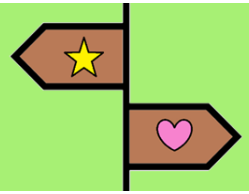


The Easter Story



Read along with the Easter story as you find each of the eggs on the trail.

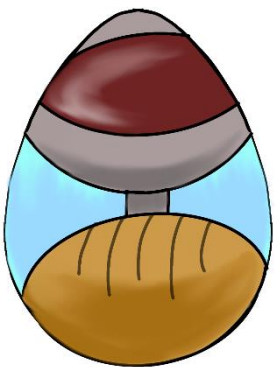


Palm Sunday

Jesus and his friends had arrived in Jerusalem to celebrate the festival of Passover. News had spread that Jesus was on the way and a huge crowd gathered, they put their coats on the floor and grabbed palm leaves to wave. What a surprise when Jesus arrived, he was riding on a young donkey! It was just as the prophet Zechariah had written over 400 years before:

**"Rejoice greatly, people of Jerusalem! Shout for joy, people of Jerusalem!
Your king is coming to you. He does what is right, and he saves.
He is gentle and riding on a donkey, on the colt of a donkey."**

Zechariah 9 v 9



The Last Supper

Jesus and his friends had a special meal together. Jesus washed the feet of his disciples, he wanted them to know what He had come to be a servant to others. Jesus told his disciples that he was going to die, he shared bread and wine with them saying:

"Take this bread and eat it; this is my body. Every one of you drink this. This is my blood which is the new agreement that God makes with his people. This blood is poured out for many to forgive their sins."

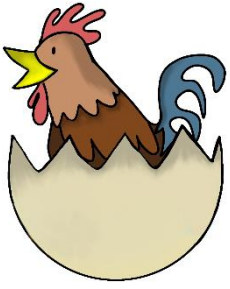
Matthew 26 v 26-28

Today we still remember what Jesus said when we share bread and wine as part of Holy Communion services.



The Garden of Gethsemane

After their meal together, Jesus and his disciples went to the garden of Gethsemane. Jesus took time to pray asking God to help him with the challenge he was about to face. While Jesus prayed his disciples fell asleep. Jesus was disappointed that his friends could not stay awake with him while he prayed. The disciples did not really understand what was going to happen. Then Judas who had betrayed Jesus arrived with soldiers who arrested him.



Peter's Denial

While Jesus had been eating with his disciples, he had warned them that one of them would betray him. Peter, one of Jesus' disciples was horrified, "Not me," he cried, "I would never betray you." "It is not you," Jesus explained but Jesus knew that Peter would deny knowing him, he said:

"I tell you the truth, tonight before the rooster crows you will say three times that you don't know me."

Matthew 26 v 34

After Jesus was arrested, Peter was waiting in a courtyard to hear what was happening. Somebody recognised him as one of Jesus' followers, Peter was scared so he denied that he had ever known Jesus. Then somebody else asked him, and somebody else. Each time, Peter denied that he had known Jesus. After Peter had denied Jesus three times a rooster crows, and Peter remembered what Jesus had told him would happen.

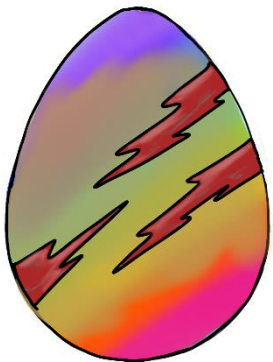


Jesus' Trial

Jesus was brought before Pontius Pilate to be judged. Pilate asked Jesus if he was the "King of the Jews". The soldiers mocked Jesus, they gave him a crown made of thorns and a robe to wear. Over the cross they put a sign saying "Jesus, King of the Jews". Pilate knew that Jesus was innocent, but the crowd called out "crucify him" so Pilate washed his hands and told them:

"I am not guilty of this man's death. You are the ones who are causing it!"

Matthew 27 v 24



Jesus is beaten

Jesus was beaten by the soldiers; we refer to his beating as receiving "stripes". When Jesus was on the cross he was pierced in the side. The prophet Isaiah had predicted that this would happen when he wrote:

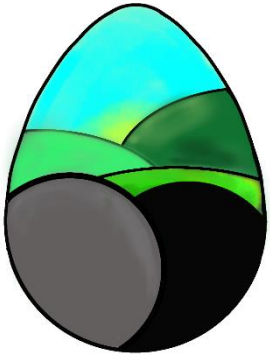
**"But he was pierced for our rebellion, crushed for our sins.
He was beaten so we could be whole.
He was whipped so we could be healed."**

Isaiah 53 v 5



Jesus dies

When Jesus was killed on the cross the sky went dark, there was an earthquake, people came to life who were dead and the curtain in the temple was torn in two! Jesus died as a sacrifice for us so that all our sins might be forgiven. In the past the temple curtain had separated people from God's holy place, now Jesus had made a way for everybody to draw close to God.



Three days later

Three days after Jesus had died Mary went to visit the tomb where Jesus had been buried; when she arrived, the tomb was empty. An angel appeared to Mary and told her that Jesus was no longer in the tomb, he had risen from the dead! Then Jesus appeared to Mary, at first, she thought it was the gardener but when she realised who it was she was amazed.



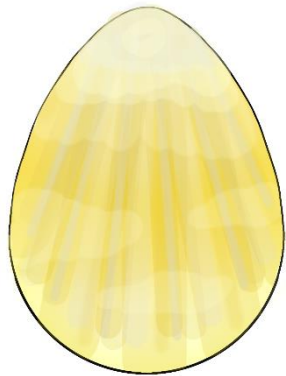
A visit from Jesus

After Jesus had risen from the dead, he appeared to many people including his disciples. He showed them the wounds in his hands and feet and reminded them of how much he loved them.

Jesus told his disciples:

“Go and make followers of all people in the world. Baptize them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit. Teach them to obey everything that I have taught you, and I will be with you always.”

Matthew 28 v 19-20



The story continues

Jesus returned to heaven, but the story does not end there. At Pentecost we remember how God sent a helper, the Holy Spirit so that we can live for God on the earth just as Jesus did.

Christians believe that the Easter story is an invitation from God, to accept his love and to receive forgiveness. Jesus took the punishment for all our sins, no mistake is too big to keep us from God anymore, all of us are invited to be his friend.

If you would like to be a friend of God, here is a simple prayer you can say today:

**Dear God,
Thank you for the story of Easter. I am sorry for the times in my life where I have sinned and behaved in a way that did not please you. Thank you that you sent your son Jesus to die on the cross and take the punishment for my mistakes. Today I choose to live for you and to be your friend.
Amen**