



# theParentLink

Children's Ministry Edition

April 2010



Important Riverside Kids info on page 3!

## Celebrate Jesus' Resurrection

Each spring, we see reminders of new life and rebirth. Trees bud, flowers bloom, and butterflies emerge from their cocoons. For Christians, the most important celebration of new life is Jesus' death and resurrection at Easter. Children may associate this holiday mainly with bunnies, baskets, and candy. So it's important to share with them the real reason we rejoice: the empty tomb.

Use these creative ideas to share the Easter message with children of all ages. Let them know that Jesus, our loving Savior, died and rose again so we can go to heaven and be with him forever.

**Palm Sunday**—Make "praise shakers" to celebrate Jesus' entry into Jerusalem. Decorate the bottoms of paper plates, fill them with beads or unpopped popcorn, and then staple together the edges. Add streamers and then have a parade. Shout out praises to Jesus and make noise to celebrate that he is our King.



**Good Friday**—Buy a small vine wreath at a craft store and insert toothpicks to resemble the crown of thorns Jesus wore. Whenever a family member makes a sacrifice for someone else, they should remove one thorn. On the night before Easter, after your children are asleep, remove the remaining thorns and decorate the crown with white ribbons and bright flowers.

**Easter Sunday**—Using a stamp pad and colored pencils, make thumbprint pictures that tell the Easter story. For example, draw a tomb with a rolled-away thumbprint rock and a butterfly with thumbprint wings.

---

### Faith Findings

- Researcher George Barna found that children are most likely to believe in Jesus as their Savior and form a lifelong relationship with him between the ages of 5 and 13. According to Barna's findings, people are up to eight times more likely to become Christians before age 13 than they are after age 13.
- According to a Gallup Poll, 84% of people who don't go to church believe that Jesus rose from the dead.



PowerSource

### Ask God:

1. To bless your Easter celebrations and keep your focus on his resurrection.
2. To help your children know that Easter is for them.
3. To keep the joy of Easter in your hearts all year long.

---

### Parenting Insights

These age-level insights from *Children's Ministry Magazine* will help you share the Easter message with kids of all ages.

#### Ages 2 to 5

Tell young children that people who hated Jesus nailed him to a cross and left him there until he died. Explain how sad and afraid Jesus' friends were but emphasize their joy when Jesus returned to life three days later.

#### Ages 6 to 9

Fairness is a big deal at this age, so explain in simple language that Christ willingly died in our place because he loves us. Kids may be fascinated by crucifixion details. Avoid euphemisms for death such as sleeping.

#### Ages 10 to 12

Kids who are familiar with the details of the Easter story are ready for the "why." Explain why it was necessary for Christ to die, referring to the blood sacrifices of the Old Testament.

## OpenTheBook

**"Don't be afraid!" [the angel] said. "I know you are looking for Jesus, who was crucified. He isn't here! He is risen from the dead, just as he said would happen."  
Matthew 28:5-6**

By dying in our place and rising from the dead, Jesus gives his followers eternal life in heaven. That's worth celebrating at Easter—and every day!

### Teachable Moments

**1. Jelly Bean Joy**—Use the candy in children's Easter baskets to remind them of God's love. In this poem, each color represents part of the Easter story:

- Orange is for sins we've done.
- Red is for the blood of God's only Son.
- White is for the grace he gives.
- Green is for new life in him.
- Yellow is for your place in heaven.
- Invite Jesus into your life and be truly forgiven.



**2. New Life**—Go on a walk to collect lots of twigs (or use toothpicks instead). Use a low-temperature hot glue gun to attach the twigs to a clean, empty soup can. Then fill the "vase" with fresh flowers as you talk about how the twigs are like our lives before Jesus (dead and broken) and how the flowers represent our lives with Jesus (new and alive).



**"So commit yourselves wholeheartedly to these words of mine. Tie them to your hands and wear them on your forehead as reminders. Teach them to your children. Talk about them when you are at home and when you are ON THE ROAD, when you are going to bed and when you are getting up." Deuteronomy 11:18-19, NLT**

**Talk to children about the real meaning of Easter—and what Jesus did for us—by asking these questions:**

1. What happened on the first Easter, and why is that so exciting?
2. Why do you think Jesus had to die on the cross? Why were his friends so surprised to see him again afterward?
3. What does Easter mean to you? How does it change your life?
4. Why does God want us to tell other people what happened on Easter? What are some ways you can do that?

## Family Experience: Easter Is for Me!

**Get closer to one another and to God during Easter by using these simple activities that will have a lasting impact.**

- **Prayer Eggs**—During Easter week, use a basket of eggs to encourage your family to spend time together talking to God. Place slips of paper with prayer topics inside plastic eggs. Make enough eggs for each family member to open one per day during the week leading up to Easter. Include praises and gratitude, as well as prayer requests for family members, your church, and the community. Open the prayer eggs at meals or bedtime and pray together for the opened requests. Place special prayer eggs in the basket on Easter morning to celebrate Jesus' resurrection.
- **Resurrection Buns**—Make edible "empty tombs" with just a few ingredients. Wrap a packaged crescent-roll triangle around a large marshmallow. Dip the roll in melted butter, then cinnamon and sugar. Cook the rolls according to the instructions on the roll package. The marshmallows "disappear" and leave an empty, sweet surprise.



Read aloud Luke 24: 1-12. Then give each family member a roll and have them take one bite. Ask: "What do you see inside your roll? How do you think the women felt when they found the tomb empty?" Say: "Remember that even as these rolls are empty, Jesus' tomb was empty, too, because he rose from the dead."

# Riverside Kids Info to Know

**He is Risen!** This month we have talked a lot about Jesus' resurrection and what God did for us. We encourage you as parents to continue the conversation with your children and share how grateful you are for what God has done for you! This month's newsletter gives you many ways you can experience the gift God has given you this Easter.

**Our numbers keep going up!** Over the past couple of months we have seen our classroom numbers going up each week. Last week we had a total of 272 children attend our weekend services! 45 new visitors in our second service alone! This creates a great problem for us. We are so excited to have new children every week, but in order to reach them for Christ we obviously need people who have a heart to see people reached for Christ. Please consider stepping up to serve in Riverside Kids and be Jesus to a child. Contact Kelly Maxey to get involved today!

**Riverside Kids Orientation/Training** will be Sunday April 11<sup>th</sup> 10:45am-12:15pm in the Riverside Room. *If you have recently started serving in Riverside Kids and have not attended an orientation/training OR are interested in serving and would like more information, than this orientation/training is for you!* RSVP to Kelly Maxey at the church office by April 4th.

**Special Friends Ministry:** We are so excited to see more families attending our church who have children with special needs. We want to reach out to these parents and provide a place for their children to love and be loved, know and be known. In order to help these children be able to do that we are looking for people who have a heart for special needs children to be one on one with them in the classroom. If you are interested in this beautiful ministry, contact Kelly Maxey at the church office.

**Computerized Check-In Is Around The Corner!** We are excited to announce that we are in the process of implementing our computerized check-in! As we are preparing for this new system there are a couple of things we would like to inform you of.

We are no longer taking any more "member registration" forms at this time or making any new ID cards, or name tags as our new system will take care of all of that very soon.

If you are a regular attendee and have a child moving up to a new class before the new system is in place we will temporarily use their current nametag and write them in on the attendance list. We will not be making any new nametags or changes to the attendance lists.

We appreciate your grace and patience as we are learning this new system and realize that there will be some bugs we have to work out, but in the long run it will be a more convenient, safer, faster way for you to check-in your child.

**Children's Camps:** If you are interested in sending your child to camp (3<sup>rd</sup> – 5<sup>th</sup> grader), Riverside has a couple of options for you. Spring Hill Camp has an overnight camp for 3<sup>rd</sup> – 5<sup>th</sup> graders only. It is affiliated with the Resurrection Life Churches. Cost is \$265 for the week (August 16-20). It is located in Evart Michigan. Bair Lake Bible Camp has overnight camps for 3<sup>rd</sup> – 5<sup>th</sup> graders as well as day camps for younger children (cost and dates vary through the summer). It is located in Jones Michigan. You can pick up a flyer for more info for either camp at the Information Center or contact Kelly Maxey at the church office.

**A copy of the monthly newsletter is available on our website.  
[www.riverside-church.com](http://www.riverside-church.com) and click on the Riverside Kids logo.**



## What's happening right now that may affect your children and family:

- New "social mapping" apps such as Loopt, four-square, and Gowalla track users' movements and alert them to others' whereabouts. Safety experts warn that these apps aren't for kids.
- More kid-friendly electronic devices are on toy shelves, including digital scrapbooking kits, e-reading devices, and toddler-themed remote control items.



---

## Quick Stats

- 30% of preteens say they often worry about their family's financial difficulties. *(USA Today)*
- Parents who are devoted to volunteerism and attend weekly worship with their children are correlated with having teens who are 40% less likely to be sexually active compared to the national average. *(Institute of Marriage & Family Canada)*

# April 2010

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thurs	Fri	Sat
				1	2	3
						Easter Services 6:00 pm & 8:00 pm
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Easter Services 9:30 & 11:30 am	Sonlight 6:00-7:30 pm		Vertical 7:00 pm			Saturday Service 6:00 pm
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
Sunday Services 9:30 & 11:30 am	Sonlight 6:00-7:30 pm					Saturday Service 6:00 pm
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
Sunday Services 9:30 & 11:30 am	Sonlight 6:00-7:30 pm					Saturday Service 6:00 pm
25	26	27	28	29	30	
Sunday Services 9:30 & 11:30 am	Sonlight 6:00-7:30 pm					

## Our mission:

To connect the next generation with Jesus Christ and teach them to be wholehearted followers of Him. The children's ministry is designed to minister to both parent and child. We want to connect the child with Jesus Christ and then equip them with the tools they will need to become followers of Him. We want to come along side the parents in their effort to lay down a spiritual foundation for their child, while allowing the parents to build on their own foundation through other ministries in the church.

Our classes run simultaneously with the services . We currently have 5 classrooms:

Nursery (ages 0-17 months)  
 Toddlers (ages 18-35 months)  
 Preschool (ages 3-5 years)  
 K – 2nd Grade  
 3rd—5th Grade

### **To contact Riverside Kids:**

Kelly Maxey, Children's Ministry Director, 269-273-8723, ext. 16, kmaxey@riverside-church.com  
 Trina Beall, Administrative Assistant, 269-273-8723, ext. 26, tbeall@riverside-church.com