**Holy Week**

From early times, Christians have observed the week before Easter as a time of special prayer and devotion. As the pilgrim Egeria recorded in the late fourth century, numerous pilgrims to the holy city of Jerusalem followed the path of Jesus in his last days. They formed processions, worshipped where Christ suffered and died, and venerated sacred sites and relics. From this beginning evolved the rites we observe today on Palm Sunday, Maundy Thursday, Good Friday, and Holy Saturday. These services and our prayers through these days invite us to experience of the last days of Jesus' earthly life, as well as the time and events leading up to his resurrection. Some parishes may pray the service of Tenebrae on one of these days in Holy Week. The three holy days, or Triduum, of Maundy Thursday, Good Friday, and Holy Saturday are at the heart of Holy Week prayer and worship.

**Creating a Sacred Space in the Home**

A sacred space is a space set apart that can help us come closer to God. Create a sacred space in the home where you can pray, read scripture, and worship. If your home allows, make it a quiet, out-of-the-way space, free from clutter. If you have limited room, even a shelf will do. Gather symbols of our Christian faith and other items that are meaningful to you: candles, a cross, an icon, incense, a cloth. Invite family members, including children of all ages, to contribute to the location and design of the space, with each person adding items that help them make meaning. Items might be added to the space throughout the week, e.g., a bowl and cloth on Maundy Thursday, a black cloth covering the cross on Good Friday, water symbolizing Holy Baptism on Holy Saturday, photos of people you are praying for.

Resources for Creating a Sacred Space in the Home

[Creating A Lenten Prayer Space At Home](https://buildfaith.org/creating-lenten-prayer-space-home/) offers suggestions for creating a sacred space in the home.

[Making an Altar for Home](https://rowsofsharon.com/2020/03/24/making-an-altar-for-home/?fbclid=IwAR1Ed2p7x4BvI1rnBIlD3Cnuc3sLcMr4sRvOTURgFVloL9q0c-_f8VEhquI) provides additional ideas and includes a video showing how to put together an altar at home.

[How to Set Up a Prayer Table](https://www.cgsusa.org/wp-content/uploads/HowToSetUpPrayerTable.pdf) can help you set up a sacred space with young children in mind.

Making a [Holy Week in a Box](https://buildfaith.org/holy-week-in-a-box/) can help children experience Holy Week through a series of symbols.

Practices for Holy Week

The days of Holy Week offer a meditative opportunity to connect ecumenically with friends, neighbors, and other parishes for prayerful preparation for Easter. Monday through Thursday are minor days of Holy Week, and yet still invite deep reflection on scripture, and its meaning for us in the context of these times. It is possible to observe these days of preparing for Easter by gathering virtually with members of a parish community, or by praying at home as individuals or families.

Resources and Suggestions for Holy Week Practices

* Pray Daily Devotions In the morning, At Noon, In the Early Evening, or At the Close of Day. Daily Devotions begin on page 136 of the Book of Common Prayer (BCP). Offering prayers on these days at noontime is a time-honored practice.
* Lectio Divina is a prayerful practice of listening to and praying scripture and can be done individually, as a family, and/or in groups on Zoom. Lectio Divina: A Beginner’s Guide provides a nice introduction and brief history of Lectio Divina, then walks you through the practice in five simple steps. <https://bustedhalo.com/ministry-resources/lectio-divina-beginners-guide> Daily readings can be found on the Forward Movement website <https://prayer.forwardmovement.org/the_daily_readings.php?d=24&m=3&y=2020> or at the back of the Book of Common Prayer. The readings for Holy Week of this year (Daily Office Year Two) can be found on page 957. You may also choose to use the Lectionary for holy days. (lectionarypage.net)
* The Mission of St. Clare provides extensive online resources for praying Daily Devotions and other Offices. (https://www.missionstclare.com/english/April/cal.html)
* Aural Bible Study, an African style of Lectio Divina is well-suited for small group Bible study. Learn more > (https://episcopalcolorado.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/Aural-Bible-Study.pdf)
* A Book of Personal Devotions was created by St. Aidan's, Boulder, and has been generously shared with the congregations of the Episcopal Church in Colorado. Congregations can customize and modify the Word document as needed. It is set to print as a small booklet (folded 8.5 by 11) that is 32 pages long. St. Aidan’s plans to print and mail the booklet to each household the week before Holy Week and will also use it for some of its online worship. As of March 25 some of the links, for the most part, to YouTube Playlists, are still under construction. Please be sure to read the notes at the end of the devotional. Access booklet on Google Drive > (<https://drive.google.com/open?id=1HOe7ZjtmZcyjzy-crRftQrORoGhCu8R9>)
* A Holy Week Devotional was created especially for youth and includes a reading and meditation for each day of the week, beginning with Palm Sunday. Youth leaders could gather their groups online each evening to check in with each another, then enter into a time of reflection using the devotional. The devotional could also be used individually in the home. (https://episcopalcolorado.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/A-Holy-Week-Devotional-EC.docx)
* Holy Week at Home provides coloring pages and descriptions of the events of Holy Week. (https://static1.squarespace.com/static/5ddc3811d81d3a28b0ffc953/t/5e79874a76cf4140aa118cac/1585022795012/Holy+Week+at+Home+%28N-PK%29.pdf)

Stations of the Cross

The Stations of the Cross is a prayerful meditation following the events leading to Jesus’ crucifixion. Prayers accompanying each station allow time to reflect on the mystery of his death. Originally praying the Stations of the Cross involved an actual physical journey in and around Jerusalem. Through the centuries, the series has been symbolized in art and architecture, and today many parishes display artistic representations in their sanctuaries. The Stations of the Cross may be prayed at any time, but is commonly a part of Lenten spiritual practice, specifically on Good Friday.

Resources for Stations of the Cross

This [Virtual Stations of the Cross](http://bustedhalo.com/video/virtual-stations-of-the-cross) offers inspiring videos with meditative music and images. These Stations can be prayed individually or in a group Zoom gathering, inviting simple shared reflection following the Stations.

You might also enjoy ChurchNext’s course on [Praying the Stations of the Cross](https://www.churchnext.tv/library/praying-the-stations-of-the-cross-with-katherin-burleson/about/), in which artist Kathrin Burleson discusses and reflects on her series of fourteen paintings representing the Stations of the Cross. This is not a service so much as an introduction to the devotion and the artist’s reflections on the paintings for each station.

Beautiful woodcut images from Margaret Adams Parker can be used for praying the stations in booklet format or projected at home or for a group online. The booklet includes suggested readings for each station. (<https://episcopalcolorado.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/Stations-booklet-free-use-during-pandemic.pdf>, <https://episcopalcolorado.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/Stations-of-the-Cross-for-online-projection-for-free-use-during-pandemic.pdf>)

This nice, simple Stations of the Cross video can be used for individual or family prayer, or shared as a group online via Zoom. (<https://corgsc.org/online-stations-of-the-cross/>)

Download a printable Stations of the Cross booklet for children to color and reflect on the Easter story. This site offers three different options (one free and two paid). Each option includes reflections for every station. (<https://www.reallifeathome.com/printable-stations-of-the-cross-for-children/>)

**Tenebrae**

The name Tenebrae (the Latin word for “darkness” or “shadows”) has for centuries been applied to the ancient monastic night and early morning services (Matins and Lauds) of the last three days of Holy Week, which in medieval times came to be celebrated on the preceding evenings.

Resources for Tenebrae

* The Office of Tenebrae sung by The Choir of Trinity Wall Street, New York (<https://www.trinitywallstreet.org/video/tenebrae-3>). During the service, candles are gradually extinguished while a series of readings and psalms are recited and chanted, followed by meditative musical responses. For individual or group prayer and reflection.
* Add family resource

Maundy Thursday

The Thursday in Holy Week. It is part of the Triduum, or three holy days before Easter. It is believed the term “maundy” is derived from the Latin for Jesus’ new command to love one another (mandate novum), or possibly the verb “to wash” (mound). This is the day we follow the example of Jesus by offering ourselves in love and humbly serving one another.

Resources for Maundy Thursday

* Sharing in Maundy Thursday in an Agape Meal (VTS)
* Hands on learning with family Last Supper and foot washing for Maundy Thursday (EC)

Good Friday

The Friday before Easter Day, on which the church remembers the crucifixion of Jesus. It is a day of fasting and special acts of discipline and self-denial (BCP, p. 17). Traditionally that has been understood to mean fasting and participation in prayer and worship at some time during the day. In the early church candidates for baptism, joined by others, fasted for a day or two before the Paschal feast. In the west the first of those days eventually acquired the character of historical reenactment of the passion and death of Christ. The liturgy of the day includes John's account of the Passion gospel, a solemn form of intercession known as the solemn collects (dating from ancient Rome), and optional devotions before the cross (commonly known as the veneration of the cross).

Resources for Good Friday

* This [Virtual Stations of the Cross](http://bustedhalo.com/video/virtual-stations-of-the-cross) offers inspiring videos with meditative music and images. These Stations can be prayed individually or in a group Zoom gathering, inviting simple shared reflection following the Stations.
* You might also enjoy ChurchNext’s course on [Praying the Stations of the Cross](https://www.churchnext.tv/library/praying-the-stations-of-the-cross-with-katherin-burleson/about/), in which artist Kathrin Burleson discusses and reflects on her series of fourteen paintings representing the Stations of the Cross. This is not a service so much as an introduction to the devotion and the artist’s reflections on the paintings for each station.

Easter Vigil

This most ancient of holy days is rich in symbolism, saturated with the word of God, and is, in fact, the principal celebration of the resurrection of our Lord. Throughout the ages, it has been in this worship that countless saints have proclaimed, “Alleluia, Christ is Risen!” Indeed, when celebrate the Easter Vigil, we recall the total darkness of the tomb, in order that the splendid light of the resurrection might be all the more glorious.