

Celebrating **EASTER** with our children

We are Easter people!

*The paschal mystery (Jesus' passion, death, resurrection and ascension into heaven)
is the central to who we are as Catholic Christians.*

EASTER CALLS US TO NEW LIFE

At Easter we celebrate **NEW LIFE in CHRIST!** It also helps us to be more aware of the new life all around us. There is nothing like children to renew our hope and deepen our gratitude for the gift of new life!

Easter is far more than just a one-day celebration. It is a season that begins at sundown Holy Saturday and lasts for six more Sundays until Pentecost. **50 days total!**

Let's look at some of our Church's signs of Christ's New Life during this glorious season.

THE PASCHAL CANDLE: The large white candle in the center of the Church by our Baptismal Font is the Paschal, or Easter candle. It is a symbol that Christ is the light of the world and through His crucifixion, death and resurrection (the Paschal mystery) we all experience new life.

✚ **Family Faith Connection:** You may want to place a white candle at the center of your dinner table to be lit only on Sundays as a reminder that each and every Sunday is a mini-Easter!

THE COLOR WHITE: Look around at Mass during the Easter season and you will find the color white. White represents Christ's victory over death through His glorious resurrection. The white garment we received at our baptism is a sign that all of the baptized share in the new life of Christ. The white pall that is laid on the coffin of those who have died reminds us that we, too, through our baptism share in Christ's eternal and everlasting victory over death.

THE BAPTISMAL FONT: Take a look at our baptismal font when you are in church. Notice that the beginning of the font is in the back of the church and ends in the midst of the pews. The tile surrounding the font is marked by a different color than the rest of the church and leads us to the Eucharistic Altar. This is to remind us by our baptism we are initiated and welcomed into the church and are invited to the Eucharistic Altar in full membership of the church. It is sacred ground.

The Baptismal Font is a symbol that all of the baptized have been "born anew" in Christ. During the Easter season, we are sprinkled with Holy Water during the Gloria to remind us of our baptismal promises and how we are each called to build up the Body of Christ on earth.

EASTER LILLIES: The white flower is a symbol of purity. The lily's trumpet like shape heralds the triumph of Jesus over death.

Teaching our children to Discover JESUS in EASTER

We all have heard of the slogan “Keep Christ in Christmas” – but what about Easter? How do you celebrate the real meaning of Christ’s glorious resurrection in the midst of bunnies, eggs, hams and lambs?

The answer is easier than you think! The key is to help your children *connect* these “secular” Easter traditions to our FAITH! Here are a few ideas.

EASTER EGGS: Here is one of my favorite Easter traditions that you may want to consider: Write each of your children a note telling them how special they are and how important they are to your family. It is even more impactful if BOTH mom and dad do this. Then tuck your notes in a plastic eggs which have your children's names on them. Then enjoy watching them hunt for their own special egg and watch them read their love note from you!



✚ **Faith Connection:** Eggs were a pagan symbol of rebirth at springtime. Christians adopted the egg as a symbol of the new life that comes with the Resurrection.

THE EASTER BUNNY: In many cultures rabbits were seen as sacred messengers of the Divine. They are signs of new life in springtime. Also, wild hares have been known to sacrifice themselves for the sake of another hare, making them an obvious symbol for Christ.



JELLY BEANS: These popular candies were invented in the 1800s but didn’t become part of Easter traditions until the 1930s. Because they are egg shaped, they can be considered a symbol of new life and spiritual rebirth.

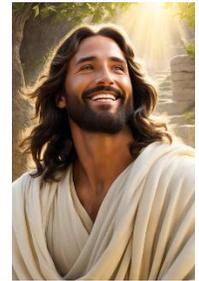
✚ **Faith Connection:** The Jelly Bean Prayer is easy way to bring the message of Easter home to your children.

RED is for the blood He gave.
GREEN is for the grass He made.
YELLOW is for the sun so bright.
ORANGE is for the edge of night.
BLACK is for the sins we made.
PINK is for the grace He gave.
PURPLE is for His hour of sorrow.
WHITE is for our new tomorrow





MAKE A PLAN FOR EASTER LIVING!



Where to start? We all have heard have an “Attitude of Gratitude”. Keeping that in mind, let’s make an Easter and beyond attitude adjustment!

It is not about *sacrificing* time to sit down and read – it is about *choosing* to open yourself up to inspiration and words of wisdom; *choosing* to let God enter you intellectually; *choosing* to continue some of your Lenten attitudes. This can make you a better parent, a better spouse, a better co-worker – a better person!

Faith Connection:

As a family:

- ✚ Select a goal to continue to grow spiritually.
- ✚ Make a plan how to reach that goal.
- ✚ Take time evaluate your progress (Sunday dinner is always a good time)
- ✚ Make adjustments if necessary.
- ✚ Celebrate the successes along the way.
- ✚ Once you mastered the goal, find new ways to continue to grow in discipleship as a family.

NEED IDEAS TO GET YOU STARTED?

- ✚ Keep Sundays holy – don’t skip Mass.
- ✚ Read the Sunday Gospel BEFORE going to Mass. Utilize the Gospel Reflection Questions to break open the Word that are in our bulletin each week for the coming Sunday.
- ✚ Find a daily devotional that you can read each day. Read it together at breakfast or dinner.
- ✚ Put your faith into action by volunteering together.
- ✚ Be creative! 😊

