

Lesson Plans that Work
Year C – Second Sunday of Easter
Lesson Plans for Older Children

Scripture: John 20:19-31

(Note: there is also an intergenerational lesson plan for this Sunday that you may wish to refer to or get more ideas from for your session.)

"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, 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: The Easter season is full of abstract concepts that nurture a mature Christian life, yet may include words difficult to grasp for children of the age you are teaching. To help the children unpack these abstract words, and make them words they can own, an art project that goes through the Easter Season invites the children to create icons like they find on their computers or electronic devices. The children will be invited to take a word each week and decide on either a synonym or an illustration. The children can take their icons home to use as bookmarks and can work together to produce a larger copy of the icon for display in the classroom. You will need copies of the Bible, paper, pens, markers, crayons or colored pencils. There are templates at the end of the lesson if you wish to print these out for them to create their icons.

Beginning: If you have not met with this class since Palm Sunday, begin by getting caught up with what is going on in the children's lives. Invite the children to tell you the after-school activities they are involved in. Anything else new? New sibling? New pet? Interesting trip? If there is a child new to the class, be sure all know the child's name and invite the children to share something about themselves.

Then, tell the children to pretend that you are new to this class, new to this town, and know **NOTHING** about what it is to be a Christian. Ask them to tell you what has been happening in our church life beginning with Palm Sunday and going on through Holy

Week to Easter. Ask leading questions if they are missing parts. (For example, “What happened on Good Friday?”)

Opening Prayer: Thank you, God, for the gift of Jesus and for the stories we have this Easter season to understand better what you call us to do. Amen.

The Story: John 20:19-31. Since this is such a long passage, it would be good to break it into two parts.

Part One: John 20:19-23. You will need two voices: one to be narrator and one to read the parts Jesus says (verses 21b and 22b–23). You will find a script of the scripture at the end of this lesson plan.

Questions:

I wonder why the disciples were so afraid? (Jesus had been killed, were they next?)

I wonder why the disciples don't immediately recognized Jesus? (There must have been something "different" about him — no one recognizes him at first.)

Why do you think Jesus said: "Peace be with you?" (Maybe Jesus knew that they were afraid or that we need to be at peace to think clearly and act appropriately.)

What did Jesus do so these people would know he really was Jesus? (He showed them the marks of the crucifixion on his body.)

What else did Jesus do? (He breathed on them.)

Why didn't they think it was odd that Jesus "breathed on them?" (One word, in their language, meant breath, wind and spirit.)

I wonder what you think verse 23 means? (The disciples were going to be the first "priests" of this new church. People would come to them with stuff that was getting in their way (things that bothered them and prevented them from being close to God and to one another) and the disciples would be able to tell them that their sins were forgiven.)

Part Two: John 20: 24-29. You will need the narrator, Jesus and Thomas. Suggest that the children listen as the passage is being read and then be ready to act out what is happening.

The children can decide who plays which parts and then present their enactment to you.

Activity: Invite the children to imagine what the words "Peace be with you" might have meant for the disciples. What do they mean for them? What words would they use with a friend their own age. If they are stuck, ask them what it feels like to be at peace, and what it feels like when you are NOT at peace.

Once they have worked through the meanings and images, work together to develop a "Peace be with you" icon for the classroom allowing time for the children to each make one to take home. (There are some symbols in the Intergenerational lesson that you may wish to copy and have on hand.)

You will find blank bookmarks at the end of this lesson that you can give the children as a starting point if they are having difficulty getting started.

Getting Closure: Read the last verses from today's passage to the children (John 20:30-31). Ask the children how they would define the word "believe." You might offer that you "believe" the Internet works, but you sure could not explain it. Some things we "believe" we can explain, some things we cannot. Notice also that Jesus said we "may come to believe."

Closing Prayer: Thank you, God for sending us clues to help us come to believe. Guide us this week as we walk in peace with you and those around us. 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.’

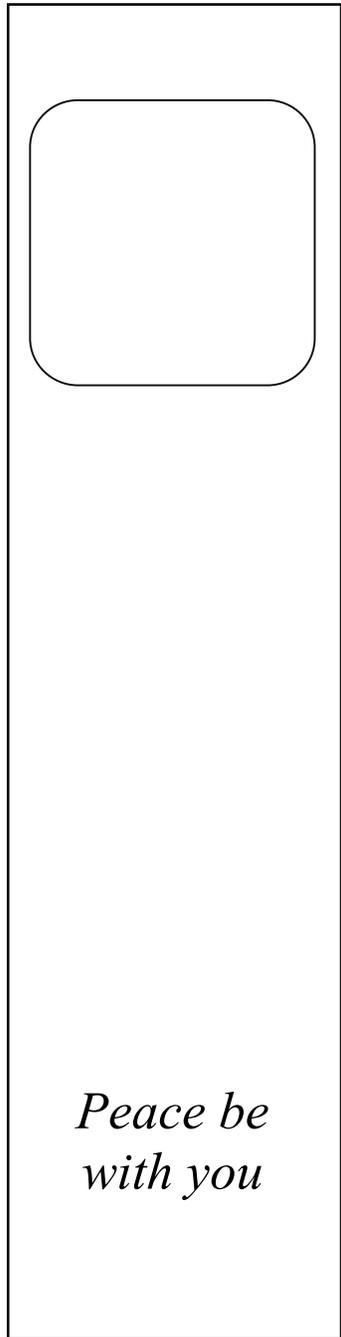
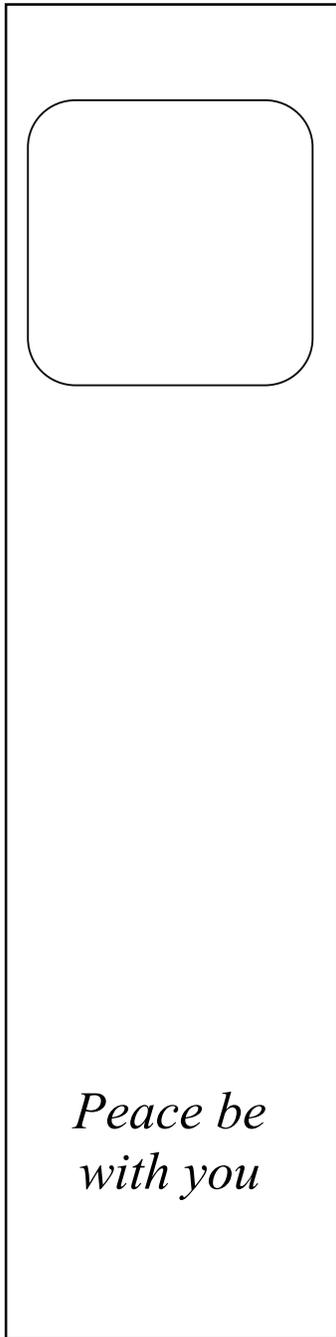
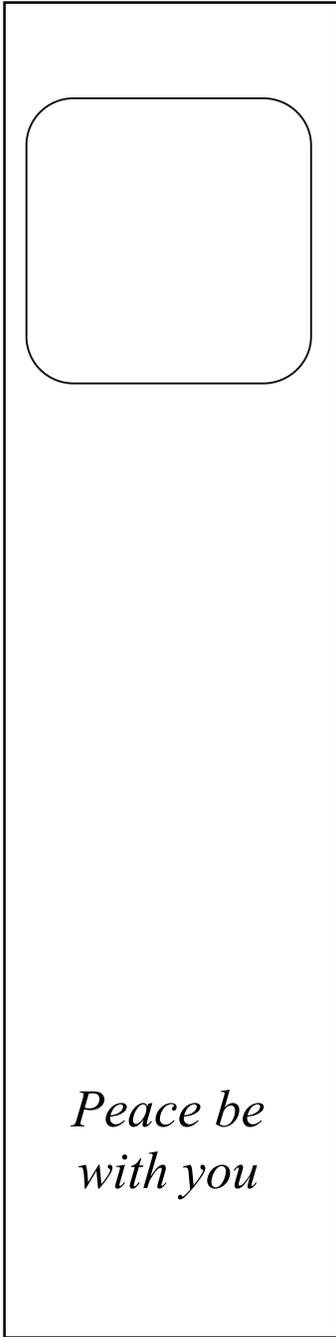
Narrator 1: Thomas answered him,

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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