

Today's Suggested Schedule—April 2026, Week 1

Bible Story: Easter (Crucified and Risen) • *John 18–20:23*

Bottom Line: You can have joy because Jesus is alive.

Monthly Memory Verse: *Always be joyful because you belong to the Lord. I will say it again. Be joyful!* • Philippians 4:4 NIV

Supplies NOT Included in the Activity Bags

Bible Story Review: Picture Plates

- Coloring supplies

Application Activity: Buckets of Questions

- Prepared buckets with the numbers 1–5 on them (use tape to write a number on each bucket)
- beanbags
- Floor tape

Memory Verse Activity: Torn Paper Cross

Prayer Activity: Pray and Dismiss

Bible Story Summary

Easter (Crucified and Risen)

In Week 1, we explore the events leading up to Easter Sunday. A story that began with betrayal, arrest, and the desertion of Jesus' closest friends set the stage for Jesus to lay aside every right and give up His life for all of us. But even though the sun went dark and all hope seemed lost, God was still at work. And when Mary Magdalene came to the tomb at dawn on the third day, she found it empty! [BOTTOM LINE] You can have joy because Jesus is alive.

1. Bible Story Review- Picture Plates

What You Need:

- Paper plates
- Coloring supplies

What You Do:

- Review the Bible Story (John 18–20:23) with the kids. Be sure to cover these main points:
 - Jesus was arrested, put on trial, and sentenced to die on a cross.
 - Jesus died on the cross and was buried in a tomb. A big stone was rolled in front of Jesus' tomb to seal it.
 - Jesus' friend Mary went to the tomb early Sunday morning. When she got there, the stone was rolled away, and the tomb was empty.
 - Jesus is alive! He appeared to Mary outside of the tomb, and she was so happy! She ran to tell Jesus' friends that He is alive!
- Give each kid a paper plate and place coloring supplies nearby.
- Ask kids to hold the plate upside down on top of their head with one hand.
- Tell them that they are going to use their other hand to draw the Easter story on the plate—while it's still on their head!
- Give the following prompts and allow kids time to draw each picture:
 1. Say: "Draw a cross."
 2. Say: "Draw a tomb with a stone."
 3. Say: "Draw a happy face because Jesus is alive!"
- Let them take the plates down and look at their drawings.
- Allow kids to talk about the Bible Story and add other details from the story to their drawing.

What You Say:

"Those drawings are so unique! Even though the pictures turned out silly when you drew them without looking, they still remind us of the most important story ever: the true story of Easter!"

"God sent Jesus to rescue us. Our sin pulled us away from God and kept us from being close to Him. But God wants us to be His close, close friends! So Jesus died on the cross to pay for our sins to make a way for us to be close with God. But Jesus didn't stay dead. On the third day, He came back to life! Jesus is alive! That's the best news ever! Jesus made a way for us to be friends with God forever. That gives us so much joy! **[Bottom Line] You can have joy because Jesus is alive!**"

2. Application Activity- Buckets of Questions

What You Need:

- Prepared buckets with the numbers 1–5 on them
- beanbags
- Floor tape

What You Do:

- Set up a line with floor tape on one side of the room.
- Place the prepared buckets in a line on the other side of the room, across from the tape line.
- Invite the kids to line up a single file behind the tape line.
- Instruct the first kid to toss the ball or beanbag into a bucket.
- If they make it into bucket #1, ask question #1. If #2, ask question #2, etc.
- Questions:
 - Who did God send to rescue us? (*Jesus*)
 - Why were the disciples sad at first? (*because Jesus died*)
 - What did Mary find at the tomb? (*It was empty./Angels!/Jesus!*)
 - Why do we have joy today? (*Because Jesus is alive!*)
 - Who can be friends with God forever? (*Everyone who believes in what Jesus did!*)
- Let the kids answer, then retrieve the ball or beanbag and give it to the next person.
- Make sure all five questions have been discussed before ending the game.

What You Say:

“Great job answering those questions! You know the true story of Easter so well. God had a plan all along to rescue us because He loves us so much. Jesus followed that plan perfectly. Jesus came to Earth, lived a perfect life, died on a cross for our sins, was buried in a tomb, and on the third day, Jesus rose again. Jesus is alive! Because Jesus paid for our sins, we can be friends with God! And since Jesus is alive forever, we will be His friends forever! **[Bottom Line] You can have joy because Jesus is alive.**”

EveryChild Pro-Tips:

- Allow kids to point to a bucket instead of tossing the ball or beanbag into it.

3. Memory Verse Activity- Torn Paper Cross



What You Need:

- Bibles
- Construction paper in a variety of colors

What You Do:

- Give every kid a Bible and direct them to look up Philippians 4:4.
- Demonstrate how to look up the verse using the Bible Navigation Tips below:

***Finding verses for 2nd-3rd graders:** Guide them to open their Bibles to the front and find the table of contents. (Hold up a Bible opened to the table of contents to show the kids what the page looks like.) When the kids find the table of contents, lead them to find the name of the book in the list. When they find the book, lead them to look at the page number beside it. Explain that the number tells them on what page they can find that book. Help the kids find the page. When they find the book, explain that the big numbers on the page are the chapter numbers. Help them find the correct chapter. Then explain that the small numbers are verse numbers. Help them find the correct verse in that chapter.*

- Repeat the verse aloud several times.
- Review any words that might be unfamiliar to the kids.
- Invite the kids to put their Bibles aside.
- Give each kid a piece of construction paper.
- Show them how to tear the paper into a cross shape. See our Pinterest Board.
- As kids work, practice saying the verse together.
- Once they're finished tearing the paper, invite them to stand up and hold their crosses while saying the verse one more time.

What You Say:

“Great work! You made something really special by tearing a plain piece of paper and creating a cross. Your cross may not look perfect. But that’s the point! We aren’t perfect, and we all make bad choices sometimes, choosing our way instead of God’s. But the cross is the good news! The cross reminds us how much Jesus loves us. Jesus died on the cross for our sins so we could be friends with God forever! And then Jesus rose from the dead! Jesus is alive today! And because Jesus is alive, we can always be joyful. **[Bottom Line] You can have joy because Jesus is alive.**”

EveryChild Pro-Tips:

- Prepare crosses in advance and encourage kids to decorate them with dot markers or other coloring supplies.

4. Pray and Dismiss

What You Need:

- Prepared cups/bowls of jellybeans

What You Do:

- Give each kid their cup with the jellybeans inside.
- Say: “We’re going to use these jellybeans to help us remember the true story of Easter.”
 - Hold up one color at a time, and instruct the kids to hold up the same color as you and repeat after you.
 - Hold up a black jellybean and say: “Black reminds us of our sins that kept us from being close to God.” (*Let the kids repeat.*)
 - Hold up a red jellybean and say: “Red reminds us of Jesus’ blood on the cross. Jesus paid for our sins!” (*Let the kids repeat.*)
 - Hold up a white jellybean and say: “White reminds us that Jesus cleanses us from sin.” (*Let the kids repeat.*)
 - Hold up a green jellybean and say: “Green reminds us we can grow our friendship with God every day.” (*Let the kids repeat.*)
 - Hold up a yellow jellybean and say: “Yellow reminds us of our friendship with God that will last forever.” (*Let the kids repeat.*)
- Set the cups aside.

What You Say:

“All of these colors help us remember the amazing truth of Easter—Jesus died for our sins, He made a way for us to be friends with God forever! And then He rose again! That is the best news ever!

“Dear God, thank You for sending Jesus. Thank You that He died for our sins so we can be Your friends, and thank You that He rose to life again. Help us grow closer to You every day. We are so excited to be friends with You forever! We love You, and we pray these things in Jesus’ name. Amen.”