

5th and up Sunday School
April 19, 2020

Object of the lesson: To have faith means to trust God even when we don't understand. It's ok to ask questions and have doubts.

Questions before the story:

Where were the disciples on Easter? Do you remember? Was everyone happy and joyful? How would you have felt if you heard from a friend that Jesus was alive after he had died? How do you think the disciples were feeling?

Read the Bible Story: Read John 20: 19-31 in a Bible

Ask some questions and talk about the story:

- What did Thomas say when he was told that Jesus was alive? (not unless I touch the wounds myself will I believe...)
- Where were the disciples the week after Jesus' resurrection? (locked in the upper room)
- How did Jesus get in the room? (appeared)
- What did he say to Thomas? (Put your finger here and see my hands. Reach out your hand and put it in my side. Do not doubt but believe.)
- How did Thomas react to seeing Jesus? (My Lord and my God)
- What did Jesus say about people who believe and have not seen that Jesus was alive? (they are blessed)
- Was Jesus angry at Thomas for asking for proof? (no, he gave Thomas what he needed to believe, but encouraged faith even for those who haven't seen and touched)

Discussion ideas:

Remember that the disciples were behind locked doors because they were afraid, embarrassed and ashamed. They were afraid of what Jesus would say to them about all their desertions if he really were alive again. They were afraid the soldiers would come for them like they had for Jesus. And, if the women were wrong and Jesus was still dead, they were afraid to face people who now knew that they had been wrong about Jesus. They had been so sure, so loud in proclaiming Jesus and were apparently so wrong. They did not want to see anyone ever again. That is why they were hiding in locked room. When Jesus appears among them does he say, "What happened? Where were you? You screwed up!" No, he says: "Peace." In other words, "It's OK. I understand. I forgive you." Imagine how they felt when they heard that.

A lot of people call Thomas a doubter. But maybe it's better to think of him as a curious person who wanted to see for himself what others had already seen. Do you remember a time when everyone was talking about an exciting event that you missed? Jesus didn't get angry at Thomas for asking questions. Thomas wasn't the only confused, questioning disciple after Easter. Everyone was so confused that they were frightened.

Jesus welcomes our questions too. There is no honest question Jesus can't handle. People have always had lots of questions about what Jesus said and did while he was alive and about how Easter happened. That is because Jesus is too big for us to understand completely. Jesus knows that and it is OK.

Activity: Make a questions poster. Collect questions about the Easter stories and God from the whole family. Write them on a piece of paper or poster board. Ask questions about the questions and add more. If you like, draw a picture of Thomas in the middle of the paper with a big question mark on his chest. The most important thing about this poster is that you don't answer ANY of the questions! Take picture of your poster and send to formation@washingtonparish.org



Activity: Make peace doves. When we pass the peace in church, we don't just say "hi" or "good morning!" we say, "Peace be with you." – Does that sound like what Jesus said to the disciples when he appeared to them in the upper room? We say "peace be with you" just as Jesus said it to the disciples and says it to us – we can say it because we know God loves and forgives us. The dove is a symbol of peace. Since we can't shake hands with others at church, we can make peace doves to share. Write "Peace be with you" on the dove. Decorate it and either bring it to Mary (right near the church) for delivery to people on our pastoral care list, or take a photo and send to formation@washingtonparish.org.

Prayer: Dear God, help us to trust even when we don't understand. Help us to use our questions to learn more about you and strengthen our faith. Amen.

