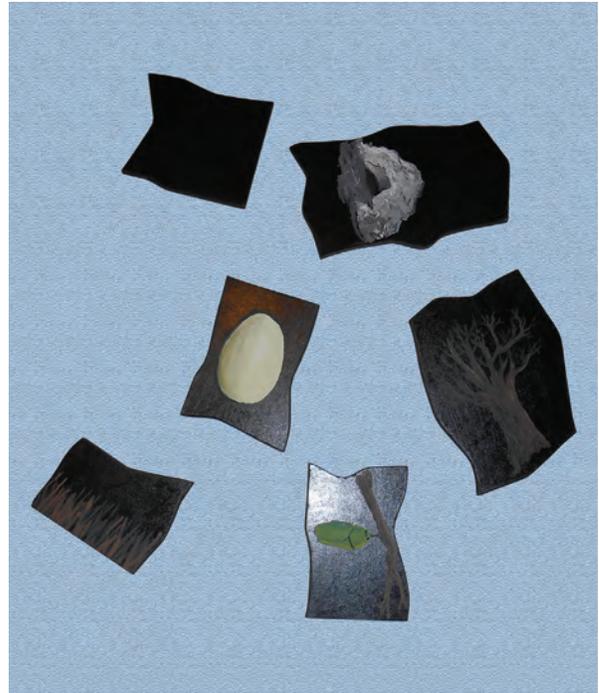
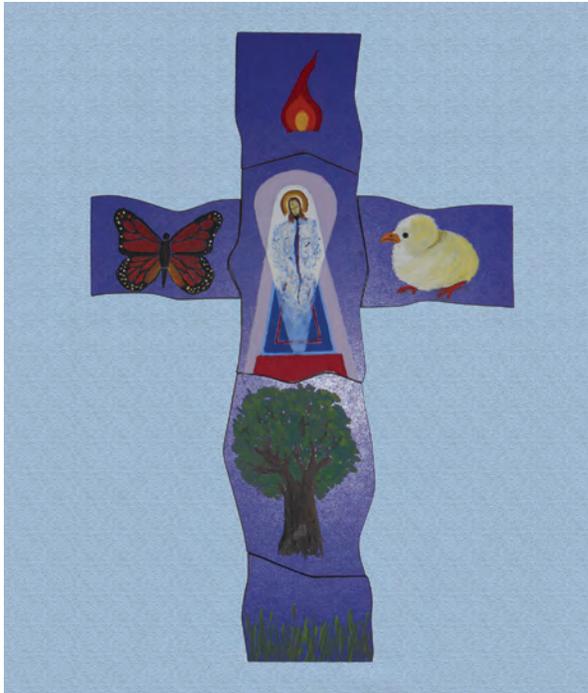


An Easter Story for Friends

A story about the power of God's love



Photos taken from perspective of the children.

Materials

- White circle underlay (approximately 24" in diameter) made of felt or heavy cotton.
- A cross-shape 18" x 12" made of wood, stiff felt or foam, (purple on one side and black on the other) cut into 6 pieces like a puzzle, four pieces form the vertical line of the cross with two other pieces on right and left:
 - top piece: a flame on the purple side; blank on the black side,
 - center of cross: Jesus on purple side; tomb on black side
 - right of Jesus on purple side: small bird or chick; egg on black side
 - left of right of Jesus on purple: butterfly; cocoon on black side
 - below Jesus/tomb piece: tree in leaf on purple; bare branches of tree on black
 - below tree: fresh spring green grass on purple side; dried brown grass on back.

Sources

This story is adapted for Friends from the Godly Play® story "The Mystery of Easter" (*The Complete Guide to Godly Play, Volume 4: 20 Presentations for Spring*, by Jerome W. Berryman © 2003) and work by the Faith & Play Working Group of Philadelphia Yearly Meeting and its corresponding members.

WORDS

This is a story about the mystery of Easter.

A mystery can be hard to understand. Sometimes we just need to listen, and to watch and to breathe in the mystery before it begins to open to us. Mystery means there are things that happen that we don't understand, and can't explain.

What do we have here to help us get ready for the mystery of Easter? What could this be? And this? What could these all be? Maybe it is a puzzle. A puzzle is a kind of mystery.

Sometimes it's difficult to come close to a mystery. We need to wonder about many things.

During this time of year, when spring is bringing new life to the world again, there are many mysteries to wonder about.

We wonder how the earth knows when to leave winter and turn into spring. We wonder how light can come from darkness. What **power** could be great enough to tell the earth when to leave the darkness of winter and change into spring?

How does a baby bird know it's time to break **free** from the egg? How does a tree that had dark, empty branches in the winter, start to **grow** leaves? How does the grass **come back to life** and turn green again? How do caterpillars, **alone** in their cocoons, turn into butterflies?

The world is made new again.

I wonder if we can take these pieces and make them into a shape that means Easter.

MOVEMENTS

Lay out underlay.

*Turn to basket. Take out pieces of cross, black side up. Place randomly around underlay, **except tomb/Jesus piece still in basket.** (Do not form cross shape, yet.)*

"Play" with the pieces, black-side up. Move them around to different places.

*Turn over flame piece.
Indicate flame when you say "power."*

[As you read the questions that come next, turn over each corresponding piece on the underlay.]

Indicate pieces with your hand, like a blessing (bird, butterfly, tree).

Move pieces (now purple-side up) into the shape of a cross, with the center piece still missing.

Ah, there is one more piece to help us, the one at the center of Easter.

Take out piece with purple/Jesus side up.

The baby who was born at Christmas grew to be a man named Jesus, who said wonderful things and did amazing things. People began to follow him and wanted to know more. He taught about love and forgiveness. He showed God's love for all people in the way he lived.

Hold up and indicate Jesus figure.

There are many symbols that crowd around Easter, but at the center of Easter is the symbol of a cross.

Place Jesus piece in center of cross.

When Jesus died on the cross the people were sad. His body was taken and placed in a tomb, and a heavy stone was rolled over the doorway.

Trace puzzle cross with your finger.

Then a mysterious thing happened. People found that Jesus was still with them, in a wondrous new way. When we come close to the mystery of Easter there is the living Jesus, a Light for the world.

Pick up Jesus piece and turn over to tomb side. Trace stone with finger.

He shows us the power of God's love to transform . . .

Turn back over to the purple side; return piece to center of cross.

. . . death to life
. . . darkness to light
. . . sadness to joy
. . . hurt to forgiveness
. . . hatred to love
. . . winter into spring.

At "power" touch flame.

God's love is for everyone. Jesus showed us the power of his love, and his words and work are still with us today. Spring returns each year and brings back light and life. God is always with us.

Pause.

Gesture toward flame.

I wonder what part of the story you liked best?

Touch Jesus at center of story. Indicate chick, tree, grass, butterfly. Hold out hands to encircle whole story.

I wonder what part is the most important for you, today?

I wonder where you are in the story or what part feels like it is about you?

I wonder how you feel when you see new life
in springtime?

I wonder how the baby bird feels when it
breaks free of the egg for the first time?

I wonder how the tree feels when at last it
sprouts new leaves?

I wonder how the grass feels when it turns
green again?

I wonder how the caterpillar feels, after all
that time in a cocoon, when it turns into a
butterfly?

I wonder where you have known the Light?

I wonder how you have experienced God's
love?

I wonder how it feels to be forgiven, and
start all over again?

I wonder what you wonder about this story?

Materials: Another Look

Another look at materials made using two sheets of foam (black and purple) glued together; felt shapes and figures were cut out and adhered to the pieces.

