



# Talking about Holy Week for Families

## Diocese of New Jersey

*Holy Week, the days between Palm Sunday and Easter, is a pivotal time in our journeys as Christians. Although the events of this week are central to our Christian life, the themes of sacrifice, death, and even resurrection can be difficult or intimidating to introduce to children. Please consider the following resources to celebrate the richness of this time with your family at home.*

### **Palm Sunday**

*Say to the daughter of Zion,  
‘Behold, your king is coming  
to you, humble, and mounted  
on a donkey, and on a colt,  
the foal of a beast of burden.’”  
Matthew 21:5*

#### **What did the people do when Jesus arrived in Jerusalem?**

They laid down palm leaf branches and shouted “Hosanna!”, which means “save us.”

**Why did the people say “save us” to Jesus?** They knew in their hearts that Jesus was the King they had been waiting for. They understood that Jesus came to save sinners just like them!

**What did the Pharisees think about Jesus?** They didn’t understand why others were worshipping Jesus as King. Pharisees trusted in their traditions and their deeds instead of Jesus. They did not honor Jesus with their words or with their thoughts. Jesus is worthy of our praise and is to be worshipped with our whole lives!

*Pray with your family. Have your younger children repeat short prayers after you. Encourage your older children to pray aloud using short prayers using one sentence, such as “God, thank you for sending Jesus to save us”.*

### **Maundy Thursday**

*“Now as they were eating,  
Jesus took bread, and after  
blessing it broke it and gave it  
to the disciples, and said,  
‘Take, eat; this is my body.’  
And he took a cup, and when  
he had given thanks he gave it  
to them, saying, ‘Drink of it,  
all of you, for this is my blood  
of the covenant, which is  
poured out for many for the  
forgiveness of sins.’” Matthew  
26:26-28*

**How did Jesus tell his friends to remember him after he is gone?** Jesus had a meal with them. He took the bread and the wine and told the disciples to eat and drink. Jesus said, “Do this in remembrance of me.” When we love and trust Jesus, we remember his sacrifice in this way.

**Why were the disciples surprised that Jesus decided to wash their feet?** Jesus is their King, their Savior. They thought they were supposed to serve him, not be served by him. But Jesus tells his disciples that they can’t be close with him unless they allow Jesus to serve them in this way.

**Why does Jesus talk about a new covenant?** Jesus is celebrating the Passover with his friends, a remembrance of when God spared his people from judgment in Egypt if they put the blood of a sacrificed lamb on their doorposts. In the new covenant, Jesus is the true spotless Passover lamb whose blood is about to be shed for our salvation.

*Pray with your family, asking Jesus to help serve others in a way that he served the disciples. Pray for your neighbors, people in the church or friends from school that you can serve in a sacrificial way.*

## Good Friday

*“...My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?”  
Matthew 27:46*

**Why does Jesus ask God if He has forsaken him?** These words are an echo of Psalm 22, written hundreds of years earlier by David, and asks, in short, “where is God when it hurts?” In order to atone for the sins of his people, Jesus had to suffer on our behalf. Perhaps the greatest part of his sacrifice, however, was being cut off from his relationship with God, even if it was temporary.

**How does this sacrifice show God’s love for us?** This sacrifice is a reminder that God really knows our suffering because he has suffered, through Jesus. He has been mocked, beaten, rejected, betrayed, tortured, and murdered—there is no pain we can experience that he doesn’t know. As God, he didn’t have to go through that, but he did, so that he could be in relationship with us.

*Pray with your family, thanking Jesus for his obedience to God. Because of his obedience, we can have new life in him.*

## Easter

*“He is not here, for he has risen, as he said. Come, see the place where he lay.”  
Matthew 28:6*

**Why wasn’t Jesus in the tomb?** Jesus was brought back to life! He was no longer in the tomb because he went to see his friends and tell them not to be afraid and to believe in him.

**What does it mean that Jesus defeats death?** Jesus beat sin and death because he is God and God is powerful. He did this for us. Sometimes we make mistakes and sin by saying “no” to God. But the Good News is that Jesus died for us, to forgive us our sins, once and for all. He was brought back to life so we can have new life and a relationship with God. He is all we need.

*Pray with your family and thank Jesus that he defeated sin on your behalf. Praise God for his power and that Jesus is risen!*