

The Fig Tree

"Nurturing the seed of faith"



Easter to Pentecost

The season of Easter is 50 days long, beginning on Easter Sunday, and ending with Pentecost (the coming of the Holy Spirit).

In Church we retell the great stories of those first disciples who encountered the risen Jesus.

The disciples were confused, afraid, unsure of what to do or what it all meant—so they spent time remembering all that Jesus had done and said. Slowly it began to make sense to them . . .

Welcome to our eighth edition of "The Fig Tree". It is hoped that parents, caregivers and grandparents will use this as a tool to build upon the faith of their family. We strongly believe that the home is the place where faith is best caught, taught, practised, nurtured and lived out. The role of the Church is to nurture and resource you in living this out, and be a place where we come together to share life with all its ups and downs.

We hope you might find some ideas that will assist your family in finding deeper meaning, and new life.

Rev'd Michael Armstrong.

Remembering

Easter is a great time to remember. Across Australia we have some significant events that cause us to remember, such as Anzac Day and Sorry Day.

In our own families we might try and remember stories about the good and the bad times—holidays, events, friends and family members. How have these people impacted upon our lives? Are there people and events that we have forgotten about? Why do we forget some things and remember others?

One of our favourite Easter stories is the road to Emmaus (Lk 24: 13-35). From this story we come to hear that it was in an action, the breaking of the bread, that the disciples remembered and saw Jesus. Every Sunday at Church we hear the words: "Do this in remembrance of me" to recall this story, and Jesus' presence with us now.



REMEMBERING YOU

A poem *By Catherine Pulsifer*



If something were to happen to you
tomorrow,
what would people remember about you?

Would they remember the hours you
worked?

Would they remember the material
things you own?
Would they remember how much money
you had in the bank?

Would they remember the number of
vacations you took?

Would they remember the love you
showed?

Would they remember your caring and
your sharing?

Would they remember the help you gave
them?

Would they remember your smile, your
laugh?

What will they remember,
your actions today
will determine what they will remember.

Key 1: Caring Conversations

Caring conversations express an interest in others—their hurts, their concerns and dreams, their values and faith. Caring conversation requires time to be available to listen and to speak. Here are some conversation starters:

- What is your best memory? What is your worst?
- Have you ever forgotten something, or someone? How did you feel when you remembered again?
- As a family, take some time to look at the moon. Spend time talking about the world around you, the cycle of life.
- Family Heirlooms are a great talking point. Do you have a family bible, special china, a piece of memorabilia? Pull it out and spend time sharing why it is important, who it has belonged to, and how you came to inherit it.
- Inheritance is another good talking point. Pull out some pictures and look at who in your family each person resembles, e.g. You have your great grandfathers ears. You could also look at mannerisms, e.g. you laugh like your grandmother etc.

Key 2: Spirituality in the Home

This is all about your family's devotional life—how do you practice the presence of God through the word of God. It includes deliberate activities like bible stories, prayer and table graces through to ensuring that you say please, thank you or sorry. It can include not only what you say and do, but what you listen to and how you consciously set out to bring God into your daily family life.

- Why not make it one of your family's priorities over the Easter season to learn the Lord's Prayer. It is one of those prayers that often when times are tough, it is good to remember! Place a copy of it on your fridge door, or in the toilet door, so that everyone starts to read it. Spend some time once a week praying it together. You might want to explore what some of it means to your family.
- A great story book that you might like to read is called "The Three Trees" (Angela Elwell Hunt). Read it together and spend time imagining being one of those trees.
- Try and start a new saying as you farewell each other. It might be something like "God bless", or "Love ya" . . . try something new.
- On a tray place a piece of string, a rock, nail, bread roll, spice, flower, key and cover it with a cloth. This is a memory game. Allow everyone to see what is on the tray for 30 seconds, then cover it over with the cloth. Everyone then writes down what they can remember—a point is given for every item. Afterwards, spend time talking about each symbol and how it relates to the Easter story—eg, the flower could symbolise the garden of Gethsemane or it could be the garden on Easter morning. Be imaginative.

Key 3: Family Rituals and Traditions

Rituals and Traditions are patterns of behaviour that can be expected to occur on a routine basis and communicate certain meaning in life. They can include bedtime prayers, celebrations, birthdays, baptisms, anniversaries etc.

Bedtime . . .

Make bedtime a time when you sit and remember all that has taken place throughout the day.

Close this time by saying a prayer together giving thanks for those things. Even very young children can learn to say "Amen!"

Sunday Afternoon

Make Sunday afternoon a special time for your family to gather together. Why not go for a walk together? Spend time looking closely at the environment and notice the changes taking place over Autumn and into Winter. Ask questions that begin with "I wonder . . .". For example, "I wonder why the leaves are going brown?", or "I wonder who might have created such a world?".



Key 4: Involved in Acts of Service

Serving one's neighbour is the response to Christ's love for us. Service communicates that love to others.

- Why not rake up some leaves from one of your neighbours home and turn it into mulch. Use the mulch to spread around on the garden. Easter is a great time to plant spring bulbs—you could plant some in a pot and make it into a gift for someone who has no garden of their own.
- As a way of “re-membering” take some time to go and visit someone who you have not seen for a long while, or another family you may like to get to know.
- Start a family “piggy bank”. Give everyone in the family a chance to contribute to the piggy bank with loose change, pocket money, or even to add IOU notes about acts of service that they could offer. After 50 days count out all that you have together and decide on a worthy charity or group to send your donation to, or to give your time to. Take time to think about it and talk about it as a family. Maybe there will be some appeal on the television that you think is worthy, or maybe some other group that you have always wanted to do something for.
- Spend a day every two weeks just saying positive things to people—anyone! For example, tell the girl at the checkout what a great job she is doing, and thank her for her smile.

Resources:

- “I’d Choose You!” by John Trent, Ph.D © 1994 Word Publishing.
- “The five Love Languages of Children” by Gary Chapman & Ross Campbell © 1997 Northfield Publishing.
- “101 Simple Service Projects Kids Can Do” by Susan L. Lingo © 2000 Standard Publishing.
- “Prayers for Aussie Kids” by Bruce D Prewer © 1993 Lutheran House Publishing.
- Beg, borrow or buy a couple of VeggieTales videos—they are a great laugh for all ages.
- Ideas for building up children, including “bully proofing” at: www.buildupzone.com
- Check out the series of “Rainbow Fish” books.



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