

The Easter Story

Our story begins with betrayal and deceit. One of Jesus' own friends, Judas Iscariot, betrayed Him. He told some very powerful people where to find Jesus in exchange for money.

One night, when Jesus was with His disciples, He left them to sleep and went off to pray. After He had finished praying, the Roman guards arrived and arrested Him. Some of His disciples saw this; ready to help they got out their swords. But Jesus turned to them and said, **"Stop and put your weapons down!"** The disciples looked on in confusion as Jesus was taken away.

While Jesus was being held by the Romans, one of the disciples, Peter, was spotted by a woman who recognised him and exclaimed **"You're one of Jesus' followers!"** **"No, I'm not!"** Peter said. Then, a second person saw him and said, **"You're one of Jesus' followers!"** **"No, I'm not!"** Peter replied. Then a third person came and declared, **"You're one of Jesus' followers!"** **"No, I'm not!"** Peter cried.



"Cock-a-doodle-do" a rooster called, making Peter jump. He suddenly remembered something. Jesus had told him that before the rooster called, Peter would deny knowing Jesus three times.

Peter had said that he would never deny Jesus. But he had. He had just denied Him three times and so Peter wept.

The news began to spread that Jesus had been arrested. People gathered where they were holding Him and the man in charge, Pontius Pilate, addressed the crowd.

"I will release one prisoner because it is Passover. You can pick Jesus or Barabbas, the murderer."

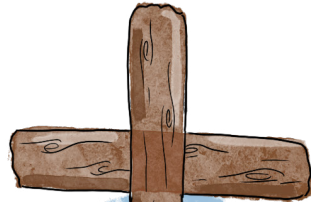
The crowd all shouted together, **"We want Barabbas."** They picked Barabbas, a murderer, over Jesus. Jesus had been abandoned by everyone.

The guards took Jesus to be killed. They nailed Him to a cross where He died. As He took His last breath, Jesus cried out, **"Father, forgive them, for they don't know what they're doing."** Then the skies turned dark, as dark as the night. It scared all those who were there. **"Maybe He really was the Son of God."** some uttered.

At the same time, something very strange was happening across town. There was a curtain in the temple, which separated people from God. Only holy people and priests could go behind it and talk to God. But when Jesus died, the curtain ripped in two. It was God's way of saying that He didn't want to be separated from people anymore. The disciples were confused, and they had so many questions. Why did Jesus have to die? Why didn't He save Himself? Why didn't God save Him? What will happen now?

After Jesus died, a very kind man named Joseph buried His body in a tomb and sealed it with a heavy stone.

And three days later, something amazing happened.



Two of Jesus' friends came to His tomb and found it empty. He was gone. Suddenly two angels appeared and said, "**Why have you come to look among the dead? Jesus is alive, go and tell His disciples!**" They couldn't believe it. They ran straight away to tell the others.



A few days later, Jesus went and found His friends. They were overjoyed to see Him again. They couldn't believe it. Jesus showed them the scars on His body, the scars that had injured Him and killed Him. Everyone was so excited to see Jesus, but Jesus said He couldn't stay.

He had to go and be with God again. Jesus said that He would leave behind His Spirit and **He would never be apart from His people again.**