

Planning



Sunday, April 2 – Saturday, April 8 • 2023

Among Palms and Betrayals

Wandering through a parade to shouts from the crowd to the very worst kind of death, we find our praise confused with sorrow and our hope mixed up in tragedy.

This week...

Ecumenical prayer calendar

Albania, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Croatia, Former Yugoslav, Republic of Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia, Slovenia

As listed in *Pilgrim Prayer: The Ecumenical Prayer Cycle*, edited by Ester Pudjo Widiasih and Karen L. Bloomquist. (Geneva: World Council of Churches, 2018). <https://www.oikoumene.org/resources/prayer-cycle> offers valuable aids for intercessory prayers, prayer on behalf of and in solidarity with others.

Special days ([commentary](#) on p. 87)

- April 6 - Maundy Thursday
- April 6 - Passover (Judaism)
- April 7 - Good Friday

Personal reflection

As you enter this week, which is full of emotion, check in with your emotions.

- **Make a list of the emotions you have experienced in the past week.**
- **Review this list and reflect on which of these emotions you want more of and which you'd like to experience less.**
- **Consider when these emotions you desire most have been easily accessed in your past.**

The planning page is provided in text format for copying, adapting, and adding to your bulletin, online worship resources, website, social media (see Weekly Resources – TEXT FILES folder).

April 2

Lent 6
Palm, Passion Sunday

Revised Common Lectionary (Year A)

Liturgy of the Palms

Matthew 21:1–11

the focus in age-level materials
Psalm 118:1–2, 19–29

Liturgy of the Passion

Isaiah 50:4–9a

Psalm 31:9–16

Philippians 2:5–11

Matthew 26:14—27:66

or **Matthew 27:11–54**

both are focus in age-level materials

Liturgical colour purple

Notes

- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____

Online Resources

Lection Connection

Essays and discussion prompts linking current events with this week's scriptures. Use for sermon preparation, Bible studies, and small groups or share on social media at <https://www.seasonsonline.ca/10/>.

Nurturing Faith and Spirituality at Home

An easy-to-share, weekly online resource supports the spiritual lives and faith formation of individuals and families at home. It is provided in the [Nurturing Faith and Spirituality at Home](#) folder.





Liturgy of the Palms
 ***Matthew 21:1–11**
Psalm 118:1–2, 19–29
 Liturgy of the Passion
Isaiah 50:4–9a
Psalm 31:9–16
Philippians 2:5–11
 ***Matthew 26:14—27:66**
 * focus in age-level materials
Matthew 27:11–54

O God, in our times of loneliness, doubt, and turmoil, may we be reminded to entrust ourselves to your unfailing love. Grant us discernment about when to protect ourselves and when to make ourselves vulnerable. Empower us as communities of faith to witness in word and deed to your steadfast, never-failing, liberating, and transforming love.

Among Palms and Betrayals

This is a Sunday full of contradictions. Even if the Palm Sunday narrative is only heard, we can hardly celebrate it with unbridled joy. For those that know the story well, the layers of what will come after that grand entrance are felt in each palm wave. We would be wise to ask, how would we tell this whole story from Palms to Passion if we did not know how it ended? Would we tell this story at all?

The narrative illustrates the wavering faithfulness of human beings, yet we are reminded in **Psalm 118:1–2, 19–29** that God’s never-failing love can be trusted. We are not alone – we live and worship in community, which helps define and shape our relationship with God.

Matthew’s gospel demonstrates how Jesus’ life fulfills the Hebrew scriptures. In Matthew 21:5, we hear echoes of Isaiah 62:11 and Zechariah 9:9.

Matthew 21:1–11 starts in the relative quiet of a hillside and ends in the middle of the city of Jerusalem, with shouting and a melee of palms and pilgrims. The reading is full of anticipation, drama, and contrasts. The disciples and the crowd lay down their cloaks for Jesus in a powerful gesture of adoration and self-sacrifice.

This adoration falters when the disciples fall asleep when Jesus asks them to keep watch and pray (26:36). When soldiers arrest Jesus, they flee into the night (26:56). These disciples are not at the cross, as the women disciples keep vigil.

In **Matthew 26:14—27:66**, the disciples cloak themselves in self-protection and denial. The adulation of Jesus stems from the crowd’s hysteria. That same hysteria will prompt them to shout “Crucify.”

Some have judged Matthew and the other gospel writers to be anti-Semitic because of the language they use in the Passion narratives. In Matthew’s account, the problem is not the religious beliefs of the leaders involved – the problem is leaders driven by fear and rush to judgment. The difficulties arise because of the choices made by certain leaders like Pilate, who chooses to “go along to get along.” Matthew’s Jewish readers would have recognized a powerful symbolism in Pilate’s seemingly simple act of washing his hands. According to Deuteronomy 21:1–9, this could have been a way of declaring Jesus’ innocence, but

Pilate – through his cowardice – reduces it to something meaningless.

When death comes, Earth reflects the significance of what happened: the temple curtain split in two, Earth shakes, and rocks split. The foundations have been fractured. Earth protests. It is an event of global significance. It would appear the forces of destruction have had the last say.

The question of Jesus’ identity reverberates through Matthew’s account. “Tell us if you are the Messiah.” The writer uses several titles for Jesus in these chapters, including “Son of Man,” “Son of God,” and even “King.” What does it mean for us now to use these titles to claim our faith in the one who saves?

Jesus leans on the scriptures that have preceded him. **Isaiah 50:4–9a** is part of the Servant Song and alludes to the mystery of suffering alongside obedience to God. “I listen to God,” says the author of this passage, reminding us that suffering need not diminish trust in God. “The Lord God helps me,” is repeated to witness the extraordinary trust made in the midst of so much pain.

Despite all that death can strip away, God’s people declare with the psalmist in **Psalm 31:9–16** that “my times are in your hand.” Against this utter despair, the psalmist, like Isaiah, trusts God and turns to the light of God. In the face of scorn and rejection by humans, God is steadfast.

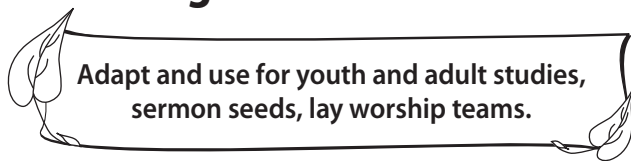
Philippians 2:5–11 declares that Jesus’ death is not a loss of hope. Jesus chooses God’s way over all else. Jesus’ life is lived in love and obedience to God. Jesus models how to be human – we are to become like him, to surrender to God utterly and to shun the exploitation of others. The author of the letter to the Philippians says Jesus accordingly has “the name above all names,” and everything in the universe is to be submitted to him. We are reminded of the cataclysmic impact the crucifixion has on the world, as described in the gospel of Matthew.

•••••

For many, this story is as present as if it were being reported in real time. This story comes alive in our telling and touches on our own betrayals. How does our world deny and reject Christ even today? How are we complicit in that?



Reflecting on the Word



Connecting with life

Look at *Thread of Hope 3* in the context of Holy Week. Imagine for a moment that one thread is pulled from this tapestry. Would the entire art unravel? Would our sacred story fall to pieces with one part missing? What holds us together this week? Where do we find God's goodness when life is so fragile?

Scripture

Psalm 31:9–16 could be the lament of Jesus.

- **To what does the psalmist call you and your church this Holy Week?**

Matthew 21:1–11, Matthew 26:14—27:66

In Matthew's view, those who follow Jesus are often on the margins of society, while those who reject him are at the centre. In this story, people on the outskirts of Jerusalem wave palm branches and praise Jesus, but once they enter the heart of the city, people express skepticism instead of praise.

- **Where do you find openness to Jesus in your community?**
 - **How might these voices of praise be brought to the centre of your worship or your outreach as a church?**
- Thinking of the response and even waywardness of the crowds and of the disciples and of the steadfast love of God that will not let us go, reflect on the following:
- **How are we walking the talk? Where are we struggling?**
 - **When do we admit to following Jesus? When do we not? Are there people we are open with and people we are not?**

Peter and Judas both experienced shame after betraying Jesus. For Judas, that shame was too much to bear. For Peter, Jesus' love was to transform his shame and redeem it. Think of a time you have felt ashamed.

Focus for Worship, Learning, and Serving

You can tell the story of Holy Week simply, letting it live and breathe through its many details.

Or you can choose to emphasize certain pieces that are somewhat unique to Matthew, including the tearing of the temple curtain and the odd little story of Pilate's wife trying to talk him out of harming Jesus.

No matter what you choose, it will be important to recognize the whole story – and especially with the younger children to emphasize that the story does *not* end today,

Materials Poster: *Thread of Hope 3* (also available in the Images to Project folder)

- **What or who has helped you in your shame?**
- **In what ways might we help alleviate the shame of others?**
- **When are we tempted to give up on ourselves or on another person?**

Judas and Peter's betrayal must have been harder for Jesus to bear than the crowd's betrayal.

- **What do you imagine about Jesus' response to betrayal?**
- **How does that response mirror/reflect your own experience of betrayal?**

Matthew's distinction between Jesus' disciples and the religious observers will be intensified as the story of Jesus' passion unfolds.

- **How might this division cause harm?**
- **How can you allow Matthew's story to be told without furthering the hurtful condemnation it communicates for those whose faith is different than your own?**

In **Philippians 2:5–11**, Paul records the words to a hymn of the early Christian community. On Palm Sunday, the ancient invocation, "Hosanna," meaning "Save us," is given to Jesus.

- **What does this name say about Jesus?**
- **To what extent do these verses reflect your own understanding of the meaning and purpose of Jesus' life and death?**

Connecting scripture and life

Each year, the journey through Holy Week is coloured by events in our lives, in our communities, and in the world. Each year, the Christian community is called to support one another in finding new meaning in Jesus' passion.

- **Who in your family, community, or nation is calling out "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?"**
- **What support can be offered?**



Among Palms and Betrayals

An Intergenerational Experience

This intergenerational worship experience can be adapted or expanded to suit your congregation. The core of the service is the “walk through scripture and story” worship stations. Choose which setting works the best in your context: inside the worship space; scattered among multiple interior areas in the building; scattered outside the building as an outdoor worship experience so that the congregation moves through stations at their own pace.

If there are mobility concerns, the congregation might be seated in one place with a small tray of objects provided for each and a copy of “[Holy Week Reflections](#)” (pp. 89)

Provide “[Jesus Comes to Jerusalem](#)” colouring booklets for younger children, and perhaps set a colouring station. Booklets are in the Overview and Planning folder.

The Holy Week Reflections might be made available on your website by QR code or in booklet form and left in the church’s garden for any who might want to contemplate the days of Holy Week again or for the first time.

Directions in large print format for display are provided in the Stations folder.

Holy Week Reflections for distribution are provided in pdf format in the Other Worship Resources folder.

Basic supplies, as listed in the stations’ materials lists, consist of pens, pencils, markers, crayons, white glue/glue sticks, scissors, hand sanitizer, wipes placed in a basket or bin (enough to reduce sharing), two containers marked “clean” and “used” to separate materials.

Prepare

NOTE: The following suggestions are mere starting points. You are invited to adapt, delete, add according to your local needs and context. If a community is gathered in person, they may speak the **bolded** lines. If worshippers are not physically present, consider having a different individual say the bolded responses. Instructions are *italicized*.

- ❑ Recruit volunteers needed for worship: hosts for each of the seven worship stations, readers for the oral telling of Matthew 21:1–11 and seven readers for the choral reading of Matthew 26:14–27:66, a storyteller to present “[Coming to Jerusalem](#)” (p. 88) and “[Jesus Comes to Jerusalem](#)” in *Exploring Our Faith* at the end of this week’s materials.
- ❑ For the oral telling, create a path through the wilderness using rocks, sand, branches, and other supplies gathered from the [Resurrection Scavenger Hunt](#) (p. 92).
- ❑ Bring items for setting the worship space: palm branches or branches of local foliage, elements for Communion as needed.
- ❑ Provide small trays with a small bowl of oil, paper, markers, pencils, fabric strip or wide ribbon, stones, and a copy of “[Holy Week Reflections](#)” (pp. 89–90) for all who will remain seated for the “walk through scripture and story.”
- ❑ Prepare copies of the colouring booklet “[Jesus Comes to Jerusalem](#)” for younger children. Booklets for printing are in the Overview and Planning folder.
- ❑ Bring songs such as “Pave the Way with Branches/Justice” (*Seasons Songbook*, vol. 2, #2 on *Seasons Music CD*, vol. 2), “You Are Holy/Du Ar Helig” (*Seasons Songbook*, vol. 1, #50 on *Seasons Music CD*, vol. 1), “Hold Us in Your Grace” (*Seasons Songbook*, vol. 9, #11 on *Seasons Music CD*,

vol. 9). Printed music and recordings are also available for purchase and download at https://www.seasonsonline.ca/order_products/.

- ❑ Set [stations](#) as described under “A Walk through Holy Week.”



Music Suggestions

Hold Us in Your Grace

Keri K. Wehlander; *Seasons Songbook*, vol. 9

Sing It! Hosanna!

Michael Mangan; *Seasons Songbook*, vol. 6

Pave the Way with Branches/Justice

Bret Hesla; *Seasons Songbook*, vol. 2

You Are Holy/Du Ar Helig

Per Harling; *Seasons Songbook*, vol. 1

Holy City Jerusalem

Richard Crooks

In Our Darkest Night

Taizé

Stay with Me

Taizé

This Is the Day

Traditional Fijian folk tune

We Shall Go Out with Hope of Resurrection

Jane Boyce-Tillman



A chart that shows the licence holder(s) for each song in each of the 9 *Seasons of the Spirit* Music Volumes can be found at www.seasonsonline.ca. Click on Library; Seasons Music Information. Please contact a licence holder for permission to duplicate.



Gathering

This worship experience begins with an invitation, prayer, and engagement with the first reading from the Liturgy of the Palms. Participants are then invited to move through the stations before gathering together again.

As people arrive, give each person a branch of foliage, whether a palm branch or something more familiar to your local wilderness.

Invitation to worship

It is only one week, but this week is a wilderness of emotion and heartbreak. Everything that could happen happens: celebration, betrayal, feasts, and love made real, hearts are broken, and faith questioned. It all happens here in this one week.

It is a wildness that we know.
We have wandered through it,
and we come again today to find God never strays but is hidden behind every rock.
God's reflection is in every puddle and every stream.
God is in all these days,
just as God will be a part of every day of our lives.

Opening prayer

Great God, sometimes we are frozen in time.
We feel like we can't move forward.

We feel stuck and wonder if this is all that will ever be. In these wild moments, we most need to find your grace.

Matthew 21:1–11

Choose from the following.

Bible story Arrange for a storyteller to present "[Coming into Jerusalem](#)" on p. 88.

Oral telling Create a path through the wilderness using rocks, sand, branches, and other supplies gathered from the [Resurrection Scavenger Hunt](#) on page 92. Invite someone to present this scripture from memory as if it is the best story they have ever heard. The storyteller will encourage the people to wave branches and shout, "Hosanna" when they hear a particular phrase.

Song and dance

Sing a familiar song or chorus while you do this, such as "Pave the Way with Branches/Justice" (Seasons Songbook, vol. 2) or "This Is the Day," which quotes Psalm 118:24. While singing or listening to music, you might encourage people to wave their palms and dance. Encourage people to stay with the music and dance as long as they want, and then transition to the stations. Provide copies of "[Holy Week Reflections](#)" and a tray of objects for any who will remain seated.

A Walk through Holy Week

Set stations as follows.

Note: Copies of the [directions](#) in large print format for display are provided in the Stations Folder.

Option for younger children The following stations are designed to be intergenerational, however, you might provide copies of the "[Jesus Comes to Jerusalem](#)" colouring booklet (in the Overview and Planning folder). The colouring booklet includes illustrations of the story of the same name that is in Exploring Our Faith, at the end of this week's materials.

Day 1 Palm Sunday Matthew 21:1–11

The parade

The practice of welcoming the humble Christ

Materials

- Basic supplies
- Poster board
- Cards with the following words (one word for each card):

- quiet, small, peaceful, tiny, surrender, childlike, kind, beautiful (you might make several sets)
- Bibles or copies of Matthew 21:1–11
- Display a copy of the [directions](#) (see p. 89)

Day 2 Holy Monday Matthew 21:12–17

Flipping the tables

The practice of outrage

Materials

- Basic supplies
- Paper
- Display a copy of the [directions](#) (see p. 89)



Day 3 Holy Tuesday
The anointing at Bethany

Matthew 26:6–13

The practice of anointing

Materials

- Bowls of oil
- Hand sanitizer and wipes
- Display a copy of the [directions](#) (see p. 89)

Day 4 Spy Wednesday
Jesus is betrayed

Matthew 26:47–56

The practice of considering our choices

Materials

- Bibles or copies of Matthew 26:47–56
- Strips of paper with a prompt on each slip (make several sets)
- Display a copy of the [directions](#) (see p. 90)

Prompts

- **Would you rather know when someone wants to hurt you, or would you rather wait until someone hurts you to find out they wanted to hurt you?**
- **Would you rather feel pain and happiness, or would you rather never feel pain or happiness?**
- **Would you rather have lots of friends who might desert you, or would you rather not have any friends?**
- **Would you rather know what scripture tells us about who God is, or would you rather stay away from scripture and try to discover who God is on your own?**
- **Would you rather your friend betrays you, or would you rather a stranger betrays you?**

Day 5 Maundy Thursday
Set the table

Matthew 26:17–19

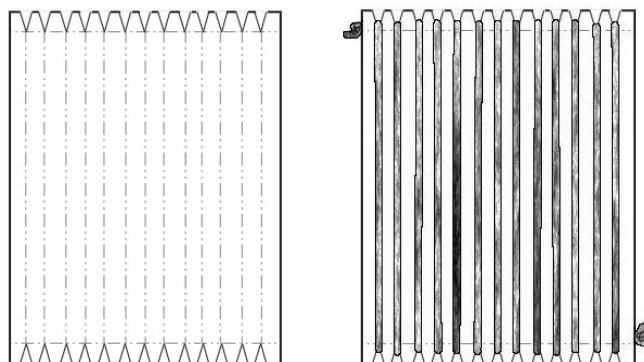
The practice of hospitality

Materials

- Basic supplies
- Stiff cardboard
- Yarn
- Fabric scraps cut into 25 cm/10 in long and 3–6 cm/ 1–2 in wide strips
- Ribbon
- Display a copy of the [directions](#) (see p. 90)

Prepare looms in advance Use a rectangular piece of cardboard, roughly the size of a large printer size piece of paper, to craft a loom. Snip evenly-spaced slits along the top and bottom of your loom to create “teeth.” You may want to make these cuttings with a ruler and pencil, so these teeth align. Before setting these looms on the table, take yarn, tie a knot, and tuck it behind the first tooth. Loop this string down to the tooth on the opposite side, then back around

the second tooth in the row you started on and continue until the entire loom is covered in vertical strings. Tie this off onto the last tooth. Make five or six (or more) of these looms.



Day 6 Good Friday
Compassionate Christ

Matthew 26:20–25

The practice of confession and assurance

Materials

- Paper
- Markers or coloured pencils
- Hand sanitizer or wipes
- Display a copy of the [directions](#) (see p. 90)



Worship Outline • April 2, 2023

Day 7 Holy Saturday

Matthew 27:57–66

A stone seals the tomb

The practice of telling the truth

Materials

- Rocks of all shapes and sizes

Gather together again.

Passion narrative

Matthew 26:14—27:66

While the Palm-Passion story has been explored at the stations, many churches will want to read it as the final piece of today's worship experience, allowing people to leave in silence. One ancient tradition suggested that, because it was inappropriate to conclude our worship with the story of Jesus' death, there is no formal benediction to conclude today's worship. Rather, worship is "suspended" through the week and continues next week with the triumphant conclusion to the story.

An affirmation of faith is provided as an option to conclude the worship.

Bible story Have a storyteller present "Jesus Comes to Jerusalem" from the Exploring Our Faith materials on page 91.

Choral Reading Read the scripture passage from The Voice (VOICE). This passage can be found at <https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Matthew+26%3A16+-+27%3A66&version=VOICE>. Invite one voice or several voices to share in reading the following sections:

Matthew 26:14–30

Matthew 26:31–56

Matthew 26:57–68

- Hand sanitizer or wipes
- Display a copy of the [directions](#) (see p. 90)

Matthew 26:69—27:10

Matthew 27:11–27:26

Matthew 27:27–27:44

Matthew 27:45–27:66

After each section, invite the congregation to respond by singing a song such as "You Are Holy/Du Ar Helig" (*Seasons Songbook, vol. 1, #50 on Seasons Music CD, vol. 1*) or "Hold Us in Your Grace" (*Seasons Songbook, vol. 9, #11 on Seasons Music CD, vol. 9*). Printed music and recordings are also available for purchase and download at https://www.seasonsonline.ca/order_products/.

Blessing

Affirmation of faith

We believe that the Christ still travels the roads of human life and is never defeated by our humanness. We believe that the church can carry Love wherever we go and that our dreams of faithfulness can be given new possibilities in each day. We believe that, here in this place, we will find inspiration and encouragement, that will lead us on in our journey with the Christ.

Special Day Commentary

April 6 – Passover begins (*Judaism*)

It is the Jewish community's annual retelling of the Israelites' redemption from slavery in Egypt, as originally told in the book of Exodus.

The focus on the celebration is the retelling of the story in interactive and multi-sensory fashion. An elaborate meal, called a *Seder*, is performed by Jews worldwide. At this meal, the story of redemption is retold with the help of special foods: *haroset* to resemble mortar used to make bricks in Egypt; salt water to remind them of tears; bitter herbs to remember the bitterness of slavery; and unleavened bread (*matzo*) to commemorate the bread that had no time to rise before the Israelites fled Egypt. Although the obligation to retell the story of redemption has its roots in the Bible, the actual Seder meal has evolved and developed over the centuries, adopting customs and practices from the myriad of communities in which Jews have resided.

For many Jews, the Passover observance continues beyond the Seder, held on the first or second night of this

seven- or eight-day festival (depending on which denomination one asks). Jews refrain from eating foods with leavening agents (*chametz*) in them. However, understanding what is or is not a leavening agent is open to interpretation. Matzo is eaten in place of bread, and the flour-like substance (*matzo meal*) is used in many recipes. Observance of this part of the festival can be very particular, even including the changing of dishes for the duration of the holiday.

In contemporary surveys of the Jewish community, the ritual observed the most by the most religious Jews to those who would describe themselves as secular Jews is the Passover Seder. This is probably due to a number of reasons: it occurs in the home, lending itself to variant interpretations and creativity; it is a bridge to the past and between generations, both living and dead; and while the Seder is a retelling of the story of redemption, the story is told not merely to celebrate freedom but to remind Jews of their obligation to fight for freedom and justice in our world. This message is relevant to every Jew and human being, regardless of observance, theology, or affiliation. *Rabbi Adam Morris*



Coming into Jerusalem

Based on Matthew 21:1–11

It was a special day in Jerusalem. Once a year, the Roman governor would come to town with lots of pomp and ceremony. There would be a big parade, and people would shout and wave.

It's not that they necessarily *wanted* to do that, but they knew they were *supposed* to do that. The Roman governor wanted to know that people were happy to see him, even though most of the people – if you asked them – would tell you they were *not* happy to see him.

The Romans had conquered this land and ruled it in a mean way. They told people to look out only for themselves and not care a lot for others. They didn't care about the poorest people, disabled or unemployed, women who had no husbands, and children who had no parents. No, the Romans pretty much only cared about themselves. People didn't like the governor, but they knew they should wave and shout and let the governor think that they liked him. It was always a good idea to stay on his good side.

But this particular day, hardly anyone was there to welcome the governor when he rode into town. He had soldiers with him, chariots, and many important-looking people, but only a few people were there to wave and shout.

Most people were on the other side of Jerusalem, where someone else was riding into town on the very same day.

Unlike the Roman emperor, this person didn't have horses and chariots – he was riding on a donkey! And he didn't have soldiers and important-looking people with him; he had children and poor people!

This was Jesus, and the people were so excited to see him that they flocked to the streets and shouted happy things. They took branches off the trees to wave because they wanted to wave something and celebrate that Jesus was there. Unlike the Romans, Jesus told them how they should love one another and care for one another. Jesus reminded the people that God loved them; because of that, they should love each other. If someone was in need, you shouldn't turn away from them, Jesus taught. You should offer them whatever you can and let them know that God loves them.

How excited the people were that Jesus was coming into town! They weren't quite sure what would happen next, but they were excited because what Jesus taught made a lot more sense than what the Romans said.

Back on the other side of town, though, the Roman governor was not happy. "I wonder who's stealing my thunder?" he muttered to some people with him. "We must find out. And we must *do* something about it."

A recording of this [story](#) is available in MP3 format in the Audio Stories folder.



Holy Week Reflections

A Walk through Holy Week

If setting stations, choose which setting works the best in your context: inside the worship space; scattered among multiple interior areas in the building; scattered outside the building as an outdoor worship experience so that the congregation moves through stations at their own pace.

If there are mobility concerns, provide a small tray of objects (small bowl of oil, paper, markers, pencils, fabric strip or

wide ribbon, stone) and a copy of “[Holy Week Reflections](#)” for any who remain seated.

The Holy Week Reflections might be made available on your website by QR code or in booklet form and left in the church’s garden for any who might want to contemplate the days of Holy Week again or for the first time.

Note: Copies of the [directions/reflections](#) in large print format for display are provided in the Stations folder. Copies of the “[Holy Week Reflections](#)” are provide in pdf format in the Other Worship Resources folder.

Day 1 Palm Sunday Matthew 21:1–11 The parade

Jesus enters the city of Jerusalem on a colt while people throw cloaks and palms down on the ground to create a welcome path.

1. Reflect on how you are entering Holy Week this year. What words of praise and lament do you long to release from the depths of your heart this week? Doodle, draw, or write your response.
2. Choose one of these words, either random or intentionally: quiet, small, peaceful, tiny, surrender, childlike, kind, beautiful.
3. Think of the place and people you associate with this word as you reflect on the word.
4. Think of Jesus, approaching an important event riding on a donkey, accepting the welcome of those willing to risk accusation to offer adoration and lament the way things are.
5. This is an exercise in defining and identifying humility around us.
6. Write your synonyms for humility.

Day 2 Holy Monday Matthew 21:12–17 Flipping the tables

In the temple, Jesus is shocked by the greed and injustice of the money lenders’ practice. He flips over their tables, and coins roll across the floor, making a loud noise.

1. What causes you rage? When or how do you most often lose your temper? On a clean sheet of paper, write or draw what most outrages you.
2. Pause and take in what you’ve put down.
3. Scribble over it and rip it into tiny pieces as you release this anger.

Day 3 Holy Tuesday Matthew 26:6–13 The anointing at Bethany

An unnamed woman comes to Jesus and covers his head with expensive oil. The others watching protest the waste, but there is no waste in showing love.

1. Dip your finger in the bowl of oil.
2. Trace the lifeline on your other hand with the oil, remembering that God has loved you from the beginning of your life and will love you until your lifeline ends.
3. Repeat this gesture, dipping your finger again as needed until it no longer feels like a waste. God loves you that much.



Day 4 Spy Wednesday Matthew 26:47–56 Jesus is betrayed

After Judas had gone to the chief priests and received a payment of 30 pieces of silver for his betrayal, Jesus received a final kiss of betrayal in the garden. He could have made other choices, just as we strive to make better choices for the love of God.

1. “Would You Rather” is a game that asks us to state our preference.
2. Choose a question from the bowl – at a station, or from below, and ponder what you would rather do or have.

- **Would you rather know when someone wants to hurt you, or would you rather wait until someone hurts you to find out they wanted to hurt you?**
- **Would you rather feel pain and happiness, or would you rather never feel pain or happiness?**
- **Would you rather have lots of friends who might desert you, or would you rather not have any friends?**
- **Would you rather know what scripture tells us about who God is, or would you rather stay away from scripture and try to discover who God is on your own?**
- **Would you rather your friend betrays you, or would you rather a stranger betrays you?**

Day 5 Maundy Thursday Matthew 26:17–19 Set the table

Jesus sent his disciples ahead of him to prepare for the Passover meal. It was a special meal. The whole city noticed Jesus was among them even if they weren’t invited to sit and dine with the group of Jesus’ friends on this special day. Help weave table placemats.

1. Appreciate your contribution to the work, the community that nourishes you, and the work you share in creating something beautiful. Write some responses on the fabric strip or ribbon.
2. You might add one or more ribbons to the loom alternating over and under the yarn attached to the cardboard. As you pull the fabric through, ponder how you are pulled together into community. Gently pull the thread through at the end of the row. Leave the excess hanging on each side.
3. Weave back in the opposite direction alternating over for under and under for over.
4. Maundy Thursday gets its name from the foot washing that Jesus shares with his friends after the meal. On this day, we remember the mandate to love one another. Consider one thing that you can do with great love today.

Day 6 Good Friday Matthew 26:20–25 Compassionate Christ

Jesus’ love for his disciples was true and real even when he knew they would one day pretend they weren’t his friends. They would betray him. Sometimes we want the world to know we love Jesus. Other times, we act like we don’t.

1. Write a letter to Jesus about all the things that bring you sadness.
2. Write, draw, or doodle as you reflect on a conversation, experience, or person that reminds you that Jesus knows you and loves you.

Day 7 Holy Saturday Matthew 27:57–66 A stone seals the tomb

Joseph, a rich follower of Jesus, asks Pilate if he can take Jesus’ body. He wraps it in a clean linen cloth and puts it in a new tomb he has carved out of the rock. He rolls a huge stone in front of the tomb. The chief priests have the tomb sealed. It is here at the tomb that we wait until Easter morning.

1. Hold a stone. As you roll it in your hand, wonder: What makes you feel like you might topple and fall? How is God your rock and your refuge?



Story and activities for the very young to use in church or at home.

Jesus Comes to Jerusalem

A story based on Matthew 26:14—27:66

A parade One day, Jesus and his friends were walking to the city of Jerusalem for a special holiday called the Passover. When they were almost there, Jesus said, “Go into the city and find a donkey for me to ride.” Soon his friends found a donkey and its colt, and they brought it to Jesus. When the people saw Jesus coming, they ran to greet him. They put their coats down in front of him. They waved palm branches over their heads. They shouted, “Hosanna! Hosanna!”

A meal with Jesus As Jesus and his friends walked along, Jesus said, “Let’s go to this house where a special Passover meal will be ready for us.” Soon everyone was sitting down to a delicious meal. Then Jesus took some bread, prayed, broke it into pieces, and gave it to his friends. Jesus said, “When you eat this bread, remember me.”

Then Jesus took a cup, prayed, and gave a drink to his friends. “Drink this and remember me,” he said.

Jesus in the garden After eating together, Jesus and his friends went to a beautiful garden to pray. It was dark, and everyone was tired. Jesus was tired, too. Jesus was also sad because he knew that some people wanted to hurt him. Jesus said to his friends, “Wait here and stay awake while I pray.” Jesus walked away from them, found a quiet spot and prayed to God. Jesus wanted God. Jesus prayed for a long time. Finally, when Jesus returned to his friends, they were asleep! “Wake up,” Jesus said.

Friends run away Jesus was talking to his sleepy friends in the garden when suddenly soldiers came and took Jesus away. Jesus’ friends were frightened. They ran away. Jesus had already warned his friend Peter that before the rooster crowed in the morning, Peter would have said three times to three different people that he did not know Jesus. Peter was sure he would not do this, but he did.

Jesus dies Some leaders were angry with Jesus and didn’t want Jesus around anymore. Jesus was put on a cross and died. Some of Jesus’ friends wrapped Jesus’ body in a soft cloth and laid him in a cave in a garden. Then they pushed a big rock across the opening of the cave.

Some of Jesus’ friends stayed nearby, watching and waiting. Finally, Jesus’ friends went home because there was nothing else to do.

What will happen next? A few days later, two friends of Jesus, both named Mary, went back to the cave. They were so sad that their friend Jesus had died, and they wanted to be close by.

Suddenly something so amazing happened that they didn’t know what to think. I wonder what it was? This is not the end of the story; we’ll wait until next Sunday to find out what amazing, wonderful surprise God gave to the people! What can we do while we wait?

A [colouring booklet](#) with illustrations of each story told here is available in the Overview and Planning folder.



Holy Week Waiting Games












We could do many things while we wait for the joy of Easter morning. You might have a few ideas of your own to add to these three games to wait for joy to come again.

Watch bread rise

Use the recipe for "Living Bread at Home" in the *Seasons Virtual Resource Booklet* available on www.seasonsonline.ca. Watch with wonder as these ingredients come together to become something delicious.

Resurrection scavenger hunt

Look for signs of new life and rebirth in the world around you in this scavenger hunt. Keep your eyes open for all of the things on this list. Maybe you'll even find more things if you open your eyes to the wonder of God's world.

 <p>Bird egg</p>	 <p>Sunshine</p>	 <p>Berries</p>
 <p>Bee</p>	 <p>Rock</p>	 <p>Seeds</p>
 <p>Flower bud</p>	 <p>Baby animal</p>	 <p>Fire</p>
 <p>Butterfly</p>		 <p>Green grass</p>

Pray with a Finger Labyrinth

Sometimes it's hard to wait, especially when we know something wonderful is coming. Practice being still by slowly tracing your finger along the path. What do you find yourself thinking about?

