

Focus: Spreading Peace

Materials:

Prayer Altar: Cross, Candle, Chasuble on stand (priest's vestment) and Altar Cloth
CD: Easter Medley
Gospel: Children's Everyday Bible

Gathering (children find/sit on a carpet square)

Say: *Good Morning everyone, my name is _____. Last week we celebrated Easter! The day Jesus rose from the dead. He died on the cross so that we could spend life everlasting with God in Heaven.*

Opening Prayer

Together we make the Sign of the Cross (do in reverse so children can mirror).

Say: *Now let's put our hands together and bow our heads.*

*Let us pray. God of Love, we believe and we trust in you.
Help us to walk in the light of faith. In the name of your son, the Risen Lord, we pray.
Amen.*

Song/Movement

Our Easter celebration is more than 1 day. We celebrate the resurrection for 7 weeks. We have a couple of special songs for the Easter season. This is the first one.-Come Christians, Join to Sing, track: 1, from EASTER CD CYCLE A

Play music, encourage children to stretch or move to the music (clapping, stamp feet march in place to the beat), turn to each other and shake hands, saying hello, etc.

Come, Christians, join to sing
Alleluia! Amen!
Loud praise to Christ our King;
Alleluia! Amen!
Let all, with heart and voice,
Before His throne rejoice;
Praise is His gracious choice:
Alleluia! Amen!
Praise yet our Christ again,

Alleluia! Amen!
Life shall not end the strain;
Alleluia! Amen!
On heaven's blissful shore
His goodness we'll adore,
Singing forevermore,
Alleluia! Amen!
Alleluia! Amen!
Alleluia! Amen!

Memory Verse

Say: *Now let's take a moment together to learn a verse from the bible.*

Peace be with you.

Have the children repeat the verse after you a couple of times.

Say: *This verse is what Jesus would say when he greeted people. He wanted everyone to know that God will take care of them, if we open our hearts to him and love him and obey his teachings. He doesn't want us to worry or be afraid. God wishes us peace.*

Sing Alleluia for Easter Season:

"Hallelu, Hallelu" Track 2 on CD Labeled EASTER SEASON CYCLE A,

Say: We haven't been able to sing Alleluia during Lent, but now it is Easter and we celebrate that Jesus is Risen!

*Hallelu, Hallelu, Hallelu, Hallelujah,
Praise ye the Lord!
Hallelu, Hallelu, Hallelu, Hallelujah,
Praise ye the Lord!
Praise ye the Lord, Hallelujah, repeat 3 times
Praise ye the Lord!
Repeat three times*

Gospel Story

Say: Today we are reading from the Gospel of John.

Have children make sign of the cross on their forehead, mouth and heart saying. *"Lord, open my mind, my lips and my heart so that I may learn it, speak it and love it."*

Read: Children's Everyday Bible, pp. 313 & 314, *Jesus Appears to His Disciples & Thomas Stops Doubting*

After the reading say: *The Gospel of the Lord*

Children respond: *Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ*

Discussion Starters:

- *Why are the disciples behind locked doors?*
- *How does Jesus greet his followers when he appears to them?*
- *What message does Jesus bring?*
- *What gift does Jesus give?*
- *What does he ask the disciple to do?*
- *Why is it hard for Thomas to believe?*
- *How does Thomas come to believe?*
- *Who does Jesus say is blessed?*

Reflection on Reading:

The disciples were so surprised in our Gospel reading today. They saw that Jesus had died and was buried in the tomb, but here he came again to be with them. The risen Christ comes to them through locked doors, he wishes them peace and gives them the gift of the Holy Spirit. By the power of the Spirit, the disciples will forgive sins and tell others of the peace of Jesus himself.

But there is another part of the Gospel story. Thomas wasn't in the room when Jesus appeared and he didn't believe that Jesus had come back to them. This story isn't just about Thomas, sometimes we are like Thomas and miss that the most important part of our faith,

is believing that Jesus is the Son of God and he died on the cross for us AND he rose again to live with God forever.

God loves and cares for us. We are invited to trust and believe in God. Faith is a gift that helps us to believe and trust in God. We learn about God from those who have lived before us, they share their stories of faith and this is how we come to believe that Jesus is alive today and with us always. The Holy Spirit helps us believe in Jesus.

Gospel Activity

Activity 1:

Spreading Peace

Have the children stand in a circle. Start with one child and ask him/her to pick one person on either side of them to shake hands with saying, "peace be with you." In turn, the chosen child will pick another child and so on until everyone has had a chance. You might want to play some music, while the children are spreading peace. (Suggestion: "I've Got Peace Like A River", track 4, America's 25 Favorite Bible Songs.) After everyone has a chance, talk about ways we can be kind and loving to help spread Jesus' love and peace to others.

Activity 2:

Telling Thomas: (variation of Act It Out)

Pretend that you are Thomas and you have just come back to the room after Jesus came the first time. Invite the children to be the other disciples and have them tell you what happened when Jesus came?

If necessary ask leading questions: What did Jesus do? What did he say? How could he come when the door was locked? Pretend that you aren't sure what they are saying is true.

Then exclaim: "I do believe!" Thank them for sharing their story of Jesus.

Complete the weekly bulletin as a group-let the children color them if there is extra time

Closing Prayer

(Children respond: "I Believe!")

Ask: *Do you believe in God, who raised Jesus from the dead?*

Do you believe in Jesus, who brings true peace to the world?

Do you believe in the Holy Spirit, who helps us to follow Jesus?

Sending Forth

Say: Let's go back into church and spread the peace of Jesus! When Father says, "Peace be with you." Remember to say. "and also with you." This is a sign for us to offer peace to each other. Remember to turn to your neighbors (front, back and side) and offer them peace just like we practiced. --It's okay to give or get a little hug or kiss from your family or close friends.

Lining Up/Closing Song

Play "*Rejoice in the Lord Always*" track 3 from Easter Medley Cycle A while children put away any materials and lineup. Hand out weekly bulletins. Remind them it is important that they return to their family quietly so that we may all listen and pray together in church.