



EASTER SCHOOLS' WORSHIP ACTIVITIES 2021

1. HOPES AND DREAMS

Palm Sunday

RESOURCES NEEDED: Palm leaves (See template)
Basket to put the palm leaves in
Optional: Length of material; pebbles; cross

SETTING: ROAD TO JERUSALEM

You could create a roadway - with a length of material and perhaps some pebbles to line the edge, with a cross at the end of the roadway.

GATHERING:

Children sit on the floor "at the side of the road".

Explain that we will be thinking about hopes and dreams.

People in Jesus' time were dreaming of a time when they would be free from the Roman soldiers who ruled their lives. They were hoping for a leader who would overthrow their enemies.

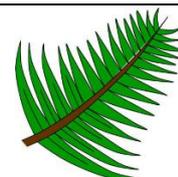
INTRODUCTION:

We all dream about how things could be different and how our lives and others in the world could be better.

As you listen to the story of Palm Sunday, think about your hopes and dreams for the future.

PALM SUNDAY:

Read the story of Palm Sunday. The children could take turns reading or could act out the story.



ACTIVITY / REFLECTION:

Think about your hopes or dreams for the future and write them on your palm leaf. Lay your palm leaf in the basket and leave in the middle of the floor.



PALM SUNDAY



As Jesus came closer to Jerusalem, he asked two of his disciples to go ahead of him. He said, "When you get to the town, you will see a donkey tied up. Untie it and bring it to me. If anyone asks you about taking the donkey, just tell them, 'The Lord needs it and he will bring it back as soon as he has done with it.'"

So, the disciples did as Jesus asked. They soon found the donkey tied at a doorway. As they were untying it, some people were standing nearby visiting. They didn't recognise the men and asked, "What are you doing? Why are you untying the donkey?" They replied just as Jesus had told them to. Having explained that the Lord needed it, the people let them go.

When they brought the donkey to Jesus, some of the disciples took off their coats and laid them on the donkey's back. They did this out of respect for Jesus. Then Jesus rode on the donkey towards Jerusalem.

As he was travelling, some people saw Jesus coming and came running towards him. They had heard he might be coming and they wanted to see him. One by one, they laid their coats on the ground for the donkey to step on. Even the people that weren't wearing coats ran to the fields and trees nearby and cut palm branches and laid them down.

As they got even closer to the town, more and more people noticed Jesus. A crowd surrounded him and started to shout praises to him for all the miracles he had done, "Hosanna! Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord! Hosanna, Hosanna!"

2. SERVICE

Jesus washes the feet of his disciples

RESOURCES: Hand-shaped paper cut outs- Draw around your own to provide these
Optional: Jug, towel and bowl

SETTING: IN THE UPPER ROOM

Children sit on the floor or on chairs, in a circle

INTRODUCTION:

Sometimes the disciples didn't fully understand the things that Jesus said or did. He challenged them to think differently.

Jesus lived in a hot country where most people travelled from place to place on foot. It was a custom to welcome visitors by washing their feet. This was normally done by a servant, but on the night that his friends met with Jesus to celebrate the Passover meal in the Upper Room they were surprised by what happened.

JESUS WASHES THE DISCIPLES' FEET

Read the story of Jesus washing the feet of his disciples.

The children could take turns reading or could act out the story.



ACTIVITY / REFLECTION:

What do you think Jesus meant when he said, "I have set you an example"?

Think about the ways that you can help others.

Write what you could do to help others on your cut-out hand outline and then lay the hands on the floor or around the jug and bowl.



Jesus washes the feet of his disciples



On the first day of the Feast of Unleavened Bread, the disciples asked Jesus, "Where would you like us to plan for you to eat the Passover feast?"

Jesus replied to them, "Go into the city and you will find a man. Tell him that we would like to come to his house for Passover."

The disciples did just as Jesus asked, and they found a place and got ready for the Passover.

The evening came, and Jesus and the twelve disciples came together to eat the meal. Before they began Jesus got up from the meal, took off his outer clothing, and wrapped a towel around his waist.

After that, he poured water into a basin and began to wash his disciples' feet, drying them with the towel that was wrapped around him. Peter was shocked and couldn't understand why Jesus was doing a servant's job.

When Jesus had finished washing their feet, he put on his clothes and returned to his place. "Do you understand what I have done for you?" he asked them. "I have set you an example - I have washed your feet, so you also should wash one another's feet."

3. THANKSGIVING

Jesus shares bread and wine

RESOURCES: Heart shapes- children to make
Optional- Cloth, low table, bread, cup

SETTING: IN THE UPPER ROOM

Children sit on the floor or around a small table.

INTRODUCTION:

When it is a special occasion family and friends often gather together to share a meal.

What special times do you celebrate? Do you eat special food?

You have heard about how Jesus and his friends met together to celebrate the Passover and how Jesus had washed their feet and set them an example.

In the next part of the story we hear about something that Jesus did that is remembered every time that Christians gather together to celebrate the Eucharist.

JESUS EATS WITH HIS FRIENDS

Read the story of the Last Supper. The children could take turns reading or could act out the story.

ACTIVITY / REFLECTION:

Jesus took bread and wine and gave thanks.

What are the things that you are thankful for in your life?

Write what you are thankful for on a heart and then lay the hearts together in the centre of the floor or table (near the bread and cup if these are used).



Jesus shares a special meal

That night while Jesus was at supper with his friends, he took bread, he gave God thanks, broke it and shared it among his friends,

‘Take this and eat it. This is my body which is given for you.’

Then he took the cup of wine, he gave God thanks and shared it amongst his friends,

“Take this and drink it. This is my blood poured out for you.”

4. SPECIAL THOUGHTS AND PRAYERS

The Garden of Gethsemane

RESOURCES:

One candle for the class or a candle for each member of the group; matches

SETTING: THE GARDEN OF GETHSEMANE

The children sit on the floor, in a quiet place;
a place where they can see the candle/s when lit.

INTRODUCTION:

There are times when we feel alone – we need others. Christians believe that God is always with them and they talk to God in prayer.

Who are the people who would be there for you if you needed someone?

In the next part of the story we hear what Jesus does when he is feeling alone.

JESUS GOES TO THE GARDEN TO PRAY

Read the story of Jesus going into the Garden of Gethsemane. The children could take turns reading or could act out the story.

ACTIVITY / REFLECTION:

When people visit a church or cathedral, they often light a candle as a sign of their prayers and special thoughts.

A candle will now be lit for your class, or individual candles to represent each person.

Sit quietly for a moment and think about someone or something that is in your special thoughts or prayers at the moment.



Jesus Prays



After the meal had finished Jesus went into the garden with Peter, James and John. He looked as if he was sad and upset about something. He stopped and said to the disciples,

“My heart feels heavy, and I feel very sad. Please stay here and keep watch while I pray. I need some company close by.”

Then Jesus walked on a bit further by himself. Next to a big tree he knelt down and began to talk to God. He prayed that God would help him with the difficult things that lay ahead.

After a while he went back to where the disciples were, to find that they had fallen asleep on the ground. Jesus woke them and said to them, “Couldn't you have stayed awake for me for just a little while?” The disciples felt bad and tried to keep their eyes open. But when Jesus went back to pray, they fell asleep again.

Twice more Jesus went off to pray the same prayer and each time found that they had fallen asleep. Finally he woke them, as he had finished praying and he could see the soldiers coming to arrest him.

5. HOPE

Jesus dies on the cross

RESOURCES:

Red card cross that has pre-cut slits; cream, white or yellow strips of card

Alternative: A cross with your own design or flowers on to colour in (See templates)

SETTING: A HILLSIDE CALLED GOLGOTHA

The children should sit where they will be able to make their “Hope” crosses or colour their flower crosses.

INTRODUCTION:

This was a very difficult time for Jesus and all his friends and family. Jesus went through great pain and suffering and for those who loved him there was also a lot of suffering.

In our lives we sometimes have times of worry or pain and it can seem as if there is no hope.

This is how Jesus’ friends felt when Jesus suffered and died.

But Christians believe that death is not the end.

JESUS DIES ON THE CROSS

Read the story of the events that led to Jesus dying on the cross. The children could take turns reading or could act out the story.

ACTIVITY / REFLECTION:

When Christians look at the cross we see it as a sign of **hope**. We believe that there is nothing in life that God does not understand, and that God will always be with us.

Take a red card cross and weave cream, white or yellow strips through it to symbolise hope.

Or: Make your own “Hope cross” design on a blank cross or colour in the cross with flowers.



Jesus dies on the cross



The soldiers led Jesus to a hill called Golgotha. They made him carry the cross on his back, but because Jesus couldn't carry it the whole way, he fell down. A man named Simon happened to be near Jesus when he fell, and the soldiers grabbed him and made him carry the cross the rest of the way.

When they reached the top of the hill, they nailed Jesus to the cross. There were three crosses: Jesus was in the middle, there was a criminal on his right and on his left. Pilate made a sign to be put on the cross. It read what he was being punished for: Jesus of Nazareth, King of the Jews.

After a time, Jesus cried out, "It is finished." That is when Jesus bowed his head and went to Heaven.

One of the men who had wanted Jesus to die saw all of this and he said, "Surely this man was the Son of God!"

He realised that he had been wrong about Jesus.

6. NEW BEGINNINGS

Resurrection

RESOURCES: Things to symbolise resurrection/hope/new life

Examples: seeds/bulbs for planting; butterflies and string to hang up; rainbows (See template)

Alternatively: Make an Easter card for your family

SETTING: THE EMPTY TOMB

Children sit in a circle with all the objects they have made and the symbols of the Easter story that have been used today.

INTRODUCTION

Christians believe that death is not the end, because of what happened on Easter Sunday. Three days after he died on the cross, Jesus rose from the dead.

The Easter story fills Christians with **hope**, because it shows us that God is always with us – even when life is difficult and it seems that there is no hope. This is because of Jesus' resurrection and it is what we remember and celebrate on Easter Sunday.

THE RESURRECTION:

Read the story of the Resurrection. The children could take turns reading or could act out the story.

ACTIVITY / REFLECTION:

In the midst of darkness and sadness, there is always hope.

As a school/class and as a family, celebrate the joy of Jesus' resurrection.

Enjoy making your Easter cards, butterflies or rainbows and displaying them; or enjoy planting seeds and bulbs together as a class or family.

Take some time to pray and celebrate the joy of Jesus' resurrection together.

Perhaps there is a favourite Easter or joyful hymn that you could do actions to (or sing together if allowed) at the end of this session.



Resurrection

After Jesus died, a man named Joseph (from a place called Arimathea) put Jesus in his tomb that nobody had ever used. The tombs they used then were cut out of rock, almost like a cave; people weren't buried in the ground like they often are now. Before Joseph left, he and some men rolled a large heavy stone in front of the tomb.

Mary and Mary Magdalene had waited a day to see Jesus because they couldn't go on the Sabbath- the holy day- which was a day of rest. They made spices and oils to put on Jesus' body as a sign of respect for Jesus and they got up very early on Sunday morning and went to the tomb.

When they arrived at the tomb they were shocked, because the stone had been rolled away. An angel said to them, "Do not be afraid. I know you are looking for Jesus, who has died. But he isn't here; he has risen just as he said he would!"