

EXHAUSTED BY EASTER? HELP IS AT HAND!

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Anglican Futures offers day-to-day practical and pastoral support to faithful Anglicans.

Our online events are designed to help lay and ordained church leaders to:

- Think Ahead (in the light of today's evidence)
- Think Afresh (in the light of eternal truth)

Anglican Futures is a Registered Charity in England and Wales (1192663)



I. Easter 2021: The Context

The mood of the nation

As we prepare for Easter 2021, it is important to recognise that we are in a very different place to where we were last year. On the 12th April 2020, we had been locked down for less than a month. This year, we will celebrate Easter, just over a year since the residents of the UK were told they 'must' stay at home.

During that year we have worked, worshipped, home-schooled, celebrated, mourned, and been forced to continually innovate. And most of the time we have done that alone. It is not surprising that everyone is exhausted, including our church leaders.

Easter also falls at the cusp of change - both just before and just after Easter, if the lockdown roadmap remains in place, some of our freedoms will be returned. There is hope.

Yet it is a frail and uncertain hope compared to the true hope that we have to proclaim because of Easter . A hope that sustains us through life and death. So the question remains - how can we celebrate that hope this year?

The rules and restrictions

Obviously, the rules and restrictions will differ depending on where in the UK you are based.

As we write, neither Wales nor Northern Ireland have announced their plans.

The Scottish Assembly has announced that up to four people from 2 households can meet outside and that churches will be able to open from the 26th March for up to 50 people.

In England, the following guidelines are likely to be in place:

- Churches can open, but many will still be online
- Outdoor services will be possible in church grounds
- No communal singing
- Parent and child groups of up to 15 over 5s can meet outside
- Groups of 6 or 2 households can meet outside

What follows are 106 ideas to bring hope

- ... to our Communities: those who live in our areas but may have little idea why Christians celebrate Easter
- ... to our Connections: our non-Christian family and friends; those who in normal times we would be working with, socialising with, playing sport with, chatting to at the school gate etc.
- ... to our Church Families: to bring the truths of the Easter story into our homes this Easter.
- ... through our Church Services: whether outdoors, indoors or online let's celebrate the hope of Easter in a way that is faithful and engaging?





2. Bringing hope to our Communities Signs of Hope

Signs of Hope - using our homes











There are many simple ways that we can encourage our church members to proclaim to the world that they are celebrating Easter with more than a Dairy Milk egg.

We can place an Easter garden on our doorstep or a wreath on our door or decorate our windows with easter images. The Easter Means Hope website from last year is still running so people can download the rainbow image and place in a prominent place. https://eastermeanshope.com/

With a little more effort an Easter trail could be produced - and non-Christians could be encouraged to join in a community Signs of Hope trail. https://faithinkids.org/resources/app/resource/178/title/easter-amble

Signs of Hope - in the churchyard or community





If your church yard is somewhere that people walk through, or sit for a cup of coffee on a bench, then why not give them something to look at?

A chalk walk of the Easter story? A changing tableau? Stones painted with Easter images for children to find?

It worked at Christmas, https://aceanglicans.org/2020/12/03/covid-creativity/, so why not at Easter?

Or, download Scripture Union's "In Search of Easter" materials with QR code links to videos https://content.scriptureunion.org.uk/resource/search-easter.



If you have a bunch of budding actors, and enough outside space for families to remain socially distanced, you could even organise a real - life story trail for your community. https://easterstorytrail.org.uk/experience/

And as with any of these ideas, finding ways to connect those who engage with your signs of hope with the church family are vital.



Why not have a prize for the most enthusiastic family? Or youngest /oldest person to engage with the trail - ask families to take photos of themselves doing the activities - and ask them to send them to the church email address? Prizes to be given out at the Easter Day service.



3. Bringing hope to our Connections Gifts of Grace

Doorstep Deliveries







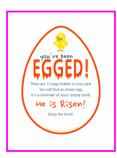
What could you leave on your neighbours' doorsteps? A bunch of daffodils? A bowl of easter eggs? Some home made easter cake? A simple painted stone?

https://theimaginationtree.com/easter-egg-pebble-craft/



It could be a secret as to who has left them - get people talking. Or leave with a note / invitation to Easter services.

You have been Egged



This is a popular idea in the US - but it might need tweaking to use in the UK not sure how keen our neighbours would be to think we had been hiding things in their front garden.

But whether you use real eggs or chocolate ones just make sure one is empty (blown or hollow) to represent the empty tomb and leave your own version of the "You have been Egged" card.

https://vanessamyers.org/youve-been-egged/

The Jelly Bean Gospel

There are lots of ways to use the Jelly Bean Gospel - as an assembly idea or an all-age sermon - but why not personalise it and use it to share the gospel with your friends and neighbours?

A bag of jelly beans and a card like this one might be a different way to share the Easter message.

https://www.flandersfamily.info/web/2019/04/13/jelly-bean-gospel-freeprintable/

Resurrection Eggs

Last year one church offered to drop a "make your own" set of Resurrection Eggs to any family from the Primary School that wanted to take part.

If you want to reduce the use of plastic - then a large egg-box could be used to house the objects or drawings could be humg on a branch, 'Jesse Tree' style. https://biblegamescentral.com/ resurrection-eggs/



Jelly Bean Gospel Red's the blood that Jesus shed, White's the perfect life He led,

Black is for my heart of sin, Green, new life I've found in Him, Pink, for flowers near His grave.

Blue's the world He came to save, Purple, temple veil, now torn,

Orange, the sky on Easter morn, Yellow is my happy grin To know that Jesus rose again!

I hope that you'll enjoy this treat

Of jelly beans, so small and sweet. The news they share is short, but true





4a. Bringing hope to our Connections Invitation to Engage

Easter Escape Rooms







Why not challenge another family to an Easter Escape Room evening? Or to work out the mystery posed by CrossTeach?

https://faithinkids.org/resources/app/resource/181/title/easter-escape-room-free-barabbas (Free) https://teachsundayschool.com/i/easterescaperoom/ (minimum cost) https://www.easterexperience.co.uk/ (Free)

Easter Craft Evangelistic Event









Easter wreaths, Sock bunnies, Blown Eggs, Easter Gardens...

This could be aimed at adults or children. Packs containing the required materials and an instruction leaflet could be delivered before the day and then the event can take place using Zoom (or your preferred provider of online meetings).

https://www.craftymorning.com/how-to-make-sock-bunnies/

https://craftsyhacks.com/easter-wreath/

https://www.theguardian.com/lifeandstyle/2013/mar/18/decorate-eggs-easter-competition https://www.countryliving.com/diy-crafts/g30928377/religious-easter-crafts-ideas/?slide=1

Easter Bake-Along

Faith in Kids are offering another Bake-Along with Ed and Martha.

https://faithinkids.org/easter-bake-along

Or you can organise your own - there are lots of ideas for what you might make in the Section 7





4b. Bringing hope to our Connections Invitation to Engage

Easter Experience

Eastleigh Parish Church was part of https://www.adventadventure.co.uk/ at Christmas - a website with links to videos, readings and activities for both adults and children. I am told an Easter version is coming soon!

Or you could create your own version using some of the video links in Section 10.

There is something for everyone:

For example, these animations from the Australian Bible Society





Or spoken word pieces - eg Arms Wide Open or He is Alive (very different in style)

Or a no-word animation like Son of Man from Dan Stevers

Or Lee Strobel explaining the evidence for the events surrounding Easter









Bible Trek

From March 27th Bible Society are promising a series of short films shot on location in Galilee,



Nazareth and Jerusalem. These might be a great way to engage people who are interested in the cultural / historical aspects of Christianity.

https://www.biblesociety.org.uk/explore-the-bible/bible-trek/



5. Bringing hope by telling the story outside our homes

My mouth will tell of your righteous acts, of your deeds of salvation all the day, or their number is past my knowledge.

With the mighty deeds of the Lord God I will come;

I will remind them of your righteousness, yours alone.

Psalm 71: 15-16

School Assembly Ideas

As schools return, the opportunity to offer to take an Assembly in person or using a recording may be possible. Here are some ideas, aimed mainly at Primary School age children:

https://faithinkids.org/resources/app/resource/180/title/zoom-easter-assembly

https://faithinkids.org/resources/app/resource/103/title/easter-egg-splat

https://faithinkids.org/resources/app/resource/106/title/peter-and-thomas

https://www.assemblies.org.uk/index.php

https://faithinkids.org/resources/app/resource/105/title/easter-passion-week-monologues

https://faithinkids.org/resources/app/resource/108/title/that-s-not-fair

https://ideas.brf.org.uk/easter-cross-words

Toddler Groups

A nice idea for explaining to younger children the significance of the empty tomb using Kinder Eggs or you could share the Messy Church puppet video.



https://www.messychurch.org.uk/resource/messy-church-home-easter



Youth Groups



Ever thought of telling the story through emojis or origami?

Or a simple 7-step visual telling that links Christmas to Easter?

Or, perhaps, your youth group would prefer a rather blood thirsty outworking of the Passover (though you will need to acknowledge that it was a lamb not a bear that was slain....)











https://ideas.brf.org.uk/the-new-beginning https://crossroadskidsclub.com/easter-gospelpresentation-using-emojis/

https://www.childrens-ministry-deals.com/products/the-emoji-easter-story

https://ideas.brf.org.uk/holy-week-visual-aid



6. Bringing hope by telling the story within our homes

I will utter dark sayings from of old, things that we have heard and known, that our fathers have told us.

We will not hide them from their children, but tell to the coming generation the glorious deeds of the Lord, and his might, and the wonders that he has done.

Psalm 78:2-4

Using Holy Week

With Easter falling in the middle of the Easter Holidays for most children it might give time for families to take time to explore the last week of Jesus' life together. Both the Resurrection Eggs idea and the Holy Week Box use objects as a springboard for telling the story.

More creative types might want to build the story out of Lego or younger ones may enjoy building the story one day at a time from Palm Day to Promised Day (via Pigeon Day and Perfume day) complete with actions!

Or you can go back to the jelly beans or emojis described before.











https://biblegamescentral.com/resurrection-eggs/

https://godventure.co.uk/news/holy-week-boxes/

https://buildfaith.org/journey-through-holy-week-with-lego/

https://ideas.brf.org.uk/walking-through-holy-week Palm day to Promised Day

Wonder of Easter and a Weekend of Wonder



Faith in Kids have produced a range of resources for Easter.

Dundonald Church have created five videos that use the Wonder of Easter materials https://dundonald.org/the-wonder-of-easter/.

These could be used to help children to engage with the bible stories or even as the basis of an At-Home Bible Club.

A Weekend of Wonder

Explore and enjoy the good news of Easter with your family

Faith in Kids have also put together a set of four activities for families with young children to do together to help set the Easter weekend in context

https://faithinkids.org/resources/app/resource/177/title/weekend-of-wonder



7. Bringing hope to our Church Family: Things for kids to do

Craft Ideas

Here are just a few ideas that could be used at home or at Sunday School to help children explore the easter story - my favourite one is the foot print donkey and hand print palm leaves - but then I don't have to clear up the mess!

















https://howtohomeschoolmychild.com/palm-sunday-crafts/

https://amysfreeideas.com/English/Easter crafts for Sunday school, crosses.html

https://paththroughthenarrowgate.com/download-easter-finger-puzzles/

https://www.mrsjonescreationstation.com/jesus-resurrection-craft-for-preschoolers/ or http://www.freefuneaster.com/easter-crafts/he-is-risen-paper-plate-tomb-craft/

https://nontoygifts.com/he-is-risen-craft/

https://www.focusonthefamily.com/clubhouse/crafts/easter-story-bags/

https://amysfreeideas.com/English/

Matthew 28, printable resurrection booklet for Sunday school.html

https://www.orientaltrading.com/holy-week-wreath-craft-kit-a2-48_5694.fltr (just the idea)

https://www.bbcgoodfood.com/recipes/hot-cross-buns

Cooking Ideas









Cooking together can be a fun way of talking about Easter together.

Resurrection rolls are a great way of talking about the resurrection and ending up with a delicious cinnamon-y pastry at the end of it all!

https://www.bbcgoodfood.com/recipes/hot-cross-buns

https://athriftymom.com/easter-tomb-snacks-easy-great-way-to-teach-kids-about-the-real-reason-for-easter/ a chocolatey cheats baking option

https://www.bbcgoodfood.com/recipes/shredded-wheat-nests

https://joyfoodsunshine.com/homemade-resurrection-rolls/ can be made using ready-made croissant pastry or puff pastry



8. Bringing hope to our Church Family: Shared Experiences

After a year of lockdown, many of us miss our church family and long for shared experiences. You may have lost touch with some of the fringe. Suggesting ways for the Church Family to connect with one another over Easter might be just what we all need.

BBQ Time





If two households or six people can meet in the garden - why not encourage people to show some hospitality with an easter theme. A Passover themed roast lamb anyone? Or pop a few fish on the BBQ and remember the disciples meeting Jesus on the beach?

Watch Party

For a small cost, you could set up a Watch Party and enjoy Joseph Fiennes' film, Risen - a detective story based on the Easter story or start watching Chosen.

For added fun - you could set up a quiz as to which events are in the bible and which aren't!





Music

FIEC have set up an Easter playlist on Spotify - which your church family could download or create your own based on songs your church sings regularly. https://fiec.org.uk/resources/the-easter-playlist

We were also joined by Thomas Brewster, one of the people behind a new song for Easter 2021 - which was recorded this year using a lockdown choir of over 100 people drawn from 70 churches



- all singing at home and brought together by the wonders of technology. Video and music below.

https://drive.google.com/file/d/1WEmH-91JR838QK_54uLuHhGOyrnYs9Y7/view?usp=sharing

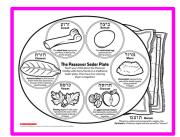
https://drive.google.com/file/d/1MYZ4omrG6e8_heqWuVbw0nm9cOx1_Rfu/view?usp=sharing

A Passover Meal

You may not be able to eat together as a whole church family - but sharing a Maundy Thursday Passover meal - with a Zoom commentary - may be one way to help our church families understand how Jesus fulfilled the Old Testament promises.

https://jewsforjesus.org/blog/did-jesus-eat-a-seder-meal

http://attributesofgodforkids.com/2018/03/06/preparing-easter-passover/





9. Bringing hope through our Church Services

Good Friday/ Saturday Night Vigil

Several people mentioned that they had based their Good Friday service around the words Jesus spoke from the cross and that J John's material was helpful.

https://canonjjohn.com/2016/03/19/7-last-words-of-jesus-part-one/ - there are eight articles: search 'last words' https://canonjjohn.com/share-easter/media/ videos of each of above https://canonjjohn.com/share-easter/media/ thoughts on easter Saturday



The Bible Society videos based on Peter's experience of Easter are incredibly powerful and would fit well in a more meditative service.

https://www.biblesociety.org.uk/ explore-the-bible/spoken-truth/peter -a-twopart-easter-spoken-word/



Several people spoke of having a more meditative service on Saturday evening - by candlelight if you are able to use the church building or once the kids are in bed if online.

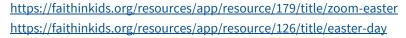
We have a script for an Easter Carol service- which was used a few years ago - rather than having a sermon the message of

easter was told through the introduction to and comments on the songs and hymns sung. Get in touch if you are interested.

Easter Sunday

It may not be possible to join together for a sunrise service this year - but why not encourage your church family to have their own time of reflection at sunrise - and ask people to take photos out of their window/ wherever they are of the sunrise. These could be sent to one person who could then create a photo montage in time for the main Easter Sunday service.

If Easter Sunday is an All-Age service here are a couple of ideas—complete with scripts.









Sermon Ideas

The Bible Reading Fellowship website offers a number of ideas for sermon outlines/ all-age services etc - they may need tweaking but it is one place to look for inspiration.

Church Society have recorded sermons for each of the main Easter services - which are designed to give the clergy a day or two off!

https://churchsociety.org/blog/entry/church society easter sermons https://ideas.brf.org.uk/topics/lent-and-easter



10. Bringing hope by using videos

Beginners Bible Story (young children)	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WAgduwD7MIg
Cartoon Bible Story (older children from the Australian Bible Society)	https://www.youtube.com/user/JAALCampaign09/videos?view=0&sort=dd&shelf_id=0
Bible Society Peter speaks—Dai Woolridge	https://www.biblesociety.org.uk/explore-the-bible/spoken-truth/peter-a-twopart-easter-spoken-word/
He is alive – Red Rocks Church	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KecDVIp9CsI
Son of Man—Dan Stevers	https://vimeo.com/89343171
I am Pilate	https://gochattervideos.com/i-am-pilate/
Authored to Die	https://gochattervideos.com/authored-to-die/
Beauty and the Beast	https://gochattervideos.com/kids-react-to-beauty-and-the-beast/
Sacrifice at the Cinema	https://gochattervideos.com/sacrifice-at-the-cinema/
The Provider	https://gochattervideos.com/provider/
That Dragon Death	https://gochattervideos.com/that-dragon-death/
Make Easter Go Viral	https://gochattervideos.com/make-easter-go-viral/
I'm Full Cos It Was Empty	https://gochattervideos.com/im-full-cos-it-was-empty/
Three Friends and the Miracle Man	https://gochattervideos.com/the-miracle-man/
Roll Away Your Stone	https://gochattervideos.com/roll-away-your-stone/
Jesus Came To Rescue	https://gochattervideos.com/rescue/
On the Way to the Tomb	https://gochattervideos.com/on-the-way-to-the-tomb/
On the Way to the Execution	https://gochattervideos.com/on-the-way-to-execution/
On the Way to Jerusalem	https://gochattervideos.com/on-the-way-to-jerusalem/
Evidence for the Resurrection	https://gochattervideos.com/evidence-for-the-resurrection/
Dr Max Finds the Facts	https://gochattervideos.com/dr-max-finds-the-facts/
Divine Comedy	https://gochattervideos.com/divine-comedy/
The Seriously Surprising Story	https://gochattervideos.com/seriously-surprising-story/
What Is Love?	https://gochattervideos.com/what-is-love-2/
Jerusalem – Animated Video	https://gochattervideos.com/jerusalem-music-video/
The Myth That Really Happened	https://gochattervideos.com/myth-really-happened/
Servant Song	https://gochattervideos.com/servant-song/
Easter – What's It All About?	https://gochattervideos.com/easter-whats-it-all-about/
The Super Cool Story of Jesus	https://gochattervideos.com/super-cool-story-of-jesus/
Arms Wide Open	https://gochattervideos.com/arms-wide-open/
If You Had Been Here	https://gochattervideos.com/if-you-had-been-here/
Jesus' Death & Resurrection	https://gochattervideos.com/following-jesus-5/
Jesus in Jerusalem	https://gochattervideos.com/following-jesus-4/
Good Friday: Live!	https://gochattervideos.com/good-friday-live/
The Gift at Easter	https://gochattervideos.com/the-gift-at-easter/
Cannonball	https://gochattervideos.com/cannonball/
Easter	https://gochattervideos.com/easter-whats-it-about/
Egg: An Easter Meditation	https://gochattervideos.com/egg-an-easter-meditation/
Why Easter J John	https://canonjjohn.com/share-easter/media/