### Name of Unit: Salvation
What Is So Special About Easter?

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<td>Christianity</td>
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<th>Key Stage in which this unit should be taught:</th>
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<td>Foundation Stage.</td>
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### Previous Learning:
Possibly: Salvation – How Did Jesus ‘Rescue’ People?  
*(Depending on where this unit is placed in the schools RE Curriculum Map.)*

### What This Unit Teaches:
- The events of Holy Week, as celebrated by Christians – the Easter story;  
- Christians believe Jesus died on a cross to show God’s love to the world and that because of Jesus, everyone can be forgiven for their ‘sins’;  
- That Christians believe Jesus rose from the dead;  
- Beginning to recognise the importance of bread and wine for Christians;  
- How Christians remember what happened at Easter and how they celebrate the festival of Easter.

### Key RE Vocabulary:
Christian, Easter, festival, Palm Sunday, disciple, Last Supper, Garden of Gethsemane, Good Friday, cross, prayer, Easter Day, risen, tomb, celebrate.

### Areas of Learning and Development Links:
Personal, Social and Emotional Development; Physical Development; Communication and Language; Literacy; Maths; Understanding the World; Expressive Arts and Design.

### Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural Development:
Understanding how people celebrate and remember things that are important to them;  
The importance of saying sorry for the things we have done wrong, and repairing relationships – with each other and with God;  
Beginning to understand ways people show love to each other and the importance of having friends.

### Sensitivities:
Different religious will not share the Christian understanding of Jesus as risen from the dead.  
Some pupils may find the idea of Jesus dying very upsetting – this needs to be handled with care.  
Sensitivities for children who have fallen out with their friends and feel lonely.

### Possible Further Thinking and Extension Activities:
Exploring how Easter is celebrated in different cultures.  
Link to the school’s own Easter Service and Collective Worship in church or school.

### Future Learning:
Why Is Easter The Most Important Festival For Christians?
## What Is So Special About Easter?

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<tr>
<td>Pupils should:</td>
<td>Introduction:</td>
<td>RE Vocabulary:</td>
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<tr>
<td>✓ Learn about the story of Palm Sunday;</td>
<td>Ask the pupils if they know what special time is coming soon?</td>
<td>Palm Sunday – The day when Christians remember Jesus entering Jerusalem at the beginning of Holy Week, (the week when he died).</td>
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<td>✓ Learn that Christians believe Jesus is a special king;</td>
<td>Talk about how Easter is a very important festival for Christians, in fact it is the most important festival for them, even more important than Christmas!</td>
<td>Hosanna! – The word that Jewish people shouted to Jesus, which means “Save us!”</td>
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<td>✓ Think about how we treat people who are special.</td>
<td>Share how we are going to be learning about Easter over the next few weeks.</td>
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<td>What Was The Donkey’s Special Job?</td>
<td>Resources:</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Talk with the pupils about people who are special to each of us. How do we treat them?</td>
<td>Children’s Bible e.g. ‘The Beginner’s Bible’ for reading the story / Video for watching the story;</td>
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<td>Show the children a picture of a donkey. Do you know what this is? Have you ever seen one?</td>
<td>Large roles of paper and paint;</td>
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<td>Where might you find a donkey (on a farm, at the seaside?) What jobs do they do now?</td>
<td>Materials for making palm leaves;</td>
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<td>Find images of donkeys performing different roles. Usually these jobs are very ordinary and involve ordinary people. But the donkey in our story today had a very important job indeed – he actually carried a ‘king!’ The ‘king’ was a person who was special to many people.</td>
<td>Donkey costume (or mask); Blocks and fur fabric to create a donkey to sit on.</td>
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<td>(There are some great pictures online of a donkey pulling Queen Victoria in a carriage, which you could use for comparisons.)</td>
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<td>Explain that this story comes from The Bible and so is a very special story for Christians.</td>
<td>Sensitivities:</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Use a children’s Bible or video clip to tell the story of Palm Sunday.</td>
<td>If acting out the story, please be aware of asking children of different faiths to ‘play’ Jesus or act as animals, as this may be considered offensive in their faith.</td>
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<td>What was the donkey’s job? Why did Jesus want to ride on a donkey? How do you think the donkey might have felt about having a special ‘king’ on his back?</td>
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<td>Activities:</td>
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<td>Create a pathway for Jesus, by laying down a large roll of paper and drawing / painting palm leaves and robes on it, just as the people at Palm Sunday put palm leaves and robes down onto the ground for Jesus to ride on. Why did they make such a big effort for Jesus?</td>
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<td>Make palm leaves and re-enact the story of Jesus entering Jerusalem. What did people say? (“Hosanna!” which means “Save us!”)</td>
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<td>Palm leaves can be made with rolled up newspaper, a cut-out template of a palm leaf, a collection of green handprints, Lego, computer paint programme, etc.</td>
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**Sensitivities:**

If acting out the story, please be aware of asking children of different faiths to ‘play’ Jesus or act as animals, as this may be considered offensive in their faith.
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</table>
| ❖ Create a trail using paper leaves or by drawing leaves on the floor for pupils to follow. How do you think Jesus felt when He went into the city?  
❖ Find out about donkeys. What is it like to ride on a donkey? Create a donkey for the children to sit on out of blocks and fabric. Where would you go on your donkey? What would it have felt like for Jesus to ride on a donkey? Why did he choose a donkey, not another animal?  
❖ Make palm leaf shapes and record on them the things they would say to Jesus if He came into your school. These palm leaves could then be made into a display.  

**Plenary:**  
Why were people so excited to see Jesus? What made Jesus special? Do kings usually ride on donkeys? Talk about how Jesus was a special kind of king – Christians believe He is King of the whole world and came to earth to show God’s love and save people. |
## Session 2

Pupils should:
- Learn about the story of the Last Supper;
- Begin to explore why Christians share bread and wine today;
- Think about special meals in our own lives and special people we share food and drink with.

### Suggested Teaching Activities

#### What Was Special About Jesus’ Meal With His Friends?

**Introduction:**
Display images of people sharing a meal together.
Talk with the pupils: When do you have special meals? (e.g. for a birthday or religious festival?)
What do you like to eat and drink at your special meals? Why do you have special meals?
Who do you share your special meals with? What makes the meals special?

**Main Part of The Lesson:**
Explain that Jesus knew he was going away from his friends, so he wanted to have a special meal before he went.
If you were going away somewhere, who would you choose to have a meal with?
Jesus chose his closest friends – his disciples – to eat with. What do you think they talked about?
Jesus and his disciples ate a special Jewish meal called a Passover meal, which included bread and wine. Show the children some bread (e.g. pitta bread, ideally bread without yeast,) and a cup of wine, (grape juice or Ribena is a good substitute!)
Have you ever seen people eat and drink this? Where, especially, do people eat it?
In church. Christians do this to remember Jesus.

**Activities:**
- Make models of the Last Supper, using Lego, Playmobil, Small World play equipment, or as a craft activity with round head shapes stuck to a cardboard box to show Jesus and his friends around a table. Who was at Jesus’ meal? Find out the names of some of the disciples.
- Talk about children’s favourite meals to have with special people: they could use the role play or mud kitchen to create a meal, use playdough or plasticine, or collage one onto a paper plate. What makes this meal special? Why was Jesus’ meal special?
- Make unleavened bread, (bread without yeast,) and find out about the Jewish festival of Passover. Share the bread with the class or ask the children to take it home and share it with the people who are special to them at home.

### Points To Note

(NB: Be aware of health issues and take care not to spread any illnesses! A way around this could be to pour from one central goblet into their individual plastic cups / glasses, still sharing the same drink.)

**RE Vocabulary:**
- Last Supper – The Passover meal Jesus shared with his disciples in Holy Week, on the night before he died on the cross;
- Disciple – One of Jesus’ special friends.

**Resources:**
- Children’s Bible e.g. The Beginner’s Bible for reading the story;
- Video clip for watching the story;
- Materials for making a ‘Last Supper’ model.
- Materials for creating pupils’ own play meals.
- Ingredients for unleavened bread.
- Plastic cups and materials for
| Decorate a transparent plastic cup (or glass) using permanent markers, glass paint or sticking tissue paper. Use these to share juice with the class. How does it feel to share?  
| Show the children a paten and chalice, and talk about how these are used in church. Perhaps the Incumbent, another member of the clergy or someone else from the church might be willing to show the children and talk about this.  
| Plenary:  
| Why do you think Jesus wanted to eat a special meal with his friends before he went away?  
| Why do you think Christians still copy Jesus’ special meal today?  
| What do you do when you want to remember someone special?  
| As a class, plan a special meal you could all have before the Easter holidays. What would make is special? Who could be invited?  

**Sensitivities:**  
Be aware of food allergies when making and handling bread and juice.  
Be aware of any children who may have recently lost or had family members or friends move away.
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<td><strong>Session 3</strong></td>
<td><strong>Why Did Jesus Go To a Special Garden?</strong></td>
<td><strong>RE Vocabulary:</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Pupils should:</td>
<td>Introduction: Show images of gardens. Ask the pupils what this makes them think of. What do they like to do in a garden? e.g. Explore, play, have a BBQ, rest, plant seeds, etc.</td>
<td>Gethsemane – the garden where Jesus went to pray with his disciples; Disciple – One of Jesus’ special friends; Prayer – talking to God.</td>
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<td>✓ Know the story of Jesus praying in the Garden of Gethsemane;</td>
<td>Main Part of The Lesson: Read / tell the story of Jesus praying in the Garden of Gethsemane. Alternatively show a video of the story. After Jesus had his special meal with His disciples, He then went into a garden nearby called the Garden of Gethsemane. He was feeling worried about what was going to happen to him and he wanted to go somewhere to pray. Do you ever feel worried? Where do you go? What makes you feel better when you are worried? What is praying? Why do you think Jesus wanted to talk to God? Jesus took three of his favourite friends with Him. Who do you like to have with you when you are worried? Do you ever talk to God? Where do you go if you pray?</td>
<td><strong>Resources:</strong> Matthew 26:36-46 Simple Bible, e.g. The Beginner’s Bible, for reading the story; Video for watching the story; Garden images for collage; Materials for a reflective garden; Branches for a reflective tree; Paper for leaves or hands, etc.; Seeds, soil and plastic cups / trays, other materials for Easter gardens.</td>
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<td>✓ Think about where people go and what they do, when they are worried;</td>
<td>Activities: ✩ Make a collage of a garden and talk about what you like to do in a garden. Discuss how gardens make you feel. How do you think Jesus felt in the garden that night? Place an image of Jesus inside the garden to help you think about how Jesus felt; ✩ Make a garden reflective area in your class or outdoor area. What will you need? Include real plants, planted seeds, twigs, rocks, craft flowers and leaves, etc.; Encourage pupils to reflect here. Their reflections could go into a class reflective book, along with existing reflections and images; ✩ Write reflections on leaves and tie them to branches to create a reflective tree; ✩ Draw around their hands in a prayer position and write reflections onto the hands to put into the class reflective book or on an Easter display;</td>
<td><strong>Sensitivities:</strong> Be aware of any incidents which could indicate a child is sad because of ill-treatment or bullying, or because of grief in the family. If children disclose anything of a child protection nature, this must be reported to the school’s Designated Safeguarding Lead.</td>
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<td>What Is So Special About Easter?</td>
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<td>✤ Plant quick-growing seeds, e.g. cress, in cups / trays to create individual Easter gardens, which can be added to over the next few weeks with a cross, tomb, etc.</td>
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<td>Plenary:</td>
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<td>Use one of the activities to talk to the children about their reflections.</td>
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<td>What helps you when you are worried about something?</td>
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<td>Remind them that they should always say if something is upsetting or bothering them.</td>
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<td>Share some of the reflections.</td>
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<td>Discuss how Christians pray, where, when and why.</td>
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<td>If appropriate, make comparisons with how people of other faiths pray.</td>
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**What Is So Special About Easter?**

**Christianity**

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<td><strong>Session 4</strong></td>
<td><strong>Why Is The Cross Special? Introduction:</strong> Look at a wooden cross, e.g. holding cross or altar cross. Ask the pupils what it is? What do they know about crosses? e.g. Is there one / are there some in their school building? / in their school grounds? / on their school badge / in the school’s church? etc. <strong>Main Part Of The Lesson:</strong> Explain that the next part of the Easter story will help us understand why crosses are so important to Christians. (Some children may already know the story, but it is important to tell the story together to address any misconceptions.) Read / retell the story of Jesus dying on a cross, explaining that there were some people who didn’t like Jesus and thought that He was making trouble, so wanted Him to die. Alternatively show a video telling this part of the Easter story. In those days, people were put on a wooden cross to die when they had done serious things wrong. Jesus hadn’t done anything wrong, so Christians believe that He died for all the people who had done anything wrong, including each of us. It was God’s special way of showing that He loved everyone – giving up the thing that He loved most, His son, Jesus. Christians believe that this was God ‘rescuing’ the people of the world. Although this is a very sad part of the story, it shows us something wonderful that Christians believe, God’s love. What is special to you? Would you give it to someone that you loved? (e.g. a favourite toy – the story Dogger is a good example of giving up something you really love for someone you love.) <strong>Activities:</strong> ➢ Add to the little Easter gardens that the pupils planted in the last lesson, making simple lolly stick crosses and adding them in; ➢ Make a silhouette of the crosses against the sky, using black paper and a paper plate. Create a sunset using paint or crayons and then stick the crosses in front. Talk about how it was a sad</td>
<td><strong>RE Vocabulary:</strong> (for teachers only!) Crucifixion – a method of execution used by the Romans, where criminals were put on a wooden cross until they died; Sins – the things we do that hurt others, ourselves and God; Confess – to admit to our sins; Repent – to say sorry and decide not to do those things any more. <strong>Resources:</strong> Luke 23:26-43 Simple Bible e.g. ‘The Beginner’s Bible’ for reading the story, / Video for watching the story; lolly sticks; Paper plates, black paper and paints for silhouettes; Paints and paper to make crosses; Playdough, beads, small stones and other materials for decorating crosses; Hearts made out of wood / clay / other materials. <strong>Sensitivities:</strong> Please be aware of any pupils who are sensitive to talking about death, or have lost someone</td>
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</table>
What Is So Special About Easter?

Christianity

| **moment when Jesus died, but that 3 days later it was all going to get better!** | recently. |
| Create multi-coloured crosses by finger painting with different colours. You might want to put a heart at the centre of the cross to show that it is a Christian sign of God’s love; |  |
| Make crosses out of playdough and decorate them with beads or small stones and / or other materials. Talk about why the cross is so special; |  |
| On wooden / clay / other material hearts, write or draw things that you would do for someone you love. Talk about how Christians believe the cross is one of God’s ways of showing how much he loves people. |  |

Plenary:
look at the crosses that everyone has made. Which is our favourite? Why?
Talk about how the cross is a sad thing because it reminds Christians that Jesus died, but it also reminds them of God’s love.
Think about ways in which people show us that they love us.
Explain that Christians believe that God helps us to love other people and they pray to God to ask him to help them to be more loving.
Talk about ways that you might show love to someone you care about.
## What Is So Special About Easter?

### Session 5

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<td><strong>Pupils should:</strong></td>
<td><strong>What Is Special About The Stone?</strong></td>
<td><strong>RE Vocabulary:</strong></td>
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</table>
| ➢ Know about Jesus’ resurrection; | **Introduction:**  
  Show the pupils a large stone.  
  Explain that it is a very important part of the Easter story. Does anyone know why? | **Resources:** |
| ➢ Begin to understand that Christians believe that God raised Jesus from the dead and that they believe He is still alive today; | **Main Part Of The Lesson:**  
  Start reading / retelling the story from when Jesus had died.  
  Alternatively watch a video showing this part of The Easter Story.  
  Talk about how His body was put into a tomb, which is like a big cave, and that a giant stone was used to block the tomb so that no one could get in or out. It’s a bit like the lid on a jam jar, or the door of a safe.  
  Carry on reading / telling / watching the story, explaining how some of Jesus’ friends went to visit the tomb, and they found that the stone had moved and the tomb was empty. They were very upset as they didn’t know where Jesus was, until they saw Him and realised that he had come back to life again, he had risen! | Large stone;  
Children’s Bible, e.g. The Beginner’s Bible for reading the story, / Video for watching the story;  
Already planted seeds in pots, and stones to add in;  
Materials for an Easter garden;  
Cloths, angel and soldier costumes for tomb role play;  
Materials for making sunrise or tomb craft pictures, including coffee filters, food colouring and split pins;  
Paintings as stimuli for talk, (e.g. Noli Me Tangere by Fra Angelico, Morning of the Resurrection by Burne-Jones or an icon by Kiko Arguello); |
| ➢ Explore feelings of loss, surprise, hope and joy. | **Activities:**  
  ➢ Talk about why the tomb was empty:  
  Return to the already planted pot of seeds. Take out the cross and replace it with a stone. Talk about how the cross is for when Jesus died, but Christians believe he came back to life and the stone reminds us that the tomb was empty;  
  ➢ Make their Easter Garden a resurrection garden, showing the empty tomb, the stone rolled away and add figures to show Jesus, Mary Magdalene, the disciples, soldiers and an angel. Use it to retell and remember the story and think about how surprised Jesus’ friends were to see Him;  
  ➢ Create an ‘empty tomb’ role play area and use it to retell the story;  
  ➢ Play a game of Chinese Whispers showing the first pupil an image or telling them a word, which they pass on to others.  
  Talk about how the disciples who saw Jesus went and told all their friends that they had seen Jesus. Do you think people believed them? |  
(Tomb – the place where a person is buried after they have died;  
Disciple – One of Jesus’ special friends;  
Risen / Resurrected – come back to life from being dead. |
### What Is So Special About Easter?

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<td>Make an Easter sunrise picture, using half a coffee filter paper and yellow / red food colouring. Talk about how Jesus’ friends rushed to the tomb first thing in the morning to see Jesus and how they must have felt; Make pictures of Jesus’ tomb, with the stone fixed with a split pin, so that it can open up. What was inside the tomb? (The cloths Jesus was wrapped in and angels, or perhaps show it as empty to give the idea that Jesus wasn’t there any more); Look at paintings of the risen Jesus. Use them as a stimulus for talk, drawing own pictures or writing simple sentences about what might be happening; Make resurrection rolls by wrapping a marshmallow in pastry. When baked, the rolls will be hollow because the marshmallow will have melted, and like the tomb, the roll will be empty! Give each pupil a stone / pebble to paint with an image of new life, or the words ‘He is risen.’ Talk about why the stone was so special in this story, (It showed that the tomb was empty and Jesus was not there any more because he was alive, He had risen.) Plenary: Look at an image of the risen Jesus with his disciples. Brainstorm words which describe the feelings of the disciples – how would they have felt when they saw Jesus again? What might they have thought? At first, Mary thought Jesus was the gardener and other disciples wondered if he was a ghost! How would you have felt? Have you ever found something you lost? How did that make you feel? Christians feel joyful and excited at Easter because they remember that Jesus’ tomb was empty and he had come back to life! He had risen!</td>
<td>Pastry and marshmallows for ‘resurrection rolls,’ A collection of stones / pebbles for pupils to paint, hide or use for storytelling and paints. Sensitivities: Please be aware of pupils who may have lost a relative and / or friend and / or a pet and wonder why they haven’t come back to life like Jesus. Other faiths do not believe that Jesus did rise from the dead, which is what makes Christianity distinctive. Please be aware of this when teaching the story to pupils from other faith backgrounds. If acting out the story, please be aware of asking pupils of different faiths to ‘play’ Jesus as this may be offensive in their religion.</td>
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### Learning Objectives

**Session 6**

- Remember the Easter story;
- Know some of the ways that Christians celebrate Easter;
- Think about ways we celebrate special events and festivals in our own lives.

### Suggested Teaching Activities

**What Is Special About Easter?**

- **Introduction:**
  - Show the pupils pictures of the donkey riding into Jerusalem, the Last Supper, Jesus in the Garden of Gethsemane, a cross and the empty tomb.
  - Can the pupils remember what happened in each part of the story?
  - Retell the story together.

- **Main Part of The Lesson:**
  - Ask the pupils what they think of when they think about Easter?
  - Look at images of Easter eggs, the Easter bunny, Hot Cross buns, Easter egg hunts, etc.
  - Share how these all remind us of what Christians believe is special about Easter.
  - Talk about how:
    - Hot cross buns have a cross on them, like Jesus' cross;
    - Easter eggs are empty like the tomb, which reminds Christians of Jesus being alive;
    - Bunnies and chicks are born in the springtime, so they start their new lives at Easter time like Jesus did.
  - Watch a video about how Christians celebrate Easter, e.g. CBeebies ‘Celebrating Easter’ or ‘Let’s Celebrate!’ Easter.

- **Activities:**
  - Make a concertina book with images from the story of Holy Week.
  - Retell the story verbally, or in writing;
  - Make Easter bonnets, using images and symbols from The Easter Story, e.g. palm leaf, donkey, cross, garden, tomb stone, angel, etc.;
  - Organise an Easter parade for the pupils to show their bonnets and incorporate into this a simple retelling of The Easter story. See if the pupils can tell the story using some of the pictures and symbols;
  - Set up an Easter egg hunt in the outdoor area, school garden or in the sand pit. Put different Easter pictures / symbols on the eggs and then use these, when retrieved, to tell the Easter story;
  - Grow cress inside egg shells (with some cotton wool inside) and talk about how new life comes.

### Points To Note

- **RE Vocabulary:**
  - Celebrating a festival – what people do to remember and mark a special time in their religion.

- **Resources:**
  - Video showing celebration of Easter, e.g. CBeebies ‘Preparing for Easter’
    - [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qVW9ijhIlU](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qVW9ijhIlU)
  - and ‘Celebrating Easter’
    - [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=StlJgYF-Ki8](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=StlJgYF-Ki8)
  - or ‘Let’s Celebrate!’ Easter;
  - Paper and pictures to make concertina books;
  - Materials for Easter bonnets including images and symbols from The Easter Story;
  - Eggs for Easter Egg hunt, with Easter images / symbols attached;
  - Empty egg shells with cotton wool and cress seeds;
  - Easter tree, etc.;
  - Materials for Easter cards;
  - Materials for making Easter eggs and baskets, etc.;
  - Resources for an Easter party.
**What Is So Special About Easter?**

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<tr>
<td>Put Easter eggs onto an Easter tree.</td>
<td>This could use the same branches as the reflective tree from Lesson 3. Attach to each egg something that the children are thankful for at Easter.</td>
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<td>Make Easter cards, with an Easter image on, to send to a family member or friend.</td>
<td>What sort of message will we write?</td>
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<td>Make Easter eggs – there are lots of wonderful ideas for this, e.g. finger painting or printing patterns on sugar paper eggs; Easter egg-shaped potato prints; using tissue paper in laminating pouches; stained glass eggs; painted hard-boiled eggs; hard-boil eggs in food colouring, then decorate; marbling paper and making the two halves of the egg move apart with a split pin; Easter egg baskets, with woven paper; etc.</td>
<td>Talk about how the empty eggs are like the empty tomb, reminding Christians that Jesus came back to life.</td>
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**Plenary:**
Share what pupils have made and talk about how different aspects of Easter celebrations remind us of the Easter story.

What special events and festivals do you celebrate in your family?
Why do you celebrate these special events and festivals?
What special things do you do to celebrate?

Play some Easter music, e.g. Easter hymns or songs and ask the pupils to think about and remember all their learning about the festival of Easter.
Ask them to share their reflections with the rest of the class to the question of this teaching unit: ‘What is so special about Easter? ’

**Sensitivities:**
Please be aware of children with allergies or other food issues when making Easter food.

*Please be aware that people of other faiths do not believe that Jesus rose from the dead, so be sensitive when decorating cards with verses such as ‘He is Risen’.**