

Unit 26 • Session 1
Jesus' Triumphal Entry

Bible Passage:

Matthew 21; Mark 11;
Luke 19; John 12

Story Point:

People welcomed Jesus to Jerusalem as their King.

Key Passage:

Philippians 2:8

Big Picture Question:

What did Jesus do to save us?

Jesus lived a sinless life, died on the cross, and rose from the dead.

Leader Bible Study

Leading into the last week of Jesus' ministry before His death and resurrection, Jesus entered Jerusalem as the King of kings. Many of God's people traveled to Jerusalem for Passover. Jesus and His disciples traveled to Jerusalem as well. Near Bethphage (BETH fayj) and Bethany near the Mount of Olives, Jesus sent two disciples ahead into a village.

Jesus told them, "You will find a young donkey tied there. No one has ever sat on it. Untie it and bring it here. If anyone says to you 'Why are you doing this?' say, 'The Lord needs it.'" Jesus would fulfill Zechariah's prophecy: "Look, your King is coming to you ... humble and riding on a donkey" (Zech. 9:9).

Jesus made a spectacular entrance into the city. He rode a donkey, and people laid branches and their robes on the ground in front of Him. The people welcoming Jesus into Jerusalem believed He was the promised Messiah, but they expected Him to overthrow Roman oppression and set up an earthly throne. Jesus sent a different message.

The next day, Jesus entered the temple and turned over the tables of the money changers and those selling doves. Jesus referred to Isaiah 56:7, declaring that His kingship would not just be over the Jews but over all people. While Jesus was in the temple, He healed the blind and the lame. Jesus' actions declared, "I am not just your King; I am also your God." (See Isa. 35:4-6.)

Finally, the priests and the scribes heard the children in the temple worshipping Jesus as their King. "Do You hear what these children are saying?" they asked. Jesus replied, quoting Psalm 8:2. Jesus gladly received their praise because He was worthy of their praise. Jesus is the Son of God who came to overthrow sin and set up an eternal throne. Help kids connect the dots between God's promises of a Messiah and Jesus' coming. Help them understand why Jesus came: to save the world from sin!

The **BIBLE** Story

Jesus' Triumphal Entry

Matthew 21; Mark 11; Luke 19; John 12

It was time to celebrate Passover, a special time to remember how God had freed His people from slavery in Egypt. Many Israelites had

traveled to Jerusalem to celebrate God's amazing rescue.

Jesus and His disciples were among the people who **traveled to Jerusalem**. When they neared Bethphage (BETH fayj) and Bethany near the Mount of Olives, **Jesus sent two of His disciples ahead into a village. "As soon as you enter the village," Jesus told them, "you will find a young donkey tied there. No one has ever sat on it. Untie it and bring it here. If anyone says to you 'Why are you doing this?' say, 'The Lord needs it.'"**

The disciples did as Jesus asked. As they untied the donkey, its owners asked why. "The Lord needs it," they said. Then **they brought the donkey to Jesus, threw their robes onto the donkey, and helped Jesus get onto it. People spread their robes along the road for Jesus, and others spread palm branches cut from the fields.**

The whole crowd praised God with a loud voice for all the miracles they had seen. "**Hosanna!**" **they said. "Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord! Hosanna in the highest heaven!"** The word *hosanna* means "save now." The people welcomed Jesus as their promised King. They hoped He would save them from the Romans.

Some religious leaders asked Jesus to tell His disciples to be quiet. Jesus answered, "If they did not praise Me, the rocks would praise Me!"

While Jesus was in the temple complex, people who were blind and people who were lame came to Him. Jesus healed them. The blind and lame would not have been allowed to worship in the temple.

Other religious leaders saw Jesus' miracles and heard the children saying, "Hosanna to the Son of David!" They were very angry and asked Jesus, "Do You hear what these children are saying?" They were saying Jesus is the king.

"Yes," Jesus told them. The writer of the Psalms had said, "You have prepared praise from the mouths of children and nursing

infants.”

Jesus left them and **went to the town of Bethany to spend the night.**

Christ Connection: During Jesus' triumphal entry, the people welcomed Him as King. Jesus was the Messiah spoken about by the prophet Zechariah: "Look, your King is coming to you; he is righteous and victorious, humble and riding on a donkey, on a colt, the foal of a donkey" (Zechariah 9:9). One day, Jesus will return to earth on a white horse as King over everything.

Introduce the Story

Session Title: Jesus' Triumphal Entry

Bible Passage: Matthew 21; Mark 11; Luke 19; John 12

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Key Passage: Philippians 2:8

Big Picture Question: What did Jesus do to save us? Jesus lived a sinless life, died on the cross, and rose from the dead.

Welcome time

Greet each kid as he or she arrives. Use this time to collect the offering, fill out attendance sheets, and help new kids connect to your group. Prompt kids to imagine they are preparing to welcome a king to church today. What do they think they would need to do to get ready? Invite the kids to share their ideas.

Activity page (5 minutes)

Invite kids to complete "Where Jesus Walked" on the activity page.

Guide kids to unscramble the names of places Jesus lived in or visited. Then kids should trace Jesus' journey by drawing lines on the map between the places in order.

Say • Jesus traveled throughout the regions of Judea, Samaria, and Galilee during His life. He was about 30 years old when He began His ministry. He spent three years performing miracles and telling people about God and His kingdom. Listen carefully to today's Bible story to find out where Jesus went the week before He died on the cross.

Session starter (10 minutes)

Option 1: Guess the word

Lead the kids in a guess-the-word game using key words from today's Bible story. (*hosanna, triumphal, Jesus, Jerusalem, king, donkey, Messiah, Roman, temple*)

Draw a blank for each letter of the word on a chalkboard, dry erase board, or use sticky notes on the wall. Call on kids one at a time to guess a letter. If a player guesses a letter in the word, he can guess another. If a player guesses a letter that does not appear in the word, his turn is over and play passes to the next kid.

The player who completes the word is the winner. Play as time allows.

SAY • The words in this game give you a few hints about the Bible story we'll talk about today. Do you have a guess of what the story is? Today we are going to begin learning about the last week of Jesus' life.

Option 2: Explore the story

Before the session, conceal the props inside separate eggs. Hide the eggs around the room. Leave one egg empty.

Challenge kids to find and collect all the eggs. Invite kids to open the eggs one at a time. Discuss what they think the items inside might have to do with today's Bible story. Refer to the "Story Eggs"

printable for explanations.

Say • Over the next few weeks, we will be learning about Jesus' final days here on earth. All of these items are related to the week leading up to Jesus' death on the cross. Pay close attention to the stories and see if you notice any of these items.

Transition to teach the story

Teach the Story

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Suggested Theme Decorating Ideas: Make your space look like a courtroom. Set up a large table, which could be put on risers to make it look taller for the judge's desk, a smaller desk to serve as a witness stand, and chairs for a jury. Position props such as a notebook and gavel on the judge's desk.

Countdown

Show the countdown video as you transition to teach the story. Set it to end as the session begins.

Introduce the session (3 minutes)

[Leader enters wearing a black judge's robe and carries a Bible.]

Leader • Hello, everyone! Welcome to my courtroom. I'm Judge [your name], and this is where I work. My job as a judge is to

hear different cases and make decisions based on the evidence that is presented.

I usually sit right there [*point to the “judge’s desk”*], and the witness who is speaking to the court sits right here [*signal to the lower desk*] in the witness box. Sometimes there is a jury of citizens who hear the evidence. They sit right here [*signal to the chairs on the side of the room*].

Over the next few weeks, we are going to learn about someone who did no wrong but was betrayed, arrested, put on trial, and eventually crucified. This is the story of Jesus and is found in the Word of God.

[*Hold up your Bible.*] Each time we meet, we will hear different parts of the story of Jesus’ final days on earth from men who spent time with Jesus or spoke with people who were eyewitnesses to Jesus’ work on earth. I hope that you will come back each week to hear how all this unfolded.

Big picture question (1 minute)

Leader • Each week, we will answer a big picture question. This question helps us to focus on what God is teaching through each story. Our big picture question is, ***What did Jesus do to save us?***

People often have questions about Jesus and salvation, and you may have some too. That’s why I’m so glad you are here! Every time we meet, we will hear stories from God’s Word that will help us answer this question.

Giant timeline (1 minute)

Show the giant timeline. Point to individual Bible stories as you review.

Leader • All of the stories in the Bible fit together to form one big story about God’s plan to rescue sinners through His Son,

Jesus. Over the past few weeks, we have learned about Jesus' ministry on earth. [*Point out some specific stories about Jesus' ministry.*]

This week, we will begin to learn about the events that took place before His death on the cross. All the stories we have talked about have led us up to this week. Let's start at the beginning of Jesus' final week as He entered Jerusalem.

Tell the Bible story (10 minutes)

Open your Bible to Matthew 21; Mark 11; Luke 19; John 12. Use the Bible storytelling tips on the Bible story page to help you tell the story, or show the Bible story video "Jesus' Triumphal Entry."

Leader • The time of Passover was and still is very important for the Jewish people. It was not just a special meal, but a weeklong celebration of what God had done to free His people from slavery in Egypt. This was especially important for the Jews during Jesus' day because they were again under oppression—this time under the Roman Empire. They were looking for the Rescuer, or Messiah, whom the prophets long ago had said would come.

When Jesus entered Jerusalem for the final time, how did He make His entrance? Look at Matthew 21:7. [*Allow kids to read the verse and respond.*] Jesus rode into the city on a donkey! Is that how you would expect a king to arrive?

How did the people respond when they saw Jesus? Look at Matthew 21:8-11. [*Allow kids to read the verses and respond.*]

People welcomed Jesus to Jerusalem as their King. The crowds shouted "hosanna!" Do you remember what that means? [*Pause for kids to answer.*] *Hosanna* means "save now." The people had seen all that Jesus had done: His miracles and healing of the sick. Now they expected Him to conquer the Romans and reign as King.

Is that what He did? [*Allow kids to respond.*] No, but He would save His people in an even greater way.

Christ connection

Leader • Jesus knew what would happen after He entered Jerusalem, but He willingly went. The people welcomed Him as their King. Jesus was the Messiah spoken about by the prophet Zechariah when he wrote, “Look, your King is coming to you; He is righteous and victorious, humble and riding on a donkey, on a colt, the foal of a donkey” (Zech. 9:9). One day, Jesus will return to earth on a white horse as King over everything.

Questions from kids video (3 minutes)

Show the “Unit 26, Session 1” questions from kids video. Prompt kids to think how they can make new neighbors feel welcome. Discuss some ways they will make others feel welcome—at home, at school, or in the community.

Missions moment (3 minutes)

Ask kids to raise their hands if they can run fast. Have they ever run a race?

Leader • Running fast might not seem like something useful for a missionary to do, but we are going to learn about a missionary who used that skill to share Jesus. His name was Eric Liddell, and he had a special life of serving Jesus.

Play the missions video and then ask if anyone had ever heard about Eric Liddell.

Leader • Missionaries share the same stories about Jesus that we learn, like our story today about how **people welcomed Jesus to Jerusalem as their King**. We can share these stories, too, and be on mission with God.

Key passage (5 minutes)

Show the key passage poster. Lead the boys and girls to read together Philippians 2:8.

Leader • God the Son left His place at the right hand of God in heaven to come to earth to live as a man and fulfill God's plan to save His people. In our story today, we saw one of the many ways Jesus the King obeyed God by entering Jerusalem one final time.

Lead boys and girls in singing "He Humbled Himself (Philippians 2:8)."

Sing (4 minutes)

Open your Bible and read aloud Revelation 5:12.

Leader • Jesus is the promised Messiah who came to save sinners.
What did Jesus do to save us? Jesus lived a sinless life, died on the cross, and rose from the dead. He is worthy of all praise.

Sing together "Jesus Saves."

Pray (2 minutes)

Invite kids to pray before dismissing to apply the story.

Leader • God, thank You that out of Your love for us, You provided Your Son as the Messiah, the One who saves us from our sins. Thank You for being the eternal King who will reign over all. May we welcome You as King in every part of our lives. We love You, Lord. Amen.

Dismiss to apply the story

The Gospel: God's Plan for Me

Ask kids if they have ever heard the word *gospel*. Clarify that the word *gospel* means “good news.” It is the message about Christ, the kingdom of God, and salvation. Use the following guide to share the gospel with kids.

God rules. Explain to kids that the Bible tells us God created everything, and He is in charge of everything. Invite a volunteer to read Genesis 1:1 from the Bible. Read Revelation 4:11 or Colossians 1:16-17 aloud and explain what these verses mean.

We sinned. Tell kids that since the time of Adam and Eve, everyone has chosen to disobey God. (Romans 3:23) The Bible calls this sin. Because God is holy, God cannot be around sin. Sin separates us from God and deserves God’s punishment of death. (Romans 6:23)

God provided. Choose a child to read John 3:16 aloud. Say that God sent His Son, Jesus, the perfect solution to our sin problem, to rescue us from the punishment we deserve. It’s something we, as sinners, could never earn on our own. Jesus alone saves us. Read and explain Ephesians 2:8-9.

Jesus gives. Share with kids that Jesus lived a perfect life, died on the cross for our sins, and rose again. Because Jesus gave up His life for us, we can be welcomed into God’s family for eternity. This is the best gift ever! Read Romans 5:8; 2 Corinthians 5:21; or 1 Peter 3:18.

We respond. Tell kids that they can respond to Jesus. Read Romans 10:9-10,13. Review these aspects of our response: Believe in your heart that Jesus alone saves you through what He’s already done on the cross. Repent, turning from self and sin to Jesus. Tell God and others that your faith is in Jesus.

Offer to talk with any child who is interested in responding to Jesus. Provide *I'm a Christian Now!* for new Christians to take home and complete with their families.

Apply the Story

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Big Picture Question: What did Jesus do to save us? Jesus lived a sinless life, died on the cross, and rose from the dead.

Key passage activity (5 minutes)

Display the key passage poster. Lead kids in reading Philippians 2:8 aloud together.

Write the key passage on a chalkboard or dry erase board. Lead kids to read the key passage together. Erase a couple of words and challenge kids to read the key passage again, saying the missing words from memory. See how many words you can erase with the kids still saying the verse correctly.

If time allows, repeat the whole challenge and continue until the class says the whole verse without any words on the board.

Say • Great job! In our Bible story today, **people welcomed Jesus to Jerusalem as their King**. Just days later, Jesus would be arrested, tried, and crucified. All this was because of the Father's great love for us and Jesus' obedience "to the point of death—even to death on a cross."

Discussion & Bible skills (10 minutes)

Distribute Bibles. Guide boys to open their Bibles to Matthew 21 and girls to open their Bibles to Luke 19. Explain that the story of Jesus' triumphal entry is found in all four Gospels. Ask kids to name the four Gospels. (*Matthew, Mark, Luke, John*) Remind them that the Gospels tell of Jesus' life, death, and resurrection. Choose volunteers to read aloud Matthew 21:9 and Luke 19:38.

Say • All four of the accounts of the triumphal entry bring different details to the story. Because our Bible story today, as well as many others, are recorded in many of the Gospels, we can have a deeper insight into Jesus' life and ministry.

Ask the following questions. Lead the group to discuss:

Why do you think the people welcomed Jesus as King? *Help kids recognize that the people knew the prophecies and believed Jesus was the Messiah who was promised long ago.*

(Option: Choose a volunteer to read Ps. 118:26.)

What type of Messiah were the Jewish people expecting? *Help kids recognize that many were expecting the Messiah to be the conqueror of the Roman Empire, but God had another plan—a plan to save people from sin.*

(Option: Choose a volunteer to read Isa. 55:9.)

What are some things you can trust God with in your life, knowing that His plans are best? *Help kids recognize that God is trustworthy and that we can trust Him in all areas of our life.*

(Option: Choose a volunteer to read Prov. 3:5-6.)

Say • Jesus entered Jerusalem on a donkey, and **people welcomed Jesus to Jerusalem as their King**. One day, Jesus will return to earth on a white horse and reign as King over everything for eternity.

Activity choice (10 minutes)

Option 1: Special places

Say • God wants people of every nation to hear about Him so they

might believe. Jesus died on the cross to rescue everyone who trusts in Him. The places we go and live are important to God because people there need to hear about Jesus. Let's look at some of the important places in missionary Eric Liddell's life.

Distribute the three "Special Places" strips describing the significant places of Eric Liddell's life. Display the world map or globe and point out each country (China, Scotland, and France) as volunteers read the statements.

Discuss with kids places that they have lived and places that they go and how they can share Jesus. For example, when they visit their grandmother in another city each summer, they can make new friends in her neighborhood and tell them about believing in Jesus.

Option 2: Make invitations

Provide supplies for kids to create invitations for people they would like to invite to church next week to learn about King Jesus.

Prepare a sample note on the board for kids to use as a template:

Dear _____, I have been having a really great time learning about Jesus' life at my church, and I would really like for you to join me next week as we learn more. Will you come with me? Sincerely, _____

Say • We have talked about how **people welcomed Jesus to Jerusalem as their King** and how He will one day come again and rule as King for all eternity. Do you have any friends or family members you would like to invite to learn more about Jesus?

Encourage kids to use the supplies to make a card to either mail or hand deliver to friends, neighbors, or family members.

Journal and prayer (5 minutes)

Distribute journal pages and pencils. Guide kids to think about and answer the questions listed on the page:

What does this story teach me about God or the gospel?

What does the story teach me about myself?

Are there any commands in this story to obey? How are they for God's glory and my good?

Are there any promises in this story to remember? How do they help me trust and love God?

How does this story help me to live on mission better?

As kids journal, invite them to share their ideas. Then pray, thanking God for sending Jesus as the Messiah and for the promise of eternal life that we have through Him.

As time allows, lead kids to complete "Hosanna!" on the activity page. Kids should number the events in the order they happened. Encourage kids to read Matthew 21:1-17 if they need help.