

# Maundy Thursday for Families

*This service is intended for families with young children. Three different experiences are included, and families may choose to conduct one or more of them.*

*Biblical stories may be read from any family Bible, though a children's Bible is preferable, and the Spark Story Bible is recommended.*

*Afterward, share pictures of your supper, foot-washing, or garden to the Children's Ministry Photos: <https://photos.app.goo.gl/M5UfnDpp3e5SnjWSA>*

## The Supper

*This experience involves a family meal around a table with readings and special prayers. The family may choose to prepare the simple meal together. When the family is gathered at the table and the food has been served, someone prays,*

Blessed are you, O Lord our God, King of the universe. You have blessed the earth to bring forth food to satisfy our hunger. Let this food strengthen us in the fast that is before us, that following our Savior in the way of the cross, we may come to the joy of his resurrection. For yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory, now and forever. Amen.

*During the meal, read the story of the Last Supper from the Spark Story Bible. Invite children to wonder about the story using questions like, "I wonder what the disciples and Jesus talked about as they ate?"*

Jesus knew that the time had come for him to leave this world. He wanted to share his last Passover meal together with his 12 closest friends, the disciples. Jesus loved his friends and wanted to show them his love in a very caring way.

As the friends got ready for the meal, Jesus put water in a large bowl and knelt down on the floor. He wanted to wash the feet of each disciple. When it was Peter's turn, Peter said to Jesus, "You will never wash my feet!"

Jesus replied, "Peter, you don't understand what I am doing now, but you will later."

Peter loved Jesus so much that he said, “Then don’t just wash my feet but my head and hands also!” Peter wanted to be as close to Jesus as possible.

As they were eating, Jesus sadly told his disciples, “Soon, one of you will betray me. One of you will tell people who don’t like me where I am so they can take me away.”

This upset the disciples, and each one said, “It’s not me you’re talking, is it?”

When Judas said this, Jesus gently replied, “Yes, Judas, you will betray me.”

Then Jesus picked up a loaf of bread. He blessed it and gave some to each of his friends, saying, “Take this bread and eat it. This is my body.” Then Jesus picked up a cup of wine. He gave thanks and said “Drink this. It is my blood which I must give up so the sins of people may be forgiven.”

When the meal was over, Jesus and his friends went to a place called the Mount of Olives. Jesus said sadly, “Soon you will all leave me.”

Peter felt bad. “Even if all the others leave you, I won’t!” he said.

Jesus looked at his dear friend and said quietly, “Before the sun rises, you will pretend you don’t know me three times.”

Peter said, “Jesus, I love you too much to ever do that to you!”

And all of the other disciples said the same thing.

*As you clear the table together, sing “Glory to God as the Angels Sing”:*

Glory to God as the angels sing.  
Thanks be to God for everything.  
God forgive me as I forgive others.  
Bless everyone, my sisters and brothers.  
Last of all, dear God, bless me.  
And so I make my prayer to thee. Amen.

## The Foot-Washing

*This experience involves washing one another's feet, just as Jesus washed the disciples' feet during the Last Supper. It is an act we traditionally perform together in the Maundy Thursday service for families, but it is optional.*

*If you choose to perform foot-washing as a family, you will need a basin, a pitcher of water, towels, and a Bible.*

*Begin by reading the story of the Last Supper from the Spark Story Bible, if you haven't already during dinner.*

*Then take turns washing one another's feet. After you have finished, ask wondering questions like, "I wonder what other ways we might show our love for others?"*

*You may sing "This Little Light of Mine" as you clear foot-washing materials.*

## The Garden

*This experience involves creating and spending time in a "garden," like Jesus and the disciples in the Garden of Gethsemane.*

*The act of creating the garden can happen earlier in the day, or it may be the central part of the evening experience. Invite children to help imagine and create the space indoors using potted plants, or you may set up the area outside in an actual garden.*

*There should be a table or some surface on which to write or draw. Be sure to set out paper and coloring tools. Candles and other sacred objects can also be used.*

*Soft music can be played, and the lights should be turned down to a low, soft level.*

*Begin by reading the story of Jesus in Gethsemane the Spark Story Bible (see below). Invite children to wonder about the story using questions like, "I wonder if a friend has ever let you down like Peter and Judas? I wonder what happened and how it made you feel?"*

*Invite children to use the paper and coloring tools to draw the story, or picture Jesus in the garden, or visualize their own prayers. Invite them to spend time with Jesus in the garden in their imaginations.*

Jesus had a good friend named Peter who was there when Jesus healed people and made miracles happen.

Jesus liked Peter so much he gave Peter the nickname “The Rock.” Jesus had another friend named Judas.

Jesus, Peter, Judas, and the other disciples spent lots of time together. They were all together when Jesus told them that his life had to end. It was a sad and hard time for Jesus and his friends.

Jesus felt so sad that he went to a quiet place in a garden and prayed. “Please God,” Jesus prayed, “make me strong. Help me trust you.”

Jesus asked the disciples to come to the garden and stay awake while he prayed. But they fell asleep.

“Wake up. Wake up. Wake up,” Jesus told the disciples three times. When Jesus finished praying, it was time for them to go and face hard things.

Even though Jesus had many friends, he had some bad enemies too. Some people were scared that Jesus would change the world too much with love. Judas got scared too. He let Jesus down. Judas told some of Jesus’ enemies where Jesus was. When soldiers came to the garden, Judas kissed Jesus on the cheek to show them who they were looking for. The soldiers took Jesus away. Judas and Peter ran away and hid. They were so scared.

Later, Peter waited outside the place where Jesus was on trial. A girl saw Peter and said “He’s a friend of Jesus. He’s in trouble too!” Peter wanted to help his friend Jesus, but he was scared, so he pretended he didn’t know Jesus. “I don’t know him. I don’t know him. I don’t know him.” Peter said. His lie made him feel even worse inside.

Peter ran away again. He cried and cried. Peter felt so sad for Jesus. Peter felt very, very sorry.

But Jesus knew that Peter loved him. Jesus knew that Peter was his friend. That’s why he had given Peter such a special job. The Rock became a strong leader in the church. He told many, many people about his best friend Jesus. “I know him. I know him. I know him,” Peter told everyone. And THAT was the truth.

### *Additional Ideas for the Garden*

*On Good Friday, you could return to the garden to read the story of Good Friday, using the Spark Story Bible, "The Day Jesus Dies" (pp 476-481), or any Bible. Invite children to wonder about the story and use their art to respond.*

*On Easter Day, add flowers to your garden area, or change it in some meaningful way to reflect the change in the story. Read the Easter story from Matthew 28:1-10 or John 20:1-18, or from "The Empty Tomb" in the Spark Story Bible. Ask wondering questions like, "I wonder what you would have done if you were one of the women who saw the angel in the tomb?" or "I wonder why Mary didn't recognize Jesus at first?"*