

The One About the Cross

"Teacher, when you tell stories, do you think sometimes you could tell me the one about the cross. I keep wondering what that cross is about." I will never forget that question from a little boy who attended church and my Bible class for the first time.

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Teaching Alongside the Creator



In the rush to find scissors and glue we should not neglect the natural supplies God has provided as teaching resources.

We do not teach alone. We join the Master Teacher, the Creator, who is already using his creation to draw people to Himself:

*The heavens declare the glory of God;
the skies proclaim the work of his hands.
Day after day they pour forth speech;
night after night they reveal knowledge.
They have no speech, they use no words;
no sound is heard from them.
Yet their voice goes out into all the earth,
their words to the ends of the world. (Psalm 19:1-4, NIV)*

and...

For since the creation of the world God's invisible qualities—his eternal power and divine nature—have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made, so that people are without excuse. (Romans 1:20, NIV)

A student I supervise, Cristy, recently encouraged a group of teachers to bring God's teaching resources into our classrooms. Cristy sent a group of teachers outside the building to find and bring back items that teach about God. (She only allowed them 3 minutes!).

Here are the types items these teachers found:

- A leaf to illustrate the waving of the palm leaves when Jesus entered Jerusalem in his [Triumphal Entry](#).
- A rock to teach about the stone being rolled away from Jesus' Tomb in the [Burial and Resurrection Story](#).
- Various types of Soil to illustrate the [Parable of the Sower and the Seeds](#).

We thought this might be more of a challenge when we taught the same workshop in Metro Manila (Philippines). The church building we were in was surrounded by a parking lot devoid of plants and next to a busy street. Still, when Cristy sent the teachers out they quickly adapted and came back with a wonderful collection of both natural and other teaching items including items such as:

- Five stones to teach about [David and Goliath](#).
- Dust to show how God formed Adam from the dust of the earth when [God Created People](#).
- A salt shaker from the kitchen to illustrate that we are to be [Salt and Light](#).
- Coins from someone's purse to help children remember when [Judas betrayed Jesus](#).

Pointing out God's creation when we teach brings a profound richness into what we are sharing. In the years to come children may forget a picture used for illustration or a worksheet. But, for the rest of their lives they will continue to see leaves and stones and soil. Connecting these things with spiritual lessons now will mean that the lessons will be reinforced over and over.

I can just imagine the future when one of my students, as an elderly person, picking up a stone and telling his or her grandchild about how the stone was rolled away from the tomb.

I want to teach with the Creator!

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After Easter: Empty Eggs and the Empty Tomb



Sometimes it seems like the resurrection of Jesus is just mixed in with the Easter bunny and Easter eggs and that makes me uncomfortable.

I remember, as a young mother, what the “after Easter slump” felt like. The children were grumpy after their sugar high. Little bits of fractured egg shell were in the carpet. I would find candy wrappers and Easter basket grass in all sorts of secret hiding places for weeks to come.

I don’t want to put away the story of Jesus along with the Easter decorations! It has occurred to me that the days following Easter are a great time to review the story of the resurrection and talk about the impact this event has on our lives every day of the year.

You might notice how shops tend to put all of their Easter decorations on sale after Easter. How about buying a dozen of those plastic Easter eggs (the kind you open and put things inside)? You can use them to review the story of the resurrection. Of course you don’t have to use plastic eggs at all if they are not available. You can just show the items to the children one after the other. The eggs are just easy to use and store away.

Here’s what you do:

[\(click here for printable instructions\)](#)

1. Collect 12 plastic eggs and a used egg carton to store them in.
2. Use a permanent marker to number the eggs from one to twelve.
3. Collect representative items (listed below) and put them inside the eggs. Place the eggs inside the egg carton.
4. Introduce the story by asking the children how they would feel if they went on an Easter egg hunt and every egg they found was empty. Lead into the lesson by saying sometimes it is GOOD if an egg is empty. Sometimes an empty egg is the best egg of all.
5. Open the egg carton and begin the lesson by opening egg number one.
6. As you open the eggs one at a time you re-tell the story to the children. You might let them guess what each of the items might represent.
7. After you tell the story distribute the eggs to the children and let them take turns re-telling the story.
8. If you are able and have fewer children then you might help the children make one of these sets each to take home.

Here’s a list of items for inside the eggs:

- Egg #1: [A leaf or twig for the Triumphal Entry](#)- Matthew 21:1-11
- Egg #2: [A cracker or communion cup for The Last Supper](#)- Luke 22:7-23
- Egg #3: [Coins for Judas betraying Jesus](#)- Matthew 26:14-16
- Egg #4: [Thorns from a bush for the crown of thorns](#) Matthew 27:27-31
- Egg #5: [A cross for Jesus carrying the cross](#) John 19:17
- Egg #6: [Nails for Jesus being nailed to the cross](#) John 19:18; John 20:25-29
- Egg #7: [Dice and purple cloth for the soldiers casting lots for Jesus’ clothes](#)- John 19:23-24
- Egg# 8: [Black paper or cloth for darkness covering the earth](#)- Matthew 27:45

- Egg #9: [Sponge for the offer of vinegar on a sponge](#)- Matthew 27:46-48
- Egg #10: [Cloth \(white\) for Joseph of Arimathea wrapping Jesus in cloth](#)- Matthew 27:57-60
- Egg #11: [A stone for the stone that was rolled away](#)- Matthew 28:1-4
- Egg #12: [EMPTY!!- Jesus is alive!](#) Matthew 28:5-7

This idea is not new with me. I've listed some sites below that explain some other variations.

- [Teaching items in eggs and printable scripture references at http://www.playeatgrow.com/2012/03/play-and-grow-homemade-resurrection.html](http://www.playeatgrow.com/2012/03/play-and-grow-homemade-resurrection.html)
- [If you are in a rush then here is one example with printable picture cards to put inside the eggs at http://www.christianpreschoolprintables.com/wp-content/uploads/PPP/BibleHolidays/Easter/ResurrectionEggsUpdate.pdf](http://www.christianpreschoolprintables.com/wp-content/uploads/PPP/BibleHolidays/Easter/ResurrectionEggsUpdate.pdf)

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