

ONLINE SUNDAY SCHOOL

PALM SUNDAY - APRIL 5, 2020

SCRIPTURE MATTHEW 21:1-3, 6-11

When they had come near Jerusalem and had reached Bethphage, at the Mount of Olives, Jesus sent two disciples, saying to them, "Go into the village ahead of you, and immediately you will find a donkey tied, and a colt with her; untie them and bring them to me. If anyone says anything to you, just say this, 'The Lord needs them.' And he will send them immediately." The disciples went and did as Jesus had directed them; they brought the donkey and the colt, and put their cloaks on them, and he sat on them. A very large crowd spread their cloaks on the road, and others cut branches from the trees and spread them on the road. The crowds that went ahead of him and that followed were shouting, "Hosanna to the Son of David! Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord! Hosanna in the highest heaven!"

When he entered Jerusalem, the whole city was in turmoil, asking, "Who is this?" The crowds were saying, "This is the prophet Jesus from Nazareth in Galilee."

REFLECTION QUESTIONS

Share a favorite Palm Sunday memory.

How do you feel when things don't work out as expected?

What are you worrying about today?

Where do you find hope today?

ACTIVITIES FOR ALL AGES

Chalk Your Walk - Write encouraging and colorful messages in chalk on your sidewalk or driveway.

Egg Hunt - Hide Easter Eggs around your house or yard to hunt together. Make sure to leave at least 1 egg empty to remind you of the empty tomb.

Color - There is a coloring sheet on the next page of a palm branch. Color it and cut it out so you can wave palms together in celebration of Palm Sunday.

RESOURCES FOR ADULTS

Palm Sunday occupies a liminal space in the Lenten Journey. Liminality (rooted in the Latin word *limen*, meaning threshold) is the transitional phase or place that sits between what has been and what is becoming. Because of this unique nature of Palm Sunday, it is among the most awkward days of Lent. It is both a profound celebration of the goodness of God as witnessed in the life and ministry of Jesus Christ and a foreshadowing of the tragedy of the week to come. I am reminded of the depiction of Jesus' entry into Jerusalem in the musical *Jesus Christ Superstar* when at the end of the crowd's Hosannas they sing, "Hey JC, JC, will you die for me?" The frame freezes on Jesus' face for a moment as the reality of his self-giving mission becomes crystal clear. In her poem *Holy Week*, poet Ann Weems writes, "We move from hosannas to horror with the predictable ease of those who know not what they do." Today, take time to read Ann Weems' poem and reflect upon the shape of the Holy Week. Ponder the ways that you both celebrate and deny the goodness of God. Let the reality of the Christ's sacrificial love begin both to temper and to enrich your praise of God this day.

"Hosanna" from *Jesus Christ Superstar* (1973)

<https://tinyurl.com/c7row8h>

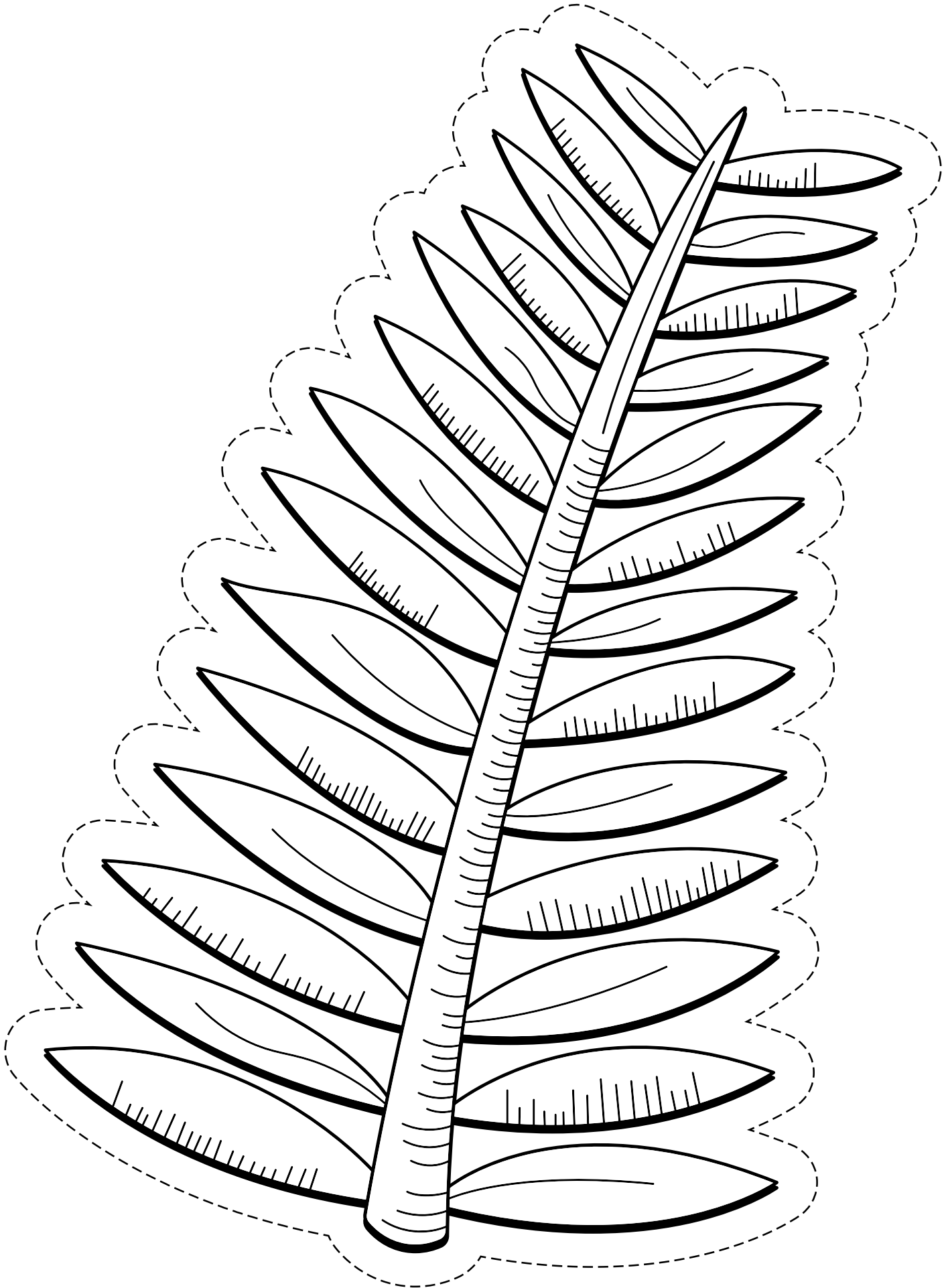
"The Holy Week" by Ann Weems

<https://tinyurl.com/ublvs9s>

CLOSING PRAYER

Jesus Christ, you are truly the human face of God. We give thanks for your life, your graceful mission to heal the world, and your love for us, even unto death.

Hosanna! Amen!



ONLINE SUNDAY SCHOOL

MAUNDY THURSDAY - APRIL 9, 2020

SCRIPTURE JOHN 13:1-17, 31-35

Now before the festival of the Passover, Jesus knew that his hour had come to depart from this world and go to the Father. Having loved his own who were in the world, he loved them to the end. The devil had already put it into the heart of Judas son of Simon Iscariot to betray him. And during supper Jesus, knowing that the Father had given all things into his hands, and that he had come from God and was going to God, got up from the table, took off his outer robe, and tied a towel around himself. Then he poured water into a basin and began to wash the disciples' feet and to wipe them with the towel that was tied around him. He came to Simon Peter, who said to him, "Lord, are you going to wash my feet?" Jesus answered, "You do not know now what I am doing, but later you will understand." Peter said to him, "You will never wash my feet." Jesus answered, "Unless I wash you, you have no share with me." Simon Peter said to him, "Lord, not my feet only but also my hands and my head!" Jesus said to him, "One who has bathed does not need to wash, except for the feet, but is entirely clean. And you are clean, though not all of you." For he knew who was to betray him; for this reason he said, "Not all of you are clean." After he had washed their feet, had put on his robe, and had returned to the table, he said to them, "Do you know what I have done to you? You call me Teacher and Lord—and you are right, for that is what I am. So if I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet. For I have set you an example, that you also should do as I have done to you. Very truly, I tell you, servants are not greater than their master, nor are messengers greater than the one who sent them. If you know these things, you are blessed if you do them. When he had gone out, Jesus said, "Now the Son of Man has been glorified, and God has been glorified in him. If God has been glorified in him, God will also glorify him in himself and will glorify him at once. Little children, I am with you only a little longer. You will look for me; and as I said to the Jews so now I say to you, 'Where I am going, you cannot come.' I give you a new commandment, that you love one another. Just as I have loved you, you also should love one another. By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another."

REFLECTION QUESTIONS

- How do you serve others that you love?
- How do you serve strangers?
- Could you serve someone knowing they would betray you?
- What are you worrying about today?
- Where do you find hope today?

RESOURCES FOR ADULTS

Perhaps because Holy Communion is a sacrament of which we regularly partake, we most closely associate Jesus and the disciple's last night together with the Last Supper. While this is appropriate, Maundy Thursday is also a time to remember the "hidden sacrament" of foot washing. In fact, the Gospel of John's rendering of that evening focuses almost exclusively on this holy moment when Jesus washes his disciples' feet and says, "A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, you must love one another." (John 13:34, NIV) The name Maundy comes from the Latin word for command, *mandatum*, found in the traditional rendering of this text, "*Mandatum novum do vobis ut diligatis invicem sicut dilexi vos.*" So Maundy Thursday is a time to reflect on that great command to love others. It is because of this love that Jesus says people will recognize his disciples. Meditate on Christian love of God and neighbor and think of the ways you share that love. Use the following links to learn, listen, and linger for a while.

Learn - Video from "The Bible Project" on love:

<https://tinyurl.com/y9qlzbuw>

Listen - "They Will Know We Are Christians" performed by Jars of Clay: <https://tinyurl.com/qt7c63b>

Linger - Meditation on love from Frederick Buechner: <https://tinyurl.com/ud7bee5>

ACTIVITIES FOR ALL AGES

Foot Washing - Fill a bucket or large bowl with warm, soapy water. Grab a few towels. Take turns washing each others feet and praying for one another.

Holy Meal - Have a time of breaking bread together and drinking juice. Reflect on Jesus' love for everyone of us. Remember his sacrifice to offer us grace.

Color - The coloring sheet on the next page is to remind us all to love one another as Jesus loved us.

CLOSING PRAYER

Jesus Christ, teacher and Savior, help us love God and one another as you have first loved us. May people know us by our love. Amen.



AS I HAVE
LOVED YOU,
LOVE ONE
ANOTHER
JOHN 13:34

ONLINE SUNDAY SCHOOL

GOOD FRIDAY - APRIL 10, 2020

SCRIPTURE MARK 14:53-15:47

Look up the Scripture in your own Bible or click on the link below.

<https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=mark+14%3A53-15%3A47&version=NRSV>

Families might choose to read the story of Jesus' trial, crucifixion, and burial in their favorite children's Bible.

RESOURCES FOR ADULTS

Crowds at churches on Good Friday are often smaller than for other services. The sorrow and sadness of the day are difficult for many to face. Our own reluctance to engage with the depths of darkness that shroud this day is a reminder of the fact that Jesus' experience on the cross is also too much for many of his followers. When it becomes apparent that Jesus will be crucified, most of Jesus' followers flee, many fearing for their own lives. As he faces death, the Gospel of Mark says Jesus cries out words found in Psalm 22,

"Eloi, Eloi, lama sabachtani? (My God, My God, Why Have You Forsaken Me?)." While we know this sense of deep abandonment will be overcome by the wonder of the resurrection, we can only fully appreciate what Easter means if we first dwell at the foot of the cross with Jesus. Christian tradition recognizes that art and ritual provide better entry points into the pathos of Good Friday than words alone. You are invited to experience two such traditions virtually: The Seven Last Words of Christ and the Stations of the Cross.

One experience is well suited for music lovers, while the other will benefit those who enjoy visuals and scripture.

Music: The Seven Last Words of Christ by Théodore Dubois: <https://tinyurl.com/szonrt9>

Visuals/Scripture: Stations of the Cross, photos by Belmont UMC: <https://tinyurl.com/s3ve6zq>

REFLECTION QUESTIONS

What is the hardest day you've experienced?

What happened?

How did you get through it?

What did you learn?

What are you worrying about today?

Where do you find hope today?

ACTIVITIES FOR ALL AGES

Make a Resurrection Garden - Fill a round dish with dirt. Add a rock tomb and a twig cross, etc.. You could even add lego Jesus and soldiers. Remove Jesus from the tomb on Easter Sunday.



Act of Devotion: Light to Dark - Gather several candles. Seven is a good number but whatever you have will work. Light all the candles. Read through the scripture passage, slowly putting the candles out one at a time as you go, so that when you finish the scripture all the candles are out. Sit in the darkness and reflect on this question: how does this story make you feel?

Color - There is a cross coloring sheet on the next page. Take time to color and pray.

CLOSING PRAYER

Jesus Christ, suffering servant and Savior of the world, draw us nearer to the cross. Help us be faithful even amid times of sorrow, fear, and death, as you are always faithful to us. Amen.

