



# Spark Holy Week Family Festival

Director Guide

## Introduction

Welcome to the Spark Holy Week Family Festival Director Guide! This multigenerational event will help prepare your congregation for the days leading up to Easter. They'll enjoy large group and small group activities as they explore Holy Week stories. The result is people of all ages experiencing the wonder and power of Holy Week together.

The purpose of this festival is to retell the biblical account of the last week of Jesus' life on earth before the crucifixion. Participants are invited to experience the events leading to the cross as if they were there with the disciples. You can "go big" if you have people who like to decorate spaces, or you can use a projector to put a picture of Jerusalem on a screen in the front of the space where you gather.

Jesus was traveling with his disciples, so your participants will travel in small groups through this experience. You will need a storyteller for each station. Have this person dress up in a first-century costume like someone traveling with Jesus. The storyteller might need a helper for the activity at their station. Have this person also dress in costume to help the story come alive.

Invite your participants to come dressed in first-century costumes too—shepherds, merchants, disciples, and even a Roman soldier or two will help immerse everyone in the experience. If you have a costume closet at your church, you can use its contents for your storytellers and have extra supplies for head coverings or robes for participants who forgot a costume.



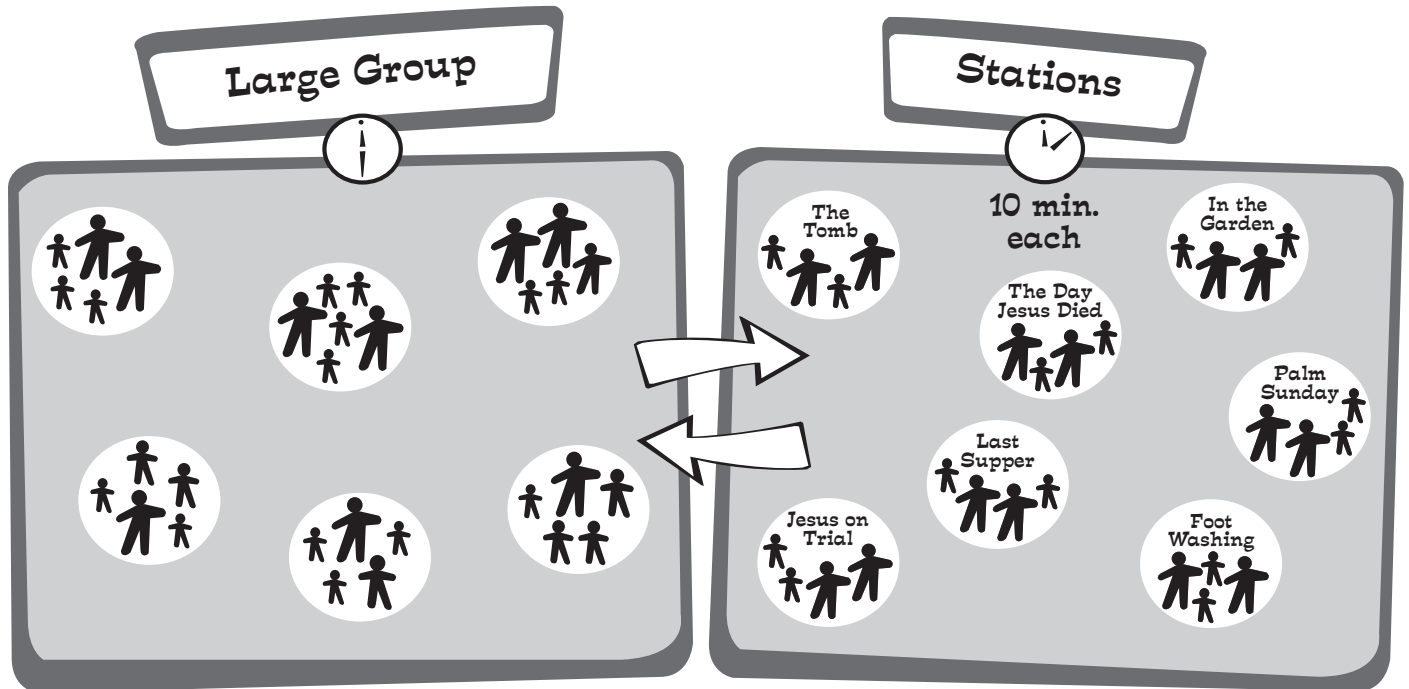
Old slide projectors are great for creating atmosphere! Search online for places that transfer digital photos into slides.



It is totally fine if people don't dress up. As the leader, you can invite them into the first-century world—perhaps even as time travelers!

## How It Works

The Spark Holy Week Family Festival can be customized to fit the size, budget, traditions, and needs of your congregation. This multigenerational event is planned for about two hours. Once all participants have gathered, everyone will begin the opening project. Every ten minutes, a different group will stop working on the project and be dismissed to enter the Holy Week activity station rotation. As groups finish, they can continue working on their projects until all participants have returned. The full event includes seven story stations.



As participants arrive, they can decorate a nametag and find a seat. Then divide everyone into smaller groups and give directions for rotating through stations. Introduce the opening project (handprint palm branches) and dismiss the first group to go to the Palm Sunday station. They can make their handprint branches when they finish the rotation.

After dividing into small groups, participants rotate through several stations to experience story-related activities. Plan to gather as a large group at the end of the event for a closing project and blessing.

There are various ways to use this resource in your congregation. The stations could be used over the course of a midweek Lenten worship/education series by doing one station activity per week as a response to the lesson, to tell the full Passion story before Easter. Have the storyteller dress in costume and pass out the elements of the response activity, or have supplies ready on chairs or pews. This format can be a great opportunity for congregation members to invite friends and neighbors who might not come to a regular worship service.

## Station Descriptions

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Participants will gather for a Large Group Opening before moving through all seven stations, beginning with Palm Sunday and ending at the Tomb. It's important to rotate sequentially so everyone experiences the stations of Holy Week in order. Everyone will gather at the end for a Large Group Closing.

**Large Group Opening:** People will be prepared to embark on a pilgrimage with Jesus.

**Palm Sunday:** Participants listen to the story of Jesus' entry into Jerusalem and join in the parade to praise Jesus as God's king.

**Foot Washing:** This station will recount Jesus washing his disciples' feet at the Last Supper. Participants will wash one another's feet and consider ways to reflect the love of Christ by serving others.

**Last Supper:** This station will give participants an opportunity to imagine they are eating with Jesus and the disciples as they hear about the Last Supper.

**In the Garden:** At this station, people will learn about Jesus coming to the garden of Gethsemane to pray and struggle with everything that was happening. They will also have an opportunity to pray for all those suffering in the world today.

**Jesus on Trial:** At this station, participants will hear the story of Jesus being put on trial, and they'll think about why his status as "king" was so threatening to the rulers of that day.

**The Day Jesus Died:** At this station, participants will hear the story of Jesus' death on the cross.

**The Tomb:** At this station, participants will hear the story of Jesus being buried, the surprise of an empty tomb, the message of an angel, and the job we all share—to tell everyone that Jesus is alive!

**Large Group Closing:** Participants will reflect on their pilgrimage and prepare their hearts for Easter.