

The Passion of Christ

(Alternative version)

INTRODUCTION

On Palm Sunday Jesus rode into Jerusalem and was welcomed as a king by the crowds. Yet only days later, their cries of "Hosanna!" would change to "Crucify him!" and Jesus would be put to death. Using today's readings we will follow his journey to the cross, so that we will be ready to share in the glory of his resurrection on Easter Sunday.

SIGN OF THE CROSS

LIGHT THE CANDLES

Light the candles and read Candle Prayer 1.

SORRY

Encourage the children to close their eyes and to listen carefully to the words of this prayer:

Father, we must be ready to forgive others,
just as you forgave us.

Even as Jesus was hanging on the cross,
he forgave the soldiers that crucified him.

Help us to forgive anyone who has hurt us,
and never to harm anyone
by our words or actions.

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

To welcome today's Gospel sing Acclamation 1.

THE PASSION

The activity and the readings are closely linked to the telling of the Passion. Using a large copy of a map of Jerusalem and the surrounding area, briefly outline the events of Holy Week, encouraging the children to add as many details as they can. Place numbers on the map to correspond to a reading and to the illustrated scenes.

As a suggestion, complete the first three readings and then distribute the pictures for coloring. When complete, assemble the pictures in order and read the final three readings. With the pictures and the map displayed, encourage the children to recount the events leading up to Easter Sunday themselves.

I. The Passover. (Matthew 26:19-30)

The disciples went to a house in Jerusalem and prepared a room to celebrate the Passover meal. As Jesus shared the meal with his twelve closest friends he said to them, "One of you will make me very sad tonight." The disciples were dismayed at his words, "Surely you are mistaken, Lord." But Jesus answered, "No. One of you sharing this very meal will hand me over to my enemies."

As they were eating, Jesus took some bread and said a prayer of blessing. He broke the bread into pieces and shared it with them saying, "Take this and eat it, this is my body." Then he took a cup of wine and said a prayer of thanks. He passed the cup to each of them and said, "Take this and drink it, for this is my blood. Just as my father promised, it will be poured out to save you from your sins."

DISCUSSION

The Passover was a meal celebrated every year by the Jews to remind them of how God had saved his people from slavery in Egypt.

What was the name of the disciple who would let Jesus down? What did Jesus share with his friends at this last supper together? What was so special about this bread and wine? When and where do we share a meal and use the same words that Jesus used?

II. The Agony in the Garden. (Matthew 26:36-50)

After the Last Supper, Jesus took Peter, James, and John to a garden called Gethsemane. It was quiet and peaceful there, and Jesus wanted to pray, for he was filled with great sadness and fear. He said to his disciples: "Stay awake because I need you with me tonight." Then he began to pray, "Father, I am afraid of what lies ahead, but I will always do whatever you ask."

When he returned to the three disciples he found them asleep. "Wake up!" he said. "Could you not stay awake with me for such a short time?" Then Jesus went away and prayed as before but returned to find them all asleep again. "Get up, the time has come." Then Judas, one of the twelve disciples, appeared with a crowd of people. He walked up to Jesus and kissed him. Then they arrested him and led him away.

(This Liturgy of the Word for Passion Sunday is continued on the next page.)

