



Easter

Devotional Guide
for Families

Lifeway[™]kids

Easter is an important time for believers to celebrate what Christ has done. As you go through this week, this devotional will help you lead kids through the story of Jesus and why we celebrate Easter. With talking points, discussion questions, prayer, and activities, our hope is that kids will establish a greater understanding of who they are in Christ and the victory they have in Him. Happy Easter!

Day 1: Jesus' Triumphal Entry

Jesus and His disciples walked toward Jerusalem. As they neared, Jesus sent two of the disciples into a village. "Go to the village. You will see a donkey and a colt. Untie them and bring them to Me." Jesus fulfilled a prophecy Zechariah made: "Tell Jerusalem that their King will come riding on a donkey. He will come with gentleness and humility." The disciples obeyed Jesus and brought the donkey and the colt. They laid their robes on the animal, and Jesus sat on the animal.

A large crowd gathered. The people spread their robes on the road, and some cut palm branches and placed them on the road. The people shouted, "Hosanna! The King who comes in the name of the Lord is blessed!" When Jesus entered the city of Jerusalem, the whole city was surprised. The crowds of people kept saying, "This is Jesus!" And everything Jesus did was exactly as the prophet Zechariah had said would happen.

—Based on Matthew 21:1-11

Make the Point

As Jesus entered Jerusalem, He rode on a donkey and a colt to fulfill Zechariah's prophecy from long ago. The prophet Zechariah told of a future King, a Savior, who would humbly come on a donkey and proclaim peace. Jesus came to fulfill God's promise. He is the King the people had been waiting for. Jesus is King over everything, and He is worthy of praise.

Family Discussion Questions

- Zechariah's message was written to give hope (Zechariah 9:9). What is that hope? How does it relate to us today?
- Why is Jesus worthy of praise?
- What are ways we can show Jesus that we love Him and want to give Him praise?

Pray

Dear God, thank You for the hope of salvation and eternal life with You. We praise You for the gift and sacrifice of Your Son who brought that hope to all people. Help us continually praise You and show our gratitude through living for You.

Family Activity

Items needed: index cards and marker

Write the words "Jesus", "donkey", "Hosanna", and "King" on cards and hide them around the room. Allow each family member to search for one card, one at a time, while the rest of the family waits. Once all the cards have been found, give family members the opportunity to locate the words in the passages from Zechariah and Matthew. Remind your family that the people waited for a long time for Jesus to come. Jesus is King, and He came to rescue people from sin just as God promised.

Lead the family to say this verse together:

"Hosanna to the Son of David! Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord." (Matthew 21:9b)

Sing a song of praise together.

Day 2: Jesus Washed the Disciples' Feet

Jesus and the disciples had gathered together in a room in the city of Jerusalem. Jesus knew that soon He would have to leave the disciples. Jesus loved the disciples. After supper, Jesus stood up and got a towel. He poured water into a bowl and began to wash and dry the disciples' feet.

When Jesus came to Peter, Peter asked, "Lord, are You going to wash my feet?"

Jesus told Peter, "What I am doing, you will not understand now. Later you will understand."

When Jesus had washed all of their feet, He asked them, "Do you know what I have done for you?"

"You call Me your Teacher and Lord. If I, your Teacher and Lord, have washed your feet, you should wash each other's feet. I have given you an example that you should do what I have done for you."

—Based on John 13:1-15

Make the Point

Jesus demonstrated His humility when He washed the feet of His disciples. Even though Jesus was their Lord and worthy of respect and honor, He took on a servant's responsibilities by washing the disciples' feet. In doing this, Jesus left an example that we should willingly serve others with humility.

Family Discussion Questions

- What does it mean to serve? As a family, discuss practical ways you can serve others.
- It's easy to serve when it's convenient. How can we remember to serve even when we don't feel like it?
- How are we serving Jesus when we serve others?

Pray

God, thank You for sending Jesus and for teaching us what it looks like to love and serve others. Help our family serve one another and the people around us even when it is difficult. Please give us greater humility as we serve and follow You.

Family Activity

Items needed: large sheet of paper, markers

On a large sheet of paper, make a list of 3-5 people in your community (church leaders, school teachers, neighbors, coaches, church members, and so on). Each family member can take turns writing a name down.

Beside each name, write one way you can serve that person (volunteer at a church event, make a card for a teacher, help a neighbor with yard work, and so on). As a family, choose someone on your list and make a plan to serve that person together this week. Check your list often for ways to serve, and take time to pray for everybody on your serve list.

Day 3: The Last Supper

One day, Jesus told two of His disciples, Peter and John, to get everything ready for a special supper.

“Where do you want us to prepare the supper?” they asked.

Jesus said, “Go into the city. You will meet a man with a water pot. Tell him that I want to eat a special supper with My disciples at his house.”

Jesus’ disciples did what Jesus told them to do. When they saw the man, they followed him to his house. Peter and John got everything ready for the special meal. When it was time to eat, Jesus and the disciples went to the house. They sat at the table. As they were eating, Jesus took some bread. He thanked God for it, and then He tore the bread into pieces. Jesus gave some bread to each disciple.

Then Jesus took a cup and gave the men something to drink. Jesus said thank You to God. Jesus shared the cup with each man. Jesus told His disciples to always remember the things He did.

“Remember Me, and always think about Me,” Jesus said.

After supper, Jesus and His friends sang. Then they left the house and went to the Mount of Olives to pray.

—Based on Matthew 26:17-30; Mark 14:12-16; Luke 22:7-23

Make the Point

Jesus shared a special meal with His disciples. He wanted to prepare them for the difficult events that were about to happen. Jesus had come to obey God and die on the cross. During this Last Supper with His disciples, Jesus established the first Lord’s Supper, a special time where believers remember Jesus’ sacrifice. The bread and the cup remind us of how Jesus sacrificed Himself to rescue us from our sin.

Family Discussion Questions

- Why did Jesus share a special meal with His disciples?
- Why do believers celebrate the Lord’s Supper?
- How can we remember and be thankful for Jesus’ sacrifice this week?

Pray

God, thank You for Jesus. We love You and praise You for all of the wonderful things You have done. Help us always remember these things. Amen.

Family Activity

Items needed: snack, worship songs

Share a snack together as a family. After you eat, sing one or two of your family’s favorite worship songs. Remind family members that we are to remember and think about Jesus just as Jesus told His disciples to do during the Last Supper they shared together.

Day 4: The Prayer in the Garden

Jesus and His disciples walked to a place called Gethsemane. It was a garden near the foot of the Mount of Olives. Jesus said to the men, "Sit here while I go pray."

Then Jesus told Peter and two other disciples, James and John, to go with Him.

Jesus became quiet. He began to think about the plan God had for Him and the things that would happen soon. Jesus told His friends He was sad and wanted them to stay near Him.

While Peter, James, and John waited, Jesus walked a little farther away. He fell down on the ground and prayed. Jesus asked God to help Him. "Whatever You want, God, I will do," Jesus said.

Jesus walked back to the disciples. He found them sleeping. "Stay awake and pray," Jesus said to the men.

Jesus walked away again to pray some more. When He finished, He went back to the disciples. They were sleeping again!

So Jesus went to pray again. He asked God to help Him be ready to do God's plan.

When Jesus finished praying, He returned to His disciples. He told them that the time had come.

—Mark 14:32-42; Matthew 26:36-46

Make the Point

Jesus knew He was about to be betrayed, arrested, and crucified. He was greatly distressed, and He chose to spend His final moments praying. He understood that all of the events about to take place were part of God's plan. Jesus prayed, fully committing to the plan God had for Him.

Family Discussion Questions

- When do you pray the most?
- What does prayer teach us about God?
- How did Jesus trust God's plan?

Pray

God, thank You for sending Jesus to earth. Thank You for the example Jesus gave us—that even in times of great distress, we can talk to You and be comforted.

Family Activity

Items needed: Bibles

Guide your family to find and read Mark 14:32-42 and Matthew 26:36-46 in the Bible. Take turns reading from each account. Talk about how Jesus submitted to the will of the Father, knowing that what He was about to do would be very difficult. Discuss different times when your family has gone to God in prayer and why prayer is important.

Day 5: Peter's Denial

One day, Jesus' friend Peter was sitting in a courtyard. A servant walked up to Peter. She said, "You were with Jesus from Galilee." This surprised Peter. He was afraid for the people to know He was Jesus' friend. Peter shouted so everyone nearby could hear: "I don't know what you are talking about!"

Peter walked out to the gateway. Another woman saw him and spoke to the people. This woman said, "This man was with Jesus!"

Now Peter was even more upset. Again he shouted, "I don't know the man!" After a little while, some more people standing near Peter spoke up. They said, "You certainly are one of the people following Jesus. The things you say show that!"

Now Peter was even more afraid. He was angry at the people. "I do not know the man!"

Then Peter heard a rooster crow. Suddenly, Peter remembered what Jesus had said earlier that night. Jesus said that before the rooster crowed, Peter would say three times that he did not know Jesus.

Peter was so sad. He was Jesus' friend, but he told the people he did not know Jesus. Peter left the people and cried. It was a very sad day for Peter.

—Matthew 26:69–75

Make the Point

Jesus knew His friend Peter loved Him and that Peter really wanted to follow and obey God. But Jesus also knew Peter's faithfulness would fail. Following Jesus requires loyalty even when it's difficult or risky. When Peter realized his sin, he wept. He knew he had hurt Jesus, and Peter felt great sorrow.

Family Discussion Questions

- Jesus told Peter that he would deny Jesus before it even happened. What does this tell us about Jesus?
- Do you think Jesus still loved Peter even after Peter denied Him three times? Why or why not?
- How did Peter feel after he denied Jesus? How should we respond when we are convicted of sin? How does God respond when we confess our sin to Him?

Pray

Jesus, we want to love and obey You, but we sin. Like Peter's sin, our sin hurts our relationship with You, and it brings sorrow. Help us repent and grow to live more like You instead.

Family Activity

Items needed: index cards, pens or pencils, beanbag or rolled-up pair of socks

Choose a room in your home and play a game of hide and seek. The challenge is that people can only hide in that one room. After a few rounds, talk together about how difficult it was to hide in a room full of people.

Say: "Just like it was hard for us to hide in a crowded room, Peter was unable to hide in the crowd of people. When he was found out, he lied and denied knowing Jesus. This was sin. Sin breaks our relationship with God, but we can talk to God about our sin. Let's look in our Bibles to see how God responds to this."

Write the following verse references on individual index cards:

1 Chronicles 16:34, Psalm 86:15, Isaiah 54:10, Romans 5:8, Romans 8:38–39, Ephesians 2:4–5, Philippians 1:6, and 1 John 1:9.

Scatter the cards on the floor. Take turns tossing a beanbag or a rolled-up pair of socks onto the cards. Select the card the beanbag landed on. Once everyone has a card, locate those verses in the Bible and read them together.

Day 6: Jesus' Betrayal, Arrest, and Trial

The religious leaders did not like Jesus. They wanted to get rid of Him. One of Jesus' disciples, Judas, went to the religious leaders and made a deal.

Judas agreed to betray Jesus. The leaders had Jesus arrested and they sent Him to Pilate, the governor.

Pilate asked Jesus, "Are You the King of the Jews?"

Jesus told him, "You have said it."

The religious leaders began telling lies about Jesus, but Jesus said nothing. Pilate was amazed at Jesus. He decided to let the people decide what he should do. Pilate could let a criminal named Barabbas go free or he could release Jesus. Pilate knew that the religious leaders were jealous of Jesus and that is why they had arrested Him. The religious leaders got the people to tell Pilate that they wanted Barabbas to be free. When Pilate asked the people about Jesus, the people said they wanted to crucify Him.

Finally, Pilate agreed to the people's demands to free Barabbas and sentence Jesus to be crucified.

—Based on Matthew 26:47–50,57–68; 27:1–31

Make the Point

Nothing that happened in the events of Jesus' betrayal, arrest, or trial was out of Jesus' control. Because Jesus is the Son of God, He knew everything that was going to happen, and He willingly submitted to the Father's plan. Jesus allowed these events to take place so that He could fulfill God's promise and make a way for people to be rescued from their sins. Jesus died on the cross, and God raised Him from the dead so we can be saved.

Family Discussion Questions

- Why do you think the religious leaders did not like Jesus?
- Jesus knew everything that was going to happen to Him, and He still obeyed God's plan. What does this teach us about Jesus?
- When are times in which it is difficult to believe that God is in control? How can we trust God when our circumstances feel uncertain?

Pray

God, thank You for Jesus and His willingness to fulfill Your perfect plan for His life on earth. Thank You for being in complete control of everything. We trust You, and we love You.

Family Activity

Give each family member a moment to think about a situation where something felt out of his or her control. Engage in discussions about what is out of our control (circumstances) and what is in our control (responses). Read the following scenarios and guide family members to move to one side of the room if the statement is in our control and to the opposite side of the room if it is out of our control. Allow kids to create additional scenarios.

- Your brother spills milk on your homework (out of our control)
- You yell at your brother for spilling milk on your homework (in our control)
- You lie to your mom about cleaning your room (in our control)
- You choose to clean your room before playing video games (in our control)
- The neighbor rakes all of her leaves into your yard (out of our control)
- You complain about your neighbor to your friends (in our control)

Challenge family members to think of ways to encourage each other when things feel out of control. Maybe think of a family codename ("GIIC"—God is in control) or a hand signal (like two thumbs up and then point up to mean, "It's okay, God's in control").

Remind your family that we can respond to difficult circumstances in ways that demonstrate our faith in God and belief that He is in control of all things.

Day 7: The Crucifixion and Burial

The religious leaders did not like Jesus. They wanted to get rid of Him. A mob of people found Jesus and arrested Him. They took Him to Pilate. Pilate allowed Jesus to be beaten up. Pilate told the people, "I can't find any reason to charge Him (Jesus)." But the religious leaders yelled, "Crucify Him!" The religious leaders did not believe the truth about Jesus.

Pilate tried to release Jesus. He was afraid of what was happening, but the crowd of people would not give up. They wanted Jesus to be crucified. Finally, Pilate agreed. Pilate had a sign made for the top of Jesus' cross that said, "Jesus of Nazareth, the King of the Jews." While Jesus was dying on the cross, Jesus asked John to take care of Jesus' mother Mary. Jesus knew that every Scripture prophesied about Him would be fulfilled, so He said, "It is finished." Jesus died on the cross to pay for our sin.

Joseph of Arimathea was a follower of Jesus. Joseph went to Pilate and asked permission to bury Jesus' body. Nicodemus and Joseph took Jesus' body and wrapped it in linen cloths. They placed Jesus' body in a new tomb in the garden. The next day, the religious leaders asked Pilate to give orders for the tomb to be guarded because Jesus had said, "After three days I will rise again."

—John 19:1-42; Matthew 27:62-66

Make the Point

Jesus's crucifixion (the way Jesus died on the cross) took place to pay for the sins of people. Because of Jesus' death on the cross, people can have a relationship with God that is personal and true. God loves people so much that He sent Jesus to provide the sacrifice for sin. Rejoice today for God's good gift for everyone who believes in Him.

Family Discussion Questions

- Why is Jesus' death important?
- How can we praise God for the gift of Jesus?
- Why do you think the religious leaders wanted the tomb to be protected?

Pray

God, thank You so much for Jesus' sacrifice. Thank You that Jesus willingly chose to die on the cross to rescue people from sin. Help us be grateful and thankful each day for this amazing gift.

Family Activity

Items needed: linen cloth, flashlights (optional)

Gather your family together to play a game where one person hides the linen cloth, and the other family members search and find it. For older children, consider turning off the lights and allowing them to search in the dark.

Say: "After Jesus died on the cross, Jesus' friends wrapped His body in a linen cloth. Then, Jesus' body was buried in a tomb. After the resurrection, some people suggested that Jesus' body was stolen rather than resurrected. But tomorrow, we will learn that the linen cloths left in the tomb proved otherwise."

Lead your family to think about what it means to know that Jesus died on the cross. Talk with your family about how Jesus' sacrifice made it possible for people to be rescued from sin. Take turns asking each family member to name one thing he or she is thankful for, and close your time in prayer thanking God for His great gifts.

Day 8: Jesus' Resurrection

After Jesus died on the cross, He was buried in a tomb. Jesus' friends and disciples were very sad and did not know what to do.

Three days later, on the morning after the Sabbath (Saturday), some of Jesus' followers took spices and perfumes to His tomb. When the women arrived, the stone was rolled away and Jesus was not there. They were confused.

Suddenly two men appeared and asked the women, "Why are you looking for the living among the dead? Jesus is not here. He has been resurrected! Remember, He told you, 'The Son of Man will be betrayed, crucified, and rise on the third day.'"

The women remembered and went to the disciples and shared the good news! Peter ran to the tomb to see. He looked inside and only found the cloths Jesus' body had been wrapped in. He was amazed at what had happened! Jesus is alive!

—Matthew 27:62–28:10; Luke 24:1–12

Make the Point

Jesus died on the cross to provide forgiveness for sin, but He didn't stay dead. Three days later, Jesus rose from the grave. Jesus paid the price for our sin, and He conquered sin and death. We can celebrate that God brought Jesus back to life and that Jesus is alive today!

Family Discussion Questions

- Why did Jesus die on the cross?
- What does Jesus' resurrection (when God brought Jesus back to life) teach us about Jesus?
- Who can you share the good news of Jesus with?

Pray

God, thank You for sending Jesus to pay the price for our sin. We praise You for raising Jesus from the grave. Help us tell others this good news. Amen.

Family Activity

Items needed: ball, marker, empty cup, soup can, tape measure

Guide everyone to take a turn rolling one or more of the objects. Measure to see how far each item was rolled. Talk about which item(s) rolled the best. Remind everyone that the stone in front of Jesus' tomb had been rolled away to show that Jesus is alive. Lead everyone to roll one more object while proclaiming, "Jesus is alive!"



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