



DIOCESE OF
GLOUCESTER

Holy Ground

An all age resource for Holy Week

Introduction

These resources are designed for you and your household to prepare for and enjoy Easter together. They are yours to be used as best suits your family.

The pattern of welcome, story, prayer and response is the pattern worship on Sundays, but if it suits you better change it around. You may have your own responses and prayers any part can be read by children or adults.

On Palm Sunday read the Welcome and the introduction to the Easter Story. You can repeat this each day or just the words of welcome.

Light a new candle each day so that by Sunday you have a circle of light on your tray, think about the word for each day. Is it the right word? You might like to write it out, think about what colour to use.

Look at the page colours used here, are they the right ones?



Resources

8 tealight candles and matches or
8 battery tealights
A tray or large flat plate

Palm Sunday

Stones or glass pebbles enough
for your whole family

Wednesday

Bubbles to blow
Olive oil or hand cream

Maundy Thursday

Pitta bread or crackers, salt
water, herbs
Lego

Good Friday

Hot Cross Buns and your
imagination.

Holy Saturday

If your family enjoy creative
activities Holy Saturday is a great
time to do this. See Saturday's
page for some ideas and links.

Easter Sunday

Chocolate eggs or other favourite
treat.

Gather your resources so you don't
have to hunt for them each day.
If you don't have everything, be
creative, i.e. draw candles.

Welcome

This is holy ground.

This is a place of honour, to be together where generations of children and adults have sat before us telling the Easter story.

This place, this time, is just as important as any classroom or church, any dining table or bedtime story that we will ever share.

Easter Story



The Easter Story is all about people, the really beautiful and brave things they can do as well as the really dreadful and selfish things. Most of all it is about how God bears the cost and pain of the beautiful, selfish, brave and dreadful things people do with the power of forgiveness, hope and love.

We are not time travellers, we can't go back in time two thousand years to be with Jesus through this Holy Week, but together we can remember some of his words:

'You are not my servants - you are my friends and I have chosen you to carry on my work of loving the world better.

Love one another as I have loved you.

If you do this then everyone will know that you are my friends.

They will know that I am alive in you and you are alive in me.'

John 15.15

Shout Palm Sunday

Jesus is arriving in Jerusalem. Quick! put up some bunting and fairy lights, book a marching band, roll out the red carpet, wave a flag, shout 'Hosanna!'

Shout what?

'Hosanna to the Son of David! Hosanna to Jesus our King'.

Jesus said, 'If you don't celebrate the stones on the ground will.'

'I beg your pardon, the stones?'

'Yes, happiness like this has to find a way out somewhere!'

Knowing Jesus is such a very special thing, we can sometimes forget that it should make us shout and sing for joy.

Prayer

Have a pile of stones or glass pebbles, let each member of the family think of a time when they have wanted to shout for joy because of Jesus, then place their stone in a jar or basket and thank God for Jesus.

Response

Can you create your own Palm Sunday procession?

How many lego or small world toys can you line up?

Be children of God today, find somewhere you can all hold hands & dance and sing or run about and shout for joy!

Prayer Monday

Jesus went to the temple to pray, what he saw made him really cross. Powerful people were making it very hard for others to worship God; they had turned the temple into a market place so they could make lots of money.

Jesus told the people the temple should be a house of prayer and he shocked everyone by turning over the tables and sending the moneylenders away.

Being angry is uncomfortable, it makes us loud and hot and unhappy, but there are times when feeling angry helps us to know that something is wrong and then we need to find the right words and actions to make it right.

Prayer

Help us Lord to remember, that some things are really special for you and for us.

Places, which are different from playgrounds, shops or cafes, where stillness and quiet are not boring, but precious.

Help us not to spoil them for others or ourselves.

Response

Perhaps you can think of some special places where you feel close to God. How would you feel if people had spoiled them?

At the moment we can't go to lots of our special place, how does that feel? How can we use our special places or things at home to feel close to God?

Listen Tuesday

Jesus was kind and loving, he healed many people who were ill. He forgave people who had made mistakes. Some people were confused by Jesus; his love was too different, too strong. He was not impressed by how rich or powerful or famous people were, he took notice of the people who were poor, or weak or hurting.

Jesus stood up to the bullies and made friends with people who were lost and lonely. Holy Week was a dangerous week! Jesus carried on teaching his friends about God, but everywhere powerful people were listening carefully to see if Jesus' words would give them a reason to have him arrested.

Prayer

**God who spoke the world into being,
help us to remember that words are
powerful, they can hurt people and spoil
friendships.**

**Help us to choose our words thoughtfully
and use them kindly.**

**Help us listen carefully too
so we can understand each other better.**

Response

Play Chinese whispers and see how much of a muddle your words get into.

When you clean your teeth try the toothpaste challenge, can you get the toothpaste back in the tube?

No! Nor will the upsetting words that come from our mouths go back in, so let's be careful with them.

Touch Wednesday

Mary came into the room quietly, softly, like a feather floating on the breeze. The disciples didn't see her, not until their noses twitched with the beautiful scent in the air. It grew strong, powerful even, it began to give Judas a headache which made him grumpy. 'What is she doing? Why is she touching you with her hands? With her hair! How much did that perfume cost? We could have used that money to feed the poor?'

'Oh Judas' said Jesus 'you hot head, can't you see? She is doing something really beautiful for me, she is helping me get ready to die.'

Doing something beautiful is like sowing a seed. For a long time it stays invisible. But, when the time is right, the seed begins to grow and the beauty of it grows bigger and stronger.

Prayer

**Thank you Lord that we can pour out
precious things; a smile, a kind word,
a card or picture, a hug.**

**If people don't understand what we are
doing and are grumpy, help us to
remember, we are doing a beautiful thing
for you.**

Response

Anoint each other's hands with a little bit of olive oil or some hand cream.

Say some words like 'here is a beautiful thing for you.'

Blow bubbles - remind yourselves how the house was filled with a beautiful scent. Plant a seed if you can and remember how kindness grows.

Share Maundy Thursday

Everyone was in the mood for a party,
everyone except Jesus.

He knew the world was suffering and
needed to be made better.

He knew that the only way to make the
world better was to show that God's
love was stronger than death.

He knew that he had to die.

So Jesus used this night to create
precious memories for his friends.

We are his friends; they are our precious
memories too.

Invitation

Dear Friends,
Please come for dinner on
Thursday
to celebrate our amazing God.

Venue

THE UPPER ROOM

Menu

Lamb, herbs, bread, wine, tears

Entertainment

Foot washing, Psalm singing,
sleep over in the garden, prayers

Everyone welcome

Prayer

Jesus, sometimes when you invite us to do difficult things,
we get over excited and hope for too much.

We get tired and give up too easily,
we feel scared of other people and let you down.

Wash the dirt from our feet so we can walk in your footsteps.

As you shared every bit of your self with us help us to share
ourselves with you and with others.

Response

make an invitation...

You could make an invitation to
dinner for your family – like the one
above.

Eat together as a family if you can,
and/or share some of the symbols of
the last supper.

If you have a Lego fan in the family
perhaps you can make a Lego last
supper or use other play figures.



Wait Good Friday

The people who didn't like Jesus and didn't understand him thought that if they killed him they would be safe from the Romans and could keep things their own way.

They worked out a way for Jesus to die – a horrible way used for murderers and thieves. They did this so that people would stop believing in Jesus and the wonderful things he said about God.

Jesus needed his friends to stay with him. Some of his best friends were confused and frightened and they ran away. Even though his heart was broken and his body hurt so much, Jesus stayed strong and forgiving.

Jesus knew that God was with him in this sad and painful place, even in death.

Prayer

Jesus, just being there with someone who is hurting doesn't feel like we are doing anything.

We feel small and weak and helpless when we want to feel big and strong and useful.

Help us to remember that you can do great things with our small acts of love, helping them to grow and grow.

Response

Enjoy being together today. Do something that reminds you of God's goodness and presence – eat hot cross buns, look for the beauty around you, go for a walk if you can.

Play a board game, share a favourite film or book.

Prepare Holy Saturday

I am Mary. 'I have nothing to do. There is nowhere I can go. Even if there was – I don't feel like it. Nothing could take away this empty, sadness, and yet... Nothing can stop me loving Jesus, so I will just do what I can.'

Today I will pray. Today I will prepare for tomorrow, when maybe I can take flowers and spices to his tomb. Today I will cook for the men who are trying to be, like men and not show their sadness or their fear.

And tomorrow, well tomorrow is another day.

Didn't Jesus say 'do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about itself.

Each day has enough trouble of its own'? Matt 6.34

Prayer

Jesus, when we feel empty and sad, help us remember that love doesn't just go away.

Response

Choose colourful clothes ready to wear on Easter Day.

Find bells and whistles, ready to make a noise when we all shout 'HE IS RISEN'

If you are creative perhaps today you would like to make a family Easter garden, or bakers might want to make Easter cupcakes or Simnel cake. There are lots of craft ideas on 'Pinterest' or other crafting websites.

Run

Easter Day He is risen Alleluiah!

Put all your candles from the week in a circle. Place your candle for Easter day in the center. Light them all, being careful to light the center one first.

**Be ready to make a joyful noise as someone says,
'He is Risen' –
And everyone answers 'He is Risen indeed. Alleluiah!'**



The sun came up, a bright golden egg yolk, warming the stones like bread from the oven and filling the streams with sparkles, like thousands of diamonds.

Mary didn't see any of this as she walked up the hill to the tomb. Her head was bent down, she carried a basket heavy with herbs and spices, she carried a heart heavy with sadness.

Where? What? Why?

The stone was gone! the tomb was empty! Mary dropped her basket picked up her dress and she ran!

Bang! Bang! Bang!

Was it the sound of her fist on the door or her heart beating? Mary didn't know.

"Peter, John, it's Mary, let me in. Jesus' body is gone, we don't know where they've put him!"

Peter was out of the door, running to the tomb where Jesus' body had been laid. John, younger and faster, soon overtook Peter. By the time Peter puffed up to the tomb, John was already peering in. The huge stone was rolled away. Peter rushed inside. It took a moment for his eyes to adjust to the dark, damp cave.

There on the stone shelf was the linen cloth that had been wrapped so, so gently round Jesus' body. Empty now it looked like a chrysalis after the butterfly has emerged. Peter looked at John and beckoned him inside. How curious! John looked at Peter. Peter looked at John.

Peter saw the faintest smile playing at the corners of John's mouth.

'Remember his words, "after three days"?

What if? What if he is risen? ...Based on John 20.1-9

Think back over your Holy Week Journey, remembering where we started.

The Easter story is all about people, the really beautiful and brave things they can do and the really dreadful and selfish things.

Most of all it is about how God knows that people are beautiful, selfish, brave and dreadful, and loves them anyway.

Look at all the words from the week and the page colours – what other words or colours would you like to have there?

Prayer

Simply offer to God in prayer all of the things you have shared and thought and felt together this week. There are sad and difficult things happening for all of us, but today is a day when we remember God's love is stronger than death - a love which never ends

NOW ... carefully blow out all the candles then...

Go on – have an egg hunt, eat chocolate or another favourite treat.

Let that lovely sweet yumminess remind you of how good God's love is.

