

Holy Week at Home

Simple steps for sharing faith with your children

Dear parents,



This year, Holy Week ceremonies and Easter Masses will not be accessible as usual. But that doesn't put a stop to our Catholic faith celebrations.

Parents are urged to do all they can to celebrate these special days with their children at home. After all, the home is the 'domestic church' and parents are the 'first teachers' of their children.

So, let's all draw deeply from our spiritual reservoirs, perhaps rekindling our sense of Catholic identity, and make this Easter a wonderful, memorable experience for our families!

Ideas and suggestions follow, which can be adapted to your unique family and household setting (and attentive to the latest Coronavirus advice). Enjoy!

Catholic Schools Office, Broken Bay Diocese

Our journey to Easter



The week between Palm Sunday and Easter Sunday is called Holy Week.

On Thursday evening of [Holy Week](#) we begin three special days of reflection on the story of Jesus' suffering, death and resurrection. These days are called the Easter Triduum.

Special ceremonies are normally held in churches on Holy Thursday evening and Good Friday, leading to a great celebration of joy on Easter Sunday: Jesus has been raised from the dead! Alleluia!

This year, our homes will lead the way as places of prayer and celebration.

Palm Sunday



Palm Sunday is the beginning of Holy Week.

On Palm Sunday we remember that Jesus entered Jerusalem on a donkey, with crowds of people welcoming him with palms. They shouted ‘Hosanna!’, acknowledging God’s saving presence.

Yet the moment of euphoria did not last. Jesus had travelled to Jerusalem before, but this would be his last time. He would be betrayed, tried as a criminal, and executed in the Roman way: death by crucifixion.

Palm Sunday

Today, at home:

Find a palm-like branch in your backyard (or another symbol). Place it at your sacred space.

Read the Gospel story of Jesus entering Jerusalem:
[Matthew 21:1-11](#) (What feelings, thoughts and questions arose as you listened to this story?)

Learn a new word: *Hosanna!* ('The Lord saves us!')

Table topic: Share a time when you felt God was 'with' you, helping you, healing you, saving you.

Pray (or sing) together: "[Hosanna in the highest!](#) Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord. Hosanna in the highest!" (see Mt 21:9)



Monday of Holy Week

With your child, create a [garden space](#) for Holy Week and Easter. This might be a corner of the backyard, or a planter on the balcony. Over the coming week, play with your garden space, adding items like plants, rocks, sticks, candles, in keeping with flow of the Gospel stories:

- The garden of Gethsemane (Matthew 26:36-46)
- The tomb where Jesus' body was laid (Mt 27:57-61)
- The site where Jesus rose from the dead (Mt 28:1-10)



Tuesday of Holy Week

At home today, remember the most [vulnerable](#) people in our society.

Table topic: share good news stories of people and groups who [reach out](#) to families in material or spiritual need. Perhaps you are part of these community outreaches.

How can our family be a light for others?

Plan a family outreach. Even just an affirming email or phone call can lift somebody's spirits and reassure them that they are not alone.



Wednesday of Holy Week

Table topic: At the meal table, share experiences of moving through times of darkness to times of light and new life. (When did life seem 'dark' and how did things get better?)

Your stories might be drawn from your own lives, or from what you observe in the wider world.

Light a candle. Share your prayer intentions, and pray together the words of [Psalm 69:16](#):

'Lord, in your great love, answer me.'



Holy Thursday

Over a family meal, share bread and wine (or grape juice).

Read the words of Jesus at the Last Supper ([1 Cor 11:23-26](#)).

Remember the story.

Table topic: 'Our family is most loving when...'

Or:

'Who is one of the most selfless, loving people you know?' (What loving things do they say/do?)



Good Friday

Today, at home:

Eat simply, in keeping with the Lenten fast.

As a prayerful exercise with your child, make a rustic cross out of sticks, bark, string. Or draw one. Place it at your prayer space for Good Friday. (Keep your sacred space bare, except for your cross.)

Read together some or all of the story of Jesus' passion ([John 18-19](#)).

Remember Jesus carrying his cross. Pray for those who walk a difficult path through life.



'Crosses' by Harriet Perosin (2013)

Good Friday - more ideas

Today, at home, create your own family version of the Stations of the Cross (see 'Walking the Way' pp.71,74 or [click here](#)).

- Invite each family member to name [a time that was difficult, challenging](#). But, thank God, you came through it.
- Draw/make a cross to symbolise that precious story of 'dying and rising'.
- With all stories told, and crosses finished, place the crosses around your home. Walk from cross to cross, and pray a short prayer at each 'station' for somebody in need of our and God's healing love.

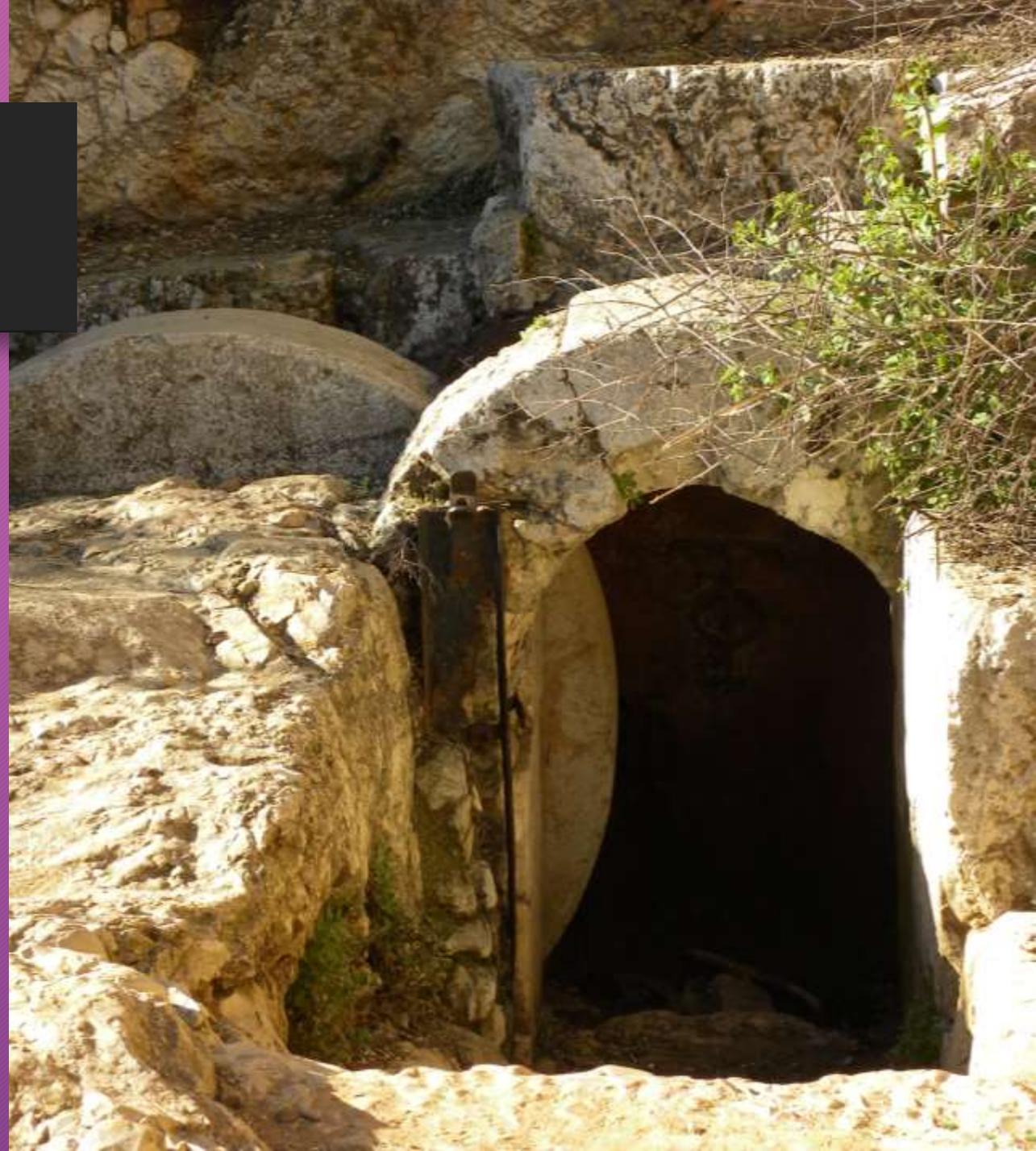


Holy Saturday

On Holy Saturday, enjoy gentle reflection and family time at home.

Take care not to make this a 'busy' day (although Easter preparations may be necessary later in the day).

- Create an atmosphere of quiet 'waiting'. (Or at least turn off the TV, laptop!)
- Keep your sacred space bare.
- Continue to eat simply today.
- Practise being gentler, kinder, more patient.
- Join in prayer: 'Loving God, open our hearts to your love and grace.'



Saturday evening

As sundown draws near, our anticipation and excitement build... Soon we will greet the Easter dawn and celebrate Jesus' [resurrection!](#)

Normally, our Catholic parishes commence Easter at the Saturday evening [Easter Vigil](#) - a celebration of fire and water and songs of praise!

This year, with Masses suspended, families are urged to celebrate meaningfully and creatively at home.

Next steps: Go to the 'Easter at Home' resource.



Final thoughts

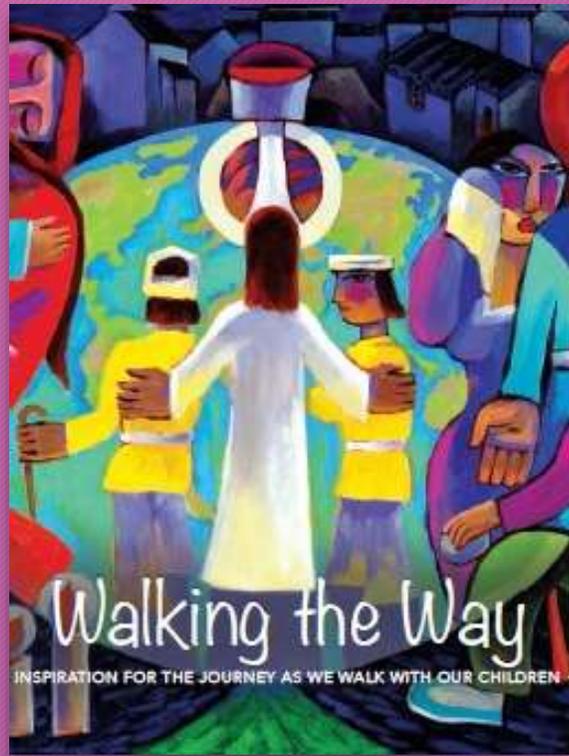


Remember:

- We are the Church.
- Our home is a holy place.
- Our table is a sacred gathering place.
- Our family Bible is the word of God.
- Our speech and actions shape the ‘domestic church’.
- And, as parent, I am the first teacher of my child in faith.

‘The Lord’s presence dwells in real and concrete families, with all their daily troubles and struggles, joys and hopes.’ (Pope Francis)

Walking the Way



The ideas within are from the “Walking the Way” parent formation initiative in Broken Bay schools. Resources for parents include a book, a website, a weekly e-Bulletin and (in usual times) parent reflection mornings and retreat days.

For further information, visit:

<http://walkingtheway.dbbcso.org/>

Further links

- [The Messy Parenting Project](#)
- [Cathfamily](#)
- [Young Catholic Mums](#)
- [Catholic Mom](#)
- [The Daily Awareness Examen](#) (reflecting on the day)
- [Marriage Resource Centre](#)
- [Good Grief](#) (support in times of loss and change)
- [Fatherhood resources](#)
- [Pray at Home](#)
- Note: The Broken Bay [Children's Sacramental Program](#) is purpose-built for home-learning. If you have a copy at home, you may like to explore it for faith-sharing ideas.