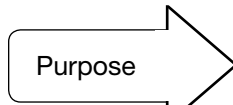
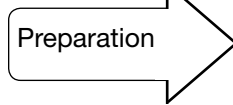


BREATH OF HOPE

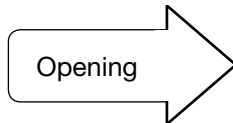
(Second Sunday of Easter)



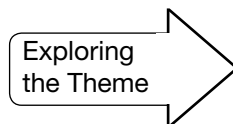
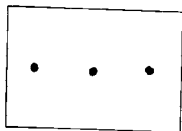
Purpose



Preparation



Opening

Introducing
the ThemeExploring
the Theme

To explore ways we can experience God's Spirit.

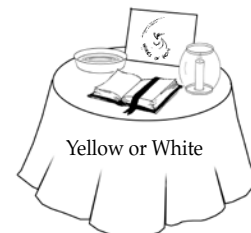


- Read John 20:19-31 and the biblical background for May 1.
- Set up worship table with yellow/white cloth, offering basket, Bible, candle, Unit VI logo and fresh cut flowers (optional).
- Print opening prayer on newsprint.
- Bring sheets of 8½ x 11" paper and pens or markers.
- Plan how you will do the sensory experience in Exploring. Bring the necessary items (e.g. wedge of lemon, keys). Bring Bibles.
- *Option A:* Purchase polar fleece in several colors (about 5 ft. or 1.5 m for 2-3 people). Cut strips of banner paper about the same length. Bring pencils, scissors, and straight pins.
- *Option B:* Bring markers, tempera paint in several colors (mix thinly for straw painting), newspapers and supplies for cleanup. Bring a large piece of mural paper and drinking straws.
- *Option C:* Bring balloons and permanent markers. Optional: Arrange for a helium tank. Bring string or ribbon to tie to the necks of the balloons so they don't float away.
- *Option D:* Bring banner paper or newsprint to cover the door to your meeting space. Bring coloured markers.
- Check the birthday list.
- Pray that the youth will feel comfortable talking about their experiences of God.

Welcome everyone. Invite them to share what they did to celebrate Easter weekend. Remind them that last Sunday was the most important day of the year for Christians. It is a day that begins a season of 50 days of celebrations of Jesus' resurrection. Easter continues today and for 6 more Sundays, right through to Pentecost. One of the reasons the celebrations go on for 50 days is because it took that long for Jesus' disciples to make sense of what was happening around them and to them. It was not an immediate recognition on Easter day. Invite a class member to **light the candle**. Candles are used as symbols of hope. We light a candle to symbolize the presence of God with us—something we cannot see, but something we believe.

Attendance, Birthdays, Offering

Prayer: Loving God, we gather together today,
as a community of seekers
to experience again the feelings of Easter—
the joy and mystery of Jesus' resurrection.
Help us experience again the power of your Spirit.
Amen.

**Seeing Is Believing**

Hand out paper. Invite everyone to turn their page sideways and draw three dots, evenly spaced apart, in a line across the page; then hold it at arm's length in front of them, covering one eye with the other hand. (*i.e. Cover the right eye with the left hand, or cover the left eye with the right hand. Stare at the dot in the center.*) As they move the paper slowly toward them, one of the dots seems to vanish! (*Because we all have a "blind spot."*) Share reactions. (e.g. surprise, curiosity, disbelief) In this Easter season we'll read about people's experiences of the risen Christ. What do you know about how they reacted and felt? (*Look at the Unit VI logo together.*) What feelings are expressed in this picture? What feelings do you associate with Easter?

Sensory Experience

Sit in a circle (*not too close*). Invite everyone to use all their senses except their sight in an experiment. Ask them to keep their eyes closed until you say to open them again. When their eyes are closed and they're quiet, move slowly around the room doing the following as your situation allows:

1. open a door slowly, then shut it
2. walk around the circle
3. step into the circle, cross the space, and step out of the circle (*without touching anyone*)
4. touch someone gently on the shoulder
5. jangle keys softly

6. whisper in someone's ear "Peace be with you"
7. fan the air over them
8. introduce a smell such as lemon

Rejoin the circle. Invite everyone to open their eyes. Ask them to share their experiences. How were they the same and different? (e.g. some may not have heard the whisper, others may not have smelled the lemon.)

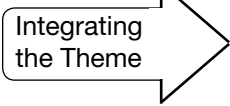
Jesus Appears to His Disciples

(Hand out Bibles.) Today we're going to look at a story about an experience the disciples had after Jesus' death. As we read the story, pay attention to the "sensory" detail (e.g. what is seen, heard, smelled, felt). Take turns reading **John 20:19-29**. Then discuss:

- Where were the disciples when this happened? Why do you suppose they were there? (e.g. hiding, grieving, comforting each other)
- What did the disciples experience? (i.e. see, hear, smell, feel)
- How do you think the disciples felt about this experience?
- What helped the disciples believe Jesus was alive again?
- Why didn't Thomas believe at first? What helped him believe?
- How do you think you would have responded to hearing this story if you had been Thomas' next door neighbour?
- What do you believe and what doubts do you have about the Easter story?
- How do you think God reaches out to people today who have doubts?

Experiencing God's Spirit Today

(Read John 20:30-31.) What does this tell us about the person who wrote this? What reason does the author give for recording this story? How do you think Scripture helps people have faith in Jesus and God? *(Reread vs. 22.)* What do you think is happening in this verse? How do you think people experience God's Spirit today? Where or how do you experience God? Take time to explore moments of awe when youth have felt God close to them. Share an experience from your own life as an example. Talk about how moments of love and acceptance from another person can actually be God's spirit being poured out on you. We can also be the means by which God's spirit is poured out on others.



Option A: Scarves

In pairs, have everyone lie on a piece of banner paper with their arms and hands outstretched while their partner traces around their arms and fingers. Draw lines joining the arms where the neck and head were, and cut out. Pin this paper pattern on fleece and cut with sharp scissors. Encourage the youth to wear these scarves as a reminder of God's Spirit always embracing them.

Option B: Spirited Art Banner (Straw Blowing)

(Cover your work space with lots of newsprint.) Use marker to print "Alleluia" in large letters on your mural paper. Place small amounts of thinned paint of different colours in various places on the large piece of paper. Invite group members to blow gently through drinking straws to create an interesting design. Reflect on the disciples' experience of the Spirit which Jesus breathed on them, and which led them into amazing experiences. Mount Spirit Banner on your classroom wall.

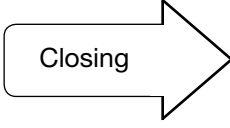
Option C: Easter Message Balloons

Like the disciples, go out sharing the good news with others. Blow up balloons but don't tie these. Write an Easter message like "He is Risen" or "Alleluia" or draw pictures with permanent markers. Allow these to dry before letting the air out. Present these to children (and adults!) in the congregation following worship. When people inflate the balloon they will get an Easter surprise!

Optional: Have a helium tank available and inflate balloons for people.

Option D: Collage Door Covering

Jesus appeared to his disciples who were hiding behind locked doors. Cover the door to your meeting space with paper (or create a paper door on a wall). Invite youth to respond to today's passage by writing or drawing on the paper things that they have experienced or hoped for, questions they may have, names of people that need to feel God's presence in their lives, things they feel sad about, doors they would like to see opened.



(Look together at the Unit VI logo) How does the logo reflect today's story and what we have been talking about?

Prayer: The Grace of the Risen Christ, the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with us all, now and forever. Amen.