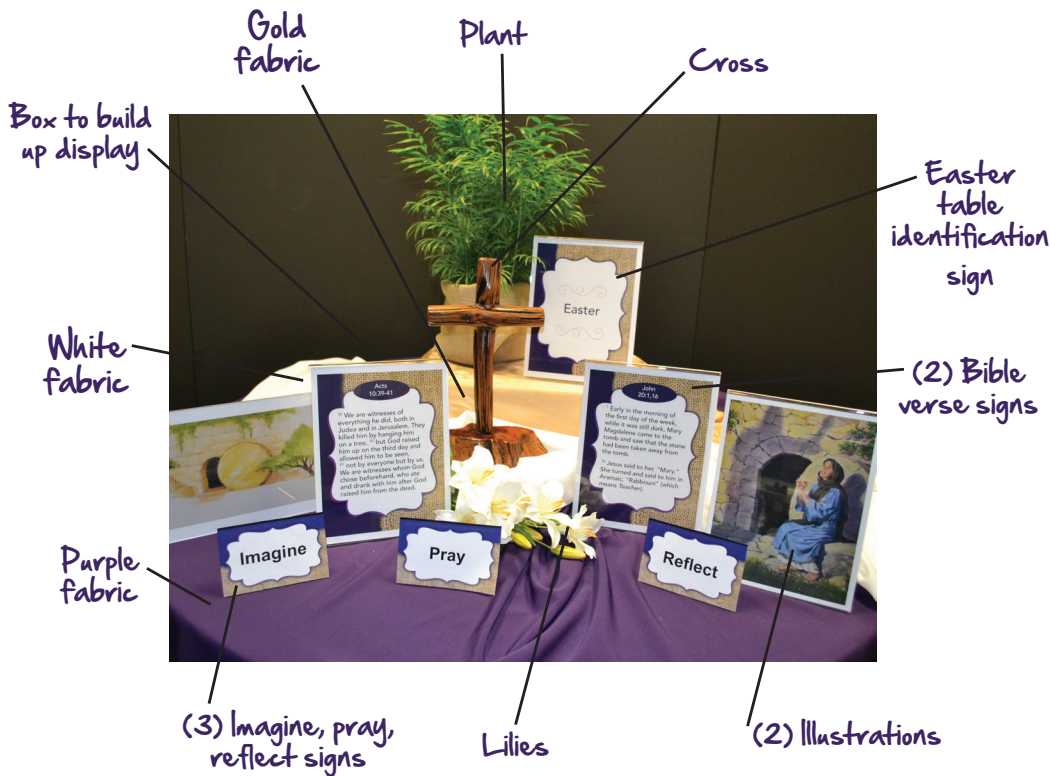


Easter Display Instructions



Tone: Easter celebrates the resurrection of Jesus and the triumph over sin and death. Jesus is alive! Mary and the others are surprised to see the empty tomb. At first Mary is concerned that someone has moved Jesus' body.

Notes: In the John passages, Mary comes to the tomb early in the morning while it is still dark. The tomb is open and Jesus' body is gone. She runs to get Simon Peter and the other disciple who come and see that it is just as she said: Jesus' body is gone! After they leave, Mary encounters Jesus and after he says her name she recognizes him. Can you imagine the emotion of that moment? May each of us leave Easter worship excited and proclaiming, *Jesus is alive! He is risen indeed!*

Other symbols: Added to the table are cloths of gold and white (for royalty and purity). Lilies are a symbol of resurrection, and we've added a plant for more color. If you have space, other spring flowers and small flowering shrubs may be used for additional color. What is available in your plant hardiness zone will dictate what you can purchase and use (like forsythia, quince, lilacs). After Easter worship plan a trip into your community to share the plants. The old wooden cross used earlier in Holy Week is replaced with a free-standing cross. The illustrations are of the open tomb and Mary waiting outside.

Ash Wednesday Display Instructions

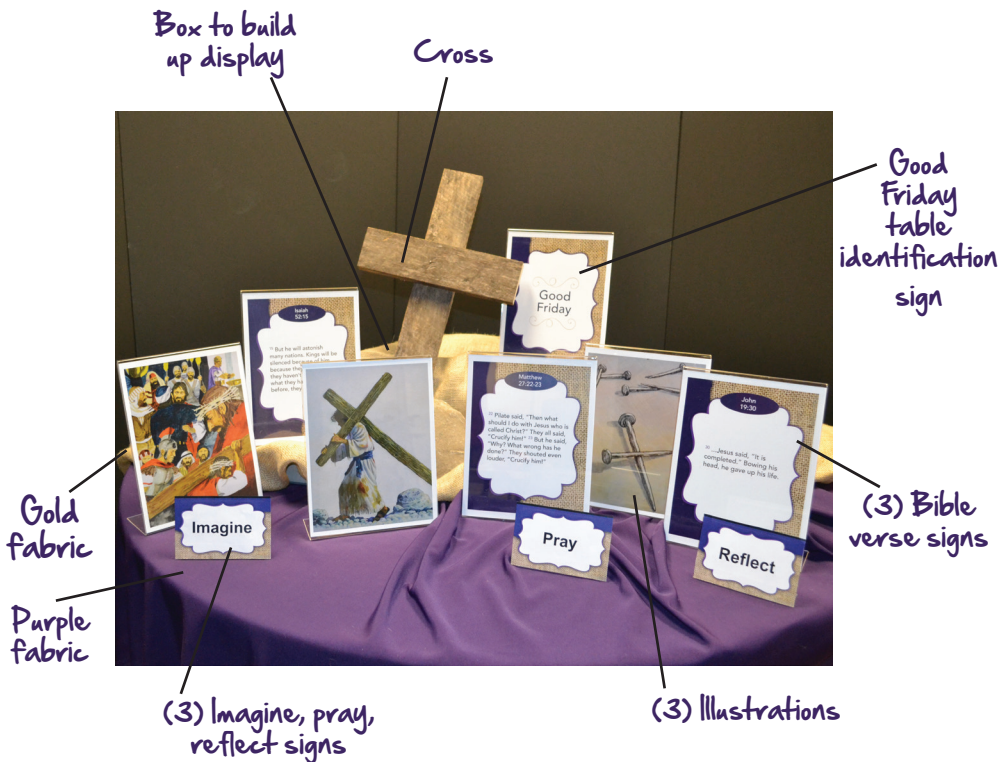


Tone: Ash Wednesday marks the beginning of Lent—which is a 40-day journey to Easter (not including Sundays, which are referred to as “little Easters”). During Ash Wednesday worship, we make a symbol of the cross on each person’s forehead with ashes. (Palms are saved from Palm Sunday to burn for ashes the next year.) The ashes are a symbol of our mortality and penitence. We are reminded during worship that we are dust and we will return to dust; we also acknowledge our sin.

Notes: In Joel the priests call the people to worship and fasting to renew their relationship with the LORD. The LORD still calls us today to return to our relationship. We are called to return home, to return to the LORD. When the people were sorrowful for sin or during mourning they would weep and tear their clothes. The Isaiah passage emphasizes that these outward signs can become only showy demonstrations for others to see if the inward changes have not occurred. The note at the beginning of Psalm 51 says, “A psalm of David, when the prophet Nathan came to him just after he had been with Bathsheba,” Ash Wednesday reminds each of us that only God can create a clean heart.

Other symbols: In the photo a palm cross reminds us that the ashes are from burned palm fronds saved from the previous Palm Sunday. The palm cross may be used as an alternative to having ashes on an open display area. Purple, representing penitence, is the color for Lent; burlap represents sackcloth, which, along with ashes was worn during times of sorrow, mourning, and penitence. The sand represents the wilderness (see Lent Display Instructions). A candle was added to this display as a symbol that God is with us even in our pain and suffering.

Good Friday Display Instructions



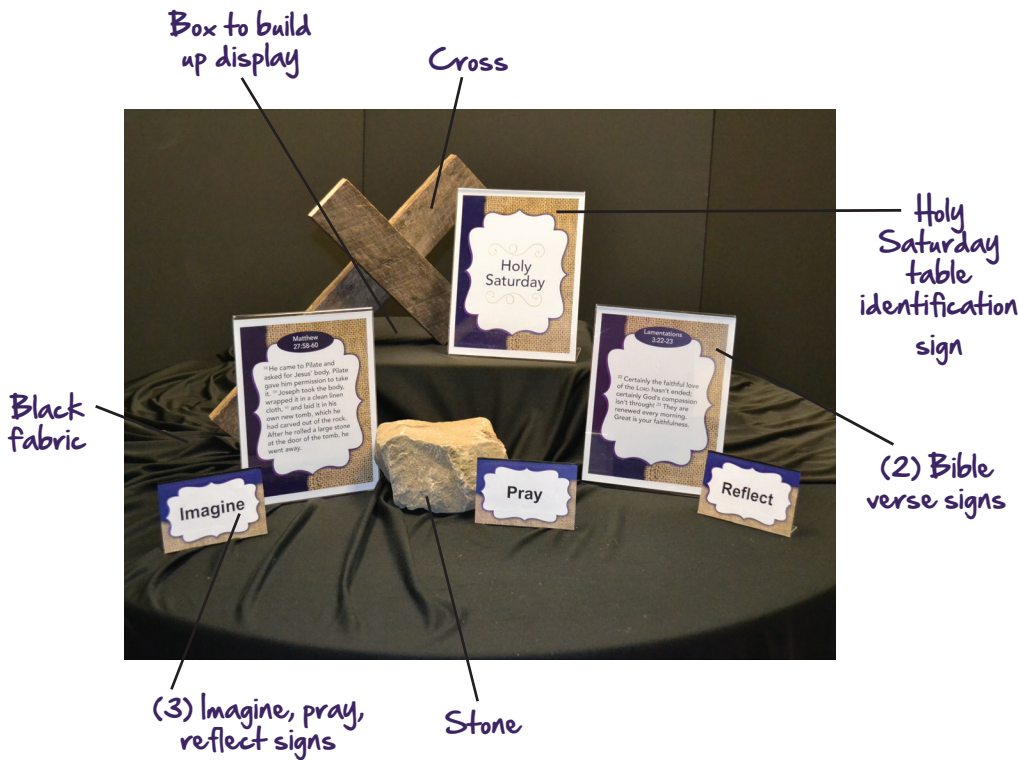
Tone: Good Friday is the day on which we remember Jesus' crucifixion. We know it is not the end of the story. God was moving, and continues to move, toward redemption and salvation for all.

Notes: The Isaiah and Matthew passages remind us that the servant we believe is Jesus astonished people. Pilate asks the crowd what Jesus has done wrong, to which they continue shouting back, "Crucify him!" The day's events move toward the cross where Jesus ultimately dies; the scenes are jarring and horrific.

For those who may have questions, have study tools available and assist them in finding the answers. Whenever possible, promote additional study and prayer to deepen understanding and encourage spiritual growth. Make sure everyone is invited to Easter worship.

Other symbols: In the photo the purple fabric is the color for Lent representing penitence; burlap represents sackcloth, which was worn during times of sorrow and mourning. *Your church may choose to use only black fabric representing death and mourning; you'll notice we've used it on Holy Saturday.* The are illustrations shown in the photo: the montage showing the betrayal, the garden arrest, trial, torture, and crucifixion; Jesus carrying the cross; and the nails.

Holy Saturday Display Instructions



Tone: On Holy Saturday we remember the day Jesus' body was in the tomb and the finality of death. We try to understand the great loss the disciples and followers were feeling, but we see it through resurrection eyes.

Some were in *disbelief* wondering how everything could have gone so wrong; others were *grieving* the loss of their LORD. Some may have felt the fear of what might happen next. The scene was chaotic. Their loss was very real and overwhelming.



Notes: A lament is a sad song; in Lamentations this verse is a reminder of God's faithfulness even when we experience pain and suffering. We wait for God to intervene. In Matthew, Joseph has to go to Pilate and request Jesus' body. Joseph will take the body to the final resting place, or so he thinks. Bodies after crucifixion were left on the crosses as a gruesome reminder of how awful the punishment could be for those who were at odds with the authorities or who broke the laws. Joseph took a risk to go and request Jesus' body. He never intended to use the tomb he'd carved so soon, especially for his LORD.

For those who may have questions, have study tools available and assist them in finding the answers. Whenever possible, promote additional study and prayer to deepen understanding and encourage spiritual growth. Make sure everyone is invited to Easter worship.

Other symbols: In the photo the black fabric represents death and mourning. The cross reminds us of the crucifixion that has occurred; the stone represents the sealed tomb that holds Jesus' body. Jesus is dead and buried.

Holy Thursday Display Instructions



Tone: Holy Thursday is the night we remember Jesus washing the feet of his disciples and the last meal they shared. The scene then shifts to Jesus in the garden before the arrest he is praying.

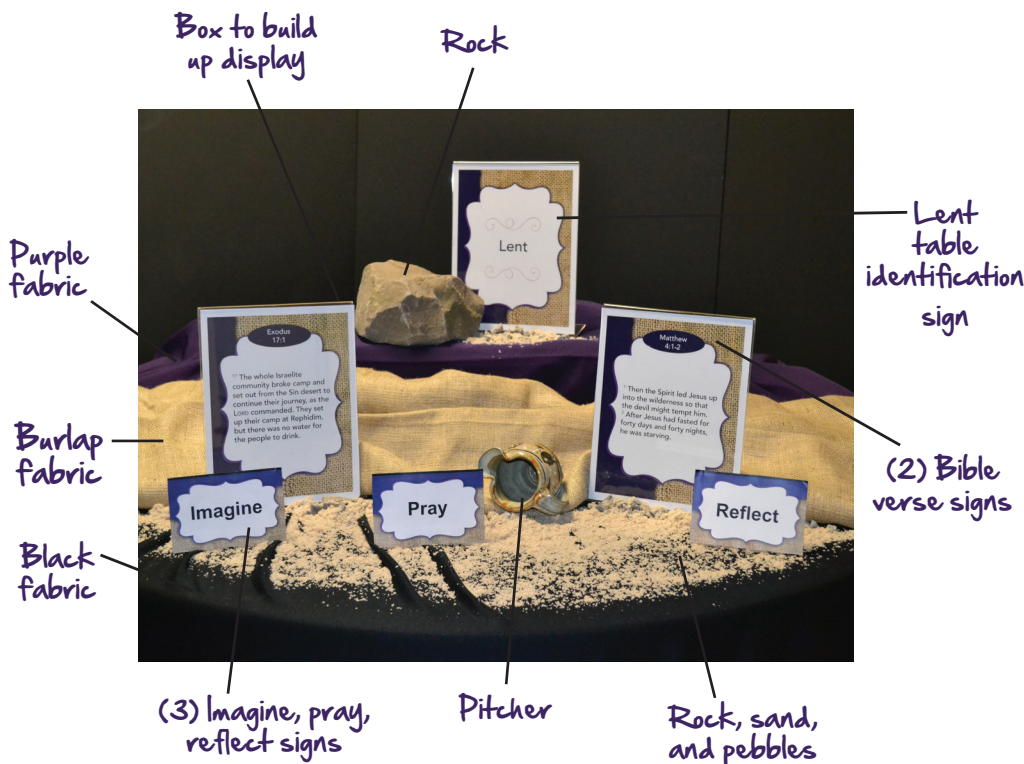


Notes: The Exodus passage is a reference to the Passover; in the passage from John's Gospel, Jesus begins washing the feet of the disciples. No one would have expected Jesus to do this, and Simon Peter argues with him about it. Later, Jesus tells them they must also wash each other's feet. A footwashing service can be a very moving and humbling experience. In the passage from Matthew, Jesus prays and asks that the cup of suffering be taken away. We've said prayers that God would relieve our suffering and pain, but to pray that will of the Father be done is much more of a challenge; it requires deep love and trust. Did the disciples fully understand what was going on? Probably not, and we don't either. There are mysteries that one day will be fully understood; until then we study, pray, and worship.

For those who may have questions, have study tools available and assist them in finding the answers. Whenever possible, promote additional study and prayer to deepen understanding and encourage spiritual growth. Make sure everyone is invited to Easter worship.

Other symbols: In the photo the fabric is purple, the color for Lent, representing penitence; burlap represents sackcloth, which was worn during times of sorrow and mourning. A bowl and pitcher represent Jesus washing the disciple's feet. A chalice and paten (cup and plate) represent the meal we celebrate in remembrance of Jesus. The illustrations shown in the photo are: the meals, Jesus washing a disciple feet, and Jesus in the garden.

Lent Display Instructions



Tone: Lent is a season of 40 days in preparation for Easter. The word "Lent" comes from *lencten*, which means "spring." Lent has traditionally been a time when candidates prepare for baptism on Easter. (In the early church, for those who had not lived as Christ's disciples, it was a time for penitence, restitution, and restoration.) Christians and churches today take this time for intentional study, prayer, fasting, and other spiritual practices to draw closer to God.

Notes: In the Exodus passage the Israelites are continuing their journey, but where they set up camp there is no water. Once again, they are faced with having to trust God to supply for their needs.

Wilderness experiences challenge us—they challenge our trust of God. No matter how long we've been on the journey our temptation will be to complain, become impatient, and then maybe try to fix things ourselves. In Matthew's Gospel, Jesus is in the wilderness being tempted by the devil, and he has just completed a 40-day fast.

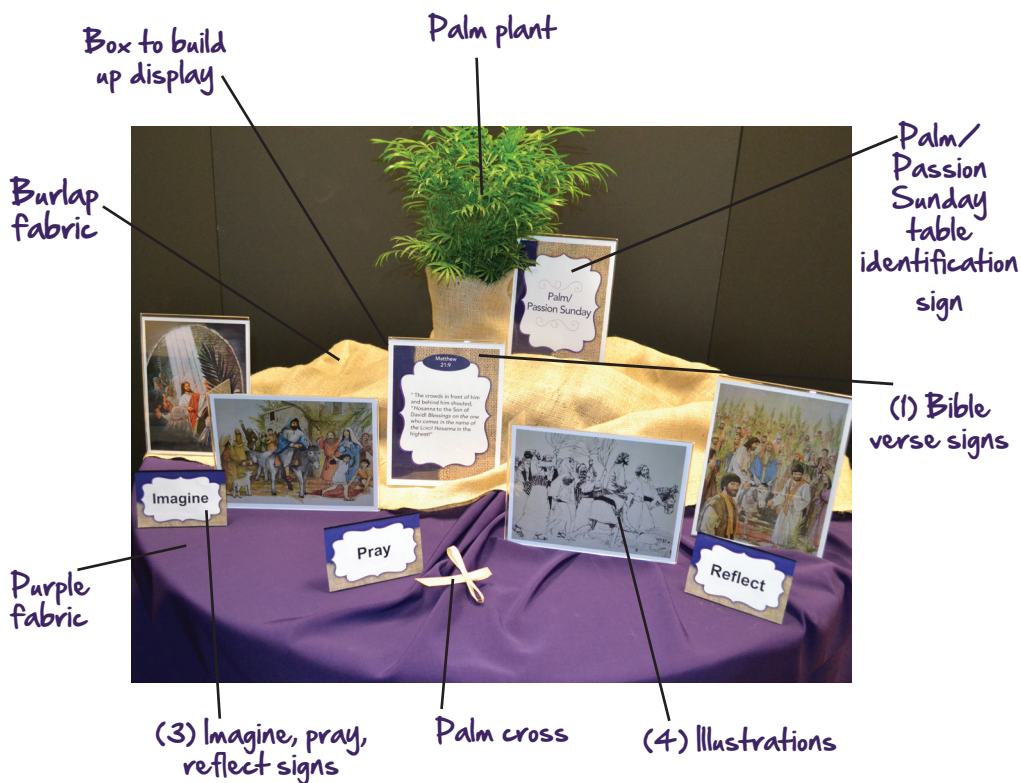
Blair Meeks writes: "In our society it is especially crucial that we reflect on the way Jesus expects disciples to live. Lent offers an opportunity to practice that alternate lifestyle by spending more time in personal devotion, engaging more

frequently in corporate worship, and working in mission projects; that is, it is a time for changing the way we do things." From *Season of Ash and Fire: Prayers and Liturgies for Lent and Easter*, Abingdon Press, 2003, page 17.

Lent and Easter stories can become so familiar that they become rote. Participating fully in Lent and Easter spiritual disciplines can help us see the stories with fresh eyes.

Other symbols: In the photo the fabric is purple, the color for Lent, representing penitence; burlap represents sackcloth, which was worn during times of sorrow and mourning. The small empty pitcher represents the lack of water the Israelites faced and Jesus' fast. The rock, sand, and pebbles represent the wilderness experiences we all face.

Palm/Passion Sunday Display Instructions



Tone: Palm/Passion Sunday begins with the crowds shouting praises to Jesus, who is entering Jerusalem, but the authorities and those in power are also nearby watching closely.

Laurence Hull Stookey writes: "The entry into the city is charged with irony, and it is about us as fully as it is about the people of ancient Jerusalem: Our faith, too, is fickle; we are the crucifiers of the One whose coming we have called 'blessed.' (Hence our withered palm branches will produce the dust applied to our foreheads next Ash Wednesday.) Jesus enters the city for one reason only: to die." From *Calendar: Christ's Time for the Church*, Abingdon Press, 1996, page 88.



Notes: In Matthew, Jesus enters Jerusalem on a donkey which is a service animal. Jesus arrives as a humble servant, not in the way that would be expected for a king. The crowd waves palm branches, laying them on the ground along with cloaks for the procession. The crowd shouts "Hosanna!" ("Save, please!") Some in this same crowd will shout "Crucify him!" on Friday.

Other symbols: In the photo the fabric is purple, the color for Lent, representing penitence; burlap represents sackcloth, which was worn during times of sorrow and mourning. A small palm plant is displayed on the table, as is a palm cross. There are four illustrations of Jesus riding a donkey. The black-and-white illustration (pen and ink) hints at the week ahead—Holy Week—which will include the arrest, trial, torture, and crucifixion of Jesus—a stark contrast to the palm waving and shouts of Hosanna today.