

Explore It

FOR LEADERS



PALM SUNDAY (INSPIRATIONAL STORY)

Matthew 21:1-11 Jesus comes to Jerusalem as King

Each child will need:

- An adult to help with the silly challenges – see Start It section
- Two plastic cups; at least 30 small items like sweets/raisins/dried pasta; two chopsticks/skewers/cutlery handles
- Pens/pencils and paper

You will need:

- A timer
- An image of a palm branch

This session, on 28 March, is also The Salvation Army's International Day of Prayer for Children and Youth. Look out for further resources to support your corps.

Start It

- **Say:** This week we continue exploring different Bible stories involving Jesus. Can you think of any stories where the lead character is a great hero and someone that everyone looks up to?

Play 'Palm Sunday: minute to win it' – a few silly challenges as a warm-up before thinking about our story! Each child will need an adult at home to help set up the challenges.

Challenge 1: Careful donkey!

(Resources: plastic cup, small sweets/raisins/dried pasta)

Challenge the children to crawl around on all fours for 60 seconds like a donkey with a cup of something on their back – without dropping their precious load!

Challenge 2: Body wave!

Challenge the children to put their arms up high; bow down and touch their toes; and stretch back up. How many times can they make a body wave in a minute?

Challenge 3: Lots and lots!

(Resources: two plastic cups, chopsticks/skewers/cutlery handles, small sweets/raisins/dried pasta)

There were huge crowds following Jesus as he went into Jerusalem - so many people. Tell each child to put 30 sweets in one cup. Then, using just the sticks, they have to transfer one sweet at a time from one cup to the other. If they drop it, put it back and try again. How many can they move in 60 seconds?

Challenge 4: Talk for 30 seconds

Ask the children to think of someone in their life they know who they look up to, and if they would like to tell a story of a time they shared something interesting with them.

Sing It

There is a choice of two lively songs this week.

Clap your hands and sing praises to the Lord!

'Hosanna Rock'

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5582z642wFY>

Explore the story of Palm Sunday in song.

'The Clip-Clop Beat' by Bob Hartman's Rhyming Bible Songs

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ts7RnAEjqMU>

Tell It

🗨️ **Say:** Palm Sunday marks the beginning of the final week before the death of Jesus and his resurrection. In today's story we will hear how excited many people were about Jesus – excited to hear what Jesus would say and excited to meet the person they had heard so many amazing things about.

Read Matthew 21:1-11 (*ICB*)

'Jesus and his followers were coming closer to Jerusalem. But first they stopped at Bethphage at the hill called the Mount of Olives. From there Jesus sent two of his followers into the town.

He said to them, "Go to the town you can see there. When you enter it, you will find a donkey tied there with its colt. Untie them and bring them to me. If anyone asks you why you are taking the donkeys, tell him, 'The Master needs them. He will send them back soon.'"

This was to make clear the full meaning of what the prophet said: "Tell the people of Jerusalem, your king is coming to you. He is gentle and riding on a donkey. He is on the colt of a donkey."

The followers went and did what Jesus told them to do. They brought the donkey and the colt to Jesus. They laid their coats on the donkeys, and Jesus sat on them. Many people spread their coats on the road before Jesus. Others cut branches from the trees and spread them on the road. Some of the people were walking ahead of Jesus. Others were walking behind him.

All the people were shouting, "Praise to the son of David! God bless the one who comes in the name of the Lord! Praise to God in Heaven!"

Then Jesus went into Jerusalem. The city was filled with excitement. The people asked, "Who is this man?"

The crowd answered, "This man is Jesus. He is the prophet from the town of Nazareth in Galilee."

Watch: This clip of Jesus entering Jerusalem on a donkey (from Zefirelli's Jesus of Nazareth):
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IbWurHqIbCQ>

Discuss:

- ➔ Why do you think Jesus rode into Jerusalem on a donkey?
- ➔ Why do you think the crowds waved branches and laid their coats on the road?
- ➔ How do you think Jesus felt when the crowd wanted him to be their king?
- ➔ What kind of king do you think Jesus is?
- ➔ Where do you think you would be in the crowd? Why?

🗨️ **Say:** People had heard about Jesus, but they had not seen him. It was an exciting but crazy time. Many people praised him and were hopeful; but others, the Pharisees, were nervous and fearful. The Bible says the crowd called him a prophet – a messenger of God. We know he was in fact the Son of God but it was difficult for many to believe this.

Discuss:

- Where have you seen glimmers of hope?
- What things have helped you experience joy and hope?
- What things have made you nervous or fearful like the Pharisees?
- How do you praise Jesus among all that is happening around you?

Action It

Let there be praise!

Set children the challenge of finding resources in their homes to make musical instruments. See how creative they can be!

As Jesus rode into Jerusalem the people were joyful and hopeful as they praised their king. Psalm 135:3 says: 'Praise the Lord, for the Lord is good; sing praise to his name.'

Invite the children to come up with their own words or lines of praise to Jesus. One way to do this might be to reshape some of the verses from Matthew 21.

As a group, put together your own praise chants for Jesus and use your instruments to create a rhythm.

Pray It

Share an image of a palm branch, then ask the children to draw their own version. Ask the children to write to Jesus about their fears and worries on one side of the palm branch.

● **Say:** Be honest with Jesus – he wants to hear you. He loves you.

On the reverse of the palm branch ask them to write to Jesus about the things they are hopeful and excited for.

Explore It

Remember to send home the Explore It (For Me) and Explore It (Together) ideas for children and families.