

SIGNS OF LIFE

*There before me [in heaven] was a great multitude that no one could count,
from every nation, tribe, people and language.*

—Revelation 7:9

INTRODUCTION

You probably know the signs of spring: the air gets warmer; the days get longer; the grass gets greener. Flowers start to bloom, trees begin to bud, and birds come back. These signs are familiar to most people. They tell us spring is here!

Do you know what the first sign of Easter was? Do you know the first thing that indicated to the world that Jesus had risen from the dead? It was the huge stone that had been rolled away from the entrance to his tomb! The women who went to see Jesus the Sunday after he was crucified noticed it. They didn't know right away what it meant. But it wasn't long before they understood that a wonderful thing had happened. An angel explained it to them, and they saw that the tomb was empty.

Nowadays, there are other signs of Easter, like all the candy in the stores and pictures of bunnies everywhere. But we're going to look at one girl's *favorite* Easter sign and what Easter really means. Today's devotion is based on Revelation 7:9, in which the apostle John wrote, "There before me [in heaven] was a great multitude that no one could count, from every nation, tribe, people and language." The devotion is called "Signs of Life."

DEVOTION

"Isn't this beautiful?" Alayna said. She and Libby were walking through the apple orchard behind Alayna's house. It was spring, and the trees were in bloom.

Libby breathed deeply. "Yeah, and the air smells so good!"

Alayna twirled a couple of times, just for fun. "I love coming out here every spring. The blossoms are my favorite sign of Easter." She ran her hand through them.

Libby said, "Mine is chocolate eggs." They both laughed. Then Libby asked, "Why are these your favorite?"

Picking a blossom, Alayna said, "Because they make the trees look alive again." She looked around. "And because there's so many of them. It reminds me of all the people who'll be in heaven because of Easter. The Bible says there'll be too many to count!"

What's your favorite sign of Easter? Does it help you remember the real meaning of the holiday? Easter is a celebration that Jesus rose from the dead. Because he did, there'll be many joyful people in heaven. And you'll be one of them! If your favorite sign of Easter doesn't remind you of that, why not choose a new favorite? The real meaning of Easter is too good to forget.

WORDS TO TREASURE

By his power God raised the Lord from the dead, and he will raise us also.

—1 Corinthians 6:14

QUESTIONS

1. If your favorite sign of Easter doesn't remind you of the real meaning of the holiday, what sign could you pick to be your new favorite?

2. Some people think butterflies are a wonderful sign of Jesus' resurrection. Why would that be?

Answer: When a butterfly comes out of its chrysalis, it reminds people of how Jesus emerged from his tomb.

3. Can you think of other signs of Easter that we haven't mentioned yet? What aspect of Easter do they represent?

A couple of answers are: (1) Easter lilies, whose white color symbolizes purity, life, and hope; (2) Easter eggs, which represent new life.

4. In order for people to be resurrected like Jesus was and be part of the joyful multitude in heaven, they have to be born again by putting their faith in Jesus. What are some signs that they have done this?

Some answers are: they begin to act more like Jesus; they go to church and read their Bible and pray; they seem to have more peace and joy in their hearts; they honor Jesus' name and God's name instead of misusing them; they try to help other people to believe in Jesus too.

5. Which holiday do you like better, Easter or Christmas? Which one do you think is more important? Why?

Answer: Both holidays are very important. Easter might be considered more important, however. That's because if Jesus had only come to earth as a human being (Christmas) but hadn't died for our sins and risen from the dead (Easter), we couldn't be resurrected and live with him forever in heaven.

Consider spending some time playing a game or doing an exercise to help children memorize the "Words to Treasure" Scripture verse.