The True Meaning of Easter

**Scene 1 - At church**

*Several children are gathered talking*

Alex: Man, I am sure looking forward to our Spring break!

Bobby: Me too! I need a break from all that hard work at school!

Charlie: I know what you mean. All we seem to be doing is getting ready for some test!

Alex: Yeah. It is just the same old thing day after day.

Domingo: I am looking forward to *Semana Santa.*

Bobby: Domingo, have you slipped a cog? What does Santa have to do with Easter? Santa is the main dude in December!

Alex: Uh, I don’t think that is what he is talking about!

Domingo: Bobby, Alex is right. *Semana Santa* is Holy Week - the week leading up to Easter.

Alex: Really? That’s pretty cool, Domingo. You celebrate Easter for a whole week?

Domingo: Yes, it is the most important holiday in the church calendar because it is the celebration of the resurrection of Christ.

Bobby: Wow, that is great! Just imagine chocolate Easter Bunny’s for an *entire week!*

Charlie: Yeah, but we only get a couple of days off for Easter. You would have to do it all at night, or you would be bouncing off the walls from all that chocolate!

Domingo: Uh, guys; in Mexico, we get two full weeks off for Easter. It runs from Palm Sunday to Easter Sunday, but we got the full week before Easter as well as the week after off from school.

*Bobby is flabbergasted. He just cannot believe they get a two-week holiday.*

Bobby: Two full weeks off?! Two weeks off! Man, that just doesn’t sound fair!

*Pastor Palmer enters the room*

Pastor Palmer: What doesn’t sound fair, Bobby?

Bobby: Did you know schools in Mexico are out for *two full weeks* for Easter?

Charlie: Yeah, and we only get one week, and then only if we haven’t had much snow!

Pastor Palmer: That sounds interesting. Are there any special celebrations?

Domingo: Yes, there are processions and passion plays all through the country. On Palm Sunday, in many towns and villages there are processions reenacting Jesus' triumphal entry, and woven palms are sold outside churches. On the Thursday before Easter many of my friends visit seven churches to recall the vigil the apostles kept in the garden while Jesus prayed and some of them even have foot-washing ceremonies.

Bobby: *Foot washing*!? That sounds *nasty*.

Pastor Palmer: It may sound bad, Bobby, but Jesus washed the feet of His disciples the night before He was crucified. Is there more, Domingo?

Domingo: Yes, on Good Friday there are solemn religious processions in which statues of Christ and Mary are carried through town. Many people dress in costumes to remember the time of Jesus. There are also plays about the crucifixion of Jesus. My dad says there is one near Mexico City attended by over a million people!

Alex: *Looks at our audience*. Wow! That’s a *whole* lot more people than we have here this morning! That sounds like people really like Easter! Is that all they do?

Domingo: No, on the Saturday between Good Friday and Easter Sunday, some people burn a life-size doll of Judas because he betrayed Jesus.

Charlie: What about Sunday? Do you get Easter Eggs or chocolate bunnys?

Domingo: No. Many people go to church and celebrate quietly with their families, though in some places there are festivities with fireworks.

Pastor Palmer: I’m glad you all are so interested in Easter, because that is exactly what I wanted to talk about today.

Charlie: Well, it’s going to be pretty hard to top what Domingo told us!

Pastor Palmer: Perhaps. I talked to Pastor Boskos this week and he wants us to conduct the sunrise service . . .

Bobby: *Interrupting* **SUNRISE SERVICE!** ***Sunrise service!*** You have *got* to be pulling my leg Pastor Palmer. You *really* want us to get up *before* sunrise and come to church?

Alex: Bobby, we *always* have a sunrise service!

Bobby: Really? Where was I during these sunrise services? I mean, first you tell me we have services on Sunday night, then you tell me we meet on Wednesday night. Now you are telling me that once a year we get up before the crack of dawn and go to church!

Pastor Palmer: It’ll be ok, Bobby. I think you will find our service this year will be very special. We want to tell people about the *true* meaning of Easter.

Charlie: Pastor Palmer, what *is* the true meaning of Easter?

Alex: I know what you mean. The stores started putting out Easter stuff a month ago, but I don’t think they really know what Easter means.

Pastor Palmer: All of you are right. What our culture tries to tell us about Easter doesn’t look anything like what the Bible tells us about the *true* meaning of Easter.

 *Looks at his watch*

 Guys, we are out of time for today. Please spend some time this week reading your Bible’s and begin inviting your friends to our sunrise service on Easter Sunday. Next time, Pastor Boskos will be with us to help us understand the true meaning of Easter.

**Scene 2 At Church**

Pastor Palmer: Hey everybody! Did you have a good week at school so far?

Alex: It was ok, Pastor Palmer. We have been inviting all our friends to our sunrise service . . .

Bobby: *Interrupting* Yeah, and they think we are plain ole crazy for getting up that early on a Sunday!

Charlie: A couple of my friends said they would come. They don’t go to church anywhere.

Pastor Palmer: That’s great guys! I told you that Pastor Boskos would be here to help us understand the true meaning of Easter.

Pastor Boskos: How are you boys today?

Bobby: We are doing great Pastor Boskos. Hey, did you know Pastor Palmer wants us to have a church service at *sunrise*? What’s up with that?

Pastor Boskos: That’s right, Bobby. Many churches have a sunrise service on Easter Sunday. The first recorded Easter Sunrise Service took place in 1732 in the Moravian congregation in what is now Germany. After an all-night prayer vigil, the unmarried men of the community went to the town graveyard to sing hymns of praise to the Risen Savior. The following year, the whole congregation joined in the service. After that, the "Easter Morning" or "Sunrise Service" spread around the world with the Moravian missionaries.

Charlie: So, why were those men going to the graveyard to sing hymns?

Pastor Boskos: That’s a great question, Charlie. There was a time when people took God seriously. They believed in Him and they believed what He said in His Word. These men understood that the resurrection of Jesus was the most significant event in their lives and that the least they could do was spend time with God in prayer. After spending an entire night with God, it was just the natural thing for them to do to go celebrate that death had no power over Jesus, or them.

Alex: It sounds like those missionaries were really committed to Jesus and telling other people about Him.

Pastor Boskos: That’s right, Alex. As Southern Baptists, we have a wonderful opportunity to do something too. For the last couple of years, our special offering themes have been “Whatever it takes.” I would like talk to you all for a couple of minutes about doing whatever it takes in our own lives. Have any of you ever heard of the Romans Road?

Bobby: Isn’t that the road that runs over by the hamburger place?

Domingo: I have heard of it, Pastor Boskos. It is a way to tell people about Jesus from the book of Romans.

Pastor Boskos: That’s right, Domingo. In **Romans 3:23**, God tells us that *all* of us have sinned and we continue to fall short of the glory of God.

 That means that we have all done wrong things and continue to do wrong things. And because we have all done wrong things, **Romans 6:23** tells us that because we have worked for sin all of our lives, we will die.

Charlie: Isn’t that pretty bad for us?

Pastor Boskos: It would be if that was all God had to say about our sin. But **Romans 5:8** tells us that *“while we were still sinners, God showed His love to us because Jesus died for us,”* and **Romans 6:23** tells us that *“the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.”*

 You see, we think we are junk, but God does not make junk. God's Word says He will make us His masterpiece. He loves us too much to leave us where we are. That is why He sent Jesus to die on the cross while we were ***still*** in the midst of the mess we made of our lives. **Romans 5:10** says *“God put His love on the line for us by offering His Son in sacrificial death while we were of no use whatever to Him.”*

Bobby: Uh, Pastor Boskos, I am not sure I understand what the death of Jesus has to do with Easter.

Pastor Boskos: That’s ok, Bobby. This last part will tie it all together. In **Romans 10:9-10** God says that if we confess that Jesus is Lord *and* we believe with all our soul that God raised Him from the dead, we will be saved. **Romans 10:11** tells us that whoever believes in Him will not be disappointed. And finally, **Romans 10:13** tells us that everyone who calls out to God for help gets help. That means that if we call out to God to save us, He will.

 As we get ready for Easter, I want to ask all of you if you have confessed Jesus as your Lord. Have you asked Him to save you?

Domingo: I have, Pastor Boskos!

Alex: Me too! I did last year and you baptized me!

Bobby: Pastor Boskos, I can’t say that I have ever confessed Jesus as my Lord. From what you just said, I can confess Him right now! Can you help me?

Pastor Boskos: I certainly can Bobby. Why don’t you come over here with me while Pastor Palmer closes out our meeting.

*Pastor Boskos and Bobby go to the other side of the stage and “talk” for a moment. They then bow their heads.*

Pastor Palmer: Pastor Boskos said that God makes us a masterpiece. That is the *true* meaning of Easter. It is that *“This is how much God loved the world: He gave his Son, his one and only Son. And this is why: so that no one need be destroyed; by believing in him, anyone can have a whole and lasting life. God didn’t go to all the trouble of sending his Son merely to point an accusing finger, telling the world how bad it was. He came to help, to put the world right again. Anyone who trusts in him is found innocent; anyone who refuses to trust him has long since been under the death sentence without knowing it. And why? Because of that person’s failure to believe in the one-of-a-kind Son of God when introduced to him”*

 You see, even though Jesus died a terrible death on the cross for the things that you and I have done wrong, He didn’t stay in the grave. On the third day He was in the grave, God raised Him from the dead, and now He lives *forever*. He wants us to be with Him. That is why it is so important for us to tell our friends about Jesus.

*Pastor Boskos and Bobby have finished. As the other boys speak, they make their way back across the stage to join them*

Charlie: I think it is *great* Bobby has trusted Jesus today!

Pastor Boskos: Me too, Charlie. That is what we want to do with our sunrise service. We want people who don’t know much, or maybe not know *anything* about Jesus to come to trust Him with their lives. That is how we do *whatever it takes.* And for the boys and girls in our audience, if *you* need to confess Jesus as your Lord today, I am sure Pastor Larry would be happy to talk with you.

Alex: That sounds great, Pastor Palmer. I am excited about our sunrise service!

Domingo: Me too! I am going to invite everyone I know!

Charlie: Man, let’s ask everyone in *all* of our classes to be here on Easter Sunday!

Pastor Boskos: That’s great guys! Now, let’s invite all *these* boys and girls to be here too!

All: We’ll see you at Sunrise on Easter Sunday!

Setting/Characters/Props

**Setting**

Modern times

Two scenes

**Characters 6 Speaking Parts**

Alex:

Bobby:

Charlie:

Domingo:

Pastor Palmer:

Pastor Boskos:

**Props**

None needed