

Easter

LESSON 13

Suggested Grade Level

Elementary School

Learning Goals

- › Easter is our celebration of Jesus' Resurrection.
- › Jesus' disciples witnessed the Resurrection to the world.
- › Every Christian is a witness to the Resurrection.
- › St. Thomas would not believe that Jesus had risen until he saw Him with his own eyes.
- › Jesus said that people who had faith in His Resurrection were blessed.
- › Because Jesus rose from the dead, we will rise from the dead.



Connection to the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*

- › CCC 656
- › CCC 658



Vocabulary

- › Easter
- › Witness

BIBLICAL TOUCHSTONE

The Lord is risen indeed.

LUKE 24:34, DOUAY-RHEIMS

Lesson Plan

Materials

- ▶ Handout A: What I Witnessed
- ▶ Handout B: The Easter Story
- ▶ Handout C: Doubting Thomas
- ▶ Handout D: Anastasis Look and Learn
- ▶ Handout E: Anastasis Coloring Page

Prayer

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

DAY ONE

Warm-Up

- Have the class stand and make the Sign of the Cross.
- Tell the class that you are going to tell a story. You want them to listen carefully to the story and decide if they believe it. Proceed to tell a silly and incredible story about something that supposedly happened in a public part of the school. For example:
 - ▶ I was walking in the cafeteria, and I saw a huge oak tree growing in the middle of the room! It had big red leaves, and there was an enormous pile of acorns all around it. People were playing in the acorns like a ball pit!
 - ▶ I was in Mrs. Johnson's classroom, and all the desks were upside down on the ceiling. Gravity must be reversed in that room or something. Her students were even floating around and doing somersaults in the air while Mrs. Johnson was trying to teach.
- Ask your students if they believe the story. Act incredulous that they do not believe it, and ask what it would take for them to believe it. If needed, prompt discussion with:
 - ▶ What if lots of other people saw it too?
 - ▶ What if those people who saw it told you about it?
 - ▶ What if you saw it for yourself?
- Identify a pattern in what your students say, specifically, that we naturally want to hear from other people who witnessed things and that we want to see things for ourselves. This makes it much easier to believe.
- We call people who saw something happen and tell other people about it witnesses.

Activity

- With your students in a circle, ask the children to think back on their day and get ready to tell a story about something they witnessed today. Maybe they witnessed their mother make breakfast or their dog going outside. It can be as simple or complicated as they like.
- Give students time to complete **Handout A: What I Witnessed**. As students work, ask them to tell you what a witness is.

Formative Assessment

- A. Tell the children that you are going to pretend to be someone. You are going to tell a witness's story, and they have to guess who you are:

"It was the third day after Jesus died on the Cross. I went to the tomb and it was empty. Jesus was not there. Then I saw Him appear. I didn't realize it was Jesus at first. I thought He was a gardener. Then He called out my name, and I knew Jesus was risen from the dead." *You are St. Mary Magdalene.*

- B. Ask the class what amazing event St. Mary Magdalene was a witness to. *The Resurrection.* Explain that Jesus also appeared to many other people after He rose from the dead.

- C. Remind the class how they responded to the incredible story you told earlier, and how it is natural to want to hear from witnesses when you hear something unbelievable.



- D. Read aloud **Handout B: The Easter Story** while students follow along. The Resurrection is an incredible story: Jesus rose from the dead!

- E. Talk with the class about how we have the stories of witnesses from the time so we can know it is true. We also have something even more important: faith. .

- F. Explain that in this way, every Christian is a witness to the Resurrection. We have the Bible and the whole Tradition of the Church, which have witnessed to this truth for more than 2,000 years!

- G. Traditionally, Christians say, "The Lord is risen indeed" Luke 24:34 (Douay-Rheims). These were words spoken by other witnesses to the Resurrection.

DAY TWO

Warm-Up

- A. Have the class stand and make the Sign of the Cross.

- B. Call on students to explain what a witness is and why witnesses are important.

- C. Explain to the class that the Risen Jesus appeared to several people, and they all became witnesses to what they had seen. But even among Christ's Apostles there were people who wanted to see (or witness) the Risen Jesus for themselves.

- D. Tell the class the story of St. Thomas, who wanted to see and touch Jesus for himself. This is why we call him "Doubting Thomas."

Activity



Create a quiet, prayerful atmosphere as you prepare to read the Bible. Explain that the Risen Jesus appeared to several people, including the Apostles, but Thomas was not with them at the time. Read aloud John 20:25-29:

So the other disciples said to [Thomas], “We have seen the Lord.” But he said to them, “Unless I see the mark of the nails in his hands and put my finger into the nail marks and put my hand into his side, I will not believe.” Now a week later his disciples were again inside and Thomas was with them. Jesus came, although the doors were locked, and stood in their midst and said, “Peace be with you.” Then he said to Thomas, “Put your finger here and see my hands, and bring your hand and put it into my side, and do not be unbelieving, but believe.” Thomas answered and said to him, “My Lord and my God!” Jesus said to him, “Have you come to believe because you have seen me? Blessed are those who have not seen and have believed.”

Formative Assessment

A. With your students gathered around, hold up **Handout C: Doubting Thomas** and have your class try to figure out what is going on.



B. Read aloud John 20:25-29 once more, asking listening questions as you go to check for comprehension.

C. Read aloud the verse at the bottom of the page and explain that we are blessed because we believe in God's promises and the witnesses of His Resurrection.

D. As time permits, have your students color the picture on **Handout C**. Pray together, asking God to help strengthen your faith.

E. For next class, ask the children to bring a photograph of their family celebrating Easter to be used for a project. Students who are not Christian can instead draw a picture of themselves celebrating Jesus' rising from the dead.

DAY THREE

Warm-Up

- A. Have the class stand and make the Sign of the Cross.
- B. Give your students time to share their photos from home.

Activity and Assessment

- A. Call on students to retell the story of Adam and Eve and the Fall. Then ask a student to explain (or explain this topic yourself) what Original Sin meant for humanity in terms of grace and Heaven. *We lost God's grace and could not go to Heaven.*

- B. Instead of living forever with God in the Garden of Eden, what would happen to people? We *would die*.
- C. With your students gathered round, hold up the artwork on **Handout D: Anastasis**. Give the children as much time as possible to view the image.
- D. Discuss the questions on **Handout D: Anastasis Look and Learn** and read aloud the information on the page as students follow along.
- E. As time permits, have students color **Handout E: Anastasis Coloring Page**.
- F. To close, teach students the following simple prayer and say it several times together:
 - Teacher: Christ is risen, Alleluia.
 - Students: He is truly risen, Alleluia.

What I Witnessed

Someone who tells others about something that happened is a *witness*.

Think of something that you saw today and draw a picture of what happened.

The Easter Story

Jesus is risen!
Alleluia!

We celebrate
Jesus' Resurrection
on Easter.

After the 40 days
of Lent, we have
the biggest feast
of the year!



Easter Sunday is just the beginning!
We celebrate Easter for 50 days.

We are full of joy! We say, "Alleluia!"

When we celebrate Easter, we are
witnesses of the Resurrection.

We tell the world that Jesus is risen.

Doubting Thomas



Saint Thomas would not believe Jesus was risen.

He wanted to see with his own eyes.

Jesus said to him, “Have you come to believe because you have seen me? Blessed are those who have not seen and have believed.”

(John 20:29)

Color the drawing of Saint Thomas and Jesus.





Anastasis

Church of the Holy Saviour in Chora

Anastasis Look and Learn

How does Jesus look in this painting?

Jesus is holding Adam's and Eve's hands. Find Adam. Find Eve.

Jesus is raising Adam and Eve from the dead.

Jesus rose from the dead.

Because He rose from the dead, we will too!



HANDOUT E

Anastasis Coloring Page

The Lord is risen indeed.

(Luke 24:34, Douay-Rheims)