

**Lesson Plans that Work**  
**Year B – Second Sunday of Easter**  
**Lesson Plans for Younger Children**

**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**

In fear, the disciples huddled behind locked doors – an obvious response to the crucifixion. (“Are we next?”) Suddenly, Jesus is right there, sensitively inviting the disciples to convince themselves that it is he – showing them the marks on his body. "Peace be with you," Jesus says. The disciples are now to carry on the work Jesus had begun. Jesus breathes the power of the Holy Spirit upon them. As God sent Jesus, now the disciples are sent out. Their message is handed on to us, the torch of peace, so we can hand it on to those who come after us.

**Theme: Peace Be with You**

**Before:** You will need a copy of the “Peace be with you” sign. To continue the theme of Easter as a season and not just one day, select one of the two options for an Easter season class project.

- Easter tree - bare branches secured with stones in a deep jar, Easter symbols
- Easter mobile – string, hanger, Easter symbols

For Easter symbols, you can simply let the children create them, or you can print out symbols for them to decorate and color. If you print them out for them to color, have each child working on the same symbol each week. (see the end of the lesson)

You will need craft supplies such as construction paper, yarn, and crayons, and art supplies. You will notice that for these children, only verses 19-22 are used.

If your budget (financial and time) permits, you could purchase from a hobby store strips of magnetic tape and cut little pieces so that the symbol the child makes to take home would “stick” to the refrigerator.

**Beginning:** Especially if you have not met with these children since Palm Sunday, invite them to tell you what we have heard and seen in church since Palm Sunday. And if they cannot tell you, remind them that Jesus was killed. He died. All his friends were sad. But Jesus did not stay dead. He was resurrected or raised from the dead. Jesus showed his friends that he is still with us. On

Easter, which was last Sunday, we celebrated that Good News. Easter is not just a day – it is a whole season. We are still celebrating Easter and will for seven weeks.

**Opening Prayer:** Thank you, Jesus, for being right here with us although we cannot see you. Thank you for all of us who are here today. Amen.

**The Story:** In this story, the friends of Jesus knew that Jesus had been killed. And they were very sad. So they all got together in the room where they had been with Jesus and were very sad. They were all there, being sad, when suddenly they saw that Jesus was in the room with them. Jesus knew they were sad and, now, very surprised to see him. So Jesus wanted them to feel better. “Peace be with you,” Jesus said to his friends. “Here, see my hands and my side where I was hurt. It is me.” I’ll bet they all crowded around Jesus, hugging him and hugging each other.

Then, Jesus said to them: “You have been learning from me all this time and now you are ready to go out and do all this work on your own. I am sending you to do the work.” And then Jesus breathed on them so they knew that the Holy Spirit was in them and would help them do hard stuff.

**Easter Activity:** Show the children what you have chosen for the season (the tree or the mobile), and if possible invite them to help you get it set up (securing the branches in the pot, etc.) Tell them that each Sunday we will make more decorations for the Easter tree or Easter mobile.

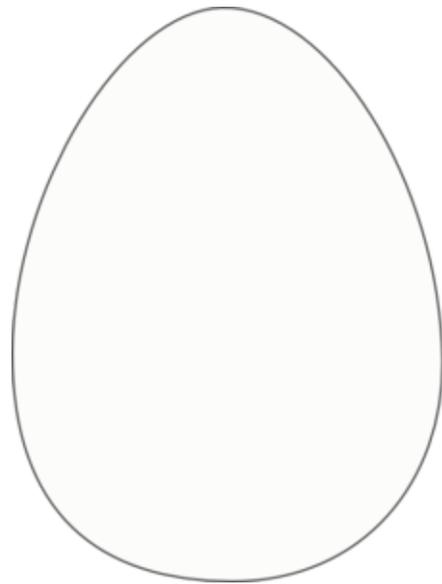
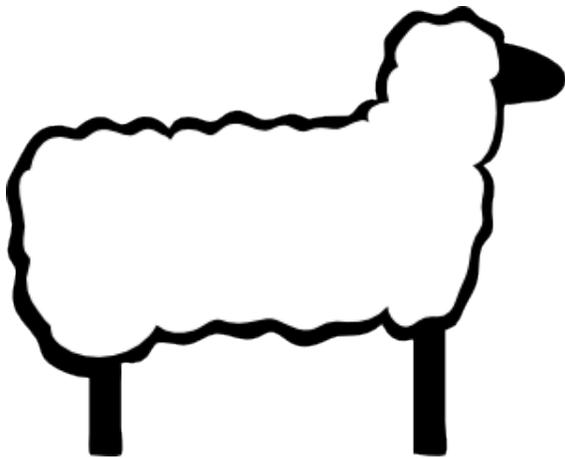
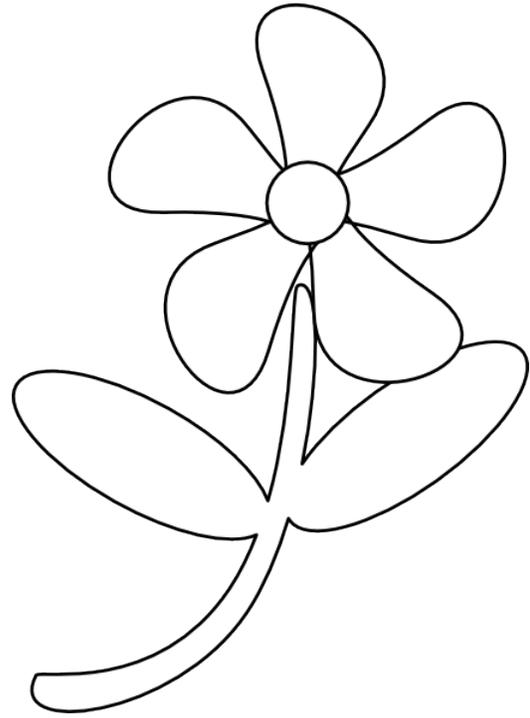
Tell the children a word for today is “Peace.” (Or if you want: “Peace be with you.”) Then, put out the paper, crayons, or whatever you are using to decorate and invite the children to create symbols. If time permits, let each child make a symbol for your Easter tree or mobile and one to take home to put on the refrigerator. (If you have the magnet strips, a square secured to each symbol going home will make it possible to post it on the home refrigerator.)

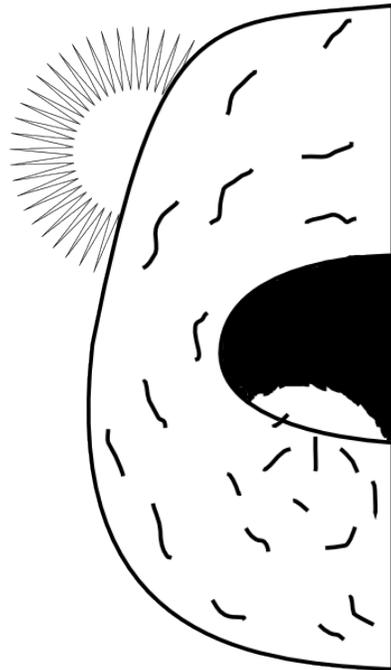
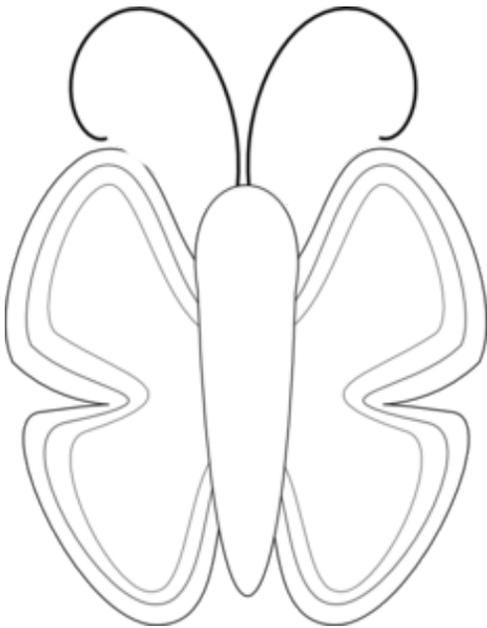
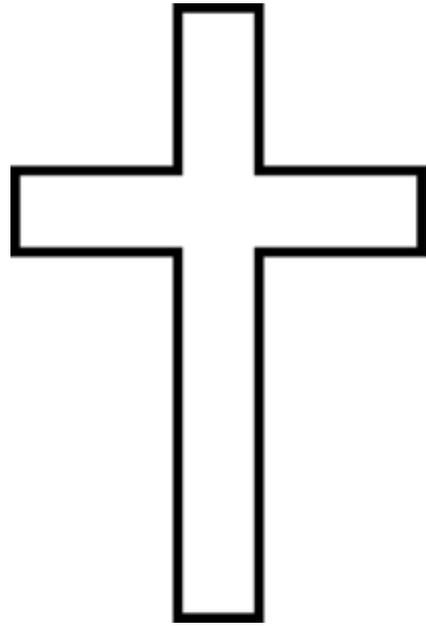
**Getting Closure:** Decorate your Easter tree or mobile by letting each child place his or her symbol where the child believes it is appropriate. When you have finished decorating it, stand in a circle for your closing prayer.

**Closing Prayer:** While holding hands, ask each child to turn to another child and all of you say together: “Peace be with you.” Then say, “Thank you, God, for sending Jesus and for the Peace with us. Amen.”

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

**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**

In fear, the disciples huddled behind locked doors – an obvious response to the crucifixion. (“Are we next?”) Suddenly, Jesus is right there, sensitively inviting the disciples to convince themselves that it is he – showing them the marks on his body. “Peace be with you,” Jesus says. The disciples are now to carry on the work Jesus had begun. Jesus breathes the power of the Holy Spirit upon them. As God sent Jesus, now the disciples are sent out. Their message is handed on to us, the torch of peace, so we can hand it on to those who come after us.

**Theme: Peace Be with You**

**Before Class:** You will need a Bible or copies of the scripture for each person and copies of the Book of Common Prayer. You will also need paper (construction paper, wallpaper scraps from a home decorating store, scrapbooking paper, card stock or any other creative type of paper you might have access to), scissors, markers, and if you’d like, strips of ribbon and a hole punch. You may need nametags for any newcomers to class.

**Beginning:** Greet each child by name. If you do not know all the children, make nametags the children can fill in themselves. Get caught up on what is going on in the children's lives – especially if you were not together last Sunday. Are any of them on sports teams? Are there school plays, dance recitals, or any similar activities going on?

**Opening Prayer:** Thank you, God, for letting us be together here today. Thank you for the events of Easter, which we have celebrated and which we will explore here today. Amen.

**The Story: John 20:19-31** You could begin by asking the children to pretend that you have just arrived this morning from another planet having spent your entire journey learning English. Now you hear that there are all these words you did not learn and you need their help trying to figure them out. Who is “Jesus?” “What happened on what you call Palm Sunday? What happened on Good Friday? What is Easter?” (Keep on until they have filled in the story from Palm Sunday to

Easter, asking leading questions if they are missing pieces. Example: “I heard some say that ... Is that true?)

Once you are done with that, invite three readers to read the passage for today, Narrator, Jesus, and Thomas. (see below for script)

**Reflection Questions:**

- I wonder why the disciples were afraid? (Jesus has been killed, and they thought they might be next.)
- Why do you think Jesus' first words were: “Peace be with you?” (Perhaps because he could see that they were way too scared to understand anything until they felt more peaceful.)
- Does it seem odd that Jesus “breathed” on them? If so, why do you think he did this? (“Breath” and “Spirit” are the same word in Hebrew. They would have expected to receive the Spirit through breath.)
- How did Jesus help Thomas – who was not there the first time Jesus came – believe that it was really Jesus? (Jesus invited Thomas to touch him to see for sure that he was Jesus.)

**Act it Out:** Invite the children to act out this passage. You could tell them that since you still don't “get it” they should act it out for you. Let the children decide who will play each part. If you have more children than speaking parts, invite them to create things they think the disciples MIGHT have said.

**Bookmarks:** If time permits, the children could make bookmarks to use when finding Bible passages. Offer what materials you are providing and let the children decide what they want to put on their bookmarks. They can place their bookmarks in their copies of the Bible, take the bookmarks home, or you can collect them to use next time.

**Getting Closure:** After the “play,” invite the children's responses to the play and to the passage. How are we also invited by Jesus to be sent out? How can we greet one another in peace?

**Closing Prayer:** Pass out copies of the *Book of Common Prayer* and ask the children to turn to p. 383. Tell them that during the season of Easter, we will close each of our times together using one of the kinds of prayer suggested at the top of the page. Today we pray for the Universal Church, its members and its mission. The Universal Church is our church right here in our town and every church all over the world.

“Thank you, God, that over 2000 years since the time we read about today, there are churches in every country in the world. We pray for all of these churches and for our own church here that we can do the work you give us to do. Amen.”

## **John 20:19-31**

**Narrator:** <sup>19</sup>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:** <sup>20</sup>After he said this, he showed them his hands and his side. Then the disciples rejoiced when they saw the Lord. <sup>21</sup>Jesus said to them again,

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

**Narrator:** <sup>22</sup>When he had said this, he breathed on them and said to them,

**Jesus:** “Receive the Holy Spirit. <sup>23</sup>If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven them; if you retain the sins of any, they are retained.”

**Narrator:** <sup>24</sup>But Thomas (who was called the Twin), one of the twelve, was not with them when Jesus came. <sup>25</sup>So the other disciples told him, “We have seen the Lord.” 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:** <sup>26</sup>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:** <sup>27</sup>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.”

**Thomas:** “My Lord and my God!”

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

**Narrator:** <sup>30</sup>Now Jesus did many other signs in the presence of his disciples, which are not written in this book. <sup>31</sup>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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**Lesson Plans that Work**  
**Year B – Second Sunday of Easter**  
**Lesson Plans for Adults**

**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.

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**Theme: Peace Be with You**

**Before Class:** You will need Bibles, preferably all the same translation, or copies of the scripture and possibly one for each person. Option: a small pack of Post-it notes.

**Beginning:** Often a new season creates a slightly different configuration to a class. If you notice that this is the case, be sure to incorporate new members or members you might not have seen for a while. Obviously, if not everyone knows each other, spend time getting to know names and information people choose to share. You might also remind the group that although all the Easter candy in stores is half-price – or gone – Easter continues for us as a season right up to Pentecost.

**Opening Prayer:** Amid all that is going on in our lives and in our world, we have the assurance of your Peace with us, in us, and in all we do. Help us to calm our anxieties and commit ourselves to fall into this Peace. Amen.

**The Scripture: John 20:19-31** Make sure each person has access to a Bible or copies of the lesson. Invite people to read one sentence of the passage, going around the room until it is read. When the entire passage has been read, allow a moment or two of silence. If time permits, you could invite the group to read it out loud again, but this time having one person read all the parts Jesus says, another read all that Thomas says, and a third read all the rest. There is an outline at the end of the lesson if you need it.

**Reflection Questions:** Begin with some questions to make sure all are aware of the setting.

- When is this happening? (Soon after the crucifixion.)
- Why are the disciples so terrified? (Jesus was killed and they are worried they might be next.)
- Why do you suppose the first thing Jesus says to them is “Peace be with you”? (Perhaps they had heard him say it so often they would immediately know it was Jesus or possibly because he was keenly aware of their stress and knew that nothing he said would be heard until he could help them calm down.)
- Why would Jesus “breathe” on them? (The word for “breath” and “spirit” are the same in Hebrew. His disciples understood that life and spirit come from the breath of God.)
- In verse 23 we understand that what Jesus is saying has to do with the priest’s power to accept penance and pronounce forgiveness. How might this be applied to each of us? (Look in the Prayer Book, page 364, at the Lord's Prayer: “And forgive us...”)
- Notice how Jesus deals with Thomas' doubt. What implications do we see for helping others in their doubt?
- I wonder where you find yourself in this story?
- I wonder what we would do if we were one of the disciples and Jesus appeared in our midst.
- Can you think of a time Jesus appeared in your midst? What was that like?

**Getting Closure:** Ask the group to remain silent for a moment or two and picture themselves there, in the room with the disciples and Jesus, receiving the blessing and the breathing of Jesus on them.

**Closing Prayer:** Say the Lord's Prayer together.

## John 20:19-31

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