

2021 Lenten Stories



Lent is a season of reflection and preparation before the celebration of Easter. Beginning on Ash Wednesday, we observe Lent for 40 days in imitation of the 40 days Jesus spent fasting in the wilderness. Some of the practices we focus on in Lent include prayer, fasting, turning away from sin, and giving to others.

Introduction

We hope this resource can help us connect together as families and as a church family. It can also draw us deeper into the season of Lent. Practices like these can become beloved family traditions that children look forward to each year.

Passing down stories from one generation to the next is an important practice that helps form us into a people with a shared identity. It's an ancient practice that we often don't make time for in our hurried modern life. These stories from Scripture become a part of our story. They get worked into our kids' hearts and imaginations. We also tell them to ourselves, because we are a forgetful people, and our imaginations need to be transformed too.

How to use this book...

1. Allow children to participate to the degree they are able. Some might be able to help light candles or blow out the match. Some might be able to memorize and say the opening phrase when we're lighting candles. Some might be able to read and do some of the storytelling.
2. Read through the story at least once so you're familiar with the story and not reading it cold while telling the story. It's also a good idea to do a practice run with the materials.
3. Gather your needed materials and set them in place for the story.
4. Pray in preparation, and present the story prayerfully.
5. When presenting the story, speak slowly and contemplatively, with wonder.
6. When a person is speaking in the story, place a hand on the representative figure and help them come to life.
7. Ask questions.
8. Twelve disciples = a lot of figures. Some of these gospel stories involve large crowds. You can use all twelve disciples or represent them with six figures and instruct your children that there were twelve disciples. (This will help keep things from getting too cluttered.)
9. We'll light a lenten cross (or candle) for each story. Those materials are assumed and not listed with each story.
10. It might be good to practice the liturgical responses at the start and end of the story.

Additional Resources

The stories will be recorded by folks from The Table and uploaded to our Vimeo channel "2021 Lenten Stories."

You can download this booklet and find out more about our Lenten Stories practice on The Table's website.

To Tell These Stories You Will Need:

- Lenten Cross with 6 purple candles (or 4 purple, 1 rose and 1 red) or 1 candle of your choosing
- Matches or lighter for Lenten Cross
- 20 adult wooden figures (available at a craft store/online as “peg people” or “peg dolls”)
 - One will be used regularly as a Jesus figure, with a light brown felt cloth tunic
- 3-5 child wooden figures (mini/small “peg people”)
- Felt in several colors: 1 large green; 1 medium or small green; 1 large tan; 1 large red; 1 brown; 1 purple, black, or red for Golgotha; 1 small light brown tunic for Jesus; some small strips for clothes on the road as Jesus enters Jerusalem; a purple “robe” for Jesus; 2 small white felt cloth for: a towel, Lazarus burial clothes, Jesus burial clothes, and angel clothes
- Paper Mache or Cardboard boxes with lids of various sizes (2 large, 2 medium, about 3 small boxes)
 - We use a medium box with a lid for a tomb, but you could create your own tomb with a round door.
- At least 6 large poms (puff balls) in various colors for animals (must have at least 1 gray or brown, some white, some tan/brown)
- Twine for tying on Jesus tunic, Lazarus burial clothes, Jesus burial clothes, towel for Last Supper, angel robes, soldier toothpicks, and crosses
- Some coins (around 12 coins should be enough, including 2 dimes and 2 pennies)
- 1 gold pipe cleaner “crown”
- 1 brown pipe cleaner for a crown of thorns
- Sewing needle (for camel going through the eye of a needle)
- Some leaves for Jesus’ entry into Jerusalem
- Small stones/Pebbles (20 tiny ones would be good, but you can get by with 5)
- 1 small book (for squishing an animal pom with a heavy burden)
- 1 tiny cup (a doll cup, lego cup, thimble, or any small object that resembles a cup)
- 1 small piece of cracker
- 1 little water basin (the cap or lid of a bottle or jug could work)
- 1 large bunch of grapes (remove the grapes from one branch before the story, page 64)
- Some potted or fake plants
- Toothpicks (at least 8)
- 1 small piece of sponge or foam
- 1 piece of paper to rip
- 3 crosses- for each cross you can take two popsicles (or tongue depressors) and glue them together to make a cross. You can then tie the cross to the back of Jesus and the thieves. Or feel free to use whatever crosses you might have at home that you think could work.
 - On Jesus’ cross, you can add a little note near the top that says “The King of the Jews”
- *Optional* Tealight candle to represent a fire

A picture of the supplies coming soon...

These materials can be found on Amazon or in craft stores like Hobby Lobby. You can also substitute materials for similar items that you already have around the house (like legos or little people for the peg people). However, it might be good to have unique items that are set aside for this purpose, if possible. If you have questions about materials, feel free to contact Ryan Donoho (ryan@thetableindy.org).

Variations

The stories journey alongside Jesus chronologically and build on one another. The best way to experience them would be to do each one in order. However, not everyone's schedule will allow for keeping up at that pace. So, feel free to make your own custom schedule with these stories. For example, If your family schedule only allows for one story a week, then feel free to pick one story to focus on for each week. Some stories are a continuation of the last story, and might need to be adapted slightly at the start if using them as a standalone story. Also, the first night of each week has a more detailed description of the candle lighting liturgy for that week.

**Stories adapted by Ryan Donoho and Andrea Reinhardt
from the NRSV, NIV, NLT, and The Message versions of The Bible.**

Table of Contents

Week One

Night 1: The Great Reversal - 6

Night 2: On The Way To Jerusalem - 9

Night 3: Zacchaeus Repents - 11

Week Two

Night 1: Jesus Heals A Blind Beggar - 13

Night 2: The Resurrection Of Lazarus - 15

Night 3: The Plot To Kill Jesus - 19

Night 4: Christ Enters Jerusalem - 21

Night 5: Clearing The Temple - 24

Week Three

Night 1: Teaching Authority - 27

Night 2: The Greedy Farmhands - 30

Night 3: The Wedding Party - 33

Night 4: Paying Taxes To Caesar - 36

Night 5: The Greatest Commandment - 38

Week Four

Night 1: Warning And Mourning Over Bad
Leaders - 41

Night 2: The Widow's Gift - 44

Night 3: Don't Be Deceived - 46

Night 4: The Parable Of The Ten Virgins - 49

Night 5: The Sheep And Goats - 52

Week Five

Night 1: Jesus Anointed For Burial - 55

Night 2: The Last Supper - 57

Night 3: Leadership And Betrayal -59

Night 4: Preparing To Leave - 62

Night 5: Abide In Love - 64

Week Six

Night 1: Prayer In Gethsemane - 66

Night 2: Jesus Arrested - 68

Night 3: Jesus Before The Sanhedrin - 71

Night 4: Peter Disowns Jesus - 73

Night 5: Jesus On Trial - 76

Week Seven

Night 1: Jesus Sentenced To Death - 78

Night 2: The King Of The Jews Goes To The
Cross - 81

Night 3: Jesus On The Cross - 84

Night 4: Truly This Man Was God's Son - 86

Night 5: Jesus Laid In The Tomb - 89

The Great Reversal

(Mt. 19:16-30; Mk. 10:17-31; Lk. 18:18-30)

- | | |
|--|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 8 figures (1 Jesus figure with tunic) • Green felt cloth • Light brown puff ball | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Small stones/pebbles
(20 tiny ones would be great) • Sewing needle |
|--|---|

Each time we start these stories, we're going to light the candles of our lenten cross. We'll add another candle each Sunday in lent. As we light the first candle, we'll use a call and response. As I light the first candle, I'll say, "Bless the Lord who forgives all our sins." And you will respond with, "His mercy endures forever."

Let's practice saying your response, "His mercy endures forever." Let's say it together: 1-2-3, **"His mercy endures forever."**

Do you have any questions? Are you ready to begin?

(Be ready to strike the match as you say:) "Bless the Lord who forgives all our sins."

(Strike the match and light the first candle as the listeners say:) **"His mercy endures forever."**

Put down a green felt cloth in the distance. Place Jesus with six disciples with him. Have them start to walk towards the green cloth.

Jesus had left Galilee and was heading towards Jerusalem. Jesus was teaching people about the kingdom of heaven as he traveled.

Add a figure and have him "run" to Jesus. Place a hand on each figure as they are speaking, and help them come to life. Have the man bow to Jesus in reverence.

As Jesus was walking on the road, a man came running up to Jesus, greeted him with great reverence, and asked, "Good Teacher, what good thing must I do to get eternal life?"

Jesus said, "Why do you question me about what's good? God is the One who is good. If you want to enter the life of God, just do what he tells you."

The man asked, "What in particular?"

Jesus said, "Don't murder, don't commit adultery, don't steal, don't lie, honor your father and mother, and love your neighbor as you do yourself."

The young man said, "I've done all that since I was young. What do I still lack?"

Jesus looked him hard in the eye--and loved him! He said, "If you want to give it all you've got, go sell whatever you own and give it to the poor. All your wealth will then be in heaven. Then come follow me."

The man's face clouded over.

Tilt the man down a little bit, and move the man slowly away.

He walked away terribly sad, because he had a lot of possessions and couldn't bear to let go of his wealth.

The disciples couldn't believe what they were hearing. As they watched the man go, Jesus told his disciples, "Do you have any idea how difficult it is for the rich to enter God's kingdom?"

Have a light brown puff ball try to gallop through the eye of a needle.

"Let me tell you, it's easier to gallop a camel through a needle's eye than for the rich to enter God's kingdom."

That got their attention, the disciples were staggered. "Then who has any chance at all?"

Jesus looked hard at them and said, "No chance at all if you think you can do it by yourself. But with God everything is possible."

Then Peter chimed in, "We left everything we owned and followed you, didn't we? What do we get out of it?"

Jesus replied, "Yes, you have followed me, and you won't regret it. In the re-creation of the world, when the Son of Man will rule gloriously, you who have followed me will also rule, starting with the twelve tribes of Israel."

Put one or two pebbles in front of Peter, and push those pebbles over to Jesus as though Peter is giving them to him.

"And not only you, but anyone who sacrifices home, family, fields--whatever--because of me will get it all back--*(drop a lot of pebbles on top of the two and push them back over to Peter)*--a hundred times over, and will inherit eternal life. This is the great reversal: many who seem to be the greatest now will be least important then, and those who seem least important now will be the greatest then."

Each time we end a story, we're going to use this response: "A Jesus story: remember me in your mercy, Lord: and unite us by your cross."

I'll say, "A Jesus story: remember me in your mercy, Lord," and you'll say, "And unite us by your cross." Let's practice saying your response, "And unite us by your cross." Let's say it together: 1-2-3, "**And unite us by your cross.**" Okay, now let's do the whole response:

Response: A Jesus story. Remember me in your mercy, Lord; **and unite us by your cross.**

What do you think this phrase means? How are we united by the cross?

(As we identify ourselves with Jesus in his death, we submit ourselves to God and one another. In a way, we also die to ourselves and are born again into a family where we practice submitting to God and one another.)

As we enter into this season of Lent, we are reminded that following Jesus can be hard, and requires us to leave behind things that make us seem great and powerful in the world. As we choose to follow Jesus, and especially in Lent, we take up practices that help us live into the way of Jesus and his kingdom. We practice things like giving away our money and possessions to those who need them. We practice fasting. We spend time in prayer and practice trusting God.

Is there something that would be hard for you to give up if Jesus asked you to?

For the rich man in our story, he had a hard time giving up the many things he owned. What could you practice giving up for this season of Lent, so that you may more fully give yourself over to following Jesus?

Giving things up helps us face our fears and trust Jesus more. When you think about giving something up for Jesus, what are you afraid of?

(Listen and acknowledge their fears; don't belittle or dismiss them, and try to speak good news to them.)

Now, we're going to sing a song - "I Want Jesus to Walk With Me"
(Example: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WvCCRr_Kyx0)

First verse:

I want Jesus to walk with me
I want Jesus to walk with me
All along my pilgrim journey
I want Jesus to walk with me

On The Way To Jerusalem

(Mt. 20:17-28; Mk. 10:32-45; Lk. 18:31-34, 22:24-30)

- | | |
|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• 11-18 figures (1 Jesus figure with tunic, 6-12 as disciples, handful as crowd)• Green felt cloth | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• 1 large or medium box lid |
|---|---|

Bless the Lord who forgives all our sins.--(*Strike match*)--**His mercy endures forever.**

Put down a green felt cloth in the distance (point to it when you mention Jerusalem). Place Jesus with six (or twelve) disciples with him. Place some other figures as a little crowd following along with Jesus. Have them start to walk towards the green cloth.

Jesus was traveling to Jerusalem with his disciples.

Then, have Jesus and six (or twelve) disciples pull off to the side. (It might be easiest to put them into a box lid to move them around together).

He took his twelve close disciples off to the side of the road and said:

Place a hand on each figure as they are speaking, and help them come to life.

“Listen to me carefully. We are on our way up to Jerusalem. When we get there, the Son of Man will be betrayed to the religious leaders and scholars. They will sentence him to death. They will then hand him over to the Romans to be made fun of, to be tortured, and crucified. On the third day he will be raised up to life.”

Move a figure from the road over to Jesus, and place two of the twelve disciples next to her.

It was about that time that the mother of the Zebedee brothers came with her two sons and knelt before Jesus with a request.

Jesus asked, “What do you want?”

Bow the mother figure forward when she speaks.

She said, “Give your word that these two sons of mine will be awarded the highest places of honor in your kingdom, one at your right hand, one at your left hand.”

Jesus responded, "You have no idea what you're asking." And he said to James and John, "Are you capable of drinking the cup that I'm about to drink, of being baptized in the baptism I'm about to be plunged into?"

They said, "Sure, why not?"

Jesus said, "Come to think of it, you are going to drink my cup, and be baptized in my baptism. But as to awarding places of honor, that's not my business. My Father is taking care of that."

Group the six (or twelve) disciples together.

When the ten others heard about this, they lost their tempers, and were thoroughly disgusted with the two brothers.

So Jesus got them together to settle things down. He said, "You've observed how godless rulers throw their weight around, how quickly a little power goes to their heads. It's not going to be that way with you. Whoever wants to be great must become a servant. Whoever wants to be first among you must be your slave. That is what the Son of Man has done: He came to serve, not be served--and then to give away his life in exchange for the many who are held hostage."

Response: A Jesus story. Remember me in your mercy, Lord; **and unite us by your cross.**

I wonder what you noticed in the story?

This lenten season we will journey with Jesus to Jerusalem and the cross. As we travel with Jesus, let's try to notice how Jesus speaks the truth about the religious leaders of his day and helps and serves the common people and those in need. He stands up against injustice, and those in power crush him for it.

Our journey takes us to the cross, but points us to the resurrection and new life that Jesus brings. How do you think Jesus was able to give so much of himself away to help others?

What are some ways that you could try to serve others this lent?

SONG: "I Want Jesus to Walk With Me"

(Example: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WvCCRR_Kyx0)

First verse:

I want Jesus to walk with me
I want Jesus to walk with me
All along my pilgrim journey
I want Jesus to walk with me

Zacchaeus Repents

(Lk. 19:1-10)

- | | |
|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● 20 adult figures (1 Jesus figure with tunic) ● 1 child figure for Zacchaeus ● Felt cloth: 1 large tan or brown, 1 green | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● 1 small box on edge for tree ● 1 large box lid, 1 small box lid ● 1 medium box |
|---|--|

Bless the Lord who forgives all our sins.--(*Strike match*)--**His mercy endures forever.**

Put down a large tan or brown felt cloth for Jericho. Put down a green felt cloth in the distance. Put Jesus in Jericho with his (6) disciples and a large crowd all around him. (It might be easiest to put Jesus and the crowd all on a large box lid, so that it will be easy to move them all together later.) Place a small box on its side (so it stands up tall like a tree) ahead of where Jesus and the crowd are.

Jesus was traveling to Jerusalem and walked through Jericho.

Place a small figure outside the crowd. Have him go around the edge of the crowd trying to find a way in.

There was a rich man there, his name was Zacchaeus. He was the head tax man. He wanted desperately to see Jesus, but the crowd was in his way--he was a short man and couldn't see over the crowd.

Place Zacchaeus on top of the small box set on its side.

So he ran on ahead and climbed up in a sycamore tree so he could see Jesus when he came by.

Move Jesus and the crowd (on the box lid) to stand near the tree. Place Jesus close to Zacchaeus and the tree. Place a hand on each figure as they are speaking, and help them come to life.

When Jesus got to the tree, he looked up and said, "Zacchaeus, hurry down. Today is my day to be a guest in your home."

Move Zacchaeus down from the tree to Jesus.

Zacchaeus scrambled out of the tree, hardly believing his good luck, delighted to take Jesus home with him.

Everyone who saw the incident was upset and grumped, “What business does he have getting close to someone who is such a bad person?”

Zacchaeus just stood there, a little stunned. He stammered apologetically, “Master, I give away half my income to the poor--and if I’ve cheated anyone, I’ll pay four times the damages.”

Place a medium box on its side with a small box lid inside for a table. Move Jesus and Zacchaeus inside the house near the table.

Jesus said, “Today is salvation day in this home! Here he is: Zacchaeus, son of Abraham! For the Son of Man came to find and restore the lost.”

Response: A Jesus story. Remember me in your mercy, Lord; **and unite us by your cross.**

I wonder what you notice in this story?

Do you know why the other people did not like Zacchaeus?

(He stole money from them. He worked with the Romans, who were foreigners ruling over them.)

Do you remember the story of the rich man who went away sad, and how Jesus said it was very hard for rich people to be saved? What was the difference between that man and Zacchaeus?

(Zacchaeus repented and gave away his money. He was able to trust Jesus more than his money.)

What led Zacchaeus to repentance and salvation? (More kid friendly language: What did Jesus do that opened the way for Zacchaeus to do the right thing?)

Repentance is a major theme in the season of Lent. Can you think of anything you need to repent of?

SONG: “Zacchaeus Was a Wee Little Man or “I Want Jesus to Walk With Me”
(https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WvCCRr_Kyx0)

First verse:

I want Jesus to walk with me
I want Jesus to walk with me
All along my pilgrim journey
I want Jesus to walk with me

Jesus Heals A Blind Beggar

(Mt. 20:29-32; Mk. 10:46-52; Lk. 18:35-43)

- | | |
|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 15 adult figures (1 Jesus figure with tunic) • Felt cloth: 1 large tan or brown, 1 green | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1 large box lid |
|---|---|

Bless the Lord who forgives all our sins.--(*Strike match*)--**His mercy endures forever.**

(*Light the first candle as you say,*) “On our journey, we follow Jesus.”

Place a green felt cloth in the distance for Jerusalem. Place a tan or brown felt cloth for Jericho. Place Jesus in the middle of a crowd of about twelve figures just beyond the Jericho cloth. It may be easiest to put Jesus and the crowd on a large box lid to easily move them along together.

Jesus was on a journey to Jerusalem with his disciples. As they were leaving Jericho, a huge crowd followed him.

Place a figure just in front of the crowd. Place a hand on each figure as they are speaking, and help them come to life.

Suddenly they came upon a blind beggar by the name of Bartimaeus, son of Timaeus, sitting alongside the road asking for handouts. When he heard the rustle of the crowd, he asked what was going on. They told him, “Jesus the Nazarene is going by.”

Bartimaeus began to yell, “Jesus! Son of David! Mercy, have mercy on me!”

Move the crowd and Jesus forward right next to the blind man.

The crowd tried to hush him up, but he yelled all the louder, “Son of David! Mercy, have mercy on me!”

Move Jesus a little closer to Bartimaeus.

Jesus stopped and said, “Call him over.”

Have a figure from the crowd near Bartimaeus move close to him.

They called him. “It’s your lucky day! Get up! He’s calling you to come!”

Make way in the crowd and move Bartimaeus over to Jesus.

Throwing off his coat, he was on his feet at once and came to Jesus.

Jesus said, "What do you want from me?"

The blind man said, "Master, I want my eyes opened. I want to see!"

Tilt Jesus to touch the blind man's face as he speaks.

Deeply moved, Jesus touched his eyes and said, "Your faith has saved and healed you." In that very instant he recovered his sight and followed Jesus down the road.

Move the blind man into the crowd behind Jesus and move the crowd a little bit towards Jerusalem.

Response: A Jesus story. Remember me in your mercy, Lord; **and unite us by your cross.**

I wonder what you noticed in that story?

What was different about the way Bartimaeus was saved and the way Zaccheaus was saved?

What was similar between the way Bartimaeus was saved and the way Zaccheaus was saved?

SONG: "I Want Jesus to Walk With Me"

(Example: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WvCCRR_Kyx0)

Second verse:

When I'm in trouble, Lord, walk with me.

When I'm in trouble, Lord, walk with me.

When my heart is almost breaking.

Lord, I want Jesus to walk with me.

The Resurrection Of Lazarus

(Jn. 11:1-44)

- | | |
|--|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 20 figures (1 Jesus figure with tunic) • 2 medium boxes • Box lids: 1 large, 1 medium, 1 small | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1 white cloth • Twine to tie on white cloth |
|--|--|

Bless the Lord who forgives all our sins.--(*Strike match*)--**His mercy endures forever.**

(*Invite the listeners to join you in saying,*) **“On our journey, we follow Jesus.”**

Place Jesus with six disciples. Add four more figures as a crowd near Jesus and the disciples. A little ways away, setup a medium box on it’s side. Put a small box lid inside as a bed. Put a figure on the bed to represent Lazarus. Put two figures nearby for Mary and Martha.

While Jesus was traveling, a man was sick, Lazarus of Bethany. He and his sisters, Mary and Martha, were friends of Jesus and lived in Bethany, between Jericho and Jerusalem.

Add another figure by the sisters. Have the figure go speak to Jesus. Place a hand on each figure as they are speaking, and help them come to life.

So, the sisters sent word to Jesus, “Master, the one you love so very much is sick.”

When Jesus got the message, he said, “This sickness is not fatal. It will become an occasion to show God’s glory by glorifying God’s Son.” Jesus loved Martha, her sister, and Lazarus, but oddly, when he heard that Lazarus was sick, he stayed where he was for two more days. After the two days, he said to his disciples, “Let’s go back to Judea.”

The disciples said, “Rabbi, you can’t do that. The religious leaders there are out to kill you, and you want to go back?”

Jesus announced, “Our friend Lazarus has fallen asleep. I’m going to wake him up.”

The disciples said, “Master, if he’s gone to sleep, he’ll get a good rest and wake up feeling fine.” Jesus was talking about death, while his disciples thought he was talking about taking a nap.

Place a medium box on its side not far from the “house” box where Lazarus is. Put a white felt cloth on Lazarus with twine. Lay Lazarus down in the box and slide a lid over the opening to close it.

Then Jesus became explicit: "Lazarus died. And I am glad for your sakes that I wasn't there. You're about to be given new grounds for believing. Now let's go to him."

That's when Thomas, the one called the Twin, said to his companions, "Come along. We might as well die with him."

Move Jesus and the disciples over by the house, but not right next to the house. It might be easiest to put them on a box lid and move them together.

When Jesus finally got there, he found Lazarus already four days dead.

Add some more figures around Mary and Martha.

Bethany was near Jerusalem, only a couple of miles away, and many of the Jews were visiting Martha and Mary, sympathizing with them over their brother.

Move Martha out to meet Jesus.

Martha heard Jesus was coming and went out to meet him. Mary remained in the house. Martha said, "Master, if you'd been here, my brother wouldn't have died. Even now, I know that whatever you ask God he will give you."

Jesus said, "Your brother will be raised up."

Martha replied, "I know that he will be raised up in the resurrection at the end of time."

Jesus responded, "You don't have to wait for the End. I am, right now, Resurrection and Life. The one who believes in me, even though he or she dies, will live. And everyone who lives believing in me does not ultimately die at all. Do you believe this?"

Martha said, "Yes Master. All along I have believed that you are the Messiah, the Son of God who comes into the world."

Move Martha back to Mary. Hold her near Mary while she speaks. Use a whisper voice (loud enough to be heard well).

After saying this, she went to her sister Mary and whispered in her ear, "The Teacher is here and is asking for you."

Have Mary jump and move quickly to Jesus and lay her down at his feet. Have the sympathizers come after Mary.

The moment she heard that, she jumped up and ran out to him. Jesus had not yet entered the town but was still at the place where Martha had met him. When her sympathizing Jewish

friends saw Mary run off, they followed her, thinking she was on her way to the tomb to weep there. Mary came to where Jesus was waiting and fell at his feet, saying, “Master, if only you had been here, my brother would not have died.”

When Jesus saw her sobbing and the Jews with her sobbing, he was greatly troubled. He said, “Where did you put him?”

They said, “Master, come and see.” Now Jesus wept. The Jews said, “Look how deeply he loved him.” Others among them said, “Well, if he loved him so much, why didn’t he do something to keep him from dying? After all, he opened the eyes of a blind man.”

Move Jesus, and everyone else, over to the tomb.

Jesus, again greatly disturbed, arrived at the tomb. It was a simple cave in the hillside with a slab of stone laid against it. Jesus said, “Remove the stone.”

The sister of the dead man, Martha, said, “Master, by this time it’s going to smell really bad. He’s been dead four days!”

Jesus looked her in the eye and said, “Didn’t I tell you that if you believed, you would see the glory of God?” Then, to the others he said, “Go ahead, take away the stone.”

Slide open the lid. Tilt Jesus slightly upward as he prays.

They removed the stone. Jesus raised his eyes to the sky and prayed, “Father, I’m grateful that you have listened to me. I know you always do listen, but on account of this crowd standing here I’ve spoken so that they might believe that you sent me.”

Bring Lazarus out of the tomb. Move a couple figures by Lazarus, and take off the white cloth.

Then Jesus shouted, “Lazarus, come out!” And he came out, wrapped from head to toe in burial cloths, and with a kerchief over his face. Jesus told them, “Unwrap him and let him loose.”

Have a figure from the crowd move away.

Many of the Jews therefore, who had come with Mary and had seen what Jesus did, believed in him. But some of them went to the Pharisees and told them what he had done.

Response: A Jesus story. Remember me in your mercy, Lord; **and unite us by your cross.**

I wonder, what did you notice from the story?

We don't always know why God doesn't step in and stop more bad things from happening. Sometimes evil seems to win. However, we can be confident that God is at work and will eventually overcome evil and bring new life, either in the present time or the future resurrection.

What from this story gives you hope?

Jesus was about to go through a very difficult time, and at times, it would look like evil had won. Jesus endured about every type of evil a person could experience, even death. But through it all, God raised him from the dead and brought about new life that we can enter into too with Jesus.

Now, we're going to sing a song - "I Want Jesus to Walk With Me"

(Example: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WvCCRR_Kyx0)

Second verse:

When I'm in trouble, Lord, walk with me.
When I'm in trouble, Lord, walk with me.
When my heart is almost breaking.
Lord, I want Jesus to walk with me.

The Plot To Kill Jesus

(Mt. 26:1-5; Mk. 14:1-2; Lk. 22:1-2; Jn. 11:45-57)

- | | |
|--|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 7 adult figures • Felt cloth: 1 large green | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1 large box |
|--|---|

Bless the Lord who forgives all our sins.--(*Strike match*)--**His mercy endures forever.**

(*Invite the listeners to join you in saying,*) **“On our journey, we follow Jesus.”**

Place down a large green cloth. On one end, put a large box on its side. Place six figures inside. Have a figure come towards the figures in the box and join them.

Some of the people who had seen Jesus miraculously raise Lazarus from the dead went back to the Pharisees and told them about Jesus. The chief priests and Pharisees called a meeting of the Jewish ruling council.

Place a hand on each figure as they are speaking, and help them come to life.

“What do we do now?” they asked. “This man keeps on doing these things, creating God-signs. If we let him go on, pretty soon everyone will be believing in him and the Romans will come and remove what little power and privilege we still have.”

Then one of them--it was Caiaphas, the designated High Priest that year--spoke up, “Don’t you know anything? Can’t you see that it’s to our advantage that one man dies for the people rather than the whole nation be destroyed?” He didn’t say this of his own accord, but as the High Priest that year he unwittingly prophesied that Jesus was about to die sacrificially for the nation, and not only for the nation but so that all God’s exile-scattered children might be gathered together into one people.

From that day on, they plotted to kill Jesus. They sent out the word that anyone who knew his whereabouts should inform them. They wanted to kill him sneakily away from the crowds. They agreed that it should not be done during Passover Week.

“We don’t want a riot on our hands,” they said.

Response: A Jesus story. Remember me in your mercy, Lord; **and unite us by your cross.**

Those who have power and privilege don't like to give up their power and privilege and will often do evil things to keep it. Jesus taught his disciples to lay down their power and privilege for the sake of others.

What are some things you can do to practice thinking of the interests of other people above yourselves?

Now, we're going to sing a song - "I Want Jesus to Walk With Me"
(Example: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WvCCRR_Kyx0)

Second verse:

When I'm in trouble, Lord, walk with me.
When I'm in trouble, Lord, walk with me.
When my heart is almost breaking.
Lord, I want Jesus to walk with me.

Christ Enters Jerusalem

(Mt. 21:12-17; Mk.11:1-10; Lk. 19:28-38; Jn. 12:12-19)

- | | |
|--|------------------------------------|
| ● 20 adult figures (1 Jesus figure with tunic) | ● Leaves for palm branches |
| ● 3-5 children figures | ● 2 medium boxes |
| ● Felt cloth: 1 tan or brown, 1 green | ● 1 large box lid |
| ● Small cloths for clothes on the road | ● 1 gray or brown pom for a donkey |

Bless the Lord who forgives all our sins.--(*Strike match*)--**His mercy endures forever.**

(*Invite the listeners to join you in saying,*) **“On our journey, we follow Jesus.”**

Place a green felt cloth for Jerusalem and a tan or brown felt cloth for Jericho. Put Jesus in the middle of the felt cloths. Have six disciples and a crowd of 10 figures with him. When you mention Jerusalem, point to the green cloth. When you mention Jericho, point to the tan cloth.

Jesus was on his way to Jerusalem from Jericho.

Place a couple medium boxes, just ahead of Jesus and the crowd, to represent Bethpage. Group two disciples together and have Jesus approach them.

When they arrived at Bethpage on Mount Olives, Jesus sent two disciples with these instructions:

Put out a gray or brown pom by one of the buildings. Place a figure nearby the “donkey.”

“Go over to the village across from you. You’ll find a donkey colt tethered there, one that has never been ridden. Untie it and bring it to me. If anyone asks what you’re doing, say, ‘The Master needs him, and will return him right away.’ He will send the donkey colt with you.”

Move the two disciples over by the “donkey.” Place a hand on each figure as they are speaking, and help them come to life.

They went and found a colt tied to a door at the street corner and untied it. Some of those standing there said, “What are you doing untying that colt?”

The disciples replied, “The Master needs him, and will return him right away.” The people allowed them to take the donkey colt.

Have the two disciples bring the “donkey” to Jesus. Put Jesus on top of the pom.

They brought the donkey colt to Jesus, and spread their coats on it. Jesus climbed onto the donkey.

What was happening was the full story of what was sketched earlier by the prophet in Scripture: “No fear, daughter Zion: See how your king comes, riding a donkey’s colt.” The disciples didn’t notice the fulfillment of many Scriptures at the time, but after Jesus was glorified, they remembered that what was written about him matched what was done to him.

Put a small felt cloth or cloths down on the road to Jerusalem. Put some leaves of down on the road as well. Then have Jesus and the crowd move towards Jerusalem. It might be easiest to put them in a box lid so that you can move them altogether (one option would be to put the crowd in a box lid and move it with one hand, and move Jesus and the pom in the other hand).

Nearly all the people in the crowd threw their clothes 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!”

Have them all arrive on the Jerusalem green felt cloth. Place some children figures and an adult figure in Jerusalem. Place your hand on the adult figure while the people of Jerusalem speak.

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.”

The crowd that had been with him when he called Lazarus from the tomb, raising him from the dead, was there giving eyewitness accounts. It was because they had spread the word of this latest God-sign that the crowd swelled to a welcome parade.

Place another figure in Jerusalem, put your hand on it when the Pharisee speaks.

The Pharisees took one look and threw up their hands: “It’s out of control. The whole world has gone after him.”

Response: A Jesus story. Remember me in your mercy, Lord; **and unite us by your cross.**

I wonder what you notice from this story?

There is a lot of symbolism happening in this story. Jerusalem was the capital of that area. It's the place where the king would live, and the people are welcoming Jesus into the city as if he is their new king. Most kings fight wars and ride impressive war horses. Jesus, however, comes into the city peacefully riding a humble donkey.

What do you think this says about what kind of king Jesus is?

Now, we're going to sing a song - "Hosanna" (<https://hillsong.com/lyrics/hosanna/>) or "I Want Jesus to Walk With Me"

(Example: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WvCCRr_Kyx0)

First verse:

I want Jesus to walk with me
I want Jesus to walk with me
All along my pilgrim journey
I want Jesus to walk with me

Clearing The Temple

(Mt. 21:12-17; Mk.11:15-19; Lk. 19:45-48; Jn. 2:13-22)

- | | |
|--|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● 20 adult figures (1 Jesus figure with tunic) ● 3 children figures ● Felt cloth: 1 large tan ● Boxes: 1 large, 3 small | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Box lids: 1 large, 3 small ● Lots of poms for animals (include some white and brown) ● Coins |
|--|--|

Bless the Lord who forgives all our sins.--(*Strike match*)--**His mercy endures forever.**

(*Invite the listeners to join you in saying,*) **“On our journey, we follow Jesus.”**

Setup the Temple area: Place a large tan felt cloth down. On one end of the cloth, place a large box upside down. Use eight figures as pillars, and put the large box lid upside down on top of the pillars. Put a few small boxes around the tan cloth. Put three small box lids in front of the boxes and tables. Put a figure near each of the three box lids. Put some coins on the box lids. Add three figures on the tan space as religious leaders. Then, put Jesus and three disciples on the felt cloth.

When Jesus entered Jerusalem, he went to the Temple right away.

Add a lot of poms as animals onto the tan cloth (Include some white and brown colors)

Jesus found the Temple full with people selling cattle, sheep, and doves. The money changers were also there charging people money to change their money over to Temple currency to buy the animals.

Have Jesus drive out the animals.

Jesus chased the sheep and cattle out of the Temple.

Have Jesus knock over the tables and spill the coins. Place a hand on each figure as they are speaking, and help them come to life.

He knocked over the tables of the moneychangers, spilling coins all over the place. He told the dove merchants, “Get your things out of here! My house is supposed to be a house of prayer for the nations, but you’ve made it a home for thieves!” That’s when his disciples remembered the Scripture, “Zeal for your house consumes me.”

Bring in a couple figures to Jesus. Tilt Jesus to touch them.

Now that space had been cleared out, the blind and crippled people could get into the Temple area. They came to Jesus and he healed them.

Have a few child figures run through the Temple area.

Children started running and shouting through the Temple, “Hosanna to David’s Son!”

When the religious leaders saw all that Jesus was doing, and what the children were saying, they were very upset. They asked, “Do you hear what these children are saying?”

Jesus said, “Yes, I hear them. And haven’t you read in God’s Word, ‘From the mouths of children and babies I’ll furnish a place of praise?’”

The religious leaders asked, “What credentials can you present to justify what you’re doing?”

Jesus answered, “Tear down this Temple and in three days I’ll put it back together.”

“What!” they exclaimed, “It took forty-six years to build this temple, and you’re going to rebuild it in three days?” But Jesus was talking about his body as the Temple. Later, after he was raised from the dead, his disciples remembered he had said this. They then put two and two together and believed both what was written in Scripture and what Jesus had said.

Gather three religious leader figures from the Temple together.

The chief priests, religion scholars, and elders were trying their best to find a way to get rid of Jesus. But with the people listening closely to every word Jesus spoke, they couldn’t come up with anything that wouldn’t start a riot.

Have Jesus and his disciples leave.

When it was evening, Jesus and his disciples left the city and stayed in Bethany.

Response: A Jesus story. Remember me in your mercy, Lord; **and unite us by your cross.**

I wonder what you noticed?

Why do you think the religious leaders didn’t like Jesus?

Why do you think the common people, children, blind, and cripple people loved Jesus?

Now, we’re going to sing a song - “I Want Jesus to Walk With Me”

(Example: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WvCCRr_Kyx0)

Second verse:

When I'm in trouble, Lord, walk with me.
When I'm in trouble, Lord, walk with me.
When my heart is almost breaking.
Lord, I want Jesus to walk with me.

Teaching Authority

(Mt. 21:23-32, 45-46; Mk.11:27-33; Lk. 20:1-8)

- | | |
|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 20 adult figures (1 Jesus figure with tunic) • 2 child figures • Felt cloth: 1 large tan, 1 small green | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1 large box • 1 large box lid |
|---|--|

Bless the Lord who forgives all our sins.--(*Strike match*)--**His mercy endures forever.**

(*Light the first candle as you say,*) **“On our journey, we follow Jesus.”**

(*Light the second candle as you say,*) “And submit to his way.”

Setup the Temple area: Place a large tan felt cloth down. On one end of the cloth, place a large box upside down. Use eight figures as pillars, and put the large box lid upside down on top of the pillars. Put Jesus and three disciples on the felt cloth, surrounded by a crowd of four figures. Alongside the crowd, have three figures that represent the religious leaders, grouped together.

Place a hand on each figure as they are speaking, and help them come to life.

One day Jesus was teaching in the Temple, and the high priests and leaders of the people came up and demanded, “Show us your credentials. Who authorized you to teach here?”

Jesus responded, “First let me ask you a question. You answer my question and I’ll answer yours. About the baptism of John--who authorized it: heaven or humans? Tell me.”

Move the group of leaders back away from the crowd in a huddle. Use a whisper voice (loud enough to still be heard well).

They were on the spot and knew it. They pulled back into a huddle and whispered, “If we say ‘heaven,’ he’ll ask us why we didn’t believe John; if we say ‘human,’ the people will tear us limb from limb, because they all hold John up as a prophet.”

Move the group back over by Jesus.

They decided to concede this round to Jesus. They answered, “We don’t know.”

Jesus said, “Then neither will I answer your question. But, tell me what you think of this story:”

To the side of the cloth area for the Temple, place a figure for the man and two child figures for his two sons. Put out a small green felt cloth for the vineyard.

A man had two sons. He went up to the first and said, "Son, go out for the day and work in the vineyard." The son answered, "I don't want to."

Move the first son over to the green felt cloth.

Later on, though, he changed his mind and went to work in the vineyard.

The father gave the same command to the second son. This son answered, "Sure, I would be glad to." But he never went to the vineyard.

Jesus asked the religious leaders, "Which of the two sons did what the father asked?"

They responded, "The first."

Jesus said, "Yes, and I tell you that crooks and prostitutes are going into God's kingdom ahead of you. John the Baptist came to you and showed you the right way to live, and you did not believe him. But the crooks and prostitutes believed him. Even when you saw their changed lives, you didn't care enough to change and believe him."

When the religious leaders heard his story, they realized that he was speaking about them. They wanted to arrest him, but they were afraid of the crowds, because the people regarded Jesus as a prophet.

Response: A Jesus story. Remember me in your mercy, Lord; **and unite us by your cross.**

The people saw John the Baptist and Jesus as having authority from heaven, but the religious leaders of the time couldn't see it. Why do you think it might have been hard for the religious leaders to see that John and Jesus were proclaiming good news from heaven?

(John and Jesus were critical of the way the religious leaders did things. They probably didn't like the way that John and Jesus challenged their authority and power over the people. They didn't like being told they had done something wrong.)

John and Jesus both claimed to have a message from heaven. The religious leaders didn't trust them, but some of the people did. How can we tell if a person is someone we can trust?

(They act with love and consider the interests of other people. They do good things to help others, they tell the truth, they do what they say they'll do, etc... But it's not always easy to tell.)

When we are confronted with something bad that we've done, how should we respond?

(We should be open to being wrong. We should treat it as a kairos, an opportunity to learn and grow. We should discern how we can repent with trusted people. We should confess our wrongs and show we're sorry.)

Sing - "I Want Jesus to Walk With Me"

(Example: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WvCCRr_Kyx0)

Third verse:

In my trials, Lord, walk with me.

In my trials, Lord, walk with me.

When my head is bowed in sorrow.

Lord, I want Jesus to walk with me.

The Greedy Farmhands

(Mt. 21:33-46; Mk. 12:1-12; Lk. 20:9-19)

- | | |
|--|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 20 adult figures (1 Jesus figure with tunic) • Felt cloth: 1 large tan, 1 small green | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1 large box • 1 large box lid |
|--|--|

Bless the Lord who forgives all our sins.--(*Strike match*)--**His mercy endures forever. On our journey, we follow Jesus.** (*Invite the listeners to join you in saying,*) **“And submit to his way.”**

Setup the Temple area: Place a large tan felt cloth down. On one end of the cloth, place a large box upside down. Use four figures as pillars, and put the large box lid upside down on top of the pillars. Put Jesus and three disciples on the felt cloth, surrounded by a crowd of three figures. Alongside the crowd, have two that represent the religious leaders, grouped together.

Jesus was teaching in the Temple, and was having a conversation with some of the religious leaders. He told them and the others around listening another story:

Beside the Temple area, put down a green felt cloth. Place a figure on the green cloth. Then, place a couple figures near the cloth. Move the figures onto the cloth and move the vineyard owner away.

A man planted a vineyard. He handed it over to farmhands and went off on a trip. He was gone a long time.

Put a figure by the vineyard owner and have it move to the vineyard. Have the farmhands knock him over. Then, have the servant get up and go back to the owner.

In time, he sent a servant back to the farmhands to collect the profits, but they beat him up and sent him back empty-handed.

Place another figure by the owner and have it move to the vineyard. Have the farmhands knock him over. Then, have the servant get up and go back to the owner.

The owner decided to try again and sent another servant. That one they beat black-and-blue, and sent him back empty-handed.

Place another figure by the owner and have it move to the vineyard. Have the farmhands knock him over and kick him away (let it roll a little ways).

He tried a third time. The farmhands worked that servant over from head to foot and dumped him in the street.

Place a hand on each figure as they are speaking, and help them come to life. Add another figure by the owner.

Then the owner of the vineyard said, "I know what I'll do: I'll send my beloved son. They're bound to respect my son."

Move the son figure halfway towards the farmhands.

But when the farmhands saw him coming, they quickly put their heads together. "This is our chance--this is the heir! Let's kill him and have it all to ourselves."

Bring the son to the farmhands. Have the farmhands knock him over. Then give him a little toss where it won't hurt anything.

They killed him and threw him over the fence.

Move back over to Jesus and put your hand on him when he talks.

Jesus said, "Now, when the owner of the vineyard arrives home from his trip, what do you think he will do to the farmhands?"

The people answered, "He'll kill them--a rotten bunch, and good riddance. Then he'll give the vineyard to farmhands who will hand over the profits when it's the appropriate time."

Jesus said, "Right--and you can read it for yourselves in your Bibles: 'The stone the stone-workers threw out is now the cornerstone. This is God's work; we rub our eyes, we can hardly believe it!' This is the way it is with you. God's kingdom will be taken back from you and handed over to a people who will live out a kingdom life. Whoever stumbles on this Stone gets shattered; whoever the Stone falls on gets smashed."

At the end, have the two religious leaders run away.

When the religious leaders heard this story, they knew it was aimed at them. They wanted to arrest Jesus and put him in jail, but they were afraid of the crowd and held back. They got out of there as fast as they could. Most people held Jesus to be a prophet of God.

Response: A Jesus story. Remember me in your mercy, Lord; **and unite us by your cross.**

I wonder, what did you notice from this story?

What do you think this story was about?

(The religious leaders had been mean and done bad things to the prophets God had sent them, and these religious leaders were going to kill Jesus. So, God was going to give new people an opportunity to lead his faithful people.)

Now, we're going to sing a song - "I Want Jesus to Walk With Me"
(Example: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WvCCRr_Kyx0)

Third verse:

In my trials, Lord, walk with me.
In my trials, Lord, walk with me.
When my head is bowed in sorrow.
Lord, I want Jesus to walk with me.

The Wedding Party

(primarily Mt. 21:45-22:14; Lk. 14:15-24 is similar)

- | | |
|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 20 adult figures (1 Jesus figure with tunic, 1 king figure with pipe cleaner crown) • 1 small green felt cloth | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Boxes: 1 large, 1 medium • 1 small box lid |
|---|---|

Bless the Lord who forgives all our sins.--(*Strike match*)--**His mercy endures forever. On our journey, we follow Jesus.** (*Invite the listeners to join you in saying,*) **“And submit to his way.”**

Place the Jesus figure off to the side.

Jesus had been teaching in the Temple. The religious leaders didn't like what they were hearing. Jesus was exposing their bad behaviour. They wanted to put Jesus in jail, but they didn't, because Jesus was so popular with the people. Most people thought that he was a prophet of God. Jesus responded by telling stories. He said:

Place a large box on it's side. Put a figure in front of it as the king with a gold pipe cleaner crown. Place a figure in the box as the son. Put a small box lid upside down inside as a table.

God's kingdom is like a king who threw a wedding party for his son.

Place three servants near the king. Place three figures a little ways away, spaced out. Have the servants each go to the other figures.

When it was time for dinner, he sent out his servants to the invited guests to tell them to come to the party. And they wouldn't come!

Have the servants come back to the king. Then, have them return back to the other figures.

He sent out another round of servants , saying, “Look, everything is on the table, the prime rib is ready for carving. Come to the feast!”

Put down a small green felt cloth by one of the figures. Have one figure weed the green cloth. Return the messenger from the gardener back to the king.

They only shrugged their shoulders and went off, one to weed his garden,

Put down a medium box right side up with no lid by one of the figures. Have the figure go into the box. Return the messenger from the shop worker back to the king.

another to work in his shop.

Have the other figure bump into the messenger. Have the messenger fall over.

The rest beat up the messengers and then killed them.

Add a couple figures by the king. Have them go over to the evil guest and knock him over.

The king was outraged and sent his soldiers to destroy those thugs and burn down their city.

Add another servant by the king. Add two clusters of three figures and one cluster of two figures a little ways away.

The king told his servants, "We have a wedding party all prepared but no guests. The ones I invited are not worthy of the honor. Go out into the busiest intersections in town and invite anyone you find to the party."

Move the servants out to gather up the figures and fill up the box.

The servants went out on the streets and rounded up everyone they could find, good and bad, regardless. And so the party was on--every spot was filled.

Put your hand on the king and have him move to the party and look around.

When the king entered and looked over the scene, he spotted a man who wasn't properly dressed for the wedding party.

Have the king talk to one of the figures.

He said to him, "Friend, how dare you come in here looking like that!" The man was speechless.

Have a servant come over to the figure the king talks to, and escort him out.

Then the king told his servants, "Get him out of here--fast. Tie him up and ship him to hell. And make sure he doesn't get back in."

Take hold of Jesus and pretend he is talking.

Then, Jesus concluded his story by saying, "That's what I mean when I say, 'Many get invited; only a few make it.'"

Response: A Jesus story. Remember me in your mercy, Lord; **and unite us by your cross.**

I wonder, what do you think was the main point or big idea of this story?

Why did the people who were invited first not get to enter into the party? (*They chose not to come.*)

What do you think the wedding party in the story represents? (*Being with God in the kingdom of God*)

Now, we're going to sing a song - "I Want Jesus to Walk With Me"
(Example: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WvCCRR_Kyx0)

Third verse:

In my trials, Lord, walk with me.

In my trials, Lord, walk with me.

When my head is bowed in sorrow.

Lord, I want Jesus to walk with me.

Note to the storyteller If the kids have questions about burning down the city or the man being thrown out for his clothes, it may be helpful to note that parables tend to have a specific point, and not all aspects of the parable are meant to be exemplary. In general, parables use figurative language, and we must be careful about taking them too literally.

Paying Taxes to Caesar

(Mt. 22:15-22; Mk. 12:13-17; Lk. 20:20-26)

- | | |
|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 20 adult figures (1 Jesus figure with tunic) • Felt cloth: 1 large tan | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1 large box • 1 large box lid |
|---|--|

Bless the Lord who forgives all our sins.--(*Strike match*)--**His mercy endures forever. On our journey, we follow Jesus.** (*Invite the listeners to join you in saying,*) **“And submit to his way.”**

Setup the Temple: Put down a large tan felt cloth. On one side of the cloth place a large box upside down. Use eight figures as pillars on top of the box. Put a box lid upside down on top of the pillars. Place the Jesus figure and three disciples with him on the felt cloth. Place four other figures around as a crowd listening to Jesus.

Jesus had been teaching in the Temple. The Pharisees were plotting a way to trap him into saying something that could get him in trouble with the law.

Have four figures approach Jesus. Place a hand on each figure as they are speaking, and help them come to life.

They sent some of their people, pretending to be genuinely curious, with a few of Herod’s followers mixed in, to ask, “Teacher, we know you have integrity, teach the way of God accurately, are indifferent to popular opinion, and don’t pander to your students. So tell us honestly: Is it right to pay taxes to Caesar or not?”

Jesus knew they were up to no good. He said, “Why are you playing these games with me? Why are you trying to trap me? Do you have a coin? Let me see it.”

Place a coin in front of Jesus, heads side up (a quarter, dime, or nickel would work best).

They handed him a silver piece. Jesus said, “This engraving--who does it look like? And whose name is on it?”

They said, “Caesar.”

Jesus responded, “Then give Caesar what is his, and give God what is his.”

Have the four troublemakers go away.

The Pharisees mouths hung open, speechless. Try as they might, they couldn't trap him into saying anything that could get him arrested. They went off shaking their heads.

Response: A Jesus story. Remember me in your mercy, Lord; **and unite us by your cross.**

I wonder, what do you notice from this story?

Has anyone ever tried to get you to do something that would get you in trouble?

How did you respond?

How did Jesus respond? *(He wouldn't play their game and get baited into getting himself in trouble. He called them on their game and responded with wisdom.)*

Now, we're going to sing a song - "I Want Jesus to Walk With Me"

(Example: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WvCCRR_Kyx0)

Third verse:

In my trials, Lord, walk with me.

In my trials, Lord, walk with me.

When my head is bowed in sorrow.

Lord, I want Jesus to walk with me.

The Greatest Commandment

(Mt. 22:34-40; Mk. 12:28-34; Lk. 10:25-37)

- | | |
|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 20 adult figures (1 Jesus figure with tunic) • Felt cloth: 1 large tan, 1 green, 1 tan or brown • 1 gray or brown pom | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1 medium box • 1 small box lid • 2 coins (preferably dimes) |
|---|---|

Bless the Lord who forgives all our sins.--(*Strike match*)--**His mercy endures forever. On our journey, we follow Jesus.** (*Invite the listeners to join you in saying,*) **“And submit to his way.”**

Place a tan cloth on the side of the space. Place Jesus with six disciples and a crowd of six around him. Hold onto someone from the crowd when the scholar talks.

Jesus was teaching in the Temple everyday. A religion scholar stood up with a question to test Jesus, “Teacher, what do I need to do to get eternal life?”

Place a hand on each figure as they are speaking, and help them come to life.

Jesus answered, “What’s written in God’s Law? How do you interpret it?” (*to the audience*) What do you think, how do you get eternal life? (*acknowledge the responses*) Let’s see what they say.

The scholar said, “That you love the Lord your God with all your passion and prayer and muscle and intelligence--and that you love your neighbor as well as you love yourself.”

Jesus said, “Good answer! Do it and you will live.”

Looking for a loophole, the scholar asked, “And how would you define ‘neighbor’?” Jesus answered by telling a story:

Place a green felt cloth for Jerusalem, and a tan or brown felt cloth for Jericho. Place a figure on the Jerusalem cloth. Have him start to walk to Jericho.

There was once a man traveling from Jerusalem to Jericho.

Place a couple figures by the man walking. Have them knock him down, and then leave.

On the way he was attacked by robbers. They took his clothes and beat him up, and went off leaving him half-dead.

Have a figure come from Jerusalem and approach the figure laying down. Have him avoid the man and continue on.

Luckily, a priest was on his way down the same road, but when he saw him he went over to the other side of the road and continued on his way.

Have a figure come from Jerusalem and approach the figure laying down. Have him avoid the man and continue on.

Then a Levite, religious man, showed up. He also avoided the injured man.

Have a figure come from Jericho with a gray or brown pom and approach the figure laying down. Bring him close and tilt him down towards the man.

A Samaritan traveling the road came on him. When he saw the man's condition, his heart went out to him. He gave him first aid, disinfecting and bandaging his wounds.

Place a medium box on its side not far away. Put a small box inside as a bed. Put the injured man on top of the pom and move them to the inn and place him in the bed.

Then he lifted the injured man onto his donkey, led him to an inn, and made him comfortable.

Place a figure in the box as the innkeeper. Exchange a couple coins from the Samaritan to the innkeeper (two dimes would work best).

In the morning the Samaritan took out two silver coins and gave them to the innkeeper, saying, "Take good care of him. If it costs any more, put it on my bill--I'll pay you on my way back."

Put your hand on Jesus to show that he is talking.

"What do you think? Which of the three became a neighbor to the man attacked by robbers?"

(To the audience) What do you think? Which one? *(acknowledge responses)* Let's see what he said.

The scholar responded, "The one who treated him with kindness."

Jesus said, "Go and do the same."

Response: A Jesus story. Remember me in your mercy, Lord; **and unite us by your cross.**

I wonder, what do you notice from the story?

What does it look like to love your neighbor?

Should we be willing to help some people more than other people? For example, should we help our friends, but not those who are different than us?

Part of the surprise of this story is that the people who were from the same place as the man who was injured, did not help the man. But the Samaritan, who was from a different place and would normally be considered an enemy of the injured man, was the one who showed kindness and love. We are to love everyone, regardless of where they come from or what they look like.

Now, we're going to sing a song - "I Want Jesus to Walk With Me"

(Example: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WvCCRR_Kyx0)

First verse:

I want Jesus to walk with me
I want Jesus to walk with me
All along my pilgrim journey
I want Jesus to walk with me

Warning And Mourning Over Bad Leaders

(Mt. 23:1-39; Mk. 12:37b-40; Lk. 11:37-12:3, 13:31-35, 20:45-47)

- | | |
|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 15-20 adult figures (1 Jesus figure with tunic) • 1 animal pom | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1 small book • 1 small box lid |
|---|---|

(Be ready to strike the match as you say,) "Bless the Lord who forgives all our sins."

(Strike the match as they say,) "His mercy endures forever."

(Light the first candle as you say,) "On our journey, we follow Jesus."

(Light the second candle as you say,) "And submit to his way."

(Light the third candle as you say,) "His way goes through the cross."

Place Jesus with six disciples around him, and a crowd around the disciples. Place a hand on each figure as they are speaking, and help them come to life.

One day, Jesus was teaching and a crowd had gathered to listen to him. He then turned to his disciples and said, "The teachers of religious law and the Pharisees are the official interpreters of the law of Moses. You should practice and obey their teachings on the law of Moses, but be careful about following them. Do not do what they do, because they do not take what they teach into their hearts and live it out in their behavior."

Take one animal pom and squash it with a small book.

"They take God's law, package it in bundles of rules, and load you down like pack animals who carry heavy loads on top of them. They seem to take pleasure in watching you stagger under these loads, and wouldn't think of lifting a finger to help."

Take the animal pom and heavy object away. Place a small box lid upside down like a table. Place a figure at the head of the table.

Their lives are perpetual fashion shows. They do all their deeds to be seen and admired by others. They love to sit at the head table at church dinners, basking in the most prominent positions."

Take away the table and figure.

“They love to be greeted with respect in public places, being called honorary titles like Reverend. Don’t let people put you on a pedestal like that. You all have a single teacher, and you are all classmates. Save the authority for God; let your Heavenly Father tell you what to do. You should not be called instructors, for you have one instructor, the Christ. Do you want to stand out as great? Then step down and be a servant. If you puff yourself up, you’ll get the wind knocked out of you. But if you humble yourself, you’ll be honored.”

“You Pharisees, you religion scholars, I’ve had it with you! You’re hopeless! Frauds! Your lives are like locked doors that keep people out of God’s kingdom. You refuse to enter, and won’t let anyone else in either.” Jesus continued to be upset and warn the people about the Pharisees and religious scholars of his day.

Take a few figures from the crowd and move them away from the rest.

After Jesus had said all this, the religion scholars and Pharisees went into a rage. They went over and over everything Jesus said, plotting how they could trap him in something he said.

Jesus continued to lament, “Jerusalem! Jerusalem! Murderer of prophets! Killer of the ones who brought you God’s news! How often I’ve ached to embrace your children, the way a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, and you wouldn’t let me. And now you’re so desolate, nothing but a ghost town. What is there left to say? Only this: I’m leaving soon. The next time you see me you’ll say, ‘Oh, God has blessed him! He’s come, bringing God’s rule!’”

Response: A Jesus story. Remember me in your mercy, Lord; **and unite us by your cross.**

I wonder, what makes someone a bad leader?

What makes someone a good leader?

The people thought of John the Baptist and Jesus as prophets. Prophets were people who confronted leaders about the evil things they were doing, and called the nation back to faithfulness with God. They spoke the truth about the evil that was being done. They stood up for people who were being oppressed. Sadly, prophets were often arrested and killed by the powerful leaders they criticized. It takes great courage and faith in God to stand up and tell the truth about bullies.

Can you think of someone who has acted like a prophet?

Now, we’re going to sing a song - “I Want Jesus to Walk With Me”
(Example: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WvCCRr_Kyx0)

Second verse:

When I'm in trouble, Lord, walk with me.
When I'm in trouble, Lord, walk with me.
When my heart is almost breaking.
Lord, I want Jesus to walk with me.

The Widow's Gift

(Mk. 12:41-44; Lk. 21:1-4)

- | | |
|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 18 adult figures (1 Jesus figure with tunic) • Felt cloth: 1 large tan • Coins (a good amount, including 2 pennies) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Boxes: 1 large, 1 small • 1 large box lid |
|---|--|

Bless the Lord who forgives all our sins.--(*Strike match*)--**His mercy endures forever. On our journey, we follow Jesus. And submit to his way. (Invite the listeners to join you in saying,) His way goes through the cross.**

Setup the Temple: Put down a large tan felt cloth. On one side of the cloth place a large box upside down. Use eight figures as pillars on top of the box. Put a box lid upside down on top of the pillars. Place the Jesus figure and six disciples with him.

Jesus had been teaching in the temple and warning his disciples about the religious scholars and Pharisees.

Place a small box right side up a short distance from Jesus. Move Jesus by it. Leave the disciples where they are.

Jesus moved near to the offering box, where people would give money. He was observing how the crowd tossed money in for the collection.

Have a couple figures come and place a lot of coins in the box.

Many of the rich people were putting a lot of money in the offering box.

Have one figure come up and put in two pennies.

One poor widow came up and put in two small coins--a measly two cents.

Move the disciples over to Jesus. Place a hand on each figure as they are speaking, and help them come to life.

Jesus called his disciples over and said, "The truth is that this poor widow gave more to the collection than all the others put together. All the others, who have more money than they need, gave money they'll never miss; she gave extravagantly what she couldn't afford--she gave everything she had."

Response: A Jesus story. Remember me in your mercy, Lord; **and unite us by your cross.**

I wonder, if you were watching people put money into the offering box, and you hadn't heard what Jesus said, who would you normally think had been the most generous: the ones who put in a lot of money, or the one who put in a little?

Who do you think usually got a lot of honor and praise for how generous they were?

Do poor people usually receive a lot of honor and praise?

What do you think it truly means to be generous?

How does Jesus teach us to treat poor people?

Now, we're going to sing a song - "I Want Jesus to Walk With Me"

(Example: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WvCCRr_Kyx0)

First verse:

I want Jesus to walk with me
I want Jesus to walk with me
All along my pilgrim journey
I want Jesus to walk with me

Don't Be Deceived

(Mt. 24:1-36; Mk. 13:1-32; Lk. 17:22-37, 21:5-33)

- | | |
|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 20 adult figures (1 Jesus figure with tunic) • Felt cloth: 1 large tan | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2 large boxes • Box lids: 1 large, 1 medium |
|---|--|

Bless the Lord who forgives all our sins.--(*Strike match*)--**His mercy endures forever. On our journey, we follow Jesus. And submit to his way. (Invite the listeners to join you in saying,) His way goes through the cross.**

Setup the Temple: Put down a large tan felt cloth. On one side of the cloth place a large box upside down. Use eight figures as pillars on top of the box. Put a box lid upside down on top of the pillars. Place the Jesus figure and six disciples with him.

Jesus had been teaching at the Temple.

Move Jesus and his disciples away from the temple. It might be easiest to put them all on a medium box lid and move them together. Place a hand on each figure as they are speaking, and help them come to life.

As Jesus and his disciples walked away from the Temple, his disciples pointed out how very impressive the Temple architecture was. One disciple said, "Teacher, look at that stonework! Those buildings!"

Jesus said, "You're not impressed by all this sheer size, are you? The truth of the matter is that there's not a stone in that building that is not going to end up in a pile of rubble."

Setup a large box upside down, or stack up some books to make the Mount of Olives. Move Jesus to the top, and then move the disciples to the top.

Later, Jesus was sitting on the Mount of Olives. From that spot you can see the Temple below. His disciples approached and asked him, "Tell us, when are these things going to happen? What will be the sign of your coming, that the time's up?"

Jesus said, "Watch out for doomsday deceivers. Don't be led astray."

Have a figure show up somewhere off the mountain. Have him gather a crowd of four figures and then remove them.

“Many leaders are going to show up pretending to be me, claiming, ‘I am Christ, the Messiah. The end is near!’ They will deceive a lot of people.”

Place two figures, and have them bump into each other like they are fighting.

“When reports come of wars and rumored wars, keep your head and don’t panic. These things are going to happen. It’s normal stuff, it’s not a sign of the end. Nation will fight nation and ruler will fight ruler, over and over again.”

Take the figures that were fighting and set them down. Then knock them down.

Famines and earthquakes will occur in various places. This is nothing compared to what is coming.”

Take the two extra figures away. Put your hand on Jesus while he talks.

“And watch out! They’re going to drag you into court. And it will go from bad to worse, dog-eat-dog, everyone at each other’s throat, everyone hating each other. Lying preachers will come forward and deceive a lot of people. For many others, the overwhelming spread of evil will do them in. You’re placed there as witnesses to the truth. When they bring you into court, don’t worry about what you’ll say. When the time comes, the Holy Spirit will make his witness in and through you. I’ll give you the words and a wisdom that none of your opponents will be able to withstand or contradict. You will be betrayed even by parents and brothers, by relatives and friends; and they will put some of you to death. Stay with it--that’s what is required. Stay with it to the end. You won’t be sorry; you’ll be saved. All during this time, the good news--the message of the kingdom--will be preached all over the world, a witness staked out in every country. And then the end will come. When the Son of Man arrives, it will fill the skies--no one will miss it. But the exact day and hour? No one knows that, not even heaven’s angels, not even the Son. Only the Father knows. So, stay faithful and ready.”

Response: A Jesus story. Remember me in your mercy, Lord; **and unite us by your cross.**

I wonder, what do you notice in this story?

It sounds scary doesn’t it? There is a lot of evil in the world, and bad things happening all the time. How are we supposed to live in the midst of the craziness and evil?

Now, we’re going to sing a song - “I Want Jesus to Walk With Me”

(Example: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WvCCRR_Kyx0)

First verse:

I want Jesus to walk with me
I want Jesus to walk with me
All along my pilgrim journey
I want Jesus to walk with me

The Parable Of The Ten Virgins

(Mt. 25:1-13)

- | | |
|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 11 adult figures • 5 pebbles | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1 large box • Box lids: 1 large |
|---|--|

Bless the Lord who forgives all our sins.--(*Strike match*)--**His mercy endures forever. On our journey, we follow Jesus. And submit to his way. (Invite the listeners to join you in saying,) His way goes through the cross.**

Jesus continued to teach his disciples while on the Mount of Olives. He told them a parable about when he would return:

Set out a large box on it's side. Place ten figures in front of the box.

God's kingdom is like ten young girls who took oil lamps and went out to greet the bridegroom before the wedding feast. Five were foolish and five were wise.

Add five pebbles to five of the figures.

The foolish girls took lamps, but no extra oil. The wise girls took jars of oil to feed their lamps.

Lay down all ten figures.

The bridegroom didn't show up when they expected him, and they all fell asleep.

Have the ten figures stand back up. Place a hand on each figure as they are speaking, and help them come to life.

In the middle of the night someone yelled out, "He's here! The bridegroom's here! Go out and greet him!" The ten girls got up and got their lamps ready.

Group the five without pebbles together and the five with pebbles together. Put your hand over each group as they talk.

The foolish girls said to the wise ones, "Our lamps are going out; give us some of your oil." The wise ones answered, "No, there will not be enough for all of us. Go to a shop and buy some for yourselves."

Move the five figures without pebbles away. Place a figure by the five wise figures.

So, the five foolish girls went to go buy more oil. While they were away, the bridegroom arrived.

Have the five wise girls move close to the bridegroom. Move the bridegroom and five wise girls into the box. Put the bridegroom on one end of the box. The bridegroom side will be where our “door” will be. Slide the lid of the box in front of the opening of the box (it should be able to slide back and forth in front of the box). If you don’t have a lid that can do this, you can just put the box over the figures upside down so they are inside; and when the foolish girls try to come in, cover your mouth and make it sound like the bridegroom responds from inside without opening the door.

Everyone who was there greeted him, and they went into the wedding feast. Then, the door was locked.

Move the five foolish figures over by the door side of the box. Knock on something wood.

Much later, the foolish girls showed up and knocked on the door, saying, “Master, we’re here. Let us in.”

Slide the door back to reveal the bridegroom (or make the bridegroom talk from inside).

The bridegroom answered, “Believe me, I don’t think I know you.”

Slide the door back over the opening.

So stay alert. You have no idea when he might arrive.

Response: A Jesus story. Remember me in your mercy, Lord; **and unite us by your cross.**

Do you know who the bridegroom in this story represents? (*Jesus*)

What do you think the wedding feast represents? (*Being with Jesus in his kingdom*)

How do you think we can stay ready to join the party with Jesus?

Now, we’re going to sing a song - “I Want Jesus to Walk With Me”

(Example: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WvCCRr_Kyx0)

First verse:

I want Jesus to walk with me
I want Jesus to walk with me
All along my pilgrim journey
I want Jesus to walk with me

**Note to the storyteller* If the kids have questions about why some of the young girls wouldn't share their oil, it may be helpful to note that in parables there is a specific point to the story, and not all aspects of the parable are meant to be exemplary. It might have been loving for the wise girls to give up their oil so that others might go into the party, even if it meant they missed out, but that's not the point of the story. (It also could be bad by enabling their behaviour.) Or, it might have seemed good for the bridegroom to be more generous in letting them in. But, the point of the story is about being ready when Jesus returns.*

The Parable Of The Sheep And Goats

(Mt. 25:31-46)

- | | |
|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 20 adult figures (1 Jesus figure with tunic and golden pipe cleaner crown; 2 angel figures with white felt cloth robes) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Boxes: 1 large, 1 small |
|---|---|

Bless the Lord who forgives all our sins.--(*Strike match*)--**His mercy endures forever. On our journey, we follow Jesus. And submit to his way.** (*Invite the listeners to join you in saying,*) **His way goes through the cross.**

While on the Mount of Olives, Jesus continued to teach his disciples about what it would be like when Jesus returns:

Place a large box upside down. Put a small box on top of it upside down as a throne (near an edge of the box to have room for other figures). Have Jesus (with his tunic and a golden pipe cleaner crown) descend down to the throne with a couple angels (figures with a white felt cloth tied around them) with him. Place the angels next to Jesus.

When the Son of Man finally arrives, blazing in beauty and all his angels with him, he will take his place on his glorious throne.

Put a crowd of figures in front of Jesus. Then, divide them into right and left groups.

Then, all the nations will be arranged before him and he will sort the people out, much like how a shepherd sorts out sheep and goats, putting sheep to his right and goats to his left.

Put your left hand on Jesus while he speaks, and put your right hand over the group on the right.

Then the King will say to those on his right, "Enter, you who are blessed by my Father! Take what's coming to you in this kingdom. It's been ready for you since the world's foundation. And here's why: I was hungry, and you fed me. I was thirsty and you gave me a drink. I was a stranger to you and homeless, and you invited me into your home. I was naked, and you gave me clothing. I was sick, and you cared for me. I was in prison, and you visited me."

Take your hand off of Jesus. Put your hand on one of the figures on the right.

Then those “sheep” are going to say, “Master, what are you talking about? When did we ever see you hungry and feed you, thirsty and give you a drink? Or a stranger and show you hospitality? Or naked and give you clothing? And when did we ever see you sick or in prison and come to you?”

Put your left hand back on Jesus with your right hand over the “sheep.”

Then the King will say, “I’m telling the solemn truth: Whenever you did one of these things to someone who was overlooked or ignored, that was me--you did it to me.”

Put your right hand on Jesus with your left hand over the “goats.”

Then he will turn to the “goats,” the ones on his left, and say, “Get out, worthless goats! Into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels. And why? Because: I was hungry and you gave me no meal. I was thirsty and you gave me no drink. I was homeless and you did not welcome me, I was naked and you gave me no clothes. I was sick and in prison, and you never visited.”

Take your hand off of Jesus and put a hand on one of the “goats.”

Then those “goats” are going to say, “Master, what are you talking about? When did we ever see you hungry or thirsty or homeless or naked or sick or in prison and didn’t help?”

Put your right hand on Jesus and extend your left hand over the “goats.”

He will answer them, “I’m telling the solemn truth: Whenever you failed to do one of these things to someone who was overlooked or ignored, that was me--you failed to do it to me.”

Take away the “goats” on the left.

Then those “goats” will be herded to their eternal doom, but the “sheep” to their eternal life.

Response: A Jesus story. Remember me in your mercy, Lord; **and unite us by your cross.**

I wonder, what did this story bring to mind for you?

Have you ever helped someone who was overlooked or ignored before?

Helping people who are in need like this seems very important to Jesus. Can you think of a way that you could try to help people who are in need?

Do you know of anyone who could use help like this?

(If you do know someone who could use help, what can you do?)

(If you don't know of anyone who could use help like this, what could you do to try and find them and help them?)

Now, we're going to sing a song - "I Want Jesus to Walk With Me"

(Example: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WvCCRR_Kyx0)

First verse:

I want Jesus to walk with me
I want Jesus to walk with me
All along my pilgrim journey
I want Jesus to walk with me

**Note to the storyteller* If the kids have questions about eternal doom and punishment, it may be helpful to note that parables tend to have a specific point, and not all aspects of the parable are meant to be exemplary. Also, scholars like N.T. Wright and Greg Boyd point out that eternal punishment does not have to mean eternal conscious torment. It can mean that they become no more in a permanent way for the rest of eternity. The eternal fire could cause a permanent death, not necessarily a permanent burning. In general, parables use figurative language, and we must be careful about taking them too literally.*

Jesus Anointed For Burial

(Mt. 26:14-16; Mk. 14:3-11; Lk. 22:1-6)

- | | |
|--|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 14 adult figures (1 Jesus figure with tunic) • 1 large green felt cloth • 1 pebble | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2 large boxes • 1 small box lid |
|--|--|

(Be ready to strike the match as you say,) “Bless the Lord who forgives all our sins.”

(Strike the match as they say,) “His mercy endures forever.”

(Light the first candle as you say,) “On our journey, we follow Jesus.”

(Light the second candle as you say,) “And submit to his way.”

(Light the third candle as you say,) “His way goes through the cross.”

(Light the fourth candle as you say,) “So, we take up our cross daily.”

Place a large box on it’s side. Put a small box lid upside down for a table. Put Jesus on one end of the table. Add some other figures in the box, but leave some room close to Jesus. When the woman is mentioned, place a figure with a pebble next to Jesus. Have the figure hold the pebble over Jesus’ head for a moment.

Jesus was with his disciples at Bethany, near Jerusalem, in the house of Simon the leper. A woman came to Jesus with an alabaster jar of very costly perfume. She poured it on his head as he sat at the table.

Put a hand on the disciple that will represent Judas while he talks.

When the disciples saw what was happening, they were furious. They said, “What a waste! This could have been sold for a lot of money that we could give to the poor.”

Put your hand on the Jesus figure.

When Jesus realized what was going on, he intervened. “Why are you giving this woman a hard time? She has just done something wonderfully significant for me. You will have the poor with you every day for the rest of your lives, but not me. When she poured this perfume on my body, what she really did was anoint me for burial. You can be sure that wherever in the whole world the good news is preached, what she has just done is going to be remembered and admired.”

Setup the palace of the high priest (Put down a large green felt cloth. Place a large box on it's side on one end of the felt cloth.) Add six figures in the box.

Remove one of the figures from the disciples, to represent Judas, and take him to the palace of the high priest. Place him with the figures there.

That is when one of the Twelve Disciples, the one named Judas Iscariot, went to the chief priests and said, "What will you give me if I hand Jesus over to you?" They couldn't believe their good luck, and agreed to pay him a large amount, thirty silver pieces. Judas gave them his word and started looking for a way to betray Jesus when he wouldn't be around any crowds.

Response: A story of Jesus. Remember me in your mercy, Lord; **and unite us by your cross.**

I wonder what part of the story you think is most important? (*Why?*)

Jesus was going through a difficult time, knowing that the religious leaders were trying to kill him. In the midst of that difficult time, this woman gave him a lovely gift that helped him prepare for what was coming.

When you're going through a difficult time, what are some things people could do to help you?

Now, we're going to sing a song - "I Want Jesus to Walk With Me"
(Example: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WvCCRr_Kyx0)

Second verse:

When I'm in trouble, Lord, walk with me.
When I'm in trouble, Lord, walk with me.
When my heart is almost breaking.
Lord, I want Jesus to walk with me.

The Last Supper

(Mt. 26:17-19, 26-29; Mk. 14:12-16, 22-25; Lk. 22:7-20)

- | | |
|--|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● 15 adult figures (1 Jesus figure with tunic) ● 1 tiny cup ● 1 small piece of cracker | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● 1 large box ● 1 small box lid ● 1 pebble |
|--|--|

Bless the Lord who forgives all our sins.--(*Strike match*)--**His mercy endures forever. On our journey, we follow Jesus. And submit to his way. His way goes through the cross.** (*Invite the listeners to join you in saying,)* **So, we take up our cross daily.**

Place Jesus with two figures.

The Day of Unleavened Bread came, the day the Passover lamb was butchered. Jesus sent Peter and John off, saying, “Go prepare the Passover for us so we can eat it together.” They said, “Where do you want us to do this?”

Place a large box on it’s side. Put a small box lid upside down inside as a table. Have Peter and John move away from Jesus. Place a figure down not far from the box with a pebble. Have the two disciples follow the man to the house.

He said, “Keep your eyes open as you enter the city. A man carrying a water jug will meet you. Follow him home. Then speak with the owner of the house. Tell him, ‘The Teacher wants to know, ‘Where is the guest room where I can eat the Passover meal with my disciples?’ He will show you a spacious second-story room, swept and ready. Prepare the meal there.”

Add another figure as the owner, by the house. Move the owner, Peter, and John inside the room. Remove the owner and man with the pebble.

They left and found everything just as he told them, and prepared the Passover meal.

Place Jesus and more figures in the house. Put Jesus in the middle behind the Table. Place a hand on each figure as they are speaking, and help them come to life.

When it was time, Jesus sat down with all the apostles. He said, “You’ve no idea how much I have looked forward to eating this Passover meal with you before I enter my time of suffering. It’s the last meal I’ll eat until we all eat it together in the kingdom of God.”

Put a tiny cup on the Table and a small piece of cracker. Pass the cup around and back to Jesus.

Taking the cup, he blessed it, then said, "Take this and pass it among you. As for me, I'll not drink wine again until the kingdom of God arrives."

Hold up the cracker and then the cup in front of Jesus.

Taking bread, he blessed it, broke it, and gave it to them, saying, "This is my body, given for you. Eat it in my memory." He did the same with the cup after supper, saying, "This cup is God's new covenant written in my blood, poured out for many people."

Response: A Jesus story. Remember me in your mercy, Lord; **and unite us by your cross.**

I wonder, what did you notice from this story?

Do you eat a meal like this sometimes?

What are we doing when we eat Eucharist together?

Now, we're going to sing a song - "I Want Jesus to Walk With Me"
(Example: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WvCCRr_Kyx0)

Second verse:

When I'm in trouble, Lord, walk with me.
When I'm in trouble, Lord, walk with me.
When my heart is almost breaking.
Lord, I want Jesus to walk with me.

Supper Continued: Leadership And Betrayal?

(Mt. 26:20-25, 30-35; Mk. 14:17-21, 26-31; Lk. 22:21-38; Jn. 13:1-38)

- | | |
|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 13 adult figures (1 Jesus figure with tunic) • 1 little water basin • 1 little white felt cloth (to tie onto Jesus) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2 large boxes • 1 small box lid |
|---|--|

Bless the Lord who forgives all our sins.--(*Strike match*)--**His mercy endures forever. On our journey, we follow Jesus. And submit to his way. His way goes through the cross.** (*Invite the listeners to join you in saying,)* **So, we take up our cross daily.**

Setup a large box on its side. Put a small box lid upside down as a table. Put Jesus in the middle behind the table. Add disciple figures around the table.

Do you remember what Jesus and his disciples were doing here? (*They were having a passover meal together, and Jesus was starting a practice for them of remembering him through the bread and wine.*)

Move Jesus in front of the table, take off his regular clothes and tie a white cloth around his middle. Put a little water basin with water in front of Jesus.

During the meal, Jesus 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.

Move Jesus over to a disciple, and act out washing his feet.

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, "If I don't wash you, you can't be part of what I'm doing" Simon Peter said to him, "Lord, not only my feet, then. Wash my hands! Wash my head!" Jesus said to him, "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. But not every one of you. He said, "Not all of you are clean," because he knew who was about to betray him.

Put away the basin with water. Take the "towel" off of Jesus and return his tunic. Move him back behind the table.

After he had washed their feet, put on his robe, and returned to the table, Jesus said to them, “Do you understand 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 an example for you. What I’ve done, you should do. I’m only pointing out the obvious. A servant is not ranked above his master; an employee doesn’t give orders to his boss. If you understand what I’m telling you, act like it--and live a blessed life.”

After he said these things, Jesus became visibly upset, and then he told them why. “One of you is going to betray me. It’s true that the Son of Man is going down a path of treachery already marked out by the Scriptures--no surprises here. But for the one who turns him in and becomes a traitor to the Son of Man, it would be better to never have been born than do this!”

When the disciples are talking amongst themselves, tilt them towards each other.

The disciples immediately became suspicious of each other and began quizzing one another, wondering who might be the traitor. Within minutes they were bickering over who of them would end up the greatest.

Place a hand on each figure as they are speaking, and help them come to life.

But Jesus intervened: “Kings like to throw their weight around and people in authority like to give themselves fancy titles. It’s not going to be that way with you. Let the senior among you become like the junior.; and the leader should play the part of the servant. Who would you rather be: the one who eats the dinner or the one who serves the dinner?”

(speaking to the kids) Which do you prefer to do? Would you rather eat dinner or be the one who serves dinner to other people? *(acknowledge responses)* Let’s see what they say.

Jesus said, “You’d rather eat and be served the food, right? But, I’ve taken my place among you as one who serves.”

Take a figure next to Jesus and tilt it up against Jesus when the disciple Jesus loved reclines.

One of the disciples, the one Jesus loved dearly, was reclining against him, his head on his shoulder. Peter motioned to him to ask Jesus who the traitor was. So, being the closest, he said, “Lord, who is it?” Jesus said, “The one to whom I give this crust of bread after I’ve dipped it.”

Put the disciple back down. Pretend like Jesus picks up the bread and dips it, then hands it to a figure representing Judas.

Then he dipped the crust and gave it to Judas, son of Simon the Iscariot. As soon as the bread was in his hand, Satan entered him. Jesus said, "What you must do, do it and get it over with." No one around the supper table knew why he said this to him. Some thought that since Judas was the one who managed the money for all of them, Jesus was telling him to buy what they needed for the Feast, or that he should give something to the poor.

Take the Judas figure and have him leave.

Judas, with the piece of bread, left. It was night.

Stack up some books or put a big box upside down. Have all the figures leave the room and go on top of the "mountain."

When they had sung a hymn, they went out to the Mount of Olives.

And Jesus said to them, "You will all run away from me; for it is written, 'I will strike the shepherd, and the sheep will be scattered.' But after I am raised up, I, your Shepherd, will go ahead of you, leading the way to Galilee."

Peter blurted out, "Even if everyone else is ashamed of you when things fall to pieces, I won't be."

Jesus said, "Don't be so sure. Today, this very night in fact, before the rooster crows twice, you will deny me three times."

Peter protested, "Even if I have to die with you, I will never deny you." All the others said the same thing.

Response: A Jesus story. Remember me in your mercy, Lord; **and unite us by your cross.**

What is something you noticed from the story?

What does it look like to be a good leader like Jesus?

Now, we're going to sing a song - "I Want Jesus to Walk With Me"
(Example: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WvCCRr_Kyx0)

Second verse:

When I'm in trouble, Lord, walk with me.
When I'm in trouble, Lord, walk with me.
When my heart is almost breaking.
Lord, I want Jesus to walk with me.

Preparing To Leave

(Jn. 14:1-27)

- 12 adult figures (1 Jesus figure with tunic)

Bless the Lord who forgives all our sins.--(*Strike match*)--**His mercy endures forever. On our journey, we follow Jesus. And submit to his way. His way goes through the cross. (Invite the listeners to join you in saying,) So, we take up our cross daily.**

Place the Jesus figure and eleven figures with him as the disciples.

After the supper, Jesus was talking with his disciples, and preparing them for his departure. He told them that he was going to have to leave them, and that they would not be able to follow him where he was going.

Place a hand on each figure as they are speaking, and help them come to life.

Jesus said, "Don't let this rattle you. You trust God, don't you? Trust me also. There is plenty of room for you in my Father's home. If that weren't so, would I have told you that I'm on my way to get a room ready for you? And if I'm on my way to get your room ready, I'll come back and get you so you can live where I live. And you already know the road I'm taking."

Move a figure next to Jesus to represent Thomas.

Thomas said, "Master, we have no idea where you're going. How do you expect us to know the road?"

Jesus said, "I am the Road, also the Truth, and also the Life. No one gets to the Father apart from me. If you really knew me, you would know my Father as well. From now on, you do know him. You've even seen him!"

Move a figure next to Jesus and Thomas to represent Philip talking.

Philip said, "Master, show us the Father; then we'll be content."

Try to give Jesus a compassionate voice rather than a sarcastic one.

Jesus responded, "You've been with me all this time, Philip, and you still don't know me? To see me is to see the Father. So how can you ask, 'Where is the Father?' Don't you believe that I am in the Father and the Father is in me? The words that I speak to you aren't mere words. I don't

just make them up on my own. The Father who resides in me crafts each word into a divine act. Believe me: I am in my Father and my Father is in me. If you can't believe that, believe what you see--the things I've done. The person who trusts me will not only do what I'm doing but even greater things, because I, on my way to the Father, am giving you the same work to do that I've been doing.

Move another figure closer to Jesus to represent Judas.

As the conversation continued, the other Judas, not Judas Iscariot, said, "Master, why is it that you are about to make yourself plain to us but not to the world?"

Jesus responded, "Because a loveless world is a sightless world. If anyone loves me, he will carefully keep my word and my Father will love him--we'll move right into the neighborhood! Not loving me means not keeping my words. The message you are hearing isn't mine. It's the message of the Father who sent me. I'm telling you these things while I'm still living with you. The Friend, the Holy Spirit whom the Father will send at my request, will make everything plain to you. He will remind you of all the things I have told you. I'm leaving you well and whole. That's my parting gift to you. Peace. I don't leave you the way you're used to being left--feeling abandoned, lonely. So don't be upset. Don't be distraught."

Response: A Jesus story. Remember me in your mercy, Lord; **and unite us by your cross.**

I wonder, what do you notice in the story?

Jesus made it clear that he, God the Father, and the Holy Spirit were united together in perfect unity. Jesus shows us what God is like. As you think about Jesus, what do you think God is like?

Now, we're going to sing a song - "I Want Jesus to Walk With Me"
(Example: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WvCCRR_Kyx0)

Second verse:

When I'm in trouble, Lord, walk with me.
When I'm in trouble, Lord, walk with me.
When my heart is almost breaking.
Lord, I want Jesus to walk with me.

Abide In Love

(Jn. 15:1-15)

- | | |
|--|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 12 adult figures (1 Jesus figure with tunic) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A large bunch of grapes |
|--|---|

Bless the Lord who forgives all our sins.--*(Strike match)*--**His mercy endures forever. On our journey, we follow Jesus. And submit to his way. His way goes through the cross.** *(Invite the listeners to join you in saying,)* **So, we take up our cross daily.**

Place Jesus with eleven figures around him.

As Jesus was preparing to leave his disciples, he continued to teach them.

(Prepare ahead of time an empty branch on the bunch of grapes. Remove the grapes from that branch before the story). Hold up a bunch of grapes. Prune off the empty branch as you talk about pruning.

He said, "I am the Real Vine and my Father is the Farmer. He cuts off every branch of me that doesn't bear grapes. And every branch that is grape-bearing he prunes back so it will bear even more. You are already pruned back by the message I have spoken. Live in me. Make your home in me just as I do in you. In the same way that a branch can't bear grapes by itself but only by being joined to the vine, you can't bear fruit unless you are joined with me."

Pass the bunch of grapes around to the kids. You might say something like, "Here, pass it around. Feel free to take a grape."

"I am the Vine, you are the branches. When you're joined with me and I with you, in a close relationship, the harvest is sure to be abundant."

Hold up the piece of the grape vine that you cut off. Then, put it back down. (or if you want to be dramatic you can burn the pruned branch in the fire of the lenten cross)

"Separated, you can't produce a single grape. Anyone who separates from me is deadwood, gathered up and thrown on the bonfire. But if you make yourselves at home with me and my words are at home in you, you can be sure that whatever you ask will be listened to and acted upon. You are my true disciples when you produce a lot of fruit. This is how my Father shows how great he is--when you produce grapes, when you mature as my disciples."

Put your hand on the Jesus figure, to show he is speaking.

“I’ve loved you the way my Father has loved me. Make yourselves at home in my love. If you keep my commands, you’ll remain intimately at home in my love. That’s what I’ve done--kept my Father’s commands and made myself at home in his love. I’ve told you these things for a purpose: that my joy might be your joy, and your joy might be wholly mature. This is my command: Love one another the way I loved you. This is the very best way to love. Put your life on the line for your friends. You are my friends when you do the things I command you. I’m no longer calling you servants because servants don’t understand what their master is thinking and planning. No, I’ve named you friends because I’ve let you in on everything I’ve heard from the Father.”

Response: A Jesus story. Remember me in your mercy, Lord; **and unite us by your cross.**

I wonder what the most important part of this story is?

I wonder how grapes grow? What do you think?

I wonder, how do you think we grow in our ability to love?

Now, we’re going to sing a song - “I Want Jesus to Walk With Me”
(Example: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WvCCRR_Kyx0)

First verse:

I want Jesus to walk with me
I want Jesus to walk with me
All along my pilgrim journey
I want Jesus to walk with me

Prayer In Gethsemane

(Mt. 26:36-46; Mk. 14:32-42; Lk. 22:40-46)

- | | |
|--|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 12 adult figures (1 Jesus figure with tunic) • 1 large green felt cloth | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Potted or fake plants |
|--|---|

(Be ready to strike the match as you say,) “Bless the Lord who forgives all our sins.”

(Strike the match as they say,) “**His mercy endures forever.**”

(Light the first candle as you say,) “**On our journey, we follow Jesus.**”

(Light the second candle as you say,) “**And submit to his way.**”

(Light the third candle as you say,) “**His way goes through the cross.**”

(Light the fourth candle as you say,) “**So, we take up our cross daily.**”

(Light the fifth candle as you say,) “And let our sinful ways of living die.”

Put down a large green felt cloth. Place some potted plants or fake plants. Put Jesus and the eleven disciples in the “garden.”

Jesus went with his disciples to a garden called Gethsemane. He said, “Stay here while I go over there and pray.”

Take Jesus and three of the figures and move them a little further away from the rest.

He took Peter, James, and John with him and fell into an agonizing sorrow. Then he said, “This sorrow is crushing the life out of me. Wait here and stay awake with me.”

Move Jesus a little further away by himself. Lay him down.

Going a little ahead, he fell on his face, praying, “My Father, if there is any way, get me out of this. But please, not what I want, I want to do what you want.”

Move Jesus back to the three figures. Place a hand on each figure as they are speaking, and help them come to life.

When he came back to his disciples, he found them sound asleep. He said to Peter, “Can’t you stick it out with me a single hour? Stay alert; be in prayer so you don’t wander into temptation

without even knowing you're in danger. There is a part of you that is eager, ready for anything with God. But there's another part that's weak."

Move Jesus over by himself again.

Jesus then left them a second time. Again he prayed, "My Father, if there is no other way than this, to drink this cup, I'm ready. I'll do it your way."

Move Jesus back over by the three.

When he came back, he again found them asleep. They simply couldn't keep their eyes open. This time he let them sleep, and went back a third time to pray, saying the same thing as the last time.

Move Jesus back over to the three figures.

When he came back again, he said, "Are you going to keep sleeping and make a night of it? My time is up, the Son of Man is about to be handed over to the hands of sinners. Get up! Let's get going! My betrayer is here."

Response: A Jesus story. Remember me in your mercy, Lord; **and unite us by your cross.**

I wonder, where might you see yourself in this story?

Have you ever been upset or nervous about something that was about to happen?

How did you deal with it?

How did Jesus deal with it?

Now, we're going to sing a song - "I Want Jesus to Walk With Me"

(Example: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WvCCRr_Kyx0)

Third verse:

In my trials, Lord, walk with me.

In my trials, Lord, walk with me.

When my head is bowed in sorrow.

Lord, I want Jesus to walk with me.

Jesus Arrested

(Mt. 26:47-56; Mk. 14:43-52; Lk. 47-53; Jn. 18:1-11)

- | | |
|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 20 adult figures (1 Jesus figure with tunic) • 8 Toothpicks (attach them to 7 figures with twine, and 1 for Peter) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some potted or fake plants • 1 large green felt cloth |
|---|--|

Bless the Lord who forgives all our sins.--(*Strike match*)--**His mercy endures forever. On our journey, we follow Jesus. And submit to his way. His way goes through the cross. So, we take up our cross daily. (Invite the listeners to join you in saying,) And let our sinful ways of living die.**

Put down a large green felt cloth. Setup some potted or fake plants. Place Jesus with three figures, and place eight other figures nearby for disciples.

Do you remember what happened in the last story? (*Jesus was praying in the garden with his disciples.*)

Place a figure for Judas. Put a crowd of seven people behind him. Attach some toothpicks to the mob ahead of time with twine.

After Jesus had prayed, while Jesus was speaking with his disciples, Judas, one of the twelve, arrived. He knew the place where Jesus and the disciples were at well, because they had gone there together often. A crowd was following him from the chief priests and elders of the people with lanterns, torches, swords and clubs. Judas had worked out a sign with them, "The one I kiss, that's the one--arrest him."

Have Judas come kiss Jesus.

He went straight to Jesus, greeted him, "How are you, Rabbi?" and kissed him.

Place a hand on each figure as they are speaking, and help them come to life.

Jesus said, "Judas, you would betray the Son of Man with a kiss?"

Have the seven with Judas move up and take hold of Jesus. Have the figures surround Jesus in a close circle. Put your hands around the figures and have Jesus bounce around off of them in the middle a little.

Then they came on Jesus--grabbed him and roughed him up.

Take hold of one of the disciples and move him up to the crowd. Then, give him a toothpick and pretend to cut an ear off of one of the members of the crowd near Jesus.

When the disciples with Jesus saw what was happening, they said, “Master, shall we fight?” Then, Simon Peter, who was carrying a sword, pulled out the sword and struck the chief Priest’s servant, cutting off his right ear. The servant’s name was Malchus.

Jesus ordered Peter, “Put back your sword. Do you think for a minute I’m not going to drink this cup the Father gave me? All who use swords are destroyed by swords. Don’t you realize that I am able right now to call to my Father, and twelve companies--more, if I want them--of fighting angels would be here, ready for battle? But if I did that, how would the Scriptures come true that say this is the way it has to be?”

Pretend like Jesus heals the man’s ear.

Then, touching the ear of Malchus, Jesus healed him. Jesus said to the mob taking him away, “What is this, coming out after me with swords and clubs as if I were a dangerous criminal? Day after day I’ve been with you in the Temple teaching, and you never so much as lifted a hand against me. But do it your way--it’s a dark night, a dark hour.”

Have all the disciples run away but one. Have someone from the mob grab the one, but then he gets away. Have Peter linger at a distance.

Then all the disciples deserted Jesus and ran away. A certain young man was following Jesus, wearing nothing but a linen cloth. The mob caught hold of him, but he left the linen cloth and ran off naked.

Have the mob with Jesus start to march off, with Peter following far behind.

They arrested Jesus and marched him off and took him into the house of the High Priest. Peter followed, but at a safe distance.

Response: A Jesus story. Remember me in your mercy, Lord; **and unite us by your cross.**

I wonder, what did you notice from that story?

Why do you think Jesus didn’t want his disciples to fight back?

Why didn’t Jesus run away? He seemed to know it was coming. How did he deal with this?

Jesus prepared himself in prayer with his heavenly Father, and faced the evil mob. He confronted their evil method and intent, peacefully. He allowed himself to be arrested and

injured, to carry out the work God had given him to do. Even when they were arresting him and injuring him, he responded with love and healing.

Now, we're going to sing a song - "I Want Jesus to Walk With Me"

(Example: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WvCCRr_Kyx0)

Third verse:

In my trials, Lord, walk with me.

In my trials, Lord, walk with me.

When my head is bowed in sorrow.

Lord, I want Jesus to walk with me.

Jesus Before The Sanhedrin

(Mt. 26:57-68, 27:1-2; Mk. 14:53-65, 15:1; Lk. 22:54, 63-23:1; Jn. 18:12-14, 19-24, 28)

- | | |
|--|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 16 adult figures (1 Jesus figure with tunic, 3 soldiers with toothpicks tied onto them) • 1 large box | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1 large green felt cloth • *optional* tealight candle |
|--|--|

Bless the Lord who forgives all our sins.--(*Strike match*)--**His mercy endures forever. On our journey, we follow Jesus. And submit to his way. His way goes through the cross. So, we take up our cross daily. (Invite the listeners to join you in saying,) And let our sinful ways of living die.**

*Put down a large green felt cloth. Place a large box on it's side for the house of the high priest on one end of the felt cloth. Place six figures in the box as Caiaphas, elders, and scribes. Put two figures in the middle of the green cloth. Away from the green cloth, set out the Jesus figure and three figures for soldiers with toothpicks tied onto them. Put a figure for Peter at a distance. *optional* Place tealight candle in the middle of the cloth.*

Move the Jesus figure and the soldiers in front of the box. Then, move the soldiers to the middle of the green cloth with the Peter figure staying off the green cloth.

Jesus had been arrested in the garden of Gethsemane. The soldiers who arrested Jesus took him to the house of the high priest, Caiaphas. The leading priests, elders, and religious scholars had gathered there.

Move Peter to the middle of the green cloth next to the soldiers.

Peter was following them at a distance. Peter entered the courtyard and sat down with the soldiers and slaves of the high priest to see what would happen to Jesus.

Bring a couple figures between the figures in the box and the Jesus figure one at a time to represent false witnesses.

The chief priests and the whole council were looking for false testimony against Jesus so that they might put Jesus to death. Many people came forward to lie about Jesus and make false accusations. However, their testimonies did not agree, and they could not find him guilty.

Bring two figures forward together as false witnesses.

At last, two people came forward and said, "This guy said, 'I am able to destroy the temple of God and to build it in three days.'"

Place a hand on each figure as they are speaking, and help them come to life.

The high priest stood up and said, "Have you no answer? What is it that they are saying against you?" But Jesus was silent. Then the high priest said to him, "I put you under oath before the living God, tell us if you are the Messiah, The Son of God."

Jesus said to him, "You say that I am. But I tell you, from now on you will see the Son of Man seated at the right hand of power and coming on the clouds of heaven."

Then the high priest tore his clothes and said, "He has blasphemed! Why do we still need witnesses? You have now heard his blasphemy. What is your decision?" The council answered, "He deserves death."

Move the council and soldiers around Jesus. Having them take turns going up to Jesus.

Then they spat in his face and struck him. They made fun of him and hit him. They blindfolded him and kept asking Jesus, "Prophecy to us, you Messiah! Who is it that hit you?"

When morning came, all the chief priests and the elders of the people decided to hand Jesus over to Pilate, the governor, to be killed. They tied him up and led him to the governor's palace.

Response: A Jesus story. Remember me in your mercy, Lord; **and unite us by your cross.**

Do you think they treated Jesus fairly?

What do you think it means to speak blasphemy?

If Jesus claimed to be the Son of God, was he speaking blasphemy?

We learn what love looks like by watching Jesus. In what ways was Jesus showing love for people in this story?

Now, we're going to sing a song - "I Want Jesus to Walk With Me"
(Example: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WvCCRr_Kyx0)

Third verse:

In my trials, Lord, walk with me.

In my trials, Lord, walk with me.

When my head is bowed in sorrow.

Lord, I want Jesus to walk with me.

Peter Disowns Jesus

(Mt. 26:58, 69-75; Mk. 14:54, 66-72; Lk. 22:54-62; Jn. 18:15-18, 25-27)

- | | |
|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 16 adult figures (1 Jesus figure with tunic, 3 soldiers with toothpicks tied onto them) • 2 children figures | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1 large green felt cloth • 1 large box • *optional* 1 tealight candle |
|---|---|

Bless the Lord who forgives all our sins.--(*Strike match*)--**His mercy endures forever. On our journey, we follow Jesus. And submit to his way. His way goes through the cross. So, we take up our cross daily. (Invite the listeners to join you in saying,) And let our sinful ways of living die.**

*Put down a large green felt cloth. Place a large box on it's side for the house of the high priest on one end of the felt cloth. Place six figures in the box to represent the chief priests, elders and scribes. Set out one figure as Jesus and three figures for soldiers with toothpicks tied onto them just off the green cloth. Place a figure for Peter at a distance. Place two figures for soldiers and slaves in the middle of the felt cloth, away from the box. *Optional-you could add a tealight candle to represent a fire for the soldiers and slaves to gather around in the middle.**

(point to Peter) Do you remember who this is? It's Peter.

Move the soldiers and Jesus up to the box. Then, have the soldiers move down to the middle by the fire.

The soldiers who arrested Jesus took him to the house of the high priest, Caiaphas. The leading priests, elders, and scribes had gathered there.

Move Peter to be next to the soldiers and slaves in the middle of the green cloth.

Peter was following them at a distance. Peter entered the courtyard and sat down with the soldiers and slaves of the high priest to see what would happen to Jesus. Peter warmed himself by a fire.

Add a child figure for the servant-girl. Have her approach Peter. Place a hand on each figure as they are speaking, and help them come to life.

A servant-girl of the high priest was by Peter. She stared at Peter in the firelight and said, "You also were with Jesus, the man from Nazareth."

But Peter denied it before all of the people there, saying, "I don't know what you are talking about."

Move Peter to the front of the green cloth away from the box and the group around the fire.

He left the fire and went out to the porch, and a rooster crowed. Let's crow like a rooster. Cockadoodledoo!

Place 3 adult figures by Peter. Place another child figure by Peter.

When Peter went to the porch, another servant-girl saw him, and she said to the other people nearby, "This man was with Jesus of Nazareth." Again, he strongly denied it, "I do not know the man."

Have the bystanders come closer to Peter.

After a little while the people standing nearby came up to Peter and said, "Certainly you are also one of them, your accent gives you away. You sound like a Galilean."

Peter began to curse and swear and oath, "I do not know this man you are talking about!"

At that moment the rooster crowed. Let's crow like a rooster again. Cockadoodledoo!

Then Peter remembered what Jesus had said, "Before the rooster crows two times, you will deny me three times."

Have Peter run off.

Peter ran off and cried uncontrollably.

Response: A Jesus story. Remember me in your mercy, Lord; **and unite us by your cross.**

Have you ever realized that you did something wrong? How did you feel?

Have you ever had a friend who pretended they were not your friend when they were around other people? How did that make you feel?

How do you think Jesus treated Peter the next time he saw Peter? (Refer to or read John 21:15-17)

What can we learn from how Jesus treats Peter?

Now, we're going to sing a song - "I Want Jesus to Walk With Me"
(Example: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WvCCRr_Kyx0)

Third verse:

In my trials, Lord, walk with me.

In my trials, Lord, walk with me.

When my head is bowed in sorrow.

Lord, I want Jesus to walk with me.

Jesus On Trial

(Mt. 27:1-2, 11-14; Mk. 15:1-5; Lk. 23:1-7; Jn. 18:28-38)

- | | |
|--|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 15 figures (1 Jesus figure with tunic) • 1 large red felt cloth | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Boxes: 2 large, 2 small |
|--|---|

Bless the Lord who forgives all our sins.--(*Strike match*)--**His mercy endures forever. On our journey, we follow Jesus. And submit to his way. His way goes through the cross. So, we take up our cross daily. (Invite the listeners to join you in saying,) And let our sinful ways of living die.**

Setup Pilate's palace (Place red felt cloth down. On top of the cloth put 1 large box upside down with a small box on top). Place Pilate on top of the small box. Have a group of six figures take the Jesus figure to Pilate's Palace, but do not put them on the red felt. Move Pilate to where Jesus and the crowd is.

Early in the morning, Jesus was tied up and taken from the house of the high priest to the palace of Pilate, who was the governor of that region.

Place a hand on each figure as they are speaking, and help them come to life.

Pilate came out to them and said, "What accusation do you bring against this man? They answered, "If this man were not a criminal, we would not have handed him over to you." Pilate said to them, "Take him yourselves and judge him according to your law." The Jews replied, "We are not permitted to put anyone to death."

Move Pilate to the top of the small box. Then, move Jesus in front of him.

Then, Pilate entered his palace and summoned Jesus to come before him. Pilate asked Jesus, "Are you the King of the Jews?" Jesus answered, "Do you ask this on your own, or did others tell you about me?" Pilate replied, "I am not a Jew, am I? Your own nation and the chief priests have handed you over to me. What have you done?"

Jesus answered, "My kingdom is not from this world. If my kingdom were from this world, my followers would be fighting to keep me from being handed over to the religious leaders. But as it is, my kingdom is not from here." Pilate asked him, "So you are a king?" Jesus answered, "You say that I am a king. For this I was born, and for this I came into the world, to testify to the

truth. Everyone who belongs to the truth listens to my voice.” Pilate asked him, “What is the truth?”

Move Pilate back out to the chief priests and crowd.

Pilate then talked with the crowd that had come with the chief priests. He said, “I find no basis for an accusation against this man.” But they were insistent and said, “He stirs up the people by teaching throughout all Judea, from Galilee where he began even to this place.” When Pilate heard this, he asked, “Is this man, Jesus, a Galilean?”

Setup a large box upside down with a small box upside down on top. Place a figure on top for Herod. Have the crowd of six figures escort Jesus to Herod.

And when he learned that he was under Herod’s jurisdiction, he sent him off to Herod.

Response: A Jesus story. Remember me in your mercy, Lord; **and unite us by your cross.**

What do you notice from this story?

Is Jesus a king?

What does Jesus say is different about his kingdom?

Kingdoms and governments, like the Roman Empire in Jesus’ time or the United States in our time, use violence to maintain their power and control. Jesus did not use violence to defend himself, even when others were using violence against him. While others are lying and making false accusations against Jesus, he speaks the truth.

Now, we’re going to sing a song - “I Want Jesus to Walk With Me”
(Example: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WvCCRr_Kyx0)

Third verse:

In my trials, Lord, walk with me.

In my trials, Lord, walk with me.

When my head is bowed in sorrow.

Lord, I want Jesus to walk with me.

Jesus Sentenced To Death

(Mt. 27:15-31; Mk. 15:6-20; Lk. 23:8-25; Jn. 18:38-19:16)

- | | |
|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 20 figures (1 Jesus figure with purple robe, 5 soldiers with toothpicks tied onto them) • 1 large red felt cloth | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Boxes: 2 large, 2 small • Purple robe for Jesus • 1 tiny water basin (cap or lid) |
|---|---|

(Be ready to strike the match as you say,) “Bless the Lord who forgives all our sins.”

(Strike the match as they say,) “**His mercy endures forever.**”

(Light the first candle as you say,) “**On our journey, we follow Jesus.**”

(Light the second candle as you say,) “**And submit to his way.**”

(Light the third candle as you say,) “**His way goes through the cross.**”

(Light the fourth candle as you say,) “**So, we take up our cross daily.**”

(Light the fifth candle as you say,) “**And let our sinful ways of living die.**”

(Light the sixth candle as you say,) “And rise with Jesus to new life.”

Setup Herod’s house (large box upside down with a small box on top, and place a figure on top for Herod). Place two soldier figures with toothpicks tied onto them near Herod. Place a crowd of six people with Jesus before Herod.

Can anyone tell me where we are at in the story? What happened in our last story? *(Jesus was taken by the chief priests, elders, and religious scholars to Pilate to be put to death. Pilate did not find any reason to kill him, and discovered that he was a Galilean, an area that Herod was in charge of. So, Pilate sent Jesus to Herod)*

Put your hand on Herod.

When Herod saw Jesus, he was very glad, for he had been wanting to see him for a long time, because he had heard about him and was hoping to see him perform some miracle. Herod questioned Jesus for a long time, but Jesus did not answer him.

Put your hands on the group of six figures.

The chief priests and the scribes stood nearby, violently shouting accusations against Jesus.

Have the two soldier figures bump into Jesus, but try not to knock him down. Take off Jesus' tunic and put a purple robe on Jesus.

Even Herod and his soldiers were mean towards Jesus and made fun of him. They put an elegant robe on him to dress him up like a king, and treated him like a joke.

Setup Pilate's palace (Place red felt cloth down. On top of the cloth put 1 large box upside down with a small box on top). Place Pilate on top of the small box. Take Jesus and the crowd next to Pilate's palace, off the red felt. Add five more figures to the crowd. Have Pilate come down to meet them. Place a hand on each figure as they are speaking, and help them come to life.

Then they sent him back to Pilate. Pilate then spoke to the chief priests, the leaders, and the crowd of people. He said, "You brought me this man as someone who was stirring up the people to rebel; and I have examined him in front of you and have not found this man guilty of any of your charges against him. Neither has Herod, because he sent him back to us. He has done nothing to deserve death. Therefore, I will have him flogged and release him."

Move Pilate back up to his throne. Then, move him to the edge of the large box by the crowd.

At the Festival of Unleavened Bread, the governor would release a prisoner of the crowd's choosing. Barabbas was a prisoner who committed murder during an insurrection. So, Pilate asked the crowd, "Whom do you want me to release to you, Barabbas or Jesus who is called the Messiah?" Pilate realized that Jesus had been handed over to him out of jealousy, and he wanted Jesus to go free.

Have a figure approach Pilate.

While Pilate was sitting on the judgment seat, his wife sent word to him, "Have nothing to do with that innocent man, for today I have suffered a great deal because of a dream about him."

Put your hands on a couple figures in the crowd. Have them go around talking to other members of the crowd.

Meanwhile, the chief priests and the elders persuaded the crowd to ask for Barabbas to be released and to have Jesus killed.

Move the figure by Pilate away.

Pilate asked them again, "Which of the two do you want me to release to you?" And the people said, "Barabbas." Pilate said to them, "Then what should I do with Jesus who is called the King

of the Jews? All of them said, "Crucify, crucify him!" Then he asked, "Why, what evil has he done?" But they shouted all the more, "Crucify him!"

Place a water basin by Pilate. Have him tilt towards the water basin.

When Pilate saw that he could do nothing, and that a riot was beginning, he took some water and washed his hands before the crowd, saying, "I am innocent of this man's blood; see to it yourselves."

Have 3 soldiers approach Jesus and move him onto the red cloth. Remove his purple robe and have the soldiers knock Jesus down.

So he released Barabbas for them, and had Jesus flogged.

Stand Jesus up and place a brown pipe cleaner crown on Jesus' head. Put the purple robe back on him. Have a soldier come up and knock into Jesus without knocking him down.

The soldiers wove a crown of thorns and put it on his head, and dressed him in a purple robe. They kept coming up to him saying, "Hail, King of the Jews!" and hitting him on the face. Then, they took him to be crucified.

Response: A Jesus story. Remember me in your mercy, Lord; **and unite us by your cross.**

What do you notice from this story?

Jesus knows what it is like to be bullied. Have you ever been bullied by someone before?

Have you ever been accused of doing something wrong when you hadn't done anything wrong?

Jesus was facing and enduring the evil of the world. Yet, he was not fighting back with evil. Jesus loved his way through the darkness. He chose to love instead of hating and hurting others. Through Jesus' suffering, death, and then resurrection he was creating a new way of living in the world. We are invited into this new creation. A way of living without bullying or violence. A way of living that overcomes evil with good.

Now, we're going to sing a song - "Angus Dei"

(Example:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ptVe8FMQXNE&list=OLAK5uy_lb9WMWSU82Qt3axuJACaZKvnMUfEDbKlo&index=4)

O Lamb of God, who takest away the sins of the world, have mercy upon us.

O Lamb of God, who takest away the sins of the world, have mercy upon us.

O Lamb of God, who takest away the sins of the world, grant us thy peace.

The King Of The Jews Goes To The Cross

(Mt. 27:31-37; Mk. 15:21-26; Lk. 23:26-31; Jn. 19:16-25)

- | | |
|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 18 figures (1 Jesus figure with purple robe and tunic, 3 soldiers with toothpicks tied onto them) • 1 large red felt cloth, 1 cloth for Golgotha • 1 brown pipe cleaner crown of thorns | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Boxes: 1 large, 1 small • 3 popsicle crosses • 1 large box lid • Some twine for tying |
|---|--|

Bless the Lord who forgives all our sins.--(*Strike match*)--**His mercy endures forever. On our journey, we follow Jesus. And submit to his way. His way goes through the cross. So, we take up our cross daily. And let our sinful ways of living die.** (*Invite the listeners to join you in saying,)* **And rise with Jesus to new life.**

Setup Pilate's palace (Place red felt cloth down. On top of the cloth put 1 large box upside down with a small box on top). Put Pilate on the small box. Add ten other figures near the palace as a crowd, just off the red cloth. Have Jesus surrounded by three soldiers on the red cloth near Pilate's palace. Have the brown pipe cleaner on his head and purple robe on. Then, switch his clothes back to the tunic as you tell the story.

After they made fun of him, the soldiers stripped him of the elegant robe and put his own clothes on him. Then they led him away to crucify him.

Have two of the soldiers start to lead Jesus to the cross. Have the crowd of ten follow behind. Hold the cross around the shoulder of the Jesus figure and start to walk, but then have him fall over.

Jesus was weak from being whipped and beaten. He was having trouble carrying his cross.

Add another figure and have him "carry" the cross to Golgotha behind Jesus and the soldiers, with the crowd following behind. It might be easiest to use a box lid or two to move the figures together. It also might be easiest to tie the cross to the side of the Simon figure.

They came across a man from Cyrene named Simon. They made him carry Jesus' cross, with Jesus walking in front of him.

Stop the procession. Place a hand on each figure as they are speaking, and help them come to life.

A lot of people followed behind, some of them were women who were beating their chest and crying loudly for Jesus. Jesus turned to them and said, "Daughters of Jerusalem, do not weep for me, but weep for yourselves and for your children. Hard days of suffering are coming for the people living here."

Put down a felt cloth (black, purple, or red). Setup two crosses, each tied to the back of a figure, one on each side of where Jesus is. Complete the procession to Golgotha.

They walked until they came to a place called Golgotha, which means Place of a Skull. When they got there, they offered Jesus wine to drink, mixed with gall; but when he tasted it, he would not drink it.

Lay down Jesus' cross between the two thieves being crucified. Take the clothes off of the Jesus figure. Lay Jesus down on the cross and tie him to the cross. Stand up the Jesus figure with the cross attached. Have the two soldiers near the cross, and put the crowd close to the soldiers.

The soldiers stripped Jesus of his clothes, and they cast lots to see who amongst them could take the clothes. At 9:00 in the morning, they put him on the cross, and they crucified him between two other men. Then, Jesus said, "Father, forgive them; they don't know what they are doing."

Have three of the figures from the crowd read the inscription and then go speak with Pilate. Have them approach the palace but not enter the red cloth. Move Pilate near them.

Pilate had an inscription written and put on the cross. It read, "Jesus of Nazareth, the King of the Jews." Many of the Jews read this inscription, because the place where Jesus was crucified was near the city; and it was written in Hebrew, in Latin, and in Greek.

Then the chief priests of the Jews said to Pilate, "Do not write, 'The King of the Jews,' but 'This man said, I am King of the Jews.'" Pilate answered, "What I have written I have written."

Response: A Jesus story. Remember me in your mercy, Lord; **and unite us by your cross.**

What did you notice from this story?

Crucifixions were intended to be humiliating and a practice of not only physical punishment but public shaming. Yet, in the midst of his pain and suffering, Jesus is still able to consider the interests of other people above himself. He considers the crowd of people following him, and he forgives all the people there who were crucifying him. How do you think Jesus had the strength and courage to love people like this?

(His connection with God the Father and the Holy Spirit. His time of preparation in prayer in the garden of Gethsemane. A life filled with practicing this type of love and forgiveness. He had trust and hope in God.)

How do you think you can find the strength and courage to love like this?

Now, we're going to sing a song - "Angus Dei"

(Example:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ptVe8FMQXNE&list=OLAK5uy_lb9WMWSU82Qt3axuJACaZKvnMUfEDbKlo&index=4)

O Lamb of God, who takest away the sins of the world, have mercy upon us.

O Lamb of God, who takest away the sins of the world, have mercy upon us.

O Lamb of God, who takest away the sins of the world, grant us thy peace.

Jesus On The Cross

(Mt. 27:34-44; Mk. 15:23-32; Lk. 23:32-43; Jn. 19:25-27)

- | | |
|--|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 18 figures (1 Jesus figure with no clothes, 2 soldiers with toothpicks tied onto them) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1 (black, purple, or red) felt cloth • 3 popsicle crosses |
|--|--|

Bless the Lord who forgives all our sins.--(*Strike match*)--**His mercy endures forever. On our journey, we follow Jesus. And submit to his way. His way goes through the cross. So, we take up our cross daily. And let our sinful ways of living die.** (*Invite the listeners to join you in saying,)* **And rise with Jesus to new life.**

Setup the crucifixion scene (Put down a felt cloth (black, purple, or red). Place Jesus with a cross tied to his back between two other figures with crosses). Put two soldier figures by the crosses. Add a crowd of eight figures looking at the crosses (leave room near the soldiers for five more figures to be placed). Place figures near the cross as they are introduced in the story.

After the soldiers had taken his clothes and put Jesus on the cross, Jesus noticed a disciple he loved standing beside his mother in the crowd. They were standing near the cross, along with his aunt, Mary the wife of Clopas, and Mary Magdalene. Jesus said to his mom, “Woman, here is your son.” Then he said to the disciple, “Here is your mother.” And from that time, the disciple took her into his home and treated her as his mother.

Take hold of one of the people in the crowd, shake their head and pretend they are speaking.

Others nearby shook their heads and said, “You bragged that you could tear down the Temple and then rebuild it in three days-so show us what you can do! Save yourself! If you are the Son of God, come down from that cross!”

Take hold of another figure from the crowd, pretend they are talking.

The chief priests, elders, and religion scholars were right there making fun of him too. They said, “He saved others, but he can’t save himself! The Messiah, the King of Israel, is he? Then let him get down from that cross. We’ll *all* become believers then! He was so sure of God--well, let God rescue his ‘Son’ now, if he wants him! He did claim to be God’s Son, didn’t he?”

Place a hand on each figure as they are speaking, and help them come to life.

One of the criminals hanging alongside Jesus cursed him: "Some Messiah you are! Save yourself! Save us!" But the other criminal hanging next to him rebuked him, saying, "Have you no fear of God? You're getting crucified, just like he is. We deserve this, but not him--he did nothing to deserve this." Then he said, "Jesus, remember me when you enter your kingdom."

Jesus replied, "Don't worry, I will. Today you will be with me in paradise."

Response: A Jesus story. Remember me in your mercy, Lord; **and unite us by your cross.**

I wonder, what do you think was one of the most important parts of the story? (*Why?*)

I wonder, if you were a character in this story, which character do you think you would be? (*Why?*)

Now, we're going to sing a song - "Angus Dei"

(Example:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ptVe8FMQXNE&list=OLAK5uy_lb9WMWSU82Qt3axuJACaZKvnMUfEDbKlo&index=4)

O Lamb of God, who takest away the sins of the world, have mercy upon us.

O Lamb of God, who takest away the sins of the world, have mercy upon us.

O Lamb of God, who takest away the sins of the world, grant us thy peace.

Truly This Man Was God's Son

(Mt. 27:45-54; Mk 15:33-41; Lk 23:36, 44-59; Jn 19:28-37)

- | | |
|--|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 18 figures (1 Jesus figure with no clothes, 2 soldiers with toothpicks tied onto them) • 1 toothpick with a piece of sponge or foam | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1 (black, purple, or red) felt cloth • 3 popsicle crosses • Twine for tying |
|--|---|

Bless the Lord who forgives all our sins.--(*Strike match*)--**His mercy endures forever. On our journey, we follow Jesus. And submit to his way. His way goes through the cross. So, we take up our cross daily. And let our sinful ways of living die.** (*Invite the listeners to join you in saying,)* **And rise with Jesus to new life.**

Setup the crucifixion scene (Put down a felt cloth (black, purple, or red). Place Jesus with a cross tied to his back between two other figures with crosses). Put two soldier figures by the crosses. Add a crowd of 13 figures looking at the crosses.

Does anyone remember where we are at in the story? (The religious leaders riled up a crowd to crucify Jesus. They tortured him, and marched him to Golgotha and started crucifying him in the morning between two criminals.)

Place a hand on each figure as they are speaking, and help them come to life.

At midday, Jesus was still hanging on the cross. From noon until three in the afternoon the whole land went dark. When it was almost three o'clock, Jesus cried out with a loud voice, "Eli, Eli, lema sabachthani?" which means "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?" He was quoting from Psalm 22 in Aramaic. Psalm 22 is a cry for help in a time of suffering, and ends with God hearing the person in distress and rescuing him.

Some of the bystanders who heard him said, "He's calling for Elijah."

Jesus said, "I am thirsty."

Have a figure take a toothpick with a small piece of sponge or foam stuck to the end and lift it to Jesus' mouth.

A jar full of sour wine was there. So they put a sponge full of wine on a branch and held it to his mouth.

Others joked, "Don't be in such a hurry. Let's see if Elijah comes and saves him." When Jesus had received the wine, he cried out loudly, "It is finished." Then he bowed his head and gave up his spirit.

Hold up a piece of paper and rip it in two.

At that moment the curtain of the temple was torn in two, from top to bottom. The earth shook, and the rocks were split. The tombs also were opened, and many bodies of the saints who had fallen asleep were raised. After his resurrection they came out of the tombs and entered the holy city and appeared to many.

Now, when the centurion and those with him who were keeping watch over Jesus saw the earthquake and what happened, they were terrified and said, "Truly this man was God's Son!"

Have most of the crowd leave, but move five figures to a distance to represent the women.

When they saw what actually happened, everyone who had come as spectators to watch the show were overcome with grief and headed home. Those who knew Jesus well, along with the women who had followed Jesus and helped provide for him in Galilee, stood at a respectful distance and kept vigil; including Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of James the younger and of Joseph, and Salome.

Have some soldier figures move to the crucified figures. Have one soldier take his toothpick and stick it in Jesus' side.

Since it was the day of sabbath preparation, the Jews did not want the bodies left on the cross during the sabbath, especially because that sabbath was a high holy day that year. So they asked Pilate to break the legs of the crucified men to speed up their dying and have the bodies removed. So the soldiers came and broke the legs of the first man crucified with Jesus, and then the other man. But when they got to Jesus, they saw that he was already dead and did not break his legs. Instead, one of the soldiers stabbed him in the side with his spear, and blood and water gushed out.

These things occurred in accordance with Scripture. "None of his bones shall be broken." This could be a reference to Psalm 34:20 or passages about the passover lamb in Exodus 12:46 or Numbers 9:12. "They will look on the one whom they have pierced" refers to Zechariah 12:10.

Response: A Jesus story. Remember me in your mercy, Lord; **and unite us by your cross.**

I wonder, why do you think Jesus kept referring to Scripture when he was dying?

Remembering the stories of how God has helped save his people can be helpful for us when we are going through something difficult. Jesus associates himself with the long history of God's people being oppressed and crying out to God for help. It can seem as if God is far off or not listening, but the Scriptures remind us that God saves, even if we are going through great suffering at the present time. The evil of the world was doing it's worst and killing the Son of God, and yet Jesus could cry out to God in his agony and hope for a future rescue.

optional - read Psalm 22 or Psalm 34

Now, we're going to sing a song - "Angus Dei"

(Example:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ptVe8FMQXNE&list=OLAK5uy_lb9WMWSU82Qt3axuJACaZKvnMUfEDbKlo&index=4)

O Lamb of God, who takest away the sins of the world, have mercy upon us.

O Lamb of God, who takest away the sins of the world, have mercy upon us.

O Lamb of God, who takest away the sins of the world, grant us thy peace.

Jesus Laid In The Tomb

(Mt. 27:57-66; Mk 15:42-47; Lk 23:50-56; Jn 19:38-42)

- | | |
|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 20 figures (1 Jesus figure with no clothes, 5 soldiers with toothpicks tied onto them) • Felt cloths: 1 large red, 1 for Golgotha, 1 white robe for burial clothes | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Boxes: 1 large, 1 medium, 1 small • 1 medium box lid • 3 popsicle crosses • Twine for tying |
|---|--|

Bless the Lord who forgives all our sins.--(*Strike match*)--**His mercy endures forever. On our journey, we follow Jesus. And submit to his way. His way goes through the cross. So, we take up our cross daily. And let our sinful ways of living die.** (*Invite the listeners to join you in saying,)* **And rise with Jesus to new life.**

Setup the crucifixion scene (Put down a felt cloth (black, purple, or red). Place Jesus with a cross tied to his back between two other figures with crosses). Put two soldier figures by the crosses. Add a crowd of 5 figures looking at the crosses from a distance.

Setup Pilate's palace (Place red felt cloth down. On top of the cloth put 1 large box upside down with a small box on top). Place Pilate on top of the small box.

(*pointing at Pilate*) Do you remember who this was? Pilate, the Roman governor in charge of the place where Jesus lived. He sentenced Jesus to death by crucifixion to appease the crowd.

Place a figure out to represent Joseph by the group of five figures watching the cross. Walk Joseph over to Pilate.

This is Joseph. Joseph was a rich man from a town called Arimathea. He had secretly become a disciple of Jesus and was waiting expectantly for the kingdom of God. When it was evening, Joseph went boldly to Pilate and asked for Jesus' body.

Bring a soldier from near the cross to speak with Pilate.

Pilate wondered if Jesus was already dead. He called for the centurion and asked him if Jesus had died. The centurion informed Pilate that Jesus was dead. Then, Pilate issued an order to release the body of Jesus to Joseph.

Walk Joseph over to the cross. Take Jesus off the cross. Add another figure for Nicodemus. Wrap Jesus in a white cloth.

So Joseph removed the body of Jesus from the cross. Nicodemus also came and brought with him a mixture of myrrh and aloes. They took the body of Jesus and wrapped it in a clean linen cloth with some spices, according to the burial custom of the Jews.

Place a medium box on it's side for the tomb. Have a medium box lid partially covering the opening. Have Joseph and Nicodemus take Jesus to the tomb. Put Jesus in and slide the cover over the opening. Have Joseph and Nicodemus leave.

Joseph placed Jesus in Joseph's own tomb, which had been recently carved out of rock. Then he rolled a great stone across the entrance and went away.

Move two figures from the group of five that were watching the cross over to the tomb.

Mary Magdalene and the other Mary were there. They had followed, and they saw the tomb and how Jesus' body was laid in the tomb. Then they returned and prepared spices and ointments. On the sabbath they rested according to the commandment.

Take a group of four figures and walk them to Pilate, but don't have them step onto the red cloth. Move Pilate over towards the crowd.

On the Sabbath, the leading priests and Pharisees went to see Pilate. They said, "Sir, we remember what that impostor said while he was still alive, 'After three days I will rise from the dead.' Therefore command the tomb to be made secure until the third day; otherwise his disciples may steal his body, and tell the people, 'He has been raised from the dead!' If that happens, we'll be worse off than we were at first."

Take three soldiers with toothpicks tied onto them and place them in front of the tomb.

Pilate said to them, "You have a guard of soldiers; go, make it as secure as you can." So they sealed the tomb and posted guards to protect it.

Response: A Jesus story. Remember me in your mercy, Lord; **and unite us by your cross.**

The stage is set for what will soon take place. As Lent comes to a close, Easter waits for us in the morning. New life is about to burst out of the tomb and across the whole world. But in this moment, the hope of Jesus' followers is nearly snuffed out. Jesus is dead and placed in the tomb, and precautions have been taken to make sure the tomb is securely shut. Their hopes of a new kingdom of God under the reign of Jesus the Messiah seem dashed. A dead messiah laying in a tomb is not a king ruling over all of creation.

Have you ever longed for things to be made right, but it ended in tragedy? (for younger kids: Have you ever hoped that things that are unfair would be fixed and made right? Have there been times when it was never fixed and made right?)

Have you ever been waiting for something great to happen, but then it got canceled and ended abruptly?

How can we trust in God, when it seems like it has all gone wrong?

Now, we're going to sing a song - "Angus Dei"

(Example:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ptVe8FMQXNE&list=OLAK5uy_lb9WMWSU82Qt3axuJACaZKvnMUfEDbKlo&index=4)

O Lamb of God, who takest away the sins of the world, have mercy upon us.

O Lamb of God, who takest away the sins of the world, have mercy upon us.

O Lamb of God, who takest away the sins of the world, grant us thy peace.