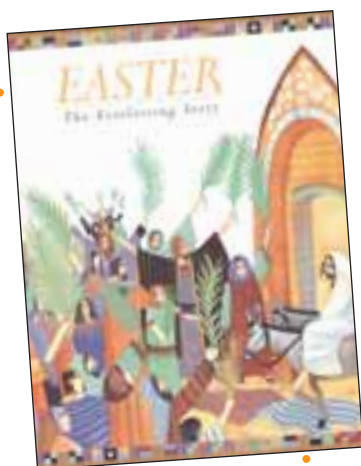


Resource reviews

- ★★★★★ Absolutely perfect!
- ★★★★☆ Very highly recommended
- ★★★☆☆ Highly recommended
- ★★☆☆☆ Recommended
- ★☆☆☆☆ Recommended with reservations
- ✘☆☆☆☆ Not recommended

Easter: The Everlasting Story

Lois Rock, 2004
Lion Publishing
paperback, 24pp, £4.99
illustrations: colour
ISBN 0-7459-4744-1
use: primary school / church / home



This book skilfully conveys the story of Jesus from Palm Sunday to Pentecost. The main characters, Jesus, Peter, Judas, Mary Magdelene and Thomas are described and illustrated in a way that lends itself to drama and character profiling. The illustrations (adapted from the *Lion Bible: Everlasting Stories*) vividly portray the emotions of characters and onlookers in a way with which Key

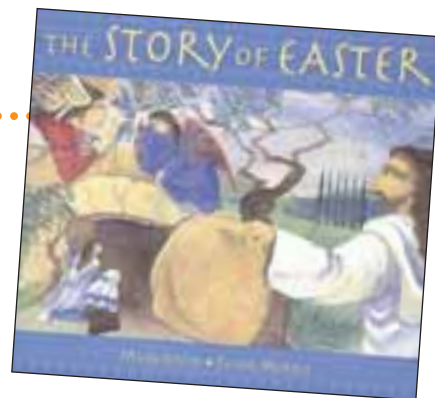
Stage 1 pupils will readily engage. The text faithfully draws from the gospels and the speech of characters is recognisable as scripture. Older primary pupils can make direct links with gospel narratives. The story of Easter is set in the broader context of the effect Jesus' ministry had on various groups of people. Jesus' journey to Jerusalem, the sadness of Gethsemene, His interviews with religious leaders culminating in His crucifixion are described graphically yet in easy language. The book ends on a high with the exciting events of Jesus' reappearance, His ascension and a clear exposition of the coming of God's Holy Spirit into peoples' lives.

I highly recommend this book for use in telling the Easter Story, inspiring drama and characterisation and promoting personal responses from pupils in the primary classroom.

REVIEWER Cathy Davie, RE Advisor for Primary Schools, Southwark Diocesan Board of Education, London.

The Story of Easter

Mary Joslin, 2005
Lion Publishing
paperback, 32pp, £5.99
illustrations: colour
ISBN 0-7459-4937-1
use: primary school / church / home

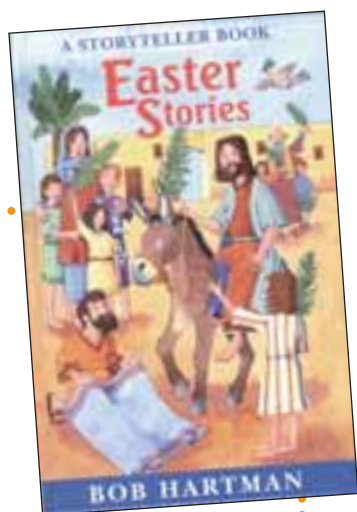


The aim of this book is to show Jesus' death and resurrection in the context of the 'big picture' and to this end the text starts at the beginning of the human story, with the creation and the subsequent breakdown of the friendship between God and humanity. This is followed by an account of the first Christmas, and an overview of Jesus' ministry and teaching with specific examples, such as the calling of the disciples and the welcome given to little children. The last third of the book deals with the events of Holy Week and concludes with the clear and simple explanation that Jesus came to share in human suffering, and by rising from the dead showed that our relationship with God could be restored. Children who know the stories of the creation, the first Christmas and Jesus' death and resurrection, but as very separate events, will be able to see the connection between them.

This is a beautifully presented book with both large and small detailed colour illustrations on each page. However, I feel that the facial features of the characters would not be appealing to children and may even be rather intimidating. Some of the pictures have a medieval style about them with, for example, winged angels playing lutes and pipes hovering over the Garden of Eden.

The text is very readable – suitable for upper primary children to read for themselves, but in a state school context it would need to be introduced with care and sensitivity as the gospel message is made very clear. Perhaps it is better suited for shared or individual reading and reflection in a church or family situation.

REVIEWER Marian Smith, Class Teacher and Subject Leader for RE and Music, Elmgrove First School, Harrow, Middlesex.



Easter Stories

Bob Hartman, 2005
Lion Publishing
hardback, 98pp, £9.99
illustrations: black and white drawings
ISBN 0-7459-4873-1
use: primary school / church / home



This book was written to help children understand how Jesus could have been welcomed into Jerusalem on Palm Sunday and then just five days later, be condemned by the same crowd.

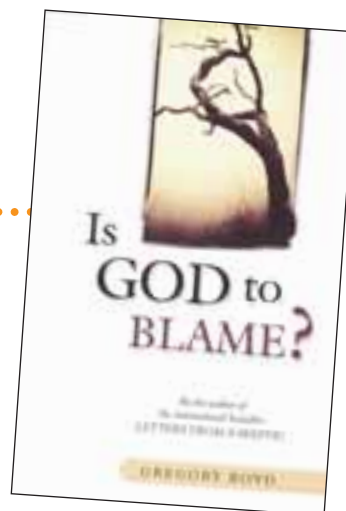
It retells the events of Holy Week in 23 short and very readable stories (some which are only two pages long) rejoicing in such titles as 'Camels, Bugs and Dirty Bowls' and 'Bread, Meat and Stinky Feet!' The stories describe the removal of the moneychangers in the Temple, the arguments with the religious leaders, the last supper, Peter's denial, the crucifixion and resurrection of Jesus, the meeting on the road to Emmaus, Thomas' doubts, the breakfast on the beach and the ascension of Jesus. The stories are well-paced, often witty without being irreverent, and are easily accessible to young readers. The author is an excellent storyteller, as those familiar with his *Lion Storyteller Bible* will already know, and he brings the characters and events vividly to life. Children will be able to share in the excitement, the drama and the joy of the events of the week, and will find it easier to understand some of the most important events in the Christian calendar.

The occasional black and white line drawings are very appealing and add to the text.

This book can be read by children from the age of seven for themselves, or they would enjoy listening to it being read. It is eminently suitable for a school, home or church context.

At the end of the book are some storytelling tips showing how the reader can effectively encourage audience participation in many of the stories. I, for one, would love to join in!

REVIEWER Marian Smith, Class Teacher and Subject Leader for RE and Music, Elmgrove First School, Harrow, Middlesex.



Is God to Blame?

Gregory Boyd, 2004
Kingsway Communications
paperback, 211pp, £7.99
ISBN 1-842-91177-5
illustrations: none
use: 'A' Level philosophy



I guess I wasn't unique in asking serious questions of God following the tsunami on 26 December 2004. Okay, I can cope with disasters that appear in some way to have a man-made cause, but I'd always believed that God had created a world 'with which He was well-pleased'. So what went wrong that fateful Boxing Day? Why were 200,000 people washed to their deaths?

Is God To Blame? opens with the true story of a devout Christian couple who had prayed earnestly for a baby and whose prayers were miraculously answered. However, their joy was soon to turn to grief; the longed-for baby died in childbirth. To add to their pain, Christian friends could only advise them that there are no accidents in God's providence – the tragic events are 'all part of God's will' (p12).

Gregory Boyd bravely struggles with the problem of human suffering and evil. He fiercely dismisses the view that God somehow engineers suffering to teach us a lesson. Instead, he urges us to see God through the life and teaching of Jesus. Boyd then develops the idea that we are in fact living in a situation of conflict – between God and the devil; between good and evil. As part of the Divine creative purpose God gave humankind freedom of choice, but humankind chose to live in opposition to God's plan and purposes. In a sense, therefore, God is currently frustrated and disappointed and is waiting for the final victory when once again He will have total control of His creation.

Why not read this thought-provoking book yourself... and then give a copy to a thinking 'A' Level philosophy student!

REVIEWER David Edgington, Retired Head of RE at Watford Grammar School for Boys, Hertfordshire.