

FAITH @ HOME

Week of April 19, 2020

Second Sunday after Easter

ADULT AND SMALL CHILD

READ: John 20:19-31

REFLECT: It's not always easy to say what's in our hearts, especially when we have big feelings about something. We may cry, or laugh, or hang our heads to show how we feel, but it's also important to say it so that others will be able to understand. When Jesus' disciples saw him after the resurrection (Jesus being raised from the dead) they were able to say out loud that they knew that he was the son of God. They spoke all the things they had been feeling in their hearts that were proven when Jesus appeared to them. One of the disciples, Thomas, wasn't there when Jesus appeared to the disciples the first time, and he still had doubts about what he had heard. After a while, Thomas was able to see and touch Jesus for himself and the feelings in his heart flowed out like a stream.

RESPOND: When was the last time you talked about big feelings? Ask a parent or trusted adult to sit down with you and share how they talk about being sad or happy, angry, or even sleepy!

ABOUT OUR CONTRIBUTOR: QUANTRILLA ARD



Quantrilla (Quanny) Ard is a faith-based personal and spiritual development writer who lives in the DC Metro area with her husband Donny and three littles (Quentin, Dylan, and Logan). In addition to being a dedicated wife and mother, she is an entrepreneur, doctoral student, and curator of all things lovely. As a woman on her own quest of shining a light on the shadowy, hidden places in her life, she writes as the PhDMamma about things she knows to be true in hopes to encourage others to do the same. Her spiritual goals and her love for Christ propel her quest to share the spiritual journey with other women- to walk alongside them and encourage them with words, deeds, and wisdom. Quanny believes in the power in collective strength, community and fellowship. You will find her wherever people are sharing stories of triumph.

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ADULT AND ELEMENTARY

READ: 1 Peter 1:3-9

REFLECT: Have you ever experienced something so amazing you both couldn't wait to tell your friends, and you also didn't know how to describe it? The first time I rode a rollercoaster I was so thrilled that as soon as the ride ended, I ran to grab my friend (who had been too afraid to go with me) and get back in line. I couldn't explain why it had been so great though, I just knew she had to experience it with me.

When the author of this letter is writing about the hope Jesus brings, they are trying to put into words the most amazing thing they've ever experienced. The incredible hope of Jesus though isn't just fun and exciting—like riding a roller coaster. Jesus is with us during the fun and exciting times, but the astonishing thing is that Jesus is God with us, in all situations. The cross and resurrection show us that there are no places or situations or feelings or trials too difficult or sad for Jesus to be with us.

RESPOND: Play Memory Charades. Have one person choose an exciting or fun memory and act it out, without using any words, for others to guess. Whoever guesses the memory correctly goes next. As you play, remind each other that we profess our faith and the hope we have through Jesus not only with the words we say, but with our actions as well.

ABOUT OUR CONTRIBUTOR: MEGAN WESTRA



Megan is on the pastoral staff team at Transformation City Church in Milwaukee, Wisconsin. Her first book, *Born Again and Again*, releases in August with Herald Press. More of her work can be found at meganwestra.com or on Twitter at @mwestramke.

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ADULT AND YOUTH

READ: John 20:19-31

REFLECT: Have you ever been in a group of friends who saw or experienced something really cool and you missed that moment? Everyone is talking about it and you are so out of the loop; maybe you don't even believe it happened because it's too good to be true. I imagine that is how Thomas felt: everyone saw Jesus in the flesh and He forgave their sins, but Thomas missed it all and doubted their account of what happened. Doubt is a natural for believers to experience, but we can rejoice in hope because we have faith and choose to believe even when we haven't tangibly seen Jesus. Jesus says, "Blessed are those who have not seen and yet come to believe" (John 20:29, NRSV) because we have hope and faith in Him even though we haven't seen Him in the flesh. Our faith brings deeper meaning to His resurrection and how we experience his power in our lives, even when we have moments of unbelief.

RESPOND: Pray and ask God to help you trust in God, even when you have moments of unbelief or doubts. Take time to journal and imagine what your response would be like seeing Jesus after he was resurrected. Would you believe Jesus was alive if you did not see him in person? How would you share the significance of the resurrection with others?

ABOUT OUR CONTRIBUTOR: FAITTH BROOKS



Faith is the Communication and Programming Director for Legacy Collective. She engages in community organizing and activism. Her passion makes her a relentless spokesperson for racial reconciliation. She is a social media strategist and blogger who writes at Faitthbrooks.com.

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ADULT AND ADULT

READ: John 20:19-31

REFLECT: The phrase “doubting Thomas” is a direct reference to this story in John. Thomas did not believe the resurrected Jesus had appeared to the other disciples because he had not seen it himself. It was too much for him to believe! And can we blame him? Jesus had been crucified to death so Jesus could not be wounded and resurrected at the same time. Thomas could be our twin, standing in for us in this story. If we’re honest, have we ever wondered the same thing on an Easter morning, especially when sitting in a church beautifully festooned with fresh flowers and filled with festival music? Coming in peace, and accepting Thomas as he is with all his doubts, forgiving everyone, Jesus again appears to the disciples and lovingly invites Thomas – and us - to put hands on his wounded side. It requires Thomas to move forward to a new place of healing, mystery and transformation. Until we let go of the past with our expectations and old ways of seeing – Jesus cannot lead us into a future where we too are forgiven and loved right where he finds us and just as we are.

RESPOND: Read the passage John 20:19-31 again. Use a concordance or study Bible to look up any words or verses for which you want additional information, clarity, or context. Reflect on the verses and see if there are one or two verses that resonate a little more deeply for you. Read these verses, or the entire passage if you like, a third time. Let its words and their meaning settle over you like clouds rolling in from the horizon. Observe what stirs deep within you. If a word or combination of words seems to pop out at you, write them down. Ponder them in your heart as you move through your day. Let your heart be open to past experiences or conclusions that you might be called to let go of. Give thanks to God for any insight of feelings you receive from this time.

ABOUT OUR CONTRIBUTOR: JAN BERRY SCHROEDER



Jan is in private practice as a Spiritual Director working with individuals and groups on deepening their faith through contemplation and other spiritual practices. She teaches Education for Ministry (EfM) at her church and consults with churches to build or enrich family ministry programs. A new writer, she is looking forward to launching a blog this year. She lives beside an apple orchard with her husband and rescue dog.

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