

# Holy Week Reflection Guide

We've created this guide to help you engage with the story of Scripture in a fresh way this Holy Week. Here is what is included each day with suggestions for how to use this guide.

## Reading

The daily readings in this guide follow the chronological order of events during Holy Week, for example, the daily reading on Monday details what happened on Monday of Holy Week all those years ago. Following the story like this allows us to picture ourselves in the unfolding events of that week that led to Jesus death and resurrection.

Many days you can choose between an abbreviated reading and a full reading. We've noted these for your ease of use. The full reading is ideal for those who want to engage the full story of Holy Week and follow along chronologically. The abbreviated readings are great for families or for people who only have a couple minutes to engage the Scripture. If you are reading with your children, we encourage you to read the passages using a version geared to the child's age (like a children's Bible).

We are reading from the book of Mark because his telling of events is the most concise, but we have included references for the book of John (Thursday - Sunday only) for those who desire a more detailed account of events. On Saturday, we will be reading from the book of Matthew since Mark does not detail the events of this day.

## Reflection

Seth Kittinger has written brief reflections on the daily scripture to help you understand the context of the passage and reflection questions to engage the imagination and emotions. Read this section aloud to your kids to help give language for what's taking place in the passage, and as always, feel free to add questions of your own!

## Hands On

We've included a hands on activity as a way to engage kids in the readings each day. We have done our best to include activities that can be done at home with the supplies most people have on hand. These are intended as a starting point to give you ideas on how to engage the scriptures, please feel free to adjust as needed to your unique kids and circumstances.

# Palm Sunday

Jesus enters Jerusalem as King

## 1) Reading: Mark 11:1-11

As they approached Jerusalem and came to Bethphage and Bethany at the Mount of Olives, Jesus sent two of his disciples, saying to them, "Go to the village ahead of you, and just as you enter it, you will find a colt tied there, which no one has ever ridden. Untie it and bring it here. If anyone asks you, 'Why are you doing this?' say, 'The Lord needs it and will send it back here shortly.' "

They went and found a colt outside in the street, tied at a doorway. As they untied it, some people standing there asked, "What are you doing, untying that colt?" They answered as Jesus had told them to, and the people let them go. When they brought the colt to Jesus and threw their cloaks over it, he sat on it. Many people spread their cloaks on the road, while others spread branches they had cut in the fields.

Those who went ahead and those who followed shouted, "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 heaven!" Jesus entered Jerusalem and went into the temple courts. He looked around at everything, but since it was already late, he went out to Bethany with the Twelve.

## 2) Reflection

Could this really be it? The moment you have been waiting for? All your life you've heard the stories of how God promised to save you and your people from your enemies, and especially from your sin. He promised that He would do this by sending a Savior King—the *Messiah*—to bring His lost children back to Himself, and to restore this broken world. Could this Jesus of Nazareth really be the Promised One, God's Anointed, come to fulfill all of God's promises? Imagine how excited you would be if it seemed that all of your deepest dreams were coming true! How would you respond?

## 3) Hands on: Make your own palm branches

Trace your child's hands on green paper (or on white paper and color it green). Cut out and tape 3-4 hand "leaves" to a long stick that you find outside. Praise Jesus as you wave the 'palm branches' around and read John 12:12-13.

# Fig Monday

Jesus clears the temple courts

## 1) Reading: Mark 11:12-19

The next day as they were leaving Bethany, Jesus was hungry. Seeing in the distance a fig tree in leaf, he went to find out if it had any fruit. When he reached it, he found nothing but leaves, because it was not the season for figs. Then he said to the tree, "May no one ever eat fruit from you again." And his disciples heard him say it.

On reaching Jerusalem, Jesus entered the temple courts and began driving out those who were buying and selling there. He overturned the tables of the money changers and the benches of those selling doves, and would not allow anyone to carry merchandise through the temple courts. And as he taught them, he said, "Is it not written: 'My house will be called a house of prayer for all nations'? But you have made it 'a den of robbers.'"

The chief priests and the teachers of the law heard this and began looking for a way to kill him, for they feared him, because the whole crowd was amazed at his teaching.

When evening came, Jesus and his disciples went out of the city.

## 2) Reflection

Jesus did *what??* Yes, that's right. Jesus got angry...*really* angry. So angry that he walked right into the courts of the temple—the Lord's house—and made a huge, noisy mess. He flipped tables and benches and ran people out of the room. Why? Because God wanted His house to be a place where people who were searching for Him could come near to Him and find Him, but the people who were running the temple had put too many things in the way, making people feel far away from Him. Jesus said that *they* were the ones who had made a mess of God's house, and that *he* was the one cleaning it up, so that people could come close to God! What are some of the things that make *you* feel far away from God? What do you think Jesus wants to do about them?

## 3) Hands on: Clear a sacred space

Jesus cleaned out the temple courts because they had been filled with so many merchants selling stuff that people couldn't come in to pray! Our lives and minds can become cluttered in the same way.

Clean up a special space in your house where you can pray and be with Jesus this week. When we clean up our physical spaces, it can help our mind and heart feel more clear too. Ask Jesus to meet you this holy week in your special space.

# Tuesday

Religious leaders question Jesus in the temple

Full reading: Mark 11:20-13:37

## 1. Reading: Mark 12:28-34

One of the teachers of the law came and heard them debating. Noticing that Jesus had given them a good answer, he asked him, “Of all the commandments, which is the most important?”

“The most important one,” answered Jesus, “is this: ‘Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one. Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength.’ The second is this: ‘Love your neighbor as yourself.’ There is no commandment greater than these.”

“Well said, teacher,” the man replied. “You are right in saying that God is one and there is no other but him. To love him with all your heart, with all your understanding and with all your strength, and to love your neighbor as yourself is more important than all burnt offerings and sacrifices.”

When Jesus saw that he had answered wisely, he said to him, “You are not far from the kingdom of God.” And from then on no one dared ask him any more questions.

## 2. Reflection

What does it mean to be a good person? So much of your life has been spent trying to make sure to do the right things, and not do the wrong things...trying to be *good*. And it's really, *really* hard! There are so many rules to follow that it's easy to feel like a failure. But Jesus, the one sent to teach us the truth and lead us back to God, said that goodness isn't about following rules. True goodness—God's kind of goodness—is about being filled with God's love and loving Him back with everything we are and everything we have, and then showing that same kind of love to the people who are around us. That's way better than trying to keep an endless list of rules! What do you think might happen in your life if you spent less time focusing on trying to “be good” and “follow the rules,” and spent more time allowing Jesus to fill you with His love so that you can love him and love others in return?

## 3. Hands on: Love your neighbor

Let us show our love for God by showing love to our neighbor. Our neighbor can be someone who lives on our street, but can also be someone in our family, in our church, or in our school!

- a. Think of someone who needs to know they are loved by God.
- b. Do something today to show love and kindness to them. Some ideas are writing a card, calling to say hello, or praying for them. Get creative!

# Spy Wednesday

Jesus Anointed at Bethany

## 1. Reading: Mark 14:1-11

Now the Passover and the Festival of Unleavened Bread were only two days away, and the chief priests and the teachers of the law were scheming to arrest Jesus secretly and kill him. “But not during the festival,” they said, “or the people may riot.”

While he was in Bethany, reclining at the table in the home of Simon the Leper, a woman came with an alabaster jar of very expensive perfume, made of pure nard. She broke the jar and poured the perfume on his head. Some of those present were saying indignantly to one another, “Why this waste of perfume? It could have been sold for more than a year’s wages and the money given to the poor.” And they rebuked her harshly.

“Leave her alone,” said Jesus. “Why are you bothering her? She has done a beautiful thing to me. The poor you will always have with you, and you can help them any time you want. But you will not always have me. She did what she could. She poured perfume on my body beforehand to prepare for my burial. Truly I tell you, wherever the gospel is preached throughout the world, what she has done will also be told, in memory of her.”

Then Judas Iscariot, one of the Twelve, went to the chief priests to betray Jesus to them. They were delighted to hear this and promised to give him money. So he watched for an opportunity to hand him over.

## 2. Reflection

Have you ever received a gift that was so great, you wanted to tell everyone about it? The kind of gift that shows that the person who gave it to you really *knows* and loves you? Jesus received a gift like that once. A few days before his death, a woman named Mary gave him an extraordinary gift. She took the most precious thing she owned, a whole jar of costly perfume, and poured it on him, because, unlike everyone else around him, she had been listening closely to his words and understood what was about to happen.

Jesus loved her gift so much that he said he wanted everyone who ever hears the Gospel to hear about her gift too! Why? Because what Jesus wants most, more than anything else, is people who listen closely to his words and love him enough to give him their everything. What do you think it would look like for you to love God with your everything, not because you have to, but because you *want* to?

### **3. Hands on: Offer fragrant worship**

- a. Gather some “smell good items” in your home and put one in a jar or cup (if possible). Some items you may have on hand are vanilla extract, essential oils, perfume, or soap.
- b. Breathe deep and smell the lovely scent. Our worship and thankfulness smells fragrant like this to God and makes his heart happy.
- c. Now from your heart, worship God by telling him some things you are thankful for, and imagine Jesus breathing deep and taking delight in your worship.

# Maundy Thursday

Jesus washes his disciples feet

Full reading: Mark 14:12-72. Detailed account: John 13:1-18:27

## 1. Reading: John 13:3-5, 12-17

Jesus knew that the Father had put all things under his power, and that he had come from God and was returning to God; so he got up from the meal, took off his outer clothing, and wrapped a towel around his waist. After that, he poured water into a basin and began to wash his disciples' feet, drying them with the towel that was wrapped around him.

When he had finished washing their feet, he put on his clothes and returned to his place. "Do you understand what I have done for you?" he asked them. "You call me 'Teacher' and 'Lord,' and rightly so, for that is what I am. Now that I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also should wash one another's feet. I have set you an example that you should do as I have done for you. Very truly I tell you, no servant is greater than his master, nor is a messenger greater than the one who sent him. Now that you know these things, you will be blessed if you do them.

## 2. Reflection

Everyone knows that kings and great leaders have servants. But Jesus, the Savior King who came to show us what God is like, is different. On the last night he spent with his followers before his death, Jesus didn't tell them how they were to serve *him*...instead, he got down on his hands and knees and *served them*! He had told them many times that true greatness—God's kind of greatness—doesn't come from being powerful or famous or wealthy, but from being a servant, putting other people's needs before your own.

Now he showed them that if you *really* know who you are as a beloved child of God, you are set free from the slavery of needing to get your own way all the time, and can instead joyfully serve those around you. What are some ways you could practice serving others instead of serving yourself?

## 3. Hands on: Wash one another's feet

Gather a large bowl or basin and fill with water. Take turns washing each other's feet. Remember - this exercise isn't about making our feet clean! It's about reminding ourselves and showing one another we are here to serve, not to be served.

# Good Friday

Jesus is crucified

Full reading: Mark 15:1-47. Detailed account: John 18:28-19:41

## 1. Reading: Mark 15:25-39

It was nine in the morning when they crucified him. The written notice of the charge against him read: the king of the jews. They crucified two rebels with him, one on his right and one on his left. Those who passed by hurled insults at him, shaking their heads and saying, "So! You who are going to destroy the temple and build it in three days, come down from the cross and save yourself!" In the same way the chief priests and the teachers of the law mocked him among themselves. "He saved others," they said, "but he can't save himself! Let this Messiah, this king of Israel, come down now from the cross, that we may see and believe." Those crucified with him also heaped insults on him.

At noon, darkness came over the whole land until three in the afternoon. And at three in the afternoon Jesus cried out in a loud voice, "Eloi, Eloi, lema sabachthani?" (which means "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?"). When some of those standing near heard this, they said, "Listen, he's calling Elijah." Someone ran, filled a sponge with wine vinegar, put it on a staff, and offered it to Jesus to drink. "Now leave him alone. Let's see if Elijah comes to take him down," he said. With a loud cry, Jesus breathed his last. The curtain of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom. And when the centurion, who stood there in front of Jesus, saw how he died, he said, "Surely this man was the Son of God!"

## 2. Reflection

Jesus had come to seek and save the lost, to restore God's broken creation, and to be crowned King over all the earth. But now he was...*dying*, being crucified by the very people he came to save! *What on earth was happening?* Though it is still hard to wrap our minds around, Jesus taught us that in order to save and heal us, and bring us back to God, he first had to enter into our sin and brokenness and experience the fullness of our separation from God.

We deserved death for choosing our own ways instead of God's, but Jesus loved us enough to suffer these consequences in our place. He allowed *his* body to be broken, and *his* blood to be shed, so that we could be with him forever. Can you even imagine a love more wonderful and powerful than that? What are some things we can do to remind ourselves of this great love that Jesus has for us?

## 3. Hands On: Make homemade unleavened bread for communion\*

In Jesus' last supper with his disciples, he instructed them to break bread and drink wine together to remember him. Believers all over the world still practice communion together today. Jesus said "This is my body, given for you."

In the passage we read above in Mark, we see Jesus' body being crucified and sacrificed for us. As you "break your bread" to eat it, remember that Jesus' body was broken for you. He said we can remember him in this way. So as you eat your bread, pray and thank Jesus for dying for you.

### **Recipe For Unleavened Bread**

- 1 cup cold water
- 2 Tbs vegetable oil
- 8 Tbs honey
- 1 1/2 tsp salt
- 3 tbs softened butter
- 1 egg
- 5 cups flour (we used white)

Preheat oven to 400 degrees F. Mix all above ingredients except for the flour. Slowly add the flour. Knead until the bread is elastic. Oil your hands, then shape balls of the dough in the same way that you shape hamburger patties. Then poke holes in them with a fork. Grease a cookie sheet and place the bread on it. Bake at 400 degrees F for 10-12 minutes or until golden brown around the edge.

\*Friday night at 6pm, Believers will be doing a virtual Good Friday service. We will take communion together at the end. This could be a great time to take communion as a family!

# Holy Saturday

Jesus is Buried

## 1) Reading: Matthew 27:57-66

When it was evening, there came a rich man from Arimathea, named Joseph, who also was a disciple of Jesus. He went to Pilate and asked for the body of Jesus. Then Pilate ordered it to be given to him. And Joseph took the body and wrapped it in a clean linen shroud and laid it in his own new tomb, which he had cut in the rock. And he rolled a great stone to the entrance of the tomb and went away. Mary Magdalene and the other Mary were there, sitting opposite the tomb.

The next day, that is, after the day of Preparation, the chief priests and the Pharisees gathered before Pilate and said, "Sir, we remember how that impostor said, while he was still alive, 'After three days I will rise.' Therefore order the tomb to be made secure until the third day, lest his disciples go and steal him away and tell the people, 'He has risen from the dead,' and the last fraud will be worse than the first." Pilate said to them, "You have a guard of soldiers. Go, make it as secure as you can." So they went and made the tomb secure by sealing the stone and setting a guard.

## 2) Reflection

It was only a few days ago that it seemed that all of your dreams were coming true. But now...everything seems hopeless. The man you had placed all of your hopes in is dead and buried, for good. Or is he? He had said many times that he would have to die, and that he would rise from the dead...but is that really possible? He raised other people from the dead, but how can a dead man raise *himself* to life? When everything you've been hoping for is crushed by disappointment, how can you trust in the promises of God? It's frightening to face feelings and fears like this when you've been let down and the future seems dark and uncertain. But if Jesus really is who he says he is, and if his promises really are true...how does that change the hopelessness, sadness, fear and other feelings you are experiencing?

## 3) Hands on: Draw your feelings & give them to Jesus

Today, we may be feeling many of the same emotions. Let's invite Jesus into the feelings we are having today, as we, like the disciples all those years ago, don't know what will happen next. Take time to name your feelings with Jesus and give them to him.

- a) Name your feelings in Jesus' presence & write them down. You may like to draw pictures of your feelings (younger kids) or maybe write them on slips of paper.
- b) Pray together as a family as you gather up all your feelings and put them in a bowl/jar together, symbolizing giving them to Jesus.

# Easter Sunday

Jesus is raised from the dead

Full reading: Mark 16:1-20. Detailed account: John 20:1-21:23

## 1. Reading: Mark 16:1-8

When the Sabbath was over, Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James, and Salome bought spices so that they might go to anoint Jesus' body. Very early on the first day of the week, just after sunrise, they were on their way to the tomb and they asked each other, "Who will roll the stone away from the entrance of the tomb?"

But when they looked up, they saw that the stone, which was very large, had been rolled away. As they entered the tomb, they saw a young man dressed in a white robe sitting on the right side, and they were alarmed.

"Don't be alarmed," he said. "You are looking for Jesus the Nazarene, who was crucified. He has risen! He is not here. See the place where they laid him. But go, tell his disciples and Peter, 'He is going ahead of you into Galilee. There you will see him, just as he told you.' "

## 2. Reflection

What a week it's been! In a few short days it seems like the whole world got turned on its head. Only a week ago the Messiah rode into town, and yet so much has happened since then; he cleared out the temple, taught about love, received an extraordinary gift, served his disciples, gave away his life as a sacrifice for the sins of the whole world, and was buried in a guarded tomb, leaving us all in suspense, wondering what would happen next. And now...could it be true? *He's alive!* The one who promised to save us from sin has defeated death itself and come back from the grave to give us all his own eternal life, leaving us with only one question left: Will we believe this Good News and join him in his mission to save the world? What about you?

## 3. Hands on: Family walk or Scavenger hunt

Parents, we want to give you two ideas for engaging the Scripture "hands on" today. The family walk is an easy way to engage with no preparation. The scavenger hunt is a lot of fun, but requires more time and planning.

Find instructions for both hands on activities below.

## **Family Walk (option 1)**

- a. Watch “God’s Wonderful Surprise,” an animated short that beautifully tells the story of Easter morning.  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Nfnhv5h0k4M&feature=youtu.be>
- b. Go on a family walk outside and hear how the world is singing with joy that Jesus is alive (just like it did the morning Mary discovered Jesus was alive)! You may hear birds chirping, see trees dancing with the wind, and smell flowers blooming.
- c. As you walk, share with each other the ways you see the earth celebrate that Jesus is alive.

## **Scavenger hunt (option 2)**

When the women went to Jesus’ tomb, he wasn’t there! What a mystery and marvel! Just as the women searched for Jesus who had risen from the dead, we are sending you on a search! The clues will remind you of events we’ve read about this Easter week.

### ***Instructions for parents***

This scavenger hunt could be a fun way to give your kids a special gift on Easter (like an Easter basket or toy). You can put the clues inside plastic eggs, or simply write them out on slips of paper and number them. Kids will enjoy this activity either way! We’ve included the PDF of the clues if you’d prefer to print them off.

**Step 1:** Decide what you’d like for them to discover at the end of the scavenger hunt. You will need to write this in as the second part of Clue #10. Some Ideas for surprises are: Easter basket, candy, toy, special meal, hugs, announcing fun plans (we’re going to have a movie night, We’re going on a family walk to the park, We’re having pizza for dinner, etc).

**Step 2:** Write out the clues on slips of paper or print the pdf included below.

1. The people said Hosanna! The next clue is by a banana.
2. Jesus washed the disciple’s feet. Look underneath a kitchen seat.
3. Jesus prayed in a garden at night. Check by a lamp that gives you light.
4. Our sins were removed when Jesus died. Hurry to find your next clue outside.
5. Jesus loves you! Your next clue is in a shoe.
6. The stone was rolled away from the tomb. Find the next clue in the bathroom.

7. The angels said that Jesus arose. Check where you dry your clothes.
8. He is risen. He is no longer dead. Run real quick to look under the bed!
9. God has all the strength and power. Your next clue is in the shower.
10. Jesus love brings our hearts great joy. Find the last clue by a toy.

**Step 3:** *Place the clues around your home!*

- Place clue #1 somewhere obvious or hand it to them
- Place clue #2 by a banana
- Place clue #3 under a chair in your kitchen.
- Place clue #4 by a lamp in your house.
- Place clue #5 outside somewhere
- Place clue #6 in a shoe.
- Place clue #7 in the bathroom on top of the toilet or sink
- Place clue #8 in your dryer
- Place clue #9 under a bed
- Place clue #10 in the shower
- The last clue will lead them to whatever you'd like them to find at the end of the hunt. So modify the last line (that's underlined) to fit your plans!

Printable PDF for clues:

<https://happyhomefairy.com/wp-content/uploads/2017/04/easter-hunt.pdf>