



# MAUNDY THURSDAY GUIDE



 **highrock**  
**2025**

# PREPARE

## A MEAL TO SHARE

It will be helpful to think about this in “courses”, with three parts- starters, main, dessert. They don’t have to be fancy- just know that you’ll have different things to talk about during each “course”.

**Pro Tip:** Do this potluck style, and ask everyone to bring something to contribute.

## COMMUNION ELEMENTS

You can use bread, crackers, wafers, wine, grape juice- whatever works for your group. Make sure to check in with your group about dietary restrictions or preferences ahead of time.

**Pro Tip:** If you have time and find baking to be a meaningful experience, you can always choose to [make your own matzah](#).

## SUPPLIES FOR PRAYER CHAINS

- Construction paper in 3 colors, cut into strips (~1”x6”)
  - You’ll need 3x the number of participants
- Glue Sticks
- Markers/Pens

**Pro Tip:** If you’re doing this with kids, or have adults who want to get more creative, you can have stickers or other craft supplies around to decorate.

## OPTIONAL: SUPPLIES FOR FOOT WASHING

Tub, warm water, soap, washcloth + towel for each person

# GATHER

Today, we gather to participate with Jesus and his disciples on the journey to the Cross. “Maundy” comes from the Latin word that means “command”. On this night, Jesus gave his final command to the disciples before he died- to love each other.

The disciples come with their confusion about what is happening at this moment. What is Jesus’ plan? They believe he’s the Messiah, but it doesn’t seem like he’s saving them from any of the people or circumstances in their lives that harm them.

Jesus comes with love for his disciples. He understands the burdens they disciples carry- they’ve been traveling together for 3 years. They have been loyal to him, even as it’s cost them their jobs, their families, and their communities.

The apostles come with their own desires. Will Jesus make his big move now? Is this the moment when all their suffering and sacrifice becomes worth it?

Jesus holds a heavy burden. He knows what will come next. The time had come for him to be executed. To endure pain, and experience separation from the family he’d been journeying.

But Jesus *also* has the vision to see past the next few days, toward the eventual defeat of sin and death, toward being reunited with God the Father.

Today, we come like the apostles, with our *own* confusion about the state of the world. We come with our *own* desires for how Jesus might change things for us.

We pray that through the sharing of this meal, through serving one another, and through the sacrament of Holy Communion, we might leave more like Jesus, grounded in love, honest about our burdens, and hopeful about God’s redemption.

# STARTERS

*Bring out the “starters” and make sure everyone has what they want and need to begin. Once everyone is ready, take turns reading this reading from John while people eat. There are questions after every section that you can ask at the table, or pick and choose which ones to engage with?*

People wanted to meet with Jesus, they thought he would be a King.

JOHN 12:12b-13

A large crowd of Passover visitors took palm branches and went down the road to meet him. They shouted,

“Praise God! Blessings on the one who comes in the name of the Lord! Hail to the King of Israel!”

*Jesus knew that the crowds wanted a king for their own reasons. Some of them were fair, but some of them were selfish. Jesus would not be the king they wanted. Instead, he would give the world what it needed- real, healthy relationships with God and with each other. Real purpose for their lives. Redemption, and reconciliation. But he knew that he would have to lose his life on behalf of all of creation to accomplish that.*

JOHN 12:23-26

Jesus replied, “Now the time has come for the Son of Man to enter into his glory. I tell you the truth, unless a kernel of wheat is planted in the soil and dies, it remains alone. But its death will produce many new kernels—a plentiful harvest of new lives. Those who love their life in this world will lose it. Those who care nothing for their life in this world will keep it



for eternity. Anyone who wants to serve me must follow me, because my servants must be where I am. And the Father will honor anyone who serves me.

*Even though Jesus had performed amazing miracles, most people did not believe that he was the Messiah, that he was the King they had been waiting for. And even those who did believe that Jesus was Messiah wouldn't admit it. They were afraid people wouldn't like them, and that they would be kicked out of their communities.*

*But despite all the miraculous signs Jesus had done, most of the people still did not believe in him.... Many people did believe in him, however, including some of the Jewish leaders. But they wouldn't admit it for fear that the Pharisees would expel them from the synagogue. For they loved human praise more than the praise of God.*

## QUESTION

*Have one person capture everyone's response- you'll use them as prayers later.*

**Imagine you were in the crowd, as Jesus enters, being welcomed as a King. What would you want Jesus to do for you? For the world? What Hopes would you have?**

# MAIN

*Serve the main dishes, and when everyone is settled, take turns reading these Scripture passages and reflections. Then, ask everyone at the table to answer the question and record their answers.*

People wanted to meet with Jesus, they thought he would be a King.

## JOHN 12:27-28

[Jesus said] “Now my soul is deeply troubled. Should I pray, ‘Father, save me from this hour’? But this is the very reason I came! Father, bring glory to your name.”

## JOHN 13:1-5

Before the Passover celebration, Jesus knew that his hour had come to leave this world and return to his Father. He had loved his disciples during his ministry on earth, and now he loved them to the very end. It was time for supper, and the devil had already prompted Judas, son of Simon Iscariot, to betray Jesus. Jesus knew that the Father had given him authority over everything and that he had come from God and would return to God. So he got up from the table, took off his robe, wrapped a towel around his waist, and poured water into a basin. Then he began to wash the disciples’ feet, drying them with the towel he had around him.

*Jesus grieved the impending suffering and death he would experience. And yet, he is confident that God loves him, and is with him in the waiting, and what will come.*

## JOHN 13:6-8, 12-17

When Jesus came to Simon Peter, Peter said to him, "Lord, are you going to wash my feet?"

Jesus replied, "You don't understand now what I am doing, but someday you will."

"No," Peter protested, "you will never ever wash my feet!"

Jesus replied, "Unless I wash you, you won't belong to me."

After washing their feet, he put on his robe again and sat down and asked, "Do you understand what I was doing? You call me 'Teacher' and 'Lord,' and you are right, because that's what I am. And since I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you ought to wash each other's feet. I have given you an example to follow. Do as I have done to you. I tell you the truth, slaves are not greater than their master. Nor is the messenger more important than the one who sends the message. Now that you know these things, God will bless you for doing them."

*Sometimes, our grief (sadness) causes us to become defensive, to isolate, or to blame others. We think people will be disgusted by our feelings. Sometimes we try to escape or overcome our grief by overpowering others in anger or trying to take control. That is how kings were expected to behave.*

*Jesus continues to model another way in his grief. He tells other people what is bothering him. He invites them into his sadness, he doesn't ignore his feelings. And then he serves his disciples in humility. Instead of powering up, Jesus chooses to serve in love by washing their feet. Instead of ignoring or dismissing the dirty, shameful parts of his disciples, Jesus takes care of them. And he tells them to do the same for others if they call themselves his disciples.*

## OPTIONAL FOOT WASHING

You may choose to wash each other's feet at this time. Take turns washing and drying each other's feet, and offer blessing- "God sees all of you and loves you. I see you and love you, too." Make sure everyone washes their hands afterwards, before you move on.

## QUESTION

*Have one person capture everyone's response- you'll use them as prayers later.*

**Is there something that you are grieving right now?  
Something you are scared or sad about?**

# DESSERT

*Once everyone has dessert, take turns reading these Scripture passages and reflections. Then, ask everyone at the table to answer the question and record their answers.*

## JOHN 13:33-35

“Dear children, I will be with you only a little longer. And as I told the Jewish leaders, you will search for me, but you can’t come where I am going. So now I am giving you a new commandment: Love each other. Just as I have loved you, you should love each other. Your love for one another will prove to the world that you are my disciples.”

“Praise God! Blessings on the one who comes in the name of the Lord! Hail to the King of Israel!”

*Jesus knew that it would be hard for his disciples to stay committed to God’s ways once he wasn’t with them any more, so he gave them one final reminder. They were supposed to love one another, just as Jesus (and God) had loved them. Even when the world around them would choose hate, violence, greed and division, Jesus reminds them to choose love.*

## QUESTION

*Have one person capture everyone’s response- you’ll use them as prayers later.*

**How do you experience God’s love for you? How do you, or could you, share that love with others?**



# ASSEMBLE YOUR PRAYER CHAINS

## ASSIGN PRAYER TYPES TO COLORS

Choose a color for each type of prayer: one for grief + fear (for kids, you can say sadness + scary), one for hope for what God can do, one for a way you've experienced + are sharing God's love.

## WRITE THE PRAYERS

Give each person three strips of each color. Have them write a specific prayer on each strip according to its color and prayer type. You'll make one copy of each prayer for every person gathered.

For example: "I am grieving poverty", or "I am sad about this relationship in my life." "I am hoping for peace in Ukraine", or "I am hoping for healing in my marriage.", "My kids remind me of God's love, so I try to love them", or "The sunrise reminds me of God's love, so I try to bring sunshine to other people's days."

## MAKE THE LOOPS

Give one copy of each prayer to each person, so everyone has each other's prayers. Take one strip of paper, curl it around to make a loop, and secure the ends with glue or tape.

## FORM THE CHAIN

Take another strip, slide it through the first loop, and then secure it to form a second loop. Continue this process to build the chain.

## CARRY EACH OTHER IN PRAYER

Over the weekend at least, pray for the people and things recorded on the chain.

- On Good Friday, pray for each other's "Griefs + Fears." We bear each other's burdens as we remember that Jesus bore the burden of sin for the whole world.
- On Holy Saturday, prayer for each other's "Hopes". Even as we sit in uncertainty about outcomes, we put our trust in God's faithfulness, and share our hopes about what God can do.
- On Easter Sunday, give thanks for each other's reminders of "God's Love." We remember how powerful and encompassing God's love is in Jesus' resurrection. By holding these reminders of this Love together, we are encouraged to be embodiments of Love in our world.

You can continue these prayers after Easter, and could add on to your prayer chain as new ones pop up!

# COMMUNION

*As Jesus' disciples, we too are commanded to love one another because Christ has first loved us. We remember this through the sharing of Christ's body and blood through the sacrament of communion. Jesus gave his life out of love for the world. He freely gave his body and blood for the forgiveness of sin- to reconcile the world back to God, and to create pathways for reconciliation between us all.*

Take time to serve one another bread and wine or juice.

Give each other the elements and say, "this is Jesus' body, given in love for you", and "this is Jesus' blood, shed for the forgiveness of your sins."

If there are people in your group not receiving the elements, you can offer a blessing- "God sees you, God knows you, God loves you."

# BENEDICTION

*Take whatever time you want to be together, but before you leave, offer this to one another. You can have one person bless your gathering or you can all read this together to each other.*

May you know God sees your life:

joy

pain

struggles

doubts

even when you try to keep them hidden.

May you know that God offers hope,

healing

comfort

peace

even when people tell you it is not possible.

And when you encounter fear,

May you strengthen your belief

In God's unending love

And offer it to the world around you.

Go in Peace to Love and serve the Lord.

Thanks be to God.