

Easter

With the beginning of the Easter season (a season that lasts seven weeks and ends with Pentecost), we will be focusing on the gift of new life in Christ. During the first week of this joyous season, we focus on the celebration of Easter. We also look at Divine Mercy Sunday, the first Sunday following Easter.

If you haven't already replaced the Lenten symbols on your prayer table at school or your dining room table at home, now is the time to do it. Simply remove the purple ribbon from your grapevine wreath, add spring silk flowers to your barren wreath, with butterflies or a bird's nest filled with eggs, and replace the purple candle with a white candle—all symbols of new life.

Week-at-a-Glance

Prayer Experience for Easter	107	Jesus Is My Shepherd	124
Story: Is Jesus Alive?	108	Sheep Magnets	126
Discussion Starters for Grades K-3	111	Shepherd's Staff Bookmark	127
Discussion Starters for Grades 4-8	111	Jesus Is the Gate	128
Crafts		Kitchen Fun: Baking Bread	129
Easter Tree	112	Craft: When Jesus Knocks	
Seeded Eggs	113	Doorknob Hangers	130
Chicks: New Life	114	Activity: Window Greetings	131
Easter Lily	115	Ascension Take-Home Page	132
Easter Bookmarks	116	Crafts	
Activity: Plant an Indoor Garden	117	Holy Spirit Ornament	133
Family Customs & Traditions	118	Sachets	134
Family Take-Home Pages	120	A Special Thank You	135
Crafts		Pentecost Take-Home Page	136
Trust in My Pocket	122		

Teacher/Parent preparation:

Replace the Lenten symbols with Easter symbols. See suggestions on page 106.

Supplies needed:

- a basketful of plastic Easter eggs, the kind that open (1 per child)
- small slips of paper
- pencils or pens
- Handel's "Hallelujah Chorus" on CD or another appropriate song
- CD player

Gather the children around the prayer table and light the Easter candle. Say to the children: During Lent our prayer table held Lenten symbols. Today it holds symbols of the Easter season, symbols of new life.

Throughout the seven-week season of Easter, we sing or say "alleluia" throughout the celebration of Mass. Alleluia is an expression for glory and praise. In Hebrew, it means "Glory to him who is." During today's prayer experience, we will be writing our own words of glory and praise.

Directions:

While passing out plastic eggs and slips of paper to each of the children, explain that they are to write a simple prayer of praise, then place that prayer inside the egg, and place the egg back into the basket. Allow time for the children to write their prayers. Once all the children have placed their eggs in the basket, put the basket on the prayer table. Tell the children you will be sharing one of these prayers each day. Have one child open an egg and read to the class the "prayer of praise" found inside.

Next, explain that Handel's "Hallelujah Chorus" is a song of praise, a "prayer"

through song. Have them close their eyes to help them focus on the "Hallelujah Chorus" as a prayer.

Play the CD.

Afterward, end with one of these prayers.

Closing Prayer for Younger Children:

Jesus is risen! Alleluia! Alleluia!

Let us be glad! Amen! Alleluia!

Closing Prayer for Older Children:

Jesus is risen! Alleluia! Alleluia!

He is Lord forever and always. Amen!

Alleluia!

Remember: Each day an egg will be opened and a child will read the "prayer of praise." This can be done with morning prayers, Grace before meals, or with bedtime prayers at home.

Reflections

The One who was crucified and rose again is the Lord of the world and of history. Easter casts its light on the whole cosmos and illumines it. It is the light of love and truth which redeems the universe from death caused by sin, and renews the plan of the creation, so that all things may acquire their full meaning and be reconciled with God and with one another.

John Paul II

Today is the day of the resurrection: May all people rejoice and say:

"Friends and enemies alike—we forgive everything today!"

Christ is risen! He is truly risen!

Orthodox Liturgy

Is Jesus Alive?

If so, where is he?



By Sandra Humphrey and illustrated by Virginia Esquinaldo

Jamal tapped on his glass with a knife and called for attention. “Okay, guys, let’s get started. If we’re ever going to get this essay done, we’ve got to focus.”

Allison shoveled a piece of pizza onto her plate and picked up her pen. “Okay, tell us again what we have to do and I’ll jot down our ideas.”

Jamal wiped imaginary sweat from his forehead and frowned. “What we have to do is explain why we do or do not believe in the resurrection and, if we do believe in the resurrection, how we know that Jesus is still a real part of our lives today.”

Krista picked the mushrooms off her pizza and shrugged. “The first part is easy. I think we all believe in

the resurrection. That’s what Christianity is all about—how Jesus voluntarily died on the cross for all of us and then rose from the dead.”

Emilio helped himself to a large slab of pizza. “But that second part is pretty hard. How do we know that Jesus is still real in our lives today when we can’t even see him or talk to him?”

Allison squeezed her eyes shut, something she always did when she was thinking. “I think it’s all a matter of faith. Remember our youth group last Wednesday night when Father Hardy gave each one of us a puzzle piece and asked us to describe the puzzle? Well, of course, no one could because we each just had one small piece and that doesn’t tell you

much about the whole puzzle.”

Jamal stopped inhaling his pizza and nodded his head. “And then we broke up into our small discussion groups. We talked about living each day by faith. With just our one puzzle piece, we don’t know what the puzzle is eventually going to look like. But we know that Jesus can see the whole puzzle because he always sees the larger picture instead of just the little bit that we see.”

Then Emilio broke in. “In our small group I talked about the time when I was almost five and I wanted this cheap, little toy car so badly. I just about had a temper tantrum right there in the store, but my Dad wouldn’t get it for me. And then I found out later that

he was getting me a really cool red tricycle for my birthday the next week and that's why he didn't get me the cheapie toy I wanted. I think Jesus looks after us the same way. He can always see the big picture, and we just have to trust him."

Emilio scrunched up his forehead and shook his head. "But how about when really bad things happen? Like when the Nelsons' home burned down last month and they lost everything in the fire?"

Allison nodded. "That was bad news. But how about the good news? Nobody died in the fire, and everyone pitched in to help them. People who didn't even know them helped clean up the mess, and hundreds of people donated stuff."

"And how about all those people who offered to share their homes with the Nelsons until they could find somewhere else to live?" Jamal added. "It seems like sometimes bad times bring out the best in people. It's what I like to call, 'bringing out the Jesus' in people."

Emilio broke into a huge grin. "Hey, man, I really like that. I think you're right. I think hard times can 'bring out the Jesus' in people."

Allison began waving her pizza crust in the air. "Hey, I just thought of something! Doesn't it say somewhere in the Gospels, 'Where two or three are gathered in my name, I am there with them'? So Jesus is alive and present

wherever Christians come together."

Krista stopped in the middle of pouring herself a glass of milk. "Of course—why didn't we think of that before! Remember Mrs. Pilon's last quiz—the four ways Jesus is present in the celebration of the Eucharist."

Emilio ticked them off on his fingers. "In the people who've come together for Mass; in the priest who represents Christ; in the Scripture readings; and especially in the bread and wine, which have become the Body and Blood of Christ."

Jamal grinned. "I think we're on to something. The Eucharist and the other sacraments—didn't Jesus give



Easter Season

them to the Church as a way to stay with us even after he rose and ascended into heaven?"

"Yeah, the Church and sacraments," chimed in Allison. "That's how we get the grace that helps us to live as Jesus did and...."

"...do good for others, like people did for the Nelsons!" finished Emilio.

Jamal pointed to the assignment sheet in front of him. "I think we got it! What do you say?"

Everyone nodded and Emilio slapped Jamal a high-five.

"Got it!" said Allison scribbling away. "We think Jesus is most definitely alive, really alive! How's that as the opening sentence of our essay?"

Reprinted from My Friend: The Catholic Magazine for Kids, Pauline Books & Media, 50 Saint Pauls Avenue, Boston, MA 02130. www.myfriendmagazine.com

Easter Renewal of Baptismal Promises

Supplies needed:

- large bowl
- holy water (you can get this at church)
- paper towels

Teacher/Parent preparation:

Place the bowl on a table and pour in some holy water.

At Easter, we renew the promises that we made at Baptism, the first sacrament we received that made us members of the Church. Does anyone have pictures of their own Baptism? Has anyone been present at a Baptism? What are some of the things that you remember from the Baptism?

After Jesus rose from the dead, he appeared to his apostles and then returned to his Father in heaven. Jesus dwells on earth in his Church, and through the sacraments he gives us life and salvation.

Most of us received Baptism as infants. We were not able to say our baptismal promises for ourselves—our godparents answered the questions for us. Do you know who your godparents are?

Invite the children to gather around the bowl filled with water. Tell them that they will now be renewing their baptismal promises by responding, "I do" to the series of questions you ask.

Leader: Do you reject Satan and all his works and all his empty promises?

All: I do.

Leader: Do you believe in God the Father almighty, creator of heaven and earth?

All: I do.

Leader: Do you believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord, who was born of the virgin Mary, was crucified, died, and was buried, rose from the dead, and is now seated at the right hand of the Father?

All: I do.

Leader: Do you believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life, who proceeds from the Father and Son?

All: I do.

Leader: Do you believe in the holy Catholic Church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and life everlasting?

All: I do.

Invite each of the children to approach the bowl of holy water, dip the fingers of their right hand into the water, and make the Sign of the Cross.

At the end of the ceremony you can pray together the *Our Father*.

Discussion Starters for Grades K-3

- In the story you just heard, Jamal, Emilio, and Allison named four ways that Jesus is with us during the Eucharist. Can you name them?
- How is Jesus present in our classroom at school? With your family at home? In your neighborhood?
- How can you bring the love of Jesus to others?

Reflection

The One who was crucified and rose again is the Lord of the world and of history. Easter casts its light on the whole cosmos and illumines it. It is the light of love and truth which redeems the universe from death caused by sin, and renews the plan of the creation, so that all things may acquire their full meaning and be reconciled with God and with one another.

John Paul II

Discussion Starters for Grades 4-8

- If someone asked if you believe in the resurrection, what would you tell him/her? What reasons would you give to support your belief?
- Emilio, Jamal, and Allison mentioned four ways that Jesus is present in the Eucharist. Can you name them?
- How is Jesus present in your life today? In your classroom at school? In your family? In your neighborhood? In the lives of the poor and suffering? In areas of the world where wars rage?
- How do you help others to see the presence of Jesus in their lives?
- Why do you think Jesus appeared to his disciples after his death?
- How often do you read the Bible?
- How does the Bible help us to grow in faith?
- Name other ways that can help you grow in faith.
- How can you find more time to share with Jesus?
- How can you share your faith with others?
- How can you encourage your friends to want to know Jesus?
- How can you encourage your friends to grow in faith?

Have the children use their Bibles to find passages from Scripture that hold eyewitness accounts of Christ after his resurrection. Try Matthew 28, Mark 16, Luke 24, and John 20 and 21.

Compare the readings from the different Gospels.

- How are they similar? Do they share the same basic story?

Reflection

There is no body! Now the Body of Christ, crucified and risen from the dead, lives in the world. Resurrection is hard to believe in, let alone explain. We need a community to help us with words, with remembering, and with holding onto hope in the face of death.

Megan McKenna

Easter Tree

Easy

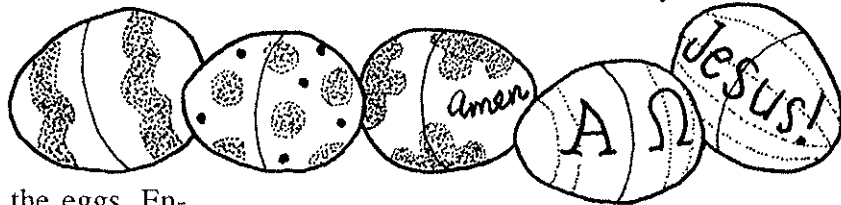
Eggs remind us of new life. In the spring we see birds' nests filled with eggs. Before long, tiny birds peck their way out of darkness and into the light of the world. Christ, too, emerged from darkness to light on Easter morning. Help your students/children understand that an egg can remind us of the tomb that surrounded Jesus in darkness until he rose on Easter morning.

Supplies needed:

2–3 dozen colored plastic Easter eggs
 a roll of thin string
 Easter stickers
 fabric paintbrush or a small tree limb with branches
 scissors
 ruler
 clear tape

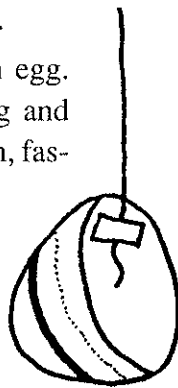
- The children can take turns “hanging” the eggs on the tree. They may need someone to “help” them tie the string and to make sure that the eggs get evenly spaced apart.

After all the eggs are hung on the “tree,” invite the children to gather around it, join hands and sing a well-known Easter song, like “Jesus Christ Is Risen Today.”



Directions:

- Have the children decorate the eggs. Encourage them to be creative and make each egg look special.
- Measure and cut the string into different lengths so that the eggs will hang at different levels on the “tree” branches.
- Attach a piece of string to each egg. Open the egg by gently twisting and pulling the two halves apart. Then, fasten the string to the inside of the egg with a small piece of tape. (See the illustration.) Put the two halves of the egg back together and close them as tight as you can. (The string should be thin enough so that the egg can still fasten and stay closed.)



Seeded Eggs

Easy

Help your children recognize eggs and seeds as symbols for the new life at Easter by making these unique egg decorations for a seasonal table centerpiece.

Supplies needed:

- Styrofoam eggs (at least 1 per child)
- a variety of seeds (either birdseed or plant seeds will do)
- craft glue
- decoupage
- sponge brushes
- craft sticks
- waxed paper



Directions:

1. Lay a sheet of waxed paper on work surfaces. (Children will place their eggs on the waxed paper to dry.)
2. Pour seeds into a large bowl or container.
3. Spread craft glue over entire Styrofoam egg, using a craft stick to spread the glue.
4. Roll glue-covered egg in seeds, making sure seeds cover the entire surface of egg. Add seeds where needed. Children should press seeds firmly onto the egg, and then place the egg on waxed paper to dry.
5. Once glue has dried and seeds are secured, brush decoupage over the entire egg and again place on waxed paper to dry.
6. Make a variety of eggs with different types of seeds. These eggs can be placed in a bowl or basket with Easter grass as a decoration at home.

Reflections

Come, then, all you nations, receive forgiveness for your sins. I am your forgiveness. I am the Passover that brings salvation. I am the lamb who was immolated for you. I am your ransom, your life, your resurrection, your light; I am your salvation and your king.

St. Melito of Sardis

When Christ says: "Do not be afraid," he wants to respond to the deepest source of the human being's existential fear. He means do not fear evil, since in his resurrection good has shown itself stronger than evil. His Gospel is victorious truth.

John Paul II

Chicks: New Life

Easy

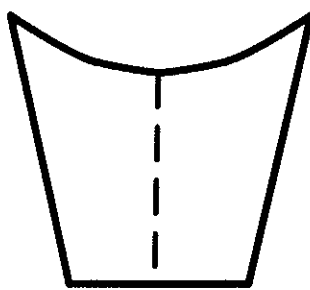
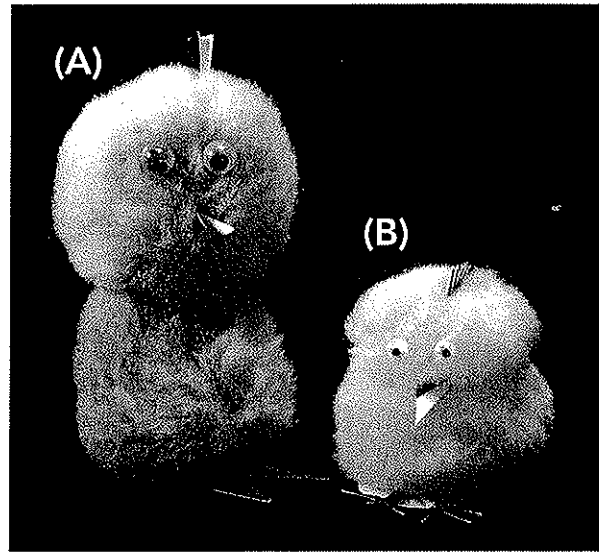
Baby chicks are symbols for new life. Chicks emerge from the darkness of their shells into the light of life outside. Help your children understand the meaning of this symbol while creating cute little chicks from pompoms and paper.

Supplies needed:

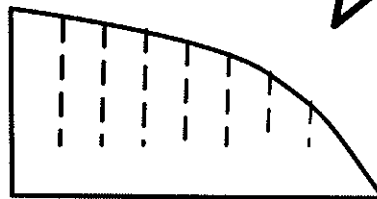
- 1 large yellow pompom or 2 beige or yellow pompoms (per child)
- 2 wiggly eyes (per child)
- orange card stock
- scissors
- clear-drying craft glue
- yellow thread
- templates for the feet and beak

Directions:

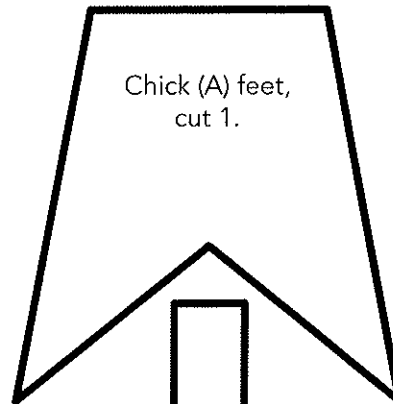
1. Cut the beak and feet from orange card stock.
2. Glue 2 large pompoms together, or have children tie yellow thread around the large pompom to divide it into the head and body. (See photo.)
3. Glue on the eyes, feet, and beak.
4. Cut a circle from orange card stock and glue it onto the bottom so that the chick won't "roll away."



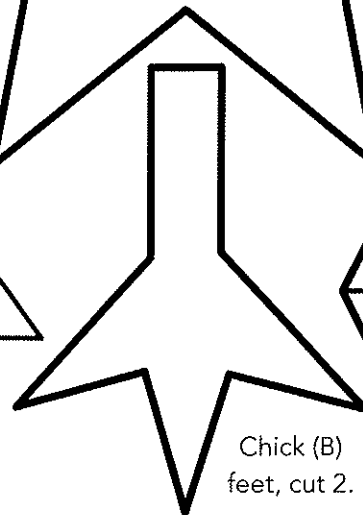
Chick (A) crest, cut 1.
Fold on dashed line.



Chick (B) crest, cut 1.
Cut slits on dashed lines (for "feathers").



Chick (A) feet,
cut 1.



Chick (B)
feet, cut 2.

Chicks (A) and
(B) beak,
cut 1
per chick.

Easter Lily

The flower most associated with Easter is the lily, fragrant and white. Its striking trumpet-like shape announces that Easter is here!

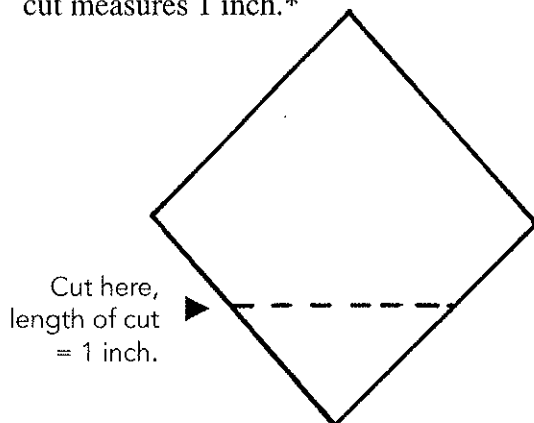
Supplies needed:

white foam sheet or card stock (4 1/2" x 4 1/2" square per flower)
 scissors
 craft scissors with patterned edges (optional)
 bamboo skewer
 wrapped candy or yellow ribbon (for the inside of the lily)
 craft glue
 green ribbon (12" per flower)

- Place candy inside flower and secure with a dab of glue.
- Tie a green ribbon around the bamboo, form a bow, and glue the bow in place.

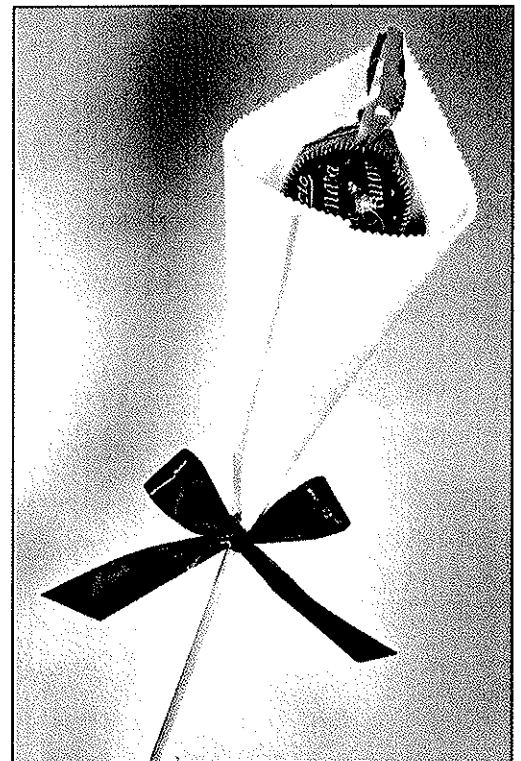
Directions:

- Have children cut a 4 1/2 by 4 1/2 inch square from foam sheet or card stock.
- Cut off 1 of the corners so that the diagonal cut measures 1 inch.*



- Place the square of foam sheet or card stock on the table with cut corner at the bottom. Glue the bamboo stick to the square.
- Fold in 2 corners to form a cone, then glue to hold.

* Note that the "cut corner" measures one inch.



Reflection

Faith is the only possibility we have of entering into contact with Christ. "Who believes in Christ," says St. Augustine, "touches Christ." By faith, St. Paul says, Christ dwells in our hearts (cf. Eph. 3:17).

Raniero Cantalamessa

Easter Bookmarks

Easy

Encourage your children to spend time reading and studying Scripture, and help them mark their favorite passages with these colorful Easter bookmarks.

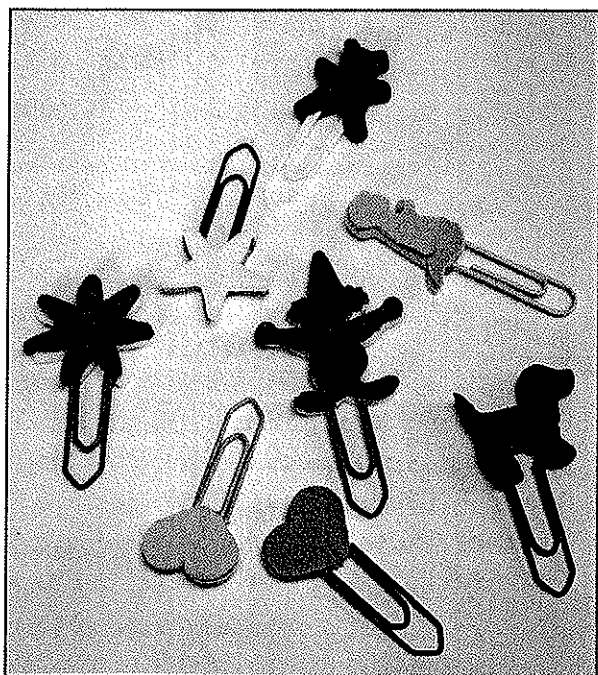
Supplies needed:

foam sheets of different colors
 large paper clips of different colors
 tacky craft glue
 scissors
 pencils

Optional: permanent markers

Templates (bottom right column):

heart (Divine Mercy)
 sheep (Good Shepherd)
 flame (Pentecost)
 candle (faith)
 cross (resurrection)



Directions:

1. Have children trace the templates to use as patterns for bookmarks.
2. Trace the patterns for the bookmarks onto foam sheets and cut them out. Cut 2 of each shape.
3. Glue 1 shape to the upper end of a paper clip, and then glue the other shape on top of the paper clip to form a "sandwich."
4. Children can add decorative details using permanent markers.

