

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 10:9

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

SMALL GROUP OPENING (10–15 MINUTES) **PAGE 108** **LARGE GROUP BIBLE STUDY** (25–30 MINUTES) **PAGE 110** **SMALL GROUP ACTIVITIES** (25–30 MINUTES) **PAGE 116**



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, 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. 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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Additional resources for each session are available at gospelproject.com. For free training and session-by-session help, visit www.ministrygrid.com/web/thegospelproject.

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. Many Israelites had traveled to Jerusalem to remember what God had done when He rescued His people from slavery in Egypt.

Jesus and His disciples traveled to Jerusalem, too. 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 said to them, "Why are you untying the donkey?" "The Lord needs it," they said. Then **they brought the donkey to Jesus, threw their robes onto the donkey, and helped Jesus get on it. People spread their robes along the road, and others spread palm branches cut from the fields.**

The whole crowd of the disciples praised God with a loud voice for all the miracles they had seen. **"The King who comes in the name of the Lord is the blessed One.** Peace in heaven and glory in the highest heaven! **Hosanna!"** The word *hosanna* means "save now." The people believed Jesus was their promised King, and they hoped He would save them from Rome.

Some of the religious leaders said, "Teacher, tell your disciples to be quiet!" Jesus answered, "If they did not praise Me, the rocks would praise Me!"

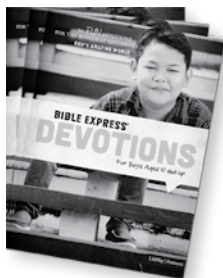
While Jesus was in the temple complex, people who were blind and people who were lame came to Him. The blind and lame were not allowed to worship in the temple. Jesus healed them.

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

"Yes," Jesus replied. "The Psalmist 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
BIBLE EXPRESS!**

Invite kids to check out this week's devotionals to discover that people welcomed Jesus as King. Jesus is the Messiah, God's chosen King (Luke 19:38) who would die to rescue us from sin.

Order in bulk, subscribe quarterly, or purchase individually. For more information, check out www.lifeway.com/devotionals.

Small Group OPENING

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 10:9

BIG PICTURE QUESTION: Who saves us from our sin? Only Jesus saves us from our 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. Ask kids to share about their favorite way to travel—on a bike? In an airplane? On a horse? Would any of the kids like to travel on a donkey?

Activity page (5 minutes)

- “Palm Branch Crossing” activity page, 1 per kid
- pencils or markers

Invite kids to complete “Palm Branch Crossing” on the activity page. Instruct kids to find the path for Jesus to follow into Jerusalem. Kids may only travel across palm branches that match. (Hint: Only one type of palm branch provides a complete path to Jerusalem.)

SAY • Have any of you heard the story of Jesus riding into Jerusalem on a donkey? In today's Bible story, people laid palm branches on the ground in front of Jesus. I wonder why they did that. Let's find out!



- “Welcome Hangers” printable
- scissors
- crayons or markers

Session starter (10 minutes)

OPTION 1: Welcome hangers

Print the welcome hangers on heavyweight paper. Cut them apart and give each kid a hanger. Provide crayons or

markers for kids to decorate their hangers. Demonstrate how to prepare the hanger by cutting along the dotted line.

As kids work, talk about what kinds of things make them feel welcome. (Examples: a friendly greeting, a smile, treats such as drinks or snacks, and so forth) Prompt them to share about a time they felt particularly welcome or unwelcome. How can they be welcoming to visitors at their own homes?

Encourage kids to hang their welcome hangers on the door of their bedroom or home.

SAY • You can use these hangers as one way to show others that they are welcome in your home. Today we are going to hear a Bible story about how people showed Jesus that He was welcome in their city.

OPTION 2: Palm branch pickup

Pile palm branches on the floor at the center of the room. Use one palm branch per kid. Play a song and instruct kids to walk in a circle around the palm branches. Randomly stop the music. Kids should scramble to grab a palm branch and shout, “Hosanna!” The last kid to do so is out.

- palm branches
- “Jesus Paid It All (Whiter Than Snow)” song or “You Will Be Saved” song

Allow the eliminated player to start and stop the music for the next round. Then rotate him back into the game during the subsequent round.

SAY • The word *hosanna* means “save now.” The people in today’s Bible story shouted “Hosanna!” when Jesus entered the city of Jerusalem. The people wanted Jesus to save them from the Romans who ruled over them. Is that why Jesus came? Let’s find out.

Transition to large group

Large Group LEADER

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- room decorations
- Theme Background Slide (optional)

Suggested Theme Decorating Ideas: You may choose to decorate for Easter over any existing theme. Play on the existing theme of a family room. You might display palm branches, a vase of lilies, a small cross or crown of thorns, and other decorations at the front of the room.

Countdown

- countdown video

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

Introduce the session (3 minutes)

- leader attire
- Bible

[Large Group Leader enters triumphantly, carrying a Bible and waving back and forth and bowing to an imaginary crowd of supporters.]

LEADER • Oh, thank you! Thank you! It really is a pleasure to be here. I am glad to see you and your smiling faces. Thank you for being so welcoming. You are too kind. *[Relax and address kids.]*

Whew, it sure feels good to be welcomed. Have your friends ever been so happy to see you when you entered a room? Now imagine a whole city celebrating when you arrived!

Today we are going to hear a story from the Bible. [*Hold up the Bible.*] The Bible is God’s Word, and everything in it is true. Our story today really happened—long ago. Let’s get ready.

Big picture question (1 minute)

LEADER • This week, our big picture question is, *Who saves us from our sin?* Any ideas? [*Allow kids to respond.*] That’s right. *Only Jesus saves us from our sin.* Let’s say that together.

Lead kids to say the big picture question and answer.

LEADER • When you hear the big picture question, say the answer. Let’s practice one more time: *Who saves us from our sin? Only Jesus saves us from our sin.*

Giant timeline (1 minute)

Point to the previous week’s Bible story on the giant timeline. Then point to the section labeled *Jesus Saves*.

LEADER • We have been learning about the beginning of Jesus’ life and ministry. Over the next two weeks, we are going to hear about what Jesus did to save people from sin. People had been waiting for so long for God to send the Messiah. Jesus had come to earth as a baby, and now it was time for Him to bring salvation to the world.

Show the Bible story picture poster.

LEADER • Check out this picture. Jesus is riding on a donkey. Our Bible story is called “Jesus’ Triumphal Entry” because Jesus entered the city of Jerusalem and the people celebrated. You can find this story in all four Gospels: Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John.

- Giant Timeline or Big Story Circle
- Bible Story Picture Poster

- Bibles
- “Jesus’ Triumphant Entry” video
- Big Picture Question Poster
- Bible Story Picture Poster

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’ Triumphant Entry.”

LEADER • What a celebration! God had promised to send a Messiah. The prophet Zechariah even said that this day would come. Zechariah 9:9 says, “Look, your King is coming to you; He is righteous and victorious, humble and riding on a donkey.”

Isn’t that surprising? If you were a king riding into a city, what kind of animal would you choose to ride? [*Allow a few volunteers to respond.*] You might ride something like a big, strong horse to show off your power. But that’s not what Jesus did. He came humbly on a donkey.

Crowds gathered, and **people welcomed Jesus to Jerusalem as their King**. They knew He was the Messiah, and they couldn’t wait for Him to set up His kingdom. But the people didn’t understand that it wasn’t time for Jesus to set up His kingdom. Jesus wasn’t going to overthrow the government and give the people military victory over their enemies—not yet. He had come to save people in a greater way by rescuing them spiritually, freeing them from sin and death.

Christ connection

LEADER • Just one week after **people welcomed Jesus to Jerusalem as their King**, they crucified Him on a cross. But that didn’t stop God’s plan to save sinners. In fact, that was God’s plan to save sinners! God had

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.

planned all along that Jesus would die the death we deserve for our sin. Jesus never sinned, but He died in our place.

On the third day, Jesus rose from the dead. He is alive! When we trust in Jesus as Lord and Savior, God forgives our sin and we will live with Him forever.

Key passage (5 minutes)

Show the key passage poster. Lead the boys and girls to read together Romans 10:9.

LEADER • People welcomed Jesus to Jerusalem as their

King. Jesus was not the type of king the people expected; they did not know that later that week, Jesus would die on the cross to save people from their sin. Our key passage reminds us that Jesus rose again and saves those who trust in Him as Lord. Let's sing!

Lead boys and girls to sing "You Will Be Saved."

- Key Passage Poster
- "You Will Be Saved" song

Discussion starter video (4 minutes)

LEADER • How do you feel when something happens in a way you don't expect? Watch this.

Show the "Unit 20, Session 1" discussion starter video. Ask kids how they would feel if they were expecting socks and received a kitten instead. Which gift is better? When you don't understand what God is doing, what can you do to remind yourself that He still deserves your worship?

LEADER • God's people expected a king who would rescue them from their enemies. But God had a greater plan! God sent a King who would save people from their sin. *Who saves us from our sin? Only Jesus saves us from our sin.*

- "Unit 20, Session 1" discussion starter video

• “Jesus Paid It All (Whiter Than Snow)” song

Sing (4 minutes)

LEADER • The **people welcomed Jesus to Jerusalem as their King**. Let’s sing a song to remember what Jesus has done for us.

Sing together “Jesus Paid It All (Whiter Than Snow).”

Pray (2 minutes)

Invite kids to pray before dismissing to small groups.

LEADER • Dear God, thank You for Your Word. Today as we think about how **people welcomed Jesus to Jerusalem as their King**, please prepare our hearts to welcome Jesus as our King and Lord. We look to Him for the promise of salvation. Amen.

Dismiss to small groups

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.

Small Group LEADER

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Key passage activity (5 minutes)

- Key Passage Poster
- chalkboard or dry erase board
- marker or chalk

Show the key passage poster. Then write Romans 10:9 on a chalkboard or dry erase board. Lead kids to read the key passage together. Then erase one word. Instruct kids to say the key passage again, filling in the missing word. Continue to erase words one at a time, calling for kids to say the key passage each time until you erase all the words.

SAY • Great job, everyone. Work on memorizing our key passage during the week. Our key passage tells us how we can be saved. *Who saves us from our sin? Only Jesus saves us from our sin.*

Bible story review & Bible skills (10 minutes)

- Bibles, 1 per kid
- Main Point Poster
- "Bible Story Game Cards" printable

Print and cut apart the Bible story game cards. Prepare a set for each group of four to six kids. Mix up the cards and arrange them facedown on a table. Explain that each card contains either a question or an answer. Kids should try to match the questions with the correct answers.

Invite a kid to turn over two cards. If he turns over a question and its matching answer, he may keep the pair and play again. If the cards do not match, he should turn both cards facedown. Play passes to the next player. As kids play,

encourage them to check their answers in the Bible. Provide the Scripture references for them to find and read.

1. Why had many Israelites traveled to Jerusalem?
(*to celebrate Passover, John 12:12*)
2. How many disciples did Jesus send into a village ahead of them? (*two, Matt. 21:1*)
3. What did the disciples find in the village? (*a young donkey, Mark 11:2*)
4. What did people spread on the road in front of Jesus?
(*their robes and palm branches, Mark 11:8*)
5. What word did the people say that means “save now”? (*hosanna, Mark 11:9-10*)
6. Who asked Jesus to quiet the disciples? (*the religious leaders, Luke 19:39*)
7. Jesus said if the disciples were quiet, what would praise Him? (*the rocks, Luke 19:40*)
8. Whom did Jesus heal in the temple complex? (*people who were blind and lame, Matt. 21:14*)
9. Where did Jesus go to spend the night? (*the town of Bethany, Matt. 21:17*)
10. Which prophet said Jesus would come, riding on a donkey? (*Zechariah, Zech, 9:9*)
11. What will Jesus ride when He comes again one day? (*a white horse, Rev. 19:11*)
12. ***Who saves us from our sin? Only Jesus saves us from our sin.***

SAY • We saw in our Bible story today that **people welcomed Jesus to Jerusalem as their King**. They celebrated Him! But Jesus was not the type of king the people expected. They hoped for a king who would overthrow the Romans.

Later that week, Jesus was arrested and killed. But

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

we know the whole story—Jesus did not stay dead!
We will hear more about what happened next time.



LOW PREP

- construction paper or rubber circles

Activity choice (10 minutes)

OPTION 1: Triumphal entry relay

Form two teams of kids. Designate a *walker* on each team. Instruct the rest of the kids to line up single file, spreading out so the line stretches across the room. Give the first three players in line a piece of construction paper.

Explain that the walker will start at one end of the room. The walker may only step on the construction paper. The players lined up should take turns laying the paper on the floor ahead of the walker. After the walker has stepped on a piece of paper, a player may pick it up and pass it down the line to be laid ahead of the walker again. Teams will race to move the walker across the room as fast as they can.

SAY • As Jesus entered Jerusalem, people spread their robes and palm branches along the road. **People welcomed Jesus to Jerusalem as their King.** They welcomed Him as the Messiah God had promised to send.

OPTION 2: Group palm branch

Give kids green construction paper, pencils, and scissors. Instruct them to trace their hands on the paper and then cut out the handprint shapes. Encourage kids to make several handprints, as time allows.

Direct the kids to tape the handprints onto the yardstick like leaves on a palm branch. When kids finish, invite a volunteer to hold to palm branch up for everyone to see.

SAY • In today's Bible story, what did the people shout as Jesus rode into Jerusalem? ("*Hosanna!*")

Do you remember what the word *hosanna* means?

- construction paper, shades of green
- pencils
- scissors
- markers
- tape
- yardstick

(“*save now*”) Jesus was not the king people expected, but He had come to save them from their sins.

People welcomed Jesus to Jerusalem as their King. Have you welcomed Jesus as your King? When we trust in Jesus as Lord and Savior, God forgives our sin and gives us eternal life.

Option: Review the gospel with boys and girls. Explain that kids are welcome to speak with you or another teacher if they have questions.

Journal and prayer (5 minutes)

Distribute journal pages and pencils. Encourage kids to write in their journals about a time something happened in a way they didn't expect. Did the situation turn out better or worse in the end?

- pencils
- Journal Page
- “Make the Connection” activity page, 1 per kid

SAY • Sometimes trusting God is hard when He does something we don't expect. Maybe God answers a prayer in a different way than we were hoping for, or maybe He allows something sad to happen. When that happens, we can remember this story. In the end, Jesus was God's promised King; He was just the kind of king no one had ever seen! Let's pray.

Dear God, thank You for sending Jesus to be the King we did not expect. Thank You that He is far greater than any king we could have asked for. Because of what Jesus has done for us, we can enter Your kingdom! Help us to remember that Your plans are always better than the plans we could make for ourselves. Amen.

As time allows, lead kids to complete “Make the Connection” on the activity page. For each blank, kids should choose the correct word to complete the Christ connection. (Answers: *Jesus', King, Messiah, Zechariah, Look, victorious, donkey, earth, white, everything*)

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