

# Sacred Space: A Resource for Small-group Ministry

**Year B**

**Focus: Easter Sunday**

**Scripture: Isaiah 25:6–9 NRSV**

## **Gathering**

### **Welcome**

Easter is the day we celebrate the resurrection of Jesus Christ. Easter is the most important day in the Christian calendar as we rejoice in his eternal presence with us. Halleluiah!

### **Prayer for Peace**

*Ring a bell or chime three times slowly.  
Light the peace candle.*

Resurrected God,

Would we recognize you? Would we understand the incredible power you have over death? Grant us the peace that was present in the garden in those moments before your resurrection, and may we spread that peace as the women who first saw you alive spread the news of your resurrection! Help us to recognize opportunities for peace—that once seemed extinguished—now as new soil for growing peace. Clear away our fear that peace may not come to pass, and show us how to work to create peace in places across the world.

Amen

—Tiffany and Caleb Brian

## **Spiritual Practice**

### **Dwelling in the Word**

I will read a scripture aloud. As you hear the scripture allow words, images, or phrases to come to mind. Try not to focus on them. Let them rest with you.

After a moment of silence, I will read the scripture a second time. As you hear the scripture again listen for how God's spirit is nudging you or catching your attention.

*Read the scripture passage: Mark 16:1–8 NRSV.*

When the sabbath was over, Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of James, and Salome bought spices, so that they might go and anoint him. And very early on the first

day of the week, when the sun had risen, they went to the tomb. They had been saying to one another, “Who will roll away the stone for us from the entrance to the tomb?” When they looked up, they saw that the stone, which was very large, had already been rolled back. As they entered the tomb, they saw a young man, dressed in a white robe, sitting on the right side; and they were alarmed. But he said to them, “Do not be alarmed; you are looking for Jesus of Nazareth, who was crucified. He has been raised; he is not here. Look, there is the place they laid him. But go, tell his disciples and Peter that he is going ahead of you to Galilee; there you will see him, just as he told you.” So they went out and fled from the tomb, for terror and amazement had seized them; and they said nothing to anyone, for they were afraid.

*Pause.*

*Read scripture a second time.*

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Invite group members to share responses to these questions:

1. As you listened to this scripture passage, what words, phrases, or images came to mind?
2. What is God’s Spirit revealing to you through the hearing of these words?

## **Sharing Around the Table**

**Isaiah 25:6–9 NRSV**

On this mountain the Lord of hosts will make for all peoples  
a feast of rich food, a feast of well-matured wines,  
of rich food filled with marrow, of well-matured wines strained clear.  
And he will destroy on this mountain  
the shroud that is cast over all peoples,  
the sheet that is spread over all nations;  
he will swallow up death forever.  
Then the Lord God will wipe away the tears from all faces,  
and the disgrace of his people he will take away from all the earth,  
for the Lord has spoken.

It will be said on that day,  
Lo, this is our God; we have waited for him, so that he might save us.  
This is the Lord for whom we have waited;  
let us be glad and rejoice in his salvation.

This scripture is fitting for Easter Sunday and celebrating Jesus Christ's resurrection.

Previous chapters of Isaiah focused on God's judgment of nations, including Israel, because of their resistance to God's will. Here the text moves from judgment to blessings. God will provide a royal feast for all nations. Note: the text does not specify that only the faithful will be invited. All will be welcome. Salvation is universal.

The shroud of death, which casts a shadow over all nations, will be destroyed. Grief and loss are not the last words. God promises life, abundant, overflowing, and joyful. However, "death" in these verses does not concern only physical death, which is the natural end of all life. "Death" also symbolizes spiritual death and separation from God. In the reign of God to come, all separation and brokenness will be swept away. All evil and destruction will end. Only in those circumstances can it truly be said that God will wipe away the tears from all faces. On that day, all people will affirm: "This is the Lord for whom we have waited" (verse 9).

The coming feast and God's future reign are not yet our lived reality. But Jesus promised the kingdom is near, and the kingdom is within us. We are called to be those who are making the reign of God a reality in small, intentional ways amid the brokenness of the world.

## Questions

1. What does it mean to you to be invited to feast at the Lord's table?
2. When have you felt you were experiencing a "shroud" of darkness or despair? How did God's love and light break through in your life?
3. How do you understand God's invitation to bring about and take part in God's kingdom?

## Sending

### Generosity Statement

Faithful disciples respond to an increasing awareness of the abundant generosity of God by sharing according to the desires of their hearts; not by commandment or constraint.

—Doctrine and Covenants 163:9

The offering basket is available if you would like to support ongoing small-group ministries as part of your generous response.

The offering prayer is adapted from A Disciple's Generous Response:

God of Rejoicing,

We share our gifts joyfully and with thanksgiving in response to the generous gifts you have given us. May the offerings we share bring joy, hope, love, and peace into the lives of others that they might experience your mercy and grace.

Amen.

### Invitation to Next Meeting

## **Closing Hymn**

*Community of Christ Sings 471, “Mfurahini, Haleluya (Christ Has Risen, Alleluia)”*

## **Closing Prayer**

## **Optional Additions Depending on Group**

- Sacrament of the Lord’s Supper
- Thoughts for Children

## Prayer for Peace

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*Light the peace candle.*

Resurrected God,

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Amen.

## Communion Statement

Choose one scripture to read from this selection: 1 Corinthians 11:23–26; Matthew 26:17–30; Mark 14:12–26; Luke 22:7–39.

### Invitation to Communion

All are welcome at Christ's table. The Lord's Supper, or Communion, is a sacrament in which we remember the life, death, resurrection, and continuing presence of Jesus Christ. In Community of Christ, we also experience Communion as an opportunity to renew our baptismal covenant and to be formed as disciples who live Christ's mission. Others may have different or added understandings within their faith traditions. We invite all who participate in the Lord's Supper to do so in the love and peace of Jesus Christ.

We share in Communion as an expression of blessing, healing, peace, and community. In preparation let's sing from *Community of Christ Sings* (select one):

- 515, "In These Moments We Remember"
- 516, "Coming Together for Wine and for Bread"
- 521, "Let Us Break Bread Together"
- 525, "Small Is the Table"
- 528, "Eat This Bread"

## Thoughts for Children

### The Empty Tomb

Materials:

- Easter basket
- One plastic egg with a rock inside
- One empty plastic egg marked with a cross
- Small treats or Easter candy (one for each person)

Say: Today is Easter. I brought an Easter basket to share part of the story of Jesus with you. On Easter we are joyful because Jesus has been resurrected. That means Jesus died on the cross but lives again.

[Show egg with rock.]

Say: Inside this egg is a stone. [Open and show rock.] After Jesus died, his body was placed in a tomb (like a cave) and a huge, heavy stone was rolled in place to cover the entrance. On Sunday morning, two women went to the tomb and discovered that the stone had been rolled away so the tomb was open. The stone reminds us that even a huge stone could not keep Jesus in the tomb.

[Show egg with cross.]

Say: When the two women went inside the tomb, it was empty. Jesus was not there. At first the women thought someone had taken Jesus away. But an angel told them, “He is not here. He is risen.” The empty egg reminds us that Jesus’ tomb is empty. He is risen. He is not dead. Jesus lives.

Let’s bow our heads and pray: We thank you God, that you love the world so much that you sent your only son. We are thankful that his story does not end with his death, but instead ends with resurrection and new life. Amen.

[Share treats with children.]