Easter Family Faith Trail

Discover new ways to grow your family's faith at home

The Uniting Church in Australia
Synod of South Australia
Mission Resourcing

Blueprint ministries

INTERGEN TEAM

LUTHERAN CHURCH OF AUSTRALIA
SOUTH AUSTRALIA NORTHERN TERRITORY

Happy Easter!

Welcome to the Easter Family Faith Trail – an opportunity to explore a variety of activity stations and discover new ways to grow your family's faith at home.

This trail is about equipping families to grow in faith and one size does not suit all.

You are free to pick and choose what activities to do and what to take home – there is no expectation that you'll do everything. We are aware that not every activity will connect with every family, particularly depending on the age and interests of your children.

Many of these activities involve different senses and different ways of connecting and growing with God.

We encourage you as a family to **decide on at least one thing** you could use or adapt at home in the lead up to or during the Easter weekend.

We hope this booklet provides a few ideas and resources for your family's faith to grow. In the midst of everything, as you spend time at home, as you play in a sand pit or eat at a table or go for a walk outdoors…

May you – play together – talk and ask questions - pray and bless each other and - invite God into your ordinary everyday places and plans so that you may grow in faith together.

SOME CHRISTIAN WORDS

***Growing in faith* – can also be called 'discipleship' or 'growing as a disciple of Jesus' or 'faith formation'.**

Lent – this is a season of the church. It is a time of waiting and preparing ourselves for remembering and celebrating the death and resurrection of Jesus. It can be a time to prepare ourselves – our spiritual selves – for Easter. It starts on Ash Wednesday and goes for six weeks until Easter Saturday, the day before Easter Sunday.

This is your family's booklet to use at home

Please feel free to write extra notes, highlight particular ideas of interest and use in whatever way is most helpful for your family.

This booklet is designed as a series of "stations" based on the events of the first Easter, as recorded in the Bible. Your family could choose to do one station a day in the lead up to Easter, or pick and choose which "stations" or activities interest your family. Each "station" has a corresponding page in this booklet with:

- A theme – one of the events of the first Easter
- Location – a suggested place in or around your home to do the activities
- A Bible passage – if you don't have a Bible at home you can look it up on www.biblegateway.com. The NIRV is used in this resource.
- Chat – some questions for your family to discuss and consider what this might look like in your home and lives together
- Activity instructions – what to do, there might be one or more ideas. You are welcome to adapt these to suit your family and what you have at home.
- Prayer – a suggested prayer your family could pray together or ideas to prompt your own prayers
- Other ideas – other activity ideas and resources your family could do

At the back of this booklet are some online resources for families about Easter.

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We pray that your family will grow together as followers of Jesus this Easter season. May you celebrate together the great news that Jesus our Saviour has died and risen again – JESUS IS ALIVE!

Station 1 Palm Sunday

LOCATION: The Front Door

FROM THE BIBLE: Luke 19:35-38

Key Verses 36, 38 (NIRV): As he went along, people spread their coats on the road. "Blessed is the king who comes in the name of the Lord!" "May there be peace and glory in the highest heaven!"

ACTIVITY: Make your front door step welcoming: sweep outside, dust off a welcome mat, tidy up, decorate the front door by adding a "welcome" sign or wreath. Make palm branches out of your own palms. Each family member can trace around their hand on coloured card. Then cut out and stick together to form a wreath or palm leaf. Wave them and sing a praise song to Jesus together.

PRAYER: Dear Jesus, help us to welcome you as we prepare for Easter. Amen

OTHER IDEAS: Grow Ministries' GIFT Lent resource (see Resources at back of this booklet) has a Lent Tree and Palm Leaf activity

Chat

How do you make a guest welcome in your home? Talk about what the people did when they welcomed Jesus as King in the bible verses above.

Station 2 The Last Supper

LOCATION: At the Table

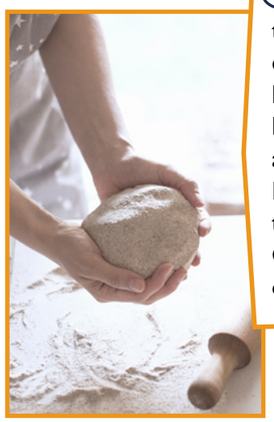
FROM THE BIBLE: Luke 22:14-20

Key Verses 14, 15 (NIRV): When the hour came, Jesus and his apostles took their places at the table. He said to them, "I have really looked forward to eating this Passover meal with you. I wanted to do this before I suffer.

ACTIVITY: Wash your hands, sit at a table, share a loaf/slice of bread – pass it around and tear a piece off, share juice/water (whatever you have). Discuss how these items are similar to what was used for the Last Supper. Talk about Holy Communion and the Last Supper. What is the significance of the bread and wine (grape juice)?

PRAYER: Jesus, we invite you to be a guest at our meals. Thank you for sharing your life with us. Amen.

OTHER IDEAS: Make your own flatbread



Chat

What did people eat and drink in the times of Jesus? What do you eat and drink at home? Reflect on why we have Communion in church and why it is a sacred meal. Perhaps there are some things you've observed about Communion that made you curious or don't understand.

Station 3 Garden of Gethsemane

LOCATION: Garden, backyard

FROM THE BIBLE: Luke 22: 39 – 46 Key Verses 40,41,45,46 (NIRV):

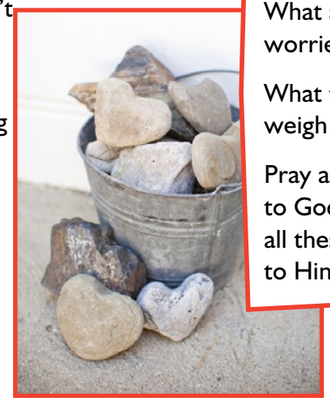
40 When they reached the place, Jesus spoke. "Pray that you won't fall into sin when you are tempted," he said to them. 41 Then he went a short distance away from them. There he got down on his knees and prayed.

45 After that, he got up from prayer and went back to the disciples. He found them sleeping. They were worn out because they were very sad. 46 "Why are you sleeping?" he asked them. "Get up! Pray that you won't fall into sin when you are tempted."

ACTIVITY: Find a container and a handful of rocks. Go around the family and place a rock in the container, naming a burden/worry you're carrying. Pray for Jesus to carry your burden.

PRAYER: Dear God, when life weighs us down with worries and stress please remind us that we can come to you and that you will help us. Help us remember to help one another too. Amen.

OTHER IDEAS: Find something heavy in your garden. Carefully, can you try and pick it up? Try picking it up all together.



Chat

Sit and reflect:
What was Jesus sad and troubled about?

What are you worried about?

What thoughts weigh you down?

Pray and talk to God and give all these things to Him.

Station 4 Arrest / Peter's Denial

LOCATION: Patio or outdoor area

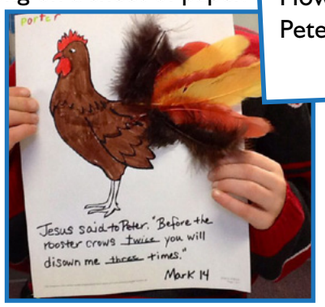
FROM THE BIBLE: Luke 22:54-62. Key Verses 60-62 (NIRV):

60 Peter replied, "Man, I don't know what you're talking about!" Just as he was speaking, the rooster crowed. 61 The Lord turned and looked right at Peter. Then Peter remembered what the Lord had spoken to him. "The rooster will crow today," Jesus had said. "Before it does, you will say three times that you don't know me." 62 Peter went outside. He broke down and cried.

ACTIVITY: Write down some things you have done wrong on a sheet of paper. With adult supervision, place in a bowl and light carefully with a match (SAFETY WARNING!). Watch the paper burn away. Alternative ideas: Shred or scrunch up the paper in a bowl of water. Remind each other that Jesus has forgiven us and removed our sins from us.

PRAYER: Dear Jesus, I am sorry, please forgive me for the wrong things I have done. Thank you for giving me a new start. Amen

OTHER IDEA: Talk about the word "betray". What does it mean to stick up for a friend or to stand up for Jesus?



Chat

Think about a time you did something wrong. How did you feel? What did you do? How do you think Peter felt?

Station 5 The Trial

LOCATION: On a pathway or cement

FROM THE BIBLE: Luke 22 and 23 (key verses as in the activity below)

ACTIVITY: Using chalk, draw out the hopscotch squares and number as illustrated. Take it in turns to jump on each square. Start at 1. As you land in each square have someone read the Bible Verse that matches the numbered square.

Bible verses for Hopscotch Activity (see Appendix 1 for full Bible verses)
1. Luke 22:54 - Jesus at the high priest's house
2. Luke 22:66 - Jesus before the high council
3. Luke 23:1-2 - Jesus taken to Pilate
4. Luke 23:6-7 - Jesus sent to Herod
5. Luke 23:11-12 - Jesus sent back to Pilate
6. Luke 23:20-21 - People call for Jesus to be crucified
7. Luke 23:23-25 - Jesus sentenced to die.

PRAYER: Jesus, you suffered many things for us. Thank you for loving us so much and being with us when we suffer. Amen

OTHER IDEAS: Following the reading of the Bible verses – older children may like to throw a small stone onto a square and play hopscotch. Children could try to remember what happened in the Bible reading for that number.

Chat

Talk about some bad / hurtful things that have happened to you. How did you feel? Who was with you during this difficult time? Think about Jesus' trial. Why was Jesus willing to let bad things happen to him?

Station 6 On The Way To The Cross

LOCATION: A walk down the driveway

FROM THE BIBLE: Luke 23:26-27 (NIRV)

As the soldiers led Jesus away, they took hold of Simon. Simon was from Cyrene. He was on his way in from the country. They put a wooden cross on his shoulders. Then they made him carry it behind Jesus. A large number of people followed Jesus. Some were women whose hearts were filled with sorrow. They cried loudly because of him.

ACTIVITY: How could you show love to someone who is sad? Discuss someone you know who is sad. What could we do for that person to help them feel loved? Ideas: make a card, phone them, do an act of service, visit them and wave through the window.

PRAYER: Loving God, we pray for people who are sad (say their names). Please help us to reach out to them and show that we care. Amen.

Chat

What things make you feel like crying? Why were the women crying?

Make a list of things you could do (on your own or as a family) to help you feel better when you are feeling sad.

Station 7 At The Cross

LOCATION: Living room

FROM THE BIBLE: John 3:16; Luke 23:32-49

Key Verses Luke 23: 33, 34 and 46 (NIRV):

[33] The soldiers … nailed Jesus to the cross… [34] Jesus said, "Father, forgive them… [46] Jesus called out in a loud voice, "Father, into your hands I commit my life." After he said this, he took his last breath.

ACTIVITY: Use a red texta or pen to draw a red dot in each other's palms saying, "Jesus died for you".

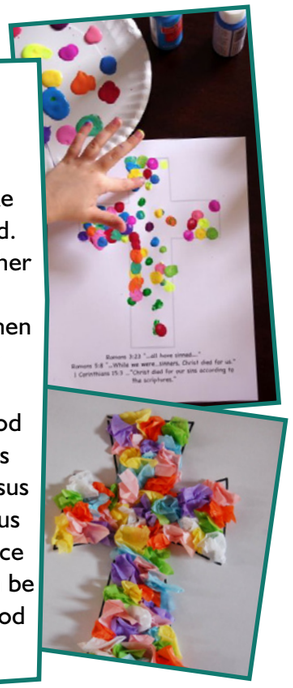
Make a cross. You could draw a cross shape onto paper/card and glue scrunched up tissue paper inside the shape or use paint and your finger to fill it with your family's fingerprints. You might prefer to use wood and nails. Perhaps put this in your garden somewhere.

PRAYER: Dear Jesus, thank you for dying for us so that we can be friends with God forever. Amen

OTHER IDEAS: Make Hot Cross Buns.

Chat

These verses about Jesus' death can make us feel very sad. Wonder together about why we call the day when we remember Jesus dying on the cross "Good Friday". Why is it good that Jesus died? Hint: Jesus died in our place so that we can be friends with God forever.



Station 8 At The Tomb

LOCATION: Next to a garden bed

FROM THE BIBLE: Luke 23:50-56

Key Verses 52-53 (NIRV): Joseph went to Pilate and asked for Jesus' body. Joseph took it down and wrapped it in linen cloth. Then he placed it in a tomb cut in the rock.

ACTIVITY: Plant seeds and/or bulbs in pots or a garden. Walk together silently around your yard or house thinking about the events of Easter.

PRAYER: Dear Jesus, it is hard to understand about death and new life. Help us to comfort each other when we feel unsure. Amen.

OTHER IDEAS: If applicable, you might like to visit the graves of some loved ones or take some time thinking about some loved ones who have passed away by looking at photo albums with your children. Obviously do this with sensitivity and don't be morbid. As you are doing this say something like, "At Easter we can remember that death is not the end of the story. Jesus died, but he came back to life. He has promised that those who are his friends will live with him forever in heaven."

Call and connect with loved ones, maybe grandparents etc. During this hard time for Jesus' friends, they found strength from one another. During important moments it can be good to connect with family and close friends.

Chat

Can you think of things that have to die before new life can grow? When we plant a seed into soil, it is being buried. Then there is a time of waiting for new life to grow. Waiting can be a difficult time. What are some things you find it hard to wait for?

Station 9 Resurrection

LOCATION: Garden (you could do this at sunrise!)

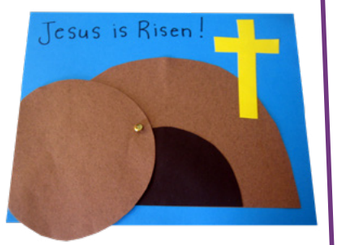
FROM THE BIBLE: Luke 24:1-12

Key Verses 1-3 (NIRV): [1]It was very early in the morning on the first day of the week. The women took the spices they had prepared. Then they went to the tomb. [2] They found the stone rolled away from it. [3] When they entered the tomb, they did not find the body of the Lord Jesus.

ACTIVITY: Tape wrapping paper across a hula hoop and take it in turns rolling it. Choose someone to burst through the hoop and break the paper.

PRAYER: Dear Jesus, thank you that we can have new life through you. Amen.

OTHER IDEAS: Make a "Jesus is Alive!" poster with a split pin or "lift-the-flap" style rock in front of the tomb.



Chat

What would you be thinking if you'd gone to Jesus' tomb and found it empty? What could have happened to Jesus' body?

On Easter Sunday Christians celebrate that Jesus is alive! God is more powerful than death.

Have one person say: Jesus is risen!
And everyone else yells: He is risen indeed!

Appendices

Bible Verses for Hopscotch Activity (NIRV)

Reference Station 5

1. Luke 22:54 - Jesus led to the high priest's house
Then the men arrested Jesus and led him away. They took him into the high priest's house. Peter followed from far away.

2. Luke 22:66 - Jesus before the high council
At dawn the elders of the people met together. These included the chief priests and the teachers of the law. Jesus was led to them.

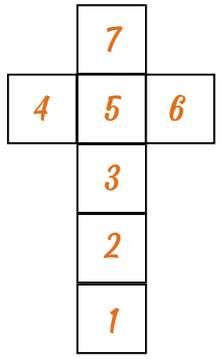
3. Luke 23:1, 2 - Jesus taken to Pilate
Then the whole group got up and led Jesus off to Pilate.
[2] They began to bring charges against Jesus. They said, "We have found this man misleading our people. He is against paying taxes to Caesar. And he claims to be Messiah, a king."

4. Luke 23:6, 7 - Jesus sent to Herod
When Pilate heard this, he asked if the man was from Galilee.
[7] He learned that Jesus was from Herod's area of authority. So Pilate sent Jesus to Herod. At that time Herod was also in Jerusalem.

5. Luke 23:11, 12 - Jesus sent back to Pilate
Herod and his soldiers laughed at him and made fun of him. They dressed him in a beautiful robe. Then they sent him back to Pilate. [12] That day Herod and Pilate became friends. Before this time they had been enemies.

6. Luke 23:20, 21 - The people called for Jesus to be crucified
Pilate wanted to let Jesus go. So he made an appeal to the crowd again. [21] But they kept shouting, "Crucify him! Crucify him!"

7. Luke 23: 23 - 25 - Jesus sentenced to die
But with loud shouts they kept calling for Jesus to be crucified. The people's shouts won out.
[24] So Pilate decided to give them what they wanted. [25] He set free the man they asked for. The man had been thrown in prison for murder and for fighting against the authorities. Pilate handed Jesus over to them so they could carry out their plans.



More Ideas

A Lent and Easter garden

Build a miniature garden as a reminder of the place where Jesus' tomb was. Place a layer of soil and a pebble path in a broad, shallow bowl or tray with sides. Set several tiny plants in the soil, mounding dirt around them so they will continue to grow. Add grass seed, too, if you like. Place a large stone as a focus point in the garden – to represent the cave where Jesus' body was laid. Add a twig cross on a mound of soil in one corner. Place the dish garden as the centerpiece on your table for the remaining weeks of the Lenten season. On Easter Sunday, add tiny flowers around the "tomb" as reminders of Jesus' resurrection.

Easter tree

Your family might like to create an Easter tree. Find a bare branch or twig and 'plant' in a container with soil so it stands upright. You could also use wooden off cuts and make your own tree for those who enjoy carpentry. You might keep the tree bare for the first week or two of Lent then gradually add paper leaves during the next few weeks of Lent. You could write prayers on the leaves. In the week of Easter you could make paper flowers and birds to add to the tree. You could also use any collage materials to add decoration onto your tree. This is a way to celebrate new life as we celebrate the risen Christ and our new life in him.

Easter cards

Throughout the season of Lent, create and make your own Easter themed cards and give them to neighbours, someone you know who is sick or someone you would like to encourage.

Easter cookies

Google search a recipe for Easter story cookies (hollow meringues). Family members can read through bible verses that relate to steps in the cooking process.

Grow Ministries

growministries.org.au

Download the free resources 'Church at Home' and 'Easter at Home' to equip your family with faith at home during the Lenten season. It includes:

- **Growing Faith at Home** – Ideas, activities, conversation starters and bible readings for you to use in your home.
- **Dwelling in the Word** – A devotional practice.
- **Children's Address** – While these are usually used within a worship context, the stories are easy to share with your younger children. Engage them in thinking about how the message for the week applies personally to their life.
- **GIFT (Growing in Faith Together) Lent activities** – A number of activities for you to do together, and links to animations to help you think about the Lent/Easter season.
- **Talking Points** – Designed to create a very open discussion platform (designed for young adults and older high-schoolers but suitable for adults of all ages).

Resources

Grow Ministries GIFT Lent

- All you need to have your own GIFT (Growing In Faith Together) event including reader's theatre, worship outline, craft activities, video suggestions and more.
  www.growministries.org.au/product/gift-lent-final/

The FREE Bible App for Kids

- www.bible.com/kids
- There is also a Parent Resources page at www.bibleappforkids.com to learn more about the Bible stories and engage in fun activities

Tract Mission Resources

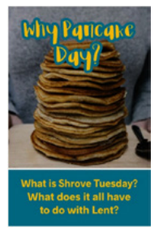
- There are a range of different Lent and Easter tracts, mini booklets, postcards and text cards and Easter Bible Verse stickers available through the Tract Mission
  www.ltm.org.au/resources/new_resources

For You – An Easter Activity Book

Pretzels & Lent

The Greatest Love

Mini Colouring In Book



Why Pancake Day?

Easter Stickers

The Bible Society

- Short video clips for kids about the life of Jesus
  www.biblesociety.org.au/leaders-connect/#kids
- Free Easter little books for churches and outreach groups – "Who, What, Why, How of Easter"
  www.biblesociety.org.au/whoeaster/

Web links for Easter and Lent

- Lent Event Uniting World (Uniting Church Australia)
  fundraise.unitingworld.org.au/event/lent-event/home
- Busted Halo
  bustedhalo.com/video/watch-lent-3-minutes
- Going For Growth (Church of England)
  www.going4growth.com/growth_through_the_year/lent
- Common Grace
  www.commongrace.org.au/lent
- Messy Church
  www.messychurch.org.uk/resource/summary-easter-resources

Lenten Calendars and Games

Journey through the season of Lent by using a Lenten Calendar. Choose a Lenten Calendar from the list below and print. Colour the calendar if it is not already done.

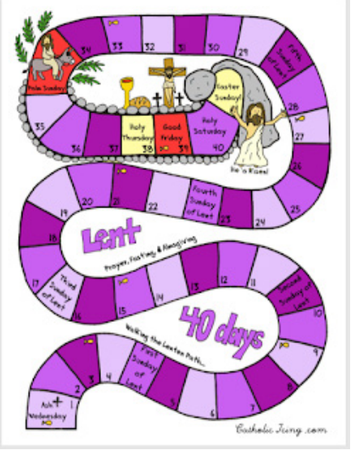
- www.catholicicing.com/printable-lenten-calendar-for-kids/ - It's free for everyone to print! Black and white, and in colour, and also as a blank page so you can fill in any language! Also updated the file to include Lenten calendars that readers have submitted in different languages.
- www.celebratingholidays.com/?page_id=9089 - 40 Day Cross Countdown
- www.waltzingm.com/2011/03/last-minute-lenten-post.html - Lenten Calendar based on a 40 days in the desert theme with an oasis on each Sunday (scroll down to this).
- www.zephyrhillblog.com/2014/03/printable-calendars-for-lent/ - Printable Calendars for Lent
- kellygillanjohnston.blogspot.com/2013/01/lenten-journey.html - Lenten Journey

The Catholic Toolbox

Journey through Lent Board Game

Here is the link:
catholicblogger1.blogspot.com/2020/02/journey-through-lent-board-game_14.html

DIRECTIONS FOR GAME: You can play this game individually or in teams. The objective of the game is to get to Easter Sunday first by answering questions about Lent.



Place 2 small baskets on the table to put question cards in. Put the *question cards in one basket (the other basket will be for discards).

Place your markers on "Ash Wednesday". Each player throws a die (1) or the first players of both teams throw a die (1) to decide who starts the game. The player with the highest throw starts.

The opponents make their moves by turns. To make a possible move you must answer a question (the other player on their right draws a card and reads you the question). On each card is a question about Lent.

If you are correct, you roll the die. If you do not answer the question correctly, your turn is over.

The players take turns answering questions correctly to throw the die and move from space to space according to the throw count. The first player to Easter Sunday is the winner.

*Use the Question Cards that are provided or make your own. You can also make cards specific to what you have been learning. You can even have the players make cards for the opposing team. There are 100 Question Cards posted for you to choose from.

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