

Experience Easter with **adults**

A journey through Holy Week to Easter and beyond

Edited by the Revd Brian Parfitt

Using Experience Easter with adults

The material in this pack is intended to inspire ways to use the 'Experience Easter with children' pack with adults too. We are grateful to those who have contributed ideas. Please use them to kick-start your thinking and adapt them to your own situation.

What this pack contains:

Experience Easter reflective Bible studies

A set of simple short Bible studies which can be used with adults alongside the Experience Easter stations outlined in the Experience Easter pack. They could be part of Holy Week services. They are intended to be reflective and not rushed, with time for individuals to stop and think – looking at the stations in silence before and after the Bible study. You could also just use the questions to encourage silent meditation without any discussion. The 'Resources for Worship' pages can help you plan a service. The Revd Brian Parfitt from the Department of Discipleship and Ministry wrote these studies.

Experience Easter leaflet

Notes for a leaflet that people can use as they journey around the Experience Easter stations. There are thoughts for meditation and a prayer for each station. The 'Experience Easter with adults' pack also has a set of verses from hymns which can be printed on a card to be left beside the station. Please adapt these to suit your situation. We are very grateful to the Revd Barry Coker, formerly Vicar of St Lawrence, Stroud for these notes.

Experience Easter hymn cards

Hymn words to be printed on cards and placed beside each of the stations to accompany the Experience Easter leaflet.

Experience Easter cards

A set of cards to be placed beside each station, based on the material in the original pack with ideas to encourage people to stop and ponder at each one. We are grateful to the Revd Anne Spargo for this material.

A service for Palm Sunday and a Palm Sunday Eucharist

The Experience Easter stations can be used as a focus for worship on Palm Sunday, including the celebration of Communion. This pack includes two versions – one is more suitable for an all-age service and draws on material in the Experience Easter and Resourcing Easter packs. The other is one more suited to adults with much of the content drawn from Common Worship: Times & Seasons. There are some thoughts for meditation in the all-age service and readings and a brief comment in the other. They can be adapted or expanded as you choose. We are grateful to the Revd Anne Spargo for this idea.

Experience Easter – Holy Week services

Material drawing on the Experience Easter pack for half-hour interactive reflections on the events of Holy Week for adults or an all-age group. (Why not encourage families to come?) There is a suggested framework for you to use or adapt. The 'Resources for Worship' pages can provide some extra ideas for this. We are grateful to the Revd Jacqueline Rodwell for these suggestions.

Resources for worship

A list of hymns and songs, Psalms and canticles, confessions, affirmations of faith and intercessions which you can draw on to plan worship linked to the Experience Easter themes.

The Diocese of Gloucester's 'Experience Easter' project is not limited to using the Experience Easter stations. There is a wide variety of other material for Holy Week and Easter on the website www.gloucester.anglican.org

Experience Easter reflective Bible studies

This is a set of simple short Bible studies which can be used with adults alongside the Experience Easter stations outlined in the 'Experience Easter with children' pack. They are intended to be reflective and not rushed, with time for individuals to stop and think – looking at the stations in silence before and after the Bible study.

You can lead the study in two ways. Either

- a) Tackle one question at a time. Give people time to think about the person or situation. Then pose each question and discuss them one at a time. Or
- b) You could work your way through all the questions, reading them aloud and giving people time to think about each one and at the end open it up for people to share whatever has struck them.

You could also just use the questions to encourage silent meditation without any discussion.

You will need to set the study in a structure with prayer or worship before and after. There are ideas for this in the Experience Easter Resources for Worship section.

Experience Easter reflective Bible studies

Station one

Hopes and dreams – The story of Palm Sunday

Look at the display about Palm Sunday. Try to imagine what it was like – the crowds, the cheering, the palm branches carpeting the road, being waved in the air.

Read Luke 19.28-44

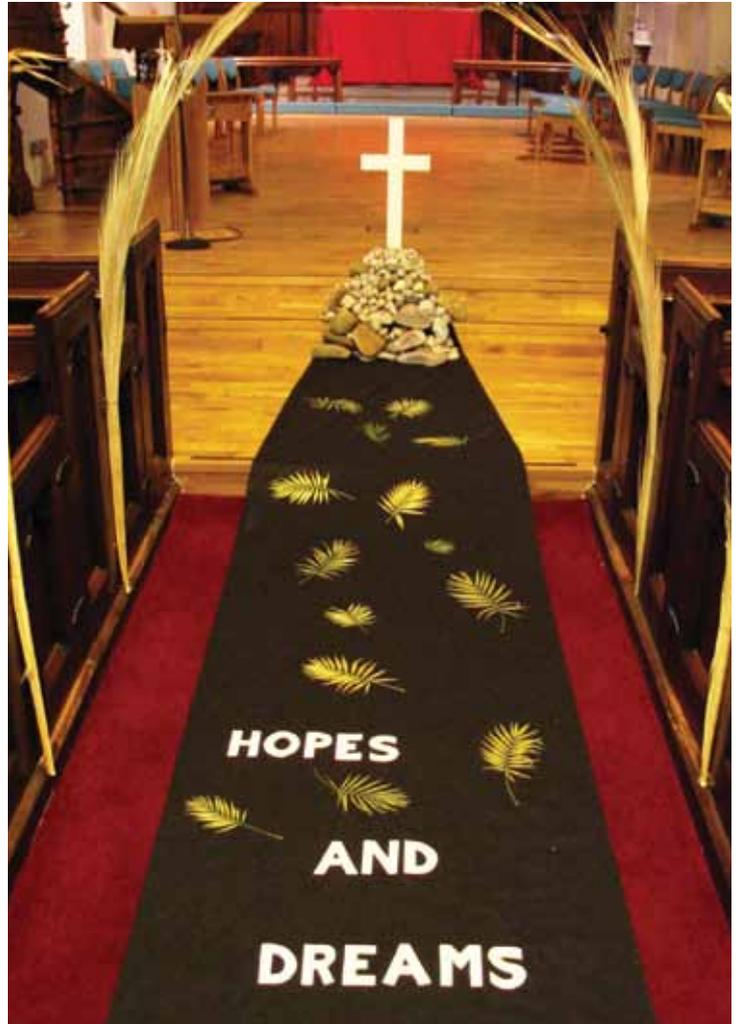
Reflect and discuss

1. Think about the disciples. How would they feel about what was happening that morning? What hopes and dreams might they have had?

2. Think about the crowds. Why were they there? What were their feelings? What were the common hopes and dreams of what would happen when the Messiah came?

3. Think about Jesus. What was true in what was being said about Jesus? Why did he not reject the praise of the crowds as the Pharisees asked him to do? What did he know that led to his tears?

4. Think about the hopes and dreams of everyone there on that Palm Sunday. How did Jesus fulfil hopes and dreams in a way beyond their expectations?



Look at the cross at the end of the road. Think about the way that for Jesus, that cross had always been the goal of the journey to Jerusalem. Think about your hopes and dreams and the way that Jesus can shape them in new ways.

Reflect on the words:

Sometimes they strew his way,
and his sweet praises sing;
resounding all the day,
hosannas to their King,
Then, 'Crucify!'
is all their breath,
and for his death
they thirst and cry.
(Samuel Crossman)

Experience Easter reflective Bible studies

Station two

Servant King – Jesus washes the disciples' feet



Look at the display about Jesus washing the disciples' feet. What does it feel like to have someone else wash you?

Read John 13.1-20

Reflect and discuss

1. Think about Jesus. What did he know was going to happen? Why did he wash the disciples' feet? What did that washing symbolise about his relationship to them? How did it mirror what he was about to do for them on the cross?
2. Think about Simon Peter. Why did he react as he did? How would you have reacted? Why?
3. Think about the disciples. How do you think they felt? How would they respond to words about Jesus being betrayed? What lesson did Jesus want them to learn from what he did to them?

4. Think about the Servant King. How is the way of Jesus different from that of the world?

Look at the jug, the basin, the towel. Think about Jesus' love for you and how he comes to serve you in your need. Think about how you are called to serve others.

Reflect on the words:

This is our God, the Servant King
he calls us now to follow him,
to bring our lives as a daily offering
of worship to the Servant King.
(Graham Kendrick)

Experience Easter reflective Bible studies

Station three

Remember me – the Last Supper



Look at the display about the Last Supper. What is it like to share a special meal with a group?

Read Matthew 26.17-30

Reflect and discuss

1. Think about the disciples. Why would it be important to them to eat the Passover meal together? How did they respond to Jesus' words about his betrayal? How might their mood have changed as the meal progressed?
2. Think about Judas. What does Jesus say about the one who would betray him? What would it feel like for Judas to be so out of tune with the rest of the company at the meal? How are we tempted to betray Jesus?
3. Think about Jesus. How was Jesus preparing them for what lay ahead by his words and actions?

What do we learn about the reason for his dying? How does it change our lives?

4. Think about the bread and wine. How do they speak to us about being fed and forgiven by Jesus? Why do we need to remember Jesus? How does receiving Communion strengthen you?

Look at the table and think about the privilege of being seated as a disciple at the Lord's Supper as a guest of Jesus.

Reflect on the words:

Broken for me, broken for you,
the body of Jesus broken for you.

Come to my table and with me dine,
eat of my body, drink of my wine.

(Janet Lunt)

Experience Easter reflective Bible studies

Station four

Alone - in the Garden of Gethsemane



Look at the garden. Imagine being in a Middle-Eastern garden at night. Think about the sights, sounds and smell. How do you feel?

Read Matthew 26.36-56

Reflect and discuss

1. Think about Peter, James and John. What does Jesus want from them as they go to pray? Why do they fail to do what he asks? Why in the end do all the disciples flee? What prevents us being faithful in prayer and standing with Jesus?

2. Think about Jesus. What emotions does he experience in the garden? What was the task represented by the cup which he was facing? How does he show his resolve as the crowds come to arrest him?

3. Think about Judas and the crowds. Why was there such a well-armed, large crowd? How does Jesus challenge them? Why do they not meet resistance from Jesus?

4. Think about Jesus alone as he prayed, alone as he is taken away captive. What is he facing that only he can do?

Look at the dark empty garden and reflect on Jesus all alone. Think about the path he was willing to tread for you.

Reflect on the words:

There was no other good enough
to pay the price of sin;
he only could unlock the gates
of heaven and let us in.
(*CF Alexander*)

Experience Easter reflective Bible studies

Station five

Sharing our sorrows – the Crucifixion

Look at the cross and the symbols surrounding it. Does the cross attract you or worry you?

Read Mark 15.21-41

Reflect and discuss

1. Think about the crowds. Why did they taunt Jesus? Why were they wrong to think that to be the King of Israel, Jesus had to come down from the cross?

2. Think about Jesus. What was he experiencing? How does he face his suffering? What happens as he dies? What do you think is the significance of that?

3. Think about the attitude of the soldiers as Jesus was crucified and the centurion's response afterwards. What is different about them? What could have made the centurion respond as he did? How do you respond to the death of Jesus?

4. Think about the cross. Why do we celebrate Christ's death on **Good** Friday not Bad Friday or Sad Friday? How can the death of Jesus be something to celebrate?



Look at the cross and the red robe. What does it symbolise for you? How should you respond to Christ's death?

Reflect on the words:

Were the whole realm of nature mine,
that were an offering far too small,
love so amazing, so divine,
demands my soul, my life, my all.
(Isaac Watts)

Experience Easter reflective Bible studies

Station six

Resurrection – the empty tomb

Look at the empty tomb. Think about going to visit the grave of someone you love. How would you feel to find it empty?

Read John 20.1-18

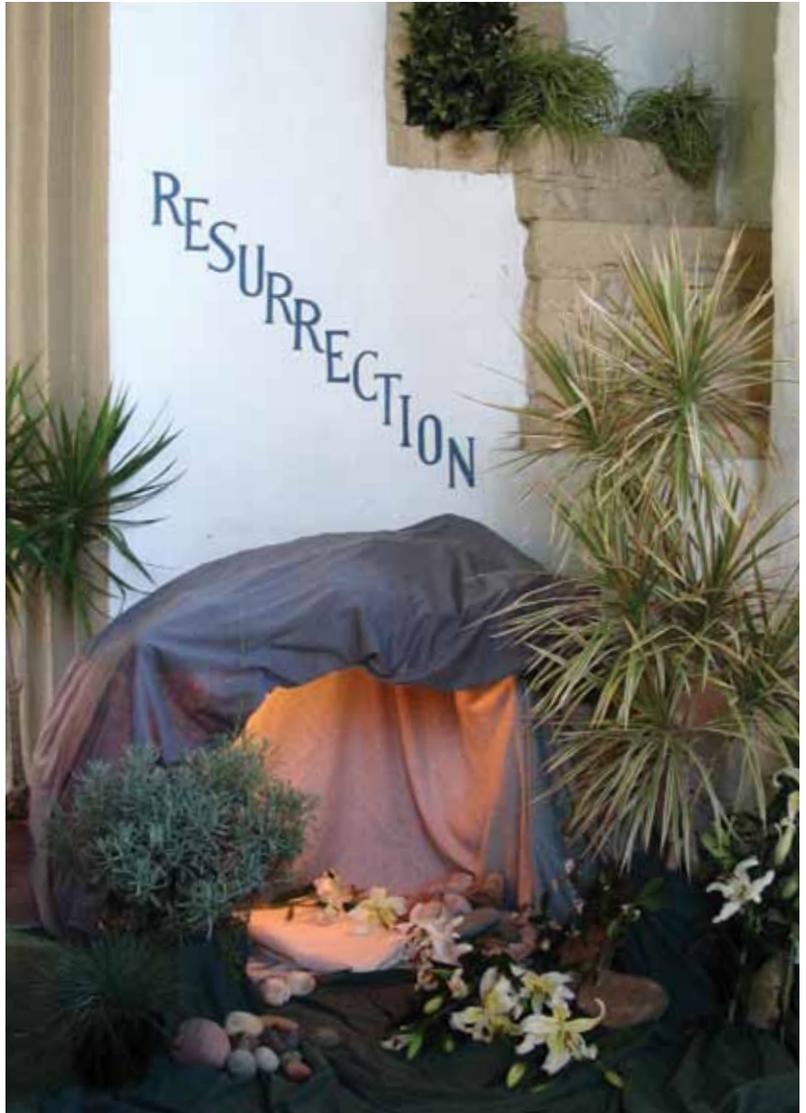
Reflect and discuss

1. Think about Mary Magdalene. What were her emotions at the various stages in this story - going to the tomb, meeting the angels, talking to Jesus? How do these encounters change her? How does encounter with Jesus make us different?

2. Think about Simon Peter and the other disciple (almost certainly John himself). They both ran to the tomb but what was different in their responses? What was the significance of the wrappings left in the tomb? What did it mean for John to 'believe'? How does faith in Jesus need to 'click' for people?

3. Think about the angels. What does the presence of angels at an event signify? How do they help Mary?

4. Think about Jesus. What do we learn about Jesus from his attitude to Mary? What do we learn about him from his words?



Look at the empty tomb and the symbols around it. What does it mean for you that the tomb is empty and that Jesus is alive?

Reflect on the words:

No more we doubt thee, glorious Prince of Life;
life is nought without thee: aid us in our strife;
make us more than conquerors, through thy deathless love:
bring us safe through Jordan to thy home above.
Thine be the glory, risen, conquering Son,
endless is the victory thou o'er death hast won.
(Edmond Budry)

Experience Easter leaflet

Welcome to this simple exploration of the main events of Holy Week and Easter which mark the suffering, death and resurrection of Jesus. In these events Christians see the love and forgiveness of God most perfectly revealed and celebrate the victory of life over death.

This leaflet is designed to help you reflect on the six stations around the church by means of a few words of explanation and a prayer for each one. At each station you will also find some words from appropriate hymns to help your reflection and prayer.

1. Palm Sunday

On this day, a week before Easter Sunday, Jesus entered Jerusalem on a donkey in fulfilment of words of the prophet Zechariah who said: "See your king comes to you gentle and riding on a donkey." Matthew tells us that Jesus rode into Jerusalem on a donkey as a symbol of the fact that he came as the King of Peace. As he did so 'a very large crowd spread their cloaks on the road, while others cut branches from the trees and spread them on the road. The crowds that went ahead of him and those that followed shouted: "Hosanna to the Son of David! Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord! Hosanna in the highest!"'

True and humble king,
hailed by the crowds:
grant us the faith to know you and love you,
that we may be found beside you
on the way of the cross,
which is the path of glory. Amen.

2. Maundy Thursday – the Last Supper

One April evening, a young Galilean sat down to supper with his companions. He knew quite well that he had made enemies and that in another part of the town they were planning his death. At that meal he did something very simple and said something very unusual, intending that in the future his friends should be able to remember him by it. The amazing thing is that, two thousand years later, he still has his friends – vastly more now than then – and that they still remember him in the same way. Saint Paul tells us: "The Lord Jesus, on the night he was betrayed, took bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke

it and said, 'This is my body, which is for you; do this in remembrance of me.' In the same way, after supper he took the cup, saying, 'This cup is the new covenant in my blood; do this, whenever you drink it, in remembrance of me.' For whenever you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes." At the Last Supper Jesus gave the Church her central act of worship, for it is the one thing he asks his friends to do to proclaim his saving death.

God our Father,
you invite us to share in the supper
which your Son gave to his Church
to proclaim his death until he comes:
may he nourish us by his presence,
and unite us in his love;
who is alive and reigns with you,
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever. Amen.

3. Maundy Thursday – washing of the feet

At the Last Supper Jesus did another amazing thing. As Saint John tells us: "Jesus got up from the meal, took off his outer clothing, and wrapped a towel around his waist. After that he poured water into a basin and began to wash his disciples' feet, drying them with the towel that was wrapped round him... When he had finished washing their feet, he put on his clothes and returned to his place. "Do you understand what I have done for you?" he asked them. "You call me 'Teacher' and 'Lord', and rightly so, for that is what I am. Now that I, your Lord and Teacher have washed your feet, you also should wash one another's feet. I have set you an example that

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you should do as I have done to you.” Jesus as the foot-washing King of Love spells out what he means when he says to his disciples: “A new commandment I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another.” The word for this day is Maundy Thursday and that comes from the Latin for commandment “mandatum” – reminding us of this new commandment to love.

Jesus Lord and Master,
who served your disciples in washing their feet:
serve us often, serve us daily,
in washing our motives, our ambitions,
our actions;
that we may share with you
in your mission to the world
and serve others gladly for your sake;
to whom be glory for ever. Amen.

4. *Maundy Thursday – the Garden of Gethsemane*

After the Last Supper Jesus went to a place called Gethsemane where there was a garden and asked his disciples to keep him company and pray for him. Saint Matthew says: ‘Going a little further Jesus fell with his face to the ground and prayed, “My Father, if it is possible, may this cup be taken from me. Yet not as I will, but as you will.”’ Jesus prayed in this way three times whilst his disciples fell asleep. Jesus was alone in his mental agony, such that Saint Luke says: “His sweat was like drops of blood falling to the ground.” Then Judas arrived with a large crowd armed with swords and clubs having told them that he would identify Jesus by giving him a kiss. This he did and Jesus was arrested. All the disciples deserted him and fled. Jesus was betrayed, abandoned and alone.

Lord Jesus Christ,
tempted like us but without sin:
bring us in the hour of temptation
to kneel beside you in the Garden;
and not to rise till the struggle is past
and the choice made, to do the Father’s will;
for your tender mercy’s sake. Amen.

5. *Good Friday – the Crucifixion*

None of the Gospel writers play on the horror and pain of crucifixion. They tell how the crowds who had welcomed Jesus just a few days ago with shouts of “Hosanna” now cry “Crucify him”. Pontius Pilate, who knows he is innocent, washes his hands of him and to avoid trouble listens to the clamour of the crowd and orders Jesus to be executed. Jesus was mocked by the Roman soldiers, who crowned him with thorns, spat at him and then led him away to crucify him. Throughout the events of Good Friday Jesus says very little, Saint Luke however records two wonderful things Jesus said from the cross. Firstly Jesus prayed as they crucified him: “Father, forgive them for they do not know what they are doing.” And later he turns to one of those crucified beside him, who acknowledges he is guilty and Jesus is innocent. This man asks Jesus to remember him. Jesus says: “I tell you the truth, today you will be with me in paradise”. When Jesus dies he does so with a shout of triumph, “It is finished” and commends his spirit to his heavenly Father. The cross becomes the place where evil throws all it can at Jesus and he meets it with forgiveness and love. On the cross God shows us how much he loves us. As Jesus himself said as he foretold his death: “I when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all me to myself”.

Jesus, by your wounded feet,
direct my path aright:
Jesus, by your nailed hands,
move mine to deeds of love:
Jesus, by your pierced side,
cleanse my desires:
Jesus, by your crown of thorns,
annihilate my pride:
Jesus, by your silence,
shame my complaints:
Jesus by your parched lips,
curb my cruel speech:
Jesus, by your closing eyes,
look on my sin no more:
Jesus, by your broken heart,
knit mine to yours. Amen.

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6. *Easter Sunday - the Resurrection*

The Resurrection is a mystery for nobody witnessed it. Saint Luke tells us that on the first Easter Sunday 'very early in the morning, the women took the spices they had prepared and went to the tomb.' They expected to discover and tend a corpse, but instead 'they found the stone rolled away from the tomb. When they entered, they did not find the body of the Lord Jesus. While they were wondering about this, suddenly two men in clothes that gleamed like lightning stood beside them. In their fright the women bowed down with their faces to the ground, but the men said to them, "Why do you look for the living among the dead? He is not here; he has risen! Remember how he told you, while he was still with you in Galilee, 'The Son of Man must be delivered into the hands of sinful men, be crucified and on the third day be raised again.'" Then they remembered his words.'

The descriptions of the first Easter Sunday are filled with amazement, confusion, fear, excitement and joyful unbelief as the friends of Jesus try to come to terms with what has happened and take in the truth of it. Faced by the question: "Why do you look for the living among the dead?" – they see the truth that Jesus has trampled down death by his dying and gives life to the dead. By his resurrection Jesus has proved himself stronger than hatred, evil and death. So we can all proclaim with Saint Paul when he wrote to the Christians in Rome: "I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord." At another point in that same letter Paul spoke of the Easter faith in these terms: "None of us lives to himself alone and none of us dies to himself alone. If we live, we live to the Lord; and if we die, we die to the Lord, so whether we live or die, we belong to the Lord. For this very reason, Christ died and returned to life so that he might be the Lord of both the dead and the living."

Lord Jesus Christ,
we greet you risen from the tomb.
The cross has not defeated you,
the grave has not kept you silent.
The vacant cross and the empty tomb
vindicate your claim
that the love which suffers
is the love that saves.
So fill your people with joy
that the world may know
that you are not a dead hero we commemorate
but the living Lord we worship,
and the loving saviour we serve. Amen.

Alleluia! Christ is risen.
He is risen indeed. Alleluia!

Experience Easter hymn card

1. Palm Sunday

Ride on ride on in majesty!
Hark, all the tribes hosanna cry;
O Saviour meek, pursue thy road
with palms and scatter garments strowed.

Ride on, ride on in majesty!
In lowly pomp ride on to die:
O Christ, thy triumph now begin
o'er captive death and conquered sin.

Ride on. Ride on in majesty!
In lowly pomp ride on to die;
bow thy meek head to mortal pain,
then take, O, God, thy power and reign.
(H.H Milman)

Sometimes they strew his way,
and his sweet praises sing:
resounding all the day
hosannas to their King:
then 'Crucify!' is all their breath,
and for his death they thirst and cry.
(Samuel Crossman)

Experience Easter hymn card

2. Maundy Thursday – The Last Supper

Broken for me, broken for you,
the body of Jesus, broken for you.

He offered his body, he poured out his soul:
Jesus was broken, that we might be whole.

Come to my table and with me dine;
eat of my bread and drink of my wine.

This is my body given for you:
eat it remembering I died for you.

This my blood I shed for you,
for your forgiveness, making you new.
(Janet Lunt)

O blest memorial of our dying Lord,
who living bread to men doth here afford;
O may our souls for ever feed on thee,
and thou, O Christ, for ever precious be.

Fountain of goodness, Jesu, Lord and God,
cleanse us, unclean, with thy most cleansing blood;
increase our faith and love, that we may know
the hope and peace which from thy presence flow.
(St Thomas Aquinas tr. J.R.Woodford)

Experience Easter hymn card

3. Maundy Thursday – Washing of the feet

A new commandment I give unto you,
that you love one another as I have loved you.
By this shall all know that you are my disciples,
if you have love one for another.
(Roy Crabtree)

Meekness and majesty,
manhood and deity,
in perfect harmony, the Man who is God.
Lord of eternity dwells in humanity,
kneels in humility and washes our feet.
O what a mystery, meekness and majesty.
Bow down and worship for this is your God.
(Graham Kendrick)

From heaven you came, helpless babe,
entered our world, your glory veiled,
not to be served but to serve,
and give your life that we might live.
This is our God, the Servant King,
he calls us now to follow him,
to bring our lives as a daily offering
of worship to the Servant King.
(Graham Kendrick)

Experience Easter hymn card

4. Maundy Thursday – The Garden of Gethsemane

'Thy will be done,' the Saviour said,
and bowed to earth his sacred head,
the sands of life had nearly run,
'My Father, let thy will be done,
thy will, not mine, be done.'

No watch his spent disciples kept,
amid the shadows deep they slept;
but silent angels waiting there,
beheld his agony of prayer –
'Thy will, not mine, be done.'

His soul foresaw the cruel scorns,
the brutal scourge, the crown of thorns,
and, darker than Gethsemane,
the shadow of the accursed tree,
'Thy will, not mine, be done.'

What though he felt in that dread hour,
the storms of human passions low'r;
nor pain, nor death, his soul would shun,
'My Father, let thy will be done,
thy will not mine, be done.'
(J. Sparrow Simpson from Stainer's 'The Crucifixion')

Experience Easter hymn card

5. Good Friday – The Crucifixion

When I survey the wondrous Cross
on which the Prince of glory died,
my richest gain I count but loss,
and pour contempt on all my pride.

Forbid it, Lord, that I should boast
save in the Cross of Christ my God;
all the vain things that charm me most,
I sacrifice them to his blood.

See from his head, his hands, his feet,
sorrow and love flow mingling down;
did e'er such love and sorrow meet,
or thorns compose so rich a crown?

Were the whole realm of nature mine,
that were an offering far too small;
love so amazing, so divine,
demands my soul, my life, my all.
(Isaac Watts)

O dearest Lord, thy sacred head with thorns was
pierced for me;
O pour thy blessing on my head that I may think for
thee.

O dearest Lord, thy sacred hands with nails were
pierced for me;
O shed thy blessing on my hands that they may work
for thee.

O dearest Lord, thy sacred feet with nails were
pierced for me;
O pour thy blessing on my feet that they may follow
thee.

O dearest Lord, thy sacred heart with spear was
pierced for me;
O pour thy Spirit in my heart that I may live for thee.
(H.E. Hardy)

Experience Easter hymn card

6. Easter Sunday – The Resurrection

Alleluia, alleluia,
hearts to heaven and voices raise;
sing to God a hymn of gladness,
sing to God a hymn of praise:
he who on the Cross a victim
for the world's salvation bled,
Jesus Christ, the King of glory,
now is risen from the dead.
(Christopher Wordsworth)

From the very depths of darkness
springs a bright and living light;
out of falsehood and deceit
a greater truth is brought to sight;

in the halls of death, defiant,
life is dancing with delight!
The Lord is risen indeed!
(Michael Forster)

Lo, Jesus meets us, risen from the tomb;
lovingly he greets us, scatters fear and gloom;
let the church with gladness hymns of triumph sing,
for her Lord now liveth, death hath lost its sting.
Thine be the glory, risen, conquering Son,
endless is the victory thou o'er death hast won.
(E. Budry tr. R. Hoyle)

Experience Easter card

Station 1: Hopes and dreams

Pause

The Easter Story begins with Palm Sunday. People in Jesus' land were longing for a leader who would rid them of the Roman soldiers who occupied their land and were convinced that Jesus was this person, the Messiah. As Jesus rode into Jerusalem on a donkey with his disciples that day for the annual celebration of Passover, the crowds went wild, cheering and throwing palm branches in his path. "Blessed is the king who comes in the name of the Lord," they shouted.

They were full of joyful expectation, but the religious leaders were angry and suspicious and began to plot to kill Jesus.

Ponder

When the religious leaders told Jesus to silence his followers, Jesus said, 'If the crowds were silent the very stones would cry out.'

What do you think Jesus meant?

Pray

Take a stone and as you hold it, think of the dreams and hopes you have for the future. Then place it in the cairn beneath the cross at the end of the road.

Experience Easter card

Station 2: Servant King

Pause

Jesus met with his friends to celebrate the Passover meal. In a hot and dusty land, feet in open sandals get very dirty. It was the task of the lowest slave in the household to wash the feet of guests when they arrived. But it's Jesus who takes a towel and lovingly bends down to wash the feet of his disciples.

Then he tells his disciples that they must follow his example of humble service.

Ponder

Christ has no body now on earth but yours,
no feet but yours, no hands but yours.
Yours are the eyes through which the compassion
of Christ is to look out on a hurting world.
Yours are the feet with which he is to go about the world.
Yours are the hands with which he is to bless all now.
Christ has no body now on earth but yours.

Pray

Dip your fingers in the water and make a sign of the cross on your hands as a sign of your desire to serve others in this way.

Experience Easter card

Station 3: Remember me

Pause

During Jesus' ministry, he often shared meals with outcasts – 'tax-collectors and sinners'. He ate with his friends Mary, Martha and Lazarus; he provided wine at the wedding in Cana; he saw to it that the hungry crowds were fed. Tonight he shares the Passover meal with his closest friends and disciples in full knowledge that Judas will betray him and the rest will desert him in fear. Yet he wants them to remember this night.

As he breaks bread and gives it to them, he says:

"Take, eat, this is my body which is given for you. Do this to remember me."

Again, when he offers them the cup of wine, he says:

"This is my blood poured out for you. Drink this as sign of God's faithfulness and his forgiveness of your sins."

Christians continue to break bread and drink wine together in the service of Holy Communion. By doing so they recall God's action in sending Jesus and encounter this gift of love as a reality today.

Ponder

A particular phrase, certain objects, places, music, even smells bring back memories of people we have loved. How do you remember those people who have been important to you in your life?

Pray

Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom.

Experience Easter card

Station 4: Alone

Pause

After the meal was over, Jesus went out with his disciples to the Garden of Gethsemane on the Mount of Olives. He wanted to pray to his Father as he knew that he would soon be arrested and sentenced to death. He asked his friends to keep watch with him, but they were very tired and fell asleep. In the darkness, Jesus felt very alone as he struggled to accept what was to befall him.

Ponder

Think of the times in your life when you have felt alone or afraid and uncertain of what the morning will bring. If you find it helpful, take a piece of modelling dough and use it to shape an object or symbol which reminds you of that time.

Pray

Hold the shape in your cupped hands (or bring the situation to mind) and hear these words of Jesus
Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you. Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid.

Leave your model in the garden.

Experience Easter card

Station 5: Sharing our sorrows

Pause

Jesus was condemned to death by the authorities and soldiers led Jesus outside the walls of Jerusalem to Golgotha which means 'the place of the skull'. A crown of thorns was placed on his head. They nailed him to the cross and fastened a notice to it that read, 'Jesus of Nazareth, the King of the Jews.' While they waited for Jesus to die, the soldiers cast dice to see which one of them could have Jesus' robe for themselves. When Jesus became thirsty, they offered him a sponge soaked in vinegar. At three o'clock that day Jesus died.

Because Jesus suffered and died as one of us, but rose again, the cross is a sign of hope for anyone who is suffering.

Ponder

Use the words on one of the crosses or think of situations of pain and suffering known to you. Reflect on how the cross of Christ might be a sign of hope for those people.

Pray

Spend some time before the cross.

We adore you, O Christ, and we bless you; by your holy cross you have redeemed the world.

Experience Easter card

Station 6: The empty tomb

Pause

After the Sabbath, Mary Magdalene and two other women set out at dawn to visit the tomb where Jesus had been laid. As they reached the entrance, they were startled by the dazzling figure of an angel, who said: "Do not be afraid, for I know that you are looking for Jesus, who was crucified. He is not here. He has risen, just as he said. Come and see the place where he lay."

For Christians, the empty tomb at Easter tells us that Jesus, God's Son, was crucified but after three days rose from the dead. This is the source of their hope.

Ponder

Goodness is stronger than evil;
love is stronger than hate;
light is stronger than darkness;
life is stronger than death;
victory is ours through him who loved us.

Desmond Tutu

Pray

May the risen Christ walk with you and fill with you with all joy and peace in believing. Amen.

An all age service for Palm Sunday

Welcome

- Explain Palm Sunday: we're going to walk through events of Holy Week by visiting the stations of Experience Easter and tell the story. Now is our chance to enter into it and experience for ourselves.
- Invitation to gather round as we engage with each station, but if you prefer to remain in a pew – please do. Or sit in different places as we travel around.
- Move to door with palms.

Blessing of the palms

All face door or join the procession

Voice Hosanna! Hosanna! Your king is among you:
Sound the trumpet, clap your hands, wave the palms high!
Two people hold baskets of palms high.

Minister We bless these palms and remember Jesus our Messiah,
humble and riding on a donkey.
May they be a sign to us of the Servant King.
Make us ready to walk the way of the cross.
Hosanna in the highest heaven.

Procession

Minister Open the gates.
All **Open the gates – welcome the King!**

Minister Open the gates.
All **Open the gates – sing praises to God!**

Minister Open the gates.
All **Open the gates – let everyone rejoice!**

Hymn: We have a king who rides a donkey

Station 1: Hopes and dreams

Gather at station to hear reading - others sit

Reading: Matthew 21: 1-9

- People in Jesus' land were longing for a leader who would rid them of the Roman soldiers who occupied their land. They were convinced that Jesus was this person, the Messiah. As Jesus rode into Jerusalem on a donkey with his disciples that day for the annual celebration of Passover, the crowds went wild, cheering and throwing palm branches in his path.
- The mood was one of a triumph almost won; of joyful expectation. But not everyone welcomed the coming of Jesus. A very different procession was making its way into Jerusalem by another gate: the Roman governor

An all age service for Palm Sunday

Pontius Pilate, entering the city on a war horse with his cavalry of soldiers. He has come to maintain law and order during the potentially tumultuous days of the Jewish Passover.

- *As tension builds we will see and hear the religious authorities plotting to kill Jesus, and use his death as an attempt to appease their Roman overlords. The crowd so full of hopes and dreams today, by the end of the week will have turned on Jesus and be calling out to Pontius Pilate: Crucify him! Crucify him.*
- *And so we come now before God to say sorry for the times when we are unfaithful to our calling.*

We say sorry

Minister For shouting your praises but forgetting your world,
Lord, have mercy.

All **and forgive us.**

Minister For voices raised in anger not in joy.
Lord, have mercy.

All **and forgive us.**

Minister For times of selfishness and greed, not of sharing,
Lord, have mercy.

All **and forgive us.**

Minister For grabbing our places and pushing out the poor,
Lord, have mercy.

All **and forgive us.**

Minister For thinking of glory and ignoring the cross,
Lord, have mercy.

All **and forgive us.**

Minister May the Father of all mercies cleanse us from our sins, and restore us in his image, to the praise and glory of his name, through Jesus Christ our Lord.

All **Amen**

Collect

Let us pray that we remain faithful disciples of Christ.

True and humble king,

hailed by the crowd as Messiah:

grant us the faith to know you and love you,

that we may be found beside you

on the way of the cross,

which is the path of glory. **Amen**

Follow to next station at end of next hymn

Hymn: From heaven you came, helpless babe

An all age service for Palm Sunday

Station 2: The Servant King

- *Later in the week Jesus met with his friends to celebrate the Passover meal. In a hot and dusty land, feet in open sandals get very dirty. It was the task of the lowest slave in the household to wash the feet of guests when they arrived.*
- *But John's Gospel tells us that it's Jesus who takes a towel and lovingly bends down to wash the feet of his disciples.*
- *Feet are unlovely things at the best of times. Most of the year they are hidden in socks and shoes. But with the warmer weather we expose them to view again and that's when some of us spend time and energy with files, lotions and nail varnish trying to make them presentable.*
- *If you've ever had your feet washed (and we re-enact this on Maundy Thursday itself) you'll know that it's a very moving and humbling thing both to do and to be on the receiving end of.*
- *One of the last things that Jesus does for his friends is to lovingly and gently wash the dust of the day's journey from their feet.*
- *And then he asks them, he asks us, to do likewise for other people. Loved, accepted and forgiven by Christ, as his people we are called to offer that same love to others.*
- *Because in the words of St Theresa*

Christ has no body now but ours; no hands but ours, no feet but ours. Ours are the feet on which he is to go about doing good, ours the eyes through which he is to look with compassion on the world, ours the hands with which he is to bless all now.

And so let's stand now to affirm our faith in God, Creator, Redeemer and giver of life.

Affirmation of Faith

Minister Do you believe and trust in God the Father,
source of all being and life,
the one for whom we exist?

All **We believe and trust in him.**

Minister Do you believe and trust in God the Son,
who took our human nature,
died for us and rose again?

All **We believe and trust in him.**

Minister Do you believe and trust in God the Holy Spirit,
who gives life to the people of God
and makes Christ known in the world?

All **We believe and trust in him.**

Minister This is the faith of the Church

All **This is our faith.**

We believe and trust in one God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Amen

Move to 'Remember me' during this hymn

(Invite people to dip hands in water as they go, or make the sign of the cross on their hands)

Hymn: Lord Jesus Christ, You have come to us,

An all age service for Palm Sunday

Station 3: The Last Supper

- *We move onto the second part of Jesus' last evening with his friends – the sharing of the Passover meal. Every year the Jews celebrate Passover in order to recall the night in which they were led to freedom from slavery in Egypt.*
- *Jesus now shares bread and wine with his closest friends and disciples in full knowledge that Judas will betray him and the rest will desert him in fear. He asks them to continue to do this after he has died as a way of remembering him.*
- *But more than that, in the context of this celebration of freedom, the bread and wine will be a symbol of his broken body and blood which will be poured out on the cross. This is what leads us to know the love and forgiveness of God through the death of Jesus on the cross. This is what brings us out of captivity to sin and into the freedom of new life with him.*
- *Christians have continued to break bread and drink wine together in memory of Jesus, in celebration of his gift of freedom and as a way in which they encounter the love and presence of God in a special way.*
- *We're going to do that now.*

The Eucharistic Prayer

Minister The Lord be with you
All **and also with you.**

Minister Lift up your hearts.
All **We lift them to the Lord.**

Minister Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.
All **It is right to give thanks and praise.**

Minister Almighty God, good Father to us all
your face is turned towards your world.
In love you gave us Jesus your Son
to rescue us from sin and death.
Your word goes out to call us home
to the city where angels sing your praise.
We join them in heaven's song:

All **Holy, holy, holy Lord,
God of power and might,
heaven and earth are full of your glory.
Hosanna in the highest.**

Minister Father of all, we give you thanks
for every gift that comes from heaven.

To the darkness Jesus came as your light.
With signs of faith and words of hope
he touched untouchables with love
and washed the guilty clean.

An all age service for Palm Sunday

All This is his story
This is our song:
Hosanna in the highest.

Minister The crowds came out to see your Son,
yet at the end they turned on him.

On the night he was betrayed
he came to table with his friends
to celebrate the freedom of your people.

All This is his story.
This is our song:
Hosanna in the highest.

Minister Jesus blessed you, Father, for the food,
he took bread, gave thanks,
broke it and said:
This is my body, given for you all.
Jesus then gave thanks for the wine;
he took the cup gave it and said:
This is my blood, shed for you all
for the forgiveness of sins.
Do this in remembrance of me.

All This is our story.
This is our song:
Hosanna in the highest.

Minister Therefore, Father, with this bread and this cup
we celebrate the cross
on which he died to set us free.
Defying death he rose again
and is alive with you to plead
for us and all the world.

All This is our story
This is our song:
Hosanna in the highest.

Minister Send your Spirit on us now that by
these gifts we may feed on Christ
with opened eyes and hearts on fire.

An all age service for Palm Sunday

May we and all who share this food
offer ourselves to live for you
and be welcomed at your feast in heaven
where all creation worships you
Father, Son and Holy Spirit:

All **Blessing and honour and glory and power
be yours for ever and ever . Amen.**

The Lord's Prayer

Believing the promises of God, let us pray with confidence as our Saviour taught us:

Our Father

Breaking of the Bread

Minister Every time we eat this bread
and drink this cup,

All **we proclaim the Lord's death
until he comes.**

Giving of Communion

Draw near with faith.
Receive the body of our Lord Jesus Christ
which he gave for you,
and his blood which he shed for you.
Eat and drink in remembrance that he died
for you, and feed on him in your hearts
by faith with thanksgiving.

The people receive communion or a blessing

Post Communion Prayer

Lord Jesus Christ,
you humbled yourself in taking the form of a servant,
and in obedience died on the cross for our salvation:
give us the mind to follow you
and to proclaim you as Lord and King,
to the glory of God the Father.

- *After the meal was over, Jesus and his disciples sang a hymn and went out to the Garden of Gethsemane on the Mount of Olives to pray. Judas had already slipped away into the night to betray Jesus. We're now going to join Jesus at prayer in the Garden of Gethsemane before his arrest and trial.*

During the singing of the hymn move to the next station.

Hymn: Peace is flowing like a river

An all age service for Palm Sunday

Station 4: Alone

- *Jesus wanted to pray to his Father because he knew that he would soon be arrested and sentenced to death. He asked his friends to keep watch with him, but they were very tired and fell asleep.*
- *In the darkness, Jesus felt very alone as he struggled to accept what was to befall him.*

Let us pray now for the pain and suffering of the world.

Prayers of Intercession

During the prayers this response is used

Lord, in your mercy

hear our prayer.

And at the end

Merciful Father,

accept these prayers

for the sake of your Son,

our Saviour Jesus Christ.

Amen.

We go out into the world

- *Jesus said to his disciples: If any want to be my followers, let them deny themselves, take up their cross and follow me. For those who want to save their life will lose it; and those who lose their life for my sake will find it.*

During hymn, we collect our crosses from the front of the church and go and stand by the cross.

Minister Let's make our hearts ready
to follow Jesus our King

Hymn: Ride on! ride on in majesty! or
Make way! Make way!

An all age service for Palm Sunday

Station 5: The Crucifixion

- *Jesus was condemned to death by the authorities and soldiers led Jesus outside the walls of Jerusalem to Golgotha which means 'the place of the skull'. A crown of thorns was placed on his head. They nailed him to the cross and fastened a notice to it that read, 'Jesus of Nazareth, the King of the Jews.' While they waited for Jesus to die, the soldiers cast dice to see which one of them could have Jesus' robe for themselves. When Jesus became thirsty, they offered him a sponge soaked in vinegar. At three o'clock that day Jesus died.*

*We adore you O Christ and we bless you for by your
holy cross you have redeemed the world.*

Blessing

Minister May the blessing of God go with you, grace and peace surround you;
may the hope of the cross inspire you,
joy and gladness fill your hearts;
and the blessing of God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit
be with you and all whom you love this day and evermore.
Amen.

The Dismissal

Minister Go in the light and peace of Christ.
All **Thanks be to God.**

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Palm Sunday Eucharist

Welcome

- *Explain Palm Sunday: Service contains the Liturgy of the Passion – we're going to walk through events of Holy Week by visiting the stations of Experience Easter – tell the story. Now is our chance to enter into it and experience for ourselves.*
- *Invitation to move and gather round as we engage with each station, but if preferred to remain in pew. Or sit in different places as we travel around.*
- *Move to door with palms.*

Blessing of the palms

All face door or join the procession

Hosanna to the Son of David, the King of Israel.

Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.

Hosanna in the highest.

Hold baskets of palms high

Minister:

God our Saviour,

whose Son Jesus Christ entered Jerusalem as Messiah to suffer and to die;

let these palms be for us signs of his victory

and grant that we who bear them in his name

may ever hail him as our King,

and follow him in the way that leads to eternal life;

who is alive and reigns with you,

in the unity of the Holy Spirit,

one God, now and for ever.

All Amen.

The Procession

Hosanna to the Son of David, the King of Israel.

Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.

Hosanna in the highest.

Hymn: All glory, laud and honour

Station 1: Hopes and dreams

Gather at first station to hear reading (others may sit)

Reading: *Matthew 21: 1-9*

Palm Sunday Eucharist

- People in Jesus' land were longing for a leader who would rid them of the Roman soldiers who occupied their land. They were convinced that Jesus was this person, the Messiah. As Jesus rode into Jerusalem on a donkey with his disciples that day for the annual celebration of Passover, the crowds went wild, cheering and throwing palm branches in his path.
- The mood was one of a triumph almost won; of joyful expectation. But not everyone welcomed the coming of Jesus. A very different procession was making its way into Jerusalem by another gate: the Roman governor Pontius Pilate, entering the city on a war horse with his cavalry of soldiers. He has come to maintain law and order during the potentially tumultuous days of the Jewish Passover.
- As tension builds we will see and hear the religious authorities plotting to kill Jesus, and use his death as an attempt to appease their Roman overlords. The crowd so full of hopes and dreams today, by the end of the week will have turned on Jesus and be calling out to Pontius Pilate: "Crucify him! Crucify him."
- And so we come now before God to say sorry for the times when we are unfaithful to our calling.

Confession:

Minister Lord Jesus Christ,
we confess we have failed you as did your first disciples.
We ask for your mercy and your help.

Our selfishness betrays you:
Lord, forgive us.

All **Christ have mercy.**

Minister We fail to share the pain of your suffering:
Lord, forgive us.

All **Christ have mercy.**

Minister We run away from those who abuse you:
Lord, forgive us.

All **Christ have mercy.**

Minister We are afraid of being known to belong to you:
Lord, forgive us.

All **Christ have mercy.**

Minister May the Father of all mercies cleanse us from our sins, and restore us in his image, to the praise and glory of his name, through Jesus Christ our Lord.

All **Amen**

Collect

Let us pray that we remain faithful disciples of Christ.

True and humble king,
hailed by the crowd as Messiah:
grant us the faith to know you and love you,
that we may be found beside you
on the way of the cross,
which is the path of glory. **Amen**

Follow to next station at end of next hymn

Hymn: My song is love unknown or
Meekness and majesty

Palm Sunday Eucharist

Station 2: The Servant King

- *Later in the week Jesus met with his friends to celebrate the Passover meal. In a hot and dusty land, feet in open sandals get very dirty. It was the task of the lowest slave in the household to wash the feet of guests when they arrived.*
- *But John's Gospel tells us that it's Jesus who takes a towel and lovingly bends down to wash the feet of his disciples.*
- *Feet are unlovely things at the best of times. Most of the year they are hidden in socks and shoes. But with the warmer weather we expose them to view again and that's when some of us spend time and energy with files, lotions and nail varnish trying to make them presentable.*
- *If you've ever had your feet washed (and we re-enact this on Maundy Thursday itself) you'll know that it's a very moving and humbling thing both to do and to be on the receiving end of.*
- *One of the last things that Jesus does for his friends is to loving and gently wash the dust of the day's journey from their feet.*
- *And then he asks them, he asks us, to do likewise for other people. Loved, accepted and forgiven by Christ, as his people we are called to offer that same love to others.*
- *Because in the words of St Theresa*

Christ has no body now but ours; no hands but ours, no feet but ours. Ours are the feet on which he is to go about doing good, ours the eyes through which he is to look with compassion on the world, ours the hands with which he is to bless all now.

Affirmation of Faith

Let us affirm our faith in Jesus Christ the Son of God.

**Though he was divine,
he did not cling to equality with God,
but made himself nothing.
Taking the form of a slave,
he was born in human likeness.
He humbled himself
and was obedient to death,
even the death of the cross.
Therefore God has raised him on high,
and given him the name above every name:
that at the name of Jesus
every knee should bow,
and every voice proclaim that Jesus Christ is Lord,
to the glory of God the Father. Amen**

Move to 'Remember me' during this hymn

(Invite people to dip their hands in the water as they go, or make the sign of the cross on their hands)

Hymn We come as guests invited or
Lord Jesus Christ, you have come to us or
My God and is thy table spread

Palm Sunday Eucharist

Station 3: The Last Supper

- *We move onto the second part of Jesus' last evening with his friends – the sharing of the Passover meal. Every year the Jews celebrate Passover in order to recall the night in which they were led to freedom from slavery in Egypt.*
- *Jesus now shares bread and wine with his closest friends and disciples in full knowledge that Judas will betray him and the rest will desert him in fear. He asks them to continue to do this after he has died as a way of remembering him.*
- *But more than that, in the context of this celebration of freedom, the bread and wine will be a symbol of his broken body and blood which will be poured out on the cross. This is what leads us to know the love and forgiveness of God through the death of Jesus on the cross. This is what brings us out of captivity to sin and into the freedom of new life with him.*
- *Christians have continued to break bread and drink wine together in memory of Jesus, in celebration of his gift of freedom and as a way in which they encounter the love and presence of God in a special way.*
- *We're going to do that now.*

The Eucharistic Prayer

Minister The Lord be with you (or) The Lord is here.
All and also with you. His Spirit is with us.

Minister Lift up your hearts.

All We lift them to the Lord.

Minister Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

All It is right to give thanks and praise.

Minister It is indeed right and just,
our duty and our salvation,
always and everywhere to give you thanks,
holy Father, almighty and eternal God,
through Jesus Christ our Lord.
For as the time of his passion and resurrection draws near
the whole world is called to acknowledge his hidden majesty.
The power of the life-giving cross
reveals the judgement that has come upon the world
and the triumph of Christ crucified.
He is the victim who dies no more,
the Lamb once slain, who lives for ever,
our advocate in heaven to plead our cause,
exalting us there to join with angels and archangels,
for ever praising you and saying:

All Holy, holy, holy Lord,
God of power and might,
heaven and earth are full of your glory.
Hosanna in the highest.
Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.
Hosanna in the highest.

Palm Sunday Eucharist

Minister We praise and bless you, loving Father,
through Jesus Christ, our Lord;
and as we obey his command,
send your Holy Spirit,
that broken bread and wine outpoured
may be for us the body and blood of your dear Son.

On the night before he died he had supper with his friends
and, taking bread, he praised you.

He broke the bread, gave it to them and said:
Take, eat; this is my body which is given for you;
do this in remembrance of me.

When supper was ended he took the cup of wine.
Again he praised you, gave it to them and said:
Drink this, all of you;
this is my blood of the new covenant,
which is shed for you and for many for the forgiveness of sins.
Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me.

So, Father, we remember all that Jesus did,
in him we plead with confidence his sacrifice
made once for all upon the cross.
Bringing before you the bread of life and cup of salvation,
we proclaim his death and resurrection
until he comes in glory.

All **When we eat this bread and drink this cup,
we proclaim your death, Lord Jesus,
until you come in glory.**

Minister Lord of all life,
help us to work together for that day
when your kingdom comes
and justice and mercy will be seen in all the earth.
Look with favour on your people,
gather us in your loving arms
and bring us with [N and] all the saints
to feast at your table in heaven.
Through Christ, and with Christ, and in Christ,
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
all honour and glory are yours, O loving Father,
for ever and ever.

All **Amen.**

Believing the promises of God, let us pray with confidence as our Saviour taught us:
Our Father ...

Palm Sunday Eucharist

Breaking of the Bread

Minister Every time we eat this bread and drink this cup,
All we proclaim the Lord's death until he comes.

Giving of Communion

Draw near with faith.
Receive the body of our Lord Jesus Christ
which he gave for you,
and his blood which he shed for you.
Eat and drink in remembrance that he died
for you, and feed on him in your hearts
by faith with thanksgiving.

The people receive communion or a blessing

Post Communion Prayer

Lord Jesus Christ,
you humbled yourself in taking the form of a servant,
and in obedience died on the cross for our salvation:
give us the mind to follow you
and to proclaim you as Lord and King,
to the glory of God the Father.

- *After the meal was over, Jesus and his disciples sang a hymn and went out to the Garden of Gethsemane on the Mount of Olives to pray. Judas has already slipped away into the night to betray Jesus. We're now going to join Jesus at prayer in the Garden of Gethsemane before his arrest and trial.*

Hymn Go to dark Gethsemane or
From heaven you came

Palm Sunday Eucharist

Station 4: Alone

- *Jesus wanted to pray to his Father because he knew that he would soon be arrested and sentenced to death. He asked his friends to keep watch with him, but they were very tired and fell asleep.*
- *In the darkness, Jesus felt very alone as he struggled to accept what was to befall him.*

Let us pray now for the pain and suffering of the world.

Prayers of Intercession

During the prayers this response is used

Lord, in your mercy

All **hear our prayer.**

And at the end

Merciful Father,

All **accept these prayers**
for the sake of your Son,
our Saviour Jesus Christ.
Amen.

We go out into the world

- *Jesus said to his disciples: If any want to be my followers, let them deny themselves, take up their cross and follow me. For those who want to save their life will lose it; and those who lose their life for my sake will find it.*

During the hymn, we collect our crosses from the front of the church and go and stand by the cross

Hymn: Ride on! ride on in majesty! or
There is a green hill

Palm Sunday Eucharist

Station 5: The Crucifixion

- *Jesus was condemned to death by the authorities and soldiers led Jesus outside the walls of Jerusalem to Golgotha which means the place of the skull. A crown of thorns was placed on his head. They nailed him to the cross and fastened a notice to it that read, 'Jesus of Nazareth, the King of the Jews.' While they waited for Jesus to die, the soldiers cast dice to see which one of them could have Jesus' robe for themselves. When Jesus became thirsty, they offered him a sponge soaked in vinegar. At three o'clock that day Jesus died.*

*We adore you O Christ and we bless you for by your
holy cross you have redeemed the world.*

Blessing

Christ crucified draw you to himself,
to find in him a sure ground for faith,
a firm support for hope,
and the assurance of sins forgiven;
and the blessing ...

The Dismissal

Minister Go in the light and peace of Christ.

All Thanks be to God.

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Experience Easter – Holy Week Services

A half-hour interactive reflection on the events of Holy Week

Monday – Hopes and dreams: The story of Palm Sunday

Tuesday – Servant King: Jesus washes the disciples' feet

Wednesday – Remember Me: The Last Supper

Thursday – Alone: In the Garden of Gethsemane

Friday – Sharing our sorrows: The Crucifixion

Easter Sunday – Resurrection: The empty tomb

Form of the reflection:

Gather (soft music, muted lighting)

Welcome

Each night re-tell the Easter Story (as in Appendix 2 of the 'Experience Easter with children' pack, but omitting the first and last paragraphs).

"Let's get comfortable as we hear again the familiar Easter story..."

Then:

Monday: Tonight ... come with me to Jerusalem

Tuesday: Tonight ... come with me to the Upper Room

Wednesday: read Mark 14:12-16

It was the first day of the Festival of Thin Bread, and the Passover lambs were being killed. Jesus' disciples asked him, "Where do you want us to prepare the Passover meal?"

Jesus said to two of the disciples, "Go into the city, where you will meet a man carrying a jar of water. Follow him, and when he goes into a house, say to the owner, 'Our teacher wants to know if you have a room where he can eat the Passover meal with his disciples.' The owner will take you upstairs and show you a large room furnished and ready for you to use. Prepare the meal there."

The two disciples went into the city and found everything just as Jesus had told them. So they prepared the Passover meal.

Tonight ... come and join me around the table

Thursday: Tonight ... come with me to the garden

Friday: Tonight ... come with me to the foot of the cross

Move to the station for reflection and activity

Return to gathering point for short, simple liturgy.

On our hearts and our houses – the blessing of God;

in our coming and going – the peace of God;

in our life and believing – the love of God;

at our end and new beginning – the arms of God to welcome us and bring us. Amen.

"See you tomorrow ..." (or Sunday, **when worship can make use of the Resurrection station as a focus.**)

Experience Easter – Holy Week Services

Monday - Hopes and dreams: The story of Palm Sunday

Group sits at the beginning of the road, facing the white cross.

Explain that we will be thinking together during this time about hopes and dreams. People in Jesus' land were dreaming of a time when they would be free from the Roman soldiers who ruled their lives. They were hoping for a leader who would help them overthrow their enemies.

Invite the group to close their eyes for a moment and think about their hopes and dreams for the future. Then listen to the story.

Story: Mark 11:1-11

Jesus and his disciples reached Bethphage and Bethany near the Mount of Olives. When they were getting close to Jerusalem, Jesus sent two of them on ahead. He told them, "Go into the next village. As soon as you enter it, you will find a young donkey that has never been ridden. Untie the donkey and bring it here. If anyone asks why you are doing that, say, 'The Lord needs it and will soon bring it back.'"

The disciples left and found the donkey tied near a door that faced the street. While they were untying it, some of the people standing there asked, "Why are you untying the donkey?" They told them what Jesus had said, and the people let them take it.

The disciples led the donkey to Jesus. They put some of their clothes on its back, and Jesus got on. Many people spread clothes on the road, while others went to cut branches from the fields.

In front of Jesus and behind him, people went along shouting, "Hooray! God bless the one who comes in the name of the Lord! God bless the coming kingdom of our ancestor David. Hooray for God in heaven above!"

After Jesus had gone to Jerusalem, he went into the temple and looked around at everything. But since it was already late in the day, he went back to Bethany with the twelve disciples.

Activity:

Time of quiet reflection. Invite the group, if they wish, to choose a stone and on it draw a picture or symbol of their dream or hope for the future. In their own time, add the stone to the cairn.

Move back to the gathering place for closing liturgy.

Experience Easter – Holy Week Services

Tuesday - Servant King: Jesus washes the disciples' feet

Group sits "in the Upper Room".

Opening questions:

When we think of a servant, what do we think of?
When we think of a king, what do we think of?
Jesus is sometimes called the Servant King – that's what we're thinking about tonight.

Story: (one person to read and another to act out Jesus' actions)

Jesus lived in a hot and arid land. Most people travelled from place to place on foot. It was the custom to welcome visitors by washing their feet in cool, clean water. Normally a household servant did this.

When Jesus invited the disciples for supper in the upper room, they were surprised by what happened ...

Jesus took off his outer clothing, and wrapped a towel round his waist. After that he poured water into a basin and began to wash his disciples' feet, drying them with a towel. *(Pour water into a basin).*

When he had finished washing their feet, he put on his outer clothes and returned to his place.

"Do you understand what I have done for you?" he asked them, "You call me 'teacher and Lord'; and rightly so, for that is what I am. Now that I, your Lord and teacher, have washed your feet, you should also wash one another's feet. I have set you an example

that you should do as I have done for you".

Activity:

Invite the group to reflect for a couple of minutes on what Jesus meant when he said: "I have set you an example that you should do as I have done for you". Ask for some suggestions.

Then invite the group to listen to the prayer of St Teresa of Avila:

Christ has no body now on earth but ours:
Ours are the only hands with which he can do his work,
Ours are the only feet on which he can go about the world,
Ours are the only eyes through which his compassion can shine forth upon a troubled world.
Christ has no body now on earth but ours.

Invite the group to reflect on what we each might do to follow the example Jesus has set his followers. Invite the group, if they wish, to dip their fingers into the water and make the sign of the cross on the palm of each hand while they say a silent prayer that God will help them serve others in a special way this Easter.

Move back to the gathering place for closing liturgy.

Experience Easter – Holy Week Services

Wednesday - Remember me: the Last Supper

At the gathering place, Mark 14:12-16 is read. Then the group is invited to “come and join me around the table”.

The group sits facing the table.

Story:

Jesus and his disciples are gathered in the Upper Room. It's the Feast of Passover. The candles are lit (*light the candles*), the food is on the table (*place bread and wine on the table*).

When the time came for Jesus and the disciples to eat, he said to them: “I have very much wanted to eat this Passover meal with you before I suffer”.

Jesus took some bread in his hands and gave thanks for it. He broke the bread and handed it to his disciples. Then he said: “This is my body, which is given for you. Eat this as a way of remembering me!”

Jesus picked up a cup of wine and gave thanks to God. He then gave it to his disciples and said: “Take this and drink it. This is my blood, and with it God makes his agreement with you. It will be poured out, so that many people will have their sins forgiven.”

Activity:

Pass the plate of bread around the group in silence (*leader takes a piece first and eats it to indicate what to do*).

After all the group have eaten a piece of bread, read the last verse of the reading:

Then they sang a hymn and went out to the Mount of Olives.

Blow out the candles.

Return silently to the gathering place for closing liturgy.

Experience Easter – Holy Week Services

Thursday - Alone: In the Garden of Gethsemane

The group sits in the garden.

Opening question:

Often people feel most alone after darkness falls and it is very quiet.

Can you remember a time when you felt very alone?

Story:

Jesus went with his disciples to a place called Gethsemane and he told them: "Sit here while I pray."

Jesus took along Peter, James, and John. He was sad and troubled and told them: "I am so sad that I feel as if I am dying. Stay here and keep awake with me."

Jesus walked on a little way. Then he knelt down on the ground and prayed: "Father, if it is possible, don't let this happen to me! Father, you can do anything. Don't make me suffer by having me drink from this cup. But do what you want, and not what I want."

When Jesus came back and found the disciples sleeping, he said to Simon Peter: "Are you asleep? Can't you stay awake for just one hour? Stay awake and pray that you won't be tested. You want to do what is right, but you are weak."

Jesus went back and prayed the same prayer. But when he returned to the disciples, he found them sleeping again. They simply could not keep their eyes open and they did not know what to say.

In the darkness of the night Jesus felt very alone. Even so, he trusted himself to God's care.

Activity:

Invite the group to think about a time when they were

lonely or afraid, then invite them, if they wish, to make a shape, figure or object out of modelling clay that reminds them of that time.

Invite the group to hold the shape in their cupped hands while the following Bible verses are read:

God says:

"I have called you by name and you are mine" *Isaiah 43:1*

"I have loved you with an everlasting love" *Jeremiah 31:3a*

Jesus says:

"Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you. Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid." *John 14:27*

Invite the group to place their shapes in the miniature garden. When all have done so, the final verse is read:

When Jesus returned to the disciples the third time, he said: "Are you still sleeping and resting? Enough of that! The time has come for the Son of Man to be handed over to sinners. Get up! Let's go. The one who will betray me is already here."

The group then returns to the gathering place for closing liturgy.

Experience Easter – Holy Week Services

Friday - Sharing our sorrows: The Crucifixion

The group sits at the foot of the cross and reflects on what they see for a few moments.

Opening question:

What are your thoughts as you look at this station?

Story:

The soldiers took Jesus to Golgotha, which means 'Place of a Skull'.

They nailed Jesus to a cross and gambled to see who would get his clothes. It was about nine o'clock in the morning when they nailed him to the cross. On it was a sign that told why he was nailed there. It read: "This is the King of the Jews." The soldiers also nailed two criminals on crosses, one to the right of Jesus and the other to his left.

People who passed by said terrible things about Jesus. They shook their heads and shouted: "Ha! So you're the one who claimed you could tear down the temple and build it again in three days. Save yourself and come down from the cross!"

The chief priests and the teachers of the Law of Moses also made fun of Jesus. They said to each other: "He saved others, but he can't save himself. If he is the Messiah, the king of Israel, let him come down from the cross! Then we will see and believe." The two criminals also said cruel things to Jesus.

About noon the sky turned dark and stayed that way until around three o'clock. Then about that time Jesus shouted: "My God, my God, why have you deserted me?"

Jesus shouted and then died.

At once the curtain in the temple tore in two from top to bottom.

A Roman army officer was standing in front of Jesus. When the officer saw how Jesus died, he said: "This man really was the Son of God!"

The cross reminds us of the death of Jesus, but because he rose again the cross has also become a sign of hope for anyone who is suffering.

Activity:

Each member of the group is given a small cross and invited to write on it the name of a person who is suffering, or a place where there is suffering. While the group hold their crosses the leader prays:

Dear Jesus

Please help the people we have named, and anyone else who is sad or suffering today to know that you are with them and love them very much.

Amen.

The group is invited to leave their crosses at the foot of the cross before returning to the gathering place for closing liturgy.

Experience Easter resources for worship

Here are some suggestions for songs, confessions, psalms, canticles, affirmations of faith, intercessions and a collect linked to each theme, to help you plan worship linked to each of the Experience Easter stations.

Reference is given to the main Common Worship book (CW), Times and Seasons (TS) and New Patterns for Worship (NPW). The full texts for these can be found on the Church of England website. (*Google 'Common Worship texts' to find them.*)

I. Palm Sunday – 'Hopes and dreams'

Hymns and songs

All glory, laud and honour
Hail to the Lord's anointed
Hark, the glad sound
Hosanna, hosanna
Majesty
My song is love unknown
Ride on, ride on
This is the day the Lord hath made
We have a king who rides a donkey
You are the King of glory

Confession O King enthroned on high (CW p.125, NPW B41 p.84)

Psalm 118.1-2 and 19-29

Canticle Nunc Dimittis (CW p.799)

Affirmation of faith We believe and declare (CW p.145, NPW E7 p.164)

Intercessions For forgiveness... (TS p.272)

Collect

True and humble king,
hailed by the crowd as Messiah:
grant us the faith to know you and love you,
that we may be found beside you
on the way of the cross,
which is the path of glory. Amen
(*Collect for Palm Sunday*)

Experience Easter resources for worship

2. Jesus washes the disciples' feet – 'Servant King'

Hymns and songs

An upper room
A new commandment
From heaven you came
Great God your love has called
Love is his word
Meekness and majesty
O Lord all the world
Such love
Ubi Caritas

Confession Lord God, we have sinned against you (CW p.124, NPW B48 p.87) or Wash away all my iniquity (CW p.277, NPW B63 p.93)

Psalm 147-1-6

Canticle A Song of Christ the Servant (CW p.794)

Affirmation of faith Though he was divine (CW p.147; NPW E9 p.165)

Intercessions Father, on this night... (TS p.299)

Collect

Lord Jesus Christ,
you have taught us
that what we do for the least of our brothers and sisters
we do also for you:
give us the will to be the servant of others
as you were the servant of all,
and gave up your life and died for us,
but are alive and reign, now and for ever. Amen
(Collect for 5th Sunday of Lent)

3. The Last Supper – 'Remember me'

Hymns and songs

An upper room
Bread of heaven on thee we feed
Broken for me
Here, O my Lord
Let us break bread together
Lord Jesus Christ
Love is his word

Experience Easter resources for worship

My God and is thy table spread
Now my tongue
This is my body

Confession Almighty God, our heavenly Father (CW p.276, NPW B38 p.83)

Psalm 23

Canticle A Song of Praise (CW p.794)

Affirmation of faith Do you believe (CW p.144, NPW E6 p.163)

Intercessions For the one... (TS p.215)

Collect

God our Father,
you have invited us to share in the supper
which your Son gave to his Church
to proclaim his death until he comes:
may he nourish us by his presence,
and unite us in his love;
who is alive and reigns with you,
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever. Amen
(*Collect for Maundy Thursday*)

4. The Garden of Gethsemane – 'Alone'

Hymns and songs

Ah, holy Jesu
According to thy gracious word
Be thou my guardian and my guide
Go to dark Gethsemane
Led like a lamb
Lord of creation
Praise to the holiest
Thy way not mine, O Lord
Walking in a garden
When you prayed beneath the trees

Confession Lord Jesus Christ (CW p.124, NPW B45 p.86)

Psalm 130

Canticle Saviour of the World (CW p.801)

Affirmation of faith We believe (CW p.148, NPW E12 p.166)

Experience Easter resources for worship

Intercessions For forgiveness... (TS p.261)

Collect

God our Father,
your Son Jesus Christ was obedient to the end
and drank the cup prepared for him:
may we who share his table
watch with him through the night of suffering
and be faithful. Amen
(*Collect for Maundy Thursday*)

5. The Crucifixion – 'Sharing our Sorrows'

Hymns and songs

Come and see
Here is love
I cannot tell
In Christ alone
It is a thing most wonderful
Man of sorrows
My God, I love thee
O sacred head
There is a green hill
When I survey
Were you there?

Confession Father eternal (CW p.276, NPW B33 p.81)

Psalm 22.1-8

Canticle The Song of Christ's Glory (CW p.799)

Affirmation of faith Holy, holy, holy (CW p.148, NPW E11, p.166)

Intercessions Fill with your Spirit... (TS p.263)

Collect

Eternal God,
in the cross of Jesus
we see the cost of our sin
and the depth of your love:
in humble hope and fear
may we place at his feet
all that we have and all that we are,
through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen
(*Collect for Good Friday*)

Experience Easter resources for worship

6. The Empty Tomb – ‘Resurrection’

Hymns and songs

Alleluia, alleluia, give thanks
Alleluia, alleluia, hearts to heaven
All heaven declares
He is Lord
I know that my redeemer lives
Jesus Christ is risen today
Led like a lamb
Love's redeeming work is done
The strife is o'er
Thine be the glory

Confession Jesus Christ, risen master (CW p.125, NPW B46 p.86)

Psalm 18.1-7

Canticle The Easter Anthems (CW p.782)

Affirmation of faith Christ died for our sins (CW.147, NPW E10 p.165)

Intercessions Jesus, light of the world... (TS p.433)

Collect

God of glory,
by the raising of your Son
you have broken the chains of death and hell:
fill your Church with faith and hope;
for a new day has dawned
and the way to life stands open
in our Saviour Jesus Christ. Amen
(*Collect for Easter Day*)

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Registered in England No. 162165. Registered Charity No. 251234.

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