

# PALM SUNDAY

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SCRIPTURE PASSAGE/ LECTORY WEEK:

Matthew 21:1-11

SOCIAL PRINCIPLES/  
BOOK OF RESOLUTIONS REFERENCES:

¶163 Basic Rights and Freedoms

OBJECTIVE:

This study will help youth understand how Jesus' humble entry into Jerusalem challenges unjust uses of power and calls us to live out God's justice with courage and compassion.

SUPPLIES NEEDED:

Bible, Copies of the Social Principles

## LESSON PLAN STRUCTURE (1 HOUR)

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### CENTERING MOMENT (5 MINUTES)

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**Say:** Today we are going to start our time together with a call and response. I will say a sentence and you all will respond with “Hosanna! Save us, O God.”

**Leader:** Jesus enters the city in humility and peace.

**All:** Hosanna! Save us, O God.

**Leader:** Not with power or force, but with love.

**All:** Hosanna! Save us, O God.

**Leader:** When the world celebrates only the powerful.

**All:** Hosanna! Save us, O God.

**Leader:** Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord.

**All:** Hosanna! Save us, O God.

**Leader:** Hosanna in the highest

**All:** Hosanna! Save us, O God.

# PALM SUNDAY CONT'D

## SCRIPTURE STUDY (25 MIN.)

**Say:** Today we are going to look at a story that many people associate with Palm Sunday; the day Jesus enters Jerusalem. This is a familiar story, but when we slow down and really listen, it has a lot to say about power, leadership, and justice.

**Say:** As you listen, pay attention to what surprises you or feels strange about this scene.

*(Read Matthew 21:1-11)*

### Reflection Questions:

- What stood out to you in this passage?
- What images or details caught your attention?
- How does the crowd respond to Jesus?

**Say:** In Jesus' time, when a king or military leader entered a city, it usually looked very different from this.

### Discussion Questions:

- What do powerful leaders usually ride on?
- What would people expect a 'savior' or 'king' to look like?
- What does Jesus ride into Jerusalem on?
- What does that choice tell us about the kind of leader Jesus is?

**Say:** Jesus enters Jerusalem during a time when the people were living under Roman occupation. The Roman Empire used force, fear, and violence to control people. Jesus' parade wasn't just a celebration it was a protest.

### Reflection Question:

- Why do you think the crowds shouted 'Hosanna,' which means, 'Save us'?
- What do you think the people wanted to be saved from?

## NOTES

Riding a donkey instead of a war horse was a sign of humility and peace. Jesus is intentionally rejecting violence, domination, empire power.

# PALM SUNDAY CONT'D

- Where do we see people today being hurt or controlled by powerful systems?  
(examples: poverty, racism, immigration policies, climate injustice, mass incarceration...)
- How is Jesus' way of power different from how the world usually works?
- What would it look like if leaders today led with humility, justice, and peace instead of control?

## GROUP ACTIVITY (25 MIN.)

*(Divide the group into small groups of 3-4)*

**Say:** The crowds welcomed Jesus, but later in the week many of the same voices disappeared or were silenced.

### Discussion Questions:

- Whose voices are often celebrated or listened to in our society?
- Whose voices are ignored, dismissed, or push aside?
- How can we be like the crowd that welcomed Jesus, but keep showing up even when it's hard?

*(Pause for group discussion. Have each group share one insight with the large group after 15 minutes.)*

**Say:** Jesus shows us that real power doesn't come from violence, wealth, or popularity. It comes from love, courage, and standing with people who are hurting.

### Reflection Questions:

- What does following Jesus look like in your school or community?
- Where might Jesus be calling you to speak up, show up, or stand with others?
- How can we practice justice the way Jesus did through humility and compassion?

## PALM SUNDAY CONT'D

*(Provide copies of the Social Principles ¶163 Basic Rights and Freedoms and ask the groups to read the section.)*

**Ask:** According to the Social Principles, how can we, as followers of Jesus, stand up for the rights and freedoms of people who are treated unfairly?

*(Pause for responses)*

### **CLOSING MOMENT (5 MIN.)**

**Pray:** Jesus, you entered the city not with weapons or force but with love and courage. Help us to follow your example. Teach us to stand with those who are pushed aside, to speak up for justice, and to live with humility and courage. Hosanna, Save us, and show us how to help bring your peace into the world. Amen.