

## Re-thinking Easter Lunch

With attention to a few small details, your family gathering on Easter Sunday can be a continuation of the faith reality you have just celebrated at the church. Try these ten ideas:

- 1. Focus on faith.** In planning the lunch, ask: How can we make this gathering a tangible experience of the love of the body of Christ? Keep your plans simple - you needn't try to incorporate every idea on this page!
- 2. Tidy your heart,** not just the house. Release any personal grudges that could contribute to family tensions and impede the grace of this special day. Breathe in the Spirit's gifts of forgiveness, love and patience.
- 3. Decorate with symbols.** You want your home to look nice, so don't adorn it with just 'anything'. Use symbols which reinforce the message of Easter. E.g., display a rustic cross draped in green and white foliage. A big bowl of water with floating candles (Easter symbols of water and light) are a stunning table decoration. Creatively feature your children's baptismal candles. Play 'Easter music' on your CD player.
- 4. Involve children.** Involve young children in cleaning and decorating the home (with the emphasis on family bonding rather than perfect housekeeping). Let them help ice the cake or pick flowers for the table. 'Fun' touches like painted eggs and paper butterflies (images of birth and new life) are a great way to involve the little ones.
- 5. Tell the story.** This is the day of the resurrection! We Christians declare our conviction that Jesus rose from the dead and lives among us. Arrange for someone to 'say a few words' to mark this special occasion. Use the opportunity to acknowledge the Spirit of the risen Christ alive in the people present at this gathering. Testify to your faith by saying why this day is important to you. Acknowledge those gathered, including any visitors. Remember loved ones who have died since last Easter.
- 6. Give religious gifts.** If gift-giving is part of your family's Easter traditions, include gifts which support the practice of faith; for example, a card with a 'Jesus' message (instead of the easter bunny), a decorated prayer candle, a framed picture of the resurrection scene (this might simply be a child's drawing).
- 7. Lead in prayer.** Include prayer as a natural part of your gathering. Pray grace before sitting down to a meal. Invite guests to offer a prayer or reflection about what Easter means to them, or to name one of life's blessings for which they are grateful.
- 8. Affirm.** In your interactions with guests, look for opportunities to affirm and thank people for their presence in your life. Perhaps it is through their influence that you have come to know the reality of God's love and the life of the Spirit.
- 9. Say it with photos.** At Easter we remember that we die and rise with Christ in baptism. Set up a collage of photos depicting the baptismal days of all your family members, as far back in the family tree as you can go. It's a talking point and serves as a visual reminder that baptism bonds us as a family of faith; that Christ has promised to be with us always (cf. Mt 28:20) from generation to generation. Photos are also a way of acknowledging family members who have gone before us to eternal life.
- 10. Offer a prayerful momento.** Farewell departing guests with a momento of this Easter Sunday which they could place on their 'fridge door. This might be a holy card, a photograph, an Easter poem, a prayer or a scripture verse printed on a small card.

