

A Holy Week journey: How to transform the world!

In this flexible resource, Brenda Vance invites us to travel with Jesus to the cross.

Introduction

As we journey through Holy Week with Jesus, using passages from Mark's Gospel, there is a focus on love and justice, and how we might live more compassionately as we model ourselves on Jesus.

The incidents described in Mark take place at first within the wider community, then move towards a narrower focus on the communal life of Christ and his followers. You might reflect this in your choice of locations for these stations: you could start the week outside your building (in view of the wider community) and then gradually move into more intimate spaces inside, culminating on Good Friday in your main worship space.

How to use this resource

The material is flexible and can be adapted to your context. There are five 'stations', one for each day of Holy Week, each taking about 20-30 minutes. You might do one per day, or hold a service on Good Friday and work through all of them. Or, set them up in a worship area for people to engage with in their own time; in which case, print out the appropriate Bible reading, meditation, activity instructions and prayer onto a sheet, copies of which may then be taken home by those attending or given to those unable to be present.

The stations could also be followed by a church or community event run jointly with others in the area, e.g. with a focus on issues of justice, particularly climate justice. You may want to have a communal meal and discussion on Maundy Thursday.

There is no station for Saturday, but you may wish to open your worship space for private prayer and meditation, with something such as a pile of stones or a bunch of flowers, to represent the sealed tomb and mourning.

Each station has the following structure:

1. **Instructions for setting up the station:** including suggested locations, images and objects.
2. **Hymn and song suggestions:** play one of these before the reading (if you're using the stations as part of a service, supply the music on an electronic device with headphones).
3. **Short reading:** to be read out by the leader or a volunteer.
4. **Thought and question:** to be read out by leader or a volunteer. There are longer meditations on the [WEB](#). The second in each online meditation set has a climate emergency focus. Allow a period of silent reflection after the reading/meditation or to invite discussion.
5. **Activity or symbolic action:** something to do.
6. **Prayer:** to be read by one person. Conclude the session by saying the Lord's Prayer together.



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1. Monday: Use anger well

Mark 11:15-18

Setting up the station An outside location – in front of the main entrance of your space, in view of the community.

Display: a picture/painting of Jesus overturning the tables in the Temple (a Google image search will bring up several); an upturned table, coins and money box on the floor – or a money box on its side with coins spilling from it.

Play suitable music 'Love inspired the anger', Andrew Pratt (Singing the Faith, 253), 'Inspired by love and anger' (Iona)

Read Mark 11:15-18

Thought and question The world is not as God would wish it to be. Is there an issue affecting the world or our community that makes us boil with rage? What should our just anger spur us on to do? See [WEB](#) for longer meditations.

Activity Place a world map on a board and supply sticky notes and pens. Invite people to write on the sticky notes the issues affecting the world that make them angry, and stick these on the map.

Lord, we bring our faults and failings before you. We're sorry for the times when we've been angry without cause, or for the wrong reasons. Forgive us for being so used to cruel and unjust practices that they no longer arouse our anger. As we journey with you through Holy Week, help us to try harder to be your true followers. **Amen.**

2. Tuesday: Think hard about your loyalties

Mark 12:13-18

Setting up the station An outside location (the encounters in this passage take place in the marketplace or street).

Display: coins; some store loyalty cards; some pin badges showing allegiance to various causes.

Play suitable music 'Take my life and let it be' (Havergal)

Read Mark 12:13-18

Thought and question If we're going to follow Jesus, we need to be ready to call out things that offend against love and justice, even if that goes against prevailing popular opinion or the policies of those in charge. Is there anything you are being nudged to 'call out' in this way? See [WEB](#) for longer meditations.

Activity Provide clay or play dough, and coins. Invite people to take a ball of clay and first imprint one of the coins into it (see Mark 13:16-17). Then next to this, imprint a finger in the clay – our fingerprints are unique and part of our God-given image. The fingerprint represents our loyalty to God. Everyone can take their pieces home, as a reminder of where their loyalty should lie.

God of love and God of justice, teach us how to find your direction on our moral compass. You don't want us to wear ourselves out with anger against what can't be changed. You don't want us to flail around in anger, hurting the innocent along with the guilty. Grant us compassion, towards ourselves and for those who do things that make us angry. Give us wisdom to choose when to seek justice. As we journey with you through Holy Week, give us the grace to be your true followers. **Amen.**

3. Wednesday: Give without counting the cost

Mark 12:41-44 and Mark 14:3-9

Setting up the station Inside your space.

Display: a selection of perfumed lotions, e.g. body lotions, hand cream, bath salts in fancy bottles.

Play suitable music 'Such love' (Kendrick)

Read Mark 12:41-44 and Mark 14:3-9

Thought and question The readings give two examples of generous giving – the widow is painfully generous; the woman in the second story gives extravagantly, some might say to excess. How do these stories challenge us? Are we afraid to be generous?

See [WEB](#) for longer meditations.

Activity Smell the lotions and, if appropriate, rub a generous amount on your skin.

Generous God, from ancient times you have urged people not to be afraid to risk being generous. But we live in a world where the peoples of the industrialised world seem to have grabbed all the riches for themselves. We're sorry for our failure to recognise the injustice in the distribution of the world's resources. Forgive us for the times when we've been mean under the guise of 'good housekeeping' or 'being sensible'. As we journey with you through Holy Week, help us to be grateful for your bountiful gifts and to follow you in giving generously without counting the cost. **Amen.**

4. Maundy Thursday: Build community through sharing

Mark 14:17-25

Setting up the station Inside your space, preferably in a social area, e.g. in a church hall with a kitchen in sight.

Display: bread and wine, plate and chalice, etc; image of the Last Supper or people sharing a meal around a table.

Play suitable music a Communion hymn or song, such as 'Broken for you' (Lunt)

Read Mark 14:17-25



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Thought and question Jesus models breaking bread with those we don't necessarily agree with – even our enemies. In some Middle Eastern cultures, a shared meal is an intimate affair, where people 'lean in' to each other. Where can you find opportunities to 'lean in' to others, including those you find difficult. What is stopping you?

See [WEB](#) for longer meditations.

Activity Provide some Lego™ or Jenga™ bricks. Invite people to build their own model of a more inclusive and welcoming church (working together in pairs of small groups, if appropriate). What would it look like? If people wish, invite them to explain their model.

Lord God, you created a world with people of all kinds, of differing gifts, strengths and vulnerabilities. Forgive us when we fear others, rather than embracing difference. We're sorry for our timidity, lack of trust and unwillingness to share. As we journey with you through Holy Week, help us to grow stronger communities as the building blocks of your kingdom. **Amen.**

5. Good Friday: Honour what God alone can do

Mark 15:25-33

Setting up the station In your main worship space.

Display: a cross; several smaller holding crosses; images of the crucifixion.

Play suitable music 'O sacred head sore wounded'; 'Were you there when they crucified my Lord'

Read Mark 15:25-33

Thought and question The stories we have followed from Mark's account of Holy Week show us the full range of human sin – greed, indifference, lack of generosity, fear of the other. On Good Friday, we come face to face with the consequences of our own failings, as Jesus takes the whole burden of human sin upon himself. How does this make us feel? What would we want to do differently as a result?

See [WEB](#) for longer meditations.

Activity Spend a few moments in silent reflection before the cross, or invite people to take one of the small holding crosses. In some traditions, it is customary to venerate the cross on Good Friday, by kneeling before it and touching or kissing it – you might want to do this, if appropriate.

Loving Saviour, you gave your very self in pain and suffering on the cross for the redemption of the world. Forgive us for all the ways we fail you each day. As we acknowledge the work you did on the cross for the sake of all humankind, help us to accept this incredible gift in trust and with hope. As we journey with you through Holy Week, grant us the grace to look beyond the night to the sunrise. **Amen.**