



HOLY WEEK DEVOTIONAL
GOD'S
EASTER STORY
FOR FAMILIES



FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF SANTA ROSA
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Dear Families,

As parents ourselves, we know that the stories of Jesus' death and resurrection can feel like heavy topics to share with your children. It's definitely easier to tell Christmas stories about the cute baby Jesus in the manger surrounded by angels and sheep than it is to talk about the brutality and sadness of his crucifixion. Yet, the stories of Easter week are central to our Christian faith because they show us Jesus' character as a humble servant who gives his life out of his love for the whole world - ourselves included! Exploring the story of Easter week opens our eyes to the depths of Christ's gift to us, and prepares our hearts and minds to experience true Easter joy. May this devotional be a blessing to you and your families this Easter season!

With love,

Pastor Emily &

Darcy, Director of Children's Ministries



What is Holy Week?

Beginning on Palm Sunday and ending with the three days that mark Jesus' trial, death, and resurrection, Holy Week is a time to remember Jesus' journey to the cross—and beyond. A lot happens from Jesus' triumphant entry into Jerusalem to his appearance outside his tomb. Reading these stories throughout Holy Week gives us a chance to walk with Jesus in the last moments of his life and to experience the miracle of his resurrection.



How to Use This Devotional

Our hope is that these devotions will be a tool to help enrich your family's Holy Week - so there's no right or wrong way to use them. You could follow our pattern of reading one devotional a day, starting the Sunday before Easter...or just go through all the devotions in one sitting. Whatever works! We've provided the Common English translation for each Bible passage, but feel free to read the corresponding stories from a children's story Bible instead.



A Palm Parade

Sunday

Prepare

Calm your head, heart, and hands as you slowly breathe in . . . and out.

Read

Mark 11:1-10

When Jesus and his followers approached Jerusalem, they came to Bethphage and Bethany at the Mount of Olives. Jesus gave two disciples a task, saying to them, "Go into the village over there. As soon as you enter it, you will find tied up there a colt that no one has ridden. Untie it and bring it here. If anyone says to you, 'Why are you doing this?' say, 'Its master needs it, and he will send it back right away.'"

They went and found a colt tied to a gate outside on the street, and they untied it. Some people standing around said to them, "What are you doing, untying the colt?" They told them just what Jesus said, and they left them alone. They brought the colt to Jesus and threw their clothes upon it, and he sat on it. Many people spread out their clothes on the road while others spread branches cut from the fields. Those in front of him and those following were shouting, "Hosanna! [*"Save Us, Please!"*] Blessings on the one who comes in the name of the Lord! Blessings on the coming kingdom of our ancestor David! Hosanna [*"Save Us, Please!"*] in the highest!" Jesus entered Jerusalem and went into the temple.

Ask

What would it be like to be in the crowd that welcomed Jesus to Jerusalem?
What would you have said or done if you had been there?

Pray

Dear God,
Like the people on the first Palm Sunday, we praise you for Jesus.
Please open our hearts to his saving presence.
Amen.



In the Temple

Monday

Prepare

Calm your head, heart, and hands as you slowly breathe in . . . and out.

Read

Matthew 21:12-17

Then Jesus went into the temple and threw out all those who were selling and buying there. He pushed over the tables used for currency exchange and the chairs of those who sold doves. He said to them, "It's written, My house will be called a house of prayer. But you've made it a hideout for crooks."

People who were blind and lame came to Jesus in the temple, and he healed them. But when the chief priests and legal experts saw the amazing things he was doing and the children shouting in the temple, "Hosanna [*"Save Us, Please!"*] to the Son of David!" they were angry. They said to Jesus, "Do you hear what these children are saying?"

"Yes," he answered. "Haven't you ever read, From the mouths of babies and infants you've arranged praise for yourself?" Then he left them and went out of the city to Bethany and spent the night there.

Ask

What does this story show us about what and who Jesus cares about?
What do you think the people that Jesus healed would say about Jesus?

Pray

Dear God,
Thank you for sending us Jesus to show us the way to live with loving kindness.
Please help us to know him, love him, and follow him.
Amen.



Washing the Disciples' Feet

Tuesday

Prepare

Calm your head, heart, and hands as you slowly breathe in . . . and out.

Read

John 13:2, 3-8, 12-17

Jesus and his disciples were sharing the evening meal...he got up from the table and took off his robes. Picking up a linen towel, he tied it around his waist. Then he poured water into a washbasin and began to wash the disciples' feet, drying them with the towel he was wearing. When Jesus came to Simon Peter, Peter said to him, "Lord, are you going to wash my feet?" Jesus replied, "You don't understand what I'm doing now, but you will understand later." "No!" Peter said. "You will never wash my feet!" Jesus replied, "Unless I wash you, you won't have a place with me."

After he washed the disciples' feet, he put on his robes and returned to his place at the table. He said to them, "Do you know what I've done for you? You call me 'Teacher' and 'Lord,' and you speak correctly, because I am. If I, your Lord and teacher, have washed your feet, you too must wash each other's feet. I have given you an example: Just as I have done, you also must do. I assure you, servants aren't greater than their master, nor are those who are sent greater than the one who sent them. Since you know these things, you will be happy if you do them.

Ask

In Jesus' time, people's feet got really dusty walking around in sandals all day. Washing someone's feet was a job for servants who were considered inferior or less important than the people they served. What does Jesus' washing his disciples feet show us about Jesus? Why do you think he tells his disciples to wash each others' feet?

Pray

Think about all the people who help you (family members, teachers, coaches, friends, counselors, etc). Name as many as you can out loud or write down a list. Say, "Dear God, thank you for sending me helpers. Please help me to serve others too. Amen."



The Last Supper

Wednesday

Prepare

Calm your head, heart, and hands as you slowly breathe in . . . and out.

Read

Mark 14:12-26

On the first day of the Festival of Unleavened Bread, when the Passover lamb was sacrificed, the disciples said to Jesus, "Where do you want us to prepare for you to eat the Passover meal?"

He sent two of his disciples and said to them, "Go into the city. A man carrying a water jar will meet you. Follow him. Wherever he enters, say to the owner of the house, 'The teacher asks, "Where is my guest room where I can eat the Passover meal with my disciples?"' He will show you a large room upstairs already furnished. Prepare for us there." The disciples left, came into the city, found everything just as he had told them, and they prepared the Passover meal.

That evening, Jesus arrived with the Twelve. During the meal, Jesus said, "I assure you that one of you will betray me—someone eating with me."

Deeply saddened, they asked him, one by one, "It's not me, is it?"

Jesus answered, "It's one of the Twelve, one who is dipping bread with me into this bowl. The Human One* goes to his death just as it is written about him. But how terrible it is for that person who betrays the Human One! It would have been better for him if he had never been born."

While they were eating, Jesus took bread, blessed it, broke it, and gave it to them, and said, "Take; this is my body." He took a cup, gave thanks, and gave it to them, and they all drank from it. He said to them, "This is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many. I assure you that I won't drink wine again until that day when I drink it in a new way in God's kingdom." After singing songs of praise, they went out to the Mount of Olives.

Ask

Why might Jesus have used food and drink to remind us how much he loves us?

Reread the words Jesus said about the bread and the cup. We hear these words when we have communion at church. How do you feel knowing these words go all the way back to Jesus himself?

Pray

Dear God, Thank you for giving us a special way to remember Jesus and to help remind us that you love us. Amen.

*"The Human One" is one of Jesus' ways of talking about himself during his life as a human being. It is also translated as "Son of Man" sometimes



Arrested in the Garden

Thursday

Prepare

Calm your head, heart, and hands as you slowly breathe in . . . and out.

Read

Mark 14:32-50

Jesus and his disciples came to a place called Gethsemane. Jesus said to them, "Sit here while I pray." He took Peter, James, and John along with him. He began to feel despair and was anxious. He said to them, "I'm very sad. It's as if I'm dying. Stay here and keep alert." Then he went a short distance farther and fell to the ground. He prayed that, if possible, he might be spared the time of suffering. He said, "Abba, Father, for you all things are possible. Take this cup of suffering away from me. However—not what I want but what you want."

He came and found them sleeping. He said to Peter, "Simon, are you asleep? Couldn't you stay alert for one hour? Stay alert and pray so that you won't give in to temptation. The spirit is eager, but the flesh is weak."

Again, he left them and prayed, repeating the same words. And, again, when he came back, he found them sleeping, for they couldn't keep their eyes open, and they didn't know how to respond to him. He came a third time and said to them, "Will you sleep and rest all night? That's enough! The time has come for the Human One to be betrayed into the hands of sinners. Get up! Let's go! Look, here comes my betrayer."

Suddenly, while Jesus was still speaking, Judas, one of the Twelve, came with a mob carrying swords and clubs. They had been sent by the chief priests, legal experts, and elders. His betrayer had given them a sign: "Arrest the man I kiss, and take him away under guard."

As soon as he got there, Judas said to Jesus, "Rabbi!" Then he kissed him. Then they came and grabbed Jesus and arrested him. One of the bystanders drew a sword and struck the high priest's slave and cut off his ear. Jesus responded, "Have you come with swords and clubs to arrest me, like an outlaw? Day after day, I was with you, teaching in the temple, but you didn't arrest me. But let the scriptures be fulfilled." And all his disciples left him and ran away.


Ask

Why do you think the disciples fell asleep? How do you think Jesus felt when all his friends were too tired to support him?

Pray

Think about a time when you did something that hurt another person's feelings. Pray:

Dear God, I know I make mistakes and hurt other people sometimes. I am truly sorry. Please send your Spirit to anyone who is hurting, and please help me be more kind. Thank you for loving me even when I make mistakes. Amen.



Jesus Dies

Friday

Prepare

Calm your head, heart, and hands as you slowly breathe in . . . and out.

Read

John 19:16-30

The soldiers took Jesus prisoner. Carrying his cross by himself, he went out to a place called Skull Place (in Aramaic, Golgotha). That's where they crucified him—and two others with him, one on each side and Jesus in the middle. Pilate had a public notice written and posted on the cross. It read "Jesus the Nazarene, the king of the Jews." Many of the Jewish people read this sign, for the place where Jesus was crucified was near the city and it was written in Aramaic, Latin, and Greek. Therefore, the Jewish chief priests complained to Pilate, "Don't write, 'The king of the Jews' but 'This man said, "I am the king of the Jews.'" Pilate answered, "What I've written, I've written."

When the soldiers crucified Jesus, they took his clothes and his sandals, and divided them into four shares, one for each soldier. His shirt was seamless, woven as one piece from the top to the bottom. They said to each other, "Let's not tear it. Let's cast lots to see who will get it." This was to fulfill the scripture: They divided my clothes among themselves, and they cast lots for my clothing. That's what the soldiers did.

Jesus' mother and his mother's sister, Mary the wife of Clopas, and Mary Magdalene stood near the cross. When Jesus saw his mother and the disciple whom he loved standing nearby, he said to his mother, "Woman, here is your son." Then he said to the disciple, "Here is your mother." And from that time on, this disciple took her into his home.

After this, knowing that everything was already completed, in order to fulfill the scripture, Jesus said, "I am thirsty." A jar full of sour wine was nearby, so the soldiers soaked a sponge in it, placed it on a hyssop branch, and held it up to his lips. When he had received the sour wine, Jesus said, "It is completed." Bowing his head, he gave up his life.

Ask

What do you wonder about Jesus dying on the cross? How does this story make you feel?

Pray

Dear God,
Thank you for sending Jesus to be our savior.
This Easter keep us focused on Jesus, the true reason for why we celebrate.
Please help us to trust in You and live in Your way every day.
We love you. Amen.



Jesus is Buried

Saturday

Prepare

Calm your head, heart, and hands as you slowly breathe in . . . and out.

Read

Matthew 27:57-61

That evening a man named Joseph came. He was a rich man from Arimathea who had become a disciple of Jesus. He came to Pilate and asked for Jesus' body. Pilate gave him permission to take it. Joseph took the body, wrapped it in a clean linen cloth, and laid it in his own new tomb, which he had carved out of the rock. After he rolled a large stone at the door of the tomb, he went away. Mary Magdalene and the other Mary were there, sitting in front of the tomb.

Ask

Before Jesus died, Joseph of Arimathea was afraid to tell people he was a follower of Jesus. After Jesus died, he asked for permission to bury Jesus. Why do you think Joseph of Arimathea wanted to do this?

Why do you think Mary Magdalene and the other Mary were sitting in front of the tomb? How do you think they felt as Jesus was buried?

Pray

Dear Jesus, you taught us how to be servants to each other.
You suffered in the garden when your friends weren't there for you.
You let your enemies arrest you and hurt you.
Your friends ran away and even said they didn't know you. But you didn't complain.
We are sorry that your friends ran away.
We are sorry that you felt so alone.
We are sorry that your enemies hurt you.
We are sorry that you suffered so much for us.
Jesus, we love you.
Thank you for loving us. Amen.



He is Risen

Easter Sunday

Prepare

Calm your head, heart, and hands as you slowly breathe in . . . and out.

Read

John 20:1-18

Early in the morning of the first day of the week, while it was still dark, Mary Magdalene came to the tomb and saw that the stone had been taken away from the tomb. She ran to Simon Peter and the other disciple, the one whom Jesus loved, and said, "They have taken the Lord from the tomb, and we don't know where they've put him." Peter and the other disciple left to go to the tomb. They were running together, but the other disciple ran faster than Peter and was the first to arrive at the tomb. Bending down to take a look, he saw the linen cloths lying there, but he didn't go in. Following him, Simon Peter entered the tomb and saw the linen cloths lying there. He also saw the face cloth that had been on Jesus' head. It wasn't with the other clothes but was folded up in its own place. Then the other disciple, the one who arrived at the tomb first, also went inside. He saw and believed. They didn't yet understand the scripture that Jesus must rise from the dead. Then the disciples returned to the place where they were staying.

Mary stood outside near the tomb, crying. As she cried, she bent down to look into the tomb. She saw two angels dressed in white, seated where the body of Jesus had been, one at the head and one at the foot. The angels asked her, "Woman, why are you crying?" She replied, "They have taken away my Lord, and I don't know where they've put him." As soon as she had said this, she turned around and saw Jesus standing there, but she didn't know it was Jesus.

Jesus said to her, "Woman, why are you crying? Who are you looking for?" Thinking he was the gardener, she replied, "Sir, if you have carried him away, tell me where you have put him and I will get him."

Jesus said to her, "Mary." She turned and said to him in Aramaic, "Rabbouni" (which means Teacher).

Jesus said to her, "Don't hold on to me, for I haven't yet gone up to my Father. Go to my brothers and sisters and tell them, 'I'm going up to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God.'" Mary Magdalene left and announced to the disciples, "I've seen the Lord." Then she told them what he said to her.

Ask

What do you think Jesus' friends thought when they saw that his tomb was empty?

Why do you think Mary Magdalene doesn't recognize Jesus at first?

What would you have done when you realized Jesus was alive again? Who would you tell?

Pray

Celebrate Jesus' resurrection by echoing this prayer together (repeating each phrase):

Jesus, You are Lord.

Jesus, You are Hope.

Jesus, You Gave Your Life For Us, and Rose Again.

Jesus, You Forgive Us.

Jesus, You Love Us.

Jesus, We Love You.