

St. Luke UMC
April 2017

parenting CHRISTIAN kids



through excellence in
ministry to children.

Rejoice in Jesus' Resurrection at Easter

POWERSOURCE

ASK GOD:

1. To bless your family's Easter preparations and celebrations.
2. To help your children know that the Easter message is for them.
3. To keep the joy of Easter in your hearts throughout the year.

Reminders of new life and rebirth appear each spring throughout nature. For Christians, the most important celebration of new life is Jesus' resurrection from the dead on Easter. Children may associate the holiday with bunnies, baskets, and candy, so it's important to share with them the real reason we rejoice: Jesus' empty tomb.

Use these creative ideas to share Easter's message with children. Share that Jesus died and came to life again so we can go to heaven and be with him forever.

Palm Sunday Make "praise shakers" to celebrate Jesus' entry into Jerusalem. Decorate the bottom sides of two paper plates. Staple the plates together, bottom

sides out, leaving space to pour in beads or buttons. Staple the gap. Add streamers, and have a parade. Celebrate Jesus by shaking the instruments and with shouts of praise.

Good Friday Insert toothpicks in a small vine wreath to resemble Jesus' crown of thorns. Whenever a family member makes a sacrifice for someone else, remove one thorn. The night before Easter, after children are asleep, remove the remaining thorns and decorate the crown with white ribbons and bright flowers.

Easter Sunday Using a stamp pad and colored pencils, work together to make thumbprint pictures that retell Easter events. For example, draw a tomb with a rolled-away thumbprint rock and a butterfly with thumbprint wings.

Easter Is for Me!

The events of Holy Week and Easter might frighten or confuse younger children. Share the message in age-appropriate ways by using these tips.

- **Ages 2 to 5** Say that people who hated Jesus nailed him to a cross and left him there until he died. Explain that Jesus' friends were sad and afraid until Jesus came back to life three days later.
- **Ages 6 to 9** Fairness is a big deal at this age, so explain in simple language that Jesus willingly died in our place because he loves us. Children may be fascinated by crucifixion details. Avoid euphemisms for death such as "sleeping."
- **Ages 10 to 12** Preteens who are familiar with details of the Easter account are ready for the "why." Share why it was necessary for Jesus to die, referring to the blood sacrifices of the Old Testament.

New Life Go on a nature walk to collect lots of twigs. Help children use a low-temperature glue gun to attach the twigs to the outside of a clean, empty soup can. Then fill the "vase" with fresh flowers as you talk about how the twigs are like our lives before Jesus (dead and broken) and how the flowers represent our lives with Jesus (new and alive).

Prayer Eggs During Easter week, use a basket of plastic eggs to encourage your family to talk to God. Place slips of paper with prayer topics inside the eggs. Make enough eggs for each person to open one per day during Holy Week. Include praises and gratitude, as well as prayer requests for friends, family, and the community. Open the eggs at meals or bedtime, and pray together for the requests. Place special prayer eggs in the basket on Easter morning to celebrate Jesus' resurrection.

Cookie Pops Follow your favorite sugar cookie recipe to make crosses on a stick. If you don't have a cross-shaped cookie cutter, you can create a template or freehand the shape with a knife. Press a cookie stick (available at

craft stores) about 2 inches into each cookie. Bake until edges are golden. Frost when cool. Share the treats with friends and neighbors, along with an Easter card or verse.

Jelly Bean Joy Use the colorful candy in children's Easter baskets to remind them of Jesus' love. In this poem, each color represents part of the Easter account.
*Orange is for the sins we've done.
Red is for the blood of God's Son.
White is for the grace he gives.
Green is for new life in him.
Yellow is for your place in heaven.
Invite Jesus into your life and be forgiven!*

Why Jesus Stayed on the Cross Give each family member an ice cube, plus a paper towel. Say: "Hold the ice cube in your bare hand while I read from the Bible." Read aloud Matthew 27:27-36, 45-50. Then ask: "How did it feel to hold the ice? What did you want to do with it? What do you think it was like for Jesus to be crucified on a cross? Why do you think he stayed up there?" Say: "I don't think the soldiers or the nails kept Jesus on the cross. I think his love for us is what kept him up there. Jesus died and came back to life so we can live with him in heaven!"

"Why are you looking among the dead for someone who is alive? He isn't here! He is risen from the dead!"

—Luke 24:5-6, NLT



TEACHABLE MOMENTS

Resurrection Buns

As a family, make edible "empty tombs." Wrap a crescent-roll dough triangle around a large marshmallow. Dip the roll in melted butter and then cinnamon and sugar.

Cook the rolls according to instructions on the package. The marshmallows "disappear," leaving an empty, sweet surprise in the middle.

After the rolls have cooled, read aloud Luke 24:1-3. Give each family member a roll and have them take one bite.

Ask: **What do you see inside your roll? How is that like what the women found? What do you think Jesus' empty tomb means?**

Say: **Just as our rolls are empty, Jesus' tomb was empty on Easter morning. That's because he died and came back to life for you and for me!**

Close in prayer. Say: **Dear Jesus, thanks for coming back to life and leaving your tomb empty on Easter. We celebrate you today! Amen.**

MEDIA MADNESS



MOVIE

Title: *Wonder*

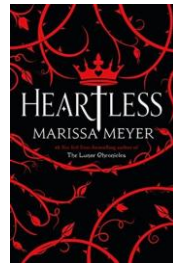
Genre: Drama

Rating: Not yet rated

Cast: Jacob Tremblay, Julia Roberts, Mandy Patinkin, Owen Wilson

Synopsis: This film is based on R.J. Palacio's 2012 *New York Times* best-selling novel, now required reading in many middle schools. It features Auggie Pullman, a 10-year-old with a severe facial deformity. After years of surgeries and homeschooling, Auggie enters middle school and deals with friends, bullies, and self-esteem issues.

Our Take: Viewers will do some soul-searching about how they view and treat people who look different from them. Because the subject and situations can be intense, this film is best for kids ages 9 and up. Topics for follow-up discussions include appearance, character, and friendship.



BOOK

Title: *Heartless*

Author: Marissa Meyer

Synopsis: This young-adult fiction book tells how Catherine, the Queen of Hearts in *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*, became evil. Catherine was once an innocent girl who wanted to open a bakery and fall in love on her own terms. But in a world of magic where she's desired by the King of Hearts, things don't turn out as she hopes.

Our Take: The main character, described as "cold, heartless, ruthless female lead," certainly isn't a positive role model. Although *Heartless* is recommended for kids as young as 12, it's a dark love story with an unhappy ending, making it inappropriate for preteen readers.



CULTURE & TRENDS

Undocumented Students With the recent crackdown on undocumented immigrants, some school districts are denying federal authorities access to students and their records. Almost 4 million K to 12 students in the United States are children of undocumented immigrants. (*cnn.com*)

Oh, Boy! The popular American Girl doll line has introduced its first boy doll. Logan Everett, a drummer, represents an effort to appeal to a broader audience, says a company spokeswoman. "A boy character has been a top request from our fans for decades." (*USAToday*)

QUICK STATS

So Artificial The number of children who eat or drink artificial sweeteners (such as sucralose and aspartame) nearly tripled from 1999 to 2012, according to a recent study. The rate went from less than 9% of kids to 25% of kids in 13 years. (*time.com*)

On the Fence One-third of parents still don't feel they have enough information to decide whether to get their preteens vaccinated against human papillomavirus (HPV). But 57% of parents are okay with a law that requires preteens to be vaccinated, as long as there's an opt-out provision. (*wfdd.org*)

Games, Sites & Apps

1-2 Switch

This game for the new Nintendo Switch console features face-to-face play. Instead of staring at a screen, players look at one another to compete in duels, dance-offs, and more. With a portable console and Joy Con wireless controllers, this game will likely be a hit at parties.

iCivics.org

This site, founded by retired Supreme Court Justice Sandra Day O'Connor, helps children learn about civics and encourages community involvement. After setting up a free account, kids can try a variety of role-playing games. Activities are geared toward children ages 8 and up.

Taps to Riches

In this simulation game, players build virtual riches by tapping buttons onscreen. The goal is to make "money," which players do by buying and investing in homes and businesses. Players can take over towns—even towns in outer space. Despite the materialistic message, the game is appropriate for kids.



April

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
						1
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9 Palm Sunday	10	11 Passover Begins	12	13 Maundy Thursday	14 Good Friday	15
16 Easter Sunday	17	18 Passover Ends	19	20	21	22 Earth Day
23	24	25	26	27	28 Arbor Day	29
30						