

HOLY WEEK

Discipleship Guide



The Village Church

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Daily narratives written by Mason King

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Select definitions of the attributes of God
on pages 67–69 were informed by The ABCs of God,
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Introduction

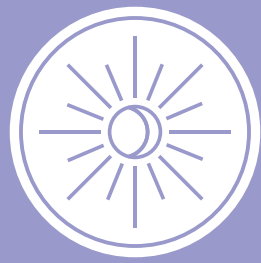
It has been said that familiarity breeds unsuspecting unfamiliarity. If you've spent any time in church, you've heard the story of Jesus' last week on earth so often that you probably have it memorized. Jesus enters the city on a donkey, palm branches waving as the crowd cries out. He rubs the religious leaders wrong, so they plot to kill Him. He shares a final meal with His disciples, one that we commemorate to this day. On Friday, after praying in a garden, Jesus is betrayed, arrested, accused, beaten, mocked, crucified, and buried. On Sunday, He returns to life, conquering death in resurrected glory. The story is one we know.

But if Jesus really was who He claimed to be, then He was the most important person to ever live, and this week was the most important of His life. We shouldn't brush past it because we know each part of the story so well. Instead, if we come at what's familiar from a new angle, with a different perspective, we may rediscover the incredible beauty woven throughout Holy Week.

This guide is intended to stir your God-given imagination to see things that might feel familiar but perhaps can be new again. Each day of the week, you'll read a story you probably know, but the colors may be a little different. We'll try to draw your eye toward something you may have missed, allowing you to enter into Holy Week in a way you might never have before.

A NOTE FOR PARENTS

Some of the themes of Holy Week can be difficult for kids to grapple with, but we believe it is so important to invite them in from an early age. After all, Jesus coming to save sinners is good news, and His resurrection is certainly cause for celebration. At the end of each day in this guide, you'll find family discipleship activities and questions that will help you begin conversations about Jesus' last days on earth and what God's rescue plan means for us today. You'll also find helpful resources in the Appendix section at the end of this guide. As you read together, play, and discuss the events of Holy Week, we hope you can rejoice in the good news that Jesus came to save sinners!



Day 1 – Palm Sunday

THE KING COMES TO TOWN

Passover in Jerusalem was a big deal every year. The city itself is on a hill, surrounded by a wall with different gates in it, and there is countryside all around. In the week leading up to the Passover feast—what we'd know as dinner on Thursday night—there weren't dozens of people standing around—there were hundreds, thousands of Jews filling the city. They walked the streets, buying, trading, sitting and talking, laughing, and connecting with friends and family.

They'd camp outside the walls, crash on the cushions of a cousin's couch, and spend the week getting ready for Passover. It was a hectic, crowded, loud week in Jerusalem, and it was the big show at the Temple. If you're a religious leader and all your people are in town—it's conference time. You've been tweeting, writing press releases, and practicing your sermons. You're set to be on all week.

This is the week of hope. Jews have spent this week remembering and celebrating spilt blood since their last night under Pharaoh. They've heard the promises of God for a final Savior—a Messiah—and they believe God will keep His Word. They've been looking, waiting, and hoping for centuries, and this week is the time it all comes back up to the surface.

There have been 400 years of silence from God to His people. Four centuries of longing, of stories, doubts, hopes, and tales. Tales from your granddaddy, told by his granddaddy, and his—every year around the table at Passover dinner.

But this year is different. Now there are people in the street whispering rumors and telling stories about a prophet who's from up north, and He's making His way south to the city. It's said He can tell you all you've ever done. That He's been healing people—curing disease, ending blindness with mud and spit, driving out demon possession. His teaching is strong, persuasive and rings with truth. He speaks with authority and is loved by the people. He even spends time playing with the children. There is news that recently He even raised a man, His friend, from the dead with just a word after the man had been dead for days. Could it be? Messiah at last?

Wait—He's not just heading south... He's here. Everyone around you on the street is running to the gates, headed out onto the hills to see Him. You leave your lunch half eaten and run after the crowd.

He is coming, and He's riding on a donkey. It's Him!

Righteous. Victorious. Humble Jesus.

You see the crowds—people who’d followed Him south, who’ve followed Him for years, along with skeptics, haters, hopefuls, and enemies among the faithful.

All there to see this man.

And the crowd recognizes His signals. They’re not subtle. These Torah-literate Jews see Him with textual eyes—they cry out that Jesus is the Davidic King! He’s here!

Shout in triumph, Daughter Jerusalem!

Look, your King is coming to you;

he is righteous and victorious,

humble and riding on a donkey,

on a colt, the foal of a donkey.

–Zechariah 9:9

People throw down their coats—the clothes off their backs—down onto the dirt in front of Him. They rip branches off trees and cover the ground—the King needs a carpet—this is the royal treatment, and watch this... Jesus receives it.

There is singing and celebration, quoting the Psalms and echoing the angels. The people are praising God!

“Hosanna! Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord!”

“Blessed is the coming kingdom of our father David! Hosanna in the highest!”

“Blessed is the King who comes in the name of the Lord! Peace in heaven and glory in the highest!”

The skeptics, haters, and soon-to-be sworn enemies are also in the crowd, and you can hear them too, yelling at Jesus, trying to be heard above the noise:

“Teacher, rebuke your disciples! What they’re saying is blasphemy! You’re not Messiah; stop them for their own sake!”

What does Jesus say in response? See Him, seated on a donkey, yelling back over the crowd’s praise, “I tell you, if these were silent, the very stones would cry out.”

You can hear His subtext just as loudly: “Their voices could cease, and you could find comfort in their quiet, but creation itself would rise up in this moment and praise God at my entry into Jerusalem. I will not rebuke them, I am their King—and I’m coming for you.”

Make no mistake: this is not a quiet, keep-it-cool, disappear-in-the-crowd Jesus. By this entrance into town, Jesus is making Himself known. He's pinging the radar in heavy waves, rattling the bunkers of the religious leaders. He's going to spend the next few days turning up the heat on them, and it's gonna get unbearably hot in the kitchen.

So much so that coming into town and declaring His Kingship is the first in a series of intentional provocations that for any sober-minded Jew of that day meant that Jesus would either overthrow Rome and the religious leaders—or He would be killed as the threat that He is.

He's the Bread of Life, born in the House of Bread. Jesus is the promised Davidic King, Messiah, entering Jerusalem on a donkey. Righteous, victorious, and humble.

Look again at the Pharisees in the crowd standing tall, clumped together, eyeing the scene, jostled and bumped by the mass of humanity—their guts in knots of rage, anxiety, disdain, and fear. They're listening to the people, and then one says to another, "You see that you gain nothing by telling Him what to do, the whole world has gone after Him."

Jesus enters town and goes right to the temple, to His Father's house. When He hits the gates of Jerusalem, the crowds don't just disperse—they want to see where He's going. He enters town amidst praise and shouts and singing and makes a statement by heading right into the temple. But it's late in the day, and this is just a scouting trip. His point made, He leaves town with the disciples and makes the journey east to Bethany, where Mary, Martha, and Lazarus live.

Can you imagine the buzz in town that night?

"What a day! Did you see Him?"

"On a donkey, just like it said!"

"Did He really raise the dead?"

"What's going to happen?"

"I can't believe it. He's here! Did you see Him in the temple?"

400 years of longing, expectation, and deafening silence just erupted in songs and shouts of joy. A people who felt forgotten have seen their King. It's no ordinary Passover in Jerusalem, and if the crowds are feeling that, so are the ones in power.

There is a subtext, a confrontation playing underneath, within, and above every second of the week. God and Satan are at war for the souls of men. Jesus is carrying out the mission given to Him by the Father but not without opposition, pressure, and attack at every turn.

This week cannot be seen outside of that wider lens. Jesus has entered from the cosmic realm into our human reality and is going to push against every reality until we are freed from blindness and death, brought home as the children of God.

As we enter this week, try and really see Him with your mind's eye.

See His entry into Jerusalem and hear the joy of the crowd at His coming.
See Him praised on Sunday like a king, and on Thursday arrested like a common thief.
Feel His righteous anger at His Father's house being misused by those in power.
Feel empathy for the fitful moments in bed those nights before sleep stole His worries.
Recognize His courage and feel His loss as He chooses each word and provokes His own death at the hands of His enemies—all to further God's rescue plan.

This week, enter into Christ's suffering by engaging the story in the hours. Enter into His grief, which might make you reach for Sunday—for resurrection—but that is days and a lifetime away.

It's Sunday, and the King has come to town.

DAILY SCRIPTURE

The next day the large crowd that had come to the feast heard that Jesus was coming to Jerusalem. So they took branches of palm trees and went out to meet him, crying out, "Hosanna! Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord, even the King of Israel!" And Jesus found a young donkey and sat on it, just as it is written,

*"Fear not, daughter of Zion;
behold, your king is coming,
sitting on a donkey's colt!"*

His disciples did not understand these things at first, but when Jesus was glorified, then they remembered that these things had been written about him and had been done to him.

—John 12:12–16

Family Discipleship

GATHER

Blankets, coats, or fabric

PLAY

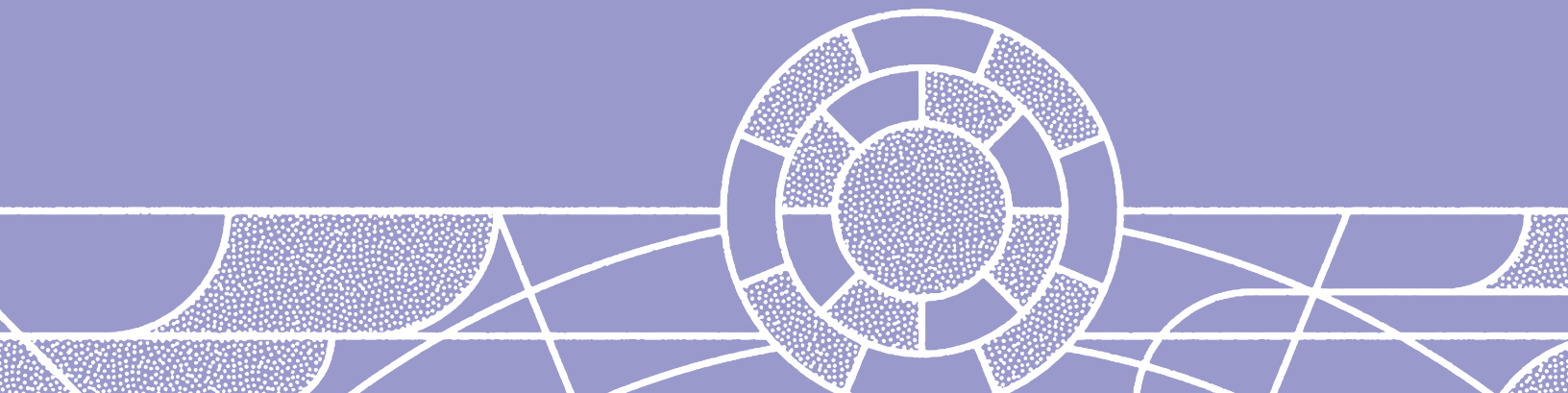
Act out Jesus' Triumphal Entry as a family.

CONNECT

Hosanna! Jesus entered into Jerusalem on a donkey just as Zechariah 9:9 prophesied! The people thought Jesus was going to save them like an earthly king, but God had a different plan—a rescue plan!

ASK

- ▶ Where are we in God's Big Story? (Between "Jesus is born" and "Jesus dies on the cross")
- ▶ Were the people excited to see Jesus? (Yes! They shouted, "Hosanna!")
- ▶ What truth or attribute do you see about God in this story? (Jesus Came to Save Sinners; God is Worthy)
- ▶ Could anyone else have been the Savior of God's people? (No, only Jesus was worthy to be called Savior and worthy of all the glory. Jesus was the perfect sacrifice who never sinned, and He was the Son of God!)
- ▶ What kind of heart does God desire for His children? (A healthy heart that gives God glory and has Him at the center)



Word Search

Try to find the words from Matthew 21 in the word search below. Words may go diagonal, up or down, and forward or backward.

P	T	V	T	N	U	O	M	S	D	F	H	X	C	M
R	S	L	D	C	M	E	A	S	E	H	T	O	L	C
O	Z	Y	O	B	N	D	W	O	R	C	S	S	F	N
P	N	K	I	C	B	E	W	J	Z	X	Q	X	Y	M
H	B	J	E	R	U	S	A	L	E	M	F	G	U	F
E	T	U	O	H	S	R	V	B	P	F	M	B	Y	I
T	Z	Z	C	B	J	E	S	U	S	O	R	L	C	D
K	B	L	M	D	R	O	L	E	J	B	J	E	A	H
D	C	G	B	Z	F	B	L	E	S	S	I	N	G	P
D	I	W	X	S	A	P	H	R	B	R	A	N	C	H
H	A	V	S	I	I	N	E	V	E	G	M	M	U	W
G	V	I	A	C	U	T	G	A	P	T	P	Q	N	W
E	D	E	S	D	N	H	O	S	A	N	N	A	T	O
E	A	I	Y	E	K	N	O	D	T	B	V	I	I	O
S	D	X	A	H	E	D	H	Y	D	A	D	Q	E	N

Jerusalem

Mount

Enter

Untie

Donkey

Jesus

Lord

Prophet

Disciples

Colt

Clothes

Crowd

Palm

Branch

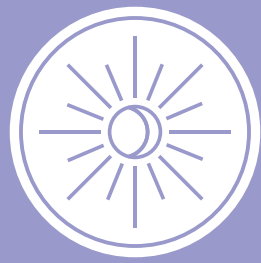
Hosanna

Blessing

Shout

David





Day 2 – Monday

TURNING TABLES

It's Monday morning and Jesus is in the temple teaching—and not to a few people but to crowds. It was probably hard to find a seat (if it wasn't standing room only).

He enters the temple, which was meant to be a house of prayer, full of people from all nations. He knows what it is full of now: a kind of strip mall or flea market of booths, tables, and stalls of goods for sale—all to profit off the faithful who come to obey God's law.

It was an entire ecosystem dependent and preying upon the devotion of Jews to their God, and it made Jesus sick. This is probably the one time someone gets to really use the term righteous anger and no one questions it. Though we all like to think of our anger as righteous, there are few times when that's really true—but this is the moment.

Jesus flips tables over. People are shouting. Coins spill and skitter across the stone floor. People push and dive to grab the money. Animals are squawking. There are angry voices and angry hearts, but only one that's righteous. These guys are kicked, shooed, and harassed out of their workplace, and they're not happy about it, but they've been squatting in someone else's space for way too long.

And Jesus isn't having it. The chief priests, scribes, and Pharisees are watching with a mix of emotions and thoughts, probably angry at what they're seeing, because they have a profit share in the money on the ground and the guys who are now outside of the temple. Jesus has just threatened their bank accounts, and He's created civil unrest. Both moves are threats to the religious leaders, and now He's crossed civil lines into Roman authority by disturbing the peace.

Jesus spends the day teaching in a temple clear of mess, and then makes the hike back out to Bethany that night.

DAILY SCRIPTURE

The Passover of the Jews was at hand, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem. In the temple he found those who were selling oxen and sheep and pigeons, and the money-changers sitting there. And making a whip of cords, he drove them all out of the temple, with the sheep and oxen. And he poured out the coins of the money-changers and overturned their tables. And he told those who sold the pigeons, "Take these things away; do not make my Father's house a house of trade." His disciples remembered that it was written, "Zeal for your house will consume me."

So the Jews said to him, "What sign do you show us for doing these things?" Jesus answered them, "Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up." The Jews then said, "It has taken forty-six years to build this temple, and will you raise it up in three days?" But he was speaking about the temple of his body. When therefore he was raised from the dead, his disciples remembered that he had said this, and they believed the Scripture and the word that Jesus had spoken.

-John 2:13-22

Family Discipleship

GATHER

An object to toss (ball, stuffed animal, balloon, etc.)

PLAY

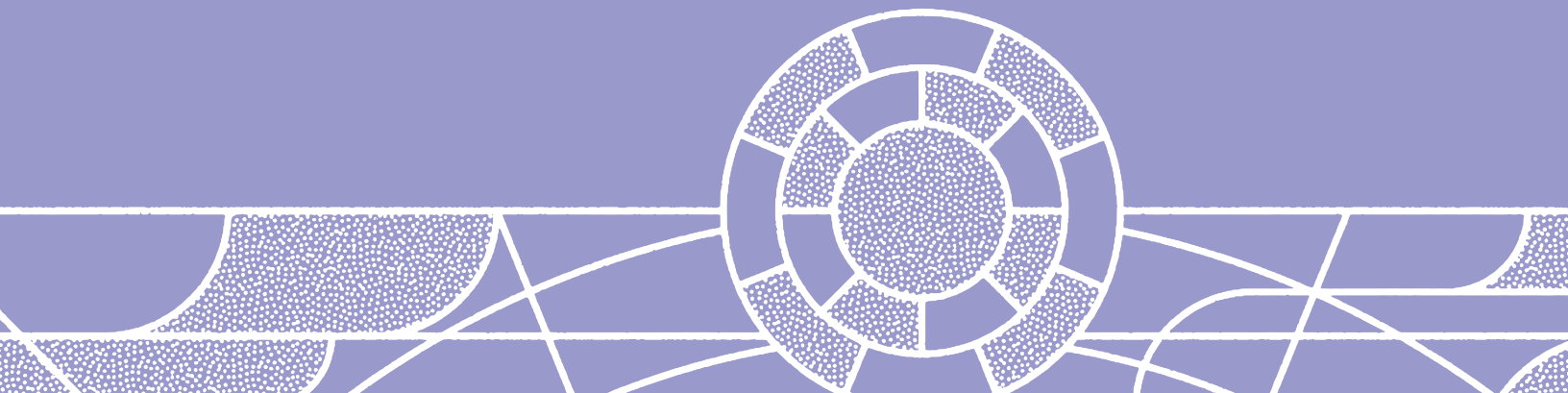
Play a game of “Want, Want, Need.” Grab a ball, stuffed animal, balloon, or other tossable object. Talk about the difference between a want (toy, new shoes) versus a need (God, food, water). Take turns tossing the object to one another. When the object is caught, that person will say a “want” or a “need.” Pray together and thank God that He is all we need and gives us all we need through Jesus!

CONNECT

God is in Charge of Everything! This truth is why we can trust that He knows what is best. God tells us that a healthy heart, a heart that loves and trusts Him, is what is best. We show we have a healthy heart when we worship God alone and give Him all the glory. God knows we cannot have a healthy heart on our own, so He sent Jesus to die on the cross to make a way for His children to have healthy, God-centered hearts!

ASK

- ▶ What big, important city did Jesus and His disciples travel to? (Jerusalem)
- ▶ What were the Israelites doing inside the temple? Were they worshiping God? (No, they were trying to make money by selling animals for sacrifice.)
- ▶ What was Jesus talking about when He said, “Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up”? (He was talking about the temple of His body and leaving a clue about what He was going to do very soon.)
- ▶ What attribute of God do you see in this story? (God is Worthy; only He deserves glory.)
- ▶ What kind of heart does God desire for His children? (A healthy heart that gives God glory and has Him at the center)



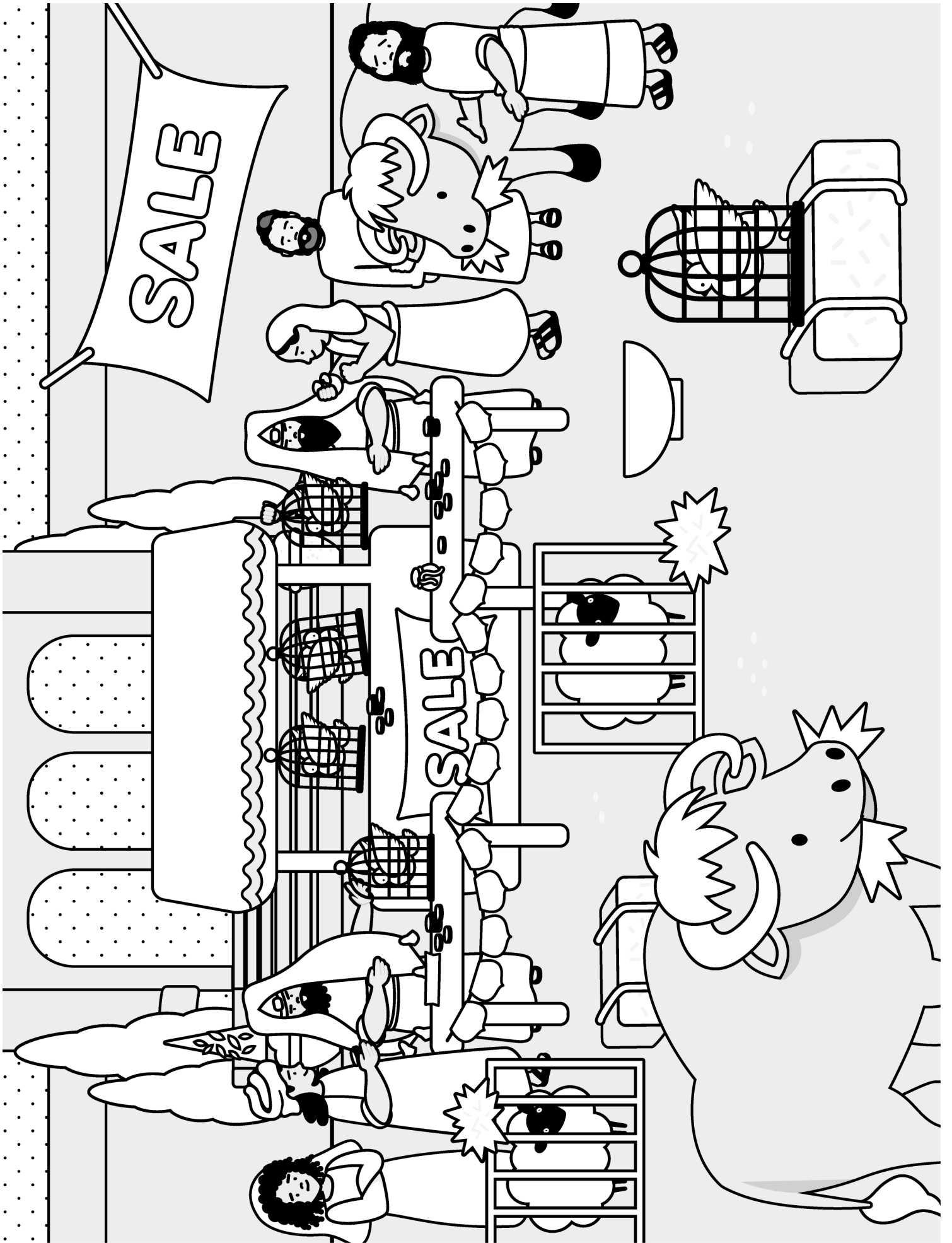
For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.

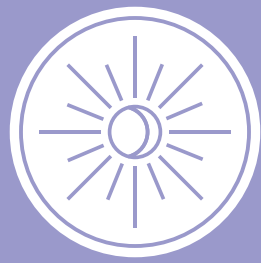
—ROMANS 6:23

FOLLOW THE INSTRUCTIONS TO CODE ROMANS 6:23.

- ▶ Circle the words “wages” and “gift” in GREEN.
- ▶ Above wages draw a \$; Above gift write “FREE!”
- ▶ Underline the words “sin” and “God” in RED.
- ▶ Above those words, write “+”
- ▶ Put a box around “death” and “eternal life” in yellow.
- ▶ Above those words, write “=”
- ▶ Put a box around “in Christ Jesus” in PURPLE.
- ▶ Above that, write “need.”

NOW PUT IT INTO YOUR OWN WORDS!





Day 3 – Tuesday

IMPOSSIBLE TO IGNORE

Jesus is back in the temple, and the religious leaders have a plan: it's time to trip Jesus up in front of the crowd. Their goal is to discredit Him, shame Him, or quiet Him. It's time to show the people who's really in charge.

As Jesus walked into the temple, “the chief priests and the scribes and the elders came to him, and they said to him, ‘By what authority are you doing these things, or who gave you this authority to do them?’” (Mark 11:27–28)

“Tell us Jesus, who do you think you are? We are the ones with authority here in the temple. We are the high priests.”

Jesus responds: “I will ask you one question; answer me, and I will tell you by what authority I do these things. Was the baptism of John from heaven or from man? Answer me.”

In hushed tones they said to one another, “If we say, ‘From heaven,’ he will say, ‘Why then did you not believe him?’ But shall we say, ‘From man?’”— they were afraid of the people, for they all held that John really was a prophet. So they answered Jesus, “We do not know.” And Jesus said to them, “Neither will I tell you by what authority I do these things.” (Mark 11:29–33)

Got 'em. You can see it—they were afraid of the people, so they punted. This is happening in real time in public because they want an audience. They want to get the crowd back, but it's not working, and now everybody is paying attention.

Jesus leans in with three parables, all pointed at the priests, scribes, and Pharisees—and they aren't subtle. He brings the parables of the two sons, the tenants, and the wedding feast. They're each a sermon in themselves, so hear this—they all point to the religious leaders as unbelieving, treacherous, disobedient, and outside of the kingdom. Jesus is exposing their hypocrisy and pronouncing judgement just as publicly as they questioned His authority.

Can you imagine the crowd at that point? What level of shaming, jeering, disdain, or shock do you hear in the air? Or was it just awkward silence and hard stares?

What color is the rage in the hearts of the priests? They can't find a good way to arrest Jesus without inciting a riot. They are afraid of the mob, but they want the hearts of the people. They're stuck. They keep trying to trick Him into incriminating or discrediting Himself.

There are legal and theological questions put before Him, all tricks with the end goal of Roman arrest or religious heresy.

Jesus answers them all perfectly. He answers with the wisdom of God and leaves them speechless, some of them awed, but most doubling down with resentment and anger.

At this point, Jesus seems ready to be done with it. He leans in again with His own question:

“What do you think about the Christ? Whose son is he?” They said to him, “The son of David.” He said to them, “How is it then that David, in the Spirit, calls him Lord, saying, ‘The Lord said to my Lord, sit at my right hand, until I put your enemies under your feet’? If then David calls him Lord, how is he his son?”

And no one was able to answer him a word, nor from that day did anyone dare to ask him any more questions.” (Matt. 22:42–46)

With the priests and Pharisees silenced, Jesus lets them have it in front of the crowd.

He spends 36 verses, which takes just under five minutes to speak out loud, putting them on blast. He pronounces seven woes with specific accusations about their character, sin, and condemnation. And He does it in the temple, in front of the crowd, to their faces.

Jesus, talking to the priests, scribes, and Pharisees in front of the crowd and His disciples, makes statements like this:

“Woe to you, for you tie up heavy burdens on people’s shoulders, but you won’t bear them.”

“Woe to you, hypocrites, you shut the kingdom of heaven in people’s faces.”

“Woe to you, who appear clean on the outside, but inside are full of greed and self-indulgence.”

“Woe to you, who are like a tomb, white washed, respectable—and full of dead men’s bones.”

“Woe to you, snakes. How are you going to escape being sentenced to hell?”

Jesus isn’t playing anymore. He didn’t come to align Himself with the priests and Pharisees. There are no more veiled statements or subtle parables—they’ve poked enough for today, and the day is ending with everyone clear about where Jesus stands. The old way of life in the temple is over, and the priests, scribes, and Pharisees were just put on notice that their time is up.

What do you feel, standing in the crowd? After hearing Jesus say all that to these so-called “Holy Men”? How tense is that room?

And what would you feel if you were the priests and Pharisees? You can't even get a word in. You just want this guy to shut up and go back to the sticks. Now He's in your face in front of everyone, and He's reading your mail. Every shame you hide, every sin you minimize or justify, and He's dropping truth bombs all over your self-made kingdom.

They feel threatened. Cornered. Insulted. Red faces, tight jaws. Some of them are confused, some near to truth, but all of them are blind. And they don't like feeling like this. They're not used to feeling like this.

That evening, Jesus heads home with His disciples. And while they walk back to Bethany, a group of men stay in town, meet up in the dark of night, behind locked doors, and start talking.

You know this kind of talk. The airing of complaints, of frustration, of mounting anger and wounded pride. Air swirling with "How dare He? Who does He think He is? Doesn't He know who I am, who we are? Someone needs to shut Him up. Did you see the way the crowd looked at Him? The way they looked at us? This is getting out of hand."

And then a plan comes together. A plan to make Him be quiet, to make an example of Him, and to teach the crowd who to follow.

They can't arrest Jesus with everyone in town; it'd be too risky. He's too popular. The quickest they could do it is after dinner on Thursday. The Passover meal will be over, and people will be sleeping off dinner or leaving town to get out ahead of the traffic. With the crowds lessening, under the cover of darkness, they can put things into motion that will make Him pay.

DAILY SCRIPTURE

Now is the judgment of this world; now will the ruler of this world be cast out. And I, when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all people to myself.” He said this to show by what kind of death he was going to die. So the crowd answered him, “We have heard from the Law that the Christ remains forever. How can you say that the Son of Man must be lifted up? Who is this Son of Man?” So Jesus said to them, “The light is among you for a little while longer. kWalk while you have the light, lest darkness overtake you. mThe one who walks in the darkness does not know where he is going. While you have the light, believe in the light, that you may become sons of light.”

–John 12:31–36

Family Discipleship

GATHER

Pencil, paperclip

PLAY

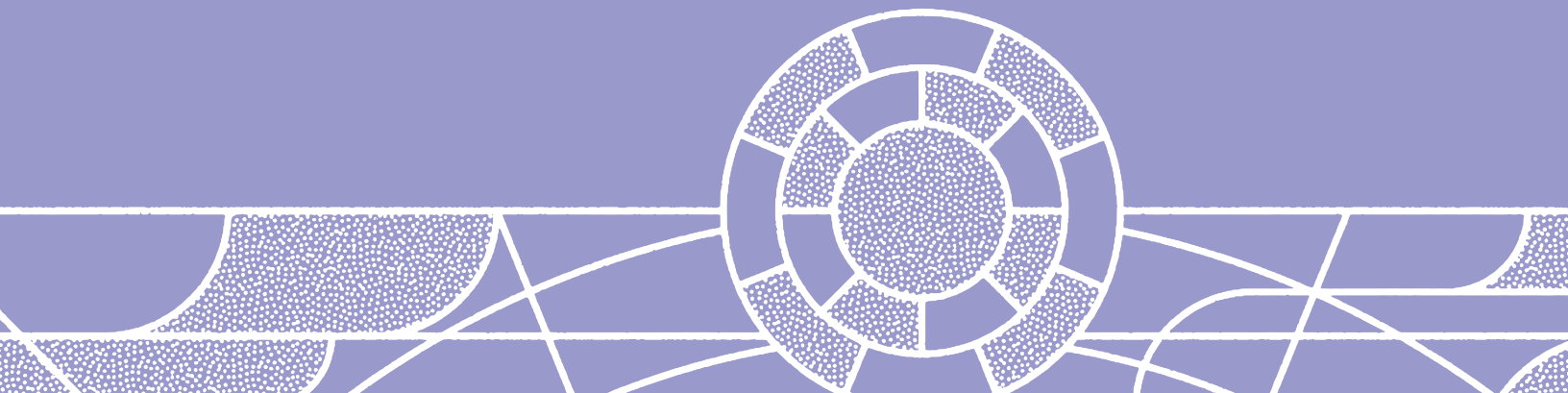
Use the Praise Spinner and talk about ways you can uplift those around you and show God's love. God uses His people, the Church, to show the world who He is. Today, we know that Jesus died on the cross, on the third day rose from the dead, and sent the Holy Spirit to help His children share the good news that Jesus Came to Save Sinners!

CONNECT

Jesus' very good friends and followers, the disciples, did not know or understand exactly how Jesus was going to save sinners. They saw Jesus' miracles and heard what He was telling them, but they didn't understand. Jesus tells His disciples that faith and trust in Him are what will allow them to bear fruit and be a light to the world. And even better, they will be sons of light and welcomed into God's family forever!

ASK

- ▶ Who did Jesus teach others about in Jerusalem? (He taught other people about God.)
- ▶ Who is Jesus? (Jesus is God the Son.)
- ▶ What kinds of miracles did Jesus do? (Jesus fed 5,000 people, walked on water, calmed a storm, and more.)
- ▶ What attributes of God can you name? (God is Wise, Good, Attentive, Compassionate, and more.)
- ▶ Is it easy or hard for you to show others kindness? How can you ask God to help you? (Answers will vary.)



Praise Practice

How to use a spinner sheet: place a plastic spinner in the middle of the circle.
Take turns spinning and praising someone in the category you land on!

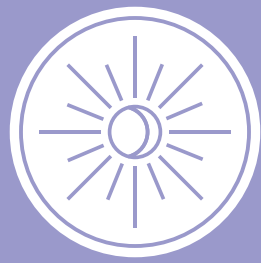
A FAMILY MEMBER

**YOUR
SCHOOL
TEACHER**

**A FRIEND
AT SCHOOL**

SOMEONE FROM CHURCH





Day 4 – Wednesday

A STRANGE SILENCE

Compared to the past three days, Wednesday is the eerie, still sky before a dark storm. It's the day of planning and plotting, and Jesus is present in the temple.

The air has to be different today. There's an electricity around Jesus—He is the figure to see this week. But today there is a strange silence from the religious leaders.

It's your third morning in the temple. You made it early enough to grab a spot near where Jesus was teaching yesterday. It's mid-morning, so you probably need that second cup of coffee—but your eyes are glued to Jesus. The buzz in the room is helping you focus. People are whispering, "Have the Priests given up? I bet they have. Yesterday was incredible! He was on fire! This is real change. This is real power. This is our King."

But the holy men have not given up. The plan is in place, and all the leaders have to do is bide their time. "Yesterday was heated enough," they think. "Let Him teach. We know what's coming."

For those men, the day is full of hushed details behind closed doors. The hours are thick with plotting and scheming against the prophet from Nazareth. Wounded pride steeping in anger for 48 hours. It is a stew of blinding hate masked with religious zeal.

DAILY SCRIPTURE

When Jesus had finished all these sayings, he said to his disciples, “You know that after two days the Passover is coming, and the Son of Man will be delivered up to be crucified.”

Then the chief priests and the elders of the people gathered in the palace of the high priest, whose name was Caiaphas, and plotted together in order to arrest Jesus by stealth and kill him. But they said, “Not during the feast, lest there be an uproar among the people.”

–Matthew 26:1–5

Family Discipleship

GATHER

Candle or flashlight

PLAY

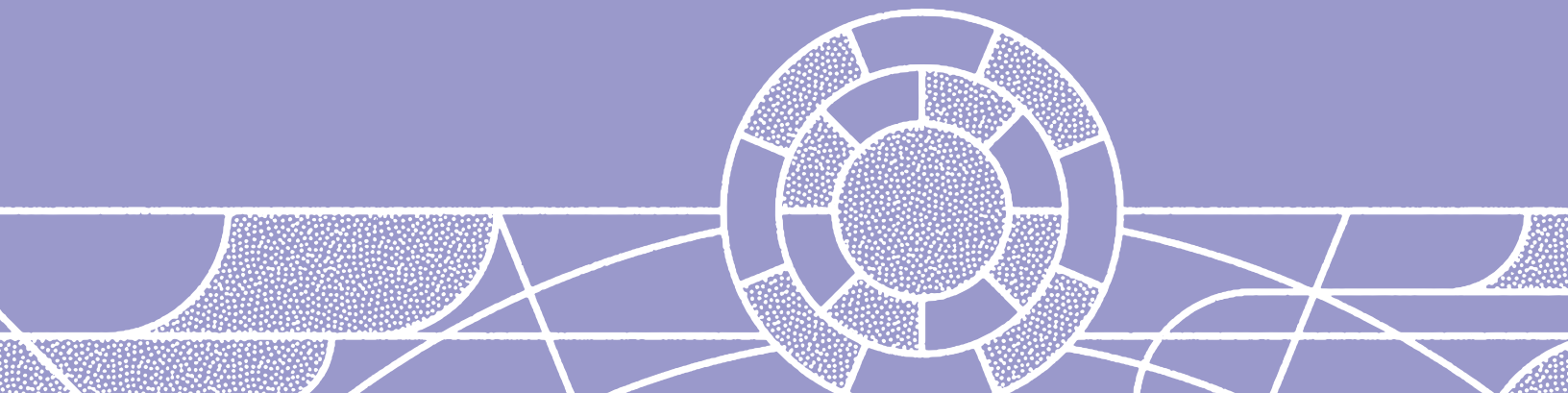
Turn off the lights and have someone light a candle or turn on a flashlight. Go to different rooms or closets in your house and talk about where the light shines brightest. You can also take turns seeing how far someone can go away from the light until they can't see it anymore.

CONNECT

It is hard to see in the dark without light! Light also shines brighter the darker the room is. Jesus takes time to teach His very good friends and followers that He is the Light of the World. Jesus came so those who believe in Him can walk in the light. Jesus tells His disciples that faith and trust is what will allow them to bear fruit and be a light to the world. And even better, they will be sons of light and welcomed into God's family forever!

ASK

- ▶ What truth does this remind you of? (Jesus Came to Save Sinners)
- ▶ Is anything a surprise to God? (No! God is patient with us and knows we are all sinners.)
- ▶ What is sin? (Sin is when we see things as more valuable than God and think we know what is best for ourselves. Sin separates us from God and leads to death.)
- ▶ What attributes of God can you name? (God is Just, Patient, Merciful, and more.)
- ▶ Knowing that nothing surprises God and He is patient with us, is there anything you'd like to tell Him? (Practice confessing to one another. Explain that God Wants to Talk With Us. He is attentive and compassionate, and He desires us to walk in the light and have healthy hearts.)



Philippians 2:9

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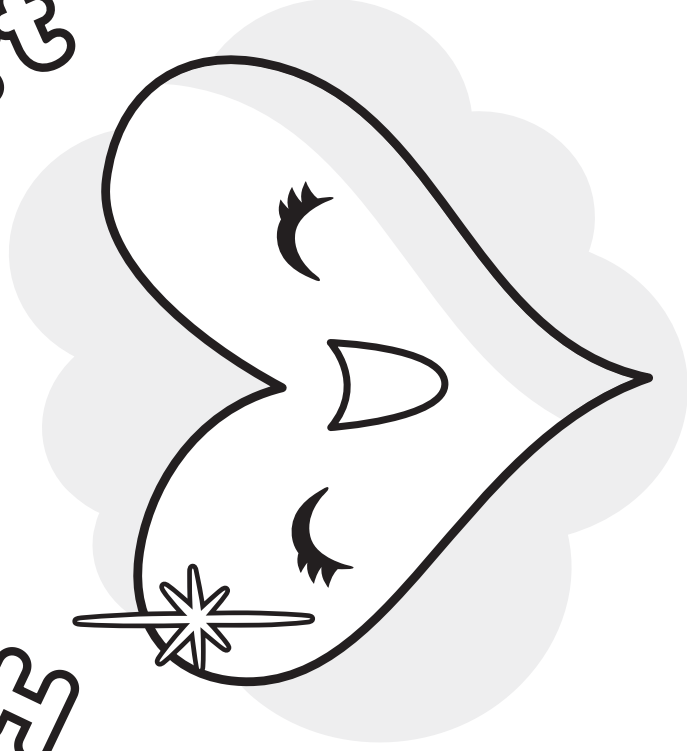
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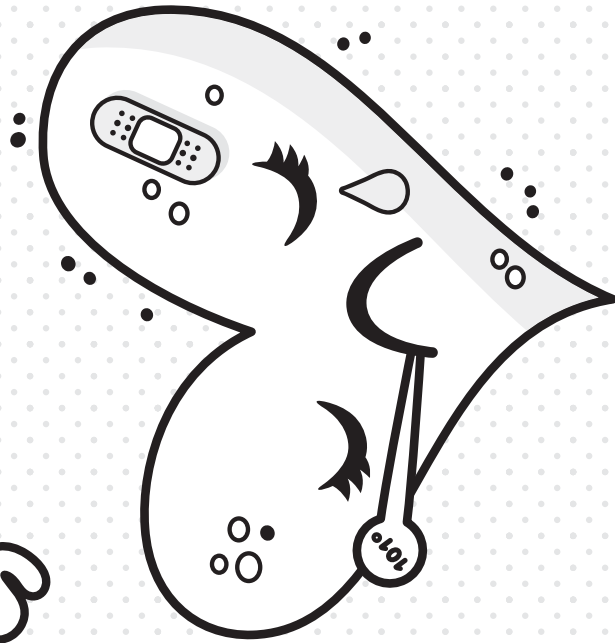
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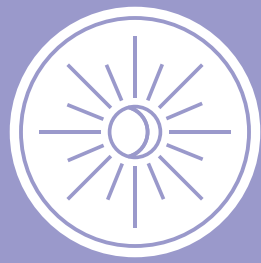
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Healthy Heart



Sick Heart





Day 5 – Maundy Thursday

ONE LAST MEAL

It's Thursday—Passover. This is the day, and by Old Testament law, the meal has to be eaten inside the city walls. Everyone is making plans, homes are full of relatives, and the lines at the checkout are full of last minute shoppers.

Jesus knows that it's going to be a long night, and His heart is heavy with what is ahead. You can't separate His deity and humanity—it's wrong to think He enters into this evening without emotion, fear, or the call for courage in the face of grief and pain.

Jesus is not a victim of circumstance or power outside His control. He has been, is, and will be in control at each turn of this week—regardless of what worldly power and demonic minds think they are at play.

But tonight is His last meal to eat before He dies.

Tonight is His final chance to sit with His friends before their last three years are changed forever. It is their last supper together.

And tonight is a different kind of Passover—it is the last Passover of the Old Covenant. The blood of the Lamb of God brings in a different and stronger word—the New Covenant is coming.

Given that this week has made Him a bit of a celebrity, where Jesus spends Passover is a big deal. When the disciples asked about dinner plans, He sent them to find a man who was looking for them. It was already taken care of. Dinner that night was in a house at the end of the street, in a large upstairs room with high windows. There were a couple of columns spread wide across the room, a low table in the middle, and cushions set out in a U shape to lean on while they ate. Jesus is sitting in the middle of the center table and everyone is laying on their side, leaning on their left arms, feet out from the table, eating and drinking with their right hands.

We're standing together against the inside wall of the upper room. You can see the sun fading outside the windows, as stars will soon begin to show. The candles and lamps are lit inside, and the table is set for a feast. While it has been a triumphant week for many, the air in the room has turned sober. Jesus is talking about being betrayed, about suffering, about His body breaking, His blood spilling, about leaving and a Helper that's coming.

Jesus tells the disciples that He's longed to eat this Passover with them before He suffers, for He's not going to eat it again until it is fulfilled in the kingdom of God.

Jesus then takes a familiar and life-orienting narrative in the lives of the disciples, the story of the Passover, and re-narrates it, taking the place of the lamb for the forgiveness of sins.

“He took bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it and gave it to them, saying, ‘This is my body, which is given for you. Do this in remembrance of me.’

And likewise the cup after they had eaten, saying, ‘This cup that is poured out for you is the new covenant in my blood.’” (Luke 22:19–20)

As there had been at many points that week, I’m sure a couple glances were shared between the disciples. They didn’t quite get what He was saying, but Jesus knew. He dropped little anchors in their memories. Jesus does this so that their faith might be strengthened in their coming trial. Jesus loved and looked out for them to the end.

We can tell from where we’re standing that the plates are empty. The meal is done, and there is one less of them at the table. Judas left early, maybe to buy more food or run an errand. We saw Jesus tell him something, and then he was gone.

Throughout the meal we’ve heard them sing several times, but now, before the table is cleared and things are done, tradition calls for the final song: Psalm 118.

As we stand in the shadows of the room, the sun is long gone, the moonlight hits the rooftops around us, and the faces inside are lit only by flickers of lamplight. Their voices begin to echo off the stone walls.

And as we watch this circle of friends—disciples and their Lord singing—we hear these words come from their mouths. One wonders Christ’s own thoughts as He sang, both text and subtext, together in His voice:

*Oh give thanks to the LORD, for He is good;
for His steadfast love endures forever!*

*Out of my distress I called on the LORD;
the LORD answered me and set me free.*

The LORD is on my side; I will not fear.

What can man do to me?

The LORD is on my side as my helper;

I shall look in triumph on those who hate me.

The LORD is my strength and my song;

He has become my salvation.

*I shall not die, but I shall live,
and recount the deeds of the LORD.
The LORD has disciplined me severely,
but He has not given me over to death.*

*Open to me the gates of righteousness,
that I may enter through them
and give thanks to the LORD.
This is the gate of the LORD;
the righteous shall enter through it.
I thank you that you have answered me
and have become my salvation.
The stone that the builders rejected
has become the cornerstone.
This is the LORD's doing;
it is marvelous in our eyes.
This is the day that the LORD has made;
let us rejoice and be glad in it.*

*You are my God, and I will give thanks to you;
you are my God; I will extol you.
Oh give thanks to the LORD, for He is good;
for His steadfast love endures forever!*

After they sing, they leave through a door in the far corner off to our right, and head down the stairs, into the street. They are headed to the Garden of Gethsemane, where Jesus prays and wrestles His will to the ground with tears that flowed like blood. He prays for His disciples, His friends. He prays for those who would come to believe in Him—for you and me.

On the last night of His life, Jesus prays that God would let us see His Glory, be one with Him, and that God would keep us from evil. Jesus asks His Father that we might be a sign to the world, in unity and love, that He is the true Son, sent by the Father.

As we stand now in the darkness of the garden, we're again hidden in the shadows, this time by thick olive trees with squatty trunks as round as tires and heavy with branches.

Jesus is walking toward us. Exhausted from prayer, He comes back to find His three friends—Peter, James, and John—sleeping just off to our left. Their spirit is willing, but their flesh is weak.

If there was any time to be awake you would think it'd be now. These three have already been woken up twice by Jesus, but it's late.

The meal was long, the wine sits heavy, and their bodies are tired. Jesus rouses them once more, saying something about it being time.

Wait, what are they looking at? Do you hear it? The footsteps? Do you see the torchlight? There is a mob coming quickly in the darkness.

There's an awkward greeting. The hug of a friend, a kiss of betrayal, and a night of injustice ahead.

His is a heart full of grief, like no one has ever known.

Righteous, victorious, and humble.

This is our King, and this is His hour.

DAILY SCRIPTURE

Now as they were eating, Jesus took bread, and after blessing it broke it and gave it to the disciples, and said, "Take, eat; this is my body." And he took a cup, and when he had given thanks he gave it to them, saying, "Drink of it, all of you, for this is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins. I tell you I will not drink again of this fruit of the vine until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father's kingdom."

—Matthew 26:26–29

Family Discipleship

GATHER

Bowl of water and towel

PLAY

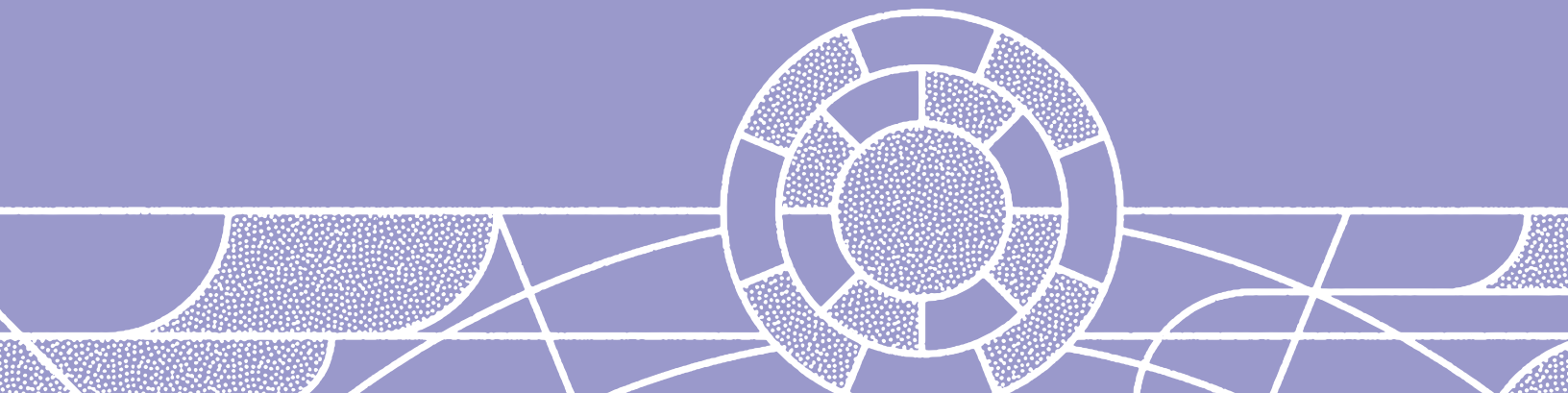
Take turns washing each other's feet. Spend some time talking about what Jesus was showing His disciples in John 13:1–20 as He washed their feet. Talk about what kind of king Jesus was and the compassion He showed those around Him. What kinds of qualities do you see in Jesus? How does Jesus want us to treat others?

CONNECT

Jesus spent some of His last hours before going to the cross with His disciples, reminding them how important it is to love one another and remember all Jesus did and said while He was on earth. The words He shared while washing their feet and during the Last Supper were probably very confusing to His friends. Today, all those who love and trust Jesus take time to share this special meal together, called communion. We take this time to remember what Jesus taught us and give thanks for what He continues to do for us. Then we show and tell the world how amazing it is that Jesus came to save sinners!

ASK

- ▶ What did Jesus eat with His disciples? (A special meal of bread and wine)
- ▶ Why do those who love and trust Jesus still eat this special meal called communion today? (To remember Jesus and all that He did here on earth)
- ▶ Why was it surprising when Jesus washed the disciples' feet? (Jesus is God! He is in charge of everything and worthy of all glory. Jesus isn't like an earthly king; He is a forever King! Jesus showed His disciples what it means to serve and love others.)
- ▶ What attributes of God do you see in this story? (God is Provider, Deliverer, Holy, Good, Loving, and more.)
- ▶ How does knowing that Jesus is compassionate help you love and trust Him more? What are ways you can be a light to others this week? (Answers will vary. Help a neighbor, collect items to donate, etc.)

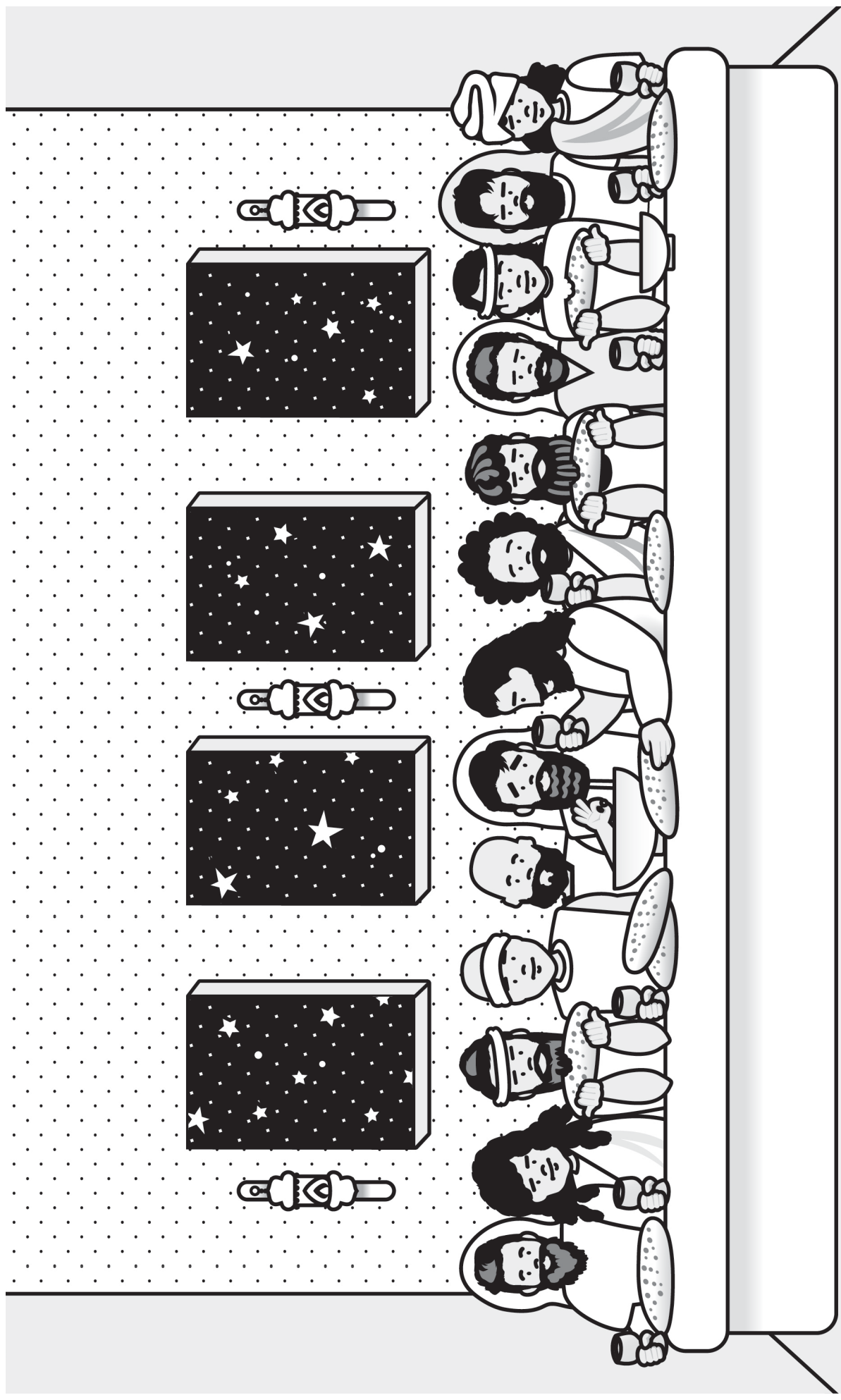
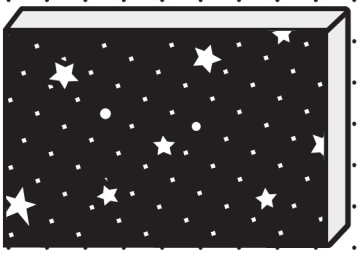
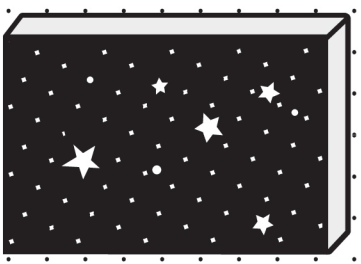


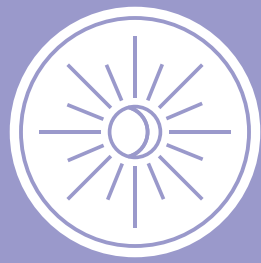
Word Search

Try to find the words from John 3:16 in the word search below. Words may go diagonal, up or down, and forward or backward.

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Day 6 – Good Friday

IT IS FINISHED

This morning, as you drive to work, settle in at your desk, get your youngest up from their nap, or head to class, Pilate is having a tense conversation with the Holy Men (the priests and Pharisees)—and he seems to be losing.

Try as he might, Pilate can't agree with them about the threat level of this man, Jesus. He keeps trying to turn Jesus loose, and the Holy Men finally threaten to go over Pilate's head to his boss, Caesar.

And Pilate is nervous. His wife is telling him she's had a dream about Jesus, and he should back away quickly. Jesus is puzzling him, because He's not acting like any terrorist or criminal Pilate's ever seen. There is something not right. The only thing he can sense for sure is the envy of the priests and that Jesus is threatening their popularity and power.

The threat against his loyalty to Caesar is enough for Pilate. Surprisingly, it comes from the high priests of God. These men should be looking for the kingdom of God, but they deny God's King, pledging their loyalty to King Caesar as they condemn King Jesus.

This week has left the Holy Men—the priests, scribes, and Pharisees—thirsty for revenge and ready to let Jesus taste their power as they flex and work a crowd, move the pieces, and push Rome's buttons.

These priests, these keepers of the house of God, get what it takes to make things happen. They've pressed through the night without sleep, but it's been worth it for this moment. Now no one is singing Hosanna for the Prophet. There is no praise for Jesus. There are no palm branches or royal carpets today.

The faithful have left town, and the remnant that was here before has remained after. What change did Jesus even think He could make in five days? Look at Him next to Pilate, unable to shield His eyes from the morning sun, His hands bound behind His back. He looks so weak now. No pithy questions, no high judgments from His mouth anymore. In fact, He's said next to nothing all night. Like a little lamb, He's been silent.

And now this Lamb is the scourge of Rome. Time to hand Him off and watch the work of the Holy Men play out.

Jesus has been surrounded by crowds this week.

On the hills outside town, a kingly welcome by a longing people.

In the temple, a mixed room of open ears and blind eyes—hope and hatred in every degree.

In the moonlit shadows of the garden, pawns and puppet masters come to arrest Him.

All morning, an angry mob of Jews scream for His death and the freedom of a known terrorist.

And this morning, Pilate has sent Him to a battalion of Roman soldiers to be prepared for crucifixion. Here is Jesus tied to a post, hands outstretched in front of Him. A shirtless, bloodied, and sleep-deprived man surrounded by 600 yelling, mocking, snide, belittling Roman soldiers.

And one fierce whip—the scourge. Nine strands of leather knotted with glass and metal. It took the lives of many sentenced to crucifixion before they ever made it out of the yard.

Imagine the angle, looking down from above. One man, standing in His blood, alone in the center of 600 angry voices, pacing, threatening, harming with each minute.

Hear their cries.

Now mute their voices.

Hear the crack of the whip.

Some of those 600 probably sat down for lunch while Jesus's hands and feet were nailed in place. They had their fun. Can you see them eating now? Joking about the robe and the crown?

While some of you worked through lunch and others of you made PB&J's for the third day in a row, Jesus was crucified.

And His mom watched it happen. Can you feel her tears? Her boy, losing blood by the second, nailed to a log and being yelled at by a crowd. Her boy, for whom she bled to bring into the world, now bleeds as He leaves it, and she can't make it stop.

The Pharisees watched it too—and they didn't want it to stop. Look what they made happen. They took in the full view. They heard the crowd damning His name, and it was sweet music to them. They were back in power.

You can feel their satisfaction. No more woe pronounced upon them. No more threats.

Imagine the smugness in their eyes, the sick joy in their voices as they get close enough to His feet but far enough to keep clean from His blood. Looking at Jesus. They are drunk with power. One priest stands before the others, in front of the people, and loudly says:

“He saved others; he cannot save himself. He is the King of Israel; let him come down now from the cross, and we will believe in Him. He trusts in God; let God deliver him now, if he desires him. For he said, ‘I am the Son of God.’” (Matt. 27:42–43)

Little do they know how much the Father desires the Son. These Holy Men have no sight for the players with which they are in a cosmic war. They see themselves generals, when really, they are Lego men. Their words, their hate are hurled at the Incarnate One, who hears and feels and hurts as He endures these insults, this pain over the next few hours until His death.

And while you were cleaning up from lunch, washing dishes or heading back to the office, the sun went dark. The moon was full last night, so it’s no solar eclipse. It is the brightest and hottest part of the day. It’s an early spring afternoon, but it’s black as night outside.

If you’re able to think above the sadness, or see past your hate, the darkness in midday might make you pause for a second.

Zoom out from this scene, and onto the wide scale of what’s happening: Jesus is on the cross, and the sky has turned black.

Just this week He told the parable, and now it’s playing out. The owner of the vineyard sent his son, and they killed him and threw him out, wanting the inheritance for themselves.

The Pharisees yell, “He trusts in God; let God deliver him now, if he desires him.”

And they echo Psalm 22:

*All who see me mock me;
they make mouths at me; they wag their heads;
“He trusts in the LORD; let him deliver him;
let him rescue him, for he delights in him!”*

Christ knew His life was required. It was the joy set before Him that helped Him endure. And in the middle of His pain, in the middle of His body failing—His shoulders long out of socket, His legs cramping, His lungs filling with fluid and every breath a struggle—

God the Father begins to pour out His wrath on sin.

Unseen by our eyes, angels watch on in confusion, and demon smiles drop as God moves, not to rescue the Son, but to punish Him—the sinless for all sin.

Divine judgment on rebellion, lust, addiction, stolen glances, misplaced hopes, anger, proud moments, and stubborn hearts. His hatred of arrogance, lying, cheating, abuse, murder, of twistedness and darkness and evil.

His right punishment of all things that have come and gone, and that will come and go against His perfect standard, design, and creation. God's divine judgment is poured out on the only sacrifice that is able to absorb, pay for, and shield others from all that is deserved by sin and should be felt by sinners.

Absorb. Pay for. Shield.

These actions are coated in Christ's grief—they are colored with His blood. Living in perfect unity and presence with His Father, He feels, for the first and only time in His life, a relationship destroyed by the weight of sin.

But He feels it on the scale of every broken relationship rolled into one. An unimaginable absence of love and affection and presence and stability and safety while He is bleeding out on a cross, yelled at by men who mock His name and His Father's, while His mother and His friends look on.

It is the most unbearable part of the day, and Christ is alone in it.

He alone experiences this grief, and He doesn't give in to death in the middle of it.

After a few hours, the crowd had grown quiet watching the spectacle of a slow death. Many probably left knowing that the end was imminent. It's about when you started thinking of what was for dinner or leaving early to beat the Friday traffic. By mid-afternoon, it had likely grown quiet on the hill outside town.

One poet uses the mocker's words, and imagines Jesus thinking to Himself: "But, O my God, my God! why leav'st thou me, The son, in whom thou dost delight to be?"

And the dark silence is broken as Jesus cries out loud: "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?" (Matt. 27:46)

A little while later, through bruised ribs and spent strength, He pulls Himself up for a breath, and with exhaustion and tears, says, "It is finished."

That same poet, some 1,800 years later would write this moment from Christ's voice:

“But now I die; now all is finished.
My woe, man's wealth: and now I bow my head.
Only let others say, when I am dead,
 Never was grief like mine.”

This is our King—dead upon the cross.

DAILY SCRIPTURE

And when the sixth hour had come, there was darkness over the whole land until the ninth hour. And at the ninth hour Jesus cried with a loud voice, “Eloi, Eloi, lema sabachthani?” which means, “My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?” And some of the bystanders hearing it said, “Behold, he is calling Elijah.” And someone ran and filled a sponge with sour wine, put it on a reed and gave it to him to drink, saying, “Wait, let us see whether Elijah will come to take him down.” And Jesus uttered a loud cry and breathed his last. And the curtain of the temple was torn in two, from top to bottom. And when the centurion, who stood facing him, saw that in this way he breathed his last, he said, “Truly this man was the Son of God!”

–Mark 15:33–39

Family Discipleship

GATHER

Chalk

PLAY

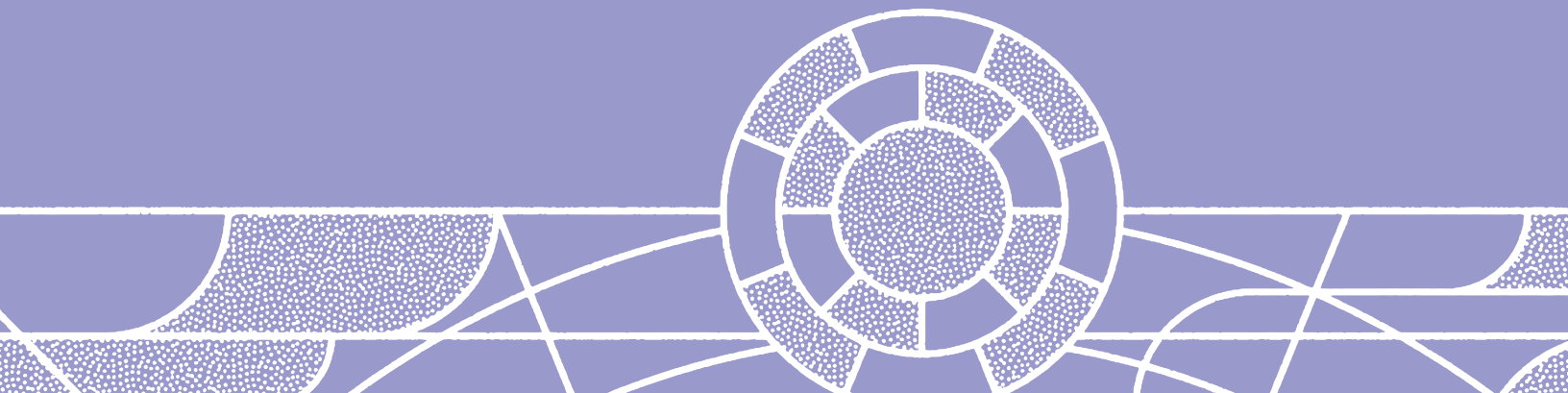
Use chalk to write truths about God and the good news Jesus brings on your driveway or sidewalk. Share the good news of what Jesus did on the cross with your neighborhood!

CONNECT

Why is this day called Good Friday? Jesus dying on the cross is good news because Jesus came to save sinners! Jesus dying on the cross covers the sins of all who believe in Him fully, freely, and forever!

ASK

- ▶ Who did Jesus come to save? (Sinners)
- ▶ Where did the leaders of Jerusalem find Jesus praying? (In the garden)
- ▶ Why did Jesus say, “It is finished,” before He died? (The moment Jesus—the perfect sacrifice—died on the cross, all the sins of anyone who by grace through faith would love and trust Jesus were fully, freely, and forever forgiven!)
- ▶ What attributes of God do you see in this story? (God is Deliver, Holy, Provider, and more.)
- ▶ Is there anything surprising, confusing, or exciting to you about what happened on Good Friday? (Answers will vary.)



Philippians 2:10-11

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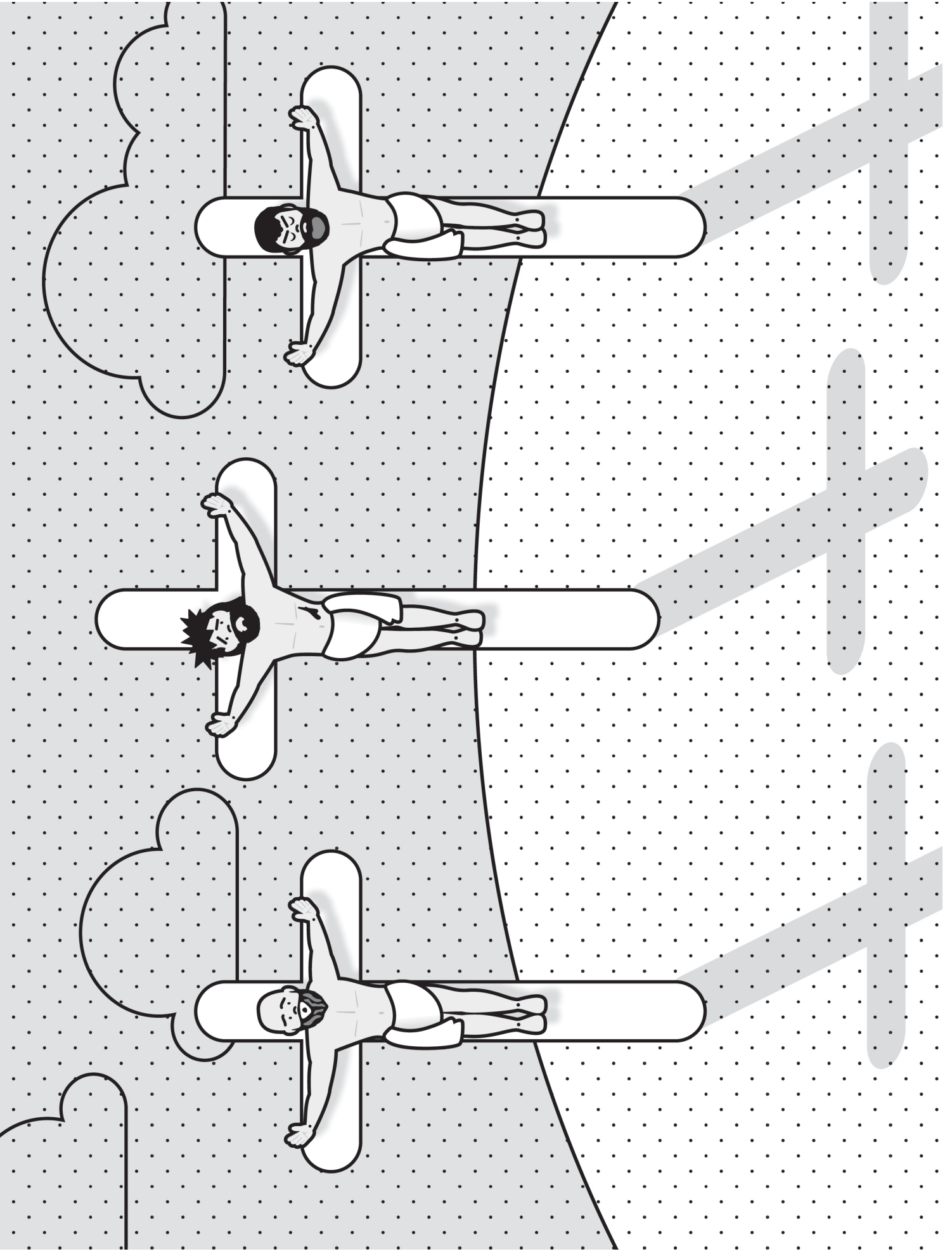
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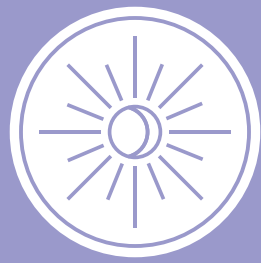
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Day 7 – Saturday

A MISSING KING

The day begins while dinner ends with full plates and uneasy, empty stomachs. The need to be together to avoid being alone, the quiet of death among the friends of Jesus.

In the Jewish world, the day began at sundown with the supper meal. The first third of the day was spent sleeping, then working from rest rather than chasing it. The week ended with the Sabbath—a day of rest meant for reflection upon the goodness and provision of God. A day meant for no work but that of hearts filled with and pouring out worship to God.

Their friend, their teacher, their walking hope was nailed down and executed by the state, by the leaders of their faith as a dirty criminal. His blood escaped His body through every exit wound, a spring of passing life cutting crimson streams across His flesh onto the wood until it pooled in the rock below.

There is a silencing confusion that follows injustice. The trauma endured is the kind of horror and sadness that inescapably projects itself on the back of your eyelids. You'd rather stay awake all night in order to keep out the pain that comes when you try to sleep. There is no rest in the chest of these friends. This Sabbath is a day of mourning, of confusion, of diverted eyes and dashed hopes—for He was the King—and now He's dead in a rich man's tomb. Tomorrow brings the terrible and needed duty of giving dignity to the dead by preparing His body for what is to come.

Having killed Jesus, the high priests are trying to reconcile their win with the odd things they've seen—a midday darkness, an earthquake, the temple curtain torn in two. Things that might pause, but cannot stop the hardened heart at play. And play on they did. Seeing their dominance, the high priests approached Pilate and argued for a guard to be placed at the imposter's tomb. They can't afford for His disciples to steal the body, giving the public hope over Jesus' words about rising again. An earthquake at Jesus' death was not enough to skip the track of self-preservation in their hearts. You can almost hear their thoughts: "Let's outwait His words. Let's get through the Sabbath and into the week—then we can start shaming the mention of His name until it's silenced."

One wonders what happened to the friends of Jesus in these hours. A sleepless night, the forcing down of food, a happy memory that insults the overwhelming pain of loss. Dawn brings no relief; the sun merely reinforces the darkness of the past day. In the loss, the questions come with their blades, as if enough blood had not been spilt:

“What happened?”

“Was He really Messiah?”

“What do we do now?”

“Are we next?”

“Where is everyone? Are they safe?”

“Is it really over?”

“Is He really gone?”

The response? Silence. Pain. Confusion. Fear.

Where is our King?

DAILY SCRIPTURE

When it was evening, there came a rich man from Arimathea, named Joseph, who also was a disciple of Jesus. He went to Pilate and asked for the body of Jesus. Then Pilate ordered it to be given to him. And Joseph took the body and wrapped it in a clean linen shroud and laid it in his own new tomb, which he had cut in the rock. And he rolled a great stone to the entrance of the tomb and went away. Mary Magdalene and the other Mary were there, sitting opposite the tomb.

The next day, that is, after the day of Preparation, the chief priests and the Pharisees gathered before Pilate and said, “Sir, we remember how that impostor said, while he was still alive, ‘After three days I will rise.’ Therefore order the tomb to be made secure until the third day, lest his disciples go and steal him away and tell the people, ‘He has risen from the dead,’ and the last fraud will be worse than the first.” Pilate said to them, “You have a guard of soldiers. Go, make it as secure as you can.” So they went and made the tomb secure by sealing the stone and setting a guard.

–Matthew 27:57–66

Family Discipleship

GATHER

Coloring book

PLAY

Play the quiet game as a family while coloring. Spend time in the silence thinking about how it must have felt for all those who loved Jesus the day after He died on the cross.

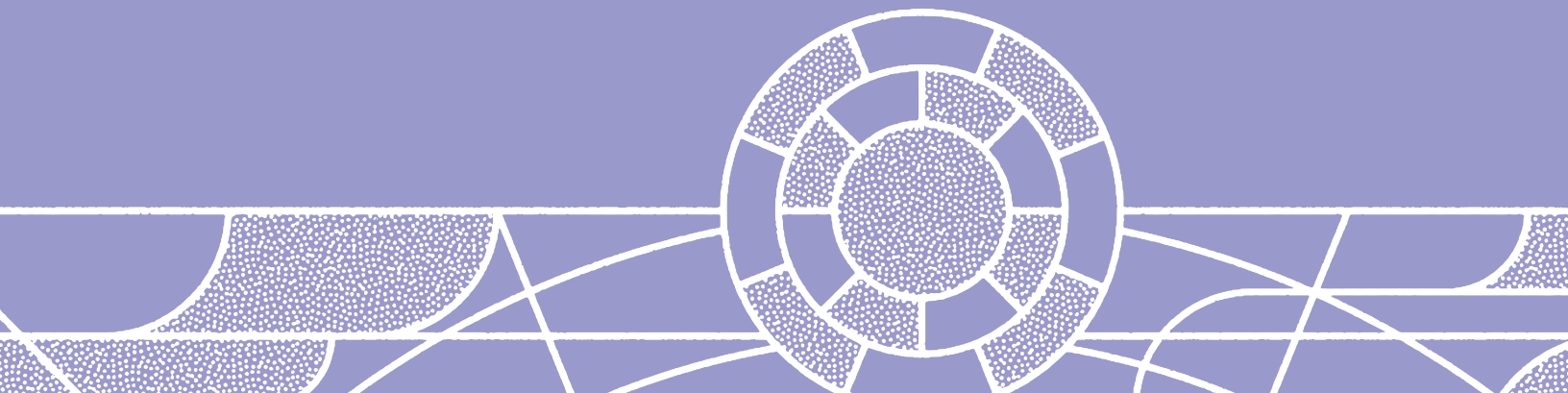
What do you think they were thinking? How do you think they felt? Talk about it after you are done coloring.

CONNECT

Jesus' very good friends and followers were confused, sad, and maybe even a little frustrated or scared. They watched their King, their Savior, and their friend die on the cross. They did not know God's rescue plan, His forever plan. It looked like God's plan may not happen. But tomorrow is coming! A forever hope and God's forever plan will be revealed!

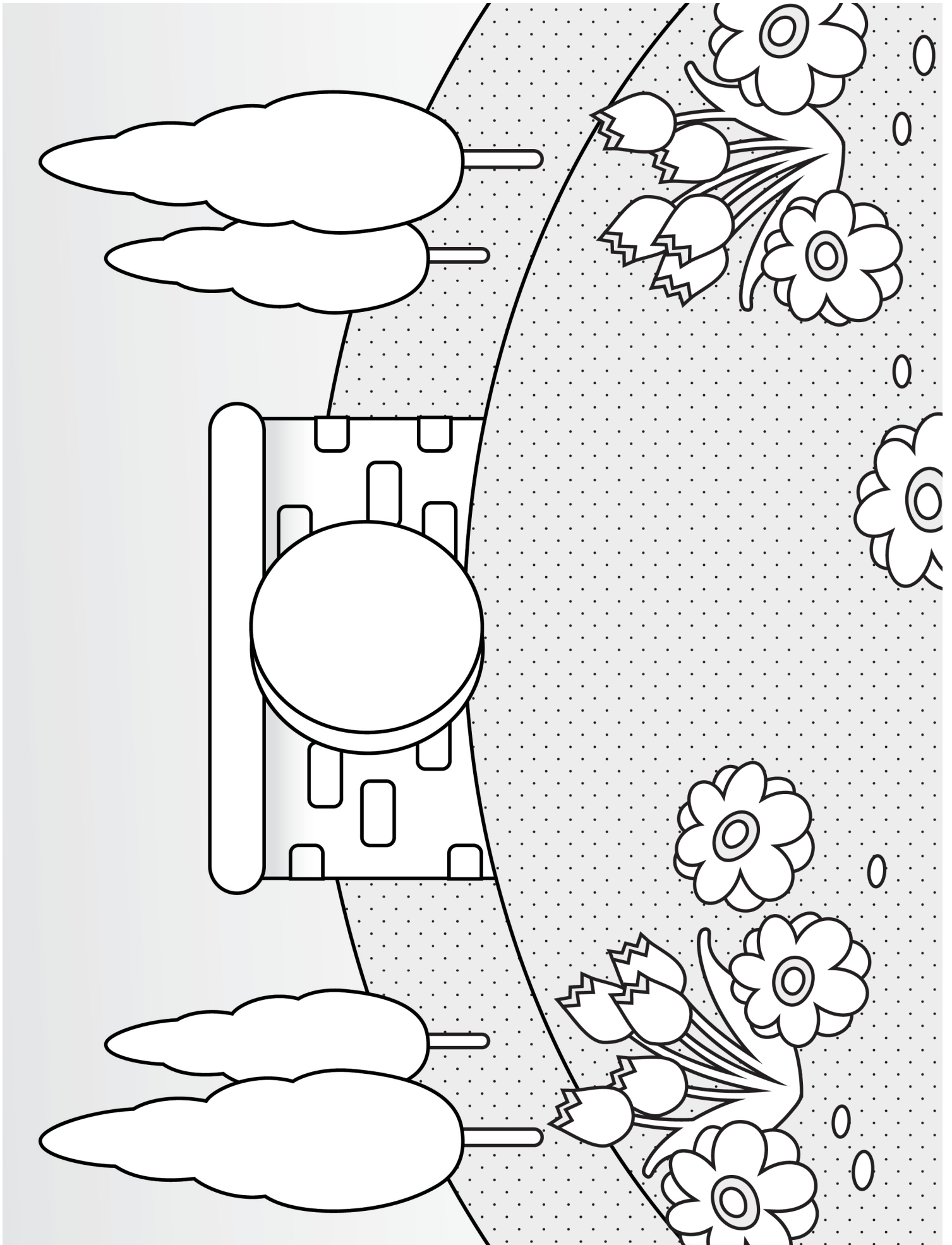
ASK

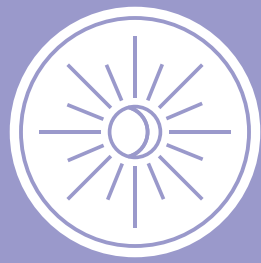
- ▶ Where did Jesus' disciples lay His body? (In a tomb)
- ▶ What was put in front of Jesus' tomb? (A large stone and guards)
- ▶ How do you think Jesus' very good friends and followers felt after seeing Jesus die on the cross? (Sad, scared, confused, etc.)
- ▶ What attributes of God do you see in this part of the story? (God is Faithful, Deliverer, Worthy, Merciful, Holy, Patient, and more.)
- ▶ How does loving and trusting Jesus give us hope that nothing is too hard for God? (Jesus has defeated death; He is Almighty! We can look to Jesus, our forever King, for hope because we see that nothing is too hard for God.)



IF YOU CONFESS
WITH YOUR MOUTH
THAT JESUS IS LORD
AND BELIEVE IN
YOUR HEART THAT
GOD RAISED HIM
FROM THE DEAD, YOU
WILL BE SAVED.

ROMANS 10:9





Day 8 – Resurrection Sunday

HE IS RISEN

With all the questions from last night in Mary's head, there is one desire guiding her through the minefield of trauma—the need to be near Jesus.

As He was laid on the table Friday night, she sat across from the tomb, weeping and watching over His body.

In the silence of Saturday, Mary ran through her list and packed for this morning, one last chance to say goodbye to her Lord in the quiet of dawn. A wrapping of His body, a final anointing of His flesh, no doubt wet with her tears once again. How many tears had she shed this week?

She just wants to be near Jesus.

Sitting with the dead brings a strange comfort as one sorts through pain. In the presence of a loved one now gone, their lifeless body is the stone image of a lifetime of breath.

And it is image upon image in her mind as Mary heads out in the fading dark. Memories flood her sight as the pain of loss is all that feels near to her now.

Just to sit and be with Jesus, her heavy thoughts on the path in the breaking dawn, “Why are we here? Why is He dead? Oh, it was terrible. Just terrible.”

She watched Him with the crowds.

She watched Him weep for the dead, and bring her own back to life.

She watched Him die.

Who would bring Him back now? There's no one to call for, the Lord Himself is dead.

Mary reaches the tomb as little drops of dew begin to reflect off olive leaves. Then she sees the stone.

In the midst of grief, of the churning emotions in her heart, only one thing makes sense—someone has taken Him.

Her bag drops as she turns, stone jars clanking together as they hit the ground. Her morning errand just became a race against time to tell the others.

He's not there—He's gone! He's gone. They've taken His body.

Breathless, fighting stitches in her side, she reaches the house and breaks the fitful sleep of Peter and John with her cries. A pounding at the door, the panicked speech, the call to calm down and speak clearly—all giving way to a fear-filled Mary blurting through heaving sobs, “They’ve taken the Lord, and I don’t know where He is!”

Peter and John look at each other. A look loaded with the loss of their Lord, the shame of their weakness, the fear of the moment. They have to go. They have to do something.

Sitting in the now quiet house, can you see Mary, alone with her fears? “What will they do with Him? Haven’t they done enough? I just want to be near Him. Could I not even protect His body in death?”

She sits, her breath returning, and with the rising sun, she stands to head back to the tomb.

Her walk now is less certain than the task of this morning, but in the want to draw near, she heads to where she saw Him last.

Peter and John must have fled already. She’s alone outside the tomb, unable to bring herself to go inside for she knows who she will not see. The dirt at her feet forms dark brown cakes as tears flow once more.

And from the hidden well of strength, or the acceptance of the inevitable, she moves into the tomb.

Mary’s face drops. Her eyes are wide with shock as she takes in just who is there. Two angels, sitting along the table like anchors of a mercy seat—and no body between them.

“Woman, why are you weeping?”

“They have taken away my Lord, and I do not know where they have laid Him.”

Behind her a man appears in the garden and asks the same, once more, “Woman, why are you weeping?”

Picture the swirl of thoughts in Mary’s head right now: Who are these men? Wait. They look different. Who is talking to me now? I’m in the garden, it must be the gardener coming to work. Where are Peter and John? Oh, where is Jesus? He’s not here. I need to find Him.

“Woman, why are you weeping? Whom are you seeking?”

He has to know, how could he not know? This place is his job.

“Sir, if you have carried Him away, tell me where you have laid Him, and I will take Him away.”

And then the storm inside her breaks into a blinding shower of sadness, of fear.

Just tell me, please. Please tell me where my friend is. I can't take anymore—I need to be near Him.

“Mary.”

It's hard to imagine the silence of that moment. As if the storm went mute in a heartbeat and her world stopped spinning at the sound of her name. She knew. He is here.

“Teacher!”

Tears flow again as she rushes to hug the risen Christ. Fear drops off her like lead, her heart rises with joy unspeakable. The distance between them, from the garden to the cross, the inability to help, having to watch Him die—forever closed in a moment. She just wanted to be near Him.

And now, He is here. He's alive!

Jesus speaks, “Mary, we have work to do. Go and find my brothers. Tell them that I am going to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God.”

Then Mary ran for the second time that day. The lightness of her step as she felt the growing peace in her heart. The tides of death are gone.

She reaches the door, and instead of knocking, throws it open, looks around—eyes wide with love and says with airy breath, “I've seen the Lord!”

Here is our King—He is Risen!

DAILY SCRIPTURE

But Mary stood weeping outside the tomb, and as she wept she stooped to look into the tomb. And she saw two angels in white, sitting where the body of Jesus had lain, one at the head and one at the feet. They said to her, “Woman, why are you weeping?” She said to them, “They have taken away my Lord, and I do not know where they have laid him.” Having said this, she turned around and saw Jesus standing, but she did not know that it was Jesus. Jesus said to her, “Woman, why are you weeping? Whom are you seeking?” Supposing him to be the gardener, she said to him, “Sir, if you have carried him away, tell me where you have laid him, and I will take him away.” Jesus said to her, “Mary.” She turned and said to him in Aramaic, “Rabboni!” (which means Teacher). Jesus said to her, “Do not cling to me, for I have not yet ascended to the Father; but go to my brothers and say to them, ‘I am ascending to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God.’” Mary Magdalene went and announced to the disciples, “I have seen the Lord”—and that he had said these things to her.

—John 20:11–18

Family Discipleship

GATHER

Empty plastic egg

PLAY

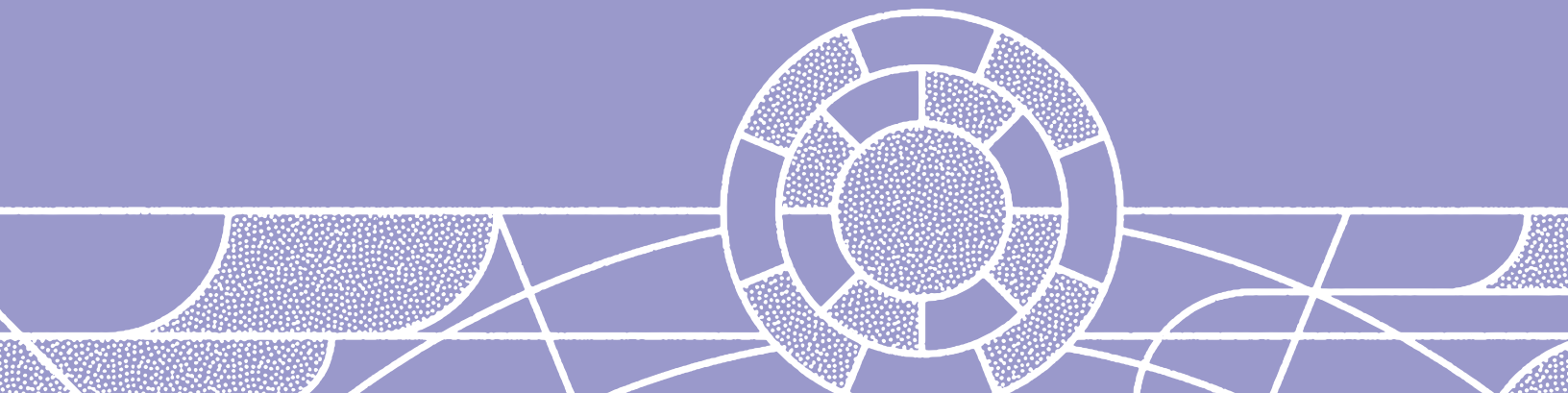
Hide an empty plastic egg around your home, in your front yard, or at a local park. When the egg is found, have whoever found it share why it is good news that Jesus came, died on the cross for sin, and rose again. Whoever finds the egg can hide it and the game can be played again.

CONNECT

Today we get to celebrate and rejoice in God's rescue plan! Jesus was born as a baby, lived a perfect life, died on the cross for sin, and was raised to life after three days! Now everyone who loves and trusts Jesus has a new, healthy heart and will live with God forever. What good news! Today, Jesus is at the right hand of God the Father in heaven. He sent the Holy Spirit to be with all those who love and trust Him, and one day He will return and make all things new!

ASK

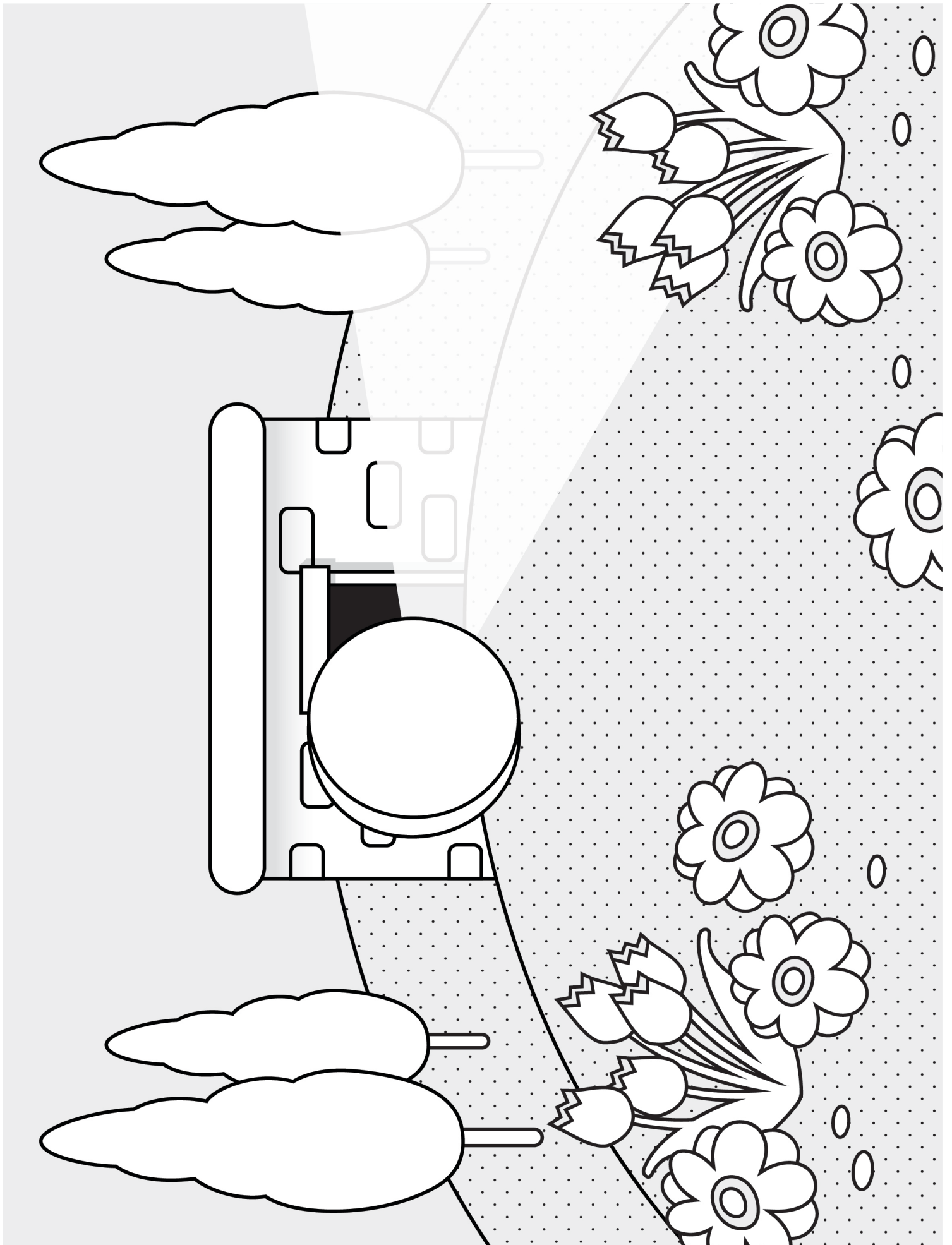
- ▶ Who rolled away the stone? (An angel)
- ▶ What did the angel tell the women after sitting on top of the stone? ("He is not here; He has risen!")
- ▶ Who met the disciples on the road? (Jesus!)
- ▶ What attributes of God do you see in this part of the story? (God is Faithful, Attentive, Merciful, Sovereign, Holy, Almighty, Incomprehensible, and more.)
- ▶ What did Jesus' very good friends and followers do when they saw that Jesus had defeated death? What is the response of those who saw that Jesus had defeated death? (They were filled with joy, worshiped Jesus, and wanted to go and tell others the good news that Jesus has risen from the dead!)

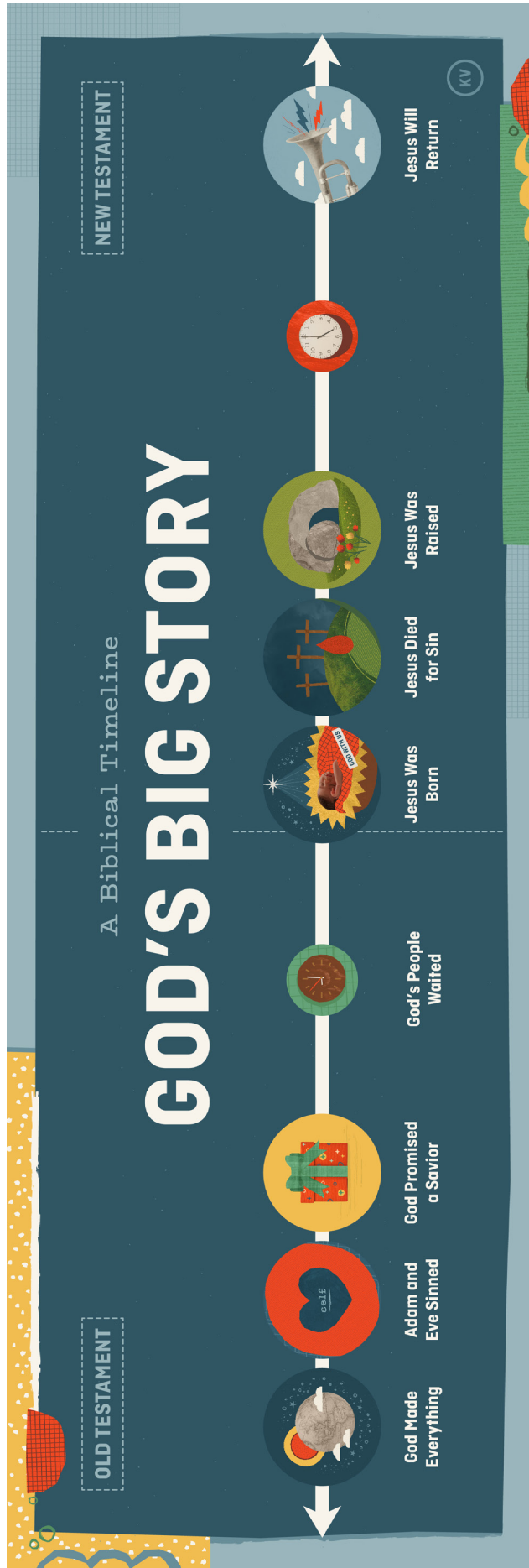


Attribute Matching

Match the following attributes to their definitions (you can find the answers on pages 67–69).
Jesus' life, death, and resurrection showed that He is...

ALMIGHTY	He knows what is best.
ATTENTIVE	He is a place of safety.
COMPASSIONATE	Nothing is too hard for God.
CREATOR	He is right to punish sin.
DELIVERER	He never changes.
FAITHFUL	He hears and responds to the prayers of His children.
GENEROUS	He sees, cares, and acts when His children are in need.
GLORIOUS	He made everything.
GOOD	He always does what He says He will do.
HOLY	He deserves all glory.
INCOMPREHENSIBLE	He shows His greatness and worth.
JUST	He does what is best.
LOVING	He rescues His children.
MERCIFUL	He has the right, wisdom, and authority to do all that He pleases.
PATIENT	He gives what is best.
PROVIDER	He meets the needs of His children.
REFUGE	He is what is best.
SOVEREIGN	He is completely perfect and separate from sin.
UNCHANGING	He is slow to anger.
WISE	He is bigger than we can fully understand.
WORTHY	He does not give His children the punishment they deserve.







Attributes of God

ATTENTIVE

God hears and responds to the needs of His children.

COMPASSIONATE

God cares for His children and acts on their behalf.

CREATOR

God made everything. He is un-created.

DELIVERER

God rescues and saves His children.

ETERNAL

God is not limited by and exists outside of time.

FAITHFUL

God always keeps His promises.

GENEROUS

God gives what is best and beyond what is deserved.

GLORIOUS

God displays His greatness and worth.

GOOD

God is what is best and gives what is best. He is incapable of doing harm.

HOLY

God is perfect, pure, and without sin.

INCOMPREHENSIBLE

God is beyond our understanding. We can comprehend Him in part but not in whole.

INFINITE

God has no limits in His person or on His power.

IMMUTABLE / UNCHANGING

God never changes. He is the same yesterday, today, and tomorrow.

JEALOUS

God will not share His glory with another. All glory rightfully belongs to Him.

JUST

God is fair in all His actions and judgments. He cannot over-punish or under-punish.

LOVING

God feels and displays infinite unconditional affection toward His children. His love for them does not depend on their worth, response, or merit.

MERCIFUL

God does not give His children the punishment they deserve.

OMNIPOTENT / ALMIGHTY

God holds all power. Nothing is too hard for God. What He wills He can accomplish.

OMNIPRESENT

God is fully present everywhere.

OMNISCIENT

God knows everything: past, present, and future; all potential and real outcomes; all things micro and macro.

PATIENT / LONG-SUFFERING

God is untiring and bears with His children.

PROVIDER

God meets the needs of His children.

REFUGE

God is a place of safety and protection for His children.

RIGHTEOUS

God is always good and right.

SELF-EXISTENT

God depends on nothing and no one to give Him life or existence.

SELF-SUFFICIENT

God is not vulnerable. He has no needs.

SOVEREIGN

God does everything according to His plan and pleasure. He controls all things.

TRANSCENDENT

God is not like humans. He is infinitely higher in being and action.

TRUTHFUL

Whatever God speaks or does is truth and reality.

WRATHFUL

God hates all unrighteousness.

WISE

God knows what is best and acts accordingly. He cannot choose wrongly.

WORTHY

God deserves all glory, honor, and praise.

