

Easter: Second Sunday in Easter

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Preparation

Background for Scripture Readings

First Reading

- The first reading from Acts of the Apostles summarizes the ideal Christian community.
- Today's passage describes the witness of the community to outsiders.
- The Christian community continues the healing ministry of the Risen Christ.

Second Reading

- Today's reading from Revelation recounts the first vision of the book.
- The author describes a vision of the victorious Christ holding all power, even over death.
- Christ is the beginning and the end, his power endures beyond all persecution.

Gospel

- The Gospel passage narrates two appearances of the Risen Jesus. In both stories, his first words are "Peace be with you."
- Jesus sent his disciples out with the gift of peace, to be signs of his healing presence in the world.
- The second appearance involves the Apostle Thomas who needs evidence of Jesus' Resurrection.

Breaking Open the Word

Leader Instruction

Catechist Reflection Guide for the Second Sunday in Easter

First Reading: Acts 5:12-16—Many came to believe in Jesus.

Responsorial Psalm: Psalm 118:2-4, 13-15, 22-24—Give thanks to God.

Second Reading: Revelation 1:9-11a, 12-13, 17-19—Life forever in Christ.

Gospel: John 20:19-31—Jesus appears to the disciples.

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 words "**Peace be with you!**" Point out that **The dove is a symbol of the Holy Spirit and in the Gospel, Jesus says, "Receive the Holy Spirit" to the disciples.** Read John 20:19-31 from a children's Bible or tell it in your own words.

For Ages 7-8: Read aloud the words "**Peace be with you!**" Have children look at the illustration and explain that **The dove is a symbol of the Holy Spirit and in the Gospel Jesus says, "Receive the Holy Spirit" to the disciples.** Read John 20:19-31.

For Ages 9-11: Read aloud John 20:19-23. 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.

For Ages 12-14: Read aloud John 20:19-31. 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 **Jesus wanted the Apostles to believe him and not to be afraid.** Point out that **This is the first time Jesus comes to all the disciples, and all of them except John had abandoned Jesus when he was arrested.** Ask them how the disciples might have felt about meeting Jesus after they had run away (*worried, afraid, embarrassed, ashamed*). Tell children **Jesus wanted the disciples to know he forgave them and so he said "Peace be with you." He did not hold any grudges. Then he told them to forgive others.** Explain that **The Sign of peace we use at Mass is one way we let people know we want them to have peace.** Practice how to do the Sign of Peace and use it as the closing prayer.

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. Ask young people to silently read the questions on the handout and think about their responses. After a few minutes open a discussion with the large group on the first set of questions. Emphasize that **Jesus was totally forgiving and modeled the kind of forgiveness he wants from his disciples.** Have volunteers respond to the last question. 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. Emphasize how **Jesus' forgiveness was a sign that strengthened the disciples' faith in him.**

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.