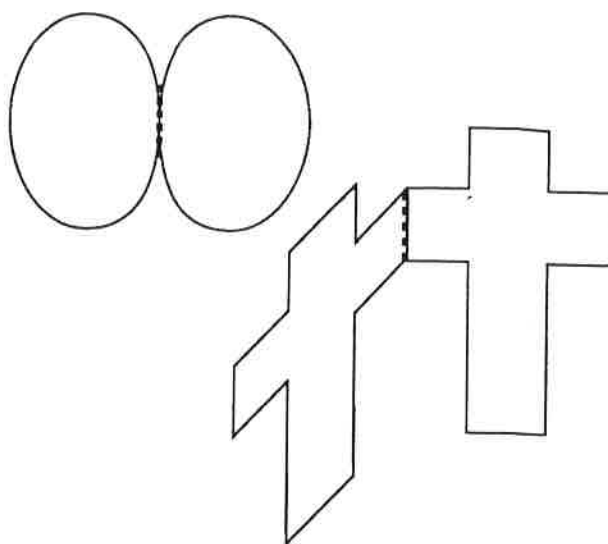


Easter Cards

Send the Good News of the resurrection using hand-made Easter cards. Use symbols, colors, and words which will remind people of the greatest feast the Church celebrates, the feast of the Resurrection or Easter.

Suggestion:

Cards can be made from construction paper in the shape of Easter eggs or crosses. Cut an egg or cross shape out of folded paper, leaving a section connected (dotted line).

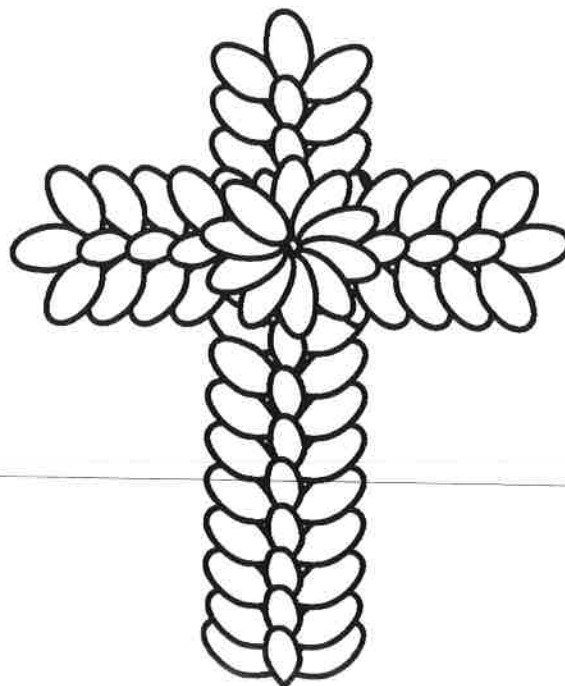


Passion (Palm) Sunday

Passion Sunday is the Sunday before Easter. It is the beginning of Holy Week. The more common name for Passion Sunday is Palm Sunday.

On this day, palms are blessed in honor of Jesus' entrance into Jerusalem. People waved branches of palms and shouted "Hosanna" as Jesus passed.

Many Christians make crosses out of palms and wear them as a sign of their faith. Some people braid or weave palms into more decorative crosses and symbols. (Hint: Before weaving or braiding palms, soak them in warm water.)



Holy Week

The solemn observance of Holy Week begins with Palm Sunday, the Sunday before Easter. Each day of Holy Week affords time to reflect on the events which led up to the death and resurrection of Jesus. It is the greatest story ever told. Use Holy Week as a family story telling time.

Palm Sunday

On Palm Sunday, we celebrate Jesus' triumphal entry into the city of Jerusalem. Palms are blessed and distributed in church. They remind us of the palms that the people waved as they shouted their "Hosannas" as Jesus passed. Call children's attention to this special prayer they hear each time they go to Mass: "Hosanna in the Highest. Blessed is He Who comes in the name of the Lord."

During the Palm Sunday liturgy children will hear the story of Christ's crucifixion and death, which is the Gospel story for that day. During the course of Holy Week, retell the story using your own words. Have the children tell the parts that they remember.

Holy Thursday

The night before Christ died, He gathered His friends together to celebrate the Jewish feast of Passover. It was the last meal He was to share with them. During that

Last Supper, Jesus changed the bread and wine into His body and blood. He also ordained the Apostles His first priests.

Have a family discussion about the sacraments of Holy Eucharist and Holy Orders. It's a good time to bring out the family photo album to look at communion pictures and talk about the past, making plans for the future. If there is time, bake bread together.

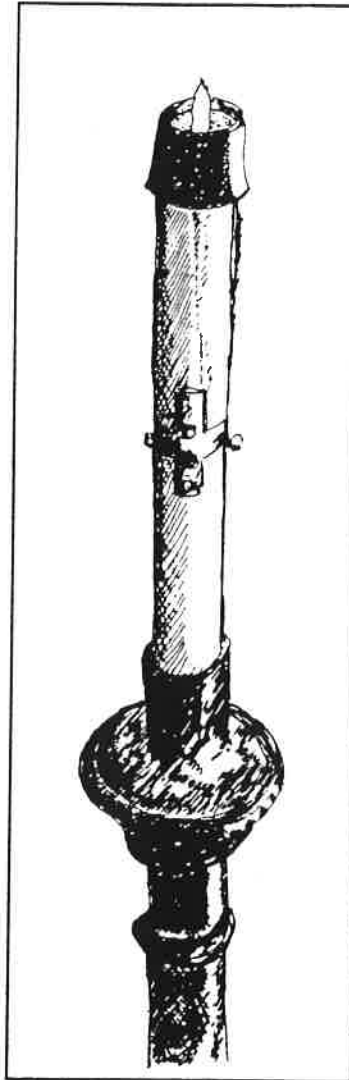
Good Friday

The solemn remembrance of Christ's crucifixion and death on Calvary takes place during the Good Friday liturgy. This special Liturgy is not a Mass. It is a three-part service: the Liturgy of the Word, Veneration of the Cross, and Holy Communion. Older children will understand this service better than younger ones. For younger children, the story of Jesus' death can be easily told through the stations of the cross.

Holy Saturday

On Holy Saturday night, the Church celebrates the Easter Vigil. The liturgy begins with the Service of Light, which is the blessing of the new fire and the lighting of the Paschal, or Easter, Candle. The new baptismal water is also blessed. Those who have been preparing for baptism are baptized at this Mass.

For younger children, who probably will not be present at this Easter Vigil service, make sure they get to see the Easter Candle. It will be prominently displayed in church throughout the Easter season.

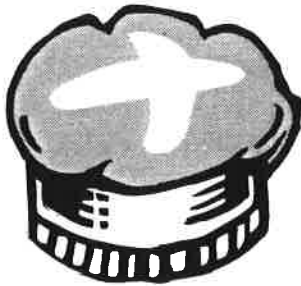


GOOD FRIDAY IDEAS FOR FAMILIES

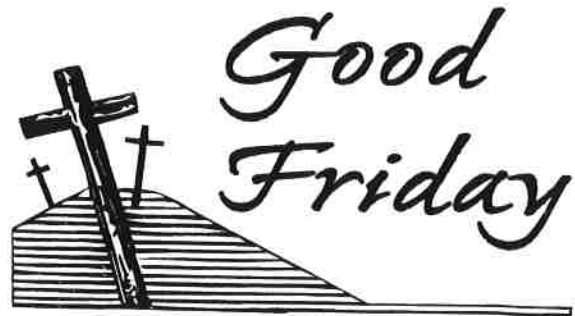
Most schools are closed on Good Friday, so children will be able to participate in family observances of this solemn day. If possible, the entire family should attend Good Friday services together, or at least make a trip to Church for the Stations of the Cross.

A few other suggestions:

Make hot cross buns. The familiar hot cross buns are sweet rolls with the sign of the cross cut into it, and they are one of several traditional European breads marked with a cross for Good Friday. According to tradition, these buns originated at St. Alban's Abbey in 1361, where the monks gave them to the poor people who came to the monastery that day.



Solemnize the hours between noon and 3 o'clock in the afternoon. Some churches hold prayer services during the three hours of Christ's suffering on the Cross. It would be appropriate to observe a period of silence at home, for devotional reading and private prayer (e.g., no radio, television, music, etc.). Each member of the family might choose a particularly unpleasant job which has been put off for a long time, like cleaning the garage or a closet, or scrubbing the bathrooms to emphasize the dreariness appropriate to the day.



A FAMILY EASTER CANDLE

If for some reason your family cannot attend the Easter Vigil Service (for example, if the children are too young to be out late at night) some of this symbolism can be brought into the home. A simple ceremony for lighting a new fire might be done after dark just before bedtime on Holy Saturday night. A new fire can be kindled in a large heat proof pan or you may want to do it outside, in the barbecue. From this fire an Easter or Paschal candle can be lit. The family Easter candle should be large enough to be lighted at meal times for the forty days of the Easter season. Most religious goods stores carry "Christ Candles" which will serve the purpose.

Literally...

A father was reading Bible stories to his son. He read, "The man named Lot was warned to take his wife and flee out of the city without looking back. Lot's wife disobeyed. She looked back and was turned to salt."

Surprised by this, the son asked, "What happened to the flea?"

*We adore You, O Christ, and we bless You because,
by Your holy Cross, You have redeemed the world.*