

# Into Jerusalem

The way of God and the way Jesus lives in obedience to God lead into Jerusalem. God's way bids trusting preparation by those who would follow Jesus. God's way celebrates saving promises brought near in stances humble, yet firm. Words hint that more than a parade begins this day. Disciples form for a procession that descends into the city and this week.

## Focus Scripture: Luke 19:28–40

Jesus enters Jerusalem to observe Passover. In that day, Passover increased the population of Jerusalem in two distinct ways – pilgrims came to worship and Rome sent more troops to the fortress Antonia, which overlooked the northwest corner of the temple. Pilate returned to oversee the city. A celebration of national freedom like Passover made Roman authorities more wary of public demonstrations. It was a time of risk and danger for all.

In Luke's narrative, associated with Palm Sunday, there are no palm branches lining the way for Jesus. Cloaks are cast down instead. Laying down cloaks may have been a traditional homage paid to kings (2 Kings 9:13). Also, Luke records no "hosannas" from the crowd. As for "hosanna," the Hebrew word translates to something like "save us." That cry is sounded earlier, in Luke 2:11, where an angel announces the birth of the Saviour. The plea of "save us" has likewise been included in Luke by Jesus' healings and acts of gracious inclusion (Luke 19:9–10).

This account lifts up the identity of those in the procession. They are disciples – and they are a "multitude." Those who follow Jesus are not simply the Twelve (6:13–16). Earlier, Luke reports that Jesus sent out 70 disciples in mission (10:1). By the time told of in Acts 1:15, the numbers of followers has grown to at least 120. The community of those who follow Jesus has been growing on the way to Jerusalem. It will grow even more after this week.

The role of the Pharisees is unclear. Their advice to silence the crowd has often been heard as adversarial. It may, in fact, be a friendly caution. Earlier, some Pharisees warned Jesus that Herod wanted to have him killed (13:31). Here the warning may have to do with Rome. The increase in troop numbers

brought with it greater vigilance. Large and loud public displays might have been taken for civil unrest.

The assigned verses for Palm Sunday omit the ending to Luke's account, which offers two critical details about where this day will lead. Jesus weeps over the fate of the city. After that comes the cleansing of the temple, which ends with leaders seeking a way to kill Jesus. The time of Jesus' passion, or suffering, is entered. Christians call the recollection of these days Holy Week.

The additional readings blend this day's themes of celebration and passion. **Psalm 118:1–2, 19–29** provides the source for the crowd's shouts of joy in Luke and the other gospels. With slight variations, the common cry is blessing the one who comes in God's name. **Psalm 31:9–16** could be heard as a prayer from the cross. It closes with the trust that "my times are in your hands." **Isaiah 50:4–9a** offers imagery that resonates with one who goes to trial with confidence in God's vindication. **Philippians 2:5–11** celebrates the humility of Jesus to endure the cross, as well as exalting Christ in the light of the Resurrection. **Luke 22:14–23:56** narrates Jesus' final week in Jerusalem. For information on the unique elements of Luke's account, refer to "Passion Story as Told by Luke" in this week's adult materials.

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Palm Sunday invites both celebration of Jesus and anticipation of where this procession into Jerusalem will lead. When have you felt so moved with joy that you could not keep it to yourself? Why? In what ways do the rituals and stories of Palm Sunday's entry into Jerusalem prepare you and your church for the other days and nights of this week?



March 28, 2010

**Focus Scripture**  
**Luke 19:28–40**

*Liturgy of the Palms*  
**Psalm 118:1–2, 19–29**

*Liturgy of the Passion*  
**Isaiah 50:4–9a**  
**Psalm 31:9–16**  
**Philippians 2:5–11**  
**Luke 22:14–23:56**

**Blessed are you, Holy One, for your coming among us in Jesus as one humble in power, as one gentle in strength. Loosen our praise this day. And remind us such praise cries out for your saving ways that beckon us to follow Jesus into this week. Amen.**

If you have Internet access, visit [www.spiritseasons.com](http://www.spiritseasons.com) to access Spirit Sightings for connections between current events and the focus passage.

## The Focus for Ages 5–12

This session begins with a parade, and what child doesn't love a parade? However, seeing the parade is sometimes a problem for children. As they recall what it is like to be in a crowd of people, they will prepare themselves to be a part of the multitude that welcomed Jesus to Jerusalem.

Because so much happens between Jesus' entry into Jerusalem and Easter Sunday, part of this session is devoted to filling in some of those gaps. Think about the children in

your group. Which Respond zone will help each one hear the other stories of Holy Week? Older children may need the challenge of the Holy Week zone to push them beyond what they already know. Younger children who barely know these stories may be best served by making the candlesticks with the symbols of the stories in the art zone.

Pray that the children will find ways to enter into these stories about Jesus so that the story of Easter has more meaning for them.

March 28, 2010



### Materials needed

#### Before the session

- ❑ Prayerfully reflect on this week's focus scripture, Luke 19:28–40, and biblical background material (p. 43). What is different about Luke's reporting of this event from other gospels?
- ❑ Bring *basic supply kit* (see p. 2) and, if possible, *Seasons Music CD, vol. 8* and *CD player*. *Seasons .mp3 Downloads* are available for purchase from [www.spiritseasons.com](http://www.spiritseasons.com).
- ❑ Bring songs "You Are Holy/Hamba Nathi," "River Running in You and Me," and "Rest and Wait" (pp. 11, 4, and 9 in *Music Section*; also on #21, #26, and #7 on *Seasons Music CD*).
- ❑ Bring footprints from February 21, 2010 (see Prepare).

#### Gather

- ❑ Prepare worship table with *purple or red cloth* (whichever is used in the sanctuary), *palms*, *Christ candle*, *matches*, *Bible*, and *offering basket*. Place *bookmark* at the beginning of Luke.

#### Engage

- ❑ Prepare to tell the story on *today's resource sheet "Welcome to Jerusalem."*
- ❑ For mime group, bring *today's resource sheet "Welcome to Jerusalem."*
- ❑ For Bible research group, bring *copies of today's resource sheet "More Information about the Story"* and *directions*.

#### Respond

Gather materials for the zone selected.

- ❑ **Art zone:** *glass votive candleholders*, *today's resource sheets "Welcome to Jerusalem" and "Holy Week Story,"* and *2 cm/1 in plain stickers or stickers with Holy Week symbols*
- ❑ **Holy Week zone:** *directions*
- ❑ **Game zone:** Make game papers according to the directions in Respond.
- ❑ **Music zone:** *song "We Sing of Your Glory/Tuya Es La Gloria" (p. 10, Music Section; also #19 on Seasons Music CD)*
- ❑ **Outreach zone:** *information about Lenten offering or project*

#### Bless

- ❑ Bring song "We Sing of Your Glory/Tuya Es La Gloria" (p. 10, *Music Section*; also #19 on *Seasons Music CD*).



# Into Jerusalem

## Scripture

Luke 19:28–40

**FOCUS** To celebrate Jesus' arrival in Jerusalem with the disciples and hear more Holy Week stories.

## GATHER

**Welcome** the children and introduce guests or new children to the others. Engage them in conversation about changes they see in the learning space. Play the song "You Are Holy/Hamba Nathi" (p. 11, *Music Section*; also #21 on *Seasons Music CD*) as the signal to gather at the worship table.

### Opening ritual

**Special day** If the purple cloth was replaced with a red one, this will be an obvious sign that this is a special day in the church year. If not, the children may have noticed the palms on the worship table or elsewhere in the church building. Today is Palm Sunday, which means that Lent is almost over. Light the Christ candle.

**Sing** "You Are Holy/Hamba Nathi" (p. 11, *Music Section*; also #21 on *Seasons Music CD*). If the children do not know the song, invite them to hum along with the music. If you take up an offering, this can happen during the song.

**Pray** Explain the process for praying with the footprints. Everyone will move together from footprint to footprint echoing each word from the

footprints after you or a child says it. After "We pray for," they are welcome to name places or people they want to pray for. After everyone who wishes has prayed, move to "Amen" and say it together.

To indicate that the opening ritual is over, have the children gather up the footprints and place them on the worship table. Extinguish the Christ candle.

### Connecting with the focus

**Crowds** Invite the children to think of a time when they were in a crowd of people, maybe at a parade or some other outdoor gathering. Ask:

- **What could you see?**
- **What did you hear?**
- **How did you feel?**

Encourage the children to put themselves back in that situation and remember what it was like. After they have described their memories, comment that there is a crowd in the Bible story for today.

## ENGAGE

### Preparing for the story

**Luke's story** Invite a child to get the Bible from the worship table and hold it so the group can see where the bookmark is. Ask:

- **Do you think the story is in the book of Isaiah in the Hebrew Scriptures or the gospel of Luke in the New Testament?**

This simple question will help many children recognize the two parts of the Bible, especially since they have had several occasions to distinguish the placement of Isaiah and of Luke. Then have a child open the Bible to the bookmark (Luke) and find chapter 19. You might point out that there are 24 chapters in Luke, so this is near the end of the book.

### The Bible story

**An entry** Tell the story on today's resource sheet "Welcome to Jerusalem," based on **Luke 19:28–40**. To pick up on the earlier conversation about being in crowds, ask:

- **What brought the crowd together in the story?**
- **What excited the crowd?**
- **What did the crowd do?**

### Exploring the story further

To enable the children to explore the story further, according to interests and abilities, explain the two options and have each child select one.

**Mime group** With the children, talk about the people who were in the Bible story (Jesus, two disciples on a errand for Jesus, Pharisees, the crowd). Ask them to select a person in the story. As you tell the story, they are to enter it and act out the part of that person, but without speaking or making any sounds. Repeat, inviting the children to select a different person the second time.

**Bible research group** This group will gather information that helps interpret the story. Provide Bibles, copies of today's resource sheet "More Information about the Story," and these directions:

- 1 Take a Bible and a copy of "More Information about the Story."
- 2 Find Luke 19:28–40 in the Bible.
- 3 Take turns reading the Bible and the information on the page.
  - **Read Luke 19:28. Why was Jesus going to Jerusalem? Read #1 on "More Information."**
  - **Read Luke 19:29. Bethany is a village, but what is the Mount of Olives? Read #2.**

- **Read Luke 19:30–31. Why did Jesus want a young colt? Read #3.**
- **Read Luke 19:32–36. Why did the people put their coats on the road? Read #4**
- **Read Luke 19:37–38. Where have we heard those words before? Read #5.**
- **Read Luke 19:39. Why were the Pharisees concerned? Read #6.**
- **Read Luke 19:40.**



### The Bible story and us

Play the song "River Running in You and Me" (p. 4, *Music Section*; also #26 on *Seasons Music CD*) as the signal to come together. Ask:

- **What do you think will happen when Jesus goes into Jerusalem?**

This question leads to the Respond zones, which focus on the events of Holy Week. You may wish to tell the group about the events through Maundy Thursday, using today's resource sheet "Holy Week Story," before moving to the Respond zones.

# 3 RESPOND

Invite the children to select a zone and work with the materials there.

- **Art zone: Candleholders** Decorate candleholders with symbols of the events of Holy Week. Each child will need a glass votive candleholder. Review the stories from Palm Sunday through Good Friday, using today's resource sheets "Welcome to Jerusalem" and "Holy Week Story." After each part of the story of Holy Week, have the children

draw a symbol on a circle sticker to attach to the candleholder. Simple suggestions are palm branch, scroll, loaf of bread, praying hands, and cross.

**Look for stickers for the children to use instead of drawing the symbols.**

- ❑ **Holy Week zone: Booklets** For children who are familiar with these stories, have them read the passages in Luke and make a booklet for their families to use during Holy Week. Provide Bibles, drawing paper, construction paper, markers, and these directions:

- 1 You will need three sheets of paper folded in half.
- 2 Stack them and staple them together on the left side. Now you have a booklet with six pages.
- 3 Read each passage from Luke listed here. Draw a picture to remind you of that story on one of the pages. Write the Bible reference on it too.  
 Luke 22:7–23 Jesus eats last supper with disciples  
 Luke 22:39–46 Jesus prays in garden  
 Luke 22:47–53 Jesus is arrested  
 Luke 23:13–25 Jesus is judged to die  
 Luke 23:32–34 Jesus is crucified  
 Luke 23:50–56 Jesus is buried
- 4 Take your booklet home and read and think about one story each day this week.



- ❑ **Game zone: Holy Week games** To the list of Bible references in Holy Week zone above, add Luke 19:28–39 Jesus enters Jerusalem, Luke 19:47–48 Jesus teaches in the temple. Print each reference on one side of a piece of



paper and the description on the reverse side. Make three or four sets. Invite the children, working alone or with a friend, to arrange the events in order, using the description sides only. They can check their order by looking at the reference side.

Another way to use the papers is to play charades. A child draws a slip of paper and acts it out for the others to identify. Or they can sketch it to see how quickly the others can identify it.

**To make the game more difficult for older children, have them tell the story when they guess the event.**

- ❑ **Music zone: Song of praise** On Palm Sunday the people sang praises to God. The children in the music zone will begin with the song “We Sing of Your Glory/*Tuya Es La Gloria*” (p. 10, *Music Section*; also #19 on *Seasons Music CD*). Then review the events of Holy Week, using today’s resource sheet “Holy Week Story.” Ask:

■ **What kind of song do you think the disciples would have sung at the end of Holy Week?**

Try to sing “We Sing of Your Glory” as they might have sung it on Good Friday.

- ❑ **Outreach zone: Lenten offering or project** Conclude the Lenten offering or project with a celebration of what the group has done. Provide information about who might use what they offered. Pray for those persons.



**Gather** Play “River Running in You and Me” (p. 4, *Music Section*; also #26 on *Seasons Music CD*) as the signal to gather at the worship table.

**Sing** “We Sing of Your Glory/*Tuya Es La Gloria*” (p. 10, *Music Section*; also #19 on *Seasons Music CD*).

**Pray** this prayer, or one of your own:

God, we are thankful for Luke and friends who wrote down the stories about Jesus. Amen.

**Blessing** Say to each child, “(Child’s name), remember and think about the life of Jesus this week.”



Which children were familiar with the story of Palm Sunday? Which ones also knew most of the stories that make up Holy Week?

If your group does not meet on Easter, how will you send Easter greetings to the children?



# Welcome to JERUSALEM

based on Luke 19:28–40

Experiment with speaking louder as the multitude grows, suggesting the magnitude of the crowd.

For many weeks Jesus had been journeying to Jerusalem. Friendly Pharisees had warned him not to go to the city where Herod ruled. Disciples had tried to keep him away. But Jesus knew it was God's will.

On the way, Jesus taught many people about God's love and healed many people with God's love. Now the time had come to go into the city of Jerusalem.

When Jesus, and the disciples travelling with him, reached Bethany, they stopped at a place called the Mount of Olives. Jesus called two disciples over. "Go into the village. At the edge of the village you will find a colt that has never been ridden. Bring it to me. If anyone asks what you are doing, say 'The Lord needs it.'"

With those instructions, the two disciples went to the village of Bethany. They found

the colt, just as Jesus had told them. As they were untying it, they were asked, "What are you doing?" The disciples answered as Jesus told them. "The Lord needs it."

They brought the colt to Jesus. Then they threw their cloaks over the colt and Jesus got on it.

A curious thing happened as they got closer to the city of Jerusalem. As Jesus rode along, the disciples spread their cloaks on the road.

You know how a gathering of people can draw more people. That is what happened and soon a big crowd, a multitude of people, were watching for Jesus. They weren't being quiet either. They were shouting, "Praise to God!" "Blessed is Jesus who comes in the name of God!" "Peace in heaven!" "Glory in the highest heaven!"

In the crowd were some Pharisees. They were afraid that all this noise would get the attention of the Roman soldiers. One of them said, "Teacher, tell your people to be quiet."

But Jesus answered, "If I tell them to stop and they stop shouting, the stones would shout out praises to God."

Jesus continued to the city. The people continued to shout praises to God.



# More Information about the Story

**#1** **Passover:** Jesus and the disciples were going to Jerusalem to observe Passover, a Jewish celebration of national freedom which remembered the time when God led the Israelites out of slavery in Egypt. At Passover, Jerusalem was a very busy place. Thousands of pilgrims came to town, and hundreds of Roman soldiers came, too, to make sure everyone behaved themselves. The Roman governor, Pilate, came to Jerusalem as well, which gave the soldiers more reason to be on the alert for trouble.

**#2** **Mount of Olives:** The Mount of Olives was a hill just outside the walls of Jerusalem.

**#3** **Riding a colt:** Jesus rode on a young colt. In Bible times, royalty would ride on a young colt during periods of peace, rather than a horse which was associated with war. When Jesus rode into Jerusalem on a colt, he was showing that he was coming to bring peace, not war.

**#4** **Celebrating Jesus' arrival:** People were throwing their coats on the ground. Throwing your cloaks on the ground for the king's horse to walk on showed great respect for the king (2 Kings 9:13).

**#5** **Blessed is he who comes in God's name:** The words in v. 38 come from Psalm 118:26, and were the usual greeting for Passover pilgrims. What is special in this case is that the disciples have added the word "king," so Jesus is being called "the king who comes in God's name," someone even more special than the governor who comes in the name of Rome.

**#6** **The Pharisees' word to Jesus:** The Pharisees' advice to Jesus, "Get your disciples under control!" may have been a friendly warning rather than criticism. Their call for "silence" might have been meant to avoid drawing Roman attention to Jesus and Jesus' followers during heightened security for Passover.



# Holy Week Story

(based on Luke 22:14—23:56)

## Jesus teaches

Jesus and the disciples travelled further into the city until they came to the temple. Every day, Jesus taught the people about living in God's loving, generous, welcoming ways. Many people came to hear Jesus teach. The religious leaders listened to Jesus' teaching. Because Jesus' teaching was different from their teaching, some of the religious leaders were angry. They wanted to stop Jesus from teaching. The religious leaders tried to trick Jesus by asking difficult questions. Jesus answered their questions by telling stories. The leaders couldn't find anything wrong with Jesus' answers.

## Jesus has a meal

When it came time to eat the Passover meal, Jesus and his friends gathered around a table. Jesus looked at his friends and told them that the meal they were to share was special. It was probably the last meal they would have together. Then Jesus showed them a cup of wine and gave thanks to God. Jesus said, "Drink from this cup and know that God is making a promise to people." Jesus took some bread and gave thanks to God for it. Jesus broke the bread and said to his friends, "Every time you eat some bread, remember me."

## Jesus prays

After the meal was finished, Jesus and his friends went to a quiet place. Jesus said to his friends, "Pray that you make good choices." Then Jesus left his friends and went to pray. Jesus prayed about what God wanted him to do. Jesus told God about his feelings. Jesus was quiet and listened to God. When Jesus returned to his friends they were asleep. Jesus was disappointed with his friends. Then a crowd of people came including the religious leaders that were angry with Jesus. The crowd took Jesus away.

## Jesus' friends

The crowd took Jesus to rulers of the country. The crowd told the rulers that Jesus was telling people he was chosen by God. The rulers asked Jesus some questions but they didn't think Jesus had done anything wrong. Still, the crowd and the religious leaders wouldn't give up. They made sure that Jesus was punished. Jesus was dead and Jesus' followers were sad and scared. Their teacher and friend was gone. What would they do now? What would happen next?

**For some children, this may be the first time they have heard the events of Holy Week. Allow time for the children to ask any questions they might have about this difficult story.**