

Our Sabbath Scripture Stories



F A M I L I E S R E C L A I M I N G S U N D A Y

Read aloud: Acts 2:1-11
1 Corinthians 12:3b-7, 12-13

Gospel: John 20:19-23

Dad quietly gathered all the family members in the living room this morning. All the curtains were closed. The doors were shut and locked. It was just the members of the Pauline family sitting close together on the floor in a darkened room. No one said anything for a few seconds, and the anticipation was rising. What was all this about?

In the darkened room, Mom suddenly turned on a big spotlight from Dad's workshop. Dad pulled the black cloth from a large picture that was on an easel. It was a picture of Jesus, and Jesus was looking directly at them.

No one uttered a word or made a sound. Then Dad broke the silence.

"Today, Kids, we hear about the Resurrection appearance of Jesus to His disciples. Jesus appeared to His disciples in a locked room. The disciples and Mary were all together, huddled in fear. But then, suddenly, Jesus appeared before them. The first thing He said to them was, 'Peace be with you.' "

Mom went on, "Can you just imagine what it would be like to have Jesus stand before you and say, 'Peace be with you'? Try to feel the same gentleness that Jesus must have conveyed that day."



Soon after, Mom went over and started opening all the curtains to let the light in. "How did seeing the picture of Jesus make you feel?" she asked the children.

"I feel all goose-bumpy!" Lucy said. "That was pretty cool, especially since I was kind of scared, because it was dark in the room!"

"And suddenly, there was Jesus looking at us!" Mary Clare added. "His eyes looked right at me!"

With all the lights on, Dad then opened his Bible to read the passage from John, Chapter 20. Dad ended the passage in which Jesus breathed on them and said, "*Receive the holy Spirit. Whose sins you forgive are forgiven them, and whose sins you retain are retained.*" (John 20:22b-23)

"Why was breathing on them important, Daddy?" little Lucy asked. "How come Jesus did that?"

"You see, Lucy," Dad answered, "Jesus breathing on the disciples was not merely symbolic. Remember in Genesis when God breathed into Adam to give him the breath of life? Jesus was breathing into the disciples and making them new beings, now with the ability to forgive sins or hold sins bound. They received the power of the Holy Spirit!"

"That is so amazing!" Vincent agreed. "And isn't that the same Holy Spirit that empowers priests to forgive our sins in the sacrament of Reconciliation?"

"Exactly, Vincent!" Dad smiled. "This power has been passed on for more than 2,000 years through the priesthood. And it all started that day!"

"Remember the lines where Jesus says, '*As the Father has sent me, so I send you*'?" (John 20:21b) Vincent asked. "Now, did Jesus mean 'you' as in just these disciples or 'you' as in me, and Hillary, and Lucy, and Ben, and Mary Clare, and all of us?"

"Excellent question, Vincent!" Dad marveled. "That day, Jesus gave the apostles the same mission, or the same job, as the Father gave to Jesus. But, and this is a big BUT, through the teaching and the mission of the apostles, we all came to learn about Jesus and God's plan for our salvation. So, one by one, as people all over the world became believers, we joined in God's plan, and we became SENT too!"

"To tell others, right?" Hillary asked excitedly.

"Absolutely!" Dad said as he scooped her up in his arms. "Jesus was sent by the Father; now Jesus sends us!"

"So were the apostles 'peaceful,' or were they jumping up and down?" Vincent laughed.

Now Mom could only laugh. "Well, the apostles were rejoicing when they realized Jesus was alive, but Jesus also offered them His peace. So maybe a little of both!"

"That's right," Dad added. "When Jesus offered the apostles His peace, it was the peace you extend to others, peace for the world, and the peace in knowing you are in right relationship with God. That kind of peace would make anyone rejoice!"

"Amen!" Mom exclaimed. "Now let's have a 'peaceful' exit as we are all 'sent' off for Mass this morning!"

And wearing their touches of red (the liturgical color for the day), the family headed out.