

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

**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, 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:** If this is the first session of this series for you, be sure you know the names of all the children and they know each other's names. (There are "Get to Know You" activities under the Resources tab of Lesson Plans that Work.)

During this Easter season the class is invited to create "Pictures of Easter" to collect in your classroom. Plastic lids from cottage cheese or sour cream containers can form frames if you like. You could also make frames from gluing popsicle sticks together into a square.

Children will probably also want to take home what they have made, so one picture each week can be made collaboratively to stay in the room and individual pictures to go home. We want to stay with the concept that Easter is a season, not just a day. Assemble as wide a variety of art materials as your budget and time will allow. Paper in different colors and textures, crayons, watercolors, glue, scraps of paper or cloth for a collage, and, glitter. For today, white paper, crayons and glitter will be needed. Disposable wipes or moist washcloths will be helpful.

During Lent an altar was suggested. If you were using one in Lent, you may wish to continue using one. If you want to use one in Easter, a small table waist-high to your shortest child is the beginning. Upon it you can place a votive candle safely contained in a glass jar (baking soda makes a good base and serves as an instant fire extinguisher if needed). You will also need a simple wooden cross, a tiny jar for flowers, and a simple cloth, if you choose. During Easter, the children can fashion items to place on the altar. If you do choose to light the candle, be sure to blow it out when it will be unattended.

**Beginning:** If the children do not already know each other, introduce yourself and ask the children to introduce themselves. It could be something like this: "Hi. My name is \_\_\_\_\_ and my favorite color is \_\_\_\_\_." Go around your circle until each child gets to make an introduction.

**Option:** If you were going to set up an altar, this would be a good time to do it.

**Prayer:** Thank you, God, for this time we have together to continue our celebration of Easter and your life with us. Amen.

**The Story:** If this is your first session with these children, or if you haven't met in a while, do a simple review of what has been happening, inviting the children to offer their observations. Cover the facts that Jesus went into Jerusalem on a donkey and everyone was so glad to see him that they waved palms and even their coats. Then, Jesus was killed by being crucified, which is being nailed to a cross. He died, and his friends were very sad. Jesus had told them this would happen but that he would not stay dead. On Easter, his friends began to see that Jesus was right there with them.

If you were with the children on Easter, invite them to tell you this story, filling in the blanks for them as they need it.

Then tell them that in today's story Jesus' friends were hiding. They were afraid, and they were very sad. How do we look when we are sad? (Slump in your chair and put on a sad face. Invite the children to look sad, also.) While they were all sitting there, being sad, suddenly they noticed that Jesus was right there with them. They could actually see him. This is what he said to them, "Peace be with you." Then he breathed on them. Jesus said, "Now, you have the Holy Spirit in you."

Ask the children, "I wonder how we could describe peace." (Here are some suggestions: Getting over being angry. Not being sad anymore. Feeling safe. Being happy. Being relaxed. )

Invite them to share times when they have felt at peace. (In their bed, being with a parent or grandparent, in church, playing with friends, etc.)

**Activity:** Tell the children that each week in church we remind each other that Jesus told us, "Peace be with you." We get up and shake hands with people near us and say: "Peace of the Lord be with you." Let's do that now. (Shake the hand of the child nearest you, encourage the children to shake hands with each of the other children, saying: "Peace of the Lord be with you." Be sure you also shake each child's hand.)

**Activity:** Invite the children to create artwork for our altar to show what we mean by "peace." Give each child paper and crayons, and work on a piece of art yourself. Then collaboratively create the piece that will go on the altar' preferably combining concepts the children have developed in their individual pieces. Clean up, as needed.

**Getting Closure:** Position your collaborative piece of art on your altar. Shake hands all around again saying: "Peace be with you." And, if there is a child new to your class, invite that child to come back next week or any time.

**Closing Prayer:** May the God of hope fill us with all joy and peace in believing through the power of the Holy Spirit. *Amen. (Romans 15:13, Book of Common Prayer, page 126)*

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**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 recognize 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.’

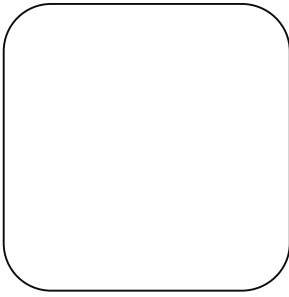
**Narrator 1:** Thomas answered him,

**Thomas:** ‘My Lord and my God!’

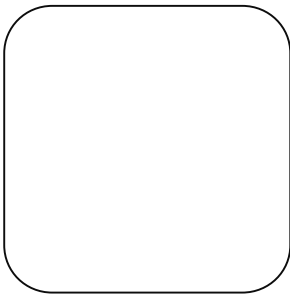
**Narrator 2:** Jesus said to him,

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

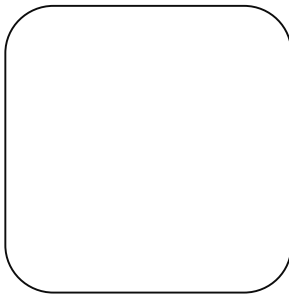
**Narrator 1:** Now Jesus did many other signs in the presence of his disciples, which are not written in this book. But these are written so that you may come to believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and that through believing you may have life in his name.



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

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

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**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**

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