

The Easter Tree

A Ten Day Family Activity

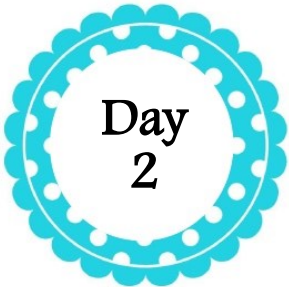
Supplies needed for this family activity:

- brown butcher paper
- green paper
- paper cut in the shape of bread
- paper for tracing hands
- lip-shape cut out of paper
- Band-Aids
- sandpaper
- cloth
- paper for drawing an angel
- glitter
- nails
- postcard size cardstock



The Easter Tree

Create a large cross from brown butcher paper or poster board. Tape the cross on a wall. Read 1 Peter 2:24 from your Bible. Go to Biblegateway.com and look up the New King James Version of this verse. What word does the NKJV use in place of “cross?” Why do we call this cross an Easter tree? What happened on the Easter tree?



The Palm Branch

Read Matthew 21:6-11. Discuss what makes Jesus worthy to be praised. Have everyone cut a palm leaf from green paper. On the leaf, write or draw a reason you want to praise Jesus. Tape the palm leaves to the wall at the bottom of your Easter tree.



The Bread

Have a special remembrance meal with your family. Light some candles and turn off the lights. Read Luke 22:14-20. Share stories about ways God has worked in your family this year. At the end of the meal, have everyone write on a bread-shaped paper one thing they are thankful for and want to remember. Tape the bread on the Easter Tree.



The Prayer

Read Matthew 26:36-39. Where did Jesus go when He felt troubled and needed to pray? Do you have a special place you like to go to pray? Do you include listening to worship music or keeping a prayer journal during your prayer time? Share ideas that have made your prayer life grow. Have everyone trace their hands, then write one new thing you may try to add to your prayer life. Tape the hands to the Easter tree.



The Kiss

Have you ever thought a kiss could mean something other than love? Read Mark 14:10-11, 43-36. How does this story make you feel? How do you think Jesus felt when Judas kissed him? Jesus knew Judas was going to betray him, yet he included Judas as one of his friends. Have you ever been hurt by a friend? Have you forgiven that friend? Write your name on the lip-shaped paper and thank Jesus for His love and forgiveness. Attach the lips to the Easter Tree.



The Thorns

Read about Jesus suffering in Matthew 27:27-31. If you have access to a bush with thorns, take a branch and let everyone feel the thorns. Give each family member a Band-Aid and have them write their name on the bandage. Take some time to thank God for sending Jesus to take the pain and punishment we deserve. Place the bandages on the Easter Tree as a reminder of the pain and suffering Jesus experienced in our place.



The Cross

Read Mark 15:22-27, 33-39. (For an extended look, add verses 28-32.) Take a piece of sandpaper and let everyone feel the roughness, similar to the rough wood on the cross. In Jesus' day, crucifixion was used as a punishment for people who had committed crimes. But Jesus wasn't a criminal. Why was Jesus crucified? Why did Jesus, the Son of God, allow Himself to be nailed to the cross and die? Cut the sandpaper into a cross shape and tape it to the Easter Tree.



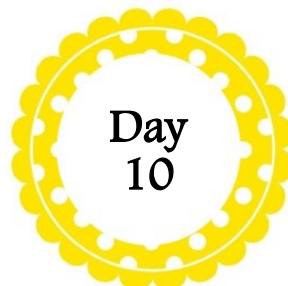
The Tomb

Read Matthew 27:57-61. (For an extended look, add verses 62-66.) Give everyone in your family a piece of cloth. How do you think Jesus' friends felt as they watched His body being wrapped in linen cloth and laid in a tomb? How would you have felt if you had been there with them? How does it make you feel today when you hear this story? With markers, write one or two words about your feelings on the cloth and tape it to the Easter Tree.



The Angel

Read Matthew 28:1-10. Describe the scene as the women arrived at the tomb. What astonishing news did the angel give to the women? What were the angel's instructions? How would you feel if you had such important news to share? How would you tell others this news? Draw a figure of an angel on a postcard size paper, decorate it with glitter and attach it to the Easter Tree.



The Nail Print

Discover the disciple Thomas' response when he heard that Jesus was alive in John 20:24-29. On a postcard size sheet of cardstock, have each family member finish the sentence (younger children can draw or have their parents write for them) "I BELIEVE IN JESUS BECAUSE..." Take a nail and pierce it through the paper, leaving a nail print, and hang the cards on the Easter Tree.