Preschool–Grade 6

Palm Sunday

Sunday School Lesson for Preteens (Ages 11–12), 45–60 minutes

Main point: Jesus is the King God promised. He came lowly, not proud, and He is worthy of our praise every day, whether or not anyone else is praising.
Bible passage: Zechariah 9:9, Matthew 21:1–16 and John 12:12–19. Students read Zechariah 9:9, Matthew 21:1–11 and John 12:12–19 out loud themselves.
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)* and "Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion; shout, O daughter of Jerusalem: behold, thy King cometh unto thee: he is just, and having salvation; lowly, and riding upon an ass, and upon a colt the foal of an ass." *Zechariah 9:9 (KJV)*
You need: a Bible for each student, paper or a notebook and a pen for each student, a whiteboard and a marker, and one take-home sheet for each student.
Before class: read the passages, plus Mark 11:1–11 and Luke 19:28–40. Write both memory verses on the board.

1. Opening game: Big Entrance (5–10 minutes)

Ask students to describe how important people arrive today: a president, a champion team coming home, a famous performer. Write words on the board (motorcade, red carpet, cameras, security). Ask: *What does a big entrance tell you about how that person wants to be seen?* Say: "Jesus planned His entrance into Jerusalem down to the animal He rode. Let's see what it tells us about Him."

2. Bible story: Students Read It (15 minutes)

Read out loud: Zechariah 9:9. Old words: **daughter of Zion** and **daughter of Jerusalem** (the people of Jerusalem); **just** (always right and fair); **having salvation** (bringing rescue); **lowly** (humble); **foal** (a young animal).

Read out loud: Matthew 21:1–11. Students take turns, a few verses each. Old words in this passage:

- **drew nigh** (21:1): came near; **over against you** (21:2): ahead of you, across the way
- **an ass** (21:2): a strong animal for riding and carrying loads (a donkey); **colt**: a young one; **loose them**: untie them
- **ought** (21:3): anything; **the Lord hath need of them**: the Lord needs them
- **meek** (21:5): gentle and humble; **strawed them in the way** (21:8): spread them on the road
- **Hosanna** (21:9): a word of praise from a prayer that means "Save now" (Psalm 118:25); **in the highest**: in heaven
- **all the city was moved** (21:10): the whole city was stirred up

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Read out loud: John 12:12–19. Old words: **much people that were come to the feast** (12:12): a big crowd in Jerusalem for the passover; **bare record** (12:17): told what they had seen; **prevail nothing** (12:19): get nowhere. Point out that many came because they had heard Jesus raised Lazarus (12:17–18), and that the disciples only understood later, after Jesus was glorified (12:16).

Tell the rest in your own words: Mark and Luke say Jesus sat on the colt, one that no man had ever sat on (Mark 11:2, 7; Luke 19:30, 35). Luke says the whole multitude of the disciples praised God with a loud voice for all the mighty works they had seen. Some Pharisees said, "Master, rebuke thy disciples," and Jesus answered that if they held their peace, "the stones would immediately cry out" (Luke 19:37–40). When He came near and saw the city, He wept over it (19:41). In the temple, Jesus drove out those who bought and sold, saying, "My house shall be called the house of prayer" (Matthew 21:12–13). He healed the blind and the lame, and when the chief priests were angry at the children crying "Hosanna to the Son of David," Jesus answered from Psalm 8:2: "Out of the mouth of babes and sucklings thou hast perfected praise" (Matthew 21:14–16).

3. Questions to ask (15 minutes)

1. Compare Zechariah 9:9 with Matthew 21:5. Jesus did exactly what the prophet wrote. What does that tell you about God keeping His word?
2. A king could ride a war horse. Zechariah says this King comes "lowly." Why do you think Jesus chose to come humble?
3. The two disciples obeyed before they understood (Matthew 21:6), and John says they only understood later (John 12:16). Where are you obeying God now without seeing the whole picture?
4. People spread their own garments on the road (Matthew 21:8). What does it cost you to honor Jesus in front of others?
5. The Pharisees wanted the praise to stop (Luke 19:39–40), and the chief priests were angry at the children (Matthew 21:15). Why does real praise for Jesus sometimes bother people? How do you keep praising anyway, with love?
6. The city asked, "Who is this?" (21:10). If a friend asked you that about Jesus, what would you say?

4. Memory verse (5 minutes)

Old words in Matthew 21:9: **the multitudes that went before, and that followed** means the crowds in front of Jesus and behind Him; **blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord** means God has sent Him (Psalm 118:26). Read both verses together. Then students cover one phrase at a time and quiz a partner. Say Matthew 21:9 this week; keep working on Zechariah 9:9 next week too.

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5. What this means for us (5–10 minutes)

Say: "Zechariah said the King comes 'having salvation.' In that same week Jesus died to bring it. God loves you, and 'all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God' (Romans 3:23, KJV). Jesus is God manifest in the flesh, God who came as a man (1 Timothy 3:16). 'Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures; and that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the scriptures' (1 Corinthians 15:3–4, KJV). We obey the gospel the way Peter preached it: '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) We **repent**, turning from sin, and our old self dies (Romans 6:6). We are buried with Jesus by baptism in His name, all the way under the water. **Remission** means our sins are washed away, and we rise to walk in newness of life, a brand-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 utterance, which means as He gives the words (Acts 2:4). Jesus called this being born of water and of the Spirit (John 3:5)."
Pray with the students, 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.

6. Activity: Journal (10 minutes)

Each student writes privately. No one has to share. Write these three prompts on the board:

1. If someone asked me, "Who is Jesus?", what would I honestly say?
2. What is one way I can praise Jesus this week where others will see it?
3. Write a short prayer of praise to Jesus, the King.
   If there is time, invite a few volunteers to share one sentence.

This week: praise Jesus out loud at least once a day, and be ready to answer someone who asks, "Who is this?"

7. Prayer

"Dear God, thank You for sending Jesus, the King You promised, lowly and having salvation. Help us praise You every day, even when no one else does, and help us answer with love when people ask who You are. In Jesus' name, amen."

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