

Discussion and conclusion

Aim

To enable the children to reflect upon their experience and ask questions about what they have seen and heard.

Setting the scene

The children will have experienced the Easter story in an imaginative way. To some, the story will be familiar, to others it will be totally new, and many children will fall somewhere between these two positions. The group time is an opportunity for children to express their feelings about the things which happened to Jesus.

A basket of artefacts is provided for each group as an aid memoire of the scenes, but some leaders may prefer not to use these. The children are prompted to wonder why the things which happened were important. The leaders should be trained carefully to ask open questions and to encourage children to verbalise their thoughts. For this reason it is important not to give the children more information than they have received during the course of the journey.

NB: Group time is intended for open-ended questions, not as an opportunity for the leaders to recap the whole journey. Above all, the session must not be used to proselytize. The aim of the whole journey is to encourage further thought rather than asking children what they believe. Having sown the seeds, we must trust the Holy Spirit to enable children to grow and be nurtured in the Christian faith.

Character(s)

None

Costume

None

Scenery

None

Props

The open-ended questions below (one per group) to help the leaders begin the discussions

One booklet for each child if they are going to be used as a take-home gift.

A basket for each group containing artefacts to remind them of the journey, such as:

- A leaf
- A coin
- A stone
- A piece of matzo
- A small cup
- A nail

Discussion questions

- I wonder which part of this journey you like best...
- I wonder which part of this journey is the most important part...
- I wonder which part of this journey is most about you...
- I wonder why people still remember this journey every year at Easter...
- I wonder why Christians think this journey is so important that they tell it every year in their churches...
- I wonder what this journey has got to say to us today...

Take-home gift

As previously mentioned, we searched long and hard to find a suitable booklet for the children to take home as a memento of their Easter journey experience. There are many booklets produced by Christian publishers which contain the Easter message, but we were anxious to find something that was not confessional. We also wanted something which was quirky and interesting to the children. Eventually, we decided to design our own folding booklet to remind the children of the story. The booklet has been professionally drawn and printed and is colourful and easily produced. Further details of how to obtain copies of the booklet we produced can be found by contacting us at info@easterjourney.org.uk However, you may prefer to give each child a bookmark or other memento of their visit. Alternatively, it is not obligatory to provide a gift at all.

The conclusion

The children are led into a space in the final room and asked to sit in their groups while the discussion takes place. It is important not to rush this part, allow about eight minutes for the discussion. After the discussion, the storyteller then draws the presentation to a close by asking the children altogether to look at the small booklets. He or she helps the children to understand how the booklet opens and reminds them about the scenes as this is demonstrated. This part of the proceedings will need to be adapted depending on the style of booklet used. If there is no take-home gift, other visual aids can be used. For example, a cross shape can be torn from a sheet of A4 paper (see page 85 of *A-Cross the World* by Martin Payne and Betty Pedley, Barnabas 2004).

The storyteller invites the children to remember that they have been part of a very special journey, that the story goes on and on today and that as they leave the building they are taking that story back to school with them.