

# Living the Resurrection

BY LAURIE ZILIAK

The Easter season is upon us, and the Resurrection is central to the celebration of Easter. Indeed, the Resurrection and the victory of life and love over death is “the crowning truth” of our faith (*Catechism of the Catholic Church*, 638). And yet, resurrection can be a difficult concept—one that is hard to grasp for all people, even more so for children.

**Recognizing the power and importance of the Resurrection has never been more significant than it is today.** We are emerging from a pandemic, and we are beginning to experience a return to life after COVID-19. But we will never return to life as it was. Our lived reality will forever be impacted by the individual and collective experience of the past year.



**RESURRECTION IS  
NOT RESUSCITATION.  
IT IS NOT A RETURN  
TO LIFE AS IT WAS.**

Indeed, the Gospels go to great lengths to illustrate that the resurrected Christ was not always immediately recognizable by those

who knew him best. As the disciples journeyed to Emmaus, Jesus walked and talked with them, but the disciples did not recognize him. Later, Jesus appeared to his disciples as they gathered in Jerusalem, and, once again, they did not recognize him. Instead, they thought they were seeing a ghost (see Luke 24:36-49).

Consider incorporating the following ideas to help children reflect on Jesus' Resurrection and the resurrection moments in their own lives during this Easter season.

### Let Nature Do the Talking

Trees are budding, flowers are blooming, birds are chirping, all of which speak to new life emerging. **Take the children outside and guide their attention to the many ways they can see signs of new life around them.** Invite them to document what they see by drawing pictures, or invite them to take pictures if they have the appropriate technology. Use their images to create a "Resurrection display" that celebrates the many ways new life is emerging.

## Celebrate with the Church

The Church celebrates the Resurrection and new life in many ways during the Easter season. Each Sunday's Eucharist celebrates the Resurrection. Guide the children through intentional preparation for the coming Sunday celebration. Read the Gospel for the coming weekend with the children and engage in reflection on the implications of the Gospel for their lives. If circumstances allow, take the children into the church to look for signs and images of the Resurrection in the art and elements found in the worship space.

During the Easter season, many communities celebrate First Communion and Confirmation. New members also join the Church at the Easter Vigil. **Invite the children to participate in these moments of renewal of the Church.** Obtain a list of those involved in or just completing sacramental preparation and assign prayer partners. Provide time during communal daily prayer for the children to pray for their partner, and conclude with a prayer of renewal for the whole Church.

## Honor New Life in Christ

We would be remiss if we did not recognize the unfathomable loss we have experienced due to the pandemic. The number of lives lost is staggering, and chances are that most people have been impacted in some direct way. **Invite the children to reflect on the Resurrection and those lost to COVID-19 by naming loved ones and community members who have suffered or died.** Facilitate a reflection on the Gospel from Easter Sunday (John 20:1-9). Invite the children to bring in pictures and mementos, and set up a display honoring those who have died and are now living with Christ. Be aware of how you present this. As we reflect on Resurrection in light of recent and tragic loss, it is rarely about joy, but rather hope in the face of grief. Facilitate daily or weekly prayer to pray for each of the people represented in your display by name.



## Identify Mini-Resurrections as Pandemic Positives

While COVID-19 has changed our reality, moments of grace have occurred throughout the pandemic. Invite the children to reflect on the mini-resurrections they experienced as a result of COVID-19.

**RESURRECTION CAN OFTEN BE EXPERIENCED IN OUR OWN LIVES IN MOMENTS OF MOVING FROM DARKNESS TO LIGHT, FROM FEELING DEAD TO EXPERIENCING NEW LIFE.**

**Invite the children to name “pandemic positives” that came about as a result of the pandemic or from distance learning.** Have them name positive events or positive people that kept them going when they were feeling down. Invite the children to create a representation of their “pandemic positive” (draw a picture, write a story, and so forth). Display these “pandemic positives” and return to these mini-resurrection reflections periodically during the Easter season.

As Christians, we are an Easter people, and the Resurrection is central to our faith. Be intentional this Easter about inviting children to reflect on the Resurrection and to recognize the ways it is evident in their lives. While it is a difficult concept to grasp, it is also essential in recognizing the victory of life over death and light over darkness—hope that is much needed these days.

