

Junior Soldiers

UNIT 13 : LESSON 9



Palm Sunday

PURPOSE:

For the children to explore and understand what happened on Palm Sunday and why it is significant.

Blessings on the one who comes in the name of the Lord!
Hail to the King of Israel!"

John 12:13b

Consider & Prepare

Read:

John 12:12-19

Mark 11:1-11

The story of Jesus' entry into Jerusalem on Palm Sunday will be a familiar one for many Junior Soldiers. It is important for us to take the time to remember why it is significant. This event is full of symbolism and was a fulfillment of prophecy.

As we draw attention to this, we help the children to see more of God's overarching story for humanity. They will understand more clearly that God has a plan and a purpose.

Consider how God is speaking to you as you look deeper into this well-known story.

What you will need:

For 'Connecting In'

- Your choice of the 'welcome' materials
 - Small cups of drink
 - Cushion/seats
 - Party poppers etc.
- Optional: Pinata (hung from the roof) with a stick
 - Small treats to fill the pinata. For example: wrapped lollies, stationery, novelty items

For 'The Main Thing'

- Bibles
- Pens or pencils and paper
- Three areas set up for the different activities
- Printed copies of the explanation cards
- For Activity 1: Equipment to play 'Pin the tail on the donkey'
- For Activity 2: Palm fronds for palm crosses OR palm leaves or green streamers
 - Search 'how to make a palm cross' for step-by-step instructions and video tutorials. Ensure the leader looking after this activity can demonstrate and teach the children
- For Activity 3: Bibles

For 'Memory Verse'

- Write the words of the key verse on pieces of paper (a couple of words per page).

For 'Home & Beyond'

- Print off the Home & Beyond cards for each child.

Connecting In

Activity...

As children arrive, welcome them as though they are honoured guests who you are very excited to see. Choose some or all of these:

- Call out their name. For example, "Welcome [NAME], I'm so glad you are here"
 - Release party poppers
 - Offer them a drink
- Show them to a comfy seat/cushion

Optional: When everyone has arrived, invite everyone to take turns hitting the pinata until it breaks. Allow the children to collect the contents.

Link...

When Jesus arrived in Jerusalem, there were a lot of people travelling. People came to Jerusalem for the Passover Festival, like we might travel to be with family or friends for Christmas. Families and friends gathered to worship, enjoy food and have fun together. But Jesus was given a special welcome. As he entered the city, he was greeted by people waving palm leaves and placing them on the ground in front of him to show they saw him as their king. We now refer to this as Palm Sunday.

The Main Thing

Ask the children to look up John 12:12-19 and read it aloud together.

Divide the children into groups and tell them they have five minutes to come up with a headline to share the news about what was happening on Palm Sunday.

After five minutes, ask the groups to return and share their headline.

Today we are going to learn more about why this event was such big news.

Set up three areas to help the children explore some of the different features of Palm Sunday. If you have a large group, divide the children into three groups and rotate between the activities.

Donkey

- Ask one of the children to read Part 1 of the explanation card:
 - What was special about Jesus riding on a donkey?
 - Donkeys were ridden by royalty. When a king went to war he rode a horse, when he came in peace, he rode a donkey. Many people at the time thought that Jesus would become an important political leader, that he would raise an army and lead a war to free the Jews from the Romans. Jesus rode a donkey to show that he came in peace.
- Activity – Play ‘pin the tail on the donkey’.
- We trust Jesus and follow him as king of our lives. We find peace in our hearts when we follow him.
 - How do you allow Jesus to be king in your life?

Palms

- Ask one of the children to read Part 1 of the explanation card:
 - Why did people wave palms and lay them on the road?
 - Palms were a symbol of victory in Jesus’ time. They welcomed him as a peaceful hero. They laid them on the ground as a sign of respect, a bit like a red carpet. They shouted ‘hosanna’ which means ‘save us now’.
- Activity – Make palm crosses out of palm fronds OR sing ‘Hosanna’ and wave palm leaves or green streamers.
- Jesus was given a special welcome when he came into Jerusalem. People were very excited to see him.
 - How would we welcome someone important today? Think about what we might do if the King of England, or a winning footy team was visiting.
 - How do you welcome Jesus into each day of your life?

Prophecies

- Ask one of the children to read Part 1 of the explanation card:
 - A prophecy is something that God tells us is going to happen in the future. When Jesus entered Jerusalem on Palm Sunday, he fulfilled a prophecy.
- Activity – ask half of the children to look up Zechariah 9:9 and read it out loud together. Ask the other half of the children to look up John 12:12-16 and read it out loud.
- These words in Zechariah were written about 520 years before Jesus was born. God had a plan and a purpose for Jesus. He has plans and a purpose for you too.
 - What do you think God might have planned for your life?

Tying In

Just as God had a plan for Jesus long before he entered the world, he has a plan for our lives too.

What difference does it make to you to know that God has a plan for your life?

Memory Verse

Write the words of the verse on pieces of paper and lay them out like a path of stepping stones.

Invite the children to travel along the path, reading out the words as they step on them. Turn a couple of the pieces of paper over to hide the words. Ask the children to try again. Repeat several times.

Prayer Time

Ask the children to line up against one wall. Remind the children that Jesus' entry into Jerusalem was an important step. Explain that as you read the prayer, they can silently pray their answers and take a step forward each time.

Dear Jesus, as we step towards Easter:

- We thank you for...
- We pray for...
- We ask that you will help us...

Amen

Home & Beyond

Print off the 'Home & Beyond' cards attached. The children might like to keep these in their journals or notebook where they could write or stick the challenges, reflect, answer questions or complete activities each week.



Junior Soldiers

Home & Beyond

This week, organise a special welcome for someone in your family or for your Big Bud. Tell them about how Jesus was welcomed into Jerusalem.



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Explanation Cards

Donkey

Part 1: What was special about Jesus riding on a donkey?

Donkeys were ridden by royalty. When a king went to war he rode a horse, when he came in peace, he rode a donkey. Many people at the time thought that Jesus would become an important political leader, that he would raise an army and lead a war to free the Jews from the Romans. Jesus rode a donkey to show that he came in peace.

Activity: Play 'Pin the Tail on the Donkey.'

Part 2: We trust Jesus and follow him as king of our lives. We find peace in our hearts when we follow him.

Discuss: How do you allow Jesus to be king in your life?

Palms

Part 1: Why did people wave palms and lay them on the road?

Palms were a symbol of victory in Jesus' time. They welcomed him as a peaceful hero. They laid them on the ground as a sign of respect, a bit like a red carpet. They shouted 'hosanna' which means 'save us now'.

Activity: Make palm crosses or sing 'Hosanna' and wave green streamers.

Part 2: Jesus was given a special welcome when we came into Jerusalem. People were very excited to see him.

Discuss: How would we welcome someone important today? Think about what we might do if the King of England, or a winning footy team was visiting.

How do you welcome Jesus into each day of your life?

Prophecy

Part 1:

A prophecy is something that God tells us is going to happen in the future. When Jesus entered Jerusalem on Palm Sunday, he fulfilled a prophecy.

Activity: Read Zechariah 9:9 and John 12:12-16.

Part 2: These words in Zechariah were written about 520 years before Jesus was born. God had a plan and a purpose for Jesus. He has plans and a purpose for you too.

Discuss: What do you think God might have planned for your life?