

Palm Sunday – Family Lesson

Lesson Objective: To celebrate the beginning of Holy Week, and

Opening prayer: Loving and uniting God, we give you thanks for the many ways in which You meet us in our lives. You met us in the streets of Jerusalem as Jesus rode in on a donkey and you meet us in our homes and communities even today. Continue to meet us in all of our moments of each day. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

Activity 1:

It's Palm Sunday! The first Sunday of Holy Week is commonly called "Palm Sunday" or "Passion Sunday." Those who call it "Palm Sunday" tend to focus on the entry of Christ into Jerusalem to the shouts of "Hosanna! Blessed is the One who comes in the name of the Lord." Those who refer to the day as "Passion Sunday" tend to focus on Jesus' suffering. This is especially appropriate in contexts where participation in midweek services on Maundy Thursday or Good Friday is difficult or minimal, and where, as a result, worshipers would sing "Hosanna" and "Christ arose" with little attention to Jesus' suffering and death.

As we focus on Palm Sunday this week, we want to participate in the celebration of Jesus entering Jerusalem.

Coloring Palms pull out your crayons, markers or other coloring tools, and color the palm frond at the end of the lesson. Be sure to print enough copies for each person to color.

Feasting on the Word: Matthew 21:1-11, The Message, a Bible paraphrase

If you have Growing in God's love: A Story Bible, I encourage you to read the story from there, found on pages 270-271.

As the story is read, wave your palms in celebration to Jesus entering into Jerusalem as the beginning of Holy Week.

You are also welcome to act out the whole story as a family.

The Royal Welcome

21 ¹⁻³ When they neared Jerusalem, having arrived at Bethphage on Mount Olives, Jesus sent two disciples with these instructions: "Go over to the village across from you. You'll find a donkey tethered there, her colt with her. Untie her and bring them to me. If anyone asks what you're doing, say, 'The Master needs them!' He will send them with you."

⁴⁻⁵ This is the full story of what was sketched earlier by the prophet:

Tell Zion's daughter,
On a donkey, on a colt,
foal of a pack animal."

⁶⁻⁹ The disciples went and did exactly what Jesus told them to do. They led the donkey and colt out, laid some of their clothes on them, and Jesus mounted. Nearly all the people in the crowd threw their garments down on the road, giving him a royal welcome. Others cut branches from the trees and threw them down as a welcome mat. Crowds went ahead and crowds followed, all of them calling out, "Hosanna to David's son!" "Blessed is he who comes in God's name!" "Hosanna in highest heaven!"

¹⁰ As he made his entrance into Jerusalem, the whole city was shaken. Unnerved, people were asking, "What's going on here? Who is this?"

¹¹ The parade crowd answered, "This is the prophet Jesus, the one from Nazareth in Galilee."

Family Discussion:

- Jesus was fulfilling an Old Testament prophecy by riding a colt into Jerusalem. We saw the original prophecy in the verse from Zechariah. What are other Old Testament prophecies that Jesus fulfilled? *(Here are a few that you can look up in your Bible: Micah 5:2, Isaiah 9:6, Isaiah 53:3)*
- The Jewish people thought that Jesus was coming to be their earthly king, that he would overthrow the Romans! But God had a very different plan for Jesus. Sometimes God's plans don't make sense to us. Can you share a time you couldn't figure out what God was doing in your life but then you understood later? *(Parents, this is a great time to share with your children about how God has worked in your life. Being open about your faith journey with your kids will help them see what a Christian walk is really like! It's not always easy, but we can trust that God is always faithful.)*

Activity 2: As a congregation, we are working to participate in Palm Sunday from afar.

Now that you have heard the story and even participated in welcoming Jesus into Jerusalem, it is your turn to create your own interpretation of the scene that day, using 8 ½ x 11 paper and whatever medium(s) you have at your disposal. Anytime between now and Friday, we encourage you to share your artwork by scanning and emailing it to cjforsing@fredericksburgpc.org.

Closing Prayer: Saving God, as you rode into Jerusalem on a donkey, we celebrate that you are the King of our lives. We shout Hosanna in the highest; praising your Holy Name. You

show us that your love meets us wherever we are, even when we are safe at home. In your holy name we pray, Amen.

