



On your marks

The following idea is an imaginary retelling of the events surrounding Easter told by the young Mark in whose Jerusalem home, traditionally, the Last Supper took place. This piece could be used as a storytelling outline at a special event, as part of an all-age service around Easter or for St Mark's Day (25 April), or at a communion service with children present.

Get set

Some visual aids will help in the retelling of this story, chief among which would be the blanket that Mark wrapped around him when he followed Jesus and the disciples secretly late on the Thursday night of Holy Week - see Mark 14:51. Other suggestions would be items carried by Mark to help prepare and serve at the meal, and perhaps leaves on a branch to hide behind in the garden. You could also encourage those listening to provide appropriate sound effects at various points.

It is also just possible that Mark may have been the youngest member of the household that Passover night and as such may have been the one who asked the question 'What makes this night so special?' as part of the ceremony. You could perhaps include this in the retelling.

Go!

Retelling of the story

I'll never forget that Passover weekend. It changed my life! In fact, it changed a lot of people's lives... but maybe I ought to start at the beginning of my story.

My mum and dad live in an upstairs house in the back streets of Jerusalem, above a shop. It's all right, I suppose, as homes go... but I never thought of it as being anywhere special... that is, not until the visit! Let me explain.

Mum has relatives up in Galilee and that's where it all started. The story of Jesus, I mean. You must have heard about him. He said such wonderful things and did such amazing things that people followed him. People said he was the special rescuer - the one to make Israel great again - the one to get rid of our enemies and to bring a time of justice and peace. Everyone was talking about him

(confidentially)... They say he could command evil to come out of people, just like that! And he bothered about people... all sorts of people, especially the ones no one else bothered about. He made them well!

Now wait for it! This Jesus - the very same one - came and visited us in Jerusalem. Can you believe it? I was so excited. Maybe he would do a miracle in our very own home? They say that once he turned water into wine. His friends - mum's relatives were among them - wanted a place to stay in Jerusalem for the Passover festival - a place to celebrate the feast.



You do know about the Passover, don't you? It's the great festival when we remember how long ago God rescued our ancestors from being slaves in Egypt and God took them through the water to freedom. The Passover meal is full of food to help us remember and be thankful. I began to wonder whether it would happen all over again. But this time it would be Jesus rescuing us. Well, I was right in a way... but not as I expected.

I helped mum get everything ready. There was the table to lay, plates to collect, food to buy... we had to borrow some extra cushions from next door. Mum wanted everything just right. She wasn't having her Galilean cousins say that she didn't know how to put on a meal for guests... especially a great guest like Jesus.

I was forever fetching and carrying that evening. Jugs of water, bowls of spices and herbs, cups of wine. I was like a yo-yo but once I stayed in a corner and just listened. There was strange talk at that table. Everyone seemed much more subdued and quiet than normal - not the usual party chatter at a festival.

And then Jesus took some of the bread. He lifted it up and said thanks to God and broke it and said: *This is my body. It's going to be broken for you. When you eat bread like this, remember me.* And then he picked up a cup of wine and said: *This is my blood. It's going to be poured out for you. When you drink wine together like this, remember me.*

So weird! Jesus was talking about death and dying, not about the great rescue we were all hoping for. It really confused everyone. I noticed the Judas left the meal soon off after that.

Mum sent me to bed, as it was late, but I couldn't sleep. I kept thinking about what Jesus had said. What did it mean? Then I heard them all singing - the final hymn of the meal I reckoned - followed by the sound of lots of footsteps leaving. They were all going for a walk - at midnight! What was going on? I just had to find out.

I was already changed for bed, so I just pulled a blanket around me and crept down the stairs being careful to avoid the fourth step, which always creaked, and hoping my mum wouldn't hear the extra pair of feet going out that night.

The friends of Jesus walked along the twisty, dark streets of the capital. I followed secretly at a distance. Where were they going? They left the city via a side entrance of the Sheep Gate and walked down to the Olive Grove called Gethsemane. I used to play there a lot when I was younger so I could easily find my way now in the dark although it wasn't as dark as you might expect, because of the full Passover moon.

Even so the garden was quite scary at night. There were strange noises and weird shapes and shadows. I almost didn't stay. Then I thought I heard a moan from the place where Jesus had gone, but why should he be moaning?

Soon after that it all happened... the sound of marching feet... some guards were on the way. I froze with fear. They appeared through the trees and were being led by Judas. He went right up to Jesus



and gave him a kiss of welcome. It seemed to be a signal, because the guards immediately arrested Jesus. There was some shouting and a bit of a fight but then it was all over and the friends of Jesus ran scared past me hiding in the bushes. One of them knocked me flying and I cried out in pain. One of the guards must have heard that and suddenly began coming straight for me. I panicked. I dropped my blanket and ran for my life... just as I was.

I might have had a difficult time trying to explain about the missing blanket the next day but mum never asked me. Everyone was caught up with what happened. Everyone was so sad. You see they had taken Jesus and killed him on a cross outside the city.

Jesus the special rescuer was dead. How come? It just wasn't right. He'd done nothing wrong.

And that was it... or so I thought. But on the Sunday of the festival, we began to hear the news. Only rumours of first. People were saying that they had seen Jesus again. Yes! Back from the dead! Jesus was alive again!

In fact, many people saw him. Once he appeared in our own house - in the room where we'd had the meal - and I was there. It really was true.

Jesus was alive. He was the special rescuer after all. He was stronger than death! Stronger than all darkness. He was the light that will never go out!

And now I'm a follower of Jesus too. Not in secret now, creeping through the back streets with my blanket, but as part of his new family. The family of Jesus that is spreading all over of the world.