



THE RADIX PROJECT

small groups / deep roots

EASTERTIDE 2020
MEETING ONLINE



SAINT MARK'S
EPISCOPAL CATHEDRAL



Friends,

IT HAS been our great pleasure to gather as a group over the last year to prayerfully consider scriptures and discussion questions that might resonate with you for our Radix groups. We have followed a similar pattern to the small group structure in our own planning meetings, and we are excited to offer a second opportunity to connect, study and pray in small groups in the season of Easter, this time in an online format during this period of isolation. As you consider engaging in a Radix Project small group this season, please know that we are diving in alongside you, opening ourselves to the transforming love of God made known through one another, and praying for you as you do the same.

You may recall we chose the name “Radix” for this small group ministry because it means “root,” and we are reclaiming our Christian roots by this practice. Jesus lived and taught in small groups, as did the early Church. To be “radical” doesn’t mean to be rebellious—rather it describes the freedom to stretch into the borderlands precisely because one is rooted in the deep soil of a defining narrative, which, for us, is the brilliant and liberating gospel of Christ. Through this defining narrative we are known and nourished in the church community, and connected through past, present and future to all who are so rooted. Radix groups reveal this connection in tangible and life-giving ways.

In Christ,

Steve, Kelly, Cristi, Nancy, Jennifer

The Radix Project Planning Committee

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Please feel free to contact anyone from the Planning Committee if you have any questions or concerns along the way. Thank you for your participation!

OVERVIEW FOR SMALL GROUPS

Small groups are designed to gather people of faith in settings that foster trust so that our relationships with God and one another are strengthened. When we meet each other for earnest conversation, sharing and prayer, we deepen the bonds of affection by which we learn how to love ourselves, each other and God more fully. In this way, small groups are intentional about providing space for prayerful support and accountability, guided by the One we know as Jesus the Christ.

For our purposes in the Radix Project, we have designed a process for guiding 6–10 people in their season together, designed as six 90-minute sessions, with a plenary gathering before the first session. Each small group gathering is structured to open with prayer, to have time for check-in, scripture reading and reflection, sharing of stories, and check-out with prayer.

SMALL GROUP SESSIONS

In addition to the six small group meetings (which will convene at various times), there is a plenary gathering to which all who participate in the small groups are invited. So the flow of the season looks like this:

OPENING PLENARY

Sunday, April 26, 2020,
7–8:30 p.m., via Zoom

The Opening Plenary will begin with a brief presentation by Dean Steve, giving a general introduction to the various narratives of the resurrected Christ which will be discussed in the small group meetings. This presentation is open to anyone, whether or not they are participating in the small groups. Following this presentation, the groups will meet individually for the first time in break-out sessions.

- SESSION 1: MY MESSAGE FOR YOU** week of April 27, 2020
- SESSION 2: THEY DID NOT UNDERSTAND.** week of May 4, 2020
- SESSION 3: I HAVE SEEN THE LORD.** week of May 11, 2020
- SESSION 4: MADE KNOWN IN THE BREAKING OF THE BREAD.**
.week of May 18, 2020
- SESSION 5: PEACE BE WITH YOU** .week of May 25, 2020
- SESSION 6: YOU ARE WITNESSES** week of June 1, 2020

ESTABLISH GROUP NORMS

In order to grow in trust, it is important for groups to agree to norms for their time together and revisit them periodically as needed. It is important that everyone agree to abide by the same expectations for their time together. Here are some aspects of relational group culture that all groups will want to discuss as they begin their work

CONFIDENTIALITY

- ◆ What is allowed to be shared outside the group?
- ◆ What may be shared on social media?

RESPECT AND MUTUALITY

- ◆ Let others finish without being interrupted.
- ◆ Resist the temptation to problem-solve.
- ◆ Mutual respect is essential.
- ◆ Give everyone a chance to speak.

LOGISTICS

- ◆ What are expectations about beginning and ending on time?
- ◆ About sharing food, etc.?

TECHNOLOGY

- ◆ What are expectations about phone use during meetings?
- ◆ Will they be turned off and placed in a basket? Silenced? Other?

ATTENDANCE

- ◆ Be punctual.
- ◆ Commit to regular attendance and participation.

PREPARATION

- ◆ What, if anything, are group members expected to do to prepare for their meetings?

COMMITMENT TO PRAYER

- ◆ What are expectations that each group member commits to pray for the others daily during this time as a small group?

FLOW OF THE SMALL GROUP MEETINGS

A key to the flourishing of small groups is some consistency week to week so folks will know what to expect. A group facilitator will encourage the group to stay on track, but everyone has a part in making that happen. Here is the suggested format for all Radix Project groups which are designed to meet for 90 minutes each week:

- GATHERING** 5 minutes
- OPEN IN PRAYER** 5 minutes
- CHECK-IN** 10 minutes
(A question will serve as the prompt.)
- SCRIPTURE REFLECTION** 20 minutes
- GROUP DISCUSSION** 30 minutes
- CHECK-OUT INCLUDING PRAYER REQUESTS** . 10 minutes
- CLOSING PRAYER/WORSHIP** 10 minutes

ZOOM ETIQUETTE

It is a good idea to keep your microphone on mute until it's your turn to speak.

CHECK-OUT/CLOSING

This is an opportunity for each member of the group to reflect on the time together, articulating what they learned, and to ask the group to hold them in prayer with special intention. That intention may have arisen in the context of the meeting, or it could be that you are asking for prayers for some prevailing part of your life (e.g., my child has surgery next week, or I am retiring from work, etc.). The important thing is that the prayers of the group gather all those intentions up as the meeting comes to an end, AND that each person commits to holding those prayers through the week, until you meet again. Consider incorporating the closing prayers in some brief form of worship. Some examples could be:

- ◆ Daily Devotions, BCP, p. 137–140
- ◆ Compline, BCP, p. 127
- ◆ A brief hymn, chant, or Taizé prayer
- ◆ The group may choose to go around and allow each person to pray for the person sitting to their right, with the facilitator opening and closing.
- ◆ Alternatively, after the intentions are named, sit in silent prayer, centered on God's mercy and presence.

SCRIPTURE STUDY GUIDES



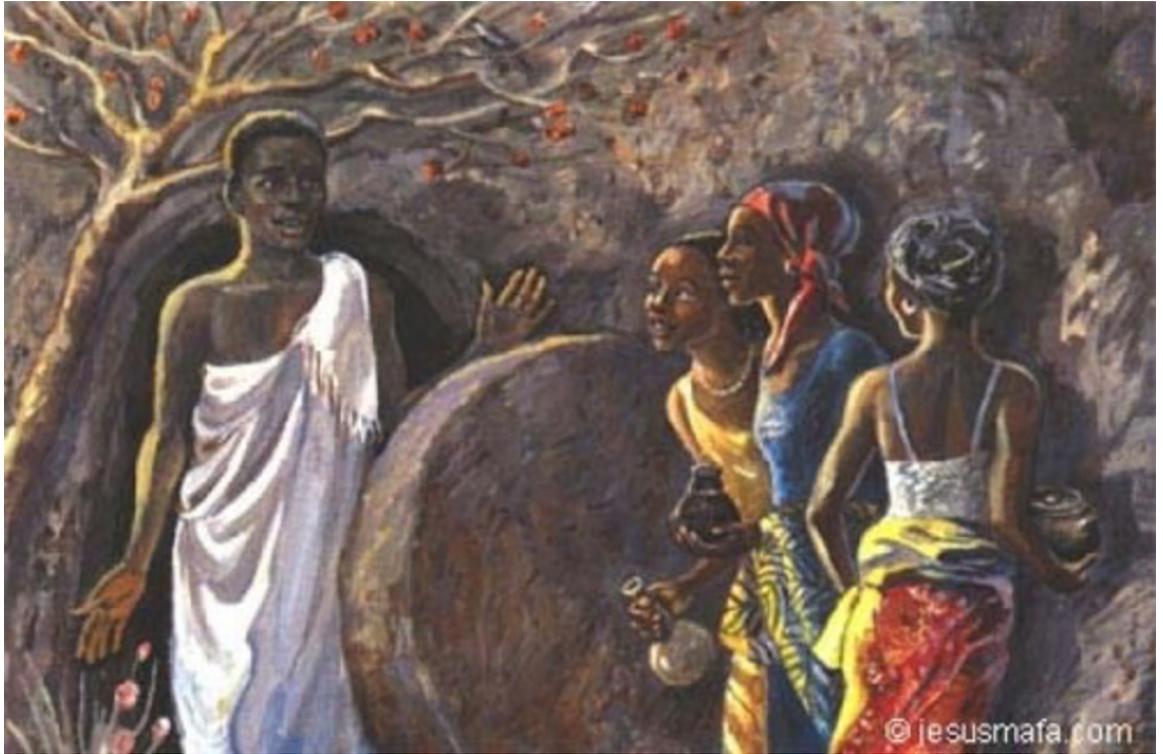
WEEK 1: MY MESSAGE FOR YOU

CHECK IN

What is your favorite park? What do you like to do when you visit that park?

SCRIPTURE *Matthew 28: 1-10*

AFTER the sabbath, as the first day of the week was dawning, Mary Magdalene and the other Mary went to see the tomb. And suddenly there was a great earthquake; for an angel of the Lord, descending from heaven, came and rolled back the stone and sat on it. His appearance was like lightning, and his clothing white as snow. For fear of him the guards shook and became like dead men. But the angel said to the women, “Do not be afraid; I know that you are looking for Jesus who was crucified. He is not here; for he has been raised, as he said. Come, see the place where he lay. Then go quickly and tell his disciples, ‘He has been raised from the dead, and indeed he is going ahead of you to Galilee; there you will see him.’ This is my message for you.” So they left the tomb quickly with fear and great joy, and ran to tell his disciples. Suddenly Jesus met them and said, “Greetings!” And they came to him, took hold of his feet, and worshiped him. Then Jesus said to them, “Do not be afraid; go and tell my brothers to go to Galilee; there they will see me.” ♦



Easter, Empty Tomb from the “Jesus Mafa” series (1973); a collaboration between a Christian community of the Mafa people in Cameroon, West Africa, and French missionaries.

QUESTIONS FOR SCRIPTURE REFLECTION

1. In every gospel, the first people to witness the risen Jesus are women. Why might that be? Who are the people in your life who stick with you through life's great joys and sorrows? Why might that be?
2. There is so much movement in this passage. Resurrection is about belief, and it is about action. What action words stand out to you? How has Jesus moved you "to go and tell" others about him? What have you said or wish you had the courage to say now?
3. *Visio divina*. What do you notice about the picture? Is there a person or a part of the scene with whom you identify? If so, say more about that.

GROUP DISCUSSION

1. We are experiencing a great earthquake in our personal and corporate lives right now. Who are the angels in your own life who have helped you not be afraid in the midst of an extraordinary experience? How have you been an angel to someone else in the midst of a crisis?
2. The women felt both fear and great joy at the same time. When have you felt that tension in your own life? What was the situation? Who or what has helped you not to get stuck or frozen in place? What happened next?

NOTES

WEEK 2: THEY DID NOT UNDERSTAND

CHECK IN

Who in your life do you go to tell when something unusual happens?

SCRIPTURE *John 20: 1-10*

EARLY on the first day of the week, while it was still dark, Mary Magdalene came to the tomb and saw that the stone had been removed from the tomb. So she ran and went to Simon Peter and the other disciple, the one whom Jesus loved, and said to them, “They have taken the Lord out of the tomb, and we do not know where they have laid him.” Then Peter and the other disciple set out and went toward the tomb. The two were running together, but the other disciple outran Peter and reached the tomb first. He bent down to look in and saw the linen wrappings lying there, but he did not go in. Then Simon Peter came, following him, and went into the tomb. He saw the linen wrappings lying there, and the cloth that had been on Jesus’ head, not lying with the linen wrappings but rolled up in a place by itself. Then the other disciple, who reached the tomb first, also went in, and he saw and believed; for as yet they did not understand the scripture, that he must rise from the dead. Then the disciples returned to their homes. ♦



Résurrection
(1937/1948) by
Marc Chagall
(1887–1985); the
central panel in
a monumental
triptych titled
Révolution;
Centre Pompidou,
Paris.

QUESTIONS FOR SCRIPTURE REFLECTION

1. What details do you notice in this account of the resurrection? What gaps in the story do you wish you knew more about?
2. The movement in this narrative is swift, and then ends somewhat abruptly with the disciples returning home. We, too, have returned to our homes to contemplate all that has happened in our world during COVID-19. What do you think it was like for the disciples to go home and contemplate all that had happened after the crucifixion and resurrection?
3. *Visio divina*. Rather than depicting a realistic scene in time, this painting shows symbols and aspects of meaning related to Jesus's resurrection. What images or figures are you drawn to?

GROUP DISCUSSION

1. Sometimes it takes time to understand what is taking place, and sometimes only in hindsight can we make sense of it. In this scripture, the disciples are reflecting on all that Jesus said and all that happened up to that point, and understanding it in a new way. Has there ever been a time in your life when you were able to put all the pieces together to understand something about your life in a new way?
2. What about being at home helps you integrate belief and spiritual practice into your life? What about being at home makes it more difficult?

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WEEK 3: I HAVE SEEN THE LORD

CHECK IN

If you got a tattoo (or another tattoo), what would it be and where would you put it?

SCRIPTURE *John 20:11-18*

BUT Mary stood weeping outside the tomb. As she wept, she bent over to look into the tomb; and she saw two angels in white, sitting where the body of Jesus had been lying, one at the head and the other at the feet. They said to her, “Woman, why are you weeping?” She said to them, “They have taken away my Lord, and I do not know where they have laid him.” When she had said this, she turned around and saw Jesus standing there, but she did not know that it was Jesus. Jesus said to her, “Woman, why are you weeping? Whom are you looking for?” Supposing him to be the gardener, she said to him, “Sir, if you have carried him away, tell me where you have laid him, and I will take him away.” Jesus said to her, “Mary!” She turned and said to him in Hebrew, “Rabbouni!” (which means Teacher). Jesus said to her, “Do not hold on to me, because I have not yet ascended to the Father. But go to my brothers and say to them, ‘I am ascending to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God.’” Mary Magdalene went and announced to the disciples, “I have seen the Lord”; and she told them that he had said these things to her. ♦



Christ Appearing to Mary Magdalene [Noli me tangere] (1651)
by Rembrandt van Rijn (1606–1669); Herzog Anton Ulrich
Museum, Braunschweig, Germany.

QUESTIONS FOR SCRIPTURE REFLECTION

1. What word or phrase stands out to you?
2. Mary, someone who had been close with Jesus, clearly still wasn't expecting a Resurrection. It takes Mary some time to register and believe that Jesus is risen. How does the Resurrection uphold or break into your faith? What is different in your life because of Jesus?
3. *Visio divina*. What strikes you about Rembrandt's painting of Mary's encounter with Jesus and why?

GROUP DISCUSSION

1. Mary couldn't find Jesus in a past, familiar way, and found Him in a different way. When have you experienced waiting and hoping, and then something more than you could have hoped for, or wildly different than you expected, happened? How does that relate to "do not hold onto me?"
2. Have you ever been surprised by grace in the midst of despair? Have you even been surprised by the way the Spirit showed up in your life?

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WEEK 4: MADE KNOWN IN THE BREAKING OF THE BREAD

CHECK IN

Describe a time that you connected with a stranger in an unexpected way.

SCRIPTURE *Luke 24: 13–35*

Now on that same day two of them were going to a village called Emmaus, about seven miles from Jerusalem, and talking with each other about all these things that had happened. While they were talking and discussing, Jesus himself came near and went with them, but their eyes were kept from recognizing him. And he said to them, “What are you discussing with each other while you walk along?” They stood still, looking sad. Then one of them, whose name was Cleopas, answered him, “Are you the only stranger in Jerusalem who does not know the things that have taken place there in these days?” He asked them, “What things?” They replied, “The things about Jesus of Nazareth, who was a prophet mighty in deed and word before God and all the people, and how our chief priests and leaders handed him over to be condemned to death and crucified him. But we had hoped that he was the one to redeem Israel. Yes, and besides all this, it is now the third day since these things took place. Moreover, some women of our group astounded us. They were at the tomb early this morning, and when they did not find his body there, they came back and told us that they had indeed seen a vision of angels who said that he was alive. Some of those who were with us went to the tomb and found it just as the women had said; but they did not see him.” Then he said to them, “Oh, how foolish you are, and how slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have declared! Was it not necessary that the Messiah should suffer these things and then



The Supper at Emmaus (1601)
by Caravaggio
(1571–1610);
The National
Gallery, London.

enter into his glory?” Then beginning with Moses and all the prophets, he interpreted to them the things about himself in all the scriptures.

As they came near the village to which they were going, he walked ahead as if he were going on. But they urged him strongly, saying, “Stay with us, because it is almost evening and the day is now nearly over.” So he went in to stay with them. When he was at the table with them, he took bread, blessed and broke it, and gave it to them. Then their eyes were opened, and they recognized him; and he vanished from their sight. They said to each other, “Were not our hearts burning within us while he was talking to us on the road, while he was opening the scriptures to us?” That same hour they got up and returned to Jerusalem; and they found the eleven and their companions gathered together. They were saying, “The Lord has risen indeed, and he has appeared to Simon!” Then they told what had happened on the road, and how he had been made known to them in the breaking of the bread. ♦

QUESTIONS FOR SCRIPTURE REFLECTION

1. What word or phrase stands out to you?
2. Can you describe a time when you “heart was burning” within you? Did the experience change you in some way? Were there others with you?
3. Visio Divina: What strikes you about Caravaggio’s painting of this meal at Emmaus and why?

GROUP DISCUSSION

1. Describe a time in your life when you became aware of a “holy presence.” Did you know it right away, or did it take some time to unfold or “live into it?”
2. How do you share the experience of such an event with others, and why might that be important to do?

NOTES

WEEK 5: PEACE BE WITH YOU

CHECK IN

Have you ever encountered a friend in an unexpected and/or surprising way? What was it like?

SCRIPTURE *Luke 24:36–53*

WHILE they were talking about this, Jesus himself stood among them and said to them, “Peace be with you.” They were startled and terrified, and thought that they were seeing a ghost. He said to them, “Why are you frightened, and why do doubts arise in your hearts? Look at my hands and my feet; see that it is I myself. Touch me and see; for a ghost does not have flesh and bones as you see that I have.” And when he had said this, he showed them his hands and his feet. While in their joy they were disbelieving and still wondering, he said to them, “Have you anything here to eat?” They gave him a piece of broiled fish, and he took it and ate in their presence.

Then he said to them, “These are my words that I spoke to you while I was still with you—that everything written about me in the law of Moses, the prophets, and the psalms must be fulfilled.” Then he opened their minds to understand the scriptures, and he said to them, “Thus it is written, that the Messiah is to suffer and to rise from the dead on the third day, and that repentance and forgiveness of sins is to be proclaimed in his name to all nations, beginning from Jerusalem. You are witnesses of these things. And see, I am sending upon you what my Father promised; so stay here



Christ Appears to Apostles Behind Closed Doors (c. 1310), by Duccio di Buoninsegna (c. 1255–c. 1319); a detail from the great altarpiece in the Cathedral of Siena, Italy.

in the city until you have been clothed with power from on high.”

Then he led them out as far as Bethany, and, lifting up his hands, he blessed them. While he was blessing them, he withdrew from them and was carried up into heaven. And they worshiped him, and returned to Jerusalem with great joy; and they were continually in the temple blessing God. ♦

QUESTIONS FOR SCRIPTURE REFLECTION

1. Jesus says many things to his disciples in this passage: “Peace be with you.” “Why are you afraid and doubt?” “Touch me.” “You are witnesses.” Which stands out to you and why?
2. *Visio divina*. Look at the disciples in the icon. What thoughts and feelings do you see on their faces?
3. The disciples are afraid they are seeing a ghost (*pneuma* = spirit, wind, breath), but Jesus asks them to touch his hands and feet and to give him something to eat. What is he showing them?

GROUP DISCUSSION

1. The first half of the story emphasizes Jesus’ embodiment. What does it mean to you that Jesus is “God incarnate” both in life and death?
2. Luke says of the disciples, “in their joy they were disbelieving and still wondering.” How do you understand their experience? What does this mean for understanding faith?
3. In the second half of the story, Jesus points the disciples toward the future, promising they will receive God’s “power from on high” and blessing them. Read this again and imagine Jesus is speaking to us today. How are we to live?

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WEEK 6: YOU ARE WITNESSES

CHECK IN

Have you ever witnessed something unbelievable? Share it with the group if comfortable.

SCRIPTURE *Matthew 28: 16-20*

Now the eleven disciples went to Galilee, to the mountain to which Jesus had directed them. When they saw him, they worshiped him; but some doubted. And Jesus came and said to them, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything that I have commanded you. And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age.” ♦



La Resurrezione [*The Resurrection*] (1972–77),
by Pericle Fazzini (1913–1987); a bronze alloy sculpture,
measuring 66 feet wide, 23 feet tall, and weighing 80 tons,
in the Paul VI Audience Hall of the Vatican.

QUESTIONS FOR SCRIPTURE REFLECTION

1. Which of the action words in this passage are most salient to you? (Worshipped, doubted, go, make, baptizing, teaching, obey)
2. How do you think the disciples and witnesses might have felt to be entrusted with such responsibility to go and do these things? How do you feel about it?
3. *Visio divina*. The photograph is of a sculpture in the Vatican. What emotions or connections does it evoke in you as you look at it?

GROUP DISCUSSION

1. In the passage, not all of the witnesses respond to what they see in the same way. Some worship and some doubt. How do worship and doubt influence you?
 2. Jesus tells his friends to teach people to “obey everything I have commanded of you.” What might you want to learn, or to teach others, in response to this passage?
 3. The end of this scripture is commonly called “The Great Commission,” and is essentially the vision and mission of the church even today. How do you see the Church living out this mission in the world? How do you participate in that mission?
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CLOSING DISCUSSION

This is the end of six weeks of study and reflection together. Take time to pray together about next steps, both as individuals and as a group.

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