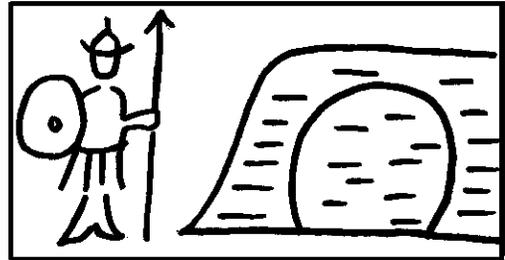


How Can We Make the Resurrection Real for Pre-Schoolers?

By Phyllis Meshel Onest

The best way for young children to learn is to see and touch. Abstract thinking is beyond their ability, so how do we help pre-schoolers make a connection to the abstract idea of new life? Experiences such as growing grass or seeds are those kind of concrete images.



Let's start with Picture Books. They are basic tools when it comes to young children understanding Jesus' death and Resurrection. Concentrate on the tomb and finding it empty holds a lot of drama for children. The portions of the story, before the Crucifixion, when Jesus undergoes beatings would be too intense for pre-schoolers, and actually unnecessary.

Want to add more excitement? Go from the two-dimensional picture book to a three-dimensional scene of Jesus' burial site.

1. Construct a tomb and a stone with clay or papier-mâché.
2. Make the scene as elaborate as you wish.
3. Make or use plastic figures to represent Jesus and the Roman soldiers.
4. Wrap Jesus in a shroud - Gauze or white strips of fabric.
5. Place him in the tomb on Holy Friday.
6. Roll the stone in front of the opening of the tomb. Be creative and make sounds that would give the impression that the stone is heavy.
7. Place the guards in front. The stone is not moved.
8. The guards can march back and forth with the help of the pre-schoolers.
9. On Pascha morning they should find that during the night the stone was rolled away. How did this happen?
10. The guards are now lying outside the tomb. Why?
11. Jesus is gone, but the shroud is inside. Where is Jesus?
12. Read the story of the Resurrection from a Bible Storybook; the language is easier for a pre-schooler to understand.
13. Have the children look for and "discover" the Jesus figure nearby.
14. "Christ is Risen! Truly He is Risen!" may now have meaning for our preschoolers.

In the classroom, reenact the story of the Resurrection as it is being read. To reinforce the lesson, have different students retell the story using the figures in the scene.