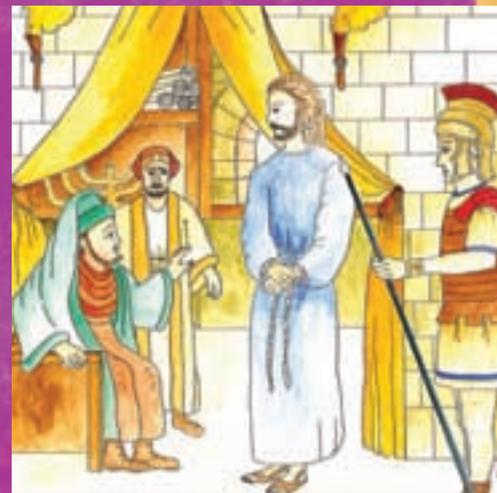
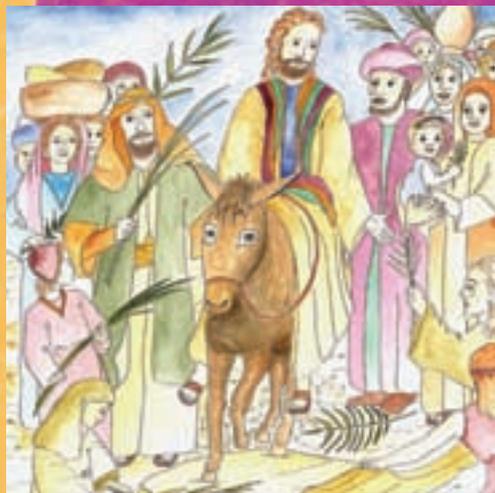
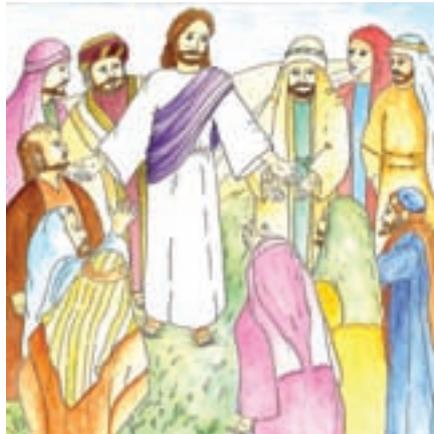


# WHY EASTER?



Barbara Reaoch illustrated by Carol McCarty

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Shepherd Press

## Read: John 11:17-27 and 38-44

## WEEK 1 • DAY 1

**Listen:** Who are your good friends? Lazarus, Mary, and Martha were very good friends of Jesus. This was a sad time for them but Jesus wanted to teach his friends something important. When God created the world, everything was good. God made the first people, Adam and Eve, and gave them a home with Him in a beautiful place called Eden. Then one day everything changed. Adam and Eve did not obey the rules that God made for them. They wanted to do things their own way. They disobeyed God. This is called sin. Their punishment was to leave beautiful Eden, forever. No longer did they talk with God and enjoy His friendship with them. Life outside Eden was hard. Then one day Adam and Eve died.

Adam was the first father on the earth. We all come from Adam and Eve, and every person born after Adam is like him. We all tend to do what we want instead of obeying God (Rom. 5:18-19). God loves us very much, and it is wrong for us to disobey Him. It is right and it is fair for God to punish us for sin. We all have the same punishment as Adam. Is there any hope for us to enjoy a friendship with God? Jesus told Lazarus, Mary and Martha (and us) something important about God's plan.

God loves you and planned for Jesus to take your punishment. Jesus came back to life after He died and now lives in heaven. Boys, girls, moms and dads, those who believe Jesus took the punishment for their sin are God's children. God's children enjoy a friendship with Him. They live with God forever. Although their body may die on earth, they will live in heaven and one day be given a new body. Jesus raised Lazarus to life, and He has the power to give you the new life He promised.

**Truth:** God planned for Jesus to take our punishment for sin.

### Discuss:

1. What do all people want to do instead of obeying God?
2. What is the punishment for sin?
3. What does Jesus promise for those who believe in Him?

### Memorize: Week 1—Acts 2:22-24

#### • Day 1—Acts 2:22

***22***“Men of Israel, hear these words: Jesus of Nazareth, a man attested to you by God with mighty works and wonders and signs that God did through him in your midst, as you yourselves know—<sup>23</sup>this Jesus, delivered up according to the definite plan and foreknowledge of God, you crucified and killed by the hands of lawless men. <sup>24</sup>God raised him up, loosing the pangs of death, because it was not possible for him to be held by it.

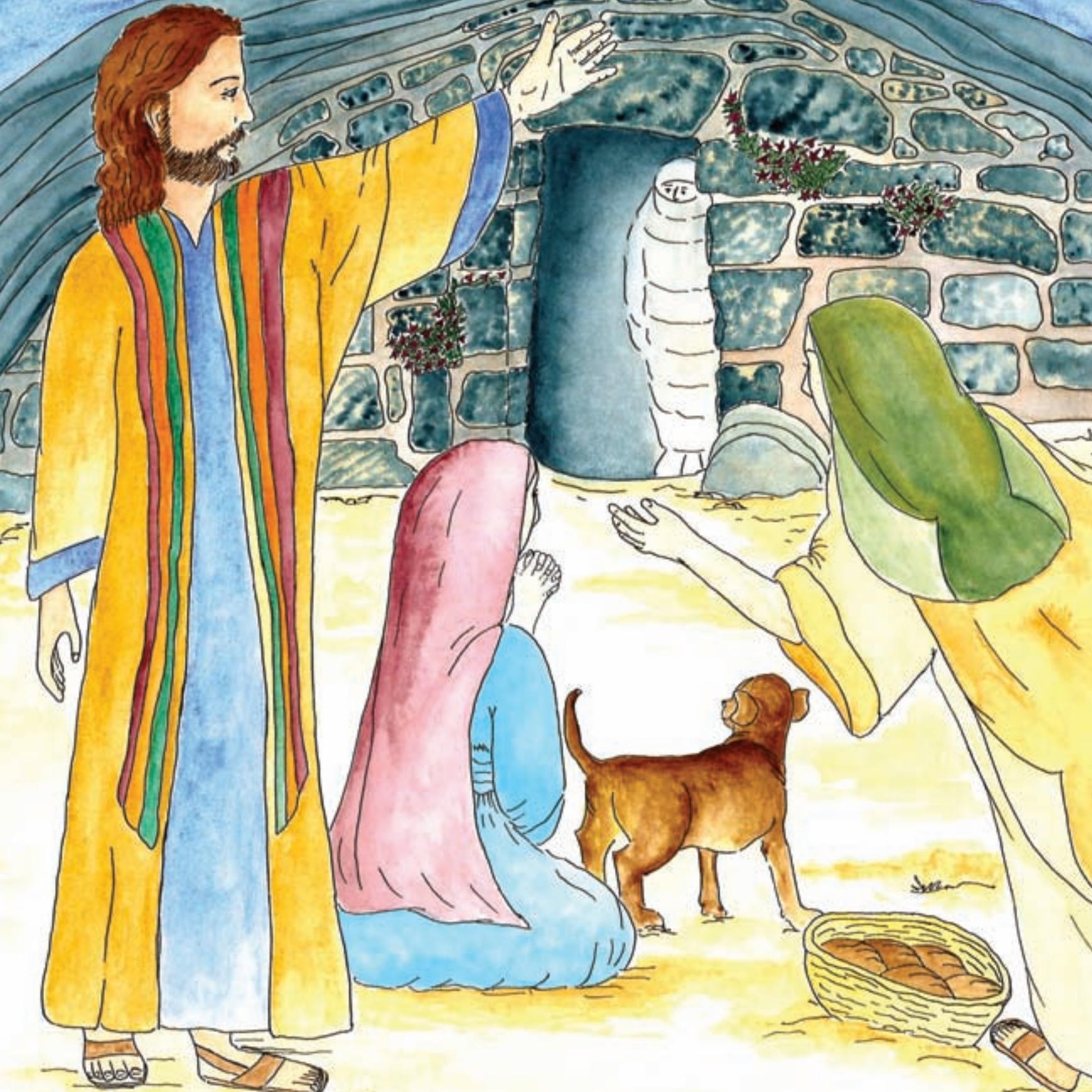
#### • Discuss verse 22:

“Men of Israel, hear these words: Jesus of Nazareth, a man attested to you by God”

**Sing:** “When I Survey the Wondrous Cross” (p. 62)

#### • Discuss “my richest gain.”

What is my richest gain compared with the love of Jesus?



**Listen:** How do we show Jesus our love for Him? Lazarus, Martha, and Mary were so grateful for all Jesus had done. Lazarus had died but now he was alive. Jesus did what no one else could do. Lazarus wanted to show Jesus his love. He honored Jesus with a special dinner. Martha started to prepare to serve all of Jesus' favorite food to show her love for Him. How would Mary show Jesus her love?

The day came for Jesus and His friends to gather around the table with Lazarus. The freshly baked bread smelled good and everyone was hungry. Martha happily served the guests and had decided to serve Jesus the rest of her life. Suddenly the aroma of freshly baked bread was overpowered by a sweet fragrance. What was it? All eyes were on Mary as she poured perfume on Jesus' feet. This was no ordinary perfume. It had cost what one person earned in a whole year of work. In those days people poured this kind of perfume over the body of a loved one when they died.

Mary had always listened closely to Jesus as He spoke. Mary heard Jesus talk about death as the awful penalty of sin. When Lazarus died, Mary felt the sting of this truth. However, Mary heard Jesus call Himself the resurrection and the life and that He was the way for a person to be forgiven of sin and live forever with God. In pouring this perfume on Jesus, Mary was telling Jesus she believed Him. She trusted Jesus and knew what He said was true. Mary showed her love for Jesus by believing Him.

Was Mary wasting her money? Judas thought so. Judas wanted the money for himself (Luke 12:16-21). Judas heard Jesus talk many times, but did not believe Him

(Matt. 26:14-16). Many people are like Judas. They hear about Jesus but do not believe what He says. Mary understood Jesus and believed Him (Matt. 13:23).

**Truth:** Jesus gave His life so we can be forgiven.

**Discuss:**

1. What did Mary believe about Jesus?
2. What will you do to listen closely to Jesus' words?
3. How will you show your love for Jesus today?

**Memorize:** Week 1—Acts 2:22-24

• **Day 2—Acts 2:22**

**22**“Men of Israel, hear these words: Jesus of Nazareth, a man attested to you by God with mighty works and wonders and signs that God did through him in your midst, as you yourselves know—<sup>23</sup>this Jesus, delivered up according to the definite plan and foreknowledge of God, you crucified and killed by the hands of lawless men. <sup>24</sup>God raised him up, loosing the pangs of death, because it was not possible for him to be held by it.

• **Discuss verse 22:**

“with mighty works and wonders and signs that God did through him in your midst, as you yourselves know”

**Sing:** “When I Survey the Wondrous Cross” (p. 62)

• **Discuss “my richest gain.”**



**Listen:** “Here he comes! Here he comes,” shouted the children. They looked up from their games and saw Jesus coming toward Jerusalem. “Let’s go tell our family and friends so they can come and see this famous man,” they said. By now, everyone knew that Jesus had raised Lazarus from the dead. They were sure Jesus was the Messiah-King that God had promised to send. A crowd quickly gathered. They spread coats and palm branches down on the rocky, dusty road so Jesus would know He was honored (Matt. 21:8). From the Scriptures they knew that the Messiah King would come from the family line of King David.

As Jesus got closer, they started shouting “Hosanna to the son of David!” Hosanna means “save now.” The children were so excited and kept saying “Hosanna to the Son of David, Hosanna to the Son of David” (Matt. 21:15-16). The adults were also overjoyed and said, “Finally we will be free from Roman rule.” The Roman government made laws that made life hard for the Jewish people. They thought God’s King (Messiah) was coming to give them freedom from the Roman government.

The people also knew that the Scriptures told of the Messiah King riding into Jerusalem on a donkey (Zech. 9:9). Why would the Messiah King not ride a horse? All kings rode horses to show their strength for battle. Jesus was different from other kings. Jesus was stronger than any other king but He followed God’s plan in humility. He came to save the people from something much worse than a government that made life hard. He came to save them from their sin.

**Truth:** Jesus is the Messiah-King God promised to send.

**Discuss:**

1. Why did the people put coats and palm branches on the road?
2. Why did the people shout, “Hosanna to the son of David”?
3. Why did Jesus ride a donkey and not a horse?

**Memorize:** Week 1—Acts 2:22-24

• **Day 3—Acts 2:22**

*22*“Men of Israel, hear these words: Jesus of Nazareth, a man attested to you by God with mighty works and wonders and signs that God did through him in your midst, as you yourselves know—<sup>23</sup>**this Jesus, delivered up according to the definite plan and foreknowledge of God, you crucified and killed by the hands of lawless men.** <sup>24</sup>God raised him up, loosing the pangs of death, because it was not possible for him to be held by it.

• **Discuss verse 22:**

“with mighty works and wonders and signs that God did through him in your midst, as you yourselves know”

**Sing:** “When I Survey the Wondrous Cross” (p. 62)

• **Discuss “Prince of Glory.”**

What does it mean to be a Prince or King?

