

# FULL STEAM AHEAD, Europe!

## EASTER ( FINLAND)

### DIDACTIC UNIT



#### BACKGROUND FOR TEACHERS

**Origins:** The Finnish Easter celebration is a mixture of religious traditions and folklore rituals celebrating the spring. The birch twigs about to burst for example; in the earlier days they represented the palm leaves on Palm Sunday in Jerusalem, but they would also be used to drive away evil spirits and bless the people against witches and trolls, that after old pagan beliefs appeared on Easter Saturday.

**Witches and trolls today:** Nowadays Easter has become a celebration mostly for children. On Palm Sunday young children go round from door to door, dressed as small witches or trolls with old skirts, colourful scarfs, freckles painted on their faces, carrying a coffee pot to collect treats in it. Nowadays you can also see more Halloween style hats etc, but the original way is more like a russian Babushka. The children recite a poem, an old rhyme to bless the people and drive away evil spirits, and wave a decorated willow twig in return for sweets – usually chocolate eggs or small treats. It's a bit like the trick or treat tradition on Halloween - but without the nasty tricks. The willow twigs - often called "the kittens of the willow" because of their appearance, are decorated with colourful feathers, crepe paper, candy paper or whatever small and colourful things related to Easter you can come up to.

**Grass, birch, eggs, bunnies and "mämmi":** It's also common to celebrate the beginning of the spring by planting grass seeds in small dishes and decorate them with small eggs and other Easter figures, and have birch twigs in vases of water to see them grow new leaves called "mouse ears". Easter eggs and Easter bunnies – ancient symbols of fertility have come to Finland a bit later as global cultural imports, but nowadays they are a very important part of the celebration. The traditional easter eggs are real eggs that are painted with different motives, but nowadays the focus may be more on the chocolate eggs and the small surprises inside them. Even outdoor egg hunts are organized to amuse the children. On Easter Saturday it's time for family dinner and to eat some more chocolate. Traditional dishes on Easter in Finland are lamb and "mämmi". Mämmi is a mudd-looking dark brown pudding made of malt and rye flour, often served with cream and sugar.

#### Links:

Other traditions: <https://www.gofinland.fi/blog/easter-in-finland/>

Easter witches tradition: <https://finland.fi/life-society/wandering-witches-welcome-finnish-easter/>



**ZŠ a MŠ  
STRUHLOVSKO**

Co-funded by the  
Erasmus+ Programme  
of the European Union



# FULL STEAM AHEAD, Europe!

Get to know the Finnish Easter:

EASTER EGGS



EASTER GRASS



MÄMMI



LAMB



WILLOW TWIGS



AN EASTER WITCH



# FULL STEAM AHEAD, Europe!

Colour the eggs:



# FULL STEAM AHEAD, Europe!

## GAMES AND FUN

### Organize an egg hunt:

Hide the coloured egg paintings in your school / classroom/ or other suitable place. You can even draw a map. The person to find and collect most eggs wins a prize.



### Egg push competition:

The players need to roll the egg (or other round object) with their nose, without using any other parts of the body, from start line to finish. The first one to cross the finish line wins the race.

### Diy - pipecleaner bunny ears, rabbit, carrot:

You can use pipecleaners to create Easter motives. Click on the links below to find the instructions.

Bunny ears: <https://bit.ly/2UWdVtU>

Bunny and carrots: <https://bit.ly/3m2IE5o>

### Some more ideas for Easter crafts on Pinterest:

<https://urly.fi/1PEa>



**ZŠ a MŠ  
STRUHLOVSKO**

Co-funded by the  
Erasmus+ Programme  
of the European Union





# FULL STEAM AHEAD, Europe!

## Bunny tail:

Hang the picture on the wall. Get a pompom or a drawn bunny tail and some double stick tape. Everyone has to try to attach the tail to its rightful place blindfolded. You can also simply use a pencil to mark the place.



# FULL STEAM AHEAD, Europe!

Learn the “tiputanssi” chicken dance:

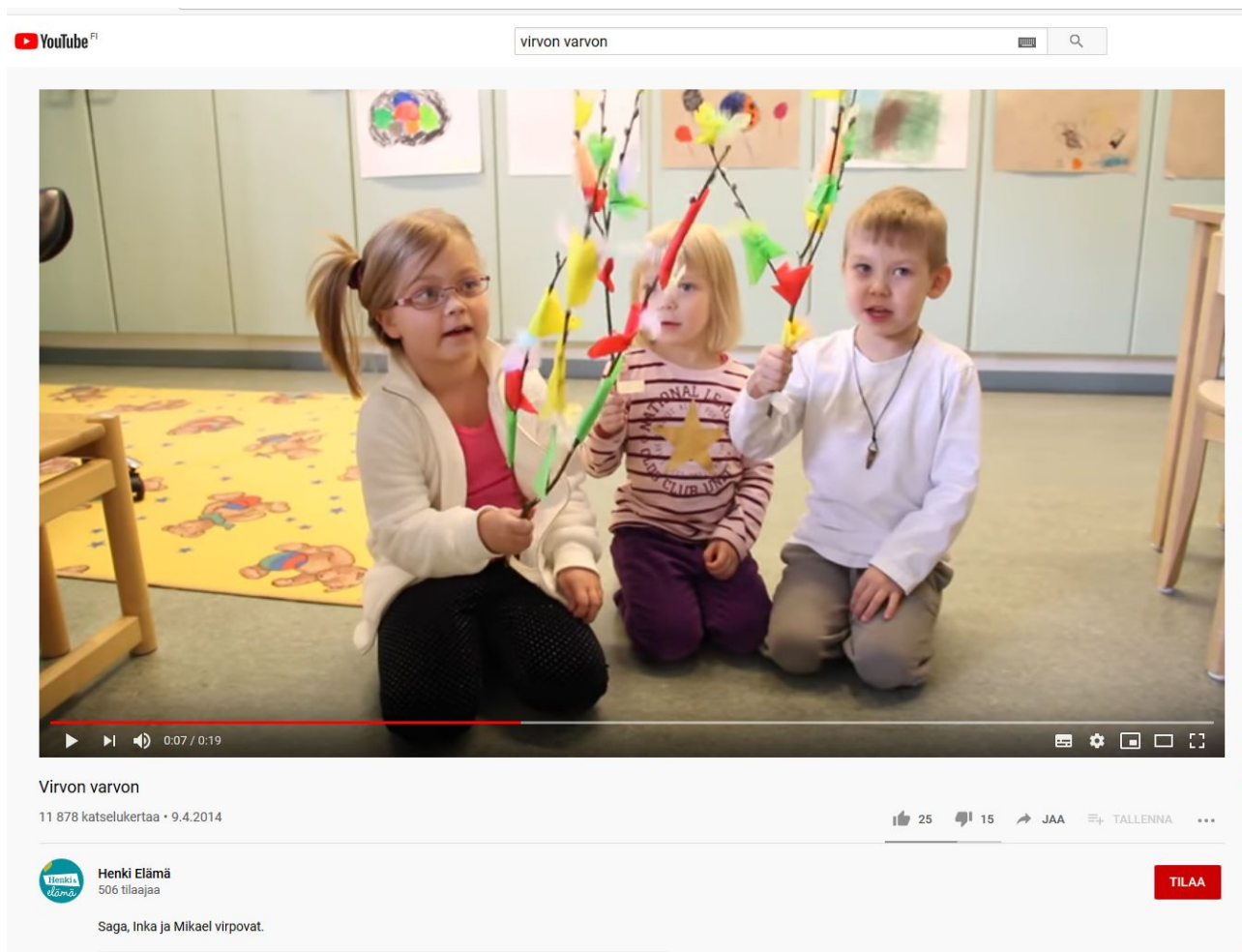
<https://bit.ly/35Zv0JJ>



# FULL STEAM AHEAD, Europe!

Listen and see the poem on Youtube - try learning it!

<https://urly.fi/1Ohi> (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1X1IJbz09y4>)



**The rhyme recited :**

*Virvon, varvon, tuoreeks terveeks, tulevaks vuodeks; vitsa sulle, palkka mulle!*

(In translation: "I wave and wave the twig for your youth and health and many years to come; a twig for you, something in return for me"!).



**ZŠ a MŠ  
STRUHLŮVSKO**

Co-funded by the  
Erasmus+ Programme  
of the European Union

