

Easter Around the World

with Kate & Mack

Hi kids!

It's me, Kate, and my friend, Mack. Easter is just five weeks away, and we've been traveling to learn some of the different ways people celebrate this holiday. We're going to make quick stops in all parts of the world — Africa, Americas, Asia, Europe and the Pacific. We know you're busy with school and all the learning you have to do every day, so this should be a fun break for you.

When you think of Easter, what's the first thing that comes to mind? Maybe it's the Easter bunny, because you get baskets full of yummy candy. Or maybe it's dyeing Easter eggs with your family.

Hopefully you also think of the true reason that we celebrate Easter! After all, it doesn't really have anything to do with bunnies or candy. It's all about Jesus. In fact, Easter wouldn't even exist if it weren't for him!

Easter is really important because it's the time when we remember that Jesus chose to die for us. But why do we celebrate it? Doesn't it seem a little weird that we'd be happy about someone (and not just any someone) dying?

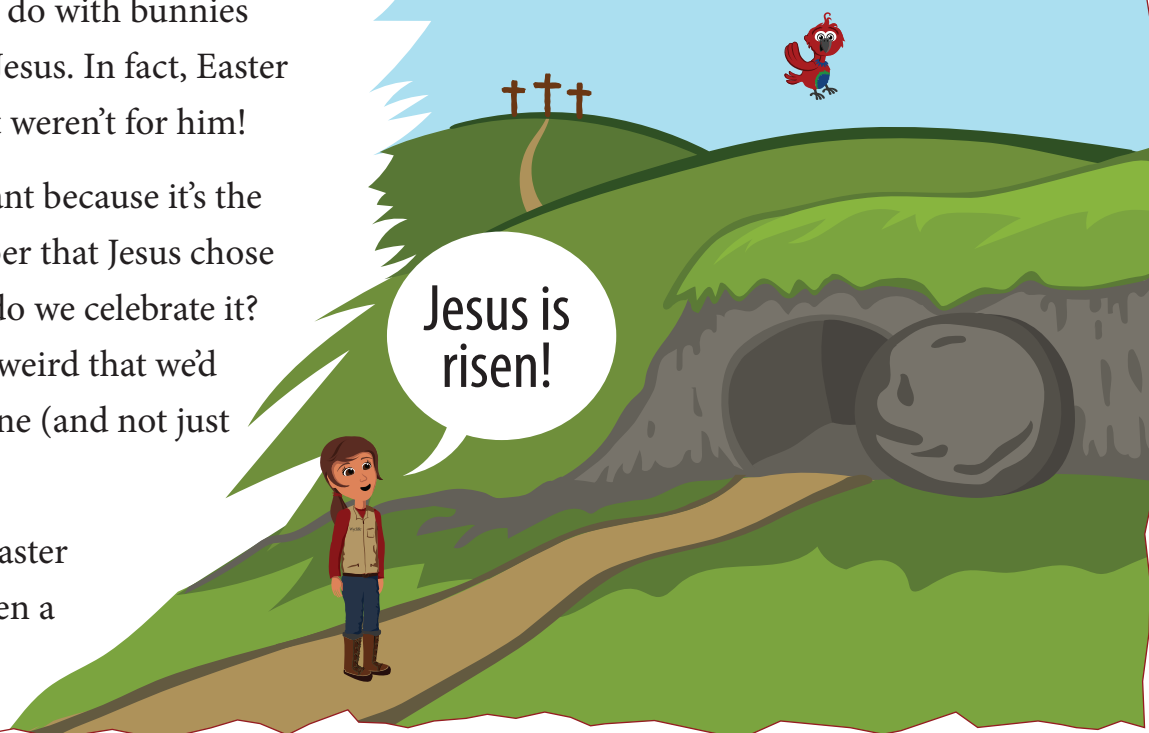
If you think about it, Easter weekend must have been a really sad time. For a

couple days, everyone mourned (that means they were super sad) that Jesus was dead. But then, three days later, Jesus rose from the dead! And that's why we can celebrate — because Jesus loved us so much that he died and rose again so that one day we can live with him in heaven! How amazing is that?

But you'll be able to read all about that over the next few weeks with your family. After all, it's really important that we understand why Jesus died for us, and what he went through so that we can be forgiven of our sins. And there's no better time to talk about it a lot than around Easter, right?

So are you ready to travel the world with us?

Let's get started!



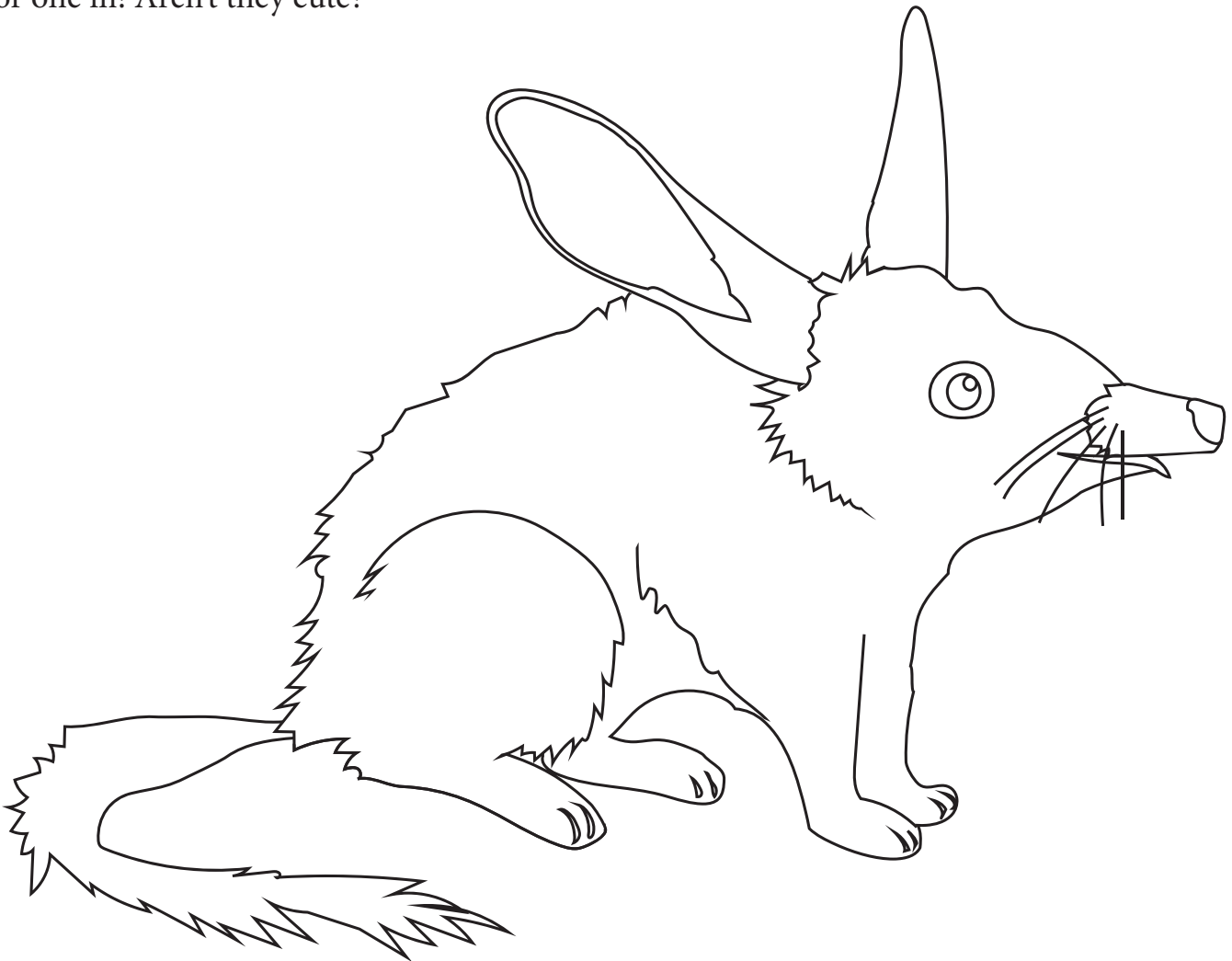
Week One – Pacific

Fun Facts:

- 🌐 Some Australians don't use a bunny for their Easter festivities because they think that they're pests and hurt the environment (probably by eating foods that they shouldn't!). Instead they might use an Australian animal called a bilby. It's pretty cute and has long soft ears, just like a bunny.
- 🌐 Easter happens during the fall in New Zealand, since the country is in the southern hemisphere (that's the bottom half of the globe). So even though leaves are falling from the trees, people still celebrate it with pictures of daffodils, baby chicks and rabbits.
- 🌐 Easter week is full of church activities in Vanuatu, including a sunrise service on Easter morning. Even the whole country says that Good Friday and Easter Monday are official holidays, and people don't have to go to work or school.

Color the Bilby

Remember how we learned that Australians don't use a bunny at Easter, but instead they use a bilby? Since you've probably never seen a bilby before, Mack and I thought it would be fun to color one in! Aren't they cute?



Let's read the Bible!

Get your whole family together to do this part! Over the next five weeks, we'll be reading about the last days before Jesus was crucified, and then we'll finish with reading about the resurrection! Remembering why we celebrate Easter is really important, and reading the Bible as a family is a perfect way to focus on Jesus.



Read: Matthew 21:1-11

When you're done reading these verses, talk with your parents and answer these questions:

1. If someone asked you for something, and told you it was for Jesus, would you give it to them right away? How would you feel if someone asked you to give your favorite toy to Jesus? Would you say yes?
2. What do you think it was like to be in the crowd that saw Jesus entering the town? Would you be shouting with them, "Praise God for the Son of David! Blessings on the one who comes in the name of the Lord! Praise God in highest heaven!"?
3. Imagine that you were one of Jesus' disciples. What do you think it would be like to follow him and see him do miracles and tell parables?
4. Pray together and thank God that he sent his only son, Jesus, to be our savior.

You can write
down your answers
to these questions
if you want!



Week Two – Africa

Fun facts:

- 🌍 Lots of Christians in Africa celebrate Easter. Churches like to decorate with cloths that are in the shape of butterflies, flowers, banana trees and more. How pretty! And lots of people attend church services to celebrate together.
- 🌍 Have you ever heard of the Easter Vigil? It's a church service to celebrate the resurrection of Jesus! Hundreds of people come together for this celebration. They sing songs and beat drums and women make high-pitched sounds called kigelegele.
- 🌍 In Ethiopia, Orthodox Christians celebrate Easter one or two weeks later than we do. It's called Fasika, and people fast from meat, milk and cheese for eight weeks before this special day (that means they don't eat those foods). Then on the night before Easter, Christians will have a church celebration that ends around 3 o'clock in the morning! After the service, people eat and celebrate that Christ is risen from the dead.
- 🌍 The day after Easter (sometimes called Easter Monday) has been turned into a holiday in South Africa that they call "Family Day." Some people might keep celebrating Easter for one more day, but many people also take it as a day to recover from all the Easter fun they had the week before!

Hot Cross Buns

These delicious buns are eaten in many countries all around the world, and South Africa is one of them! The cross is to remind people of Jesus. So when you're eating them, remember what Easter is all about — Jesus dying on the cross for our sins and rising from the dead!

You'll need your mom or dad to help you make these. They're a fun way to spend a Saturday morning or afternoon, aren't they, Mack?








Here's how you make them:

Ingredients


For the dough:

- 🌍 ¼ cup apple juice
- 🌍 ½ cup mixed dried fruit, cut in small pieces
- 🌍 ½ cup raisins
- 🌍 1 ¼ cup milk at room temperature
- 🌍 3 large eggs, 1 separated
- 🌍 6 tablespoons butter at room temperature
- 🌍 2 teaspoons instant yeast







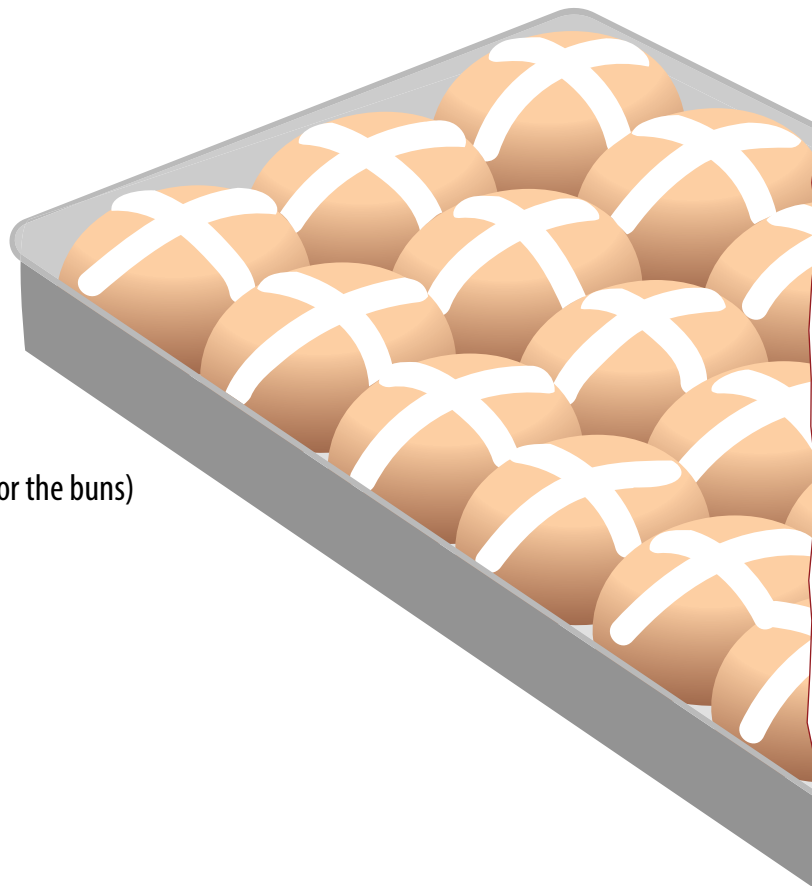
-  ¼ cup brown sugar packed firmly
-  1 teaspoon ground cinnamon
-  ¼ teaspoon ground cloves or allspice
-  ¼ teaspoon ground nutmeg
-  1 ¾ teaspoon salt
-  1 tablespoon baking powder
-  4 ½ cups unbleached all-purpose flour

For the topping:

-  1 large egg white (saved from one of the three eggs for the buns)
-  1 tablespoon milk

For the icing:

-  1 cup + 2 tablespoons powdered sugar
-  ½ teaspoon vanilla extract
-  Pinch of salt
-  4 teaspoons milk



Directions

1. Grease a 9 x 13 (or square) baking pan and set aside.
2. Mix the apple juice with the dried fruit and raisins. Cover with plastic wrap and microwave for a few seconds until the fruit and liquid are warm and the plastic starts to “shrink” itself over the top of the bowl.
3. Take out of the microwave and set aside to cool to room temperature.
4. When the fruit is cool, mix together all of the dough ingredients (except the fruit) and knead together. You can use an electric mixer or a bread machine, if you have it! Knead the dough until it is soft and elastic (that means stretchy).
5. Now mix in the fruit.
6. Cover the dough with a towel and let it rise for 1 hour. It should look puffy when the hour is over.
7. Divide the dough into balls that fit nicely in the palm of your hand. You’ll be able to make around 12 to 14 buns of this size. Grease your hands a bit so you can roll them into balls.
8. Put the balls on the greased pan.
9. Cover the pan, and let the buns rise for another hour. (Or until they’re puffed up and touching each other).
10. While the dough is rising this time, preheat the oven to 375°F.
11. Whisk together the egg white and milk, and brush it over the top of the buns.
12. Bake the buns for 20 minutes, until they’re nice and golden brown. Take them out of the oven and put them on a rack to cool.
13. Mix together the ingredients for the icing. When the buns are all cool, you can either put the icing in a special icing bag, or even a sandwich bag (if you do that, cut off the tip of a bottom corner). Now draw crosses on top of each bun.

When the icing has dried a bit, you can eat them. They sure are delicious!

Let's read the Bible!

Read: Matthew 26:1-30

Last week we read about Jesus' triumphant (that means big and joyful) arrival at Jerusalem. We're going to continue reading about the days after Palm Sunday, and today we'll talk about Jesus' Last Supper with his disciples.

1. When Jesus told his disciples that he was going to be crucified, do you think he was scared?
2. Do you think that the disciples believed Jesus would be killed? Do you think they knew that it would be soon?
3. Next time you take communion (if your mom and dad say that you're old enough), think about the Last Supper and thank Jesus for dying on the cross for our sins.

You can write
down your answers
to these questions
if you want!



Week Three – Asia

Fun facts:

- 🌐 In the Philippines, little girls dress up as angels for Easter and join a bunch of people who walk through the streets early in the morning. This early walk is called a procession. There are two of them — the men are in one procession, and they follow an image of Jesus risen from the dead. The women make up another procession, and they follow Jesus' mother, Mary, who's wearing a black veil. The two groups meet at the church, and this is like Jesus comforting Mary after he rose from the dead! Then the little angels take off Mary's veil (called a *lambong*) and people start to celebrate!
- 🌐 Even though only around three percent of people in India are Christians, lots of people celebrate Easter as a spring festival. In fact, Good Friday is a public holiday! It starts with Lent (40 days before Easter) and ends on Easter Sunday. Christians attend church services to ask forgiveness for their sins. For people who don't believe in Jesus, Easter eggs and bunnies are what makes this holiday fun for them. Lots of candy is sold during Easter! People also give chocolate cakes, flowers and colorful lanterns as gifts to people.

Time to decorate eggs!

Eggs are decorated all around the world — for Easter, and sometimes just for fun! Some cultures decorate their eggs with a lot of tiny details, drawing or painting the egg by hand. And of course we know that here in America we often like to dye our eggs lots of pretty colors.

This year, try decorating at least one egg in a brand new way. Maybe you'll make a pretty design on it with markers, or make it look like Chinese tea eggs (they crack the shell a bit before soaking the egg, so that the actual egg has some pretty colors on it too). If you want more ideas, you can look them up on the Internet. It would take me and Mack a loooooong time to show you all the pretty eggs. There sure are a lot out there!



Let's read the Bible!

Read: Matthew 26:31-75

So far we've read all the way up to when Jesus and his disciples had the Last Supper. But there's still so much we have to cover! You'll see that the weekly Bible reading is getting a bit longer, because there's a lot of details that happened in the last few days of Jesus' life. But all of it is really important to us, isn't it? It tells us just how much Jesus loved us — he was willing to die for us, even though he didn't deserve it!

1. When Jesus is in Gethsemane, we get a glimpse of how hard it was for him to think about dying. He even asked God to not let it happen, if it was God's will! But when the crowd came to get Jesus, what did he do?
2. What did one of Jesus' disciples do to defend him? And what did Jesus say in response? (Hint: think lots of angels)
3. If you were Peter, how would you feel when the rooster crowed and you remembered that Jesus had said you would betray him three times?
4. Pray together and thank God that we can always confess our sins to him and ask for forgiveness, even if we deny him like Peter did. And just like Jesus forgave Peter, God will forgive us!





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Wycliffe

Week Four – Europe

Fun facts:

-  For over 40 years, people in Germany have decorated a tree for Easter, just like many people do for Christmas. They hang around 10,000 Easter eggs from the branches of a special apple tree!
-  Egg tapping competitions are popular on Easter Sunday in Latvia. It's a really fun game, and there's only one rule: You have one hard-boiled egg that you use to tap against other people's hard-boiled eggs, but don't let yours get cracked by the tapping, or else you're out!
-  In Norway, Easter is a time where crime books and mystery TV shows get extra popular! In fact, publishers have come out with special "Easter Thrillers" known as *paaskekrimmen*. Families gather together over Easter weekend to enjoy these mysteries. On the Monday after Easter, all the mysteries are solved!
-  On Easter Monday, people in one French town cook a giiiaaant omelet. They use more than 4,500 eggs to make the omelet, and it can feed up to 1,000 people! Tradition says that Napoleon and his army were traveling through the south of France one day and stopped in a small town. They ate omelets there, and Napoleon liked them so much that he ordered the townspeople to gather their eggs and make a giant omelet for his army the next day.

Mack's Mystery

Remember how mysteries are popular in Norway around Easter? Well we have a mystery that we can't solve without you! So put on your detective hat and bust out the magnifying glass, because we need your brain power.

First read Mack's story so you can hear what happened. Then help decode the answer to the mystery.

Are you ready? It's mystery time!

Mack and the Mystery of the Missing Man

The sun was just beginning to shine, and the birds were waking up so they could sing their morning greetings to the world. One of them was Mack, a macaw from Mexico who was on vacation to visit his friends on the other side of the world.

Stretching his wings and shaking out his feathers, Mack looked down from the branch he'd been resting on and saw a group of women walking on the road below him. They looked rather sad, he thought. But who wouldn't be sad, waking up really early in the morning? (Early mornings aren't Mack's favorite time of day.)

Suddenly the branch Mack was sitting on started to shake — really hard! It felt like someone was

trying to make him fall out of the tree. Mack wrapped his feet around the branch and squeezed his eyes shut, trying to hold on with all his might. Then he heard a loud rumbling sound, like a giant rolling a huge bowling ball!

Finally the branch stopped shaking and everything got quiet again. Mack peeked his eyes open, afraid of what he might see. He noticed a very bright light far away — so bright he couldn't keep looking at it.

"Squaaaaaw?" cried Mack (in bird speak that means "What's going on?"). A few minutes later, the same women he'd seen earlier came running by him, talking to each other as they ran.

It was hard to understand what they were saying, but Mack heard a few words, like "man," and "gone," and "dead." What could this mean?

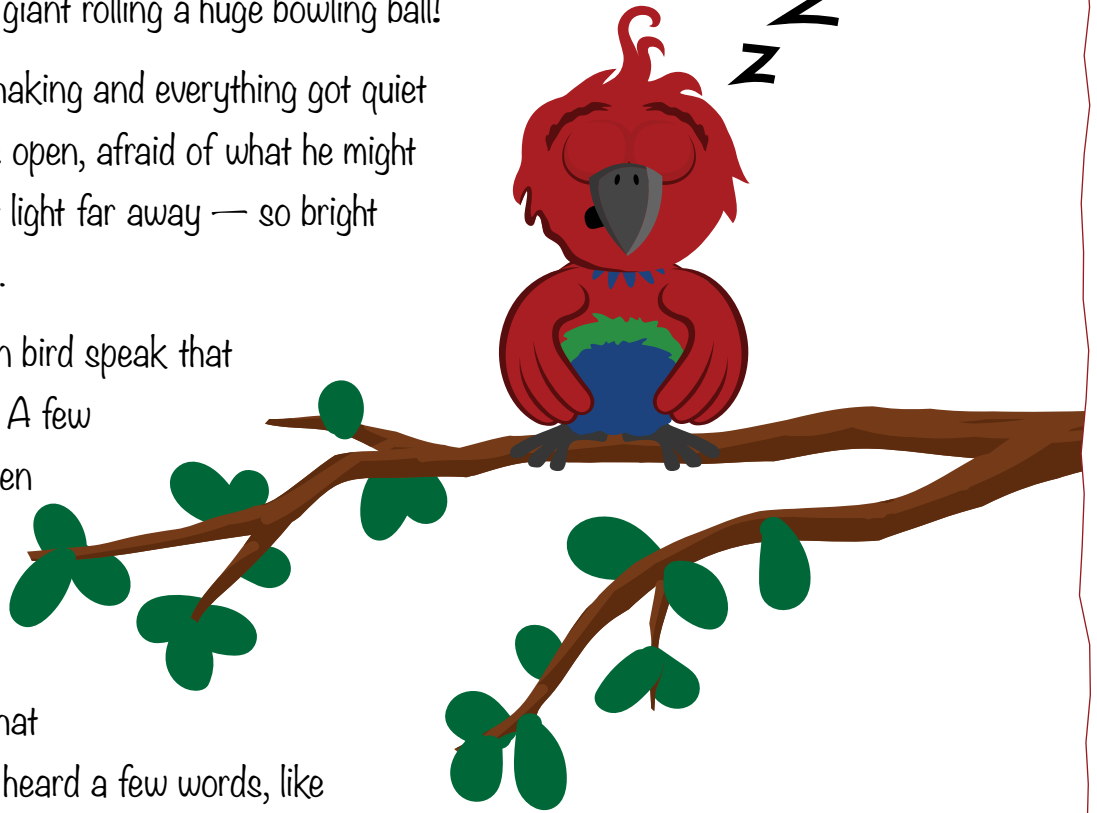
Mack decided to investigate. He flew to the spot where the bright light had come from. When he got there, he saw what had made the great big sound he'd heard. It had been a giant rolling something away, but it wasn't a bowling ball. It was a big stone.

Getting closer, Mack saw that the stone had once covered a cave. It was like a room made out of the rocks, and big enough to put a lot of cool things in there! But all Mack saw inside was something that looked like folded cloth.

What could all this mean? The clues Mack had were: an earthquake, a giant rumbling sound (that must have moved the giant stone away from the cave), a bright light, a group of sad women who'd come back saying things about a man who was gone and maybe even dead, an empty cave, and some cloth.

None of it really made sense, but it had to all fit together, right? Mack knew he had the pieces of the puzzle — he just didn't know how to put them together.



























Only you can help Mack solve the mystery of the missing man!



Decode the answer to close the case!

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Let's read the Bible!

Read: John 18:28-40; 19:1-42

Last week we read a lot about when Jesus was betrayed, and today we're going to read about Jesus' crucifixion. It's a hard thing to read, but it's really important that we understand what Jesus went through. Everything he did was because he loves us so much and wants us to live with him forever.

1. Pilate wanted to let Jesus go because he wasn't guilty. But he let the people decide if they wanted Jesus or Barabbas to be free. Have you ever thought that we're just like Barabbas? We were let go from the punishment that we deserved (death and separation from God), and Jesus paid the price in our place.
2. Go and read Matthew 27:45-56. It gives some more information about Jesus' last moments on the cross. What was in these verses that we didn't read in the book of John?
3. Do you think it's important that Jesus died the day before the Passover Sabbath? Look up Genesis 11:4-5 (this was the very first Passover). What do Jesus' death and the Passover have in common?
4. Pray with your family and thank God for loving us enough to send his one and only Son, Jesus, to die on the cross for our sins. All we have to do is accept that gift, and we can live with God in heaven one day. That's an amazing act of love!

You can write
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to these questions
if you want!



Week Five – Americas

Fun facts:

- 🌐 In Bermuda, people like to fly kites on Good Friday. The tradition started one year when a teacher wanted to help his students learn about Jesus returning to heaven. So he took a kite decorated with Jesus' face on it, and let it soar into the sky. It was like Jesus ascending (that means going up) to heaven.
- 🌐 At the White House (where the president of our country lives), there's an annual "Easter Egg Roll" on the front lawn. They've had this event every year for over 130 years! Kids use big serving spoons to roll colored hard-boiled eggs across the grass. Sounds like fun!
- 🌐 Easter is the second-best-selling candy holiday in America. There are over 16 billion jelly beans made in the U.S. each year for Easter. That's enough to fill a giant egg that's 89 feet tall and 60 feet wide!

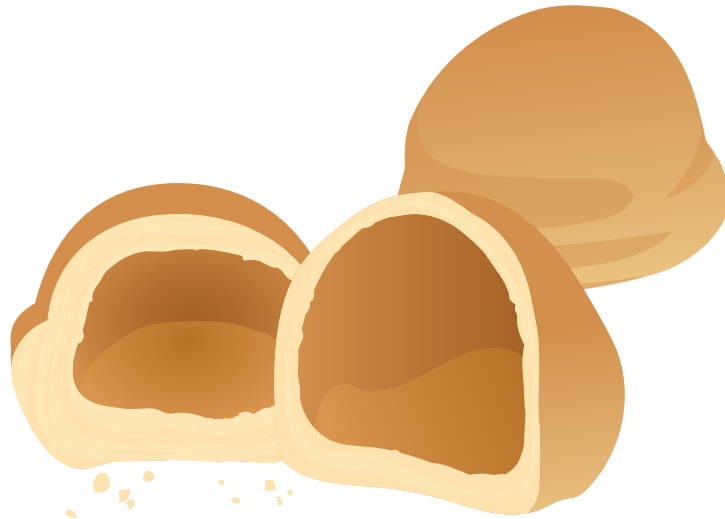
Resurrection Rolls

Can you imagine what it was like for Mary and the other women to find Jesus' tomb empty on Easter Sunday? Well, today you can get a little glimpse of how exciting it must have been! We're going to make "Resurrection Rolls" (though some people call them "Empty Tomb Rolls"), which remind us that Jesus rose from the grave. Plus, they're super delicious!

Here's how you make them:

Ingredients

- 🌐 One can of store-bought crescent rolls or biscuits
- 🌐 Marshmallows
- 🌐 Butter
- 🌐 Cinnamon sugar



1. Open the can of rolls or biscuits and separate them.
2. Melt a tablespoon of butter.
3. Roll a marshmallow in the butter and then in a small bowl of cinnamon sugar so that it gets nicely covered.
4. Now put the marshmallow in the middle of the roll or biscuit.
5. Wrap the marshmallow up and pinch the biscuit closed. It's like a tomb!
6. Bake for 7-10 minutes at whatever heat the container for the rolls or biscuits say.



Once they're cool you can tear the roll open. Even though they used to be filled with a marshmallow, they're now empty! These rolls are so yummy, and the cool thing is that they can really remind us of Jesus' burial and resurrection. After all, Jesus was wrapped in linen (like the dough) and spices (like the cinnamon sugar) and put in the grave. But on the third day, he rose from the dead, and now the tomb is empty forever. Thank you, Jesus!

Let's read the Bible!

Read: Matthew 28:1-20; John 20:1-31

The last four weeks we've read a lot about Jesus — the Last Supper, his betrayal, all the trials he went through, his crucifixion and then his burial. But now we're getting to the most beautiful moment of all — the morning he rose from the dead!

1. If you were one of the women who saw the angel and heard that Jesus had risen from the dead, what would you do? Would you start crying, or maybe even laughing? Would you run as fast as you could to tell everyone else?
2. Both Matthew and John tell about Jesus' resurrection with different details. What do you like about each of their stories?
3. Maybe you've heard Thomas called "Doubting Thomas" before. But if you were Thomas, would you have acted any differently? Maybe we should call him "Realistic Thomas," because he wanted to see for himself that Jesus had risen from the dead! Would you have wanted the same?
4. As Christians today, we haven't seen Jesus in person. But we do get to see his fingerprints all over our lives. It's like he's leaving us clues that he's with us, even if we can't see him! What are some ways you've seen Jesus work in your life? Maybe your mom or dad will have a good example to get you started.
5. Pray as a family and thank God for the wonderful gift of his Son, Jesus. Then talk about what you can do as a family to tell people you know about how much God loves them, just like Jesus told us to in Matthew 28:19-20.

Well kids,

Mack and I hope you've had fun with us this Easter. It's always wonderful to remember the true reason we celebrate different holidays, and Easter is a really important one for Christians all around the world! After all, Easter is the whole reason we can talk to God whenever we want, because Jesus made it possible for us to do that. Thank you for dying on the cross for our sins, Jesus. We love you!

