



Finding Easter in the everyday



When we see growing plants and leaves in gardens and green spaces, we can talk about new life. Remember the garden where Jesus went to pray, the open tomb and the celebration in that garden – Jesus is Alive, Hallelujah!

The special food we have to mark our journey from pancakes to hot cross buns, and other Easter treats, help us remember this special time in our church year.



When we see someone we love, or something like a heart shape, we can talk about love – the love that God had for his son Jesus, the love that Jesus came to teach us, a love that was strong and lasts forever, death could never stop it. Let's share that love with everyone!



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A weekly free Bible-based resource for families available every Monday: urc.org.uk/families-on-faith-adventures. See the URC Children's and Youth Work YouTube channel.



Children's and Youth Work
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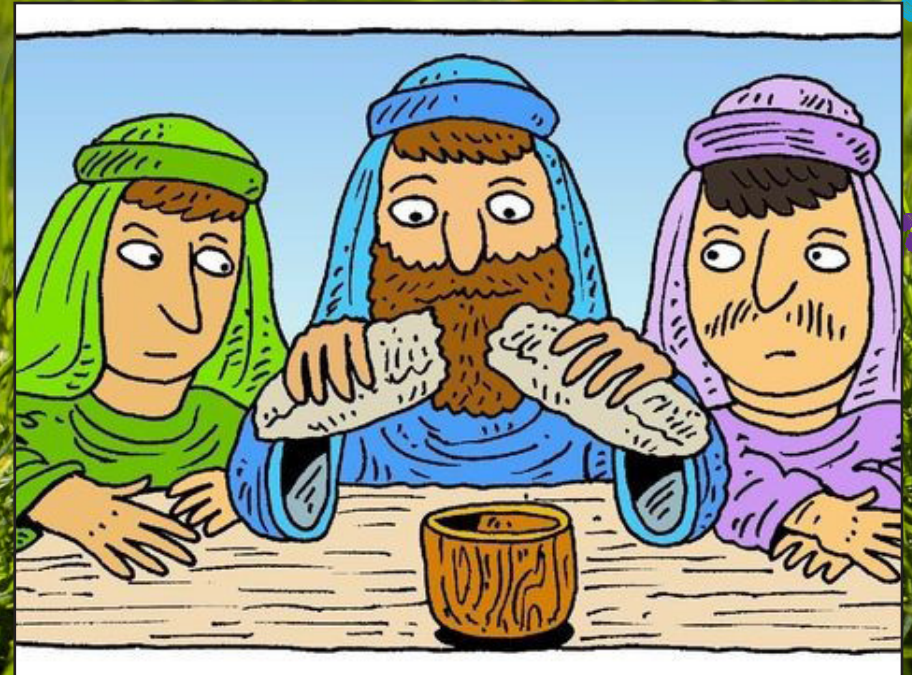


A taste of

families on faith adventures

@ home

for your journey towards Easter





How to use the Lent resource with young children

'Walking towards Easter together' has lots to offer families with young children as you prepare for Easter.'

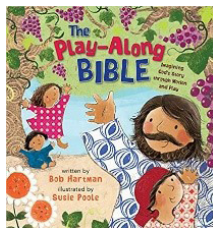
Don't try to do every day as a family; perhaps choose one or two days to get into it together. Do whatever works best for you, capturing ideas, photos, and comments in the family journal. Your children might like to have their own notebook journals to decorate and fill in over Lent. Children will obviously enjoy marking each day on the map with stickers as a countdown to Easter.

You might want to share some of the daily stories in your own words with your child / children; you will know what stories will appeal to them. Get the children involved in as much of it as possible. Even the more complex activities could be a good opportunity for you or an older family member to teach them a new skill. Every week there is also a free online resource FOFA@home with a wealth of ideas on the Sunday themes.'

Exploring the story

Spend some time over the 40 days revisiting the Easter story using Bibles aimed at young children, we recommend the following, but there are many to choose from:

- *Jesus Storybook Bible* by Sally Lloyd Jones
- *Play Along Bible* by Bob Hartman
- *The Lion Storyteller Bible* by Bob Hartman



Watch and listen, dance and sing

- CBeebies offer a series exploring Easter: www.bbc.co.uk/cbeebies/watch/lets-celebrate-easter?collection=lets-celebrate-celebrations
- The Easter story performed by children: www.youtube.com/watch?v=LgFZDCguR8E
- Jesus you're my superhero: www.youtube.com/watch?v=1FY4C930M2Y
- Jesus Loves me Remix: www.youtube.com/watch?v=lUePulhSqkQ

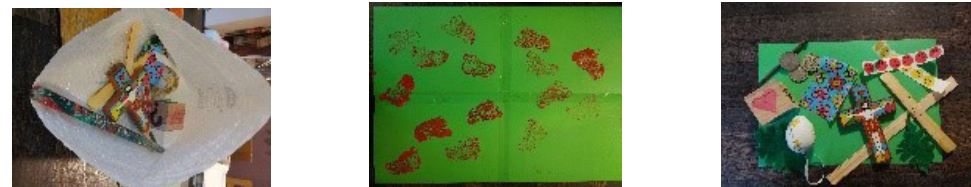
Scrapbook journal for under 5's

Poly pockets with a frame the shape of a footprint. (Use a child's foot as the template.) Insert pictures or collages of things with fit with the feelings of thought for each week: hearts, people, cross etc or with pictures of the things your child has created.



Play mat and treasure bag

Create a play mat using fabric or felt, but paper will work. Use the jiffy bag to create a treasure bag and fill it with things which help to remember what happened during Holy Week. These should be tactile sensory objects: coins, a piece of fabric sprayed with perfume, a palm leaf shape in felt, a cross etc.



Being challenged together

Each week, FOFA@Home has a *Walking the Way* challenge – a challenge to help us live our lives in the Jesus way from day to day rather than it just being about church. These can often be adapted to make them much simpler for little ones.



Throughout Lent, why not make some of the sticker topics your challenge: can you make someone smile or give someone a big smile to cheer them up? Can you share your toy or some sweets or cakes with someone? Can you remember to say thank you to God for your dinner every day? Then put a sticker on the chart to say "Yes, I did it!"



Making together

Most of the activities in the Lent resource could be done by children, especially with a family member helping them, so these are just a few additional activities to enable under 5's to play around Lent. Why not use the recipe book to do some cooking with the under 5's; they'll love measuring and stirring. They will enjoy a lot of the pilgrim crafts, especially dressing up. They could choose flowers and leaves for you to press, stick tissue paper on a stained glass window cross, see how a newspaper tree gets taller and taller, and play with finger puppets. They can help make an Easter garden in a container, or with jammy dodgers.

Sensory bin

Create an Easter Sensory bin with items which relate to the Easter Story. Fill the bin with straw, coloured rice or pasta, and place the items in it to find, or simply put them into a wooden bowl.

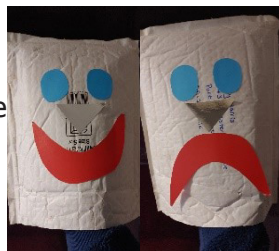


How to dye rice and pasta

Put one cup of rice or mini pasta pieces into a ziplock bag or plastic container with lid. Add 1 tsp of vinegar or lemon juice. Add food colouring to achieve the depth of colour desired. Fasten bag or container and shake thoroughly until all rice or pasta is evenly coated. Allow to dry on a paper towel or tray – the more spread out it is, the quicker it will dry. Store in a ziplock bag.

Happy / sad puppet

Cut out eyes, noses and mouths from card, paper or felt. Stick them onto the jiffy bag your pack came in to create happy and sad faces. When you tell the Easter story, flip between the happy and the sad faces. Can your child tell you which face to use?



Jiffy egg

Cut the jiffy bag into two egg shapes, decorate them on both sides and hang them from the ceiling or a window. Alternatively, cover the bubble side of the egg shapes with paint and use them to print with.



What's in the box?

Small children can explore the Bible story through their senses, using toys and everyday items and materials which relate to the theme. To help them recognise that the items are linked to the story, try to use the same box or big bag (maybe a pillowcase) every time.

Stimulate their interest by singing "What's in the box? What's in the box? Let's see, let's see, what's in the box?" Take the items out one at a time, showing interest and excitement and exploring the item with your child. Make links to the story, encouraging your child to make those links too. "I wonder who this could be in our story?" "Let's feel this lovely green fabric – I wonder what was green in our story?"

Here are some suggestions for Holy Week. Use a paper plate or wooden spoon with a smiley face on one side and a sad one on the other, with a mirror to encourage children to mimic the face as they think about whether the people in the story are happy or sad.

Palm Sunday

Leaves, a donkey, noisy instrument, and a shiny crown.

Good Friday

Nails, wood, black fabric, hand cream (they anointed Jesus' body), sticks tied together to make a cross shape.

Maundy Thursday

Bread roll warmed in the oven to smell nice, a cup or beaker (wooden if you have one, or unbreakable), white cloth, soap, bag of coins.

Easter Sunday

An empty container, bandages, colourful and sweet smelling flowers, noisy instrument, a shiny crown.



Prayers in the Lent resource

There are lots of ideas for prayer in the Lent resource that are interactive and suitable for all ages. For example, the finger prayer walk, saying sorry in sand, praying with buttons or water and being thankful with ribbons. Or just finding a place to sit and be close to God.



Praying together

Backpack prayers

Pack some items, or pictures of items, that you might take with you on a journey into a rucksack. Mix them up, then take it in turns to take one item out and talk to God together. It is fun to close your eyes when choosing so it is a surprise. As an alternative, why not turn your jiffy bag into a backpack. Here are a few ideas for things to go in the bag and some simple starters for talking to God:



- Hankie – talk to God about things that make you sad or worry you
- Building brick – say thank you to God you for your home
- Sweets – say thank you to God for food to eat
- Torch – ask God to show you the right things to do
- Teddy – talk to God about people you love and ask God to bless them.

Road map prayers – God is with you on your journey

Using a play mat or, you could draw a map of your own. Cut out some paper hearts and place them on the map, remembering all the places that you go to: school, nursery, shops, friends' houses. Sit quietly around the map. Say the names of the places you are thinking about and ask God to be with you in all those places and ask God to watch over the people there and keep them safe.



Blessings

It is good to remember people and ask God to bless them. God want us to love him and to love others and we can do this by talking to God about them.



Make some large footprints out of card or paper. Write the name or draw a picture of a person you want God to bless on the back of each one. Lay the footprints in a circle and, as a family, walk around the footprints and take it in turns to say stop. As you stop, put your foot on the nearest footprint. Turn it over and and ask God to bless the person on the back. Stand quietly and say Amen, and then start again.



Lambsongs.co.nz via FreeBibleimages.org



Wondering together

“I wonder...” questions are perfect for every age. There is no right or wrong answer. They encourage you to engage with the theme and link it to your own feelings, experiences, thoughts, ideas and give you a chance to listen to God too. The FOFA@H resource uses questions for all ages – you may have to choose one and simplify it slightly for little ones. Think about the emotions they know, think about what might happen next, think about the life experience they’ve had. Have these conversations while you’re doing something else – a craft, maybe, or colouring – and remember to give them time to think! Try really hard not to answer the question for them, though it’s a good opportunity for you to do some “I wonder”ing too.