

Intergenerational Lesson Plan

Scripture: John 20:19-31

Background: Easter - the unearned gift of grace. The reflective season of “going in” that Lent provided (no matter what disciplines we undertook, nor even how well we attended to them) explodes on Easter. Of course, we cannot “figure it out.” How comforting, then, to have these Scriptures, showing first how the disciples struggled to grasp what had happened and then stories of Jesus before the crucifixion, which are written in the light of the Resurrection.

As Easter people we know, as Paul said, that nothing, not even death, shall separate us from the love of God. We are people who expect life out of death. And so, in Eastertide we celebrate the wonder and prepare ourselves to take the awesome message out into the world on Pentecost.

A Notation for this Week's Gospel

The same Gospel reading occurs in the Second Sunday of Easter in all three lectionary cycles; so for each cycle, the lesson plan suggests a section of the reading as the focus. Today's reading from the Gospel of John follows the discovery of the resurrected Jesus by the women at the tomb. Although several disciples raced to the tomb to see for themselves, they returned to the upper room – reasonably sure that they would be the next to be killed. While they huddled in fear, Jesus came to them, and even after all he had been through, he continued to teach the message of peace and forgiveness. For today's session, the suggested focus is the concluding portion: verses 25 through 31.

Before: A variety of activities are suggested so you can use what fits your timeframe. Some will require a bit of gathering of materials, so you will want to be prepared. You will need to spot good news stories in the

newspaper or on the web for the Good News Board. Trace the butterfly outline on the nametags or glue butterflies on for when people arrive. If your group does not already know each other well, you may want to do the Get Acquainted activity.

Gathering:

Supplies Needed: name tags, butterfly outline (traced or glued on the name tags), felt markers or crayons.

As people arrive, invite them to put their name on a name tag and color the butterfly if they choose. Note: the last page of this lesson plan has a sheet of butterfly outlines that can be printed and used in several of today's activities. As they work, ask them to think about why we use the symbol of the butterfly at Easter.

Opening Prayer: *Thank you, God, for being patient with us as we seek to follow Jesus. Alleluia, Christ is Risen! Amen.*

Getting Started: Ask the group to share things they noticed about the Easter Day Service, whether they attended here or in a different place with family members. Some ideas may be: Were there people we did not know? What flowers decorated the church? What was your favorite part?

Preview: Tell the group what you have planned for this session, which is to begin and end in prayer, hear and reflect on today's Gospel passage with a few questions and selected activities. Let them know what time you expect to be finished and answer any questions.

The Story: John 19:[18-23] 24-31

Supplies needed: Bibles or copies of the scripture for today. Or tell the story, using this account as a guide.

Many of Jesus' friends were gathered in the room where they had last been with Jesus. Some of them had gone back to the tomb when the women came to tell them that

they had seen Jesus, alive! But still, they were scared. Would someone come and drag them off? So they stayed in the safe room.

Suddenly Jesus came to be with them, to breathe his peace upon them, to let them see his wounds so they would know that he was really Jesus. Thomas had not been there when Jesus came, and he was having a very hard time believing what the other disciples were telling him.

Jesus came back to the room and this time Thomas got to see Jesus for himself. “Wow!” said Thomas. “Now I believe!”

“It is good that you can believe now that you have seen me,” said Jesus. “Many who do not get to see me will believe. Peace be with you.”

Reflection Questions

The disciples passed the message of peace to those they met, and those people told other people, and so it has gone down to this day when we say to each other: “Peace be with you.”

- When during our church service do we hear the words “Peace be with you”?
- How do we respond? (Do some people hug each other? Shake hands with each other?)
- Are there other times we pass peace to other people? (We may not say, “Peace be with you, but what are other ways we can greet people in peace?)
- I wonder what it looks like when we greet others in peace?

Create A Timeline

Ask the group to help you put together a timeline for the Easter story, beginning with Maundy Thursday, the last time Jesus has been with all the disciples.

Some elements to draw out of the group:

- The Last Supper on Maundy Thursday
 - Jesus washing the feet of his disciples to show them how to lead
 - The crucifixion
 - Joseph of Arimathea, who gave his tomb so Jesus could be buried
 - The women going to place burial herbs on the body of Jesus and finding the tomb empty
 - Jesus appearing first to the women and then to all the disciples except Thomas, then Thomas getting his chance
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As a group, decide which parts to portray (Jesus, Thomas, at least one woman, other disciples). If the group is large, give those who are going to be in the skit a few minutes to prepare while the rest of you decide on some questions to ask.

Some examples: To Thomas: how did it feel to have everyone have an experience you did not get? To the women: how did it feel to bring such good news and have so few believe you?

Enjoy the skit and then engage the questions.

Good News Board

Supplies needed: A sheet of foam core or a big piece of cardboard, markers or crayons, paper, and transparent tape, and good news stories from newspapers, magazines, the web, or stories we know in our communities.

Invite your group to create a Good News Board. (stories of good news, good deeds, or the Easter message) using the stories you brought and adding sketches of other stories they know about. During the Easter season, we can add other stories we find. We can be on the lookout for people who help each other or do good deeds. We can post the stories, as we find them, on the board where we can all see it during the Easter Season.

Greeting Cards

Supplies needed: Paper and envelopes, addresses of people in the congregation unable to be here, postage stamps.

Ask the group to identify people who are ill or otherwise unable to be with us. (You may have some names to add to the list.) Invite those present to write a brief message – or just sign their names to cards for each person identified. Copies of the butterflies from the name tags could be included – and if you have time - colored by the children. The envelopes can be addressed, cards inserted, postage affixed ready to be mailed.

Many Splendored Juices

Two options are suggested.

Supplies needed: Bottles of clear juice (white cranberry, white grape, apple), food coloring, pitchers, glasses or clear plastic glasses.

First option: Pour juice into pitchers, add drops of a different food coloring to each (a little red to make pink –more red to make it redder, red and yellow to make orange) Serve the juice letting people choose which color they want.

Second option (requires advance work): The day before pour, a drop or two of food color in each glass. Allow it to dry. On the day of your session, pour the clear juice into the glasses and watch the juice magically change color.

Peace Bookmarks

Supplies needed: Strips of cardstock or heavy paper, copies of the butterfly pattern, Easter stickers, glue, scissors, crayons or felt markers.

Offer the supplies and invite each person to make a bookmark to take home and use in a book they are reading. They can add the butterfly and write a brief message such as: "Peace is with me," "God's peace is in me," or just simply "Peace."

Prayer Partners

Supplies needed: A list of names of people who have asked for our prayers, slips of paper, pencils.

Invite the group to take the name of a person on the list, write it down on a piece of paper, and take the slip home to help remember to pray for the person. There may be other concerns the group has: peace in the world, a local concern, etc. Invite people to choose the person or organization for whom they want to pray.

Closing Activity

Invite the group to sit in a circle, each person holding the slip of paper with the person or organization for whom they are praying written on it. Tell them we can begin our prayers for the people we have selected here. Tell them you will begin the prayer, and they can say the names, going in a circle, if that works best. Begin by praying, "Dear God, we hold these people and organizations up to you," and name them, one by one. When all have had a chance to name their prayer person, close by saying "Help us to bring peace to the world. Amen."

Closing Prayer: *We thank you, God, for this time together as we begin this Easter Season. Help us to be people of peace, love, and joy. Amen.*

John 20:19-31

¹⁹When it was evening on that day, the first day of the week, and the doors of the house where the disciples had met were locked for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood among them and said, "Peace be with you." ²⁰After he said this, he showed them his hands and his side. Then the disciples rejoiced when they saw the Lord. ²¹Jesus said to them again, "Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, so I send you." ²²When he had said this, he breathed on them and said to them, "Receive the Holy Spirit. ²³If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven them; if you retain the sins of any, they are retained." ²⁴But Thomas (who was called the Twin), one of the twelve, was not with them when Jesus came. ²⁵So the other disciples told him, "We have seen the Lord." But he said to them, "Unless I see the mark of the nails in his hands, and put my finger in the mark of the nails and my hand in his side, I will not believe."

²⁶A week later his disciples were again in the house, and Thomas was with them. Although the doors were shut, Jesus came and stood among them and said, "Peace be with you." ²⁷Then he said to Thomas, "Put your finger here and see my hands. Reach out your hand and put it in my side. Do not doubt but believe." ²⁸Thomas answered him, "My Lord and my God!" ²⁹Jesus said to him, "Have you believed because you have seen me? Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have come to believe." ³⁰Now Jesus did many other signs in the presence of his disciples, which are not written in this book. ³¹But these are written so that you may come to believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and that through believing you may have life in his name.