

# King Jesus

- Large and Small Group Sessions for Kindergarten-Grade 3 and Grades 4-8
- 2 Dramas
- Songs
- Complete Palm Sunday and Easter Program
- Crafts, Games, and Other Photocopiable Pages

**LEADER'S GUIDE K-8 EASTER BOOK 1**

# King Jesus



Grand Rapids, Michigan

Any questions or comments about this unit?  
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*Walk With Me*

Grades K-8

Year 1, Easter: King Jesus

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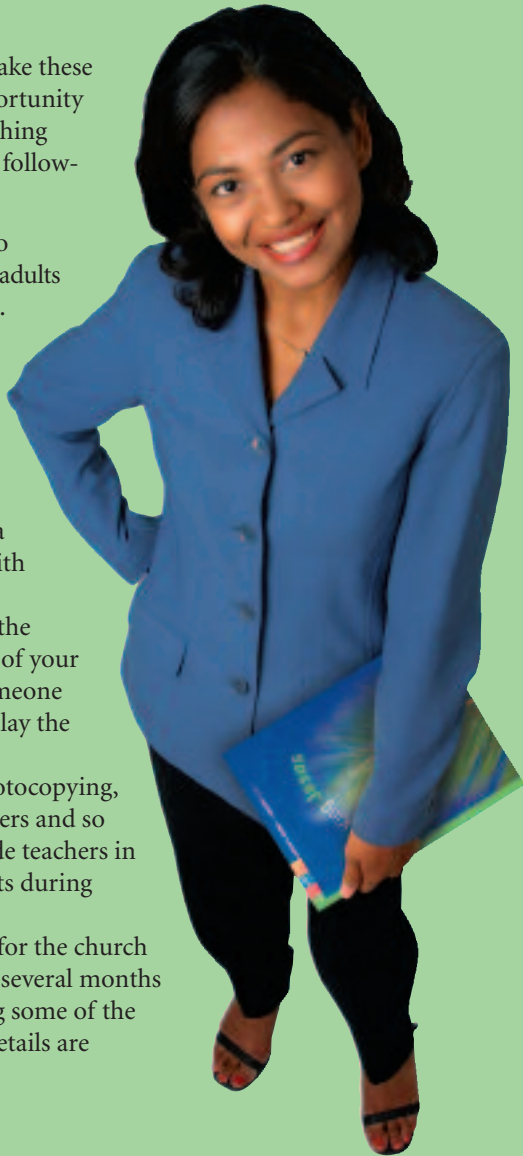
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## Ways to Get Others Involved

You’ll need the talents of many people in your congregation to make these two sessions come alive for your children. What a wonderful opportunity to involve adults and teens who usually don’t take part in the teaching ministry of the church! Consider using volunteers in some of the following ways:

- *Drama Team.* You’ll want to find actors to play the roles in the two dramas. Your middle school kids could take these roles. Or invite adults and older teens to prepare and present one or both of the dramas.
- *Sets Person(s).* Whether you want a very simple set with a few props for the dramas or a more elaborate backdrop and set, you will probably want to find one or more people who have visual gifts to plan and prepare these for you. If you plan to use any kind of lighting, you’ll want to find a volunteer to manage that too.
- *Costume Gatherer.* Simple costumes will add a lot to the drama presentation. Look for a volunteer who’d be willing to work with others or alone to plan and prepare what the actors will wear.
- *Musicians.* Whether you plan to present an Easter program to the church and community or just to enjoy songs together as part of your opening worship on these two Sundays, you’ll want to find someone with musical gifts to teach the songs to children, someone to play the accompaniment, someone to lead the singing.
- *Materials Gatherers:* Look for people who are willing to do photocopying, gather craft materials such as pipe cleaners, paper punch, stickers and so on, cut flags out of fabric—anything you might need to provide teachers in the small groups as they work with children on specific projects during these two weeks.
- *Program Planners.* If you have the children present a program for the church and community, you’ll want to appoint a planning committee several months ahead of time—people who will take responsibility for making some of the content decisions, schedule rehearsals, and make sure all the details are attended to.



# How to Use This Book

*“If you confess with your mouth, ‘Jesus is Lord,’ and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved.”*

—Romans 10:9

Jesus is King! That’s the message we want children to hear loud and clear during this season of preparation and celebration. On that first Palm Sunday King Jesus came into Jerusalem with resolve—ready to die for the sins of the world. Adults and children lined the streets praising him as their earthly king. How little they truly understood! Today, because of his death and resurrection, we too can praise King Jesus, the one who defeated death and Satan for us.

During this Lent and Easter season you will be teaching the children in your program about Jesus the King—and about the wonderful gift of salvation he gives to those who truly believe. Our hope is that through these sessions the children will come to know more about Jesus and will joyfully and gladly join in worship of their Lord and King.

This book offers a variety of ideas and options for large group sessions, small group sessions, and an Easter program. Use the ideas and options that work best with your church school. Ideally, the large group session would take about 15-20 minutes, then the children would break up into small group sessions that would last for about 30-40 minutes. You may also need to schedule an extra practice time or two if your church is planning on doing the Easter program.

**Finding time to do everything in this book may prove difficult, so choose what you think your group will be able to handle. You will need one copy of this book for each of your leaders. As the purchaser of this book, you are granted permission to photocopy the drama and the patterns and activities on reproducible pages 47-54 and 75-90.**

## Getting Started

Because these materials suggest a different format and approach than the regular *Walk With Me* units, you’ll want to spend some extra time planning and preparing to teach these sessions. Although we realize that each church situation is unique, you may find some of the following suggestions helpful:

- In the early winter, appoint a small committee to read through this book and decide which suggestions would work best for your church.
- After the committee makes its recommendations, recruit actors, song leaders, accompanists, and teachers as necessary.
- Recruit volunteers who are willing to gather materials for these special sessions. Give them plenty of time for this task (a month or two), since they will likely want to ask the congregation to save and/or gather some of the items.
- Schedule rehearsals for the drama team.
- If you’re planning an Easter program, schedule a large final rehearsal that includes drama, singing, recitation, and so on.



## Large Group Sessions and Easter Program

The large group session materials in this book contain a drama for each week and a list of songs to learn as a whole group. (All the songs are included on the CD that comes with this book.) Each drama takes about eight minutes and requires five to seven actors. The costumes and sets may be as simple or as elaborate as you like. (See suggestions on pages 10-11 and 29-30.)

You'll probably want to choose either middle schoolers or a team of adults or older teens to play these roles. Either way, be sure to schedule ample rehearsal time.

The dramas and songs can be used not only for the large group session but also for an Easter program. You'll find a sample program along with ideas for organizing and producing it on pages 71-73.

## Small Group Sessions

Small group sessions will give you the opportunity to help apply the story to the children's lives. If you are unable to present the story in a large group setting, you can still use the drama or another form of the story in the small group setting. It's a story you want children to hear!

Each small group session opens with a Hello step designed to catch the children's interest and get them thinking about the lesson's theme.

Next comes the Know step (telling the story). If the children have already heard the story in the large group session, you'll want to use this time to review the story with them. If you did not participate in a large group session, use either the drama or another interesting way to present the story to the children (see sessions for suggestions).

The Grow step will help children understand what the story means for their lives, and the Show step will guide them to respond to what they learned in this session.

The small group session includes many options for activities and crafts that leaders (or the committee you appointed earlier) should carefully consider well ahead of teaching these materials. **Once you've decided which crafts and activities to use, you may want to appoint two or more volunteers (possibly parents of children in the group) who will spend the time needed to gather materials, cut out patterns, and assemble all the materials you'll need.**

Above all, we hope you'll enjoy planning these Easter sessions. We trust that you and your congregation will come to see and worship Christ, the risen Lord, our King!

## Scheduling Rehearsals

1. Let cast members know about rehearsal times when you first ask them to participate. Stress that agreeing to participate means making a commitment to come to all practices.
2. Schedule two to four well-planned all-cast rehearsals.
3. Request that all lines be memorized by the first rehearsal.
4. Build community at rehearsals. Pray, practice, and enjoy a snack together.
5. If you are presenting the dramas as part of an Easter program, use your final rehearsal to go through the entire program, including music, recitations, and so on.

## Tailoring Your Sessions to the Ways Children Learn

How do children learn? The answer to that question can be almost as varied as the children in your group. Some learn best through words. Others through music. Still others through nature or through movement.

Sessions in the *Walk With Me* curriculum try to respect the many ways children learn. *Walk With Me* sessions include a wide range of activities that speak to children with the following types of intelligence (based on Howard Gardner's theory of multiple intelligences). Within each session, the icons below highlight the learning styles represented by each activity. As you teach, you'll begin to get a sense for how the children in your group learn best. Children who are



### Word Smart

learn best through verbal activities (listening, reading, or speaking), including discussions, worksheets, writing, reading, storytelling, and word games.



### Number Smart

learn best by exploring patterns and relationships through activities such as problem solving, logical puzzles or games, making charts and graphs, or putting things in sequence.



### Picture Smart

learn best by visualizing concepts. These kids enjoy viewing maps, slides, pictures, videos, and diagrams; making jigsaw puzzles; and expressing their ideas with shape, color, and design.



### Body Smart

learn best by using their bodies, acting things out, using puppets, moving—anything hands-on.



### Music Smart

learn best through sound, music, and rhythm—playing musical instruments, writing their own songs and raps, listening to recordings, singing, and so on.



### People Smart

learn best through doing things with others, cooperating and working in small or large groups, role playing, conversations, brainstorming, and other interactive exercises.



### Self Smart

learn best by working independently through such things as writing in a journal, meditating, reading, and reflecting.



### Earth Smart

learn best through activities connected to living things and natural phenomena, through nature walks, examining plants and animals, nature experiments, and activities that focus on ecology.

—The ideas on this page are based on material from the following resources: *Multiple Intelligences in the Classroom* by Thomas Armstrong, © 2000, and a chart prepared by Donald L. Griggs, Livermore, California.

# 1

Large Group Session

## Jesus Is Our King

### Scripture

Matthew 21:1-17

### Memory Challenge

Romans 10:9

### Focus

We worship Jesus, our King.

### WORDSearch

#### Think About It

Hans Christian Anderson tells a tale about an emperor who is riding into the city with brand-new clothes “designed” by his sly tailors. The people all “ooh” and “aah” as if he’s decked out in really fine threads. But he’s been tricked. What the people know that the king doesn’t, is that his brand-new clothes are imaginary. The king is walking through town without any clothes. The people all play along with the joke. After all, this is the king, and it wouldn’t do to show disrespect. But a little child has no such inhibitions and simply blurts out the truth: “Look at the king! The king is in his altogether.”

Sometimes the story of Jesus’ triumphal entry seems to be a variation on that theme. We readers are waiting for the rug (cloak) to be pulled out from under the colt. We’re waiting for the little children to blow the whistle. There’s King Jesus. But instead of riding on a kingly white charger, he enters town on a lowly donkey. The adults all expect big things to happen soon. They expect a king who will rescue them from the oppression of Rome. Here he is at last. But he’s riding a donkey’s colt. Is everybody in on the joke here? Are they all just playing along?

But no one seems to care. At least for now, this is as good as it gets. By throwing down their cloaks they give this gentle King the red carpet treatment. They know they have something good here, something the prophet Zechariah promised them:

“Your king comes to you . . . riding on a donkey” (Zech. 9:9). And if there’s one thing Jewish people know besides oppression, it’s prophecy.

They’re ready. Jesus is their King.

They even have a rallying cry: “Hosanna! Hosanna!” It’s a cry of praise that literally means “Save!” Here is their King fulfilling the prophecy and getting ready to save them. Even the children end up shouting praise:

“Hosanna to the Son of David.” Jesus has “King” written all over him. For what was the preferred royal mount of his human ancestor, old King David? Of all animals, a *mule!* Can you believe it? A lowly work animal, an animal of peace and service, just like this donkey.

#### Pray About It

Pray today that you will see clearly what Jesus has done for you. This King has already given you so much—peace, joy, love, and reconciliation with God the Father. He has already conquered death for you. And there’s so much more to come. No one’s going to pull the rug out from under you because Jesus’ kingdom is forever secure. Give thanks.

#### Tell About It

What do you tell your kids about the triumphal entry? Help them see how Jesus got what he so richly deserved: praise from God’s people (even though some refused to join the praise). Help them see their part in this praise. Tell them that Jesus is not a king like so many others who selfishly use worldly power to bring bloodshed and death. Jesus came to bring salvation and peace with God. He came to bring a wonderful kingdom that will never end—because nobody who lives there will ever *want* it to end. Teach them to sing “Hosanna!”—and really mean it.



Yes, the kingdom of true peace is on its way. The crowd can taste it as the hosannas roll off their tongues. There's no joke being played here. The King is coming. The people are happy with him. All is as it should be. All is how God said it would be.

But here's the problem: those who were supposed to know him best thought only of themselves. Jewish religious leaders thought it was more important to keep their own pride and their own status. "But when the chief priests and the teachers of the law saw the wonderful things he did and the children shouting in the temple area, 'Hosanna to the Son of David,' they were *indignant*" (Matt. 21:15). They saw wonderful things that day: peace and healing and salvation. But they turned away from Israel's true King.

This entry into Jerusalem was no joke. And the people weren't just politely playing along. They knew their King had come. But their religious leaders vowed, "Not on our watch." This King must be laughed at, humiliated, and punished. He must die. That's how King Jesus did exactly what he set out to do. And he did it for all of us who welcome him as our King . . . and who don't turn away.

## Planning the Session

Presenting the stories of Palm Sunday and Easter to a room full of kids from kindergarten through eighth grade is quite a challenge! How can you tell these stories in a way that will touch the lives of all these kids with the majesty of our King and the love of our Savior?

The outline and suggestions that follow may help you plan and schedule the 15-20 minutes you have together. You'll need to decide which suggestions would work most effectively for your group. Then set the plan in motion!

A possible schedule for your session might look like this:

- Singing (5-12 minutes)
- Drama (8-10 minutes)

If you are planning to use this book to help the children prepare and present a Palm Sunday/Easter program, you may want to use the large group session each week (in addition to other rehearsals, as needed) to help them prepare. You'll find suggestions for program planning on pages 71-73.

The suggestions that follow assume that you are using this large group session to tell the story of Jesus' triumphal entry to children and young teens, preparing them to talk about and think about this story in their small groups.

## Singing

You may want to ask someone with musical gifts to lead the singing and teach new songs to the children during these two weeks. The tips in the box "Introducing a New Song" (p. 10) may be helpful to that person.

However, most of the songs you choose for these two sessions will likely be the well-known Palm Sunday and Easter songs that children know and love. The following songs (included on pages 55-70 of this book) are among those you may want to sing. They were selected for their ties to the themes of the drama and the Palm Sunday/Easter story.

*Note:* If you are planning to use these songs as part of an Easter program, you will probably want to start teaching them to the group already in early winter so that they know them well by the time you present the program.

- "Alive, Alive" (p. 55; CD, track 1)
- "We Have a King" (p. 57; CD, track 2)
- "He Is the King of Kings" (p. 58; CD, track 3)
- "Clap Your Hands" (p. 59; CD, track 4)
- "Hosanna" (p. 60; CD, track 5)
- "Lord, I Lift Your Name on High" (p. 62; CD, track 6)

- “He’s Alive!” (p. 64; CD, track 7)
- “God’s Not Dead” (p. 65; CD, track 8)
- “Mighty Resurrection Day” (p. 67; CD, track 9)

Other songs you may want to consider (but that are not included in this book) include the following:

- “Shout Hosanna” by Robert C. Evans
- “He Is Exalted” by Twila Paris
- “King of Kings and Lord of Lords” by Sophie Conty and Naomi Batya
- “Ho-ho-ho-hosanna,” arranged by Larry Haron
- “Oh, How Good Is Christ the Lord,” a Puerto Rican folk hymn arranged by Dale Grotenhuis
- “Crown Him with Many Crowns” by Matthew Bridges and George J. Elvey (great congregational song)

### Introducing a New Song

The way you introduce a new song is crucial—be sure you know the song well and have thought through ways to introduce it. Here are a few ideas to keep in mind:

- Many kids learn mostly by rote and repetition. Listen to the CD or play the tune and encourage the kids to join in on a line or phrase at a time. You may want to start by teaching them a phrase that repeats often.
- Make up motions that may go along with simple words, such as *step* or *Jesus*, to help them remember the words.
- Be enthusiastic! model your love of singing instead of being concerned about your performance.

## Drama

Rehearsing and presenting a drama can be a fun and rewarding experience—both for the actors and for the people who view the drama. For this week’s drama, “The King Rides,” you will need seven or more actors (depending on how many extras you include). You’ll want to find a team of actors, either teens or adults, and begin working with them early. This could be a wonderful opportunity for your middle school group to prepare and present something for the younger children. (See the tips for scheduling rehearsals on p. 5.) You’ll also want to begin thinking about the costumes and props—and maybe ask someone to help you gather the things you will need.

### Costumes

Plan early for costumes, but remember that they don’t have to be fancy. Since this is a contemporary drama, most items you will need will be familiar and readily available. The following suggestions are only that—suggestions.

- As the news anchor, George should be dressed “professionally”—maybe a suit and tie.
- Jackie should look professional too: a suit of some kind, a dress, or slacks and a jacket.
- Make Mike look like a businessman.
- Rosie wears typical teen clothes.
- Rita wears “glamorous” teen clothes.
- Dress Mitch in jeans or old clothes.

### Props

As with costumes, you can do as much or as little with props as you’d like. If you have a talented artist or designer, you may want to create a whole backdrop of Jerusalem. You also might want to design special lighting.

But in most cases, the following simple props are all you need for an effective presentation:

- George: desk and papers with microphone, headphone or earpiece
- Jackie: clipboard and handheld microphone
- Mike: briefcase

You'll also need to make arrangements for Kelly's voice to come through the sound system of your auditorium.

## Small Groups

After the drama, children will meet in small groups. If your regular teachers are present for these two weeks, it would probably work best to have children meet with their groups as usual or to combine several groups together. Note that we have only included two session plans—one for children in K-3 and another for children in grades 4-8. Each leader will need to adapt the plan to the needs of his or her children.

# Jesus Is Our King

## Scripture

Matthew 21:1-17

## Memory Fun

Romans 10:9

## Focus

We worship Jesus, our King.

## WORDSEARCH

### Think About It

Hans Christian Anderson tells a tale about an emperor who is riding into the city with brand-new clothes “designed” by his sly tailors. The people all “ooh” and “aah” as if he’s decked out in really fine threads. But he’s been tricked. What the people know that the king doesn’t, is that his brand-new clothes are imaginary. The king is walking through town without any clothes. The people all play along with the joke. After all, this is the king, and it wouldn’t do to show disrespect. But a little child has no such inhibitions and simply blurts out the truth: “Look at the king! The king is in his altogether.”

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people know besides oppression, it’s prophecy. They’re ready. Jesus is their King.

They even have a rallying cry: “Hosanna! Hosanna!” It’s a cry of praise that literally means “Save!” Here is their King fulfilling the prophecy and getting ready to save them. Even the children end up shouting praise: “Hosanna to the Son of David.” Jesus has “King” written all over him. For what was the preferred royal mount of his human ancestor, old King David? Of all animals, a *mule*! Can you believe it? A lowly work animal, an animal of peace and service, just like this donkey.

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Yes, the kingdom of true peace is on its way. The crowd can taste it as the hosannas roll off their tongues. There's no joke being played here. The King is coming. The people are happy with him. All is as it should be. All is how God said it would be.

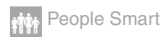
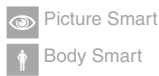
But here's the problem: those who were supposed to know him best thought only of themselves. Jewish religious leaders thought it was more important to keep their own pride and their own status. "But when the chief priests and the teachers of the law saw the wonderful things he did and the children shouting in the temple area, 'Hosanna to the Son of David,' they were *indignant*" (Matt. 21:15). They saw wonderful things that day: peace and healing and salvation. But they turned away from Israel's true King.

This entry into Jerusalem was no joke. And the people weren't just politely playing along. They knew their King had come. But their religious leaders vowed, "Not on our watch." This King must be laughed at, humiliated, and punished. He must die. That's how King Jesus did exactly what he set out to do. And he did it for all of us who welcome him as our King . . . and who don't turn away.



# HELLO

Royal Welcome



## Goal

Help the children sense that kings and queens get very special welcomes.

## Time

5 minutes

## Materials

- Red rug or inexpensive red fabric
- Paper crowns with children's names printed on them (pattern on reproducible page 75)

Before the children arrive, lay the "red carpet" on the ground near the door where they come in. As the children enter the room, give them the paper crowns and help them put them on.

Ask the children if they know why you laid out a red carpet for them. Then briefly tell them about some of the things people do to welcome special and famous people—especially kings and queens (lay out red carpets, drive them around in limousines, bow to them, provide servants for them, and so on).

If your children have just come from the large group presentation of the drama, ask them what they remember about the king in today's story. Did he come into town in a fancy car? Did he walk on a red carpet? Explain that together you will act out and remember what happened the day that Jesus came to Jerusalem.

If the children did not see the drama today, ask them to listen very carefully to the story you're about to tell—the story of the time a very special king came to a big city.



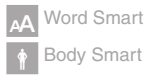
If you don't have time to prepare the crowns before the session, think of a special way to greet the children that makes them feel important—maybe bow to each child and welcome them by name.





# KNOW

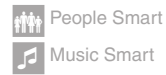
## The King Rides



Word Smart



Body Smart



People Smart



Music Smart

### Goal

Tell what happened when Jesus came to Jerusalem.

### Time

10 minutes

### Materials

- Story props: palm branches, coats, bathrobes, gray towel or blanket over a broom handle (for donkey)

If the children saw the drama in your large group session, explain that now you are all going to pretend that you were there that day, just like the people in the drama. You may want to assign the parts of Jesus and the disciples (two are enough!). The rest of the children can be the crowd. Give bathrobes to Jesus and the disciples. Give coats and palm branches to the rest of the children. Divide your room into two parts: Jerusalem and the road to Jerusalem. Place Jesus and the disciples at the far end of the road to Jerusalem. Ask the rest of the children to stand along the streets of Jerusalem. Then invite the children to act out their parts as you tell the story.

*The story follows:*

Jesus and his disciples were traveling to Jerusalem. (Encourage your Jesus and disciples to begin walking very slowly toward the Jerusalem side of your room.) Before they got to the city, Jesus stopped his disciples. “I want to ride into Jerusalem on a donkey,” he told them. “Please bring me a donkey.” (Hold up broomstick donkey and beckon to the disciples.)

The disciples found the donkey just where Jesus had said they would find it, and they led it back to Jesus. (Give “donkey” to the disciples and tell them to “lead” it back to Jesus.)

Jesus sat on the donkey’s back. (Encourage your Jesus to do so.) And he and his disciples walked and rode toward the city of Jerusalem. (Ask the children to do so.)

The people of Jerusalem knew that Jesus was coming. They also knew that Jesus was a special king. So they wanted to give Jesus a king’s welcome. They laid their coats on the street for him. (Give the children time to lay their coats over the “road.”) As Jesus rode his donkey through Jerusalem on the road covered with coats (encourage Jesus and the disciples to enter Jerusalem on the road), they waved their palm branches and yelled, “Hosanna! Hosanna! Hosanna in the highest!” (Encourage the children to really enjoy the parade—they should wave their palm branches and yell “Hosanna!” You may want to explain that *hosanna* means “save”; it’s a word we use to praise Jesus, like the words “Alleluia” or “Praise him!”)

The people knew that Jesus was a king. That’s why they gave him such a big welcome.



But they didn’t know what we know—that Jesus is the King of the whole world and of heaven too. Jesus is the King of kings! (Encourage the children to continue with their praise and palm waving. If you learned “We Have a King” or “He Is the King of Kings” or another suitable song, have the children sing it together as part of your celebration.)



If the children did not hear the story in a large group session, you may want to invite a guest storyteller to join your group today and tell the story as an eyewitness account: “I was there that day! You’ll never guess what happened. . . .”

## Storybook: "King Jesus Rides into Jerusalem"

Option to  
step 2

AA Word Smart  Picture Smart  People Smart

### Time

10 minutes

### Materials

- Storybook (copied and assembled, reproducible pages 77-78), one per child
- Picture books of Jesus' triumphal entry (optional)

If you'd prefer to read the story to the children, you can use the storybook that the children will be sharing with their families this week. Assemble a sample book ahead of time and show the children the pictures as you read through the pages together.




If your children really enjoy listening to stories, you may want to look for a colorful picture book account of Palm Sunday and use that to tell the story today. Or bring several books and let the children compare the pictures and tell the story by looking at the pictures.



# GROW

Our King

AA Word Smart  
 Self Smart

### Goal

Realize that Jesus is a special king.

### Time

5 minutes

### Materials

None needed

When you have finished reviewing or telling the story to the children, gather them around you in a circle. Ask them to close their eyes for a minute and to pretend that they were there that day in Jerusalem. Then help them think about the story and what it means for us by asking some of the following questions (taken from page 8 of the storybook):

- I wonder what it was like seeing all those people waving palm branches. . . . I wonder if their voices were loud. . . .
- I wonder how Jesus felt riding on the donkey and listening to the people. I wonder if he was smiling. . . .
- I wonder if the children were smiling and happy. . . .
- I wonder if the people knew that Jesus was a King. . . .
- I wonder if you know that Jesus is your King too. . . .

Tell the children how wonderful it makes you feel to know that King Jesus loves and cares for each one of you. Then invite them to join you in the following prayer. Explain that each time you hold up your hand, they should say "Hosanna!" (Practice a few times before you begin the prayer!)

Dear Jesus, like the children in Jerusalem, we want to praise you.

**Hosanna!**

You are a great and wonderful King.

**Hosanna!**

You loved each of the people who welcomed you to Jerusalem.

**Hosanna!**

And you love us too.

**Hosanna!**

Thank you for being our Lord and King

**Hosanna!**

Amen.

# 4

# SHOW

Worship and Celebrate

## Goal

Worship Jesus, our King.

## Time

25 minutes

## Materials

See individual projects (below) for lists

Continue the spirit of praise to King Jesus in the remainder of your session by providing food, playing and/or singing music, and choosing one or more of the activities below—activities that will help the children remember the story and continue the celebration.

## Two-Week Project Idea Triumphal Tambourines



Word Smart



Picture Smart



Music Smart

## Time

15 minutes each week

## Materials

- 8 oz. size plastic whipped topping container, no lid, one per child
- Colored pipe cleaners, three per child
- Paper punch
- Sharp scissors or utility knife for adult use
- 1¼" fender washers, six per child
- Palm Sunday/Easter stickers
- Duct tape in various colors—red, blue, yellow, and green (or large label stickers)
- Colored pencils
- Permanent markers for older children



Rather than just shaking the tambourines, we have found that if you tap them strongly against your opposite hand, you get a louder sound.

If you choose this project, the children will make their own tambourines to use in accompanying the singing in your Easter program and/or large group session. Having the children do this craft may involve a lot of work for you and others before the session, but we think you'll find it's worth it!

If you have a large class or are working with very small children, you may want to invite one or more helpers to join your group today. (A class of middle school kids would be ideal!) Make a sample or two ahead of time to show the children how fun these instruments can be.

You'll need to carefully walk the children through each step of the process as described and pictured. Notice that we include only the first half of the project here. Directions for finishing the tambourines appear in session 2.



*Step 1:* Hand out 2"-3" strips of duct tape the children can use to cover the sides of their container, especially any writing that may be there. The children can use overlapping strips of tape to “patch” over the words on the container. You may wish to do this step yourself ahead of time if you’re working with small children.



*Step 2:* Encourage the children to decorate the outside bottom of their containers today. (This will eventually be the top of the tambourine.) They can use stickers, colored pencils, and permanent markers. Encourage them to draw things that relate to the Bible stories (cross, crown, palm branches, sunlight, angels, and so on).



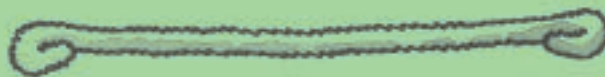
If you think the children are not familiar with the Easter story they will hear next week, include only pictures that tie to the Palm Sunday story.

### Teacher Preparation for Week 2

1. Cut three oblong-shaped holes (3" x 1") in the sides of each plastic container, using either sharp scissors or a utility knife. It may help to draw the shapes on the container prior to cutting them out.
2. Using a paper punch, punch a hole above and below the center of each oblong hole.



3. For safety, fold the ends of each pipe cleaner so they are not sharp.



## One-Week Project Idea

### Storybook: “King Jesus Rides into Jerusalem”

AA Word Smart    Picture Smart    People Smart

#### Time

10 minutes

#### Materials

- Storybook pages (reproducible pages 77-78), one set per child
- Markers or crayons



Distribute copies of the storybook pages to each child. Show them how to fold the pages into a book. Then make crayons and markers available and give the children the opportunity to color their books. Encourage the children to use the book at home this week to tell the story of King Jesus to their families and friends.

## Hosanna Flags

AA Word Smart

Picture Smart

Body Smart

Music Smart

### Time

20-25 minutes

### Materials

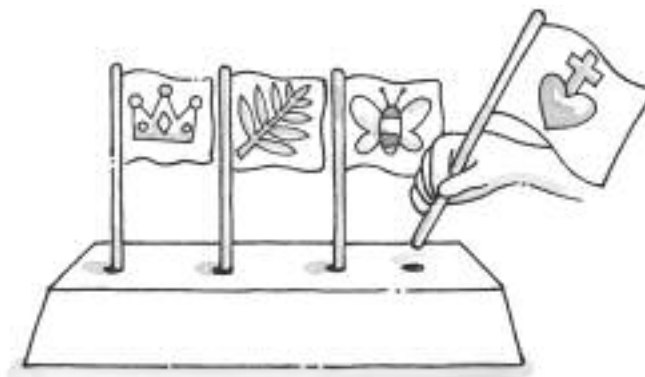
- 18" (45 cm) dowel rods, one per child
- 10" x 12" (25 x 30 cm) pieces of nylon fabric (ripstop or flag/sport nylon), one per child
- Pinking shears
- Crayons
- Craft glue (tacky glue)
- Drawing paper (10" x 12" or 25 x 30 cm), one sheet per child
- Sample flags (reproducible page 76)



These flags are a great craft and can also be used for an Easter program, if you plan to have one. During the singing of the processional song, the children can enter waving their flags and then mount them in long flower boxes placed in the front of the sanctuary or auditorium. Prepare the flower boxes ahead of time by putting non-hardening clay in the bottom so that the children can stick their flags in it.



Or drill holes in the bottom of the boxes that are large enough for the dowel rods to fit snugly. Then flip the box over so that the flags the children mount in the holes are very visible.



If you don't plan to have a program, you may want to talk to your pastor or another worship leader about letting the children use the flags somehow in church on Easter Sunday.



### Before the Session

If you are working with young children, you (or a volunteer) may want to do the following before the session:

1. Using pinking shears, cut a 10" x 12" (25 x 30 cm) piece of nylon fabric for each child.
2. Generously pour glue along the 10" (25 cm) side edge of the fabric. Lay the dowel over the glue and roll up 1½ to 2 turns of the dowel. When done rolling, add a thin layer of glue along the “rolled edge” to secure in place. Pinch and rub the glued edges.
3. If you are working with kindergarten or first-grade children, you may want to print words on the flags ahead of time and/or draw the outline of a symbol (crown, palm leaves, cross, and so on) that the children can color and/or decorate. See samples on reproducible page 76.



If you plan to use these flags in an Easter program, you may want to include some Easter designs as well as Palm Sunday designs. Tell the children that some of the flags are pictures of the wonderful story they will hear next week—the story about how Jesus, the King, showed his great love for us.

#### *Directions for the activity follow:*

Give the children each an undecorated flag, then walk them carefully through the following steps:

**Step 1:** Have the children draw a “Palm Sunday” design on paper. If you plan to use the flags in an Easter program, you may want to include some Easter designs too. If children don’t know the Easter story, tell them they will hear all about how Jesus died and came to life again in your next session! Show them the samples on reproducible page 76 if you feel your group needs some suggestions. They should also practice writing the words to see how they will fit on the fabric.



If you’re working with very small children, you may either want to do some of the flag design ahead of time (see box above) or have a volunteer (perhaps a middle school student) work with each child in creating a flag. Another possibility is to just invite the children to decorate the flags with bright colors—and not try to add pictures or words.

**Step 2:** Have children draw their designs on their flags with crayons. The crayons show up nicely on this nylon fabric. Light-colored crayons are great on dark fabric.

**Step 3:** If time allows, kids can draw the same or a different design on the opposite side of the fabric. Then have a parade! Play some Palm Sunday songs and let the children march and sing.

# Jesus Is Our King

## Scripture

Matthew 21:1-17

## Memory Challenge

Romans 10:9

## Focus

We worship Jesus, our King.

## WORDSEARCH

### Think About It

Hans Christian Anderson tells a tale about an emperor who is riding into the city with brand-new clothes “designed” by his sly tailors. The people all “ooh” and “aah” as if he’s decked out in really fine threads. But he’s been tricked. What the people know that the king doesn’t, is that his brand-new clothes are imaginary. The king is walking through town without any clothes. The people all play along with the joke. After all, this is the king, and it wouldn’t do to show disrespect. But a little child has no such inhibitions and simply blurts out the truth: “Look at the king! The king is in his altogether.”

### Pray About It

Pray today that you will see clearly what Jesus has done for you. This King has already given you so much—peace, joy, love, and reconciliation with God the Father. He has already conquered death for you. And there’s so much more to come. No one’s going to pull the rug out from under you because Jesus’ kingdom is forever secure. Give thanks.

Sometimes the story of Jesus’ triumphal entry seems to be a variation on that theme. We readers are waiting for the rug (cloak) to be pulled out from under the colt. We’re waiting for the little children to blow the whistle. There’s King Jesus. But instead of riding on a kingly white charger, he enters town on a lowly donkey. The adults all expect big things to happen soon. They expect a king who will rescue them from the oppression of Rome. Here he is at last. But he’s riding a donkey’s colt. Is everybody in on the joke here? Are they all just playing along?

But no one seems to care. At least for now, this is as good as it gets. By throwing down their cloaks they give this gentle King the red carpet treatment. They know they have something good here,

something the prophet Zechariah promised them: “Your king comes to you . . . riding on a donkey” (Zech. 9:9). And if there’s one thing Jewish people know besides oppression, it’s prophecy. They’re ready. Jesus is their King.

They even have a rallying cry: “Hosanna! Hosanna!” It’s a cry of praise that literally means “Save!” Here is their King fulfilling the prophecy and getting ready to save them. Even the children end up shouting praise: “Hosanna to the Son of David.” Jesus has “King” written all over him. For what was the preferred royal mount of his human ancestor, old King David? Of all

### Tell About It

What do you tell your kids about the triumphal entry? Help them see how Jesus got what he so richly deserved: praise from God’s people (even though some refused to join the praise). Help them see their part in this praise. Tell them that Jesus is not a king like so many others who selfishly use worldly power to bring bloodshed and death. Jesus came to bring salvation and peace with God. He came to bring a wonderful kingdom that will never end—because nobody who lives there will ever *want* it to end. Teach them to sing “Hosanna!”—and really mean it.

animals, a *mule!* Can you believe it? A lowly work animal, an animal of peace and service, just like this donkey.

Yes, the kingdom of true peace is on its way. The crowd can taste it as the hosannas roll off their tongues. There's no joke being played here. The King is coming. The people are happy with him. All is as it should be. All is how God said it would be.

But here's the problem: those who were supposed to know him best thought only of themselves. Jewish religious leaders thought it was more important to keep their own pride and their own status. "But when the chief priests and the teachers of the law saw the wonderful things he did and the children shouting in the temple area, 'Hosanna to the Son of David,' they were *indignant*" (Matt. 21:15). They saw wonderful things that day: peace and healing and salvation. But they turned away from Israel's true King.

This entry into Jerusalem was no joke. And the people weren't just politely playing along. They knew their King had come. But their religious leaders vowed, "Not on our watch." This King must be laughed at, humiliated, and punished. He must die. That's how King Jesus did exactly what he set out to do. And he did it for all of us who welcome him as our King . . . and who don't turn away.

# 1 HELLO

Getting Ready

## Goal

Think about how we would welcome a very important visitor.

## Time

10 minutes

## Materials

- Paper
- Pens or pencils, markers

Before the group arrives, write the following on a board or newsprint, where everyone can see it.

**The president/prime minister is visiting your school, and you're in charge of planning a welcome party for him or her. What would you do?**

Make paper, pens or pencils, and markers available to kids as they arrive. Invite them to write, draw, or get ready to act out answers to the question. When everyone has arrived, invite volunteers to show or tell the group how they answered the question. Conclude together that most of us would try to plan something pretty special if we knew such an important person were coming to visit!

Remind them that the drama they just saw was about an important person coming to visit too. (If you didn't see the drama yet, tell them that the story they're about to hear or participate in is about an important king visiting a big city.) The people who lined the streets of Jerusalem thought Jesus had come to be their earthly king, someone who could keep them safe from other rulers or countries. But they would soon find out that Jesus was a different kind of king.



# 2

## KNOW AA Word Smart

### A Different Kind of King

#### Goal

Tell what kind of a king Jesus really is.

#### Time

10 minutes

#### Materials

- Bible
- Script: "A Royal Welcome" (reproducible page 79), one copy per student



If you have enough time, you may want to audiotape the reader's theater drama and then play it back so the group members can hear their own radio play.

If your group saw the drama in the large group session, review the story by reading the Scripture passage together today: Matthew 21:1-17. Either have a volunteer read the passage from the Bible or use the reader's theater version of the drama (reproducible page 79). If you have a small group, you can assign more than one

part to some members of the group and invite all group members to read the parts of the Crowd, City People, and Children. Since some kids are uneasy about reading in a group, you may want to ask for volunteers for the longer parts, such as Narrators 1 and 2 and Jesus. Give the readers a few minutes to look over their parts; then read through the passage together.

Option to step 2

option option option

## The King Rides AA Word Smart Body Smart

#### Time

10-15 minutes

#### Materials

- Drama: "The King Rides" (reproduced from pages 47-50), one copy per student

If you do not have a large group session before you meet together as a small group, consider reading through the drama together today. Ask for volunteers for the various roles and either walk and read your way through the skit, or have kids sit around the table and read the skit as a reader's theater. Give cast members a few minutes to read through their parts before beginning the drama.

# 3

## GROW Self Smart Word Smart

### Our King

#### Goal

Realize that Jesus is King of our lives.

#### Time

5 minutes


#### Materials

- Chalkboard/chalk or newsprint/markers

Comment that even though everything looks happy and wonderful in Jerusalem on Palm Sunday, Jesus knows that sadness is just around the corner. Invite the children to tell you

what they know about the events of the week following Palm Sunday. As they mention things, list them on a board or on newsprint.

Conclude by noting that we can celebrate the coming of the King on Palm Sunday too. And because we know the truth about Good Friday and Easter we know what kind of king Jesus really is—the King of our world and King of our lives.

 If none of your children are familiar with the events of Passion week and Easter Sunday, tell them briefly that Jesus was no ordinary king. He is the King of heaven who came to earth because he loved us so much. He loved us enough to die for us and to rise again from the dead for us. Explain that they will hear that story next Sunday

Ask the group to join you in a prayer to King Jesus. If you think members of your group would feel comfortable doing so, have them kneel—an appropriate way to come before a king. Explain that you will begin by saying, “We praise you, King Jesus.” Then go around the circle and have each member repeat the sentence, using whichever verb they want (We honor you . . . We worship you . . . We thank you . . . We love you . . .). Conclude the prayer by thanking King Jesus for loving us enough to die for us so that we can live forever.

## **4** **SHOW** Worship and Celebrate

<b>Goal</b>
Worship Jesus, our King.
<b>Time</b>
25 minutes
<b>Materials</b>
See individual projects (below) for lists

Continue the spirit of praise to King Jesus in the remainder of your session by providing food, playing and/or singing music, and choosing one or more of the activities below—activities that will help the group remember the story and continue the celebration.

## Two-Week Project Idea

### Triumphal Tambourines Word Smart Picture Smart Music Smart

<b>Time</b>
15 minutes each week
<b>Materials</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>■ 8 oz. size plastic whipped topping container, no lid, one per child</li><li>■ Colored pipe cleaners, three per child</li><li>■ Paper punch</li><li>■ Sharp scissors or utility knife for adult/older child use</li><li>■ 1¼" fender washers, six per child</li><li>■ Palm Sunday/Easter stickers</li><li>■ Duct tape in various colors—red, blue, yellow, and green (or large label stickers)</li><li>■ Colored pencils</li><li>■ Permanent markers</li></ul>

If you choose this project, the kids in your group will make their own tambourines to use in accompanying the singing in your Easter program and/or large group session. Make a sample or two ahead of time to show everyone what the finished instruments look like and how fun they can be.





If your middle school kids would find this activity childish, check with a leader of kindergarten or grade 1 children and find out if he or she would like the kids in your group to work with the small children to help them make tambourines. This activity is quite difficult for small children, but they will love the finished product. This gives your group a great chance to serve others. It will also help build community in your church school!

You'll need to carefully walk the group through each step of the process as described and pictured below. Notice that we include only the first half of the project here. Directions for finishing the tambourines appear in session 2.

**tip** Rather than just shaking the tambourines, we have found that if you tap them strongly against your opposite hand, you get a louder sound.



*Step 1:* Hand out 2"-3" strips of duct tape and have group members use them to cover the sides of their container, especially any words or designs that may be there.

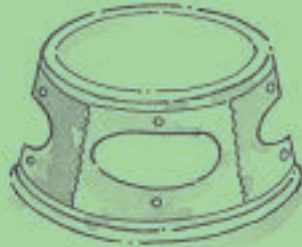


**tip** If you think the children are not familiar with the Easter story they will hear next week, include only pictures that tie to the Palm Sunday story.

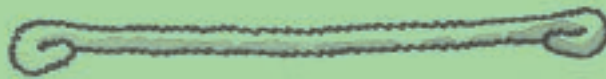
*Step 2:* Encourage kids to decorate the outside bottom of their containers today. (This will eventually be the top of the tambourine.) They can use stickers, colored pencils, and permanent markers. Encourage them to draw things that relate to the Bible stories (cross, crown, palm branches, sunlight, angels, and so on).

### Teacher Preparation for Week 2

1. Cut three oblong-shaped holes (3" x 1") in the sides of each plastic container, using either sharp scissors or a utility knife. It may help to draw the shapes on the container prior to cutting them out.
2. Using the paper punch, punch a hole above and below the center of each oblong hole.



3. For safety, fold the ends of each pipe cleaner so they are not sharp.



A middle school class could do this preparation for younger children to save teachers some time. Or look for some adult volunteers to help out.

## One-Week Project Ideas

### Devotional: "Time with God"

AA Word Smart

Self Smart

#### Time

5-10 minutes

#### Materials

- "Time with God," week 1 (reproducible pages 81-82), one copy per student

Distribute the devotional and read the introductory copy about Holy Week to the group. Then issue the challenge: Spend 10 to 15 minutes with God every day of Holy Week. To get kids started and interested, consider doing today's devotion, Palm Sunday, with the group. Invite volunteers to read the Scripture and together discuss the question. Tell them that next week you'll be asking about how well they met the devotion challenge!

# Hosanna Flags

AA Word Smart

Picture Smart

Body Smart

Music Smart

## Time

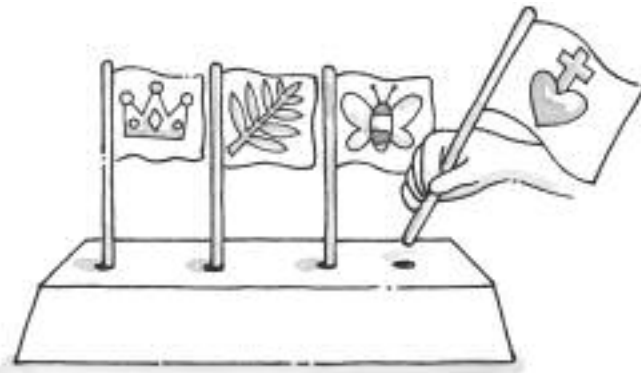
20-25 minutes

## Materials

- 18" (45 cm) dowel rods, one per child
- 10" x 12" (25 x 30 cm) pieces of nylon fabric (ripstop or flag/sport nylon), one per child
- Crayons
- Craft glue (tacky glue)
- Drawing paper (10" x 12" or 25 x 30 cm), one sheet per child
- Sample flags (reproducible page 76)

These flags are a great craft and can also be used for an Easter program, if you plan to have one. During the singing of the processional song, the children can enter waving their flags and then mount them in long flower boxes placed in the front of the sanctuary or auditorium. Prepare the flower boxes ahead of time by putting non-hardening clay in the bottom so that the children can stick their flags in it.

Or drill holes in the bottom of the boxes that are large enough for the dowel rods to fit snugly. Then flip the box over so that the flags the children mount in the holes are very visible.



If you don't plan to have a program, you may want to talk to your pastor or another worship leader about letting the children use the flags somehow in church on Easter Sunday

### Directions for the activity follow:

Give each child a 10" x 12" (25 x 30 cm) piece of nylon fabric (cut out with pinking shears, if possible). Then walk them through the following steps:

*Step 1:* Generously pour glue along the 10" (25 cm) side edge of the fabric. Lay the dowel over the glue and roll up  $1\frac{1}{2}$  to 2 turns of the dowel. When done rolling, add a thin layer of glue along the rolled edge to secure in place. Pinch and rub the glued edges.



If you're working with middle school children, you may want to have them help a class of younger children make these flags. Talk with a teacher of kids in K-3 and see if they would be interested in help from your group.

**Step 2:** Have the children draw a “Palm Sunday” design on paper. If you plan to use the flags in an Easter program, you may want to include some Easter designs too. If children don’t know the Easter story, tell them that next week they will hear the wonderful story about how Jesus, the King, showed his great love for us. Show them the samples on reproducible page 76 if you feel your group needs suggestions. They should also practice writing the words to see how they will fit on the fabric.



**Step 3:** Have the children draw their designs on their flags with crayons. The crayons show up nicely on this nylon fabric. Light-colored crayons are great on dark fabric.

**Step 4:** If time allows, encourage children to draw the same or a different design on the opposite side of the fabric. Then have a parade! Play some Palm Sunday songs and let the children march and sing.

## What Was It Like? Word Smart Picture Smart

### Time

10 minutes

### Materials

- Books about Bible times

Kids this age may be quite interested in what the land and buildings were like in the Jerusalem Jesus rode into that day. A number of helpful books are available on this subject, including *Where Jesus Walked: A Spiritual Journey Through the Holy Land* by R. Wayne Stacy (Judson Press, 2001). This book includes spectacular photographs, maps, and more.

Check your local library or bookstore for others, including the following:

- *Bible Then and Now*, Jenny Roberts (Book Sales, 2001)
- *Atlas of the Bible: An Illustrated Guide to the Holy Land*, Harry Thomas Frank, photographer (Reader’s Digest, 1982). Out of print, but you may find a copy in the library.
- *New Manners and Customs of Bible Times*, Fred H. Wight and Ralph Gower (Moody Press 1987)



If you are working with middle schoolers, challenge them to find the information in the books and share it with the rest of the group. Suggest topics like the following:

- Jerusalem
- Temple
- Palm Sunday
- Palms
- Mount of Olives

### Pretzels and Prayer

Eat pretzels and tell the group the story about how pretzels were first made. If you like, make copies of the reproducible page 80 (“Pretzels and Prayer”) for each child, and fill small bags of pretzels for them.