

CHILDREN & HOLY WEEK



at REDEEMER

Welcome to Holy Week! It is a week like no other in the life of the church and one that can – and ought – to include our children in the journey from palms to cross; from tomb to empty grave. But how do we include children in that journey?

Story, song, and prayer...the liturgies of Holy Week have a way of weaving all of these in to make for a rich experience for young and old alike. It may be that as children we had few, if any experiences, of Holy Week beyond Palm Sunday and Easter Day (and if your tradition included a service on Good Friday – that day, too). Here at Redeemer, we deeply immerse ourselves into that pattern of story, song, and prayer as we live the week. This is not an adults-only journey. Our children are as profoundly engaged in the journey as the grown-ups. And as we make intentional prayer part of our daily pattern as adults, so too can our children

This resource will provide you with some ideas of the ways in which your child can share in the liturgical life of our community as well as some thoughts on how to add some intentional actions in your home life this week.

Welcome to Holy Week – to the entrance into Jerusalem, the gathering of friends where bread is broken and wine is poured, betrayal, the garden, the trial, the cross and the tomb. Let us journey together.

Holy Week

In the worship services of Holy Week, we journey through the story of Jesus' arrival in Jerusalem on Palm Sunday to his betrayal, death and celebration of his resurrection with the First Eucharist of Easter.

Let us begin our journey through Holy Week...

Sunday, April 13 – **Worship on Zoom** at 9AM; **Palm Sunday Procession and Sung Eucharist** at 10.30AM; **Bach Vespers** service at 7PM

Monday, April 14 – **Sung Eucharist** at 12PM and **Taizé Eucharist** 6PM

Tuesday, April 15 – **Sung Eucharist** at 12PM and **Taizé Eucharist** 6PM

Wednesday, April 16 – **Sung Eucharist** at 12PM and **Service of Darkness** 6PM

Thursday, April 17 – **Maundy Thursday** Service at 7.30 – with foot washing, commemoration of the first Eucharist, stripping the altar and one hour vigil

Friday, April 18 – Solemn Good Friday Liturgy with veneration of the cross and communion and the Way to the Tomb at 12PM

Saturday, April 19 – **Great Vigil** at 9PM

Sunday, April 20 – **Worship on Zoom** at 9AM; **Procession and Eucharist** at 10.30AM.

PALM SUNDAY – APRIL 13

This marks the beginning of Holy Week. We gather for the *Blessing of the Palms* and recall the story of Jesus' entry into Jerusalem. From this very celebratory moment in the story of Jesus' life we begin the journey to the cross.

We are fortunate, here at the Church of the Redeemer, that the Palm Sunday experience is so rich. Some of us may have grown up hearing both the Palm Sunday readings and the 'passion narrative' (the story of Jesus death) because Good Friday didn't figure into our liturgical experience but here the Sunday that begins Holy Week is dedicated to the story of Jesus' entry into Jerusalem. We are a parish that marks well the whole of the story – we don't fast forward from the entry into Jerusalem to the empty tomb, bypassing the 'messy' stuff in between. So we have Palm Sunday.



At Church in the morning:

At the 10.30AM service, if the weather is nice, we gather at Taddle Creek Park (Bedford Avenue north of Bloor) to start our procession at 10.15AM. Then in procession, we walk along Bloor Street waving our palms as we remember the story of how Jesus entered Jerusalem to a chorus of *blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord, hosanna in the highest*. If the weather is dismal, we gather at the church for the blessing of the palms and begin our journey there.

The readings appointed for Sunday morning:

Isaiah 50.4-9a

Psalms 24

Philippians 2.5-11

Matthew 21.1-11 or Luke 19.28-40

There will be instructions on how to make a cross from the palm branch you received. Transform your palm branch into a cross and place it somewhere in your home to remind you of the journey we are on together this week.

At Church in the Evening:

In the evening, the service at 7PM will feature beautiful music by the choir at Bach Vespers. It will be a very different experience from the Sunday morning service and if your child enjoys choral music please join us!

At Home:

On Saturday night you might read the Gospel story at bedtime and talk about what will be different about church in the morning.

Monday THROUGH Wednesday in Holy Week

These three days can be the hardest to make the ordinariness of daily life take a back seat. We still need to go to work, our kids still need to go to school and after school activities. How do we find the balance? Can you find a few minutes at the beginning or end of the day to read the Holy Week stories together; to pray; perhaps to sing? Maybe the following suggestions are already part of your routine. Mark the time and space as special – light candles, turn down room lights, turn off technology. You could sing a Taizé or Iona song to start. Read the story from the Gospel suggested on each day. What does this story tell us about Jesus? What does this story tell us about the people who were with Jesus? End your time together with a prayer thanking God for the day that was and remembering that you are walking with Jesus throughout this week. If you are doing this before going on to other evening activities, be aware that it will take a few minutes to shift back into the everydayness of life around you. That's okay. This week is a hard one to journey through.

Monday, April 14

The readings for today are:

Isaiah 42.1-9 ✕ Psalm 36.5-11 ✕ Hebrews 9.11-15 ✕ John 12.1-11

The gospel reading is the story of Mary anointing Jesus feet. What was that like for her? Why did she do it?

Tuesday, April 15

The readings for today are:

Isaiah 49.1-7 ✕ Psalm 71.1-14 ✕ 1 Corinthians 1.18-31 ✕ John 12.20-36

This is where you might depart from the lectionary – this reading may not be as accessible for younger children. Maundy Thursday offers up a couple of good stories - you could substitute the first part of the reading for Maundy Thursday (John 13.1-17) where Jesus washes his disciples' feet.

Wednesday, April 16

The readings for today are:

Isaiah 50.4-9a ✕ Psalm 70 ✕ Hebrews 12.1-3 ✕ John 13.21-32

In today's gospel reading Jesus tells his disciples that one of them will betray him. What does it feel like to be betrayed?

At Church:

There are services each of these days at 12PM and at 6PM at the church. If your child is older and interested in hearing the story of Holy Week unfold through word and sacrament, come to church together. In the evening, our service is a Taizé Eucharist music that is easy to learn. As with Sunday morning, as much as possible, we create opportunities for leadership by the children.

Maundy Thursday—APRIL 17

From the Latin *mandatum novum do vobis*, the name Maundy Thursday arose. During the liturgy, the sentence from John 13.34 is read - "A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another as I have loved you." We gather to hear scripture read, to have our feet washed, for the Eucharist and in the growing darkness as we move toward Good Friday we strip the church of its finery and prepare to wait during the Garden Watch.

The readings:

Exodus 12.1-4, 11-14

Psalm 116.1-2, 12-19

1 Corinthians 11.23-26

John 13.1-17, 31b-35

At Church:

There is a lot that goes on that is visual and for your child to be engaged in with this service. Last year, the children had opportunities to have roles in foot-washing, stripping the altar and preparing the space for the Vigil. We'll create space near all of the action for our families to be full participants in the liturgy as they wish and still have space to colour. What is the service like? There are hymns and songs to sing; the sermon to listen to; foot washing – where we remember the story of Jesus washing the feet of his disciples. Some questions to think about? Why might it be important for Steven and Paige to wash the feet of members of the parish? Why might some of us want to have our feet washed or to wash those of another person? What happens after communion? What is all of this stripping of the church about? At the very end of the service, the church is plunged into darkness. Make sure you have all of your gear packed up while the church is being stripped and if your child is afraid of the dark prepare them for that.

One Hour Vigil:

At the end of the Maundy Thursday service the church is candle-lit and remains open for a time of silent prayer. We recall the story of the Jesus going to the garden to pray before he is betrayed. The disciples who went with him were unable to stay awake in the garden - we are invited to wait and watch with Jesus as the darkness grows.

Would your child want to participate in the garden vigil? For how long? Sitting still is hard work for all of us. Make an agreement on how long you will stay – it might be a 'renewable time'. That is – you agree to try 15 minutes and work out a silent 'code' that says it is time to go or that staying longer is okay. It might be helpful to step out of the worship space for a washroom break before you begin your vigil. The church looks different in the darkness – perhaps a bit frightening so you might need to work out a way for your child to signal that they are afraid. It can also be warm so staying awake can be difficult. It is a real test. When your time in the church is done – leave quietly. On the way home you can talk about what the service was like; what it meant to sit for the vigil and remember what happened to Jesus.

At home:

Choices abound today for your observances at home. You can continue with the pattern of the past few evenings of hearing the gospel reading. You could read the second part of the reading from John where the 'new commandment' is offered...the one that gives us the name for this day. What is that commandment? How do you live as Jesus asks us to live our lives?

Or...you could do something connected to what is happening at church if you can't attend the service.

Suggestion 1: Has your child ever washed your feet? You will have washed theirs many times. Tonight you could wash one another's feet. This could get a bit messy so lots of towels on the floor first. Get a big basin – big enough for your feet and a jug that your child can handle. Remember the towels to dry feet, too. The best way to make this work is to hold your foot over the basin and let your child pour water from the jug over it (save enough to do both feet). Let them gather up water from the basin in their hands and use it to finish washing your feet. Then, dry gently with the towel. Repeat with the other foot. When they're done, it's your turn to wash their feet. If you know the Taizé refrain "Ubi Caritas" (#533 in Common Praise) sing it while washing each others feet.

Why did Jesus wash his disciples feet? Why do we wash one another's feet at the Maundy Thursday service?.

Suggestion 2: Can your child tell you the story of the garden (Mark 14.32-42). Perhaps they could create a garden scene with cushions to mark the spot. Could you be one of the disciplines and help them act it out. What does betrayal mean? What happens when Judas betrays Jesus? How does it feel? Have they ever felt betrayed by a friend? How does Jesus respond and what do we know about the Easter story that helps us learn how to handle when we are hurt by a friend. Wrap up this time with quiet prayer. Tonight you might use simple sentences such as the following and allow silence for everyone in the family to name their concerns.

Let us say a prayer for those who need to be remembered tonight:

We remember our friends at school and work...

We remember our neighbours...

We remember our family....

We remember those who are sad, or hungry, or lonely...

We remember those who are happy, or feasting, or visiting with family this weekend...

We are sorry if we hurt someone today...

We thank you for...

Jesus remember us, pray for us, be with us tonight as we remember you, pray for you, be with you tonight. Amen

GOOD FRIDAY—APRIL 18

Jesus is betrayed and stands trial. The crowd shouts "Crucify him!" and on Golgotha Jesus is nailed to a cross. The sky turns dark and his body is laid in a tomb. We recall all of this through readings, reflection, bread and wine, prayer and the cross in our midst. The Noon service includes veneration of the cross, reserved sacrament, and the Way to the Tomb. The children have created the art for the stations that guide us to the tomb.

The readings for today are:

Isaiah 52.13-53.12

Psalm 22

Hebrews 10.16-25

Luke 22.36-23.56



During the service the children will be invited to help prepare the Easter Garden with Lor.

GREAT VIGIL—APRIL 19



We gather on Holy Saturday, waiting in the darkness for Jesus, the light of the world. The new fire is lit and from it the Pascal Candle is lit and carried into the church. The light from that candle is spread to the candles each of us holds and the light spreads and grows. We listen to the stories of God's acts of salvation. Some in our community will be baptized. We renew our baptismal faith and hear the Easter Proclamation "Christ is Risen. Christ is risen, indeed. Alleluia!" We celebrate with thanksgiving as we gather for the Eucharist.

We have many readings for today:

Genesis 7.1-5, 11-18, 8.6-18, 9.8-13 ✕ Exodus 14.10-31; 15.20-21 ✕ Baruch 3.9-15, 32-4.4 ✕ Ezekiel 36.24-28 ✕ Romans 6.3-11 ✕ Psalm 114 ✕ Luke 24.1-12

At Church:

This is the night. This service starts late (9 PM) and has it all – word and story; song; candlelight; bread and wine. We will light the new fire and watch the flames dance; we watch as the paschal candle is brought into the church stopping three times along the way as the sub-deacon proclaims *The light of Christ*. We light our candles from the Paschal candle and we gather in the darkness of the church until we and it glow in candlelight. We hear the stories of God's mighty acts – flood; the Exodus from Egypt; the empty tomb. We remember our baptismal covenant and we are splashed with water in remembrance of our baptism. We proclaim Christ risen and as we ring bells the church is brightly lit and the

decorations and linens that had been removed on Maundy Thursday return. We receive the bread and the wine. The perfect night for the night owls in our midst!

At Home:

It's a party! The Sunday morning routine in your household might be given over to that other part of Easter celebrations (you know – the fuzzy character who delivers chocolate) and the church celebration begins once you arrive for the worship service. Why not start the Easter celebration tonight! Read the Gospel reading (Mark 16.1-8) in advance and figure out how you as a family will mark the good news! Could you make the dinner table a bit fancier tonight – just as we bring back all of the special things at church? Do you have bells and noise makers that you could use to proclaim *Christ is Risen, Alleluia! Christ is Risen, indeed!* (It will be good practice for the morning service). Tonight in our evening prayers, we remember to thank God for the gift of Jesus.

EASTER—APRIL 20

If you didn't come to the Easter Vigil, our morning service begins with a procession and there is glorious choral music throughout the service and is just as joyous and wonderful as the evening before! And of course, all of the wonderful ways that the children in our community share in leadership on Sunday mornings is part of this day, too. We might even be able to pull out the special vestments for them to wear when they carry the cross!

Today's readings are:

Acts 10.34-43

Psalms 118.1-2, 14-24

1 Corinthians 15.1-11

Luke 24.1-12

From palms to footwashing, from cross to tomb, from new light to empty tomb, we journey together. May our Holy Week be a moving and blessed one.

Church of the Redeemer

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