

EASTER BONUS SESSION 1

JESUS' TRIUMPHAL ENTRY

MATTHEW 21; MARK 11; LUKE 19; JOHN 12



CHRIST CONNECTION: Jesus wanted the people to believe that He is the King and Savior of the world. God wants all people to turn away from their sin, trust in Jesus, and receive life with God forever.

BIG PICTURE QUESTION: Who is Jesus? Jesus is the Son of God who came to earth to save us.

KEY PASSAGE: John 3:16

STORY POINT: People welcomed Jesus as their King.



IN ADVANCE TO TEACH THE SESSION

LEADER Bible Study

The triumphal entry presents two contrasting images: the people's celebration as Christ entered Jerusalem and Jesus' heartbroken lamentation as He wept over a city full of people He desired to save. Though God's people seemed overjoyed by the arrival of the Messiah, they did not understand what He would soon endure to pay the price for their sins.

Thousands had gathered in Jerusalem for Passover, one of the largest festivals of the Jewish calendar. Throughout this special week, Israelites came together for special rituals, feasts, and readings of Scripture. But this year was different; the people had received word of a miracle-performing prophet who could perhaps free them from the rule of the Romans. The Israelites expected the long-awaited Messiah to be a conquering king; they were not anticipating a Suffering Servant—the sacrificial Passover Lamb—who would lay down His life for their sins.

Yet, the all-knowing Christ was aware of the torment He would endure at the hands of the Pharisees and Roman authorities, and He received the crowds' praise even though He knew the masses would soon be calling for His execution. He knew the people of Jerusalem would betray Him, yet He wept for their lost state, nonetheless.

Jesus celebrated Scripture's promises of "Hosanna"—the salvation of God's people—and wept for those who would refuse to see God's love and receive His provision. Thankfully, Christ's once-and-for-all sacrifice wasn't just for His followers in the city of Jerusalem at that time; it is for everyone who places true faith in His finished work on the cross.

Lead boys and girls to see that Jesus created all people and cares deeply for them. Pray for their hearts to receive His truth and that they will celebrate the King who has secured eternal salvation for all who repent and believe in Him!



PREPARE

THE WEEK PRIOR

Prepare your heart to teach; plan the session



LEARN

10–15 MINUTES

Teach preschoolers the story of the gospel



LOVE

20–25 MINUTES

Lead preschoolers to love the God of the gospel



LIVE

15–20 MINUTES

Lead preschoolers to live the mission of the gospel



Scan the QR code to listen to The Gospel Project for Kids Weekly Leader Training Podcast.



PREPARE

IN ADVANCE TO TEACH THE SESSION

GATHER Supplies

Keep these items on hand for each session: Allergy Alert, Bibles, construction paper, copy paper, washable markers, crayons, scissors (adult use), blunt-tipped scissors, glue sticks, glue, blocks, baby dolls, play dough, world map or globe, snack food, paper cups, and napkins.



LEARN

Welcome and worship with song

- ☐ "Joy, Joy, Joy (God Is Always With Me)"

Tell the Bible story

- ☐ Bible Story Picture Poster
- ☐ "Jesus' Triumphal Entry" video (optional)
- ☐ storytelling tips props (optional)
- ☐ small blanket or hand towel

Review

- ☐ Giant Timeline

Respond through song and prayer

- ☐ "That's What Jesus Did" song
- ☐ "Jesus Was Born (Away in a Manger)" song



LOVE

Make a dot picture

- ☐ light-colored construction paper or copy paper
- ☐ dot stickers, 1 sheet per child

Play "Pin the Palm Leaf"

- ☐ painter's tape
- ☐ cupcake liners

Create a crowd

- ☐ preschool-friendly magazines
- ☐ plastic people figures
- ☐ baskets
- ☐ sticky notes (optional)



LIVE

Learn the Big Picture Question

- ☐ Big Picture Question Poster

Practice the Key Passage

- ☐ Key Passage Marker
- ☐ Key Passage Poster
- ☐ "God Loved the World (John 3:16)" song
- ☐ camera phone or tablet

Play a braying game

- ☐ "Jesus on a Donkey" printable, 1 copy



LEARN

THE STORY OF THE GOSPEL

LEARN the Bible Story

1 WELCOME AND WORSHIP WITH SONG

Greet preschoolers with a smile. As preschoolers arrive, sing a song such as “Joy, Joy, Joy (God Is Always With Me)” or another upbeat worship song of your choice to engage and welcome preschoolers. Lead motions enthusiastically and encourage preschoolers to join you. Help the preschoolers think through what it means to worship God and why we often use music to help us do so. Take time to talk about any lyrics that might be challenging to understand.

2 TELL THE BIBLE STORY

Place the Bible Story Picture Poster on the floor and cover it with a small blanket or towel. Gather kids around the covered picture. Tell them to close or cover their eyes.

SAY “One, two, three, what do you see? [Lift up the blanket or towel covering the picture.] Do you see Jesus in the picture? What is He riding? (a donkey) Listen closely as we hear about the time Jesus rode a donkey into the city of Jerusalem.”

Open your Bible to Matthew 21. Show the video or tell the Bible story using the provided storytelling tips. Use the bold version of the Bible story for young preschoolers.

JESUS’ TRIUMPHAL ENTRY

“Jesus and His disciples were walking to the city of Jerusalem. Crowds were gathering there to celebrate the Passover. Jesus asked two of His followers to go ahead to one of the villages and find a young donkey. Jesus told them, “Untie the donkey and bring it to me. If someone asks why, just say, ‘The Lord needs it.’”

This was all happening because a long time ago, the prophet Zechariah wrote that this would happen, saying: “See, your King is coming to you, gentle, and mounted on a colt, the foal of a donkey.” Jesus made these words come true!

Jesus’ followers went and found the donkey, just like Jesus said they would. They brought the donkey and its colt to Jesus, and they put some of their clothes on its back. A large crowd of people came and put their coats and palm branches on the road for Jesus to walk on. Everyone was happy and shouting, “Hosanna! Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord! Hosanna!”

But some people didn’t like all the cheering. They told Jesus to make everyone be quiet. Jesus said, “If they’re quiet, even the rocks will start talking!”

As Jesus got closer to the city, He felt sad. Jesus cried. He knew that because

STORYTELLING TIPS

Lay it down: Invite kids to sit on fabric pieces and large leaves on the floor during the story.

Draw the story: Draw stick figures on a dry erase board as you tell the story to represent Jesus, His disciples, and the donkey. Draw leaves and coats on the path and add crowds of people celebrating.



LEARN

THE STORY OF THE GOSPEL

the people didn't understand who He really was, something bad would happen to the city. **The religious leaders saw how everyone loved Jesus, and they were worried they couldn't stop it. They said, "Everyone is following Jesus!"** ”

Christ Connection: Jesus wanted the people to believe that He is the King and Savior of the world. God wants all people to turn away from their sin, trust in Jesus, and receive life with God forever.

3 REVIEW

Point to the Giant Timeline as you review today's Bible story. Ask the following review questions.

1. What did you like about the Bible story? (Answers will vary.)
2. What were some things in the Bible story that made Jesus happy or sad? (Answers will vary.)
3. What did Jesus ride on as He entered Jerusalem? (a donkey)
4. How did the people feel when they saw Jesus coming down the road? (Many were excited, but some did not like all the cheering.)
5. Who is the King and Savior of the world? (Jesus)
6. **Who is Jesus? Jesus is the Son of God who came to earth to save us.**

SAY ” Jesus and His disciples traveled to Jerusalem for a special celebration. A large crowd of people gathered along the road to see Jesus. The **PEOPLE WELCOMED JESUS AS THEIR KING** by shouting 'Hosanna' and putting their coats and palm branches on the road for Jesus to walk on. Some people did not like the cheering—these people did not know who Jesus was. Jesus wanted the people to believe that He is the King and Savior of the world. ”

4 RESPOND THROUGH SONG AND PRAYER

SAY ” Jesus wanted the people to believe that He is the King and Savior of the world. God wants all people to turn away from their sin, trust in Jesus, and receive life with God forever. ”

Sing “That's What Jesus Did” as preschoolers move with the music. Prepare for prayer by singing “Jesus Was Born (Away in a Manger).” Collect an offering.

SAY ” God, thank You for sending Jesus. Thank You that if we turn away from our sins and turn to Jesus, You will forgive our sins and give us a life with You forever. Amen. ”





LOVE

THE GOD OF THE GOSPEL

LOVE God because of what we learned

Choose the activities that best fit your group, space, available resources, and time constraints. Set up activities in one of these ways: 1) as a group, all at the same time, 2) in small groups that rotate through each activity, or 3) set up as centers, allowing preschoolers to browse and choose.

1 ☐ PASS THE WELCOME



Invite kids to join you in a circle on the floor. Practice ways to welcome people such as waving, shaking hands, gently patting a friend on the back, and saying “hello.” Play worship music and pass a welcome action around the circle. Periodically, stop the music, show the Bible Story Picture Poster, and cue the kids to shout, “Hosanna!” Continue to play, switching the welcoming action with each round.

SAY “What is your favorite way to welcome someone? [Allow responses.] When Jesus arrived in Jerusalem, the people were so excited. The **PEOPLE WELCOMED JESUS AS THEIR KING** by shouting, ‘Hosanna!’ They also laid their coats and palm branches on the road for Jesus to walk on.”

2 ☐ MAKE A DOT PICTURE

Show the Bible Story Picture Poster. Point out the road Jesus was traveling on as He went into Jerusalem. Demonstrate how to peel, stick, and line up dot stickers to create a path on paper. Draw stick figures of people along each side of the road. Display the picture. Distribute a sheet of paper, a page of dot stickers, and a pencil to each child. Encourage the kids to make their own dot sticker path and draw pictures of people waiting to see Jesus.

SAY “How would you have felt if you were standing on the side of the road in Jerusalem waiting to see Jesus? [Allow responses.] People were cheering and shouting ‘Hosanna.’ They were so excited! **PEOPLE WELCOMED JESUS AS THEIR KING.** Jesus wanted the people to believe that He is the King and Savior of the world. God wants all people to turn away from their sin, trust in Jesus, and receive life with God forever.”

3 ☐ PLAY “PIN THE PALM LEAF”

Use painter’s tape to make two parallel lines, about 2 feet apart, on a wall at the preschoolers’ eye level. Make small palm fronds out of cupcake liners by folding each one in half, cutting an oval shape, then cutting slits along the edges. Write each child’s name on a paper palm leaf and place a rolled piece of tape on the back. Invite one child at a time to close his eyes, spin around, and try to stick his palm leaf between the taped lines on the wall.

SAY “Our tape road is covered with palm leaves! When Jesus entered Jerusalem, the road was also covered with palm leaves and coats. People wanted to see Jesus. The **PEOPLE WELCOMED JESUS AS THEIR KING** and worshiped Him. What did the people shout as Jesus rode in to Jerusalem? (Hosanna!)”



LOVE

THE GOD OF THE GOSPEL

4 ☐ CREATE A CROWD

Prior to the session, cut out pictures of people from child-friendly magazines. Place the pictures in a basket on a table or the floor. Gather plastic people figures and dolls and place them in baskets in an open area. Lead preschoolers to line up the figures, dolls, and pictures to create the look of a crowd of people. Consider adding blocks for kids to use to build a road. (Note: You can draw stick figures on sticky notes in place of the magazine cut outs.)

SAY “You made a crowd of people. When Jesus entered Jerusalem on a donkey, crowds of people gathered to see Him. They worshiped Him and **PEOPLE WELCOMED JESUS AS THEIR KING**. Jesus wanted the people to believe that He is the King and Savior of the world. God wants all people to turn away from their sin, trust in Jesus, and receive life with God forever.”

5 ☐ PLAY “PRAISE, PRAISE, HOSANNA”



Gather the children in a circle on the floor. Introduce a “Duck, Duck, Goose” style game with a new twist. Choose one child to be it. Instruct the child to walk around the circle, gently tapping each child’s back while saying “Praise.” Tell the child to say “Hosanna!” when she is ready to choose someone to chase her. Encourage the selected child to stand up and chase the first child around the circle back to her spot. Announce that the child who was tagged becomes the new leader. Continue playing until each child has had a turn to lead.

SAY “In today’s Bible story, the **PEOPLE WELCOMED JESUS AS THEIR KING**. Do you remember what they joyfully shouted as Jesus rode into town? (Hosanna!) Yes, they welcomed Jesus by saying ‘Hosanna!’ The word hosanna means ‘save us.’ You and I can welcome Jesus, too. Jesus is the King and Savior of the world. God wants all people to turn away from their sin, trust in Jesus, and receive life with God forever.”



THE MISSION OF THE GOSPEL

LIVE for God out of love

1 LEARN THE BIG PICTURE QUESTION AND ANSWER

SAY “Who is Jesus? Jesus is the Son of God who came to earth to save us. When Jesus entered Jerusalem, people were excited to see Him. They cheered, shouted, and laid their coats and palm branches on the road for Him. Why do you think the people were excited to see Jesus? [Allow responses.] The people had heard about the amazing things Jesus had done. God sent Jesus to earth to live a perfect life, die on a cross, and come back to life to save people from their sin.”

2 PRACTICE THE KEY PASSAGE

Place the Key Passage Marker at John 3:16. Invite a child to open your Bible to the key passage. Read the key passage aloud. Guide preschoolers to cross their arms in front of them, hug themselves, and gently rock back and forth as they listen to the words of the key passage.

SAY “God really loves you and me. God sent His only Son, Jesus, to be our Savior. Whoever believes and trusts in Jesus will have life with God forever.”

Sing the key passage song “God Loved the World (John 3:16)” together.

3 PRAY

Invite preschoolers to tell you any prayer requests they have. Pray for them.

SAY “God, help us celebrate Jesus by trusting in Him and repenting of our sins. Thank you for sending Jesus as our Savior and King. Amen.”

☐ PLAY A BRAYING GAME

Hide the “Jesus on a Donkey” printable in the room in a visible location. Select a child to find the picture. Make the braying sound of a donkey to lead the child to the picture. If the child is close to the donkey, make a louder sound. If the child is farther away, make a quieter braying sound. Continue to play as time allows, hiding the donkey in a different location each time.

SAY “Jesus asked two of His followers to find a donkey for Him to ride into Jerusalem. Jesus’ followers brought the donkey to Him. A large crowd of people gathered along the road where Jesus was coming. They put their coats and palm branches on the road for Jesus to walk on. They cheered and shouted for Him. **PEOPLE WELCOMED JESUS AS THEIR KING.**”