



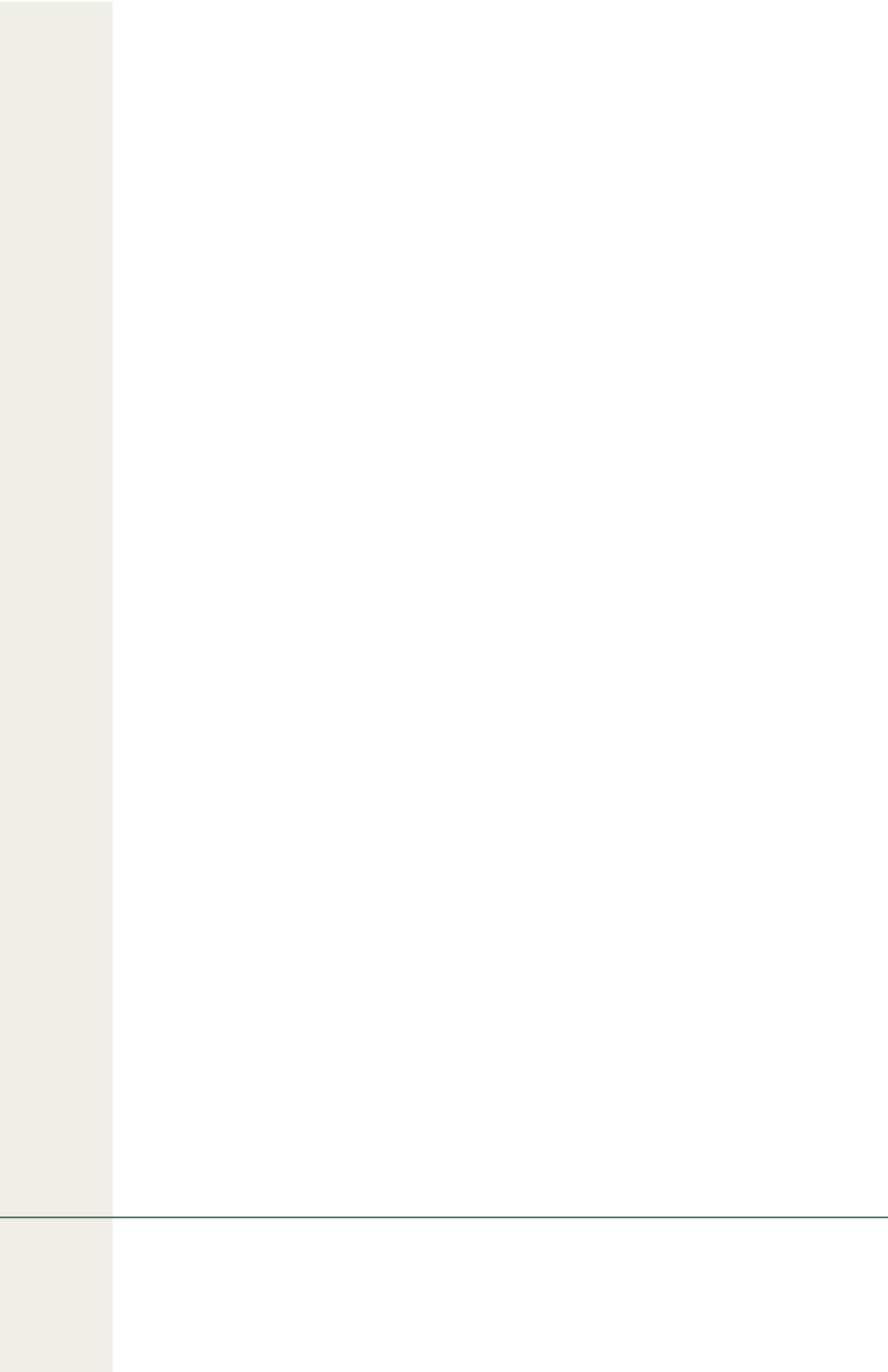
the Nurturing Home

# *Celebrating Holy Week*

with your  
preschoolers




by Kimberly Kincell



# Table of Contents

03	Introduction
05	Palm Sunday
07	Passover
09	Communion
12	Springtime Life
14	Garden of Gethsemane
16	Good Friday
18	Saturday, Jewish Sabbath
20	Resurrection Sunday



One could easily argue that Holy Week is the most important celebration of the year—more important than Christmas, birthdays, anniversaries, or graduations. So taking the time to plan your celebration is a worthy occupation!

Yet before you can really teach your children to understand this season, you have to know it yourself.



What follows, then, is a quick summary for you! Set aside an hour or two to review what this week is all about! If you are a Christian, I promise that this should be a wonderful experience. If you aren't a Christian, this booklet probably isn't for you, but you can still enjoy the Easter traditions that seem precious to you, perhaps Easter egg hunts, or attending Easter Sunday services.

If you love the Christian significance of the season, then you'll be ready to use our prompts to find fun ways to introduce your children to this beautiful season of remembrance!



Look for this Egg Symbol throughout the booklet.

There you will find ideas for filling plastic eggs with symbols of the Easter story. Alternatively, purchase the original Resurrection Eggs™ from Family Life (available through [christianbook.com](http://christianbook.com)). Display in a basket of Easter grass, and use the eggs to prompt tellings and retellings of everything that happened during the first Holy Week.

Traditionally, Holy Week starts with the celebration of Palm Sunday and ends one week later on Easter Sunday. We're going to help you quickly review the various Holy Week events. Then you can share with your child at their level.

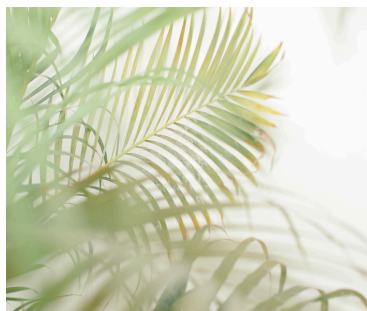
As you plan what to do with your preschoolers, an easy daily routine is

1. Read from a Bible story book that is faithful to the Biblical account. Choose the day's story, e.g. Jesus' triumphal entry, and read the illustrated story together as a Read Aloud.
2. Learn the suggested songs in advance, and sing them together.
3. Open the day's egg and connect the symbol with the story, e.g., "This represents the palm branches that the people had when Jesus rode into the city on a donkey. Let's get our big palms from the vase and wave them while we sing!"
4. If the kids want to open the other eggs, let them! Briefly tell them what those symbols mean, too!
5. Have fun! This is a celebration!

# Palm Sunday

---

Palm Sunday is the celebration of Jesus' triumphal entry into Jerusalem to celebrate the Passover Feast. The crowd was so excited that they put palm branches in the road for Jesus to ride on. Hence, the name "Palm Sunday."



Start your review by reading Matthew 21:1–11 and John 12:12–13 for the context of Jesus's triumphal entry.

If you already know where the week is headed, then you may realize that while the people worshiped as Jesus arrived in Jerusalem, many of them quickly turned against Him and cried for Him to be crucified just a few short days later...

As your children get older, you can explain that it's easy to worship when everyone else is, too. But it's a different story to stay true to the Lord when you must go against the crowd to do so.

That message is illustrated by Peter's denial of Jesus as told in Luke 22. Review that sobering chapter, but remember the good news is that Jesus knew that Peter would blow it but loved him anyway. The Lord's mercies are new every morning!

## **Palm Sunday for your preschoolers:**

While these are good things to ponder this day, preschoolers are not quite ready to discuss peer pressure. For them, this should be a day of waving palms, singing, and praising the Lord!

If you live in an area that grows palms, perhaps you can bring one or two into the house. If not, craft stores like Hobby Lobby have plastic versions. Three to four palms can be placed in a large vase as a centerpiece through the season. Allow your children to wave the palms and pretend to be in the crowd that day.

Matthew 21:9 and 11 is set to music by Steve Green in his Hide ‘em in Your Heart children’s song series. Simply search for “Hide ‘em in Your Heart Hosanna!” on YouTube and learn this song together.



The egg symbol for Palm Sunday is a palm of course. You can look for a tiny silk or plastic version, or simply cut a small one out of green construction paper.

When your children are older and you add the story of Peter’s denial, add an egg with a small plastic rooster.

# Passover

---



Jesus came to Jerusalem to celebrate the Passover Feast. Read about it in Exodus chapter 11 and then chapter 12:14–30. I find it both touching and fascinating to see how Passover gives added depth to the season!

God’s people, the Israelites, had been mistreated slaves in Egypt for many years. Moses was chosen by God to lead the Israelites out of slavery to the Promised Land. Moses went to the Pharaoh of Egypt and said, “God says, ‘Let my people go!’” But Pharaoh wouldn’t let them go. The story is found in Exodus chapters 3 through 12.

God sent ten plagues on Egypt and the last was the death of the firstborn. The death angel was to come in the night and kill all the firstborn males, but if the Israelites put lamb’s blood on their doorposts, the death angel would “pass over” their house.

After that horrific plague, Pharaoh let them leave and they left quickly, taking unleavened bread with them because it was quickly made and would last well. The Jewish Passover was instituted by God to remember all this.

For us today, the Israelites’ slavery in Egypt is like our slavery to sin.

- The blood on their doorposts to save them from death is the blood of Christ which saves us from eternal death due to sin.
- The sacrificed Passover lamb for us is Christ sacrificed on the cross.
- Our passover blood is the blood of Christ, shed for us.

## Passover for your preschoolers:

- Read the story of the Egyptian plagues from your Bible story book.
- An old children’s song, “Pharaoh Pharaoh,” is about this time. It, too, can be found on YouTube. The chorus is easy to learn and has very few words. Sing it as if you are Moses singing it to the Pharaoh!

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=y7O4kWKTNPA>

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=scJDRx\\_Dflo](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=scJDRx_Dflo)



The egg symbol today is a little bit of matzah or cracker. Pretend to travel out of Egypt and eat Matzah on the way.

(Matzah is unleavened bread used by Jews to celebrate Passover. It can be found in most grocery stores.)



# Communion

---



Review Luke 22:7-20.

Jesus instituted the church's ordinance of communion at a Passover meal. Christians remember Christ's death by taking "communion" or "The Lord's Supper" as described in this passage. Jesus said,

"Do this in remembrance of Me."

As you read in Scripture, no leavening is allowed during Passover or the week following it. Leavening is another word for yeast and, in Scripture, yeast often represents sin (I Corinthians 5:6-8).

On the next page you'll find a summary of the symbolism connecting Passover, Christ's death, and our celebration of communion.



The unleavened bread represents Christ's sinless body. Remember that leaven represents sin, so unleavened bread represents Christ's sinless life.

We all deserve to die because "the wages of sin is death" and we "all have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God."

Except Christ. He's the only one who could die in our place because He is the only one who had no sin. Yet He willingly took our sin upon Himself—to die in our place (Isaiah 53:3–5). Such love!

As we "break bread" in communion, we remember that His sinless, blameless body was broken for *our* transgressions.

## *The Unleavened Bread*

---

The cup represents Christ's blood shed for us. As the blood on the doorpost made death "pass over," so Christ's blood causes death to pass over us and allows us to have eternal life.

## *The Fruit of the Vine*

---

Jesus is our Passover Lamb, sacrificed so that His blood could cleanse us from all sin!  
1 Corinthians 5:7

He became our sacrificial Lamb, given once for all.

## *The Sacrificial Lamb*

---

### **Communion for your preschoolers**

Explain that your church takes communion regularly and that it is done to remember that Christ died for us.

Open the egg with the Passover Matzah and briefly mention

that it also represents the body of Jesus. Show them a regular piece of bread and compare with the Matzah. The Matzah is different (not fluffy) because it has no yeast.

Explain that long ago, God's people had to take all the regular bread out of their whole house and clean it when they celebrated. We don't have to do that now because Jesus' blood washes our hearts clean which is better than a clean house!

If there's a cross hanging in your church, point it out at next service and explain that Jesus died for them on the cross so that they could have eternal life. Consider John 3:16 for your memory verse this season.

For older preschoolers, draw a heart on a white board and put black marks all over it. Then use red colored water to wash it all away. Explain that this is like Jesus' blood that washes all our sin away!

Suggested song: "What Can Wash Away our Sins?" Or "Whiter Than Snow."



Today's egg symbol is a small plastic communion cup. (You can likely ask your church for one.) Explain to your children that the juice in the cup during communion represents Jesus' blood. During communion, it reminds us that Jesus washes away our sins just like the red water washed the white board.

Alternatively, cut or buy a small white snowflake to represent a heart that is white as snow because of Jesus.

# Springtime Life

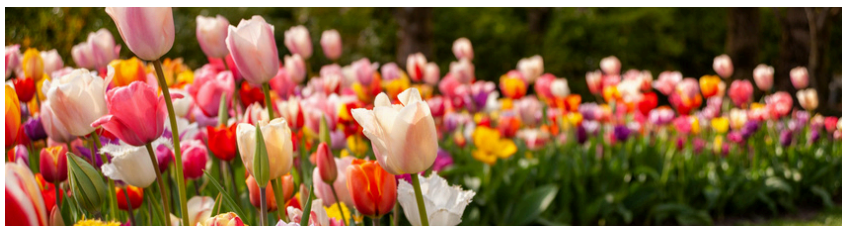
---

Just like the Israelites when they celebrated Passover, we, too, commemorate our freedom from bondage when we take communion! For us, it's not the bondage of slavery in literal Egypt, but rather the bondage of sin. Once we were slaves to sin, but now we are freed from sin! This is made clear in Romans 6, especially verses 6 and 7.

We are freed from sin's bondage not because of anything we do, but because of what Christ has done for us! (Romans 8:1-4.)

As the Jews back in Egypt took the lamb's blood to mark their doorposts so that the death angel would pass over, we, too, have a perfect Lamb sacrificed on the cross. With His blood sprinkled on us, the death angel passes over us and we have everlasting life! (John 3:16, Hebrews 2:9)

Springtime reminds us of everlasting life. After the cold and dark of winter, life springs forth! Daffodils and tulips emerge; trees begin to bloom, leaves bud. Our Creator has surrounded us with an annual display that reminds us year after year that life follows death for the believer!



The eggs used in the traditional seder meal represent newness of life as well. This is a celebration of life!

---

### **Spring for your preschoolers:**

Sing the verse of “Great is Thy Faithfulness” that begins “Summer and winter and springtime and harvest.” Hold up the Calendar Time season cards as you mention each season.

Point out bare trees outdoors, and explain that they will soon have new leaves as everything comes back to life! If you have emerging spring flowers like crocuses, tulips, or daffodils, show your preschoolers the shoots pushing up out of the ground because everything is coming back to life! After death comes life!

Look at eggs, real or fake, and explain that little birds grow inside them. Read the Little Golden Book, *Springtime Animals*.

If Easter is falling late enough, you might have a farm nearby with newly born animals to visit.



The egg symbol is a small silk flower—to remind us that spring and Easter are all about things coming back to life. Explain to your littles that Jesus came back to life after He died, and that’s what you’ll be celebrating on Sunday!

# Garden of Gethsemane

---

After their Passover meal, Jesus and his apostles went out to Gethsemane. There Jesus prayed to the Father about what He knew was coming: His death.

It was not easy! He was completely human and completely God. His human side felt dread and pain. Because of that, He is perfectly able to understand our weaknesses. He has been tempted in every way as we are, yet without sin (Hebrews 4:14–16). Read Matthew 26:36–46.



In the Garden of Gethsemane, Jesus spent a long while in prayer, setting a good example of what to do when we're about to face something very difficult. This is where Jesus prayed, "Nevertheless, not My will but Thine be done." Jesus had taught us to pray the same thing: "Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven."

---

## **Gethsemane with your preschoolers:**

Get yesterday's flower egg back out. Review that it represents life in spring. Also talk of flower gardens; perhaps visit one and pray while there.

Jesus went to a garden called Gethsemane where He prayed to His Father in heaven when He was sad. We can always pray to God, too—when we're sad, but also when we're happy!

Jesus prayed to God all the time. We do, too!



The egg symbol for Gethsemane is a small pretzel. The folds represent folded hands to pray. It reminds us that Jesus prayed in the Garden of Gethsemane.



Other activities:

- Read about the Garden of Gethsemane from the Bible story book or the Bible itself.
- Say the Lord's prayer together today.
- Get on your knees, fold your hands, and pray for something special together.
- Go buy a soft pretzel to eat together after praying.
- Sing, "Sweet Hour of Prayer" or "In the Garden."
- Have pretzels for lunch or as a side for dinner.
- Repeat the verse, "Not My will but Thy will be done."  
(Matthew 26:39d)
- Sing the old song, "Not my will, but Thine."

# Good Friday

---

It was also in the Garden of Gethsemane where Jesus was betrayed by Judas and arrested.

He was then taken to Caiphias, the high priest, and before the Sanhedrin.

Early the following morning, Jesus was taken to Pilate, the governor. Read about it in Matthew 27.



The people might have praised Jesus when He rode into Jerusalem, but the crowd is calling for Him to be crucified now!

Jesus was stripped, taunted, flogged, and had a crown of thorns placed on His head *before* the crucifixion.

At that time, crucifixion was a common punishment for criminals. The hands and feet were nailed to a T-shaped, rough, wooden cross. Nailed this way, the body drooped down, and in order to breathe, the victim had to lift himself on his nailed feet, sliding his back against the rough wood. Jesus' back would have been torn and bleeding from the flogging (John 19:1).

After hanging for hours, the victim would get dehydrated and the muscles too tired to push up to breathe. The person eventually would die of asphyxiation. If the prisoner had not died in a reasonable amount of time, the guards would often push a spear into the person's side to finish off his death. As reported in

John, they broke the legs of the robbers to prevent them from pushing up to breathe. But they did not do this to Jesus because He was already dead. (John 19:32-36, Exodus 12:46, Numbers 9:12, Psalm 34:20.)

As soon as Jesus died, the curtain of the temple was torn in two! This was the heavy veil that divided the holy of holies into which only the High Priest could enter on the Day of Atonement from the rest of the temple. The tearing of that curtain was symbolic of a new way in which all Christians could enter the presence of God with no other sacrifice but Christ's. We are no longer separated from God's presence but can come boldly to the throne of grace to find help! (Hebrews 4:14-16)

In addition, all Christians have become priests, offering spiritual sacrifices to God (I Peter 2:5). God doesn't desire animal sacrifices; He is pleased by a broken and contrite heart (Psalm 51:17).

---

### Good Friday for your preschoolers:

- Listen to and sing along to Hide Em in Your Heart's "We Love Him" on YouTube. "Jesus Loves Me" is a good choice as well.
- Remind your kids about the cross at your church and how seeing it reminds us that Jesus died on a cross for us.
- Read the story of the crucifixion in your Bible story book.



The egg symbol for today is a small cross, easily made with little twigs held together with wire (or a bread tie) at the cross-section.

# Saturday - Jewish Sabbath

---



Although Jesus would have been in the grave then, He is not now!

It's time to prepare to celebrate Christ's resurrection tomorrow!

Jewish days actually begin at sundown—so the first day of the week would have begun Saturday night. There is reason to believe that Christ rose from the dead before sun-up, still on the first day of the week. It doesn't matter much, because we are sure that when the women came to the tomb early in the morning on the first day of the week, Jesus' body was not there!

Read Matthew 28. Death no longer has power over us because Jesus overcame death! We have the gift of eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.

---

## **Prepping for tomorrow with your preschoolers:**

Hide 'Em in Your Heart also includes, "In My Father's House," a great introduction to eternal life in heaven!

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LLOKKGQWJV5>

The song can easily lead into the third verse of "When We All Get to Heaven:" "Onward to the prize before us, soon His beauty we'll

behold. Soon the pearly gates will open, We shall tread the streets of gold. When we all get to heaven, what a day of rejoicing that will be!”

Outdoor sunrise services on Easter morning can become cherished memories for a child. Something about being outside in the early morning beauty to celebrate His resurrection makes an indelible mark. As a child at sunrise services, I remember feeling cold but being awed by the morning light. I also remember singing “Up From the Grave He Arose!” and still love that song today! I encourage you to celebrate with your children and give them precious memories about the most important things in life.

But if you or your children have not yet sought Jesus Christ as your Savior, please attend to this now. If we seek Him, we will find Him—if we seek with all our hearts (Jeremiah 29:13). The beauty of this season is lost to the person who is not saved. How can you be saved? “Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and you will be saved.” Godly sorrow brings repentance that leads to salvation (2 Corinthians 7:10). We are all in need of a Savior—the only Savior of the world, Jesus Christ. He is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only, but for the sins of the whole world. If we believe in Him, we have the gift of eternal life, not earned, but freely given.

This is a beautiful time of celebration for those of us who know Him personally.



The egg symbol is a stone. He is in the grave at this point in the story—sealed with a stone. But the stone will soon be rolled away!

Bonus scriptures to ponder today:

1 John 1:9

Acts 2:21

Hebrews 7:25

Romans 10:9

# Resurrection Sunday

---

*He lives! He lives!  
Christ Jesus lives today!  
He walks with me and talks with  
me  
Along life's narrow way.  
He lives! He lives!  
Salvation to impart.  
You ask me how I know He lives?  
He lives within my heart.*



This is the day of Christ's resurrection—on the Feast of First Fruits! Jesus is the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep (I Corinthians 15:20)! This means that He is the first to rise from the grave and conquer death for all.

We gather with Christian brothers and sisters to marvel at the resurrection of our Lord and Savior! Celebrate today. He is risen! He is risen indeed!



Today's egg is empty! The grave is empty. "He is not here: He is risen!"







the Nurturing Home

[WWW.NURTURINGBIRTHTOFIVE.COM](http://WWW.NURTURINGBIRTHTOFIVE.COM)

ALL RIGHTS RESERVED

2026