

Celebrate New Life:

Easter

Theme

Christ's Gift to Us

Banner Symbol

Butterfly



Goals

- Youth will see Jesus as the way of salvation and new life, which we celebrate at Easter.
- Youth will examine the differences the Resurrection makes.
- Youth will desire to worship God.

Core Teaching

We celebrate the Resurrection of Christ, a powerful sign of God's love for us. Through Jesus Christ we are saved from sin and saved for new life in harmony with God's purposes.

Scripture

Matthew 7:13-14 (Narrow is the road to new life.)
 Matthew 28:1-10 (The Resurrection story)
 Romans 6:23 (The wages of sin)
 1 Peter 2:22-25 (By his wounds you have been healed.)

Your Options

Keepsake
Book

Come Into the Community
(5–90 minutes)

- A. Alleluia Surprise
- B. Sunrise Breakfast

Prepare: Jesus' Story
(10–30 minutes)

- A. From Sin to Salvation
- B. From Death to New Life
- C. Resurrection

Celebrate: The Church's Story
(10–40 minutes)

- A. Easter Morning
- B. The Colors of Easter (Banner)
- C. Hymns of Easter

Grow: Our Story
(10–20 minutes)

Living as Easter People

Commit: Putting It All Together
(10–30 minutes)

- A. Means of Grace: Worship
- B. Congregational Worship

Go Forth With a Blessing
(5–10 minutes)

- A. Celebrate Communion
- B. Shout It Out

Keepsake: *The Name Above All*

Come Into the Community

Alleluia Surprise

Create a colorful banner with the word *Alleluia* on it. Decorate a large box that has a lid. (This will be the container for your alleluia banner.) Tie string to colorful helium-filled balloons. Attach the balloon strings to the banner and put the balloons and banner inside the box.

When the box lid opens, the balloons will float the banner. Fill the balloons immediately before you plan to use them so they won't lose their lift power.

As the youth enter, draw their attention to the gift box. Build excitement about what could be in it. Let them guess what might be in the box.



When all have gathered, introduce the theme of Easter and the joy and celebration we experience with this season. Then say, "I can't wait any longer. Let's open the box." Open it and let the youth feel the joy and surprise as the balloons float out with the banner proclaiming Alleluia!

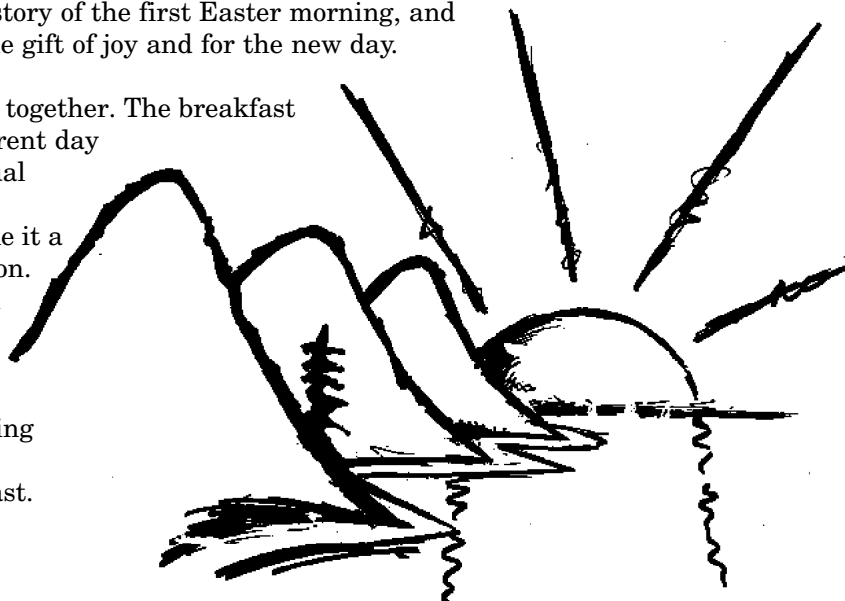
Sunrise Breakfast

Determine a location.

Supply either a full or continental breakfast.

Have the youth gather at a special location while it is still dark to watch the sun come up. Begin the morning with songs of praise, retelling the story of the first Easter morning, and prayers for the gift of joy and for the new day.

Eat breakfast together. The breakfast can be a different day from your usual confirmation sessions. Make it a special occasion. You may wish to find a hill or lake or another dramatic setting and make it a picnic breakfast.



Jesus' Story

From Sin to Salvation

With everyone following along in their own Bibles, read 1 Peter 2:22-25 one verse at a time. After each verse, have volunteers say what the verse means.

Then do this exercise to help youth get a sense of Jesus as the way to God:

Find a large empty space or clear the room so that youth will not harm themselves in this exercise. Blindfold the group. The object of the activity is to find you and stand with you. Make no noise and allow the group time to struggle on their own.

Have mentors stay close to the confirmands so they do not get hurt; however, they are not to help the confirmands find you. At some point, give a signal for mentors to place their hand on the shoulder of the youth and gently lead them to where you are.

Ask:

- What was it like trying to find me on your own?
- What connection do you see between Jesus and the help of your mentor?

Say:

*The power of sin is so strong that human beings cannot break it by themselves. Only God is greater. God, in giving us Jesus Christ, created a way for us to break away from the power and have new life. Through our acceptance of Jesus Christ as our Savior, we are **saved from** the power of sin and **saved for** a life of righteousness in harmony with God, who loves us.*

Jesus bridges humanity's separation from God and makes it possible to be in right relationship with God and with others. That's salvation. That is Jesus' gift to us. He gave it freely at great cost to himself because he loves us.

Provide Bibles and blindfolds. Meet in an open space.

Keepsake Book

With either activity here, you may also read together the keepsake book *The Name Above All*.

If you gave the youth their copies in Session 5, simply remind them of its message.

From Death to New Life

Draw two parallel roads. Make one a wide "freeway" and the other a narrower way. Have the group read Romans 6:23 and Matthew 7:13-14. Label the destination for the wide one "Destruction" and for the narrower one, "New Life."

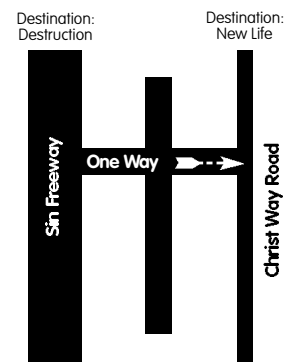
Say:

This is one image of what Jesus has done for us: We are going down the road that is filled with sin and leads to eternal death. By ourselves we cannot crossover to the road that is filled with joyful life. But through his own death on the cross Jesus has given us a way to make that change. We need only ask for it, and the way is there.

Between the two parallel roads draw a cross. Its horizontal bar should touch both roads, making a new road between them. Label it One Way with an arrow pointing to the Christ Way Road.

Invite the youth to write in their journals their reflections as to where they are on the roads and in their relationship to Jesus Christ.

Post a large sheet of paper or have available a markerboard and markers. Provide Bibles.



Resurrection

Say:

Now imagine this scene: You know what Jesus endured for you, for us all. And you feel the sadness and the loss of one who loved you so much, but then you find out that he is not dead.

Have a volunteer read dramatically Matthew 28:1-10.

Say:

He is alive! That is what Easter is all about: the joy, the victory. Death does not have the final say. Jesus is with us. He stretches out his hand and says: "Come, begin a new life!" That's Easter.

The Church's Story

Easter Morning

Talk about ways in which your church and others celebrate:

- **Sunrise Service**— This practice commemorates the women who came to the tomb at dawn and were the first to know about the Resurrection. Sunrise is a symbol of Jesus' resurrection.
- **Easter Service**— Easter Sunday morning worship is full of joy and celebration. Often churches will have trumpets, lilies, special music to help worshipers feel the joy of the Resurrection.
- **Easter Greeting**— In the early centuries, Christians greeted one another on Easter with words meaning, "Christ is truly risen," to which the reply was "Thanks be to God." The greeting for many Easter worship services begins in the same way: "Christ is risen!" To which the worshipers reply, "Christ is risen indeed!"
- **Easter Prayer**— The council of Nicaea, in A.D. 325, prescribed that during Easter time, all Christians should pray standing, never on bended knees. It is a way to symbolize that we are risen with Christ.

The Colors of Easter

Have paraments on display and materials to construct the banner symbol.

Say:

White and gold are joyous and festive colors to use at Easter and throughout the Easter season. White lilies are often used at Easter because of the trumpet shaped flower that reminds us of a trumpet telling the good news.

Make the symbol for the banner, a butterfly with bright vivid colors on a white background. Talk about why the butterfly is a symbol for the Resurrection (emerging from the tomb-like cocoon, being transformed from one state to another, and so forth).



Resurrection

Say:

The joy and beauty of Easter is told no better than in the rich hymns we sing during Easter. The victory over death of our Lord Jesus Christ and the gift the Resurrection brings to us is seen so fully in the words of the hymns we sing. Look at the words of some of the hymns, and once again experience Christ's gift to us.


Select from these hymns from *The United Methodist Hymnal*:

“Christ the Lord Is Risen Today” (302)

“The Day of Resurrection” (303)

“Easter People, Raise Your Voices” (304)

“Up From the Grave He Arose” (322)

 Provide hymnals.

Our Story

Living as Easter People

Split the group into twos or threes. Have them come up with a quick list of what they think day-to-day life would be or is like in these categories: *Without the Resurrection* and *Because He Lives*.


Then have the small groups report. Encourage discussion.

Ask:

- What does this list say about how we are to live as Easter people?


You may want to sing together or at least refer to the chorus of the hymn “Because He Lives!” (UMH 364). One thing that is crucial in the lives of young people is hope. To live as Easter people is to be able to face tomorrow with the confidence that God ultimately triumphs even over death.

Draw a vertical line down a markerboard or large sheet of paper. On one side, write *Without the Resurrection*; on the other side, write *Because He Lives*

 Provide hymnals.

Putting It All Together

Means of Grace: Worship

 Provide hymnals and worship bulletins for everyone.

If you have not already done so, move to the sanctuary or another place where worship is celebrated.

Say:

Worship is a spiritual discipline because it is an ordered way of acting and living that sets us before God so that God can transform us.

Praise is a way to worship. Singing helps us to praise. God calls for worship that involves our whole being. The body, mind, spirit, and emotions should all be brought to worship. That is why we use color, visuals, sounds, smells (incense, flowers, evergreens, fresh-baked bread) to involve all our being when we worship.

We are to present our bodies to God in a posture consistent with the inner spirit in worship: standing, clapping, dancing, lifting the hands, lifting the head, kneeling. Through our worship, we express our love and devotion to God.

Have confirmands look at “The Basic Pattern of Worship” (pages 2–5 in *The United Methodist Hymnal*) or at your church’s worship bulletin. Talk about each movement; encourage questions.

Congregational Worship

Consider having the confirmands work together to plan a special worship for the congregation. The service can be performed on Confirmation Sunday or any time. Or simply give each one an opportunity to be a worship leader sometime during their confirmation experience.

Go Forth With a Blessing

Celebrate Communion

Choose one of the Services of Word and Table from *The United Methodist Hymnal*. Adapt it as needed.

Partake together.

Shout It Out!

Announce to the world the Resurrection. Tell the group that you will say the traditional Easter greeting, “Christ is risen!” to which they are to shout their reply, “Christ is risen indeed!” Do it two or three times. End with “Amen!”