

Top 10 Easter Ideas



For families and
intergenerational services

JESUS
all about life

Introduction	3
1. Red string storytelling	4
2. Easter activity stations	7
3. 3D statue discussion	8
4. Pair and share - Halve it	9
5. Paper cross tearing	10
6. Wrap a body.....	11
7. Finger grab game	12
8. Easter around the world	13
9. Big story of the Bible	17
10. Easter story videos.....	18
Appendix - Extra material	19



Introduction



Easter is a wonderful time of the year. Many traditions are also part of this celebration. It can be hard to find new things to do together.

These top 10 Easter Service ideas can help you find some engaging and fun ways to involve everyone in the celebration of Easter.

They explore the question:

How can we ***celebrate Easter together*** as a community so that children and families are awakened to ***a clearer picture of who Jesus is*** and what he came to do?

Some ideas are more suitable for **Good Friday** or **Resurrection Sunday**. Others can be used at any time over the Easter period.

1. Red string storytelling

Best suited to Resurrection Sunday

Overview

Give everyone a 60 cm piece of red string or ribbon to hold. It will help us explore the Easter story. Tell the Easter story and ask everyone to engage with the story using the string with the actions you show them. Finish by joining the string to those beside you. Use follow-up questions to help continue conversations at home.



Outline of Easter story with string actions

Jesus entered Jerusalem	wave string like a palm branch
He gathered his close followers for the last meal	make a circle, round like bread
He prayed in the garden of Gethsemane	praying hands with string in between, string tip pointing to heaven

Jesus was arrested	string draped over wrists like shackles
Jesus stood before Pilate	wash hands rubbing the string like soap
Jesus was mocked	crown of thorns with string
Jesus was crucified	use string to wipe away tears
The temple curtain tore	throw the string down
Jesus' body placed in a tomb, and a stone rolled in front	lay string down gently
BUT three days later three women came to the tomb; guess what they found?	Make question mark
An angel was there	flapping string
"Jesus is Risen!" he said.	throw string in the air

Why did Jesus do this? Throughout this whole story he had a plan, a big picture in mind. He loves people everywhere and wanted to rescue them and gather them together as one people. *(Ask people to begin joining their strings together.)* We are separated from God in our sin, but Jesus' blood was for everyone. Jesus paid the price for us all to be reconnected with God, and each other, as a big family forever.

Variations

1. Ask the group to go outside and join the string in a huge circle. Then create large shapes like a heart (God's love) or a cross (His sacrifice). Take a picture of the group from as high as possible.
2. Split the story up between Good Friday and Easter Sunday. On Good Friday use the red string and end with Jesus' body being laid in the tomb. On Easter Sunday hand out the red string again and join the strings together. To illustrate being washed from our sins, the leader can place the red string in bleach or white paint.

Follow-up Questions

- When have you suffered the most?
- How do you feel when someone suffers on your behalf?

2. Easter activity stations

Suited to either day

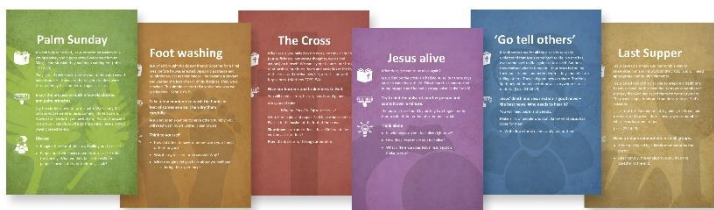
Overview

Easter activity ‘stations’ have been designed to help people experience the amazing story of Easter. All or some of them can be used. They can be set up inside or outside. There are two versions available or make your own.

Easter Activity Stations



Six Simple Easter Stations



Search “Easter stations” on max7.org.

3. Statue discussion

Best suited to Good Friday

Overview

Show an image of Michelangelo's Pieta (*below*) from the internet and project it on a screen for all to see. This can prompt a discussion in pairs for 3-5 minutes.

Pair and share questions

- How do you feel looking at this sculpture?
- What has the sculptor captured in his work?
- What would you have tried to do if you were at the crucifixion?
- What do the faces tell you?



4. Pair and share - Halve it

Suited to either day

Challenge – ‘What is Easter all about?’

1

Tell someone next to you *what Easter is about* in 60 seconds.

2

Now swap roles, but this time you only have 30 seconds to tell what Easter is about.

3

Swap again. You only have 15 seconds.

4

Swap roles again. You only have 5 seconds.

Ask for a volunteer to tell their 5 second version. It will probably only include: ‘God’s son Jesus died and rose to life to rescue us’ (paraphrase of John 3:16). Draw out the message that all the peripheral things of Easter fall away – eggs, bunnies, chocolate, and so on. Easter is only and forever ***all about Jesus***.

5. Paper cross tearing

Suited to either day

Overview

Give everyone a piece of A4 paper to fold and tear into a cross. For instructions see

[http://www.max7.org/en/resource/paperfoldin
gcross](http://www.max7.org/en/resource/paperfoldin
gcross)

A leader gives instructions and demonstrates from the front. Parents can assist their children.



Activity options

- Pair and share. Talk about what the cross symbolises.
- Write or draw a prayer on the cross.
- Write your own areas of brokenness on the cross and fold it up. Take the folded cross to the front in prayer.
- It could be burned in a safe way or pinned up to a prayer wall.

6. Wrap a body

Best suited to Resurrection Sunday

Overview

Tell the Easter story as you wrap a volunteer in toilet paper or similar. The fun is “breaking out” of the wrappers with **resurrection life**.

Instructions

As the storyteller recaps the major elements of the Easter story leading up to Resurrection Sunday, someone wraps a volunteer at the front with toilet paper (*like a still and standing Egyptian mummy*).

When the storyteller gets to the part of the story where the stone is rolled away and Jesus comes back to life, the ‘mummy’ explodes with life and the paper is torn as they move their limbs. The risen Jesus volunteer can run though the church while everyone cheers.

Interview the mummy:

- How did it feel being wrapped up as *dead*; what were your thoughts and sensations?
- What was it like to *break out again*?
- What have you discovered about Jesus’ death and resurrection from acting this out?

7. Finger grab game

Suited to either day

Stand and face the person next to you. The leader counts 1,2,3 and 4 slowly.

- On 1, each person puts their right hand in the air with their pointer finger up.
- On 2, each person puts their left hand out in front of them with their palm up and open.
- On 3, each person puts the pointer finger on their right hand over the left palm of the other person.
- On 4, each person uses their left hand to try and grab the pointer finger of the other person.

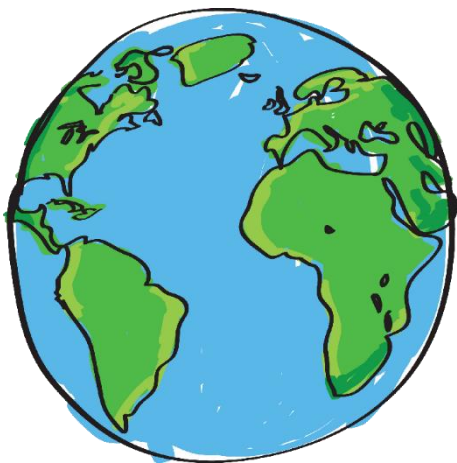
Play the game a few times then introduce these words as you play:

1. God is good ...
2. He loves me ...
3. Jesus came to save me from ...
4. Sin!

Only grab the other person's finger when you hear the word 'sin'.

8. Easter around the world

Best suited to Resurrection Sunday



Show photos or videos of people around the world celebrating Easter differently. Talk about some of the unusual customs and how culture influences them.

Make the point that although there are many different types of celebrations, foods and customs, what is common to all is that we are celebrating the birth of Jesus, God's son. Billions of people around the world are celebrating Jesus!

See the next few pages for some ideas!

In the Philippines ... two processions happen during Easter — the men are in one procession and follow an image of Jesus risen from the dead while the women form another procession and follow Jesus' mother, Mary, who wears a black veil. The two groups meet at the church as a symbol of Jesus comforting Mary after he was raised from the dead. Girls who are dressed up as angels for Easter then take off Mary's veil (called a *lambong*) and everyone celebrates!

In Ethiopia ...Christian churches celebrate *Faskia*, which is the 55 days leading up to Easter. *Faskia* (the Amharic word for Easter) is more significant in Ethiopia than Christmas, and for this reason is celebrated longer than Easter is celebrated in many parts of the western hemisphere. During this holiday, people spend 55 days fasting from meat and animal products. The night before Easter, Christians have a vigil that begins in a sombre mood, but when morning comes, dancing and music breaks out. Families and communities spend Easter Sunday at church services and in homes, eating and celebrating.

In Orthodox countries ... Easter is celebrated according to the Julian Calendar. That's why

Christmas and Easter happen at different times in different places.

People in Germany ... love decorating for Easter! They even decorate tree branches for Easter with painted eggs in the same way people decorate tree branches in December for Christmas. In addition to celebrating the holiday itself, Easter marks the beginning of spring! Many people wear colourful traditional dress to celebrate the occasion.

In Poland ... families get together to celebrate the holiday and eat a filling Easter Sunday breakfast. The most famous part of a Polish Easter is the *babka*, a bread that traditionally has raisins and a thin, sweet glaze on top of it.

In Bermuda ... people like to fly kites on Good Friday. The tradition started one year when a teacher wanted to help students learn about Jesus ascending to heaven. He took a kite, decorated it with Jesus' face, and let it soar into the sky. It was like Jesus ascending!

Australians ... don't use rabbits for their Easter festivities because they're introduced vermin. Instead, they use images and the shape of the endangered Australian animal called a *bilby*. The *bilby* is tiny, has long ears, and looks similar to a rabbit so they dub the animal the "Easter Bilby."

Most cultures of the world have an Easter bread tradition. The Hot Cross bun has been shared and enjoyed since at least the 14th Century when a monk was said to have introduced cinnamon into the yeasty, raisin bread and given these sweet buns to the poor. There are decorated cakes, breads and bun traditions that go back much earlier than that all over the world.



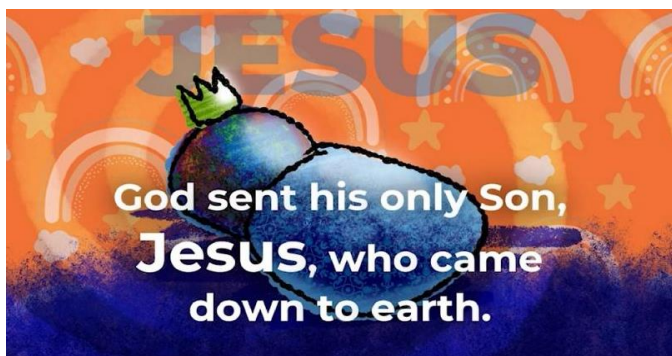
9. Big story of the Bible

Suited to either day

It is helpful for everyone, especially kids, to see how the Easter story fits into the bigger narrative of the Bible – from creation right through to the new creation that is coming. Where does Jesus fit?

Watch this video featured on Max7.

Search *Big Story of the Bible* on Max7.org.



Use the PowerPoint to reinforce important connections in the story of Jesus as Saviour of the world.



10. Easter story videos

There are a whole range of different Easter videos on Max7 in all different styles.



Go to www.max7.org/en/library/Easter to look at the **video** resources.

After the video

Talk to the person next to you.

- What was amazing about the Easter story?
- What have you rediscovered about Easter?
- What questions would you like ask God?

Appendix - Extra material

OTHER IDEAS

- **Play a game of *Stuck in the mud*.** Afterwards have the children come together and ask them how this game is similar (and different) to the Easter story.
- **Bible reading** – Ask a child or group of children to read the Easter story.
- **Interview** – Ask the oldest person in the congregation to recall memories of their Easter as a child. What has changed? What has stayed the same?
- **Play along with the music** – Have simple percussion instruments for younger kids to play along to some of the Easter songs on Resurrection Sunday.
- **Easter drama** – prepare children to learn a short Easter play to present at a service.
- Children prepare an Easter song to sing.
- Do a **reading of** Philippians 2:5-11. Make actions for everyone to do as you read it.
- List some of the **prophecies written about Jesus' death** in the Old Testament and then put them on a timeline in the order they were written.

