



EASTER GARDEN

Note to parents: this activity does not need any prior knowledge of Christianity. If your child is interested in thinking further about the questions raised, check out the suggestions at the end.

Aims: To help children explore the Easter narrative through modelling it.
To give children freedom to ask questions of the story.

What you'll need to build your garden...

- A **container**—an old shoe box, tray, or basket would be great.
- **Some sticks** and **string/thread/wool** for making three crosses.
- A **pot** to make the tomb
- A **flat stone** a similar size to the top of the pot, to make the entrance.
- **Soil, moss/grass/plants/pebbles/stones** If gathering these from a wood or park, please be careful not to harm nature.
- A **small scrap of white cloth** (or tissue/kitchen roll)

The Activity

1. Creating the landscape

- ✂ • Set your pot on its side and cover the tray and the pot with a layer of soil.
- Create a mound of soil—a hill in your Easter garden.
- Cover the garden in foliage (moss/grass/plants/flowers).

2. The Crucifixion

- ✂ • Using the string and the twigs, create three small crosses.
- Place these on top of the hill

- 📖 • Read *Mark 15: 21-41* (if you don't have a Bible, you can find this www.biblegateway.com—try the CEV translation)

- 💡 **think** • Who saw the crucifixion? How many different characters can you see mentioned in the reading?
- Do you think they were pleased to see Jesus die? Why/why not?
- What unnatural thing happened while Jesus was killed?
- What impact did this whole episode have on the Roman centurion standing nearby?

3. The Body

-  • Cut a strip of cloth (could be paper towel or toilet paper) and wrap a stone with it to represent Jesus' body.
- Place this in the tomb and place the large flat stone across the entrance.

 • Read *Mark 15:42-47*.

-  • Why might it have been a brave thing for Joseph of Arimathea to ask Pilate for Jesus' body?
- Who else saw where the body was laid?
- What do you think the next day was like for Joseph, the women and the disciples?

4. The Resurrection

-  • Roll back the stone from the tomb entrance.
- Unwrap and throw away the stone.
- Leave the cloths inside the tomb.
- Add any other finishing touches to your scene e.g. pebble footpaths etc.

 • Read Mark 16:1-8 (www.biblegateway.com—try the CEV translation)

-  • What were the women expecting to find when they got to the tomb?
- Can you think of at least three things that were surprising or shocking for the women?
- What surprises or shocks you about the Easter story?

Where are you going to place your Easter garden—somewhere personal where you go to reflect?
Somewhere where others might see it and stop to ponder?

Going Deeper

- 1) To hear a Christian talk about why the resurrection is so important for them, check out: <http://request.org.uk/festivals/holy-week-and-easter/why-is-the-resurrection-so-important-to-christians/>
- 2) If you are interested in how Christians defend the resurrection—then the following short video might be of interest: <http://request.org.uk/jesus/death-and-resurrection/what-happened-to-the-body/#>