

Why do some Christians put a cross on their Easter Garden?

EYFS
Learning
Pathway

UNIT 4

In this unit, pupils find out about the key events from Palm Sunday until Easter Day in the Christian Salvation story. They will find out about the Christian belief that Jesus saved his people from their sins by dying on the cross and rising again three days later. During the unit, pupils will encounter signs and symbols linked to the celebration of Easter and be able to talk about why these are important for believers.

KEY VOCABULARY

- JESUS
- GOD
- SALVATION
- EASTER
- HOSANNA
- PALM
- GOOD FRIDAY
- DONKEY
- SUNDAY
- DISCIPLES



Early Years Foundation Stage – Learning Pathway

Lesson 1

STEP 1: Show a Children's Bible (The Beginner's Bible is a good option for younger children). Ask whether pupils know who the Bible is a special book for. Explain we are going to be finding out about the Easter story which is special for Christians. Show a picture of Jesus as a baby in a manger, explaining that although pupils may know Christians believe Jesus was born at Christmas, this story is set years later when Jesus was in his 30s.

STEP 2: Show some pictures of Palm leaves, a donkey, the city of Jerusalem and cloaks. Explain that the story starts on the day that Christians believe Jesus entered the city of Jerusalem riding on a donkey. Read the story of Palm Sunday (if using a version different from The Beginners Bible, ensure the key events reflect those found in the Bible).

STEP 3: Ask what the people in the story were shouting. Encourage pupils to say the word 'hosanna' to you in different voices (loud, quiet, squeaky etc). Explain Hosanna means 'save us.' Ask the following questions:

Why do you think people were shouting this at Jesus?

What did the people need saving from?

Explain the people shouted 'Hosanna' because they recognised Jesus as the saviour. Christians today also call Jesus the saviour because they believe that he saved them from their sins.

Focus Group:

Pupils try to write 'Hosanna' on a leaf outline (give word cards so that they can copy the word). Encourage pupils to decorate their leaves by adding green tissue paper and other items. Ask what 'Hosanna' means and record pupils' responses.

Independent Group:

Have some cut out large palm leaves and cloaks set up. Encourage pupils to act out the story independently. You might also give pictures of the different scenes so pupils can sequence them.

Lesson 2

STEP 1: Recap the last lesson. Ask: Who is Palm Sunday a special day for? What did the people in the story shout at Jesus? If helpful, Re-read the story or watch a short video* to remind pupils of key events. Show the children on a map where the city of Jerusalem is and a photograph of what it looks like today. **STEP 2:** Share some photographs from Palm Sunday celebrations in different churches (ensure you show a diverse range of churches and celebrations) and discuss what pupils can see happening.

STEP 3: Show a palm cross (or a photograph of one), explain that many Christians receive one every year on Palm Sunday. Tell pupils they are made of palm leaves. Ask: Why do you think many Christians are given these? What do the palm crosses help Christians remember? Show some El Salvador crosses that depict Palm Sunday. What has been drawn on them to show the story?

Focus Group:

Pupils design their own El Salvador crosses to show the key events from Palm Sunday.

Independent Group:

Using their palm leaves from last week, practice waving them and saying 'Hosanna' and 'save us' in different voices.

Lesson 3

STEP 1: Recap the last lesson. Ask: Who is Palm Sunday a special day for? Show the Bible and remind pupils this is the special holy book for Christians. Ask:

What did the people shout at Jesus?

What does 'Hosanna' mean?

STEP 2: Explain Christians believe that they needed to be saved from their sins (terrible things that they have done). Explain Christians all over the world believe that later in the story, Jesus did this for them. Tell pupils that today we are going to be reading the rest of the Easter story. Use a clear version of the story that links well to the original text to share the key events with the children (The Beginner's Bible is a clear, child friendly version). Explain Christians believe that when Jesus died, he was 'sinless' because he had not done anything wrong; Christians believe this means Jesus was able to die for the terrible things they have done so they can be forgiven.

STEP 3: Show a picture of a cross. Explain that for many Christians, this is a special symbol because they believe Jesus died on a cross for their sins. Show some different pictures of how the cross symbol is used by Christians today (e.g pictures of necklaces, images for the home, crosses on mug or bibles etc).

Lesson 4

STEP 1: Show some pictures of Easter eggs. Ask which are pupils' favourites and which they would like to eat. Explain that many Christians share eggs with each other during the Easter celebrations, and that for Christians, eggs are a sign of new life.

STEP 2: Read the story of Easter again with the children or watch a short video* looking out for signs of new life. Ask pupils where they think there is new life in the story. Focus on Jesus dying and rising again. Explain that Christians believe they receive new life in Jesus because their sins (terrible things that they have done) are forgiven because of his death.

STEP 3: Show an egg template. Ask pupils which parts of the story they might draw inside the egg to represent new life. Which symbols from the story might represent new life?

Focus Group:

Using construction materials, pupils to make their own crosses. Ask why this symbol is important for Christians and record their responses.

Independent Group:

Give pupils some picture scenes from the easter story and encourage them to make a pictorial timeline of key events.

Focus Group:

Give pupils egg templates and encourage them to draw parts of the story or symbols that represent new life. Encourage pupils to share these events with you and record what they say (on post it notes or in another helpful form).

Independent Group:

Give pupils some pictures that link with the religious celebration of Easter (hot cross buns, easter eggs, decorations for churches etc.). Can they spot symbols and signs linked to new life?

Lesson 5

STEP 1: Remind pupils of the Easter Story. Show some scenes from the story starting from Palm Sunday to Easter Sunday. As a class, order the story events by placing the pictures in a timeline. Walk down the timeline, encouraging the children to tell each stage of the story.

STEP 2: Ask pupils to remind you why Christians believe Jesus' death and resurrection are so important. Talk together about the Christian belief about forgiveness of sins and what this means for Christians today.

STEP 3: Show pictures of churches at Easter time, look at the pictures of the flowers and other decorations - ask: What do you think church will be like for Christians on Easter Day? Show some Easter banners from churches - ask: What signs and symbols can you see?

Focus Group:

Design suitable Easter decorations for a church. You might choose to give pupils an empty banner outline that they can fill with meaningful images and symbols to remind Christians about the meaning of Easter.

Independent Group:

Give pupils access to some different worship songs that might be used on Easter Sunday and listen out for any of the unit's key vocabulary in the lyrics. Which is their favourite? Which would they recommend to a church for an Easter celebration? Work with additional adult if possible.

Lesson 6

STEP 1: Recap last week's lesson and discuss what some of the celebrations in church might look like.

STEP 2: Show some pictures of different Easter Gardens. Explain that many Christian children make these at church or home on or around Easter Day. Talk through the features of an Easter Garden. Ask: Why do you think there is a cross in the garden? What does the cross symbolise?

STEP 3: Explain that some children roll a stone in front of the tomb on Good Friday and then roll it away on Easter Day; ask why pupils think this is.

Focus Group:

Get pupils to design their own Easter Garden using a template. Ask pupils to tell you about the features of their design and record what they say.

Independent Group:

Using construction materials, make their own Easter Gardens and talk about the features with a friend.

Learning Outcomes

- Talk about new ideas of new life in nature
- Recognise some symbols Christians use during Holy Week e.g. palm leaves, crosses, eggs, etc., and make connections with signs of new life on nature
- Recognise and retell stories connected with celebration of Easter
- Say why Easter is a special time for Christians
- Recognise some symbols Christians use during Holy Week e.g. palm leaves, crosses, eggs, etc., and make connections with signs of new life on nature
- Talk about some ways Christians remember these stories at Easter