

Spring Lessons That Teach About Christ

Since we spend Easter week (Palm Sunday – Easter Sunday) celebrating Easter without much leeway for additional activities or lessons, I taught these ten “extra” lessons in the weeks leading up to Easter week. I didn’t do a lesson every day (or in the order listed), but inserted them into our schedule when they fit. We did most of the crafts right after school, and taught the lesson during family scripture study time in the evening.

Introduction

From “Easter and Signs of Spring” by Jennifer Edwards, April 1997 *Friend*:

Long ago, Jesus Christ lived on earth. He taught people how to live righteously, He healed the sick and did many more miracles to help people, and He showed us with His own life how we should live. Then He suffered for our sins, died on a cross, and was resurrected—all so that we might live with Him and Heavenly Father and our own families if we, too, are righteous.

Easter is the time of year when we especially remember what Jesus Christ did for us. It is in spring, a time when leaves and flowers begin to grow. It is when some animals wake up from their winter naps. It is when fuzzy caterpillars sleeping in their cocoons come forth as beautiful butterflies.

Fragrant blossoms cover trees, and grass begins to grow green again. Buzzing bees start working busily to make honey.

Lambs and bunnies and other baby animals are often born in the spring.

Brown, wrinkled bulbs that were buried deep send forth green shoots that grow tall and have colorful flowers. The Easter lily blooms at this special time of year and reminds us that the Savior was “buried” in a tomb and came out of it resurrected and will never die again.

“Jesus said . . . , I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live.” * That means that because Jesus Christ died for us, and was resurrected, we will all be resurrected, too, after we die, and will then live forever. And if we have faith in Him and obey His commandments, we can live with Him and Heavenly Father then.

Ideas for Spring Pre-Easter Activities

- Throughout the week, you could slowly assemble an Easter basket filled with symbols: lily, lamb, sun, eggs, bread, 3 gardens: flowers (Eden), olive branch (Gethsemane), white flowers (Garden Tomb), butterfly, grass, glasses (seeing clearly), candle (light of world), baby animals (new life), then symbols from Easter week, if desired (palm branch, donkey, temple, lamp (10 virgins), sacrament cup, olive or something red, silver coins, rope, rooster, soap, red cloth, nails, cross, dice, sponge, rocks, white cloth, 3 black balls, tomb, spices, soldier, glove, empty egg
- “Discover The Joy of Easter”: Write journal entries “reasons you love Jesus” (p.18) or “How do you feel about Jesus’ sacrifice for you?” (p.28), “What can you do to show Jesus that you love him? (p.63); Easter Bingo 106-109
- Memorize scripture verses: John 3:16 “For God so loved the world...”, Luke 24:5-6 “...He is not here, but is risen!”, John 11:25-26 “I am the resurrection, and the life...”, John 20:29, “...blessed are they that have not seen...”, 1 Cor. 15:22 “For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ...”, D&C 76:22 “...this is the testimony, last of all...”, Mosiah 16:8 “...the grave hath no victory, and the sting of death is swallowed up in Christ...”
- Make time to serve others as Jesus would.

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Easter Lilies



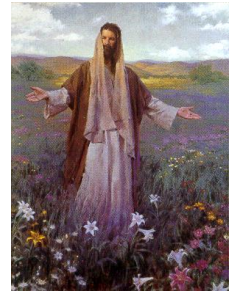
Pictures: Lilies in a Field, Resurrected Christ by tomb, Moroni with Trumpet

Teaching Aids: bulbs, faux lilies

Teach: Lilies are Easter flowers because they teach us about Christ. There are three ways in which lilies remind us of Him.

1. Consider the lilies of the field – Faith in Christ

While Jesus lived on the earth, he taught, through the imagery of lilies, about having faith in Him: “And why take ye thought for raiment? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they toil not, neither do they spin: ... Wherefore, if God so clothe the grass of the field, which to day is, and to morrow is cast into the oven, shall he not much more clothe you, O ye of little faith? Therefore take no thought, saying, What shall we eat? Or, What shall we drink? Or, Wherewithal shall we be clothed? ... for your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things. But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you” Matthew 6:28, 30-33.



When we see the lilies, we can remember that Heavenly Father and Jesus Christ know us, and they know our needs. When we have faith in Jesus Christ, He will provide for us in all that we need.

2. Bulbs to Blooms – Burial and Resurrection

Lilies are flowers that grow from bulbs. Bulbs stay buried in the ground all winter, and in spring blossom forth with beautiful life. Jesus was buried in a tomb for three days, and then came forth in a perfect form, having immortal life. Lilies remind us of this miracle and symbolize the hope we have of everlasting life through the resurrection of Jesus Christ. Jesus said, “I am the resurrection and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live.” Jesus Christ rose from the dead, and provided a way for all of us to rise again after we die.



2. Trumpet Ushers in the Second Coming of Christ

Lilies are shaped like what instrument? (trumpets) “In the scriptures, trumpets are used to sound warnings, proclaim news, and herald visitors. Moroni holds a horn to his lips with his right hand, symbolizing both the spreading of the gospel throughout the world and the long-anticipated Second Coming of the Savior, which will be announced by trumpet-blowing angels” (“Looking Up to Moroni” by Wendy Kenney, November 2009 *New Era*).

Matthew 24:31 “And he shall send his angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they shall gather together his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other.”

Joel 2:1 “Blow ye the trumpet in Zion, and sound an alarm in my holy mountain: let all the inhabitants of the land tremble: for the day of the Lord cometh, for it is nigh at hand.”

The trumpet shape of the lily reminds us that trumpets will herald (announce) the second coming of Christ.

Craft: Make handprint Easter lilies (<http://www.artistshelpingchildren.org/eastercrafts-03-handprintliliescraftforkids.html>).

Supplies: white paper, yellow and green pipe cleaners, clear tape, scissors

Directions: Trace hands on white paper. Cut out as many as you want for the lily blooms. Roll the handprint vertically to form a funnel shape. Secure the side with clear tape. Roll each finger down to form the curls of each bloom. Cut yellow pipe cleaner ~3” (1 for each bloom). Loosely curve the yellow piece to form a U shape. Wrap the top of a green pipe cleaner at the bottom of the U. Curl the ends of the yellow cleaner to form the center of the bloom. Insert the completed green stem into the center of the bloom and pull through. Display the lilies in a vase or wrap with a ribbon.

Variation: Make a small, felt version of this craft to wear on Easter Sunday. Idea and photo from: <http://wildolive.blogspot.com/2011/04/make-handprint-easter-lily-brooch.html>



Extras:

Read *The Parable of the Lily*, by Liz Curtis Higgs

Poem

Easter morn with lilies fair
Fills the church with perfumes rare,
As their clouds of incense rise,
Sweetest offerings to the skies.
Stately lilies pure and white
Flooding darkness with their light,
Bloom and sorrow drifts away,
On this holy hallow'd day.
Easter Lilies bending low
in the golden afterglow,
Bear a message from the sod
To the heavenly towers of God.
-Louise Lewin Matthews



Lambs

Jesus is the Good Shepherd. We are His lambs.

Pictures: Jesus with a lamb

Teaching Aids: plush lamb(s), video clip “NT Customs—Shepherd and Sheepfold” from LDS Media Library – NT Presentations

Teach: Lambs are often born in Spring. There are many ways in which lambs remind us of Jesus Christ.

1. Jesus is known as the Good Shepherd. We are like His sheep.

From “By These Names” Dorothy Leon, April 1996 *Liahona*:

When the Savior lived on earth, shepherding was a common occupation. There were three kinds of people who became shepherds. One kind of person became a shepherd because his father was one; his father taught him as he grew up.

A second kind of person became a shepherd because he loved sheep and *wanted* to learn how to be a shepherd. While he worked and learned, he received food and a place to sleep and was sometimes paid with a gift of a sheep or two.

The third kind of person became a shepherd solely for the money. This kind of shepherd was known as a hireling shepherd. When his day’s work was done, he went home. If during his working hours there was danger, he fled in fear of his own safety, leaving the sheep alone and without a leader.

The first two kinds of shepherds were called good shepherds because they never left their sheep alone, even when their own lives were at risk. They guided the sheep along rocky paths and walked in front of the sheep to make certain the paths were safe. They led the sheep to green pastures, where they could feed. Jesus was that kind of shepherd—a Good Shepherd—to all mankind. He gave his life for us, and if we follow him, he will lead us to eternal life.”

Watch: “New Testament Customs—Shepherd and Sheepfold” from the LDS Media Library – New Testament Presentations (1:20)

Read: John 10: 1-18

As you read this parable, have the children pretend to be sheep and Dad act the part of the shepherd.

“Verily, verily, I say unto you, he that entereth not by the door into the sheepfold, but climbeth up some other way, the same is a thief and a robber. But he that entereth in by the door is the shepherd of the sheep. To him the porter [gatekeeper] openeth; and the sheep hear his voice: and **he calleth his own sheep by name, and leadeth them out.** And when he putteth forth his own sheep, **he goeth before them, and the sheep follow him: for they know his voice.** And a stranger will they not follow, but will flee from him: for they know not the voice of strangers. . . . Then said Jesus unto them again, Verily, verily, I say unto you, **I am the door of the sheep.** All that ever came before me are thieves and robbers: but the sheep did not hear them. I am the door: **by me if any man enter in, he shall be saved, and shall go in and out, and find pasture.** The thief cometh not, but for to steal, and to kill, and to destroy: **I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly. I am the good shepherd: the good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep.** But he that is an hireling, and not the shepherd, whose own the sheep are not, seeth the wolf coming, and leaveth the sheep, and fleeth: and the wolf catcheth them, and scattereth the sheep. The hireling fleeth, because he is an hireling, and careth not for the sheep. **I am the good shepherd, and know my sheep, and am known of mine.** As the Father knoweth me, even so know I the Father: and **I lay down my life for the sheep.** And other sheep I have, which are not of this fold: them also I must bring, and they shall hear my voice; and there shall be one fold, and

one shepherd. Therefore doth my Father love me, because **I lay down my life, that I might take it again. No man taketh it from me, but I lay it down of myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again.** This commandment have I received of my Father.”

Read: Alma 5:38, 60 “Behold, I say unto you, that the good shepherd doth call you; yea, and in his own name he doth call you, which is the name of Christ; and if ye will not hearken unto the voice of the good shepherd, to the name by which ye are called, behold, ye are not the sheep of the good shepherd. And now I say unto you that the good shepherd doth call after you; and if you will hearken unto his voice he will bring you into his fold, and ye are his sheep; and he commandeth you that ye suffer no ravenous wolf to enter among you, that ye may not be destroyed.

Read: Luke 15: 1-7 “Then drew near unto him all the publicans and sinners for to hear him. And the Pharisees and scribes murmured, saying, This man receiveth sinners, and eateth with them. And he spake this parable unto them, saying, What man of you, having an hundred sheep, if he lose one of them, doth not leave the ninety and nine in the wilderness, and go after that which is lost, until he find it? And when he hath found *it*, he layeth *it* on his shoulders, rejoicing. And when he cometh home, he calleth together *his* friends and neighbours, saying unto them, Rejoice with me; for I have found my sheep which was lost. I say unto you, that likewise joy shall be in heaven over one sinner that repenteth, more than over ninety and nine just persons, which need no repentance.”

We are like lambs. Jesus is the shepherd who loves us and watches over us. When we sin (or get “lost”), he seeks after us and rejoices when we repent and come back to Him.

2. Jesus Christ is the Lamb of God

“The feast of the Passover was instituted to help the children of Israel remember when the destroying angel passed over their houses and delivered them from the Egyptians. The unblemished lambs, whose blood was used as a sign to save Israel anciently, are a symbol of Jesus Christ, the Lamb of God, whose sacrifice redeemed all mankind” (*The Guide to the Scriptures – Passover*).

“Jesus is known as the Lamb of God because He was Heavenly Father’s perfect offering for our sins. He had no faults or blemishes. He had a pure heart – he was innocent, gentle, kind, and humble, and he did no harm to anyone. He was without sin” (“By These Names” Dorothy Leon, April 1996 *Liahona*).

For Older Children:

From “Whom Say Ye That I Am?” Jeffrey R. Holland, Sep. 1974 *Ensign*:

“I Am the Good Shepherd. If in times of trial we wander, we need someone wise and concerned to give aid. To those, Jesus said he was the Good Shepherd, one who would leave the ninety and nine safely enfolded to rescue the lamb that is lost. And this shepherd is not a hireling, one who trembles at the sound of a wolf and flees at the sight of thieves. Ownership of the flock makes a great deal of difference and this watchman will protect at the very cost of his life. “I ... know my sheep,” he promised, “... and I lay down my life for the sheep.” (John 10:14–15.) Safely returned, we again graze along, not knowing what the loss of our life might have been like. With staff in hand, Christ must often muse lovingly over such youthful artlessness. “Verily, verily, I say unto you, ye are little children, and ye have not as yet understood how great blessings the Father hath in his own hands and prepared for you; And ye cannot bear all things now; nevertheless, be of good cheer, for I will lead you along. The kingdom is yours and the blessings thereof are yours, and the riches of eternity are yours.” (D&C 78:17–18.) *I am the Good Shepherd”*

I Am the Lamb of God. Of course, by paradox, this Shepherd was also a lamb—the Lamb of God. From Adam to the atonement of Christ, men were commanded to offer the firstlings of their flocks, that purest lamb without spot or blemish, as a similitude of the sacrifice that God the Father would make of his Firstborn, his Only Begotten Son who lived with perfection in the midst of imperfection. As they met for the Passover meal to

commemorate the preservation of the firstborn of their fathers, Jesus taught his disciples that the blood of the lamb was once again to save them from destruction. In the hours that then followed, Jesus offered both body and blood that all who would might come cleansed unto the Father, having washed white their robes in the blood of the Lamb. (See Luke 22:17–20; Ex. 12:2–10; Rev. 7:14.)

In some way that is to our minds incomprehensible and beyond the deepest appreciation of our hearts, Jesus Christ took upon himself the burden of men’s sins from Adam to the end of the world. Before he was born into this mortal world, it was prophesied of him, “He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth: he is brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he openeth not his mouth. “He was taken from prison and from judgment: and who shall declare his generation? for he was cut off out of the land of the living: for the transgression of my people was he stricken.” (Isa. 53:7–8.) *I am the Lamb of God.*”

Other:

Instead of bunnies, decorate with lambs – a symbol for Christ. Use lamb lollipop molds to make chocolate pops or butter molds in that shape. Give children a stuffed lamb in their baskets. Talk about how Jesus is the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world!



Craft: Make a lamb craft.

Lamb Craft 1: Wrapped Woolly Lamb

<http://www.daniellesplace.com/html/rpreschoolsamplelostsheep.html>



Supplies: black craft foam or vinyl, 3 yards of yarn, googly eye or white paint

Instructions: Print out sheep patterns from the website and use as templates to cut sheep shapes from black foam or vinyl. Wrap yarn around the sheep’s legs, body, neck and head. Stuff the end of the yarn under the layers of wound yarn. Glue on a small googly eye or use a small drop of white paint for the eye. (I used 2 lamb cutouts with a piece of cotton ball glued in-between the body and the heads glued together, wrapping the yarn in such a way that the lamb can stand on all fours.)



Lamb Craft 2: Lamb Place Card Holders

catholicmissionaryfamily.com/2011/04/easter-lamb-name-cards.html

Supplies: white card stock, colored cardstock, black construction paper, cotton balls, clothes pins, googly eyes, glue, scissors



Instructions: Cut out a sheep body and head from paper. Glue 4-6 cotton balls on sheep body. Leave a spot on the top left corner for the head. Glue the head to the corner of the body. Add googly eyes. Flip over sheep and glue two clothes pins on the back with the clipping side at the top. Cut out rectangles from the colored paper and put your guests’ names on them. Clip them to your sheep.

Lamb Craft 3: Handprint Lamb

<http://craftsbyamanda.com/2011/03/handprint-easter-lamb.html>

Supplies: 1 sheet pink construction paper, cotton balls, white craft or school glue, black acrylic paint, 1 small wiggly eye, black Sharpie marker, 6" piece of ribbon, paintbrush



Instructions: Write your child's name, age and the date on the back of the construction paper. Use paintbrush to cover the palm of child's hand with black paint. Immediately press child's hand onto the construction paper to create the handprint. While the paint on the paper is drying, wash off your child's hand with soap and water.

Show children how to glue cotton balls to the palm part of the handprint on the paper, overlapping the fingers a little bit. Glue a wiggly eye onto the thumb. Use a marker to draw an ear. Tie the ribbon into a bow and trim off any excess. Glue the bow onto "neck" area. Use the marker to write "Happy Easter" across the top of the project.

Lamb Craft 4: Butter Lamb (Polish Tradition)

Pictures with instructions: <http://www.eatingfromthegroundup.com/?p=2215>

Supplies: 2 sticks of cold butter, a little softened butter, knife, garlic press, toothpick, 2 whole cloves, garnishes

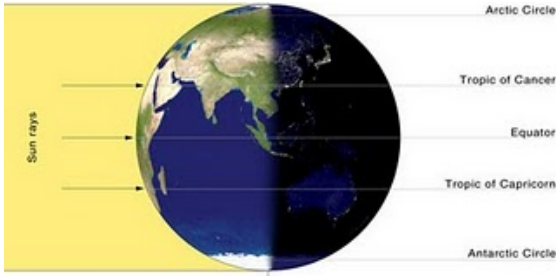
Instructions: Use a long butter stick for the body. Cut part of another stick for neck and head and attach to the lamb's body using softened butter. Shape body. Cut slices of unused butter stick to form nose, ears, folded legs and tail. Attach to lamb. Make the lamb's wool from remaining butter using a garlic press. Make the wool in batches. Starting at the top of the body and working down, attach the "wool" using a toothpick. When butter gets too soft, put the lamb and extra butter in the refrigerator for about 10 minutes. Insert cloves for eyes. Refrigerate until serving. Garnish plate with parsley, greens, pansies, etc.



The First Day of Spring – The Vernal Equinox

The sun teaches us about Christ.

Teach: Use a light and a globe to demonstrate the equinox.

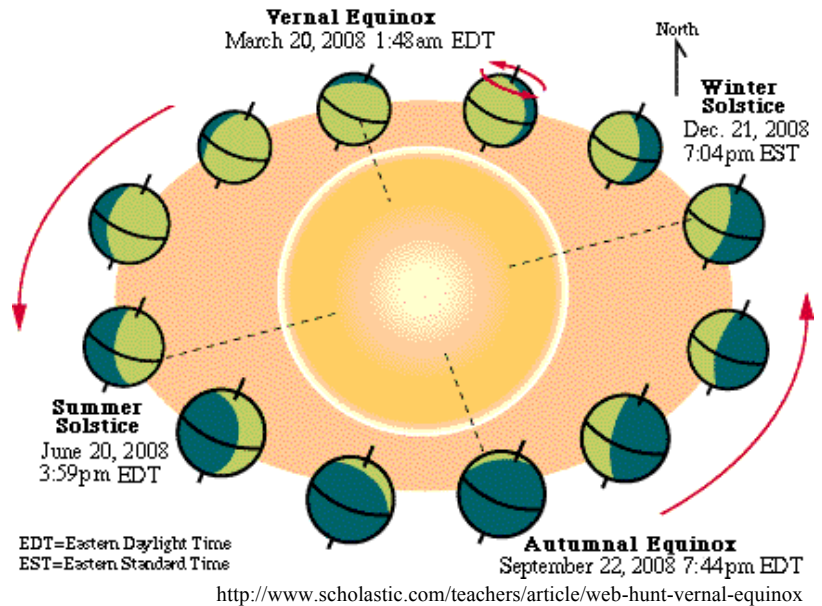


Today is the first day of spring! The first official day of spring comes on the Vernal Equinox. This is when the sun is directly above the equator, rising due east and setting due west. This happens every year between the 19th to the 23rd of March. (It changes because an astronomical year is not exactly 365 days every year.) The word *equinox* comes from the Latin words meaning “equal night.” The spring and fall equinoxes are the only

dates with equal daylight and darkness as the Sun crosses the celestial equator. The tilt of Earth is zero, and with no tilt, the North and South Poles are basically straight up and down.

Throughout the year, the earth is tilted on its axis, which allows different amounts of sunshine to reach different parts of the globe creating seasons. But on the two equinoxes, day and night are equal in length, 12 hours each.

Easter is celebrated on the first Sunday after the full moon following the Vernal/Spring Equinox. This can be any Sunday between March 22nd and April 25th.



Read: Read the book “A New Beginning – Celebrating the Spring Equinox” by Wendy Pfeffer.

Craft: Make your own sun. <http://mindfull-meanderings.blogspot.com/2010/05/thermocool-styrofoam-plate-sun.html>

Supplies: foam plate, scissors, sponge, acrylic colors - yellow & orange, black Sharpie, wide popsicle sticks, masking tape



Instructions: Get a white foam plate. Cut out triangles along the edges as shown or leave as is. Using a sponge, directly apply yellow at the center of the plate and allow to dry. Then apply orange along the edges. Draw eyes, nose & a mouth using a black Sharpie. Tape a popsicle stick on the back.



Teach (later if needed): use a ball or plush sun to represent the sun

Songs: On a Golden Springtime (CS, 88), The Lord Is My Light (Hymns, 89), There Is Sunshine in My Soul Today (Hymns, 227)



The sun teaches us many things – even things about Christ.

2 Nephi 11:4 “Behold, my soul delighteth in proving unto my people the truth of the coming of Christ; for, for this end hath the law of Moses been given; and all things which have been given of God from the beginning of the world, unto man, are the typifying of him.”

Sunrise and sunset: life, death and resurrection of Christ.

When the sun rises each day, it is like it is “born.” “Dawn” means the first appearance of light in the sky before sunrise. Dawn also means the beginning of a new period of time. When the sun passes over the horizon at sunset, it is like it “dies.”

The sun reminds us of the Son of God. When Jesus was born into the world, He brought light. At the highest point of His ministry (noon), He taught the truths of eternity (things that will help us return to Heavenly Father), and He atoned for our sins. With His death (sunset), darkness came over the earth. Then, on Sunday morning, at the rising of the sun, Mary discovered that the Lord had risen, making the light of the resurrection a reality for all of us.

The sun brings light and warmth to the world. Jesus is the light of the world.

D&C 11:28 “Behold, I am Jesus Christ, the Son of God. I am the life and the light of the world.”

Jesus brought light into the world. He brought an understanding of the plan of salvation. He brought us the atonement, which brings us out of the darkness of sin. He brought us the resurrection, which brings us out of the darkness of death. Each day, as the sun rises, we can be reminded of the Son of God who brings us light.

Although the sun sets each night, we know that it will rise again in the morning. So when times are hard and feel dark (like nighttime), we can trust in the Lord that He will bring light back into our life in the morning.

The light of Christ gives us warmth, just like the sun. When we feel the Holy Ghost, we often feel “warm” inside. Just as the warmth of the sun makes it possible for plants to grow, the warmth of the Holy Ghost helps us to grow closer to Heavenly Father.

Spring (seasons related to the sun): seasons of Christ’s life and ours

As the earth moves around the sun, and tilts on its axis, it moves us closer and farther away from the sun. When we are close to the sun, the weather is warmer: summer. As we tilt farther away from the sun, we become colder: fall and winter. Then, once again, the earth tilts closer to the sun and spring comes.

The seasons change from cold to warm, and the leaves on the trees change from green, to colors, then fall to the ground leaving bare branches. In the spring, new life comes to the trees, and buds bring forth flowers and new leaves. The seasons remind us of the life of Christ: summer, fall and winter being His life, suffering and death. Spring reminds us of His resurrection and the new life that comes from spiritual rebirth.

Jesus was born in the meridian of time.

The prophets foretold that Jesus would come in “the Meridian of Time.” In the sky, a meridian is an imaginary sphere around the earth that slices the earth in half (show diagram). In geography, the Prime Meridian is an imaginary line running north to south, which, when you flatten the earth, is exactly in the middle of the map at 0° longitude (see diagram). In literature, meridian means “noon” or “the period of greatest splendor.”

Adam was promised that Jesus Christ would come “in the meridian of time.” When Enoch asked when the Savior would come, he was given the same answer “in the meridian of time.”¹

Meridian literally means “midday.” The sun reaches its high point at noon, as it *passes over* the meridian. Time before that “passover” [when the sun passes that line] is called *ante meridiem* (A.M., or “before midday”), and afterward it is *post meridiem* (P.M., or “after midday”).¹

The coming of Christ marked the “high noon” of the earth’s temporal existence. Elder Bruce R. McConkie wrote, “The meridian of time is the middle or high point of that portion of eternity which is considered to be mortal time. Since Christ lived, ministered, and worked out the atonement in time’s meridian, such era was truly the high point of history.”¹

We learn from modern revelation that Jesus’ real birth date is April 6. In the year 1 B.C., April 6th was the date of the Passover. When Jesus was 33 years old, the Passover began after sunset following His death. During the Passover, Jesus passed over from mortal life into the spirit world, and then passed over from the spirit world into His body with His resurrection.¹

Summary

Jesus came in the meridian of time – the middle of time or the highest point in history. He also came in the meridian of the Mosaic calendar – during the Passover. Jesus – the Light of the world – came into the darkness of the world to redeem us. On the dawn of Easter Sunday “at the rising of the sun,” when the women came to the tomb, they learned that Jesus had also risen.

So as spring brings us new life in the flowers and animals of the earth, bringing hope of warmth and more light each day, we are reminded of the hope, life and light that comes through Jesus Christ, the light of the world, the Savior of mankind, who came in the meridian of time.

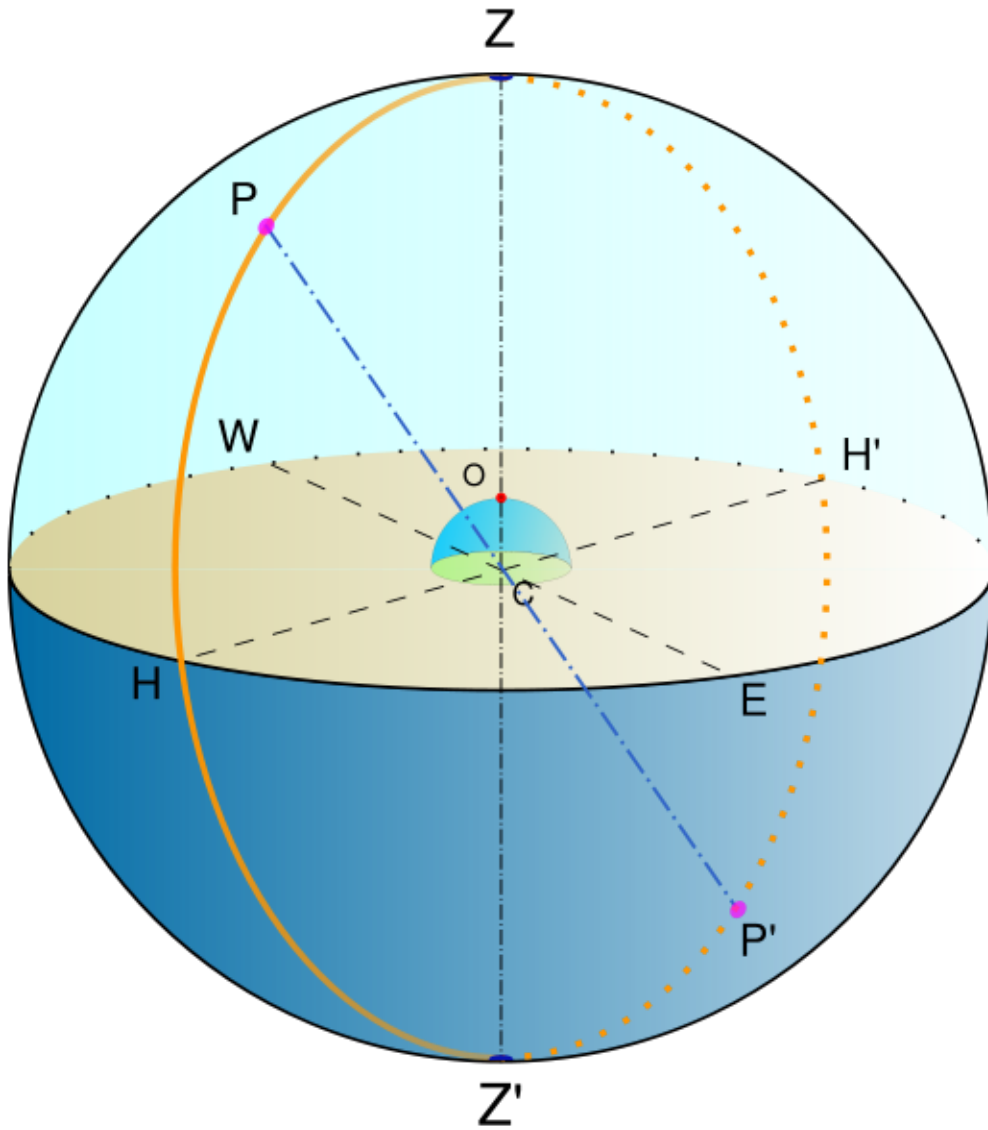
¹“Passover – Was It Symbolic of His Coming?” January 1994 *Ensign*

Extra: Passover

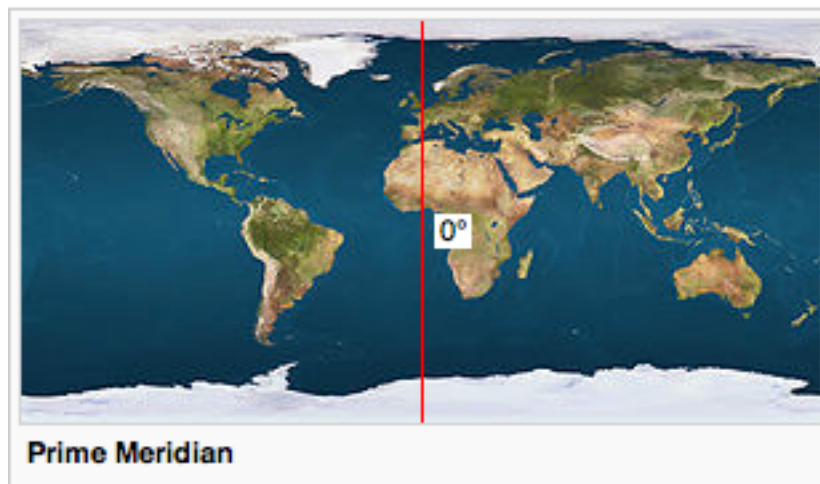
The Law of Moses taught the children of Israel about the coming of Christ. In the calendar that Moses used, the meridian day of the Hebrew year was also the annual Passover feast day – the day of the exodus of the children of Israel from Egypt, or their day of libration from bondage. The exodus was like a “birth” for the Israelites because they began a new life of freedom. The term “Passover” can symbolize transitions to new phases of life such as birth, death and resurrection.¹

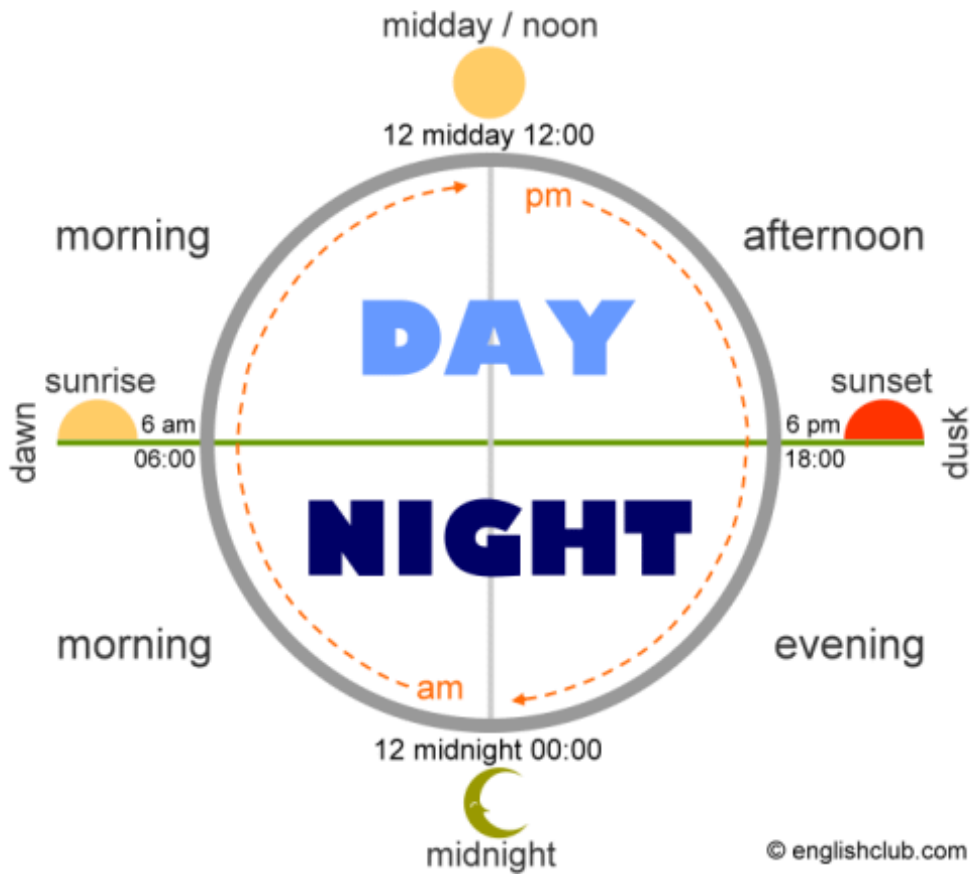
We learn from modern revelation that Jesus’ real birth date is April 6. In the year 1 B.C., April 6th was the date of the Passover. Jesus also began His public ministry on his thirtieth birthday: April 6, A.D. 30. Three years later, the Passover feast day was April 2, A.D. 33. Passover in that year began after sunset following the death of the Savior. During the Passover, Jesus passed over from mortal life into the spirit world, and then passed over from the spirit world into His body with His resurrection.¹

The meridian is the outer orange circle. <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Meridiano.svg>

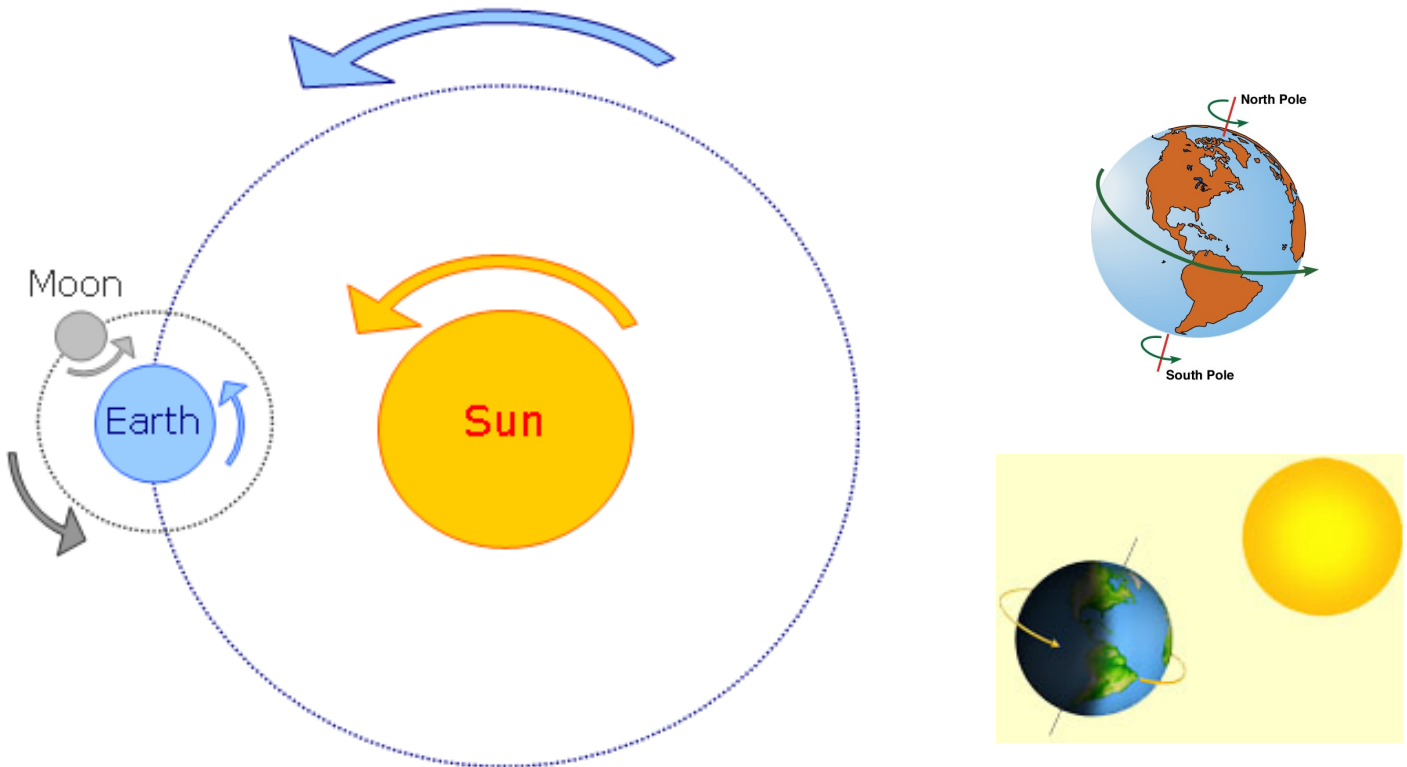


http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Prime_meridian





<http://www.englishclub.com/vocabulary/time-day-night.htm>



http://mail.colonial.net/~hkaiter/Rotation_Revolution.html

The Bread of Life

Jesus is the Bread of Life

Teach: In John chapter 6, Jesus miraculously fed the multitude of 5,000 with five small loaves of bread and two small fish. He filled their bodies with physical bread. The next day, Jesus taught them how this was similar to the Israelites being fed manna in the wilderness – both of them were provided bread by Heavenly Father. He then told them how the Father has provided Him, Jesus Christ, as the bread of life.

“Our fathers did eat manna in the desert; as it is written, He gave them bread from heaven to eat. Then Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Moses gave you not that bread from heaven; but my Father giveth you the true bread from heaven. For the bread of God is he which cometh down from heaven, and giveth life unto the world. Then said they unto him, Lord, evermore give us this bread. And Jesus said unto them, I am the bread of life: he that cometh to me shall never hunger; and he that believeth on me shall never thirst.

“Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on me hath everlasting life. I am that bread of life. Your fathers did eat manna in the wilderness, and are dead. This is the bread which cometh down from heaven, that a man may eat thereof, and not die. I am the living bread which came down from heaven: if any man eat of this bread, he shall live for ever: and the bread that I will give is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world” John 6:31-35, 47-51.

Just as bread gives us nutrition and sustains us physically, Jesus offers us eternal life and sustains us spiritually.

The bread of the sacrament symbolically represents Christ’s body, and the water his blood. When we eat the sacrament bread, we are covenanting to become one with Jesus Christ – to partake of His atonement and take His name upon us. When we take the sacrament, we should remember how Jesus Christ is the true bread of life and how we need to come unto Him with repentant hearts and strive to become like Him every day.

Extra: “The True Bread of Life” by Thomas R. Valletta, March 1999 *Ensign*.

Activity: Bake bread as a family: regular bread, pretzels, challah, or hot cross buns. The twisted shape of pretzels symbolizes arms crossed in prayer. Challah is eaten by Jews on holidays and represents manna. Hot Cross Buns have a cross of icing on the top to symbolize the cross of Christ – the bread of life. Deliver some bread to someone who may need an extra dose of kindness. Include an Easter message, such as a bookmark, scripture or poem.

Soft Pretzels (Sharon Danneman)

2½ tsp yeast
1½ c warm water
1 Tbsp sugar
1 tsp salt
3-3½ c flour
1 egg, beaten (optional)
Coarse salt (optional)
Melted butter (optional)
Cinnamon sugar (optional)



flour. Turn dough onto a well-floured surface (or knead in mixer) and knead for 5-7 minutes. Cut dough in half and cut each half into 6 pieces. Form a 15”-long rope and form a shape (we like doing letters and hearts). Place pretzels 3” apart on baking sheet. Brush egg mixture on and sprinkle with salt or brush with melted butter and sprinkle with cinnamon sugar. Bake 10-15 minutes.

Challah, 2 Loaf (Vickilynn Haycraft)

Challah or khale is a special braided bread eaten by Ashkenazi Jews on the Sabbath and holidays. According to Jewish tradition, the three Sabbath meals (Friday night, Saturday lunch, and Saturday late afternoon) and two holiday meals (one at night and lunch the following day) each begin with two complete loaves of bread. This “double loaf” commemorates the manna that fell from the heavens when the

Preheat oven to 425°. Grease 2 large baking sheets. In a large bowl, sprinkle yeast over warm water. Stir with wooden spoon until well blended and yeast is dissolved. Gradually stir in sugar, salt, and 3 cups

Israelites wandered in the desert for forty years after the Exodus from Egypt. The manna did not fall on the Sabbath or holidays; instead, a double portion would fall the day before the holiday or Sabbath. It is these hunks of bread, recognizable by their traditional braided style that are commonly referred to as challah.

Serving Size: 24



- 1 1/3 c warm water, 120°
- 2 Tbsp organic butter, softened
- 1 Tbsp yeast
- 2 Tbsp extra virgin olive oil
- 1 tsp salt
- 1/3 c honey
- 2 large organic eggs, beaten slightly
- 2 Tbsp vital wheat gluten
- ~4 c whole wheat flour +/- as needed (I used 3 3/4 c)

1. Place hot water in mixing bowl (Kitchen Aid). Add softened butter and mix to dissolve butter. Add 3 cups of flour and yeast. Mix well and let sponge for 15 min.
2. Stir down sponge and add oil, salt, honey, eggs, gluten and 2 c flour. Stir to mix. Stir in flour, one cup at a time, until dough pulls away from the sides of the mixing bowl and clings to itself. The dough should not be very sticky, but still moist and supple. The amount of flour needed will vary. Let dough knead until very supple and springy and gluten is developed (by hand, 12-15 min, by large mixer 6-7 min).



3. Let rise, covered, until doubled ~1 hour. Punch dough down and divide into 2 portions. On oiled surface, divide each loaf into 4 portions. Roll each fourth into long snakes. Braid by starting with the left portion and running it over, under over under the other portions. Pinch each end of the loaf to

seal. Roll loaf slightly longwise on counter before placing on the baking sheet. (Make the bread stand pretty high or it will end up flat.) Let rise about 30 min.

4. Brush with glaze before baking. Bake at 350° for 20-25 min, or until done.

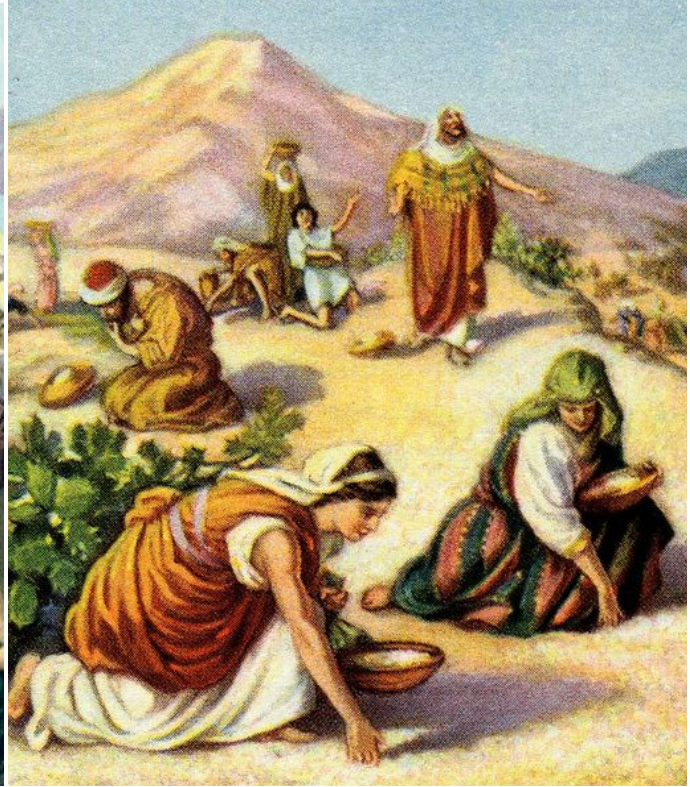
Hot Cross Buns (Allrecipes.com)*

- 4 c all-purpose flour, divided
- 1/3 c sugar
- 1 (.25 ounce) pkg active dry yeast
- 1 1/4 tsp ground cinnamon
- 1/2 tsp salt
- 1 c fat-free milk
- 1/4 c butter
- 2 eggs
- 3/4 c raisins
- 1 egg yolk
- 2 Tbsp cold water
- 1 1/2 c confectioners' sugar
- 1/4 tsp grated orange peel
- 4 tsp orange juice



In a large mixing bowl, combine 2 c flour, sugar, yeast, cinnamon and salt. In a saucepan, heat milk and butter to 120-130°. Add to dry ingredients; beat just until moistened. Add eggs and beat until smooth. Stir in raisins and enough of remaining flour to form a soft dough. Turn onto a floured surface. Knead until smooth and elastic ~6-8 min. Place in a bowl coated with nonstick cooking spray, turning once to coat top. Cover and let rise in a warm place until doubled, ~1 hr. Punch dough down; turn onto a lightly floured surface. Divide into 18 pieces; shape each into a ball. Place in two 9" round baking pans coated with cooking spray. Using a sharp knife cut a cross on top of each roll. Cover and let rise in a warm place until doubled, about 30 min. Beat egg yolk and water; brush over buns. Bake at 375° for 18-22 min or until golden brown. Remove from pans to wire racks to cool. Combine icing ingredients. Pipe crosses onto rolls (symbolize Christ's cross).

*Traditionally, these are sweet, yeast-leavened, spiced buns made with currants or raisins, often with candied citrus fruits, marked with a cross on top. You could also simply use cinnamon roll dough and cream cheese icing.



Gardens

Teach: The Fall, the Atonement and the Resurrection all happened in gardens.

The Garden of Eden – The Fall

Life on earth began in a garden. The first man and woman were placed in a garden. Moses 3:15 “And I, the Lord God, took the man, and put him into the Garden of Eden, to dress it, and to keep it.” In the Garden of Eden, Adam and Eve ate the fruit from the Tree of Knowledge and became mortal. They “fell,” which allowed sin and death to enter the world, and which also allowed them to bring children into the world. 2 Nephi 2:25 “Adam fell that men might be; and men are, that they might have joy.” Because Adam and Eve fell, each of us had a chance to be born on earth to have our own mortal experience. Because of the fall, we needed a Savior.

The Garden of Gethsemane – The Atonement

Jesus chose to bring about the first part of His atoning sacrifice in a garden – the Garden of Gethsemane. He spent many hours there praying. Matthew 26:36, 39 “Then cometh Jesus with [his disciples] unto a place called Gethsemane, and saith unto the disciples, Sit ye here, while I go and pray yonder. And he went a little further, and fell on his face, and prayed, saying, “O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me: nevertheless not as I will, but as thou wilt.” Here, in a garden of olive trees, the Savior suffered, both in body and spirit, for all of our sins. The pain was so great that blood came from every pore in His body. Only God could have endured that kind of pain. He chose to endure it so that we could become clean from our sins. He said, “For behold, I, God, have suffered these things for all, that they might not suffer if they would repent; But if they would not repent they must suffer even as I; Which suffering caused myself, even God, the greatest of all, to tremble because of pain, and to bleed at every pore, and to suffer both body and spirit – and would that I might not drink the bitter cup, and shrink—Nevertheless, glory be to the Father, and I partook and finished my preparations unto the children of men” D&C 19:16-19.

The Garden of the Empty Tomb – The Resurrection

After his suffering in Gethsemane, and His death on the cross, Christ’s body was laid in a tomb... in a garden. “And when Joseph had taken the body [of Jesus], he wrapped it in a clean linen cloth, And laid it in his own new tomb, which he had hewn out in the rock: and he rolled a great stone to the door of the sepulcher, and departed” Matthew 27:59-60.

When Mary came to on Sunday morning to anoint the body of Jesus, she found that the stone had been rolled away from the sepulcher. Mary told the disciples, who also found the tomb empty. After they left, Mary stayed behind. “But Mary stood without at the sepulcher weeping: and as she wept, she stopped down, and looked into the sepulcher, And seeth two angels in white sitting, the one at the head, and the other at the feet, where the body of Jesus had lain. And they say unto her, Woman, why weepest thou? She saith unto them, Because they have taken away my Lord, and I know not where they have laid him. And when she had thus said, she turned herself back, and saw Jesus standing, and knew not that it was Jesus. Jesus saith unto her, Woman, why weepest thou? whom seekest thou? She, supposing him to be the gardener, saith unto him, Sir, if thou have borne him hence, tell me where thou hast laid him, and I will take him away. Jesus saith unto her, Mary. She turned herself, and saith unto him, Rabboni; which is to say, Master.” Mary was the first to see the Risen Lord..

In fulfillment of Heavenly Father’s plan, Jesus Christ created the earth. He helped to place man in the Garden of Eden. When man fell, they needed a Savior. Jesus had volunteered and was chosen by Heavenly Father to be our savior and redeemer. In the Garden of Gethsemane, He fulfilled that calling and paid the price for our sins, bridging the gap between us and heaven caused by sin. In the Garden Tomb, he conquered death, taking up His body from death to immortality, bridging the remaining gap dividing us from our Father in Heaven.

Sing “I Know that My Redeemer Lives” (Hymns, 136)

Activity/Craft: Plant a flower in a cup (p.75 Discover Joy of Easter) or Make an Easter Garden
(From: www.christianitytoday.com, impressyourkids.org, joyfulmamasplace.blogspot.com, and candacemercyisnew.blogspot.com)

Explain: as a reminder of what Jesus did for us, let's make our very own Easter Garden!

Supplies:

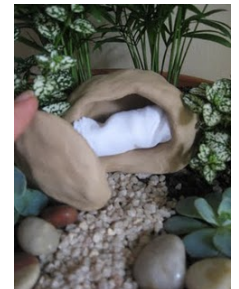
- a planter base or foil baking dish
- soil
- tomb (clay, cut an oj container/tp roll in half; potatoes will shrivel)
- small plants, rocks, sticks, moss, leaves
- large stone to cover tomb
- peg doll
- white cloth (burial clothes)
- flowers (on Saturday)
- sign "He is Risen!"



Bury the tomb in the soil so that just the opening shows. It should look like a cave. Add plants around the tomb, rocks, sticks, moss and leaves. Put a stone in front of the grave.



Friday, April 6: Just as these plants look a little sad because they are withered, Jesus' friends must have been feeling sad, scared, and confused. On Friday, after Jesus died on the cross, His friends wrapped his body and placed it lovingly in a tomb. *Wrap the peg doll in white cloth and place it in the tomb.*



Saturday, April 7: Saturday night add some flowers to the garden to emphasize life and beauty, take out the peg-person, fold the white clothing, roll the stone away and add a sign "He is Risen!"



Sunday, April 8: Go to the "garden tomb" you have made and discuss how joyous it must have been for Mary and the apostles to see Jesus Christ alive again. Express your joy in knowing that Jesus resurrected and lives today.

Extras:

“The Purifying Power of Gethsemane” You Tube – begin at 2:35. 10:25 total (<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=O5yBITJKgWg>)

“The Purifying Power of Gethsemane” Bruce R. McConkie, April 1985 General Conference: As we read, ponder, and pray, there will come into our minds a view of the three gardens of God—the Garden of Eden, the Garden of Gethsemane, and the Garden of the Empty Tomb where Jesus appeared to Mary Magdalene.

In Eden we will see all things created in a paradisiacal state—without death, without procreation, without probationary experiences. We will come to know that such a creation, now unknown to man, was the only way to provide for the Fall. We will then see Adam and Eve, the first man and the first woman, step down from their state of immortal and paradisiacal glory to become the first mortal flesh on earth. Mortality, including as it does procreation and death, will enter the world. And because of transgression a probationary estate of trial and testing will begin. Then in Gethsemane we will see the Son of God ransom man from the temporal and spiritual death that came to us because of the Fall.

And finally, before an empty tomb, we will come to know that Christ our Lord has burst the bands of death and stands forever triumphant over the grave. Thus, Creation is father to the Fall; and by the Fall came mortality and death; and by Christ came immortality and eternal life. If there had been no fall of Adam, by which cometh death, there could have been no atonement of Christ, by which cometh life.

And now, as pertaining to this perfect atonement, wrought by the shedding of the blood of God—I testify that it took place in Gethsemane and at Golgotha, and as pertaining to Jesus Christ, I testify that he is the Son of the Living God and was crucified for the sins of the world. He is our Lord, our God, and our King. This I know of myself independent of any other person. I am one of his witnesses, and in a coming day I shall feel the nail marks in his hands and in his feet and shall wet his feet with my tears. But I shall not know any better than I know now that he is God’s Almighty Son, that he is our Savior and Redeemer, and that salvation comes in and through his atoning blood and in no other way. God grant that all of us may walk in the light as God our Father is in the light so that, according to the promises, the blood of Jesus Christ his Son will cleanse us from all sin. In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, amen.

“In the beginning God planted a garden eastward in Eden, and he placed there the parents of the human family. We are told that God walked in that garden in the cool of the evening, blessing the earth with his presence. Then, through his free choice, man left this garden, never to return, and entered a world of suffering, sin, and death. God withdrew his personal presence and man was left to walk by faith and the Spirit in a hostile world, in a world that was now enemy-occupied territory, for everywhere was found the influence of the adversary, the prince of this world.

Thus man began his long journey through mortality, made bearable by simple moments of hope, companionship, beauty, love, family closeness, and earth-oriented goal achievements. As he ventured further and further from the garden, the awareness of his true condition settled over him like a dark cloud. This was a world of time where everything would soon pass away. Youth, physical beauty, even life—all would one day be gone. Man, a little lower than the angels, knew that at the end of all his most cherished dreams and associations was a grave and a few spadefuls of earth.

At some time in our Savior’s own earthly youth, he knew what he would do when grown. He came to know that he was the person prepared from before the foundation of the world to be offered as a lamb in sacrifice. His life, by its very nature, was to carry him toward a grim rendezvous with the prince of darkness. And long before that crisis came, his face was set toward Jerusalem and toward a garden called Gethsemane. There he would meet his adversary. There all things would hang in balance, awaiting the outcome.

As the duel began that night, his seconds fell asleep. In terrible loneliness he stepped off the brink of earthly support and plummeted downward in his spirits, grappling with his foe and his duty of love until, in a way unknown to us, he had plumbed to infinity the wages of human sin and suffering. And then he rose. He had carried with him the whole of the world’s weakness into a garden and a night; now he must bear it up a hill toward day.

As he hung on the cross, he experienced that which was essential to his victory and yet almost too much to bear. His feeling was beyond words as he pleaded, “My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?” [Matt. 27:46] The sustaining power of heaven had been withdrawn. The face of his Father had turned away and he was left unto himself that the awful battle could be his alone—to win—or lose. From the purity and love and power of his own soul he drew his measure of strength, and (as it appears) breaking his heart, fulfilled his quest. “It is finished,” said the Savior, and then he died.

The power of sin passed away in that moment. The victory of love had been won. The Son of God had ransomed his Father’s children paying a price of suffering none of us really understand.

Then, on the third day, friends of the Christ, coming at daybreak to the place of his burial, found the grave empty and the stone rolled away. To Mary, lingering in confusion and grief before the abandoned tomb, it was given to behold the risen Christ—walking again in the garden, in the cool not of the evening but the dawn.

Butterflies

Teach: Another sign of Spring is the butterfly. Teach about the life cycle of a butterfly (I used *Usborne* “Caterpillars and Butterflies” by Stephanie Turnbull).

The butterfly’s life cycle can symbolize the life of Jesus Christ. The first stage of being a caterpillar, which walks on the ground, is like Jesus’ life on earth. The second phase of when the caterpillar forms a cocoon, is like the burial of Jesus in the tomb. The last stage, when the caterpillar leaves behind its empty chrysalis, and emerges as a beautiful butterfly, represents Jesus leaving the empty tomb and rising from the dead in a glorified, immortal body.

Craft 1: Make a butterfly. <http://acornalcove.blogspot.com/2009/07/fun-butterfly-craft.html>

Materials: Scissors, ruler, scrapbook paper, pipe cleaners.



1. For each butterfly, cut two 2.5” squares from scrapbook paper. Trim the left and right sides of the squares to round them, as shown.
2. Accordion-fold each of the squares to create two sets of wings.
3. For the butterfly's body, cut a pipe cleaner in half. Fold one of the halves into a V-shape and twist the ends together a few times just above the bend to create an abdomen (it should be about an inch long).
4. Sandwich both sets of wings between the pipe cleaner ends above the abdomen, and twist the ends a couple more times to hold them snugly in place.
5. Use your fingers to pull the wings open a bit, and then curl the tips of the pipe cleaner to shape antennae.

Craft 2: Make a butterfly finger puppet.

Source: <http://www.crafts-for-kids-to-make.com/butterfly-craft-for-kids.html>

Materials: colored cardstock, printer, scissors, Xacto knife, sticky-backed plastic, scraps of colored tissue paper, double-sided tape, finger from a rubber glove.



1. Print out the butterfly template onto colored cardstock. (Find template at the site listed above.)
2. Cut around the outside of the butterfly shape, then carefully cut away the inside of the wings using an Xacto knife.
3. Press the cardboard wings (with the printed side down) onto the sticky side of a piece of sticky-backed plastic.
4. Cut away the excess plastic from around the outside of the butterfly.
5. Cut or tear the scraps of tissue paper into small pieces and put them into a low-sided bowl or tub, so that your kids can rummage through to find the colors and sizes that they want to use.
6. Let the kids stick little pieces of tissue paper onto the sticky plastic. Use a single color for each wing or make a pattern with lots of different colors. Make sure to cover all the stickiness. (It's fine if the tissue overlaps but you don't want any bare bits of plastic to show when your butterfly is finished.)
7. If desired, cover the finished butterfly with another piece of Contact paper and trim the excess.
8. Fold the wings along the dotted lines so that they stand up in a 'V' shape.
9. Put a piece of double-sided sticky tape on the rectangular space between the wings (onto the same side as the tissue paper) and then firmly press on the finger of your rubber glove for the body of your butterfly.
10. Pop your finger inside your butterfly’s body and hey-presto you can flutter your beautiful butterfly away! Why not take your finger puppet outside to see if there are any flowers for it to land on?



Source: <http://www.crafts-for-kids-to-make.com/butterfly-craft-for-kids.html>

Grass

Grass quickly dies = our mortality. Christ offers eternal life.

Teach:

Isaiah prophesied: "...**All flesh is grass**, and all the goodliness thereof is as the flower of the field: The grass withereth, the flower fadeth: because the spirit of the Lord bloweth upon it: surely the people *is* grass. **The grass withereth, the flower fadeth: but the word of our God shall stand for ever**" Isaiah 40:5-8.

Isaiah taught that we mortals are like grass, which withers, and like flowers, which fade. By ourselves, we are nothing and can't return to Heavenly Father. We need a savior to redeem us from mortality and sin. Jesus Christ has power over death and sin. He loves us and will help us grow and thrive when we keep His commandments.

In Psalms, we read a similar message: "**As for man, his days are as grass:** as a flower of the field, so he flourisheth. For the wind passeth over it, and it is gone; and the place thereof shall know it no more." (Ps. 103:15-16.)

When grass receives lots of rain, it grows thick and green and spreads its velvety green carpet even over a barren wilderness, but as soon as the sun beats down on it (or dry hot winds pass over it), the grass withers and dies. One week, the grass blades are vivacious and vigorous, then gone the next.¹

We need constant spiritual nourishment to thrive. Reading our scriptures and praying every day are like the rain and the sun we need to grow (the living water of Jesus Christ and the light of Christ). When we stop doing these things, we quickly wither spiritually. The more we read, the more the Holy Ghost is with us and the more we are blessed.

During Easter, we fill baskets with grass, which represents us. To the grass, we add Easter eggs, which remind us of Christ's victory over death (rising from the tomb). We also add treasures to the grass, like presents and candy, which remind us of the treasures we have in the gospel of Jesus Christ and in the scriptures which give us the nourishment we need to survive spiritually.

Craft: Plant wheat seeds in baskets or buckets and grow the grass. Fill a container with soil. Sprinkle wheat kernels over the soil, add a little more soil on top, then moisten. Keep soil moist. When the wheat grass grows, you can trim it and add it to shakes for extra nutrition!



¹ "A Sampler of Biblical Plants" by D. Kelly Ogden, August 1990 *Ensign*.

Easter Eggs

New Life – the Resurrection

Teach: Eggs Symbolize New Life

A baby chick hatching out of its egg reminds us of new life. Christians use eggs to symbolize the resurrection since, though the egg is dormant (alive, but not actively growing), it contains a new life sealed within it, just as Christ's lifeless body laid inside the sealed tomb, and then emerged with life. Cracking the eggs can symbolize Christ's resurrection from the dead.

Traditions

Lots of traditions involving eggs have emerged over time. At least 2,500 years ago in Persia, people painted eggs for their New Year celebration, which falls on the Spring equinox. The faithful from early times painted Easter eggs in happy colors, had them blessed, ate them, and gave them to friends as Easter gifts. In medieval times eggs were traditionally given at Easter to all servants. In 1307, King Edward I of England had 450 eggs boiled before Easter, dyed or covered with gold leaf, which he distributed to the members of the royal household on Easter Day.

In the many countries, people play a game known as "egg tapping," in which they hit their hard-boiled eggs against others' eggs. The winner is the last one with an unbroken egg. Egg rolling is another popular game in the United Kingdom and countries, where children roll their eggs down hillsides at Easter. In our country, every year, kids go to the White House to roll their eggs across the White house lawn with a spoon. Many countries have beautiful techniques for decorating their eggs (show pictures).

Since we are Christians, we use the egg to remember the life that is given to us through Jesus Christ – both physical life from the resurrection, and spiritual life from the atonement.



Craft 1: Dye Easter Eggs

Craft 2: Make stained glass Easter eggs: <http://www.squidoo.com/Easter-Kids-Crafts>



Supplies: Construction paper, clear contact paper, glue or glue stick, scissors, hole punch, suction cup hanger, colored tissue torn into approx. 1" pieces

1. Cut out an egg shape from the center of a piece of construction paper. Repeat, using the first sheet as a guide so the sheets are identical.
2. Cut out a piece of clear contact paper about an inch larger than the egg shape and attach it to one of the pieces of construction paper making a "window".
3. Have an assortment of torn tissue paper ready to use in various colors.
4. Attach pieces of tissue paper to the sticky side of the "window" of the egg shape until it's fully covered.
5. Using glue or a glue stick, glue down construction paper #2 to construction paper #1, lining up the eggs to match exactly. Be sure to glue right up to the edge of the egg shape. Allow to dry if using glue.
6. Cut another piece of contact paper a little larger than the egg shape and carefully press it down on top of the tissue covered egg to seal everything.
7. Trim around egg leaving about 1/2 inch of the construction paper for a border.
8. Punch a hole at the top of the egg and hang in a window.





Ukraine: "Pysanky"



Serbia



Croatia : "Pisanica"



Russia: Fabergé eggs



Czech Republic



Ukraine: embroidered eggs



France



Romania



Poland: Drapanka



Belarus



Vienna, Austria



Clean Windows

Disciples didn't see clearly; do not judge

Teach: President Monson shared this story in September 2010:

“A young couple, Lisa and John, moved into a new neighborhood. One morning while they were eating breakfast, Lisa looked out the window and watched her next-door neighbor hanging out her wash. “That laundry’s not clean!” Lisa exclaimed. “Our neighbor doesn’t know how to get clothes clean!” John looked on but remained silent. Every time her neighbor would hang her wash to dry, Lisa would make the same comments. A few weeks later Lisa was surprised to glance out her window and see a nice, clean wash hanging in her neighbor’s yard. She said to her husband, “Look, John—she’s finally learned how to wash correctly! I wonder how she did it.” John replied, “Well, dear, I have the answer for you. You’ll be interested to know that I got up early this morning and washed our windows!”

Tonight I’d like to share with you a few thoughts concerning how we view each other. Are we looking through a window which needs cleaning? Are we making judgments when we don’t have all the facts? What do we see when we look at others? What judgments do we make about them? Said the Savior, “Judge not.” He continued, “Why beholdest thou the mote that is in thy brother’s eye, but considerest not the beam that is in thine own eye?” Or, to paraphrase, why beholdest thou what you think is dirty laundry at your neighbor’s house but considerest not the soiled window in your own house?

None of us is perfect. ...And yet for some reason, despite our own imperfections, we have a tendency to point out those of others. We make judgments concerning their actions or inactions. There is really no way we can know the heart, the intentions, or the circumstances of someone who might say or do something we find reason to criticize. Thus the commandment: “Judge not.” ...Mother Teresa, a Catholic nun who worked among the poor in India most of her life, spoke this profound truth: “If you judge people, you have no time to love them.” The Savior has admonished, “This is my commandment, That ye love one another, as I have loved you.”

I consider charity—or “the pure love of Christ”—to be the opposite of criticism and judging. ...I have in mind the charity that impels us to be sympathetic, compassionate, and merciful, not only in times of sickness and affliction and distress but also in times of weakness or error on the part of others. There is a serious need for the charity that gives attention to those who are unnoticed, hope to those who are discouraged, aid to those who are afflicted. True charity is love in action. The need for charity is everywhere” (“Charity Never Faileth,” President Thomas S. Monson, November 2010 *Ensign*).

The Symbol of Our Discipleship is Our Devotion to Christ

Most other Christian religions use the cross to symbolize their devotion to Christ. In our church, we don’t like to focus on the instrument of His death, but rather celebrate the Savior as the Risen Lord – not on the cross, but on His throne. “President Gordon B. Hinckley taught that our message to the world is that He lives! The symbol of Christ for the Latter-day Saints will be found in the meaningful expression of our faith and the way we live His gospel. ...The Savior taught that we will be known as His disciples if we have love one to another. ...We manifest our love for God when we keep His commandments and serve His children. We don’t fully comprehend the Atonement, but we can spend our lives trying to be more loving and kind, regardless of the adversity we face. ...How we relate and interact with each other is a measure of our willingness to follow Jesus Christ” (“We Follow Jesus Christ” Quentin L. Cook, April 2010 General Conference).

*Challenge everyone in the family to act with extra charity – to think, speak, and act more like Christ.

Activity: Clean the windows in your home with your kids. Talk about how much better you can see through the windows after cleaning them.

