

Thoughts For Easter

Adapted from Resource Book U.K. Territory - 2002



Preparation

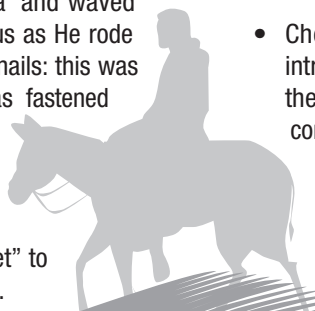
Display items that depict the Easter season: Sacred — basin and towel, palm branches, moneybag, crown of thorns, large nails, small wooden Cross.

Secular — chocolate eggs, fluffy chicks, spring flowers, etc.

Have a special “Easter” theme for lunch e.g. Hot Cross buns with homemade jams.

Fellowship

Ask several ladies to share an Easter memory. From the display table speak of each item and its link to Easter, e.g. Palm branches: people cried ‘Hosanna’ and waved these in praise of Jesus as He rode into Jerusalem. Large nails: this was the cruel way Jesus was fastened to the cross. Compare it with the commercial emphasis we place on Easter today — Easter egg hunts, new “bonnet” to wear on Easter Sunday.



Education

Learn of Easter traditions from other countries and cultures:

- Perhaps the finest Easter eggs were those given by the Czar of Russia to members of his family. These were beautiful expensive works of art created by the great court jeweler, Fabergé, in gold and precious stones. One such egg was in the shape of a nest of frosted silver made



of hundreds of silver twigs and leaves, scraps of moss and heather sprigs, with an egg sitting in the middle. Inside the egg were three large pearls.

- In the Middle Ages eggs were among the foods forbidden during Lent and were joyfully welcomed at Easter. They were painted in bright colours and presented as Easter gifts to friends, relations and servants.

- Chocolate eggs were introduced as recently as the 19th century. A Dutch company in 1860 invented a machine to make chocolate flow smoothly into egg moulds. The first hollow chocolate Easter egg was made in England in 1875.



Service

Remind each lady that they are loved by God and of great worth. Give each of them an Easter card and chocolate egg to emphasize this.

Worship: Three Trees

Three trees were growing on a hill together. The first said, ‘I want to be a baby’s cradle when I am cut down.’ The second said, ‘I want to be a big boat and sail the seas.’ The third said, ‘I don’t want to be cut down, I want to grow on



the hillside forever and point men to God.'

Men came along and cut down the first tree and took it to be made into a cattle stall. 'I want to be made into a cradle,' said the tree, but into a cattle stall it was made and later the baby Jesus was laid in this stall, for no cradle could be found in which to lay Him.

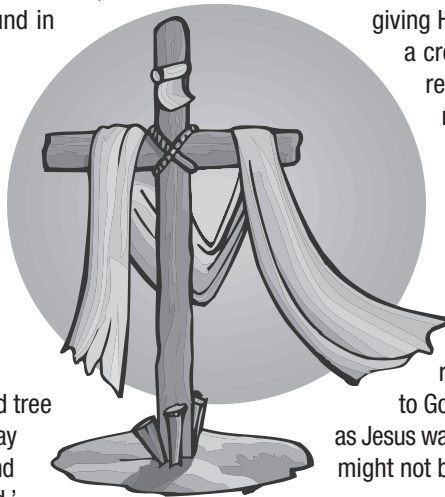
The second tree was cut down and made into a fishing boat. 'I want to be a big ship sailing the sea,' it said, but Peter bought it and Jesus stood in this boat to preach on the Sea of Galilee.

The time came for the third tree to be cut down. 'I want to stay here on this lovely hill, tall and straight, to point men to God,' was the tree's cry. 'I don't want to be made into a cross, a thing of shame.' But that cross bore the body of Jesus and it stands for all time, towering over centuries, pointing men to the love of God.

It's only a story of course. Each tree wanted to be something special; God used them in spite of their own wishes not coming true. Perhaps the trees were of greater value than they would ever realize. We must be careful that we pray 'Thy will be done', rather than 'Make my dreams come true'.

Scripture Reading: Matthew 26:36-42
Here we have a picture of Jesus praying in the garden of Gethsemane before facing crucifixion. From a human point of view the task that lay ahead of Him was a very difficult one and so He said to His Heavenly Father:

'Father, is this the way You really want me to go? It's not what I want but I will do Your will.' There was no other way. This was God's only way of saving mankind from sin and bringing them to new life. Prophets had come and gone and had shown something of the character of God but it was this final act of God, giving His only Son to die on a cross, that would bring reconciliation between man and God. And Jesus was prepared to say, 'Not as I want but Your will be done.'



As Christians we, too, need to be ready and available to God for Him to use, just as Jesus was. What we want to do might not be what God wants.

Sometimes God has a special plan or work that only we can do. The work God wants us to do may only be small; it may seem very insignificant but if we don't do it — no one else will. What would have happened if Jesus hadn't been willing to go to the cross and die for the sins of humankind? Who else would have reconciled us to God?

As we approach Easter may the Lord help us to see clearly what He wants from us, and in knowing God's will for our lives may He give us strength and guidance to fulfill His plan.

Suggested Songs/Choruses

- *Not My Will Father But Thine Be Done*
- *All That I Am, All That is Me*
- *Man of Sorrows*
- *O Love Upon A Cross Impaled*
- *The Old Rugged Cross*