

History of Easter



In Christianity, the last week of Lent (the week before Easter) is called “Holy Week.” The Christian Holy Week includes the religious holidays of Palm Sunday, Maundy Thursday (Holy Thursday) and Good Friday. It commemorates through scripture and ritual, the last week of Jesus’ life on earth. Palm Sunday commemorates Jesus’ entry into Jerusalem, his destination for the celebration of Passover. Palm branches were waived as a gesture of welcome into the Holy City.

Holy Thursday is the commemoration of Jesus’ last Passover meal with his followers. Friday brings the commemoration of his crucifixion and death. Easter Sunday is the commemoration of the resurrection of Jesus and the start of the Great Fifty Days culminating with the celebration of Pentecost. Pentecost is regarded as the “birthday” of the church when the message of Christianity moves from the upper room to the streets of the city and world. For many Christian families these days are reminiscent of special foods, beautiful ritual, music, processions, renewal of baptism and the glow of candlelight.

Hospice staff and volunteers may find that patients and families who have a Christian background, experience a longing to be more connected to their roots of faith. It may be an opportunity to dwell on sacred memories and review past Easter memories. The theme of resurrection and ascendance may provide openings for conversations about spiritual beliefs, dying and the afterlife.

