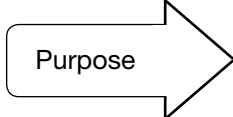
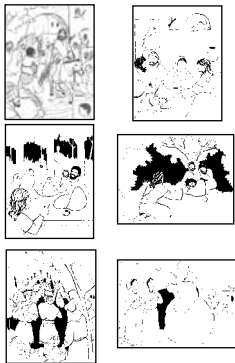
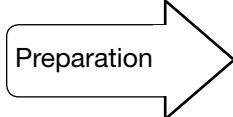


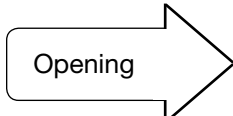
BREATH OF HOPE
(Second Sunday of Easter)



To explore ways we can experience God's Spirit.



- Read John 20:19-31 and the biblical background for May 1.
- Prepare the worship table with a yellow or white cloth, a Bible, Unit VI logo, offering basket and a candle. Place an Easter basket filled with signs of new life (e.g. seeds, budding branches, stuffed chick or lamb, empty eggshell, spring flowers, etc.) on the table. Decorate room.
- Print "Easter Greeting" on newsprint sheet (*See Opening*).
- Bring set of 6 teaching pictures "Hosanna!" (#44) "A Celebration!" (#45) "Stay Awake!" (#46) "Not Me!" (#47) "Who Was Jesus?" (#48) and "Alive Again!" (#49) from Unit V.
- Bring *Seasons of the Spirit* CD (vol.9) and CD player.
- Print opening prayer on newsprint (It will be used each week in the unit).
- Bring a selection of foods on a plate that would have been eaten in Jesus' time (e.g. grapes, olives, pita bread, cheese, etc.) and a blanket.
- *Option A:* Make copies of activity sheet "Where Is Jesus?" maze. Bring pencils and crayons.
- *Option B:* Cut people shapes from poster board (*See pattern on Teacher's Resource Sheet.*) Bring a variety of ribbons, tissue paper or crepe paper strips and fine line markers etc.
- *Option C:* Secure the use of a bulletin board. If your church does not have one, tape a colorful paper backdrop to a wall. Read the resource sheet "Alleluia Bulletin Board." Cut out the letters ALLELUIA approximately 6-8 in. (15-20 cm) high from brightly colored paper. Bring seeds, white glue, nature pictures and other reminders of new life. Bring grey or brown construction paper and scissors.
- Check the birthday list.
- Pray for openness to God's Spirit as you celebrate this joyous Season of Easter.



Invite a child to **light the candle** and say, "We light this candle to remind us that God is always with us."

Welcome each child by name. Take a moment to talk about what they did to celebrate Easter Day last Sunday. Did you know that Easter is not over? Easter is not just a one day celebration, but a special season in our church that lasts for 8 Sundays. It is a time to be joyful and sing and say lots of Alleluias. We have a special Easter greeting that we are going to say to each other each week. (*Put up newsprint sheet*)

Easter Greeting

Teacher: Alleluia, Christ is risen!

Children: Christ is risen, indeed!

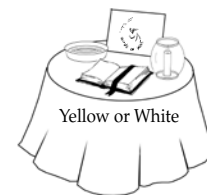
All: Alleluia!

Sing: "Alleluia!" #8 *Seasons of the Spirit* CD (vol. 9)

(Or use song with same title from Teacher's Resource Sheet)

Attendance, Birthdays, Offering

Prayer: Thank you God,
For the good news of Easter
That Jesus is with us again
To show us your way. Amen.



Easter Basket: Invite a child to take an item out of the basket. Invite them to say how that item shows new life. Have the child place the item on the worship table. Repeat until all the items are there. Each of these items show us new life beginning and can remind us of the new life that God gave to Jesus on Easter day.

Reviewing the Easter Story

(*Set out the 6 teaching pictures that tell the Easter story in a jumbled order.*) Invite the children to rearrange the pictures into the correct order to tell the Easter Story. Then invite them to tell you about what is happening in each picture. (*After the last picture has been described, continue...*) The 2 Marys were so happy and went to tell the disciples what they had seen—that Jesus was alive in a new way and with them again! But the disciples didn't believe what the women said. Our story today is about what happened next.

Exploring
the Theme

Story: “Meeting Jesus”

(Place the candle, the food and the blanket nearby. Open the Bible to the gospel of John.) Today’s story comes from John’s gospel. It begins late on Easter Day. The disciples are all gathered together in an upstairs room. *(Tell the story from the Story Resource Sheet.)*

A Time for Wondering...

- I wonder what Benjamin and his family and friends will do now that they’ve seen Jesus?...
- I wonder whether other people will listen when they try to tell what has happened?...
- I wonder how the disciples are feeling now?...
- I wonder what you like best about the Easter story?...

Song: “Filled With Easter Joy” *(See Teachers Resource Sheet)*

Integrating
the Theme



Option A: “Where Is Jesus?” Maze

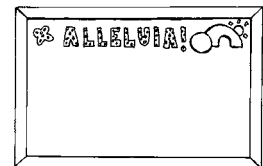
Look at the maze together. Help the children talk about each of the pictures and the question “Where is Jesus today?” Wonder what will happen now that Jesus’ friends have seen him. Encourage them to add something that reminds them of Jesus.

Option B: Breath of God, Blow on Me

When Jesus breathed on his friends and gave them the gift of the Spirit it got them moving again. Make this wind ornament as a reminder that we all experience God’s Spirit. What does God’s Spirit help us to do? Hand out the paper people shapes and invite the children to decorate them to represent themselves. Help them print “Breath of God, Blow on Me” on the figure. Attach a ribbon for hanging and add streamers to the feet. Encourage them to take it home and hang it up.

Option C: Bulletin Board Project *(an ongoing project)*

Hand out the precut letters for Alleluia and invite the children to decorate them with seeds, and Easter stickers and other reminders of new life. Invite them to make a tomb and a butterfly. Attach the letters along the top of the bulletin board, and add open tomb and butterfly.



Closing

(Look together at the Unit VI logo) Notice the joyful people filled with God’s Spirit.

Prayer: God, be with us
this we pray.
May your Spirit guide us
in work and play.
We thank you for Jesus
who teaches your way,
bringing us closer to you
every day. Amen.

Story: Meeting Jesus



(Place the lit candle in front of everyone.) Benjamin was young—about as young as you and he knew that something was the matter. Ever since their friend Jesus had died everyone was acting strange! At first there had been lots of crying and even some arguments.

Now nobody was saying much and when they did, they whispered. And Benjamin couldn't even go outside to play! The big door was shut and locked. When anyone had to come or go they had to knock a certain way as a signal. The adults were afraid that what happened to Jesus might also happen to them. Earlier the two Marys had told them a strange story about seeing Jesus. But no one believed them.

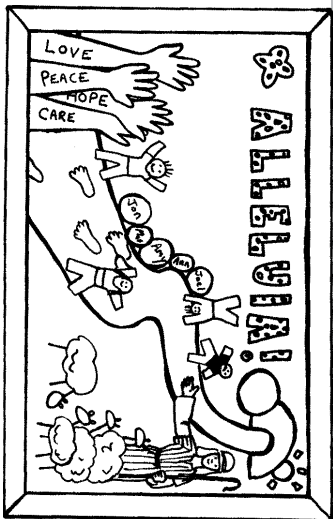
Then something happened! The lamp in the corner of the room flickered. *(Blow gently on candle.)* And when Benjamin looked up standing right in front of him was Jesus!

How could this be? Jesus was here! Jesus had risen like Mary said! Then Jesus said to everyone, "Peace be with you." He told them not to be afraid. *(Gently blow again.)* Then he breathed God's Spirit on everyone—on Benjamin, on his parents, on all the disciples. And what a feeling! Benjamin felt warm all over, the way he felt when the sun shone on him or when his father hugged him, or when his mother tucked him in at night. Jesus told everyone that he loved them and God loved them and that this love which we felt all around and deep inside was God's Spirit. Jesus asked us to go out and share this love with others. Then Jesus vanished! But that warm loving feeling stayed with us and we were no longer afraid. We wanted to tell others what had happened.

(Set plate of food in front of everyone.) Benjamin couldn't wait to tell his Uncle Thomas all about this experience! One week later as they all ate dinner together Benjamin told him everything! But he could tell by the way Uncle Thomas frowned and scrunched up his forehead that he just didn't believe him! Uncle Thomas was always hard to tell things to. Why Uncle Thomas wouldn't even believe that the bread was fresh unless he tasted it for himself!

Then just as mysteriously as before, Jesus was standing right beside Thomas. Jesus held out his hand and Benjamin saw the marks where the nails had gone in. Jesus took Uncle Thomas' hand and put it in his, saying "See for yourself." Now uncle Thomas knew what the rest of us knew. Jesus was with us again in a new way.

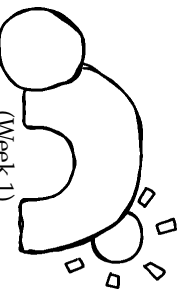
When Benjamin went to bed that night he was still full of wonder and excitement. He could hardly sleep. Where was Jesus now? When would they see him again? *(Wrap the blanket around one of the children.)* When Benjamin gathered his blanket around him he had that feeling he'd had before. It was that warm and loving feeling like being wrapped up in a hug. Was this God's Spirit? And as he drifted slowly off to sleep he smiled and prayed, "Thank you, God, for your gift of Jesus. Even though I don't see Jesus right now, I know he is with us, Amen." *(Share the food on the plate.)*



To celebrate the Easter season, make an "Alleluia" bulletin board that will be added to each week.

Before the children arrive

- secure the use of a bulletin board to be used from Easter to Pentecost. (Alternative: tape together lengthwise two sheets of mural paper about 4 ft./1.3m long.)
- Cover the board with a bright color.



(Week 1)

What to do each week

(Note: more explanation will be found in each lesson.)

Week 2: Bring precut letters for Alleluia and invite the children to decorate with seeds, butterflies, glitter and sequins.

Attach the letters along the top of the board. Invite children to cut out an empty tomb and stone to add to top corner. Add sun.

Week 3: Add a curving road that will fill the space from the tomb to the bottom left hand corner of the board. Invite the children to decorate the road with footprints of those who have seen the empty tomb and gone to tell others. (e.g. use paint, or chalk, or trace feet, etc.) Attach the feet to the bulletin board.

Week 4: Cut out the shepherd on this page and invite one child to color it. Invite the

"Alleluia" Bulletin Board



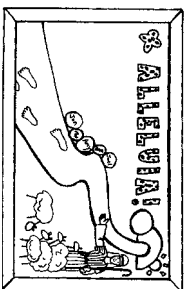
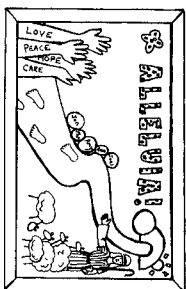
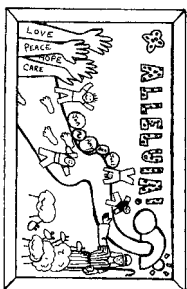
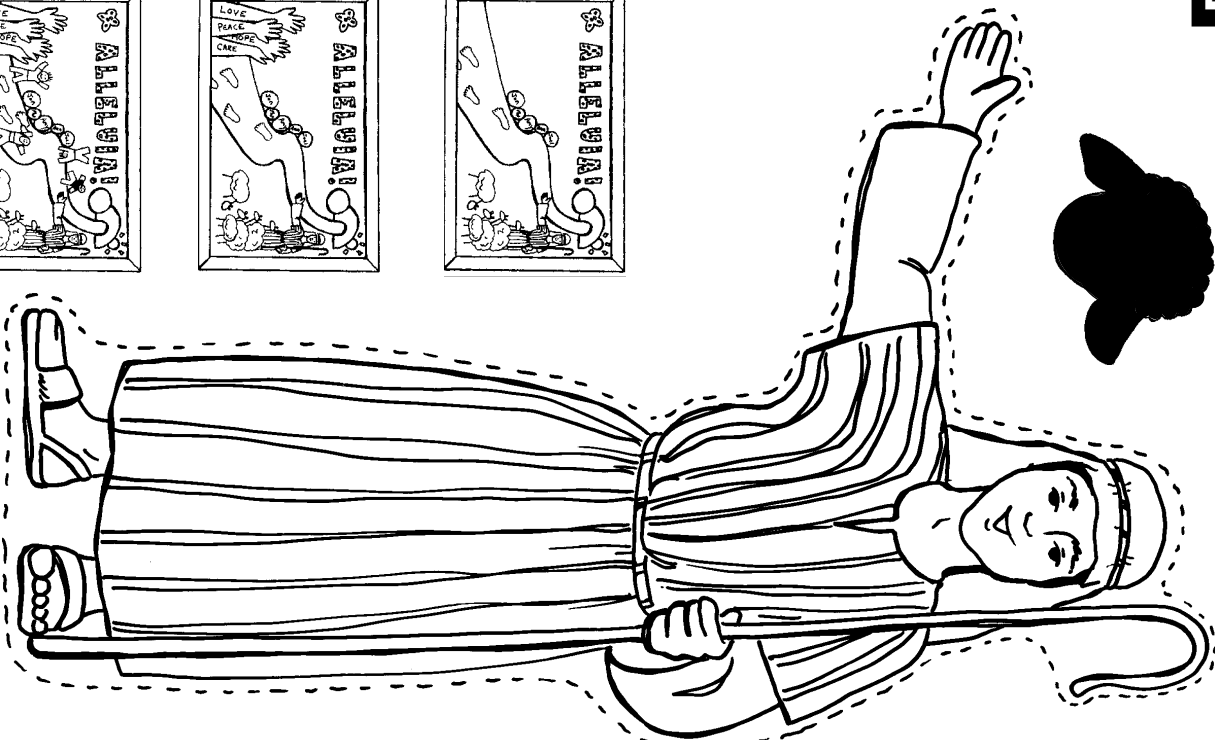
other children to make sheep by taping toothpick legs to precut oval shapes. Glue stretched cotton balls over the body and legs. Cut out and glue black paper heads on the oval bodies. (See pattern.) Attach the sheep and the shepherd to the bulletin board.

Week 5: Hand out grey or beige fabric stones and invite the children to print their names on them. (Use ball-point pens or thin felt markers.) Add the stones, along the roadway. (If the children crumple a small ball of paper and staple the fabric over it, they will get a lumpy effect.)

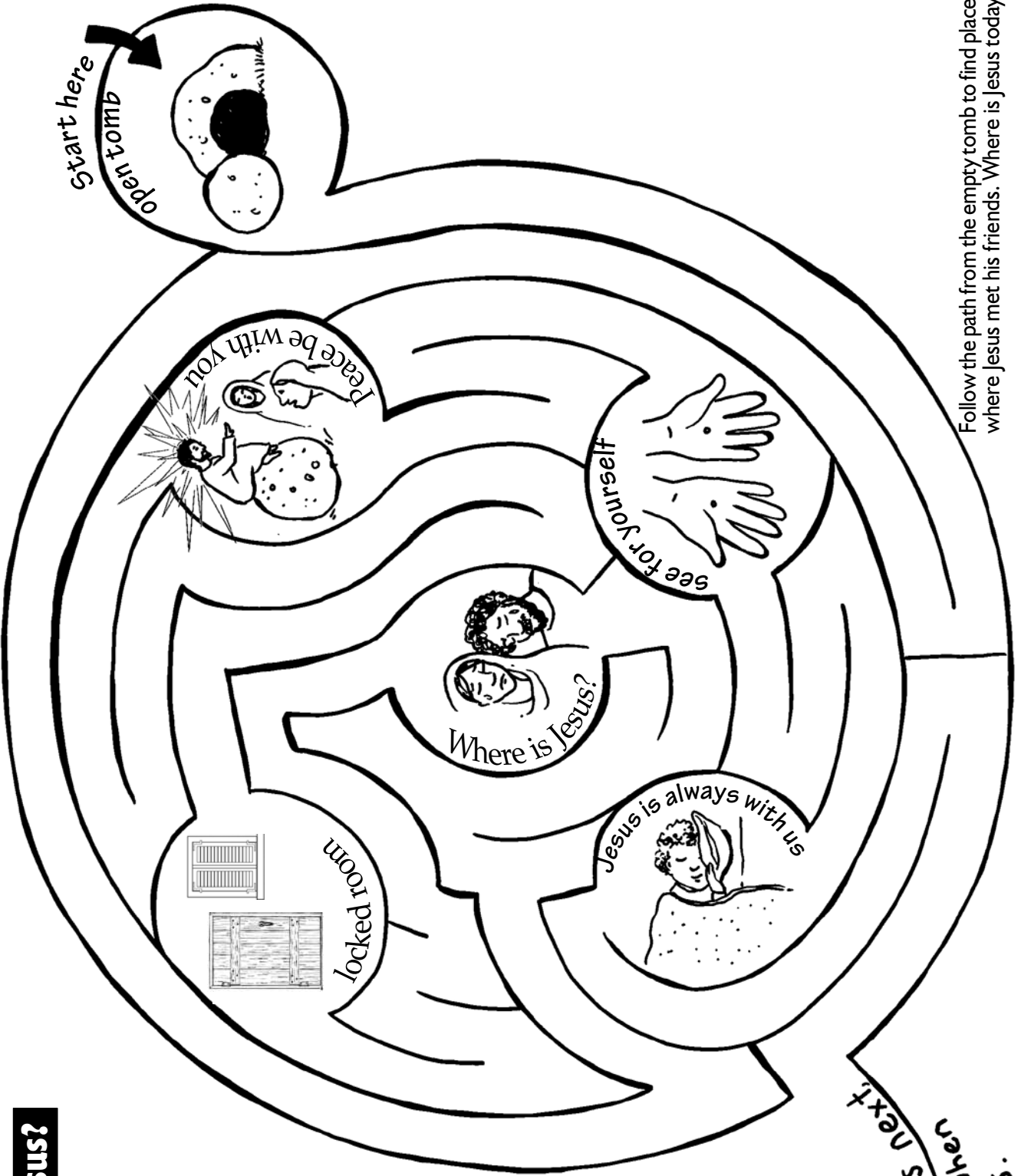
Week 6: Hand out orange, red and yellow construction paper and invite the children to trace their hand and a length of their arm. After the tracings have been cut out, ask the children to decorate them and print comforting words (e.g. love, peace, care, etc.) on them. Attach these arms, very close together at the very bottom of the road.

Week 7: Hand out people shapes for the children to make into self-portraits. Invite them to attach them to the road, any way they wish.

(You will need this sheet each week if using Option C)



Where Is Jesus?



*Draw what happens next,
or a picture of when
Jesus is with us.*

Follow the path from the empty tomb to find places where Jesus met his friends. Where is Jesus today?

Opening Song: Alleluia (sing as an "echo" song)

(tune: Frère Jacques)

Alleluia, Alleluia,
Praise God! Praise God!
Je-sus is risen, Je-sus is risen,
He's with us again! He's with us again!



Happy Easter, Happy Easter,
Praise God! Praise God!
We're an Easter people, We're an Easter people,
Alleluia Praise God!



Song: We're Filled With Easter Joy

(tune: The Bear Went Over the Mountain)

We're filled with Easter Joy (3x)
Alle - lu - ia!

Alle - lu - ia, Praise God! (3x)
We're filled with Easter Joy.

"People Shape" Pattern for Option B Craft

