

Easter for the Youngest

The Joys of Easter in Early Childhood

Easter is such a great time for celebration. Children catch the excitement easily. So don't wait until Easter Sunday to talk about the resurrection of Jesus. Celebrate a *season* of Easter. It helps young children learn when they hear and experience the joys of Easter more than just one day a year.

For preparation, review the Easter story in the Bible yourself. Read it in each of the four gospels. This will help the story be fresh in your mind so you can talk about it during teachable moments and incorporate it in your classroom as Easter approaches.

• Sing Easter Songs

Concentrate on songs that tell that Jesus is alive. Teach the children a new song about the Resurrection. Teach them the chorus from an Easter song ([Hymnal 05FX0520](#)). Make up your own words and put them to a familiar tune. Give the kids instruments and sing your songs to Jesus.



Kids love to sing and move with the Easter songs on [Miss Patty-Cake's Eggstravaganza DVD \(38FX1454\)](#). Read her [book \(38FX1455\)](#) to reinforce the message.

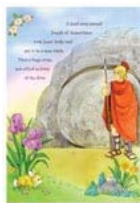
• Hunt for Resurrection Eggs

You can incorporate an egg searching activity along with Miss PattyCake's kids. Hide [Resurrection Eggs \(38FX0698\)](#) (for 3 and up). Tell the

children how Jesus' friends went to the tomb to look for Him and couldn't find Him there. Have the kids look for hidden Easter eggs like Jesus' friends looked for Him. Ask the children to bring their eggs back to you and open them. Talk about each item as it relates to the Easter story.

• Show the Story

Use pictures about Jesus' death and resurrection to show the story. Mix up the pictures and ask the kids to put them in the right order.



Hang these pictures on your bulletin board a couple weeks before Easter.

[Jesus Is Alive! Bulletin Board Set \(38FX1612\)](#) is perfect for this age-group.

• Read the Bible

During the Easter season, read the story of Jesus over and over. Encourage the children to act out the story or make play dough characters to tell the story.

Use Bible storybooks at the appropriate age-level for the children.

[The Story of Jesus \(38FX1430\)](#) board book is great for very young children. It tells the story of Jesus' life, from His birth to His resurrection and ends with "We love Jesus, because He first loved us."

For preschoolers, a book they can re-

Seek and Find

Kids love to hunt for hidden things. Make a game out of finding [Resurrection Eggs \(38FX0698\)](#).



Then open the eggs to find 11 little items, including a donkey and a cross. One egg is empty, just like the tomb after Jesus rose from the dead.

Kids want to hide the eggs again and again and find them to discover pieces of the Easter story.

Long after you've told the Easter story with the eggs, the kids will remember and tell about what was inside the eggs.

Easter Candy Stats:

- 42% of people rank the chocolate bunny as the "must-have" candy in the Easter basket. Jelly beans run second.
- More than 90 million chocolate bunnies, 2 million marshmallow chicks, and 16 billion jelly beans will be produced for Easter.
- 90% of parents say their kids receive Easter baskets of candy and goodies.

—National Confectioners Association

The Joys of Easter in Early Childhood (cont.)

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late to is [He's Risen! He's Alive!](#) (38FX1538). It begins

"Jesus, our Lord, the Son of God,
Was nailed onto a cross.
And there He died on Friday eve—
His friends felt such a loss."

This is an engaging rhyming story kids enjoy listening to. And it ends with the most wonderful part of the story:

"He died for you, for me, for ALL,
And rose that we might live.
The gift of heav'n is ours for free
The best gift He could give."

The end of the book shows kids painting a "Jesus Is Risen" banner. Before class paint the words on a large sheet of paper in bubble letters.

Put paint shirts on the kids and let the kids color

and decorate the banner. Let them add stickers. Use markers if you'd prefer not to mess with paints.

Display the banner for the kids to show their parents when they come for their children.

If possible, give the children their own copy of the book to take home.

Jesus Is Risen

• Use toys

Use whatever toys the children are playing with and reenact the story. When you play with play dough, guide the play by making a cross and a tomb and tell the story.

Use blocks to build a tomb and put a doll or a child inside. While the other children "sleep" remove the doll or child. Have other children come look inside and see an empty tomb.

Offer a variety of stamps and let kids stamp out the Easter story. [The Story of Jesus Rubber Stamp Activity Book](#) (03FX6733) includes an book and stamps for telling seven stories of Jesus, including the Easter story.

• Send Easter Home

Give each child the Easter message to take home. Parents can review the story later in the day and during the week.



[The First Easter](#) (38FX1615) is a reproducible coloring book. You can use the following plan

for sending the story of Jesus home by reproducing pages and stapling them together as a booklet. Send these home each Sunday for families to share together.

Two weeks before Easter: Give the children a booklet with the pages of Jesus' birth; boyhood; baptism; and calling of the 12.

One week before Easter: Give the children the pages of Palm Sunday and The Last Supper.

Easter Sunday: Put together the pages of Jesus' arrest, Calvary, the soldier at the tomb, the angel at the tomb, Jesus appearing to His disciples.

Slip a [Jesus Is Alive! Bookmark](#) (38FX1614) in diaper bags or take-home sacks for older kids. On the back write "Remember—2005." Add your church name, too. Parents can use these in their kids' Bibles as a reminder throughout the year of the truths of Easter.



"Jesus Is Alive" Egg Wrap

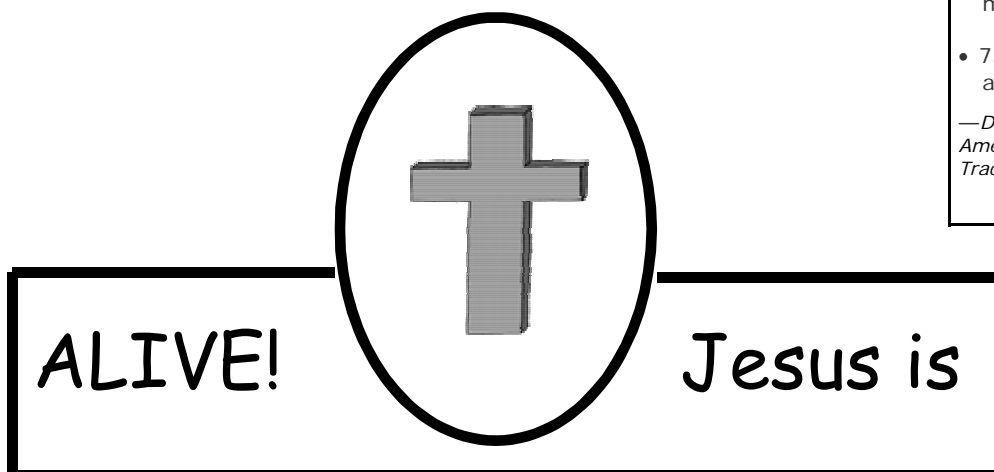
Reproduce the "Jesus is ALIVE!" pattern below and cut out one per child. The children can color their egg wraps, if they'd like. (Pattern is at full size.)

Tape the ends together and let each child place a small plastic egg in the center. Let the children take these egg wraps home.

Easter Flower Stats:

- Easter is the 3rd most popular holiday for flower purchases (after Christmas and Mother's Day).
- 47% of flowers purchased for Easter are flowering plants, the most popular being the lily.
- 73% of flowers purchased at Easter are given as gifts.

—Data collected by IPSOS-Insight for the American Floral Endowment's Consumer Tracking Study, 2003



Host an Easter Egg Roll for the Little Ones

Annual Easter Egg Roll

Young children and their families have been gathering annually for Easter Egg Rolls on the White House lawn since the late 1800s.



Eggs are tossed in a race on the South Lawn during the 2004 White House Easter Egg Roll Monday, April 12, 2004.

—www.whitehouse.gov/easter/history.html

Over the years, the Egg Rolls have evolved and changed, with different games and amusements popular in different years.

Near the end of the nineteenth century, children played "Egg Picking," "Egg Ball," "Toss and Catch," and "Egg Croquet." Soon the event evolved into a more elaborate affair, with bands, entertainers, and food.

It is the White House's largest public celebration.

Host a Neighborhood Egg Roll

More and more churches are doing Easter egg hunts. You can do something a little different this year.

Get into the fun of an old-fashioned egg roll and share the message of Jesus' love with others.

Following are some practical ideas for doing this simply and affordably. A butterfly theme is suggested since that is a symbol of the Resurrection, and young children enjoy them, too.

- Invite neighborhood families with children 6 and under to your Easter Egg Roll.
- Mail or hand-deliver invitations. Include a ["Jesus Is Alive" butterfly bookmark \(38FX1544\)](#). On the invitation tell the families that they will receive a free gift at the Easter Egg Roll.

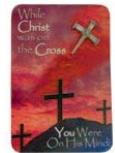
- As the children leave your event, give each one their gift: an [Easter Butterfly treat sack \(38FX1545\)](#) filled with [The Easter Butterfly book \(38FX1543\)](#) and, of course, candy.



You may want to add a little Easter grass at the bottom of the sack. Also

include information about your children's ministries activities.

- If you can, hold your Egg Roll outside. Post a banner inviting the neighbors.
- Mark starting and finishing lines with a rope or paint.
- Group the children by age and let them push plastic eggs to the finish line with plastic spoons.
- Ask the parents to write down their children's names and addresses, and hold drawings for toys you have purchased.
- Let the children take their spoons and eggs home with them.
- Give each adult a fresh cut flower, a [seed butterfly \(38FX1431\)](#), or a [nail cross pin \(38FX1550\)](#), which comes on a card that simply says, 'While Christ was on the Cross, You were on His mind!'
- Follow up with those who attended your event, thanking them for coming. Let them know when your next activity for young children will be held.



Easter Recitations Young Children Can Share

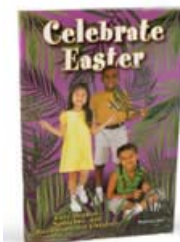
On Easter Sunday you probably have visitors at church. Many of them may be family members of those who attend your church. Have some of your youngest share the meaning of Easter with your congregation and visitors.

- Select simple Easter poems or verses for the children to learn.
- Several weeks before Easter, begin working with the children on the poems.
- Teach them all to say all the lines together or have the boys and girls alternate lines.

- On Easter Sunday, practice one last time and include any visiting children you may have.
- Then relax and let the children say their pieces. The congregation and visitors alike will love it, mistakes, and "incidents," and all.
- When the children have finished, give them ["Jesus Is Alive!" bookmarks \(38FX1614\)](#) to hand out to people in your congregation. Tell the children that they will get their own bookmark to take home, too.

These three resources have several pages of ideas for young children.

- [Easter Program Book 38FX1450](#)
- [Easter Program Builder 38FX1597](#)
- [Celebrate Easter 38FX1448](#)



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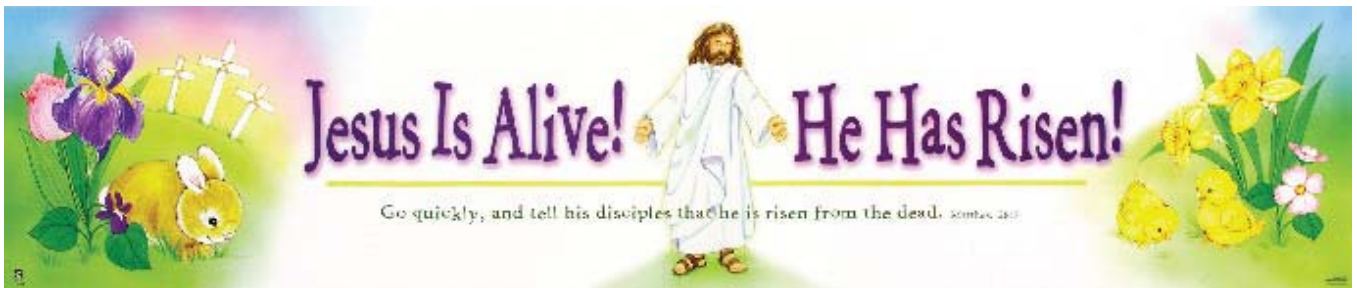
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Please forward this file or photocopy a printout for your friends, family, and other children's workers.

Jesus Is Alive! He Is Risen! Resources



Jesus is Alive! Banner Item # 38TW1611

Brighten your classroom with this theme and spread the message that Jesus is alive.



[Jesus Is Alive! Bulletin Board Set \(38FX1612\)](#)

This set includes five posters, each 12 x 17.

- Let five kids hold the pictures while you tell the story.
- Mix up the posters and let the kids put the story in the right order.
- Hang the posters on the bulletin board.

Also included are four punch-out bulletin board accessories— all four come on a 12 x 17" sheet.

[Jesus is Alive! He Is Risen! Bookmark \(38FX1614\)](#)

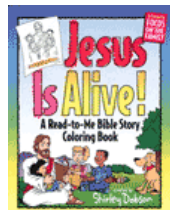
Send home a theme bookmark with the children and tell them to share the Easter story with their families.

[The First Easter Coloring Book \(38FX1615\)](#)

Reproduce copies of these coloring pages and send them home for families to share together. (See page 2 of this file for specific ideas for making booklets for the kids.)

[Jesus Is Alive: A Read-to-Me Bible Story Coloring Book \(18FX7567\)](#)

Be sure every child gets his own coloring book. He can start coloring in class and take the book home for on-going learning.



[Jesus is Alive! Stickerbook \(38FX1613\)](#)

The art on these stickers matches the Jesus Is Alive! Theme. Great fun for the kids and their projects.