



Holy Week Centerpiece Created by Lilly Lewin

Experiencing Holy Week by yourself, with family, kids, youth group etc, and even together on line!

In preparation for Holy Week, here is a centerpiece and meditation you can create for yourself, your family, or even online via a video or on a zoom call with your community!

In the future, you could create this for your entire church community on site (making it larger as necessary...using larger candles and enough supplies for your entire group)

Each day there is an activity/response you can do on your own or with your family/group to retell the story of the last week of Jesus's life.

The centerpiece works a bit like a reverse advent wreath. Start with all the candles lit on Palm Sunday and Monday, and then you extinguish a candle each day, and thus the centerpiece is dark on Saturday. And all candles are relit on Easter!

Begin with a plate or dish for your centerpiece and 5 candles. I use a red candle for Good Friday and place it in the center, but you could also do the candles in a row if you were creating this on an altar space. This can also be created for your coffee table rather than your dining table.

Remember you don't have to do all of this, just start. Do a couple of days. Do what works for you and your family/group. Feel free to modify the questions for the ages in your group.

We started with just the candles and purple cloth activity the first year. Get your family/group/roommates to join in the creation of the centerpiece and getting the props together. Just use what you have!

I love this way to pray, because we remember much more of what we do than what we hear. And I would love to hear how you use this centerpiece. Please email me at freerangeworship@gmail.com

Rejoicing in the already but not yet! Lilly

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SUPPLIES:

- 5 Candles..perfect world 4 white, one red
- Dish or plate that will hold candles and be large enough for extra things to be added to it.
- Pieces of fern or palm branches, size depends upon size of your table/centerpiece. I have a small table so we have a small centerpiece.
- Cut out clothes/jackets either from magazines or run off outlines like paper doll clothes on 8.5x11 sheets of paper. PDF included
- Coins ...pennies or the plastic gold coins
- Olive oil, Vegetable Oil or bottle of perfume
- Hershey kisses enough for everyone or Kiss Cut Out

- Pieces of paper with a plate drawn on it to use as placemat, or paper place mats, enough for all members of your group.
- Purple Fabric (or any color) cut into 3x6 inch strips, make a half inch cut in the short end of each strip so they can easily be torn into two parts
- Piece of muslin or black cloth that will cover entire centerpiece to represent grave cloth.
- Band aids. One for each person
- Candles, one for each person in your group (you can use small birthday candles)

HOLY WEEK CENTERPIECE

DAY 1: Palm Sunday, (Palm cut and coat cut outs, or pieces of fern)

Pick a passage Matthew 21: 1-10, Luke 19: 28-40, Mark 11: 1-11, John 12:12-19 **LIGHT ALL 5 candles**

Read the story of Jesus entering Jerusalem, and talk about what it would be like to be in the crowd when Jesus rode into town. What do you see, hear, smell? Are you excited, scared, angry like the Pharisees? Talk about this.

Add pieces of palm fronds or cuts of a fern to symbolize the entry into Jerusalem. If you have younger kids in your group or you are feeling artistic, print off the page of coats, jackets and palm branches and color these and cut them out and place around the centerpiece plate .

DAY 2: Monday: Cleansing the Temple (dish of pennies/coins)

Leave Palm Branches around the plate for a couple of days and bring a bowl of pennies/coins to the table.

Read the story Luke 19:45-48, Matt. 21:12-17, Romans 8:35-39

LIGHT ALL THE CANDLES and have someone blow out one of them.

Pass around the coins and HOLD A penny/coin in your hand and think about the scene. What does it look like, smell like, what do you see? What do you notice?

The Money Changers were blocking people's access to prayer & worship, especially the Gentiles.

What things block you from prayer and worship right now?

What things keep you from worshipping Jesus?

What things (like the tables of the money changers) keep you from being with God?

News, Texting, Computer time, facebook, Netflix Video games, busyness, fear, worry, lack of trust, what else?

As you hold your coin, TALK to God about these things. Allow Jesus to hold these things for you and ask Jesus to take away these blocks.

Then take time to talk about this as a group if you are with others.

DAY 3: Tuesday: Anointing at Bethany (olive oil or perfume)

LIGHT ALL CANDLES and have someone extinguish two of the candles.

Read the passage. John 12: 1-11, Mark 14:1-9 Matthew 26: 6-13

The woman in the story gave Jesus her most valued possession. She honored him with this gift of expensive perfume.

What is your most valuable possession?

It might be a material thing

It might be a talent that you have.

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It might be your health or even your life today!

Are you willing to give this to Jesus to honor him? Talk to Jesus about this.

Are you willing to give up your most valuable, most precious possession in order to honor Jesus?

Pass around the olive oil or perfume and a dab on your forehead as a symbol of your willingness to honor Jesus.



Day 4: Wednesday: Judas betrays Jesus (Hershey Kiss or cut out lips)

Light all the Candles and have someone extinguish 3 of the candles.

READ one of these: Matthew 26:14-16 (17-21) Mark 14:10-11,Luke 22:1-6

This week, Jesus was betrayed by two of his friends, Judas and Peter. Judas betrayed Jesus for 30 pieces of silver. Peter denied that he even knew Jesus.

Anyone betray you this week/month/year?

Jesus said, "Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you."

Take time to pray for the people who have betrayed you or people or groups that are your enemies.

What about you? Have you betrayed Jesus lately? With your actions or inactions? Bad attitude, lack of faith, etc. Talk to God about these things.

Eat a Hershey kiss as a symbol of your willingness to forgive those who have betrayed you and as a symbol of your need for forgiveness. Or Write your Name on the kiss cut out and put it on the centerpiece dish/plate.

Day 5: Thursday: THE LAST SUPPER (Pieces of Cloth and placemat)

Light all the Candles and have someone extinguish 4 candles.

Pick one of these passages to read: Mark 14:12-26, John 13: 1-17 , Luke 22: 7-30, Matthew 26: 26-30, Luke 22: 14-21

Add a piece of purple cloth under the candles to form a cross. Have extra pieces of purple cloth, enough for each person in your group. (cloth pieces should be about 3x6 inches w cut in the the narrow side) You will use these on Good Friday.

Placemat Print Out: Have a paper placemat for each person or have people create one before you begin.

READ the Passage: Imagine the scene. Picture the colors, the smells, the atmosphere of the room.

Consider that it was Jesus's last meal with his disciples, his closest friends. If it was your last meal what would you be eating and who would be at your table?

Take time to write out or draw your menu for your last supper and name the people at your table on your placemat. Take time to Pray for the friends you have listed.

Day 6: Friday GOOD FRIDAY (pieces of cloth) Light only the red candle. Pass around pieces of purple cloth.

Read the story: Matthew 27: 32-54, Luke 23: 26-49, Mark 15:21-33, 33-40

Extinguish the candle. SAY "IT IS FINISHED."

After listening to the passage (use Bible Gateway App to listen to it if you don't want to read it out loud) have everyone rip their pieces of purple cloth in half symbolic of the temple curtain being torn separating the holy of holies when Jesus died on the cross.

When the candle has had time to cool, have someone cover the centerpiece with a cloth symbolic of Jesus' burial.

The curtain was ripped top to bottom! We now have direct relationship with God! Talk to Jesus about this.

How does it feel to know that you are not separated from God even in death?

How does it feel to know that Jesus knows and understands your suffering and pain?

What things do you need Jesus to finish for you in your life?

Talk to Jesus about this and share with someone else today.

Day 7: Saturday: (BAND AIDS) All the candles are out. The strips of cloth are on the plate. Entire centerpiece is dark and covered with "burial cloth"

Jesus's disciples, his friends, have abandoned him and are hiding and afraid. His body is buried in a borrowed tomb.

How are you feeling today about the death of Jesus? What if you didn't know that Sunday was going to mean resurrection?

Talk about this.

PASS OUT BAND AIDS

Take time to pray for anyone you know who is suffering or sick or feeling afraid.

We have all lost something this crazy season...jobs, freedom of movement, security. Talk to God about this.

Pray also for friends who have suffered a loss or lost a loved one in recent months.

Place a band aid on your wrist as a reminder to pray these people in the next few days.

We are all experiencing grief and loss in this crazy time. Take time to journal or talk about this with someone. What is the grief you feel today? Give this to Jesus to carry for you.

Day 8 : EASTER!!!! (small candles like birthday candles)

You can do this at breakfast or around another meal on your own or with housemates.

If you covered your centerpiece, **uncover and RELIGHT ALL THE CANDLES!**

Have all the candles lit before people sit down for the meal.

READ the Resurrection Story together! Choose one Matt.28:1-10, Mark 16:1-18, Luke 24

Pass around the birthday or other small candles.

Light your candle from the centerpiece as a symbol of Jesus resurrection and the Light returning to the World. Now we can share that Light and his love with everyone we meet.

Say together: CHRIST IS RISEN! HE IS RISEN INDEED.

What are some ways you've seen or experienced resurrection and new life this week?

Spend some time thanking Jesus for his love for you and all the good things that are in your world.

Pray for places that need the Light and Resurrection of Jesus today.

Hospitals, Places of conflict and poverty, medical workers and others on the frontlines.

Pray for your community, your neighborhood, to see and experience more of the love of Jesus.

Pray for specific needs you know about.

Pick a country to pray for in the coming days. Pray that healing love and light of Jesus will be seen there.

Use a map of the world, globe or map on line to pray with this week as we ask Jesus to shine his light and love in these places.

EXTRA: you can create a prayer collage (cutting out pics or words from magazines or drawing them) to remind you to pray for things in your world that need resurrection.

PRAY:

Jesus help us to see your light and experience your resurrection today and every day. Thank you that we are Resurrection People able to share your love and life with others. AMEN

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For more resources check out:

Lilly Lewin @lillylewin on instagram, twitter and facebook

freerangeworship.com and freerangeworship@gmail.com



PALM SUNDAY

COLOR & CUT OUT
and PUT around
centerpiece





