

The Easter Butterfly!

The Easter story can be a challenging one to tell to the under-fives. Vicki Howie explains how she has often dealt with this by telling a gentle tale about a caterpillar turning into a butterfly to mirror the story. Some simple props (a big leaf cut from green paper, a small Easter egg, a toy/pipe cleaner caterpillar, a pair of stripy socks, a toy/paper butterfly) and mimes for everyone to join in with keep the children (and the adults!) engaged. Practise the mimes with the children before you tell the story, and ask a helper to show the props.



One sunny day, a beautiful butterfly came floating, floating down from the sky... (*link thumbs and flutter fingers*). It landed on the leaf of a stinging nettle, and there it laid – an egg... (*show the egg*).

Inside the egg, something was growing. I wonder what that was? It was a tiny creature that grew bigger and bigger until the egg cracked, and out it popped – a hairy, stripy caterpillar... (*show the caterpillar*). Can you make your finger wiggle like a caterpillar?

“I’m hungry!” said the caterpillar, and he began to munch the nettle leaf, *munch, munch*, until there was nothing left of it at all.

“I’m *still* hungry,” said the caterpillar, and he wriggled his way on to another juicy leaf and began to munch again. How did he eat? *Munch, munch, munch!*

Very soon, the little caterpillar grew into a great big one. He was a very good friend to all the other caterpillars in the nettle patch. He showed them where to find the biggest, juiciest leaves, and he told them how to wave their tails in the air to frighten away the hungry birds, *swish, swish!* No wonder all the caterpillars loved to follow him!

But one sad day, the friendly caterpillar told his friends, “I’m sorry, but I must go away now to do something very special.”

“Oh, don’t go away and leave us!” they cried. “Who will show us where to find the juicy leaves, and who will help us to scare away the hungry birds? And anyway, we love you and we don’t want to be without you – not now, not ever!”

“I really must go!” said the caterpillar. “But don’t be sad! I promise you’ll see me again and then you’ll be glad!”

The caterpillar wriggled his way up a bumpy tree trunk. Then he began to spin himself a silky sleeping bag called a cocoon... (*show one sock*). He snuggled down inside the cocoon, pulled it over his head and disappeared from sight... (*put the caterpillar inside this sock*). When the other caterpillars saw that their friend had gone, they went away sadly.

Inside the cocoon, the caterpillar began to change. He wriggled out of his stripy, hairy body... (*all wriggle*) and then he grew long legs and silky wings... (*all flap arms*) and he BURST out of the cocoon as a beautiful, colourful butterfly... (*pull butterfly from other sock*).

As he was drying his wings in the sun, his caterpillar friends found the empty cocoon and started to cry... (*show empty sock*).

“Oh no, where has our best friend gone?” they cried. “The hungry birds must have eaten him. Now we’ll never see him again.”

“Why are you crying?” asked the new butterfly. “Are you looking for me?”

The caterpillars looked round. “It’s you!” they cried. “You’ve come back! But look at you! Now you’re a beautiful butterfly!”

“A good friend always keeps his promise,” said the butterfly. “Don’t forget, I’ll always be your friend. One day, you’ll be butterflies too and then we’ll float above the nettle patch – together forever!”