

# Trade Fear for JOY with Jesus

## *Prayer Activity for Children....*

By Cathy Gilmore

Inspired by the book, *Easter Bunny's Amazing Day*,  
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Jesus wants all of us to experience God's loving Divine Mercy. Each of us needs to exercise humility to place our TRUST in Jesus. For young children, fear is often a barrier to their trust in God. This activity/meditation offers children an opportunity to trust their fears to Jesus and cling to his love, and prepares them for the time when they can give their sins to Jesus and cling to His Mercy.

The story, *Easter Bunny's Amazing Day*, is an excellent way for children to be introduced to the love and mercy of Jesus. The pretend bunny in the story who is frightened, places his trust in Jesus. Easter is all about surprises. The surprise hidden inside of trusting in Jesus is that His love can renew each of our hearts; and fill each of us with JOY.

The love of the risen Jesus lifts all the fear from the little bunny's heart and fills him with JOY. The bunny's life then has a new purpose...surprising others with the sweet love of Jesus. When children place their love and trust in Jesus, they are prepared to "BE Easter Bunnies" and bring the sweet love and JOY of Jesus to everyone too.

This activity is designed for children age 3-7 years old, but can be appreciated by all ages. It is perfect for the Saturday of Holy Week or sometime soon after Easter Sunday. Suitable for use with one family at home, in a classroom, or as a children's prayer activity during a Divine Mercy Parish Event.

### ***"Trade Fear for JOY with Jesus" Activity Step-By-Step:***

**Supplies:** Plastic Eggs, copies of "Prayer of Trust", Divine Mercy image or statue of Jesus, flowers, candle, empty basket, crayons/pencils, optional copies of coloring/sons and optional Easter or "bunny style" snacks.

- 1) READ aloud - the picture book [Easter Bunny's Amazing Day](#)
- 2) TALK with the children about the way trust in Jesus trades fear for JOY!
- 4) Children PREPARE to give their fears to Jesus and tuck small notes inside plastic eggs.
- 5) PRAYER WALK to "Jesus JOY Altar" to leave fears and pray a prayer of trust
- 6) SING "Jesus Takes My Fears Away"
- 7) Plus OPTIONAL coloring page and/or snack.

### 1) Story Time:

Gather your child or children together and read aloud the picture book: *Easter Bunny's Amazing Day* by Carol Benoist and Cathy Gilmore. This story reframes the children's understanding of the Easter Bunny. This bunny helps the children discover that trust in Jesus fills you with the best Easter surprise...the LOVE & JOY of Jesus!

### 2) Talk about Fear and Trust:

The Little Bunny in the story trusts in Jesus and trades his fear for JOY. We all are afraid of some things sometimes, right? We can trust in Jesus just like the bunny did. God said some important things in the Bible about being afraid... "Trust in the Lord with all your heart" (Proverbs 3:5) "Do not fear, for I am with you" (Genesis 26:24).

### 3) Prepare to Give Fear to Jesus:

Tell the children, "When Jesus died and rose again, the Apostles, like the little bunny in the story, were afraid and Jesus took their fears away. When we remember that Jesus is always with us and how His love keeps us safe, then we know we can trust Him and give our fears to Him too. Let's give our fears to Jesus. Each child then is invited to write down or draw one of their own fears on a note to "give to Jesus." When finished, the child folds up their note and puts their Jesus note in a plastic egg. (Example of how to write the note below)

Jesus, I give my fear of \_\_\_\_\_ to you.  
Jesus I trust in you! Name \_\_\_\_\_

### 5) Prayer Walk to the Jesus Joy Altar:

Then each child or small group of children take a walk to go to a prepared spot with a little "shrine" or simple altar set up. You can include a framed Divine Mercy Image or statue of Jesus, flowers, candle and empty basket. Have each child place their egg in the basket and take a copy of the Prayer of Trust in exchange. Kneeling for a quiet moment, the group then together will pray the Prayer aloud (children repeating each line after a leader) before returning to where they began

### 6) Songs, Coloring and Snack

Conclude your special time by singing the song, "Jesus Takes My Fear Away". Then allow younger children to color the bunny who trusts Jesus in his sunny garden. You can end with "bunny style snacks" like veggies and dip, chocolate eggs, gummy bunnies, etc. to celebrate the JOY of Jesus.

Ask the children if they know the secret of WHY we give candy on Easter:

***Because the LOVE of Jesus is so SWEET!***

## ***Little Bunny Prayer of Trust***

By Cathy Gilmore

Please Jesus, give me a humble heart,  
that I may trust you for everything.

I am small, but you are big enough  
to take care of me, always.

Fill my heart with your love and your JOY!

Help me to remember that you do big things  
with what appears to be small,  
like bread, children, bunnies and ME!

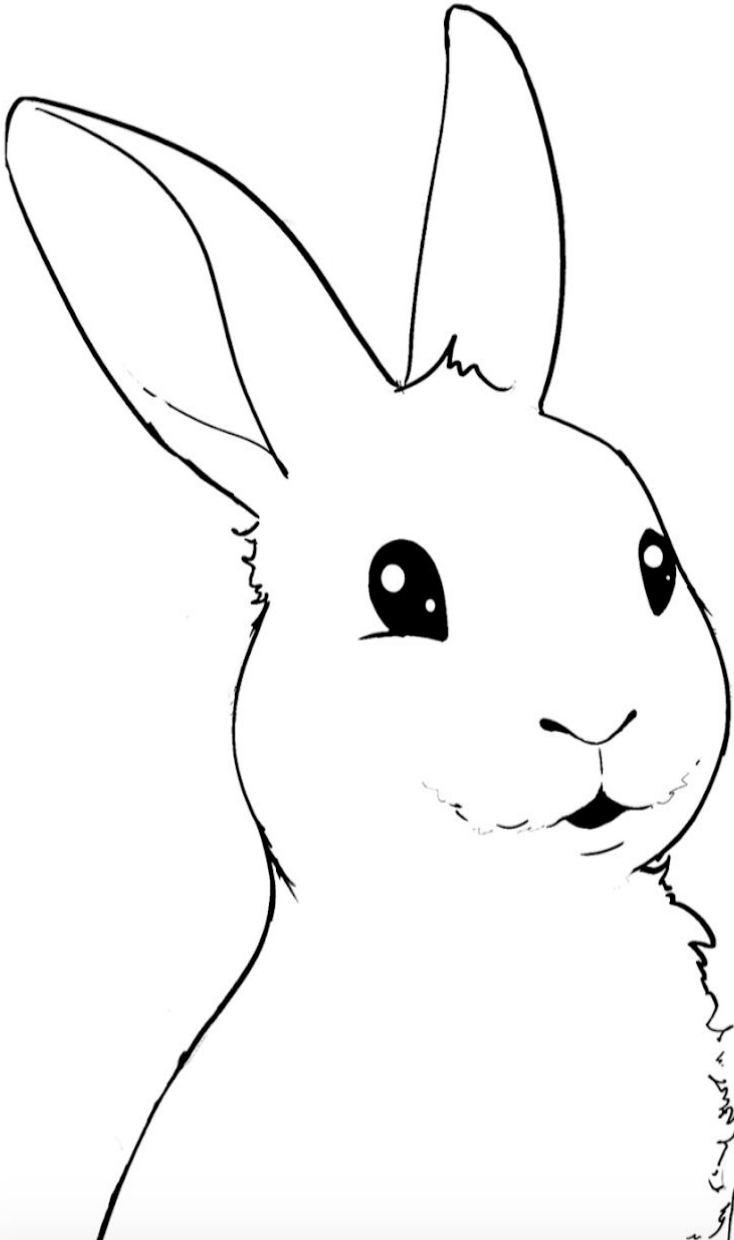
Jesus I TRUST in YOU! Amen.



# ***When I trust in Jesus, JOY fills MY heart...***

***And I can BE an Easter Bunny too. I can bring the SWEET love of Jesus to everyone!***

***This Coloring Page is for you to create your own beautiful garden background for your Easter Bunny. You can add: grass, flowers, sunshine, an empty tomb, and... JESUS!***



A coloring page from *Easter Bunny's Amazing Day*. 2014 Liguori Publications

Illustration from the book *Easter Bunny's Amazing Day*, by Carol Benoist and Cathy Gilmore / Liguori Publications©2014

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Read the story of the Easter Bunny who found JOY by TRUSTING Jesus: ***Easter Bunny's Amazing Day*** - Liguori ©2014  
***Find a menagerie of tiny friends who inspire JOYFUL faith & virtue in children - from author Cathy Gilmore, at***  
[www.VirtueHeroes.com](http://www.VirtueHeroes.com)

# Jesus Takes My Fears Away

Lyrics by Cathy Gilmore © 2014

Song is sung to the public domain tune of "Jesus Loves Me, This I Know" hymn by William B. Bradbury, 1862.

## (Hand Motions)

<b>Jesus takes my fears away,</b>	(Point finger up to heaven)
<b>He protects me every day.</b>	(Cross arms out in front of chest)
<b>When I'm scared*, I think of Him.</b>	(One finger point at temple, thinking)
<b>He's with me and I can grin.....</b>	(Finger at corners of mouth to make a smile.)
<i>(Refrain)</i>	
<b>My Jesus saves me.</b>	(Hold arms up strong!)
<b>My Jesus holds me.</b>	(Hug arms around self)
<b>My Jesus loves me,</b>	(Make heart shape with 2 hands)
<b>His own words tell me so.</b>	(Hold palms up like book)

Add more verses by substituting the following for "**When I'm scared**" in the 3rd line

"In the dark" or

"In a storm" or

"When I'm hurt" or

"When I'm sad" or "If I'm lost" or "If I'm alone"....

Or others that the child recommends.

And then repeat the refrain.

## **Final Verse:**

<b>Jesus takes my sins away,</b>	(Bowed head)
<b>Trusting His mercy gives me faith.</b>	(Folded praying hands)
<b>When I do wrong, I'll go to Him.</b>	(Hands on top of each other, palms facing up)
<b>He forgives me. I can start again.....</b>	(Brush hands together like "clean slate")
<i>(refrain)</i>	