# Welcome to this spring and Easter Get OWT! session, a celebration of new life popping up everywhere in nature! Say goodbye to winter and hello to blossom, new green leaves and bright flowers. Sleepy animals are waking up, seeds are sprouting, and baby lambs are in the fields – all signs of hope and joy at this special Easter time.

## Bible story

Although the story of Good Friday might be difficult for small children to understand, it is important that we talk about both the death and resurrection of Jesus as part of the Easter Story.

* **Death of Jesus:** Matthew 27:45-56; Mark 15:33-41; Luke 23:44-48; John 19:29-30
* **Jesus is alive:** Matthew 28:1-10; Mark 16:1-8; Luke 24:1-12; John 20:1-10

## Activities

Why not choose from the activity suggestions below? You can find the details of these and other activities on [The Salvation Army Family Ministries Pinterest page.](https://uk.pinterest.com/familyministriesukit/)

As a guide, the suggested activities have asterisks to show how easy they are to prepare and set up:

*\* This activity is simple to set up – gather the resources and go!*

*\*\* This activity requires a bit of preparation, eg making play-dough or gathering a few different materials.*

*\*\*\* This activity may need some extra time to source, make or freeze things, or to gather resources, so plan well in advance.*

**Easter egg trail \***

Our Easter egg trail has eight eggs to find which relate to the Easter story in a very simple way, showing things small children may recognise. Peg them up on bushes and trees and print the trail sheet so families can follow the story and find the eggs. There are some other great trails for slightly older children produced by sunhatsandwellieboots.com and the Bible Society.

**Tissue paper crosses \***

Provide plain cardboard crosses, Pritt stick or PVA glue and large tissue paper squares. Little ones can scrunch up the tissue paper and stick it on the cross to make a colourful Easter decoration.

**Cocoon tunnels \***

Set up some play tunnels for children to wriggle inside and pop out the other end. The tunnel could be a ‘cocoon’ for a caterpillar, or a winter home for a hibernating hedgehog.

**Egg rolling \***

Set up a basket of lots of empty plastic eggs and something to roll them down, eg a cardboard ramp or sections of pipe propped up against a table. Children will love rolling the eggs down the ramp!

**Nature frames \***

Cut a cross shape out of the middle of a piece of cardboard to create a window. Invite families to go and look for signs of new life through the frame. They could even take photos using their frame and share them with the group.

**Nature crowns \*\***

Celebrate new life at Easter by making a spring nature crown to wear. Make a simple crown using a strip of card or strong paper. A2 sheets cut into six long strips work well. Stick some wide double-sided tape along the card. Collect leaves and flowers for little ones to stick easily on the headbands.

**Egg suncatcher \*\***

Eggs are a symbol of new life and hope. Make card egg-shaped frames to stick on a piece of sticky-backed plastic. Children can fill the egg with petals and leaves to make an Easter nature suncatcher.

**Animal wakeup \*\***

Set up a play tray with toy animal figures (or print and laminate photos) such as hedgehogs, bats, bees, squirrels, badgers, mice, ladybirds and frogs. Add lots of leaves, as well as places for them to hide away and hibernate, eg small boxes, small logs, bird boxes. Families can play at putting the creatures to sleep and waking them up after the long winter.

**Spring play-dough \*\***

Offer some spring-coloured play-dough, eg yellow and green, along with lots of nature items such as twigs, leaves, petals, acorns, branch pieces, alongside some play-dough tools and Easter cutters. Can little ones make a bumblebee, a bunny or an Easter chick, or cut out and decorate an Easter cross? Download printable play-dough mats and laminate for children to work on.

**Easter sensory tray \*\***

Choose a base such as yellow or green-coloured rice or bird seed and add small plastic eggs, flowers, baskets, chicks, bunnies and bugs.

**Big butterfly art \*\*\***

A butterfly is a wonderful sign of new life! Make a giant cardboard butterfly and provide lots of collage materials and colouring materials to create a big butterfly piece of art.

**Easter gardens \*\*\***

Provide a tray (eg food packaging cardboard or foil trays) and materials to make an Easter garden. Fill with soil and sprinkle on some cress or fast-growing grass seed. Add some greenery or small flowers, pebbles and decorate a wooden cross. A small compostable plant pot makes a good tomb with a large pebble for the stone.

## Story ideas

Suggested books for story time or a story mat:

* *A Very Happy Easter* (Tim Thornborough)
* *The Easter Fix* (Steph Williams)
* *The Play-Along Bible* (Bob Hartman), ‘The Cross’ page 90 and ‘Alive Again!’ page 93
* *God’s Big Promises Bible Story Book* (Carl Laferton), ‘Jesus is Alive!’ page 346
* *Happyland Easter Story – Jesus Fixes Things* (Sammy Jordan)
* *The Very Hungry Caterpillar* (Eric Carle)
* *A Little Book about Spring* (Leo Lionni)

## Questions

* What signs of spring and new life did you notice today?
* It’s wonderful to celebrate new life at Easter and to know how much God loves us all. What’s your favourite thing about celebrating spring and Easter?
* The Easter story is a sad story with a happy ending. What makes you feel sad? What makes you feel happy again?

## Song suggestions

* ‘Jesus is Alive’ by Kids Ablaze Inc:
<https://youtu.be/FzxN0D3voo0?si=AUMkONszne9VIYi1>
* ‘One Two Three’ by Stormy Turner:
<https://youtu.be/MIf9jv4pVTM>
* ‘Shout Hosanna’ by Raising up Champions:
<https://youtu.be/O2u_w5rcFqY>

## Prayer

*Practise the actions with the families before saying this prayer:*

I feel sad, I feel sorry, Jesus died upon the cross. *(Heads down, sad faces)*

I feel great, I feel happy, Jesus is alive again! *(Heads up, smiling faces!)*

Happy Easter!

Amen.

*Encourage everyone to march around.*

Jesus is alive today.

Hooray! Hooray!

He is with us every day.

Hooray! Hooray!

Amen.

– *The Big Yellow Book* (Tiddlywinks), pages 23 and 27