

A FAMILY GUIDE TO

HOLY WEEK

TO PREPARE FOR EASTER

APRIL

5

A family reading plan geared towards preschool/elementary aged kids and their families with accompanying activities.

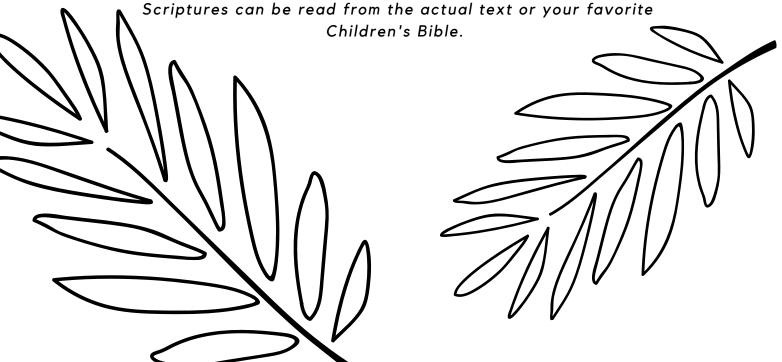
APRIL

12



This year looks different for all of us. But even so, maybe even especially so, as believers, we have reason to celebrate! We have resurrection hope that no outside circumstances can take away. And while acknowledging there are many people in our communities and around the world who don't have the luxury of "extra time" to celebrate, there are some also who do, and so I've scanned the blogs and asked friends for ideas for how we can lead our families through Holy Week well. I've included all the sources in a page at the end of this plan. Feel free to refer to them for even more ideas!

Use this guide as a resource. I've tried to include a few ideas for each day that will appeal to different age groups. Pick one or two and use them as works in your family. Scriptures can be read from the actual text or your favorite





PALM SUNDAY:

Mark 11:1-11 | Triumphal Entry |

HOLY MONDAY:

Mark 11:15-18 | | Jesus Clears the Temple ||

HOLY TUESDAY:

Mark 14:3-9 || Woman Anoints Jesus ||

HOLY WEDNESDAY:

Matthew 26: 14-16 || Judas Betrays Jesus ||

MAUNDY THURSDAY:

John 13: 1-5 || Jesus Washes the Disciples Feet ||

GOOD FRIDAY:

Mark 15: 21-39 || Jesus' Crucifixion ||

HOLY SATURDAY:

Mark 15: 42-47 || Jesus' Burial ||

EASTER SUNDAY:

Luke 24: 1-9 | Jesus' Resurrection |

Visit https://childrensministry.com/holy-week-familydevotions/ for the complete devotional that these readings came from.

PALM SUNDAY

READ ALOUD MARK 11:1-11

Candle Lighting:

Place five candles (from simple votives to creative centerpiece) in the middle of your table (or wherever you plan to do your family time). On Palm Sunday, light all five candles and leave them lit through the entire Bible reading and discussion. Ask your kids why we light candles? (To celebrate, to give us light...) Jesus is the light of the world, we celebrate him, and the whole city celebrated him on Palm Sunday. But, each day, you will "snuff out" one candle, until, on Good Friday, all are out. This both calls as back to advent as well as reminds us of the darkness we are left in before the good news of the Resurrection.

Discussion:

In Jesus' time, palm branches were used in celebrations or to honor dignitaries. Have your kids make palm branches out of green construction paper and decorate the dinner table. During dinner, discuss the meaning of Hosanna. (It was used as an appeal for divine help or salvation and a way to praise someone.) Ask your children what they might shout if they saw Jesus coming down the road today (Hope Community Church)

Activity:

 cut palm branches out of construction paper (template at the end) or trace your child's hand several time on green construction paper, cut out, and glue together onto a wooden skewer or popsicle stick. Reenact the story by having kid(s) shout and sing 'Hosanna'. Show them how to lay down their coats and branches for Jesus, just like the people of Jerusalem did. (Focus on the Family Canada)



HOLY MONDAY

READ ALOUD MARK 11:15-18

Candle Lighting:

Light five candles when you sit down. At the end of the reading, blow one of them out.

Discussion:

Tell your children that this area of the temple was the place non-Jews could come to pray, but it had become a dirty, noisy, unworshipful place. Jesus chased the sellers out of the temple. Ask your children why they think it would have upset Jesus to see the temple like this? (childrensministry.com)

Activities:

- Build a temple using blocks. Look for pictures online of what it would have looked like.
- Bake bread as a family, and discuss why Jesus called himself the Bread of Life. Point out that just as bread gives us nutrition and sustains us physically, Jesus offers us eternal life and sustains us spiritually. (Focus on the Family Canada)



INGREDIENTS

- · 1 tablespoon active dry yeast
- 1 cup warm water
- 2 tablespoons sugar
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 2 tablespoons vegetable oil
- · 21/2 cups all purpose flour

EASY HOMEMADE BREAD FOR MONDAY'S ACTIVITY

DIRECTIONS

Preheat oven to 400° F. In a small bowl, add sugar to warm water, and stir until sugar dissolves, and then add yeast. Set mixture aside for 5 to 10 minutes or until foamy.

In a separate mixing bowl combine flour and salt. When yeast is foamy, add oil, and then add yeast mixture to mixing bowl.

Stir until flour is wet and then knead in mixer for about 5 minutes. Cover and let set for 5 to 10 minutes.

Turn dough out on a floured surface, form into loaf shape and place in a greased pan. Cover with a damp cloth and let rest for 10 minutes.

Bake loaf for 25 minutes. Remove from pan and let cool before slicing.

*For a softer crust, add a thin layer of butter to top of loaf after it is removed from the oven.



HOLY TUESDAY

READ ALOUD MARK 14:3-9

Candle Lighting:

Light four candles when you sit down. At the end of the reading, blow one of them out.

Discussion:

This woman gave Jesus a gift that was very precious. We can give gifts that come from our heart, too. Have each family member share something he or she can do to honor Jesus. As each person shares, you can even spray perfume into the air or on the person. (childrensministry.com)

Activities:

- Make an Easter picture tree. Anchor a small branch in a pot. Have
 your kids look through magazines and cut out images (or draw images)
 that remind them of Jesus. Examples: A lamp because He is the Light
 of the World or a road because He is the one way to heaven. Glue
 pictures on card stock, attach short pieces of string, and hang the
 pictures on the branches. (Focus on the Family Canada)
- Make salt dough ornament eggs to decorate. Look up recipe online.





HOLY WEDNESDAY

READ ALOUD MATTHEW 26: 14-16

Candle Lighting:

Light three candles when you sit down. At the end of the reading, blow one of them out.

EASTER SCAVENGER HUNT

- a rock (the tomb)
- two sticks (the Cross)
- something black (sin)
- something red (blood)
- something white (a clean heart)
- something green (growing in Christ)

EASTER SCAVENGER HUNT

- a rock (the tomb)
- two sticks (the Cross)
- something black (sin)
- something red (blood)
- something white (a clean heart)
- something green (growing in Christ)

Discussion:

Count out 30 dimes.Tell your kids that Judas betrayed Jesus for about 120 days of wages. Let the kids count the dimes. Then give your children a dollar bill. Ask if they would trade it for five nickels. Thirty pennies? Determine which has the most value. Discuss how Judas betrayed Jesus for 30 silver coins, but that Jesus life was worth far more than the 30 coins. Ask your children how Jesus must have felt when His friend betrayed Him. (Focus on the Family Canada)

Activity:

- Send your children on an Easter scavenger hunt. Instruct them to find items that symbolize different parts of the Easter story. Examples: A rock (the tomb), two sticks (the Cross), something black (sin), something red (blood), something white (a clean heart), something green (growing in Christ). Older children can go on a digital scavenger hunt, taking photographs of items that remind them of Easter. (Focus on the Family Canada)
- Make the



MAUNDY THURSDAY

READ ALOUD JOHN 13: 1-5

Candle Lighting:

Light two candles when you sit down. At the end of the reading, blow one of them out.

Discussion:

Jesus washed feet to show his love. Have a bowl, a bar of soap, and paper towels ready. Take turns washing each other's hands and drying them as you express love to each other. Model for and encourage your children to use specific affirmations for each family member. (childrensministry.com)

.Activities:

- Read Luke 22:39-46. Visit a garden or park and pray there. Talk about Jesus praying in the Garden of Gethsemane. (Focus on the Family Canada)
- Prepare a Family Seder Meal using the information and liturgy at the end from Focus on the Family Canada. This is traditionally done on Thursday night, but takes a bit of time, so could also be moved to Friday depending on how it fits in with your family's schedule.



GOOD FRIDAY

READ ALOUD MARK 15: 21-39

Candle Lighting:

Light one candle when you sit down. At the end of the reading, blow it out.

Discussion:

Gather two horseshoe or carpenter's nails, light gauge wire, and a shoelace for each child. Follow these steps:Help children lay their nails across each other like a cross, then start wrapping the wire around the point where the nails intersect to bind the nails into a cross.Crisscross the wire in the center. Have the kids recall an event of the Crucifixion with each wrap. Wrap more wire around the top and make a loop to hold the shoelace. Encourage family members to wear this as a cross to remember that Jesus died for them on Good Friday.

Activity:

 Make a cross out of wood scraps. Ask each family member to think of an attitude or action from the past week that they knew didn't make God happy. Have family members write their thoughts on a piece of paper, fold it and pin it to the cross. Talk about how Jesus suffered the punishment for all of our sins so that we would not have to. Be sure not to force confession, but if they are ready for it, create the space.



HOLY SATURDAY

READ ALOUD MARK 15: 42-47

Candle Lighting:

Leave all the candles unlit.

Discussion:

Take turns wrapping each other in a white sheet just as Jesus may've looked when prepared for burial. Talk about how the disciples might've felt when all their hopes seemed destroyed when Jesus died. Talk about how the burial isn't the end of the story, but that it was a very sad day for Jesus' friends. (Focus on the Family Canada)

Activities:

- Take a morning walk around your neighborhood. Talk about how spring reminds us of the new life Jesus gives us. Point out the signs of new life that are starting to appear. (Focus on the Family Canada)
- Easter Egg Hunt: hide Easter eggs around your house or yard. Include either painted "Resurrection Story Stones" (rocks painted with pieces of the story painting on them- look for ideas online) or "Resurrection Eggs" (buy online or assemble ourself) amongst the prizes (or only). Have children retell the story using these prompts.
- Build a Resurrection Garden. Look up ideas online for how to create a small garden that helps tell the story.





EASTER SUNDAY

READ ALOUD LUKE 24: 1-9

Candle Lighting:

Relight all the candles!

Discussion:

Try to imagine yourself with the women that early morning, going to the tomb in anticipation of anointing a dead body of your loved one. They probably walked very slowly, mourning and weeping as they went. Then, finding He was alive, they ran with excitement back to tell the disciples! Hallelujah, He is alive!

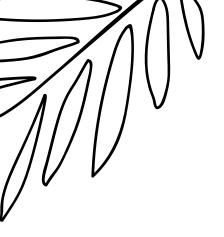
Activities:

• Practice the Easter greeting of the early church:

Leader: He is risen!

All: He is risen, indeed!

- To make this morning extra-memorable, you may want to rise early, bundle up in coats and blankets and do your morning devotional outside while watching the sun come up, as the women did that first Easter morning.
- Have joyful music playing Jesus is alive!
- Make Resurrection Buns for breakfast
 (https://www.aroundmyfamilytable.com/empty-tomb-rolls-2/). These
 are a family tradition in our house! You tell the story of the
 resurrection and make a special breakfast at the same time. Read a
 book about Easter while you wait for them to bake.
- During Easter dinner, have cupcakes for dessert with one candle on each. Use trick candles to show how Jesus, the Light of the World, appeared to be extinguished but wasn't. Light the candles and together blow them out. When the candles relight themselves, talk about how everyone thought Jesus' light had disappeared, but it hadn't. He was and still is alive! (Focus on the Family Canada)



SOURCES

childrensministry.com: https://childrensministry.com/holy-week-family-devotions/

Hope Community Church:

https://gethope.net/family-easter-ideas-remember-jesus-easter-week-activities/

Focus on the Family Canada: https://info.focusonthefamily.ca/easter



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THE SEDER

EXPERIENCE THE EASTER STORY IN A NEW WAY WITH A TRADITIONAL PASSOVER MEAL by Stan Keliner

he Seder (pronounced say-der) is the religious ceremony telling the story of Passover. It's a family-oriented ritual where everyone gathers around the table for a service that may include a meal.

The Seder is traditionally celebrated in one night and consists of 15 steps, but families can celebrate it as they see fit. In many Christian circles, the Seder is celebrated on the Thursday before Easter as a part of Holy Week. According to the account of the first Passover recorded in **Exodus 12**, a lamb's blood was shed and doorposts were painted so God would "pass over" that house, sparing the family from death. As a spiritual picture, this symbolizes the blood of the Lamb of God, Jesus, being painted on the doorposts of our heart. What a beautiful picture of forgiveness!

When we compare the principles of the Passover to the details surrounding the death and resurrection of Jesus, it's exciting to see how the two are related. God's directives to ancient Israel foreshadowed His plan to deliver each one of us through Jesus' death and resurrection hundreds of years later.

The following is a sample Seder that incorporates Jewish tradition with a Christian perspective. Consider sharing the Seder as a family during a one-evening ceremony, or partake of these elements a little each day during the week leading up to Easter.



PREPARATION FOR THE SEDER

After all leaven has been removed from the house, the traditional Seder begins just after sundown as the mother lights the candles and recites a blessing. Throughout the meal, the family maintains a posture of reclining, using pillows or cushions to lean against.

A list of basic Seder elements includes:

FOR EACH INDIVIDUAL:

- 2 parsley sprigs
- 1 tablespoon of charoset
- wine/grape juice—4 servings of 3 oz. each
- salt water-1 bowl per 4-5 people
- (bitter) 1/2 teaspoon fresh horseradish
- 6 14 square matzah (available in most grocery stores in the kosher or ethnic food section—use plain style)
- 1 pillow or cushion for reclining

FLUAH'S PLACE:

Same as the "individual" amounts with the exception that only one serving of wine or juice is poured and left next to the place setting for the duration of the ceremony.



FOR THE LEADER'S USE.

- 1 2 white candles and candlesticks with matches
- 1 bowl of salt water
- 1 lamb bone with no meat, roasted in ovenuntil brown
- 3 whole squares of matzah (unleavened bread) and 4 napkins
- 1 roasted egg
- 1 bowl of fresh water and a hand towel
- 🕞 1 small **reward**, such as a small toy or piece of candy

THE SEDER TABLE MAP



The First Cup: The Cup of Sanctification

Each person fills a glass with wine or juice.

Explain: This is the cup of sanctification. The word sanctification means to be set apart for God. Jewish families remember that God performed miraculous deeds to free (set apart) Israel from Egypt. We remember that Christ set us apart from the world as a holy nation to himself (1 Peter 2:9).

Everyone drinks the first cup.

Washing of Hands

The leader dips his hands in a washbasin and wipes his hands on the towel.

Explain: Jewish families remember how the priest. washed in the basin before he could come before God on behalf of Israel (Exodus 30:17-That ritual pointed to Jesus, who washes away our quilty conscience so that we can draw near to God (Hebrews 10:22). This symbol of cleansing also provides insight concerning Jesus' washing of the disciples' feet at His Passover Seder (John) 13:1-17)..

Dipping of 3. the Parsley



Everyone dips parsley in the salt water, one sprig at a time.

Explain: The first dip symbolizes the tears shed by the Israelites while they were enslaved; the second dip symbolizes the drowning of the Egyptian army in the Red Sea and the miraculous deliverance that came for the nation of Israel (Exodus 14:13-31). In the New Testament, the apostle Paul compares the crossing of the Red Sea to baptism, which symbolizes our redemption from sin. (1 Corinthians 10:1-2).

Breaking of the Middle Matzah

The leader takes the middle square from a stack of three matzah, breaks it in half, puts one half back in the middle of the stack and wraps the other half in a napkin. Now the leader hides the middle half of matzah. as the rest of the family closes their eyes.

Explain: We can see the beautiful picture of the Trinity in the matzah—the top piece representing the Father; the bottom piece representing the Holy Spirit; and the middle piece representing Jesus, who was broken for us and then wrapped in linen to be hidden away (Mark 15:46).

The Four Ouestions and the Passover Story

The leader and the youngest child in the family now ask and answer four important questions that explain why the Passover is celebrated. Next, the leader reads Exodus 12:1-13 as he holds up the lamb bone.

Explain: At the original Passover celebration, a lamb was killed and its blood was spread on the doorposts and lintel of the house to protect the home from the 10th plague, the slaying of the firstborn. God said He would pass over the house when He saw the blood (Exodus 12:13), Each person had to eat of this sacrificial lamb—no one could eat for another person. We understand that we must each make a personal decision to spiritually apply the blood of Jesus to the doorposts of our heart so we never experience sin's judgment (1 John 1:7-8).

The Second Cup: O. The Cup of Plagues

Everyone fills the cup a second time.

Explain: This is the cup of 🍱 plagues. God poured out 10 plagues on Egypt in order to show His strength and deliver the nation of Israel. Thank God that He delivered Israel and He delivers us.

Next, each person dips a spoon into his cup, then makes 10 drops of wine fall onto his plate as he says the name of each plague: blood, frogs, lice, flies, cattle disease, boils, hail, locusts, darkness and slaying of the firstborn. Finally, each person drinks from his cup.

SEE PAGE 9 FOR THE FOUR PASSOVER OUESTIONS

Eating of the Bitter Herbs



Everyone takes a piece of matzah, adds a small portion of horseradish and eats it.

Explain: Eating bitter herbs (horseradish) symbolizes the bitterness of slavery the nation of Israel endured in Egypt. We also remember the bitterness of our slavery to sin (John 8:34).

Eating of



Each person enjoys a piece of matzah with a little charoset.

Explain: This mixture symbolizes the mortar, the cement that holds bricks together, that the Israelites used while enslaved in Egypt. This sweet mixture represents bitter toil because even harsh labor is sweetened by the promise of redemption. We know that it was through Christ's bitter suffering that the sweetness of redemption also came to us (Hebrews 2:9-10).

> SEE PAGE 9 FOR THE CHAROSET RECIPE

Sharing of the Charoset

Everyone takes another piece of matzah with charoset and feeds it to the person on his right, saying, "Shalom, peace to you."

Explain: When Jesus brought sweetness into our lives through His forgiveness. He never intended for us to keep it to ourselves. As we feed each other the charoset, we are showing that we want to pass this sweet message on to others (Matthew 28:19-20).

Explanation O. of the Egg

The leader picks up the egg.

Explain: The egg is a reminder that because the temple was destroyed in A.D. 70, the Jews were no longer able to sacrifice. The egg is referred to as the Hagigah, the holiday sacrifice that was made during temple times. We are also reminded that Jesus was the final sacrifice that took away sin once and for all (Hebrews 10:1-18).

12. Finding and Eating of the Afikomen

The Afikomen ("ah-fee-koe'men") is the piece of matzah. that was hidden earlier. It's time to play a fun game as you send all the kids on a hunt to look for the hidden matzah. Whoever finds the piece gets a token reward—a ransom is paid for the Afikomen. When found, the Afikomen is broken in pieces and distributed to everyone.

Explain: Jesus himself used matzah as a picture of His sacrifice when He broke the bread during the Last Supper and said, "This is my body given for you" (Luke 22:19, NIV).

The Eating of the Meal

Your family can now eat a full meal to recreate the meal that took place in Expdus 12. (Seder menus may vary, including items such as roasted lamb and potatoes, matzo ball soup and sponge cake. Research online to create your own Passover meal)

The Third Cup: 13. The Cup of Redemption

Everyone fills the cup a third time.

Explain: This is the cup of redemption. The word redemption suggests the idea of a price being paid to bring someone out of slavery. The sacrificial lamb offered on Passover paid the price to deliver the nation of Israel from the bondage of Egypt. We know that Jesus drank with His disciples and declared, "Drink of it, all of you, for this is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins" (Matthew 26:27-28). Drink the third cup in remembrance of Jesus.

14. Looking for Elijah

As the ceremony draws to a close, one of the children goes to the door and peeks his head out to see if Elijah is coming.

"Is Elijah there?" the leader asks.

"No, he is not here," the child says.

'Maybe next year Elijah will come!" the leader replies.

Explain: According to Malachi 4:5-6, the Jewish people know that Elijah will prepare the way for the Messiah. When they ask if Elijah is coming, they are actually proclaiming that they are waiting for the Messiah. We recognize that John the Baptist prepared the way of the Lord more than 2,000 years ago (Luke 1:13-17).

15. The Fourth Cup: The Cup of Praise

Everyone fills the cup a fourth time.

Explain: This final cup is a reminder of God's promise to Israel (Exodus 6:7, NIV): "I will take you as my own people." The Jewish people look forward to a golden age when everyone will be at peace and will be reunited with God. In Jewish homes, it is traditional to close with "Next Year in Jerusalem," a further indication of their waiting for Messiah. As followers of Jesus, we, too, have been chasen by God to be His people, and we eagerly wait for the return of the Messiah so that we will be with Him forever (1 Thessalonians 4:13-17). So. with the Passover ceremony finished, let us drink the fourth cup, proclaiming, "Come, Lord

Jesus!"

Ston Kellner, a Jewish follower of Jesus, has been sharing Passover truths for more than 30 years and is the author of Behold the Lamb: Messianic Passover Haggadah.

SEDER EXTRAS

SEDER MEAL SHOPPING LIST



THE FOUR PASSOVER QUESTIONS

Introductory Question

Child: Why is this night different from all other nights?

Leader: Once we were slaves of Pharaoh in Egypt, but now we are free. We set aside this night each year to remember the great things. God did for us.

Question 1

Child: On all other nights we eat either bread or matzah, but why, on this night, do we eat only matzah?

Leader: Matzah reminds us of two things—we were delivered from slavery in Egypt, and we have a new life.

Ouestion 2

Child: On all other nights we eat whatever kind of vegetables we want, but why, on this night, do we eat only a bitter one?

Leader: We remember how bitter our ancestors' slavery was while they lived in Egypt.

Question 3

Child: On all other nights we do not dip our vegetables even once, but why, on this night, do we dip twice?

Leader: We are reminded of tears and of a miraculous deliverance, as we just saw portrayed with the parsley.

Question 4

Child: On all other nights we eat either sitting up straight or reclining, but why, on this night, do we all recline?

Leader: Before, we were slaves, but now we are able to recline to express the rest we enjoy as free people. This pillow represents our freedom.



MIX TOGETHER AND SERVE CHILLED:

INGREDIENTS

6 peeled, cored and diced apples

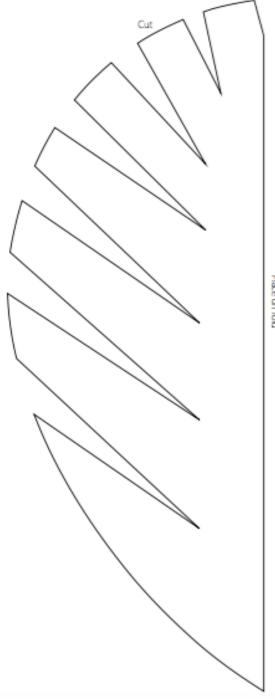
1 tsp. cinnamon

1 cup chopped walnuts

14 cup sweet red wine

1/2 cup honey

PALM BRANCH TEMPLATE



PALM LEAF

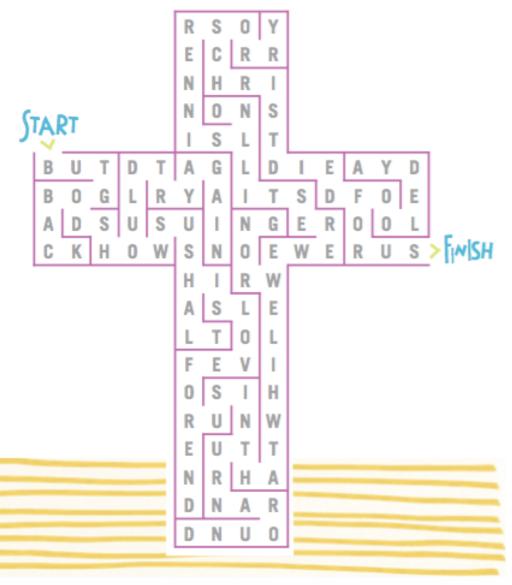


Cut template and position it onto folded green construction paper.

Trace and cut, then open fold and glue a green craft stick for the stem.

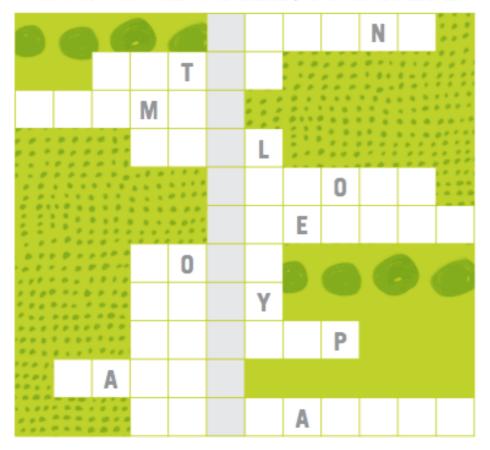
GOOD FRIDAY

READ YOUR WAY THROUGH THIS MAZE TO FIND OUT WHAT'S GOOD ABOUT GOOD FRIDAY



EASTER SUNDAY

THE NEW TESTAMENT GIVES US SPECIFIC NAMES OF PEOPLE WHO SAW EITHER THE EMPTY TOMB OR THE RISEN SAVIOR. FIT THESE WITNESSES INTO THE PUZZLE BELOW, AND THEN READ THE SHADED BOXES.



Mary Matthew 28:1

Salome Mark 16:1

Peter Luke 24:12

John John 21:1-2

Philip Acts 1:13

James 1 Corinthians 15:7

Joanna Luke 24:10

Thomas John 20:27

Saul (Paul) Acts 9:4-5

Cleopas Luke 24:18

Nathanael John 21:1-2

#\$WER. Joanna, Peter, Thomas, Saul, Salome, Geopas, John, Mary, Philip, James, Nathanael; Jesus Christ.

AN EASTER CRAFT . . . WITH A PURPOSE

Use this Easter centerpiece to help kids better understand what Jesus did for us.

- Cut out a white cardboard cross, using the template on the following page.
- Write the days of the week and the Bible verses on the cross, or use the squares below.
- Wrap the bottom of the cross with plastic wrap.

 Set it in a container partly filled with soil.

During the week before Easter, have a child read each day's Bible passage.

ON EASTER MORNING, READ MATTHEW 28:1-10.

Remove the cardboard cross from the container and plant flowers to remember Jesus' resurrection.

-Susan Sundwall





