



# *Easter Faith:*

FROM ONE GENERATION  
TO ANOTHER

BY DEBORAH HAUSER

**W**hat Is Easter to You? Easter summons up full-color pictures in our mind. For one who rejects Christianity, Easter might be synonymous with the season of spring, chocolate bunnies, and malted eggs at the local grocery store – all gentle reminders that Easter is coming around again.

For Christians, however, Easter brings to mind powerful images of a crucified Savior and an empty tomb. For Christians, Easter means the culmination of 33 years of sacrificial earthly living and Jesus' awesome victory over death, for good. For Christians, Easter means everything [eternal life here and now and in the presence of the Lord].

Just how is that expressed in families?

When our four children were young, as parents we made sure to make Easter memorable. We faithfully boiled dozens of eggs. Then each of our children received a stash to dye accordingly. In the wee hours of Easter morning, my husband's job was to hide the eggs for our children to find, along with their baskets of Easter goodies. I have dozens of pictures of our children holding their baskets and eating chocolate bunnies and eggs.

When our children were young, Easter meant to them just that: eggs, baskets, chocolate, new frilly socks, new ties, new shoes, church, and family. Easter was knee-deep in visual aids to confirm to them the day was important. This would help to reinforce Jesus Christ as their Savior and Lord, which they would grasp more fully later in their lives. This was the faith we had prayed for and taught to them.

For our children, Easter was a process. It began as a rich, tactile, annual event, in their home and in their hearts. As they got older, lessons in Sunday School and church began to take on more meaning for them. Easter came to mean more and more because of their growing faith.

As they grew physically and spiritually, the hiding of the eggs led to discussions about why Jesus (if He were God) had to die so horribly. They began to ask questions like: "If Jesus didn't really stay dead, where is He?"

Because of the traditions set up in our home from the time they were small, our children felt safe asking us these questions. Their queries alone made our preparations for Easter worthwhile. The time and treasure we had spent on their new outfits, special food, baskets, and decorations helped to create a sense of Easter. Easter began to have a certain "feel" to them – one they grew to love ... along with their

risen Savior, Who made it all possible.

That's the importance of a foundation of faith for children raised in a Christian home. It doesn't happen overnight. It takes time to develop life-long beliefs that carry you through the difficult losses the world promises to deliver. Instilling the fundamentals of faith when children are young is the only thing that will sustain them long after we parents are on the "other side of Heaven."

The legacy Christian families carry out is eternally simple. The faith-building story is born out of an all-consuming love our Savior Jesus has for us: that He was willing and prepared to die for each one of us. So God became man (on Compassionate Christmas), in order to die for the sins of all people (on Glorious Good Friday), and then rise again to life (on Eternal Easter). This wasn't a last-minute "fix" for humanity's sins. This loving plan was laid out before the foundation of the world was laid.

This love, God's love through His Son, Jesus Christ, is why Easter evokes such strong feelings in those whose faith may have begun to sprout at home, in a Sunday School class, or in a Christian dayschool.

Recently, my 24-year-old daughter, Julia, wrote to me and said she can barely make it through singing the Easter hymn "*Jesus Christ Is Risen Today*." She said it "gets to her" every time. That, dear reader, is the result of many years of faithfully teaching "Jesus" to our daughter. It is Jesus and His love that pulls on her heartstrings to resonate many powerful feelings of faith.

Does Julia have a sense about Easter? She sure does. Does Easter mean more to her than store-bought chocolate bunnies and new white shoes? You bet. Easter is about the risen Jesus she has known and trusted in for as long as she can remember. And our prayer is that when her time comes to be a mother, some of the things she'll do will come from traditions she can pass along to her children. Perhaps she'll even teach and sing that hymn to my grandchild ... well, if she can get through it.

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