**Easter– March 2024**

*Resources and ideas to explore with home, school and church.*

*Schools – Please ensure that all links are viewed and considered for your context as some are directly linked to those with faith.*

**What is Easter?**

Easter is celebrated by Christians to commemorate the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, as described in the New Testament of the Bible. Christians believe, Jesus was crucified on Good Friday, and three days later, on Easter Sunday rose from the dead, symbolising victory over sin and death. Easter is considered the most important and joyful celebration in the Christian liturgical calendar. Christians across the globe will reflect on the significance of Jesus’ sacrifice and the promise of eternal life.

While Christians celebrate Christ is risen! Traditions that mark this vary around the world <https://www.compassionuk.org/blogs/easter-traditions-around-the-world/>

**Love wins:** For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life. For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him. John 3 :16

The Message puts it: ‘This is how much God loved the world: He gave his Son, his one and only Son. And this is why: so that no one need be destroyed; by believing in him, anyone can have a whole and lasting life. God didn’t go to all the trouble of sending his Son merely to point an accusing finger, telling the world how bad it was. He came to help, to put the world right again.

**Suggested Learning Points and Bible Readings by Age Group**

**All:** Learn the meaning of Easter

Easter themed art from around the world: <https://bameanglican.wordpress.com/2019/04/21/easter-and-art-from-around-the-world/> for use with different age groups as appropriate.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Age**  | **Suggested content** | **Creative Exploration** |
| **0-5:** | * An introductory outline of the Easter story

*Beginner's Bible The Very First Easter: An Easter Book For Kids* (Zondervan) or video version: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bkNTU_Vv5Ew> * Sing ‘We have a king who rides a donkey’ and make your own actions up for the words: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gSbEEwik2hs>

How do we show that we care for other peopleWho cares for you? What do they do for you? * Easter sand video: <https://www.bbc.co.uk/cbeebies/watch/lets-celebrate-easter>

Jesus is alive! God loves us so much. Look at the hands and face of Jesus at the end. Can you pull a face that shows that you are happy with the people who care for you? Can you pull a face that shows how Mary felt that Jesus is alive? What can we do with our hands to show we care for others? How do others use their hands to show they care? | * Make a crown to remember Jesus is a king – a king who loves us all and to remind us to show love for others by being kind and helpful
* Make a paper plate donkey like this one: <https://kidscraftroom.com/paper-plate-donkey-craft/>
* Paper plates Easter story for toddlers: <https://lettheirlightshine.com/2020/02/21/on-the-way-to-easter-paper-plate-pictures/>
 |
| **5-7:** | * Watch Three friends and the miracle man <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Aj0K_iUitGQ>

 What did the children like about the miracle man?What did he do? What made them sad? Why were they happy again?  How did they find out what happened to Jesus? Why did Jesus die?  Who can be forgiven? What do you like best about this story?  | * Eggs – decorate paper eggs with different coloured tissue squares to show the happiness and sadness of the Easter story
* Easter Gardens remind us of the sadness and starkness of the cross but the joy of new life in the garden. You can make Easter gardens individually or as a group or create them out of Lego or junk modelling materials.
* A very basic one is here: <https://www.sunhatsandwellieboots.com/2013/03/grow-easter-resurrection-garden.html> you could use cardboard or paper instead of a stone and could add moss or other greenery to add some colour or just wait for the grass to grow.
* There are some good ideas for bigger scale ones here: <http://www.spiritualchild.co.uk/eastergarden.html>
* A song which conveys the meaning of Easter for Christians: **You didn’t wait until I loved you**
* <https://music.apple.com/gb/album/kids-praise-party-vol-2/1013044907> or <https://open.spotify.com/track/291BNcThXrauTktLX7awN2?si=bvkGikb9SC2toXAVl80F6A>
 |
| **7-11** | * Watch this version of the Easter story <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HL8R158Ujp4>
* Easter Resurrection in Rocks by Patti Rokus <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=e1VYZItUocA>
* What would making a sacrifice for something you believe in involve today?
* How might making a sacrifice be a positive thing?
* Who or what would you make a sacrifice for?
* Is sacrifice an expression of love?
 | * Make a God’s eye cross – you will need twigs or lolly sticks and wool in a variety of colours. Show the children the cross and tell them that it was a sad day when Jesus died but it was also a Good day because it showed how much God loves us. And when Jesus rose again on Easter Day that was an amazing day for the world. Show them a completed colourful cross and tell them this reminds us of the amazing day when Jeus came back to life. How to make a God’s Eye cross: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=X53ZXcHoR_c>
* An activity to use through Holy Week at home or school: Listen, look, act and pray through [Holy Week slides](https://mcusercontent.com/3ee1f9cb35d751b908bd79a83/files/462df0c3-e12c-e582-60b0-fe9c90272c8e/Holy_Week.pdf).
 |
| **11-17** | * The Last Supper is where Jesus set out the path he was about to take. That he would be leaving his disciples in the world in a physical sense – but that he was also leaving them with a very real way of remembering him and what he was about to do.
* Look at this image, called Table of Hope and featuring real children who were forced to live on the streets. The children and their families now have homes.
* Jesus dying on the cross is a hugely significant day for Christians. On this day we remember Jesus’ sacrifice for each person because of God’s love for the world.
* John 3:16 says: God loved the people of this world so much that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who has faith in him will have eternal life and never really die.
* This is how The Message puts it: ‘This is how much God loved the world: He gave his Son, his one and only Son. And this is why: so that no one need be destroyed; by believing in him, anyone can have a whole and lasting life. God didn’t go to all the trouble of sending his Son merely to point an accusing finger, telling the world how bad it was. He came to help, to put the world right again.
* What do you think about these words/ What does it mean for you? For our world?
 | * Last Supper with Street Children image by Joey Velasco – Table of Hope <https://www.facebook.com/NationalReligiousVocationConference/photos/last-supper-with-the-street-childrenthe-12-children-in-the-painting-are-real-peo/997386353685812/?paipv=0&eav=AfZLovwbB-yjkRiOX80TL6GtN9KyN8PgoNlp86lbfh85J2FYOjQV-8dMIHAGpr_rceo&_rdr>
* Would you call the table at the Last Supper a Table of Hope?
* Why? What does it mean to you?
* What do you think it means for the world?
* Make and eat Hot Cross buns/toast and jam – as we savour the different flavours in the buns/or toast and jam try to think about where the sweet spots are as you eat
* Where is the food crunchy or not as sweet?
* As you eat consider:
* All the emotions contained in the story of Holy Week from Jesus triumphant entry into Jerusalem to his loneliness and pain on the cross and to the ultimate joy of the resurrection and reunion with his friends.
* Where is the sweetness in your life?
* Who are those people who help you stay sweet?
* Where are the crunchy, not so sweet parts?
* Where do you need God to ask you to shine his light on your life?
* Where do you want to ask him for help in your life?
 |

**Reflection / Spiritual development**

Throughout the past year we have all had to let go or say goodbye to many things. Some of the things we would have enjoyed have not happened; parts of our ‘old lives’ have changed greatly. Some of us may have had to say goodbye to people we loved. Easter is a reminder that there is a promise of new life, and how Jesus came to give us new life. We can look forward to new life ahead of us, with new things beginning.

What does it mean that Jesus gives us new life?

How do you feel when you get something new?

How are those feelings similar to the way you feel if Jesus has given you new life?

You may want to include a song or poem to further extend your session and give the children/young people an opportunity to explore through a time of reflection.

Christian Easter Poems - <https://www.poemsource.com/Christian-easter-poems.html>

**Suggestions for prayers**

**Prayer:** Lord Jesus as we celebrate the miracle that is Easter. You broke the chains of death, and you are alive! Let your light shine into every corner of our world and may your love live in our hearts now and forever. Amen. **OR** As Christians around the world celebrate the miracle that is Easter. May we think about how our lives can shine light into every corner of our world and love live in our hearts now and forever.

**Interactive Option**

**Mini Egg Prayers –** Get a packet or mini box of mini eggs. For each colour of egg pray for the topic. White – Praise the Lord’s name! Yellow – Say thank you for something. Pink – Say sorry for something you know you shouldn’t have done. Mauve – Pray for another country or someone you know who needs God’s love right now.

**Butterfly Prayers –** Butterflies start their life as caterpillars. Then caterpillars bury themselves in a chrysalis and their life seems to end. After some time, though, they burst from that tomb into new life as a butterfly. 3 days after he died, Jesus rose to new life! Christians believe that Jesus brings us hope and new life. What are your hopes and dreams? Where in your life would you like a new start? Write or draw your ideas on a butterfly shape, decorate it and hang it up to remind you that Jesus is able to bring new life to us.

**Links to other resources for further use**

**Easter trail resource** - download for free: <https://www.scottishbiblesociety.org/resources/story-ten-easter>

**Make Resurrection Rolls** - be amazed! <https://www.aroundmyfamilytable.com/empty-tomb-rolls-2/>

**Dwell at Home Easter Resource** traces the journey through Holy Week with readings, activities, thoughts and reflections using the headings: Breathe, Read, Wonder, Pray <https://network.crcna.org/topic/spiritual-formation/faith-nurture/gods-big-easter-story-holy-week-journey-families>

**Good Friday sensory prayer stations** <http://www.spiritualchild.co.uk/goodfridaysensory.html>

Video: Why did Jesus have to die? <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YX6kfl9qBkA>

**Some more versions of The Easter Story**

The Easter Story - J John <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=J_E-3BqqeiU>

The Jesus Storybook <https://www.facebook.com/JesusStorybookBible/videos/10157406331058569/> and <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SigoALSS1R8> The Resurrection

Bible Society <https://www.biblesociety.org.uk/resources/collections/easter-resources/the-awesome-easter-surprise-resources/>