



Sunday Celebrations

Third Sunday of Easter | **April 26, 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 24:13-35

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

Symbol (optional)

Bowl of water, vase of spring flowers or an Easter lily, sunglasses you made for each family member (see last week's lesson)

Get Ready

Invite your family to join you on a walk through your neighborhood, around your yard, or through your home. Once you have returned to your prayer space, ask family members to recall who and what they saw on their walk, and what they talked about.

Remind family members to bring noisemakers with them again. It is still the joyous Easter season!

Begin

- Light a candle and sing “Open Our Eyes, Lord” or “Walking with Jesus.”
- Make the Sign of the Cross together and pray:
**Jesus, thank you for walking with us each and every day.
Open our eyes to see you here and everywhere we go.
Amen.**

Listen and Reflect

- Use your noisemakers as you again sing “Alleluia!”
- Before proclaiming today's Gospel, invite family members to listen for who was walking together, where they were going, and what they were talking about.
- Proclaim today's Gospel.
- Spend a moment in silent reflection. Then invite family members to name those who were on a walk together (*two of Jesus' disciples*); where they were going (*to Emmaus*); and what they were talking about (*all the things that had been happening*). Then asked who joined them on the walk (*Jesus*).
- Ask if the disciples knew Jesus was walking with them (*no*) and when did the disciples know they had been walking with Jesus (*when he blessed the bread, broke it, and gave it to them*).





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Connect

- Remind your family that Jesus is walking with you all the time—in the hard times, like right now (give examples of hard things, such as not being able to see friends or go to church or play on the team)—and in the good times, like right now too (give examples of good things, such as having more family time, trying new recipes, and spending virtual time with family and friends).
- Let each family member choose a pair of sunglasses. Explain that the sunglasses are a reminder to open their eyes to see the many ways Jesus is walking with them. During the week, they should write or draw on their sunglasses ways they see Jesus walking with them. (Give examples, such as someone sending them a special card, a prayer being answered, a friend calling, or someone helping them with homework or a chore.) Then they should decorate their sunglasses with stickers, colors, and other fun things.
- On Friday or Saturday night, invite family members to gather before or after dinner to model their sunglasses and to share how and where they have seen Jesus walking with them.
- Before concluding today's celebration, brainstorm ways you will let others know Jesus is walking with them, too.

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 "Christ the Lord is Ris'n" or "This is the Day the Lord Has Made."





Sunday Celebrations

Celebrating Sunday Throughout the Week | **April 26, 2020**

Here are three simple ways to continue this week's celebration.

- Today's Gospel tells us that the disciples knew Jesus in the blessing, breaking, and sharing of the bread. This would be a good week to renew or emphasize the practice of saying grace before and after meals.
- Put a heart in the center of your kitchen or dining room table. At dinner each night, ask if anyone's heart is burning with happiness and joy. If so, invite that person to hold the heart and share the reason for his or her happiness and joy. Family members could respond by singing a joyful Alleluia or by saying, "We rejoice with you!"
- April has been a long and difficult month for many. This would be a good week to send family ecards or cards to your pastor and parish staff members, elderly family members, teachers, and others who come to mind. Simply say, "We just want to remind you—Jesus is walking with you today!" Use sidewalk chalk to put this message on your sidewalk too! Trace family members' footprints all around the message.

Prepare to Celebrate *Next Sunday*

Prepare for next week's celebration by cutting out a large image of a sheep. Gather cotton balls and glue. If you do not have cotton balls on hand, simply cut out white paper circles about the size of a cotton ball.

If you have a stuffed sheep and an image of Jesus, the Good Shepherd, plan to add one or both items to your prayer table at next week's celebration.

