

*Isa. 50:4–9a*  
*Pss. 118:1–2, 19–29;*  
*31:9–16*  
*Phil. 2:5–11*  
**Luke 19:28–40;**  
**23:1–49**

# Jesus' Triumphal Entry

**Goal for the Session** Adults will identify with the crowds who shouted “hosanna” and will seek to honor Jesus by promoting peace.

## ■ P R E P A R I N G F O R T H E S E S S I O N

### Focus on Luke 19:28–40; 23:1–49

#### WHAT is important to know?

— From “Exegetical Perspective,” Jae Won Lee

Jesus' entrance follows the plot of Zechariah 9:9: Zion's king comes to Jerusalem triumphant and victorious, humble and riding on a donkey. The disciples' acclamation comes from Psalm 118:26: “Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the LORD,” to which Luke adds an explicit reference to Jesus as king. However, Luke also adds a comment about peace and glory. The praise of the multitude of angels in 2:14 is about peace on *earth*, and in fact Jesus bestows peace on *earth* (7:50; 8:48; 10:6). Further, the plot of Zechariah 9, which is so strongly played out in Jesus' entry, anticipates God's acts to establish peace for *Jerusalem*.

#### WHERE is God in these words?

— From “Theological Perspective,” George W. Stroup

The multitude's praise and joy suddenly turn to great sorrow when Jesus weeps over Jerusalem, because even though the multitude sings of peace and glory in heaven, it fails to recognize the price of true peace, “the things that make for peace!” (19:42). The multitude sings of peace in heaven without recognizing that Jesus is not an example of some larger notion of peace. He is their peace. Indeed he is the peace of the world—not any peace, but the peace that only he can give—and that peace cannot be found apart from the journey that leads inexorably to Golgotha, both for him and for those that would be his disciples.

#### SO WHAT does this mean for our lives?

— From “Pastoral Perspective,” William G. Carter

Jesus rides no high horse, just a lowly colt. He chooses to enter a deadly situation without force or protection. He gives himself freely and without reservation. This is a prophetic act, a sign of God's vulnerable love, which risks everything and promises to gain all. This is the means by which God creates peace. Sometimes we are clueless when it comes to peace. However, for those who continue to share the body and blood of Christ, it is common to say, “The peace of the Lord Jesus Christ be with you all.” How does each of us respond? With the words, “And also with you.”

#### NOW WHAT is God's word calling us to do?

— From “Homiletical Perspective,” H. Stephen Shoemaker

What kind of king? So we have a clash of kingdoms: Caesar or Christ. Caesar's kingdom is based on domination and ruthless power, the kind of kingship Jesus refused when tempted in the wilderness. The kingdom of God Jesus preached is based on justice, mercy, and the love of God (Luke 11:42 and Matt. 23:23). So we have our choice: *Pax Christi* or *Pax Romana*. Our challenge is to show how the gospel of the kingdom has political implications but transcends our everyday political loyalties.

**FOCUS SCRIPTURE**

**Luke 19:28–40;**  
**23:1–49**

## Focus on Your Teaching

Adults recognize that the focus of Holy Week rightly is on Jesus. They enjoy the celebrations of Palm Sunday and Easter. Some will be anticipating family get-togethers, meals, or out-of-town visitors in the week ahead. Many will feel deep sadness as well as joy at the events of the days that culminate in the crucifixion and resurrection. Many will welcome the opportunity to move beyond their personal plans and to reflect on today's text and the world ramifications of the season.

### YOU WILL NEED

- study Bibles
- map showing Bethphage, Bethany, and Jerusalem
- photo of Jerusalem from the Mount of Olives
- pens
- paper
- board or newsprint
- markers
- Internet-connected device (optional)
- purple cloth
- battery-powered candle
- large Bible
- your church's hymnal or songbook
- copies of Resource Sheets 1 and 2
- copies of Resource Sheet 1 for April 21, 2019

### For Responding

- option 1: pens and paper; directions on board or newsprint
- option 2: art materials to make posters
- option 3: pen and paper

*O Lord Jesus, help me this week to focus on your death and resurrection. Help me to pray, to meditate, and to read your Word with understanding. Keep me mindful also of the world for which you died. Amen.*

## LEADING THE SESSION

### GATHERING

*Before the session*, prepare the worship center with purple cloth, candle, and a large Bible open to Luke 19. (This will be the last session for using the Lenten purple cloth.) If you will use option 1 in Responding, print the directions on the board or newsprint.

Greet participants as they arrive and distribute pens and paper.

Invite each person to write a list of the things that make for peace. (These could include components of the world, region, community, home life, workplace, church, or other settings.) Then ask participants to read their lists aloud, and, as they do so, list the items on the board or newsprint; make a checkmark beside items that appear on more than one person's list. Post the list where everyone will be able to see it.

Light the candle and pray the following or a prayer of your choosing:

*King of glory and of peace, help us to grasp the message of this holy day as we begin our journey into Holy Week. By your Spirit enable us to use this week as a time of preparation and reflection. In your name, we pray. Amen.*

### EXPLORING

Show the map of Bethphage, Bethany, and Jerusalem. Ask a volunteer to read aloud Luke 19:28–40, and indicate on the map the towns that are mentioned. (Obtain maps from a study Bible, Bible atlas, or the Internet [[bibleatlas.org/bethphage.htm](http://bibleatlas.org/bethphage.htm)].)



# FEASTING on the WORD

## CURRICULUM

### Jesus' Triumphal Entry

Jerusalem is surrounded by high hills, one being the Mount of Olives to the east. Descending the Mount of Olives, the city of Jerusalem is an impressive sight today. In Jesus' time, the glorious temple made it even more magnificent.

If you have access to the Internet, show a YouTube video of a modern-day Palm Sunday procession from Bethphage to Jerusalem (search: Palm Sunday Procession Jerusalem). Note the thousands of pilgrims, singing in various languages and waving palm branches. If any of your participants have been part of a procession like this, invite them to tell about it.

From a study Bible or Bible atlas show a photo or picture of Jerusalem taken from the Mount of Olives. (Or search online for "photo of Jerusalem from Mount Olives.") Invite a volunteer to read aloud Zechariah 9:9–10.

Distribute copies of Resource Sheet 1 (Focus on Luke 19:28–40; 23:1–49). Have a volunteer read aloud the "What?" excerpt.

Discuss the understanding of "peace" as an important component of Palm Sunday. Take your time—this may be a new idea to many.

Invite a volunteer to read aloud Luke 19:41–42 and another to then read the "Where?" excerpt on Resource Sheet 1. Ask:

- ✪ How do you think the disciples felt during the procession to Jerusalem?
- ✪ How do you think they felt as Jesus wept over the city? Discuss the contrasting emotions of the day.

Continue with a discussion of Jesus as the peace-bringer. Begin with participants reading silently 2 Corinthians 5:18–19 and Colossians 1:19–22, followed by Philippians 2:5–11. (Write these references on the board or newsprint.) Invite participants to tell how they understand Christ's death as a means to bring peace and reconciliation between ourselves and God, as well as between ourselves and others.

Prepare for Responding by distributing copies of Resource Sheet 2 (The Two Processions). Have everyone read the excerpt aloud in unison. Then have someone read aloud the "Now What?" excerpt from Resource Sheet 1. Ask:

- ✪ Where do you see Christians acting like Jesus on the donkey today?

## RESPONDING

Choose one or more of these activities, depending on the length of your session:

**1. Hosanna and Peace Affirmations** Distribute paper and pens and post the following directions where all can see them:

- ✪ Read the "So What?" excerpt on Resource Sheet 1.
- ✪ Read again the list of items that make for peace from Gathering.
- ✪ Now complete the following brief affirmations (things that you believe):
  - ✪ I cry "Hosanna" to Jesus today because . . .
  - ✪ I think Christians are called to be peace-bringers because . . .
  - ✪ I plan to use one of the items that make for peace in the following way . . .

EASY  
PREP

Encourage participants to take home their affirmations and to read them daily as part of their Holy Week devotions.

- 2. Hosanna and Peace Posters** Make “Hosanna” and peace posters to hang on a bulletin board, a corridor wall, or other area where worshipers will see them. Place scissors, glue, poster board/chart paper, rulers, markers, and magazines on a large table or other work area. Pieces of palm may be added if available. Posters can be easily turned into banners by folding them slightly at the top and stapling to make a secure flap. Then insert a piece of dowel, and tie string or cord at each end of the dowel to hang.

Refer participants to the list of items that make for peace from Gathering. How might these items be incorporated into the posters?

- 3. Assessment of the Lenten Witness Strategy** The Lenten witness strategy has concluded. Use this time to assess your strategy. Ask: What joys have you experienced? What might you have done differently? Have someone take notes. Someday you may want to engage in another short-term witness strategy; your experience will be invaluable for that purpose. Note whether parishioners are bringing visitors to Holy Week and Easter services. Encourage group members to welcome them to your congregation.

## CLOSING

Gather around the candle. Distribute hymnals or songbooks. Together sing or read in unison a Palm Sunday hymn, such as “All Glory, Laud, and Honor,” “Hosanna, Loud Hosanna,” “Ride on! Ride on in Majesty,” or another favorite. (All three songs are on YouTube, some with organ alone, some with choirs. Type in the hymn title.)

Remind the group that this is the beginning of Holy Week. Many churches celebrate this day as the Sunday of the Passion. So it is fitting now to move from the celebration of Jesus’ triumphal procession to his passion and death, the focus of the next five days.

Spend time in silent meditation about the cross and the peace that Jesus brought to the world.

Then pray:

*O God, help us to bring peace through our lives and actions, including . . .  
(read the list of items from Gathering). Through Christ our Lord. Amen.*

Distribute copies of Resource Sheet 1 for April 21, 2019, or e-mail it to the participants during the week. Encourage participants to read the focus scripture and Resource Sheet 1 before the next session.

Palm Sunday/Passion Sunday is a seesaw of emotions, from exultation to deep sorrow. Whatever your church’s emphasis (palm procession or passion) try to keep a blend of joy and serious reflection. An appropriate remembrance of this day includes both dimensions.

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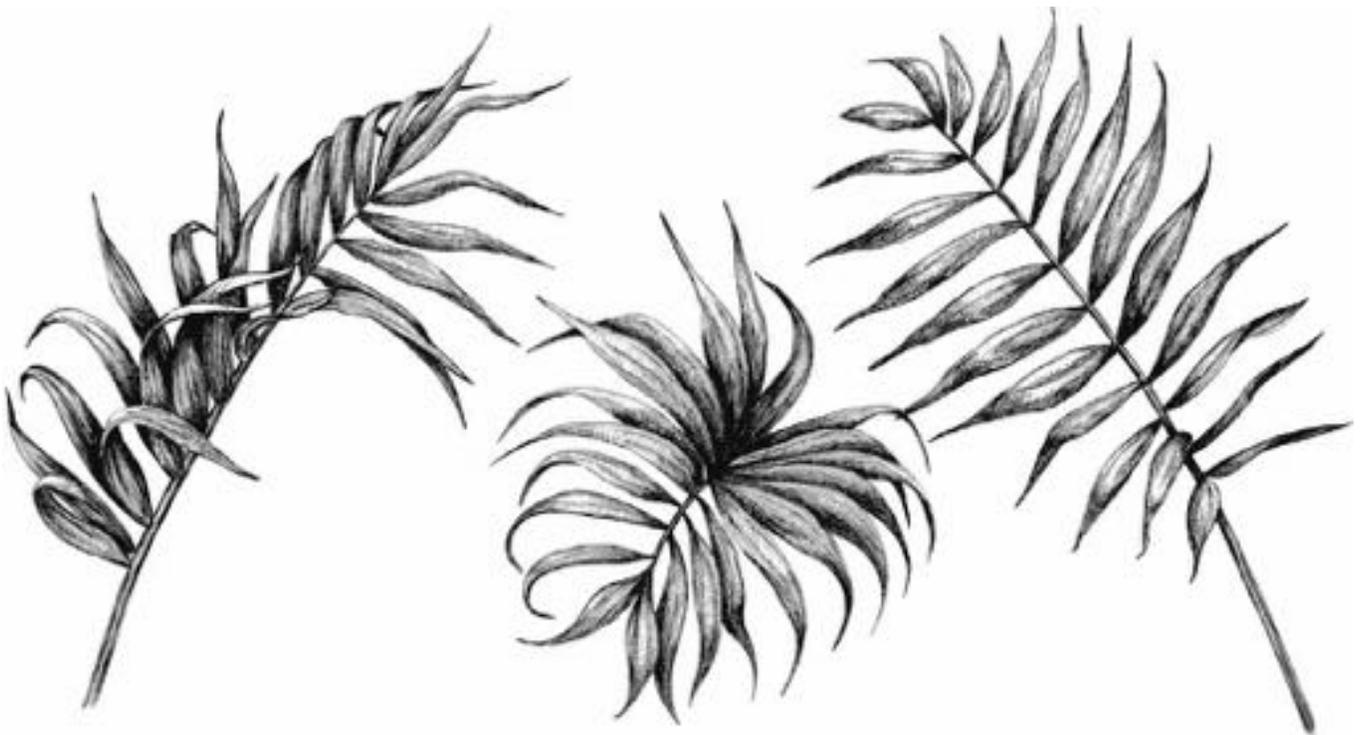
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## The Two Processions

Jesus scholars Marcus Borg and John Dominic Crossan give us a riveting image with which to begin: there were the two processions that Passover week.<sup>1</sup> From the west came Pilate draped in the gaudy glory of imperial power: horses, chariots, and gleaming armor. He moved in with the Roman army at the beginning of Passover week to make sure nothing got out of hand. Insurrection was in the air with the memory of God's deliverance of the Hebrew people from slavery in Egypt.

From the east came another procession: Jesus in ordinary robe riding on a young donkey. The careful preparations suggest that Jesus has planned a highly ritualized symbolic prophetic act. Luke has in mind the prophecy of Zechariah 9:9–10, the coming of a new kind of king, a king of peace who will dismantle the weaponry of war.

Excerpted from H. Stephen Shoemaker, *Feasting on the Word, Year C, Volume 2* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2009), 153, 155.



1. Marcus Borg and John Dominic Crossan, *The Last Week* (New York: HarperSanFrancisco, 2006), 1–5.