

6. Palm Sunday (Mark 11:1-11)

“Hosanna! Blessings on the one who comes in the name of the Lord!” (Mark 11:9)



PLAN

Session Outline

1. Gather

Greeting
Puzzlers
Celebrity
Transition to Explore

2. Explore

Sacred Conversations
Hear and See the Bible Story
Interact with the Bible Story
Say the Bible Verse
Transition to Respond

3. Respond

Modern Welcome
Unusual Instructions
Loving God,
Loving Neighbor
Transition to Bless

4. Bless

Inviting
Praising
Blessing
At Home with God

Supplies

Basic Supplies: Offering basket | Pencils | Paper | Marker

Gather: TV/DVD player | Outdoor space or indoor space with plants

Explore: TV/DVD player

Respond: Tablecloth | LED candle | Palm branches

Bless: Tablecloth | LED candle | Palm branches | TV/DVD player

Before You Teach

This is Palm Sunday, the start of Holy Week. Our Bible story tells the story of Jesus' extravagant welcome to Jerusalem, before people turned on him and he was killed, buried, and raised from the grave. Jesus was traveling to Jerusalem with the disciples for the Passover Festival. They stopped near the nearby cities of Bethphage and Bethany, where many festival visitors stayed, since Jerusalem was crowded. Jesus gave the Twelve instructions for finding a colt for him to ride into the city. The instructions are rather unusual in that he basically tells them to just go and take someone else's animal. He also tells them to say, if questioned about taking it, "its master needs it" (verse 3) and he will send it back when he's done, and they do this.

As Jesus approached Jerusalem, crowds gathered on the road to greet him. They greeted him as they would a king, spreading their clothes on the road for him to walk on. Some of them even cut branches off nearby trees and spread them on the road as well. Though other versions name the branches as palm branches, Mark's Gospel does not. The waving of palms was a traditional greeting for royalty in Jesus' time and area. (Since we know palm branches to be the tradition, the branches will be called palm branches in the activities in the session as well.) As Jesus passed, they shouted, "Hosanna! Blessings on the one who comes in the name of the Lord!" (verse 9). Hosanna was originally a prayer, but over time became a festive shout. *Hosanna* means "save now." The people believed that Jesus would save them from Roman rule, which was not what Jesus was sent to do. This misguided hope actually ends up leading to his death.

In this session, we'll make a contemporary connection through discussions of celebrity and creating scenarios for welcoming Jesus in today's world. We'll also have some fun with a game involving unusual instructions as we recall the unusual instructions Jesus gave to the disciples in the story.

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GATHER

Greeting

Before class: Display either attendance chart (Class Kit—pp. 16–17 or 15 & 18) at eye level.

- Play “Part of the Story” (Adventure DVD), as you welcome each child.
- Show the children where to place their offerings on the worship table.
- Have the children mark the “Attendance Chart” by signing their first names on week #6.

SAY: Today is Palm Sunday.

A—Puzzlers (Activity Sheets)

Before class: Tear out the Session 6 Activity Sheets for each child.

- Give each child a copy of “Story Word Scramble” (Activity Sheets—p. 13). Let them complete the puzzle.
- Allow them to work on the “What the Crowd Shouted” activity (Activity Sheets—p. 14).

SAY: In our Bible story, Jesus is greeted extravagantly by the crowds in Jerusalem.

OR

B—Celebrity (Discussion)

Before class: Think about your favorite celebrities and why you are interested in them, so that you can help guide the children in the discussion.

SAY: When Jesus entered Jerusalem, people greeted him like we greet celebrities today.

ASK: Which celebrities are you a fan of? Why do you like them? How would you greet your favorite celebrity if he or she came to town?

- Discuss and contribute your own information where it is appropriate to do so.

ASK: Do you think we give celebrities too much attention? Why or why not?

- Discuss and contribute your thoughts where it is appropriate to do so.

TIP: *Be prepared to steer the conversation away from any inappropriate topics that may arise as a result of talking about celebrities and their behavior.*

Transition to Explore

- Encourage children to bring a chair or to sit on the floor in a carpeted area.
- Invite children to form a circle on the floor.

TIP: *Transitions are a helpful way for children to move easily from one activity to the next.*

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EXPLORE

Sacred Conversations

- Encourage children to join and sit in the circle.
- Demonstrate a listening position for the children.
- Ask wondering questions.

ASK: I wonder:

- How do you like to be greeted?
 - Has anyone ever greeted you in an extravagant way? Who and why?
 - How do you go out of your way to welcome others?
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Hear and See the Bible Story

- Read the Bible story together (*CEB Deep Blue Kids Bible*—Mark 11:1-11).
- Watch the Adventure DVD Session 6.

SAY: Today, we’re exploring a story about Palm Sunday.

ASK: I wonder how your church celebrates Palm Sunday?

Interact with the Bible Story

- Assign parts and act out “Palm Sunday” (Bible Story Sheets—Session 6).
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Say the Bible Verse

Before class: Display the “Unit 2 Bible Verse” poster (Class Kit—pp. 7 & 26).

- Tell the children the Bible verse: “Hosanna! Blessings on the one who comes in the name of the Lord!” (Mark 11:9).
 - Invite the children to say the verse with you.
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Transition to Respond

- Encourage children to put away their chairs and/or get back to their places.

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RESPOND

Modern Welcome (Activity)

Before class: Gather a Deep Blue Kids Bible for each child.

SAY: People in Jerusalem welcomed Jesus with shouts of Hosanna and by laying palm branches and their clothes on the road that his colt walked on.

ASK: How do you think we would welcome Jesus if he came to our town?

- Have the children form teams, and work together to come up with a way to welcome Jesus to town. These ideas could include in-person greetings or even use electronic media—leave it open for children to come up with ideas, but help them along if they seem to be struggling. Let each team have a chance to present or act out their welcome plan for the class.

ASK: How do you think Jesus would respond to your welcome?

OR

Unusual Instructions (Game)

Before class: Gather a piece of paper and a marker. Write the word “Home” on a piece of paper and place it in a spot of your choosing in your space. Try to locate a larger space if your classroom is small.

ASK: Did you notice that Jesus’ instructions to the disciples about getting the colt were a bit unusual?

SAY: Jesus often told the disciples to do unusual things. Let’s play a game to remind us of this.

- Form two teams. Have the teams line up on the opposite side of the room from the home sign. Have the teams take turns coming up with unusual instructions to give the other team for getting to home. Each instruction must include three actions that result in forward motion. For example, “pick up a book, hand it to a teammate, and take one laughing step forward.” If the person performing the action fails to complete any part of the instruction, he or she must take their team back to starting position. The teams will alternate turns regardless of whether a team has to return a player to the starting position. As each new person on the team takes a turn, he or she will start from the place where their teammate is standing, and that teammate will go back to the end of their line in case he or she needs to go again.

TIP: As appropriate, modify the instructions for children who may have trouble with movement.

Loving God, Loving Neighbor

Before class: Photocopy “Meet Our Neighbors” (Leader Guide—p. 42) for each child.

- Select a strong reader to be Asia and read her part and the questions from “Meet Our Neighbors.” Select another reader to read Benjie’s responses to Asia’s questions.
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Transition to Bless

- Ring a bell to announce the transition.
- Create a worship center on a small table with a tablecloth, palm branch, and an LED candle.

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BLESS

Inviting

Before class: Display “Unit 2 Bible Verse Signs” poster (Class Kit—p. 30) on a wall or bulletin board.

SAY: Today, we learned about Palm Sunday. Let’s learn to sign our Bible verse, which is from our Bible story.

- Gather the children around the Bible Verse Signs poster. Have the children read the Bible verse.
 - Teach the children to sign the verse.
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Praising

Before class: Gather a TV/DVD player and the Adventure DVD.

SAY: Let’s learn a new song!

- Play “Part of the Story” on the Adventure DVD.
 - Let the children sing the song.
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Blessing

Before class: Gather palm branches.

SAY: Let’s welcome one another like the people of Jerusalem welcomed Jesus as we say a prayer of blessing for each person.

- Light the candle in the worship center, and make a circle. Give each child a palm branch.
- Call the children one by one by name to step into the circle. As each child steps in, have the children call out, “Hosanna! Hosanna!” and wave their palm branches. Then say the following prayer for each child. After you pray for the child, he or she may return the circle.

PRAY: Dear God, thank you for (insert child’s name). Go with (him or her) this week, and make (him or her) welcome in all places. Amen.

At Home with God

SAY: What was one thing that you learned today about Palm Sunday? Can you share what you learned with your family?

- Send Bible Story Sheets—Session 6, and the Unit 2 Song Sheet home with each child.

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Meet Our Neighbors

MEET OUR NEIGHBORS

Hi! I'm Asia, and I have been helping my mom interview our neighbors here in Deep Blue Shores. I'm excited for you to learn all about some of my favorite neighbors.



Benjie is Edgar's dad. He is also the zookeeper at the Deep Blue Shores Zoo. I love when we get to explore the zoo with him!

How long have you lived in Deep Blue Shores?

I moved to Deep Blue Shores twelve years ago to help open the zoo, before I married Edgar's mom. I grew up in the Philippines, and I have a lot of family who still live there. I miss it sometimes, but I love it here!

What do you like to do for fun?

I like to learn new languages. I learned to speak Filipino, English, and Cebuano when I was young. Now I am learning Spanish from Rosie, Edgar's abuela.

Do you have a favorite Bible verse or Bible story?

My favorite Bible story is the story of Creation from Genesis. The earth has so many plants and animals! I love that God gave the first humans the job of taking care of and naming all of them.

What is your favorite joke?

What do you call a messy hippo? A hippopota-mess!



Cinnamon is Kat's new pet cat. He can't answer my questions, so I'm going to ask Kat to help us get to know him instead.

How old is Cinnamon?

We got Cinnamon at an animal shelter, so we aren't really sure. The volunteer at the shelter said he is probably about four years old. Instead of celebrating his birthday, we celebrate the day he came to live with us.

What does Cinnamon like to do for fun?

Cinnamon loves to learn new tricks. He can even play fetch! He wasn't sure about Indie at first, but now they really like to play together.

How did Cinnamon get his name?

We named him Cinnamon because of his orange fur. He also has a kind of spicy and sweet personality—like cinnamon!