

Easter ultimately reminds us of the hope that we have in Jesus. Jesus' resurrection reminds us that what has happened to Him will happen to us when He returns. A renewed earth, where heaven and earth are restored is what Jesus will accomplish. Being a part of this renewed creation is trusting in Jesus' atoning sacrifice on the cross that pays the debt for all our wrongdoing. Our hope is further assured by the Holy Spirit, who allows us to experience God's presence and resurrection power now until Jesus returns to fully restore this world.

Many Christians throughout Easter have celebrated Holy Week, or Passion Week, which chronicles Jesus' last week here on earth before His death and resurrection. Christians have celebrated this in different ways, but they all are ultimately used to align our heart with God's plan of salvation and to draw us closer to God. Use this devotional to help with this individually or even as a family.

If you would like to do a fun activity with your kids, you can set up 6 candles and make a nice centerpiece to put somewhere in the house. Each day you do a reading, you will blow out one of the candles. For example, on Day 1, have all 6 candles lit. After the devotional is finished blow out one candle and then pray together. You'll repeat this for each day until Friday when all the candles are out, which symbolizes Jesus' death. On Easter Sunday, light all the candles to signify Jesus' resurrection.

Day 1: Palm Sunday

Candles to light: All 6 candles.

Verses to read:
Matthew 21:1-11

Reflection:

1. On Palm Sunday, we remember that Jesus willingly went to Jerusalem in obedience to the Father, knowing that He was on a journey toward the cross. What motivated Jesus to do this for you? How does that make you feel?
2. What difficult journey are you on? What steps of obedience do you need to take in following Jesus? What promises do you need to remember?

Prayer and Candles: Before praying, blow out one candle.

Day 2: Holy Week Monday

Candles to light: Only 5 out of the 6 candles.

Verses to read:

Matthew 22:34-40

Reflection:

1. On Monday of Holy Week, we remember Jesus' teachings to His disciples, including the greatest command: to love God and our neighbors (Matthew 22:37-40). How do you personally experience God's love?
2. How can we demonstrate love to God?
3. How can we demonstrate love to our church *and* to our neighbors around us that don't know Jesus?

Prayer and Candles: Before praying, blow out one candle.

Day 3: Holy Week Tuesday

Candles to light: Only 4 out of the 6 candles.

Verses to read:*

Luke 21:37-38

**The Gospel writers did not record any specific details of Jesus' life on Tuesday of Holy Week. However, Luke tells us that "each day Jesus was teaching at the temple" (Luke 21:37) and He regularly met with the disciples on the Mount of Olives (Luke 22:39).*

Reflection:

1. On Tuesday of Holy Week, we remember that it was Jesus' usual practice to be with His disciples for the purpose of teaching and prayer. What has Jesus been teaching you lately?
2. What areas in your life would you like to grow in?
3. In what ways, can you use prayer to just be with God and be in His presence?

Prayer and Candles: Before praying, blow out one candle.

Day 4: Holy Week Wednesday

Candles to light: Only 3 out of the 6 candles.

Verses to read:

Matthew 26:6-13

Reflection:

1. On Wednesday of Holy Week, we remember the beautiful example of sacrificial worship demonstrated by the woman who anointed Jesus. Why did she do this?
2. Can we offer something as a beautiful sacrifice to Jesus today?

Prayer and Candles: Before praying, blow out one candle.

Day 5: Maundy Thursday

Candles to light: Only 2 out of the 6 candles.

Verses to read:

John 13:12-15, 34

Reflection:

1. Maundy is Latin *mandatum* for “command” because Jesus gave His disciples new commands this night in regard to serving and loving one another as He has loved us. On Maundy Thursday, we remember Jesus’ command and how Jesus demonstrated serving one another. How does loving one another, as He has loved us, change the way you show love and service to someone?
2. In what way can you serve those around you?

Prayer and Candles: Before praying, blow out one candle.

Day 6: Good Friday

Candles to light: Only 1 out of the 6 candles.

Verses to read:

John 19:16-30

Read John 18-19 in silence with God.

Reflection:

1. On Good Friday, we remember the sacrifice of Jesus to endure torture and death on a cross. Why did Jesus do this for us?
2. How might your faith need to be deepened in His love for you? How does the cross remind you of this?
3. How can you express gratitude to Jesus?

Prayer and Candles: Before praying, blow out one candle.

Day 7: Holy Week Saturday

Candles to light: None. No candles to light!

Verses to Read:

Psalm 46

Reflection:

1. On Saturday of Holy Week, we remember the disciples as they experienced what they considered to be the silence of God in the midst of their fear. What areas in your life do you feel God is silent about? How can you be still before the Lord and listen to Him?
2. What fears do you need to bring before God? What do you need to believe about God to overcome those fears?

Day 8: Easter Sunday

Candles to light: He is risen! Light all 6 candles.

Verses to read:

Matthew 28:1-9

Reflection:

1. On Easter Sunday, we celebrate Jesus' resurrection. Why does His resurrection bring us hope?
2. As you think about the future of a restored creation, what are you looking forward to?
3. How does the Holy Spirit promise a foretaste of what is to come?
4. How can you point others to the hope you have in Jesus?