

EASTER SEASON AT HOME

APRIL 12-MAY 31, 2020



A Building Faith Resource
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A guide through the Easter Season, April 12 - May 31

Easter Season Ritual: The Easter Tree is an idea we concocted from Easter egg trees and Advent Jesse Trees. Each week, you will hang another "ornament" on the tree that correlates with a Bible story, bringing you from resurrection to Pentecost. You will need:

- Easter Tree
 - Get a branch from a tree outside (strong enough and with enough branches to hold your ornaments)
 - Create a tree out of recycled materials
 - Pull out a fake Christmas tree from storage
 - Use a strong indoor plant that has places you could hang or nestle things
- Ornaments
 - Blow out some eggs ([here's](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4dtAkCaZaak) a how-to video <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4dtAkCaZaak>), and string ribbon, string or yarn through them to hang.
 - Make salt dough eggs - [here's](https://www.designmom.com/diy-salt-dough-eggs/?fbclid=IwAR1AZnjwd1aHeOTOUGgW0CEMDIXoVeNyoRale8fOFIZRTZp1gFabKkr3dFM) a recipe: <https://www.designmom.com/diy-salt-dough-eggs/?fbclid=IwAR1AZnjwd1aHeOTOUGgW0CEMDIXoVeNyoRale8fOFIZRTZp1gFabKkr3dFM>
 - Make paper eggs
 - Or maybe you want to forego the egg shape, and instead create an ornament from other materials each week. Get creative!

Each week, there will be an Easter Tree prompt. Read the story, then create your ornament. You can do just one ornament each week, or a bunch of ornaments to illustrate the story - do whatever works for you. Be sure to share your pictures so we can see what others are doing and encourage each other!

Projects: We did a call-out for projects made with found objects, and people contributed some great ideas! Sometimes these have something to do with the week's scripture, and sometimes they're more connected to an overall theme of Easter - "Behold, I am making all things new!"

Practices: There are a lot of ideas here. Choose a few that work for you, or spread out the prompts for the whole week.

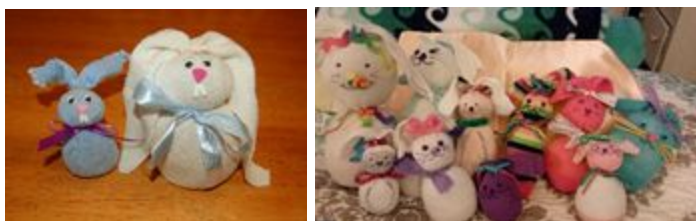
Connect: Take pictures of these rituals and practices in your home. Post them with the hashtag #EasterSeasonAtHome

April 12: Easter Sunday

- **Attend a virtual worship service.** Daniel and Talashia's family will lead a sunrise service live from home on the College Mennonite Church Facebook page at 7:00 am EST if you want to join it!
- **Welcome the Light:** Uncover and light your Holy Week candles (if you were following this resource for Holy Week). Turn on the lights. Step out into the light of day. The Light of the World is alive today and forever!
- **Scripture Prompt:** John 20:1-18; Matthew 28:1-10
 - Story in *Shine On* on page 270
- **Easter Tree:** Today you get started on the Easter Season ritual! Go outside and cut a branch from a tree. Prop it in a vase so that you can fill it with symbols of Easter in the coming weeks.
 - The branch is bare now, but get ready - new life is coming!
- **Easter Outside:**
 - Take your coffee or tea outside. Taste God's promise, God's everlasting love. Breathe.
 - Go to a green space and say, sing or move Psalm 23.
 - Go on a "New Life" treasure hunt around your yard. Take pictures, write down, or draw the signs of new life you see. Share your findings!
- **Taste of Easter:** Here are a few ideas of things you can eat today in your celebration.
 - Resurrection Rolls: As you make these, tell the story of Jesus' body being prepared for burial, then placed in a tomb. When they come out of the oven, marvel at the empty tomb. [Here](#) is a recipe using store-bought dough, but you can also make them with regular homemade bread dough.
 - Eggs: Eggs are a symbol of fertility, but Christian tradition also sees them as a symbol of new life.
 - Look up "Easter Food" on Wikipedia to find all kinds of Easter foods from around the world!
- **Easter Symbol Hunt for kids:** Fill pink eggs with a small cross, yellow plastic eggs with a small rock, and green eggs with a gladiola bulb (or another annual). Tell each child they are to find one green egg, one yellow egg, and one pink egg. When each child has their eggs, explain the symbols:
 - Cross: The cross that Jesus was crucified on
 - Rock: The stone that was rolled away from the tomb
 - Gladiola bulb: Resurrection and new life (it looks dead and has to be buried, but it comes up as something beautiful in its time)
- **Easter Playlist:** Check out Daniel's Easter [playlist](#)

Week of April 19

- **Scripture Prompt:** John 20:1-18
 - Story in *Shine On* on page 273
- **Reflection Prompt:** This is the first of several stories we will read over the next few weeks about people recognizing Jesus. The recognition never happens right away; it always takes them a bit to realize it's Jesus. Why do you think this is? And what is it that opened Mary's eyes so that she recognized Jesus?
 - The first person to recognize the risen Christ was a woman. In the context of first-century Palestine, this is a big deal. Jesus doesn't just appear to the privileged and powerful. And to Jesus, women are every bit as worthy as men. Reflect on this.
 - Look around you. What is Jesus doing here and now? Where do you recognize Jesus?
- **Easter Tree Prompt:** Inspired by this story and your reflections on it, create, decorate and hang your ornament for the week.
- **Prayer Prompt:** Jesus, I seek you. Open my heart so that I can recognize you right here, right now. Amen.
- **Project Prompt:** Do you have partner-less socks in your house? Make these cute little bunnies.



Materials Needed:

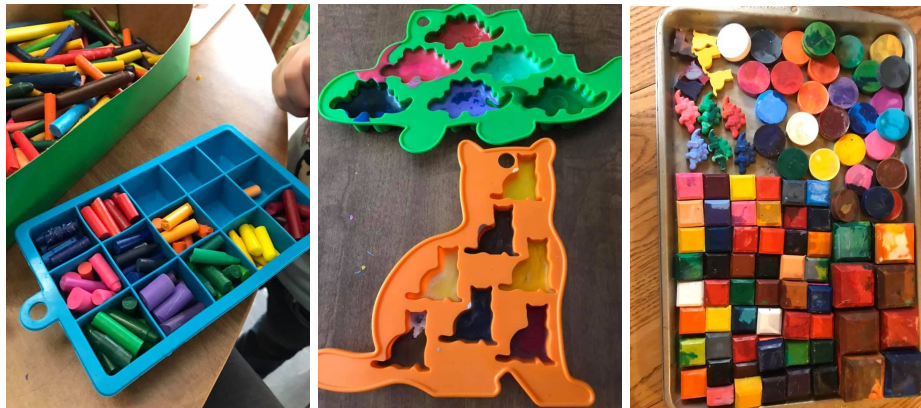
- Sock(s), scissors, Craft glue or hot glue tool, Polyfill, cotton balls, or tissue paper, 2 Rubber bands, Sharpie or other marker, Ribbon, yarn or pipe cleaner, Cottonball (for tail)
- Optional items: Googly eyes, poms, other items to decorate

Instructions/Steps:

- 1: Fill sock with polyfill or other form of stuffing about 3/4 full.
- 2: Place rubber band around the bottom 2/3 of the stuffed portion to make the base (body) area to make a circular or oval like shape.
- 3: Place another rubber band at the top of the other 1/3 of the stuffed portion to make the head/face of the bunny.
- 4: Once the top rubber band is tight and secure, cut the remaining part of the sock down the middle about 1/4 -1/2 inch from the top of the bunny head to make the ears.
- 5: Further cut the these two flaps into the shape of ears that you desire.
- 6: Use ribbon, yarn, or pipe cleaner to tie around the "neck" area of the bunny making a simple bow, bow tie, scarf, etc. This should also cover up the rubber band.
- 7: Use ribbon, yarn, or pipe cleaner to tie around the rubber band by the ears in a decorative way that you desire.
- 8: Use Sharpie or other marker to draw eyes, nose, mouth and whiskers of the bunny.
- 9: Use craft glue, a hot glue tool to glue a cotton ball or pom on the back of your bunny.
- 10: Decorate in additional ways if you would like.

Week of April 26

- **Scripture Prompt:** Luke 24:13-35
 - Story in *Shine On* on page 275
- **Reflection Prompt:** It is in the act of hospitality that Cleopas and the other friend's eyes were opened. They offered hospitality by inviting him to eat with them, and then when he broke the bread and blessed it - another act of hospitality - they recognized Jesus. There is power in eating together, isn't there?
 - What is it about sitting at the table together that builds relationships and allows for revelation? Reflect on this.
 - Our usual ways of offering hospitality aren't possible right now. So get creative! How can you "break bread" with someone else this week?
- **Easter Tree Prompt:** Inspired by this story and your reflections on it, create, decorate and hang your ornament for the week.
- **Prayer Prompt:** Jesus, you are the bread of life. Guide us to open our lives to others. Amen.
- **Project Prompt:** Gather up your old broken crayons and make something new. Peel the paper off the crayons, break them into small pieces and place in silicone molds to melt into new crayons! Melt in the oven at 250° for 15-30 minutes depending on how large the mold is. (Err on the shorter amount of time and add as needed.)



- **Extra:** Watch Bryan Moyer Suderman's [SmallTall Singalong from April 1](#), where he sings two songs about being on the road with Jesus, including one about the Emmaus road.

Week of May 3

- **Scripture Prompt:** Luke 24:36-49
- **Reflection Prompt:** Like the stories of the last two weeks, this story involves recognition of Jesus. And like last week's story (which comes right before this in the book of Luke), it involves hospitality. It's almost humorous that as the disciples are staring at Jesus' wounds in wonder, he asks, "Do you have anything to eat?" And then, Jesus does what he did on the road to Emmaus - he "opens their minds" to understand the scriptures. Their eyes are opened, and then their minds are opened. He helps them make sense of the past and of the present. They are making new sense of what they already knew.
 - How appropriate right now. What new sense are you making of the past and present? Are there prophets among us who are helping this faith sense to happen? If Jesus sat down to eat with you and opened your mind right now, what do you think he might reveal?
 - What do you understand differently than you understood it two months ago?
- **Easter Tree Prompt:** Inspired by this story and your reflections on it, create, decorate and hang your ornament for the week.
- **Prayer Prompt:** Jesus, you are the God of our past, our present and our future. Dwell with us today. Amen.
- **Project Prompt:** Make tie-dyed paper! Simply put some liquid food coloring in water, then dip dry paper towels into the dye.



Week of May 10

- **Scripture Prompt:** John 21:1-14
 - Story in *Shine On* on page 277
- **Reflection Prompt:** Are you seeing a pattern here? This story involves recognition and hospitality again! And this time, Jesus uses a familiar story to aid in the recognition. Remember back to the way Jesus called Simon Peter and his brother? They were fishing, and he made their nets full, and then he told them to follow him. They left their nets and followed. Now, in a time of uncertainty, they've gone back to what they know - fishing. In that comforting familiarity, they recognize Jesus.
 - What patterns and routines are you finding comfort in right now? How does Jesus find you there?
- **Easter Tree Prompt:** Inspired by this story and your reflections on it, create, decorate and hang your ornament for the week.
- **Prayer Prompt:** Jesus, Divine Comforter, you are with us in the comfort of a warm drink and the mundane brushing of teeth. And you are with us when we're disoriented and don't even know what day it is. Open our hearts to you. Amen.
- **Project Prompt:** Do something with those cardboard toilet paper tubes! Here are a few ideas: Make binoculars to use in a couple weeks for your Detectives of Divinity hike, or fish to remind you of today's story, or butterflies - a symbol of resurrection and a way to use that tie-dyed paper from a week ago.



Week of May 17: Ascension

Ascension Day is Thursday - maybe you want to wait to celebrate it until then, or maybe you want to remember Ascension all through this week.

- **Scripture Prompt:** Luke 24:50-53; Acts 1:1-11
 - Story in *Shine On* on page 278
- **Reflection Prompt:** Just read this, really read this. Imagine it. What a surreal story!
 - In Acts 1:8, Jesus tells the disciples, "You shall receive power." We sometimes think of power as a bad thing, but this reminds us that while power can be easily abused, it is a gift. Reflect on your relationship with power.
- **Easter Tree Prompt:** Inspired by this story and your reflections on it, create, decorate and hang your ornament for the week.
- **Prayer Prompt:** Jesus, you came into this world in a surprising way, and you just kept right on surprising us. Make us aware of your surprising work here and now.
- **Project Prompt:** Make a pollinator hotel! Find your "container" - an empty can (open on both ends), or maybe something else you have around your house. Then get some bamboo sticks or paper straws - or make some "straws" out of paper. Gather sticks, woodchips, and other natural materials you think could go into your hotel. Fill it tightly, then hang it outside and welcome the pollinators.



Week of May 24

- **Scripture Prompt:** Acts 1:12-26
- **Reflection Prompt:** Now the disciples are waiting for the promised Holy Spirit to come upon them. They pray constantly and in community and they appoint a new disciple to take the place of Judas. They don't just sit around and wait, they act. That time of waiting was a time of preparation for what was to come.
 - We are waiting right now. But, like Jesus' followers, that doesn't mean we have to sit around. How do we prepare for what is to come?
- **Easter Tree Prompt:** Inspired by this story and your reflections on it, create, decorate and hang your ornament for the week.
- **Prayer Prompt:** Jesus, we are waiting. Work in our hearts and in our minds. Make this time a generative one, a time of growth and preparation. Amen.
- **Project Prompt:** Grab a few cans or bottles out of your recycling bin and add in a few pieces of old flatware, keys to nowhere, and other potential noisemakers. Use string to put them together into a windchime. As we wait for the Spirit, you can listen to the promise of the wind.



- Extra: Get some free and amazing resources from [Illustrated Ministry!](#)

Week of May 31: Pentecost

- **Scripture Prompt:** Acts 2:1-41
 - Story in *Shine On* on page 280
- **Reflection Prompt:** A bunch of insiders are gathered together for a familiar, insider-y celebration - Shavuot. And then something big happens. There's wind, and fire, and speaking in tongues, and suddenly the gospel is blown wide open! God's good news is for everyone, not just for the insiders, and this comes crystal clear at Pentecost.
 - Do some self-examination. What are you holding onto that hinder you from jumping on board with the wide-open gospel? How will you release that?
- **Easter Tree Prompt:** Inspired by this story and your reflections on it, create, decorate and hang your ornament for the week. Maybe you want to leave it up for awhile, or maybe you're ready to package up your ornaments for a future year.
- **Prayer Prompt:** Holy Spirit, welcome. Animate me. Amen.
- **Project:** Salad Spinner Art. Salad Spinner Art. Place a paper plate in a salad spinner, drop some globs of paint in, and spin away! You'll end up with one-of-a-kind flame art.



- **Outside Project:** Go on a Detectives of Divinity Hike. Grab your binoculars and cameras and something for your field notes! Go on a hike, collecting clues of the Holy Spirit's activity.
 - Listen to [Bryan Moyer Suderman's "Detectives of Divinity"](#) to give you language for this hike and to get you in the mood for it
- **Other Spirit activities:** Blow bubbles, fly a kite, and build a bonfire! We compare the Holy Spirit to air and wind. Why?
- **Extra:** Sing along with [Bryan Moyer Suderman's Spirit songs!](#)