

PALM SUNDAY 4/2/23

(From 2021 The Gospel Project Volume 9 Unit 26: Customized from the Preschool, Younger, and Older Leader Guides)

BIG PICTURE QUESTION FOR THIS UNIT:

What is the Bible? The Bible is God's Word that tells us what is true about God and ourselves.

KEY PASSAGE FOR THIS UNIT:



**Your word is a lamp to my feet
and a light to my path.**

Psalm 119:105

TODAY'S LESSON: Jesus' Triumphal Entry

Leading into the last week of Jesus' ministry before His death and resurrection, Jesus entered Jerusalem as the King of kings. 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." (See Isa. 35:4-6.)

Finally, the priests and the scribes heard the children in the temple worshipping 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. 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!

PREPARING YOUR CHILDREN FOR GOD'S WORD:

Make sure that your children have a Bible with them even if they are too young to read.

Have your kids sing along with the worship songs that are posted for this week.

THE BIBLE STORY:

Matthew 21; Mark 11; Luke 19; John 12

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 the 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.

APPLICATION:

Most of the people living in Israel during Jesus' life would have been pretty familiar with the prophecies contained in the Scriptures. When Jesus came in on a young donkey, the **people welcomed Jesus to Jerusalem as their King**—the one God had promised years before. The problem was they only understood part of the truth. They expected Jesus to be an earthly king, setting up an earthly kingdom.

The Roman Empire had conquered the area that included the land of Israel. The people were living under Roman rulers who did not love God or honor Him. The people who worshiped Jesus and said "Hosanna" thought Jesus would defeat the Romans, kick them back to Rome, and give the promised land back to God's people. But Jesus came to be an even better kind of King.

Jesus' kingdom is a heavenly kingdom, and He is our heavenly King. ***What did Jesus do to save us? Jesus lived a sinless life, died on the cross, and rose from the dead.*** Sin and death were defeated. Everyone who has faith in Jesus is forgiven and made new. When Jesus returns, He will set up His eternal kingdom where we will live forever with God.

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.

FAMILY DISCUSSION STARTERS:

2-5 Year Olds:

- What did Jesus send His two friends into the village to get for Him? *(a donkey)*
- How did the people show that they were happy to see Jesus? *(laid their robes on the road, cut palm branches to lay on the road, and shouted "Hosanna!")*
- Who was not happy that the people were praising Jesus? *(religious leaders)*
- What did Jesus do at the temple? *(made people selling things leave, healed people who could not see or walk)*
- What will Jesus ride when He returns? *(a white horse)*
- What did Jesus do to save us? Jesus died on the cross and rose from the dead.***

Kindergarten-2nd Grade:

- Why did Jesus send His disciples to get a donkey for Him to ride? *(to fulfill prophecy, Matt. 21:4-5)*
 - What word did the people and the children say in praise of Jesus? *(Hosanna, Matt. 21:9,15)*
 - Where did Jesus go to spend the night? *(Bethany, Matt. 21:17)*
 - Why do you think they people welcomed Jesus with such excitement? *Remind your kids that the people in Jesus' day were looking for an earthly king to conquer their enemies and give them back control of their land. They believed Jesus was the promised King but misunderstood what kind of king He'd be.*
 - When do you feel most excited to worship Jesus? *Guide your kids to think through the various ways we worship God, like singing praise, obeying our leaders, and doing our best work in school or sports. Remind them that anything done for God's glory is worship.*
 - Why do you think some people reject Jesus? *Help your kids connect this idea to the religious leaders in Jesus' day. They hated Jesus because they did not want to believe they needed help, and they feared losing control over the religious practices of the people. Today, it is much the same. People want to believe they are good on their own. They don't want to believe that their sin is so bad it required Jesus' death, and they don't want to surrender control of their lives to Him.*
- Say • **People welcomed Jesus to Jerusalem as their King.** When we have faith in Jesus, He is the King of our lives. Someday He will come back and set up His perfect kingdom on earth forever.

3rd-5th Grade:

- Why do you think the people welcomed Jesus as King? *Help your kids recognize that the people knew the prophecies and believed Jesus was the Messiah who was promised long ago.*
(Option: read Ps. 118:26.)
- What type of Messiah were the Jewish people expecting? *Help your kids recognize that many were expecting the Messiah to be the conqueror of the Roman Empire, but God had another plan—a plan to save people from sin.*
(Option: read Isa. 55:9.)
- What are some things you can trust God with in your life, knowing that His plans are best? *Help your kids*

recognize that God is trustworthy and that we can trust Him in all areas of our life.

(Option: read Prov. 3:5-6.)

Say • Jesus entered Jerusalem on a donkey, and **people welcomed Jesus to Jerusalem as their King**. One day, Jesus will return to earth on a white horse and reign as King over everything for eternity.

The Gospel: God's Plan for Me

Ask your 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 your kids.

God rules. Explain to your kids that the Bible tells us God created everything, and He is in charge of everything. 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 your 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. 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 your 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 your 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.