

March 24, 2013

Lesson 31: Triumphal Entry into Jerusalem

Luke 19:29-44

When he had come near Bethphage and Bethany, at the place called the Mount of Olives, he sent two of the disciples, saying, 'Go into the village ahead of you, and as you enter it you will find tied there a colt that has never been ridden. Untie it and bring it here. If anyone asks you, "Why are you untying it?" just say this: "The Lord needs it."' So those who were sent departed and found it as he had told them. As they were untying the colt, its



owners asked them, 'Why are you untying the colt?' They said, 'The Lord needs it.' Then they brought it to Jesus; and after throwing their cloaks on the colt, they set Jesus on it. As he rode along, people kept spreading their cloaks on the road. As he was now approaching the path down from the Mount of Olives, the whole multitude of the disciples began to praise God joyfully with a loud voice for all the deeds of power that they had seen, saying,

'Blessed is the king

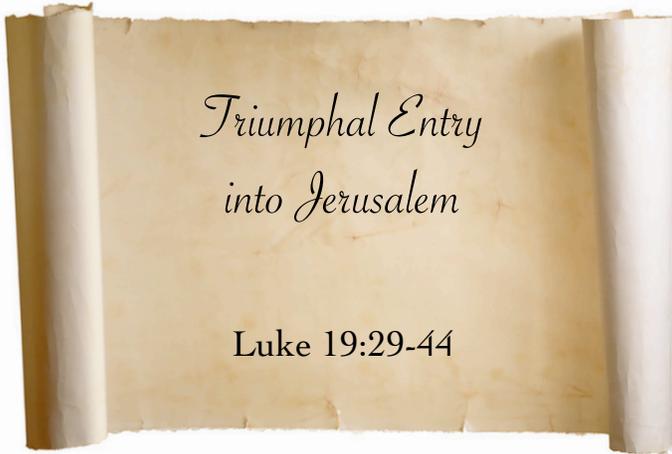
who comes in the name of the Lord!

Peace in heaven,

and glory in the highest heaven!

Some of the Pharisees in the crowd said to him, 'Teacher, order your disciples to stop.' He answered, 'I tell you, if these were silent, the stones would shout out.'

As he came near and saw the city, he wept over it, saying, 'If you, even you, had only recognized on this day the things that make for peace! But now they are hidden from your eyes. Indeed, the days will come upon you, when your enemies will set up ramparts around you and surround you, and hem you in on every side. They will crush you to the ground, you and your children within you, and they will not leave within you one stone upon another; because you did not recognize the time of your visitation from God.'



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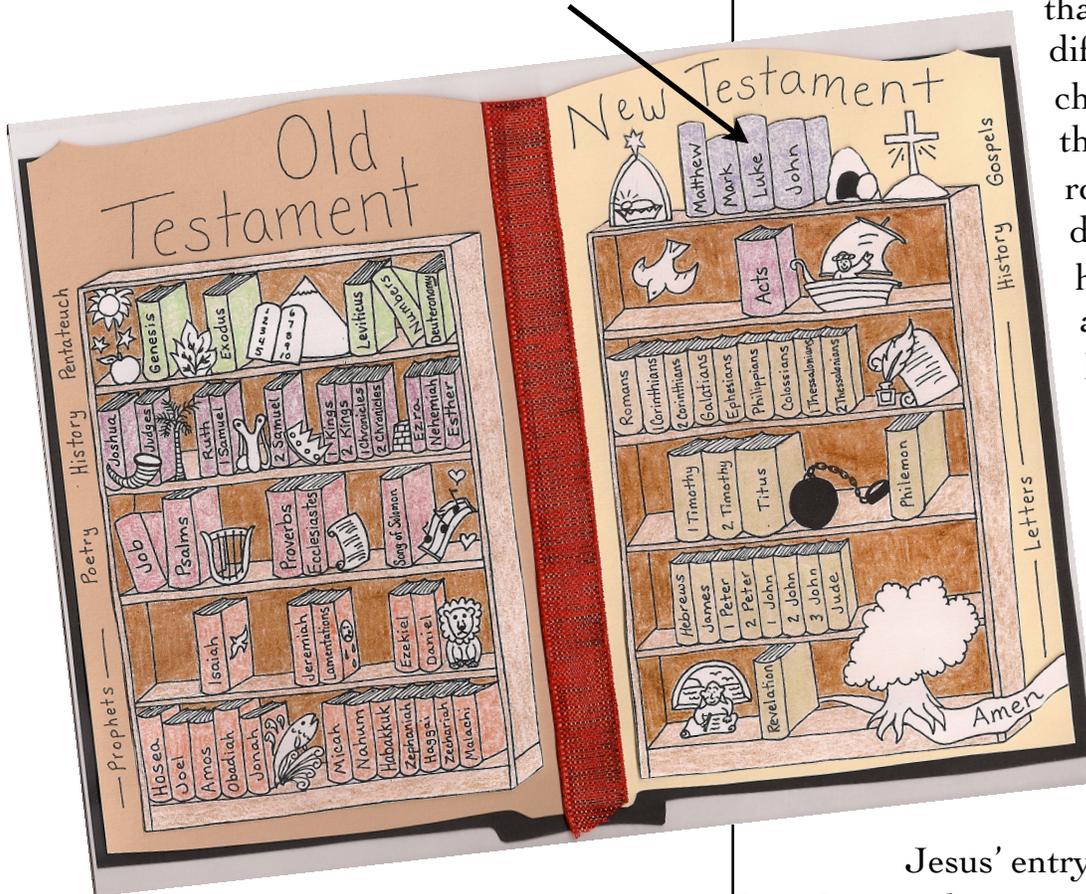
The Big Story Truth: Jesus' love for us - for the world- takes him into Jerusalem and to the cross.

About this Scripture Passage: Today our reading begins with Jesus' entry into Jerusalem. Jesus is welcomed with fanfare. Some had hoped that Jesus would be a king. They hoped for him to be the one to come and free them from the political occupation that they endured. Jesus was and is a king... but not the kind the people expected. The first sign

that Jesus' kingdom is different comes with his choice of animal. Rather than a fine war horse, Jesus rode into town on a humble donkey, a symbol of the humility that he would talk about with his disciples later on in the week.

The reading we will be talking about in church goes on beyond what is included here. In our worship service today we will read all the way through the passion story Luke tells. We will follow the events of Holy Week through

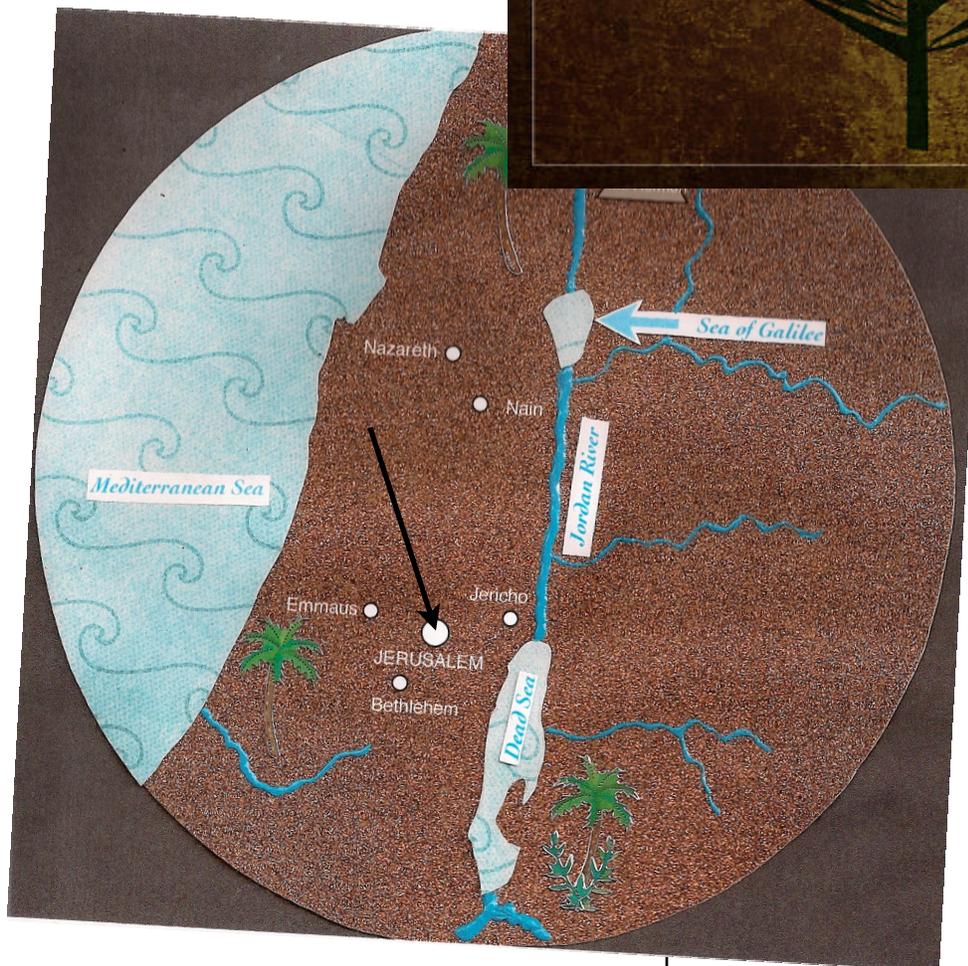
Jesus' entry into Jerusalem, to the Last Supper that we celebrate on Maundy Thursday and finally to Good Friday and Jesus' death on the cross.



Making the Connection: The main point of our Sunday School lesson this week is to help kids get a preview of the events that will be dramatized and represented throughout the rest of this week. This Sunday School lesson is a good opportunity to preview and explain at their own level things that they will see and hear in the upcoming worship services this week.

HOSANNA

To save or help;
what the people
shouted to Jesus.



Preschool

Materials Needed:

- Palm branches
- Unleavened bread/crackers
- Grape juice
- Basin of water
- Washclothes
- Cross
- Holy week crosses to color
- Holy week activity books

Before the Children Arrive:

On one end of your classroom table, set out some palm branches. In the middle, place some crackers or unleavened bread, grape juice, basin of water and washcloths. On the other end, place a cross.

Experiencing the Story:

As children enter, the materials on the table will probably naturally catch their attention. Tell the kids that today is the start of a special week. It's called "Holy Week." Ask if any of them have heard about Holy Week before. What do they already know about Holy Week?

All during lent we've been on a trip with Jesus. We've been traveling toward Jerusalem. Holy Week begins with Jesus getting to Jerusalem. Tell the kids that you are going to read the story from the Bible about Jesus entering Jerusalem. Ask them to listen carefully to see which things on the table go with this part of the story.

Read "Palm Sunday" from the Spark Story Bible pages 454-459. When you are finished, ask the kids what item goes with this story. (The palm branches!) Tell the kids that today in church we will begin our service by having a parade with palm branches. Practice marching around your room waving the palm branches and saying "Hosanna!" Hosanna is a happy word that the people shouted to welcome Jesus like a king!

After you have had a chance to practice the parade, ask the kids to sit back down and draw their attention to the other items still on the table. Tell them that there is more to hear about this Holy Week story. The next important part of the story happened on Thursday. On Thursday is when Jesus and his friends celebrated the Passover holiday together.

Read “The Last Supper” from the Spark Story Bible pages 462-467. Ask the kids which items on the table match this part of the story. The basin and water remind us that Jesus loved his friends and took care of them. Jesus also wants us to love each other. The bread and wine remind us that Jesus said he was going to give his body and blood so that we would all be forgiven. Play with these items for a while. Let the kids have the opportunity to take off their shoes and socks and wash each others feet. Use the time to talk about ways that they show others love just like Jesus wants them too. Let the kids eat the crackers/bread and drink some grape juice. What do they think it would have been like to be at the supper that night with Jesus? Would they have been happy to be there? Would they have been sad to know that Jesus was talking about his friends leaving him?

When you are ready to move on, point to the last item on the table - the cross. Tell the kids that this is the last part of the story that you are going to talk about today. It is a sad part of the story. Read “Jesus is Betrayed” in the Spark Story Bible (pages 468-473) and “The Day Jesus Died” (pages 476-481).

Activity:

Get out a Holy Week cross for each child. Talk through the scenes with them by first pointing to the Palm Sunday picture with Jesus coming into Jerusalem on the donkey, then Maundy Thursday with Jesus washing his disciples feet, and finally the Good Friday scene with the cross. Tell kids that today in church and this week in some special church services during the week we are going to remember these days that Jesus had in Jerusalem and Jesus dying on the cross. Our church service today is going to start out loud and happy thinking about that special parade... but then it is going to be quieter and sadder as we think about Jesus dying on the cross. The special part about this week though is that it didn't end with Jesus dying on the cross. After three days something very special happened--- Jesus rose from the dead! So in the very middle of our cross

is Jesus with the sign saying “He lives!” That’s what we are going to celebrate next Sunday on Easter Sunday!

Give the kids time to color their crosses. Hand out the Holy Week activity booklets. If you have time left over, they can start to do some of the activities. Otherwise, send them home to do at home with their families this week.

Early Elementary

Materials Needed:

- Palm branches
- Unleavened bread/crackers
- Grape juice
- Basin of water
- Washcloths
- Cross
- Holy week crosses to color
- Holy week activity books

Before the Children Arrive:

On one end of your classroom table, set out some palm branches. In the middle, place some crackers or unleavened bread, grape juice, basin of water and washcloths. On the other end, place a cross.

Experiencing the Story:

As children enter, the materials on the table will probably naturally catch their attention. Tell the kids that today is the start of a special week. It's called "Holy Week." Ask if any of them have heard about Holy Week before. What do they already know about Holy Week?

All during lent we've been on a trip with Jesus. We've been traveling toward Jerusalem. Holy Week begins with Jesus getting to Jerusalem. Tell the kids that you are going to read the story from the Bible about Jesus entering Jerusalem. Ask them to listen carefully to see which things on the table go with this part of the story.

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When you are ready to move on, point to the last item on the table - the cross. Tell the kids that this is the last part of the story that you are going to talk about today. It is a sad part of the story. Read “Jesus is Betrayed” in the Spark Story Bible (pages 468-473) and “The Day Jesus Died” (pages 476-481).

Activity:



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Get out a Holy Week wreath kit for each child. Show them a completed wreath. Talk through each of the scenes with them relating them to the parts of the stories you just read. Tell kids that today in church and this week in some special church services during the week we are going to remember these days that Jesus had in Jerusalem and Jesus dying on the cross. Our church service today is going to start out loud and happy thinking about that special parade... but then it is going to be quieter and sadder as we think about Jesus dying on the cross. The special part about this week though is that it didn't end with Jesus dying on the cross. After three days something very special happened--- Jesus rose from the dead! Help the students notice Jesus with the empty tomb. (If you want to stop there you don't need to include the ascension. If you want to include that piece, you can help the kids know that after Jesus rose from the

dead he was with his disciples for a while, and then he went back up into heaven. We'll learn about that story another day.)

Give the kids time to work on their wreaths. As kids finish, let them have time to write what they learned about Holy Week in their Smash Books. Hand out the Holy Week activity booklets to do at home with their families this week.

Upper Elementary

Materials Needed:

- Holy week posters
- Copies of question sheets that go along with each poster
- Souvenir item corresponding to each day: palm branch, broken popsicle sticks for overturned tables, question mark, paper or confetti to represent pieces of silver, wine/grape juice, nail cross necklace kits, white birthday candles for mini Christ candles, strips of white fabric for empty grave clothes
- Glue for the cross necklaces (if needed). The kits for the necklaces give directions on how to assemble that include glue. It can be done just by holding them in place and wrapping the wire according to the direction, but it is a little harder to keep in place while securing with the wire.
- Medicine dropper or cup for the wine/grape juice. They will be “spilling” a few drops into their smash books.

Before the Students Arrive:

Tape a Palm Branch to the door of your classroom (or another area of the church you think will work well) with a sign saying “Welcome to Jerusalem.” Inside your classroom, pick places around the room to put up each of the Holy Week posters. Next to each poster should be the corresponding question sheet (see below). Each of the days also has a particular item that accompanies it. These should be set on a table or bowl near the poster so that each day has its own little area. As kids go around the room, they will take time to read through the poster, collect a “souvenir” item and add it to their smash book along with any notes or reflections.

Set up the room so that each day has these corresponding items for “souvenirs”

- Sunday- Palm Branch
- Monday- Broken Wood
- Tuesday- Question Mark
- Wednesday- Pieces of Silver
- Thursday- Wine (a small amount and a medicine dropper or easy to pour cup to drip a few drops on each smash book)
- Friday- Cross (This souvenir is making a nail cross necklace)
- Saturday- Candle
- Sunday- Empty Grave Clothes

Be prepared to meet students outside your room when they arrive so that you are able to give instructions before they enter the room.

Experiencing the Story:

Meet your students outside the classroom door. Tell them that today begins a special week. This is the week that we call “Holy Week.” Ask the kids what they know about Holy Week already. Affirm their answers and redirect as necessary. Let them know that Holy Week begins with Jesus finally entering Jerusalem. (Remind students that for many weeks now what we’ve been hearing about Jesus has been happening as he was on his way to Jerusalem.) Tell the kids that today they are going to make a journey around your classroom to learn about Jesus’ last week. Give them each their Smash Books to take along with them on their journey. Open your classroom door and instruct students to start at the poster that says “Palm Sunday.”

Give students a few minutes to read through the poster and the questions. You might choose to play soft music in the background and have students do this reading and reflecting silently. Otherwise, you might choose to have someone read the poster out loud and discuss the reflection questions together. Either way, students should have their smash books with them so that they can jot down their reflections and add in the souvenir from each day. Take your time with this activity.

When you have had an opportunity for the students to journey through each of the days, gather around your classroom table. Debrief with your own or some of the following questions as conversation starters:

- What did you learn on this journey through Holy Week that you didn’t know before?
- What do you think it would have been like to be in Jerusalem during this week when Jesus was there?
- What would you have said to Jesus if you saw him alive on Easter Sunday after all the events of the last week?

Tell the kids that during the church service this morning (and in special services that we will be having on Thursday and Friday) they will hear more about these Holy Week events. Ask them to keep in mind what they have learned this morning as they go to church. Challenge the kids to see if they can identify the events of Palm Sunday, Maundy Thursday, and Good Friday during the drama that we will be hearing during our church service today.

Palm Sunday

Jesus began his journey toward Jerusalem way back when he was transfigured up on the mountain top (when his clothes turned to dazzling white and his disciples saw Moses and Elijah standing with him). All these weeks Jesus has been determined to continue his way to Jerusalem knowing that what will happen here is very important. He is greeted with something kind of like a parade. The people shouted “Hosanna” which means something like “save” or “help.” It was a happy word that expressed the people’s expectations for Jesus. They expected Jesus to be their savior --- but not really the kind of Savior that Jesus turned out to be. The people wanted a human king to save them from the governors and kings they had already. But Jesus wasn’t that kind of king. When the people found out they were disappointed. Their expectations were wrong and they were upset with Jesus! They didn’t understand that Jesus came to save people from bigger evils. Jesus came to save us all from sin, death, and the devil.

Have you ever felt let down by someone when they didn’t live up to your expectations? What are your expectations about God? Another way to think of that question is, what do you hope that God is going to do in your life? Write about these thoughts in your Smash book. Add a Palm leaf as a souvenir from your reflection on Palm Sunday.

Holy Monday

Jesus was mad when he drove the money changers out of the temple. Being mad is something that is bad when you are mad for the right reasons. What do you think it was that made Jesus so mad that he would chase people out of the temple? When have you been mad for a really good reason? Record your thoughts in your smash book. Add a sliver of broken wood as a reminder of the tables Jesus overturned... and as a reminder that sometimes we are called to overturn injustice as well.

Holy Tuesday

Lots of people asked questions of Jesus all the way through the Gospel. His friends asked questions. His enemies asked questions. What questions do you have for Jesus? Write them on and/or around one of these question marks in your smash book.

Holy Wednesday

Judas was one of Jesus' disciples. He was one of Jesus' closest friends. And he betrayed Jesus for money. Have you ever been betrayed by a friend? Have you ever been the one to betray someone else's trust? Write about one of those experiences in your smash book. Add some silver pieces. Remember that Jesus offers us forgiveness even for the sin of betrayal.

Maundy Thursday

The word "Maundy" comes from the word for "mandate" or "command." In the Gospel of John, Jesus says that he gives us a new commandment, that we should love one another. On this night, Jesus told his disciples that he loved them so much that he would give his body and his blood for them and for all people. That includes us! What does it mean to you to know that Jesus was thinking of you on that night? "Spill" a few drops of wine on your smash book to remind you of Jesus' blood given for you.

Good Friday

It seems silly to call the day that Jesus died “good” but it was. It is good for us. Jesus did this for us. There is a saying about Jesus on the cross that goes something like this: “Nails didn’t hold Jesus to the cross; love did.” That was true. Jesus could have come down at any time, but he didn’t. He died to defeat death for us. As a reminder of what Jesus did for you, use the nails below to make a cross necklace for yourself. Whenever you see it, remember that you are loved more than you could ever know!

Holy Saturday

What was happening on Holy Saturday? The description on the poster said that Jesus “rested in the tomb.” The reality is that Jesus was dead. Very dead. Fully dead. Jesus died the death that was supposed to be for all sinners. So the question is, what happened on Saturday? Some say Jesus went to hell. Christian tradition says that on Saturday, Jesus went to hell and freed all of those who were caught in Satan’s trap. Let’s say that’s what did happen-- imagine what it would have been like to be there when Jesus showed up. What would your reaction be to Jesus’ arrival? Now think about what it means to you here today to know that because of Jesus you will never have to experience being separated from God’s love and grace. Write about your thoughts in your smash book. Add a candle to your book as a souvenir. The Christian church often uses one single white candle as a symbol of Christ and his victory over death! Watch for this candle on Easter morning!

Easter Sunday

In those days, people weren't usually buried underground like they are now. Bodies were put in caves that had been made into tombs. There would be a kind of stone bench or slab that a newly dead body would be laid on. There would be a pit below that after the person had been dead long enough that just the bones were left, the bones would be scraped off into the pit so that a new body could be laid in the tomb until it had decomposed and then the bones could be pushed into the pit. Usually families would have a "family tomb" so that all the bones of related family members were together in their own tomb and pit.

Jesus' body though was put into a brand new pit. No one had been put there before. There were no bones in the pit, just Jesus' body waiting to decompose.

But it didn't! The best part of this whole story is that exactly one week after Jesus entered Jerusalem, three days after dying on the cross, when the women went to put spices on Jesus' body in the tomb.... it wasn't there!!!! All that was there was the empty cloth that his body had been wrapped in.

The Bible tells us that some of the disciples had a hard time believing that Jesus was really alive until they saw him themselves. Why do you think that would have been? What parts of Jesus' story are hardest for you to believe? Write your thoughts in your smash book and add a piece of cloth to remind you that cloth was all that was left in the tomb.