

heartfelt Newsletter

March 2010

SCRIPTURE: John 20:1-18

THEME: Metamorphosis!

family
round
the
table



Decorations:

Use the pastel colors of spring for the table covering and napkins. Add Easter flowers, colored eggs, and Christian symbols of resurrection to decorate the area.

MENU

Ham, Vegetables, Colored Hard-boiled Eggs, Lamb Cake

Prepare and serve a traditional Easter dinner, including ham that is symbolic of Christ conquering the old laws, colored eggs representing new life, and a lamb cake highlighting the lamb who gave his life.

Blessing:

Dear God, thank you for the joys of this day. Bless the food we eat to make our bodies strong, and also make our spirits strong as we celebrate Jesus' gift of new life. Amen.



PLAYING TOGETHER

Activity One: The Jelly Bean Prayer

Materials: one of each color jellybean listed for each bag, plastic sandwich-sized bags (one per set), the Jelly Bean Prayer (one copy per bag)

Directions:

1. For each set, place the following colors of jellybeans in a snack size plastic bag: blue, green, orange, pink, purple, red, yellow, and white.
2. Place a copy of the prayer to include in each bag.
3. Use the Jelly Bean Prayer as a family devotion and to give as gifts to others.

The Jelly Bean Prayer

RED is for the life He gave

GREEN is for the grass He made

YELLOW is for the sun so bright

ORANGE is for the edge of night

BLUE is for the sins we made

WHITE is for the grace He gave

PURPLE is for His hour of sorrow

PINK is for our new tomorrow

A bag full of jelly beans colorful and sweet

Is a prayer, is a promise, is a special treat

Activity Two: Easter Eggs

Materials: plastic eggs, basket

Directions:

1. Ask each family member to find a symbol of Easter to place inside a plastic Easter egg. Examples may include: a blade of grass symbolizing new life, a flower suggesting the sweet fragrance of hope, or a stone representing the one the angels rolled away.
2. Gather the eggs in a basket and be ready to share them during your family worship.

Activity Three: The Very Hungry Caterpillar

Materials: The Very Hungry Caterpillar by Eric Carle.

Directions:

Read the story and invite a discussion by asking:

1. What part of this story do you like best?
2. What do you think the man who wrote this story wants you to know?



STUDYING GOD'S WORD TOGETHER

- Invite a family to locate John 20:1-18 and read the passage aloud.
- Share that the story of The Very Hungry Caterpillar may help us understand the mystery of Easter morning. This story traces the changes that take place in a caterpillar's life – from the egg on a leaf to a fully-grown caterpillar, which eats and eats his way through all the stages in what we call metamorphosis. When the caterpillar has developed as fully as possible, he covers himself with a cocoon and goes to sleep. At the end of The Very Hungry Caterpillar story, he emerges as a bright and beautiful butterfly. He doesn't look like a caterpillar any more! This is nature's story of an amazing change.

The Bible story of Easter is even more amazing! Jesus came to earth as a man to live among us, to experience life as a human being, to show us how God wants us to live with one another. After he had done everything that God sent him to do on earth, Jesus accepted death on a cross to demonstrate God's power over sin and death. On the third day, God raised Jesus from death to new life! The symbol of metamorphosis helps us understand a little bit about how Jesus must have changed from death to life. Then Jesus appeared to those who had known him so that we might all believe in God's power! On Easter, we celebrate that God defeated death and that this gift of life everlasting is available to all of us.

Reflection Questions for the Family

1. Have you heard this Bible story before? What is your favorite part of this story? Did you hear anything new this time?
2. How do you think Mary felt the morning she found the tomb empty?
3. Where do you think the disciples went when they left the tomb so quickly? What do you think they did?
4. If you were in this story, where would you be?
5. What do you think we are to remember from this story?



PRAYING TOGETHER

- Light a worship candle and place the open Bible next to it.
- Listen to a recording of the hymn “Christ, the Lord, Is Risen Today”.
- Share the Easter messages from the eggs prepared earlier. Invite each family member to take an egg from the basket and open it. The person who placed the object inside can then explain its importance.
- Invite family members to share their joys and concerns. Open a time of prayer by repeating together these words of affirmation from Psalm 118:24: This is the day that the Lord has made; let us rejoice and be glad in it.
- Invite family members to pray about their joys and concerns and to pray for one another.
- Close with these words: Dear God, thank You for your gift of Jesus. Thank you for the story of Easter that brings us hope and new life. Help us remember how we are to live with one another. Amen.