



Lent/Easter 2021

A JOURNEY TO KING'S CROSS

Route

VIA MARKS GOSPEL

Valid until: ETERNITY Price: TAKE UP YOUR CROSS



the
devotional

EASTER EXPRESS TRAIN MAP



- Passion Line
- Old Testament Line
- Parable Line
- Teaching Line
- Miracle Line
- Crux Express
- Healing Line
- Wilderness Line
- Lakeside Line
- Covert Christ Line
- Gentile Line

Dead Sea

HOW TO DO AN 8-MINUTE FAMILY DEVOTION

'Start children off on the way they should go, and even when they are old they will not turn from it.' Proverbs 22:6

'Hear, O Israel: the Lord our God, the Lord is one. Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength. These commandments that I give you today are to be on your hearts. Impress them on your children. Talk about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up.'
Deuteronomy 6:4-7

This devotional aims to help the whole family meet with Jesus by opening up the Bible and praying together. This booklet is designed to take out the hard work of planning, and also to equip parents to build on what the children will be learning at church on Sundays.

Mondays –Thursdays are designed to give you insight into the story that will be looked at the following Sunday. Friday will take you to a psalm or the words of a prophet and show how the passage points forward to Jesus.

This is a whistle-stop tour of Mark's Gospel ending at the crucifixion of Jesus – King's Cross. Your children can track your journey with the enclosed map.

STRUCTURE

Each session consists of:

- reading the passage (we suggest using either the NIV or Good News translations)
 - reading the explanatory paragraph expanding on the passage
 - asking a few questions designed to reinforce what was learnt
- finishing with a prayer, drawing on an aspect of the passage and lifting up the needs of the day, along with any other praise/ thank you/ sorry prayers

TOP TIPS:

- Find a regular time and place that works for everyone. Some people like to do it at bedtime, others prefer at the breakfast table.
- Have the Bible at hand, along with this booklet. If you have very young children, consider having a picture Bible too.
- QR codes – use the camera on your phone and scan it over the QR code, then click on the link it takes you to. These are optional extras, only if you have the time to watch the videos.
- You might want to download the 'Operation World' app, which helps give children a global perspective for their prayers. In our family, the children take it in turns to press the 'I'm Praying' button.

If you have any questions or feedback, please do not hesitate to get in touch.

David Simpson, Curate at HTB (david.simpson@htb.org)

PRAYER: TIPS FOR PARENTS

Our prayer as you go through this devotional series together is that it will help facilitate time for you all to meet with God and dig into His word. This time isn't just for the kids – be encouraged that as you work through each day's reading, you can create opportunities for everyone to encounter God in their own way, including you!

As parents and carers, know that God has perfectly positioned you in your family to help your kids become God-connected and not just God-smart. A God-smart child knows all the answers – they know how to 'do church' as part of the crowd and what to say and do, but they might not know what an everyday relationship with God looks like. A God-connected child is communicating with God throughout the day and has a thriving two-way relationship with him. You have the ability to show your kids what that looks like by giving them windows into your own relationship with God, sharing honestly about how you meet with God and do life alongside Him in the mundane, normal bits of life. Have fun with it, and don't worry if it feels a bit messy.

Here are some ideas that might help you facilitate praying:

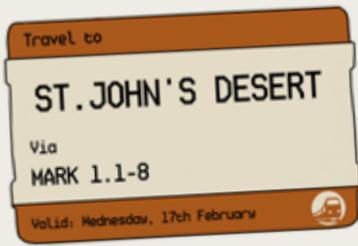
- As a family, come up with interesting questions/topics to talk to God about – make them little things as well as big things. Talking to God about your favourite sandwich filling as well as asking Him to heal a family member helps kids understand that God can be approached for all of life's situations.
- If feeling shy, under-fives might prefer to whisper into their hands when praying to God. Reassure them that God can hear the quietest of voices.
- Explore with your child the different ways people catch God's voice. It's not usually by hearing a booming voice in their ear! It may be a thought, a feeling, a mental picture, a wise word from someone else or a Bible verse.
- Look for opportunities to ask God questions, and pay attention to anything He might be saying.
- Also consider using practical ways to spend time with God. For example, ride your bikes with God and pray for the people you see, make a prayer walk in the garden or blow bubbles and think about each 'pop' being an 'Amen' to a prayer.

Further tools to help connect everyday life with God are available here: parentingforfaith.org

Lauren Sheath, Head of Kids at St Peter's Brighton



Spotify Family Playlist for 'Journey to King's Cross'



WEDNESDAY 17 FEBRUARY

JESUS IS GOOD NEWS, MARK 1:1-8

Read the Bible passage

The word 'gospel' literally means 'good news'. What would the good news be? Some advice, perhaps, or a new philosophy or teaching?

The good news is not a philosophy or a new way of thinking. Mark says the good news is a person – the person of Jesus Christ (v1).

The prophets had said a messenger would come and prepare the way for the Lord (v2-3), and now John appears to be preparing the way. John wore camel hair and a belt like the prophet Elijah and ate honey and locusts. He led a simple lifestyle and he called people back to God.

God was coming!

John lived in the desert (v3, v4) – a place to which God had led his people out of slavery in Egypt. God was about to do an amazing rescue again, and it all starts in the desert.

QUESTIONS TO DISCUSS:

What does 'gospel' mean? *Gospel literally means 'good news'.*

Which two people did the prophets say were going to appear? *A voice or messenger to prepare a way, and then God would appear.*

Who was John the Baptist? *John was the voice/messenger that the prophets spoke about. You could discuss how odd he must have looked – his camel hair clothes and his diet of grasshoppers and honey.*

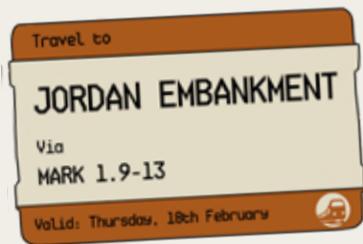
PRAY

Thank God that Jesus is good news. Ask God that we would love him more on our journey to Easter.



Locusts in Augmented Reality

Scroll down the page to x3 locusts. Tap on the 3D images to make them appear.



THURSDAY 18 FEBRUARY

JESUS GOES INTO THE DESERT, MARK 1:9-13

Read the Bible passage

The waiting is over! The prophets said a messenger would prepare the way for God's coming. John the Baptist was the messenger, and now God appears.

Jesus is baptised by John. In this moment we see a special glimpse of the Trinity. God is three persons: Father, who we often just call 'God'; the Son, who we call 'Jesus Christ'; and the Holy Spirit. God the Father tells Jesus 'You are my Son, whom I love; with you I am well pleased' (v11), and then the Holy Spirit comes upon Jesus and anoints Him. Jesus has not done anything special and yet God loves Him totally. Sometimes we think we need to earn love and approval, but that's not how God's love works.

Jesus is then led into the desert, where He is tempted for 40 days. God's people had wandered in the desert for 40 years, but they gave in to temptation. Jesus is perfect where God's people had messed up and doesn't give in to temptation.

QUESTIONS TO DISCUSS:

Who are the different members of the Trinity? *God the Father, Jesus (God the Son) and the Holy Spirit.*

Children, ask your parents, 'what difference does it make knowing that God loves you?'
PARENTS, share about the effect on your life of God's unconditional love.

How was Jesus different to God's people when he was in the desert? *Jesus was different because He did not give in to temptation, unlike God's people.*

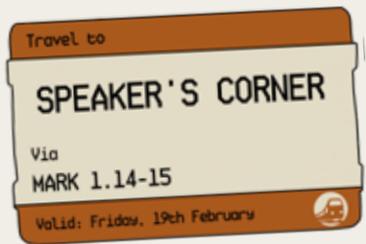
PRAY

Thank God for His love, which we cannot earn, and thank Him that Jesus did not give in to temptation.



The Marshmallow Test

Would you give in to temptation?



FRIDAY 19 FEBRUARY

JESUS ANNOUNCES HIS KINGDOM, MARK 1:14-15

Read the Bible passage

John's job seems to be done, while Jesus' job is just beginning. John prepared the way, and Jesus begins on the way that will lead to the Cross – on the map you will see this as King's Cross. As He starts on the way, He says: 'The time has come... the Kingdom of God is near. Repent and believe the good news!'. The king has arrived and therefore the reign of God, also called the kingdom of God, is on its way.

How should we respond to the news that the king is on his way? John said people needed to repent (v4), and now King Jesus says we need to repent (v15). Repentance means turning away from anything that leads us away from God, and turning towards God. We need to do that with the thoughts we have, the words we use and in our actions.

We also need to believe the good news. We need to believe who Jesus is (that He's the King) and what He came to do (dying and rising again so we can have our sins forgiven).

QUESTIONS TO DISCUSS:

What does 'repent' mean? *Turning away from things that lead us away from God and turning towards God.*

What might repentance look like in our lives? *Discuss things that you say or do that may need to be changed.*

What good news does Jesus want us to believe in? *That Jesus is the King and that He came to die and rise for each of us.*

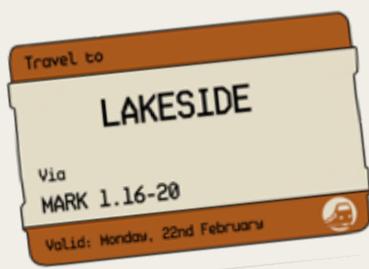
PRAY

Say sorry to God for something you have thought, said or done recently and ask Him to help you put your trust in Jesus every day.



Gospel of The Kingdom

The Bible Project explain what Jesus meant when he preached 'the Kingdom of God'



MONDAY 22 FEBRUARY

JESUS CALLS HIS FIRST DISCIPLES, MARK 1:16-20

Read the Bible passage

The start of Jesus' ministry is marked by an extraordinary authority. Normally people asked to follow a teacher (or 'rabbi' was the Jewish term), but Jesus asks people to follow Him. There are a few things to notice about when Jesus calls His disciples:

- **Jesus gives them a new calling.** Rather than being 'fishermen' (v16), Jesus gives them a new job – to fish for people ('fishers of men' v17).
 - **Jesus calls them to love Him more than their jobs.** In v18, Simon and Andrew leave their nets. Jesus is calling them to follow Him above their day job as fishermen.
 - **Jesus calls them to love Him more than their family.** Families are amazing gifts from God, but we are to love Jesus above our family. James and John 'left their father Zebedee' (v20) to follow Jesus.

Today Jesus is calling each of us to follow Him. We need to love Jesus more than anything we do and to love Him more than anyone else.

QUESTIONS TO DISCUSS:

What was the new job that Jesus gave the fishermen? *He called them to be 'fishers of people' (v17).*

What are we to love Jesus more than? *We are called to love Jesus more than our jobs (v18) and more than our family (v20).*

Children, ask your parents, 'What has it meant to love Jesus more than your jobs and family?' *Share about any difficulties, or even how Jesus has transformed your life through giving you a higher calling than what you used to live for.*

PRAY

Praise God that Jesus is worth following above everything and everyone else. Ask God to help us love Him as he deserves.



Fishers of Men

Song retelling Jesus calling his first disciples.



TUESDAY 23 FEBRUARY

JESUS HEALS MANY, MARK 1:21-33

Read the Bible passage

Jesus goes into the synagogue (a Jewish place of worship) and starts to teach people. The people listening are amazed at His authority (v22, v27). The word 'author' means someone who writes something and that is at the heart of Jesus' authority. Jesus has authority because He is the one who decides how things should go in the world.

People are also amazed by His miracles. A man comes into the synagogue who is controlled by demons. Demons are the opposite of angels – angels are good and help with God's work.

Jesus commands the demons out (v25), and they leave (v26). Simon's mother-in-law was badly ill in bed. Jesus held her hand and heals her (v31). Jesus has power and authority over the spiritual and physical battles we face.

QUESTIONS TO DISCUSS:

What was special about Jesus' teaching? *It had 'authority' (v22, v27). Discuss what authority means.*

How did Jesus show He has authority over the spiritual world? *Jesus could tell demons to leave the man, and they left (v25-26).*

How did Jesus show He has authority over the physical world? *Jesus touched Simon's mother-in-law's hand and she was healed of her fever (v31).*

PRAY

Thank God that Jesus has authority over everything. You could ask for Jesus' authority to break into a particularly tough spiritual or physical battle you are facing.



Jesus You're My Superhero

Jesus has superpowers better than any superhero - and he's real!



WEDNESDAY 24 FEBRUARY

JESUS PRIORITISED HIS MESSAGE, MARK 1:35-39

Read the Bible passage

Straight after all the healings and teaching on a Sabbath day (the day of rest for Jews), Jesus goes off for some prayer. We see in this little passage two of Jesus' priorities.

Jesus prioritised prayer. We are told Jesus goes off 'very early in the morning, while it was still dark... he prayed'. He got up really early to pray. Prayer for Jesus was more than listing His needs. He knew He needed to spend time with God and was willing to sacrifice anything for it.

Notice that He did it away from distractions ('a solitary place' v35).

Jesus prioritised preaching. Simon finds Jesus and says, 'everyone's been looking for you!' (v37). Instead of going back to the same crowds, Jesus wants to go to new places 'so that I can preach there also. That is why I have come' (v38). He knows that telling people the Good News is the most important and the most loving thing He could do.

QUESTIONS TO DISCUSS:

How important did Jesus think prayer was? *It was a priority. He gave up sleep to pray and He did it away from distractions.*

How important was it for Jesus to tell people the Good News? *He said it was the reason he came (v38) and so He had to keep moving around to tell more people.*

Discuss as a family how you can grow together and individually in prayer. Tell your children how, where and when you pray.

PRAY

Ask God to help you as a family to pray together.



Different types of Prayer

Explore four different ways to pray.



THURSDAY 25 FEBRUARY

AUTHORITY TO FORGIVE SINS, MARK 2:1-12

Read the Bible passage

We're back in Capernaum and Jesus is teaching at a house to a large crowd. Some friends are so desperate for their friend to be healed by Jesus that they lower their friend (who can't walk) down on a mat through a hole in the roof to Jesus.

Jesus says to the man on the mat, 'your sins are forgiven' (v5). What is happening here?

- **The friends want the man physically healed** so he can walk.
- **Jesus says the man's deepest need is having his sins forgiven.** Sin is a Bible word for our rejection of God. So far, we have seen that Jesus is King of God's kingdom.
- **By claiming to forgive sins, Jesus claims to be God.** The religious people know that Jesus is claiming to be God by saying He can forgive sins (v6-7).

Jesus then proves He can forgive sins by healing. He asks the question 'Which is easier: to say to this paralysed man, "Your sins are forgiven," or to say, "Get up, take your mat and walk"?' It is hard to say 'your sins are forgiven' because you cannot prove it and only God can do it. It is equally hard to say 'get up, take your mat and walk' because you then have to perform a miracle! Jesus proved He could forgive sins (which is invisible) by healing the man (which is visible).

QUESTIONS TO DISCUSS:

What did the friends and Jesus think was the man's deepest need? *The friends want him physically healed. Jesus wants to forgive his sins (v5).*

What was easier for Jesus to say - 'your sins are forgiven' or 'get up, take your mat and walk'? *Explore how both were hard - you cannot prove someone's sins are forgiven (it's invisible and only God does it), equally to heal someone is humanly an impossible task.*

What does this show us about Jesus? *It shows us that He is God because God alone can forgive sins (v7).*

PRAY

Thank Jesus for dying on the cross - the way that God forgives our sins.



A story about Forgiveness



FRIDAY 26 FEBRUARY

THE SON OF MAN, DANIEL 7:13-14

Read the Bible passage

Daniel, the one who was in the Lion's Den, has a dream one night and saw 'one like a son of man' coming with clouds before God (v13). This man was given 'authority, glory and sovereign power' and people from every country worshipped Him (v14). His kingdom will go on forever (v14). This 'Son of Man' is super powerful (more than all superheroes put together) and He'll be in charge into infinity. This person has God's power; He's divine.

Yesterday we saw that Jesus claimed to be God by forgiving the sins of the man on the mat. One of the names He used to describe Himself was 'Son of Man (Mark 2:10).' Jesus used the term 'Son of Man' 14 times in Mark's Gospel. One of the reasons He used it was to declare that He was the person Daniel saw in his vision.

QUESTIONS TO DISCUSS:

How did the Son of Man arrive before God the Father? *He arrived with clouds. Maybe discuss how majestic that would have been.*

What did God the Father give the Son of Man? *The Son of Man is given authority, glory and power (v14).*

What is one of the reasons Jesus called Himself the Son of Man? *Jesus was saying 'I'm that one Daniel saw!' - i.e. I'm from God. As an aside, Jesus also used the title to show His humanity - that He is literally the son of a man.*

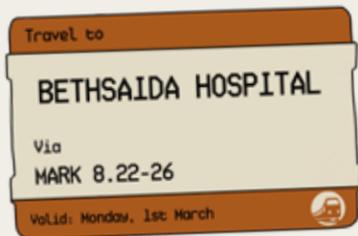
PRAY

Praise God for all the power and authority that Jesus has.



Son of Man

The Bible Project explain the term 'Son of Man'.



MONDAY 1 MARCH

THE HEALING THAT TOOK

TWO GOES, MARK 8:22-26

Read the Bible passage

So far, the disciples have seen that Jesus is the King. He has power and authority – He’s healed people and forgiven sins, and in other passages He calms storms and walks on water.

In this passage, a blind man is brought to Jesus in a town called Bethsaida. Jesus spits on the man’s eyes and the man gets some of his sight back: ‘I see people; they look like trees walking around’ (v24). Jesus then touches him again and his sight is fully restored: ‘and he saw everything clearly’ (v25). Is this because Jesus didn’t have the power the first time to heal? Probably not. He never takes two goes at healing anywhere else. Jesus then tells the man to keep it a secret. Remember this story as we see what happens tomorrow – it might help us understand it!

QUESTIONS TO DISCUSS:

What sort of power does Jesus have? *Power to heal people, power to forgive sins, power to calm storms and much more. He has power only God has.*

What happens the first time Jesus touches the man’s eyes? *The man receives some of his sight – people look like trees (v24).*

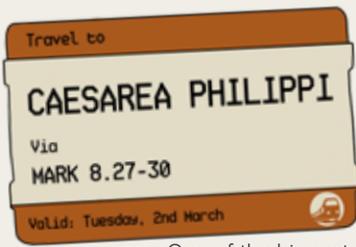
What happens the second time Jesus touches the man’s eyes? *The man receives all of his sight (v25).*

PRAY

Ask God to help us to see clearly who Jesus is.



Healing in two stages
Watch a retelling of the story.



TUESDAY 2 MARCH

PETER'S CONFESSION, MARK 8:27-30

Read the Bible passage

One of the biggest questions everyone must answer is 'who is Jesus?'.

Jesus now asks His disciples this question: 'who do people say I am?'. The disciples respond: 'Some say John the Baptist; others say Elijah; and still others, one of the prophets' (v28). Jesus then asks - 'what about *you*? (v29).

Peter responds, 'You are the Messiah' (v29). He was right: Jesus is *The* Messiah.

To understand that Jesus is the Messiah means that Peter understands Jesus is the Anointed Rescuing King who was promised from long ago. This understanding can only come from God showing it to him - no one else had realised Jesus was the Messiah.

When God shows someone who Jesus is, we call it *revelation*. Only the Holy Spirit can show us who Jesus is; we cannot discover it by ourselves.

Might Peter be a little like the man who did not fully see? Let's see what happens tomorrow.

QUESTIONS TO DISCUSS:

Who did people think Jesus was? *John the Baptist raised again, Elijah or another prophet.*

Who did Peter understand Jesus was? *Jesus was the Messiah - the promised king who would rescue God's people.*

How did Peter understand? *God shows Peter - He reveals to Peter something he didn't know before.*

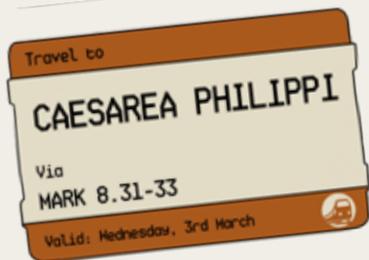
PRAY

Thank God that Jesus is the Messiah who comes to rescue us.



Messiah

The Bible Project explain what 'Messiah' means.



WEDNESDAY 3 MARCH

JESUS FORETELLS HIS DEATH AND RESURRECTION, MARK 8:31-33

Read the Bible passage

Straight after Peter declares that Jesus 'is the Messiah', Jesus goes on to teach His disciples that he *MUST* 'suffer... be rejected... be killed and after three days rise again' (v31). This was a total shock to Peter – his idea of the Messiah did not allow for suffering, rejection and death.

Peter is so surprised, he 'took [Jesus] aside and began to rebuke Him' (v32). Jesus then corrects Peter. Peter has a human understanding of the meaning of 'Messiah', not God's understanding. God's understanding is that the glory of being King only comes through suffering.

We now know why Mark put the healing of the blind man just before this passage: Peter had partial sight, but not full sight. Fully seeing who Jesus is means we understand He's the King, but a King who must suffer, die and then be raised again.

QUESTIONS TO DISCUSS:

What did Jesus say the Messiah must have done to Him? *The Messiah must suffer, be rejected, be killed and then rise again (v31).*

How did Peter feel about this? *He rebuked Jesus because he thought the Messiah/ King didn't need to suffer.*

How is Peter like the blind man who was healed in two stages? *He understands partially who Jesus is, but not fully. He needs Jesus to give him full sight – to understand that Jesus is the King who MUST suffer. He's also told to keep it a secret after receiving full sight.*

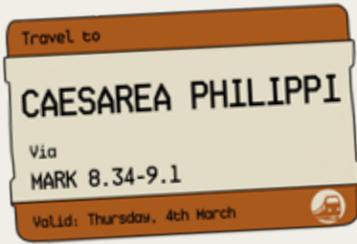
PRAY

Ask God to give us insight by the Holy Spirit to fully understand who Jesus is.



'That's My King'

Jesus is a different kind of King - but what a King!



THURSDAY 4 MARCH

FOLLOWERS OF JESUS FOLLOW THE SAME PATH
TO GLORY THROUGH SUFFERING, MARK 8:34-9:1

Read the Bible passage

— Yesterday we heard the news from Jesus to Peter that the Messiah, the King, must suffer and die.

Jesus then calls His disciples to Him and says suffering is the way of Jesus: 'Whoever wants to be my disciple must deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me' (v34). Some people think that following Jesus means you'll have a trouble-free life. Jesus promises that those who follow Him must suffer – denying yourself and taking up a cross is a life of suffering.

However, Jesus says that in the process, those who 'lose their life for me and for the gospel will save it' (v35). Many Christians around the world face intense suffering for following Jesus. We will also suffer in various degrees too for following Jesus. But the promise is that we will have eternal life with Jesus that will be free of suffering.

QUESTIONS TO DISCUSS:

What did Jesus say His followers must do? *They must deny themselves (choose God's way rather than their own) and take up their cross. Christians will suffer.*

What does Jesus promise for those who take the way of the cross? *People who follow the way of the cross will receive eternal life, where there will be no suffering.*

Children, ask your parents what the cost of following Jesus has been for them. *PARENTS, share examples from your own life of persecution. Maybe also share stories of other Christians who have suffered because of their faith.*

PRAY

Pray for Christian brothers and sisters around the world to have strength to persevere in the midst of suffering.



Story of Brother Andrew

Watch the story of Brother Andrew smuggling Bibles to persecuted Christians.



FRIDAY 5 MARCH

ISAIAH'S SERVANT SONG, ISAIAH 50:4-7

Read the Bible passage *As you read the passage, ask your children to put up a hand when a part of the body is mentioned.*

The prophet Isaiah wrote four songs about a servant and here we read the third of those songs. Isaiah lived about 700 years before Jesus but wrote vividly about what Jesus would go through.

The game 'Guess Who?' makes you try and guess which character your opponent is by asking about their different features. In this 'servant song' we are told about the features of this servant. He has an '**instructed tongue**' (v4). This servant would be a great teacher and his words would help tired people. His **ear** listens to the God speaking to him (v4) and he fully obeys what God tells him (v5). His **back** is beaten (v6). The beard on his **cheeks** are pulled (v6). His **face** is laughed at and spat at (v6), but he sets his face like flint (v7) on his task.

The person Isaiah is describing is, of course, Jesus. Jesus' tongue uttered the best teaching known to humanity, His ear perfectly listened to God and obeyed, His back was beaten, His face was laughed at and spat at. This week, we have seen Jesus set his face like flint towards the cross – nothing is going to stop Him facing death so that He can win salvation for those He loves.

QUESTIONS TO DISCUSS:

How were some of Jesus' body parts described? *Cover some/all of the above.*

Who was Isaiah describing even though he never met Him, when he wrote it? *Isaiah was describing Jesus, despite living 700 years before.*

How can you use your body parts to serve God today? *Think up some creative ways - whether it is listening well to others/ God, speaking kindly to others or singing praise, using hands to help.*

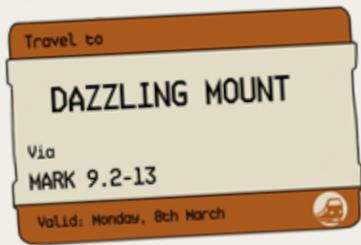
PRAY

Thank God that Jesus was willing to suffer because He loves us.



Prophets

Watch how God spoke to his people through his prophets, like Isaiah.



MONDAY 8 MARCH

THE TRANSFIGURATION, MARK 9:2-13

Read the Bible passage

In the Old Testament, God appeared to His people at Mount Sinai: 'there was thunder and lightning, with a thick cloud over the mountain, and a very loud trumpet blast. Everyone in the camp trembled' (Ex 19:16).

Something even more amazing happened in our story today. Jesus goes up a mountain, clouds are there and everyone is afraid. Then two of the greatest leaders of God's people appear: Moses and Elijah. It is very similar to Mount Sinai. God speaks out of the cloud declaring, like at the baptism, that 'This is my Son, whom I love' (Mark 9:7). Jesus appears dazzling white – shining, sparkling and radiant!

Suddenly everything disappears, but Jesus remains. Jesus is the bridge between God and humanity.

We're also given a glimpse of the glory of Jesus: glory that will be revealed more fully when He's resurrected.

Jesus needed God's encouragement that He's the Beloved Son because He's getting further along on His journey to the Cross, where He must suffer and be rejected (Mark 9:12).

QUESTIONS TO DISCUSS:

What happened at Mount Sinai? *Clouds, lightning, thunder, God's glory and Moses were there. People were terrified.*

How was it similar and different at this mountain? *There were clouds, Moses was there, Jesus was dazzling bright, the disciples were frightened, and God spoke.*

What does this event show us about Jesus? *Jesus remains – unlike Moses and Elijah. Jesus has a dazzling glory, which we'll see again at His resurrection (Mark 9:9-10).*

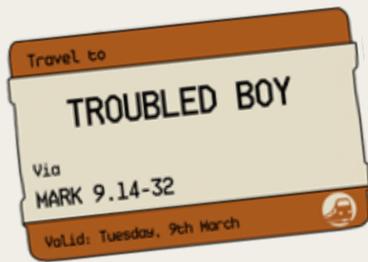
PRAY

Praise God that power and the glory belong to Jesus.



Mufasa speaks to Simba in 'The Lion King'

Simba is about to rescue his family and needs reassurance from his father. Spot the similarities and differences to the Transfiguration!



TUESDAY 9 MARCH

THE BOY WITH AN EVIL SPIRIT

IS HEALED, MARK 9:14-32

Read the Bible passage

Yesterday we saw a dazzling glimpse of Jesus' glory at the 'Transfiguration' and straight after this a man has a demon-possessed son. The disciples are unable to cast out the demon. Since an early age, this boy would roll around, with foam coming out of his mouth (v18) and sometimes he'd be thrown into water or fire (v22). It then happens right in front of Jesus (v20). The solution is prayer and belief: Jesus says, 'everything is possible for him who believes' (v23).

The disciples couldn't get rid of the demon because they weren't praying (v29).

At the end of the passage, Jesus talks about how He will be betrayed, killed and then rise again (v31). This boy looked dead and came back to life when Jesus took him by the hand (v26-27). This was a picture of what's going to happen to Jesus: He will die, and God will raise Him back to life.

QUESTIONS TO DISCUSS:

How would you have felt if you were the father of the demon-possessed boy? *Encourage your children to share lots of possible feelings: frustration, sadness, disappointment, helplessness, fear etc.*

What did Jesus say would help the boy be set free from the demons? *Belief in Jesus (v23-24) and prayer (v29).*

Is there an impossible situation you/ your friends are facing that you could bring to Jesus in prayer?

PRAY

Praise Jesus that nothing is impossible for Him and bring the situation to Him in prayer.



Nothing is Impossible

Listen to this song by Planetshakers Kids.



WEDNESDAY 10 MARCH

JAMES AND JOHN ASK A FAVOUR, MARK 10:35-45

Read the Bible passage

James and John ask Jesus for a favour. Jesus says, 'What do you want me to do for you?'. They want power: 'Let one of us sit at Your right and the other at Your left in Your glory' (v37).

Before Jesus goes to the throne, Jesus says He must 'drink a cup' and 'be baptised'. Both pictures describe what happened at the cross.

'Drink the cup' refers to Jesus taking on the anger of God on Himself. God's anger is sometimes pictured as a cup of wine that must be drunk (Jeremiah 25:15, Isaiah 51:17).

Jesus has already been baptised (Mark 1), but the baptism that Jesus talks about is dying on the cross. Baptism is a picture of dying (going down into the water) and of resurrection life (coming out of the water).

Jesus says His followers will have the same path: a life of dying to self and rising in new life with Jesus (v39). Jesus summarises His mission in the last verse: 'the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life as a ransom for many.' (v45)

QUESTIONS TO DISCUSS:

What would you ask for if Jesus was in the room now and said, 'what do you want me to do for you?' *Try to encourage honest answers.*

What was the cup Jesus said He was going to drink? And what was the baptism Jesus was going to face? *The cup was a picture of the anger or judgment of God. Baptism was a picture of the death He would face on the cross, and the resurrection life of Him rising again.*

What feelings do you think Jesus had through this discussion? *Explore a range of emotions: love to go to the cross, frustration at the disciples' misunderstanding, commitment to suffer for those He loved.*

PRAY

Thank God that nothing was going to stop Jesus from going to the cross.



Liverpool FC basking in the glory

James and John wanted to participate in Jesus' glory - celebrating like the football players.



THURSDAY 11 MARCH

BLIND BARTIMAEUS, MARK 10:46-52

Read the Bible passage

In today's story we meet another blind man, named Bartimaeus. He understands who Jesus is – he calls Him 'Son of David' (v47, 48). He asks Jesus for mercy: 'Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!' (v47, 48). Mercy is kindness toward someone who doesn't deserve it.

Jesus then asks the exact same question He asked James and John: 'what do you want me to do for you?' (v51).

Secondly, Bartimaeus wanted to see. His faith in Jesus heals him (v52), because he knows Jesus is the King, with power to heal.

We are all a bit like Bartimaeus: we don't deserve Jesus' kindness, but Jesus loves to show His mercy to those who ask. If we ask Him, He will give us sight to see who He really is.

QUESTIONS TO DISCUSS:

What would it have felt like not to be able to see? *Possibly: scary, confusing, being laughed at/avoided.*

What did Bartimaeus want from Jesus? *Mercy – kindness that wasn't deserved; Sight – he couldn't see.*

What was Jesus delighted to give Bartimaeus? *Bartimaeus was given sight – a glimpse of Jesus' mercy.*

PRAY

Pray the prayer that Bartimaeus said: 'Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!'



Three Blind Children have Sight Restored

Jesus is still giving sight to the blind today.



FRIDAY 12 MARCH

THE RISEN ONE, PSALM 16:7-11

Read the Bible passage

There are 150 poems in the Bible that have been put together in one book called the Psalms. We can view the Psalms in different ways: as prayers we can pray in different situations, as Jesus' book of prayers, or as prayers written about Jesus (being fulfilled by Him). This one was written by King David.

These verses were often used in the early Church to talk about Jesus rising again. The person described in the Psalm trusts completely in God supporting them: 'because He is at my right hand, I shall not be shaken' (v8). And there is a promise that this person will not rot in their grave: 'You will not abandon me to the grave, nor will You let your Holy One see decay' (v10). This person will rise back to life after death. The only person who has ever risen to resurrection life after dying is Jesus.

As a result, Jesus will enjoy God's amazing joyful presence (v11).

If we trust in Jesus, we can know resurrection life in the new creation and know the amazing joyful presence of God.

QUESTIONS TO DISCUSS:

What was King David writing about Jesus in this psalm? *Jesus' resurrection - that His body wouldn't rot but be made new.*

What do you think it will be like to fully experience 'joy in [God's] presence' in the new creation (v11)? *Explore the what the feeling will be like - maybe use some experiences of joy here on earth to describe it.*

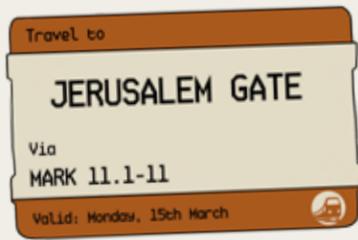
PRAY

Ask God to let you taste more of His amazing joyful presence this week.



The Beast is transformed

Death is not the end in 'Beauty and the Beast'



MONDAY 15 MARCH

THE TRIUMPHAL ENTRY, MARK 11:1-11

Read the Bible passage

We are entering the final week of Jesus' ministry on earth and here we read of Him entering Jerusalem, the capital city. How do kings normally enter their capital city? Normally kings would have a grand entrance on their horses, showing off their military might. Jesus came in both a similar and different way.

Before they get to Jerusalem, Jesus asks two of His disciples to fetch a donkey that has never been ridden before. Jesus then gets on the donkey and approaches the great capital city, Jerusalem. People do their best to roll out a red carpet for the King – they throw their coats on the road and put branches on the road (v8). Crowds are cheering – they shout 'Hosanna! Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord!' (v9). 'Hosanna' means 'Please save us'.

This entry is similar to other kings: Jesus enters His capital city to much cheering. However, it is also different as Jesus comes on a donkey. A donkey is not a magnificent horse, but a lowly animal.

The crowd realise who He is: the Messiah spoken of in Zechariah who would enter on a donkey (Zechariah 9:9), and the Forever King who would come from King David's family (v10).

QUESTIONS TO DISCUSS:

How was Jesus like other kings? *He entered His capital city to an applauding crowd.*

How was Jesus different to other kings? *He arrived on a donkey, not a horse.*

What does this show us about Jesus? *A donkey is a symbol of lowliness. It was a fulfilment of a prophecy made by Zechariah. It shows us the gentleness and humility of Jesus.*

PRAY

Ask God to help us follow in Jesus' path of humility.



Arrival of King in Thailand

See the grand entrances sometimes Kings have (don't watch the whole thing!)



TUESDAY 16 MARCH

CLEARING OF THE TEMPLE; MARK 11:12-19

Read the Bible passage

Jesus arrives in Jerusalem and goes to the temple area. The temple was supposed to be a place where people met with God. It was the place where God lived amongst his people. However, what Jesus found was totally different to what should have been there. People were using the temple as a place to make money and for cheating people out of money. Jesus challenges those there: 'Is it not written: "My house will be called a house of prayer for all nations"? But you have made it "a den of robbers"' (v17). Jesus shows us in His response what good anger looks like.

However, Jesus' rebuke annoys the Jewish leaders so much that they want to kill Jesus.

QUESTIONS TO DISCUSS:

What was the temple supposed to be for? *A place where God dwelt with his people. A place for prayer and worship (v17) for both Jews and people from all over the world.*

Why did Jesus turn over tables and drive out those buying and selling in the temple? *Because they had missed the point of the temple: they were trying to make money and steal from people, not helping visitors to worship. (v17)*

Why do you think the Jewish leaders wanted to kill Jesus? *Explore how it feels to be rebuked. Their hard hearts did not want to receive correction but instead they wanted to silence their opposition. Discuss how as a family you can all learn from correction.*

PRAY

Say 'sorry' prayers to God and ask for forgiveness for the times we have not taken corrections from God or others.



Augmented Reality Temple

Show your children the Temple. You need to have downloaded 'Immersive Bible' app beforehand (free).



WEDNESDAY 17 MARCH

THE FIG TREE, MARK 11:12-14, 20-26

Read the Bible passage

Fig trees are supposed to produce fruit. Early in the year, they produce little buds which will become figs. This fig tree, while it doesn't have the fruit, doesn't even have the little buds. It's not got the growth it's supposed to have. Jesus brings His judgement upon it by punishing it and cursing it. The fig tree withers and dies.

The same is happening with the temple. Jesus does not find the right growth there, so He brings His judgment upon it. This might be a surprise for us: it can be easy to focus on Jesus' blessing and forget or ignore His judgment. The temple is destroyed decades later and has never been rebuilt.

This all points to a new and better way for us to have friendship with God. Jesus described Himself as the temple. He is the way we can have friendship with God – not through a building, but through a person.

QUESTIONS TO DISCUSS:

What do you think it would have felt like to be a disciple and see the fig tree withered one day after Jesus cursed it? *Shock/ awe/ scared – realising the power of Jesus' words even over the life of a plant.*

Why did Jesus curse the fig tree so it would never produce fruit again? *Jesus didn't see the life and growth He was hoping to see (v14).*

How is the fig tree like the temple? *The fig tree was supposed to produce fruit but didn't have even the signs of life (buds). Likewise, the temple didn't have evidence of life (prayer and worship). Jesus judges both.*

PRAY

Ask God to keep bringing His transforming power in your lives and ask for God to produce fruit in the lives of your friends and family.



'Brick after Brick'

Song by Sovereign Grace about the new Temple God is building



THURSDAY 18 MARCH

PARABLE OF TENANTS, MARK 12:1-12

Read the Bible passage

In the Bible, many pictures are used to describe God's people, Israel. One describes them as a vineyard in the book of Isaiah (Isaiah 5).

Jesus tells a very similar story, describing a vineyard that the owner leaves. When the fruit is ready to be picked, the owner sends his servants to collect some of the fruit. Those using the land attacked the servants, and some they even killed. Then the owner sends his son whom he loves (Mark 12:6) – but this one they kill (v8). The owner, of course, will not be happy and will come and get rid of those using the vineyard.

When Jesus told this story, He was speaking about the Jewish leaders. They didn't like God's prophets and they didn't like Jesus. They want to kill Him, just as those who used the vineyard didn't like the servants and the son.

QUESTIONS TO DISCUSS:

What was the picture of the vineyard used to describe? *The vineyard was a picture of God's people – cared for and protected by God.*

How were God's messengers and God's own Son treated in the story? *The servants/messengers were attacked and some were killed (v5). The Son was killed (v7-8).*

How do you think Jesus felt as He told the story? *A mixture. Possibly good anger (angry at their wrong rejection of Him), sorrow (as their rejection would lead to the cross), love (knowing that only He can change hard hearts by His love).*

PRAY

Thank God that Jesus was willing to go to the cross, despite the pain of the rejection He faced.



A Vineyard

See what a vineyard looks like.

FRIDAY 19 MARCH



ISAIAH'S SUFFERING SERVANT, ISAIAH 53:3-9

*Get a toy before the devotion, a sheep if possible!
Say, 'As I read the passage, if it says 'he', point
at the toy, and if it says 'our', point at yourself.'*

Read the Bible passage

Today we're looking at the final 'servant song' in Isaiah, which describes a swap this servant will face. Isaiah was talking about Jesus and describing what would happen to Him 700 years before the events happened.

This song shows the swap that happened at Jesus' death. Jesus took up our pain. He took our suffering. He was broken for our sins and was cut off from life for our rejection of God.

It is a totally unfair swap, but it was all done by the love of God. Jesus was delighted to go to the cross because He loves us that much. He did everything – including facing God's judgment that we deserve because of our sin – so that we could be friends with God. Through Jesus' death, we are brought peace with God and we are healed by His wounds (v5).

QUESTIONS TO DISCUSS:

Have you ever felt unfairly punished for something? *Share what it was like.*

Why is Jesus' swap unfair on Jesus? *Discuss how it was unfair on Jesus: He didn't deserve any judgment because He was perfect.*

How does it make you feel knowing that Jesus was so happy to make the swap?

PRAY

Thank God that Jesus was delighted to face God's judgement so that we could be healed.



'I Look Upon Your Hill'

Listen to this song using the words from Isaiah 53 about Jesus' death.



MONDAY 22 MARCH

RELIGIOUS LEADERS WANT TO
ARREST AND KILL JESUS, MARK 14:1-2

Read the Bible passage

Today we learn of the religious leaders' aim to get rid of Jesus. Again, we see Jesus' prediction of going to the cross coming true. Jesus knows He must die – that is why He came.

We're told this was happening just before Passover and the Feast of Unleavened Bread (v1):

- **Feast of Unleavened Bread** was a week-long festival where God's people remembered their rescue from slavery in Egypt (see Exodus 12:14-20, 31-39). They were in such a rush to leave, they had to make bread without yeast. Yeast has become symbolic of sin – we need to get rid of sin in our lives.
- **Passover** was a one-day festival that remembered the time when God passed over every household in Egypt (see Exodus 12:1-13:16). Every house was judged by God. God's people had to kill a lamb, paint the blood on their doors and then eat the lamb. Only by doing this did the lamb die in their place. The Egyptians, however, didn't kill a lamb and so God judged them and killed their eldest son.

Both were fulfilled by Jesus: Jesus is the sinless saviour, not affected by the 'yeast' of sin.

Jesus is also our Passover Lamb whose blood saves us, because Jesus died in our place.

QUESTIONS TO DISCUSS:

How did God save his people at the Passover? *The Hebrews had to kill a lamb, paint its blood on their door and eat it to be saved from God's judgment.*

How did the religious leaders feel about Jesus and what did they want to do to Him? *The religious leaders hated Jesus; they wanted Him arrested and then killed (Mark 14:1).*

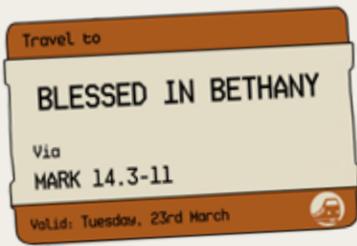
How might God be using their hatred to do another saving rescue at Passover? *God used their hatred to allow Jesus to be killed – His death would save all who trusted in Jesus, the true Passover Lamb.*

PRAY

Thank God that He can use terrible things for good – He used the religious leaders' hatred of Jesus for the saving of many.



Passover Scene from 'The Prince of Egypt'



TUESDAY 23 MARCH

ANOINTING OF JESUS, MARK 14:3-11

Read the Bible passage

How could you show someone how much you love them? You could say lots of kind words.
You could give them an amazing gift.

In today's story we read of how one woman showed her amazing love for Jesus. Jesus was at a meal at someone's home and a lady comes up to Him with a jar. In the jar is very, very expensive perfume. It's so expensive it would take a year of working to have enough money to buy it. Does she pour a little bit of it on Jesus and save the rest for herself? No - she breaks the jar and pours all the perfume on Jesus' head (v3). She realises how precious Jesus is, and so gives Him one of the most valuable things she has: her perfume.

Jesus tells us that this amazing love of hers is also doing something special: she is preparing Jesus for His burial (v8). When people died, their bodies were covered in special oils and perfumes. In doing so, she is preparing for and pointing to Jesus' death.

QUESTIONS TO DISCUSS:

How would you show someone that you love them a lot? *Encourage your children to be creative on what amazing love could look like for them.*

How did the woman show she loved Jesus? *She gave a year's wages worth of perfume to anoint Jesus.*

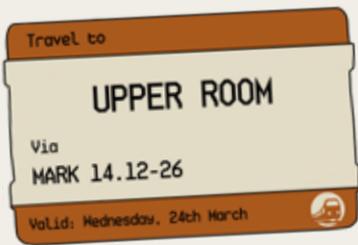
Children, ask your parents, 'how do you show your love for Jesus?' *PARENTS, think about some of the ways you express your love for Christ - whether words, time, financially or other ways.*

PRAY

Praise God for the amazing example this woman was of love for Jesus - and ask God to help us love Jesus in a similar way.



Facts about Perfume



WEDNESDAY 24 MARCH

THE NEW FAMILY MEAL, MARK 14:12-26

Read the Bible passage

Jesus has a room prepared for their Passover meal (v13-16). As they are sitting down, Jesus says one of the disciples will betray Him. He knew Judas would hand Him over to the religious leaders (v18-21).

At the Passover meal, Jesus lifted up the bread and gave thanks. Jesus said the bread is like His body: the bread is offered to God, thanks is given and it is broken. Jesus' whole life was one offered to God, it gave thanks to God and was broken when He was crucified. He also took a cup with wine, and gave it to His disciples. The red wine was to remind the disciples of the red blood Jesus would shed on the cross.

Jesus also pointed to the great banquet meal (v25) that would take place at the end of time when God gathers people from all nations to feast with Him (Isaiah 25:6-8).

Jesus was taking things the Jews would use at Passover and saying their true meaning was found in Him: broken bread points to His broken body, red wine points to His red blood poured out on the cross.

QUESTIONS TO DISCUSS:

What does the broken bread remind us of? *Jesus' body that was broken on the cross (v22).*

What does the wine remind us of? *Jesus' red blood that was poured out for us at the cross (v24).*

The meal also points to heaven, which is described as a great feast. What would you like at the feast in heaven? *Your children can list anything they'd like on the menu!*

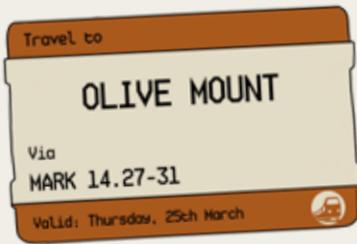
PRAY

Thank God for the amazing love He showed by sending Jesus to die and rise again for us.



The Last Supper

A retelling of the story.



THURSDAY 25 MARCH

DENIAL PREDICTION, MARK 14:27-31

Read the Bible passage

One of Jesus' closest friends was Peter. In today's story, Jesus says He will be caught and abandoned by those around Him (14:27). Peter declares that 'even if all fall away, I will not' (v29), but Jesus responds that, 'today - yes, tonight - before the cock crows twice you yourself will disown me three times' (v30). Peter knows following Jesus will be costly: 'even if I have to die with You, I will never disown You' (v31). Peter knows following Jesus means suffering like Jesus. He is making an amazing declaration of love with his words. He's a bit like the woman who poured her expensive perfume on Jesus who showed amazing love. However, Peter is different. We will see how he reacts when asked by people as to whether he follows Jesus. Jesus says he's going to fail and that Peter will disown Jesus three times that very night before he hears 'cock-a-doodle-doo' twice. Who will be right - Jesus or Peter?

QUESTIONS TO DISCUSS:

How did Peter express amazing love for Jesus? *He said he'd even die for Jesus (v31).*

Have you ever promised something, then failed to keep the promise when it became too difficult? *PARENTS, you may want to start by sharing an example.*

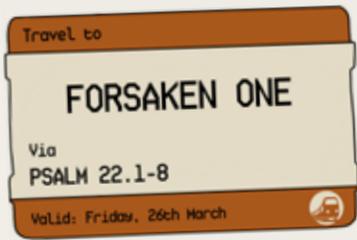
Who do you think will be right - Jesus or Peter? *You could discuss how Jesus has shown He's always right from other episodes.*

PRAY

Ask God's to help us by His Holy Spirit to be faithful to Jesus.



Listen to cockerel's saying 'cock-a-doodle-doo'



FRIDAY 26 MARCH

FORSAKEN ONE, PSALM 22:1-8

Read the Bible passage

From before time began, Jesus has had the most amazing loving friendship with God the Father. But then at the cross Jesus was separated from God. He felt the pain of a broken relationship.

This Psalm starts 'My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?' (v1). Being 'forsaken' is like being ignored, deserted or left by yourself. This psalm was written about Jesus' experience on the cross. Jesus experienced separation from God that He had never felt before. He cries out at the cross, but He doesn't hear an answer (v2). He feels that God is far away from Him (v11).

When we live our own way, one thing that happens is we experience distance in friendships. The same happens with our relationship with God. However, Jesus never did anything that would spoil a relationship. But on the cross, He felt the distance from God that He didn't deserve. He felt the distance we deserve from our rejection of God.

Amazingly, we will never be left by God – because Jesus experienced our rejection for us.

QUESTIONS TO DISCUSS:

Have you ever felt distance in a friendship because of something you did or said? *Encourage them to talk about an experience.*

Why did Jesus face separation from God at the cross? *He had never felt the separation from God and did not deserve it, but He went through it because He loves us.*

Children, ask your parents, 'how does it make you feel knowing Jesus was forsaken in your place?' *PARENTS, share how you felt when reading this psalm.*

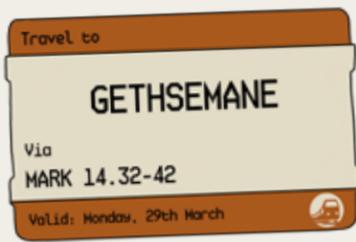
PRAY

Thank God that, because of Jesus' death, we will never be left by God.



Distance in a relationship

Anna feels like she's been forsaken by Elsa in 'Frozen 2'



MONDAY 29 MARCH

GARDEN TRIAL, MARK 14:32-42

Read the Bible passage

The Bible starts with a man in a garden who disobeys God – Adam. Because of his disobedience, he faces the judgment of God and is taken out of God's presence.

In today's story, Jesus is in a garden called Gethsemane. Gethsemane means 'oil press' – olives were pressed to get the oil out of them. Jesus faces intense pressure here, like He's being pressed by the weight of what He faces. Jesus faces a difficult challenge and speaks to God, His Father (v36), asking whether there is any possible way He does not have to go to the Cross. He knows the extreme pain He will face – physically but, most importantly, relationally. He will be separated from the perfect love of God and face the judgment of God that He did not deserve.

Remember Jesus talked about a cup He must drink (10:38-39). He's talking about it again here: the cup is a picture of God's good anger against our rejection of Him. Jesus will drink the cup of God's good anger that we deserve, allowing us to be free from the eternal separation we deserve.

Like Adam, Jesus is in a garden. But, unlike Adam, Jesus says 'Your will be done' to God. He is totally obedient.

QUESTIONS TO DISCUSS:

What do you think it felt like to be Jesus in the garden? *Hard – knowing that you were going to face death and separation from God. Love – this was all driven by Jesus' love for us.*

How is Jesus different to Adam and us? *He said 'your will be done' (v36) – he was perfectly obedient to God.*

Can you think of other ways in which Jesus is different to us? *Explore other ways in which Christ is unique – e.g. miraculous birth*

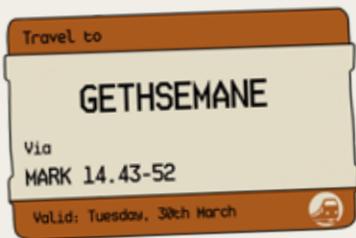
PRAY

Praise Jesus that He took the cup – facing God's good anger – instead of us having to take it.



Olive Press

See how olive's would have been pressed back in Jesus' time.



TUESDAY 30 MARCH

JESUS ARRESTED, MARK 14:43-52

Read the Bible passage

One of the most painful things in a friendship is betrayal. Friendship is marked by love and trust. To betray someone means to break the trust by being disloyal.

In today's passage, we see a terrible betrayal. Jesus is in the garden with His disciples and Judas arrives with a crowd of armed people. Over and over, we are shown the pain of the betrayal Jesus faced:

- Judas is 'one of the Twelve' (v43) of Jesus' closest friends and yet he betrays him.
- Judas betrays with a kiss (v44-45). A kiss is a sign of deep friendship and love but Judas doesn't love Jesus.
- The betrayal happens at night. The religious leaders' hearts were dark like the night (v49).
 - Jesus spoke and acted peacefully yet the crowd comes with swords (v43).
 - Jesus is betrayed for money (v11). Judas loved money more than Jesus.

At the end of the arrest, we read 'then everyone deserted him and fled' (v50), just as He said it would happen (v27).

QUESTIONS TO DISCUSS:

Have you ever felt the pain of being betrayed or seen it happen in a friendship?

Who betrayed Jesus? *Judas.*

How do you think it felt for Jesus to be betrayed? *Explore the deep pain He must have felt by the betrayal of one of his closest friends, and how something as loving as a kiss was used to identify Him.*

PRAY

Ask God to help us by His Holy Spirit be faithful to Jesus and our friends.



Betrayed by a Kiss

Clip from 'The Miracle Maker' movie



WEDNESDAY 31 MARCH

JEWISH TRIAL, MARK 14:53-72

Read the Bible passage

Today's story looks at Jesus going before the religious leaders for trial. Jesus stands alone as someone who is true all the time. Indeed, He said of Himself 'I am... the Truth' (John 14:6).

The religious leaders try to find something that Jesus said or did that was wrong, so that they could put Him to death. However, it says they could not find anything (v55-56).

Then the High Priest asks, 'Are you the Messiah, the Son of the Blessed One?' (v61). Jesus then responds with 'I am' (v62). As we've been learning all the way through, Jesus is the Messiah, the anointed King. The religious leaders didn't believe Jesus could be and so they think they have a reason to kill Jesus. But Jesus has spoken the truth: He is the Messiah (v62).

Peter then reappears in the story. He's watching all that's going on and is trying to keep himself warm by a fire. Three times he's asked whether he was with Jesus but he denies it.

Immediately afterwards they hear 'cock-a-doodle-doo'.

The religious leaders and their accusers are full of lies, and Peter also lies – only Jesus remains as the one true person.

QUESTIONS TO DISCUSS:

Have you ever said anything untrue or done anything wrong?

Were the religious leaders able to find anything untrue that Jesus had said or anything wrong that He had done? *Jesus had not said anything untrue, nor had He done anything wrong.*

How do you think Peter felt after denying Jesus? *Explore the feeling Peter would have felt in saying he'd follow Jesus to the death and then denying Him shortly after.*

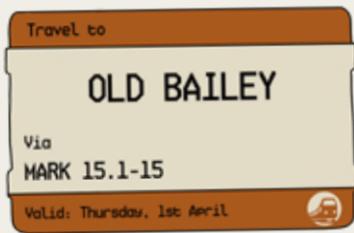
PRAY

Thank God that there is nothing false or untrue about Jesus.



Jerusalem

Listen to a song by CityAight about Jesus' week in Jerusalem



THURSDAY 1 APRIL

ROMAN TRIAL, MARK 15:1-15

Read the Bible passage

Jesus faces an unfair Roman court. He's asked by the Roman leader, Pontius Pilate, 'are you the king of the Jews?' (v2). All through Mark's Gospel, we've seen Jesus is the King. He's not only the King of the Jews, He's the King over everything – King over disease, disasters, demons and even death.

Pilate, although he doesn't have a reason to kill Jesus, offers the crowd the freedom of either Jesus or a man called Barabbas.

Barabbas was a criminal. Jesus, however, had not done anything bad in His life.

Pilate, however, sets Barabbas free – which he didn't deserve. And Jesus would get crucified – which He didn't deserve. Jesus died instead of Barabbas. And when we trust in Jesus, Jesus died instead of us. That's good news!

QUESTIONS TO DISCUSS:

Was Jesus the King of the Jews? *Yes – He's the promised King of the Jews, but He's also the King of everything.*

How do you think Barabbas felt that he was able to go free, instead of facing death? *He would have felt so happy, but also possibly guilty.*

How do you feel knowing that Jesus died for you, just as He did for Barabbas? *Explore the feelings and thoughts your children have, knowing Jesus was willing to die for them because He loved them so much.*

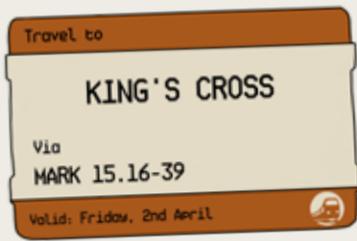
PRAY

Thank Jesus that He died in our place.



Aslan swapped for Edmund in 'The Lion, The Witch and the Wardrobe'

Watch the scene where Edmund goes free but Aslan will pay the price.



FRIDAY 2 APRIL

THE CRUCIFIXION OF THE KING, MARK 15:16-39

Read the Bible passage

Soldiers put a royal purple robe on Jesus and put a crown of thorns on Him (v17). They bow down saying 'hail, King of the Jews!' (v18). They're mocking Him - not realising he really is the King. He is put on a cross with a notice saying 'King of the Jews' (v26).

His death is the both the worst and best day in history. It is the worst day in history because the Son of God has been deserted and judged by God (v34). But it is also the best day in history, because the barrier between us and God has been taken away.

Did you notice it said the 'curtain of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom' (v38)? The temple had a curtain stopping people from entering the presence of the holy God. It was a literal, physical symbol of the separation between us and God. Yet Jesus' death allows us to now go into the presence of God because the curtain was torn from top to bottom.

QUESTIONS TO DISCUSS:

How do we see that Jesus is a King in the story? *The soldiers give Him a purple robe, a crown, they call him a king, he has a sign saying 'king of the Jews'.*

The curtain is torn in two from top to bottom - what did that show? *Jesus' death dealt with the barrier of our sin that prevented us from entering God's presence. Top to bottom shows it was God's initiative and God's power to deal with the separation.*

How would you like to respond to Jesus? *Go round as a family sharing how each person wants to respond to Jesus - it may be thanksgiving, it may be saying sorry for sin, or it may be wonder (or all of the above!).*

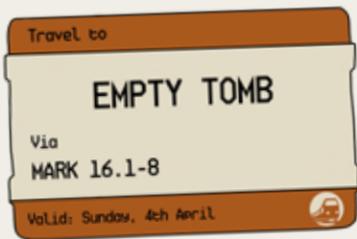
PRAY

Turn your responses to what Jesus has done into prayer.



Hercules dives into the River Styx in the film 'Hercules'

Hercules dies to save, but death itself won't keep a hold on him.



SUNDAY 4 APRIL

THE RESURRECTED KING, MARK 16:1-8

Read the Bible passage

Three women go to the tomb early on Sunday, expecting to encounter a large stone still rolled in front of the tomb of the dead Jesus. When they arrive, the enormous stone has been rolled away! An angel appears and says, 'You are looking for Jesus the Nazarene, who was crucified. He has risen!' (v6).

This is the best news we could possibly imagine. The fact that Jesus has risen from the dead means the cross really did make a way for us to be friends with God, and it means that death is not the end. For those who trust in Jesus, death becomes a doorway to infinite life with Jesus.

QUESTIONS TO DISCUSS:

Imagine going to the tomb with the three women – what would you have been feeling? *Explore the mixture of emotions they would have felt – sadness, disappointment, confusion, pain, and possibly hope?*

What would you feel being told by an angel that Jesus is risen?

Children, ask your parents 'what difference has knowing Jesus is alive made to your life?' *PARENTS, share how the reality of the resurrection has made a difference – maybe in facing death or trials in life.*

PRAY

Praise God that Jesus is alive!



Greatest Day

Song by Tim Hughes with clips from movies

OTHER RESOURCES

THE MARRIAGE COURSE

Why not enjoy date nights with a difference and join The Marriage Course? The Marriage Course is a series of seven sessions, designed to help couples invest in their relationship and build a strong marriage. Sign up for free here: htb.org/marriage

How does it work?

The course can be done in the comfort of your own home. Each session lasts 1 hour 55 minutes, half of which will be for your conversations. The films will be available online and you will be given access when you register for the course. Don't forget the candles, snacks, and drinks. Put older kids in another room and the younger ones to bed. Try to make it feel as special as possible. You can begin the course whenever you like, and it will run for seven consecutive weeks.

What happens when we sign up?

Once you register, we will send you the link for you to connect to the online course. We will be running the course free of charge. The only cost you will incur is purchasing two course journals.

THE PARENTING COURSE

The Parenting Children Course was developed in 1990 by Nicky and Sila Lee (authors of The Parenting Book) for parents and care-givers looking for practical support to strengthen their family relationships.

Who is it for?

The Parenting Children Course is for parents, step-parents, prospective parents or carers of children aged 0-10 years. The course is for every type of parenting situation including parenting on your own, step-parenting and parenting as a couple. The Parenting Children Course is based on Christian principles but designed for all couples with or without a church background.

THE PARENTING FOR FAITH COURSE

The goal of the course is to help parents discover that they are perfectly positioned to show their children the reality of a life with God and to empower them to have their own vibrant two-way relationship with him. Sign up for free here: parentingforfaith.org/course



