

Teaching Your Child About Easter

Easter is a Christian holiday of enormous significance. The sacrificial death of Christ and His triumphant resurrection is reason for great gladness and joyous celebration to those who know Him as Savior. The cross and the empty tomb reveal truths of Easter that Christian parents will want their children to know and understand so they may share in a meaningful celebration.

Many books and children's story Bibles are valuable teaching resources. Christian bookstores have devotional materials written for children, as well as recordings of the Easter story. Whether or not you use these supplemental helps, do not overestimate using the Bible itself to teach biblical truths. The Holy Spirit gives even young children an understanding of stories and truths that are read directly from God's Word. Children come to love and to value God's Word as parents lovingly introduce them to the Holy Scriptures.

Study the Bible With Your Child

Choose a time you and your child are not hurried or tired. (Pray for such a time!) Have a set time each day that becomes part of your daily routine. Begin with a 5- to 10-minute study and extend the time as appropriate. Do not be discouraged if you miss a day. Two or three times a week is a good start.

Always begin with a brief prayer. Before you pray, briefly summarize the Scripture you will be reading.

Read the Scripture aloud slowly, with expression. Use an easy-to-understand translation of the Bible. If your child has a Bible, read from it. Use your young child's finger to point to the words as you read. Allow your older child to read aloud.

Explain words or concepts that your child does not understand. (Ask him to stop you if he does not understand something.)

Talk about what you have just read. Repeat the truths taught in the passage. Ask questions to determine how well your child understands what she heard.

Choose a "verse for the day" from the suggested Scripture. Talk about what it means and memorize it together. One family wrote the verse on pieces of paper, omitting different words on each piece. They hid the papers in their home. When a family member discovered one, he or she sounded a signal. Everyone gathered to see who could fill in the missing word. Then they all recited the verse together. The family experienced joy and laughter as they learned together.

Close in prayer, thanking God for His Word. Reinforce the teaching casually and spontaneously throughout the day.

Plan an Easter Bible Study

Using the previous suggestions, plan a Bible study about Easter with your child. Divide into small parts the beautiful but intricate story of Easter. Even a very young child can learn the details a few at a time. Your child may not completely understand the agony of the Crucifixion, the wonder of redemption or the miracle of the Resurrection. However, the awe, reverence and joy you express as you read the biblical account and celebrate together will affect him. Never underestimate what the Holy Spirit will do in the heart of even a young child.

Suggested Outline

The Scripture passages and truths at the end of this lesson are a suggested outline for a study. Adapt it to fit your child's age, needs and attention span. Include fewer verses for younger children. Extra days of shorter studies are more desirable than longer ones. Teaching your child about Easter should be a high priority. It is also important Bible study be a good, loving and meaningful time.

Use Music

As you plan your family's study of Easter, include hymns and other meaningful music as reinforcement to your conversations and the Scripture you read. Truths presented musically significantly impact learning.

Listen to professional recordings as well as singing together as a family. Use a recording of Handel's "Hallelujah Chorus." Select hymns for your family to sing. Choose one as a family favorite, sing it every day and watch to see if your children memorize it without effort.

Sing "adult" hymns. Little children who cannot read will enjoy listening and learning to sing with you. Introduce music your child will hear in the services where your family will celebrate Easter. Select hymns your child will hear at your church. When you introduce and sing "Christ the Lord Is Risen Today," teach your child to join in, particularly on the "alleluia" portion. Always talk about the meaning of the words such as "hallelujah," "Easter" and "hosanna." Teach your children to sing, as well as listen, with joy and reverence. One family taught their 2-year-old triplets to sing "Christ the Lord Is Risen Today." To their delight, the children sang with the congregation on Easter morning!

I. Read Mark 14:32-50.

THE ARREST IN THE GARDEN

Truths:

1. Jesus knew what was going to happen, but He did not run away or hide.
2. Jesus wanted to do what God, His Father, wanted Him to do.

II. Read Mark 14:53-15:15.

THE TRIAL

Truths:

1. Jesus had done nothing wrong.
2. God was in complete control. It was God's plan for Jesus to die.

III. Read Mark 15:16-32.

THE CRUCIFIXION

Truths:

1. Jesus could have gotten off the cross, but He did not. He knew God wanted Him to be there, and He obeyed God.
2. Jesus suffered for our sins. The soldiers hurt Jesus.

IV. Read Mark 15:33-47.

JESUS' DEATH AND BURIAL

Truths:

1. Jesus died on the cross. He died because He loves us and wants us to go to heaven.
2. Only people who love and believe in the Lord Jesus Christ will go to heaven.
3. Jesus' friends took His dead body and laid it in a tomb.

V. Read Matthew 28:1-10.

THE RESURRECTION

Truths:

1. God made Jesus come alive again.
2. Because Jesus came alive, all people who believe in Him will live forever with Him.
3. Many people saw Jesus and talked to Him after His resurrection.