

Holy Week Family Devotions

Palm Sunday to Easter, 8 days

These Holy Week family devotions walk through the last week of Jesus' life one day at a time, from the crowds shouting Hosanna on Palm Sunday to the empty tomb on Easter morning. Children see that Easter is more than eggs and candy: Jesus chose to die for us and rose again.

Each of the eight days has a short reading from the Gospels, a talk to read aloud, questions for every age, a hands-on activity and a prayer. Good Friday is handled gently for young children. Start on Palm Sunday, a week before Easter, and tick off each day as you go.

DAY 1

Palm Sunday: the King rides in

READ

Then they led the colt to Jesus and threw their cloaks over it, and He sat on it. Many in the crowd spread their cloaks on the road, while others spread branches they had cut from the fields. The ones who went ahead and those who followed were shouting: "Hosanna!" "Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord!" "Blessed is the coming kingdom of our father David!" "Hosanna in the highest!"

— Mark 11:7-10 (BSB)

TALK

Today is Palm Sunday, the start of Holy Week. Jesus rode into Jerusalem on a young donkey, just as the prophet Zechariah had promised. Crowds spread their cloaks and branches on the road and shouted, "Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord!" Hosanna means save, please. Many hoped for a king who would free them from Rome. Jesus came to save them from something bigger: sin and death.

ASK

- What did the crowd spread on the road?
- What did the people shout (vv. 9-10)?

- What did Jesus come to save us from?

DO

Cut palm branches from green paper, or use real leaves. Wave them as you read verses 9–10 aloud together, shouting Hosanna!

PRAY

King Jesus, blessed are You who come in the name of the Lord. Hosanna! Save us, and be the King of our hearts. Amen.

DAY 2

Monday: a house of prayer

READ

When they arrived in Jerusalem, Jesus entered the temple courts and began to drive out those who were buying and selling there. He overturned the tables of the money changers and the seats of those selling doves. And He would not allow anyone to carry merchandise through the temple courts. Then Jesus began to teach them, and He declared, “Is it not written: ‘My house will be called a house of prayer for all the nations’? But you have made it ‘a den of robbers.’”

— Mark 11:15–17 (BSB)

TALK

When Jesus came to the temple, He found people buying and selling there, turning God’s house into a busy market. Jesus overturned their tables and said, “My house will be called a house of prayer for all the nations.” Jesus was not angry for no reason. He cared that people from every nation could come and meet God there. He wants our hearts and our church to be places of prayer too.

ASK

- What did Jesus do in the temple (v. 15)?
- What did Jesus say God’s house should be (v. 17)?
- What gets in the way of prayer in our home?

DO

Make a quiet prayer corner in your home this week with a cushion, a Bible and a lamp. Take turns spending a few minutes there each day.

PRAY

Lord Jesus, make our home and our church a house of prayer. Clear out whatever crowds You out of our hearts. Amen.

DAY 3

Tuesday: everything she had

READ

As Jesus was sitting opposite the treasury, He watched the crowd putting money into it. And many rich people put in large amounts. Then one poor widow came and put in two small copper coins, which amounted to a small fraction of a denarius. Jesus called His disciples to Him and said, “Truly I tell you, this poor widow has put more than all the others into the treasury. For they all contributed out of their surplus, but she out of her poverty has put in all she had to live on.”

— Mark 12:41-44 (BSB)

TALK

During Holy Week Jesus taught in the temple courts. One day He sat and watched people putting money into the offering box. Rich people put in large amounts. Then a poor widow put in two tiny copper coins. Jesus said she had given more than all the others, because they gave out of what they had left over, but she gave all she had to live on. In a few days Jesus would give everything for us.

ASK

- How much did the widow give?
- Why did Jesus say she gave more than the rich people (v. 44)?
- What could you give to God this week?

DO

Give each child two coins. Talk about what giving to God means, and choose together where your family will give an offering this Sunday.

PRAY

Lord Jesus, You gave everything for us. Help us give to You with our whole hearts, not just what is left over. Amen.

Wednesday: a beautiful deed

READ

While Jesus was in Bethany reclining at the table in the home of Simon the Leper, a woman came with an alabaster jar of expensive perfume, made of pure nard. She broke open the jar and poured it on Jesus' head. Some of those present, however, expressed their indignation to one another: "Why this waste of perfume? It could have been sold for over three hundred denarii and the money given to the poor." And they scolded her. But Jesus said, "Leave her alone; why are you bothering her? She has done a beautiful deed to Me. The poor you will always have with you, and you can help them whenever you want. But you will not always have Me. She has done what she could to anoint My body in advance of My burial. And truly I tell you, wherever the gospel is preached in all the world, what she has done will also be told in memory of her."

— Mark 14:3-9 (BSB)

TALK

Two days before the Passover, a woman came to Jesus with a jar of very expensive perfume. She broke it open and poured it on His head. Some people grumbled that it was a waste. But Jesus said, "She has done a beautiful deed to Me." She was preparing His body for burial. She seemed to understand that Jesus was going to die, and she loved Him with everything she had.

ASK

- What did the woman pour on Jesus?
- Why did some people complain (vv. 4–5)?
- What beautiful deed could you do for Jesus?

DO

Smell a candle, a flower or some perfume together, and imagine the whole house filled with that scent. Then each person names one way to show love for Jesus this week.

PRAY

Jesus, You are worth more than anything we have. Help us love You with everything, like the woman with the perfume. Amen.

Thursday: the Last Supper

READ

When the hour had come, Jesus reclined at the table with His apostles. And He said to them, “I have eagerly desired to eat this Passover with you before My suffering. For I tell you that I will not eat it again until it is fulfilled in the kingdom of God.” After taking the cup, He gave thanks and said, “Take this and divide it among yourselves. For I tell you that I will not drink of the fruit of the vine from now on until the kingdom of God comes.” And He took the bread, gave thanks and broke it, and gave it to them, saying, “This is My body, given for you; do this in remembrance of Me.” In the same way, after supper He took the cup, saying, “This cup is the new covenant in My blood, which is poured out for you.

– Luke 22:14-20 (BSB)

TALK

On Thursday evening Jesus ate the Passover meal with His disciples. He took bread, gave thanks, broke it and said, “This is My body, given for you; do this in remembrance of Me.” Then He took the cup and said it was the new covenant in His blood, poured out for them. That same evening He washed His disciples’ feet. Christians still remember Jesus’ death every time they share the Lord’s Supper.

ASK

- What did Jesus do with the bread and the cup?
- What did Jesus say the bread was (v. 19)?
- Why does Jesus want us to remember Him?

DO

Share bread at dinner and read verse 19 before you eat. Then, like Jesus in John 13, take turns washing each other’s hands or feet with a bowl of water and a towel.

PRAY

Lord Jesus, thank You for giving Your body and pouring out Your blood for us. We remember You. Teach us to serve one another as You served. Amen.

Good Friday: Jesus dies on the cross

READ

It was now about the sixth hour, and darkness came over all the land until the ninth hour. The sun was darkened, and the veil of the temple was torn down the middle. Then Jesus called out in a loud voice, “Father, into Your hands I commit My Spirit.” And when He had said this, He breathed His last. When the centurion saw what had happened, he gave glory to God, saying, “Surely this was a righteous man.” And when all the people who had gathered for this spectacle saw what had happened, they returned home beating their breasts. But all those who knew Jesus, including the women who had followed Him from Galilee, stood at a distance watching these things.

— Luke 23:44–49 (BSB)

TALK

Today is Good Friday. Jesus was nailed to a cross. Even there He prayed for the people hurting Him: “Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing.” Darkness covered the land, and the veil of the temple was torn down the middle. Then Jesus called out, “Father, into Your hands I commit My Spirit,” and He died. We call this day good because Jesus died to take away our sins.

ASK

- What happened to the sky and the temple when Jesus was on the cross (vv. 44–45)?
- Who did Jesus pray for, even on the cross?
- Why do we call this day Good Friday?

DO

Make a simple cross from two sticks or paper strips. Write or draw something you are sorry for on a scrap of paper, then tear it up and thank Jesus for forgiving you.

PRAY

Jesus, You died on the cross for our sins. Thank You for loving us that much. Father, forgive us, and help us forgive others. Amen.

Saturday: the quiet day

READ

Now there was a Council member named Joseph, a good and righteous man, who had not consented to their decision or action. He was from the Judean town of Arimathea and was waiting for the kingdom of God. He went to Pilate to ask for the body of Jesus. Then he took it down, wrapped it in a linen cloth, and placed it in a tomb cut into the rock, where no one had yet been laid. It was Preparation Day, and the Sabbath was beginning. The women who had come with Jesus from Galilee followed, and they saw the tomb and how His body was placed. Then they returned to prepare spices and perfumes. And they rested on the Sabbath, according to the commandment.

— Luke 23:50-56 (BSB)

TALK

After Jesus died, a good man named Joseph of Arimathea asked for His body. He wrapped it in linen and laid it in a new tomb cut into the rock. The women who loved Jesus saw where He was laid, then went home to prepare spices. On Saturday they rested, because it was the Sabbath. It was a sad, quiet day. They did not know yet what Sunday would bring.

ASK

- Who took care of Jesus' body (vv. 50–53)?
- What did the women do on the Sabbath (v. 56)?
- Have you ever had to wait while you were sad? How did it feel?

DO

Spend a few quiet minutes together without screens or music. Then talk about how Jesus' friends felt on this day, and why waiting can be hard.

PRAY

Lord, on sad and quiet days, help us trust You even when we cannot see what You are doing. Sunday is coming. Amen.

Easter Sunday: He has risen!

READ

On the first day of the week, very early in the morning, the women came to the tomb, bringing the spices they had prepared. They found the stone rolled away from the tomb, but when they entered, they did not find the body of the Lord Jesus. While they were puzzling over this, suddenly two men in radiant apparel stood beside them. As the women bowed their faces to the ground in terror, the two men asked them, “Why do you look for the living among the dead? He is not here; He has risen! Remember how He told you while He was still in Galilee: ‘The Son of Man must be delivered into the hands of sinful men, and be crucified, and on the third day rise again.’” Then they remembered His words.

– Luke 24:1-8 (BSB)

TALK

Very early on Sunday morning the women went to the tomb with their spices. The stone was rolled away, and Jesus' body was not there! Two men in radiant clothes asked, “Why do you look for the living among the dead?” Then they said, “He is not here; He has risen!” The women remembered: Jesus had told them He would rise on the third day. Death could not hold Him, and all who trust Him will live with Him forever.

ASK

- What did the women find at the tomb?
- What did the two men tell them (vv. 5–6)?
- How will our family celebrate that Jesus is alive?

DO

Greet each other with the old Easter greeting: one says, He is risen! and everyone answers, He is risen indeed! Then go to church together and celebrate.

PRAY

Risen Lord Jesus, You are not among the dead; You are alive! Thank You for defeating death. Hallelujah! Amen.

Tips for family devotions

Start on Palm Sunday. Day 1 is the Sunday before Easter. In 2027 that is March 21, with Easter on March 28.

Be gentle on Good Friday. With young children, keep the focus on Jesus' love and His prayer for forgiveness rather than the details of the suffering.

Use your senses. Palm branches, perfume, bread, water and a quiet day help children feel the week, not just hear about it.

Save the best for Sunday. Read day 8 first thing on Easter morning, before the egg hunt.

More family devotions

Family Devotions for Young Kids · 10 days

Advent Family Devotions · 25 days

Family Devotions for Teens · 7 days

Family Dinner Devotions · 10 days

Holy Week Bible reading plan

Lent Bible reading plan

Easter prayer points

The prayer of salvation

All family devotions

Questions