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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**

*4th-6th Grade (Ages 9-11)*

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Free curriculum for small and rural churches

## Lesson Overview

Lesson Overview: "Hosanna! Jesus the King Who Served" Introduction: Start with a simple question: "If you were riding a donkey today, what would you want to ride for?" Many kids might say something fun like a skateboard or a bike. Today's story tells us that Jesus chose something different, He chose a humble donkey so He could enter Jerusalem as the King of love and kindness. We'll explore why that mattered and how we can learn from Him today.

--- The Triumphal Entry (Matthew 21:1-17 & Luke 19:28-44) Jesus came to Jerusalem not to be praised with loud cheers but to be trusted in love. His followers spread their cloaks and palm branches on the road, not to make a big show of Himself, but to honor Him as their King. This was a dramatic moment because Jesus had just spent three years teaching and healing others, now He was making His grand entrance into the city. The crowd shouted "Hosanna!" (which means "Save us!"), showing their hearts were ready to follow Him. Yet, later, they would turn against Him, forgetting how He had truly come, to serve, not to be served. Why Was This Entry Special? Jesus chose a donkey, not a horse, because He wanted to show His humility. Horses were for kings who wanted to look powerful, but Jesus knew true power comes from love. He also picked a donkey because it was gentle and familiar, something people could trust. When He rode in, the crowd didn't just cheer; they spread their clothes and palm fronds, a sign of celebration in their culture. These actions told everyone: "This is the King who comes not to boss people around, but to care for them!" Jesus' Promise of Peace After His entry, Jesus spoke a famous verse: "Peace be on Jerusalem." This was a blessing, but it was also a warning. He knew some in the crowd would later betray Him, but His heart was full of mercy. He came to bring healing, not war. Even as He rode in, He was setting up His kingdom, not with force, but with love. His entry was a preview of what His kingdom would be like: a place where everyone is welcome, and no one is left out. A Deeper Question: What Does It Mean for Us? If Jesus came as a servant King, how can we follow Him? Maybe today you'll wonder: How can I serve others in a way that shows Jesus is my King? It doesn't have to be big, maybe it's helping a friend, showing kindness, or even just listening. Jesus didn't wait for permission to serve; He acted with love. Can we do the same? Personal Application & Challenge: End the lesson with a prayer or reflection question: "Today, I will look for ways to serve like Jesus did, even if it's small." For older kids, ask: "Where do you see

Jesus serving others right now?" Share how Jesus' example encourages you to trust Him, even when things seem hard. --- Teacher Tip: Use a donkey toy or pictures of palm fronds to make the story vivid. End with a simple discussion: "How would you describe Jesus' kingdom to a friend?" (Encourage answers like "a place where everyone is loved"). Keep it warm and heartfelt, this is a story about God's big love! 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 Triumphal Entry: A Celebration of Love and Hope

One bright morning, as Jesus and His disciples traveled to Jerusalem, they came upon a small village called Bethany, just a few miles away. The disciples saw a donkey tied near a roadside and noticed that a few people were preparing it for use. Jesus asked them, "Would you like me to ride this donkey?" They answered, "Yes!" So Jesus sat on the donkey, just as the Bible says. The crowd saw this and began to cheer, waving their clothes and spreading palm leaves on the ground. They shouted, "Blessed is the King who comes in the name of the Lord! Peace in heaven and glory to God!" (Luke 19:38). Their voices rang out with joy, showing how they knew Jesus was the promised Messiah, one who would bring hope and salvation.

Jesus didn't ride a fine horse like kings usually did. Instead, He chose something simple, an unbroken donkey, to show how He came not to be powerful, but to be gentle and kind. His followers spread palm leaves (small, flat leaves from a special tree) to make a big, colorful parade. The Bible says Jesus stopped at the Mount of Olives and looked down on the city of Jerusalem. He saw the people there, some rich and powerful, some lonely or sick, and He felt compassion for them. He knew what was coming: soon, they would reject Him, and His suffering and death would be near. But before that, He wanted to show them His love in a big way.

When Jesus reached the city, He entered it with great excitement. The crowds were so excited that they blocked the streets, and the animals in the marketplaces ran away because of the noise and cheers. Some people brought their children to see Jesus, while others spread palm leaves, making a beautiful carpet for Him to walk on. Jesus smiled and said, "I am here to bring peace," and He blessed the children as they played near Him. The Bible says some of the leaders in Jerusalem were upset. They didn't understand why Jesus was acting so joyfully. They thought He was too friendly, too close to the people, and they didn't want to see Him as their King.

As Jesus rode into Jerusalem, the people's hearts were full of excitement, but their minds were also full of questions. The Bible tells us that Jesus knew what the leaders would do later, He would be arrested, crucified, and die, but He would rise again on the third day (Matthew 21:4). Still, He chose to show His power in a different way. Instead of showing His strength in a flashy display, He chose kindness and love. The crowd's cheers might have sounded like praise to them, but Jesus knew that soon, many would turn against Him. That's why He wanted them to see Him now, not just as a King, but as someone who cared deeply for them.

Deeper Questions for Reflection: 1. Why did Jesus choose to ride a donkey instead of a horse? 2. How did the people's actions (waving palm leaves, cheering) show they believed Jesus was special? 3. What might have made the leaders in Jerusalem feel uncomfortable about Jesus' entry? 4. If you were in the crowd, what would you have done differently?

Personal Application: Jesus came into Jerusalem not to be feared or controlled, but to be loved and served. Even today, His love is like the palm leaves we spread, something simple, beautiful, and full of hope. When we meet people who are hurting or lonely, can we bring them a smile, a kind word, or even just a donkey-sized act of kindness? Jesus didn't wait for the perfect moment to show His love; He acted when He knew what was coming. Like Him, we can choose to love others even when they don't understand us.

Why This Story Matters: This story is one of the most joyful moments in the Bible because it shows Jesus' heart, full of love, hope, and mercy. It reminds us that God doesn't always act in grand, loud ways, but sometimes in quiet, kind ways. When we see someone in need, can we be like Jesus, spreading love and hope, even when the world seems

different? His Triumphal Entry tells us that God's kingdom isn't just about power, it's about serving others with compassion.

## 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!'**

Blessed is the king who comes in the name of the Lord! This verse is one of the most exciting parts of the Bible, it's like a big shout of joy when Jesus came to Earth! When people saw Him riding into Jerusalem on a donkey, they waved palm leaves and sang, "Hosanna!" which means "Save us!" (Luke 19:38). Their voices told everyone that Jesus wasn't just a regular king, He was the greatest King ever, sent by God to help people and bring peace and glory. Imagine if a superhero came to your town to fix problems, heal the sick, and make everything better! That's what Jesus did, and this verse reminds us that He is still the best King anyone could ever have today. The word "Blessed" isn't just a word, it means full of happiness and favor from God. In this verse, the crowd was saying, "Oh, how good it is that Jesus is here to take care of us!" Think about a time when you felt really happy because someone helped you, listened to you, or made you feel safe. Jesus feels that way about us, like He's always watching out for us, just like a big, loving parent. But here's something important: Jesus isn't just here to be happy for us; He's also here to save us from something big, sin and death. When we trust in Him, we get to live forever in heaven with God, where there's no sadness or bad things anymore! The crowd was also saying, "Peace in heaven!" This doesn't mean the world is perfect now (because it isn't, it's full of fights, mistakes, and trouble), but it's a promise that God will one day make everything right. Right now, when we feel afraid or hurt, we can hold onto this promise: "No matter what happens on Earth, God is making peace between us and Himself." Jesus came to fix the biggest problem, our broken relationship with God, and His death on the cross made peace possible for us! That's why we can sing along to the verse today, even when things feel tough. God does love us enough to fix what's broken! The second part of the verse says, "glory in the highest!" This means we should celebrate and worship God every day, not just on special holidays. When we pray, read the Bible, or sing songs about Him, we're saying, "Jesus is awesome!" and giving Him all the praise. It's like when you tell someone you love them, it's the same with God! When Jesus walked the Earth, He wasn't just a teacher; He was the ultimate example of love, kindness, and truth. His life, death, and resurrection show us that God is glorious, and we get to be part of His family. So next time you feel proud of yourself or happy for someone else, remember: Jesus is the reason for all that joy, and His love is the foundation of every good thing! Deeper Questions for You: - What's one way you've felt God's love in your life this week? - If Jesus were here today, what would He do to help someone you know who is hurting? - How can you show Jesus that you believe in His peace and glory this week? Personal Application: This verse is like a cozy blanket for your heart, it reminds you that no matter what, God is with you, and He's already won the battle against evil. Next time you feel small or alone, try saying this verse out loud and imagine the crowd in Jerusalem cheering for Jesus too. You're part of something so much bigger than just your own life. And when you pray, ask God to help you be a little like the crowd, full of wonder and trust in His plan. He's always on the move to make things right, and you get to be a part of His story!

## Activities

### Activity 1:

1. Group Discussion (2 min): Ask, "Why do you think people shouted 'Hosanna!' when Jesus entered Jerusalem? How does that make you feel about God's power?" Write their answers on the poster border.
2. Cutting Palm Leaves (5 min): In small groups, cut palm-shaped paper from the green/red construction paper (adults may pre-cut if needed). Fold some to resemble leaves.
3. Decorating the Poster (5 min):
4. Glue palm shapes and leaves onto the poster, arranging them in a "triumph" arc.
5. Place slips of paper with "Hosanna!" around the edges and write a group verse (e.g., "Blessed is the King who comes in the

## Activity 2:

1. Prep Donkey Hats (2 min): Adults cut paper plate shapes into donkey faces (black circles for eyes, red noses) and decorate them with students'

## Discussion Questions

- Here are four open-ended discussion questions for upper elementary students (ages 9-11) based on The Triumphal Entry (Matthew 21:1-17, Luke 19:28-44), designed to spark thoughtful reflection, deeper biblical insight, and personal application:
- 1. Jesus' Entrance: A Crowd of Praise or Warning?
  - The story shows a huge crowd welcoming Jesus as he rides into Jerusalem on a donkey. They spread their cloaks on the road and shouted "Hosanna!", which means "Save us, please!" (Luke 19:38). At first glance, it seems like the crowd is happy and excited. But Jesus also warns them later in the story that this celebration will turn to sorrow. What do you think really motivated the crowd? Was it only excitement, or was there something deeper, like hope for freedom or change? How do you think Jesus knew their hearts? How do you know when people are truly happy, or are they just saying the right words?
  - (Encourages students to consider motives, biblical discernment, and their own reactions to celebration.)
- 2. The Donkey and the King's Humble Way
  - Jesus chose to ride a donkey, not a warhorse like a king might ride in battle. Why do you think he chose this? Some scholars say it was to show that he didn't come to rule by force, but by loving service. If you had to describe Jesus' way of ruling, what would you say? How could someone be a "king" in your life today, not by being powerful, but by being kind, gentle, and helping others? Think of a time when someone showed kindness to you, even if they weren't famous or in charge. How did that make you feel?
  - (Connects the story to themes of humility, leadership, and real power.)
- 3. The Temple's Cries of Discontent
  - After Jesus cleansed the temple, the merchants and money-changers were upset. They had been making money off the poor by charging high prices. Jesus didn't just yell at them, he acted to restore the temple to its original purpose: a place of worship, not greed. Later, Jesus would be crucified, and the temple would be destroyed. How do you think the temple's "cry" changed the people's hearts? What does this tell us about how God feels when people use his gifts (like money or time) for selfish reasons? Have you ever felt angry at someone who treated something special (like your toys, a friend's gift, or even God's creation) with dishonesty? How did you respond? What would Jesus say to you in that moment?
  - (Encourages students to reflect on justice, justice, and their own responses to injustice.)
- 4. Hosanna Today: When Do We Celebrate Jesus?
  - The word hosanna comes from the crowd's cry, but we still use it today, especially during Advent and Easter. What are some ways you might celebrate Jesus in your life right now? Maybe it's singing songs, praying, or being kind to someone who needs help. But Jesus also warned the crowd about getting too caught up in celebration. What's a time when you or someone else got excited about Jesus but later realized something was missing? How can we make sure our celebrations are real, not just words? Think of a time when you felt God's love in a small way, like helping a friend or seeing someone smile. How did that make you want to share God's love with others?
  - (Connects the story to worship, discernment, and everyday faith.)
  - These questions invite students to explore the story from multiple angles, motives, actions, consequences, and personal applications, while inviting them to think deeply about how Jesus' entry into Jerusalem reflects his character and how they can follow in his footsteps. Would you like any adjustments to fit a specific lesson focus?

## Prayer Focus

*Prayer Focus: "A King Comes for Us" Teacher, begin by leading the class in a quiet moment of reflection. Ask them to imagine they're standing in a crowd, watching Jesus ride into Jerusalem on a donkey, shouting, "Hosanna!" (which means "Save us!") as people spread their cloaks and branches in welcome. This moment was full of hope, Jesus wasn't just arriving; He was bringing freedom, joy, and God's love to all who would believe. Dear God, We thank You for Jesus, the King who rode into our world not on a mighty horse but on a gentle donkey, showing us how love and humility are stronger than power alone. Like the crowd, we shout "Hosanna!" to You, thanking You for sending Your Son to save us. Help us to remember that even in small ways, when we cheer for others, share our time, or welcome strangers, we're like the people of Jerusalem, spreading Your joy. Teach us to trust that Your kingdom isn't just about grand victories but about being kind, brave, and faithful in little moments. Have the class repeat after you: "Jesus, thank You for choosing us. Help us to be like the crowd today, full of hope and worship!" Why does this matter for us today? Jesus didn't just show up once to fix everything, He came to show us how to live as His followers. The people of Jerusalem didn't know it yet, but their celebration was a sign of God's plan. Sometimes, when we feel small or like we're "not enough," remember: Jesus was small when He came, but His love was big enough to change the world. How can we, like the disciples, spread His love today? Maybe by helping someone who looks like they're falling behind, or by being the kind of friend who lifts others up? Pause for quiet reflection. Ask: "Who do you think needs our Hosanna today? A classmate who feels left out? A neighbor who needs kindness?" Personal Application: God, You invited us into Your story, now help us live in it. When we feel tired or worried, remind us that Jesus rode into Jerusalem on a donkey because He knew what was coming. He was both the King and the Servant. Teach us to trust You in the hard parts, like the people of Jerusalem who didn't fully understand at first. Give us the courage to welcome others into Your kingdom, even if it's messy or uncomfortable. End with a prayer of commitment: "Jesus, make us Your people today. Help us to be like the crowd, full of hope, worship, and love. Amen." --- Teacher's Note: This prayer ties together the story's themes of hope, humility, and mission. The "deeper questions" encourage kids to connect the event to their own lives, while the repetition and invitation to action help them internalize the lesson. For older kids (11-year-olds), you could add: "How does this passage challenge or inspire you to be more like Jesus in your own 'triumph', whether it's a big decision or a small act of kindness?"*

### >> 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.