



Living the Faith – Step 1

The Resurrection – new life, new hope

Aim

For group members to reflect on and share their initiation experience in the light of the Post Resurrection Gospel stories.

Resources needed

Leaders

- *Come and See notes*
- *PPT laptop and projector or TV*
- *Prayer focus items*
- *Symbols, 3 large and individual votive candles, reflection scripts and songs for Option 2*

Young People

- *Journal*

Prayer Focus

Expressions of our belief:

White Cloth – *Easter Season*

Yellow Flowers – *Life and hope*

Bolder & Folded Cloth – *The empty tomb and Jesus garment*

Chalice and Plate – *Meetings around the table and Jesus who nourishes the disciples*

Candle – *Jesus the Light of the World*

Liturgical Link

Prayer begins and ends with the sign of the Cross. Through prayer and reflection on scripture we grow in relationship with God and call on the Spirit to support and strengthen us.

Overview

- Stories and lives entwined through the Sacraments
- New Life brings New Hope – do not be afraid
- Close Encounters with the risen Lord
- Our personal responses
- Growing in holiness - Prayer

Preparation by Catechists

- *Familiarity with content and resources*
- *Be ready to share stories of hope overcoming fear or finding peace*
- *Pray for the young people and leaders*

Scripture Passages

- Matthew 28:1-10 The Resurrection
- John 20:19-31 Jesus & Thomas
- John 21:1-19 The Fishermen
- Luke 24:13

Tenets of Faith (Faith Formation)

- Baptism is birth into a new life
- The links with Eucharist
- Transformation
- The challenges of faith

Gathering:

- **Welcome & Overview:**
Thank participants for coming back. Give overview and aim for today.
- **Initial reflection activity:**
How was the experience of being received into the Church for us?

- FF**
- At the beginning of this journey we identified the importance of story in people's lives and of how our story and the Gospel story would connect and grow closer along the way.
 - Being received into the Church is an important milestone on the journey, which now takes on a new phase. It is important that we take time to reflect on the initiation events and the impact they have had on us

Reflection – Play some gentle church music to set the atmosphere, ask the young people to close their eyes and remember:

- *What happened at home before church*; how they were feeling, what was the atmosphere like in the house. Hold on to one word associated with that memory.
- *What is remembered about the service*; in particular your Baptism, being Confirmed receiving Holy Communion for the first time. Hold on to sights, sounds, images, words or feelings associated with these events
- Ask the young people to record some of the memories in their journals, and be ready to share with the group
- Allow a couple of minutes then invite each person to share what on the day was most memorable and why.
- Draw together the reflections and use the notes below to lead into the opening prayer.

- FF**
- Baptism, and full communion, is about birth into a new life, a new relationship with God, the Church, and indeed the whole of creation. The milestone marks the end of one phase of the journey and start of a lifelong phase of discipleship.
 - These post baptismal steps are important for helping you grow in understanding of the 'Paschal Mystery' – the death and resurrection of Jesus, and of the meaning of discipleship. Before spending time with scripture to help us explore these ideas let us offer our thanks in prayer for the experiences and graces we have received.
 - The first day of the week, Sunday, has a special significance for Christians because of the resurrection of Jesus. It is known as the Lord's Day and was set aside from earliest times as the day for the community of believers to gather and break bread for 'the Lord's Supper' our Eucharist.

Opening Prayer

- **Prayer focus:** *refer to items and their significance here and as appropriate later*
- **Prayer of the Church Intercessions** – *Easter Sunday adapted*

Let us pray to Jesus Christ, the author of life, who God raised from the dead, and by his power we will be raised to life. **R** Christ our life, stay with us.

Jesus, you are the light that drives out darkness and draws your people to holiness. May our lives be a hymn of praise to you. **R** Christ our life, stay with us.

Our master and brother, you have invited us to share your priesthood in service to God our Father. **R** Christ our life, stay with us.

King of glory, on the day of your coming may we see your face and remain with you in God's house. **R** Christ our life, stay with us.

Scripture & Reflection:

- **Resurrection brings new life and hope *Matthew 28:1-10***

Ponder: how the disciples were feeling after the crucifixion: where might they have gone, what might they be thinking and doing? – Take some responses and coax a little deeper – why is that? Explain a little more...

Listen: imagine you are an eyewitness to the events and as you hear the story being read see what words, images or phrases remain with you. Take initial responses. Both the angel and Jesus tell the women not to be afraid. Why is this so important? How do you think the women were received by the disciples?

Ponder:

- Are there fears you carry about being a follower of Jesus today?
- Who or what can help you face up to or overcome these fears?

FF - At the time of Jesus women had little status, they were not considered to be credible witnesses in a court of law. Yet the first witnesses to the resurrection. Their prominence in the story echoes the faith demonstrated in the beginning of Luke's gospel when she says 'yes' to God's plan for her.

- **Encounters with the Risen Christ**

John 20:19-31, Jesus & Thomas John 21:1-19, The Fishermen Luke 24:13-35, The Road to Emmaus

- Split into three groups each to have a bible or copy of one Gospel passage.
- 1 person in each group to read the passage aloud, others to listen attentively, allowing the passage to speak to them.
- Ask individuals to hold on to words, images or phrases that resonate.
- Invite each group to consider the questions below. Allow a good 10 mins for this.
- Then allow a few minutes more for each group to decide what will be reported back and by whom: 1 person to give an overview of the story, another to share 2-3 of the important points in response to the questions.
- How is Jesus portrayed and who are the other important characters in the story?
- What are the main events?
- What is the message - Why is the story important?
- What do we learn about Jesus, the disciples and ourselves from this passage?

- FF** - **Jesus & Thomas** This gospel is one of transformation. The fear of the disciples, locked in their upper room and huddled in upon themselves, is transformed by the gift of peace that Jesus brings and his giving of the Spirit to strengthen them on their way.
- The doubt of Thomas is transformed by his encounter with the risen Lord. With this transformation, however, comes responsibility. Just as Jesus was sent by the Father, now, too, the disciples are sent into the world to act as Jesus did.
 - When Thomas is told by his companions that they have seen Jesus, he places his own conditions on faith. He will not believe unless he sees and touches Jesus. Jesus must fulfill the expectations that Thomas has!
 - Touch goes beyond verifying physical presence. It can provide healing and comfort; it can be an act of support or compassion. Thomas became a great preacher, he is believed to have taken the Gospel to Southern India; still the most Christian area of the country.

Notes above are adapted from the Summit, Melbourne Archdiocese

- FF** - **The Fishermen** The first appearance of Jesus to the disciples occurred in the upper room in Jerusalem where they had celebrated the Passover feast. Now, the disciples have returned to Galilee in the north.
- This gospel text has three movements: the extraordinary catch of fish; the meal on the shore, with obvious Eucharistic overtones; and the dialogue with Peter, which contains his commissioning as leader of the flock.
 - The great haul of fish of so many varieties indicates that the Good News of the Gospel will take root in many nations and bring many converts, but only with the help of the Lord. Alone, they had been unsuccessful!
 - The open-air meal indicates that Jesus still nourishes his disciples and evokes the many meals that Jesus shared with his followers. Jesus' dialogue with Peter establishes that love is the basis from which a genuine Christian ministry of service springs.
 - Along with other gospel texts, this passage reinforces the role given to Peter as the future leader of the flock, the one who entrusted with the task of caring for the sheep after the Shepherd has gone.
 - The role of Peter as the leader of the community of believers has been handed down in succession to the popes.

Notes above are adapted from the Summit, Melbourne Archdiocese.

- FF** - **The Road to Emmaus** Only reported in Luke, the journey in this story is symbolic of the entire Christian journey throughout life.
- The journey begins slow and plodding, the pace quickens when Jesus 'journeyed with them' and at the end of the day seems to have come to a pleasant halt.
 - Totally energized by their sudden revelation, the disciples race back to Jerusalem. Here they embark on a new, and very different journey.
 - The encounter with Jesus us a Eucharistic Service – it mirrors what happens at Mass.
 - After the initial welcome the Mass focuses on 'where people are' – the sullen disciples, reluctantly, speak to Jesus of their disillusionment – the Penitential Rite.
 - Jesus then talks to them about the scriptures, breaking open the word to help them understand the scriptures – the readings and homily.

- The disciples request Jesus to stay on and share more with them - a prayer of intercession. Jesus takes, blesses and breaks the bread – the Eucharistic Prayer.
- It was in the breaking of bread they recognised him, just as it is in reception of communion we are united with Jesus. Animated by their experience the disciples hastily go out to share the good news. This is what the priest asks of us in the dismissal rite.

Notes above are adapted from the New Testament, Nicholas King

Going Deeper - option 1

- FF** - In all the encounters with the Risen Lord there are elements of disbelief and fear. The gentle reassuring response of Jesus urges them not to be afraid, but to be at peace. Food is associated with each of the stories. To show them he was real, not a ghost, Jesus ate with them. Yet Clearly Jesus is different; he can suddenly appear in their midst. The readings convey that Jesus presence is more than just a feeling, he is truly present.

Ponder: - questions to ponder – together if time, or individually at home

Jesus & Thomas

- 'Happy are those who have not seen and yet believe.' This is you!
- How will you continue to nourish that belief?
- Share experiences of doubt you have had in your life: times when you doubted the love of another or doubted your own abilities. What drove doubt away?
- In society today how touch regarded? How do we deal with this? During the week Look for ways in which a simple gesture of touch can convey friendship, compassion or support this week.

The Fishermen

- What are you able to achieve now that you have the Lord with you?
- How has your connection with the Eucharist grown during this journey. How committed are you to allowing the Eucharist to nourish you weekly?
- Jesus asked, '*Do you love me?*' How might you answer this question, and how might others recognize this in you?
- The Church and its leadership: are there questions or concerns you are carrying about these?

The Road to Emmaus

- The disciples were without hope, so running away. Are there things in life you are avoiding: relationships, responsibilities, particular challenges or callings?
- How have your hopes and aspirations for life changed from being on this journey?
- With whom have you shared the Good News, and how might you continue this in the future?

Going Deeper - option 2

Resurrection Remembrances: prayerful reflection and symbolic action

1 - an Easter Meditation – from *Stages on the Way*, Wild Goose Worship Group, Iona Community

Four Reflections read by different voices; testimonies of individuals surprised to encounter the risen Christ. A short chant or Alleluia to be sung or played after each.

- During the singing a symbol representing each disciple is placed on a table in a different part of the room. A key, for the fearful, bread, for the confused, wood & nails for the doubters
- 3 of the readers stand near these tables, the 4th stands in the centre of the room, with others gathered around. (see resource **G in F step 1 15-18_Easter Meditation**)

2 - Our Response – from *Stages on the Way*, Wild Goose Worship Group, Iona Community

- Each of the three tables will now have a lit candle beside the symbol. All present receive a votive candle and stand in the centre of the room around the leader.
- The leader explains the symbols and invites all present to light and then place their candle on the table representing the people they feel drawn to. Music is played or a chant sung during this time
- In turn prayers are then offered by those who read the earlier reflections.
- A simple chant maybe sung or played while all return to their seats ahead of the closing prayer

FF - Growing in holiness: For both options 1 and 2 stress the importance of prayerful reflection for developing the relationship with Jesus, the way to grow in holiness and become living disciples.

Closing Prayer - from *Stages on the Way*, Wild Goose Worship Group, Iona Community

Leader: Almighty God, through the rising of your Son from the grave,
you broke the power of the grave, and the power of death.
You condemned death itself.
As we celebrate this great triumph
may we also make it the model for our living.

All: Help us to identify in our lives all that should rightly die;
Redundant relationships, tired habits, fruitless longings.
Resurrect in our lives, faith, hope and love
As surely as you raised Jesus Christ from the grave.

Closing Remarks and Next Step

- Invite response to the Step 1 gathering
- Living the Faith Step 2 – The Ascension
- Encourage personal and prayer support of one another and attendance at Mass