

Empty Tomb Cookie recipe and readings:

This is a basic meringue cookie recipe that can be used to tell the story of Christ's Passion. Each ingredient reminds us of a part of Jesus' journey to the cross, and then finally, to the glory of Easter morning when the tomb was found opened and empty. Below, you'll find the recipe and the related scriptures to read together as you make these with your children. Enjoy!

Ingredients:

1 cup whole pecans
1 tsp. vinegar
3 egg whites
pinch of salt
1 cup granulated sugar
1 qt. or gal. size zipper bag
wooden spoon

Directions:

1. Preheat oven to 300 degrees. (This part is crucial...the oven must be completely pre-heated)
2. Read **John 19: 1-3**. (ERV) *Then Pilate ordered that Jesus be taken away and whipped. 2 The soldiers made a crown from thorny branches and put it on his head. Then they put a purple robe around him. 3 They kept coming up to him and saying, "Hail to the king of the Jews!" And they hit him in the face.*

Place pecans in a ziploc bag and have children use a wooden spoon to break them into small pieces, to remind us of how Jesus was whipped by the soldiers.

3. Read **John 19:28-30**. (ERV) *28 Later, Jesus knew that everything had been done. To make the Scriptures come true he said, "I am thirsty."^[a] 29 There was a jar full of sour wine there, so the soldiers soaked a sponge in it. They put the sponge on a branch of a hyssop plant and lifted it to Jesus' mouth. 30 When he tasted the wine, he said, "It is finished." Then he bowed his head and died.*

Have the children smell the vinegar; allow them to dip a finger in and taste it if they would like to. Remind them that this was the only drink offered to Jesus when he was suffering on the cross. Place teaspoon of vinegar into mixing bowl.

4. Read **John 10:10b-11**. (ERV) *I came to give life—life that is full and good.
11 “I am the good shepherd, and the good shepherd gives his life for the sheep.*

Tell the children that the eggs represent life. Jesus gave His life so that we might have eternal life with Him in heaven.

Break eggs and separate whites from yolks (use a separate bowl, breaking one egg at a time, than add to mixing bowl. Even a small amount of yolk will interfere with the egg whites firming up). Add egg whites to vinegar.

5. Read **Luke 23:27**. (CEV) *27 A large crowd was following Jesus, and in the crowd a lot of women were crying and weeping for him.*

Sprinkle a little salt into your child’s hand and let them taste it. Remind them that when we cry, our tears taste salty. The salt in our recipe reminds us that Jesus’s followers were sad and scared and they cried when he was crucified.

Add a pinch of salt to the mixing bowl.

6. Read **Psalms 34:8**. (NIV) *Taste and see that the Lord is good; blessed is the one who takes refuge in him.*

Read **John 3:16**. (ERV) *God loved the world so much that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him would not be lost but have eternal life*

Allow the children to taste a little sugar. Remind them that the sweetest part of the Easter story is that Jesus died because He loved us and He wants us to believe in Him.

7. Turn mixer onto high speed and add sugar to egg white mixture one spoonful at a time. Continue to beat on high speed until stiff peaks form....this could take 12-15 minutes.

Point out that the eggs are turning white. White is the color that represents purity. Jesus was perfect and pure, and His death and resurrection provides us with the opportunity to be made clean also.

While the egg whites are beating, read: **Isaiah 1:18**: (GNT)¹⁸ *The Lord says, “Now, let’s settle the matter. You are stained red with sin, but I will wash you as clean as snow.^[a] Although your stains are deep red, you will be as white as wool.*

8. Read **Matthew 27:57-60**. (GNT) *57 When it was evening, a rich man from Arimathea arrived; his name was Joseph, and he also was a disciple of Jesus. 58 He went into the presence of Pilate and asked for the body of Jesus. Pilate gave orders for the body to be given to Joseph. 59 So Joseph took it, wrapped it in a new linen sheet, 60 and placed it in his own tomb, which he had just recently dug out of solid rock. Then he rolled a large stone across the entrance to the tomb and went away.*

When egg whites have formed stiff peaks, gently fold in broken nuts. Line a baking sheet with waxed paper or parchment paper. Drop spoonfuls of eggwhite mixture on the baking sheet. Tell children that the mounds each represent the rocky tomb where Jesus was buried.

9. Read **Matthew 27:65-66**. (ERV)*65 Pilate said, "Take some soldiers and go guard the tomb the best way you know." 66 So they all went to the tomb and made it safe from thieves. They did this by sealing the stone in the entrance and putting soldiers there to guard it.*

Place the baking sheet in the pre-heated oven, close the door and turn the oven **OFF**. Give the children strips of tape to "seal" the oven door.

10. Now, go to bed! Remind the children that while they may be sad to leave the cookies in the oven overnight, Jesus's followers were broken hearted when he died and his tomb was sealed. They didn't understand the things that Jesus had told them before His death. They didn't understand that Jesus's story wasn't over yet.

Read **John 16:20**. (GNT)*20 I am telling you the truth: you will cry and weep, but the world will be glad; you will be sad, but your sadness will turn into gladness.*

John 16:22. (GNT) *22 That is how it is with you: now you are sad, but I will see you again, and your hearts will be filled with gladness, the kind of gladness that no one can take away from you.*

11. Easter Morning! Unseal the oven and remove the cookies. Break one open and point out that the cookies are hollow...they are EMPTY! Enjoy the sweet taste of these cookies as you read together the story of the empty tomb!

Read: **Matthew 28:1-9** (ERV) *28 The day after the Sabbath day was the first day of the week. That day at dawn Mary Magdalene and the other woman named Mary went to look at the tomb.*

2 Suddenly an angel of the Lord came from the sky, and there was a huge earthquake. The angel went to the tomb and rolled the stone away from the entrance. Then he sat on top of the stone. 3 The angel was shining as bright as lightning. His clothes were as white as snow. 4 The soldiers guarding the tomb were very afraid of the angel. They shook with fear and then became like dead men.

5 The angel said to the women, "Don't be afraid. I know you are looking for Jesus, the one who was killed on the cross. 6 But he is not here. He has risen from death, as he said he would. Come and see the place where his body was. 7 And go quickly and tell his followers, 'Jesus has risen from death. He is going into Galilee and will be there before you. You will see him there.'" Then the angel said, "Now I have told you."

8 So the women left the tomb quickly. They were afraid, but they were also very happy. They ran to tell his followers what happened. 9 Suddenly, Jesus was there in front of them. He said, "Hello!" The women went to him and, holding on to his feet, worshiped him.

Bible Translations used in this lesson:

ERV (Easy-to-Read Version)

GNT (Good News Translation)

CEV (Contemporary English Version)

NIV (New International Version)