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stories worth exploring

The Easter Story

Early Level: Contexts to Explore the Story

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SCOTTISH
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For young children to get the most out of the Easter story, it is important that they are given time to explore it for themselves in different ways. Have fun setting up your Nursery or Play area and allow the children to freely explore the story and internalise it in their own way.

Give them space to talk about what they enjoyed and allow them to guide you into what they would like to explore further. There will be particular aspects of the story that fascinate them and they will want to re-enact or delve into deeper. We hope that the ideas below will help you to develop the learning through their interests.

As you set up different contexts, keep in mind the links to the Easter story. Suggestions of how to link the activities to the story are found in blue. Don't worry about making the links over complicated, just gently extend their thinking by asking questions such as "What do Christians believe about ..." or "Who do Christians believe died and rose again at Easter time....?" Ask them what they think too! "Do you think that?" "How do you think Jesus' friends felt?" Some suggested phrases to use in your discussions with children can be found in the blue speech bubbles in the 'Mind-Map' files.

1. Art and Craft Area

Art and Craft Cross Activities

Christians believe that Jesus died on a cross at Easter time. The cross is a central symbol of the Christian faith.

a. Coloured Cross

Tape a cross shape on each piece of card by taping a short piece of masking tape horizontally across a longer vertical piece.

Let the children completely cover their card in chalks or pastels, smudging the colours together for nice effects. Spray the finished card with hairspray to 'fix'. Once it's dry, peel off the masking tape you'll be left with a white cross in the middle of the riotous colour!

b. Sandpaper Crosses

Draw around a cross template on the back of rough sandpaper. Cut the cross out. Allow the children to make patterns on the sandpaper cross with a thick wax crayon

c. Natural Crosses

When outdoors, allow children to find two sticks and place them across one another to make a cross. Talk about how Jesus died on a cross.

Inside, make a cross with lollipop sticks. Or collect twigs when outside and try tying them together to make a cross.

d. Cross Suncatchers.

Draw crosses on laminating sheets using a template. Allow children to tear bits of tissue paper and place them inside the crosses. It doesn't matter if the tissue paper sticks out of the cross, it will be cut off later. Laminate and cut around the cross shape. Punch a hole at the top and hang by the window.

Art and Craft Egg Activities

These link these to the Easter story in two ways:

- The stone being rolled away
- Christians believe that when Jesus came alive again, he defeated death and people can have a new life with Jesus as their friend. Eggs are a symbol of this new life.

a. Marbled Eggs 1

Cut an egg shape from cardboard. Place in a tray and roll marbles dipped in paint backwards forward across them.

For a large (and fun) piece of art work, use plastic Easter eggs dipped in paint and roll them around outside on a large sheet of paper. Talk about how the Easter story is colourful and happy.

b. Marbled Eggs 2

Put shaving foam onto a plate, squish different coloured acrylic paints (or food colouring) onto it and then carefully overlay a cardboard egg shape on the top.

c. Water resist Eggs

Draw a pattern onto a cardboard egg shape using a white crayon or a candle, then paint over with watery paint. Watch the pattern appear.

d. Bubble Wrap Eggs

Cut out egg shapes from bubble wrap. Paint onto the bubble wrap and press a piece of paper on to the paint to make an egg print.

Other Easter Crafts**a. Egg Rolling**

Decorate hard boiled eggs and go out to roll them down a hill together. [Talk about how the stone was rolled away and Jesus is alive.](#)

b. Angels

Angles can be made with paint and hand prints (see internet for various options) or with paper plates or doilies.

[Talk about the angel moving the big stone. How did Mary feel when there was an angel there instead of Jesus?](#)

2. Snack Area

a. Hot Cross Buns

(You could be adventurous and make your own!)

[Why do you think there is a cross on the top?](#) When do we eat these? (traditionally on Good Friday)

b. Make Crown of Thorns Biscuits

Spread a round digestive biscuit with peanut butter or chocolate spread. Break pretzels into pieces and arrange them like thorns around the edge of the biscuit.

[Talk about the crown of thorns that was put on Jesus' head in the Easter story.](#)

c. Empty Tomb Treats

Cut circles out of puff pastry with a large, round cutter and give each child a circle. Get them to place a marshmallow in the middle and then fold one half over so that it's a semi-circular pouch. Bake in the oven according to the pastry instructions.

When the pastry comes out of the oven, it will have puffed up and opened a little to reveal that it is now empty (the marshmallow has melted!). [Talk about how the tomb was empty on Easter Sunday. Christians believe that Jesus is alive! Enjoy the sweet pastry.](#)

3. Literacy Area

a. Reading Corner

Provide Easter story books in your reading area. 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 Beginners Bible, The Very First Easter	ISBN 9780310763017
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The Easter Story (My Very First Bible Stories)	ISBN 9780745963150
Lois Rock	

The Easter Bible Storybook	ISBN 9781844272921
(a board book particularly suitable for younger children)	
Maggie Barfield	

Bibleworld Books - buy the books to read, or download a free powerpoint from 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 Beginners Bible	ISBN 9781859855546
The Big Bible Storybook (Scripture Union)	ISBN 9780281081127
The First Lion Bible	ISBN 9780745961033
The Jesus Storybook Bible	ISBN 9780310708254

b. Easter Story Puppets

Make simple stick puppets and allow children to [retell the Easter story](#). Templates are available on teaching websites or you could allow the children to create their own characters.

c. Sequence the Story

Provide simple picture sequencing cards in your literacy area for children to explore independently. These are available in our 'Additional Resources' or you can obtain them from a number of teaching websites. Pictures can also be downloaded from Bibleworld books (<https://bibleworld.co.uk/resources>). [Talk about the story together](#).

Note: There is a lot in the Easter story. For early level, five (or even four) pictures are probably enough: For ante-preschool children, you could use just three pictures

- [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!](#)

4. Writing Area

a. Write a Message

[Pretend to be an angel](#) and write a message to the women at the tomb. What did the angel say to them?

b. Drawing

Can they draw an [Easter picture](#) of their favourite part of the story?

c. Design a 'He is Alive' Banner

Complete with their own special writing and jagged balloon shape. [Talk about how the Easter story tells us that Jesus came alive again!](#) Christians believe that this is true.

5. Outdoors

- a. Have a Cross Hunt. [Talk about how Jesus died on a cross.](#)
- b. Collect stones and discover which ones roll the best. Talk about how the stone was rolled away from the tomb entrance.
- c. Make crosses from natural materials. [Talk about how Jesus died on a cross and how the cross is a symbol of the Christian faith.](#)
- d. Roll a decorated egg down a hill to [celebrate the stone being rolled away.](#)
- e. Collect things to use to make an Easter garden. [Talk about the story and what items you might need to put in your garden.](#)

6. Small World Play

- a. **Try making an Easter tomb from a shoebox and make a garden area around it.**
Provide people, a cross, pebbles, a large stone. [Talk about the Easter story.](#)
- b. **Use your sand tray for an Easter garden.**
Provide sticks, pebbles, tissue paper flowers, small people. [Talk about the Easter story.](#)

7. Numeracy and Mathematics

- a. **Investigate shapes in the Easter story**
 - A cross – where can you see a cross shape? Go on a cross hunt outdoors. [Talk about the Easter story and how Jesus died on a cross.](#)
 - A sphere (like the tomb stone). [Talk about the stone that was rolled away from the tomb. Christians believe that Jesus is alive!](#)

Which ones can roll? [Do they remember what happened to the stone in the story \(an angel rolled it away\)](#)

What other shapes can roll? You could perhaps have a sorting activity with lots of 3D shapes and let the children separate them into 'can roll' and 'cannot roll'.

Rolling is a great concept to explore if the children wish to: You could link this into a craft activity such as rolling painted marbles or eggs (above) or they could investigate different ways to roll their bodies in the gym or down a hill outside. What else can they find outside that can roll? What shape is it?

- b. **Big and Small/Heavy and Light**
Collect small and larger stones. [How big was the stone that sealed the tomb?](#)
Was it heavy? Heavier than your stone?

8. Construction Area

a. Which parts of the **Easter Story** can they build?

A cross? a tomb in the hillside? a garden? [Talk about the story together.](#)

b. Large Construction

With large blocks or cardboard boxes build the empty tomb - can you make it big enough for someone to crawl inside? You could paint or cover it green?

9. Music Area

Easter rhymes and songs There are a few simple Easter Songs and Rhymes for younger children in the book 'Tiddlywinks, Say and Sing' by Maggie Barfield, produced by Scripture Union. Check out p77-79 for some Easter rhymes that use well-known nursery rhyme tunes.

or try Out of the Ark for simple Easter songs

<https://www.outoftheark.co.uk/products/early-years/early-years-songbooks/>

10. Science

a. Explosions

Resources needed:

- Bicarbonate of soda
- white vinegar
- food colouring
- eye droppers (these can be bought cheaply at a Chemists or ordered online)
- small bowl for each of the food colours

Mix the food colouring into the white vinegar to colour it. Keep each colour of vinegar in a separate cup and provide a dropper for each cup. Cover the bottom of the tray with bicarbonate of soda. Drop a drop of coloured vinegar onto the soda and watch the explosion!

[Chat about what happened when the women went to the tomb in the Easter story. What dramatic, explosive things happened?](#)

b. Earthquakes

Make your own seismograph

e.g. <https://www.kids-earth-science.com/kids-science-activities.html> or search the internet for other options.

Chat about what it would have been like for the woman and the guards at the tomb, when the earth shook and an angel came and rolled the stone away from the tomb.

11. Health and Wellbeing

Feelings and emotions

Use the Easter story as a basis for discussion about feelings and emotions. What makes you happy? What makes you sad? Who can help when you feel sad? Make happy and sad face puppets.