

A Holy Week walk in the house

This is a way to celebrate Holy Week and Easter day without leaving your property.

You can do it over several days or all in one go.

Some of the ideas have actions for after hearing the reading and some are best acted out during the reading.

Some of the props need to be made in advance.

Entry into Jerusalem

Place: the hall

Props

Put some coats on the floor.

Make some palm branches out of paper, ready to wave

Reading:

Jesus was in Bethany and asked his friends to fetch a donkey - friends spread their coats on a donkey and he mounted it.

He set off towards Jerusalem. The people gave him a wonderful welcome, some throwing their coats on the street, others spreading out rushes they had cut in the fields. Running ahead and following after, they were calling out,

"Hosanna!

Blessed is he who comes in God's name!

Blessed the coming kingdom of our father David!

Hosanna in highest heaven!"

Action: Without shoes on, march up and down the hall shouting hosanna and waving your paper branches. Perhaps a parent is willing to be the donkey?

Thoughts: Why did Jesus choose to ride a donkey? Normally a leader would ride into town on a horse – suggesting he was coming to fight or had won a war. But Jesus does something different

Prayer: thank you Jesus for choosing to be a different kind of leader. To choose love and peace not fighting to get your point across. Hosanna! Blessed are you who comes in God's name. Amen

Cleansing of the Temple

Place: the sitting room

Props:

a small robust table

some toy coins or some lego pretending to be coins

some toy animals

Reading:

Jesus went straight to the Temple.

It should have been a place of quiet - but instead it was a place of noise, filled with people exchanging coins for special temple coins and doves and lambs for sale

Jesus was angry because it meant that people could not be quiet and pray.

So he pushed over the tables and set the birds free, driving everyone out until it was quiet again.

Jesus said

"It is written in the Scriptures that God said, 'My Temple will be called a house of prayer for the people of all nations.' But you have turned it into a hideout for thieves!"

Action:

Try acting it out – with some of you making lots of noise and someone playing Jesus.

Thoughts:

Why did Jesus do this. Was he right to be angry?

What else could he have done

Prayer:

Spend 20 seconds being really noisy (ask an adult to time it)

And then for 2 minutes be as still and quiet as you can be.

“God, help us to know when to be noisy and when to be still so we can hear your voice”

The upper room 1: washing the feet

Place: a room upstairs – could be the bathroom for practical reasons!

Props:

a bowl of water and a towel

Reading:

Jesus gathered in a room with his friends.

It must have been exciting, like a mystery tour.

Jesus had already made sure everything was prepared.

And what did he do before they ate - just as soon as they had sat down?

He acted like a servant and washed their feet.

Peter said it wasn't right, then said wash all of him.

But Jesus said, no, just your feet is enough.

Remember what I've done though and think about it.

If I, the one you sometimes call Master or Teacher have washed your feet like a servant would – that is how you should behave with each other

Action:

Wash each others feet.

Or hands if preferred – a good time to remember the handwashing rules :)

Thoughts:

What does it feel like to wash someone's foot/hand?

What does it feel like to have your foot washed/hand?

What was Jesus saying when he told his friends to be like servants to each other?

Prayer:

Lord make me like you

Ready to be a servant to others

Ready to love others even when it means putting them before me.

Because that is what you have done for me. Amen

The upper room 2: the last meal together

Place: a room upstairs – either stay in the same one or move from the bathroom into a bedroom. Make sure the table is set up ready

Props:

a table
a piece of bread/pitta bread
a beaker of blackcurrant squash or similar

Reading:

Jesus and his friends sat down to eat together.
And Jesus took the bread to say a blessing in the usual way.
He held it up and broke it and said - this bread see how I break it up?
That will happen to me. I will be broken for you. I will die for you.
Remember that, every time you break bread together, the love I have for you.
And he shared the bread out between them
And he took wine and said – see this wine, it is a beautiful blood red colour
It is like my life, poured out in love for you.
Remember that, every time you drink wine together, the love I have for you.
And the cup of wine went round the table and everyone had a drink.
Even Judas, who later on went out to tell Jesus enemies where he would be...

Action:

Take your piece of bread and have someone lift it up and then break it into pieces and share it together
Take your beaker of juice and share it together

Thoughts:

What does it feel like to share the bread and drink together?
How do you think Jesus friends felt?
Why do we still do this in church today?

Prayer:

We thank you Jesus, for sharing yourself with everyone. And for giving us a way to remember just how much you love for us through sharing bread and wine together. Amen

The Garden of Gethsemene

Place: the garden

Props:

Something to sit/lie on

Reading:

And then they went to a garden.
Jesus told his friends to sit and keep watch while he went to pray.
But ... they fell asleep
Jesus prayed
"My Father, if it is possible, take this cup of suffering from me!
Yet not what I want, but what you want."
Jesus came back and found them all asleep.
"Wake up" he said "Couldn't you keep watch just one hour?
Stay here and pray for strength to face the coming hour. "
Jesus went off once more to pray.
"My Father, if it is possible, take this cup of suffering from me!
Yet not what I want, but what you want."
Jesus came back and found them all asleep again. They were so ashamed they didn't know what to say. Jesus went away a third time to pray.
"My Father, if it is possible, take this cup of suffering from me!

Yet not what I want, but what you want."

And he came back a third time to find them a sleep. AGAIN

Jesus said "Are you still sleeping? Enough, for it is now time, I am going to be betrayed."

Jesus was right. for they could already see a group of men with torches travelling from the City up the Mount of Olives. Judas was with them.

He came up to Jesus and kissed him.

That was the agreed sign so that the soldiers would know who to arrest.

And so they arrested Jesus.

And what did all his friends do?

They ran away.

Action:

Act it out as it is being read.

Have someone be Jesus and go and stand further away while everyone else pretends to be asleep

Thoughts:

Why did Jesus friends keep falling asleep? (they had eaten a lot!)

Did Jesus find it easy to choose to die on the cross?

Why did his friends run away?

Prayer:

Jesus, sometimes we let you down. Because we are tired. Because we are scared. Because we just don't know what to do.

Thank you for taking up the cup of suffering for us. Amen

The courtyard

Place: by a fire – or a radiator? Or you could make your own fire with coloured paper

Props:

Coloured paper fire

Someone ready to make a cock crowing noise

Reading:

The soldiers and priests who were with them took Jesus off to be questioned.

Peter followed him to the courtyard of the High Priests house.

Earlier on in the evening Jesus had talked about who would betray him. Peter had said "not me – I would never do that!" And Jesus had told him "Before a cockerel crows twice, you'll deny me three times." Peter had shaken his head. He could not believe that could ever happen.

And now, Peter sat warming his hands by the fire.

One of the Chief Priest's servant girls came in and, seeing Peter warming himself there, looked hard at him and said, "You were with that Jesus, the man from Nazareth."

Peter denied it: "I don't know what you're talking about." He moved a little way from the fire. A cockerel crowed.

The girl spotted him and began telling the people standing around, "He's one of them."

"No I am not" said Peter

After a little while, the people around him brought it up again. "You've got to be one of them. You've got 'Galilean' written all over you."

Now Peter got really nervous and swore, "I never laid eyes on this man you're talking about."

Just then the cockerel crowed a second time. Peter remembered how Jesus had said,

"Before a cockerel crows twice, you'll deny me three times." He collapsed in tears.

Action:

Act it out as it is being read

Thoughts:

Why did Peter, one of Jesus best friends, say that he didn't know him?

How do you think Peter felt?

Do you think Jesus still loved him and counted him as a best friend? (I do)

Prayer:

Loving Jesus, sometimes we act or speak without thinking. And we do things that hurt others and let them down. Its only afterwards that we realise how bad we have been. When we are really sorry, help us to be forgiven. And to feel forgiven. Amen

Pilate and the crowd

Place: the stairs – one person standing on the stairs to be Pilate, the others at the bottom of the stairs as the crowd

Props:

3 pieces of paper as prompts saying

Barabbas! Barabbas!

Crucify him! Crucify him!

Kill him! Kill him!

Optional bowl of water for Pilate to wash his hands

Reading:

Jesus was taken from one place to another while the chief priests tried to find enough evidence to have him killed. They took him to the Roman Governor Pilate who talked to him but could see no real reason to have Jesus killed. But he didn't want to stand up to the Jews either. In the end Pilate thought he had found a way out.

At every Passover festival Pilate would set free anyone prisoner the people asked for. At that time there was a man called Barabbas in prison for riot and murder. When the time came to release a prisoner, Pilate asked the crowd

Do you want me to set free for you the King of the Jews?

Barabbas! Barabbas!

What then, do you want me to do with the King of the Jews?

Crucify him! Crucify him!

But what crime has he committed?

But they just shouted all the louder

Kill him! Kill him!

Pilate wanted to please the crowd so he set Barabbas free for them. Then he had Jesus whipped and handed over to be crucified ...

Pilate washed his hands of the matter. (wash hands or mime it)

And all the people who a few days before had shouted hosanna, were now there shouting kill him.

Action:

Act it out as it is being read

Thoughts:

And all the people who a few days before had shouted hosanna, were now there shouting kill him. We have just done that too.

Why did the crowd do that?

Is it just too easy to go along with what everyone else is doing?

Prayer:

Lord Jesus, help me to stand out from the crowd by being kind and loving and always thinking about what you would do. Amen

The Crucifixion

Place: by the bins. Why? Because Jesus was crucified near the rubbish tip, outside the city walls

Props:

Make some small crosses to take outside with you. Either colour in simple ones or do some paper folding <https://mommynippets.com/paper-palm-crosses/>

Reading:

Jesus was taken out to be killed. All sorts of people followed the cross.

Simon carried it when Jesus fell.

Women were there crying.

His mother followed, held up by her friends

The religious leaders were there - satisfied at a job well done.

His friends - still full of guilt

Criminals, carrying their crosses

Onlookers who love a good crucifixion party and the chance to jeer and heckle.

And us.

And while he was on the cross Jesus showed caring even to one of the criminals dying with him

And while he was on the cross Jesus asked one of his friends to look after his mother, and his mother to take care of his friend.

And while he was on the cross Jesus said "Father forgive them, they don't know what they are doing"

Jesus said 'My God, my God why have you forsaken me?.'

Jesus said 'Into your hands I commend my Spirit'

Jesus said 'It is finished .

And he died

Action, thought and prayer:

Hold your cross and think of how amazing Jesus was to do this for us

The tomb

Place: By the front door

Props: none

Reading:

There was a man called Joseph who was from a place called Arimathea. He wanted to help and so although he was very sad because Jesus had died he decided to be very brave as well.

He went to Pilate. And asked if he could take Jesus. Pilate agreed so he wrapped Jesus in a sheet and placed him in his own tomb that he had bought ready. It was in a garden.

He rolled a big stone in front of the tomb

Action:

Slam the front door loudly to be the stone rolled in front of the tomb

Thoughts:

When have you been very brave?

We know this is not the end of the story – but does it still feel sad?

Prayer:

Dear God we are thankful that there are brave and caring people around like Joseph. Help us to be brave and caring too.

Sunday morning

Place: By the front door again

Props:

Either add paper flowers to your paper cross
or even make a flower cross to put in your window
Have a small sheet outside the front door if you can

Reading:

At the crack of dawn on Sunday, the women came to the tomb carrying the burial spices they had prepared. They found the entrance stone rolled back from the tomb, so they walked in. But once inside, they couldn't find the body of the Master Jesus.

They were puzzled, wondering what to make of this. Then, out of nowhere it seemed, two men, light cascading over them, stood there. The women were awestruck and bowed down in worship. The men said, "Why are you looking for the Living One in a cemetery? He is not here, but raised up. Remember how he told you when you were still back in Galilee that he had to be handed over to sinners, be killed on a cross, and in three days rise up?" Then they remembered Jesus' words.

They left the tomb and broke the news of all this to Jesus disciples . The women kept telling these things to the apostles, but the men didn't believe a word of it, thought they were making it all up.

But Peter jumped to his feet and ran to the tomb. He stooped to look in and saw a few grave clothes, that's all. He walked away puzzled, shaking his head.

But then later that day Jesus started to appear to his friends – in the garden, in the upper room, on a road outside Jerusalem. Somehow – there he was. Jesus said to them "Peace be with you. Look its really me!"

And they were scared, amazed, excited and overwhelmed. "Jesus is alive!"

Action:

Open the front door – there is nothing there! (unless you have managed to smuggle a sheet outside)

Take your cross and cover it with flowers, new life – to show that Jesus is alive.

Display it in your window

Thoughts:

Why didn't the disciples believe the women?

How can we know that Jesus rose from the dead?

Prayer:

Loving God we thank You for Easter Day – with its promise of new life, and new opportunities.
Help us to be your faithful disciples.
May all that we are, and do and say, give evidence to the truth that Christ is Risen!
He is Risen Indeed! Amen

And now enjoy some hot cross buns and/or Easter eggs!