

Holy Week for Families with Young Children

Dear Families with Young Children,

Holy Week can feel like a lot—especially with little ones. The stories are deep, and it's not always clear how to share them in age-appropriate ways.

But even simple moments can help make this week meaningful.

Here are a few short, gentle activities for children under 5 (and easily adapted for older kids). Each takes just a few minutes. If it feels like too much, just choose one.

Maundy Thursday: Hide the Cross

What to do:

- Show your child a cross or a picture of Jesus
- Say: *"Tonight we're going to put Jesus away for a few days. He's going somewhere we can't see him."*
- Let your child help wrap it in cloth or place it in a special box and hide it together somewhere safe
- Say: *"We'll find Jesus again on Easter morning!"*

Time: 5 minutes

Why it matters:

Young children understand hide-and-seek. Jesus is hidden—but not gone—and will be found again.

Maundy Thursday: Gentle Foot Washing

What to do:

- Fill a small tub with warm water (test it first), you can add bubbles or soap, as you wish.
- Have a soft towel ready and gently wash your child's feet
- Say: *"Jesus washed his friends' feet to show he loved them. I'm washing your feet because I love you."*
- Dry their feet and give them a hug

Time: 5–10 minutes

Why it matters:

This simple, sensory act helps children connect love with action.

Good Friday: Quiet Time

What to do:

- Turn off TV, music, and noisy toys for a while
- Choose calm activities: reading, coloring, building, cuddling
- Say: *“Today is a sad day. We’re being extra quiet and gentle.”*
- Use soft voices and offer extra comfort

Time: About 1 hour (or as long as they can manage)

Why it matters:

Even if they don’t fully understand, children can feel a change in tone and rhythm.

Good Friday: Make a Simple Candle

What to do:

- Use a jar candle or tea light in a safe holder
- Let your child decorate it with stickers or washable markers
- Say: *“This is our special Jesus candle. We’ll light it on Easter morning.”*
- Place it somewhere visible

Time: 10 minutes

Why it matters:

Creating something tangible helps children connect with the story—and they’ll remember “their” candle.

Holy Saturday: Magic Eggs

What to do:

- Give your child a white crayon and a hard-boiled egg and let them draw (even though they won’t see it)
- Say: *“Watch what happens—it’s like magic!”*
- Dip the egg in dye together, and watch the hidden design appear
- Say: *“Something special is hidden... and tomorrow we’ll see it!”*

Time: 15 minutes

Why it matters:

The surprise reveal introduces the idea of waiting and trusting that something wonderful is coming.

Holy Saturday: Finding Jesus

What to do:

- After your child goes to bed, take out the hidden cross, and place it somewhere they'll discover it Easter morning (on their pillow, at breakfast, or near their basket)
- When they find it, celebrate: *"You found Jesus! He came back! Happy Easter!"*

Time: 2 minutes to set up

Why it matters:

The joy of discovery makes the resurrection feel real and exciting for young children.

We hope these small moments help your family enter the story of Holy Week with wonder, gentleness, and hope.

Blessings,

John and Rachel Gardner