

# QUESTIONS & ANSWERS



JESUS CHRIST VISITS THE AMERICAS BY JOHN SCOTT

## *How can I make Easter more Christ centered for my family and me?*

Since I joined the Church in 2005, Easter has become more meaningful to me. Watching films such as *The Lamb of God* (item no. 53586 VHS; 54586090 DVD) and *Finding Faith in Christ* (53668 VHS; 54041092 DVD) has helped me gain new insight into the Atonement of Jesus Christ. I am grateful to build on what I was taught as a child and to understand, for instance, the meaning of what happened during Passover. Celebrating

Easter helps me remember to

live in a way my Heavenly Father would want me to live and to remember what Jesus Christ did for the world—and for me.

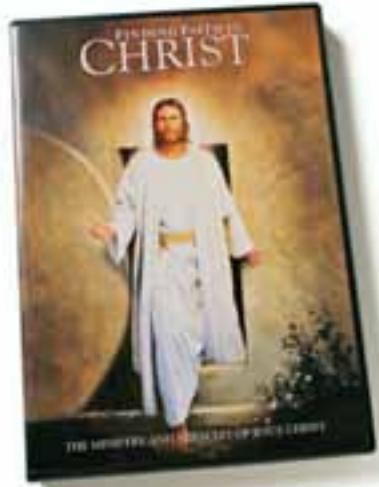
*Tammy Jean Easton, California*

When I was little, my mother asked my brothers and me which holiday was our favorite. We all chimed in, "Christmas!" When asked why, we responded that the gifts made the holiday special. She then asked which was our least favorite holiday. Mom was shocked when I responded, "Easter." I explained that to me, Easter was a grim holiday. I didn't understand why we celebrated the

day Jesus died. Mom sweetly explained that Easter was not a celebration of the Savior's death but of His Resurrection.

Because of His triumph over death, she said, we too would be resurrected. That day, for the first time, I saw the joy in Easter.

Today I still find joy in Easter. I spend the day with family and reflect



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on our Savior, His Resurrection, and the glory of the Atonement—all of which are true causes to celebrate. John 3:16 states: "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." This scripture reminds me that in this case, His gifts are what make the holiday special.

*Amanda Jayne Dibb, California*

Several years ago my husband and I decided we wanted our children to associate Easter with the Savior and His love for them and not necessarily with bunnies, chickens, or Easter eggs.

On Easter Sunday, during a special family home evening, we taught our children about Jesus Christ and His

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PHOTOGRAPH BY DAVID STOKER

love for them. To aid in telling the story of Jesus's last few days, we used several beautiful pictures found in the *Family Home Evening Resource Book* (31106). As our children grew older, we discussed the miracle of the Atonement in greater detail. We looked forward to this special opportunity to share our testimonies with them.

We chose to reserve other activities for a celebration we called Spring Day, a weekend or Monday evening close to the beginning of spring. Our Spring Day celebration included a penny hunt, jelly beans, and sometimes gardening tools or seeds to use in the family garden.

Even though it took awhile for our children to get used to the idea of Easter being strictly a holy day, for me it was a tremendous relief to not be distracted by the secularization I

often saw in stores. After several years of our family's tradition, our children looked forward to our Spring Day celebration as a separate event. It helped them to observe Easter Sunday more fully as a time to reflect upon our Savior's love because the day was free from worldly distractions.

*Marilyn Wood, Louisiana*

During the week leading up to Easter, our family reads from the scriptures and the words of the apostles and prophets about what occurred on that day in Jesus's life.

We also focus on the rebirth of nature all around us. Where we live, the world is just coming to life with blossoms on the trees and bushes and blooming bulb plants all over our yard. This helps us remember that all things are made new by the Atonement and Resurrection.

***During the week leading up to Easter, our family reads from the scriptures about what occurred on that day in Jesus's life.***

On Sunday we attend church together. Sometimes we bring friends with us to enjoy the special spirit in our meetings. We enjoy the choir and speakers, and during the sacrament we focus on the great gift of the Atonement with reverence and gratitude. I am grateful that we have this opportunity to remember our Savior, not just at Easter time but every week.

*Michele Richardson Harper, Virginia*

With five children ranging in age from 3 to 11, we have tried to be creative in how we approach the Easter season. We want to instill in them a reverence for it, along with the excitement they already feel.

In our annual family Easter egg hunt, we include not only candy in the plastic eggs but also small pictures that we have clipped from the *Friend* and *Ensign* magazines. These pictures are mostly of the Savior, but we also include pictures of our prophet, temples, Joseph Smith, the Book of Mormon, and other things that will remind our children of the sacred nature of Easter. As they open their eggs to see what is inside, they take a minute to look at the picture. As parents, we ask them what is in their picture, what it represents, or why it is important.

There is also one special egg

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hidden every year, and each child is eager to find it. This egg contains no candy. It is special because it is empty. After all of the eggs have been opened, we talk about the empty egg and compare it to the empty tomb that held Christ's body for three days. We emphasize the importance of the Resurrection and of what the empty tomb means for each of us today.

While our children still get excited about the commercial side of Easter, we hope that through our family Easter egg hunt they are also learning the sacred and special reason for the holiday.

*Stephanie Nixon, Florida*

When we remember that we are celebrating the reality of Christ's Resurrection, we can begin to incorporate new family traditions that reflect a meaningful religious observance of the holiday. One idea might include watching one of the many

### WHAT THINK YE OF CHRIST?



*"Every day of our lives and in every season of the year (not just at Easter time), Jesus asks each of us, as he did following his triumphant entry into Jerusalem those many years ago, 'What think ye of Christ? whose son is he?' (Matt. 22:42).*

*"We declare that he is the Son of God, and the reality of that fact should stir our souls more frequently. I pray that it will, this Easter season and always."*

**President Howard W. Hunter (1907–95), "Jesus, the Very Thought of Thee," *Ensign*, May 1993, 64.**

Church-produced videos focusing on the Crucifixion and Resurrection and then holding a family testimony

meeting to provide everyone the opportunity to express feelings of love and gratitude for the Savior and share what the Resurrection means specifically to them in their lives.

Regardless of the specific Easter traditions we establish, focusing on the Resurrection and the love that Christ has for each of us will help our Easter observances be more powerful and meaningful.

*Jonathan H. Westover, Utah*

When our oldest children were very young, we made the decision that bunnies and baskets weren't necessary to our family's Easter celebration. Instead, we wanted to focus on Jesus Christ, our Savior. To accomplish this, we began the tradition of having a sunrise devotional on Easter morning.

Our devotional consists of hymns, prayers, and scripture reading. In addition, we write or draw our thoughts on the

*Every year during our Easter egg hunt, there is one special egg that is empty—it represents the empty tomb and Christ's Resurrection.*

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PHOTOGRAPH BY JERRY GARN

Atonement, Crucifixion, and Resurrection of Jesus Christ. As we watch the sun come up, we reflect on that early Easter morning when the followers of Jesus Christ received the glorious news, “He is risen” (Mark 16:6).

It has been an inspiring way for our family to begin Easter. It focuses our thoughts on Jesus Christ, and we go to sacrament meeting spiritually prepared to continue our worship of Him.

We have been holding our devotionals for 18 years now, and we can see the fruits of it in our family. Our children look at Easter as a celebration of the Resurrection of Jesus Christ. He is the center of the day, not an afterthought.

*Charlotte Goodman McEwan, Florida*

During the Easter season our family displays pictures from the Gospel Art Picture Kit (34735) that portray scenes from Gethsemane, the Crucifixion, and the Resurrection. This gives us opportunities to talk to our children about these subjects and keeps the true meaning of Easter in the forefront of our minds.

Another tradition, one we just started, also makes Easter more meaningful. For Easter dinner, we eat fish and honeycomb. Before eating, we read Luke 24:38–44, which describes what Jesus said and did after He was resurrected. We then sing the song “Did Jesus Really Live Again?” (*Children’s Songbook*, 64):

**Our family holds a sunrise devotional on Easter morning. As we watch the sun come up, our thoughts focus on the Resurrection of Jesus Christ.**

*Did Jesus really live again?  
Yes, when the third day came,  
He wakened and he left the tomb;  
He called Mary’s name.*

*Did Jesus come to those he loved?  
Yes, people touched his feet,  
And of the fish and honeycomb  
He did truly eat.*

*And there were nail-prints in his hands  
And a spear wound in his side.  
Did Jesus really live again  
After he had died?  
Oh yes! And so shall I!  
Verena Poole, Oregon ■*

## SHARE YOUR IDEAS

An upcoming Q&A feature will focus on the following question:

*Sometimes I feel that ward members are a bit cliquish. I want to feel that I belong to the ward family, but how can I have courage to keep reaching out when I feel like I might never fit in?*

If you’d like to contribute your ideas and experiences, please label them “Ward Unity” and follow the submission guidelines under “Do You Have a Story to Tell?” in the contents pages at the beginning of the magazine. Please limit responses to 500 words and submit them by March 21.