

Risen and Real: Resources for Intergenerational Worship

Fourth Sunday of Easter Year B April 22, 2018



What this is: Early Word- Blocks and Names Reading



Where it's used: Any intergenerational gathering; especially for Fourth Sunday of Easter Year B April 22, 2018



Time: 5 minutes



Bible focus/theme: Acts 4:5-12



What's needed:

- Large flat surface for block-building. (eg trestle table top flat on the ground)
- Plenty of wooden blocks of any size and shape; enough for one for each person in your gathering as well as extras for the words from the passage.
- The following names from the passage, printed out onto paper and stuck onto 17 individual blocks. Place these blocks in a separate container for distributing during the reading.

RULERS

ELDERS

SCRIBES

ANNAS THE HIGH PRIEST

CAIAPHAS

JOHN

ALEXANDER

HIGH PRIESTLY FAMILY

PRISONER

PETER

ELDERS

SOMEONE WHO WAS SICK

PEOPLE OF ISRAEL

JESUS CHRIST OF NAZARETH

GOD

JESUS

REJECTED STONE

CORNERSTONE

RULERS OF THE PEOPLE

- Sticky name tag labels and textas.
- Copy of the text of Acts 4:5-12 either on screen or in hard print copy distributed amongst your gathering
- Art image A by Chris Booth displayed.

Risen and Real: Early Word

Acts 4:5-12

4:5 The next day their rulers, elders, and scribes assembled in Jerusalem,

4:6 with Annas the high priest, Caiaphas, John, and Alexander, and all who were of the high-priestly family.

4:7 When they had made the prisoners stand in their midst, they inquired, “By what power or by what name did you do this?”

4:8 Then Peter, filled with the Holy Spirit, said to them, “Rulers of the people and elders,

4:9 if we are questioned today because of a good deed done to someone who was sick and are asked how this man has been healed,

4:10 let it be known to all of you, and to all the people of Israel, that this man is standing before you in good health by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom you crucified, whom God raised from the dead.

4:11 This Jesus is ‘the stone that was rejected by you, the builders; it has become the cornerstone.’

4:12 There is salvation in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given among mortals by which we must be saved.”

As people arrive at your gathering today provide them with a sticky name label and invite them or help them to write their own name on the label, and stick it to a block, which they keep with them in readiness for the Early Word Bible Reading.

Introduction

Our Bible Reading today comes from the book of Acts, after the gospel stories of Jesus’ life. We pick up the story after Jesus has been crucified and raised to life again. He has appeared to his disciples, eaten with them, blessed them, spoken with them, and promised to be always with them wherever they are: his resurrected body has become invisible, no longer stuck in one visible time and place, but powerfully present everywhere.

His followers are now continuing to do the things that Jesus did – share God’s Good news, bring healing and compassion, treating those who have been cast aside with justice and mercy.

Peter and John for example have healed a man who sat begging by the temple gate every day. That’s just what Jesus would have done.

But Just like Jesus, Peter and John have been arrested and in our reading today, we find them standing trial.

Here we have a collection of blocks.

Risen and Real: Early Word

Some blocks already have names on them – the names of the people in the Bible Reading. And you all have blocks too, with your names on them.

Peter and John are standing in the temple, so we are going to build the temple from the blocks with our names. The temple was the gathering place for the people of God – a place that should have included everyone.

Invite people to come forward and add their block to build up a temple building. If people aren't keen to move or find mobility challenging, remind them that we can work together – others around them can offer to take their block and add it to the temple. Everyone's block needs to be included, but let those who are keen to do the building, and those happy to observe to do so freely.

While this happens read the passage once. It will be a little bit busy and there'll be lots of movement, but this is a good reminder that the temple was a busy and noisy place too, unlike some of our churches.

After reading once, and the temple is complete continue:

We have built the temple from our own names – the names of the people of God. There are some other names in the Bible reading. We will hear the Bible reading again, and add in the blocks with these names too.

Invite volunteers who want to participate in building the temple further to take a block from the box with a name on it.

Explain that, as you read the passage again, those with the blocks with names will add them in when the name comes up in the passage.

The names have been highlighted in the text – so that everyone can join in together.

Read the passage slowly and expressively, pausing on the highlighted names, encouraging the gathering to join in, repeating the name if necessary and allowing time for those with the corresponding block to add it to the structure.

At the end of the reading finish with the following conclusion:

The temple was very important to the Jewish people in the time of Jesus. But it wasn't to last. The people were devastated when the temple was destroyed in war.

(Invite those who would like to participate to destroy the temple)

But as Peter knew and proclaimed in the passage today, the temple wasn't the place to put their hope. Of all the names in the passage, and of all our names added into the story, there was one name that Peter said was the name of hope – Jesus.

Though Jesus hadn't been accepted by the builders of the temple – the Rulers and Elders and Scribes, Peter knew that the name of Jesus was the name that was the name of hope for all people, not just the Jewish people, but all of God's people, all of God's creation.

Risen and Real: Early Word

Peter quoted the ancient scriptures saying ‘The stone the builders rejected – Jesus – became the cornerstone – or first foundation’ for all people to be welcomed to God. Let’s find the name of Jesus amongst our stones and use that as the starter stone to make a new structure – one in the shape of Jesus body. Those who would like to be part of that building can join in while we keep exploring the text together.