

Bible Story: Jesus rides into Jerusalem on Palm Sunday

Scripture: Luke 19:28-40

The waiting was over – the promised King was finally coming into Jerusalem and the people crowded the streets to cheer his arrival. Often called the Triumphant Entry, this wave of popularity would be short lived. Yet in that special moment get a hint of the final return of Christ.

BIBLE READING

Read through each of the Bible passages ask your children to listen and identify all people.

LESSON OPENING

Donkey relay and musical parade: have your kids participate in a two part game to introduce the story. Across the room, set out a variety of simple instruments (bells, megaphones, party horns, drums, get creative with things at home to make noise). Have your kids race across the room, going on all four like “donkeys” and bringing back instruments. After all instruments have been gathered, march around the room parade style, playing the music and shouting “hosanna!” Explain that today we will talk about a special kind of parade that happened in the Bible, and what happened leading up to Easter.

BIBLE LESSON

This is a great story to act out with kids, either using puppets or live “skit” type action. If you are really brave you may even act the part of the donkey and have students ride around the room!

Explain at intervals the important elements of the story. Describe the setting by telling kids that Jesus was getting ready to come into Jerusalem. He knew that He was nearing the end of His life, but the disciples and people did not realize this. He instructed two disciples to secure His mode of transportation:

²⁸ And when he had said these things, he went on ahead, going up to Jerusalem. ²⁹ When he drew near to Bethphage and Bethany, at the mount that is called Olivet, he sent two of the disciples, ³⁰ saying, "Go into the village in front of you, where on entering you will find a colt tied, on which no one has ever yet sat. Untie it and bring it here. ³¹ If anyone asks you, 'Why are you untying it?' you shall say this: 'The Lord has need of it.'" ³² So those who were sent went away and found it just as he had told them. ³³ And as they were untying the colt, its owners said to them, "Why are you untying the colt?" ³⁴ And they said, "The Lord has need of it." ³⁵ And they brought it to Jesus, and throwing their cloaks on the colt, they set Jesus on it. -Luke 19:28-35

A donkey? So what? There are a couple of significant things about this ride. For one thing, riding a donkey was a sign of peace. Jesus was not riding in with a sword and a great white horse. He was demonstrating humility and true servanthood. Also, though, He was fulfilling a prophecy. Long before Jesus was born, a prophet had given a sign to look for to recognize the coming savior King.

*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*

As Jesus approached the city, the people gathered and crowded around. They spread out coats on the ground, demonstrating their respect for Him as king.

³⁶ And as he rode along, they spread their cloaks on the road. ³⁷ As he was drawing near—already on the way down the Mount of Olives—the whole multitude of his disciples began to rejoice and praise God with a loud voice for all the mighty works that they had seen, ³⁸ saying, "Blessed is the King who comes in the name of the Lord! Peace in heaven and glory in the highest!" ³⁹ And some of the Pharisees in the crowd said to him, "Teacher, rebuke your disciples." ⁴⁰ He answered, "I tell you, if these were silent, the very stones would cry out." -Luke 19:36-40

So what was happening here? The people gathered and cheered for Jesus. Some versions of the story use the word "Hosanna" which means "save us." The people

wanted someone who would save them from the cruel Roman oppression. They hoped Jesus would deliver them. Of course, He would save them from sin, but not quite how they expected...do we ever do this? We might hope God answers our prayers a certain way, but His methods are sometimes a little different.

The grouchy temple leaders tried to get the people quiet. Look at what Jesus says, though. If they didn't cry His praises, the rocks would! Well, we can't let the rocks take our place, can we? We know and celebrate that Jesus came to save us and give new life. As we celebrate Holy Week, why don't we think about some ways we can praise Him and tell others about Him?

MEMORY VERSE

"Your king comes to you. He is gentle and riding on a donkey." Matthew 21:5

Your king: act like you are putting a crown on your head

Comes to you: walk in place

He is gentle: smile

And riding on a donkey: act like riding on a donkey

Matthew 21: hold up 2 fingers on one hand and 1 finger on the other hand 5:
hold up 5 fingers

CRAFT

"Palm palm" branches: have kids trace a hand (assist if necessary) on green paper (or white and color it shades of green). Stack varying shades of green and cut out the hands. Arrange the "palms" in layers and glue to a paper towel roll or long stick to make a branch.

Palm frond fan: decorate a large green sheet of paper. Fold accordion-style to make a fan in the shape of a palm branch.

Musical fun: in honor of the "parade" in the story, create musical instruments to celebrate, using paper plates or cups, shells or beads, and crepe paper streamers to decorate.

