



Easter Devotional Project

How to use this devotional

We're happy to provide this devotional in order to guide you, your family, or your friends through our approach to the celebration of Jesus' resurrection on Easter Sunday. We've shaped this devotional to be contextualized for children, but there is still so much for adults to benefit from as well, whether you share this with kids or not. If you are a parent or care giver we encourage you to consider these as you move through this devotional journey with kids:

1. **Your children need to hear you read Scripture to them.** Instead of making use of a version adapted for children (which can be helpful from time to time), please read the actual text of the Scriptures from an "adult" translation (such as NIV or ESV). The explanation sections of the devotions are shaped to help with bringing the text to our kids in a way they can grasp.
2. **Consider taking the time to memorize** a key phrase or verse with your kids (length of text being dependent on age-ability). This teaches our kids to get God's Word in our hearts and minds, and develops the vital spiritual discipline of memorization as well as reflection on the Word. Simple and consistent repetition is the most helpful tool for this.
3. **Set aside a consistent time and gather in a specific place** in the home to move through the devotional and the project together as a family—this way, you'll be sure to do it, the kids begin expecting it, and you'll find that a pattern can be set for your family going into the future even beyond these Easter projects.
4. **Develop a simple structure to your time:** a) call the family together, b) review what happened previously, c) move through the devotion, d) complete the craft element, e) memorize Scripture, sing a hymn, etc. f) close in a simple prayer perhaps inviting and providing encouragement for your kids to pray as well. And, **HAVE FUN!** Be as artistic as you'd like to be. We've provided the resources, you and your kids provide the creativity.
5. You need to notice how many of the **questions relate to each other**— there's often a progression, so please seek to move your kids more deeply into the questions throughout the course of your conversation
6. **Adults need to take time to read the Bible text**, explanations and questions ahead of time so you can chew on all of this yourself, **ask God to impact your own heart** with the truth of his Word, and prayerfully consider how to "translate" these little lessons for your children. **Worship and discipleship is to be modeled and taught in the home**, this flows from adults seeking to incorporate these practices into our own lives, thus you seeking to personally grow through this process will also provide the deepening faith in Christ that your children need for their own growth in the Lord.
7. Please consider how you might **explain, larger words and ideas**, especially with younger kids. Here are some words and ideas that appear in the devotionals that adults need to be prepared to explain: "declare," "humble," "rejoice," "special practice," "repeating," "symbol," "new relationship/new covenant," "clean from our sin," "participate," "God's mercy," "grow stronger in our faith," "Betrayal," "submissive," "Father's will," "obeying," "continued in his mission," "Trial," "found no fault," "sentence him to death," "defend himself," "mocked," "scoffed at," "grace," "dark in our lives," "evil," "consequences."
8. Take time at the beginning in order to **guide your kids into this special time**: consider singing the doxology or another simple hymn. And, the time at the conclusion of each devotional to **guide your kids through a resolution**: pray with them and for them, pray the Lord's Prayer together. You are teaching your kids what it means to worship God!

Palm Sunday

Matthew 21:1-11

When Jesus declares that he is King, the Bible tells us that he does it gently, humbly, seated on a young donkey. King Jesus has come as a rescuer, to bring peace to us. The peace he brings is the gift making all things right, removing the punishment for our sin by dying on the cross and being raised to life for us. He doesn't come with a war horse or sword, but to bring us peace!

The crowds rejoice to see Jesus enter Jerusalem as king, they throw their cloaks on the ground, they wave palm branches excitedly. But, many of these people, do not really yet understand who Jesus is as King. They think Jesus came as a war-bringing king, but he really came as a peace-bringing king who will lay down his own life for those he loves.

Questions:

- What is a King supposed to do?
- What is the difference between a peace-bringing King and a war-bringing King?
- Why do you think it's important to know that Jesus is a peace-bringing King and not a war-bringing King?
- How can this truth encourage us today?



Palm Sunday-

Cut out a palm branch together.

The Last Supper

Matthew 26:26-30

With the Last Supper, Jesus started a special practice for his disciples and all believers to keep repeating until he returns. The Lord's Supper is supposed to be a special thing that Christians do together when we worship God. Jesus gave us the bread and wine, symbols we can touch and taste, as reminders of his love for us. When we eat the bread, we trust that Jesus gave his body on the cross as a payment for our sin. When we drink the wine we trust that Jesus gave his blood so that we could have a new relationship with God where we are clean from our sin.

When we are ready to participate in in this special time during worship, we are remembering God's mercy to us through what Jesus did for us on the cross. And, by taking the Lord's Supper with Christ's Church, we are encouraged and grow stronger in our faith.

Questions:

- Do you like hugs from your parents?
- How does a hug from your mom or dad make you feel loved?
- What is a "symbol"? What other kinds of things in your life can you think of as examples of a "symbol"? What is a hug from your parents a symbol of?
- What does the Lord's Supper a "symbolize" to the Church?
- Why do you think it's important for the Church to have the Lord's Supper together?



The Last Supper-

Draw the bread and wine onto the cardstock and color.

Betrayal

Matthew 26:47-56

Did you notice that when the soldiers came to arrest Jesus, one of his own disciples led the way? Can you imagine how it would have felt for Jesus to have his own friend, Judas, turn against him? Yet Jesus would not fight back. He didn't even get angry at Judas.

Jesus was willing to be arrested and go to the cross because he knew it was his Father's will. His heart was submissive, open to whatever God the Father wanted. He knew he had power over the whole world--even over whole armies of angels! He could have hurt all of those soldiers with his power. But, he let go of his power in order to bring peace.

Questions:

- It was Judas who betrayed Jesus, but when the soldiers took him away all of his other friends left him and ran away. They did not remain close to Jesus when it was hard for them. Do you remember a time when you had a chance to stay close to Jesus by doing something hard like obeying God, helping someone or telling someone about Jesus, but you felt scared or nervous?
- When his friends ran away, do you think Jesus stopped loving them?
- No, Jesus never stopped loving them, in fact he continued in his mission to die on the cross in order to show his love and to forgive their sin! When we fail to remain close with Jesus, does he stop loving us? How do you know this is true?
- What do you think of Jesus' willingness to give up his power instead of fighting?
- Can you think ahead to the time a few days later when his angels did come to his rescue? What happened?



Betrayal & Trial-

Make a crown of thorns using the burlap rope.

The Trial of Jesus

Luke 23:1-25

Jesus went on trial in front of two very important men, men who could free him or sentence him to death. Both Pilate and Herod found no fault in Jesus. Jesus had not done anything wrong, and certainly nothing deserving of death. Instead of letting Jesus go even though he was innocent the crowds wanted Barabbas, who was guilty of murder, set free instead.

But, during this scary and hard trial, Jesus would not say anything to defend himself. He trusted his Heavenly Father with the outcome. He knew his Father was good, and that his Father had a plan. A plan for the rescue of his people. Jesus would carry all the sins of his people and receive God the Father's punishment for them, instead of this punishment coming upon us.

We are all like Barabbas, guilty of sin and needing forgiveness by Jesus taking *our* place before God's judgment.

Questions:

- Can you imagine how Barabbas might have felt seeing an innocent man being punished instead of him?
- What are some thoughts and feelings he might have felt after he was set free?
- Barabbas was set free by Pilate and Herod listening to the crowds—none of these people actually cared about him. But, God set *us* free from sin because he *loved us*. When we think about being set free from our sin because of God's love for us, what does this make you think and feel?
- How can we show these feelings to God?

Good Friday

Luke 23:32-49

When Jesus suffered and died on the cross, he was innocent. He suffered in our place. Just like the two criminals on the crosses next to him, we deserve punishment for our sins, we were like those criminals. Through all of this, some people still did not recognize that Jesus was the rescuer. One of the criminals mocked him. Rulers scoffed at him. Soldiers made fun of him. What a dark and awful day. Did any of that stop Jesus from being the rescuer of his people?! No way! But, it did show us how much we all need a rescuer.

One of the criminals next to him understood who Jesus really was, he recognized his own sin and he believed in Jesus and cried out asking Jesus to remember him. Jesus responded in kindness and mercy and promised that on that very day, he would be with him in paradise. What amazing mercy and grace!

Questions:

- What does it mean for people to "put their trust in" something?
- Who or what were the different people trusting in on that day? Who or what are you sometimes tempted to trust in instead of Jesus?
- What does it mean for people to go through "darkness" in life? *PARENTS, some ideas may be "confusing, scary, lonely, angry, sad, etc."* help your kids identify these real life possibilities.
- What did Jesus accomplish for his people on the cross? How can this truth encourage us when things seem dark in our lives?



Good Friday-

Draw, color and paint the cross.

The Grave

Matthew 27: 57-66

Jesus' death is a very sad thing to think about.

All of his friends and family were very sad and couldn't believe that he was gone. Jesus' friend, Joseph from a place called Arimathea, was a very brave man to ask Pilate (who was the leader of the soldiers who killed Jesus) if he could put Jesus' body in his own grave.

Jesus taught that he is fully human and fully God, and that he came to rescue his people from the consequences of our sins and from the evil in the world. The people who loved Jesus and believed what he said must have been very confused that Jesus died. They must have feared that Jesus couldn't rescue people anymore. Jesus' body was laid in a big room made of rock, like a cave with a big stone in front of the entrance. There was no way that a dead person could roll the big rock out of the way! Right?!

There were also lots of people who didn't believe that Jesus was God. They thought he was a liar! However, they remembered Jesus saying that even though he was going to die, he wasn't going to stay dead! Even though Pilate didn't believe that Jesus was God or that he was going to come back to life, he sent lots of soldiers to where Jesus' grave was to make sure nothing would happen to his body. And, the leaders of the Jews also sent their own soldiers to guard Jesus' grave. But, both the soldiers and Jesus' friends were about to get a big surprise! Do you know what the surprise was?!

Questions

- Have you known anyone who has died? How did that make you feel?
- If Jesus said he was going to rescue his people from their sins and from evil, how could he do that since he was dead? Why did Jesus have to die?
- Can soldiers or death or anything else stop Jesus from rescuing us from sin?



The Grave-

Use the linen to wrap to make the tomb.

He is Risen!

Matthew 28:1-10

Jesus is risen! He is alive! Nothing could stop Jesus from showing the love he has for his people! There has never been a happier event in all the history of the world than what we read in this story. All the ground shook. Then a strong angel in clothes so white they would hurt your eyes came down from heaven and moved that big stone in front of Jesus' grave out of the way as if it was as light as a pebble. Then he sat on top of the rock for a little rest. The soldiers that Pilate had sent to guard Jesus' grave were so afraid of this warrior in white that they shook!

However, the angel was so kind and excited to see Jesus' friends! He said to them, "I have good news—Jesus rose from the dead, just as he said! GO AND TELL ALL JESUS' FRIENDS!" This was good news! They started to run as fast as they could to share their happy news, but Jesus appeared right in front of them! Their best friend, their King, their God was back!!

Why did Jesus come back to his friends? Because Jesus had to tell his friends about a special gift: Jesus died and rose from the dead so that we, his people, could know God as our Father and beat sin and death also. In his death, Jesus took the consequences of our sin. And, in his risen life, Jesus gave his people new life through becoming God's own children as a gift that we open by faith. Jesus also came back to give his friends a special mission: to go and tell others about his great work in the cross and resurrection.

Questions

- What do you think Jesus' friends must have felt when they saw the angel?
- When Jesus Christ was nailed to the cross, he died, he was buried in a tomb. How do you think a lot of people feel about death? How do you feel about death?
- If Jesus has the power to raise himself from the dead, that means he has the power to raise his people from the dead too! And, he's promised to do so. When we think about this promise, and the proof God has given us in Jesus' own resurrection, how can this help our fear of death?
- What are ways we can show God our gratitude for his special gift of new life in Jesus?
- How do you think you can be involved in God's special mission to let others know about God's great love and power he's shown through Jesus?



He is Risen-

Open the tomb to show the resurrection.

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