



Session 1
Spring 2016
Primary

Jesus rides into Jerusalem

LUKE 19:28-40

prepare

PRAYER

God, you welcome me with open arms. May I welcome you into my life. Amen.

PURPOSE STATEMENT

To celebrate with the crowd that welcomed Jesus

STORY SUMMARY

Jesus and his friends traveled to Jerusalem for the Passover. Two of Jesus' friends borrowed a young donkey and put their cloaks on it. Jesus rode down the Mount of Olives on the donkey, and a large crowd gathered, shouting praises and spreading clothes and branches on the road. Some Pharisees asked Jesus to quiet the crowd, but he said that if the crowd were quiet, the rocks would start shouting.



teaching tips for primary

Children love parades and celebrations. Make the tone of this session joyful so children can catch the spirit of the crowd welcoming Jesus. Help children understand what praise is—declaring God's greatness. We sometimes interchange *praise* and *thanksgiving*. Praise has an element of thanksgiving, but it always begins by announcing who God is and applauding God's love, compassion, wisdom, and other attributes. In children's terms, it is like paying God a compliment.

Decide which Explore activities you will do. Cut the bonus leaflets at the fold line to separate pages 1 and 2 from pages 3 and 4. Send home pages 1 and 2 of the bonus leaflet today. The first half of the bonus leaflet provides Family faith talk opportunities for sessions 1–5. Check Supplies and To do throughout the session to see what needs to be prepared.

Make copies of the Letter to families from page 96 in this guide. This letter gives an overview of the quarter as well as where to find the Bible stories in *Shine On: A Story Bible*. Send one letter home with each child.

In this text, Jesus draws closer to Jerusalem, the end of a long journey in Luke's Gospel (9:51–19:44). Jerusalem is the seat of Jewish religious and political power: the city of Zion, dwelling place of God, and the home of the powerful judicial body, the Sanhedrin. Jerusalem is also the place of Jesus' final destiny, his death on the cross. As narrative time slows to a crawl, the tension that has been building since the beginning of the Gospel mounts. Twice Luke mentions that Jesus is "approaching" (19:29, 37); twice he mentions the Mount of Olives, the site of God's coming judgment and reign, according to the prophet Zechariah (Zechariah 14:4). Jesus' conflict with religious leaders (5:17) and his repeated passion predictions (13:31–35; 18:31–34) are about to reach their climax.

Jesus' instructions to his disciples about procuring a donkey and the completion of their task are narrated with remarkable detail. The disciples find everything just as Jesus said, and they obey him to the letter. This communicates several things: it suggests that Jesus is in full control, orchestrating what is about to happen; it highlights the theme of prophetic fulfillment; and it portrays the disciples as obedient and faithful, even though they have not always been so thus far.

The main point of the story is to depict Jesus entering the royal city of David as its king. He enters not to *claim* royal rule but as an *already* victorious king. Throughout his public ministry Jesus has been announcing the advent of the reign of God; however, the word pictures he has painted about this kingdom are unusual, and his actions have not been those of a typical king. This carefully orchestrated entrance into Jerusalem is a sign-act, a deliberate move by Jesus to present himself as the long awaited ruler of Israel. Like a king who has authority to requisition supplies from his subjects, Jesus sends two disciples to procure an unriden colt. Although Luke does not explicitly quote Zechariah 9:9, as do Matthew and John, the allusion is clear. In this prophetic text the king does not come with arrogance on a conquering warhorse; rather, he comes with humility, on an ordinary work animal, to destroy weapons of war and bring peace (Zechariah 9:10).



The responses to Jesus' sign-act also befit a king. Although Luke does not mention the waving of palm branches, he does say that the crowds spread their coats on the road, a practice that heralded the coming of a new king (as in 2 Kings 9:13). As Jesus approaches Jerusalem, a multitude of disciples acclaim him as king with the words of Psalm 118: "Blessed is the king who comes in the name of the Lord." Scholars believe this was a royal psalm used in Israel's past at the entry and enthronement of a king. The second part of the disciples' proclamation is unique to Luke's Gospel and echoes the words of the angels at Jesus' birth: "Peace in

heaven, and glory in the highest heaven." Like the host of angels who heralded the birth of Christ the Lord (2:13–14), the host of disciples also praise God (19:37–38). For readers who know the end of the story, however, their words have tragic overtones. Right after this Jesus will weep over Jerusalem and lament the fact that they did not recognize "the things that make for peace" (19:41–44). Peace remains "in heaven" as God's intention, but it has not yet come "on earth," as the angels sang.

The Pharisees attempt to squash the disciples' praise. Earlier, when Peter confessed Jesus to be the Messiah, Jesus ordered him not to tell anyone (9:20–21). Now the time for silence is over. If Jesus' followers don't bear witness to the one who inaugurates God's reign, creation itself will erupt in praise.

Tragically, not everyone acknowledges Jesus as the Messiah who comes bringing God's reign. Jesus ascends his throne and becomes king in the most unlikely places and in the strangest of ways. He becomes king on the cross, extending forgiveness to enemies and criminals and saving others rather than himself.

gather

supplies

- Shine Songbook and CD
- Year Two Songbooks (optional)
- CD player
- Masking tape
- Small paper plates
- Crayons or markers
- Candle and matches
- Small stones
- Glass bowl

poster pack

- Bible memory poster (Luke 22)

media connections

- YouTube search for "Jesus' triumphal entry" (choose several video clips, including one from the donkey's perspective)
- *The Donkey That No One Could Ride* by Anthony DeStefano
- "Come into the Streets with Me" song by Shirley Erena Murray
- "Silence My Soul" song by Francisco F. Feliciano
- Recording of hymn "Hosanna, Loud Hosanna!"

BUILD COMMUNITY

Use masking tape to mark a circle on the floor close to where you plan to tell today's Bible story. Invite children to remember a time of celebration in their lives (birthday, birth of a sibling, learning to tie shoes, scoring a goal). Provide small paper plates; have children draw faces on their plates showing how they felt. Encourage children to share their experiences and place their faces in the circle, creating a crowd of happy faces. Sometimes celebrations evoke emotions other than happiness; acknowledge any unhappy faces in the crowd. Tell the children that today's story is about a crowd of people celebrating Jesus. Leave the face plates in place for later.

WORSHIP TOGETHER

Light a candle. Place several small stones at the base of the candle.

Pray, praising God for creating all of us and thanking God for each child in the circle. Then sing "Cantai ao Senhor" (O Sing to the Lord) from the Shine CD, track 1 (page 5 of the *Year Two Songbook*).

SPIRITUAL PRACTICE

Explain that praise is speaking good things about someone. Set out a glass bowl and give each child a small stone. Encourage each child to say a good thing about God and place a stone in the bowl. After each stone goes in the bowl, the group says together:

We praise you, God.

Bible memory

Point to the words on the Bible memory poster as you read the text. Say the verse in short phrases, having the children repeat each phrase after you and follow your motions.

The greatest (*raise arms in front of you and overhead*) **among you must become like the youngest, and the leader like one who serves.** (*Hold hands near body, palms up, then move hands forward away from body, as though offering something to another.*)

—Luke 22:26b

teaching tip

Media connections can add creativity and relevance to your session. They can enlarge your understanding of the Bible text and prepare you to offer additional experiences to children.

experience

SHARE THE STORY

Point out the Jerusalem poster. Explain that Jesus' final week of living on earth was spent in and around the city of Jerusalem. Trace the city walls. Then point to the entry gate near the number 1. Also indicate the illustration of Jesus entering Jerusalem to cheering crowds.

Gather around the crowd of happy face plates created earlier in Build community. Lay out a strip of brown cloth to represent the road into Jerusalem.

Open the Bible to Luke 19 and turn to page 248 in *Shine On: A Story Bible* to find today's story. As you tell the story, sketch simple stick figure illustrations on cloaks and branches copied from page 84 of this guide. Place the cloaks and branches on the brown cloth, forming a trail. For example, as you mention the donkey, draw a simple stick donkey; as you mention Jerusalem, quickly sketch a few buildings and place it on the cloth. Continue in this way throughout the story.

WONDER AND REFLECT

Quietly replace each happy face plate (from Build community) with a stone, saying:

Jesus said, "If the people are silent, the stones will shout."

Ponder the story with the children. Pause between questions to give them time to reflect. Add questions that arise from your own reflection and ask the children what they wonder about.

- I wonder why the Pharisees wanted the people to be quiet. I wonder what Jesus meant by saying that the stones would shout out.
- I wonder why it was important for Jesus to ride a donkey into Jerusalem.
- I wonder what Jesus had done that made the people want to praise and honor him.
- Imagine standing on the street to watch a parade go by. I wonder how you would welcome Jesus.

PEACE NOTES

All of creation is included in God's big plan for peace and salvation. Jesus said that if the people were silent, the stones would praise him. Write the word *H-O-S-A-N-N-A* by writing one letter at a time on each stone. Pass a fine-point permanent marker and invite each child to take a turn writing a letter.

Line up the stones in order with the letters facing the children. This word means "save us, we pray." Talk about what nature and humans might need saving from. What can we do to participate in God's work of peace and salvation in the world?



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Luke 19:28-40

supplies

- Bible
- *Shine On: A Story Bible*
- Stones of varying sizes (one per child, at least seven)
- Fine-point permanent marker

storytelling props

- Happy face plates (from Build community)
- Strip of brown cloth
- Cloak and branch patterns (from Additional resources)
- Pen, pencil

poster pack

- Jerusalem poster

to do

- Make copies of the cloaks and branches from page 84. You will draw story sketches on these shapes. Practice telling the story and drawing story sketches.
- Fold back the Sudoku cards that appear along the edge of the Jerusalem poster. Fasten with a paper clip. These will be cut apart for use in session 7 and beyond. Until then they will remain folded back.

explore

CREATE

Make a palm banner. On a piece of muslin, use permanent marker to draw the spine of a palm branch. Lay muslin on a table. Set out green ink pads. Children ink one hand and press it on the muslin, heel of the hand against the spine to make leaves on the frond (see illustration on page 88). Have wet wipes or soap and water available for washing hands. Letter the word *Hosanna* on the banner and hang the banner in the room.

Alternative: Make individual banners on sheets of white paper. Place small amounts of green tempera paint in pie tins if ink pads are not available.

supplies

- Banner-sized strip of muslin or other plain cloth in a neutral color
- Green permanent marker
- Large green ink pads, washable (from craft or school supply stores)
- Soap and water, or wet wipes
- Large sheets of white paper (optional)
- Green tempera paint in pie tins (optional)

MOVE

Celebrate Jesus. Tear green construction paper into branches. Have children form two lines facing one another. Wave branches and sing the song on page 1 of the Primary leaflet to the tune of "Jesus Loves Me."

For smaller groups: If your group is small, form one line and parade around the room while waving the branches and singing the song.

supplies

- Primary leaflets
- Green construction paper



other ideas

- Make praise rocks by writing praise words on stones or painting rocks with bright colors.
- Read *The Amazing Journey* by Susie Poole (especially the Palm Sunday portion).

RETELL

Retell today's story using the sketches that you drew in Share the story. Mix up the sketches and give one to each child. Children retell the story while putting the pictures in order on the brown cloth. If you have more children than pictures, have extra cloaks and branches available (patterns on page 84). Children can make their own sets of drawings for the story and place them in order.

supplies

- Cloaks and branches with sketches (see Storytelling props on previous page)
- Strip of brown cloth (see Storytelling props on previous page)
- Extra cloaks and branches (from Additional resources)
- Markers

LEAFLET

Children can form groups to play the game on pages 2 and 3. They can color page 4 to reveal the word *king*.

supplies

- Primary leaflets
- A variety of buttons (for game markers)
- Coins (one per group)
- Pencils, crayons, colored pencils

bleSS

PRAY

Sing the fifth verse of “Come into God’s Presence” from the Shine CD, track 4 (page 9 in the *Year Two Songbook*). Then pray, praising God’s love and compassion in sending Jesus to us.



SEND

Send the children out with Jesus’ words from John 20:21.

Jesus spoke these words to his disciples one of the last times he saw them. “Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, so I send you.” Peace be with you as you go today.

Send home the session 1 leaflet and the first half of the bonus leaflet. Explain to parents that the bonus page is an opportunity to talk about faith at home during the season of Lent. Send home a copy of the Letter to families from page 96 in this guide with each child.

looking ahead

Store the other halves of the bonus leaflets (pages 3 and 4) for use in sessions 5 and 9.

leader’s closing prayer

A little “peace and quiet” is a good thing, but true peace comes from living in God’s grace, about which we should never stop giving praise.

God of peace, may I live in your peace but never be silent about the wonders of your love and graciousness. Remind me of them daily, and through them renew my own love and graciousness toward all your children. Amen.

supplies

- Session 1 Primary leaflets
- Bonus leaflets (pages 1 and 2 only)
- Copies of Letter to families (from Additional resources)
- *Shine Songbook and CD*
- *Year Two Songbooks* (optional)
- CD player

I have decorated paper bags hanging on the wall of the room for each child. When they are absent on a Sunday, I put in papers that they missed. I also put surprises in once in a while for each child or a note to remind them of our theme, “Shine,” or other fun things.

—Elsa Haga-VanDerGraaf
Grand Rapids, Michigan