

Natur**E**xplorers
Educational Journeys into God's Creation

Nature Study Through the Holidays

*A Mini Book of
Nature Studies
for Easter*

By Cindy West and Melissa Leach

Celebrating Easter

Easter is undoubtedly the most holy of celebrations for us as Christians. It's the time we set aside to remember the ultimate sacrifice Jesus made for us on the cross. The time we praise Him above all names for becoming our Savior. The time we stand in exuberance that He has overcome death and sin for all of us.

Easter is a time of great joy, yet brings to mind a sadness that Jesus had to be tortured and slain for our sins. Praise God that He was willing to do this for us and we can stand before Him with the blood of our Savior covering our sins! While we want to humbly remember His pain and crucifixion, we also want to stand amazed in His presence with full thankfulness and everlasting joy.

It's no coincidence that we celebrate Easter in the spring of the year, with new life and fresh beginnings all around us. And what a perfect time for nature study. As we focus on Jesus' story and marvel at the new life of creation surrounding us, we're almost instinctively drawn to Him.

Savor the story of Jesus' death, burial and resurrection this season. Know that He will fill your heart, mind and soul with His sweet presence as you focus on His Word. And appreciate the new life of His creation as you consider the new life Easter brings for all of us.



Bible Time

The story of Easter typically begins with Palm Sunday, which is the beginning of Jesus' final week on earth. On Palm Sunday, He rode into Jerusalem on a donkey and was received as royalty. Throughout the week, He spent time teaching, rebuking, preparing for the Passover feast and making enemies. By the Passover on Thursday, He went from being accepted as royalty to being arrested and put on trial for blasphemy. By Friday, He would be slain and buried, only to victoriously rise again by Sunday.

We hope you will go through all these very important events of Jesus' final week in your studies. We've included the Bible references from each of the four gospels beginning with the triumphant entry on Palm Sunday through Jesus' resurrection. For older children, you may want to choose one or more of the gospels and go through the entire text over the course of your study. For younger children, we've included a thorough, but abbreviated version of the highlights.

The entire text from each gospel beginning with the triumphant entry through the resurrection:
Matthew 21-28

Mark 11-16
Luke 22-24
John 12-21

A thorough, but abbreviated look at the Easter story:

Luke 19:28-44 The Triumphant Entry
Matthew 26:17-55 The Last Supper and Arrest
Matthew 27:27-54 The Crucifixion
Matthew 27:62-28:15 The Resurrection

Lift Your Voices!

Take time during your study to sing your praises to the Lord! You can easily find lyrics and music to these hymns and contemporary songs online.



Arise, My Love
Because He Lives
Celebrate, Jesus, Celebrate
Christ Arose
Christ the Lord is Risen Today
Crown Him With Many Crowns
He Lives
I Will Rise
Up From the Grave He Arose
Were You There?

Find Him in Creation!

Just as Easter is a time when death springs forth into life, so too is the season of spring! To help you make Bible and nature connections with your children, we have organized the nature ideas to go along with the high points of the Easter story.

Palm Sunday
Sweet Fragrances
The Passover
Mount of Olives
Black Friday
Burial
Resurrection
Traditional Easter Symbols



Our hope is that you will read a selection from the Bible referenced on the previous page, then get outside to find sweet signs of the Author. At the end of the idea sections, you'll find notebooking pages that go along with some of the activities.

Since it is spring, there will be a few references to things that might be associated with the worldly view of Easter, such as eggs. We assure you, however, that our intent is to keep you focused on the One who made all these wonders! It would be a shame to ignore signs of spring in this study because they are a huge part of the new life God brings forth in His creation during this glorious time of year.

*E is for Easter, coming soon,
A is for angels, near the tomb,
S is for stone which was rolled away,
T is for tomb, found empty that day,
E is for early morning, the women are glad,
R is for the Risen Lord, no reason to be sad.*

Author Unknown

Sweet Fragrances

Just a few short days before the Passover Feast and arrest of Jesus, Mary poured a very expensive bottle of perfume over Jesus' feet and head as a love offering. A wonderfully sweet fragrance filled the room. She was scolded by some of the disciples for wasting the expensive perfume, but Jesus defended her telling them that her act of selfless love was not only beautiful, but a preparation for His burial as well.



Book to Read

The Reason for a Flower
by Ruth Heller



- Go on a fragrance walk. Since flowers are often blooming wildly this time of year, finding sweet smells shouldn't be hard. Not everything smells sweet, though! Use the notebooking page [A *Smell is in the Air*](#) to note the various smells you find.
- Does everything in nature have a smell? Try to find things that have fairly neutral smells. In other words, look for things that your sniffer can't detect very well and note them in your nature journal.
- Give your nose and brain a challenge. Make a chart of descriptive words that you might use to describe nature smells. Some possibilities include words like "sweet", "bitter", "woody", "fresh", "mildewy", "dirt-like", and "perfume-like". As you take a nature walk, note which items fit into each category based on their smells. Add additional descriptive words to your chart if needed. Younger children might simply make tally marks each time they come to another item that fits into a particular category.
- Many perfumes use flower fragrances as their main scent. In ancient times, when Jesus was with us on earth, most perfumes came from fragrant flowers and other plants being crushed so that the plant's oils were released. These fragrant oils were mixed with other oils (that didn't have a smell) to make perfume. People would simply place the fragrant oil on their clothes or body as perfume. Find a few fragrant plants and experiment making your own perfume!
- Find something in nature worthy of offering as a gift to Jesus. God has been very creative in nature and offers us utterly stunning things to discover. During this walk, look especially for something beautiful that you've never noticed before. You don't literally have to bring the item back and turn it into an offering to God (although you could if you want.) Instead, take the time to offer Him a prayer of thanksgiving for His wonders.





A Smell is in the Air

Go on a fragrance walk to notice sweet and not-so-sweet smells in nature. In the chart below, make a simple sketch of each thing you find.

Sweet Smells	Not-So-Sweet Smells
sample	