



Sunday Celebrations

Palm Sunday of the Passion of the Lord | **April 5, 2020**

Welcome to Sunday Celebrations, a free resource from RCL Benziger to help you celebrate Sunday with your family, in your home.

Each Sunday's celebration focuses on the Gospel of the day, and encourages family members of all ages to join in singing, praying, sharing, and celebrating. Suggested songs (search the internet for recorded versions) and craft activities help enliven and extend the celebrations.

Here are three simple ideas to help you get started:

1 Choose the place where you will gather for your Sunday celebration. It may be around your living room coffee table, around your kitchen or dining room table, outdoors at your picnic table, any place that works for your family!

2 Decorate your chosen place with symbols of faith. These might include a placemat, napkin, or cloth in the color of the liturgical season; a Bible; a candle; a cross or crucifix; and a plant or flowers. Other suggestions will be offered on each Sunday Celebrations outline.

3 Each Sunday Celebrations outline is based on the flow of a Liturgy of the Word with children. Feel free to adapt the outline to best suit the ages and attention spans of your family members. It is most important simply to set aside time to pray and reflect on God's Word.

RCL Benziger prays that by taking time for Sunday Celebrations, families of all ages will be encouraged and strengthened by God's Word. Our prayers are with you as you lead your family in Sunday Celebrations and the Good News of Jesus Christ.





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Gospel Reading

Matthew 26:14—27:66 (long form) or Matthew 27:11-54 (shorter form)
(Readings are available at usccb.org/bible/readings.)

Symbol (optional)

Crucifix; homemade palms (see last week's session)

Get Ready

Remind family members that today's celebration at church normally begins with handing out, blessing, and processing with palms. Ask if anyone remembers the special word sung during the procession. (Hosanna) Explain that Hosanna is a word of praise and joy—the people of Jerusalem were giving praise to Jesus.

Invite family members to join you in a procession through your house or around your yard. Wave the palms you have made (see last week's session for directions), and sing "Hosanna!" in praise of Jesus. Then continue today's celebration as follows.

Begin

- Light a candle and sing a familiar Palm Sunday refrain such as "Ride on, Jesus, Ride"; "All Glory, Laud, and Honor"; or "Hosanna."
- Make the Sign of the Cross and pray:
**Jesus, we praise you. We bless you. We adore you.
As we hear today's Gospel, help us know just how much you love us.
Amen.**

Listen and Reflect

- Sing a Lent Gospel Acclamation ("Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ, King of endless glory.") As you sing, lift your hands in praise to Jesus the King.
- Before proclaiming today's Gospel, invite family members to pay attention to all the people who are a part of the story.
- Proclaim today's Gospel.
- Spend a moment in silent reflection. Then invite family members to recall those who were part of the Gospel story. Ask: Who hurt Jesus? Who showed love to him? How did they do so? (*Responses will depend on which form of the Gospel—long or short—you chose to proclaim.*) Which type of people are we called to be? (*Those who show love to Jesus.*)





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Connect

- Explain that today is the first day of Holy Week, a very special week in the Church year that leads to the celebration of Easter Sunday. The word *holy* means “connected to God.” As a family, talk about ways you stay connected to God. Emphasize that people who love Jesus stay connected to God.
- Together, identify three ways you can stay connected to God this Holy Week. (*Ideas would include praying, reading the Bible, helping others, being patient and kind, loving others, and so forth.*)

Conclude

- Lead your family in praying for the world, the Church, those in need, the sick and those who have died, and for your prayer intentions. As you respond, “Lord, hear our prayer,” lead your family in raising hands, palms up, to God.
- Pray together the Lord’s Prayer.
- Make the Sign of the Cross and conclude by singing the song you sang at the beginning of this celebration of the Word or another song of your choosing.





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Celebrating Sunday Throughout the Week | **April 5, 2020**

Here is a simple way to continue today's celebration.

Connected to God

1. Create a poster titled "Connected to God."
2. Divide the poster into three sections, and label each section with one way your family decided to stay connected to God this Holy Week. Display the poster on the refrigerator or in a place where all family members will see it.
3. Invite family members to put a checkmark or a sticker in the appropriate section of the poster each time they "connect to God" in the coming week.
4. On Holy Saturday, take time to celebrate all of the connections, and invite family members to share ways they connected to God during Holy Week.

Prepare to Celebrate *Easter Sunday*

Next Sunday is Easter Sunday! Even though you may still be unable to gather with your parish community, prepare to celebrate with your family. Here are five simple suggestions.

1. Create homemade Easter cards or ecards for family members and friends, or for residents of a local nursing home or shelter. Mail or email the cards in time for delivery by Easter Sunday or during Easter week.
2. Work together to create large banners or signs that proclaim Easter messages such as "Jesus is Risen!", "Alleluia!", or "Happy Easter!". On Easter Sunday, display the signs in your yard, on your front door, or in the front windows of your home. Children may enjoy writing Easter messages on your sidewalk or driveway using sidewalk chalk.
3. Continue the tradition of dying Easter eggs. Invite family members to decorate this year's eggs with signs of new life—a cross, a butterfly, a baby chick, a flower, the sun, and so forth.
4. Choose one new recipe to prepare for Easter dinner. Create an Easter table centerpiece using family members' baptismal candles.
5. Even if it is not possible to invite family and friends for this year's Easter dinner, encourage family members to dress up for Easter dinner. Invite them to plan ahead of time what they will wear.

