



Awesome Easter Pop-up Service

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Instructions

This service has been put together in a way that can be done simply, with little to no rehearsal and for any size of church. It can be done with just two people at the front, or with a series of pairs of people, perhaps an adult and child pairing. The props are simple and easy to find but will provide visual reinforcement to what is being said in the story and add emphasis to all that happened when Jesus came back to life. The script offers ways to involve the entire church congregation with actions cued on words and phrases that are highlighted in the script. We have suggested places that you might want to sing but we haven't suggested specific songs

as those choices are individual for each church setting. We've also suggested prayers in the service, but we have left it to you to insert prayers that are appropriate to your tradition. We hope you enjoy sharing the story of Easter together.

The script is based on our new children's booklet *The Awesome Easter Surprise*. You could buy copies of the booklet and give them out to children before or after the service. Visit www.biblesociety.org.uk/easter to order. There is an accompanying PowerPoint with backgrounds visuals from the booklet that you can show during the service. The Slide numbers in the script correspond with the correct background.

The graphic features a central image of the booklet cover for 'The Awesome Easter Surprise'. The cover art depicts three women in traditional headscarves and robes standing near an open tomb entrance. An angel in white robes is visible inside the tomb. The background shows a landscape with trees and hills. Text on the cover includes 'The Awesome Easter Surprise', 'WRITTEN BY MARK WOODS', and 'ILLUSTRATED BY MATTIA CERATO'. To the right of the booklet, the text 'Awesome Easter Pop-up Service' is displayed in a large, bold font. The Bible Society logo is positioned in the top right corner of the graphic area. The entire graphic is set against a background of purple and green geometric shapes.

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Preparation

1. Assign parts

Narrator/s: a person who reads the stanzas of the poem *The Awesome Easter Surprise*. You can have one narrator, or five different ones as noted in the script.

Silent partner/s: this is a person who brings in the props for each section (see script). As with the narrator, this could be one person throughout, but to involve more people and children this can be five different 'silent partners.' There are script notes explaining how this person should react and interact with the props.

Stage manager: someone who has oversight of the whole service. They are there to send the right people and correct props up at the right time.

2. Read through

Have the narrators and silent partners read through the script notes. As this is a poem, they will want to practise saying the words with the correct emphasis and rhythm. There are also a couple of cues for actions in the poem and the narrators should know what to do in these places to help the whole church join in (see introductory comments). The narrator and silent partner should work together so props coincide with what is being said.

3. Gather props

- Large chocolate egg or Easter basket brimming with goodies
- A tray full of herbs and spices. These could be cut fresh from the garden or be spice jars from the kitchen cupboard
- Something to represent angels. This could be two tinsel halos or two torches that are shone around the church. The torch function on mobile phones would be fine for this purpose, but make sure there are two as the poem speaks of two angels
- A box that is big enough for everyone in the congregation to see. The box needs a lid so that the silent partner can make a show of lifting it off to see what's inside and, finding nothing, display the empty insides to the congregation
- Picnic basket covered with a tea towel and containing:
 - Loaf of bread - an uncut loaf would be most effective so the silent partner can break it apart
 - Fish - either just one to represent the fish that were caught, or a net full of fish like the poem says
 - Napkin - for breakfast (see script notes)



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Script

Instructions to the congregation

(Show PPT slide 1):

Easter Day! Today we are going to retell the story of Easter by reading *The Awesome Easter Surprise* and everyone can take part. Whenever the narrator says, Jesus, we will sign it by tapping the palm of one hand with the middle finger of the other, and vice versa. Let's practise that together (*practise a couple of times*).

Also, in a couple of places in the poem we are going to join in together when we hear 'yours and mine' (*hold out your hands toward the people on 'yours' and put both hands on your heart for 'mine.' Practise with everyone*). So, keep an ear out and watch so you know when it's time for us to take part together.

Opening prayer (your choice)

Opening song (your choice)





1. Is Easter about all those chocolate eggs
We give in this wonderful season?
There's no doubt they're a treat, but it's not what
we eat
That's important – and here is the reason.

2. Though chocolate eggs are all very fine,
For two thousand Easters gone by
It's the stories of **JESUS** that people have told –
How he died, but God raised him on high.

3. For one day long ago – the saddest of days –
Wicked people put **Jesus** to death.
And he died **for your sins, and for mine,**
and for all
And he loved till his very last breath.

4. On that first Easter morning, all full of tears
Came the women, their bags full of spices
To lay on his body – but there at the tomb
Were two angels, all full of surprises.

5. 'He's not here – he is risen!' said the two
shining ones,
He's alive again, raised from the dead!
So they rushed off to tell all the other disciples
All that the angels had said.

Narrator: (Show PPT slide 2)

Read stanzas 1 and 2 (remember to include the sign for **Jesus**)

Silent partner:

Have a big chocolate egg or Easter basket full of goodies. Hold it up or walk around the front so that everyone can see it. Then put it down at the front, not central, but where it can still be seen. Maybe on a chair or table to the side.

Narrator: (Show PPT slide 3)

Read stanzas 3, 4 and 5 (remember to include the sign for **Jesus** and **for your sins, and for mine**)

Silent partner:

Carry in a tray of spices. This could be herbs cut from the garden or even spice jars from the kitchen cupboard. Pick them up off the tray and look at them so people can clearly see what they are.

Torches or tinsel halos - to represent the angels - pull out a couple of halos made with garlands or shine two bright torches (even torches on phones) around the church. Where the poem says, 'So they rushed off to tell all the other disciples,' leave the tray and torches, and run off in a mad dash.



6. 'You're joking!' said most of them.
'That sort of thing,
Doesn't happen, as well you should know.'
But Peter and John ran straight off to the tomb
As fast as they ever could go.

7. 'I wonder what we'll find inside?' they
were thinking,
And wondering if they would dare
To poke their heads in there – but when they
arrived,
It was true – there was NO BODY THERE!

8. The women were right: **Jesus** was alive.
And over the next forty days
They met him again and again, and he taught
them
More of his wonderful ways.

9. When two of them walked on the road
to Emmaus –
So sad, 'cos they thought he was dead –
He walked and he talked with them, joined in
their meal
And they knew him when he broke the bread.

Narrator: (Show PPT slide 4)

Read stanzas 6 and 7 (optional song after this part)

Silent partner:

Carry in a big box that has a lid so that it can be carried in, set down, lid removed, insides inspected, and, with a look of surprise, the empty insides shown to everyone on 'there was NO BODY THERE!' Exit and leave box at the front when your scene is done.

Song

Narrator: (Show PPT slide 5)

Read stanzas 8, 9, 10, 11, 12

Props:

Basket containing a loaf of bread (road to Emmaus), a fish or a net-full of fish (disciples fishing) and a dinner napkin (breakfast). Cover the basket with a tea towel so people can't see what's in the basket ahead of pulling out each item on cue from text.

Cues

Pull out loaf of bread on 'and they knew it was him when he broke the bread'.

Point to 'hand and side' when read by narrator.

Pull out fish when it says 'he gave them a net-full of fish'.

Pull out napkin and tuck it under your chin, like you are preparing to eat at 'Come and have breakfast'.

Leave basket and props at the front when you are finished with your scene.

10. When one of his followers doubted,
he said,
'Come here! Touch my hand and my side!'
And Thomas soon realised he wasn't a ghost.
'My Lord and my God!' he replied.



11. And when the disciples went out in their
boat –
They didn't catch all they could wish –
A mysterious stranger stood on the shore
And gave them a net-full of fish.



12. 'It's the Lord!' exclaimed Peter, and
leapt overboard –
The waters closed over his head –
But he and the others got safely to **Jesus**:
'Come and have breakfast,' he said.

13. So Easter's much more than a chocolate egg,
Though chocolate eggs are just fine.
It tells us of **Jesus**, who rose from the grave
And forgives all our sins – **yours and mine** –

Narrator: (Show PPT slide 6)

Read stanzas 13 and 14

14. And walks with us today as we go on
our way,
And still calls to us from the shore,
Because Easter is every day, here in our hearts –
And **Jesus** lives, for evermore.

Props:

Walk on and pick up chocolate egg/basket that was left on the stage earlier. Look at it thoughtfully, and then move around picking up and briefly pondering each of the things that have been left on the stage (spices, torches, empty box). Then look at the chocolate egg again, shrug and throw it off stage.

Put both hands over your heart on, 'Because Easter is every day, here in our hearts ...'

(Show PPT slide 7)

Song and prayer to end