

What is Easter?

The radio program left the children very excited. Never before had they watched a "show" with their ears instead of their eyes. Days later and they were still talking about it.

Toby, Doby, their Mommy, and Daddy were anxious to hear more about the Holiday Aunt Olive called Easter. Aunt Olive promised to tell them all about it but had gone out of town for a few days to visit a sick friend.

Suzy knew a little about Easter but liked the way Aunt Olive told the story better. So, she made the Mouse Family wait for her Aunt to return.

Finally, Aunt Olive returned home. Soon, the mystery of the 'Easter Holiday' would be solved.

It was a warm spring evening. Aunt Olive and Suzy invited the Mouse Family to join them out on the porch. When they were all gathered around, Aunt Olive began.

"Easter is such a special time of year. A time when spiritual people who believe in a special man called Jesus, celebrate his rebirth," Aunt Olive said.

"Rebirth," Mother Mouse asked, "What is rebirth?"

"Rebirth, Aunt Olive said, "is a very important part of the story. I will get to that part, soon."

Mother Mouse nodded and Aunt Olive continued, "Many, many, years ago, Jesus taught people about love and forgiveness. Unfortunately, there were those who didn't like what Jesus taught. They thought he was evil, and this belief scared them, so he was punished.

"Easter is the celebration of Jesus being reborn into an extraordinary world, one where He is able to watch over his flock."

"Flock," asked Doby.

"Flock is the name given Jesus' children," Aunt Olive explained, "much like a group of mice are called a colony."

"Ohhh," Doby said.

"I didn't know that," Toby said, "and I am a mouse."

"See," Suzy said, "you learn something new everyday."

"People today still believe Jesus watches over them," Aunt Olive continued, "so, on Easter morning, people go to Church and pray."

"Do mice go to church, Dad," Toby asked.

"No, son, mice don't," Father Mouse replied.

"Can we go," Doby asked.

"Maybe," Father Mouse said, "We'll have to see."

"Do you remember what to say on Easter morning when you greet someone, Suzy," Aunt Olive asked.

"The Lord is risen," Suzy replied, "and then, that person is suppose to say, the Lord is risen, indeed. Right," Suzy said.

"That's right, Suzy, very good. I am so proud of you for remembering," Aunt Olive said.

"The Lord is risen indeed," Toby and Doby echoed.

"That was very nice, boys" Aunt Olive said.

"What else happens on Easter," Mother Mouse asked.

"Well, after Church, most people go home to gather with their families to enjoy a nice meal together," Aunt Olive said.

"Oh boy, I knew I'd like Easter," Doby said, "food."

"Yes, Doby, lots and lots of food. Suzy's mommy bakes a big, juicy ham and serves it with sweet potatoes, corn, and applesauce."

"Don't forget dessert," Suzy interrupted.

Doby licked at his little lips.

"Of course," Aunt Olive said, "we can't forget dessert.

"Mommy usually makes a lemon meringue pie, or a chocolate fudge cake," Suzy said, rubbing her tummy and licking her lips, "sometimes she surprises us and makes both.

"I love surprises," Toby said.

"Me too," added Doby.

"Tell them about the special breakfast treats Aunt Olive," Suzy said.

"Oh yes, for breakfast, Suzy's Mommy always bakes 'Hot Cross Buns,'" Aunt Olive said.

"Hot Cross Buns, Hot Cross Buns, one a penny, two a penny, Hot Cross Buns," Suzy sang and danced about.

"Suzy is singing a song that street vendors used to sing years ago. It would let people know that their Hot Cross Buns were fresh out of the oven, ready to be bought, and taken home to eat," Aunt Olive explained.

"Why do they call them Hot Cross Buns," Mother Mouse asked.

"Well," Aunt Olive said, "Hot because they are fresh out of the oven. Cross, because there is a cross of frosting across the top of them."

"A cross looks like this," Suzy said, holding up her fingers in a crossed position to illustrate.

"That's right," Aunt Olive said.

Toby, Doby, their Mommy, and Daddy all held up their fingers and made a cross.

"Very good," Aunt Olive said, "You all made some great crosses."

"What else Aunt Olive," Doby begged, "please tell us more."

"Well, the Easter flower is the 'Easter Lily," Aunt Olive began.

"We planted some of those in our flower garden," Suzy said, " they sure are pretty; tall and white."

"They are my favorites in the whole garden," Toby said.

"Mine too," Doby added.

"There are lots of fun things about Easter," Suzy went on. "There are Easter egg hunts and Easter Parades. The Easter Bunny comes and brings eggs and candy in a big old basket."

"Easter egg hunts," Doby said.

"Easter parades," Toby said.

"And the Easter Bunny," Suzy said, "tell us, Aunt Olive, tell us about them all."

"There's way too much to cover tonight. We can continue this another night," Aunt Olive said, "right now, it is time for dinner. Then, it will be time for your bath and bedtime."

"Oh, Aunt Olive, please," Suzy put on her pouty face.

"Suzy, you know better," Aunt Olive reminded, "no pouting or you lose your bedtime story."

"Okay," Suzy said.

"It is time for all little mice to get ready for bed too," Father Mouse said.

"And I need to get dinner ready," said Mother Mouse.

"Thank you for telling us about Easter," said Mother and Father Mouse.

"Thank you," Toby and Doby said, "see you tomorrow Suzy."

"See you tomorrow, good-night," Suzy said. "Good-night," called back the Mouse Family.