Preschool–Grade 6

Palm Sunday

Sunday School Lesson for 3rd to 5th Grade, 45–60 minutes

Main point: Jesus is the King God promised long before, so we praise Him with our words and our lives.
Bible passage: Matthew 21:1–16 and John 12:12–19 (also Mark 11:1–11 and Luke 19:28–40). Read them before class.
Memory verse: "And the multitudes that went before, and that followed, cried, saying, Hosanna to the Son of David: Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord; Hosanna in the highest." *Matthew 21:9 (KJV)*
You need: a Bible for each child (or one for every two children), a whiteboard or large paper, a marker, and one take-home sheet for each child.
Before class: write the memory verse on the board.

1. Opening game: What Would a King Ride? (5–10 minutes)

Ask: "If a great king came to our town, how would he arrive?" Write every answer on the board: a golden carriage, a big war horse, soldiers, trumpets. Then say: "Long before Jesus was born, God's prophet wrote how the true King would come. Let's find out if He came the way you guessed."

2. Bible story: The King Comes to Jerusalem (15 minutes)

Kids open their Bibles to Matthew 21. When you reach a **Look up** line, a child finds the verse and reads it out loud. Tell the rest in your own words.

The two disciples. Jesus came to Bethany six days before the passover; this was the next day (John 12:1, 12). Jesus came near Bethphage, at the mount of Olives, and sent two disciples into the village (Matthew 21:1). **Look up Matthew 21:2–3.** They would find an ass tied, and a colt with her. **Loose** means untie. If anyone asked, they were to say, "The Lord hath need of them." An **ass** is a strong animal people rode (we call it a donkey today), and a **colt** is a young one. Mark says no man had ever sat on this colt (Mark 11:2). When the owners asked, "Why loose ye the colt?", the disciples said, "The Lord hath need of him," just as Jesus said (Luke 19:33–34).

The prophecy. Look up Zechariah 9:9. God's prophet wrote long before that the King would come "lowly, and riding upon an ass, and upon a colt the foal of an ass." **Lowly** means humble, not proud. Matthew says it happened so this would come true (Matthew 21:4–5).

The road. The disciples did as Jesus commanded. They put their clothes on the ass and the colt (21:6–7), and Jesus sat on the colt (Mark 11:7). **Look up Matthew 21:8.** A very great multitude spread their garments in the way, and others cut down branches from the trees and **strawed** (spread) them in the way. Many people at the feast took branches of palm trees and went out to meet Him (John 12:12–13). Many came because they had heard that Jesus raised Lazarus from the dead (John 12:17–18).

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The praise. Look up Matthew 21:9. Hosanna is a Hebrew word of praise from a prayer that means "Save now" (Psalm 118:25). The crowd's words "Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the LORD" come from Psalm 118:26. **Son of David** means the King from David's family that God had promised. Luke says the disciples praised God with a loud voice for all the mighty works they had seen. Some Pharisees told Jesus to stop them. **Look up Luke 19:40.** Jesus said that if they held their peace, the stones would cry out!

Who is this? When Jesus came into Jerusalem, all the city was moved (stirred up), asking, "Who is this?" The multitude said, "This is Jesus the prophet of Nazareth of Galilee" (Matthew 21:10–11).

In the temple. Jesus went into the temple and drove out those who bought and sold there. He said, "My house shall be called the house of prayer" (21:12–13). The blind and the lame came to Him, and He healed them (21:14). **Look up Matthew 21:15–16.** Children were crying (shouting) "Hosanna to the Son of David," and the chief priests were angry. Jesus answered, "have ye never read, Out of the mouth of babes and sucklings thou hast perfected praise?" (21:16). He was quoting Psalm 8:2. John adds that the disciples did not understand all this at first, but after Jesus was glorified, they remembered it had been written about Him (John 12:16).

3. Questions to ask (10 minutes)

Thinking questions (no single right answer; let kids talk)

1. Look at our list of how a king would arrive. Why do you think Jesus came riding on a colt instead (Zechariah 9:9)?
2. The two disciples went and did as Jesus commanded (Matthew 21:6), before they knew how it would turn out. When is it hard to obey Jesus right away?
3. The people gave their garments to make a road for Jesus (21:8). What can we give to honor Jesus?
4. Jesus said even the stones would cry out if the people kept quiet (Luke 19:40). Why does Jesus deserve our praise?
5. Jesus was pleased with the children's praise (Matthew 21:16). How can kids praise Jesus at church, at home and at school?

Recall questions

1. What did the city ask when Jesus came in? *("Who is this?" Matthew 21:10)*
2. What kind of branches did the people take to meet Jesus? *(Branches of palm trees, John 12:13)*
3. Which prophet wrote about the King riding on a colt? *(Zechariah, Zechariah 9:9)*

4. Memory verse: Erase a Word (5 minutes)

Explain the old words: **multitudes** means big crowds; **cometh** means comes; **in the name of the Lord** means sent by God; **Hosanna in the highest** means praise to God in heaven. Read the verse on the board together. Erase two words and read it again. Keep erasing two words at a time until the board is empty and the class can say it alone. Then kids say it to a partner.

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5. What this means for us (5 minutes)

Say: "The crowd called Jesus the Son of David, the King. In that same week He died for us. God loves you. The Bible says: 'For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God' (Romans 3:23, KJV). That means all of us have done wrong, and none of us is as good as God. Jesus is God manifest in the flesh, which means God came to earth as a man (1 Timothy 3:16). Christ died for our sins, was buried, and rose again the third day (1 Corinthians 15:3–4). How do we obey the gospel? 'Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.' (Acts 2:38, KJV) To **repent** means to turn away from sin; our old self dies (Romans 6:6). We are **buried with Jesus in baptism**, all the way under the water, in Jesus' name. **Remission** means our sins are washed away, and we come up to live a new life (Romans 6:4; Acts 22:16). And God fills us with the **Holy Ghost**, and we speak with other tongues as the Spirit gives the words (Acts 2:4). The Bible calls this being born again (John 3:5)."
Pray with the kids, and encourage them to talk with their parents and pastor about being baptized in Jesus' name and filled with the Holy Ghost. Never pressure a child.
This week: praise Jesus out loud every day: sing to Him, thank Him, or tell someone what He has done.

6. Activity: Bible Look-Up Race (10–15 minutes)

Kids work in pairs with one Bible. Read a reference and a question. The first pair to find the verse and read the answer out loud wins the point.

1. Matthew 21:1: Near which mount did this happen? *(The mount of Olives)*
2. Matthew 21:2: What would the disciples find tied? *(An ass, and a colt with her)*
3. Matthew 21:3: What were they to say if anyone asked? *("The Lord hath need of them")*
4. Mark 11:2: What was special about the colt? *(No man had ever sat on it)*
5. John 12:13: What did the people take when they went to meet Jesus? *(Branches of palm trees)*
6. Matthew 21:11: Who did the multitude say Jesus was? *(Jesus the prophet of Nazareth of Galilee)*
7. Luke 19:40: What would cry out if the people kept quiet? *(The stones)*
8. Matthew 21:15: Who cried "Hosanna" in the temple? *(The children)*

7. Prayer

"Dear God, thank You for sending Jesus, the King You promised. Help us obey You right away like the two disciples, and praise You out loud like the children in the temple. Thank You for loving us and coming to save us in Jesus. In Jesus' name, amen."

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