



vibrantfaith

+ Generations Together

## Resurrection

Here is an intergenerational session for all members of the congregation exploring Jesus' resurrection and the challenge to believe that which we have not seen—as individuals, families, and as a community. This session is designed to be conducted in about 90 minutes, and can be adapted for a shorter or longer timeframe.

### Introduction

Each of the Gospels tells about Jesus' friends who found the empty tomb on Easter morning. The story of Jesus' resurrection doesn't end there. Learn about Thomas, who had trouble believing that God really raised Jesus from death. Here about Jesus' breakfast on the beach with his disciples. In this session we will get to know the *risen* Jesus and reflect on our own beliefs *and* doubts.

### I. Gather

[use the following adaptation of the activity Resurrection Faith & Doubt]

#### Needed:

Bible – open to John 20:24-29

### Activity Plan

1. Invite participants to sit together in family groups or small groups of 4-6 individuals. Gather in a comfortable place and say this prayer aloud to begin:

*Amazing God, it's easy to believe what we can see and touch and hear. Help us to believe in your love and saving power, even when we cannot see it or touch it. Help us to trust that your Word is true. Amen.*

2. Read aloud the story of Thomas (John 20:24-29) from your Bible, or from a children's Bible storybook if you think more appropriate.
3. In family groups or small groups, involve each person in retelling the Bible story, point-by-point. Have one person tell what happened first in the story. The next person says, "Then ..." and tells the next point in the story. Family or group members continue like this, in turn, until the story is finished.
4. Ask family/group members to discuss these questions (post them for all to see):

- What questions do you have about this Bible story?
  - What questions do you think Thomas had before he saw Jesus?
  - How were Thomas' questions answered?
  - Do you think Jesus was angry with Thomas? Why or why not?
5. Gather all participants into one large group and tell them that this next brief activity may help them think about how a person can be alive, even when we can't see them—as Jesus surely is. Ask one person to move to another room. Ask: Do you believe (*person's name*) is alive, even though he/she is not sitting with us? How do you know? As a group, move to a different room, but not the same room where the absent person is located. Ask: Do you believe (*person's name*) is alive, even though he/she is not standing with us? How do you know? Gather back in your original space, having the absent member join you.
  6. Mention how Thomas needed to see Jesus for himself before he could believe that God had raised Jesus from death. Invite family/groups to talk together about how you knew that the person who was in the other space was still alive, even though you couldn't see or touch him/her. Assure everyone that God promises to send the Holy Spirit to help us believe in Jesus, even though we can't see him and touch him.
  7. Read again Jesus' words to Thomas in John 20:29: "Jesus said to him, 'Have you believed because you have seen me? Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed.'"
  8. Direct participants back into their family or small groups. Invite each person to restate Jesus' message in his or her own words and share with the family or small group.

## **II. Grow**

[use the following adaptation of the activity Come, Eat Breakfast]

### **Needed:**

Bible (or see text); plain paper placemats or 12" x 18" sheets of construction paper, 1 per person; crayons or markers; goldfish crackers; napkins; (optional) beach towels or beach blankets to set the mood

### **Activity Plan**

1. Have participants remain in their family or small groups. Invite them to sit together on the beach blankets or beach towels. Guide them through the following process.
2. Together, close your eyes and imagine that you are sitting on a beach. What can you hear? What can you smell?
3. Open your eyes and imagine you can see a fishing boat bobbing in the waves. The fishermen don't look happy, because they haven't caught any fish.
4. From your Bible read aloud John 21:2-6. Review: How many fish did the disciples catch before they saw Jesus? (None.) How many did they catch after Jesus told them where to cast their net? (A huge number—153).
5. Give each person some goldfish crackers on a napkin to eat as you read aloud John 21:7-14. Talk about what the disciples saw when they reached the beach. (Jesus preparing a meal of fish and bread.) Take turns pretending to be a disciple and demonstrating what you might have said and done when you saw Jesus cooking breakfast.

6. Comment that this story takes place after Easter, after God raised Jesus from death. What does the story tell us about how the disciples felt when they saw their friend and Savior, Jesus. How do you think the disciples responded when Jesus invited them to come and eat breakfast? Why?
7. Give a plain placemat or 12" x 18" sheet of construction paper to each person. Take time for each person to use markers or crayons to decorate the placemat with a picture of Jesus having breakfast on the beach with the disciples, drawing each member of your family in the group of disciples.
8. Tell participants to take their placemats home and use them at meals in the days to come. Invite them to take turns telling the Bible story to one another and to any guests in their homes.

### III. Go Forth

**Needed:** sufficient copies of the following activities:

Resurrection: Caterpillar to Butterfly

Easter Traditions for Teens

Alleluia Chain

All Creation Bless the Lord

#### **Activity Plan**

1. Invite participants to gather in a large group. Invite general discussion on these questions:
  - What have you learned about the risen Jesus today?
  - What have you learned about your own beliefs and doubts?
2. Tell participants that you want each household to continue to reflect on Jesus' resurrection and the power of faith at home through the Easter season. Therefore, you want them to take at least one of the following activities with them as they leave. Briefly describe these activities:
  - All Creation Bless the Lord (adult/couple, young adult, mature teen): Easter starts the liturgical season of joy and praise. In the northern hemisphere nature cooperates by bringing forth new life and hope. Let us bless the Lord.
  - Easter Traditions for Teens (teen family): As children become teenagers, they may feel that Easter is a holiday for younger children and/or for people who aren't critical thinkers. Welcome teenagers' questions and invite them to help you develop new ways to celebrate Easter.
  - Resurrection: Caterpillar to Butterfly (young family): Watch the transformation of a caterpillar into a butterfly to inspire a time of reflecting on the meaning of the Resurrection. Christ promises that we will share in a resurrection like his, enjoying new life forever in God's kingdom.
  - Alleluia Chain (young family, all ages): Each day during the Easter season, take time to lift up "Alleluia" moments. Remember these joy-filled moments by creating a paper chain to hang in your home.
3. One last time read Jesus' words to Thomas in John 20:29: "Jesus said to him, 'Have you believed because you have seen me? Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed.'"

Conclude with this prayer:

*Sometimes, God, it is hard to believe in things we cannot see. Send your Spirit to strengthen our faith and help us to believe in you and in the resurrection of your Son, Jesus Christ, in whose name we pray. Amen.*

# Resurrection Faith and Doubt

By Beth Herrinton-Hodge



Each of the Gospels tells about Jesus' friends who found the empty tomb on Easter morning. The story of Jesus' resurrection doesn't end there. Read about Thomas, who had trouble believing that God really raised Jesus from death.

## For

Young Family

## Season

Spring

## Needed

Bible, or children's Bible storybook with the story of Thomas (John 20:24-29), or text

## Prepare in Advance

Think about your own faith and doubt concerning Jesus' resurrection.

## Activity Plan

1. Gather in a comfortable place and say this prayer aloud to begin:

*Amazing God, it's easy to believe what we can see and touch and hear. Help us to believe in your love and saving power, even when we cannot see it or touch it. Help us to trust that your Word is true. Amen.*

2. Read aloud the story of Thomas (John 20:24-29) from your Bible, a children's Bible storybook, or the text.
3. Involve everyone in retelling the Bible story, point-by-point. Have one family member tell what happened first in the story. The next person says, "Then ..." and tells the next point in the story. Family members continue like this, in turn, until the story is finished.
4. Discuss:
  - What questions do you have about this Bible story? (Don't feel as if each question must be answered; simply invite questions to be asked.)
  - What questions do you think Thomas had before he saw Jesus?
  - How were Thomas' questions answered?
  - Do you think Jesus was angry with Thomas? Why or why not?
5. This activity may help children think about how a person can be alive, even when we can't see them—as Jesus surely is. Ask one person to move to another room. Ask: Do you believe (*person's name*) is alive, even though he/she is not sitting with us? How do you know? As a group, move to a different room, but not the same room where the absent person is located. Ask: Do you believe

(*person's name*) is alive, even though he/she is not standing with us? How do you know? Gather back in your original space, having the absent family member join you.

6. Recall how Thomas needed to see Jesus for himself before he could believe that God had raised Jesus from death. Talk together about how you knew that the person who was in the other space was still alive, even though you couldn't see or touch him/her. Assure everyone that God promises to send the Holy Spirit to help us believe in Jesus, even though we can't see him and touch him.
7. Read again Jesus' words to Thomas in John 20:29: "Jesus said to him, 'Have you believed because you have seen me? Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed.'"

Invite each person to restate Jesus' message in their own words.

8. Say this prayer aloud:

*Sometimes, God, it is hard to believe in things we cannot see. Send your Spirit to strengthen our faith and help us to believe in you and in the resurrection of your Son, Jesus Christ, in whose name we pray. Amen.*

9. Variation: Some children will enjoy repeating step 5, with different family members taking turns leaving the room.

## Thomas Meets the Risen Christ

### John 20:24-29

<sup>24</sup> Now Thomas, one of the Twelve, called the Twin, was not with them when Jesus came. <sup>25</sup> So the other disciples told him, "We have seen the Lord." But he said to them, "Unless I see in his hands the mark of the nails, and place my finger into the mark of the nails, and place my hand into his side, I will never believe."

<sup>26</sup> Eight days later, his disciples were inside again, and Thomas was with them. Although the doors were locked, Jesus came and stood among them and said, "Peace be with you."

<sup>27</sup> Then he said to Thomas, "Put your finger here, and see my hands; and put out your hand, and place it in my side. Do not disbelieve, but believe." <sup>28</sup> Thomas answered him, "My Lord and my God!" <sup>29</sup> Jesus said to him, "Have you believed because you have seen me? Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed."

# Come, Eat Breakfast

By Paige Evers

The risen Jesus appears to his disciples and guides them to an overwhelming catch of fish and feeds them with a seaside breakfast. Experience the joy of the risen Jesus' presence by retelling the Bible story, decorating placemats, and enjoying a snack on an imaginary beach.



## For

Young Family

## Season

Spring

## Needed

Bible (or see text); plain paper placemats or 12" x 18" sheets of construction paper, 1 per person; crayons or markers; goldfish crackers; napkins; beach towels or beach blanket

## Prepare in Advance

Arrange the beach towels or blanket so everyone can sit on them in a circle.

## Activity Plan

1. Sit on the beach towels or beach blanket. Say this prayer aloud:

*Dear God, thank you for raising Jesus from death! Help us learn from your Word. Show us how much Jesus loves us. Teach us to be Jesus' disciples and to share his love with others. Amen.*

2. Together, close your eyes and imagine that you are sitting on a beach. What can you hear? What can you smell?
3. Open your eyes and imagine you can see a fishing boat bobbing in the waves. The fishermen don't look happy, because they haven't caught any fish.
4. From your Bible read aloud John 21:2-6 (or see text). Review: How many fish did the disciples catch before they saw Jesus? (None.) How many did they catch after Jesus told them where to cast their net? (A huge number—153).
5. Give each person some goldfish crackers on a napkin to eat as you read aloud John 21:7-14. Talk about what the disciples saw when they reached the beach. (Jesus preparing a meal of fish and bread.) Take turns pretending to be a disciple and demonstrating what you might have said and done when you saw Jesus cooking breakfast.
6. Comment that this story takes place after Easter, after God raised Jesus from death. What does the story tell us about how the disciples felt when they saw their friend and Savior, Jesus. How do you think the disciples responded when Jesus invited them to come and eat breakfast? Why?
7. Give a plain placemat or 12" x 18" sheet of construction paper to each person. Take time for each person to use markers or crayons to decorate the placemat with a picture of Jesus having breakfast on the beach with the disciples, drawing each member of your family in the group of disciples.
8. Use the placemats when you eat meals together in the days to come. Take turns telling the Bible story to one another and to any guests in your home.

## Breakfast on the Beach

### John 21:2-14

<sup>2</sup> Simon Peter, Thomas (called the Twin), Nathanael of Cana in Galilee, the sons of Zebedee, and two others of his disciples were together. <sup>3</sup> Simon Peter said to them, "I am going fishing." They said to him, "We will go with you." They went out and got into the boat, but that night they caught nothing. <sup>4</sup> Just as day was breaking, Jesus stood on the shore; yet the disciples did not know that it was Jesus. <sup>5</sup> Jesus said to them, "Children, do you have any fish?" They answered him, "No." <sup>6</sup> He said to them, "Cast the net on the right side of the boat, and you will find some." So they cast it, and now they were not able to haul it in, because of the quantity of fish.

<sup>7</sup> That disciple whom Jesus loved therefore said to Peter, "It is the Lord!" When Simon Peter heard that it was the Lord, he put on his outer garment, for he was stripped for work, and threw himself into the sea. <sup>8</sup> The other disciples came in the boat, dragging the net full of fish, for they were not far from the land, but about a hundred yards off.

<sup>9</sup> When they got out on land, they saw a charcoal fire in place, with fish laid out on it, and bread. <sup>10</sup> Jesus said to them, "Bring some of the fish that you have just caught." <sup>11</sup> So Simon Peter went aboard and hauled the net ashore, full of large fish, 153 of them. And although there were so many, the net was not torn. <sup>12</sup> Jesus said to them, "Come and have breakfast." Now none of the disciples dared ask him, "Who are you?" They knew it was the Lord. <sup>13</sup> Jesus came and took the bread and gave it to them, and so with the fish. <sup>14</sup> This was now the third time that Jesus was revealed to the disciples after he was raised from the dead.

# Resurrection: Caterpillar to Butterfly

By Heath Howe

Watch the transformation of a caterpillar into a butterfly to inspire a time of reflecting on the meaning of the Resurrection. Christ promises that we will share in a resurrection like his, enjoying new life forever in God's kingdom.

## For

Young Family

## Season

Spring, around Easter

## Needed

[From Larva to Butterfly Time Lapse](#) YouTube video showing transformation of caterpillars into butterflies

## Activity Plan

1. Gather where you can view the video. Say this prayer aloud:  
*God, send your Spirit to guide our thoughts and words as we learn together. Open our hearts to wonder about your great love for us through your Son, Jesus. Amen.*
2. Comment that each spring Christians celebrate the gift of Easter. Together, list what you know about Easter. Recall that Jesus died on a cross on Good Friday and that God raised him from death three days later. This new life is called the Resurrection. Read aloud Matthew 28:5-9:

But the angel said to the women, "Do not be afraid, for I know that you seek Jesus who was crucified. He is not here, for he has risen, as he said. Come, see the place where he lay. Then go quickly and tell his disciples that he has risen from the dead, and behold, he is going before you to Galilee; there you will see him. See, I have told you." So they departed quickly from the tomb with fear and great joy, and ran to tell his disciples. And behold, Jesus met them and said, "Greetings!" And they came up and took hold of his feet and worshiped him.

3. Take a moment to identify the variety of feelings these women experienced. Tell each other questions you have about the Resurrection. (Was Jesus the same as he was before he died? Why did God do this?) Let the questions rest among you without trying to answer them.
4. Explain that learning about two of God's creatures – caterpillars and butterflies – may help you think about the resurrection in a different way. Watch the YouTube video [From Larva to Butterfly](#).
5. Discuss your answers to these questions:
  - What happened to the caterpillars?
  - How do you think this change happened?
  - What was your favorite part of this video? What was most surprising?
6. Wonder together what it might have been like for Jesus in the tomb after he died. What in the butterfly story is something like this? (As you discuss and wonder, enjoy the silences. It is not important to rush in with explanations or answers.)
7. Wonder together what it might have been like for Jesus when God raised him from death. What in the butterfly story is something like this?
8. Give thanks that God's great promise of Easter is that when we die, we will be raised to new life with God, too. Wonder together what that will be like.



# Easter Traditions for Teens

By Jolene Roehlkepartain



As children become teenagers, they may feel that Easter is a holiday for younger children and/or for people who aren't critical thinkers. Welcome teenagers' questions and invite them to help you develop new ways to celebrate Easter.

## For

Teen Family

## Season

Spring

## Needed

Bible

## Prepare in Advance

Mark the following passages in your Bible or plan to use the text: Matthew 28:1-10, Mark 16:1-10, Luke 24:1-12, and John 20:1-10.

## Activity Plan

1. Pray this prayer aloud to begin:

*God, thank you for Easter and for the chance to spend time together as family. Amen.*

2. Ask for volunteers to read aloud Matthew 28:1-10; Mark 16:1-10; 24:1-12; and John 20:1-10 from your Bible or use the text.
3. As a family, compare the accounts of Jesus' resurrection in these four readings from the Gospels. Ask:
  - What is the same in all four accounts? What's different?
  - Which account do you like best? Why?
  - What questions do you have after hearing these four accounts?
4. Talk together about any Easter rituals your family has. Which mean the most to you? Why? Which ones no longer seem appropriate?
5. Comment that Easter sometimes may seem like more of a children's holiday. Invite ideas about how to make the celebration of Easter more meaningful for teenagers. Based on your conversation, create a new Easter ritual or two to add to your family's celebration. For example, many children enjoy Easter egg hunts for candy; teenagers, however, might be more interested in an egg hunt if the

contents of the eggs included money or if they are the ones to hide the eggs. Or they might enjoy egg bowling— rolling hard-boiled eggs on a hard surface to try to knock down a chocolate bunny. Or egg rolling—releasing hard-boiled eggs at the top of a grassy hill and seeing which ones rolls down the hill the farthest. Or doing an egg toss (with underhand throwing) using hard-boiled eggs.

6. Plan how to update Easter rituals to make them more appropriate for teens. Teenagers may still enjoy receiving an Easter basket, especially if it includes gifts like movie tickets, sketchpads, books, a gas card, a DVD, or cosmetics.
7. Invite teenagers to become more involved in the Easter traditions that adult family members enjoy. Involve teenagers in cooking, decorating the table, or finding a new recipe for your family meal. For music lovers, have them learn more about Handel's Messiah and perhaps attend a concert of Easter music in your community. Have teens and adults in your family volunteer to help with Easter worship at your church. For those who enjoy art, try creating Pysanka (Ukrainian Easter eggs): [Learn about Ukrainian Easter Eggs](#)
8. Connect teenagers with thoughtful adults who can talk with them about their questions and doubts concerning Jesus' resurrection. Many teenagers find it difficult to believe that the resurrection took place and so they disregard the entire holiday of Easter, or they may act out to make Easter uncomfortable for others. Instead, welcome their questions. Reassure each family member that Easter and the miracle of the resurrection are God's work and do not depend on human feelings or belief. God welcomes our questions and doubts, and the Spirit will help each person grow in understanding across the years. Talk about how adults and teenagers often have mixed feelings about holidays, which is OK, and they continue to celebrate because holidays are more than what people think, believe, and feel.
9. Alternate idea: Watch the movie *Miss Potter*, which is about author Beatrix Potter who wrote the Peter Rabbit books. Afterward talk about Miss Potter's descent into darkness and her psychological resurrection.

### **Matthew 28:1-10**

Now after the Sabbath, toward the dawn of the first day of the week, Mary Magdalene and the other Mary went to see the tomb. <sup>2</sup> And behold, there was a great earthquake, for an angel of the Lord descended from heaven and came and rolled back the stone and sat on it. <sup>3</sup> His appearance was like lightning, and his clothing white as snow. <sup>4</sup> And for fear of him the guards trembled and became like dead men. <sup>5</sup> But the angel said to the women, “Do not be afraid, for I know that you seek Jesus who was crucified. <sup>6</sup> He is not here, for he has risen, as he said. Come, see the place where he lay. <sup>7</sup> Then go quickly and tell his disciples that he has risen from the dead, and behold, he is going before you to Galilee; there you will see him. See, I have told you.” <sup>8</sup> So they departed quickly from the tomb with fear and great joy, and ran to tell his disciples. <sup>9</sup> And behold, Jesus met them and said, “Greetings!” And they came up and took hold of his feet and worshiped him. <sup>10</sup> Then Jesus said to them, “Do not be afraid; go and tell my brothers to go to Galilee, and there they will see me.”

### **Mark 16:1-8**

When the Sabbath was past, Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James, and Salome bought spices, so that they might go and anoint him. <sup>2</sup> And very early on the first day of the week, when the sun had risen, they went to the tomb. <sup>3</sup> And they were saying to one another, “Who will roll away the stone for us from the entrance of the tomb?” <sup>4</sup> And looking up, they saw that the stone had been rolled back—it was very large. <sup>5</sup> And entering the tomb, they saw a young man sitting on the right side, dressed in a white robe, and they were alarmed. <sup>6</sup> And he said to them, “Do not be alarmed. You seek Jesus of Nazareth, who was crucified. He has risen; he is not here. See the place where they laid him. <sup>7</sup> But go, tell his disciples and Peter that he is going before you to Galilee. There you will see him, just as he told you.” <sup>8</sup> And they went out and fled from the tomb, for trembling and astonishment had seized them, and they said nothing to anyone, for they were afraid.

### **Luke 24:1-12**

But on the first day of the week, at early dawn, they went to the tomb, taking the spices they had prepared. <sup>2</sup> And they found the stone rolled away from the tomb, <sup>3</sup> but when they went in they did not find the body of the Lord Jesus. <sup>4</sup> While they were perplexed about this, behold, two men stood by them in dazzling apparel. <sup>5</sup> And as they were frightened and bowed their faces to the ground, the men said to them, “Why do you seek the living among the dead? <sup>6</sup> He is not here, but has risen. Remember how he told you, while he was still in Galilee, <sup>7</sup> that the Son of Man must be delivered into the hands of sinful men and be crucified and on the third day rise.” <sup>8</sup> And they remembered his words, <sup>9</sup> and returning from the tomb they told all these things to the eleven and to all the rest. <sup>10</sup> Now it was Mary Magdalene and Joanna and Mary the mother of James and the other women with them who told these things to the apostles, <sup>11</sup> but these words seemed to them an idle tale, and they did not believe them. <sup>12</sup> But Peter rose and ran to the tomb; stooping and looking in, he saw the linen cloths by themselves; and he went home marveling at what had happened.

### **John 20:1-10**

Now on the first day of the week Mary Magdalene came to the tomb early, while it was still dark, and saw that the stone had been taken away from the tomb. <sup>2</sup> So she ran and went to Simon Peter and the other disciple, the one whom Jesus loved, and said to them, “They have taken the Lord out of the tomb, and we do not know where they have laid him.” <sup>3</sup> So Peter went out with the other disciple, and they were going toward the tomb. <sup>4</sup> Both of them were running together, but the other disciple outran Peter and reached the tomb first. <sup>5</sup> And stooping to look in, he saw the linen cloths lying there, but he did not go in. <sup>6</sup> Then Simon Peter came, following him, and went into the tomb. He saw the linen cloths lying there, <sup>7</sup> and the face cloth, which had been on Jesus' head, not lying with the linen cloths but folded up in a place by itself. <sup>8</sup> Then the other disciple, who had reached the tomb first, also went in, and he saw and believed; <sup>9</sup> for as yet they did not understand the Scripture, that he must rise from the dead. <sup>10</sup> Then the disciples went back to their homes.

# Alleluia Chain

By Christy Huffman

Each day during the Easter season, take time to lift up “Alleluia” moments. Remember these joy-filled moments by creating a paper chain to hang in your home.

## For

Young Family

## Season

Spring, during Easter Season



## Needed

Strips of construction paper or colored copier paper (1-inch x 6-inch), pens or fine-tipped markers, tape or stapler

## Activity Plan

1. Beginning on Easter Sunday, gather family members and invite each person to write or draw an “Alleluia” of the day on a strip of construction or copier paper. Explain that *alleluia* means “praise God.” An “Alleluia” is anything that brings joy or is a positive moment: a smile from a friend, a beautiful sunrise, an answered prayer, learning a new skill, reading a good story, a favorite food to eat, and so on.
2. After each family member writes or draws his or her “Alleluia,” use tape or a stapler to link the paper strips together to form a chain. Hang the chain around the dinner table or some other place where everyone will see it each day.
3. Each day after you add to the chain, ask family members to tell about their “Alleluia” for that day, and then say the following prayer:

*Christ is risen, He is risen indeed. Alleluia! We give you thanks, O God, for Jesus, who died and rose again to give each of us life with you forever. Thank you for every Alleluia moment you place in our lives. Amen.*

4. Continue this activity each day during the Easter season, adding to the chain each day or most days. You will have a grand collection of “Alleluias” when the Day of Pentecost arrives.

# All Creation Bless the Lord

By Susan Vogt



Easter starts the liturgical season of joy and praise. In the northern hemisphere nature cooperates by bringing forth new life and hope. Let us bless the Lord.

## For

Adult, Couple

## Season

Spring

## Needed

A happy heart that's open. (If you don't feel too joyful at the moment, can you at least summon up the will to look for the good around you?) Paper and pen, a candle.

## Prepare in Advance

- Decide whether to do this by yourself or with your spouse. If done with your spouse, see *Spouse Variation* at end.
- Ideally, it would be nice to do this activity outdoors. If this is not practical find a place where you can have a view of the natural world even if it is just a window, a book, or a video. (Dirt and insects in the basement would be a stretch.)

## Activity Plan

Ultimately, prayer is the raising of the heart and mind to God. Over the centuries we humans have tried to organize and categorize prayer. One system that is simple and memorable works with the acronym – ACTS.

Adoration / Praise

Contrition / Sorrow

Thanksgiving / Gratitude

Supplication / Petition

For this activity, we will focus on the “A” (Adoration) since Easter starts the season when Christians remember the glory of Christ’s resurrection. Pentecost soon follows as a reminder of the disciples’ courage and inspiration to share the good news of the resurrection with the world.

1. Begin by lighting a candle, pausing, and calling to mind the presence of God. Then pray out loud something to the effect of:

*Creator God, I come before you today in awe of all creation. Jesus, Son of God, I remember that you overcame death by rising and urged your followers to spread the good news. Holy Spirit, I have confidence that you will be with us until the end of time. Amen.*

2. Take about five minutes to sit quietly and look around you. Notice what is alive (plant life, critters big and small, birds, ants, mosquitoes or other flying insects, even dust bunnies that have collected under your couch or dust particles that dance in the air ☺).
3. On your sheet of paper, quickly write down the many manifestations of nature that you see around you. Don't worry if some seem silly or irreverent, just list them all.

4. Next form these items into a litany of praise and adoration since they all are part of God's creation and reflect God's glory. You can use the formula:

*Bless the Lord, all ye \_\_\_\_\_ . Praise and glorify God forever.*

*Bless the Lord, all ye \_\_\_\_\_ . Praise and glorify God forever.*

*Bless the Lord, all ye \_\_\_\_\_ . Praise and glorify God forever.*

*Bless the Lord, all ye \_\_\_\_\_ . Praise and glorify God forever.*

Continue for as long as your list goes.

5. End with:

*Give thanks to the Lord, for God is good, God's love is everlasting.*

*Bless the Lord, the God of gods, all who fear God,*

*Give praise and thanks to God for God's love is everlasting!*

### **Spouse Variation**

Spouse Variation: If done with your spouse you can sit together, say the opening and closing prayer in common but make your separate lists. It would be nice to combine your lists of natural items that glorify God and alternate saying the beginning stem, "Bless the Lord, all ye...", then join together for "Praise and glorify God forever."