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HALLELUJAH

EASTER PACK

***Ideas to make this your
best Easter yet***

EASTER PACK

Ideas to make your Easter journey the best yet!

Prepared by the Mission Resource Department with assistance from Creative Ministries Department and the Territorial Children's Department.

CONTENTS:

CONTENTS & INTRODUCTION	2
SERVICE THEME IDEAS	3
OUTREACH IDEAS	4
CREATIVE ELEMENT IDEAS	6
KIDS & FAMILIES IDEAS	9
YOUNG PEOPLE IDEAS	11
SONG IDEAS	12
SOCIAL MEDIA & PROMO IDEAS	12
THINGS TO CONSIDER CHECKLIST	13

INTRODUCTION:

We've collated a large range of ideas to help you with Easter in your setting. Our suggestion is to look through and find a couple of ideas that you could adapt in your setting. Whatever you choose to do to acknowledge this time in your setting, our top recommendations are:

- 1. Do it well:** Whatever you do, do it well. Stick to one or two ideas and make them great!
- 2. For the community:** Cater your event for your local community and share the Easter story.
- 3. The right time:** Think about the times of your services, events and gatherings – are these accessible to new people, families etc. Choose times for Easter weekend with this in mind and advertise well!
- 4. What's next?** However you choose to mark this time in your setting, figure out what's next? What's the follow up for visitors? What could they take home to remind them of their experience? What is the next service/event/activity you'll invite people to? What's your next series – is it relevant?



SERVICE THEME IDEAS:

A list of theme ideas you could use for an Easter series or over the Easter weekend.

Characters: Explore Easter from a different Bible character's perspective each week - i.e. Mary mother of Jesus, the soldier, one of the thieves, Thomas

Song titles or lyrics: Base each week on different Easter song that tell the story of Easter, or the meaning/significance of Easter. Or base each week on different lines or verses from an Easter song.

Lent Reflection: Follow the pattern of lent and focus each Sunday on the different parts of the lent journey. Here is a great reflective resource: <https://www.venn.org.nz/a-lenten-devotional/>

Symbols: Explore the significance of the different symbols of Easter – the cross, the crown of the thorns, the tomb, the sign, the robe etc.

Locations: Spend time looking into the different locations of Easter and how they're significant to the Easter story. You could include places like the garden, the Passover feast home, Pilate's place, the Praetorium (where he was beaten, mocked), the road, the hill on Calvary, the tomb etc.

This Changes Everything: Explore how Easter changes everything – this could be great as a series exploring how different aspects of Easter change everything or a two-part series over Easter weekend.

The Journey: Follow the journey of Jesus to Calvary– exploring the different events that led to his crucifixion and resurrection.

Death vs Life: Explore what it means to be dead and alive again in Christ.

The Plan: This series or service could emphasis that the coming of Jesus was the plan for salvation / redemption all along. It was prophesied, there was no back up, it was unexpected etc.

Bible Project: You could base your services around the Bible Project videos that explore the Easter story – they have a series on Luke-Acts and have a video that explores the Crucifixion and one that explores the resurrection. Find them here: <https://bibleproject.com/explore/video/gospel-luke-4/> and <https://bibleproject.com/explore/video/gospel-luke-5/>

Why the third: Explore why Jesus raising from the dead three days later is significant. There is a great post here to base your thoughts off: <https://bibleproject.com/blog/why-did-jesus-rise-on-the-third-day/>

Seven sayings: Spend time learning about the last seven things Jesus said from the cross.



OUTREACH IDEAS:

A list of outreach ideas you could use for various events or activities in your community.

FOR INDIVIDUALS:

Easter egg hunt: Encourage your people to have an Easter egg hunt with their neighbours!

Easter workers: Ask members of your corps to write thank you/encouragement notes for shift workers like the Police, fire brigade, hospital workers, service station attendees etc. You could even include baking!

Cards: Give out blank cards to every member of your congregation and encourage them to write a message and give these to people in your community. This could be anyone; neighbours, supermarket attendant, doctor or school teacher.

Make your own: Challenge your people to have a go at making their own Easter chocolates or eggs, hot cross buns or Easter craft and then to give this away!

Social media: Create or find a social media post that sensitively shares why we celebrate Easter and encourage your people to share this. Maybe it's about the egg/new life tradition or similar.

FOR YOUR CORPS/CENTRE:

Stations of the Cross: Create a stations of the cross experience where people can come and explore what the Easter story is all about. Here's a helpful resource with lots of links:

<https://resourcecem.com/2018/10/03/the-stations-of-the-cross/>

Display: Create a display in your Family Store windows and church windows that encourage people to remember why we acknowledge Easter. You could even encourage your congregation to do this in their own homes.

Drop offs: Everyone loves a parcel so why not surprise people with a small, thoughtful parcel! This could be an Easter themed snack or drink, an ornament, a card in the letterbox, Easter egg, whatever! Let your people know you are thinking of them.

Easter egg hunt: Organise a large-scale Easter egg hunt for families in your community. You could partner with some local businesses and groups to organise it or run it through a local school.

Movie night: Have an Easter theme movie night. This could be a serious night exploring the Easter story or a more casual night that is family friendly. Some Easter movie ideas – the Passion, Son of God, or Peter Rabbit for a casual option.

Senior's party: Hold a special Easter event just for seniors in your community. This could be part of your usual Companion's Club or Home League, or a special one-off event.

Community meal: Host a community Easter meal (or morning tea even!) and invite people that may not get to experience this otherwise. Make it really special; decorate, have delicious food and include some special elements (small gifts, entertainment).

Retirement homes: Host a morning tea at a local retirement home. Get a small brass band together or come up with some other entertainment, crafts or items that could bless that community.

Markets/events: Why not partner with something already happening like a market, or have a presence at an established event? Maybe a brass band, free face painting or get creative!

Prayer cross: Place a cross in a prominent area like your foyer, Family Store or local mall and invite people to write a prayer request and place it on the cross. Ask people from your corps to pray for these over the following weeks.

Lent countdown: During the 40 days leading to Easter, why not include a Lent countdown somewhere in your community? This could be as simple as numbers displayed in a church or Family Store window, large letters in your church grounds/carpark or different locations each day, social media posts in your Facebook group etc.

Easter high tea: Host an Easter high tea for people in your community. Maybe this could be for stay at home parents, older people or businesses in your area.

Decorate: Decorate the front of your building, Family Store windows or foyer of your building with Easter themed décor. Encourage people to think about the true meaning of Easter.

Egg-making: Host an egg making night at your corps/centre. This could be chocolate eggs, decorating or dyeing real eggs or craft eggs. Share the meaning behind the egg and new life.

Playlist: Create a Spotify or YouTube playlist with Easter theme songs or videos and share this via your social media. This is a simple way for people to explore Easter without having to leave their home or commit to an event.

Lonely people: Who are some of the lonely or forgotten people in your community? Why not do something to show they are thought of – simple cards or Easter egg drop offs go a long way!



CREATIVE ELEMENT IDEAS:

A list of creative ideas you could use to tell the Easter story in your services / events.

CREATIVE SERVICE ELEMENTS:

Live story retelling: This could be someone reading a script while a video / images are on the screen, or people dressed as the characters from the Easter story enter the room, or while a live painting or similar is done. There are a range of great stories online or use the relevant Bible passages as your basis.

Live painting: Have someone paint a picture / sketch on a large canvas during your service – this could be during a reflective song, during a story / script or part of the message.

Live dance: If you have someone from your congregation or centre can dance, why not include a live dance in one of your services?

Easter traditions: As part of a service or your whole Easter series, include a segment about Easter traditions. You could invite a different family or individual each week to share about an Easter tradition they have – a great way to get to know people, include different people and get people reflecting on Easter.

Easter around the world: During a service or across your Easter series/weekend, highlight different traditions from Easter around the world.

Testimony / interviews: As part of your Easter series or weekend, have different people share what Easter means to them through a testimony or interview.

Story telling pictures: There are a range of great story telling books / images that you could use to help tell the Easter story at an event or during a service.

Photobooth: Set up a simple photobooth that people can get photos at before or after the service. This is a great way to serve people in your church, and an enticement for new people to come along. It also creates a bit of excitement/energy as people start arriving.

Kid's stuff in room: Another great way to keep kids (and their families) engaged in a service is to have some kid-friendly playthings / resources in the room. This might be an area with a rug so kids can play, a book nook etc.

Flower cross: Have a cross on display for Good Friday and on Sunday, invite people to bring a flower to attach to the cross (and have some available for those that forget!). This can be a really beautiful moment for people and creates a stunning scene!

Themed food: Everyone loves food so acknowledge Easter with Easter themed food as part of your morning tea after church, or the food you serve at your event. Some ideas include hot cross buns, chocolate eggs, chocolate nests, out Pinterest!

[https://www.pinterest.nz/search/pins/?q=easter%20baking&rs=typed&term_meta\[\]=easter%7Ctyped&term_meta\[\]=baking%7Ctyped](https://www.pinterest.nz/search/pins/?q=easter%20baking&rs=typed&term_meta[]=easter%7Ctyped&term_meta[]=baking%7Ctyped)

Why Easter: Explore why we do certain things at Easter, or the significance of certain traditions and symbols. Research the meaning reason behind easter eggs, bunnies, chickens, hot cross buns etc.

Liturgical reading / prayers: A great way to add something different to your service is through interactive liturgical readings or prayers. There are a whole range of great resources online – here is one made by Central Vineyard Church in Auckland:

<https://static1.squarespace.com/static/541feaf9e4b09194f7696cb6/t/602a1b919c6fb3465e272a02/1613372307123/Liturgy+of+Communion+2021.pdf>

Take home: Come up with a simple 'take home' from your service or event – something to remind people of the service / theme. Small crosses, rocks, cloth, bookmarks etc. are easy, simple take homes. Often craft stores/emporiums have small wooden crosses for reasonable!

VIDEOS:

Salvation Online: Check out our range of Easter videos made for Salvation Online that you guys use in your setting.

- https://tsanzf.sharepoint.com/:f:/s/MissionResources/EvImGOwA3ANCvMSdTu6Rek4Bvml_m_ONXq1RmPcNbjQjIw?e=wLtZ31

Shift worship: A range of different video formats at reasonable prices, including openers, timers, storytelling, pre-message and background.

- <https://www.shiftworship.com/collections/?filter=easter>

Skit guys: A range of different video formats at reasonable prices.

- <https://skitguys.com/videos/theme/easter>

DRAMAS / SCRIPTS:

Skitguys: A range of different Easter themed scripts for purchase.

- <https://skitguys.com/scripts/theme/easter>

Sunday School Center: A short, kid-friendly script.

- <https://www.sunday-school-center.com/support-files/easter-skit-elementary-empty-tomb.pdf>

Christian Drama: A range of short, free Easter themed scripts.

- <http://www.christian-drama.org/easter-scripts/>

SETS / DÉCOR:

Church Set Design: The Church Set Design website has a great range of Easter set/décor ideas – from simple to very complex!

- <http://churchstagedesignideas.com/category/easter-designs/>

Pinterest: Pinterest is a great place to start for décor / set inspiration.

- [https://www.pinterest.nz/search/pins/?q=easter%20stage&rs=typed&term_meta\[\]=easter%7Ctyped&term_meta\[\]=stage%7Ctyped](https://www.pinterest.nz/search/pins/?q=easter%20stage&rs=typed&term_meta[]=easter%7Ctyped&term_meta[]=stage%7Ctyped)
- [https://www.pinterest.nz/search/pins/?q=easter%20decor&rs=typed&term_meta\[\]=easter%7Ctyped&term_meta\[\]=decor%7Ctyped](https://www.pinterest.nz/search/pins/?q=easter%20decor&rs=typed&term_meta[]=easter%7Ctyped&term_meta[]=decor%7Ctyped)

HELPFUL LINKS:

Life.Church: Life Church have a range of free resources including sermon ideas, image options and small group series.

- <https://open.life.church/search?utf8=%E2%9C%93&type=group&q=easter&button=>

RightNow Media: RightNow has a range of free resources – from Bible studies, to sermon ideas, kids' videos, testimony videos etc.

- www.rightnowmedia.com



KIDS & FAMILIES IDEAS:

Almost all the ideas listed in previous sections are intergenerational ideas & resources that families and children will love to be part of. Here are some ideas to specifically help children and families!

Children's Mission hub: The Children's Mission Department have an Easter Resources hub that will be updated with resources in the lead up to Easter. Check it out here:

<https://children.salvationarmy.org.nz/resources/easter-resources>

Lifting the Lid: Introduce a segment in your service that brings the whole congregation together, but seeks to specifically engage children. Use a vintage suitcase/beautiful gift box & hide inside a special item that represents the connection between your children & adult service themes. Hide the suitcase/giftbox somewhere in your auditorium and ask children to find it, then gather around as you discover what is inside and speak to it.

E.g. A large dice. 'Today in kids' church we're going to hear about how people played games to hurt Jesus. In adults church we're talking about how Jesus was rejected and mocked before being led to the cross and what a dice has to do with that. After church, ask each other: 'What's something you learned about Easter?'

Easter Kahoot: Help kids learn more about Easter by creating and playing a few rounds of Kahoot! It's a free game-based learning platform that children all over the country are utilising at school. You can create your own quiz rounds or find an Easter quiz created by someone else. Can be played either on tablets or phones, plus you'll need a computer and screen to display the questions/score cards throughout the quiz. This is SURE to be a winner with your kids! Sign up at kahoot.com/ for a free 14-day trial.

Easter Create Event: Host an event where the creative folk within your congregation can learn to make Easter-related crafts from one another. Older people could teach kids and young people to knit mini eggs or chicks or bake hot cross buns, while kids could teach adults about Easter coloured slime or lego! A great all-ages craft: <https://dynamicdad.uk/activities-craft/how-to-make-a-no-sew-sock-bunny/2/>

Palm Sunday: Make Palm Sunday a big event and ensure your kids are a key part of this. This is always a great Sunday to encourage interaction and activities in your service, especially with branches etc!

Jesus egg: Have an Easter egg hunt during your gathering and explain the meaning of the hollow egg – representing Jesus and the empty tomb.

Wonder Walks: Explore and have fun this Easter through Wonder Walks which is a series of 8 free, interactive walking maps, designed to help under-10s connect with the story of Easter while out enjoying a walk with others – available at Manna. <https://manna.nz/wonder-walks/>

HELPFUL LINKS:

Strandz: The Strandz website has a whole section dedicated to engaging kids and families at Easter. **It is the best!**

- <https://www.strandz.org.nz/lent--easter.html>

Sunz: SUNZ have a range of resources for use in services or for families at home.

- <http://childrenandfamiliesnz.blogspot.com/p/the-journey-to-easter.html>

Newspring Church: A list of great ideas for families to explore Easter together.

- <https://newspringnetwork.com/articles/celebrating-easter-with-your-kids>

Strandz Bubbles: This is a great option for doing at home, as it was created during last year's lockdown. A great way for families to journey toward Easter together.

- <https://www.strandz.org.nz/easterbubbles.html>

Easter Lego challenge: A fun journey to Easter for families that uses Lego!

- <https://www.proverbialhomemaker.com/easter-story-lego-challenge.html>

Play.Bible: A range of videos that tell stories from the Bible, with some focusing on Easter.

- <https://www.play.bible/category/kids>

Sally Lloyd-Jones: Sally wrote the Jesus Storybook Bible (and other things!) and has a range of resources to engage kids with the Bible and journey to Easter / through Lent.

- <https://www.sallylloyd-jones.com/>

Ideas Hub: A range of ideas on engaging with the Bible and Lent this season.

- <https://www.brf.org.uk/resources/>

Manna: Places like Manna often have good options for easter hunts, small gifts or takeaway reminders. They also stock Resurrection Eggs: https://manna.co.nz/resurrection-eggs?search_filter=all&search=resurrection%20egg



YOUNG PEOPLE IDEAS:

Almost all the ideas listed in previous sections are ideas & resources that all ages can engage with – but we know Easter Camps are cancelled this year so more young people may be around / attending your services... let's keep this in mind!

Involve: With more young people at home for Easter this year, it's a great opportunity to get them involved with the planning and running of your gatherings / events. Young people have great ideas and will add so much value – ask them to be on planning teams, ask them what would make them engage with Easter, get them involved in the actual running of the event/service.

Social: Organise something specifically for your young people to engage with Easter – this might be a movie night, sleepover, night away, hang out day, stations of the cross with a teenage focus. Lots of your teens will be mourning the gap left by Easter Camp – let's make sure Easter is still a great experience for them.

Sharing: Ask one of your young people or youth leaders to share over the Easter weekend around what their usual Easter experience would be. This will help people understand what they're missing and how Easter is a really significant weekend for our teenagers. Or why not ask one of your young people to preach!

Service weekend: Why not encourage your young people to come up with some creative ways they could serve or give back to your community over Easter. Maybe it's a beach or park tidy up, maybe it's an encouraging chalk bomb (leaving chalk messages all over the busy areas of your community), maybe it's baking cookies or making Easter eggs for essential workers, isolated people or elderly in your community. Lots of fun ways to bless others and hang out!

Re-look at your services: Find service run sheets from previous Easter services in your setting and have a real think about how these included or valued young people. What could you do differently this year? You could ask some young people to have a look at the run sheets and get feedback (not every element has to relate/cater for all ages, but all ages need to be catered for!)

Lent challenge: Share around what Lent is with your young people and start a lent challenge with your crew. This could be challenging each of them to think about one thing they could add or one thing they could remove from their lives that would help them focus more on Jesus in the lead up to Easter. Have a big celebration over Easter weekend to acknowledge their mahi and share about their experiences.



SONG IDEAS:

A list of song ideas you could use for various events or services.

Playlist of Easter music: A playlist perfect for playing during an event or pre / post a service – a mix of older and newer music with an Easter theme. These are all great for music teams to use in a service.

- <https://open.spotify.com/playlist/78vyFNRJn0KH7bxATs19mB?si=18Py5b4TQluCcXS2ecRCZW>



SOCIAL MEDIA & PROMO IDEAS:

A range of images to use for social media, posters, flyers and slides.

Download pack: A range of generic images to be used as slides or for social media. Social Media images with details for services will be uploaded to the Mission Resources Facebook shortly and are available in this folder.

- <https://tsanzf.sharepoint.com/:f:/s/MissionResources/ErvVdvjAqi5MiTHnB8EzaciBaUOWWabdewR7tVsdDbnN0g?e=ayFbzS>
- <https://www.facebook.com/NZFTSMissionResources>

Unsplash: Unsplash is a repository of free images – a great option for promo photos.

- <https://unsplash.com/>

Canva: A free online design tool – a really good option for poster, flyers and Facebook designs!

- <https://www.canva.com/>



THINGS TO CONSIDER CHECKLIST:

A checklist of things to consider when you're preparing for your Easter events, activities, and services.

The people:

- Who is your event for – is it an in-house event, for your local community or both?
- How will you communicate about your event? To your congregation? To your community?
- How is your event catering for: kids, families, older people, teens, singles, Christians, visitors?
- How many volunteers will you need to run the event?

The event:

- How will you advertise? Facebook, local schools/clubs, posters, Eventbrite? How will you resource your people to share about the event?
- Have you checked dates with other local calendars / events?
- Have you considered the budget for this event? What will you need to do to find the money needed?
- Have you considered any safety needs / issues?
- How could you partner with other churches or community groups?

The environment:

- How will you communicate about your facilities - toilets, other important locations, safety?
- Have you considered the type of language you will be using? Remember, you will have visitors!
- Have you looked around and through your building? How does this look to new people?
- How will people be welcomed to your event/service?
- When / how will you communicate around how long your event will be to attendees?

The effectiveness:

- What are your desired outcomes for your event/service? Will your plans help you get there?
- Is there a simple phrase, an experience or takeaway that you would like attendees to remember from your event? How will you emphasise this?
- What are the next steps for visitors? What is your next event/service that you could invite them to? What are the next steps for those already attached to your corps/centre?
- Will you give a takeaway to attendees? What will this be? What will it communicate?
- How will you thank and celebrate your volunteers who have served?