

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

"Do not let your hearts be troubled. Believe in God; believe also in me. In God's house there are many dwelling places. If it were not so, would I have told you that I go to prepare a place for you? And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and will take you to myself, so that where I am, there you may be also. And you know the way to the place where I am going." Thomas said to him, "We do not know where you are going. How can we know the way?" Jesus said to him, "I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to Abba God except through me. If you know me, you will know God also. From now on you do know God and have seen God."



Questions

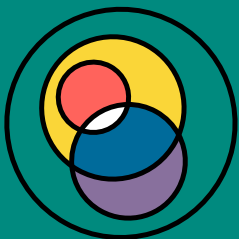
- In this scripture, Jesus' friends shared with him how nervous they were about what would happen after he was gone. How does it feel to hear Jesus say, "do not let your hearts be troubled?"
- Jesus reminds them to follow in his ways of welcoming all. What did Jesus tell his disciples about God's house?
- There are many types of dwelling places/shelters people live in. What types of dwelling places/shelters do you know of?
- Jesus invites us to live as the household of God, a family of faith, where all belong and are safe. What makes a place feel safe to you?
- We are in the season of Easter when we focus on how the good news of Jesus' resurrection guides how we live. What does our church community do to provide safety and shelter for those in our community who need it?

Look it Up!



Look up Homes for the Homeless.

Founded in 1986, Homes for the Homeless provides housing and employment training for families and people without homes throughout New York City. They use a family-based, child-centered, education-focused approach in their work.





Activity

Materials:

Paper
Coloring utensils
Building materials (craft sticks, toy building blocks, modeling clay, etc.)

This passage describes God's house as having "many dwelling places." A dwelling place is a safe space to live and sleep. There are many different kinds of dwellings. As a group, revisit the answers to the question about the different types of dwelling places, and then, discuss the different types of dwelling places in your community. If participants want, let them share what their dwelling place looks and feels like.

Ask participants to list dwellings uncommon to their communities. Next, discuss how different cultures and people live in different kinds of dwellings or dwellings made with materials local to different areas. Consider providing some illustrations of dwellings from around the world (i.e., mobile homes, apartments, condos, ranches, houseboats, tiny houses, campers, mansions, yurts, caves, bamboo houses, etc.).

Finally, give everyone paper and markers, or building materials, and invite them to create their own version of God's house with many dwellings. Encourage them to be creative. Participants can include some of the dwellings you've discussed or make up new ones! Conclude by sharing how God's love and God's house are expansive; there are no limits to who is included, and there is a special dwelling place for everyone.

Alternate Activity

Note: While this activity will require some advance planning and scheduling, it is a wonderful opportunity to connect this passage with tangible realities in your community.

Identify ahead of time what local services, organizations, or ministries in your community provide people with shelter. Reach out to one, and see if there is a service activity where participants can help support the organization.

Remind the group that God's house has a dwelling space for everyone. Talk together as a group about how a dwelling is a safe space to be in and sleep in and how safe dwellings for everyone are not always a reality in our world. Sometimes people struggle to find a safe place to live. Discuss the organizations in your community that help people in this way. Then, complete a service activity in support of one of those organizations.



Micropractice

When we meditate on scriptures, we choose a phrase to hold in our minds. John 14 contains many helpful phrases. Try meditating on "do not let your hearts be troubled" or "I am the way, the truth, and the life."



Download a graphic to share with your community and on social media. You can download it here: illustratedministry.com/minirevAEaster5



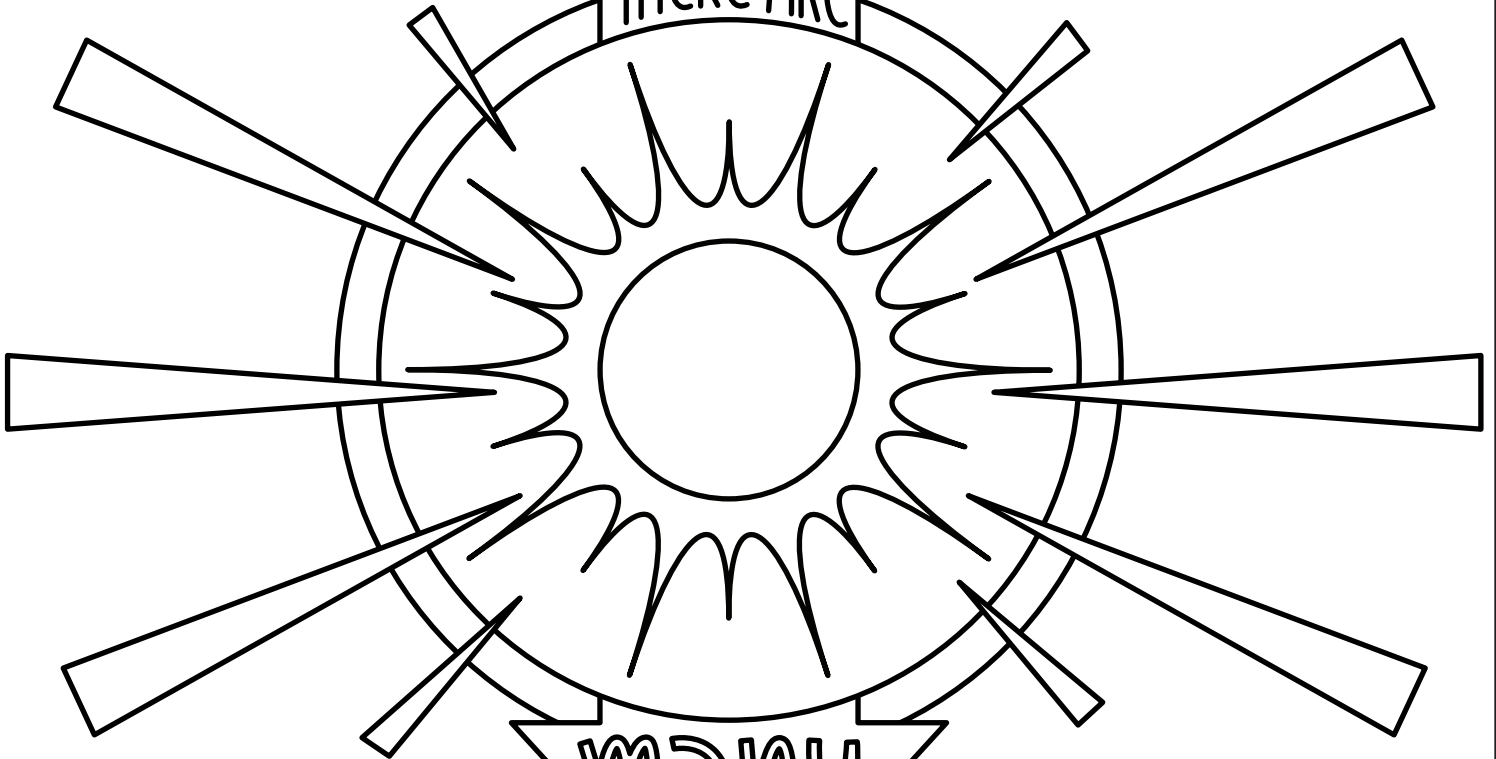
Prayer

Loving and comforting God, thank you for welcoming us and helping us be safe. Thank you for making space in your house for everyone. Help us show your welcome and love to others. Amen.

III

GOD'S HOUSE

THERE ARE



many

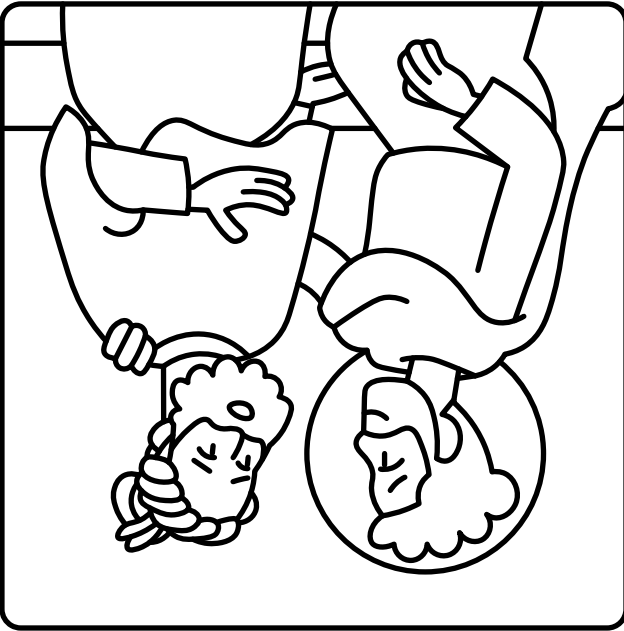
DWELLING

PLACES.

2. Jesus told them, "I will make sure rooms are ready for you there, and I'll come back and get you so you can be there, too. You already know the way I am taking."



3. Thomas said, "But we don't know where you're going. How can we know the way you're going?"



John 14:1-7



1. The disciples were feeling nervous. They were preparing themselves for when Jesus would leave them. So Jesus told them, "Do not worry. Trust in God and me. God's house has many rooms, room enough for everyone!"

4. Jesus responded, "I am the way, the truth, and the life. When you are with me, you will know your way to God. If you know me, you also know God. And you've seen God because you've seen me."