



Sunday Celebrations

Easter Sunday of the Resurrection of the Lord | **April 12, 2020**

Welcome to Sunday Celebrations, a free resource from RCL Benziger to help you celebrate Sunday with your family, in your home.

Each Sunday's celebration focuses on the Gospel of the day, and encourages family members of all ages to join in singing, praying, sharing, and celebrating. Suggested songs (search the internet for recorded versions) and craft activities help enliven and extend the celebrations.

Here are three simple ideas to help you get started:

1 Choose the place where you will gather for your Sunday celebration. It may be around your living room coffee table, around your kitchen or dining room table, outdoors at your picnic table, or any place that works for your family!

2 Decorate your chosen place with symbols of faith. These might include a placemat, napkin, or cloth in the color of the liturgical season; a Bible; a candle; a cross or crucifix; and a plant or flowers. Other suggestions will be offered on each Sunday Celebrations outline.

3 Each Sunday Celebrations outline is based on the flow of a Liturgy of the Word with children. Feel free to adapt the outline to best suit the ages and attention spans of your family members. It is most important simply to set aside time to pray and reflect on God's Word.

RCL Benziger prays that by taking time for Sunday Celebrations, families of all ages will be encouraged and strengthened by God's Word. Our prayers are with you as you lead your family in Sunday Celebrations and the Good News of Jesus Christ.





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Gospel Reading

John 20:1-9

(Reading is available at usccb.org/bible/readings.)

Symbol (optional)

Bowl of water; vase of spring flowers or an Easter lily

Get Ready

Invite family members to bring noisemakers with them today. These could be tambourines, shakers, whistles, bells, or keys, piggy banks and coins, spoons, and sticks!

Once the family has gathered for today's celebration, invite family members to share the most amazing things they have ever seen. Examples could include seeing a whale in the ocean, a shooting star, a homerun at the ballpark, the birth of a child, or a double rainbow in the sky. Be prepared to share your own examples, too!

Begin

- Light a candle and invite family members to use their noisemakers as you sing joyful Alleluias.
- Make the Sign of the Cross and pray:
**Jesus, today we celebrate your rising from the dead.
Fill our hearts with joy as we give all praise and glory to you.
Amen.**

Listen and Reflect

- Use your noisemakers as you again sing "Alleluia!"
- Before proclaiming today's Gospel, invite family members to listen for the amazing thing that happens.
- Proclaim today's Gospel.
- Spend a moment in silent reflection. Then invite family members to name the amazing thing that happened. (*The stone was rolled away from Jesus' tomb, and the tomb was empty.*) What had happened to Jesus? (*Jesus was risen from the dead.*) Ask family members how they would have felt if they had seen the empty tomb and why.





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Connect

- Explain that, on Easter Sunday, the Church celebrates Jesus' Resurrection, or rising from the dead, and the new life he gives to each of us. At Church, this is a day when we celebrate that new life by renewing our baptismal promises. The bowl of water on your table today is a reminder of Baptism.
- Invite family members to join you in renewing baptismal promises as a family by responding "We do!" to each of the following statements:

We believe in God, the Father almighty, Creator of heaven and earth.

We do!

We believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord, who was born of the Virgin Mary, suffered death and was buried, rose again from the dead and is now seated at the right hand of the Father.

We do!

We believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy catholic Church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting.

We do!

This is our faith. This is the faith of the Church. We are proud to profess it in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Amen.

adapted from Order of Baptism of Children 95-96

- As a reminder of their Baptisms, invite each family member to come forward and make the Sign of the Cross with the water. As they do so, use your noisemakers and sing "Alleluia!"

Conclude

- Lead your family in praying for the world, the Church, those in need, the sick and those who have died, and for your prayer intentions. Respond, "Risen Jesus, hear our prayer," leading your family in raising hands, palms up, to God.
- Pray together the Lord's Prayer.
- Make the Sign of the Cross and conclude by singing "Alleluia!" or a rousing Easter hymn such as "Jesus Christ is Risen Today"; "He Rose"; or "This is the Day the Lord Has Made."





Sunday Celebrations

Celebrating Easter Sunday Throughout the Week | **April 12, 2020**

Sharing the Easter Message

At the conclusion of today's celebration, hang the Easter banners, posters, and signs you made (see last week's session) and use sidewalk chalk to fill your sidewalk and driveway with Easter Good News messages.

At Easter Dinner Today

Before sharing dessert, remind family members that earlier today they renewed their baptismal promises and signed themselves with water, the main symbol of Baptism. Recall that at their Baptisms they were also given lighted candles as a sign of the light of Christ. Light the baptismal candles one by one (see last week's session), and as you do so, say to each person, "(Name), walk as a child of the light. Keep the flame of faith alive in your heart."

Celebrating Easter Sunday Throughout the Week

- Do an internet search for examples of Paschal (Easter) candles. Gather the family around the computer or make copies of the examples you find. Explain that the Paschal candle is lit and blessed at the Easter Vigil on Holy Saturday night. It represents Christ, the Light of the world.
- Look together at your examples to find the special symbols that are placed on a Paschal Candle: the Alpha (A) and Omega (Ω), the current year, and the cross (representing Christ). Also look for the five large grains of incense inserted in the form of a cross. Explain that these represent the five wounds of Christ: his hands, his feet, and his side.
- If possible, purchase a large white candle (or use a candle you already have) and use stickers, markers, glitter glue, and other craft supplies to decorate the candle with the name of each family member and symbols of Easter and new life. Keep the candle on display until Pentecost Sunday as a reminder that the flame of faith is alive in your home! Light the candle during mealtime and prayer time, and sing an Alleluia or "This Little Light of Mine" each time you do so.

