

journey to the cross

A RESOURCE FOR FAMILIES TO USE AT HOME

instructions

Welcome to Journey to the Cross. We love that you have made this a part of your family's Easter celebration this year. This resource is designed to be used at home with your family. It may be helpful to set up stations around your house that represents the different events. For each stop on your journey, we have provided text for you to read as a family and a simple action using items that you have around the house. Before you get started, you will want to gather: *a computer or smart phone, clear glass of water, food coloring, thorns or sharp leaves, a nail, wine vinegar, Q-Tips, 30 real or play coins, ½ cup of bleach, and a tape measure. We have also included a recipe for Resurrection Rolls so be sure to check the ingredients list.*

We pray your family will gain a better understanding of the events that lead up to the Empty Tomb and the reason we have to celebrate all God has done by sending his son Jesus.

station one – creation

We have included the link to the Creation Video, watch this and then read the following text.

The Beginning. It's where all good stories start, and the story of creation is no different. Genesis 1:1 says, *"In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth."* God created everything, and not only that, but He created it perfectly. *"God said, 'Let there be light,' and there was light. God saw that the light was good."* (Genesis 1:3) God separated the sea from the land and saw that it was good. He created plants and trees and all sorts of delicious fruits and vegetables for us to eat. And it was good. He placed the sun, moon, and stars in the sky—and it was good. Birds filled the air and fish filled the sea. And it was good. Then came the animals; tiny to humongous and everything in between, God created them all. And it was good. But that's not all, God's work was not done. On the sixth day, from the dust of the ground, God created man. *"God saw all that He had made, and it was very good."* (Genesis 1:31) God's creation was just as He intended it to be; it was good, it was complete, it was perfect...

Discuss as a family: Q: Why is it important that God's creation was perfect?

(A: God created it just as He intended it to be, He doesn't make mistakes. He is a perfect Creator.)

station two – the fall

...but not for long. When God created Adam and Eve, He gave them a lot of freedom, but asked one thing of them: not to eat from the tree of knowledge of good and evil (Genesis 2:16-17). Unfortunately, Adam and Eve chose to disobey, and when we choose to disobey God, there are consequences. Sin entered the world. Sin is anything we say, think, or do that makes God sad. Adam and Eve knew that they had done wrong, and they even tried to hide from God, but God knew exactly what had happened.

Experience: Fill a **clear glass with water** (leaving room for a ½ cup of bleach). The water represents people. Adam and Eve were in the garden with God and they were pure and sinless, like God. But then sin entered the world. **Put a drop of food coloring in the glass of water.** Is the water still clear? Watch how the sin spreads throughout the water. **Put in several more drops.** **Ask:** What are some sins you struggle with? **Explain:** Sin entered the world with Adam and Eve, but sin is still very much a part of our world today. God sent Adam and Eve out of the garden because of their sin. They were no longer able to be with God. Since we also sin, we don't deserve to be with God either. *Set the stained water aside until later.*

station three – garden of gethsemane

Because of the sin that entered the world, all of humanity would need a Savior and that is where our journey continues.

Jesus often went to the Garden of Gethsemane to pray, however, this particular time He knew that He was about to be betrayed. On the night that Jesus was arrested, He prayed three separate times. In Matthew 26:39, He prays, *“My Father, if it is possible, may this cup be taken from me. Yet not as I will, but as You will.”* Jesus knew that God was about to ask Him to do something very difficult, but He also wanted to obey. And not only did Jesus want to obey, in the next station, we will see that He DID obey.

**Go outside and find a spot to pray as a family:
Thank Jesus for His willingness to obey God.
Ask for God’s help to obey Him no matter what.**

Pray that you would listen to what God has to say to you throughout the rest of the journey.

station four – betrayal

Jesus knew that one of His disciples was going to betray Him. During the Last Supper, in Matthew 26:23-24, Jesus says *“The one who has dipped his hand into the bowl with me will betray me. The Son of Man will go just as it is written about him. But woe to the man who betrays the Son of Man!”*

Count out thirty coins. These coins represent the price Judas was paid to lead the chief priests to Jesus. Judas, one of Jesus’ disciples, made the choice to betray Jesus by taking the officers to where Jesus was praying in the Garden of Gethsemane. Judas helped the officers arrest Jesus.

Matthew 26:48-50 says *“Now the betrayer has arranged a signal with him: ‘The one I kiss is the man; arrest him.’ Going at once to Jesus, Judas said, ‘Greetings, Rabbi!’ and kissed him. Jesus replied, ‘Do what you came for, friend.’ Then the men stepped forward, seized Jesus and arrested Him.”*

station five – the crucifixion

For this stop, pass the different items around and allow your child to experience the crucifixion through interacting with each of the items.

Thorns or Leaves-Carefully feel the sharpness of the thorns or leaves. When Jesus was being led to the cross, the soldiers put a crown of thorns on his head. This was used to tease and taunt Jesus. Jesus allowed them to tease Him and did not retaliate. **Ask** your children if they are ever teased, and if so, how do they respond?

“They stripped Him and put a scarlet robe on Him, and then twisted together a crown of thorns and set it on His head. They put a staff in His right hand. Then they knelt in front of Him and mocked Him. ‘Hail, king of the Jews!’ they said.” (Matthew 27:28-29)

Nail-Carefully feel the sharpness of the nail. Jesus was crucified on a rough cross using sharp nails. *“Carrying His own cross, He went out to the place of the Skull (which in Aramaic is called Golgotha). There they crucified Him...”* (John 19:17-18)

Wine Vinegar and Q-Tips-Soak a Q-tip in wine vinegar and taste it.

“Later, knowing that everything had now been finished, and so that Scripture would be fulfilled, Jesus said, ‘I am thirsty.’ A jar of wine vinegar was there, so they soaked a sponge in it, put the sponge on a stalk of the hyssop plant, and lifted it to Jesus’ lips. When He had received the drink, Jesus said, ‘It is finished.’ With that, He bowed his head and gave up His spirit.” (John 19:28-30)

station six – the empty tomb

After Jesus died on the cross, His body was put in a tomb. Pilate and his officers made sure that it was sealed securely and that no one could get in.

“Take a guard,” Pilate answered. ‘Go, make the tomb as secure as you know how.’ So they went and made the tomb secure by putting a seal on the stone and posting the guard.” (Matthew 27:65-66)

Search for images of an empty tomb in Google, and as you look at them, remember that Jesus rose again! He is alive!

“After the Sabbath, at dawn on the first day of the week, Mary Magdalene and the other Mary went to look at the tomb. There was a violent earthquake, for an angel of the Lord came down from heaven and, going to the tomb, rolled back the stone and sat on it. His appearance was like lightning, and his clothes were white as snow. The guards were so afraid of him 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, who was crucified. He is not here; He has risen, just as He said. Come and see the place where He lay.’” (Matthew 28:1-6)

Bonus activity: Make Resurrection Rolls with your family. The instructions are attached.

station seven – forgiveness

Bring the cup of stained water back out. Let's look back at our sin-stained water. Since we are full of sin, we don't deserve to be with God, but God loves us and wants to be with us. God did something amazing so that we could be forgiven and made new. God sent Jesus to the earth to take our punishment. Let's say this cup of dirty water is us and this cup of bleach represents Jesus. Pour ½ cup of bleach into the glass of dirty water. Romans 3:23-26 says, *“Everyone has sinned. No one measures up to God's glory. The free gift of God's grace makes us right with Him. Christ Jesus paid the price to set us free. God gave Christ as a sacrifice to pay for sins though the spilling of His blood. So God forgives the sins of those who have faith. God did all this to prove that He does what is right. He is a God of mercy.”*

When we realize we need a Savior and ask Jesus to forgive us of our sins and be in charge of our life; He no longer sees our bad choices. Hebrews 8:12 says, *“I will forgive their wrongdoing, and I will never again remember their sins.”* What happened to the water? The sin is gone! Jesus lived a perfect life. He did not deserve to die. But when He died on the cross, Jesus took our sins on Himself. When Jesus enters a heart, the sin is forgiven. We each get to choose to have Jesus come into our hearts and take away the sin. As a family, thank Jesus for taking our sins on Himself.

station eight – the temple veil

In the Temple, there was a very special area called the Holy of Holies. This area was behind a curtain, and only the High Priest could enter this special area once a year. This was God's special home among His people, but the curtain separated God from the people. And this wasn't any old curtain, this curtain was HUGE! We don't know exactly how tall or thick it was, but it was most likely over 60 feet tall and around 4 inches thick. Measure out 60 feet on your driveway to see how tall it was! Then, see if you can find a pillow that is four inches thick to help you understand how thick the fabric would have been.

When He died on the cross, Jesus made a way for us to be with God, and in that moment, the Temple Veil was torn. After seeing how tall and thick the Temple Veil was, do you think there is any way that was done by a human? But wait, it gets even better! The Temple Veil didn't just tear in half, it tore in half from TOP to BOTTOM! Over 60 feet tall and it tore from top to bottom. Matthew 27:50-51 says, *“And when Jesus had cried out again in a loud voice, He gave up His spirit. At that moment the curtain of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom. The earth shook, the rocks split...”* God made it very clear that the curtain has fallen between Him and us, and we can all be with God now if we make that decision!

resurrection rolls

Ingredients:

- 1 (10 oz) can refrigerated crescent dinner rolls
- 8 large marshmallows (*We've learned from personal experience that name brand works best.*)
- ¼ cup melted butter
- 2 tablespoons ground cinnamon
- 2 tablespoons white sugar

Instructions:

1. Preheat oven to 400 degrees F. Prepare a baking sheet by either lightly greasing or laying down parchment paper.
2. Separate crescent rolls into individual triangles.
3. In a small bowl, mix together cinnamon and sugar.
4. Show the kids a marshmallow and explain that this will remind us of Jesus' body. Dip the marshmallow in the melted butter and then roll in the sugar mixture. The melted butter and the sugar mixture reminds us of the oils and the spices used to anoint and prepare Jesus' body for burial.
5. Place the marshmallow in the center of a dough triangle and carefully wrap the dough around the marshmallow. Pinch the seams together tightly to seal in the marshmallow. Explain that this reminds us of how Jesus was buried in the tomb and how it was sealed tightly by a large stone.
6. Once all of the marshmallows are wrapped in dough, place on the baking sheet. Bake in the preheated oven until golden brown, about 15 minutes.
7. Once they are baked, pull them out and allow them to cool down a bit. Once they are cool, open one and show the kids that they are empty. Jesus has risen! He is alive!

