

Focus: Spread Peace and the Good News of Jesus

Materials:

Prayer Altar: Cross, Candle, Chasuble on stand (priest's vestment) and Altar Cloth
 CD: Easter Season Cycle B
 Book: The Children's Story Bible
 Book and CD: 100 Bible Stories, 100 Bible Songs
 Colored letters and blue tape

Gathering (children find/sit on a carpet square)

Say: Good Morning everyone, my name is _____. Last week we talked about Last week was Easter Sunday. Did you have a party? Easter is the most holy and important celebration in our church. Jesus died, but through the power of God, he lives again with God in Heaven. In today's Gospel, we will hear about a visit Jesus made to his friends, the disciples, after he rose from the tomb.

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.--Join in the Dance, track: 1, from EASTER SEASON CYCLE B cd

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. Have children sit on their carpet squares when finished.

Join in the dance of
 the earth's jubilation!
 This is the feast of the
 love of God.
 Shout from the
 heights to the ends of
 creation: Jesus the
 Savior is risen from
 the grave!

1. Wake, O people;
 sleep no longer, greet
 the breaking day!
 Christ, Redeemer,
 Lamb and Lion, turns
 the night away!
 2. All creation, like a
 mother, labors to give
 birth.

Soon the pain will be
 forgotten, joy for all
 the earth!
 3. Now our shame
 becomes our glory on
 this holy tree.
 Now the reign of
 death is ended; now
 we are set free!

Alternate Creative Movement

Have kids form two equal lines facing each other, or a big circle. To the beat of the music have them take four steps toward each other and clap the hands of the child facing them (or their own), then take four steps back and clap their hands together. Repeat.

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 B,

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,
Praise ye the Lord, Hallelujah,
Praise ye the Lord, Hallelujah,
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: The Children's Bible Storybook, pp. 358,360, *The Disciples See Jesus and The Story of Thomas (omit last paragraph)*

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

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

Discussion Starters:

- *Why are the disciples afraid?*
- *How does Jesus greet his friends?*
- *Why does Thomas doubt Jesus was there?*
- *What helps Thomas to believe in Jesus?*
- *What does it mean to live in peace?*
- *Where is peace needed most in the world today?*
- *How can people bring the gift of peace to others?*

Reflection on Reading:

In today's gospel the Risen Lord appears to his followers. They are gathered behind locked doors, afraid. Jesus greets his friends by saying, "Peace be with you." The peace of the Holy Spirit is given to the disciples and they are blessed with the power to forgive sins.

Jesus' greeting, "peace be with you," calms the fears of the disciples. They are given the courage to go out and be peacemakers in the world. Followers of Jesus today are still given the same task—to spread forgiveness and peace throughout the world.

Gospel Activity

Activity 1:

A: 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.)

B: Tell the Good News

Book: 100 Bible Stories, 100 Bible Songs-Read page 186 and then play "Get on Board Little Children" Disc 2, Track 41

Activity 2:

I SPY Jesus

Before Mass, place the colored letters around the room (on the trim, on frames, backs of chairs, not on the painted walls.).

In today's Gospel Thomas doubted because he hadn't seen Jesus alive. Jesus asks us to believe in him even though we have not seen.

Let's play a little game where we can practicing seeing Jesus all around us.

Use the master sheet for colors:

Say: I spy a purple 'J', a green 'E' and so on until you spell Jesus and Peace.

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 us peace?

Do you believe in the Holy Spirit, who helps us to share God's love with others and live in peace?

Sending Forth

Say: *Let's try to go back into church and spread the peace of Jesus. When Father says, "Peace be with you" be sure to respond, "And with your spirit." This is a sign for us to offer peace to each other; turn to your neighbors and offer them peace just like we practiced.*

Lining Up/Closing Song

Play "Rejoice in the Lord" track 3 from Easter Season CD Cycle B 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.