

Holy Week

Bible Verse

He isn't here, because he's been raised from the dead, just as he said. Come, see the place where they laid him. Matthew 28:6

Did You Know?

Holy Week begins with Jesus' "triumphant entry" into Jerusalem. The celebration that occurs is similar to the reception of military leaders returning victorious from battle. It's probable that some in the crowd expect Jesus to be a military ruler who will free them from the Roman emperor. But Jesus is a different kind of ruler. Jesus comes as a peaceful leader, teaching people to love one another.

After his triumphant entry, Jesus shares bread and wine with his disciples, as part of the Passover meal. Like the crowd earlier, the disciples are confused about who Jesus really is. Peter declares that he would die with Jesus before denying him. It seems that Peter is imagining a military battle, not a peaceful surrender. When the time comes to accompany Jesus to death, Peter denies Jesus three times. Like the disciples, we are often quick to choose violence. Following the peaceful way of Jesus is much more difficult.

Christians find the strength to follow this path because of their experience of the risen Jesus. All the Gospels give an account of the empty tomb. None of them, however, describe the resurrection itself. Jesus' resurrection remains part of the mystery of our faith. Ours is a resurrection faith, one that does not rely on evidence of how the resurrection occurred. We know that Jesus is alive because of the witness of those who experienced the presence of the risen Jesus and by our own experiences of Jesus' presence with us.



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Spiritual Practices Station

Bible Story

Matthew 21:1-11;
26:17-58, 69-75;
28:1-10

Anchor Point

We celebrate Jesus.

My Plan

- Bible Story—Holy Week
- Control the Volume of the Bible Verse
- Pray in a Garden—All Children
- Praying While Active—All Children
- Respond to the Story—Younger Children
- Holy Week Acrostic—Older Children
- Worship

For more Bible background information, go to deepbluekids.com.

Illustrations of the Deep Blue Kids are by Tim Moen, character designer; Jesse Griffin, 3D artist; Julio Medina, 3D artist; Eric M. Mikula, facial rigging; Christopher Slavik, layout artist.

Station Setup

Write the Bible verse on a large sheet of mural paper or a piece of poster board and hang it where the children can see it. (He isn't here, because he's been raised from the dead, just as he said. Come, see the place where they laid him. Matthew 28:6)

BIBLE STORY—HOLY WEEK

Supplies: Deep Blue Kids Bibles

SAY: Holy Week begins with Palm Sunday and ends with Easter. Today we're going to hear the Bible stories we retell and remember each week during Holy Week. These stories are found in the New Testament because they are about Jesus. Our stories today are from the gospel of Matthew. Matthew is the first book in the New Testament.

- Have the children find Matthew in their Bibles.

SAY: Matthew is one of the four Gospels.

ASK: What are the other three Gospels? (Mark, Luke, and John)

SAY: The stories in the Gospels tell us about Jesus. On Palm Sunday, we remember Jesus' triumphant entry into Jerusalem. Jesus rode into Jerusalem on a donkey. As Jesus approached Jerusalem, people gathered to celebrate him. Some people spread their clothes on the road for Jesus to ride on. Other people cut palm branches and spread them on the road.

- Have the children find Matthew 21:9 in their Bibles.

ASK: What did the people shout as Jesus rode by? (Hosanna to the Son of David! Blessings on the one who comes in the name of the Lord! Hosanna in the highest!)

SAY: After people celebrated Jesus on his way into Jerusalem, Jesus and his disciples shared the Passover meal together. During the meal, Jesus told his disciples that the bread and wine that they were sharing was the sign of a new covenant. Jesus asked his disciples to remember him when they ate bread and shared the wine. When we celebrate communion, we remember Jesus. After the Passover meal, Jesus and his disciples went to the Mount of Olives. Jesus went to pray in a garden called Gethsemane.

- Have the children find Matthew 26:36-46 in their Bibles.
- Encourage the children to follow along as you read Matthew 26:36-46 aloud.

SAY: Jesus was arrested in the garden of Gethsemane. Judas, one of Jesus' disciples, betrayed Jesus and led the soldiers to him. The soldiers took Jesus to the house of the high priest. There Jesus was put on trial and sentenced to death. Jesus was crucified on a cross. After Jesus died, his body was placed in a tomb. The entrance to the tomb was sealed with a large stone. Roman soldiers guarded

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the entrance of the tomb. Holy Week ends on Easter with the celebration of Jesus' resurrection. After Jesus died, his followers were sad. Early in the morning on the third day after Jesus died, two women named Mary, who were friends of Jesus, went to the tomb where Jesus had been buried.

When the women got to the tomb, they discovered there had been an earthquake and the big stone which had been in front of the tomb was rolled to the side. An angel was sitting on the stone and all the guards had fainted. The women looked in the tomb and it was empty! The angel said, "Now hurry, go and tell Jesus' disciples he's been raised from the dead and you will see him in Galilee." As the women hurried to tell the disciples what they had seen, Jesus met them and greeted them. Mary and Mary fell at Jesus' feet and worshipped him. It was true, Jesus was alive! Jesus told them to go and tell the disciples that he was alive. On Easter we celebrate the good news of the empty tomb that means Jesus is alive.

CONTROL THE VOLUME OF THE BIBLE VERSE

Supplies: Bible verse poster made during station setup

- Show the children the Bible verse poster.

SAY: When the women went to the tomb early in the morning, they found an empty tomb and an angel. This is what the angel said.

- Encourage the children to read the verse together with you.

SAY: Now let's pretend I'm a volume control slider. We'll say the verse together two more times. When I'm standing over here (move all the way to your right side), the volume needs to be very soft. As I walk across the room, the volume increases and when I am standing over here (move all the way to your left side), the volume is very loud.

- Encourage the children to say the verse with you two more times as you control the volume with your position.

Activity Options

Choose from the following activities as your time and the children's interests allow.

PRAY IN A GARDEN—ALL CHILDREN

Supplies: Leader's Guide—p. 8

Before class: Identify a place for the children to spend time in prayer. Make copies of "Prayer Time" (p. 8) for each child.

SAY: After Jesus and his disciples celebrated Passover, they went to a garden called Gethsemane.

ASK: How do you think Jesus was feeling at this time? What did Jesus do in the garden? (He prayed.)

≈ TIPS ≈

If your church has a garden or courtyard area, use it for this activity. You may also have the children sit in the grass or under trees outside even if the area is not specifically a garden. If you do not have an outdoors option for this activity, find a quiet place inside where the children can pray. Add plants or flowers to the area to give it a garden feel.

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SAY: Jesus knew that we can pray any time, no matter what we are feeling. Let's spend time praying in a garden like Jesus did.

- Take the children to the place where they will pray.

SAY: You may sit in one spot while you are praying or you may walk around. This will be a quiet time of prayer. Be respectful of others around you that are also praying.

- Give each child a copy of "Prayer Time."

SAY: You can always pray about anything that's on your mind. You may use this prayer sheet as a guide while you pray, but you don't have to.

- Encourage children to spend time praying.

PRAYING WHILE ACTIVE—ALL CHILDREN

- Have the children stand in a circle.

SAY: We have spent some time in silent prayer, but we know that there are many ways to pray. We can pray any time, regardless of what we're doing. Think about something you like to do and think of an action that goes along with that activity. For example, I might say that I like to swim (make swimming motions with your arms) or that I like to read (pretend to hold a book).

- Give the children a few moments to think of an activity and a corresponding action.

ASK: Can you pray while you are doing the activity you like to do? (Of course!)

SAY: Let's go around the circle and share our activities. When it's your turn, tell us what you like to do, showing us the action you've chosen. After each person shares, we'll say together, "We can pray while we (activity)" and we'll make the motion the person showed us.

- Invite each child to share an activity he or she likes to do.
- Encourage the children to respond as directed.

After all children have shared, **SAY:** Now let's see if we can remember everything that was shared. This time we'll say, "We can pray while we," and beginning with the first activity shared, we'll say all the activities that have been shared in a row and do the actions with them.

- Encourage the children to remember all the activities shared.

SAY: We can pray anywhere, at any time, no matter what we are doing.

RESPOND TO THE STORY—YOUNGER CHILDREN

Supplies: Leader's Guide—p. 9, paper, crayons

Before class: Make a copy of "Jesus Is Alive" (p. 9).

SAY: At the end of Holy Week we celebrate Easter.

ASK: What do we celebrate on Easter?

- Give each child a piece of paper.

SAY: I am going to read the story of Jesus' resurrection again. After you listen to the story, I invite you to respond to the story by drawing a picture. You may draw something you remember from the story, or something that represents how the story makes you feel, or simply draw a design. There is no right or wrong response. Each person may respond to the story differently.

- Read "Jesus Is Alive!"
- Invite the children to respond to the story by drawing.
- Allow time for children to draw.

HOLY WEEK ACROSTIC—OLDER CHILDREN

Supplies: Leader's Guide—p. 10, pencils

Before class: Make copies of "Holy Week Acrostic" (p. 10).

SAY: Today we have heard stories that we tell during Holy Week each year.

- Give each child a copy of "Holy Week Acrostic" and a pencil.
- Encourage the children to work individually or in pairs to create acrostics.
- Invite the children to share their acrostics with each other.

Worship

Supplies: Leader's Guide—p. 7

Before class: Make copies of the "Reproducible Family Letter" (p. 7).

SAY: Today we talked about Holy Week.

ASK: When is Holy Week? (the week between Palm Sunday and Easter)

SAY: Some of the stories of Holy Week are happy and some are sad. No matter how we're feeling, we can always pray. I'm going to give you some directions to follow while we pray today.

- Have the children close their eyes.

PRAY: God, we take time today to name silently persons we know who are hurting and those who have needs that we may not know.

- Have the children place their hands over their heart.

PRAY: We hold these persons in our heart and ask that you would show us how we can be a friend in hard times as well as in joyful times.

- Have the children cup their hands and lift them upward.

PRAY: We lift these persons up to you, God. You know who they are. Surround them with your love.

- Invite the children to open their eyes and raise their hands toward the sky.

PRAY: God, we also give thanks for those persons experiencing joyful times.

- Have the children clap three times.

PRAY: Thank you for being with us all, all the time. In sad times and in joyful times we celebrate that Jesus is alive. Amen.

- Send a family letter home with each child.

Reproducible Family Letter

Today we explored the events of Holy Week through spiritual practice activities. A spiritual practice is anything that helps us form a connection to God. Spiritual practices may include prayer, personal reflection, group sharing, worship, meditation, and study. There are many different types of spiritual practice, and some people may find certain practices more meaningful than others. Participating in a variety of spiritual practices helps to keep us focused on God.

Do This Activity at Home With Your Family

COMPARE GOSPEL ACCOUNTS OF THE RESURRECTION

Each of the Gospel writers—Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John—tells of women discovering the empty tomb. As is usually the case when more than one Gospel records the same story, the accounts are slightly different.

Read the story of Jesus' resurrection in each of the Gospels.

- Matthew 28:1-10
- Mark 16:1-8
- Luke 24:1-12
- John 20:1-18

Discuss together:

1. How are these stories of Jesus' resurrection similar?
2. What differences are there in the four stories?
3. Which version is your favorite and why?

Prayer Time

Prayer is talking with God. You can pray about anything. There is no right or wrong way to pray.

If you need suggestions for what to pray about, consider saying one of following prayers.

Help!

You can pray to God any time you feel like you need help.

You can ask God to help you.

You can ask God to help other people.

Thanks!

It is always good to thank God for your blessings.

Thank God for the good things in your life.

Thank God for the people who love and help you.

Thank God for loving you and always being with you.

Wow!

God created many wonderful things.

Tell God what you find amazing about God's world.

Compliment God on the clever, efficient, and beautiful world God created for us.

Jesus Is Alive!

A long time ago, after Jesus had died on the cross, two women named Mary, who were friends of Jesus, went to the tomb where Jesus had been buried. They knew Jesus' body was sealed inside the tomb by a big rock. They also knew Jesus' tomb was being guarded by Roman soldiers. Still, they wanted to see the place where Jesus' body was, so early in the morning they walked out to the tomb.

When the women got to the tomb, they discovered there had been an earthquake and the big stone which had been in front of the tomb was rolled to the side. An angel was sitting on the stone and the guards had fainted.

You can imagine how Mary and Mary felt—confused, mad, disappointed, sad. But here's the good news! The story doesn't end there.

The angel said to the women, "Don't be afraid. I know you are looking for Jesus who was crucified. He isn't here, because he's been raised from the dead. Come, see the place where they laid him."

The women looked in the tomb and it was empty! The angel said, "Now hurry, go and tell Jesus' disciples he's been raised from the dead and you will see him in Galilee."

As the women hurried to tell the disciples what they had seen, Jesus met them and greeted them. Mary and Mary fell at Jesus' feet and worshipped him. It was true! Jesus was alive!

Jesus told them, "Don't be afraid. Go and tell my brothers I am alive and I will see them in Galilee."

The women found out that an empty tomb was good news because it meant Jesus had risen from the dead and he was alive!

(Based on Matthew 28:1-10)

Holy Week Acrostic

During Holy Week we remember the events that led up to Jesus' resurrection.

- Jesus rode into Jerusalem on a donkey.
- Jesus and his disciples celebrated Passover.
- Jesus prayed in the garden called Gethsemane.
- Jesus was arrested.
- Peter denied knowing Jesus.
- Jesus died on a cross.
- The women discovered the empty tomb.
- Jesus is alive.

Create an acrostic by writing a word or phrase about the stories of Holy Week that begins with each letter in the words Holy Week.

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