



Fifth Sunday of Easter Cycle C

Prayer:

Loving God, we praise and thank you
For the newness we see all around us in nature:
Trees and grass are green again;
The sun has kissed plants and now flowers are blossoming.
May your Risen Son, Jesus Christ,
Hug our hearts and help us bloom with newness, too. **AMEN.**

Readings

Revelation 21:1-4
John 13:31a, 33-35

Reflection and discussion:

Today's scripture readings talk about something NEW. In the reading from the book of Revelation, heaven and earth look new to John because he sees things differently. That's what "revelation" means. When something is **revealed**, we see it like we have never seen it before. Can you think of a revelation that you have had?

Examples: Planting a seed, watering the soil, then watching and waiting until you see something green poking its way out of the earth. After making the connection between seeds and plants, we now see that a tiny seed has LOTS of power in it to become something much bigger and more beautiful.

Another example: Ask if they remember when they were born. NO. Then talk about the marvel of seeing a baby and realizing that all of us began as babies. We were really small and helpless, but we have power in us to grow.

John used to think of God and heaven as being far away. But after he knew Jesus and experienced Jesus Christ risen from the dead, John SAW things differently. John realized then that God and heaven are right here among us. "God's home is with God's people." God lives in us and is close by so God can help us when we are suffering and be happy with us when we are glad.

In today's Gospel, Jesus also talks about something new—a new commandment. The people Jesus was talking to knew about the commandment to love God and love their neighbor as they loved themselves. But now that they had met Jesus and experienced how he loved them, Jesus wanted them to remember to try to love others as they knew Jesus loved them. **Let's think about what that means. How did Jesus show he loved people?**

Did Jesus help people when they were sick or sad? **Invite children to recall examples.** Did Jesus forgive people who disappointed him or hurt him? **Remind children that Jesus forgave the disciples who ran away when he was arrested and crucified. When he rose from the dead he went looking for them and let them know that he forgave them and wanted to be with them. He had meals with them. He even cooked for them on the seashore!**

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When we share the good things that we have, when we hug someone who is sad, when we say we are sorry or when we accept another person's apology, we are living reminders to others that GOD'S HOME IS WITH GOD'S PEOPLE and that God uses us to be her/his heart and hands to show God's love just as Jesus did.

Activity

Materials: Fold sheets of paper into three equal panels. 8 ½ x 14 inch legal size would be good if it's handy. Otherwise, use 8 ½ by 11.

Crayons or colored markers.

1. Invite students to "plant"/draw a seed in the ground in the first panel. Tell them to write down on the panel what quality of God/Jesus that they want to grow in their lives.
2. In the second panel invite them to draw a tiny plant growing in the sunlight. Ask them to draw rays of sunlight shining on the plant. Then talk with them about what helps they need from Jesus or other people so the good quality in them will grow. (They may want to write some of the helps in their sun rays.)
3. In the third panel ask them to draw the flower or tree that symbolizes them and how they want to be good for others like Jesus. (Again, they may want to write in the panel to express how they want to be good for others.)

Closing blessing:

Extend your hands and bless the class, saying something like this:

Go now with Jesus, loving as he loves you
And so reminding others that "God's home is now with God's people."