

The Easter Surprise



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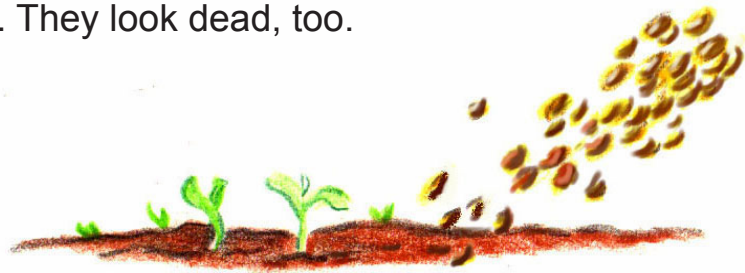
Garden Surprises

Surprising things happen in a garden.

When you look at a garden in the winter it may look dead.



Before seeds are planted they are little grains or kernels—dry and hard and often brown. They look dead, too.





Have you seen butterflies in a garden? They start out as caterpillars. Then they seem to die. They wrap themselves in cocoons. But surprise, surprise! One day they wake up and break open the cocoon. Out they come! They have turned into butterflies with colorful wings.



There were surprises at Easter, long, long ago.

The Lord came to Jerusalem at the time called Passover, riding on a donkey like a king. The disciples and the Lord's friends were worried. They were afraid some jealous people would kill the Lord. But the Lord wasn't afraid.

The people who had followed the Lord were sad when His enemies killed Him. They believed the Lord was gone forever. They carefully put the Lord's body in a tomb and a big stone was rolled over the opening.



Easter Morning

What was the big surprise in the garden where the Lord's body was placed?

The Lord sent an angel to roll back the stone to show that He was no longer in the tomb! This was the Easter surprise. The Lord was alive!



Two women who were both named Mary came early in the morning to the tomb.

They were surprised to find the stone was rolled away. The women looked and they saw that the Lord wasn't there. Instead there was an angel. He said gently, "Don't be afraid. You seek Jesus of Nazareth. He is risen! He is not here." (Mark 16:6). They were surprised again! One of the women ran to tell the disciples what she had seen at the tomb.



Seeing the Lord

The other Mary looked inside the tomb again. She saw two angels sitting where the body of Jesus had been.

They asked her, “Why are you weeping?” (John 20:13)

She said, “Because they have taken away my Lord, and I do not know where they have laid Him” (John 20:13). She was looking for the Lord’s body. Then she turned around and saw a Man standing near her. It was the Lord, but she did not recognize Him. She He asked her, “Woman, why are you weeping? Whom are you seeking?” (John 20:15). But He already knew why she was crying, because the Lord knows everything in our minds and hearts. Then the Lord said her name: “Mary!” Hearing that, she recognized Him. She called Him “Rabboni!” It was a name that showed her love and respect for her Master, the Lord.



These are the Easter surprises. The Lord has shown that He will never die but will always be with us. He is always near, always ready to come to be with us to give us comfort, courage and strength.