

Children's Message, Easter, 2021

Happy Easter, children of God! If I say, "Christ is risen!" do you know what the next words are? "**He is risen indeed, Alleluia!**" Let's try it. "Christ is risen!" "**He is risen indeed, Alleluia!**" Once more, with outside voices: "Christ is risen!" "**He is risen indeed, Alleluia!**"

Do you remember when we "buried" the Alleluia, more than a year ago? We didn't say that word during the last 6 weeks because we were walking with Jesus towards the cross—the cross he was going to die on. It was a time to be a little more quiet, so we left that "Easter word" out of our worship. But today we unbury the Alleluia! and shout our "Easter shout of joy"! "Christ is risen!" "**He is risen indeed, Alleluia!**"

Now, who wants a plastic egg? Take one, but don't open it. What do you think is inside? (jelly beans, of course!) Did you know we can tell the Easter story with jelly beans? Do you all know your colors? Open your egg carefully so the jelly beans don't fall out—don't touch yet! When I name a color, see if you can find that color jelly bean in your egg. Pick it up, and then put it in the other end of your egg.

First I want you to find a **green** bean. The color green reminds us of the gardens that will soon begin to grow. We think of gardens because there are 3 of them that are important in Jesus' life. During the last week he was alive, Jesus went to a garden called "Gethsemane." That turned out to be a sad place for him, because he was arrested there by soldiers who were told he was a liar.

Now see if you can find the **orange** jelly bean. Orange is the color of some of the *coins* that were used in Bible times. One of his disciples, Judas, betrayed Jesus on Thursday night, and the people who wanted to kill Jesus paid Judas 30 coins. That's not a good way to use money, is it?

Can you find the **purple** jelly bean? Purple is one of the colors kings wear. The soldiers took Jesus to the governor, one of the rulers, and they made fun of him by dressing him in purple. We know he was king of his people—he was God's Son!--but they didn't believe he was really a king. So they dressed him in purple, made a pretend crown out of thorns, and whipped him so much he was bleeding.

Now it's time for the **red** jelly bean. Red is for blood. After whipping Jesus till he bled, the soldiers nailed him to a cross, and more blood spilled out of him from his hands and feet, and from the thorns on his head.

Do you remember that Jesus died on the cross because he loved us so much? When God created the first people in the *first* garden—the Garden of Eden—they loved God and obeyed him. But soon they discovered that they didn't have to do what God told them—that was called "sin." Jesus died because all the people everywhere are sinners. The color we use for sin is **black**. Can you find your black jelly bean?

There's good news in this story! Even though we're all sinners, because we all disobey God's loving commandments, God forgives us! Jesus died on the cross to prove God's love for all of us. Find your **white** jelly bean, and remember that because of the gigantic love of Jesus, God forgives us every time we sin!

There should be 2 more jelly beans in your egg. Take out the **yellow** one next. Yellow is the color of the sun, and it reminds us that after Jesus had been buried on Friday, when the sun came up on Sunday his tomb was empty! God, the Father of Jesus and of each of *us*, had raised him from the dead. God made Jesus alive again! Because Jesus died and was raised, WE can also be alive after we die here on earth.

Your last jelly bean is **pink**. Pink is a cheerful color. It can help us feel happy and joyful, and it can give us *hope*. HOPE is the promise God gives us at Easter, the promise that he will always be with us, here on earth, and after we die, when we're in heaven with Jesus, and God, and all the people we loved here on earth who have already gone to live with Jesus in heaven.

"Christ is risen!" **"He is risen indeed, Alleluia!"**