

10 Minute

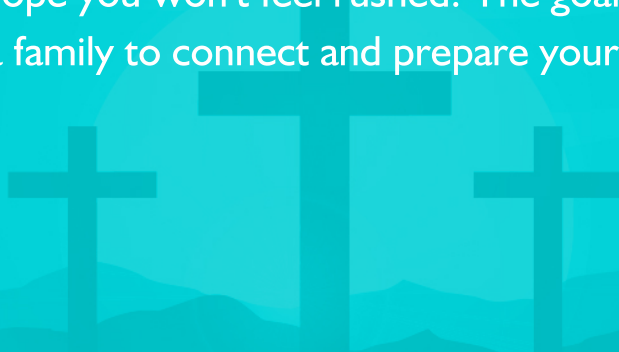
Easter Devotions

for Families



How to Use This 10-Day Easter Devotional with Your Family

Just like any holiday, Easter can be a busy time. There are egg hunts to attend, candy to buy, eggs to paint, and new outfits to pick out. In the midst of all the activities it can be easy for kids, and adults, to forget what it is we are celebrating during the Easter season. It can also be easy to miss out on the incredible power of the resurrection that we celebrate at Easter simply because we've become familiar with the story. The purpose of this devotional is to give you, as a parent, a tool to meaningfully connect with your kids for ten days as you prepare for Easter. Each of these ten devotionals includes a brief description you can read to your kids as well as a Scripture reading and questions you can discuss as a family. You can complete each devotional in less than ten minutes, but we hope you won't feel rushed. The goal is to have some time together as a family to connect and prepare your hearts for Easter.



1. Who Is Jesus?

Do you know who Jesus is? You've probably heard of him, maybe at church or in the Bible. It's easy to think that he's just some character in a story from the Bible but Jesus really lived on earth like us. You know all those feelings, questions, concerns, sadness and misunderstandings you've had in your life? He had them too! Jesus was a human, but get this... He was also God! He came to Earth, so He knows just how hard some days can be.

Question Time:

Let's ask some questions to hear from each other. (This is a time for everyone present to chime in.)

What does it feel like to be you today?

What was something hard that happened this week?

What was something fun that happened?

Guess what! Jesus probably has those kinds of feelings, too.

The Bible is a great place to read more about Jesus' life. The Bible is a home for all the little stories, letters, and histories that helped shape this BIG story of God's love. One of Jesus' good friends, John, actually wrote some stories about his life that you can find in the Bible. John was a good friend to Jesus. John wrote about Jesus not just as a character, but as a real human - just like you!

John 1:14

14 The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the one and only Son, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth.

That's right. "The Word" is just another name for Jesus. So, if you're keeping track, you can call Him Jesus, Friend or The Word. But, let's just stick with Jesus or Friend for now.

Why? Because He came to earth to dwell among humans to reveal a new way to live, God's way! His way is shown with grace and truth. Over the next nine days, we're going to discover that way of living. We'll answer some questions each day, and we will read the stories of Jesus' life. We will also see why Easter is such an important part of Jesus' life on earth.

Next Steps:

Today - or tomorrow, if you're reading this before bed - find comfort in knowing that you're not alone in your feelings. Jesus is with you always, and He knows exactly how you feel.

2.

Learning Is Growing



Learning about Jesus is kind of like going to school. In order to learn a lot, it's important to ask really good questions. These things are a part of the process of learning how to become who God has designed you to be. When Jesus was a child, his parents traveled to the Temple to celebrate Passover. When it was time to return home, they accidentally left him behind. He wanted to learn more about God, so He stayed at the Temple and asked some great questions. Sometimes, it can be scary to ask questions, especially when it seems like everyone knows the answer but you. But, asking questions helped Jesus to discover more about God.

Question Time:

Why is it sometimes so scary to ask questions?

What is a question you have about God?

Great answers. Take a look at the story in the Bible where Jesus asked questions at the Temple. Look for yourself. He was a kid with questions, too.

Luke 2:41-46

41 Every year Jesus' parents went to Jerusalem for the Festival of the Passover. **42** When he was twelve years old, they went up to the festival, according to the custom. **43** After the festival was over, while his parents were returning home, the boy Jesus stayed behind in Jerusalem, but they were unaware of it. **44** Thinking he was in their company, they traveled on for a day. Then they began looking for him among their relatives and friends. **45** When they did not find him, they went back to Jerusalem to look for him. **46** After three days they found him in the temple courts, sitting among the teachers, listening to them and asking them questions.

Three days of questions. That's a lot of information. All of that information helped Jesus learn more about God.

Next Steps:

Take a moment and ask good questions about Jesus. What questions do you have about Easter? Take time to really listen and consider the answer given. If you don't feel like the answer is complete, or if you want to know more, ask another question.

3.

Ugh, Temptation Is Hard

Have you ever had that moment when you know you shouldn't do something that you really want to do? Grabbing a cookie or two, or ten, when you know you're not allowed? Maybe laughing at someone in your neighborhood because they're different or taking a toy that you've always wanted from a friend? That is the same whisper that told Adam and Eve to eat from the Tree of Knowledge in Genesis and the same whisper Jesus experienced. This whisper is Satan, and Satan wants you to consider yourself, and your needs, before the needs of others. You see, Satan wants you to think that what you want or need right now is the most important thing in the world. But, you know what? If you listen to that whisper, it always brings hurt to you or someone else. Jesus knew what it's like to be tempted, and He overcame that temptation by following God's Word. It's that simple.

Question Time:

It's okay, it's safe to talk about temptation here. What was a time you were really tempted?

When you give in to temptation do you usually feel better or worse about yourself?

When you say no to temptation, and do what is right, how do you usually feel?

Matthew 4:1-4

1 Then Jesus was led by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil. **2** After fasting forty days and forty nights, he was hungry. **3** The tempter came to him and said, "If you are the Son of God, tell these stones to become bread." **4** Jesus answered, "It is written: 'Man shall not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God.'"

See! Temptation happens. It even happened to Jesus. And by following God's Word rather than giving into Satan, Jesus resisted temptation. By putting aside His own "wants," Jesus gave us all hope that we can follow in His footsteps and overcome temptation just like He did.

Next Steps:

You're going to have times when you are tempted this Easter season. Before giving into a questionable decision, maybe make a quick list in your mind of ways it might hurt someone else and ways it's going to bring hope to others.

4.

All Can Play



In Jesus' time, everyone in his community disliked Samaritans, and Samaritans disliked Israelites (Jesus' people). It was a silly disagreement from long ago that spiraled into much more. Have you ever had that experience, maybe with a sister or a brother, maybe a friend, or even a parent? Maybe there was a time when something small suddenly became something much bigger and more complex. Suddenly, you find yourself not wanting to spend time with that person, or wanting to play with them, and you don't even know why.

Jesus met a Samaritan woman at a well one time, and everyone was telling Him that He shouldn't associate with Samaritans. Guess what, He did! Jesus did the opposite. All people deserve to both talk and be heard. When He talked to the Samaritan woman at the well, they started to break down the walls of anger and were friendly instead. Easter is all about hope and breaking down walls.

Question Time:

Have you ever felt upset or mad at someone and you couldn't say exactly why? What was that like?

What did you do to help the situation?

How has talking made you feel better?

Check out this story of when Jesus broke down walls and gave hope.

John 4:1-10

1 Now Jesus learned that the Pharisees had heard that he was gaining and baptizing more disciples than John—
2 although in fact it was not Jesus who baptized, but his disciples. 3 So he left Judea and went back once more to Galilee. 4 Now he had to go through Samaria. 5 So he came to a town in Samaria called Sychar, near the plot of ground Jacob had given to his son Joseph. 6 Jacob's well was there, and Jesus, tired as he was from the journey, sat down by the well. It was about noon. 7 When a Samaritan woman came to draw water, Jesus said to her, "Will you give me a drink?" 8 (His disciples had gone into the town to buy food.) 9 The Samaritan woman said to him, "You are a Jew and I am a Samaritan woman. How can you ask me for a drink?" (For Jews do not associate with Samaritans.) 10 Jesus answered her, "If you knew the gift of God and who it is that asks you for a drink, you would have asked him and he would have given you living water."

After this, she went to a village and shared with all her friends and family about her conversation with Jesus. More people got to hear about His love, and they helped break down some walls of anger.

Next Steps:

If there is someone at your school, your neighborhood, or your family that you feel upset with, take a moment and talk about your feelings. Then take a moment to pray for that person and that relationship out loud. Maybe by listening, hearing, sharing, and praying you can help break down some walls and start to spread a bit of love yourself!

5.

Best Friends Share Feelings

Sometimes it's really hard to share feelings. Sometimes you don't even know how you feel or what you feel, but you know it's not good. Jesus knew what that was like. A lot of people will try to tell you not to cry or not to be sad. But, feelings are human, and it's good to feel, whether you're happy or sad.

Question Time:

Why is it hard to talk about your feelings?

What do you do to help explain how you're feeling?

Can you share how you're feeling right now?

There was a time when Jesus' best friend had passed away. He was so sad that he cried, even though He knew He was going to bring his friend back to life.

John 11:32-36

32 When Mary reached the place where Jesus was and saw him, she fell at his feet and said, "Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died." **33** When Jesus saw her weeping, and the Jews who had come along with her also weeping, he was deeply moved in spirit and troubled. **34** "Where have you laid him?" he asked. "Come and see, Lord," they replied. **35** Jesus wept. **36** Then the Jews said, "See how he loved him!"

Two things to notice: first, Jesus was sad and other people knew it, and that was ok. Second, it was actually more than ok, verse 36 shows that Jesus sadness brought comfort to others who were sad when they saw how much Jesus cared for their mutual friend Lazarus. Jesus soon turned everyone's tears of sadness to tears of joy though, when He miraculously brought Lazarus back to life!

Next Steps:

Sometimes it's hard to explain how you are feeling. Here's a trick to help you identify how you are feeling. It's an acronym of different feelings. Chances are, no matter what you are feeling, you are feeling one of these things.

H:appy

A:ngry

S:cared

S:ad

Use the **HASS** tool this week. It can be kind of fun. Share with someone how you feel and try your best to open up. Jesus came to Earth and experienced the same feelings you feel. Because of that, you can feel safe sharing your feelings with Jesus and those that love you.

6. The King Has Arrived: The King of Kings!

Sometimes we can be blinded by our wants and miss out on something better, something that we actually need. Maybe you can relate? Have you ever wanted something in the moment that made you miss out on something even better later on?

When Jesus was alive, some of the Israelite people were amazed by his works and miracles. Jesus healed and helped a lot of people, and some of the Israelites wanted to praise him for it. Other Israelite people didn't like some of the things Jesus was doing. They wanted a king, but they were so blinded by their desire to have a king immediately that they missed out on a different kind of King - a better king! That's Jesus.

About a week before the big event that we now celebrate on Easter Sunday, Jesus went to Jerusalem and some of the Israelite people greeted him with palm trees and sang Hosanna, which means SAVE US! They praised him, and Jesus had come to save, but the salvation was not just salvation from an earthly enemy. Jesus had come to bring us salvation from sin. A salvation that would make a difference for all eternity!

Question Time:

Have you ever wanted something so badly that you had to have it right away?

What is so challenging about waiting, even if you know there is something better to come?

Waiting and seeing is really hard. Sometimes the best things come from waiting. God has something big around the corner and is inviting us to push pause on what we want now, for what will be better tomorrow, in this case it will be eternity.

Matthew 21:8-11

8 A very large crowd spread their cloaks on the road, while others cut branches from the trees and spread them on the road. 9 The crowds that went ahead of him and those that followed shouted, "Hosanna[a] to the Son of David!" "Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord!"[b] "Hosanna[c] in the highest heaven!" 10 When Jesus entered Jerusalem, the whole city was stirred and asked, "Who is this?" 11 The crowds answered, "This is Jesus, the prophet from Nazareth in Galilee."

Next Steps:

When you want something so badly, push pause and think for a moment if there might be something better down the road if you wait. This week, take a moment and thank God for the real freedom he offers you through the love Jesus showed.

1.

Let's Eat and Remember



After Jesus arrived in Jerusalem, He wanted to gather and eat with His closest friends, the disciples. A few days later, He was going to be put to death by people who would falsely accuse Him of doing wrong. This was going to leave the disciples confused, scared and hurt. Jesus ate with them to prepare them for what was going to happen and asked them to remember how he loved others and to remember to always trust God.

Maybe you're like the disciples. Maybe you've had a moment where you were confused, hurt or scared. It's easy to get lost in those moments, but if you just remember how Jesus trusted God no matter what, you'll also be able to get through even the scariest moments. He is always with you.

Question Time:

When is a time you have been scared?

What aspect of Jesus is important to remember in those moments?

What are some ways you can remember Jesus during your day?

Jesus ate a meal with His disciples and asked them to remember Him. He asked them to carry on the mission of bringing hope and freedom to all people. You can remember Jesus today, too. Can you carry on His mission to love, even when you're scared? To bring peace, even when others want you to fight? Remember, Jesus is with you always and you can always talk to Him in prayer.

Luke 22:14-20

14 When the hour came, Jesus and his apostles reclined at the table. **15** And he said to them, "I have eagerly desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer. **16** For I tell you, I will not eat it again until it finds fulfillment in the kingdom of God." **17** After taking the cup, he gave thanks and said, "Take this and divide it among you. **18** For I tell you I will not drink again from the fruit of the vine until the kingdom of God comes." **19** And he took bread, gave thanks and broke it, and gave it to them, saying, "This is my body given for you; do this in remembrance of me." **20** In the same way, after the supper he took the cup, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood, which is poured out for you."

Next Steps:

When it seems dark, when you're scared, take a moment and remember Jesus. A great way to remember Him is to look at the Gospels - Matthew, Mark, Luke and John - and see the way He lived. Can you remember Jesus this week? Maybe during a meal, you and your family or friends can take a moment and say one thing you're grateful for about Jesus' way of living.

8.

Last Is First



Kickball is fun! What isn't fun is being last picked. It can be hurtful when people overlook you or say mean things to you.

Jesus knew how it felt to have people be mean to Him. The people in charge came and arrested Jesus because they were scared that He was leading an uprising so He could be the one in charge of all the people. He was, but it wasn't an uprising against anybody. It was an uprising for everybody's salvation. He wanted all people to experience love and grace, but the authorities didn't believe that and they wanted to get rid of Jesus.

It's really hard to not be liked. It can feel like you're all alone. But you're not alone. Jesus is with you. When you're picked last, or when people say hurtful things, you have an opportunity to show them Jesus' way. Like those that wanted to hurt Jesus, people expect you to say hurtful things or do something mean. But it's better to give grace, even to those that try to hurt your feelings. When everyone was screaming for Jesus to be hurt and put to death, He didn't turn around and hurt people. He gave His life for them.

Question Time:

What was a moment recently when you felt hurt?

How might you be able to show the people hurting you Jesus' love through your actions?

Jesus was eventually put to death. But here is the good news: He was put to death so that everyone else might live. His death on the cross was a symbol for all people that pain and hurt will not win! But, healing, hope and love always takes the day. People will try to hurt or silence love, but love always wins in the end.

Matthew 27:38-44

38 Two rebels were crucified with him, one on his right and one on his left. **39** Those who passed by hurled insults at him, shaking their heads **40** and saying, "You who are going to destroy the temple and build it in three days, save yourself! Come down from the cross, if you are the Son of God!" **41** In the same way the chief priests, the teachers of the law and the elders mocked him. **42** "He saved others," they said, "but he can't save himself! He's the king of Israel! Let him come down now from the cross, and we will believe in him. **43** He trusts in God. Let God rescue him now if he wants him, for he said, 'I am the Son of God.'" **44** In the same way the rebels who were crucified with him also heaped insults on him.

Next Steps:

This week, instead of responding with more hurtful words or more hurtful actions, try your best to heal by your words and actions. This is what Easter is all about. It's all about healing, and you can be a part of it. This might come in the form of an apology to someone you know you hurt.

1. Life > Death



Easter! Wow, can you believe it... this is what it's all about. It's easy to get lost in all the beautiful colors and candy during Easter. It can even be confusing as to why we even celebrate. We celebrate Easter because death has been conquered. Jesus died, even though he was the only person who ever lived who didn't deserve to die. But three days later He came back to life! He came back to life and began to show Himself to His friends who thought He was gone forever.

Remember that hurt never wins. It's true! Hurt, pain, death... it will never have the final say on the life Jesus offers. He gave his life to hurt and death so that you might be able to live a life full of joy forever. If you put your faith in Jesus and believe that He died on the cross and came back to life to pay the price for your sins, you can have joy in this life and for all eternity! That's what we celebrate at Easter. Not only that, but everyone you encounter can also see what it means to follow Jesus' way. The good news is this: Jesus was raised from the dead so you can live an eternal life. Believe in Jesus, believe in His way, and you will be healed and filled with joy as you start to live more like Him!

Question Time:

When do you feel most loved?

How can you believe in Jesus?

What happens when put our faith in(believe) Jesus?

Sometimes it's hard to believe when you can't see, and you're not alone. One of the ways we can help others see Jesus is by trying to live like He did. Jesus came to serve, and you can serve others too.

Luke 24:1-8

1 On the first day of the week, very early in the morning, the women took the spices they had prepared and went to the tomb. 2 They found the stone rolled away from the tomb, 3 but when they entered, they did not find the body of the Lord Jesus. 4 While they were wondering about this, suddenly two men in clothes that gleamed like lightning stood beside them. 5 In their fright the women bowed down with their faces to the ground, but the men said to them, "Why do you look for the living among the dead? 6 He is not here; he has risen! Remember how he told you, while he was still with you in Galilee: 7 'The Son of Man must be delivered over to the hands of sinners, be crucified and on the third day be raised again.' " 8 Then they remembered his words.

Next Steps:

Share the good news of Jesus' resurrection today. Celebrate with your friends and family. Remind each other to live life the way Jesus lived life. Take a moment and show how He lived so that others might believe.

10. A New Day, a New Way

We've learned so much together this Easter season, but the good news is that it's not over. Have you ever thought that you don't have power or influence because you're young or small? That's a crummy feeling, and it can make you feel insignificant. The whole purpose of Jesus rising from the grave is so that He can empower you with God's Holy Spirit. You can do the very things He did. You can be small and yet have a BIG impact. The purpose of His Spirit is to give you the very same strength and resolve that Jesus had, even in hard situations. That means there is no task too big and no opportunity out of reach. All you have to do is depend on Jesus and His way, and you can accomplish big things for Him. This doesn't mean that suddenly you're going to be able to have the ability to levitate cookies and drop them into your mouth. This does mean, however, that when you're doing things for God's Kingdom and for His love to be shown, God will help you accomplish **ANYTHING**.

Question Time:

Have you ever felt small and insignificant?

How does it make you feel to know that you've been empowered by the Holy Spirit?

What is something this week you can do to share the love of Jesus?

Jesus' disciples were scared after He died. They locked themselves in a room, and He came to tell them that He was giving them the Holy Spirit.

Luke 24:36-49

36 While they were still talking about this, Jesus himself stood among them and said to them, "Peace be with you."
37 They were startled and frightened, thinking they saw a ghost. **38** He said to them, "Why are you troubled, and why do doubts rise in your minds? **39** Look at my hands and my feet. It is I myself! Touch me and see; a ghost does not have flesh and bones, as you see I have." **40** When he had said this, he showed them his hands and feet.
41 And while they still did not believe it because of joy and amazement, he asked them, "Do you have anything here to eat?" **42** They gave him a piece of broiled fish, **43** and he took it and ate it in their presence. **44** He said to them, "This is what I told you while I was still with you: Everything must be fulfilled that is written about me in the Law of Moses, the Prophets and the Psalms." **45** Then he opened their minds so they could understand the Scriptures. **46** He told them, "This is what is written: The Messiah will suffer and rise from the dead on the third day, **47** and repentance for the forgiveness of sins will be preached in his name to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem. **48** You are witnesses of these things. **49** I am going to send you what my Father has promised; but stay in the city until you have been clothed with power from on high."

You can be given Jesus' power and receive the Holy Spirit if you believe in Him. Don't be afraid, for He is with you always.

Next Steps:

Pray for strength in those moments you feel like you can't accomplish a big task. Don't forget that Jesus is with you always, ready to help, all you have to do is ask.