

# **Journey to the Cross**

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*Journey to the Cross is an event targeted at families with children under 5<sup>th</sup> grade. Families get to "live" Jesus' journey to the cross starting on Palm Sunday and ending with the burial of Jesus.*

*New Hope hosted this event on Good Friday during the day for families.*

## **Palm Sunday:**

Begin with palm branches and a live donkey outside in the parking lot. Begin by thanking everyone for coming on this journey this morning. Open with a prayer ask everyone to repeat back. Explain that the adults need to go on the journey as well and will be asked to help at certain times as well and there will be time at the very end for everyone to get a chance to ride the donkey and play with the other animals. We are starting outside because Jesus rode into Jerusalem on a donkey. As he entered the people were shouting and yelling "Hosanna in the highest" and waving palm branches. Why do you think they waved palm branches? Ask for a volunteer (pick someone not from New Hope). Place them on the donkey and begin walking forward having everyone else shouting "Hosanna in the highest" and waving palm branches as the donkey walks by.

Have the donkey and volunteer stop by the beginning of the foyer. Get the volunteer down and we leave the donkey there.

Next, explain that while Jesus was on his way into town Judas was off speaking to the authorities about turning Jesus over to them. Judas was asking for money in return and was given 30 pieces of silver. Ask how many they think is in the bag. Show them the money and ask what it is? Quarters. Show them the picture of the roman coin that Judas would have received. Caesars picture is on it. After Judas had met with the authorities Judas met Jesus and the rest of the disciples in the upper room. Move into the narthex.

## **Maundy Thursday:**

As entering the narthex ask everyone to sit around the table on the floor. Explain to everyone that the disciples and Jesus begin to have a meal together. During the meal, Jesus stopped, broke the bread, blessed and it gave it to the disciples and said take and eat this is my body given for you. Do this in remembrance of me. Give each person a piece of bread (those who haven't had first communion can have a cracker instead offer it to those who might want it). Then Jesus took the wine, blessed and gave it to his disciples saying take this is my blood shed for you do this in remembrance of me. Let each person take the chalice and take a drink from it. Grape juice is available to those who haven't had first communion. Then after they finished their meal together Jesus explained that one of his disciples had betrayed him, had turned him over to the authorities. Does anyone remember who did that? What was his name? Judas then ran out the door and the next time he would see Jesus will be when he comes with the authorities. Move to the sanctuary.

Ask all the children to sit on the steps to the altar area. Have the adults stand in front. Explain that Jesus then washed his disciples' feet. Doing this was a sign of a servant not a king. The disciples weren't sure what to think and Peter didn't want Jesus to do it. Remember that all they wore for shoes was a small leather strap under their feet or nothing at all. How many of you have walked barefoot before? How dirty does your feet get when you do this? So imagine walking everywhere like that and then think about walking in a desert were it is mostly dirt and sand rather than sidewalks and stuff. They had really dirty feet. Now what we are going to do is wash your feet. All of us adults are going to wash your feet. It's okay to move around after we finish washing your feet. Then we will move again afterwards.

Exit the narthex from the side door and move to the Fellowship hall. Enter talking explaining that Jesus had invited three of his disciples, John, James, and Peter to go with him when he went away to pray. He went to the Garden of Gethsemane. He asked them to pray and he went further away to pray. How many of you have tried to pray while lying in bed? Can you stay awake? I can't I usually end up falling asleep. So while Jesus was praying, the disciples kept falling asleep because it was during the night. So Jesus had to keep waking them up to pray. While Jesus was praying Judas had arrived with the authorities and he told the authorities that the person he kissed on the cheek is Jesus. So the authorities knew who to arrest. Judas walked up to Jesus and kissed him on the cheeks. The authorities then arrested Jesus and took him away.

### **Goody Friday:**

Move to the left classroom of old sanctuary. Begin by explaining that Jesus was hauled off by the authorities where they began to make fun of him and laugh at him and dressed him up like a king. They took off the clothes he had and placed a scarlet/purple robe on him that resembled something a king would wear. They then built a crown out of thorns like this one and placed it on his head. Then they gave him a stick and they bowed before him laughing and making fun of him. Then they took a whip and whipped him until he couldn't stand anymore. After being hurt so bad Jesus was then forced to carry a big heavy cross beam like this one, but even heavier up the mountain. Jesus had a hard time walking up the mountain so they got a man named Joseph to help Jesus carry the cross beam. When Jesus reached the top that is when they nailed him to the cross beams or the whole cross. They placed a nail in both palms and then in his ankles. Okay, I am going to give y'all a few minutes to look around and take turns wearing the robe or carrying the cross beam and trying to hammer a nail into the board.

Put the cross together and lean it up against the wall. Then after Jesus had been up on the cross for several hours he finally gave his spirit to God and died. So some of the women who had been following Jesus wanted him to be buried properly so they asked if they could bury him. So they took him off the cross and carried him to the tomb. Move to the next classroom.

When they laid him in a tomb they cleaned him up and rubbed oil on him and then covered him with a sheet. Ask Beth or Stoney to touch the body so that they could feel that it wasn't newspaper. Then have everyone move from the room. The authorities didn't want Jesus followers to steal the body so they moved a big huge stone or boulder in front of the cave to seal it so no one could get in or out and they placed two guards to keep watch. So we are now going to seal our tomb by moving our boulder in front of the door. What happens on Easter? Is Jesus still there? You will have to go to your churches to find out and those who come here we will come back over here to see if Jesus is still there. Let us pray, repeat after me. Thank you for coming and now we will move to the community center for lunch and then everyone will have time to ride the donkey and run around and play.

### **Materials Needed:**

1. balloons for boulder (100 large balloons fill it)
2. Beige sheets for boulder
3. bread
4. grape juice
5. bucket with water
6. sponge
7. purple robe
8. crown of thorns (in Rich's office)
9. nails
10. cross (still in Old Sanctuary classroom)

11. 2 x 4 if going to do the nails in the wood (still in Old Sanctuary classroom)
12. palm branches
13. bag of coins (Get 30 quarters out of soda machine and use Rich's velvet bag on office shelf)
14. white linen for table cloth (borrowed from Bazaar ladies closet marked white sheets. Two works best)
15. black sheet for covering Jesus in tomb (in office)
16. long white table with two cinderblocks
17. A stick
18. hammer
19. fake plants for garden (all around office area and sanctuary)

