

Bible Passage: MATTHEW 4; Luke 4

Story Point: People welcomed Jesus to Jerusalem as their King.

Key Passage: "Let the heavens be glad and the earth rejoice, and let them say among the nations, "The Lord reigns!" 1 Chronicles 16:31

Big Picture Question: What is the gospel? The gospel is the good news that God sent His Son, Jesus, into the world to rescue sinners.

LEADER DEVOTIONAL

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, gentle, and mounted 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: "Have you never read: You have prepared praise from the mouths of children and nursing infants?" Jesus gladly received their praise because He was worthy of their praise.

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!

*Today's lesson is a combined lesson with Palm Sunday and Easter since elementary children will be in big church next week.

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WELCOME

As kids arrive, invite them to tell you about a time they went to or participated in a parade. What was the occasion?

Say: Jesus rode into town on a donkey. God's prophet Zechariah had predicted in Old Testament times that the Messiah would come to them riding on a donkey. Jesus was the King whom God had promised to send. People welcomed Jesus to Jerusalem as their King.

ACTIVITY PAGE

Invite kids to complete the Maze activity page.

Say: Today we will hear about how Jesus made his way through Jerusalem.

KEY PASSAGE ACTIVITY

Display the key passage poster and read it through with the kid's multiple times. Then cover a few of the words using sticky notes or index cards and tape. Read the key passage again, letting the kids fill in the missing words. Each time they succeed in saying the key passage, cover a few more words and repeat it again. Challenge the kids to memorize the verse over the next few weeks.

Say: Our key passage teaches that God promised to be with His people. Those who trust Jesus for salvation are part of God's family, and Jesus made the same promise to be with us forever. We can be bold and have courage because we have the almighty God with us all the time.

SESSION STARTER

Twenty questions:

Invite kids to play a game of 20 questions. Explain that you are thinking of a person, place, or thing. Kids may take turns asking up to 20 yes-or-no questions to try to figure out what person you are thinking of. For example, "Is this person a boy?" "Is this person still alive?" or "Is this person famous?"

Keep track of how many questions kids ask. If they are unable to guess the person after asking 20 questions, reveal the answer. Play multiple rounds as time allows. Use words related to today's Bible story. (Suggested words: *Donkey, Palm Branches, Hosanna, Jesus, garden, prayer, king, cross, earthquake*, and so on)

Say: The word *Hosanna* means "save now." Have you ever heard that word before? Today we will learn why people shouted "Hosanna!" when Jesus came to town. And in the 2nd Bible story today, something happened to Jesus that the disciples didn't fully understand. It probably left them with a lot of questions.

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BIBLE LESSON

Jesus' Triumphal Entry

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

It was the time of year that the Israelites celebrated Passover. Many Israelites had traveled to Jerusalem to remember what God had done when He rescued His people from slavery in Egypt.

Jesus and His friends also traveled to Jerusalem. He sent two of them ahead to a village. Jesus said, “Go into the village ahead of you. There you will find a donkey and her colt tied up. Untie them and bring them to Me. If anyone says anything to you, you should say that the Lord needs them.”

The friends did what Jesus said. They put their robes on the donkey and the colt, and Jesus sat on them. As

Jesus came to Jerusalem, a large crowd gathered. The crowd laid their robes on the road. They cut palm

branches from trees and laid those on the road, too. The crowds walked ahead of Jesus, and those who

followed Him shouted, “Hosanna to the Son of David! He who comes in the name of the Lord is the blessed

One—the King of Israel! Hosanna in the highest heaven!” The word *hosanna* means “Save now!”

The religious teachers didn't like it. They asked Jesus to tell His friends to be quiet. “If they didn't praise Me,” Jesus said, “the rocks would cry out!”

When Jesus entered Jerusalem, people asked, “Who is this?” The crowds replied, “This is the prophet Jesus from Nazareth in Galilee!” They were only half right. Jesus wasn't just a prophet of God—He was God's Son!

Jesus went to the temple and drove out the money changers there. While Jesus was at the temple complex, people who could not see and people who could not walk came to Him. Jesus healed them.

The priests and the scribes at the temple heard children shouting, “Hosanna to the Son of David!” The priests and scribes asked Jesus, “Do you hear what these children are saying?” The children were saying,

“The king is here! The king is here!”

Jesus said, “Yes. Even the children will praise Me.” Then Jesus left and went to spend the night in the town of Bethany.

Christ Connection: The people were happy to see Jesus. They knew He was their King. Jesus came riding on a donkey, just as the prophet Zechariah said He would. (Zechariah 9:9) One day, Jesus will come back, riding on a white horse as King over everything. (Revelation 19:11)

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DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Small Group ACTIVITIES



Say • Raise your hand if you had heard this Bible story before today.

Help kids open their Bibles to today's Bible passage. Assign a few kids parts of the passage to read as other kids act out the story.

If your group is small, read the Bible while all the kids act it out.

Invite kids to play a "Guess Who" game. Share that you will describe someone from the story, and they should guess who it is.

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, Mat. 21:14*)

We were upset by what we saw in the temple. (*The religious leaders, Matt. 21:15*)

Say: When Jesus rode into Jerusalem as King, He knew that He was heading for the cross. Jesus fulfilled God's plan to save people from their sin. ***Who saves us from our sins? Only Jesus saves us from sin.***

Special Palm Sunday Activity:

Play a Crown and Donkey Game - Lead kids to sit in a circle on the floor. Select one child to be the king. Direct him to wear a crown and sit in the middle of the circle with his eyes closed. Guide kids to pass a small toy donkey around the circle. When the king says, "Hosanna!" the donkey stops moving and whoever has it holds it discreetly. The king gets three chances to guess who has the donkey. Then the kinder with the donkey becomes the new king.

Say: **People welcomed Jesus as their King.** The people were happy to see Jesus. They knew He was their King. Jesus came riding on a donkey, just as the prophet Zechariah said He would. One day, Jesus will come back, riding on a white horse as King over everything.

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PRAYER TIME

REFLECTION AND PRAYER

Distribute a sheet of paper and pencil to each kid. Ask the kids to write about or draw a picture to answer the following questions:

What does this story teach me about God or the gospel?

What does this story teach me about myself?

Who can I tell about this story?

Be sure to send the sheets home with the kids along with the activity pages so parents can continue to discuss the Bible story with their kids.

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