

The First Palm Sunday



Bible verses:

Mark 11:1-11; Luke 19:28-40



Aim:

To explore how Jesus arrived in Jerusalem, and why it was surprising



Today's fruit:

Self-control



In this *Explore it* session we will explore the surprising way Jesus entered Jerusalem on the first Palm Sunday.

As the crowds gathered to welcome him, Jesus chose to arrive peacefully on a donkey rather than with power or force. Through the story we will discover that Jesus is a very different kind of king and that God's Kingdom works in unexpected ways.

As this is a two-part Easter set of sessions, there is no memory verse.

Each child will need:

- 'Explore it Ideas' handout
- Large pebbles (one per child)
- Paints or acrylic markers

You will need:

- The 'Fruit of the Spirit - Self-control' sign - download from **Salvationist**



Start it

Say:

In today's Bible story, Jesus took everyone by surprise.

Ask:

- Do you like surprises? Why or why not?
- What makes something a surprise?

Say:

Think of a member of your family or one of your friends. Imagine a surprise that they would love.

When you've decided complete this sentence:

'I would surprise _____ by _____.'

Give each child the opportunity to share who they would choose to surprise and how that person might react. Notice together that surprises don't all look the same. Some are big and dramatic whereas others are small and unexpected. Today we're going to hear about a surprise that changed everything.

Sing it

Say:

The people reacted to Jesus' surprise by singing songs of praise. Now it's your turn to do the same.

Watch:

'Hosanna!' (New Kids #Easter Worship) by Allstars Kids Club (2:53)



Share it

Say:

So far you've had a few clues about the way Jesus entered Jerusalem. Now we're going to see why this moment was such a surprise to the people who were there. Watch the clip to find out more.

Watch:

Jesus and Palm Sunday (God's story) by Crossroads Kids' Club (2:47)

Say:

The clip helped us to discover what happened when Jesus entered Jerusalem. The whole event was a big surprise, but there were lots of little surprises along the way. Before he entered Jerusalem, he stopped and asked two of his disciples to do something unusual.

Read:

He [Jesus] said to them, 'Go to the town you see there. When you enter it, you will find a colt tied which no one has ever ridden. Untie it and bring it here to me.'

Mark 11:2 ICB

Ask:

- How do you think the disciples felt when Jesus asked them to find the donkey?
- How did the people in the story react? In what way was it surprising?

The clip asks the question: would you be willing to obey Jesus, even if he asked you to do something you didn't understand? What is your response?

Say:

The disciples didn't fully understand what Jesus was doing, but they chose to trust him and do what he said.

When Jesus rode into Jerusalem on a donkey, the people watching would have been surprised. Kings and rulers usually arrived on strong horses, surrounded by soldiers. Riding a donkey was not the normal way to show power.

Ask:

- What kind of king do you think people were expecting to see that day?
- Why do you think Jesus chose to arrive in such a peaceful way?

Say:

Some people welcomed Jesus with praise and celebration. Others were angry and didn't want people to think Jesus was the Messiah. In his Gospel, Luke tells us more about what happened.

Read:

Jesus was coming close to Jerusalem. He was already near the bottom of the Mount of Olives. The whole crowd of followers was very happy. They began shouting praise to God for all the powerful works they had seen. They said,

**'God bless the king who comes in the name of the Lord!
There is peace in heaven and glory to God!'**

Some of the Pharisees said to Jesus, 'Teacher, tell your followers not to say these things!'

But Jesus answered, 'I tell you, if my followers don't say these things, then the stones will cry out.'

Luke 19:37-40 *ICB*

Ask:

- What surprising thing did Jesus say the rocks would do if the people stopped praising him?
- Why do you think Jesus said that?

Say:

Jesus knew exactly what he was doing that day. He knew that some people in the crowd were excited and full of praise, and that others were angry he was there. Jesus could have arrived in Jerusalem like a powerful ruler, showing his strength and forcing people to follow him. Instead, Jesus chose to arrive peacefully.

Ask:

- What does Jesus' arrival show us about what God's Kingdom is like?
- Display the 'Fruit of the Spirit - Self-control' sign

Say:

Today's fruit of the Spirit is self-control.

Self-control doesn't just mean stopping ourselves from doing something wrong. Sometimes it means choosing God's way even when another way would be easier or look more impressive.

On Palm Sunday, Jesus showed self-control. He chose peace instead of force and trusted God's plan. By doing this, Jesus showed that he was a very different kind of king, and that God's Kingdom works in surprising ways.

Action it

Say:

Jesus said that if the people were silent, even the stones would cry out in praise.

Today, we're going to make our own praise rocks as a reminder of Jesus' entrance into Jerusalem.

The children each need a large pebble and either paint or acrylic markers to decorate the stones. They can generate their own praise words or use the ideas and Bible verses below.

Praise words: Hosanna, Glory, Hallelujah, praise, exalt, adore, worship, hope

Praise Bible verses: Psalm 9:2; Psalm 42:11; Isaiah 25:1; Hebrews 13:15; 2 Corinthians 1:3-4; John 4:24.

Pray it

Invite the children to hold their praise rocks quietly in their hands. If the paint is still wet, they can place the rock in front of them instead.

Say:

In today's story, Jesus said that if the people stopped praising him, even the stones would cry out. As you hold your stone, think about one thing you would like to thank God for.

Give the children time to think.

Say:

If you would like to, you can quietly say a thank you prayer to God in your head, or out loud.

Optional prayer to bring the session to a close:

Dear God,

Thank you for Jesus and for the surprising way he came to show us your love. Help us to remember to praise you and give thanks for all the good things in our lives.

Amen.

Explore it

Remember to send home the 'Explore it Ideas' for children and families.



Explore it is produced by the Children and Youth Department in collaboration with Kay Moorby (soulwithaview)

The First Palm Sunday

Here are some ideas for you to explore at home.



Bible verses:

Mark 11:1-11;
Luke 19:28-40



Aim:

To explore how Jesus arrived in Jerusalem, and why it was surprising



Today's fruit:

Self-control



Notice

Palm Sunday reminds us that Jesus chose a surprising way to show God's love.

This week, see if you can notice a time when you choose kindness, patience or peace instead of doing what is easiest.



Create

Did you enjoy painting the rocks this week? Watch the clip and see if someone at home will help you create some amazing rock paintings.

Watch:

12 Rock Painting Ideas for Kids (How to Paint Rocks?) by Max's Train Station - Trains and Crafts for Kids

www.youtube.com/watch?v=uE5YkzIKfKs



Song for the week

Watch:

'Hosanna!' (New Kids #Easter Worship) by Allstars Kids Club

www.youtube.com/watch?v=_LHaJPO-iPY

The First Easter



Bible verses:

Luke 24:1-12



Aim:

To think about what happened on the first Easter Sunday, and what it means for us as followers of Jesus



Today's fruit:

Love



In this session we will explore the story of the first Easter and discover why it is such an important celebration for Christians.

As we revisit the events of Good Friday, the quiet waiting of Saturday and the surprising joy of Easter Sunday, we will hear how Jesus' friends responded with love, even when they felt sad and unsure. Through the story of the empty tomb, we will discover that Jesus is alive and that Easter is a celebration of God's love and hope for the world.

As this is a two-part Easter set of sessions, there is no memory verse.

Each child will need:

- 'Explore it Ideas' handout
- An Easter egg-shaped piece of paper
- Colouring pencils and felt-tips

You will need:

- The 'Fruit of the Spirit - Love' sign - download from **Salvationist**
- TRUE and FALSE signs



Start it

Clear a space in the room and label one side TRUE and the other FALSE. Explain that you are going to read out some statements about Easter. While you are reading each statement, the children should stay where they are and listen carefully. When you call out 'Go!', they should move to the side they think is correct.

True or False Easter Statements

- 1. People all over the world celebrate Easter. TRUE** – Easter is celebrated by Christians in almost every country. Traditions vary widely depending on culture and history, but the Easter story is shared across the world.
- 2. Easter is only celebrated with chocolate eggs. FALSE** – Chocolate eggs are a modern tradition, especially common in the UK and Europe. Many Easter celebrations focus on church services, food, music, prayer and family gatherings rather than chocolate.
- 3. In some countries, people have special Easter parades and processions. TRUE** – In countries such as Spain, Italy and parts of South America, people take part in Easter processions that retell the story of Jesus' death and resurrection through music, costumes, and movement. Many Salvation Army corps in the UK used to march through the streets on Easter Sunday morning.
- 4. Easter eggs were originally made from chocolate. FALSE** – Eggs have been a symbol of new life for a long time. Long before chocolate as we know it even existed, people decorated real eggs to celebrate Easter and the idea of life beginning again – and some still do.
- 5. Easter Sunday is always a quiet and serious day. FALSE** – While parts of Holy Week are quiet and reflective, Easter Sunday is most often joyful and celebratory, marking the resurrection of Jesus.
- 6. For Christians, Easter celebrates that Jesus is alive. TRUE** – At the heart of Easter is the belief that Jesus rose from the dead. This is why Easter is the most important celebration in the Christian calendar.

Say:

Easter is celebrated in lots of different ways around the world. Some traditions are fun, some are quiet, and some are very colourful. Today, we're going to explore the story that sits behind all of those celebrations.

Sing it

Say:

The first Easter began with confusion and surprise, but it ended with amazing joy. This song helps us celebrate the good news that Jesus is alive.

Watch:

'He is Alive' by Christ Fellowship Kids (1:59)



Share it

Say:

Last week, we heard about the surprising way Jesus entered Jerusalem on Palm Sunday. Today's story comes after some very hard and confusing days for Jesus' friends.

Ask:

- What happened to Jesus on Good Friday?
- Why do you think it is called 'Good' Friday, even though it was a very sad day?

Say:

On Good Friday, Jesus was arrested, beaten, and nailed to a cross. He died there, even though he had done nothing wrong. Jesus chose to give his life to show just how much God loves the world.

After Jesus died, his body was taken down from the cross and placed in a tomb. A large stone was rolled across the entrance.

Read:

A man from the Jewish town of Arimathea was there, too. His name was Joseph. He was a good, religious man. He wanted the kingdom of God to come. Joseph was a member of the Jewish council, but he had not agreed when the other leaders decided to kill Jesus. Joseph went to Pilate to ask for the body of Jesus. So Joseph took the body down from the cross and wrapped it in cloth. Then he put Jesus' body in a tomb that was cut in a wall of rock. This tomb had never been used before. This was late on Preparation Day. When the sun went down, the Sabbath day would begin.

Luke 23:50-54 *ICB*

Ask:

How did Joseph show love and care for Jesus in this moment?

Say:

The next day was Saturday. It was the Sabbath, a special day of rest for the Jews. Jesus was left in the tomb, and his friends were left waiting and wondering what would happen next.

Ask:

What do you think Saturday felt like for Jesus' friends?

Say:

Saturday was a very sad day, and it felt like the story might be over. However, God's work was not finished.

Watch:

Jesus Lives: The Story of the Resurrection (Luke 24) by The Biggest Story (4:25)

Say:

The clip helped us see how the first Easter began. Friday had been dark and sad. Saturday had been quiet and full of waiting. When Sunday morning came, the women went to the tomb expecting to find Jesus' body.

Read:

Very early on the first day of the week, the women came to the tomb where Jesus' body was laid. They brought the spices they had prepared.

Luke 24:1 *ICB*

Ask:

- Why do you think the women went to the tomb so early in the morning?
- What does this show us about their love for Jesus?

Display the 'Fruit of the Spirit - Love' sign.

Say:

Loving Jesus didn't stop when things were sad or confusing. The women showed love by going to the tomb, even when they didn't understand what God was doing.

When they arrived at the tomb, everything changed.

Read:

They found that the stone had been rolled away from the entrance of the tomb. They went in, but they did not find the body of the Lord Jesus. While they were wondering about this, two men in shining clothes suddenly stood beside them. The women were very afraid; they bowed their heads to the ground. The men said to the women, 'Why are you looking for a living person here? This is a place for the dead. Jesus is not here. He has risen from death! Do you remember what he said in Galilee? He said that the Son of Man must be given to evil men, be killed on a cross, and rise from death on the third day.' Then the women remembered what Jesus had said.

Luke 24:2-8 *ICB*

Ask:

- What do you think the women were expecting to see?
- How do you think they felt when they realised the tomb was empty?

Say:

The women remembered that Jesus had said he would rise again, even though they had not understood it before. They ran to tell the disciples what they had seen and heard, though not all of them believed them straight away.

Ask:

Why do you think the disciples found the news about Jesus hard to believe?

Say:

The first Easter was full of surprises, questions and different reactions. The most amazing thing of all was that Jesus was alive.

Action it

Begin the 'Action it' section by watching the following clip, which shows one of the biggest Easter eggs made at Bettys. After watching, briefly discuss the children's reactions to seeing how Bettys giant Imperial Easter egg is made.

Watch:

How we make our giant Imperial Easter Eggs by Bettys1919 (1:20)

Say:

Bettys is a bakery business in Yorkshire. The Bettys Easter eggs are designed to grab people's attention. Today you're going to imagine you are an Easter egg designer with a special job. You have been asked to design a chocolate Easter egg that helps people remember the true message of Easter.

Each child will need a large Easter egg-shaped piece of paper and some colouring pencils or felt-tips. To help them develop their ideas, you may wish to talk through the following questions together before they begin:

- What part of the Easter story would you want people to notice?
- How could your design show that Jesus is alive?
- What message of hope or love would you want people to take away when they receive your Easter egg?

Give the children time to create their Easter egg design and share them together.

Pray it

Say:

Easter Sunday is a day of celebration. Jesus is alive, and that gives us a reason to smile and to share good news. So, we're going to sing 'He is Alive' again and celebrate together.

Watch:

'He is Alive' by Christ Fellowship Kids (1:59)



Prayer (optional):

Dear God, thank you for Jesus.

Thank you for the love shown on Good Friday, for the waiting of Saturday, and for the joy of Easter Sunday.

Thank you that Jesus is alive. Help us to show our love for Jesus in the way we live and to share the good news with others.

Amen.

Explore it

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The First Easter

Here are some ideas for you to explore at home.



Bible verses:
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Aim:
To think about what happened on the first Easter Sunday, and what it means for us as followers of Jesus



Today's fruit:
Love



Act

Joseph and the women in the Easter story showed love by caring for Jesus, even when they felt sad and unsure.

This week, choose one small way to show love to someone else, such as helping at home, being kind to a friend, or encouraging someone.



Make

See if someone at home will help you to make your own chocolate Easter egg. Have a look at the clip to help you create an Easter egg masterpiece.

Watch:
How to Make Homemade Chocolate Easter Eggs (DIY Recipe!) by Blue Peter

www.youtube.com/watch?v=RBjtU9RHwEA



Song for the week

Watch:
'He is Alive' by Christ Fellowship Kids
www.youtube.com/watch?v=5_DZlxxnhOcM

Kids Alive! Online – salvationarmy.org.uk/kidsalive

Kids Alive! The UK's only weekly Christian comic – is filled with jokes, competitions, Bible-based cartoons and much more..and is now available to read online!

 **Explore it**

