

Easter (n.):

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the most important and oldest festival of the Christian Church, celebrating the resurrection of Christ

Devotional 2017

Dear Family

In our Christian calendar, Easter is our most important celebration. We celebrate with both sombre remembrance and victorious joy.

This devotional was created to help lead you and your family in meaningful reflections during the week leading up to Easter. It has been divided into three parts:

- **READ**—read the scripture following Christ's journey to the cross and ultimately his resurrection and ascension.
- **REFLECT**—Discuss what you have read with someone else or reflect on it personally.
- **RESPOND**—Read this section **BEFORE** you start the devotion and prepare anything that is needed. This section has both a "**Sing**" (component for all) and a "**Do**" (component for kids) option. We would encourage you to worship in response to the truth you read about and you may need to prepare the music or sound track. If you have children and would like to do something fun to reinforce the devotion, please go ahead and enjoy the "Do" suggestions.

It is our prayer that this Easter you will see a new and beautiful facet of the gospel.

"I do not cease to give thanks for you, remembering you in my prayers, that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give you the Spirit of wisdom and of revelation in the knowledge of him." Ephesians 1:16-17

Much love,

RHC

Day One

Sunday, 9th April

CREATED IN GOD'S IMAGE

READ

- Psalm 100

REFLECT

- How does the truth that God made us affect our view of him and the way we ought to live?
- How does the truth that we belong to God as his people challenge our current way of interacting with God?

God made us and has called us to be his people through the work of Jesus Christ. As such, we are to live for his glory by worshipping him with our lives. So, let us respond with thanksgiving. Let us be eager to worship God in song and in service.

RESPOND

- **SING** - *Great is the Lord*, Elevation Worship
 - *Rejoice*, Dustin Kensrue
 - *Shout (Psalm 100:1-3)*, Seeds of Praise Volume 3
- **DO** Show your children a picture of your family. Does it look like the family? Yes. Is it the real family? No, it is an image of the family, it cannot talk or move or think, it only shows us what the family is like. Explain that in the same way we are the image of God. We are not God, but we show others what God is like just like the photo of the family. We are not a perfect reflection of God, but with the help of the Holy Spirit we can become more and more like him.

Day Two

Monday, 10th April

THE FALL

READ

- Romans 1:18-25

REFLECT

- How has God made himself known to us?
- How have we responded to knowledge about God?
- How have we worshipped creation rather than the Creator?
- How have sin and lies affected our lives?
- How can we escape the wrath of God?

God has disclosed the truth about himself to us. If we reject his truth, we will suffer the terrible consequences of sin. However, we escape the wrath of God if we repent of our sins and put our faith in Jesus Christ.

RESPOND

- **SING** - *We Praise Your Righteousness*, Sovereign Grace
- *Our Only Hope Is You*, Sovereign Grace
- *You Made Us Your Own*, Sovereign Grace
- **DO** Give everyone in the family a few post-its. Write down the answers you discussed in the third question above, and other sins you can think of, on the post-its. Choose a volunteer from the family to represent mankind and stick the post-its to them. Talk about repentance and forgiveness. As a family, repent of the sins you identified and remove the post-its. Thank God for his gracious forgiveness and rejoice in the knowledge that you are part of his family.

Day Three

Tuesday, 11th April

A NEW KING AND A NEW KINGDOM

READ

- Mark 11:1-10

REFLECT

- How does the owner of the colt respond to the Lord's need of it, and how does this challenge our attitude towards our possessions?
- How do the people welcome Jesus into their city, and how does this challenge the way we worship Jesus?

Jesus is our Majestic King who enters Jerusalem as part of God's plan to fulfil his mission of establishing the kingdom of God. Jesus is worthy of our best possessions and jubilant worship.

RESPOND

- **SING** - *Shout Hosanna*, Kristian Stanfill
- *Crown Him (Majesty)*, Chris Tomlin
- **DO** Make musical instruments, flags or ribbons out of recycled materials to use in praising God when you sing the song today. For example, use a toilet roll, duct tape and rice to make a shaker, a cardboard box and chopsticks to make a drum, fold cardboard in half and glue bottle tops to the inside to make castanets, cut used paper into strips and tape them to a stick to make a flag to wave, tape a ribbon or old shoe lace to a stick. Be sure that everyone has something to use to praise the Lord.

Day Four

Wednesday, 12th April

THE SERVANT KING

READ

- Mark 14:3-9

REFLECT

- How does the woman's devotion to Jesus challenge the way we express our own devotion to him?
- How does Jesus respond to the woman's act of worship and how does his response encourage us?

Jesus is our Servant King who came to save the worst sinners. Those who have been touched by his grace and mercy respond with great devotion to him.

RESPOND

- **SING** - *I Will Offer Up My Life*, Matt Redman
- *King of Kings Majesty*, Jarrod Cooper
- **DO** Talk about things you do by yourself or with your family, that express your devotion to God for all he has done for us. Look at these things in the light of the extravagance of the woman's offering in Mark 14:3-9. Talk about ways you could offer more of what is most precious to you: your time, your possessions, your heart and your actions.

Day Five

Thursday, 13th April

JESUS OUR LAMB

READ

- Mark 14:12-25
- Exodus 12:1-13
- John 1:29

REFLECT

- What does the story of the Passover teach us about God's nature and his purposes?
- Why was Jesus described as the "Lamb of God" and what does this tell us about his mission?
- Jesus offered his "body and blood" to his disciples. How does Jesus offer you the same thing?

The Passover was the most important Jewish holiday because it was a reminder of God's deliverance of them from Egypt through the blood of the lamb. When John the Baptist saw Jesus, he declared that he was the Lamb of God. Later, when Jesus celebrated the Passover, he told his disciples that he was initiating a new, a better covenant through his own blood and body. Jesus was the only one who could offer himself sinless and without blemish to God. He alone qualified to be sacrificed as the perfect lamb who takes away our sins.

RESPOND

- **SING** - *Before the Throne of God Above*, Sovereign Grace
- *Lamb of God*, Vertical Church Band
- **DO** Try to make some unleavened bread at home to experience what they ate at the Passover. (<https://www.bbcgoodfood.com/recipes/3080679/authentic-unleavened-bread>)

Day Six

Friday, 14th April

JESUS OUR LOVING SAVIOUR

READ

- Mark 14:66-72
- Mark 15:16-32
- Romans 5:8

REFLECT

- What type of people rejected Jesus?
- Why did Jesus not defend himself when he was mocked?
- What does Jesus' actions tell us about the type of love he has?
- Do you think it was easy or difficult for Peter to receive the love of Jesus? Do you find it easy or difficult?

Jesus came to earth knowing that we would all reject him. Even Peter, who was one of his closest friends, denied Jesus. The soldiers and even the criminals who were crucified mocked him. God's love is not conditional upon our love, rather God's love is given to us despite how we treat him, and it's his unconditional love and grace that will bring us back to him.

RESPOND

- **SING** - *How Deep the Father's Love for Us*, Stuart Townend
- *Hallelujah What A Saviour*, Austin Stone
- **DO** Prepare a treat to give to your children. Help your children understand what "unconditional" means by asking them to write a list of conditions to be completed before they can receive the treat (e.g. finish their homework, dinner). Give them the treat before they begin. Explain that God gives us his love before we do anything. Enjoy the treat together.

Day Seven

Saturday, 15th April

JESUS IN THE TOMB

READ

- Mark 15:33-47

REFLECT

- When Jesus died, the curtain in the temple was torn in two. What do you think is the significance of this event?
- Once Jesus had died, how did they care for his body?
- What witnesses were present and why do you think these witnesses were important?

Although the death of Christ on the cross is the saddest moment in history it is also a very real reason for celebration. The enemy thought to defeat Christ with death, however it was Christ who defeated death and from that moment offered himself as a sacrifice in place of all those who believed in him. The curtain tore in two to show everyone that because of Christ's death, we are now able to approach God in his Holy Place.

RESPOND

- **SING** - *O Praise the Name*, Hillsong
- *Man of Sorrows*, Hillsong
- *Lead Me to the Cross*, Hillsong
- **DO** Build a "tent tomb" out of blankets, sheets, couches and tables. Sit inside to read and reflect on this devotion.

Day Eight

Sunday, 16th April

JESUS REIGNS

READ

- Acts 1:1-11

REFLECT

- Why is the resurrection of Christ important to the gospel story?
- What had the Father promised to give to Jesus' disciples?
- Does this same promise belong to us?
- Once we have the Holy Spirit in us, what are we meant to do and how are we meant to live?
- Where is Christ now?

Christ's resurrection proved to his disciples that he had indeed conquered sin and death. The Father promised that he would put the Holy Spirit in every believer to bear witness that we are his children and that Christ is alive. Christ commissions us (his disciples) to be his witnesses to the world and to testify of the great things God has done and plans to do.

RESPOND

- **SING** - *Come Behold the Wondrous Mystery*, Matt Boswell
 - *Made Alive*, Citizens
 - *The Same Power*, Ben Cantelon
- **DO** A science experiment to demonstrate "proof". For example, prove that water and oil do not mix. (<http://www.sciencekids.co.nz/experiments/oilandwater.html>)

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