

Easter – The Sounds of Holy Week

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On your marks:

It is important that children share in the experience of Holy Week, including Good Friday. Without entering into the events of these days, the victory of Easter morning will be robbed of its full significance for them. The following outline focuses on some key sounds from that momentous week and could be used as a group activity to be used anytime from Palm Sunday onwards, or as part of a workshop at a special Holy Week event, or perhaps as a presentation in a Good Friday service in church.

Get set:

You will need to collect a series of items to make the following sound effects:

Two halves of a coconut for a donkey's hooves

A tray of gravel, deep enough to allow a child to stand in this and march vigorously on the spot

A collection of pieces of wood that can be thrown down noisily

A bag of coins that can be jangled and from which some can be tipped out

A wooden platter and spoon

A cup and some liquid to pour into it

Some pieces of matzo bread or cracker that will snap noisily

A bowl of water

A hammer and nail with a block of wood, into which to bang the nail

Some wooden dice

A piece of cloth to tear

A piece of card that can be wobbled to make the sound of thunder

A large candle and candlesnuffer

Other sound effects for this presentation will be made with voices and hands.

Go!

1. Collect the items above and place them on a central table. In the middle put the candle. When your group has gathered around in a circle, explain that between them, they are going to provide the soundtrack for the most important week of Jesus' life. These sounds will accompany the climax of God's rescue plan, which comes to fulfilment in what Christians call Holy Week.

2. As you talk through the sound effects and practise them, you need to distribute them to different children in your group thoughtfully. For example, the hammer and nail and block of wood need to be given to

a responsible child! In addition to all the objects for sounds, some of the effects will need to be made with hands and voices, perhaps by the whole group or selected groups of children.

3. The leader of the group will provide a very simple commentary to link the sounds. This should be kept to a bare minimum (see below), especially if it is being presented in Church. However when you work through this as a group or in a workshop, talk through in much more detail the story behind the sounds through question-and-answer. The sounds represent:

Palm Sunday on the streets

The overturning of the tables in the Temple

The Roman soldiers marching and discussions with Judas about betrayal

The events of the Last Supper

The trials and judgement

The crucifixion outside the walls

4. Once each member of the group has their sound effect ready, arrange them to be sitting in the appropriate order so that the sequence of sounds is correct. There should be a short pause after each sound effect.

5. The Sounds of Holy Week

Leader: This is the week that turns all endings into new beginnings. These are the sounds of Holy Week.

Pause

(Light the candle, placed central to the group or centre stage for a presentation)

Leader: The streets of Jerusalem were filled with new sounds

The clip-clop of donkey's hooves

The cheering of the crowds

Some suspicious whispering behind hands

Leader: The temple in Jerusalem was filled with new sounds

The sounds of pigeons cooing, sheep bleating and coins being rattled

The sound of pieces of wood dropping to the ground and then some coins falling

The gasps of breath from the onlookers

Leader: The Jerusalem Passover was filled with new sounds

The crunch of marching feet made by soldiers on the move

The sound of people telling others to keep quiet, as secret deals are done

The sound of a moneybag being placed into someone else's hands

Leader: A Jerusalem house in the back streets was filled with new sounds

The noise of a spoon scraping a wooden platter during a meal

The sound of drink being poured into a cup

The sound of Matzo being cracked

The sound of a door slamming shut

Leader: The Jerusalem courts were filled with new sounds

The sound of clenched fists thumping upon the tables

The sound of angry voices

The sound of hands being washed in water

The sound of feet dragged across gravel on a slow march to death

Leader: The hill outside Jerusalem was filled with new sounds

The banging in of a nail into wood

The sound of dice being rolled

The sound of some cloth being torn

The sound of thunder and of rain (the drumming of fingers on open palms)

Leader: And then there were no more sounds from Jerusalem

After a pause, snuff out the candle

Leader: This is the week that turns all endings into new beginnings...
but not yet.

Before the sound that would go out into all the world, there was just
silence. And the world held its breath.

