

Easter Egg Exchange

By Beth Herrinton-Hodge



The popular custom of coloring Easter eggs comes from an ancient Christian practice of dying, cracking, and feasting on eggs as an Easter celebration. Instead of randomly coloring eggs, draw names to decorate (and hide) eggs for one another.

For
Young Family

Season
Spring

Needed

Bible, commercial egg-coloring kit, cups or mugs, measuring cup, measuring spoons, water, white vinegar, eggs, cooking pot, slips of paper, pen, small basket or other container, old newspapers or other table cover

Prepare in Advance

- Hard-boil one egg for each family member
- Cover table or workspace with table covering
- Prepare egg-dye per instructions

Activity Plan

Describe the steps of the activity one by one in numbered fashion. Here is an example:

1. Say this prayer aloud to begin.

Great God of all, the mystery of Easter is so much greater than we can imagine. Thank you for the sacrifice of your Son, and the joy of his resurrection. Amen.

2. Have each family member write his or her name on a slip of paper, fold it and place it in a small basket or container.
3. Pass around the container and have each person draw a slip of paper. Silently read the name on the paper, and make sure no one reveals whose name they have drawn.
4. Family members are to decorate an Easter egg for the person named on the paper slips. Family members may work together to decorate the eggs, but they are not to tell who they're decorating the egg for.
5. Follow the directions on the egg-coloring package to dye the eggs. You may use the wax crayon or other items in the package to add personalized decorations.
6. Set aside the decorated eggs and allow them to dry.
7. While the eggs are drying, move away from your workspace and gather for Scripture reading and discussion. Use the attached worksheet.
8. Variation: Write the name of the person on the egg you decorate. When you hide and search for the eggs on Easter Sunday, let each person find the egg with his or her name on it.



Easter Eggs

The tradition of coloring eggs for Easter most likely began in the early Christian church. People dyed hard-boiled eggs red to symbolize the blood that Jesus shed on the cross. They would hold the dyed eggs in their hands and crack the shells together to show that Jesus broke the bonds of sin and death. Then they would eat the eggs to end their Lenten fast.

On Fat Tuesday, the day before Ash Wednesday, people often cleaned their stores of food, eating rich foods like eggs, butter, and sugar before beginning a Lenten fast.

The season of Lent marks the forty days before Easter. During this time, people often fast, eating only sparse and basic foods. To break the fast, people enjoy fancy Easter feasts with egg dishes, sweet breads and treats.

Many families enjoy egg-coloring and Easter egg hunts, either in their homes, in their churches, or within their communities. These have become popular events with little connection to faith practices. The roots of these celebrations come from the dyed red eggs prepared by early Christians. This practice of coloring and eating eggs for Easter continues today in Orthodox Christian traditions.

From your Bible read Luke 23:50–24:5 (or see text on last page). Discuss as a family:

- How is an egg similar to a tomb?
- How is an egg similar to a rock placed in front of Jesus' tomb?
- How is decorating eggs for one another a way to celebrate Easter?
- How is eating a colored egg a way to celebrate Easter?

Refrigerate colored eggs until Easter Sunday. Enjoy them for Easter breakfast, or have an Easter egg hunt as a way to celebrate Jesus' resurrection.

Variation:

Read about a [Greek Orthodox Easter Egg tradition](#).



Jesus is Buried

Luke 23:50-56

Now there was a man named Joseph, from the Jewish town of Arimathea. He was a member of the council, a good and righteous man, who had not consented to their decision and action; and he was looking for the kingdom of God. This man went to Pilate and asked for the body of Jesus. Then he took it down and wrapped it in a linen shroud and laid him in a tomb cut in stone, where no one had ever yet been laid. It was the day of Preparation, and the Sabbath was beginning. The women who had come with him from Galilee followed and saw the tomb and how his body was laid. Then they returned and prepared spices and ointments.

On the Sabbath they rested according to the commandment.

The Resurrection

Luke 24:1-5

But on the first day of the week, at early dawn, they went to the tomb, taking the spices they had prepared. And they found the stone rolled away from the tomb, but when they went in they did not find the body of the Lord Jesus. While they were perplexed about this, behold, two men stood by them in dazzling apparel. And as they were frightened and bowed their faces to the ground, the men said to them, "Why do you seek the living among the dead?"

