

HOLY WEEK DEVOTIONS: A Family Activity

PALM SUNDAY

Scripture: *Luke 19:28-48*

Materials: Smooth stones, matches, and bright markers.

Light the three white candles in your centerpiece.

Read aloud the Scripture. Say: “The Sunday before Easter is called Palm Sunday because people waved palms and laid them in Jesus’ path as he entered Jerusalem. But some people were unhappy about everyone’s excitement at his arrival.”

Ask: “Have you ever been excited about something when other people weren’t? How did it feel? Why did some people want Jesus to quiet the cheering crowd?”

Make a bed of praises for the Holy Week centerpiece. Decorate the smooth rocks with symbols and words of praise (hearts, flowers, words like “love,” Alleluia,” etc.). Place the rocks around the base of the candles.

Say: “We’re on a journey this Holy Week. All the white candles in our centerpiece are lit because Jesus’ ministry shone all over Palestine for three years. But during our journey this week, Jesus’ earthly life will be extinguished. Tonight we extinguish one candle as we remember Jesus’ grand entrance into Jerusalem as the promised King and how that same day Jesus’ death was being planned.”

Blow out one candle, and close in prayer with “Park kez der Asdvadz, Glory to you O Lord our God.”

HOLY THURSDAY

Scripture: *Luke 22:7-62*

Materials: Matches and a Bible.

Light two white candles in your Holy Week centerpiece.

Say: “The Thursday before Easter is called Holy Thursday. Jesus shared bread and wine with his disciples and asked them to remember him during the Lord’s Supper.

“Also on Holy Thursday, Jesus washed his disciples’ feet, celebrated Passover, prayed in the Garden of Gethsemane, was betrayed by Judas, abandoned by his disciples and arrested.”

Say: “As we read today’s Scripture, notice each thing Jesus did or endured that might’ve been difficult.”

Read aloud the Scripture. Ask: “What was the most difficult thing Jesus did? What would’ve been most difficult for you to do or to endure? Why? What is the most difficult thing you’ve ever done? Why did you do it? Why was it difficult? Do you ask God for help during difficult times? Why or why not?”

Say: “We extinguished one candle as we remembered Jesus’ grand entrance into Jerusalem and how that day a group of Jewish leaders determined to have him killed. We’ll extinguish a second candle because we’ve learned that Jesus was betrayed by Judas, abandoned by his friends, and arrested by the people who wanted to kill him.”

Blow out one candle and close in prayer by thanking Jesus for loving us so much that he endured difficult things for our sake.

Say: “Park kez der Asdvadz, Glory to you O Lord our God.”

HOLY (GOOD) FRIDAY

Scripture: *Luke 22:66-23:56*

Materials: Pens, pencils, slips of paper, matches, plastic eggs and a Bible.

Light one white candle in your Holy week centerpiece.

Read aloud the Scripture. Say: “Today is Holy Friday, called “Good” Friday in many churches. The name doesn’t seem to fit when we think about the Scripture, does it? How can this day be called ‘good’ when we think about what happened to Jesus? But it is good because when Jesus died for us, he saved us from our sins and allowed us to have a close relationship with God. Still, this good outcome had a terrible price—Jesus’ life.

“Jesus died and was laid to rest in a tomb. The world went dark, the earth shook, and the temple curtain was torn from top to bottom. Jesus was the final sacrifice for our sins.”

Have each family member write something they’ve done that they’re not proud of on the slips of paper. Then place the slips inside the plastic eggs. Lay the eggs around the base of the Holy Week centerpiece.

Say: “We extinguished one candle as we remembered Jesus’ grand entrance into Jerusalem and how that day a group of Jewish leaders determined to have him killed. We extinguished a second candle because we learned how Jesus was betrayed by Judas, abandoned by his friends, and arrested by the people who wanted to kill him. Today we extinguish the third candle as Jesus’ time on earth ends and he was laid in a tomb. Jesus died for our sins. Today we can feel how dark and sad this day must’ve been for Jesus’ disciples and followers.”

Blow out the candle and close in prayer by acknowledging Good Friday as a sad day, but also one filled with the anticipation of Jesus’ resurrection. Thank God for the hope his son Jesus brought in the world. Say: “Park kez der Asdvadz, Glory to you O Lord our God.”

EASTER SUNDAY

Scripture: *Luke 24:1-12*

Materials: The plastic eggs from Friday, matches, and a Bible.

Light the purple candle in your Holy Week centerpiece.

Read aloud the Scripture.

Use the following questions to spark discussion among family members, and then create your own “I wonder” questions.

- “I wonder how the women felt on their way to Jesus’ tomb where he had been dead for a few days.”
- “I wonder what the angels thought when they spoke to the women.”
- “I wonder how Peter felt when he found only strips of linen in the tomb”
- “I wonder how his disciples felt when Jesus visited them in the days after he’d risen.”

Say: “Today is Easter Sunday, the most glorious and amazing day of the whole year! On Holy Friday Jesus died and was laid in a tomb. On Sunday he was raised from the dead. Jesus died for our sins, and we buried our sins with him on Friday. (Remember how we wrote down things we weren’t proud of having done?) He rose on Easter to forgive our sins and to give us new life. Today we celebrate our new life in Jesus by destroying our sins.”

Remove the slips of paper from the eggs and rip them into tiny pieces and throw them in the garbage.

Ask: “How did it feel to see our sins on the paper thrown away? How do you feel now that your sins are gone forever? How does Jesus want us to use the life he’s given us? How can we honor Jesus for his sacrifice?”

Say: “Today we light the single purple candle as a symbol of Jesus’ triumph over death. We’ll leave the candle burning because Jesus has risen. Our Savior has given us eternal life.”

Close in prayer by thanking Jesus for his sacrifice and for forgiving our sins. Praise God for his Son. Hug each other with the greeting “Christ is risen from the dead! Krisdos haryav ee merelotz! Blessed is the resurrection of Christ! Orhnyal eh harootiunun Krisdosee!”