



a Kendall Hunt Company

Second Sunday of Easter, Year A, Junior High - RCLB Lectionary



Junior High Session

Acts 2:42-47

John 20:19-31

Opening Prayer

Let us pray.

O God, open our minds and hearts to you.

Help us to be more aware of your presence in our daily lives.

In the name of Jesus Christ we pray.

Amen.



Opening Life Reflection

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The topic for today is faith. Divide the young people into small groups of three or four. Give each group time to go on a faith search. Have the groups spread out and search their environment for ways that God is revealed to them. Provide each group with a sheet of paper and pencil and have them write down their responses. Invite the small groups to gather together and share with the large group what they have discovered. Discuss:

- How do we come to know God?
- What helps you become more aware of God's presence in your surroundings?
- What is faith?

Allow time for discussion. Faith is both a gift and a response. God gives us the gift of love. When we trust in God's love for us we grow in faith.



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Listening to the Word of God

In the first reading from Acts of the Apostles, listen to learn out about life in the early Church.

Read Acts 2:42-47.

Allow for silence.

Scripture Discussion Starters

- What is life like for the first followers of Christ?
- What do the disciples share?
- How do they praise God?

In today's Gospel the Risen Lord appears to his followers. Listen to the message he brings.

Read John 20:19-31.

Allow for silence.



- Why are the disciples meeting behind locked doors?
- What does Jesus say when he appears to the disciples?
- What does Jesus show the disciples?
- Does Thomas believe in the Risen Lord at first?
- How does Thomas come to believe?

Scripture Background

Provide 2-3 minutes of background information on the readings using the Catechist Background section.

On this Second Sunday of Easter we continue to praise God with great joy for the gift of salvation given through Jesus. Throughout the Easter season, the first reading is taken from the Acts of the Apostles to show the mystery of the Church as it developed from its beginnings.

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Today's first reading from Acts describes the Spirit-filled life of the disciples. They live as a community of believers, sharing all things in common. The disciples pray and break bread in each other's homes. They joyfully gather together to eat and give praise to God. And God spreads the faith by increasing the number of new believers.

Today's Gospel presents a story of mission, forgiveness, and faith. The story begins with the disciples frightened and gathered behind locked doors. The Risen Lord appears to his followers on the evening of the resurrection. The first word he speaks is "peace," and then he tells the disciples to go out and continue his own saving work: "As the Father has sent me, so I send you." Jesus breathes on his followers, giving them the Spirit. The Holy Spirit gives the disciples the power to forgive sins.

Thomas is not present when the Risen Lord first appears to the disciples. He tells the others that unless he sees, he will not believe. When Jesus appears to him, Thomas strongly admits to having faith. Thomas calls Jesus "My Lord and my God." The passage ends with a message for all believers. Those who have not seen as Thomas did are called to believe.

Questions for Deeper Reflection

- How does the first reading from Acts show the similarities between the early Church and the Church today?
- What does Jesus say to his followers each time he appears to them?
- How are the disciples given the power to go out and continue Jesus' saving work in the world?
- How are followers of Jesus today called to believe without seeing?

[If you are not going to continue with the doctrinal discussion, proceed to the Gospel in Life.]

Doctrinal Discussion Starters

Faith

God invites us into a relationship of love. God's love is freely given and we are free to respond. Faith is both a gift and a response. Faith gives us the ability to believe the truths that God has revealed to us through Jesus Christ.



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The community of believers hands on the gift of faith from God. With the power of the Holy Spirit, the words and actions of faith-filled people help others to live their faith.

Sometimes we have questions or even doubts about our faith. We may struggle to understand the evil and suffering that exists in our world. It is part of our human nature to search for truth and meaning in life. In times of doubt and struggle, we can turn to our Church community for support.

- How do you learn about your faith?
- Where do you turn when you have questions or doubts about your faith?
- How is faith a gift from God?

The Gospel in Life

What can you do this week to help deepen your understanding of God?

Connecting to Faith First® Legacy Edition

At Home Family Guide, themes 20 and 27
Junior High, Jesus in the New Testament, chapter 7
Junior High, Church and Sacraments, chapter 3
Junior High, Morality, chapter 4