



Early Childhood Devotions

FOR CHILDREN AGES 3 TO 7



JOY:FULLY LUTHERAN 1 THESS. 5:16–24

FOCUS: Jesus. Others. You.

Easter Resurrection (Jesus is Alive!)

(MATT. 28:1–10; MARK 16:1–12; LUKE 24:1–12; JOHN 20:1–18)



Before You Teach

“Alleluia” is the joyful word that adorns our Easter praise. It’s the Church’s cheer for the risen Lord, and erupts in word and song for 50 days — from Easter day to Pentecost. Children need not only to learn its meaning, but also to shape their lives in a posture of praise. St. Augustine understood that when he wrote, “A Christian should be an Alleluia from head to foot.” It is our privilege to begin to instill in children the knowledge and will to live the alleluia during and beyond the Easter season.

Greeting

Dedicate time to greet each child upon entry. Statistically, the first five seconds after a child’s arrival establish a positive attitude for the day.

Gathering

Light your battery-operated candle. Follow your routine, signaling children to gather in your worship area.

Say: *Jesus lives! Alleluia!* Repeat with the children. Sing the refrain to “A Hymn of Glory Let Us Sing” (LOSP, p. 56).

Tell the Story

YOU WILL NEED: A precut construction-paper sun, adhered to a tongue depressor.

Do: Raise the sun, signaling children to speak the words *That’s amazing!* where indicated by asterisks *.

Early Sunday morning, the third day after Jesus had died and was buried, Mary Magdalene went to the place where Jesus had been buried. Although it was still dark, she saw that the stone had been taken away from the tomb.* She ran and went to Simon Peter and John, other disciples of Jesus, saying, “They have taken our Lord, Jesus, out of the tomb and we do not know where they have laid Him.”* So Peter and John ran to the place where Jesus had been buried. Peter entered the tomb first, and then John. They saw that Jesus was not there.* They did not understand the Scripture (Bible)



in which it was written that Jesus would rise from death. Confused and afraid, Peter and John left and went back to their homes. But Mary stood and cried outside the tomb. Stooping down, she looked into the tomb and saw two angels in white.* The angels

were sitting where the body of Jesus had lain.* They spoke to her saying, “Woman, why are you weeping?” Tearfully she replied, “They have taken away my Lord, and I do not know where they have laid Him.” Then, turning around, she saw Jesus standing, but did not know that it was Him.* Jesus said to her, “Woman, why are you crying? For whom are you looking?” Thinking Jesus was the gardener, she said to Him, “Sir, if you have carried Jesus away, please tell me where you have laid Him, and I will take Him away.” Then, Jesus said, “Mary.”* Amazed, knowing the sound of His voice, Mary turned to Jesus, saying “Rabboni!” which means “teacher.” With a joyful heart, Mary Magdalene then left and ran to the disciples, shouting, “I have seen the Lord! I have seen the Lord!”* Happily she told the disciples everything she had seen and heard. Jesus is alive!*

Say: *Mary Magdalene hurried to tell the disciples the good news that Jesus was alive. Like Mary Magdalene, we cannot keep this amazing news to ourselves. Who can you tell about Jesus?*

Pray: *Signal children to repeat each phrase after you.*

Jesus, You have arisen, all of my sins forgiven.
Alleluia! is my song. I praise Your name all day long.
You came down from heav’n above. Thank You, Jesus,
for Your love! Amen.

Remember the Story

BIBLE WORDS TO REMEMBER

Pre-K & K: “The Lord has risen indeed” (LUKE 24:34).

Grades 1 & 2: “I am the resurrection and the life. Whoever believes in me, though he die, yet shall he live, and everyone who lives and believes in me shall never die” (JOHN 11:25–26).

ACTIVITIES

Create: Painted Stones.

YOU WILL NEED: Brightly colored acrylic paint, gathered or purchased smooth stones/rocks (to purchase, go to *Amazon.com* and look for “smooth stones”).

Each child selects and paints a stone. As they work, review the Easter narrative. Surround your altar cross with the multicolored painted stones when they are dry.

Do: Celebration Station: Distribute precut streamers. Chant and clap:

Jesus lives, my sins forgives. Alleluia! Shout, “Hurray!”
Jesus lives, my sin forgives. Alleluia! Praise His name!
(Shout the phrase!)

OPTION: “Train” around the room/school while chanting and/or singing.

Sing: “Christ the Lord Is Risen Today” (*LOSP*, p. 96).

Sending

Gather children in the “Sending Circle.” Loudly proclaim together: **Jesus lives! Alleluia!** Pray, inviting children to offer words of thanks and praise for the amazing love of Jesus. As children exit say to each, **Jesus goes with you!**

Live the Story

We are resurrection people! “Alleluia” is our song! Let us daily speak and live our “alleluias!”



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Writer: Dr. Judith Christian Designer: Lisa Moeller

NOTE: You will need the songbook: *Little Ones Sing Praise (LOSP)*, copyright © 1989 Concordia Publishing House (CPH), St. Louis, Mo.

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Rattles & Prattles

A RESOURCE FOR CAREGIVERS OF INFANTS AND TODDLERS



“Rejoice always ...” (1 THESS. 5:16–24)

Bible Story: Crucifixion and Resurrection
(LUKE 23:1–24:12).

Focus: Jesus’ saving work (i.e., suffering, death and resurrection from the dead) is the Good News for everyone.

What it teaches us: Jesus came to be the Savior of all people no matter their race, age, culture or what time in history they lived. God’s people respond in joyful thanks and praise.

Prepare to teach

› **Read** the story from various translations and, if possible, a study Bible.

› **Think:** Jesus, God’s Son, willingly and joyfully left His home in heaven and came to earth to live as one of us. He suffered, died and came alive again to redeem all people. [“Jesus, the founder and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross” (HEB:12:2)].

› **Pray:** Use the prayer suggested in the story outline.



WORSHIP TIME AND BIBLE STORY PRESENTATION

You will also need

- › *Little Ones Sing Praise (LOSP)*, copyright © 1989 Concordia Publishing House
- › Picture of Jesus (find one doing an Internet search)
- › Two pictures of the Bible story: crucifixion and resurrection

Gather for Worship

Invite the children to the worship area. Sing (tune: “Are You Sleeping?”) **Come and sit down** (repeat) **on the floor** (repeat). **We will learn of Jesus** (repeat), **sing and pray** (repeat).

Invocation: Use the same melody and sing: **We begin now** (repeat) **in God’s name** (repeat) — **Father, Son and Spirit** (repeat). **Amen** (repeat).

Opening Song

Show picture of Jesus. **Jesus loves each of us. We learn about Jesus’ love in the Bible** (Show Bible). Sing, “Jesus Loves Me, This I Know” (*LOSP*, p. 42).

Bible Story

Show picture of Jesus’ crucifixion.

Jesus loves us all; loves you and me.

Bad soldiers planned mean things to do. They hurt Jesus, and said mean things too.

They nailed Jesus to a big wooden cross — There Jesus died; He did it all for us.

Friends took Him down, washed and wrapped Him carefully.

Sadly, put Him in a grave — so quietly.

But, they were in for a BIG surprise. In just three days, Jesus came alive!

Show picture of the resurrection.

Cheer: repeat three times, getting louder each time. **Jesus is alive! Jesus is alive! Jesus is alive!** Shout: **Hooray!** (Parents & Twos curriculum, CPH)

Sing: “Do You Know Who Died for Me” (*LOSP*, p. 93) Use verses: loves me so, died for me, came alive.

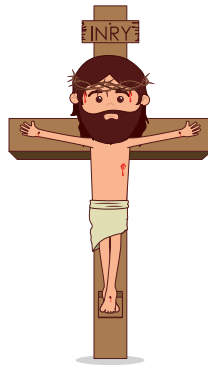
What the Story Teaches: Jesus loves us so much. He was willing to be hurt and die for us. Jesus didn’t stay dead. He came alive again on Easter Day.

Time to Pray

Use the sentences in the above paragraph as a prayer focus. Preface each sentence with **We thank and praise You, Jesus, for loving us so much ... In Your name we pray. Amen.**

Closing/Benediction

Sing (same melody): **Time to go now** (repeat) **Time to play** (or whatever activity you do next) (repeat). **God is always with you** (repeat). **Loves you too** (repeat).



CURRICULAR MATERIALS //

IDEA STARTERS for integrating the Bible story and theme into STREAMS (curriculum)

S Science and Nutrition

- > **Sensory Table:** Hide crosses (in sand, shredded paper, uncooked rice, popcorn, etc.). Find crosses and use chant from the story presentation.
- > **Serve Hot Cross Buns:** Use frosting to make cross shapes on rolls; or make cross shapes from peanut butter playdough. Check online for recipe.

T Technology

- > **Electric keyboard:** Borrow a small keyboard from an upper-grade classroom or parent. Play low, sad notes to reflect sadness when Jesus died. Play high notes to reflect happiness of Easter when Jesus came alive.

R Reading and Language Arts

- > **Read board books:** *Jesus Rose on Easter Morn* by Gloria McQueen Stockstill (copyright © 2003 Concordia Publishing House), *The Easter Day Surprise* by Jane L. Fryar (copyright © 2008 Concordia Publishing), “Baby Touch and Feel” series (DK Children).
- > **Action Poem:** **We can smile and clap our hands. Jesus is alive! We can and pray to Him. Jesus is alive! He is here and everywhere. Jesus is alive!** (Earl Gaulke, CPH)

E Engineering

- > **Make cross shapes** using items with different textures (e.g., tree cookies, blocks, cut pieces of sandpaper)

A Arts (art, music and physical education)

- > **Art:** create texture collages.
- > **Music:** “Do You Know Who Died for Me” (*LOSP*, p. 93) and “I’m as Happy as Can Be” (*LOSP*, p. 60)
- > **Physical Education:** sing “Say to the Lord, I Love You” (*LOSP*, p. 18) and use the actions. **We love Jesus; He’s our Savior.** Make up additional actions.

M Mathematics

- > **Sorting:** Use real or laminated-paper crosses. Make sets of three crosses of different sizes and sort by size (e.g., small, big, bigger).

S Social Studies

- > **All People:** **Jesus died for everyone, everywhere.** Sing “Jesus Loves the Little Children” (*LOSP*, p. 94).
- > **Emotions:** Use poem **When Jesus died, it was so sad** (use index fingers to make sad lips). **Then Easter came and we are glad** (draw smile).

CONNECT WITH PARENTS in your newsletter

Invite families to attend Easter services to joyfully celebrate the redeeming work and resurrection of Jesus. If possible, give each an Easter book (e.g., an Arch Book from CPH).



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Writer: Judy Williams Designer: Chrissy Thomas

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Time Out for Directors

LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT TIPS FOR EARLY CHILDHOOD CENTER ADMINISTRATORS



The Importance of Open-Ended Art Experiences

Glitter. Glue. Construction paper. Scissors. Paint. Messy. Delightful. Creative.

Take a moment and read the above words again. What comes to mind as you read them? What do you envision when you think of glitter, glue and paper? What do you picture when you think of paint and creativity? There could be a list of ideas that comes to your mind as you read the above words. Yes, each of these words is connected to the subject of art, but what really is “art”? And, what does art look like in your early childhood classroom? And, more specifically, how do your students engage in artistic opportunities in your classroom?

Wow! It may appear that this brief article is already getting fairly deep, but asking questions like these prompts the opportunity to engage in reflective thinking. Reflective thinking can bring up images, past experiences or even hopeful excitement for future opportunities in one’s mind. As you reflect and imagine the opportunities you provide for your students in regard to art, how would you explain how your students are able to engage in creativity and imagination?

God made the human brain to be an amazing work of art! Only God could make something that is able to think, move body parts, feel emotion and experience creativity. If you look online for the meaning of creativity, you will find many possible definitions. A popular definition of creativity is the ability to create a new product or idea. Creative thinking and experiences can randomly appear, lead to unexpected connections

and provide solutions to problems. The use of a child’s imagination as it connects to creativity is important and needs to be nurtured.

It is the natural disposition of young children to have a desire to create. Children create play scenarios with toy cars and blocks, make believe in their dramatic play and explore different roles when they create games on the playground. When children have freedom to create and use their imaginations, they are engaging in age-appropriate work that develops their brains.

In relation to open-ended art, where there is no specific desired outcome or specific pattern to follow, children engage in individual expression. They use their executive function skills to make decisions on their own and work through challenges that can present themselves with materials. Open-ended art experiences





Even young children can praise God with their creative minds and glee-filled imaginations!

can include a variety of materials, or few; children have the opportunity to choose the media they want to explore. Through open-ended art experiences, children learn initiative, problem-solving, risk-taking and creative expression by making something through representation.

Children are able to grow in their physical development through the use of glue, pencils, crayons, paint and clay. Through the use of materials that require manipulation by fingers and hand movements, children develop fine motor skills that are important for expanded opportunities of writing as they grow.

Open-ended art experiences also promote a variety of language development skills. As adults talk to children about their art, they utilize unique vocabulary that expands when new materials and items are shared. Words of texture, such as sticky, slimy or smooth, or words that name newly introduced items, such as scissors, collage or paintbrush, build a child's vocabulary.

There is also great joy and self-expression when a child engages in open-ended art and is able to participate in a new type of self-expression. Social and emotional skills are developed through these creative opportunities as children talk about their work, socialize with peers in the creation of art, make choices of materials to use and find success with their results. As children engage in open-ended art, they can easily become focused in their attention, which is an important skill for future school success.

As you work on providing more open-ended art experiences where children can engage in imaginative

thinking and creativity, consider the following helpful strategies:

- › Provide a rich assortment of materials and experiences for students. Art experiences do not always need to happen indoors at a table or easel. Go outside and look for opportunities for creative art. What are some items available in nature that can be used for color, texture and collages?
- › As children engage in open-ended art, they will take a unique role in their learning — follow the child's lead. Children often learn more when they are deeply invested in experiences that highly interest them.
- › Enrich oral language and vocabulary by expanding on children's ideas. Share words that describe their work. How can you provide ideas or suggestions to push their individual ideas further? Ask open-ended questions as well, providing opportunities to think and use newly learned vocabulary.
- › Rather than praising all work the children do, use factual observations about the child's work. Saying "You used some red circles in your picture" or "I can tell you worked hard to glue those leaves on the tube" acknowledges a child's work in a way that doesn't overpraise.
- › Encourage collaborative work with students. How can students work in pairs or small groups to create open-ended art?

Children are JOY-filled individuals who love to use their God-given gifts of creativity and imagination. Do not be bothered by the messes children create or the time children take to finish their masterpieces. Rejoice that children are using their talents and experiencing creativity in ways that use their brains for learning. Even young children can praise God with their creative minds and glee-filled imaginations!