



THEME: EASTER AND SPRINGTIME

Objectives:

1. To learn about Easter and the coming of spring.
2. To take a walk with the family and find the signs of spring.
3. To meet and play with other families and children.

Prior to Family Faith Event

- Invite all families with 3-5 year olds to register.
- Choose a location that will allow use of the floor and has plenty of space for movement.
- Invite families to bring these items to share and use during the session:
 - A living plant or fresh cut flowers.
 - A large empty canning jar.
 - A food or beverage to share with all.

EVENT PLAN

Welcome

- Invite all to gather in their family groups; a carpeted floor is best.
- Arrange flowers and living plants for a decorative background.
- Discuss the objectives in language that adults and children can understand.

Group Conversation

- Invite children to be seated on the carpet near you for this presentation and discussion.
- Show a picture of Jesus dying on the cross or use a crucifix.
- Talk about the following points:
 - Jesus died on a Friday and his family and friends buried him immediately. Jesus' friends were very sad.
 - On Sunday morning, they went to the place where they had buried Jesus. They were surprised and happy because Jesus had risen from the dead. He was walking and talking and very much alive.
 - It was the first Easter. They were so happy they sang Alleluias!
 - Jesus rising from the dead on Easter was so great that we celebrate it every year in the springtime.
- Teach children an Alleluia song of your choice, add clapping, dancing and gestures. Repeat it several times so the children commit it to memory. Invite parents to join in the singing, clapping, dancing and gestures too.

Family Walk (about ten minutes in length)

- Explain that the families are going to go for and walk and their assignment is to look for signs of spring and new life—birds, insects, buds on trees, new leaves on trees, people out working in their yards, riding bikes, walking, rollerblading, skateboarding, not wearing coats, etc.
- Invite the children to come forward to get a large envelope
- Ask families put all the signs of spring they find into the envelope to share with the group. Or they can write names of things they find on the envelope.
- Set a time for all to be back from their walk.

- On their return, have the small children join you on the carpet with their family envelope.
- Ask each child to share what is in or on the envelope. An older member of the family can assist with the written items.
- Encourage sharing by asking questions about items.
- When all have shared, ask families to return any living creatures to the outdoors. All families should go participate in setting the creatures free into nature.

Snack

Move the group to a different area for snack. The movement supports a child's need to be active. Invite the children to hope or skip to the snack area.

Family Activity

- Gather in Family groups.
- Describe the family activity, a table decoration depicting Easter and Springtime. It would be wise to make a sample or demonstrate this so that families can see what you are trying to explain.
- Provide each family with a group of bare branches. The branches are placed in a fruit jar and vacant space is filled with small, decorative stones or marbles.
- Let the preschool children do the carrying and fetching for this project.
 - Invite them to come up and pick out 3-5 branches for their family.
 - Once they have delivered these to the family circle, have them deliver the rocks or marbles to hold the branches upright in the glass jar.
- On several tables, place all of the items families may use to decorate their bare branches (see list below). Invite them to use items freely and to be very creative as they make the bare branches come alive.
- Play traditional Easter hymns in the background as families decorate.

Circle Prayer

- Have families make a large circle, placing their table decoration in the middle of the circle for all to see.
- Invite all to join in singing the Alleluia with clapping, dancing and gestures after each statement of faith.

Jesus is risen from the dead. (sing Alleluia)

Easter celebrates Jesus' new life. (sing Alleluia)

Jesus is our forever friend. (sing Alleluia)

We will rise to new life like Jesus. (sing Alleluia)

At Home

Encourage families to:

- Place their finished springtime decoration on their table.
- Go for a walk in about three weeks to see what new spring things you can find.

Materials needed:

Pictures of Jesus crucified and/or buried

Picture of the Risen Christ

Craft glue

Assorted small foam objects—flowers, leaves, insects, birds, eggs

Silk flowers with small blossoms to glue to branches

Spring colored narrow ribbon

Moss for bird nests

Copies of hymns for adults only or use overhead and project on wall

Beverages

Paper products

CD of traditional Easter Hymns

CD Player