

**Lesson Plans that Work**  
**Year C – Second Sunday in Easter**  
**Gospel Lesson for Adults**

**Scripture: John 20: 19-31**

"Christ has died. Christ is risen. Christ will come again." An astounding discovery! The Easter news was spread to all who would listen. The disciples told people, who in turn, told people, and to this day, we hear the message — a message of weeping and then of joy that comes with the morning of a new day. We too like the disciples weep **AND** then delight in the joy bursting forth in us. We, too, are called to bring this message with our lives, and, if necessary, with words, to those who have not yet heard it.

**A Notation for This Week's Gospel**

The women brought an account the men could not grasp. That evening, the exhausted band of men and women who followed Jesus, huddled in the locked room. They were terrified that they would be killed next. To their amazement, Jesus was right there in their midst proclaiming the Peace he had been teaching them to trust. Breath sweeping over the earth brought life in the beginning; now Jesus was breathing new life in the Holy Spirit.

**Theme: Hear what the Spirit is saying to the Church**

**Before Class:** During the season of Easter, a different way of approaching Bible Study will be introduced in each session. If one does not appear to be appropriate for your group, use one of the others. And if your group really resonates with one method, feel free to use that one with other sessions. You will need paper for note taking, pencils or pens, and copies of the Bible or copies of the scripture for the day. You might want to experiment with different translations. The sessions offered here are all based on the New Revised Standard Version, so wording could change slightly in different translations.

**Beginning:** Since this is a new unit, the configuration of your group might have changed. If a person new to this group is present, be sure you all know each other's names and something about each other. You might choose to begin by going around the table and inviting each person to share either an insight or special moment they have had so far in this Easter season. Tell the group that we will be experimenting with different ways to do Bible Study during the Easter season. Different methods will appeal to different people. And if we find a method that serves none of us, we will not repeat it!

**Opening Prayer:** Thank you, God, for the amazing gift of Easter and for this entire season to help us unpack its wonder and its call on our lives. Amen.

**The Scripture: John 20: 19-31.** The setting: Easter evening. Three women have visited the empty tomb, have seen the Risen Jesus, and told the other disciples what they had experienced. The disciples (according to Luke) were unable to believe what they had been told and are hiding, in fear.

You will need Narrator 1, Narrator 2, Jesus, Disciples, and Thomas if you choose to follow the script below. Or you could simply invite someone to read the passage.

**Process: Holy Conversation**

In a "holy conversation" we are looking for a dialog, finding meaning and not just a discussion of facts. We are invited into listening to the word and to each other's hearing of the word. As the passage is read, we listen with pencil and paper at hand, to note words and phrases that stand out for us. We wonder and we ask "What if?"

Invite people to share what they have heard. Honor those who prefer not to speak. When it seems appropriate, suggest the passage be read again, possibly with different readers or a different translation, as people listen with pencil and paper at hand to note what they hear in this reading. After time to reflect, ask for volunteers to offer what they have heard.

If the group gets stuck, you could ask these questions:

We've had 2000 years to reflect on these events, the disciples had less than a day, how does that help us identify with their state of mind?

Notice the patience Jesus displayed with his disciples in verses 19b through 23. What is the sequence of Jesus' approach?

Notice the sequence of Thomas' ability to believe (verses 24-28).

Which came first, for each of us, believing or belonging to a group that believed?

**Getting Closure:** Discuss how it felt to do Bible Study in this manner. Remind the group that each week we will use a different method and not return to methods that did not resonate with us.

**Closing Prayer:** Thank you, God, for the patience of Jesus, calling us to believe and standing with us as we live into belief. Amen.

**John 20: 19-31**

**Narrator 1:** When 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,

**Jesus:** ‘Peace be with you.’

**Narrator 2:** After he said this, he showed them his hands and his side. Then the disciples rejoiced when they saw the Lord. Jesus said to them again,

**Jesus:** ‘Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, so I send you.’

**Narrator 1:** When he had said this, he breathed on them and said to them,

**Jesus:** ‘Receive the Holy Spirit. If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven them; if you retain the sins of any, they are retained.’

**Narrator 2:** But Thomas (who was called the Twin), one of the twelve, was not with them when Jesus came. So the other disciples told him,

**Disciples:** ‘We have seen the Lord.’

**Narrator 1:** But he said to them,

**Thomas:** ‘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.’

**Narrator 2:** A 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,

**Jesus:** ‘Peace be with you.’

**Narrator 1:** Then he said to Thomas,

**Jesus:** ‘Put your finger here and see my hands. Reach out your hand and put it in my side. Do not doubt but believe.’

**Narrator 1:** Thomas answered him,

**Thomas:** ‘My Lord and my God!’

**Narrator 2:** Jesus said to him,

**Jesus:** ‘Have you believed because you have seen me? Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have come to believe.’

**Narrator 1:** Now Jesus did many other signs in the presence of his disciples, which are not written in this book. But 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.

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