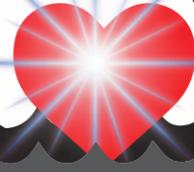


The Easter Story

Adapted from the book by Joy Cowley

The Easter story is about God's love for us, a love too big to be described in words. But we know it in our hearts. We can feel it like a warm presence. This is because God created us and he wants us to be his children. He wants us to shine his love, like a mirror, to other people. But it isn't always easy. Life gets difficult. Sometimes, this love gets hidden by a sea of troubles.



So God made a plan. He knew his children needed to know him. They needed to learn to live in loving kindness. He decided he would need to go to earth to show them the way. So God became one of us, and his name was Jesus. Jesus came as a baby, and when he grew up he lived the life of an ordinary person. But he did more than shine God's love. He was God. He came to earth to live in loving kindness and to show us how to love God and each other.



Jesus healed people with love, and talked to people about love. "Love your neighbour as yourself." He said. "Forgive those who hurt you." Because Jesus said that loving kindness was more important than just keeping laws and rules, some of the law-keepers became angry. "This man is dangerous," they said and they plotted to kill him.



Jesus knew he would be killed and he knew that death was not the end. He would rise up from the tomb to show that death is a new beginning. While Jesus was God he was also fully human and the pain ahead of him was very frightening. His followers were scared too. When their master was arrested most of them ran away.



All this was meant to be. Jesus had to know betrayal, fear, loneliness, hurt, all the painful feelings that people like us experience so that in the future his Spirit could be with us, comforting us in our fear, loneliness and pain. That is why we call the day of his death GOOD Friday.

The followers of Jesus didn't understand this. They took his body from the cross and laid it in a cave-like tomb with a stone across the entrance. They felt very lost and scared. Imagine their surprise when they found the tomb empty. At first they thought his body had been stolen. Then Jesus himself came to see his friends. He looked different. "I told you I would rise again," he said.



Jesus stayed with his friends for a while and then they couldn't see him anymore. But he hadn't left them. His death and resurrection meant that his Spirit could be everywhere at once, helping them and us grow to know and love God. The Easter story means that Jesus is always with us, showing us the way of loving kindness. We can talk to him about our problems. He will help us deal with them.

We can tell him about our mistakes. We can tell him about the things that are difficult and that we are worried about. In fact, we can say anything we like to Jesus. He always understands because he is God and he is one of us. Most of all, we say, THANK YOU for the wonderful story of Easter.



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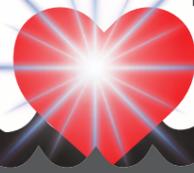
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