“Jesus on Palm Sunday”

Home Sunday School Lesson on John 12:12-19

Jesus Christ is Coming to Town…Riding on a Donkey!

“In Home” Sunday School Suggestions to Study and Celebrate Palm Sunday

It’s that time…almost Easter! The final countdown…Holy Week is (or at least, should be) a joyous and also a contemplative time in our church year. In fact, Easter should really be the key holiday, as the Resurrection is so pivotal and essential to our faith. Unfortunately, modern commercial hype sometimes breezes by Easter with a few marshmallow bunnies and a nod at some colorful eggs. This year, get ready for the Paschal celebration by thinking about the week leading up to it. This lesson kicks off Holy Week with a look at Palm Sunday.

Lesson focus: Jesus came to save people who were needy and hurting. There were many people who recognized that He was special, and wanted Him to save them. Others did not understand who Jesus was, and wanted to hurt Him. The way that Christ lived and died did not meet anyone’s expectations; but He did the will of God.

Passage: John 12:12-19

Target Audience: Kindergarten-6th grade (or whoever you might have at home!)

Materials Needed: Green construction paper, scissors, paper towel tubes or popsicle sticks, glue or tape, noisemakers, coats, branches.

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Game and Lesson Introduction

Lesson Opening: Palm Sunday is a great time to have fun with some creative and energetic activities! Many options are possible, especially in the comfort of your own home. Select from one of the following openers, or make up one of your own!

- Have your own parade! Grab a branch from outside, or make one of the paper palm branch crafts shown. Wave the branches and walk around, shouting or singing.
- Re-enact the story and get everyone involved! Line a hallway with coats and stuffed animals. Have an adult play "donkey" and give rides to younger kids. Use noisemakers or instruments to make a joyful noise!
- Have a donkey relay: if you have enough participants, group children up in two lines and have them take turns "donkey walking" on all fours across a room, picking up a branch or coat, and bringing it back to the start line. See who finishes first!
- Fun fact exploration: what did the palm branches symbolize? Do some research on palms, branches, and why this was significant. While you're in a researching mood, check out the differences between horses and donkeys, and see what historical and modern ramifications come along with those!
- Find and watch a video clip of a motorcade, political parade, or red carpet celebration.

After a couple of fun activities, find out what kids already know or remember about the week before Easter. What is coming up? What are we excited about on Palm Sunday? What does it all mean? Explain that today we'll find out what was going on with Jesus and the donkey parade…

Ask: What do people do to honor celebrities today? Who do you think is important or worthy of a parade?

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Palm Sunday Bible Study for Kids

How you choose to experience the story will vary according to the ages and abilities of your children (and how many are participating). For younger children, you may wish to use a children's or storybook version of the Bible, and explain details as you go.

Older kids can take turns helping to read the story. You can also make this interactive, and encourage everyone to get in on the action. You might find a short video version to reinforce it. Or even have students draw as you go…it's all up to the kids and their learning styles.

**Note: the story of the Palm Sunday processional appears in all four of the Gospels. This one is from John, but feel free to explore the other versions, as well.*

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*The next day the large crowd that had come to the feast heard that Jesus was coming to Jerusalem. **13** So they took branches of palm trees and went out to meet him, crying out, "Hosanna! Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord, even the King of Israel!" -John 12:12-13*

Talk about what is happening here. Right before this, Jesus had just raised Lazarus from the dead. He brought a dead guy back to life, so it certainly makes sense that people would crowd around to see what He might do next!

They wanted to make Jesus a king, to have Him save them from political oppression. They waved palm branches to welcome Him into town and celebrate Him. It was sort of like waving pom-poms at a game or rally. The word "Hosanna" means "Save us." The people wanted Jesus to save them and be their king. Well, He already was their king, but not exactly in the ways they expected…

*Ask: Can you think of some ways that Jesus did not always do what was expected of Him?

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Continue with the method in which Jesus came:

And Jesus found a young donkey and sat on it, just as it is written,

15 "Fear not, daughter of Zion;
behold, your king is coming,
sitting on a donkey's colt!"

16 His disciples did not understand these things at first, but when Jesus was glorified, then they remembered that these things had been written about him and had been done to him. -John 12:14-16

Okay, so what's the big deal with riding a baby donkey? Well, a couple of significant things were taking place here. For one thing, riding a donkey was an indication of peace. Jesus was not storming in on a grand war-horse, ready to swoop in and raise riots. He was coming gently, indicating that His kingdom was one of peace.
He was also fulfilling a prophecy. Do you know what a prophecy is or what it means? People long before Jesus lived spoke things about what was going to happen. One of those prophets had spoken about this:

Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion!
Shout aloud, O daughter of Jerusalem!
Behold, your king is coming to you;
righteous and having salvation is he,
humble and mounted on a donkey,
on a colt, the foal of a donkey. -Zechariah 9:9

The disciples didn't quite put the pieces together at the time, but later they realized that Jesus was exactly carrying out the words of that prophet.

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*Ask: has there ever been a time when you didn't understand something right away, and realized later how significant it was?

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*The crowd that had been with him when he called Lazarus out of the tomb and raised him from the dead continued to bear witness. **18** The reason why the crowd went to meet him was that they heard he had done this sign. **19** So the Pharisees said to one another, "You see that you are gaining nothing. Look, the world has gone after him." -John 12:17-19*

So why was the crowd so excited about Jesus? As we read here, they were impressed by His miracles, and had seen Him raise Lazarus. They wanted to celebrate Him. This is a joyous and festive occasion, and the people almost realized how important Jesus was…but not quite. They didn't quite comprehend the kind of King that Jesus was. Not a king who would conquer enemies with swords and rule over others. He was a leader who came to serve, and who lived to die. The enemies He came to conquer were not flesh and blood, but sin, death, and the devil. Of course, the Pharisees were not too pleased to see Jesus so praised and lifted up.

All along, they had wanted to find a way to get rid of Him. They watch from the sidelines, disgusted at the celebration. And within a few days of this happy welcome parade, they would have Jesus arrested, beaten, and killed. The Messiah had the power to stop them. He could have wiped them out with a glance, or changed what they were doing. He could have escaped. But that would not have fulfilled His mission.

That's not the kind of king He came to be.
So as we celebrate Palm Sunday and get ready for Holy Week, we rejoice in who Christ was, and who He IS in our lives today. Hosanna!

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Palm Sunday Craft Ideas for Holy Week

A Different Approach: Donkeys, Palms, Dirty Feet, and a Cross
Craft Ideas for Holy Week

Holy Week is (or should be) the most celebrated time in a church season. From Palm Sunday through Good Friday, we honor the last days of Jesus, and eagerly anticipate His resurrection on Easter. As we prepare for Holy Week, consider activities and discussions that will make children appreciate Christ's sacrifice. Of course, fun crafts can accomplish the task, too!

Don't miss our featured Palm Sunday for Kids lessons & activities

Bible Verses or Craft Captions to Consider…

"Fear not, daughter of Zion;
behold, your king is coming,
sitting on a donkey's colt!" -John 12:15

So they took branches of palm trees and went out to meet him, crying out, "Hosanna! Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord, even the King of Israel!" -John 12:13

And those who went before and those who followed were shouting, "Hosanna! Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord! -Mark 11:9

For even the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many. -Mark 10:25

If I then, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet. 15 For I have given you an example, that you also should do just as I have done to you. -John 13:14-15

Jesus calls us to love and serve one another.

Jesus did not fill expectations…He went far beyond them!

Jesus lived to die, and died so that we may live.

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Craft one: “Palm Palm Stick ”

You will need:

- Scissors
- Construction paper (green)
- Markers or decorating materials
- Glue or tape
- Toilet Paper tube or popsicle stick
- Pipe cleaners (optional decoration)

Procedure:

1. Trace hand prints onto green paper.
2. Carefully cut the hands out of the paper.
3. Decorate the hands with words, phrases, or verses.
4. Glue the hand prints onto the sides of the stick or tube.
5. Wave, shout “Hosanna,” and enjoy!
6. Alternate: create a simple “palm branch” by cutting a large leaf shape out of green paper, trimming slits down the side, and adding a pipe cleaner handle.

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Craft Two: “Jerusalem-Bound Donkey”

You will need:

- Paper plates
- Glue, tape, or staples
- Markers or crayons
- Scissors
- Clothespins
- Paper or felt
- String or ribbon

Procedure:

1. Fold the paper plate in half, in the shape of a taco
2. Decorate the plate in “donkey” colors (gray, brown, etc.)
3. Cut a paper, cardstock, or felt piece into the shape of a donkey head
4. Add extra decoration, saddle, hair and “tail”, if desired.
5. Place clothespins on the underside of the plate to serve as the donkey’s legs.

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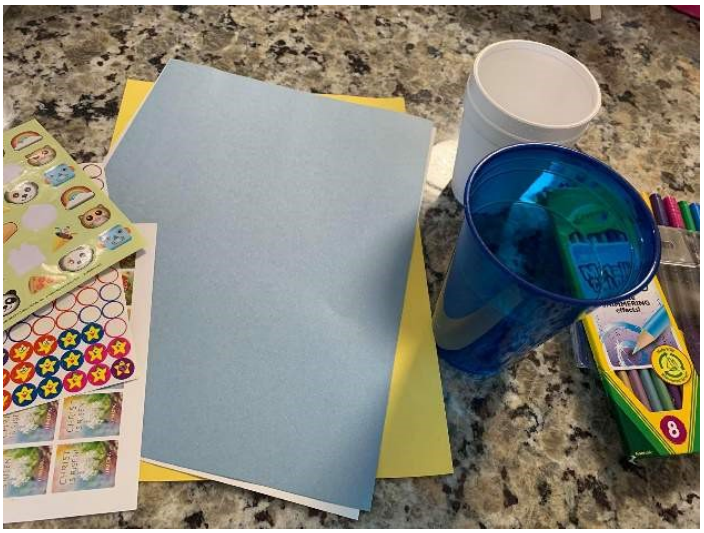
Craft Three: “Last Supper Cup”

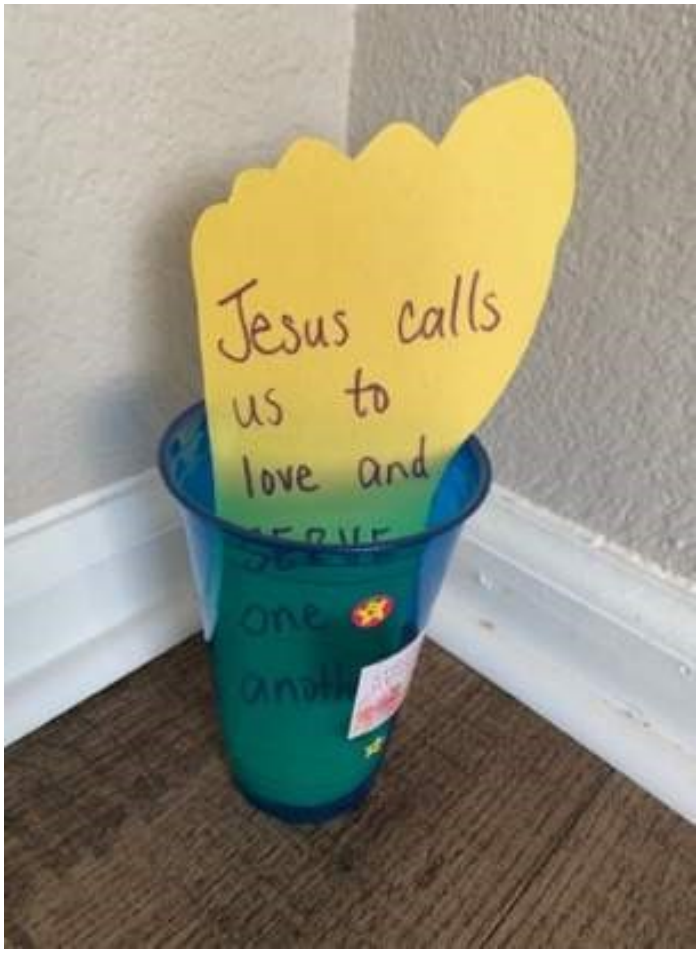


You will need:

- Paper or Styrofoam cups
- Stickers (optional)
- Markers or crayons
- Scissors
- Construction paper

Procedure:

1. Decorate the cup with notes, stickers, or markers.
2. Trace a foot shape onto the construction paper.
3. Cut the foot out, and add a caption or verse to it.
4. Place the “foot” into the cup. Use as a reminder decoration, or miniature coin collector!



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These craft ideas were prepared by Kristin Schmidt, who serves at the Epiphany Lutheran Church in Castle Rock, CO.

She has shared her teaching gifts through *Ministry-To-Children* since 2014 and now serves as our lead curriculum writer.

Kristin has a professional background in elementary and pre-school education. A graduate of Biola University, she holds a Master of Education and will receive the Master of Theology degree from Concordia University, Irvine, California, in May 2020. Kristin grew up in southern California and lived the past 10 years in Georgia. She is a long-distance runner and voracious reader.

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Help you tell kids about Jesus!

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Our website now has over 4,000 free resources for your children's ministry. Each month we're adding even more! Here are a few popular sections:

- Over 300 Coloring Pages Bible Coloring Pages.
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- Sunday School Games, Bible Crafts, and Worship Songs for Kids
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Triumphal Entry: Palm Sunday Skit

ministry-to-children.com/triumphal-entry-palm-sunday-skit

Written by Felicia Mollohan Last updated March 28, 2019 Leave a Comment Filed Under: Bible Skits for Kids , Easter Ideas
March 11, 2014

Here is a simple skit that presents Jesus' Triumphal Entry into Jerusalem. This would be wonderful to have the children in your class act out on Palm Sunday so they know the story of what happened on on the Palm Sunday. This can be done as simply as having the children read the script while acting or as elaborately with costumes and memorized lines.

Triumphal Entry: Luke 19:28-38

Characters: Narrator, Jesus, Owner, Disciples (at least 2), the rest of the class can be the crowds

Props: donkey (picture or cut out) and coats or cloth to put on donkey

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(Jesus and disciples walk to the front of the room)

Narrator: He was going on ahead, going up to Jerusalem. When He approached Bethphage and Bethany, near the mount that is called Olivet, He sent two of the disciples, saying,

Jesus: (pointing to where the donkey is) Go into the village ahead of you; there, as you enter, you will find a colt tied on which no one yet has ever sat; untie it and bring it here. If anyone asks you, 'Why are you untying it?' you shall say, 'The Lord has need of it.'"

Narrator: So those who were sent went away and found it just as He had told them. As they were untying the colt, its owners said to them,

Owner: Why are you untying the colt?

Disciple: The Lord has need of it.

(owner nods head in agreement)

Narrator: They brought it to Jesus, and they threw their coats on the colt and put Jesus on it. As He was going, they were spreading their coats on the road.

(Jesus walks around with the donkey while crowd is praising Him)

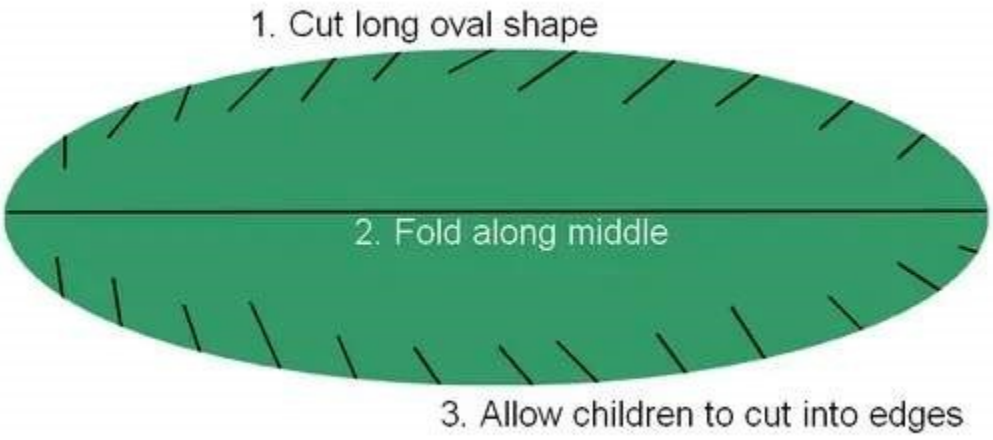
Narrator: As soon as He was approaching, near the descent of the Mount of Olives, the whole crowd of the disciples began to praise God joyfully with a loud voice for all the miracles which they had seen, shouting:

Crowd: Blessed is the King who comes in the name of the Lord; Peace in heaven and glory in the highest!

Paper Leaf Craft for Palm Sunday

ministry-to-children.com/palm-sunday-leaf-craft

Written by Mimi Bullock Last updated March 28, 2019 1 Comment Filed Under: Crafts , Easter Ideas April 4, 2011



Easter is more than a holiday—it is the reason for the hope of Christians. Jesus' death and resurrection is terrible and glorious to those that love him. For kids, Easter is full of conflicting images. Chocolate bunnies, Easter eggs and the cross get jumbled up in the Christian child's spirit. Teach your holiday lesson with clarity by providing crafts to reinforce this important lesson.

Palm Sunday Leaf Craft

The Easter story is panoramic and includes many people and special places. Sometimes we forget to include Jesus' entrance into the city on a donkey. The children sang, "Hosanna!" and greeted him with palm leaves. This palm leaf craft is an excellent way to reintroduce children to the kingship of Jesus.

Supplies: Large sheets of **green construction paper**. Child-safe scissors.

Directions: Before class cut out as many large leaf shapes as you need. Buy the large size construction paper if needed. Make the leaves long and oval shaped. Fold the leaves in half to make the leaf look like a tropical palm. When children arrive, give them safety scissors. Kids use the scissors to cut the edges making the paper look like fronds. Give kids crayons to write "Hosanna" on the leaves.

Smaller children might find it fun to wave the palms at a volunteer pretending to be Jesus. Play the song, "Hosanna" and allow kids to worship by waving their crafts in the area.