

Sixth Sunday in Lent/Palm Sunday

Lectionary Title 17: **Entry to Jerusalem**

Old Testament: Psalm 118:26 (NRSV, 1989)

²⁶ Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the LORD.² We bless you from the house of the LORD.

New Testament: Mark 11:1-10 (NRSV, 1989)

Jesus' Triumphal Entry into Jerusalem

¹When they were approaching Jerusalem, at Bethphage and Bethany, near the Mount of Olives, he sent two of his disciples ²and said to them, 'Go into the village ahead of you, and immediately as you enter it, you will find tied there a colt that has never been ridden; untie it and bring it. ³If anyone says to you, "Why are you doing this?" just say this, "The Lord needs it and will send it back here immediately." ⁴They went away and found a colt tied near a door, outside in the street. As they were untying it, ⁵some of the bystanders said to them, 'What are you doing, untying the colt?' ⁶They told them what Jesus had said; and they allowed them to take it. ⁷Then they brought the colt to Jesus and threw their cloaks on it; and he sat on it. ⁸Many people spread their cloaks on the road, and others spread leafy branches that they had cut in the fields. ⁹Then those who went ahead and those who followed were shouting, 'Hosanna! Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord! ¹⁰Blessed is the coming kingdom of our ancestor David! Hosanna in the highest heaven!'

General Concept: Jesus defines his being the Messiah not from the Jewish and imperial perspectives but according to God's call.

Key Concepts in the Different Age Levels in Sunday School

N/K/YE: **Jesus enters Jerusalem to obey God.**

ME/OE: **Jesus enters Jerusalem to obey God's call.**

Y: **Jesus enters Jerusalem to obey God's will and purpose.**

A: **Jesus enters Jerusalem to fulfill his destiny and calling as the suffering Messiah.**

Exegesis of the Biblical References

The entire chapter of Psalm 118 can be observed as taking place in the context of worship to God for the protection and victory experienced by the worshipper. Some scholars attributes this psalm to David during his ascension to the throne or someone appointed by God for a higher position praising God with so much joy. Verse 26 is a line used by priests to greet and welcome pilgrims who are entering the gate of Jerusalem during the celebration of Passover.

Jesus' triumphant entry to Jerusalem is part of the fulfillment of his messianic plan. Jesus had long foreseen the arrival of this moment and he knew the outcome of this occasion. Jesus' entering Jerusalem marked the climax of his ministry and this portrays his total obedience and loyalty to God despite the plots and plans of religious leaders against him. Jesus' entry to Jerusalem conveys a strong message to the authorities that Jesus was not afraid of their power nor the suffering that awaits him. This is also to provide encouragement to his disciples who are worried and afraid of losing Jesus.

As Jesus marched into Jerusalem, people celebrated by waving palm leaves and putting their cloaks on the ground to welcome him in anticipation of the eventual restoration of Israel's glory as in the time of David. But how people welcomed Jesus in his supposed triumphant entry was nothing special at all. This is a common expression by people who welcome generals in the same manner during their homecoming after winning battles. Jesus' riding on a colt instead of a war-horse or chariot suggests that he came in peace and not as a conquering savior that people wanted and hoped him to be.

Jesus's entry to Jerusalem is his concrete expression of responding to God's call in total, unconditional obedience. His entry was not to fulfill the vision of the Jews nor to satisfy their desire for glory, but to respond to God's call to come to Jerusalem to fulfill God's plan to establish God's reign here on earth.

The passage did not describe Jesus' response to the celebration and call of the people. This is unusual since Jesus often responds by instructing people not to disclose his identity as the Messiah. Nearing the end of his ministry, Jesus perhaps knew that it was time for all people to know his identity as the Messiah specially the religious leaders who, understandably will feel threatened with his coming and being acclaimed as the Davidic Messiah. His seeming triumphant entry represents the open and public acknowledgement of his messianic claim and the alternative reality and alternative message that he represents which has given hope to the hopeless and powerless of the land. This is certainly most threatening for the powers-that-be in the land who would do and resort to anything just to protect the status quo. The prevailing system benefited them so much that they prevented any meaningful change to occur that will benefit the majority especially the poor of the land. The day of Jesus' entry was the start of the open clash between the powerful Jewish and Roman authorities and the solitary Jesus who had taken an unequivocal stand of solidarity with the powerless and marginalized of the land. The powerful simply had to act to stop the advance of this alternative reality and message this simple carpenter had been proclaiming and witnessing to. They had to immediately act against him. This was the way Jesus' mission was to be fulfilled as he courageously confronted his soon to be persecutors and executors.

God in Jesus expects his believers to respond in similar degree of loyalty and obedience to the call of God to proclaim the gospel and establish the Kingdom even in the face of danger, and resistance from those who may feel threatened. Jesus' followers must be prepared for the consequent sacrifice and suffering that await. Furthermore, believers must not be distracted with the glamour, cheers, and ecstatic ovation while marching toward

God's call. Instead, believers must stay focused, committed and faithful not to satisfy others' expectation, but to simply and sincerely respond to God's call in all loyalty and obedience to God's gracious, loving, and liberating will.

Companion Guide for the Teachers and Other Users

As Jesus and his retinue entered the gates of Jerusalem, the people waved branches, put clothing on the road and shouted his name in acclamation signifying the entry of the long-awaited messiah. It was a rehearsed action after the manner of welcoming a Roman military commander returning from conquest. They expected Jesus to seize control of Jerusalem, the nation's seat of power. Jesus went on to enter the temple, overturned the tables of the money changers and drove them out with a whip. It was an outrageous act that had a chilling effect on the authorities of the city.

Most probably, the religious leaders went on a hurry to report the incident to the Roman governor with an urgent appeal to quell a rebellion against the Empire. Apparently, Pontius Pilate sent in his soldiers not so much to suppress a real uprising as to oblige and accommodate Rome's allies. It was clear to him that Jesus' action was more symbolic of the Jewish people's aspirations for freedom rather than a real and imminent danger to the Empire. It was also possible that Pilate was a kind of person who could not tolerate a mere nuisance to the Pax Romana.

But Jesus had other things in mind when he entered Jerusalem. He was there for a meeting with destiny—the fate of a suffering messiah. Everything that happened from the time he accepted God's call in the wilderness up to the moment of his arrival in Jerusalem pointed to just one direction—the cross. He knew what the cross meant to the sufferer since many before him had gone that way. It was the most gruesome way of leaving this world ever invented, the most horrifying prospect of dying. But he couldn't have known what lies behind the cross. Was it going to be worse than dying by crucifixion? Was it but a passage to a glorious life never disclosed to any human being? Or was it simply the end.

God has disclosed to him the cause for which he was going to suffer and die. But God is silent about what awaits him after the cross. Perhaps this was more horrifying than crucifixion itself. But it's not for him to know. It was sufficient for Jesus to know that he was putting his fate completely in God's hands.

Nursery/Kindergarten/Younger Elementary Levels

I. Objectives

At the end of the session and with the consistent example shown by parents and other significant adults, the children will be able to:

1. listen to the story of Jesus when he entered Jerusalem;
2. discuss what the people shouted to welcome Jesus;
3. recall occasions when their families welcome relatives and others people in their homes as a sign of obedience to God.

II. Concept: Jesus enters Jerusalem to obey God.

Materials: *The Holy Bible* (NRSV, 1989), pictures showing Jesus' triumphal entry to Jerusalem, pieces of recycled paper, leaves, preferably palm leaves

III. Learning Experiences

A. Opening Worship

1. Welcome time: Greet the learners with your welcoming smile and your big warm hug. Tell each learner, "Jesus, our Messiah loves you so much!"
2. Opening prayer: "Thank you, O God, for this beautiful morning. We ask you to be with us as we learn more about Jesus especially in His triumphant entry to Jerusalem. This we ask in Jesus' name we pray. Amen."
3. Opening songs:
 - a. "Welcome Jesus" (Tune: "Mary Had a Little Lamb")
Welcome, welcome Jesus Christ, you're God's promise to us all
Welcome, welcome Jesus Christ, come reign in our lives today.
 - b. "Hosanna" (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=g9XJnLsN3F4>)

B. Getting Ready

Tell the class to recall some of their experiences when their families expect the coming visit of their relatives from the province or from the city. Ask them what they and their parents prepare. Let them describe their feelings on such happy occasions. Ask the class if God will be pleased when we welcome others to our homes.

C. Learning Time

1. Explain to the class the meaning of the Passover. Tell them it is a Jewish celebration to remember how God saved the Israelites in Egypt. The angel of death did not enter their houses but passed over their houses that had the lamb's blood painted on their doors. This saved them from death.
2. Prepare the children to listen to the story. Provide them the activity sheets that tell the story.

Jesus Enters Jerusalem

(Based on Mark 11:1-10)

It is almost Passover. Jesus wants to celebrate it. He tells his disciples that they will go to the temple in Jerusalem. He asks two disciples to get a donkey.

"Go into the village. You will find a tied donkey. Untie it and bring it to me."

The disciples obey Jesus. In the village, they find a tied donkey just as Jesus said. As they are untying the donkey, some people ask them, "Why do you untie the donkey?"

“The Lord needs it,” They answer. “We will return it later.”

So the disciples bring the donkey to Jesus.

Jesus rides on the donkey. He starts to go to the Temple. Some people see Jesus coming. They tell others about it, “Jesus is coming. Jesus is coming.”

Many people hear about it. They run to greet Jesus. As they see Jesus coming, they remove their cloaks and put them on the road. Some hold palm branches and wave them at Jesus. They shout joyfully, “Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord. Hosanna! Save us!”

It is indeed a joyous occasion!

D. Deepening Activity/ Sharing Time

Ask these questions.

For N/K

1. What celebration is about to happen in Jerusalem? (It was almost Passover.)
2. Who wanted to go to Jerusalem to celebrate the Passover? (Jesus)
3. Who do you think asked Jesus to go to Jerusalem? (God) What kind of a man is Jesus? (He is obedient to God.)
4. What did he ask his disciples to get? (He asked two disciples to get him the tied donkey in the village.)
5. Did the disciples find the donkey? (Yes) What did they do? (They untied the donkey and brought it to Jesus.)
6. When asked by the people why they got the donkey, what did the disciples reply? (The Lord needs it.)
7. What did the people do when they saw Jesus coming and riding on a donkey? (They put their cloaks on the road. They got palm branches and waved them at Jesus.)
8. What did the people shout?” (“Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord. Hosanna!”)
9. What does hosanna mean? (Explain that the word hosanna means “Save us!”)
10. Why do you think the people shouted “Hosanna”? (They believe Jesus can save them.)
11. If Jesus is coming today, how will you welcome him? Why do you think Jesus can save us? (Expect different answers from the class.)

For YE:

1. What celebration is about to happen in Jerusalem? (It was almost Passover.)
2. Who wanted to go to Jerusalem to celebrate the Passover? (Jesus)
3. Who do you think asked Jesus to go to Jerusalem? (God) What kind of a man is Jesus? (He is obedient to God.)
4. What did he ask his disciples to get? (He asked two disciples to get him the tied donkey in the village.)
5. Did the disciples find the donkey? (Yes.) What did they do? (They untied the donkey and brought it to Jesus.)
6. When asked by the people why they got the donkey, what did the disciples reply? (The Lord needs it.)
7. Why do you think Jesus asked for a donkey and not a horse? (He will ride on a donkey in going to Jerusalem. He chose to ride on a donkey because it means being humble. A horse means being great.)
8. What did the people do when they saw Jesus coming and riding on a donkey? (They put their cloaks on the road. They got palm branches and waved them at Jesus.)

9. Why do you think the people did that? (They thought Jesus is the king they have been waiting for. They were happy to welcome the king.)
10. What did the people shout?" ("Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord. Hosanna!")
11. What does hosanna mean? (Explain that the word hosanna means "Save us!")
12. Why do you think the people shouted "Hosanna"? (They believe Jesus can save them.)
13. If Jesus is coming today, how will you welcome him? Why do you think Jesus can save us? (Expect different answers from the class.)

E. Discovering the Biblical Truth

Ask: "Aside from celebrating the Passover, why do you think Jesus entered Jerusalem?" (Jesus entered Jerusalem to obey God.)

F. Applying the Biblical Truth

1. Teach the memory verse: "Hosanna! Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord!" (Mark 11:9b)
2. Tell the children to think of something that will please Jesus. After each child says what he/she can do humbly, let the class respond by singing "Hosanna in the Highest."
3. **For N/K:** Provide the children a green leaf, preferably from a palm tree. Ask them to paste the memory verse on the leaf.
4. **For YE:** Provide the children a green leaf, preferably from a palm tree. Ask them to paste the leaf on a recycled sheet of paper on top of the memory verse. Then let them decorate their artwork.
5. Ask the children to join the parade inside the classroom (or outside the room together with the other children) waving their artwork as they say joyfully the memory verse.
6. Remind the class that as they wave their leaves, they should remember Jesus who came humbly to save us from our sins because he loves us and he is obedient to God.

G. Closing Worship

1. Offering: Lead the class in saying, "As we offer our money, we also offer ourselves to God through Jesus who died on the cross for our sin.
2. Closing song: "Hosanna, Laud Hosanna" (Hymnal of a Faith Journey # 148)
3. Closing prayer: "Our Parent God, we thank you for Jesus who showed us to be humble. Teach us to serve humbly like Jesus. In His name, we pray. Amen."

Middle and Older Elementary Levels

I. Objectives

At the end of the session, the learners are expected to:

1. listen to the story of Jesus when he entered Jerusalem;
2. discuss what the people shouted to welcome Jesus
3. talk about Jesus' entry to Jerusalem as an act of obedience to God; and
4. recall occasions when families do good deeds to others as a sign of obedience to God

II. Concept: Jesus enters Jerusalem to obey God's call.

Materials: *The Holy Bible* (NRSV, 1989), activity sheet, materials for the Palm Sunday placemats and Palm Sunday flags

III. Learning Experiences

A. Opening Worship

1. Welcome Time: Greet the children with your welcoming smile and your big warm hug. Initiate your unique handshake with children and converse with some of them about what they did during the week.
2. Opening prayer: Tell the class to gather around and say their one-sentence prayer of thanks to God. "Thank you, O God, for _____."
3. Opening songs:
 - a. "Hosanna" (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=g9XJnLsN3F4>)
 - b. "Who Is He?" (Tune: "Joyful, Joyful We Adore Thee")
 Who is He who comes in triumph? Who is He who comes to die,
 Comes in peace and comes in power, Hidden One now lifted high?
 Jesus, Jesus, Lord, Messiah, Mighty master of the grave!
 See Him ride, the King of Glory! God Himself has come to save!

 See Him there in humble splendor. Hear them shouting all around.
 Joy explodes in wild procession. Praise is now the victor's crown.
 "Glory, glory in the highest!" Like the angels hear them sing,
 Dancing round the long-awaited, once their hope, and now their King.

 Rise and join the glad procession! Hear them passing by again.
 All the ransomed, all His children, marching to Jerusalem!
 Look ahead, the gates of splendor! Hear the everlasting hymn!
 Open wide your hearts in worship! Let the King of Glory in!

B. Getting Ready

1. Ask the class what their families do to welcome important guests in their homes. Lead the discussion on the value of being hospitable by warmly welcoming people. Let them imagine if this attitude will please God.
2. Show placards showing important terms. Tell the class to read them. Discuss their meaning to help the class in understanding the story.
 - a. *Passover*. It is an important annual Jewish festival celebrating the night that God freed his people from Egypt. (You can talk about the blood of the lamb posted on each door of the homes of the Israelites in order that the angel of death will pass them over and save them from death.)
 - b. *Hosanna*. It means "Save us!"

- c. *Palm Sunday*. It is the Sunday before Resurrection Sunday.
- d. *Holy Week*. Starting with Monday after Palm Sunday up to Saturday, it is the week by when Jesus spent his last days on earth before he rose from the dead on Resurrection Sunday.

C. Learning Time

1. Tell the class to read Mark 11:1-10 responsibly.
2. After reading the verses, ask the class to do a choral reading. Assign parts such as the narrator, Jesus, the disciples, the villagers, and the people in Jerusalem.

Jesus' Triumphal Entry into Jerusalem

(Based on Mark 11:1-10)

Narrator: When Jesus came close to Jerusalem, he wanted to celebrate the Passover. He also obeyed what God wanted him to do. He calls his two disciples.

Jesus: Go to the next village. You will find a donkey that is tied. Untie it and bring it to me.

Disciples: Yes, Jesus.

Village men: Why are you untying the donkey?

Disciples: The Lord needs it.

Narrator: The villagers did not stop the disciples. The disciples brought the donkey to Jesus. They laid clothes on the donkey and set Jesus on top of it. Jesus rode on it and went to Jerusalem.

People in Jerusalem: Is that Jesus coming to Jerusalem? Come,. let us tell the others that Jesus is coming.

Narrator: Many people came. Some went before Jesus and some followed Jesus. They put their cloaks on the road where Jesus passed. Some brought palm leaves. They waved their leaves and shouted.

People in Jerusalem: Hosanna! Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord!

Narrator: The people were happy. They welcomed their king. They knew that Jesus loves them. They made a grand parade.

D. Deepening Activity/Sharing Time

Discuss the lesson.

1. What are the two reasons why Jesus decided to go to Jerusalem? (To celebrate the Passover. and to obey God.)
2. What do you think God wanted Jesus to do? (To establish God's reign here on earth and to save people from sinful systems.)
3. Why do you think being obedience and humility were shown by Jesus when he entered Jerusalem?
4. Why do you think Jesus told his disciples to tell the village men that he needed the donkey? (They have to get the donkey because it symbolized humility as foretold by the prophets. The people knew he was the king. However, they also knew that kings usually ride on horses to show greatness.)
5. Why is the triumphal entry of Jesus significant? (Jesus showed that he was a different kind of Messiah and not like a powerful king (humility), and it symbolized his obedience (servanthood) to God's will by establishing God's reign.)

6. If Jesus is coming today, how will you welcome him? What will you say? Why? (Expect different answers from the class.)
7. Which of the following sentences do you agree with? Explain your answers.
 - a. Jesus went to Jerusalem to establish God's reign and because of this, the powerful wanted to kill him.
 - b. The people considered him as their awaited king but they were expecting a different type of king. But they welcomed him just the same.
 - c. Jesus is our messiah who suffered and died so that we can be saved.
 - d. We can follow Jesus as the King of our lives at present and in the future.

E. Discovering the Biblical Truth

Ask: "Why do you think Jesus entered Jerusalem?" (Jesus enters Jerusalem to obey God's call.)

F. Applying the Biblical Truth

1. Discuss the memory verse: "Hosanna! Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord!" (Mark 11:9b)
2. Ask the class to list good things that they can do as a family to show obedience to God. Examples are: helping in the home chores, doing things for sick people in the community, helping the elderly, or giving food or clothes to the hungry.
3. **For ME:** Tell the class to prepare Palm Sunday placemats. With the use of a palm leaves, construction paper, a plastic sheet to cover the placemat, and glue, let the class make a placemat creatively. Tell them to write the memory verse on their placemat.
4. **For OE:** Tell the class to prepare Palm Sunday flags. Tell the class to think of a flag design. Ask them to write any of the following: Praise to God, Shout for Joy, or Hosanna in the Highest. Then let them decorate their flags and paste them on sticks.

G. Closing Worship

1. Offering
2. Closing song: "Who Is He?" (Tune: "Joyful, Joyful We Adore Thee")
3. Closing prayer: "Our Parent God, we thank you for sending Jesus to us that we may know how to live with you and with other people. Continue to make us like Jesus, in words, in thoughts, and in deeds. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen."

Youth Level

I. Objectives

At the end of the session, the learners are expected to:

1. define the meaning of a suffering servant in the context of Jesus' entry to Jerusalem;
2. debate on the possible feelings of Jesus as he obeyed God knowing that he will be in harm's way; and
3. recall occasions when we struggle to obey God because of the sacrifice that results from our decisions

II. Concept: Jesus enters Jerusalem to obey God's will and purpose.

Materials: *The Holy Bible* (NRSV, 1989), hymnal, activity sheet

III. Learning Experiences

A. Opening Worship

1. Welcome time
2. Opening prayer: "Thank you O God for your love." Tell each student to shake hands with their classmates and say: "Thank you O Lord for the gift of friendship."
3. Opening song: "Who is He?" (Tune: "Joyful, Joyful We Adore Thee")
Who is He who comes in triumph? Who is He who comes to die,
Comes in peace and comes in power, Hidden One now lifted high?
Jesus, Jesus, Lord, Messiah, Mighty master of the grave!
See Him ride, the King of Glory! God Himself has come to save!

See Him there in humble splendor. Hear them shouting all around.
Joy explodes in wild procession. Praise is now the victor's crown.
"Glory, glory in the highest!" Like the angels hear them sing,
Dancing round the Long-awaited - Once their hope, and now their King.

Rise and join the glad procession! Hear them passing by again -
All the ransomed, all His children, Marching to Jerusalem!
Look ahead the gates of splendor! Hear the everlasting hymn!
Open wide Your hearts in worship! Let the King of Glory in!

B. Getting Ready

In groups of three or four, invite the class to ponder on these questions. After the group discussion, tell them to share their thoughts with the big group.

1. What sort of welcome do you think Jesus will have if he will arrive in your hometown and would visit your church?
2. What would it be like when Jesus arrives? Who would be there?
3. How do you think Jesus would be treated (huge traffic, expensive cars, red carpet, lots of media)? How do you think would Jesus feel being welcomed by your town and particularly to your church?

C. Learning Time

1. Greet the students and make them feel special and welcome. Talk about a parade or waiting for a special person to come to town. Ask: "Have you seen a parade? How do people act when they see a parade? Why do you think they feel that way?"
2. Inform the class that in Bible times, there were special days when all people left what they were doing and, if they were physically able, went to Jerusalem to worship in the Temple. One of these celebrations is the Passover. Everyone who could make the trip to Jerusalem did so – even Jesus and his friends.

Say: In today's Bible story, the people are excited about the arrival of one person in particular. They have heard about him. They have heard about all that he has done. Now they want to see him for themselves. Ask: "Who do you think it is?"

3. Tell the class to read in unison Psalm 118:26 and Mark 11:1-10.

D. Deepening Activity/Sharing Time

1. Discuss the lesson. Ask these questions.
 - a. Why is it necessary for Jesus to go to Jerusalem? How is it related to the 26th verse of Psalm 118? (To fulfill what the prophets said and to fulfill his being a Messiah.)
 - b. Why did Jesus ask for a donkey instead of a mighty horse? (He fulfilled what the prophets said that a donkey symbolizes humility and servanthood.)
 - c. How did Jesus manifest his being a suffering servant when he entered Jerusalem? (He came in peace and he was ready to serve.)
 - d. What could Jesus have felt when he knew that in obeying God, he would be in harm's way? (He wanted to avoid it but he obeyed the will of God.)
 - e. Would it make a difference if Jesus decided otherwise? Would he still be saving the world? What could happen to humankind if Jesus disobeyed God? (Answers may vary.)
2. Share an experience when you struggle to obey God because of the sacrifice that result from your decisions. Tell how you managed to persevere and eventually succeeded in obeying God. Ask: "Have you had any second thoughts of quitting and leave everything behind?"
3. Debate. Group the class into two groups and allow them to decide who will stand for the affirmative and the negative side: Is Jesus being a suffering servant necessary to achieve salvation for all?

E. Discovering the Biblical Truth

Ask: Why did Jesus enter Jerusalem? (Jesus enters Jerusalem to obey God's will and purpose.) Why is Jesus' absolute obedience to God necessary to achieve salvation? (It is the only way by which humans can be saved from the sins of this world.)

F. Applying the Biblical Truth

1. Discuss the memory verse: "Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord. We bless you from the house of the Lord." (Psalm 118:26)
2. Tell the class to simulate a TV program and prepare an evening report of the contextualized triumphal entry of Jesus to Jerusalem using a news format. Assign students who will do these tasks: news scriptwriter, the anchor person, the camera people, field reporter, and the news director. Assign also the audience.
3. After the news report, let the class exchange ideas on how this report will be received by the people today. Encourage the class to comment on the following concepts: All of us can rely on God's Word. Jesus showed his humility and servanthood when he entered Jerusalem. We can show our humility and servanthood when we obey God's will and purpose for us. There are ways by which we could share God's love with others.

G. Closing Worship

1. Offering
2. Closing song: "Who is He?" (Tune: "Joyful, Joyful We Adore Thee")
3. Closing prayer: "Our Parent God, teach us how to live in obedience to your word. Lead us to follow your way, truth and life. This is our prayer in Jesus' name. Amen."

Adult Level

I. Objectives

At the end of the session, the learners are expected to:

1. define the meaning of a suffering servant in the context of Jesus' entry to Jerusalem;
2. debate on the issue of whether Jesus entered Jerusalem victoriously or not;
3. express the entry to Jerusalem as the defining moment for Jesus as the Messiah; and
4. recall occasions when people obey God by putting their complete trust in Him.

II. Concept: Jesus enters Jerusalem to fulfill his destiny and calling as the suffering Messiah.

Materials: *The Holy Bible* (NRSV, 1989), hymnal, activity sheet

III. Learning Experiences

A. Opening Worship

1. Welcome time: Greet the learners with your welcoming smile and warm hand of fellowship. Initiate a conversation about the need of obeying God at all cost. Make it a free-flowing discussion.
2. Opening prayer: "O God, we are ready to meet your Son like the people in Jerusalem, shouting Hosanna in the Highest. You are our God! Inspire us today as we go back in time where you obediently fulfilled your being a suffering servant in order to save us. In Jesus' name, we pray. Amen."
3. Opening song: "Hosanna, Loud Hosanna" [HFJ # 148]

B. Getting Ready

1. Divide the class into groups of three or four. Ask each group to recall and discuss how God spoke to people in the biblical times (directly by the prophets, through objects like the burning bush, quieting angry waves, through the angels, through dreams).
2. Ask: How does God speak to us today? Encourage discussion. (Some possible answers are: God speaks through similar ways as in the biblical times; through significant adults like parents, pastors, teachers, friends, nature, prayer, music, worship, Sunday school lessons, etc.).

C. Learning Time

1. Remind the class that today is Palm Sunday.
2. Tell the class to read the biblical texts. Discuss the verses using the given ideas.
 - a. Psalm 118:26. The psalmist prophesied that that the Messiah will make a triumphal entry to Jerusalem.
 - b. Mark 11:1-10. Jesus was at the Mount of Olives. He asked his disciples to get him a donkey that he will use in entering Jerusalem. The donkey is the symbol of Jesus' humility and his being a servant. As prophesied, Jesus entered Jerusalem and it was his defining moment in presenting himself as the Messiah. The crowd prepared his path and praised him as the blessed one who comes in the name of the Lord.

D. Deepening Activity/Sharing Time

1. Discuss the lesson. Ask these questions.
 - a. How are the OT and NT texts related? (The OT text is a prophecy and the NT text is the fulfillment of the prophecy by Jesus, from a Christian perspective.)

- b. Why do you think Jesus' entry to Jerusalem was his defining moment as the Messiah? (It was the appointed time for him to tell everybody that he was ready to die to save the world.)
 - c. Jesus knew that in entering Jerusalem, he is obeying God. How did this decision of Jesus show that he is the suffering servant? (Jesus was ready to face his death in order to serve humankind.)
 - d. What is the significance of using a donkey instead of a horse? (A person riding on a donkey shows humility and servanthood.)
 - e. Jesus submitted his trust in God and obeyed God completely. How can people obey God today? (By putting their complete trust and dependence on God)
 - f. If Jesus chose to disobey God and did not accept his death, what could happen to us? (Answers may vary.)
2. Debate. Tell the class to debate on this question: "Is Jesus' entry to Jerusalem victorious or not?" Assign the affirmative and the negative sides.

E. Discovering the Biblical Truth

Ask: Why did Jesus enter Jerusalem? (Jesus enters Jerusalem to fulfill his destiny and calling as the suffering Messiah.)

F. Applying the Biblical Truth

1. Discuss with the class the importance of saying hosanna in the context of the challenges in their daily life.
2. Encourage the class to list ways on how they can follow and obey God in order to experience abundant life. Remind them of the Kingdom values such as love, compassion, peace, patience, forgiveness, justice, and unity.
3. Tell the class to share their thoughts if Jesus would come now. Ask them what they will prepare, what they will say, and what they will do.

G. Closing Worship

1. Offering
2. Closing song: "Who is He?" (Tune: "Joyful, Joyful We Adore Thee")
3. Closing prayer: "Our God, would we have understood? Would we have been blinded by our own expectations? Like your followers, we want so much from you, dear Lord, and we want it now. Help us today to see where we have allowed cataracts to build up and cloud our mind's eye. Bring us back to the way, the truth and the life. Amen."