



DIOCESE OF HAMILTON

700 King Street West, Hamilton, Ontario, Canada L8P 1C7

Children's Liturgy of the Word SECOND SUNDAY OF EASTER

Have you ever heard the saying, "Seeing is believing?" It's a powerful statement suggesting that our eyes are the best source of proof. Just like the Apostle Thomas, who didn't believe in the resurrection of Jesus until he saw it for himself, we tend to trust what we see more than what we hear.

But there's something even more powerful than sight - touch. A simple touch can do more than words in grief or sadness. It provides comfort and demonstrates support and compassion. The laying on hands symbolizes the Holy Spirit's impartation and is a powerful sacrament in many religious ceremonies.

In today's Gospel, the disciples were transformed by the unexpected presence of Jesus. Transformations like this often require the support of others. Have you ever experienced a moment where God acted unexpectedly? Or have you ever had doubts on your faith journey? These moments can be challenging, but they also provide an opportunity for growth and reflection.

It's essential to nourish our faith and support those around us. Please take a moment this week to be mindful of opportunities where a simple touch could convey a message of support to someone who needs it. By spreading love and compassion, we can make a difference in people's lives and bring the love of God to the world.

Objectives

- † Help children believe in Jesus without seeing him.
- † Develop faith in Christ.

Background

- † Have you ever experienced doubt when it comes to matters of faith? It's understandable, especially when we're faced with something as shocking as the crucifixion and resurrection of Jesus.
- † Even the disciples, closest to Jesus, felt doubt at that moment. Thomas, in particular, expressed his doubts and even placed conditions on his belief.
- † But instead of turning him away, Jesus responded with compassion and acceptance, leading to one of the most profound professions of faith ever recorded.
- † The move from doubt to faith is genuinely transformative. Just think about the fear the disciples felt when huddled in their upper room. But when Jesus appeared to them and gifted them with the Holy Spirit, that fear transformed into peace and joy.
- † And let's not forget about Thomas. His doubt was transformed into faith when he was allowed to touch Jesus. That transformation came with great responsibility, though. Just as Jesus was sent, Thomas was also sent to act as he did.
- † There is an ancient tradition that Thomas went on to preach the gospel as far East as India. That's a testament to the power of transformation that comes with faith. And that's precisely what the first reading is all about.
- † It exhorts early Christians to live their faith with renewed joy and strength, even in the face of persecution. So take heart; doubt may be a natural response, but transformation, peace, and joy come with faith.

Leader's Reflection Questions

- † Do you ever experience doubt?
- † How do you share your faith in Jesus?

The Liturgy

Procession from the main Church

After the opening prayer, when all are seated, the leaders come forward and stand facing the altar.

Priest: Dear children, God's message of love you hear in today's reading is for you. Share it with your friends. Go in peace, knowing that God's love is always with you.

When most of the children have formed a procession, the leader with the book proceeds to the place of the celebration. The second leader usually walks behind the children. Upon arrival at the location of the celebration, the leader places the book on the prepared table.

Welcome.

The leaders assist the children to sit and prepare. Begin with the Sign of the Cross. Help the children think and connect their actions as they touch their foreheads, shoulders, and stomachs. The leader may say the following prayer in these or similar words.

**Loving God, you invite us to follow you. Help us to listen to your voice.
Amen.**

Invite the children to listen to the readings.



First Reading

A reading from the Acts of the Apostles.

The followers of Jesus all felt the same way about everything. None of them claimed their belongings were their own, and they shared everything they had.

The apostles told everyone that the Lord Jesus was now alive.

God greatly blessed his followers, and no one needed anything. Everyone who owned land or houses would sell them and bring the money to the apostles.

Then, they would give the money to anyone who needed it.

The word of the Lord.

Children: Thanks be to God.

Gospel

The children stand for the Gospel. The leader proclaims it. All sign themselves on the forehead, lips and chest.

✠ **A reading from the holy Gospel, according to John.**

Children respond: Glory to you, O Lord

The disciples locked themselves in a room on the evening Jesus rose from the dead. Suddenly, Jesus appeared to them. He greeted them, showed them his hands and side, and said, "Peace be with you." When the disciples saw the Lord, they became very happy. After Jesus had greeted them again, he said, "I am sending you, just as the Father has sent me." Then he breathed on them and said, "Receive the Holy Spirit. If you forgive anyone's sins, they will be forgiven. But they will not be forgiven if you don't forgive their sins."

Although Thomas was one of the twelve disciples, he was not with the others when Jesus appeared to them. So they told him, "We have seen the Lord!" But Thomas said, "First, I must see the scars in his hands and touch them with my finger. I must put my hand where the spear went into his side. I won't believe it unless I do this!"

A week later, the disciples were together again. This time, Thomas was with them. Jesus came in while the doors were locked and stood in the middle of the group. He greeted his disciples and said to Thomas, "Put your finger here and look at my hands! Put your hand on my side. Stop doubting and have faith!" Thomas replied, "You are my Lord and my God!"

Jesus said, "Thomas, do you have faith because you have seen me? The people who have faith in me without seeing me are the ones who are blessed!"

At the end of the Gospel, the Minister of the Word proclaims The Gospel of the Lord.

The Gospel of the Lord.

Children: Glory to you, O Lord.

The children sit to listen to the reflection.

Reflection

The leader may offer this reflection in these or similar words. Remember the amount of time available to return to the main assembly. The leader may wish to reduce the number of questions.

An excellent place to begin is the question:

What did you hear?

When Jesus died, the Apostles were very sad. They decided to stay together so they wouldn't be alone and could help one another.

Who do you like to be with when you are sad or scared?

One day, when most Apostles were together, something amazing happened. They saw Jesus in the room with them!

How do you think they felt?

Some of them must have wondered if it was Jesus.

How did Jesus show them he was the same Jesus they knew?

Jesus appeared to his disciples after rising from the dead. He showed them his wounds, and they recognized him. They were happy to see him alive again. Jesus gave them a message, asking them to continue his work of helping the poor, lonely, and hungry. He gave them the Holy Spirit to guide and strengthen them, knowing this wouldn't be easy. He also emphasized the importance of forgiveness, asking his disciples to show forgiveness. This would help people understand that God still loves them and wants them to do what is right. One of Jesus' disciples, Thomas, wasn't there when Jesus appeared to the others.

What did he say when he heard the story about Jesus' visit?

Why do you think he didn't believe the others?

Jesus met his disciples the following week and spoke with Thomas. Although Thomas doubted him, Jesus was not angry and wanted to show Thomas that he still loved him. Jesus explained to Thomas that there are people who have never seen him but still believe in him, including you and me, who have faith based on what other followers have shared with us.

Who told you about Jesus? What have they said?

Who can you tell about Jesus? What will you say?

Following the reflection, the prayer leader invites everyone to stand to profess their faith.

Recite the Creed or use the sample below to ask the children to respond.

The Creed

Depending on the time, a simple profession of faith may be made (see below).

Leader: Do you believe in God, the Father Almighty, maker of heaven and earth?

All: We do believe.

Leader: Do you believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, who became our brother and gave his life for us?

All: We do believe.

Leader: Do you believe in the Holy Spirit who lives in our hearts and gives us everlasting life?

All: We do believe.

Leader: This is our faith. This is the faith of the Church. We are proud to profess it.

Prayer of the Faithful

leaders may begin the intercessions by announcing the needs they know. It may be necessary for the leader to repeat and paraphrase the petition and conclude it with the cue for the response: we pray. All respond to each petition by saying: Lord, hear our prayer. Sample intercessions are below.

Leader: With faith in our hearts, let us call upon our loving God for our needs. Our response is: **R./**

Lector: That the Church be of one mind and heart in Jesus, we pray: **R./**

Lector: That the sick, the weak and the elderly know God's healing love, we pray: **R./**

The leader may invite other intercessions from the children or add intercessions based on the Church's current needs, the world, or the local community.

Lector: That we will believe in Jesus and follow his way even when the going gets tough, we pray: **R./**

Leader: God of light and peace, bless us and those for whom we pray through Jesus our risen Lord. Amen.

Ask the children to return to the main assembly. Ask them to return quietly and think about what they have heard and are now doing.

Be mindful of children having difficulty finding their families.

Readings: Lectionary Sundays and Solemnities, Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops, Ottawa, ON, adapted for children.
Celebrating the Lectionary for Preschool and Kindergarten Year B, Liturgy Training Publications, Chicago, IL.
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