

Introduction

How can we explain the key moments of the Easter story to children in a way that doesn't linger on the horrific elements yet conveys the power of the narrative? The approach here can be adapted in a variety of ways, but you will need to develop your own mental 'script' to be able to tell it by heart. Adapt the script below or find a good storytelling version of the story to capture the 'flow' of the key moments, and always consider the age and maturity of your audience when considering content.

Preparation

For best results, use a piece of A3 paper and a pair of sharp scissors. (With small groups, a piece of A4 paper will do.)

Make sure your pupils can see the floor in front of you, preferably sitting around you in a half-circle. You might find it's best to kneel, so you can use the floor to lay out the pieces and make adjustments towards the end.

Remember - this is an exercise in storytelling, not origami. Consider the speed with which you tell the story, the different voices, speeding up and slowing down as appropriate - especially at the crucifixion. Use the different paper shapes as illustrations, but by the end, your pupils should be looking at you and listening for what comes next.

Development

Download [the paper-cutting Easter story](#).

Follow-up

1. Discussion: What's the most interesting question we can think of about this story?

After the children have discussed this in pairs, ask for some ideas, but be prepared for some tough ones, especially about whether this story is 'really true'. Be honest and say that we cannot prove that this story happened anymore than we can 'prove' any other historical account, but we can study it closely, then ask ourselves questions about what it is saying, such as:

- Why did the 'men' disciples, who wrote this story down afterwards, tell it in a way that makes them look like cowards who ran away? Was it to tell the truth as it really happened?
- Why did none of Jesus' disciples (men or women) expect to see him alive again?
- Why were women the first people to see the risen Jesus? In the first century, women weren't thought to be trustworthy. If these people made it all up, they created a story that was deliberately hard to believe. What's the point, unless it really happened?
- Were these people slightly crazy, fooling themselves? This small group of 'failures' became a

powerful people-movement that swept the Roman Empire, driving out the old gods and beliefs. If this was foolishness, it was amazingly successful. This story's message spoke deeply to thousands of people, who then wanted to be part of it.

- In Roman times, crucifixion was thought to be the most embarrassing and shameful death that anyone could suffer. If they were making it up, why didn't the disciples create a more heroic death for Jesus?
- Why does the Bible include four slightly different versions of this story? Why not have just one? Is it saying, 'Make up your own mind, but this is what we all think?'

2. **Mind-mapping questions and answers**

For children familiar with this technique, mind-mapping is a neat way for older children to explore and develop ideas. If studying this topic over a series of weeks, set up a classroom discussion wall with key questions and possible answers for pupils to add to and annotate.

3. **Teaching children to tell the paper-cutting story for themselves**

This will take a lot of scrap A4 paper, a large bin liner for all the bits and quite a lot of patience, but the children will find it fascinating. Each child will need a pair of sharp scissors and lots of paper. Expect the folding and cutting to be difficult, demonstrating it several times with larger pieces of paper, and pairing up more able 'folders and cutters' with others. It's not as easy for some as we'd like to think. Then challenge the children to take the story home to show to someone in their family.