

**Purpose**

- To learn the activities of Holy Week

**Materials**

- Bible
- Handouts

**Background Information****HOLY WEEK**

The last week of Jesus' life is often called Holy Week. We are going to refer to the four Gospels and go through the events of this week and try to understand what happened and what Jesus had to endure for us.

The Handout 63-1 gives a listing of the events that take place and tells you where you can find them in each of the Gospels. This is called the harmony of the Gospels.

During the last few weeks of Jesus' time with his disciples he kept predicting his death. Even though he told them many times they seemed to be reluctant to believe him. Jesus kept telling them that his death would take place in Jerusalem. As they were on the road and approaching the Mount of Olives sent two disciples on ahead. Jesus told them they would find a colt tied there, this colt had never been ridden. This meant that it probably would be a little difficult to ride. They were to bring it to him. The disciples did as they were told and threw cloaks over it and Jesus sat on the colt. As he approached Jerusalem people threw the cloaks and palm branches all along the path. Many people followed Jesus shouting "Hosanna, blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord, Hosanna in the highest." On the path from Bethany Jesus was hungry and saw a fig tree. He commanded that no one would ever eat from the fruit of this tree again. The tree withered and died.

Jesus traveled on to the temple in Jerusalem. He became enraged at the number of vendors selling and buying wares. Jesus overturned the tables of the moneychangers and those selling doves for sacrifice. He even stopped those trying to carry merchandise into the temple courts. It was the practice that people had to change their money to give at the temple and also bought doves in order to have a sacrifice. As Jesus was clearing out the temple the chief priests and teachers of the law were beginning to look for a way to kill him because they were afraid of him and the power he seemed to have over the people. The religious leaders continued to question Jesus about many things; they were looking for a way to trip Jesus up so that they could have him killed. The Passover and the Feast of Unleavened Bread were only two days away and the religious leaders were still looking for a sly way to arrest Jesus and kill him.

Judas approached the chief priests and asked what he would be given if he agreed to betray Jesus. They gave him thirty (30) pieces of silver. Thus the plot thickens.

On the first day of the Feast of Unleavened Bread Jesus instructed the disciples to go into the city and find a man carrying a jar of water. The man was to be told Jesus was coming to eat the Passover meal and where could they eat. The man led them to a large upper room, furnished and ready. The disciples prepared for the Passover meal. As evening came Jesus arrived with the 12 disciples. Here Jesus revealed to all of the disciples that one of them would betray him and another would deny him three times before the rooster cried at dawn. Jesus broke the bread and shared the Last Supper with him. He also passed the cup for them to drink. Jesus reminded them that the bread was symbolic of his body soon to be broken; the wine would represent his blood, shed for us. It is interesting that Jesus continued to serve Judas and Peter even though he knew they would both betray him. This shows that Jesus will forgive us anything as long as we are one of his children.

Jesus led the disciples to Gethsemane so that he could pray. Jesus asked Peter, James and John to keep watch for him. Jesus went deeper into the garden and prayer. Here he agonized over what was about to happen to him. He asked God to spare him and let this cup pass from him. Returning to Peter, James and John Jesus found them asleep. Jesus awoke them and asked them if they couldn't stay awake for one hour to water for Jesus. This happened three times before Jesus began to lead them from Gethsemane. As the soldiers and Judas approach Jesus comments that here comes his betrayer. Judas kissed Jesus on the cheek as a signal to the guards. These guards seized Jesus and arrested him. One of Jesus' followers grabbed a sword and cut off the ear of a soldier. Jesus told them not to be rebellious and they all fled.

The soldiers took Jesus to the high priest and held a "trial". People falsely testified against Jesus so that it would appear he had broken the law. During this time it came true that Peter would deny knowing Jesus or traveling with him. He denied Jesus three times before the rooster crowed that morning had come.

Early in the morning the chief priests, elder, teachers of the law and the whole Sanhedrin decided to hand Jesus over to Pilate to be tried. Jesus was taken to Antonia Fortress to be tried by Pilate. Pilate (a Roman) could find no real reason to crucify Jesus but the Jews were so set on killing Jesus that Pilate was afraid they would turn on him if he refused. Pilate was aware that the Jewish leaders were jealous of Jesus and the power he had over the people. Pilate even suggested that he release Jesus and have Barabbas crucified instead. It was the custom at the Feast to release a prisoner so he hoped that they would allow him to release Jesus and take Barabbas instead. Barabbas had committed murder so he was considered a serious criminal. The crowd still insisted that they wanted Jesus crucified. Pilate symbolically washed his hands as if he were washing his hands of the whole situation.

When Judas saw that Jesus was condemned to die he became remorseful. Judas tried to return the money to the chief priests but they refused it. Judas went out and hung himself. After the chief priests saw Judas hanged they took the money and bought a potter's field as a burial place for foreigners. It was forbidden to put blood money into the treasury.

After flogging Jesus the soldiers led him away to the Palace. There a whole company of soldiers put a purple robe on him, and placed a crown of thorns on his head.

They did this in mockery because some felt Jesus wanted to be king. They repeatedly struck him on the head and spit on him. After a time they replaced the purple robe with Jesus' own clothes and led him away to Golgotha to be crucified. Jesus was forced to carry his own cross. The cross was a huge tree and was fashioned in the shape of a cross. Along the path Simon, a man from Cyrene, was forced to help Jesus carry the cross. When they arrived at Galgotha (The place of the Skull) Jesus was offered wine mixed with gall to drink, but Jesus refused it. After Jesus was nailed to the cross the soldiers divided up his clothes by throwing dice and gambling. They placed a sign on the cross that said: THIS IS JESUS, THE KING OF THE JEWS. This was only one more way to mock Jesus.

Two robbers were also crucified with Jesus. One was placed on his right, one on his left. When one of the robbers questioned Jesus about his salvation; Jesus promised that he would spend eternity in Heaven with God. He had confessed his sins and accepted that Jesus was his Savior.

During the afternoon on that Friday, it became suddenly dark. From the sixth hour until the ninth hour it was dark as night. At the ninth hour Jesus cried out "My God, why has thou forsaken me?" The soldiers again tried to give him some wine mixed with gall, but again Jesus refused it. Jesus cried out again and died. At that exact moment the veil in the temple that kept the common man from worshiping in the Holy of Holies was torn from the top to the bottom. This is symbolic because it had to be done by God since man would have ripped it from the bottom to the top. This is another reason that the Campbells believed that Jesus wants all men to be able to receive communion. At the same time the earth shook and the rocks split open. Many believers that had died were raised to life. They came out of the tombs, and went into the holy city to talk to the people.

At evening a rich man, Joseph of Arimathea, a prominent member of council went to Pilate and asked for Jesus' body. Pilate was surprised that Jesus was already dead. Usually it took two or three days for someone to die on the cross. Pilate agreed so Joseph bought some linen cloth, took down the body, wrapped it in the linen and placed it in a tomb cut out of the rock. He rolled a stone in front of the entrance. Mary Magdalene and Mary, Jesus' mother, saw where he had laid Jesus. This all happened on Friday.

When the Sabbath was over (early on Sunday), Mary Magdalene, Mary (Jesus' mother), and Salome bought spices so that they might go to anoint Jesus' body. This would be like taking flowers to the cemetery today. When they arrived at the tomb they noticed that the rock was rolled away and they looked inside. A young man dressed in a white robe informed them that they should not be alarmed because Jesus was risen and not here. The three women fled and were afraid. As they ran to tell the disciples, Jesus appeared to them and instructed them to tell the disciples to go to Galilee and they would see him.

What followed were accounts of Jesus appearing to various people over the next 40 days before he ascended to Heaven.

## **Procedure**

- Go over background information. As this is done Check out handout 63-1 and 63-2. Handout 63-1 gives you the harmony of the Gospels so that it can be looked up if you wish. It also lists it by day. Handout 63-2 is a map of the area in and around Jerusalem so that they can follow the path of the week's events. 63-3 is for fun.
- Handouts 63-4 and 63-5 give you additional information about how each symbol relates to Easter.