

EASTER SUNDAY FAMILY PRAYER SERVICE

Before beginning, prepare a prayer space with a candle and flower or plant. If possible, prepare a pot with potting soil and have seeds ready to plant during the prayer service.

LEADER: We believe in the resurrection: we believe Jesus died and rose again, that he spoke to Mary and left footprints in the dew. We believe Jesus is alive again!

ALL: (in a loud voice) And you cannot whisper alleluia!

LEADER: We believe in the resurrection: we believe the love of God is stronger than death, that crosses speak of beginnings and not endings. We believe love walks from the tomb.

ALL: (in a loud voice) And you cannot whisper alleluia!

LEADER: We believe in the resurrection, found at Emmaus and in upper rooms, on beaches in the morning and gardens at dawn. We believe Jesus is found alive in every place and time.

ALL: (in a loud voice) And you cannot whisper alleluia!



READER: *A reading from the holy Gospel according to Matthew (Mt 28:1-10)*

After the sabbath, as the first day of the week was dawning, Mary Magdalene and the other Mary came to see the tomb. And behold, there was a great earthquake; for an angel of the Lord descended from heaven, approached, rolled back the stone, and sat upon it. His appearance was like lightning and his clothing was white as snow. The guards were shaken with fear of him and became like dead men. Then the angel said to the women in reply, “**Do not be afraid!** I know that you are seeking Jesus the crucified. He is not here, for he has been raised just as he said. Come and see the place where he lay. Then go quickly and tell his disciples, ‘He has been raised from the dead, and he is going before you to Galilee; there you will see him.’ Behold, I have told you.”

Then they went away quickly from the tomb, **fearful yet overjoyed**, and ran to announce this to his disciples. And behold, Jesus met them on their way and greeted them. They approached, embraced his feet, and did him homage. Then Jesus said to them, “**Do not be afraid.** Go tell my brothers to go to Galilee, and there they will see me.”

The Gospel of the Lord. **Praise to you Lord, Jesus Christ.**

SHARE: “Do not be afraid!” These are the first words the angels and Jesus say to the women who come to the empty tomb. What does this tell you about their appearance? What thoughts, emotions, and reactions do you think the women experienced that morning? How would you react knowing that Jesus, your best friend, was not really dead?



NEW LIFE

(If you have seeds, prepare a small pot with dirt and allow each person to place their seed just below the surface of the dirt.)



LEADER: As we plant our seeds and bury them in the dirt, we remember how Jesus was buried in the ground for three days. Just like we cannot see what is happening to the seed when it is under the dirt, we know that new life is about to burst forth. As we water and take care of our seeds, let us remember that it sometimes takes awhile for new life to spring forth from a difficult situation.

(If you do not have seeds, focus on the flower or plant that you placed in your prayer space.)

LEADER: As we look at the beautiful symbol of life before us, we remember that what we now see first started as a seed. It is a reminder of how Jesus came bursting forth from the grave after being buried for three days. Let us take a moment to thank God for the gift of life.

(This next part will best be done outside. If, however, you do not have a backyard to walk around in, invite people to walk throughout the house or to find a quiet place to sit and reflect.)

LEADER: A common Gospel passage following the resurrection is the road to Emmaus. Jesus travels with two disheartened disciples who are returning home after his death. Let us take some time right now to “walk” with Jesus and talk to him about whatever is in our heart. Thank him for the blessings of family and health, ask him for peace and understanding, cry and laugh with him, but also give him the gift of your silence so he can speak to your heart. *(Allow 5 minutes for everyone to walk and pray. If you would like, invite people to share about their experience when they return.)*

REGINA CAELI *(This is the traditional prayer of the Church during the Easter season that takes the place of the Angelus three times a day.)*

Leader: Queen of Heaven, rejoice, alleluia. **All:** For He whom you did merit to bear, alleluia.

Leader: Has risen, as he said, alleluia. **All:** Pray for us to God, alleluia.

Leader: Rejoice and be glad, O Virgin Mary, alleluia. **All:** For the Lord has truly risen, alleluia.

Together let us pray. O God, who gave joy to the world through the resurrection of your Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, grant we beseech you, that through the intercession of the Virgin Mary, His Mother, we may obtain the joys of everlasting life. Through the same Christ our Lord. Amen.

Leader: In the name of the Father.... **Amen. Alleluia!**

