

**TEACHER GUIDE**
The first Palm Sunday must have been an amazing day. Many of the Jews believed that the Messiah would be a human ruler who would overthrow the Romans and give them back Jerusalem. As Jesus rode in on a donkey—a detail that had been recorded by the prophet Zechariah—people spread palm leaves in his path. They shouted, “Hosanna! Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord!” For many standing there, this was the best day of their lives. The Messiah was here!

But the excitement of Palm Sunday soon faded. The religious leaders continued to look for a way to take Jesus down for what they considered to be blasphemy. On Thursday of that week, Jesus shared a special Passover meal with his disciples. How fitting that the meal celebrated God’s deliverance of the Jews through the blood of a perfect lamb. Jesus was the Lamb of God who would free people from the punishment of sin once and for all.

That night, Jesus was arrested while he prayed in the garden. He was subjected to an unjust trial and sentenced to be crucified—the most brutal form of Roman execution. Though his death was excruciating, Jesus gave his life willingly, so that humanity could be restored to God and be part of his Kingdom.

**FOR THE TEACHER:**
Read the account of Jesus riding into Jerusalem in Matthew 21:1-11.

***What stands out to you about this story?*** \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

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***What is something new you learned from reading it this time?***

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***What is one important truth you think your students need to hear?***

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Try to connect to the excitement of that day. Imagine feeling that all of your troubles and worries were over. How would you have felt as the events of the rest of that week unfolded?

**LESSON SCHEDULE & SUPPLY LIST**

*Note: Italicized supplies are included in the curriculum. You can find the video on the DVD or DVD-Rom (for .mov version) and the printables on the Print Materials Disc in the Week 3 folder.*

 **SETTING THE STAGE** (10 minutes)

 You’ll need:

 • Paper

 • Markers

 • Crayons

 • Other art supplies (optional)

 **INTRODUCTION & VIDEO** (8 minutes)

 You’ll need:

 • *Week 3 Video*

 **GOING DEEP** (10 minutes)

 Jesus Rides Into Jerusalem—Matthew 21:1-11.

You’ll need:

* Bible

 **CLOSER LOOK** (10-20 minutes)

 **Activity 1:** FILL YOUR PLATE RELAY

 You’ll need:

 • *Seder food and plate cutouts* (one set for each team)

 • Double-sided tape

 **Activity 2:** POWER IN THE BLOOD

 You’ll need:

 • Clear bowl of water

 • Black pepper

 • Dishwashing liquid

 • Red food coloring

 • Small container

 **THE GOOD WORD** (10 minutes)

“For Christ also suffered once for sins, the righteous for the unrighteous, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh but made alive in the spirit”—1 Peter 3:18

 *Note: Write the verse on a poster board or white board before class starts.*

 **BIBLE TO-GO** (5-10 minutes)

 You’ll need:

 • *Encouragement Cards* (at least one per child, printed on cardstock)

 • *Last Supper Coloring Page* (optional)

 • *Week 3 Take Home Activities* (one per child or family)

**SETTING THE STAGE** (10 MINUTES)

***You’ll need:*** Paper, Markers, Crayons, Other art supplies (optional)

As children arrive, ask them to think about the best day of their whole life. Provide them with paper and art supplies to draw a picture of that day. If they need prompting, you could suggest they draw a picture of a special birthday or holiday, or going to a fun place, such as the zoo or to visit relatives. When pictures are completed, ask a few of the children to share about their best day ever.

**INTRODUCTION & VIDEO** (8 MINUTES)

***You’ll need:*** Week 3 Video

Introduce the video, saying something like:

**Today we’re going to talk about a day that was the BEST DAY EVER for many people. I’ll give you a hint: It has to do with Jesus. Remember last week we heard about the miracles Jesus did and the stories Jesus told about the Kingdom of God. Today we’re going to hear about the week leading up to Easter Sunday. Let’s watch as some friends tell us the story!**

**PLAY** Week 3 Video.

Follow video by saying something like this:

**Jesus had fulfilled the most important part of his mission on earth. He had paid the ultimate price—his life—for our sin. People would no longer have to offer animal sacrifices like they had since the time of Abraham and Moses. Jesus had paid the price of sin once for all! And through that sacrifice, he had established the Kingdom of God.**

**OPTIONAL DISCUSSION QUESTIONS**:

• Why were the people so excited when Jesus rode into Jerusalem on the donkey? (*He was the Messiah* *and they thought he would be a king like David.)*

• What was Jesus talking about when he compared the bread and wine to his body and blood? *(His sacrifice on the Cross.)*

• What crime was Jesus accused of? *(Blasphemy.)*

• What are two things that Jesus showed us about God? *(That he is loving, good, and powerful.)*

• Jesus compared the Kingdom of God to a mustard seed. How are the two things alike? *(They both start small and grow really big!)*

**GOING DEEP** (10 MINUTES)
***You’ll need:*** Bible

Tell the story of Palm Sunday from Matthew 21:1-11, using this script.

**Today we pick up our story of Jesus at the beginning of the most important week of his life! The week began with Palm Sunday—which we celebrate today. In preparation for the celebration of Passover, Jesus and his disciples traveled to the city of Jerusalem. Many other Jews had traveled there also.**

**Passover was a celebration of something that had happened long ago. Do you remember the story of Moses leading the Israelites out of Egypt? Well, before Pharaoh would let the people go, God sent 10 terrible plagues. Can you name some of them?** (Turning the Nile to blood, frogs, gnats, flies, diseased livestock, boils, hail, locust, darkness.) **The final plague—which was the worst—was that all the firstborn children and animals in Egypt would die. But God made one way that the firstborn children could be spared. If the family painted the blood of a spotless lamb on their doorposts, God would pass over and their firstborn children would live. This was a preview of the day when the perfect Lamb of God would shed his blood for the sins of the world so that we could be saved.**

**As they came into Jerusalem, Jesus asked his disciples to get him a young donkey to ride. The disciples spread out their cloaks on the donkey’s back for Jesus to sit on. As Jesus rode the donkey into Jerusalem, a large crowd of people spread their cloaks and palm branches on the road—something that would have been done for royalty—and said: “Hosanna to the Son of David. Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord! Hosanna in the highest!”**

**Does it sound like the people were happy that Jesus was there? Yes, they were! But many Jews believed that Jesus had come to be their earthly king and overthrow the Romans so that they would once again have their own country. For many people welcoming Jesus, this was the best day of their life!** (Read Matthew 21:10-11.) **Jesus’ entrance into Jerusalem made a big impression!**

**What began as a thrilling week quickly turned tragic. On the Thursday after Palm Sunday, Jesus and his disciples celebrated the Last Supper. That night Jesus—betrayed by Judas, one of his own disciples—was arrested as he was praying in a garden. He was put through an unfair trial, beaten severely, and finally hung on a cross to die.**

**The same people who had welcomed him less than a week earlier watched him die a horrible death on the Cross. His body was laid in a tomb and a large, heavy stone was rolled in front of the entrance. The situation must have seemed hopeless. Though Jesus’ friends and followers couldn’t see it, the very best part of the story was yet to come. This was all a part of Jesus ushering in the Kingdom of God. We’ll hear more about that next week!**

**CLOSER LOOK** (10-20 MINUTES)

**Activity 1: FILL YOUR PLATE RELAY**

***You’ll need:*** Seder food and plate cutouts (one set for each team), Double-sided tape

**SAY: *Jesus celebrated Passover, a very important Jewish holiday, with his disciples. He even gave two parts of the meal new meaning. Let’s play a game to learn more about some of the foods eaten during the Passover meal, called a Seder.***

Divide children into two teams. Tape two plates on one wall and have teams gather at the opposite wall. When you say “go,” the first child must choose a Seder food, run to the opposite wall and tape the food in its correct outline on the plate. (Note that salt water and drink will be taped on the wall next to the plate.) The player then returns to his team and tags the next player, who takes the next food and does the same.

Game continues until all foods have been attached to the plate and the last player has returned to his team and the team sits down.

After the game is over, explain what each food represents:

**LAMB SHANKBONE** — represents the sacrifice the Israelites made when they left Egypt.

**ROASTED EGG —** represents one of the offerings made in the temple.

**MAROR —** a bitter herb,usually horseradish, this herb makes you cry and reminds you of the bitterness of slavery.

**CHAROSET —** a mixture of apples, nuts and cinnamon which represents the material the Israelites used to make bricks in Egypt.

**KARPAS —** a green vegetable that reminds you of the newness of spring.

**SALT WATER —**served in a bowl and represents the tears the Israelites cried while they were slaves in Egypt.

**MATZAH —** unleavened bread to remind you that the Israelites left Egypt so quickly that their bread did not have time to rise.

**DRINK** — cups of wine or grape juice.

Jesus came to be the perfect Passover lamb. The Seder meal can remind us that he has freed us from the bondage of our sin.

**Activity 2: POWER IN THE BLOOD**

***You’ll need:*** Clear bowl of water, Black pepper, Dishwashing liquid, Red food coloring, Small container

Before class, combine some dishwashing liquid and red food coloring in a small container. Set the bowl of water on a table where students can see as you teach.

**SAY:** ***This bowl of water represents our lives and the pepper represents sin. Since Adam and Eve, sin has been a big problem. In fact, Romans 3:23 says that “all have sinned.”*** Sprinkle a little pepper into the water with each question about sin. ***Let’s think about sin and how it affects our lives.***

* **What is sin?** *(Sin is when we turn away from God and follow ourselves instead of him.)*
* **Can we get rid of our sin on our own?** *(No.)*
* **What should be the punishment for our sin?** *(Being away from God.)*
* **Who paid the price for our sin?** *(Jesus.)*

**The Bible says that without the shedding, or giving, of blood there is no forgiveness (Hebrews 9:22) for sin. Jesus shed his blood so that we could have our sins forgiven. Jesus’ blood is powerful. Let’s see what happens when we add the blood to our sinful lives.** Apply “the blood” by pouring a drop of the red soap into the center of the pepper water. The “sin” will vanish to the sides of the bowl. **When our lives are covered by the blood of Jesus, sin doesn’t stand a chance.**

**THE GOOD WORD** (10 MINUTES)

Before class, write the memory verse on a white board, print it on a piece of paper or create a PowerPoint slide. Introduce the good word, saying something like this:

**Jesus did many amazing things on earth and lots of people loved him and felt his love. But his real purpose in coming was to suffer and die for the sins of the world. Today’s Good Word tells us about this great sacrifice.**

Read 1 Peter 3:18.

**“For Christ also suffered once for sins, the righteous for the unrighteous, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh but made alive in the spirit”**

Explain unfamiliar words and concepts:

**RIGHTEOUS FOR THE UNRIGHTEOUS —** because Jesus was God, he never sinned, so he was righteous. Though he was sinless, he died for us—the unrighteous.

**PUT TO DEATH IN THE FLESH —** Jesus died. His body stopped working and he was buried, just like any other human.

**MADE ALIVE IN THE SPIRIT** — The Spirit of God brought Jesus back to life, making him different from any other human.

Have students repeat the verse with you one or two times. Next, play “Silly Pop-Ups.” State a characteristic, such as, “Everyone who has a younger sibling,” and have children who fit that description stand and say the verse (children sitting may also recite the verse). Here are a few to get you started:

• Everyone who has blue eyes, black hair, or freckles

• Everyone who is wearing blue

• Everyone who has a dog, cat or fish

• Everyone who ate breakfast this morning

• Everyone who likes to read

The longer you play, the more inclusive the characteristics should be (example “has a nose” or “likes ice cream”). Play long enough to repeat the verse at least five times.

**BIBLE TO-GO** (5-10 MINUTES)

***You’ll need:*** Encouragement Cards (at least one per child, printed on card stock), Last Supper Coloring Page (optional), Week 3 Take Home Activities (one per child or family)

**SAY:** ***What began as an exciting week for Jesus and his disciples led to a day that was definitely the worst day any of them had experienced. Jesus was the best friend these men had ever known. More than that, they believed he was the Messiah God had promised them long ago. Now he was dead. I’m sure his friends felt lost and alone and wondered how life would ever get better.***

***Maybe you’re going through something really hard right now. Maybe a family member or friend is sick, or your mom or dad doesn’t have a job. You may be facing bullies at school or having a hard time with your schoolwork. Maybe something else hard is happening in your family. You may feel like some days are your WORST DAY EVER. Jesus understands that. Next week we’ll find out why even on the worst days, we can always have hope! Until then, let’s listen to some of God’s words of hope for us that can be found in the Bible.***

Hand out printed encouragement cards. Have six children or leaders read them out loud to close. Have enough cards for each child to have one to take home and decorate. Close in prayer, thanking God for the gift of his Son, who was willing to suffer and die for us.

**OPTIONAL EXTRA:** Last Supper Coloring Page

*Note: Use the optional extra activity if you need to fill more time, or for kids to do while waiting for their parents to pick them up.*

**TAKE HOME ACTIVITIES**

Each week, use the provided Take Home Activities to encourage kids to keep learning at home with their parents. These thoughtful activities will guide the families in your church through a richer Lent and Easter experience.

**WEEK 3 TAKE HOME ACTIVITIES:**

**For Parents:**This week, your child learned about the week leading up to Jesus’ crucifixion. This week is called “Holy Week” and begins with Palm Sunday and ends on Holy Saturday, the day before Easter Sunday. During this week, Jesus’ purpose on earth culminates as he rides into Jerusalem on a donkey, shares the Last Supper with his disciples, is arrested in the Garden of Gethsemane, is put on trial, and is nailed to a cross to die and pay for the sins of the world. Take time during this Holy Week to remember Jesus the Suffering Servant by doing these activities with your child. Don’t forget the discussion question that goes along with each activity. Have fun!

**Activity 1: SERVANT WASHING**

***You’ll need:*** a Bible, Plastic tubs filled with warm water, Soap, Wash cloths

To demonstrate his role as a servant, Jesus washed his disciples’ feet during the Last Supper. At first, Peter did not want to have his feet washed, but Jesus said: “If I do not wash you, you have no share with me.” After that, Peter told Jesus to wash his whole body!

Read the account of Jesus’ washing the feet of his disciples in John 13:1-17.

Talk about what it means to be a servant. Read Mark 9:35 to find out what Jesus said.

***How can we, as a family, serve others? How can we serve each other?***

Think of times when your child or spouse has acted like a servant and talk about them. Try to think of one example for each family member.

Then wash each other’s feet to demonstrate your heart to serve one another as Jesus served—even giving his life. You may want to play worship music to set the tone. After everyone’s feet have been washed, close in prayer, asking God to help you to follow Jesus’ example and be servants to all.

**Activity 2: REMEMBERING THE CROSS**
***You’ll need:*** Remembering the Cross Devotional and corresponding coloring pages

This activity will help your family reflect upon the events of Holy Week, Christ’s death, and his resurrection. Each Remember Page includes three components: read, reflect, create. As you go through each event, encourage your child to fill out the remember page, and write down or draw any thoughts or feelings they experienced during that time. You can go through a page each night of Holy Week, or go through them all at once – whatever is easiest and best for your family!

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