

# Lent 2021 @ First Pres

## Family Lent Devotions

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## Family Lenten Devotions—A Guide for Parents and Caregivers

**Goal:** Parents/primary caregivers (not pastors or Sunday School teachers) are the most important faith-influencers of their children. Research shows that the strongest indicator of faith among young adults is whether a parent took an active role in their faith formation as a child. The goal of these devotions is to support and equip you as parents/caregivers to encourage your children's faith formation and to show your children that your faith is important to you too.

**Devotion Format:** Each devotion will follow the same format:

- Memory Verse: Begin each devotion by reciting this verse out loud together. Recite it together for the next few days and see if you can memorize it.
- Openers: Each devotion (except for Jesus Dies: Good Friday) will have three openers. These will be creative discussion questions or short activities that are in some way tied to the Bible story you're about to read. Most won't require anything special, but a few of them ask you to use common household items. If you're short on time, choose just one or two of the openers. Or if you have another creative idea, come up with your own opening question or activity.
- Context: You can read these few sentences aloud before you get to your Bible story. They will help introduce the story you're about to share.
- Scripture: The scripture printed in your devotions is from the Common English Bible, a relatively new translation that uses everyday English and has the lowest reading level of any English translation. The page number in parentheses next to the scripture passage will point you to the parallel story in the Spark StoryBible. See the "Unique Families" section below for more information on which is right for your family.
- Wonder: "Wondering" questions are reflection questions designed to invite children into conversation with the story and encourage ideas and questions instead of right-and-wrong answers. These wondering questions invite reflection on the Bible story itself. If other questions seem more appropriate for your family's context, feel free to adapt these questions or add to them.
- Video: The videos will be creative re-tellings of the Bible story you've just read. Click on the image of the video in your devotion to pull up the video online. See Amplify instructions below for watching. (Note: these videos have sound, but no real words in them—just sounds that mimic language.)
- My Life: These questions will help you move from the Bible story itself into its application for your lives today.

- **Pray:** The prayer for each devotion is connected to the day's devotion. Again, feel free to adapt prayers to fit your family's needs. A suggestion—take turns praying or pray communally. It's just as important for your kids to learn to pray as it is for them to see you praying.

**Unique Families:** No two families are exactly alike. Our families come in all different shapes, sizes, and ages, and we each come with our own unique set of experiences and faith journey. These devotions are written to try and create a baseline experience that can meet all families' needs. But of course no devotion can meet everyone's needs. So, it's up to you to adapt the devotions to fit your family. For example, if the “wondering” questions feel over or under your children's developmental thinking stage, try tweaking them.

In terms of which version of Bible stories to read, here are some general guidelines:

- Families with **3<sup>rd</sup> Graders and Older:** Read the Common English Bible translation provided in your devotions;
- Families with **2<sup>nd</sup> graders or younger:** Read the parallel stories from the Spark StoryBible. Page references are in parentheses beside the scripture each day. If you don't have one, you can [purchase your own online](#);
- Families with a wide mix of ages: You'll need to make a decision about what's most appropriate for your family: reading from the Common English Bible, reading the Spark StoryBible, or reading both versions together for each devotion.

**Amplify:** The videos in the devotions below are available on a streaming service via our First Pres subscription. You'll need to create a free account to view them. Just follow these steps:

1. Go to our church's Amplify page:  
<https://my.amplifymedia.com/firstpresbyterianchurchoflib/sign-up>
2. Enter this access code and click the purple “Verify” button: **FYBMJR**
3. Fill out your information and click the “Start a Free Membership” Button
4. To play the videos, click the screenshots of the videos in each lesson, or search Amplify for “Holy Moly” and find the video with the matching title.

**Facebook:** Feel free to post photos, comments, or questions from your family in our [First Pres Facebook group](#) (“First Pres Community”). This is a closed group only visible to church members who have requested to join.

**Help!!!:** If you run into issues with any of the devotions, please [email Pastor Ryan](#) or give him a call at the church.

# Loving the Lost

## First Sunday in Lent

Memory Verse: “You must love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your being, with all your strength, and with all your mind, and love your neighbor as yourself.” (Luke 10:27)

### Openers:

- 1) Find Jerusalem and Jericho on a map. They’re about 18 miles apart. It would take a good day’s walk to get from one to the other. It was a very dangerous road with lots of robbers on it. How would you feel about traveling on that road? What would you plan to take on your journey?
- 2) Do you know Jericho is considered by some to be the oldest city in the world? What can you find out about it? Draw a picture of something you found in Jericho that’s still there today from ancient times.
- 3) Have you heard about the wall of Jericho? You’ll find the story in Joshua 6:1 ~ 20. Can you build a wall of Jericho with blocks and then make it fall as Joshua did?

Context: Jesus was always telling parables to teach important lessons. Parables are fictional stories that use everyday people and objects to teach about what God is like and who God wants us to be. In the Parable of the Good Samaritan, an injured man waits for someone to find him and help him. The ending of this parable would have been very surprising to the Israelites because a Samaritan was the last person they would expect to stop and help him (you see, the Israelites and Samaritans didn’t always get along). Listen to the parable and try to put yourself in the shoes of all the different characters.

Scripture: Luke 10:25-37 (Spark StoryBible, P. 360)

A legal expert stood up to test Jesus. “Teacher,” he said, “what must I do to gain eternal life?”

Jesus replied, “What is written in the Law? How do you interpret it?”

He responded, “You must love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your being, with all your strength, and with all your mind, and love your neighbor as yourself.”

Jesus said to him, “You have answered correctly. Do this and you will live.”

But the legal expert wanted to prove that he was right, so he said to Jesus, “And who is my neighbor?”

Jesus replied, “A man went down from Jerusalem to Jericho. He encountered thieves, who stripped him naked, beat him up, and left him near death. Now it just so happened that a priest was also going down the same road. When he saw the injured man, he crossed over to the other side of the road and went on his way. Likewise, a Levite came by that spot, saw the injured man, and crossed over to the other side of the road and went on his way. A Samaritan, who was on a journey, came to where the man was. But when he saw him, he was moved with compassion. The Samaritan went to him and bandaged his wounds, tending them with oil and wine. Then he placed the wounded man on his own donkey, took him to an inn, and took care of him. The next day, he took two full days’ worth of wages and gave them to the innkeeper. He said, ‘Take care of him, and when I return, I will pay you back for any additional costs.’ What do you think? Which one of these three was a neighbor to the man who encountered thieves?”

Then the legal expert said, “The one who demonstrated mercy toward him.”

Jesus told him, “Go and do likewise.”

#### Wonder:

- 1) I wonder...why did the priest and the Levite cross over to the other side of the road when they saw the injured man?
- 2) I wonder...what made the Samaritan stop to help him?
- 3) I wonder...what do you think the injured man did or said when he was finally healed?

Video: Click image below



My Life:

- 1) Who do I see in my life that is a “neighbor” that Jesus would want me to help?
- 2) What keeps me from loving any of my neighbors? Are there things that sometimes make it difficult?
- 3) What are some ways I might be able to help someone this week?

Pray: God of love, give us eyes to see those who are lost and hearts to love those in need. Amen.

## When Jesus Got “Lost”

Second Sunday in Lent

Memory Verse: Jesus replied, “Why were you looking for me? Didn’t you know that it was necessary for me to be in my Father’s house?” (Luke 2:49)

### Openers:

- 1) Can you draw a picture of what you think Jerusalem might have looked like in Jesus' time? How is it different from cities today? Then check out this [drawing of what archaeologists think the temple in Jerusalem might have looked like](#). It was very large--about the size of 25 football fields!
- 2) Play a game of hide and seek. Take turns being the seeker and the hiders. What were the best hiding spots? When you were the seeker, what clues did you use to find the people who were hiding?

Context: There aren't many stories in the Bible about Jesus' childhood, but this week we'll read about when 12-year old Jesus got "lost" from his parents. They looked for him for three whole days before they finally found him. Mary and Joseph must have been worried, but all along Jesus had been in the place where he felt most at home.

Scripture: Luke 2:41-52 (Spark StoryBible, P. 230)

Each year his parents went to Jerusalem for the Passover Festival. When he was 12 years old, they went up to Jerusalem according to their custom. After the festival was over, they were returning home, but the boy Jesus stayed behind in Jerusalem. His parents didn't know it. Supposing that he was among their band of travelers, they journeyed on for a full day while looking for him among their family and friends. When they didn't find Jesus, they returned to Jerusalem to look for him. After three days they found him in the temple. He was sitting among the teachers, listening to them and putting questions to them. Everyone who heard him was amazed by his understanding and his answers. When his parents saw him, they were shocked.

His mother said, "Child, why have you treated us like this? Listen! Your father and I have been worried. We've been looking for you!"

Jesus replied, "Why were you looking for me? Didn't you know that it was necessary for me to be in my Father's house?" But they didn't understand what he said to them.

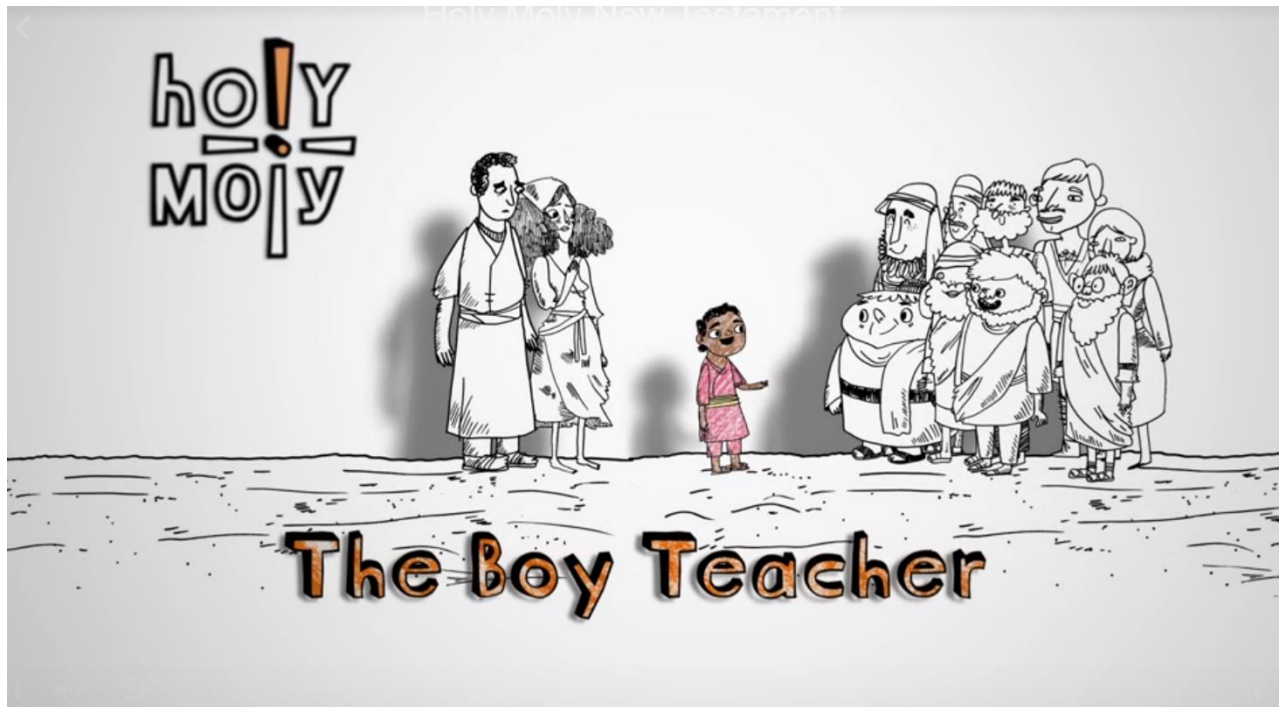
Jesus went down to Nazareth with them and was obedient to them. His mother cherished every word in her heart. Jesus matured in wisdom and years, and in favor with God and with people.



## Wonder

- 1) I wonder...why do you think Jesus stayed behind in Jerusalem?
- 2) I wonder...what do you think Jesus was like when he was a boy?
- 3) I wonder...what did Jesus mean when he said: “it was necessary for me to be in my Father’s house”?

Video: Click image below



## My Life:

- 1) Have you ever been lost from your parents? How did you feel? Do your parents remember a time you were young and they lost you momentarily? How did they feel?
- 2) It says that Jesus was obedient to his parents. What do you think that means? How can you be obedient to your parents?
- 3) Jesus went to the temple because it felt like home to him. Where are the places you feel safest and most comfortable? Where are the places you feel closest to God?



Pray: God-with-us, help us to seek and find the places in our everyday lives where we feel closest to you. Amen.

## The Lost and Found Son

### Third Sunday in Lent

Memory Verse: “We must celebrate with feasting because this son of mine was dead and has come back to life! He was lost and is found!” (Luke 15:23-24)

#### Openers:

- 1) If you were given \$1 million, what would you do with it? Everyone draw a picture or make a list of what you’d do with your money and then share them with each other.
- 2) What does “prodigal” mean? Look it up in the dictionary. Can you try using it in a sentence? Are you ever prodigal?

Context: When crowds gathered to listen to Jesus teach, there were all sorts of different people there. Some of the people knew that they had made some bad choices and they didn’t feel very close to God. Other people were very religious and thought that God must really be proud of them because they were so faithful and obedient. Jesus knew that he had to tell stories that would speak to both of these different groups of people at the same time. As you read the Parable of the Prodigal Son, think about how those different groups of people might have heard this story.

Scripture: Luke 15:11-32 (Spark StoryBible, P. 378)

Jesus said, “A certain man had two sons. The younger son said to his father, ‘Father, give me my share of the inheritance.’ Then the father divided his estate between them. Soon afterward, the younger son gathered everything together and took a trip to a land far away. There, he wasted his wealth through extravagant living.

“When he had used up his resources, a severe food shortage arose in that country and he began to be in need. He hired himself out to one of the citizens of that country, who sent him into his fields to feed pigs. He longed to eat his fill from what the pigs ate, but no one gave him anything. When he came to his senses, he said, ‘How many of my father’s hired hands have more than enough food, but I’m starving to death! I will get up and go to my father, and say to him, “Father, I have sinned against heaven and against you. I no longer deserve to be called your son. Take me on as one of your hired hands.” ’ So he got up and went to his father. “While he was still a long way off, his father saw him and was moved with compassion. His father ran to him, hugged him, and kissed him. Then his son said, ‘Father, I have sinned against heaven and against you. I no longer deserve to be called your son.’ But the father said to his servants, ‘Quickly, bring out the best robe and put it on him! Put a ring on his finger and sandals on his feet! Fetch the fattened calf and slaughter it. We must celebrate with feasting because this son of mine was dead and has come back to life! He was lost and is found!’ And they began to celebrate.

“Now his older son was in the field. Coming in from the field, he approached the house and heard music and dancing. He called one of the servants and asked what was going on. The servant replied, ‘Your brother has arrived, and your father has slaughtered the fattened calf because he received his son back safe and sound.’ Then the older son was furious and didn’t want to enter in, but his father came out and begged him. He answered his father, ‘Look, I’ve served you all these years, and I never disobeyed your instruction. Yet you’ve never given me as much as a young goat so I could celebrate with my friends. But when this son of yours returned, after gobbling up your estate on prostitutes, you slaughtered the fattened calf for him.’ Then his father said, ‘Son, you are always with me, and everything I have is yours. But we had to celebrate and be glad because this brother of yours was dead and is alive. He was lost and is found.’”

### Wonder

- 1) I wonder...why did the younger son want to leave his family?
- 2) I wonder...why did the father forgive his son and even throw a party for him?
- 3) I wonder...what do you think happened to the two brothers? Were they able to become friends again?

\*Bonus Activity: Act out the story of the Lost and Found Son with your family. Take turns being the father, son, and brother. Someone can also be the pig farmer or the partiers or even the pigs.

Video: Click image below



My Life:

- 1) Tell about a time you felt you were treated unfairly by someone. Were you able to forgive them?
- 2) Have you ever thought about running away? Where would you go? What would you miss most about home?
- 3) Have you ever thought something was lost forever and then you found it again? What was it? How did you feel?

Pray: God of grace, humble us to return to you when we've lost our way and to celebrate together when our sisters and brothers find you. Amen.

## Losing Lazarus

### Fourth Sunday in Lent

Memory Verse: "I am the resurrection and the life. Whoever believes in me will live, even though they die." (John 11:25)

### Openers:

- 1) When our friends or family are feeling sad, what sorts of things can we do or say to comfort them? What's one thing you could do to comfort someone this week? Here's one idea: make a card and send it to someone you know who is sad, lonely, or sick.
- 2) Draw a picture (or make a sculpture) of the strongest, most powerful thing you can think of. Share your creations with each other. After you finish sharing, ask: Are any of these things more powerful than God's love?

Context: During his life, Jesus earned a reputation as a healer. That's why Mary and Martha asked Jesus to come when their brother, Lazarus, got sick. But by the time Jesus arrived, Lazarus had already died. What happened next was truly amazing. And it reminds us that no matter how lost we might feel sometimes, our faith in God to find us makes anything possible. Never forget--God's love is the most powerful thing in the universe!

Scripture: John 11:1-3; 17-26;34-44 (Spark StoryBible, P. 440)

A certain man, Lazarus, was ill. He was from Bethany, the village of Mary and her sister Martha. (This was the Mary who anointed the Lord with fragrant oil and wiped his feet with her hair. Her brother Lazarus was ill.) So the sisters sent word to Jesus, saying, "Lord, the one whom you love is ill"...

When Jesus arrived, he found that Lazarus had already been in the tomb for four days. Bethany was a little less than two miles from Jerusalem. Many Jews had come to comfort Martha and Mary after their brother's death. When Martha heard that Jesus was coming, she went to meet him, while Mary remained in the house. Martha said to Jesus, "Lord, if you had been here, my brother wouldn't have died. Even now I know that whatever you ask God, God will give you." Jesus told her, "Your brother will rise again."

Martha replied, "I know that he will rise in the resurrection on the last day." Jesus said to her, "I am the resurrection and the life. Whoever believes in me will live, even though they die. Everyone who lives and believes in me will never die. Do you believe this?"...

He asked, "Where have you laid him?"  
They replied, "Lord, come and see."

Jesus began to cry. The Jews said, “See how much he loved him!” But some of them said, “He healed the eyes of the man born blind. Couldn’t he have kept Lazarus from dying?”

Jesus was deeply disturbed again when he came to the tomb. It was a cave, and a stone covered the entrance. Jesus said, “Remove the stone.”

Martha, the sister of the dead man, said, “Lord, the smell will be awful! He’s been dead four days.”

Jesus replied, “Didn’t I tell you that if you believe, you will see God’s glory?” So they removed the stone. Jesus looked up and said, “Father, thank you for hearing me. I know you always hear me. I say this for the benefit of the crowd standing here so that they will believe that you sent me.” Having said this, Jesus shouted with a loud voice, “Lazarus, come out!” The dead man came out, his feet bound and his hands tied, and his face covered with a cloth. Jesus said to them, “Untie him and let him go.”

### Wonder

- 1) I wonder...what did Martha mean when she said to Jesus, “Lord, if you had been here, my brother wouldn’t have died. Even now I know that whatever you ask God, God will give you”?
- 2) I wonder...why did Jesus cry?
- 3) I wonder...what did Lazarus say or do after he came out of the tomb?

Video (click image below)



### My Life:

- 1) Jesus says, "I am the resurrection and the life. Whoever believes in me will live, even though they die." How do you think we keep living after we die?
- 2) Do you have any friends or family who live far away. How do you feel when you have to say goodbye to them? How do you feel when you get to see them again?
- 3) Mary and Martha were upset that Jesus didn't come right away to heal Lazarus. Have you ever been disappointed when someone didn't do what you expected them to?

Prayer: God of new life, give us faith to believe that your love is more powerful than anything in the universe. Amen.

## Lost and Found Hearts

### Fifth Sunday in Lent

Memory Verse: "The Human One came to seek and save the lost." (Luke 19:10)

### Openers:

- 1) Looking at things from a new perspective can change the way we see things. If you have a two-story house, look out your first floor window. Then go above that window upstairs and look out at the same scene. How is it different? What things can you see from higher up that you couldn't see from below?
- 2) Let's play a game called "Zacchaeus." Everyone starts with 5 pennies (or another small item). Make one person "Zacchaeus" and everyone else is a "Jericho." Take turns rolling a dice. If the person rolls a 1 or a 6, they get to keep their pennies. If they roll a 2, 3, 4, or 5, then they have to give one of their pennies to Zacchaeus. Keep taking turns until someone has all the pennies. After you play, talk about how everyone felt about the game. Were the rules fair? What was it like to be Zacchaeus? How did the Jerichos feel?

Context: In Jesus' day, tax collectors were some of the most unpopular people around. They were considered greedy and they often stole from the poor. So when Jesus is friendly to a tax collector named Zacchaeus, the people in Jericho aren't

very happy about it. But Jesus' invitation to Zacchaeus gives us hope that all people--even tax collectors--can change their hearts when they discover that God loves them for who they are.

Scripture: Luke 19:1-10 (Spark StoryBible, P. 400)

Jesus entered Jericho and was passing through town. A man there named Zacchaeus, a ruler among tax collectors, was rich. He was trying to see who Jesus was, but, being a short man, he couldn't because of the crowd. So he ran ahead and climbed up a sycamore tree so he could see Jesus, who was about to pass that way. When Jesus came to that spot, he looked up and said, "Zacchaeus, come down at once. I must stay in your home today." So Zacchaeus came down at once, happy to welcome Jesus.

Everyone who saw this grumbled, saying, "He has gone to be the guest of a sinner."

Zacchaeus stopped and said to the Lord, "Look, Lord, I give half of my possessions to the poor. And if I have cheated anyone, I repay them four times as much." Jesus said to him, "Today, salvation has come to this household because he too is a son of Abraham. The Human One came to seek and save the lost."

### Wonder

- 1) I wonder...why did Zacchaeus want to see Jesus?
- 2) I wonder...why were the people so angry that Jesus was going to stay at Zacchaeus' house?
- 3) I wonder...what caused Zacchaeus' change of heart? Why did he suddenly offer to give away all his money?



Video: Click image below



My Life:

- 1) How would you feel if Jesus invited himself over to your house for dinner? What would you cook? What would you want to tell him or ask him?
- 2) Some people grumbled when Jesus went to Zaccheaus' house. How do you react when you think something is unfair? Do you ever get mad at a friend when you think they are paying more attention to someone else?
- 3) Have you ever had a sudden "change of heart" like Zacchaeus? What happened?

Pray: God of our hearts, give us love for the lost and hope that the world can change one heart at a time. Amen.

# Jesus Comes

## Palm Sunday

Memory Verse: “Hosanna to the Son of David! Blessings on the one who comes in the name of the Lord! Hosanna in the highest!” (Matthew 21:9)

### Openers:

1. Put on a pretend parade. Decide what holiday your parade is celebrating, what floats or performances are part of it, and who is the “Grand Marshall” of your parade. (Or if it’s easier for your family, just talk about parades you’ve been to and what you’ve seen there)
2. Google “donkeys” and learn 5 fun facts about these stubborn animals.
3. Make a list of kings and queens (real or fictional). What do they have in common? What makes them different?

Context: Jesus had been traveling all around Israel and the surrounding areas for many months—teaching about God’s kingdom, healing people, and telling people to turn their lives around. Jesus wasn’t doing those things in big cities. Instead he spent almost all of his time in small towns where most people were very poor. As the Jewish holiday of Passover approached, Jesus knew it was time to travel to the big city—Jerusalem. And he told his disciples what would happen. There were a lot of people in Jerusalem who didn’t like what Jesus was teaching, and they would try to capture him and kill him when he came to Jerusalem.

Scripture: Matthew 21 (Spark StoryBible, P. 454)

When they approached Jerusalem and came to Bethphage on the Mount of Olives, Jesus gave two disciples a task. He said to them, “Go into the village over there. As soon as you enter, you will find a donkey tied up and a colt with it. Untie them and bring them to me. If anyone says anything to you, say that their master needs them.” He sent them off right away. Now this happened to fulfill what the prophet said, Say to Daughter Zion, “Look, your king is coming to you, humble and riding on a donkey, and on a colt the donkey’s offspring.” The disciples went and did just as Jesus had ordered them. They brought the donkey and the colt and laid their clothes on them. Then he sat on them.

Now a large crowd spread their clothes on the road. Others cut palm branches off the trees and spread them on the road. The crowds in front of him and behind him shouted, “Hosanna to the Son of David! Blessings on the one who comes in the name of the Lord! Hosanna in the highest!” And when Jesus entered Jerusalem, the whole city was stirred up. “Who is this?” they asked. The crowds answered, “It’s the prophet Jesus from Nazareth in Galilee.”

Wonder:

- (1) I wonder...if Jesus is supposed to be the king (they call him “the son of King David”), why did he ride a lowly donkey into Jerusalem?
- (2) I wonder...why were some people so excited to see Jesus coming into Jerusalem? Who did they think he was?
- (3) I wonder...why did Jesus go to Jerusalem even though he knew some people there would try to kill him?

Video: Click image below



### My Life:

- (1) If Jesus came today, how would you want to welcome him?
- (2) Have you ever been scared to do something, but you did it anyway? (*just like Jesus might have been a little afraid to enter into Jerusalem*)
- (3) If our world today looked more like the Kingdom of God that Jesus taught about, how would it be different?

Pray: Jesus our King, help us welcome you into our hearts and our lives like the people of Jerusalem welcomed you shouting “Hosanna,” and give us the courage to live for God like you did. Amen.

## Jesus Eats

### Maundy Thursday

Memory Verse: “Jesus took bread, blessed it, broke it, and gave it to them, and said, ‘Take; this is my body.’” (Mark 14:22)

### Openers:

- (1) Talk about your favorite family meal. It could be a holiday meal tradition or an everyday meal. Who is there? What do you do or eat that makes it so special?
- (2) [Watch this short family-friendly video](#) that explains the modern-day Passover Seder, the meal Jesus was sharing with his disciples the night before he died.
- (3) If you were moving far away and you had to say goodbye to all your friends, what would you want to tell them?

Context: Once Jesus arrived in Jerusalem during the week of Passover, he continued to teach about God and God’s kingdom. Some of the religious leaders in Jerusalem didn’t like what Jesus was teaching. They thought what he was teaching about God was wrong and it made them very angry. In fact, they were so angry that they wanted to kill him. One of Jesus’ disciples, Judas, found out about their plan and he decided to help them arrest Jesus. Even though Jesus seemed to know

what was about to happen, his disciples didn't realize that they were about to sit down for their last Passover dinner with Jesus.

Scripture: Mark 14 (Spark StoryBible, P. 462)

On the first day of the Festival of Unleavened Bread, when the Passover lamb was sacrificed, the disciples said to Jesus, "Where do you want us to prepare for you to eat the Passover meal?"

He sent two of his disciples and said to them, "Go into the city. A man carrying a water jar will meet you. Follow him. Wherever he enters, say to the owner of the house, 'The teacher asks, "Where is my guest room where I can eat the Passover meal with my disciples?"' He will show you a large room upstairs already furnished. Prepare for us there." The disciples left, came into the city, found everything just as he had told them, and they prepared the Passover meal.

That evening, Jesus arrived with the Twelve. During the meal, Jesus said, "I assure you that one of you will betray me—someone eating with me."

Deeply saddened, they asked him, one by one, "It's not me, is it?"

Jesus answered, "It's one of the Twelve, one who is dipping bread with me into this bowl. The Human One goes to his death just as it is written about him. But how terrible it is for that person who betrays the Human One! It would have been better for him if he had never been born."

While they were eating, Jesus took bread, blessed it, broke it, and gave it to them, and said, "Take; this is my body." He took a cup, gave thanks, and gave it to them, and they all drank from it. He said to them, "This is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many. I assure you that I won't drink wine again until that day when I drink it in a new way in God's kingdom." After singing songs of praise, they went out to the Mount of Olives.

### Wonder

- (1) I wonder...how you think Judas felt when Jesus said, "one of you will betray me"?
- (2) I wonder...how do you think Jesus felt saying goodbye to his disciples? (*see Mark 14:32-36/ Spark StoryBible, P. 468-69 for additional context*)



(3) I wonder...why did Jesus share his “body” and his “blood” with his disciples?

Video: Click image below



My Life:

- (1) Have you ever betrayed someone? Or been betrayed? How does it feel?
- (2) What are some ways we can give thanks to God for our food? Share a meal with our neighbors? Share our food with our neighbors?
- (3) When we have communion in church, we're following Jesus' instructions to remember and re-live his last meal with his disciples. How do you feel when you take communion? ([See below for a brief Communion 101 resource.](#))

Pray: Jesus, Lamb of God, help us follow you wherever you go and share your bread with everyone around us. Amen.

# Jesus Dies

## Good Friday

Memory Verse: “Jesus said, ‘Father, into your hands I entrust my life.’” (Luke 23:46)

Context: After Jesus finished his last meal with his disciples, he went into a garden to pray to God. He was feeling sad and scared. He really didn’t want to die, but he was determined to keep living like God wanted him to—whatever the consequences. Just then, some soldiers arrived to arrest Jesus. Judas had betrayed him. And the rest of the disciples did too when they got scared and pretended not to know Jesus. They put Jesus on trial, and they found him guilty. They said he was pretending to be the Messiah, the Christ—and they sentenced him to die.

Scripture: Luke 23 (Spark StoryBible, P. 476)

As they led Jesus away, they grabbed Simon, a man from Cyrene, who was coming in from the countryside. They put the cross on his back and made him carry it behind Jesus. A huge crowd of people followed Jesus, including women, who were mourning and wailing for him...

They also led two other criminals to be executed with Jesus. When they arrived at the place called The Skull, they crucified him, along with the criminals, one on his right and the other on his left. Jesus said, “Father, forgive them, for they don’t know what they’re doing.”...

The people were standing around watching, but the leaders sneered at him, saying, “He saved others. Let him save himself if he really is the Christ sent from God, the chosen one.”

The soldiers also mocked him. They came up to him, offering him sour wine and saying, “If you really are the king of the Jews, save yourself.” Above his head was a notice of the formal charge against him. It read “This is the king of the Jews.”

One of the criminals hanging next to Jesus insulted him: “Aren’t you the Christ? Save yourself and us!”



Responding, the other criminal spoke harshly to him, “Don’t you fear God, seeing that you’ve also been sentenced to die? We are rightly condemned, for we are receiving the appropriate sentence for what we did. But this man has done nothing wrong.” Then he said, “Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom.”

Jesus replied, “I assure you that today you will be with me in paradise.”

It was now about noon, and darkness covered the whole earth until about three o’clock, while the sun stopped shining. Then the curtain in the sanctuary tore down the middle. Crying out in a loud voice, Jesus said, “Father, into your hands I entrust my life.” After he said this, he breathed for the last time.

### Wonder:

- (1) I wonder...why did some people want to kill Jesus?
- (2) I wonder...what feelings do you think Jesus had throughout his last day?
- (3) I wonder...was God with Jesus when he was on the cross? Where do you see God’s love even in this sad story?

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### My Life:

- (1) Has anyone you love ever died? How did it feel? How do you remember them even though they aren't alive anymore?
- (2) When bad things happen, what kinds of things can we do to find hope that God is still with us?
- (3) Jesus gave his life to God and to us. How will you give your life to God and to others?

Pray: Jesus our Savior, give us the strength to follow in your footsteps, even when it means that we might have to suffer for others like you did for us. Amen.

## *Jesus Rises*

### Easter Sunday

Memory Verse: "Don't be afraid. I know that you are looking for Jesus who was crucified. He isn't here, because he's been raised from the dead..." (Matthew 28:5-6)

### Opener:

- 1) Decorate Easter eggs! As you do, try to think of different ways that Easter eggs connect to Jesus' resurrection.
- 2) Have a relay race (like the disciples were running to tell the others the news about Jesus). (Hint: if your home is too small for running and it's too cold to be outside, come up with a modified relay race that involves crab-walking)
- 3) Plan a pretend surprise party! Who is it for? What are you celebrating? What will the decorations look like? And what face will the person make when they're surprised?

Context: After Jesus died, a man named Joseph from a town called Arimathea buried Jesus' body. He carefully wrapped Jesus' body in a cloth and he gently placed it inside a cave. Then he rolled a huge stone in front of the cave's opening. Some of Jesus' disciples planned to go anoint Jesus' body with spices and

oils (that's what they used to do a long time ago), but since Jesus died on a Friday and Saturday was the Sabbath, they had to wait until Sunday to anoint him.

Scripture: Matthew 28 (Spark StoryBible, P. 482)

After the Sabbath, at dawn on the first day of the week, Mary Magdalene and the other Mary came to look at the tomb. Look, there was a great earthquake, for an angel from the Lord came down from heaven. Coming to the stone, he rolled it away and sat on it. Now his face was like lightning and his clothes as white as snow. The guards were so terrified of him that they shook with fear and became like dead men. But the angel said to the women, "Don't be afraid. I know that you are looking for Jesus who was crucified. He isn't here, because he's been raised from the dead, just as he said. Come, see the place where they laid him. Now hurry, go and tell his disciples, 'He's been raised from the dead. He's going on ahead of you to Galilee. You will see him there.' I've given the message to you."

With great fear and excitement, they hurried away from the tomb and ran to tell his disciples. But Jesus met them and greeted them. They came and grabbed his feet and worshipped him. Then Jesus said to them, "Don't be afraid. Go and tell my brothers that I am going into Galilee. They will see me there."

Wonder:

- (1) I wonder...what were Jesus' disciples (Mary Magdalene and Jesus' mother, Mary) expecting to find when they came to Jesus' tomb?
- (2) I wonder...how do you think they felt when they saw Jesus with their own eyes?
- (3) I wonder...what does it mean to Jesus' followers that he rose from the dead?

Video: Click image below



My Life:

- (1) What's the best surprise you've ever experienced? How did it feel when you were first surprised? How did it feel later?
- (2) Do you like to share good news, and who do you share it with first? What are some ways you can share the good news of Jesus' new life?
- (3) Does Jesus' resurrection change your everyday life? How?

Pray: Risen Jesus, our Christ, fill our hearts and inspire us with your spirit so that we can share the good news of the new life you've given us far and wide. Amen.

## Communion 101

- ❖ **What do we call this meal?** It goes by many names—Communion, the Lord’s Supper, the Eucharist, the Breaking of Bread.
- ❖ **Is it different from other practices or rituals we do during our worship?** Communion is one of two “sacraments” in our tradition—sacred practices we keep because Jesus instructed us to. The second sacrament we celebrate is baptism.
- ❖ **Is it really the body and blood of Christ?** No. You may have heard that some Christian denominations believe that the bread and juice become the real body and blood of Christ. But Presbyterians believe the elements are symbols.
- ❖ **Do I need to take communion to be saved?** No. Taking communion is a sign and seal of the salvation we have already received by God’s grace alone through faith alone.
- ❖ **What does communion mean?** This meal carries many different meanings for Christians, but here are four important meanings for communion in our Presbyterian Reformed tradition:
  - Communion as Community—during communion, we believe that we come into community with every follower of Jesus around the world and even those who came long before us;
  - Communion as Appetizer—kind of like an appetizer, we believe that communion is a “foretaste” of the great kingdom feast—when God’s kingdom will come fully and God will bring all people together;
  - Communion Remembering—we remember Jesus’ life, death, resurrection, and his promise to come again;
  - Communion as Giving Thanks—when we have communion we give thanks to God for creating us, giving us new life, and being with us now and forever.