

# faith at home

Resources for Schools  
**PHASE: SECONDARY**

**– Easter**



faith at  
home

## KEY CONCEPT/MESSAGE:

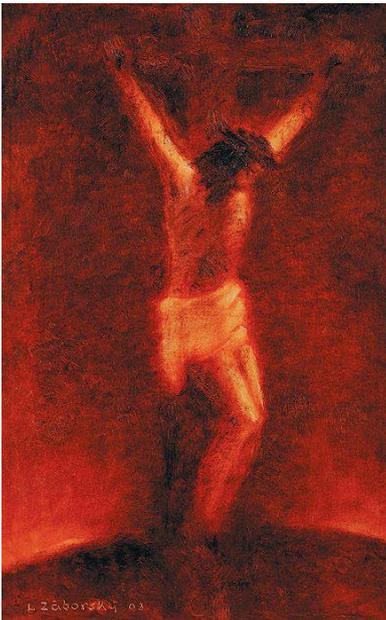
At Holy Week and Easter, Christians celebrate their belief in salvation and the reconciliation of God with his people. They believe that God in raising his son Jesus from the dead, signals the destruction of the power of sin and death forever. It is seen as a redeeming sacrifice, reconciling God and humans. Christians believe that freedom was gained by the costly love of Jesus shown in his free choice to die. Jesus, though totally innocent, died for their sins and no other, than the Son of God was able to do that. A death once and for all.

## BIBLE PASSAGE OF THE WEEK:

*Crucifixion: Ladislav Záborský*

### **The crucifixion and death of Jesus**

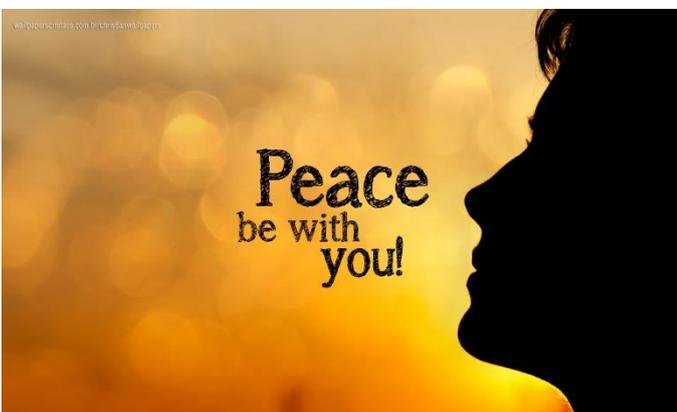
Luke 23:32-47 New International Version



The soldiers also came up and mocked him. They offered him wine vinegar and said, "If you are the king of the Jews, save yourself."

There was a written notice above him, which read: this is the king of the Jews. One of the criminals who hung there, hurled insults at him: "Aren't you the Messiah? Save yourself and us!" But the other criminal rebuked him. "Don't you fear God," he said, "since you are under the same sentence? We are punished justly, for we are getting what our deeds deserve. But this man has done nothing wrong." Then he said, "Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom. Jesus answered him, "Truly I tell you, today you will be with me in paradise."

## Gathering



Something you may want to try as each student, or any adult arrives, to model how they can greet each other:

Start your time together by saying something positive to each other as a greeting: perhaps "I hope you have a great day today....."

Or you can say 'Peace be with you'. Take a moment to think of times you've been truly wronged, in small ways or big ones. Maybe someone stole something, turned others against you, broke an agreement, cheated on you, or spoke unfairly or abusively.

I wonder....

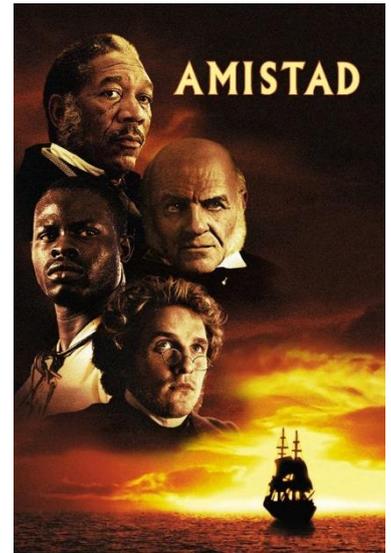
*Who did it involve? What happened? How did you respond? Were you able to forgive them? And why?*

*If it is really hard to forgive people, why might that be? What was the impact on you then? Now?*

## Engagement

In January 1839, 53 Africans were kidnapped from eastern Africa and sold into the Spanish slave trade. They were imprisoned aboard the Spanish slave ship La Amistad, bound for Havana, Cuba. In 1997 the film Amistad, directed by Steven Spielberg, retold the story. During their journey, the Mende people break free and kill some of the crew. Trying to sail home they get lost and are finally captured off Long Island, America. Consequently, the courts must decide whether the Mende are slaves and murderers, or legally free being wrongfully abducted and enslaved. As they await their fate one of the Mende is given a Bible:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ONbUs4uekIs>



Reflect/think what you observed in the film. In the clip, the two Mende discuss what they see in the pictures:



What do you think is their understanding of the story?

What was the impact of seeing the central character of the bible story wronged? How did what they saw in the pictures in the bible, and the assessment of what they thought the story of the man was about, resonate with their own situation? Discuss your thoughts and ideas with a partner.

Christians believe that Jesus, throughout his ministry, reached out to those who had been wronged, oppressed or who had been marginalised by society. For those who have suffered themselves, it can be comforting to know that Jesus himself suffered and was mistreated; that he is someone who can truly empathise with their situation.

If you are hurt, what difference does it make talking to others who have been hurt too?

Watch [Louis Armstrong Let My People Go - YouTube](#)

How do some Christians' link the story of Moses and the Exodus and the death and resurrection of Jesus? Why might the story of the Exodus resonate with that have suffered discrimination and injustice?

## Response

Create a large cross shape using A1 Flip Chart Paper. Write on the sheets the word 'Relationship'. Then randomly tear the sheets. Give each person 3 plasters and a Biro or Sharpie pen and follow the instructions below to create their response to the broken relationships cross:

- Ask everyone to think about the question: How do you respond when someone wrongs you?
- How does it help to know that someone else has felt what I am experiencing?
- What can we do to advocate for those who do experience wrong treatment?



Ask them to consider:

- Are some things easier to write than to say when asking for forgiveness or receiving an apology?
- How do you know when the act of reconciliation is truly heart felt and sincerely received?
- Ask whether they are thinking about broken relationships close to home or huge, global situations of conflict.

Finally ask if they would like to come forward and mend where the cross is torn with their plasters, and if they wish to share which word or phrase they have chosen and why.

## Sending

Conclude with 'I wonder...'

- How you might support family and friends who are trying to make amends for times when they have been wronged or got things wrong?
- What do you feel when someone forgives you and your relationship/friendship is healed?
- How might you transform your approach to life by thinking of others' needs first no matter what?

*Share one of the following prayers.*

### Reconciliation



Loving God,  
you have reconciled us in Christ Jesus  
and have given us the ministry of reconciliation.  
We pray for all those from whom we are estranged.  
Bring healing to strained or broken relationships.  
Forgive us for the times we have wronged others,  
whether by ignorance, neglect, or intention.  
Grant us the courage and the grace to seek their forgiveness  
and opportunity to make amends.  
Where others have wronged us,  
grant us a gracious spirit,  
that we might forgive  
even as we have been forgiven in Jesus Christ. Amen.

~ Author unknown

This Easter Lord,  
Enable us to right our wrongs  
Enable us let go of pain, sorry and resentment  
so that we may reflect in all we do today and in the future the easter message of faith, love and hope.  
Give us the courage to be agents of reconciliation and advocates of forgiveness  
in our friendships, families and our communities  
For ever celebrating your saving sacrifice  
Amen

## SPIRITUAL DEVELOPMENT

(practical ways to help us explore faith and develop spiritually at home together)

### EXPERIENCES that can help us ENCOUNTER:

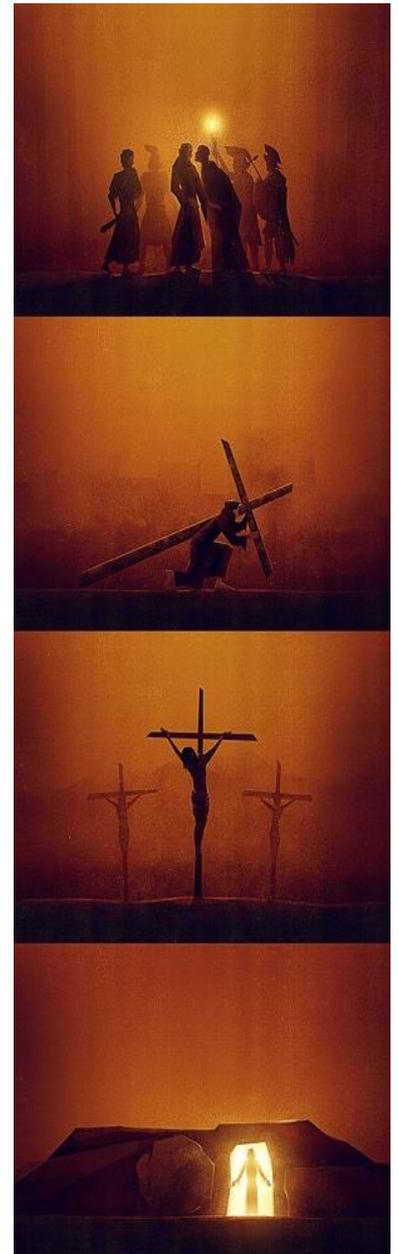
**Meditation on the Cross:** Print out or show the 4 pictures of *The Easter Story* by Joe Cavazos ask students to focus on the four pictures in turn and read the following.

**Picture 1:** The resurrection of Jesus Christ is central to the Christian faith. It is mentioned over one hundred times in the New Testament. Without it there is no such thing as the Christian faith. Long ago a man named Job asked the big question, that sooner or later every human being has to face. *If a man die, shall he live again? all the days of my appointed time will I wait, till my change come.* (Job 14:14) This same question is still asked today, "Is this life all that there is? Is death the end? Or is there life beyond the grave? How is it possible for anyone to know the answer to these questions?" Some Christians' believe the answers to these questions and Job's question can be found in the Easter story and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

**Picture 2:** Crucifixion is intended to degrade the person being crucified. The ultimate Roman punishment. It strips the person of honour and encourages people to abuse those condemned. In the Bible reading from St Luke's gospel, Jesus has been led to the place of execution following his trial. Luke's account tells of how Jesus is crucified alongside two other criminals. Reflect: What emotions might the criminals have felt when they realised they were going to be crucified alongside Jesus?

**Picture 3:** In the story of the death of crucifixion and death of Jesus, even as he is dying, the bible highlights the belief that Jesus right to then end, practices what he has been preaching, that is, forgiveness. Christians at this time of year also look closely at the words which are exchanged between Jesus and the two criminals. One of the criminal's taunts Jesus to prove he is the saviour of the world. The other however, recognises who, for Christians, Jesus is and the wrong that is being done to him. He asks Jesus to not forget him when he comes into His kingdom. For Christians, this conversation highlights how it is never too late to recognise and admit when you have got things wrong. To believe also that Jesus who came to heal the world is always there and ready to save and reconcile God's people to their heavenly Father. The interaction between the criminals and the plea from Jesus, "Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing." sits within the heart of the Easter message for Christians.

**Picture 4:** Christians celebrate all that is within the last hours of Jesus' life and the story of his resurrection through services of Holy Week and on Easter Day. In the Christian tradition the Easter celebration is one of a wrong righted. The death and resurrection of God's Son, Jesus, restoring God's people and opening up eternal life for all with a new understanding of forgiveness, atonement, reconciliation and salvation.



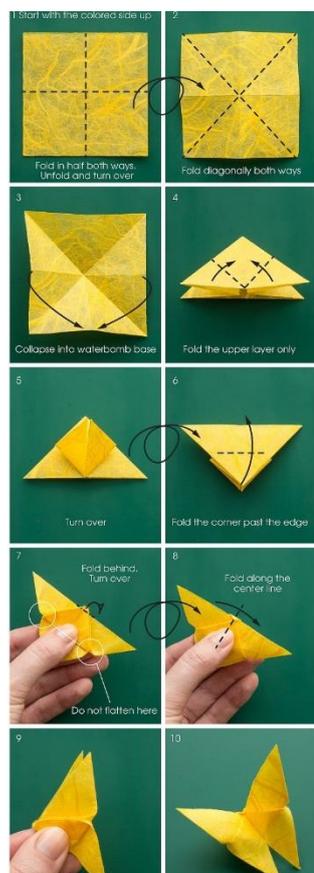
### [Jesus Resurrection - YouTube](#)

How has the film maker, portrayed the resurrection? Why have they filmed it this way? Does it tell you anything about faith stance of the film maker? Do you think this scene is 'true' to the Christian message? Why?

## ACTIVITIES that can develop PRACTICES-HABITS:

The celebration of Easter for Christians around the world is an important holy day and holiday. It is an occasion celebrated to remember the resurrection of Jesus Christ. It is a time when special foods are eaten and homes and churches are decorated with candles, eggs, lambs, flags, butterflies, lilies, easter trees and gardens or palm branches. The Easter symbols in the decorations, are a blend of Paganism, Christianity and Judaism and linked to the concept of new life and sacrifice.

Explore and research the origins of the symbolism found in easter decorations. Does it matter that this symbolism is drawn from more than one faith tradition?



## PRAYERS that can help us REFLECT:

The butterfly is one image and symbol of resurrection and new life used in Christian homes at this time of year. Although butterflies aren't mentioned, in the Bible their lifecycle is seen by some Christians as a remarkable illustration from nature of the transforming work of Jesus Christ in the lives of believers. The Bible says that anyone who belongs to Christ has become a new creation. The old life is gone, and the new life has begun (2 Corinthians 5:17). The easter message is one of new life in Christ, of faith, hope, love and eternal life. Write on the square paper in each of the four quarters the name of someone or your own name, you wish to pray for or remember using the focus of **faith**, **hope**, **love** and **eternal life**:

- **Faith** - name a person who is struggling or searching for faith in God or suffering from illness
- **Hope** – name a person or group or area which is reflecting hope to other people of in need
- **Love** – give thanks for/ name a time when you have seen God's love in action
- **Eternal Life** – name a person or a family who has had a loved one die recently or an area of the world which has suffered a tragedy

Using a square piece of paper and follow the instructions on the illustration to create your prayer butterfly.

If you would like Pray as you fold your butterfly

Prayer at the end of creating your prayer butterfly

*Father God, thank you for sending Jesus Christ  
to be an example of someone who walked in love and sought peace,  
even in the hardest circumstances.*

*I ask that you to give me eyes to see the other person  
in my broken relationship(s) in the way that you see them.*

*Give me the ability to forgive as you forgive.*

*Loving God help me to love in the same unconditional way that you do.*

*In this relationship, for your will to be done. Amen*

*Thank you, Father, for sending your Son,  
Jesus, to be our example,  
but even more we thank you  
that we are reconciled to you through him. Amen*

*Loving Jesus be with us in all every aspect of our life today  
Help us to recognise your healing love this Eastertide  
Help us to act with love and be agents of reconciliation now and always, Amen.*

## **CONVERSATIONS which CONNECT COMMUNITIES:**

### Discussion starters for groups:

Jesus said: “Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing.” How easy is it to be a forgiving person? What are the challenges to live out this statement in our lives?

What could we do and/or say to create a spirit of reconciliation and forgiveness in our homes and communities? How would we know if we had succeeded?

Who can you see in the Bible and in history who laid down their lives for:

- their faith
- for others

How does the account of the death and resurrection of Jesus and the message of eternal life:

- impact on our cultural view of death? Why?
- enable Christians to face the challenges and choices of life? Why?

## **COLLECTIVE WORSHIP – OUR APPROACH**

### **INVITATIONAL**

Everyone is welcomed to take part in collective worship, as much or as little as they or their parents and carers are comfortable with. This means we use invitational language and consider carefully our choice of words and songs. Children are invited to pray but are not compelled or expected to do so; they always have a choice. We invite them to pray or reflect in whatever way they would usually as a family, if that is part of their home experience.

### **INCLUSIVE**

Acts of worship need to be inclusive of all. Therefore, we choose topics and ideas that are shared by different faiths and worldviews. When we present Christian teaching, we make it clear that this is ‘what Christians believe’, saying things like:

‘I wonder why this story might be important to Christians?’

‘The story today comes from the Bible (the holy book of Christians), which teaches that ...

Our worship should be accessible for children and young people with a range of different backgrounds, and so we take care that activities do not require expensive resources. We also offer a variety of activities, so that children and young people with differing needs can all find something they can engage with.

### **INSPIRING**

We aim for our acts of worship to inspire those engaging with them. How might it engage their emotions, enabling a sense of peace, comfort, hope or motivation? How might it inspire them into action, into thinking differently and considering their behaviour or actions? How might it inspire them to reflect on their faith or beliefs, and on the faith or beliefs of others?