

big faith

SESSION 7

Unit 2: Seeds of Faith

Faith Focus: Jesus helps us grow in our faith.

Grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and savior Jesus Christ. (2 Peter 3:18)

GROW IN FAITH

Grow Through Praise—Matthew 21:1-11

Today's story is a familiar one—Jesus' triumphal entry into Jerusalem, which we celebrate each year on Palm Sunday. We often wave palm branches and shout, "Hosanna!" But regardless of how you honor or celebrate this day, it is clear that Jesus' entry into Jerusalem was unique and full of excitement and praise.

Prior to Jesus' entry into the city, he sent two of his disciples into a village to borrow a donkey and a colt for him to ride. This instruction was making a powerful statement that Jesus was different. In those times, a Roman commander would ride a powerful horse. But Jesus is the leader of a quite distinct kind of kingdom. Jesus came as a peaceful leader to teach people to love and serve one another. Jesus entered Jerusalem riding humbly on a donkey rather than pompously on a warhorse. Just as the crowd celebrated Jesus on that day long ago, we continue to celebrate Jesus as a leader we can all follow and praise every day! This story also inspires us to grow into leaders like Jesus, who strive to share love and humility with all.

- Discuss leadership styles.
- Prepare for Holy Week.

SESSION OUTLINE

COME TOGETHER

Prepare to Learn

Faith Focus—Jesus Helps Us
Grow in Our Faith

Palm Leaf (Craft)

FAITH CONNECTIONS

Read the Story

Big Faith Video

Faith Response

FUN WITH FAITH

Hosanna! (Storytelling/Drama)

Words of Praise (Language)

A Joyful Noise Parade
(Craft/Praise)

SHARE YOUR FAITH

Big Faith Idea—Faith in Jesus

SUPPLIES

scissors

CEB kids' Bible or CEB Bible
storybook

TV and DVD player or
streaming device

sticky notes

crayons

coats

pencils

device to look up word
definitions

plastic eggs

rice

duct tape

rubber bands

empty tissue boxes

empty round oatmeal
containers

construction paper

glue

markers

COME TOGETHER

Prepare to Learn

Supplies: All-Ages Class Pack, Activity Sheets, Activity Stickers

Prepare Ahead: Set up your area with the supplies and activity pages needed for today's session. Display the Unit 2 Bible Verse Poster (Class Pack—pp. 12 & 13), Unit 2 Faith Focus Poster (Class Pack—pp. 6 & 19), and Unit 2 Faith Response Poster (Class Pack—pp. 8 & 17) to use later in the session.

- As children arrive, invite them to join you in a circle.
- Give each child a copy of the "Spring Sticker Page" (Activity Sheets—p. 29) and their own set of Activity Stickers. Have children place the donkey sticker on the Session 7 space.

SAY: In today's story, we will learn about a time when Jesus was praised by a whole crowd of people.

Faith Focus—Jesus Helps Us Grow in Our Faith

Supplies: All-Ages Class Pack

Prepare Ahead: Display the Unit 2 Faith Focus Poster (Class Pack—pp. 6 & 19).

- Show children the Faith Focus Poster.

SAY: Our faith focus for today is "Jesus helps us grow in our faith." When we praise Jesus and read about the ways Jesus praised God, we learn about how to connect to our faith in new ways. We praise through singing, talking about God, sharing what God has done for us, and more.

ASK: Do you have any specific memories of praising God?

- Give children time and space to share their ideas.

Palm Leaf

Supplies: Activity Sheets, scissors

Prepare Ahead: Tear out "Palm Leaf" (Session 7 Activity Sheet) for each child.

SAY: Today we will hear about a time when Jesus was praised. The people in Jerusalem gathered for the holy days. During that time, some people thought that Jesus would be crowned king. As he entered the city, people waved palm leaves. When we praise God, we learn more about God's heart for all people.

- Give each child a copy of the activity sheet.
- Have each child cut out the palm leaf from the activity sheet. Have the children set the leaves aside to use in a later activity.

FAITH CONNECTIONS

Read the Story

Supplies: CEB kids' Bible or CEB Bible storybook

- Invite the children to join you in a circle.
- Read the story of Palm Sunday (Matthew 21:1-11) from a CEB kids' Bible or CEB Bible storybook.

ASK: How do you think the disciples and crowd felt while worshiping Jesus?

Big Faith Video

Supplies: Big Faith DVD, TV, DVD player or streaming device

- Watch the Session 7 video on the Big Faith DVD or via your Amplify Media subscription.
- Give children time to respond to the questions on the screen. Discuss the questions as partner pairs, as small groups, or all together.

ASK: What was your favorite part of the video?

Faith Response

Supplies: All-Ages Class Pack, sticky notes, crayons

Prepare Ahead: Display the Unit 2 Bible Verse Poster (Class Pack—pp. 12 & 13) and Unit 2 Faith Response Poster (Class Pack—pp. 8 & 17) if you haven't already.

- Invite children to wonder about the images on the posters.
- Encourage children to say the Bible verse with you: "Grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and savior Jesus Christ" (2 Peter 3:18).

SAY: Jesus knew that people did not understand what he came to earth to do. People thought Jesus was worthy of praise because they thought he would be king. Jesus knew that he would not be an earthly king. Instead, he would care for people by sacrificing and by loving everyone. Jesus knew that one day, people would praise him for the right reasons.

ASK: What are your favorite ways to praise God?

SAY: Jesus' life and teachings help us understand what God loves. God loves for us to be kind, loving, joyful, peaceful, good, gentle, and faithful. Every time we do what God loves, we give God praise.

- Lay the Faith Response Poster on the floor or a table and invite the children to gather around it.

- Give each child a sticky note and crayons.

ASK: What do you see on our poster?

- Invite each child to draw her or his favorite way to praise God. Encourage children to think about parts of a church service like the instruments, candles, songs, prayers, and Scripture or acts of love that give God praise.

FUN WITH FAITH

Hosanna!

Supplies: CEB Bible, coats, palm branches from “Palm Leaf”

SAY: When Jesus entered the town, people put down their cloaks, or coats, to show respect and praise. We are going to create our own paths of coats to travel on.

- Give children a selection of coats. Have the children work together to make a winding path around the room.
- Encourage children to take turns walking the path while others shout “Hosanna!” and wave their palm branches.
- Read Matthew 21:1-11 as the children reenact the passage.

Words of Praise

Supplies: pencils, device to look up definitions

Prepare Ahead: Make copies of “Words of Praise” (Leader Guide—p. 52).

ASK: Do you know what the word “Hosanna” means?

- Give each child a copy of “Words of Praise” and have the children work together to complete it. Have a tablet, cell phone, or computer available for children to look up the meanings of words.

A Joyful Noise Parade

Supplies: plastic eggs, rice, duct tape, scissors, rubber bands, empty tissue boxes, empty round oatmeal containers, construction paper, glue, markers

SAY: One way to praise God is to make a joyful noise. Let's work together to create our own joyful noise parade.

- For shakers: Have a child fill a plastic egg half about halfway full of rice. Have the child close the egg and tape around the outside with duct tape. Use scissors to cut the tape.
- For a guitar: Have a child wrap rubber bands around the outside of a tissue box. Children can pluck the rubber bands over the hole of the box to make sounds.
- For a drum: Have a child glue construction paper around the outside of an oatmeal container and use markers to decorate it. Children can beat the lid of the drum to make noise.
- Encourage the children to march around in a parade while playing their instruments.

SHARE YOUR FAITH

Big Faith Idea—Faith in Jesus

Supplies: All-Ages Class Pack

Prepare Ahead: Display the Spring Big Faith Idea Poster (Class Pack—pp. 4 & 21). Photocopy the Unit 2 Family Faith Letter (Leader Guide—pp. 93–94) as needed.

- Show children the Big Faith Idea Poster.

SAY: We grow in our faith when we praise God. Praise helps us feel close to God, express our gratitude, and learn about ways to connect to God.

- Have the children gather in a circle.
- Have each child share one thing she or he is grateful for.
- Invite the children to pray with you.

PRAY: Lord, we love to praise you. Help us to learn about you more through praise. Grow our faith each day. Amen.

- Send the Family Faith Letter home with each child who hasn't received it yet.
- Send home any activities or items made during today's session.

REPRODUCIBLE

SESSION 7

Words of Praise

Draw a line from the word to what you think the word means.

Hosanna

Alleluia

Praise the Lord

Amen

To hold in
high regard

Holy

Ceremony of foot-
washing and giving
to the poor

Maundy

Sacred

Exalt

Save us

So be it