



Easter @home

Enjoy this activity book with your children while you share with them the wonderful message of Easter: Christ is Risen! May you and your family be blessed this Easter season.

Welcome!

Welcome to this year's Easter@Home! This family-time resource has been developed so that you, and those you live with, can have some faith-shaping times together as you make the most of the weeks leading up to Easter. We have designed the booklet to stimulate discussion, create fun times and enable you and your children to learn more about why this is one of our most sacred Christian celebrations.

There are LOTS of options, hopefully with something for everyone, but we suggest you only pick a few. We have made sure that the activities are relatively easy to do and organise – we know you don't need any extra stress in your life! Each activity follows a similar pattern: read, do, talk. Some of the readings come from Scripture and others from storybooks. Try to find child-friendly versions of the Bible especially if you have younger children. The internet is a great source of freely available translations. The Easter story is gruesome in parts and can be a challenge to explain to children. Ask the Holy Spirit to guide and lead your words as you talk and pray with your children.

We have sourced the activities in this booklet from many different places and are thankful to the Christian community who freely share their ideas.

Let's help our children understand that there is more to Easter than bunnies and chocolate, and ensure that, in our homes, Christ is the centre of the Easter season.

Have fun, talk lots and be blessed as you journey together to the cross this Easter.

Blessings,

Karen

Baptist Children and Family Ministries

Treasure Hunt

Read The numbered readings that follows this page

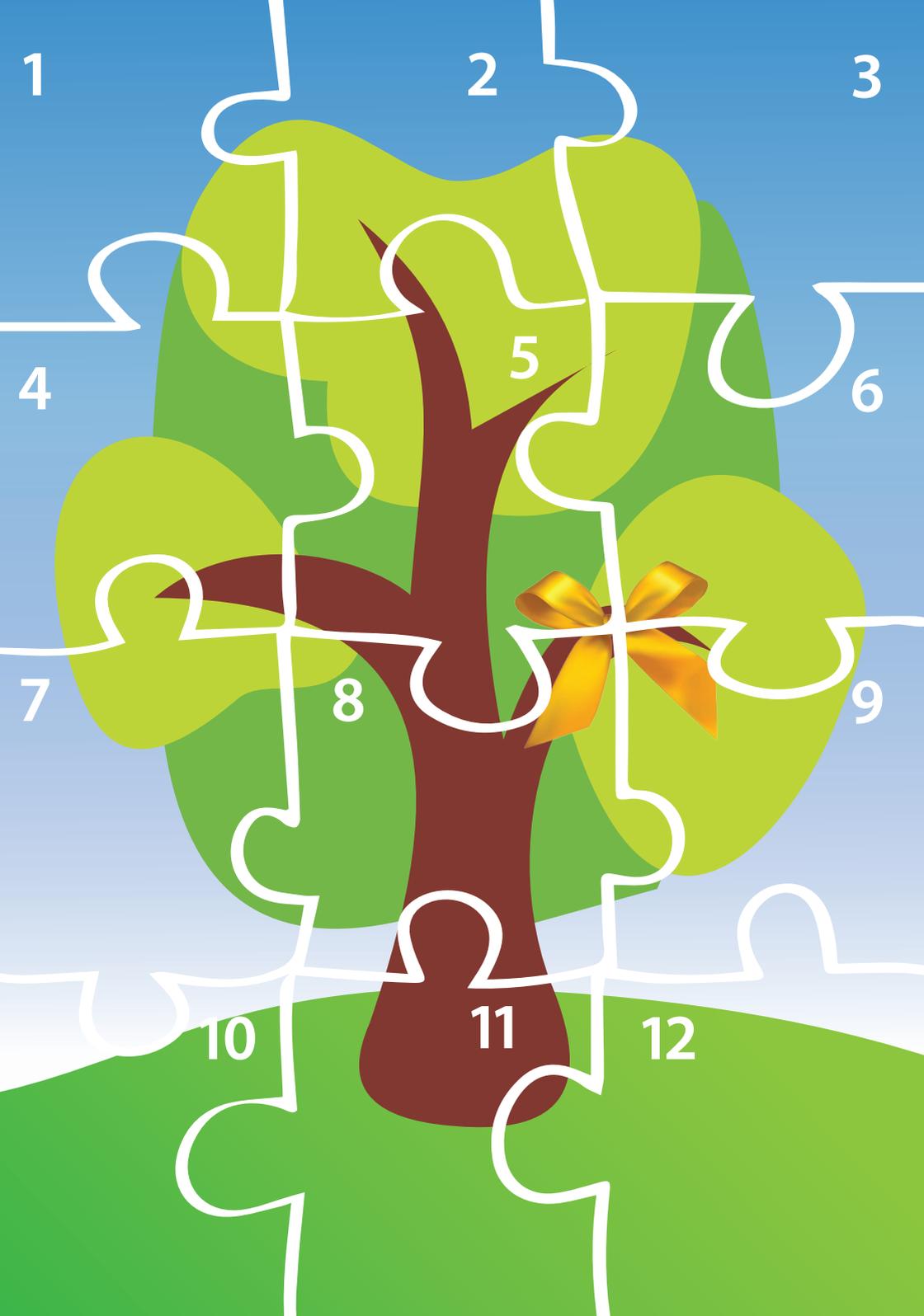
Do You'll need: puzzle cut-outs on the next page, Treasure Map and Readings 1-10, yellow ribbon and a prize.

1. Cut out the puzzle pieces from on the next page
2. Using the Treasure Map hide the puzzle pieces as per the numbers indicated eg. hide puzzle piece 1 at the front door. Hide each piece according to the other numbers on the Treasure Map. The Treasure Map spots are places in and around most people's homes.
3. Tie a yellow ribbon on a tree in your garden. Hide the "prize" in or around the tree. Make sure it's well hidden!
4. Give the children the Treasure Map with readings on the back. The hunt begins!!
5. The children use the map to find each puzzle piece. As you find each piece read the matching numbered reading on the back of the map.
6. Once the children have all the pieces, they need to put the puzzle together to reveal where 'the prize' is hidden. Remember the prize is hidden in or around the tree with the yellow ribbon.



Talk The treasure hunt readings give the children a brief look at the whole of God's 'big story' – helping them to understand who Jesus is and why he came to earth. The story of Easter is put into its context and is seen as part of a greater whole. God has been working through all of history and continues to work in us today. We are part of his plan for all creation and we look forward to the time when Jesus returns and we will be with him forever. The glow sticks remind us that Jesus came to be the light of the world and he wants us to shine his light to the people around us.

- 1 God created the world and he said it was good, but the people he created sinned and didn't follow him. Sin separated them from their creator God. This didn't stop God – he had a plan to make things right because he loved them so much.
- 2 God loved his people and he acted to save them. He came to Abraham and said “I will make you a mighty nation. You will be blessed to be a blessing to all nations.” Even though Abraham and Sarah were very old, God kept his promise and gave them a son named Isaac.
- 3 Isaac's grandson, Joseph was a child who liked to show off. This annoyed his brothers and they sold him into slavery in Egypt. Joseph grew up there and came to be the second most powerful man in the land. When famine came to Israel, Joseph was able to forgive his brothers and help his family who came to live in Egypt. God had a plan to save his people.
- 4 400 years later the Israelites were still in Egypt but now they were Pharaoh's slaves. They cried out to God to save them. He heard their cry and sent Moses to lead them out of slavery, through the Red Sea and into the Promised Land. The land that God had promised to Abraham all those years ago.
- 5 Even though God had taken them out of slavery and given them a new land the people still turned away from him. There were good leaders, like Deborah, who helped the people follow God and bad leaders who led them away from God.
- 6 Even though God was their King the people cried out for a human king like the other nations. God was sad because he was really their king, but he gave them Saul and then David. David was a good king and a man who loved God. He helped the people to follow God. God promised that one day he would give them a forever-king.
- 7 After David died some of Israel's kings followed God but some did not. Eventually the bad kings led the people so far from God that God sent them out of the Promised Land into exile in a country called Babylon. There they learned that God was still with them.
- 8 After a long time the Persian king, Cyrus allowed the people to go home. They found Jerusalem in ruins but Nehemiah, who loved God, helped them rebuild the temple and the city. At last they had somewhere to worship God again!
- 9 After another 400 years the people were still waiting for God to give them their promised king. At last the time for God's plan had come. He sent Jesus, his own son as their forever-king, born to a young peasant girl named Mary. The Saviour of the world had arrived!
- 10 Jesus, filled with the Spirit, spent his life following God. He called people to follow him too. He blessed children, he healed the sick and even raised the dead. He pointed people to God the Father. He had come to fulfill God's plan.
- 11 The religious leaders did not understand who Jesus was and they had him killed. Jesus was nailed to a wooden cross but even on the cross Jesus still helped people. Jesus died but God raised him from the dead because Jesus was the perfect king, the sinless one, the Saviour of the world. Death is no longer forever. God's plan had worked!
- 12 God's plan is still working in you and in me. God poured out his Spirit upon everyone who believes in Jesus and through God's Spirit we live with him now. And the exciting thing is that one day Jesus will return to earth again, and everyone will know that he is the strong and mighty King of Kings. Those who follow God will live with him in a new heaven and a new earth. We'll be perfect friends with him forever, just as God planned it in the beginning.



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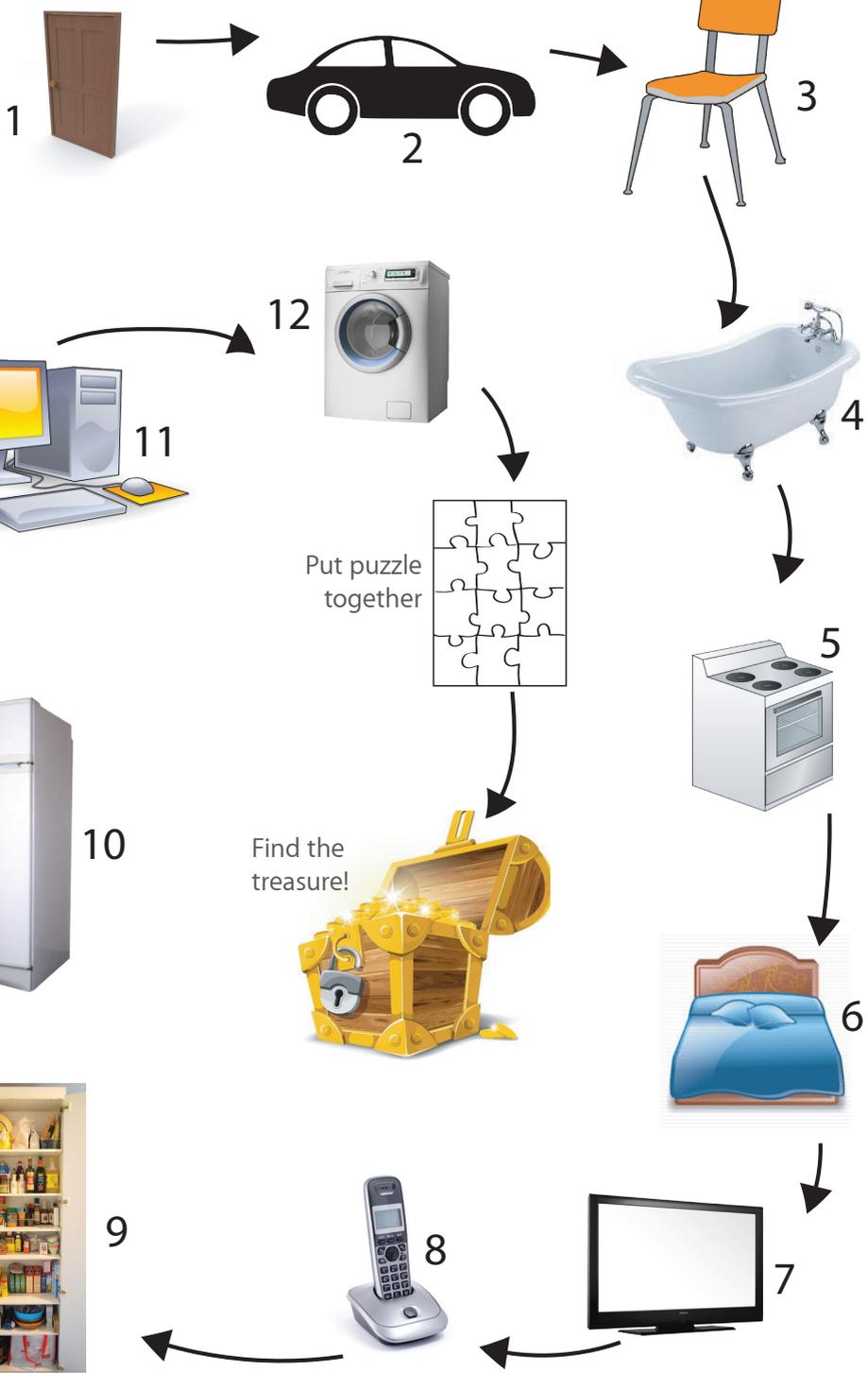
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Begin Here

Treasure Map



Rock Tomb

Read The Easter story in a child friendly version of the Bible or storybook. *The Jesus Storybook Bible* is one of the best.

Do You'll need: some small pebbles or rocks (the beach is a great place to look), one big rock, some modelling clay (or air-dry clay) and a deep bowl.

1. Line the inside of the bowl with the stones. Start with the larger ones at the bottom and as you go up the sides the smaller stones will stack above.
2. Once the bowl is lined with pebbles/stones carefully use pieces of the clay to cover the stones. Make sure the layer of clay is thick enough to stand up once the bowl is inverted. Remember to leave a space for the opening of the tomb.
3. Use some more modelling clay in between the pebbles if needed. You should have an igloo shaped upside-down tomb.
4. Turn the bowl over and tap it at the top so the tomb falls out.

The children can use the people figures from page 4 to play inside and outside the tomb.

Talk As you read the Easter story in a child-friendly Bible or an Easter storybook play with the figures and tomb. Talk about the parts of the story that are happy and those that are sad. How would Jesus have felt? What about the disciples? Why did Jesus die? What was the wonderful result?



RESURRECTION STORY

Read

The resurrection story found in Mark 16 in a child-friendly version.



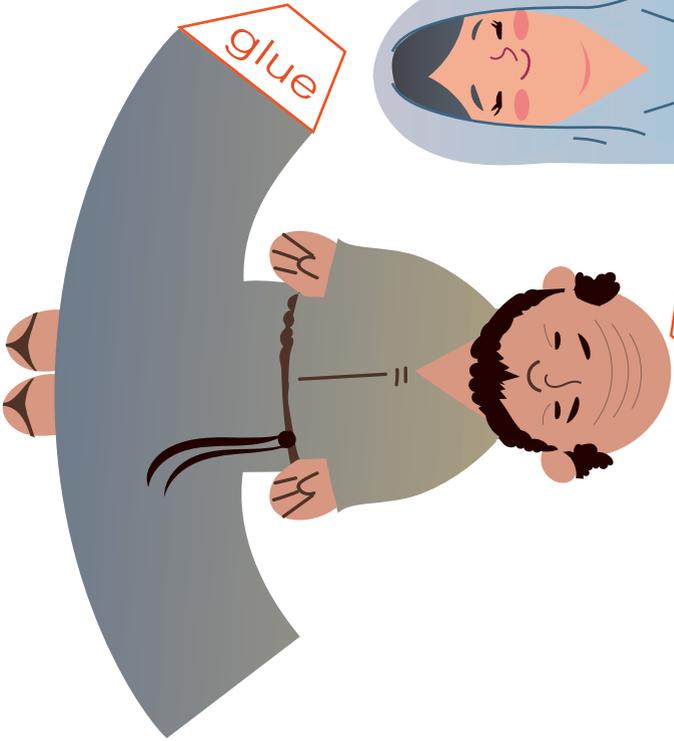
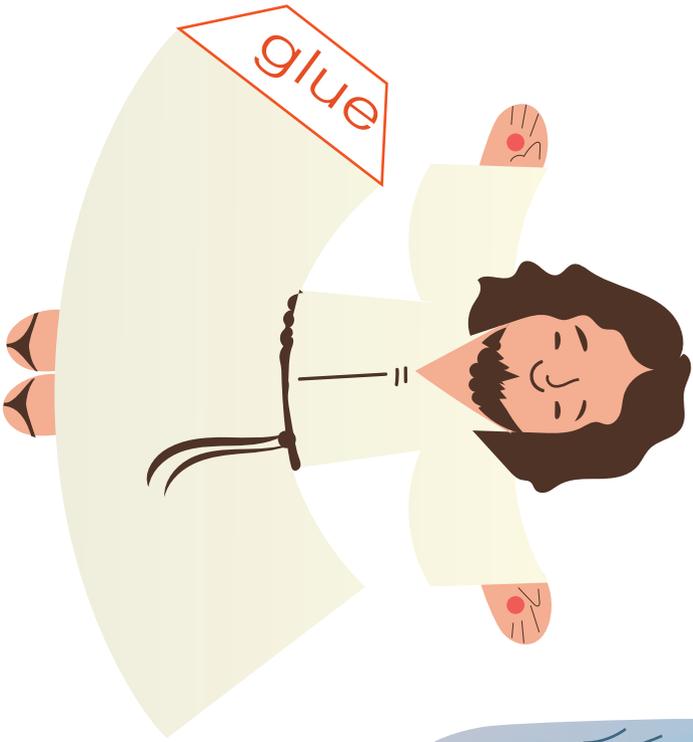
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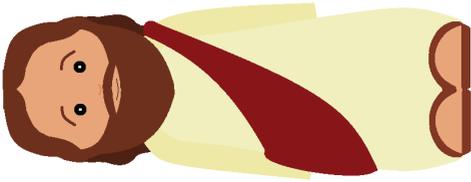
You'll need: cut-outs on the next page, glue and scissors.

Cut out the people images. There are 6 figures: Jesus, Mary, angel, Peter, and 2 guards. Once cut, loop the bottom part of each figure and secure with glue at the back. Fold out the feet. Your people should now stand up!

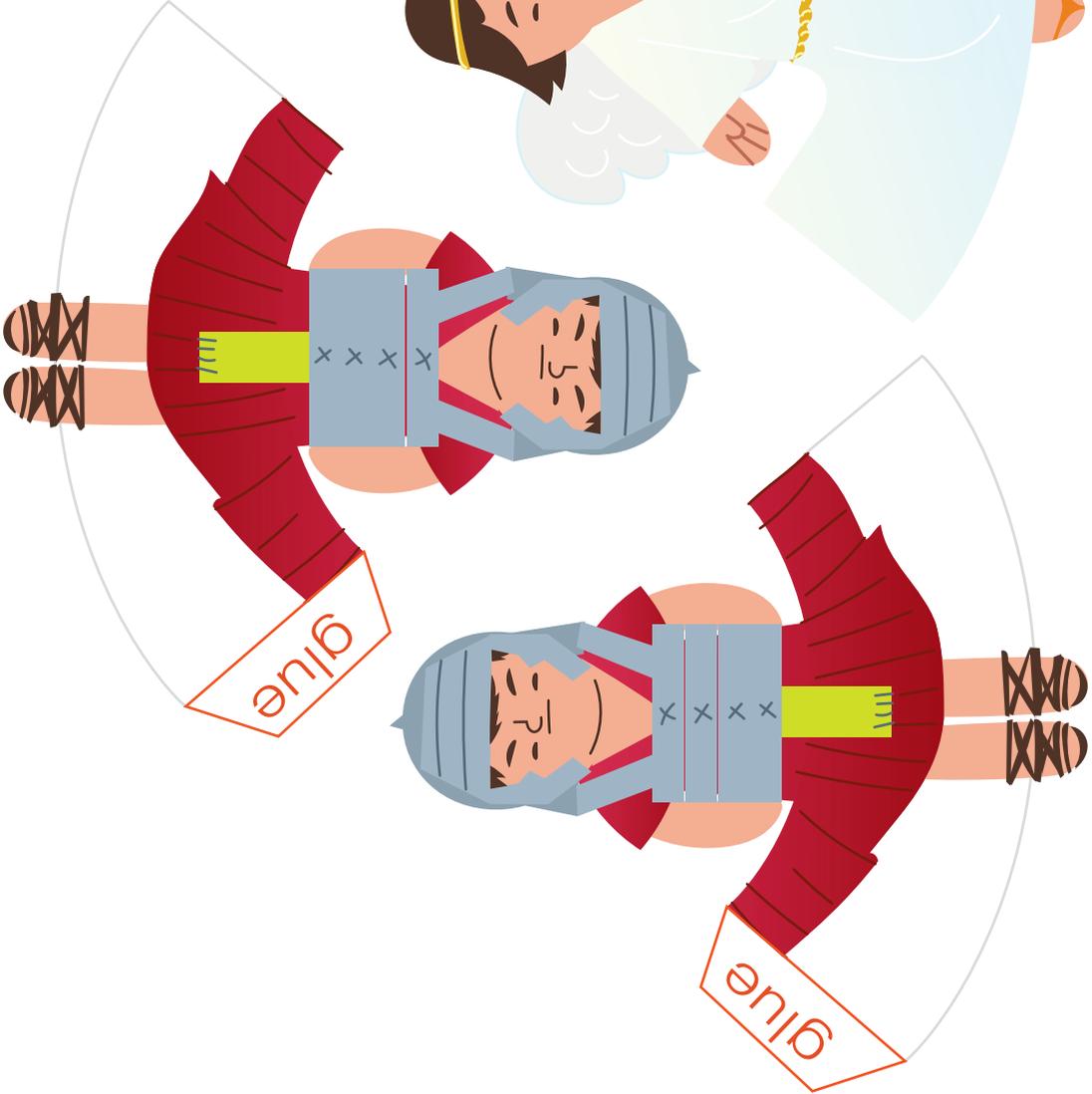
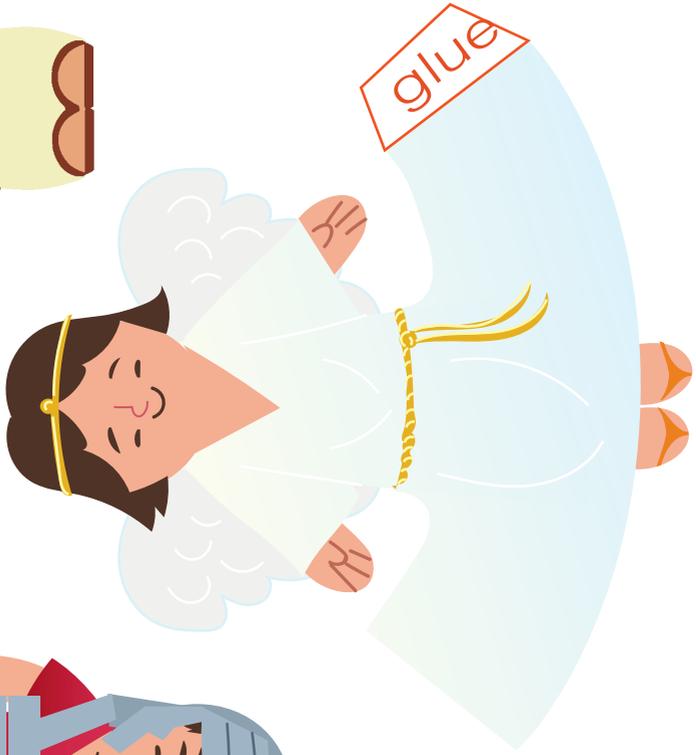
Talk

Talk through the story of the resurrection while the children play with the paper figures. You could use the tomb made in the "Rock Tomb" activity. Ask questions as you talk so that the children are able to interact with the story. Talk about which parts of the story you liked the least and which you liked the most and discuss why.





Empty tomb figure



Empty Tomb

Read The burial and resurrection story in Matthew 27:57-28:6 in a child-friendly version.

Do You'll need: 2 pieces of paper, the Jesus cut-out on the previous page, glue and scissors.

1. Roll one piece of paper into a tube and secure with glue. You need the tube to be about 5cm in diameter all throughout.
2. Roll the second paper into a tube. This one should taper from one end to the other, with one end 5cm in diameter and the other end about 4.5cm in diameter.
3. Place the tapered tube inside the other tube. At one end the tubes will be aligned and at the other end there will be a little gap between the tubes (this is the hiding place for the Jesus figure).

*Check out this You Tube video to see how this is done:
www.youtube.com/watch?v=2e1R0NY115g*

Talk After reading the Bible story, explain that when Jesus went into the tomb he stayed there for 3 days. But when the tomb was opened he was no longer there! While you are telling the story place the Jesus figure inside the gap showing he was going into the tomb. Now hold your hands over both ends of the tube and count 1,2, 3 (the number of days he was inside the tomb) and then show the children the other end of the tube (the opposite end to where you placed the figure). The Jesus figure will seem to have disappeared!



Safe Hands

Read John 1:10-13, Isaiah 41:10, 49:16, Hebrews 13:5, Deuteronomy 31:8

Do You'll need: Plaster of Paris, sand in a container (can be done on the beach or at home), some durable string or ribbon, vivid markers or paint.

1. Level the sand out in the container so it's flat and compact.
2. Make the Plaster of Paris (1 measure plaster to ½ measure water).
3. Have the children place both their hands in the sand to make two moulds.
4. Pour the plaster into the hand prints.
5. Loop some string or ribbon and place the ends into the plaster. Let it set until dry and hard.
6. Some of the sand will attach to the plaster and turn the hands grey and rough. On each finger an adult can write or paint the following words: *Jesus will always love me. Jesus will never leave me.*
7. Hang the hands in the child's room.



Talk

Jesus made a way for us to be reconciled with the Father. We have become children of God and have a place in his new Kingdom. God will never leave us. The Bible tells us that he holds us in the palm of his hands and that he even has our names written on his palms.

Recite the words from the plaster hands using the fingers on your own hands as a way to remember these promises. You could do this each night when the children go to bed as a reassuring way to go to sleep.

Paper Eggs

Read Romans 5: 1-2

Do You'll need: white and red card, split pins, hole punch, scissors, small lolly or chocolate.

1. Cut the card into strips of 15cm x 2cm - 5 red and 5 white.
2. Place all the strips on top of each other, alternating the colours - one red, one white etc.
3. Punch a hole at each end of the strips. Place a split pin through one end. Fan all the strips out. Bring them all together to form a ball and put another pin in the other end.
4. Take some paper and wrap it around the lolly or chocolate and write an Easter blessing on the outside. Place it inside the egg.
5. Give the egg away to a friend or neighbour.

Talk The red card represents the blood of Jesus and the white card the cloths wrapped around him. He came to give us new life, which is represented by the 'egg'. Inside the 'egg' is the sweet victory of His gift to us; the gift of eternal life. This is what we celebrate at Easter and the reason we give each other chocolate eggs.



Resurrection Ice

Read & Do

You'll need: 8 clear disposable plastic cups, water and one each of the following items: small leaf, 3 coins, small cup, thorn or toothpick, small cross, a die, small stone and a little hammer.

This activity is a variation on the Resurrection Eggs. Fill all the cups with water. Put one each of the items into the cups. One cup will contain water only. Place all the cups in the freezer until the water is completely frozen. From Palm Sunday to Easter Monday, the children get one frozen item per day. Hold the cup under some running water to loosen the ice inside. Tip the ice block out on a table or outside deck or path. The children can use the little hammer (I gave my little ones a big bolt to use) to un'lock' each day's treasure. A messy activity but lots of fun!

Talk

- Day 1: Leaf – Matthew 21: 1-11. Jesus rode into Jerusalem on a donkey. The people waved palm branches.
- Day 2: Small cup – Matthew 26: 17-19. Jesus at the Last Supper with His disciples.
- Day 3: Coins – Matthew 27:3. Judas betrayed Jesus for 30 pieces of silver.
- Day 4: Thorn/Toothpick – John 19:2. The soldiers placed a crown of thorns on Jesus' head.
- Day 5: Dice – John 19:23. The soldiers took Jesus' garments and cast lots for his coat. Talk about what it means to cast lots.
- Day 6: Cross – John 19:18,37 and John 20: 25-29. Jesus was nailed to a cross and pierced in his side.
- Day 7: Stone – John 19:1. The stone covering Jesus' tomb was rolled away.
- Day 8: Nothing – Luke 24:6. The tomb is empty. He has risen!

Talk about how each item fits into the story of Jesus' journey. You could display the pieces and get the children to use them, as well as the Paper People on page 4 to retell the story each day.



The Sacrifice Cross

Read 1 Peter 3:18, Romans 5:6

Do You'll need: coloured cardboard, scissors, markers and blu-tac.
Cut out a large cross and use the blu-tac to stick it up on the wall.

Cut out some flower shapes – a different colour for each person. Trace each person's hand and cut it out. Write on the hand the item you will be sacrificing for the week of Easter. Each time a family member sacrifices their item they get to put a flower on the cross.

Talk

Jesus sacrificed his life for us. Giving up something that's precious to us, even just for a few days, reminds us of what a wonderful gift we receive from Jesus - eternal life. Talk with your children about what you could choose to give up – maybe a favourite food item, or a hobby, TV or computer (homework is not an option!) but don't make it too hard! Decide for how long you will each give up this item.

On Easter Friday celebrate the number of flowers you have on the cross and give thanks to Jesus for what he gave up for each of us. Talk about how hard it was to give up these things and how it helped you focus on Jesus.



Easter Story Meringue Biscuits

Read See the verses below. Either read them as you make each stage or at the end. Ideally, this activity should be done on the Saturday night of Easter weekend.

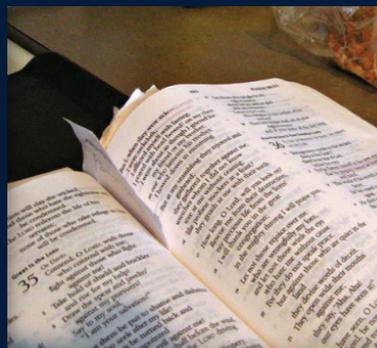
Do & Talk

You'll need: 1 cup whole pecans or walnuts, 1 tsp. vinegar, 3 egg whites, pinch of salt, 1 cup sugar, large zipper bag, wooden spoon and tape. Preheat oven to 150°C.

- Place pecans or walnuts in a ziploc bag and let the children beat them with the wooden spoon to break into small pieces. Explain that after Jesus was arrested, he was beaten by the Roman soldiers. Read John 19:1-3.
- Let each child smell the vinegar. Add a teaspoon of vinegar into the mixing bowl. Explain that when Jesus was thirsty on the cross he was given vinegar to drink. Read John 19:28-30.
- Add egg whites to vinegar. Eggs represent life. Explain that Jesus gave his life to give us life. Read John 10:10-11.



- Sprinkle a little salt into each child's hand. Let them taste it and brush the rest into the bowl. Explain that this represents the salty tears shed by Jesus' followers, and the bitterness of our own sins. Read Luke 23:27.
- So far the ingredients are not very appetising. Add 1 cup of sugar. Explain that the sweetest part of the story is that Jesus died because he loves us. He wants us to know and belong to him. Read Psalm 34:8.
- Beat with a mixer on high speed for 12-15 minutes until stiff peaks are formed. Explain that the colour white represents the purity in God's eyes of those whose sins have been cleansed by Jesus. Read Isaiah 1:18.



- Fold in the broken nuts. Line a baking tray with waxed paper. Drop spoonfuls of the mixture onto waxed paper.
- Explain that each mound represents the rocky tomb where Jesus' body was laid. Read Matthew 27:57-60.
- Place the tray in the oven, close the door and turn the oven OFF. Give each child a piece of tape and seal the oven door. Explain that Jesus' tomb was sealed. Read Matthew 27:65-66.
- GO TO BED. Explain that they may feel sad to leave the meringues in the oven overnight. Jesus' followers were in despair when the tomb was sealed. Read John 16:20.
- On Easter Sunday morning, open the oven and remove the meringues. Take a bite. Notice the meringues are hollow. On the first Easter Jesus' followers were amazed to find the tomb open and empty. Read Matthew 28:1-9.

Talk about what had happened. Why was the tomb empty? Who were the first people to see the risen Jesus?



A New Direction

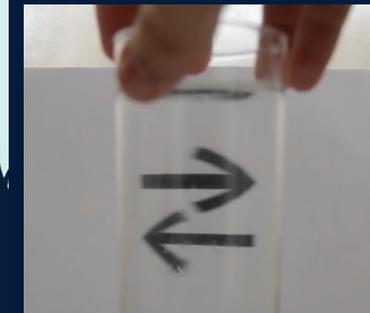
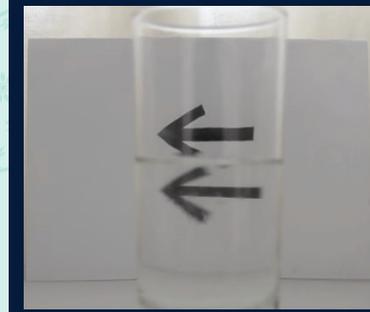
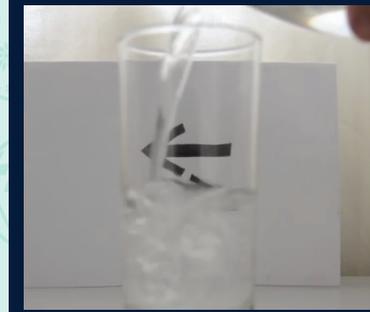
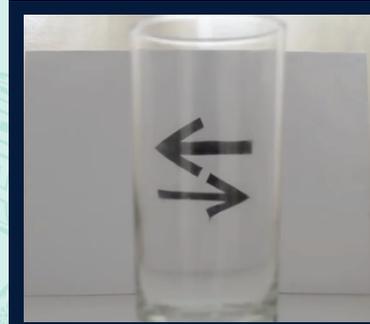
Read Psalm 103:10-13

Do You'll need: a large clear drinking glass, marker and paper.

1. Draw two large arrows on the paper, one above the other. One should point left and the other right.
2. Fill the glass with water.
3. Slowly move the paper behind the glass so that you can see the arrows through the water.
4. What do you see? The arrows will both point in the same direction when behind the water.

Talk

When you view the bottom arrow through the glass the water causes the direction of the arrow to reverse. This is symbolic of what Jesus did for us when he died and rose again. He took away the sin that separated us from God. We now have the chance to choose to follow him and to completely change the direction of our lives. Parents, maybe you could share a personal story of how Jesus has helped you to change the direction of your life.



Secret Message

Read John 3:16

Do You'll need: half a lemon, water, spoon, bowl, cotton bud, white paper and a lamp.

1. Squeeze some lemon juice into the bowl and add a few drops of water.
2. Mix the water and lemon juice with the spoon.
3. Dip the cotton bud into the mixture and write a message onto the white paper.
4. Wait for the juice to dry so it becomes completely invisible.
5. When you are ready to read your secret message or show it to someone else, heat the paper by holding it close to a light bulb.

Talk

God the Father sent Jesus the Son to earth on a 'secret mission' but the people couldn't see and didn't understand what that mission was – just as the lemon juice message was unable to be seen. Jesus' death and resurrection revealed this secret mission - he had come to take away our sins and enable us to have a relationship with God the Father. The mission was finally revealed - just as the light and heat revealed the message on the paper.



Tea Bag Gospel

Read Philippians 2:5-11

Do & Talk

You'll need: a tea bag (one with string and a tag) and scissors.

1. Remove the label – The label tells us what tea it is. Jesus has many labels that tell people something about who he is (e.g. Christ, Saviour, Good Shepherd, Messiah). When Jesus came to earth he put aside all his glory and became like a servant, setting aside all his special titles to become like us.
2. The string – Remove the string and show it. We can often become attached or tied to things here that we think make us happy. But Jesus had his eye on the future kingdom and knew that doing what God wanted – even if it meant going to the cross – was the most important thing.
3. The staple – Carefully remove the staple from the tea bag and show it. Look at the holes left in the tea bag. Jesus was not pierced with a staple but with nails and a spear when he was put on the cross.
4. The tea – Carefully open the bag without ripping it and show the tea inside. Tea looks like dirt and if you put it in water it changes all the water. When we do things that are wrong, it is a bit like the tea, it makes the rest of our lives feel yucky too. When Jesus died on the cross, he made a way for all our sins to be washed away. When we say sorry to God, Jesus' blood makes us clean again. Empty the tea leaves into a dish.
(Thanks to 'Faith Box' for this idea.)



Older children can have a look at the following link on YouTube that adds a few extra elements to this story: www.youtube.com/watch?v=x4Fqu5fFIGM

Roll Away the Stone

Read Luke 24: 1-12



Do You'll need: a Hula-hoop, wrapping paper/newspaper and tape. Wrap the hula hoop in paper. In this game everyone takes a turn to see who can roll the paper-covered hula-hoop furthest. Now choose the person who rolled it furthest to break through the paper hula hoop and shout "I have risen!" You will probably find that everyone wants a turn so be prepared to re-wrap the hula hoop with more newspaper several times!

Talk After the game talk about how the disciples and Mary must have felt when they discovered that the tomb was empty. What do you think they may have thought? What would you have thought?



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manatū iriiri whānau tamariki

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