

Journeying through ALL of Holy Week

By Jenny Reilly, DCE

We know that many people experience Palm Sunday and even more worship on Easter, but what about the events in between? What about the sorrow, the pain, the betrayal? We can't truly appreciate the celebration if we haven't understood the trials of Holy Week. After seeing a prayer room at one local church, our church offered a Lenten Prayer Room that was open all week starting on Palm Sunday. If you do not have a dedicated space for this, you could place tables around the church with a guide book leading people to various stations. These stations allow all ages to stop and spend time reflecting on the entire Holy Week. Here is one set of stations we offered to help people pause and reflect on the last week of Jesus's life.

Below are brief descriptions of what we did, supply lists, and other helpful resources. We placed the directions and scripture references in plastic frames or inexpensive picture frames or placed them on cardstock and secured them to the wall. Add your own touches and make changes so your prayer room is a meaningful ministry that fits your local church setting.

Special Note – We add clipart and images to the instruction pages that enhance the focus of each station. Due to copyright laws, these images cannot be added here.

If you have any questions or need clarification, please contact me at jenny@salemunitedmethodist.com.

Station 1 - Palm Branch Celebration

Station 2 – The Journey

Station 3 – Plants

Station 4 – Washed Clean

Station 5 – Mirror

Station 6 – Holy Saturday

Station 1 – Palm Branch Celebration

By Jenny Reilly

Supplies

- Brown table covering
- Palm branches
- Green strips of paper
- Sticks (paint stir sticks work great)
- Pens
- Glue sticks
- Bible
- Directions

Setting Your Station

- Cover the table with brown material.
- Make a path on the table with palm branches (add touches of pebbles and sand if you wish to give the illusion of a dirt road). Note - If using a small table use a vase to hold palms.
- Place the opened Bible on the table turned to Mark 11.
- Place the remaining items on the table, leaving work space for people to make their palms.

Reflection Direction Sheet Wording

Read Mark 11:1-11

Holy Week begins with a celebration!

A parade!

A party for the King!

- ✘What do you celebrate today?
- ✘What blessings fill your life?
- ✘What do you have to cheer about?
- ✘What accomplishments need to be celebrated?
- ✘What celebrations of faith or family or friends do you want to shout about?

Write these celebrations and praises on the green slips of paper. Glue them onto the stick to form a palm of praise.

Holy week is a busy week that takes us through a variety of emotions and events.

Wave your palm branch high and begin your prayer room journey with a prayer of praise!

Station 2 – The Journey

By Jenny Reilly

Supplies

- Road signs stickers in a basket or small container (about \$9 for 500 stickers from Oriental Trading)
- Maps
- Pictures of various Road signs
- Compass
- Scripture verses - 2 Chronicles 6:26-27 & Joshua 7:10-12

Setting Your Station

- Print the verses (we used NIV) on individual pieces of paper and place in small frames and place on the table along with the
- If the station is against a wall, place a map on the wall
- Decorate the table using pictures of road signs, compasses, maps, etc.
- Place the basket of road sign stickers near the direction sheet.

Reflection Direction Sheet Wording

The Journey

Faith is a journey.

Lent, if done with intention and discipline, can be a journey.

And as we go through Holy Week, it can be considered a journey as well. And along life's journeys are many road signs, detours, and mishaps.

Think of the people in the Bible's passages you have read during Lent.

The Disciples, Nicodemus, the Jewish leaders, those who witnessed Jesus turning over tables in the Temple, John the Baptizer, those who received and witnessed miracles....

What did their journeys look like?

Were their signs for them? Maybe...

U-turns? Yielding? Wrong Way! STOP!

Thinking back, what signs has God put in your path recently?

As you approach the cross, what sign might God be showing you?

Take some time to pray about the signs that have been evident on your journey of faith. Pray about a sign God wants you to see at this particular point on your journey.

As you leave, take a Road Sign sticker that speaks to your faith journey.

Station 3 – Plants

By Jenny Reilly

Supplies

- Cups or planting pots (we used small, ready to plant pots)
- Spoons for digging in dirt (plastic works fine)
- Dirt (or expanding peat pellets make for less mess and are fun)
- Spray bottle filled with water
- Seeds
- Picture of dirt and roots
- Card or sign with the words and reference of Isaiah 53:2 printed (CEB)
- Plastic table cloth
- Wipes/Paper towels for messy hands and clean up

Setting Your Station

- Cover your table with the table cloth
- Place a basket or two with needed supplies for planting seeds to take from this station.
- You may want to add instructions for how to plant the seeds
- Place the Scripture, picture, and reflection sheet on the table in a way that still leaves a work space.

Direction Sheet Wording

✦ Spring time can be so fascinating.

✦ One day you see a space in the ground and there is nothing but old mulch, dirt, left over remnants of last year's flowers. And of course the weeds that always find a place.

✦ Then seemingly overnight you look again and there is a bloom.

✦ How can you relate to
...that time of "winter"?
...the anticipation of "spring blooms"?
...the image of last year's left-over "stuff"?

✦ Read the Bible verse from Isaiah 53:2.

✦ Reflect for a moment on the "ordinary" Jesus.
What became of this young plant with no desirable appearance?
What bloomed?
What treasure lay in waiting?

✦ Take a moment to reflect on what this means for your Lenten journey, your faith journey, as you plant a seed that holds an unknown treasure for you in the days, weeks, and possibly months to come.

✦ Before you go from this station, look at the picture of the hands holding the seedling.

Close in prayer once you have considered...

Whose hands are these?

What qualities do these hands possess?

What message does this picture offer to you?

Station 4 – Washed Clean

By Jenny Reilly

Supplies

- Small clear punch cups
- Water Pitcher
- Pepper shaker
- Small Bowl with clear dish detergent
- Towel
- Trash can
- Pail for water
- Light tablecloth (we used pale blue so you can see the effect)

Setting Your Station

- Cover the table with the tablecloth
- Place the pail and trash can beside the table for easy clean-up
- Place remaining items around the table along with the direction sheet, leaving space for the activity.

Direction Sheet Wording

- ◆ Pour water into a new cup.

Look at the water...

What words come to mind?

...purity?

... cleanliness?

...simple?

- ◆ Sprinkle some pepper into the cup.

Look at the contents of your cup now.

What words come to mind?

...changed?

...dirty?

...different?

- ◆ Genesis tells us that God created and it was all good.

Then story after story tells of humans getting it wrong...

...changing that which God created into something different...

...sometimes evil...

...sometimes dirty...

How have you gotten it wrong

What sins have you committed?

- ◆ Touch the soap in the bowl with your fingertip.

Now touch the center of the peppered water with that fingertip.

“Jesus replied, ‘Unless I wash you, you won’t have a place with me.’”

John 13:8b

“Some of you used to do those things. But your sins were washed away. You were made holy. You were made right with God. All of that was done in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God.”

1 Corinthians 6:10-12

◆ Go from this station with the knowledge that your sins have been **washed clean** by a Savior loved you so much that He died for you.

Please dispose of the water in the bin and throw your cup away.

Station 6 – Holy Saturday

By Jenny Reilly

Supplies

- Bibles
- Black cloth
- Reflection sheet with Romans 6:3-11 scripture reference

Setting Your Station

- Cover the table in black
- Place Bible open to Romans 6:3-11 near the direction and reflection sheets

Direction Sheet Wording

Holy Saturday

As we go through Holy Week we celebrate Palm Sunday, we remember the Last Supper, we witness the crucifixion. Then most of us busy ourselves with Sunday preparations.

But what about Saturday?

It is the day...

- ...Jesus lay in the tomb, surrounded by darkness.
- ...the disciples grieved and maybe lost hope.
- ...full of so many questions and seemingly no answers.
- ...God seems silent in the scriptures.
- ...that follows trauma and precedes getting on with life.
- ...which seems to leave us in limbo.

Have you ever been in that kind of limbo? Trauma is something that is not necessarily life and death, but instead it can be something that has altered who we are. We will never be the same.

It could be...

- ...a change in career, relationship, or life path.
- ...the death of a loved one.
- ...returning from war and knowing that what has been experienced will never allow you to live life as you once did upon returning home.
- ...experiencing a hurt that changed your perspectives on life and/or faith.
- ...witnessing something that opened your eyes to a new reality.

Maybe Holy Saturday was and is God's way to offer us a time to...

Be Still. Be silent. Wait. Trust.

This is a day we can bury our sins.

- ...a day we should allow our sins, which died with Jesus, to be taken to and laid to rest in the tomb.

...a day to let our sins go.
...a day to just be...

Spend a few moments just being still and silent.
When you are ready to leave, read the scripture and closing thought.

Reflection Sheet Wording

Read Romans 6:3-11

Go from this place with the knowledge that
Easter morning brings the celebration of a
new life that we have because the burden of those
sins that have kept us in darkness are now
buried, having been taken from us, and we are
free through the resurrection of our savior,
Jesus the Christ.