

# WHAT MATTERS MOST AT Easter?\*

\*Aside from chocolate eggs

## How will you teach Holy Week and Easter to the 4-11s this year?

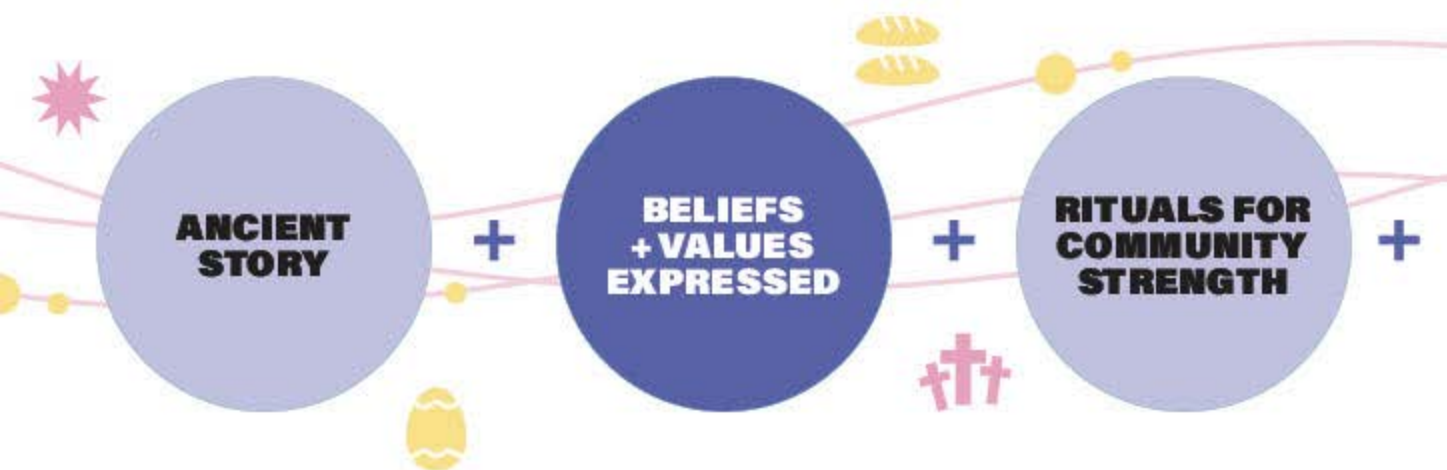
Most schools use the occasion of a festival to teach about it. We do Divali at Divali time and Eid at the end of Ramadan. Because there is always a school holiday around Easter, some schools find it hard to make the best use of the opportunity: children learn about Jesus' death, but the resurrection story has already fallen off the agenda by the time term starts. Here are some varied and possibly fresh ways of working that might energise learning about Holy Week and Easter for your younger pupils.

Teaching a festival well in RE should always add to pupils' understanding of what kinds of things religious festivals might involve. The five elements in the diagram are simple enough for pupils to understand: these five added together will make a festival.

In the Christian celebrations around Holy Week and Easter, there are of course key events: Jesus' last supper, the crucifixion and the empty tomb. These **events** connect to **beliefs** about salvation and life after death. They connect to **values** such as self-sacrifice, love and forgiveness. They connect to the **practice** of Eucharist, bread and wine to remember Jesus, the place of the cross in Christianity and the practices of Easter worship across the world. Teachers who keep these links in mind as they tell the stories are often able to make helpful simple connections, showing progress for pupils in the 4-11 age range.

It is obvious in a way that the 'fun stuff' of festivals is what makes them religions' most popular offer – many more people celebrate Christmas and Easter than go to church on an average Sunday, even those only loosely associated with Christian identity or community.

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Details of all these activities and worksheets and PPTs to run the lessons are available on the NATRE website. Do send in examples of using these in the classroom, to editor@retoday.org.uk

# 7 IDEAS FOR TEACHING ABOUT HOLY WEEK AND EASTER:

## 01 'What matters most at Easter?'

A magic question. The answer 'chocolate' is always contested! Make this into a real question by playing Kim's Game with nine artefacts. I would use: a hot crossed bun, a large nail, 30 silver coins, a plastic donkey, a crucifix, an empty cross, a chocolate rabbit, a boiled egg and a bandage.

## 02 Recall and connect:

Once pupils have played Kim's Game and studied the nine items, ask who can say how each one is connected to the Easter festival and Jesus' story.

## 03 Take away ...

Ask the pupils to suggest a 'take away': which one of the objects does not matter too much? Which one can you have Easter without? Then remove another, and another, until you have three objects left. Why do these three matter most at Easter?

## 04 Connect up:

How does each object link to a belief that Christians hold? Beliefs include:

- 'Jesus was like a great king.'
- 'Bread and wine bring people into Jesus' real presence.'
- 'There is life after death.'
- 'Love is stronger than death.'
- 'Salvation from evil and death comes from Jesus.'

## 05 30 sentences:

On the next page is a 30-sentence retelling of the stories of Holy Week and Easter. Give each pupil one sentence to illustrate, and create a class picture book of the story. Share it with young pupils - you could make a classroom gallery and invite children from three years below yours to come and receive a guided tour.

## 06 If Peter was a tweeter ...

Give children mobile phone outlines and ask them to write Peter's tweets during this momentous week. And perhaps Pilate's wife's tweets. And maybe Mary's tweets. It is a curiosity-driven way to get a new take on the stories from different perspectives.

## 07 Press releases and newspaper pages:

This is a more challenging activity. Put pupils in the roles of journalists and witnesses to, first, the events of Good Friday, then the events of Easter Sunday. Run a role play press conference for both days, and get pupils to write up the stories for the *Jerusalem Star*, *Roman Times* and *Daily Disciple*.

**GIFTS,  
GENEROSITY,  
PARTYING**



**FOOD,  
CULTURE  
(ARTS AND  
DANCING?)**

