

Marking Good Friday

Children look forward to hot cross buns, Easter eggs, chicks and making bonnets around Easter. Good Friday is more than a Bank Holiday – in churches it's a very special time to remember that Jesus died on a cross to save the whole world. Here are some traditional and new ways to tell children that Good Friday is all about the cross.

Hot Cross Buns

Though many places sell them all year round, hot cross buns are traditionally eaten on Good Friday. The cross on the top is a reminder of the cross on which Jesus died, and the spices are a reminder of the spices used in his burial.

Many shops sell hot cross buns near to Easter, but there are lots of great recipes online if you'd like to make your own together.

Find a cross

If you go to church on Good Friday (**and many churches have special activities for children and families**), look round the church building and see how many crosses you can find. Even if you're not in church, learn to spot crosses everywhere: window frames, aeroplane trails...there will be crosses everywhere!

Many people wear a cross as jewellery, some people carry a small cross in their pocket or bag. At a christening, the minister may draw the sign of the cross on the child's forehead – the cross is a sign of belonging to God, and of the love that God has for us.

One of the most famous bible verses says, "God so loved the world that he gave his only Son..." (John chapter 3 verse 16). New parents probably understand this sort of love better than anyone: the love that means you would do anything and everything for the sake of your child. We can pray "Our Father", because God loves us like that – Jesus' death on the cross was God being willing to do anything and everything for our sake, because he loves us.

Make an Easter Garden

This can be anything from a simple plant pot 'garden' to something much more ambitious. Usually an Easter garden includes a hill with three crosses on it, and a cave-tomb (usually a smaller plant pot laid on its side) with a stone against it. Some gardens also add a path made of gravel, and spring flowers such as primroses.

You can even make an Easter garden picture instead if you don't have the materials to make a 3D one from natural objects – try cutting the pictures out of the seed catalogues

that are often delivered free from local garden centres.

When you make the garden, put the stone in front of the cave. On Easter Sunday, roll the stone to one side (or peel it off if you made a picture) to help tell the Easter story.