

Easter Sunday

Feasts and
Seasons
Easter

4

Background: Easter

The Church celebrates the Easter Vigil on Holy Saturday evening. The fire and Paschal candle are blessed, and the history of our salvation is proclaimed. The community rejoices with new members whom the Church baptizes, confirms, and welcomes to the Table of the Lord. Jesus is risen! Alleluia!

At Easter Sunday Mass, our celebration of the Resurrection continues. In fact, our celebration will continue throughout the fifty days of the Easter season. The Easter season Sunday Gospel readings include the Scripture accounts of Jesus' post-Resurrection appearances. These remind us that the gift of new life is for us. The Risen Lord emphasizes the participation in the life of the Kingdom of God that he intends for us. Throughout the Easter season, we give praise and thanks to God the Father for this great gift that his Son has gained for us.

Getting Ready

1. Prepare your family prayer table for the Easter season. Place upon it a white cloth, a bowl of Holy Water, a candle, a Bible, a cross, and a vase of fresh flowers. Find a suggested prayer and other Easter season resources at RCLBenziger.com>Resources.
2. Gather the family around the prayer table. Light the candle and sing an Easter Alleluia. Proclaim the Scripture verse at the top of page 251. Invite family members to name signs of new life they have seen in recent days.
3. Invite the family to join you in celebrating new life by helping to plant flowers around your home, in window boxes, in your neighborhood, and/or in the yards of neighbors who are elderly or disabled. Decide on a day and time to do the planting, and purchase several flowering plants. Offer a prayer asking God to bless your efforts to bring new life to your surroundings. Conclude by singing an Easter refrain or hymn.



Focus

Easter Sunday is the Church's greatest feast, celebrating the Resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead.

The Saints Say

The fifty days from the Sunday of the Resurrection to Pentecost Sunday are celebrated in joy and exultation as one feast day, indeed as one "great Sunday."¹² These are the days above all others in which the Alleluia is sung.

Universal Norms on the Liturgical Year and the General Roman Calendar 22

¹² St. Athanasius, *Epistula festalis*: PG 26, 1366.

Prayer

Risen Lord, as I celebrate the Easter season, open my eyes to the many signs of new life that surround me. Place within my heart an Alleluia—a word of thanks and praise to you. Amen.

Exploring the Theme

Share

1. With your child, take turns reading aloud *A Reason to Celebrate* on page 251.
2. Read the directions to the Activity and share your responses with each other.

Hear and Believe

3. Look at the photograph of the Paschal candle on page 252. Explain that we begin the Easter season by lighting this candle from the Easter fire at the celebration of the Easter Vigil.
4. Read together the first two paragraphs of *The Church's Greatest Celebration* on page 252. Invite your child to underline all the signs of joy and new life he or she sees in the second paragraph. (*The colors are bright and beautiful; the songs are happy and filled with praise; we have new water for blessing and baptizing; and so forth.*)
5. Read the third paragraph of *The Church's Greatest Celebration*. Invite your child to recall what the blessed water reminds us of. (*We are each a new creation.*)

Respond

6. Research together different ethnic traditions for celebrating Easter. For example, some nationalities prepare special foods. Others bless Easter baskets. Still others have special prayers, songs, and dances. Choose one of the traditions you find and work together to surprise your family by leading them in a celebration of your chosen tradition!
7. Conclude this lesson with prayer. A suggested format is as follows.
 - Sing an Easter refrain, hymn, or Alleluia.
 - Pray together the Sign of the Cross and the prayer at the bottom of page 252.
 - Proclaim the Scripture verse at the top of page 251.
 - Offer prayers of petition (responding, "Risen Lord, hear our prayer").
 - Pray together the Sign of the Cross and sing again the Easter refrain, hymn, or Alleluia you sang at the beginning of this prayer.

Two Things We Learned

1.

2.