

# Celebrate?



Luke 19:28-48



As Jesus entered Jerusalem, the crowds responded with shouts of celebration. They called him King and cried out the words of Scripture. Yet the same day also held protest, tears and confrontation. In this session the young people explore how celebration and misunderstanding can sit side by side. As they consider the different ways that day could have been described, they are invited to reflect on their own expectations of Jesus and to look again at who he truly is.

## You will need:

- Paper and pens
- Printed news headlines



## Beat

### Leader's notes:

Before the session, choose one current news story and collect several different headlines reporting on the same event. Try to include headlines from a range of newspapers or online sources. If possible, bring physical copies so the young people can see how the same story is presented.

Display the headlines and discuss the following questions:

- What differences do you notice between these headlines?
- What words stand out?
- What seems to be emphasised or downplayed in each headline?
- How might the newspaper's perspective or editorial policy influence the way the story is told?

Help the group notice that the facts may be similar, but the angle, wording and focus can vary depending on the perspective of the writer or publisher.

### Say:

The way a story is told often depends on what the writer expects to see or wants others to notice. Today we are going to look at a moment in Luke's Gospel where the same day could

have been described in very different ways. For some it was a day of celebration, and for others there was absolutely nothing to celebrate!

 **Bridge****Ask:**

How might our own views influence which headline we notice or believe?

 **Amplify****Ask:**

Think about everything we have discovered in Luke's Gospel so far. What have we learned about Jesus?

**Say:**

In Luke 9 we read that Jesus 'set his face to go to Jerusalem' (RSV) and today we finally reach the moment where he enters the city.

By this point Jesus had already taught large crowds and performed many miracles. His reputation had spread, and people had heard about him and followed him from place to place. Yet this moment carried a different weight. Jerusalem was the centre of worship and power, the place where authority was recognised and tested.

As Jesus entered the city, the crowds responded in celebration and openly called him King. Their praise was loud and joyful. Yet Luke invites us to look more closely. What did they recognise about Jesus, and what might they still have misunderstood?

As we watch this passage, notice what the celebration reveals about who Jesus is, and what it suggests about the expectations of the crowd.

**Watch:**

LUMO Project Gospel of Luke 19:28-48 (3:29)  
[www.youtube.com/watch?v=hlOSiWSwfO4](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hlOSiWSwfO4)

**Say:**

Before the crowds begin to shout and celebrate, Luke slows the story down. He shows us how Jesus chose to enter Jerusalem.

**Read:**

<sup>28</sup> After Jesus had said this, he went on ahead, going up to Jerusalem. <sup>29</sup> As he approached Bethphage and Bethany at the hill called the Mount of Olives, he sent two of his disciples, saying to them, <sup>30</sup> ‘Go to the village ahead of you, and as you enter it, you will find a colt tied there, which no one has ever ridden. Untie it and bring it here. <sup>31</sup> If anyone asks you, “Why are you untying it?” say, “The Lord needs it.”’

<sup>32</sup> Those who were sent ahead went and found it just as he had told them. <sup>33</sup> As they were untying the colt, its owners asked them, ‘Why are you untying the colt?’

<sup>34</sup> They replied, ‘The Lord needs it.’

<sup>35</sup> They brought it to Jesus, threw their cloaks on the colt and put Jesus on it. <sup>36</sup> As he went along, people spread their cloaks on the road.

– (Luke 19:28-36)

**Ask:**

- What do you notice about the specific instructions given by Jesus?
- Why do you think Luke tells us the colt had never been ridden?
- What does Jesus mean when he says, ‘The Lord needs it’?

**Say:**

This moment is not accidental. Jesus is intentional about how he enters Jerusalem. He does not arrive on a war horse or with any display of force. Instead, he chooses a colt.

**Read:**

<sup>37</sup> When he came near the place where the road goes down the Mount of Olives, the whole crowd of disciples began joyfully to praise God in loud voices for all the miracles they had seen:

<sup>38</sup> ‘Blessed is the king who comes in the name of the Lord!’

‘Peace in heaven and glory in the highest!’

<sup>39</sup> Some of the Pharisees in the crowd said to Jesus, ‘Teacher, rebuke your disciples!’

<sup>40</sup> ‘I tell you,’ he replied, ‘if they keep quiet, the stones will cry out.’

(Luke 19:37-40)

**Ask:**

Read Zechariah 9:9. How does it link with the shouts of the crowd as Jesus enters Jerusalem?

**Rejoice greatly, Daughter Zion!**

**Shout, Daughter Jerusalem!**

**See, your king comes to you,**

**righteous and victorious,**

**lowly and riding on a donkey,**

**on a colt, the foal of a donkey.**

– (Zechariah 9:9)

How do the words of Zechariah help us understand what is happening in this moment?

**Say:**

Zechariah spoke these words centuries before Jesus entered Jerusalem. God's people had been waiting for a king who would come and restore what had been broken.

When Jesus entered the city on a colt and the crowd began to praise God, this would have seemed like the fulfilment of something they had carried for a long time.

**Ask:**

Zechariah used the words, 'See, your king comes to you, righteous and victorious.' As Jesus rode into Jerusalem, what kind of king do you think the people were celebrating?

**Read:**

**<sup>41</sup> As he approached Jerusalem and saw the city, he wept over it <sup>42</sup> and said, 'If you, even you, had only known on this day what would bring you peace – but now it is hidden from your eyes. <sup>43</sup> The days will come upon you when your enemies will build an embankment against you and encircle you and hem you in on every side. <sup>44</sup> They will dash you to the ground, you and the children within your walls. They will not leave one stone on another, because you did not recognise the time of God's coming to you.'**

– (Luke 19:41-44)

**Ask:**

- Why do you think the Pharisees wanted to silence the disciples?
- What do you think Jesus meant when he says even the stones would cry out?

**Say:**

The Pharisees recognised the weight of what was being said. Calling someone 'King' was no small thing, especially in Jerusalem. Asking for silence was an attempt to contain the momentum of this moment.

**Ask:**

- What surprises you about Jesus' reaction when he sees Jerusalem?
- What does Jesus say the people have not recognised?
- How does this change the way we see the celebration that has just taken place?

**Say:**

The celebration was still echoing in the background, yet Jesus wept. The question was no longer whether Jesus was being celebrated, but whether he was being recognised for who he truly was.

**Read:**

**<sup>45</sup> When Jesus entered the temple courts, he began to drive out those who were selling.**

**<sup>46</sup> 'It is written,' he said to them, "My house will be a house of prayer"; but you have made it "a den of robbers."**

**<sup>47</sup> Every day he was teaching at the temple. But the chief priests, the teachers of the law and the leaders among the people were trying to kill him. <sup>48</sup> Yet they could not find any way to do it, because all the people hung on his words.**

– (Luke 19:45-48)

**Ask:**

- What does this scene tell us about the kind of king Jesus is?
- How did the scene in the Temple challenge or deepen what the crowd thought they were celebrating?

**Say:**

The celebration on the road to Jerusalem was genuine. Yet the events that followed revealed more about who Jesus was. He was not defined by popularity or political power. His way was marked by humility, grief and the courage to confront what was wrong. Those who praised him were beginning to see a king, but they were still realising he was not the kind of king they expected.

 **Bridge**

**Ask:**

In what ways might different people in the crowd have experienced that day differently?



 **Sound Check**

**Say:**

Different newspapers can report the same event and tell the story in very different ways. Two newspapers might describe the same situation, yet the headline and emphasis can shape how we understand what happened. That's before social media gets hold of a story and spins it a thousand different ways.

**Leader's notes:**

You may want to refer back to some of the headlines mentioned in the Beat section.

**Say:**

Luke 19 includes celebration, protest, tears and confrontation, all within the same day. Depending on what someone noticed or expected, they might have written very different headlines about it.

In your groups, create as many newspaper headlines as you can for the events in Luke 19:28-48. You can draw on any part of the story: the arrival, the praise, the Pharisees' reaction, Jesus weeping or in the Temple.

If you are feeling particularly creative, you may want to invent a newspaper title to go alongside your headline. That will help us to see the perspective you have chosen to focus on.

**Leader's notes:**

Divide the group into teams and give them paper and pens. You may want to give them a few examples to get them started.

- City Celebrates Arrival of Long-Awaited King
- Celebration Turns to Confrontation in Temple Courts
- Is This What We Were Waiting For?

When they have had time to complete their headlines, share them together and discuss the following questions:

- What differences do you notice between the headlines?
- What seems to be emphasised in each one?
- How is Jesus represented or misrepresented in these headlines?
- In what way do you see Jesus represented or misrepresented in the news today?

**Say:**

In Luke 19, celebration and misunderstanding sit side by side. That tension continues today, as Jesus is still celebrated in many different ways. Reading Scripture carefully and asking questions gives us space to discover who Jesus truly is, not just who we expect him to be.

 **Bridge****Ask:**

If you had been there that day, what headline would you have written?

 **Selah****Say:**

In Luke 19, many people had heard about Jesus. They had seen miracles. They had listened to his teaching. They celebrated him as king. Yet Jesus' tears suggested that not everyone truly recognised who he was. It is possible to know about someone without really knowing them.

Take a quiet moment to consider your own perspective of Jesus. Is it shaped mostly by what you have heard from others, or by what you have discovered for yourself?

**You may want to reflect on these questions quietly:**

- What do I find easiest to celebrate about Jesus?

- Is there anything about him that challenges my expectations?
- Do I know him for myself, or mainly through what others have said about him?

**Optional Prayer:**

Lord Jesus, you were celebrated in Jerusalem, yet not always fully recognised. Help us to look again at who you are. Give us the patience to read carefully, the honesty to question our assumptions, and the courage to follow you as the King you truly are. Amen.

 **Coda**

**Say:**

In a piece of music, the coda brings the different aspects of the melody, harmonies and bassline to a conclusion. It pulls together the different themes and often, but not always, brings resolution to a piece of music.

**Ask:**

- As you reflect on everything you have learned today, what is your coda?
- What is the one thing you will take away from this session about celebrating Jesus for who he truly is?

**Leader's notes:**

Give the young people a moment to think about your question and briefly share their coda with the group before the session comes to an end.

