

Following Sunday 11th April - John 20.1-18
Surprised by Joy

Take some time to share how Lent and Easter were for you as a group. Share any big insights from the Revelation course.

Welcome

What have you been surprised by recently?

Worship

Easter is not a single day but a season of rejoicing for the church. Worship the risen Jesus who has set us free from sin and death. Use an Easter song to spend time remembering his victory.

Word

Read the account of the resurrection in John 20.1-18

1. They say that seeing is believing. Look at the response of Mary and the disciples in this passage. John focusses on the physical evidence. Looking at the evidence shared here how would you feel in the disciples' place?
2. Mary stays at the tomb when everyone else leaves. This speaks of her absolute desolation at the loss of Jesus. She is broken out of her grief by the angels. How true is it that those who lose the most often find the greatest comfort?
3. At first Mary is confused in the presence of Jesus who she thinks is the gardener. Imagine the moment when Jesus calls Mary by name. How would you feel to hear him call your name in a time of great distress? Perhaps you know a time when this happened.
4. Jesus longs for us all to know a renewed relationship with him as our risen Lord. Pray for one another that you might understand afresh all that Jesus is and always will be.

Witness

How might we show the difference that the risen Jesus makes in our lives to those around us?

Following Sunday 18th April – John 20.24-31
Doubting Thomas

Welcome

Share something that you find hard to believe.

Worship

Thomas calls Jesus – “My Lord and my God!” We can sometimes just see Jesus as our gentle saviour when He is the awesome ruler of all of creation. Spend time worshipping Him as Lord and God of our lives.

Word

Read John 20.24-31 as Thomas encounters the risen Lord.

1. If you encounter something completely at odds with your view of the world it can take some time to believe it. No one had ever been raised from the dead to resurrection life before this. What do you think of Thomas' response to the news in verses 24 & 25?
2. In his teaching Jesus repeatedly said that he would suffer and then rise from the dead. Look at his response to Thomas' doubts. How can this help us when we have times of doubt? How should we deal with those who are having doubts?
3. Thomas' doubts result in a new revelation of who Jesus is. When we struggle to believe it can lead us on to a deeper faith in Jesus. Can you think of tough times when Jesus has been closer to you?
4. These things are written so that we might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God. What changes for us in our lives when we recognise Jesus as Lord and God?

Witness

It is so important that John has written a story for us to engage with as he seeks to share the good news of Jesus. Our stories of Jesus at work in our lives are the best testimony that we can give to others. Spend time sharing your 100 words stories of life before Jesus, meeting Jesus and the difference he has made. Use simple words that others outside of church circles will understand.



Following Sunday April 25th – John 21.1-14
A Miraculous Catch

Welcome

Where for you is a special place to connect with Jesus?

Worship

Jesus meets the disciples at the place where they have gone to recover from the traumas of his death and resurrection. Spend time worshipping the one who is always with us, especially in our times of greatest need. Give thanks for his risen life that changes everything.

Word

Read of the meeting on the beach in John 21.1-14.

1. The disciples are on familiar ground, or perhaps water. What do you think leads them to go out fishing all night? Simon is in charge again. Does this make sense?
2. Jesus was very familiar with life on the lake. Look back to other gospel encounters he had with the fisherman in their boats. What lessons should they have learned from these many experiences?
3. Jesus provides them with a meal. Again, there are lots of resonant memories that this would have provoked. How is it important that Jesus asks them to bring some of the fish they have just caught? What does it tell us of our relationship with him?
4. Jesus is waiting for us to meet with him in the centre of our ordinary lives. Pray for one another that you might be aware of the times when he calls you to spend time with him in each and every day. Give thanks that he can transform every part of our existence by his presence amongst us.

Witness

As we come out of lockdown it will be tempting to lay aside times that we have been able to spend with Jesus. Share how you will work to keep hold of time with him which is such a powerful part of our witness to the difference he makes to us.

Following Sunday 2nd May – John 21.15-25
Reinstating Peter

Welcome

Can you think of someone who has fallen from grace but then returned to a prominent position?

Worship

In this passage Jesus displays the amazing forgiveness that characterises the Christian faith. Worship the one from whom forgiveness flows. Give thanks for the undeserved favour of God that washes away all of our sin and shame.

Word

Read the final verses of John's gospel in John 21.15-25.

1. Jesus meets with Peter at a fire of burning coals. There's a link here to another time Peter warmed himself on a fire. How do you think Peter would feel about this meeting?
2. At the heart of this conversation is the love that Peter and Jesus share. How do the three sections of their interaction deepen the meaning of what is being said? Peter is hurt by Jesus' questions. Why does this matter?
3. The outcome of this exchange is that Peter is again called to follow his master. He must not get distracted for he has much to do. How reassuring is it for us that Jesus can use us even when we mess up and fail him?
4. We may think that we have done things that prevent us from serving Jesus. Pray for one another for a new assurance that Jesus has much for us to do no matter what our past contains.

Witness

Discuss how this story of Peter's denial, shared in all four gospels, would have influenced the early church. What does it mean for us in his church now as we seek to show others the power of forgiveness? Do we make forgiveness as central to our faith as we should?