

45. Worship



BIBLE STORY / REFERENCE

Matthew 20:17-19,
Matthew 21:1-11,
Zechariah 9:9

Jesus rides into Jerusalem
and is welcomed as King



AIMS

To help the children think about worship – to understand why the people worshipped Jesus on Palm Sunday, and why Christians worship him today.

Jesus entered Jerusalem on Palm Sunday and the people worshipped him and welcomed him as King. Christians today also worship Jesus because of who he is.



PREP FOR LEADERS

Read through the Bible passages for this session and reflect:

- What are some of the reasons why the people worshipped Jesus on Palm Sunday?
- How do you worship him today? Take some time to pray for your group.



GAMES / INTRO ACTIVITIES

Choose one or more of the following activities to introduce today's theme:

▶ Bible Verse Game

You will need: palm leaves with words from Matthew 21:9 (from additional document: Bible Verse Game)

In advance, cut out the individual palm leaves and hide them around the room. If you have a larger group, you may need to do multiple sets and get the children to work in smaller groups. If you do this, you could print them on a different colour of paper for each group, or mark the leaves with a colour/ symbol for each group so that the sets don't get mixed up.

Get the children to hunt for the leaves and then to try to arrange them into the right order to find out what the crowd in Jerusalem shouted to welcome Jesus: Hosanna! Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord!

▶ Post-It Game

You will need: post-it notes prepared in advance with the name of a famous person or character the children are likely to be familiar with written on each one

Stick a post-it note on each child's back. They have to work out which name is on it by asking others questions that can only be answered yes or no, e.g. Am I a man? Am I American? Am I a singer? See who can work out their identity the quickest.

▶ Buckaroo

You will need: Buckaroo game(s)

(continued overleaf)

Children take turns to load an item onto the mule, trying not to be the one who causes the mule to buck, knocking the items off. If you have a larger group, you will need to divide the children into small groups to play this game.



EXPLORING THE BIBLE

▶ Recap/ Intro

You will need: Bible

So far this term, we've thought about Jesus' life - his miracles and some of the things he taught. Over the next few weeks, we are going to be thinking about some of the events in Jesus' life leading up to Easter.

All of Jesus' teachings and miracles took place over about three years from when he was around 30-33 years old, so the events we're going to think about now happened at the end of that time.

Jesus and his friends were planning to go to Jerusalem to celebrate Passover, and Jesus spoke to his friends, telling them what was going to happen to him there.

Read Matthew 20:17-19

It sounds like a strange thing to say- I don't think Jesus' disciples fully understood what Jesus was talking about at the time. It sounds strange to go to a place if you know that is what's going to happen, but Jesus knew it was part of God's plan.

We'll think more about that later on but today we're going to think about what happened when Jesus arrived in Jerusalem.

▶ Palm Sunday Story

You will need: paper palm leaves (from additional document: Palm Leaves), Bible,

donkey toy or hobby horse (optional)

Ask the children if they have ever met somebody famous. Who did they meet? How did they feel about meeting that person? Share your own experience if you have met someone famous.

The people in Jerusalem had heard that Jesus was coming, and they were very excited. He was someone really famous. Back then they didn't have TV or the internet or social media, but the things Jesus did were so amazing that the word had spread. Everyone was talking about his miracles and the stories of the things he had done.

Imagine you had heard about someone who had healed sick people, calmed a storm just by speaking to it and even raised people from the dead, and now you were going to get the chance to meet that person. How would you feel? The people were so excited that a huge crowd gathered to welcome Jesus into Jerusalem.

You could get the children to act out what happened with one child as Jesus and the rest being the crowd. Get the children to stand in two lines, facing one another as if they are standing along the two sides of the road. Get the child who is playing Jesus to go to one end of the road and to be ready to enter when you tell him. If you have a toy donkey or hobby horse, you could give it to him; otherwise you could just get him to pretend he is riding on a donkey as he enters.

Before you get Jesus to enter, prepare the children who are the crowd for their role in the drama. Give out paper palm leaves (*from additional document: Palm Leaves*) and encourage them to wave them and throw them down on the ground when Jesus enters. The

people threw their robes down on the ground too. It was as if they were making a special carpet, just like we might put down a red carpet to welcome someone special.

Explain that as Jesus came into Jerusalem, the people shouted, "Hosanna!" This means, "Lord, save us!" They also shouted, "Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord!" The people were recognising that Jesus was the Messiah, the one who had been promised all throughout the Old Testament, and that he was the one who could save.

Get the child playing Jesus to travel down the road as the rest of the children re-enact the crowd's welcome.

When Jesus rode into Jerusalem on a donkey, it was something that had been written about in the Old Testament, hundreds of years earlier.

Show the children the prophecy in Zechariah 9:9: "Tell the people of Jerusalem, "Look, your King is coming to you. He is humble, riding on a donkey."

This all happened on a day which Christians remember as Palm Sunday, and which they celebrate on the Sunday before Easter Sunday.



REFLECT & RESPOND

▶ Reflection

See if the children can remember what the people shouted as Jesus entered Jerusalem: Hosanna! Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord!

When they did that, they were recognising him as someone very special and honouring him as their King. They were

worshipping Jesus.

Part of being a Christian today is worshipping Jesus - realising that he is God and praising him for that. Christians today worship by singing and praying to God thanking him for the things he has done and for what he is like- that he is loving, forgiving, powerful etc. Worship is also about living in a way that shows that Jesus is our King and that we want to follow him.

▶ Prayer Activity

You will need: paper palm leaves (from additional document: Palm Leaves – you can use the same ones you used to tell the story), pens or pencils, Bible verses (from additional document: Praise verses), equipment to play music (optional)

Show the children the verses (from additional document: Praise Verses). Explain that these are some words we have in the Bible that people used to praise God. Discuss the different kinds of things they are praising God for.

Give the children a palm leaf and a pen or pencil each. Give them a few minutes to write or draw their response to God on it. They might want to copy out one of the Bible verses, or part of one, or they might want to use their own words to talk to God.

As they do this, you could play the song “You are my King” in the background. You can find it here:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=avJ4IDnZWRU>

Pray together. Depending on time you could ask some of the children to volunteer to read out the prayers from their palm leaves, or a leader could pray.

Encourage them to take their palm leaves home as a reminder.



ADDITIONAL IDEAS

▶ Lumo Project Video Clip

You will need: equipment to play video

This video clip could be used to recap the story: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4hR62e1pYG4>. It includes the verses being read from the Bible while actors bring the scene to life. The section of the clip covering the Palm Sunday story runs from the beginning of the clip to 1.30.

▶ Palm Crosses

You will need: palm crosses (these can be purchased online, for example: <https://www.eden.co.uk/palm-crosses-50-pack/>)

You could give the children a palm cross to take home as a reminder of today's story, and also to remind them that this story was only the beginning of this significant week in Jesus' life which included his death and resurrection.

▶ Easter Cross Craft

You will need: cross outlines and pictures printed from <https://craftingthewordofgod.com/2016/03/25/easter-picture-cross/> coloured pens or pencils, glue sticks, scissors

This is a craft that the children could make over Sessions 45-48 as they explore the Easter Story. Each week they can colour the corresponding picture(s) to add to their cross. By the end of the four weeks they will have an Easter decoration to take home which will remind them of the story. For this session, they should add picture F.