



Jesus Will Always Be with Us

(based on Matthew 28:16–20)

After Jesus died, his friends were sad. Then they heard some incredible news. God had raised Jesus to life. Mary Magdalene and the other Mary had seen him. Jesus was alive!

Jesus had told the two women that he would meet them in Galilee. The disciples didn't waste any time. They hurried to put on their sandals and cloaks. They grabbed some food and started the long walk to Galilee. Jesus was going to meet them there.

High on a mountain, the disciples gathered just as Jesus had told them. They walked up the mountain side by side. Some of them were bursting with joy and excitement, because some of the women had seen Jesus risen and alive. They had heard the stories, and something inside them leapt for joy. Others were still so sad they could hardly breathe. They had watched Jesus die, and still couldn't believe it had really happened. They didn't know what to think or what to believe.

Jesus met them on the mountain in Galilee just as he promised. Was it really Jesus? How could he be alive? Yet he was. They weren't sure what to think. Everyone started to talk at once.

Jesus looked at his disciples.

"I have a special job for you," Jesus explained. "Go into the whole world and tell everyone about me. Ask them to be my followers too. Baptize them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Tell them everything I have taught you."

Then, smiling at each one in turn, Jesus said, "And remember, I am with you always, to the end of all time."

Some of the disciples wondered about the important job they had been given. They were excited and afraid all at once.

"We're going to tell the whole world about Jesus!" they exclaimed to each other.

"Can we go out into the whole world?" they wondered.

"Are we brave enough to tell everyone about Jesus? Do you think we can live like Jesus wants us to live?" they asked.

"Can we remember everything Jesus taught us?" they worried.

Then the disciples remembered that Jesus had promised to be with them wherever they went. They had to take the good news of Jesus to the whole world. It was a huge job, but they were not alone. Jesus would be with them every step of the way.



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Use one or more activities from each section to explore grace and gratitude with your children this week.

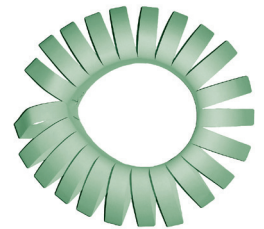
Recognizing God's Grace

- Read and enjoy the story with your family members—imagine and wonder.
- Baptism is one sign that Jesus is with us always. Help your family members discover if they were baptized as infants, or if they will be baptized when they make a profession of faith upon confirmation.
- A circle is a Christian symbol for “always.” Look around your church and in Christian art to find how circles are used. They remind us that Jesus is with us always.



Responding to God's Grace

- Make a circle wreath for your bedroom door. Fold a sheet of copy paper in half lengthwise. Draw a line about 1" from the edge opposite the fold and cut that off. Draw another line about 1" from the edge opposite the fold. This is your “stop cutting” line. Mark the fold at ½" intervals. Cut from the fold to the “stop cutting” line at the ½" marks. Unfold the paper, and overlap the uncut edges to make a tube. Staple the edges together, then flex the ends of the tube together to form a circle (the cuts will fan out) and staple again.
- Make a garland of circles cut from recycled greeting cards. Use a circular craft punch (or draw around a circular object and cut out). Use stickers to secure the circles to a length of heavy thread.



Celebrating in Gratitude

- Use your finger to trace a circle in wet sand. Think about how a circle doesn't have a beginning or ending, and how it can remind us of “always.” Trace your finger around the circle several times.
- Listen to the “Hallelujah Chorus” from Handel's *Messiah* at bit.ly/HallelujahChorusSong or bit.ly/SoulfulCelebrationHallelujah. Together, raise your hand when you hear the choir sing “forever.” It's good to do this more than one day.
- Guide your family members to name people who have been teaching them about their faith. Together, give thanks to God for those people:

God, thank you for _____, who is teaching me about faith.

Note: bit.ly web addresses are case sensitive.