



a Kendall Hunt Company

Second Sunday of Easter, Year B, Intermediate - RCLB Lectionary



Intermediate Session

Acts 4:32-35

John 20:19-31

Opening Prayer

Let us pray.

Loving God, You want us to be peacemakers wherever we are.

Help us to be peacemakers and make the world a better place to live.

In the name of Jesus Christ we pray.

Amen.

Opening Life Reflection

The topic for today is the Challenge of Peace. Provide pencils, strips of construction paper and a stapler. Have each child write a prayer for peace on a strip of construction paper. Then staple the strips of paper, interlocking them together to form a peace chain. Discuss:

- How would you describe peace?
- How can you be a peacemaker?
- What kinds of things do peacemakers do?



Allow time for discussion. The call to follow Jesus includes being a peacemaker. Peacemakers treat others with respect and love.

Listening to the Word of God

In the first reading from Acts listen to how the first followers of Jesus live together in peace.

Read Acts 4:32-35.

Allow for silence.

Scripture Discussion Starters

- How do the first followers of Jesus share with one another?
- How do they care for one another?
- What do the apostles tell others about Jesus?

In the gospel today listen to Jesus give his friends a peaceful greeting.

Read John 20:19-31.

Allow for silence.

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- Why are the disciples meeting behind locked doors?
- What does Jesus come and say to his friends?
- How does Jesus help Thomas to believe?

Scripture Background

Provide 2-3 minutes of background information on the readings using the **Catechist Background** section.

The first reading from Acts of the Apostles shows the beginnings of the early Church. The Holy Spirit is present with the first Christians. This is evident in their powerful testimonies about the resurrection of Jesus. They live in community, sharing with one another so that everyone has what they need. In today's passage we have a glimpse of the reign of God already present in the midst of the early Church.

In today's gospel the Risen Lord appears to his followers on the evening of the resurrection, when they are gathered behind locked doors, afraid. He greets his friends with a greeting of "peace" and he commissions them to go out and continue his own saving work. Jesus gives the Spirit to his followers and through the Holy Spirit they are given the power to forgive sins. Jesus' greeting, "peace be with you," calms the fears of the disciples and empowers them to be peacemakers in the world. Followers of Jesus today are given the same task, to work for justice and spread forgiveness and peace throughout the world.

Questions for Deeper Reflection

- Where is the gift of peace needed most in the world today?
- Who are some peacemakers that you know?
- How can Jesus help you to bring forgiveness and peace to others?

[If you are not going to continue with the doctrinal discussion, proceed to the **Gospel in Life**.]

Doctrinal Discussion Starters

The Challenge of Peace

God created the world and all living things. War, terrorism, and the use of weapons, nuclear, biological, or chemical, threatens the existence of God's creation. The Church's teaching on peace addresses the real devastating effects of war and violence on human lives. Catholic teaching on the challenge of peace is rooted in scripture. In the Old Testament we learn that peace is not merely the absence of conflict. Peace is living in right relationship with God and God's people. Peace is living with others in a way that brings about the well-being of individuals and the whole community. The Hebrew word shalom refers to a total harmony with nature, God and self. In the New Testament, Jesus brings the gift of peace to the Church.



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The Church teaches that all human life is sacred. In 1983, the United States bishops issued a pastoral letter on war and peace, "The Challenge of Peace." In the letter the bishops point out the horrors of nuclear war. They teach that the use of nuclear weapons against a general population is immoral. We believe that because of the evils and injustices that all war brings with it, we must do everything reasonably possible to avoid it. Pope John Paul II has spoken about peace. He has addressed the evils that threaten peace in our world and has challenged world leaders to make decisions that value life. Our understanding of peace is founded on respect for all human life.

- What does the Old Testament teach about peace?
- What does the Church teach about respect for life?
- Why are Christians called to be peacemakers?

Sacrament Connection

In the Eucharist the Spirit joins us with Christ and one another in giving praise and thanksgiving to God for the blessings of creation and salvation. We are sent out from the Eucharist to "Go in peace." Sharing in the Eucharist helps us to live as peacemakers in the world.

The Gospel in Life

How can you live as a peacemaker wherever you are this week?

