



Session 1
Spring 2016
Early Childhood

Jesus rides into Jerusalem

LUKE 19:28-40

prepare

PRAYER

Creative God, all you have made is full of beauty. With your people around the world, I praise you. With your creation—from water and rocks to trees and sky—I praise you. Amen.

PURPOSE STATEMENT

To experience Jesus' last days with his friends

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 from the Mount of Olives on the donkey. 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 early childhood

This story invites all who hear it, especially little ones, to joyfully praise God with whatever materials are close at hand. Children will handle branches and rocks as they join creation in praise. The Luke text does not specifically reference palm branches. However, they are traditionally a part of Palm Sunday celebrations and have been included in this session.

Decide which Explore activities you will do. The Create project involves finger painting, so you may want to have an older child or adult assist if you choose this option. Alternately, you might find it more manageable to use paper leaf shapes rather than painted handprints. Check Supplies and To do throughout the session to see what needs to be prepared. Go to www.ShineCurriculum.com/Extras to find tips for working with younger children.



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 Early Childhood Music CD*
- CD player
- Stones
- Bowl

resource pack

- Bible memory poster (Luke 19)
- Seasons poster

to do

- Because the Seasons poster is used on the floor, you may want to laminate it or cover it with clear adhesive to provide greater durability.

media connections

- *Brother Sun, Sister Moon: St. Francis of Assisi's Canticle of the Creatures* by Katherine Paterson
- *Let the Whole Earth Sing Praise* by Tomie dePaola
- "Sizohamba Naye" (We Will Walk with God), available on John Bell and Alison Adam's CD *Sing with the World: Global Songs for Children*
- "Uyai Mose" (Come All You People)

BUILD COMMUNITY

Greet each child by name. Lay the Seasons poster from the resource pack on the floor. Set out smooth stones. Ask children to choose a stone and place it somewhere on the footprint path. Read the headline on the poster, highlighting that we can follow God all the time. *Note:* Avoid small pebbles, as they are choking hazards.

WORSHIP TOGETHER

Sing "Every Tree" from the *Shine Early Childhood Music CD*, track 9. Act like the creature or object mentioned while you sing. Song lyrics are at the back of this guide.

SPIRITUAL PRACTICE

Explain that the word *praise* means to say good things about someone. We can say good things about friends. We can also say good things about God.

Set a bowl in the middle of the Seasons poster. Invite children to pick up a stone that was laid on the poster earlier, place it in the bowl, and say something good about God. Model this first, by saying something like "God is kind" or "God is loving." A simpler option is to have each child say "Praise God" while placing the stone in the bowl. Close by saying "Praise God" together.

teaching tip

Using different postures for prayer and celebration can help to connect the mind, body, and heart in talking with God.

Bible memory

Read the Bible memory verse from the poster. March in place while saying the first line. Lift hands up for "peace in heaven," and then lift hands higher and wider for "glory in the highest heaven!"

Blessed is the king who comes in the name of the Lord! Peace in heaven, and glory in the highest heaven!

—Luke 19:38

experience

SHARE THE STORY

Open a Bible to Luke 19:28 and show children the words of the Bible story. Say:

This story is for you, for me, for all people.

Lay a cloth road on the floor. At one end, make a large square using yarn to represent the city of Jerusalem. Partway down the road, make a smaller square using yarn to represent a town. Set a Donkey figure copied from page 84 in this guide inside the smaller yarn square.

Have small squares of cloth and several leaves ready. Lay them on the road to represent cloaks and branches when indicated in the story. Have several small stones ready to set by the road.

The Bible story is found on the back of the story picture in the resource pack. Follow the instructions there for movement of the props.

WONDER AND REFLECT

Reflect on the story together. Allow time for children to consider these wondering questions and to respond aloud if they wish to. Invite children to share what they felt about the story and what part they liked best.

- (*Show story picture.*) If you had been with the crowd of people, I wonder where you would have stood.
- I wonder why Jesus wanted to ride on a donkey.
- Imagine putting some of your clothes on the ground in front of the donkey.
- I wonder what rocks would say about Jesus if they started shouting.
- I wonder what words I would shout about Jesus.

Point to the children in the summer section of the Seasons poster. Have children repeat the words in the speech bubbles several times.

PEACE NOTES

Celebrate the peace that Jesus brought to the world by singing “Hosanna” from the *Shine Early Childhood Music CD*, track 14. Pat the ground, palms down, for the line “We lay our palms for you.”

Pray, using the same motion during the prayer.

God, you made a wonderful world.

We lay our palms for you.

You sent your son, Jesus, into the world.

We lay our palms for you.

You are with us here today.

We lay our palms for you. Amen.

teaching tip

A shortened interactive Bible story is online in the “Tips for younger children” section at www.ShineCurriculum.com/Extras.



Jesus rides into Jerusalem

Luke 19:28–40

supplies

- Bible
- *Shine Early Childhood Music CD*
- CD player

storytelling props

- Yarn (city and town)
- Cloth (road)
- Donkey figure (from Additional resources)
- Small squares of cloth (cloaks)
- Leaves
- Small stones

resource pack

- Story picture
- Seasons poster

to do

- Cut out small squares of cloth in different colors to represent cloaks in the Bible story.
- Find leaves to represent palm branches in the Bible story.

explore

CREATE

Create a celebration banner. A sample is on page 85 in this guide. Cut cardboard into five long strips, approximately 6 in / 15 cm wide. Have children make green hand-prints on three strips to resemble palm leaves. On the other two strips, have children press their fingertips or closed hands in gray paint to represent small and large stones. Make a hole in one end of each strip and hang the strips from a branch, alternating green and gray. Hang the finished banner in the room.

supplies

- Green paint
- Gray paint
- Paint trays
- Paint smocks
- Handwashing supplies
- Five long cardboard strips
- Yarn
- One-hole punch
- Scissors
- Branch

other ideas

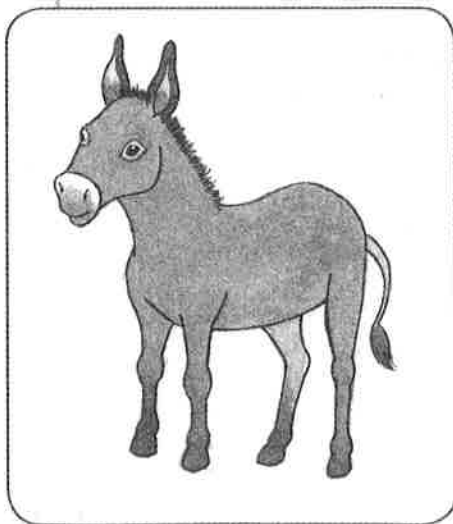
- Sing the song "The Final Week," available at www.ShineCurriculum.com/Extras.
- Act out the story. A short script is available at www.ShineCurriculum.com/Extras in the "Tips for younger children" section.

MOVE

Use masking tape to secure gray paper "stones" on the floor around the room. Play the song "Hosanna" from the *Shine Early Childhood Music CD*, track 14. Have children move around the room without stepping on the stones. When the music stops, everyone stands on a stone and recites the Bible memory passage together.

supplies

- *Shine Early Childhood Music CD*
- CD player
- Bible memory poster (Luke 19) (from resource pack)
- Gray construction paper (one sheet per player)
- Masking tape



RETELL

Option 1: Hide Donkey figures from page 84 in this guide around the room, one per child. Have a branch and piece of clothing for each child as well. Retell the story by singing "Sing Hosanna" from page 85 to the tune of "Give Me Oil in My Lamp." Guide children to find a donkey as you sing verse 1. Lay clothing and then branches during verses 2 and 3. Dance joyfully during the refrain.

Option 2: Cut out the branches and robes on page 3 of the Early Childhood leaflet and glue them on the road pictured on the page.

supplies

- Early Childhood leaflets
- Donkey figures, one per person (from Additional resources)
- Shirts, robes, or coats
- Branches
- Scissors
- Glue sticks

DISCOVER

On page 2 of the Early Childhood leaflet, read about different types of branches used to celebrate Palm Sunday. Examine the tree branches you have cut from local trees. Children can draw a branch in the empty box on page 2. Then provide a variety of rocks for children to explore. Imagine what the rocks would say if they shouted about Jesus.

supplies

- Early Childhood leaflets
- Crayons
- Tree branches
- Rocks
- Magnifying glasses

bles

PRAY

Gather the group for a blessing. Pray:

God, we praise you! The rocks and trees you made praise you, too! Amen.



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, may I live in your peace, but never be silent about the wonders of your love and graciousness. Renew my commitment to care for all your children. Amen.

SEND

Sing "Follow, Follow Jesus" from the *Shine Early Childhood Music CD*, track 10. Song lyrics are at the back of this guide.

Go in peace. God will be with you.

Make sure to send leaflets home with the children.

Let families know that there is a free download of the song "Hosanna" on the Shine website (www.ShineCurriculum.com/Music). Instructions for downloading the free song are on the back of the Early Childhood leaflet.

supplies

- Early Childhood leaflets
- *Shine Early Childhood Music CD*
- CD player

When we work with young children, it is important to try to see the world from their perspective and to value their contributions through their actions and their words.

—Patty Farris

Vancouver, British Columbia

looking ahead

If you plan to make chapatis (Indian flatbread) during Create in session 2, gather the ingredients and materials listed on page 3 of the session 2 Early Childhood leaflet. Make a batch at home before the session to see the proportions that will work best. Locate an electric skillet to make them in the room or arrange for someone to take the prepared dough to the kitchen to cook.