

A Walk Through Holy Week with Children

This program was written to help children identify with the events of Holy Week. Hands on activities and stories will engage children in experiencing and understanding Holy Week. It has been designed to parallel the ***Readings for Holy Week*** and is ideal to use in a church setting with children or in the home with your family. Listed below are the resources used in this program. The resources are available for loan from the Board of Christian Education Resource Library or if you wish to purchase your own copy we can assist with that request.

Benjamin's Box . Melody Carlson. ZonderKidz. 1997.

Loving Hearts United. Interprovincial Board of Communication. 2009.

My First Bible. Good Books. 1997

My First Message. Eugene Peterson. Navpress. 2007

The Lenten Tree. Abingdon Press. 2004

Readings for Holy Week. Interprovincial Board of Communication. 2000

Super Simple Bible Lessons. Abingdon Press. 2005

New Testament Bible Hero Adventures. Group. 1996

Over the course of the week children will assemble their own set of Resurrection Eggs. Each child will need a piece of fur, 3 coins, a handiwipe (small piece of cloth), communion cup, a twig, a piece of leather, thorn from grapevine, a nail, a dice, a piece of white cloth, and a stone.

Saturday – Mark 14:5-9, John 11:55-12:11 The Anointing At Bethany

From *My First Bible*, pages 418-421

Jesus went to Jerusalem. It was Festival time, the yearly springtime Passover festival, and the city was full of people. So he stayed at the house in Bethany, where Martha and Mary and Lazarus lived. It wasn't far away.

Martha was always busy, busy, cooking and cleaning the house.

"Tell Mary she must help me," Martha said to Jesus – all hot and flustered.

But Mary was listening to Jesus. She didn't want to miss a word. Jesus wanted Martha to listen too. He didn't need a special meal. He didn't mind a bit of dust.

Mary and Martha and Lazarus loved Jesus very much, and he loved them.

One dreadful day, Lazarus was ill.

Martha and Mary sent a message to Jesus: "Please come quickly or he'll die." But Jesus didn't get there in time- and Lazarus did die.

Martha came to meet Jesus. Her eyes were all red with crying.

"If only you had come quickly," she said. "God will do anything you ask him. You could have made Lazarus well. But now he's dead and buried."

Mary said the same:

"If only you had come quickly." They began to cry again.

Jesus cried too. But he had a surprise for Martha and Mary. A very BIG surprise.

"Lazarus will come to life again," Jesus said. "God wants it to happen. And listen, here's the best news of all:

Everyone who trusts me will live, even if they die."

Jesus stood outside the cave where Lazarus was buried.

"Lazarus, come out!" Jesus called.

And Lazarus did!

Give each child an egg carton or basket with a dozen empty eggs. Each day they will hear a story and receive a small item to put in one of the eggs that represents the story from that day.

If you have an Easter putz, construct the house where this story took place with a cave and a stone pushed aside. If you do not have an Easter putz, this could be done with a flannel graph story or wooden figures from a children and worship set.

Sunday – Matthew 21:4-5, Mark 11:1-8, Luke 19:37-40 and John 12:12, 16 The Triumphal Entry

From *My First Message*, pages 272-275

When they neared Jerusalem, Jesus sent two disciples with these instructions: “Go over to the village across from you. You’ll find a donkey there, her colt with her. Untie her and bring them to me. If anyone asks what you’re doing, say, “The Master needs them! He will send them with you.”

This is the full story of what was sketched earlier by the prophet:

“Look, your king’s on his way, riding on a donkey.”

The disciples went and did exactly what Jesus told them to do. They led the donkey and colt out, laid some of their clothes on them, and Jesus began to ride. Nearly all the people in the crowd threw their garments down on the road, giving him a royal welcome. Others cut branches from the trees and threw them down as a welcome mat.

Crowds went ahead and crowds followed, all of them calling out.

“Hosanna to David’s son!” Blessed is he who comes in God’s name!” “Hosanna in highest heaven!”

As he made his entrance into Jerusalem, the whole city was shaken. Unnerved, people were asking, “What’s going on here? Who is this?”

The parade crowd answered, “This is the prophet Jesus, the one from Nazareth in Galilee.”

What kind of welcome parade would people have for Jesus today? Were the people happy? Can you think of some things we should praise God for?

Play track 27 from *Loving Hearts United* CD entitled *Hosanna*

Read from *Benjamin’s Box*, pages 3-7

Long ago, in the faraway land of Palestine, there lived a boy named Benjamin. His small humble home was nestled into a wall of other houses, almost hidden on a narrow back street in the bustling city of Jerusalem. Benjamin loved Jerusalem because God’s temple was there. More than that, Benjamin loved God! His grandfather had taught him many things about God when he was just a tiny boy.

Benjamin talked to God a lot. He whispered prayers each night at sunset. And in the morning, he always gave thanks for the new day.

Benjamin’s parents worked hard weaving and selling cloth, but their family was still quite poor. So Benjamin helped out by taking odd jobs around the city. Everyone in Jerusalem seemed to know Benjamin. They could count on him to be honest and work hard.

One bright spring morning, Benjamin sat outside in the sunshine. In his hands was a wooden box.

“Hi, Benjamin” called his friend Eli. “What’s that you’ve got?”

“It’s my treasure box,” said Benjamin. “My grandfather gave it to me before he died last year. He said it was very, very special.”

Eli opened it and looked in. “There’s nothing in it except for some old straw. How can this be a treasure box?”

Benjamin shrugged. “I don’t have any real treasures yet. But my grandfather said this straw came from the bed of a baby who was born in a stable. My grandfather was a shepherd then, and he said the baby would grow up to be a king.”

“Why would a king be born in a stable with cows and donkeys?” Eli laughed and closed the box. “I heard some sort of king is coming today. His name is Jesus. Want to come to the city gate and watch for him?”

“Sure. My grandfather took me to hear a man called Jesus once. I liked to listen to him!”

Crowds were already lining the street. Some people cut palm branches from trees and handed them around. Others laid garments on the street like a carpet.

“Wow!” said Benjamin. “He must be a king!” The two boys squeezed through the throng just as a donkey entered the gate. “That’s him!” Benjamin pointed to the man on the donkey. “That’s Jesus!” “Hosanna, Hosanna!” cheered the crowd as they waved their palm branches in the air.

“Hail to our new King!” yelled an old man beside Benjamin.

“Why does a king ride an ordinary donkey?” asked Benjamin.

The old man turned. “It means he comes in peace. Jesus has come to set us free! Hail, King Jesus!”

Benjamin looked into Jesus face as he drew near. Jesus smiled back – as if they were friends! The donkey plodded along and Benjamin followed, pushing through the crowd to keep up. At last, he drew close enough to pet the donkey. A small tuft of hair came off in his hand.

That night Benjamin placed the bit of donkey fur in his treasure box.

Give each child a small tuft of fur to put into one of the empty eggs.

This is the time if you have an Easter Putz you could construct the temple and city of Jerusalem with people with palm branches.

If you do not have a putz, use a flannel graph or wooden figures from a children and worship set.

Closing prayer: Have children think of two things to praise God for. Have them thank Him in prayer. We praise you, God, just like the people did on Palm Sunday. Thank you for sending us Jesus to be our king. Thank you for all the other things you have done for us. Amen.

Monday - Mark 11:15-19 Jesus Cleanses The Temple

From *My First Bible*, pages 424-427

The temple was a special place. A quiet place for people to say their prayers. A place where God could talk to them.

So what was all that NOISE?

Roo-Coo! Roo-Coo!

“Buy a pair of pigeons!”

Baa-maa! Baa-maa!

“Buy a lamb!”

People bought pigeons and lambs to sacrifice at the temple

“Get your temple money here!”

There was a temple tax, paid in special temple money.

God’s temple had been turned into a market! Stalls everywhere. People shouting.

Jesus was very angry.

“God’s temple is a place to pray,” he said, “not to buy and sell and cheat people! You robbers!”

He overturned the stalls. Money rolled everywhere. The pigeons flew up in fright. The lambs all bleated and ran.

The men in charge of the temple were furious with Jesus.

But blind people came to him. And people who couldn’t walk properly. And Jesus made them well.

The men in charge of the temple didn’t like that either. They were jealous.

“We must get rid of Jesus,” they said. But they couldn’t think how.

Then Judas came to see them.

Jesus had chosen Judas to be one of his twelve special friends.

But Judas wasn’t friends with Jesus any more. So... whisper, whisper, whisper...

They made a secret plan.

Why was Jesus angry in the temple?

Name some things that make you angry. Ask God to help you control your temper.

Read from *Benjamin’s Box*, page 9

In the next days, Benjamin and Eli went to hear Jesus whenever they could. One day as they waited, Eli whispered, “The priests have offered money for someone to betray Jesus.”

“Why?” asked Benjamin. “What has he done?” He only speaks the truth. They should listen to him.”

“The priests are jealous of him. They want Jesus to stop teaching,” said Eli.

“Someone should warn Jesus,” declared Benjamin. “I’m not afraid. I’ll go.” He pushed through the crowd until he reached one of Jesus friends. He tugged on the man’s sleeve.

“Excuse me, Sir? Are you with Jesus?”

“Yes, I am,” the man answered.

“Please, I need to warn Jesus. He’s in danger, the priests are offering a bribe to betray him! You must tell-”

“Shh,” said the man. “Do not repeat this. I’ll take care of it.” And he slipped a coin into Benjamin’s hand.

“Thank you, kid sir. What is your name?”

“Judas Iscariot,” said the man as he turned away.

That night, Benjamin tucked the shiny denarius into his treasure box.

Give each child 3 dimes to represent the coins and place in an egg.

At this time, if you have an Easter Putz, construct the temple and tables overturned. If you do not have a putz, use a flannel graph or wooden figures from children and worship set.

Closing prayer:

Lord, it is so sad to think about how Judas killed himself. Judas was sad because he was unfaithful. Help us to not love anything more than you, and may we be faithful to you in everything. Thank you for letting us be your friend even when we do things you are not happy about. Amen.

Tuesday – Matthew 25:1-13 Jesus Parables

From *The Lenten Tree* page 104

What if someone invited you and your friends to go on a vacation with them? You’d be very excited, wouldn’t you? But what if he came to pick you up and you weren’t ready? Your suitcase was not packed because you had been watching TV and had fallen asleep. Your friend didn’t have time to wait for you because the others would miss their plane. So, he left and went with those who were ready to go. That would make you very sad, wouldn’t it?

Jesus was talking to His disciples about what would happen when He came back to earth to take them to heaven. Jesus liked to tell stories, and so He told them about ten women who were going to a wedding party. The women were very excited because they were going to go with the bridegroom. They didn’t know, however, when the groom was going to come. Five of the women were very wise. They had put oil in jars and placed the jars beside their lamps. This way, if the groom came at night, they would be ready to go with him to the party. The other five, however, were foolish. They didn’t think about what they might need, so they did nothing to get ready.

The women waited, but the groom did not come for a long time, and soon, they fell fast asleep. The night grew darker, and darker, when suddenly, at midnight, there was a great shout! The groom was coming! The ten women jumped up and began to light their lamps. The wise women used the oil from their jars but the foolish women did not have any oil. They ran to buy some more, but when they returned, it was too late. The party had already begun. The door was locked, and no one else could come in. The

foolish women were very sad because they had not been ready! Only God knows when Jesus will come to take us to heaven. That's why Jesus wants us to always be ready.

From ***New Testament Bible Hero Adventures***, page 22
Mark12:41-44

One day Jesus and his disciples visited the Temple. The Temple courts bustled with happy people who had come to worship God. Some people were buying animals to give as offerings. Other people were talking with priests or praying. Many people dropped money in the offering box as they walked by.

How do we give our offerings today?

Well, in Jesus day everyone brought their offerings to the Temple. Jesus sat down where he could watch people as they stopped at the offering box. As Jesus watched, a rich man put a big bag of money into the offering box. The rich man thought he was more important than anyone else because he put in so much money.

Let's put our noses in the air like the important rich man. He looked around to see if other people noticed how much he gave. Lots of people heard the big bag of money THUNK into the offering box. The rich man smiled as he thought; "Now all these people know how important and rich I am." But Jesus didn't smile.

Then a fancy lady walked up to the offering box. She wore beautiful, bright robes. One by one she drew heavy gold coins from her bag and dropped them into the offering box. CLUNK, CLINKETY, CLUNK! The heavy gold coins made lots of noise as they clattered into the offering box. The fancy lady smiled as she saw all the people stare at her gold coins. But Jesus didn't smile. All kinds of people brought money to the offering box. Some people brought lots of money and some brought just a little. Some looked happy and thankful, but others looked proud and haughty. Jesus watched all the people and smiled when people gave thankfully.

Then something happened that brought a great big smile to Jesus face. Do you think Jesus smiled because someone put in a great big bag of money? (Pause for response) Well, he didn't. Let me tell you what happened.

An old woman had been waiting her turn to give her offering. When no one else was near, she shuffled slowly to the offering box. Let's shuffle our feet too.

Her clothes were old and faded, and her sandals were worn and thin, but she had a beautiful smile on her face. The old woman carefully took out two little coins and dropped them quietly into the offering box. They made a tiny little plinkety-plink. Can you make a quiet plinkety-plink? The two coins she put in were worth less than a penny. That is all she gave.

As the old woman shuffled quietly away, Jesus called to his disciples. "That poor widow put in more than anyone else," Jesus said.

The disciples looked at each other in surprise. They thought about the rich man with his huge bag of money. They thought about the fancy lady with her heavy gold coins.

"What does Jesus mean?" the disciples wondered. "The old woman's two coins are worth less than a penny."

Do you know what Jesus meant?

Jesus explained, "The people who put in lots of money are rich, and they still have lots of money left. But the widow is poor, and she put in everything she had to live on." Then the disciples understood. The widow loved God so much that she wanted to give everything she had. Though she could give only two small coins, she gave from a big heart full of love. That's why Jesus smiled such a big smile. Even if we don't have any money at all, Jesus smiles when we give him our love. Let's tell Jesus how much we love him right now. Prayer: Dear Jesus, our hearts are full of love for you. We're happy to give our love to you. Amen.

These are just two stories Jesus told in his final days to his disciples. Another story is one we all will remember.

Matthew 22:34-40 The Great Commandment

From ***Super Simple Bible Lessons***, page 90

The things that Jesus taught were often different from what the people were used to. Some people liked what Jesus had to say. Others wondered by whose authority he spoke. Others thought him to be a troublemaker and wanted to get rid of him. Many times religious leaders would try to trick Jesus into saying something wrong. Then they could have him arrested.

One day while Jesus was teaching, a group of Pharisees decided to ask him a question. "Teacher, which commandment is the greatest in the law?"

The Pharisees smiled to themselves. If Jesus chose any one of the commandments to be greater than any other one, then he would be in trouble. He would be teaching against the Law of Moses, where all the commandments are equally important.


Jesus thought for a moment. Everyone around him was waiting expectantly to see what he would say. "You shall 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 very much like it: You shall love your neighbor as yourself."

The Pharisees were stumped. The commandment that Jesus had listed as the greatest commandment and the second commandment actually summarized all the commandments that were included in the Law of Moses.

At this point continue to construct your Easter Putz. If not use a flannel graph or wooden figures from children and worship set.


Let the children do the following activity to take home. Make a copy of the following envelope for each child. Let them color the envelope. Cut it out and fold the tabs down on the dotted line. Tape or glue the sides of the envelope together. Take the envelope

home and find ways to earn money to help others. When the envelope is full, bring it back to church and give it to a special mission project.





You shall love
the Lord
your God
with all
your heart.

Luke 10:27



You shall
love your
neighbor as
yourself.

Matthew 22:39

I treasure
your words
in my
heart.

Psalms 119:11

Wednesday - John 13 - Jesus Washes The Disciples Feet

Even though this event happened on Thursday of Holy Week, we are moving it a day ahead since Thursday was a very busy day.

Remember that back in the days of Jesus, the streets of Jerusalem were made of packed down dirt and were very dusty. Everyone wore sandals. To avoid tracking all the dirt into their homes and to give people a treat, polite hosts at a dinner party had a servant just inside the door. This servant would wash people's feet when they arrived for dinner! For the servant, it was not pleasant work. In fact, the job was given to the lowest of all the servants. Listen to what happened in this story.

From *My First Message*, pages 281-285

Just before the Passover Feast, Jesus knew that the time had come to leave this world to go to the Father. Having loved his dear friends, he continued to love them right to the end. It was suppertime. Jesus knew that the Father had put him in complete charge of everything, that he came from God and was on his way back to God. So he got up from the supper table, set aside his robe, and put on an apron. Then he poured water into a basin and began to wash the feet of the disciples, drying them with his apron. When he got to Simon Peter, Peter said, "Master, you wash my feet?" Jesus answered, "You don't understand now what I'm doing, but it will be clear enough to you later." Peter persisted "You're not going to wash my feet – ever!" Jesus said, "If I don't wash you, you can't be part of what I'm doing." "Master!" said Peter. "Not only my feet, then. Wash my hands! Wash my head!" Jesus said, "If you've had a bath in the morning, you only need your feet washed now and you're clean from head to toe. My concern, you understand is holiness, not hygiene. So now you're clean." After he had finished washing their feet, he took his robe, put it back on, and went back to his place at the table. Then he said, "Do you understand what I have done to you? You address me as "Teacher" and "Master" and rightly so. That is what I am. So if I, the Master and Teacher, washed your feet, you must now wash each other's feet. I've laid down a pattern for you. What I've done, you do. I'm only pointing out the obvious. A servant is not ranked above his master; an employee doesn't give orders to the employer. If you understand what I'm telling you, act like it- and live a blessed life."

Give each child a small handwipe to put in one of their eggs as a symbol of the footwashing.

Continue to build your putz or flannel graph.

How would you feel if Jesus washed your feet?

Have a foot washing like Jesus did. Get a bowl, soap, and a towel and take turns washing each other's feet.

As you do this, think of special ways to serve your family this week and ask what you will do.

Thursday- Institution of The Last Supper

Read *My First Message*, pages 286-293

On the Festival of Unleavened Bread which is a seven day celebration that starts with Passover where only flat bread is eaten, the disciples came to Jesus and said, "Where do you want us to prepare your Passover meal?" Passover is a special celebration remembering when God saved the people of Israel from slavery.

He said, "Enter the city. Go up to a certain man and say, The Teacher says, my time is near. I and my disciples plan to celebrate the Passover meal at your house." The disciples followed Jesus instructions to the letter, and prepared the Passover meal. After sunset, he and the 12 were sitting around the table. During the meal, he said, "I have something hard but important to say to you: One of you is going to hand me over to the men who want to kill me."

They were stunned, and then began to ask, one after another. "It isn't me, is it, Master?"

Jesus answered. "The one who hands me over is someone I eat with daily, one who passes me food at the table. In one sense the Son of Man is going to experience things well-marked by the Scriptures- no surprises here. In another sense that man who turns him in, turns traitor to the Son of Man- better never to have been born than do this!"

Then Judas, already turned traitor, said, "It isn't me, is it, Rabbi?"

Jesus said, "Don't play games with me, Judas."

During the meal, Jesus took and blessed the bread, broke it, and gave it to his disciples: Take, eat.

This is my body.

Taking the cup and thanking God, he gave it to them:

Drink this, all of you.

This is my blood.

God's new covenant poured out for many people for the forgiveness of sins.

"I'll not be drinking wine from this cup again until that new day when I'll drink with you in the kingdom of my Father."

They sang a hymn and went directly to Mount Olives.

Tell the story of the first Passover in Exodus 11-12. Think about why you should remember the things God has done for you.

This is the time in your Easter Putz or flannel graph story that you can construct the Upper Room where the last supper took place.

Read from *Benjamin's Box*, pages 11-12

The next day, Benjamin was asked to help his aunt get ready for unexpected guests.

They would be coming for Passover dinner. He went right to work carrying water jugs.

"Did you hear the guest of honor is Jesus?" said a servant girl.

Benjamin's eyes opened wide. Imagine- to serve such an important man! He must work hard and do his very best.

Two of Jesus friends came to help, and Benjamin listened as they talked of Jesus. They loved him so much!

Soon Jesus arrived, and the supper began. If Benjamin listened carefully he could hear some of their words. But what did Jesus mean when he said the wine was like his blood and would be spilled, and the bread was to be broken like his body. It made no sense.

Then Jesus said someone would betray him. Benjamin smiled, he wasn't worried. He knew that Judas would prevent this.

After supper, Benjamin found a broken cup. He saved it to remember the night when he served Jesus.

Mark 14:32-42

Later, Jesus and his friends left to pray. Benjamin wanted to pray too. He followed at a distance, watching as they finally stopped in a garden. Benjamin sat beneath an olive tree and broke off a twig. He couldn't hear Jesus, but he knew he was praying.

Benjamin prayed too. And as he prayed he rubbed the twig between his hands. Before long, his eyelids grew heavy and he soon fell asleep.

Loud yelling startled Benjamin. He leaped up in time to see soldiers taking Jesus away.

"Stop!" he cried. "You can't take him. He hasn't done anything---"

"Shh, boy!" said one of Jesus friends, holding Benjamin back.

"What's wrong?" demanded Benjamin. "Why are they taking him?"

"They want to question him."

Benjamin pulled away. "Why didn't you stop them?" But the man just shook his head and walked away. All Jesus friends were gone now.

Benjamin saw the smooth twig in his hand. "Dear God, please take care of my friend Jesus," he prayed as he walked. At home, he placed the cup and twig in his box.

Give each child a plastic communion cup and a twig to put in two of their eggs to remember the story.

Was Jesus happy or sad in the garden?

What did Jesus know was going to happen to Him?

What is He doing for us right now?

Prayer:

Jesus, keep on praying for us. We will try to be good. Thank you that we can come and talk to you about anything that happens to us. We pray in your name. Amen.

Friday The Crucifixion

From *My First Bible*, pages 436-441

Questions, questions, questions. All night long, Jesus enemies asked him angry questions. Then, early in the morning, they took him to the Roman Governor, Pontius Pilate.

“Jesus has done nothing wrong,” the Governor said. He wanted to let Jesus go. But the crowd would not let him.

“Kill him! Nail him to a cross!” the crowd shouted angrily.

It was Jesus they wanted to kill!

But why? Jesus was good. He had done nothing wrong.

These people hated Jesus.

“He tells lies about God,” they said.

They did not believe he really was God’s promised King.

The Governor was afraid of them. At last he said:

“I will do as you want. But don’t blame me.” And he handed Jesus over to his soldiers.

They took him to Skull Hill and nailed him to a cross. There were two other prisoners on crosses, one on each side of Jesus. Above Jesus head was a notice: “Jesus of Nazareth: King of the Jews.”

Jesus mother Mary stood close to the cross, with his special friend John.

“Look after her for me, John” Jesus said from the cross. And from that day on John took care of Mary.

Jesus did not hate the soldiers who nailed him to the cross. He did not hate his cruel enemies.

“Father, forgive them,” he prayed.

At last Jesus cried: “I have finished my work.”

Then he died.

It was the saddest day.

Two friends took his body to the grave. It was a kind of cave- with a big, heavy stone across the opening.

Sadly the women watched. It was time to go home. Because it was Friday, and the Sabbath – God’s special day of rest – began at sunset. Christians call the day Jesus died Good Friday.

Give each child popsicle sticks and have them build three crosses, one for each of the criminals and one for Jesus. Stick them in a mound of dirt to remember Jesus death on the cross. Construct this scene in your putz or on the flannel graph.

From *Benjamin’s Box*, pages 15-23

The Leather Strip John 19:1-15

“Benjamin, did you hear the news?” asked Eli the next morning. “They’ve locked Jesus up. Everyone says that Judas Iscariot got a bunch of money to betray him.”

Benjamin gasped. He had told Judas about the bribe- maybe this was his fault! He said good-bye to Eli and wandered through the city. What could he do? Was there any way to help? Sounds of shouting made him stop, and he turned to see an angry crowd. "Jesus deserved that beating!" snarled an old man. "That heretic claims to be God's son!"

"He should be stoned!" yelled another, shaking a fist.

"What's going on?" asked Benjamin. "Did they hurt Jesus?"

"What do you know about this Jesus?" demanded the old man. They all turned and stared at Benjamin with angry eyes.

"No-nothing," he stammered. His gaze dropped to the ground where he noticed a small strip of leather. He picked it up. It was from the whips used by soldiers. It was wet with blood. He tucked it in his tunic and slipped away. Why would anyone beat Jesus?

Give each child a small strip of leather to put in one of their eggs.

The Thorn Matthew 27:29

Benjamin continued to walk. If only he could make them release Jesus. But what could a small boy do? He heard loud cries as another crowd gathered at the end of the street. "Hail, King of the Jews!" yelled a soldier as Benjamin pushed his way past men and women.

And there stood Jesus.

Benjamin looked into Jesus' eyes as Roman soldiers threw a shabby robe over his beaten back. He expected to see hatred, but instead saw only love. Just then a soldier shoved a crown of thorns onto Jesus head. And another struck him with a stick.

Benjamin's eyes filled with tears. Why were they doing this? A few days ago, everyone had called Jesus a king when he entered Jerusalem. Now it seemed they all hated him. Benjamin squatted down and buried his head in his hands. "Please, God," he prayed over and over. "Please, make them stop!" When he finally opened his eyes, the crowd had moved along. Jesus was gone. He walked over to where they had scorned his friend and picked up a sharp thorn broken from the awful crown.

He ran home. His parents paused to hear his story, then sadly shook their heads and returned to their work. Benjamin placed the thorn and leather strip in his box and cried.

Give each child a part of a grapevine thorn to represent the crown of thorns in the egg.

The Nail John 19:16-22

"Benjamin!" called Eli. "Have you heard? Jesus is to be crucified!"

"No!" cried Benjamin. "He has done nothing to deserve that!"

Eli frowned. "My father says that only the worst criminals are put to death on a cross."

Benjamin went inside and sat in a dark corner of his house. He did not want to talk, or even to think about this sad news. But in his mind he could still see the evil men hurting Jesus.

"I must go!" he finally said aloud. "If this is partly my fault, I can at least be there. I can pray for him."

"Where are you going?" asked his mother as he opened the door.

"To help a friend," he said. She nodded and touched his cheek.

As Benjamin climbed the hill, he found a large spike. It was like those used by Romans to nail criminals to crosses. He tucked it in his tunic and continued on. Three crosses stood at the top. But he could not force his eyes to look upon his friend. He noticed a small group of people apart from the larger crowd. He knew they were Jesus' dearest friends. He sat near them and bowed to pray. But the only words that came were, "I'm sorry, God. I'm so sorry..."

The Die and the Spear John 19:23-25,32-24

Benjamin watched as soldiers gambled for Jesus' clothes. He tried to shut his ears to their cruel remarks.

Finally, he forced himself to look up. Benjamin looked into Jesus' eyes and saw such sorrow and pain that it cut to his heart. But he also saw love. And like before, Jesus looked right at Benjamin. Surely, this was his way of saying all would be well. Perhaps he would even do a miracle!

But instead the sky turned dark and Jesus cried out, "Father, into your hands I commit my spirit!" The ground shook and Jesus breathed his last breath. Benjamin was stunned.

Jesus was dead!

As if in a dream, Benjamin heard the people move about. He saw a soldier pierce his friend's side with a spear. People hurried to take down crosses and bodies before the Sabbath began. Soon they were gone, and he was alone. He picked up a stone the soldiers had gambled with and looked up at the dark sky. Why had God allowed it? Later that night, he opened his treasure box and placed the nail and the gambling stone inside. He looked at his collection. It had seemed so valuable when he believed Jesus was the King. But now the strange items only filled him with unbearable sadness.

Give each child a nail and a dice to put in one of their eggs.

The Cloth Matthew 27:57-61

"Benjamin" called Eli the next morning. "Come hear the news!" Benjamin stuck his head out the window and rubbed his sleepy eyes.

"They posted guards at Jesus' tomb," explained Eli. "Some say that Jesus will return to life!"

Benjamin perked up. "My Grandfather told me that Jesus brought some people back from the dead."

"Maybe it will happen again!" said Eli. "But the soldiers say they're making sure people don't steal the body." Quickly Benjamin dressed and raced to the tomb. Could it be? Could Jesus have returned to life? How he hoped so!

But the huge stone remained in place and the guards blocked the tomb. With dark scowling faces, they told him to leave at once. As Benjamin walked slowly down the hill, he noticed a bit of white cloth hanging from a small branch. He plucked it off and rubbed it between his fingers. His parents wove cloth like this for burials.

"Jesus is dead," he told himself as he continued toward home.

That night he sadly placed the cloth in his box. This would surely be the last thing to remember his friend by. He tried to pray, but no words came. He wondered if God even listened.

Give each child a piece of white cloth to put in an egg.

Invite the children to go and lead the adults from the sanctuary into the room by candlelight. They can then share the stories of the week by showing the putz or flannel graph story.

Easter Sunday The Resurrection

From *Benjamin's Box*, page 25

Early the next morning, Benjamin went to the market for his mother. He used to enjoy the crowds in the city, but now they only reminded him of how everyone had turned against Jesus. He shuffled along without looking up.

"It's a miracle!" shrieked a girl. Benjamin stopped in his tracks and listened. "Jesus has risen from the dead. The Stone's been moved."

Benjamin turned and ran from the market and up toward the tomb. Could it possibly be true? Could Jesus have risen from the grave? In his heart he believed it could be. It must be! He ran even faster.

Sure enough, the stone was rolled away! He fell to his knees and thanked God. When he stood, he picked up a sharp piece of broken rock. It must have crumbled from the huge stone.

With a joyful heart he marched back down to town. Jesus was alive!

In the market, he met a woman who was a friend of Jesus. "I know the good news," he said. "Jesus is alive!"

"Yes!" she smiled. "It's as the prophet said, 'On the third day He'll rise. Some of us have even seen him!'"

Benjamin ran home and told his parents. He placed the stone in the box. What a treasure he had now!

Give each child a stone to put in one of their eggs.

From *My First Message*, pages 310-317

Early in the morning on the first day of the week, while it was still dark, Mary Magdalene came to the tomb and saw that the stone was moved away from the entrance. She ran at once to Simon Peter and the other disciple, breathlessly panting, "They took the Master from the tomb. We don't know where they've put him."

If you found the empty tomb and heavy stone rolled away, what would you think?

Peter and the other disciple ran, neck and neck. The other disciple got to the tomb first, outrunning Peter. Stooping to look in, he saw the pieces of linen cloth lying there.

Simon Peter arrived after him, entered the tomb, and observed the linen cloths lying there. Then the other disciple, the one who had gotten there first, went into the tomb, took one look at the linen cloths, and believed. The disciples then went back home.

But Mary stood outside the tomb weeping. As she wept, she knelt to look into the tomb and saw two angels sitting there, at the head and at the foot of where Jesus body had been laid. They said to her, "Woman, why do you weep?"

"They took my Master," she said, "and I don't know where they put him." After she said this, she turned away and saw Jesus standing there. But she didn't recognize him.

Jesus spoke to her, "Woman, why do you weep? Who are you looking for?"

She, thinking that he was the gardener, said, "Mister, if you took him, tell me where you put him so I can care for him."

Jesus said, "Mary."

Turning to face him, she said, "Teacher!"

Jesus said, "Go to my brothers and tell them, I ascent to my Father and your Father, my God and your God."

Later on that day, the disciples had gathered together, but, fearful of the Jews, had locked all the doors in the house. Jesus entered, stood among them and said. "Peace to you."

But Thomas, one of the Twelve, was not with them when Jesus came. The other disciples told him, "We saw the Master."

But he said. "Unless I see the nail holes in his hands, put my finger in the nail holes, and stick my hand in his side, I won't believe it."

Eight days later, his disciples were again in the room. This time Thomas was with them. Jesus came through the locked doors, stood among them and said, "Peace to you."

Then he focused his attention on Thomas. "Take your finger and examine my hands. Take your hand and stick it in my side. Don't be unbelieving. Believe."

Thomas said, "My Master! My God!"

Jesus said, "So, you believe because you've seen with your own eyes. Even better blessings are in store for those who believe without seeing."

Play the recording on the CD from **Loving Hearts United** entitled *Jesus Christ Is Risen Today*

End the day by reading from **Benjamin's Box**, page 27

During the next few days, Benjamin and Eli listened as the disciples shared about how Jesus had appeared to them in various places.

"Jesus said that all this came to pass just so forgiveness could be preached to all nations- beginning right here in Jerusalem," explained a disciple. "He said that since we saw all these things, now we can go out to tell others the good news of His forgiveness!" Benjamin smiled. Now he understood that Jesus had forgiven him too. And he wanted to share the good news. He ran home and got his treasure box, and went out into the streets and gathered all of his friends.

"Inside this box," he explained, "is a great treasure."

The children drew closer and listened with excitement.

One by one, Benjamin took out each item. He explained how he got it and what it all meant.

"And so you see" he said as he closed the box and looked into their faces. "The treasure is really Jesus! Because of what Jesus did on the cross, we can all be forgiven by God the Father!"

They all cheered and begged him to tell the story again!

That night Benjamin opened his box one more time before he went to bed. He examined each item, handling them all with love and care. Finally he placed the last one back in the box. Then he knelt and prayed:

Dear God, thank you for letting me find all these special treasures. But most of all, I thank you for sending me the greatest treasure of all. Thank you for sending Jesus. And help me to be a good servant for Jesus. Help me to tell everyone I know about the good news! Amen

Hand out the last egg. Remind the children this one has nothing in it and represents the empty tomb.

Send the children out with their set of Resurrection Eggs so that they can retell the story many times.