SECOND SUNDAY OF EASTER

YEAR A

PRAYER OF THE DAY:

O God,
you want the whole world
to believe in you
and in Jesus, who you sent
to save us.
Show us how to believe,
and teach us
what we should believe.

what we should believe.
Though people may laugh
at us for believing,
give us courage
to stand up for you
and to live as we should.
We ask this through
Jesus Christ, our Lord.

FOCUS OF THE READINGS

Both of our readings focus on the presence of the risen Lord. In the first reading, this presence is witnessed in the actions of the disciples—their life together in community, their miracles, their teaching, and their belief in the Resurrection. This witness led more and more men and women to believe.

Jesus' first words to his disciples are of peace and forgiveness. "Peace be with you; . . . if you forgive the sins of anyone, they are forgiven." Thomas represents those of us who find it hard to believe that Christ is truly present among us and that living in peace and unity is possible. To him, Jesus says, "Do not doubt, but believe." The Gospel focuses on the faith of those who have not seen the body of Jesus. Christ is "Lord and God" for those who see, not physically, but with faith!

FIRST READING: Acts 2:42-47

This is a reading from the Acts of the Apostles.

Those who believed in Jesus lived together in a community and shared everything they had. They listened to the teaching of the apostles and prayed together.

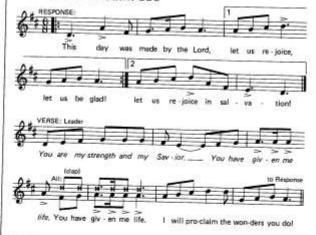
And they were filled with wonder because of the many signs and miracles of the apostles.

Every day they went to the temple to pray, and in their homes they broke bread and ate together

with joy and thanksgiving in their hearts.
All the people liked the way the disciples lived, and many others came to believe in Jesus and be saved.

The Word of the Lord.

RESPONSE: Psalm 118



GOSPEL ACCLAMATION:



GOSPEL: John 20:19-31

This is a reading from the Gospel of John.

On Sunday evening, the same day the women had been to the tomb of Jesus, the disciples were gathered in a room upstairs. They had locked the doors because they were afraid of the people who had crucified Jesus.

Then Jesus came and stood in the room and said,

"Peace be with you!"

He showed them his hands and his side. The disciples were filled with joy when they saw the Lord. Jesus said again,

"Peace be with you!"

Then he breathed on the disciples and said to them,

"Receive the Holy Spirit.

If you forgive the sins of anyone,
they are forgiven.

If you do not forgive them, they are not forgiven."

Now Thomas was not there with the other disciples when Jesus came. So, later they told him,

"We have seen the Lord!"

But Thomas said,

"I'll never believe it until I see the marks made by the nails in his hands and touch the wound in his side."

One week later, the disciples were in the same room again. This time, Thomas was with them. Even though the doors were locked, Jesus came in and stood among them. He said,

"Peace be with you."

Then he said to Thomas,

"Here, touch the marks on my hands and feel the wound in my side. Doubt no longer, but believe."

Thomas said to Jesus,

"My Lord and my God!"

Then Jesus said to Thomas,

"You believe now because you see me.

How blessed are people who have not seen me
and still believe!"

The Gospel of the Lord.

REFLECTING ON THE READINGS WITH CHILDREN:

Like the Passion, the theology of the Resurrection is difficult to discuss with children. Let the text speak for itself.

After the first reading, ask the children to recall how the first Christians lived and what they did. Ask them why the Christians lived that way. How did it show they believed in Jesus?

After the Gospel, ask the children what they heard:

- · Where were the apostles? Why?
- Wasn't it normal that they should be there?
- What did Jesus say when he came in? Why?
- Which disciple was not there?
- What did he say when the others told him about Jesus?
- Wasn't that a normal way to react?
- What happened one week later?
- What did Jesus say again to the disciples?
- What did he say to Thomas?
- · What did Thomas call Jesus?

Help the children to understand that when Jesus said, "those who have not seen," he meant, "seen my body." Help them understand, also, that it is truly difficult to believe in things we haven't seen. Often we come to believe because someone in whom we trust tells us. For example, we believe some food is good for us because our parents tell us so. (You might provide other examples.) In the same way, people come to believe in Jesus by what we say and do; they see Jesus in our lives.