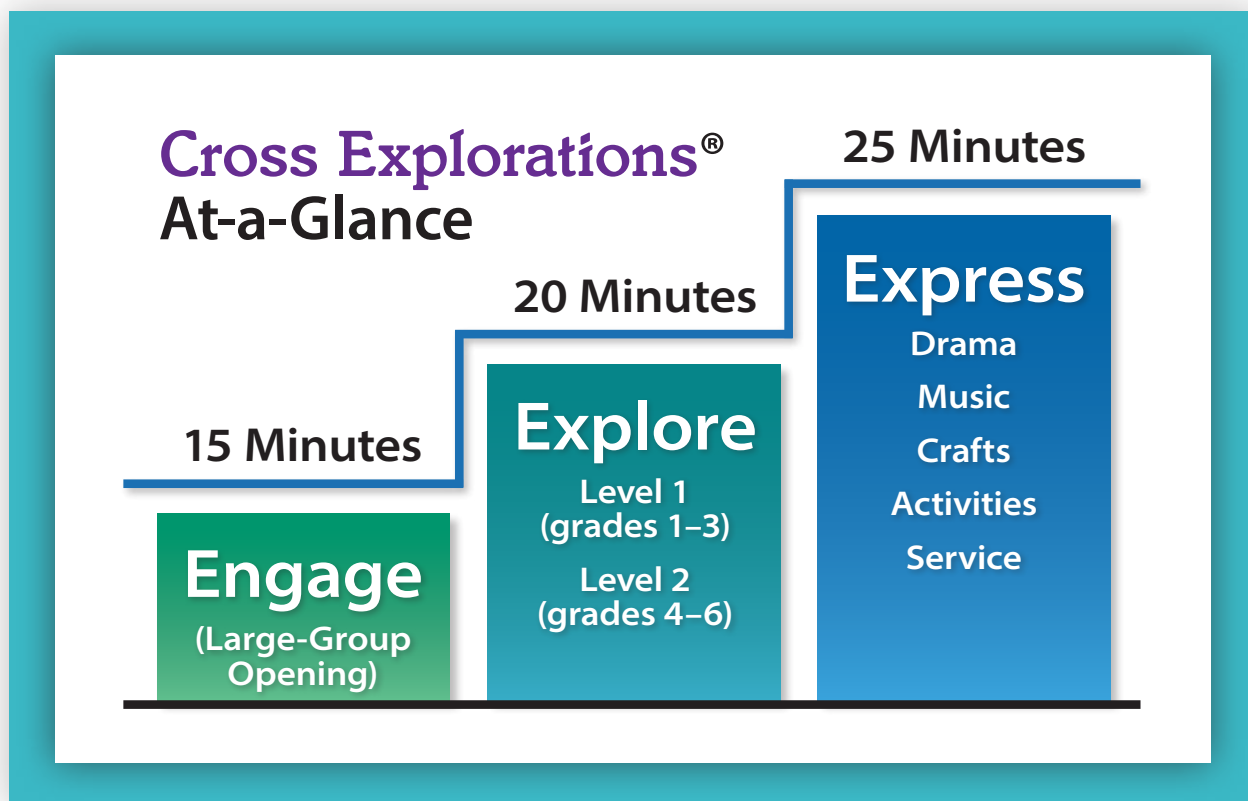




What's on the Express Activities & More CD?

The Express Activities & More CD gives you a choice of activities to help kids apply the Bible lesson to their lives. It includes science, music, games, snacks, service projects, and more, organized by week and by type of activity. Choose activities that fit the time you have available and the talents of your volunteers.

Do not expect to do all the activities each week. Rather, vary the ones you choose from week to week so students get a chance to experience different types of learning. If you use Cross Explorations in a Midweek setting, use any extra time to include additional small-group Express options.

The Craft Patterns folder on the Activities & More CD has patterns for the crafts you will find in the separate Craft Booklet in the Cross Explorations kit.

Site Leaders

Cross Explorations site leaders do what they do best! If you love helping kids apply the Bible truths in the lessons through music, games, science activities, themed food options, service projects, and the like, you'd make an excellent site leader for the Express activities on this CD. Recruit people with other talents or strengths to lead activities you are not as comfortable doing.

Site Location

Express sessions offer flexibility for meeting locations. You may choose to meet in separate classrooms that are set up for specific sites or in one larger space.

If you have multiple sites in one space, use rolling dividers, moveable walls, or even fabric panels to block sight and sound distractions. Food options will sometimes require kitchen access.

Jesus Dies and Rises to Save Us

New Testament 4 • Activities at-a-Glance

Lesson	Activity	Food	Service
1	Showers of Blessings	Wee Little Gingerbread Men	
2	The Lowly Donkey Carries the Cross	Veggie Palm Path	
3	Making Pennies New Again	How Much Will You Give?	A Chance to Give
4	Holy Communion Talk	Passover Snack	
5	Yes, No, or Maybe	Essential Ingredients	
6	All by Himself	Ticket to the Banquet	
7	Surprise Alleluia Picture	Risen to New Life	
8	Empty or Full?	Fruit-and-Veggie Butterfly	Good News Cards
9	Storytelling Hunt	Breaking Bread	
10	Sensory Experience	Blindfold and Believe	
11	Catching Fish Forgive Me	Feed My Lambs; Feed My Sheep	Faithfulness Cards
12	We Still See Jesus	Pudding in a Cloud	
13	True or False?	God Knows My Name!	

Jesus Dies and Rises to Save Us

New Testament 4 • Lessons at-a-Glance

Lesson	Lesson Title / Scripture	Key Point
1	Jesus and Zacchaeus Luke 19:1–10	Like Zacchaeus, we are among the lost whom the Son of Man came to seek and to save. Jesus asks us to forgive those who sin against us, as He forgives us, unconditionally.
2	The Triumphal Entry Mark 11:1–10; Luke 19:28–40	The multitudes called out “Hosanna!”—Save us!—to their King. We, too, cry out “Hosanna!” to Jesus, our King, who entered Jerusalem to save us and all people by triumphing over sin.
3	The Widow’s Offering Mark 12:41–44	The widow gave all she had to God, trusting Him to provide and care for her. Her actions point us to Jesus, who gave His all for us, even though we fail to trust in God for all things.
4	The Lord’s Supper Luke 22:1–23	Jesus is our Passover Lamb, who with His very body and blood grants us forgiveness, life, and salvation.
5	Peter Denies Jesus Mark 14:26–72	Though we, like Peter, deny Jesus and His gifts, Jesus does not deny us because we belong to Him as baptized members of His Body, the Church. Instead, He forgives us and welcomes us back.
6	The Passion of Christ Matthew 27:11–66	The Father, the perfect, righteous judge of the universe, gave His Son, Jesus, as the perfect, righteous sacrifice on the cross and punished Him for the sin of the whole world.
7	The Resurrection of Jesus Matthew 28:1–10	The resurrection reveals that the Father has accepted the Son’s sacrifice for our sins, and it fills us with confident hope that, as Christ has been raised from the dead, we, too, will rise to eternal life.
8	The Empty Tomb John 20:1–18	On the first Easter, Jesus revealed to Mary Magdalene and to His disciples that He was alive. Through the Word, the Spirit gives us faith to believe in Christ’s resurrection and comforts us when we mourn the death of loved ones.
9	Jesus Appears on the Emmaus Road Luke 24:13–35	The disciples recognized Jesus through the Scriptures and the breaking of the bread. Christ comes to us and abides with us through Word and Sacrament and continues to open our eyes and strengthen our faith.
10	Jesus Appears to Thomas John 20:19–31	We, like Thomas, doubt what we cannot see. Through His Spirit, God gives us eyes of faith that we might see Jesus in Word and Sacrament and believe in Him.
11	Jesus Appears in Galilee John 21:1–19	We are all like Peter in our words and actions, denying our Lord and weeping bitterly over what we have done. We need the same comfort Peter received—the comfort of sins forgiven and the assurance that even when we are faithless, Jesus remains faithful.
12	Jesus Ascends into Heaven Acts 1:1–11; Luke 24:44–53	Jesus, our risen Savior, ascended to heaven to prepare a place for us there with Him.
13	John’s Vision of Heaven Revelation 21–22	Those who believe that salvation has been accomplished by the all-availing sacrifice of Jesus on the cross will bear the sign of Christ, written on their forehead in Holy Baptism, and they will have access to the tree of life.



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Showers of Blessings

Lesson 1

Jesus and Zacchaeus

Luke 19:1–10

Key Point

Like Zacchaeus, we are among the lost whom the Son of Man came to seek and to save. Jesus asks us to forgive those who sin against us, as He forgives us, unconditionally.

Purpose

Zacchaeus was separated from Jesus by sin. But Jesus came to Zacchaeus and told him, “The Son of Man came to seek and to save the lost.” Jesus gave Zacchaeus the gifts of forgiveness, life, and salvation.

This activity illustrates how God’s gifts, His blessings, flow into our lives through His action, not ours. He is the one who rains down blessings on us.

You Need

- ☐ A clear, wide-mouthed glass jar
- ☐ Shaving cream
- ☐ Food coloring
- ☐ Water
- ☐ Eyedroppers
- ☐ Small clear plastic cups
- ☐ Smocks & cover for the table

Do This

Do this as a demonstration in front of the children, or invite each child to do it. If individual students do this activity, you will need one jar for each “scientist” and one eyedropper for each color.

Cover the table to protect it from food coloring. Ask the “scientists” who are assisting to wear smocks. Fill a clear, wide-mouth jar three-quarters full with cool or room-temperature water. Fill several separate small clear plastic cups with water, one

per color. Then, carefully squeeze drops of three different colors of food coloring into the cups of water. Make the colors intense.

Squirt shaving cream on top of the water in the jar. Cover the water with a 2-inch thick layer of shaving cream, leaving room at the top of the jar. Use separate eyedroppers to transfer drops of colored water to the top of the shaving cream in the jar. Try to keep the colors separate. Squeeze out the drops until the shaving cream becomes saturated. What happens?

Understand It

When more moisture is in the cloud than it can hold, the excess moisture falls as precipitation. When the colored water from the eyedropper saturates the shaving cream “cloud,” the colored water falls as rain.

Make the Point

Ask What did you observe during the activity? **The shaving cream filled up with colored water from the eyedropper, and the moisture fell from the cream cloud as precipitation.**

On the board, draw the jar, the shaving-cream cloud, and the eyedropper. Point to the jar.

Say This jar is full of water. Zacchaeus was full of riches. We could say Zacchaeus is like this jar of water, in a way. Write the word *Zacchaeus* under the picture of the jar. But Zacchaeus was also poor. He did not know Jesus or have the blessings of forgiveness and eternal life He came to bring.

Point to the eyedropper and cloud. **When Jesus came to Zacchaeus, He brought His gifts. He “rained down” eternal blessings on Zacchaeus.**

We are poor sinners too. Erase *Zacchaeus*, and write your name. **Just like Zacchaeus, way up in a tree, we sometimes feel too small and not important enough to be close to Jesus. Just like Zacchaeus, we are separated from Jesus by our sin. But Jesus comes to us too. He showers us with His gifts of forgiveness, life, and**

salvation. You and I are never too small, too short, too tall, too mean, or too unkind for Jesus. We have never done anything so bad that Jesus won't love us and want us to be with Him. He comes to us, too, with His gifts of forgiveness and salvation.

Ask How does Jesus come to visit us? How do we poor sinners receive His gifts?

Write the answers on the board. **Jesus seeks and saves us. He comes to us in His Word and Sacraments. Jesus brings salvation to us. We do nothing to earn Jesus' gifts.**

Option: Have the students draw the activity on craft paper; they can label the jar in the drawing with their name and the cloud with colored gifts.

Wee Little Gingerbread Men

Lesson 1

Jesus and Zacchaeus

Luke 19:1–10

Key Point

Like Zacchaeus, we are among the lost whom the Son of Man came to seek and to save. Jesus asks us to forgive those who sin against us, as He forgives us, unconditionally.

Purpose

Children will learn about how Zacchaeus tried to make himself happy by giving himself nice things when he was dishonest in his tax collecting.

They will also learn how the nice things Zacchaeus owned did not make him happy and were not what he really needed. Zacchaeus needed Jesus' love and forgiveness. The children will be reminded that Jesus chooses us.

You Need

- ☐ Person-shaped gingerbread cookies
- ☐ Various colors of icing in tubes
- ☐ Small candies & sprinkles in bowls with spoons
- ☐ Paper plates & napkins
- ☐ Plastic wrap (for children who want to take home their cookies)
- ☐ Three Bibles marked at Romans 3:23; Ephesians 2:8–9 & Ephesians 1:7.

Do This

Set out tubes of icing and small candies and sprinkles in bowls on the table where children can reach them.

Give each child a cookie on a plate.

After discussing where true riches come from, the children will decorate the gingerbread men to look like royalty.

Make the Point

Hold up a gingerbread cookie.

Ask What does this look like? **A**
gingerbread man

Say Let's pretend this gingerbread man is Zacchaeus. He looks rather plain, doesn't he? The Bible tells us Zacchaeus was a rich tax collector, but in Jesus' eyes, Zacchaeus was a poor sinner. Just as this gingerbread cookie cannot decorate itself, so we cannot give ourselves the gifts of God. We, too, are poor.

Ask What happened to change Zacchaeus from a poor man with lots of money and possessions to a man who was rich in mercy? **Jesus chose to come to Zacchaeus's home and bless Zacchaeus with His gifts of forgiveness, life, and salvation. These gifts are God's eternal treasures.**

Ask volunteers to read from the Bibles you have marked.

Ask What do we learn from Romans 3:23?
We are all sinners.

What do we learn from Ephesians 2:8–9?
By grace, God saves us; we do not save ourselves.

What do we learn from Ephesians 1:7?
The riches of God's grace come to us through Jesus, who redeemed us and gives us forgiveness, life, and salvation.

Say In Christ, the poor are made rich.

Invite the students to decorate their cookies so the plain gingerbread men look rich.

Say The cookies can remind us of how Jesus comes to us. He decorates us with the forgiveness of sin and life everlasting. He makes us fit for heaven.

Before eating the cookies, lead students in a prayer of thanks for the cookies and for Jesus' love, forgiveness, and salvation.

The Lowly Donkey Carries the Cross

Lesson 2

The Triumphal Entry

Mark 11:1–10; Luke 19:28–40

Key Point

The multitudes called out “Hosanna!”—Save us!—to their King. We, too, cry out “Hosanna!” to Jesus, our King, who entered Jerusalem to save us and all people by triumphing over sin.

Purpose

Children will explore how God’s creation echoes His salvation through the lowly donkey.

You Need

- ☐ An assortment of donkey images, including some that show the cross markings on their back
- ☐ Copy of donkey image (end of activity)
- ☐ Copy of crosses (end of activity)
- ☐ Scissors
- ☐ Blindfold
- ☐ Tape
- ☐ *Note:* Standard and miniature donkeys have a cross on their back. An Internet search of “donkey cross markings” or the like provides many images. Print these from your computer or show them on an interactive whiteboard or tablet device (for a smaller group).

Do This

Before class, determine how you would like to show the images of the donkey—either electronically on an interactive whiteboard, computer, or tablet device if the group is small enough, or by printing pictures to share.

Before class, print the donkey and crosses for the game (end of activity). To make a larger donkey, either enlarge and print the first donkey on poster paper, or print the two halves on standard size paper and tape together. Hang the donkey on a wall. Copy and cut out the crosses that match the donkey size you are using. Add loops of tape or double-stick tape to the back of the crosses.

Invite the students to share what they know about donkeys. Write their answers on the board, if possible.

Display some images of donkeys. Encourage the students to study the donkey pictures and make observations. List what they observe about donkeys on the board (e.g., color, markings, length of ears, and so forth).

Share some interesting factoids about donkeys. You can find information on them in books or by searching online sources, such as the American Donkey and Mule Society website, lovelongears.com.

Examples: Donkeys are in the same family as horses and zebras. They are generally gentle, friendly, and loving creatures. Miniature donkeys are a true breed that are less than 36 inches tall. They are not bred down from larger donkeys. Donkeys can be ridden and can carry or pull heavy loads. Donkeys have longer ears than horses. Donkeys come in a variety of colors: they can be gray, brown, black, or sorrel. Standard and miniature donkeys are marked with an often visible dorsal stripe along their back and a perpendicular stripe across their shoulders.

“Make the Point,” using the notes below.

Play Pin the Cross on the Donkey. The object of the game is to stick the cross on the donkey’s back.

To play, invite each student to take a turn being blindfolded. Give the blindfolded student a tape-backed cross. Spin the student around before he or she attempts to place the cross on the donkey. Let all students have a turn. See which student places the cross closest to its natural location, with the length following the neck and with the short side across the shoulders.

Make the Point

Say Today's lesson is called "The Triumphal Entry."

Ask What comes to mind when you hear the word *triumph*? **Accept answers such as win, victory, celebration, joy, or pride.**

Say You may think of a triumph as a win and picture a triumphal entry as a warrior returning home after crushing his foe. *Triumph* can also mean "a joyful celebration." Jesus' march to Jerusalem was joyful, but it was also humble.

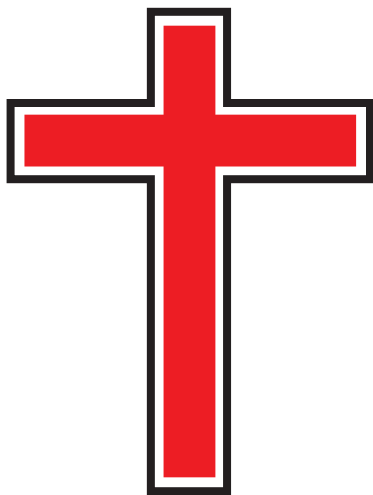
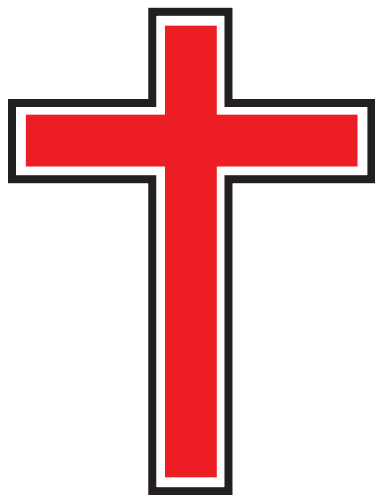
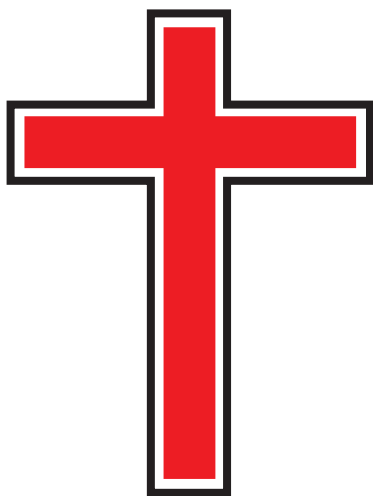
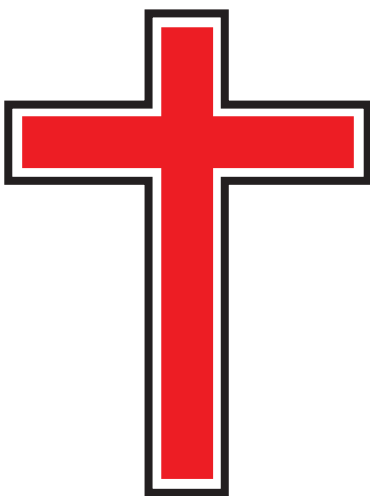
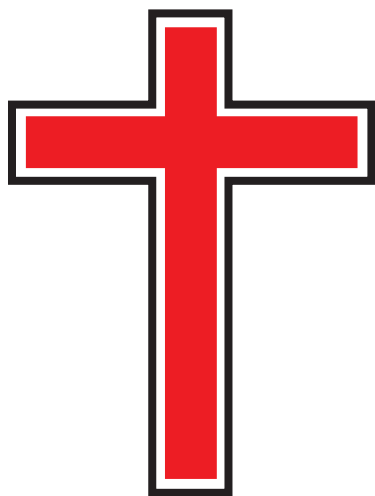
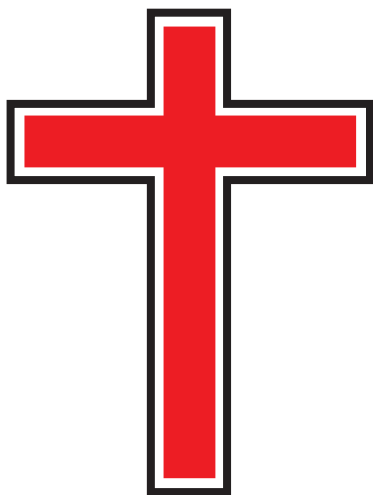
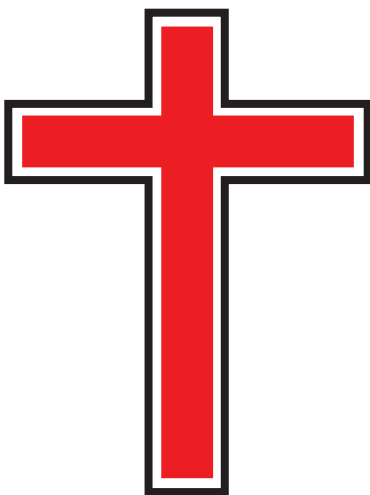
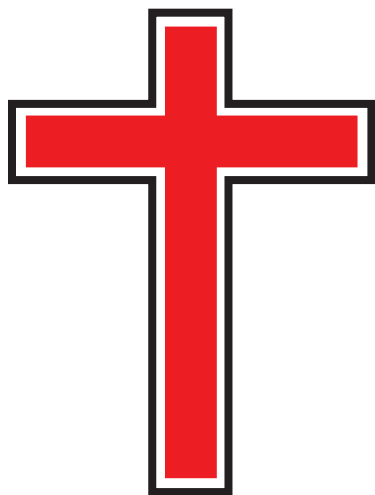
Ask How was Jesus' triumphal entry humble? **There was no fancy horse. He was surrounded by common people. The victory was not yet won; rather, He was going to die.**

Say Jesus did not come into this world to sit on an earthly throne and rule over an earthly kingdom. Rather, He entered the holy city on a donkey and was followed by a crowd of people who needed rescuing from their sins. As a humble servant, not as a royal king, Jesus' sacrificial death triumphed over sin.

Say He chose the humble donkey, not a fancy horse, for His Jerusalem journey to save His people. Riding a donkey fulfilled the Old Testament prophecy of Zechariah, "Shout aloud, O daughter of Jerusalem! Behold, your king is coming to you; righteous and having salvation is He, humble and mounted on a donkey, on a colt, the foal of a donkey" (Zechariah 9:9).

Our triune God created the world—plants and animals, palms and donkeys. He saved us by His death on the cross, and He brings us to and keeps us in the one true faith through His Word and Sacraments. Our dear Creator made the lowly donkey with a cross on his back. The legend of the donkey suggests that perhaps He did this to help us remember how He sent His Son to humbly triumph over sin!





Veggie Palm Path

Lesson 2

The Triumphal Entry

Mark 11:1–10; Luke 19:28–40

Key Point

The multitudes called out “Hosanna!”—Save us!—to their King. We, too, cry out “Hosanna!” to Jesus, our King, who entered Jerusalem to save us and all people by triumphing over sin.

Purpose

Children will create an edible palm snack while joining the cry, “Hosanna—Save us!”

You Need

- ☐ Pea pods, thin slices of green pepper or green apples & celery fans
- ☐ Dip of choice, such as hummus, ranch, or peanut butter, slightly thinned with plain yogurt
- ☐ Small bowls
- ☐ Paper plates
- ☐ Table knives

Do This

Before the lesson, wash and cut the veggies or apples. To make celery fans, cut stalks into 3-inch pieces; then make five or more 2-inch cuts into one end of each piece. Place the celery into an ice bath for a couple of hours or until the cut end splays open like a palm frond.

Portion the dip into small bowls for the children to share.

Provide each child with a plate and knife.

Help the children use the table knife to spread the dip in a cross shape from top to bottom and side to side on the plate.

Lay the palm veggies along the path to form a green cross.

Enjoy!

Make the Point

Say Tell me how you made your snack.
Accept answers.

First, you made a path with your dip. Jesus followed a path from a small town near the Mount of Olives into Jerusalem. Next, you covered the path with veggies. When Jesus rode into Jerusalem, the people waved palms and shouted, “Hosanna! Save us!” They also spread clothes and palm branches on His path. This showed honor, respect, and reverence.

Luke records that the people were rejoicing and praising God for all the great works they had seen. They shouted, “Blessed is the King who comes in the name of the Lord!” (Luke 19:38).

Many in the crowd believed the Old Testament prophecy that the Messiah would come to them riding on a donkey: “Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion! Shout aloud, O daughter of Jerusalem! Behold, your king is coming to you; righteous and having salvation is He, humble and mounted on a donkey, on a colt, the foal of a donkey” (Zechariah 9:9). Jesus did not ride into King David’s city to restore King David’s earthly kingdom. Rather, He entered Jerusalem on His way to the cross, to pay for the sins of the world.

When you look at your finished veggie snack, you see a beautiful cross. Jesus’ triumphant entry was His palm-covered way to the cross. He is our perfect sin substitute, our triumphant Savior! Hosanna! Jesus, save us!

Let students share what this means to them. Then, say a prayer to thank Jesus for His love and forgiveness and for your snack that reminds you of this.

A Chance to Give

Lesson 3

The Widow's Offering

Mark 12:41–44

Key Point

The widow gave all she had to God, trusting Him to provide and care for her. Her actions point us to Jesus, who gave His all for us, even though we fail to trust in God for all things.

Purpose

In this activity, children will make projects and then give their work away to others as they recall all Christ has done for them.

You Need

- ☐ Pastel-colored tissue paper
- ☐ Green pipe cleaners
- ☐ Stapler
- ☐ Gift tags or strips of paper
- ☐ Fine-tip markers, colored pencils, or crayons
- ☐ Tape

Do This

Show children how to make tissue paper flowers:

Lay sheets of colored tissue paper neatly on top of one another.

Fold the paper accordion style, making sure each fold is about an inch wide.

Fold the strip in half in each direction to make a flexible crease.

Wrap the pipe-cleaner stem around the center of the flower at the crease.

Staple the flower near the wire, catching all the folds.

Twist the stem ends together.

Unfold the flower.

Tape a gift tag to the stem.

Make the Point

Say Today, we learned about a widow who gave all she had as an offering to God.

Ask What was special about her gift? **The widow gave all she had, while the others just gave a little of the large amounts of money they had. She trusted God to take care of her. She loved God more than the money.**

Say Sometimes I'm selfish. I want to keep everything God gives me. I don't want to share. But Christ is different. He loves me with all His heart, with all His soul, and with all His might. He even willingly gave up His life to pay for my sins on the cross. Now, by faith, I am His own dear child.

Ask How could I show Jesus' kind of love with my flower? **I could give it away.** What could I say as I hand someone the flower? Accept reasonable answers from your students. Encourage students to say something about Jesus and His love, such as "Jesus gave His life for you and me."

Say This week, find someone to give your flower to. Next week, when you come back to class, you can share what happened when you gave away your flower.