

The Gift of the CROSS

*Celebrating Christ
Through Holy Week*

Brandon Helder



For Dad and Mom,
who first opened the Bible for me.

The Gift of the Cross
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LENT IS A TIME OF PREPARATION. During this season, Christians around the world fast and pray, focusing their minds and hearts on Christ's death and resurrection. For many of us, however, the Easter season can be obscured by distractions. Our attention often shifts away from Jesus's sacrifice and resurrection toward superficial things, like fancy clothing and baskets of eggs.

As parents and educators, it's important that we stop and reorient Easter in our homes and classrooms. This devotional and the Resurrection Blocks wooden block set were created in this hope. With each block, each story, each prayer, you can build with those you love lasting memories based upon eternal truths. It is my hope that, through this devotion, all will reflect on the truth of God's Word, will wonder at his love, and will remember and celebrate the mystery of our faith.

Christ has died. Christ is risen. Christ will come again.

Reading Plans

Though this devotional is designed to align with the corresponding days of Holy Week, this may not be a realistic option for your home or classroom. Because schedules and contexts vary so greatly, consider how you might use

this devotional in your setting and adjust the pacing to meet the needs of your unique audience. Here are some possible schedules to consider as you prepare for this special time together.

DAILY DEVOTIONAL	HOLY WEEK	SCHOOL WEEK	THROUGHOUT LENT
DAY 1: Entering Jerusalem	Palm Sunday	Friday before Palm Sunday	First Sunday of Lent
DAY 2: Jesus Anointed at Bethany	Monday	Monday	Second Sunday of Lent
DAY 3: The Last Supper	Tuesday	Tuesday	Third Sunday of Lent
DAY 4: Jesus Arrested at Gethsemane	Wednesday	Wednesday	Fourth Sunday of Lent
DAY 5: Peter Disowns Jesus	Thursday	Thursday	Fifth Sunday of Lent
DAY 6: Jesus Sentenced to Death	Friday	Friday	Sixth Sunday of Lent
DAY 7: The Burial of Jesus	Saturday	Add to Friday or Omit	Optional
DAY 8: The Resurrection	Easter Sunday	Monday after Easter	Easter

Resurrection Blocks

This devotional book can be enjoyed independently; however, it was created to be paired with the Resurrection Blocks wooden block set available for purchase at www.worshipwoodworks.com. When using this kit, a wooden block corresponding to each daily devotion is added to a stack, ultimately constructing a cross. Tactile and visual models like this engage children in meaningful ways and present a physical timeline of the events of Holy Week to be remembered and enjoyed again and again.



Before beginning this devotion with your family or classroom, you'll wrap each of the individual blocks in festive wrapping paper. To ensure that they are opened in the correct order, mark the outside with the numbers listed below.

Two nails have been included with your set. These will be needed for the Day 6: Christ Sentenced to Death reading. You will need to include these with the #6 block.

You'll also need a simple candle and something with which to light it. Where possible, and under careful supervision, allow children the honor of lighting and extinguishing the flame each day. If open flames are not permitted in your setting, a battery-operated tea light would work as well.

Finally, as you read, note that *italicized words* in the book are read aloud by the leader, while ***bolded and italicized*** words are recited by all. These phrases are printed on the back cover for participants to read if appropriate.

#1

#2

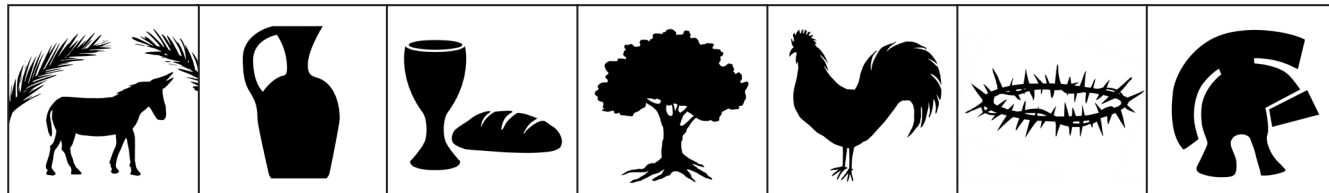
#3

#4

#5

#6

#7





DAY 1: ENTERING JERUSALEM

Matt. 21:1–11; Mark 11:1–11; Luke 19:29–40; John 12:12–19

Preparing

Today we begin a time of remembering and celebrating Jesus's life, death, and resurrection. The time that stretches from Palm Sunday to Easter is called Holy Week. We'll begin our time by welcoming each other in this way: I'll say "The Lord be with you," and then you'll say "And also with you." You can see this written on the back cover if you want to read along.

Let's try this together:

*The Lord be with you
And also with you.*

[Sit in a circle together and light the candle.]

We light the candle to remember Christ, the light of the world. Let's quiet our thoughts as we look at the flame.

[**Resurrection Blocks:** Those using the Resurrection Block set should include this as well:]

Each day, we'll unwrap a new wooden block to add to our stack.

[Unwrap the wooden stand with the donkey and palm branches decoration.]

Each day we'll read from the Bible and discover together how the symbols on each block connect with the stories of Holy week. After we read, I'll say "This is the Word of the Lord," and then you'll say "Thanks be to God."

Reading

Luke 19:29–40

As he approached Bethphage and Bethany at the hill called the Mount of Olives, he sent two of his disciples, saying to them, “Go to the village ahead of you, and as you enter it, you will find a colt tied there, which no one has ever ridden. Untie it and bring it here. If anyone asks you, ‘Why are you untying it?’ say, ‘The Lord needs it.’”

Those who were sent ahead went and found it just as he had told them. As they were untying the colt, its owners asked them, “Why are you untying the colt?”

They replied, “The Lord needs it.”

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They brought it to Jesus, threw their cloaks on the colt and put Jesus on it. As he went along, people spread their cloaks on the road.

When he came near the place where the road goes down the Mount of Olives, the whole crowd of disciples began joyfully to praise God in loud voices for all the miracles they had seen:

“Blessed is the king who comes in the name of the Lord!” “Peace in heaven and glory in the highest!”

Some of the Pharisees in the crowd said to Jesus, “Teacher, rebuke your disciples!”

“I tell you,” he replied, “if they keep quiet, the stones will cry out.”

*This is the Word of the Lord.
Thanks be to God.*

Reflecting

Why do you think the crowds treated Jesus like a king?

What was Jesus thinking about as the people shouted “Hosanna”?

Praying

Jesus, like those people shouting “Hosanna” thousands of years ago, we are excited and grateful that you have come to save us. Thank you for coming to earth and becoming a person to rescue us from ourselves. Help us to respond by living lives of praise to you. Amen.

Remembering

Each day, after we pray, we will end by sharing what we Christians around the world believe about Jesus. I’ll begin by saying “Together we remember and share what we believe,” and then we’ll together say “Christ has died. Christ has risen. Christ will come again.” Let’s try this together:

*Together we remember and share what we believe:
Christ has died. Christ has risen. Christ will come again.*

Responding

Just as the crowd of people shouted praise to Jesus, we know that creation sings praise to God as well. Jesus even said that the stones would cry out if the disciples and the crowd didn’t. Read Job 12:7–10 and then spend some time outside. Notice how each plant, each animal, the water, and the land all sing their own unique praises to God.

THE RESURRECTION BLOCKS



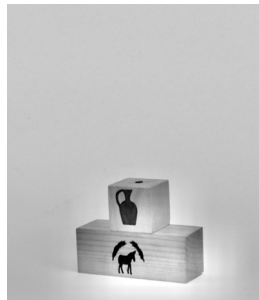
DAY 1
Entering
Jerusalem



DAY 5
Peter Disowns
Jesus



DAY 2
Jesus Anointed
at Bethany



DAY 6
Jesus Sentenced
to Death



DAY 3
The Last
Supper



DAY 7
The Burial
of Jesus



DAY 4
Jesus Arrested
at Gethsemane



DAY 8
The
Resurrection



BRANDON HELDER is a Christian author, speaker, and elementary school teacher. Through his many experiences leading devotions in the classroom and at home, Brandon seeks to motivate children to engage with the Bible and to encounter Christ within its pages. Brandon has written and illustrated other children's books and devotional journals. He lives in Grand Rapids, Michigan, with his wife and three daughters. Follow Brandon at facebook.com/brandonhelderbooks.