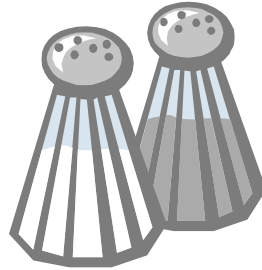


SPICE RACK®

E-Curriculum



by Mark DeVries

Note to the Teachers: The easiest thing to do (which actually becomes the most difficult before the end of the class!) is to use the same teaching method for the entire class period. What most of us are used to is simply lecturing or asking questions. And hey, if your kids are walking out each week saying, “Man, that connected with me. The hour just flew by!,” then those two methods are fine. What this curriculum seeks to do is to give you active exercises that take the kids’ attention off of you and their own discomfort enough that they CAN naturally answer the questions you want them to get at. Remember the rule: *1 minute of attention for each year of life lived.* That means that even in our older classes, we should be shooting for changing our teaching methods 3 times in the class period. The reason there are seven different exercises is that I’m guessing that 4 of them won’t work for your group. If an exercise doesn’t work, try the next one. But please try to engage the kids with something besides the standard lecture and Q&A. Thanks for all your work in loving God’s kids! Also, to aid you in your preparation, any special supplies recommended for this lesson are outlined in a box. Contact colyer@ymarchitects.com with any questions!

“EASTER SURPRISES”

I. Gathering (attendance, announcements, first timers)

II. Engaging the Brain

A. Chicks and Bunnies (or all things tacky)



1. If you have access to baby chickens or bunnies or any generic, tacky Easter paraphernalia, bring it to class today and set it around the room.
2. Once the group has gathered, ask the following process questions:



- What do you see here that has anything to do with biblical story of Easter?
- Does anyone have any ideas about how these things came to be associated with Easter?
- If we were to interview Jesus today about all this stuff related to Easter, what do you think he would say?

→ What do you think about people who say that Christians shouldn't do eggs and bunnies, etc. at Easter time?

B. Easter Check-In Question



1. Go around the group inviting each person to tell about their favorite thing about Easter when they were little.
2. You may want to begin with the person who was most recently at an Easter egg hunt.
3. Process Questions

→ **Would you agree with this statement: “Easter is one of those things that children seem to understand a whole lot better than adults”?**

→ **Is Easter more important or less important to you now than it was when you were little? Why?**

→ **Do you think Jesus would participate in an Easter egg hunt? Why or why not?**

C. Easter Flower Arrangements

1. This option could take the entire hour, or it could be completed following class today.
2. Bring a few vases and fresh cut flowers to class.
3. Have the group make flower arrangements for five different shut-ins in the church.
4. Have the group write notes to all five shut-ins.
5. Arrange for adult drivers to drive the class to the homes of the shut-ins to wish them a happy Easter and to leave the cards and flowers.
6. Before the groups leave, have them come up with questions for the shut in about what Easter really means.

D. Wacky Bonus Idea: What Easter Feels Like

1. If you have a small class (and a wealthy Sunday School teacher—this probably won't make it as an approved Christian Education expense), hand each person in class a crisp \$100 bill.
2. As they are holding their \$100 bills, ask these process questions
 - **How are you feeling right about now?**
 - **Are any of you thinking, “Okay, what's the catch—this is too good to be true”?**
 - **Do you think the feelings you just described are similar to how the first disciples felt on that first Easter? In what way?**
 - **What's the possibility that you'll be telling someone about what you experienced today?**
 - **How accurate a picture do you think this is of the good news that Jesus came to bring?**
 - **Why will it be so easy to tell people what happened?**



→ Why is it so much harder to tell people about being given cash out of thin air than it is to tell people what God has done in your life?

3. This exercise could also work if you had the class imagine that they had been given \$100 bills, but it wouldn't be near as fun (and your attendance next week wouldn't be nearly so high!).

III. Igniting the Heart

A. Your Own Easter Psalm

1. For this exercise, you will either need Bibles for everyone in the group today or copies of each of the psalms listed below.
2. Write out the following references on different slips of paper.

Psalm 18, Psalm 23, Psalm 30, Psalm 33, Psalm 35, Psalm 37, Psalm 46, Psalm 65, Psalm 66, Psalm 68, Psalm 80

3. Have as many slips of paper as you expect to have students in class today (duplicate references if necessary).
4. Have each person draw a slip of paper.
5. Explain that each person has three minutes to read (or scan) the psalm they have chosen and then report back to the group 2 things:
 - a. Do you think this is a psalm that Jesus might have prayed after he was raised from the dead?
 - b. What one verse from that psalm would you point to as evidence for your answer?
6. Invite the group to ask questions to clarify the instructions.
7. After three minutes is up, have the group members give their answers.
8. Process Questions

- How do you feel about praying pre-written prayers?
- How do you think Jesus prayed more often—with pre-written prayers, with spontaneous prayers or with silence? Why?
- Do any of you ever write out your prayers? Why or why not?
- Of all the psalms we just heard, which do you think is the one closest to what Jesus would have prayed on that first Easter morning?

B. Your Own Easter Creation

1. Remind the group that when Jesus was on the cross, he prayed Psalm 22: "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?"
2. Process Questions

- Why do you think Jesus quoted this psalm from the cross?

→ Are there any prayers that you “know by heart”? What are they?

3. The Creation Options

- a. Explain to the group that you want each of them to create something that expresses what Jesus might have been feeling toward God on that first Easter morning.
- b. Give the following options (based on what supplies you might have available):

- 1) Draw something.
- 2) Paint something.
- 3) Sculpt something.
- 4) Write a poem.
- 5) Write a song.
- 6) Write a rap.
- 7) Write a take-off on a commercial or a TV theme song.
- 8) Create a dance.

4. Invite the group to ask questions to clarify the instructions.
5. Give the group at least 5 minutes to complete their creations.
6. After the creations are done, invite individual kids or groups of kids to share their creations with the group (as many as are comfortable sharing their creations).

C. I Used to Think... But Now I Think...

1. Distribute journal sheets and pencils to the group.
2. Have everyone wad up their sheets and throw them into a pile in the middle of the room.
3. Once all the sheets are in the pile, have everyone pick up a sheet and read it silently.
4. Process Questions

→ Is there anything on the sheet you picked up that you really agree with?

→ Is there anything your sheet said that was particularly interesting, that you'd like to tell the rest of the group about?

IV. Taking It Home

A. Egg Fillings



1. Distribute empty plastic eggs to the group.
2. Send the group members outside to each find something that is a reminder of what Easter is all about.
3. Before sending them out, invite the group to ask questions to clarify the instructions.

4. After a few minutes, have the group members come back and show what they have in their eggs.

B. Close the class in prayer (or invite one of the students to do it), drawing upon the images from the eggs.

C. Invite the group to take their eggs with them as a reminder of their new perspectives about life in Christ this Easter.

↓ JOURNAL SHEET BELOW ↓

JOURNAL SHEET

EASTER SURPRISES

1) For me, Easter is mostly about...

- Chocolate bunnies
- Jesus rising from the dead 2000 years ago
- Baby chicks
- My new life in Christ
- Eating a big dinner with my family
- God being big enough to take my worst and make it into a victory

2) For our church, Easter is mostly about...

- Getting a pile of people in the sanctuary
- Beautiful music
- The sunrise service
- Seeing people we haven't seen in a long time
- People dressing up, looking impressive, smiling a lot and pretending to like each other.

3) When it comes to people who only come to church on Christmas and Easter, I think ...
(check all that you agree with)

- They only show up to be seen.
- I'm just glad they show up any time.
- They might just hear something that wakes them up.
- They must have a mighty shallow faith.
- I have enough problems being faithful to God without guessing what is in someone else's heart.

4) If people really understood what life in Christ was about, they would...

- Dance more
- Be more serious
- Eat more chocolate
- Spend more time with their families

5) When it comes to Easter, I used to think...

But now I think...