

Holy Week Diorama

(Scene 5 is optional. To make this drama an Easter Diorama, use the alternate Scene 5.)

For each scene, the actors stay completely still while the narrator speaks. Then they quickly and silently change the scene. Practice making the scene change smooth.

The Narrator's lines are all taken from the four Gospels: Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John.

Characters: Narrator, Jesus, Angel, Peter, Maid, Soldier, two Women (or Mary), a handful of other actors. Except for Narrator and Jesus, actors can play multiple parts.

Props: Loaf of bread, goblet, basket, cross, crown of thorns, spear.

Scene 1: The Last Supper

Jesus, Peter, and several Disciples sit as if they are around a low table. Jesus is in the middle, facing the front. He holds a loaf of bread in his left hand and holding up a goblet in his right hand. The other actors show a variety of emotions—interest, confusion, disbelief, shock, horror. Nobody is happy.

Narrator begins speaking after actors are in place.

Narrator: The night before Jesus was killed, he ate a meal with his disciples. He said to them, "I have eagerly desired to eat with you before I suffer." While they were eating, Jesus took bread, gave thanks and broke it, and gave it to his disciples, saying, "Take this and eat it; this is my body." Then he took the cup, gave thanks and offered it to them, saying, "All of you drink from this cup. This is my blood, which is poured out for the forgiveness of sins. When I sent you without wallet, bag or sandals, you did not lack anything, But now if you have a wallet, take it, and also a bag; and if you don't have a sword, sell your coat and buy one. It is written about me: 'He was numbered with the transgressors'; and this must be fulfilled in me and is being fulfilled right now." After dinner, they sang a hymn together and left for the Mount of Olives.

Jesus hands the bread to the person on his left and the goblet to the person on his right. These actors take the bread and goblet with them as they exit offstage. Jesus moves from sitting to kneeling. Peter and two Disciples curl up in the back on stage left. The other actors exit.

Scene 2: The Garden

An Angel walks onstage. Jesus is on his knees, looking upward, his hands raised. He looks like he's begging for help. The Angel stands behind him and to his right, watching him. Peter and a couple Disciples are asleep behind him on his left.

Narrator begins speaking after actors are in place.

Narrator: They went to a place called Gethsemane, and Jesus took Peter, James, and John along with him. Jesus began to be deeply distressed and upset. "My soul is overwhelmed with sorrow to the point of death," he said. "Stay here and keep watch." Going a little farther, he fell to the ground and prayed, "Father, everything is possible for you. Take this cup from me. Yet not what I want, but what you want." Then he returned to his disciples and found them sleeping. "Peter, are you asleep? Could you not keep watch for one hour? Watch and pray so that you will not fall into temptation. The spirit is willing, but the body is weak." Once more he went away and prayed the same thing. An angel from heaven appeared to him and strengthened him. Being in anguish, he prayed more earnestly. When he came back, he again found them sleeping. He told them, "Are you still sleeping and resting? Enough! Get up! Let's go! Here comes my betrayer!" While he was still speaking, Judas Iscariot led armed guards to Jesus, and they arrested him. All the disciples deserted him and fled. Peter followed them at a distance.

The two Disciples move to the front of the stage and sit down. Peter stands behind them.

Scene 3: The Denial

The Maid walks onstage and stands on Peter's left. Two actors sit on the ground, warming their hands around a fire but looking up at Peter. Peter stands behind them, angrily looking at the Maid. His left hand is on his chest and his right hand is held up as if he's swearing or saying "Scout's honor". The Maid carries a basket and looks at Peter as if she doesn't believe a word he's saying.

Narrator begins speaking after actors are in place.

Narrator: They took Jesus to the high priest, and all the chief priests, elders and teachers of the law came together. Peter followed him at a distance, right into the courtyard of the high priest. One of the servant girls of the high priest came by. When she saw Peter warming himself by the fire, she looked closely at him. "You also were with that Nazarene, Jesus," she said. But he denied it. "I don't know or understand what you're talking about," he said. She said again to those standing around, "This fellow is one of them." Again he denied it. Those standing near said to Peter, "Surely you are one of them, for you are a Galilean." He began to call down curses on himself, and he swore to them, "I don't know this man you're talking about." Immediately the rooster crowed. Then Peter remembered the word Jesus had spoken to him: "Before the rooster crows you will disown me three times." And Peter broke down and wept.

Peter and Maid exit. The other two actors move to the back of the stage to become Crowd people.

Scene 4: The Road to Calvary

Jesus walks onstage and stops in the middle, facing stage right, carrying a cross on his right shoulder. He's wearing a crown of thorns. A Soldier follows, standing on stage left, carrying a spear. Several Crowd people (anyone but Angel or Peter) walk up and stand in a row behind Jesus, all looking either angry or grief-stricken. Some are pointing and shouting. Others may be crying.

Narrator begins speaking after actors are in place.

Narrator: Early in the morning, all the chief priests and the elders of the people came to the decision to put Jesus to death. They bound him, led him away and handed him over to Pilate, the governor. Pilate knew it was out of envy that they had handed Jesus over to him. "What shall I do with Jesus who is called Christ?" Pilate asked. They all answered, "Crucify him!" "Why? What crime has he committed?" asked Pilate. But they shouted all the louder, "Crucify him!" When Pilate saw that he was getting nowhere, he took water and washed his hands in front of the crowd. "I am innocent of this man's blood," he said. "It is your responsibility!" Then he had Jesus flogged, and handed him over to be crucified. The governor's soldiers twisted together a crown of thorns and set it on his head. They put a staff in his right hand and knelt in front of him and mocked him. "Hail, king of the Jews!" they said. They spit on him, and took the staff and struck him on the head again and again. After they had mocked him, they led him away to crucify him. But when the centurion saw how Jesus died, he said, "Surely this man was the Son of God!"

All actors exit except for two who become the Women. (If using alternate ending, the Soldier takes the cross offstage and all actors exit except for Jesus and Mary.)

Scene 5: The Tomb *(This scene is for Holy Week and may be omitted. For Easter Sunday, use the alternate Scene 5.)*

An Angel walks onstage and stands on stage left, facing the Women. His hand is reaching out to them, and he's telling them something. The Women are frightened. One may be covering her mouth in surprise or fainting with fear.

Narrator begins speaking after actors are in place.

Narrator: Joseph of Arimathea took Jesus' body and placed it in a tomb. Then he rolled a stone against the entrance. Mary Magdalene and Mary the mother of Jesus saw where Jesus was laid. Very early on the first day of the week, just after sunrise, they went to the tomb. But when they looked up, they saw that

the stone, which was very large, had been rolled away. As they entered the tomb, they saw a young man dressed in a white robe sitting on the right side, and they were alarmed. "Don't be alarmed," he said. "You are looking for Jesus the Nazarene, who was crucified. He has risen! He is not here. See the place where they laid him. But go, tell his disciples and Peter, 'He is going ahead of you into Galilee. There you will see him, just as he told you.' " Trembling and bewildered, the women went out and fled from the tomb. They said nothing to anyone, because they were afraid.

* Alternate Scene 5: The Tomb

Jesus stands on stage left, smiling and reaching to Mary, who is standing on stage left. Mary is shocked and happy.

Narrator begins speaking after actors are in place.

Narrator: At the place where Jesus was crucified, there was a garden, and in the garden a new tomb, in which no one had ever been laid. Joseph of Arimathea and Nicodemus took Jesus' body and laid it that tomb. Early on the first day of the week, while it was still dark, Mary Magdalene went to the tomb and saw that the stone had been removed from the entrance. Mary stood outside the tomb crying. As she wept, she turned around and saw Jesus standing there, but she did not realize that it was Jesus. "Woman," he said, "why are you crying? Who is it you are looking for?" Thinking he was the gardener, she said, "They have taken my Lord away, and I don't know where they have put him. Sir, if you have carried him away, tell me where you have put him, and I will get him." Jesus said to her, "Mary." She turned toward him and cried out, "Rabbi!" Jesus said, "Go to Peter and my brothers and tell them, 'I am returning to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God.' " Mary Magdalene went to the disciples with the news: "I have seen the Lord!"