



Youth Group Online Gathering: Celebrate Easter!

By Pamela Evans

Purpose of this Gathering

The purpose of this time together is to celebrate Easter, hear the story of Easter, to contemplate and notice where we find ourselves in the story and celebrate the resurrection of Jesus Christ by living out our faith.

Preparing ahead of time:

- This gathering assumes you are using Zoom to connect with your group. You will also need to know how to share your screen and a video on this platform. If you are new to using Zoom, go here for helpful tips <https://support.zoom.us/hc/en-us>
- Ensure you have set up a safe connection with the online platform that you choose to use, follow the security practices for online gatherings. See this article for more information:
http://www.pmrfirstthirdresources.ca/uploads/1/4/0/1/14012171/pmr_first_third_resources_10_security_practices_for_hosting_online_gatherings_with_children_and_youth.png
- Join the call 10 minutes before the Zoom call is set to happen so you can greet participants as they arrive.
- When you send the link to your youth for your meeting, ask each participant to have on hand: something they like to create with – so, it could be pencil crayons or felt pens and paper OR playdough or modelling clay OR lego or building blocks OR collage materials OR pen and paper.
- Make sure you have the following items on hand, ready to go for your gathering:
 - o Christ Candle and matches, Your choice of something to create with
 - o Some symbols of Easter
 - o Your Bible
 - o Download the Bible Project video from <https://bibleproject.com/all-videos/gospel-series/>. The video is *Gospel & Acts Luke 24* (or find the link at https://www.youtube.com/watch?time_continue=1&v=Vb24Lk1Oh5M&feature=emb_logo)

OUTLINE OF THE GATHERING

Greeting and Welcome

- Greet each participant as they come into the online room.
- Encourage that the youth to use their video and audio on their computers if they are able as it allows for us to be fully present to one another and support caring for one another.
- Remind your group of the online gathering covenant that you have created together. If you have not built an online covenant with your group, do this now. There are ideas in the following website link to support building community online with youth:
<http://www.pmfirfirstthirdresources.ca/building-community-online.html>
- When all of your group has gathered, light your Christ Candle and share a prayer of your own or this one:
Holy, Gracious One – we gather together today to celebrate the risen Christ! We give thanks for new life, new hope and joy in this time. In your loving name, we pray. Amen.

Check in with One Another

- Deepening connections online is important as it is in face to face gatherings – there are ideas for questions you might ask each participant in your group at
<http://www.pmfirfirstthirdresources.ca/building-community-online.html>.
- Share by invitation – a good habit to start with your group regardless of how you meet! Ask one person to go first and then after they are done sharing they invite someone else in the gathering who shares and then asks another participant and so on until everyone has had a chance to share. If participants do not want to share or speak, ask them to invite another participant so the “circle” keeps going.

Symbols of Easter – Choose a Game!

The purpose of these games is to learn how images and symbols of Spring share the story of Easter. As you play these games, remember to share the pieces of the story (or ask the youth to share the connections) that these symbols represent.

1. *Symbols of Easter Pictionary*

- Share your white screen (ensure you have enabled all the participants to be able to use the white screen. Show the participants the chat window. Each person gets a chance to draw one of the words. They will be able to know what their word is by checking the chat box (as leader, you can tell each participant by chatting with them in a private message what their word is)
- Have the rest of the participants guess the word from the drawings. Choose your own words or use these ones:
 - Hot cross buns
 - Daffodil
 - Butterfly
 - Palm branch
 - Easter eggs
 - Chick
 - Easter Bunny

- Easter basket
- Lamb
- Other:

*once they have guessed the word, ask the group what to share the part of the story this symbol is about

2. *Online Scavenger Hunt*

- List the words on a screen that you share with the group. Tell participants that they have 5 minutes to find those items in their home – they can be creative as to how they “find these”. They can bring the item to their screen OR take a picture on their phone and have the pictures ready to show. At the end of the 5 minutes, have a bell ring or a song start so they know they need to come back. Share what they found together, giving points for creativity and ingenuity! As the participants share their pictures and items, share the part of the story this symbol is about.

Discuss

- Invite each participant to choose and answer one of these statements (by invitation)
 - A story of Jesus I remember is
 - I would describe Jesus as ...
 - I have heard other people use to describe Jesus as...

Watch the Video

- **The Bible Project – Luke Ch 24** from <https://bibleproject.com/all-videos/gospel-series/> .
(or find the link at https://www.youtube.com/watch?time_continue=1&v=Vb24Lk1Oh5M&feature=emb_logo)

Discuss:

- What do you notice about this video?
- Are there parts of the story you heard for the first time today?
- Are there parts of the story that are missing?
- What is the most important part of this story for you?
- How does this story make you feel?

Creative Moment: Hallelujah!!

The good news today is that Christ has risen! Death was not the final word – there is new life all around us! When we sing or say Alleluia/Hallelujah we are rejoicing and praising and giving thanks for the living Christ in and amongst us!

There are many many MANY celebrations in art of Easter none more famous than Handel’s Hallelujah which is strangely shared most at Christmas time even though it was created for Easter. A friend Charles Jennens wrote a libretto taken from the Bible, based on the life of Jesus Christ, and gave it to Handel. The result was the composition of Messiah, the complete 260-page oratorio, began on August 22, 1741, and was composed in just 24 days, when Handel finished the final orchestration on September 14, 1741.

Even when the subject of his work is religious, Handel is writing about the human response to the divine and nowhere is this more apparent than in Messiah. "The feelings of joy you get

from the Hallelujah choruses are second to none...and how can anybody resist the Amen chorus at the end? It will always lift your spirits if you are feeling down."

- Share with your participants that you will be sharing one rendition of this chorus and during it they might choose to listen or using their choice of creative outlet, create a piece to share with the group (if you choose) about what you hear and feel in this moment about the story of Easter. The piece is about 4.5 minutes long, if the participants are involved in their process, you may want 1 minute of quiet. This is one sample of the many musical portrayals of Handel's Hallelujah Chorus https://www.youtube.com/watch?time_continue=4&v=glpXEVuiDDU&feature=emb_logo
- After the creating, encourage the participants to share their piece using their video cameras to share their work. You can do this piece of sharing by invitation – if people don't want to share, they can simply ask someone else to go next.

Finding Moments of Resurrection

We long to notice the moments of resurrection in our lives where we can break free from that which ties down or makes us feel dead inside or when we rise out of the muck into a place of wholeness, freedom and new life. We experience resurrection when we notice those are moved to help someone who is hurting or inspired to help those who are struggling or work to change the world. We experience resurrection when we as disciples of Christ keep sharing the good news and loving the world as Christ loves the world.

Discuss

- How will you love the world Christ loves? How does God call you to be in the world?
- How will you share good news? Who will you tell when you see those moments of new life and good news in the world?
- If you have time – watch *Some Good News* with John Krakinsky (episode 2 is fantastic!)

Closing Prayer

Ask each person: What is your prayer going from this time together? Ask participants to share by invitation.

Closing Blessing for your Group:

*May the loving power of God,
which raised Jesus to new life,
strengthen you in hope,
enrich you with love,
and fill you with joy. Amen*

Reflection for Leadership

- What did you notice about the group's participation?
- What worked really well?
- What might you change for next time?