

FAMILY FAITH FORMATION SUNDAY AFTER EASTER LESSON

GOD'S STORY: Today's lesson which talks about Jesus' friends following the resurrection. Remember, they were having a tough time! **Read together John 20: 19-31.** (part of this passage can be found in the Spark Story Bible, pp. 492-495)

TALK ABOUT GOD'S STORY: Share together your thoughts about what this passage means to you...

+ Have each person in your family retell the story, point-by-point. Start with one person and have them tell what happened first in the story. The next person says, "Then..." and tells the next point in the story. Family members continue like this, in turn, until the story is finished.

+ What was the weirdest part of the story, or hardest to understand? What was the best part of the story? What questions do you have about the story?

+ Do you think you would have felt like Thomas if you had been there?

+ Do you think Jesus was angry with Thomas? Why or why not?

+ Jesus' disciples were afraid following the resurrection. They weren't sure what had happened. They even had to go into hiding! Talk about a time that you were afraid but felt that Jesus was with you.

ACTING ON GOD'S STORY: This story calls us to do more thinking about how it's message still has meaning for us today. Discover this through the following activities...

+ We too can think about how a person can be alive, even when we can't see them – as Jesus still is. Ask one person to move to another room. **Ask:** Do you believe (*person's name*) is alive, even though he/she is not sitting with us? How do you know? After sharing this, bring your "missing" person back. **Discuss:** Remember how Thomas needed to see Jesus for himself before he could believe that God had raised Jesus from the dead. Talk together about how you knew that the person who was in the other space was still alive, even though you couldn't see or touch him/her. Share with your family that God promises to send the Holy Spirit to help us today, to believe in Jesus, even though we can't see or touch him.

+ Draw a picture or make a list of ways that you know Jesus is still with us today.

+ Make an "**Alleluia Chain**": "Alleluia" means "praise God" – and is anything that brings joy, is a positive moment, a special moment you know that Jesus is with you. Cut strips of paper. Each day during the Easter season invite family members to write down one "Alleluia moment" they had that day. Share those moments either at dinner or at the close of the evening. Start building that chain! How long can you make it? Display it where everyone can see it each day. If you don't want to make a chain, feel free to put the slips in a jar or basket. Or you could even keep a running list on a whiteboard! Being reminded daily of God's presence is a gift!

PRAYING GOD'S STORY: Close with the following prayer:

Dear God, Sometimes it's hard to believe in things we can't see. Sometimes we are afraid and feel alone. But keep reminding us every day that you are ALWAYS with us – through those who love us, through the

kind things people do for each other, for the times we laugh and feel happy and through the beauty of the world you created. Help us to remind others that you are with us! Alleluia! Christ is risen indeed! Amen!