



Sunday Celebrations

Second Sunday of Easter | **April 19, 2020**

Welcome to Sunday Celebrations, a free resource from RCL Benziger to help you celebrate Sunday with your family, in your home.

Each Sunday's celebration focuses on the Gospel of the day, and encourages family members of all ages to join in singing, praying, sharing, and celebrating. Suggested songs (search the internet for recorded versions) and craft activities help enliven and extend the celebrations.

Here are three simple ideas to help you get started:

1 Choose the place where you will gather for your Sunday celebration. It may be around your living room coffee table, around your kitchen or dining room table, outdoors at your picnic table, or any place that works for your family!

2 Decorate your chosen place with symbols of faith. These might include a placemat, napkin, or cloth in the color of the liturgical season; a Bible; a candle; a cross or crucifix; and a plant or flowers. Other suggestions will be offered on each Sunday Celebrations outline.

3 Each Sunday Celebrations outline is based on the flow of a Liturgy of the Word with children. Feel free to adapt the outline to best suit the ages and attention spans of your family members. It is most important simply to set aside time to pray and reflect on God's Word.

RCL Benziger prays that by taking time for Sunday Celebrations, families of all ages will be encouraged and strengthened by God's Word. Our prayers are with you as you lead your family in Sunday Celebrations and the Good News of Jesus Christ.



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Gospel Reading

John 20:19-31

(Reading is available at usccb.org/bible/readings.)

Symbol (optional)

Bowl of water, vase of spring flowers or an Easter lily

Get Ready

Before today's celebration, find examples on the internet of things you have to see to believe. These could include natural phenomena, such as a triple rainbow or glowing sand, or fun examples, such as a dog who delivers mail and groceries to a neighbor or a grasshopper who "claps his hands." After sharing such examples, invite family members to talk about amazing, unbelievable things they've seen. Be sure to share your own examples!

Invite family members to again bring noisemakers with them (see last week's session).

Begin

- Light a candle and sing "Open Our Eyes, Lord."
- Make the Sign of the Cross together and pray:
**Jesus, every day you show yourself to us in amazing ways.
Open our eyes to see and our ears to hear you with us right now, today.
Amen.**

Listen and Reflect

- Use your noisemakers as you again sing "Alleluia!"
- Before proclaiming today's Gospel, explain that the main characters are Jesus and Thomas. Invite family members to listen for what Thomas had to see in order to believe.
- Proclaim today's Gospel.
- Spend a moment in silent reflection. Then invite family members to name what Thomas had to see in order to believe. (*The mark of the nails in Jesus' hands and the wound in Jesus' side.*) Recall that Jesus said to Thomas, "Blessed are those who have not seen and have believed." Ask family members what they think Jesus meant by those words. (*Ideas will vary, but should reflect that there are many people, including all believers on Earth today, who have never seen Jesus' nail marks, but who still believe in Jesus.*)





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Connect

- Engage family members in thinking about why they believe in Jesus by inviting them to complete the following sentences:

† When I see _____, I know that Jesus lives.
(Ideas might include: the sunrise; people loving each other; the cross; everyone at church; and so forth.)

† When I hear _____, I know that Jesus lives.
(Ideas might include: the birds sing; my favorite church song; laughter; words of love; and so forth.)

† When someone _____, I know that Jesus lives.
(Ideas might include: forgives me; hugs me; prays for me; helps me; and so forth.)

† I believe in Jesus because _____.
(Ideas might include: I have heard his stories in the Bible; I have learned about him at church; he has answered my prayers; many people have showed his love to me; and so forth.)

- As we continue to be encouraged to stay home and to watch out for each other and our neighbors, brainstorm ways your family can show others that Jesus is alive. Choose one or more of your ideas as a family faith activity for the coming week. Perhaps you want to continue to write sidewalk messages of Good News (see last week's lesson). By now, maybe a neighbor's lawn needs mowed. Or, maybe your family wants to stop and pray at a special time each day for the safety and health of your neighbors.

Conclude

- Lead your family in praying for the world, the Church, those in need, the sick and those who have died, and for your prayer intentions. Respond, "Risen Jesus, hear our prayer," leading your family in raising hands, palms up, to God.
- Pray together the Lord's Prayer.
- Make the Sign of the Cross and conclude by singing "Alleluia!" or a rousing Easter hymn such as "Easter Alleluia," or "Christ the Lord is Ris'n."





Sunday Celebrations

Celebrating Sunday Throughout the Week | **April 19, 2020**

Here is a simple way to continue to celebrate the message of today's Sunday Celebration.

- Place three baskets or bowls on your coffee table, kitchen table, or in a place where family members will see them. Near the baskets or bowls place strips of paper, pencils or pens, and crayons. Label one container "saw," one container "heard," and one container "showed."
- Invite family members to take time to write or draw throughout the coming week where they see and hear Jesus, and the ways in which they show Jesus to others.
- Before Friday or Saturday night dinner, take time to share and celebrate all the ways Jesus was alive and real to your family, and to others because of your family's efforts.

Prepare to Celebrate *Next Sunday*

At the beginning of next Sunday's celebration, you will be invited to take your family on a walk through your neighborhood, your yard, or your home to look for signs that Jesus lives. Take a few minutes to think about where you will choose to walk.

Prepare ahead of time a cutout pair of oversized sunglasses for each family member. Use poster board or heavy drawing paper. Make the shape of the sunglass frames fun and playful. Gather crayons, markers, stickers, and other decorating supplies ahead of time, too.

