

Planning



Sunday, April 16 – Saturday, April 22 • 2023

Resurrection Witness

We push through locked doors and boundaries to take the good news of new life in our own hands and are encouraged to look to find good news everywhere we look.

This week...

Ecumenical prayer calendar

Belarus, Moldova, Russia, Ukraine

As listed in *Pilgrim Prayer: The Ecumenical Prayer Cycle*, edited by Ester Pudjo Widiasih and Karen L. Bloomquist. (Geneva: World Council of Churches, 2018). <https://www.oikoumene.org/resources/prayer-cycle> offers valuable aids for intercessory prayers, prayer on behalf of and in solidarity with others.

Special days (commentary on p. 116)

April 18 - Yom HaShoah (*Judaism*)

April 21 – Ridvan (*Baha'i*)

April 22 – Earth Day

Personal reflection

As Jesus continues to appear to his disciples and friends, someone is missing – Thomas. He had heard the message of Jesus' resurrection, but the experience of seeing and the offer to touch the risen Christ helped him fully believe. How different is this experience from your own? Is hearing a lesson, reading it, or completing it going to help you understand it? There are many ways to experience the risen Christ, and we open ourselves to all the ways Christ is around us and working in the world today.

This week, tangibly experience the risen Christ by putting your faith into action. Volunteer at your church or a local ministry with the poor, or reach out to someone in your community who could use a helping hand.

The planning page is provided in text format for copying, adapting, and adding to your bulletin or online worship resources or website or social media (see Text folder, Worship Outline).

April 16, 2023

Easter 2

Revised Common Lectionary (Year A)

Acts 2:12a, 22–32

Psalm 16

1 Peter 1:3–9

John 20:19–31

the focus in age-level materials

Liturgical colour white or gold

Notes

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- _____
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Online Resources

Lection Connection

Essays and discussion prompts linking current events with this week's scriptures. Use for sermon preparation, Bible studies, and small groups or share on social media at <https://www.seasonsonline.ca/10/>.

Nurturing Faith and Spirituality at Home

An easy-to-share, weekly online resource supports the spiritual lives and faith formation of individuals and families at home. It is provided in the [Nurturing Faith and Spirituality at Home](#) folder.





Acts 2:12a, 22–32

Psalm 16

1 Peter 1:3–9

John 20:19–31

the focus in age-level materials

O God, open our eyes and move our hands to receive your peace. Help us to hear the blessing you offer in our lives so that we might reach beyond fear and feel joy. Amen.

Resurrection Witness

Touch,” writes Margaret Atwood, “comes before sight, before speech. It is the first language and the last and it always tells the truth.” It is what we want to understand about this Easter story. We want to understand it so that it becomes real. We want to touch and hold it so that every question finds its answer and our witness feels real.

Our questions get answered in strange ways. In **Acts 2:12a, 22–32**, the word of witness rebounds from the Spirit-filled Peter as he shares the Easter story. Peter draws on his own experience of the carpenter from Nazareth, the itinerant preacher and healer, but also on his faith tradition that sees Jesus as the fulfillment of a nation’s hopes and dreams. The promise of God’s goodness and protection in life and beyond are constant themes for the writer of **Psalm 16**. There is mutuality here, derived from a covenant commitment, whereby a person chooses God, and God is ever faithful.

1 Peter 1:3–9 testifies to subsequent generations of faith: “although you have not seen [Jesus], you love him...even though you do not see [Jesus] now, you believe in him.” This passage brings words of encouragement and love, a blessing! Many years later, people who did not personally encounter Jesus in the flesh live in trust of the “living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead.” This way of living as Christ-followers is one of joy, even in the presence of alienation from the surrounding culture and the reality of suffering.

“Seeing and believing” dominate Thomas and Jesus’ encounter in **John 20:19–31**.

This has been an ongoing theme in John. At the opening of this gospel, Jesus asks Nathaniel, “Do you believe because I told you that I saw you under the fig tree?” (1:50). The

story of the man born blind in John 9 is filled with nuances about sight and belief. In this focus passage, the only blessing spoken by Jesus and recorded in John falls on those who have not seen but believe. That blessing reflects the life situation of the original community addressed by this gospel. Most, if not all, of John’s first readers would not have seen Jesus. Yet they believed. Jesus’ blessing of them is Jesus’ blessing of us as well.

This story is often used to berate doubt, based on verse 27, where Thomas wants to touch and see. But the word translated as “doubt” is not one of the common Greek words for doubt. It is *apistos*, whose literal meaning would be closer to “without faith” or “unbelief.” Jesus graciously provides Thomas with what he needs to move from unbelief to belief. Jesus bestows Spirit upon the community, a movement we will see repeated this season. Here Jesus’ “breathing” upon the disciples empowers them to recall Genesis 2:7, where God breathes life into the one formed of dust. The same word in Greek means “breath” and “spirit.”

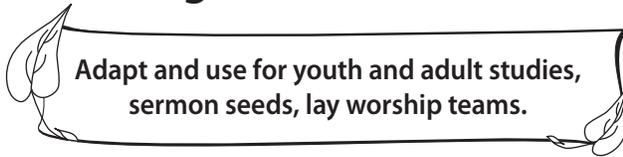
Faith does not remove all doubts and questions. It doesn’t push away all the dust and filth but invites trust and witness in the risen Christ. With Thomas’ confession, this chapter concludes with a statement of faith.

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It’s seldom explored, but perhaps Thomas didn’t join the other disciples in hiding out because he wasn’t afraid. Perhaps he somehow knew that God was still with him, even though he was not aware of the stories of Christ’s resurrection. What helps you believe in the Resurrection? What questions do you have about it? How does what you hear, see, and touch echo with your faith? Where do your senses fail to offer connection?



Reflecting on the Word



Connecting with life

We are in the Season of Easter, an unbridled celebration of Jesus alive again in a new way.

- **What does it mean to you to say we are Easter people?**

Scripture

Acts 2:12a, 22–32

Peter puts forward a persuasive speech to support the Christian belief in the risen Christ.

- **How does he illustrate his point?**
- **Where does he draw on his own experience?**
- **What convinces you of this wisdom?**

Psalm 16

- **What choices has the psalmist made in life?**
- **What choices have been made for them?**
- **When have your choices led to joy?**

1 Peter 1:3–9

Through the resurrection of Jesus Christ, we have a “pure and enduring inheritance that cannot perish” (v. 4, *Common English Bible*).

- **What – if any – might be the conditions for receiving this inheritance?**
- **To whom do you believe it is offered?**

John 20:19–31

Thomas is missing when Jesus appears to the community gathered behind closed doors.

- **What might have caused Thomas not to be there?**
- **What helped him to reconnect with the community?**
- **What difference did Jesus’ scars make for Thomas?**

- **Why is forgiveness such an important part of being in community?**

There is potential for anti-Semitism in the statement that the disciples were hiding from “the Jews” and in Acts 2:23.

- **Remembering that Jesus and the disciples are Jews, who were “the Jews” from whom the disciples are hiding?**
- **What doors are we keeping shut through fear?**

Nothing keeps Jesus from coming to the disciples – not even locked doors.

- **What might John be trying to tell us about Jesus simply coming in, rather nonchalantly, saying, “Peace be with you”?**
- **How have you understood/experienced God’s Spirit?**
- **What is the one specific instruction Jesus gives the disciples at this point?**

According to the gospel of John, the risen Christ gives the disciples only one commandment: forgive.

- **What other instructions do you wish Jesus had also given?**
- **How do you understand verse 23?**

Connecting scripture and life

Jesus told us that through loving each other, people would know we are his disciples. As we spend time with others, we learn more and more about God’s love.

- **When have you touched God’s love?**
- **How have you seen God’s love in others?**
- **What are ways we can show, individually and as a faith community, life that is joy-filled?**

Focus for Worship, Learning, and Serving

The unknown can be scary in a world that clings to certainty and empirical truth. We all come with different questions and our own doubts. When we gather as the church, be it for worship or other aspects of life as a church, our differing lives and experiences come with us and influence how we do and do not trust each other. What do we lock

up of ourselves from each other – our questions, doubts, and histories of hurt and shame? Whom do we lock out of our lives, communally and individually, and why? Who is missing, and why? How might we look and touch the world and each other with more grace and love?

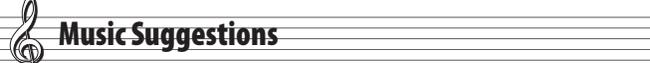


Resurrection Witness

Prepare

NOTE: The following suggestions are mere starting points. You are invited to adapt, delete, add according to your local needs and context. If a community is gathered in person, they may speak the **bolded** lines. If worshippers are not physically present, consider having a different individual say the bolded responses. Instructions are *italicized*.

- ❑ Recruit volunteers needed for worship.
- ❑ Choose an option for hearing John 20:19–31. For the Bible story, arrange for a storyteller to present “Jesus Appears to the Disciples” on p. 118. Alternatively, for younger children, arrange for a storyteller to present “Thomas Is Amazed!” in Exploring Our Faith at the end of this week’s materials. For the dramatic reading, arrange for 6–12 actors.
- ❑ Bring items for setting the worship space.
- ❑ You might choose to print *Alleluia* on or in your bulletin (in the Images to Project and Images for Printing folders). See “Connecting with the Art” on p. 8 for background to the art and artist.
- ❑ Choose a song for Psalm 16, such as “You Will Show Me the Path of Life” by Marty Haugen or “Protect Me O God, I Trust You” by Michael Saward. Another option for children is “My Heart Is Glad” by William Beckstrand.
- ❑ Bring songs such as “O Spirit of Peace/Yarabba Ssalami” (*Seasons Songbook, vol. 4, #30 on Seasons Music CD, vol. 4*). Printed music and recording are also available for purchase and download at https://www.seasonsonline.ca/order_products/.
- ❑ Set stations as described on pp. 119–120.



Music Suggestions

I Am Becoming Peace
Linnea Good; *Seasons Songbook, vol. 9*

I Send You Out
John Angotti; *Seasons Songbook, vol. 9*

Pass It On
Kate Abba, Julia Abrahams; *Seasons Songbook, vol. 9*

The Peace of the Earth
Traditional; *Seasons Songbook, vol. 9*

O Spirit of Peace / Yarabba Ssalami
Hesla & Palestinian; *Seasons Songbook, vol. 4*

Where the Spirit Is
Per Harling; *Seasons Songbook, vol. 2*

Breathe on Me, Breath of God
Edwin Hatch

Thine Is the Glory
Edmund Louis Budry

Thuma Mina / Send Me, Jesus
Traditional South Africa

 A chart that shows the licence holder(s) for each song in each of the 9 *Seasons of the Spirit* Music Volumes can be found at www.seasonsonline.ca. Click on Library; Seasons Music Information. Please contact a licence holder for permission to duplicate.

Gather

Call to worship

When doors were shut, and the world was kept out,
resurrection found the disciples.

When the church gathers, and the world waits outside,
resurrection finds us.

When fear grew, and new questions were found,
resurrection found the disciples.

When faith leads us to new questions about life,
resurrection finds us.

When suffering remained, and the city was hostile,
resurrection found the disciples.

When Christ gathers with his followers in living worship,
resurrection finds us.

Come, let us worship God!

Opening prayer

God of great surprises and unbounded joy, your voice echoes in our hearts into our uncertainties and wonderings: Breathe deeply, take good heart, and do not be afraid. Amen.

Prayer of thanksgiving and confession

Resurrection God,

you have given us life in a beautiful world!

We hear the dawn chorus that promises a new day and draw comfort from the voices of loved ones.

We savour familiar foods that nourish us and enjoy the tang of new flavours.

We watch the emergence of life in a new chick or butterfly and touch the varied textures of rough tree bark or smooth pebbles.



Worship Outline • April 16, 2023

Thank you for our experiences of life this week that have brought pleasure and joy, and which we name in a short time of silence. *(Short time of reflection in which thanks may be expressed silently or aloud.)*

Thank you for Jesus, whose resurrection we proclaim and recognize in the events of life around us. Sometimes, God, it is hard to see and believe. There are times when we look elsewhere for life, disregarding past experiences and our heritage. Sometimes we focus on the scars of life and cannot imagine anything different.

Sometimes the trials of life seem greater than our faith to overcome them. Gracious God, you do not condemn us for our doubts and struggles but speak peace to us. Amen.

Words of affirmation

People of God, fearful and faithful, doubting and dutiful, the Holy Spirit of God breathes life, healing and forgiveness into us.

Receive God's peace and wholeness.

In trust and joy, we receive God's peace. Amen.

Engage

Psalm 16

A song can bring comfort and hope in times of uncertainty and fear. Consider singing a song such as Marty Haugen's "You Will Show Me the Path of Life" or Michael Saward's "Protect Me O God, I Trust You." Another option that might work better with children would be William Beckstrand's "My Heart Is Glad."

Opening the word

John 20:19-31

Choose from the following for hearing the focus story.

Bible story Have a storyteller present the story "[Jesus Appears to the Disciples](#)" on page 118.

Dramatic reading Dramatize the reading with four tableaux or still mimes, using six to 12 actors. Techniques that can make tableaux more effective include:

- **The reader is prepared to pause until all the actors are in position and quite still before starting.**
- **The actors focus on the feelings and emotions they are trying to express before taking their positions and then holding these expressions until the relevant verses have been read.**
- **The actors move deliberately but not too quickly from one pose to another.**

(Once these techniques have been applied to a few different passages and the passage read by the actors ahead of time, a dramatized reading can be prepared for a service with only 10 to 15 minutes of rehearsal.)

Vv. 19-20 – Jesus stands with his back to the congregation and hands stretched out in blessing; those representing the disciples stand or sit huddled together facing the congregation, looking with amazement and joy at Jesus. Thomas stands to one side with his back to the others, holding his head in his hands or showing some other expression of despair.

Vv. 24-25 – Jesus moves to the side opposite Thomas but continues to face the group. Thomas joins them from his side, looking with a frown at his hands and using the fingers of one hand to point to the palm of the other. The disciples all show joy, and the group moves freely around Thomas.

Vv. 26-29 – Jesus rejoins the group and stands facing Thomas. Both Jesus and Thomas are sideways to the congregation. Jesus shows open hands to Thomas, who kneels in worship. Still full of joy, the disciples stand behind or around them and look at one another within the group.

Vv. 21-23, 30-31 – Jesus moves to one side and the disciples, including Thomas, stand or kneel together facing Jesus from the other side, with more serious expressions. Jesus holds the palm of one hand under his chin, with fingers slightly cupped and directed at the group and the other hand stretched out as if moving them away.

You may choose to repeat a refrain from the sung psalm, if chosen, in between each tableaux reading. Actors might rearrange themselves as the refrain is sung.

If gathering in person, invite children, young people, and all who wish to move to the stations. Others will remain seated for proclaiming the word. For those participating at home, you might encourage them to use materials that have been sent.



Respond

Sing or listen to a song such as “O Spirit of Peace (*Yarabba Ssalami*)” as people gather again (*Seasons Songbook, vol. 4, #30* on *Seasons Music CD, vol. 4*. Printed music and recording are also available for purchase and download at https://www.seasonsonline.ca/order_products/.)

Prayers of the people

Resurrection God, full of peace,
we pray for those for whom life seems like a locked room.
We think of those who feel afraid and unable to move
(short time of silence);
do not abandon them,
but show the path that leads to life.

We pray for those who suffer distress through injury
or illness,
unable to be free of pain or physical restrictions
(short time of silence);
do not abandon them,
but show the path that leads to life.

We pray for those who are troubled in mind,
hemmed in by worries or a lack of confidence
(short time of silence);
do not abandon them,
but show the path that leads to life.

We pray for the people and places with no political or
religious freedom.
We remember those bound by tyranny or dictatorships
(short time of silence);
do not abandon them,
but show the path that leads to life.

We pray for leaders and forward thinkers whose ideas are
thwarted
by ignorance or biased legislation.
We recognize our own discomfort with new ideas and ask
for greater understanding.
(short time of silence);
do not abandon them,
but show the path that leads to life.

We pray, too, for ourselves, when we are unable to see beyond
the boundaries of our narrow world,
or lack the will to work for the good of others
(short time of silence);
do not abandon us,
but show the path that leads to life.

Prayer of dedication or offering prayer

God of life, our hearts have been touched.
We have seen your grace and feel moved to offer our hands
in healing and hope.
May those who receive the gifts or our hands find encourage-
ment and the reassurance of your love. Amen.

Bless

The God of resurrection goes with you
to ask questions and wonder about this world.
The God of resurrection goes with you to surprise you with

wonder and joy.
Go to live in the world as Christ’s disciples.
We go as witnesses to all that God has done! Amen.

Special Days Commentary

April 18 – Yom HaShoah (*Judaism*)

This day memorializes the six million Jews, as well as homo-
sexuals, Jehovah’s Witnesses, and Roma, who died in the
Holocaust. It is a day to emphasize respect for all people’s
dignity and work to prevent such horrors from ever hap-
pening again.

April 21 – Ridvan begins (*Baha’i*)

This day begins the commemoration of the declaration of
Baha’ullah to his followers in 1863. Work is suspended on the
first, ninth, and twelfth days of the commemoration.

April 22 – Earth Day

First observed in the United States in 1970, today Earth Day
is celebrated worldwide as a time to focus on conservation
and preservation of the world’s resources. Earth Day celebra-
tions often feature educational programs and community
activities such as cleaning up public parks and roadsides
and participation in public recycling efforts. As stewards
of God’s gifts, we are called to care for God’s creation. Plan
some Earth Day activities for your congregation, or partner
with activities going on in your community



HOLY HUMOUR SUNDAY

Holy Humour Sunday has as many origin points as it does names.

It was perhaps too much fun in the Catholic Church, where the observance of *Risus Paschalis* (Easter's Laugh) was outlawed in the seventeenth century. A few hundred years earlier, in Germany, *Risus Paschalis* had priests peppering their sermons with jokes and stories to get a laugh from the pews. A series of practical jokes followed the worship experience. The ultimate joke God played was by raising Jesus from the dead.

For others in the Orthodox church, Easter Monday was a time to laugh and dance together – and share a good meal.

The day has been known as Laughter Sunday, Hilarity Sunday, God's Laughter Sunday, Bright Sunday or Holy Fools Sunday, but it wasn't until 1988 that the Fellowship of Merry Christians encouraged churches to revive this tradition of laughter and joy.

If you choose to celebrate this year, here are some ideas for your worship and life together:

1. Pepper your sermon and the liturgy on Easter 2 with funny jokes and stories like the priests in the Middle Ages.
2. Sing all hymns with kazoos and kazoos only.
3. Recruit the youngest comedians to share their funniest jokes and stories.
4. Encourage the faithful to show up for worship on Easter 2 in their Sunday Funniest.
5. Play with the idea of Sunday Funnies by playing with comics in your worship. What would the texts for this day look like if they were comics? Could these comics come alive in your worship?
6. Primal screams release stress and frustration, but what about laughter? Perhaps one prayer for this Sunday might focus on practicing contagious laughter.
7. Capture the enthusiasm of the Orthodox church and have a big potluck on Easter Monday with games, skits, and comedians of all kinds.



Jesus Appears to the Disciples

Based on John 20:19–31

On the first day of the week, Sunday, the disciples gathered in a locked room for fear of what would happen to them because of their known relationship with Jesus. This was the Sunday following the crucifixion (Easter Sunday). Suddenly, Jesus appeared among them and said, “Peace be with you.” Jesus could see the look of bewilderment on their faces as they said to one another, “Do you see what I see?” Jesus began to identify himself by showing them the crucifixion marks on his hand and his side. Upon seeing his marks, the disciples rejoiced that Jesus was here with them.

Isn't it just like Jesus to show up when all seems hopeless, when we think we are at a dead-end?

Jesus said again to the disciples, “Peace be with you.” He then reminded the disciples that it was through a relationship with God that he did his work. Just as Jesus was in the world to do God's work, they would be sent into the world to continue Jesus' work. Jesus then shared the spirit of peace with them, which would remain with them and give them power to continue sharing Jesus' love and life with others.

One of the disciples, Thomas, wasn't present for this meeting with Jesus. The other disciples told Thomas that they had seen Jesus. Thomas was reluctant to believe. He had doubts, just like we do from time to time. He told his friends that unless he sees the nail marks and puts his hand in Jesus' side, he will not believe. Approximately one week later, the disciples found themselves in the same locked room, and this time Thomas was with them. Jesus appeared and said, “Peace be with you.” He then directed the conversation to Thomas. “Thomas, see my hands. Put your finger here and place your hand into my side. Thomas, it is time to stop doubting and believe.” Thomas replied, “My Lord! My God!”

Jesus looked at him and said, “You have believed because I am here. Blessed are those who believe but have not seen.”

Jesus' miracles are written throughout the New Testament so we may come to know Jesus – the Messiah, the Christ – and have life with God.

A recording of this story is available in MP3 format in the Audio Stories folder.



Bible story

Materials

- Basic supplies
- Paper or drawing pads
- Recording of today's story "[Jesus Appears to the Disciples](#)"
- Alternatively, arrange for a storyteller to present the story

The practice of storytelling

Directions

1. Listen to the story “Jesus Appears to the Disciples.”
2. Use the art materials to draw or write your response to the story.



Living, Learning, Growing as Disciples

The following stations might be set up around your worship space, or in other places around the church, in your home, or outdoors. Choose one or more practices, depending on your space and numbers. Display the directions for all to see onscreen or in person. Adapt stations for use when physically distancing and above all, follow the safe practices of your congregation and local health officials.

For your convenience, directions are formatted for printing and available in the Stations folder.

Health and Safety Practices

Basic supplies pens, pencils, markers, crayons, white glue/glue sticks, scissors, hand sanitizer, wipes placed in a basket or bin, two containers marked “clean” and “used”

Setting the space Utilize large spaces where people can maintain a safe physical distance. Spread out chairs around a large table or use tape to mark off the space around stand alone chairs.

Keep it clean Wipe down and disinfect places used for stations. Provide enough arts and crafts supplies to reduce sharing and mark containers “clean” and “used.” Remind people to use hand sanitizer as they begin and as they end stations.

Six-word story

Materials

- Basic supplies
- Paper
- Basket of cards with the following words (one word on each card): attic, hands, basement, power, gold, heart, cup, protect, land, speech, change, door, book, house, night, last, tomb, nail



**Suitable for all ages
working together**

The practice of storytelling

Directions

The disciples were locked in an upper room filled with fear. We all have things that scare us and things that we struggle to speak out. Tell your truth in a six-word story.

1. Choose the story you will tell. It can be any true story. It might be worth risking telling something scary to say out loud, perhaps something no one knows about you or something that has locked you inside of fear.
2. If you don't know where to start, pick a card from the bowl. Think of the hopes and fears you have connected to that word. Is there a story there that feels true?
3. Fine-tune your story.
4. Omit unnecessary words.
5. Write your completed story on paper and post it to the bulletin board.

Younger children may need help getting started and counting the words. Encourage them to find their truth in their own words.

Fullness of joy

Materials

- Play dough
- Cookie cutters
- Rolling pins
- Hand sanitizer or wipes



**Suitable for all ages
working together**

The practice of contemplation

Directions

Psalm 16 invites us to imagine a refuge, a place of safety, that we might find in choosing God. God responds to our choice by leading us on the “path to life” where we find “fullness of joy.”

1. Use the art materials provided to construct this path in your life. As you build, reflect on these questions:

- **When has it been easy to choose God's path?**
- **Where have you stumbled?**
- **When did you doubt the way forward?**



Breath prayers

Materials

- Copies of the directions



**Suitable for all ages
working together**

The practice of prayer

Directions

Our minds whisper messages to us constantly throughout the day. People talk to us. We hear traffic noises. Breath prayers can help fill our minds with God's peace. Breath prayers are silent; you can pray anytime, anywhere. These prayers offer an opportunity to sit quietly with eyes closed, breathing in and out, counting quietly to five with every breath in and out while whispering words of prayer to God.

1. Spend a few moments sitting quietly with your eyes closed, breathing in and out slowly, focusing on each breath.
2. Choose a phrase to whisper as you breathe in and a phrase to whisper as you breathe out. Here are two suggestions where the first option might work better for adults and the latter for children.

Protect me, O God // for in you I take refuge.

I bless the Lord // who gives me counsel;

Therefore my heart is glad //, and my soul rejoices.

You show me the path of life // in your presence there is joy.

(Selected verses from Psalm 16)

As you breathe in, say silently, "Peace be."

As you breathe out, say silently, "with me."

As you breathe in, say silently, "Peace be."

As you breathe out, say silently, "with you."

Folding peace into our hands

Materials

- Origami paper
- Downloadable instructions from <https://peacecraneproject.org>
- Hand sanitizer or wipes



**Suitable for all ages
working together**

The practice of imagining

Directions

Jesus greets the fear of the disciples with peace. Imagine how we might change the world by greeting every fear with peace.

1. Practice folding peace cranes following the instructions.
2. With each complicated fold, attempt to release your own fear and welcome peace.

The article "[Connecting with the Art](#)" on page 8 provides background to this season's posters and art engagement ideas for individuals and groups. You might add an Art station and select one of the art engagement ideas.



Story and activities for the very young to use in church or at home.

Thomas Is Amazed!

A story based on John 20:19–31

After Jesus died, his friends were sad and afraid. They were sad because they thought they would never see Jesus again, and they were worried about what would happen to them. They stayed together, locking all the doors so they would be safe.

Suddenly, Jesus appeared in the room with them. The friends were amazed. Jesus was alive!

Jesus said to the friends, "Peace be with you."

Jesus' friends had so much to say to Jesus. They talked and talked to Jesus. Then Jesus went away.

Thomas was one of Jesus' friends. Thomas wasn't in the

room that day, and he was still very sad.

"Thomas," the friends said. "We saw Jesus!"

But Thomas said, "I don't believe you. I want to see Jesus. Then I will know that Jesus is still with us."

The next week, all the friends were in the same room again, including Thomas. Suddenly, Jesus was there, too. Everyone was amazed.

Jesus said to Thomas, "Touch my hands. I'm really here." Thomas was amazed. Then Jesus turned to everyone and said, "My love will always be with you."

Pencil Decoration

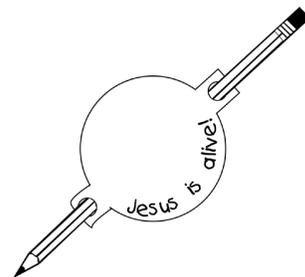
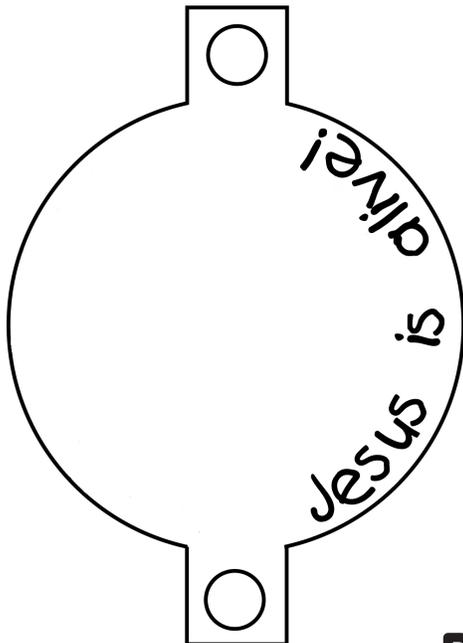
No matter what, Jesus' love will always be with us. Like Thomas and the disciples, we can share the good news.

 Make copies of or trace the pencil decoration. Make more than one.

 Decorate your pencil decorations with markers, pencils, and stickers. Cut out the decoration.

 Punch holes where indicated.

 Slide a pencil through the holes.



Pencil Art

Use your pencil to draw pictures full of love and joy and share them with people in your family or church. These drawings are messages of God's love.



Here is the locked door. Draw a scene from the story of Thomas – you can draw your scene outside in the marketplace or inside the room where Jesus appeared to his friends, the disciples.

