

## Palm Sunday: Jesus' Victory

### FOR THE TEACHER:

On Palm Sunday Jesus was welcomed into Jerusalem by cheering crowds who waved palm branches and shouted "hosanna to the Son of David." In the Jewish tradition this was the way of welcoming a conquering hero or King - the crowds are acclaiming Jesus as the Messiah. And rightly so, as the King of Israel and all Creation he is entering Jerusalem to conquer the devil and set humanity free through his death (Heb. 2:14-15). Yet, his triumph will not be in the militaristic way expected by our fallen human nature - instead of conquering through destruction he will conquer through the cross. This is why Jesus enters Jerusalem on a donkey, not a majestic horse.

Questions marked with an asterisk (\*) are part of the Trinitarian Catechism.

**FIRST ACTIVITY:** Go around the room and have the kids talk about heroes - either great people from the past who achieved great things (like Abraham Lincoln) or superheroes from comic books and movies (like Super Man and Spider Man). How do heroes deal with their enemies? What do they do to rescue people?

**SCRIPTURE LESSON:** Ask for a helper to pass out a bible to each child. Have them all turn to Matthew 21:1-11. For older kids, have them take turns reading.

*1 As they approached Jerusalem and came to Bethphage on the Mount of Olives, Jesus sent two disciples, 2 saying to them, "Go to the village ahead of you, and at once you will find a donkey tied there, with her colt by her. Untie them and bring them to me. 3 If anyone says anything to you, tell him that the Lord needs them, and he will send them right away."*

*4 This took place to fulfill what was spoken through the prophet:*

*5 "Say to the Daughter of Zion,  
'See, your king comes to you,  
gentle and riding on a donkey,  
on a colt, the foal of a donkey.' "*

*6 The disciples went and did as Jesus had instructed them. 7 They brought the donkey and the colt, placed their cloaks on them, and Jesus sat on them. 8 A very large crowd spread their cloaks on the road, while others cut branches from the trees and spread them on the road. 9 The crowds that went ahead of him and those that followed shouted,*

*"Hosanna to the Son of David!"*

*"Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord!"*

*"Hosanna in the highest!"*

*10 When Jesus entered Jerusalem, the whole city was stirred and asked, "Who is this?"*

*11 The crowds answered, "This is Jesus, the prophet from Nazareth in Galilee."*

\*When Jesus entered Jerusalem just before his crucifixion, how did the people welcome him? *By waving palm branches and shouting "hosanna to the Son of David."*

\*When do we celebrate Jesus' triumphal entry into Jerusalem? *Every Sunday and especially on Palm Sunday.*

\*Why was Jesus entry into Jerusalem a triumph? *Because he had come to conquer the devil, defeat sin and death, and set humanity free?*

\*How did Jesus accomplish this? *By his death on the cross, his resurrection, and his ascension to heaven.*

PRIMARY LESSON: Jesus is the greatest hero ever because he has set everyone free from sin and death. But he didn't do it by beating people up, he did it by allowing our sin and our death to die in his death on the cross.

SECOND ACTIVITY: Have three kids link arms as the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Have all the other kids link arms with each other and then have the kid at the end of the chain link arms with Jesus. Have Jesus go down onto the floor, without letting go of the Father, the Holy Spirit, or the chain of other kids. When he goes down to the floor have the other kids go down as well. This helps us see how everyone is included in Jesus' death (2 Cor. 5:14). For Easter Sunday we will do the same activity, having Jesus stand back up and bring everyone back up with in his resurrection.

PRAYER: For older kids, have one of them pray this prayer (or come up with their own). For younger kids, have them repeat after you as you read the prayer.

Father in heaven, thank you for sending Jesus to take defeat the devil and set us free from death and sin. Jesus, thank you for being willing to die so that our sin could be put to death in you and we could be resurrected with you and live forever. Holy Spirit, help us to believe that our Father loves us and that we have been set free from death through Jesus' death. In Jesus' name, Amen.