

In contemplating ways to celebrate the Easter season with your children in a way in which they are familiar and focusing on the essential message of the light of the Resurrection, I have composed a simple “service of light” based on our Liturgy of Light which we have celebrated in the atrium *every year* since your children were in Level I. IF you have the means to make a “Paschal/Easter candle,” using color wax, wikky stix, maybe paint or markers (haven’t tried this on wax) please do so. If you do not have a larger, white candle, consider constructing the image on a piece of paper and place in front of a candle to represent the Easter candle. Below are the things you will need. You will want to include your children in the preparation of this celebration as much as possible, perhaps doing the reading or helping you to construct the Paschal Candle. As you reflect on the Light of Jesus and what that means for our world today, be specially attentive to what your children have to say. They have much to teach us.

Preparation of the Table: Set the prayer table

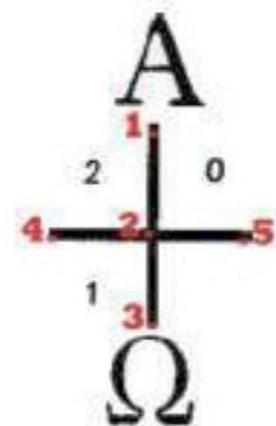
- White cloth
 - Bible in stand with Luke 24:1-8 marked
 - Good Shepherd statue or the image of the Risen Christ
 - Flowers (if you have them)
 - “Alleluia” in stand
 - Candle to be used for the paschal Candle
 - Matches
 - Taper or votive for each child and adult present. This may be a great time to pull out your child’s baptismal candle if you have them and don’t mind burning them down a little during this unusual time in our history. These will be used later in the service.
- **Blessing and Preparation of the Candle:** Say the words then place the appropriate piece or draw the appropriate image on the candle or the paper

<i>Christ Yesterday and today</i>	Vertical bar
<i>The beginning and the end</i>	Horizontal bar
<i>The Alpha</i>	Above the cross
<i>And the Omega</i>	Below the cross
<i>All time belongs to him</i>	2 Upper left
<i>And all the ages;</i>	0 Upper right
<i>To him be glory and power</i>	2 lower left (image shows a 1)
<i>Through every age forever</i>	0 lower right (year reflects current calendar year)

Amen

Red balls of wax (or cloves) to represent the wounds of Christ

<i>By his holy</i>	1 top	
<i>And glorious wounds</i>	2 center of cross	
<i>May Christ our Lord</i>	3 bottom	
<i>Guard us</i>	4 left	
<i>And keep us</i>	5 right	<i>Amen</i>



Light the Easter Candle and read the Resurrection account from Bible or scripture card:

*Luke 24:1-8 (easiest to read and understand for the youngest child)

- Prayer – **May the light of Christ rising in glory dispel the darkness of our hearts and minds.**

During the church service, the deacon or priest will lift high the Paschal candle and proceed down the aisle of the darkened church. Each time he will chant, “Christ our Light.” And the congregation will respond, “Thanks be to God.” When the Candle reaches the front of the Church, the Exsultet is chanted, usually by a deacon, or in some cases the priest. For your service, it is **OPTIONAL to read, sing, or listen to part of The Exsultet up to 1 minute 24 seconds (1:24) shown below, before you proceed.**

The link below has the entire chant.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WyEAsiDjFP4&t=29s>

Exult, let them exult, the hosts of heaven,
Exult, let Angel ministers of God
Exult, let the trumpet of salvation
Sound aloud our mighty King's triumph!
Be glad, let earth be glad, as glory floods her,
Ablaze with light from her eternal King,
Let all corners of the earth be glad,
Knowing an end to gloom and darkness,
Rejoice, let Mother Church also rejoice,
Arrayed with the lightning of his glory,
Let the holy building shake with joy,
Filled with the mighty voices of the peoples
(1:24)

Discussing what the children heard in **the Exsultet** is particularly appropriate for the older children but could also be done with younger ones by asking, What did you hear? There are so many images to explore.

The children are especially drawn to the image of light in the atrium. Read ONE of the following familiar passages *from the Bible*.

For the younger children:

- " The people who walked in darkness
have seen a great light;
those who dwelt in a land of deep darkness,
on them has light shined." **Isaiah 9:1**
- "...for once you were darkness, but now you are light in the Lord; walk as children of light ..." **Eph. 5:8**

For older children

- Your sun shall no more go down,
nor your moon withdraw itself;
for the LORD will be your everlasting light,
and your days of mourning shall be ended.' **Isaiah 60:20**
- This is the message we have heard from him and proclaim to you, that God is light and in him is no darkness^[a] at all. **1 John 1:5**

Discuss the following with your children.

- **When, Jesus rose from the dead his light became brighter and stronger than before. He came not just to BE the great light, but to share his light. After he rose, Jesus began to give His new light to all of His sheep, first to his apostles and disciples. Many have received the new light into their hearts. From the time of Jesus until now, how many have received it into their hearts. At your baptism, Jesus shared his light with you.**

Lighting of individual candles: Call each child and adult, one at a time, by name. Light a candle and hand to the individual called.

- (The child's name) , **receive the light of Christ.**
- Hand the lit candle to the child. Optional to have a bowl of sand or candle holders to place the candles in, or instruct your children how to carefully handle a lit candle.
- Enjoy the light. **Such a beautiful light! Is this light just for us? Who could we share Jesus' light with? I wonder what the world would be like if we all shared and shined the light of Jesus.**
- **What are some words we can say about this light?**
- **What can we say to Jesus for the gift of his everlasting light?**
 - **Possibly sing some songs you know about light.**

Let us pray:

"May this flame be found still burning by the Morning Star; the one Morning Star who never sets, Christ your Son, who, coming back from death's domain, has shed his peaceful light on humanity, and lives and reigns forever and ever. Amen."