

Triumphal Entry (Scene 1) *Enter female actor in period attire. She is carrying palm branches and a cloak.*

Welcome to Jerusalem. I grew up not far from here in Bethany. I'm so glad that you're here because I want to share a very special story from a very special time in my life. This story is about Jesus and it was the first event of what we call the Easter story.

It was almost time for Passover; so many people were coming to Jerusalem to celebrate. The streets were so busy with people, animals, and all kinds of excitement. It was certainly my favorite time of year as we celebrated God's deliverance for His people out of Egypt. But this year was different.

There were many rumors about this Jesus from Nazareth. Rumors of miracles—healing the sick, making the blind see, and even raising the dead! Some said he was a prophet, some said he was a crazy man, but I believed that He was the Son of God—the Messiah!

So, one day, I was standing in the street near a friend's house, and several men began untying her donkey colt. We all thought these men were trying to steal her donkey! We shouted, "Hey! Why are you untying that donkey colt?"

We expected them to see us and run away, but they turned and said, "The Lord needs it." (*With wonder and excitement*) Did they mean *THE* Lord—Jesus? Could he be here—in Jerusalem? If so, I knew that I had to go see Him.

The men untied the colt and began their journey back to Jesus. I wanted to see Jesus, so I followed them. There were many others following. The disciples threw their cloaks on the donkey and put Jesus on it.

(*With increasing excitement*) As Jesus entered Jerusalem, there were so many people. Everyone was throwing their cloaks down to cover the dusty road. (*Throw down the cloak*) The street was like a sea of colors—reds, blues, browns. It was like a carpet rolled out for a King!

They were waving palm branches along the road as Jesus passed. The palm branches made such a loud swishing sound. (*Wave the palm branch*) It was like all of creation was singing a song to Jesus. But all of that was nothing compared to the people who were shouting, "Hosanna! Hosanna! Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord!"

Some of the Jewish leaders shouted at Jesus and told him to make the people quiet down. I'll never forget Jesus' response. He told them, "If they keep quiet, then even the rocks will cry out!" In other words, the whole earth would soon be worshipping Jesus!

I could feel my heart pounding inside my chest! The crowd continued to shout with joy, "Hosanna! Hosanna!" which mean God saves. The whole city was stirred and everyone was asking, "Who is this man?" Could this man really be the Messiah? Would he be the One that saves us?

Jesus and the disciples continued along the road toward the Temple. The crowds continued to follow Jesus, but I stopped and began to think about what had just happened. I remembered the words of Zechariah, the prophet, who said that the Messiah would ride on the colt of a Donkey. (*Slowly and convincingly*) In my heart I believed He *was* the Messiah, but how was this one man going to save us? **I had no idea what would happen next, but I knew that this story wasn't over.**

*At each station, the monologue will end with this line. At this point, Mentors should lead their group to the next station. The actor/actress may or may not dismiss the children.*

The Last Supper (Scene 2)—*Enter female actor in period attire. She is carrying wooden dishes and a cloth.*

Good morning and welcome to my home! I've been expecting you, so please come in and have a seat. I hope you don't mind, but I'm going to finish washing this last bowl from our meal. Oh, it was so delicious!

*(Admiring a wooden bowl)*

This bowl is special to me. It's really just an ordinary bowl, but it is special because it was used in a very extra-ordinary way. I want to tell you about the time when Jesus and his disciples ate a meal at my house. It is what we now call the Last Supper. This happened after Jesus rode the donkey into Jerusalem.

It was time for the Passover celebrations, and we heard a knock on the door. It was Jesus' disciples. They asked my husband to use our upper room to prepare the Passover meal for themselves and Jesus.

We would never say no to such an honor, so we quickly began preparing the Passover meal for them. We prepared the food, poured the wine, and set the table with the dishes. Then, Jesus and his disciples came to the table to share the special meal together.

I wanted to hear what Jesus would say or do, so I stayed as close as I could to the room. The disciples and Jesus talked as they ate, and everyone seemed to be enjoying the Passover meal. When they had finished eating, I heard Jesus speak to His disciples.

First, Jesus took the bread and passed it to his disciples. He said to them, "This is my body which is broken for you." Then, Jesus took the wine and passed it to his disciples. He said to them, "This is my blood which is poured out for you."

I could feel the tears running down my cheeks. Jesus—the Messiah—was promising to save us. But I couldn't help to wonder how he would do it! I was expecting a mighty king, but Jesus was telling the disciples that He was a servant who had come to serve God—the Master.

There was a point during the meal when Jesus leaned over to Judas and said something to him. Whatever Jesus said to him, Judas didn't say anything back to Jesus. Instead, Judas got up and left the room in a hurry. I'm just not really sure what that was about.

I didn't understand what Jesus was saying about servants and masters until he showed us. I peeked through the door to see Jesus standing at the table. He took off his outer clothes and wrapped a towel around his waist. Then, he took this bowl *(hold up wooden bowl)* and filled it with water.

*(Slowly and with emotion)*

I'll never forget what happened next. Jesus went around the table...and he washed the feet of the disciples. One by one, he wiped them clean with the water and dried them with the towel. All the disciples were shocked by what Jesus was doing. Simon Peter even tried to stop Jesus!

Jesus—the Messiah—was taking the dirtiest job so that the disciples' could be clean. I realized that this fit all the things that Jesus had taught us. He told us that He would give up his life so that our sins would be washed away.

Before Jesus and the disciples left for the Garden of Gethsemane, Jesus told them that they would all run away from him on that very night. How could anyone run away from such a loving, powerful man? I believed He was the Son of God, and I would never stop following him! Simon Peter felt the same way and said the same thing to Jesus! But Jesus told him that he would deny knowing Jesus three times before the morning.

That was a special night. It was the most special Passover meal I've ever seen. I'm not sure what was happening, but it was clear that this night was going to be an important night. As Jesus and the disciples left to pray in the garden, **I had no idea what would happen next, but I knew that this story wasn't over.**

Garden of Gethsemane—*Enter Simon Peter in robe and cloak with sword*

My name is Simon Peter, but you may call me Peter. I was one of Jesus' twelve disciples. And I was with him the night when he was arrested. I want to tell you the story of that night.

After we had eaten the Passover meal with Jesus, He led us to the garden of Gethsemane, near the Mount of Olives. This garden was such a beautiful place. We had been there together so many times. It was calm, quiet, and very peaceful. But that night was different. It was obvious that something was troubling Jesus.

When we arrived in the garden, Jesus asked us to pray. He went on just a little further so that he could also pray. I tried my hardest to hear what Jesus was praying. I heard him pleading with God the Father to take this cup from him. And then, I heard Jesus say, "But Father...not my will but your will be done."

I continued to watch him as he prayed. His prayers at times were intense, and other times seemed to be peaceful as he praised His Father. At one point, he was so stressed that he was sweating blood, which only happens when someone is under tremendous stress. It was as if the weight of the whole world was on his shoulders. Look back on that night, I realize that's exactly what was happening.

Jesus continued to pray, but I didn't hear much more. My eyes were so heavy. I tried to stay awake, but I fell asleep. We all fell asleep! When Jesus was finished praying, he came back to find us all fast asleep...and I think John was even snoring!

Jesus told us to wake up, and we heard the sound of someone coming. I heard so many footsteps, the sounds of chains clinking around, and then I saw the mob. Judas, one of our brothers, was leading them. How could he do such a thing? We had all seen Jesus do many miracles. We had learned so much from his teaching. And we all believed He was the Messiah. So, how could one of our very own treat Jesus this way?

I was shocked to see Judas leading the mob, and I was so angry. But I remembered that Jesus said one of us would betray him. Judas went up to Jesus and kissed him on the cheek. Then, all the guards and servants arrested Jesus.

*(Pull out the sword and admire it)*

I was so scared, but I wanted to protect Jesus. I drew my sword and swung at one of the servants. He was lucky because I only caught his ear! But Jesus went to the servant, touched his ear, and healed him. Jesus commanded me to put away my sword, so I did.

The mob led Jesus away. I followed them from a safe distance because I wanted to see what was going to happen to Jesus. They led him into the city where the guards

began to mock him. They made fun of him and his teachings. The blindfolded him and then began punching him. They would laugh and say, "If you're the Son of God, then tell us which one of us is hitting you!"

Jesus never fought back. He had to be hurting, but he never even whimpered. The beatings went on through the night. I continued to watch from a distance, but the crowd of people was growing. There were three people that tried to say I was one of Jesus' followers. The first was a servant girl, but I told her that I didn't know Jesus. Later, another man accused me of following Jesus, but I said, "I am not one of His followers!" About an hour later, another man said, "This man was with Jesus—because he is also a Galilean." Of course I was with Jesus, but I saw what they were doing to him and I didn't want it to happen to me. So, all three times I said that I never knew Jesus.

When the rooster crowed at dawn, I realized what I had done. I had denied knowing Jesus, just like he said I would. I was so ashamed, but I was just so scared. The guards continued to watch Jesus. I wasn't sure what they were going to do with him. I was scared that more people might recognize me as one of His followers, so I went to find the other disciples. I knew they were probably hiding as well. I had no idea what was happening, **but I knew that this story wasn't over yet.**

## Jesus' Trial and Crucifixion—*Enter John dressed in robe*

Hello, my name is John. I am one of Jesus' closest followers. I was there when they arrested Jesus, and I stayed close to him until his death. I want to tell you the story of Jesus' last day here on Earth.

After Jesus was betrayed in the Garden, he was mocked and beaten by those who arrested him. Then, Jesus was taken to the home of Caiaphas, the High Priest. There was already a mob of people waiting there to see Jesus and question the things He had taught us.

These men wanted to know what Jesus had been teaching, but Jesus told them to go ask the thousands of people that had listened and learned from Him! Jesus stood before the council with boldness. They asked him, "If you are the Christ, then tell us." But Jesus replied, "If I tell you, you still will not believe. From now on, the Son of Man will be seated at the right hand of God."

This made the council so angry! Some of the men on the council were so angry that they ripped their robes! They shouted at Jesus, "So, are you the Son of God then?" And Jesus said, "You say that I am." That is when the men grabbed Jesus and led him to the house of Pilate, the Roman Governor.

They told Pilate that Jesus had misled the Jews and refusing to pay tribute to Caesar, the Roman Emperor. So, Pilate asked Jesus, "Are you the King of the Jews?" Jesus replied, "You have said so."

Pilate had Jesus flogged, which is the worst beating you can ever imagine. But the Pharisees wanted Jesus to be executed—killed—for the things he had said. Pilate could not find anything Jesus had done wrong, so Pilate sent Jesus to Herod, another Roman official.

Herod questioned Jesus for a long, long time, but eventually he just sent him back to Pilate. Pilate didn't want anything to do with Jesus—neither did Herod—but the Chief Priests were not going to let Jesus get away. They struck a deal with Pilate to let the crowd choose who would be crucified—Jesus or Barabbas.

I stood in the crowd as Pilate brought out the two men. Barabbas was a murderer, and just an evil guy. Just a few days ago, these people were shouting "Hosanna" as Jesus came into Jerusalem, so I thought for sure that they would ask Pilate to free Jesus. But instead, the crowds shouted, "Crucify, Crucify him!" Pilate asked the crowd three times, and each time they just shouted louder, "Crucify Him!"

I could feel my heart sink deep. I know that Jesus spoke to us about his death, but I couldn't believe what was happening. I wanted to stop it, but I knew that it was unstoppable. Jesus was going to die.

They led Jesus and two other men to the place called Golgotha. It was a small hill where the Romans would execute the worst kinds of criminals. There was a huge crowd following Jesus. Some were still shouting crucify, and others were crying because they did not want to see him die.

On the hill, they nailed Jesus to a cross and they raised him up between the other two men. I remember watching with tears in my eyes as Jesus prayed, "Father forgive them. They don't know what they're doing."

One of the criminals mocked Jesus and shouted at Jesus. He kept asking, "If you're the Christ, why don't you save yourself? The other criminal knew that he deserved this punishment, and he knew that Jesus was an innocent man.

I admired this man's faith and belief in Jesus. Even as Jesus was dying, this criminal still believed that He was the Messiah. Jesus saw his faith and promised him that he would be with Jesus in Heaven!

I continued to watch Jesus as he struggled to breathe. I held his mother as she watched her Son suffer. I knew that Jesus would not live much longer. I began to wonder about what would happen next. What would we do with Jesus' body? Where are the other disciples? **I had no idea what would happen next, but I knew that this story wasn't over.**

## Jesus' Death and Burial—*Enter Joseph of Arimathea carrying grave clothes*

My name is Joseph, and I come from Arimathea. I was there when Jesus was crucified. I was the one who took his body and buried it in my own tomb. I want to tell you the story of that day.

It was such a long day. Jesus had been arrested the night before in the garden. Then, he was led before the High Priest, Herod, and Pilate for a bogus trial. I was a part of the council that questioned Jesus, but I did not agree or support their plans to have him killed. In fact, I believed Jesus was the Son of God—the Messiah.

Even though some of us on the council believed in Jesus and disagreed with Caiaphas, the trial went on. In the end, the people demanded Jesus' death, and so he was nailed to the cross at Golgotha.

I was there in his final hours. I saw his mother, Mary, as she cried for her son. I said John holding her and trying to comfort her. There isn't much comfort when you're only son is dying such a painful death. The look of sadness on her face made me imagine the face of God as he watched His only Son giving up his life.

At around the sixth hour of the day, the sky turned dark and everything was a deep purple. It was almost as if a storm was brewing. The skies stayed dark until the ninth hour. And about that time, Jesus spoke one last time.

Jesus looked up towards Heaven and shouted, "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?" At first, we didn't understand who he was talking to. But I soon realized that Jesus was experiencing the weight of my sin on the cross. The wrath of God was being poured out on him, instead of on me.

Then, Jesus cried out again, "Father, into your hands I commit my Spirit." And with that, Jesus gave up his life. When he died, the whole earth shook and rocks were split. The temple curtain that closed off the Holy of Holies was ripped in two, from the top to the bottom. It was as if God was breaking down the barrier so that we could bring our sadness directly to Him.

As the evening came close, I realized that something must be done with Jesus' body. I overheard people discussing what should be done because the Sabbath was about to begin. I wanted to keep my distance from everything that was going on, but my love for Jesus could not be contained any longer. I had to speak up.

I went to Pilate and asked if he could be buried in my tomb. Pilate agreed, and so I took Jesus' body, wrapped it in new, clean linen, and laid him in my tomb that had been cut in the rock. My servants and I rolled a large stone in front of the tomb. The women who had followed Jesus, Mary Magdalene and others, were also there. They were weeping as they saw Jesus' body laid in the tomb.

After Jesus died, many people wondered if it was an elaborate joke—that Jesus hadn't really died, but I was there. I held Jesus' body in my arms. He was dead. And others thought that Jesus' disciples would try to steal the body—since Jesus said he would rise again. So, the Pharisees had guards placed at the tomb to make it secure.

As I looked at the stone in front of the tomb, my heart was filled with sadness. Where had Jesus' disciples gone? Where were the people that shouted "Hosanna" just days before? Why did He have to die? There were just so many questions, but not any answers.

I remember feeling like every bit of joy and hope had been stolen from us. I knew that Jesus was good, and it felt like evil had won. But then I remembered his promise to be raised from the dead. Could he really do that? What would that even look like? We all waited in the sadness to see if there would be any hope. Would Jesus return or would he forever be inside that tomb? ? **I had no idea what would happen next, but I just felt that this story wasn't over.**