

**Parents:** Here is a discussion guide that gives definitions and explanations for the special days and worship services of Holy Week, along with Scripture readings for each. Read through the descriptions and Scripture passages as a family and discuss using the questions listed in italics in each section. A few suggested activities are also included. Please reach out to the church office at [aplcoffice@gmail.com](mailto:aplcoffice@gmail.com) with any feedback or questions. Thank you!

## Holy Week Discussion Guide

### PALM SUNDAY

Palm: the leaf of a plant that grows in places that are warmer than New Jersey

Sunday: the First day of the week.

On the Sunday before his death, Jesus rode into Jerusalem on the back of a donkey. People lined the streets to shout praises to him.

Read Matthew 21:1-11

- *Why a donkey?*
- As part of our communion liturgy we sing Holy, Holy, Holy which includes words that are similar to what you read in Matthew. (see below) *What are they? Why do you think we sing “Palm Sunday” words every week?*
- Hosanna is Aramaic. It means “Save us!” Now we often use it as a word to mean praise.



#### ***In Worship:***

At Abiding Presence we begin worship on Palm Sunday outside the sanctuary. We gather in the narthex and hear the gospel about Jesus entering Jerusalem. We cry out with the crowd “Hosanna to the son of David!” If you worship online for Palm Sunday, you will participate in a virtual version of this.

### Passion Sunday

Palm Sunday is also called Passion Sunday. Here “passion” refers to Jesus’ death. We often read the entire story of Jesus’ arrest and death on this Sunday. We start worship with hearing about all the people praising Jesus as he enters Jerusalem and end with him on the cross.

## MAUNDY THURSDAY

Maundy (mawn-dee) – from the Latin *mandatum* meaning commandment  
Thursday – day of the week

Several days before his death Jesus gathered with his disciples for a meal and some conversation. He washed his disciples feet. After that meal, he went to the Mount of Olives to pray. There, Judas betrayed him, and Jesus was arrested.

### Foot Washing

Read John 13:3-5, 12-15

Since people spent lots of time walking dirt roads with sandals, it was common for servants to wash someone's feet when they came to visit. Here, instead of a servant, Jesus washes his disciples' feet.

- *How did the disciples feel about Jesus washing their feet? Why do you think they felt this way?*
- Jesus also gives them a command. *What is it?*
- *If you don't actually wash people's feet, what are other ways to follow Jesus' command?*
- *What would it feel like to have someone wash your feet?*

Either parent or student (or both!) can volunteer to wash the other's foot. It's symbolic, so you don't need to actually scrub it down with soap. Just rub some water on the foot and then dry it off.

Liturgy:

O Lord, you commanded us to wash one another's feet. Please be with now as we demonstrate our love for one another, as You have loved us. In Jesus' holy name we pray, Amen.

### Last Supper

This was also the night that Jesus gathered with his disciples for "The Last Supper," which we commemorate each time we participate in the Sacrament of Holy Communion.

- *When did you first receive Holy Communion?*
- *What have you learned about Holy Communion since then?*
- *Why do you think Holy Communion is such a central part of our worship services?*

### In Worship...

- At the end of the service, we remove everything from the altar and chancel area. Candles. The communion ware. The pieces of cloth on the altar (called paraments). The service book. The Bible. Everything is removed. We do this to symbolize Jesus being arrested and his disciples scattering. Watch for it on Thursday's Maundy Thursday service online.

## **GOOD FRIDAY**

### **Why is Good Friday, good?**

We do not glorify violence or gruesome death when we gather on Good Friday. Quite the opposite. On Good Friday, we remember that Jesus Christ, the Son of God, came into the world and loved the world. And that love was so radical and different from what we expected, that we killed that gift of love—Jesus.

Without the celebration of Easter and the resurrection of Jesus on Sunday, Good Friday would not be good. But because we know that Jesus rises again, Good Friday *is* good. On that day, all of what would separate us from God (all of our sin) dies along with God.

### **Stations of the Cross Coloring Sheets**

The Stations of the Cross Coloring Posters and Sheets (attached or access [here](#)) were created by artist Adam Walker Cleaveland and were launched by Illustrated Children's Ministry for Lent 2017. Given that the Illustrated Children's Ministry community comes from over 30 different denominations around the world, some of whom may not be familiar with the Stations of the Cross, we decided to create illustrations based on the fourteen scriptural Stations of the Cross, which Pope John Paul II introduced on Good Friday in 1991. The stations are listed below, along with their accompanying scriptural references. You'll notice that we are also including a 15th Station which celebrates the resurrection of Jesus.

- Station 1: Jesus in the Garden of Gethsemane (Matthew 26:36-41)
- Station 2: Jesus, Betrayed by Judas, is Arrested (Mark 14:43-46)
- Station 3: Jesus is Condemned by the Sanhedrin (Luke 22:66-71)
- Station 4: Jesus is Denied by Peter (Matthew 26:69-75)
- Station 5: Jesus is Judged by Pilate (Mark 15:1-5, 15)
- Station 6: Jesus is Scourged and Crowned with Thorns (John 19:1-3)
- Station 7: Jesus Bears the Cross (John 19:6, 15-17)
- Station 8: Jesus is Helped by Simon the Cyrenian to Carry the Cross (Mark 15:21)
- Station 9: Jesus Meets the Women of Jerusalem (Luke 23:27-31)
- Station 10: Jesus is Crucified (Luke 23:33-34)
- Station 11: Jesus Promises His Kingdom to the Good Thief (Luke 23:39-43)
- Station 12: Jesus Speaks to His Mother and the Disciples (John 19:25-27)
- Station 13: Jesus Dies on the Cross (Luke 23:44-46)
- Station 14: Jesus is Placed in the Tomb (Matthew 27:57-60)
- Station 15: The Resurrection of Jesus (Mark 16:1-6)

Read the Bible Passages together. Begin coloring some pages.

### ***In Worship...***

At Abiding Presence we use a service of *tenebrae* to mark Good Friday. As we hear 7 readings about the last moments of Jesus' life, we extinguish candles and lower lights. By the end of the service, the sanctuary is completely dark, except for one sole candle which symbolizes Christ's presence. That candle is removed and brought back into the darkened sanctuary. The light of Christ shines even in the darkness and even when we would extinguish it.