

Triumphal Entry



Scripture Reference: [Matthew 21:1-11](#)

Suggested Theme: Jesus is our King, and we can praise Him as our God.

Memory Verse: “So I will praise you, Lord, among the nations. I will sing praises to your name.” [Psalm 18:49 ICB](#)

Story Overview:

Jesus entered Jerusalem for the last time in a most unusual way. He entered in the way that the Old Testament said a peaceful king enters a city – riding on a donkey. A great crowd waved palm branches at Jesus and cried out, “Hosanna!” in praise of him.

Background Study:

The other gospel writers record this event in [Mark 11:1-11](#); [Luke 19:28-44](#); and [John 12:12-19](#).

Everyone loves a parade. This story excites children when they think about crowds cheering and waving leaves and branches.

This event takes place on a Sunday and marks the beginning of what is often referred to as the “Passion Week.”. Jesus will have been crucified, buried, and risen by the following Sunday. Some children may be familiar with the fact that some religious groups celebrate “Palm Sunday” as the beginning of Easter Week.

Many people gathered in Jerusalem for the Passover. Probably many had heard of Jesus and his miracles.

Jesus was staying in the nearby town of Bethany and seemed to return at least near there Sunday through Thursday evenings during the Passover celebrations ([Mark 11:11, 19 and 14:13](#); [Matthew 21:17](#)). Perhaps he stayed with his friends Mary, Martha and Lazarus. [Luke 21:37](#) mentions that he spent each night on the Mount of Olives. Bethany was next to the Mount of Olives.

As they approached the city from the Mount of Olives, Jesus and the disciples would have had a good view of Jerusalem and especially the temple. Jesus sent two disciples on ahead.

To fulfil the prophecy of [Zechariah 9:9](#), Jesus would enter the city on a donkey. War heroes rode horses, but Jesus rode a donkey, which symbolised a king. The young donkey that Jesus told the two disciples to get had never been ridden. Unused animals were regarded as especially suitable for religious purposes. An example would be the cattle that pulled the Ark of the Covenant ([1 Samuel 6:7](#)).

Spreading the cloaks on the ground was also something done for kings. This was done for King Jehu ([2 Kings 9:13](#)).

The gospel writers mention branches cut from the trees. These would have been abundant around the city. John specifically mentions palm branches. Leaves of date palms grew very large. Palm branches were more

likely to have come from Jericho. People might have gathered them and brought them into Jerusalem when they came for the Passover. Palm leaves symbolised triumph and victory. John saw a multitude of palm branches in his vision ([Revelation 7:9](#)).

Jesus allowed this homage even though the Pharisees wanted him to stop it ([Luke 19:39](#)). As he looked at all the cheering people, he must have felt sad. In a few days, the people would be nowhere to be found and died on the cross practically alone. But now he wept as he looked at the city ([Luke 19:41](#)).

The people were quoting [Psalm 118:25-26](#) as they praised Jesus. They added the word “King” ([John 12:13](#)). “Blessed is he who comes” was a Psalm sung at Passover. It was perfect for this occasion.

Other Bible Verses About Jesus Being the King

- [Isaiah 9:6-7](#)
- [John 18:36](#)
- [Ephesians 1:20-21](#)
- [1 Timothy 6:13-15](#)
- [Hebrews 1:3-4](#)
- [Revelation 1:5-6](#)
- [Revelation 17:14](#)

Way to Introduce the Story:

Before the group gathers, think of specific ways you can sincerely praise each of the children. Don't praise the outward things or what they have no control over (pretty curly hair, height, new dress, etc.) but instead, praise them for their good deeds and attitudes. Children recognise and appreciate a sincere compliment just like adults do! “Before our story today, there is one thing that I would like to do. Praise is a word that means ‘to say something good about something or someone’. I would like to praise each of you children.”

Then, one by one, say a good thing about each of the children. Visitors can be praised for attending today, being on time, sitting and listening nicely, etc. Ask the children if they would like to praise anyone else in the group. Make sure no one gets left out. “In today's story, the people wanted to praise Jesus. They did it in a very special way. Let's listen.”

The Story:

Jesus and his disciples travelled to the city of Jerusalem. As they travelled, they saw lots and lots of people. It seemed like everyone wanted to go to Jerusalem. All of the Jews wanted to go there for the special Passover celebrations.

When Jesus and his friends came to a village just outside of Jerusalem, Jesus stopped to talk to them. He asked two of the disciples to do a special job.

“Go into the village,” Jesus instructed, “and you will see a donkey and its colt.” (A colt is a young donkey). “Bring them to me. If anyone says anything or tries to stop you then just say: ‘the Lord needs it’. When you say that no one will try to stop you.”

The two disciples went into the village, and guess what they saw? There was a donkey and its colt, just as Jesus said. They untied the donkeys and began to walk away. Some people were standing nearby, and they called out, “Hey, what are you doing with that colt?”

The disciples said just what Jesus said to say, “The Lord needs them.” When they said that, the people let them go. It was just like Jesus said it would be.

When the disciples returned to where Jesus was, they put their cloaks on top of the colt, and Jesus began to ride into Jerusalem. This was very important because many years ago, one of the prophets said that the king would come riding on a donkey.

Many people had heard about Jesus. They knew he had taught great things and that he had performed many miracles. He had made sick people well and made blind people see again. He even made a dead person come back to life.

The people began to do the things usually done when a king rides in a parade. They shouted praises to Jesus as he passed by. They said very good things about him and shouted out how good he was. They shouted, "Hosanna to the son of David!" and "Blessed is the King!"

Some people threw down their cloaks so that the feet of Jesus' donkey didn't even have to touch the dirty road. Some of the people picked up palm branches and waved them. They waved the branches and continued to shout praises. They treated Jesus like a king. People were shouting and smiling. It was like a big parade. Everyone was so happy.

What do you think you would have done if you had been there? Would you wave the branches and shout good things to Jesus? What good things would you say about Jesus?

[Psalm 106:1](#) is a good verse that helps us remember to say good things to God and to Jesus.

"Praise the Lord! Thank the Lord because he is good. His love continues forever." Psalm 106:1, ICB

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Ways to Tell the Story:

This story can be told using various methods. Always remain true to the facts found in the Bible, but help children connect to its meaning by using drama, visual aids, voice inflection or other group participation.

Be selective. Each teacher is unique, so only use the illustrations that best relate to how YOU tell the story in THIS lesson. Too many illustrations can be confusing, so eliminate any that cover other stories or details you do not wish to emphasise in this lesson.

[Click here for visual aids and more storytelling methods.](#)

View this slideshow and download it from the original source:

<https://www.freebibleimages.org/illustrations/jesus-jerusalem/>

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Review and Reflection Questions:

Review questions help children remember and know the facts of a story. Reflection questions encourage them to internalise the meaning and implications for their lives. Asking at least one of each type of question can help strengthen a child's spiritual development and help them connect to God. [Click here to learn more about review and reflection questions.](#)

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Review:

- Where did Jesus get the donkey he rode on? (His disciples found the donkey and its colt in the next village)

- What did Jesus tell the disciples who found the donkey and its colt to say to anyone who said anything about the donkeys? (“The Lord needs them”)
- When Jesus entered Jerusalem at the beginning of the last week, what was he riding on? (A donkey)
- What did the people wave at Jesus when he entered Jerusalem for the last time? (Palm branches)
- What did people put on the road that Jesus was going on? (Tree branches and their coats)
- What did the people shout and say to Jesus as he rode by? (“Hosanna to the Son of David,” “Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord,” and “Hosanna in the highest heaven!”)
- What did the things the people shouted at Jesus mean? (They were honouring Jesus, treating Him like their king, and asking Him to save them)
- What does “hosanna” mean? (It means “save us” and can also mean “Praise God”)
- What did the people of Jerusalem ask when they saw Jesus entering their city? (“Who is this?”)
- What did you learn about Jesus from this story?

Reflection:

- Imagine the large crowd of people watching Jesus on the donkey in Jerusalem. What does it sound like? What does it smell like? What does it look like?
- Why do you think the people put tree branches and their coats on the road?
- If you were in the crowd, what would you have shouted or said?
- How do you think the people in the crowd felt when they saw Jesus?
- If you were in the crowd, how would you have felt when you saw Jesus go by you?
- How do you think Jesus felt as he went through the crowds in Jerusalem?
- How do you think Jesus’ disciples felt about this event?
- What part of this story did you find most interesting?

Prayer:

It is important to guide children in learning how to pray. In prayer, children can connect with God and learn that He hears and answers them. God can become a life-long friend who is with them every moment of their lives. Try using a variety of prayer methods from time to time so that the children can learn to connect with God in different ways. Note that you can pray at any time throughout your lesson. [A variety of prayer methods are found here.](#)

Song Suggestions:

- [Hey-Ho! There He Goes- Jesus on a Donkey Song](#)
- [Rejoice in the Lord Always Song](#)
- [J-E-S-U-S Song](#)
- If you have access to church hymnals, guide the children in looking up “Praise” in the index to find and sing songs about praise to God.
- Refer to the [Song Page](#) on this website for more song options.

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Activities and Crafts:

- [How to choose the best learning activities for my teaching situation.](#)
- [Visit the activities and songs pages for additional activities and crafts.](#)

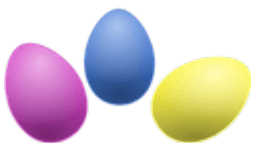
Activities:

- Play the Praise Game. Use a marker to draw a circle on a large piece of paper. Divide the circle into four equal parts. Write “God or Jesus” in one part, “family member” in another, and “friends” and “people at church” in the final two parts. Form a “spinner” using a pencil to hold a large paper clip in the circle’s centre. Use your finger to spin the paper clip around the stationary pencil. Each child should take turns spinning the clip. When the clip points to “God or Jesus”, they should say something in praise of God or Jesus. When the clip points to a “family member”, they should say something in praise of a member of their family. Let the children take turns until everyone has had at least one chance. Continue as long as there is time and interest. Instructions for making a spinner game at <http://missionbibleclass.org/bright-ideas/games-to-play/spinner-game/>.
- Write notes to people in the congregation or in the children’s families praising them for something good they have done.
- Discuss worship and what happens on Sundays or other times of worship.
- Talk about personal devotional times and how we can pray and read our Bibles and commune with God. Mention appreciating the world around us and praising God for His creation.
- Have the children (and teacher!) take turns saying good things about God.
- This lesson is one of several that tell the story of Jesus’ Death, Burial and Resurrection. These events are often grouped or taught together and called “The Passion Week.” If you or the children want to explore this group of events, you can look below at the related lessons:
 - [Triumphal Entry](#)
 - [The Last Supper](#)
 - [A Night of Betrayal and Prayer](#)
 - [The Trial of Jesus](#)
 - [Jesus is Crucified](#)
 - [Burial and the Resurrection](#)

Invite the children to respond to this story using the adaptable “God’s Story” printable reflection page. [Free printables for this story.](#)

Crafts:

- Make “palm branches” from green paper (or bring real ones) and act out the story.
- Make a cross using a palm branch. [Instructions and printable instructions here.](#)



This story is part of a bigger story about the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus.

A simple way to tell the story is to open plastic Easter Eggs one at a time. Each egg reveals something about the story. If you tell stories about the death, burial and resurrection over a few weeks, you might try repeating this method weekly. The children will really know the story after this! [Click here to learn how to do it.](#)

Print and use these free bookmarks, trading cards or timelines. [Free printables for this story.](#)

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Other Online Resources:

- [Colouring page with text \(Ministry Spark\)](#)
- [Colouring page \(Christian answers\)](#)
- [Craft: Donkey and palm branches using paint, handprints and footprints \(Catholic icing\)](#)
- [Craft: Donkey puppet made from a paper bag \(printable\)\(DLTK\)](#)
- [Craft: Papercraft donkey \(printable\) \(DLTK\)](#)
- [Craft: Palm leaf to fold and cut \(printable\) \(DLTK\)](#)
- [Craft: Photographed instructions for paper palm branches \(Michelle Paige\)](#)
- [Printable, Wordsearch \(Sermon 4 kids\)](#)
- [Printable, Word jumble puzzle worksheet \(Sermon 4 kids\)](#)
- [Printable, Multiple choice worksheet \(Sermon 4 kids\)](#)
- [Activity: Make a donkey from cardboard boxes. \(Bible class creations\)](#)
- [Interactive group activities \(Sermon 4 kids\)](#)

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Date

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