

Expanding the Impact of Your
Gifts of Encouragement

Jesus Lives!

Let's Celebrate!

This event outline provides ideas for approximately an hour-long program. Each activity focuses on Jesus' resurrection. It's perfect for use as a spring outreach event for children ages 3 to 9. Consider adapting it for use in your children's Sunday school event the weekend before or after Easter, in a midweek Christian education event, or in Bible club.

We've planned your event for you—including a Bible story presentation, snack, activities, and songs for young learners! May God bless you as you share the joy of Jesus' resurrection with the kids in your care.

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#JLL3DC



If you have ideas for how we might make future events even more useful in your setting, be sure to let us know! You may email us at editor@CTAinc.com.



Jesus Lives! Let's Celebrate!

Kids' Event Outline

In this event outline you will find suggestions for activities, songs, snacks, and Bible time. Read through the choices in advance so that you will have the necessary materials available when the event begins. Choose the activities you wish to use, taking into account the size of your group, your guests' ages and interests, their background knowledge, skill levels, and the time-frame you have scheduled.

As Children Arrive

Warmly greet children and parents as they arrive. Give each child a *Jesus Lives! Let's Celebrate!* goodie bag, and help little ones as necessary use markers to label the bag with their name. (You will need to use a permanent marker to write on the plastic, so supervise carefully to ensure ink doesn't stain any child's clothes. As an alternative, affix large, self-adhesive labels to each goodie bag. Then use washable markers to write names on the labels.)

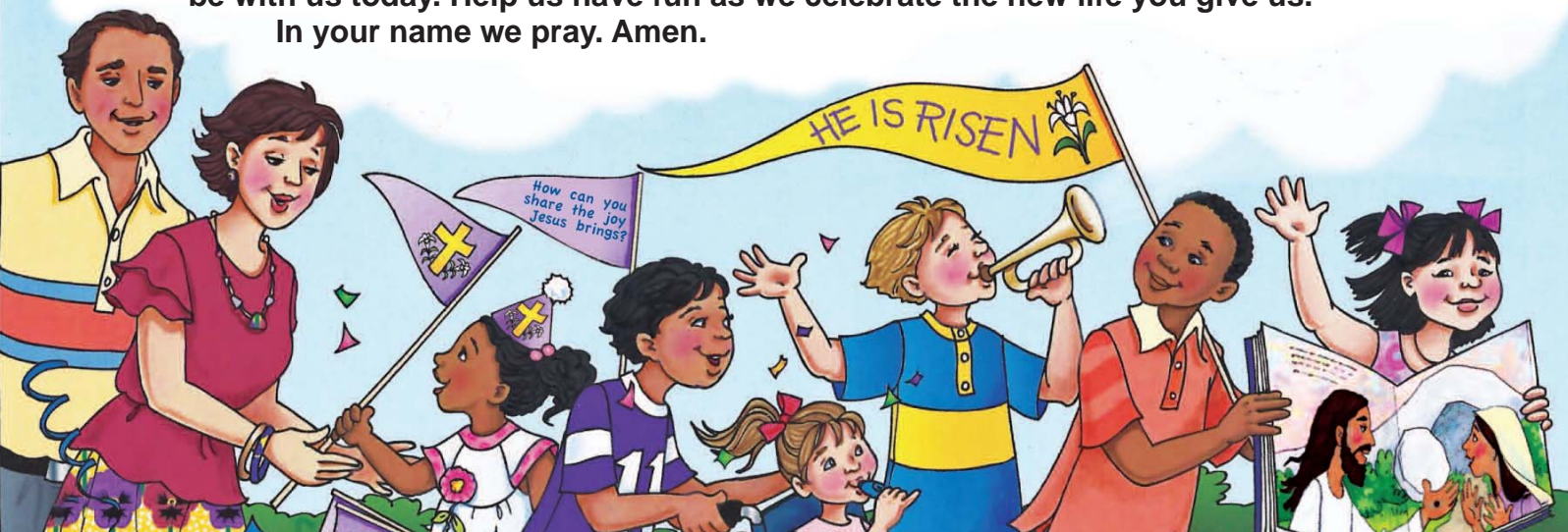
TIP: Later in this event, you will assign the children to small groups for work in the activity centers. You will likely want 4–6 children in each small group. Consider using the goodie bag arrival activity to make this easier. For example, use a blue marker to write names on 4–6 different goodie bags, a red marker for a different group of 4–6 goodie bags, a green marker for 4–6 additional goodie bags, and so on. Later, you can easily create a blue small group, a red small group, and a green small group by gathering children according to the color on their goodie bags.

Introduce the children to each other as each child arrives, and help everyone learn newcomers' names. Engage everyone in conversation, using questions like these:

- **What is a celebration?**
- **Tell about a time when you celebrated. What did you celebrate?**
- **Can you name other times people celebrate?**
- **How does a big celebration make you feel?**
- **Today we'll talk about the best reason to celebrate. Can you guess what that might be? We'll find out very soon!**

When your guests have arrived and you're ready to move the children into today's small group activities, say something like this: **We're here today to celebrate the new life Jesus has for us. The new life Jesus gives will last forever! Let's pray for our time together.** Pray using words like: **Dear Jesus, be with us today. Help us have fun as we celebrate the new life you give us.**

In your name we pray. Amen.



Small-Group Activities that Teach

NOTE: You likely won't have time for all the activities suggested below, so choose from among them those that best fit the guests you hope will attend and that make the best use of the products, resources, and volunteers available to you.

Assign the children to groups, 4–6 kids in each group. (If you color-coordinated the names you printed on each child's goodie bag as the children arrived, explain that now.) Mix older children with younger ones, and assign one adult per group to shepherd the children from activity to activity. These adult guides should offer encouragement and show Jesus' love and care.

Explain that the groups will move from one activity to the next every 10 minutes or so. Ring a bell or play "traveling music" that the group will hear when it's time to rotate. Then send the children to the activity centers.

I. Bible Center

Seat children near you so they can see the pictures as you read the book *Jesus Lives! Let's Celebrate!* (Item #JLL3SC). Get listeners ready for the story with words like these:

Watch and see the children's parade change as I read the story. Listen for the word *celebrate*. Each time you hear that word, you may cheer, sound your pretend horn, whistle, or clap. Let's practice together.

We want to celebrate (pause for the children's response) **because Jesus, our Savior, is alive! He died for our sins, but he didn't stay in the grave! Jesus came alive again for us on the first Resurrection Day! It's the very best reason to celebrate!** (Pause for children's response.)

Then begin reading the book, pausing to allow the children to respond each time you say, "Celebrate." Make the story more personal to the children as you read the questions imbedded within the illustrations and allow them to answer. You will also want to point out how the parade is growing—with more and more people added all along the way!



NOTE: If your group is large, consider showing the free, downloadable PowerPoint version of the book. That way, they can all see the pictures as you read.

After reading the book, invite the children to listen to the whole story of Jesus' resurrection. Consider reading a simplified version from a children's Bible. Then ask, **Why did Jesus die?** (He died to take away our sins—the wrong, hurtful things we sometimes say and do.)

No one but Jesus could die for sins, because Jesus never sinned at all—not even one time! He kept all of God’s laws perfectly for us. Then he took our sins—the wrong things we think, say, and do—to his cross. He suffered and died in our place, taking the punishment we deserved. But did Jesus stay dead in his grave? No! Jesus came alive again on the first Resurrection Day! God raised Jesus from the dead to show that what Jesus did was enough. Our sins are gone.

Now we are God’s very own children. Listen to what Jesus said: “Because I live, you also will live” (John 14:19). Jesus lives, and we can celebrate. (Pause for children’s response.) That celebration starts now and keeps on going and going and going—because the life we have in Jesus will never end! Everyone who believes in Jesus lives with him now, here on earth. When our life here ends, we will live with Jesus in heaven.

If time will allow, teach children the cheer below. You can say the words and demonstrate the action; then let the children echo the words and actions back to you:

Jesus lives! (hands over head)
Wow—it’s great! (show two thumbs up)
Let us all (“roll” hands in front of you)
Celebrate! (jump and cheer)

If time permits, return to the story and ask the imbedded questions again. Let the children who did not have a chance to answer earlier do so now. Younger children may also enjoy counting the number of people in the parade and noting the differences from one page to the next.

As the children leave this activity center, give each a copy of the book *Jesus Lives! Let’s Celebrate!* (Item #JLL3SC). Encourage them to put it in their goodie bag, take it home, and share it with friends and members of their family later today and throughout the week.

II. Resurrection Window Cling

Scatter colorful permanent markers on the table. Distribute the *Jesus Lives! Let’s Celebrate!* color-your-own window cling (Item #JLL3CL) and invite children to use the markers to color the cling. (Caution children that the markers may stain clothing, so they must work carefully.)

As the groups work, remind the children, **Jesus died to take away all our sins—the wrong things we do and the good things we fail to do. Even though Jesus never sinned—not even once—he loved us so much that he died in our place. He let himself be punished for us. The best part of all is that Jesus didn’t stay dead. He came alive again! Now we know for sure that our Friend and Savior, Jesus, will always be with us, and we’ll always be with him.**

Explain that the cling will stick to a window. Demonstrate this if possible in your setting. **Just as the light shines through the colorful cling, Jesus’ love can shine through us to others, too! How will people see Jesus’ love in us? How can we show that love?**

Encourage the children to put their completed window cling in their goodie bag, take it home, and display it in a window where it can remind the entire family about Christ’s love.



III. Song Center

Teach children the following song to the tune of “Here We Go ‘Round the Mulberry Bush.” (If the melody is unfamiliar, key the words “tune Mulberry Bush” into your Internet search engine.) Use the actions described below to help the children learn the words and sing with confidence and joy.

Explain, **Because Jesus loves us, he willingly died on his cross and paid the penalty for our sins. His resurrection crushed the power of death and hell forever. Jesus is our kind, wonderful Friend now and forever.**

My Jesus lives! Let’s celebrate! (hands over heart; jump/wave hands over head)

Celebrate! Celebrate! (jump/wave hands over head)

My Jesus lives! Let’s celebrate! (hands over heart; jump/wave hands over head)

Celebrate today! (wave hands over head)

Remind your listeners that we can celebrate Jesus’ resurrection anytime—not just on Resurrection Day.

When we are feeling sad or weak or lonely, we can remember that Jesus is strong and powerful. He can help us and he wants to help us! Our living, loving Savior is able to help us with any problem. We can always ask him. Our Jesus is strong! Our Jesus is alive!

Celebrate these truths by singing the song once again.

Challenge children to name people who need to hear the Good News of Jesus’ resurrection—everyone! Jesus, our Savior, loves everyone! He wants all people to believe and be saved. Pray together. Ask Jesus to help you share the Good News as you go and tell others about his love.

As time will allow, sing other favorite songs about Jesus’ death and resurrection.

IV. Snack Station and 3D Hologram Bookmark

Plan to serve a simple snack of cheese and crackers. Or have volunteers decorate sugar cookies with Resurrection symbols (angels, butterflies, celebration banners and balloons). Serve water or juice in a *Jesus Lives! Let’s Celebrate!* tumbler (Item #JLL3PT).

As the children eat, talk about Jesus’ resurrection. Give each child a *Jesus Lives! Let’s Celebrate!* 3D hologram bookmark (Item #JLL3DBK) and use the questions below as a guide for discussion.

- **What happens when you move the bookmark?** (The picture changes—balloons fly and confetti falls as the parade celebrates Jesus’ resurrection.)
- **Why did Jesus die?** (To wash away our sins; Jesus let himself be punished for our sins—he had no sins of his own.)
- **What makes Jesus’ resurrection something we want to celebrate?** (Because of Jesus, we can be God’s friends; we can know Jesus’ love now and experience it forever; his love for us never stops!)



If older children finish their snack early, suggest that they find the Resurrection story in their Bible and use their *Jesus Lives! Let's Celebrate!* 3D hologram bookmark to mark the place. The children may discover that the Bible records Christ's resurrection in several places because it is such a wonderful truth!

NOTE: The Resurrection account is found in Matthew 28, Mark 16, Luke 24, and John 20.

As the children leave this center, be sure each child puts the bookmark into their goodie bag. Encourage children to take the bookmark home and show it to friends and family members. Encourage them to tell everyone what the bookmark says about who Jesus is, and what he has done for us.

V. Parade Flag Project

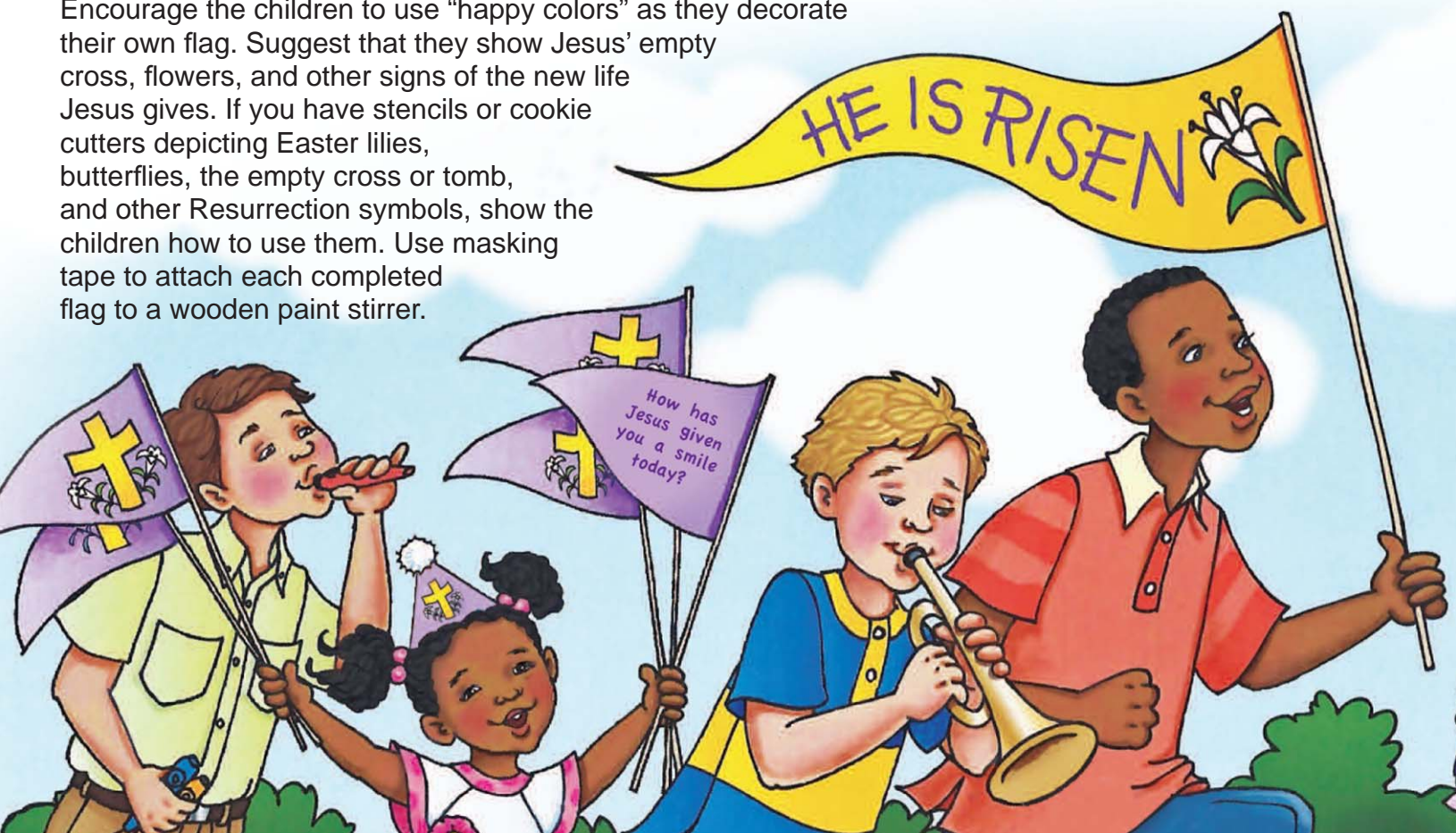
Make a few parade flags ahead of time to show the children. Have wooden paint stirrers on hand to serve as flagpoles. Local paint stores or home improvement stores may sell these to you at a reasonable rate or even give them away. (If you don't have access to paint stirrers, simply roll construction paper into a tight cylinder and tape the parade flag to it. Or use large plastic straws, reducing the size of the flags to match.)

Scatter crayons on the table, and give each child a triangular paper flag to decorate. Tell children to put their name on the back side of their flag. Help younger participants to do so.

Show children a parade flags in the *Jesus Lives! Let's Celebrate!* softcover book and call attention to the flags you made ahead of time. Ask, **Why do people sometimes carry banners or flags in a parade?** (To let everyone know why they are celebrating.)

Why are we celebrating today? We are so happy that Jesus is alive. He died on the cross to pay for our sins, but Jesus did not stay in the tomb. God raised him from the dead on the first Resurrection Day! Jesus lives!

Encourage the children to use "happy colors" as they decorate their own flag. Suggest that they show Jesus' empty cross, flowers, and other signs of the new life Jesus gives. If you have stencils or cookie cutters depicting Easter lilies, butterflies, the empty cross or tomb, and other Resurrection symbols, show the children how to use them. Use masking tape to attach each completed flag to a wooden paint stirrer.



Large-Group Activities

I. Resurrection Chant

As groups complete the center activities, call them to join you in a large, central area. Teach the group the following chant/cheer, and keep performing it until each of the small groups has joined the large group.

The leader will say the words while making fist pumps in the air in rhythm. Students will join in with the words as they learn them.

Celebrate! Celebrate!
Shout Hooray!
Jesus lives! Jesus lives!
He's alive today!
So join our parade,
And don't be late!
Come on everybody, let's CELEBRATE!

Then repeat the chant from the beginning. You may vary the fist pumps by substituting foot stomps, jumps, claps, and other movements.

Ask volunteers to move the assembling children into groups of three or four to line up for the Resurrection parade. Students may continue to chant as you organize them.

II. Resurrection Parade

When all the small groups have assembled, explain that you will form a Resurrection parade as you walk to the egg hunt area. Encourage the children to wave their parade flags and keep on shouting the chant all along the parade route. Children may invite parade observers to join in the parade, too. Everyone has a reason to celebrate, because Jesus is alive!

If possible, play Resurrection songs for the children to sing as they march. Have plenty of volunteers on hand to make sure no child is accidentally left behind.



III. Egg Hunt

Ensure that everyone has the *Jesus Lives! Let's Celebrate!* goodie bag (Item #JLL3TS12) they received as they arrived. By now, the bags will have several take-home items in them. Now your guests will add eggs from the egg hunt.

Explain the egg hunt process, the boundaries, and safety rules. Have plenty of adult helpers available to ensure no child wanders off and to make sure everyone enjoys a fun, safe time. You may want to pair very young children with an older child or adult helper.

Explain that you have hidden one or two special eggs for each child; consider purchasing the *Jesus Lives! Let's Celebrate!* Gospel Easter Egg (Item #JLL3EG) and/or the *Jesus, Your Living Savior* Gospel Easter Egg (Item #EAS3EG). Each child may take home one of each of these eggs. If they find others once they have found their own, they are to leave the additional eggs for other children to find. Then release the group to find the hidden eggs.

When most of the eggs have been found, call everyone to a central location. If possible, have them sit down with you. Repeat the "Resurrection Chant" one last time. Thank everyone for coming and make sure they have their take-home items.

Be sure to give visiting children a letter, brochure, or some other preprinted invitation welcoming them and their family to visit your church and to consider becoming a part of your church family, if they don't already have a church family of their own. (CTA makes several free, downloadable resources available for Easter to help with this. Check them out by going to www.CTAinc.com/FREE and clicking on *Jesus Lives! Let's Celebrate!*)

After the event and cleaning up, gather volunteers one last time. Pray for the children who attended and their families, asking God to bless the Word he has planted in their hearts. Ask that Jesus' Easter gift of eternal life will forever remain their most precious possession.

