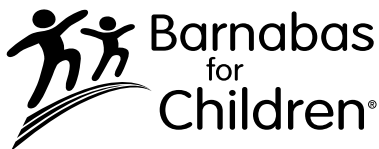


Family Fun for Easter

**30 Lent and Easter activities
for families to share**

Jane Butcher



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Pages 14–15: Bread dough recipe taken from *Messy Church 2*, p. 71
Page 31: Basic biscuit dough recipe taken from *Messy Cooks*, p. 17
Page 35: Passover meal idea extended from *Messy Church*, pp. 159–60
Page 45: Empty-tomb rolls recipe taken from *Messy Cooks*, p. 100

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Introduction

'Easter' is not just about the school holidays or the bank holiday weekend, although both can be very enjoyable. It's also not just about chocolate eggs and bunny rabbits, even though it may sometimes seem that way in the media or at your child's school. Sometimes the pressure—on our children and from our children—to turn Easter into a chocolate fest can seem overwhelming. Has Easter become all about spending and consuming, or can it be reclaimed as something more positive and more meaningful? Is it possible to rediscover the essence of Easter?

Well, the run-up to Easter starts a month or so earlier with the season of Lent. Over the years a number of traditional customs have sprung up, providing lots of opportunities for families to enjoy fun activities together over the weeks leading up to Easter. It's also a great way to mark the change from winter and Christmas to the new season of spring, and for Christians it gives the opportunity to recognise the importance of Lent and the celebration of Easter Sunday.

This book offers thirty ideas for activities to share as a family right through the season of Lent, starting with Shrove Tuesday, up to Holy Week and Easter Day itself. There are also suggestions for things to talk about and think about with your children along the way. I hope you have lots of family fun this Easter!

Jane Butcher

Temptation!

It's hard to give things up, and very tempting to 'give up' in the wrong way after a few days! Read the story of Jesus in the wilderness with your children to see how he dealt with 40 days of temptation.

1. Read Matthew's Gospel, chapter 4, verses 1 to 11

The Holy Spirit led Jesus into the desert, so that the devil could test him. After Jesus had gone without eating for forty days and nights, he was very hungry. Then the devil came to him and said, 'If you are God's Son, tell these stones to turn into bread.' Jesus answered, 'The Scriptures say:

"No one can live only on food. People need every word that God has spoken." "

Next, the devil took Jesus to the holy city and had him stand on the highest part of the temple. The devil said, 'If you are God's Son, jump off. The Scriptures say:

"God will give his angels orders about you. They will catch you in their arms, and you won't hurt your feet on the stones." "

Jesus answered, 'The Scriptures also say:

"Don't try to test the Lord your God!" "

Finally, the devil took Jesus up on a very high mountain and showed him all the kingdoms on earth and their power. The devil said to him, 'I will give all this to you, if you will bow down and worship me.'

Jesus answered, 'Go away, Satan! The Scriptures say:

"Worship the Lord your God and serve only him." "

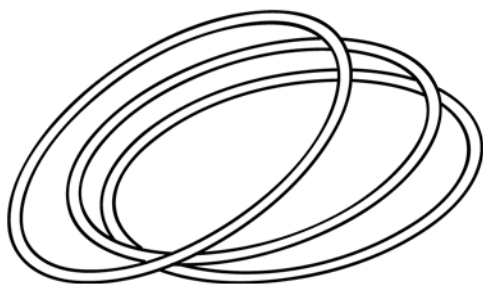
Then the devil left Jesus, and angels came to help him.

2. Egg and spoon obstacle courses

Try one or more of these temptation-themed challenges!

Jesus was tempted by the devil to step off the right path, but he knew he needed to trust God and stay on the right path. Set out an obstacle course in the house or garden. It could be some sturdy furniture, cushions, boxes, hula hoops or anything safe that is close at hand. Each person has to walk through the course as quickly as possible without the egg falling off the spoon.





To make it a little harder:

Set up an obstacle course as before. Each person has to walk the course as quickly as possible holding a cardboard tube with a small chocolate egg inside. Hold it flat to stop the egg from falling out.

To make it even harder, replace the egg with a marble!

3. Plaited bread

One temptation Jesus faced in the desert was to turn stones into bread. This bread-making activity is both enjoyable and thought-provoking.

First, make the bread dough.

You will need:

400g strong plain flour

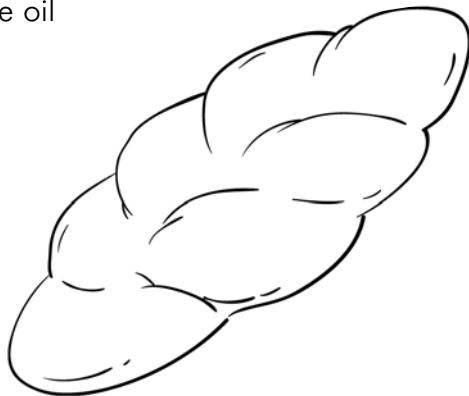
2 level tsp sugar

2 level tsp dried yeast (the easy baking variety)

230ml plus 5 tbsp warm water

1.5 level tsp salt

2 tbsp olive oil



- 1.** Sift the flour, sugar, yeast and salt into a bowl. (If you are using yeast that needs to be reconstituted in water first, follow the instructions on the packet.)
- 2.** Add the oil and water and knead well.
- 3.** Cover with a clean tea towel and leave in a warm place for approximately one hour until doubled in size.
- 4.** Divide the dough into three pieces and roll the pieces into long strands to represent the three temptations Jesus faced.
- 5.** Plait the bread and bake in the oven at 190°C or Gas Mark 5 for 45–50 minutes until the top is golden brown and the base sounds hollow when tapped.
- 6.** Cool on a wire rack.

When you eat it together, **talk about** the things that tempt you the most.

Note: If you are short of time, you could use a shop-bought bread mix.

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