

The Whole World Redeeming



Children's Resources

PALM SUNDAY

John 12:12-16 - (CEV) Jesus Enters Jerusalem

The next day a large crowd was in Jerusalem for Passover. When they heard that Jesus was coming for the festival, they took palm branches and went out to greet him. They shouted, "Hooray! God bless the one who comes in the name of the Lord! God bless the King of Israel!"

Jesus found a donkey and rode on it, just as the Scriptures say, "People of Jerusalem, don't be afraid! Your King is now coming, and he is riding on a donkey."

At first, Jesus' disciples did not understand. But after he had been given his glory, they remembered all this. Everything had happened exactly as the Scriptures said it would.

PALM SUNDAY

Palm Sunday is a great opportunity for a family-focused service, building on the feeling of celebration and community associated with Palm Sunday and the entry of Jesus into Jerusalem. You might like to put together some children's packs (as suggested below) for the children to use during the sermon, or the children could go out for a short time (using one of the suggested activities) and return at the end of the service to finish the celebration together.

INTERACTIVE MESSAGE:

For this message you will need:

- Some football gear
- Some streamers
- Photos of fans (people) at the airport waiting for a rock group (a modern photo and one of the fans waiting for The Beatles.)
- A bag of goodies (chocolate frogs or lolly pops)
- A copy of the first verse of 'O Boundless Salvation'.

'I wonder what you get excited about. One of the things that I get excited about is when I go the football and watch my favourite team, the Cats, play. I love the atmosphere of being with other people following the same team. I love all the cheering and chanting and the excitement every time a goal is scored. I love waving my banners and flags around and spend a lot of energy screaming out at the players and the umpires!!!'

➤ I wonder how many here follow the football? (allow responses)

'Oh that's quite a few of you. Ok let's have some fun. Let's see who can barrack the loudest for their football team. I have some streamers here to help us get into the atmosphere. (Hand out streamers to the children and some adults) On the count of three I would like you to scream out, 'Go Cats or the name of your team and throw your streamers'. Are you ready, 1...2...3... Go'

'Wow that was pretty loud and I loved your enthusiasm. I can't imagine if we all went to the football together the loud racket we would make.' The thing about the football, is that everyone who goes to a game is there for the same purpose and this is to see your team win. Imagine how disappointing it

would be if you lined up for footy tickets and you got to the front of the line and there were no tickets left. How disappointing that would be not to be part of that crowd cheering for your team.'

'Imagine if your favourite music group or rock star flew into the airport. Maybe One Direction or Five Seconds of Summer. (Show an image of screaming fans lined up at the airport.) Or for the older people present today maybe you can imagine or actually remember when The Beatles or ABBA or The Rolling Stones arrived at the airport (show an image of screaming fans at the airport for the Beatles.) Imagine being part of the crowd waiting at the airport. All the chanting and screaming, all the placards and signs being held up. Imagine all the different people lining up for a glimpse of your favourite star. Now picture the disappointment of driving to the airport and getting out of the car, walking up towards the airport but there were so many people already there that there was just no space for you to stand and see your favourite star. You had woken up that morning so excited and had been driven to the airport only to be so disappointed that you got back in the car and went straight home. How disappointing that would be?'

'Now because I am in such a generous mood today I have a bag of goodies here that I would love to give away. So if you would like something from this bag please come to the front now to receive your surprise. (Of course most of the children will flock up to the front so you need to make sure that you have one item for each child. You will need to arrange for a specific adult to come up for this object lesson. Tell the chosen adult before the service that they need to stand at the back of the line and that they are going to miss out on receiving something from the bag.)'

(Hand out the treats to everyone in the line but when you get to the chosen adult at the end of the line, pretend you don't have anything left in the bag and that they have to miss out.)

'Oh, no, I'm so sorry but I have just given the away last treat. I'm sorry but you will have to miss out. Gee sorry about that, I feel really bad.' (Have the adult sulk when returned back to their seat.)

'Oh that was really awkward!'

'Imagine being part of the crowd on Palm Sunday two thousand years ago waiting for Jesus who was the King that everyone had been waiting for. Imagine waking up that morning and hearing that Jesus was going to make an appearance. The Jesus that you had heard about from so many people. The Jesus that had performed miracles, the Jesus who had ministered to so many people. I would think that on the day there would have been a huge a crowd but maybe not everyone got to physically see Jesus that day. Some people may have walked away disappointed because they could just not get through the crowds to see Jesus.'

'The good news is that today we don't have to wait or line up to see Jesus. Jesus loves us and invites all of us and wants all of us to be part of His crowd. Jesus wants us to be part of his family and the invitation to be a friend of Jesus is open to everyone in the world. Jesus loves all of us, everyone, no matter who we are and no matter what we have done. Nobody will ever miss out on Jesus, He is here for everyone. Nobody will ever be excluded.'

➤ I wonder if there is anyone who can tell me what John 3:16 talks about.

John 3:16 (CEV)

God loved the people of this world so much that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who has faith in him will have eternal life and never really die.

'That's right, it says God loved the people of this world so much that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who has faith in him will have eternal life and never really die. It doesn't say, "God loved a select few people of this world, it says that God loves loved the people of this world. That is everyone in this world. We all have the opportunity to be part of Jesus' crowd. We all have the opportunity to be a friend of Jesus and to be redeemed/forgiven no matter what we have done.'

'There is a song that the Founder of the Salvation Army wrote called O Boundless Salvation. I wonder if someone would read the first verse out for us.'

O boundless salvation! deep ocean of love,
O fullness of mercy, Christ brought from above,
The whole world redeeming, so rich and so free,
Now flowing for all men, now flowing for all men,
Now flowing for all men, come, roll over me!

'It says, 'the whole world' meaning: everyone in the world, everyone in this room, everyone that lives in your street, everyone in your family, everyone that you go to school with. We are all welcome to be part of the crowd that follows Jesus.'

'As we think about the coming week leading up to Easter let's remember that we are all welcome of be part of the crowd following Jesus.'

At this point you might like to get the children to either collect their activity bags or to go out to Kids Church.

ACTIVITY SUGGESTIONS:

These activities can be used in a variety of settings as you explore the theme with your kids, e.g. kid's church, kids club during the week, on some tables during church or as the kids go out during the message.

All over the world:

For this activity you will need:

- A world globe or a world map
- Some pins or stickers

*On the world globe/map I wonder if you can find the following countries:
Italy, Africa, Scotland, Thailand, Greenland, Brazil, Russia and Australia.*

Place a pin or sticker on the country when it has been found. When all the countries have been found stand back and look at all the countries and how it represents many people in the world.

'When we talked earlier about everyone being part of Jesus' crowd do you think it included all the people that lived in these countries? And there are so many more countries still!

- Did you know that God loves and knows people everywhere in the world and we are all invited to be part of his crowd?
- I wonder if you find that amazing.
- I am curious, do you think there is anyone that Jesus would not want to be friends with?

'Let's have a think about someone at school or in your neighbourhood who you may not get on with or you don't necessarily like.'

- Do you think Jesus loves them more than you?

'That's right, Jesus loves us all the same, sometimes he may be disappointment with our actions but he still loves us and no matter who we are we can all be part of His crowd.'

Part of the crowd:

For this activity you will need:

- Strips of coloured paper
- Textas
- Staplers

Talk to the children about who they think would be included to be part of Jesus crowd. As you are talking about this, encourage them to write down names of everyone that they know, family, friends, school mates, neighbours, their sport coach, teachers etc. on the strips of paper. The children can make their own chains with the strips of paper and take it home and place in their bedroom. Encourage the children to pray for the people on their chain. They could pray that God will give them the opportunity to share with the people on their chain, that Jesus loves them and they are invited to be a friend of Jesus.

CHILDREN'S ACTIVITY BAG SUGGESTIONS:

Below are some suggestions for you to use in creating a children's activity bag for use during the second half of the service. It would be good to hand these out to the children after the interactive message.

Easter invitation card:

For this activity you will need to provide each child with a piece of card stock folded like a card as well as some pencils/textas, Easter stickers and decorations. Ask the children to make an invitation card that they would like to send during the coming week to someone special in their lives. Place all the items that the children will need, plus some instructions, into a small snap lock bag and place it into the activity bags.

- Draw/create a card that you would like to send this week to someone special in your life. Explain in the card that the person receiving card is welcome to be part of the Jesus' crowd and that He wants to be their friend. Invite them to attend church next Sunday with you.

Crowded Palms:

For this activity you will need to provide each with a large blank sheet of paper cut out in the shape of a palm as well as some pencils/textas. You will need to provide a set of instructions.

- Sometimes we forget that we are part of the big crowd of Jesus and every now and then we need to be reminded. Using this sheet of paper, draw as many people on the sheet of paper as possible with yourself right in the middle of the page. Along the top of the sheet write the words, 'I will always be part of Jesus' crowd.' Take this home and place in your bedroom or your bathroom mirror as a reminder.

You are welcome:

For this activity you will need some door handle signs and some pencils/textas. You will also need to provide the children with a set of instructions.

- Wouldn't it be great to let all our family and friends know that Jesus loves them and that they are welcome to be part of the crowd of Jesus. Sometime it's the little things that people see or hear that make them think about becoming a friend of Jesus. Why not create your own door handle sign that says 'All are welcome to enter into a friendship with Jesus'. Hang it on your bedroom door at home so that your family and friends can read it and maybe they just may think about what this may mean.

Other items to include:

- Themed *Kidzone* for Palm Sunday (this will include puzzles and stories etc. for today's theme).
- 'Home and Beyond' card or swing tag for the family to continue the conversation at home.
- Lollypop, sweets, shapes or something to eat depending on the children that you have, keeping in mind allergies and eating in church policies etc. This could also be done by having a container where the children can choose something to put into their bag when they collect it OR making up the bags individually with names on them, thus catering for those with special needs, as well as having spares for visitors.

- Invitations or fliers for the families for the family Easter celebrations.

HOME AND BEYOND:

It is vitally important, as leaders within our churches that we help equip parents with suggestions, activities and language as they help their children to navigate their spiritual journey. A 'Home & Beyond' card placed in the activity bag or used as a swing tag on the activity bag is a great way to help them take the key message home and continue the conversation in the rhythm of their daily lives.

Map Prayers:

Photocopy a page of the Melways or a local map outlining a five block radius of the area around your house. Place the map on your fridge and encourage the members of your family every time they open the fridge to pray for the people who live in this community.

As a family pray for the people who live in this area. Pray that they will hear about the love of Jesus and have the opportunity to know that they are welcome to be a friend of Jesus.

John 3:16 (CEV)

God loved the people of this world so much that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who has faith in him will have eternal life and never really die.