

Triumphal Entry

(Palm Sunday: Matthew 21:1-17)

Pre-Session Warm Up

Today is “Palm Sunday”. Does anyone here NOT know why we call it that? Today we are going to learn about the very first Palm Sunday and how even children your age shouted their praises to God for Jesus.

Do you ever spend time praising Jesus? He loves it when you do!

Opening Prayer

Lord Jesus, You deserve our praises. You are an awesome God! You are greater than we can even imagine. You created the whole earth and everything in it. You hold all things together in order. You are full of kindness. Please open our hearts and minds this morning, Lord, so that we might know You more fully than we have ever known You before. In Jesus’ name, we pray. Amen.

Memory Verse

*Let my mouth be filled with Your praise and with Your glory all the day.
(Psalm 71:8)*

Lesson

One week before Jesus’ death on the cross, He and his disciples were walking from Jericho into Jerusalem. They were coming to celebrate Passover, a very important holiday for the Jews.

Every year they have a big celebration and a feast to remember how God rescued them from being slaves in Egypt and brought them back to the Promised Land.

Jesus and His disciples were coming into Jerusalem to celebrate Passover. But, before this week would end, the Lord Jesus would give His life on the cross to pay for our sin.

As they came near the city, Jesus stopped at a nearby village where He sent two of His men to borrow a donkey and its colt.

Matthew 21:1-3

As Jesus and the disciples approached Jerusalem, they came to the town of Bethphage on the Mount of Olives. Jesus sent two of them on ahead. (2) “Go into the village over there,” he said. “As soon as you enter it, you will see a donkey tied there, with its colt beside it. Untie them and bring them to me. (3) If anyone asks what you are doing, just say, ‘The Lord needs them,’ and he will immediately let you take them.”

Even though this seemed like an odd request, His disciples did what Jesus asked without questioning Him.

Matthew 21:6-7

The two disciples did as Jesus commanded. (7) They brought the donkey and the colt to him and threw their garments over the colt, and he sat on it.

They laid their robes over the donkey like a saddle.

Sometimes the Lord may ask you to do something that you may not understand why He’s asking you to do it; or, you might think sounds really hard to do, but God always wants us to obey Him, no matter what! For example, He may ask you to forgive someone who has been mean to you. Or, He may ask you to make friends with someone who has no friends.

When Jesus rode the donkey into the city, many people treated him just like a king. They formed a big parade to honor Him. Children and adults cheered and sang songs. They waved and shouted. The people cut branches off of palm trees and waved them like flags to honor Him. But the people really didn’t understand what Jesus had come to Jerusalem to do.

You see, people had heard about Him. Many of them had seen Jesus perform miracles. They heard that He had given a blind man sight. They had watched a lame man walk! People cheered because he had turned water into wine and fed 5,000 people with only two small fish and five loaves.

The people wanted to make Him their earthly king, so they spread garments and branches out before him. The people thought it would be great to have a king who could feed them and cure their diseases.

Matthew 21:8-9

Most of the crowd spread their garments on the road ahead of him, and others cut branches from the trees and spread them on the road. (9) Jesus was in the center of the procession, and the people all around him were shouting, "Praise God for the Son of David! Blessings on the one who comes in the name of the LORD! Praise God in highest heaven!"

The people lined the road, shouting, "Long live the king!" They waved palm branches like flags and laid their coats in the road in front of the colt as it passed before them. That's why we call this, "Palm Sunday".

Not everyone in the crowd was happy on that first Palm Sunday. The enemies of Jesus watched the parade with fear and anger.

Matthew 21:10-11

The entire city of Jerusalem was in an uproar as he entered. "Who is this?" they asked. (11) And the crowds replied, "It's Jesus, the prophet from Nazareth in Galilee."

Early the next morning Jesus entered the temple where He healed the blind and the lame.

Matthew 21:14

The blind and the lame came to Him in the Temple, and He healed them.

Seeing these amazing miracles made the children shout their praise to Jesus, but that made Jewish religious leaders angry.

Matthew 21:15-16

The leading priests and the teachers of religious law saw these wonderful miracles and heard even the children in the Temple shouting, "Praise God for the Son of David." But the leaders were indignant. (16) They asked Jesus, "Do you hear what these children are saying?" "Yes,"

Jesus replied. "Haven't you ever read the Scriptures? For they say, 'You have taught children and infants to give you praise.'"

The Jewish religious leaders were angry that Jesus healed the blind and lame because they were jealous of His popularity. But even the young children called out their praise to Jesus and He was pleased to hear their praise.

The Lord Jesus deserves all our praise. What are some reasons we should praise the Lord? What is it about Him that should make us shout for joy? [Teacher, write the children's ideas on the board. Encourage them to discover some of God's attributes listed below.]

God's Inner Qualities:

- **All-knowing:** God knows everything, past, present, and future. He knows all about you, even what you are thinking. He knows your deepest needs and desires, and He knows how to meet them (Job 37:16; Ps 139:1-4).
- **All-powerful:** God can do anything He wants to do. His power is greater than we can imagine. He always uses it for our good (Job 42:2; Rev 19:6).
- **All-present:** God is always present everywhere. He is with you all the time. He sees everything you do and hears everything you say (Ps 139:7-12; Prov 5:21; 15:3; Acts 17:28).
- **All-wise:** He made and understands all things. His plans for us are perfect (Ps 104:24; Is 40:28; Rom 11:33).
- **Faithful:** God always does what He says He will do. You can trust His Word completely (Lam 3:22, 23; 1 Cor 10:13; 1 Thess 5:24).
- **Holy:** He is completely pure and perfect. He never sins and He cannot tolerate sin. All that He does is right and good (1 Sam 2:2; Ps 99:5; Is 43:15).

- *Merciful*: God cares about us more deeply than we could understand. He sent His Son to die so that He can justly choose not to give us the punishment our sin deserves (Num 14:18; Ps 130:3; Eph 2:4).
- *Sovereign*: He rules over all things in heaven and earth, including our lives. There is no power or authority greater than His (Ps 22:28; 47:2; Is 44:6; 66:1,2; Dan 4:34; 35).
- *Unchanging*: He is always the same — pure and good, faithful in His love and care — and nothing can change who or what He is (Mal 3:6; James 1:17).

God wants us to know what He is really like. Each day as you spend time with the Lord, begin with a few moments of praise to Him. We can admire Him for all He has made; thank Him for all He does for us, but also praise and glorify Him just for who He is — Lord of all. The Bible says our mouths should be filled with His praise. Speak your praise not just privately to Jesus, but to others as well. That is what happened in the temple in Jerusalem. The children shouted out their praise to the Lord Jesus, giving Him the glory He deserves.

Closing Prayer

Father, You want us to know You for who You really are. I pray that You will give each of us a desire in our hearts to spend time alone with You each and every day, thinking about Your special inner qualities that make You the wonderful Father that You are. You want me to know Your love and to show it to others. In Jesus' name, we pray. Amen.

Learning Activities

Craft Corner

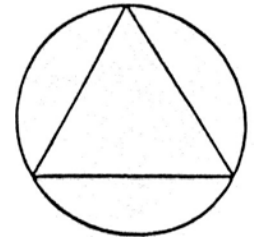
Have the children write Jesus a poem, drawn Him a picture, or sing Him a song. Or, have them make cards for some of His attributes.

Then they can hold them up as you spend time praying and praising Him.

Game Center

What is God Like? Matching Game

Prepare 16 yellow circles similar to the one sketched to the right.



On the back of the circles write the following messages — one message per circle, but use each message twice:

- GOD IS POWERFUL!
- GOD IS ALIVE!
- GOD LOVES YOU!
- GOD HATES SIN!
- GOD IS PATIENT!
- GOD DOES NOT CHANGE!
- GOD CANNOT LIE!
- GOD KNOWS EVERYTHING!

Each time a child correctly answers a question he gets to turn over two circles. If the messages on the back match, remove the pieces. If the messages are different, turn them back over, and the children will try to remember where they are and make future matches. It won't be long before even young children will have all eight statements about God memorized.

Or, use the following review questions in a game of your choice:

1. Where were Jesus and His disciples going the week before His death on the cross? (They were going to Jerusalem to celebrate Passover.)
2. What is the celebration of Passover about? (When God passed over the Israelite's homes that had lamb's blood painted on the door posts and didn't kill the first-born son.)

3. Just before coming into Jerusalem, what did Jesus send two of His disciples off to do? (To go into the village, find a donkey and bring it to Jesus.)
4. When Jesus rode into the city on a donkey, what did the people do and why? (They thought he was going to be anointed as King, so they waved palm branches and laid down their clothes for Him to walk over and shouted, "*Praise God in highest heaven.*")
5. Why did they hope He was going to be their king? (They were under the Roman rule at that time and they wanted to be free of the persecution.)
6. Who came to Jesus in the Temple to be healed? (The blind and the lame.)
7. Who was it in the temple that sang out their praise to Jesus and made the Scribes and Pharisees angry? (The children.)
8. Why were the Jewish religious leaders angry that the children sang out their praise to Jesus? (They were jealous of his popularity.)
9. Besides praising Jesus for all the good things He does for us, why else should we praise Him? (For Who He is—God, the creator of the universe!)
10. What are some great things about Jesus that we should praise Him for? (He is powerful, He loves you, He is patient and kind, etc.)
11. What are some creative ways you can praise the Lord? (Write a poem, draw a picture, sing a song, etc.)
12. Why do we call this Sunday, "Palm Sunday"?

TRIANGLE TANGLE-

Using a pencil or crayon, shade in each triangle with a dot in it. Discover something we offer in church by singing and praying and listening. If you use bright colors to fill in all the other triangles, you will have a pretty "stained glass window" to hang in your room or give to someone.

