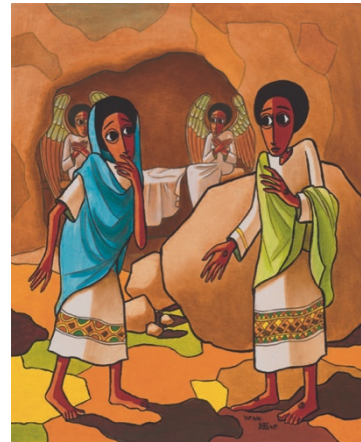


Journey Into Easter With Children

Reflections through art on the events of Holy Week



Inspired by paintings from the Ethiopian artist Nebiyu Assefa, this pack offers children and their families new and creative ways to engage with the story of Holy Week and Easter at home.

Journey Into Easter is free to use. Please share it!

Written by Shahne Vickery, author of *Experience Easter, Roots and Fruits* and many other popular collective worship titles for schools.

Journey Into Easter With Children - Monday

Reflections through art on the events of Holy Week.

The Painting – *The Last Supper* by Nebiyu Assefa (*Large version of picture can be downloaded*)



The Story: Jesus knew that the end of his time on earth was drawing closer. He wanted to share the special Passover meal with his disciples. As they ate together, Jesus did something unexpected.

He took some bread and gave it to his friends saying “Take and eat; this is my body”.

Then he took a cup and offered it round. “Drink from it, all of you. This is my blood which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins. Do this to remember me.”

Reflect: In his painting *The Last Supper*, the artist Nebiyu Assefa shows the disciples looking puzzled and confused. I wonder what they are thinking as he offers them the bread and the wine.

Create: Using modelling material, old scraps of fabric, coloured bits of paper, or anything you have around your home, make a model or picture of the table in the story of The Last Supper or maybe recreate the scene using Lego or Playmobile figures.

Pray: Lord Jesus

Thank you for giving us signs and symbols
to help us remember
who you are and what you have done for us.
As we travel through this Holy Week together,
give us a fresh understanding of your teaching
and your love for us.
Amen



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Journey Into Easter With Children - Tuesday

Reflections through art on the events of Holy Week.

The Painting – *The Garden* by Nebiyu Assefa (Large version of picture can be downloaded)



The Story: After eating supper together, Jesus and his disciples went to a place called Gethsemane where there was a garden. He asked three of his friends, Peter, James and John, to go further into the garden with him and to stay awake and keep watch while he prayed.

Jesus was deeply troubled about what he *knew* would soon happen to him.

Three times he went back to find his friends, but three times he found that they had fallen asleep.

Reflect: Notice which colours the artist, Nebiyu, has used in his painting *The Garden*. How do you think these colours help us to understand how Jesus is feeling? How do *you* feel as you look at this painting?

Create: Colours are used by artists in lots of different ways to show emotion and feelings. Create some abstract art to show how using colours can help you express your feelings.

Pray: Lord Jesus

In the garden of Gethsemane your friends let you down and you felt frightened as you faced the future alone.

We pray today for anyone who is lonely and afraid; help them to know that you are with them and that you love them very much.

Amen



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Journey Into Easter With Children - Wednesday

Reflections through art on the events of Holy Week.

The Painting – *The Lie* by Nebiyu Assefa (*Large version of picture can be downloaded*)



The Story: The darkness and peace of the garden where Jesus had been praying was suddenly shattered. An angry crowd carrying torches and armed with clubs and swords had come to arrest him and take him to the house of the high priest.

The disciples who were with Jesus were terrified and fled, but Peter followed the crowd at a safe distance. When they all arrived at the place where the high priest lived, Peter waited outside in the courtyard. He mingled nervously with the crowd and sat warming himself by the fire, trying not to be noticed. But then people began to recognise him. They pointed at Peter. “Weren’t you a friend of Jesus?” they asked accusingly. Once, twice and then a third time Peter angrily denied even *knowing* Jesus! This was the moment that the cock began to crow and words that Jesus had spoken to him just hours earlier rang in his ears, “Before the cock crows Peter, you will disown me three times”.

Reflect: How does the artist show us which of the figures in the painting is Peter?
What do Peter’s hands tell us about what he might be saying?

Create: Make a picture of a cockerel using hand and finger prints.

Pray: Lord Jesus
Sometimes we are confident and brave
but other times we get scared or embarrassed.
We don’t always stand up
for what we know is right
and we let you down.
We are really sorry
and ask you to forgive us,
just as you forgave Peter.
Amen



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Journey Into Easter With Children - Thursday

Reflections through art on the events of Holy Week.

The Painting – *The Trial* by Nebiyu Assefa (Large version of picture can be downloaded)



The Story: Even though there was no reason to find Jesus guilty, the chief priests and elders of the people decided that he must be put to death. They took Jesus to Pilate, the Roman Governor for the region, to be condemned, but Pilate could not find him guilty of any crime. The chief priests and elders *insisted*, “We have a law” they told Pilate, “Jesus must die because he has claimed to be the Son of God.”

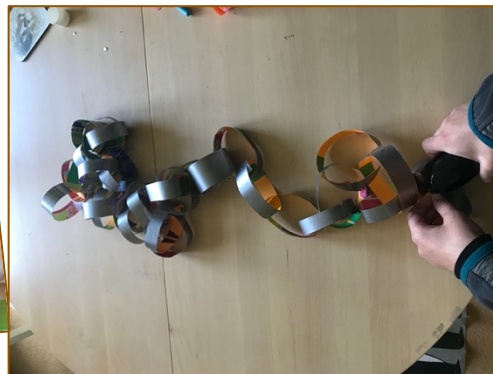
Pilate was worried about this. He took a bowl of water and washed his hands to show that he would take no further responsibility for what happened to Jesus and he handed him over to be crucified.

Reflect: In the painting Jesus’ hands are bound. He is a prisoner even though he has done nothing wrong. How do you think it might feel to be unjustly accused and treated as a criminal?

Create: Take some dark paper (or paint white paper grey on one side). On the other side use collage, paint or pens to make that side of the paper as colourful and vibrant as possible. Now cut the paper into strips and use a stapler, paper clips or glue and make a paper chain. Keep the grey side of the paper on the outside.

Pray: Lord Jesus

Even in our time we know that Christians in some parts of the world are in chains or imprisoned, simply because they believe in you. Keep them strong and courageous and help them to feel your presence and peace today. Amen



Journey Into Easter With Children – Good Friday

Reflections through art on the events of Holy Week.

The Painting – *The Cross* by Nebiyu Assefa *(Large version of picture can be downloaded)*



The Story: Even though he was guilty of no crime, Jesus was hung on a cruel cross by his enemies. At the moment that he died the sun became dark, the earth shook violently and rocks all around, split apart. The centurion and those with him who were keeping watch, were terrified. They knew for certain now that they had witnessed before their own eyes, the death of the Son of God.

As evening approached a man called Joseph from Arimathea, a follower of Jesus, went to Pilate and asked if he could take Jesus' body away and put him in a tomb nearby, which was cut out of the rock. Pilate gave his permission. Joseph of Arimathea wrapped Jesus carefully in linen, laid him in the tomb and rolled a huge stone across the entrance.

Reflect: The eyes in Nebiyu's paintings are always what we notice first. The only time that Jesus' eyes are shown closed is in this picture. He has died. The sun has stopped shining. The world is a dark place. There are 6 other characters in this picture. Choose three of them. If you were to draw a thought bubble for each of these, what would you write inside?

Create: Making Easter gardens is a tradition all over the world. They can be created using any materials that are at hand. If you are going outside today, collect some natural bits and pieces from the ground. Perhaps you can make a cross from two sticks. On Good Friday the garden will be quite plain but on Easter Day it will be transformed!

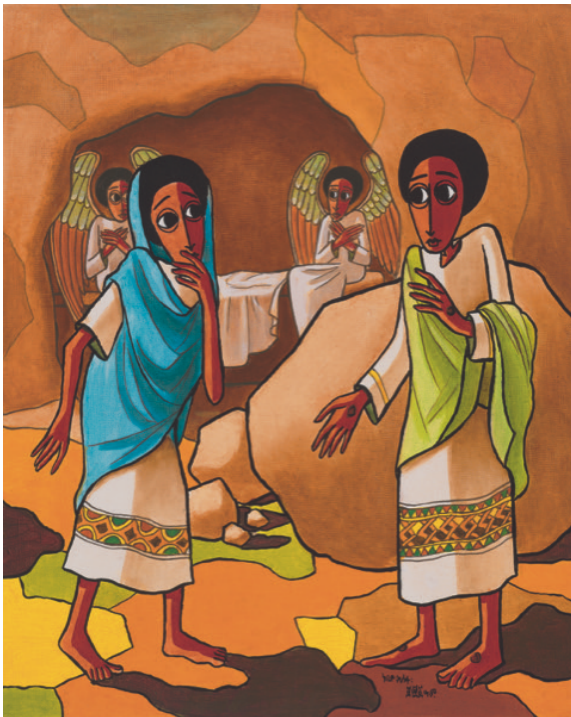
Pray: Thank you Lord Jesus
that on the very first Good Friday,
you stretched out your arms
on the cross
and embraced the whole world in love.
Amen



Journey Into Easter With Children – Easter Day

Reflections through art on the events of Holy Week.

The Painting – *The Empty Tomb* by Nebiyu Assefa *(Large version of picture can be downloaded)*



The Story: On the third day after Jesus had been crucified and whilst it was still dark, Mary Magdalene went to the garden tomb where Jesus had been laid. As she drew nearer, she noticed, with alarm, that the huge stone that had been in front of the entrance had been rolled away! Bewildered, Mary raced back to the disciples who immediately returned with her to see for themselves. It was true, the tomb was empty and Jesus' body was no longer there! Shocked and confused but realising there was nothing to be done, the men went home again but Mary stayed. She had never felt more alone and she wept bitterly. Bending over once more, Mary looked into the cave. To her amazement, she saw two angels in white, seated where Jesus' body had been. "Why are you crying?" they asked. "They have taken my Lord away" she said "and I don't know where they have put him."

At this moment Mary turned and saw Jesus standing there. At first she did not recognise him but then he spoke her name, "Mary". Her face lit up, her tears turned to joy and her heart was ready to burst. She had seen him with her own eyes, Jesus was alive!

Reflect: Jesus is alive! But at first Mary didn't recognise him. Why do you think this could have been? Hands always play an important part in Nebiyu's art. What do you notice about Jesus' hands and feet in this picture? Why do you think it might have been important for Mary to see these?

Create: It is Easter Day! Now is the time to celebrate! Transform your Easter garden and make it look amazing with lots of colour. Take the chains that you made on Thursday and pull them apart one by one to reveal the colour inside. Make an Easter cross with the pieces. What was dark and cold is now vibrant and alive!

Pray: Lord Jesus
Today we celebrate the miracle that is Easter.
You broke the chains of death
and you are alive!
Let your light shine
into every corner of our world
and may your love live in our hearts
now and forever.
Amen



Journey Into Easter With Children written by Shahne Vickery

Thanks to the children– Daisy, Henry, Reuben and Clara - who have kindly tried out all the crafty ideas and to Carolyn Wright for putting together this resource.

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