

Use Week of:

Unit 26 • Session 1

Jesus' Triumphal Entry

BIBLE PASSAGE:

Matthew 21; Mark 11;
Luke 19; John 12

STORY POINT:

People welcomed Jesus to Jerusalem as their King.

KEY PASSAGE:

Philippians 2:8

BIG PICTURE QUESTION:

What did Jesus do to save us? Jesus lived a sinless life, died on the cross, and rose from the dead.



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LEADER Bible Study

Leading into the last week of Jesus' ministry before His death and resurrection, Jesus entered Jerusalem as the King of kings. Many of God's people traveled to Jerusalem for Passover. Jesus and His disciples traveled to Jerusalem as well. Near Bethphage (BETH fay) and Bethany near the Mount of Olives, Jesus sent two disciples ahead into a village.

Jesus told them, "You will find a young donkey tied there. No one has ever sat on it. Untie it and bring it here. If anyone says to you 'Why are you doing this?' say, 'The Lord needs it.'" Jesus would fulfill Zechariah's prophecy: "Look, your King is coming to you ... humble and riding on a donkey" (Zech. 9:9).

Jesus made a spectacular entrance into the city. He rode a donkey, and people laid branches and their robes on the ground in front of Him. The people welcoming Jesus into Jerusalem believed He was the promised Messiah, but they expected Him to overthrow Roman oppression and set up an earthly throne. Jesus sent a different message.

The next day, Jesus entered the temple and turned over the tables of the money changers and those selling doves. Jesus referred to Isaiah 56:7, declaring that His kingship would not just be over the Jews but over all people. While Jesus was in the temple, He healed the blind and the lame. Jesus' actions declared, "I am not just your King; I am also your God." (See Isa. 35:4-6.)

Finally, the priests and the scribes heard the children in the temple worshiping Jesus as their King. "Do You hear what these children are saying?" they asked. Jesus replied, quoting Psalm 8:2. Jesus gladly received their praise because He was worthy of their praise. Jesus is the Son of God who came to overthrow sin and set up an eternal throne. Help kids connect the dots between God's promises of a Messiah and Jesus' coming. Help them understand why Jesus came: to save the world from sin!

The BIBLE Story

Jesus' Triumphal Entry

Matthew 21; Mark 11; Luke 19; John 12

It was time to celebrate Passover, a special time to remember how God had freed His people from slavery in Egypt. Many Israelites had traveled to Jerusalem to celebrate God's amazing rescue.

Jesus and His disciples were among the people who **traveled to Jerusalem**. When they neared Bethphage (BETH fayj) and Bethany near the Mount of Olives, **Jesus sent two of His disciples ahead into a village**. "As soon as you enter the village," Jesus told them, "you will find a young donkey tied there. No one has ever sat on it. Untie it and bring it here. If anyone says to you 'Why are you doing this?' say, 'The Lord needs it.'"

The disciples did as Jesus asked. As they untied the donkey, its owners asked why. "The Lord needs it," they said.

Then they brought the donkey to Jesus, threw their robes onto the donkey, and helped Jesus get onto it.

People spread their robes along the road for Jesus, and others spread palm branches cut from the fields.

The whole crowd praised God with a loud voice for all the miracles they had seen. "Hosanna!" they said. "Blessed is He who comes in



the name of the Lord! Hosanna in the highest heaven!”

The word *hosanna* means “save now.” The people welcomed Jesus as their promised King. They hoped He would save them from the Romans.

Some religious leaders asked Jesus to tell His disciples to be quiet. Jesus answered, “If they did not praise Me, the rocks would praise Me!”

While Jesus was in the temple complex, people who were blind and people who were lame came to Him.

Jesus healed them. The blind and lame would not have been allowed to worship in the temple.

Other religious leaders saw Jesus’ miracles and heard the children saying, “Hosanna to the Son of David!” They were very angry and asked Jesus, “Do You hear what these children are saying?” They were saying Jesus is the king.

“Yes,” Jesus told them. The writer of the Psalms had said, “You have prepared praise from the mouths of children and nursing infants.”

Jesus left them and went to the town of Bethany to spend the night.

Christ Connection: During Jesus’ triumphal entry, the people welcomed Him as King. Jesus was the Messiah spoken about by the prophet Zechariah: “Look, your King is coming to you; he is righteous and victorious, humble and riding on a donkey, on a colt, the foal of a donkey” (Zechariah 9:9). One day, Jesus will return to earth on a white horse as King over everything.

Bible Storytelling Tips

- **Assign roles:** Assign volunteers roles of disciples, Jesus, and members of the crowd. Encourage kids to act out the story as you tell it.
- **Set the scene:** Search online or in biblical resources for pictures of ancient and modern-day Jerusalem. Show drawings of Jerusalem during Jesus’ time and explain where Jesus might have entered the city. Then show pictures of Jerusalem today.

INTRODUCE the Story



SESSION TITLE: Jesus' Triumphal Entry

BIBLE PASSAGE: Matthew 21; Mark 11; Luke 19; John 12

STORY POINT: People welcomed Jesus to Jerusalem as their King.

KEY PASSAGE: Philippians 2:8

BIG PICTURE QUESTION: What did Jesus do to save us? Jesus lived a sinless life, died on the cross, and rose from the dead.

Welcome time

Greet each kid as he or she arrives. Use this time to collect the offering, fill out attendance sheets, and help new kids connect to your group. Prompt kids to tell about a time they won a competition or learned a difficult skill. How did they feel in those moments?

SAY • *Triumph* is a word that means to succeed, win, or overcome. Today's story is about a time Jesus traveled into Jerusalem. His arrival caused people to celebrate and sing praises. It's known as the triumphal entry because the people of Israel thought it was proof Jesus had come to triumph over His enemies.

Activity page (5 minutes)

Invite kids to complete the "Silly Pictures" activity page. Encourage the kids to find and circle at least seven items that do not belong in the Bible story picture.

SAY • A lot of items were added to that picture that you wouldn't expect to see. In a way, Jesus' arrival in Jerusalem was unexpected too. We will learn more today about what happened when Jesus entered Jerusalem.

- "Silly Pictures" activity page,
- 1 per kid
- pencils or markers

Session starter (10 minutes)

OPTION 1: Throw a parade

Instruct your group to line up and march around the room or through the halls of your church's meeting place. If appropriate, consider providing noisemakers so the parade feels more like a celebration.

SAY • Watching a parade is fun. Walking in a parade can be even more fun! Today we will learn about a time Jesus entered into Jerusalem. It was a lot like a victory parade. We'll learn more soon.

OPTION 2: Crown toss

Help the kids make paper crowns from yellow construction paper by cutting a zig-zag pattern down the length of the sheet and then taping it into a loop. Crowns do not need to be large enough for kids to wear. Set a traffic cone at one end of the room. Challenge the kids to toss their crowns to see if they can land them on the cone.

SAY • Crowns are often used as a symbol of royalty, like a king or a queen. Today, we will learn about a time Jesus was treated like a king as He entered Jerusalem. He didn't wear a golden crown, but He did have a big parade celebrating His arrival.

LOW PREP

• noisemakers
(optional)

• yellow construction
paper
• scissors
• tape
• traffic cone

Transition to teach the story

TEACH the Story



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BIG PICTURE QUESTION: What did Jesus do to save us? Jesus lived a sinless life, died on the cross, and rose from the dead.

- room decorations
- Theme Background Slide (optional)

Suggested Theme Decorating Ideas: Decorate your space to look like a courtroom. Paint foam board to look like wood panels. Hang the panels around the room and cover a high desk to look like a judge's bench. Hang a picture of an unofficial city seal on the back wall. Position a smaller desk or a chair on one side of the "judge's bench."

Countdown

- countdown video

Show the countdown video as you transition to teach the story. Set it to end as the session begins.

Introduce the session (3 minutes)

[Leader enters wearing a long black robe and carrying a gavel.]

- leader attire
- gavel

Tip: If you prefer not to use themed content or characters, adapt or omit this introduction.

LEADER • Hey there. I'm [*your name*], and I'm a judge. My job is to hear cases in court and make legal decisions. If someone is suspected of breaking the law, he or she might be arrested and brought to my court. Here, two lawyers will try to show that person's side of the story, to prove if the suspect is guilty. After that, a group of regular people known as the jury will decide if the suspect is guilty or not. If the suspect is determined to be guilty, then I will decide how to bring about justice. Sometimes that means paying a

fine, serving the community, or perhaps even some time spent in jail.

In my job, every case I have to hear is different, but most of them all have some things in common. One thing that every case has in common is that in my courtroom, I am in charge. If things get out of hand, I can tell people to settle down. If someone refuses to settle, I can have him removed from the room. But along with the authority I have in my courtroom comes a lot of responsibility. I have to pay close attention to make sure every person is treated fairly and given a fair trial to determine if he is guilty or not.

In some ways, being a judge is similar to being a king or a ruler—not of a whole kingdom, but of a court case. You know, that makes me think of a Bible story in which Jesus was welcomed as a King.

Big picture question (1 minute)

LEADER • To help us think about the story, it's important to ask the right question. For the next few weeks, we will be studying the answer to this big picture question: *What did Jesus do to save us?* You may already know the answer. Let's pay close attention each week to learn more about the answer.

Giant timeline (1 minute)

Show the giant timeline. Point to individual Bible stories as you review. · Giant Timeline

LEADER • In the very beginning of time, God created the earth, everything on earth, and the whole universe. God created people in His image and loved them

more than the rest of His creation. Sadly, Adam and Eve, the first humans, chose to disobey God. Their sin brought sadness, pain, and death into the world. However, God had a plan all along. He sent His Son. Jesus was born as a human baby and grew into a man. He never sinned and traveled around Israel teaching about God and God's kingdom. Jesus performed miracles and even raised people from the dead! As Jesus grew more popular with the regular people living in Israel, He grew more hated by the religious leaders. They wanted to kill Him! That's where our story picks up.

Tell the Bible story (10 minutes)

Open your Bible to Matthew 21; Mark 11; Luke 19; John 12. Use the Bible storytelling tips on the Bible story page to help you tell the story, or show the Bible story video "Jesus' Triumphal Entry."

LEADER • Most of the people living in Israel during Jesus' life would have been pretty familiar with the prophecies contained in the Scriptures. When Jesus came in on a young donkey, the **people welcomed Jesus to Jerusalem as their King**—the one God had promised years before. The problem was they only understood part of the truth. They expected Jesus to be an earthly king, setting up an earthly kingdom.

The Roman Empire had conquered the area that included the land of Israel. The people were living under Roman rulers who did not love God or honor Him. The people who worshiped Jesus and said "Hosanna" thought Jesus would defeat the Romans, kick them back to Rome, and give the promised land

- Bibles
- "Jesus' Triumphal Entry" video
- Big Picture Question Poster
- Bible Story Picture Poster
- Story Point Poster

back to God's people. But Jesus came to be an even better kind of King.

Jesus' kingdom is a heavenly kingdom, and He is our heavenly King. ***What did Jesus do to save us? Jesus lived a sinless life, died on the cross, and rose from the dead.*** Sin and death were defeated. Everyone who has faith in Jesus is forgiven and made new. When Jesus returns, He will set up His eternal kingdom where we will live forever with God.

Christ connection

LEADER • During Jesus' triumphal entry, the people welcomed Him as King. Jesus was the Messiah spoken about by the prophet Zechariah: "Look, your King is coming to you; He is righteous and victorious, humble and riding on a donkey, on a colt, the foal of a donkey" (Zechariah 9:9). One day, Jesus will return to earth on a white horse as King over everything.

Note: You may use this opportunity to use Scripture and the guide provided to explain how to become a Christian. Make sure kids know when and where they can ask questions.

Questions from kids video (3 minutes)

Show the "Unit 26, Session 1" questions from kids video. Prompt kids to think about what it means to show hospitality. Guide them to discuss ways they can make others feel welcome—at home, school, or church.

• "Unit 26, Session 1" Questions from Kids video

Missions moment (3 minutes)

Play the "Eric Liddell's Gift" missions video and then ask if anyone had ever heard about Eric Liddell.

• "Eric Liddell's Gift" missions video

LEADER • Running fast might not seem like something useful for a missionary to do, but Eric Liddell used his talent for running to glorify God. No matter

what gifts or talents God has given you, those gifts can help you live on mission for God's kingdom. Living on mission means sharing the gospel with people we meet and showing God's love to everyone around us.

Key passage (5 minutes)

• Key Passage Poster
• "He Humbled Himself
(Philippians 2:8)"
song

Show the key passage poster. Lead the boys and girls to read together Philippians 2:8. Then sing the key passage song.

LEADER • Jesus loved God and loved us. He obeyed God even though it meant a painful death. He knew that His death and resurrection was the best way to glorify God and the only way to give us life.

Sing (4 minutes)

• "Jesus Saves" song

LEADER • Let's worship God together.
Sing together "Jesus Saves."

Pray (2 minutes)

Invite kids to pray before dismissing to apply the story.

LEADER • Father, thank You for sending Jesus to be our King. Help us love You with all our hearts, souls, minds, and strength. Give us the wisdom and courage to obey Jesus as our King. Amen.

Dismiss to apply the story

The Gospel: God's Plan for Me

Ask kids if they have ever heard the word *gospel*. Clarify that the word *gospel* means “good news.” It is the message about Christ, the kingdom of God, and salvation. Use the following guide to share the gospel with kids.



God rules. Explain to kids that the Bible tells us God created everything, and He is in charge of everything. Invite a volunteer to read Genesis 1:1 from the Bible. Read Revelation 4:11 or Colossians 1:16-17 aloud and explain what these verses mean.



We sinned. Tell kids that since the time of Adam and Eve, everyone has chosen to disobey God. (Romans 3:23) The Bible calls this sin. Because God is holy, God cannot be around sin. Sin separates us from God and deserves God's punishment of death. (Romans 6:23)



God provided. Choose a child to read John 3:16 aloud. Say that God sent His Son, Jesus, the perfect solution to our sin problem, to rescue us from the punishment we deserve. It's something we, as sinners, could never earn on our own. Jesus alone saves us. Read and explain Ephesians 2:8-9.



Jesus gives. Share with kids that Jesus lived a perfect life, died on the cross for our sins, and rose again. Because Jesus gave up His life for us, we can be welcomed into God's family for eternity. This is the best gift ever! Read Romans 5:8; 2 Corinthians 5:21; or 1 Peter 3:18.



We respond. Tell kids that they can respond to Jesus. Read Romans 10:9-10,13. Review these aspects of our response: Believe in your heart that Jesus alone saves you through what He's already done on the cross. Repent, turning from self and sin to Jesus. Tell God and others that your faith is in Jesus.

Offer to talk with any child who is interested in responding to Jesus. Provide *I'm a Christian Now!* for new Christians to take home and complete with their families.

APPLY the Story



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BIG PICTURE QUESTION: What did Jesus do to save us? Jesus lived a sinless life, died on the cross, and rose from the dead.

Key passage activity (5 minutes)

• Key Passage Poster

Assign each kid a word from the key passage. Encourage the kids to say their words in the correct order. Challenge them to see how quickly they can say the whole key passage.

SAY • People welcomed Jesus to Jerusalem as their King.

Jesus was not the earthly king they expected; He is the King of heaven and earth. Jesus is God the Son, yet He became a human and obeyed God's plan to die on the cross. Jesus is the perfect picture of humility and love. He gave up His rightful place in heaven to be treated like a criminal so we could live with God forever. *What did Jesus do to save us? Jesus lived a sinless life, died on the cross, and rose from the dead.*

Discussion & Bible skills (10 minutes)

• Bibles, 1 per kid
• Story Point Poster
• Small Group Timeline and Map Set (005802970, optional)

Distribute a Bible to each kid. Help kids find Matthew 21. Ask which Bible division Matthew is in. (*the Gospels*) Remind kids that Bible divisions are ways people have organized the Bible to help us study God's Word more easily. Consider showing Jerusalem on the New Testament Israel Map. (*H4*)

Ask the following questions. Lead the group to discuss:

1. Why did Jesus send His disciples to get a donkey for Him to ride? (*to fulfill prophecy, Matt. 21:4-5*)
2. What word did the people and the children say in praise of Jesus? (*Hosanna, Matt. 21:9,15*)
3. Where did Jesus go to spend the night? (*Bethany, Matt. 21:17*)
4. Why do you think they people welcomed Jesus with such excitement? *Remind the kids that the people in Jesus' day were looking for an earthly king to conquer their enemies and give them back control of their land. They believed Jesus was the promised King but misunderstood what kind of king He'd be.*
5. When do you feel most excited to worship Jesus? *Guide kids to think through the various ways we worship God, like singing praise, obeying our leaders, and doing our best work in school or sports. Remind them that anything done for God's glory is worship.*
6. Why do you think some people reject Jesus? *Help kids connect this idea to the religious leaders in Jesus' day. They hated Jesus because they did not want to believe they needed help, and they feared losing control over the religious practices of the people. Today, it is much the same. People want to believe they are good on their own. They don't want to believe that their sin is so bad it required Jesus' death, and they don't want to surrender control of their lives to Him.*

SAY • People welcomed Jesus to Jerusalem as their King.

When we have faith in Jesus, He is the King of our lives. Someday He will come back and set up His perfect kingdom on earth forever.

Option: Retell or review the Bible story using the bolded text of the Bible story script.

LOW PREP

- “Special Places” printable
- globe

Tip: Use this activity option to reinforce the missions moment found in Teach the Story.

Activity choice (10 minutes)



OPTION 1: Special places

Print and cut apart the “Special Places” printable. Invite volunteers to come help you point out each country on a globe while you read the three strips. You may select strong readers to read the strips for you.

SAY • Those were some places that were important in Eric Liddell’s life. In our lives, different places will end up being important. Think about where you live, go to school, or visit on vacation.

God wants everyone in every nation to hear about Him and believe. Jesus died on the cross to rescue everyone who trusts in Him. The places we go and the places we live are important to God because people everywhere need to hear about Jesus. **People welcomed Jesus to Jerusalem as their King,** and someday He will return to set up His eternal kingdom on earth. Everyone who trusts in Him will live in His kingdom forever.

OPTION 2: “Palm” branches

Provide each kid with green construction paper and a paint stirrer. Instruct kids to trace their hand onto their papers as many times as they can fit it. Help the kids cut out their handprints. Kids will need between six and eight handprint cutouts. Show them how to tape the handprints to the paint stirrer in an overlapping manner, with fingers pointed away from the stirrer. When they are finished, it will look like a palm branch.

SAY • **People welcomed Jesus to Jerusalem as their King.**

The people laid down their robes and palm branches to cover the ground in front of Jesus. They sang

songs and worshiped Him. But Jesus was not the earthly king they expected. Jesus had come to set up God's heavenly kingdom.

We can join God's heavenly kingdom by trusting in Jesus. When we have faith that He lived a perfect life for us and died the death we deserve, God forgives our sins and gives us eternal life. When we understand who Jesus is and what He has done for us, we will want to worship Him as King, too!

Reflection and prayer (5 minutes)

Distribute a sheet of paper to each child. Ask the kids to write about or draw a picture to answer the following questions:

- What does this story teach me about God or about the gospel?
- What does this story teach me about myself?
- Whom can I tell about this story?

Make sure to send the sheets home with kids alongside the activity page so that parents can see what their kids have been learning.

If time remains, take prayer requests or allow kids to complete the Bible story coloring page provided with this session. Pray for your group.

- pencils and crayons
- paper
- Bible Story Coloring Page, 1 per kid

Tip: Give parents this week's *Big Picture Cards for Families* to allow families to interact with the biblical content at home.