

Good Friday: Darkness & Light

Life and death stand side by side as we enter into Good Friday. Jesus reveals the power and glory of God, even as he is put on trial and sentenced to death. Standing with the disciples at the foot of the cross, we gather in solemn devotion and darkness, but with the promise that Easter will dawn.

READ THE STORY: John 19:17-31, when Jesus died (Spark Story Bible page 476).

EXPERIENCE: Tenebrae (Latin for “shadows” or “darkness”) is one traditional form of worship often held the evening of Good Friday. It includes dimming of lights and extinguishing of candles; the concluding “Strepitus” or loud noise (slamming shut the Bible) symbolizes the earthquake and agony of creation at the death of Christ.



You can experience Tenebrae at home:

Put a cross in a space where you can sit and read the story and pray—if you don’t have a cross, make one out of whatever you find at home. Turn on (or light) several lamps, lights, and candles—10 candles and lights, altogether, if you are using the Spark Story Bible. Put away distractions. Silence noisy devices.

Read the title (“The Day Jesus Died”) and then turn out one light (or extinguish one candle). After each paragraph of the story (or every few sentences, if you’re reading out of a different bible), do the same, until the story is finished and your space is dark. Close the bible forcefully, so that it makes a loud noise. Then sit in silence to reflect or pray.

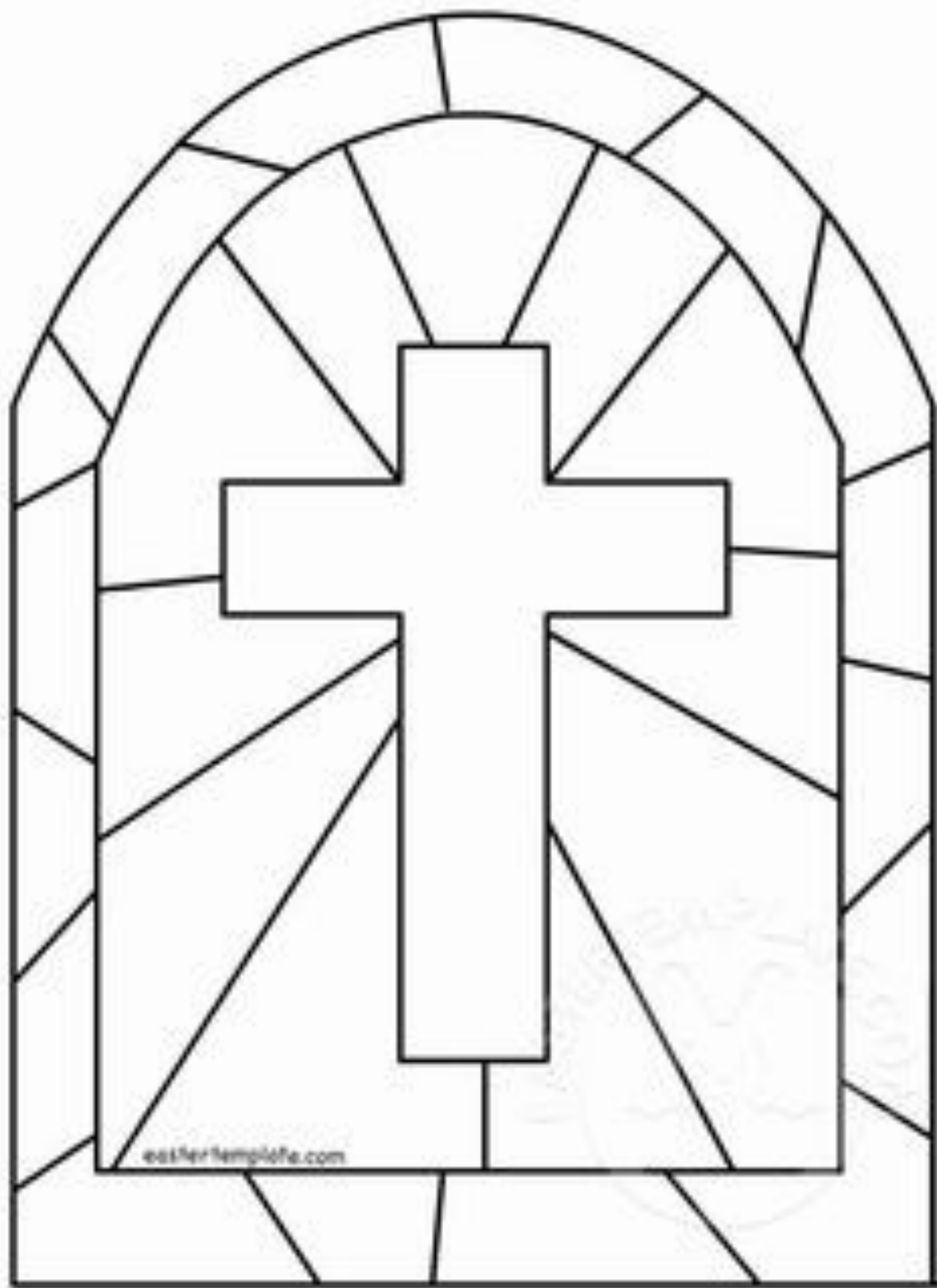
WONDER:

- What do you notice in the silent darkness at the end of the reading? How do/did you feel? What do/did you hear when you listen to the silence?
- What lamentations, sorrows, and prayers are you bringing to the cross?
- If you drew a picture of Good Friday, what color would you use to show sadness and grief?
- Why do you think it is important to remember this solemn and sad day?

CREATE: Make a “[stained glass](#)” background with tissue paper, markers, melting crayons, or simply by coloring on paper (see page 2 for a template). Add a black cross as a reminder that Good Friday is a day full-to-overflowing with both grief and hope.



PRAY: *Dear God, in the darkness of Good Friday, help us to name what we have lost and what we grieve. In the darkness of Good Friday, help us also to keep trusting, keep hoping. Amen.*



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