

Easter: New Life

Feasts and Seasons
Easter



Background: The Easter Season

Although Christmas is the more popular feast, Easter is the Church's most important feast. It celebrates the central truth of our faith, the Paschal Mystery—Jesus' Passion, Death, Resurrection, and glorious Ascension.

By rising from the dead, Jesus conquered death forever. Death is no longer the end of the story. It is a transition into a new and better life with God forever. Life has won the victory! Eternal death has been overcome!

The Church's word of Easter joy is *alleluia*. During Lent the Church puts this word away and concentrates instead on the Cross of Christ. Now that Lent has passed, we return Alleluia to our prayers, our hymns, and our liturgies in order to express the joy of Easter.

Getting Ready

1. Prepare your family prayer table for the Easter season. Place upon it a white cloth, a bowl of holy water, a candle, a Bible, a cross, and a vase of fresh flowers. Find a suggested prayer and other Easter season resources at RCLBenziger.com>Resources.
2. Gather the family around the prayer table. Remind family members that the Church year season of Easter begins on Easter Sunday and ends with the celebration of Pentecost Sunday. The Easter season is a season of joy and celebration. Invite family members to offer ideas on ways your family can celebrate the season with joy. Vote on the top five ideas, and mark time on the family calendar to celebrate with joy!

Our Top Five

1. Prepare the garden for planting.
2. Clean house and give away what we don't need.
3. Go out for ice cream.
4. Make an Easter banner for our front door.
5. Make kites to fly on Pentecost Sunday.



Focus

Easter, our most important feast, is a joyous celebration of the new life won for us by Jesus' Resurrection.

The Saints Say

The fifty days from the Sunday of the Resurrection to Pentecost Sunday are celebrated in joy and exultation as one feast day, indeed as one "great Sunday."¹² These are the days above all others in which the Alleluia is sung.

Universal Norms on the Liturgical Year and the General Roman Calendar 22

¹² St. Athanasius, *Epistula festalis*: PG 26, 1366.

Prayer

Risen Lord, your rising from the dead has won for us eternal life. Fill my heart with Easter joy. Help me share the Good News of your Resurrection with my family and with all I meet. Amen. Alleluia!

Exploring the Theme

Share

1. Light the candle. Pray together the Scripture verse at the top of page 253. Explain that Jesus spoke these words to the Apostle Thomas. Thomas had said he would only believe that Jesus had risen if he saw Jesus with his own eyes. Talk about what the Scripture verse means. Pray again the Scripture verse.
2. Read *A Fresh Start*. Take a few moments to talk about the new beginnings each of you has experienced.
3. Review the Activity directions with your child and invite him or her to complete the three questions. Take time to discuss your child's responses.

Hear and Believe

4. Look at the illustration on page 252. Ask what it illustrates (*Jesus' Ascension into Heaven*) and how your child can tell that this is what is happening.
5. Read aloud *God Raises Jesus to New Life*. Invite your child to review the text and to underline at least five facts about Easter Sunday and the Easter season. (*For example: We rejoice in the Resurrection of Jesus; we celebrate our belief in Jesus; our hearts are filled with joy; we rejoice that God raised Jesus from the dead; the Easter season lasts for fifty days; during the Easter season we celebrate the Ascension and Pentecost; Easter is a new beginning for us; and so forth*)

Respond

6. Brainstorm with your child and other family members the names of people or families you know who need Easter joy, a new beginning, or renewed faith. Include them in your prayers of petition today, and continue to pray for them throughout the week.
7. Conclude this lesson with prayer. The following format is suggested.
 - Sing "Blest Are We" from the *Blest Are We Faith in Action* Grade 6 music CD.
 - Pray together the Sign of the Cross and the prayer at the top of page 254.
 - Offer prayers of petition (responding, "Lord, hear our prayer").
 - Pray together the Lord's Prayer and the Sign of the Cross.
 - Sing "Blest Are We" or another Easter refrain or hymn.

Two Things We Learned

1.

2.