Beyond the bunny: How to celebrate an Easter of faith

Preparing for Easter offers families the perfect opportunity to slowdown and prepare for the celebration of Christ's resurrection. As with all holidays, we may find ourselves making lists, running errands, calling relatives and hunting through storage for the box of decorations – in this case, baskets, grass, bunnies and plastic eggs.

It's easy to get caught up in the details, but it's just as easy to create a faith-filled, intentional and reverent holiday. This year, create traditions that enrich your children's understanding and experience of this sacred holiday.

During most church services, we are surrounded by art – banners, stained glass and perhaps even sculptures and paintings – all of which is intended to focus our minds on the holy. You and your family can do the same at home. You might create a centerpiece for your table so that every meal is a reminder of the renewal that Easter promises. Along with that centerpiece, have your family write a mealtime prayer that you use only during Easter. If your children are looking for more ways to get involved, encourage them to make a banner that can adorn the kitchen or family room. Include the symbols of Easter (cross, lamb, lily) and find a passage from the Bible to inscribe on it, such as John 11:25-26 (NIV):

Jesus said to her, "I am the resurrection and the life.
He who believes in me will live, even though he dies;
and whoever lives and believes in me will never die."

When your children place the centerpiece on the table, hang the banner on the hook or read their prayer, they will learn that Easter is much more than coloring eggs and trading jelly

beans. They will learn it is a time when their family prepares and focuses their intentions on the sacred promise of Easter.

Keeping Easter in the forefront of our minds, during our everyday lives and even during Mass, can take a mighty effort. But, with a few practical reminders, you and your family can create sacred space and allow the holiness of the season to reside in your home and heart.