

YEARS PRE-PRIMARY, ONE & TWO – EASTER: BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Good Friday to Easter Sunday

The Resurrection of Jesus is the crowning truth of our faith in Christ, a faith believed and lived as the central truth by the first Christian community; handed on as fundamental by Tradition; established by the documents of the New Testament; and preached as an essential part of the Paschal mystery along with the cross: Christ is risen from the dead! [CCC 638]

Jesus' death on the cross on the day, commemorated on the Church calls Good Friday, seemed to his followers that all of teachings and promises would be forgotten. After his death, the Apostles went into hiding, fearing they would suffer the same fate.

After Jesus' death, some women, who were his followers, came to anoint his body as was the Jewish custom. They had not been able to do it on the day of burial because it was the Sabbath and work was not permitted on that day. While the women have concerns about how they can move the great stone sealing the entrance of the tomb, in all the Gospels when they arrive, the stone has already been rolled away. In Matthew's Gospel when the women come to the tomb, they experience an earthquake and an angel appears who rolls the stone away.

The women find that the tomb is empty. In Matthew's, Mark's and Luke's Gospels they are assured by an angel that Jesus has risen from the dead. In Matthew's Gospel, Jesus appears to the women, and in the Gospel of John (and the longer ending of Mark) Jesus appears to Mary Magdalene alone. The women led by Mary Magdalene, who is named in all the Gospel accounts, are the first witnesses to the resurrection of Jesus. They are commissioned by Jesus to tell the disciples what they have seen. In the Gospel of John, it is only Mary Magdalene who sees Jesus and is commissioned by him.

Mary Magdalene and the holy women who came to finish the anointing the body of Jesus... were the first messengers of Christ's Resurrection for the Apostles themselves. [CCC 641]

Eventually Peter and other disciples also experience the risen Lord. The resurrection of Jesus rekindled the faith of Jesus' followers, and they came to believe that he was

indeed the Messiah. They could trust what Jesus taught them about his loving Father, and they could be a people of hope and new life.

Easter celebrates Christ's resurrection from the dead. It is the oldest Christian feast and the most important feast of the ecclesial calendar. Easter is a reminder that through his death and resurrection, Jesus brought us the promise of new life.

The Church recognises this in the liturgy of Holy Saturday. The fire, the water and the Easter (Paschal) Candle are very prominent in these celebrations, and they represent the new life of Christ, who is the Light of the World. We now celebrate this event as Alleluia people. Alleluia means 'praise God'. We praise God for this wonderful sign that shows that Christ continues to live among us, and that he takes us from death to life.

ABOUT THE SCRIPTURE IN THIS LESSON

Matthew 28:1-10 | *The Resurrection*

The women do not find the dead body of Jesus in the tomb as they expected. Rather they find an angel. The message of the angel is the revelation from God of his action regarding Jesus. It represents an early formulation of the faith of the early church:

'Jesus who was crucified is not here; for he has been raised ... you will see him'. 'He has been raised!' [see Matthew 28:5-6]

The women have been presented to us as model disciples. They were disciples of Jesus in Galilee, where they also shared in Jesus' mission as servants of the Lord. When the men fled in terror, it was the women who stayed with Jesus at the death. It was they who were there when he was buried, and who were the first missionaries of the risen Christ.

Matthew does not present the empty tomb as a proof for anything. It does, however, raise a question. It is a reminder of what Jesus himself hoped for, and it prepared the women, and it can prepare us, to be vigilant, so that when the risen Jesus comes to us we will be open to his presence and his call. If we are vigilant, we will see him when he comes. God had raised Jesus from death into the life-beyond-death. It was the wonder of this that brought the disciples through their fright and the shattering of their hopes to the new energy that empowered them to do to others what Jesus had done to them. It was this Spirit that brought about the incredible growth of the Christian community.

The Gospel according to Saint Matthew. An Introductory Commentary.
Michael Fallon MSC. Chevalier Press. Australia. 2005.

YEARS PRE-PRIMARY, ONE & TWO - EASTER

Good Friday to Easter Sunday



MAIN TEACHING AND LEARNING POINTS

- Jesus rose from the dead.
- On Easter Sunday, members of the Church family celebrate that Jesus is risen.

EASTER SUNDAY

On Easter Sunday, members of the Church family remember and celebrate that Jesus is risen from the dead. At church, a special Easter candle is lit and the word 'Alleluia', meaning 'Praise God' is used to celebrate that Jesus is risen and is always with us.

At home people celebrate Easter with special foods and give each other Easter eggs.

GOD'S WORD

Matthew 28:1-10 | The Resurrection

Parent: A reading from the holy Gospel according to Matthew.

Child responds: *Glory to you, O Lord.* (While saying the words, trace a small cross with the thumb on the forehead, lips and heart.)

After the Sabbath, as Sunday morning was dawning, Mary Magdalene and the other Mary went to look at the tomb. Suddenly there was a violent earthquake; an angel of the Lord came down from heaven, rolled the stone away and sat on it. His appearance was like lightning, and his clothes were white as snow. The guards were so afraid that they trembled and became like dead men.

The angel spoke to the women. 'You must not be afraid,' he said. 'I know you are looking for Jesus, who was crucified. He is not here; he has been raised, just as he said. Come here and see the place where he was lying. Go quickly and tell his disciples, 'He has been raised from death, and now he is going to Galilee ahead of

you; there you will see him! Remember what I have told you.' So they left the tomb in a hurry, afraid and yet filled with joy, and ran to tell his disciples.

Suddenly Jesus met them and said, 'Peace be with you.'... 'Go and tell my brothers to go to Galilee, and there they will see me.' [GNT]

The Gospel of the Lord.

Child responds: Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.

FOCUS QUESTIONS

Ask your child the following questions to help them reflect on the Scripture.

- **What happened when the women arrived at the tomb?**
- **What did the angel do?**
- **What did the angel tell the women to do?**
- **Whom did they meet on the way?**
- **What did Jesus say to them?**
- **What do you think this story tell us?**

ALLELUIA SONG

Sing this song with your child to the tune of London Bridge.

A-lle-luia is the word
is the word
is the word.
A-lle-luia is the word
that we sing at Easter.

A-lle-lu-ia means 'praise the Lord'
praise the Lord
praise the Lord.
A-lle-lu-ia means 'praise the Lord'
that we sing at Easter.

A-lle-lu-ia Jesus is risen
Jesus is risen
Jesus is risen.
A-lle-lu-ia Jesus is risen
Jesus is the Lord.

Jesus is the one we love
one we love
one we love.
Jesus is the one we love
A-lle-lu-ia Jesus.



Easter Card

Cut out the card along the solid black lines. Fold the card in half along the dotted line. Trace over the words and then decorate.

