



CELEBRATING EASTER

Easter is the most important celebration in the Church's year. It is a time of rejoicing as we celebrate the resurrection of Jesus. Because of this event, we know that Jesus is alive and still with us today. The resurrection is the reason for our faith. It gives us hope that, at the end of time we too will be raised from the dead and will live forever with Jesus in heaven.

The Easter season begins on Holy Saturday night when we celebrate the Easter Vigil. We begin the Vigil with the blessing of the New Fire. The new fire symbolises that Jesus has risen from the darkness of the tomb to a new life and is present with us always. As the fire is lit, and the paschal candle begins to burn and carried into the darkened church, the darkness slowly fades as each person lights a candle from the paschal candle. In doing so, we recall that Jesus is no longer in the tomb but risen and we welcome the risen Jesus, the light of the world.

On Easter Sunday we share our joy with others by exchanging gifts which symbolise life. One of the traditional gifts given at Easter is the egg. Just as a chick breaks through the shell of the egg, the Easter egg symbolises the tomb from which Jesus came forth on Easter Sunday. The egg reminds us of the new life Jesus shares with us.

FAMILY ACTIVITIES

Choose one (or more) of these activities to share with your family.

- During Holy Week (the week leading up to Easter) place on the kitchen table - wine and bread for Holy Thursday, as a reminder that Jesus instituted the Eucharist on this night, a cross made of twigs for Good Friday as a reminder that Jesus died on the cross and an Easter candle and Easter eggs on Easter Sunday as a reminder that Jesus is risen from the dead..
- With your child/ren, decorate a candle with the Easter symbols below. As you decorate the candle explain to them the meaning of the symbols.
 - A cross, a reminder of Jesus, death
 - The alpha and omega - the first and last letter of the Greek alphabet - to represent the beginning and the end
 - Five incense containers which look like metal studs are placed in the candle; one at each of the four ends of the cross and one in the centre. with your child
 - The year
 Use the candle as the centre piece for your Easter celebration.
- With your child/ren make personalised Easter eggs for each member of your family by dyeing and decorating hard boiled eggs. Add words that are associated with Easter such as He is alive, Jesus, Alleluia to complete your egg. As you exchange your eggs on Easter Sunday, remind each other that Jesus is alive with the words Alleluia, Alleluia Jesus is risen.

EASTER BLESSING

As you gather your family for the Easter meal, place a lit candle in the middle of the table (use the paschal candle you made).

Invite the family to make the sign of the Cross.

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| Parent | In the name of Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.
Jesus is risen today, Alleluia! |
| Family | Yes, He is truly risen, Alleluia! |
| Parent | May the light of Christ dispel the darkness of our hearts and fill us with love. |
| Family | Jesus is risen. Alleluia! |
| Parent | May the light of Christ fill us with peace. |
| Family | Jesus is risen. Alleluia! |
| Parent | May the light of Christ fill us with hope. |
| Family | Jesus is risen. Alleluia! |
| Parent | May the light of Christ guide us to be people of the resurrection. |
| Family | Jesus is risen. Alleluia! |
| Parent | We ask this in the name of Jesus, the risen Lord. |
| Family | Amen. Alleluia! Alleluia! |

Family Faith

This resource is designed to assist you as parents in taking on the task of sharing your faith with your children. The resource contains

- Information for parents in child friendly language
- Family activities which help to integrate faith with life
- Scripture readings to discuss with your children
- Prayer moments
- Hints on how to pray with children, highlighting different ways of praying as a family.