

Sixth Grade Session 17: A New Hope

Easter is the celebration of Christ's Resurrection and the most important season for the Church! The Resurrection is important because it signifies Christ's defeat of death and our hope for heaven. We should prepare ourselves to truly celebrate Jesus' victory while finding ways to respond to the hope we have been given. It was on this day that the lives of every single human being changed forever. On this day, death changed forever. This feast is central to our Christian belief and shows Jesus' power over all things. His rising from the dead gives us hope in death and life while revealing to us Jesus' great and unending love.

- Does Easter stand out as an important day in your year, or is it just another holiday?
- What can you do different this year to celebrate Easter?
- What are some things you can do individually and with your family?
- What are some ways that you can spread the hope and joy of this season to those around you?
- How can you make this season come to life?

Jesus' Resurrection requires a response. For many of his disciples, this response was to go out and share the hope and joy of His rising from the dead. However, many people did not believe them and did not accept this truth or hope. Both the Jews and their Roman occupiers persecuted and killed the followers of Christ for what they were preaching. Even today Christians are persecuted.

Our faith is not popular in our culture and society, and many people do not want to hear the name Jesus. It seems more popular now to not follow a certain faith practice but to just do whatever you want.

- Why is Jesus' Resurrection so important?
- Many of the early Christians who saw the risen Jesus were eventually persecuted and killed for professing their belief in Him.
 - Why do you think they were willing to die for their faith?
- What are some ways you can celebrate the true meaning of Easter?
- What are some ways you can share this Easter joy?
- What are some things we can do to help prepare ourselves for the hope that Easter brings?

Our faith is centered not just on the death of Jesus but also on His Resurrection and the hope it brings to each of us. Jesus rose from the dead so that one day we too might be resurrected to new life with Him. As we approach Easter, the celebration of Jesus' Resurrection, it is important that we not only look at what happened 2000 years ago but how this event is central to our daily lives here and now.

So how important is it that Jesus actually rose from the dead?

- Paul tells us that this is the sole reason for even bothering with Christianity: “If Christ has not been raised, then empty is our preaching; empty, too, your faith.” In other words, St. Paul is telling us that Jesus rising from the dead fulfills everything that Jesus preached about.

If Jesus had not risen from the dead, then He would be no different than any of the other prophets or teachers that had gone before Him. That is why Easter is so important and considered the “feast of all feasts” in our Church. It is central to our belief as Christians and the foundation of our hope in Jesus.

The Hope of Easter

Many people fear death. It is scary to think that, at some point, we will no longer be present in the world. Even scarier often times is the thought of losing others, especially the ones we love the most. In truth, we react this way because death was not originally part of God’s plan for us. It came about as a result of our own sin. But God in His loving plan did not want the consequence of sin, which is death, to be our end.

Instead He sent His Only Son to die for our sins. Jesus took on this penalty and died for us. But then Jesus overcame death and made it into something entirely different. While we will all still die one day, that is not the end. We have the hope and promise of heaven. Jesus in His death and Resurrection opened for us the gates of heaven. The celebration that death does not have the last say is central to our Easter celebrations, giving us great hope and joy.

It is this hope that gave the apostles and early Christians the strength to stand up for their faith in the face of persecution and death. It is this hope and joy in the love of God that our Church was built upon. It is this love of God that keeps us going and rejoicing even in light of tragedy, death, and violence. At Easter we celebrate the immense joy of God’s love and the hope of new life which resulted from Jesus’ sacrifice.

Action Plan!

Wake up every day during the Easter season and make a point to thank Jesus for coming to save you. Share your hope and joy with your friends at school. Tell them about the real meaning behind Easter. Just as it was important to find ways to prepare yourself in Lent, it is vital that you seek out ways to draw closer to Jesus during the Easter season.