



the Parent LINK

April 2011



Family Ministries
www.gatheraround.org



Help Children's Faith Grow

On Easter, we remember the pinnacle of our Christian faith: Jesus' resurrection from the dead. His victory assures us of forgiveness and eternal life—two things worth celebrating! You can use the Easter message as a springboard to share God's good news with your kids all year long. Let kids know that Jesus is their friend and lets them live forever in heaven with him. Follow these tips:

- Realize that kids understand God—and Easter—in vivid, literal images. Don't dismiss tough questions. Instead, read the Bible together.
- Tweak your traditions. Turn your usual Easter celebrations into opportunities to learn more about God and his Word. For your egg hunt, for example, fill plastic eggs with Scripture verses as well as candy.
- Know that it's never too early to share the good news. Don't wait until your kids can communicate to tell them about Jesus. Remember that children can discover God from infancy (see 2 Timothy 3:14-15).

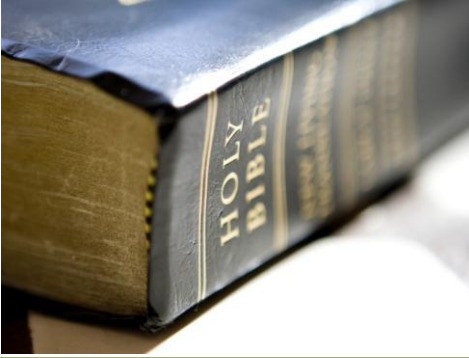
POWERSOURCE

ASK GOD:

1. To nurture your children spiritually as they grow up physically.
2. To help your children know that Jesus is their personal Savior and best friend.
3. To help you make Easter all about Jesus—and about sharing Jesus with others.

FAITH INSIGHTS

- In a 2010 survey, two-thirds of Americans said they knew that Easter is a religious holiday. But only 42% connected its meaning to Jesus' resurrection. And only 2% said they'd describe Easter as the most important holiday of their faith (*Barna Group*)
- Another Barna Group study found that children are most likely to become Christians for a lifetime from ages 5 to 13. In addition, children's moral development is largely complete by age 9.



“We have been born again because God raised Jesus Christ from the dead. Now we live with great expectation, and we have a priceless inheritance.”

(1 Peter 1:3)

Because Jesus rose from the grave on Easter, everyone who believes in him has hope, peace, and the promise of life forever in heaven.

Teachable Moments

1. Faith in Motion—While telling children about the first Easter, stand up and act out what’s happening. For example, run in place, peer into a tomb, act surprised or scared, jump for joy, and gently shake a partner’s shoulder to share the good news.

2. Easter Party—Throw a party to celebrate Jesus’ resurrection from the dead—and to remind children that Easter morning is about more than baskets of candy. Play praise music while you enjoy a special breakfast. Then wave streamers, make confetti, and play homemade musical instruments.



3. Special Message—Hide hollow chocolate eggs, rather than plastic or real eggs. Tell children to hunt for the eggs, which contain a special message. As kids discover their eggs are hollow, talk about Jesus’ empty tomb on Easter morning. Then have them share what the resurrection means to them.

Begin a conversation with your children about Easter, using these discussion questions as a launching point:

1. Why do we have such big celebrations at Easter? How can we celebrate Easter’s good news every day?
2. What gifts did Jesus give us on the first Easter? How can we share those gifts with other people?
3. How are you “growing up” in God and his Word? What has changed about your faith since you were younger?
4. How can you keep growing closer to God, day by day and year by year?

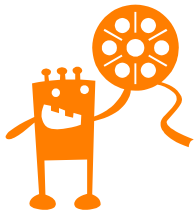
FAMILY EXPERIENCE

Celebrate the good news of Easter with these activities:

• **Sheep Muffins**—You’ll need precooked chocolate muffins, vanilla icing, shredded coconut, Fruit Roll-Ups, scissors, plastic knives, and paper plates. Peel the papers off the muffins. Have family members each place their muffin upside down on a paper plate and ice the muffin, leaving the sheep’s “face” on the side and the bottom plain. Sprinkle a layer of shredded coconut over the icing for wool. Remove the Fruit Roll-Ups from the cellophane and cut two quarter-inch-tall ears. Stick the ears into the icing on the sides of the sheep’s head. Tightly roll the Roll-Ups and cut into four equal sections for legs. Read aloud John 10:11. Say: “Jesus, the good shepherd, gave up his life for us, his sheep. But the good news is that he rose from the dead on Easter morning!” Enjoy your snack together.



• **Rock-Solid Reminders**—Set out some rocks and markers. Have each family member choose a rock and write the word “alive” on it. (Help younger children.) Read aloud Mark 16:1-6. Say: “After Jesus died on the cross and was buried, a large rock sealed his tomb. But on Easter, the rock was rolled away, and the tomb was empty!” Decide on a place to keep your rocks to remind you about what happened on Easter. Close in prayer, thanking God for being our reliable, solid rock—and for raising Jesus from the dead.



MEDIA MADNESS



MOVIES

Movie: *Rio*

Genre: Animated comedy, adventure

Rating: to be determined

Cast: Jesse Eisenberg, Anne Hathaway, George Lopez

Synopsis: This film from the creators of *Ice Age* features Blu, a rare macaw who's safe in his cage in Minnesota. When he finds out about a female like him, he sets off for Rio de Janeiro and the Brazilian rainforest. But it's far from love at first sight between Blu and Jewel.

Our Take: This movie presents a fun opportunity to teach children about geography. For a family outing, see if there's a Rainforest Café restaurant near you. Enjoy dinner or dessert as a post-movie treat.



MUSIC

Artist: Rebecca St. James

Album: *I Will Praise You*

Artist Info:

Australian-born St. James, 33, released her first Christian pop album 20 years ago. She's written books and devotionals and especially encourages teenage girls to live pure lives for God. St. James is getting married in April.

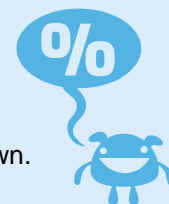
Summary: In her second studio worship album, St. James has a more mature feel. Her signature soft vocals really stand out. In "Shine Your Glory Down," St. James sings of the joy of walking in God's light.

Our Take: St. James offers praise-filled songs that will appeal to older elementary kids and preteens. Her lyrics explore the many ways that God is good, loving, and always faithful.



CULTURE & TRENDS

- Multigenerational households are on the rise. Nearly 50 million Americans now reside with numerous generations. (*Pew Research Center*)
- Home entertainment is going olfactory! A \$70 contraption called ScentScape will waft 20 different smells into video games. With a ScentEditor app, users can even create and share scents of their own.



QUICK STATS

- Only 14% of all parents say they're very familiar with what the Bible has to say about parenting, even though 77% identify themselves as Christians. (*Lifeway Christian Resources*)
- When meeting new people, 28% of preteens and teenagers are most likely to turn to a social networking website rather than another mode of communication. (*Harris Interactive*)

GAMES

Title	Content	Rating & Platform
<i>The Toy Maker</i>	At this free, fun site, kids can print out dozens of patterns and then assemble a wide variety of toys and puppets	thetoymaker.com
<i>Kideos</i>	This site serves as a kid-friendly YouTube. Prescreened videos are available for children ages birth to 10.	kideos.com
<i>de Blob 2</i>	An evil faction led by Comrade Black has sucked the color out of Prisma City. The heroic Blob and his buddies must "paint" the whole place back to normal.	E10+; Xbox 360, Wii, Nintendo DS, PS3



This page is designed to help educate parents and isn't meant to endorse any movie, music, or product. Our prayer is that you'll make informed decisions about what your children watch, listen to, and wear.



SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
					1	2
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17 Palm Sunday Holy Week begins	18	19	20	21 Maundy Thursday	22 Good Friday	23
24 Easter Sunday	25	26	27	28	29	30