

Christ is Risen! Christ is Risen, indeed! Eastertide is a period of 50 days, beginning on Easter Sunday and ending at Pentecost, when we celebrate the birth of the Church. During Eastertide, we celebrate the Risen Christ and imagine how we might live as Easter people. Rachel Held Evans wrote, "God showed us how to heal instead of kill, how to mend instead of destroy, how to love instead of hate, how to live instead of long for more. When we nailed God to a tree, God forgave. And when we buried God in the ground, God got up."



Scripture

When it was evening on that day, the first day of the week, and the doors were locked where the disciples were, for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood among them and said, "Peace be with you." 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, "Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, so I send you." When he had said this, he breathed on them and said to them, "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."

But Thomas (who was called the Twin), one of the twelve, was not with them when Jesus came. So the other disciples told him, "We have seen the Lord."

But he said to them, "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."

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, "Peace be with you." Then he said 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." Thomas answered him, "My Lord and my God!" Jesus said to him, "Have you believed because you have seen me? Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have come to believe."

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



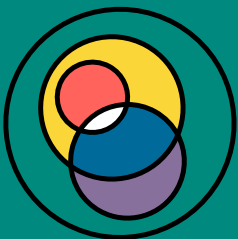
Questions

- We are in the season of Easter, a time when we celebrate the good news of Jesus and practice being faithful disciples. Faithfulness means showing true and constant support or loyalty. Who is faithful to you? Who are you faithful to?
- Which character in this story is like you? Why?
- Sometimes, it's hard to believe something you didn't experience. Tell the story of a time when you believed something happened without experiencing it and/or didn't believe something happened because you didn't experience it.
- Thomas wasn't there when Jesus first appeared. He had doubts whether Jesus was alive, and he wanted proof. Retell the story and include reactions from each disciple to Thomas' doubt. How would you have reacted to Thomas?
- Jesus meets Thomas where he is, amid his doubt, and invites him to come close, just as Jesus does with us. Where, or when, do you feel closest to God?

Look it Up!

Did you know the most basic building block of human life isn't visible to our eye without a microscope?

Look up pictures of human cells and other organisms. What are some tiny but important organisms that aren't visible to us?





Activity

Materials:

Writing utensils

Paper

Today's story takes place after Jesus' death when his disciples were scared and unsure of what would happen next. When Jesus appeared to them, and they saw his hands and side, they were so happy. Thomas, however, was not there when Jesus appeared. When the other disciples told him about what happened, he didn't believe them. He needed an experience with Jesus for himself, and he got one a week later. Jesus didn't make him feel bad for wanting this; Jesus understood Thomas' need to visit with him just like the others had done.

Sometimes we can be like Thomas, needing our own reminders of Jesus' presence in our lives to help strengthen and enrich our faith. One way we can have those reminders as a group is by naming items in the sacred space of the church building that remind them of Jesus or rooms where people practice their faith in some way. Write all of them down on paper you can take with you. Once your list is complete, create a plan to find each item/room in the church, and go on a scavenger hunt together to locate them. Whenever you find an item/room, have the person who chose it share why they chose it. Afterward, cross it off the list and look for the next item/room. When you've found everything on your list, return to your original room, and say a prayer over the time you just spent together.

Alternate Activity

Materials:

Clear glass

Raisins (enough for each participant)

Sparkling water

Sometimes it's hard to believe things when we haven't experienced them ourselves. In the disciples' encounter with Jesus, they talked with him and touched his hands and side. When Thomas returned from being away, they told him that Jesus had appeared to them, but he didn't believe them. It wasn't until Jesus came to Thomas that Thomas also believed.

Let's play a game in the spirit of Thomas. Split the group evenly into two groups. Invite one group to the opposite side of the room to participate in something.

Pour sparkling water into the glass. Have each participant put a raisin in the glass and watch what happens. When they finish, have them share with the other group what they experienced. Discuss with the second group if they believe what the other group tells them. Then, invite the second group to do the experiment and experience it themselves.

Have the two groups share their experiences:

- What did it feel like to experience the raisins dancing and tell others what you saw?
- What did it feel like to hear one group say they saw raisins dance? What did you need to believe what they told you?



Micropractice

What do you need help to believe? Write a statement you want to believe more confidently. Carry that statement with you, and reflect on it this week. Some examples might include: I believe God loves me, I believe I am important, or I believe love wins.



Download a graphic to share with your community and on social media. You can download it here: illstrtdm.in/minirevAEaster2



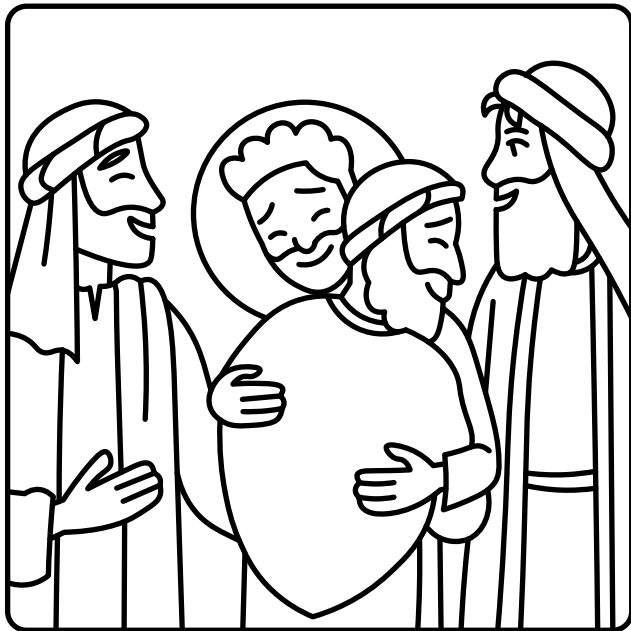
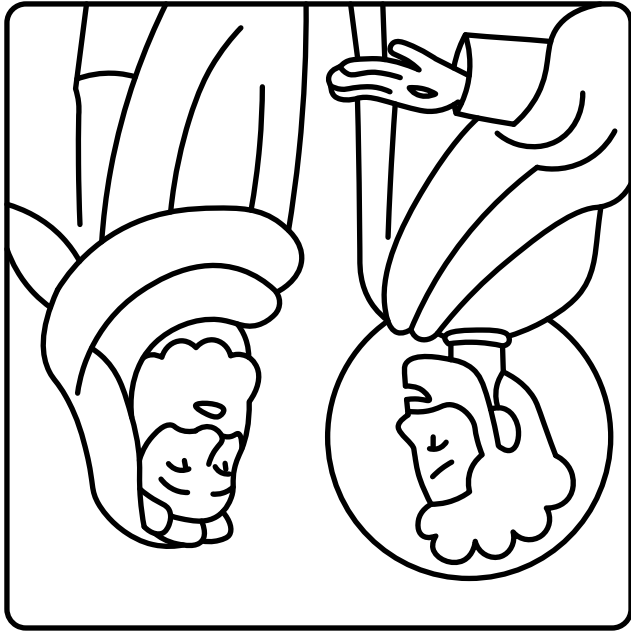
Prayer

Ever-present God, you meet us where we're at and listen to our questions and doubts. Help us come closer to you and learn new things about you. Amen.



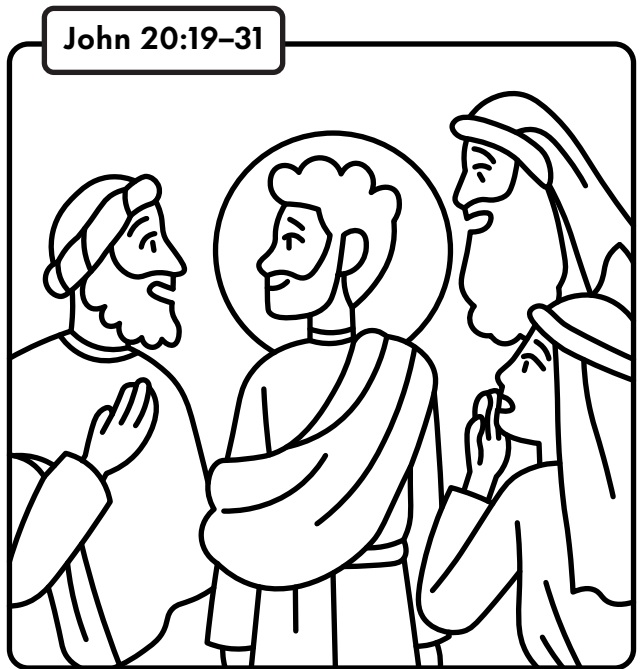
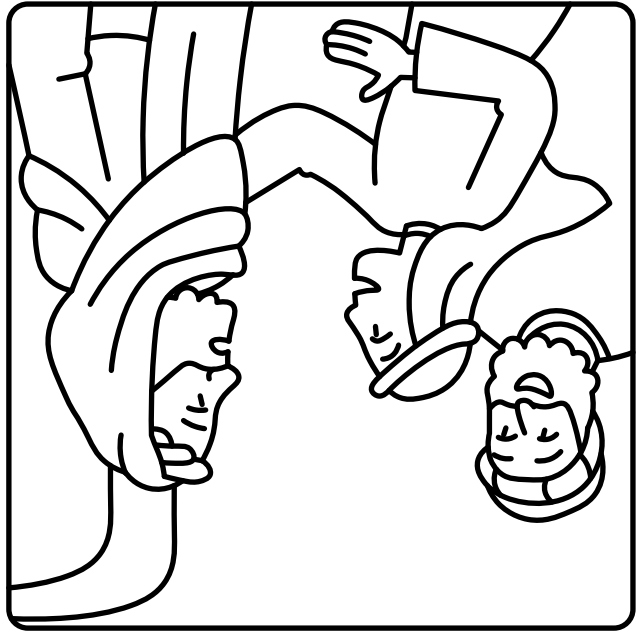
JESUS
SAID TO HIM,
"HAVE YOU
BELIEVED
BECAUSE
YOU HAVE
SEEN ME?
BLESSED
are those who
HAVE NOT
((SEEN))
AND YET HAVE COME TO
BELIEVE."

3. Later, when Jesus appeared to the disciples those who come to believe without needing proof.”
 “You are the Lord!” Jesus replied, “Blessed are believe now that you’ve seen me?” Thomas said, again, he told Thomas, “Feel my wounds. Do you
 3. Later, when Jesus appeared to the disciples



4. Jesus did many other signs while with his disciples, but these particular stories have been written down so that you can continue to believe in Jesus and, through believing, have abundant life.

2. Jesus told the disciples, “I give the Holy Spirit to be with you.” When the disciple Thomas arrived after Jesus left, the disciples told him all about it. But he had a hard time believing what they told him.



1. One evening after Jesus’ death, the disciples hid in a locked room, afraid of what would happen now that Jesus was gone. Suddenly, Jesus appeared in the room with them, saying, “Be at peace.”