



**EMOJI  
EASTER**



# INSTRUCTIONS TO PARENTS

*You might be wondering how emojis fit into the Easter story. Emojis have become so prevalent in our culture, sometimes it even feels like using them is a second language. They show us that words aren't always enough when it comes to emotions. Plus, they're just downright fun!*

*Over the next few days, you and your family will be looking at stories that take place in the week leading up to Easter. Each day you'll give your kids the dry erase circles and a marker and encourage them to draw an emoji that matches an emotion they notice in the story.*

*On each day of this guide, you will find a passage of Scripture to look up and read, a couple of paragraphs unpacking the passage, a few discussion questions, and a prayer. During the discussion questions, the kids will have a chance to share the emoji they drew and why they chose it.*

*When we read the Bible, it can be easy to forget that we are reading about real people with real joys, real pains, and real emotions. What a blessing to realize that God has been working through broken people, just like us, for ages. And not only that, but He can use our emotions to bring Him glory.*



## **READ:** Matthew 21:1-11

Wow! What an entry. People are gathered in the streets, the disciples are following alongside, the crowds are laying down clothes and cutting down tree branches and spreading them on the road, they're cheering and shouting 'Hosanna!' It's a party! And then comes Jesus, riding on...a donkey. It's sort of anticlimactic, isn't it? This is the King, the Savior of the world, the One who came to heal humanity, and He's riding a donkey. Wouldn't we expect Jesus to ride in on something amazing, something majestic, like an elephant or a tiger, or at least a horse? But, here He comes, riding on a donkey with her foal trotting along by her side. The people were excited, but I bet they were also a little surprised to see the Messiah riding on such a common animal as a donkey.

But here's the cool part: there was no reason for them to be surprised. This was how it was supposed to happen. God made it clear hundreds of years earlier that this was His plan, and we can see that in Zechariah 9:9. Zechariah prophesied a message from God, all the way back in the Old Testament, saying that the King would ride in on a donkey. Zechariah describes the Messiah as "righteous, victorious, and humble." Jesus didn't need a fancy horse to show people that He was the Messiah; God made it clear from the beginning.

## **DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:**

- What emoji did you draw?
- When was a time you were surprised?
- What are some ways we can follow Jesus' example of humility?
- What does it mean that Jesus is "Lord?"
- The passage we read has a prophesied message that included "See, your king comes for you." Why can we believe that Jesus came for them and for us?

**PRAY:** Thank You, Jesus for being our humble, victorious King. Help us to grow closer to You over the next few days of Holy Week.



## MONDAY

### READ: Mark 11:15-19

We don't often think of Jesus as being angry, but there are a few times throughout Scripture that He shows righteous anger. Righteous anger means getting angry because something is not pleasing or honoring to God. In righteous anger, Jesus cleaned the temple twice. This shows us how important proper worship of God is.

People selling things in the temple might not seem like a big issue to us, but here's why Jesus was so mad. This was before Jesus had died on the cross, so people were still having to bring sacrifices to the temple for their sins. Sometimes this was a Jewish coin, sometimes this was a dove or pigeon, sometimes it was a bigger animal, like a cow or sheep.

First, the concern was a practical matter. Imagine if you came to church on a Sunday, and it was full of people exchanging money, birds flying around, and cows and sheep roaming the halls. That would be loud, smelly, and distracting. The temple was a place to focus on worshiping God, and the salespeople and money changers were taking away from that.

Second, the money changers and salespeople were taking advantage of people coming to the temple to offer sacrifices. They were charging more for the animals than what they were worth, and they were being dishonest. We have seen over and over again that God sticks up for the poor and cares about honesty and fairness. It makes sense that this injustice made Jesus angry; injustice should make us angry, too! Anger is not a wrong emotion. It's what we do with the anger that can result in sin.

### DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

- What emoji did you draw?
- When have you felt angry?
- What is the difference between righteous anger and selfish anger?
- Why did the people make animal sacrifices?
- Why do we not need to bring animal sacrifices to church anymore?

**PRAY:** Thank You, Jesus for Your example of righteous anger. Help us honor You with all of our emotions.



**TUESDAY**

**READ:** Matthew 21:14-17

This passage is only four verses long, but we learn a lot in those four verses. First, we see that Jesus continues to heal the blind and the hurting, even as He lives out His final days on earth. Then, we see that children are praising Jesus. They're shouting in the temple, 'Hosanna!' Do you remember what happened yesterday when people got loud in the temple? Jesus kicked the salespeople and money traders out for being disruptive and distracting. But this is a different kind of loud. These kids are raising their voices because they know that Jesus is worthy of praise.

There's still another group of people we haven't talked about in this passage, the chief priests and scribes, and they are not very happy with what they see happening. In fact, one translation of the Bible says they were "indignant." This means that they were annoyed, or even angry, that the children were praising Jesus. Yet Jesus quotes a verse from Psalm 8:2 and tells the leaders that kids were created to praise.

Can you see yourself in this story? How would you praise Jesus if you were in the temple with those kids that day? God has created you to praise and proclaim who He is. You are never too young to know and share the Truth of who Jesus is and how much He loves us. This story is a great reminder of that.

### **DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:**

- What emoji did you draw?
- Why do you think the chief priests and scribes were annoyed?
- What are some ways you can praise Jesus this week?
- Does Jesus turn anyone away? Why or why not?
- The religious leaders were angry at Jesus for receiving praise. Did they personally know God? How can we?

**PRAY:** Thank You, Jesus for Your example of righteous anger. Help us honor You with all of our emotions.



## READ: Matthew 26:6-16

This passage opens with a woman pouring perfume over Jesus' head. To us, that seems like a pretty weird way to honor someone. But for it to make more sense, we need to look at the cultural importance of the woman's action. First, this jar of perfume would have cost around a year's earnings. This was a costly gift that the woman was offering Jesus.

Second, you might have noticed that Jesus says she was preparing Him for burial. During this time period, people would pour perfume over dead bodies before a burial to help cover the smell. The disciples would not have fully understood what He meant, but Jesus knew that soon He would be nailed to a cross to die. The act of anointing Jesus with the expensive perfume was a true testament to this woman's humble generosity and love for Jesus.

However, in the very next verse we see the exact opposite of generosity. Judas Iscariot, one of Jesus' close friends, one of His disciples, makes a choice. Judas knows that the chief priests and religious leaders have been looking for a reason to kill Jesus. Judas approaches the chief priests and offers to lead them to Jesus for a price. The chief priests offer him thirty pieces of silver to betray Jesus.

The price Judas accepted to betray Jesus was a mere fraction of the cost of the perfume that the woman sacrificed to show her love to Jesus. Two very different reactions to Jesus, but even today we have the same choice. We get to choose between generosity and selfishness, humility and greed.

## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

- What emoji did you draw?
- What are the differences between how the woman and Judas treated Jesus?
- How can you be generous in your actions, words, and choices this week?
- Is it always easy to follow Jesus? Why or why not?
- Judas tried to find fulfillment in money. Where is true fulfillment found?

**PRAY:** Thank You, Jesus for Your example of righteous anger. Help us honor You with all of our emotions.



## **READ:** Matthew 26:17-30

In this passage, we see Jesus and His disciples celebrate the holiday of Passover together. This holiday is used as a reminder of when God saved the Israelites from slavery in Egypt through the plagues. It specifically is in remembrance of the tenth plague when the firstborns in each family were killed. But God made a way for the Israelites to be safe from this plague by sacrificing a spotless lamb and marking their doorposts with the lamb's blood.

Remember on Monday how we talked about the need for sacrifices? People had to make sacrifices for their sin, because God hadn't sent Jesus to die on the cross yet. During this special celebration of Passover, Jesus was making a new promise to His disciples. Jesus was showing them that He would be the sacrifice, the final sacrifice.

When we read the Bible, it can be easy to forget that we have a bird's eye view of the stories we're reading. We have the privilege of knowing the beginning and the end. But the people we read about are seeing it play out in their lives. They don't always know what is coming or what God has planned.

In the passage we just read, it seems like Jesus is dropping some pretty obvious hints about what is going to happen. But we have to remember that the disciples were watching things unfold day by day. They didn't have the benefit we have of being able to read the whole story at once. They didn't fully understand how this story was going to end. All they saw was that they were losing their close friend and leader. So, while we read this passage and can find joy in knowing that Jesus was making a way for us to be close to God by dying on the cross, we have to remember that the disciples were feeling sorrow and grief.

## **DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:**

- What emoji did you draw?
- How did their celebration of Passover point to Jesus dying on the cross?
- When have you felt sad or confused by what's happening around you?
- Why did Jesus need to die on the cross for us?
- Even though the disciples were sad, what did they have to look forward to?



**PRAY:** Thank You, Jesus for Your example of righteous anger. Help us honor You with all of our emotions.

*We pray that this devotional has brought your family closer to God and to each other over this past week. And while we've reached the end, this isn't the end of the story!*





