

Entrance into Jerusalem

Planning

Theme Towards Jerusalem

Luke describes Jesus setting his face to Jerusalem. Over seven weeks we travel with Jesus on his journey from the Mount of Transfiguration to the glory of the cross.

Week 7 of 7

Entrance into Jerusalem

Luke 19.28-40

On Palm Sunday we enter Jerusalem with Jesus, the King of peace.

This week's reading provides an opportunity to:

- identify what is distinctive about Luke's account of the entry into Jerusalem
- recognise that Jesus is the King of peace
- hold up the cross as a focus for our prayer.

Other Bible readings for this week

RCL Palm Sunday Year C, Psalm 118. 1-2, 19-29

ROOTS www.rootsontheweb.com

Week by week

Bible notes
Prayers
PostScript: up-to-the minute comment
Bible study worksheet
Children's Sheet
Templates for craft activities
Further resources: film, website and book suggestions
Links to other materials for this week

Resources focusing on Holy Week include: an overview, on page 5, and material highlighting the Passion aspects of the story, on page 21. The complete set of resources is available on the [WEB](#).

Prepare your session

Read **Luke 19.28-40** and the *Bible notes* on page 20. Choose from the materials to suit the age range, length of session and preferences of your group. Integrate prayers and singing at appropriate moments. For shorter sessions, use the story opposite and *Peace flag* on page 20.

Prayers

Additional prayers can be found within this weekly material. All prayers are on the [WEB](#).

A prayer of peace

Sing to the tune of 'Once I caught a fish alive'

One two three four five,
help us keep your love alive.
Six seven eight nine ten,
help us make your peace again.
When everything goes wrong,
show us how we can be strong:
no need to shout and fight,
gentleness can make things right!
Amen.

A prayer to a king

What were you doing, Lord?
The people were expecting a fearsome warrior king on a war horse, who would free them from the Romans, not someone quietly riding in on a little pony! What was the good of that? I'm a bit like that sometimes.
I want my problems sorted instantly and a bit by force.

You show us that maybe this isn't always the best way.
Help me to know how to take a more gentle, patient approach, knowing that you are there at my side to help. **Amen.**

Music

See p.1 for key to abbreviations.

Sing

Clap your hands (CH, JP)
Here comes Jesus on a donkey
Hosanna (CHY)
I danced in the morning (SB, JP)
Peace, perfect peace
Shout hosanna
The servant king
We have a king who rides a donkey
Topsy turvy kingdom

Listen

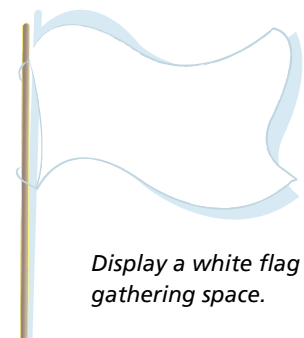
'Peace train', Cat Stephens on *Teaser And The Firecat*;
'New Year's Day', U2 on *War*;
'Where is the love?', Black-Eyed Peas on *Elephunk*

Gather

Prepare the space

On a table place the rucksack from previous weeks with the rope, compass and map, journal, boots, and foot rub already inside. To these items, add a white flag. Bring the familiar items out one by one, reminding the group what each represents. Make a show of looking to see if there is anything else, and finally bring out the white flag.

Ask the group if they know what this white flag might mean. Explain that it is a sign of surrender in some way, or perhaps a way of marking the end of the journey, planting the flag at the conclusion.



Display a white flag in your gathering space.

Gathering activity

Look at a photograph of the end of a journey (the Internet has plenty to choose from). Talk about how the travellers must be feeling. Why not recreate the photograph between the members of the group, asking them to convey the people's emotions? You could even take a photograph and see how well you've done, showing the different emotions.

Gathering prayer

Lord God, King of the universe and of all history,
you came not to force us but to teach us how to be like you.
Pour out your blessings on us;
make us bringers of peace
and make us more like you. **Amen.**

Open the Word

Based on Luke 19.28-40
Bible notes are on page 20.

With very young children

Today's activity offers a chance to think about Jesus riding into Jerusalem on a donkey

You will need: building blocks (wooden blocks, Duplo™, cardboard boxes); a long strip of cloth or paper to represent a road; a hobby-horse or a donkey head on a stick.

Share this short paraphrase and actions.

Jesus rode into Jerusalem on a donkey.
(mime riding action)

The people laid down their coats to make a path for him.

(mime laying down coats)

They waved palm branches
(wave hand)

and called out 'Blessed is the King'.

(invite children to repeat the phrase)

'Peace in heaven'.

(invite children to repeat the phrase)

Repeat so the children can join in.

■ Invite the children to build a model of a gateway out of building blocks and re-enact Jesus entering Jerusalem.

End by repeating the Bible actions.

With children

You might gather the children together as you tell the story. Have them pushed up against each other, perhaps even jostling each other. Some restrained pushing and shoving will help create the atmosphere.

Talk about

After reading the Bible story to your group, use these discussion points.

- What do you think a king should be like?
- How have you celebrated the arrival of someone special?
- How do you think it could have been noisy and peaceful at the same time?

With young people

Ideas to explore the Bible reading are on page 20.

An unexpected entrance

based on Luke 19.28-40

We hadn't known what to expect really, just followed his instructions – we'd learnt to trust him even when we didn't understand him. So we'd gone into the village just outside the city, just as he'd asked, and we found the colt, just as he said.

Then the owner came and asked, 'Why are you untying it?' just as Jesus said he would, and we told him, 'The Lord needs it,' just as Jesus said we should. Then we brought it back to Jesus and put our cloaks on it ready for Jesus to ride it – all just as he had told us. But that was all we knew.

What did we expect? I guess we all wondered – would there be anger? Violence even? But not at all! There were certainly lots of people there, lining the streets, shouting out, cheering, singing – it was really noisy... yet surprisingly peaceful.

People were spreading their coats in front of him, a real sign of respect, and there wasn't any anger, just joy in their actions and in their words,

'Blessed is the King who comes in the name of the Lord. Peace in heaven and glory in the highest heaven.'

Of course the religious guys weren't happy, even with that, and they told him to stop the crowds. He simply told them, 'I tell you, if they were silent, the very stones would start shouting out.'

Well, I wouldn't be expecting that... but then, who knows!



Bible study with young people

- Beforehand, read **Luke 19.28-40**. Read and print out a copy of the Bible study sheet for each group member. There are additional Bible notes on the [WEB](#).
- In the session, read the Bible passage together, look at the *Bible notes* and *Make connections* sections. Use this conversation spark to provoke first reactions from the group: *In what way was Jesus a king? What sort of kingdom did he want?*
- For the *Explore* session, display some images or posters of famous peacemakers from history such as Martin Luther King, Gandhi, Aung San Suu Kyi, St Francis.

An unexpected entrance **Luke 19.28-40**

Bible notes

This scene is familiar to us, but has subtle differences according to which gospel we read. In Luke's version, the crowd is made up of Jesus' disciples who strew garments on the road rather than branches. Quoting Psalm 118, they shout 'Peace in heaven and glory in the highest' (rather than Hosanna). By these subtle changes, Luke presents Jesus as a king of peace, rather than a conquering king accepting the crowd's adulation. Less a 'triumphal entry', more a humble homecoming. Such a peaceful entry does not explain why he eventually suffers a rebel's death, and yet the power of his presence is subversive precisely because he turns the world's values on its head.

Make connections

Whenever we think of kings, we instinctively bring to mind grandeur, regal decorations, military-style parades. Jesus' arrival on a young colt is today's equivalent of turning up in a hatchback, rather than a limousine! The crowd's cry of peace contrasts with, say, the singing of a national anthem that invariably speaks of conquest and strength. And Jesus does not demand or expect this response; in his earlier life we see him frequently escaping to a lonely place away from the crowds. His peace – radically different from that won by defeating others – comes through healing and recognition that God is for everyone.

Explore

Think about the last royal event you saw, such as the Queen's Diamond Jubilee celebrations.

- What do you think is the point of such national celebrations?

Think about what sort of event would be attended by a crowd shouting 'peace'. How would it be different?

- Can you name any 'peacemakers' through history?
- How did they try to create peace? What was their inspiration?

The Hebrew word that Jesus would have used is 'shalom'. It means harmony, wholeness, self-esteem, mutual understanding.

- What teachings of Jesus were about creating peace? What did he say about violence and conflict?

Respond to the Word

Based on Luke 19.28-40

See p.19 for ways of presenting the Bible reading.

Additional response activities can be found under *Respond to the Word* on the [WEB](#).

Make Peace flag

 + C + YP 20 MINS

Make a peace flag instead of a palm this year!

You will need: white material; scissors, felt tips, crayons, glue, coloured shiny paper, magazines, newspapers, large sheets of sugar paper. Spread these out around the room so that each young person has their own space.

- Beforehand, look up and write out words for peace from different languages. Also collect images for peace and relevant symbols, to be coloured in or decorated.
- Ask the youngsters to consider how they might show peace. Talk about the symbols you have gathered.
- Invite the group to design and decorate their own flags (at the end of our Lenten journey towards Jerusalem), using the materials gathered. Do not be prescriptive, but rather give everyone time and space (maybe with some music playing in the background) to create their own flag. Alternatively, they could make bunting to celebrate the royal arrival. Together, consider how bunting for Jesus might differ from the royal bunting of Jubilee celebrations.

Listen and discuss **Glory torch**

C + YP 5 MINS

An ongoing activity, looking for the glimpses of glory

You will need: torch or torches.

- Look back at the *Glory torch* activity from 10 February (or introduce it this week).
- Consider the passage from this week. Where are the moments of glory?

Play **King of peace**

 + C + YP

A run-around game

- This is based on the classic game, 'Stuck in the mud'. One person is 'it'. If this person 'tags' someone else in the group then that tagged person has to stand still and raise his/her arms sideways in the air.
- Other players can release the 'stuck' people by running under one of their arms and shouting out 'Set free by the King of peace'.

Send out

Live in faith

Challenge everyone to be a 'person of peace' this week. To do this, they should try to respond to people and situations in a way that brings peace and solutions, instead of conflict.

Pray

May Almighty God bless us and keep us.
May the deep peace of Christ go with us.
And may we be filled with the stillness of the Holy Spirit as we go out to take that peace to all. **Amen.**

The Passion

The final steps to the cross, based on Luke 22–23

This material, suitable for children from about 8-9 years upwards, can be used as an alternative to the Palm Sunday materials on pages 18-20 which focus on Jesus' entry into Jerusalem, or to extend them in order to focus on an aspect of the Passion story. It is taken from a set of resources to use during Holy Week. See page 5 for an overview and find the complete resource on the [WEB](#).

Gather

Prepare the space

Display a rucksack on a table with the rope, compass and map, journal, boots, a tub of ointment (foot rub or hand lotion) and white flag. Allow some time for the children to look at the different items, perhaps reminding them of previous sessions where you have used these items.

Gathering activity

As you look at the items together, say, 'We have had a long journey through Lent. We have arrived in Jerusalem but our journey is not over.'

Gathering prayer

Almighty, ever-living God, you are great and you are mighty. As we reflect today on the cross of Jesus, we pray that you will fill us with your wisdom and understanding to see how greatness and might can be shown in gentleness and forgiveness.

Amen.



Open the Word

Luke 23.32-43 Jesus is taunted on the cross

We use a pair of boots to stand side by side with Jesus while he is mocked, but still offers mercy.

And so to the place – Golgotha: the place of the skull, the place of death, and the place of mockery.

The leaders mocked as they watched Jesus being nailed to the cross, 'He saved others, but he doesn't seem to be able to save himself,' they sneered.

The soldiers mocked as they gambled for his clothes, and offered him sour wine as he gasped for air: 'Come on, if you can, save yourself!'

A criminal mocked as he hung on a cross next to him, 'Come on! If you're the Messiah, save yourself, and save us at the same time!'

But not everyone mocked. The other criminal next to him could see the truth, 'Stop! Don't you fear God? We've been condemned rightly; a fair punishment for our crimes, but this man – he's innocent'.

Then he turned and looked into the eyes of love and gasped, 'Jesus, remember me, when you come into your kingdom'. No more mockery, no more lies, just the truth spoken in love. Jesus turned and said to him 'Truly, I tell you, today you will be with me in paradise'.

Reflection: The boots

Take the boots from the table display and hold them up.

Even when he had nothing left to give, Jesus gave precious gifts to that criminal: forgiveness, understanding, grace, hope. Even when we have very little, we can always give something away: time, friendship, forgiveness, understanding, a willingness to walk in someone else's shoes, to know what they are thinking and feeling. To whom could you give love, pity or a beautiful promise? Is there someone you haven't even noticed?

Respond Stand together

15 MINS

You will need: a copy of the Taizé chant, 'Jesus, remember me'.

- Invite everyone to take their shoes off and stand in a circle with their empty shoes in front of them. Explain that the group will soon move around the circle of shoes, so each person should leave their pair where they are, as they will be able to collect them at the end.
- As the music is played, quietly at first, invite people to think about who has helped them when times were difficult. Who has stood in their shoes?
- Now invite people to take two steps to the left and to look at the shoes now in front of them. What would it be like to stand in these shoes? What support does the owner of the shoes need?
- Raise the music volume a little. All move two steps to the left and face another pair of shoes. They may not instantly recognise whose these are. Whose shoes do we need to stand in? Who needs our support?
- Raise the music volume a little more. All move four steps to the left and face another pair of shoes. Are we able to imagine the shoes of someone far away, and what it must be like to stand in their shoes?
- All move back to their own shoes and join in with the song as they put them on again: Jesus, remember me, when you come into your kingdom.

Live in faith

Encourage the youngsters to spend a little time every day this week just sitting in their room with a cross in their hands. Invite them to ask the Lord to fill them with the love that drove him to accept that fate. Ask them to think about what little sacrifices they can make at home, at school, for the sake of others.

Pray

You turned everything upside down, Lord.

You saved us by being weak, not strong. Help us to see the ways in which we can stand alongside others and sort things out calmly and gently.

Amen.