

Introduction

Our passage this week is all about seeing (as well as touching, hearing etc.) to believe. We ourselves might be experiencing the lack of contact with people, as well as our regular routines, but we must continue to believe and have faith that life will return to normal again.

Into that Jesus speaks a message of peace. We hope in your worship time together this week you will experience that peace which Jesus offers.

Gather

Response line: **Share your peace with us.**

God our Father,
we meet together without fear:
Share your peace with us.

We meet knowing that Jesus came back
from death...
We meet because we are your Church...
Amen.

Read

Bible story

John 20.19-31: The disciples rejoice because they are able to see and embrace Jesus after his resurrection.

Action time

Teach everyone the actions to two key words in today's Bible passage. Each time they hear the word:

1. 'peace', ask them to be still for 10 seconds; encourage them to breathe in deeply and then exhale.
2. 'Jesus', ask everyone to give the biggest grin possible.



The return of Jesus from the dead was all the disciples could talk about. Every one of them was so excited about it. Well, not exactly every one of them. Thomas wasn't excited, because Thomas had missed it. 'Unless I see the marks the nails made in his hands, I won't believe he's alive,' Thomas said.

A week earlier, Jesus had appeared to 10 of the disciples. They were gathered together, hiding because they were afraid they would be killed next. Although they were in a locked room, Jesus appeared and said, 'Peace be with you.' As the disciples rejoiced, Jesus said, 'As God the Father sent me, now I send you.' Then he breathed on them, saying, 'Receive the Holy Spirit. When you forgive people their sins, they are forgiven. When you find people guilty, they are guilty.'

Thomas was with the others in the house now. 'I'll only believe if I put my finger in the marks and my hand in his side,' he said. The doors were closed, just as they had been before, but again, Jesus appeared. He said, 'Peace be with you.' Then he spoke to Thomas: 'Look at my hands and put your finger in the holes. Put your hand in the wound on my side. Do not doubt, but believe.' Thomas was suddenly as excited as the rest of the disciples. 'My Lord and my God!' he cried.

Jesus asked Thomas, 'Have you only believed because you have seen me? God blesses all those who believe even though they haven't seen me.' This is why the story of Jesus was written down; so that people may believe that he is the Messiah, the Son of God. All who believe in Jesus will have life through him.

Glossary

sins the bad things that people do, that go against what God wants; **Messiah** the 'anointed one', someone chosen by God to save the Jewish people, also a title used for Jesus.

Talk together with children

- How might you have felt if you were in Thomas' place?
- Has someone ever told you about something exciting which made you want to see for yourself?
- What can we do to invite other people to come to know Jesus?

Talk together with young people

- How would you have responded if you were Thomas?
- How easy is it to believe something without seeing it?
- When do you experience the feeling of peace in your life?

More activities, songs and prayers

Play

A simple greeting game

Invite one person to go outside the room and then come in again. Encourage everyone else to greet them when they enter by saying, 'Peace be with you.'

Create

Make a 'hug' to share

Provide cut-outs of the 'hug' template and invite everyone to decorate them.

Hand of peace

A reminder to offer Jesus' peace to one another

Use this easy recipe to make your own play dough. Increase quantities as required.

Ingredients: 150g plain flour, 75g salt, 1 teaspoon of cream of tartar, 1 tablespoon of vegetable oil, 300ml water, a few drops of food colouring.

Method: Sieve the flour, salt and cream of tartar together into a pan. Add the oil and food colouring to the water and add this slowly to the dry ingredients, stirring over a low heat. Mix until it forms a mass. Knead for a couple of minutes. This will keep in an airtight container for a week.

You will need: round foil containers, coloured play dough (recipe), sparkly bits/sequins/beads.

- Give each child a container and a lump of play dough to spread out into a thin layer.
- Invite them to play their hand and make an imprint onto the play dough.
- They can decorate their hand with sparkly bits and/or spell out the letters of the word 'Peace'.
- Take the hand prints home, as a reminder to reach out to others in peace.

Think/reflect

Peace be with you

Invite everyone to take time to reflect together on the question: 'Where do you need God's peace in your lives?' Give everyone a piece of paper and a pen to draw round their hand, and inside the outline, write down areas where they need to feel God's peace: today, this week, this month.

You could play the track [Peace be still](#), The Belonging co. feat. Lauren Daigle on *All the earth* as you do this.

Pray See, hear, feel prayers

Use your senses to experience God at work

- Take the words 'see', 'hear' and 'feel' one at a time. Either write them out on large sheets of paper, or just say each word out loud, and explain what it means.
- Encourage everyone to talk about ways in which they can sense Jesus at work in us and around us using those different senses, e.g. they may see Jesus through other people, or in creation; they may hear Jesus through the Bible, through kind words of others, through music; they may feel the presence of Jesus through hugs, or being in a special place.
- After you have discussed each word, spend a short time thanking God for those ways in which we experience him. Ask the children to choose one new way of experiencing God this week and embrace him through it.

Bear hug

Ask everyone to find a space in the room, sit down and give themselves a big bear hug and, as they hold that position, to close their eyes and imagine God's embrace. Encourage everyone to keep holding that position and pray aloud, inviting the risen Jesus to meet and embrace them. As they pray, you could also play the track [Peace be still](#), The Belonging co. feat. Lauren Daigle on *All the earth*.

Sing and listen

Watch and join in with some songs about God's Peace, some suggestions:

[Make me a channel of your peace](#)

[Let there be peace on earth](#)

[I've got peace like a river](#)

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