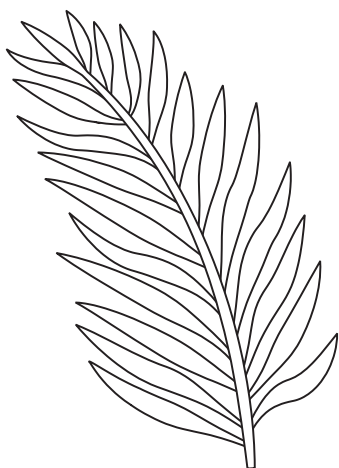




HOLY WEEK DEVOTIONS

**PALM
SUNDAY**

MONDAY

TUESDAY

WEDNESDAY

MAUNDY
THURSDAY

GOOD
FRIDAY

HOLY
SATURDAY

EASTER
SUNDAY



PALM SUNDAY

PALM SUNDAY CELEBRATIONS

And many spread their cloaks on the road, and others spread leafy branches that they had cut from the fields. And those who went before 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 11:8-10

ASK:

As a family, talk about how to prepare to throw a party. What food would you choose to serve? What would the decorations look like? Who would you invite?

READ:

After a party is all planned, the celebration is ready to begin! Isn't that the best feeling ever? This is similar to what the people of Jerusalem did for Jesus on Palm Sunday!

On the first day of Holy Week, Palm Sunday, the people of Jerusalem were preparing the celebration. Many people knew He was coming, and the Bible says they spread their coats on the road and waved palm branches. Today, this would be like waving streamers and rolling out the red carpet for an important person's arrival. Jesus most definitely is an important person — the most important person. Sometimes, though, we don't act like we know that He is the most important. We celebrate ourselves, gaining money, winning in sports, our friends or other achievements more than we celebrate Jesus, as if those things are more important than Him.

At the beginning of Holy Week, we can celebrate Jesus's arrival on Palm Sunday because we know what is coming. At the end of Holy Week, we celebrate His resurrection from the dead on Easter morning! This small celebration doesn't even compare to the huge celebration that we will get to have in heaven with Jesus because of what He did for us on the cross. He took away our sins and gave us the best gift to celebrate: eternal life!

DO:

What is a special day you like to celebrate? What is something we can do that celebrates Jesus? Think of a way you can celebrate Jesus today.

PRAY:

Dear God, help us to remember that we have the best reason to celebrate because of Jesus! Forgive us for our sins that sent Jesus to the cross. Thank You for giving us the best gift, eternal life! In Jesus' name we pray, Amen.

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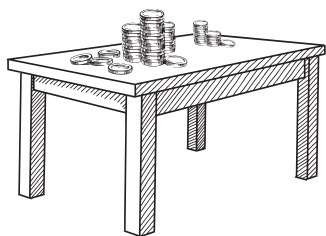
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Manufactured in the United States of America

MONDAY

HOUSE OF PRAYER



HOLY WEEK DEVOTIONS

PALM
SUNDAY

MONDAY

TUESDAY

WEDNESDAY

MAUNDY
THURSDAY

GOOD
FRIDAY

HOLY
SATURDAY

EASTER
SUNDAY



And they came to Jerusalem. And He entered the temple and began to drive out those who sold and those who bought in the temple, and He overturned the tables of the money-changers and the seats of those who sold pigeons. And He would not allow anyone to carry anything through the temple. And He was teaching them and saying to them, “Is it not written, ‘My house shall be called a house of prayer for all the nations’? But you have made it a den of robbers.”

MARK 11:15–17

ASK:

Each room in our house has a different purpose. We make food in our kitchens, take baths in the bathroom and go to sleep in our bedrooms. You most likely have some sort of rules in your house. What are some of the rules you have in your house?

READ:

On Monday, the second day of Holy Week, Jesus entered the temple courtyard and saw that the people were not using the space for its purpose. The temple courts are a place of worship, just like our church is, but that is not what the people were using it for! They were using it like a marketplace, where people could buy and sell things. Jesus was angry! They were not following the rules that God had set for His House. Jesus turned over the tables and taught them what it should be used for.

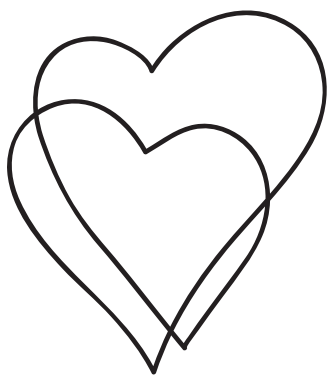
He told the people, “My house will be called a house of prayer” (MARK 11:17). Just like the rooms in our houses have a certain purpose, God’s house has a specific purpose, too. In His house, we come to pray, praise, and thank Him for all that He has done for us! Sometimes, just like the money-changers, we don’t follow His commandments. We disrespect God when we don’t respect the rules that others have made, like our teachers, pastors or parents. As we look forward to the end of Holy Week, we remember what Jesus did for us: He died on the cross to wash away our sins and rose so that we can live with Him in heaven! Most importantly, we come to His house to receive the forgiveness of our sins!

DO:

As a family, make a list of things to thank God for in prayer.

PRAY:

Write your own prayer of thankfulness, or use this one as a template and fill in the blanks. “Dear God, help us to remember that Your house is a house of prayer. Forgive us when we do not use Your house as a place to pray and worship You. Thank You for _____. In His name we pray, Amen.”



HOLY WEEK DEVOTIONS

PALM
SUNDAY

MONDAY

TUESDAY

WEDNESDAY

MAUNDY
THURSDAY

GOOD
FRIDAY

HOLY
SATURDAY

EASTER
SUNDAY



TUESDAY

PROVE HIS POWER

And one of the scribes came up and heard them disputing with one another, and seeing that He answered them well, asked Him, “Which commandment is the most important of all?” Jesus answered, “The most important is, ‘Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one. And you shall 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: ‘You shall love your neighbor as yourself.’ There is no other commandment greater than these.” And the scribe said to Him, “You are right, Teacher. You have truly said that He is one, and there is no other besides Him.”

MARK 12:28-32

ASK:

Has someone ever asked you a question that they thought you might get wrong, just so they could stump you? Maybe they thought they would catch you in a lie, or they would prove that you didn't know what you were talking about. Think about a time this has happened and share it.

READ:

On Tuesday of Holy Week, this is what happened to Jesus! The time had finally come for Jesus to show who He really was: the Son of God! Even though Jesus had already spent much of His life teaching and doing miracles, the Pharisees, who were teachers in the temple in Jesus' times, were jealous that everyone was following Jesus. If they could ask Him trick questions, maybe they could get Him to teach something wrong and no one would want to follow Him anymore! They were jealous and they hated Jesus.

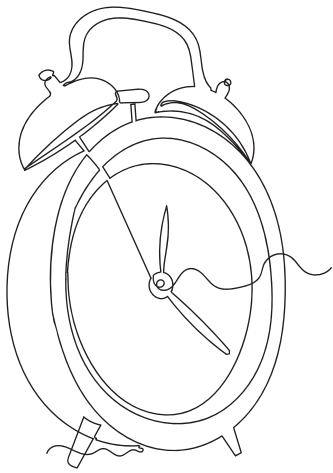
Even though they knew that all of the commandments are important, they asked Him which was the most important. Jesus could not be tricked! He taught them about the importance of love: loving God above everything else and loving our neighbor as ourselves. They doubted His power as He was teaching them. Sometimes we also doubt His power. Maybe we don't trust God's plan for our lives, we question His love for us, or we doubt that He could really forgive us. This is not true though! Just like He proved to the people in the temple, He has proven His power, love and forgiveness to us. The story doesn't end on Tuesday of Holy Week, and our story doesn't end in doubt! It continues forever in heaven, where we get to celebrate with Jesus. We know that at the end of Holy Week, He died on the cross and rose on Easter morning to forgive us, prove His power and show us His love!

DO:

What is one thing you can do this week that shows your love for God? What is one thing you can do this week that shows your love for others?

PRAY:

Dear God, help us to always remember Your power and forgive us when we doubt You. Thank You for sending Jesus to show us the best love of all. In His name we pray, Amen.



HOLY WEEK DEVOTIONS

PALM
SUNDAY

MONDAY

TUESDAY

WEDNESDAY

MAUNDY
THURSDAY

GOOD
FRIDAY

HOLY
SATURDAY

EASTER
SUNDAY



WEDNESDAY

BE ALERT!

[Jesus said,] “But concerning that day or that hour, no one knows, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father. Be on guard, keep awake. For you do not know when the time will come. It is like a man going on a journey, when he leaves home and puts his servants in charge, each with his work, and commands the doorkeeper to stay awake. Therefore stay awake—for you do not know when the master of the house will come, in the evening, or at midnight, or when the rooster crows, or in the morning—lest he come suddenly and find you asleep. And what I say to you I say to all: Stay awake.”

MARK 13:32-37

ASK:

The hardest time to fall asleep is always the night before something exciting! Tell about a time that was hard for you to sleep or wait because of excitement. Did you know what or when you were waiting for, or was it a surprise?

READ:

For all of time, God’s people knew that He would send a Savior for His people. They knew He was coming, but they did not know when. This anticipation makes it easy to doubt. The people of His time doubted whether Jesus really was the Son of God. We may doubt whether God keeps His promise of Christ’s return. The waiting is not easy, but God erases all of our doubts by always keeping His promises.

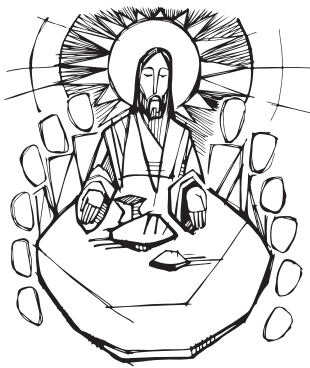
The Bible doesn’t directly talk about what Jesus was doing on Wednesday of Holy Week. Maybe He was teaching or resting before the big events that the rest of the week would bring. We do know, though, that Wednesday happened! The people were probably waiting with great anticipation. Just as Jesus talked about in Mark 13:33, “Be careful! Watch! You don’t know the exact time.” We should be patiently waiting, with ready hearts and minds, for Jesus to return again someday.

DO:

What are some things you have waited for in the past? What are ways God has kept His promises while we waited?

PRAY:

Dear God, help us to be patient while waiting, and forgive us when we doubt Your promises. Thank You for always keeping Your promises to us, especially the promise of a Savior. We look forward to when You keep Your promise of Your return so that we can be with You. In Jesus’ name we pray, Amen.



HOLY WEEK DEVOTIONS

PALM
SUNDAY

MONDAY

TUESDAY

WEDNESDAY

**MAUNDY
THURSDAY**

GOOD
FRIDAY

HOLY
SATURDAY

EASTER
SUNDAY



MAUNDY THURSDAY

A MEAL TO REMEMBER

Now as they were eating, Jesus took bread, and after blessing it broke it and gave it to the disciples, and said, “Take, eat; this is my body.” And He took a cup, and when He had given thanks He gave it to them, saying, “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. I tell you I will not drink again of this fruit of the vine until that day when I drink it new with you in My Father’s kingdom. And when they had sung a hymn, they went out to the Mount of Olives.”

MATTHEW 26:26-30

ASK:

Family meals are often a tradition, especially around the holidays! Do you have any family meal traditions? Talk about them together.

READ:

Mealtime traditions include two parts: the food you are eating, and the people you are sharing it with. Do you know what happened on Maundy Thursday? On Thursday of Holy Week, called Maundy Thursday, Jesus shared the Last Supper with His disciples! The Last Supper was more than just Jesus sharing a meal with the disciples. It was when Jesus set aside time to sit and talk with His closest friends, who He considered to be like family.

At the Last Supper, Jesus said the Words of Institution, which we hear the pastor say during worship, and started the tradition of the Lord’s Supper! It was at the Last Supper that He said, “Take, eat. This is my body,” and “Drink of it, all of you. This is my blood.” Through this special meal, the disciples received the forgiveness of sins. Now, we continue this tradition as a special meal during church. It is different from the meals we have at Thanksgiving or Christmas with our families. However, it does have those two things that make it special. The food, which is Christ’s body and blood with the bread and wine, is always the same! The people we are sharing it with — all believers — are our brothers and sisters in Christ.

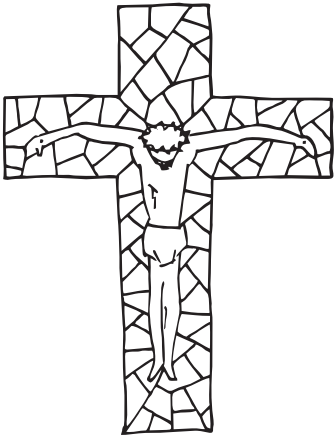
At the Last Supper, the disciples were confused and afraid of what was about to happen, but Jesus gave them hope in His Word and the promise of forgiveness. Just like the disciples, it is easy for us to be confused and afraid of the things happening in our world. It is especially easy for us to doubt that God will really provide for us, but just like Jesus encouraged His disciples, He encourages us, too! He has given us His Word and promise of forgiveness for all people. Thanks be to God that He sent Jesus to die on the cross for us and overcome all the struggles of this world for us!

DO:

Read this devotion together as a family and share a special meal together!

PRAY:

Dear God, thank You for the gift of traditions, especially ones that help us remember Jesus’ death and resurrection that has saved us from our sins. Forgive us for all that we have done wrong. In Jesus’ name, Amen.



HOLY WEEK DEVOTIONS

PALM
SUNDAY

MONDAY

TUESDAY

WEDNESDAY

MAUNDY
THURSDAY

**GOOD
FRIDAY**

HOLY
SATURDAY

EASTER
SUNDAY



GOOD FRIDAY

WE ARE NOT ALONE

And when the sixth hour had come, there was darkness over the whole land until the ninth hour. And at the ninth hour Jesus cried with a loud voice, “Eloi, Eloi, lema sabachthani?” which means, “My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?”

MARK 15:33–34

ASK:

Have you ever felt alone? Have you ever been left behind?

READ:

When I was younger, my family went out to eat at a restaurant. We drove two cars to get there, and, after we were finished eating, my siblings and parents walked out to the cars to leave while I was using the restroom. My mom thought I was riding home with my dad, and my dad thought I was riding home with my mom. I walked outside to find them, and neither car was anywhere to be seen. I felt abandoned.

Maybe you have had a similar experience. Loneliness is not a good feeling, but it is something that we all have felt — even Jesus. When we feel lonely, what can we do? It is tempting to be sad or scared. We may complain or try to fill up our time to forget about it. Really, though, we should turn to God!

On Friday of Holy Week, Good Friday, Jesus hung on the cross to die for us. When Jesus was on the cross, He was lonely. In verse 34 from today’s reading, Jesus cried out to God, His Father, and asked, “My God, My God, why have you abandoned me?” (MARK 15:34). Jesus was lonely hanging on the cross so that we do not ever have to experience that loneliness or separation from God. Jesus knew that He would die on the cross, but when He was lonely, He turned to God. He was sure that this was part of God’s plan to save us, His people.

Even when we feel lonely, we know that God is with us. Even though Jesus died on the cross, He did not stay dead. He actually defeated death for us! Because of this, we get to celebrate this victory in heaven, with Him and everyone we love!

DO:

Can you think of someone who may be experiencing loneliness at this time? How can you reach out to them this week and share God’s love with them, so they know they are not alone?

PRAY:

Dear God, help us to remember that we are never alone because of what Jesus has done for us. Forgive us for all that we have done to send Jesus to the cross. In His name we pray, Amen.



HOLY WEEK DEVOTIONS

PALM
SUNDAY

MONDAY

TUESDAY

WEDNESDAY

MAUNDY
THURSDAY

GOOD
FRIDAY

**HOLY
SATURDAY**

EASTER
SUNDAY



HOLY SATURDAY

A DAY OF REST

And when evening had come, since it was the day of Preparation, that is, the day before the Sabbath, Joseph of Arimathea, a respected member of the Council, who was also himself looking for the kingdom of God, took courage and went to Pilate and asked for the body of Jesus.

MARK 15:42-43

When the Sabbath was past, Mary Magdalene and Mary the mother of James and Salome bought spices, so that they might go and anoint Him.

MARK 16:1

And on the seventh day God finished His work that He had done, and He rested on the seventh day from all His work that He had done. So God blessed the seventh day and made it holy, because on it God rested from all His work that He had done in creation.

GENESIS 2:2-3

ASK:

Do you like taking naps? What about going to bed early?

READ:

Oftentimes, we don't want to rest when we need to. We would rather stay busy playing, spending time with friends and family, watching movies or whatever it may be that you like to do! Even though these things are not bad, rest is not a bad thing either.

Rest is good for us. It is so good that God even rested! During the week of creation, at the very beginning of the world, God created everything in six days. On the seventh day, He rested. He stopped what He was doing and took time to rest.

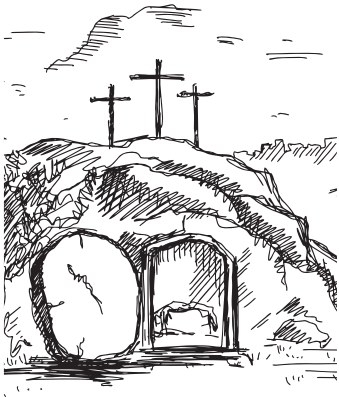
God still desires us to rest from our work and to find our rest in Him. As we await the promise of an empty tomb on Easter morning, take this time to rest in the peace and promise of the Resurrection. Thanks be to God that He always keeps His promises.

DO:

What is a way you can take time to rest as a family today? Brainstorm ideas and decide together!

PRAY:

Dear God, forgive us when we try to refuse finding rest in You and Your promises. Help us to find peace and rest as we wait patiently for the empty tomb. In Jesus' name we pray, Amen.



HOLY WEEK DEVOTIONS

PALM
SUNDAY

MONDAY

TUESDAY

WEDNESDAY

MAUNDY
THURSDAY

GOOD
FRIDAY

HOLY
SATURDAY

EASTER
SUNDAY



EASTER SUNDAY

PANIC TURNED TO PRAISE

When the Sabbath was past, Mary Magdalene and Mary the mother of James and Salome bought spices, so that they might go and anoint Him. And very early on the first day of the week, when the sun had risen, they went to the tomb. And they were saying to one another, “Who will roll away the stone for us from the entrance of the tomb?” And looking up, they saw that the stone had been rolled back—it was very large. And entering the tomb, they saw a young man sitting on the right side, dressed in a white robe, and they were alarmed. And he said to them, “Do not be alarmed. You seek Jesus of Nazareth, who was crucified. He has risen; He is not here. See the place where they laid Him. But go, tell His disciples and Peter that He is going before you to Galilee. There you will see Him, just as He told you.” And they went out and fled from the tomb, for trembling and astonishment had seized them, and they said nothing to anyone, for they were afraid.

MARK 16:1-8

ASK:

When was the last time you were surprised? Was it a good surprise, or one that scared you, like someone jumping out from behind the door?

READ:

Panic! Shock! Trembling and afraid. These are all words that Mark uses when he is talking about the disciples on Easter Sunday. It seems kind of crazy, though. Are those things you feel today, this Easter? Probably not!

On that first Easter Sunday, the disciples were surprised! They had heard Jesus vaguely talk about His death and resurrection, but they didn’t exactly know what was about to happen. Mary Magdalene, Mary and Salome went to anoint Jesus’ body by pouring perfume or oil on Him. This was a tradition at that time to mark the anointed person apart as holy. When they arrived at His tomb, they found that it was empty. They were shocked and scared. Just three days earlier, His body had been placed there and sealed shut. How could this have happened? They were already sad about His death, and now this?

This surprise was even better than they could have guessed! Not only was His body gone from the tomb, but He had risen from the dead! Now, this is no surprise for us. We get to celebrate this promise that God kept to us each and every day: Jesus is risen! Because He is risen, He has defeated death for us! We no longer have to fear; we get to live with Him in heaven forever! He is risen indeed! Alleluia!

DO:

How does it feel to know that Jesus is risen? What can we do to celebrate the empty tomb?

PRAY:

Dear God, help us to always remember the best surprise of all time: the empty tomb! Thank You for sending Jesus to die for us, so that we can celebrate His resurrection together! Amen.