

Introduction: What is Easter?

Find out what the pupils know about the Easter story or celebrations linked to Easter. You could either tell an Easter story or ask questions such as “*When I say the word ‘Easter’, what words or pictures does this make you think of? Who celebrates Easter? Can you name some of the people in the Easter story? What happens to them? Can you think of a time when they prayed?*”

Why did Jesus and his friends pray at Easter?

Easter remembers the death and resurrection of Jesus and the hope that brings to Christians today. During ‘Holy Week’ lots of different events happened involving Jesus and his disciples. Some were joyful occasions such as when Jesus entered Jerusalem and the supper he shared with his disciples. Others were difficult, such as when Jesus was arrested, his trial and crucifixion.

What do you do when you feel worried or really happy? Is there something you can do or a place where you can go or a person you can speak to? Jesus often spoke to God in prayer because he needed help in difficult times, as well as thanking him for good times.

Where/how do you think Jesus prayed? He prayed in lots of different places, at many different times. He might have bowed down in pray, at other times he called out to God where he was.

Introduce Activities

These activities will follow some of the events of the Easter story, from Palm Sunday to Jesus’ resurrection which Christians celebrate on Easter Sunday. Each activity will give you a chance to think about a part of the Easter story and how you could respond to it, in prayer or by reflecting on the activity.

Suggested activities

(All these activities are taken from, or adapted from Prayer Space activities provided by BeSpace www.bespace.be and Prayer Spaces in Schools www.prayerspacesinschools.com)

1. Palm Sunday

On Palm Sunday, Jesus entered Jerusalem on a donkey and crowds of people lined the streets to cheer him

People put their cloaks and palm leaves onto the ground for the donkey to walk over. As Jesus went past the people shouted, “Hosanna!” “Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord!” “Hosanna in the highest heaven!”

The crowds were excited to see him, shouting hosanna is a bit like shouting hooray. When have you felt like shouting hooray? What really amazing things have happened in your life that you’re really thankful for? What ‘Hooray’ moments have made your life really good?

If you want to you can write or draw a hooray moment or a thank you prayer on your leaf shape.

2. The Last Supper

The English word ‘companion’ comes from a Latin phrase ‘com panis’ which literally means ‘with bread’. During the Last Supper, the night before Jesus was killed, Jesus broke bread with his companions, his disciples, his best friends.

Who are your best friends? Who is really important to you?

A) Make a model of one of your friends out of pipe cleaners. If you want to, as you make the person, you can give thanks to God for them and their friendship.

B) Make (or use) a paper chain of people to write or draw about your best friends and why they are important to you. If you want to, you can give thanks to God for them and their friendship.

3. Garden of Gethsemane

Often Jesus would go to quiet places to pray to God, his father. The night before Jesus died, he went to pray in the garden of Gethsemane, because he was troubled and sorrowful and wanted to spend time with God, seeking his help. He said, "My Father, if it is possible, may this cup be taken from me. Yet not as I will, but as you will."

Is there anything that you are troubled or sorrowful about?

Is there anything that you are worried about?

Write or draw it as a thought or prayer onto a flower shape, and if you'd like to, you can ask God to help you with it.

4. The Trial

Jesus was arrested and tried by the Chief Priests and elders who didn't like him. His trial was unfair, people lied about him to get him sentenced to death. But Jesus didn't say anything, he kept quiet because he knew that he had to go through with God's plan.

Can you think of some things in our world which are not fair?

These could be things in your own life, in your local community or in our world.

Write or draw about the think that you've thought of onto strips of paper. As you do this you could ask God to help put right the things that are wrong or unfair. Then staple or stick the strips of paper linking them together into a paper chain. When you've finished, pick up the chain and break the links. As you do you can ask God to put things right.

5. Crucifixion

Jesus was sentenced to die by crucifixion on a cross. This was a horrible and painful way to die.

As he died Jesus said, "Father, into your hands I commit my spirit."

Christians believe that by choosing to die, Jesus took upon himself all the punishment for all the bad things (called sin) that people do and say, to show us how much God loves us. We all say and do things that we regret and wish that we hadn't, but because Jesus died for us, we can say sorry and know that we are forgiven. In the Lord's prayer we say: 'Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us.'

Think about if there is anything that you would like to say sorry about or ask for forgiveness. Write or draw it onto a small piece of paper and put it on the cross.

6. Resurrection

After Jesus died, his body was put into a tomb. Jesus' friends were sad and confused: it was a dark time – they didn't know why Jesus had died when he had said that he had come to save them. It felt like all their hopes and dreams had died with Jesus.

But three days later the tomb was empty. Jesus had been resurrected! He was alive again!

How do you think Jesus' disciples felt? How does that make you feel?

On Easter Sunday, Christians celebrate that Jesus overcame death, so that we would all know how much God loves us.

Christians believe that Jesus gives everyone a hope of new life and a new start.

Do you have any hopes and dreams?

Why might a butterfly be a sign of new life? If you'd like to, write or draw a prayer or picture about your hopes and dreams onto the butterfly shape.

