

Holy Week House Party 2025

Instructions to Parents/Guardians

We hope this resource will provide activities that will bless your entire family during this Holy Week and Easter season. This year, families will be invited to gather with their church families to celebrate an Easter egg hunt or observe Holy Week activities. The following is designed to provide families with a continuation of conversations around the events that led to Easter morning. We applaud families who take the opportunity to share the stories of Holy Week and Easter—stories we can also share with our church family.

The Holy Week activities may be used in a variety of ways. They could be done throughout Holy Week or in their entirety on Easter Sunday. We recognize that, for some, the Holy Week activities might take place entirely indoors due to weather conditions. Families might be able to join with neighboring families. Church leaders may want to use this resource for the entire church family. This resource is designed with flexibility in mind. We encourage families to find creative ways to celebrate this Easter season.

It is recommended that you use this resource in conjunction with Discipleship Ministries' worship resource for this Lenten Season, "[Steadfast Love: A Lenten Playlist](#)," which includes music for Palm Sunday, Holy Week, and Easter Sunday. The Children's Messages for the Lenten series also reinforce the Holy Week activities.

If you do not have plastic eggs to fill and hide, other options are available. For example, children could hunt for objects around the house instead of hunting eggs. Some activities do not need eggs at all. We recommend that you customize this resource for your situation.

Whether these activities are done throughout Holy Week or on Easter Sunday, we recommend dedicating a specific place in your house. This might involve setting up a designated area in a room to place each egg or object in a small box. You could set up a worship station or an altar area in this space.

Be creative in how you use this resource. Find ways to share your Holy Week and Easter activities. For example, you might place the objects on a windowsill, write scripture verses, or draw the objects in sidewalk chalk on your driveway. Whether you are using hard-boiled eggs with artwork on them or plastic eggs with contents inside, place them in an egg carton throughout the week. Then, on Saturday, reflect on what each "art" egg represents, and the events depicted that occurred during Holy Week. Create a new family tradition that celebrates the Risen Christ. It will remain a significant part of your family's Holy Week and Easter Sunday traditions.

["J. E. L. O. \(Jesus Even Loves Little Ones\)" rearview mirror hanger](#) is available to download. Download, print, cut, and place the hanger in the vehicle that is used most often in your family. Use the questions each time you are in the vehicle together to continue (and deepen) the faith formation conversation that the Holy Week activities sparked within your family.

Materials needed (all things found around the house)

- Holy Week Mirror Hanger ([Click here to download](#) and place it on the rearview mirror of the car for family discussion questions throughout Holy Week.)
- Box with a lid (shoebox)
- Eggs (plastic Easter eggs or hard-boiled eggs)
- Coat/cloak template (Download PDF here: [template.](#))
- Paper and crayons/markers/colored pencils
- Scissors
- Foaming hand soap
- Hand towel or washcloth
- Basin or bowl
- Paper towels
- Flashlight
- Tealight or Christmas tree bulb
- *Play-Doh* or modeling clay (if available)
- Nail (careful!)
- [Nail template](#)
- Popsicle sticks/toothpicks/twigs from the yard/pipe cleaners
- Dark cloth
- Wristwatch/stopwatch
- Drum (or something to bang, such as pots and pans)

Daily Egg Art Instructions: This Holy Week resource offers a daily egg art activity. Include the eggs you create during this week in your traditional Easter egg hunt on Sunday morning. After all the eggs have been collected, have the children talk about the true meaning of Easter. As eggs are opened, the children share the story using the art as a guide. There are two different options regarding egg art. One is to fill a plastic egg; the other is to use hardboiled eggs and crayons.

You may incorporate these eggs into your church's egg hunt as well. If you do, spend time allowing multiple children to discuss and describe the significance of each egg and their understanding of how the egg is applied to the Easter message.

Palm Sunday (April 13, 2025)

Read Scripture Luke 19:28-40, NIRV

²⁸After Jesus had said this, he went on ahead. He was going up to Jerusalem. ²⁹He approached Bethphage and Bethany. The hill there was called the Mount of Olives. Jesus sent out two of his disciples. He said to them, ³⁰“Go to the village ahead of you.” As soon as you get there, you will find a donkey’s colt tied up. No one has ever ridden it. Untie it and bring it here. ³¹Someone may ask you, ‘Why are you untying it?’ If so, say, ‘The Lord needs it.’”

³²Those who were sent ahead went and found the young donkey. It was there just as Jesus had told them. ³³They were untying the colt when its owners came. The owners asked them, “Why are you untying the colt?”

³⁴They replied, “The Lord needs it.”

³⁵Then the disciples brought the colt to Jesus. They threw their coats on the young donkey and put Jesus on it. ³⁶As he went along, people spread their coats on the road.

³⁷Jesus came near the place where the road goes down the Mount of Olives. There the whole crowd of disciples began to praise God with joy. In loud voices they praised him for all the miracles they had seen. They shouted,

³⁸“Blessed is the king who comes in the name of the Lord!” (Psalm 118:26)

“May there be peace and glory in the highest heaven!”

³⁹Some of the Pharisees in the crowd spoke to Jesus. “Teacher,” they said, “tell your disciples to stop!”

⁴⁰“I tell you,” He replied, “if they keep quiet, the stones will cry out.”

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Object: Coat/cloak paper template

Activity: Cut out a coat from the [template](#). Place the cutout on the ground and take turns shouting, “Blessed is the king who comes in the name of the Lord!” Cut out a coat for each person in the home if you want, or lay some blankets or clothes on the ground and shout, “May there be peace and glory in the highest heaven!”

Find Psalm 118:26 in your Bible and read it together.

Children are to go outside their front door (with adult supervision) or the church entrance door, place coats on the ground and shout, “Blessed is the king who comes in the name of the Lord!” Ask them, “How loud can you shout?”

Egg Art: Draw a coat or cloak on a small piece of paper and place the drawing inside a plastic egg, or draw an outline of a coat on a hard-boiled egg.

Expectation: It's Palm Sunday. The people shouted and cheered as Jesus entered Jerusalem.

Wonder: Have children share a story about a time they attended a parade. Ask, "Do you remember how people crowded together to see the parade?" Children are on the shoulders of adults just to see. Sometimes when a crowd gathers for a parade, it becomes difficult to see. Ask, "How do you think the children trying to see Jesus felt during this parade?" The crowd welcomed Jesus into the town. Ask, "What are the ways our family makes people feel welcome when they come to visit?" How can you welcome Jesus into your life this week? How can your family welcome Jesus into your home?"

Prayer: Hosanna! God, we give you thanks for the blessing that you sent us in Jesus. Give us opportunities to be a blessing to others by welcoming Jesus into our house. May there be peace and glory in the highest heaven. Amen.

Monday (April 14, 2025)

Read Scripture: John 12:1-11, NIRV

Mary Pours Perfume on Jesus at Bethany

12 It was six days before the Passover Feast. Jesus came to Bethany, where Lazarus lived. Lazarus was the one Jesus had raised from the dead. ² A dinner was given at Bethany to honor Jesus. Martha served the food. Lazarus was among the people at the table with Jesus. ³ Then Mary took about a pint of pure nard. It was an expensive perfume. She poured it on Jesus' feet and wiped them with her hair. The house was filled with the sweet smell of the perfume.

⁴ But Judas Iscariot didn't like what Mary did. He was one of Jesus' disciples. Later he was going to hand Jesus over to his enemies. Judas said, ⁵ "Why wasn't this perfume sold? Why wasn't the money given to poor people? It was worth a year's pay." ⁶ He didn't say this because he cared about the poor. He said it because he was a thief. Judas was in charge of the money bag. He used to help himself to what was in it.

⁷ "Leave her alone," Jesus replied. "The perfume was meant for the day I am buried.

⁸ You will always have the poor among you. But you won't always have me."

⁹ Meanwhile a large crowd of Jews found out that Jesus was there, so they came. But they did not come only because of Jesus. They also came to see Lazarus. After all, Jesus had raised him from the dead. ¹⁰ So the chief priests made plans to kill Lazarus too.

¹¹ Because of Lazarus, many of the Jews were starting to follow Jesus. They were believing in him.

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Object(s): Washcloth and sweet-smelling foaming soap.

Activity: Wash another person's hands or feet within your home. Use some fragranced soap, a washcloth, and a hand towel. Sing "Jesus Loves Me" while you wash.

"Jesus loves me this I know
For the Bible tells me so
Little ones to him belong
They are weak, but he is strong.

Yes, Jesus loves me
Yes Jesus loves me
Yes Jesus loves me
The Bible tells me so."

Use sweet-smelling soap (to remember Mary's perfume) and warm water to cleanse hands or feet.
Then, dry them with a towel.

Egg Art: Cut a piece of paper towel into a small square to represent the towel Jesus used to wash the disciples' feet. Place it in a plastic egg or draw a towel on the side of a hard-boiled egg.

Expectation: Jesus' attitude of servanthood was the direct opposite of Judas's understanding. Jesus demonstrated humility as he reminded his followers that Mary put others (Jesus) before herself.

Wonder: I wonder how it feels to put someone else's needs before your own. I wonder how God made it so that no matter how dirty something is, once we notice it, we can clean it up. I wonder what "clean" smells like to you. How might serving others— putting their needs before our own —help us feel humble?

Prayer: God of joy, we are thankful that Jesus reminds us that being humble and putting others before ourselves is a joyous way to live and to remember him. Amen.

Tuesday (April 15, 2025)

Read Scripture: John 12:35-36, NIRV

Then Jesus told them, "You are going to have the light just a little while longer. Walk while you have the light. Do this before darkness catches up with you. Whoever walks in the dark does not know where they are going. While you have the light, believe in it. Then you can become children of light." When Jesus had finished speaking, he left and hid from them.

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Object: flashlight

Activity: Find a space of approximately fifteen feet between two points in your house or church. Walk from point A to point B. It seems easy to do so with the lights on. Return to point "A" and have someone turn off the lights. Does it become very dark? DO NOT ATTEMPT TO WALK THE DISTANCE WITH THE LIGHTS OFF. Does the darkness create fear? Are you afraid to try to walk in the dark? Use a flashlight to take steps toward point "B." How helpful is the use of the light? Did the light remove fear?

Or

Scatter some Easter eggs in a yard (one that is safe to navigate in the dark). Wait for darkness to fall and try to find the eggs without the use of light. Take a few minutes to reflect. Did the darkness make it more difficult? Are you scared because of the darkness? Are you afraid to take steps in the darkness?

Then, try to retrieve the eggs using a flashlight. Was the light helpful in finding the eggs? Compare the experiences of hunting eggs in darkness to having the help of a flashlight.

Egg Art: Find a small Christmas tree light or tealight that fits into a plastic egg to symbolize that Jesus is the light, or draw a candle on the side of a hard-boiled egg.

Expectation: Jesus reminds us that we are scared and may be filled with fear when it's dark. We must trust in him to remove the fear. He is the light that we need to help us overcome the fears found in life's scary situations.

Wonder: I wonder how it feels to be scared. How could relying on the comfort of Jesus help us feel safe?

Prayer: God of comfort, we are thankful that Jesus is the light of the world that shows us the way, even in frightening and scary times. Amen.

Wednesday (April 16, 2025)

Read Scripture: John 13:21-32, NIRV

²¹ After he had said this, Jesus' spirit was troubled. He said, "What I'm about to tell you is true. One of you is going to hand me over to my enemies."

²² His disciples stared at one another. They had no idea which one of them he was referring to. ²³ The disciple Jesus loved was next to him at the table. ²⁴ Simon Peter motioned to that disciple. He said, "Ask Jesus which one he means."

²⁵ The disciple was leaning back against Jesus. He asked him, "Lord, who is it?"

²⁶ Jesus answered, "It is the one I will give this piece of bread to. I will give it to him after I have dipped it in the dish." He dipped the piece of bread. Then he gave it to Judas, son of Simon Iscariot. ²⁷ As soon as Judas took the bread, Satan entered into him.

So Jesus told him, "Do quickly what you are going to do." ²⁸ But no one at the meal understood why Jesus said this to him. ²⁹ Judas was in charge of the money. So some of the disciples thought Jesus was telling him to buy what was needed for the feast. Others thought Jesus was talking about giving something to poor people. ³⁰ As soon as Judas had taken the bread, he went out. And it was night.

Peter Says He Does Not Know Jesus

³¹ After Judas was gone, Jesus spoke. He said, “Now the Son of Man receives glory. And he brings glory to God. ³² If the Son brings glory to God, God himself will bring glory to the Son. God will do it at once.

(To reinforce the imagery of bread and cup, consider using Matthew’s account of the Lord’s Supper.)

Matthew 26:26-30, NIRV

²⁶ While they were eating, Jesus took bread. He gave thanks and broke it. He handed it to his disciples and said, “Take this and eat it. This is my body.”

²⁷ Then he took a cup. He gave thanks and handed it to them. He said, “All of you drink from it. ²⁸ This is my blood of the covenant. It is poured out to forgive the sins of many people. ⁹ Here is what I tell you. From now on, I won’t drink wine with you again until the day I drink it with you in my Father’s kingdom.”

³⁰ Then they sang a hymn and went out to the Mount of Olives.

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Objects: Bread and cup

Activity: Use the lid of a box to create a table for the Last Supper. On the lid of the box, draw an image of bread and a cup. If you have *Play-Doh* or modeling clay, you may create the bread and cup, then place them on the lid (table).

Egg Art: Place either your clay-molded bread and cup inside a plastic egg or draw a bread and cup design on a piece of paper and place it in a plastic egg. Or draw an image of the bread and cup on the side of a hardboiled egg.

Expectation: The Lord’s Supper is more than just the last meal that Jesus had with his disciples. He had all his friends, the disciples, gathered around him at this Passover meal, also known as the Last Supper. Jesus told his disciples to do this act of drinking from the cup (juice) and eating the bread in remembrance of him. This is the act of Holy Communion.

Wonder: This scene is about trust between good friends and family members (remember, disciples Andrew and Peter were brothers). Sometimes, disagreements or a lack of trust can occur among friends. How did those at the meal respond when Jesus said that one of them would betray him? This is a story about a relationship with Jesus. How have you celebrated this event at your church in the past?

Prayer: God, we are thankful that we can always trust you. We are faithful to you and trust in you. Thank you for the bread and the juice as a reminder of how Jesus offers his love and forgiveness, even if we disagree with one another. Amen.

Maundy Thursday (April 17, 2025)

John 13:1-17, 31-35, NIRV

Jesus Washes His Disciples' Feet

13 It was just before the Passover Feast. Jesus knew that the time had come for him to leave this world. It was time for him to go to the Father. Jesus loved his disciples who were in the world. So he now loved them to the very end.

² They were having their evening meal. The devil had already tempted Judas, son of Simon Iscariot. He had urged Judas to hand Jesus over to his enemies. ³ Jesus knew that the Father had put everything under his power. He also knew he had come from God and was returning to God. ⁴ So he got up from the meal and took off his outer clothes. He wrapped a towel around his waist. ⁵ After that, he poured water into a large bowl. Then he began to wash his disciples' feet. He dried them with the towel that was wrapped around him.

⁶ He came to Simon Peter. "Lord," Peter said to him, "are you going to wash my feet?"

⁷ Jesus replied, "You don't realize now what I am doing. But later you will understand."

⁸ "No," said Peter. "You will never wash my feet."

Jesus answered, "Unless I wash you, you can't share life with me."

⁹ "Lord," Simon Peter replied, "not just my feet! Wash my hands and my head too!"

¹⁰ Jesus answered, "People who have had a bath need to wash only their feet. The rest of their body is clean. And you are clean. But not all of you are." ¹¹ Jesus knew who was going to hand him over to his enemies. That was why he said not every one was clean.

¹² When Jesus finished washing their feet, he put on his clothes. Then he returned to his place. "Do you understand what I have done for you?" he asked them. ¹³ "You call me 'Teacher' and 'Lord.' You are right. That is what I am. ¹⁴ I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet. So you also should wash one another's feet. ¹⁵ I have given you an example. You should do as I have done for you. ¹⁶ What I'm about to tell you is true. A slave is not more important than his master. And a messenger is not more important

than the one who sends him. ¹⁷ Now you know these things. So you will be blessed if you do them.

Peter Will Say He Does Not Know Jesus

³¹ After Judas was gone, Jesus spoke. He said, “Now the Son of Man receives glory. And he brings glory to God. ³² If the Son brings glory to God, God himself will bring glory to the Son. God will do it at once.

³³ “My children, I will be with you only a little longer. You will look for me. Just as I told the Jews, so I am telling you now. You can’t come where I am going.

³⁴ “I give you a new command. Love one another. You must love one another, just as I have loved you. ³⁵ If you love one another, everyone will know you are my disciples.”

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Object: Heart to suggest “love.”

Activity: When you pray, position your hands into a heart shape.

Then spend time daily praying for the people that you witnessed offering love to one another that day. This will offer an opportunity to pay attention and look for acts of love in your daily life. Remember, love is an action. The positioning of your hands into the shape of a heart suggests that you are the “hands and feet” of Jesus!

Egg Art: Trace someone’s heart-shaped praying hands onto a piece of paper. Fold that paper and place it inside a plastic egg or draw a heart on the side of a hardboiled egg.

Expectation: John 13:34-35 teaches us the simple, yet great command, which is to love others as Jesus loved us so they can know Jesus.

Wonder: When people are anxious, they are scared and nervous about what might happen. We all feel anxious and scared at times. It’s good to know that when Peter felt the same, Jesus demonstrated how much he loved his followers. Jesus said, “I give you a new command. Love one another. You must love one another, just as I have loved you. If you love one another, everyone will know you are my disciples.” Not just with his words, but through his actions, “Now you know these things. So, you will be blessed if you do them.” Throughout his ministry, Jesus showed us many ways we can love others. Helping others is one way. Can you make a list of the many ways we can help people? I wonder how you can use this list to show the world to love one another in the name of Jesus.

Prayer: God, often it is so much easier to say, “I love you” than it is to demonstrate love to others. Thank you for Jesus teaching us that love is an action word. Once we know this, then we can show the world. Allow us to pray for others, as we show them your love. Amen.

Good Friday (April 18, 2025)

Read Scripture: John 19:16-30, NIRV

¹⁶ Finally, Pilate handed Jesus over to them to be nailed to a cross.

Jesus Is Nailed to a Cross

So the soldiers took charge of Jesus. ¹⁷ He had to carry his own cross. He went out to a place called the Skull. In the Aramaic language it was called Golgotha. ¹⁸ There they nailed Jesus to the cross. Two other men were crucified with him. One was on each side of him. Jesus was in the middle.

¹⁹ Pilate had a notice prepared. It was fastened to the cross. It read,
Jesus of Nazareth, the king of the Jews.

²⁰ Many of the Jews read the sign. That's because the place where Jesus was crucified was near the city. And the sign was written in the Aramaic, Latin and Greek languages.

²¹ The chief priests of the Jews argued with Pilate. They said, "Do not write 'The King of the Jews.' Write that this man claimed to be king of the Jews."

²² Pilate answered, "I have written what I have written."

²³ When the soldiers crucified Jesus, they took his clothes. They divided them into four parts. Each soldier got one part. All that was left was Jesus' long, inner robe. It did not have any seams. It was made out of one piece of cloth from top to bottom.

²⁴ "Let's not tear it," they said to one another. "Let's cast lots to see who will get it."

This happened so that Scripture would come true. It says,

"They divided up my clothes among them.

They cast lots for what I was wearing." ([Psalm 22:18](#))

So that is what the soldiers did.

²⁵ Jesus' mother stood near his cross. So did his mother's sister, Mary the wife of Clopas, and Mary Magdalene. ²⁶ Jesus saw his mother there. He also saw the disciple he loved standing nearby. Jesus said to his mother, "Dear woman, here is your son." ²⁷ He said to the disciple, "Here is your mother." From that time on, the disciple took her into his home.

Jesus Dies

²⁸ Later, Jesus knew that everything had now been finished. He also knew that what Scripture said must come true. So he said, "I am thirsty."²⁹ A jar of wine vinegar was there. So they soaked a sponge in it. They put the sponge on the stem of a hyssop plant. Then they lifted it up to Jesus' lips.³⁰ After Jesus drank he said, "It is finished." Then he bowed his head and died.

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Objects: Nail and cross

Activity: Have an adult find a nail in your house. Perhaps there is one holding up a picture of your family on the wall. Take thirty seconds and look at the nail as a reminder of the pain that Jesus went through to bring us healing and display God's love that overcomes the worst evil.

Create a cross using pipe cleaners, popsicle sticks, or toothpicks, and place it near the designated area where your family has been praying throughout the week.

Egg Art: Draw a nail or cut one from the [template](#) and place it in a plastic egg, or draw a nail and a cross on the side of a hard-boiled egg.

Expectation: The Crucifixion can be a sensitive and scary concept for younger children. Even so, it's important for them to understand what Jesus endured to offer forgiveness for everyone and to display God's love in the face of evil.

Wonder: The American Sign Language sign for the name "Jesus" is pointing to the palm of each hand as a reminder of the nails that were placed into each of his hands. I wonder why the nail is the sign used to name Jesus. This sign for Jesus reminds us of the nails that were used to put him on the cross. Where have you seen crosses in your life? How important is the cross when describing Jesus and what he came to do?

What question would you like to ask Jesus about when he died?

Prayer: God, every time I see a nail, remind me of the pain and sorrow that Jesus had to go through to save us and offer hope for eternal life in heaven. Amen.

Holy Saturday (April 19, 2025)

Read Scripture: John 19:40-42, NIRV

The two men took Jesus' body. They wrapped it in strips of linen cloth, along with the spices. That was the way the Jews buried people. At the place where Jesus was crucified, there was a garden. A new tomb was there. No one had ever been put in it before. That day was the Jewish Preparation Day, and the tomb was nearby. So, they placed Jesus there.

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Object: Dark cloth to suggest the stillness of this day.

Activity: Play a game of “Red-Light-Green Light.” This game is a favorite of children, and it is easy to play with no props needed. This game also is a terrific way to build executive function (decision and motor control skills) through play. Executive function develops better emotion regulation and impulse control by helping children pause, (**wait**), think, and then decide before reacting. Here are the rules:

1. The children line up, side-by side at one end of the yard (if outside) or a large room (if inside), facing the “caller.” For safety reasons, if playing inside, have children walk, crawl, or crab crawl to slow down the movements.
2. The caller stands opposite the children, facing them.
3. The caller shouts, “Green Light,” and turns away from the children. When the light is green, the children move toward the caller by running, walking, or crawling—depending on the space and location of your game.
4. The caller shouts, “Red Light,” and turns facing the children again. The children must stop or “freeze” immediately.
5. The caller continues to shout “Red Light” or “Green Light” until a child reaches the caller. That child could then become the next caller.
6. Certain variations of the game suggest that when the caller turns around when calling “Red Light,” if a child is pointed out as moving, he or she returns to the starting line. This version can become argumentative and may distract from the object of game, which is body control and cognitive response.
7. Once a child reaches the caller, select another caller, return to the starting line, and begin again.

In the evening of this day, as you gather for family worship time, place a dark cloth over the entire worship space and cover it in darkness. Or cover your egg art eggs with a dark cloth. As a family, sit

quietly and discuss the waiting that took place on this day in the Easter story. While you wait, sit in silence (even if it is only a few seconds) and concentrate on the black cloth.

Egg Art: On a small piece of paper, draw a watch or old-fashioned clockface and place it in your plastic egg; or you may place a watch in the egg. Or draw a clockface on the side of a hard-boiled egg. Reflect on all the eggs placed in the carton that you have collected all week. Spend a moment in silence as you reflect upon each day's events of this Holy Week.

Expectation: On Saturday, everything was so still that people could hear every little sound. There was nothing that could be done. Holy Saturday is a day of waiting.

Wonder: How does it feel when you have a pet/favorite stuffed animal/friend/family nearby? Does it feel different when they are gone? When you're hoping for something, how does it feel?

Prayer: God, it is hard for us to sit still and wait. On this day, we are reminded of the waiting and the hope that we have in Jesus. In our sadness and waiting, we trust in Jesus for a new day of joy and think about how his love can bring us out of these feelings of fear and sadness. We put our hope in your son, Jesus. Amen.

Easter Sunday (April 20, 2025)

Read Scripture: John 20:1-18 NIRV

The Tomb Is Empty

20 Early on the first day of the week, Mary Magdalene went to the tomb. It was still dark. She saw that the stone had been moved away from the entrance. ² So she ran to Simon Peter and another disciple, the one Jesus loved. She said, "They have taken the Lord out of the tomb! We don't know where they have put him!"

³ So Peter and the other disciple started out for the tomb. ⁴ Both of them were running. The other disciple ran faster than Peter. He reached the tomb first. ⁵ He bent over and looked in at the strips of linen lying there. But he did not go in. ⁶ Then Simon Peter came along behind him. He went straight into the tomb. He saw the strips of linen lying there. ⁷ He also saw the funeral cloth that had been wrapped around Jesus' head. The cloth was still lying in its place. It was separate from the linen. ⁸ The disciple who had reached the tomb first also went inside. He saw and believed. ⁹ They still did not understand from Scripture that Jesus had to rise from the dead. ¹⁰ Then the disciples went back to where they were staying.

Jesus Appears to Mary Magdalene

¹¹ But Mary stood outside the tomb crying. As she cried, she bent over to look into the tomb. ¹² She saw two angels dressed in white. They were seated where Jesus' body had been. One of them was where Jesus' head had been laid. The other sat where his feet had been placed.

¹³ They asked her, "Woman, why are you crying?"

"They have taken my Lord away," she said. "I don't know where they have put him." ¹⁴ Then she turned around and saw Jesus standing there. But she didn't realize that it was Jesus.

¹⁵ He asked her, "Woman, why are you crying? Who are you looking for?"

She thought he was the gardener. So she said, "Sir, did you carry him away? Tell me where you put him. Then I will go and get him."

¹⁶ Jesus said to her, "Mary."

She turned toward him. Then she cried out in the Aramaic language, "*Rabboni!*" Rabboni means Teacher.

¹⁷ Jesus said, "Do not hold on to me. I have not yet ascended to the Father. Instead, go to those who believe in me. Tell them, 'I am ascending to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God.'"

¹⁸ Mary Magdalene went to the disciples with the news. She said, "I have seen the Lord!" And she told them that he had said these things to her.

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Object: Empty plastic egg.

Activity: Playing Easter Joy!

Supplies: Drum, pot, pan.

Provide each child with something that makes noise. Rhythm instruments are great... but so are homemade things like two spoons to hit together and baby rattles to shake.

Say: "I am going to beat my drum, and as I do, I want you to guess what I am feeling."

(Play it happily and quickly and smile.)

Ask: "What feeling did you hear?" *(They will say, "Happy.")*

(Play the drum slowly and frown.)

Ask: "What feeling did you hear?" (*They will say, "Sad."*)

Say: "You are good at this. I am going to tell you the story of Easter now, and I want you to hear it in the music I make."

(*Begin to hit the drum happily and continue it while you speak.*)

Say: "Jesus was the light of the world, God's love walking with people, teaching them, healing them... it was a wonderful time!" (*Keep playing happily.*)

Say: "But then," (*start playing slowly and sadly*), "some people did not love Jesus, and they were afraid of his great love, so they decided to crucify him. They arrested him (*one beat*), and they hurt him (*one beat*), and they made him wear a crown of thorns (*one beat*) and carry his cross (*one beat*); they hung him on the cross (crucified)."

(*Silence.*)

Say: "Jesus died, and it was the saddest day ever. The people were so sad." (*Silence.*)

Say: "On the third day, after Jesus had been taken from the cross and laid in the tomb, they went there to take care of his body (*start beating slowly and get faster and faster as you talk*). When they arrived, they discovered the best news ever! (*Beat faster.*) Jesus was alive again... he was raised, and his love was still with them!!! And that was the happiest day ever!!!" (*Beat harder and faster!*)

(*Silence.*)

Say: "You know, that is our happy Easter story... but it just had one problem... I had only one drum and there is no way I could play the happiness of that first Easter by myself on that one drum. It was happy." (*Start playing the drum and have others begin to make noise with their "instruments." The noise will get louder and louder, and the children will laugh. You may have to shout*):

Say: "That is how happiness sounds... Easter is the happiest day ever!!! HAPPY EASTER!"

Adapted with permission from Leanne-Hadley.com.

Egg Art: Leave one empty egg for this day to represent the tomb. An empty egg on Easter morning is better than one filled with candy, better than toys! The empty egg holds the most wonderful gift ever... the empty tomb!

Expectation: After Jesus died, everyone thought that God would not be with us anymore... that God's love died with Jesus on the cross, but then God did something surprising. God raised Jesus from the dead and proved that nothing, not even death on the cross, could stop God from loving us!

Wonder: What does it mean to you that God will not let death come between us? The disciples and the others shared the good news of Easter that Jesus was alive. How can you share with others the good news of Easter Sunday? Take your instruments, which were used in 'Playing Easter Joy!' earlier, outside (with supervision) and play even louder. Use the Lenten Playlist song, "Light of a Clear Blue Morning" by Dolly Parton, to provide background music. Play along with the song's rhythm. Let the world around you hear the happy joyful sounds of Easter!

Prayer: God of Easter, we give you thanks for the gift of new life and of the good news of the Resurrection. Help us to experience the newness and joy that come from the Risen Jesus. Amen.