

Easter: Easter Sunday

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Preparation

Background for Scripture Readings

First Reading

- Peter announces to the Gentile household of Cornelius, that all who believe are forgiven of their sins.
- Today's passage highlights the expansion of the Church.
- The disciples spread the Good News to the far ends of the Earth.

Second Reading

- Paul calls for a new way of life in today's second reading.
- In Baptism we have "passed over" from death to life.
- Those who participate in Christ's death and Resurrection through the Sacrament of Baptism are on a journey of faith.

Gospel

- In the Gospel according to John, Mary Magdalene is first to arrive at the tomb early on the morning after Jesus rose.
- The second and third visitors come to the tomb because of Mary's incredible story.
- Before Jesus appeared to anyone, Mary visited his tomb and was the first to announce the events of the Resurrection.

Breaking Open the Word

Leader Instruction

Catechist Reflection Guide for Easter Sunday

First Reading: Acts 10:34a, 37-43—Peter's witness of faith in the Resurrection.

Responsorial Psalm: Psalm 118:1-2, 16-17, 22-23—A song of victory.

Second Reading: Colossians 3:1-4—Look to heaven; or 1 Corinthians 5:6b-8—Celebrate the news.

Gospel: John 20:1-9—Mary Magdalene and Peter find an empty tomb.

Invitation to prayer (30 sec.)

Ask the children to quiet themselves and sit comfortably. Begin the session with the Sign of the Cross. Have them take three deep breaths while you prompt them to relax as they breathe in God, our Father who loves us, Jesus Christ, his Son, our brother, and God's Holy Spirit who lovingly guides us.

Listening for a word or phrase to speak to your heart (3-4 min.)

Read the Gospel passage or special phrase slowly and deliberately while the children are silently listening. Ask them to listen for a word or phrase that seems to be God's word for them today. Spend about 30 seconds as they pick out their "word" from God. Ask them to silently repeat that word or phrase and to write it on their heart.

For Ages 5-6: Read aloud the word "**Alleluia!**" Tell children, **The word means "Praise God." It is a happy word. We are happy because today we celebrate Jesus rising from the dead and still being with us.** Read John 20:1-9 from a children's Bible or tell it in your own words.

For Ages 7-8: Read aloud the words, "**Jesus is missing.**" Have children look at the illustration and explain that **Mary and the disciples found an empty tomb when they went to visit Jesus' burial place. They wondered where Jesus was.** Read John 20:1-9 from a children's Bible or tell it in your own words.

For Ages 9-11 and 12-14: Read aloud John 20:1-9. Ask young people to listen for a word or phrase that seems to be God's word for them today. Spend about 30 seconds as they pick out their word or phrase. Ask them to silently repeat that word or phrase and to write it on their heart.

Loving God through his word (3-5 min.)

For Ages 5-6: Explain that **Mary went to Jesus' tomb early on Easter Sunday.** Refer children to the illustration. **When Mary got there she saw the tomb was empty.** Quiz children's understanding by asking the following questions: **How did Mary and the Apostles feel when they saw Jesus was not there? Where do you think he might have been? Mary and the disciples did not know where he was. They were surprised. Today we know he did rise and he is always with us, even today!** Read the text aloud. Suggest ways that Jesus is with us (*in our parents, when we pray, when we go to Church*). Ask children for their ideas. Have children complete the drawing activity. Close with the prayer. You may wish to use gestures with the Alleluia or sing it.

For Ages 7-8: Have a conversation with the children using the questions on the handout. You may wish to have them close their eyes for a guided meditation where they place themselves in the Gospel scene and then answer the questions. Have a good reader read aloud the last sentence and then have all the children say it together. Close with the prayer.

For ages 9-11: Ask young people to share their word or phrase. Play quiet music in the background and

using the text on the handout do a guided meditation with the young people. When you have finished, ask them to share their responses to each of the questions in the meditation. Close with the prayer.

For ages 12-14: Ask young people to share their word or phrase. Have young people take a few minutes to reflect on the questions and have them share their responses in the large group. Close with the prayer.

Living the Gospel words through the week (3-5 min.)

The handouts describe one or two ways children and young people can live this reflection on the Gospel through the week at home, school, or play. If appropriate, have them add one or two more personal choices to act on this week.