

Holy Week Devotions For Families and Singles

Holy Week 2017: Through Death to Life Worship Series

Instructions

These devotions are designed for you to practice in your home, and flexible enough for those who are traveling during Holy Week. Creating a Sacred Space for this time may help us transition from our busy lives to a time of devotion.

Begin by reading the scripture. Take note of the comments that we included. Offer each person time to reflect and respond to the questions. End your time with a prayer. For families with children, we recommend Scripture passages to be read in the [Common English Bible translation](#).

Creating a Sacred Space

Create a **Sacred Space** for your home. This space can be as simple as a blanket or rug, or for those of you with space it can be an entire room. In this space, place items that are important to you and your family as children of God. Consider candles (both real and battery operated), a cross, a bible, a family journal, photos of family members, a cup for water (baptism reaffirmation), prayer beads, and other items that each of you hold as important.

You can create a similar **Sacred Space** for when you are on-the-go, like so many families. Fill a bag with special items, prayers, a small bible, and favorite bible verses. Tuck this under the seat or in a compartment in the car.

Prayer During Holy Week

Each day, end your time together with this prayer.

God, as we remember Jesus' last week, remind us that through bad times and good times, you are with us. Help us notice the suffering in the world around us. Help us find ways to offer the blessings of Easter to those in our community who are in need.

Do not let us pass too quickly over the suffering just to get to the joy of Easter. Remind us that you are there for us in both bad times and good times.

Amen.

Holy Week Devotions

Monday — Creation

Read Isaiah 42:1-9.

As the prophet Isaiah noted in verse 5, God is the creator of the world. This includes God as creator of all nations, all families, and all persons. As people created in God's image, we are a gift to our families and communities.

Younger Children

I WONDER how our family can share God's gifts with each other?

Older Children

What have you NOTICED about what happens when you share your gifts from God with our family?

Questions for Families with Older Youth and Singles

Yesterday was Palm Sunday. We marched with Jesus into Jerusalem. We witnessed the crowds cheering. In the story of Palm Sunday we heard the stories or rumors of religious leaders plotting to kill Jesus. How did Jesus, the servant of God, do the very things noted in vv. 6-7? How does Jesus continue to do them today?

For Families

Have each person complete the following sentence for each member of the family:

You are a gift to the family because...

For Singles

Ask a friend to complete the following sentence about you: You are a gift to me because...

Or reflect on the question: I am a gift to my community because...

Tuesday — Exodus

Read Isaiah 49:1-7.

The Jews of Jesus' day hoped that when God acted, God would heal their nation (v. 5). At that time, the nation of Israel was occupied and run by the Roman government. Religious and Roman leaders maintained a tense relationship. Jesus' actions in the Temple (turning over the money changers tables) revealed God's care for all people, including those exploited by their leadership. Jesus' ministry was a "light" that invited hope for all.

Younger Children

I WONDER how we can serve God and serve our neighbors out in the world?

Older Children

What ways have you NOTICED that you can help friends when they are in need?

Questions for Families with Older Youth and Singles

Like we saw in yesterday's reading from Isaiah, God declares the Servant (v. 3) would be "a light to the nations" (v. 6). How did Jesus accomplish this in his ministry? What do you think it means or looks like for us to be a "light" to others?

For Families

Have each person complete the following sentence for each member of the family: One of the gifts you offer to the church or community is...

For Singles

Reflect on the question: One of the gifts I offer to my church or community is...

Wednesday — Kings

Read John 13:21-31a.

There was a time in Israel's history when what the people really wanted was to be like other, larger, more powerful, more prosperous nations. They asked God for a human king even when God alone was to be their king. Their request was a failure to trust God. Similarly, we see one of Jesus' disciples, Judas, fail to trust Jesus and in turn betrayed Jesus to the religious authorities.

Younger Children

I WONDER how Jesus felt knowing that he would be betrayed by Judas?

Older Children

What have you NOTICED about what happens when you betray a friend's trust?

Questions for Families with Older Youth and Singles

Read the passage from varying perspectives. What might you be thinking if you were Peter? Judas? Another disciple? How did Jesus respond? How can Jesus help us to love others when we do not want to?

For Families

Have each person complete the following sentences for each member of the family:

The reason I can trust you is because...

I can trust Jesus because...

For Singles

Reflect on the following questions — Who are the people I trust the most? Why? How do I invite people to trust me? How is Jesus inviting me to trust him more?

Maunder Thursday — Exile

Read John 13:1-17, 33-35 and Ezekiel 36:24-28.

Though the people have not done as God would desire (both in the Ezekiel passage and in John), God does not abandon them. In fact, God acts in their favor when they do not desire it (36:22) or even notice it (John 1:11). God does what people want but cannot do for themselves. God brings freedom and new life. The freedom God gives is demonstrated by a new heart or a new desire within us to serve other people instead of being consumed with serving ourselves.

Younger Children (just read the John passage)

I WONDER how the disciples felt when Jesus washed their feet?

Older Children

What do you NOTICE about people who take the time to help you do something you don't know how to do?

Questions for Families with Older Youth and Singles

Have you ever had someone do something for you that you were unable to do for yourself? (fix your car or bike, give you a shot of medicine, help you understand your homework assignment, etc.) How did that make you feel? How do you think Peter felt when Jesus washed his feet? If we are to love as Jesus did (John 13:34-35), how do we show that love to others?

For Families

Have each person complete the following sentence for each member of the family: I am willing and enjoy serving you because...

For Singles

Or reflect on the question:

How willingly do I serve others? What are my hesitations?

How willingly do I allow others to serve me?

Good Friday - Hope for Restoration

Read Ezekiel 37:1-3.

Today we remember Jesus' crucifixion, death on a cross. For Jesus' friends and followers this was the worst day they could imagine. They had hoped that Jesus would be the leader of their country. Though their hopes were dashed, God would use this terrible event in ways that were unimaginable for Jesus's first followers. Much like when the prophet Ezekiel sees the valley of the dry bones, God does the seemingly impossible. Though it can be difficult to keep believing when all we see is bad news, our faith in God trusts that God is still at work, always at work, creating and recreating. Though all appears bad on this day, there is a reason why Christians refer to this day as "Good Friday." Our hope will allow us to call it nothing less.

Younger Children

I WONDER how it feels when something surprising happens?

Older Children

What have you NOTICED about people who experience something unimaginable?

Questions for Families with Older Youth and Singles

What did Ezekiel see in the valley? What would have been your reactions to seeing a valley of dry bones? How would you have answered God's question, "can these bones live?" Why can it be hard to trust God for the seemingly impossible?

For Families

Have each person complete the following sentence for each member of the family: Because we worship the God of Resurrection, one thing I hope for you is...

For Singles

Reflect on the question: If God has raised Jesus from the dead, what might God desire to do in me and through me?