



Easter homes of hope

We have an opportunity to offer the hope of Easter this year as never before. The pandemic has created a particular moment where:

- **Local** is our new world. We know more people in our roads. We are in our nearest park or and public space often.
- **Walking** is our new entertainment. It feels like the only legal form of fun left! We feel the benefit of fresh air like never before. Families walk together as relief from cabin fever.
- **Hope** is our new treasure. It is in short supply. Our future is uncertain. How many more will cases will there be? Will we have a holiday? Will there be another lockdown? This is the year to offer the hope of Easter.

As the first buds and flowers are bursting through, this is the moment for an Easter trail in your community. Get families walking around their local streets, following the Easter story - the only source of certain hope.

For those who are concerned that the Easter story is too gory to be family-friendly, [listen to Sally Lloyd Jones'](#) tone and hear how she makes Easter suitable for every family:

"As we read this Great Rescue Story together, God wants us to remember: however we are feeling today, wherever we are today, whatever is happening in our lives today—however it looks, even if it looks like there is no hope at all—spring is coming. It may look like nothing is happening. It may even look like everything has died.

*But...
Spring is coming!
Easter is coming!*

Jesus dies —yes, but he comes alive again! And one day death and sickness and tears—they will be no more. Because God is making the story end happily for his world—and for his children!"

HOW TO RUN A HOMES OF HOPE TRAIL

Here's a six step plan:

1. **Appeal for hosts** to be a *Home of Hope* for your trail. Create an open Facebook group for the purpose. Start with families in your church family. How would they like to run this? What ideas do they have? It is easier to grow from a small core than to try to draw a crowd into an empty space.
2. **Reach out to your community** beyond your own church family. Open your arms wide. Invite other churches to take part. Invite families from the school gate. Throw the invitation as far as you can. Hopefully, some offers will come from families who are not Christians. Be gentle in what you ask them to do and show huge grace with how they approach it.
3. **Plan your route** according to the number of hosts available and the size of your local area. Little legs quickly get tired! Aim for a *Home of Hope* about every 100 metres. Do you want a long trail that could be tackled in sections over several days? Or a category for younger families to receive a prize even if they only do part of the trail? If your church community covers a wide area, could you split into local groups and have separate trails in different neighbourhoods?
4. **Give each home a theme and a verse** and allow them to represent it in their own way. We have prepared a selection of Bible verses with a visual theme and a simple explanation. You don't need to use all of them. You can add your own if you want a longer trail.

Encourage each host to be creative – they could decorate a window with their verse, explanation and a picture; put up a board in their garden; make a scene out of Lego or drape a giant model over half their house! Whatever they do needs to be visible from the road/pavement. Give every host a laminated page to display, explaining that they are part of your Easter *Homes of Hope* trail, including details of how to find out more about both the trail and the Easter story.

5. **Create a trail map** showing each *Home of Hope*. Google maps is an option for creating an easily-updatable [online version](#) (for those who understand it!)
6. **Have a prize for those who complete the trail** and those who have taken part. Stuff a bag full of treats, individually wrapped chocolate eggs, a book about the Easter story, some Easter craft ideas and details of your church's other Easter events. Why not throw in a Luke's Gospel with a note on where to find the Easter story? You could also offer a prize for the host with the best-decorated *Home of Hope*.

A few top tips:

- Focus the trail on aspects of the resurrection. The resurrection speaks more loudly than the crucifixion to families who understand very little of the Easter story. It is also easier to recreate in a garden or window.
- Visit [Nay Dawson's blog](#) to read about how she has run a string of trails in her community. Be inspired!
- Check out [Together @Home's Easter trail](#) if you want ready made visuals
- A physical flyer to put into people's hands is still useful in this social media age. Members of your church are well-placed to knock on the doors of families who live in their road and invite them to host a Home of Hope or to do the trail.
- Each display could include a letter to write down, revealing an Easter word or phrase by the end of the trail. You could leave a space on the invitation flyer for families to fill in the letters as they go along.
- The best way to draw others in is to let them own the trail with you. Who can run the Facebook group? Who can do the graphic design on the flyer? Who can offer creative, arty help to the clueless? Don't keep guests on the outside – use this as an opportunity to draw them into community.
- What will be the next step for thrilled families? How can you encourage them to continue the adventure of faith? Keep your eye on Faith in Kids for more ideas!



Photos by Nay Dawson

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Produced in partnership with Nay Dawson, www.naydawson.com

SUGGESTED VERSES AND THEMES

The rows in **bold** are our suggestions for a short (8 house) trail

Theme	Key Verses	Explanation
The donkey	Matthew 21:7	The donkey carried Jesus into Jerusalem while the crowds cheered.
Palm leaves and coats	Matthew 21:8-9	As Jesus rode into Jerusalem, the crowds cheered for him and sang to him. They even cut branches off trees to wave and spread their coats on the road like a red carpet for a celebrity.
Thirty silver coins	Matthew 26:14-15	Judas was one of Jesus' closest friends, but he loved money more than he loved Jesus. He was paid 30 silver coins by the religious leaders to help them arrest Jesus.
Bread and wine	Luke 22:19-20	Jesus had a last meal with his friends. He knew that he was about to be killed. He used the bread and wine to explain that he was about to have his body broken and his blood spilt to save them.
The cross	Luke 23:33-34	Jesus was put on a cross to die by Roman soldiers. It was the worst punishment for criminals, but Jesus had done nothing wrong. It wasn't fair but Jesus still prayed a kind prayer for those who did it.
The torn curtain	Luke 23:45-46	When Jesus died, the huge curtain in the temple was torn from the top to the bottom. God tore it to show that Jesus' death means we can come to God as his children.
The Roman soldier	Luke 23:47	Even though the Roman army officer had seen many people killed, when he saw Jesus die he knew that Jesus was very, very different to the rest of us.

Theme	Key Verses	Explanation
The cloth and the tomb	Luke 23:53	Jesus' dead body was wrapped in a large sheet and placed in a cave with a huge stone rolled across the door. That was how they buried people in Jesus' time. His friends thought this was the end of Jesus. They cried.
The stone rolled away	Luke 24:1-2	Jesus died on the Friday. When some of his friends went to his tomb on the Sunday, they found the huge stone rolled away. It took more than three men to move that stone. They didn't understand who had done that.
Angels	Luke 24:4-6	Jesus' body had gone! The shining men were angels, sent by God to explain that Jesus had risen from the dead. He was not dead anymore.
Broken bread	Luke 24:30-31	After he rose from the dead, Jesus met two of his friends as they walked along. They didn't know it was him until he sat down to eat with them. It was as he broke the bread that they realised it really was Jesus: Alive! Then he disappeared!
Hands and Feet	Luke 24:38-39	Even when Jesus' friends saw him alive again, they couldn't believe it was really him. Jesus let them see and touch his hands and feet to show them that it was definitely him.
Thomas	John 20:26-28	Jesus' friend Thomas couldn't believe Jesus really was alive again. Jesus was kind to him and let him put his finger in the scars in his hands to prove it really was him. Thomas knew that only God can rise from the dead, that's why he said to Jesus, "My Lord and my God"

Theme	Key Verses	Explanation
Bread and fish	John 21:12-14	Jesus did a miracle when he helped his friends to catch so many fish, even though they had caught nothing for hours. Jesus made them a meal of the bread and fish.
Lift off!	Luke 24:50-51	Jesus stayed with his friends for weeks proving that he had new life. Then it was time for him to return to Heaven where he rules today as the forever king.