

Maundy Thursday – a Holy Week Experience at Home

Stripping of the Table: *all ages, 15-20 minutes*

Stripping of the altar (removing all ornaments, linens, candles, plants, flowers, etc.) is an ancient custom of the Church. Congregations mark the way Christ's life was stripped from him by stripping the altar of all signs of life and beauty during a special service. This almost-bare worship space reminds us of the bareness of life without the hope of Christ that we have through His resurrection.

- This beautiful and powerful ceremony can also be practiced in the home, as our homes are also places of worship. Materials needed: Bible or Prayer Book, storage box or bin, dark cloth, cleaning supplies.
- Read Psalm 22 together (or just the first two verses, if attention spans are short).
- Explain the ancient custom of stripping the altar, what it symbolizes, and how your family will now do a similar stripping in your home – focusing on icons and symbols of your faith.
- Send your family through the house to gather all icons and religious symbols that can be easily moved (crosses, carvings, candles, etc.). Ask everyone to work silently as a sign of respect for the task. Pack these items away in the storage bins.
- Use the dark cloth to drape any other items that are too large or permanent to pack away (wall art, door wreaths, and so forth.)
- Finally, remove all items from your dining or kitchen table and together wash the table thoroughly.
- Leave the table bare until Easter morning.
- After all the icons have been packed away or covered, take a moment to notice how your home looks and feels. Help each other make the connection between a home without these beautiful and meaningful items and a life without Christ.
- Saturday night, after everyone is in bed, do your best to unpack and uncover all of the religious items, so that when the family wakes up on Easter morning there will be more than just Easter baskets to celebrate!

(source: <https://buildfaith.org/holy-week-at-home-family-practices-for-the-triduum/>)