



An Easter Donkey's Diary

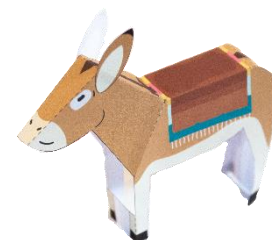
Information for Teachers/Parents:

This is a new and interactive way to tell the Easter story written by Tony Bower, from the York Schools and Youth Trust.

Travel with our young donkey detective (the grandson of our Christmas Donkey) from Palm Sunday to Easter Sunday as he seeks to unravel the special mission Jesus was carrying out. Pick up clues along the way and store them on his saddle.

The following script is in three parts, each taking ~12 minutes.

Children should first assemble their very own 3D donkey and cut out the 6 clues ready to be glued onto his saddle bags.



*Download the donkey cut-out sheet here:
godwhospeaks.uk/the-easter-donkey*

Introduction

We're going to listen to the Easter story, as told by the young donkey Jesus rides on Palm Sunday!

Listen carefully to the donkey's Easter diary. Can you spot the six clues he picks up along the way? You have a picture of each of the six clues. Stick them to his saddle bags to help him work out the mystery.

He may invite you to join in with some of his songs too!

Part One

Have you ever sniffed food cooking and thought:
Yum yum in my tum tum.
I have.

Have you ever smelt fresh grass after it's rained and thought:
ROLL ON IT!
I have.

Have you ever sniffed food cooking and thought:
Yum yum in my tum tum.
I have.

Oops sorry. I think I already told you that. Sorry. I do get in a bit of a muddle puddle with my words. (Muddle puddle is my phrase for when I get things a bit messed up like jumping in a muddy puddle and you get really messy).



I am such a young colt that my understanding of human words isn't great yet, BUT I have brilliant senses. I can tell it is going to rain when... I get wet! Sorry, that's just a joke. BUT I can sense the different feelings of humans. I can tell if they are happy or sad. I can sense if they are angry or joyful. All of my super senses really help me to work out what is going on and I know my amazing senses could help me to solve a great big super-duper whopping mystery.

My grandad is an amazing donkey detective, and I am going to be one too one day. At least that's my big hope because I worked out the answer to a mystery...oops sorry. I mustn't tell you the ending and get into a muddle puddle. I will tell you the beginning first.

The story begins with me singing my donkey song.
It goes like this:

I like to spin around
Stomp my hooves upon the ground
Sing EE haw, EE haw
Repeat the song forevermore.

Why don't we sing it together? I'll say a line and you repeat after me, it's a bit of a marching song.

[Repeat the song with the children joining in]

That was great!

So anyway, back to my story, I was so busy singing and spinning that I almost didn't hear what happened next. (And I have really good hearing; just look at my big ears!)

'It is time' said my master.

With that my master handed my reigns over to two kind men and I just knew I was in safe hands.

I also felt like I had just been chosen to do something so special that I could have jumped over the moon. Which is amazing because I can't even jump over a small fence, or a plank of wood, or even a puddle!

Why did I feel so excited?
Why did I feel so special?

The two men were talking as they were walking. I couldn't understand many of their words, but one word made my heart beat stronger when they said it. It made my heart feel safer. It made my heart feel braver.
It was just one word.

Jesus.

The two men took me to meet Jesus. Can you imagine how I felt? Go on, imagine how I felt meeting Jesus. You can put your hand up in the air and say how you think I felt meeting Jesus. Thank you.

[Discussion time]



Yes, yes and YES! Or, as I would say:

EE AW! EEAW! EEAW! I felt all of that and even more. There I was struggling to stand still and feeling like a sky full of butterflies were doing cartwheels in my tummy. I was beyond giddy, but when Jesus calmly sat on my back and the friend of Jesus told me to 'giddy up, I thought: 'I can't get any giddier.' Thankfully, I realised he meant for me to walk on, and so I did. I walked like a king, carrying Jesus, the king of all kings. I sensed that Jesus was on a mission, a very special mission, one that no one had ever done before, one that no one else on earth could ever do. Only Jesus. But what was his mission? I knew I needed to be an effective detective and solve the mystery of Jesus' mission.

As I walked along the sun shone like a golden crown on the head of Jesus, and the crowds began to gather all around.

My ears are big, and I could hear the excitement in the crowds all around me. I love having big ears. I love the way my Creator God made me. I hope you love the way you've been made too. You are so special. I know that's true because I could sense it every time Jesus looked at the crowds of people. He absolutely loved them, every one of them.

They were all gathered by the roadside. They were so excited to see Jesus. I wondered if they really knew how much Jesus loved them.

I could feel it in my bones. I was so happy carrying Jesus I wanted to skip, but I'm not sure if I could skip, so I didn't. I was so excited carrying Jesus I wanted to sing but I didn't know any songs, so I didn't. Instead, I just listened to the crowd singing. They were singing 'Hosanna! Hosanna!' It sounded beautiful.

Do you know what the word 'Hosanna' means? You can have a guess. You can ask your teacher if you don't know because teachers know so many things. They even know how many carrots to give donkeys. Two. Is two a big number? I hope it is. Sorry, I'm doing a muddle puddle again.

[Discussion time]

Did you find out what 'Hosanna' means?

Save us!

That's what it means.

That's what they were singing.

Jesus save us. Was this the mission that Jesus was on? I began to think about this as the people were singing.

They were waving bits of trees in the air. Palm branches. Lots and lots of them.

You don't have palm trees, but you do have palms! So here is what you all can do, wave them in the air and wave them everywhere. You can do that right now. GO!

WOW! That looked amazing BUT do be careful. Now you can say the word 'HOSANNA!' It's a wonderful word and it makes a beautiful sound.



You can say it loud to start with and then go quieter and quieter until it's a gentle whisper. One, two, turnips! Sorry, I should have warned you about that. I don't know what number comes after two, but I do know I like to eat more than two turnips. Okay, let's do it now: One, two, turnips:

'HOSANNA! HOSANNA! HOSANNA! Hosanna! Hosanna! Hosanna! Hosanna!
Hosanna! Hosanna!'

We walked on and on beneath a shining smiling golden sun.

Some of the palms fell on the road and I walked over them. They felt ticklish on my hooves.

I was trying not to laugh out loud when I saw the crowd putting their coats and cloaks on the floor. On the road.

On the road!

I couldn't jump over all of them,
Truthfully, I couldn't jump over one of them. I once saw a frog jump and tried to copy it but it wasn't my best idea, actually it was a bad idea and so I knew I couldn't jump out of the way. My big dirty hooves went:

Plonk
Plonk
Plonk

I like the sound of that. Why don't you join in with me saying it? Okay, here we go:

Plonk
Plonk
Plonk

All over their coats and cloaks.

I'll never fully understand humans, but I did understand that they were worshipping Jesus. I did understand that Jesus loved them, and that Jesus had come to save them.

I even picked up one of the palm leaves that was lying on the ground and **placed it carefully in my saddle bag**. I did this to remind me of the day, and to remind me of the moment that I carried Jesus into Jerusalem.

The day the city turned out to greet and to meet him. The day the people shouted out: 'Hosanna! Save us' I didn't know how Jesus was going to save them BUT I knew I would be an effective detective and solve the mystery.

[Children to attach clue to their cut-out donkey]

My journey into the heart of Jerusalem stopped at the temple. The place of worship. This is the place I thought Jesus would be so happy to see, like a donkey finding a whole house made out of hay. The temple is the place where humans came to pray to God, so why was Jesus so sad?



Jesus was also angry.

Not just a little bit upset like when I drop the last tiny bit of my carrot and can't find it. That really does bother me, and it happens a lot!

No, this feeling I could sense was so much more than that.

It was anger. The kind of angry I might feel if someone actually stole all my carrots and then ate them right in front of me. AND laughed in my face.

Imagine that!

My heart would be very upset.

So when Jesus dismounted from me and tipped over the tables in the temple, scattering the things on them everywhere, I began to be a donkey detective like my grandad.

BANG!

CRASH!

WALLOP!

Went the tables

Jesus made a whip out of some rope and began to:

WHACK!

THWACK!

WHACK!

All the silver and gold coins from the tables.

'You have turned my Father's house into a den of robbers' said Jesus, whose words roared from him like a mighty lion.

I understood every word Jesus said.

I didn't understand a word the people said but I knew they were moaning about Jesus.

They grumbled and mumbled and went:

Mutter

Mutter

Mutter

It sounded like words stuck in the gutter.

Jesus was so upset. He was so sad. The people were grumbling and acting so bad. I wanted to help him and so when I saw the whip he had made laying on the floor I scooped it up with my teeth.

I was going to hand it to him but he was holding his hands up and looking up to the heavens.

My grandad saw an angel once and I was looking for one now.

I didn't see one but it felt like there was an army of angels there.



Jesus was still looking up to the heavens when I **slipped the whip into my saddle bag**. I didn't understand all that was going on BUT I knew I would be an effective detective and solve the mystery.

[Children to attach clue to their cut-out donkey]

The cries of the crowd were getting louder and uglier. I wanted to carry Jesus away from them.

It seemed to me that all the people at the temple had gotten their heads and hearts into a muddle puddle.

How could they get so confused as to turn a place of caring and praying into a place of stealing and lying?

I'll never understand humans.

I watched as Jesus walked slowly away and I wanted to shout 'Hosanna!'

These people need saving from their selfishness and greed.

I wanted to shout:

'HOSANNA!'

I knew somehow that Jesus could save them. I just didn't know how.

Now what was Jesus going to do?

Written by Tony Bower, York Schools and Youth Trust





An Easter Donkey's Diary

Part Two

Put your hand up if you like food.

I love food! As in L.O.V.E I love food and love lots of it for dinner.

I can't put my hand up in the air BUT I can do something else. For dramatic effect, please put your hands on your knees and do a drum roll on the count of eleven.

One, nine, three, eleven.

I'm putting my hoof in the air. Yes hoof, which is proof that I am a donkey, or to be more precise, I am a colt. A young donkey, and that is why I am putting my hoof in the air. Only one of them. I tried to do it with two hooves in the air once, but I fell over.

You never want to see a donkey fall over. It's not a pretty sight. AND you definitely don't want to be the donkey that falls over that's a painful plight.

OUCH!

As my grandad used to tell me:

'You learn from your mistakes, and you grow a little wiser.'

My grandad also said that he must be very wise at his age because he made so many mistakes. I love my grandad AND I always loved it when he told me his most special story. The story of when Jesus was born, and the angels sang, and the shepherds ran. The night when the world was filled with hope wider than the sky. The night that changed everything for good.

Now, back to my story because I had longed for my own donkey detective adventure ever since I sat by my grandad's hooves and listened with my big floppy ears and my big open heart. So there I was in Jerusalem. The privileged donkey who had carried Jesus whilst the crowds sang his praises. The detective donkey who was trying to work out what special mission Jesus was carrying out.

Here are the clues I have gathered so far:

A palm branch.

A rope made out of old cord.

Here's what I have seen so far:

Jesus being praised.

Thieves at the temple being chased away.

Here's what I have heard so far:

Jesus telling every listening heart that the most important command to follow is to love God and to love each other.

I loved that!



Jesus also said some lovely things to a little old widow who placed a tiny coin in the temple offering.

It was so tiny that the coin made a little sound that went:

PLINK!

I love that sound:

PLINK. PLINK! PLINK!

I know what we can all do, we can all make that sound on the count of one, two, turnips. Here we go, one, two, turnips.

PLINK!

It really made me think when Jesus said that the old widow lady had given more than everyone else.

I know I am not good at counting and numbers and my head goes into a muddle puddle, you might have all noticed that, about me and numbers and that is why you should pay very careful attention to your teachers and learn your numbers well. I know I can count on you to do it! Do you get it? Count. On you. Oh well, sorry.

But how can one tiny coin be more than lots and lots of big gold coins?

I hadn't got a clue. Do you get it? Do you understand it?

I had seen plenty of those big gold coins going into the offering box.

I didn't understand. Maybe you can be a detective like me and try to work it out.

How did the widow give more money than people who gave more money! It's a bit of a riddle. It's a bit of a muddle in my mind. See if you can figure it out.

[Discussion time]

Did you work it out?

This is what Jesus said:

'This widow lady has given more than anyone because she gave everything she had.'

EVERYTHING!

My ears started to flip and flap when I heard that.

Flip flap

Flip flap

How about that?

She gave everything. That's what love does, and that's what Jesus was talking about. Love God and love one another. Not just a little bit or on one day of the week but all the time.



It's funny. I don't understand all the words humans say but I did understand the words Jesus was saying. Even though sometimes they might make me think a lot and I have to be an effective detective to work it all out. I think it's really important to think about what Jesus says and try to understand it.
Let me tell you what happened next...

I was grazing on the grass in the garden of Gethsemane in the evening. I had been given the task to carry Jesus into Jerusalem and I am a loyal little colt. I do not abandon my duty and do a bolt. So that is why I stayed close to where the friends of Jesus were all hanging out for the night.

The garden of Gethsemane.

It was the end of a long tiring day when I heard familiar footsteps come my way. I heard the sadness in their voices. I heard the confusion in their conversations. One of them stopped by me and tried to smile as he stroked my head.

He was carrying a small loaf of bread in his hands, a loaf which he **placed into my saddle bag**, and then he stood there and shook his head.

'The bread Jesus shared with us tonight.' He said. 'The bread that he broke in his hands and offered to all of us. 'This is my body broken for you', that's what Jesus said, and that's what Jesus told us.'

The man shook his head. I could feel confusion and sadness. I could sense there was fear too.

'I have never seen all of us so quiet. We sat there listening and hanging on Jesus' every word that he said. 'This is my body broken for you, eat this bread in remembrance of me.' That's what we all did. We ate the piece of bread that Jesus had broken for each one of us.'

The man looked into the dark night, I didn't know what he was thinking but there was a sad feeling, I could sense that.

'That loaf is for tomorrow's breakfast' he told me as he patted the saddle bag and tried to smile at me. I nodded and snorted trying to tell him that not only would I look after it carefully but that I would also think carefully about what Jesus said. It felt to me that this could be part of Jesus' mission. It felt like this could be another big clue. I knew that I wanted to be an effective detective and solve the mystery.

[Children to attach clue to their cut-out donkey]

The garden became full of people all camping out for the night. They made a circle on the ground as they started to sing. It was a wonderful song and a beautiful sound but I didn't hear the words. I just felt the feelings of prayer and worship that came from their hearts and filled and thrilled the air.

It was AMAZING!!

Sorry for shouting but it really was, get ready this time, AMAZING!!!



Then all of a sudden, like the sun going down, the whole atmosphere changed. The garden became as quiet as a carrot in the ground.

Everything felt different.

I could see Jesus with three of his friends. I could see Jesus talking to them as they walked together. I trotted across the ground to see if they were going somewhere and needed me to carry anything BUT the load that Jesus was carrying wasn't on the outside. It wasn't a physical load he was carrying like a million bags of carrots. It was an even heavier weight around his heart.

I could feel it.

The weight that was so heavy it felt like it could crush the whole world.

THAT was the kind of weight I could feel Jesus was carrying.

Jesus wasn't leaving the garden at all. He was standing still. He was standing strong like a tree that is deep rooted. Jesus wasn't going anywhere BUT his three close friends kept closing their eyes, time and time again. I saw their eyes shut and saw their shoulders slump and their bodies lying flat out on the ground and their mouths and noses making a rumbling snoring sound.

Jesus was wide awake.

Jesus' mouth was moving but I couldn't quite hear everything he was saying. I think he said something like:

'Father, if there is any other way.'

Was he asking his Father God if there was a way out of the garden? I knew all the roads around here and I could show him the way out of the garden but I don't think he meant that.

I heard Jesus say: 'Not my will but yours be done.'

And I felt an anxiety, a stress like someone who was trying to carry the weight of the world.

I had never felt anything like this before. There seemed to be a real tussle going on inside Jesus. It was like Jesus was struggling to hand over the reins of his life. There was something he really didn't want to do but something that he felt overwhelmingly he had to do.

Overwhelmed! That's what I think was going on.

Overwhelmed by emotions.

Overwhelmed by decisions.

Overwhelmed by his mission.

Jesus was standing up and I knew why.

I could hear it.



Did I tell you I have really big ears? Well, I have, and in the darkness before the dawn, I could hear them coming.

It was the way the ground shook with their marching feet.

It was with the way the swords clanked as they marched up the street.

It was the soldiers coming this way.

It was the soldiers entering the garden before the break of day.

There were torches burning and flames jumping. There were swords raised and people shouting. There were disciples running and there was Jesus standing... still.

I could sense that Jesus was a man who had made his decision.

I could sense that Jesus was a man on a mission as the soldiers led him away but why? Why had the soldiers come? Why arrest Jesus? It wasn't Jesus who had been cheating God at the temple. It wasn't Jesus who had done anything wrong at all. So why arrest him? I want to be an effective detective, but I could not work it out.

Suddenly everyone had gone.

I was left standing by an olive tree, all alone. I began to move and crunched an olive branch under my hoof. I looked down at the ground and decided to pick the branch up and **slip it into my saddle bag**. The olive branch looked like it had been snapped. Had it been snapped by the soldiers with their swords? I didn't know, but it would help remind me of this mysterious moment. I knew more than ever that I needed to be an effective detective and solve the mystery.

[Children to attach clue to their cut-out donkey]

I will never forget seeing Jesus calmly walking out of the garden surrounded by soldiers.

He never looked back.

And I couldn't look away.

I have no idea where they were taking him but I had a horrible feeling about what was going to happen to him.

I stood in the middle of a lonely garden as the clouds hid the moon and I brayed as loud as I could.

'Someone help Jesus' I cried, but no one was there to help.

Written by Tony Bower, York Schools and Youth Trust





An Easter Donkey's Diary

Part Three

My nose can sniff trouble a billion paces away. I hope a billion is a really, really, REALLY big number because my nose was twitching and itching with bags and bags of troubles.

There was fear in the air.
There was anger in the atmosphere.

I could smell so much trouble I didn't know whether to run or to hide, but something deep down inside said: Find Jesus.

I began to sniff the scents of the soldiers who took Jesus away. Maybe they could lead me to him now. The scent was still strong in the grey morning light. I knew it was time to be braver than I felt and to have courage that was stronger than my wobbly legs.

My legs were very wobbly. Think of something that wobbles and then think of it wobbling eighty million times more than that.

I had to find Jesus.

The streets of Jerusalem were like a mouse that was fast asleep in the middle of the darkest night. It was like everyone was hiding away. It was like no one wanted to leave their house and step out into the light, as if the whole city was clinging on to the night.

I had never sensed a place like this.
I had never felt anything like this.

My ears started to itch, which meant they would soon begin to twitch.

Itchy

Twitchy

Itchy

Twitchy

Now my ears had all gone tingly.

I didn't know what it meant but I somehow knew it wasn't good.

Itchy

Twitchy

Itchy

Twitchy

Flipping

Flapping

Flopping

Flaying

Oh me oh my I don't know why?



'CRUCIFY!'

The cry rang out over the city.
The cry ran through my body.

'CRUCIFY!'

The cry made my teeth chatter
The cry made my heart sadder.

'CRUCIFY!'

The cry told me something terrible was the matter.
The cry made my legs run faster than ever.

I didn't trot, I ran.

I ran and I ran and I ran. If I was going to run into trouble I was running there at the double.

I ran and I ran and I ran until my breath was wheezy and my tummy was queasy.

I ran until I ran into a crowd of people.

'Oi'

'Ouch!'

'Oi'

'Ouch'

I tried to say sorry, but I was too out of breath.
My legs were quivering and then I saw something that made my heart feel like breaking.

The cross.

The cross that Jesus was on.

I gasped.
I cried out.

Some people laughed.

I thought they were laughing at me but when I looked I could see no one was looking at me. They were looking and laughing at Jesus.

I couldn't believe it.

I didn't want to see it, and I really didn't want to see someone offering Jesus a drink with a dirty old sponge. Jesus refused the drink and the sponge fell on the ground.

No one was bothered about it, so I **scooped it up and put it in my saddle bag.**

[Children to attach clue to their cut-out donkey]



I didn't know if that smelly sponge would ever help me be an effective detective and solve the mystery. I didn't know why Jesus was on the cross, I looked away, and that's when it happened. That's when I saw her.

The lady my grandad carried to Bethlehem. The lady who gave birth to the hope of every heart. The lady who is the mother of Jesus.

Mary.

She was standing next to a man who had his arm around her shoulder. Mary was looking at Jesus. Her eyes fixed on Jesus, and I could feel the love between them. I could see it in her tears.

I didn't want to look.
I couldn't look away.

Mary crying.
Jesus dying.

'Father forgive them'

The words of Jesus that washed over me.
The words of Jesus that washed over the crowd.
The words of Jesus that washed over the world.

'Father forgive them.'

I started to move close to Mary. I wanted to be there to support her, but then it happened.

The sun cast a long shadow from the cross that spread right over my body. I could feel it. I could sense it.

The cross of Jesus touching me somehow in the shadow that was cast. In the shape of the cross that fell upon me.

I could feel it.
I could sense it.

The cross upon which Jesus died as the sun departed and darkness darker than any night fell upon the earth. BUT why, why did Jesus have to die? How could people treat someone so incredibly good, so horribly badly?

I had to try to work it out. I had to solve the mystery. I had to be an effective detective.

A good detective looks at the clues and finds the facts. A good detective works things out and solves the puzzle and solves the problem.

What had I witnessed?

Crowds of people praising Jesus. Jesus caring for his Father's house, the temple.



Jesus talking about the most important thing being love. To love God and to love one another. Jesus showing his love to everyone but not everyone loved Jesus. Some people were jealous of him, I had sensed that. Some people didn't believe in him, I had heard that. Some people didn't understand him, I had felt that. But why did he die? What was Jesus' special mission?

I had to think even harder. Even though my heart was sadder than ever I had to work out what was going on.

What had I witnessed? What had I seen and heard?

Jesus saying that he wanted to do his Father's will. Jesus allowing himself to be arrested when he knew he hadn't done anything wrong. Jesus allowing himself to be put upon a cruel cross.

'Father forgive them'

Father forgive.

The word sang in my mind. The word danced in my heart.

Forgive.

Forgive.

Jesus was innocent. Jesus was king of creation. Jesus was the gift of God to this world that my grandad saw being born, the night the angels sang of peace and joy to mankind.

Jesus saw that people were selfish and greedy, not always kind or caring. Jesus witnessed it all and felt it all. Jesus knew it all in his heart. I knew that was true.

Forgive them.

Forgive them.

I trudged wearily away not quite knowing now where to go or what to do. I was loyal to Jesus. I would have carried him to the ends of the earth and back but now he was gone.

The next two days I couldn't eat a carrot. I couldn't even look at a carrot. If someone had handed me a plate of carrots I would have looked away.

I didn't want to eat.

I didn't know what I wanted to do.

My mind was in a muddle puddle as I heard the women leave the house. I had stayed close by to Jesus' mother and friends just in case they needed me to carry them anywhere like my grandad did all those years ago. My grandad was there when Jesus was born, and I was there when Jesus died. How sad is that?



I began to trot slowly behind them. It was still dark, just before the dawn as they approached a lovely garden.

I could sense something was different straight away. My ears were flapping in an excited way. I felt like jumping and I can't jump, but I felt like I could jump over the moon and back.

There were birds singing a song I had never heard before.

The sun was beginning to rise and light the world and make it shine like it had never shined before.

I was feeling a joy that I had never felt before. A joy that I never thought possible.

I heard the women scream.

I saw white lightning flashes and heard angelic voices.

'Why do you look for the living among the dead? Jesus is not here. He is risen like he said.'

The women were crying, BUT the tears were full of joy.

The women started talking about telling the disciples as they ran from the garden. I started to follow them but stopped to pick something up that they had dropped. It was a jar of oil. A special oil they use for people who've died. I **slipped it into my saddle bag** and thought I would think about it later.

[Children to attach clue to their cut-out donkey]

I was in a right muddle puddle over this puzzle about the mission of Jesus. I didn't know how I could solve it and be an effective detective. BUT I also didn't know it was about to be unravelled before my very eyes!

I was about to follow the women from the garden when I heard footsteps. The kind of feet that can walk anywhere, even on water. The feet that had rested gently on my side whilst the world sang: 'HOSANNA!' The feet that had walked out of the tomb of darkness and into the light of life.

I turned around and my eyes almost popped out of my head!

Jesus was smiling at me as he smelt the fresh air and took a deep breath.

The palm leaf, the triumphal entry into the city, the rope Jesus used to stop people cheating on God, the piece of bread, 'my body broken for you', the olive branch, Jesus tested and arrested in the garden, the sponge at the cross, Jesus forgiving and talking about living in his kingdom, and a jar of oil no longer needed because Jesus is risen.

This is Jesus' mission.

His death.

His forgiveness.

His new life.

The world's new hope.



This is the mystery solved.

This is the mystery for the whole world to solve and for every heart to resolve, and for everyone to truly know.

Jesus is ALIVE! EE AW! EE AW! He is RISEN! And I am an effective detective!

Jesus is alive!

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