

Detective Devo

EASTER EDITION

Dear Parents,

Preparation is important! We spend time packing for vacation, we make meticulous Pinterest boards for birthday parties, we schedule time for numerous soccer practices so that our team can score the winning goal. Whether we thrive off of the planning process or ignore it until it becomes a necessary burden, no one can deny that most important things in life have a time frame of prepping beforehand. Easter is no different. Holy Week is the week leading up to Easter Sunday, a week full of preparation for arguably the most important event in the Christian faith. This week is so important that over a third of the cumulative Gospels focus on the final week of Jesus' life on earth. With this in mind, we have created a guide to help your family do some spiritual preparation during this significant week.

Carve out a few minutes of your family's day to do a short scripture reading, talk through some discussion questions, and end your time praying together. Your family will also get to use the included decoder to reveal a symbol from each day's reading. We have everything written out for you. Each day you and your family will learn about a different event that happened during Jesus' final week leading up to the crucifixion. We pray that this will give you and your family a chance to prepare your hearts to celebrate Jesus and His resurrection this coming Sunday!

S U N D A Y

JESUS' RIDE INTO TOWN

What is the most majestic and amazing animal you can think of?

Some people might think of a really fast animal like a cheetah. For others it might be a powerful, strong animal like an elephant. Still others may see a beautiful and graceful gazelle pop into their mind. God made so many unique and wonderful animals to fill the world with, but today we are going to read about an animal that probably isn't at the top of our "Majestic, Amazing Animals" list. However, we will see that this animal was given a very important job by Jesus. Use the decoder to see which animal it is and then as a family, read Luke 19:28-36.

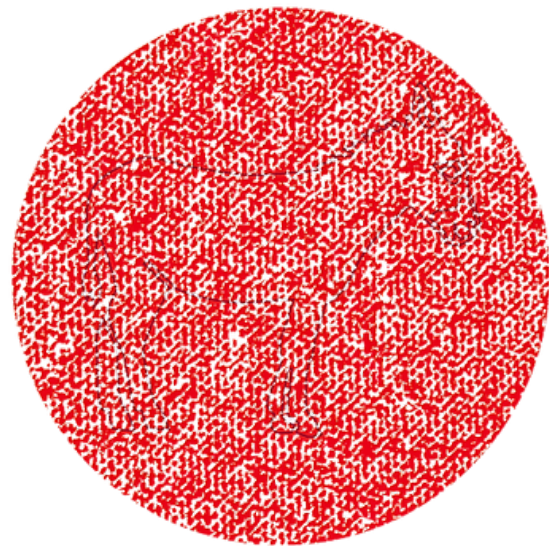
What were some of the things that Jesus told the disciples to do? (Luke 19:30-31)

Isn't it amazing that Jesus not only knew that a donkey would be waiting for Him, but He even knew the questions that the donkey's owner would ask?! The disciples obeyed Jesus and brought the donkey to Him.

What was the donkey's special job in this story?

A donkey may not seem like an amazing or spectacular animal, but God gave it a purpose. It carried Jesus, the Savior of the world, into Jerusalem. Sometimes, we do not feel very amazing or spectacular, but we can always remember that God has an important purpose for our lives.

Finish by praying that God would remind each person in your family of the special and important job that He has given them.



M O N D A Y

JESUS AT THE TEMPLE

Have you ever been really angry? What does that feel like?

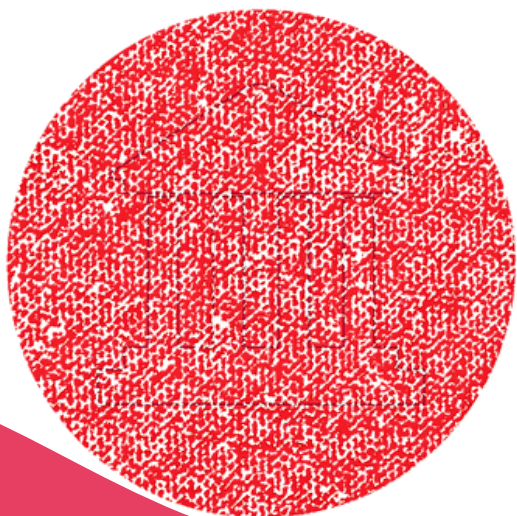
Anger is an emotion we all feel at one point or another, even Jesus felt anger while He was on earth. Use the decoder to see where Jesus became angry, and then as a family, read Matthew 21:12-17.

What was Jesus angry about? (Matthew 21:12-13)

People were misusing the temple to make money for themselves instead of using it as a place to worship God. Jesus knew that what they were doing was not only wrong, it was not honoring to God, and this made Him angry. Romans 12:9 tells us to “detest evil”, which means when we see evil things happening, it should make us very sad, and even mad.

However, the Bible also tells us in Ephesians 4:26 that we should “Be angry and do not sin, do not let the sun go down on your anger.” There is a right and a wrong way to be angry. We can’t use our anger as an excuse to make bad decisions like hurting someone else with our words or actions. When we feel angry, we should ask God what He wants us to do about that emotion. **What are some things that it is okay to feel angry about?**

Jesus was angry because people were not giving God the honor that He deserves. They were not following God’s purpose for the Temple. Jesus obeyed God in everything He did even to the point of dying on the cross. Jesus wanted others to understand that obeying God is always the best decision.



Finish by praying that God would help your family follow Jesus’ example and understand how to “be angry and not sin.”

T U E S D A Y

SHEEP AND GOATS

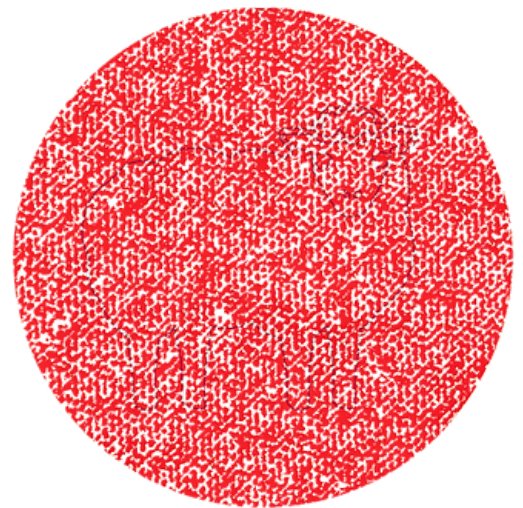
Do you think you can tell the difference between a sheep and a goat? It may seem like a silly question, but these two animals can actually look pretty similar! Scan the QR code for a quick lesson on telling sheep and goats apart. You'll be surprised! Use the decoder to see which animal Jesus compared people who follow Jesus to and then read Matthew 25:31-46.



Jesus used a parable, or story, about two animals to explain the difference between those who follow Him and those who do not. **Which animal did He compare Christians to?** (sheep) **Which animal did He compare non-Christians to?** (goats) Jesus is often compared to a shepherd and a shepherd's job is to take care of and protect his sheep, so it makes sense that Jesus compared Christians to sheep in this story.

Just like it can be difficult to tell the difference between a sheep and a goat on the outside, we can't always tell what someone believes by looking at them. But Jesus can see our heart and He can see if we have chosen to make Him in charge of our life. People who choose to follow Jesus and become a Christian want to make choices that make God happy. Doing good things does not make someone a Christian. But when someone is a Christian, they want to show God's kindness and love to others, like Jesus mentioned in the story. **What are some things that Jesus said Christians would choose to do to show His love?** (Matthew 25:35-36)

Now, read the verse right before that, Matthew 25:34. What does this verse tell us that God has prepared for His followers? God has His kingdom prepared for us, before anything else! We do not go to Heaven because we have earned it through doing good things. Instead, when we become a Christian we want to show love to others because of the love God has shown us. Just like the goats and sheep may act alike and Christians and non-Christians may act alike, God can tell the difference because of the heart behind their actions.



Finish by thanking God for showing us His love through sending His Son, Jesus, and ask Him to help your family show God's love to others this week.

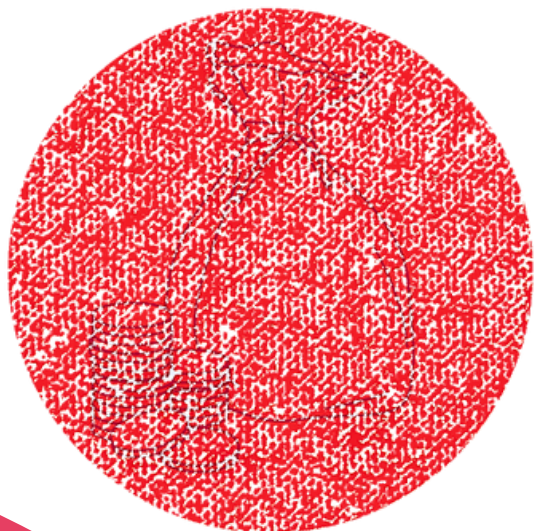
W E D N E S D A Y

JUDAS AGREES TO BETRAY JESUS

It is hard to love our enemies. It does not usually feel good to be nice to those who are unkind to us. But Jesus gives us the perfect example of this. One of Jesus' disciples, His friend Judas, chose to betray Jesus. The word betray means to give someone or some piece of information to an enemy. Use the decoder to see what Judas was given for betraying Jesus and then read Matthew 26:1-5; 14-16.

What did the chief priests and leaders of the community decide to do to Jesus? (Matthew 26:4) They did not like that people were choosing to follow Jesus, they wanted Him to be killed. They chose to go about this in a sneaky way and that is where Jesus' friend Judas came in. **What does Matthew 26:14 say that Judas did?** He went to the leaders of the community and offered to show them where Jesus was, to betray Him. Judas betrayed Jesus for a few silver coins. Read Matthew 26:15 to see how many. Thirty may sound like a lot, but in the Hebrew culture, it really was not very much money. Thirty silver coins is the price a master would be paid if his slave was hurt by an ox (Check out Exodus 21:32). Judas gave Jesus to His enemies for the same amount of money given for a dead slave.

However, Jesus was still kind to Judas. In fact, Jesus knew that Judas would betray Him, and yet, tomorrow we will see them eat dinner together. Jesus knew that His purpose was to be a sacrifice for everyone including those who hurt Him. Jesus did not just die for some people; He died on the cross for everyone. When Jesus died on the cross, He created a way to connect every single person with God if they choose to follow Him.



Finish by thanking Jesus for being the perfect example of loving everyone and ask Him to help your family to follow His example and love those who may be unkind to you.

THURSDAY

THE LAST SUPPER

Jesus knew that He was about to die on the cross, but His disciples still did not realize this. Jesus wanted to have one last meal with them because He knew that everything was about to change. Jesus loves us and He chose to make the sacrifice for us, but that does not mean it was easy. Use the decoder to see parts of their last meal together and then read Matthew 26:17-30.

What celebration was taking place? (Matthew 26:17)

This took place during the Feast of Unleavened Bread, a holiday that the Jewish people celebrated each year to remember God's faithfulness. While this was normally a celebration, the disciples were worried. They knew that the leaders were against Jesus. Jesus started to give them hints about what would happen over the next few days.

Jesus and his friends had a long meal that night and they enjoyed spending time with each other. Jesus finished the meal by sharing food and drink with them and reminding them that He would always be with them. They did not fully understand what this meant when He did it, but it was His way of comforting them and preparing them for what was about to happen. **Why was it important that the disciples knew that Jesus would always be with them?**

Finish by thanking Jesus for giving His life for us and for always being with us.

