

Easter Garden

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These instructions will walk you through the steps to make an Easter garden complete with Jesus, a cross, the tomb and living plants. You can use this to act out the Easter story with your children on Easter weekend, or just to enjoy throughout the spring and summer as a reminder of the price Jesus paid for us. The picture shows the garden that I made last year using moss and bulbs. These instructions represent what I am making this year with my Sunday School class.

Supplies Needed

Garden and Cross

- Large pot (I used 9" pots from Dollarama \$3 each)
- Tray or saucer to go under pot to collect excess water
- Small pot or large cup to use for the tomb (3" - 4")
- Potting soil
- Small rocks for path
- Large rock to cover tomb
- Assorted seeds (eg. grass, lettuce, small flowers), living moss, or flowering bulbs
- Two sticks (min. 8" and 4" long)
- 2 small nails (I used 9/16" cut tacks) and one nail at least 1 ¼" long with a medium sized head
- Bowl, water, large spoon or small shovel
- Spray mister or watering can
- White glue or tacky glue
- Hammer



Clothespin Jesus (NOTE: if you intend to use this to act out the Easter story, you might find it easier to purchase, an [Easter Story Kit](#). It comes with all of the supplies for a freestanding cross and 5 Clothespin People (Jesus, Pilate, Mary, Soldier, Angel).

- One old fashioned clothespin and stand (You can get these at Michaels or order [Basic Bodies](#))
- 6" piece of beige pipe cleaner
- Black paint or marker
- Drill with 1/8" bit
- 8" scrap of yarn or embroidery floss
- 4" x 8" piece of white knit fabric for robe
- ¾" x 6" piece of white knit fabric for loincloth
- 1 ½" x 17" piece of muslin or other fabric for grave clothes (or use a tissue)
- Sewing machine or needle and thread and iron
- Sharp scissors and straight pins

Prepare the Garden

- Find a place to work that doesn't matter if you get messy. There will be dirt...
- Place the large pot on the saucer (this will catch extra water when you water your garden).
- Dump some potting soil into a large bowl, and add water just until the soil sticks together.
- Fill the large pot with the soil, but save a bit to cover the tomb.
- Place the small pot on its side on one edge of the garden, with the opening towards the middle of the garden. Carefully cover this with at least 1 cm of soil. The pot will be the tomb in a hillside.
- Make a path to the entrance of the tomb by placing the stones on top of the soil. You can also put some stones inside the tomb if you like for the floor.
- Hunt outside for a stone that is large enough to cover the entrance to the tomb.

Plant Some Seeds

- Decide which seeds you would like to plant where in your garden. Follow the package directions for planting depth and spacing. We planted grass seed on top of the tomb and flowers and lettuce beside the path. You can sow the seed a bit more thickly than is recommended so that you have a nice green carpet initially.
- Place your pot in full sun inside your house. Water lightly and regularly (a spray mister will work well, or you can very carefully use a watering can. Be careful not to wash the dirt off of the tomb!). Your seeds will start coming up soon. Keep watering regularly and enjoy your garden as it grows. Once the risk of frost is over, you can move your pot outside. You will need to let your plants acclimatize to the full sun by setting the pot in part shade for the first few days. If you put the plants directly into full sun from being in your house, the leaves will burn.
- Once the plants have at least 2 true leaves (the first 2 leaves to come are seed leaves) you need to thin them. Either carefully dig up the ones you are removing and transplant them elsewhere, or just pull them out. If you leave too many plants in the pot, they will crowd each other out and not perform well. They will last throughout the summer if you continue to water your garden regularly. If you have grass, you can trim it with scissors as it grows.
- NOTE: When I made my garden last year, I actually just took some moss that was in my yard and placed it on top of the tomb. I also found some tiny bulbs that were just peeking out of the soil in my yard and transplanted them into my garden as big clumps. I left the entire thing outside, as these plants were acclimatized to that temperature (I also used a massive planter, which made it easy to keep them watered - see photo at top of page). It was great, because the bulbs bloomed on Easter morning.

Make the Cross

- NOTE: If you don't plan to have a Jesus doll to put on the cross, you can just join the sticks together by wrapping them with string to make a simple cross and not worry about adding nails.
- Carry on with these instructions if you want to be able to put Jesus on the cross. Using a hammer, carefully nail the two tacks into the short cross piece so that they are 3" apart. Don't hammer them all the way in. You want them to stick out a bit so that they will hold Jesus' hands.

- Glue or nail the cross piece onto the upright piece of the cross an inch or more down from the top.
- Drill a small pilot hole partway into the long stick 3 ½" below the intersection with the other cross piece. Hammer the large nail into this hole, being careful not to nail it all the way in. This nail will hold Jesus' feet and needs to stick out far enough that his legs can fit over it.
- Stand the cross up in the garden somewhere by pushing it into the soil. You may want to rest it against the side of the pot so that it can stay upright when you place Jesus' body onto it.

Make the Jesus Doll

- Drill a hole through the clothespin just below the neck. It will go from side to side (not front to back).
- Insert the pipe cleaner through this arm hole. At each end of the pipe cleaner, form a hand by twisting about 2 cm of pipe cleaner into a circle. Make sure that the end is secure. You should have a hollow circle that you can place items in, like a staff.
- Add two small black dots in the centre of the head for eyes using black paint or a black marker. Let the paint dry fully before proceeding.
- To make the loincloth, pull the ¾" strip of white fabric between the doll's legs, beginning at the back, and leaving ¼" on the back side. Wrap the cloth around the doll, and then pull it back through the legs from the front, showing two distinct legs. Twist the fabric as it comes out the back, and pull it around to cover the front of the legs. Glue into position.
- For hair and/or beard
 - Cut the yarn into very short (1/4") pieces and form a pile with them.
 - Cover the part of the head that you want to have hair with lots of tacky glue or white glue.
 - Dump the gluey head into the pile of hair and do your best to cover as much of the glue with yarn as possible. Don't worry if it looks crazy.
 - Add the beard by putting a bead of glue across the lower portion of the face. Apply more scraps of yarn.
 - **Once the glue has fully dried**, trim the hair and/or beard to the desired length and style. If there are patches without hair, just add some glue and a bit more yarn and trim again once dry.
- Fold the 4" x 8" fabric in half, right sides together. Cut out the paper pattern and pin it on the fabric matching the fold. Cut the bottom of the robe and ends of the sleeves. DO NOT CUT the side seams at this point, rather trace the stitching lines onto the fabric using a pen or pencil. Remove the pattern, but keep the fabric pinned together.
- stitch along the two side seams that you traced with a sewing machine or by hand. Trim seam allowances to ¼" and clip underarm seam. Turn robe right side out. Iron flat.
- Pull the robe over the doll's head.
- Push the doll pin into the stand (feet), but DO NOT GLUE in place.





Easter Story Kit

Use your Garden to Tell the Easter Story

On Thursday night, talk about how Jesus and his friends had the last supper and then went out to the garden to pray. *Put Jesus in the garden.* Remind them how his friends all deserted him and how Judas came to arrest him. (Matthew 26:17-67, Mark 14:12-72, Luke 22: 7-62, John 13, 17-18:27)

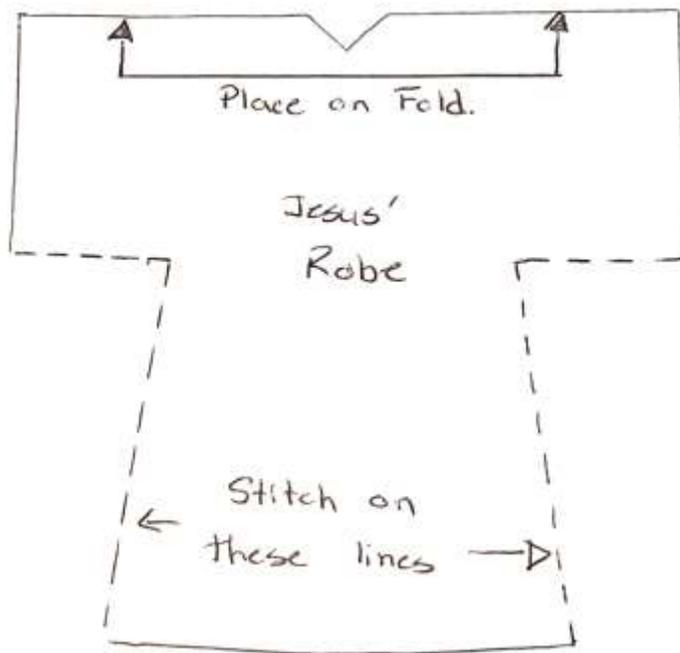
On Friday, talk about Jesus' trial and crucifixion. *Take off his robe and feet and hang his body on the cross (hand loops should hook onto the tacks and the legs will slide behind the nail).* The soldiers made fun of Jesus and gambled for his clothes. Jesus suffered his father's rejection because he was paying for our sins and dying the death that we deserve. The sky grew dark in the middle of the day, and then Jesus died. His friends took down his body from the cross and buried him in a tomb. *Take Jesus' body off of the cross, wrap it in the linen cloth and put it in the tomb. Roll your stone in front to close off the tomb. If you have soldiers, place a guard at the tomb.* (Matthew 27:11-66, Mark 15: 1-47, Luke 22:63-23:56, John 18:28-19:42)

On Easter morning, before your children wake up, roll the stone away from the entrance to the tomb, put the soldiers face down and remove Jesus' body from the tomb. Carefully fold up the linen cloth and leave it inside. Put Jesus' robe back on and put him out of sight somewhere. When your children wake up, go and look at the tomb together and wonder at the empty tomb. How would his friends have reacted? What does it mean to us today? *Bring the dressed Jesus back to the garden* and tell how he comforted Mary. (Matthew 28:1-15, Mark 16:1-18, Luke 24:1-12, John 20:1-18)

I hope this garden helps you to make the Easter story real to your children! I used my garden last year to film a video of the Easter story to share with my Sunday School class during lockdown. You can find it in sections [here](#).

Sherine





Cut this pattern out. Fold your fabric in half lengthwise and pin the pattern on, matching the top edge with the fold in your fabric. Cut along the solid lines at the ends of the sleeves and bottom of the robe. Mark the dotted lines on the fabric with a pen or pencil and stitch on these lines. The easiest way to cut the hole for the neck is to just fold the robe in half once you have made it and snip off the corner.