

LENTEN DEVOTIONALS

WEEK 7 (EASTER):

CHRIST IS RISEN!
PEACE BE WITH YOU!

SCRIPTURE: JOHN 20: 18-22

Mary Magdalene went and announced to the disciples, "I have seen the Lord"; and she told them that he had said these things to her.

When it was evening on that day, the first day of the week, and the doors of the house where the disciples had met were locked for fear of the Jewish authorities, Jesus came and stood among them and said, "Peace be with you." After he said this, he showed them his hands and his side. Then the disciples rejoiced when they saw the Lord.

Jesus said to them again, "Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, so I send you." When he had said this, he breathed on them and said to them "Receive the Holy Spirit."

REFLECTION

At long last, Easter Sunday is here! Christ is risen! Christ is risen indeed! Alleluia! The Gospel of John tells us that Mary Magdalene saw and spoke with Jesus on Easter morning. She was so excited that she rushed to the disciples to deliver the good news. But what do we learn? Even after sharing that good news, the disciples are still hidden away in a locked room, afraid. Have you ever had this happen to you? You are excited about a new discovery or happy event in your life, and you want to share it with everyone? But when you do, others aren't excited with you, or it doesn't change their mood or mind.

This is what we see in today's story. Mary excitedly shared her good news, but the disciples just couldn't believe it. Jesus recognized this and met them where they were at. Now, Jesus could have scolded them or been disappointed with the disciples. Hadn't they learned anything? But instead, Jesus said, "Peace." He let them see him, his wounds, his whole self. And again, he said, "Peace be with you." Jesus wanted the disciples to know that they could come to him when they felt bad and alone and that he would help them.

Isn't this what Christ offers us today? Through his resurrection, he offers us help, hope, peace, and purpose. Jesus gives us the gift of the Holy Spirit, who is the one who helps us in our daily lives and our big events. We can celebrate like Mary and doubt like the disciples and Jesus will meet us where we are and work with us there. This is the good news that Jesus gives to us.

DISCUSSION

As you color the coloring page, ponder these questions together:

- Imagine you are in the room with the disciples and Mary comes to share the good news about Jesus? How do you think you would react?
- What does peace mean for you? What does peace look like?
- The Gospel of John says that Jesus gave the disciples the gift of the Holy Spirit. As disciples of Jesus, how do you see the Holy Spirit helping you?

ACTIVITY

Supplies needed: Fresh or artificial flowers or activity page, tape or hot glue

One tradition in many congregations is the flowering of the cross on Easter Sunday. Congregations take the plain wooden cross that has been on display during Lent and fill it with fresh flowers on Easter morning. It is a beautiful visual picture of new life that emerges from death.

We invite you to take the cross you created last week and gather the prayers that cover it together. Replace the sticky notes with fresh flowers, artificial flowers or your colored and cut out flowers from the activity page to cover the cross and join in the celebration of Jesus' resurrection and a new life in Christ.

Please share your crosses by emailing them to icm@illustratedchildrensministry.com or sharing them on social media using the hashtag [#anillustratedlent](https://twitter.com/anillustratedlent) so we can share ideas from our amazing community on this joyous Easter day!

**Also remember to open your prayer boxes that you made earlier in the season and celebrate how Christ has journeyed with you to Easter Sunday.*

PRAYER

Christ is Risen!

Christ is risen indeed!

Thank you, God, for your son.

For the new life found in him.

For the new hope found in him.

For the gift of the Holy Spirit,

Who guides us and encourages us

To be a people of Peace and Purpose

To each other and all whom you love in this world.

Christ is Risen!

Christ is risen indeed!

Alleluia! **Amen!**