

Holy Week Devotional
For Families



HOMWOOD
COMMUNITY CHURCH

INTRODUCTION

This Holy Week devotional is intended to be a starting place for families of preschoolers through youth to spend time together talking, learning, praying and thinking about God's Word, His love for us, Jesus' willing, obedient and loving sacrifice and the miracle of the resurrection! It is NOT meant to be a list of "to-dos" or "must dos" for every family or every child. The activities are a collection of ideas from various online resources as well as from an article written by Jan Brown in 2001 and republished in Christianity Today in 2010. Each devotional corresponds to week 7 (days 35-40) of the Redeemer Lent Devotional linked in our weekly newsletter. It can also be found [here](#). Each day contains a link to the Redeemer devotional, the scripture reference, a main theme or "take away," some discussion questions to talk through as a family (as time, age and attention spans allow) and one or more suggested activities. Some kids may understand the Scripture reference when read directly, or some kids may enjoy you "retelling" the story to them for better understanding. Similarly, younger children will probably enjoy the activities more, where older kids may be ready to engage in more discussion.

Take all, or none, or some of the ideas and please make them your own! Family rhythms are all different, and of course the age of your kids will significantly impact how you and your family approach this devotional time. There are years when families complete a devotional and some kind of activity every day of Holy Week, and there are years when families struggle just to make it to church on Easter morning. Wherever you and your family land on that spectrum this year, may you be encouraged to believe with your mind and your heart that the one true God defeated death by sacrificing His own son, so that we may have life, and have it abundantly!

The Anointing

(Monday)

Scripture: Mark 14:3-9

Take Away: Jesus is Worthy of our Worship!

Activity: Light a sweet smelling candle as you read the Scripture and discuss. Let the fragrance remind you of the sweet smelling perfume the woman used to anoint Jesus. You can also prompt kids every time they see a candle, or smell a sweet fragrance, to remember that we are called to worship Jesus, who is the Light of the World (John 8:12).

Discussion: How did the people dining with Jesus respond when the woman poured the perfume over Jesus' feet? (*angry, complained of waste*). How did Jesus respond to their complaints? (*He defended her*). What did Jesus say the woman was doing? (*worshipping him*). What are some ways that we can worship Jesus? (*serving others, praying, singing, sacrificing ourselves and our wants for others, caring for a hurting friend, giving our money and time, etc*). What are some things we are tempted to worship instead of Jesus? (*toys, grades, relationships, ourselves, etc*). What can we do when we feel we are worshiping other things (idols) and not worshiping Jesus the way we should? (*pray!, repent!, tell a parent or friend and ask them to pray for us, remind ourselves we are loved and forgiven in Christ!*).

Prayer: Father, thank you for showing and teaching us how to worship you. Jesus, thank you for your costly sacrifice for us. May we always remember you are worthy of our worship. Amen.

The Cleansing

(Tuesday)

Scripture: Mark 11:15-19

Take Away: God Hears Our Prayers!

Activity: Serve pretzels for a snack as you read and discuss. If you are up for it, you can even make your own soft pretzels. [Here](#) is a recipe, or help yourself to another one on pinterest. Pretzels remind us to fold our hands in prayer, and that God's House is a house of prayer.

Discussion: This passage is one of the very few times we see Jesus get angry in the Bible. What was Jesus angry about? (the money changers had taken over the temple and disrupted worship). What did Jesus say God's House is intended to be? (a house of prayer for ALL the nations). Why is it important that Jesus reminded us that His house of prayer is for **all the nations?** (the Gospel is for everyone, not just a few people). Before Jesus' death and resurrection, people had to go to the temple to pray and to make sacrifices for their sins. Do we still have to offer sacrifices at the temple to experience God's forgiveness? Why or why not? (No. Jesus' death was the perfect sacrifice for our sins. We can now pray directly to God to ask for forgiveness because of Jesus' death on our behalf!). Besides confessing our sins, what are some other things we can pray for? (our families, friends, those who are hurting, our neighbors, our teachers, our city, the world, offering praise and thanksgiving for answered prayers, etc). Does God ALWAYS hear your prayer? (YES! Even if it is not answered the way you hoped, God always hears us and loves us). How often can we pray? (as often as we feel led! Prayer does not always have to be bowing our head in church, before a meal or at bedtime. We can pray with our thoughts throughout the day and talk to God all the time!)

You can also go over the acronym A.C.T.S. (adoration, confession, thanksgiving, supplication) to teach children how to pray and give them more ideas of things to pray for. [Here](#) is a great resource.

Prayer: Father, thank you that you always hear our prayer. Thank you for sending your son Jesus to be our perfect sacrifice, so that through him, we may receive your forgiveness. Help us to live lives of continual prayer. Amen.

The Plot

(Wednesday)

Scripture: Matthew 26:1-5, 14-25

Take Away: God is in Control!

Activity: Count out 30 coins (dimes, nickels, or quarters) as a visual reminder of the 30 pieces of silver the Pharisees paid Judas to betray Jesus.

Discussion: Are you ever tempted to lie, to talk badly about a friend behind their back, or to tell information a friend asked you not to? What if someone offered you \$1,000 to tell them your best friend's most embarrassing moment? What if someone offered you ice cream every day for a week if you disobeyed your mom or dad? (discuss various answers). What did Judas do when he was offered money to betray Jesus? (He agreed to betray Jesus and take the money). What does betrayal mean? (the dictionary says it is: to be disloyal to or to be unfaithful in guarding). Can you think of any other examples of a betrayal? What do you think Jesus felt knowing there was a plot to kill him, and that one of his friends was going to betray him? (sad, rejected, angry, lonely, etc). Have you ever felt betrayed? How does it make you feel to know that Jesus experienced those same feelings and he knows exactly how you felt?

Even when we feel sad, disappointed or like things are out of our control, we can remember that NOTHING can stop God's plan. Even though people plotted against Jesus, and even though Judas betrayed Jesus, they could not stop God's plan to rescue His people! God is in complete control and His plan for us is GOOD! And no one can stop God's good plan for you!

Prayer: God, thank you that even when things are not working out the way we want them to, or when friends are being unkind, or when we feel alone, that you are ALWAYS in control. Thank you that you love us and that you have good plans for us, even when we don't see them. Father, may you give us more faith to trust in your plans. Thank you for your son Jesus, who knows how we feel. Thank you for your Spirit that comforts us, and thank you that you are always with us. Amen.

The Washing

(Thursday)

Scripture: John 13:1-5

Take Away: Jesus is a Servant King!

Activity: Read *The Servant King* in the Jesus Storybook Bible.

Have a foot washing. Take turns washing each other's feet in the family—or invite your neighbors or friends over for a foot washing!

Discussion: How did it feel when you were washing someone else's feet? (*Yucky, gross, smelly, etc.*) How did it feel to have your feet washed? (*relaxing?, awkward? ticklish?*). Our feet are dirty, but not nearly as dirty as the feet of people in Biblical times. Do you think any other king during Jesus' time ever washed anyone's feet? Why or Why not? (*it was gross, thought the job was beneath them, it's not what "kings" do, etc.*) Who usually washed feet during this time? (*servants*). Is it surprising to you that Jesus washed feet? Why or why not? (*various answers. Jesus was a servant King who came to lead by serving others and showing love to them.*) Does Jesus' washing feet remind you of anything else Jesus was going to "make clean" through his life, death and resurrection? (*our hearts are made pure in Him.*) As we follow Jesus' example of service, what are some ways that we can serve other people? What are some ways our family can serve others? Do you have ideas for how our church can serve others? (*try to encourage kids to think about ways both big AND small they can serve. Lots of little ways of serving others adds up! Keep track of their ideas and see if you can implement some this year.*) What are things that keep us from serving other people? (*fear of rejection, selfishness, distractions, worry that we don't have enough etc.*) What can we do when we realize we are serving ourselves more than God and others? (*pray! Repent and ask for forgiveness. Remember that Jesus' death and resurrection means we are forgiven.*) What things can we tell ourselves when we do not feel like serving? (*I am God's special child and He loves me! He provides for my every need and because He loves me, I can show that love to others.*)

Prayer: God, thank you for sending your son Jesus, to be a servant king. Thank you that you love us so well and take care of us. We ask you to help us show your love by serving you and others. In Jesus name, Amen.

The Cross

(Friday)

Scripture: John 19:1-37

Take Away: God's Love for us is BIG!

Activity: Read *The Sun Stopped Shining* from the Jesus Storybook Bible.

Make an Easter garden in a potting tray or disposable casserole dish (really anything will do). Place an empty toilet paper roll (or half of it) in the tray as the tomb. Fill the tray with dirt leaving the end of the roll exposed. Use popsicle sticks or toothpicks to make three crosses (tie with twine, string etc) and stick them in the dirt. Take another toothpick and wrap it a few times in toilet paper (to symbolize Jesus' body). Place it inside the tomb. Let children find a rock to cover the tomb and then decorate the garden however they'd like: flowers, grass, greenery, moss can all go on top of the dirt. On Easter morning, roll the stone to the side of the "tomb" and remove the toothpick wrapped in toilet paper so the tomb is empty!

Serve Hot Cross Buns for breakfast. Make cinnamon rolls and ice them with a cross on top to remember the importance of the cross today.

Make a crown of thorns. Go on a walk and look for sticks/ vines/ etc. with thorns on them. Weave them into a "crown" and gently let kids wear the crown. How does it feel? Why did the soldiers make that for Jesus? What does it mean to "mock" someone?

Forgiveness Cross. Cut a cross out of poster board, cardboard, etc. Using post it notes (or folded pieces of paper), have kids write down sins they need to ask for forgiveness from. Have them stick their "sins" on the cross (use folded paper for kids who want to keep theirs private). Place cross in an area you will see during the weekend. Remove and get rid of all the paper before kiddos wake up Easter morning to remind them they are forgiven!

Discussion: How do you feel when you read the story of Jesus' death? (*Lots of possibilities. Each child will process this story very differently.*) Did Jesus commit any sins? (*no*). Did Jesus deserve to die? (*No, he was sinless*). Why did Jesus willingly obey God's plan, and die on the cross? (*Because he loves us so much. We are all sinners and the punishment for sin is death. BUT instead of us receiving the punishment, Jesus died for us. Jesus lived a perfect life and didn't deserve to die, but he offered His life as a sacrifice for our sins. In a small way, it is like your brother, sister or friend going to time out, or being punished because of something you did when they didn't do anything wrong. Jesus did this because He loves us.*) Why do you think God sent his son to die for us? (*Because of his great love for us His children*)

and because He wants His children to live with Him forever. Because of Jesus' death and resurrection, our sins are forgiven and we can live forever in heaven with God).

Jesus willingly and obediently died as a sacrifice for our sins because of His deep love for us. He endured pain, mocking, ridicule, humiliation, and betrayal all because of the Father's unending love for [child's name]. His death bought us forgiveness of sin and eternal life with our Heavenly Father.

Prayer: Thank you God for your amazing and redeeming love for me and thank you Jesus for your perfect obedience and willing sacrifice that gives me forgiveness of my sins. May I never forget how much you love me. I love you. In Jesus name, Amen.

The Grave

(Saturday)

Scripture: Matthew 27:57-66

Take Away: God is my Hope!

Activity: Make resurrection cookies or rolls. Recipes [here](#) and [here](#). These are both great ways to share the Easter story, and the cookie recipe is especially great to tell the story with Scripture references.

Discussion: What do we know about God's word? (It is TRUE!). Scripture tells us that Jesus was completely dead. How do you think Mary and the disciples felt after Jesus' death? (Sad, angry, lost, etc). Before Jesus died, he told his disciples that he would rise again. After his death, do you think they felt hopeful? Why or why not? What is hope? (one definition of Biblical hope is: the unshakable confidence in God, regardless of circumstances. Put another way, it is the confidence that God will keep his promises, regardless of other things going on). If you had been alive during this time, do you think you would have hoped Jesus was going to come back to life? Why or why not? What would have made it hard to hope in God for a resurrection? (They had seen him die such a painful death, the stone was so big and heavy and sealed the tomb, the guards outside the tomb, the number of people who wanted him dead, etc). What would have given you hope that he was going to rise? (He told them he would, they had seen him raise Lazarus from the dead. God is all powerful and had saved his people from slavery in Egypt and always kept his promises). Do you hope in God now for eternal life? Do you hope for God to make all things here new? Why or why not?

Prayer: Father, we thank you for your word that is true. We thank you that you always keep your promises. We thank you that we have HOPE in you; that you are faithful and will always do what you promise to do. Thank you that we live in a time where we know that Jesus did not stay dead; that he rose and that he lives with you now. May we live lives full of hope in your goodness. Thank you for loving us Father. In your name, Amen.