

COUNTDOWN TO EASTER—HOLY WEEK

This countdown begins Palm Sunday and walks you through Holy Week, explaining the events that occurred. Each day you add and read scripture related to Holy Week and add a symbol for the day. You may add a couple Hershey's kisses just for fun.

1. GATHER YOUR SUPPLIES.

- Purple, Black, and White Ribbon
- 8 Small Boxes (any small boxes will do. Michael's has small wedding boxes, or use baggies)
- Hershey's Kisses (optional)
- "Palm Branches" (pieces of Easter grass work well or make out of construction paper.)
- Small LED Light or Tea Light
- 30 Silver Coins
- Something to Represent a Basin and Cloth (you can use the bottom of an Easter Egg and a small piece of fabric.)
- Small Cross (you can use sticks or craft sticks and yarn to make your cross.)
- Torn Piece of Cloth

2. ASSEMBLE YOUR BOXES, OR A BAGGIE.

Attach the days of the week to the front of the box or the baggie. Make a copy of the verse for each day so that you can put the verse in the correct box or baggie. If you don't want to make a copy of the verses, be sure to read the verses from your bible, or have mom and dad help you read the scripture.

EACH DAY ADD THE SYMBOL AND VERSE TO YOUR BOX OR BAGGIE, THEN READ THE SCRIPTURE AND THE DETAILS PROVIDED,

DAY 1- PALM SUNDAY

Symbol: Palm Branches

Verses: Luke 19:28-44 (also found in Matthew 21:1-11, Mark 11:1-11, and John 12:12-19)

Details: Jesus enters Jerusalem on a donkey to a warm welcome. The people are shouting, "Hosanna! {which means "Save now!"} Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord!" They wave palm branches and lay their cloaks on the road for Jesus to ride over.

DAY 2- MONDAY

Symbol: LED Light or Tea Light

Verses: John 12:20-36

Details: After the Triumphal Entry, Jesus tells his disciples, "You are going to have the light just a little while longer. Walk while you have the light...Put your trust in the light while you have it, so that you may become sons of light." (v. 35-36) Jesus had already declared, "I am the light of the world" in John 8:12 and challenged them to "let your light shine before men, that they may see your good deeds and praise your Father in heaven." (Matthew 5:16) In his last days, Jesus encourages his disciples to soak up all of his "light" that they can while he is still there in person so they can carry it on when he is no longer with them.

Make It Memorable: Go into a room of your house that has no light and turn on the little light from their box or a small flashlight. Talk about how a little light can illuminate a large part of the room, just as we can affect those around us by showing Jesus' light in us. Come up with a way you can "be a light" to someone this week.

DAY 3- TUESDAY

Symbol: 30 "Pieces of Silver"

Verses: Matthew 26:14-16 (also found in Mark 14:10-11, Luke 22:1-6)

Details: Judas agrees to betray Jesus to the chief priests for thirty silver coins, thus setting into motion the plan to have Jesus arrested and eventually crucified.

Make It Memorable: Make it real for your kids by asking them what someone would have to give them in order for them to give up their mom or dad. Hopefully they conclude that no amount of money would be worth it!

DAY 4- WEDNESDAY

Symbol: Basin and Wash Rag

Verses: John 13:1-17

Details: Washing guests' feet was a job delegated to the lowest servant. Think about it: they only wore sandals, so their feet were exposed to everything, including mud, dust, animal droppings, and even raw sewage. No one wanted to be the foot-washer...can you blame them?! By washing his disciples' feet, Jesus, the only human who has ever been perfect, humbled himself to the lowest place and

demonstrated that to be human was to serve others.

Make It Memorable: Get out a large bowl and cloth and wash your kids' feet. If they want, they can also wash yours. Determine to try to serve one another, just as Jesus humbly served his disciples.

DAY 5- MAUNDY THURSDAY

Symbol: Communion Cup and "Bread"

Verses: Luke 22:7-23 (also Matthew 26:17-30, Mark 14:12-26)

Details: {"Maundy" comes from the Latin *mandatum*, which means commandment, and refers to John 13:34 where Jesus commands his disciples to love one another.} During the Passover meal, he also breaks the bread and tells his disciples, "This is my body given for you," and the cup, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood, which is poured out for you." The parallels here are undeniable. They are sitting here celebrating the Passover, a feast to remember when God protected the Israelites during the final plague in Egypt (Exodus 11 & 12) by having them slaughter a lamb and paint the lamb's blood on the sides and top of their doorframes so that they would be "passed over," and their firstborn son would survive. In the same way, Jesus' blood is about to be shed so that all who believe in Him are "passed over," spared from an eternity separated from God.

Make It Memorable: Have crackers and grape juice for a snack today and be thankful to Jesus for all that he has done for us.

DAY 6- GOOD FRIDAY

Symbol: Cross

Verses: Mark 14:43-15:32 (also found in Matthew 26:47-27:44, Luke 22:47-23:43, John 18:1-19:27)

Details: Good Friday commemorates the death of Jesus on the cross. You may want to go into more or less detail about the crucifixion, depending on the ages of your children.

Make It Memorable: Make a crown of thorns out of play doh and some tooth picks. Talk about the fact that Jesus was willing to endure all of that pain and eventually death in order to save us.

DAY 7- HOLY SATURDAY

Symbol: Ripped Cloth

Verses: Mark 15:33-47 (also found in Matthew 27:45-61, Luke 23:44-56)

Details: After Jesus breathed his last breath, the curtain of the temple, which separated the Holy of Holies from the rest of the temple, was torn in two. Previously, only the high priest could enter the Holy of Holies into the presence of God once a year; the curtain denoted a separation between God and men. Now that Jesus had given himself as the ultimate sacrifice for our sins, there was no longer that separation. We can access God directly because Christ erased our sins when he died for us.

Make It Memorable: Hold up a sheet between you and your child, showing how people were formerly separated from God. Then drop the sheet so they can see how freely we can come to God because of Jesus.

DAY 8- EASTER SUNDAY

Symbol: Empty Box

Verses: John 20:1-18 (also found in Matthew 27:62-28:10, Mark 16:1-19, Luke 24:1-12)

Details: Christ is Risen!! He is Risen Indeed!! Because Jesus left the tomb empty and conquered death, we can live for eternity in Heaven!

Make It Memorable: Go to church with your family and celebrate!

4. TIE A RIBBON AROUND EACH BOX OR BAGGIE.

Palm Sunday through Maundy Thursday get a **purple** ribbon, the traditional color of Lent which stands for royalty and repentance. Good Friday and Holy Saturday should have **black** ribbon, symbolizing sin and death, and Easter Sunday gets a **white** ribbon to signify resurrection and new life.

5. DISPLAY THE BOXES IN A PLACE WHERE YOUR KIDS WILL SEE THEM OFTEN.

Glue or tape to your box or baggie.

Palm Sunday

LUKE
19:28-44

Monday

JOHN
12:20-36

Tuesday

MATTHEW
26:14-16

Wednesday

JOHN
13:1-17

Maundy Thursday

LUKE
22:7-23

Good Friday

MARK
14:43 - 15:32

Holy Saturday

MARK
15:33-47

Easter Sunday

JOHN
20:1-18

Glue or tape to your box or baggie.

Palm
Sunday

Monday

Tuesday

Wednesday

Maundy
Thursday

Good
Friday

Holy
Saturday

Easter
Sunday