

Jesus' Triumphal Entry

BIBLE PASSAGE: Matthew 21:1-17; Mark 11:1-11; Luke 19:28-44;
John 12:12-19

MAIN POINT: People welcomed Jesus to Jerusalem as their King.

KEY PASSAGE: Romans 6:9

BIG PICTURE QUESTION: Who saves us from our sin? Only Jesus saves us from sin.

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Leader BIBLE STUDY

The Sunday before Easter is Palm Sunday—the day Jesus entered Jerusalem as the King of kings the week of Passover. Many of God's people traveled to Jerusalem for Passover. Jesus and His disciples traveled to Jerusalem as well. Near Bethphage (BETH fayj) and Bethany near the Mount of Olives, Jesus sent two disciples ahead into a village.

Jesus told them, “You will find a young donkey tied there. No one has ever sat on it. Untie it and bring it here. If anyone says to you ‘Why are you doing this?’ say, ‘The Lord needs it.’” Jesus would fulfill Zechariah's prophecy: “Look, your King is coming to you ... humble and riding on a donkey” (Zech. 9:9).

Jesus made a spectacular entrance into the city. He rode a donkey, and people laid branches and their robes on the ground in front of Him. The people welcoming Jesus into Jerusalem believed He was the promised Messiah, but they expected Him to overthrow Roman oppression and set up an earthly throne. Jesus sent a different message.

The next day, Jesus entered the temple and turned over the tables of the money changers and those selling doves. Jesus referred to Isaiah 56:7, declaring that His kingship would not just be over the Jews but over all people. While Jesus was in the temple, He healed the blind and the lame. Jesus' actions declared, "I am not just your King; I am also your God" (Isa. 35:4-6).

Finally, the priests and the scribes heard the children in the temple worshiping Jesus as their King. "Do You hear what these children are saying?" they asked. Jesus replied, quoting Psalm 8:2. Jesus gladly received their praise because He was worthy of their praise. Jesus is the Son of God who came to overthrow sin and set up an eternal throne.

As you prepare for and celebrate Easter, help kids connect the dots between God's promises of a Messiah and Jesus' coming. Help them understand why Jesus came: to save the world from sin!



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The BIBLE STORY

Bible Storytelling Tips

• Animate the art:

Choose a volunteer to hold the Bible story picture and walk it slowly across the room as you tell the story.

• Call for response:

When you talk about the crowd praising God, call for kids to shout together, "Hosanna!"

Jesus' Triumphal Entry

*Matthew 21:1-17; Mark 11:1-11; Luke 19:28-44;
John 12:12-19*

It was time to celebrate Passover, a special time to remember how God had freed His people from slavery in Egypt. **Many Israelites had traveled to Jerusalem to celebrate** God's amazing rescue.

Jesus and His disciples were among the people who traveled to Jerusalem. When they neared Bethphage (BETH fayj) and Bethany near the Mount of Olives, **Jesus sent two of His disciples ahead into a village. "As soon as you enter the village," Jesus told them, "you will find a young donkey tied there. No one has ever sat on it. Untie it and bring it here.** If anyone says to you 'Why are you doing this?' say, 'The Lord needs it.'

The disciples did as Jesus asked. As they untied the donkey, its owners asked why. "The Lord needs it," they said. Then **they brought the donkey to Jesus, threw their robes onto the donkey, and helped Jesus get onto it. People spread their robes along the road for Jesus, and others spread palm branches cut from the fields.**

The whole crowd praised God with a loud voice for all the miracles they had seen. "Hosanna!" they said. "Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord! Hosanna in the highest heaven!" The word *hosanna* means "save now." The people welcomed Jesus as their promised King. They hoped He would save them from the Romans.

Some religious leaders asked Jesus to tell His disciples to be quiet. Jesus answered, "If they did not praise Me, the rocks would praise Me!"

While Jesus was in the temple complex, people who

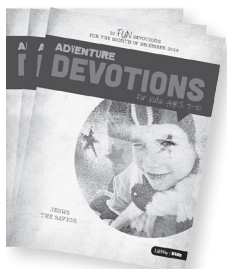
were blind and people who were lame came to Him. **Jesus healed them.** The blind and lame would not have been allowed to worship in the temple.

Other religious leaders saw Jesus' miracles and heard the children saying, "Hosanna to the Son of David!" They were very angry and asked Jesus, "Do You hear what these children are saying?" They were saying Jesus is a king.

"Yes," Jesus told them. The writer of the Psalms had said, "You have prepared praise from the mouths of children and nursing infants."

Jesus left them and went to the town of Bethany to spend the night.

Christ Connection: During Jesus' triumphal entry, the people welcomed Him as King. Jesus was the Messiah spoken about by the prophet Zechariah: "Look, your King is coming to you; He is righteous and victorious, humble and riding on a donkey, on a colt, the foal of a donkey" (Zechariah 9:9). One day, Jesus will return to earth on a white horse as King over everything. (Revelation 19:11)



**WANT TO
DISCOVER
GOD'S WORD?
GET
ADVENTURE!**

Invite kids to check out this week's devotionals to discover how God's Word can help them grow in the gospel. Order in bulk, subscribe quarterly, or purchase individually. For more information, check out www.lifeway.com/devotionals.

Introduce the STORY

SESSION TITLE: Jesus' Triumphal Entry

BIBLE PASSAGE: Matthew 21:1-17; Mark 11:1-11; Luke 19:28-44;
John 12:12-19

MAIN POINT: People welcomed Jesus to Jerusalem as their King.

KEY PASSAGE: Romans 6:9

BIG PICTURE QUESTION: Who saves us from our sin? Only Jesus saves us from sin.

Welcome time

Greet each kid as he or she arrives. Use this time to collect the offering, fill out attendance sheets, and help new kids connect to your group. As kids arrive, ask them if they've ever attended or participated in a parade in someone's honor. Talk about who was honored and why.

SAY • Jesus rode into town on a donkey. God's prophet Zechariah had predicted in Old Testament times that the Messiah would come riding on a donkey. Jesus was the King whom God had promised to send.

People welcomed Jesus to Jerusalem as their King.

Activity page (5 minutes)

- "Can You Find Them?" activity page, 1 per kid
- pencils or markers

Invite kids to complete the "Can You Find Them?" activity page. Instruct the kids to find the items from the key in the picture.

SAY • When Jesus arrived in Jerusalem, people were excited. They saw Him as an earthly King, but He is so much more than that! Jesus is the King of everything. He came the first time to die on the cross, but one day He will return to fix everything that is broken in the world.

Session starter (10 minutes)

OPTION 1: Gather the palm leaves

Before class, print and cut out the palm leaves using the palm leaves printable. Scatter the palm leaves on the floor. Encourage the kids to collect them and put the main point in order. If you have a large group, create two sets, form teams, and see which team can put the branches in order first.

SAY • Jesus and His disciples traveled to the city of Jerusalem to celebrate the Passover. When Jesus entered Jerusalem, people placed their robes and palm branches along the road before Jesus. They shouted out, “Hosanna!” *Hosanna* means “save now!”
People welcomed Jesus to Jerusalem as their King.

OPTION 2: Parade brigade

Provide flags, banners, noisemakers, balloons, and items used to celebrate in a parade. Encourage kids to march around the classroom as if they are in a parade. You may also parade the kids through the hallway as long as they do not interrupt other classes in session. Afterward, ask the kids how it felt to be in a parade.

SAY • Did you enjoy being in the parade? Today we are going to hear about the time when Jesus rode into Jerusalem on a donkey. People spread out their coats and palm branches in front of Him, and they cheered and sang too. **People welcomed Jesus to Jerusalem as their King!**



- “Palm Leaves” printable.
- scissors

- flags, banners, noisemakers, balloons, or other items used to celebrate in a parade

Transition to teach the story

Teach the STORY

SESSION TITLE: Jesus' Triumphal Entry

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- room decorations
- Theme Background Slide (optional)

Suggested Theme Decorating Ideas: Hang Easter decorations over those used in the prior unit's theme. Consider using Easter lilies or palm branches to add a bit of Easter flair. Display a cross or a crown of thorns to remind kids the purpose of the holiday. You may also display the theme background slide.

Countdown

- countdown video

Show the countdown video as your kids arrive, and set it to end as the session begins.

Introduce the session (3 minutes)

- leader attire
- rope

[Leader enters wearing hiking boots and carrying a walking stick. Leader also has a coil of rope.]

LEADER • Hey, everyone. Happy Palm Sunday! Wow, what a great looking bunch. I suppose you are here for the trail rides? We just started offering people the option of riding a mule up the mountain now that the weather is warming up. In fact, that's what I have this rope for. I tie one end to the mule's bridle—that's the bit of gear the mule wears on its head—and that lets me lead the mule wherever I want to lead it. In our

case, that's up a mountain trail!

Have any of you ridden a mule before? What about a horse or a donkey? [*Allow responses.*] Fun fact of the day: a mule is actually half horse and half donkey. But horse, mule, or donkey, it all reminds me of our Bible story.

Big picture question (1 minute)

LEADER • We are going to talk about a time Jesus rode a donkey into Jerusalem. It was the first Palm Sunday. As you listen to the story, pay attention to find the answer to our big picture question: *Who saves us from our sin?*

Giant timeline (1 minute)

Show the giant timeline or big story circle.

LEADER • Over the last few weeks, you've been learning about the early church and the commands God gave them for how to live. For the next two weeks, we want to take a step back and remember what Jesus did for us. It's Palm Sunday this week, and that means next week is Easter! What a great time to remember that Jesus died for us and celebrate that Jesus rose from the dead too!

• Giant Timeline or
Big Story Circle

Tell the Bible story (10 minutes)

Open your Bible to Matthew 21:1-17; Mark 11:1-11; Luke 19:28-44; John 12:12-19. Use the Bible storytelling tips on the Bible story page to help you tell the story, or show the Bible story video "Jesus' Triumphal Entry."

LEADER • The people in Jerusalem were excited when Jesus came into the city. They cheered, waved palm

• Bibles
• "Jesus' Triumphal Entry"
video
• Big Picture Question
Poster
• Bible Story Picture
Poster

branches, and even laid their coats in the dirt for Jesus to travel over. They were showing Jesus honor and respect, because they wanted Him to rule over them. **People welcomed Jesus to Jerusalem as their King**, but they expected an earthly king, not the kind of King Jesus came to be. They wanted to be free from the Roman Empire, which controlled Israel at that time. However, Jesus came to destroy bigger enemies than the Romans—sin and death.

Even the animal Jesus chose to ride on showed that He was a different kind of King. Most earthy kings would have ridden in on a big, powerful warhorse surrounded by their armies. Jesus rode in on a young donkey surrounded by His disciples. How do you think the people reacted when they started to see that Jesus wasn't planning to be the earthly conqueror they wanted? [*Allow responses.*] Those are some interesting ideas.

The people saw that Jesus wasn't planning to defeat Rome and bring back the kingdom of Israel; they turned on Jesus. On Palm Sunday they shouted "Hosanna," which means "save now," but less than a week later, many of these same people shouted, "Crucify Him!"

Christ connection

LEADER • And that's what the rulers did. They nailed Jesus to a cross to kill Him. Thankfully, Jesus did not stay dead. On the third day, Jesus rose from the grave to show that His sacrifice was enough. The curse of sin was broken, and death had no power over Jesus. When we believe in Jesus, God forgives our sin and

Tip: Use Scripture and the guide provided to explain how to become a Christian. Make sure kids know when and where they can ask questions.

gives us new life. What good news!

During Jesus' triumphal entry, the people welcomed Him as King. Jesus was the Messiah spoken about by the prophet Zechariah: "Look, your King is coming to you; He is righteous and victorious, humble and riding on a donkey, on a colt, the foal of a donkey" (Zechariah 9:9). One day, Jesus will return to earth on a white horse as King over everything. (Revelation 19:11)

Key passage (5 minutes)

Show the key passage poster. Lead the boys and girls to read together Romans 6:9.

- Key Passage Poster
- "Romans 6:9" song

LEADER • Our key passage teaches us that Jesus defeated sin completely when He rose from the dead. Death has no power over Jesus! When we believe in Jesus, sin and death lose their power over us too.

Lead boys and girls in singing "Romans 6:9."

Discussion starter video (4 minutes)

LEADER • How do you expect people to treat you when you arrive somewhere? Think about that as you watch this quick video.

- "Unit 32, Session 1" discussion starter video

Show the "Unit 32, Session 1" discussion starter video. Ask the kids why they think Zach was disappointed in the reaction of his classmates. How can we make people feel welcome at school, our homes, or church? What did the people do to welcome Jesus to Jerusalem? Why did they welcome Jesus like that? How can we welcome Jesus into our lives?

LEADER • **People welcomed Jesus to Jerusalem as their King**, and He deserved such a grand welcome

because He is King! When we choose sin, we show with our lives that Jesus is not welcome as our King. When Jesus is our King, we obey His commands out of love because He first loved us.

Sing (4 minutes)

• “Wonderful” song

LEADER • Jesus is our King. He died on the cross and rose from the grave to rescue us from sin. Let’s praise Him together.

Sing together “Wonderful.”

Pray (2 minutes)

Invite kids to pray before dismissing to apply the story.

LEADER • God, only You can save. Thank You for coming into the world to rescue us from sin and defeat death. You love us so much. Help us to obey You out of love and bring glory to You. We love You. Amen.

Dismiss to apply the story

The Gospel: God's Plan for Me

Ask kids if they have ever heard the word *gospel*. Clarify that the word *gospel* means “good news.” It is the message about Christ, the kingdom of God, and salvation. Use the following guide to share the gospel with kids.



God rules. Explain to kids that the Bible tells us God created everything, and He is in charge of everything. Invite a volunteer to read Genesis 1:1 from the Bible. Read Revelation 4:11 or Colossians 1:16-17 aloud and explain what these verses mean.



We sinned. Tell kids that since the time of Adam and Eve, everyone has chosen to disobey God. (Romans 3:23) The Bible calls this sin. Because God is holy, God cannot be around sin. Sin separates us from God and deserves God's punishment of death. (Romans 6:23)



God provided. Choose a child to read John 3:16 aloud. Say that God sent His Son, Jesus, the perfect solution to our sin problem, to rescue us from the punishment we deserve. It's something we, as sinners, could never earn on our own. Jesus alone saves us. Read and explain Ephesians 2:8-9.



Jesus gives. Share with kids that Jesus lived a perfect life, died on the cross for our sins, and rose again. Because Jesus gave up His life for us, we can be welcomed into God's family for eternity. This is the best gift ever! Read Romans 5:8; 2 Corinthians 5:21; or 1 Peter 3:18.



We respond. Tell kids that they can respond to Jesus. Read Romans 10:9-10,13. Review these aspects of our response: Believe in your heart that Jesus alone saves you through what He's already done on the cross. Repent, turning from self and sin to Jesus. Tell God and others that your faith is in Jesus.

Offer to talk with any child who is interested in responding to Jesus. Provide *I'm a Christian Now* for new Christians to take home and complete with their families.

Apply the STORY

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Key passage activity (5 minutes)

- Key Passage Poster
- index card
- pen

Write each word or phrase of the key passage and Scripture reference on separate index cards. Hide the cards in the room. Challenge kids to find the cards and arrange them in order.

For a larger group, make two or more sets, using different colored index cards per set. Form teams and assign each team a card color. Guide teams to race to find their cards and place them in order.

SAY • People welcomed Jesus to Jerusalem as their King, but only a few days later, the people wanted to crucify Jesus. On the third day, women went to Jesus' tomb. They had forgotten that Jesus said He would die but He would also come back to life. An angel met the women and told them Jesus was not in His tomb—He is alive! Jesus is still alive today.

- Bibles, 1 per kid
- Main Point Poster
- palm branches (optional)
- construction paper (optional)
- Bible times clothing (optional)

Bible story review & Bible skills (10 minutes)

Distribute a Bible to each kid. Help kids find today's Bible passages. Assign a few kids parts of the passage to read as other kids act out the story. Children may dress up in Bible times clothing and wave their hands, palm branches, or

pieces of construction paper in the air as one child rides on an imaginary donkey. Then, invite kids to play a guessing game. Share that you will describe someone from the story and they should guess who it is.

Clues:

- Jesus sent us into a village. (*two disciples; Matt. 21:1; Mark 11:1; Luke 19:29*)
- We put our robes on the donkey. (*the disciples; Matt. 21:7; Mark 11:7; Luke 19:35*)
- We placed robes and palm branches along the road. (*the people; Matt. 21:8; Mark 11:8; Luke 19:36; John 12:13*)
- We wanted the disciples to be quiet. (*the religious leaders, Luke 19:39*)
- We were run out of the temple. (*the buyers and sellers, Matt. 21:12*)
- Jesus healed us. (*the blind and lame, Matt. 21:14*)
- We were upset by what we saw in the temple. (*the religious leaders, Matt. 21:15*)

SAY • People welcomed Jesus to Jerusalem as their King.

Even so, when Jesus rode into Jerusalem, He knew that He was heading for the cross. Jesus fulfilled God's plan to save people from their sin. He did so by living a perfectly obedient life that we could never live and dying the death we deserve. On the third day, Jesus rose again to prove that He was victorious over sin and death. When we trust in Jesus, we are forgiven, and God promises us eternal life with Him.

Who saves us from our sins? Only Jesus saves us from sin.

Tip: For a smaller group of kids, read the Bible while all the kids act it out.

Option: Retell or review the Bible story using the bolded text of the Bible story script.

A circular icon with a dark background and a white border containing the text "LOW PREP" in white capital letters.

LOW PREP

- paper sheets
- palm branches (optional)
- coats, jackets, or robes, (optional)

Activity choice (10 minutes)

OPTION 1: Palm relay

Play a relay game with paper sheets representing palm branches and coats. You may choose to use actual palm branches and coats, jackets, or robes if you have them available.

Form even teams and guide kids to line up on one end of the room. Give each team two sheets of paper. Explain that each team should send one kid at a time across the room and back before the next kid can go. Kids travel across the room by stepping on one sheet of paper while picking up the other and putting it in front of them. The first team to have all of its members complete the relay wins.

SAY • People welcomed Jesus to Jerusalem as their King.

They laid down their robes and palm branches along the road for Jesus' donkey to step on. They believed that Jesus had come to rescue them from the Romans, but Jesus humbly came to earth to rescue people from sin. Less than a week later, Jesus died on the cross and rose again to rescue us from our sin when we trust in Him. One day, Jesus will return as a King, riding on a white horse.

OPTION 2: Rocks cry out

Before class, gather smooth, hand-sized stones. It may be helpful to rinse them with water and dry them before the activity.

During class, give each kid a stone and markers. Invite the kids to draw faces on the stones. As kids draw on the stones, read Luke 19:37-40. Talk about what the word *rebuke* means, and ask kids why the Pharisees did not want the disciples to praise Jesus.

- smooth stones
- markers
- water and towels (optional)

SAY • People welcomed Jesus to Jerusalem as their King,

and that made the Pharisees angry. The Pharisees were religious leaders who believed that in order for God to be happy with them, they had to follow all of God's laws and some other laws they made for themselves, too. They didn't like Jesus. He taught that no one can keep God's laws perfectly except for Him and that salvation is based only on trusting in Jesus, not what a person can do for God.

Jesus—the only One who has never sinned—died on the cross and rose again so we could be forgiven of our sin when we trust in Him. *Who saves us from our sins? Only Jesus saves us from sin.*

Journal and prayer (5 minutes)

Distribute each child's journal. Ask the kids to write about or draw a picture to answer the following questions:

- What does this story teach me about God or about the gospel?
- What does this story teach me about myself?
- Whom can I tell about this story?

Make sure each child secures this week's sheet in the journal, and then collect them. Keep the journals in the classroom so they will be available every week or as often as you wish to use them.

If time remains, take prayer requests or allow kids to complete the Bible story coloring page provided with this session. Pray for your group.

- pencils and crayons
- Journal Page
- Bible Story Coloring Page, 1 per kid

Tip: Give parents this week's *Big Picture Cards for Families* to allow families to interact with the biblical content at home.