

Theme: Lent/Holy Week

Objective: To help families to engage in an interactive, creative activity using Scripture stories from the liturgies of Holy Week.

Overview: Dioramas are great tools for helping families to visualize and reconstruct important events or moments in time. To help capture the importance of Holy Week, families will be assigned a Scripture passage that corresponds to one of the week's events. After reading the passage and identifying the scene and main characters in it, families will create a simple diorama, which tells the Scripture story.

To conclude the event, families will join together to present a Journey through Holy Week by sharing their Scripture scenes. Families can take the scenes they created home to use as a focal point for a family prayer center during Holy Week.

EVENT PLAN

Prior to the Family-Faith Event

1. Invite all families with kindergarteners to register. Ask each family group to bring one or more large shoe boxes to the event.
2. Choose a location that has a large enough meeting space for your group. Make sure there are large tables for each small group to work on as they create their scenes.
3. Prepare a Lenten prayer space with a Bible, candle, crucifix, purple cloth and other symbols representing the liturgical season of Lent. There needs to be enough room for the dioramas the families create to be added to the prayer space at the end of the session.
4. Gather the materials needed (see the "Materials Needed" list below)
5. Choose the Scripture passages (see list in "Event Activity") that you would like families to use for their dioramas. List the events and their Scripture citations on the board or large piece of easel paper. (Feel free to adapt, combine, or use other passages from the Gospels centering on events of the Passion and Death of Jesus.)
6. Prepare a quick show-and-tell that demonstrates some of the creative ways the participants can develop their dioramas using the craft materials provided.

Day of Event

Welcome (10 – 15 minutes)

1. Welcome the participants and families as they arrive. As an activity to engage participants as they arrive, give each family construction paper and direct them to the worktables. Ask them to use the construction paper to create a "Family (Paper Doll) Chain" that represents them, and to decorate it, including their family name. (Remind adults to do the activity *with* their children, rather than *for* their children, especially since it involves scissors.)
2. After ten to fifteen minutes, ask the families to gather in the meeting space. Invite each family to introduce itself to the large group and then place their "Family Chain" on the prayer table.
3. Begin with a simple opening prayer which asks for God's blessings on all of the families present as they gather to reflect on the season of Lent, and Jesus' great sacrifice on the cross.
4. Spend a few minutes by inviting volunteers to tell what they know about what the Church's season of Lent means for us as Catholics.
5. Turning to the children, ask what happens during Holy Week, beginning with Palm Sunday. You may want to use leading questions, or symbols, such as palm branches (Passion Sunday), bread, wine, a bowl with water (Holy Thursday), a cross (Good Friday), etc. to help them recall some of the events of Holy Week. As the children describe Holy Week, write the major events on the board or easel.

Event Activity (40-50 minutes)

1. Describe the activity to the families. Then, ask each family to choose a Scripture passage. Each family will then move to its own space to read the passage together and create the diorama depicting the scene described in the passage. (See below for the option of creating dioramas that depict the 14 Stations of the Cross.)
2. Give the families plenty of time to read their Scripture passages, and to design their dioramas. Remind the adults that this activity is meant to be shared by both parents and children.
3. After the families have finished their Scripture scenes, ask all participants to gather in their family groups in the main meeting area, around the prayer center. Show the families how simple it is to create a Lenten prayer space at home by using purple cloth, a Bible, candle, a large cross, and symbols of the season.
4. Then, explain that each family will come to the front, read their Scripture passage, and place their diorama in the prayer center. This is a time for everyone to be quiet and think and pray about what Jesus did for us.
5. Begin with an opening prayer such as:

God of power and mercy, we come together today to remember the events of Holy Week. In love you sent your Son, Jesus, to save us so that we can live forever with you in heaven. Bless us as we gather to reflect on his suffering and death. Bless us and be with our families during this holiest of holy times. Help us learn to follow the example of Jesus, and love each other more and more every day. We ask this through Christ, our Lord. Amen.
6. Invite families to come forward, read their Scripture passage, and place their diorama in the prayer center.
7. After all of the families have come forward, invite the kindergarten member of each family to come forward to receive a cross to take home for their family. Suggest that the families decorate the cross, and use it at a family prayer space in their home during Lent and Holy Week.
8. End with a prayer such as the following:
9. Lord Jesus Christ, your passion and death is a sacrifice that unites earth and heaven. All people are saved by your death on the cross. Thank you for this special time you give us during Holy Week to think and pray about everything you have done for us. Bless our families. Help us to follow in your steps. We want to share in your glory in heaven, where you live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit one God, forever and ever. Amen.
10. Serve refreshments and allow the families time to look at the display of dioramas.
11. Send families home with the diorama they created, a cross, and their family's paper-doll chain. Suggest that they place these special symbols at a family prayer space during Lent and Holy Week.
12. You may also want to suggest that families create one or more dioramas at home, based on the events of Holy Week. Refer families to [rclbenziger.com > Stories of God Kindergarten > Online Resources > Parents/Families] for a ritual Blessing of the Family Cross which they can use during Lent or Holy Week.

Holy Week Events/Scripture passages (feel free to revise this list by combining events, adding to, or deleting events)

- The Entry into Jerusalem: Matthew 21:1-11; Mark 11:1-10; Luke 19:29-44; John 12:12-19
- The Conspiracy against Jesus: Matthew 26:2-5; Mark 14:1-2; Luke 22:1-2
- The Betrayal by Judas: Matthew 26:14-16; Mark 14:10-11; Luke 22:3-6; John 18:2-5
- Preparation of the Passover: Matthew 26:17-19; Mark 14:12-16; Luke 22:7-13;
- The Lord's Supper Matthew 26:26; Mark 14:22; Luke 22:14
- The Washing of the Disciples' Feet: John 13:1-17
- Agony in the Garden: Matthew 26:36; 26:44; Mark 14:32-42; Luke 22: 39-46; John 18:1
- The Sleep of the Apostles: Matthew 26:40-45; Mark 14:37-41; Luke 22:45-46
- Jesus' Betrayal and Arrest: Matthew 26:47-50; Mark 14:43-45; Luke 22:47; John 18:1-14
- Jesus Before the Sanhedrin: Matthew 26:57; Mark 14:53; Luke 22:66;

- Jesus is Condemned: Matthew 26:66-67; Mark 14:64-65; Luke 22:70-71
- Peter's Denial of Jesus: Matthew 26:69-75; Mark 14:66-72; Luke 22:54-62; John 18:17-27
- Jesus Before Pilate: Matthew 27:1; Mark 15:1; Luke 23:1; John 18:28
- Jesus is Mocked by the Soldiers: Matthew 27:27; Mark 15:15; Luke 22:63-65; John 19:1
- Jesus is Crowned with Thorns: Matthew 27:29; Mark 15:17; John 19:2
- The Way of the Cross: Matthew 27:32; Mark 15:15; Luke 23:25; John 19:16
- Jesus' Crucifixion and Death: Matt 27:33-56; Mark 15:22-41; Luke 23:33-49; John 19:17-30
- The Burial of Jesus: Matthew 27:57-66; Mark 15:42-47; Luke 23:50-56; John 19:38-42

OPTION: Another option is to have family groups each create a diorama that depicts one of the 14 Stations of the Cross. Suggested Scripture passages:

1. Jesus and the Apostles in the Garden of Gethsemane: Matthew 26:36-41
2. Judas Betrays Jesus and is Arrested: Mark 14:43-46
3. Jesus is Condemned by the Sanhedrin: Luke 22:66-71
4. Jesus is Denied by Peter: Matthew 26:69-75
5. Jesus is Judged by Pilate: Mark 15: 1-5, 15
6. Jesus is Scourged and Crowned with Thorns: John 19:1-3
7. Jesus Carries the Cross: John 19:6, 15-17
8. Jesus is Helped by Simon the Cyrenian to Carry the Cross: Mark 15:21
9. Jesus Meets the Women of Jerusalem: Luke 23: 27-31
10. Jesus is Crucified: Luke 23:33-34
11. Jesus Promises His Kingdom to the Good Thief: Luke 23:39-43
12. Jesus Speaks to His Mother and the Disciple: John 19:25-27
13. Jesus Dies on the Cross: Luke 23:44-46
14. Jesus is Placed in the Tomb: Luke 27:57-60

Materials Needed

- Bibles, one per family
- Shoe boxes, large sizes if possible (also ask families to bring to the event)
- Popsicle sticks (to create "stick" characters to stand in the Styrofoam)
- Construction paper, various colors
- Card stock paper, various colors
- Arts and crafts supplies, including: Pipe-cleaners, glitter, crayons/markers
- Glue, tape, and scissors for each table
- Wooden or foam crosses, one per family, approximately 8" – 12" high. (You will give these to the families at the end of the session.)