

Letters from Jerusalem

A 6-week Lent Resource
for Families

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Note for Families

Welcome to *Letters from Jerusalem*! This resource is a 6-week series for families to use during the season of Lent.

Letters from Jerusalem takes you through the last week of Jesus' life on earth. The disciples have traveled with Jesus to Jerusalem to celebrate the Passover. They had no idea this would be His last week on earth. The devotions for each week are written as a letter from one of the disciples to their family back home. These letters tell the story of what is happening that day in Jerusalem while they are with Jesus. The letters contain all Biblical facts from one of the four Gospels but are just told from the viewpoint of a disciple.

Each week will contain the following activities:

- Color of the Week (a color to wear that week)
- Family Devotion
- Bible Memory Verse
- Bible Story Art
- Family Craft
- Family Activity
- Family Letters
- Family Snack

Countdown to Easter

Also included in this resource is a 40-Day Countdown to Easter family activity. Families will open an egg each day during Lent (no egg on Sundays though) and it will give them an idea of something they can do that day to serve others.

Week 1 Overview

Color of the Week - Green (wear this color this week)

Family Devotion - The Triumphal Entry (Matthew 21:1-11)

Bible Memory Verse - Matthew 21:9

Bible Story Art - Draw a picture of the story of Jesus' triumphal entry into Jerusalem

Family Craft - Triumphal Entry T-Shirts

Family Activity - Palm Branch Limbo

Family Letters - Write a Letter to your Pastor

Family Snack - Palm Sundaes

Family Devotion - Matthew 21:1-11

Dear Family,

We finally made it to Jerusalem. It's been a long trip, but I'm so thankful to be here with Jesus. He really is an amazing Teacher. I am learning so much!

You'll never believe what happened to us right before we entered Jerusalem. We got to Bethpage on the Mount of Olives and Jesus stopped us. He told two of us to go ahead to the village and bring Him a donkey that is tied there with her colt. He said we would find them as soon as we entered the village. We weren't exactly sure how He knew where this donkey would be, but Jesus hadn't been wrong yet, so we obeyed and did what He said. Right before we went, Jesus also told us that some people may ask us questions about why we are untying this donkey and her colt. Who wouldn't, right? Kind of seems weird that He asked us to take a donkey that isn't ours without asking. But He said for us to tell anyone that asks that the Lord needs it and will bring it back soon. We still weren't sure we would be able to find the donkey, but we did as the Lord told us to.

And guess what? Everything happened exactly as Jesus said it would! The donkey and her colt were where He told us they would be. Amazing!

When we brought the donkey and colt back to Him, we put some cloaks on it and then Jesus got on it and rode it into Jerusalem. And what the people did next was so cool! They spread their cloaks on the ground, laid branches on the ground, and then started shouting! So many people were lining the streets shouting "Hosanna to the Son of David! Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord!" It was really loud, but so cool to hear many people praising Jesus as King!

When we got into Jerusalem, many people were asking who Jesus was. They had no idea who He was. And those who knew began telling everyone that this was Jesus of Nazareth!

Sometimes I don't understand the things Jesus does. Why did He want to ride a donkey into Jerusalem? If He is King, then why not take a horse or something better than a donkey? Donkeys are lowly animals, but I do know that donkeys are a symbol of peace. I wonder if Jesus was trying to send a message to the people of Jerusalem. Maybe He wanted to show them He comes in peace?

Again, I don't understand Jesus and what He does, but I do know one thing...He has healed people and performed so many miracles that I can't even begin to explain them all. And everything He says is true. I believe Him and what He teaches. I pray what He teaches this week while we are in Jerusalem will be well-received by all who hear Him. I want others to believe in Him and who He is, just like I do.

I pray you are doing well back home. I can't wait to write again.

I love you all,

Andrew

Bible Memory Verse

Hang this page on your fridge this week to help you memorize this verse.

**"Hosanna to the Son of
David! Blessed is he who
comes in the name of the
Lord!"**

Matthew 21:9

Bible Story Art

In the space below, draw a picture of the story of Jesus' triumphal entry into Jerusalem.

Family Craft

Triumphal Entry T-Shirts

Supplies Needed: t-shirt template (one per child), markers

If the people cheering for Jesus in the streets of Jerusalem wore matching t-shirts that day, what would they have looked like?

Using the t-shirt template, design a "Triumphal Entry T-Shirt." Think back to the story in Matthew 21 and design a shirt based off the story. Share your t-shirt design with your Children's Ministry leader so they can share it on your church's social media page. Be creative!

Family Activity

Palm Branch Limbo

Supplies Needed: palm branch (or any type of tree branch), music

Using a palm branch (real or fake...or any type of tree branch you have), play a game of limbo. Play some fun music and have each family member take turns going under the palm branch. Lower the branch after each round. See who can go the lowest without falling!

Family Letters

Letter to Your Pastor

Supplies Needed: stationery, envelope, pen, stamp

Each week your family will write letters to people to encourage them in their faith!

This week write a letter to your pastor(s). Let them know you are thankful for all the ways they lead your church. Thank them for the ways they help you come to know Jesus. Thank them for giving of their time to serve your family and all the people at your church.

Then drop the letter in the mail!

Family Snack

Palm Sundaes

Supplies Needed: vanilla ice cream, green food coloring gel, chocolate syrup, whipped cream, cherries

Celebrate Palm Sunday with a Palm Sundae!

Scoop vanilla ice cream into a bowl. Add green food coloring gel and mix till ice cream turns green. Then add the following on top: chocolate syrup, whipped cream, and cherries. Eat and remember the Bible story of Jesus riding into Jerusalem on a donkey while people waved palm branches!

***You can also use a green ice cream of your choice if you like: mint chocolate chip, green sherbet, or pistachio.*

Week Two Overview

Color of the Week - White (wear this color this week)

Family Devotion - Jesus Clears the Temple

(Matthew 21:12-17)

Bible Memory Verse - Matthew 21:13

Bible Story Art - Draw a picture of the story of Jesus clearing the temple of the money changers

Family Craft - House of Prayer

Family Activity - Cleaning Party

Family Letters - Write a Letter to a Sick Friend

Family Snack - Peeps S'mores

Family Devotion – Matthew 21:12-17

Dear Family,

Well, it seems that things got a little bit more interesting after our arrival to the great city of Jerusalem...

When we got there, Jesus went straight to the temple. He loves the temple. He loves teaching others about God and we all love learning something about Him every day. But what Jesus saw when He arrived at the temple made Him very angry. None of us had ever seen Jesus get angry the way He did at the temple today. It was crazy!

When we arrived in the temple courts, Jesus found many people who were buying and selling there. They were selling things like doves...animals that people could use for sacrifices in the temple. And He also found money changers who were exchanging money for others (so they could buy things) who were not from Jerusalem but had come to celebrate the Passover.

And then Jesus blew up! He flipped the tables! He yelled for them to get out! He told them they were turning His house of prayer into a den of robbers. Money went flying everywhere. Doves and other animals were flying everywhere. It was a crazy scene! We were all shocked and couldn't believe what we were seeing. We had never seen Jesus act this way before!

Once all of that was out of the temple, Jesus began healing. The blind and the lame came to the temple and sought out Jesus. And He healed them. I really love watching Jesus heal people. It's so amazing how someone comes to Him...not being able to see...then He heals them, and now they can see. Wow...I am always in awe every time I see Him heal someone.

But there are certain people that cannot stand what Jesus does....and they are the chief priests and the teachers of the law. They cannot wrap their heads around the miracles He performs. They become so angry anytime Jesus does something. I really don't understand why. Jesus is the Son of God. Why can't they see that and be excited about all that Jesus says and does? I hope they don't cause any trouble for Jesus while we are in Jerusalem celebrating the Passover this week.

It's been quite a day already. So much has happened. Thankful for the time I get to spend with Jesus as He is teaching me so much about God.

I'll write more later.

I love and miss you all,

Andrew

Bible Memory Verse

Hang this page on your fridge this week to help you memorize this verse.

"My house will be called a house of prayer, but you are making it a den of robbers."

Matthew 21:13

Bible Story Art

In the space below, draw a picture of the story of Jesus clearing the temple of all the money changers.

Family Craft

House of Prayer

Supplies Needed: paper, markers

The temple was known to be a house of prayer, but people had defiled that by changing money inside the temple and selling items to sacrifice. Jesus brought the temple back to what it was supposed to be...a house of prayer.

Let's remember to make the house we live in a house of prayer by continually praying together as a family. In this activity, you will be creating a map of the inside of your home and then you will use that map as you pray in every room of your house.

First, on a sheet of paper, draw a layout of your house. If you have more than one floor, you can use multiple sheets of paper (one sheet per floor of your home). Make boxes large enough for you to write in. You will label each room: living room, kitchen, bedroom, etc.

As a family, decide on a word that you would like to write in each room. This would be the one thing you would pray for over that room. For example, for the living room you could write the word "peace" and then pray and ask God to bring His peace to that room as you gather as a family. Another example, for the kitchen, you could write the word "thanks" and as you pray, ask God to always make each of you thankful for what He's given you as you are in the kitchen cooking and eating together as a family.

***If you need an example of what to do, you will find a house layout with words on the following page.*

After you have finished creating the map of your house, gather as a family in each room and pray that word you wrote over each room in your home. And don't just do this once, but continually pray through your home as a family each week.

Family Activity

Cleaning Party

Supplies Needed: cleaning supplies

Jesus cleaned the temple of all the money changers and brought it back to what it's meant to be. So how about you have a little fun and get the whole family to help clean the house!

I can just hear the grumbles from the kids...cleaning the house...no fun! But you can make it fun! Here are a few ideas for a fun cleaning party:

- Turn on music the kids love and jam out to some fun songs while you clean.
- Make it a competition. See who can clean the best in the fastest amount of time.
- Set a timer to see if they can clean their room in a certain amount of time.
- Offer incentives to kids if they clean. Maybe something like dinner at their favorite restaurant, special dessert treat, or a whole week with no chores.

After the cleaning party, thank your family for helping and remind them of the Bible story this week of Jesus cleaning the temple and helping it be what it is supposed to be.

Family Letters

Letter to a Sick Friend

Supplies Needed: stationery, envelope, pen, stamp

Each week your family will write letters to people to encourage them in their faith!

This week write a letter to someone you know that is sick. Maybe someone who has COVID-19, cancer, or is in the hospital. Let them know you are praying for God to heal them.

Then drop the letter in the mail!

Family Snack

Peeps S'mores

Supplies Needed: package of Peeps marshmallows (use birds, not bunnies), Hershey chocolate bars, graham crackers

This snack will remind kids of this week's story of Jesus driving out the money changers in the temple. The Peeps birds will remind them of the doves that went flying everywhere when Jesus overturned the tables.

If the weather is beautiful, build a fire outside (you can use the grill as a fire pit if you need to. Or if it's too cold, place Peeps on a cookie sheet and melt in oven).

Give each child a Peeps marshmallow and a roasting stick. Have them roast the Peeps marshmallow over the fire. Take two graham crackers, place half a Hershey chocolate bar and the roasted Peeps marshmallow in between the two graham crackers. Smash down and eat the gooey, yummy Peeps s'more!

Week Three Overview

Color of the Week - Purple (wear this color this week)

Family Devotion - The Last Supper (Luke 22:7-23)

Bible Memory Verse - Luke 22:19b

Bible Story Art - Draw a picture of the story of Jesus and the disciples eating the Last Supper

Family Craft - We Remember Jesus Banner

Family Activity - The Last Supper Family Meal

Family Letters - Write a Letter to Grandparents

Family Snack - Cinnamon Bread

Family Devotion - Luke 22:7-23

Dear Family,

The day has come for the Passover meal. All of us disciples are excited to celebrate this day with Jesus. This morning, Jesus came to Peter and I and asked us to get everything set up for the Passover meal. When we asked Him where we are to set it up, He gave us explicit instructions. You know Jesus...He gives great details about doing things. By now, you would think we would understand His ways, but we don't. But even though we didn't understand, we followed His instructions completely.

He told Peter and I to enter the city and find a man carrying a jar of water. We are to follow him to the house that he enters and ask the homeowner where the guest room is in which Jesus can eat the Passover meal with His disciples. Jesus said this man will show us a large room upstairs that will be furnished. This is where we are to make the preparations for the Passover meal.

So, as Peter and I journeyed to the city, we discussed all the things Jesus just said to us. We had lots of questions. Like, how are we supposed to know if the man with the jar of water is the right man? There could be several men carrying jars of water. And do we trust this man to lead us to the right house? How will we know for sure that we are doing everything Jesus asks us to do? Peter and I concluded that we have to trust Jesus completely. He has never led us astray and we should know by now that everything He says is true.

So, do you think we found the man carrying the jar of water who led us to the house where we are to make the Passover preparations? Yes, of course we did! Once again, Jesus never fails. Everything was just as He told us it would be.

We got the meal ready and then Jesus and the other disciples showed up. We ate, we laughed, and we reclined at the table together. It sure was a great meal and we really enjoyed eating with Jesus.

But during our time together that night, Jesus said some things that made us wonder what was about to happen. He told us He was super excited about eating this Passover meal with us before He suffers. Suffers from what? What does He mean by that? There is no way we will let Jesus suffer from anything.

Then He took bread, gave thanks to God, and broke it. When He gave the bread to us, He said, "This is my body given for you; do this in remembrance of me." Then He took the cup, gave thanks to God for it, and said, "This cup is the new covenant in my

blood, which is poured out for you." When He said these things, we all began looking around the table at each other. Every one of us was confused by what He said. What does He mean that bread is His body? Why are we to remember Him when we eat bread? And the cup is His blood? What? And what kind of new covenant is He talking about? We were all confused.

At the end of the meal, Jesus said something that had all of us fearful. He told us that one of us would betray Him! That's when we all started talking about who would do something like that to Jesus. Why would we betray the man who has taught us so much? Why would we betray the man who has done miraculous things? Why would we betray the man who is our Teacher and our Friend? That makes no sense! I pray it's not me. I can't believe I would ever do something like that!

Tonight's meal started off great, but it ended with lots of questions and lots of worry from the disciples. Please pray for us. None of us want to be the one to betray Jesus.

Miss and love you all,

John

Bible Memory Verse

Hang this page on your fridge this week to help you memorize this verse.

**"This is my body given for
you; do this in remembrance
of me."**

Luke 22:19b

Bible Story Art

In the space below, draw a picture of the story of Jesus and the disciples together at the Last Supper.

Family Craft

We Remember Jesus Banner

Supplies Needed: brown butcher paper, markers

Jesus told the disciples to remember Him every time they ate the bread and drank the wine. Today, you are going to remember Jesus by creating a banner to celebrate Him.

Roll out the butcher paper on the floor. In the middle of the paper write in large letters, "We Remember Jesus." Then have family members take markers and write down things they remember about Jesus. This could be things He did or people He healed or even different names for Jesus. You can also draw pictures of things Jesus did.

You will use this banner as a table runner for the Family Activity (on the next page). You can also hang the banner in your home for the rest of Lent and when you look at it, you will be reminded of Jesus and all He has done for you.

Family Activity

The Last Supper Family Meal

Supplies Needed: We Remember Jesus banner, rolls, cheese cubes, strawberries, grape juice

For supper tonight, have a simple meal (like one the disciples might have had with Jesus the night of the Last Supper).

Set your table with the We Remember Jesus banner you just created. Set out simple plates and cups (disposable works great with kids).

Your simple meal can include rolls, cheese cubes, and strawberries. Serve grape juice to drink.

As you eat, read the story of The Last Supper. End your meal together in prayer asking God to help each of you always remember Jesus and what He did for you.

Family Letters

Letter to Grandparents

Supplies Needed: stationery, envelope, pen, stamp

Each week your family will write letters to people to encourage them in their faith!

This week write a letter to one of your grandparents. Tell them about the story you have learned about Jesus eating the Last Supper with His disciples. Tell them about things you remember about Jesus from the Bible. Remind them that Jesus loves them!

Then drop the letter in the mail!

Family Snack

Cinnamon Bread

Supplies Needed: 1 can refrigerated crescent rolls, ground cinnamon, sugar, softened butter

Your family will be baking cinnamon bread to go along with the story of Jesus eating the Last Supper with His disciples.

Heat oven to 375°. Unroll the crescent dough to form eight triangles and place on an ungreased baking sheet. Spread softened butter on each triangle. Sprinkle the cinnamon and sugar over the butter. Roll each triangle into a crescent shape. Bake 10-12 minutes.

You can make together to eat as a family, or you can even make enough to deliver to friends and family to remind them about Jesus and His love for them.

Week Four Overview

Color of the Week - Red (wear this color this week)

Family Devotion - Garden of Gethsemane (Matthew 26:36-56 & John 18:1-11)

Bible Memory Verse - Matthew 26:41

Bible Story Art - Draw a picture of the story of Jesus and the disciples in the Garden of Gethsemane

Family Craft - Prayer Bookmark

Family Activity - Bedtime Prayer Journal

Family Letters - Write a Letter to a Friend

Family Snack - Dipped Pretzels

Family Devotion

Matthew 26:36-56 & John 18:1-11

Dear Family,

I pray this letter finds you doing well. I was doing well, but after what happened tonight, I am truly shaken to the core.

After we finished the Passover meal with Jesus, He led us out to the Garden of Gethsemane. It was nighttime and all was quiet in the garden. It was such a peaceful place to be.

Jesus told all of us to sit in the garden while He went to pray. But then He asked me, James, and John to go further into the garden with Him and keep watch while He prayed. He also said that His soul was overwhelmed with sadness to the point of death. That made us sad, too. We have not seen Jesus be sad very many times while we have been with Him.

We weren't sure why He was sad, but He asked us to keep watch and pray. And well...we tried. But our stomachs were so full from just having eaten the Passover meal, it was nighttime, and He asked us to sit down and pray. But we couldn't keep our eyes open! We all fell asleep!

When He returned, we could tell He was a little frustrated with us. He couldn't believe we had fallen asleep when all He had asked us to do was to watch and pray. He looked directly at me and said, "Couldn't you men keep watch with me for one hour?" Oh man...I felt so bad! What was wrong with me? Why couldn't I do the one thing Jesus asked me to do?

So, He left again and went to pray and asked us to pray as well. And guess what we did? We fell asleep again! It was so hard to stay awake and pray. He came back and woke us up again and told us to pray. Now, you would think that after two times of falling asleep, we wouldn't do it again. But we did! He came back a third time and found us sleeping! This time He told us to get up because the hour had come, and His betrayer was here.

His betrayer was here in the garden? We quickly got up because we wanted to find out which one of us was going to be the one to betray Jesus.

All of a sudden, we saw a large crowd of men with clubs and swords coming toward us. And in that crowd was Judas Iscariot! He came up and kissed Jesus and said hello

to Him. And Jesus told him to do what he came here for. Then the soldiers who were in the crowd seized Jesus and arrested Him! They were treating Him like He was a criminal...and that made me really angry! So I took the sword of a soldier and cut off the ear of one of the servants. I thought I would show them that nobody can mess with Jesus!

Well...Jesus didn't like that I did that. He told me to put away the sword. Then He took the ear I had cut off and placed it back on the servant and healed him. That was another amazing miracle! But yet nobody seemed to care that He did that. Jesus explained to all of us that He could easily call on God to send more than twelve legions of angels to protect Him, but if He did that then the Scriptures would not be fulfilled in the way they were supposed to be.

It was a crazy turn of events! What started out as a peaceful prayer time in the Garden of Gethsemane turned into a very sad event of Jesus being betrayed by one of our own and then being arrested! How could Judas Iscariot do something like this? Why would he turn against Jesus who has done nothing but love him? It makes no sense.

When Jesus was led away, we didn't know what to do, so we all fled and deserted Him. We were so scared, and I guess we were afraid of what might happen to us, too. Running seemed like the only option.

Please pray. We are all so scared of what is going to happen to Jesus. This is not fair. He's done nothing but love and help others. I will keep you posted.

Love to all,

Peter

Bible Memory Verse

Hang this page on your fridge this week to help you memorize this verse.

"Watch and pray so that you will not fall into temptation. The spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak."

Matthew 26:41

Bible Story Art

In the space below, draw a picture of the story of Jesus and the disciples in the Garden of Gethsemane.

Family Craft

Prayer Bookmark

Supplies Needed: prayer bookmark template, markers or crayons, single hole puncher, ribbon

While in the Garden of Gethsemane, Jesus asked the disciples to "watch and pray." (Matthew 26:41) In today's activity, you will be coloring a prayer bookmark. This bookmark is designed to help remind you to "watch and pray."

Color the bookmark using markers or crayons. Using a single hole puncher, punch a hole at the top of the bookmark. Loop ribbon through hole and tie off. Place bookmark in your Bible to remind you to "watch and pray."

Family Activity

Bedtime Prayer Journal

Supplies Needed: notebook, pen, markers

Jesus asked His disciples to stay awake and pray at night while they were in the Garden of Gethsemane. And they fell asleep three times!

If you say your prayers at bedtime, you might say them while you're lying down, all tucked into your bed, nice and cozy. And what happens when you do this? You usually fall asleep!

I challenge you to stay awake while you are saying your bedtime prayers. And a great way to do this is by starting a bedtime prayer journal (and by sitting up).

You can gather your family together for bedtime prayers or do on your own.

Grab a notebook, pen, and markers. Label with the date. Make 2 columns. One for prayers and one for praises. Write down several things in each column.

Another way to do this is by drawing a picture for God. Use markers to design a beautiful picture. This can be a picture of things you are praying about or things you are giving praise to God for.

At the end, write out a prayer if you like. Then before you say Amen, be silent and just listen. Ask God to speak to you. And if you hear anything, write that in your prayer journal, too.

Family Letters

Letter to a Friend

Supplies Needed: stationery, envelope, pen, stamp

Each week your family will write letters to people to encourage them in their faith!

This week write a letter to one of your friends. Tell this friend you are praying for them. Share with them one of your favorite Bible verses. Remind them that Jesus loves them!

Then drop the letter in the mail!

Family Snack

Dipped Pretzels

Supplies Needed: pretzels (regular ones, not the sticks), vanilla almond bark, sprinkles, parchment paper

In this week's Bible story, we learned about Jesus and the disciples praying in the Garden of Gethsemane.

Pretzels are a snack that remind us of prayer. Long ago, when children said their prayers, they crossed their arms across their chest. A monk decided to make a snack that symbolized the children saying their prayers. The crossed pieces of the pretzel symbolize the crossed arms of children in prayer.

To make the dipped pretzels, first melt vanilla almond bark in the microwave according to the directions on the bag. Then, dip the pretzels into the vanilla almond bark. Lay the pretzels on parchment paper and quickly pour sprinkles on top of the almond bark. After the almond bark hardens and cools, you can eat!

Week Five Overview

Color of the Week - Black (wear this color this week)

Family Devotion - The Crucifixion (Matthew 26:69-75 & 27:32-61)

Bible Memory Verse - Matthew 27:50

Bible Story Art - Draw a picture of the story of Jesus' Crucifixion

Family Craft - Easter String Cross

Family Activity - Sins Nailed to the Cross

Family Letters - Write a Letter to Police Officers

Family Snack - Crown of Thorns Crackers

Family Devotion

Matthew 26:69-75 & 27:32-61

Dear Family,

Today has been a very dark day, the darkest of days I have ever had while following Jesus. After His arrest, I decided to follow the soldiers to see where they were taking Jesus. I stayed far behind because I was afraid they might see me and arrest me, too. And I did not want that to happen. But, of course, some people did recognize me. Three people made the announcement to others that I was one of the followers of Jesus. I quickly denied all of them and told them I didn't know who Jesus was.

And then the rooster crowed...and my shoulders slumped, and I began to weep. Jesus had told me that before the rooster crowed, I would deny knowing Him three times. Why did I do that? Why did I tell those people I didn't know who Jesus was? I am so ashamed of what I did. Jesus has done so much for me and I couldn't even claim that I knew Him.

The next day, so many things happened. Things I can't even believe actually happened. A large crowd of people was shouting to crucify Jesus. Those were the same people who were just praising Him as He rode into Jerusalem on a donkey. Now they wanted Him dead. Why? What horrible thing did Jesus ever do to them?

Pilate chose to listen to the crowd of people and crucify Jesus. He knew Jesus had not done anything wrong, but I think Pilate was afraid of the crowd and what they might do to him if he didn't give them what they wanted.

But what really hit me hard was seeing Jesus. He had been whipped, beaten, and spit on. He was in great pain. And then they wanted Him to carry a large wooden cross to a place called Golgotha where they would crucify Him. But Jesus couldn't do it. He was too weak to lift that heavy cross. So, they pulled a man named Simon out of the crowd and he carried the cross for Jesus.

Then I watched as they drove nails into His hands and feet, placed a crown of thorns on His head, and hung Him on the cross to die. Above His head they placed a sign that said: "This is Jesus, The King of the Jews." That was hard to watch. I still don't understand why they wanted to crucify Him. He healed people, performed many miracles, and taught others about God. Why did they want Him to die?

Jesus wasn't the only one being crucified that day. Two criminals were on each side of Him. As people passed by the three men on the crosses, they seemed to only hurl insults at Jesus. They mocked Him and said for Him to save Himself since He was the Son of God. And then what really shocked me were the religious leaders who were also mocking Jesus. They shouted for Him to come down and save Himself. And if He did then they would believe in Him as the Son of God. So crazy!

From about noon till 3:00 pm, it went completely dark. Very eerie. I have never seen the sky do that in the middle of the day. Then all of a sudden, Jesus shouted out, "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?" And then Jesus died. At that moment something weird happened...the earth began to shake, the rocks split, the tombs broke open, and the curtain in the temple was torn in two. When this happened, people started realizing that Jesus was who He said He was.

From a distance, I could see the women. They were faithful followers of Jesus and they were there to care for Jesus' needs. I could see Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James and Joses, and also James and John's mother. And they were all in tears...just as I was.

That evening, a man named Joseph from the town of Arimathea came to claim Jesus' body and bury it in one of his tombs. He wrapped Jesus' body in clean linen cloth, placed it in the tomb, and rolled a big stone in front of the entrance. Then the chief priests went to Pilate and asked for guards to be placed in front of the tomb because they had heard Jesus say that He would

rise on the third day. And they even put a seal on the stone, too. They didn't want anyone to steal Jesus' body and make it look like He had risen from the dead. Who would do such a thing anyway?

So, what started out as a great week celebrating the Passover with Jesus in Jerusalem has ended terribly. My heart is hurting so bad. I miss my Friend. I miss my Teacher. I miss the Messiah. Why did He die? Please pray for all of us who loved Jesus. This is so very hard.

Miss and love you all,

Peter

Bible Memory Verse

Hang this page on your fridge this week to help you memorize this verse.

"And when Jesus had cried out again in a loud voice, he gave up his spirit."

Matthew 27:50

Bible Story Art

In the space below, draw a picture of the story of Jesus' Crucifixion.

Family Craft

Easter String Cross

Supplies Needed: block of wood, pencil, 5 nails, hammer, 3 colors of yarn

In this activity, you will be creating a cross using the supplies listed above.

On a small block of wood, draw a cross using a pencil. This will help you to know exactly where to put the nails.

Hammer a nail at each of the ends of the cross (4), plus one in the center of the cross where the lines meet. Next, take one color of yarn and tie it to one of the nails. Then begin weaving the yarn around each of the nails in whatever pattern you desire. Be creative! There is no one way to do this. When you are finished with that color, tie the end off onto one of the nails.

Then take another color of yarn and do the same thing. And then take a third color of yarn and do the same thing. When you are finished, you will have a beautiful Easter cross to remind you of Jesus' sacrifice for you!

Family Activity

Sins Nailed to the Cross

Supplies Needed: 2 pieces of wood, hammer, nails, sticky notes

Jesus died on the cross for our sins. He sacrificed His life so that we can live forever with Him in heaven.

For this activity, families will create a cross out of wood and nail their sins (the bad things we do) to the cross.

First, create a cross out of two pieces of wood. These don't have to be large pieces. You can use whatever wood you have to create a cross.

Next, have family members take sticky notes and write down things they want God to forgive them for. These could be things like: hitting my sibling, saying a mean word to a friend, not doing what my mom or dad asked me, lying, cheating on a test, etc. Have them write down one sin per sticky note.

Then, take the sticky notes and nail each one into the wooden cross. Parents will need to help younger kids with this.

When all sticky notes (sins) have been nailed to the cross, gather your family around the cross and pray together, asking God to forgive you of all these sins.

Family Letters

Letter to Police Officers

Supplies Needed: stationery, envelope, pen, stamp

Each week your family will write letters to people to encourage them in their faith!

This week write a letter to the police officers at your local police station. Thank them for their service to your community. Tell them you are praying for them and asking God to protect them while they serve to protect your community. Remind them that Jesus loves them!

Then drop the letter in the mail or hand deliver to your local police station.

Family Snack

Crown of Thorns Crackers

Supplies Needed: crackers, peanut butter, pretzel

Supplies Needed: crackers, peanut butter, pretzel sticks

This simple snack will help remind kids of the sacrifice Jesus made for us when He died on the cross.

On crackers of your choice, spread peanut butter (or almond or sunflower butter). Break pretzel sticks into small pieces and place around the outer edge of the cracker (to make it look like a crown of thorns). Eat and enjoy!

Remind children that this snack represents the crown of thorns that was placed on Jesus' head when He was crucified on the cross. After you eat, say a prayer thanking Jesus for dying on the cross for your sins.

Week Six Overview

Color of the Week - Yellow (wear this color this week)

Family Devotion - The Resurrection (Luke 24:1-49)

Bible Memory Verse - Luke 24:6a

Bible Story Art - Draw a picture of the story of Jesus' Resurrection

Family Craft -Butterfly Chalk Art

Family Activity - Easter Sunrise Breakfast

Family Letters - Write a Letter to Jesus

Family Snack - Resurrection Rolls

Family Devotion – Luke 24:1-49

Dear Family,

What I am about to tell you will be hard to believe. But it's true! I'm still trying to wrap my brain around what happened. I am truly amazed!

Early on the third morning after Jesus had died, the women said they went to the tomb. They were going to take spices to put on Jesus' body. But when they got there, they found the stone that was in front of the tomb rolled away. And when they entered the tomb they found it empty. Jesus' body was not in there. It was gone! Naturally, they were confused and worried. Who would take Jesus' body? And how in the world did a large stone get rolled away?

Then out of nowhere appeared two men whose clothes were shining bright! They were angels! They asked the women why they were here looking for the living among the dead. Then they said "He is not here; he has risen!" They absolutely could not believe what these men had said. Risen? Like He's alive??

Then the men reminded the women of what Jesus had said while He was still with them in Galilee. Jesus had said that He would be delivered into the hands of some evil men who would crucify Him, and then on the third day He would rise from the dead. And then the women said it was like a light went off in their heads. Yes, they remembered Jesus' words! How could they have forgotten such an important piece of information that Jesus had shared with them?

In their excitement, they ran back to find the eleven of us disciples and the other followers of Jesus. They were bursting with joy when they found us. But you know what? None of us believed them. How could this be? What they said seemed like nonsense!

So, I decided to go find out for myself what they were talking about. I ran to the tomb and found it exactly as the women had said. The stone was rolled away, the linen cloth that Jesus had been wrapped in after His death was lying on the floor of the tomb, and Jesus was not in there. He had disappeared. I was confused. How could this be? What exactly happened to Jesus' body?

Later that day, the craziest thing happened. Jesus appeared to two of His followers on the road to Emmaus. At first, they didn't recognize Him, but when He came back to their house, broke the bread and gave thanks, they said suddenly they realized who He was. It was Jesus! He was alive! And then Jesus quickly left them.

That's when they ran to find us (the eleven disciples), and they told us about what had happened.

Then all of a sudden, Jesus appeared to us! I couldn't believe it! Honestly, I felt like I was seeing a ghost. I couldn't understand how He could be alive. But Jesus said He wasn't a ghost. He let us touch Him and then He showed us the scars on His hands and feet from where the nails had been driven in.

I think we were all still in shock and somewhat in disbelief even though we could see Him. But then He reminded us of what He had told us while He was with us. As we sat there and listened to Him, it was like a light bulb was going off in our heads. We finally could understand the Scriptures. It was so cool to be able to put all the pieces together and to fully understand everything Jesus had taught us.

Jesus reminded us that we were witnesses of everything that happened to Him and we needed to go out and share this message with others. But we couldn't do that until we had received power from God. Jesus told us to stay in the city until that happened.

Let's just say this whole week has been a whirlwind of events and emotions. We were so excited to enter Jerusalem with Jesus to celebrate the Passover. Then we got to witness the anger of Jesus as He drove out the money changers in the temple. Then, we were thrilled to eat the Passover meal with Him and pray with Him in the Garden of Gethsemane (even though we fell asleep).

And then everything took a turn for the worse. Jesus was betrayed by Judas Iscariot (one of our own). He was arrested by soldiers and dragged to Pilate where He was condemned and crucified on a cross. After He died, He was buried in a tomb. We all grieved and mourned the loss of the Son of God, who was our Friend and our Teacher. It was the darkest day for sure.

But then the unthinkable happened. Jesus rose from the dead! He is alive and I have seen Him with my own eyes! Words cannot describe the joy I feel! I am overwhelmed with excitement and pure joy!

Jesus has now asked me and the others to go out and spread His name to the whole world. He wants me, Peter, to tell others about Him. I have been given a great task and I am ready to tell others. No denying Jesus anymore. I believe, and I am ready to share that belief with everyone.

I look forward to being able to see you again, hopefully one day soon. Please pray now for me and the other disciples as we go out and do what Jesus has asked us to do. And pray that everyone we talk to will believe in Jesus as their Savior.

Love and miss you all,

Peter

Bible Memory Verse

Hang this page on your fridge this week to help you memorize this verse.

"He is not here; he has risen!"

Luke 24:6a

Bible Story Art

In the space below, draw a picture of the story of Jesus' Resurrection.

Family Craft

Butterfly Chalk Art

Supplies Needed: sidewalk chalk

A butterfly symbolizes new life. Because of Jesus' death and resurrection, we have new life...eternal life with Him if we believe in and follow Him.

Today, decorate your driveway with butterflies using sidewalk chalk. Draw colorful butterflies. You can even write in "He is Risen!" or "Thank You Jesus for New Life!" Take a picture of your butterflies and share them with your Children's Ministry Leader or on your parent's social media pages.

Family Activity

Easter Sunrise Breakfast

Supplies Needed: breakfast food, Bible

Begin your Easter morning early, just like the women did when they went to visit His tomb.

Parents...before sunrise, get up and make breakfast for your family. This could be something simple like muffins and fruit or you can make biscuits, eggs, and bacon!

Set your family's breakfast up outside as a picnic. Lay a blanket on the grass. Then wake up your children before the sun rises and have them come outside for a sunrise breakfast.

As you eat together, read the story of Jesus' Resurrection found in Luke 24:1-49. Talk about how much we have to celebrate and be thankful for on this day.

Family Letters

Letter to Jesus

Supplies Needed: stationery, envelope, pen

This week's letter will be written to Jesus. Each family member will write their own letter to Jesus. In this letter, tell Jesus what's on your mind, what you need help with, what you are thankful for, and even how you can better serve Him.

Put the letter in an envelope, address to Jesus, and stick it in your Bible or dresser drawer.

Family Snack

Resurrection Rolls

Crescent rolls

Bag of large marshmallows

½ stick of butter, melted

Bowl of cinnamon/sugar mixture

Preheat oven to 400°. Give each child a large marshmallow and explain that it represents Jesus, our Savior. Have them coat the marshmallow in the melted butter. Tell them this represents the embalming oils used for burial.

Roll the marshmallow in the cinnamon/sugar mixture, which represents the spices used to anoint Jesus' body.

Unroll the crescent rolls onto a cookie sheet. Place coated marshmallow at top (bigger end) and tightly wrap the marshmallow in the triangle of the crescent roll. This signifies the wrapping of Jesus' body after death.

Put rolls in oven, which represents the tomb Jesus was placed in.

Bake for 10 minutes, until brown and puffed. Remove from oven and serve. Have kids bite into their roll to find it empty inside. He is risen!!