

PRACTICAL APPLICATIONS

FOR FAITHFULLY FOLLOWING JESUS THROUGH YOUR WEEK

DINNER TIME DISCUSSION:

What do you love most about the Easter story and why?

DEVELOPING DISCIPLINES:

Journal Prompt: "Even when Jesus returned triumphantly in his resurrected body, he felt no need to erase the visible signs of his suffering." Amanda Held Opelt, A Hole in the World. What does this mean for me that Jesus did not hide the scars of his suffering?

GOSPEL IN EVERYDAY LIFE:

How has the promise of eternal life changed your life? When you consider the Great Commission, how do you see yourself as a participant in Jesus' grand call to make disciples of all nations? How are you living your faith actively and sharing it with others?

PRACTICING PRAYER

Resurrection Sunday is truly a joy-filled and triumphant day for the Church! And yet, many of us will come to this day longing for loved ones who are far away from God to know Jesus as their Lord + Savior, too. Sit with the names that come to mind in the loving presence of God. Commit (recommit) to praying for these people fervently and regularly.

VERSE MEMORY:

"The angel said to the women, "Do not be afraid, for I know that you are looking for Jesus, who was crucified. He is not here; he has risen, just as he said. Come and see the place where he lay. Then go quickly and tell his disciples: 'He has risen from the dead and is going ahead of you into Galilee. There you will see him.' Now I have told you."

Matthew 28:5-7, NIV



To be a Christ centered community helping people faithfully follow Jesus both locally and globally.

Leader Resource Guide

Date: April 20, 2025

The Empty Tomb



OPENER QUESTIONS FOR BUILDING COMMUNITY

Share about a day you anticipated for a long time. How did you feel when it finally came?

How did you celebrate Easter?

NOTES

BE REAL ABOUT YOUR SIN.

BE REAL ABOUT YOUR DOUBT.

BE REAL ABOUT YOUR PAIN.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS FOR FOSTERING CHRIST CENTERED COMMUNITY

1. **Personal Scripture reading recap:** A quote from Eugene Peterson's *Eat This Book: There is only one way of reading that is congruent with our Holy Scriptures, writing that trusts in the power of words to penetrate our lives and create truth and beauty and goodness, writing that requires a reader who, in the words of Rainer Maria Rilke, "does not always remain bent over his pages; he often leans back and closes his eyes over a line he has been reading again, and its meaning spreads through his blood." This is the kind of reading ... enters our souls as food enters our stomachs, spreads through our blood, and becomes holiness and love and wisdom.*

What have you read this week that has formed you with holiness, love, and wisdom?

2. **Enter the Story:** Just like last week, pick one of the different gospel recordings of the Resurrection (Matthew 27:57- 28:20; Mark 15:42-16:8; Luke 23:50-24:12, 36-53; John 19:38-20:31).

- A. Meditate on one account together by reading the passage out loud several times.

Give a little space for silence after each reading (30 seconds - 2 minutes, depending on your group's comfort level with silence). Let God's Word speak in this exercise, save discussion time for part b.

The first time it is read out loud, consider what phrase or word draws your attention.

The second time it is read out loud, prayerfully consider how this passage is intersecting with your life right now.

The third and final time it is read out loud, prayerfully surrender to the presence, power, and purposes of God.

- B. Discuss: Was there a word or phrase that rattled around your spirit as the passage was read? How is that intersecting with your life? Why is the resurrection such a central part of all four gospels? (See Acts 4:33; 2:22-33; 17:30-34 and Ephesians 1:15-23.) What are the implications of the resurrection in your own life?

C. Put yourself at the empty tomb. What questions and emotions would you have rolling around in your heart and mind? Try to capture the immense shock and awe that follows the deep sorrow of the cross. What foreshadowing had Jesus given as preparation for the reality of the past 3 days?

D. As you reflect on the last 4 weeks, what is still resonating with you from the "One Day" series and passages we studied (Good Friday accounts + Resurrection Sunday)? How have these past four weeks shaped your view and heart toward Jesus? What do you appreciate most about Him? How does this impact your discipleship to Him?

3. Investigate the Road to Emmaus account in Luke 24:13-35. Read this account and pay attention to how Jesus interacts with the disciples on this road. What do you notice about Jesus; his actions, words, and posture? What are things that blind us or keep us from understanding who Jesus is, what he's done, and now what he's doing in and through us? Let this account shape the way you interact with each other in your gathered community.
4. Matthew 28:8, "So the women hurried away from the tomb, afraid yet filled with joy." **After spending time rejoicing that the tomb is empty!** - take a vulnerable step to be authentic about your own sin, doubt, and/or pain. Is there a storyline or character from the resurrection accounts that you resonate with? (breakfast on the beach, Mary Magdalene, Peter, John, Thomas etc.) Why? How does the empty tomb shape our hope in the face of our sin, doubt, and pain?

Remember the tenderness and patience Jesus shows on the Road to Emmaus with the two disciples wrestling with what had just happened. Don't dismiss or jump too fast past the realities of what your gathered community is wrestling with ... and yet, don't lose the hope of the Resurrection either. It may be appropriate to hold the posture of the women - afraid yet filled with joy! Ground yourselves in the joy while you wrestle with the broken and fallen parts of life this side of glory.

5. The Woodlands in the Word passages are Mark 11-15. We will be back in 1 Peter for the next series. The sermon passage is 1 Peter 3:8-22.