

A Strong Foundation for Easter

R. Scott Wiley

Cole toddled across the room toward the Bible. He bent over, picked up the Bible, and grasped it to his chest. He walked toward me, smiling and carrying the Bible. He stopped beside me. I waited for the Bible to drop. “Bible,” Cole said and dropped the Bible in my lap.

“Yes, Cole,” I said. “You found the Bible. Did you want to look at the Bible?”

Cole sat beside me and turned the pages quickly. We stopped at a picture. “Jesus,” Cole said.

“Jesus,” I repeated. “The Bible tells us about Jesus.”

Cole turned through the pages, pausing occasionally to look at a picture. He closed the back cover, flipped the Bible over, and began turning pages again.

Each week Cole brought me the Bible, and each week we turned the pages and stopped at pictures. This week was different. Cole had said *Bible* and *Jesus*. Cole had begun to learn about the Bible and its significance.

Teaching preschoolers is like constructing a building. We must create a strong base, a strong foundation, for future understanding. As we help boys and girls begin to understand more about God and Jesus, they establish a strong base on which others can build for future understanding. We must guide young children to understand fully the basic concepts before moving to more complex ideas and truths.

At Easter, we can build foundations about Jesus and His love, guiding younger preschoolers to have a secure foundation for further understandings of the message of Easter. To form an understanding of who Jesus is, 1s and 2s explore Bible stories

that tell about things Jesus did and ways Jesus showed His love.

Through their interactions with loving parents and other significant adults, 1s and 2s begin to sense the love of Jesus. They hear the name of Jesus and begin to associate loving and happy feelings with that name. They can hear stories about Jesus and begin to understand that He helped people because He loved them. Younger preschoolers can look at biblical pictures of Jesus, turn the pages in the Bible as they hear Bible phrases, and listen to adults talk about Bible stories. These simple activities will begin to construct a strong spiritual foundation in the lives of boys and girls. Easter can be a time of hearing people thank God for Jesus.

Remember, the Bible is the foundation for all of our teaching. As you talk about Easter, focus on the true biblical aspects. Minimize the secular traditions and commercial aspects of Easter. At church, teachers should base all activities and teaching on the Bible. At home parents should avoid mixing the biblical story and secular fantasy. Children can become easily confused or develop misconceptions. To build a strong foundation, focus on Jesus and minimize everything else.

We may be the builders, but God is the Architect. He is responsible and able to further each child’s spiritual development. As we teach, we need to use ways that best meet the needs of our preschoolers. We offer opportunities for children to discover, explore, and understand biblical truths about God and Jesus. God lays the foundation; He gives the growth (1 Corinthians 3:6-11).

Concepts about Jesus for 1s and 2s

- ✿ Jesus loves me.
- ✿ Jesus helped people because He loved them.
- ✿ Jesus told people about God.
- ✿ Jesus wants me to love Him.

Teaching Tips for Easter

- ♥ Keep everything focused on the Bible. Avoid eggs, bunnies, and other traditional items for Easter. Younger preschoolers are often confused by the mixture of secular and biblical.
- ♥ Mail simple postcards to children before Easter. Choose a postcard with a simple, realistic illustration of Jesus. Note on the card: Happy Easter! Jesus loves you!
- ♥ Avoid painting or messy activities on Easter. Often children will wear new or special clothing for Easter. Still plan to have fun, engaging activities, but avoid anything that may cause anxiety or mess.
- ♥ Plan to have unfamiliar children in your class. Families often visit during Easter, and infrequent attenders may come. Place information cards, security cards, and other needed items close to the door or outside the door to make transitions easier.
- ♥ Consider enlisting an additional adult to help you on Easter. Another pair of hands can help with an unhappy child or a large number of children.

More Easter Ideas for 1s and 2s

- 🐰 Cover a picture of Jesus with sticky notes. Encourage a child to pull off the notes to see the picture. Talk about the Bible story. Say: "At Easter we hear about Jesus. Thank You, God, for Jesus."
- 🐰 Tape pictures of Jesus to the walls around the room. Encourage a child to find a picture. Or walk with a child around the room and touch each picture. Tell the child: "Jesus loves you."
- 🐰 Place a wooden puzzle of Jesus on the floor and cover the puzzle with a small towel or blanket. When the child discovers the puzzle, encourage him to take out the pieces and put the puzzle together. Talk about Jesus and His love.
- 🐰 Pour a small amount of aquarium gravel into plastic water bottles. Seal the lids with masking tape. Provide small realistic stickers of Jesus and other simple stickers in pastel colors. Encourage children to decorate the bottles. Shake the bottles and sing a song about Jesus.

