

Adaptable Easter Egg Hunt for Families during COVID-19

BY KEVIN JOHNSON



Easter Egg Hunt/Holy Week House Party - Instructions to Parents/Guardians

This Holy Week and Easter will be unlike any in recent memory. Families will not be gathering with their church families to participate in Easter Egg Hunts or Holy Week activities together. The following offers similar activities designed for families practicing physical distancing.

This Holy Week Scavenger Hunt/Easter Egg Hunt activity may be used in a variety of ways. The activities could be done throughout Holy Week or on Easter Sunday. They may be done indoors or outdoors. You may do this activity with or without plastic Easter eggs. You may do this activity as a family or decide to join with a neighboring family. (If you do, please use proper physical distancing.) Please feel free to customize and adjust this resource as needed.

Whether done throughout Holy Week or on Easter Sunday, dedicate a specific place in your house for this activity. This might mean setting up a dedicated space in your home for the eggs

and activities. You might also use or create a single box or Easter basket to place each egg or object. Families could use this dedicated area to reflect on the Easter story.

Be creative in how you use this resource; find ways to share your Holy Week and Easter activities. For example, place the objects on a windowsill, or write Scripture verses and draw the objects in sidewalk chalk on your driveway.

Materials needed (all things found around the house)

- Box with a lid (shoebox)/Easter basket
- Eggs (plastic Easter eggs or Hard-boiled eggs)
- Palm branch template
- Paper and crayons/markers/colored pencils
- Scissors
- Glass jar or container
- Coin(s)
- Hand towel or washcloth
- Basin or bowl
- Paper towels
- Play-Doh or modeling clay (if available)
- Sidewalk chalk
- Popsicle sticks/toothpicks/twigs from the yard
- Dark cloth
- Wristwatch
- Drum (or something to bang, such as pots and pans)

Daily Egg Art instructions: This Holy Week resource offers a daily egg art activity. Include the eggs you create during this week in your traditional Easter egg hunt on Sunday morning. After the eggs have been collected, have the children discuss the true meaning of Easter and reinforce that truth. Have them share the story from the eggs as they open them, using the art as a guide. There are two different options regarding the egg art. One is to fill a plastic egg and the other is to use hard-boiled eggs and crayons.

Egg 1: Palm Sunday

Takeaway/Objective: Families will learn to be a blessing to one another by praising Jesus.

Read Scripture: John 12:12-13 (CEB) ¹² The next day the great crowd that had come for the festival heard that Jesus was coming to Jerusalem. ¹³ They took palm branches and went out to meet him. They shouted, “Hosanna! Blessings on the one who comes in the name of the Lord! Blessings on the king of Israel!”

Emotion: Blessed (to praise and honor as holy)*

Object: Paper palm leaf

Activity: Cut out a palm leaf from the template below. Each person takes a turn waving the branch and shouting “Hosanna.” Cut out a leaf for each person in the home if you want. Go out to the end of your driveway (with adult supervision) and wave your palms, shouting “Hosannas” to people in your neighborhood. Shout: “Blessings on the one who comes in the name of the Lord.” How loud can you shout?

[DOWNLOAD Palm leaf template \(PDF\)](#)

Egg Art: Draw a palm leaf on a small piece of paper and place it in a plastic egg. Draw a palm leaf on a hard-boiled egg.

Expectation: It’s Palm Sunday. The people cut down palms and cheered as Jesus entered Jerusalem. The crowd shouted “hosannas” and “blessings” to praise and honor Jesus for who they hoped he would be.

Wonder: Talk about a time you have been to a parade. How do you think the children felt trying to see Jesus during this parade? The crowd celebrated Jesus entrance into the town. I wonder how you can praise Jesus in your life today? How can your family praise Jesus while in your home?

Prayer: Hosanna! God, we give you thanks for the blessing that you sent us in Jesus. Give us opportunities to be a blessing to others by honoring Jesus in our house. Amen.

Egg 2: Monday

Takeaway/Objective: Families will learn how to show trust through sharing.

Read Scripture: Mark 12:41-44 (CEB) ⁴¹Jesus sat across from the collection box for the temple treasury and observed how the crowd gave their money. Many rich people were throwing in lots of money. ⁴²One poor widow came forward and put in two small copper coins worth a penny. ⁴³Jesus called his disciples to him and said, “I assure you that this poor widow has put in more than everyone who’s been putting money in the treasury. ⁴⁴All of them are giving out of their spare change. But she from her hopeless poverty has given everything she had, even what she needed to live on.”

Emotion: Generosity (free in giving or sharing)

Object: Coin(s)

Activity: Collect several different types of coins (for example, pennies, dimes, nickels, quarters). Hold the coin. Feel it. Are there any words written on it? What does it say? (**SPOILER:** All coins have “In God we Trust” written on them.) I wonder what it means to trust in God. Find a jar and decorate the outside of it with a sign that reads “generosity jar.” During the days that you are required to stay at home, place a coin in the “generosity jar” every time you see someone in your home trust in God.

Egg Art: Trace a coin on a piece of paper (or use a real coin) and place it in your egg. Draw a coin on the side of a hard-boiled egg.

Expectation: Jesus watched people in the temple giving money to God. Some made a big show of giving lots of money. But one person didn’t. Jesus pointed out her generous act of sharing by giving all she had.

Wonder: How do you feel knowing the woman trusted in God enough to give everything she had? As a family, decide how you can share all the coins in the jar. Once your family can leave your home, make that happen!

Prayer: Gracious and loving God, thank you for the story of the woman who trusted you enough to give all in your name. Give us the same trusting hearts to share with others. Amen.

Egg 3: Tuesday

Takeaway/Objective: Families will learn humility by putting others first.

Read Scripture: John 13:4-5 (CEB) ⁴So he got up from the table and took off his robes. Picking up a linen towel, he tied it around his waist. ⁵Then he poured water into a washbasin and began to wash the disciples' feet, drying them with the towel he was wearing.

Emotion: Humble (not proud or boastful. Low in rank or status).

Object: Towel or washcloth

Activity: Wash another person's hands/feet within your home. Sing "Jesus Loves Me" while you wash.

*Jesus loves me this I know
For the Bible tells me so
Little ones to him belong
They are weak, but he is strong*

*Yes, Jesus loves me
Yes Jesus loves me
Yes Jesus loves me
The Bible tells me so.*

Use soap and warm water to cleanse the other person's hands or feet. Then dry them with a towel.

Egg Art: Cut a piece of paper towel in a small square to represent the towel that Jesus used to wash the disciples' feet; place that piece of paper towel in a plastic egg. Draw a towel on the side of a hard-boiled egg.

Expectation: Jesus' attitude of humility and servanthood was the direct opposite of the disciples' understanding. They had recently been in an argument about who among them was the greatest. Since there was no servant present to wash their feet, it didn't make sense for them to wash each other's feet. When Jesus began to wash their feet, the disciples were stunned and silent. Jesus demonstrated humility and putting others' needs before his own.

Wonder: I wonder how it feels to put someone else before yourself. How could serving (putting others' needs before your own) help us feel humble?

Prayer: God of joy, we are thankful that Jesus shows us that being humble and putting others before ourselves is a joyous way to live. Amen.

Egg 4: Wednesday

Takeaway/Objective: Families will learn about forgiveness

Read Scripture: Mark 14:17-20; 22-25 (CEB) ¹⁷ That evening, Jesus arrived with the Twelve. ¹⁸ During the meal, Jesus said, “I assure you that one of you will betray me—someone eating with me.” ¹⁹ Deeply saddened, they asked him, one by one, “It’s not me, is it?” ²⁰ Jesus answered, “It’s one of the Twelve, one who is dipping bread with me into this bowl.

²²While they were eating, Jesus took bread, blessed it, broke it, and gave it to them, and said, “Take; this is my body.” ²³He took a cup, gave thanks, and gave it to them, and they all drank from it. ²⁴He said to them, “This is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many. ²⁵I assure you that I won’t drink wine [juice] again until that day when I drink it in a new way in God’s kingdom.”

Emotion: Forgive (to stop feeling anger toward a person who has wronged you)

Object: Bread and cup

Activity: Make the lid to the box the table of the Last Supper. On the lid of the box, draw an image of bread and a cup. If you have Play-Doh or modeling clay you may create the bread and cup and place them on the lid (table). If you are not using a box, you can use a blank piece of paper.

Egg Art: Put either your clay molded bread/cup or draw one on a piece of paper and place into the plastic egg. Draw the bread and cup on the side of a hard-boiled egg.

Expectation: During this Last Supper (which was a Passover meal), Jesus had his disciples with him. It is amazing that Jesus shared the gifts of bread and juice with friends who would be unfaithful (betray) to him. Each time we take Communion (bread and juice), we remember Jesus’ love and the forgiveness he gives.

Wonder: Show on your face how you think the disciples’ faces looked when Jesus said one of them would betray or be unfaithful to him (verses 19-20). How does bread and cup remind us of

the body and blood of Jesus? How does the bread and cup remind us that we have been forgiven?

Prayer: God, we are thankful that through Jesus we are given forgiveness. Thank you for the bread and the juice as reminders of how Jesus freely gives his love and forgiveness. Amen.

Egg 5: Thursday

Takeaway/Objective: Families will learn to experience comfort through prayer.

Read Scripture: Matthew 26:39 (CEB) Then he went a short distance farther and fell on his face and prayed, “My Father, if it’s possible, take this cup of suffering away from me. However—not what I want but what you want.”

Emotion: Anxiety (fear or nervousness about what might happen)

Object: Praying hands on paper

Activity: Trace your hand on piece of paper. Inside each finger write words that bring comfort (peace, joy, faith, hope, love, grace, patience, kindness, gentleness, sharing, faith). Outside each finger, write the name of a person who needs comfort. Then spend time each day praying for the people you named. Place the hand tracing by your bed and pray for those five people each night before you go to sleep.

Egg Art: Draw a smaller version of your praying hands artwork and place it into the plastic egg. Draw praying hands on the side of a hard-boiled egg.

Expectation: Jesus was very upset the night he was betrayed. When he was upset, he went into the garden and prayed. God wants us to pray when we are anxious, afraid, or upset. When we pray, we can be comforted knowing that God hears our prayers.

Wonder: When someone is anxious, they are scared and nervous about what might happen. We all feel anxious lately as we watch the news around us. It’s good to know that Jesus felt the same way at times in his life. Jesus said, “not what I want but what you want.” Jesus was scared but found comfort in prayer to God. Do you find comfort in knowing that God hears your prayers?

Prayer: God, we thank you that we can pray to you when we are afraid or scared. We are also thankful that you always hear our prayers even when we are not sure or do not feel your presence. Amen.

Egg 6: Friday

Takeaway/Objective: Families will learn that God's love is present in times of grief.

Read Scriptures: Matthew 27:33-35 (CEB) ³³When they came to a place called Golgotha, which means Skull Place, ³⁴they gave Jesus wine mixed with vinegar to drink. But after tasting it, he didn't want to drink it. ³⁵After they crucified him, they divided up his clothes among them by drawing lots.

Mark 15:39 (CEB)

³⁹When the centurion, who stood facing Jesus, saw how he died, he said, "This man was certainly God's Son."

Emotions: Grief (a sadness felt from the loss of someone or something that you love)

Object: Cross

Activity: Make a cross out of pipe cleaners, popsicle sticks, sticks, or toothpicks and place it in your worship box. Other options include displaying the cross in a windowsill or drawing a cross on the driveway with sidewalk chalk so that it is large enough for neighbors to see.

Egg Art: Draw a cross and place it in a plastic egg. Draw a cross on the side of a hard-boiled egg.

Expectation: The crucifixion can be a sensitive and scary concept for younger children. Even so, it's important for them to know what Jesus went through to show how much God loves the world and to offer forgiveness for everyone. During the year 2020, many people are feeling grief, sadness, and loss.

Wonder: What activities are you missing or grieving the loss of during this time? How do you think the disciples' felt when Jesus died on the cross? What question would you like to ask Jesus about when he died?

Prayer: God, every time I see a cross, it reminds me of your love that is present in times of sadness and grief. Amen.

Egg 7: Saturday

Takeaway/Objective: Families will learn that God is present in our times of waiting.

Read Scripture: Matthew 27:59-60 (CEB) ⁵⁹Joseph took the body, wrapped it in a clean linen cloth, ⁶⁰and laid it in his own new tomb, which he had carved out of the rock. After he rolled a large stone at the door of the tomb, he went away.

Emotion: Waiting (to remain in place in readiness or expectation of something)

Object: Dark cloth to suggest the stillness of this day.

Expectation: On the Saturday, everything was so still you could hear every little sound. There was nothing that could be done. Holy Saturday is a day of waiting.

Activity: Play a game of Red Light/Green Light. This game is a favorite for children and is easy to play with no props needed. This game also is a great way to build executive function (decision and motor control skills) through play. Executive function develops better emotion regulation and impulse control by helping children pause (**waiting**), thinking, and then decide before reacting. Here are the rules:

1. The children line up, side-by-side at one end of the yard (if outside) or a large room (if inside) facing the “caller.” For safety reasons, if playing inside, have children walk, crawl, or crab crawl to slow down the movements.
2. The “caller” stands opposite the children, facing them.
3. When the “caller” shouts “green light” and turns about face (away from) the children, the children move toward the caller by running, walking, or crawling (depending on space and location of your game).
4. When the “caller” shouts “red light” and turns facing the children again, the children must stop or “freeze” immediately.
5. The “caller” continues to shout, “red light” and “green light” until a child reaches the “caller.” That child could then become the next “caller.”
6. Certain variations of game suggest when the “caller” turns around when calling “red light,” if a child is pointed out as moving, he or she returns to the starting line. This version can become argumentative and may distract from the object of game, which is body control and cognitive response.
7. Once a child reaches the “caller,” select another “caller” and go back to the starting line and begin the game again.

Wonder 1: How did it feel when you were given a red light and had to wait? How did it feel to wait your turn to be the caller? Why is waiting so hard?

Egg Art: Draw a watch or an old-fashioned clock face and place it in your plastic egg, or you may place a watch in the egg. Draw a clock face on the side of a hard-boiled egg.

Egg Hunt: If you are doing the egg hunt all in one day, place a dark cloth over the eggs. If you are doing this during Holy Week, in the evening of this day as you gather for family worship time, place a dark cloth over the entire worship space. Or cover your egg art eggs with the dark cloth. As a family, sit quietly and discuss the waiting that took place on this day in the Easter story. You are waiting in the same way for your Easter egg hunt tomorrow. Afterward, sit in silence and concentrate on the black cloth covering what you are waiting for.

Wonder 2: How does it feel when you have a pet/favorite stuffed animal/friend/family nearby? Does it feel different when they are gone? Is waiting difficult during these days of physical distancing?

Prayer: God, it is hard for us to sit still and wait. In our sadness and waiting, we trust in Jesus that waiting is not the end of the story. Amen.

Egg 8: Easter Sunday

Takeaway/Objective: Families will learn about the Easter joy of Jesus' resurrection.

Read Scripture: Mathew 28:5-6 (CEB) ⁵But the angel said to the women, "Don't be afraid. I know that you are looking for Jesus who was crucified. ⁶He isn't here, because he's been raised from the dead, just as he said. Come, see the place where they laid him.

Emotion: Joy (Joy is an emotion. Happiness is a feeling that goes away quicker than joy. Joy is a deeper sense of great pleasure and gladness.)

Activity 1: Easter egg hunt. If you are doing a traditional Easter egg hunt all on one day, add the egg art eggs to your egg hunt. Once all eight eggs have been collected, as a family retell and reflect on the Holy Week story through the objects or art. Once completed, display your art and or eggs in a windowsill of your house or apartment.

Object: Empty plastic egg.

Egg Art: Empty plastic egg. Leave one empty egg for this day to represent the tomb. The tomb is empty just as the egg is empty. An empty egg on Easter morning is better than one filled with candy, better than toys! It is the emptiness of the tomb. The empty egg holds the most wonderful gift ever . . . the empty tomb!

Expectation: How is the empty egg a surprise? How might that remind us of the surprise the women felt at the empty tomb that first Easter morning? In one sense, the egg is empty; in another way, the egg is filled with endless possibilities. The tomb was empty! Death has been defeated! All things are possible! God raised Jesus from the dead and proved that nothing, not even death on the cross, could stop God from loving us!

Activity 2: Playing Easter Joy!

Supplies: drum, pot, pan.

Provide something that makes noise for each child. Rhythm instruments are great . . . but so are homemade things like two spoons to hit together and baby rattles to shake.

Say: "I am going to beat my drum, and as I do, I want you to guess what I am feeling".

(Play the drum happily and quickly and smile.)

Ask: "What feeling did you hear"?(They will say, "happiness.")

(Play the drum slowly and frown).

Ask: "What feeling did you hear?"(They will say, "sadness").

Say: "You are good at this. I am going to tell you the story of Easter now, and I want you to hear it in the music I make."

(Begin to hit the drum happily and continue it while you speak).

Say: "Jesus was the light of the world, God's love walking with people, teaching them, healing them... it was wonderful time!" (Keep playing happily).

Say: "But then, (start playing slowly and sadly), some people did not love Jesus, and they were afraid of his great love, and they decided to crucify him. So, they arrested him (one beat), and

they hurt him (one beat), and they made him wear a crown of thorns (one beat) and carry his cross (one beat), and they hung him on the cross (crucified)."

(Silence).

Say: "Jesus died, and it was the saddest day ever. And the people were so sad." (Silence).

Say: "On the third day, after Jesus had been taken from the cross and was laid in the tomb, people went there to take care of his body and (start beating the drum slowly and get faster and faster as you talk) when they got there, they found out the best news ever! (Beat faster.) Jesus was alive again... he was raised, and his love was still with them!!! And that was the happiest day ever!!!" (Beat harder and faster!)

(Silence.)

Say: "You know, that is our happy Easter story... but it just had one problem... I had only one drum and there is no way I could play the happiness of that first Easter by myself on that one drum. It was happy (Start playing the drum and have others begin to make noise with their "instruments." The noise will get louder and louder, and the children will laugh; and you may have to shout):

Say: "That is what happiness sounds like... Easter is the happiest day ever!!! HAPPY EASTER!"

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Wonder: Did you feel sad when the beats were slow? Did you feel happy when the beats were fast? The disciples and the others shared the "good news" of Easter that Jesus was alive. How can you share with others that "good news"? Take your instruments from earlier outside (with supervision) and get even louder. Let the world around you hear the happy sounds of Easter!

Prayer: God of Easter, we thank you for the good news of the Resurrection. Because of your love, all things are possible! Help us to experience Easter joy, Amen.

OTHER RESOURCES:

Holy Week in a Box, [holy-week-in-a-box](#)

Picture the Bible, [Holy-Week-bookW.pdf](#)—An image- and activity-based portrayal of the last days of Jesus' earthly life.

Blessing over the Easter Eggs, [blessing-of-the-easter-eggs](#)

All the emotion definitions are taken from Merriam-Webster's Word Central Online Dictionary – www.wordcentral.com

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Rev. Kevin Johnson is the Director, Children's Ministries for Congregational Vitality & Intentional Discipleship at Discipleship Ministries. Kevin's hero Fred Rogers suggests that we, 'listen to the children, learn about them, learn from them. Think of the children first.' This quote defines Rev. Kev's approach to ministry. Kevin, an ordained elder of the Kentucky Annual Conference, has over fifteen years of ministry experience in which he has thought of the children first. Prior to ministry, Kevin worked with children in the hospital setting and in group homes for emotionally and physically abused children.

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