

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

Greet each kid as he or she arrives. Use this time to collect the offering, fill out attendance sheets, build relationships, and help new kids connect to your group.

SAY: Today's Bible story is about a one-man parade. Someone rode into the city of Jerusalem, and the people celebrated. Does this story sound familiar?

ACTIVITY PAGE

Invite kids to complete “Remember the Time” on the activity page.

SAY: Was it difficult to remember the details of your favorite memory? Why do you think some experiences are easier to remember than others?

KEY PASSAGE ACTIVITY

Write the key passage on a dry erase board or sheet of poster board before class. Lead the group to read the verse aloud with you several times. Erase a few words or cover them with sticky notes each time you read the verse. Continue until you cover the entire verse.

Say: Let's work hard to memorize the key passage for this unit. It is such a great reminder of God's promise to never leave us or abandon us. We don't need to be afraid or discouraged.

SESSION STARTER

Option 1: Moo, baa, hee-haw

Have kids move their chairs to form a circle. Explain that one player will begin by making one of three animal noises. He may moo like a cow, baa like a sheep, or hee-haw like a donkey. The rest of the players will react according to the sound:

Moo—Players to the immediate right and left will stand and jump in place 10 times.

Baa—Players not immediately next to the “sheep” will clap their hands 10 times.

Hee-haw—All players will stand, raise their hands, and shout “Hosanna!”

Play then passes clockwise around the circle with each player taking a turn making an animal noise.

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.

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Option 2: Category clues

Form groups of three or four kids. Give each group a pencil and piece of paper. Explain that you will announce a category. Kids should work together to list words that fit the category. (For example, if the category were “things that are yellow,” kids might list daffodils, school buses, or pencils.)

After two minutes invite groups to share their lists. Use these categories: 1) ways to travel; 2) ways to greet someone; 3) things you might find on the ground.

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.

Form two or three teams. Invite one representative from each team to stand at the board. Ask a review question. The first player to write the correct answer earns a point for his or her team. Kids at the board may only give one answer. If all the players answer incorrectly, allow the first kid in the audience to raise her hand to answer.

How many disciples did Jesus send ahead into the village? (Two, Matt. 21:1-2)

What animal did the disciples bring to Jesus? (a donkey, Matt. 21:7)

What two items did the crowds spread on the road? (Robes, branches; Matt. 21:8)

What word did the crowds shout? (Hosanna, Matt. 21:9)

What city did Jesus enter on a donkey? (Jerusalem, Matt. 21:10)

Where did Jesus go when He was in Jerusalem? (The temple, Matt. 21:12)

Who praised Jesus at the temple? (Children, Matt. 21:15)

In what city did Jesus spend the night? (Bethany, Matt. 21:17)

Jesus fulfilled the words of which prophet? (Zechariah, Zech. 9:9)

Review the gospel with boys and girls. Explain that kids are welcome to speak with you or another teacher if they have questions. (Feel free to use the GOSPEL visual aid from your class bulletin board.)

PRAYER TIME

Journal and prayer

Distribute journal pages and pencils. Guide kids to think about and answer the questions listed on the page. As kids journal, invite them to share their ideas.

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

What does the story teach me about myself?

Are there any commands in this story to obey? How are they for God's glory and my good?

Are there promises in this story to remember? How do they help me trust and love God?

How does this story help me to live on mission better?

Review the gospel and encourage kids to speak with you or another teacher if they have questions. Then pray, thanking God for His faithfulness and asking Him to help us be faithful to love Him. As time allows lead kids to complete “Remember Word Search” on the activity page.