

Family Page

Background Reflection

Palm Sunday begins Holy Week on a high note. Jesus rides into Jerusalem and is greeted by cheers and waving palm branches. He knows this week will end in his death, yet he sits serenely on a donkey. This Sunday welcomes the King of Kings, triumphant and glorious. Here indeed is the promised king, but a king who is not quite what anyone was expecting.

The glorious ride on the donkey into Jerusalem amid the cheering crowds flows into the crushing defeat of Good Friday, the stark emptiness of Holy Saturday, and the glory of the Resurrection on Easter. This is the paradigm of our lives and of our spiritual journeys as well.

On this Sunday, we receive a palm to take home. This palm is a symbol that Jesus is truly the King, the King of eternal life, triumphant over death, who brings us with him to Easter life, now and always.

People of Faith

Saint Cecilia (second century)

Saint Cecilia suffered for Christ and was martyred by the Roman emperor. The Church of Saint Cecilia in Rome was built on the site of her house. Because Cecilia was inspired by music to praise God, she is often pictured with a musical instrument and is the patron saint of musicians. Her feast day is November 22.

Prayer

Pray this prayer together as a family, beginning and ending with the Sign of the Cross.

Lord our God, the palms we receive on Palm Sunday remind us of the victory of Jesus. May they be signs of hope on tough days and signs of joy as we prepare to celebrate Jesus' rising from the dead on Easter. We ask this through Christ our Lord. Amen.

Family Activities

- Read together the Featured Story on page 1500 in *The Catholic Children's Bible* (Matthew 21:6–9). Invite your child to summarize what she or he remembers about the meaning of this story.
- Discuss together where you will place your palms this year. Remind your child that the palm is blessed. It reminds us of the victory of Jesus, so it should be treated with respect.
- Watch the video "Palm Sunday HD" (YouTube, 2:58) together, for a good explanation of Palm Sunday as celebrated in the Catholic Church around the world. With your child, compare the video to your own parish celebration.

Palm Sunday

Discover!
Finding Faith in Life

A New Kind of King

Matthew 21:6–9

Prayer

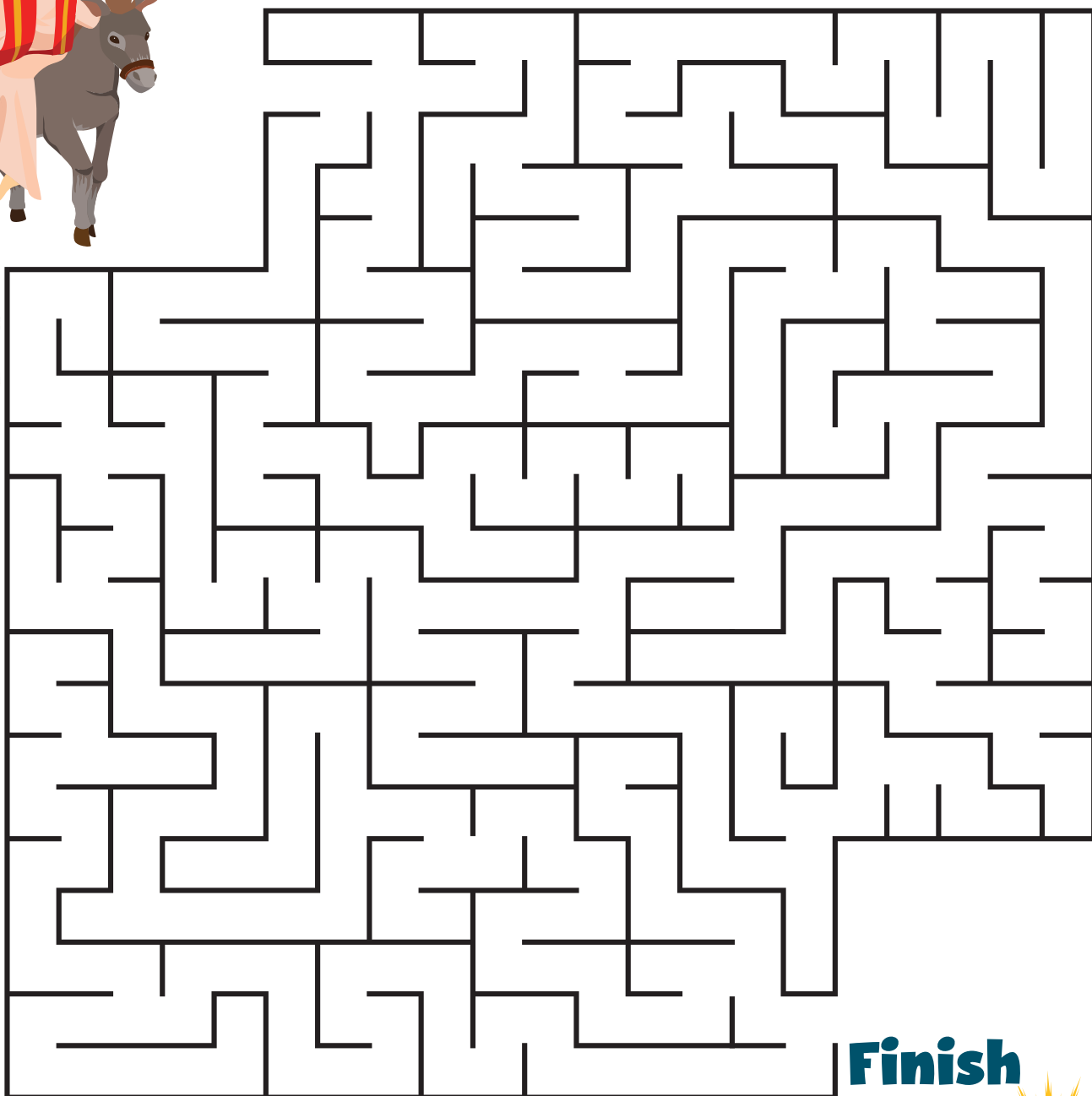
Lord God, may this Palm Sunday help us to praise you always. Thank you for the gift of new life in your Son, Jesus, our King. Hosanna in the highest! Amen.



Show Jesus entering into Jerusalem by completing the maze.



Start



Finish



Following Jesus to Jerusalem

Leader: Let us begin our prayer with the Sign of the Cross. . . . Let us remember that we are in the holy presence of God.

Leader: Loving God, as we enter into Holy Week, bless us and bless the donkeys that we have made. Today, as we follow Jesus to Jerusalem, may we continue to follow him all the days of our lives.

All: Amen.

Reader 1: Lord Jesus, a donkey carried you to Jerusalem. Help us to carry your peace and love to all we meet.

All: Hosanna!

Reader 2: Lord Jesus, you chose a donkey as a sign of your peaceful and humble kingship. Help us to be peaceful and humble in our relationships with others.

All: Hosanna!

Reader 3: Lord Jesus, you rode into Jerusalem in peace and love. Help us to follow you always.

All: Hosanna!

Leader: Lord Jesus, you came as a peaceful and loving king.

All: Hosanna!

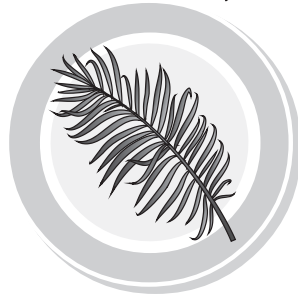
Leader: Let us place our donkeys in "Jerusalem." Like Jesus, we have made it to Jerusalem! We have followed our king. Let us pray together: Hosanna in the highest!

All: Hosanna in the highest!

Leader: Let us go now and be a people of peace and love, hope and joy. Hosanna in the highest!

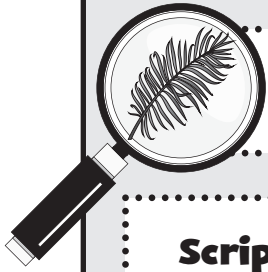
All: Hosanna in the highest!

**Palm
Sunday**



A New Kind of King





Lesson at a Glance

Scripture Focus

Matthew 21:6–9

Lesson Goals

- to state that Palm Sunday is the day we celebrate Jesus' coming to Jerusalem before his Passion
- to name Palm Sunday as the beginning of Holy Week
- to identify Jesus as the King who saved us by giving up his life

Catechism References

559–560, 570, 1674

Key Words

disciple, cloak, Passion, hosanna, humble

Music Suggestions

- “Hosanna (Praise Is Rising),” by Worship For Kids (Integrity Music)
- “Hosanna,” by Spring Harvest (Elevation Kids)

Materials Needed

- *The Catholic Children's Bible* and the Palm Sunday activity booklet
- the *Discover!* folder
- copies of the handout “A New Kind of King,” one for each child
- clothespins with springs, two for each child
- a sample completed donkey
- a prayer table, a red cloth, palm branches (one for each child), a bowl of sand, holy water (*optional*)
- scissors, crayons, and pencils
- a board or poster to write on
- materials for any of the additional activities you choose

Background Reflection

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The glorious ride on the donkey into Jerusalem amid the cheering crowds flows into the crushing defeat of Good Friday, the stark emptiness of Holy Saturday, and the glory of the Resurrection on Easter. This is the paradigm of our lives and of our spiritual journeys as well.

On this Sunday, we receive a palm to take home. This palm is a symbol that Jesus is truly the King, the King of eternal life, triumphant over death, who brings us with him to Easter life, now and always.

**Get Ready! (10 minutes)****Opening Prayer**

- Invite the children to turn to page 1 of the Palm Sunday activity booklet.
- Begin prayer by leading the children in the Sign of the Cross. Then say, "Let us remember that we are in the holy presence of God." Allow about 10 seconds of silence.
- Read aloud the prayer on page 1 of the activity booklet. Invite the children to say "Amen," and then close with another Sign of the Cross.

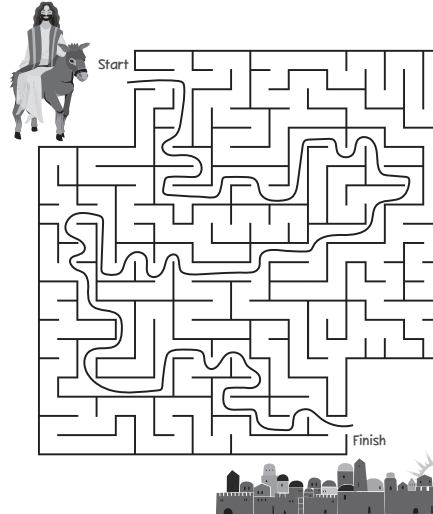
Engage Activity

- Invite the children to share times they have been to a big parade or a football or baseball game where people waved flags. Explore with them the feelings of excitement at these events and help them understand that we cheer to offer people encouragement, to celebrate our happiness, and to show our support as a group.
- Explain that on the first Palm Sunday, Jesus came to Jerusalem and the people had a parade for him. Tell the group that the people did not wave flags, but they waved something else. Explain that when the children read today's Bible passage, they will find out more about this parade.

**Dive In! (15 minutes)****Scripture Focus**

- Invite the children to find Matthew 21:1–17 in *The Catholic Children's Bible* (pages 1498–1499). Point out the green leaf at the beginning and end of the passage.
- Have the children turn to the Featured Story on page 1500. Explain that the green leaves on this page mark that this is a shortened version of the same Scripture passage found on the previous page.
- Ask the children to look at the artwork on pages 1500–1501, and see if anyone can name the green branches that are shown on these pages (*palm branches*). Encourage the children to listen for the way these branches are used.
- Read the Scripture passage to the children. Ask the children several questions to check for comprehension, such as the following:
 - What animals did the disciples of Jesus bring to him? (*a donkey and a colt*)
 - What did they put on the donkey's back? (*their cloaks*)
 - What did Jesus do? (*He got on and rode into the city.*)
 - What did the people spread on the road for Jesus to ride on? (*their cloaks and branches they cut from the trees*)

- What were they shouting? (*"Praise to David's Son! God bless him who comes in the name of the Lord! Praise be to God!"*)
- Why were they so excited? (*They were happy because their King was here.*)
- Have the children turn to the activity on page 2 of the activity booklet and complete it. *Solution:*



Understand It!

- Read aloud the Understand It! on page 1501, or have a volunteer read it.
- Invite the children to summarize what they just heard, asking them key questions about the reading to check for comprehension.
- Review some of the key points with them:
 - The Sunday before Easter is called Passion Sunday, or Palm Sunday. On this day, we remember when Jesus entered Jerusalem as a king.
 - At church we receive blessed palm branches.
 - When Jesus came into Jerusalem, the people cut palm branches, waved them, and laid them down to cover the dusty road.
 - The people thought Jesus was a king who would lead them in battle against their enemies. But Jesus was not that kind of king. He rode a lowly donkey, not a warhorse.
 - Jesus saved us by giving up his own life.
- Explain to the children that sometimes they might even hear this Sunday called by its long name, which is: Palm Sunday of the **Passion** of the Lord. Explain that the *Passion* is another word we use for the suffering of Jesus.

Live It!

- Read aloud the Live It! on page 1501, or have a volunteer read it.
- Explain to them that we say "Praise be to God!" to show our thankfulness for all that God has done for us. Recall that the people in the Scripture passage were praising God for sending Jesus, and we can praise God for the same reason.
- Encourage the children to show the Live It! activity to their parents and to create the bookmark at home. Tell them that they can use this bookmark in their Bibles.

Tell It!

- Ask the children to look at the images in the Tell It! on page 1501. (*Image 1 shows the disciples throwing their cloaks on the donkey. Image 2 shows Jesus riding into Jerusalem and palm branches waving. Image 3 shows the people spreading palm branches and cloaks before Jesus. Image 4 shows the people praising God.*)
- Invite volunteers to tell the story in their own words using the pictures in this section.
- Discuss the fourth image and explain that another way to say “Praise be to God” is to say **“Hosanna”** (which means, “Salvation is here!”). Remind the children that we sing or say, “Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord” and “Hosanna in the highest,” at every Mass, during the “Holy, Holy, Holy” prayer.



Discover! (25 minutes)

Core Learning Activity (Craft)

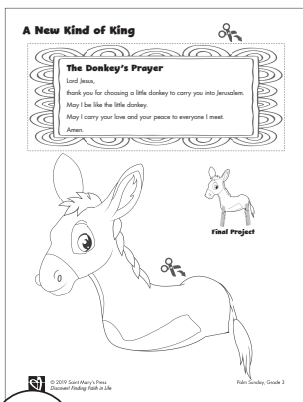
A Palm Sunday Donkey

- Prepare by making a sample donkey to show to the children.
- Give each child a copy of the handout.
- Distribute scissors, and instruct the children to cut out the figure of the donkey. Ask them to cut out the prayer and set it aside for now.
- Direct them to color the donkey’s body gray or brown and the mane and tail black. Explain that they should color both sides of the donkey and add an eye and a smile to the other side of the donkey’s head.
- Distribute two clothespins to each child. Show them how to add legs to the donkey by clipping the clothespins onto the bottom of its body so it can stand on the ends.
- Close the activity by praying “The Donkey’s Prayer” together.

Process the Activity

- Ask the children to stand their donkeys in front of them. Congratulate the group on their good work.
- Explain that a donkey, even today, is considered a hardworking but lowly animal. Ask the children why Jesus chose a donkey to carry him to Jerusalem. (*Jesus wanted to show that he was not a warlike king but a humble and lowly king. He wanted his followers to be humble too.*)
- Explain that the word *humble* means being down-to-earth and not thinking you are better than everyone else.
- Point out that the donkey is smiling, and ask the children why they think this might be. (*The donkey is happy to be chosen to carry Jesus. He knew Jesus would be kind to him. Accept other reasonable responses.*)
- Explain that we will learn more about this happy day when a donkey carried Jesus into Jerusalem, a day we still celebrate in our Church and in our parish each year.

Note: The handout can be found at the end of this chapter or accessed online at www.smp.org/discover_grade3.

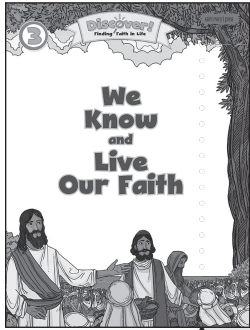


Additional Activity Options

If the core activity would not work for your group for any reason, you may choose to use any of the additional activities on page 294 in its place.

Core Teaching

- Explain to the children that Palm Sunday is the Sunday before Easter and it begins Holy Week, when we remember the Passion, or suffering, of Jesus, our Lord.
- Remind the children that during Holy Week we remember that Jesus is our King who saved us, not by fighting, but by giving up his life on the cross.
- Explain that Palm Sunday is our celebration of the day Jesus came into Jerusalem and the people cheered and greeted him like a king, waving branches and laying their cloaks on the ground.
- Tell the children that on Palm Sunday we receive palm branches in church. Explain that the priest blesses the palms so they become a holy reminder to us of all that Jesus did for us. Remind the children that Jesus is our King, and we honor him and praise him with palm branches on Palm Sunday, just like the people in the Bible did. Explain that we take the palm branches home and put them in a special place where we can see them.
- Explain that palms are signs of victory. Mention to the children that they might see palms in stained-glass windows to show that a saint died for their faith in Christ and is now victorious with him in Heaven. Continue by explaining that the palm branch can remind us to be strong and victorious in times of trouble and to remember that God loves us so much that he sent his Son, Jesus, to save us.
- Ask the children some questions to check for comprehension, such as the following:
 - What is the Sunday before Easter called? (*Palm Sunday*)
 - What week begins with this Sunday? (*Holy Week*)
 - Why is Holy Week important to us? (*We remember the Passion of Jesus during this week. We remember that Jesus gave his life to save us.*)
 - What happened on the first Palm Sunday? (*The people honored and praised Jesus with palm branches. They praised God for giving Jesus to us as our Savior.*)
 - Why do we get palms in church on Palm Sunday? (*We honor and praise Jesus with palms like the people in the Bible did. We keep the palms at home as a reminder that Jesus is our King who came to save us.*)
- Have the children turn to page 4 of the activity booklet. Read the “People of Faith” section aloud. Add any other information you know about Saint Cecilia, and encourage the children to say, “Saint Cecilia, pray for us,” during the next week.



We Know and Live Our Faith

The following articles and activities in the *We Know and Live Our Faith* resource correspond to concepts introduced in this lesson:

- “The Church Year” + activity, pages 28–29
- “The Prayer of Praise” + activity, pages 60–61

Read aloud, or invite a volunteer to read, the selections as time allows. Check for understanding by asking several questions. Invite the children to begin the activities, or have them complete the activities with their families at home.



Go! (10 minutes)

Lesson Wrap-Up

- Invite the children to think back over all the different things they did in this lesson, and invite volunteers to share some of the key things they learned.
- Take time to get input from the group and write their answers on the board.
- Ensure that the following points are made, write them on the board, and circle them:
 - Palm Sunday is the day we celebrate Jesus’ coming to Jerusalem before his Passion.
 - Palm Sunday is the beginning of Holy Week.
 - Jesus is the King who saved us by giving up his life.

Short Closing Prayer (optional)

Note: Use this prayer if you do not intend to use the longer prayer service on the next page to close this lesson.

- Begin prayer by leading the group in the Sign of the Cross. Then say, “Let us remember that we are in the holy presence of God.” Allow a few seconds of silence.
- Ask the children to stand their donkey crafts in front of them. Ask them to find the prayer they had set aside, “The Donkey’s Prayer.” Ask the group to read the prayer together.
- Close the prayer by making a final Sign of the Cross together.

Prayer Service

Following Jesus to Jerusalem

Set up a prayer table at the front of the room, covered with a red cloth. Place a sign on the prayer table with "Jerusalem" written on it. Choose three readers and mark or circle their parts for them. Ask the children to form a line across the back of the room, carrying their donkeys.

Leader: Let us begin our prayer with the Sign of the Cross. *(All make Sign of the Cross.)* Let us remember that we are in the holy presence of God. *(Allow about 10 seconds of silence.)*

Leader: Loving God, as we enter into Holy Week, bless us and bless the donkeys that we have made. Today, as we follow Jesus to Jerusalem, may we continue to follow him all the days of our lives.

All: Amen.

Reader 1: Lord Jesus, a donkey carried you to Jerusalem. Help us to carry your peace and love to all we meet.

All: Hosanna! *(Have the children move one or two steps toward "Jerusalem.")*

Reader 2: Lord Jesus, you chose a donkey as a sign of your peaceful and humble kingship. Help us to be peaceful and humble in our relationships with others.

All: Hosanna! *(Have the children move one or two steps toward "Jerusalem.")*

Reader 3: Lord Jesus, you rode into Jerusalem in peace and love. Help us to follow you always.

All: Hosanna! *(Have the children move one or two steps toward "Jerusalem.")*

Leader: Lord Jesus, you came as a peaceful and loving king.

All: Hosanna! *(Have the children move one or two steps toward "Jerusalem.")*

Leader: Let us place our donkeys in "Jerusalem." *(Have the children move the rest of the way and place their donkeys on the prayer table.)* Like Jesus, we have made it to Jerusalem! We have followed our King. Let us pray together: Hosanna in the highest!

All: Hosanna in the highest!

Leader: Let us go now and be a people of peace and love, hope and joy. Hosanna in the highest!

All: Hosanna in the highest!

Close with one of the music suggestions or another appropriate song.

Additional Activities

Materials Needed

- scarves and towels
- a stick horse
- green construction paper
- a pair of scissors
- a video recording device (optional)

Materials Needed

- plastic Easter eggs, one for each child
- small pieces of green paper to represent palm branches, one for each egg
- small brown crosses, one for each egg
- small rocks, one for each egg
- small strips of white cloth, one for each egg

Materials Needed

- a computer with internet access
- a computer projector

Palm Sunday Play (15 minutes)

- Prepare by gathering scarves, towels, and a stick horse. If a stick horse is not available, designate a chair or stool as “the donkey.”
- Cut out palm branch outlines from green construction paper. Lines can be added if desired.
- Explain to the children that they will act out the entry of Jesus into Jerusalem.
- Give everyone a part as townspeople, disciples, and Jesus.
- Distribute towels, scarves, and palm branches.
- Have the children decide how best to act out the scene. Give them direction and guidance as needed.
- Videotape, if possible, the completed effort. Show the video to the children and parents at an appropriate time.

The Holy Week Egg (15 minutes)

- Prepare by gathering enough plastic Easter eggs for each child to have one. Fill each egg with the following small items: a small palm made from green construction paper, a small brown cross, a small rock, and a small piece of white cloth.
- Distribute the eggs, and explain to the children that the story of Holy Week and Easter can be told using this egg.
- Ask the children to open up their eggs and to take out the pieces with you, one at a time. Explain what each item represents.
 - On Palm Sunday Jesus rode into Jerusalem on a donkey. (*Hold up the small palm.*)
 - On Good Friday Jesus died on the cross. (*Hold up the cross.*)
 - His friends buried him. They closed the tomb with a large rock. (*Hold up the rock.*)
 - On Easter Sunday, when the women came to the tomb, the stone was moved away. All they found was the white cloth that had been wrapped around him. (*Hold up the white cloth.*)

Shout Hosanna (15 minutes)

- Show the video “Shout Hosanna from the ‘On Tour’ DVD on Donutman.com—Rob Evans is The Donut Man” (YouTube, 1:35).
- Ask the children to watch and listen to the video.
- Repeat the video and ask the children to imitate the gestures of the children in the video as they watch.
- Remind the children that part of the song comes from the Scripture passage we read today.
- Explain that the last verse of the song, about Jesus rising, is a verse about what we celebrate at Easter: Jesus is alive and risen from the dead!

A New Kind of King



The Donkey's Prayer

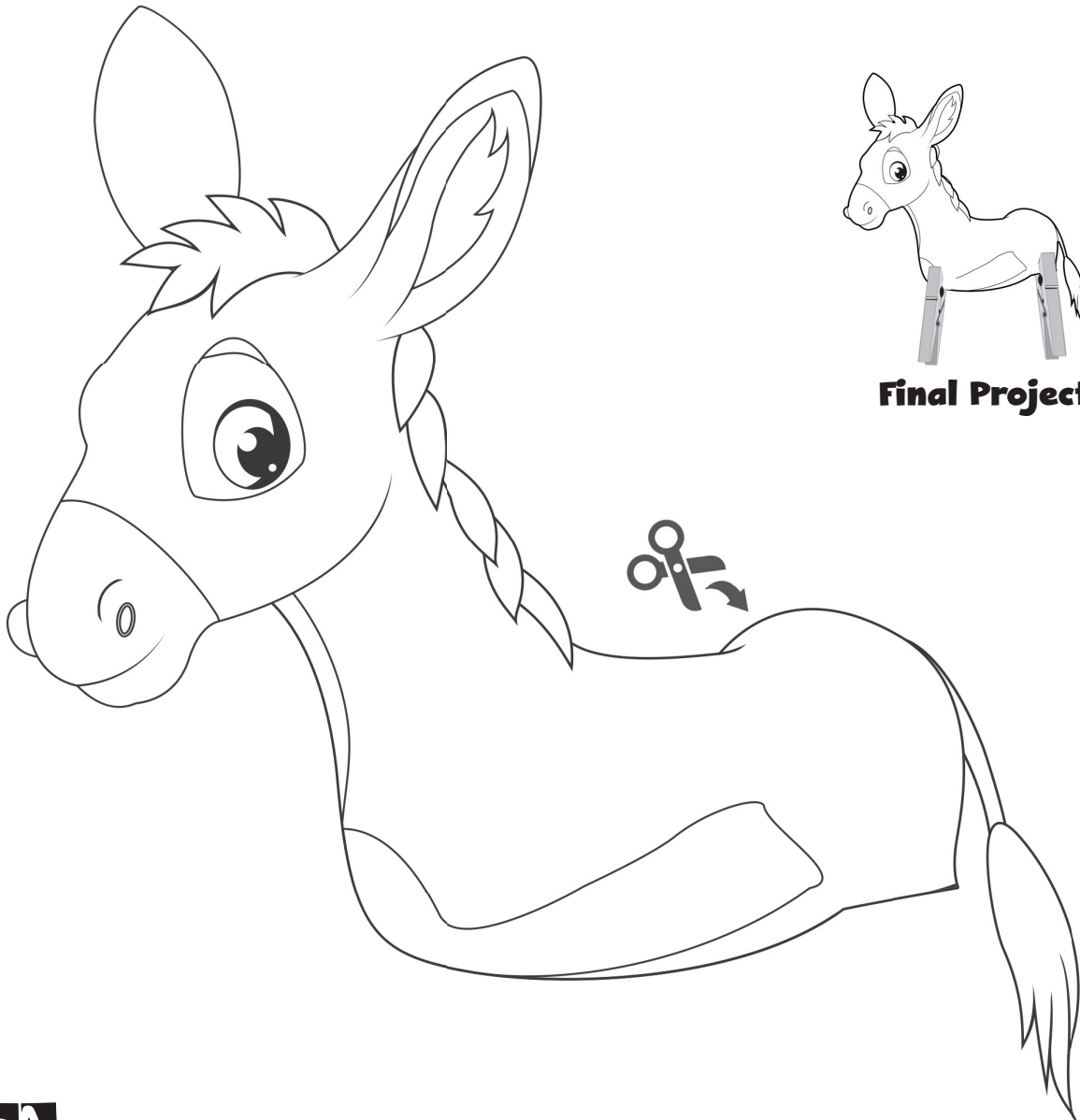
Lord Jesus,

Thank you for choosing a little donkey to carry you into Jerusalem.

May I be like the little donkey.

May I carry your love and your peace to everyone I meet.

Amen.



Final Project



The Crowds Praise Jesus

Matthew 21

STORY

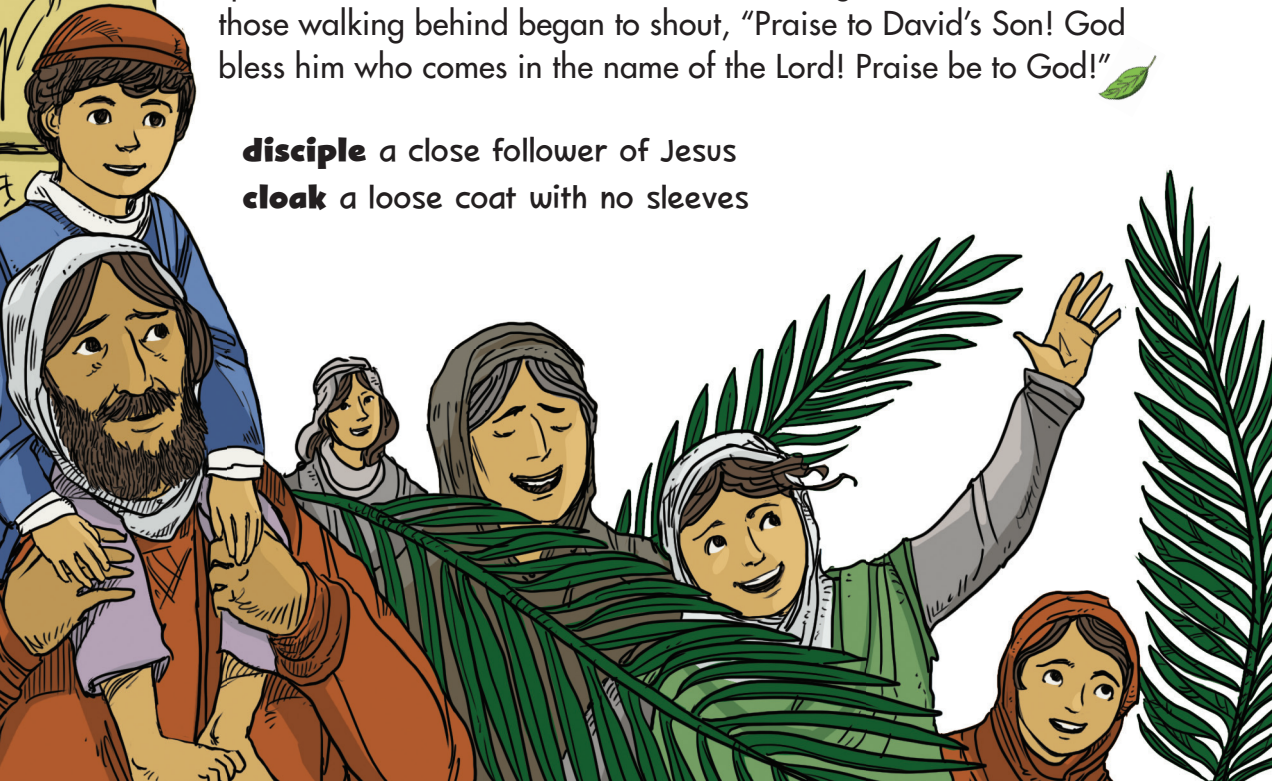


Matthew 21:6-9 (For the full story, read Matthew 21:1-17.)

6 [T]he **disciples** went and did what Jesus had told them to do: 7 they brought the donkey and the colt, threw their **cloaks** over them, and Jesus got on. 8 A large crowd of people spread their cloaks on the road while others cut branches from the trees and spread them on the road. 9 The crowds walking in front of Jesus and those walking behind began to shout, "Praise to David's Son! God bless him who comes in the name of the Lord! Praise be to God!"

disciple a close follower of Jesus

cloak a loose coat with no sleeves



Understand It!

The Sunday before Easter is called Passion Sunday, or Palm Sunday. On that day we remember when Jesus entered Jerusalem as a king. At church we receive palm branches. The people in this Bible story from Matthew used palm branches to welcome Jesus. They realized that Jesus was the promised savior, called the Messiah. So they praised him when he rode into Jerusalem. They greeted Jesus as the son of King David, as their king.

The people had prayed for a king who would lead them in a fight for their freedom. They thought Jesus would be that kind of king. But Jesus did not come to lead a battle. He did not ride on a horse like a warrior. He rode a lowly donkey. He saved us not by fighting but by giving up his life.

STORY
Matthew 21

Live It!

Make your own "Praise God" bookmark.

Cut a heavy sheet of paper in the shape of a bookmark. Decorate it with a palm branch like the one shown here. Write "Praise be to God!" on it and keep it in your Bible. Whenever you see it, remember to praise God for sending his Son, Jesus.



Tell It!



Using the pictures above, retell this story in your own words.

