**Suggested Easter service for schools**

*Welcome to our special Easter act of Worship.*

Alleluia.

Christ is risen.
He is risen indeed.

Alleluia.

*We light the candle in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit.*

*During our act of worship we are going to use well known hymns and Bible passages to help us reflect on the Easter story and the sacrifice Jesus made for the whole world by dying on the cross.*

**Bible Reading 1 – Luke 22: 14-20**

**The Lord’s Supper**

When the time came, Jesus and the apostles were sitting at the table. He said to them, “I wanted very much to eat this Passover meal with you before I die.  I will never eat another Passover meal until it is given its true meaning in the kingdom of God.”

Then Jesus took a cup. He gave thanks to God for it and said, “Take this cup and give it to everyone here. I will not drink again from the fruit of the vine until God’s kingdom comes.”

Then Jesus took some bread. He thanked God for it, broke it, and gave it to the apostles. Then Jesus said, “This bread is my body that I am giving for you. Do this to remember me.” In the same way, after supper, Jesus took the cup and said, “This cup shows the new agreement that God makes with his people. This covenant begins with my blood which is poured out for you.”

If you are able to, you could share a bread with each other. Put the bread in a basket, each child takes a small piece to eat and then passes the basket along to the next person.

*After Jesus shared in this meal with his disciples, he went to the garden of Gethsemane to pray. He knew that is death would be a painful and horrific one. He asked God to take his suffering from him, but Jesus knew that he had to die so all the world could be free of all the bad things they had done. Jesus knew he had to obey his Fathers will. As Jesus continued to pray, God sent an angel down to strengthen and comfort Jesus.*

**Prayer activity 1 – God understands our distress and worries and promises to help us.**

Have a large cross at the front of your worship space and enough pieces of wool/string or ribbon for each child and adult.

Explain that just as Jesus asked God to help him when he was upset and worried, we can ask God to help us too. God understands how we are feeling and tell us to bring all our concerns to him.

Invite the children to come and take a small piece of string, wool or ribbon. For each thing you are sad or worried about tie a knot in your piece of material. As you make the knots think quietly about these things an if you would like to ask God to help you with these worries. Then invite the children to bring these things to front and place them at the foot of the cross as a sign that they have given them to God.

Remember when Jesus was really upset in the garden and was praying, God sent an angel to strengthen him, God can do the same for you, just ask him.

*This Bible passage could be place at the foot of the cross. 2 Corinthians 3-4*

*Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of compassion and the God of all comfort, who comforts us in all our troubles, so that we can comfort those in any trouble with the comfort we ourselves receive from God.*

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KZ_VlQ8M5EE> you could play this track in the background as the children are praying and reflecting.

**Bible Reading 2 – Luke 23: 33-34**

**Jesus is crucified**

When they came to the place called “The Skull,” they crucified Jesus there, and the two criminals, one on his right and the other on his left. Jesus said, “Forgive them, Father! They don't know what they are doing.”

**Reading 1** - *Taken from When I survey the wondrous cross by Isaac Watts*

When I survey the wondrous cross
On which the Prince of glory died,
My richest gain I count but loss,
And pour contempt on all my pride.

See from His head, His hands, His feet,
Sorrow and love flow mingled down!
Did e’er such love and sorrow meet,
Or thorns compose so rich a crown?

**Bible Reading 3 - Luke 23: 44-47**

**The Death of Jesus**

It was about twelve o'clock when the sun stopped shining and darkness covered the whole country until three o'clock; and the curtain hanging in the Temple was torn in two.  Jesus cried out in a loud voice, “Father! In your hands I place my spirit!” He said this and died.

The army officer saw what had happened, and he praised God, saying, “Certainly he was a good and innocent man!”

**Reading 2 – Taken from Because He lives by Kristin Chenoweth**

God sent His son, they called Him Jesus
He came to love, heal and forgive
He lived and died to buy my pardon
An empty grave is there to prove my saviour lives

Because He lives, I can face tomorrow
Because He lives, all fear is gone
Because I know He holds the future
And life is worth the living, just because He lives

**I wonder why Jesus had to die?**

Watch this video clip, which explains the reasons why. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cZ4gQniUVO8>

Turn to your partner – I wonder why Christians believe Jesus had to die?

I wonder what knowing that Jesus died to take away the sins of the world might mean for you?

**Prayer activity 2 – Gods love**

Have enough hearts for each child and adult at the foot of the cross.

Invite the children to reflect on what they have just heard and discussed. Invite them to come and take a heart from the foot of the cross as a reminder of the love God has for all his people regardless of who we are or what we have done. The cross is a symbol of love, Gods love for all the world.



God is love.

*You are precious to me.
    You are honoured, and you are loved.*

*Isaiah 43:4*

# [*https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mfyVeJ2OdQg*](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mfyVeJ2OdQg) *- Jonathan McReynolds - Lovin' Me. You could have this track playing the background as the children think about God’s love and come and take a heart.*

**Sing together – Roll the Stone away**

**Bible reading 4 – Luke 24: 1-12**

**The Resurrection**

Very early on Sunday morning the women went to the tomb, carrying the spices they had prepared. They found the stone rolled away from the entrance to the tomb, so they went in; but they did not find the body of the Lord Jesus. They stood there puzzled about this, when suddenly two men in bright shining clothes stood by them. Full of fear, the women bowed down to the ground, as the men said to them, “Why are you looking among the dead for one who is alive? He is not here; he has been raised. Remember what he said to you while he was in Galilee:  ‘The Son of Man must be handed over to sinners, be crucified, and three days later rise to life.’”

Then the women remembered his words, returned from the tomb, and told all these things to the eleven disciples and all the rest. The women were Mary Magdalene, Joanna, and Mary the mother of James; they and the other women with them told these things to the apostles. But the apostles thought that what the women said was nonsense, and they did not believe them. But Peter got up and ran to the tomb; he bent down and saw the grave cloths but nothing else. Then he went back home amazed at what had happened.

*Use a large Easter egg as an illustration of the Empty tomb. Jesus didn’t stay in the tomb dead, he rose from the dead. This showed everyone that he was the son of God and that God can do the impossible. So when you open your Easter eggs, remember that they are a symbol of new life, the life of Jesus who rose from the dead leaving the tomb empty, just like this Easter Egg.*

[*http://flamecreativekids.blogspot.com/2017/04/easter-egg-prayers.html*](http://flamecreativekids.blogspot.com/2017/04/easter-egg-prayers.html)

**Reading 3 - Taken from In Christ Alone by Stuart Townend**

In Christ alone! - who took on flesh,
Fullness of God in helpless babe.
This gift of love and righteousness,
Scorned by the ones He came to save
Till on that cross as Jesus died,
The wrath of God was satisfied
For every sin on Him was laid
Here in the death of Christ I live.

There in the ground His body lay,
Light of the world by darkness slain:
Then bursting forth in glorious day
Up from the grave He rose again
And as He stands in victory
Sin's curse has lost its grip on me,
For I am His and He is mine
Bought with the precious blood of Christ

**Reading 4 - Crown Him with many crowns by Matthew Bridges**

Crown Him Lord of life
Who triumphed o'er the grave
And rose victorious in the strife
For those He came to save
His glories now we sing
Who died and rose on high
Who died eternal life to bring
And lives that death may die

**Reflection – sit quietly and ponder what this story might mean for you?**

I wonder what the Easter story means for you?

It is a story of joy and sorrow or despair and hope. It is also a story full of love. God loves for all his world.

**Easter prayers** – written by the children.

Let us pray

Amen

**Easter Joy - By Joanna Fuchs** (Adapted for school use)

Jesus came to earth,
To show us how to live,
How to put others first,
How to love and how to give.

Then He set about His work,
That God sent Him to do;
He took our punishment on Himself;
He made us clean and new.

He could have saved Himself,
Calling angels from above,
But He chose to pay our price for sin;
He paid it out of love.

The Lord died on Good Friday,
But the cross did not destroy
His resurrection on Easter morn
That fills our hearts with joy.

Thank you Saviour; Thank you Lord.
Help us love like you!

*As you leave worship today you will be given a small Easter egg to enjoy. The Easter story is sad, but ends with joy as Christians remember all around the world how Jesus came back to life.*

**Sending liturgy**

Go in the peace of Christ.

Alleluia, alleluia.
Thanks be to God.

Alleluia, alleluia.

Amen

**Suggested music**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=05LVkdMX7Kw> – Medley of Easter songs to have playing before the act of worship.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xNrV2fX5Qb4> – a modern version of Christ the Lord is risen today. Have playing as the children leave.

<https://www.eden.co.uk/shop/big-start-songs-for-collective-worship-a-talk-by-spring-harvest-4728856.html>

Song to sing – Roll the stone away