

CELEBRATING THE RESURRECTION EASTER AT HOME

taking childhood spirituality seriously

Godly Play^{UK}



Here are some ways in which you can use some of the rituals and words from the ancient Easter Eve service. Ideally it is used on the night before Easter Day, preferably when it is darker, so that the imagery of moving from darkness to light can be really experienced. But you could do many of these things on Easter Day, just adapt some of the 'night' wordings.

Here are the different things you might do – in the order that makes most sense at home.

1. Telling Biblical stories of faith
2. Lighting an Easter Fire
3. Using the fire to light a large candle to represent Christ as Light
4. Sharing the light with others and processing to bring light to darkness.
5. Remembering our commitment to Christ through baptism
6. Making a loud noise to show the joy of knowing that Christ is risen

All this can be done at home and you could use Lent to help you get ready to celebrate. Different members of the household could prepare the different things. Some of the ideas just need to be prepared on the day. You can do everything or just one or two things. Before you decide, read through all the ideas and work out which ones are right for you. Gather up everything you will need. This might take a while, so start in good time.

Telling Biblical Stories of Faith

Traditionally these are Old Testament stories. For example:

Creation

Miriam dancing

Daniel rescued from the lions

Noah

Ruth

Abraham and Sarah

Jonah

Moses and the Passover

Ezekiel in the valley of bone

Those familiar with Godly Play will recognise these. The usual custom is to share the story in limited light. Find a place where you can gather in candlelight, or subdued light. Here are some ways you might do this:

You could create some Godly Play-style story-telling sessions to tell some of the stories. You might need to improvise the materials you need.

Different members of a household choose their favourite story from the list and work out a way of telling the story to others. Be creative. You could act it; paint it; draw it; poem it! Do it in the way that is right for you. Lent could be a good time to get ready, a time to practise.

*At the end of each story the storyteller could say:
This is the word of the Lord,
and others reply:
Thanks be to God.*

Lighting the Easter Fire

It is best to do this outside if you can. If this is impossible, then move to another space where you have arranged about half a dozen nightlights together to represent a mini bonfire.

In the afternoon create a bonfire outside. It is up to you to decide how big this might be. You could use a fire pit, barbeque, metal dustbin lid, a metal bucket or some other container. Make sure the wood is really dry. If you have a mandolin-style potato peeler you can peel some shavings from a stick to make great kindling. Have fun.

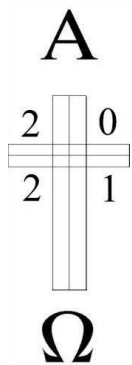
Somebody lights the fire, or the nightlights if you cannot go outside and says this prayer:

Eternal God,
who made this most holy night
to shine with the brightness
of your one true light,
set us aflame with the fire of your love,
and bring us to the radiance of your
heavenly glory;
through Jesus Christ our Lord.
All Amen.



The Easter Candle

Buy a plain candle, the biggest fattest candle you can find and afford. You could paint it with colourful Easter designs using acrylic paint, another Lent activity. The traditional design is like this.



A – Alpha, the first letter of the Greek alphabet
Ω – Omega, the last letter of the Greek alphabet
2021 – this year

Somebody holds up the unlit candle
whilst pointing to the design.
Somebody else could say these words.

Christ yesterday and today,
All The beginning and the end

Alpha and Omega,
all time belongs to him, and all ages.
**All To him be glory and power,
through every age and for ever. Amen.**

Mark the candle to remember the wounds of Christ.

This is traditionally done with 5 elaborately studded nails that have grains of incense attached to them. You could use 5 drawing pins or small tacks that you stick into the cross shape on the candle.
As these are inserted in the candle someone says these words.

You also need a small candle for each person.

1 By his holy and
2 glorious wounds
3 may Christ our Lord
4 guard and
5 keep us.
Amen.

Lighting the Easter Candle



Light your big Easter Candle from the fire or the nightlights.

Someone says:
May the light of Christ, rising in glory,
banish all darkness from our hearts and
minds.

The person holding the Christ Light
holds it up as high as possible.

Someone says:
The light of Christ.
All Thanks be to God.

Everyone then lights their own candle
from the Easter Candle.

Someone says:
The light of Christ.
All Thanks be to God.

Now go around the garden or around
your home in a procession, stopping
wherever you like and saying:

The light of Christ.
All Thanks be to God.

Celebrating Baptism



Find the largest bowl or bucket that you have. Fill it with water extravagantly. If you are outside, you could use a hosepipe or smaller buckets. Everyone could join in. Let the water splash everywhere. If you are inside you could fill the bath or the kitchen sink. Find the best place for this holy water play.

When the water has been poured into the bowl, each person could take a handful of water and as it falls back into the bowl they could say what they like about water or why they are thankful for it.

The Godly Play baptism lesson reminds us of the waters of creation, the dangerous waters of the flood, the water that the people passed through from slavery to freedom, the water that Jesus was baptised in, the water we are baptised in and much more. Each person could take one of these phrases and say it alongside the other thank yous.



The High Fin Sperm Whale ©
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You could use a leafy or furry twig to shake water on each person. Rosemary twigs

are often used. Dip the twigs in the water and shake them around. If you don't have plants, find the largest paint brush you can find. If all else fails, then cup your hands to throw water over everyone ... the wetter the better.



Photo by Bilsenbatten 2012 Wikimedia Commons

Then each person is marked with the sign of the cross using the water. You could do this to each other. You don't need to say anything, or you could make up your own words, or use any, or all, of these.

'Do you turn to Christ?' 'Yes, I turn to Christ.'
'I remember the day of my baptism.'
'Tonight we pray for all the people in the world who will be baptised.'
Reply each time: Amen.

Exultet – Make a joyful noise

A beautiful prayer, called *The Exultet*, a prayer of joy and glory, is sometimes said on Easter Eve. Below are some parts of it which could be read by different people. The full text can be found on an internet search or here: www.catholic.org/prayers/prayer.php?p=641

In the Middle Ages, people used to put the words on a great scroll and draw pictures to illustrate them. Then they sang the words from a high place and let down the scroll so people could see the pictures – a kind of PowerPoint before computers were even thought of! Perhaps you could have fun making your own *Exultet* scroll, making pictures to go with the words.

Can you see the words in Latin written upside down under the picture of the risen Jesus?



Or you could sing or say another, more familiar prayer, *The Gloria* – Glory to God in the highest. There is a great version of it here <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=U0SrN4B-HTU>

Another tradition as a sign of Resurrection is to switch on all the lights and ring bells, bang pan lids, bowls, drums, rattles, blow instruments, shout/clap/dance, make a noise with anything to hand.

Someone says:
Christ is Risen!

All He is risen indeed!
Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia!
(getting louder and louder)

Have a time of celebration and feasting ... party like mad ... give presents, eat eggs ... enjoy new life!

Words from the Exultet



Rejoice, heavenly powers! Sing, choirs of angels!
Exult, all creation around God's throne!

Jesus Christ, our King, is risen!

Sound the trumpet of salvation!

Rejoice, O earth, in shining splendour,
radiant in the brightness of your King!

Christ has conquered! Glory fills you!

Darkness vanishes for ever!

May the morning Star which never sets
find this flame still burning:

Christ, that Morning Star, who came back from the dead,
and shed his peaceful light on all mankind,
your Son who lives and reigns for ever and ever.



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*A Christian movement centred on childhood spirituality —
providing training to transform thinking and practice for the whole of life*