

FAITH CIRCLES *connect*

2ND SUNDAY OF EASTER • YEAR B

1. Welcome your Guests
2. Share Food & Drink
3. Worship Song
4. Read the Sunday Gospel

JOHN 20:19-31

In the evening of that same day, the first day of the week, the doors were closed in the room where the disciples were, for fear of the Jews. Jesus came and stood among them. He said to them, 'Peace be with you,' and showed them his hands and his side. The disciples were filled with joy when they saw the Lord.

Thomas, called the Twin, who was one of the Twelve, was not with them when Jesus came. When the disciples said, 'We have seen the Lord,' he answered, 'Unless I see the holes they made, and unless I can put my hand into his side, I refuse to believe.' Eight days later the disciples were in the house again and Thomas was with them. The doors were closed, but Jesus came in and stood among them. 'Peace be with you,' he said. Then he spoke to Thomas, 'Put your finger here; look, here are my hands. Give me your hand; put it into my side. Doubt no longer but believe.' Thomas replied, 'My Lord and my God!' Jesus said to him: 'You believe because you can see me. Happy are those who have not seen and yet believe.'

5. Personal Sharing

In the weeks before meeting today, a member of the group was invited to prepare a short, 5-7min, sharing on how this Gospel reading connects with their life and relationship with Jesus. The reflection questions below may assist in preparing for the sharing:

1. The disciples were trapped with fear in the upper room when Jesus came and stood among them. Describe a time when you were afraid or anxious and you experienced Jesus' presence entering into the situation. What was it like and what was your response?
2. Like all the apostles in today's reading we are invited to personally experience and recognise the risen Jesus really and truly present in our lives. Share with the group a time when you have experienced Jesus' presence in your life? What has it meant for your faith in his resurrection and ongoing presence in your life.

6. Share in Smaller groups

Once your nominated speaker has shared their story, break into smaller sharing groups to reflect on the above questions. Each person shares their experience of God since last gathering in light of the Gospel message.

1. How is everyone going? (Consider "high/low")
2. What jumped out/touched/resonated with you from the personal sharing?

3. Have you experienced that in your life?
4. Was there another point from the Gospel that really struck you?

7. Worship & Prayer**Worship**

Singing together as a group is a vital part of each connect group gathering. Our worship draws our focus to God and all that God has done for us. As St Augustine reflected 'the one who sings prays twice'.

Play a song or hymn as a way of entering into a time of prayer. You may like to use some of the resources provided in our music guide.

Pray for Each Other

Remain in your smaller discussion groupings of 3-5 people. Invite the Holy Spirit to be present and invite group members to pray aloud for each others' needs. Enable time for people to share their prayer intentions. Individuals might like to pray for themselves or ask someone else to pray for them.

Closing Prayer

After people have had time to pray for one another in their smaller groups close the evening with a final prayer in the large group. A suggestion might be:

Loving Father, we thank you for the love and care you have for each of us. Fill us with your Holy Spirit that we may continue to draw strength from you and follow your will in all we do. We ask this in Jesus' name. Amen