



Holy Week at Home

Holy Week, which is the week between Palm Sunday and Easter Sunday, is a special week in which we remember the stories of the last days of Jesus' ministry as he entered into Jerusalem and prepared for his death on the cross. Holy Week is a time of holy waiting, we know that Easter joy will greet us, but we cannot see the full picture yet, and so we wait. This year, Holy Week looks very different for all of us, as we are all at home and unable to physically be together as the church for some of our most meaningful services. These resources are for you and your family to consider ways to create a meaningful Holy Week at home. Some are meant for certain days during Holy Week, and others can be experienced at any time. They will help you tell the stories and reflect on their meaning in your life, and to help you prepare for Easter.

Reflections throughout the week

Creative Storytelling:

Using materials found in your home, create a scene or diorama to help you tell different stories that are meaningful in Holy Week. Using blocks, Legos, or playdoh make all the scenes and characters to tell the story. Reflect on the question together.

- Jesus Cleanses the Temple: Mark 11:15-19
 - How did Jesus' followers feel after seeing that Jesus was angry?
 - How do we use our money to glorify or give thanks to God?
- Last Supper with the Disciples: Mark 14:12-25
 - What did Jesus' friends think when they heard his words?
- Jesus' Death and Resurrection Story: Mark 15:21-16:8
 - When do you feel close to Jesus?
 - How might you have reacted to the empty tomb?

Some helpful tips for storytelling:

1. Share the Story

Adults and older children can help by telling the Biblical story. Describe the characters, answer questions, point out the key moments of the passion and resurrection stories.

2. Use an Easter Book for Help

You might use a children's Bible or Easter book as a guide to share the story.

3. Explain Jesus Died, Buried, and Risen

Regardless of the book you use, be sure to tell children that Jesus died, and was buried, and rose again. Oftentimes, this needs no elaboration.

4. Let Children Play!

After telling and showing them the story, let children play. Resist the urge to micromanage or make sure they are 'doing it right.' They may need to do some experimenting. One child put the soldiers in the closet, for example.

5. Invite Children to Tell the Story

Encourage children to tell you the story. Again, don't micromanage. If necessary, you can help by simply reminding them of the characters. Make sure to encourage and thank them.

6. Remind Children that Jesus Loves Them

Remind children that Jesus loves them! Consider the following nugget: "If you had been the only person to ever live, Jesus still would have come, died and rose again, just for you." Alleluia!

Resource from Buildfaith.org

Prayer Stones:

Remember Jesus praying about the hard thing he had to do (Matthew 26:38-46). Find a rock. Hold it as you pray, asking God for help in doing the things you find hard to do. You can even write or paint on the rock a word or picture of a hard thing that you need God's help to do.

Ask: What is it like when you know you have something really hard to do?

What are some of the emotions you feel when faced with a hard thing?

What do you think gave Jesus the strength and courage to keep going?

Daily Reflections

Maundy Thursday

Today we remember the last Passover meal Jesus had with his friends. Set the dining room table together in a special way. Or create a scene with materials in your home to help you tell the story.

Read Mark 14:12-25.

In church, how do we remember this meal? Share a meaningful communion memory you have.

Consider baking bread together, using the recipe that was sent out in the Banner newsletter and joining the church for our virtual Maundy Thursday service.

You can also read John 13 and have a foot or hand washing experience in your home. Jesus washed the feet of his friends as an act of love, service, and preparation. Take turns washing one another's feet or hands as an act of love and service, in preparation for the journey you will take from Maundy Thursday to Easter morning.

Good Friday

Good Friday Crosses:

Remember Jesus' death (Matthew 27:32-50).

Draw and cut out cross shapes from cardboard. Leave them blank through Friday and Saturday.

On Sunday, cover the front of the cross shapes with glue. Tear up pieces of colored paper or tissue paper, and cover the crosses with them.

Talking about Good Friday with Children:

Talking about death and grief with children is critical to their faith. However, even though it is Holy Week and not yet Easter it is necessary to give the proclamation, "Christ has died and Christ is risen from the dead." Children will be thinking bunny rabbits, Easter eggs and baskets. It is also the time to instill in them through prayer and practice the importance of Holy Week in their faith.

Good Friday explanations we can share:

- When Jesus rode into Jerusalem on the back of a donkey, the people who greeted him expected a powerful hero. They did not understand that Jesus' power was not physical strength, but the power of love.
- Jesus showed us that we are to remember him and follow his example of caring for and serving others. We remember him in the gift of bread and wine that mysteriously becomes the body and blood of Christ. It is the time when we know he is present with us.
- At the time of the Last Supper, we see Jesus' example of humbly serving others in love in his washing of the disciples' feet.
- Jesus proclaimed God's forgiveness from the cross as he was dying. He forgave Peter, who had denied him, and those who caused his death, and he will forgive us for all that we do that hurts others. That's why Good Friday is good.
- As God was with Jesus in his suffering, he is with us when we suffer

.Resource from Buildfaith.org, "Good Friday Through the Eyes of a Child"

Daily Reflections

Holy Saturday

Light in the Darkness: Remember Jesus' burial (Matthew 27:57-61).

- In a darkened room, light a candle and talk about the hopes the disciples must've had when Jesus entered Jerusalem.
- Blow out the candle and talk about what it is like when things go wrong. What are the feelings you feel when things go wrong or you experience a big change?
- Remind yourself or one another that Saturday was a very sad day for Jesus' friends, but it wasn't the end of the story.

Wax Crayon Eggs:

Holy Saturday is a wonderful day to dye Easter eggs. There are many different techniques, but the one that requires the most faith, despite its simplicity, is the wax crayon method. Even as you decorate your eggs, you can't see what the finished design will look like.

Holy Saturday is like wax crayon eggs. It is a day of waiting. We know we have something precious and beautiful, but we cannot yet see what the completed picture is. And so we must wait, as Mary waited, and the disciples waited.

Materials needed: At least 1 dozen boiled eggs, Easter-Egg dye kits, wax or white crayons

- Use a pale-colored wax crayon and draw or write on your egg. The only evidence that you have done anything will be bits of wax clumped on your egg's smooth surface.
- Dye your egg according to package directions.
- Wait. Wait some more.
- Pull your egg out of the dye.

Those invisible wax images are now clearly white, surrounded by brilliant egg dye. There is the flower you drew, imperfect but lovely. There is the name you wrote, a little wobbly but still your name.

Resource from Buildfaith.org

Symbols to Prepare for Easter:

Easter celebrates the resurrection of Jesus and there are many symbols. Learn about these symbols and as you do, draw or cut out shapes and decorate them to hang up in your room or put in your window for others to see. You could also hang them from a small branch for the center of your table.

- **Eggs** and **chicks** symbolize new life and they have been a symbol of spring since ancient times. It is also a symbol of the rock tomb out of which Christ emerged when he arose again. The chick, hatching out of the egg, symbolizes new life or re-birth.
- As one of the symbols of Easter, the **cross** reminds us of the life death and resurrection of Jesus.
- **Daffodils** and **tulips** bloom in the spring and symbolize spring and new life. Also, a daffodil has a flower that is shaped like a trumpet which helps us remember the joy when we shout, "Christ has risen, Alleluia!"
- The **butterfly** is a strong Christian symbol of Easter. The cocoon of a butterfly resembles the crucifixion of Jesus and his burial. The butterfly coming out from the cocoon resembles the resurrection of Christ from his tomb.

What other symbols or decorations of Easter could you put around your home?

Easter Sunday Reflections

Sunrise Breakfast:

Getting up before dawn to watch the sunrise is a special treasure that is not easily forgotten in life. This Easter morning tradition of a sunrise breakfast creates a sacred space in which memories are cultivated for life. Breakfast can be as simple or elaborate as you wish. The most important element is simply gathering together as a family and enjoying the time together.

Materials Needed:

Breakfast foods

- You could even make Resurrection Rolls the day before! [Find more here!](#)

Printout of John 20: 1-18

How to do it:

1. The night before, set the table. If possible, consider setting up outside on a balcony or deck, or near a window to see the sunrise. Also, prepare as much of breakfast ahead of time as possible. Breakfast can be as simple or elaborate as you like.
2. Plan to wake everyone in time to be ready at the table about 10-15 minutes before sunrise.
3. Serve breakfast and have everyone seated. Begin with a prayer of your own or use this one: *"God of darkness and light, we give you thanks for this Easter morning. As we sit here in the dark, we are excited to experience the resurrection in a new way as the sun rises and light fills the sky. Help us to have a meaningful breakfast together as a family. Amen."*
4. Begin to eat breakfast together and have someone read the passage slowly and deliberately.
5. Read the first line again: "Early on the first day of the week, while it was still dark..." (20:1a, NRSV). Is it still dark outside? This is the time of day when Mary went to the tomb.
Ask, How do you think Mary felt when she went to the tomb in the dark?
If you are able to eat outside, take note of what sounds you hear. Is it quiet? Is it noisy?
6. Enjoy breakfast together and notice as it gets brighter and day breaks. Share any thoughts and experiences that come to mind.

Ask questions that occur to you or use one (or more) of the following:

What part of the Gospel reading is most interesting to you or sticks out the most?

Does the light happen all at once, or does it seem to get light outside gradually? What does this tell us about the resurrection?

In the reading, Mary calls Jesus 'teacher.' How is Jesus a teacher to you? How do you think people felt when they realized that Jesus was alive? Did different people feel differently?

'Resurrection' means coming back to life. What are some things that remind you of resurrection in the world?

7. Close your time together with a prayer of your own or use this one: *"Thank you, God, for this resurrection breakfast, a time to focus on you and the mystery of resurrection. Help us to celebrate Easter and to share its message of hope and promise. Amen."*

Notes and Variations:

The beauty of this tradition is that it starts Easter morning with a spiritual focus and centers the day in family and faith. This tradition is a great foundation on which to build other traditions as the years go by. Add your own special recipes and surprises at breakfast. Use different scriptures and prayers in different years. Add songs or other readings that are meaningful in your family.

Resource from Buildfaith.org and pages 53-55 of Faithful Families: Creating Sacred Moments at Home, Chalice Press, 2017.

Easter Sunday Reflections

Easter Story Nature Walk and Scavenger Hunt:

Go on a walk outdoors or around your house and find the following objects to help you remember the Easter story.

Things to find and what they represent:

- Something with leaves
 - Represents the palms that people waved when Jesus entered Jerusalem
- Something that holds water/liquid
 - Represents the cup that Jesus used at the Last Supper
- Something silver
 - Represents the coins that Judas received when he betrayed Jesus
- Something prickly or thorny
 - Represents the crown of thorns that Jesus wore
- Something purple
 - Represents the purple robe they placed on Jesus as they called him King of the Jews
- Something made of wood
 - Represents the cross
- Something dead
 - Represents Jesus' death
- Something dark in color
 - Represents the darkness that came over the world after his death
- Something round and smooth
 - Represents the stone placed in front of the tomb
- Something that is empty
 - Represents the empty tomb
- Something soft
 - Represents the linens that Mary found in the tomb
- Something living
 - Represents Christ's resurrection
- Something bright and colorful
 - Represents our hope and joy in Jesus' gift to us
- Something that lights up
 - Represents that Jesus is the light of the world