

## Bible reading Matthew 28:1-10

### With fear and great joy

THIS WEEK WE EXPLORE THE DYNAMIC OF OUR RESPONSE TO THE RESURRECTION.

Two women, disciples of Jesus, visit his tomb once the sabbath is over. They find the tomb empty, and experience both fear and joy. They are sent by an angel to tell the rest of the disciples that Jesus is raised. As they run, they fleetingly meet Jesus himself, who repeats the angel's message.



## REFLECT

Open a bag of mini eggs, or similar and reflect on the Easter story as you munch the different colours. If the egg is white, talk to God about something that surprises you about the resurrection. If yellow, think about something that shocks you about the resurrection. If pink, thank God for something from the story that brings you joy. If purple, consider what you want to tell others about Easter.



Paint pebbles with symbols, images or words relating to the Easter story. Find places where these can be hidden for the local community to find and enjoy.

## Pray



Make traditional Easter biscuits (or you could buy some). [https://www.bbc.co.uk/food/recipes/mary\\_berrys\\_easter\\_46791](https://www.bbc.co.uk/food/recipes/mary_berrys_easter_46791) Once cooked, take a biscuit and look at the **circular shape**. Remember that Jesus' love is for the whole world.

**Break the biscuit in half**, as the earth was split by the earthquake on the first Easter Day. Remember that God is powerful and awesome. Look at the **fruit in different places** in each biscuit. Give thanks that we are each as unique as they are. Begin to eat and **taste the spices**, remembering that the women took spices to embalm Jesus' body. Pray for those who mourn their loved ones. Enjoy the sweetness and give thanks for the **sweetness** that Jesus' resurrection brings to our world.

## Bible notes

Of the small group of women who stood by Jesus and watched him dying in agony on the cross, only 'Mary Magdalene and the other Mary' are consistently named in the first three Gospels as observing carefully where Jesus was buried (Matthew 27:61; Mark 15:47), and as coming again on the Sunday to see the tomb (Matthew 28:1; Mark 16:1; Luke 24:10). The community of John's Gospel seems already to have forgotten 'the other Mary', since only Mary Magdalene is said to have met Jesus in the garden (John 20:11-18).

'The other Mary' is identified as the mother of two sons, 'little James and Joses' (Mark 15:40; Matthew 27:56), and as one of the women who provided for Jesus when he was in Galilee (Mark 15:41), the place where he is now calling his disciples to meet him once more. We do not hear any more about this other Mary and her two sons, but their presence in the Gospel narratives suggests that all three were known as members of the early Christian movement. The man who recognised only his disciples as 'my mother and my brothers' (Matthew 12:49) has led this other Mary to the fearful place of his torture and execution, and into the tomb into which the soldiers had sealed his broken body. Now, in an earthquake, the two Marys see an angel in the lightning and hear his voice in the thunder.

With all that has happened, no wonder there is fear as well as joy as they run to proclaim the news that 'he has been raised'. Their courage and their perception are rewarded as they suddenly encounter their risen Lord. But even as they take hold of his feet to worship him, he urges them forward as his messengers to his brothers, renewing the reassurance he had given those disciples when their boat was battered by the wind and waves, 'Do not be afraid' (14:27).

## First impressions

- What do you see: fear or joy?
- For those at the tomb, there was fear and joy; what is Easter like for you?
- We are 'Easter people' – how do we keep that going for more than a week?



## A prayer of thanksgiving

Lord God, we thank you for your amazing resurrection. We want to take our response to it into our everyday lives. In the fear, in the joy, in the rollercoaster moments, as well as when the path runs smoothly – wherever you call us, whatever you ask us to do, we trust you, Lord. You are always with us – thanks be to God. Amen.

## LISTEN

Listen to 'Christ is risen', Phil Wickham on *Living Hope*. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gdIIX5cxEno> Think about which lyrics speak to you right now. What lyrics could you add about your own response to the resurrection?

