

# A Week called Holy

ENTER THE MYSTERY...  
of Christ's Suffering,  
Death and Resurrection

Ideas for celebrating Holy Week with Young People—in School or in Church

## The Big City

A Drama/School Assembly for Holy Week

Voice Welcome to *The Big City!* And here's your host . . . It's Matt Ropolis!

Matt Hello this is *The Big City!* The TV Programme that lets you know what's happening in the Big City. We go to the Big City so you don't have to! Tonight on *The Big City* we take a peek at Jerusalem, a city which welcomes thousands of visitors every year. And, as usual, we have our roving reporter Mike Less. So what's happening in the Big City tonight, Mike?

Mike Well, you've caught us at a very special time of year. It's the holiday season in Jerusalem. Thousands of people have travelled far and wide to celebrate the Passover Holiday.

Matt So lots going on there? Any strange or amusing anecdotes to tell?

Mike Well, yes! We had a bit of an incident yesterday. Some important person arrived.

Matt Tell us about this V.I.P., Mike

Mike Well apparently it was a King.

Matt A King?! I expect he arrived with a splendid cortege? What was it? A Rolls Royce? A stretch Limousine?

Mike No - a donkey!

Matt A donkey?

Mike Yep a donkey!

Matt Strange King, Mike!

Mike Well there was a great sense of hysteria in the city when he arrived. Lots of pushing and shouting. At one stage the police had to engage in a bit of crowd control.

Matt So where is he now? I suppose he's taken the Penthouse suite in The Jerusalem Hilton?

Mike No—apparently he's taken private accommodation. He was last seen in a small upstairs room.

Matt Is that where he'll be celebrating the Passover?

Mike It looks like it, Matt

Matt Some King!

Mike Yeh - we're getting the feeling that he's a different kind of King. He seems a bit more down to earth than other kings we've known in the past!

Matt And what do we know about him?

Mike Well, apparently, and this is only rumour remember, he's actually a descendent of King David, so in a way it's kind of ironic that he should have such a welcome in his own city!

Matt Well I'm sure we'll be coming back to you later in the programme to find out the latest.

And we'll also be discovering how the Religious leaders will be spending this Passover and how the Restaurants are coping with the crowds!

### Explanation

On Palm Sunday, Jesus rode into the City of Jerusalem. Crowds of people were there to welcome him. There was excitement in the air.

This is how the Gospel of Mark tells the story:

*When they were approaching Jerusalem, at Bethphage and Bethany, near the Mount of Olives, he sent two of his disciples and said to them, "Go into the village ahead of you, and immediately as you enter it, you will find tied there a colt that has never been ridden; untie it and bring it. If anyone says to you, 'Why are you doing this?' just say this, 'The Lord needs it and will send it back here immediately.'" They went away and found a colt tied near a door, outside in the street. As they were untying it, some of the bystanders said to them, "What are you doing, untying the colt?" They told them what Jesus had said; and they allowed them to take it. Then they brought the colt to Jesus and threw their cloaks on it; and he sat on it. Many people spread their cloaks on the road, and others spread leafy branches that they had cut in the fields. Then those who went ahead and those who followed were shouting, "Hosanna! Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord! Blessed is the coming kingdom of our ancestor David! Hosanna in the highest heaven!" Then he entered Jerusalem and went into the temple; and when he had looked around at everything, as it was already late, he went out to Bethany with the twelve.*  
(Mark 11:1-11)

This takes place on a Sunday. But on Thursday evening he is arrested under cover of darkness and put on trial. By Friday morning he is sentenced to death, and the crowds who had cheered him on only days before were now crying for his blood.

So today we realise that Jesus doesn't conform himself to the standards of this world. He is a king, but a different kind of King. Today we realise how fickle people can be. One minute, they are excited by Jesus, the next they call for his death. Today we realise what Jesus did to show us how much he loves us. Today we remember, too, that although Jesus gives himself over humbly, he rises from the dead with glory.

### Prayer

God,  
As we think about the events of this Holy week, help us to fix our eyes firmly on Christ

And not to be fickle in following him.  
Help us to live by his standards  
and not to try to live up to the standards of this world.  
We ask this in Jesus name.  
Amen.

## Breakfast News

### A Drama/Assembly for Holy Week

#### Characters:

Anna Fudd Newsreader (sat behind a newsdesk)  
Dan Reporter (to left of stage)  
Derek Weatherman (to right of stage)  
Reverend Knowitall - Religious Expert (sat at newsdesk)

Anna Good Morning. Welcome to Breakfast News. I'm Anna Fudd. News is breaking as we speak and so we go straight over to our reporter who's expecting an important arrival in the city

Reporter Yes Anna. We are awaiting a rather important King to the city today. His arrival has been expected for some time now and there's been a great deal of excitement around. And there is . . . hang on . . . I don't believe this. There appears to be . . . yes I think it is . . . yes . . . it's a man on a donkey.

Anna Well, I must apologize for my colleague there. He seems to have gone quite mad! I thought you said you were expecting a King!

Reporter Yes . . .but he appears to be a different kind of king. The crowds seem to like him anyway.

Anna What's the situation there at the moment, Dan.?

Reporter Well the crowd is getting quite hysterical. I haven't seen scenes like this in a long time.

Anna So he's obviously very popular with the people despite his interesting mode of transport. Do keep us informed. And now over to Derek with the weather.

Weather Things are bright and breezy over Jerusalem, at the moment. The sun is shining but there's a slight chill early evening. Anna.

Anna And now back to Dan, who's on the scene at Jerusalem.

Reporter Yes, there's been a rather dramatic turn of events. King Jesus was enjoying a meal with his friends in very intimate and humble surroundings in a small upstairs room of a house. It's reported that they went for a stroll along the mountain top and were accosted by a group of soldiers who arrested him. He was taken to the governor's house for questioning.

Anna What are the charges brought against him, Dan?

Reporter At this moment, we're not quite sure. We've had no word from inside the governor's house, but it appears that Jesus is still being questioned by the authorities as we speak. We're expected to have a statement any moment. Hang on...it's just coming through. . . Jesus, yes . . . Jesus has been arrested, it has been confirmed. He has

been put on trial, and is receiving his sentence. Oh this is bad. This is very bad. This is unprecedented. He 's been sentenced to death.

Anna Very disturbing events there. Thank you, Dan. We'll get back to you later. with an update. Now over to the weather.

Derek There's a slight chill in the air in Jerusalem at the moment.

Anna Thank you. Well, back to the main headline. Jesus has risen in popularity over the last few months but his popularity has brought with it some controversy and opposition. He's run up against the religious and civil authorities. Despite healing many people and being a very loving and compassionate person he seems to have come to very unfortunate circumstances. Now we go over to Dan with an update on events

Reporter *(more solemn)* Anna, at mid morning Jesus was seen to be carrying his instrument of execution through the streets of Jerusalem. He reached the hill, nicknamed by locals as 'The Place of the Skull', and there he was nailed to a cross. At 3 p.m. this afternoon he died. *(Pause)* Back to you in the studio.

Anna *(lost for words)*. Over to the weather.

Weather Well there's been a rather freak incident all across the land. Things went dark and cold at about 3 p.m this afternoon. We can't really explain what happened. There seems to be no natural explanation. We weren't expecting an eclipse. But things are rather frightening out there. Our advice: stay indoors until things improve.

Anna Well, we have with us our religious expert, the Reverend Knowitall. Reverend Knowitall, How do you explain the situation surrounding the death of this King, Jesus?

Reverend Well, obviously Jesus upset many people. Maybe they were jealous or felt threatened in some way.

Anna But who is responsible for his death?

Reverend I think we all have a part to play in his death. We have all failed in so many ways. Jesus was extremely compassionate and loving. His whole life witnessed to God's love for us. Unfortunately, there have been times when we rejected his love. I think what his death proves is how much he really loves us. You see: he loves us to death.

Anna It's not very good news is it?

Reverend Well today is a very dark day. But the news is good in the sense that we have finally realized the extent to which God loves us. Who knows, in years to come, the day on which he died, may even come to be known as Good Friday?!

Anna So that's the end of that, then?

Reverend Oh no. There's plenty more to come. Jesus predicted that he would overcome death and rise again.

Anna So we can expect some more news to break soon then?

Reverend Yes, we certainly haven't heard the last of Jesus.

### **A Prayer:**

We've all heard the news:  
Jesus died for us.  
But sometimes we forget what that means.

We have some bad news:  
We have done wrong things and not lived up to what  
God wants of us.

But the good news is:  
Jesus came to rescue us from all that is bad and make  
us unhappy.

May we share this news with others  
and bring the headlines of Jesus love  
and his victory over sin and death  
to the whole world.

We ask this through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

## **Symbols of Suffering**

### *An Idea for Assembly or Prayer Service*

*This idea can either be used as one assembly or prayer time, or can be split up over a number of days, particularly for the first few days of Holy Week.*

*If you have a small group of people, arrange them in a circle with a large space in the middle.*

Begin with a song such as **The Servant King**

*You could play some reflective instrumental music in the background, whilst the following words are said. The item could be carried in turn and placed in a central position where all can see. The short prayer for each item is a suggestion. You could even sing a verse of a hymn or chorus between each item. Do whatever is appropriate to your circumstances and the age of the young people.*

### **Branch**

On Palm Sunday, Jesus is welcomed by the crowds into Jerusalem. They wave branches like banners and place their coats on the road like a red carpet.

*Lord Jesus, help us to greet you with joy and happiness.*

### **Bowl and Jug of Water, Towel**

On Maundy Thursday, Jesus sat down with his friends and followers and did the unbelievable. He washed their feet. It was a sign of his love for them. And he commands them and us to do the same.

*Lord Jesus, help us to serve others and put your love into action.*

### **Bread and Wine**

On Maundy Thursday, Jesus sat down with his friends and followers for a meal. And in the meal, he broke bread and poured wine, 'This is my body,' he said, 'This is my blood.' He was offering himself to them.

*Lord Jesus, help us to see your presence in our lives.*

### **Coins**

On Maundy Thursday Judas handed Jesus over. He was given thirty pieces of silver.

*Lord Jesus, help us to remain faithful to you.*

### **Rope**

Jesus is put on trial. He is questioned, beaten, spat at, teased and whipped. He is a prisoner. Badly Treated.

*Lord Jesus, help us to stand up for people who are treated unjustly.*

### **Crown of Thorns and Purple Garment**

The soldiers teased Jesus. Because he said he was a king, they dressed him up. They made a crown out of thorns and placed a purple robe on him. They tried to make him look silly. Little did they know that Jesus was a King, but not the kind of King they had come to know.

*Lord Jesus, help us to stand up for people who are bullied and teased.*

### **Cross**

Jesus is sentenced to death on the cross. But he has to carry the wood all the way through the city to the place of execution outside.

*Lord Jesus, help us to see the importance of the Cross in our daily lives.*

### **Hammer and Nails**

Jesus is nailed to the cross. Crucifixion is a terrible public execution. Jesus hangs on the cross, in the middle of two thieves.

*Lord Jesus, help us not to be scared, even when confronted by the tragedies and horrors in the world today*

### **Stick with sponge**

Jesus said, 'I'm thirsty'. The soldiers offered him a sponge soaked in Vinegar.

*Lord Jesus, help us to help others who thirst after you.*

### **White Linen Cloth**

His body is removed from the cross and wrapped in a linen cloth and placed in a tomb. He is given a hurried burial.

*Lord Jesus, help us to keep our eyes firmly fixed on you and to look for your risen life, even when all we see is death and destruction.*

### **Candle**

Some women went to the tomb on Sunday to anoint the body. When they got there they discovered that the tomb was open. Jesus was alive!

*Lord Jesus, help us to live as Easter People, confident of your presence everywhere.*

### **A Prayer:**

Lord Jesus,

here are the symbols of your suffering  
of your death,  
and of your Resurrection.  
Help us to see signs of your presence today  
in those who suffer,  
In those who are persecuted  
In those who are treated unjustly.

Help us to see signs of your Resurrection  
even when things are dark and scary. Amen.

## Bread of Life!

*Maundy (or Holy) Thursday is the day when Jesus gave us the Eucharist, when he gave us the command to 'Do this is remembrance of me.' Since that evening, the church has always met together to break bread and discover Jesus in the Eucharist. These prayers are given as a resource to help you explore the meaning of the Eucharist. They are appropriate for use at a celebration of the Eucharist or as an assembly or study/prayer group on the theme*

### God, I'm Hungry!

#### Voice 1

God, I'm hungry.  
I was late for school this morning and had no time for breakfast.  
The only thing in the cupboard anyway was a Pop Tart and well...I think you understand why I didn't grab it on the way. Mind you they've gotta be nicer than a 'Nutri grain' bar!  
My mother was shouting after me, telling me that breakfast was the most important meal of the day – but I had a bus to catch!  
And now I'm sat here – my stomach making strange gurgling noises, and all I can think about is food.  
Chips and Burger, Pasta bake and Pizza, Curry and Rice, even the Salad Bar sounds appetising today!

God, I'm hungry.  
I'm starving!  
My mother always tells me off for saying 'I'm starving!' 'You don't know what it's like to be starving!' she says.  
And then she goes off on a lecture about Africa and children with flies on their face.

God, I'm hungry!  
It's amazing how much money and time we spend on food, or thinking about food, cooking food, watching food on the tele...even chefs are celebrities these days!

Oh...there goes my stomach again....

God, I'm hungry!  
I'm hungry. People say that all the time, though. Not just for food, but for all kinds of things. Like...  
Hungry for justice, hungry for fairness and equality in the world, hungry for peace, hungry for love, hungry for money, hungry for revenge, hungry for a quiet life, hungry for an exciting life, the list goes on and on. We are hungry for so many things.

God, I'm hungry!  
And what do you do, when people say they're hungry?  
You offer them Jesus.

A strange thing to do, I think.  
I'm gonna have to think about that one.  
I'm gonna have to give that some deep thought:  
that Jesus fills our hunger.

God, we're hungry!  
We live in a hungry world.  
Where we hunger for so many things.  
We're hungry, God.  
God, we're hungry.

#### Voice 2

God our Father,  
Jesus said, 'I am the bread of life.'

Give us this bread that we may be filled with your life.  
As we offer you our hunger,  
fill and sustain us,  
nourish us with your presence  
and help us to share this bread with others.

Give us an appetite for your love  
an appetite for justice,  
an appetite for peace,  
an appetite for healing,  
an appetite for your kingdom,  
so that the whole world may be full of your presence.

We ask this through the same Jesus Christ our Lord.  
**Amen.**

### God, I'm Full!

God, I'm full!  
Stuffed. Satiated. Packed out.  
Full up! I can't eat any more!  
I couldn't eat another thing!  
I couldn't even manage that last bit of cheesecake!  
I think I've over done it!  
I'm never gonna eat again!

I love food, and sometimes, Lord, I pig out and eat too much! I stuff my face! I really enjoy it!

I know that Jesus had a lot to say about food! Well, he talked about food a lot, anyway! Maybe there's something in that!

Maybe following Jesus is like eating a meal!

Sometimes, I follow Jesus whole-heartedly like having a full three-course meal! I feast on it! I take a great big bite out of it!

And other times I play about with it like food on a plate, not really that interested or enthusiastic!

Sometimes, I miss a meal, and don't even realise it, like I've lost my appetite for following Jesus altogether!

But thanks, God, for feeding us today.  
Thanks for this great meal.  
Thanks for this Eucharist.  
Thanks for feeding us with Jesus, the bread of life.

May we leave here full of Jesus' presence with an appetite for life, and all that you want us to do. Amen.