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A reproducible networking newsletter for the Christian Education Ministries of the Indiana-Kentucky Synod, ELCA, to equip, empower, and encourage believers of all ages to develop their relationship with God and neighbor through faith development and discipleship.

Train children in the right way, and when old, they will not stray.
Proverbs 22:6

Rethinking Christian Education FAITH FORMATION

Called to Be Church

Baptism is a very big deal. In that radical act of being marked and set apart, we are joined to the Body of Christ, the church. This lifelong journey that begins in baptism challenges us to rethink and reexamine Christian education and what it means to be “formed in faith.” For too long we’ve had a vague sense that parish education is about religious information and acquired knowledge and we’ve often separated it from worship. Teaching the bible stories and learning the catechism are important baptismal promises. But when religious education becomes too goal-oriented and curriculum-conscious, we easily lose sight of

Whether we’re planning worship, confirmation, adult education, or weekly sessions of Sunday School, the goal is a rich and multi-layered faith enabling us to encounter God in each other and in all of life.

the larger goal—hearing, seeing, being, tasting and touching God’s presence. Being sealed with the Holy Spirit and marked with the cross of Christ forever—grafted into the body of Christ—is much more than “Christian education.” Faith formation is seeing ourselves as part of the faith story and knowing ourselves as part of

the Body of Christ. To begin, we invite a return to the sources of the church’s life, the means of grace. Celebrating the sacramental life of the church, gathering together around the font and the table, hearing, reading, singing
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EASTER SYMBOLS

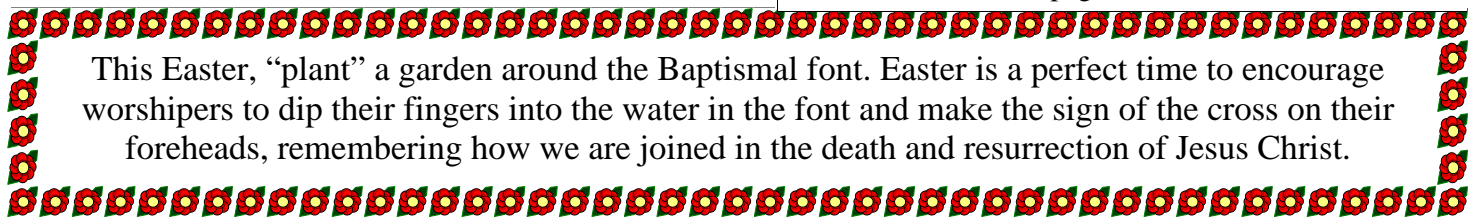


The two most important times each year, in a Christian’s life, are Christmas and Easter. They stand like bookends in the life of Jesus Christ and are the focus of our saving and redemption. As Christian Educators, we can help our students raise their heads above the secular clutter using the weeks of Lent to prepare our students’ hearts and heads for this annual renewal. We can use secular symbols to teach the rebirth of our faith:

- **Easter Lilies:** Easter lilies bloom in the spring close to Easter time. Because they are shaped like trumpets, lilies are symbols of immortality. (1 Corinthians 15:52)
- **Eggs:** Eggs symbolize the new life that returns to nature during the spring. Christians also view it as a reminder of the tomb from which Jesus Christ arose. (Luke 24:1-4) Early Christians used red colored eggs to symbolize the Resurrection.
- **Butterflies:** The life cycle of a butterfly is a symbol of eternal life. While in its cocoon, it undergoes a metamorphosis and emerges in a new and beautiful form.
(1 Corinthians 15:53-54)



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This Easter, “plant” a garden around the Baptismal font. Easter is a perfect time to encourage worshipers to dip their fingers into the water in the font and make the sign of the cross on their foreheads, remembering how we are joined in the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

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BOOK REVIEW

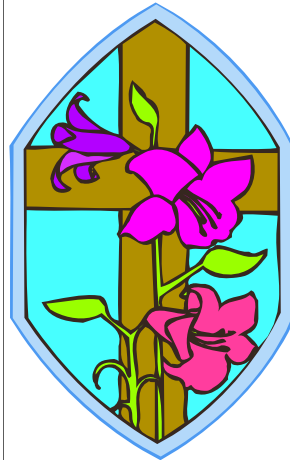
One of the most refreshing books that I have read is The Lutheran Handbook I. It is written in an informative and snappy style, generous with lots of good information of history, geography, sociology, practicality, theology, all written with a tongue-in-check humor. This book is perfect for people who know nothing of religion, perfect for Christians of any stripe, and perfect for life-long Lutherans. This handbook is not all satire. It is a serious, joyous, and thoroughly Christian document meant to educate, entertain and deepen one's relationship with God and with Christ's church. It includes guides on how to appreciate liturgy, how to deepen your experience of a worship service, how to find famous Bible stories, how to understand miracles, how to approach Scripture, and how to live as a Christian in your everyday life. What you learn on Sunday, you should be able to apply on Monday through Saturday. The Lutheran Handbook I is one of the most informative, interesting, and humorous books that you will ever read.



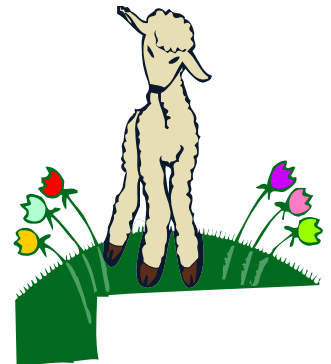
Easter is an important family gathering time and worship is often surrounded by special family rituals and visits from relatives. It is also a time when un-churched or de-churched people may experience the heart tug to "check it out." Keep in mind the basics of hospitality:

- Position hosts to make people feel welcomed and answer questions
- Be sensitive to families with children
- Be conscious of helping guests through worship
- Be ready to gather information from guests
- Be sure to greet guests following worship

Easter Symbols Continued



- **The Cross:** The cross is a symbol of Jesus' crucifixion and resurrection. Jesus' resurrection is his victory over the power of sin and death. (Romans 3:25-26) That is why the cross has become the major symbol for God's power to forgive sins and give new life to people. (1 Corinthians 1:18) People often back hot cross buns to symbolize this event.
- **Sand Dollar:** The marking on this shell symbolize components of Christ's birth and death. The five point outline on the front of the sand dollar represents the star of Bethlehem. (Matthew 2:1-2) The five holes in the sand dollar represent the pierced hands, feet, and side of Christ. (Psalm 22:16; John 20:26-67) When the sand dollar is opened, it reveals five tiny objects that look similar to flying doves. Doves symbolize the Holy Spirit. (Luke 3:21-22)
- **The Lamb:** Jesus is often referred to in the Bible as the "Lamb of God." (Revelation 5:6-14) John the Baptist described Jesus as the "Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world." (John 1:29). The Passover lamb (Exodus 12:1-11) has been interpreted by Christians as foreshadowing Jesus' sacrificial death. (1 Corinthians 5:7)



(excerpts from the American Bible Society
www.bibles.com/brcpages/EasterSymbolsAdults)