

Easter - Palms for Holy Week

On your marks:

Increasingly churches are looking for ways in which children can enter into the experiences and stories of Holy Week in order to better prepare them for the miracle of Easter Sunday. The following idea is a way of linking the stories that lead up to Good Friday and Easter Eve (and beyond if appropriate) by miming various events using the palms of your hands. There is also a simple craft follow-up activity at the end.

Get set:

This is a simple idea that needs no preparation and could be used as part of a Palm Sunday service when the whole church is present.

Go!

1. Today is Palm Sunday. The people tore down palm branches to welcome King Jesus into Jerusalem.

Splay out the fingers of your hands and then wave your palms high like palm leaves.

2. Palm Sunday begins Holy Week. This was Jesus' last week before he died. It was filled with special events.

Early on Jesus went into the temple and was angry about the way it was being used like a market and not as a place of prayer.

Clench your fingers tightly into your palms and wave them in anger; follow this by putting your palms together in an attitude of prayer.

3. At Bethany outside Jerusalem where Jesus stayed, only Mary seemed to understand that Jesus was about to die. She anointed his feet with perfume. Jesus praised and blessed her for what she did.

Open wide your hands and stretch them out to bless and then clap them together gently to show praise.

4. In the upper room Jesus used part of his last meal to show his friends that he was going to be broken and poured out for the sake of the whole world.

With both hands, mime breaking a piece of bread and pouring out the wine.

5. In Gethsemane Jesus went off on his own and prayed. He was facing the decision to

take on the pain and the horror of death for us.

Clench your two palms together in an attitude of earnest prayer.

6. Before the High Priest and the Roman Governor, Jesus did not resist as they passed sentence of death on him.

Cross over your two hands in front of you at the wrists, as if they are tied together and with your palms spread out.

7. On a hill outside Jerusalem they stretched out Jesus' hands and nailed them to a cross, leaving him there to die.

Point to each wrist (the sign language for Jesus) then stretch out your open palms to either side.

8. Jesus' death was a shock to all his friends, who were frightened about what was going to happen next.

Open palms together across your mouth in amazement, horror and fear.

9. In despair they went into hiding, wondering what the next step would be.

Hold your head in the palms of both hands

10. To be added on Easter Day

On Easter Day Jesus was alive again, showing them his hands where the nail marks were.

Hold out both palms wide to be inspected.

11. And the disciples were filled with joy.

Lift high the palms of both hands in jubilation!

12. Craft idea

Using the ideas above, have the children trace round their hands in the various positions recorded, to create a hand and palm collage of the events of Holy Week (and if appropriate, beyond).

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