## Holy Week - centrepiece and meditation activity

Thanks to Lilly Lewin for this resource for you to use during Holy Week…with your family, MU Branch or small group.

In preparation for Holy Week, here is a centrepiece and meditation you can create for yourself, your family, or even your MU Branch (making it larger as necessary…using large candles and enough supplies for your entire group) Each day there is an activity/response you can do on your own or with your family/group to retell the story of the last week of Jesus’s life.

The centrepiece works a bit like a reverse advent wreath. Start with all the candles lit on Palm Sunday and Monday, and then you extinguish a candle each day and thus the centrepiece is dark on Saturday. And all candles are relit on Easter!  
  
Begin with a plate or dish and 5 candles. I use a red candle for Good Friday and place it in the centre, but you could also do the candles in a row if you were creating this on an altar space. This can also be created for your coffee table rather than your dining table.

Remember you don’t have to do all of this, just start. Do a couple of days. Do what works for you and your family/group. Feel free to modify the questions for the ages in your group.

We started with just the candles and purple cloth activity the first year. Get your family/group to join in the creation of the centrepiece and getting the props together. We remember much more of what we do than what we hear.  And I would love to hear how you use this with your families and groups!

Rejoicing in the already but not yet!

Lilly Lewin

**SUPPLIES:**

* 4 White Candles
* 1 Red Candle
* Dish or plate that will hold candles and be large enough for extra things to be added to it.
* Pieces of fern or palm branches, size depends upon size of your table/centrepiece. I have a small table, so we have a small centrepiece.
* Optional: Cut out clothes/jackets either from magazines or run off outlines like paper doll clothes on 8.5x11 sheets of paper.
* Coins …pennies or the plastic gold coins
* Olive oil or bottle of perfume
* Heart sweets enough for everyone
* Pieces of paper with a plate drawn on it to use as placemat, or paper place mats, enough for all members of your group.
* Purple Fabric  cut into 3x6 inch strips, make a half inch cut in the short end of each strip
* Piece of muslin or black cloth that will cover entire centrepiece.
* Elastoplasts. One for each person
* Candles, one for each person in your group (you can use small birthday candles)

**DAY 1: Palm Sunday,** (pick a passage Matthew 21: 1-10, Luke 19: 28-40, Mark 11: 1-11,John 12:12-19)  LIGHT ALL 5 candles.

Read the story of Jesus entering Jerusalem, and talk about what it would be like to be in the crowd when Jesus rode into town. What do you see, hear, smell? Are you excited, scared, angry like the Pharisees? Talk about this.

Add pieces of palm fronds or cuts of a fern to symbolize the entry into Jerusalem.

**DAY 2:  Monday:  Cleansing the Temple**.  Leave Palm Branches around the plate for a couple of days and bring a bowl of pennies/coins to the table.

Read the story Luke 19:45-48, Matt. 21:12-17, Romans 8:35-39

LIGHT ALL THE CANDLES and have someone blow out one of them.

Pass around the coins and HOLD A penny/coin in your hand and think about the scene. What does it look like, smell like, what do you see?

The Money Changers were blocking people’s access to prayer & worship, especially the Gentiles.

What things block you from prayer?

What things keep you from worshipping Jesus?

What things (like the tables of the money changers) keep you from being with God?

TV, Phone, Computer time, facebook, Sports, busyness, fear, worry, lack of trust, what else?

AS you hold your coin, TALK to God about these things.

then take time to talk about this as a group.

**DAY 3: Tuesday: Anointing at Bethany**

**LIGHT ALL CANDLES and have someone extinguish two of the white candles.**

Read the passage. John 12: 1-11, Mark 14:1-9 Matthew 26: 6-13

The woman in the story gave Jesus her most valued possession. She honoured him with this gift of expensive perfume.

What is your most valuable possession?

It might be a material thing

It might be a talent that you have…

It might be your life!

Are you willing to give this to Jesus to honour him?

Are you willing to give up your most valuable,

most precious possession in order to honour Jesus?

Pass around the olive oil or perfume and a dab on your forehead as a symbol of your willingness to honour Jesus.

**Day 4: Wednesday Judas betrays Jesus**

**Light all the Candles and have someone extinguish 3 of the white candles.**

READ one of these: Matthew 26:14-16 ( 17-21) Mark 14:10-11,Luke 22:1-6

This week, Jesus was betrayed by two of his friends, Judas and Peter.  Judas betrayed Jesus for 30 pieces of silver.  Peter denied that he even knew Jesus.

Anyone betray you this week/month/year?

Jesus said, “Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you.”

Take time to pray for the people who have betrayed you or people or groups that are your enemies.

What about you? Have you betrayed Jesus lately? With your actions or inactions?  Bad attitude, lack of faith, etc. Talk to God about these things.

Eat a heart shaped sweet as a symbol of your willingness to forgive those who have betrayed you and as a symbol of your need for forgiveness.

**Day 5: Thursday: THE LAST SUPPER**

**Light all the Candles and have someone extinguish 4 candles.**

Pick one of these to read: Mark 14:12-26, John 13: 1-17, Luke 22: 7-30, Matthew 26: 26-30, Luke 22: 14-21

Add a piece of purple cloth under the candles to form a cross. Have extra pieces of purple cloth, enough for each person in your family/group. (cloth pieces should be about 3x6 inches w cut in the narrow side) You will use these on Good Friday.

Placemat Have a paper placemat for each person or have people create one before you begin.

READ the Passage: Imagine the scene. Picture the colours, the smells, the atmosphere of the room.

Consider that it was Jesus’ last meal with his disciples, his closest friends. If it was your last meal what would you be eating and who would be at your table?

Take time to write out or draw your menu for your last supper and name the people at your table on your placemat. Take time to Pray for the friends you have listed.

**Day 6: Friday GOOD FRIDAY** Tonight, Light only the red candle.  Pass around pieces of purple cloth.

Read the story: Matthew 27: 32-54, Luke 23: 26-49, Mark15:21-33, 33-40….extinguish the candle. IT IS FINISHED.

After listening to the passage everyone will rip their pieces of purple cloth in half symbolic of the temple curtain being torn separating the holy of holies when Jesus died on the cross.

 When the candle has had time to cool, have someone cover the centrepiece with a cloth symbolic of Jesus’ burial.

**Day 7: Saturday:**All the candles are out. The strips of cloth are on the plate. Entire centrepiece is dark and covered with “burial cloth”

Jesus disciples, his friends have abandoned him and are hiding and afraid. His body is buried in a borrowed tomb.

How are you feeling today about the death of Jesus? What if you didn’t know that Sunday was going to mean resurrection?

Talk about this

PASS OUT THE ELASTOPLASTS

Take time to pray for anyone you know who is suffering or sick or feeling afraid.

Pray also for friends who have suffered a loss or lost a loved one in recent months.

Place a band aid on your wrist as a reminder to pray for these people in the next few days.

**Day 8 : EASTER!!!!!** If you covered your centrepiece, uncover and re-light them all!

Have all the candles lit before people sit down for the meal.

READ the Resurrection Story together! Choose one Matt.28:1-10, Mark 16:1-18, Luke 24

Light your candles from the centrepiece as a symbol of Jesus resurrection and the Light returning to the World. Now we can share that Light  and his love with everyone we meet.

Say together: CHRIST IS RISEN! HE IS RISEN INDEED.