

Easter Sessions 2020

Nature Prayer Stations | Under 5s Easter Service
Outdoor Easter | Outdoor Easter Scavenger Hunt

Contents

Nature Prayer Stations

Seven prayer station suggestions, ideal for children aged 5-11. Designed to be set out in the shape of a cross, this reflective session helps to guide participants through a process of reconnecting with God.

Under 5s Easter Service

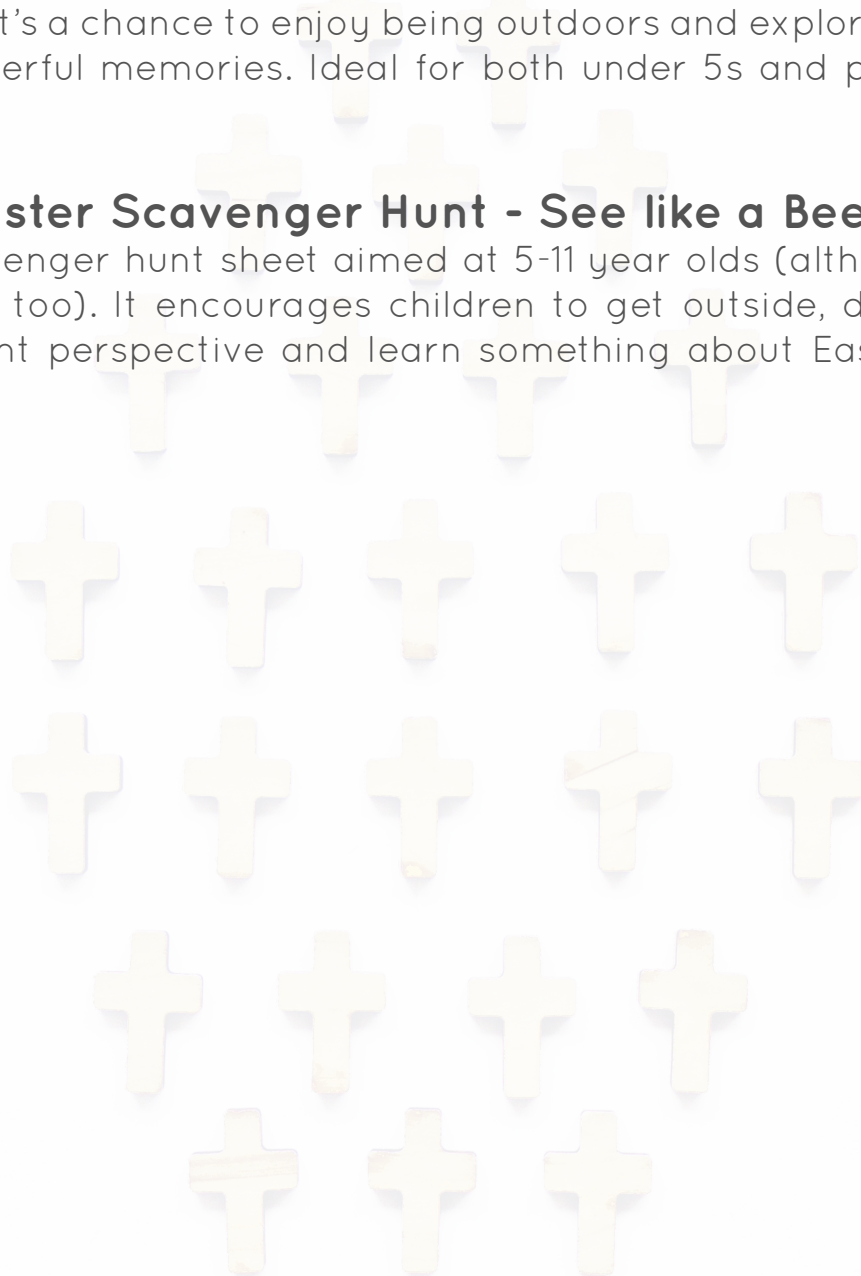
A short yet flexible service aimed at under 5s with worship and activities. Ideal for Pram Services or for use in a toddler group setting.

Outdoor Easter

Outdoor Easter is a fun activity sheet for children to complete at home with their families. It's a chance to enjoy being outdoors and explore Easter whilst creating wonderful memories. Ideal for both under 5s and primary school aged children.

Outdoor Easter Scavenger Hunt - See like a Bee

An Easter scavenger hunt sheet aimed at 5-11 year olds (although under 5s can enjoy this too). It encourages children to get outside, discover things from a different perspective and learn something about Easter with each item they find.



NATURE PRAYER STATION LAYOUT

FINISH



HERB PAINTING



FORGIVENESS SEED
PAPER



GIANT PEG CROSS



NATURE PLAYDOUGH



WINDOW TO THE WORLD



SCRIPTURE WEAVING



LEAF PRINTING

START



THE STATIONS START WITH EXPLORING THE THINGS THAT HOLD US BACK FROM GOD. AS YOU JOURNEY ALONG THE CROSS, LEARN HOW WE ARE FORGIVEN AND HOW MUCH GOD LOVES US. THROUGH THIS WE DISCOVER HOW TO LET GO OF THE THINGS THAT SEPARATE US FROM GOD SO WE CAN PRAISE HIM FOR THE WORK HE DOES IN OUR LIVES, REJOICE IN HIS UNENDING LOVE AND RECOGNISE THE IMPORTANCE OF THE CROSS.

LEAF PRINTING

In Philippians 4:13 it says, "I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me." When it comes to worries, we're told to cast them all onto God because He cares for us (1 Peter 5:7). This station invites people to connect (or reconnect) with God as they cast their worries onto Him whilst leaf printing on to rocks. Encourage the children to choose a rock, paint a leaf and print it onto their rock. As they place the leaf on the rock ask them to think of something they worry about, then as they remove the leaf ask them to give that anxiety onto God. God is our rock and His strength brings us strength. You could use the rocks to create an Easter Garden, or place at the foot of your cross in church.

SCRIPTURE WEAVING

This prayer station encourages children to reconnect with the Bible; learning to seek advice and discover more of God through reading scripture, reflecting on how we can weave God's word into our lives. You could either do a large weave for the children to add their thoughts to or individual ones for them to take home. Provide copies of different Bible verses from the Easter story (see *Matthew 26-27, Mark 14-16, Luke 22-23 and John 18-19*), several different colours of ribbon, yarn, biro or fabric pen and a frame for weaving. The frame could either be made from a V shaped twig, or use a piece of cardboard with slots cut in to the edge wrap the yarn around. If you aren't preparing the frames in advance, the children will need to wrap the thread horizontally around their frame. Then ask each person to choose a Bible verse that stands out for them today and write it on a piece of ribbon. On other ribbons they can write or draw how they could weave God's word into their lives, for example, pray more, serve others, etc. Once they have finished, invite the children to weave the ribbons vertically through the yarn in frame.

WINDOW TO THE WORLD

Use sticks and twine to create a window shape. This frame will be used to create something like a wreath, with items attached to it. Provide the children with different items that can be attached to the frame such as flowers, ribbon, tassels, pom poms, leaves etc. Assign a meaning to each item e.g. leaves could be praying for new beginnings, red flowers could be for places or people that need healing, ribbon could be for uniting/peace. Invite each person look through their window to the world and think about what they'd like to pray for, then take the corresponding item and attach it to their frame. Once finished, hang the windows up for all the church to see.

GIANT PEG CROSS

Make a giant cross out of wood or cardboard and attach pegs to it. The cross is our central focus, and our opportunity to reflect on God's love and grace. Using leaves cut into the shape of love hearts, or alternatively using paper hearts or similar, encourage the children to think about how God's love and grace makes them feel and paint/write on the hearts. What does it mean to them? Are they unsure of their feelings, if so they could ask God to shine a light on their confusion. Once finished invite the children to peg their leaf to the cross. By the end of the session the cross will be covered in love!

FORGIVENESS SEED PAPER

"For God shows His love that while we were still sinners Christ died for us." Romans 5:8

Here you can either offer an activity where people get an individual pot to take home, or plant the seed paper in a larger planter to place outside the church to create a forgiveness garden. You will need some seed paper (easily bought or made) cut into small pieces around 2-3cm diameter, compost, pots / planter and a watering can filled with water. Whilst holding the seed paper, ask the children to think about someone that they need to forgive, or something that they have done that they would like forgiveness for. Invite them to ask God for help with the forgiveness that they have been thinking about. Place the seed paper in a pot half full of compost, cover with more compost then water. As the children water the pot they can remember how Jesus came to wash away our wrong doings, and as they observe the seeds growing over time, they are reminded of the new life found in Jesus.

NATURE PLAY DOUGH PRAYERS

At this station we ask the question "Lord, what do you want me to do?"

Now that we have explored forgiveness, love and grace, we can start letting go of the worldly things holding us down. This station is an opportunity to explore what God is wanting us to do. Who does He want us to pray for? What questions do we have for Him? Using play dough and natural items such as twigs, leaves, flowers, seeds, etc. invite the children to mould and build items whilst they are praying, and see what they create. Is it an animal? A landscape? An object? Invite the children to pray into their creations by asking God to interpret them.

HERB PAINTING

God can answer prayers at different times and He always keeps his promises. Through this activity you will reflect on how we can trust God. Provide paint and bundles of different herbs, we recommend the following:
Rosemary = reminds us of our baptism vows, which can be linked to promises
Horseradish, lettuce and parsley = all used at the Passover meal, which can be linked to the Last Supper.

Encourage the children to think about some of the promises God has made. So far they have let go of their worries, woven scripture into their lives, prayed for the world, reflected on God's love, sought His forgiveness and asked what He wants you to do. Now they can thank God for His promises, and ask Him to give them the strength, as they leave, to keep any of the promises they have made today. Invite the children to paint a picture of thanks to God using the Biblical herbs as brushes.

AFTER EVERYONE HAS VISITED ALL OF
THE STATIONS, HAND OUT GRAPES.
AS THEY EAT THEM, SUGGEST THAT
THEY THINK ABOUT THE SWEETNESS
AND BOUNTY OF GOD'S LOVE.
(FOR LITTLE ONES, CUT THE GRAPES
IN HALF)

Under 5s

Easter Service

Here is an example of an informal Easter Service aimed at children under 5. It has been designed to be flexible so it can be used as a stand-alone event, or could be offered as a short act of worship during a toddler group session or with your under 5's children's group. Feel free to swap the songs for more familiar ones if you prefer – these are just suggestions, so make it work for you and your setting!

You will need:

Blankets or cushions (optional)	Sticky back plastic
Large foil wrapped hollow chocolate egg	Coloured tissue paper squares
Fillable plastic eggs	Small hollow chocolate eggs
Washi / electrical tape	A bowl
Rice / lentils / beads (for shakers)	Shredded paper

Welcome

Invite the children (and their parents/carers if present) to sit in a circle, or position themselves somewhere near you where they can all see. You could provide blankets or cushions for people to sit on if you like.

Say: Welcome everyone! It's wonderful to see you all here today.

Introduce who you are if necessary, and briefly describe what will be happening during the service.

Pray: Father God, thank you that you love us and want to welcome us into your family. Help us to listen to what you want to share with us today. Amen

Sing: 'Hosanna Rock' Yancy and Friends
www.youtube.com/watch?v=5582z642wFY

Encourage everyone to join in by clapping their hands, waving their arms, 'playing the drums' and 'rocking the guitar' at the appropriate moments.

Story Time

As everyone settles back down, reveal a large (hollow) foil wrapped Easter egg.

I've brought this chocolate egg with me today to help us to understand the Easter story.

Jesus did good things wherever he went. He made poorly people better, fed people who were hungry and taught lots of people how to live like

God wanted them to. But some people didn't like Jesus and wanted him gone forever. These people arrested Jesus, nailed him to a wooden cross and watched him die (*unwrap the chocolate egg*). Jesus' body was put in a cave and a heavy stone was rolled across the entrance. The cave was a bit like this egg – with the big stone rolled against the entrance, it must have been very dark inside.

When Jesus died it was not the end of the story- he rose to new life and was no longer inside the cave. Something amazing had happened! (*Break the egg into pieces and observe how it is empty inside*). On Sunday morning, some of Jesus' friends went to the cave and found that the heavy stone had been rolled away from the entrance. They were very upset when they saw the cave was empty and wondered where Jesus' body had gone. Then they saw two angels sitting inside the cave. The angels said, "Jesus is not here anymore – he's no longer dead. He is alive!" Jesus' friends were surprised but so happy – what a wonderful day!

When Jesus rose to new life it was amazing, and we can be part of this amazing story too! God loves us so much and wants good things for us.

Share the sweet chocolate with everyone.

Activity

At Easter, we eat chocolate eggs. The eggs are a symbol of new life and the hollow shell reminds us of the empty tomb when Jesus rose from the dead. That's definitely something to celebrate!

We're going to make some colourful egg shakers which we can use when we sing to praise God and celebrate Jesus being alive.

Help the children to open up a plastic egg and spoon in whatever you have provided to make the sound inside. Offer a choice if possible, so the children can discover that different fillings make different sounds. You may want to provide egg cups, or egg boxes to sit the plastic eggs inside whilst they are being filled. Help the children to close their egg, and then seal it with tape. Try to stretch the tape out as you go so that the edges stay nice and smooth. If you are able to source clear plastic eggs, try filling them with coloured sand or rice, or coloured beads. These look really effective and are interesting for the children to look at whilst they are shaking them!

Sing: 'One, Two, Three' Yancy and Friends
www.youtube.com/watch?v=Mlf9jv4pVTM

If the group are unfamiliar with the song, show them how they can join in by counting '1,2,3' and by joining in where there is easy repetition. You can also encourage the children to make music with their egg shakers as you worship.

Prayers

On a window, attach a large cross shape cut out of sticky back plastic (sticky side facing out). It is helpful to define the edge of the cross with coloured tape to make the shape more prominent. Provide bowls of different coloured tissue paper squares; enough for a least one square of each colour for each person.

Each colour of tissue paper represents something different in our lives that we can talk to God about:

Blue = Things that make us sad

Green = The world we live in

Yellow = Things that make us happy

Red / Pink = People we love

(Add extra colours / categories if you wish)

God cares about us and wants us to talk to Him. He loves us so much that He sent His only Son to die for us. He wants us to get to know Him and to tell Him about the things that matter to us.

Invite everyone to come and take a piece of each colour of tissue paper, which they will place on the sticky cross. As they do this, encourage them to talk to God about the things that the colours represent, e.g. when they stick on the blue piece of tissue paper, they might tell God about when they hurt their knee, etc. Encourage parents / carers to join in too and have some helpers around to facilitate this if necessary.

Pray: Thank you Jesus that you came down to earth and died on the cross for us. Thank you that we can celebrate that you didn't stay dead, but came back to life. Thank you that you care about us so much, and want to know about what happens to us each day. Amen.

Close

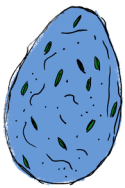
Thank everyone for coming. Prepare a bowl full of shredded paper with small hollow chocolate eggs hidden in it, so that each child can find one to take home as they leave. Challenge them to remember the Easter story whilst they eat it.

Outdoor EASTER

Outdoor Easter Challenge; how many can you do? Tick the box next to each challenge once you've completed it.

Name of Explorer:

Egg Seed Bombs ☐



Make seed bombs using scrap paper and seeds (instructions below*). Scatter in your garden & watch the flowers grow.

Discuss the new life we have in Jesus.

Mudcakes ☐



Get messy and make mudcakes - pick some pretty flowers to decorate them with.

Thank God for this season of new life, growth and the food that we eat.

Go Running ☐



Have fun and run around a field - enjoy it!

Thank God that through His Son Jesus, we have been set free; death's curse has lost its grip on us.

Garden Bunting ☐



Make bunting to decorate your garden or outdoor space (see inspiration below*).

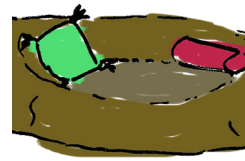
Write or draw prayers on the bunting for people or places that are suffering.

Poohsticks ☐



Enjoy spending some time playing this classic game.

Whilst holding a stick say sorry for things you have done wrong. Drop it and remember that God washes those things away.



Giant Birds Nest ☐

Using lots of different objects, (twigs, paddling pool, brown blanket, etc.), create a giant birds nest and snuggle in it.

Talk about the ways God cares for us and looks after us.



Rock Rubbing ☐

Making rock rubbings with paper & crayons to reveal its pattern.

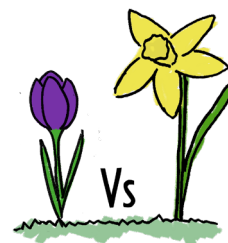
Discuss how it would have felt to find out that the rock had been rolled away to reveal the empty tomb. Jesus is alive!



Nature Impressions ☐

Mould discs out of play dough or clay. Find natural items, press them into the discs then lift them off to reveal an impression.

What impression does Jesus leave on our lives?



Crocus vs Daffodils ☐

Go on a walk and see which flower you spot the most. If you're in a group why not split into teams and assign each team a flower to look for.

Praise God for creation.



Bird Feeder ☐

Make a bird feeder; either a whole seed fat ball or one to put loose seeds in. Research ideas.

It's important that we feed ourselves with God's word from the Bible. When do you do this?

Garden Bunting

Using plastic bags



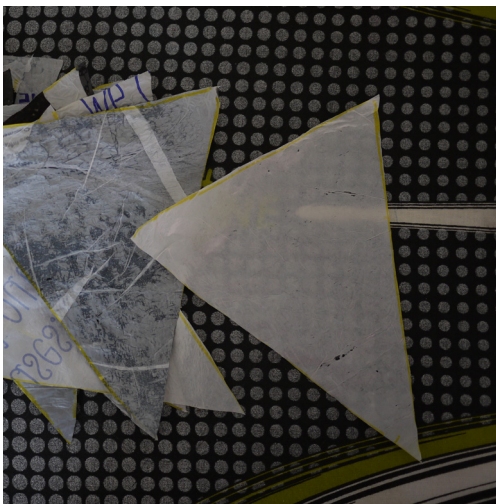
Step One

Take three or four plastic bags and cut them in half, keeping one side connected. Pile them up flat on top of each other.



Step Two

Place a piece of greaseproof paper on top of the plastic bags. With your iron on a high heat setting, iron the bags. IMPORTANT do not let the plastic bags touch the iron itself - always make sure you use the greaseproof paper as a barrier. The bags will bond together instantly.



Step Three

Make a triangle template out of a piece of card and use this to draw the shape repeatedly on the bonded bags, then cut them out.



Step Four

Write on or decorate the triangles with permanent pens, then attach them to a length of string or ribbon. We used paper clips to hang them, or alternatively you could make holes with a punch to thread the string or ribbon through.

Egg Seed Bombs

How To



Step One

Turn your scrap paper into mulch by shredding it into small pieces, then adding a bit of water to soften and combine it all. Begin by either ripping up the paper, putting it in a blender (like we did) or through a paper shredder. Then add the water to the paper a tiny bit at time. If you accidentally add too much simply squeeze out the excess.



Step Two

Add wildflower seeds to the paper mulch and then combine it all together with your hands.



Step Three

Break off lumps of the seed and mulch mix and use your hands to mould it into an egg shaped seed bomb. Leave the seed bombs on a wire rack to dry.

N.B. The seed bombs don't need to be fully dry before you scatter them.



Step Four

You can store the seed bombs in egg boxes to transport them to the location you'd like to scatter them. Simply throw or place in the general area of where you'd like the flowers to grow.



Bees are really important and need our help. Why not discover more about how you can help them.

Outdoor EASTER SCAVENGER HUNT



THE BLACKBURN
DIOCESAN BOARD
OF EDUCATION



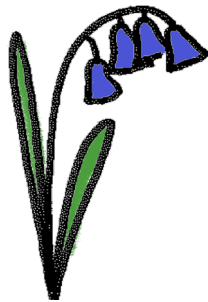
See like a bee! When bees see the world it doesn't look the same as when we look at it. Can you find all the flowers?

Bonus points if you find other flowers not on our list!

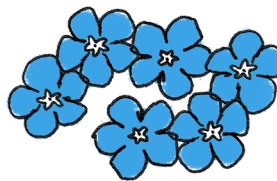
Blue and Purple Flowers. When looking at blue flowers what colour do the bees see? Answer: Blue!

☐


Crocus

☐


Bluebell

☐


Forget-me-not

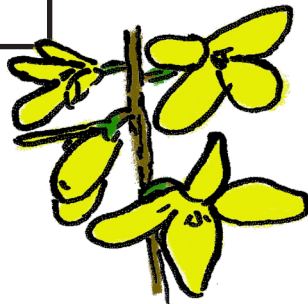
Draw in here

Your discovery

Yellow Flowers. When looking at yellow flowers what colour do the bees see? Answer: Blue!

☐


Daffodill

☐


Forsythia

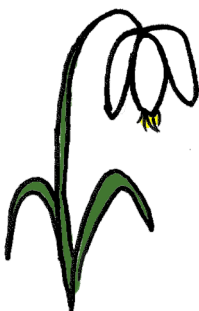
☐


Crocus

Draw in here

Your discovery

White Flowers. When looking at white flowers what colour do the bees see? Answer: Blue!

☐


Snakes Head Fritillary

☐


Lily of the Valley

☐


Snowdrop

Draw in here

Your discovery

Bees see the world differently. I bet you never considered that what you're looking at might look different to others. To some people Easter is about chocolate and bunnies, to others it's about Jesus dying for us on the cross. How will you see Easter?