



Church of Ireland ✙
Board for Ministry with
Children & Families

SPRING

VALENTINES
DAY

FAMILY LENT
IDEAS

EASTER
RESOURCES

www.cfm.ireland.anglican.org

Welcome



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Welcome to Spring – my absolute favourite season! Isn't it wonderful how each year Spring feels like a delightful surprise? The evenings get brighter, and everything around us – from trees to flowers to hedgerows – bursts into life with vibrant colours.

Last year, Spring felt like it was tightly packed into March with Easter, St. Patrick's Day, and Mother's Day falling within weeks of each other. Thankfully, this year, we have a little more breathing room to savour the season!

To help you make the most of this beautiful time, our newsletter is once again filled with ideas, inspiration, and resources perfect for your churches, schools, or homes. This season gives us so many opportunities to journey with our children and explore God's love, justice, and grace together.

As always, we keep you in our prayers and would love to hear about your activities. Please don't hesitate to reach out with any news, questions, ideas or events by emailing us at cfm@ireland.anglican.org. Blessings, Rachael.

KIDS IN THE KINGDOM

EMPOWERING YOUNG VOICES
IN FAITH AND FAMILY



Join us for an inspiring
evening with the wonderful
Millie Bellew.



Drawing from her in-depth research on the religious rights of children, Millie will delve into the importance of empowering children's voices within our faith communities and families. Click **HERE** to register.



FEBRUARY 19TH

8PM ZOOM



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Valentines Day



"Of all the commandments, which is the most important?"

Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength.'

The second is this: 'Love your neighbour as yourself.

There is no commandment greater than these." Mark 12:30-31

Love it or loathe it, Valentines day can be a great opportunity to chat with our Children about friendships, kindness, and most importantly God's unconditional love. And given that Jesus told us that loving God and our neighbour are the top 2 commandments it's an opportunity too good to pass up on.

So how can we spark those conversations? Here's a couple of practical ideas to get you started.



@Home

Encourage positive affirmation for your children by writing heart-shaped post-it notes with things you love about them, focusing on their qualities rather than achievements.

For example "I love how kind you are" Starting Sunday and leading up to the 14th, stick these notes on their bedroom door at night so that every morning they read a new affirmation.



@Church.

Valentines can be a great opportunity to spread God's love to everyone - not just the loved-up couples.

We've a love heart printable you can access, why not print them off, attach them to a small bag or box of chocolates and give them out to your Church family or encourage your congregation to take one each and give them to someone who doesn't come to church....yet! Download the sheet [HERE](#)



@Toddler group

A lovely simple craft for your toddlers to enjoy, teaching how we can show love to God's creation, Using toast cut into heart shapes, poke a hole at the top and thread some string to tie a loop. The children can help to cover the toast with lard and dip into a tray filled with nut free seeds (to avoid any allergy dangers...with the children not the birds!).

You could also learn the song "God sees the little sparrow fall" which you can hear [HERE](#). (photo credit - Kiltiernan Church)



NEW



cmsireland
equipping the church in mission

2025 CMSI RESOURCE



Fair Play: making things right with God today

CMSI's new Children's Resource unpacks ideas around fairness and justice. Children will explore how this is a complex area and must go beyond equality for individuals. They will consider matters such as levelling up in both global and local contexts, grounding everything in the Christian call to 'do justice, love mercy and walk humbly with God' (Micah 6: 8).

The resource explores four key areas that come out of this verse, using the Bible and examples from some of CMS Ireland's global partners, to consider the issue of fairness and justice. This dual focus on the Bible and their global partners.

In this pack you will find 4 sessions exploring how we must go beyond simple handouts or thinking that these issues can be easily solved. This is a digital resource, with differentiated lesson plans, workbooks, PPTs and videos accompanying each session. The pack will be available from the start of Lent. To sign up, go to CMS Ireland's website www.cmsireland.org/childrens-resource or scan this QR code.



ALTERNATIVE WAYS TO EXPLORE THIS SEASON

LOVING LENT



Share Passover



When we talk through the Easter Story we mention that Jesus and His friends had gathered to celebrate Passover. To help our families understand more fully the significance of

this feast, why not hold a Seder meal as a church, or just in your home?

I have been part of a Church Passover and personally found it very grounding for my faith, it is also such an interactive way to teach Children and help them to understand the context of the Last Supper. This year Passover starts Saturday, April 12th (after sundown) and concludes on Sunday, April 20th (at nightfall), and the Seder meals are shared on April 12 after nightfall, and the second Seder will be on April 13 after nightfall.

During the meal the story of Israel's captivity and freedom is told, but as Christians we can share with our children not only God's rescue for the Israelites but also how He has rescued us through Jesus' death and resurrection.

There is a script that is followed called a Haggadah, but to help make this easier for younger children to understand you might want to use a tailored script such as this one by Heidi Franz - click [HERE](#) to request the download.

"What are you giving up for Lent?" It's the annual discussion amongst family, friends, Church members and those in shops who have run out of topics for polite conversation!

In our house I have to admit it is a discussion I try desperately to avoid for fear that someone will suggest I give up Chocolate!

But despite the pressure placed on Chocoholics like myself, Lent is a season unlike any other in society today.

A season of restraint over greed; A season of focus over distraction; A season of giving over getting. A truly counter-cultural season and one which the retail industry does not want to promote for obvious reasons. So, where the retail industry steps back we the Church should step up and not allow this season to be demoted to the history books as "something people used to do in the olden days" as our daughter often says.

How then can we teach our Children to Love Lent? We have a few ideas on this page to help you start.

First up is Plates of pLENTy. This is a mostly child-led resource which helps children to consider practical ways to respond to Lent.

There are 4 empty plates which focus on 4 key themes through Lent:

- A plate to Serve others
- A plate to Give (to those around you or to God)
- A plate to Love the world we live in
- A plate to help us think about the way we Live

Although there are a few ideas on the plates, each child can think about their own response to the challenge. There is space on the plate to encourage reflection on the action they chose and what they learned/what God revealed to them during that time. They can either pick one plate for the whole of Lent or complete them all during the 40 day period.

Click [HERE](#) to download the pack.



EnviroLent



If you missed our social media posts last year, take a moment to check out the wonderful EnviroLent created by Millie Bellew.

This resource is perfect for children who are passionate about the environment or those who are beginning to explore how their actions impact it. EnviroLent encourages families to use the season of Lent as an opportunity to reflect on their environmental impact. Each week includes a Bible reading, a prayer, and a suggested action for families to try together. Click [HERE](#) for access.





Neartú *(Irish for Strengthen)*

A conference for anyone involved in Children and Families Ministry.

Saturday
May 24th
10.30 am - 4 pm
€25
(inc. lunch)



Rachel Turner
Keynote speaker.

Author of many books including: "It takes a church to raise a parent"
Founder of Parenting for Faith. International speaker.

As well as a variety of Workshops, Worship, Resource Marketplace & Yummy food!

easter



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This year we have a new paper craft to help you explore the Easter Story with your Children.

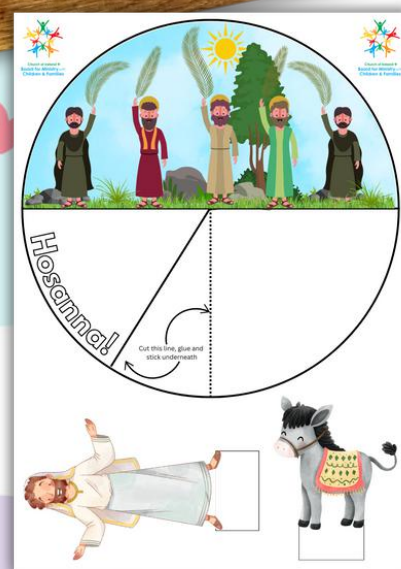
Our 3D Easter Dioramas break the story into 4 sections and allow you to discuss what was happening at each stage, ask wondering questions and think about how we can respond to what God is teaching us. At the back of each picture is the Bible passage relating to what is happening, providing another way to get the God's word into homes and encourage the whole family to explore together.

There are two versions to choose from - one ready to print in full colour and another black and white for children to colour in as you chat together. The instructions are included and it is very simple, even little hands can practice their fine motor skills by cutting out the circles or characters.

You can either take one page a week in the build up to Easter Sunday, or all in one go if you are running an Easter Holiday club and have time.

We recommend printing onto thin card or heavy duty paper to ensure the characters don't bend.

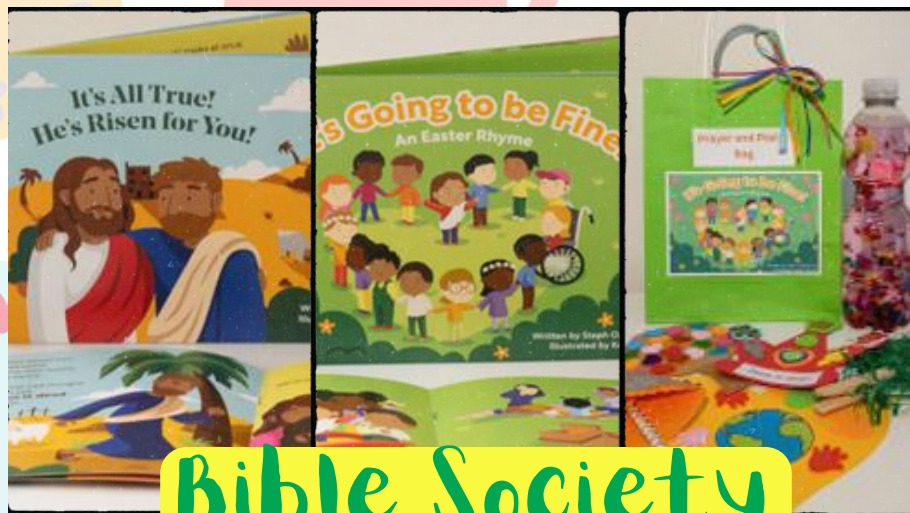
You can download your pack by clicking [HERE](#).



Easter



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Bible Society

Once again the Bible Society have produced a beautiful Easter offering which includes a book for Primary school age children and one for Toddlers. Alongside the books you can also download for free an activity pack which compliments the books. The pack will give you all the instructions to help children to make a Prayer and Praise Bag, which will encourage them to chat with God as they read through the story booklet. They can make something for each of the six parts of the story to help them focus and chat to God as they journey towards Easter. Currently orders can only be delivered to Northern Ireland - but stay connected to our CFM social media pages as we are in discussions and hope to announce a change for delivery to the Republic soon, Click **HERE** to take a look at all their Easter resources and to place your order.

Jesus without Language

If you would like to tell the whole story of Easter in one go but don't have the time to make all the dioramas, Jesus Without Language has a tri-part 3D option which is also free to download.

This is more a resource for leaders/parents/carers to make and talk through the story rather than for children to make, but - as with so much of JWL's resources, it's beautifully created. JWL also has a range of Lent resources and many other Bible stories, so if you've never visited their website now's the time! Click **HERE** for the Easter resource.



Prayer Spaces



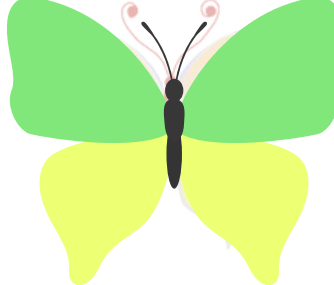
Easter is a great time to introduce Prayer Spaces into your setting - whether it's a school, Church, Club space or even in your home.

Prayer Spaces allow children to take time out to pray, think and consider the story of Jesus in their own time. These spaces can be especially valuable to those who struggle with formal services.

Prayer Spaces in Schools have some wonderful ideas and guidance on how to set up an Easter prayer space.

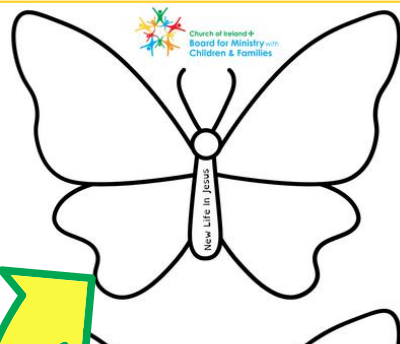
It is free to sign up and download the instructions for all the spaces on their site. Click **HERE** to take a look around.

easter



Butterflies are a lovely symbol of our new life in Christ, especially during Easter. Their life cycle can help people of all ages understand Jesus' resurrection and its importance. Just like a caterpillar becomes a butterfly, we too can experience new life through Jesus. His death and resurrection show us that there is always hope and a chance for fresh starts. By trusting in Jesus, we begin a new journey. So, whenever you see a butterfly, remember the special gift of new life we have through Him!

Here are some simple ways to use the butterfly idea in your conversations. Click [HERE](#) to download both templates.



Decorate me!

Those of you who have been in our Welcoming Families Workshop or indeed the last Building Blocks event will be familiar with this idea - it's a fantastic way to brighten your Church yard or rails. We have a very basic outline of a butterfly which you can download [HERE](#) and print back to back. Challenge the children - or indeed any age - in your congregation, or the school you are connected with, to decorate the butterfly with beautiful patterns and colours. Gather all the butterflies, cut them out and laminate them, then hang them from the trees in your church yard or from your railings and invite families to come and find their Butterflies. You could even tie it in with the Small but Mighty trail which is free to download [HERE](#) on the Sunhats and Wellieboots page. You could either have this as a come any day activity to encourage people to explore the church grounds, or you could make it a Spring day event and have the church open to welcome families to stay and chat over tea and snacks, have congregation members available to link in with new faces.

Photo credit above to Diocese of Connor

Eat me!

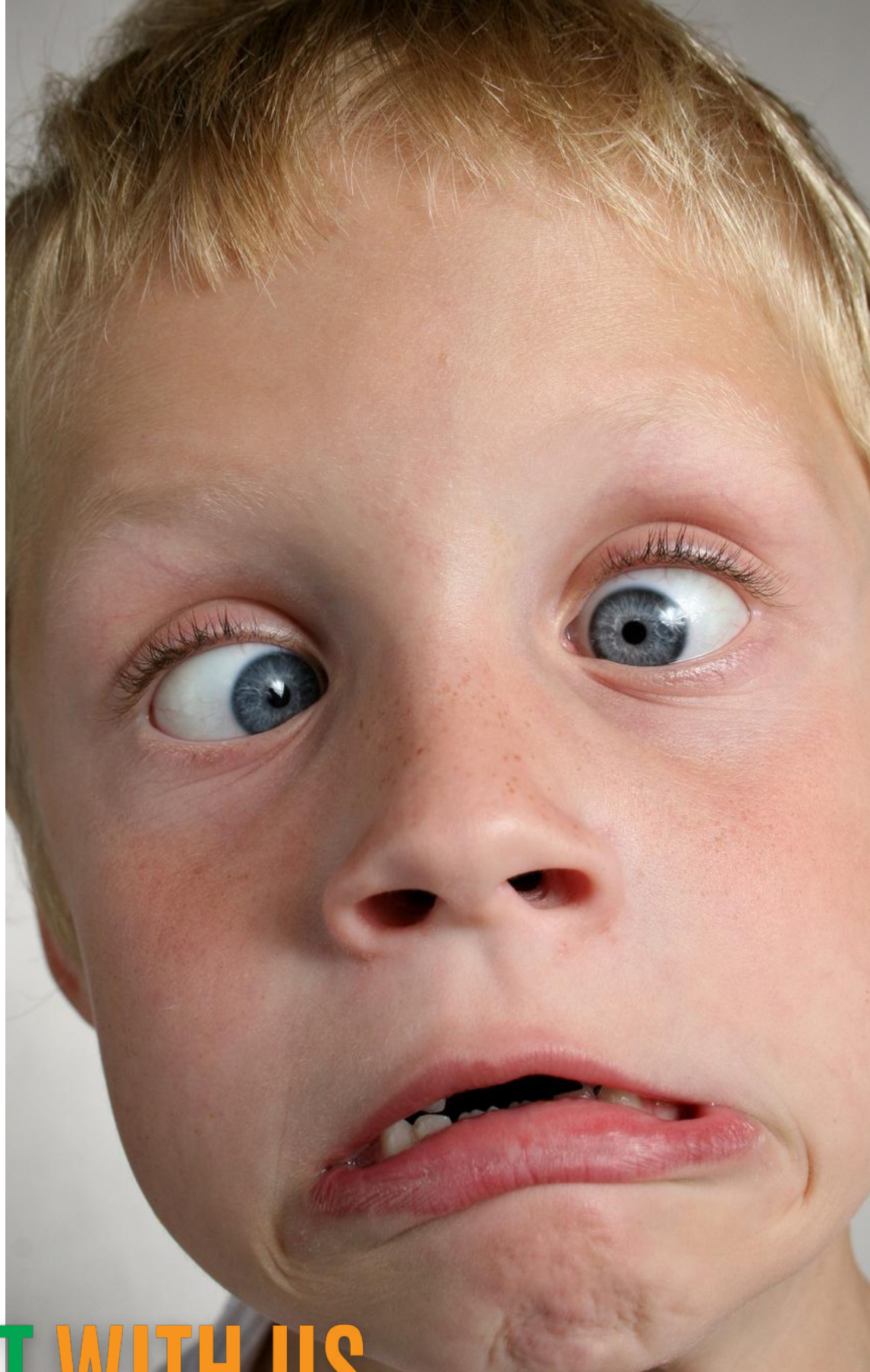
The second butterfly is a more delicious sort altogether! This printable can be coloured in and stuck to a paper plate onto which your group can place their edible butterflies. Again, little hands can develop their fine motor skills by cutting out the circle.

To make the butterflies in the photo we used chocolate fingers, chocolate covered pretzels and mini smarties - all held in place with melted chocolate which hardens when dry. You can of course let your culinary imaginations run wild and use a multitude of foods to make your butterflies, even vegetables (much to my daughter's disgust!!) It's fun way to get a wonderful Bible verse into the homes of your Children.





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CONNECT WITH US

FEEL FREE TO CONTACT



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