

Explore Easter

Easter Lesson for Years 3-6

Learning Questions

A: What were the key events surrounding Jesus' death? (For younger year groups – use sections marked **A** below)

B: How did Jesus' death and the events surrounding it fulfil prophecy? (For older year groups – use sections marked **B** below)

Lesson format: series of videos with discussion questions (*answers in brackets*) and activities depending on which learning question you use.

Resources needed: videos (provided on **our website** and **YouTube channel**), Bible texts sheet, one between two (for sections marked **B**) (provided on **our website**), Miracle Maker clip (available on **YouTube**), paper or books for written work. You might also want to use some images and/or props to support memory in the written activity. Suggestions for these are given below.

Duration: 1hr -1hr30mins.

Overview

| | |
|----------------------------|-------------|
| Intro | 5 mins |
| Video 1 – Palm Sunday | 1 min |
| Discussion/activity | 5 -10 mins |
| Video 2 – The Temple | 3 mins |
| Discussion/activity | 5 -10 mins |
| Video 3 – The Last Supper | 2 mins |
| Discussion/activity | 5 -10 mins |
| Video 4 – The Trial | 3 mins |
| Discussion/activity | 5 -10 mins |
| Video 5 – The Crucifixion | 4 mins |
| Discussion/activity | 5 -10 mins |
| Video 6 – The Resurrection | 2 mins |
| Discussion/activity | 5 -10 mins |
| Written work | 10 -15 mins |
| Plenary | 5 mins |

Word bank

| | | | |
|-------------|-----------|----------|--------------|
| Bible | Governor | Judas | Resurrection |
| Christians | Herod | Palm | Sacrifice |
| Crucifixion | Hosanna | Passover | Temple |
| Crucify | Isaiah | Pilate | Tomb |
| Disciples | Jeremiah | Prayer | Trial |
| Easter | Jerusalem | Prophecy | Whip |
| Gethsemane | Jesus | Psalm | Zechariah |

Intro (5 mins)

A: What do Christians celebrate at Easter? (*Jesus' death and resurrection.*) What parts of the Easter story do you already know?

B: Who do Christians believe Jesus was? (*The son of God.*) Why do they believe this? (*Healing, miracles, teaching, prophecies.*) Historians all agree that Jesus existed, but Christians believe he was the son of God because of the things he did and said and because he fulfilled many prophecies. What is a prophecy? (*A prediction of what will happen.*)

Video 1 (1 min) – Palm Sunday (suggested props – donkey, palm branch)

"Have you ever been part of a crowd at a really exciting event? Well I was, I'll tell you about it...

It was one Sunday. I was on my way into Jerusalem. I couldn't get anywhere near the gates because there was this massive crowd. So I asked someone what was happening. Well they said there was an important person coming. Then I saw him.

He was riding on the back of a donkey. Everyone was shouting and cheering 'Hosanna'. So I asked the lady next to me who he was. She said he was this man who'd been going round telling amazing stories, healing the sick, feeding the hungry, and performing miracles. She said his name was Jesus and he was the son of God! And then I remembered – I'd heard of this guy, I'd heard of all the amazing things he was doing!

So I was really pleased to be there, and see him in person! People were still shouting 'Hosanna' and 'Bless him' and 'Praise God' and 'Bless him who comes in the name of the Lord'. So this time I joined in! And then people started waving palm branches and someone gave me one, so I waved it as well. It was so joyful, it was fantastic!"

Discussion/activity (5-10 mins)

A: What happened when Jesus entered Jerusalem? (*It was Sunday, a massive crowd gathered, he rode on a donkey, the crowd shouted and waved palm branches.*) Why do you think the people did this? (*They were happy, Jesus had been doing amazing things, they thought he was the son of God, they were pleased to see him.*) Would you have joined in? Why?

B: Palm Sunday was a time of great rejoicing – why? (*The people were happy, Jesus had been doing amazing things, they thought he was the son of God, they were pleased to see him.*) Why did they believe he was the son of God? Look at the introduction and first text on the Bible texts sheet. How was this prophecy fulfilled? (*Jesus came on a donkey, everyone was cheering.*) Does it explain why the people were so excited? (*They thought he was a king and had come to save them.*) Would you have felt the same if you had been there?

Video 2 (3 mins) – The Temple (suggested props – coins, whip)

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"Hi, my name's Jonathan and I want to tell you about something that happened at the temple one day when I went there to pray. But before I get into that, I just need to explain a bit about the temple. It's a really really important place, it's a really really holy place, it's a really really special place. It's a place where people go to pray, and it's a place where people go to offer sacrifices and it's a place where people go to meet with God. On this particular day, I'd gone to pray. I went there, and I wanted to go, and with prayer you want somewhere quiet, you want somewhere peaceful, you want somewhere tranquil, so that you can pray and think about things.

Anyway, it was anything but quiet. It was anything but peaceful, it was anything but tranquil. There were all kinds of things being sold: cattle, sheep, everything being sold, food, clothes, and there were people exchanging money. To be honest with you, it all looked a bit dodgy, and it didn't really do me good, you know, I'd gone to pray, and all these things were going on around me and to be honest with you it's been like this for a long long time and it makes me really really angry that people treat the temple in this way, but there was nothing that I could do about it.

Anyway, on this particular day, I'd gone to pray, and it was full of noise and full of commotion. And then all of a sudden, everything starts to kick off, and I can hear shouting and tables are being turned over and money is going everywhere and it's just chaos and I hear this man shouting at the top of his voice, about the fact that this isn't what the temple is meant to be for, it's supposed to be a house of prayer. Anyway, somebody that I was sitting with whispered to me that they thought it was Jesus, this person that I'd heard about who was claiming to be the son of God. Anyway, he was just so angry, and as I say, all the tables were being turned over and the money was going everywhere and he was really really angry, he had a whip, he was driving people out, it was just utter utter chaos.

It was an amazing thing. He was saying about the fact that 'this is my Father's house, this is meant to be a place of prayer but you've made it a den of robbers!' and it was just incredible to be there.

To be honest with you, on a personal level, I thought what Jesus did was great in dealing with all these really bad things that were going on in the temple. But boy, nobody ever expected to see that take place in the temple. But it was an amazing day. And I thank Jesus for what he did."

Discussion/activity (5-10 mins)

A: What was the Temple supposed to be used for? (*It was like a church, it was a house of prayer, where people went to make sacrifices and meet with God.*) What was it being used for when Jesus came? (*Men were selling things and exchanging money and they were cheating people.*) What did Jesus do? (*He got angry, he shouted, he turned over the tables, he scattered the money, he made a whip and drove people out.*) Why do you think he did this? (*People weren't treating the temple with respect or using it for its proper purpose.*) Would you have agreed with him?

B: Why do you think Jesus was so angry about what was happening in the Temple? (*The men were using the Temple for the wrong purpose and were cheating people.*) Look at the next section of the Bible texts sheet. Which of these prophecies was fulfilled in what you heard? (*All of them, but particularly Isaiah 29 and Jeremiah.*) What is the significance of the words 'which bears my Name'? (*The temple was God's place.*) Do you think any more of these prophecies might have been fulfilled as a result of what happened in the temple? (*All of them – Jesus' actions in the temple upset the religious leaders and started to make them his enemies.*)

Video 3 (2 mins) – The Last Supper (suggested props – plate, chalice, bread)

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"Hi I'm Peter. I'm one of Jesus's disciples, and I'm here to talk to you about one of the last times we met with Jesus for a meal. We met for meals quite often, we all enjoyed them, but this one was special. This was Passover, which is a sort of special festival that we have. But this time felt different. It was different.

First off, before we sit down to eat, it's customary for the servant to wash the master's feet. We all wear sandals so our feet get quite dirty through the day. But this time, Jesus did it. He took a towel, wrapped it around his waist, poured out a bowl of water and washed each of our feet. We were shocked. We're his disciples, he's our teacher, our master, but he insisted. He said he wanted to teach us a lesson about serving each another.

As we gathered around the table Jesus said that one of us, one of his disciples, was about to betray him. We didn't know why at the time, but Judas then left the room, he looked really sad and guilty. We obviously didn't know, but he was the one Jesus was talking about. Then, after we all sat down, Jesus gave us a new commandment. He said, 'Love one another as I have loved you'. Then he took a piece of bread, gave a prayer of thanks, broke it and divided it among us. He said, 'This is my body, broken for you, do this in remembrance of me.' Then he took a cup of wine, gave thanks, and said, 'Share this among you. It represents my blood which will be poured out for many people, for the forgiveness of their sins'. We didn't really understand why Jesus was saying this at the time, but, well, we came to understand it soon."

Discussion/activity (5-10 mins)

A: What did Jesus do which surprised Peter and why was it so unusual? (*He washed the disciples' feet. It was unusual because it was normally the job of a servant.*) What did Jesus say about Judas? (*He said Judas was going to betray him.*) What did Jesus say about the bread and the wine? (*He said the bread was his body and the wine was his blood.*) Do you think Jesus knew he was going to die? How do you think he might have felt?

B: What point was Jesus trying to make by washing the disciples' feet? (*It is important to serve one another, and one person is no greater than another person.*) Look at the next section of the Bible texts sheet. Which of these prophecies was fulfilled in what you heard? (*All of them but particularly the Psalm and Zechariah. Judas was paid thirty pieces of silver to betray Jesus.*) Can you think of any ways the other prophecies might have been fulfilled in this part of the story? (*Isaiah 6: the disciples didn't understand what Jesus was telling them. Isaiah 53: Jesus was going to endure suffering and pain on the cross, and Christians believe he did this as a sacrifice for others.*)

Video 4 (3 mins) – The Trial (suggested props – whip, crown of thorns)

"Well I was there, right from the start.

Us soldiers, we'd had a tip off that a friend of this Jesus, a man named Judas, was going to lead us to where he was, so we could arrest him. He had been winding up the chief priests and the religious leaders talking about God and forgiving people's sins. So this Judas, he was going to take us to the garden just outside of Jerusalem, a garden called Gethsemane. And that's what he did, that's where we found Jesus, praying. There was only a couple of his friends there so it should have been an easy thing to arrest him there and then.

Judas went up to Jesus and greeted him with a kiss, so we knew which one was Jesus. But then one of his friends, a man named Peter, pulled out his sword and started hacking away. And he hit one of the servants on the side of the head, and he cut off his ear! It was terrible. But Jesus stopped him and told him to put his sword away, and he reached out his hand and touched that man's head, and healed it, like it was nothing. So we took our moment then, we grabbed hold of Jesus, and we dragged him back to the city.

There was a lot of going backwards and forwards that night, I can tell you. No one seemed to know what to do with him! So we took him first of all to the high priest. They sent him

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back to Pilate, the Roman governor. He sent him on to Herod, King of the Jews, who then eventually sent him back to Pilate.

Pilate wanted to let him go, but a crowd had gathered by that point, and they'd been encouraged by the chief priests to shout out, 'Crucify him, crucify him!' Well the crowd was getting ugly and Pilate was getting worried, so he gave in in the end. He told us to take Jesus away, have him whipped, and put him on a cross.

So that's what we did. We whipped him good and proper that night, till his back was bloody and torn, and he could barely stand. And one of my friends, one of the other soldiers, he grabbed hold of a purple robe and stuck it on his shoulders. And he got some thorns, and made a crown out of these thick thorns, and stuck it on Jesus' head, pushed it down hard, so it was bleeding. They laughed at him and they called him, 'Hail, King of the Jews', and they beat him some more. But do you know what? Despite all this whipping, and the beating, and the insults, that Jesus, he never said a thing. Not a single word."

Discussion/activity (5-10 mins)

A: How did Judas betray Jesus? (*He kissed him.*) What did the soldiers do to Jesus? (*They whipped him, dressed him in a purple robe and a crown of thorns, hit him and laughed at him.*) What did Jesus do and say? (*Nothing.*) Why do you think the soldiers and Jesus acted like this?

B: Why do you think the soldiers acted like they did? (*They were scared, they were told to, they enjoyed it.*) Why do you think Jesus acted like he did? (*He knew it was God's will, he knew it had to happen, he was fulfilling prophecy.*) Look at the next section of the Bible texts sheet. Which of these prophecies was fulfilled in what you heard? (*All of them, but particularly Isaiah 50 and 53.*) Do you think any more of these prophecies might have been fulfilled as a result of what happened in this part of the story? (*Psalm: while Jesus was on the cross the soldiers played dice and gambled for his clothes and divided them between them (except his robe). Zechariah: when Jesus was arrested and tried, some of his followers left him and turned against him.*)

Video 5 (4 mins) – The Crucifixion – show the clip from the Miracle Maker available [here](#).

Discussion/activity (5-10 mins)

A: How do you think Jesus felt? How do you think Jesus' friends felt? How would you have felt? Time for quiet reflection.

B: How do you think Jesus felt? How do you think Jesus' friends felt? How would you have felt? Time for quiet reflection. Look at the next section of the Bible texts sheet. Which of these prophecies was fulfilled in what you heard and saw? (*All of them, but particularly Isaiah 13 and Zechariah.*) Do you think any of the other prophecies were also fulfilled? (*Psalm: none of Jesus' bones were broken on the cross – this was unusual for a crucifixion. Isaiah 53: Jesus died willingly and the two men who were crucified either side of him were criminals.*)

Video 6 (2 mins) – The Resurrection (suggested props – basket, white sheet)

"Hello, my name's Mary. Can you see my basket? I've got some amazing oils and some sweet-smelling herbs in it. It reminds me of an incredible day. Let me tell you about it. I'd just lost my closest friend. He was an amazing man and he'd done nothing wrong. His name was Jesus. He'd helped so many people, but he was dead, he was gone and I didn't think I'd see him again. How wrong I was!

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Jesus died on the Friday, and on the third day, the Sunday, I went to where they'd buried him. I took my basket with the herbs and the oils, I wanted to put them on his body. I missed him and I wanted to do that for him.

But when I got to where they'd buried him, the huge stone that they'd used to cover the entrance had been rolled away. I couldn't believe it! And then when I got closer and looked inside, Jesus's body was gone! All I could find were these grave clothes. Where had he gone? Well, I saw a man outside, so I went out – I thought he was the gardener! But then he said my name, he said, "Mary". I knew that voice. It was Jesus! He was alive, he'd come back to life! I couldn't believe it, I ran to tell all of our friends.

After that day, he met with us several times, and he even let us feel, and touch the wounds – proof that he was alive. It was just amazing.

It wasn't until later that we remembered that he'd told us that he was going to die and that he would come back to life, we just couldn't remember that. Jesus had beaten death – it was incredible! He really was the son of God."

Discussion/activity (5-10 mins)

A: Why was Mary surprised when she went to visit Jesus' tomb? (*The stone had been rolled away and Jesus' body was gone.*) Who did she then meet and what did she do? (*She met Jesus and she went to tell all their friends.*)

B: How do you think Mary felt on her way to the tomb? (*Sad, disappointed, confused.*) How do you think she felt when she got there and found it empty? (*Surprised, scared, confused.*) How do you think she felt when she met Jesus? (*Surprised, happy, scared, confused.*) Look at the last Bible text. Jesus spoke these words to his disciples before he died. What do you think he meant? (*His body was the temple and it would be destroyed and brought back to life in three days.*) Can you understand why the disciples back then and Christians today believe he was the son of God? (*Miracles of Jesus, healing, teaching and in particular, prophecies fulfilled.*)

Written work (10-15 mins)

A: Using the learning question above (**What were the key events surrounding Jesus' death?**), get the children to write about one of the sections of the story in as much detail as they can. Try and include how the people felt and why.

B: Using the learning question above (**How did Jesus' death and the events surrounding it fulfil prophecy?**), get the children to write about one of the prophecies that was fulfilled in the story. See if they can explain how the fulfilment of prophecy makes Christians believe Jesus was the son of God.

Plenary (5 mins)

A: Did you learn something new about the Easter story? Did anything surprise you? Can you remember the key events? Which part would you most have liked to be there for and why? Can you explain why Easter is important to Christians?

B: Why did the disciples believe Jesus was the son of God? What prophecies did the events surrounding his death fulfil? (*All the prophecies on the Bible texts sheet.*) Are there any other reasons the disciples had for believing he was the son of God? (*Healing, miracles, teaching of Jesus.*) What do you think?