

Running your toddler Easter event

- Before the event** Advertise your event widely. A poster template has been provided. Running it on a Saturday may allow the whole family to attend, or you might want to run during your normal group time. Try to get extra help (if someone else tells the story you can more easily chat to people). Decide what crafts and activities you want to provide. Some people may be glad to help by preparing craft activities or helping with refreshments.
- Setting up** Try to set your room out differently to create a 'special' space at the front where the group can come and sit facing the screen with their backs to the rest of the room - this will also give the leaders a chance to hide Easter eggs for the egg hunt. Alternatively you may be able to go somewhere different, in a church worship area or community hall perhaps, to make it seem more special for the children. Local churches might welcome children for a special Easter event. Whether you do the Easter craft before the talk (or after) will depend on your own group circumstances.
- Welcome...** Once everyone has gathered at the front, welcome them. If you are in a church, you could start with a prayer. It is best to do this at the outset because they will tend to be quiet and a little in awe of the fact that you are somewhere special, perhaps with someone they don't know. You could also start off with a quieter action song, as you need to keep them calm until after the talk.
- Perhaps sing a bunny-themed song like *'Peter Rabbit has a fly upon his nose.'* Church groups can use the well-known song, *Thank you Lord for this fine day...* and add verses that fit with the group. (e.g. Thank you for... mums and dads; Easter eggs; Postman Pat; tiny tots; etc). Making it up on the day gets the children involved. Keep it quiet and not too long. Try to use the same songs each Easter as repetition creates familiarity, and that's the way under-3s tend to learn.
- Easter talk** This talk is designed to tell the message of Easter in a very visual way. The theme is... 'God loves you very much.' Aim for around two to three minutes as it will almost certainly take longer. Vary your voice and try to draw the children into the story with questions wherever you can.
- A suggested script has been provided, together with simple pictures that tell the story. (These can be printed and mounted on card, or can be downloaded as a screen presentation). If you wish to use props, you'll need two identical teddies, hidden in a brightly coloured box, a see-through bowl of water, and 'mud' (eg chocolate sauce). For extra impact, you could even have some 'old man' clothes to put on, with a mum, pushchair, child, and a girl on a bike all behind you. (Be careful who you choose - it might be worth choosing a child who knows you.)
- End with a song with actions and musical instruments to make it as noisy as possible. Church groups may like to end with *Jesus' love is very wonderful...*
- Easter egg hunt** Invite the children to go and hunt for Easter eggs (small solid chocolate ones are ideal), making sure that there are enough for each to have one. Keep a few in reserve just in case someone fails to find one! It's also a nice idea to present an Easter Egg to each carer (maybe a crème egg), or to choose one mum who has been going through a particularly difficult time and give her a really nice Easter egg all to herself. When all the eggs are collected, thank them for coming and give them a colouring picture to take home. Remind them to take their eggs, their colouring picture **and** their craft home!