

Remembering and enjoying Palm Sunday!



On Palm Sunday we remember when Jesus entered Jerusalem, the capital city of his country, to show people the kind of king he was and what God's kingdom would be like.

To begin...

Can we do something special outside of our house to show that this is a really important day? What if, on Sunday morning we put a branch on the door of our house or in the window (instead of a rainbow or a teddy for one day) to celebrate Palm Sunday. It would be like branches Jesus friends carried as they walked beside him on his way to Jerusalem.

We could say a prayer after we have done this:

Father God, help us to find out more about you and your love as we celebrate Palm Sunday today. Thank you that Jesus showed us what you are like and the kind of world you long for us to live in. Amen.

OK, so what's the story?

You can read it in the Bible in the gospel of Matthew, chapter 21 verses 1-11. Here's a summary of that story:

The Palm Sunday story

Hosanna! Hosanna!' The crowds shouted and sang as Jesus rode into Jerusalem on a donkey. Now who'd get excited about a man riding on a donkey? People who had read the Old Testament, that's who. Some laid their cloaks down in the road, and some cut branches from the nearby trees to mark the way, as they would do for a king.

A king? A king on a donkey? What made them think of that? Well, the Old Testament prophet, Zechariah. Years before, he'd said: 'Shout for joy, Jerusalem! Your king comes to you, riding humbly on a donkey, a colt, the foal of a donkey.' Jesus knew the Old Testament very well, of course. That's why he'd sent his disciples ahead of him to get the donkey in the first place. 'Go into Bethphage,' he'd said. 'You'll find a donkey and her foal tied up there. Bring them to me.' Just as his followers were about to go, he'd said, 'If anyone tries to stop you, just say, "The Lord needs them," and they'll let you go.'

So the disciples had gone and got the donkey, a humble animal, just as Zechariah had described it, and thrown cloaks on its back for Jesus to sit on. And that's what he was riding into the city.

'Hosanna to the Son of David!' cried the crowds, both behind and ahead of Jesus. 'Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord! Hosanna in the high eople asked. And the singing crowds replied, 'This is the prophet, Jesus, from Nazareth in Galilee.'

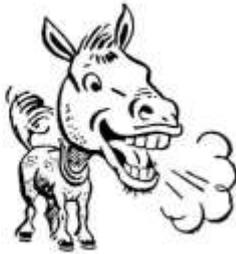
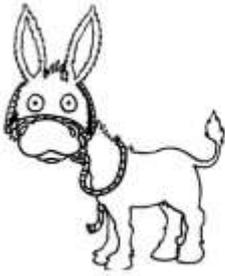
Glossary

Hosanna! a Hebrew word usually used to mean 'Praise', but it actually means 'Save us, please!'; **prophet** someone who receives messages from God to pass on to the people.

What about having a song and some music next?

You'll recognise the tune! Try it on the recorder.

Little Donkey



Little donkey, little donkey, on a dusty road, Little donkey,
carry Jesus to Jerusalem.

See branches waving near, Jesus is here, Jesus is here! See
faces full of cheer, Jesus is here, Jesus is here!

Little donkey, little donkey, on a dusty road, Little donkey,
carry Jesus to Jerusalem.

Leaders are frowning there, they do not care, they do not care.
Jesus brings love to share, to everywhere, to everywhere!

Little donkey, little donkey, on a dusty road, Little donkey,
carry Jesus to Jerusalem.

OK, so let's think a bit about the story...

- ❖ Every year at this time, Jerusalem was filled with pilgrims arriving for the Jewish festival called the Passover. It would have been a chaotic time with a lot of people everywhere.
- ❖ Have you ever been part of a big crowd watching an event? What did it feel like?
- ❖ If you have attended The Lord Mayor's Show in Norwich, or even the London Marathon, you'll have an idea of what a big crowd feels like. There would have been a lot of soldiers around too in Jesus' day – like we have the Police today keeping order.
- ❖ A man and his followers coming into the city on a donkey would have been a tiny part of this chaos. Would he have even been noticed? What would the Romans and bystanders have thought of this? As some were shouting 'Hosanna to the Son of David', would they have been heard above the noise of the crowds?
- ❖ If you saw Jesus on the street, what word might you shout and why?
- ✚ People had seen Jesus do some amazing things – like healing sick people and feeding 5,000 people with 5 loaves and 2 fish. They had seen how courageous he was standing up for truth and doing things God's way. They had seen his gentleness and tenderness when people who were hurting inside asked him for help. So when he came to Jerusalem, their capital city, they would be wondering what kind of King he was going to become. Flashy? Loud?
- ✚ No, none of that. As the story showed, Jesus entered the city as a peacemaker, on a donkey seeking peace, right living and mercy.
- ❖ What was the most surprising part of the story for you? How do you think you would have felt seeing Jesus come as this kind of king?

Time for a prayer?

This may be a good time to say sorry to God for the times when we are so busy with our own things we forget God. If so, here's a prayer we can pray:

*Forgive us, Father God, when we shout with our mouths, but our hearts are silent; when our eyes see your signs, but our minds block you out; when we enjoy the turmoil, but do not recognise Jesus. Help us to move where you are moving. **Amen.***

Now let's get creative!

There's several things we could do now:

- Decorate leaves using the template and join them together to make a large banner.
- Enjoy doing the colouring sheet.
- Explore the activity sheet.

Have fun!

To end...

You could finish this Palm Sunday activity time by saying this prayer:

*Father God, thank you for this time to learn more about you.
Help us to hear your voice this week in all things we get up to.
Help us to be ready to do what you ask.
Please be with all those who don't get noticed in our world
and those who need your love close to them this week.

Amen.*