



Introduction

Here is a way for the whole school to share in the experiences of Holy Week, including Good Friday. Without entering into the events of these days, it is hard for children to understand why the story of Easter morning means so much to Christians. The following outline focuses on some key sounds from this momentous week.

Preparation

You will need to collect a series of items to make the following sound effects:

- Two halves of a coconut for a donkey's hooves
- A tray of gravel, deep enough to allow a child to stand in this and march vigorously on the spot
- A collection of pieces of wood that can be thrown down noisily
- A bag of coins that can be jangled and from which some can be tipped out
- A wooden platter and spoon
- A cup and some liquid to pour into it
- Some pieces of matzo bread or cracker that will snap noisily
- A bowl of water
- A hammer and nail with a block of wood, into which to bang the nail
- Some wooden dice
- A piece of cloth to tear
- A piece of card that can be wobbled to make the sound of thunder
- A large candle and candlesnuffer

As you talk through the sound effects and practise them, you could simply invite some children to come up and be responsible for each particular sound. However, it will probably work best to prepare this beforehand with a group from one particular class. Also, some of the sound effects will need careful handling. For example, the hammer and nail and block of wood need to be given to a responsible child!

In addition to all the objects for sounds, some of the effects are made with hands and voices and for these the whole school can be invited to participate. These sounds include: cheering, whispering, pigeon and sheep noises, gasps of breath, noisy shouts and angry voices, thunder and rain sounds.

Development

1. Collect the items above and place them on a central table. Put the candle in the middle. When the whole school has gathered, explain that between them, they are going to provide the soundtrack for the most important week of Jesus' life. These sounds will accompany the climax of God's rescue plan, which comes to fulfilment in what Christians call Holy Week.
2. One child with a good clear voice provides a very simple commentary to link the sounds.
The sounds represent:

Palm Sunday on the streets
The overturning of the tables in the temple
The Roman soldiers marching and discussions with Judas about betrayal
The events of the Last Supper
The trials and judgement
The crucifixion outside the walls

3. Arrange for each child or group of children with their sound effects to be sitting in the appropriate order so that the sequence of sounds is correct. There should be a short pause after each sound effect.
4. The Sounds of Holy Week

Narrator: This is the week that turns all endings into new beginnings. These are the sounds of Holy Week.

(Pause)

(Light the candle, placed centre stage)

Narrator: The streets of Jerusalem were filled with new sounds.

The clip-clop of donkey's hooves
The cheering of the crowds
Some suspicious whispering behind hands

Narrator: The temple in Jerusalem was filled with new sounds

(The sounds of pigeons cooing, sheep bleating and coins being rattled
The sound of pieces of wood dropping to the ground and then some coins falling
The gasps of breath from the onlookers)

Narrator: The Jerusalem Passover was filled with new sounds.

(The crunch of marching feet made by soldiers on the move
The sound of people telling others to keep quiet, as secret deals are done
The sound of a moneybag being placed into someone else's hands)

Narrator: A Jerusalem house in the back streets was filled with new sounds.

(The noise of a spoon scraping a wooden platter during a meal
The sound of drink being poured into a cup
The sound of Matzo being cracked
The sound of a door slamming shut)

Narrator: The Jerusalem courts were filled with new sounds.

(The sound of clenched fists thumping upon the tables)



The sound of angry voices
The sound of hands being washed in water
The sound of feet dragged across gravel on a slow march to death)

Narrator: The hill outside Jerusalem was filled with new sounds.

(The banging in of a nail into wood
The sound of dice being rolled
The sound of some cloth being torn
The sound of thunder and of rain)

Narrator: And then there were no more sounds from Jerusalem.

(After a pause, snuff out the candle)

Narrator: This is the week that turns all endings into new beginnings... but not yet.

Before the sound that would go out into all the world, there was just silence. And the world held its breath.

5. The piece could end here and then be picked up with a similar assembly at a later date that celebrates the joy of the first Easter morning. Alternatively, another child could then read the events of Easter morning using a retelling of this story.