

A Home Liturgy for Holy Week

This liturgy takes place each day during Holy Week, at the family table, during a meal, or at bedtime. The youngest person able to asks the questions.

Items needed: six candles (one of them red) in holders; a palm cross; a copy of the Lord's Prayer; a bottle of perfume; a purse filled with money; a bowl of perfumed water and a hand towel; a wooden cross; the makings of an Easter garden; a special Easter candle.

Palm Sunday

Place six candles on the table in the shape of a circle. Light the six candles. Place a palm cross (brought from church), on the table in the centre of the circle.

Reading: Mark 11.1-11

Question: 'Why do we have six candles and a palm cross on the table today?'

Answer: 'Because this week is Holy Week. In six days it will be Good Friday, and Easter is coming. Today we remember how all the people welcomed Jesus into Jerusalem waving palm branches.'

Holy Monday

Light five candles (of the circle of six). Place a copy of the Lord's Prayer on the table, in the centre of the circle of candles.

Reading: Mark:11.15-19

Question: 'Why do we have five candles and the Lord's Prayer on the table today?'

Answer: 'Because this week is Holy Week. In five days it's Good Friday, and Easter is coming. Today we remember that Jesus threw the money-changers out of the temple. 'My house shall be called a place of prayer', he told them. His special prayer is for us all.'

Say or read the Lord's Prayer together.

Holy Tuesday

Light four candles. Place a bottle of perfume on the table, in the centre of the circle of candles.

Reading: Mark:14.3-9

Question: ‘Why do we have four candles and some perfume on the table today?’

Answer: ‘Because this week is Holy Week. In four days it will be Good Friday and Easter is coming. Today we remember the woman from Bethany who anointed Jesus’s head, who recognised that he was the King of kings and would soon die.’

Holy Wednesday

Light three candles. Place a purse filled with money in the centre of the circle of candles.

Reading: Mark 14.10-11

Question: ‘Why do we have three candles and this purse filled with money on the table today?’

Answer: ‘Because this week is Holy Week. In four days it will be Good Friday and Easter is coming. Today we remember that Jesus was betrayed for money, and that Jesus wants us to give what we can to help those in the world who are poor.’

There could be a discussion about right and wrong ways of using money.

Maundy Thursday

Light two candles. Have a bowl of warm water and a towel on the table between them. Wash each others’ hands before the meal. The meal could include elements of a Passover meal eg flat bread, wine, bitter herbs.

Reading: Mark 14.22-26; John 13.2-5,12-15

Question: ‘Why do we have two candles and this towel and water on the table today?’

Answer: ‘Because this is Holy Week. One candle is for Good Friday, and one is for today, Maundy Thursday. Today we remember the last Passover meal that Jesus celebrated with his disciples. Our communion service comes from this meal.

Good Friday

The one red candle is lit - and then blown out. A wooden cross is placed on the table. The palm cross is stuck to the front door until the Sunday after Easter or until Pentecost.

Question: 'Why did we blow out the candle today?'

Answer: 'Because Today is Good Friday. This is the day that we remember that Jesus died and went home to God.'

Reading: Mark 15.21-39

Everyone is quiet for a few minutes.

Holy Saturday

Reading: Mark 15.42-47

Make an Easter garden on a tray or plate. An Easter includes a model of a cave, with a stone that can be rolled away on Easter Day. Spring flowers are traditionally included.

Easter Day

Light seven candles (the circle of six and the special Easter candle in the centre of the circle). Roll away the stone from the cave/tomb, and light a candle beside it. Have on the table: spring flowers beside the circle of candles, Easter eggs and whatever else to make the table festive.

Reading: John 20.11-18

Question: 'Why do we have Easter eggs and all these flowers and candles today?'

Answer: 'Because today is Easter Day, the last day of Holy Week. Today we remember that Jesus rose from the dead and showed us the new life God offers all of us, not just after we die but through the difficult bits of living now'.

All shout Alleluia!