



Easter

8-Day Family Devotional



Day 1: Palm Sunday

??? STARTER QUESTIONS

- What are parades are like? What kinds of things happen? What kind of feeling is there in the crowd? What are some reasons we throw parades?
- What do you think of when you hear the title “king”? What is a king is like and how he treats his people?

READ: MATTHEW 21:1-11

Discuss Together:

1. How was Palm Sunday like a typical parade today? How was it different?
2. How is Jesus like a typical king and how is He different?

When Jesus entered Jerusalem riding on a donkey on Palm Sunday, it was a lot like a parade. A huge crowd of people went ahead of Him and behind Him, waving palm branches and shouting “Hosanna (which means “save us now!”) to the Son of David! Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord!” When the crowd called Jesus “the Son of David” they were proclaiming that He was the Messiah, the king they had been waiting for God to send for hundreds of years. That’s why they were so excited! Their king was finally here, and He was going to save them!

But in a lot of ways it was different from a typical parade for a typical king in that time period. A Roman “triumphal entry” parade for a king would have looked like this:



*Jacques Grosset de Saint-Sauveur, "A Roman Triumph" - <https://fineartamerica.com/featured/a-roman-triumph-illustration-jacques-grosset-de-saint-sauveur.html?product=poster>

These parades happened after a king won an important battle. He would be draped in expensive clothes, holding an ivory scepter in his hand and wearing a golden crown on his head. He would ride on a horse-drawn chariot followed by musicians and all the most important people in the city.

But Jesus rode in on a donkey, which was a symbol of humility. He did have a crowd around Him, but they weren't the important people of the city. Also, a donkey was an animal kings rode in times of peace, not war. The people were right in calling Jesus a king and recognizing that He came in the name of the Lord. But what they didn't understand was that Jesus wasn't coming to fight a war. He was coming to bring peace through His own death and sacrifice.

Jesus didn't look like the world's idea of a king, but He was exactly the king God had promised. His battle was against a bigger enemy than a foreign army. He was coming to save them from sin and death and give them eternal life! His battles are not against flesh and blood, and His kingdom is not of this world. He came to give them so much more than they ever expected.

How often do we want the wrong things from Jesus? How often do we ask Him to come in and fight our physical battles (take away sickness, give us material stuff) when He wants to fight our spiritual ones (teach us to trust, make us humble, give us patience, teach us obedience)? Let's understand what kind of king Jesus really is and praise Him and thank Him for the deeper, eternal things He does for us.



OPTIONAL PARENT STORY

Describe a time when you asked God to fix some physical situation for you and, instead, He worked to change you spiritually.



ACTIVITY

Make palm branches out of construction paper glued to popsicle sticks or pipe cleaners (if you have them). You can cut the paper in the shape of a branch or trace your handprint to make "branches." Then, wave your branches and sing songs of praises to Jesus our humble king while marching around your house, outside, or down your street. You could even record yourselves singing and send it in to your church's social media page!



PRAY

Dear God, thank you for sending your Son to fight the ultimate spiritual battle for us—to save us from our sins! Jesus, we give you praise and honor for being our humble king! In Jesus's name, Amen.



MEMORY VERSE

"Hosanna to the Son of David! Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord! Hosanna in the highest heaven!" – Matthew 21:9

Day 2: Holy Monday

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STARTER QUESTIONS

- What is perfume like? How does it smell? Why do people use it? How does it make you feel? When you think about strong perfume, does it remind you of anyone?

READ: JOHN 12:1-11

Discuss Together:

1. Do you remember any other stories about Mary, Martha, and Lazarus from the Bible? Do you remember any other stories about Judas?
2. Why would Jesus say it's okay for Mary to waste all that perfume when it could have been sold to help the poor?

In biblical times, people used perfume for a lot of the same reasons we use it for today. Women and men used it to smell better. They also used it for aromatherapy, like some people use essential oils today. They might put certain scents in their bathwater or burn it like incense to help them feel calmer or sometimes rub it on their skin in lotions. They even put perfumes and spices on people's bodies when they buried them. But, they also used perfume for religious reasons. They burned incense to God as a sacrifice or poured out oil or perfume on their sacrifices. The Bible says their sacrifices were "a pleasing aroma" to God (Exodus 29:18).

Jesus said that, when Mary anointed His feet, it was preparing Him for His burial, because He knew He would die in only a few short days. This would have been surprising for His disciples to hear, though, because at this point in the week, the crowds were still really excited about Jesus and cheering for Him as king. The people hadn't turned against Him yet. But Jesus knew it was coming.

In this story, Judas complained that Mary pouring out her whole jar of perfume was wasteful. It was a year's worth of wages! In today's money, that would be like \$15,000! That amount of money is probably hard for a kid to even imagine, but it's about as much as it would take to buy a very nice used car or a brand new compact car like a Nissan Versa or a Hyundai Accent. And she just poured it all out on His feet!

Of course, Jesus cared about helping the poor, but He said, in this case, what Mary did was right. It showed extravagant love and extravagant worship for Jesus. Her act of anointing was also an interesting picture of the extravagant sacrifice Jesus was about to make for us.

This perfume was in a special kind of jar. Because the scent was so strong, people typically used only a drop or two at a time. So the jar had a very long, thin neck that let the perfume come out in a very slow drip. There was no way she could just pour the perfume out. If she wanted to pour it all out, she would have to break the jar. When Mary broke her perfume bottle, it was a symbol of how Jesus's body was broken for us on the cross. Her love for Him was extravagant just like His love for us is extravagant.

Mary gave everything she had to Jesus as an offering. The Bible asks us to do the same thing. In Romans 12:1–2, Paul tells us to make our whole lives as a living sacrifice, which is “pleasing” to God in the same way that the Old Testament sacrifices were “a pleasing aroma” to God and Mary’s perfume was pleasing to Jesus. That means everything we do every day is for Jesus, not just on Sunday mornings. We offer all we are and all we have to Him, just like Mary did.



OPTIONAL PARENT STORY

Describe a few ways that you have offered your whole life to Jesus as a living sacrifice.



ACTIVITY

Have the kids draw or write all the different things that make them special (I am nice to my friends, I am a good drawer) and the things they do with their time (I play soccer, I go to friend’s houses to play). Create a temporary “offering plate” out of a paper plate, a regular dinner plate or bowl, or a special plate/platter, if you have one. Have each child place their paper in the offering plate, signifying their offering of their whole lives to Jesus. As they do, parents can lay hands on the child and pray for God to use their whole lives, who they are and what they do, to serve Him.



PRAY

Dear God, thank you for sending your Son to give His whole self as a sacrifice for us. Give us the strength and wisdom to give our whole selves as a living sacrifice for you! In Jesus’s name, Amen.



MEMORY VERSE

“Offer your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God” – Romans 12:1b



Day 3: Holy Tuesday

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STARTER QUESTIONS

- What do you think God's voice would sound like? How would hearing God's voice make someone feel? What would you do if you heard the voice of God or an angel coming from heaven?

READ: JOHN 12:20-36

Discuss Together:

1. Why do you think the disciples and the crowds had a hard time understanding that Jesus was going to die? Why do you think Jesus needed to die?
2. Why do you think God would speak from heaven right now in the story of Jesus's life?

God doesn't speak out loud from heaven very often, not even in the Bible. He did it when He gave Moses and Israel the Ten Commandments and other laws that established His covenant with them (Exodus 19:16–22). He did it when He cursed King Nebuchadnezzar (Daniel 4:28–37). He did it when Jesus was baptized (Luke 3:21–23). He did it at the Transfiguration (Luke 9:28–36). He did it here, when Jesus talked about His death (John 12:20–36). He did it when He was telling Peter that the mission was expanding to the Gentiles (Acts 10:9–23). Finally, John speaks of it happening over and many times in his vision of the Revelation.

Each time, it is at a very significant point in the story of God's relationship with His people. Each time, God uses it to show the people His glory, so they will know He is real and that what His prophet (Moses or Daniel or Jesus) is saying is true. That's why His voice was so loud and often came with thunder and lightning or other signs of the glory and power of God. In this story, it was so the people would believe that Jesus really would have to suffer and die and that this is what would bring God the most glory.

We can see that in the short parable Jesus tells. "Unless a kernel of wheat dies, it only remains a single seed. But if it dies it produces many seeds." The way Jesus will accomplish His mission is through His death. That is how He will be able to save many people and bring them eternal life.

It may not seem like that big a thing for them to believe. They didn't really need God to speak aloud from heaven for them to get this, right? I mean, we believe in it now, without hearing God's thunderous voice from heaven. But we are on the other side of Jesus's death and resurrection. We already know the end of the story. This was a really hard thing for the disciples to believe, even though Jesus had been telling them for a while. It just didn't make sense that their Messiah would die. They thought He was coming to save them! How could He save them if He was dead?

But what Jesus is saying with His parable is that this is exactly how He will save them, by dying and being raised again. Just like a kernel of wheat has to die in order to produce more seeds.

They still wouldn't really understand until after it happened, even though they had heard God's voice directly from heaven. It's still hard for some people to believe, even today! In Corinthians, Paul

that the message of the cross is “foolishness” to the world, but for those who believe, it is “the power of God” (1 Corinthians 1:18–25). When you think about it, it does sound kind of crazy. That God Himself would die? But that is just how much God loves us!

The gospel may sound crazy to some people, but it is the power of God for us! If you believe Jesus died for your sins and rose again, and you commit to follow Him as your Lord, He will send the powerful Holy Spirit to live in you and change you from the inside out. And one day, He will raise you from the dead too in the power of God, and you will live with Him forever in heaven.



OPTIONAL PARENT STORY

Share why you believe in the gospel even though it sounds crazy to some people.



ACTIVITY

Get three glasses and label one “Jesus,” one “sin,” and one “you.” Fill the “Jesus” glass with half water, half bleach. Fill the “sin” glass with water and dark food coloring. Fill the “you” glass only half full with water. Pour some of the “sin” glass into the “you” glass, to show the way sin stains our lives. Then pour from the “Jesus” glass into the “you” glass to show how Jesus takes our sin away.

If you don't have these materials, or if you just want to watch it on video instead, search YouTube for “Jesus, Sin, and You (message illustration)” - https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8Z_SMrnEial



PRAY

Dear God, thank you so much for coming to earth as a man and dying in our place! We could never thank you enough for your crazy love! Help us to follow you all the days of our lives. In Jesus's name, Amen.



MEMORY VERSE

“The cross is foolishness to those who are dying, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God” – 1 Corinthians 1:18



Day 4: Holy Wednesday

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STARTER QUESTIONS

- Have you ever had a friend who turned on you? Maybe they gossiped about you or joined a bully in making fun of you or something like that. How would something like that make you feel?

READ: JOHN 13:21-30

Discuss Together:

1. How do you think Jesus felt about one of his closest friends turning Him over to the people who were trying to kill Him?
2. Why does God continue to love people even though they turn their backs on Him?

Judas was one of Jesus's closest friends, and they were really close. Jesus and His twelve disciples weren't just regular buddies; they lived together all the time. It was kind of like how you might live with a group of friends at summer camp or at boarding school. They traveled together all over Galilee. They worked together all day, ate all their meals together, did everything together. Jesus was their rabbi (which means teacher), but He was much more than just a teacher. He was like a father to them, and He loved them like His children. And they all knew He was the Messiah, God come to them in human form, so they respected Him as their Master, Lord, and as God Himself.

But Jesus wasn't surprised that Judas betrayed Him. The Bible tells us that a year before His death, Jesus knew that Judas would turn against Him (John 6:64). But we don't see Jesus treating Judas any differently than He treated any of the other disciples. How could He keep letting Judas live with them and travel with them and eat with them every day when He knew Judas was a traitor? What do you think Batman would do if he found out Robin or Alfred was a traitor?

Jesus didn't try to hurt Judas or get revenge or have him arrested. He didn't even kick him out of the group! He kept teaching him and loving him and treating him like a beloved son, just like He treated all the other disciples. The very same night that Judas was going to betray Him, Jesus washed his feet.

Washing someone's feet was worst job for the lowest servant in the household. Not something the master ever did. But the night of the Last Supper, Jesus knelt down and washed His disciples' feet to show them that, even though He was their master, He loved them enough to serve them. He was showing them that the way to love people God's way was to serve them.

But Jesus went even further, because He included Judas in that foot-washing. The Bible says that, at the beginning of that night, the devil had already put in Judas's heart to betray Jesus. And in the middle of the meal, Jesus would send Judas away to do it. He would let Judas go betray Him. But He didn't send him off right away. First, Jesus washed his feet.

Why? To show the disciples that the love that comes from God is not only a serving kind of love, but a serving kind of love for your enemies, too! That is radical, crazy love, isn't it? To serve even the

person who has hurt you, who makes you frustrated or angry or drives you crazy or is just difficult to love. But that's the kind of love God has for the world. It's the kind of love God has for us. The Bible says He died for us even when we were still His enemies (Romans 5:8). Even before we loved Him and followed Him. He didn't just die for His twelve closest friends. He died for the whole world, so that anyone who believes in Him would have eternal life (John 3:16).

If we want to love people the way God loves, we have to serve everyone we meet, even the people who don't treat us well. We have to put their needs ahead of our own. We have to not only say we love them but show our love through our actions—even our enemies. That's the amazing love of Jesus.



OPTIONAL PARENT STORY

Describe a time when you showed love to someone who “didn't deserve it” because they had mistreated you.



ACTIVITY

Make a list of people who have hurt you or who are difficult for you to get along with. Pray for those people and then think of something you can do to serve them.



PRAY

Dear God, thank you so much for dying for us even while we were still your enemies. Please give us the strength to love our enemies the way you love us. In Jesus's name, Amen.



MEMORY VERSE

“Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you” – Matthew 5:44



Day 5: Holy Thursday

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STARTER QUESTIONS

- What do you think of or feel like when you hear the word “command” or “commandment”?
- What commandments from the Bible do you think are most important? Why?

READ: JOHN 13:12-17, 31-35

Discuss Together:

1. What kind of an example did Jesus set for how we should live? Describe what Jesus was like, what He did, and how He treated people.
2. Why is it our love that will make people recognize us as Jesus’s followers? How is His kind of love different from the love of other people?

When Jesus washed the disciples’ feet at the Last Supper, He did something radical. Something no one had ever done before. The master never washed feet. That was the job for the lowest servant in the household. In Bible days, people walked everywhere and wore sandals every day. The roads were dusty, dirty, and muddy, not asphalt or pavement like we have today. I mean, stepping in donkey dung was a pretty regular occurrence. So washing people’s feet was a nasty job. Yet Jesus did it. God Himself in human form washed their feet!

Then He said He was showing them how they should love other people. Through this simple yet significant act Jesus was showing them that to really love someone is to serve them. Not just to say you love them or have happy feelings about them when you see them or spend a lot of time with them. To love someone means to serve them, to do helpful loving actions for them. Real love is giving of yourself for others, putting other people’s needs ahead of your own, sacrificing your own comfort to help someone else. Putting yourself last, making yourself the lowliest servant. Real love is humble love in action.

This night is called “Maundy Thursday” because it is the night that Jesus gave them His “new command.” “Maundy” comes from the Latin word for “mandate” or “command.” At first, it seems like His command isn’t not really all that new, right? The two greatest commands have always been to love God with all you are and love your neighbor as yourself; Jesus Himself said so (Matthew 22:36–40). The difference is that the old command was “love your neighbor as yourself.” This new command is “love other people as Jesus loves you.”

The way Jesus loved people—not just when He was washing their feet, but through His whole time on earth—was really different from the way the world loves each other. Every human being is capable of some level of love. Because we are made in the image of God and God is love, we all love. But the natural, human kind of love is self-centered. The natural kind of love is one that loves people who are nice to us. The kind that loves as long as it’s convenient or makes us happy. But the Jesus kind of love loves everyone, no matter what, and even when it’s hard.

Jesus always noticed people who were sad or hurting, the ones other people walked right past. When He healed someone, He reached out and touched them, even people that the culture would have considered unclean. He showed women, children, foreigners, the sick, and the poor that they had equal value in God's eyes even though the culture didn't think they were valuable. He didn't just help people, He wept with those who were hurting and felt their pain with them. Then He gave His life on the cross so we could live. Jesus was the greatest example of self-sacrificing love who has ever lived.

Jesus's command for His twelve disciples that last night, and for all of us who are His disciples today, is to love everyone in the world the way He loves them. "That is how they will know you are my disciples," He said. If we love people that way, they will see something radically different in us. They will ask each other, why is that person so overly generous, so overly kind, so overly thoughtful, so overly compassionate, so overly gracious, even to people who aren't nice to them. What is up with that person? And we can answer, "It's not me, it's Jesus. Because He loved me this way and gave me His Holy Spirit. That's the only way I can love other people this way."



OPTIONAL PARENT STORY

Describe a time when you showed radical love for someone by serving them—love through action. What impact did it have on that person? What impact did it have on other people who saw you do it? Or describe a time when someone showed you radical love by serving you. What impact did it have on you and those around you?



ACTIVITY

Develop a list of intentional acts of love for other people that you can do as a family. Not just "random acts of kindness," but ways you can help people who really need help, ways you can put others' needs ahead of your own, ways you can sacrifice yourself for other people, ways you can be a servant. Choose one to do each week and see how people respond!



PRAY

Dear God, thank you so much for your sacrificial love for us. Please give us hearts to love other people the way you love us. In Jesus's name, Amen.



MEMORY VERSE

"As I have loved you, so you must love one another" – John 13:34

Day 6: Good Friday

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STARTER QUESTIONS

- Has anything really unfair ever happened to you? What did that feel like? What did you do about it? What did you want to do about it?

READ: JOHN 18:28-40

Discuss Together:

1. What did Jesus mean when He said His kingdom was not of this world?
2. How could Jesus endure so much suffering and pain and unfair treatment when He was innocent? Why didn't He defend Himself? Why didn't He fight back or save Himself or have angels come and save Him?

A lot of terrible things happened on Good Friday. Jesus was put on trial for something He didn't do, He was betrayed by one of His closest friends, one of his other closest friends denied he even knew Jesus, and all of His disciples except one ran away because they were scared of what might happen to them for being His friends. Jesus was beaten and made fun of and then died a terrible death. In the ancient world, dying on a cross was not only a really painful way to die, it was very shameful way to die. It was humiliating, something that only happened to criminals and slaves.

Isn't it weird that we call that "Good" Friday? But we call it "good" not because of what happened to Jesus, but because of what that day did for us. For all of mankind. The death of Jesus is what made it possible for us to go to heaven, to be with God forever. The story of Jesus is called "the gospel," which means "good news." It is God's rescue plan to fix His relationship with human beings.

- God created the world GOOD, but when SIN entered the world, our relationship with God was broken (Genesis 3).
- The gospel is the GOOD NEWS of God's rescue plan for the world—that Jesus came to die for our sins and give us eternal life (John 3:16).
- To receive God's FREE GIFT of eternal life, we simply BELIEVE in our hearts and CONFESS with our mouths that Jesus is LORD (Romans 10:9–10).
- But CONFESSING doesn't just mean saying it. It means we commit to LIVE OUT what we believe by following Jesus as our LORD, obeying His Word, living as He lived, and loving as He loved (Matthew 7:21–23; John 13:15; 13:35; 15:14).

Any death is a hard thing to think about, but Jesus's death was really unfair because he was completely innocent! He didn't deserve anything that happened to Him that day. But He endured it all for us, without fighting back or complaining (Isaiah 53:3–7). Because His goal wasn't His own comfort or even His own justice, but to save us.

The reason Jesus's death on the cross "worked" as a sacrifice is because He was innocent, because He was blameless. He didn't fight back or defend Himself because He knew it needed to be done. He said if His kingdom were of this world, His disciples would have been fighting to prevent his

arrest (John 18:36). But since His kingdom is not of this world but of heaven, He had to endure the cross so the rest of us could go to heaven with Him. Jesus didn't want to die this horrible death. He said so when He prayed in the garden of Gethsemane, asking God if there was any other way, that He would prefer not to have to do it. But He ended that prayer with, "Not my will, but yours be done" (Luke 22:42).

Jesus was ready and willing to go through this horrible suffering, pain, humiliation, and death because it meant that we could be with Him in heaven. The writer of Hebrews said Jesus endured the cross "for the joy set before him" (Hebrews 12:2--for the joy of being in heaven with you and with me. That is why Good Friday is called "good."



OPTIONAL PARENT STORY

Describe a time when you had to endure a time of suffering. How did God use that time to bring joy and thankfulness into your life?



ACTIVITY

Cut a cross out of a piece of paper and, using one word—hatred, envy, racism, etc., write all the sins you can fit onto that paper. Hang that cross somewhere prominent in your house—on a window, a bathroom mirror, on the refrigerator—for the days between Good Friday and Easter Sunday to remind us of why Jesus died on the cross. On Easter Sunday, take the cross down, crumple it up, and throw it away. Better yet, burn it!



PRAY

Dear God, thank you so much for enduring all the events of Good Friday for us. Not just the pain and death, but the shame and mocking. We can never repay you, Jesus, but we thank you and praise you for all you've done, and we commit to live for you. In Jesus's name, Amen.



MEMORY VERSE

"My kingdom is not of this world" – John 18:36



Day 7: Holy Saturday

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STARTER QUESTIONS

- Have you ever been really sad about something? Maybe someone you love died or something happened to you or to someone you know. How did you handle your sadness?

READ: JOHN 19:38-42

Discuss Together:

1. Why do you think these two secret followers of Jesus now came forward to take care of His body in burial? What does that tell us about how many people loved Jesus?
2. The next day, on Saturday, what do you think Jesus's followers were doing?

Holy Saturday was a much quieter day than Good Friday had been. There was no trial, no mocking, no crowds shouting, "Crucify Him!"

The Bible doesn't even tell us what His disciples were doing. They could have been resting because it was the Sabbath. They could have been hiding out because they were afraid the same people who killed Jesus would kill them too. Maybe they were together, praying about what to do next, now that Jesus was gone. They probably had a lot of different feelings—confusion, anger, fear, worry. But most of all, they were sad. Because Jesus—their master, their teacher, their hero, and their friend—was gone. They didn't know yet that Jesus would rise again. They just knew He had died, and they were sad.

Some people think it's not okay to be sad, or at least that it's not okay to show it. A lot of times grown-ups tell kids to "stop crying" or "suck it up" or "don't be sad," when what we really need is time and space to just be sad. If we just push all our sadness down instead of letting it out, we'll never really heal.

The Bible tells us that it is okay to be sad. It's even good to let ourselves feel those emotions. The Bible even tells us the best thing we can do with our sadness is to pour it all out to God in prayer. God won't ever tell us to stop crying or to suck it up and not be sad. He will comfort us like a loving father, like a good shepherd. The Bible calls that kind of prayer a "lament." Over one-third of the psalms are songs of lament that the whole country of Israel would sing together to express their sorrow before God in worship.

The psalms teach us that we can tell God whatever it is we are feeling. We can be completely honest with Him, even about something that seems negative. God invites us to bring all our pain to Him—our frustrations, our sorrows, our sadness, our regrets, our hurts—everything. Don't be afraid to tell Him exactly how you feel. He can handle it. But the psalms don't end with our pain and sorrow. The ending of every one of the psalms of lament turns to trust and hope in God. Because no matter how sad we are feeling, God is our comfort, our refuge, and our strength. He can change our mourning to dancing and our sorrow to joy when we bring it to Him in prayer (Psalm 30:11-12).



OPTIONAL PARENT STORY

Describe a time when you were very sad and brought your sadness to God in prayer. How did He comfort you? What Bible verses do you go to when you are feeling sad and need comfort from God's Word?



ACTIVITY

Have your kids draw a picture of how they are feeling right now or how they feel when they are sad or scared or worried. Art therapists say that often, if kids can't express how they are feeling in words, drawing can really help. Then ask them to describe their drawing to you.



PRAY

Dear God, we are so sad that Jesus had to die on the cross for our sins, but we are so thankful that He did. Thank you for letting us bring our sadness to you in prayer and for comforting us always. In Jesus's name, Amen.



MEMORY VERSE

"Why my soul, are you so disturbed within me? . . . I will yet praise Him." – Psalm 43:5 (selected phrases)



Day 8: Easter Sunday

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STARTER QUESTIONS

- Why do you think it's important that Jesus rose from the dead? Why does it matter? Why is it something we celebrate?

READ: LUKE 24:1-12

Discuss Together:

1. Why do you think the women were surprised and confused that Jesus's body was not there?
2. Why didn't the other disciples believe them? Why did only Peter run to the tomb (in other Gospels, it was both Peter and John who ran)?
3. How would you have felt if you were one of the women at the tomb or one of the disciples?

The women coming to the tomb expected to see a dead body. That may seem creepy or gross to us today, but it was a totally normal part of their burial custom to go to a grave in the days after a person had died and put spices on the body. Imagine how surprised they were when they got there, and His body was gone!

They were confused, worried, maybe even scared. But then two angels appeared and told them His body wasn't there was because God raised Him from the dead! His body wasn't missing. He was alive!

Imagine how they must have felt then! Maybe still a little confused, but instead of scared or worried, they would have been incredibly happy!

This was the biggest miracle they had seen yet! Yes, they had seen Jesus raise Lazarus from the dead, but this was a whole other level of miracle. When God raised Jesus, because He had died on the cross as a sacrifice for all their sins, His resurrection was different. His resurrection meant that all of us who believed in Him would be raised from the dead one day too! That all His followers would follow Him to heaven.

This was the best news they had ever heard. This news is what the Bible calls "the gospel"—the good news of Jesus. That Jesus brings eternal life for all who believe in Him (John 3:16). One day, when we die, God will raise us again just like He raised Jesus. He will give us a new, perfect, everlasting body and put us in a new, perfect, everlasting place, where there is no more death, sadness, sickness, or pain. This is why we celebrate Easter Sunday every year. It's the greatest day in the story of God's rescue plan to fix His relationship with people.

Today we celebrate--with our families, with our church families, and with followers of Jesus all across the world and throughout all of church history as well. Because "Christ has died, Christ is risen, Christ will come again!" Because Jesus died for us, we can live forever with Him in heaven! That's something worth celebrating!



OPTIONAL PARENT STORY

Share some of the reasons you are looking forward to heaven—and not just the streets of gold, mansions, and huge banqueting table with unlimited ice cream!



ACTIVITY

Bake “Empty Tomb Rolls” together. (Recipe below.)

- 1 (10 oz.) package crescent dinner rolls
- ¼ cup sugar & 1 tablespoon ground cinnamon, mixed together
- 8 large marshmallows
- ¼ cup butter, melted

If you don’t already have crescent rolls, you can Google how to make your own dough. Preheat oven to 375 degrees. Prepare muffin pan with non-stick cooking spray. Separate rolls into eight triangles.

- Take the marshmallow (Say, “This represents Jesus.”)
- Roll it in the cinnamon/sugar (Say, “After Jesus died on the cross, He was wrapped in linen.”)
- Wrap the marshmallow in the dough (Say, “Then Jesus was put in the tomb.”)
- Be sure to pinch the dough all around the marshmallow, sealing the edges well.
- Dip the tops of the dough in the remaining butter and then into the cinnamon/sugar.
- Place the roll, sugar side up, into the muffin cups
- Bake at 375 for 13–15 minutes
- When you take the rolls out of the oven, break one open to reveal no marshmallow inside (Say, “When they came to the tomb on Easter morning, Jesus’s body was gone! He had been raised from the dead! And He is still alive today!”)



PRAY

Dear God, we are so sad that Jesus had to die on the cross for our sins, but we are so thankful that He did. Thank you for letting us bring our sadness to you in prayer and for comforting us always. In Jesus’s name, Amen.



MEMORY VERSE

“Why my soul, are you so disturbed within me? . . . I will yet praise Him.” – Psalm 43:5 (selected phrases)

