

Easter Season: Hosanna!

Quarter 8 • Lesson 13
Celebration

- 1. Connecting:** Move across the space stepping on objects.
- 2. Teaching:** Listen to the story of Jesus' ride into Jerusalem (Zechariah 9:9; Matthew 21:1–11; Luke 19:34; John 12:13b).
- 3. Responding:** Lay something down for Jesus.

SUPPLIES

- Bible
- Palms or other small tree branches (1 for each child)
- Large leaves or old newspaper pages (1 for each child)
- Sweet-smelling spice or fruit

Optional Supplies:

- *The Action Bible*, pages 612–613
- *The Action Bible*, image of Jesus entering Jerusalem
- Student Pages
- Memory Verse Poster
- Scissors

Teacher Devotion

*Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the LORD.
From the temple of the LORD we bless you. The LORD is God.
He has been good to us. Take branches in your hands.
Join in the march on the day of the feast.
March up to the corners of the altar.
Psalm 118:26–27*

What would you do if you were standing outside Jerusalem the day Jesus rode through on a donkey? Would you celebrate? Would you take a branch and lay it before the Lord your God? The Gospels referencing Jesus' passage through Jerusalem just before His crucifixion point back to these verses from Psalms. Jesus is the one who came in the name of the Lord. He is God and He was honoured by the people who put branches down in front of Him to honour Him. Imagine being part of this celebration!

Palm Sunday marks the beginning of Holy Week. This is a time of reflection as well as a time to celebrate God's fulfilment of His promise to restore our relationship with Him.

Take a moment to record your thoughts and emotions about the events surrounding Jesus' final days on earth. It is evident in this, as well as in the other stories about the events of this week, that the disciples and others felt a wide variety of emotions as they watched Jesus ride past them before being arrested, suffering, and dying on the cross before rising again to life. Reflect on Easter and all of its events. Spend some time laying your praise and thanks before God similar to the palm branches laid before Jesus.

Family Connection: Encourage families to talk about what they might do to honour a special guest. What foods would they prepare? What dishes would they use? What else would they prepare for this person's visit?

LESSON TIME

1. Connecting: Move across the space stepping on objects.

Welcome the children as they come to class. Ask the children to take 3–5 leaves as they enter and have them sit at 1 end of the teaching space. If you are using the newspaper pages instead, give each child 1 page.

Today, we will celebrate Palm Sunday! Let's pretend for a moment that we are part of a large crowd gathered outside of Jerusalem. We are having a normal day when suddenly we see Jesus riding toward us on a donkey! How exciting! We gather branches and leaves to lay at His feet because He is the King of Kings! We want to make sure that He has a carpet of leaves and branches because this is a way to honour a king. We must make a path for Him and act quickly.

To make a path, we must all work together. You each have some leaves. We will start with 1 person. This person will put down all of her leaves in a path. They must be close enough together to allow someone to walk from 1 leaf to another without stepping on the ground. Then, another person will put down his leaves to continue the path. We will continue doing this until there is a path from 1 end of the space to another.

The difficult part of this activity is that once each child begins putting her leaves down, she must stand on a leaf at all times. This means we will need to think of a way to continue the path across our space while giving each child a place to step.

Have the child at the front of the line put his leaves down and step on them. Then ask the second child to step on the path and add her leaves. Continue in this way until all of the children have used their leaves and have moved across the space to the other side. Here are a few options you can use to help guide the children if they get stuck:

Option 1: Have each new child walk on the path as far as possible, then lay 2 leaves to the side of the main path to step on. Then pass the last leaf or leaves to the person at the front of the line to lay in front of him or her. In this way, the whole group can move 1 or 2 steps for each new person added to the path.

Option 2: Have the children create 2 paths, 1 long and 1 short path. The first path will be directed toward the other end of the space. The second path will go beside the first path. As the children come down the path to add to it, they will put 1–3 leaves down to make the first path longer. Then they will put 1–2 leaves on the second path and step off of the first path. Once the second path is complete, they will step back onto the first path and walk across to the other side of the space.

Once the children are all across the teaching space, celebrate their success in figuring a way across. Then have them gather the leaves into a pile at the front of the teaching space and sit in their normal places.

Just as we laid down the leaves to get across our space, the crowd in today's story laid down branches and coats to create a path for Jesus that led into Jerusalem.

2. Teaching: Listen to the story of Jesus' ride into Jerusalem (Zechariah 9:9; Matthew 21:1–11; Luke 19:34; John 12:13b).

Teacher Tip: Since each Gospel author gives a slightly different perspective on the story of Jesus' ride through Jerusalem, this story is told using verses from 3 of the Gospels. It is through all the different perspectives of the apostles that we discover a fuller, more complete story!

The Old Testament of the Bible often tells about things that would happen when Jesus came to earth. These were written many, many years before Jesus came to live on earth. The disciples studied the old Scriptures and knew this. They understood that a verse in the Old Testament book of Zechariah talked about the event they were seeing. Listen to what this verse said about Jesus:

*City of Zion, be full of joy! People of Jerusalem, shout!
See, your king comes to you.
He always does what is right. He has won the victory.
He is humble and riding on a donkey. He is sitting on a donkey's colt.*
Zechariah 9:9

This came true on a very special day when Jesus entered the city of Jerusalem. This happened just days before Jesus was sent to die on a cross. We celebrate Palm Sunday the week before Easter to remember this day. This true story is so important that it appears in the Bible 4 times! Listen as I tell you what happened that special day. Try to imagine that you were there and could feel the excitement of the crowd!

Jesus and His disciples were on their way down the Mount of Olives, outside the city of Jerusalem, when Jesus sent 2 disciples on a special mission. Listen to what He said.

Read these verses directly from your Bible.

He said to them, "Go to the village ahead of you. As soon as you get there, you will find a donkey tied up. Her colt will be with her. Untie them and bring them to me. If anyone says anything to you, say that the Lord needs them. The owner will send them right away."
Matthew 21:2–3

The disciples did just as Jesus asked them to do. They found the young donkey that had never been ridden. The owners asked why they were taking the donkey.

- What do you think the disciples said?

Allow 1–2 children to respond.

They replied, "The Lord needs it."

Luke 19:34

Let's pretend I am the owner of the donkey and you are the disciples. I will ask why you are untying the donkey, and you will say, "The Lord needs it." Ready?

TEACHER: Why are you untying the donkey?

CHILDREN: The Lord needs it.

The disciples brought the donkey to Jesus. They threw their coats on it, and Jesus sat on the donkey. A large crowd gathered and spread out their coats and tree branches in front of Jesus.

Optional: If possible, share the image from *The Action Bible*.

Have the children each get 1 leaf from the front and place their leaves on the ground in front of them.

Teacher Tip: Take a moment to talk to the children about how you might honour a special guest in your community. What might you do to prepare for that person's visit?

The people were excited to welcome Jesus as a special guest to Jerusalem. The Bible tells us that the people shouted "Hosanna" as Jesus rode past them. Listen to this verse and see if you hear what "hosanna" means:

Hosanna!

Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord!

Blessed is the king of Israel!

John 12:13b

- What do you think "hosanna" means?

Allow 1–2 children to respond.

The word "hosanna" is used as a praise that shows strong feelings of love and joy toward someone. The people were so excited to see Jesus! They shouted, "Hosanna!" The people knew their King and Saviour had come! Let's shout, "Hosanna!" like the people in the streets shouted when they saw Jesus. We will say it 3 times.

Shout, "Hosanna!" 3 times with the children.

Jesus had come! He was about to die to pay the price for everyone's sin so that the people who believe in Him could be forgiven! The Bible tells us that Jesus continued riding to Jerusalem.

In this true story from the Bible about Jesus' ride from the Mount of Olives into the city of Jerusalem, we see His followers excited and in celebration over seeing Jesus! They did not know that Jesus was about to die for them, but they were excited to welcome their King and thankful for His presence.

Optional: If you are using *The Action Bible*, show the children the pictures on pages 612–613 of Jesus on His way to Jerusalem. Ask them what they think it would look like, feel like, smell like, and sound like to be part of the crowd that gathered around Jesus that day.

Now that you know the special story of Jesus' ride into Jerusalem, let's retell the story! Raise your hand if you would like to come act out a special part.

Choose 2 children to be disciples. Choose 2 more children to be the owners of the donkey. Have the other children pick up 1 leaf either from the ground or from the pile at the front of the teaching space.

The rest of you have the special role of laying down your leaves when Jesus comes through the town. Think back to the beginning of our story as I reread these verses from the Old Testament.

City of Zion, be full of joy! People of Jerusalem, shout!

See, your king comes to you.

He always does what is right. He has won the victory.

He is humble and riding on a donkey. He is sitting on a donkey's colt.

Zechariah 9:9

- **What did Jesus ask the 2 disciples to do at the beginning of our true story?**

He asked them to go find the donkey's colt and untie it. Have the children assigned to the role of disciples pretend to untie a donkey. As they are doing this, ask the next question.

- **As they were untying the donkey, who talked to the disciples?**

The donkey's owners.

Ask the children pretending to be the owners to say: "Why are you untying the donkey?"

Ask the children pretending to be the disciples to say: "The Lord needs it." Then have them pretend to bring the donkey back to you.

Jesus got on the donkey and began riding down the Mount of Olives to Jerusalem. On His way, a large crowd appeared with palm branches and coats in their hands.

3. Responding: Lay something down for Jesus.

Teacher Tip: It is encouraged that you also participate in this activity. You may never know what the children in your class do to honour God in this activity. But, it is important that the children know this can stay between them and God unless they want to share their thoughts after class.

Let's pause for a moment. When the people laid down their coats and branches for Jesus, they were doing more than just putting things down for Jesus to ride over on

His donkey. The people were honouring Jesus.

Think about how you can honour Jesus today. Think about something you do that you know does not honour God, such as lying or stealing. Or think of something you would like to do to honour God, such as being kind to your sister or helping your friends when they go through difficult things. Think of just 1 thing you can do or stop doing in order to honour God.

Pause for 15–30 seconds to allow the children to think. Allow the 4 children without leaves to pick up their leaves from the front of the space.

Now, as you place your leaves down in a path on the ground, imagine yourself honouring Jesus in this way. Let's all take our leaves and lay them down for Jesus to ride over!

Give the children 1 minute to put their leaves in a path in the middle of the space.

- **Does anyone remember what the people in the crowd said as they saw Jesus?**

Allow 2–3 children to respond.

Each time I pause, repeat what the crowd said when they saw Jesus on the donkey.

Pause after each line.

Hosanna!
Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord!
Blessed is the king of Israel!
John 12:13b

Encourage the children to repeat each line a second time.

Wow! It is so special to be able to give honour and praises to God! The people were so excited to welcome the Saviour!

Optional: If you are using Student Pages, allow the children to cut out the branches and people at the bottom of their pages. Then give them about 1 minute to act out what the people did with the branches as they laid them down at Jesus' feet.

This week, as you think about Jesus' death and resurrection, remember the ride He took into Jerusalem. Remember how the people who loved and worshipped Him brought Him honour and glory. Hosanna in the highest!

End class by saying this blessing, based on Zechariah 9:9, over the children.

Blessing: May you believe in the one who came to die for you. May you shout with joy as you think about His victory over sin.

Teacher Tip: If students are interested in learning more about Jesus and what it means to follow him, you can download the Salvation Path below and share it with them.

Lead the children in singing this quarter's song, if possible.

"My Lighthouse" by Rend Collective: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HA8VtUPgqTc>