

Holy Week



What's Happening Historically

- » Rome had become the most powerful empire in the early 1st century AD.
- » The Roman emperor was Emperor Tiberius.
- » The Roman Empire spread across North Africa, Europe, and the Middle East, including Jerusalem.
- » Rome claimed to have created peace.
- » Taxes, as well as military and political oppression, were extremely high, so there was false peace.
- » People worshipped many different gods in a variety of rituals and temples throughout the Roman Empire.
- » In Rome, the people were expected to submit to the Roman gods and the emperor.
- » Jews were hoping for a Messiah to help free them from Roman rule and oppression.
- » Jesus' message of peace, love, kindness, and humility were opposite of what they expected in their Savior.
- » Jesus was calling for a new and different kind of kingdom, which went against the priorities of the Roman authorities and Jewish religious leaders.
- » Pontius Pilate, the Roman governor of Judea, was responsible for keeping peace and order in the region.
- » Jesus' entry into the city on a donkey was symbolic and fulfilled the prophecy of Zechariah 9:9.
- » Jesus spoke powerfully to the people — upsetting the Pharisees.
- » Those who believed Jesus was the Messiah kept quiet for fear of the religious leaders.
- » Traditionally, palm branches were waved to symbolize victory, joy, and goodness.
- » Holy Week is foundational to the Christian faith.



Holy Week

Scene 1 - Palm Sunday



Palm Sunday *(John 12, Psalm 24, Zechariah 9:9, Mark 10:45)*

Additional readings : Luke 19-20

Quick Summary

Jesus had traveled through Jerusalem before, but His trip was unique this time. And truly, the promised King of the Old Testament has come, but the tension surrounding Him has reached a fevered pitch. Nonetheless, Jesus arranges His entrance into the city on this day, referred to as Palm Sunday or Passion Sunday — the beginning of Holy Week. Before riding into the city on a donkey, Jesus is anointed as King, displays His miraculous power over death by raising Lazarus to life, and predicts His own death and resurrection. His time in Jerusalem is filled with opposition. The religious leaders do everything in their power to diminish the influence of Jesus and then get Him crucified.

Conversation Starters:

As a family

- What does a servant heart look like and how can we practice that kind of mindset (heart posture) starting this week?

4-8-year-olds

- What is so amazing about donkeys?
- What do you believe about Jesus' power?

9-12-year-olds

- When have you been afraid to do the right thing because of what others might say about you or do to you?
- Can you put Psalm 24:3-6 in your own words?

13-18-year-olds

- What do you think about Jesus' words in Mark 10:45? How does this impact how you see Jesus? Strong, weak, loving?
- How do you think you would have responded to Jesus' strong words? What are the benefits of constructive criticism?



Holy Week

Scene 2



Covenant with Abraham and God's Faithfulness *(Genesis 12, 15, and 17)*

Quick Summary

This is a critical passage of Scripture when it comes to understanding God's relationship with His people. In our reading, God makes a covenant with Abram. A covenant is a binding relationship in which everyone involved is expected to be 100% responsible for the good of the relationship. God will be Lord to Abram and his family through the generations, and they will be faithful to Him. Over time, however, we learn that humans fail in their responsibilities, but God remains always faithful.

Conversation Starters:

As a family

- It would be hard to suddenly move away from your home and go somewhere new. Tell a story about a time when you had to trust God even when you did not know what would happen.

4-8-year-olds

- What do you think is a covenant?
- What makes you feel close to Jesus?

9-12-year-olds

- Genesis 15:6 says, "Abram believed God and it was credited to him as righteousness." Can you put that in your own words?
- Why is it sometimes difficult to keep God's commandments, laws, rules?

13-18-year-olds

- Have people broken a promise they made to you? What was that like for you? — for the relationship?
- What do you love about people? What is difficult to love about people? What is difficult to trust about people?



Holy Week

Scene 3



God's Faithfulness *(Genesis 9:12-17 and Psalm 105)*

Quick Summary

God consistently shows His love for us. We often either miss it, move on, or explain it away. From a rainbow in the sky to miracles and victories, God puts His faithfulness on display. In Genesis, God gives us the sign of a rainbow as a reminder of His covenant with all flesh on earth. Psalm 105 reminds us to seek His presence continually and to freely share His wondrous works. This is a psalm of thanksgiving and remembrance of God's faithfulness, provision, and everlasting covenant. We are to keep His statutes and observe His laws as we faithfully follow Him.

Conversation Starters:

As a family

- How is obedience freedom, and how does it display our faithfulness? *(Optional - Read Deuteronomy 28: 1-14)*

4-8-year-olds

- How do you know God loves you?
- How does God know you love Him?

9-12-year-olds

- If Jesus showed up one day at our front door, what is one thing you would thank Him for?
- How do you know Jesus is with you?

13-18-year-olds

- Talk about ways to seek the Lord and His strength and continually seek His presence.
- Why are the words "thankful" and "remember" important words as we live in relationship with Christ?



Holy Week

Scene 4



Jesus' Strong and Important Words *(Matthew 23:1-36, Matthew 26:1-13)*

Quick Summary

Here we see Jesus spend several hours throughout the week teaching, answering questions, and challenging destructive norms and false teaching. He brings a radical message and provides seven clear and direct challenges to the scribes and Pharisees. He encourages honesty, humility, justice, mercy, faithfulness, genuine righteousness, selflessness, and love. He also aggressively challenges hypocrisy. In the beginning of Matthew 26, Jesus concludes His teachings and sayings and reveals that people were plotting to kill Him.

Conversation Starters:

As a family

- How are we like the chief priests and Pharisees?

4-8-year-olds

- What does a humble person act like?
- When do you notice selfishness inside of you?

9-12-year-olds

- What do you think of verse 23:12? How can you live this out?
- What is "false teaching"?

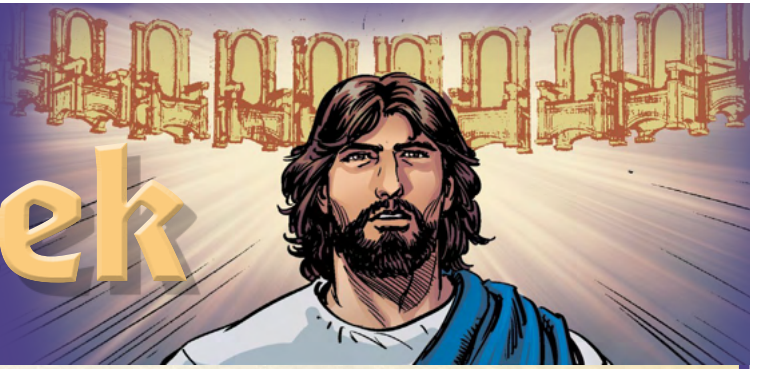
13-18-year-olds

- What does it mean to live a life of righteousness, and why is humility an important character ingredient of it?
- When have you noticed honesty to be difficult for you?



Holy Week

Scene 5



Jesus Will Judge Sin *(Luke 22, John 3, Revelation 19-20)*

Quick Summary

In these passages, we read about the work of Christ to judge sin. Before Christ judges sin and eventually sets up His eternal kingdom, He is clear that He must go through the cross. The cross comes before the kingdom and the end of rebellion against God. On the night He was betrayed, Jesus held the Passover meal with His disciples, drinking from some of the ceremonial cups. Later that night, Jesus prays in the garden. Knowing what is coming, He prays that if there is another way, God would remove this cup of suffering from Him. But Jesus knows this is the plan. The cross, however, does not win the day. Jesus rises from the dead. The King of Kings reigns forever. The fifth cup, then, helps us remember and consider God's gift of His deliverance to His people. The passage in Revelation is the dramatic image of the risen and exalted Christ coming back to earth to put an end to all rebellion. His children will be with Him in His perfect presence forever and ever.

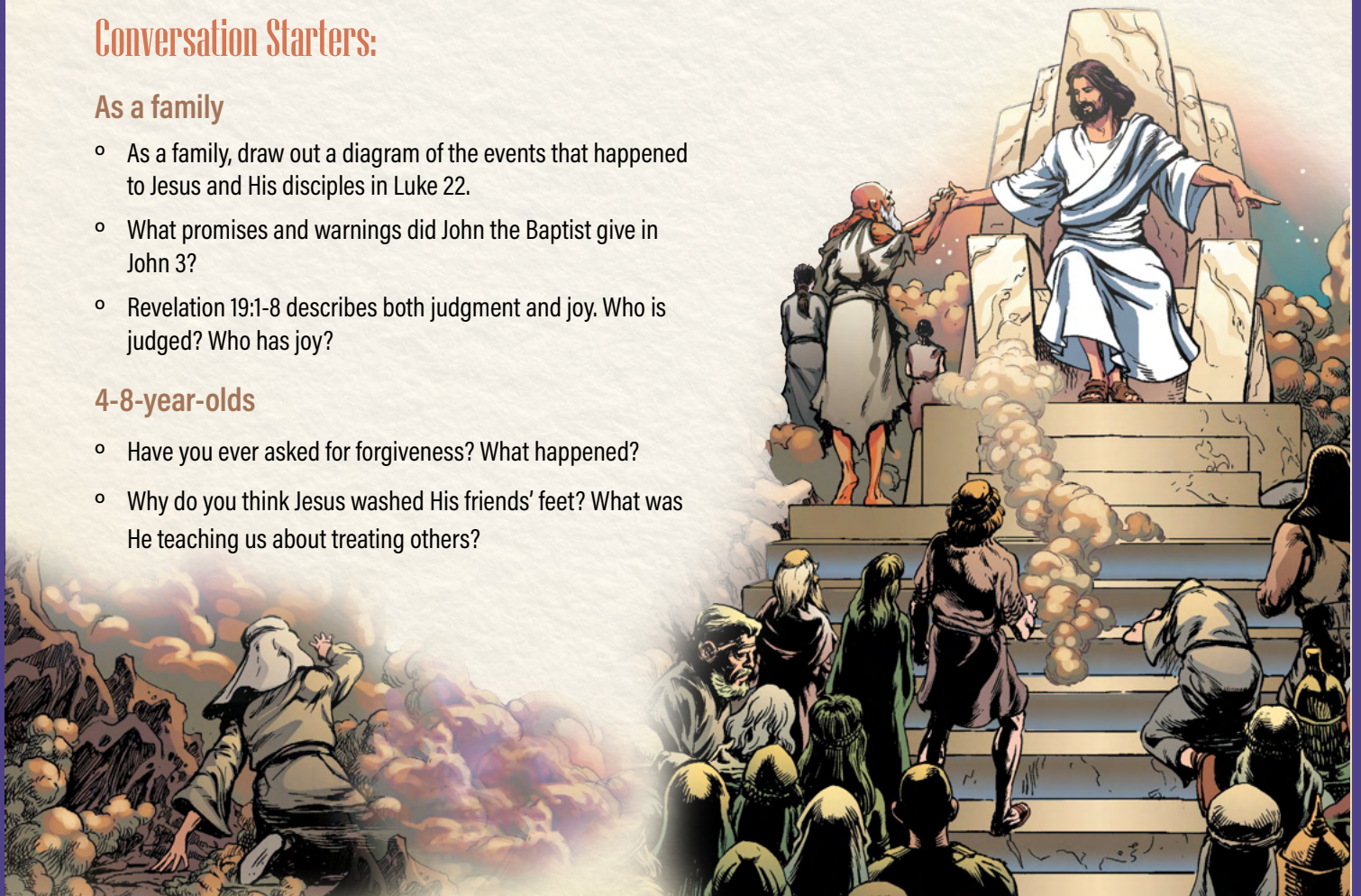
Conversation Starters:

As a family

- As a family, draw out a diagram of the events that happened to Jesus and His disciples in Luke 22.
- What promises and warnings did John the Baptist give in John 3?
- Revelation 19:1-8 describes both judgment and joy. Who is judged? Who has joy?

4-8-year-olds

- Have you ever asked for forgiveness? What happened?
- Why do you think Jesus washed His friends' feet? What was He teaching us about treating others?



9-12-year-olds

- Why do you think your good deeds are not enough to save you from your sin?
- When have you prayed for strength? What was happening? Were you afraid?

13-18-year-olds

- Why do you think people sometimes make choices that hurt others or go against what they believe? What is necessary for you to make wise decisions?
- Memorize Ephesians 2:8-10 and then put those ideas in your own words.



Holy Week

Scene 6



Jesus' Crucifixion *(Matthew 26:36-27:66)*

Quick Summary

In this scene, we read about Jesus' sincere and anguished prayer in the Garden of Gethsemane — His soul was languishing. He is betrayed, arrested, unfairly treated, mocked, beaten, denied, and rejected. His own disciple, Peter, denied Him, and the others fled. Jesus asserts that He is King of the Jews. Pilate, the governor, was confused as to why the Jews wanted Jesus to be crucified. Nonetheless, he washed his hands of the trial, leaving the decision to the religious leaders. Jesus suffered a brutal death on the cross. The chief priests and Pharisees wanted His tomb guarded so no stories of His resurrection could be made up. Jesus' body was placed in a tomb that was sealed and guarded.

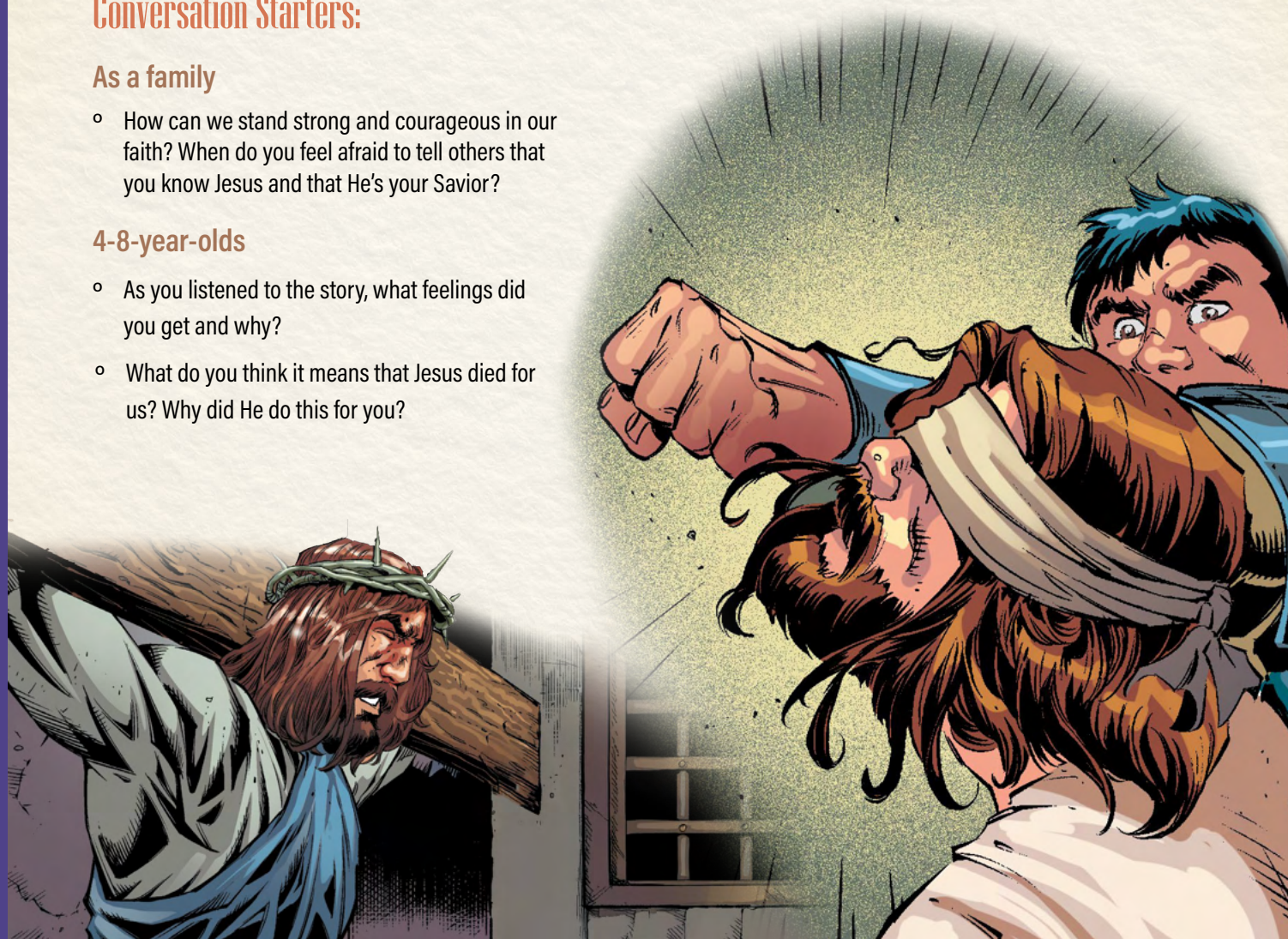
Conversation Starters:

As a family

- How can we stand strong and courageous in our faith? When do you feel afraid to tell others that you know Jesus and that He's your Savior?

4-8-year-olds

- As you listened to the story, what feelings did you get and why?
- What do you think it means that Jesus died for us? Why did He do this for you?



9-12-year-olds

- What would it have been like to be the disciples during that time? What would you have done?
- Jesus was treated badly and was accused of things He didn't do. How did Jesus respond to how He was being treated and what does that teach you about how to handle unfair situations?

13-18-year-olds

- Do you believe Jesus loves you? How do you know?
- In Matthew 26:39 Jesus said, "My Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me; nevertheless, not as I will, but as You will." And then He said it again in verse 42. How do you know God's will for you? How can you search for it?



Holy Week

Scene 7

God's Children Are Redeemed *(Ephesians 2, Hebrews 9)*

Quick Summary

In Ephesians 2, we read a clear teaching on our need for redemption and God's power to save us. In addition, Paul outlines one of the powerful consequences of redemption — the unity of all Christians in Jesus Christ. According to Paul, we were all dead in our sins and destined for judgment, but the incredible mercy of God saved us in Christ. We are not God's children because we achieved moral perfection but because the grace of God saves us through our trust (faith) in Christ. Jesus died to save us all, and now He is at the center of our identity. The writer of Hebrews then draws on the Old Testament tabernacle and sacrificial system to explain the redemption of Christ. We read in this passage that we have an eternal inheritance. If we genuinely believe this and that we have been redeemed, we will naturally live and act differently. Hebrews 9 reassures us that Jesus is coming back for those who are eagerly waiting for Him.

Conversation Starters:

As a family

- Paul says that Christ is our peace and that He tears down walls of hostility between us. What kinds of "walls of hostility" exist between people?

4-8-year-olds

- What does it mean to you that Jesus forgives your sins?
- How does it feel to know that Jesus will return for those who are eagerly waiting for Him?



9-12-year-olds

- What does it look like to have a purified conscience? Why is this important as you learn to serve God?
- What does it mean to you to be His workmanship or masterpiece, created for good things in Christ Jesus that were prepared ahead of time for you to walk in?

13-18-year-olds

- You have an eternal inheritance! What does this mean and how can it change your perspective?
- What do you think God has created you to do? What are some of the gifts and talents God has built in you to be given away as love for others?



Holy Week

Scene 8 - Easter Sunday



Jesus' Resurrection *(John 20-21, Psalm 100)*

Quick Summary

After His crucifixion, Jesus appears to various people. John is a more relational author who provides us with a relational look into Jesus' resurrection. We get a glimpse into the completion of Peter's story — he receives redemption, forgiveness, and commissioning from Jesus. Jesus appears to others in very personal and life-giving ways, too. John ends the book by saying that so much more could have been written. Someday, we will know the rest of the story. In the meantime, Jesus often said, "Follow me." He wants a close, personal relationship with each one of us. Jesus' love is steadfast, and He is faithful! Let's enter His gates with thanksgiving and His courts with praise!

Conversation Starters:

As a family

- How can gratitude change our soul, our mindset, and our relationships?

4-8-year-olds

- When has someone forgiven you? What did that feel like?
- What do you think Peter felt when Jesus forgave him?

9-12-year-olds

- Jesus said, "Peace be with you," more than once. What do you think He was saying? Why do you think it was important for His listeners to hear?
- How can you have a personal relationship with Christ?

13-18-year-olds

- How is obedience freedom?
- What would it look like for you to follow Jesus?

