

THE Week

A Pebbles and Stones
Devotional



Journey with Your Family Through
Holy Week

THE Week

A Pebbles and Stones
Devotional



Journey with Your Family Through
Holy Week

Unless noted, all Scripture quotations are taken from:

Holy Bible, New International Version® (NIV®)

Copyright © 1973, 1978, 1984, 2011 by Biblica, Inc.

All rights reserved worldwide.

© 2024 Kathleen Trock-Molhoek. All rights reserved.

ISBN: 978-0-9914752-5-4

This devotional is copyrighted and all rights are reserved by Kathleen Trock-Molhoek.

This material may not be reproduced or transmitted in any form or by any means without the express written permission of Kathleen Trock-Molhoek.

Authors

Kathleen Trock-Molhoek

Raina Stagg

Design and Layout

Shebatt Quinones

Kathleen Trock-Molhoek

Raina Stagg

Published by

Pebbles and Stones



Contents

Introduction	9
How to Adapt for Large Groups	11
 Palm Sunday: Different Than Expected	12
 Monday: Jesus in the Temple	13
 Tuesday: Jesus Teaches Many Parables	14
 Wednesday: Jesus Foretells His Death	15
 Thursday: Jesus Is Betrayed	16
 Good Friday: Jesus Died for Us	17
 Saturday: Jesus Is Buried	18
 Resurrection Sunday: Jesus Is Alive	19

Introduction

Welcome to the week that changed everything – Holy Week. This devotional, *THE Week*, begins with what is traditionally called Palm Sunday and continues through the events leading up to the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus. During the next eight days, you and your family will have the opportunity to engage in these events by listening to how God is speaking to you through the Biblical narrative and sharing those reflections with each other.

Each daily devotional has four main parts that help build our relationships with God and each other:

- An Introductory Question
- The Biblical Story
- Listening Prayer & Journaling
- Sharing & Praying

As you begin, we encourage you to create a welcoming environment and, if possible, to have everyone sit in a circle. You may want to introduce why you are gathering and what you will be doing together.



Introductory Question (5 minutes)

Begin each lesson by asking the Introductory Question, which gives everyone a personal connection to the Biblical Story. It also helps everyone get to know each other.

After you ask the question, make sure each person has an opportunity to answer. Don't force answers from anyone. You may want to begin by sharing your own answer first. Once everyone has shared, use your family's (or group's) answers to transition into the Biblical Story.



Biblical Story (5-10 minutes)

Share the Biblical Story; we encourage you to use a Bible as you tell it. We've included key points and events as bullet points in each devotional, but we encourage you to read the story beforehand so that you can tell it in an engaging way.

As you tell the story, there is no need to add much interpretation or application. Leave room for the Holy Spirit to teach, convict, and encourage each person in a way that is specific to them during the next part of the devotional: Listening Prayer & Journaling.



Listening Prayer & Journaling (5-10 minutes)

Make sure everyone has paper and crayons (or other materials) so that they can write or draw what God is saying to them. You may choose to play instrumental music in the background; if you do, make sure it does not have a familiar melody or lyrics – these can be a distraction.

Encourage everyone to quiet themselves on the outside and on the inside. We suggest you begin this time by praying and asking the Holy Spirit to speak to each person through the Scripture that has been shared. For example, you might pray something like this:

Dear Father,

Hi, it's me. I've come to spend time with You. I want to tell You about many things, and I want to listen to what You have to say to me. As I think about today's Bible story, help me to hear what You are saying to me through it.

To help everyone get started, encourage them to reflect on any of the following questions:

Through the Bible Story, what is God telling you...

- *About Himself?*
- *About yourself?*
- *About others?*
- *Is there anything He's asking you to do?*

You can talk to God about anything.



Sharing & Praying (10 minutes)

Give each person a chance to share their journal page or what their conversation with God was about. After each person shares, have those sitting next to them gently lay a hand on their shoulders – always ask permission before doing this – and pray for them, relying on the Holy Spirit's leading as they pray.

If someone is reluctant to share, don't force them. Ask if you or someone else may pray for them.

If anyone is uncomfortable praying out loud, that's okay. Be patient and don't pressure them. If they want to, they can still place a hand on the shoulder of the person who shared, and you or someone else in the group can pray.

Note: it is important to create an environment of empathy and trust within the group. Below are some guidelines that we suggest discussing and committing to with your family or group:

- *We're here to listen, not just with our ears, but with our hearts.*
- *We will be honest; we will trust one another with our experiences and reflections just as they are, without disguise.*
- *We're here to encourage each other. We will not respond with teasing or joking.*
- *We will not judge, be quick to advise, or have a "know-it-all" attitude.*
- *What is said here stays here; we don't share it with others without permission.*

Note: If someone shares that they may be unsafe or in a situation of danger, abuse, or neglect, you *must* follow appropriate guidelines and report it to local authorities. This includes: a) if they are thinking of hurting themselves; b) if they are thinking of hurting someone else; or c) if someone is hurting them, an elderly person, or an adult who needs special care.

Optional: If you have time, you may choose to end each lesson by singing a praise song together or speaking a blessing over your family.

As you meet, I pray that you and your family or small group will experience Ephesians 1:17-21:

I keep asking that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the glorious Father, may give you the Spirit of wisdom and revelation, so that you may know him better. I pray that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened in order that you may know the hope to which he has called you, the riches of his glorious inheritance in his holy people and his incomparably great power for us who believe. That power is the same as the mighty strength he exerted when he raised Christ from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly realms, far above all rule and authority, power and dominion, and every name that is invoked, not only in the present age but also in the one to come.

How to Adapt for Large Groups

To use this devotional with large groups (i.e. multiple families, churches, etc.), we recommend that large groups split into small groups of 12 or fewer. As you prepare to facilitate a large group meeting, here are a couple of things to keep in mind:

- You will need equipped leaders and co-leaders for every small group. No one leads alone.
- It is important to keep each small group intergenerational.

In a large-group meeting, everyone stays together during the Introductory Question and Biblical Story. Not everyone will have time to answer when you ask the Introductory Question. Take a few responses and incorporate them into the Biblical Story. After the Biblical Story, transition into small groups, where group leaders will:

- Repeat the Introductory Question, giving *everyone* a chance to respond.
- Briefly summarize the Biblical Story, incorporating their group's responses to the Introductory Question.
- Continue to lead their small groups through Listening Prayer & Journaling and Sharing & Praying.

Palm Sunday: Different Than Expected



Introductory Question

Tell us about a time when something happened differently than you expected.



Bible Story

We've all had experiences that were different from what we expected. (Incorporate your family's or group's answers to the Introductory Question – for example,) Sam expected to fail his exam, but he passed it! Sarah was expecting that she wouldn't like the taste of a kiwi, but she loved it.

Over 2000 years ago, the Jewish people were expecting a Messiah (an anointed one) to come and save them. They thought He would be an earthly king; they were hoping that He would come, set up His kingdom, and overthrow the Romans who were ruling over them. But when Jesus the Messiah came, He was different from what they expected.

Tell the story from **Matthew 21:1-11** and **Luke 19:28-44**, including main events such as:

- Jesus entered Jerusalem riding on a donkey. Why was that unusual? Conquering kings would ride in on a mighty horse, but a donkey symbolized humility and peace. This fulfilled a prophesy in **Zechariah 9:9**, which reads, "Rejoice greatly, Daughter Zion! Shout, Daughter Jerusalem! See, your king comes to you, righteous and victorious, lowly and riding on a donkey, on a colt, the foal of a donkey."
- The people showed their excitement by laying palm branches and cloaks on the road in front of Jesus. They shouted, "Hosanna (save us)!" and "Blessed is the king who comes in the name of the Lord." They praised God for the miracles they had seen.
- Some Pharisees in the crowd told Jesus to rebuke the people for what they were saying. He said, "If they keep quiet, the stones will cry out" (**Luke 19:40**).
- As Jesus approached Jerusalem and saw the city, He wept over it, saying, "If you...had only known on this day what would bring you peace – but...you did not recognize the time of God's coming to you" (**Luke 19:42-44**).



Listening Prayer & Journaling

Invite your family to spend a few minutes in Listening Prayer and Journaling: *As we've listened to these words from the Bible, God has been speaking to us through them. What is God telling you about: Himself, yourself, others, and what to do? You can talk to God about anything.*



Sharing & Praying

When everyone begins to finish Journaling, give each person an opportunity to share what God has been speaking to them. After each person shares, pray for them.

KEY VERSE: Zechariah 9:9

"Rejoice greatly, Daughter Zion! Shout, Daughter Jerusalem! See, your king comes to you, righteous and victorious, lowly and riding on a donkey, on a colt, the foal of a donkey."

Monday: Jesus in the Temple



Introductory Question

Tell us about something you saw that was out of place or didn't belong.



Bible Story

In our story yesterday, we read that Jesus rode into Jerusalem on a donkey. The crowds shouted "Hosanna," spreading palm branches and their cloaks on the road. Today, we will continue the story in Matthew 21:12-17. The first place Jesus went after entering Jerusalem was the temple, which is a place where the Jews worshipped God. He saw some things going on there that didn't belong – like (incorporate your family's or group's answers to the Introductory Question – for example) when Jacob saw his toys on the floor and when Maggie found a snake in her house. In the temple, Jesus saw money changers and people buying and selling doves and other animals.

Continue to tell the story from **Matthew 21:12-17**, including main points such as:

- Jesus drove out all who were buying and selling things in the temple. "'It is written,' he said to them, 'My house will be called a house of prayer,' but you are making it 'a den of robbers'" (Matt. 21:13). Jesus was quoting from **Isaiah 56:7**, which says, "...my house will be called a house of prayer for all nations," and **Jeremiah 7:11**, which says, "Has this house, which bears my Name, become a den of robbers to you? But I have been watching! declares the Lord."
- After Jesus drove out the moneychangers, the lame and blind came to Jesus at the temple, and He healed them.
- Children saw the wonderful things Jesus did and praised Him, saying "Hosanna (save us!) to the Son of David!" but the chief priests and the teachers of the law (the religious leaders) were indignant. "Do you hear what these children are saying?" they asked Him. "Yes," He said. "Haven't you read, 'From the lips of children and infants you, Lord, have called forth your praise?'" Jesus quoted **Psalms 8:2**, which says, "Through the praise of children and infants you have established a stronghold against your enemies, to silence the foe and the avenger."



Listening Prayer & Journaling

Invite your family to spend a few minutes in Listening Prayer and Journaling: As we've listened to these words from the Bible, God has been speaking to us through them. What is God telling you about: Himself, yourself, others, and what to do? You can talk to God about anything.



Sharing & Praying

When everyone begins to finish Journaling, give each person an opportunity to share what God has been speaking to them. After each person shares, pray for them.

KEY VERSE: Isaiah 56:7

"...my house will be called a house of prayer for all nations."

Tuesday: Jesus Teaches Many Parables



Introductory Question

What is something good that you did and forgot about until someone reminded you?



Bible Story

Yesterday, we read that Jesus cleared out the temple and healed the lame and the blind. The story continues in Matthew 21:23-25:46, where Jesus began to teach many parables. One of them was about what will happen when the Son of Man (the Messiah – Jesus) comes with all His angels and gathers up all people from every nation. Then, the Son of Man (the King) will separate all people as a shepherd separates sheep from goats – the sheep on His right and the goats on His left. The King will reward the sheep with eternal life, saying, “I was hungry and you fed Me, I needed clothes and you clothed Me, I was a stranger and you invited Me in.” (Incorporate your family’s or group’s answers to the Introductory Question – for example,) just as Michael forgot that he had sent a thank-you card to his uncle, and Katelyn forgot that she had stood up for her friend at work, the sheep will not remember when they did these things for Jesus. But Jesus will say, “Whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me” (v. 25:40).

Continue to tell the story from **Matthew 25:31-46** and **22:34-40**, including main points such as:

- Then the King will banish the goats into eternal fire and punishment, saying, “I was hungry and you gave Me nothing to eat, I needed clothes and you did not clothe Me, I was a stranger and you did not invite Me in...” The goats will say, “When did we see you in need and not help you?” And the King will reply, “Whatever you did not do for one of the least of these, you did not do for me” (v. 25:45).
- On another occasion, an expert in the law asked Jesus, “What is the greatest commandment?” Jesus answered, “‘Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.’ This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: ‘Love your neighbor as yourself’” (v. 22:37-39).



Listening Prayer & Journaling

Invite your family to spend a few minutes in Listening Prayer and Journaling: As we’ve listened to these words from the Bible, God has been speaking to us through them. What is God telling you about: Himself, yourself, others, and what to do? You can talk to God about anything.



Sharing & Praying

When everyone begins to finish Journaling, give each person an opportunity to share what God has been speaking to them. After each person shares, pray for them.

KEY VERSE: Matthew 22:37, 39

“...‘Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind’ ...[And] ‘Love your neighbor as yourself.’”

Wednesday: Jesus Foretells His Death



Introductory Question

Tell us about a time when you knew something was going to happen.



Bible Story

Yesterday we read about when Jesus taught the importance of loving God and others through the parable of the Sheep and the Goats. Today we will continue the story in Matthew 26:1-16, when Jesus told His disciples some of the things that were about to happen to Him. (Incorporate your family's or group's answers to the Introductory Question – for example,) just as Cassie knew her family was going to move, and Jose knew there was going to be a storm, Jesus knew that He would be crucified during Passover (a festival that the Jews celebrated to remember how God had rescued them from slavery in Egypt).

Continue to tell the story from **Matthew 16:21-23** and **26:1-16**, including main points such as:

- Earlier, Jesus had told His disciples that He “must go to Jerusalem and suffer many things at the hands of the [religious leaders], and that he must be killed and on the third day be raised to life” (v. 16:21). In John’s account, Jesus said He told them these things because He had called them His friends (**John 15:15b**).
- Peter responded, “No, Lord! This shall never happen!” But Jesus told Peter, “You are a stumbling block to me; you do not have in mind the concerns of God, but merely human concerns” (v. 16:23). Then Jesus said, “Whoever wants to be my disciple must deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me” (v. 16:24).
- The religious leaders began planning to arrest Jesus secretly and kill Him (Matt. 26:3-4).
- While Jesus and His disciples were in Bethany, a woman poured expensive perfume on Jesus’ head. The disciples thought that the money should have been used to help the poor. But Jesus said, “She has done a beautiful thing to me...When she poured this perfume on my body, she did it to prepare me for burial” (v. 26:10-12).
- Then one of Jesus’ disciples, Judas Iscariot, secretly made a deal with the chief priests to betray Jesus for thirty pieces of silver. And Judas watched for a chance to hand Jesus over.



Listening Prayer & Journaling

Invite your family to spend a few minutes in Listening Prayer and Journaling: *As we’ve listened to these words from the Bible, God has been speaking to us through them. What is God telling you about: Himself, yourself, others, and what to do? You can talk to God about anything.*



Sharing & Praying

When everyone begins to finish Journaling, give each person an opportunity to share what God has been speaking to them. After each person shares, pray for them.

KEY VERSE: Matthew 16:24

“Then Jesus said to His disciples, ‘Whoever wants to be my disciple must deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me.’”

Thursday: Jesus Is Betrayed



Introductory Question

Tell us about a time when a friend let you down.



Bible Story

Yesterday we read about when Jesus foretold His death. Today we will continue the story in Matthew 26:17-75, where Jesus is betrayed and arrested. (Incorporate your family's or group's answers to the Introductory Question – for example,) like Joe's friend let him down by playing with someone else, and Megan's friend let her down by gossiping about her, most of Jesus' friends deserted Him when He was arrested and put on trial.

Continue to tell the story from **Matthew 26:17-75**, including main points such as:

- The disciples prepared the traditional Passover dinner. As they were eating, Jesus said, "One of you will betray me" (v. 21). All of them, including Judas, said, "Surely not me, Lord?" And Jesus said to Judas, "You have said so" (v.25).
- Then "...Jesus took bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it and gave it to his disciples, saying, 'Take and eat; this is my body.' Then he took a cup, and when he had given thanks, he gave it to them, saying, 'Drink from it, all of you. This is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins'" (v. 26-28).
- Jesus told His disciples that all of them would fall away. Peter insisted that even if he had to die, he would not disown Jesus. And the other disciples said the same. Jesus told Peter, "Before the rooster crows tonight, you will disown me three times."
- In the Garden of Gethsemane, Jesus was filled with sorrow. He prayed, "My Father, if it is possible, may this cup be taken from me. Yet not as I will, but as you will" (v. 39). He asked His disciples to keep watch, but they fell asleep twice while He was praying.
- Judas arrived with an armed crowd and kissed Jesus on the cheek to signal that Jesus was the man they were looking for. Then all the disciples deserted Jesus and ran away.
- The priests, elders, and teachers of the law put Jesus on trial. Outside in the courtyard, Peter was asked three times whether he was with Jesus. He denied Jesus each time, and then a rooster crowed. Peter remembered what Jesus had said, and he wept bitterly.



Listening Prayer & Journaling

Invite your family to spend a few minutes in Listening Prayer and Journaling: *As we've listened to these words from the Bible, God has been speaking to us through them. What is God telling you about: Himself, yourself, others, and what to do? You can talk to God about anything.*



Sharing & Praying

When everyone begins to finish Journaling, give each person an opportunity to share what God has been speaking to them. After each person shares, pray for them.

KEY VERSE: Matthew 26:28

"This is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins."

Good Friday: Jesus Died for Us



Introductory Question

Tell us about a time you were blamed or punished for something you didn't do.



Bible Story

Yesterday we read that Jesus was arrested and all His disciples abandoned Him. Today the story continues in Matthew 27:11-54, when Jesus was brought before Pilate, the Roman governor. (Incorporate your family's or group's answers to the Introductory Question – for example,) just as Paula was accused of cheating, and Christian was blamed for making his sister cry, Jesus was falsely accused by the religious leaders.

Continue to tell the story from **Matthew 27:11-54**, including main points such as:

- Pilate was amazed because Jesus said nothing to defend Himself (fulfilling Isaiah 53:7).
- The chief priests and elders convinced the people to ask for Jesus to be crucified. Pilate asked, "Why? What has He done?" But they shouted louder, "Crucify Him!" Pilate gave Jesus over to be crucified and released a notorious prisoner, Barabbas, instead.
- The Roman soldiers mocked Jesus, putting a scarlet robe and a crown of thorns on Him, saying, "Hail, King of the Jews!" Then they crucified Him between two criminals.
- Jesus said, "Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing" (**Luke 23:34**). They cast lots for His garments. Over His head was written, "Jesus, the King of the Jews."
- **Isaiah 53:5** says, "he was pierced for our transgressions, he was crushed for our iniquities; the punishment that brought us peace was on him, and by his wounds we are healed."
- The chief priests, elders, scribes, and people passing by mocked Jesus, saying, "If you are the Son of God, come down from the cross!" For three hours, darkness covered the land. Then Jesus cried, "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?", quoting **Psalms 22**.
- Jesus said, "It is finished!" (**John 19:30**) and "gave up His spirit." The curtain in the temple tore from top to bottom, the earth shook, rocks split, and tombs came open.
- When the centurion and those who were with him saw all that happened, they were filled with awe and said, "Surely he was the Son of God!" (v. 54).



Listening Prayer & Journaling

Invite your family to spend a few minutes in Listening Prayer and Journaling: *As we've listened to these words from the Bible, God has been speaking to us through them. What is God telling you about: Himself, yourself, others, and what to do? You can talk to God about anything.*



Sharing & Praying

When everyone begins to finish Journaling, give each person an opportunity to share what God has been speaking to them. After each person shares, pray for them.

KEY VERSE: Isaiah 53:5

"But he was pierced for our transgressions, he was crushed for our iniquities; the punishment that brought us peace was on him, and by his wounds we are healed."

Saturday: Jesus Is Buried



Introductory Question

What is a way that you can show love to someone?



Bible Story

While Jesus was being crucified, many women were watching from a distance, including Mary Magdalene and Mary the mother of James and Joseph, who “had followed Jesus from Galilee to care for his needs” (Matthew 27:55). Today we will continue the story in Matthew 27:55-66 and Luke 23:55-56, when three of Jesus’ followers continued to show their love for Him after the others had left.

(Incorporate your family’s or group’s answers to the Introductory Question – for example,) *just as Hannah showed love to her mother by making her a treat, and Tim showed love to his friend by visiting him at the hospital, a rich man named Joseph showed his love for Jesus by providing for Jesus’ burial.*

Continue to tell the story from **Matthew 27:55-66**, including main points such as:

- Joseph asked Pilate for Jesus’ body, and Pilate ordered that it be given to him. Joseph wrapped Jesus’ body in clean linen and placed it in his own new tomb (fulfilling Isaiah 53:9). He rolled a large stone in front of the entrance to the tomb.
- “The women who had come with Jesus from Galilee followed Joseph and saw the tomb...Then they went home and prepared spices and perfumes...” (**Luke 23:55-56**).
- The chief priest and Pharisees remembered that Jesus, whom they called “the deceiver,” had said He would rise again after three days.
- They asked Pilate to secure the tomb so that Jesus’ disciples could not steal His body and claim that He had risen from the dead. They said, “This last deception will be worse than the first” (Matt. 27:64). Pilate agreed and secured the tomb by putting a seal on the stone in front of the tomb and posting a guard.



Listening Prayer & Journaling

Invite your family to spend a few minutes in Listening Prayer and Journaling: *As we’ve listened to these words from the Bible, God has been speaking to us through them. What is God telling you about: Himself, yourself, others, and what to do? You can talk to God about anything.*



Sharing & Praying

When everyone begins to finish Journaling, give each person an opportunity to share what God has been speaking to them. After each person shares, pray for them.

KEY VERSE: Luke 23:55-56

“The women who had come with Jesus from Galilee followed Joseph and saw the tomb...Then they went home and prepared spices and perfumes...”

Resurrection Sunday: Jesus Is Alive



Introductory Question

Tell us about a time when you had good news to tell.



Bible Story

Yesterday we talked about how Jesus' followers cared for His body and how His tomb was secured. The story continues in Matthew 28:1-20, when Mary Magdalene and the other Mary took spices (**Luke 24:1**) to the tomb the day after the Sabbath. When they arrived, there was a violent earthquake and an angel came from heaven, rolled back the stone from the tomb, and sat on it. The guards were so afraid that they shook and became like dead men.

The angel said to the women, "Do not be afraid, for I know that you are looking for Jesus...He is not here; he has risen, just as he said. Come and see the place where he lay. Then go quickly and tell his disciples [to meet Him in Galilee]" (Matt. 28:5-7). (Incorporate your family's or group's answers to the Introductory Question – for example,) just as Marcus told the good news that his dog got better, and Samantha told her friends that she was promoted, the women hurried away, afraid yet joyful, to tell the disciples that Jesus was alive.

Continue to tell the story from **Matthew 28:1-20**, including main points such as:

- As the women were going, Jesus met them. They clasped His feet and worshipped Him. Then Jesus said, "Don't be afraid. Tell my brothers to go to Galilee; they will see me there."
- After the women left, the guards told the chief priests everything that had happened. The priests and elders bribed the soldiers to say that Jesus' disciples stole His body, and they promised to keep the soldiers out of trouble with the governor. So the soldiers took the money and spread the lie, which some people still believe today.
- The eleven disciples went to Galilee. When they saw Jesus, they worshipped Him, but some doubted. Then Jesus said, "Go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age" (v. 19-20). This is the Great Commission, a command that still applies to us today.



Listening Prayer & Journaling

Invite your family to spend a few minutes in Listening Prayer and Journaling: As we've listened to these words from the Bible, God has been speaking to us through them. What is God telling you about: Himself, yourself, others, and what to do? You can talk to God about anything.



Sharing & Praying

When everyone begins to finish Journaling, give each person an opportunity to share what God has been speaking to them. After each person shares, pray for them.

KEY VERSE: Matthew 28:19-20

"Go and make disciples of all nations...surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age."



Pebbles and Stones
 info@PebblesandStones.com
www.PebblesandStones.com

Lausanne Children and Family Network
cnfnetwork@lausanne.org
<https://lausanne.org/network/children-and-family>