

## EASTER

### MEETING AIM

To discover the events and meaning of the Easter story.

### BIBLE PASSAGE

Mark 15-16

### BACKGROUND

The Easter story might be well known by the people in your congregation, but Easter is a time when you might welcome people who wouldn't normally attend church. Think carefully about how you might help these people explore the story and meaning. How can you introduce these people to the good news of Easter?

### WELCOME ACTIVITIES 5 MINS

#### OPTION ONE: Easter egg hunt

Before the service, hide small wrapped Easter eggs around your meeting space. As people arrive, challenge them to go on an Easter egg hunt. You could also hide Easter booklets or other Easter items to find.

#### OPTION TWO: Best day ever

Invite people to the front to describe their best day ever. This could be a life-changing event (wedding day, birth of a child), a time spent with friends and family or a special holiday. Try to get a range of different stories, without it getting competitive!

### BIBLE STORY 10 MINS

#### You will need: stations as detailed below

Before the service, set up the different stations in different areas of your space. If you have a small congregation, then invite them to move around the church with you as you tell the story. If that would be impractical, then invite people to turn around in their seats as you progress.

**1 Palm Sunday:** arrange cloaks and palm leaves (real or cut from card) on the floor. Say: "The people of God had been waiting for God's special saviour for centuries. They thought it would be someone who would set them free from oppression. But Jesus was not that

kind of saviour. He rode into Jerusalem on a donkey as the prophet Zechariah had said many years before. Everyone shouted and cheered, they put cloaks on the floor and waved branches." Demonstrate or ask volunteers to help you.

**2 Last supper:** set out a table with small cups of red juice and some bread. Say: "Jesus celebrated the Passover with his friends. The Passover was a very special festival for the people of God – they remembered when God rescued them from slavery in Egypt. During the celebration meal, Jesus took some bread, broke it and shared it with his friends." Do this and share the bread with the people nearest to you. He said it was his body, broken for them. "He picked up the wine and said that this was his blood, shed for them." Give the cups of juice to people to drink.

**3 Gethsemane:** arrange some large pot plants in one area of your meeting space. Say: "Jesus and his friends went to a garden to pray. While he was there, one of friends, Judas, arrived with some soldiers to arrest Jesus. Judas had betrayed Jesus!" Ask some people what Jesus' friends might have thought when they saw Judas betray Jesus.

**4 Calvary:** set up a large cross. Say: "Jesus was put on trial and handed over to be killed, even though he had done nothing wrong. He was nailed to a cross and left to die." Pause to let people reflect on this.

**5 The tomb:** create a 'tomb' using furniture and pieces of material. Say: "Jesus' friends put his body in a tomb. Then, early on Sunday morning, some women went to the tomb with spices to anoint Jesus' body. When they got there, the tomb was open! An angel told them that Jesus was alive!"

### SMALL GROUPS 10 MINS

#### You will need: copies of the questions below; Bibles

Break into small groups – made up of one or two families, or different mixed-age groups – and give each group a copy of these questions and a Bible:

- What's your favourite part of the story?
- What does this story mean to you?
- What difference does Jesus being alive make to your life?

Give the groups time to chat about these questions, referring to the Bible passage if they need to.

### REVIEW 10 MINS

#### You will need: roving mic (if needed)

Get some feedback on questions two and three from 'Small groups', using a microphone to hear people's contributions if your meeting space is large.

### RESPONSE ACTIVITIES 10 MINS

Set up these three activities in different parts of your meeting space. Explain what each one is and encourage people to go to the one that will help them process what they have discovered most effectively.

#### OPTION ONE: Discussion

Assign some volunteers to help guide a discussion about the story and what it might mean for the congregation today.

#### OPTION TWO: Testimony

##### You will need: a volunteer to give their testimony

Before the service, find a volunteer who is happy to talk about what Jesus' resurrection means to them. Encourage them to tell the story to the group and invite the group to ask any questions they have.

#### OPTION THREE: Reflection

##### You will need: crosses cut from A5 card; felt-tip pens

Give participants a cross and ask them to write down their thoughts on the Easter story or draw pictures on the cross. As they do so, encourage them to talk to God about what they think and feel.

### CLOSING 5 MINS

Bring everyone back together and ask if anyone would like to share anything from the response time. Thank everyone for taking part and say an appropriate blessing to close the service.

### ALEX TAYLOR

is resources editor for *Premier Youth and Children's Work*.

## FREDDIE AND THE FIRST-AID FIASCO

"Hey Freddie! What's that?" Jayesh pointed at a green shirt poking out of Freddie's bag.

"Oh, nothing," said Freddie, hurriedly pushing the shirt down and trying to fasten the bag up so his friends couldn't see it.

"It had a badge on it," said Chelsea. "Are you in the army?"

"No, nothing like that," said Freddie. Why had he left the shirt in his bag? He'd been on duty with St John's Ambulance the night before and forgotten to put his uniform in the wash.

"Well, what is it then?" asked Jayesh.

"It's nothing," said Freddie, "just an old shirt of my brother's. I used it to mop up the Tizer I spilt in my bag."

"You and your Tizer," Chelsea snorted with derision.

"You must be the only person in Manchesterford who drinks that filth."

"I'm surprised your insides haven't melted," added Jayesh.

"Yeah...I must be stained orange inside out." Freddie breathed a secret sigh of relief: his friends seemed to have forgotten about the shirt.

"Hey, look at that old bloke over there!" Chelsea pointed over the road at a pensioner grasping onto the bus stop and wheezing. As they watched, he collapsed on the floor.

The three friends rushed across the road as soon as the traffic would allow. They crouched down around the old man.

"Hey mate!" shouted Jayesh. "ARE YOU OK?"

Chelsea tapped the man on the cheeks.

"What are you doing?" asked Jayesh.

"Well, it's what they do on *Casualty*, isn't it?"

"I don't know, I only ever see it at my gran's house."

Chelsea looked at Freddie: "What do we do?"

"I'll call 999." Jayesh got his phone out of his pocket.

Freddie just stared at the old man. If he didn't help the man, he might die. If he did help, his friends would know he was a member of St John's Ambulance. He remembered what they'd said to Karim when they discovered he loved the *Eurovision Song Contest* – the banter was merciless...

"Freddie! What should we do?"



### DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- What would you do in Freddie's situation?
- Is it always easy to admit to liking or being something considered uncool? Why? Why not?
- If you're a Christian, do you hide it, or do you let people know?
- If you hide it, what might happen if people found out?

This story is based on Matthew 5:14-16. Read this passage to the group and compare Jesus' story and words to this one. Discuss what Jesus might have been saying, encouraging the group to think about the passage in a new way.

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is resources editor for *Premier Youth and Children's Work*.



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## WORKING BACKWARDS

I still haven't built that bike shed we bought last year. Or re-grouted the bath. But I have finished the decking in the garden and cancelled that magazine subscription. Why do we get some things done yet procrastinate and put others off?

Areas where I'm getting things done and areas where I'm not roughly correlate with whether I have a clear and articulated goal to work backwards from. Try it yourself: write a list on the left of a page of jobs you've 'ticked off' recently – things you've achieved. Then on the right, list all the things you are putting off and not really making progress with. What is the difference? What stops those on the right being on the left?

Setting good goals should be a regular and intrinsic part of life. It's key to mentoring. Goals allow you to see into the future you desire, break it down into manageable, less intimidating steps and help you gain momentum. Goals give you a target to measure against and therefore chart progress, which leads to improved confidence and mental health. Feeling uncertain and not having a plan for moving forward is hugely demotivating, so don't underestimate how a bit of mentoring can be the difference in your mentee finally feeling able to take steps in areas in which they might feel powerless at the moment.

Try it out: plan a 'life adventure' with your mentee. Ensure ideas come from them not you so they feel their own ownership, motivation and commitment, not yours.



## BOOK TICKETS

- **Choose your destination:** be as specific as possible. (You could spend a session just talking through this bit but for today limit it to 15 minutes.) Choose something that's a stretch but still realistic. Maybe start easy if you want to repeat this process several times over the year. Word it in a way that you will definitely know when you've got there! For example, not 'lose weight' but 'lose 5lbs by 1st June'.
- **Departures and arrivals:** set deadlines and checkpoints along the way.

## PACK

- **What will you need?** Create a 'kit list' that is both emotional and practical, has steps to follow and 'quick wins' to get you going.
- **Create a 'to-do-list':** do this for the coming week and diarise items.

## SET OFF

- **Review the difficulties:** what might slow you down or make it harder? How will you deal with obstacles, delays and distractions?
- **Accountability:** who do you need to send a 'postcard' to, to update them with your progress to ensure you keep to the timetable?
- **'Wish you were here':** who do you need to share emotional or prayer needs with, in order that they can support you?

## HOLIDAY SNAPS

- **Celebrate!** Could you create some kind of 'souvenir' to mark your journey and serve as a reminder?
- **Review:** what would you do differently next time? What have you learned about yourself from the process? What is the next adventure?

## JOEL TOOMBS

has an MA in Christian mentoring and wrote the *Mentoring and Young People Grove* booklet. He is a volunteer youth worker.

## NOISY GAMES

Easter is a time of celebration, so why not play some of these noisy games to celebrate! They are ideal for playing at club nights or after-school clubs where you don't have to worry about disturbing other groups.

### SONG LYRIC BATTLE

**You will need:** cards with words that often appear in song lyrics, such as *love, life or light*

Split the group into two or more teams. One team should take a card and read out the word. That team should start singing a song with that word in the lyrics. After a couple of lines, the next team should sing a different song with that word in it. Play continues until a team can't think of a song to sing. That team keeps that card and draws another. Keep playing until all the cards have been used. The winning team is the one with the fewest cards.

### OUT FOR THE COUNT

**You will need:** chairs (one per person)

Sit in a circle and count the number of players, say ten (this is good with a larger group). Players randomly stand up and shout out the numbers from one until you get to ten. Players can only say one number and must stay standing up once they have spoken. The person to shout the last number is the loser.

If two players stand and shout at the same time, they are out (and so the 'final' number is reduced by two). The loser and any players who are out get a point. Keep playing and at the end of your time, the player with the fewest points is the winner.

### KING OF THE JUNGLE

**You will need:** chairs (one per person)

Arrange the chairs in a circle and designate one chair as the lion chair – the king of the jungle. Choose a player to sit in that chair and ask them to do an impression of a lion, with actions and sound. The other players sit down; each one has to think of an animal and come up with an action and sound for their animal. Each player should demonstrate their action and sound, so that everyone can see it. The lion is the king, and the other players are ranked going around the circle to the lion's left (so the player to the lion's right is the bottom of the heap!).

The lion starts the game, doing their lion impression followed by the action and sound of another animal in the circle. The player with that animal does their action and sound, followed by another. Play passes around the circle in this way until a player hesitates, misses their turn or gets an action or sound wrong. This player goes to the bottom of the heap and everyone moves up. The players move around the circle, but the animal actions and noises stay in the same place. So, as the lion starts the game again, some players will have a new animal action and sound. The aim of the game is to become the lion – the king of the jungle.



### BRING ME A...

**You will need:** a list of objects that can be found in your venue

A classic that doesn't seem like it will be noisy, but competitiveness always gets the better of children and young people, resulting in a cacophony of shouting! Split the group into four teams and send the teams into different corners of the room, while you stand in the middle. Shout out: "Bring me a..." followed by the first thing on your list. The teams should send one person to you with that thing. The first person to get to you wins their team a point. The team with the most points at the end of the list is the winner.

Simple? Well, you'll need to have referees to solve disputes and make sure that fights don't break out over various items. And avoid asking for a person ("Bring me the vicar.") as they will inevitably get mauled by the teams.

### ALEX TAYLOR

is resources editor for *Premier Youth and Children's Work*.



## EASTER SUNDAY

Easter Sunday is an incredibly joyful time in the life of the Church and these craft ideas will help children to focus on the themes of new life and joy that come with the resurrection of Jesus.



### BUTTERFLY PAINTINGS

**You will need:** three or four fillable plastic Easter eggs; marbles or small stones; sticky tape; paint; a deep tray; large paper butterfly shapes that will fit inside the tray; cloths to wipe the excess paint

This craft focuses on the new life of Easter, using a butterfly as a symbol of resurrection. Put a stone or marble inside each plastic egg. This will give them some weight. Then tape around the middle of the egg to stop the marbles coming out. Place a paper butterfly in the tray and, on top of the paper, put a few small blobs of paint in different colours. Less is definitely more in terms of paint! Put the eggs into the tray and shake the tray so that the eggs roll in the paint and decorate the butterfly. When the paint has spread, take out the butterfly and leave it to dry. Wipe the paint from the eggs and the tray and start again with a new butterfly shape. Talk about how a caterpillar goes into a chrysalis and emerges with new life as a butterfly, just as the body of Jesus is put into the tomb and he emerges with new life. What does new life mean for the children you are working with? You might even link the rolling eggs with the rolling of the stone from the entrance of the tomb.



### EMPTY TOMB ROLLS

**You will need:** ready-made croissant dough (available from supermarkets); marshmallows; baking tray; oven  
Preheat the oven according to instructions on the packet, and grease a baking tray. Open the croissant dough and separate it into sections (there are normally six or eight in a packet). Give each child a marshmallow and ask them to wrap it up in a section of the dough. Put the wrapped marshmallows onto the baking tray and bake according to the instructions on the packet. Leave them as long as possible in the oven without burning to ensure that the marshmallow has melted. When the rolls are baked, leave them to cool slightly and then break them open. The marshmallow will have disappeared! Link the wrapping of the marshmallow with the preparation of Jesus' body when he is placed in the tomb and the surprise of the missing marshmallow with the shock of finding his body missing on the third day. Continue to chat about the story as you eat your rolls.



### ROLLING STONE RUNS

**You will need:** cardboard boxes; cardboard tubes; card; paper; pens; sticky tape; scissors; marbles

Talk about the morning of Easter Sunday when the women came to the tomb and found the stone rolled away from the entrance. Work in pairs or individually to make marble runs to imaginatively illustrate the stone rolling. Encourage the children to be as inventive as they can and leave some time at the end so that they can test out what they and others have made.

### ALLELUIA COLOURING

**You will need:** copies of the colouring page ([from youthandchildrens.work/resources](http://youthandchildrens.work/resources)); felt-tip pens or pencil crayons

In some churches, the word 'Alleluia' is never said during Lent and it is only on Easter Sunday that it is said again. The word means 'praise the Lord' and is something really fitting to say when celebrating the resurrection of Jesus. Sit with the children as they colour in the sheet and chat about the Easter story and what it means to them.



## PETER RABBIT (PG)

CLIP: 00:43:41 – 00:50:00

### SYNOPSIS

Based on the books by Beatrix Potter, Peter Rabbit, his sisters Flopsy, Mopsy and Cotton-tail and their cousin Benjamin enjoy their days harassing Mr McGregor in his vegetable garden. When he dies, no one can stop the rabbits from roaming across his house and land and eating all the food they want. However, when Tom, one of Mr McGregor's relatives, inherits the house, Peter discovers that the new McGregor is even scarier than the last. Tom and the rabbits battle over the garden and food, and when Tom starts to fall in love with Bea, a lover of nature (including rabbits!), his conflict with Peter intensifies. Both Peter and Tom must fight their jealousy and desire to be in control to see if they can live side by side.

Ask your young people if anyone has seen the film before or if they know anything about Peter Rabbit. If some of your group have seen the film before, they could review the plot (to the best of their memory!) or you could show the trailer (available on Netflix or YouTube). Outline the characters of Peter and Tom McGregor; does the group think that they will get along or not? Is Peter wrong to steal food from Mr McGregor's land?

As the clip begins, Peter and his family have already had several run-ins with Tom and are very suspicious of him. To make matters worse, Tom and Bea have now started a romance (after Tom told Bea he loves rabbits) and Peter is not only jealous, but concerned that this means his life of easy access to food may be over. Peter decides to fight Tom, but their fighting is interrupted by Bea and both Peter and Tom comedically pretend that they are getting along perfectly. At the end of the clip one of Bea's paintings is ruined by Tom and Peter, but Peter is solely blamed. Angry, Bea throws Peter out of her house.

### DISCUSS

After showing the clip, break into small discussion groups or stay together to discuss the following questions:

- Who is to blame for the painting getting ruined?
- Why do Tom and Peter hide their dislike of each other from Bea?
- What emotions do you think that Peter is feeling?
- What advice could Bea give to Peter and Tom to help them get along?

Read Luke 16:10 together and break it down into two parts (trust and dishonesty). Discuss the following questions:

- Why is trusting someone important?
- How can we be trustworthy people?
- How do you think other people feel when we are dishonest?
- How would the clip of Peter and Tom be different if they read this verse and acted it out?

This clip sees Tom and Peter get into trouble because they lie and fight with each other. Challenge your young people to tell the truth, even when it is difficult, in the following week.

*Peter Rabbit* is now on Netflix.

### TOM WADE

is head of humanities at Haileybury and Imperial Service College.



## THIS IS REAL

**ARTIST:** Jax Jones featuring Ella Henderson  
**SUITABLE FOR:** Over-13s

### INTRODUCTION

We all have, within us, a deep yearning to belong. This song celebrates finding that place, and this session explores what it means for us to find the place we truly belong, in Jesus.

Begin the session by asking the group to think about what it means to belong. You could start by talking about what it means to belong to this group. How do you know when you belong somewhere? How does that make you feel?

### LISTEN AND DISCUSS

Play the track, providing copies of the lyrics for the young people to follow, as appropriate. As a group, discuss:

- How do you feel about this song?
- Can you relate to the singer's experience?
- When have you most felt like this?
- Why does belonging matter?

Explain that this song is a celebration of finding somewhere we belong. In this song, this is in the context of a relationship. For all of us, belonging matters, and we will all have had different experiences of belonging, or perhaps of longing to really belong somewhere where we may feel excluded. You may want to create a space where this can be discussed further.

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Turn to the Bible and ask someone to read Isaiah 43:1 (depending on your group, you may wish to read more of the chapter). You may need to explain some of the context to the verse, explaining that this reading is a direct message from God to his people, reminding them that he had called them by name and they belong to him. Explain that the same is true for us today; we are called, known and loved by God and we can 'belong' to him.

As a group, discuss:

- How does it feel to know that you can belong to God?
- What does this mean to you, in your life?

Group members may respond to this differently, depending on where they are at in their journey with God, so create space to explore some of the issues. As you draw the session to a close, you may want to pray together, celebrating what it means for us to belong to God. Alternatively, you may find it more appropriate to offer to pray for individuals, for the issues raised by this session and that they would find their place to belong in Jesus.

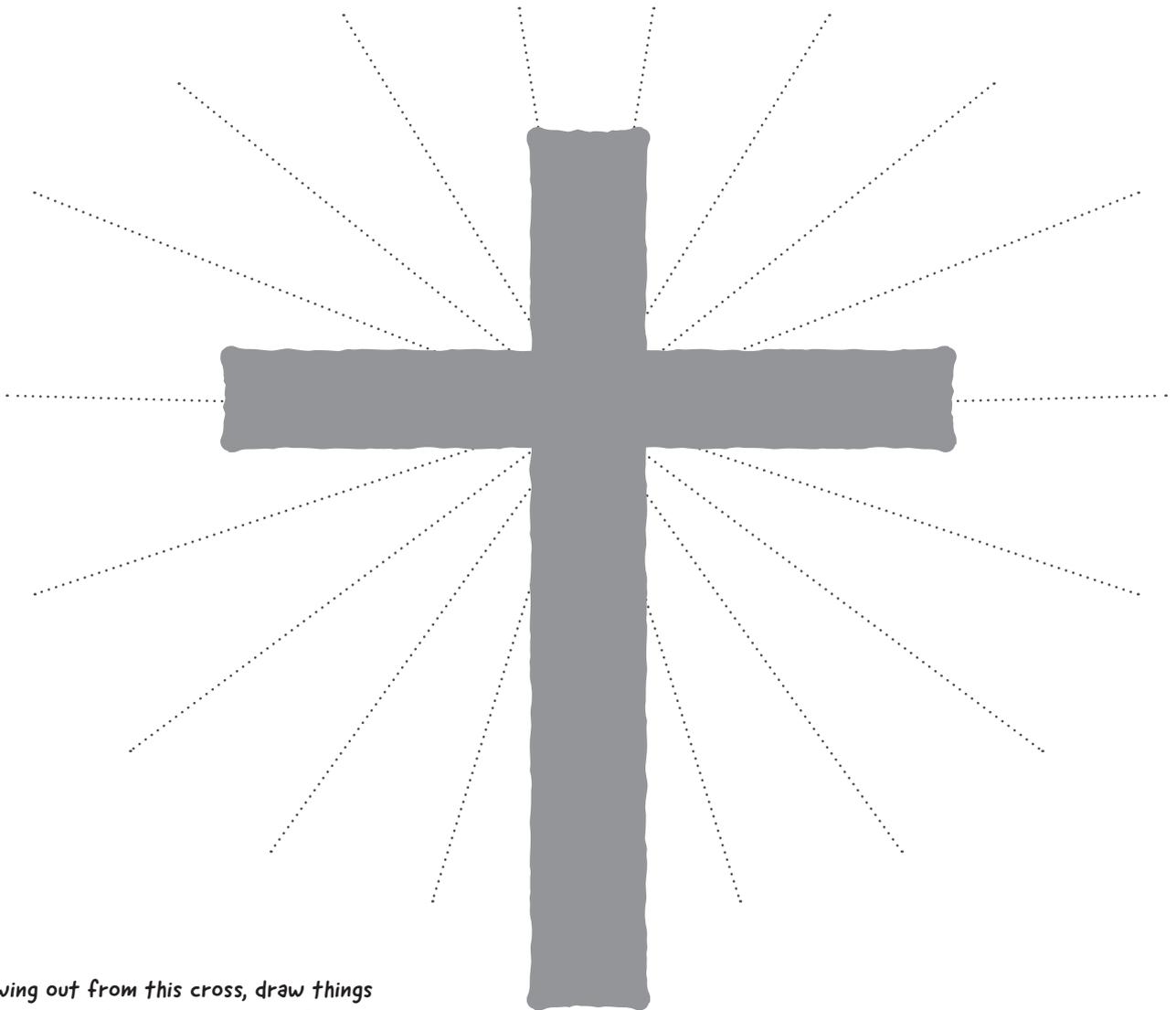
### BECKY MAY

is a freelance writer and experienced children's and youth leader. She can be found at [theresourcescupboard.co.uk](http://theresourcescupboard.co.uk).

# EVERYTHING MADE NEW

Jesus' death on the cross and resurrection from the dead means that we are forgiven all our sins, and our relationship with God is restored. That is pretty amazing! But Jesus' dying and rising again is not just good news for you – the Bible promises that Jesus will also make new all the broken and dying parts of our world. Everything will get transformed by the cross. It says:

**“ALL THE BROKEN AND DISLOCATED PIECES OF THE UNIVERSE — PEOPLE AND THINGS, ANIMALS AND ATOMS — GET PROPERLY FIXED AND FIT TOGETHER IN VIBRANT HARMONIES, ALL BECAUSE OF HIS DEATH, HIS BLOOD THAT POURED DOWN FROM THE CROSS” (Colossians 1:20, MSG).**



Flowing out from this cross, draw things from this world you want to see fixed. That can be people, animals, nature, streets and anything else you care about. Show the vibrant colours and resurrection life that flow from the cross to everything God made.