

# ASSEMBLIES TO DO AFTER EASTER

These assemblies explore the resurrection story and its implications for the world.

The proof of the pudding	pages 45-46
A big surprise	pages 47-49
Escape!	pages 50-51
The Road to Emmaus	pages 52-54
Peter – a very special breakfast	pages 55-57
The horrible tie	pages 58-59

## **THE PROOF OF THE PUDDING**

**Aim:** to explain that Jesus proved that he was the Son of God by rising from the dead.

### **You'll need:**

- a tin of food - It can be anything edible!
- a tin opener
- plate and forks

### **Preparation:**

- Remove the label from the food. You could get a friend to choose a tin and remove the label for you so that you genuinely don't know what's inside at the start of the assembly.

### **Introduction**

Ask children what festival they celebrated at the weekend (or recently). Ask them what they remember about the Easter story. Explain that Christians believe that Easter isn't just about remembering the events of the past. What happened at Easter can make a difference to our lives today.

### **Content**

Show the tin without a label to the children. Explain that a friend gave you this tin without a label and you don't know what's inside it. Ask for some guesses as to what's inside. Could it be something you eat for breakfast - baked beans maybe? Or something sweet - tinned peaches, or sticky toffee pudding? Or maybe it's tinned tomatoes, or kidney beans, or a tin of soup? Invite lots of guesses. You could take the tin out to the audience and get one or two to shake the tin to see if they can hear anything sloshing around. What would they hope is in the tin? What's their favourite food that comes out of a tin?

When he was on earth, Jesus said that he was God's son. People that met him had to decide whether that was true or not. Some people maybe thought he was a good man who helped others. Some people maybe thought he was a bit mad. Lots of people had opinions about him. Could they believe what he said about himself? How could they know if it was true? What was the proof that he was the Son of God? So Jesus was a bit like this tin - people were trying to work out who Jesus was. They were looking for evidence to see if he was God's son. But they wanted him to prove it.

Then ask how we can find out what's in the tin? The only way to find out is to open it. We can guess all we like. We can talk about what we hope is in there, or what we would like to be in there. But the only way to prove what is in the tin is to open it. Open the tin, pour the contents onto a plate and show it to the children. If appropriate, give one or two of them a taste (using a clean fork for each child).

Christians believe/the Bible teaches/I believe that:

- the way Jesus proved that he was God's son was by coming back to life again. You've heard the story of Easter and how he was killed on the cross. All of Jesus' followers were very sad at that and scared. But two days later, a woman called Mary went to the tomb where Jesus' body had been put, and she found it empty. She saw someone who she thought was the gardener, and asked him what had happened. But as soon as the man spoke, she knew that it was Jesus! Jesus had come back from the dead and was alive again. That was the proof that Jesus was who he said he was, that he was the Son of God.

### **Prayer**

Explain that you are going to say a prayer and if they want to join in, they can say 'Amen' at the end.

Dear God

We thank you for all that Jesus said and did while he was here on earth.

We praise you that his actions show that what he said was true – when he rose from the dead he proved that he is your son.

We thank you that we can know Jesus with us today. Help us to share his love with people around us.

Amen.

## **A BIG SURPRISE**

**Aim:** to explore how the disciples' sadness turned to joy when they discovered that Jesus was alive.

### **You'll need:**

- (optional) a present and lots of wrapping paper

### **Preparation:**

- Rehearse the story so that you are confident in telling it - make it your own
- For the finale of the story - see below - you could have a wrapped present that you get one of the children to open. If you decide to do this, keep the present hidden behind the curtains on stage, or behind a screen. This is by no means essential - children will be able to identify with the feelings in the story.

### **Introduction**

Ask children what festival they celebrated at the weekend (or recently). Ask them what they remember about the Easter story. Explain that Christians believe that Easter isn't just about remembering the events of the past. What happened at Easter can make a difference to our lives today.

### **Content**

This assembly is a simple retelling of a true story. You could get children out to mime the story while you tell it. You will need five children to play the parts of Sam, his mum and dad, his brother and his sister. Get Sam to stand one side of you, and the rest on the other side of you. You may want to get the children to imagine a huge Christmas tree next to the parents and children that has a massive pile of presents underneath it.

'I want to tell you a story about a boy called Sam. Sam lived with his mum and dad and his brother and sister. Sam loved all the things that boys usually love - football, baked beans on toast, playing with his friends. But the thing that he loved the most was Christmas. Sam looked forward to Christmas all year. He loved seeing all the decorations in the shops. He loved the carol concert that they did at school. He liked opening Christmas cards and wrapping presents. But of course, the best thing of all was Christmas Day.

So Sam woke up very early on Christmas Day. He was really looking forward to opening his presents. He woke everyone else up and they all went downstairs to open their presents. The Christmas tree had been up for a few days, but during the night Sam's mum and dad had brought down all the presents and there was a huge pile. It was so exciting to see all the presents under the tree.

And then Sam's mum and dad started handing out the presents. They gave presents from Sam's grandparents to his brother and sister, but they said to Sam, 'Sorry Sam, there's nothing for you from Grandma and Grandpa.' Sam's brother and sister opened the presents and were very happy at what they got. How do you think Sam felt?

Then Sam's mum handed out the presents from their aunts and uncles - she gave three presents to Sam's sister and three presents to Sam's brother. But when it came to Sam she said, 'Sorry Sam, there isn't anything for you.' How do you think Sam felt?

Then Sam's dad handed out the presents from Sam's mum and dad. He gave five presents to Sam's sister and five presents to Sam's brother. They ripped the wrapping paper off and shouted about what they had been given, and waved their presents around. But Sam's dad said to Sam, 'Sorry Sam, there doesn't seem to be anything here for you.' How do you think Sam felt?

Sam looked at his brother and sister surrounded by wrapping paper, and toys, and books and games. He looked at his mum and dad opening their presents. He looked at the empty space around him. And he felt very sad, and very disappointed.

We've just celebrated Easter and you've heard all about the Easter story. And you know that Jesus had lots of friends who were excited about the things he taught them about God. But then Jesus was arrested even though he hadn't done anything wrong. And he was put to death on the cross in front of them. How do you think Jesus' friends felt? They were very, very sad and very, very disappointed - even worse than Sam felt when he didn't get any Christmas presents. They were scared and felt very alone. They didn't understand why Jesus had to die.

But how do these stories end?

Well Sam sat there feeling very sad and very disappointed. But then he saw that his mum and dad both had massive smiles on their faces, as if they were enjoying a secret joke. And they said to him, 'Sam, come and see what's in the dining room.' So Sam followed his mum and dad into the dining room.

Now's the time to reveal your big present if you have one!

And there was the biggest present that Sam had ever seen. It had a big label on it that said 'To Sam, Happy Christmas, from Mum, Dad, Grandma and Grandpa and all your aunts and uncles.' Sam ripped off the wrapping paper, and there was.... a table football game. It was the one thing that Sam had really wanted for Christmas, but he hadn't really been expecting because it was such a big thing. But all his aunts and uncles, his mum and dad, his grandma and grandpa had put their money together to buy it for him. So he went from being very sad and disappointed to very happy and excited in the space of three seconds!

And what about the Easter story - how does that end? The Bible tells us that Jesus' friends felt very, very sad and very, very disappointed, and scared and alone. They got together in a room to talk about what had happened - and suddenly Jesus was there with him! He was alive. They could touch him, and talk to him and ask him all kinds of questions. They went from being very, very sad and very, very disappointed to very, very happy and amazed and excited and shocked and surprised and overjoyed! They saw Jesus several times over the next few days so they didn't have any doubt that it was him.

Christians believe that because Jesus came back from the dead, he lives now. And we can get to know him now - so we can feel happy and amazed and excited and surprised and overjoyed that Jesus is alive!

### **Prayer**

Explain that you are going to say a prayer and if they want to join in, they can say the response **Thank you Lord** and join in with 'Amen' at the end.

Dear God

At Easter you turned disappointment into delight

**Thank you Lord**

You turned sadness into joy

**Thank you Lord**

You turned confusion into amazement

**Thank you Lord**

This Easter you give us forgiveness and love

**Thank you Lord**

You give us the chance to be your friends

**Thank you Lord**

**Amen**

## **ESCAPE!**

**Aim:** to explain that Jesus is stronger than death and he proved it by coming back to life

### **You'll need:**

- rolls of cheap kitchen roll
- large bag
- rope, padlock, and/or chains

### **Preparation:**

- In the assembly, you'll wrap cheap kitchen roll round a child and then get them to break out of it. It would be a good idea to practice this in advance with a boy or girl of the same age as those in the assembly, so you know how much paper you should use!
- Put the kitchen rolls and other materials inside the bag.

### **Introduction**

Ask children what festival they celebrated at the weekend (or recently). Ask them what they remember about the Easter story. Explain that Christians believe that Easter isn't just about remembering the events of the past. What happened at Easter can make a difference to our lives today.

### **Content**

Explain that you need someone to help you in the assembly and choose a volunteer. (It doesn't need to be anyone particularly strong and can be a boy or a girl.) Interview your volunteer and find out a bit about him or her.

- What's your name?
- What did you have for breakfast this morning?
- What colour are your bedroom walls?
- Are you any good at escapology?

Explain that escapology is the art of escaping from handcuffs or ropes tied round you or other restraints. Harry Houdini is one of the most famous escapologists in history. He used to be handcuffed, put into a big container full of water and then the lid would be sealed on top. The audience would hold their breath while they waited for him to escape. But somehow he would do it and reappear to lots of applause. Ask your volunteer if they fancy trying that one?!

Explain that the escape you're going to ask them to do is easier than that and doesn't involve any water. You are going to tie up your volunteer and then they have to try to escape. Pull the rope, chains and padlocks out of the bag one by one and put them to one side, making suitable comments to build the tension!

Then produce the kitchen rolls and explain to your volunteer that this is what they have to escape from. Get your volunteer to stand with their hands by their side and wrap the kitchen roll around them. Then get all the children in the audience to do a gentle drum roll, patting their hands on their knees. Give your volunteer a count

down – “3, 2, 1, Escape!” Encourage pupils to give them a round of applause and get them to sit down.

Explain that we have just celebrated Easter – the time when we remember that Jesus died. When Jesus’ friends watched him die, they were convinced that that was the end for him. They knew that he was definitely dead, and they were very sad about it. But it wasn’t the end. Christians believe that/the Bible teaches/I believe that:

- During his life Jesus had shown that he was more powerful than illness by healing people; he had shown that he was more powerful than the weather by calming a storm when he was out in a boat with his friends. And Jesus showed that he was more powerful than death by coming back to life again.
- The Bible says that it was impossible for death to keep hold of Jesus. Death just wasn’t strong enough. Jesus conquered death as easily as your volunteer broke through his or her restraints.
- Jesus came back to life, and Christians believe that he is still alive today. We can get to know Jesus and experience his love and power in our lives today. Jesus can help us deal with the things that hold us back – things like fear or anger or prejudice.

### **Reflection**

Invite children to reflect on the assembly:

Like a knife slicing through butter,  
like a spoon scooping up ice-cream,  
like a child tearing paper,  
Jesus broke out of the hold of death.

Like night turning to day,  
Like winter becoming spring,  
Like ice melting to water,  
Jesus came back to life.

### **Prayer**

Explain that you are going to say a prayer and if they want to join in, they can say ‘Amen’ at the end.

Dear God  
We thank you that Jesus’ death was not the end,  
that he came back to life and still lives today.  
We thank you that we can know Jesus’ love and power in our lives today.  
Help us to share that love with others.  
Amen

## THE ROAD TO EMMAUS

**Aim:** to tell the story of the road to Emmaus and how Jesus walks with us today

### **You'll need:**

- a small loaf of bread
- a plate
- table and three chairs

### **Preparation:**

- Set up the table and three chairs at the front. Put the bread on a plate on the table.

### **Introduction**

Ask children what festival they celebrated at the weekend (or recently). Ask them what they remember about the Easter story. Explain that Christians believe that Easter isn't just about remembering the events of the past. What happened at Easter can make a difference to our lives today.

### **Content**

Explain that you want to tell them the story of something else that happened at Easter:

After Jesus died, his friends were very upset and confused about what had happened. They had thought that Jesus was going to be a great leader, but he had ended up being killed.

Two of Jesus' friends decided to go to a village called Emmaus which was about seven miles away from Jerusalem, the city where Jesus had been put to death. It would have taken them about two hours to walk that distance.

Ask for two volunteers to play the part of the two friends. Take them on a walk around the hall, up and down the aisles, in between rows if there is room, round the back of the hall. You will keep walking with the two friends during most of the assembly, while you explain the story.

Ask pupils 'What do you think these two friends were talking about as they walked?' Explain that they were talking about Jesus – about what had happened in the last few days that had led to his death.

Ask if anyone can remember anything in the Easter story that they might have been talking about. Hopefully they will remember the elements that they covered in the Easter workshops and mention those: Palm Sunday, the Last Supper, Peter letting Jesus down, the trial, and the crucifixion. Pick up on one or two of these.

Try to mention the Last Supper so that pupils might pick up on the connection with Jesus breaking bread at the end of the story. What questions might the two friends have had about these events?

Then explain that while the two friends were walking along, another person came and joined them. Get another volunteer to join the group. This man asked them what they were talking about. (You could get your new volunteer to say, 'What are you two talking about?')

One of the two friends asks him where he'd been for the last few days.

Get one of them to say 'haven't you heard what has been going on in Jerusalem?'

So the two friends explained to the mystery man all about Jesus and what had happened. And the mystery man started explaining to them what it all meant. He talked to them about stories from the Bible. He seemed to know an awful lot about it. And he seemed to know an awful lot about Jesus.

I wonder how he knew so much? I wonder who this mystery person was?

You could invite pupils to give suggestions for other elements of the Easter story that they might have discussed on the journey – this could be a good way to review the story although don't draw it out too much.

So the three of them walked and talked and talked and walked all the way to Emmaus.

Aim to arrive back at the front of the hall at this stage.

The two friends invited the mystery man to stay and have a meal with them. So they all sat down together.

Get the three to sit down at the table and the 'mystery man' to break the bread as you explain the next bit.

The mystery man picked up the bread, prayed to God and broke it. The two friends looked at him amazed. They both realised where they had seen someone do that exact same thing before. And they both realised who the mystery man was. Ask the audience and the two friends who they think the mystery man is. It was Jesus! Wow – how amazing!

But then Jesus disappeared from their sight.

Get the mystery man to sit back in the audience

The two friends thought back to the walk, and all they had talked about and realised that they had known deep down that something special was happening and that God was with them. They were so excited to think that Jesus was alive that they got up, even though it was late, and went all the way back to Jerusalem again, all seven miles, so they could tell Jesus' other friends what had happened.

Lead the two friends once round the hall quickly and get them to sit back down in their seats.

Christians believe/the Bible teaches/I believe that:

- Jesus' death wasn't the end of the story. On the third day Jesus came back to life and appeared to his friends several times. He explained everything that had happened to these two friends, cooked breakfast for some others, ate with them, showed them the wounds in his hands and feet and let them touch him. Jesus' friends were convinced that Jesus had come back to life.
- Jesus is still alive today. Although we can't see Jesus, Christians believe that we can get to know him and that Jesus helps us in our lives today. Jesus walks with us through all our experiences, happy or sad, good or bad.

### **Prayer and reflection**

Explain that you are going to say a prayer and if they want to join in, they can say 'Amen' at the end.

Dear God

You walked with your friends on the road to Emmaus,  
answering their questions and showing how much you cared .  
Please walk with us through our lives.

Make us aware of your love and show us how to live.

Amen

## **PETER – A VERY SPECIAL BREAKFAST**

**Aim:** to tell the story of Peter's restoration and how God forgives us

**You'll need:**

- a small barbecue

**Preparation:**

- In this assembly you will get pupils to use their imagination and to enter into the story, to imagine what Jesus and Peter would have felt like. Make it clear that you don't expect pupils to answer the questions that you pose – they are just for them to wonder about.

**Introduction**

Ask children what festival they celebrated at the weekend (or recently). Ask them what they remember about the Easter story. Explain that Christians believe that Easter isn't just about remembering the events of the past. What happened at Easter can make a difference to our lives today. Explain that you want to pick up on one of the stories that they explored in the Easter experience when they visited the church (if appropriate.)

**Content**

Explain that Jesus and Peter were very good friends. Peter had spent three years following Jesus around, listening to Jesus' teaching and being involved in his life. Peter had told Jesus that he would never leave him, that he was prepared to go to prison or even to die for Jesus.

But when Jesus was arrested, Peter was very afraid. And when someone asked Peter if he knew Jesus, Peter said that he didn't. Three times Peter pretended that he didn't know Jesus. When Jesus needed his friends most, Peter let him down.

So when Peter heard that Jesus had come back to life, he had mixed feelings. He was excited to think that he could see Jesus again. But he knew that he had let Jesus down badly.

Explain to the children that you are going to tell the story of what happened when Jesus and Peter met after Jesus had risen from the dead. You want them to imagine what it would be like to be part of the story, to imagine what Jesus and Peter would have felt. You're going to ask them questions to think about in their minds – you don't want them to answer out loud.

Ask for two volunteers to play the parts of Jesus and Peter. Get Peter to stand one side of the stage and pretend to be fishing. Explain that Peter would be in a boat, throwing out the nets and pulling them back in. Get Jesus to sit on the other side of the stage, cooking fish on the barbecue.

### Tell the story:

Before he met Jesus, Peter used to be a fisherman. After Jesus died, Peter decided that he would go fishing again and he persuaded some of his friends to go with him. They fished all night but they didn't catch anything. They were feeling really fed up when they saw a stranger on the shore. He told them to try fishing on the other side of the boat and when they pulled the nets up, they were full of fish! Peter realised that the stranger on the shore was Jesus. How do you think you would feel if you were Peter? What would you do? How do you think Jesus feels about you?

(Leave a short pause.)

Peter might have been tempted to run away, but he didn't. He was so keen to see Jesus that he jumped into the water and started swimming towards him. (Get 'Peter' to mime swimming towards Jesus for a few strokes – you don't want this to distract people from the wondering aspect of the story.) Imagine that you are Jesus and you see Peter swimming towards you. How would you feel? What would you want to do?

(Leave a short pause.)

Peter arrived at the shore, and the other friends followed in the boat. They brought some fish to Jesus and he cooked it over the fire. They ate breakfast together and then Jesus leaned over towards Peter and asked him a question. He said to Peter, 'Do you care about me?' Imagine that you're Jesus. A few days ago Peter let you down when you needed friends around you. How do you feel as you ask this question? How do you think he's going to answer?

(Leave a short pause.)

Peter looked at Jesus. And he realised that Jesus wasn't angry with him. Jesus forgave him for having let him down. Peter was really sorry that he had let Jesus down and he said, 'I do care about you.' Imagine you're Peter. How do you feel as you say that? What do you think Jesus will do next?

And then Jesus asked the question again: 'Do you care about me?'

And Peter said, 'Yes Lord, I do care about you.'

Jesus asked the question for the third time. 'Do you care about me?'

And Peter answered for the third time. 'Yes, Jesus, I do care about you.'

Jesus then said to Peter that he wanted him to carry on the work of teaching and caring for people that Jesus had been doing. Jesus forgave Peter and gave him the chance to have a fresh start. Imagine that you're Peter. How do you feel as you hear those words from Jesus?

Thank the pupils for listening so well and using their imaginations. Explain that in the story, often something very different to what you might expect happens. You might have expected Peter to keep his distance when he saw Jesus, but he jumped in the water to get closer to him. You might have thought that Jesus would be upset with Peter or angry with him, but Jesus forgave Peter. And you might have thought that Jesus wouldn't trust Peter again because Peter had let him down. But Jesus gave Peter a job to do in the future, to care for people like Jesus did.

Christians believe/the Bible teaches/I believe that:

- Jesus is willing to forgive all of us when we do things wrong. He wants us to be close to him and to care for people like he did.

### **Prayer and reflection**

Explain that you are going to say a prayer and if they want to join in, they can say 'Amen' at the end.

Dear God

We thank you that your love and forgiveness are so big that you still love us even when we let you down.

We thank you that you can forgive us for everything that we have done wrong.

We thank you that you always give us another chance to be your friend and to work with you.

Amen.

## **THE HORRIBLE TIE**

**Aim:** to explain that lots of people saw Jesus after he had risen from the dead

### **You'll need:**

- An old tie or woman's scarf – the more garish and horrible the better
- A pair of strong scissors

### **Preparation:**

- Ask the head teacher or a senior member of staff to wear the tie or scarf to the assembly. Explain the format of the assembly - that you will cut the tie or scarf in two, and what you plan to say before doing so.
- Think through what you'll say in the assembly. You don't want to undermine the staff member by appearing to be rude to them!
- Put the scissors in your pocket.
- Find out how many children will be in the assembly so that you can compare the figure with the 500 people that saw Jesus at the same time after he came back to life. (1 Corinthians 15:3-8)

### **Introduction**

Ask children what festival they celebrated at the weekend (or recently). Ask them what they remember about the Easter story. Explain that Christians believe that Easter isn't just about remembering the events of the past. What happened at Easter can make a difference to our lives today.

### **Content**

Pause after the introduction and explain that you're finding it very hard to concentrate this morning because you're being distracted by Mr X's tie or Miss X's scarf. Say something like:

'I don't mean to be rude but that is the most horrible tie/scarf I've ever seen. The colours don't go with what you're wearing. And the pattern is so loud I think I need sunglasses. It's very difficult to lead this assembly looking at that tie/scarf. In fact, I just can't go on any more. Either that tie/scarf has to go, or I do. And as I don't want to go, I think I'll do this....'

Then cut the tie or scarf in two and hold up the bit you have cut off.

Allow the reaction to die down!

Then ask pupils to think about what would happen if they went home and told their mum or dad or carer what had happened in the assembly. 'Today we had a visitor in assembly and she cut Mr X's tie in half!' Your mum might be very surprised and find it hard to believe you, because that sort of thing doesn't happen very often. How could you convince your Mum that you were telling the truth?

Well, maybe you could take three or four of your friends home and you could all say 'Today we had a visitor in assembly and she cut Mr X's tie in half!' That might make it more believable but your mum might think that you had all got together to play a joke on her. She might not be convinced that it had happened.

But if you took everybody here home, and they all lined up outside your house and one by one they gave their version of events, it would be very difficult for your mum to argue that it hadn't happened. If that many people all said that they had seen it, your mum would be convinced that it was true.

At Easter, we celebrate the fact that Jesus died and then came back to life again. But that's quite a difficult thing to believe isn't it, because it seems so amazing. We don't see things like that happening every day. The Bible tells us though that Jesus appeared to his friends several times over a period of 40 days. He cooked breakfast for them, ate with them, showed them the wounds in his hands and feet and side, let them touch him and so on.

And the Bible says that Jesus appeared to 500 people at the same time. All those 500 people saw him – that's as many people as there are in this assembly (or whatever the comparable figures are.) And when that bit of the Bible was written, most of the people who had been in the crowd of 500 were still alive and so people could have gone and talked to them about it.

Although it sounds amazing to say that Jesus came back to life, Christians believe that that is what happened and that Jesus is still alive today. Christians believe that we can get to know Jesus and that he can help us in our lives today.

### **Prayer and reflection**

Invite pupils to reflect for a moment. What do you think about Jesus and the Easter story? Do you think that Jesus came back to life? What would convince you that it was true?

Explain that you are going to say a prayer and if they want to join in, they can say 'Amen' at the end.

Dear God

We thank you for all we have learned about Easter over the last few weeks.

Please help us as we think about it, to understand what it means for us.

We thank you that Jesus died and rose to life again.

We thank you that we can get to know Jesus and that he can help us in our lives today.

Amen