

An Easter journey around the world

As we journey through Lent into Holy Week and towards Easter Sunday, we are also journeying around the world to discover some of the ways Lent and Easter are celebrated.

There are six stops on this **Easter journey**, each has a country to discover (two on Easter Sunday), information about an Easter tradition, an activity to get involved in and a Bible passage to share.

This Easter journey can be used in many different ways. All six stops can be explored on one journey as part of an interactive children's session, intergenerational activity or a community outreach event. Create a series of stopping points with a world map, the Bible story and the activity for each country. Encourage groups to journey together around the space. Alternatively, one or two of the countries could be used each week for a school assembly, junior church or a midweek club. Or you could go outdoors to explore the Easter Journey, as all activities can be done outside. Be sure to complete a risk assessment in advance of the session.

See [WEB](#) for children's versions of the Bible readings and **Share the story** ideas.

Gather

Take a globe or world map and pass it from person to person as you pray:

Jesus, we are going on a journey.
Be with us as we discover ways in which others
celebrate your amazing love. **Amen.**

Lent – Mexico



Matthew 4:1-11 see [WEB](#) for a way to share the story

Across the world, Christians mark Lent with a variety of food traditions and customs. Lent often begins with people eating up certain foods (as on Shrove Tuesday) before a Lenten fast. Fasting is a reminder of Jesus' temptation in the wilderness, and an opportunity for believers to remember Jesus' suffering and focus on their faith in preparation for Easter. Many people will eat or avoid certain foods on particular days and, in some places, there are traditional Lenten foods. In Mexico, one of these traditional foods is Capirotada, a bread pudding which is served throughout Lent and on Good Friday. Every family has its own recipe. The recipe we have provided [WEB](#) has been adapted for you to make. If you don't have cooking facilities, prepare in advance for the children to taste.

As you bake the Capirotada you may like to explain the symbolism of the ingredients: bread represents Christ's body, brown sugar syrup is a reminder of Jesus' blood, cinnamon sticks are a reminder of the wooden cross, raisins signify the nails and the layer of cheese is like the cloth placed round Jesus' body.



Palm Sunday – Australia



Matthew 21:1-11 see [WEB](#) for a way to share the story

On Palm Sunday, we remember Jesus' entry into Jerusalem on a humble donkey rather than a war horse, as was expected of a new king. Jesus came to bring peace and justice so in Australia, people mark this day and demonstrate their faith by marching for peace. Palm Sunday peace marches and rallies were started by churches in Australia in the 1970s. The marches now involve people from many different backgrounds and, over the years, have called for rights for refugees, the end to wars, nuclear disarmament, climate action and many more things.

Make peace placards: Take A5 size pieces of card and fix to craft sticks to make mini placards. Ask everyone to write or draw onto the placards places or situations where they want to see peace. Hold all the mini placards up together and shout out 'We pray for peace'.



Maundy Thursday – Greece



Matthew 26:17-30 see [WEB](#) for a way to share the story

On the Thursday of Holy Week, as they remember Jesus' betrayal, families in Greece dye eggs red to represent the blood of Jesus. The eggs are then used to decorate the house or are baked into the traditional tsoureki Easter bread. The red eggs are also used to play a traditional game of Tsougrisma (egg tapping). Each player takes a turn at tapping, tip to tip, the other players' eggs. The winner is the one who's egg remains intact the longest. This game is often played on Easter Day and cracking the eggs is symbolic of Jesus' resurrection.

Dye eggs red: In a bowl, combine red food colouring, 6 cups of warm water, 3 tbsp. distilled white wine vinegar and stir well. Take hard boiled eggs and, using a spoon, submerge them in the dye mixture. Let them stand until they are a good red colour. Rinse the eggs under running water and dry well. Use them to decorate or play Tsougrisma together.





Good Friday – Bermuda



Matthew 27:45-56 see [WEB](#) for a way to share the story

On Good Friday, the day we remember Jesus dying on the cross, families in Bermuda gather together to fly homemade kites. These kites are colourful and often shaped as hexagons or octagons. Traditionally, kites were not flown until after 3pm but today they fly all day with kite flying competitions held. The kites were first flown as a reminder of Christ's Ascension, but for the activity below we suggest you focus on making a cross shape on the kite and talk about the crucifixion as you do so.

Make and fly homemade kites: Take thin garden cane and cut to lengths to make the kite frame. Make a cross shape with these and fix together with tape or string. Use string to create a diamond shape around the cross (you could explore making different shaped kites). Cut a diamond shaped piece of paper slightly bigger than the kite frame and fix in place. Attach a long length of string to the centre of the cross to hold the kite and create kite tails.



Easter Saturday – Germany



Matthew 27:57-61 see [WEB](#) for a way to share the story

Osterfeuer, or Easter fires burn every year, on Easter Saturday, mainly in Northern Germany. This tradition began as a small fire, the Easter fire, that the congregation gathered around. The fire, which is a reminder of Christ's light and resurrection, was blessed by the priest and the special Easter Paschal Candle lit from it. Today Osterfeuer brings communities together for Easter festivities and in some places the whole town processes with candles, a symbol of light in the darkness.

Create an Osterfeuer: If you are meeting indoors, drape sticks with fairy lights or battery tea lights. If you are able to meet outdoors build a small fire, use a fire pit or light a small barbecue. Take all necessary fire safety precautions. Gather together sticks and wood and safely build a fire.

Encourage everyone to sit around the fire together. Light a large candle, read the passage and remind everyone that even in the darkness of the grave the light of Easter Day is coming.



Easter Sunday – Brazil



Matthew 28:1-10 see [WEB](#) for a way to share the story

In the town of Ouro Preto in Minas Gerais, Brazil, people spend the night of Easter Saturday getting ready for the Easter Sunday procession. Everyone works together to decorate the parade floor with bright patterns and symbolic images made with flowers, sand, coffee grounds and sawdust. This is the 'Tapete de Flores' or flower carpet. Early on Easter morning the procession begins, continuing a tradition that began back in 1733. The floral path and procession remind us of the joy of the women and disciples who discovered Jesus' empty tomb in the garden and were witnesses to his resurrection.

Create a Praise path: Go outside and mark out a path to decorate. Use chalks, sand, dry leaves, fallen flowers and twigs to work together to create hearts, crosses and other Easter symbols along the path.



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Easter Sunday – Ethiopia



Matthew 28:1-10 see [WEB](#) for a way to share the story

In Ethiopia, Christians celebrate Easter or Fasika. The celebration is preceded by a 55-day fast from meat and dairy (Hudade). At sunrise on Easter morning, families break their long fast with a feast of traditional Ethiopian foods including doro wat (spiced chicken stew), injera (flatbread) and tej (honey wine).

An Easter feast: Together share an Easter feast beside your Praise path or create a menu for one. Ask the children about the traditional Easter foods of their families. Encourage families to bring in a dish and create an Easter feast to share (be aware of health and hygiene requirements). Alternatively ask the families to send in an image of their traditional foods. Display these together to create an Easter feast menu.



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A final prayer

At the end of your Easter journey, pray:

As we come to the end of our Easter journey, we celebrate with people all over the world that Jesus is alive! **Amen.**