

Holy Week Devotionals 2026

Parents of 1-6th grade kids: We encourage you to use these devotionals for your own growth first, and then to help your kids grow—just like the safety instructions on an airline flight: “secure your own oxygen mask before assisting others.” We suggest you use the main devotionals for your own study, and the “**For Families**” sections to guide your kids in a simpler look at the Holy Week story.

Friday

A Crowd, a Crown, and a Cross

Thursday night was long and sleepless. All through the night, Jesus was interrogated and accused of blasphemy by the leaders of the Jews, who should have recognized him as their king. Even Peter, the boldest disciple, had lied three times to a few stragglers, denying that he knew Jesus. By the time morning came, exhaustion must have already been setting in. But the day was just beginning.

Jerusalem was run by the Romans, who kept a fragile peace with the Jews. The local governor, Pilate, had a tradition of setting a prisoner free to please the crowds gathered for Passover. When the leaders of the people brought Jesus to Pilate Friday morning, he found himself with a choice - offer the crowd this Jesus, or a different one; Jesus Barabbas, a well-known prisoner. The chief priests worked the crowds and made sure that when the time came, they would scream for Barabbas, not the Messiah, to be released, and they would demand for Jesus to be crucified. The scene couldn't be more different from Sunday, when disciples and supporters surrounded Jesus to escort him toward the city in a royal procession. Today, the crowd cried “His blood be on us, and on our children!” (Matthew 27:25). Less than a week ago, Jesus' followers had welcomed him as the king who had come to save them; today, soldiers crowned him with thorns, and treated him like a joke. Jesus was nailed to a cross. It was the most painful and most shameful way the Romans had devised to execute someone. Before he died, Jesus cried out loudly, “Eli, Eli, lema sabachthani?” It was the first line of a psalm, “My God, my God! Why have you abandoned me?”

Read: Matthew 27:1-62

1. What do you think the people who loved and believed in Jesus were feeling through the day on Friday as Jesus was mocked and crucified?
2. In Matthew 27, what stands out to you about the way Jesus responded to Pilate, the soldiers, and the crowds?

For Families:

Read together: Matthew 27: 11-54

1. Who was the criminal who was released instead of Jesus?
2. What did the crowd shout as Jesus stood before Pilate?
3. Could Jesus have come down from the cross if He wanted to? Why didn't He save Himself?
4. When Jesus died, what happened to the veil in the temple?