

10 WAYS TO CELEBRATE EASTER AT HOME



1. Bask in the light of Christ

Bring out the baptismal candles of your children and pray around them after dinner or before bedtime. With the aid of photos, remember and retell the stories of the special day of their baptism.

2. Live the Easter Gospels

The Easter Gospels are full of vivid and wonderful stories of the risen Jesus appearing to his disciples. Bring these scenes alive by reading them in a creative setting which reflects the story: rise to greet the dawn (Jn 20:1), barbeque some fish on the beach (Jn 21:9), pray on a mountain top (Mt 28:16)

3. Greet one another

Instead of the standard 'G'day' or grunt, greet one another on Easter morning with a traditional Christian greeting: 'He is risen!' 'He is risen indeed.'

4. Play Easter music

Bring out all your favourite 'easter' music and sing plenty of alleluias and songs of praise during this joyful season.

5. Use symbols of life

Creatively use easter symbols in your home: water, light and signs of life. Light candles, fill a bowl with water, decorate your front door with boughs of greenery. Shock yourself with a cold shower one morning - just to remind you of the waters of your baptism and the bracing freshness of the gospel! If you have expecting or have a newborn babe your home is indeed a sacred sign of the gospel of life.

6. Easter activity

Enjoy a simple easter activity with your children: paint designs on hardboiled eggs, plant a seedling, with rocks and plants create an 'empty tomb' scene in the garden, perform an easter play. As you get creative, talk about the meaning of Easter and tell the 'Jesus' story.

7. Share Good News stories

Around the dinner table, share one of the great blessings of your life. How has God gifted you with love, faith, new life? Set up a Good News list on your 'fridge door. Invite people to jot down all the blessings of their week.

8. Be a missionary

You don't have to go overseas to be a missionary. In your own home pray for the world, that the saving love of Christ may be felt by every person. Offer Christian hospitality. Envelop visitors in the faith of your home, perhaps 'breaking bread' with them at a family meal. As a family take part in a social justice project or a neighbourhood outreach.

9. Welcome a newcomer

By this time many people on the RCIA journey will have been baptised in their local parish. Share in the welcome with a warm greeting and an invitation to visit your home for a cup of coffee. Ask about their faith journey and listen carefully - the newly baptised are in a unique position to proclaim the Good News.

10. Spread Christ's peace

During the Easter season focus on giving warmer handshakes, bigger smiles, tender touches. Laughter, humour and good plain fun are also key ingredients to experiencing the joy of the risen Christ.

Easter is a season not just a Sunday. Aim to do something different or a little special as a family each week of the Easter season, right up to Pentecost Sunday. May you proclaim the risen Lord through the 'stuff' of everyday life.

Helpful hint

When we speak of sharing the Easter message with 'our children' we are referring to a task for every adult, not just parents with young children. We all have children in our lives - nieces, nephews, godchildren, neighbours.

Parent or otherwise, be aware of your own creative power to bring forth life and love in our world.



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10 WAYS TO...

BASK IN THE JOY OF EASTER

1. Remember your awakening in faith

Think back on your journey of faith. Was there a special moment of conversion? An 'Ah ha!' moment when it all made sense? Who first taught you the story of Jesus? Get in touch with these precious memories and allow them to affect you in the present.

2. Adorn your home

Fill your home with easter symbols of light and life. Play 'alleluia' songs, light candles, add potted colour or a gold and white festive tablecloth. Build an 'easter garden' in the backyard with the kids. Springclean your sacred space and open the bible to the Easter Gospel.

3. Throw a party

Now that your home is looking good, throw a 'resurrection party' for your fellow believers and invite the neighbours. It needn't be a huge bash. (Then again it might be!) Let your neighbourhood know that Christians go a bit crazy at Easter.

4. Send out warm messages

Fill your Easter season with smiles, warm handshakes, affection, looks of love. Plant 'I love you' notes around the house where family members will find them. Or add a special 'easter treat' in your child's lunch box. Romance your spouse in a special way this Easter.

5. Have some fun

Rumble the kids. Dance with your three-year-old. Challenge the family to a backyard cricket match. Hold a fancy-dress family meal. Anyone for a game of trivial pursuit? Share some laughs. If you can get a smile (okay, a look of amusement) out of your sceptical teenager, you've succeeded big-time.

6. Make prayer time special

Light a candle after your family meal and reflect and sing an 'Alleluia' verse.

Make a pilgrimage to a sacred place or shrine. Say a prayer on your journey.

If you are grieving a sorrow, bring your tears to Jesus at the foot of the cross.

7. Touch a sorrow with life

Reach out to someone who is finding it hard to feel joyful this Easter.

Drop in a card or a pot-plant to a grieving family. Invite a lonely person to a family meal. Give a practical gift (e.g. mow a lawn, mend a fence, cook a casserole) to a person who is ill or financially struggling. Visit someone who is house-bound, or perhaps in hospital, or in jail.

8. Celebrate Sundays well

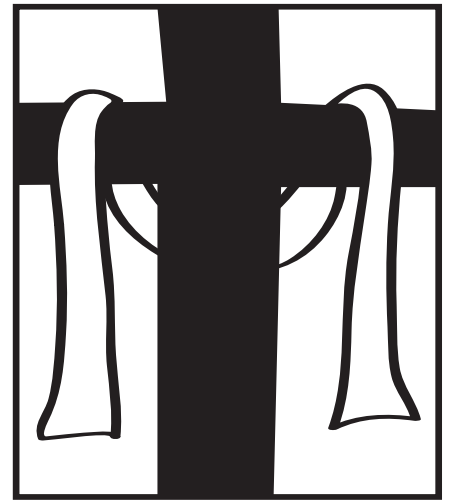
Every Sunday is the 'Day of the Lord', our 'weekly Easter' when we remember and celebrate the mystery of Christ's death and resurrection. Make Sundays during the Easter season extra special: a time for resting, praying, enjoying family and friends.

9. Welcome the sun

Get up very early one morning to greet the sunrise and to read the Gospel account of the discovery of the empty tomb (Jn 20:1-9). Or find another way to prayerfully enjoy God's creation.

10. Listen to the newly baptised

Those who were baptised at the Easter Vigil have their own special 'resurrection story' to share. Invite a new member of your faith family home for a cuppa and ask about his or her story. This is a stunning way to hear the Good News proclaimed in your own living room.



The Resurrection. A story too good to be true? Even Jesus' disciples found it difficult to believe at first. But then the awesome reality began to sink in: He is risen from the dead! Death is not the end. Our sins are forgiven. Peace is a real possibility. Life can be filled with a hope which no one, not even the most evil of evils, can take from us.

With our faith in the Resurrection, we are assured life in the Spirit of the risen Christ, now and eternally.

Helpful hint

Easter is a season, not just a Sunday. Make the most of these weeks in the Church's calendar (right up to Pentecost), a season of joy and celebration.

Perhaps we don't think of 'enjoying ourselves' as particularly spiritual thing. And yet, if the world is to recognise us as a people of the *Good News*, it is vital that they see and hear tangible evidence of this fact!

Our joy cannot be muttered words of piety, it must be felt in the glow of our smiles, in the warmth of our welcome, in outreaching hands and hearts.



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Sing Alleluia!