

## PREPARING AT HOME

April 2-8, 2018

*Focus reading:* John 20:19–31 (<http://bible.oremus.org/?ql=385032723>)

*Other lectionary readings:* Acts 4:32–35, Psalm 133, 1 John 1:1-2:2

*Theme:* Love Is A Response to Grace

The disciples have good reason to be afraid after Jesus' crucifixion. No doubt the political tensions only increased after stories of Jesus' resurrection began to surface. The disciples knew that they, too, would be seen as a threat that must be eliminated. When the risen Jesus enters that fear-filled room, he offers peace. He also talks about forgiving the sins of others. The Greek word for sin, *hamartia*, is an archery term that means "missing the mark." What archer would not expect to "miss the mark" from time to time? And what happens after one misses the mark? The archer reaches for another arrow and tries to correct his or her mistake. Our curriculum states that "Grace, in this case, may look like a quiver full of arrows." (Seasons of the Spirit, SeasonsFUSION Lent/Easter 2018, p. 132) A gracious God forgives us and offers us a second, third, and fourth chance with countless chances after that. Having received that grace, we respond in love and forgive others. Thomas, who was absent from this gathering behind locked doors, later receives the peace and grace he needs as well. Jesus enters our fears and our doubts to bring us peace and grace that we might carry the love we have received into the world.

### PEACE

Twice in this story Jesus says "Peace be with you." When do we greet one another with the words "Peace?" Talk with your child about passing the peace in worship. With younger children, practice how you might do this. What are we saying to one another? What is the peace we are hoping for? In what way is peace the opposite of fear? Draw a picture of peace. Think of people to whom you would like to pass the peace and why you wish them peace.

### DOUBTS AND FEARS

Jesus didn't scold the disciples for being afraid behind locked doors; nor did he blame Thomas for not believing without evidence. Instead, Jesus empowered his followers by giving them the Holy Spirit and showed Thomas what he needed to see to be convinced. What are your doubts and fears? Talk about them, if you wish. Share them with Jesus in quiet meditation. Allow him to offer you his peace.

### PRAYER

God of Easter,  
We thank you for the peace your Spirit brings,  
calming our fears,  
answering our doubts.  
May we pass that peace to others.  
Amen.

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