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The Triumphal Entry , Hosanna!

Scripture: Matthew 21:1-17, Luke 19:28-44

Theme: Jesus is the King who came to serve, not to be served

1st-3rd Grade (Ages 6-8)

Free curriculum for small and rural churches

Lesson Overview

Lesson Overview: "Jesus the King Who Came to Serve" Matthew 21:1, 17 & Luke 19:28, 44 Introduction (Engage): Start with a fun question: "If you were a king, how would you greet your people?" Let kids shout "Hosanna!" (a Hebrew word meaning "Save us!") like the crowd did, showing how excited they were to see Jesus! Explain that today we learn about Jesus entering Jerusalem not on a fancy throne, but on a donkey, a humble choice that shows He came to serve, not rule. Key Lesson (Teach): Jesus rode a donkey to show He was different from other kings. While rich men wanted to be served, Jesus chose to serve the people, He came to heal, teach, and love them. The crowd waved palm branches and cheered because they saw His kindness. This wasn't about power, but about love (John 13:13: "Serving is more than just doing what you're told, it's showing you care!"). Application (Practice): Ask kids: "How can we be like Jesus this week?" Simple ways: help a friend, share a toy, or give a hug to someone who needs it. Jesus' entry showed His heart, let them cheer when they see someone helping others! End with a prayer: "Thank You, Jesus, for choosing to serve us with love!" Closing (Encourage): End with a heartwarming reminder: Jesus' kingdom isn't about being on top, it's about being for others. Let's all be little "Hosanna heroes" today! (Optional: Play a short hymn like "This Is My Father's World" or "Jesus Loves the Little Children" for a joyful close.) --- Teaching Tips for Volunteers: - Use a donkey stuffed animal or toy throne to act out the scene. - Let kids wave palm leaves (or paper cutouts) and shout "Hosanna!" - Keep it interactive with songs, gestures, or a "King's Entry" parade! - Connect to their lives: "What's one way you can serve someone today?" Optional reflection: children can draw a picture of Jesus helping their friends, then share one way they can help someone else this week. This extra activity supports the lesson's theme and gives teachers a simple, lowprep option for extending the discussion.

Bible Story

The Joyful Ride into Jerusalem

One sunny day, Jesus and His friends decided to travel to Jerusalem for a special visit. Jesus sat on the back of a donkey, while His disciples followed behind. The people of Jerusalem saw them coming and began to sing and shout, "Hosanna!" which means "Save us, please!" They laid down their cloaks and palm leaves on the road so Jesus could ride on them. The crowds cheered, and the noise grew louder as Jesus approached the city. (Matthew 21:1-10)

Jesus knew what this meant. The people were excited because they thought He would soon be their king and free them from being ruled by the Romans. But Jesus had a bigger plan than just a political victory. He wanted to show His love and teach them about God's kindness. While Jesus was there, He taught the people and healed those who needed help. The children gathered around Jesus and sang praises to God. They were so happy to see Him. (Luke 19:36-40)

As Jesus walked into Jerusalem, some people got mad and started yelling, "Cut down the tree that grows in someone else's field!" These were angry priests and teachers who didn't want Jesus to be their leader. They didn't understand how kind and gentle Jesus was, so they tried to stop Him. But Jesus didn't fight back. He just smiled and said, "Yes, you will!" He knew His time was coming soon, and He would do what God had planned for Him. (Matthew 21:18-21)

This story reminds us that God's way of saving the world is different from what people expect. Sometimes, we think we know what's best, but God often works in unexpected ways. Just like the people of Jerusalem, we can praise God when we see His love in action, even when we don't fully understand it yet. We can also be kind, like Jesus, to those around us, even when others might not understand or appreciate us. God wants us to trust Him, just like Jesus trusted His Father. What a wonderful reminder that God's love is always there for us!

Key Verse

Luke 19:38 , 'Blessed is the king who comes in the name of the Lord! Peace in heaven and glory in the highest!'

A Special Welcome for Jesus! When Jesus comes back one day, he will be like a big, kind king riding a donkey. The Bible says that his arrival is super special, so happy that people should shout, "Praise God!" This verse is like a big, happy cheer for Jesus because he brings peace and glory (that means something wonderful and bright). Even though we might not see him now, we can still remember that he loves us and is preparing a big, happy home for us to live with him forever. Why Does God Love Jesus So Much? God made Jesus because he wants to help us. When Jesus comes back, he will fix all the problems in the world, like making everything safe and kind again. The Bible says that his coming is like a bright light in the sky, showing that God is the best King ever! Just like when you and your friends share a big party, Jesus is planning a super-duper celebration where everyone gets to be happy forever. What Can We Do Today? Even though Jesus isn't here yet, we can still be kind and brave like him! When we help others, share our toys, or say "thank you," we're showing how much God loves us. One day, when Jesus returns, we'll all be so excited because he'll take us to a place where there's no more sadness, just joy, peace, and love forever! Think About It: - If you saw a kind king riding into town, what would you shout? - How can you be a little "king of love" today? This verse reminds us that Jesus' arrival is like the biggest, happiest surprise, full of love and peace!

Activities

Activity 1:

Kids will create a small collage showing Jesus riding a donkey while people cheer with palm branches, then discuss what it means for them.

1. Make "Palm Branches": Give each child a sheet of paper or a bag. Have them draw or cut out palm leaves (or use pre-cut palm shapes if available). Let them decorate with markers.
2. Act It Out: Explain that Jesus rode a donkey into Jerusalem while people waved their palms ("Hosanna!" means "Save us!"). Have children hold their palm branches high and march around the room like a parade.

3. Thankful Waves: Ask: "What do we do when we see someone important in our lives?" Have kids wave their palms (or hands) toward the teacher or a Bible verse, saying, "Thank you, God!" in unison.
4. Sing a Hosanna Song: Play a simple tune (like "The Lord Is My Shepherd") and let kids clap or wave palms while singing "Hosanna! Hosanna!" to remind them of Jesus' love.
2. ACTIVITY: "Donkey & Crowd Scene Collage"
6. Plan the Scene: Show the Bible story and ask: "Who is Jesus? What did the people do when they saw him?" Write "Hosanna!" on the board.
7. Cut & Glue: Give each child a large sheet of paper. Have them:
8. Draw or glue a donkey on the paper.
9. Add palm branches (cut from paper) and a crowd (draw or glue small people).
10. Write "Jesus rode a donkey" and "People cheered, Hosanna!" at the top.
11. Share & Reflect: Ask: "Why did the people wave palms? How can we show love like that?" Let children share answers (e.g., waving to friends, thanking God).
12. Extend the Lesson: Say: "Jesus came to save us. How can we be like Him by showing kindness?" Let kids brainstorm simple acts (e.g., sharing toys, praying for friends).
13. Tips for Both Activities:
14. Use Bible verses (Matthew 21:9) as a reminder.
15. Keep the group small (3, 10 kids) for clear instructions.
16. End with a prayer asking God to help children trust Him like Jesus did.
17. Would you like any adjustments for time, materials, or group size?

Discussion Questions

- Here are four open-ended discussion questions based on The Triumphal Entry (Matthew 21:1-17, Luke 19:28-44) to spark meaningful conversations with early elementary children:
- What Do You Think Jesus Was Feeling When He Rode Into Jerusalem?
- Imagine you were riding on a donkey with Jesus, watching the crowd cheer and wave palm branches. How do you think He felt, excited, sad, or something else? Did you notice anything special about the animals, the people, or the way they welcomed Him? What would you feel if you were there, and why?
- Application: When have you felt excited about something big or important? How did you respond, like Jesus did by entering Jerusalem with love and kindness?
- Why Did the Crowd Think Jesus Would Be Different When He Came Back?
- The story says they waved palm branches and shouted, "Blessed is the King who comes in the name of the Lord!" (Luke 19:38). Why do you think they expected Jesus to be a political leader who would fix problems fast? What did they really hope He would do? How can we hope for things in our lives that feel big or important, like when we pray or cheer for someone we believe in?
- Application: What's one way you've seen someone make a difference, even if it wasn't exactly how you expected? How can we follow Jesus' example of hope and trust?
- What Happened to the Animals in the Story?
- Jesus rode a donkey, and the donkey was special because it was a gift from someone who loved Him (Luke 19:30). Do you think animals have feelings too? Why or why not? What would you do if you saw a donkey or another animal with no one taking care of it? How can we care for animals like Jesus cared for them?
- Application: Think of a time you helped someone or something, like a friend, a pet, or even a toy you shared. How did it make you feel?
- Why Did the Temple Workers Get Angry, and How Can We Be Like Jesus Instead?

- The story says Jesus cleansed the temple, and the workers got upset because He drove out those who were making money from worship. How do you think Jesus felt about that? Why do you think He did what He did? What's something in our lives that might make us feel angry or frustrated, like when something isn't fair or people don't treat us right? How can we act like Jesus and care for what's important, even if it's hard?
- Application: What's one way you've tried to be kind or fix something that wasn't right? How did it go, and what would you do differently next time?
- These questions encourage exploration of emotions, expectations, care for others, and obedience, all while connecting the story to young children's daily lives! Would you like any adjustments to fit a specific lesson focus?

Prayer Focus

Prayer for Kindness and Thankfulness (The Triumphal Entry) "Dear Heavenly Father, today we come to You with hearts full of wonder! Just like Jesus rode into Jerusalem on a donkey, we can ride into our day with a heart that is happy and ready to show kindness. Help us to remember that we are all special in Your eyes, and we can share our love with others, just like Jesus shared His love for everyone. Give us the strength to walk with thankfulness, to shout 'Hosanna!' with our hands and hearts, and to believe that You are with us always." "Lord Jesus, You came to bring hope and joy to the world. Teach us to welcome others with open arms, just like You welcomed us. Help us to see how our small acts of kindness, like sharing a smile or being a good friend, can make others feel loved. Give us the courage to stand up for what is right, like You stood up for the people who needed help. Thank You for being our Leader and our Friend!" "Father, You have a special plan for each of us, just like You had a special plan for Jesus. Help us to trust You with our lives and to follow Your example. When we feel scared or unsure, remind us that You are always with us, guiding us and protecting us. Teach us to shout 'Hosanna!', 'Save us!', with all our hearts, just like the crowd did when they saw You coming. Amen." "Let's pray together! Dear God, we thank You for Jesus and for all the wonderful things He did for us. Help us to be His friends today by showing love and kindness to everyone we meet. Keep our hearts full of joy and faith, just like You wanted. In Jesus' name, Amen!" --- Simple Application for the Class: Ask the children: "What can we do today to be like Jesus, riding into our day with joy and love? Maybe we can share our toys, give a hug to someone who looks sad, or even ride our bikes (or scooters) into the playground like Jesus rode into Jerusalem!"

>> Missions Spotlight

In Jerusalem today, Palm Sunday is celebrated on the very streets where Jesus rode. Pray for the peace of Jerusalem, and that the Jewish people would recognize Jesus as their Messiah, the King who came riding on a donkey.

-> To the Cross

The crowds shouted 'Hosanna!' and waved palm branches. They wanted a king to defeat Rome. But Jesus came to defeat sin and death. He rode a donkey, not a war horse. One week later, the same crowd would shout 'Crucify Him!' Only the cross could save them.