



PRIOR TO TEACHING THE SESSION



Easter | SESSION 1

Jesus' Triumphal Entry

Matthew 21; Mark 11;
Luke 19; John 12

KEY PASSAGE:

Romans 10:9

BIG PICTURE QUESTION:

Who saves us from our sin? Only Jesus saves us from sin.

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. (Revelation 19:11)



PRIOR TO TEACHING THE SESSION



LEADER Bible Study

The Sunday before Easter is Palm Sunday—the day Jesus entered Jerusalem as the King of kings the week of Passover. Many of God’s people traveled to Jerusalem for Passover. Jesus and His disciples traveled to Jerusalem as well. Near Bethphage (BETH fayj) 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. In the temple, Jesus 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 worshipping 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.

As you prepare for and celebrate Easter, 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!



WELCOME Kids

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 each kid to think about the last time someone came to his or her house. Did kids do anything to make that person feel welcome?

SAY • Today's Bible story is about how people welcomed Jesus when He entered Jerusalem about a week before He died on the cross.

1 ACTIVITY PAGE (5 minutes)

Invite kids to complete the "Can You Find Them?" activity page. Instruct the kids to find hidden in the picture items from the key.

SAY • When Jesus arrived in Jerusalem, people were excited. They saw Him as an earthly King, but He is so much more than that! Jesus is the King of everything. He came the first time to die on the cross, but one day He will return to fix everything that is broken in the world.

2 SESSION STARTER (10 minutes)

- **OPTION 1:** Moo, baa, hee-haw
- Instruct kids to move to form a circle. Explain that one player will begin by making one of three animal noises. He may moo like a cow, baa like a sheep, or hee-haw like a donkey. The rest of the players will react accordingly:

- Moo: Players to the immediate right and left will stand and jump in place four times.
- Baa: Players not immediately next to the "sheep" will clap their hands four times.
- Hee-haw: All players will stand, raise their hands, and shout "Hosanna!"

Play then passes clockwise around the circle with each player taking a turn making an animal noise.

SAY • The word hosanna means "save now." Today we will learn why people shouted "Hosanna!" when Jesus came to town.

- **OPTION 2:** Word baseball

Form two teams of kids. On a chalkboard or dry erase board, draw seven blanks (for the word hosanna). Invite the first team to guess a letter.

If the letter is in the word, write it in its blank and give the team another guess. If the letter is not in the word, draw an X on the left side of the board to indicate a strike. Play passes to the second team. Teams are out if they earn three strikes. For each word a team guesses, award a point.

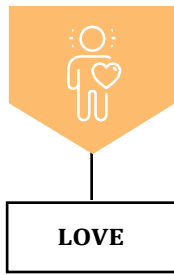
Play additional rounds with related words. The team to score the most points wins. (Suggested words: Jesus, triumphal, Jerusalem, donkey)

SAY • Have you heard all of these words before? Listen carefully to our Bible story today to see what these words have to do with Jesus.

Transition from **WELCOME** to **LEARN**



Easter Older Kids Session 1



THE GOD OF THE GOSPEL

LOVE God by Applying the Story

1 REVIEW & BIBLE SKILLS (5 minutes)

Provide Bibles and instruct kids to open to the New Testament. Ask them to name the first four books of the New Testament. (Matthew, Mark, Luke, John)

Remind kids that the Bible is the inspired Word of God. Everything in the Bible is true. God gave us the Gospels so we can know about Jesus, and today's Bible story is found in all four Gospels.

SAY We saw in our Bible story today that people welcomed Jesus to Jerusalem as their King. [Point to Jerusalem (H5) on the New Testament Israel Map.] They celebrated Him! But Jesus was not the type of king the people expected. They hoped for a king who would overthrow the Romans.

Later that week, Jesus was arrested and killed. But we know the whole story—Jesus did not stay dead! We will hear more about what happened next time.

2 GROUP DISCUSSION (10 minutes)

Ask the following questions. Lead the group to discuss.

SAY *Why is it important that Jesus rode into Jerusalem on a donkey?*

Lead kids to conclude that Jesus' fulfillment of the Old Testament prophecies was evidence that Jesus is God's Son, the promised Messiah. Discuss how Jesus' entry on a donkey showed His humility. He didn't enter the city on a warhorse, like people might expect a victorious king to do. (Option: Choose a volunteer to read Matt. 5:17.)

SAY *Have you learned anything about Jesus that surprises you?*

Guide kids to identify attributes of Jesus that they did not expect from a king. Help them consider the ways in which the kingdom of God is "upside down" from kingdoms of the world. (Option: Choose a volunteer to read John 18:36.)

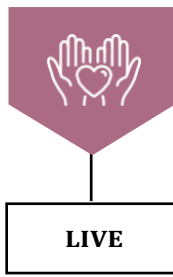
SAY *What do you think it will be like when King Jesus returns?*

Invite kids to share their ideas.

(Option: Choose a volunteer to read Isa. 65:17-19.)

Transition from **LOVE** to **LIVE**





THE MISSION OF THE GOSPEL

LIVE the Mission

1 ACTIVITY CHOICE (10 minutes)

OPTION 1: Prayers for Atlanta

Invite kids to sit in a circle on the floor. Remind them that they have learned some facts about Atlanta, Georgia—like Atlanta is a popular place to make movies. Ask kids to fill in this fact: Where there is a movie, there is _____ (Popcorn)

Share the “Atlanta Prayer Card” and read the prayer requests aloud. Invite kids to join in “popcorn prayers.” Explain that you will begin by saying a one-sentence prayer; then you will say, “popcorn” and the name of the kid who will pray next. That kid will voice a one-sentence prayer, say “popcorn,” and name the next kid who will pray. Continue until everyone has prayed.

SAY *Many people in Atlanta do not believe the gospel, but missionaries in the city are telling people that Jesus saves people from sin. We can help people in Atlanta hear this good news by praying for the people and missionaries there.*

OPTION 2: Empty hands ball toss

Instruct kids to stand in a circle. Lead the kids in playing several rounds of tossing games.

Round 1: Give one player a ball and instruct him to pass it to his left. Kids should pass the ball around the circle as quickly as they can.

Round 2: Give one player two balls. She should pass one to her left and the other to her right. Challenge kids to race and see which ball returns to the original player first.

Round 3: Instruct kids to hold their hands flat and pass the ball around the circle without cupping their hands or using their fingers to hold the ball.

Round 4: Give one player a ball and direct him to toss the ball to any other player. Kids can continue passing the ball across the circle. Then add a second ball. Kids must pay attention and be ready to catch the ball. Add a third or fourth ball depending on the size of your group.

SAY *You have to have empty hands to catch a ball. That reminds me of what we need to welcome Jesus into our lives: nothing but empty hands of faith!*

We heard in our Bible story today how people welcomed Jesus to Jerusalem as their King. We can welcome Jesus into our lives as King by turning away from our sin and turning to Him.

2 JOURNAL AND PRAYER (5 minutes)

Distribute journal pages and pencils. Guide kids to think about and answer the questions listed on the page. As kids journal, invite them to share their ideas.

- What does this story teach me about God or the gospel?
- What does the story teach me about myself?
- Are there any commands in this story to obey? How are they for God’s glory and my good?
- Are there promises in this story to remember? How do they help me trust and love God?
- How does this story help me to live on mission better?

Review the gospel and encourage kids to speak with you or another teacher if they have questions. Then, pray that kids would trust God and live out their faith through obedience. As time allows, lead kids to complete “Pop Quiz” on the activity page.