

Celebrating Easter as a Family

Devotional Ideas – Matthew’s Gospel

Introduction

The events surrounding the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ (commonly called Easter) are arguably the most important in our Christian faith. They deserve special attention and celebration, especially in our day when the true meaning and message of the holiday is diluted with Easter bunnies and marshmallow candies. To give full importance to these events it is helpful to establish traditions that put on display the exalted meaning of these special days.

The following is a suggestion of one such tradition that can help families focus on the true significance of this Holy Day.

Procedure

1. To prepare for the devotional time parents should read through the listed Scripture, develop questions suitable to the age of your children (a few are provided) and collect the suggested visuals/symbols.
2. It is suggested that a table or some sort of space be set aside to display the visuals / symbols as they are used. As these collect day after day, they will serve as reminders of past portions of the Easter story. They can be used as a device for review as well.
3. As your family gathers for devotions, set the visuals / symbols before your children. Allow them to examine them if they wish. Encourage your children to see if they can determine how these visuals fit into the Biblical account.
4. Read the suggested Bible text and discuss the questions that follow (and/or the questions you've developed.)
5. Finish your devotion time with a song and prayer. Guide your children to pray into their lives what God talks to them about through His Scriptures.

Scripture/Visual Plan

Day 1: Read Matthew 26:1-16.

Visual/Symbol (v/s): Coins (30 pieces of silver); perfume (what the woman poured on Jesus' feet)

Questions:

1. How do each of the visuals fit into the Biblical account?
2. Who wanted to kill Jesus? Why do you think they wanted to kill Him?
3. What did the woman do to Jesus? Did her action show she felt differently than the chief priests? How would you say she felt about Jesus and His worth?

Day 2: Read Matthew 26:17-30

V/S: Bread and wine

Questions:

1. How do each of the visuals fit into the Biblical account?
2. What do we call the ceremony that Jesus performed with His disciples?
3. What is the bread to remind us of? What is the wine to remind us of? Why was Jesus' blood poured out?

Following the example of Jesus and the disciples, end this time by singing a song.

Day 3: Read Matthew 26:31-56

V/S: A Hershey Kiss or picture of lips (Represents Judas' kiss); Sword

Questions:

1. How do each of the visuals fit into the Biblical account?
2. What did Jesus say the disciples would do when He was taken? Did the disciples agree? Was Jesus right?
3. What do you think Jesus was troubled about? What do you think was most important to Him?
4. Did Jesus willingly give up His life? How do you know?

Day 4: Read Matthew 26:57-68

V/S: Cotton Ball (to represent a cloud); piece of torn cloth

Questions:

1. How do each of the visuals fit into the Biblical account?
2. The chief priests tried to find people who would tell lies about Jesus. Were they successful? Why didn't Jesus defend Himself?
3. Who did Jesus say that He is? Why is this important? What was the reaction of the people who heard this? Why did Jesus put up with their abuse?

Day 5: Read Matthew 26:69-75

V/S: Feather (represents the cock)

Questions:

1. How does this visual fit into the Biblical account?
2. How many times did Peter deny Christ? Before whom did he deny Christ each time?

3. What did the cock crowing remind Peter of? Why did he go out to weep? Have you ever denied Christ?

Day 6: Read Matthew 27:1-10

V/S: Rope (represents what they bound Jesus with and what Judas hung himself with); coins (represents the 30 pieces of silver)

Questions:

1. How do each of the visuals fit into the Biblical account?
2. What did the chief priests and elders decide to do with Jesus? Were they right to do this? Was this God's plan? How do you know? Why do you think these rulers were so mean to Jesus?
3. Who had a change of mind? Why do you think he changed his mind? Can anyone truly be happy who rejects Jesus?

Day 7: Read Matthew 27:11-26

V/S: Basin of water (when Pilate washed his hands), pieces of glass broken or sharp metal (represents the ends of the scourge/whip)

Questions:

1. How do each of the visuals fit into the Biblical account?
2. Did Pilate know Jesus was innocent? Why then did he permit Jesus to be crucified? Who was released instead of Jesus? Who really deserved punishment?
3. What does it mean to be scourged? How do you think this felt? Who really deserved the scourging Jesus received?

Day 8: Read Matthew 27:27-44

V/S: Scarlet cloth (represents the robe put on Jesus), thorns, nails, cross

Questions:

1. How do each of the visuals fit into the Biblical account?
2. In what ways did the people hurt and abuse Jesus? Why do you think the people treated Him this way?
3. Take time to thank Jesus for putting up with all this mistreatment .

Day 9: Read Matthew 27:45-56

V/S: Sponge, Torn Cloth (represents the veil in the Temple)

Questions:

1. How do these visuals fit into the Biblical account?
2. What did Jesus yell out? Why do you think He yelled this out?
3. What happened when Jesus died? What did all of these things that happened make the Centurion think about Jesus? Was he right? Is it important that we know who Jesus is?

Day 10: Read Matthew 27:57-66

V/S: Flat rock (represents the stone covering the tomb), Clean white strip of cloth (represents burial of Jesus), Wax (represents the seal put on the tomb)

Questions:

1. How do the visuals fit in the Biblical account?
2. Who made sure Jesus had a proper burial? Where was Jesus placed? Why was the stone rolled against the tomb?
3. What were the chief priests afraid of? What did they do to try to keep Jesus' body in the tomb?

Day 11: Read Matthew 28:1-10

V/S: Flat rock (represents stone covering the tomb), angel, picture of sun (represents the resurrection)

Questions:

1. How do these visuals fit in the Biblical account?
2. Who rolled the stone away from the tomb? What message did the angel have for the women? How did the women feel about all this?
3. What did the Women do when they saw Jesus? Why is this the right thing to do? What did the resurrection prove about Jesus? Note: Take time to talk about worship and to worship God as a family.

Day 12: Read Matthew 28:11-20

V/S: Coins (represents the bribe), Picture of a mountain, Water (represents baptism), Bible (represents the teachings of Jesus)

Questions:

1. How do each of the visuals fit in the Biblical account?
2. How did the chief priests and elders try to cover up Jesus' resurrection? Why did they do this?

3. Who met the disciples at the mountain? What did Jesus tell the disciples to do? Which of these things should Christians today do? What promise of Jesus will help us do these things?

Songs and Hymns

- Christ the Lord is risen today
- Up from the grave He arose
- When I survey the wondrous cross
- In Christ alone
- Were you there
- Jesus Christ is Risen Today