

Family Connections

April 24 - June 12



Easter

Family Connections

Unit 6: April 24th - June 12th

During the Easter season, our lessons will focus on the resurrection and on post-resurrection stories. We will emphasize to our younger students that Easter is a *season*, and not just a day, by taking two more weeks to hear and tell the resurrection story. Our stories of post-resurrection appearances will include the story of Thomas the faithful doubter who stayed connected to his faith community and was given the gift of seeing and touching Jesus for himself. In the stories of “Breakfast With Jesus,” we will connect Jesus’ breakfast on the beach with his disciples, and his conversation with Peter (“Do you love me? Feed my sheep,”) with our own “breakfast with Jesus” – communion – and understand that sacrament as a pledge to Jesus that we will minister to others in Christ’s name.

Our older students will also study the Acts of the Apostles: Peter’s meeting with Cornelius, Peter and John’s miraculous release from prison, Saul’s conversion, and Paul’s first letter to the Corinthians. Through all of these stories, we will see God’s hand at work uniting, empowering, witnessing, and spreading the Word to the ends of the earth. If we are to be parts of this body of Christ, we also have a purpose and a part to play in this story. By faith, we are also called to be witnesses to the life of Christ.

So what is faith, and where does faith begin? In seeing, hearing, touching, smelling, and tasting? How do we believe that which we cannot prove? Ultimately faith is a gift—it comes from God. We cannot manufacture faith within ourselves or within our children. But we can cultivate faith by staying connected to other believers in our community. Although Thomas had doubts, he remained faithful to what he knew and to those with whom he shared his faith, and for that he was rewarded. The same can be true for us.

Our last unit will be a week to focus on stories from the Book of Daniel.

April 24

PS-2: Resurrection -

- When we say that Jesus was “resurrected” it means he rose from the dead on the very first Easter. God’s power overcame even death and raised Jesus. Jesus was alive! Knowing about God’s power helps us to believe in God.

3rd - 5th: Thomas the Faithful Doubter

- Even though we have not seen Jesus, we can believe in him. Doubt and faith can go together
- Was Jesus mad that the disciples didn’t believe or that Thomas didn’t believe? (no Jesus offered to help them believe.) So, can we expect Jesus to help us believe? (yes)
- What did Jesus say about the people who have not seen Jesus and yet believe? (They are blessed v. 29)
- If someone didn’t believe in Jesus, what could that person do to find out the truth? Brainstorm ideas on how you would advise someone to find the truth about Jesus. (Go to church, talk with a trusted person – parent or minister, pray to Jesus for help, come to Church School to learn about Jesus, read the Bible.)

May 1

PS-2: Resurrection continued

3rd/4th/5th: Prison Break!

After Jesus ascended into heaven, the apostles were filled with the Holy Spirit and they did many signs and wonders among the people. The high priest and all the Sadducees, being filled with jealousy, arrested the apostles and put them in the public prison. But during the night, an angel released them from prison. The apostles returned to the temple and continued to preach.

- The high priest had given the apostles strict orders not to preach in Jesus’ name. Why didn’t Peter and the apostles obey the high priest? (they needed to obey God rather than humans)

- A member of the council named Gamaliel talked to the council and said, “If this plan or this undertaking is of human origin, it will fail, but if this is of God, you will not be able to overthrow them. You may even be found fighting against...” (God).
- Think about this “test” – What do you think? Did the apostle’s teaching fail? (no – the Gospel is still preached all over the world).

May 8

PS-2: Thomas the Faithful Doubter

Even though we have not seen Jesus, we can believe in him. It is normal to have doubts in your faith. Talk to your children about questions they may have that they would want God to answer.

- The first time Jesus appeared to the disciples, Thomas was NOT there. How did he feel when the disciples said that they saw Jesus? (did not believe them).
- Did Thomas ever get a chance to see Jesus after he was raised from the dead? (yes)
- Did he believe after he saw Jesus? (Yes)

Although we have never seen Jesus, we still do believe that he was the son of God, and we believe the lessons he taught. Jesus said, “Blessed are those who have NOT seen and yet believe.” Even though we have not seen Jesus, we can believe in him.

3rd: 4th & 5th: Peter and Cornelius

Cornelius was a centurion. He was not Jewish, but he loved God. The Lord told him in a vision to send for Peter. Peter was a Jew. He was one of Jesus’ most beloved disciples and he became the disciple Jesus chose as the cornerstone of the church. It was unlawful for him to associate with Gentiles (like Cornelius). But God sent a vision to Peter. He was shown a net full of animals and he was told to “kill and eat.”

- Why wouldn’t Peter agree to eat them? (They were considered “profane or unclean” to Jews.)

- But God insisted that Peter eat them - why? (God made the rules about cleanliness and separation and therefore God can eliminate those same rules.)
- Then God told Peter to go and visit Cornelius. Did he go? (Yes, because God had shown him that he should not call anyone profane or unclean).

God loves all people and wants us to respect and care about each other. We are not called to blindly follow a set of rules, but rather to open ourselves to a process of discernment: listening to God's voice, and following where God leads us. In full humility we must declare that the choice to include or exclude is not ours to make, but rather God's.

May 15th

PS - 2: Breakfast with Jesus

- Jesus' friend were fishing, but they didn't catch any fish. A man on the beach told them to throw their net on the other side of the boat. Then they caught lots of fish! Who was that man? (Jesus)
- The disciples ate breakfast with Jesus on the beach. After breakfast, Jesus asked Peter to "feed his sheep." What did he mean? (He wanted Peter to take care of his followers).
- When we participate in Communion, the bread reminds us that Jesus loves us. Jesus wants us to help feed his sheep or take care of other people. What can you do to show kindness or take care of others?"

3rd, 4th/5th; Saul's Conversion

- Saul was a Jewish leader who persecuted Christians. He was traveling to Damascus to arrest the Christians there when he was blinded by a light. He heard a voice saying, "Saul, Saul, Why do you persecute me?" (Acts 9:4) Who did he hear? (Jesus).

- Saul continued on to Damascus following the instruction that were given to him and he visited a Christian named “Ananias.”
- Ananias was worried about meeting with Saul, because Saul persecuted people like him. What did Ananias do? (obeyed God, went to Saul, touched his eyes, told him God was going to use him)
- What happened when Ananias touched Saul’s eyes? (scales fell off, he could see, Saul was filled with Holy Spirit)
- Did Saul continue to persecute the followers of Jesus? (No, he praised God, was baptized, learned from Jesus’ followers, and began preaching)
- Saul had also been given the Roman name of “Paul” by his parents. Later on when he started traveling for his missionary journey’s to the Gentiles, he was referred to as “Paul” rather than “Saul”.

May 22nd

PS - 2: Continue “Breakfast with Jesus”

3rd, 4th & 5th: One Body

- 1 Corinthians 12:12. “For just as the body is one and has many members, and all the members of the body, though many, are one body, so it is with Christ.”
- Each person in the Church is a part of the body of Christ. Just like a human body is not complete without all its parts, the church is not complete without all its different people and ministries.
- We are each different and we serve in different ways, but we are all part of the same Church. God has given us different skills and talents to help others. Do not think that what one person does is more important or less important than what others are doing in the church.
- What skills and talents can you use to help others?

May 29th Ascension

- Jesus rose from the dead on Easter, and ascended into heaven 40 days later on Ascension. Why was it important for Jesus to appear to the disciples before ascending into heaven?
- Jesus told the disciples to stay in Jerusalem and wait for a promise. What did they need to wait for? (the Holy Spirit).
- In ten days, we will celebrate the coming of the Holy Spirit. It is the day when the disciples received the power to be “witnesses to the ends of the earth.” Why would the disciples need power to be witnesses? (the disciples were persecuted for preaching the Gospel or the “Good News” of Jesus Christ.)
- Over time, the disciples shared their stories with others who wrote them down. Those stories were eventually collected into the Bible and shared with people all over the world. Jesus never left his small corner of the world, yet His Good News about God’s love continues to be shared everywhere thanks to all who believe in him and who belong to the body of Christ.

June 5th: Daniel

- Daniel was wise and responsible. Darius made him a leader in his kingdom.
- The King’s Men were jealous of Daniel. They wanted to get Daniel into trouble with the king. But Daniel was a good man and he did not do anything wrong! So they made up a new law. The law said that no one could pray to anyone.... *Except the king!*
- Was the king angry with Daniel for praying to God? (No – he really loved Daniel)
- But the law could not be changed! What did the king do to Daniel? (Had him thrown into the lion’s den).
- What might happen to Daniel in the lion’s den? (The lions might eat him!)
- How did the King feel? (He worried about Daniel all night)

- Did the lions hurt Daniel? (No!)
- How did God protect Daniel? (God sent an angel to shut the lions' mouths)
- In the morning, the King ran to the lions' den to check on Daniel. What did he find? (Daniel was okay. God had saved him.)
- Talk with your children about how they can serve God, just as Daniel did, by being honest and true, and by praying to God.

June 12: Banner Party

Our last week of Church School will be a celebration of our whole year together. We'll complete a banner together to be hung in Fellowship Hall and thank our teachers and assistants for a wonderful year. We'll have some snacks, play some games, and have lots of fun! Thank you, parents, for sharing your children with us each week and join me in thanking our church school teachers for all they do! Have a great summer!

Sources: Lynn C. Wood.