

# The King Comes



A Palm Sunday Lesson for Elementary Children



**Family Leadership Network**  
NEXT GENERATION LEADERSHIP INITIATIVE

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*The King Comes!* script is adapted from *The Lion Book of Stories of Jesus*, retold by Timothy Dudley-Smith, 1990.

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## CONNECT - for Leaders

*Read:*

Matthew 21:1-11 & 27:11-26

Mark 11:1-10 & 15:1-15

Luke 19:28-40 & 23:13-25

John 12:12-19 & 18:28-40

*Ask:*

*What did I notice, hear or feel as I read these accounts?*

*Consider:*

The children present will not be unfamiliar with the heights and the depths of being praised and affirmed; disliked and rejected. Which of us - child or adult - hasn't experienced at some time, the encouragement and elation; the discouragement and despondency that comes with variations on those real or imagined perceptions of what others think of us?

Jesus was like us and Jesus was not like us. He was hailed as a King, and within a week, nailed to a cross. But Jesus was not dependent on how others perceived him for his identity or sense of mission in the world. He knew the fragile and less-than-informed nature of the praise. He knew the rejection of the very ones he came to save, and even by the One who would save him. He was not derailed by praise or disabled by the pain of total abandonment. He loved at all times and to the end, completing what he came to do.

We can't understand what *his* experience was, but we can be moved, and comforted by knowing that he understands *ours*. And because he understands through his own experience (and most fully and truly because he remained true to his calling in the midst of all the reaction he encountered), Jesus offers us precisely what we need to navigate praise and rejection and arrive instead at our true identity: "I am the one who is loved by God."

What a beautiful thing when a child is coming to know the steadying companionship of faithful Jesus, and is able to pursue the plans and purposes God has for her. Entering the story of Palm Sunday, watching Jesus fully committed to his mission is a compelling entrance to Holy Week. May each child in your care find their identity in being God's beloved child. More than that, may they and we, learn to see others as God does, able to offer true words of encouragement in season; equally willing to identify with the disliked and the struggling to offer the kindness and advocacy we have know from Jesus.

## PREPARE

### *Pray:*

for the Spirit of Jesus to help children and leaders enter the Story to see what he wants them to.

for children to know Jesus understands what it's like to experience praise and rejection.

for all present to grow in their ability to see others as Jesus does.

to enter Holy Week with grateful love for all Jesus endured, knowing, "I am the one who is loved by God."

### *Gather:*

- *palm branches for all the children*
- wooden rocking horse, or a stick horse
- simple costumes for Jesus, Pharisee and Donkey Owner
- fabric or coats for the road
- wooden processional cross in a stand
- tape or stones to mark out a road that ends at the cross
- 3 copies on card stock of *each letter* of the word , **H O S A N N A**

### *Practice:*

- [making a palm cross](#) (practice a lot!)
- telling the story, *The King Comes*



## ENGAGE

Divide children into three teams to play the Palm Sunday Quiz Game (Appendix 1). If you have a multi-age group, mix them up. There are 21 questions, so if you have a smaller group or shorter time, adjust accordingly.

*Say: "Let's find out what you already know about the Palm Sunday story! Each time your team answers a question correctly, you will receive a letter that will help you spell a secret Palm Sunday word. You may talk about your question as a team before you give your answer."*

Give each team one letter (in any order), of the word, *Hosanna*, each time they arrive at the right answer to a question. (You know your kids - make it competitive between teams, or not.) Keep playing until all three teams have collected 7 letters. The next challenge is for teams to figure out the word. Go!

## INSPIRE

*Before leaders read the Palm Sunday story (Appendix 2), give each group their own words to shout out at the appropriate point in the story:*

*Group 1. Hosanna to the Son of David!*

*Group 2. Blessed is he who comes in the Name of the Lord!*

*Group 3. Hosanna in the highest!*

*Seat kids on one side of the road and practice standing to say their praises like a wave.*

## The King Comes

*from The Lion Book of Stories of Jesus, retold by Timothy Dudley-Smith*

**Readers:** Narrator, Jesus, Donkey Owner, Pharisee

**Narrator:** Two miles to go! Beyond the last grove of fig trees, just over the brow of the Mount of Olives, lay Jerusalem. Jesus and his friends, now that they were almost at the city, had spent an hour resting at the roadside before the last stage of their journey. They were silent in the midday sunshine, busy with their own thoughts. Presently, Jesus spoke quietly to the two disciples beside him.

**Jesus:** Go into the village just ahead of you.

**Narrator:** He pointed to a cluster of houses not far down the road.

**Jesus:** There you will find a colt tied - a colt no one has ever ridden. Untie it and bring it here to me. And if anybody asks you, "Why are you untying it?" Just say, "The Lord needs it."

**Narrator:** The two disciples set off; and at the entrance to the village, where two roads met, they found a house with two brown donkeys, mother and colt, tied to a ring in the wall. The donkeys stood patiently in the sunshine, swishing their tails to keep off the flies. At the sound of strangers, the owner came to the doorway and asked,

**Owner:** "Why are you untying that colt?"

**Narrator:** "The Lord needs it," the disciples replied. The owner nodded, satisfied; and they led the donkeys, mother and colt together, back down the road to Jesus and the others. Two or three of them spread their cloaks to make a saddle on the colt's bony back, warm and dusty in the sun. Carefully Jesus mounted, firm hands gentle as the colt trembled under him, and then the little company set off up the track toward Jerusalem. A good many people had gathered by this time. Word had gone around that this was Jesus who had brought Lazarus back to life from that dark grave nearby. When they saw Jesus riding to Jerusalem, many remembered the old prophecy that this was how God's chosen King would come - not riding in state on a white horse, but meekly, on a donkey, a young colt, not fully grown.

Someone cheered, then someone else. Soon they were all cheering. They broke off branches from the palm trees to wave as flags, and to make a carpet of leaves on the road. Some even spread out their cloaks in the roadway, a patchwork for a royal procession.

From the top of the hill, Jerusalem lay spread out before them like a map, and when the donkey, picking its way delicately forward, began the descent to the city, the whole company began to sing and clap their hands in their excitement. They cried out:

### **(CHILDREN SHOUT THEIR PRAISES)**

*Group 1. Hosanna to the Son of David!*

*Group 2. Blessed is he who comes in the Name of the Lord!*

*Group 3. Hosanna in the highest!*

**Narrator:** So the children sang and danced before him, and the people clapped and shouted and the palm branches waved and fluttered. Only the Pharisees, watching with

long faces at the street corners, grumbled and protested. They hated to see Jesus so popular.

**Pharisee:** The whole world has gone after him. Hey, Jesus! Tell your disciples to be quiet!

**Jesus:** I tell you that if they kept quiet, the very stones in the road would bust out cheering!

**Narrator:** And so they came to Jerusalem. Jesus cried to see the city which he loved and where he was soon to die. In just a few days, the noisy, crowd would no longer be shouting praise to him, but angry words; words of hate. "Crucify him! Crucify him!"



## EXPLORE

*~ some possible questions to explore with kids in small groups:*

Why were the people cheering for Jesus?

What does it feel like when people praise you?

Did the people understand what Jesus was among them to do?

Could Jesus have been what the people wanted him to be?

What do you think Jesus thought about the praise?

In what ways do you think he may have thought it was good and right?

Why do you think he cried then?

What might you be tempted to do if people wanted you to do something (even good) you weren't supposed to?

What do we usually think of people who really like us?

What were people going to be shouting in just a few days instead?

What are we tempted to think of people who don't like us?

Do you think Jesus felt differently about people who praised him and people who were angry at him?

How is Jesus different from us? Why did he stick to his job no matter what the people thought of him? Is that hard for us?

What can help you when you feel like people leave you out or don't like you?

Do you think Jesus understands? Is there anyone at your school who is made fun of?

How do you think Jesus sees that person? Anything you could do to show kindness, or stand up for them?

What's the best thing about Jesus that you've thought about today?

## COMMIT

Pray as the Spirit leads out of the conversation you have just had in your group. Allow space for children to thank Jesus for the great love he has for people and for them, which helped him stick to what he was called by God to do.

Pray together that followers of Jesus, big and small, will learn to ask Jesus to help them when they are tempted to be proud or distracted, or when they are discouraged by feeling left out.

Who comes to mind as someone you could reach out to with understanding this week?

*Extra time?* Help the children make a cross from their palm branch



## CONTINUE

Send a card to the children in your small group to tell them you are praying for them in Holy Week.

*Write the names of the children in your small group here and record any ways you might pray for them in particular.*



## APPENDIX 1

### Palm Sunday Quiz Game

1. Name the 4 Gospel writers
2. Which city did Jesus enter on his way to the Cross?
  - A) Bethlehem
  - B) Jerusalem\*
  - C) Paris
  - D) Damascus
3. What did Jesus use to ride into Jerusalem?
  - A) A horse
  - B) An Easter parade float
  - C) A bicycle
  - D) A donkey \*
4. What did the disciples do once they brought the donkey to Jesus?
  - A) Took a nap
  - B) The chicken dance
  - C) Ate dinner
  - D) Put their cloaks on it \*
5. What did Jesus tell the disciples to say if anyone asked why they were taking the donkey?
  - A) "None of your business"
  - B) "The Lord needs it" \*
  - C) Nothing
  - D) "Why? Is it yours?"
6. Where did Jesus tell the disciples to look for the donkey?
  - A) Just inside the village \*
  - B) Along the side of the road
  - C) At the stable
  - D) He didn't say
7. Why did Jesus ride into Jerusalem on a donkey?
  - A) That's all that was available
  - B) He was afraid of horses

- C) To fulfill prophecy \*
- D) As a sign of power

8. Which Old Testament prophet wrote about a king riding on a donkey?

- A) Isaiah
- B) Daniel
- C) Jeremiah
- D) Zechariah \*

9. What does "Hosanna" mean?

- A) Save us now!
- B) Praises
- C) Hey, dude
- D) Welcome

10. Why were Jesus and the disciples going to Jerusalem?

- A) To see a man about a horse
- B) For Passover \*
- C) For Easter
- D) To visit Peter's mother

11. What did the crowd do when they saw Jesus coming into Jerusalem?

- A) Spread out their cloaks
- B) Cut branches from the trees and put them on the road
- C) Shouted "Hosanna! Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord!"
- D) All of the above \*

12. Why were there so many people in Jerusalem?

- A) They lived there
- B) To see Jesus
- C) For Passover \*
- D) It was time to harvest the palms

13. Why did the crowd come out to welcome Jesus?

- A) They thought he was going to save them from the Romans \*
- B) They knew he had come to save them from their sins
- C) They welcomed all visitors
- D) They wanted his donkey

14. Palm Sunday is the first day of the week we call:

- A) Easter
- B) Holy Week \*
- C) Pentecost
- D) Passover

15. What do we sometimes use in worship on Palm Sunday to help us remember this story?

- A) Easter eggs
- B) Scarves
- C) Palms \*
- D) Donkeys

16. Palm Sunday always comes a week before:

- A) Christmas
- B) Passover
- C) Pentecost
- D) Easter \*

17. What kind of king was Jesus?

- A) A warrior, like King David
- B) One like most of the other kings of Israel
- C) A wise and rich one like King Solomon
- D) A totally different kind, a humble servant \*

18. A Jesus kind of king would:

- A) Kill lots of people in battle
- B) Wash his friend's dirty feet \*
- C) Make a lot of laws to rule over people
- D) Have a lot of money

19. If you could be somebody in the story who would you be and why?

20. Spell HOSANNA

21. The people in Jesus' day wanted someone to save them from the Romans. Name something people today want to be saved from.

**Family**



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