

Lent/Easter 2021

A JOURNEY TO KING'S CROSS

Route

VIA MARKS GOSPEL

Valid until: ETERNITY Price: TAKE UP YOUR CROSS



the
devotional

HOW TO DO AN 8-MINUTE FAMILY DEVOTION

'Start children off on the way they should go, and even when they are old they will not turn from it.' Proverbs 22:6

'Hear, O Israel: the Lord our God, the Lord is one. Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength. These commandments that I give you today are to be on your hearts. Impress them on your children. Talk about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up.'
Deuteronomy 6:4-7

This devotional aims to help the whole family meet with Jesus by opening up the Bible and praying together. This booklet is designed to take out the hard work of planning, and also to equip parents to build on what the children will be learning at church on Sundays.

Mondays –Thursdays are designed to give you insight into the story that will be looked at the following Sunday. Friday will take you to a psalm or the words of a prophet and show how the passage points forward to Jesus.

This is a whistle-stop tour of Mark's Gospel ending at the crucifixion of Jesus – King's Cross. Your children can track your journey with the enclosed map.

STRUCTURE

Each session consists of:

- reading the passage (we suggest using either the NIV or Good News translations)
 - reading the explanatory paragraph expanding on the passage
 - asking a few questions designed to reinforce what was learnt
- finishing with a prayer, drawing on an aspect of the passage and lifting up the needs of the day, along with any other praise/ thank you/ sorry prayers

TOP TIPS:

- Find a regular time and place that works for everyone. Some people like to do it at bedtime, others prefer at the breakfast table.
- Have the Bible at hand, along with this booklet. If you have very young children, consider having a picture Bible too.
- QR codes – use the camera on your phone and scan it over the QR code, then click on the link it takes you to. These are optional extras, only if you have the time to watch the videos.
- You might want to download the 'Operation World' app, which helps give children a global perspective for their prayers. In our family, the children take it in turns to press the 'I'm Praying' button.

If you have any questions or feedback, please do not hesitate to get in touch.

David Simpson, Curate at HTB (david.simpson@htb.org)

PRAYER: TIPS FOR PARENTS

Our prayer as you go through this devotional series together is that it will help facilitate time for you all to meet with God and dig into His word. This time isn't just for the kids – be encouraged that as you work through each day's reading, you can create opportunities for everyone to encounter God in their own way, including you!

As parents and carers, know that God has perfectly positioned you in your family to help your kids become God-connected and not just God-smart. A God-smart child knows all the answers – they know how to 'do church' as part of the crowd and what to say and do, but they might not know what an everyday relationship with God looks like. A God-connected child is communicating with God throughout the day and has a thriving two-way relationship with him. You have the ability to show your kids what that looks like by giving them windows into your own relationship with God, sharing honestly about how you meet with God and do life alongside Him in the mundane, normal bits of life. Have fun with it, and don't worry if it feels a bit messy.

Here are some ideas that might help you facilitate praying:

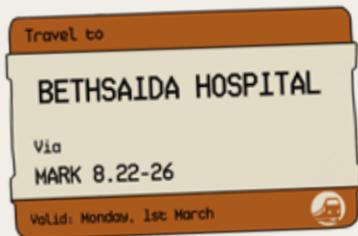
- As a family, come up with interesting questions/topics to talk to God about – make them little things as well as big things. Talking to God about your favourite sandwich filling as well as asking Him to heal a family member helps kids understand that God can be approached for all of life's situations.
- If feeling shy, under-fives might prefer to whisper into their hands when praying to God. Reassure them that God can hear the quietest of voices.
- Explore with your child the different ways people catch God's voice. It's not usually by hearing a booming voice in their ear! It may be a thought, a feeling, a mental picture, a wise word from someone else or a Bible verse.
- Look for opportunities to ask God questions, and pay attention to anything He might be saying.
- Also consider using practical ways to spend time with God. For example, ride your bikes with God and pray for the people you see, make a prayer walk in the garden or blow bubbles and think about each 'pop' being an 'Amen' to a prayer.

Further tools to help connect everyday life with God are available here: parentingforfaith.org

Lauren Sheath, Head of Kids at St Peter's Brighton



Spotify Family Playlist for 'Journey to King's Cross'



MONDAY 1 MARCH

THE HEALING THAT TOOK

TWO GOES, MARK 8:22-26

Read the Bible passage

So far, the disciples have seen that Jesus is the King. He has power and authority – He’s healed people and forgiven sins, and in other passages He calms storms and walks on water.

In this passage, a blind man is brought to Jesus in a town called Bethsaida. Jesus spits on the man’s eyes and the man gets some of his sight back: ‘I see people; they look like trees walking around’ (v24). Jesus then touches him again and his sight is fully restored: ‘and he saw everything clearly’ (v25). Is this because Jesus didn’t have the power the first time to heal? Probably not. He never takes two goes at healing anywhere else. Jesus then tells the man to keep it a secret. Remember this story as we see what happens tomorrow – it might help us understand it!

QUESTIONS TO DISCUSS:

What sort of power does Jesus have? *Power to heal people, power to forgive sins, power to calm storms and much more. He has power only God has.*

What happens the first time Jesus touches the man’s eyes? *The man receives some of his sight – people look like trees (v24).*

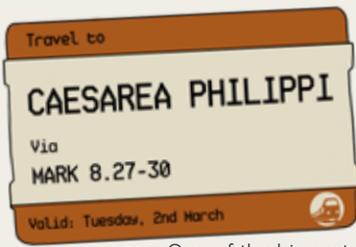
What happens the second time Jesus touches the man’s eyes? *The man receives all of his sight (v25).*

PRAY

Ask God to help us to see clearly who Jesus is.



Healing in two stages
Watch a retelling of the story.



TUESDAY 2 MARCH

PETER'S CONFESSION, MARK 8:27-30

Read the Bible passage

One of the biggest questions everyone must answer is 'who is Jesus?'.

Jesus now asks His disciples this question: 'who do people say I am?'. The disciples respond: 'Some say John the Baptist; others say Elijah; and still others, one of the prophets' (v28). Jesus then asks - 'what about *you*? (v29).

Peter responds, 'You are the Messiah' (v29). He was right: Jesus is *The* Messiah.

To understand that Jesus is the Messiah means that Peter understands Jesus is the Anointed Rescuing King who was promised from long ago. This understanding can only come from God showing it to him - no one else had realised Jesus was the Messiah.

When God shows someone who Jesus is, we call it *revelation*. Only the Holy Spirit can show us who Jesus is; we cannot discover it by ourselves.

Might Peter be a little like the man who did not fully see? Let's see what happens tomorrow.

QUESTIONS TO DISCUSS:

Who did people think Jesus was? *John the Baptist raised again, Elijah or another prophet.*

Who did Peter understand Jesus was? *Jesus was the Messiah - the promised king who would rescue God's people.*

How did Peter understand? *God shows Peter - He reveals to Peter something he didn't know before.*

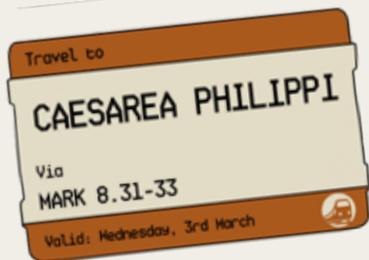
PRAY

Thank God that Jesus is the Messiah who comes to rescue us.



Messiah

The Bible Project explain what 'Messiah' means.



WEDNESDAY 3 MARCH

JESUS FORETELLS HIS DEATH AND RESURRECTION, MARK 8:31-33

Read the Bible passage

Straight after Peter declares that Jesus 'is the Messiah', Jesus goes on to teach His disciples that he *MUST* 'suffer... be rejected... be killed and after three days rise again' (v31). This was a total shock to Peter – his idea of the Messiah did not allow for suffering, rejection and death.

Peter is so surprised, he 'took [Jesus] aside and began to rebuke Him' (v32). Jesus then corrects Peter. Peter has a human understanding of the meaning of 'Messiah', not God's understanding. God's understanding is that the glory of being King only comes through suffering.

We now know why Mark put the healing of the blind man just before this passage: Peter had partial sight, but not full sight. Fully seeing who Jesus is means we understand He's the King, but a King who must suffer, die and then be raised again.

QUESTIONS TO DISCUSS:

What did Jesus say the Messiah must have done to Him? *The Messiah must suffer, be rejected, be killed and then rise again (v31).*

How did Peter feel about this? *He rebuked Jesus because he thought the Messiah/ King didn't need to suffer.*

How is Peter like the blind man who was healed in two stages? *He understands partially who Jesus is, but not fully. He needs Jesus to give him full sight – to understand that Jesus is the King who MUST suffer. He's also told to keep it a secret after receiving full sight.*

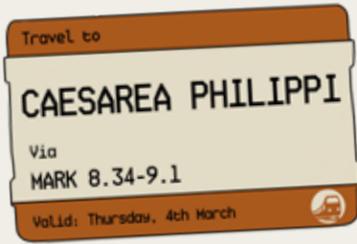
PRAY

Ask God to give us insight by the Holy Spirit to fully understand who Jesus is.



'That's My King'

Jesus is a different kind of King - but what a King!



THURSDAY 4 MARCH

FOLLOWERS OF JESUS FOLLOW THE SAME PATH
TO GLORY THROUGH SUFFERING, MARK 8:34-9:1

Read the Bible passage

— Yesterday we heard the news from Jesus to Peter that the Messiah, the King, must suffer and die.

Jesus then calls His disciples to Him and says suffering is the way of Jesus: 'Whoever wants to be my disciple must deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me' (v34). Some people think that following Jesus means you'll have a trouble-free life. Jesus promises that those who follow Him must suffer – denying yourself and taking up a cross is a life of suffering.

However, Jesus says that in the process, those who 'lose their life for me and for the gospel will save it' (v35). Many Christians around the world face intense suffering for following Jesus. We will also suffer in various degrees too for following Jesus. But the promise is that we will have eternal life with Jesus that will be free of suffering.

QUESTIONS TO DISCUSS:

What did Jesus say His followers must do? *They must deny themselves (choose God's way rather than their own) and take up their cross. Christians will suffer.*

What does Jesus promise for those who take the way of the cross? *People who follow the way of the cross will receive eternal life, where there will be no suffering.*

Children, ask your parents what the cost of following Jesus has been for them. *PARENTS, share examples from your own life of persecution. Maybe also share stories of other Christians who have suffered because of their faith.*

PRAY

Pray for Christian brothers and sisters around the world to have strength to persevere in the midst of suffering.



Story of Brother Andrew

Watch the story of Brother Andrew smuggling Bibles to persecuted Christians.



FRIDAY 5 MARCH

ISAIAH'S SERVANT SONG, ISAIAH 50:4-7

Read the Bible passage *As you read the passage, ask your children to put up a hand when a part of the body is mentioned.*

The prophet Isaiah wrote four songs about a servant and here we read the third of those songs. Isaiah lived about 700 years before Jesus but wrote vividly about what Jesus would go through.

The game 'Guess Who?' makes you try and guess which character your opponent is by asking about their different features. In this 'servant song' we are told about the features of this servant. He has an '**instructed tongue**' (v4). This servant would be a great teacher and his words would help tired people. His **ear** listens to the God speaking to him (v4) and he fully obeys what God tells him (v5). His **back** is beaten (v6). The beard on his **cheeks** are pulled (v6). His **face** is laughed at and spat at (v6), but he sets his face like flint (v7) on his task.

The person Isaiah is describing is, of course, Jesus. Jesus' tongue uttered the best teaching known to humanity, His ear perfectly listened to God and obeyed, His back was beaten, His face was laughed at and spat at. This week, we have seen Jesus set his face like flint towards the cross – nothing is going to stop Him facing death so that He can win salvation for those He loves.

QUESTIONS TO DISCUSS:

How were some of Jesus' body parts described? *Cover some/all of the above.*

Who was Isaiah describing even though he never met Him, when he wrote it? *Isaiah was describing Jesus, despite living 700 years before.*

How can you use your body parts to serve God today? *Think up some creative ways - whether it is listening well to others/ God, speaking kindly to others or singing praise, using hands to help.*

PRAY

Thank God that Jesus was willing to suffer because He loves us.



Prophets

Watch how God spoke to his people through his prophets, like Isaiah.