

Easter Unit

Bible Truth: Jesus gives us new life.

Bible Verse: “Hosanna! Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord!” Mark 11:9

Bible Basis: Matthew 21:1-17, Matthew 28:1-10, Mark 11:1-11, Mark 14:12-26, 32-42, Mark 15:25-38, Mark 16:1-8, Luke 19:28-44, John 12:12-19, John 20:1-18, John 20:24-31

Children will learn:

- Jesus is God’s Son.
- Jesus gives us new life.
- How to praise Jesus.
- Ways to remember Jesus.
- Jesus was punished for something he didn’t do.
- Jesus rose from the dead.
- The sadness of Jesus’ death turned into something wonderful.
- Jesus returned to heaven to be with God.

Lessons:

March 18 – Jesus enters Jerusalem

March 25 – Jesus shares a final meal with his disciples

April 1 – Easter – Jesus is Alive!

April 8 – Doubting Thomas

April 15 – Jesus returns to heaven

We are starting our Easter Unit in the preschool area. The Easter message makes Christianity different from every other religion on earth. We believe that Jesus came to earth as a man and bore the sins of the world as he died on a cross and came back to life again. Other religions may boast of great leaders and wise teachings, but Jesus Christ is the only one who rose from the dead to offer eternal life to those who believe in him and accept his forgiveness.

I hope you can make this a special time in your home. Teaching children about Christmas is fun and easy compared to the challenge of teaching them about Lent, Holy Week, and Easter. Memories of the little baby born in Bethlehem are still fresh in their minds when the season of Lent begins. So how do we explain that the little baby grew up to suffer and die? In a society of instant gratification and “it’s all about me,” a season which emphasizes repentance and sacrifice can be difficult concepts. It’s important to be aware of what is age-appropriate for children and be conscious of each child’s particular sensitivities and level of understanding. Children younger than three can be told that Jesus is alive and with us today. For most preschool children, a simple explanation that Jesus died on a cross, was buried in a tomb, and then rose on Easter Sunday is sufficient. Whatever we teach our children about the events leading up to Jesus’ death, it’s important to always include the story of Jesus’ resurrection and what it means for us today. It’s so important that we teach our kids the truth that Jesus died for us, rose again, and is now alive – even when they are small.

“Train up a child in the way he should go; even when he is old he will not depart from it.”
Proverbs 22:6

Planting Seeds: Seeds offer a clear message to children of the power of new life. Rest eggshell halves filled with soil in an egg carton. Plant marigold, petunia, or grass seeds in each (grass seeds will provide the fastest results). Place in sunny window and watch the plant begin to grow. Talk about how Jesus gives us new life and how we all grow and change.

Butterfly Art: Butterflies are often a symbol of new life, so it’s the perfect time to make some butterflies. You can make Easter butterfly decorations with coffee filters. Have your child scribble designs on paper coffee filters. If they use washable markers, you can lightly spray the filters with water and watch the colors spread and change. Once the designs are dry, you can pinch the middle of the filter with either a chenille wire or a clothes pin to make the body of the butterfly. Be sure to talk about how butterflies remind us of the new life Jesus brings.

Easter Jesus Tree & Devotional: Kids are familiar with the concept of having a tree at Christmas so why not carry that over into Easter? You can just use some small branches and a vase to create the tree. Ann Voskamp from [A Holy Experience](#) and author of [One Thousand Gifts](#) has a free Easter devotional including 17 days of Bible readings, a short & simple action point, and a full color ornament of classic art to cut out and use to create your own Easter Jesus tree. Just search Ann Voskamp Easter tree and you will find it. You can also use the same concept and create your own pictures or words to represent Easter and make paper ornaments to hang on the branches.

Foot Washing: This Maundy Thursday event speaks volumes about Jesus's desire for us to serve. Read John 13 to your child. Wrap a towel around your waist, as Jesus did, and wash your children's feet and then let them wash your feet if they want to. While your preschooler won't understand all of the spiritual aspects of this act, this passage serves as the opportunity to teach our children to be humble servants; to look to who we can serve in our own lives. If Jesus--God incarnate--is willing to serve, we should follow that example as well.

Songs/Activities: Young children love to move to happy music. Pick out your favorite praise music and have a praise parade with your preschooler. You can make some streamers, use instruments, make simple tambourines by placing dried beans or rice between 2 plastic plates and taping the edges shut, or make paper palm leaves and march around the house. Reinforce the idea that because Jesus is alive we can celebrate.

The Easter Song (Sung to the tune of Mary Had a Little Lamb)
Don't expect your child to grasp all the meaning of the resurrection. What you can show them, though, is that Easter is a time to be happy.

Easter is a happy day, happy day, happy day.
Easter is a happy day. Jesus is alive!

The Real Easter Bunny: Teach your child about Jesus by talking about what a real Easter Bunny is. Use a rabbit picture, a stuffed bunny or even a real one (if you are adventurous) to teach some of the characteristics of Jesus that we should all try to have. By adding a Bible verse to each quality, you will create a true Easter Bunny.

Real Easter bunnies:

- are gentle, kind-hearted and forgiving (Ephesians 4:32).
- have big ears that are quick to listen (James 1:19).
- have big eyes to look carefully and choose what is good (1 Thessalonians 5:21).
- have no voice for complaining or arguing (Philippians 2:13).
- are quiet in prayer, but hop with thanksgiving and rejoicing (Philippians 4:4-6).
- have big feet to go tell others about Jesus so they can be like Easter bunnies, too (Matthew 28: 19-20).
- eat what is healthy by filling up on God's word every day (Psalm 119:11).

Joy Journey Activities: This set of activities is found at <https://happyhomefairy.com/the-joy-journey-christ-centered-easter-activities-free-printable/>

These activities give us a chance to look into the work of our Savior and are based off of this scripture in Hebrews. Hebrews 12:2 says, *"We must never stop looking to Jesus. He is the leader of our faith, and he is the one who makes our faith complete. He suffered death on a*

*cross. But he accepted the shame of the cross as if it were nothing because of the **joy** he could see waiting for him. And now he is sitting at the right side of God's throne."*

We need to remember to share the message of joy to our children and in our home, and to the *world* – every single day, so this month brings an especially tangible and precious opportunity to make this joy come alive for our loved ones. There are 20 Christ-centered activities on this site for you to help make it possible.

Jelly Bean Prayer: The Jelly Bean Prayer can be a fun tool to teach children the gospel. Children will love getting to match the colors in the prayer with the jellybeans they get to eat.

A Jelly Bean Prayer

Red is for the blood He gave.

Green is for the grass He made.

Yellow is for the sun so bright.

Orange is for the edge of night.

Black is for the sins we've made.

White is for the grace He gave.

Purple is for His hour of sorrow.

Pink is for the new tomorrow.

Handfuls of jelly beans, colorful and bright, a prayer, and a promise of brand new life.

Cooking Activity: Resurrection Rolls -These treats are not only delicious but also a good way of emphasizing the point that the tomb where Jesus was laid was empty on Easter morning.

Ingredients:

can of refrigerated crescent rolls

8 marshmallows

1/4 cup melted butter

2 Tbs. ground cinnamon

2 Tbs. sugar

Instructions:

1. Preheat oven to 400 degrees. Lightly grease a baking sheet.
2. Separate crescent rolls into individual triangles.
3. Mix the cinnamon and sugar together in a small bowl.
4. Give each child a marshmallow and tell them it stands for Jesus and his purity.
5. Have the children dip their marshmallow into the melted butter and cinnamon/sugar mixture. The butter and cinnamon/sugar are like the oil and spices that were rubbed on Jesus' body.

6. Give each child a crescent roll triangle and explain that this represents the cloth that Jesus' body was wrapped in. Have the child completely wrap the triangle over the marshmallow and seal the edges together.
7. Place in the oven for 10-12 minutes until golden brown. Explain that the oven is like the tomb Jesus was placed in.
8. When the rolls have been removed and cooled, have the children open their "tombs" to see that they are empty inside. Jesus has risen! (The marshmallow melts but the roll remains puffed up—empty.)

Books to explore: There are a lot of wonderful books at the library and at stores like LifeWay and Cedar Springs Christian Bookstore. Here are just a few you might check out:

An Easter Gift for Me by Crystal Bowman

The Parable of the Lily (Parable Series) by Liz Curtis Higgs

My Easter Basket: And the True Story of Easter by Mary Manz Simon

Benjamin's Box: The Story of the Resurrection Eggs by Melody Carlson

J Is for Jesus: An Easter Alphabet and Activity Book by Debbie Trafton O'Neal

What Is Easter? by Michelle Medlock Adams

The Story of Easter by Patricia A. Pingry

The First Easter (Easter Board Books) by Jesslyn DeBoer

The Berenstain Bears and the Easter Story by Mike Berenstain and Jan Berenstain

Easter Bunny's Amazing Day by Cathy Gilmore and Carol Benoist

The Story of Easter by Aileen Fisher

Prayer: Dear Jesus, thank you for loving us. Thank you for washing away our sins by dying on the cross for us. We praise you this day. Amen.