

Read: John 20:19-31

SENT just like Flat Stanley

John 20:19-23

On the evening of that first day of the week, the disciples were together behind locked doors because of their fear of the Jews. Jesus came, stood among them, and said to them, "Peace be with you!" After he said this, he showed them his hands and side. So the disciples rejoiced when they saw the Lord.

Jesus said to them again, "Peace be with you! Just as the Father has sent me, I am also sending you." After saying this, he breathed on them and said, "Receive the Holy Spirit. Whenever you forgive people's sins, they are forgiven. Whenever you do not forgive them, they are not forgiven."

In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Have you ever read the book called *Flat Stanley*? If so, do you remember what happened? Stanley was sleeping, and one morning a bulletin board fell on him. His parents didn't know what to do, so they decided to take him to a doctor. The doctor was speechless, he did not even know what to say! Stanley was, well, flat!

But Stanley decided to look on the bright side of being flat. Since he was flat, do you know what Stanley could do? He could be sent in the mail! And that's exactly what happened! His mother put a sandwich and snacks in a box along with Flat Stanley and mailed him to California to visit his friends.

Do you think you could be sent in the mail? No way! You would be way too heavy! And you would have to bring a lot of food! But did you know that even though you can't be sent in the mail, you can be sent in a different way? That's what Jesus said in the verses we just read from John 20. This is the passage to remember—John 20:21, "Jesus said to them again, 'Peace be with you! Just as the Father has sent me, I am also sending you.'"

God probably won't send you like Flat Stanley, but maybe someday God could send you as a teacher or a pastor. Maybe God will use something you're really good at to help someone who really needs that. Maybe God will send you on a mission trip to another state or another country. Maybe God will use you to write a devotion like this one so you can send it to others to read.

No matter who we are, we are sent to share the good news of the Father sending his one and only Son, Jesus. Jesus came to take away our sins so that that we can tell others, "Your sins are forgiven." Jesus came to give us peace. So let's join the disciples in rejoicing as the Lord sends us out with the best message in the world!

The questions below are to help families discuss this devotion. The questions are divided by age group as suggestions, but anyone could reflect on any of the questions as they desire.

Questions for the Younger Children

- Whom did your heavenly Father send to take away your sins?
- Name someone in your life you can share the message of Jesus with.

Questions for Elementary Age Children

- Flat Stanley's mom was the one who sent him. Who is sending you into the world?
- If you were Flat Stanley and could travel anywhere in the world to share the good news of Jesus, where would you go?

Questions for Middle School and Above

- Stanley probably didn't like that he was flattened by the bulletin board, but he turned what should have been a negative thing into something positive. Can you think of something similar in your life?
- How can you have peace no matter what is going on right now in your life?

Closing Prayer:

Dear Father, thank you for sending Jesus into our world to save us. Thank you for sending us to tell the world about Jesus. Amen.