

Easter:

Sixth Sunday in Easter

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Preparation

Background for Scripture Readings

First Reading

- In the reading from Acts, Paul describes a solution to the controversy regarding requirements of the Jewish law.
- Christians at the time were convinced that converts to Christianity must keep the prescriptions of the Jewish law.
- The early Church worked to solve these controversies through the wisdom of God in the Spirit.

Second Reading

- The reading from Revelation continues to describe a vision of the New Jerusalem.
- The City was surrounded by the number twelve, the number for the fullness of Israel (twelve tribes) and the number for the fullness of the Church (twelve Apostles).
- The sign of God's presence in the Temple was no longer necessary because now God dwells in the midst of the community.

Gospel

- The Gospel passage is Jesus' promise of the presence of the Holy Spirit with the disciples.
- Jesus will dwell forever with those who love him and are true to him.
- This presence of God in the believer and in the community of believers bears much fruit.

Breaking Open the Word

Leader Instruction

Catechist Reflection Guide for the Sixth Sunday in Easter

First Reading: Acts 15:1-2, 22-29—Question of circumcision for Gentiles arises.

Responsorial Psalm: Psalm 67:2-3, 5, 6+8—Let all the nations praise God.

Second Reading: Revelation 21:10-14, 22-23—Vision of the holy city.

Gospel: John 14:23-29—The Holy Spirit teaches everything.

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 and 7-8: Read aloud the words "**God lives in me!**" Read John 14:23-24 from a children's Bible or tell it in your own words.

For Ages 9-11 and Ages 12-14: Read aloud John 14:23-29. 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: Read aloud the poem on the handout. Have children repeat each line after you. Teach children the following motions to go with the poem. **God** (*Point arms and hands upward.*) **lives in me.** (*Move arms and hands to chest.*) **God** (*Point arms and hands upward.*) **lives in you.** (*Point to others in the group.*) **God** (*Point arms and hands upward.*) **is in what we do.** (*Extend arms and hands outward.*) Close with the prayer. You may wish to use gestures with the Alleluia or sing it.

For Ages 7-8: Read aloud the text on the handout. Have a conversation with the children about ways they show respect and care for their bodies (*exercising, being clean, eating healthy foods, taking medicine when necessary, brushing teeth*). Have children complete the writing activity. Close with the prayer.

For ages 9-11: Ask young people to share their word or phrase. Have young people complete the writing activity. When they are finished, ask volunteers to share their responses. 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 complete the reflection/writing activity. Organize the large group into smaller groups and have young people share their responses. 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.