



*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

"If you love me, you will keep my commandments. And I will ask the One who sent me, to give you another Advocate, to be with you forever. This is the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot accept because it neither sees her nor knows her. You know the Spirit because she abides with you, and she will be within you.

"I will not leave you orphaned; I am coming to you. In a little while the world will no longer see me, but you will see me; because I live, you also will live. On that day you will know that I am in God, and you in me, and I in you. They who have my commandments and keep them are those who love me, and those who love me will be loved by God and I will love them and reveal myself to them."



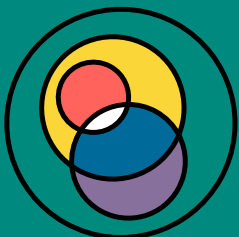
## Questions

- We're in the Season of Easter, a time when we celebrate the new life Jesus' resurrection created. What are some new things happening in your life?
- In our Bible passage for today, Jesus reassures the disciples that they will never be alone. Tell the story of a time when you felt lonely. Who helped you when you felt lonely?
- Loneliness is what we feel when we want and need a connection with others in our community but feel like we can't get that connection for some reason. What promises does Jesus make to the disciples to reassure them they won't be lonely?
- Jesus said the greatest commandments are to love God and love one another. When have you felt extremely loved? When have you tried to show your love for God and others?
- How have you recently felt God's love, or the presence of the Spirit, in your own life?

### Look it Up!

Did you know that using social media can both increase and decrease loneliness, depending on how you use it?

Look up some ways social media impacts loneliness. How can you intentionally connect with others today?





## Activity

### Materials:

Coloring utensils

Large paper

Do you know what it means to feel lonely? It can be hard to describe, but feeling lonely usually involves not feeling connected to others around you. Everyone feels lonely sometimes, and people feel lonely for many different reasons. Sometimes we feel excluded or misunderstood. Sometimes we need a friend, but they are busy. Sometimes an important person moves away, and we don't know what to do. In our passage today, the disciples fear being alone when Jesus leaves them. Jesus promised to send comfort through the Holy Spirit, whom he called an "Advocate." And, because they know Jesus and his teachings, he will always live in them and be with them, even when they feel lonely.

How can we recognize loneliness in ourselves and others? We can look for signs like changes in mood, behavior, sleep, and/or eating habits. Sometimes people seem fine on the outside, though, which means it helps to consider how to talk to people about loneliness.

As a group, consider what you might do for someone you suspect is lonely. Think about what might help you if you were lonely. Write these things down on large paper for the group to see. Afterward, have folks break off into smaller groups and discuss loneliness, explaining what it is. Invite participants to share a story of when they felt lonely, and who or what made them feel less lonely.

## Activity Adaptation

### Materials:

Coloring utensils

Paper

In this week's scripture, the disciples are worried about Jesus leaving them. They're afraid they'll be alone and feel lonely without him. When we feel lonely, we feel disconnected from the people around us. It's normal to feel lonely, and there are many ways people can help when someone feels lonely. Jesus reminds the disciples they're not alone because they carry him in their hearts and in their minds through his teachings. He promises the Holy Spirit, an "Advocate," will comfort them. Even when Jesus is gone, if they feel lonely, he'll still be there with them through the Holy Spirit.

One way we can help those who might feel lonely is to show them hospitality. When we show hospitality to people, we help welcome them into our group and build connections with them. Imagine someone new came to your group; how would you welcome them and show them hospitality? Draw your ideas, and share them with the group. When you're done, post your pictures around the room to remind yourselves of all the ways you can connect with others and prevent loneliness.



## Micropractice

The Holy Spirit is invisible. Some people pray with their eyes closed to focus on what is invisible. Some people pray with their eyes open, using all their senses. Try praying both ways. What do you notice? Which way do you prefer?



Download a graphic to share with your community and on social media. You can download it here: [illstrdm.in/minirevAEaster6](https://illstrdm.in/minirevAEaster6)



## Prayer

Ever-present God, thank you for being with us when we feel lonely. Thank you for reminding us that we are never alone; you are here to comfort us. May your love help us connect with others. Amen.

I AM  
YOU LOVE ME,

YOU  
WILL

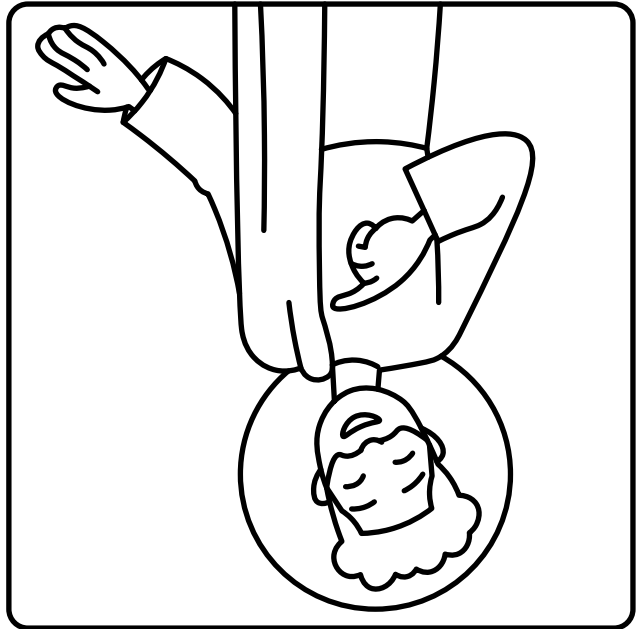
KEEP MY  
COMMANDMENTS  
AND

I WILL ASK <sup>the</sup> ONE WHO SENT ME,

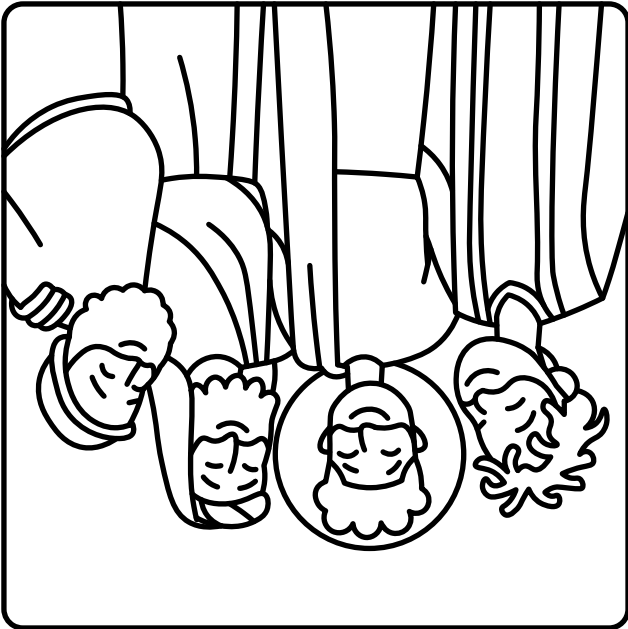
TO GIVE YOU ANOTHER  
ADVOCATE

TO BE WITH YOU  
FOREVER.

2. "Sometimes, people may have a hard time believing that the Spirit is real, but I know you can believe it because the Spirit is a part of you. You will not be alone; I will be with you."



3. "Soon, people won't see me anymore, but you will know I am with you because I am in God. I will be with you always."



John 14:15-21



1. After Jesus came back to life, he told his disciples, "If you love me, you will do as I say and love one another. I will ask God to send another, the Spirit of God, to be with you always."

4. "Whoever loves and cares for one another loves me and is loved by God. I will love them and they will know me."