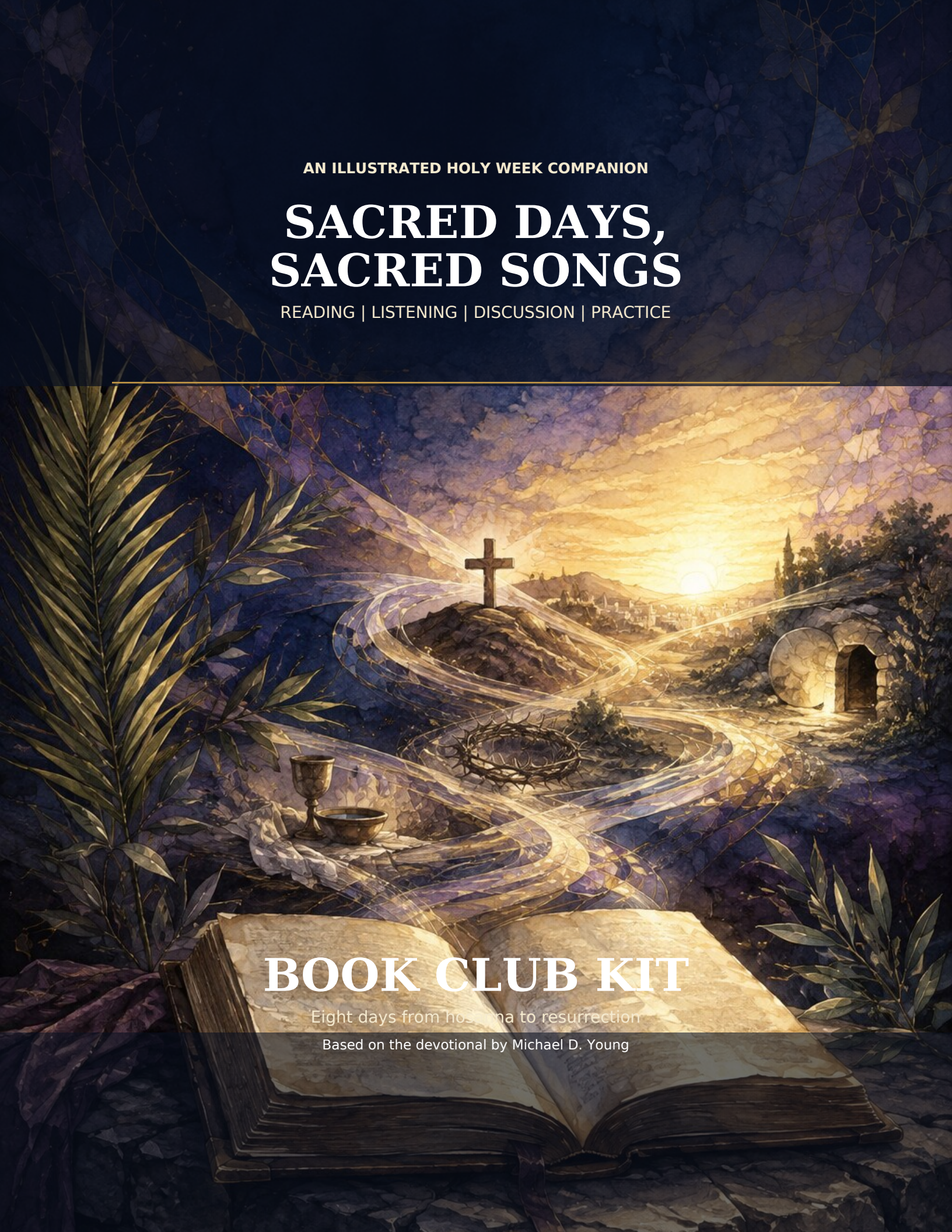


AN ILLUSTRATED HOLY WEEK COMPANION

SACRED DAYS, SACRED SONGS

READING | LISTENING | DISCUSSION | PRACTICE



BOOK CLUB KIT

Eight days from hosanna to resurrection

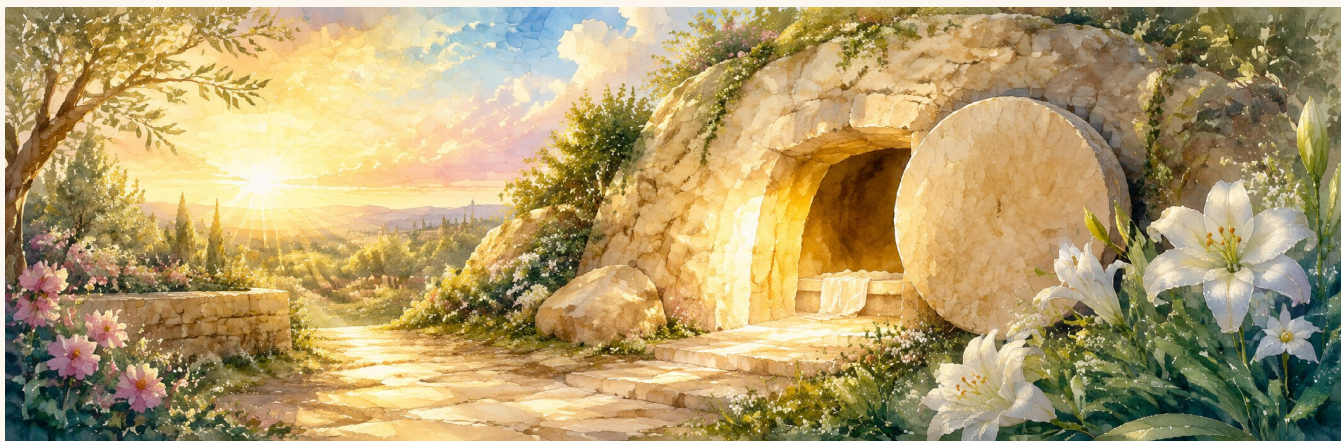
Based on the devotional by Michael D. Young



WELCOME

A Holy Week Meant to Be Heard

Sacred Days, Sacred Songs pairs each day of Holy Week with a Christlike attribute, scripture, familiar hymn texts, and the stories behind the music. This guide turns that devotional journey into a shared experience for book clubs, families, choirs, classes, and faith communities.



The book moves in a deliberate arc: public acclaim gives way to service, sorrow, silence, and finally renewal. Its hymn histories widen the conversation by showing how sacred music can grow from repentance, grief, displacement, artistic discipline, and communal memory.

Two ways to meet

Use eight brief daily gatherings during Holy Week, or combine the days into four 60-75 minute meetings: Days 1-2, 3-4, 5-6, and 7-8.

A simple rhythm

Welcome and check-in (5 min) | Read the day reflection (10 min) | Listen to one song (5 min) | Discuss (25 min) | Choose a practice (10 min) | Close in silence, prayer, or song (5 min).

Hospitality note

Invite participation without requiring it. People may carry grief, doubt, trauma, or different theological language. Questions in this guide are invitations, not tests of belief.



READING PLAN

The Eight-Day Arc

The virtues are not isolated topics. Each prepares the next movement, carrying the reader from the road into Jerusalem to the garden on Easter morning.

1	Palm Sunday Deliverance	The Holy City; All Glory, Laud, and Honor	What kind of salvation do we seek?
2	Holy Monday Compassion	Drop, Drop Slow Tears; O Divine Redeemer	What does it mean to suffer with?
3	Holy Tuesday Grace	Amazing Grace; Come, Thou Fount	What can gift accomplish beyond effort?
4	Holy Wednesday Hope	It Is Well with My Soul; The Solid Rock	What can hold us through uncertainty?
5	Maundy Thursday Love	The King of Love; O Love, That Will Not Let Me Go	How does love become service?
6	Good Friday Sacrifice	Three hymns of the cross	What response does costly love invite?
7	Holy Saturday Obedience	Were You There?; Worthy Is the Lamb	How do we inhabit faithful waiting?
8	Easter Sunday Renewal	In the Garden; Christ the Lord Is Risen Today	What can be made new?

Before listening

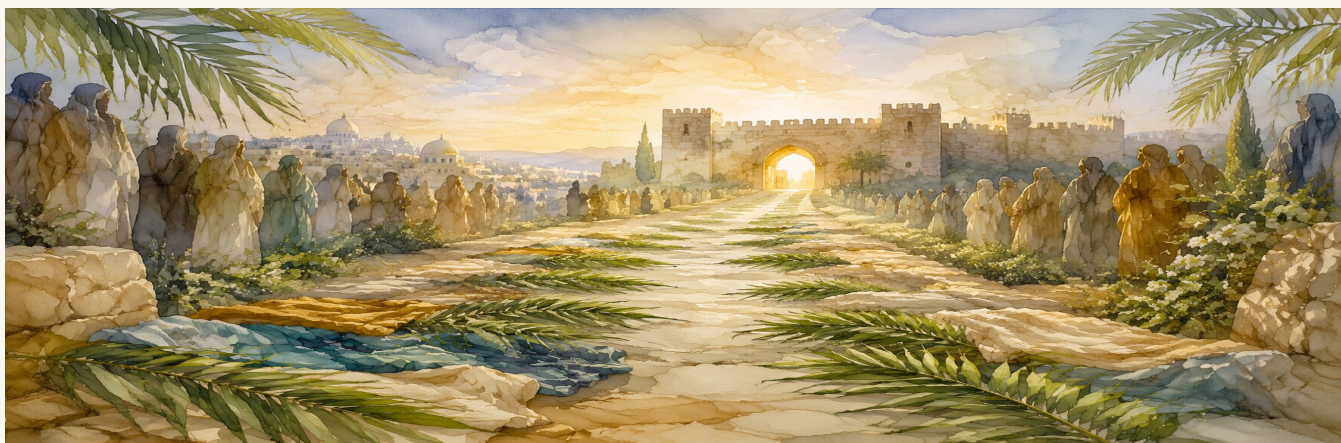
Read the song title and one stanza silently. Name what you expect the music to feel like. After listening, notice where the performance confirmed or complicated that expectation.



Deliverance

The crowd cries for immediate rescue, while the devotional reframes deliverance as Christ's deeper victory over sin and death.

Zechariah 9:9; Mark 11:8-10	The Holy City; All Glory, Laud, and Honor



Discuss

1. What might the crowd have meant by “save us now,” and how does the book expand that request?
2. Why is a humble entrance an important picture of kingship?
3. “The Holy City” moves from acclaim to the cross to a renewed Jerusalem. What does that structure teach?
4. When have you mistaken a quick solution for the deeper deliverance you needed?
5. What would it look like to welcome Christ through action rather than applause?

Practice

Make a “road of welcome”: name one burden you can help carry, one person you can honor, and one habit you can lay down this week.



Compassion

The book returns compassion to its root meaning, “to suffer with,” and connects Christ's healing with the restoration of people to community.

Matthew 9:35-36; Luke 7:12-15	Drop, Drop Slow Tears; O Divine Redeemer



Discuss

1. How is compassion different from pity, advice, or problem-solving?
2. Why does Jesus weep with mourners even when He knows Lazarus will rise?
3. Both songs use repentance as an approach to mercy. Which emotions do they make room for?
4. Where does the chapter connect physical care, spiritual care, and belonging?
5. What keeps communities from truly suffering with people who are excluded?

Practice

Choose one compassionate action built around presence: listen without correcting, bring practical help, include someone overlooked, or sit with a person in grief.



Grace

Grace appears as divine help beyond self-rescue. The hymn histories also show that conversion can be gradual, morally complicated, and in need of continual renewal.

Hebrews 4:16; Acts 15:11	Amazing Grace; Come, Thou Fount of Every Blessing



Discuss

1. How does the woman accused in John 8 receive both mercy and a call to change?
2. Why is it important that John Newton's conversion is described as a process rather than a single storm?
3. How should knowledge of Newton's participation in the slave trade shape a discussion of "Amazing Grace"?
4. What does "prone to wander" admit about faith and human will?
5. Where do you experience grace as strength, interruption, forgiveness, or second chance?

Practice

Write two short lines: "I cannot earn..." and "I can still respond by...." Keep gift and responsibility in the same reflection.



Hope

Hope in this section is not denial. It is a practiced trust that can coexist with storms, bereavement, uncertainty, and unfinished healing.

Isaiah 40:31; John 11:25-26	It Is Well with My Soul; The Solid Rock



Discuss

1. What is the difference between “it is well” and pretending everything is fine?
2. How does the Spafford story change the emotional weight of the hymn?
3. What foundations does “The Solid Rock” call unreliable, and what might their modern forms be?
4. Why do storm, anchor, rock, and horizon work so well as images of hope?
5. What helps hope become durable rather than merely optimistic?

Practice

Draw three concentric circles labeled control, influence, and trust. Place one current concern where it belongs, then name one faithful next step.



Love

The day joins commandment, covenant meal, shepherding, surrender, and service. Love is presented as both God's sustaining presence and the visible mark of discipleship.

John 15:12-13; Matthew 22:37-39	The King of Love My Shepherd Is; O Love, That Will Not Let Me Go



Discuss

1. Why does Jesus connect discipleship with how people love one another?
2. Which images from Psalm 23 make care tangible: water, pasture, table, rod, staff, or home?
3. How does George Matheson's loss deepen the phrase "love that will not let me go"?
4. What is the difference between love as feeling, loyalty, service, and sacrifice?
5. Where might receiving care require as much humility as giving it?

Practice

Practice hidden service. Do one needed act that will not earn attention, then reflect on how secrecy changed the quality of the gift.



Sacrifice

The devotional traces the Lamb imagery from Abraham and Passover to the cross, then follows a hymn across centuries, languages, and changing communities.

Genesis 22:7-8; 1 Peter 1:18-20	O Sacred Head Now Wounded; O Savior, Thou Who Wearest a Crown; When I Survey the Wondrous Cross



Discuss

1. What does the image of an unblemished lamb communicate, and where might it require careful explanation?
2. How do the Good Friday hymns move from observing suffering to personal response?
3. What is gained when a sacred text is translated and adapted? What might be lost?
4. “When I Survey” sets pride, possessions, and devotion beside the cross. Which contrast is most searching?
5. How can reflection on sacrifice lead to gratitude without glorifying avoidable suffering?

Practice

Keep a period of unfilled silence. Then write one sentence of gratitude and one concrete act of costly generosity that does not harm you or another person.



Obedience

Holy Saturday holds the tension between completed sacrifice and not-yet-seen resurrection. The songs place listeners inside memory, waiting, and worship.

John 6:38; Matthew 26:39	Were You There?; Worthy Is the Lamb



Discuss

1. How is obedience portrayed as active trust rather than passive compliance?
2. What does “not my will” reveal about desire, struggle, and faithful choice?
3. Why does “Were You There?” use first-person imagination to approach an ancient event?
4. How does the spiritual connect the crucifixion with the suffering endured by enslaved African Americans?
5. What practices help you remain faithful when there is no immediate resolution?

Practice

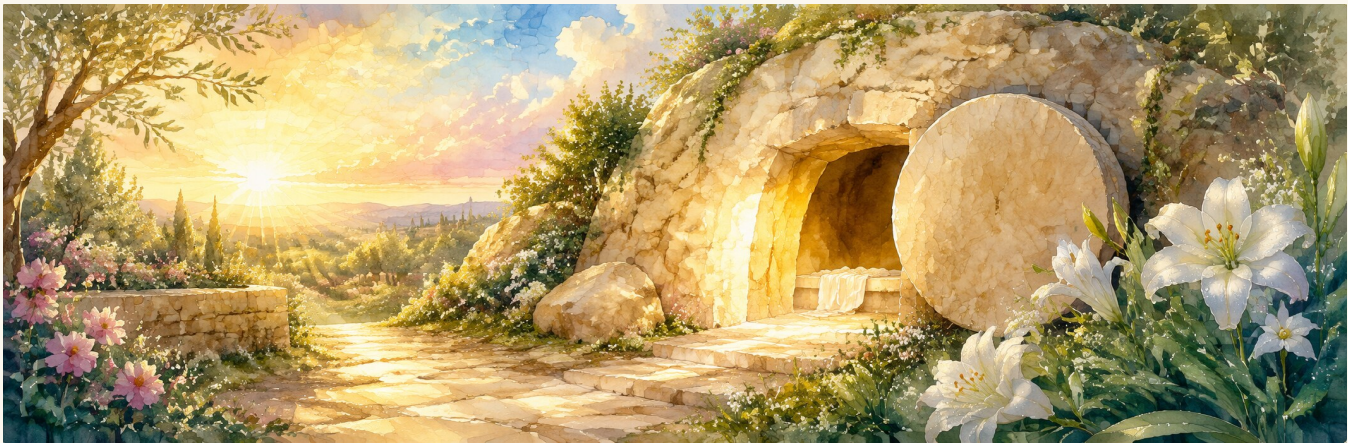
Choose a quiet form of faithfulness: keep a promise, finish an unnoticed duty, wait without forcing an answer, or accompany someone through uncertainty.



Renewal

The final movement turns ashes toward beauty and mourning toward joy. Mary recognizes the risen Christ when He calls her by name, making renewal both cosmic and intimate.

Luke 24:1-6; John 20:14-16	In the Garden; Christ the Lord Is Risen Today



Discuss

1. Why might Mary initially fail to recognize Jesus? What changes when He speaks her name?
2. How does “In the Garden” make resurrection personal, and where might private experience need community?
3. What effect does the present tense have in “Christ the Lord Is Risen Today”?
4. Which losses can be transformed now, and which must be held in hope?
5. What would renewal look like in your habits, relationships, community, or worship?

Practice

Name one “stone” to roll away and one sign of life to tend. Make the action small enough to begin within forty-eight hours.



LISTENING LAB

How to Hear a Hymn Together

A hymn is simultaneously text, melody, history, performance, memory, and communal practice. Listening slowly keeps one layer from eclipsing the others.

- | | |
|---------------------|---|
| 1 ARRIVE | Listen once without writing. Notice the first bodily or emotional response. |
| 2 TEXT | Circle one image, verb, or contrast. What claim does the lyric make? |
| 3 SOUND | Track tempo, dynamics, harmony, repetition, silence, and the treatment of the final line. |
| 4 STORY | Recall the hymn's origin. Does the history deepen, trouble, or redirect your hearing? |
| 5 VOICE | Ask whose experience the performance centers and whose may be missing. |
| 6 RESPONSE | Name one belief, question, comfort, or action the song leaves behind. |

Compare two performances

Choose one hymn in contrasting settings - solo and choir, traditional and contemporary, a cappella and accompanied, or two cultural traditions. Avoid ranking them immediately. First ask what each version reveals that the other does not.

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| Listening ethics | Use authorized recordings and follow the links or QR codes provided in the book. Credit performers when sharing selections. Keep playback volume and room access needs in mind. |
|-------------------------|---|



ACROSS THE WEEK

Themes and Motifs to Trace

Use these threads for a single long-form meeting or as prompts for members who want to follow one idea across all eight days.

FROM CROWD TO NAME

The week begins with public acclamation and ends with Mary being called personally. How do communal and intimate faith correct each other?

WATER

Tears, living water, stormy seas, and the garden at dawn connect sorrow, grace, danger, and life.

FOUNDATIONS

Rock, anchor, shepherd, table, cross, and tomb offer different pictures of what holds a life together.

REVERSAL

Captivity becomes deliverance; exclusion becomes belonging; wandering becomes homecoming; mourning becomes joy; ashes become beauty.

SONG AS MEMORY

The hymn histories show texts surviving through translation, new tunes, new communities, and changing historical meaning.

GIFT AND RESPONSE

Grace is given, yet the hymns repeatedly invite repentance, trust, service, surrender, obedience, and praise.

Capstone question

Which movement best describes your experience of the week: entrance, tears, wandering, storm, table, cross, silence, or garden? What makes that image honest for you now?



FOR THE FACILITATOR

Create a Room Where Reflection Can Breathe

The goal is not to finish every prompt. Choose the question that opens the deepest, safest conversation and allow silence to do part of the work.

BEFORE	Preview the day's text and recording. Decide whether the meeting is devotional, literary, historical, pastoral, or a blend, and tell the group.
BEGIN	Use a low-pressure opener: one word for your current weather, one image that stayed with you, or one line you would carry forward.
INVITE	Say "Who would like to begin?" rather than calling on people. Make passing acceptable. Ask follow-ups that clarify instead of interrogate.
HOLD DIFFERENCE	Invite members to distinguish "the book argues," "my tradition teaches," and "I experience." These are related but not identical claims.
CARE	Do not ask members to disclose grief, trauma, doubt, or repentance. If distress surfaces, pause, offer choice, and follow appropriate community safeguarding practices.
CLOSE	Summarize what the group discovered without forcing consensus. End with a chosen practice, silence, prayer, or a brief reprise of the music.
Suggested group covenant	Listen to understand. Speak from your own experience. Leave room for others. Keep personal stories confidential. Challenge ideas without diminishing people. Permit silence and passing.



PRINTABLE WORKSHEET

My Holy Week Practice Plan

Choose less than you could do. A small practice kept attentively is more useful than an ambitious plan abandoned in frustration.

DAY / VIRTUE	ONE PRACTICE	PERSON OR PLACE	WHEN / CUE
1 Deliverance			
2 Compassion			
3 Grace			
4 Hope			
5 Love			
6 Sacrifice			
7 Obedience			
8 Renewal			

The practice I most want to continue after Easter: _____

The support or reminder that will help: _____

One person I will invite to join me: _____



PRINTABLE CARDS

Eight Questions for the Table

Cut apart the cards, place them face down, and let each person draw one. The holder may answer, invite someone else, or pass.

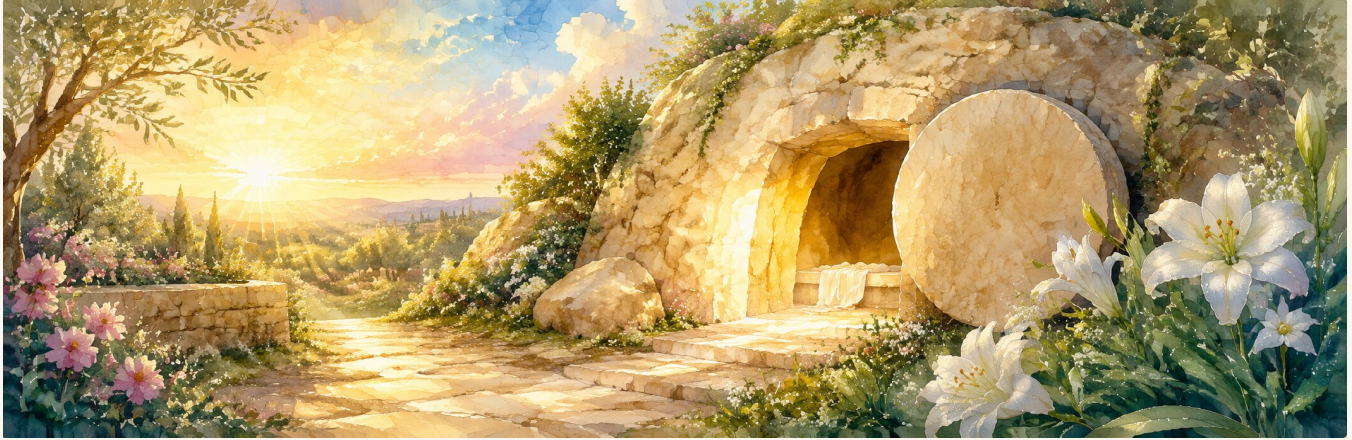
DELIVERANCE What deeper freedom might be hidden beneath the quick rescue you want? Notes _____	COMPASSION Whose suffering asks for your presence before it asks for your advice? Notes _____
GRACE Where have you received more help, mercy, or time than you could earn? Notes _____	HOPE What remains trustworthy when circumstances remain unresolved? Notes _____
LOVE What ordinary act would make care visible this week? Notes _____	SACRIFICE What can you give freely without glorifying harm or erasing your limits? Notes _____
OBEDIENCE What faithful next step is clear even though the outcome is not? Notes _____	RENEWAL What small sign of new life are you ready to notice and tend? Notes _____



CLOSING GATHERING

From the Road to the Garden

Use this final meeting to look back across the whole arc. The language below may be read responsively, adapted to your tradition, or used simply as prompts for reflection.



Leader: In acclaim and uncertainty, what do we seek?

Group: Deliverance deeper than applause.

Leader: In another's sorrow, how will we remain?

Group: With compassion that stays present.

Leader: When effort reaches its limit, what do we receive?

Group: Grace enough for the next step.

Leader: When waves rise and answers delay, where do we stand?

Group: In hope that does not deny the storm.

Leader: At the table and in the ordinary task, what will identify us?

Group: Love made visible in service.

Leader: Before costly love and holy silence, what can we offer?

Group: Gratitude, obedience, and honest waiting.

Leader: At the open tomb, what do we dare to expect?

Group: Renewal - for persons, communities, and creation.

Final round

Each member completes one sentence: "The song, image, or story I will carry is..." Then choose one date to reconnect and ask what practice endured.



TAKEAWAY

My Sacred Song

A final page for the reader who wants to translate listening into a personal rule of life.

The lyric or image that named something true for me:

The history that changed how I heard a familiar hymn:

The virtue I most need to practice:

The person or community I feel called to serve:

The unresolved question I will keep carrying:

The sign of renewal I will watch for:

“Be of good cheer; I have overcome the world.”

John 16:33

About this kit

Created as a companion to Sacred Days, Sacred Songs: A Holy Week Devotional by Michael D. Young. Song titles, scripture pairings, and historical topics follow the manuscript; all discussion prompts, activities, and facilitator materials are original to this guide.