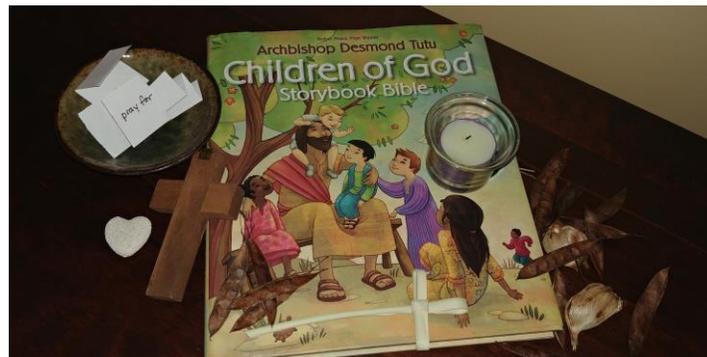


The Three Days and Easter at Home with Children

As an addition to the resources for [Prayers at Home](#), the following is a bit of a curation of some links to stories, prayers and activities that families with young children may find useful. We know that as we stay home and stay safe, not everyone is going to have access to art supplies, printers for colouring pages, the ability to go outdoors or even a Bible but we hope that there is something for everyone or that these resources will inspire your own creative ideas and responses to experiencing God in this “together-but- apart” time.

When it comes to using Prayers at Home you are encouraged to find ways to include your children. Children can help bake bread, set the table or even light a candle. They can also lead by reading the sacred story and the prayers. This is a time for snuggling close with little ones but also letting them move about in the midst of your gathering together.

You may want to consider setting up a small corner or centrepiece for worship and reflection including objects like a cross, a small bowl in which you can place prayers written on slips of paper, a candle, a stone, a shell, a small plant and a bible or other special storybook that will act as a place for gathering, centering or quiet time.



Here are some links to a number of online resources:

[Illustrated Ministry](#) has been offering free materials throughout Lent which are archived on their website. You may have seen their very simple palm frond all over Facebook and Instagram – coloured in and decorated in as many ways as there were artists of all ages posting their creations! Their Easter resource will be ready for download on April 10. Of special note are three prayers that were written for a time when we are feeling anxious. They are easily accessed on their website.



[Building Faith](#) a ministry of the Virginia Theological Seminary is an excellent resource for faith formation for all ages. Here is a short article on decorating [Easter Eggs](#). For those who may have potting soil, seeds, twigs and stones here are links to [Resurrection Gardens](#) and [Easter Wheat](#). These are wonderful projects because they change and transform as the seeds germinate, sprout and grow. While wheat grass seeds can be tricky to find, if you have grass seed for patching up your lawn it will work, especially if you keep the soil moist and set your garden in a bright, warm place.



[Christie Hides](#), a Faith Formation Minister who writes for Building Faith also has her own website. In addition to ideas for this weekend she has some thoughtful pieces on [parenting](#) and [Praying with Children in a Pandemic](#). Check out her suggestions for [Community Art Projects](#) for Palm and Easter Sunday. She also mentions another online resource, [Picture the Bible](#) which has a downloadable book with beautiful torn paper illustrations of the story of Holy Week. Interspersed between the stories are some colouring pages. You can download it and send it to your families.

She also features a relatively new picture book *Candlewalk: A Bedtime Prayer to God*, by Karin Holsinger Sherman that is a very gentle, calming picture book based on the themes and rhythms of our Service of Compline. While not specifically about Easter, it is a welcome addition to any bedtime ritual. When you follow [this link](#) it will take you to a download of the book that you can read and enjoy the pictures right now.

Amelia Richardson Dress, another author from Building Faith, has written a picture book, [The Mystery of Easter](#), and she provides a script for the telling of the Easter Story inspired by Godly Play.

Here are three picture books that you can experience on You Tube:

[The Three Trees](#) resonates with themes for Good Friday. This version is very good, however as the story proceeds the music sounds a bit like Silent Night. It is still worth a look.

A very strange and interesting telling of the story of Holy Week from Palm Sunday onwards by Patti Rukas, [Rock Art Bible Story](#) may even inspire the creation of your own pebble art! Please view anything you are going to share with children beforehand. In this case the music gets quite dramatic and might be a bit scary for really little ones.

Listen to and watch a reading of Brian Wildsmith's [The Easter Story](#), told from the perspective of the donkey who carried Jesus into Jerusalem. The music chosen to accompany the narration is quite evocative as are the colours and illustrations.

[The Desmond Tutu Storybook Bible](#), while not available on viewing or listening applications, can be purchased for some e-readers. Tutu offers fifty-six Bible stories written in his unique voice, paired with illustrations by international artists. Each story concludes with a brief prayer.

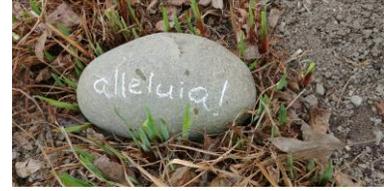
You can also find scenes from [The Prince of Egypt](#) which could be a good window into the Exodus passage we hear during the Easter Vigil. The entire movie, available on Netflix and can also be rented from other sources. It can be intense at times so please consider if it is appropriate for your children.

The Surprise of Easter

We go to the garden before sunrise, the tomb is empty, surprise, surprise! "Jesus is risen", the whole earth cries, Alleluia, Alleluia, arise, arise, alleluia, alleluia, arise, arise, alleluia, alleluia, arise, arise! (G Adam, 2019)

We cannot help but be surprised by the wondrous story of God's boundless love, a love that is so big it cannot even be contained in a tomb. Even at home, weather permitting and physical distancing being considered we are called out into the world. Here are a few ideas:

Alleluia Messages - Consider using sidewalk chalk to create Easter messages on your driveway, walkway or front step.



New Life Walk -If you can get out for a walk in the neighbourhood or on a trail, consider looking for signs of new life in the sprouts and shoots of gardens or woodland paths. Using a cell phone camera if available to take pictures of some of the things you see or even bring home stones, sticks or seeds to add to your worship corner. Pictures can be sent to relatives, friends and members of our church families as an Easter Blessings!



Bring some spring branches into your home. Add them to your family worship corner or centrepiece, now transformed for Easter. Alleluia!



It is hoped that you have found some inspiration from these offerings. Perhaps in the future we as a diocesan family can share out ideas for experiencing the Triduum in new and wondrous ways that nurture our faith and help us to grow in God's ways.

May our ways be paved with Alleluias, our footsteps borne on the breath of God.

Rev'd Canon Gerry Adam, Deacon and Director of Huron Church Camp