



Session 1
Spring 2016
Junior Youth

Jesus rides into Jerusalem

LUKE 19:28-40

prepare

PRAYER

Powerful God, you come to us in unlikely but wonderful ways. Come to us again today. 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 junior youth

Today's story commences the events of Holy Week, which will be the focus of the next five sessions. While Jesus' entry into Jerusalem is celebrated in church on Palm Sunday, encountering it earlier allows time for youth to experience several different important stories leading up to Easter. The stories of Holy Week cover a wide range of emotions. Junior youth are certainly familiar with emotional swings! Help them connect their experiences with the emotions of the original participants in these stories.

The Lent poster from the previous quarter of Shine continues into this quarter. If you did not teach the Winter quarter, ask the previous teacher to keep the Lent poster available for you. Decide which Explore activities you will do. For Retell, bring jackets, stones, and a broom for skit props. Check Supplies and To do throughout the session to see what needs to be prepared.



dig deeper

by Sheila Klassen-Wiebe

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*
- CD player
- Spring holidays game instructions (from Additional resources)
- Information cards (from Additional resources)
- Stones/river rocks with the word *recognizing*
- Purple cloth
- Pillar candle, matches
- Peanut butter related snack (optional)

poster pack

- Spring holidays poster
- Bible memory poster (Luke 22)
- Lent poster (carried over from the Winter quarter of Shine)

to do

- Hang the Bible memory and Spring holidays posters.
- Keep the Lent poster from the Shine winter quarter.
- Copy and cut apart the Information cards from page 84 of this guide.
- Write the word *recognizing* on rocks (one per person), then put them on the Lent worship table begun the Shine winter quarter.

media connections

- YouTube searches: "Jesus' triumphal entry" and "Triumphal Entry & Keni" (to see an unfolding art sketch of the story)
- *Christ's Entry into Jerusalem* by Norman Adams (commentary at the Methodist Modern Art Collection website)
- "Come into the Streets with Me" by Shirley Erena Murray (sheet music available online)

BUILD COMMUNITY

Introduce yourself to the group if needed. Play the "Holiday guessing game" explained on page 84 of this guide. Then show youth the Spring holidays poster. Say:

The word *holiday* comes from words that mean *holy* and *day*. Originally, holidays were days that were set apart, or marked as holy, for religious celebrations or observances. We will be celebrating several important holidays this quarter.

Add dates to the poster that are significant for your group, such as birthdays or church events. If no one in the group has peanut allergies, serve a small peanut butter related snack in honor of Peanut Butter Lover's Day, which was on March 1.

WORSHIP TOGETHER

Gather around a Lenten worship table, set up with a purple cloth, pillar candle, and some rocks. Draw attention to the Lent poster from the Shine Junior Youth Winter Poster pack. This week's word is *recognizing*.

Hand each youth a rock with the word *recognizing* written on it. Invite the youth to hold the rock, turning it over in their hands, as they reflect on these questions: "What do you think Jesus would look like if he showed up today? How would you recognize him? How would you welcome him?" As youth reflect, play "Óyenos, mi Dios" from the Shine CD, track 15, softly in the background.

SPIRITUAL PRACTICE

During the first five sessions of this quarter, youth will practice imaginative prayer by putting themselves into the gospel story. Since this practice will use the scripture from each session's story, it will make most sense to do it later in the session, as part of Share the story. (Further instructions are given there.)

Bible memory

Using the Bible memory poster, read through the verse together. Pass out the Information cards from page 84 of this guide for youth to read to the group, and briefly talk about the questions. Say the verse several times together.

But he said to them, "The kings of the Gentiles lord it over them; and those in authority over them are called benefactors. But not so with you; rather the greatest among you must become like the youngest, and the leader like one who serves."

—Luke 22:25–26

teaching tip

Worship together continues the theme of Lent begun in the previous quarter. Set up a worship table with a purple cloth and pillar candle. In the weeks leading up to this one, the Lenten word of the week has been written on stones and arranged around the candle. Each youth takes home a stone at the end of the session. The Lent poster from the previous quarter of Shine continues into this quarter. If you did not teach the Winter quarter, ask the previous teacher to keep the Lent poster available for you.

experience

SHARE THE STORY

Point out Palm Sunday on the Spring holidays poster. Tell the group that today's story covers the events of Palm Sunday, although we are reading it a few weeks earlier than when it is celebrated in church—and there are no palms in Luke's version!

Have youth open Bibles to Luke 19:28. Give each person a copy of the Imaginative prayer instructions from page 85 of this guide and a pencil or pen. Tell the group that they will be experiencing today's story, Luke 19:28–40, with their imaginations. Read the instructions aloud, giving time for youth to follow each step. (You can choose to read the Bible story aloud or have youth read it silently.) Encourage youth to use the chart on the handout for their notes.

WONDER AND REFLECT

Invite anyone who desires to share briefly about their imaginative prayer experience. Then reflect further on the story together.

- I wonder what the disciples said to each other as they untied the colt. I wonder what they said to each other as Jesus rode into the city.
- Cloaks were people's outer clothing; poor people also used their cloaks as blankets. Why would people lay their clothing down on the road?
- I wonder why the Pharisees wanted the people to stop. I wonder what Jesus meant by saying that the stones would shout out.
- When have you celebrated Jesus or worshiped God in a crowd? What was it like? What are different ways that we can celebrate Jesus today?

PEACE NOTES

Jesus' entry into Jerusalem was a demonstration of power, but a humble and peaceful kind of power. On page 3 of *L.E.D.*, youth can read other examples of this peaceful kind of power. Also encourage youth to write their own peaceful slogans using the prompt in *L.E.D.* Choose several lines to practice a few times together. If your group wants, move through your church building (and/or outside) shouting the lines!

Jesus rides into Jerusalem

Luke 19:28–40

supplies

- Bibles
- *L.E.D.* magazines
- Imaginative prayer instructions (from Additional resources)
- Pencil/pens

poster pack

- Spring holidays poster

to do

- Read through the Bible story to become familiar with it.
- Make copies of the Imaginative prayer instructions from page 85, two for each youth.

explore

MOVE

Design a race recalling Jesus' entry into Jerusalem. Divide into two teams. When time begins, each team uses masking tape or cones to lay out a path 3 ft / 1 m wide that goes from one marked spot to another. Next, they must completely cover their path in old coats, blankets, or fabric pieces so no bare ground shows. Finally, each team member must crawl on all fours from one end of their path to the other. When they reach the end and cry "Hosanna," their next teammate may begin crawling. First team done wins!

For smaller groups: Try doing this multiple times with a single team (which could be as few as one to two youth) competing to beat their time from the previous relay race.

supplies

- Timer
- Masking tape or cones
- Measuring tape
- Old coats/blankets/fabric pieces



other ideas

- Organize a jacket drive for your church that culminates on Palm Sunday.
- Show videos or pictures of people we celebrate in today's society. Talk about why we celebrate these people and why we celebrate Jesus.

RETELL

Assign parts for the skit on page 2 of *L.E.D.* Make a short path lined with stones and give everyone one or more jackets (their own or ones you brought). Put a broom ("colt") in one corner of the room, where the Owner starts. Jesus, Disciple(s), and Pharisee(s) should stand in a different area. You can read the part of the Narrator.

For smaller groups: If you have less than three youth, read the story from the Bible instead. You may be Narrator, with one youth reading the parts of Jesus and the other youth reading verse 38. Use the props and move through the various actions together. With three youth, Narrator can also read parts of Owner and Pharisees.

supplies

- *L.E.D.* magazines
- Storytelling props (stones, jackets, broom)

L.E.D.

If possible, go outside with copies of *L.E.D.*, Bibles, paper, and markers. On page 4, youth can see illustrations of different parts of nature praising God and create their own pictures on separate pieces of paper. Encourage youth to listen for creation praising God around them. If possible, play the song "Hallelujahs" by Chris Rice.

supplies

- Bibles
- *L.E.D.* magazines
- Paper
- Markers

TALK ABOUT

Listen to or sing along with "Unity," track 20 on the Shine CD and page 30 in the *Year Two Songbook*, and "Yezu Azali Awa" (Jesus Christ is Present Here), track 21 and page 31. The lyrics are also in the back of *L.E.D.* Review the Lingala lyrics. Have youth pay attention to how these songs compare God or Jesus to a "king" or "Savior." Provide time for silent reflection and sharing about these questions:

How is Jesus like a king? How is Jesus not like a king?

What situations in your life or in the world need "saving"?

What other names would you use for Jesus?

supplies

- *Shine Songbook and CD*
- *Year Two Songbooks* (optional)
- CD player

bless

PRAY

Invite youth to think back over the emotions of the different characters in today's story. The stories that follow this one in Holy Week will cover a whole spectrum of emotions. How can we recognize God even in the tough times? Encourage youth to take their stones from the opening time with them this week as a way to help them remember to recognize Jesus even in surprising places.

SEND

Play "Sizohamba Naye" (We Will Walk with God), track 18 on the Shine CD. Divide youth into two groups to do the "Sending litany" found on page 2 of *L.E.D.*

Give each person a copy of the Imaginative prayer instructions to take home, and encourage them to do imaginative prayer readings a couple of times during the week.

supplies

- *L.E.D.* magazines
- *Shine Songbook and CD*
- CD player
- Imaginative prayer instructions (from Additional resources)



leader's closing prayer

Who would you have been in this story—a disciple, bewildered but obedient? A member of the crowd shouting praise? A crowd member standing silent but curious on the fringes? A Pharisee growing angry over all the ruckus?

Jesus, help me walk the road into Jerusalem with you in the days to come. Strengthen me as I seek to follow your way of peaceful, powerful love. Amen.

Listening is the most important skill that a teacher can develop. Come in prepared but also prepared to let go of your agenda. Hold your session plan loosely and listen to your youth and to the Holy Spirit. What is God's lesson for us today?

—Jeanne Davies
Elgin, Illinois

looking ahead

For next week's Share the story, you will need to prepare a separate room or area ahead of time with bread and juice for each youth. One Explore option suggests bringing ingredients to make a simple recipe together or bringing it already prepared; find recipes on pages 6–7 of *L.E.D.*