



Holy Week

Devotional Guide:

A Journey through the Gospel of John



Holy Week invites us to slow down and walk closely with Jesus in the days leading up to His crucifixion and resurrection. These events were a part of God's long foretold plan, and we see Jesus accepting His Father's will in each step that ultimately led Him to the cross. As Jesus modeled love and sacrifice for His disciples, interacted with government officials, and experienced the wavering loyalties of the people, He continued to serve as the ultimate example of what new-kingdom love looks like.

Each day this week, we invite you to take time to read the provided Scripture passage, reflect on its meaning, and take part in the suggested activities. (We recommend reading ahead, as some of the activities involve collecting a few materials. All suggested songs and artwork are available online.)

As you participate, allow the events of Holy Week to draw your heart closer to Christ and prepare you for the joyful celebration of Easter.

Palm Sunday

March 29, 2026

“Blessed is He who comes in the Name of the Lord”

Reading & Reflection: *Begin by reading John 12:12-26*

Jesus enters Jerusalem riding on a donkey, while crowds wave palm branches and shout, “Hosanna! [which means ‘save now’], blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord.” In their praise, the people recognize Jesus as the Messiah and long-awaited Deliverer. Palm branches symbolize victory and kingship, yet Jesus’ mission points to a different kind of salvation—a kingdom defined not by conquest or political power, but by humility and a purpose set on restoring lives. Amid the celebration, Jesus teaches that a grain of wheat must fall into the earth and die to bear much fruit. This teaching reframes triumph. The crowd celebrates a King, yet Jesus reveals what His kingdom truly looks like: a kingdom where glory is shown through self-giving love and obedience to God’s plan. Even His disciples did not fully understand what was happening. Jesus’ entry is not a political takeover but the beginning of the path to the cross, and the victory He brings is far greater than they hoped for, arriving in a way they did not expect.

- *Why do you think the crowd did not fully grasp what was happening during Jesus’ entry into Jerusalem? What were they expecting the Messiah to do?*
- *Jesus says the man who loves his life will lose it (v. 25). What is Jesus teaching here?*
- *How might we be tempted to misinterpret God’s timing or methods in our own lives?*
- *For further study: Psalm 118:25-26; Zechariah 9:9*

Respond:

Look: Look for sprigs of greenery, such as evergreen branches or blossoming fruit tree cuttings, to bring into your home. Arrange in a vase and display it in a place of prominence. As it catches your eye throughout each day, thank Jesus that He is our victorious King.

Listen: Listen to the song, “Hosanna (Praise is Rising)” by Paul Baloche. Let your praises rise to our glorious King!

Love: Jesus’ love was most powerfully demonstrated in His sacrifice. Show love to someone in your life this week by giving of yourself: your time, service, resources, companionship.

Littles: Kids, as you listen to “Hosanna, (Praise is Rising),” wave those evergreen branches and celebrate Jesus!



Monday

March 30, 2026

“Love One Another”

Reading & Reflection:

Begin by reading John 13:1-17; 34-35

Jesus consistently models selfless service, inviting us to follow His example. When He washes His disciples' feet, a task reserved for the lowest servants, the Son of God humbles Himself before His followers, revealing the heart of His kingdom even as His death approaches. Knowing all things were in the Father's hands, and that He had come from Him and was returning to Him, Jesus served. True greatness is not measured by power or status but by loving service. In John 13:34-35, Jesus gives His disciples a new command: to love one another. This love is to be the defining mark of His followers, a visible testimony of devotion to God and His kingdom.

- *What does this act teach us about the values of God's kingdom?*
- *How should this shape the way we understand leadership and service?*
- *How can we practically imitate Christ's humility and sacrificial love in our daily relationships, and what challenges might we face in doing so?*
- *For further study: Genesis 18:4; Isaiah 52-53*



Respond:

Look: Look up the painting “Christ Washing the Apostles’ Feet #1” by Peter Paul Rubens. Imagine the reality of Jesus stooping, humbling Himself, touching every dirty foot of His disciples! Notice the light that surrounds Jesus in this image, even as we see a shroud of darkness hovering in the upper left corner.

Listen: Listen to “John 13:34” by Hidden in my Heart Scripture Songs. Let the simple lyrics work their way into your minds and hearts.

Love: Show love and humility by washing the feet of a loved one. Invite family members to each take turns, noticing that being the recipient is also an act of humility to our modern, Western thinking.

Littles: Listen to “Love One Another” by Slugs and Bugs. Take part in family foot washing!

Tuesday

March 31, 2026

“Human Frailty and the Sovereignty of God”

Reading & Reflection: *Begin by reading John 13:16-38; 18:25-27*

Following the tender moment in which Jesus humbled Himself in service, the frailty of His followers is revealed. Judas will betray Him, and Peter, though confident in his loyalty, will deny knowing Him. These sobering actions expose the human tendency toward fear, pride, and failure, even among those closest to Jesus. Yet in the face of betrayal, Jesus remains committed to His mission. His foreknowledge and unwavering commitment remind us that God’s plan is not thwarted by human weakness, and that His mercy and guidance extend even to those who stumble. God’s plan of redemption through Jesus was put into motion long before Jesus’ earthly ministry even began.

- *Why does Jesus reveal Judas’ betrayal and Peter’s denial in advance, and what does this teach us about His knowledge of human weakness and His grace toward us?*
- *Peter was confident in his loyalty, yet he failed. What does this reveal about the limits of human strength, and how should it shape our reliance on God?*
- *Even knowing their failures, Jesus still loves and guides His disciples. How does this example challenge us to extend forgiveness and faithfulness to others despite their shortcomings?*
- *For further study: Psalm 41:9; John 18:15-25*

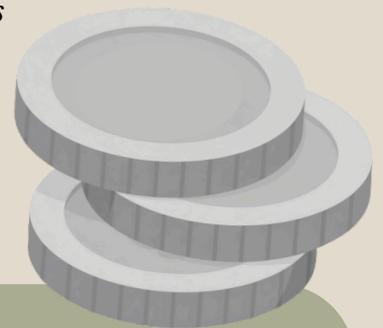
Respond:

Look: Look for weighted objects to hang on your greenery cuttings, such as rocks, blocks, or heavy nails. Place them on the display and watch the branches sag under the weight, representing the heaviness of our human failure and frailty.

Listen: Listen to the song “Forgiven” by Crowder.

Love: Consider God’s deep love as you listen to the above song. One by one, remove the objects from the branches and thank God for His forgiveness.

Littles: Listen to the song “You Are Forgiving” by Paul D. Wilson as you take part in the weighted branch exercise with your family.



Wednesday

April 1, 2026

“The Promise of a Helper”

Reading & Reflection: Begin by reading John 14:15-31

Knowing that He will soon leave His disciples, Jesus comforts them with a promise: they would not be alone. They would be given a Helper, One who would be with them forever. This Helper is the Holy Spirit who convicts, guides, advocates, and comforts. Jesus reminds His disciples that love for Him is expressed through obedience—not as a burden—but as a response to relationship. In the face of uncertainty and fear, Jesus offers a peace unlike anything the world can give—a deep, steady assurance rooted in His presence. Though He is preparing to go to the cross, Jesus’ words bring hope, for we know the story does not end at the cross. We can live each day trusting His presence, walking in obedience, and resting in His peace.

- *How do we see the Holy Spirit working in our lives to guide, strengthen, and help us follow Jesus faithfully?*
- *Jesus connects love for Him with obedience. How does obedience flow from love, and what does that reveal about our relationship with Christ?*
- *Jesus offers a peace unlike the world gives. How is His peace different from worldly peace, and how can we experience it in the midst of fear or uncertainty?*
- *For further study: John 16:5-15; Philippians 4:4-7; Ezekiel 36:26-27*

Respond:

Look: Look for tapered candles or tea lights, one per person in your family.

Listen: Listen to the song “Holy Spirit” covered by numerous artists, such as Shane & Shane.

Love: Invite each person in your home to light his or her candle as you listen to the song. Look anew with love and wonder at one another: believers are those in whom the Holy Spirit dwells, right here in this moment, in this very room!

Littles: Kids will enjoy the candle activity with supervision. Consider listening to the song “Bright” by Lifeway Kids.



Thursday

April 2, 2026

“That the World Would Know”

Reading & Reflection:

Begin by reading John 17:1-26

Before His arrest, Jesus lifts His eyes to the Father in prayer, revealing His heart for His people. He prays not only for His disciples, but for all who will believe in Him through their message—including us. His desire is clear: that we would truly know God, be protected in truth, and live in unity. This unity reflects the very relationship between the Father and the Son and becomes a powerful witness to the world of God’s love. Jesus also prays that we would experience this same love—a love that calls for a response: obedience to His voice and faithful living as His ambassadors. His prayer reminds us that His kingdom is far different from what came before and that we are invited to participate in a much larger divine story.

- *What does Jesus say it means to “glorify” the Father, and how does He define eternal life in this passage?*
- *What specific things does Jesus ask the Father to do for His disciples, and what do these requests reveal about their mission in the world?*
- *What kind of unity does Jesus pray for among all believers, and how is that unity connected to the world knowing Him?*
- *For further study: Leviticus 16; Exodus 28; 1 Corinthians 11:23-26*



Respond:

Look: Look again at your Palm Sunday greenery and recall how Jesus’ triumphal entry united the people for a time. How quickly the division and discord followed! Jesus knew that the unity of believers would be a challenge, so it was an earnest focus of His prayer.

Listen: Listen to the song “Make Us One (John 17)” by Gather Worship.

Love: Make a representation of your connection to other believers by creating a paper chain. Write names of various people on each link—not just family members, but those who might be different from you. Perhaps they live in a different country, are in a different stage of life, or are simply those you don’t necessarily connect with in a natural way. Adorn your Palm Sunday greenery with your paper chain and ask God to help you show His love to others.

Littles: Kids will enjoy taking part in the paper chain activity. Listen to the song “The Love of Christ,” based on Ephesians 3:14-21, by Slugs and Bugs as you decorate your links.

Friday

April 3, 2026

“It is Finished”

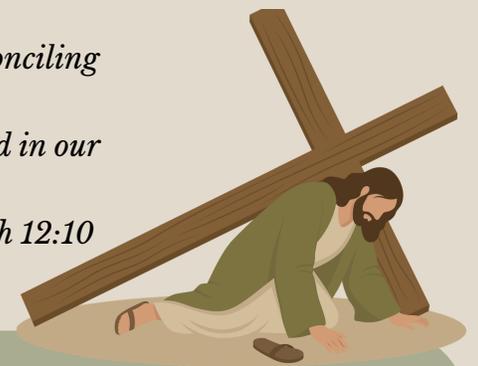


Reading & Reflection:

Begin by reading John 18:1-11; 19:1-30

Jesus is arrested, mocked, and brought before the authorities. Though He is innocent, He is treated like a criminal. Pilate questions Him about being a king yet fails to recognize the true nature of Jesus’ kingdom. The same city that celebrated Him with shouts of “Hosanna” just days before now call for His crucifixion. Even His closest disciples falter: Judas betrays Jesus with a kiss, and Peter strikes out of fear. Yet Jesus demonstrates perfect submission to the Father’s will. Jesus does not resist or defend Himself because He knows the cross is the path to redemption. As Jesus hangs on the cross, He speaks the words: “It is finished.” These are not words of defeat, but of completion. Through His death, Jesus accomplishes the work He came to do: bearing the sin of the world and opening the way for reconciliation with God. His obedience and love accomplish what we could never do ourselves; we needed someone to deliver us. The cross reminds us that redemption is complete in Christ, and we are invited to receive forgiveness, hope, and new life through Him.

- *How does the trial of Jesus deepen your understanding of the cross?*
- *What does this passage reveal about the nature of His kingdom?*
- *How does Jesus’ death accomplish God’s plan for bearing sin and reconciling humanity to Himself?*
- *How does Christ’s sacrifice shape the way we live, love, and trust God in our daily lives?*
- *For further study: Exodus 3:14; Psalm 22:18; Psalm 69:21; Zechariah 12:10*



Respond:

Look: Look up the 1890 painting, “What is Truth, Christ and Pilate” by Nikolai Ge. Compare the use of light with that which we saw on Monday. Jesus is now in the shadows, while Pilate’s position of power is bathed in light. How do shadow and light reveal the true power of Jesus?

Listen: Listen to “O Sacred Head, Now Wounded” by Fernando Ortega and “When I Survey the Wondrous Cross” by Keith and Kristyn Getty as you participate in the following exercise.

Love: Christ’s love was demonstrated in the bitterness of death. In the garden, Jesus asked His Father if this bitter cup of death might be passed. The answer was no. Drink a bitter beverage, such as unsweetened coffee or tea as you listen to the above hymns and thank Jesus for accepting the bitter cup.

Littles: Listen to the song “Jesus, Thank You” by Lifeway Kids. Color or write a card for Jesus, thanking Him for His death on the cross. Place your artwork near your Palm Branch display.

Saturday

April 4, 2026

“Suspended Between Grief and Hope”

Reading & Reflection: Begin by reading *John 19:31-42*

After the chaos of the crucifixion, Jesus breathes His last, and the earth responds—the temple curtain tears, and creation seems to pause under the weight of what has just taken place. For His disciples, this must have felt like the end of hope, a moment marked by deep sorrow, confusion, and overwhelming grief. The One they followed, trusted, and believed to be the Messiah is now gone, and their expectations seem shattered. Yet even in the quiet stillness of this day, God’s plan was still unfolding in ways they could not yet see or understand. Though it appeared that death had the final word, the tomb was not the end—it was the place from which resurrection and new life would soon emerge, bringing new hope.

- *Why do you think the the tearing of the temple curtain was significant, and what does it symbolize about access to God?*
- *How can we recognize God’s work during times of apparent silence or loss?*
- *What part of this story inspires you to live differently or respond in faith today?*
- *For further study: Matthew 27:50-51; Mark 15:37-38; Luke 23:44-46*



Respond:

Look: Look for fragrances in your home to represent the burial spices and ointments prepared by the women who ministered to Jesus. You might simmer cinnamon or cloves on the stovetop, light a sandalwood candle, or diffuse myrrh and frankincense.

Listen: Surrounded by these scents of preparation, feel the weight of the waiting today by sitting in silence for a time. Listen to the Lord’s prompts on your heart as the quietness grows.

Love: Ask the Lord to bring someone to mind who might be in a season of waiting, doubt, or fear. Pray for them and text or write to them right away, letting them know you are thinking about them.

Little: Create an Easter garden scene. Use a pie plate or terracotta plant saucer as your base. Fill the saucer with dirt, rocks, and mosses. Tip a small clay pot on its side to represent the tomb. Cover the entrance of the tomb with a stone.

Easter Sunday

April 5, 2026

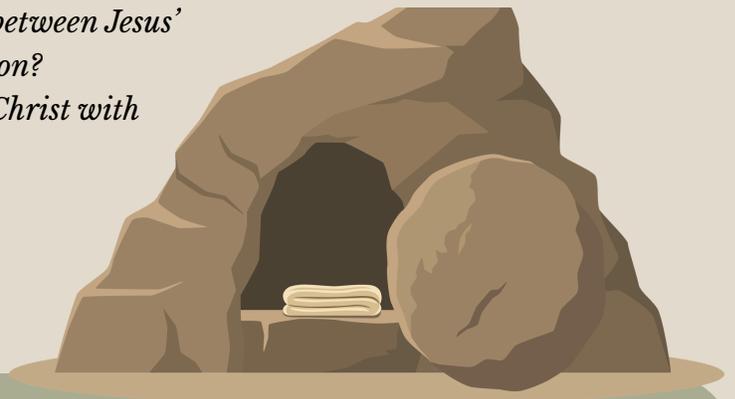
“He is Risen!”

Reading & Reflection:

Begin by reading John 20:1-31

On the first day of the week, Mary Magdalene visits to the tomb and finds it empty. Running to the disciples, she says, “They have taken the Lord out of the tomb, and we don’t know where they have put Him!” Peter and John go to see for themselves, yet they still do not fully understand. Jesus has risen! The cross was not the end, but the beginning of a new covenant—the way to life for all who believe. Through His resurrection, Jesus fulfills the promise of redemption, proving that sin, death, and despair do not have the final word. Like Mary, Peter, and John, we too are poised to encounter the risen Christ! We are invited to believe, to be saved, and to share the joy of new, victorious life with the world.

- *How does the resurrection show the connection between Jesus’ sacrifice on the cross and God’s plan of redemption?*
- *How can we share the joy and hope of the risen Christ with others in our words and actions?*
- *For further study: Psalm 16:8-11; Acts 2:25-32*



Respond:

Look: Look at the painting, “Peter and John Running to the Tomb” by Eugene Burnand. Imagine the range of emotions the disciples experienced that morning!

Listen: Listen to the “Hallelujah Chorus” from Handel’s “Messiah.” Though we often connect this song with Christmas, invite the triumphant notes to carry your thoughts through the timeline of Christ’s life on earth: from the cradle to the cross to the crown of victory!

Love: As you celebrate and worship today, greet those you meet with the Easter phrase that has been used by believers for centuries: “He is Risen! He is Risen indeed!”

Littles: Roll aside the stone from your Easter garden tomb. Place a flameless tealight in the tomb to represent Jesus as the Light of the world, risen from the dead! Listen to the song “Christ the Lord is Risen Today” by Keith and Kristyn Getty and the Getty Girls.