

Theme: Easter Season

Objective: To help families name ways that they can be the hands of the Risen Christ in the world

Overview: In this event, families of kindergarteners gather to celebrate the Risen Christ by focusing on how each of us is called to be Christ's hands in the world and answer the question, "How can we use our hands to reach out to others with love?"

An introductory "Simon-Says" activity will focus the participants on their hands. Scripture stories and group conversation, together with viewing visual images of the Risen Christ which show him with arms and hands outstretched, will focus participants on ways that we can be Jesus' hands in the world. Participants will visit art stations to create a family "hands" project, which they can bring home to use as a centerpiece for the family table or family prayer space.

EVENT PLAN

Prior to the Family-Faith Event:

1. Invite all families with kindergarteners to register.
2. Choose a location that has a large enough meeting space for your group, with space for the project stations.
3. Prepare an Easter prayer space with a Bible, candle, crucifix, white cloth and other symbols representing the liturgical season of Easter.
4. Gather and prepare the materials for the art stations (see "Materials Needed" below).
5. Gather art images of the Risen Christ to show to the participants. Search "Risen Christ" images on the Internet, and choose those that show the Risen Christ with arms and hands outstretched. Decide if you will project the images on a wall or screen, or use printed images.
6. Make St. Teresa of Avila prayer cards (see "Materials Needed" below).

Day of Event

Welcome

1. Invite participants to gather in their family groups; a carpeted floor is best.
2. Briefly wish everyone Happy Easter, and tell them that during this event we will think about how we can bring the Good News of Jesus' Resurrection to the people around us.

Focusing Activity: Play Simon Says

1. Invite all to stand for a game of "Simon Says." Remind everyone how the game is played. The focus of this particular game will be using our hands, but don't tell the participants this.
2. Have the group do some of the basic Simon Says moves to warm up to the game, such as jump up, turn around, touch your nose, etc. Then focus on Simon Says instructions that involve the hands, such as clap your hands, wiggle your fingers, high-five someone, rub your hands together, etc.
3. Next, give Simon-Says orders that ask for a more targeted response from the participants, such as
 - a. "Simon Says name one thing you use your hands for ..."
 - b. "Simon Says tell one way you use your hands to help someone else."
4. Then, end with these "Simon Says raise your hands high and outstretched to the world and shout 'Alleluia!'" and "Simon Says raise your hands high and outstretched and shout "Christ is Risen, Alleluia!"

Scripture Story and Group Conversation

1. Invite everyone to sit down. Show the group the images of the Risen Christ you have collected.
2. While showing the images, tell one of the stories of Jesus' Resurrection, such as from Matthew 28:1-10, Mark 16:1-8, Luke 24:1-12, John 10:1-10, or read a children's Bible version, or read from a storybook. (You may also wish to incorporate the stories about Jesus'

post-Resurrection appearances to Mary of Magdala, to the disciples on the road to Emmaus, to Thomas, and at the Ascension.)

3. Referring to the images, ask the group what each image has in common. Answers might include they show Jesus with arms and hands outstretched, as if reaching out to us, etc.
4. Discuss in these or your own words, "We know that Jesus loves us very much. He died on the Cross, and then rose again. That way, we will always have new life and know about Jesus' great love for us. Many of the pictures that show the Risen Christ show him with arms and hands stretched towards us, as if he wants to take us all into one big group hug and love us up! What are some of the ways that people you know show us Jesus' love?"
5. Ask the children, "How does your mom, dad, or your grandparents, show you Jesus' love?"
6. Ask the parents, "How does your child show you Jesus' love?"
7. Tell the group about a poem St. Teresa of Avila wrote that tells about how we are Jesus' hands in the world. She said "Christ has no body but yours, no hands, no feet on earth but yours" Our hands are Jesus' hands when we reach out with love and care to one another.
8. Ask the participants to name some of the ways that we can use our hands to show our love and care for other people.

Event Activity

1. Explain that for the activity, families will make a family set of handprints, to symbolize how our families are signs of Christ's love in the world. Families will bring the handprints home as a reminder about what St. Teresa said, that Christ has no hands but ours.
2. Describe the three different art stations. (Families will choose one of these stations.)

Station 1: Stained Glass Hands

Have students use vegetable peelers to shave pieces of crayons into a thin layer on the wax paper.

Place crayon shavings between two sheets of wax paper, cut to be able to fit an adult handprint. Avoid mixing the colors. (There should be one pair of wax pages per family member.

With adult supervision, press the wax paper with an iron, making sure that the wax fills up to the edges of the paper.

Using a marker, outline a handprint on each, and cut out. Families can use yarn to connect the handprints, if desired.

Station 2: Family Hands Mobile

Using construction paper and art materials, family members should trace and then cut out their handprints.

Use wire coat hangers and string or yarn to create mobiles to bring home.

Station 3: Watercolor Hands Banner or Prayer Cloth

Family members use tempera paints to make family handprints on cloth to create either a banner or prayer cloth for a prayer table at home.

3. Give the participants plenty of time to complete their family projects.
4. Invite families to show each other their completed projects.

Concluding Prayer

1. Place all of the projects in the center of the room (careful with those that are still wet!). Demonstrate how a family can create a simple Easter season prayer space using their handprint project, a Bible, a cross, a white cloth, and a candle.
2. Ask all of the families to join in a short blessing prayer. Pray this or a similar prayer:
Holy God, you sent your Son Jesus to show us how to love. Today we celebrate the Risen Christ who is present among us. With his hands, he blesses us. We are his hands in the world today. Help us and guide us in using our hands to show Jesus' love to others. Bless our hands that they may show your love to the world.

(Pause to pray aloud or silently for those who need our loving care and prayers today.)

3. Pass around the St. Teresa of Avila prayer cards, one per family (to take home). Together read aloud the prayer on the card.
4. Join or raise hands in prayer to pray the Our Father.

Refreshments

1. Thank everyone for participating. Invite families to join in refreshments, and to take home their family handprint activity and display it as a reminder about how we are Christ's hands in the world.
2. Refer families to [insert link to rclbenziger.com > Stories of God > Kindergarten > Online Resources > Parents and Families] for an Easter season table prayer based on St. Teresa's prayer, "Christ has no hands but yours."

Materials needed

- Images of the Risen Christ (to project from a computer onto a screen or wall, or print-outs to pass around during the Scripture storytelling). (Enter "the Risen Christ" in your favorite Internet search engine to find images.)
- For stained glass activity:
 - Wax paper
 - Iron(s)
 - Ironing board or large towel
 - Used crayons
 - Vegetable peelers
 - Scissors
 - Marker
- For banner or prayer cloth activity:
 - White nylon cloths, square or rectangle, approx. 24" x 36"
 - Tempra paints and brushes
 - Paint aprons (optional)
 - A place to wash hands!
- For handprint mobile activity:
 - Construction paper
 - Scissors
 - Glue
 - Art supplies such as glitter, crayons, markers, puffy paint, etc.
- Bible
- Candle
- St. Teresa of Avila prayer cards (print this prayer on cardstock, one per family):

Christ has no body but yours,
No hands, no feet on earth but yours,
Yours are the eyes with which he looks
Compassion on this world,
Yours are the feet with which he walks to do good,
Yours are the hands, with which he blesses all the world.
Yours are the hands, yours are the feet,
Yours are the eyes, you are his body.
--St. Teresa of Avila