



# parenting CHRISTIAN kids



**MIFFLIN  
PRESBYTERIAN  
CHURCH**

## Talking About Holy Week and Easter with Children

### POWERSOURCE

#### ASK GOD:

1. To bless your family's Easter preparations and celebrations.
2. To help you be patient and wise in helping your children understand Holy Week..
3. To keep the joy of Easter in your hearts throughout the year.

It is hard to believe that Palm Sunday is almost here, and Holy Week is not far behind! Parents and educators, most often those who work with younger children, are often confused as how best to handle the crucifixion as we tell the story the Easter miracle.

The events of Jesus' death are shocking and violent, but we cannot fully live into Easter if we have not experienced Jesus' death. There are ways to approach this with children that make it easier to share the whole story. Here are some of the reflections from Elizabeth Windsor, who has served over twenty-five years as an educator and a parent:

#### Children understand tragedy

Children – even very young ones – know that bad things happen. The Easter message is that good always triumphs over evil – even if it doesn't seem to at the moment. This is a message children can hear and understand.

#### Emphasize the full Christ-event

When you talk about the crucifixion, always continue immediately with the Resurrection. I have found the following kinds of language helpful: "Jesus loved people so much that some people were scared by it and they put Jesus to death on a cross. But love is so strong, that not even death can destroy it, so God raised Jesus from the dead."

(continued)



### Be conscientious with images

If the children you work with are visual learners, you may only want to share the story in words – the shorter the better. Use art that reveals the empty tomb instead of Jesus on the Cross as you tell the story.

### Basic details of the cross

Some children are curious about how crucifixion actually kills. They will ask questions such as “Did it hurt?” (“Yes”), “How does crucifixion kill someone?” (“Slow suffocation”). You do not need to dwell on the gore, but an honest answer that is short and to the point is helpful to children and allows you to move on to the resurrection.

### Jesus did not die alone

Other children worry that Jesus was alone. He wasn’t – his mother and the Beloved Disciple were there, along with other women. Two other men were crucified with him. And most importantly, God was with Jesus.

Experiencing the events of Holy Week and Easter can be a powerful way for children to share in the defining action of our Christian faith while being held in a safe and familiar environment. The events of Holy Week are all great places for embodied learning – we shout and parade with Jesus on Palm Sunday, have our feet washed, taste bread and wine, participate in a Good Friday Prayer Walk and raise the joyous “Alleluias” on Easter Day. With careful planning, worship leaders, teachers and parents can help children experience the mystery and wonder of both Holy Week and Easter.

Article from [Building Faith](#) magazine

## Easter Is for all Ages

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 didn’t understand Jesus had him killed. 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.” Many people focus only on the “substitutionary atonement” (Jesus had to die in our place) meaning of the cross. There are other Biblical explanations, as well, including that Jesus’ teaching of love for all people was threatening to the establishment, who killed him, so that the message of the Kingdom of God would not spread. God’s love, however, is always victorious, as shown by the resurrection. Other explanations focus on the model of the life of Jesus, on how we are to live, even when sacrifice is involved.

Here are a few activities to try as a family, in addition to our church programming (see the next page!!)

**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.

### SCRIPTURE OF THE MONTH

Jesus said to her, “I am the resurrection and the life. Those who believe in me, even though they die, will live, and everyone who lives and believes in me will never die. Do you believe this?” John 11:25-26

# APRIL CALENDAR

**Sunday, April 9**

## **Youth Mission Trip Bake Sale**

Plan to buy items before and after Sunday School to support our youth mission trip. We'll take your contributions, too!

**Friday, April 14**

## **Good Friday Prayer Walk**

You will have any opportunity to participate in a Prayer Walk at Mifflin. You may arrive any time between 10:00 am and 1:00 pm, and again from 5:00 pm to 7:00 pm. This walk may be done as an individual, with a friend or as a family.

The Prayer Walk takes you through seven stations set up in our Sunday School classrooms, each with a scripture, a reflection and an activity that you do at your own pace. These stations typically take 20 – 30 minutes and are appropriate for elementary children through adults.

**Saturday, April 15 10:00am  
Easter Party**

Our annual Easter Party is coming soon – so much more than an egg hunt! We will have crafts, snacks (coffee for the parents), games, and the 8<sup>th</sup> Day Puppets will be performing! Be sure and join us for a great time – children AND their parents or grandparents welcome, plus friends and neighbors - and don't forget to bring the Easter baskets for those eggs.

Want to donate eggs or candy? There's a basket near the Info Center.

Looking ahead to May

**Sunday, May 7  
GiFT for Families Lunch and Scavenger Hunt**

Plan now to join us after church for lunch and a fun (and educational!) scavenger hunt on the church grounds. Sign ups will be out on Easter Sunday.

## **Hero Central – Vacation Bible School 2017**

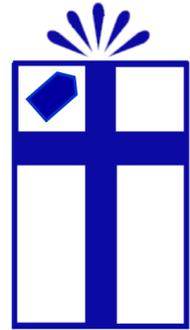
Planning for Vacation Bible School is underway! We will gather together on **Sunday, June 11 – Thursday, June 15** from 6:00 - 8:00 pm, with an optional dinner offered at 5:30 pm. Our theme is "Hero Central: Discover Your Strength in God." We are looking for people who

would like to participate in both **BIG** (ex. - coordinating recreation, science & mission, dinner or decorations), **MEDIUM** (ex. – Coordinating snacks, leading a group of students, participating in leadership in one of the above areas, etc.) or **SMALL** (helping one day in one of

the above areas, serving snacks, cleaning up after dinner, etc.)

We have jobs for youth and adults of all ages. Sign up on Sunday or contact Kathi Bubb if you would like to help.  
kathibubb@gmail.com  
614-787-7337

**GiFT**



**Growing in  
Faith Together**

Our April **GiFT for Parents** will be on Sunday, April 2. Once you have dropped off your children and had a cup of coffee, join with other parents and grandparents in the choir room at 10:15 am. We will be sharing questions and suggestions on how to nurture our children's faith in church and in the home.

We will meet again May 7 and then take the summer off.

## **FUTURE GiFT for Parents**

Do you have a topic that you would like to discuss with other Mifflin parents? Better yet, do you have a topic you would like to LEAD? Either way, contact Kathi Bubb (kathibubb@gmail.com) with your ideas for future programs for parents in our church.