

Easter Traditions

Easter Eggs

German people long ago wrote the names of each child and their birthday on dyed eggs as part of their Easter observance. With permanent marker have the children write their names and birthday on large plastic eggs. Decorate the rest of the egg with stickers or sequins. Place a copy of the Easter prayer above or a short blessing in the egg and send home.

Tree Trimming

Bring in a tree branch from outside and put it in a vase or jar. Provide the children with egg shaped cutouts of many different sizes and colors. Have the children decorate the paper eggs using markers, glitter, yarn, ribbon etc. After the eggs have dried, punch a hole in the top of them and lace ribbon through the hole for hanging. Place the eggs on the branches and enjoy throughout the Easter season.

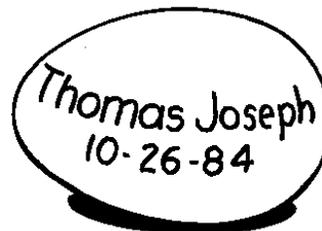


Easter Hare

What does a rabbit have to do with Easter? In pre-Christian times, a Germanic spring goddess had a hare as her messenger. As the hare is a noble animal with characteristics that symbolize Jesus, it became a Christian symbol: Like Jesus, the hare is gentle, never harming anyone; it has ever-sensitive ears, like Jesus who listened to everyone in need; despite its gentle ways, it has many enemies; and the wild hare is known to sacrifice itself for the life of another hare.

The Fourth Sunday of Easter – Good Shepherd Sunday

Celebrate Good Shepherd Sunday with a story, a finger play, and a child's version of Psalm 23.



God Watches Over Us

Jesus was a storyteller. Once he told a story to help us understand how he watches over us and loves us. Here is that story:

Story: The Good Shepherd

A man who had many sheep took them out to a large field to eat. He watched them carefully. If one got caught on a bush, he would hurry over to untangle it. If another hurt its leg, he would clean and bandage it.

When it rained, he pulled his cloak up over his head, but he stayed with his sheep. When it was dark, he did not sleep. If the wind blew at his cloak, making him shiver, he still watched over his sheep.

Easter

This shepherd protected them because he knew that wild animals could come to hurt the sheep. He watched because he knew some could wander off and get lost. He guarded them because he loved them.

One gusty day, the shepherd counted his sheep—97, 98, 99, only 99? He was supposed to have 100! One was missing.

He left the other sheep, wrapped his cloak around himself and hurried off to find the lost sheep. He searched through bushes and behind boulders. He hurt his hand on thorns. The wind tore at his clothes. Then it began to rain, but he kept looking for that one sheep.

Finally he found it behind a large rock. It was a small lamb, its fleece wet and matted with dirt. It had injured its leg and could not walk.

Gently, the shepherd picked up the lamb, carefully so as not to hurt it. He placed it on his shoulders for the long walk home. As he drew closer, he called to his friends, “Come and celebrate with me! I have found the sheep that I had lost!”

Jesus told us this story because he is like that good shepherd.

Fingerplay

Once there was a man who had a big flock of sheep. (EXTEND ARMS TO SHOW “BIG”)

He watched over them day and night. (PUT HAND TO FOREHEAD AS IF GAZING OUT AT FLOCK)

One day he counted the sheep. (POINT, AS IF COUNTING)

One was missing! (HOLD UP ONE FINGER)

The shepherd looked to the left (TURN TO THE LEFT), and to the right. (TURN TO THE RIGHT)

He looked up (LOOK UP) and he looked down. (LOOK DOWN)

Then he found the sheep! Gently he carried it back home.

(CIRCLE ARMS AS IF CARRYING A BABY)

That is how Jesus is. He watches over us (EXTEND ARMS OUT, PALMS UP) and loves us all. (BRING ARMS IN TO HUG SELF)

Prayer

The Lord is my shepherd,

I shall not want.

Surely goodness and mercy

shall follow me

all the days of my life.