

Season setting

Introduction

In this Revised Common Lectionary Year B, our Lent and Easter issue embraces two themes: **Becoming the good news** and **Resurrection life**.

The first takes us through the five remaining weeks of Lent. As we encounter incidents and teaching recorded by Mark and John that reveal Jesus living out the teachings of his Jewish faith, we find a context for our own journey to live out and share the good news of the gospel. Throughout the Gospels there are references back to the Old Testament showing how Jesus and the Gospel writers were familiar with the Jewish Scriptures.

On Easter Day, the nature of this journey is transformed as we take up the call to live a **Resurrection life**. The encounters between the risen Jesus and his disciples show us how their relationship with him empowers their mission to witness to the transforming nature of his love. Here we begin to perceive clues about what is available to sustain us as we endeavour to share the overwhelming love God offers to a needy world. Through the weeks of Eastertide we ponder how to live our lives, recognise the importance of the resurrection and consider how we might make our response in the world in which we live today, in the midst of the challenges, opportunities and joys of twenty-first-century life.

Lent – Becoming the good news

Six weeks in which we observe Jesus taking up the mission of the Old Testament writers. This will help us to consider how we can enter the stories of Jesus and become good news ourselves. The Lent calendar on page 5 can be printed and distributed.

On **26 February** in **Mark 1.9-15**, in the last pages of ROOTS issue 57, we encountered Jesus' baptism by John in the River Jordan and his being sent by the Spirit into the desert, where he faces temptations. We began with an overview of the Lenten theme as we became familiar with the account of the baptism and temptation of Jesus. In the desert we encountered the idea of angels as 'those who wait on us' and considered the beautiful image of the servant angel, waiting on the needs of Jesus.

On **4 March** we now move to **Mark 8.31-38** and learn that, to become Jesus' followers, we must take up our cross. While this does not sound like good news, we consider why it is good news and discover practical ways to share it with others. We reflect on the things that are really important to us and the things that tempt us, as we are inspired by Fairtrade Fortnight.

On **11 March** in **John 2.13-22**, we hear the familiar story of Jesus cleansing the Temple and are reminded of his call for us to be holy. We sometimes forget just how holy a place the Temple was to the people at that time. This week provides an opportunity to understand the meaning of the word holy, and to consider the ways in which we make ourselves, and the spaces in which we pray, holy.

On **18 March** in **John 3.14-21** we are reminded that God loves us so much he sent Jesus into the world to bring light to us all. We consider the importance of light and dark and, in the context of the dark side of us all, reflect on why we always want more than we have. Today is Mothering Sunday and alternative ideas, including special resources created by The Children's Society, are available on the [WEB](#).

In **John 12.20-33** on **25 March**, Jesus shows us how we should follow his example, using the beautiful imagery that a seed has to be planted to grow into something great. We consider this 'grain of wheat' metaphor and reflect on how being flexible enables us to grow and develop.

On **1 April**, we read in **Mark 11.1-11** about Jesus' entry into Jerusalem to a hero's welcome – Palm Sunday. We consider the place of welcome and joy as we become more familiar with the account from Mark's perspective. This final week of preparation for the great feast to come offers us a chance to reflect on the journey that has led to the holy city of Jerusalem.

Resurrection life

With the weeks following Easter we begin to discover, through praying the Scriptures, the skills needed to live in the light of the resurrection.

We move from Lent to the great celebration on **8 April** as we hear of the resurrection in **John 20.1-18**, and the bemused witness of Mary Magdalene on the first Easter Day. We begin to think of its implications for us as we focus on how we communicate this good news and take up our responsibility to continue to tell the story of the great event.

In this second week of Easter, on **15 April**, we hear in **John 20.19-31** of the doubt of Thomas who, despite the assurances of his friends, could not believe what they were saying. Through his disbelief to his acceptance, we explore the idea of belief as an abundant blessing.

On **22 April** we look St Luke's third, and last, account of a resurrection appearance in **Luke 24.36b-48**. We begin the story as Jesus had been recognised by his disciples in the breaking of bread and move to his appearing to more disciples and his explanation that God's promises were coming true. The time had come to welcome everyone in the world to be part of God's kingdom, and to live as one of God's people. We consider what will help us to become witnesses of faith in our world today.

In the last week of this issue on **29 April**, we move away from accounts of resurrection appearances to **John 10.11-18**, as we consider what we might think of as 'Easter teachings' found in John's Gospel. Today we hear about the Good Shepherd. We consider the sheep metaphor in a contemporary context and think about what it means to be part of Jesus' flock, with the challenge of following his teaching today.