

April 12, 2026 – Leader’s Guide

Resurrection Gifts

John 20:19-31

This past Sunday, we began a sermon series entitled “*Equipped for Spirit-Shaped Mission.*” This series focuses on how the risen Jesus prepares his disciples for mission in the 40 days after his resurrection.

Small Group Questions with Leader Guide

- 1. In verses 19–20, what is the situation of the disciples when Jesus appears to them? What emotions or conditions seem to define that moment?**

Leader Notes:

In the sermon, we noticed the fear and uncertainty hanging in the air after Jesus’ crucifixion. The disciples are behind locked doors “for fear of the Jews.” Jesus meets them *in* that fear—not after they overcome it.

- 2. In verses 19–23, what resurrection gifts does Jesus give to the disciples that prepare them for joining in his mission?**

Leader Notes:

In the sermon, we were only able to focus on one gift: the gift of the Holy Spirit. There are, however, other gifts given in the story:

- He gives them peace (three times)
- He gives them grace and restoration after their desertion
- He gives them a new purpose/mission: “As the Father has sent me, even so I am sending you.”
- He gives them the authority and vocation of extending (or withholding) forgiveness
- In a real sense, he gives them himself—both in the gift of the Spirit and in the visible offering of his wounds—so that they might know that he is alive

Explore how these gifts form and prepare the disciples to be sent by Jesus.

- 3. In verse 22, Jesus gives a preview of Pentecost—the soon-to-come day when the Holy Spirit would be poured out on the church. What is the significance of**

the action that accompanies the command to “receive the Holy Spirit”? How does this significance inform our view of what it means to be a Christian?

Leader Notes:

The significance of Jesus breathing on his disciples is this: just as God breathed on Adam in the first creation, so the Son of God breathes on his disciples to signal the arrival of new creation.

The Christian life, therefore, is not about becoming a better version of your old self, but about becoming an entirely new person in relationship with Jesus.

- 4. The first command of the risen Jesus to his gathered disciples is not to *do* things for him, but to receive the Holy Spirit. Why is it crucial to remember the priority and presence of the Spirit as we join in Jesus’ mission? How does this shape our understanding of the church’s mission in the world?**

Leader Notes:

As new creations in Christ, we are also given a new purpose: we are formed as a new community to join his mission in the power of the Holy Spirit. *2 Corinthians 5:17–19* is a helpful passage that connects being new creations with the ministry entrusted to us by Christ.

This insight from missiologist Lesslie Newbigin is also helpful:

“The active agent of mission is a power which rules, guides, and goes before the church: the free, sovereign, living power of the Spirit of God. Mission is not just something the church does; it is something which is done by the Spirit...”

(Lesslie Newbigin, The Open Secret, 62)

- 5. The new creation has come in Jesus, and yet the Christian life is the “struggle to receive what has been poured out on us from the first” (David Yeago). In verses 24–25, we see Thomas’s struggle. The disciples go to Thomas, one of their own number, to share the good news that Jesus is alive. How does this inform our understanding of what it means to be the church? Where does the mission to share and embody the good news of Jesus begin?**

Leader Notes:

In the sermon, we considered how the struggle to receive all that God has poured out on us

from the beginning is not a solo struggle. Thomas is a picture of isolation *par excellence*: he is not at the first gathering and is clearly pulling away.

Notice how the disciples go to him and point him to Jesus. Consider ways we can do that for one another.

In a real sense, our participation in the mission of God begins with the Spirit's work in us—transforming us into the new creations we are in Christ.

Closing Prayer

Close in a time of prayer focused on:

- The presence of the risen Jesus in our midst during the Easter season
- Welcoming the Holy Spirit to make us into the new creations we already are in Christ, and to empower us to serve God and the world
- Any areas of personal struggle within your group