

# Family Easter Activities

## **Palm Sunday (Luke 19:28-40)**

This is the day that Jesus rode into Jerusalem on a young donkey colt.

The people lined the way, waving palm branches and crying, Hosanna! Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord!

Waving palm branches was a Roman custom that was used to welcome a ruler or king. The significance of the Palm branch lies in the fact that the people were welcoming Jesus as they would a new political leader. Jesus' message to them was symbolized in the animal that he rode. A ruler would have been riding on a horse. Jesus chose to come in a humble way.

His attitude is summed up in Philippians 2:6-8.

Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be used to his own advantage; rather, he made himself nothing by taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness.

And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to death— even death on a cross!

Decorate the table for lunch or dinner using palm branches. (Children may make these from green construction paper.)

Instead of placing the food on the table, leave it in the kitchen. After prayer, take turns serving each other the food. Talk about what it means to serve others. When we serve others, we are serving Jesus.

## **Monday The Cleansing of the Temple (Mark 11:15-17)**

During the Passover celebration, people came from many miles away to worship God at the temple in Jerusalem. The people had to pay a temple tax, so money changers were in the temple exchanging the peoples' local currency for the proper currency to pay the tax. Vendors were selling animals for the people to use as sacrifices. The vendors and the money changers were cheating people. The temple had become a noisy, dishonest place.

Jesus went to the temple to worship God. Jesus became very angry by what he saw and he said, It is written, 'My house will be called a house of prayer.' But you have made it a den of thieves. Jesus made a whip and drove out the vendors and their animals. He overturned their stalls and buckets of money.

Talk about how Jesus wanted God's house to be a house of prayer, not a place where people sold things and cheated others. Ask: What is worship? What is prayer? Are there other places, besides the church, where we can pray and worship God?

## **Tuesday Teaching at the Temple (Mark 12:28-34)**

Every day Jesus came to teach at the temple. One of the teachers of the law asked Jesus, "Of all the commandments, which one is the most important?"

Jesus answered:

Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength.' The second is this: 'Love your neighbor as yourself.'

There is no commandment greater than these."

(Mark 12:30-31 NIV)

Share your love for God with a neighbor by taking them an Easter lily or spending time with them

## **Wednesday Judas Betrays Jesus (Matthew 26:14-16)**

Judas betrayed Jesus for about 120 days' wages. (30 pieces of silver, or the price of a slave) Let children count out 30 dimes or other coins.

Ask, "Was Jesus' life on earth worth more than 30 pieces of silver? Why or why not? What was the true value of Jesus' life to our family?"

## Thursday

### The Last Supper (Mark 14:12-26)

Eat a traditional Jewish Passover meal with your family. Talk about the meaning of each item.

**Unleavened bread:** Symbolizes the bread the Israelites took with them from Egypt. In their hurry to leave Egypt, they didn't have time to let it rise. The bread that Jesus broke at the Last Supper didn't have yeast in it. Yeast stands for sin. Jesus said the bread represents his body, since the bread had no yeast and he had no sin. His body was broken for us.

**Lamb:** The Lamb was killed so its blood could mark the doorposts of the houses of the Israelites. When the angel of death saw the blood on the doorpost, he would pass over that house and not kill the first-born child. Jesus is our Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world.

**Horseradish:** Served as a reminder of the bitterness the Israelites experienced while they were slaves. We remember how bitter our lives are when we are slaves to sin.

**Haroset:** (Ground apples, nuts, and a little honey together; could be substituted with applesauce or apple butter) The Haroset is eaten as a symbol of hope. Jesus is the hope of the world. He is sweeter than the honey in the honeycomb.

**Parsley:** (Dipped into salt water and taste) This reminds us of the tears that were shed in Egypt. The parsley is a symbol of life.

We are reminded of the sadness we feel when we think of Jesus dying on the cross. But the green reminds us of the new life that we have in Him.

**Grape juice:** Jesus said this cup was a sign of his shed blood for us on the cross. Whenever we drink it, we should drink it to remember Him.

## Friday

### The Day Jesus Died (Mark 15:22-39)



Read the story of Jesus' crucifixion. Discuss why Jesus was willing to die for our sins. Talk about what it means to accept Jesus as your Savior from sin.

## Saturday

### Jesus is Buried (Mark 15:42-47)

Talk about how Jesus' disciples might have felt when Jesus died. Ask: How would you have felt if you had been there when Jesus died? What would you have done? Talk about how we know that Jesus' burial isn't the end of the story, but it was a very sad day for Jesus' friends.

## Sunday

### Jesus is Risen! (Matthew 28:1-9)

Celebrate by baking Jesus is Risen Rolls.

Supplies:

- 1 can refrigerated breadstick dough
- large marshmallows
- spray margarine
- 1/3 cup sugar
- 1 Tablespoon cinnamon

Directions:

Knead and press each breadstick into a flat circle. Place a marshmallow in the center of the circle and pinch the dough around the marshmallow. Roll the marshmallow-filled rolls into a round ball. Spray the rolls with margarine. Combine sugar and cinnamon. Sprinkle the rolls with the mixture. Place the rolls on a baking sheet with the pinched edges down. Bake the rolls at 350 degrees for 12-15 minutes until brown.

While the rolls bake, tell the Easter story. Pray, thanking Jesus for taking our place on the cross. Then enjoy a tasty Easter treat as you celebrate that Christ's tomb was empty, just as these rolls are empty.

