



# HOLY WEEK EXPERIENCES

## - FOR FAMILIES -

## PALM SUNDAY | April 5, 2020

Begin by decorating a worshipful space in your home to use throughout the week. Set up a small table or surface to display the items used each day. Include a Bible, and one or more candles. Consider stringing white lights on a tree branch or backdrop. Light the candles and turn on the lights during your daily experience to make the time feel special.

### **Today's Reading: Matthew 21:1-11**

**Think about it:** The people knew Jesus was special. When they found out he was coming to Jerusalem, they threw a party! The people shouted “Hosanna!”—which was a word used to praise a king who was coming to rescue his people. But did these people really understand what they were doing?

### **Talk about it:**

- How did the people in this story praise Jesus? What did they do and what did they say?
- How do we praise Jesus today? What do we do, and what do we say?
- Did the people understand who Jesus really was? (Look at verses 10-11.)
- How was Jesus a “gentle king”—like the one the prophet described?

**Family Activity:** Add a green plant to your worship space to remind you of the branches the people used to praise Jesus. You might choose to pot a plant of your own, or use an existing houseplant. If you do not have a live plant, consider coloring and cutting palm leaves out of paper.

**Optional:** Post a picture of today's experience online to share with other families in our church.



# HOLY WEEK EXPERIENCES

## - FOR FAMILIES -

## MONDAY | April 6, 2020

If today is your family's first Easter Experience, begin by decorating a worshipful space in your home to use throughout the week. Set up a small table or surface to display the items used each day. Include a Bible, and one or more candles. Consider stringing white lights on a tree branch or backdrop. Light the candles and turn on the lights during your daily experience to make the time feel special.

### **Today's Reading: Mark 14:1-9**

**Think about it:** The woman in today's story knew Jesus was special. She arrived at Simon's house (probably uninvited) with a jar of expensive perfume, which she poured on Jesus' head. What an interesting way to show love for her teacher! The people watching did not understand what the woman was doing, but Jesus said her story would be remembered forever—and here we are still reading it today!

### **Talk about it:**

- What did the woman do for Jesus, and what did the people watching think about it?
- What did Jesus say about the woman's actions? How was she "preparing" Jesus?
- The religious leaders were scheming to kill Jesus. (Look at verses 1-2.) Do you think Jesus knew about their plan?
- What is the most extravagant (over-the-top) thing you have ever done to show your love for Jesus?

**Family Activity:** Bring a bottle of body spray or perfume to your worship area. (It could also be a room freshener or other fragrance.) Have one person lightly spray the fragrance in the air, so everyone can smell it. As an optional addition to today's activity, you could decorate the container with fancy paper, or sticky jewels. Leave the bottle of fragrance on the table to remember today's story.

**Optional:** Post a picture of today's experience online to share with other families in our church.



# HOLY WEEK EXPERIENCES

## - FOR FAMILIES -

## TUESDAY | April 7, 2020

If today is your family's first Easter Experience, begin by decorating a worshipful space in your home to use throughout the week. Set up a small table or surface to display the items used each day. Include a Bible, and one or more candles. Consider stringing white lights on a tree branch or backdrop. Light the candles and turn on the lights during your daily experience to make the time feel special.

### **Today's Reading: John 13:1-17**

**Think about it:** Jesus knew he was getting ready to die, and he wanted to show his disciples something important. What Jesus did was completely unexpected, and his disciples did not know what to think! Later his friends would remember what Jesus had done, and they would see how special it was.

### **Talk about it:**

- Where was Jesus preparing to go? (Look at verses 1 & 3.)
- Imagine you are one of the disciples. What do you see, feel, and think as Jesus washes your feet?
- What funny conversation does Jesus have with Peter?
- Jesus was giving his disciples an "example" they could follow. How can we follow Jesus' example today? What are some ways we can show love by serving each other?

**Family Activity:** Spend some time taking turns washing each other's hands. (You might talk about the importance of hand-washing in our current context.) Use sudsy soap, a nail brush, a wash cloth, or whatever you have on hand. Use a hand towel to gently wipe the hands of the person you are "serving." Take a bar or bottle of soap (or a hand towel) to your worship table to leave as a reminder of today's story.

**Optional:** Post a picture of today's experience online to share with other families in our church.



# HOLY WEEK EXPERIENCES

## - FOR FAMILIES -

## WEDNESDAY | April 8, 2020

If today is your family's first Easter Experience, begin by decorating a worshipful space in your home to use throughout the week. Set up a small table or surface to display the items used each day. Include a Bible, and one or more candles. Consider stringing white lights on a tree branch or backdrop. Light the candles and turn on the lights during your daily experience to make the time feel special.

### **Today's Reading: Matthew 26:14-16 & 20-30**

**Think about it:** Jesus knew what Judas was planning, and yet he included this friend in the Passover supper. Everything Jesus did was on purpose, and had special meaning. When Jesus shared the bread and the wine with his friends, he knew the meaning of this meal would last forever.

### **Talk about it:**

- What was Judas' "reward" for betraying Jesus?
- What do you think was going through Judas' mind as Jesus was talking about his betrayal?
- What did Jesus say about the bread and the cup as he shared the meal with his disciples? (Look at verses 26-28.)
- What "cost" did Jesus pay for you and me—and why?

**Family Activity:** Gather 30 coins and place them in a small bag. Pass the bag around and take turns feeling the contents, and shaking it to hear the clinking of the coins. While you are passing the bag, have a conversation about the "evils" associated with money. Why are people willing to do terrible things for money? What if you were offered \$10,000 to do something illegal, dishonest, or unkind. How would you handle the temptation? Leave the bag of money in the worship space to remind you of today's story.

**Optional:** Post a picture of today's experience online to share with other families in our church.



# HOLY WEEK EXPERIENCES

- FOR FAMILIES -

## THURSDAY | April 9, 2020

If today is your family's first Easter Experience, begin by decorating a worshipful space in your home to use throughout the week. Set up a small table or surface to display the items used each day. Include a Bible, and one or more candles. Consider stringing white lights on a tree branch or backdrop. Light the candles and turn on the lights during your daily experience to make the time feel special.

**Today's Reading: Matthew 26:31-35, 57-58 & 69-75**

**Think about it:** Peter thought he could follow Jesus, even if it meant dying with him. But Jesus knew better. Jesus knew Peter and the other disciples were sincere in wanting to follow him, but in the face of the crisis, all of them would scatter. Jesus would have to face the cross alone.

**Talk about it:**

- What did Peter and the other disciples believe about their ability to follow Jesus?
- Why did Peter lie about knowing Jesus?
- How did Peter feel when the rooster crowed?
- Have you ever been too afraid to stand up for Jesus?

**Family Activity:** Have each member of your family write "I don't know the man!" on a strip of paper. Talk about how all of us, like Peter, want to follow Jesus, but sometimes we fail. Wad up the strips of paper and set them in the worship space as a way to remember *Jesus died for my sins, too*.

**Optional:** Post a picture of today's experience online to share with other families in our church.



# HOLY WEEK EXPERIENCES

- FOR FAMILIES -

## FRIDAY | April 10, 2020

Begin by lighting the candles and turning on the lights in your worship area.

**Today's Reading: Luke 23:32-47**

**Think about it:** Jesus knew he was going to die, and he did it willingly, because it would save the people he loved from their sins. Even while he suffered, Jesus was already forgiving the people who put him on the cross. Jesus' love is that big.

**Talk about it:**

- What did the people do and say to mock Jesus?
- Why do you think Jesus said, "...they do not know what they are doing"?
- What did Jesus say to the criminal who asked Jesus to remember him?
- What happened when Jesus died, and what was the centurion's response?
- How does reading about Jesus' crucifixion make you feel?

**Family Activity:** Write out 1 Peter 2:23-24 and glue it on a small piece of wood. Give each person in your family a nail, and let them hammer it into the board, next to the verse. Encourage each person to say out loud, "He died for my sins, too." Leave the board with the nails in your family worship space.

**Optional:** Post a picture of today's experience online to share with other families in our church.



# HOLY WEEK EXPERIENCES

- FOR FAMILIES -

## SATURDAY | April 11, 2020

Begin by lighting the candles and turning on the lights in your worship area.

**Today's Reading: John 19:38-42 and John 20:1-10**

**Think about it:** Even though Jesus told his disciples he was going to die, and then rise again, they didn't get it. They didn't remember. Between Jesus' death and resurrection, his friends thought he was gone forever. They thought the tomb was Jesus final destination.

**Talk about it:**

- Why was Joseph a "secret disciple"?
- Nicodemus also followed Jesus secretly, meeting up with him at night. What brave thing did these two men do after Jesus died?
- How do we know Jesus' disciples were confused about what was happening? (Look at John 20—especially verses 2 & 9.)
- It's hard to wait—especially when we don't know what's going to happen. Can you think of a time when this was true for you?
- When we read the story of Jesus' death, we already know the ending! What difference does this make for us?

**Family Activity:** Some people call this day between Good Friday and Easter "Long Saturday"—to remember the long and sad days while Jesus was in the tomb. Make "Empty Tomb" cookies as a reminder of the long wait, and the amazing surprise of Easter morning. (Note: These will work best if you start them first thing in the morning, and leave them in the oven all day; or make them before bed and leave them in the oven overnight.)

**SEE NEXT PAGE FOR RECIPE**

**Optional:** Post a picture of today's experience online to share with other families in our church.



# HOLY WEEK EXPERIENCES

- FOR FAMILIES -

## **“Empty Tomb” Cookie Recipe:**

1 cup pecan halves  
1 teaspoon distilled white vinegar  
3 egg whites  
1 pinch salt  
1 cup white sugar

Preheat oven to 300 degrees.

Place pecans in a resealable plastic baggie. Crush the pecans into small bits.

Put 1 teaspoon vinegar into a medium bowl. Add egg whites to the vinegar. Sprinkle salt into the egg whites. Add 1 cup sugar. Beat with mixer on high speed for 12 to 15 minutes until stiff peaks are formed. Fold in broken nuts. Drop by teaspoons onto parchment paper lined baking sheet.

Place cookies in the oven; close the door and turn the oven OFF. Leave the cookies in the oven all day, or through the night. After approximately eight hours, take out the cookies. Eat them, being sure to notice the “empty tomb” inside the hollow cookie.