

SPIRIT PLAY PARENT PAGE

Unitarian Universalist Society of Sacramento



The Wonder of Easter Story

In is the story of Easter from the Christian religion, where people follow Jesus' message to love and care for each other, and to bring peace into their own lives and into the world: and these are the same values that we, as Unitarians, share.

Passover is the holiday to celebrate by Jewish people to remember their escape from slavery in Egypt. Now Jerusalem was very crowded that week for the holiday, and lots of people who were there were getting excited about seeing Jesus because they had heard about the wonderful things he had done - many called him Son of God, or King of Jews. Although his followers wanted Jesus to ride into Jerusalem on a horse, which was a symbol of pride, and war, Jesus preferred to ride on a donkey because this animal was a symbol of peace.

While Jesus and his followers, or disciples, were celebrating Passover together, they had special wine, as was the custom. However, Jesus knew something that no one else knew - which was that he was going to die soon. So when he poured the wine into each disciple's cup he asked them to remember him always, by thinking of the wine as his blood. And when Jesus broke the bread into pieces for them to share, he asked them to remember the bread as his body. And sure enough, following Jesus' death, and still today,

Christian people all over the world, have a tradition called communion, where the church leader passes out bread (or crackers) and wine (or grape juice) in remembrance of Jesus final Passover supper.

Unfortunately for Jesus, not all the people appreciated him. There were some important and powerful Jewish leaders who were jealous of Jesus. They did not like his message of a peaceful, honest life, so they wanted to kill him. In order to capture Jesus, these leaders offered money to one of Jesus's friends, a man named Judas, to help trap Jesus in the middle of the night. (I wonder why Judas accepted the silver coins?)

On the evening after the Passover Supper, Jesus and his followers went into a grove of trees to camp out for the night. Jesus wanted them to all pray together, because he knew that this would be their last time to share prayers. Sadly, later that night as they were sleeping, soldiers came and arrested Jesus. Even though Jesus did not try to fight against the soldiers who arrested him, they cruelly beat and whipped him.

After the soldiers and guards had beat Jesus, they continued to tease him, hit him, call him names, and spit on him. To further insult him as not really being the King of Jews, they made a thorny crown and forced it onto his head. Even some of the people who, a few days ago, thought Jesus was special, changed their minds and began bullying him as well. (I wonder why....)

Nails were use to hammer Jesus arms and legs on to a cross for death by crucifixion. This was the common punishment at that time, even for a thief. These nails are shaped into a cross, which is a very important symbol for people of the Christian religion all around the world.

They say that Jesus hardly owned anything in this world, except the clothes he was wearing. However, the soldiers wanted to take even his clothes away from him, and so they gambled with dice to see who could win Jesus' pieces of clothing. As the soldiers played this game, Jesus said a prayer to forgive these soldiers.

After it seemed that Jesus had died, the soldiers pierced the side of his body with the spear to make sure that he was dead. After Jesus died, a kind and rich man called Joseph of Arimatha volunteered to wrap Jesus body around and around in a cloth and to put him into a nice burial tomb that he had prepared.

An enormous rock was rolled, by many men, to cover the entrance to Jesus' tomb. The rock was bigger than a door, and as heavy as a car. Soldiers were told to guard the huge rock night and day. A few days after Jesus body was buried, two women called Mary and Mary Magdalen went to the tomb for the custom of anointing, or covering, the body with special spices. However, the tomb was discovered to be empty, except for the linen cloth that had been covering Jesus body. An angel then told them that Jesus had risen from dead and come back to life.



Wondering Questions:

I wonder if you have ever seen or heard any of this before?

I wonder which part of this story is the most important?

I wonder which part you like the best?

I wonder where you might be in this story?

I wonder how Jesus came to be a king of love and not of war?

I wonder why the Leaders of Jerusalem were so afraid of this peaceful man?

I wonder if Jesus was afraid when he knew he was going to be crucified?

I wonder how Jesus' mother and friends felt about this good man's death?

I wonder how Jesus became alive again on Easter morning?

I wonder if you know anyone who was thought to be dead had come alive again?

I wonder if there is a part of the story that we could leave out and still have a story?

I wonder if this lesson reminds you of any of our Unitarian Universalist Promises?

I wonder where the Spirit of Love and Mystery might be in this story?

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