

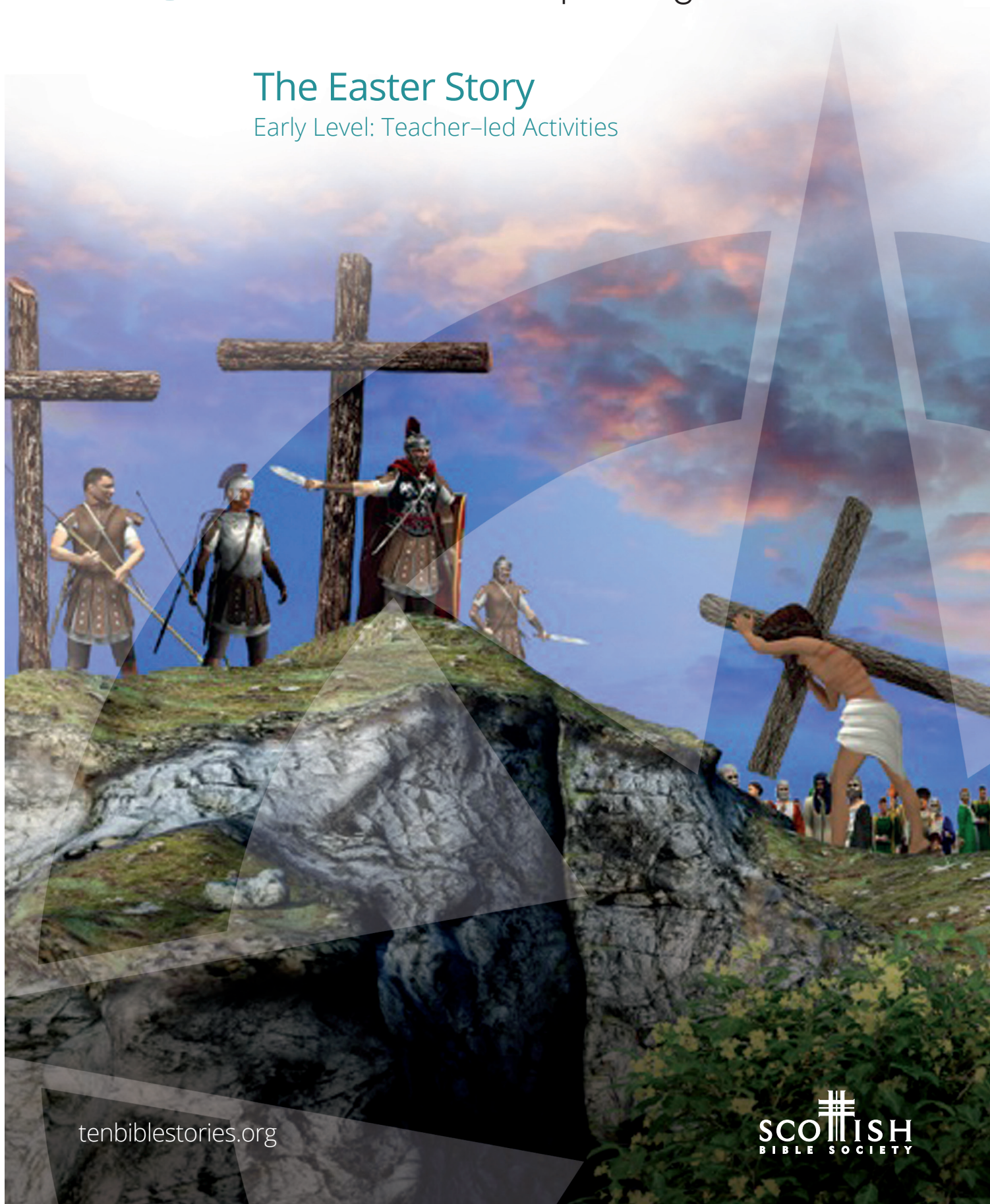


# MUST KNOW BIBLE STORIES

stories worth exploring

## The Easter Story

Early Level: Teacher-led Activities



## 1. Introducing the Bible

To begin, introduce the word 'Bible' and the word 'Christians' to the pupils to allow them to have a clear understanding of what they are learning about. Show the children a children's Bible and tell them:

This is a very special book. It's called 'The Bible' and it contains lots of exciting stories. Let's all say together. "The Bible"

And people who believe the Bible are called Christians  
Let's all say together "Christians"

Christians learn more about God and Jesus by reading the Bible. Today, I want to tell you a very special story from the Bible. Perhaps it is the most special story of all! You might have heard it - it is the Easter story; the story of what happened on the very first Easter ever.

You could learn and say this rhyme together:

**Here is a Bible, I've brought it for you** (open hands like a book)

**And Christians believe that what's in it is true!** (use BSL for true – one hand flat, one hand comes down perpendicular to it.)

See: <https://www.signbsl.com/sign/true>

## 2. The Easter Story

See story script for a suggested way of telling the Easter story for young children.

Now that you have introduced and told the story, choose from the following options to explore it further. Don't forget to tell the story again on each occasion. The first option contains some suggestions of how to do this.

## 1. Revisiting the Story

Revisit the Easter story in a number of different ways to allow the children to get to know it.

Try these suggestions:

- **Stories to read**

Read an Easter story book to your children. Some suggestions are:

The Usborne Easter Story ISBN 9780746071533

Heather Amery and Norman Young

The Story of Easter

ISBN 9781788930437

Fiona Boon and Dawn Machel

The Beginner's Bible, The Very First Easter

ISBN 9780310763017

The Easter Story (My Very First Bible Stories)

ISBN 9780745963150

Lois Rock

The Easter Bible Storybook

ISBN 9781844272921

Maggie Barfield

(a board book particularly suitable for younger children)

Bibleworld Books - buy the books to read, or download a free powerpoint from [www.bibleworld.co.uk](http://www.bibleworld.co.uk) The Easter Powerpoint is called 'A Tale of two Gardens'

- **Children's Bibles**

Read the Easter Story from a Children's Bible such as:

The Beginner's Bible

ISBN 9781859855546

The Big Bible Storybook (Scripture Union)

ISBN 9780281081127

The First Lion Bible

ISBN 9780745961033

The Jesus Storybook Bible

ISBN 9780310729945

- **Videos to watch**

Watch part of the film '**Miracle Maker**' on DVD. You could start at roughly 1:06 and run until 1:22

Watch 'The Sun Stops Shining' and 'God's Wonderful Surprise' from The Animated DVD of 'The Jesus Storybook Bible' Volume 4. This is narrated by David Suchet and beautifully illustrated by Jago. It is widely available online.

Watch this video of the Easter story from Saddleback Kids:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HL8R158Ujp4>

- Give out Children's Bibles to pairs of children and ask them to look at the pictures and 'read' or tell it to their partner. Feedback to the class. What was each pair's favourite part? Why?
- Repeat your original way of telling the story. Young children love repetition! Allow lots of time for acting out the story and allow the children the opportunity to make their own suggestions.

## 2. Easter Story Egg Hunt

### Resources Needed:

- Coloured Plastic Eggs that you can open and put something inside – widely available from craft shops, supermarkets or online.
- Items to put inside the eggs: a tiny donkey (or leaf if easier), tiny crown of thorns (a picture of one is fine), small wooden cross, small stone, small piece of linen, spices.

Hide the coloured plastic eggs in your outdoor area for children to find. Each coloured egg is linked to one part of the story. For younger children, you can reduce the number of eggs. We suggest 5 for pre-school children (donkey, crown of thorns, cross, stone, empty egg) 4 for ante pre-school children (donkey, cross, stone, empty egg) or even three to keep it very simple (cross, stone, empty egg) Judge it according to your own children.

Suggestions for egg colours and what to put inside them:

Red	tiny felt donkey or leaf
Blue	crown of thorns
Pink	small cross
Green	linen cloth
Yellow	spices
Purple	stone
White	nothing – leave egg empty

Allow the children to run around and find the first egg (the red one). Remind them to leave it where it is. Once the egg has been found, gather the children around the person who has found it. Open the egg and say something short to introduce that part of the story.

Then set the children to find the next egg etc. until each one has been found. Suggested 'comments' for each part of the story are below:

For younger children hide one egg at a time.

### **Donkey or leaf**

Lots of people loved Jesus. They thought he was a special king so they cheered and waved palm leaves in front of him as he rode into Jerusalem on a donkey. Can we all cheer?

### **Crown of thorns**

Some people were jealous of Jesus. They didn't like how popular he was, so they had him arrested. They teased him by putting a crown of thorns on his head. "Do you think you're a king now Jesus!" they said.

### **Cross**

The saddest part of the Easter story is that Jesus was sentenced to death and killed. He was put to death on a cross. That was how they killed criminals then.

### **Linen Cloth**

Jesus' body was wrapped in a white linen cloth then it was carried away to be buried.

### **Stone**

Jesus' body was put in a big tomb in the hillside and a big stone was rolled in front of it.

### **Spices**

Some of Jesus' friends brought spices to put on his body to make it smell nice – that's what they did back then to show respect for the person.

### **Empty Egg**

When some of Jesus' friends came to see his body, they discovered that the stone had been rolled away and that the tomb was empty! Jesus was alive.

This activity can be done as in introduction before telling the story or as a reinforcement activity to follow on from the story.

If you use this as an introductory activity, when you tell the Easter Story, (a suggested script is available for this) you can link to the items found inside the eggs. Just follow the cues in blue in the story script for when to introduce each item.



### 3. Two Symbols

**Resources Needed:**

- Four Coloured Plastic Eggs that you can open and put something inside – widely available from craft shops, supermarkets or online.
- Items to put inside the eggs: a small twig, a slightly larger twig, a stone, nothing.

Allow the children to run around and find the four eggs – perhaps one colour at a time. Open the eggs and use the two twigs to make a cross shape. Place the cross beside the stone. These two items are really important in the Easter story. Why do you think the last egg is empty? Find out what they all have to do with the Easter story by listening to the story together.

This activity can be done as a simple introduction before telling the story, or as a reinforcement activity to consolidate the story or to promote discussion about the key parts of the story – the cross and the empty tomb.

### 4. Story Sequencing

Provide simple picture sequencing cards to retell the Easter Story. These are available in our 'Additional Resources' or you can obtain them from a number of teaching websites.

- Jesus rides into Jerusalem on a donkey
- Jealous men arrested Jesus
- Jesus was put to death on a cross
- Jesus' body was put into a tomb and a big stone sealed the entrance
- Jesus came alive again!

**Story sequencing can be done in various ways:**

- In P1 as a group activity - give each group of children a set of sequencing cards and allow time to discuss in groups which order to put them in. Feedback and reinforce the story
- As a play activity in your play area. Allow children to independently sequence the pictures and talk about them together.
- As an assessment activity - do they know the story?

- As a class activity:
  - (a) Outside (or in the gym) get children in teams to run and collect a sequencing card. Which team can lay them out in the correct order the fastest? If outside, you can use a clothes line and peg the cards up.
  - (b) Inside, hide sets of cards around your area and allow children time to find them. Each complete set should be labelled on the back with the same number so that one group looks for all the number one cards, another group looks for number 2 etc. The cards should be brought back to the children's tables and they can then work as a group to put them in the correct order.
  - (c) Wrap up the cards as a pass the parcel with one sequencing card at each layer of paper. Sit as a class in a circle and play a quick game of pass the parcel, putting each card in the middle as they are unwrapped. Can we put them into the correct order? Talk about the story as you do so.

## 5. Happy or Sad?

Provide each table with loose collage parts (pipe cleaners, foam shapes, feathers etc.) and a piece of fabric on which to make a picture. If outside, ask the children to find natural materials.

Ask the children to think about the saddest part of the story? Can they make a sad face with their collage parts? Why do they think that part of the story is sad? Children may not come out with the obvious suggestion. e.g they may identify with people telling lies about Jesus or the sadness of the women at the tomb, rather than the death of Jesus.

What was the happiest part of the story? Can they make a happy face with their collage parts? Why was that part happy? Again, the resurrection may not be the most obvious part for children. They may pick up on Jesus' popularity as he rode into Jerusalem, or the kind man taking Jesus' body to put in his own tomb. Affirm their answers and extend discussion appropriately as they share.

Sum up with the main point: It was sad for Jesus' friends when he died, but Christians believe that the Easter story is a happy story because God made Jesus come alive again. Encourage everyone to make their best happy face!

**Challenge:** can the children join hands and make a sad face altogether. Challenge the children at the outside of the 'mouth' to move so that the frown turns into a smile. Christians believe that when Jesus came alive again, sadness was changed to happiness.

## 6. Quiz to Reinforce the Story

Read out the statements and agree what the children will do to indicate their answers. They could:

- Jump up and down for true, jog on the spot for false OR
- Run one way for true, another way for false OR
- Put hands on head for true, hands on feet for false.

After a 'false' question ask the follow up questions to reinforce their learning and knowledge.

### Statements

- This is a story from the Bible. **(T)**
- Christians celebrate this story at Easter. **(T)**
- They killed Jesus by cutting off his head. **(F)** (How did Jesus die?)
- They put Jesus' body in a church. **(F)** (Where did they put Jesus when he died?)
- They sealed the tomb with a great big stone. **(T)**
- When his friends got there they found Jesus' body. **(F)** (What did his friends find when they got to the tomb?)
- The angel said "Jesus is alive" **(T)**
- It was sad when Jesus died. **(T)**
- Everyone was even sadder when Jesus came alive. **(F)** (How did they feel?)

## 7. Kim's Game

### Resources Needed:

- Small donkey (or leaf if easier), small crown of thorns (a picture of one is fine), small wooden cross, small stone, piece of linen, spices, an empty plastic egg

Sit the children in a circle, place the items in the middle and allow the children to look at them. Cover with a tea towel and then remove one item. Which one is missing? Can they tell you what that item has to do with the Easter story. For younger children, use fewer items - perhaps just the cross, the stone and the empty egg. For older children judge the number of items according to their ability. Try removing one item and playing the game several times. If they are good at this, increase to removing two ...or even three!



## 8. Easter Port and Starboard

...a game to reinforce the Easter story

Stand the children in a line down the middle of the hall or outdoor area. Put a happy face on one wall and a sad face on the other. Shout out each of the following phrases from the Easter story and ask them to do the appropriate action. For younger children, limit the number of phrases and actions. At each activity, reinforce what Christians believe. (see comments in blue)

Cross stand with arms outstretched to the side  
(Yes, Christians believe that Jesus died on a cross at Easter time)

Happy run to one side of the room  
(The Easter story is a happy story, because Christians believe that Jesus came alive again)

Sad run to the other side of the room  
(some parts of the Easter story are really sad. Jesus friends were sad when he died)

Easter curl up like an egg  
Easter is when Christians believe that Jesus died, but came alive again

Jesus is alive                      crouch down, then do a star jump upwards  
and shout yeah!  
(Yeah! Christians believe that God made Jesus come alive again)

Angel                      lie down and make a snow angel  
(The angel in the story told the women who came to Jesus' tomb, that Jesus was alive)

The stone is rolled away      lie down and with hands stretched above your head  
roll over sideways again and again.

(How amazing! The huge stone was rolled away, Jesus had come alive again.)

## 9. Easter Rhymes with Actions

There are a few simple Easter Songs and Rhymes for younger children in the book 'Tiddlywinks, Say and Sing' produced by Scripture Union p77-79. Several of them use well known nursery rhyme tunes.

These are a great way to reinforce the Easter story and embed literacy into your activity.

## 10. What's My favourite Part/What's my Question?

Ask the children to think inside their head about their favourite part of the Easter story. Stand or sit in a circle and the teacher throws a beach ball to a child. Whoever catches the ball, can share their favourite part and why they like it.

If the class has a lot of questions about the Easter story, you could use this activity to air their questions. The person who catches the ball, can ask a question. Can anyone else in the class answer that question? Who else could they ask if they have tricky questions. Why not invite in your local school chaplain, schools' worker from your local church or a Christian parent for a 10 minute 'hot seat' session.

## 11. Egg Decorating and Rolling

Hard boil some eggs and allow the children to decorate them. Have fun rolling them down a hill. Whose egg will last the longest before cracking and breaking?

Christians believe that Jesus' body was put in a tomb and a big stone was rolled in front of it. But on Easter Sunday morning an angel rolled the stone away. Jesus is alive!

## 12. Science Explosion

Do a science experiment or an explosion to remember that Christians believe that it was God's power that made Jesus come alive again.