

A Journey through Easter

Story

Resources:

brown felt 'road', figure of Jesus on a donkey (or picture), palm branch, 'temple' model or painted box, Jesus figure, doll's house tables, praying hands, 2 temple guard figures, a coin and a bag of coins, perfume bottle, small jug and bowl, picture of the last supper, sword, dove, cross, heart, 'tomb' and stone, 3 women figures, risen Christ figure (or picture), chick in an egg that opens, caterpillar and butterfly

Lay a beige story cloth and lay a felt 'road' along it at the front

When Jesus went to Jerusalem for the last time it was the feast of the Passover, and the city was full of people. They thought Jesus was coming to be king, but they weren't paying attention.

Move a figure of Jesus on a donkey along the 'road'

He wasn't riding on a great white horse, or being carried by soldiers. He was riding on a donkey, and it wasn't even his. He had borrowed it.

Wave a palm branch

Still, that Sunday when Jesus came into Jerusalem, people waved palm branches, which were a sign of kings, and called out 'Hosannah! Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord!'

Place the temple at the back to your left, and place a Jesus figure to one side of it

When he entered the city, Jesus made his way to the temple to pray.

Place tables in front of the temple then turn them over

He saw the stalls of the moneychangers and merchants. He was so angry about people buying and selling things in such a holy place that he turned over the tables and threw the people out. Remove the tables, pause and hold your hands together in prayer above the temple "My Father's house should be a place of prayer, not a den of thieves!"

Place the two guards on either side of the temple

The temple guards began to watch him carefully.

Move the Jesus figure forward

On Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday that week, Jesus went to the temple and taught the people who gathered round him.

Hold up a coin and bag of coins then lay them before the temple

He said that the poor woman who gave a small coin gave more than the rich man who gave a whole bag of coins, because the woman gave everything she had.

Point to the two guards at either side of the temple

The guards noticed that the crowd gathered round listening was growing bigger each day, and they became worried. They began to think about how to arrest him.

Move the Jesus figure to your far right

Each night Jesus and his friends left Jerusalem and went to stay near the Mount of Olives. The people



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watched him and began to talk about the legend that the Mount of Olives was where the Messiah was to come down from heaven and lead an army of angels to drive away the Roman soldiers. This worried the guards even more.

Hold up perfume bottle and pretend to pour over Jesus, then remove them both

One evening a woman brought Jesus a present of expensive perfume. She poured it on his head, and Jesus thanked her for helping him to get ready.

Move the guards forward

On Thursday morning the guards were waiting to take Jesus, but he did not appear on the temple mound. That night Jesus and the disciples hurried through the dark streets to the upper room.

Place jug and bowl, 'pour' water, then remove it

Jesus washed his friends' feet. He wanted to show them how to love and care for others. He was a king, but he was also a servant.

Hold up a picture of the last supper picture

As Jesus ate his last meal with his friends, he gave thanks to God and shared the bread and wine with them. He said that whenever they remembered him with bread and wine he would be with them. What was he talking about? He was always saying things like that. How could they know? Still, they did not forget, and later they would understand.

Point out Judas on the picture

Suddenly Judas got up and left - he hurried away into the darkness of the city.

Place the Jesus figure at your far right

The rest sang a hymn and then went to the Garden of Gethsemane on the Mount of Olives. Jesus wanted to pray, but his friends fell asleep.

All alone, Jesus was sorrowful and troubled. He suffered such agony of spirit that his sweat fell to the ground like great drops of blood. He prayed for God's will to be done.

As Jesus woke up the disciples, Judas came out of the darkness and greeted him. This was a signal for the temple guards to take him. They came out of the shadows and took hold of Jesus. (*wave the sword*) The disciples started to fight, but Jesus said: "No more of this." The guards carried Jesus away with them into the night, and the twelve disappeared into the darkness as well. (*remove Jesus*)

The night was a confusing one. Jesus was moved from place to place. At one point they dressed him in a scarlet robe and put a crown of thorns on his head. (*hold your hands over your head like a crown*) They mocked him, calling him the King of the Jews and pretending to bow down before him. Jesus said nothing. He showed them peace. (*fly a dove over the scene*)

Hold up a cross and place it down in the centre

On Friday the soldiers took Jesus through the streets to Golgotha, which means "the place of the skull" and hung him on the cross.

Hold up a heart and place it down by the cross

God so loved the world that he sent his only Son to die for his people.

The sky grew dark. It was as if the whole world was holding its breath. Then the earth shook, and Jesus died.



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Place a 'cave' and a stone at the front

They took Jesus down from the cross. They buried him in a cave and rolled a great stone over the opening.

Saturday was so quiet you could almost hear the earth breathing.

Place three women figures by the 'tomb'

On Sunday morning it was the women who had the courage to come to the tomb, bringing spices.

Remove the stone

They wanted to be close to Jesus to remember, even if it was sad. But the stone was rolled away and the tomb was empty.

Place two angel figures by the tomb

'Where is he?' they cried. The angels said. 'Don't be afraid, be joyful! Jesus is alive! Go and tell the disciples that Jesus is risen from the dead.'

Remove two of the women and move the other figure forward

But Mary Magdalene would not leave. She stood, crying. Then someone said, 'Who are you looking for?' She thought it was the gardener, until he called her by name, 'Mary'. *(place a risen Christ figure or hold a picture beside Mary)*

She knew the sound of that voice. It was Jesus! He was alive again! She was so happy! She ran to tell all his friends the good news. *(remove the Mary figure)*

Place chick and egg, caterpillar and butterfly around the risen Christ

Christians use the symbols of the chick hatching from the egg, and the caterpillar changing into a butterfly to explain this mystery of new life.

Christians believe that somehow Jesus is still with them, as Mary discovered in the garden that first Easter day.



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Wondering and Activities

Wondering Questions

I wonder which is your favourite part of this story?

I wonder which is the most important part?

I wonder if there is anything you would change?

I wonder which part of this story is just for you today? If you could go back in time, which part would you like to be there for?

Creative Response

- Decorating card cut-outs of symbols from the story (cross, flower, angel, dove, crown, heart, stone, etc.) with stickers, sparkles and collage bits or with easy-painters.
- Making models out of air dough to represent parts of the story, using Sharpies, beads and gems to decorate them.
- Sand art: layering coloured sand in bottles and choosing colours to represent the different events or moods of the Easter journey.
- Graffiti: writing and drawing pictures and messages from the journey on a large strip of liner paper (taped to the table or floor)

Play Response

Playing with Easter symbols: baskets of crosses, eggs and chicks, caterpillars and butterflies

Prayer Response

The cross: making a cross out of sticks and wool, lolly sticks and pipe cleaners, or nails and wire - and thinking about people who are suffering.

The garden: planting mustard and cress seeds in plastic cups filled with cotton wool. Wait to see if they sprout in three days, and thinking about the difficulty of waiting, and things that are worth waiting for.

The empty tomb: create a tomb by draping black cloth over a chair or low table. Place a battery candle into the tomb and think about light shining in the dark places in the world.

New life: make silver and gold butterfly ink stamps on black card and think changes you would like to make to your life or about someone who is facing a big change.

Multisensory Response

Tasting the mystery of Easter: invitation to dip a bread stick in vinegar to taste the bitterness of the cross, and to eat a chocolate egg to taste the sweetness of resurrection (or free-from chocolate equivalent).

Smelling the scents of the Easter garden: putting pinches of spices and pot-pourri in organza bags.

Seeing Easter: paintings of the Easter journey, putting a wooden figure beside the picture you like best

Hearing the sound of the nails: cork boards, tacks and wooden hammers, or floorboard nails, wooden planks and hammers

Touching Easter: place a feather on your hand and feel the lightness of the touch. Blow gently on your hand and see where the feather goes. Think about the breath of the Holy Spirit, bringing God's peace.



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Setting Up A Easter Story Trail

At each 'stop' on the trail the children will find a story scene to look at, a story label to read, and a basket containing the symbol to collect in a bag, to represent that part of the story. The scene can be replaced by a picture, as can the symbols. At the end of the trail they will have 20 symbols in their bag, to use to re-tell the story. They could collect a story sheet, or write their own version of the story using the symbols.

- 1. Scene:** a felt road and a figure or picture of Jesus on a donkey
Label: On Sunday Jesus came into Jerusalem riding on a donkey.
To collect: a piece of fur
- 2. Scene:** a road scattered with palm leaf cut-outs
Label: The people shouted "Hosannah" and waved palm branches.
To collect: a palm leaf
- 3. Scene:** a crown on a purple cloth
Label: They welcomed Jesus as their king.
To collect: a crown
- 4. Scene:** praying hands (or picture)
Label: When Jesus went to the temple to pray he saw people buying and selling things. He was angry and threw them out. He said: 'My Father's House should be a place of prayer not a den of thieves'
To collect: praying hands charm or picture
- 5. Scene:** a bag of coins and a coin
Label: Each day Jesus taught the people. He said that the poor woman who gave a small coin gave more than the rich man who gave a whole bag of coins, because the woman gave everything she had.
To collect: a plastic coin
- 6. Scene:** a perfume bottle or ornate jar on a cloth
Label: Each night Jesus and his friends left Jerusalem and went to stay near the Mount of Olives. One evening a woman brought Jesus a special present of perfume. She poured it over him, and Jesus said thank you for helping him to prepare.
To collect: a silk rose petal
- 7. Scene:** a chain and some handcuffs
Label: As the crowds gathering around Jesus grew bigger, the temple guards became worried. They wanted to find a way to arrest Jesus. On Thursday morning they were ready, but Jesus wasn't there.
To collect: a piece of chain
- 8. Scene:** towel, water, soap, jug, bowl
Label: On Thursday evening Jesus and his friends hurried through the dark streets to the upper room. He washed their feet, to show them how to love and care for others. He was a king, but he was also a servant.
To collect: a piece of towel
- 9. Scene:** a small table with some bread and grapes and wine goblets
Label: Jesus had his last meal with his friends. He said thank you to God and shared the bread and wine with them. He said that whenever they remembered him with bread and wine, he would be with them. Judas hurried away into the darkness of the city.
To collect: a metal goblet charm, or a picture of bread and wine
- 10. Scene:** trees and flowers on flowery green cloth, with a kneeling figure, soldiers (Playmobil works well)
Label: Jesus went with his friends to the garden of Gethsemane to pray, but his friends fell asleep. The temple soldiers came with Judas through the darkness and took Jesus away with them into the night.
To collect: a sword charm or a picture of Roman soldier

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11. Scene: a red cloak and a crown of thorns (wicker wreath)

Label: The soldiers dressed Jesus in a scarlet robe and put a crown of thorns on his head. They mocked him, pretending to bow down before him, and calling him the King of the Jews.

To collect: a piece of red felt

12. Scene: a dove

Label: Jesus said nothing. He showed them peace.

To collect: dove

13. Scene: a wooden cross

Label: On Friday the soldiers took Jesus outside the city walls and put him on the cross.

To collect: a mini cross (e.g. foam, wooden, pipe cleaner)

14. Scene: a heart on a black cloth

Label: Christians believe that God so loves the world that he sent his only Son to die for his people.

To collect: a heart button

15. Scene: a model of a 'tomb' and a stone

Label: They buried Jesus in a cave, and rolled a great stone over the opening.

To collect: a stone

16. Scene: figures of women

Label: On the Sunday morning it was the women who had the courage to come to the tomb, bringing spices. They wanted to remember, even if it was sad, but they found the stone was rolled away and the tomb was empty.

To collect: a piece of cinnamon stick

17. Scene: Two angels on a sparkly cloth

Labels: The angels said, 'Don't be afraid, be joyful! Go and tell everyone that Jesus is risen from the dead.'

To collect: a feather

18. Scene: Mary and risen Christ figures or a picture

Label: But Mary Magdalene would not leave. She stood crying until someone said, 'Who are you looking for?' She thought it was the gardener, but he called her by name - 'Mary'. She knew the sound of that voice. It was Jesus! He was alive again! She was so happy that she ran to tell all his friends the good news.

To collect: a flower jewel

19. Scene: chicks and eggs

Label: At Easter time, we decorate eggs and think about chicks hatching to remind us of new life.

To collect: a plastic egg

20. Scene: Butterfly and caterpillar

Label: Christians use the symbol of the caterpillar changing into a butterfly to think about Jesus rising from the dead.

To collect: a butterfly button



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On Sunday Jesus came into Jerusalem riding on a donkey. (*fur*)

The people shouted “Hosannah” and put palm leaves on the road (*leaf*).

They welcomed Jesus as their king. (*crown*)

When Jesus went to the temple to pray he saw people buying and selling things. He became angry and threw them out. He said: ‘My Father’s House should be a place of prayer not a den of thieves’. (*house*)

Each day Jesus taught the people. He said that the poor woman who gave a small coin gave more than the rich man who gave a whole bag of coins, because the woman gave everything she had. (*coin*)

Each night Jesus and his friends left Jerusalem and went to stay near the Mount of Olives. One evening a woman brought Jesus a special present of perfume. She poured it over him, and Jesus said thank you for helping him to prepare. (*rose petal*)

As the crowds gathering around Jesus grew bigger, the temple guards became worried. They wanted to find a way to arrest Jesus. On Thursday morning they were ready, but Jesus wasn’t there. (*chain*)

On Thursday evening Jesus and his friends hurried through the dark streets to the upper room. He washed his friends’ feet. He wanted to show them how to help other people. He was a king, but he was also a servant. (*foot*)

Jesus had his last meal with his friends. He said thank you to God and shared the bread and wine with them. He said that whenever they remembered him with bread and wine, he would be with them. Judas hurried away into the darkness of the city. (*wine goblet*)

Jesus went with his friends to the garden of Gethsemane to pray, but his friends fell asleep.

The temple soldiers came with Judas through the darkness and took Jesus away with them into the night. (*sword*)

They dressed Jesus in a scarlet robe and put a crown of thorns on his head. They mocked him, pretending to bow down before him - calling him the King of the Jews (*red cloth*)

Jesus said nothing. He showed them peace. (*dove*)

On Friday the soldiers took Jesus outside the city walls and put him on the cross. (*cross*)

God so loves the world that he sent his only Son to die for his people. (*heart*)

They buried Jesus in a cave, and rolled a great stone over the opening. (*stone*)

On the Sunday morning it was the women who had the courage to come to the tomb, bringing spices. They wanted to remember, even if it was sad, but they found the stone was rolled away and the tomb was empty. (*spices*)

‘Where is he?’ they cried. The angels said, ‘Don’t be afraid, be joyful! Go and tell everyone that Jesus is risen from the dead.’ (*feather*)

But Mary Magdalene would not leave. She stood crying until someone said, ‘Who are you looking for?’ She thought it was the gardener, but he called her by name - ‘Mary’. She knew the sound of that voice. It was Jesus! He was alive again! She was so happy that she ran to tell all his friends the good news. (*flower jewel*)

At Easter time, we decorate eggs to remind us of new life. Chicks hatching out of eggs help us to remember Jesus rising from the tomb. (*egg*)

Christians use the symbol of the butterfly coming out of the chrysalis to think about Jesus rising from death to new life. (*butterfly*)