

Sunday 19th April

Theme: Seeing and believing

Target Age Group: 3 - 9

Approximate Time: 20 – 30 mins



Session Summary:

As the news of Jesus rising from the dead started to spread, various members of Jesus' followers started to have encounters with him. Today's reflection is taken from the account of John and we see the differing reactions of both Peter and John as they encounter the empty tomb. We also see how Mary Magdalene meets Jesus in the garden but doesn't immediately recognise him. In our session we will be reflecting on the difference between seeing and believing. What evidence do we need to see in order to believe things? And how can we trust that the resurrection of Jesus is the ultimate proof of his power and love for us?

Icebreaker: True or False

Decide whether the following statements are true or false; (For answers see bottom of this document)

1. Snooker and pool are Olympic sports
2. A group of owls is called a parliament
3. The Atlantic Ocean is the largest ocean on earth
4. There are ten planets in our solar system
5. Mount Everest is the tallest mountain in the world
6. The colour green is made by mixing blue and yellow
7. Glasgow is the capital city of Scotland
8. Gekko, Owlet and catboy are members of Paw Patrol
9. Lapland (The home of Father Christmas) is in Finland
10. Blackburn Rovers and Leicester City have won more Premier league titles than Liverpool

Powers of Observation:

Watch the following video. How did you get on? How many did you manage to get right? Feel free to post your score on the St Jude's Facebook page

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Tpu9sSVdqe0&t=96s>

Song: Lord I lift your name on high

Sing 'Lord I lift your name on high using the link below. If you want to do actions use the bottom link

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=COQ6cni_TG8

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5SeqQjBN0j4>

Scripture: John 20:1-18

Read the story of the resurrection in John 20:1-18

Discussion Questions:

1. How many people are featured in this story?
2. Who reaches the tomb first?
3. Why do you think they didn't go in?
4. What evidence do the disciples see which shows Jesus has risen?
5. Look at the story of Mary in verses 11 – 18. What does she see when she looks in the tomb?
6. Why do you think Mary didn't recognise Jesus?
7. What does Jesus say that enables Mary to recognise him?
8. Do you think this is important?

Reflection:

There are four different gospel accounts of the Resurrection and each writer tells the story slightly differently. Imagine if your family were all telling other people about what you got up to during lockdown – you would probably talk about different things or maybe put the events in a different order. In the same way, today's account of the resurrection is slightly different to the passage from Matthew we looked at last week. But the important thing is that all four gospel writers agree on several things – there is an empty tomb, Jesus has indeed risen from the dead and there are witnesses who then share the story.

In the passage in John we are looking at today, three people are at the tomb – Mary Magdalene, John and Peter. All three see for themselves different evidence that Jesus is alive and they all have very different reactions. Mary gets to the tomb, sees it is empty and goes to tell John and Peter. John then arrives at the tomb first but, instead of going in, just stands and looks at the evidence; the cloths and strips of linen lying on the ground. In this pause he is able to understand what he is seeing and it says in verse 8 that 'He saw and believed'. Peter arrives at the tomb after John and goes straight in – this decisive leadership then gives John the courage to follow afterwards. John needs Peter's action and Peter needs John's quiet understanding to help him make sense of what he sees.

Mary's story is really interesting. Of the three of them, she is the only one in this story to see Jesus face to face. But in verse 14 we are told that she did not realise it was Jesus. In fact she actually thinks he is the gardener and asks whether or not he has removed the body. This is interesting as Mary was a friend of Jesus so it is perhaps surprising that she doesn't recognise him. It is only when Jesus says her name that Mary responds with worship 'Rabboni'. It is the personal encounter with Jesus that changes Mary from being upset, scared and anxious to having the courage to go back and share her story with the other disciples

Like Mary, some of us will have stories of personal encounters with Jesus which have brought about a dramatic change in our lives. For others, like John or Peter, we might just see evidence of God at work – either through the stories of those around us, through answered prayers, or through the teaching of scripture. Others, like some of the other disciples we hear about later, will be told about God or hear someone else speaking about him. Our stories might all be different but,

like the gospels, the important thing is the response. How will you respond to God? Will you allow what you see and hear to change you from seeing to believing like John? Or like Mary, will an encounter with Jesus lead you to worship him? Or like Peter, will you be called to take action?

Song: Open the eyes of my heart Lord

Play the song 'Open the eyes of my heart Lord'. You can either just listen or you can join in if you want to:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wutmEjdbedE>

Activity: Easter Eggs / Easter Stones

https://www.pinterest.co.uk/pin/535295105703285173/?nic_v1=1avpd6rHsl4ZT7fefab%2F1K6vT7ADlyDleLYnK4wR25%2F9d8hEUS8yvhsAxVjbxdcMxb

Either:

1. **Easter Stones:** Find a medium sized pebble or stone and draw / paint an image from some part of the Easter story – you may want to draw the empty tomb or write 'He is risen'. If you are drawing or writing you may want to consider using a permanent marker so that the message will stay on there. Then, when you are next out for a walk, place the stone somewhere where it can be found by a passer by.

Or:

2. **Easter Eggs:** After the excitement of eating chocolate eggs last week, this week you could paint your very own 'Easter egg' using an actual egg. You may want to paint a few (Ask your parents first) and then you can put them in the windowsill or in your prayer corner. Again images from the Easter story or an Easter based message of hope would be good starting points.

Prayer:

Spend some time thinking about why you believe in God. What is it about the Christian story that you find most interesting. As a family, pray each of you might have a personal encounter with the Lord just as Mary Magdalene did.

Mary responded to Jesus when He spoke her name. Write the letters of your name on a piece of paper and then use each letter as the start of a word that you might use to describe God or that God might use to describe you

E.g.

Delightful

Omnipotent

Marvellous

Identity

New Creation

Intelligent

Chosen