

## Easter Bible Cookies

This is a special recipe to make with your family on Holy Saturday. It is a prayer experience and a recipe rolled into one! As you complete each step of the recipe, explain to your children how it relates to the passion, death, and resurrection of Jesus. Then have one person read the Scripture passages provided.

### Ingredients:

- 1 cup whole pecans
- 1 tsp. vinegar
- 3 egg whites
- a pinch of salt
- 1 cup sugar

### Supplies needed:

- a zip-lock type baggie
- wooden spoon
- medium size mixing bowl
- waxed paper
- cookie sheet
- masking tape
- Bible

#### Optional:

In case of allergies, skip the pecans and step 2.

### Directions:

1. Preheat oven to 300 degrees.
2. Have children place pecans into zip-lock-type baggie, and then break pecans into small pieces with a wooden spoon. Set nuts aside for later.

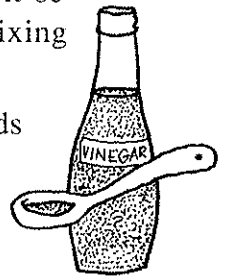
**Explain to children:** This reminds us that Jesus was beaten by the soldiers.

**Reader:** "Pilate gave orders for Jesus to be beaten with a whip" (John 19:1).

*Palm Sunday / Holy Week*

3. Have one child measure 1 teaspoon of vinegar and let everyone smell it before pouring it into the mixing bowl.

**Explain to children:** This reminds us that when Jesus was dying on the cross he was very thirsty, but they only gave him some cheap wine that tasted like vinegar.



**Reader:** "Jesus said, 'I am thirsty!' A jar of cheap wine was there. Someone then soaked a sponge with the wine and held it up to Jesus' mouth. After Jesus drank the wine, he said, 'Everything is done!' He bowed his head and died" (John 19:28-30).

4. Have children add egg whites to vinegar.

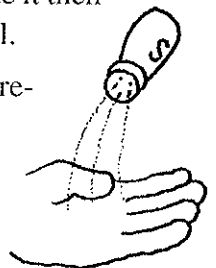
**Explain to children:** Eggs represent life, so they remind us that Jesus gave his life for us so that we could have "life to the fullest."

**Reader:** "I came so that everyone would have life, and have it in its fullest. I am the good shepherd, and the good shepherd gives up his life for his sheep" (John 10:10-11).

5. Sprinkle a tiny bit of salt into each person's hand. Have them taste it then add a pinch of salt to the bowl.

**Explain to children:** The salt represents salty tears Jesus' followers shed after his death.

**Reader:** "A large crowd was following Jesus, and in the



crowd a lot of women were crying and weeping for him” (Luke 23:27).

**Explain to children:** So far, the ingredients don’t seem as if they would be tasty. But now we add the cup of sugar. The sweetest part of the story is that Jesus died because he loves us so much!

6. Add sugar, a little at a time.

**Reader:** “I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave his life for me” (Galatians 2:20).

7. Now, have children take turns beating the ingredients (except nuts) with a mixer at high speed for about 12 to 15 minutes or until mixture forms stiff peaks.

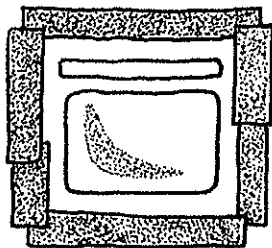


8. Have children gently mix in broken nuts and then drop the mixture by teaspoons onto a waxed paper covered cookie sheet.

**Explain to children:** Each mound represents the rocky tomb where Jesus’ body was placed.

**Reader:** “Joseph of Arimathea put the body of Jesus in his own tomb that had been cut into solid rock and had never been used. He rolled a big stone against the entrance to the tomb and went away” (Matthew 27:60).

9. Place the cookie sheet into the oven, close the door, and turn the oven OFF. Seal the oven door with masking tape.



**Explain to children:**

This represents how the tomb was sealed shut.

**Reader:** “Pilate said to them, ‘All right, take some of your soldiers and guard the tomb.’ So they sealed it tight and placed soldiers there to guard it” (Matthew 27:65–66).

10. Now, go to bed!

**Explain to children:** You may be disappointed leaving the cookies in the oven overnight. That’s how Jesus’ followers felt when he died and was buried.

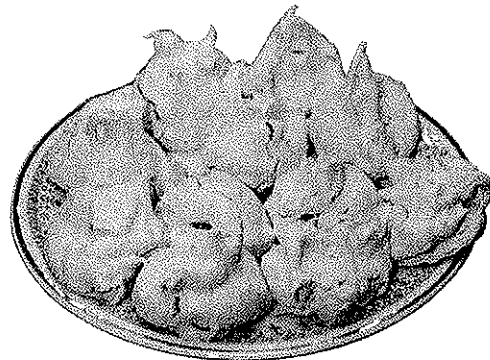
**Reader:** “Jesus said, ‘I tell you for certain that you will cry and be sad.... But later I will see you, and you will be so happy that no one will be able to change the way you feel’” (John 16:20, 22).

11. On Easter morning, open the oven and give everyone a cookie. Notice the cracked surface and hollow center.

**Explain to children:** When Jesus’ followers came to the tomb, they were amazed to find it empty! Jesus is alive!

**Reader:** “It was almost daybreak on Sunday when Mary Magdalene and the other Mary went to see the tomb. Suddenly a strong earthquake struck and the Lord’s angel came down from heaven. He rolled away the stone and sat on it.... The angel said to the women, ‘Don’t be afraid! I know you are looking for Jesus, who was nailed to a cross. He isn’t here! God has raised him to life, just as Jesus said he would. Come, see the place where his body was lying. Now hurry! Tell his disciples that he has been raised to life and is on his way to Galilee. Go there, and you will see him’” (Matthew 28:1–2, 5–7).

**Explain to children:** Now it’s up to us to share the Good News today!



## Palm Sunday/Holy Week

Dear Parent(s),

During the Lenten season, we have been focusing on different aspects of Lent: its meaning, its symbols, its customs, and its traditions. The Lenten season comes to a close on the evening of Holy Thursday with the Mass of the Lord's Supper. This week's Take-Home Pages are filled with activities that can help your child better understand the significance of Holy Week. As with the weeks of Lent, these Take-Home Pages are divided into three sections: Warm-Up Exercises, Getting Started, and Putting It into Practice. The theme for this week is Palm Sunday/Holy Week. May the activities suggested in these pages provide you with additional tools for nurturing your child's faith.

### Warm-Up Exercises...

Gather the family around your Lenten candle. Add the palm you received at the Palm Sunday Mass to your Lenten symbols on the table. Have one member of the family light the candle and another read the passage from Scripture.

*A reading from Mark 11:1-10*

Jesus and his disciples reached Bethphage and Bethany near the Mount of Olives. When they were getting close to Jerusalem, Jesus sent two of them on ahead. He told them, "Go into the next village. As soon as you enter it, you will find a young donkey that has never been ridden. Untie the donkey and bring it here. If anyone asks why you are doing that, say, 'The Lord needs it and will soon bring it back.' "

The disciples left and found the donkey tied near a door that faced the street. While they were untying it, some of the people standing there asked, "Why are you untying the donkey?" They told them what Jesus had said, and the people let them take it.

The disciples led the donkey to Jesus. They put some of their clothes on

its back, and Jesus got on. Many people spread clothes on the road, while others went to cut branches from the fields.

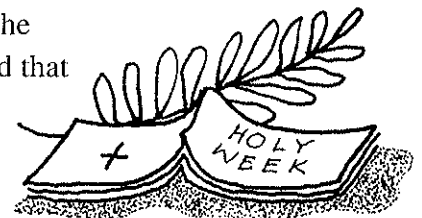
In front of Jesus and behind him, people went along shouting, "Hooray! God bless the one who comes in the name of the Lord! God bless the coming kingdom of our ancestor David. Hooray for God in heaven above!"

After sharing this passage with your family, follow up with a family discussion using the materials provided.

Explain to your family that palms were used as symbols of victory back in ancient times. When the people greeted Jesus with palms, they showered him with praise and honor. How do we, as a family, honor Jesus today?

How will we, as a family, honor Christ's passion and death this week?

Look over the schedule of liturgies and activities your parish has to offer during Holy Week, especially during the sacred Triduum, the three-day period that begins with the Mass of the Lord's Supper



## Family Take-Home Pages

and lasts until the Easter Vigil Mass on Holy Saturday. Decide which liturgies and activities your family will attend. Try to attend as many as possible. If for some reason your family can't attend some of the liturgies, make sure to find time to share the day's readings from Scripture.

### Getting Started...

Now have someone read the following passage.

*A reading from Mark 14:26–30*

During the meal Jesus took some bread in his hands. He blessed the bread and broke it. Then he gave it to his disciples and said, "Take this and eat it. This is my body." Jesus picked up a cup of wine and gave thanks to God. He then gave it to his disciples and said, "Take this and drink it. This is my blood, and with it God makes his agreement with you. It will be poured out, so that many people will have their sins forgiven. From now on I am not going to drink any wine, until I drink new wine with you in my Father's kingdom."

Now have a family discussion about the special gift Jesus shared with his disciples at the Last Supper, the gift of the Eucharist. Jesus shares this gift with us at the Mass.

Jesus is present in the liturgy in the bread and wine that become the Body and Blood of Jesus. What look like bread and wine has truly become Jesus' Body and Blood. When we receive the Eucharist, we become more and more the Body of Christ.

Talk about what could be different in the family if everybody became more and more like Jesus. Write a family prayer everyone can say after they receive Communion.

### Putting It into Practice...

If at all possible, plan a special meal for Holy Thursday. Include symbolic foods like lamb, a loaf of bread (unsliced), and grape juice for children, wine for adults. Before sharing the meal, thank God for the gift of his Son and the gift of the Eucharist.

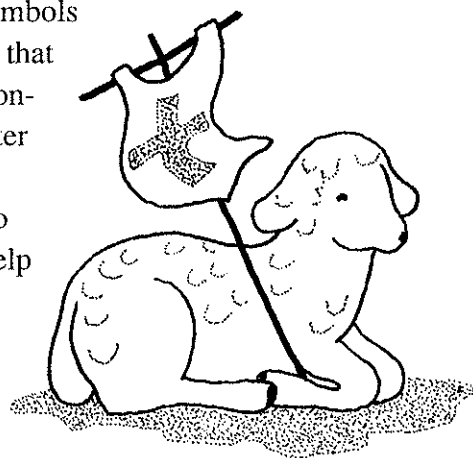
Make sure to explain to your children the significance of the symbolic foods and drinks. The lamb is a symbol for Jesus, the perfect, sacrificial Lamb. The loaf of bread reminds us of the bread Jesus blessed, broke, and shared with his apostles at the Last Supper; it also reminds us that Jesus is the Bread of Life. The grape juice and wine are symbols for Jesus' blood shed for the sins of all people of all times.

After the meal, take part in the celebration of the Mass of the Lord's Supper.

On Good Friday, make a special effort as a family to pray the Stations of the Cross, observe quiet time during the hours between noon to three, read one of the Gospel accounts of Christ's passion, or take part in the Good Friday liturgy.

On Holy Saturday, spend some quiet time reflecting on Jesus' great love for us.

Enlist the help of the entire family to prepare for the coming celebration of Easter by "spring cleaning" the house and replacing Lenten symbols with ones that reflect soon-to-be Easter joy. You might also want to help with the "spring cleaning" at church.



## Palm Sunday



Palm Sunday is the first day of Holy Week. It is the day we commemorate Jesus' triumphant entry into Jerusalem.

Blessed palms are distributed at all of the Masses. Many families place these palms in prominent places at home, for example, behind a crucifix or a framed picture of Christ. These palms are kept until the following year, when they are returned to church to be burned for ashes that will be used on Ash Wednesday.

## Holy Thursday

Many Catholic families begin their observance of the sacred Triduum with the evening Mass of the Lord's Supper.

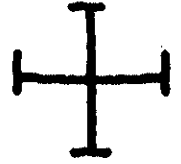


Others start their observance with a special commemorative meal before the Mass of the Lord's Supper. Symbolic foods are an important part of this meal, including lamb, which represents Jesus, the Lamb of God, who died for our sins; unsliced bread, grape juice (or wine), which symbolize the Eucharist. The bread should be broken and shared; the juice or wine (whichever is appropriate) should be shared by everyone at the table. Additional foods complete the simple, yet symbolic, meal. Then later that evening, the family shares another meal: the Eucharist. When planning your special commemorative meal, remember to plan it early enough in the evening so that your family can receive Communion. As Catholics we do not eat for at least an hour before receiving Jesus in the Eucharist.

## Good Friday

For many families, Good Friday is a day of quiet reflection, especially during the hours

between noon and three in the afternoon. Televisions and video games are turned off. Radios are silenced. Boisterous activities cease. It is a somber time to reflect on Christ's ultimate sacrifice of love.



Many families take the opportunity to pray the Stations of the Cross at noon. Others choose to attend a later liturgy where the passion of our Lord is read and the cross is venerated. Both services help families reflect on Christ's selfless gift of love.

## Holy Saturday

Many families spend the day preparing for Easter. Spring-cleaning is one of the traditional activities for the day. It is a symbolic gesture of preparing one's home for the risen Lord, as we have already prepared our hearts by receiving the sacrament of Reconciliation.

In some parishes, another tradition many families share is the blessing of Easter foods. Families typically take a basketful of food that will be served on Easter to church on Holy Saturday to have it blessed.



Many families also enjoy cooking, coloring, and decorating eggs on Holy Saturday.

If you've never colored eggs using natural ingredients like red and yellow onionskins, coffee, blueberries, beets, cranberries, or red cabbage, you might want try it this year. Simply place 2 tablespoons of vinegar to a quart of boiling water, and then add a handful of natural ingredients. Simmer for about 20 minutes and then sieve the skins or berries from the homemade liquid "dye." Let cool to lukewarm and place hard-boiled eggs into "dye," allowing them to sit for about 5 minutes.