

Do this in remembrance of me. (Luke 22:19c)

Jesus Enters Jerusalem – Matthew 21:1-11

Prepare to Lead

Activities At-a-Glance

GATHER TOGETHER

Welcome Mat (Craft)
Greeting Jesus (Journaling)
A Modern Welcome (Activity)
Bible Branch (Craft)

EXPERIENCE WONDER

Palm Sunday Processional (Worship)
Welcome Messages (Outreach)
Peaceful Place (Response Activity)

WONDER MORE

Palm Sunday Streamers (Craft)
Welcome Rituals (Game/Activity)
Walk Through Holy Week (Bible Knowledge)
Church Welcome Mat (Collaborative Art)

Supplies At-a-Glance

<i>crayons</i>	<i>posterboard</i>
<i>colored pencils</i>	<i>green construction paper</i>
<i>markers</i>	<i>wooden dowels</i>
<i>scissors</i>	<i>green streamers</i>
<i>pencils</i>	<i>doormat</i>
<i>cardstock</i>	<i>acrylic paint</i>
<i>glue</i>	<i>foam brushes</i>
<i>tape</i>	<i>paint brushes</i>
<i>music and music player</i>	<i>paper plates</i>
<i>musical instruments</i>	<i>large pieces of fleece</i>

Suggested Books

With You All the Way by Max Lucado
Hope Springs by Eric Walters

Tips for the Leader

- Greet children on their level when they arrive. Check in with children to see if they can remember this month's Bible verse and Faith Word.
- Remind families of any Holy Week activities coming up at your church.
- Did you know you can purchase full color activity pages that coincide with each session? If purchasing, consider sending the pages home along with the other take-home pages. Purchase at Cokesburykids.com.

Prepare to Wonder

Faith Word: REMEMBER

Today we experience the excitement of Jesus being welcomed into Jerusalem, even as we know that this week in Jerusalem will result in his death. In Luke 18:31-33, Jesus told his friends, the disciples, that he would be killed in Jerusalem. Jesus and his friends knew as they entered Jerusalem that Jesus' life on earth was short.

Jesus knew he was in danger as he entered Jerusalem, but he did not try to hide. He arrived, almost in defiance of those planning to kill him. As Jesus approached Jerusalem, crowds gathered on the road to greet him as people greeted kings in those days, by spreading their clothes on the road for him to walk on along with palm branches cut from nearby trees.

As Jesus passed, the crowds shouted, "Hosanna to the Son of David! Blessings on the one who comes in the name of the Lord! Hosanna in the highest!" By riding a donkey instead of a horse, Jesus was saying he came in peace. A king would ride a horse if he was coming in war and a donkey if coming in peace. Jesus asserted he was a king of peace for all.

There are many symbols in this story. Today we will focus on the symbol of the palm branch. One ritual many churches practice on Palm Sunday is a palm parade. It can be done in many ways, but almost always contains waving of palm branches and shouting, "Hosanna," a word used to praise God. Children will quickly pick up on the symbol of the palm branch as a way to remember and praise God.

Spiritual Practice for Adults

Bring the palm branch home from your worship service or make one. Once a day during Holy Week, wave the palm and sing praises to God as you remember Jesus. Thank God that the joy of Easter Day will soon arrive.

Gather Together

Use the following as optional activities for when children are arriving. You may also choose to use these activities elsewhere in the lesson.

Welcome Mat – Preschool

Supplies: Reproducible Kids' Book, crayons, cardstock, laminator (optional)

Prepare Ahead: Photocopy "Welcome Mat" (Reproducible 4A) for each preschooler.

- Give each preschooler a copy of "Welcome Mat."

SAY: In our Bible story today, Jesus is welcomed into the city of Jerusalem.

ASK: Have you ever been to a new city or a new place?

SAY: Let's make a welcome mat to help us remember the Bible story.

- Invite children to decorate their welcome mat.
- Optional: Cut out and laminate the children's welcome mat to use at home as a place mat.

Greeting Jesus – Younger Elementary

Supplies: Reproducible Kids' Book, crayons, colored pencil

Prepare Ahead: Photocopy "Greeting Jesus" (Reproducible 4B) for each child.

SAY: Our Bible story today is about Jesus entering Jerusalem. Many people were happy he was there.

WONDER: How would you welcome Jesus to your city?

- Encourage children to draw or write their responses on the page.

A Modern Welcome – Older Elementary

Supplies: Reproducible Kids' Book, pencils

Prepare Ahead: Photocopy "A Modern Welcome" (Reproducible 4C) for each child.

- Give each child a copy of "A Modern Welcome."

ASK: Imagine Jesus is coming to our church, neighborhood, or homes. What would we do?

- Have children work together in pairs or small groups to plan a modern welcome for Jesus.
- Invite willing volunteers to share their answers or ideas.

Bible Branch – All Ages

Supplies: Reproducible Kids' Book, cardstock, crayons or markers, large craft sticks, glue or tape

Prepare Ahead: Photocopy "Bible Branch" (Reproducible 4D) for each child.

- Give each child a copy of "Bible Branch."

SAY: Today is Palm Sunday! Let's make a palm branch to help us remember our Bible verse for this month.

ASK: How do we celebrate Palm Sunday?

- Encourage children color and cut out the palm branch. Attach the palm branch to a craft stick with glue or tape.
- Invite the children to repeat the Bible verse.

Tip: Save the Bible branches to use in the Palm Sunday processional.

Come Together

Supplies: Class Pack, Celebrate Wonder Bible Storybook, Wonder Box, purple cloth, battery-operated candle, a cross

Prepare Ahead: Set up a Wonder Table (see p. 3) with a purple cloth, battery-operated candle, and a Wonder Box (see p. 3). Display the Unit 1 Bible Verse Poster (Class Pack—pp. 10 & 15) and Faith Word Poster (Class Pack—p. 22) to use later in the session. Place the cross inside the Wonder Box.

- Invite the kids to join you in a circle.

SAY: We have been observing Lent over the past couple of weeks.

ASK: What do you remember about Lent?

- We recommend reading stories from the *Celebrate Wonder Bible Storybook*. Allow an elementary-age child to read the story, "Jesus Enters Jerusalem" (pp. 160–161) from the storybook or read Matthew 21:1–11 from a CEB Bible.

PRAY: God, thank you for sending Jesus to us. Amen.

Wonder Time

Share a Story

Supplies: Celebrate Wonder DVD, TV, DVD player

- Invite the children to join you and to sit in a circle on the floor.
- Watch the Session 4 video (Celebrate Wonder DVD).

WONDER: What would you have done if you were in Jerusalem that day?

Interactive Bible Story

Supplies: Reproducible Kids' Book, Bible dress-up clothes (optional)

Prepare Ahead: Photocopy today's Take-Home Pages (Reproducibles 4F–4G).

- Invite several readers to take turns reading and/or acting out the story, one section at a time.

WONDER: What is your favorite part of today's Bible story?

Wonder with Me

Supplies: Class Pack, Wonder Box, scissors

Prepare Ahead: Lay out the Unit 1 Wonder Story Mat (Class Pack—pp. 11 & 14).

Locate and cut out the Unit 1 story figures (Class Pack—p. 6) if you haven't already.

Display the Unit 1 Faith Word Poster (Class Pack—p. 22)

SAY: Today's Faith Word is *remember*.

- Read the definition of remember from the Faith Word Poster.

ASK: What Bible stories do you remember this month?

- Have a child place the donkey on the Wonder Story Mat.

WONDER together:

- What do you think Jesus was thinking when he entered Jerusalem?
 - What do you think the crowds of people thought then they saw Jesus?
 - What is the most special and memorable welcome you've ever received?
 - Have you celebrated Palm Sunday before? What do you remember?
 - What do you think is inside our Wonder Box today?
- Open the Wonder Box to reveal the cross.
 - **SAY:** Palm Sunday is the beginning of a special time called Holy Week. This week, we remember all the things that happened to Jesus before he was sentenced to die on the cross. Holy Week can be sad, but it is an important time to remember Jesus together.

WONDER: What happens after Holy Week?

Experience Wonder

Palm Sunday Processional– All Ages

Supplies: palm branches (real or the one from Reproducible 4D), music, music player, musical instruments (optional)

- Gather the children together. Give each child a palm branch and/or a musical instrument.
- SAY:** Let's re-create the special welcome Jesus received when he entered Jerusalem.
- Invite the children to march around the Sunday school space. You also might have the children process around the church building and invite other Sunday school classes or church members to join in.

Welcome Messages – All Ages

Supplies: markers, posterboard

SAY: In our Bible story today, the people welcomed Jesus into Jerusalem.

WONDER: How can we welcome people into our church?

- Invite children to brainstorm about ways to welcome people.
- SAY:** These are all great ideas! Let's make some signs that we can use to welcome people here.
- Distribute the posterboard and markers. Instruct children to work together to make welcome signs.
 - Display the children's posters around your church.

Examine the Bible Verse – Early and Older Elementary

Supplies: CEB Bibles

SAY: Our Unit 1 Bible verse is Luke 22:19c Let's find it in our Bibles.

ASK: Is Luke in the Old or New Testament? (*New*). Where is the Book of Luke located in the New Testament? (*third book*) In what chapter of Luke is our verse located? (*22*) What is the verse number? (*19*)

- Gather the kids around the Bible Verse Poster (Class Pack—pp. 10 & 15).
Read the verse together.
- ASK:** What are ways that we remember Jesus? How do we remember Jesus during Holy Week?

Peaceful Place – Preschool and Early Elementary

Supplies: copies of the Unit 1 Faith Word (Reproducible Book 1F), Celebrate Wonder Bible Storybook, With You All the Way by Max Lucado, Hope Springs by Eric Walters, quiet toys and soft items, palm branches, Biblical dress-up clothes, green construction paper, scissors, markers

Prepare Ahead: Photocopy the Unit 1 Faith Word Coloring Page (Reproducible 1F) for each child.

- Assist the children, as needed, as they interact with the items and books provided.
- Encourage children to color the Faith Word Coloring Page or draw the favorite part of today's Bible story.
- Encourage children to create their own palm branches from the green construction paper by tracing or drawing the leaves.
- Invite children to dress up in Biblical clothing and reenact the Bible story.

Tip: All of the supplies/activities suggested for the Peaceful Place are optional.

Wonder More

The following activities are supplemental to the session. Depending on your time, you may choose to skip these activities and go to the "Go in Peace" section.

Preschool – Palm Sunday Streamers

Supplies: 12–18 -inch wooden dowels, green streamers, glue or tape, scissors

Prepare Ahead: Cut green streamers into 6-inch strips.

- Give each child a dowel and some streamers.
- Help the children glue or tape the streamers to their dowels.
- When the children are done, have them shake the "palm branches" and march around the room, saying, "Hosanna!"

WONDER: Why do you think the people in Jerusalem used palm branches?

Early Elementary – Welcome Rituals

Supplies: Reproducible Kids' Book, pencils

Prepare Ahead: Photocopy "Welcome Rituals" (Reproducible 4E) for each child.

SAY: Let's see if we can come up with some special ways to welcome one another when we come to class.

- Distribute copies of “Welcome Rituals” and pencils.
- Have the children form pairs. Have each pair develop a special way of greeting each other. It could be a hand motion, movement, or spoken words.
- Let them use the rituals cards to help them remember the greeting for their partner.
- Then have them swap partners and develop a different greeting with their new partner. Continue swapping partners until all children have come up with a special greeting for one another. (If you have a large class, you may limit the swaps to a number of your choosing.)

Older Elementary – Walk Through Holy Week

Supplies: CEB Bibles, paper, markers, tape

Prepare Ahead: Write the following Scriptures on individual sheets of paper and tape throughout your space: Matthew 21:1-11, Matthew 26:17-35, Matthew 26:31-58, Matthew 26:69-75, Matthew 27.

SAY: Palm Sunday is the beginning of Holy Week. We sometimes read the stories out of order from how the events actually happened, so today we are going to walk through the stories in order.

- Together or in groups, have the children walk to each space with a Scripture posted, starting with Matthew 21.
- At each stop, look up the Scripture passage together and read it. Pause for time for reflection before moving to the next station. Repeat until you have read all five passages.

WONDER: How did it feel to read the Bible stories in order? What will you remember about Holy Week?

Intergenerational – Church Welcome Mat

Supplies: table covering; paint smocks; plain, light-colored door mat; acrylic paint; paper plates; foam brushes; handwashing supplies or wipes

Prepare Ahead: Cover the table.

SAY: Let’s make a welcome mat to welcome others to our church.

- Pour a little bit of each paint color onto separate paper plates.
- Hand out the paint smocks for the children to wear.
- Use a foam brush to write the word “Welcome” in the middle of the mat.
- Let each participant dip one hand, palm down, into the paint and make a hand print on the mat.

- Set the mat aside to dry. When it is dry, place it at the entrance to your church or children’s ministry area.

Tip: If you have a larger group, make more than one mat.

Go in Peace

Spiritual Practice – Exploring Ritual Through Remembrance

Supplies: battery-operated candle

ASK: Did you know that Jesus is considered the Light of the World? When we light a candle during a spiritual practice, it is a way of remembering Jesus.

SAY: Let’s light our candle.

- Gather the children around the Wonder Table, and light the LED candle.

SAY: Now that we have lighted our candle, let’s act as though Jesus is here with us! Praise Jesus as if he is walking into our Sunday school space.

WONDER: What might you say or do?

- Invite the children to celebrate Jesus.

SAY: That was great! Now let us close in prayer.

PRAY: God, thank you for sending Jesus to us. Amen.

Family Spiritual Practice

Supplies: Reproducible Kids’ Book, Leader Guide—p. 128

Prepare Ahead: Photocopy “Family Celebration Letter” (p. 128) and the Take Home Pages (Reproducibles 4F–4G) if you have not yet done so already.

SAY: Let’s look at your Take-Home Pages for today. Ask your family to participate in the Family Spiritual Practice. Encourage your family to help you with the pages.

- Send a copy of the Take-Home Pages with each child.
- Send a copy of the Family Celebration Letter home with each child who has not yet received one.