

EASTER
ADVENT
CALENDAR

Waiting for the Lamb

BARBARA RAINEY

with Janel Breitenstein



EVER THINE HOME®
believe · beautifully™



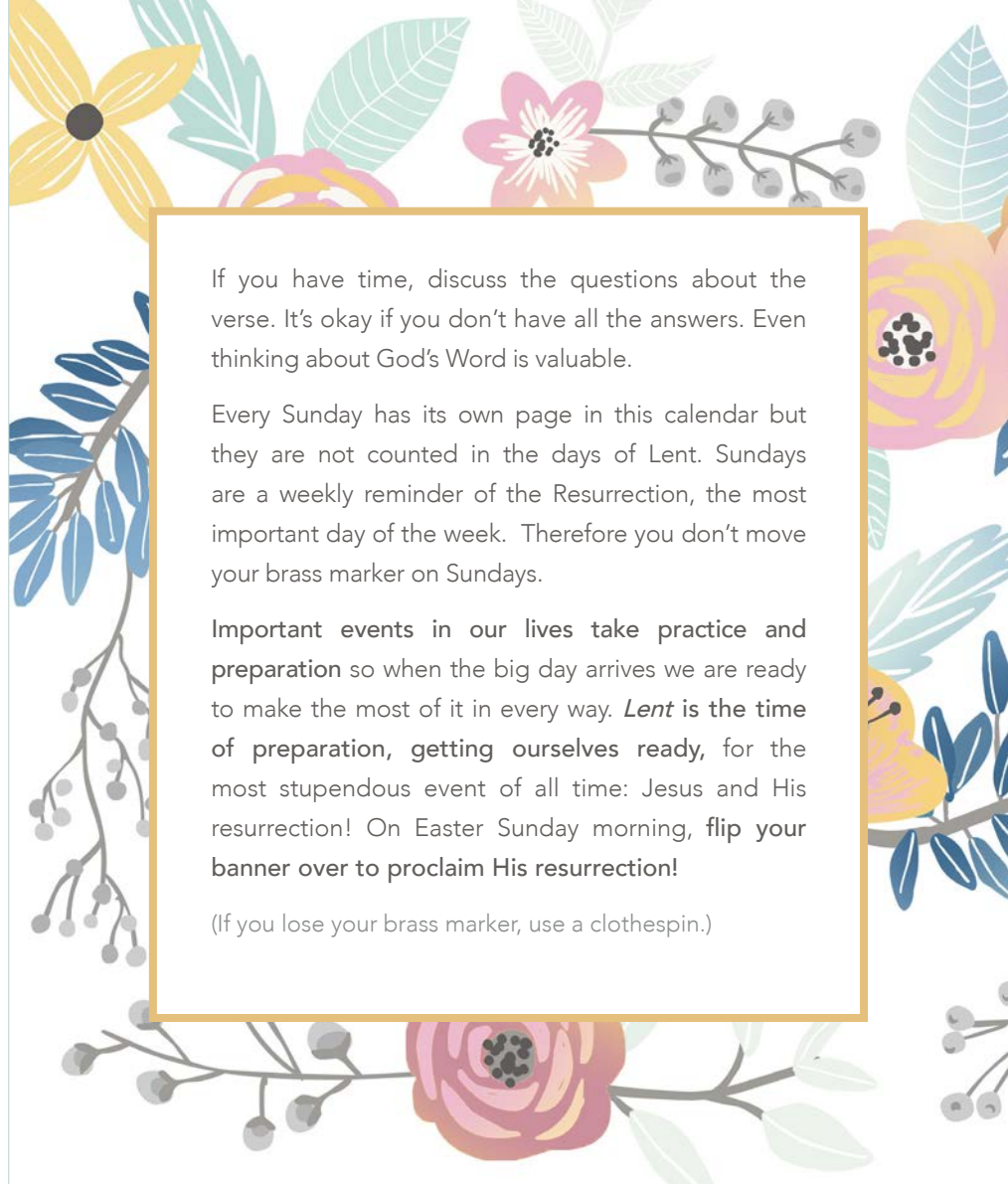
HOW TO USE THE EASTER ADVENT BANNER AND CALENDAR

Easter is the celebration of Jesus' resurrection—the biggest. Best. Miracle. EVER!

The Easter Advent banner and calendar help you and your family anticipate this miracle! Starting with Day 40, Ash Wednesday, we'll count down to Easter.

Each Monday in your advent calendar, plus Ash Wednesday, sets the scene with a short story from the Old Testament. You'll be discovering clues God left in the Bible to show His people their Rescuer, the Lamb of God, was coming.

Plan about five minutes for each introductory story. Then read each day's verse, moving the marker on the banner closer . . . and closer . . . to the Big Day!



If you have time, discuss the questions about the verse. It's okay if you don't have all the answers. Even thinking about God's Word is valuable.

Every Sunday has its own page in this calendar but they are not counted in the days of Lent. Sundays are a weekly reminder of the Resurrection, the most important day of the week. Therefore you don't move your brass marker on Sundays.

Important events in our lives take practice and preparation so when the big day arrives we are ready to make the most of it in every way. *Lent* is the time of preparation, getting ourselves ready, for the most stupendous event of all time: Jesus and His resurrection! On Easter Sunday morning, flip your banner over to proclaim His resurrection!

(If you lose your brass marker, use a clothespin.)

CLUES IN THE GARDEN

Day 40 • ASH WEDNESDAY

If you want to take the time, ask your children to recount the story of Adam and Eve, or read the story directly from the Bible in Genesis 2:7–9, 25, and 3:1–19.

Read this short story aloud:

The first clues about Jesus, the Messiah, are found in the beginning of time, in the Garden of Eden. Adam and Eve lived in a perfect place. They were perfect people who talked freely with a perfect God. What do you imagine it was like? Probably it was just like God had planned it, full of beauty and trust.

But when Adam and Eve sinned, everything changed . . . forever. For the first time, they started accusing God and each other! They hid. They lied. They were afraid.

God, in all His love, knew Adam and Eve needed to be rescued. He knew they couldn't fix the brokenness in their lives on their own. Their sin had to be paid for. Their relationships with God and each other needed fixing.

This week, we'll look at one verse every day to help us understand how God had a plan to save us through His Rescuer: Jesus, the Lamb.

(Day 40 continued on the next page.)

Day 40

God is speaking and says to the serpent, "He shall bruise your head and you shall bruise his heel."
(Genesis 3:15)

- What would happen if you hurt your heel in an accident?
- What could happen if someone hurt his head in an accident? (*He could die. Head injuries are often serious.*)

This is a future promise! **Jesus will wound Satan in a way that gets rid of him forever!**

(Place your brass marker on number 40.)

Day 39

"And the Lord God made for Adam and his wife garments of skin and clothed them."
(Genesis 3:21)

- Whose fault was it that Adam and Eve needed clothes? (Who sinned?)
- Then why is God the One making clothes for them? (*God is merciful, and doesn't give us what we deserve. He makes a way out for us, even though our sin isn't His fault.*)
- What does this tell us about what God is like?
- If God made these clothes out of skin, what did He have to do to the animals?

This is a sign of what Jesus would do. Jesus would die so that we could wear clothes of righteousness. *Righteousness* means doing everything right. Sin makes us feel naked and ashamed, but **Jesus' sacrifice covers up our shame and makes us acceptable to a perfect God.**

(Move the marker to 39.)

Day 38

"For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God."
(Romans 3:23)

- Parent, try asking your kids to jump to a place that you know is beyond their capability. Explain that everyone **fell short** of the line, no matter how good at jumping each person is. Sin means falling short of God's standard.
- What do you think "fall short of the glory of God" means? (*God has glory—honor—because He's perfect. Not a single one of us comes close to being perfect like Him. We all "fall short."*)

(Move the brass marker to 38.)



Day 37

"The reason the Son of God appeared
was to destroy the works of the devil."
(1 John 3:8)

- What reason does this verse give for Jesus coming?
- Can you remember other reasons Jesus came?

(Move the marker to 37.)

Hooray! It's SUNDAY

"And God spoke all these words, saying, 'I am the Lord your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery.

"....Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy. Six days you shall labor, and do all your work, but the seventh day is a Sabbath to the Lord your God.

"On it you shall not do any work, you, or your son, or your daughter, your male servant, or your female servant, or your livestock, or the sojourner who is within your gates.

"For in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that is in them, and rested on the seventh day.

"Therefore the Lord blessed the Sabbath day and made it holy."

(Exodus 20:1-2, 8-11)

(Don't move your marker today.
Sundays aren't part of the Lent countdown!)

CLUES ON THE MOUNTAIN

Day 36 • MONDAY #1

Read this short story aloud:

Hundreds of years after Adam and Eve lived and died, God called a man named Abraham to leave his home and follow God to a new land, but God didn't tell Abe where it was.

Abraham followed God's leading each day until he arrived in the new land. There God blessed Abraham and his wife, Sarah. They became rich. But they didn't have any kids, which made them very sad. After 20 years of waiting—and even though they were older than your grandma and grandpa—God did what He had promised: He gave them a baby boy, Isaac.

When Isaac was a young teenager, God asked Abraham to do a strange, almost impossible thing. He commanded Abraham to take Isaac to a specific mountain and *sacrifice* him. That meant kill him, as an offering to God. Why do you think this would be confusing to Abraham?

This week's story is a very important one for our faith because it contains many clues showing us what God was going to do one day to His very own Son for us.

(Day 36 continued on the next page.)

Day 36

"So Abraham rose early in the morning, saddled his donkey, and took two young men with him, and his son Isaac . . . On the third day Abraham lifted his eyes and saw the place from afar."

(Genesis 22:3-4)

- How many days did Abraham travel to the mountain?
- In the story of Jesus dying on the cross, what else took three days?

(Move the marker to 36.)

Day 35

"Then Abraham said to his young men, 'Stay here with the donkey; I and the boy will go over there and worship and come again to you.' And Abraham took the wood of the burnt offering and laid it on Isaac his son. And he took in his hand the fire and the knife. So they went both of them together."

(Genesis 22:5-6)

- Wait a minute. Doesn't it sound like Abraham and Isaac will both come back? Why do you think Abraham said that?
- Who carried the wood?
- How is this like the story of Jesus going to the cross? Is this a clue?
- What do you think it felt like for the two of them to have to carry these tools for what Abraham thought would be his own tragedy?

(Move the marker to 35.)

Day 34

" And Isaac said to his father Abraham, 'My father!' And he said, 'Here I am, my son.' He said, 'Behold, the fire and the wood, but where is the lamb for a burnt offering?' Abraham said, 'God will provide for himself the lamb for a burnt offering, my son.' So they went both of them together."

(Genesis 22:7-8)

- What does this verse tell us Abraham believed? (*He believed God would provide a lamb in place of his son Isaac*)
- In the New Testament there is another clue to what Abraham believed. "[Abraham] considered that God was able even to raise [Isaac] from the dead" (Hebrews 11:19). What does this verse tell us about Abraham's faith?
- What did Abraham trust God to do?
- How would your dad feel if he had to do what Abraham was about to do?

(Move the marker to 34.)

Day 33

"When they came to the place of which God had told him, Abraham built the altar there and laid the wood in order and bound Isaac his son and laid him on the altar, on top of the wood. Then Abraham reached out his hand and took the knife to slaughter his son. But the angel of the LORD called to him from heaven and said, 'Abraham, Abraham!' And he said, 'Here I am.' He said, 'Do not lay your hand on the boy or do anything to him, for now I know that you fear God, seeing you have not withheld your son, your only son, from me.'" (Genesis 22:9-12)

- Did God know Abraham would obey?
- Why did He make Abraham take all these steps, even to raising the knife, if He knew Abraham would obey? (*Isaac was the one thing in Abraham's life that Abraham might love more than God.*)

Parents, you may need to help your kids think about this, and come back to it throughout the next few days. Share your own answers too because all of us tend to look to comfort, security, approval, and/or power instead of God. And your children will be helped knowing you struggle too.

(Move the marker to 33.)

Day 32

"Then Jesus told his disciples, 'If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me.'" (Matthew 16:24)

- We've been talking about Abraham and Isaac carrying what they needed to sacrifice Isaac. How is that like what Jesus told us to do?
- Remember that Jesus said this before people knew He would die on the cross. What kind of people would have carried crosses?
- Why did Jesus choose these words? (*Only people sentenced to die carried crosses. Jesus asks us, too, to die to ourselves and our selfishness, so we can live for Him. Check out Galatians 2:20.*)

(Move the marker to 32.)



Day 31

"I appeal to you therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship."
(Romans 12:1)

- We read on day 33 that Abraham tied up Isaac's hands and feet to lay him on the altar as a sacrifice. How do you think Isaac felt?
- What does God mean in this verse—that we are offering ourselves as *living sacrifices*?
- What are three things you really want, or really want to do, or really love right now?
- Are you willing to choose what God wants, even if it means not getting those things?

(Move the marker to 31.)



Hooray! It's SUNDAY

"So God blessed the seventh day and made it holy, because on it God rested from all his work that he had done in creation."

(Genesis 2:3)

(Remember, you won't move your marker today.)

CLUES IN THE DESERT

Day 30 • MONDAY #2

Read this short story aloud:

You've probably noticed by now that God doesn't just tell His people what He will do—He shows them. These next clues to help His people and us recognize Jesus were learned through another experience they would never forget!

This week's story can be found in the famous Exodus story, where God seems to shout: *I want to restore our broken relationship. My Son will be the Way, He will look like this! Don't miss Him!*

So let's start by gathering a little background information. If you have time, talk about what you can remember about the story of Moses.

In Moses' time, God's people were living in Egypt. They had been slaves under Pharaoh for almost 400 years. Near the end of those long, hard years, God raised up Moses to lead His people to freedom.

God also used ten plagues to demonstrate to His people that He was all-powerful and could rescue them. He also wanted to show the Egyptian people that He was the real God, not their pretend gods made of wood and stone. How many of the plagues can you remember? You can read about them in Exodus 7:14–11:10.

"And Moses and Aaron performed all these wonders before Pharaoh . . . and he did not let the sons of Israel go out of his land." (Exodus 11:10)

(Day 30 continued on the next page.)

Day 30

"The LORD said to Moses and Aaron in the land of Egypt, 'Tell all the congregation of Israel that on the tenth day of this month every man shall take a lamb according to their fathers' houses, a lamb for a household . . . Your lamb shall be without blemish, a male a year old. You may take it from the sheep or from the goats . . .'" (Exodus 12:3,5)

- Who was in charge of getting the lamb?
- What kind of lamb was it to be? Is this a clue also?

(Move the marker to 30.)

Day 29

" . . . and you shall keep [the lamb] until the fourteenth day of this month, when the whole assembly of the congregation of Israel shall kill their lambs at twilight." (Exodus 12:6)

- How long did each family keep their lamb?
- Would you enjoy having a soft, cuddly little lamb live with your family for four days? Would you name it and play with it and want to keep it?
- How do you think the children felt about God's command to kill the lamb they loved?
- Why then did God ask them to kill the lamb? (*God was showing the Israelites every year the cost of their sin. Jesus' sacrifice would be much, much bigger and more "unfair." He didn't deserve to die, either.*)

(Move the marker to 29.)

Day 28

"Then they shall take some of the blood and put it on the two doorposts and the lintel of the houses . . . "

(Exodus 12:7)

God tells all the people of Israel they can be kept safe through the last plague He will be sending—if they follow the directions He gives them.

- A fun activity: You can paint around the doorframe of your front door with red Crayola® finger paint (it washes off) to mimic the Israelites' experience. Or hang a red ribbon or sash over your door.
- What do you think this painting of blood signifies? (*Whose blood allows us to "go inside" where God is and be with Him?*)

(Move the marker to 28.)



Day 27

“God said, ‘For I will pass through the land of Egypt that night, and I will strike all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, both man and beast; and on all the gods of Egypt I will execute judgments: I am the LORD.’” (Exodus 12:12)

- Why is God going to kill the firstborn of Egypt? (*It is a judgment—a punishment.*)
- What do you think God was saying by this harsh action? (*The punishment for sin is dying. But because Jesus came, He saves us from dying.*)

(Move the marker to 27.)



Day 26

“The blood shall be a sign for you, on the houses where you are. And when I see the blood, I will pass over you, and no plague will befall you to destroy you, when I strike the land of Egypt.” (Exodus 12:13)

This night and its ceremony is called the *Passover* because death *passed over* them. The blood of the lamb on the doorways of each Hebrew house was meant to be a vivid memory that a life had to be sacrificed to save the people.

- What is the blood called?
- What saved the firstborn children of Israel when all the firstborn children in Egypt died? (*the blood of a lamb*)
- What saves us today? (*the blood of the Lamb*)

Thank God together that the sacrifice of the Lamb—of Jesus’ blood—makes it possible for death to *pass over* us.

(Move the marker to 26.)



Day 25

“Remember this day in which you went out from Egypt, from the house of slavery, for by a powerful hand the LORD brought you out from this place.” (Exodus 13:3)

- How is Moses himself a clue? (*Moses stopped the Israelites' slavery.*)
- Like Moses, Jesus would deliver His people from slavery—the slavery of sin. And just like when Moses was a baby, an evil king would try to kill all the baby boys in Bethlehem so Joseph took Jesus and Mary to Egypt, so Jesus would even come up out of Egypt like Moses!

(Move the marker to 25.)



Hooray! It's SUNDAY

“There remains a Sabbath rest for the people of God, for whoever has entered God's rest has also rested from his works as God did from his.”

(Hebrews 4:9–10)

(Remember, you won't move your marker today.)

CLUES IN THE HOUSE

Day 24 • MONDAY #3

Read this short story aloud:

Have you ever seen the old movie called *The Ten Commandments*? (If you haven't, Lent is a great time to watch it and make it a family tradition.) After the children of Israel left Egypt, they began the long walk to the Promised Land.

On the way, God spoke with Moses, giving the Ten Commandments. And soon, God gave him something else: very detailed instructions on how to build a *tabernacle*. It was kind of like a church—only it was a huge tent! It had to be portable so the Israelites could carry it with them when they moved, a hike that lasted 40 years. Can you imagine camping for 40 years, and even camping when you went to church?!

God wanted them to build this big tent tabernacle to have a place where they could all gather in His presence and celebrate everything He did for them. It was also the place where they made sacrifices for their sins. The tabernacle was where God's holy presence could live near them. **And in this huge tent, God put more clues to show us what the Messiah would be like.**

There were two rooms in God's house. (*Parents, this might be fun for kids to draw, on paper or with chalk on your driveway, as you describe it.*) First, a big room called the "Holy." Second was a smaller room called the "Most Holy." Starting with the large room, there were three pieces of furniture: an oil-lamp stand on the left with seven branches, a table on the right with twelve loaves of special bread, and straight ahead, an altar for burning incense.

(Day 24 continued on the next page.)

Day 24

"And you shall make a table of acacia wood . . . and you shall set the bread of the Presence on the table before Me at all times."
(Exodus 25:23, 30)

- Why do you think there was bread in the Israelites' tabernacle?
- What do you think the Jews thought when they heard Jesus say, "I am the bread of life; whoever comes to me shall not hunger, and whoever believes in me shall never thirst" (John 6:35)?
- Older children: If Jesus is bread for our souls, what do you think our souls are hungry for?
- How is Jesus different than the bread we eat?

(Move the marker to 24.)



Day 23

"You shall make a lampstand of pure gold. The lampstand and its base and its shaft are to be of hammered work; its cups, its bulbs and its flowers shall be of one piece with it."
(Exodus 25:31)

- What does a lamp do?
- What does light do for us? Is this a clue?
- What is it like in the dark without a light?
- How is Jesus like a lamp?


(Move the marker to 23.)



INTERLUDE

Parents, today is the halfway point to Resurrection Sunday; Palm Sunday will be here soon.

I want to encourage you to begin thinking about how your family can celebrate this pinnacle moment of our faith. To build anticipation for Resurrection Day it will help to make Holy Week, the week between Palm Sunday and Easter Sunday, set apart from all other weeks of the year. In this calendar those eight days are accompanied by the lighting of candles. Buy seven inexpensive white pillar candles to place down the center of your table, on your fireplace mantle or on a buffet or countertop. Download our candle wraps for each candle. Buying and preparing them now signals



to your family that something special is coming! We have lots of ideas on our website, everthinehome.com, that you might consider and begin to plan for Holy Week and Resurrection Day.

Without Easter our faith would be in vain. To quote theologian N.T. Wright, "Take Easter away and you don't have a New Testament; you don't have Christianity; as Paul says, you are still in your sins . . ."

We'd love to help you celebrate with exuberance and joy!

–Barbara and the Ever Thine Home team



Day 22

"You shall make an altar as a place for burning incense." (Exodus 30:1)

Incense is something, like a spice or a liquid, burned to make a sweet perfume fill the air. In the tabernacle, it is a symbol for the incense in heaven. Revelation 8:3 tells us about incense in heaven: "Another angel came and stood at the altar with a golden censer and he was given much incense to offer with the prayers of all the saints."

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- What is the incense that's in heaven?
 - What does this tell us about what God thinks of the prayers of His people? (*They are precious and holy to him. They make Him happy, like a good smell.*)

(Move the marker to 22.)

Day 21

"And you shall make a veil of blue and purple and scarlet yarns and fine twined linen. It shall be made with cherubim skillfully worked into it . . . And you shall hang the veil from the clasps, and bring the ark of the testimony in there within the veil. And the veil shall separate for you the Holy Place from the Most Holy."
(Exodus 26:31,33)

- What is a veil? This kind of veil would have been too thick to see through.
- Why did God want the veil or curtain to be so thick? (*It shows how much God is separated from our sin. He is too holy to be near any sin.*)

(Move the marker to 21.)

Day 20

"And Jesus cried out again with a loud voice and yielded up his spirit. And behold, the curtain of the temple was torn in two, from top to bottom."
(Matthew 27:50-51)

Yesterday we read about the thick curtain of the tabernacle separating the Holy Place from the Most Holy Place.

- What happened to the temple curtain when Jesus died?
- What does this mean? (*Jesus broke the barrier of our sin that separated us from God!*)
- Why do you think it ripped from top to bottom?

(Move the marker to 20.)



Day 19

"Construct an ark of acacia wood . . . and you shall overlay it with pure gold, inside and out . . . and you shall put into the ark the testimony . . ." (Exodus 25:10-11,16)

- What is the ark?
- Was it like Noah's ark?

Exodus 40:20 reads, "[Moses] took the testimony"—the Ten Commandments—"and put it into the ark."

- Why would it be important that the stone tablets were in there? (*The commandments teach us God's standard, and that we can't reach God on our own without a Messiah!*)

(Move the marker to 19.)



Hooray! It's SUNDAY

"I gave them my Sabbaths, as a sign between me and them, that they might know that I am the Lord who sanctifies them."

(Ezekiel 20:12)

(Remember, you won't move your marker today.)

CLUES IN THE SCROLLS

Day 18 • MONDAY #4

Read this short story aloud:

It was winter in Palestine, shortly after the Second World War. A fifteen-year-old boy named Muhammed and his cousin, Jum'a, were herding livestock in the desert. While taking care of their animals, Jum'a noticed some holes in the rocky hillside.

He threw in a rock to see how big they were—then called Muhammed over to see. When Muhammed bent over to look he fell in! *Whoa*. Inside the hole was a pot that looked old. And inside the pot were ancient scrolls!

Excited with their strange discovery, they took the scrolls back to show their family. Their tribe, who were Bedouins, kept the scrolls hanging on a tent pole while they figured out what to do with them. Eleven more caves nearby hid precious scrolls.

What Muhammed found that day were many copies of Old Testament books written on scrolls. This included the book penned by the prophet Isaiah. **This discovery means we can prove that prophets predicted these clues about who the Son of God would be almost 700 years before Jesus was born. Let's read some of the verses found in the Isaiah old scrolls.**

(Day 18 continued on the next page.)

Day 18

"Therefore the Lord himself
will give you a sign. Behold, the
virgin shall conceive and bear a son,
and shall call his name Immanuel."
(Isaiah 7:14)

- Can you find the clue about Jesus in this verse?
- What could people know about Jesus from this verse, written seven centuries before it happened?

(Move the marker to 18.)



Day 17

"For to us a child is born,
to us a son is given; and the
government shall be upon his shoul-
der, and his name shall be called
Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God,
Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace."
(Isaiah 9:6)

- What was God telling people Jesus would be like in this verse?
- For older children: How is God's government different from the government of people?

(Move the marker to 17.)



Day 16

"There shall come forth a shoot from
the stump of Jesse, and a branch
from his roots shall bear fruit. And
the Spirit of the LORD shall rest upon
him . . ." (Isaiah 11:1-2)

- Who was Jesse? (*Hint: His son killed a giant!*)
- What is the "shoot" of a plant?
- What part is the root?
- How could a human like Jesse have a shoot? God's saying something here. Could this be a clue? (*David came from Jesse. And David was one of Jesus' great-great-great [and a lot more greats]-grandfather. Jesus is the "Life" that came from Jesse!*)

(Move the marker to 16.)

Day 15

Yesterday, the clue from Isaiah said the Messiah would come from Jesse, David's dad. Read what God had promised to King David hundreds of years earlier, "When your days are fulfilled to walk with your fathers, I will raise up your offspring after you, one of your own sons, and I will establish his kingdom. He shall build a house for me, and I will establish his throne forever. I will be to him a father, and he shall be to me a son."
(1 Chronicles 17:11-13)

- What does it mean that God will "establish [David's] throne forever"?
- How could a man that came from David's line be a king forever?
- Who could it be?

(Move the marker to 15.)

Day 14

"But he was pierced for our transgressions; he was crushed for our iniquities; upon him was the chastisement that brought us peace, and with his wounds we are healed . . . He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth; like a lamb that is led to the slaughter, and like a sheep that before its shearers is silent, so he opened not his mouth . . . And they made his grave . . . with a rich man in his death, although he had done no violence, and there was no deceit in his mouth." (Isaiah 53:5,7,9)

- What do these verses tell us about what the Messiah will do? There are a lot of clues here! (*You may want to read phrases from the verses above again to help your children know the clues.*)
- What can you remember about Jesus' death that made these prophecies come true—that solved the mystery of the Messiah's identity?

(Move the marker to 14.)



Day 13

"The scroll of the prophet Isaiah was given to [Jesus]. He unrolled the scroll and found the place where it was written: 'The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me, because the Lord has anointed me to bring good news to the poor; He has sent me to proclaim liberty to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty those who are oppressed.' And he rolled up the scroll and gave it back to the attendant and sat down. And the eyes of all in the synagogue were fixed on him. And he began to say to them, 'Today this Scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing.'" (Luke 4:17-21)

- Now, what are the clues in this reading from Luke?
- What work would God's Messiah do?

(Move the marker to 13.)



Hooray! It's SUNDAY

"And he said to them, "The Sabbath was made for man, not man for the Sabbath."

(Mark 2:27)

(Remember, you won't move your marker today.)

CLUES IN THE VINEYARD

Day 12 • MONDAY #5

Read this short story aloud:

Have you ever played “hot and cold”—where you try to find something hidden, and the person tells you if you’re getting “warmer”? Detectives use the words “hot” and “cold” to describe their cases, saying a case has gone “cold” when the clues and tips stop.

This happened in the Bible! For thousands of years the clues about the Messiah continued to be given, like bread crumbs along a path. Then suddenly, the clues dried up. The case went “cold.” For 400 years there was not a single word from God.

Then an angel announced to shepherds outside of Bethlehem, “**this shall be a sign for you.**” Clues began to connect like pieces of a giant jigsaw puzzle! For the next 33 years the answer to the Messiah mystery was in plain sight.

Jesus Himself began giving clues in what He did and said, connecting all the clues God had given in the Old Testament. He was saying, “**YES! I’m the one who you’ve been waiting for all this time! I am God’s answer to everything that is broken. I am the promised Messiah!**”

In solving any mystery, what a person says about himself is always considered key evidence. Jesus told stories full of clues to bring us warmer and warmer, even burning hot.

This week, we’ll examine an important, clue-filled story Jesus told about grapes and a vineyard.

(Day 12 continued on the next page.)

Day 12

“There was a master of a house who planted a vineyard and put a fence around it and dug a winepress in it and built a tower and leased it to tenants [renters], and went into another country.” (Matthew 21:33)

- Who do you think “the master” might be?
- Who owned the vineyard?
- Who did the work to plant the vines and make sure they produced good fruit? (*The master. The tenants’ job was to water the vines and pull the weeds.*)

(Move the marker to 12.)

Day 11

“When the season for fruit drew near, he sent his servants to the tenants to get his fruit. And the tenants took his servants and beat one, killed another, and stoned another. Again he sent other servants, more than the first. And they did the same to them.”

(Matthew 21:34-36)

- Who did the fruit belong to, the tenants or the Master?
- Who are the servants? *(They're people who work for the Master and come on his behalf.)*
- Is this a clue? *(The servants were those sent to serve God in the Old Testament, His prophets!)*

(Move the marker to 11.)

Day 10

“Finally the master sent his son to them, saying, ‘They will respect my son.’ But when the tenants saw the son, they said to themselves, ‘This is the heir. Come, let us kill him and have his inheritance.’ And they took him and threw him out of the vineyard and killed him.”

(Matthew 21:37-39)

- Who is the Son that was sent by the Master?
- Was Jesus talking about something that had happened in the past, or would happen in the future?

(Move the marker to 10.)

Day 9

[Jesus asked,] "When therefore the owner of the vineyard comes, what will he do to those tenants?" . . . I tell you, the kingdom of God will be taken away from you and given to a people producing its fruits."

(Matthew 21:40, 43)

The vineyard in this story is Israel, God's chosen people! The tenants who are supposed to take care of it are Israel's leaders, the nation's kings and priests.

- Do you think the tenants, the chosen kings and priests, cared well for God's people, His vineyard?
- What kind of grapes did God's people and their leaders produce—good ones or bad ones?
- Have you ever had a piece of bad fruit? What did you do with it?
- What kind of fruit does God want to produce? *(God wants His work in His children's lives to produce pleasant fruit.)*

(Move the marker to 9.)

Day 8

"But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control."

(Galatians 5:22-23)

- What does fruit do for us? *(It's sweet and healthy)*
- What does good "fruit" look like to God? *(list the fruits of the Spirit)*
- Who makes good "fruit" in our lives? *(God's Holy Spirit!)*

(Move the marker to 8.)



Day 7

“He was despised and rejected by men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief; and as one from whom men hide their faces he was despised, and we esteemed him not.”
(Isaiah 53:3)

This is an Old Testament verse that tells what will happen to the Messiah! Like the son in Jesus’ story about the grapes, Jesus was rejected by God’s people.

- What does “rejected” mean? (*People didn’t want Jesus. That’s why He died.*)
- What does it feel like when someone doesn’t want you to play with them or be in their group? (*Sad, lonely.*) This is how Jesus felt—only much, much worse. God turned away from Jesus so we could be accepted by God! God, the One who matters most, says that He will always love and accept you.

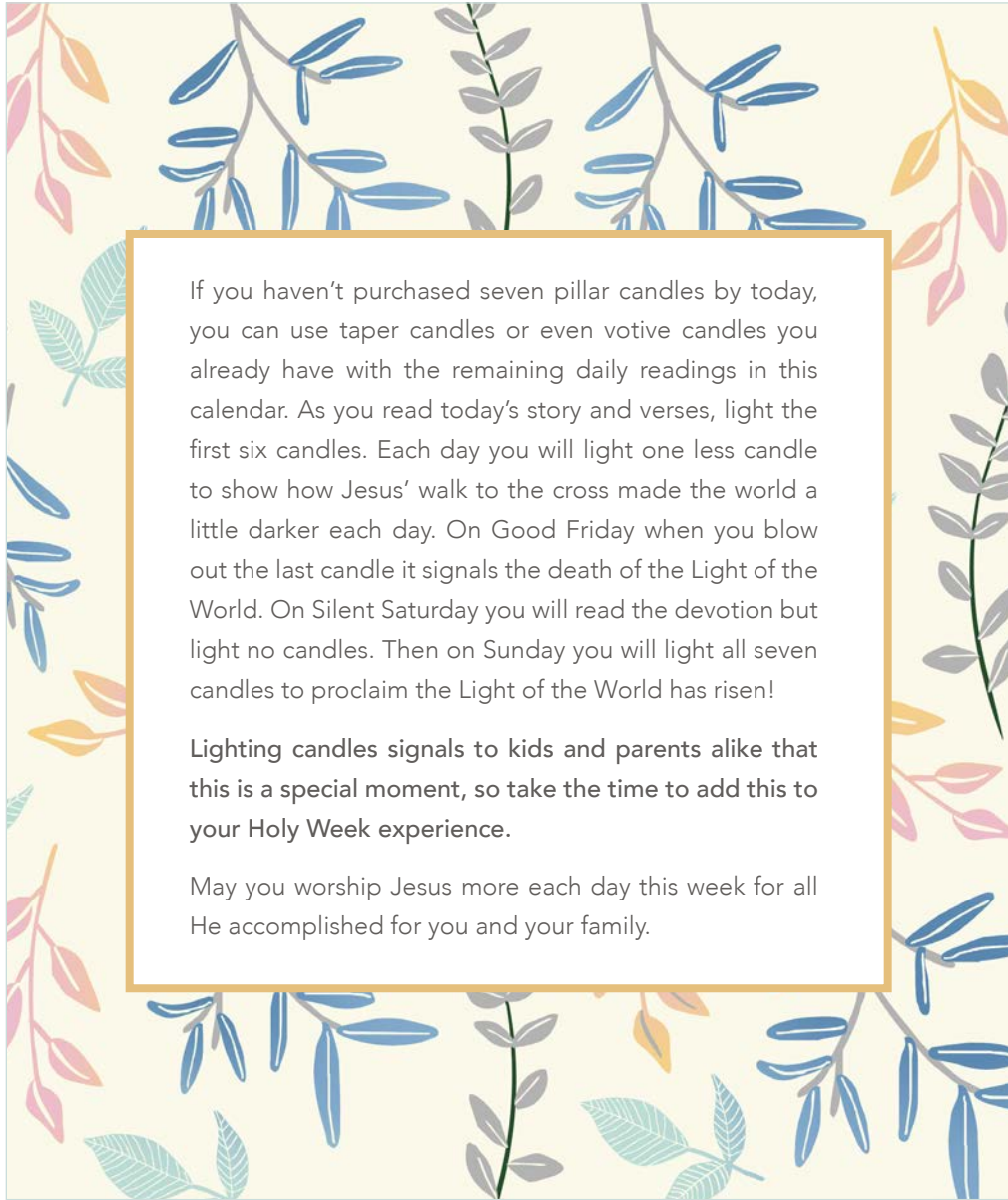
(Move the marker to 7.)



HOW TO MAKE MUCH OF HOLY WEEK

Tomorrow is Palm Sunday, the start of Holy Week. It is a time Christians have marked for centuries; the last days of Jesus’ earthly life. A perfect summary of what happened during Holy Week was written by Paul the apostle, “**The old has passed away; behold the new has come**” (2 Corinthians 5:17). During this week Jesus finished the work He was sent to do, walked the road to Calvary, and became our sacrifice for sin, “**The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world**” (John 1:29). Jesus closed the Old Testament and opened the New!

Even though life will continue normally in most ways for your family this week, agree together that you will take five minutes each day after dinner or before bed to focus on Jesus’ life given for us. Read the short daily devotions and light the corresponding candles.



If you haven't purchased seven pillar candles by today, you can use taper candles or even votive candles you already have with the remaining daily readings in this calendar. As you read today's story and verses, light the first six candles. Each day you will light one less candle to show how Jesus' walk to the cross made the world a little darker each day. On Good Friday when you blow out the last candle it signals the death of the Light of the World. On Silent Saturday you will read the devotion but light no candles. Then on Sunday you will light all seven candles to proclaim the Light of the World has risen!

Lighting candles signals to kids and parents alike that this is a special moment, so take the time to add this to your Holy Week experience.

May you worship Jesus more each day this week for all He accomplished for you and your family.



CLUES FROM JESUS

PALM SUNDAY

Today is Palm Sunday, the start of Holy Week. Each day we will read the I AM verses from the book of John where Jesus plainly told His disciples **He was the long awaited Messiah**. Each of these seven names tells us more about Jesus our Messiah who is the fulfillment of all the Old Testament prophecies.

Light candles one through six.

"I AM THE BREAD OF LIFE;

whoever comes to me shall not hunger . . .

I am the living bread that came down from heaven. If anyone eats of this bread, he will live forever. And the bread that I will give for the life of the world is my flesh." (John 6:35, 51)

- Do you remember what was in the tent tabernacle on one of the tables? (See Day 24.)
- If Jesus is the Bread of Life, how does He feed us?
- How is Jesus like bread?

(Blow out all six candles.
Don't move your marker because today is Sunday.)

Day 6

HOLY WEEK MONDAY

Light candles two through six.

**"I AM THE LIGHT OF THE WORLD.
Whoever follows me will not walk in
darkness, but will have the light of life."
(John 8:12)**

- These words were spoken in the temple in Jerusalem. The Jewish rulers understood Jesus was identifying Himself as God, the Creator of light.
- Was there something in the tent tabernacle that was used for light? (See Day 23.)
- Why is light so important to humans and every living thing on earth?

(Blow out all candles. Move the marker to 6.)

Day 5

HOLY WEEK TUESDAY

Light candles three through six.

**"I AM THE DOOR.
If anyone enters by Me, He will be saved
and will go in and out and find pasture."
(John 10:9)**

- How many kinds of doors can you name?
- What does a door do?
- How is Jesus like a door?
- What does Jesus' door open? (*the way to God*)
- Is there more than one door? (See Revelation 3:20.)

(Blow out all candles and move the marker to 5.)



Day 4

HOLY WEEK WEDNESDAY

Light candles four through six.

"I AM THE GOOD SHEPHERD.

I know my own and My own know Me. I lay down My life for the sheep." (John 10:14-15)

- Do you know another shepherd in the Bible? What did he do to protect His flock? (*David killed the bear and the lion to save them.*)
- What does Jesus, the good shepherd, say He will do for His sheep, His children?
- How do you feel knowing Jesus cares for you enough to lay down His life for you?

(Blow out all candles and move the marker to 4.)



Day 3

MAUNDY THURSDAY

Light candles five and six.

"I AM THE TRUE VINE,"

Jesus said, 'and My Father is the vinedresser. I am the vine, you are the branches. Whoever abides in Me and I in him, he it is that bears much fruit, for apart from Me you can do nothing.'"

(John 15:1, 5)

- Do you remember that Jesus compared His blood to wine? When did He say that? (Read John 6:53-58.)
- Have you ever seen leaves or branches taken off a bush or tree? What happens to them?
- Can grapes grow without being attached to a vine?
- Jesus did nothing on His own initiative (John 12:49). He always depended on His Father to tell or show Him what to do. Here Jesus tells us we must be connected to Him like He was to the Father. Are you living daily connected, drawing your life from, Jesus the true vine?

(Blow out all candles and move the marker to 3.)

Day 2 GOOD FRIDAY

Light candle six only.

"I AM THE WAY, THE TRUTH, AND THE LIFE. No one comes to the Father except through Me." (John 14:6)

Before His walk to the cross, Jesus spoke this trinity of names about Himself, the great I AM, to His disciples. He was still teaching, still guiding them even to His last breath. These names tell us more about Jesus, the Lamb of God.

- How many ways are there to God? How many did Jesus list? (*One. He is the way.*)
- Where does truth come from? Why did Jesus say **He is the truth**? (*You might read John 1:14.*)
- Think about when Jesus said this. Why will it matter so much to the disciples to know **Jesus is the life** in just a few hours?

At nine o'clock in the morning on Good Friday Jesus was nailed to the cross. At noon it became as dark as night, and the darkness lasted for three hours. What must it have been like for darkness to descend during the brightest part of the day? Just before three o'clock Jesus said, "Tetelestai" which means, It is finished. Then He breathed His last breath. At that moment an earthquake shook the earth and the curtain in the temple was torn in two. The Lamb of God had given His life, His blood, for you and me.

(Blow out all candles and move the marker to 2.)

Day 1 SILENT SATURDAY

Light no candles today.

"The woman (at the well) said to Him, 'I know that Messiah is coming (he who is called Christ). When he comes, he will tell us all things.' Jesus said to her, 'I who speak to you am He.'" (John 4:7-26)

Very plainly Jesus said, "**I AM MESSIAH.**"

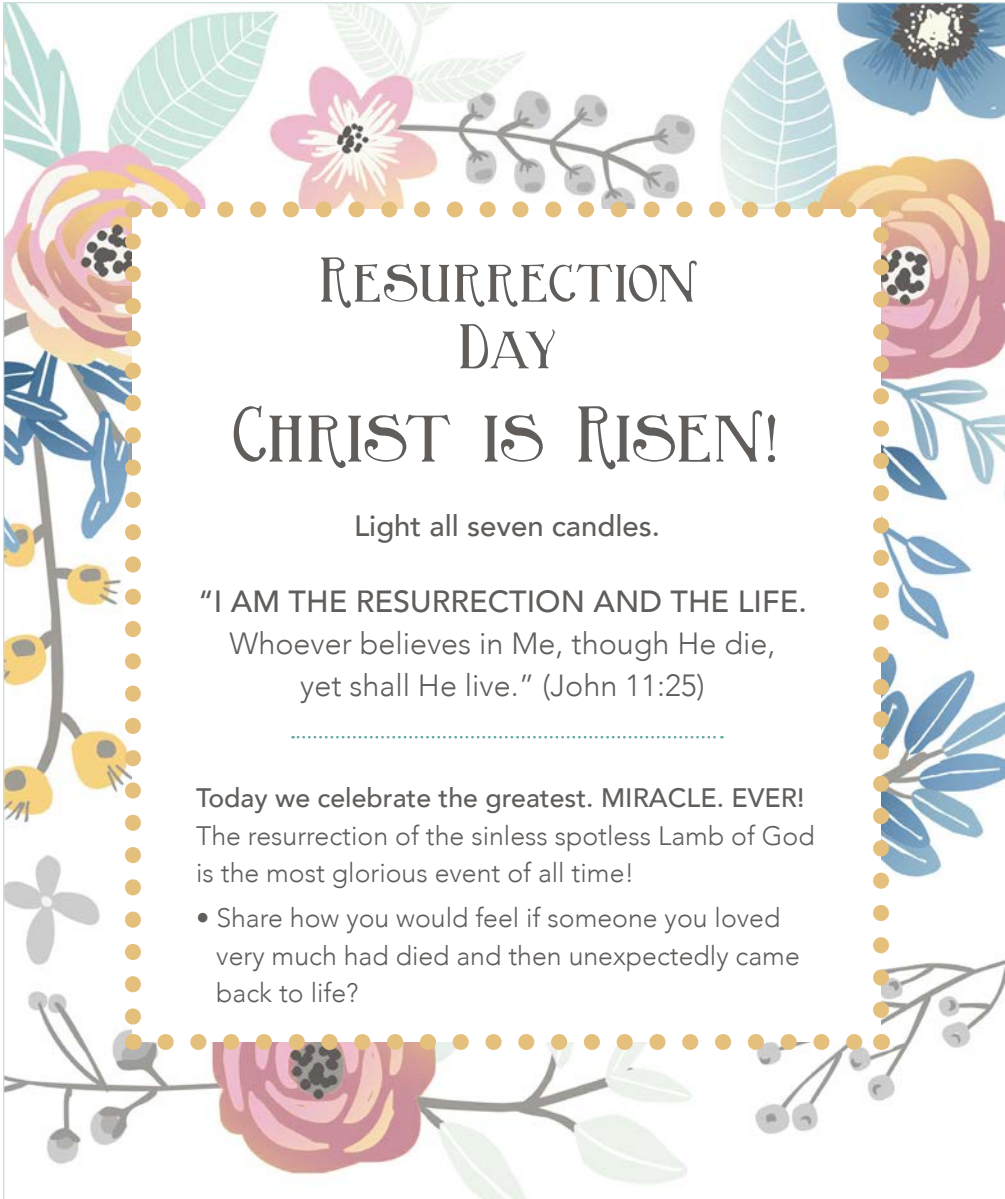
- Do you know the story of this woman? What was her background?
- If Jesus was offering this woman eternal life, what does that mean for you?

Today is Saturday, and for the disciples Jesus is dead. They were sad. Their dreams were dashed. They didn't remember that Jesus said, "I am the life." **Are there times in your life that you, too, forget what Jesus said?**

Saturday was also their Sabbath day. No work was done. People were at home. But it was not an ordinary Sabbath. No one could forget what they'd seen: the crucifixions, the earthquake, the darkness, the temple curtain torn open. For the disciples of Jesus their world was shattered. They wondered, ***Did we misunderstand His message? Was it all in vain? But what about the miracles?***

Light no candles today to remember that without the Light our world would be hopeless and dark. Cover all your candles with a black cloth. You may choose not to turn on any lights all day to remember how the disciples felt. This is a day of waiting.

(Move the marker to 1. Tomorrow before dawn flip your banner over.)



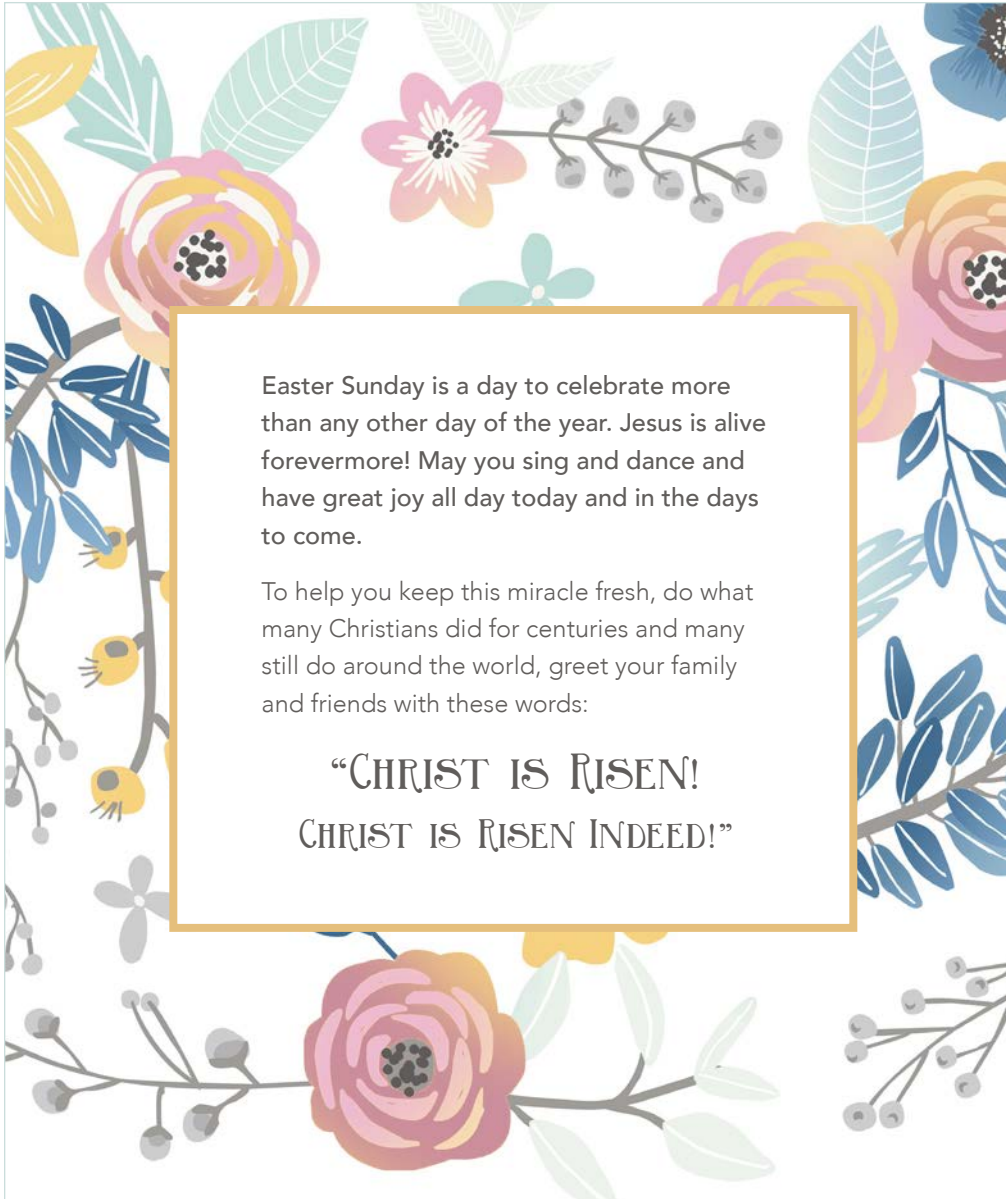
RESURRECTION DAY CHRIST IS RISEN!

Light all seven candles.

"I AM THE RESURRECTION AND THE LIFE.
Whoever believes in Me, though He die,
yet shall He live." (John 11:25)

Today we celebrate the greatest. **MIRACLE. EVER!**
The resurrection of the sinless spotless Lamb of God
is the most glorious event of all time!


- Share how you would feel if someone you loved very much had died and then unexpectedly came back to life?



Easter Sunday is a day to celebrate more than any other day of the year. Jesus is alive forevermore! May you sing and dance and have great joy all day today and in the days to come.

To help you keep this miracle fresh, do what many Christians did for centuries and many still do around the world, greet your family and friends with these words:

**"CHRIST IS RISEN!
CHRIST IS RISEN INDEED!"**



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ISBN: 978-1-60200-903-5

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