

2026

Holy Week

Family Devotional Guide



Jesus' Triumphal Entry

Many people followed Jesus as He taught in Galilee. Some came so He could heal their diseases and injuries. When the time for the Passover celebration came, Jesus and His disciples traveled from Galilee to Jerusalem for the feast. As they came to the Mount of Olives, Jesus' disciples found a donkey for Him to ride into the city. The people along the way shouted, "Hosanna! Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord!" (Mark 11:9) They waved palm branches and laid their coats on the road in front of Jesus. They were happy because they believed that Jesus was the Savior God had promised to send. (Matthew 21:6-9; Mark 11:7-10; Luke 19:35-38)

DID YOU KNOW?

Jesus is God's Promised Savior!

WHO DOESN'T LIKE A PARADE?

Jesus and His disciples were joined by a crowd as Jesus rode down the mountain. The crowd shouted with joy, proclaiming that Jesus came in the name of the Lord.

After all, this was not like any holiday parade we might see today. This was God's Son, Jesus, coming into Jerusalem, as the Savior people had been waiting for!

The people had waited many years for God to send the Savior He promised. They learned verses such as Isaiah 7:14, which promised that a young, unmarried woman would give birth to a son called Immanuel. The people had heard Jesus teach about God. They realized Jesus was special. The people shouted "Hosanna!" as Jesus rode past. Hosanna means "save now." The crowd called out, "Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord." They praised Jesus as being sent by God to save them.

Can you guess why the day is called Palm Sunday? (People welcomed Jesus with palm branches as He entered Jerusalem on the first day of the week.)

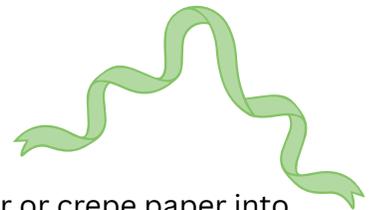


TALK ABOUT IT

- What does Jesus' choice to ride a donkey tell us about the kind of King He is?
- How might Jesus have felt as the crowd praised Him?



Dear God, thank You for sending Jesus to be our Savior. Thank You for the Bible that tells about Jesus' life, and that we can know that He is our Savior. Amen. Lead your family in repeating a few times: "Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord!"



HAVE YOUR OWN PARADE: Cut green construction paper or crepe paper into strips and attach the strips to a stick or straw to make a streamer. Give each family member a streamer (or a short branch of a real tree). Let kids take turns leading the family parade through the house while everyone waves streamers and shouts, "Hosanna! Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord!"



Monday



Cleansing the Temple

During the Passover celebration, Jesus and His disciples went to the temple. In the temple, they found people buying and selling animals for their sacrifices. It may have been a noisy place with so many people there. Jesus made those who were selling animals and exchanging money leave the temple. Jesus told them Scripture says, "my house will be a house of prayer, but you have made it a den of thieves!" (Matthew 21:13) Then Jesus taught the people about God. (Matthew 21:12-13, Mark n:15-17, Luke 19:45-48)

DID YOU KNOW?

Jesus taught people how to worship!

With all the animals around the temple courtyard, think about how this area might have sounded and smelled! People came to the temple to worship God, but they might have been distracted from worship because of the noise, smells, and sights of the animals and their owners.

Jesus came into the temple and turned over tables, then He said that the people had made the temple a "den of thieves." What do you think upset Jesus about what He saw? While the Bible doesn't directly say that people were being cheated and taken advantage of, we get a peek into Jesus' frustration through His actions and words. It's possible that those coming into the temple were being cheated when exchanging their coins and buying animals for offerings. This experience would make it hard to worship God. Worship is any action or attitude that shows praise, love, and appreciation for God, and many of the folks in the temple courtyard were not doing any of that.

You might think God only likes quiet times at church, but He likes for people to sing praises to Him, say prayers out loud to Him, and read their Bibles aloud. Jesus wanted people to worship God, and He taught them the right way to worship.

WAYS TO WORSHIP:

1. Write each of these actions on a strip of paper.
 - Thank God for Jesus.
 - Sing a song to God.
 - Choose a way to help someone and do it.
 - Tell something you like about God.
 - Act out a way you could help someone.



TALK ABOUT IT

- Why do you think Jesus was angry at the people who were selling things and exchanging money?
- How can you worship Jesus?

Let's PRAY

Dear God, thank You for sending Jesus to help us know how to worship You. Please help us remember to worship You. Amen.



2. Put the strips in a cup.
3. Take turns choosing a strip and leading the family to do what it says.



Monday, March 30



Tuesday



Jesus Teaches in the Temple

Jesus taught many things in the temple during Passover week. Once, a temple leader asked Jesus, "Which command is the most important of all?" Jesus answered by quoting the Scriptures, "'Love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind, and with all your strength.' The second is 'Love your neighbor as yourself.' There is no other command greater than these." (Mark 12:28-31) The temple leader knew Jesus was right. Jesus wanted everyone to love God more than anything else. He also wanted everyone to understand that God wants them to love other people. After Jesus answered the man's question so well, no one else tried to trap Him by asking other questions. (Deuteronomy 6:4-5, Joshua 22:5, Matthew 22:34-40, Mark 12:28-34)

DID YOU KNOW?

Jesus taught people how to love!

Jesus taught people to love God and to love others. Jesus often taught at the temple. Sometimes He directly taught His twelve disciples. Sometimes He taught the temple leaders. Sometimes He taught anyone who was there and willing to listen.

No matter who listened to Jesus teach, Jesus told them how wonderful God is and how God wanted them to live. In fact, when Jesus was asked about the most important of all the commandments, He had an answer ready because He knew the Scriptures (our Old Testament). Jesus wants people to love God with everything: their hearts, their emotions, their thoughts, and their bodies. In other words, people are to love God completely. Hold up one finger. (Every family member does this.) Jesus taught that people should love God. Repeat after me: Love God. Jesus also told people to love others as much as they love themselves, which He said is the second greatest commandment. An easy way to remember is by holding up one finger for God and two fingers for others. Hold up one finger and say, "Repeat after me. Love God." Hold up two fingers and say, "Repeat after me. Love others." Now repeat together "Love God. Love others. Love God. Love others." while holding up one finger for God and two fingers for others.



HEART CHALLENGE: Make the shape of a heart with your hands by putting your thumbs together for the bottom of the heart and putting your curled fingers together to form the rest of the heart. Challenge the rest of the family to also make heart shapes with their fingers. Ask what people often think of when they see hearts. (love) Plan to do a kind deed for someone your family knows. Decide who you will help, how you will help them, and what supplies you need.



TALK ABOUT IT

- How can you show love to God?
- How can you show love to other people around you?

Let's  PRAY

Dear God, thank You for teaching us how important it is to love You and to live in ways that please You. Help us notice times we can show Your love to others.





Wednesday



A Woman Worshiped Jesus

Jesus was eating in a friend's home one evening when a woman approached Him. She carried a bottle of expensive perfume. She began pouring the perfume into Jesus' hair in a worshipful way. She was anointing Jesus with the perfume. Some of Jesus' disciples thought she was wasting the expensive perfume. They said, "This might have been sold for a great deal and given to the poor." Jesus corrected them. He said, "Why are you bothering this woman? She has done a noble thing for me. You always have the poor with you, but you do not always have me." (Matthew 26:9-10) Jesus explained that she had done a beautiful thing in her worship of Him. And we still remember her today when we hear about her special worship of Jesus. (Matthew 26:6-13; Mark 14:3-9)

DID YOU KNOW?

We can worship in many ways!

What is something good someone has done for you recently? How did you feel when the person did it? It typically makes us feel good when someone does or says something nice to us. The woman in

today's Bible passage did something for Jesus that was more than nice. She showed her love to Him as she anointed Him! (Put a dab of perfume or other pleasant smell on a cotton ball or facial tissue and pass it around for each family member to smell. Ask each person what pleasant things they like to smell.)

Usually in our culture, we don't pour perfume on people's heads to show love, but in Bible times, it was a wonderful way to show love, honor, respect, and worship. Jesus recognized her act as right and good.

People in Bible times also used perfume when someone died. Family members poured perfume on the bodies of those who had died and then buried them. The woman in today's Bible story likely did not know Jesus would die in a few days, but Jesus knew what was going to happen. He knew that in an important way, she was getting Him ready to be buried.



TAKE A GUESS: Draw seven blank lines on a sheet of paper. Let kids take turns guessing letters of the alphabet. (Whisper possible guesses to preschoolers.) If the letter a child guesses is in the word perfume, print the letter in the appropriate blank on the paper. If a child guesses the letter e, print it in both needed spaces. Challenge kids to guess the word before all the blanks are filled in. Play again using words from the Bible story, such as head, poor, and Jesus. For older children, use anoint, forever, and worship.



TALK ABOUT IT

- Do you think Jesus cared about poor people? Why?
- What are some ways people today can show love to God?



Dear God, please help us honor Jesus in everything we do. Please help us know how to show our love for Jesus today. Thank You that our family can learn about You together.





Jesus' Last Supper

Jesus and His disciples ate the Passover meal together. The Passover meal is a celebration of how God brought the Jews out of slavery in Egypt. During the meal, Jesus picked up the bread and thanked God for it. He broke it into pieces and said, "This is my body, which is given for you. Do this in remembrance of me." A little while later, Jesus took a cup and said, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood, which is poured out for you." (Luke 22:19-20) Christians still eat the bread and drink from the cup to remember what Jesus did. This is often called Communion or the Lord's Supper because it reminds us of Jesus' last meal with His disciples and what He taught them.

DID YOU KNOW?
The Lord's Supper connects us with Jesus!

Every year, God's people celebrated a special time in their history. They ate special food. They used special cups. They remembered a special part of their history from the Scriptures about Passover.

Passover is a remembrance of the time God's angel passed over the houses in Egypt whose doorposts were marked with lamb's blood, sparing them from the death of their firstborn sons. That's why the celebration is called Passover.

Jesus celebrated this special meal with His disciples. However, Jesus told them new meanings for the celebration. Jesus tore off pieces of bread and called it His body. Then Jesus took a cup and called it His blood. This was Jesus' way of saying God was making a new promise: Everyone who trusts Jesus would now become part of God's family.

People today who trust Jesus as their Savior (Christians) still celebrate the Lord's Supper to help them remember what Jesus did to save them from their sins. That's why the Lord's Supper is often served only to people who have already trusted Jesus to save them. Eating the bread and drinking from the cup are meant to remind us that Jesus died for our sins.



MAKE A MEMORY PAPER CHAIN: Cut several strips of cardstock for each child (light colors work best for writing) about 1 inch by 8½ inches. Provide markers and scissors. Ask kids to each tell something they remember about Jesus from this Bible story or another aspect of Jesus saving us. Then have them write/draw what they shared on a slip of paper. Kids can also decorate the other strips of paper. Tape one strip of cardstock into a loop. Put another strip through that loop and tape it closed. Continue with all strips of cardstock to make the chain. When finished, guide kids to place their memory chain somewhere they will see it often to remind them of Jesus' love and sacrifice for us.



TALK ABOUT IT

- What might God want people to think about as they watch or take part in the Lord's Supper in their churches?
- What are other ways we can remember Jesus' sacrifice for us?

Let's  **PRAY**

Dear God, help us to remember that Jesus gave a new meaning to the Passover. Please help us to remember that Jesus is the One who saves us from our sins.





Friday



Jesus is Crucified

The day after Jesus ate the Passover meal with His disciples, He was arrested, put on trial, and sentenced to death. Roman soldiers beat Him and then nailed His hands and feet to a wooden cross. They set the cross up where people could see Him. Two criminals were hanging on crosses on either side of Jesus. He stayed nailed to the cross all day while people made fun of Him, spit on Him, and called Him names. Jesus said to God, "Father, forgive them because they do not know what they are doing." (Luke 23:34) A mysterious darkness came on the land even though it was the middle of the day. Finally, Jesus prayed, "Father, into your hands I entrust my spirit" (Luke 23:46) and He died. (Matthew 27:27-50; Luke 23:32-46)

DID YOU KNOW?

God had
a plan for
Jesus!

Not long after the Lord's Supper, soldiers arrested Jesus in the garden where He was praying. They took Jesus to the prison where they beat Him, spit on Him, and made Him wear a crown made of huge thorns. The soldiers made Jesus carry a wooden cross to a hill outside the town.

Then Jesus was crucified on a cross. As Jesus hung on the cross, many people stood around watching to see Him die. Some of the people were angry at Jesus. They didn't believe Him when He said He was the Savior. Some of the people were confused. They had seen Jesus do many miracles, but they did not know why God did not stop the soldiers from killing Him. Some people who watched were very sad.

They loved Jesus but knew He was dying. Others were afraid. They thought soldiers might arrest and kill them, too, since they were friends of Jesus. Then there were those who were glad Jesus was dying-yes, they were glad! They thought Jesus was evil and wanted to get rid of Him! None of the people really understood yet that this was just one part of God's plan.



TALK ABOUT IT

- If you had been near Jesus on the cross, would you have been angry, confused, sad, afraid, or glad? Why?
- Some people (maybe your family) have crosses as decorations or jewelry. Why do you think people use crosses in these ways?

Let's  PRAY

Dear God, thank You for having a plan for Jesus to be the Savior. Please help us to remember that Jesus loved us enough to die for each of us. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.



CREATE A CROWN OF THORNS: Twist chenille stems (brown or any color) into a circle large enough to wear as a crown. Cut more chenille stems into smaller pieces and twist them in various places around the crown as thorns. Place the crown in the middle of your dinner table or somewhere in your home as a visual reminder of Jesus' sacrifice.

Friday, April 3



Saturday



Jesus in the Tomb

After Jesus died, a man named Joseph asked the Roman governor for permission to bury Jesus' body. Joseph took Jesus' body off the cross and wrapped it in cloth. He had a tomb that had been carved out of a big rock where he put Jesus' body. He placed a big, round stone over the opening of the tomb. The Roman governor had his seal put on the stone. He posted guards outside the tomb to be certain no one could steal Jesus' body or do anything to it. Jesus' disciples were likely very sad because they thought they would never see Him again. But that's not the end of the story. (Matthew 27:57-66; Mark 15:42-46; Luke 23:50-56; John 19:38-42)

DID YOU KNOW?

God is all knowing!

When people do not understand, God knows what He is doing. From a busy, loud Sunday to a quiet Saturday. Saturday in Bible times was the Sabbath, a time of worshipping God.

Since Joseph had taken care of asking for Jesus' body and having it placed in a tomb, there was not much more Jesus' family and friends could do for Him. The Bible tells us the women went home and prepared spices and perfumes, but they rested on the Sabbath.

We do not know much more about what the people did. Possibly, they talked with one another about how sad they were and how much they missed Jesus. They may have cried. They may have prayed. They likely had a lot of questions, such as "How can we believe He is the Savior?" or "Why did God let this happen?" Even though Jesus had been telling His followers what would happen, they still did not fully understand God's plan. But God knew what He was doing, and it would be more wonderful than anything they had ever seen!



DRAWING IN THE DARK: Use paper, a pencil, and a blindfold. Blindfold a volunteer. Place the paper and the pencil in front of them. Instruct them to draw a sun in one corner of the page. Remove the blindfold and blindfold another. Using the same picture, instruct the next person to add a tree. Continue asking others to add a house, a dog, a doghouse, and a flower. Show the "finished" picture. Remark that the picture would have been better if the people drawing had known the plan for the picture before beginning. In a similar way, the people in today's Bible story would have understood more if they had known God's plan.



TALK ABOUT IT

- What would you have been thinking about on the day Jesus was dead in the tomb?
- How do you feel when you hear how sad Jesus' friends and family were?

Let's PRAY

Dear God, thank You that we know the rest of the story, that Jesus is alive. Help us to be comforted and excited by Your plan. And give us opportunities to tell others that Jesus is alive. Thank You, God, that You have a plan so that everyone can know You. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.





Resurrection Sunday



Jesus is Alive!

On Sunday morning, some of the women who followed Jesus went to His tomb to put spices on His body. When the women arrived, they discovered that the stone had been moved from the opening of the tomb. Instead of finding Jesus' body in the tomb, they found angels! The angels said, "Why are you looking for the living among the dead? He is not here, but he has risen!" (Luke 24:5-6) Later that day, Jesus showed Himself to His disciples, proving that He was no longer dead but fully alive just as He had promised. All His disciples worshiped Him. (Matthew 28; Mark 16; Luke 24; John 20)

DID YOU KNOW?

Jesus,
the Savior,
is alive!

The women thought as they walked. They didn't know how they were going to move the stone from the opening to the tomb. One surprise was that the stone was already moved, but their next surprise was even greater.

Jesus' body was gone! Then two angels stood beside them! They reminded them that Jesus would be crucified but would come back to life again after three days!

The women were excited! They still hadn't seen Jesus, but they knew He was alive. They told the disciples and the others what they had seen and heard. But the disciples did not believe them! Peter and another disciple ran to the tomb. All they found were the grave clothes. Yet, no one had seen Jesus. They only saw where He had been.

Later in the day, two men walked along the road, talking about Jesus. Suddenly, another man appeared, it was Jesus. Jesus began eating with them, they suddenly realized it was Him! He was alive! Also on that day, Jesus appeared to another. A woman saw a man in the garden that she thought was the gardener. When He called her by name, she realized it was Jesus. When these people searched for Jesus' body, they only found where He had been. But when Jesus was ready, He found them!



HIDE & SEEK: Print the name Jesus on paper. Hide the paper. Tell your family that a paper with the name Jesus on it is hidden in the room. Challenge them to hunt until they find the paper. Once the paper is found, remind your family that when the people hunted for Jesus, they only found where He had been, but when Jesus was ready, He found people. Point out that Jesus comes to people in a special way when they are ready to trust Him as their Savior.



TALK ABOUT IT

- How could Jesus come back from being dead?
- What does Jesus' resurrection mean for us and our salvation today?



Dear God, thank You for Jesus! Thank You for the true Easter story that helps us know for sure that Jesus is the One who saves us from our sins. Please help us to tell others this true story. Amen.

