



EASTER TEACHER TALKS

Welcome to Easter Teacher Talks. These talks have been written for a teacher, family member or congregation leader to be able to give a short and meaningful talk in a church service, home, Christian School, or community event context.

Resources and props are needed for most talks. Each talk is designed to provide opportunities to contextualise this for your circumstances and culture and to encourage participation from the listeners.

The range of talks spans from celebrations of Palm Sunday, through the Easter festive days, to Jesus appearing to Thomas after God raised Him to life.

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PALM SUNDAY - STORY AND SYMBOLS

BIBLE PASSAGE: JOHN 12:12-16

PURPOSE: To help the children understand the significance of the Palm Sunday procession

RESOURCES:

- Picture of Jesus' procession into Jerusalem (<https://histreasureseekers.wordpress.com/2012/04/01/jesus-rides-on-a-donkey-palm-sunday/> or page X)
- Pictures of symbols, as per the text [heart, crown, blessed, balloons, warhorse, donkey]

TEACHER TALK:

Here's some questions: (Easiest first) What day is it today? What is next Sunday called? What do we celebrate on Easter Sunday? What is the special name for today, the Sunday before Jesus was killed? Palm Sunday, not named for the palm of your hand, but for palm trees.

I'm going to show you a drawing of Palm Sunday, but before I do, you need to understand something about symbols. A symbol is a picture that means something, a picture with a message.

- You all know this symbol [heart] means 'I love you'.
- This one [crown] means [king].
- This one [raised hands] means blessed or "happy in God's goodness".
- This one [balloons] means a party or fun.
- This one [warhorse] means ready for battle or fight.
- This one [donkey] means coming in peace.

So now I'll show you the Palm Sunday picture. If an ordinary person looks at this, they will see a man on a donkey, with clothes upon the ground and branches being waved. And that's all they will see.

But if you understand about symbols, you see so much more in this picture. The clothes on the ground tell us that the person coming is a king; the donkey tells us what sort of king: fierce and rough? No, gentle and kind. The branches tell us again that he's a king, king of the Jews. And if you could add the sound of people cheering you would know also that this was a great celebration.

On the first Palm Sunday, Jesus the king was riding into Jerusalem. These people here knew that, but they didn't expect that before the week was over, Jesus would be dead. That wasn't the sort of king they had in mind. They also didn't expect that 3 days later again, Jesus would be alive again, proving that he's an even better king than they imagined. He's king over life and death, the king of peace.

We are SO blessed by God's goodness! Jesus is the king of peace who loves us and has done everything possible for us to be his friends and live in his kingdom.

PRAY: *Hooray for you, King Jesus! Hurray that you are such a great and mighty king, and also the King of peace. Amen*

PALM SUNDAY – GAME

BIBLE PASSAGE: JOHN 12:12-13

PURPOSE: To revise, through a game, the facts around Palm Sunday

RESOURCES:

- A picture of Jesus riding into Jerusalem on Palm Sunday. Whiteboard or paper to play Noughts and crosses. Leader to have a turn alternating with the children, acting as a team. A child has to answer a question to have a turn for their team.

TEACHER TALK:

Show the picture of Palm Sunday, and allow the children time to look at it carefully. Then play Noughts and Crosses using these or similar questions.

- What is this day called?
- Why is it called Palm Sunday?
- What animal did Jesus ride?
- What city was he riding into?
- Who owned the donkey?
- Who did Jesus send to borrow the donkey?
- What did the people fling down, besides the palm branches?
- What did the people call out?
- Who did most of the shouting and praising God?
- What was the significance of Jesus riding a donkey and not a warhorse?

Easier questions for younger children.

- How many legs does a donkey have?
- Make a donkey noise.
- Were the people happy or sad?
- Would you let Jesus borrow something of yours?

PRAY: *Lord Jesus, thank you for coming as the King of Peace. Thank you for dying to make us friends. And help us to share this good news. Amen*

GOOD FRIDAY

BIBLE PASSAGE: LUKE 23

PURPOSE: To explain the value of Jesus' death on the Cross

RESOURCES NEEDED:

- pictures of the crucifixion or a cross
- picture that shows the 3 crosses on Golgotha.
- A shiny 50c coin and a dirty \$2 coin. [we used a large, low value coin and a small, high value coin]

TEACHER TALK:

Show the picture of the crucifixion or (if you have young children), talk about why we have a cross on the wall of the church – to remind us of Jesus' death.

Show the picture of the 3 crosses. Why don't we have 3 crosses on the wall because 3 people were crucified on that day? Two people were punished for their own wrongdoing. Jesus was punished for our wrongdoing. The two criminals were important to God, but Jesus was worth more.

To help explain that, look at these coins. If you ask a little child which coin, they would like, they will choose the big shiny one. But you are old enough to understand that the dirty little one is worth more, because of what it is made from. No matter how shiny and clean the little one is, it is not worth as much as the gold. Gold is worth the most.

Back to the crosses. 3 men were killed that day, and 3 men mattered to God. Jesus' death is more important because he is worth more. He is God and is worth so much that his death can count for everyone in the world. If he were not God, it would be a wasted death. But He is God and he died on that cross so that we can be forgiven and be part of his family forever.

LET'S PRAY:

You are the only one, Lord Jesus, worth so much that your death counts for all people who trust you, because you are in fact God. There is no one else like you, and we praise you. Amen.

CLEAN FROM SIN

BIBLE PASSAGES: JEREMIAH 2:22 & EPHESIANS 5:25B-27

PURPOSE: To be reminded that we each need cleansing and forgiveness.

RESOURCES NEEDED:

- Different household soaps (dishes, laundry, people), Hand Sanitizer, Window cleaner, vinegar, baking soda, metal polishes.
- Items that need cleaning or pictures of things that need cleaning to match the items above.
- card with the word *sin*
- picture of Jesus' cross.

TEACHER TALK:

What do all these things have in common? They clean things.

Different sorts of dirt need different cleansers. Ask children to match item with product (e.g. match the window with window cleaner, shoes with shoe polish, etc.) Can anybody tell me another type of cleanser and what it would work on? Suggest/prompt such things as: Shoe polish, tooth paste, Silver or other metal cleaner, furniture polish, car polish, broom.

Here's another kind of dirt. (Show card) We call it sin. Sin is what's inside us that makes it so easy for us to hate/fight/kick/steal/lie/be selfish. The Bible tells us that sin leaves stains on us (stains are unclean-able marks). No matter how we scrub, stains won't come out. These sin-stains on our hearts, in our minds create a divide between us and God. Just like Adam and Eve could no longer walk in the Garden with God, so we can't be God's friends with sin staining our lives and hearts. But, wonderfully, there is a way to wash the stain of sin out, there is someone who makes us clean, even from this kind of dirt and stain [Show a cross picture].

This cross is only wood (made by me, or made recently), but when we talk about *the cross*, we really mean the fact that Jesus Christ died on a Roman cross to be punished for all our sin so that we can be free of stains, shame, guilt and fear. Our hearts are clean towards toward God and we can be friends with him.

That's what we especially remember at Easter. How good and kind and loving Jesus was to die to make us clean and forgive our sin. That's far better than any detergent or sanitizer.

LET'S PRAY: *Lord Jesus, you died for our sin. Thank you so much that we can be friends with you, clean and fresh. Amen*

GOOD FRIDAY “IT IS FINISHED”

BIBLE PASSAGE: JOHN 19:30

PURPOSE: To recognise the finished work of Jesus on the cross

RESOURCES NEEDED:

Pictures or examples of these things:

- Tea towel
- empty container of ice-cream or lolly packet
- big jigsaw box
- jar of vegemite or a spreadable
- trophy
- The words *It is finished* on display

TEACHER TALK:

Today I want you to think about these words: *It is finished*. Say them with me, please. You can say these words in all kinds of ways.

(Show the relevant prop)

1. Imagine you go to put some vegemite on your toast, and it's all gone. But it doesn't really matter because you like peanut butter just as much. So you shrug your shoulders and say, "*It is finished*" in a matter-of-fact kind of way. Say it with me.
2. It's your turn to dry the dishes after tea before you can watch TV. There are so many plates. Finally, they are all done and you say, "*Phew, it is finished.*" Say it like that with me.
3. Your favourite ice-cream is finished. You frown and say, "*Aaaw, it is finished*", sounding very disappointed. Say it like that with me.
4. After weeks and weeks, your mum finishes that huge jigsaw. You are so surprised that it's finally done, that you say, very surprised, raising your eyebrows, "*It is finished*". Say it like that with me.
5. You have played in the grand final game. Your team hadn't won for years and years. It was such an exciting game. First, your team was ahead, then the other team, then you scored, then the team scored, and time was running out and then your team scored just as the siren went You won!! You shouted out in triumph, "*It is finished!*" Say it like that with me.

These words, "*It is finished*" are words that Jesus said on the cross, with his last breath. How do you think he said them? Was he surprised? Disappointed? Not particularly caring? I think he was triumphant. He had finished everything he came to earth for; he had taken the punishment we deserve; he had even been separated from his Father God for us, and now the price was paid, the battle was over, and God had won.

Let's say it one more time, as gladly and triumphantly as we can. "***It is finished!***"

LET'S PRAY: Lord Jesus! It is finished! You won the battle, you proved that you are stronger than death. There is nothing for us to do except say Thank you, and Yes Please to being your friend. Amen.

GOOD FRIDAY – REVISION GAME

BIBLE PASSAGE: ANY GOSPEL ACCOUNT OF THE CRUCIFIXION

PURPOSE: To remind the children of the facts of the first Good Friday, through a game

RESOURCES NEEDED:

- Good Friday picture
- Large grid for Noughts and Crosses, pen.

TEACHER TALK:

Show picture to remind the children of the Easter story. Explain the game. The teacher plays in turn; the children all form the opposing team. A child must answer the question to add the mark for their team. Suggest 3 games with the children winning 2-1. Choose from these questions.

1. What terrible thing happened on Good Friday? (Jesus was crucified)
2. Who nailed Jesus onto the Cross? (Roman soldiers)
3. Whose idea was it to kill Jesus? (the Pharisees or leaders)
4. Where did Jesus friends put his body? (in a cave)
5. What did they close up the cave with? (a huge stone)
6. Who watched them do all of this? (Mary and some of the ladies)

After all this, those leaders who had hated Jesus thought, “this man is finished”. So much for thinking He was God! But just in case some of his crazy friends got some stupid ideas about stealing his body....

7. On the Saturday what did those leaders ask the Governor to do? (set a guard of soldiers)
8. On Sunday who came very early to visit the tomb? (Mary the mother of James, Mary Magdalene, Johanna/Salome)
9. What did they want to do? (anoint/put spices on his body)
10. What were they worried about as approached? (How to move the stone)
11. Was Jesus in the tomb? (no)
12. Why not? (he had risen)
13. What was left behind in the tomb? (his linen clothes)
14. Is Jesus still alive? (yes)
15. Does God forgive us if we try really hard to be good? Or if we believe that Jesus died for us? (Jesus died for us)

LET’S PRAY: *Dear Lord Jesus, thank you so much for dying for us. Thank you for doing such a hard thing so we can be your friends. Thank you for being alive for ever and ever. Amen*

GOOD FRIDAY – NEW COVENANT

BIBLE PASSAGE: MATTHEW 26:26-28

PURPOSE: To help the children understand the idea of a covenant

RESOURCES:

- You need to prepare these skits ahead of time with some willing adults. Encourage them to dress in character, or carry a significant prop.
- Optional pictures as indicated in the text

Skit 1: 2 school children.

Bill: Will you help me with my homework?

Tom: What is it?

Bill: Maths. I have to do **TWENTY** questions, and it will take me years! Will you help me?

Tom: No.

Bill: Please! I'll let you have a ride on my bike.

Tom: 5 rides on your bike?

Bill: All right.

Tom: Good. It's a deal: 5 rides on your bike in return for the maths homework. Come on...

Skit 2: 2 teenagers. Suggest wearing caps to look the part.

Max: Are you still going for [sports team]? They're hopeless. They couldn't kick a goal to save their lives!

Trent: They were just unlucky yesterday. The ref was so one-eyed. If he hadn't penalised Martin, we would have scored a try and then we would've converted, and got another one down the other end, and we would have won. Anyway, they're better than your Eels [or other team].

Max: You wanna bet? I bet you 10 bucks Parra beats St George next week.

Trent: You're on! Here, I'll write this down so you can't wriggle out of it. [Pretend to write while saying] "I promise to pay [name] \$10 if Parra beats St George next Sunday." Sign this.

Max: Easy [Pretend to sign paper]. I'll keep this. Start saving, loser!

Skit 3. 2 business men.

Mr Jones: So it's a deal then, Mr Smith?

Mr Smith: Yes, Jones. I'll have the figures with me tomorrow, and as soon as we receive your deposit, we'll commence operations.

Mr Jones: Good. That's settled. I'll have the cheque ready for 10:00 am tomorrow.

[Shake hands]

Mr Smith: Thank you.

Mr Jones: Thank you; it's a pleasure to do business with you.

TEACHER TALK:

I have arranged for 3 little skits. I want you to watch them and then tell me what was the same about them? (Watch the acts)

They are all agreements, all deals, all between 2 people, all between people roughly the same, roughly the same authority. What was different about them?

Each one was agreed upon in a different way:

- words
- signature
- handshake

To make a deal, you need at least 2 people or 2 groups; and you need to have about the same power.

If there was a king, an ordinary person couldn't make a deal with him! A man can't approach a king, and suggest a deal. But a king can approach a man, and demand whatever he likes. If he's a good king, he'll say: "I'll rule over you and provide fair laws and build your roads and schools in return for your taxes and your service in the army..." If he's a bad king, he'll say, "You do what I want; give me all your money and work for me or else."

And with God, [picture, symbol of power and love] it's even more the case. A person can't approach God, the Almighty King of the Universe, and make demands. We don't have that right. But God can approach people with any kind of deal He decides.

When a king makes a deal with a person, we have a special name – not a deal, but a covenant.

There are several times in the Bible when God makes a covenant with people. How did they know God would keep his word? Not by a handshake; not by signing his name on a bit of paper, but by blood. The Old Covenants that God made needed the blood of an animal sacrifice.

The night before Jesus was killed, he had dinner with his disciples. He took the bread and broke it, saying "This is just like my body, broken for you." Then he took the wine, and said, "This is my blood of the new covenant."

Jesus' shed blood was the guarantee of the new covenant God was making with people. It's incredible! God has made a covenant to forgive all the sins of his people, and to send His Holy Spirit to live with them forever. God made the covenant so we can enjoy him forever, and be His people, and he can be our God. We know it's true, because it has been sealed with Jesus' own blood.

That's why today is Good Friday. That's one of the things we celebrate at Easter, the new covenant between God and His people.

PRAY:

Father God, how kind you are, to make a covenant with us, a covenant of peace. WE can not thank you enough. Help us to truly celebrate You this Easter time. Amen

CRUCIFIXION

BIBLE PASSAGE: JOHN 19:17-42

PURPOSE: To encourage the children to make up their mind about Jesus

RESOURCES:

- A picture of the crucifixion scene, with post-it notes covering the characters that you will mention below. Remove each post-it as you speak.
- simple survey

TEACHER TALK:

Have you ever done a survey? A lot of surveys look something like this. Ask children how they would vote about mobile phones or junk food. The surveys that are hard are the ones that don't give you a middle option. [cover middle column.] You HAVE to make your mind up one way or the other. [Ask again]

It's the same with Jesus. Lots of people love Jesus, some hate him, and lots of people haven't made up their minds yet. But one day we'll all have to decide one way or the other. It's always been like that. I'm going ask you about different people who were at Jesus' crucifixion. You can tell me whether they were for Jesus or against Jesus, or if they didn't really care yet.

1. While Jesus was on the cross, **Roman soldiers** watched. While they waited for Jesus to die, they shared out his clothes. Couldn't waste them; might as well get some use out of them.
2. **Women, disciples, and even Jesus' mother.**
3. Just near the end, Jesus said he was thirsty. **One of the soldiers** quickly offered him some vinegar to drink. Maybe he needed to wet his mouth so he could speak clearly, because then he shouted out: IT IS FINISHED!
4. After Jesus had died, one of **the soldiers** thrust his spear into Jesus' side to prove he was already dead.

So, some of these loved Jesus, some hated; and some we're not sure of. But there's one interesting character here, who changed his mind. He started out being against Jesus, and then ended up being for him, on his side. It was **One of the thieves**, one of the criminals who were crucified with Jesus. As they all hung on their crosses, this criminal somehow realised Jesus was who he claimed to be, the king in charge of all, and asked Jesus to please have mercy on him. And of course, Jesus did, and promised him a place in heaven that very day. I love that part of the story.

I want to ask you today, what do you think of Jesus? Are you on his side, or against him? If you're not sure yet, please make up your mind very soon, and do what this guy did. It's the only way for us to get to be on God's side.

PRAY: Lord Jesus, we all have to choose, we all must decide what we think of you. If we are not sure yet, please show us that you are the only way to be right with God. Thank you for dying for us. Amen

FATHER, FORGIVE THEM

BIBLE PASSAGE: LUKE 23:34

PURPOSE: To help the children understand forgiveness

RESOURCES:

- a toy, like a rabbit, teddy bear etc., with a bandage on it.

TEACHER TALK:

Poor Teddy Bear! Someone at school tripped him over. It was an accident. But Teddy has a badly grazed knee and can't take part in the sports day. The Teddy who tripped him over should say...? (sorry). And then what should Teddy say? (that's all right, I forgive you.) Do you find it easy to forgive people who hurt you?

Not always. Think of Teddy here. He has actually been hurt twice. The first was is on the outside. It's easy to see he has a sore knee and leg. But he has also been damaged on the inside, because on the inside he is feeling angry and disappointed and that it's not fair. It's not fair that he misses out on Sports Day and the Teddy who tripped him over doesn't miss out.

Teddy's hurt knee will get better pretty much by itself, in time. But the hurt inside him will not go away by itself. If you just leave those hurt feelings inside, they will grow and fester and eventually turn quite nasty inside us. The way to fix this hurt inside is hard. It is forgiveness. Sometimes when we say, 'I forgive you' it's just words. To really mean it, is difficult. It's like saying to ourselves, 'It's all right, I accept being hurt. I don't like it but I accept that I am missing out on Sports Day.' When Rabbit does that hard thing, he will be fixed up on the inside and made better from the bad feelings.

Is it easy? No. It's hard to bear the cost of forgiveness when someone else has hurt you. It was hard for Jesus to bear the cost of forgiveness for the whole world. But he did. He forgave us, and also prayed for his Father God to forgive us too. That's amazing. And because he is the champion Forgiver, he can help us to forgive others when we are finding it *all too hard*.

PRAY:

Father God, please forgive us for hurting you, and for hurting others. Thank you that Jesus bore the cost of forgiving us. May we never forget it. Amen

SAVED BY FAITH

BIBLE PASSAGE: ROMANS 3 AND 4

PURPOSE: To help the children understand that we are saved through Jesus's work only.

RESOURCES NEEDED:

- Pictures or sketches or word cards to illustrate the scene as below. Adapt your example to a game that might be currently popular.

TEACHER TALK:

Imagine you are playing a game. Here you are on one side of a pit of deadly snakes. On the other side of the pit is a feast and a party. What is the only way to get across? There's a pile of planks, some short and some long, but they don't reach, so you can't make a bridge, and you can't join the logs.

The jump button only allows you to jump half way across the screen, so if you try that, you will die. If you do nothing, and just sit there, your time will run out and you will die. The secret is a hidden handle. If you jump up and grab that, a bridge automatically appears, and you just walk safely across to the party.

That Pit Crossing game is like becoming a Christian.

We are on one side. God and everything that is good is on the other. In between is a deadly pit.

Nothing that is good and everything that is bad. Some people call that hell, or hades – the world of the dead.

We can't jump across to God's side. We can try logs of being good, going to church, working hard, helping others, sharing. They are good, but they are all too short.

There's only one way. If we ask Jesus to forgive us and make us part of his family, it's as if his cross makes a bridge, and we can now make it safely from our side to God's side. We can't build a decent enough bridge ourselves. We don't need to. God has made the way by Jesus dying on the cross in our place.

LET'S PRAY:

Lord Jesus, thank you for making it possible for us to reach you, to be included in your family. You are the only way and so we say thank you. Amen

BELONGING

BIBLE PASSAGE: EPHESIANS 2:19 – 3:10

PURPOSE: To teach the children that because of Jesus, we belong to God and his family.

RESOURCES NEEDED:

- a happy face
- a sad face

TEACHER TALK:

Tell a little story about a child who was changing schools. The night before he was due to start, he had a terrible nightmare about it (show sad face). He had the wrong jumper, his shoes weren't right, his hair stuck up that morning. Too many mistakes in his spelling. Wrong sort of lunch. He just didn't belong.

How do you think he felt?

But this story has a happy ending: in real life, he settled in quickly and made friends (show happy face).

But think about that bad dream when the boy didn't belong, when he didn't fit in. The Bible tells us that by ourselves, that's what we are like towards God. (Sad face) We don't fit in with him. I don't mean that we wear the wrong clothes, or eat the wrong food, or can't spell. It's because we are all born with sin, the Bible says, a disease of the soul. The moment we tell our first lie, or disobey our parents or do any naughty thing, that's proof that we've got the sin problem and don't belong to God. But we can have a happy ending like the child in the story (Happy face).

We can choose to believe what the Bible teaches that Jesus made a way for us to belong. We can choose to believe He died on the cross for us and because of this we can belong to God and his family, the Church.

LET'S PRAY:

Thank you Lord Jesus that even when we didn't fit in with you, you died for us so that we can belong to you and your family forever. Amen.

EASTER SUNDAY – EMPTY TOMB

BIBLE PASSAGE: LUKE 24: 1-6

PURPOSE: Jesus doesn't need a tomb as he is not dead anymore!

RESOURCES NEEDED:

- 2 items as examples of things that can be lost in our story we used an old children's book and a recently bought ingredient.
- Picture of the garden tomb, either with or without the stone rolled away.

TEACHER TALK:

Have you ever had the trouble of not being able to find things? I had to look for 2 things this week. The first one was the book, *Peter Rabbit*. I hadn't read it for years and I didn't know where to start. It was so frustrating, but not surprising because I really didn't know where to begin. The second item was *Custard Powder*! I knew I had bought a fresh packet this week, so I confidently opened the pantry door, reached my hand in to pick it up and it wasn't there. This was worse than the book because I knew I was looking in the right place. If *Peter Rabbit* was frustrating, this was far worse. There was no other place the *Custard Powder* should be. This is like the first Easter Morning. Mary and the others knew for a fact what they were looking for and they knew exactly it was. Mary had been there when Jesus died: she had seen Joseph and Nicodemus wrap up his body, carry it to the cemetery and put it in the tomb. There was absolutely no doubt that that's where she would find Jesus' body. So can you imagine her confusion when it wasn't there? She knew it was the right place to look! And then to confuse her more, an angel said to her 'Mary, why are you looking in the wrong place?' (Mary knew it wasn't the wrong place.) The angel told her the cemetery is the wrong place, because there is no dead body. Tombs are only for dead bodies, and you won't find the dead body of Jesus here. Jesus is using his body again, He is alive.

Poor Mary! Looking in the wrong place! **Poor** Mary? No way. She was **amazed** Mary, **astonished** Mary, **too good to be true** Mary, **delighted** Mary, **overjoyed** Mary. Never had she been so glad to be so wrong! There was no dead body to be found that first Easter Sunday Morning. Jesus was alive, and He is still alive now and forever.

LET'S PRAY:

Lord Jesus, it could even be funny that Mary was looking in the wrong place, when you were alive and well again! Thank you that you love for ever, world without end. Amen

GOD'S WONDERFUL PLAN

BIBLE PASSAGE: ANY GOSPEL ACCOUNT OF EASTER

PURPOSE: To be reminded of God's wonderful plan

RESOURCES NEEDED:

- Small cards with an "X"
- Small cards with a "?"
- One large card with a huge, colourful, spectacular tick ✓
- Blu-tac or sticky tape, and a surface on which to attach the cards.

TEACHER TALK:

I was marking some children's school books this week and I had to use this sign: X What does it mean? I also had to use this sign? What does it mean? And I also had to use this sign ✓ What does it mean? Don't you just love it what you get a big bold tick at the end of your work?

We can use these signs to think about the Easter story. Firstly, the X. When Jesus was crucified, all his followers were devastated (add x cards as you talk). It seemed so wrong, so horribly wrong. One week earlier, they had believed He was going to be the King! Then he was arrested, tried, and now he had ended up nailed to a cross like a common criminal. It was the end to all their plans and hopes. Definitely a cross X

Then His body was wrapped up (X) and put in a dark cave-like tomb and a huge stone was rolled across the entranceway. So then His disciples and friends had time to think. That's like the "?". We don't understand (?) What now? We've followed Jesus for 3 years, what do we do now? He said he came to save us, but He didn't even save himself (?). He said by dying He could forgive sins (?). Can we believe anything that He said now that He is dead and buried? He claimed He was the only way to God. But now that He is not here, how can we find a God? And how come God let this happen anyway? There were so many questions and so much confusion.

But then came Sunday morning and the tomb was empty. That is like a tick from God (Show huge tick ✓). A huge gigantic tick of approval. It was God declaring that Jesus is real, everything He said and claimed is absolutely true. It is the ultimate tick of God's approval and guarantee.

The Easter story begins like feeling like a X but ends with a ✓. God approves of Jesus and the value of his death. Jesus is alive now and forever and ever.

LET'S PRAY:

**Lord God, thank you that Jesus' death was not a mistake, it was part of your huge wonderful plan.
Amen**

GOD'S LOVE AND JUSTICE

BIBLE PASSAGE: JOHN 19; 2 CORINTHIANS 5:19

PURPOSE: To help the children understand that God himself took our punishment, because he is loving, fair and just.

RESOURCES:

- Pictures of 4 dinner plates which can be repositioned as you talk;
- the labels 1,2,3
- a picture to represent bad language

TEACHER TALK:

What is there in this building that reminds us of the Easter story? (A cross) Tell me, why do we have the cross? Who died? Who was Jesus? Had he ever done anything wrong? So why did he die? Is it fair if you get punished for something you didn't do? God is always fair, so how could he punish Jesus instead of us?

I'm going to tell you a story with 3 different endings. I want you to listen carefully and see which one is most like the Easter story. It might help you understand why Jesus' death on the cross is so incredible.

Here is a table ready for dinner. (show four plates) How many people in this family? (4) There is the dad, the mum and two children. The dad is the head of this house. It is a happy, loving family. The mum has cooked a beautiful meal, and calls the family to come and sit up. They come at a hurry because they have been busy all afternoon and are really hungry.

As the children come running into the room, one child says something extremely rude to his parents. That is so bad! In that house, it is against the rules to talk like that, especially to the parents. If you spoke like that, the rule was that you got no dinner. (Remove one plate.) Remember, the dad is in charge so it is up to him to deal with this situation.

Here is where the three endings come in.

#1 The dad can say, 'Son, you have broken the rules but it doesn't matter. I love you, so eat up anyway. '(Replace the plate) Is that fair? No. The boy had done wrong, and it is not fair to ignore it.

#2 The dad could say, 'Son I love you, and I don't want you to go hungry. But you have broken the rules so there must be a punishment. Your brother can go without and you can eat up.' (Take the brother's plate away.) Is that fair?

#3 The dad could say, 'Son, you have broken the rules and there must be a punishment. I love you, so I will go hungry for you. I will take your punishment. (Take away the dad's plate to the child's) You can eat my dinner.'

Which ending is most like the Easter story? It is the ending when the dad himself took the punishment. Our sin means that there must be a punishment. God set the rules, and He chose to take our punishment. It wasn't just a man called Jesus dying on the cross for someone else's punishment. It was God himself, Jesus the Christ, dying on the cross to take our punishment.

PRAY:

Lord God, Lord Jesus, you took our place on the cross. No one made you; you chose to take our place because you love us. Thank you so, so, so, so much. Amen

THE TRUTH OF THE RESURRECTION

BIBLE PASSAGE: 1 CORINTHIANS 15

PURPOSE: To remind the children of the importance of the Resurrection for our whole faith.

RESOURCES NEEDED:

- little blocks (not connectable)
- shoe box or similar labelled *Christ's resurrection*.

TEACHER TALK:

Ask for a couple of volunteers.

- How many blocks can you stack up one at a time? (4 or 5)
- Why so few before they fall over? (no foundation)

You understand that the stronger the foundation, the taller and stronger the stack. Things on top depend on things below. Let's pretend that these blocks are some of the things God has promised.

List these, and indicate a block as you list each the following:

- He has rescued us
- He has changed us from being utterly selfish
- He has made us his friends
- He has reversed death, so now it is the doorway to Eternal life with God for any one who believes
- He shares his own Holy Spirit with us
- He always loves us
- He showers us with His grace, etc., etc.

How can all these things be true? How can they all be supported? How can we be sure about them? The answer is that there is a base or foundation for them. All these things are TRUE because they depend on one solid base: Christ's Resurrection.

Produce the shoe box, and place all the other blocks on top of it to build a small tower, repeating the list of truths as above.

LET'S PRAY:

Dear Lord Jesus, thank you for coming alive again, and being alive always. Thank you that all these wonderful promises are true. Amen

RESURRECTION DAY

BIBLE PASSAGE: ANY GOSPEL ACCOUNT OF THE RESURRECTION

PURPOSE: To assert that Jesus' death and resurrection were real, not just tricks.

RESOURCES:

- a piece of string, or whatever you need for a 'magic' trick.
- Perhaps you can do a trick with a pack of cards – use whatever you can.

TEACHER TALK:

Let me show you a magic trick. I can tie this string around your arm, and count to three and pull it right through your arm. You won't feel a thing! (Demonstrate a couple of times.) What was really happening? Did the string really cut through your arm? No, of course not. It's just a trick. It's in the way the string is tied so that when I pull the end it just unravels.

On that first Easter Sunday morning, when Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James and Salome/Joanna discovered that the tomb was empty, some people thought it was a trick. They thought someone had taken Jesus body and hidden it. Or maybe that Jesus hadn't really died anyway. But it was no trick. The soldier had thrust his spear into Jesus' heart to make sure he was dead. And now he was really alive. How do we know?

- The angel told Mary
- The disciples saw him alive and wrote it down for us.
- He answers our prayers and helps us.

If Jesus had stayed dead, he couldn't hear us. I know that my prayers are heard and answered, and I know Jesus is alive.

That's why we celebrate Easter!

PRAY:

Dear Lord Jesus, you really were dead, and now you really are alive! Thank you for your power, that you are stronger even than death, and that you love and care for us. Amen

LIVING SAVIOUR

BIBLE PASSAGE: LUKE 24:1-12

PURPOSE: To remind the children that Jesus is our living saviour.

RESOURCES:

- Any picture to match the text, either of an object you might lose, or the empty tomb

TEACHER TALK:

Put your hand up if you have ever had trouble finding things! Homework, socks, library books, car keys.... I know why you can't find things. It's easy. You can't find the thing you are looking for because you are looking in the wrong place!

For example, if you want to look up the word *clock* in the dictionary, you will never find it if you look under the letter 'k'. If you are looking for ice-cream, there's no use looking in the oven. That's just plain silly! If you are looking for the toothpaste, don't waste your time looking under the bed.

Early that first Easter morning, the women went to the burial tomb with their spices and perfumes to anoint the poor, broken, dead body of Jesus. When they got to the tomb, the stone had already been rolled away, so they went inside, hearts still breaking. To their amazement, Jesus wasn't there! What had happened? What did it mean?

Then 2 gleaming angels appeared, and said, "You are looking in the wrong place! You don't find living people in a tomb. Only dead people are in cemeteries! You are looking in the wrong place!" Then the women remembered Jesus had told them that he would rise on the third day. Of course they had been looking in the wrong place!!

That's what Easter is all about. The tomb is the wrong place to find Jesus. Jesus died, but he is no longer dead. He lives for ever and ever. We celebrate a living saviour, not a dead one.

PRAY:

Dear Lord Jesus, you are the living Lord, the risen Lord, alive for evermore. This Easter, we want to praise you and love you. Amen

DOUBTING THOMAS

BIBLE PASSAGE: JOHN 20:24-29

PURPOSE: To retell the story of Thomas after the resurrection, and encourage the children to worship Jesus

RESOURCES:

- Optional, picture of a seahorse
- Pictures to match the story of Doubting Thomas

TEACHER TALK:

Do you believe everything you are told? My young daughter was happily reading a book about seahorses, until she came to the sentence which she couldn't believe. It said, 'Father Seahorse has the pouch for the babies.' 'That can't be right!' she thought, and came to ask me. I said, 'Yes, that's right. I think it's the only know creature where the father gives birth.' And she believed me.

So why did my daughter believe me, and not the science book? Because she knows and trusts me. And that's a sensible reason.

There's a character in the Bible who was not as sensible as my daughter: Thomas, one of the disciples.

You know the story - Jesus had been crucified, and he had risen, He had appeared to all the other disciples when Thomas was not around. So they told him. They were good, reliable witnesses whom Thomas knew and trusted, but he didn't believe them. Think about it! There was Simon Peter, and Andrew and James (that's 3, and that would have been enough to convince a judge), plus John and Philip, Bartholomew, Matthew, Thaddaeus, another James, another Simon. That's 10, 10 reliable witnesses and Thomas didn't believe them. What more could he want? He wanted to see Jesus' hands and poke his hand into Jesus' side.

A week later, Jesus appeared again to his disciples, and this time, Thomas was there too. Jesus said, 'Here you are Thomas, go ahead, put your finger in my side.' I don't think Thomas actually did, but he did kneel down and worship Jesus, God's own son.

Jesus then said something I like. "you believe because you see, but how blessed are those people who believe without seeing."

That's us! We are blessed.

We don't have to be like Thomas refusing to accept good witnesses. But let's be like Thomas and worship Jesus Christ.

PRAY:

Dear Lord Jesus, we believe that you are alive and that you are God. We worship you. Amen.



