

8 Tips for a Simpler More Meaningful Easter

1. Plan ahead. Instead of going on auto-pilot, hold a family meeting to decide what the group really wants to do and who's going to do what. Observe Lent for 40 days before Easter, possibly with a study/action/prayer guide or calendar.
2. Focus on relationships with family, friends and other people, and with God, rather than on "stuff." Spend your time, energy and money nurturing people, not things.
3. For a symbol of Easter, look to Jesus' resurrection. Bunnies, eggs and candy have been taken over by commerce. Do they tell the story you want to tell? Let's tell the real stories of our faith and values. Reserve fertility rites for the first day of spring, March 21st; Earth Day, April 22nd or May Day, May 1st.
4. Avoid debt and gluttony. Refuse to be pressured by advertising to over spend or over eat. Build community with a meal of mostly locally produced food - planned, prepared and cleaned up by the whole family.
5. If you need to give gifts, give appropriate ones. Get to know the recipient. Give what they want to receive, not what you want to buy. Give children one thing they really want, rather than many gifts. Set a price ceiling. Put gifts out shortly before opening them. Then take turns opening them, not all at once, so that each gift can be admired and each giver thanked.
6. Give alternative gifts. Give at least 25% of what you spend to the needy... individuals or groups locally, nationally or internationally.
7. Give of yourself, not just "stuff" - a coupon book for future services (such as baby-sitting or an "enchanted evening") or something baked, sewn, handmade, composed, etc. Consider more time for volunteering rather than entertainment. If you giving cards, make your own.
8. Choose simplicity of decoration over extravagance, for example, one modest, well-placed display instead of dozens of lilies in church or home. Avoid plastic and imported flowers and trimming.

-Ideas adapted from Alternatives for Simple Living