

HOLY WEEK



Holy Week is special time to set apart and enter into the life, death and resurrection of Jesus as a family. You might be thinking...but how?

1. **Set realistic expectations and plan ahead** - decide at the beginning of the week how church services or special activities will align in your family rhythm. Decide what other activities you may need to forego. Most children enter into a different situation or schedule better when informed on what to expect. Explain ahead of time things for children to anticipate that may be unique or different. A brief conversation (whether at a mealtime or even in the car on the way to church) can help prepare their imaginations and hearts (not to mention, yours) for Holy Week worship.
2. **Maundy Thursday** - "It is a time of remembering Jesus' last meal with his disciples." Ask your children to be "on the look out" for special items (i.e. pitchers of water), words (i.e. this is my body) or times during the service (i.e. stripping of the altar) and to quietly let you know when they discover them. Discuss what you experienced as a family afterwards. There will be a time when we can go to the front of the church and wash feet. Out of humility, Jesus served His disciples by washing their feet. Is the water warm? There are towels to dry your feet. Not everyone has to do it. Imagine how you would have responded to Jesus washing your feet if you were one of His disciples? Wonder how dirty their feet were compared to your feet? We will remember Jesus' last supper with his disciples. What do we experience in church that is similar? The altar is also stripped bare. Watch for all the different items that are removed. Wonder why each one is important? Is it cleaned off quickly or slowly? Wonder why? Look for a color in church tonight? Is it still purple? The lights will dim and there is quiet, waiting, watching, praying. It might feel difficult, and that's okay. It will slowly get easier as you practice and grow up! We are still and quiet in services to respect other people who are listening, worshipping, and praying.
3. **Good Friday/Stations of the Cross** - This is when our church family remembers Jesus' death on the cross. It is a sad day. We can all participate and walk to different places in the church as we remember the events leading up to Jesus' death on the cross. We will hear readings and prayers. There is a large cross. Wonder who will carry it each time? We will not be sitting in chairs for most of the service. It is not long, but it is a sadder service. Listen for the different people and places mentioned in the readings. Wonder what it was like to be one of the people there the day Jesus died?
4. **Easter Sunday** - The best day ever! We celebrate that Jesus did not stay dead. Jesus is alive! He gives us the hope of resurrection too. Prepare ahead and allow your children to be well rested. So many special things to look or listen for: there will be baptisms, special music, flowers. Wonder how many times we will sing or say Alleluia? There will be fun with confetti eggs and butterflies to signify new life.



Activities for Holy Week and Easter

1. **Resurrection Cookies** - Make meringue cookies on Holy Saturday - fabulous object lesson of the empty tomb; scripture and cooking all in one.
<https://eatathomecooks.com/easter-story-cookies-for-kids-of-all-ages/>
2. **An Easter Feast Table** - designate a special table or shelf in your home as a place to focus on God. Decorate with a fabric of the church season (white in Easter), and have a Bible, basket of children's books for Easter, a cross, prayer prompts, anything that would encourage you in your family devotion. Change out for different church seasons. If we decorate for holidays, why not decorate with the church season in our homes? A great location for your children's Easter gold gilded cross if they participated in the Lenten Art Sunday School class.
3. **Plan to plant a lily or perennial plant** - Jesus brings new life; it will return and grow each new year.
4. **Resurrection Eggs** - can be purchased or look on internet for how to make yourself. A wonderful way to tell and retell the Easter story with smaller children. Play with and re-hide throughout the Easter season.