

Good Friday Family Activities

Hi, parents! We're providing sensory activities to help you create a meaningful, memorable, sensory-filled Good Friday experience for your whole family.

These activities are intended to create a cohesive sensory experience leading families from Preparation to Resurrection. There are multiple experiences for some senses. Do them all, or feel free to choose the ones that seem best for your family situation.

SENSE OF SMELL

Prepare your heart by creating a unique perfume like the one Mary used to anoint Jesus before his death.

Supply list:

- A variety of essential oils (choose spicy fragrances to be more “biblical”, but any favorites will also work!)
- Cotton balls (one for each family member)

READ IT TOGETHER (John 12:1-7)

“Six days before the Passover festival, Jesus went to Bethany. That is where Lazarus lived, the man Jesus raised from death. ² There they had a dinner for Jesus. Martha served the food, and Lazarus was one of the people eating with Jesus. ³ Mary brought in a pint of expensive perfume made of pure nard. She poured the perfume on Jesus’ feet. Then she wiped his feet with her hair. And the sweet smell from the perfume filled the whole house.”

EXPERIENCE IT TOGETHER

- After reading the Bible passage together, let each family member smell each of the essential oils.
- Give each person a cotton ball, and let them place one drop of each of their favorite scents on their cotton ball. Scents may be combined to create a new scent!

TALK ABOUT IT TOGETHER

- Jesus said Mary was preparing his body for death and burial. When she broke the jar, the house was filled with the scent of her perfume. How do these oils make our home smell?
- When we smell our scented cotton balls, we can remember the perfume Mary put on Jesus, and remember that Jesus died for us.
- Let’s thank him right now. As you smell your cotton ball, tell Jesus, “Thank you for dying for me.”
- Like Mary prepared Jesus, we are preparing our hearts to celebrate Easter.

SENSE OF TOUCH

Experience Jesus' servant heart as you serve like Jesus.

Supply list:

- Basin, tub, or bucket (big enough for a pair of feet to fit into!)
- Pitchers of water
- Towels and washcloths

READ IT TOGETHER (John 13:1-5a)

"Jesus and his followers were at the evening meal... ³ The Father had given Jesus power over everything. Jesus knew this. He also knew that he had come from God. And he knew that he was going back to God. ⁴ So while they were eating, Jesus stood up and took off his robe. He got a towel and wrapped it around his waist. ⁵ Then he poured water into a bowl and began to wash the followers' feet.^[a] He dried their feet with the towel that was wrapped around his waist."

EXPERIENCE IT TOGETHER

- Use the water, basin, and towels.
- Choose one family member to have his or her feet washed by the others.
- Have that person place his or her feet in the basin, and let each family member take a turn pouring water over them and drying their feet with a towel. (No scrubbing necessary!)
- Repeat for other family members as desired.

TALK ABOUT IT TOGETHER

- Did it feel funny to have someone wash your feet like that? What was so strange? How did it feel to wash (your brother's/dad's/mom's...) feet?
- What do you think it was like for the disciples when Jesus washed their feet? He was being really nice to them, wasn't he?
- He was showing them (and us) that serving other people is how we show love to them. Jesus is God, but he is also a servant!

SENSE OF SIGHT

See Jesus' royalty and respond to him as king.

Supply list:

- Paper cross shape (older kids may cut out their own)
- Purple tissue paper (or other paper), torn into pieces about one inch square
- Glue sticks (OR liquid starch and paint brushes)
- Wet washcloth or baby wipes

READ IT TOGETHER (John 19:1-3)

“Then Pilate ordered that Jesus be taken away and whipped.² The soldiers made a crown from thorny branches and put it on his head. Then they put a purple robe around him.³ They kept coming up to him and saying, “Hail to the king of the Jews!” And they hit him in the face.”

EXPERIENCE IT TOGETHER

- Let each person cut out a cross shape (OR cut them in advance for young preschoolers.)
- If using the liquid starch, let each person “paint” their cross shape with the starch, and then press tissue paper pieces onto the wet starch. (Have wipes ready for messy hands!)
- If using glue, have family members “color” their cross shape with the glue, and press tissue paper pieces over it.

TALK ABOUT IT TOGETHER

- Purple was the color of kings. Do you think the soldiers thought Jesus was really a king? Why did they put a purple robe on Jesus?
- When we look at our purple crosses, let’s remember that Jesus really is the King of our hearts.
- Let’s thank him for loving us so much, he was willing to let the soldiers beat him and make fun of him.

SENSE OF HEARING

Hear the rooster crows and think about why Peter denied Jesus.

Supply list:

Video file of rooster crowing: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=r6I1EXPrA-A>

READ IT TOGETHER (from Matthew 26)

³¹ Jesus told the followers, “Tonight you will all lose your faith in me. But after I am killed, I will rise from death. Then I will go into Galilee. I will be there before you go there.” ³³ Peter answered, “All the other followers may lose their faith in you. But my faith will never be shaken.” ³⁴ Jesus answered, “The truth is, tonight you will say you don’t know me. You will deny me three times before the rooster crows.

⁶⁹While Peter was sitting outside in the yard, a servant girl came up to him. She said, “You were with Jesus, that man from Galilee.” ⁷⁰ But Peter told everyone there that this was not true. “I don’t know what you are talking about,” he said. ⁷¹ Then he left the yard. At the gate another girl saw him and said to the people there, “This man was with Jesus of Nazareth.” ⁷² Again, Peter said he was never with Jesus. He said, “I swear to God I don’t know the man!” ⁷³ A short time later those standing there went to Peter and

said, “We know you are one of them. It’s clear from the way you talk.”

⁷⁴ Then Peter began to curse. He said, “I swear to God, I don’t know the man!” As soon as he said this, a rooster crowed. ⁷⁵ Then he remembered what Jesus had told him: “Before the rooster crows, you will say three times that you don’t know me.” Then Peter went outside and cried bitterly.

EXPERIENCE IT TOGETHER

- Play the video file of rooster crowing. (Stop after three crows.)
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=r6I1EXPrA-A>

TALK ABOUT IT TOGETHER

- Jesus told his followers that he would be arrested and they would all run away. They didn’t believe that would really happen.
- Peter said, “The others may run away, but I would never do that. I would die for you.”
- But Jesus told Peter that before a rooster crowed the next morning, Peter would say three times that he didn’t know Jesus.
- When Peter heard the rooster crowing, he remembered what Jesus had said. He was very, very sad, because he had been so scared, he forgot how much he loved Jesus. He forgot all the things Jesus had done for him!
- Let the rooster remind us to never be afraid to talk about all the great things Jesus has done.
- What are some of the great things Jesus has done?

SENSE OF TOUCH

Feel Jesus’ love for you.

Supply list:

- Red marker
- Black marker

READ IT TOGETHER (Mark 15:20,22,24)

²⁰ After they finished making fun of him, they took off the purple robe and put his own clothes on him again. Then they led him out of the palace to be killed on a cross.

²² They led Jesus to the place called Golgotha. (Golgotha means “The Place of the Skull.”)

²⁴ The soldiers nailed Jesus to a cross. Then they divided his clothes among themselves, throwing dice to see who would get what.

EXPERIENCE IT TOGETHER

- With a red marker, each family member draws a dot in the palm of one hand.
- With the black marker, each person writes their name above their red dot.

TALK ABOUT IT TOGETHER

- In Jesus' time, criminals were nailed on crosses.
- We know Jesus was not a criminal. He had never done anything wrong!
- It was painful and embarrassing to die like that. Why did Jesus have to die like that?
- He died on the cross because he loves us. He died in our place- for the wrong things we do.
- The red dot reminds us of the mark where the nails went into Jesus' hands.
- When we see it, let's remember how much Jesus loves us!
- Pray, "Thank you, Jesus, for loving us so much you died on the cross for us."

SENSE OF TASTE

Taste fresh-baked Resurrection Buns!

Shopping list:

- Cooking parchment, waxed paper, or aluminum foil
- Canned biscuits
- Melted butter
- Sugar
- Cinnamon
- Large marshmallows

READ IT TOGETHER (Mark 16:2-6)

² Very early on that day, the first day of the week, the women were going to the tomb.

It was very early after sunrise. ³ The women said to each other, "There is a large stone covering the entrance of the tomb. Who will move the stone for us?"

⁴ Then the women looked and saw that the stone was moved. The stone was very large, but it was moved away from the entrance. ⁵ The women walked into the tomb and saw a young man there wearing a white robe. He was sitting on the right side of the tomb. The women were afraid.

⁶ But the man said, "Don't be afraid. You are looking for Jesus from Nazareth, the one who was killed on a cross. He has risen from death! He is not here. Look, here is the place they put him when he was dead."

EXPERIENCE IT TOGETHER

- Each family member takes one canned biscuit and flattens it into a circle on a piece of parchment, foil, or waxed paper.
- Spread melted butter, sugar, and cinnamon to taste on the flattened biscuit.
- Place one large marshmallow in the center of the biscuit. Fold the edges over the marshmallow and seal them shut- like the tomb.
- Refrigerate the unbaked biscuits until Easter morning.

TALK ABOUT IT TOGETHER

- The spices around the marshmallow in our biscuit are like the spices used on Jesus' body when he was buried.
- The spices taste sweet, don't they? Jesus offers us the sweetest gift we will ever receive: friendship with God and life with him forever!!
- The marshmallow represents Jesus. It is pure white, just as Jesus was pure and sinless.
- We're going to have to wait until Easter to eat these. What do you think Jesus' friends felt after Jesus died, and they were waiting together?

DO MORE TOGETHER

Finish this activity on Easter morning!

- Bake your biscuits at 375 degrees for ten to twelve minutes.
- When your kids bite into them, they will be surprised to discover that the marshmallow is gone- the biscuit is empty!
- Ask, "How is our surprise like the surprise the women experienced when they came to the tomb and found it empty?"
- With your kids repeat what the angel told the women, "He has risen from death! He is not here."

Complete supply list for all activities:

Most of the supplies will be items you can readily find around your house.

- A variety of essential oils (choose spicy fragrances to be more "biblical", but any favorites will also work!)
- Cotton balls (one for each family member)
- Basin, tub, or bucket (big enough for a pair of feet to fit into!)
- Pitcher for water
- Towels
- Paper cross shapes cut from half sheets of paper (older kids may cut out their own)
- Purple tissue paper (or other purple paper), torn into pieces about one inch square
- Glue sticks (OR liquid starch and paint brushes)
- Wet washcloth or baby wipes
- Video file of rooster crowing: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=r6I1EXPrA-A>
- Red marker
- Black marker
- Cooking parchment, waxed paper, or aluminum foil
- Canned biscuits
- Melted butter
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- Large marshmallows