
Children's Message: Palm Sunday

A Different Kind of Kingdom Mark 11:1-11

(also found in John 12:12-16; Matthew 21:1-11; Luke 19:28-40)



Children's Message: A Different Kind of Kingdom

Jesus Enters Jerusalem on Palm Sunday

Main Objective: Palm Sunday is a fun and triumphant church celebration, especially when it involves waving branches during service and having “mini parades” or songs. But what does it mean and celebrate? This message takes a look at the original events of Palm Sunday, with an emphasis on how Jesus had a different end goal and purpose than what the people wanted for Him. We recognize that He did not come to establish an earthly kingdom or to fulfill a simple task; He came to suffer and die.

Law/Gospel Theme: Easter (and Holy Week leading up to it) gives us a beautiful look at the good news of Jesus. He did not come to be served or to rescue people from government; He came to serve, suffer, and give His life for our sins. Jesus came to Jerusalem not for glory, but to fulfill God’s plan and purpose. We give thanks that He was aiming for a “tough target” and hit the bullseye.

Optional Materials: A target or picture of a target, large and small versions of “pin the tail on the donkey” game, a blindfold, a cross; optional add-ons: palm branches, crown.

Bible Passage: Mark 11:1-11 (also found in John 12:12-16; Matthew 21:1-11; Luke 19:28-40)

Note: The idea behind this message is to convey to children that Jesus had a different focus and end in mind than what people of the day might have hoped or imagined as He rode into Jerusalem. This example describes illustrating that concept with targets or a “Pin the Tail on the Donkey” game. However, feel free to adjust and adapt as needed, as with any message suggestion.

More Teaching Ideas:

- Watch the [video demonstration of this message](#) and related [craft ideas](#)
- Compare our [Sunday School Lesson on Mark 11:1-11](#)
- Compare the [children's sermons from rfour.org](#) and [sermons4kids](#) on this passage
- See all our latest [children's sermons](#), [Sunday School Lessons](#), and [Sunday School curriculum](#)

Palm Sunday Children's Sermon (Mark 11:1-11)

If possible, have two "Pin the Tail on the Donkey" games set up or available: one larger and one much smaller. Greet the children, perhaps with palm branches for Palm Sunday.

Hello, children of God! Hosanna! Today is Palm Sunday. And what does that mean? Why do we have palm branches? What are we remembering? Well, we are going to talk about that. This is a special day when we recall how Jesus was cheered and celebrated as He entered the city of Jerusalem, riding on a donkey. Speaking of donkeys, I know a game that involves donkeys. Have you ever played "Pin the Tail on the Donkey"? It's a popular old party game where you have to try attaching a tail symbol onto a picture of a donkey. I'm not quite sure who came up with it, but it can be kind of fun and challenging. Now, I need a couple of volunteers who might like to try this game out with me. (*Select two children*).

Okay, (child's name), I want you to take this picture of a tail, and I want you to attach it to that donkey (*indicate the larger image*). Just go ahead and paste it on there. (*Watch child complete the task*.)

Great! You may sit back down. Okay, (child's name), now you're going to put this tail on the other donkey. Oh wait; first, I want you to put this blindfold on...and then we are going to spin you around a little. (*Carefully place the blindfold on the student, and give them a few gentle spins for disorientation*.) Okay, go ahead! (*Watch second volunteer attempt to find and pin the tail on the smaller donkey*.)

Well, that wasn't too bad. Thank you, volunteers. You both did a great job. But tell me, which of those do you think was easier? That's right, it was much easier to aim for the larger picture, especially when you could see to do it!

It might seem obvious to aim for a target that's easier to hit, or for a goal that's easy to achieve. Have you ever played darts? In a game like darts, you have a target that might look like this (*hold up a target or picture of a target*).

Now, hitting these outside rings is easier. But hitting the smaller tougher areas is worth more points. If you get the "bullseye" in the center, which is challenging, it's the most valuable. Well, why are we talking about targets anyway? What does it have to do with our Bible story? It's quite simple: Jesus had a different goal in mind than what others thought He should be aiming for. He wasn't just taking things the easy way. He knew that His job would be the hardest thing possible, but that it would be worth more than anything else.

On Palm Sunday, Jesus came into the city of Jerusalem. He was on a donkey, showing that He came in humble peace. People had heard about Him and were excited to see Him. They expected that He might save them from political oppression, and they wanted Him to rise up and help them. They cheered "Hosanna", which means "save us!" They waved palm branches, which was sort of like waving flags in a parade. These people wanted Jesus to

have an end goal that included rescuing them from other people and taking over government. But that was not the kind of salvation Jesus planned to bring. He knew what was coming. He knew that He had a tougher target to hit. He would have to suffer, experience immense pain, and be killed. His end goal was the cross (*hold up cross*).

He also recognized that this was God's plan and purpose for Him, and that He was going to rescue not just the people of Jerusalem, but all people, saving them not from Romans, but from sin, death, and the devil.

And what wonderful news this is for us! We should rejoice that Jesus did not aim for an easy task but was willing to suffer and die. He had a painful and difficult goal to reach, and He did it. With His blood, He freed us from sin and death forever. We can give thanks to God every day for saving us.

Why don't we say a prayer right now?

Prayer:

(Have kids repeat each line)

Dear God,

Thank you for your marvelous plans

Thank you for sending Jesus and giving Him important purpose

Help us to trust you and remind us you are near

Thank you for forgiveness

Thank you for your love

We love you, God!

In Jesus's name, Amen!

Bible Verses/story to Reference: Mark 11:1-11

Now when they drew near to Jerusalem, to Bethphage and Bethany, at the Mount of Olives, Jesus^[a] sent two of his disciples ²and said to them, "Go into the village in front of you, and immediately as you enter it you will find a colt tied, on which no one has ever sat. Untie it and bring it. ³If anyone says to you, 'Why are you doing this?' say, 'The Lord has need of it and will send it back here immediately.'" ⁴And they went away and found a colt tied at a door outside in the street, and they untied it. ⁵And some of those standing there said to them, "What are you doing, untying the colt?" ⁶And they told them what Jesus had said, and they let them go. ⁷And they brought the colt to Jesus and threw their cloaks on it, and he sat on it. ⁸And many spread their cloaks on the road, and others spread leafy branches that they had cut from the fields. ⁹And those who went before and those who followed were shouting, "Hosanna! Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord! ¹⁰Blessed is the coming kingdom of our father David! Hosanna in the highest!" ¹¹And he entered Jerusalem and went into the temple. And when he had looked around at everything, as it was already late, he went out to Bethany with the twelve.

-[Mark 11:1-11 ESV](#)