



DIOCESE OF HAMILTON

700 King Street West, Hamilton, Ontario, Canada L8P 1C7

Palm Sunday

Children's Liturgy of the Word

Palm Sunday marks the beginning of Holy Week. It remembers Jesus Christ's triumphal entry into Jerusalem as the Messiah, while proclaiming His Passion and death on the Cross. This day unites the joy of Christ's royal welcome with the sorrow of His suffering, preparing us to enter the Paschal Triduum. It may be helpful to explain Holy Week to the children (see Holy Week attachment).

A distinctive feature of the Mass on this day is the blessing of palms. A procession follows, joyfully reenacting Christ's entry into Jerusalem. The red vestments worn during this Mass symbolize the Passion, blood, and martyrdom of Christ.

Palm Sunday reveals the dual kingship of Christ: humble yet triumphant, acclaimed yet betrayed. It invites us to reflect on Israel's messianic hopes, which reach their peak in Jesus, who rebuilds the true temple—His body—through His death and resurrection. The Church encourages Catholics to reject superficial piety and embrace the Cross as the path to true exaltation.

Palm Sunday invites the Church to experience both glory and suffering. It encourages everyone to begin Holy Week with branches in hand and hearts focused on the Cross. Here, true kingship is shown through a selfless love.

This week, the Children's Liturgy of the Word will focus primarily on an abbreviated version of the Gospel adapted for children, including the Gospel at the beginning of Mass, to provide Children's Liturgy of the Word Leaders with options to assist children in entering more deeply into the readings.

Background

Matthew 21.1-11 is proclaimed after the blessing of the psalms and before the entrance procession. The people recognize Jesus as the Son of David. The word *Hosannah* has the same Hebrew root as Jesus' own name, which means "save us."

Isaiah 50.4-7 portrays the obedient Servant who receives divine instruction, endures suffering without resistance, and trusts unwaveringly in God's help. This prophetic text foreshadows Christ's Passion, emphasizing the need to listen to God amid humiliation.

Psalms 22 prophetically depicts the sufferings of the Messiah during his Passion: mockery by onlookers, encirclement by enemies, piercing of hands and feet, division of garments, a cry for divine aid, and ultimate vindication leading to praise among the faithful. These verses vividly prefigure Christ's crucifixion as recorded in the Gospels.

Philippians 2.6-11 is known as the Christological Hymn, an early Christian creed about Christ's pre-existence, his voluntary self-emptying love, his obedient humiliation unto death, and his subsequent exaltation by the Father to universal lordship. It underscores the paradox of divine humility leading to glory, serving as a model for Christian unity and obedience.

Matthew 26.14 - 27.66 is the Passion of Jesus from Judas' betrayal through his arrest, trials before Jewish and Roman authorities, scourging, crucifixion, death, and burial. This climactic account fulfills Old Testament prophecies which were proclaimed in Psalm 22 and Isa 50–53. It reveals human sin (betrayal, denial, mockery), divine sovereignty amid suffering, and the inauguration of salvation through Christ's obedient self-offering (as in Philippians). It invites disciples to vigilance, repentance, and faith in the Cross as the path to Resurrection.

The Passion reveals Christ's innocence amid betrayal (Judas), weakness (disciples), injustice (trials), and mockery, yet sovereign. It prefigures the Eucharist as a new Passover, the Cross as glorification.

The Liturgy

Procession from the main Church

After the opening prayer, when all are seated, the leaders come forward and stand facing the altar.

Priest: (in these or similar words)

Today is Palm Sunday! We waved our palm branches and sang "Hosanna!" to welcome Jesus. But Jesus also suffered for us. Go with your leaders and learn how Jesus was brave and loving for us.

Once most of the children have formed a procession, the leader with the book proceeds to the celebration site. The second leader usually walks behind the children. Upon arrival at the CLoW room, the leader places the book on the prepared table.

Welcome.

The leaders assist the children in sitting and preparing. **Begin with the Sign of the Cross.** Help the children think and connect their actions as they touch their foreheads, shoulders, and stomachs. The leader may offer the following prayer, in these or similar words.

**In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.
Amen.**

Let us pray,

God our Father, as we wave our palms, help us follow Jesus all the way to the Cross. Make our hearts brave like his. We ask this through Jesus, our King. Amen.

Let's quiet our hearts to listen to God's Word.

Invite the children to listen to the readings. Proclaiming all the readings is unnecessary; however, the Gospel is required.

REIMAGINED READINGS FOR CHILDREN

The reimagined readings below are intended for use after the children have heard the original reading. The intent is to allow the children to listen to the original reading and help them better understand it (not replace it).

Read at a minimum, the Gospel, which has the highest priority, and then ask the children to sit down. You can then read the reimagined reading. Leaders may not have time to read all of the reading. If time permits, after the Gospel, proclaim the Psalm, and then the first reading, if time permits.

Reimagined readers must always remain faithful to the original Scripture's intent, making it age-appropriate for children to understand.

NB: Palm Sunday includes the Gospel Proclamation below, followed by a procession before Mass.

GOSPEL

Matthew 21.1-11

Jesus and his disciples went to Bethpage on the Mount of Olives when they were going to Jerusalem.

He told two of his friends, "Go into the village. You will find a donkey and a colt there. Bring them to me. If anyone asks why you are doing that, say 'The master needs them.'" They did what Jesus asked. When they returned, they put their cloaks on the donkey.

As he went into the city, many people were excited to see him. They put their cloaks on the road, and others put down tree branches.

The crowd shouted, "Hosanna in the highest! Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord! Hosanna to our king!"

When Jesus entered Jerusalem, everyone was asking, "Who is this?"

The people answered, "This is Jesus, the prophet of Nazareth, the one sent by God."

FIRST READING

Isaiah 50.4-7

The prophet said that God teaches me how to listen and how to help others. Even when people are mean, I try to do what is right.

When things are hard, I do not give up, because God is with me and helps me be strong.

RESPONSORIAL PSALM

Psalm 22.7-8, 16-17, 18-19, 22-23

R. My God, my God, stay close to me.

People laughed at me
and said, "Trust in God!
Let God help you." R.

I felt hurt
and surrounded by trouble,
and I was very weak. R.

But you, Lord,
do not leave me.
Stay near and help me. R.

I praise you, Lord,
with all your people.
Those who love God
give you thanks. R.

SECOND READING

Philippians 2.6-11

Jesus is God's Son, but he chose to be humble and help others. He obeyed God, even when it was hard, even when he suffered on the cross.

Because of his love, God raised him up and gave him great honour. Now everyone can say, "Jesus is Lord," and we praise God.

GOSPEL

Matthew 26.14 - 27.66

Jesus knew that the time was coming when he would suffer and die. One of his disciples, Judas, helped the leaders find a way to arrest him.

Jesus shared a special meal with his friends. He took bread, thanked God, and gave it to them, saying, "Do this to remember me." He took a cup and said, "This is my blood, God's promise of love for you."

Later, Jesus went to pray. He felt sad and afraid, but he said, "Father, I want to do your will." Soon, soldiers came, and Jesus was arrested.

Jesus was brought before the leaders. Some people said things about him that were not true. They decided that he should die. Peter, his friend, became afraid and said he did not know Jesus. Later, he was very sorry.

Jesus was taken away and nailed to a cross. People laughed at him, but Jesus trusted God. After some time, Jesus cried out and gave his life. A soldier said, "Truly, this was the Son of God."

A good man named Joseph placed Jesus in a tomb, and a large stone was rolled in front of it.

Reflection

The leader may offer this reflection in these or similar words. Remember the amount of time available to return to the main assembly. The leader may wish to reduce the number of questions. An excellent place to begin is the question:

What did you hear? Allow children to respond.

Today we heard how Jesus went into Jerusalem riding on a donkey. People were very excited to see him. They put their cloaks on the road and waved palm branches in the air. They shouted “Hosanna! Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord!”

Have you ever been excited to see someone special? Allow children to respond.

Maybe a grandparent... a friend... or someone coming home after a long trip. The people felt like that when they saw Jesus. They believed he was sent by God. But here is something interesting. Jesus did not come riding a big horse like a king going to war. He came riding a donkey.

Why do you think Jesus chose a donkey instead of a big horse? Allow children to respond.

Because Jesus is a different kind of king, he did not come to fight. He came to love. He came to serve. He came to save. The people shouted “Hosanna!” That word means, "Save us, Lord!" or "Help us, God!"

What are some things we might want Jesus to help us with? (School, family, friends, etc.)

Sometimes we need help to be brave. Sometimes we need help to forgive. Sometimes we need help to do the right thing.

The people were happy on Palm Sunday, but later in the week, things became very hard for Jesus. But even when people stopped cheering, Jesus still loved them. He still trusted God.

When things get hard, what can we remember about Jesus? Allow children to respond.

We can remember that Jesus stays with us, loves us, and helps us be strong. Jesus never gives up on us. So today, when we hold our palms, we remember to say in our hearts, Hosanna! Jesus, help me follow you. Jesus, help me love like you. Jesus, stay with me always.

Alternate Reflection

What did you hear? Allow children to respond.

The Gospel today tells the Passion of Jesus—his last days before Easter. It's a big love story where Jesus shows how much he cares for us, even when everything goes wrong.

First, Judas, one of Jesus' friends, took money to hand him over to others. But at the Last Supper, Jesus shared bread and wine, saying, "This is my body and blood—given for you!" He knew hard times were coming, but still loved everyone.

Then in the garden called Gethsemane, Jesus felt sad and scared. He prayed three times, "Father, if you can, take this away—but I want what you want!" His friends fell asleep instead of praying with him. Soldiers arrived, and Judas kissed Jesus to say, "That's him!" They grabbed Jesus.

When do you feel scared, like in the garden? What can you pray?

Peter followed, but got scared and said, "I don't know Jesus!" three times. He cried hard because he loved Jesus, but was weak.

At the trial, people lied about Jesus. Pilate, who was in charge, knew that Jesus had done nothing wrong. Soldiers hurt him, put a thorny crown on his head, and dressed him like a pretend king. Pilate let the crowd choose: free Jesus or a robber? They decided to free the robber!

They nailed Jesus to a cross. He prayed, "Father, forgive them—they don't know!" It got dark, and Jesus felt alone but trusted God. He said, "It is finished," and died. The earth shook—a soldier even said, "This was truly God's Son!" Friends buried him.

How did Jesus show love even when hurt? Allow children to respond.

Jesus did all this to save us from our mistakes. He forgave, obeyed, and loved to the end!

What will you do to thank Jesus this Holy Week? Allow children to respond.

Let's be brave friends of Jesus!

Following the reflection, the prayer leader invites everyone to stand to profess their faith. Recite the Creed or use the sample below to ask the children to respond.

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The Creed

Depending on the time, a simple profession of faith may be made (see below).

Leader: Do you believe in God, the Father Almighty, maker of heaven and earth?

All: I believe.

Leader: Do you believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, who gave his life for us?

All: I believe.

Leader: Do you believe in the Holy Spirit who lives in our hearts and gives us everlasting life?

All: I believe.

Leader: This is our faith. This is the faith of the Church. We are proud to profess it.

Prayer of the Faithful

Leaders may begin the intercessions by announcing the needs they know. The leader may need to repeat and paraphrase the petition, concluding it with the cue for the response: 'We pray.' All respond to each petition by saying, "Lord, hear our prayer." Sample intercessions are below.

The intercessions are said. The Leader introduces them, and an assistant announces them.

The leader says:

Today, we remember how the people welcomed Jesus with joy as he entered Jerusalem. Trusting in God's love, we bring our prayers to him. Our response is: 'Lord, hear our prayer.' R: Lord, hear our prayer.

Assistant:

For the Church, that we may always welcome Jesus into our hearts and follow him with love. We pray to the Lord. R:

Assistant:

For the leaders of our world, that they may choose peace, kindness, and fairness instead of anger and war. We pray to the Lord. R:

Assistant:

For our families and friends, that our homes may be filled with love, patience, and forgiveness. We pray to the Lord. R:

Assistant:

For people who are sad, sick, or suffering, that they may know Jesus is close to them and gives them strength. We pray to the Lord. R:

Assistant:

In the quiet of our hearts, we offer our own prayers... [pause]. We pray: Come, Lord Jesus. R:

The Leader says:

Loving God, your Son Jesus entered Jerusalem in peace and humility. Hear the prayers we bring to you today, and help us to follow him with faithful hearts. We ask this through Christ our Lord.

Return to the church

Ask the children to return to the main assembly. Ask them to return quietly and reflect on what they have heard and what they are now doing. Be mindful of children who may have difficulty finding their families.



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The Kids Bulletin: thekidsbulletin.com (please note: request for a free will offering to use)

NAME: _____

DATE: _____

MATTHEW 21:1-11

1. Where were Jesus and the disciples when he sent them for the animals?

- A. Bethlehem
- B. Nazareth
- C. Bethphage and Mount of Olives



5. What did the disciples put on the animals before Jesus sat on them?

- A. Palm branches
- B. A saddle
- C. Their cloaks



2. Which animals did the disciples go to find?

- A. A horse and a pony
- B. A camel and its baby
- C. A donkey and its colt



6. What did the crowd spread on the road in front of Jesus?

- A. Flowers and seeds
- B. Sand and stones
- C. Cloaks and branches



3. What were the disciples to say if anyone questioned them?

- A. 'We are borrowing them for a race.'
- B. 'The owner said it okay.'
- C. 'The master has need of them.'



7. What did the crowds keep crying out?

- A. 'Welcome, King of Galilee!'
- B. 'Who is this man?'
- C. 'Hosanna in the highest!'



4. Who rode on the animals into the city?

- A. Peter and John
- B. The prophet
- C. Jesus



8. When asked "Who is this?", what did the crowd call Jesus?

- A. 'A Roman soldier'
- B. 'The King of Judea'
- C. 'The prophet from Nazareth'



Sunday Fun!

OSV Family Activities for Palm Sunday Year A

1



REFLECT & PREPARE

Think about what to let go of to fully rise with Christ and plan how to celebrate the Triduum.

2



A SPECIAL HOLY WEEK

Turn off the TV for the week and set up a cross table to discuss growing closer to



3



DECORATE EASTER EGGS

Decorate eggs with spring colors and discuss how Jesus is calling you to new life.



4




PRAY WITH PALM CROSSES

Make palm branch crosses, reflect on giving something up, and pray the Lord's Prayer together.

Holy Week

Palm Sunday – Jesus Comes as Our King


Holy Week begins with Palm Sunday. On this day, we remember when Jesus came into the city of Jerusalem riding on a donkey. People were happy to see him. They waved palm branches and shouted, "Hosanna! Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord!" Even though the people were cheering, Jesus knew a hard week was coming.

 We learn: Jesus is our King, but he is a King who loves and serves.

Holy Thursday – The Last Supper


On Holy Thursday, Jesus had a special meal with his friends, the disciples. This meal was called the Last Supper. At this supper:


- Jesus gave us the Eucharist
- Jesus washed his disciples' feet to show how to serve others
- Jesus told them to love one another


 We learn: We follow Jesus by loving, serving, and sharing.

Good Friday – Jesus Dies on the Cross

On Good Friday, something very sad happened. Jesus was put on a cross and died. He did this because he loves us so much. He wanted to save the world from sin and bring us back to God. The day is called Good Friday because Jesus' love was stronger than sin.

 We learn: Jesus loves us more than we can imagine.

 Holy Saturday – Waiting and Trusting On Holy Saturday, everything is quiet. Jesus has died, and his friends are very sad. But this is not the end. The Church waits and prays, trusting God.

 We learn: Sometimes we wait, but God is always working.

Easter Sunday – Jesus Is Alive!

On Easter Sunday, the happiest day comes! Jesus rises from the dead. The tomb is empty. Death is defeated. God's love wins. We say: Alleluia! Jesus is alive!

 We learn: Because Jesus lives, we have hope.

Simple Summary for Children

Holy Week is the most important week of the year.

- Palm Sunday — Jesus comes as our King
- Holy Thursday — Jesus gives us the Eucharist
- Good Friday — Jesus dies for love
- Holy Saturday — We wait and trust
- Easter Sunday — Jesus rises and gives us new life

Holy Week teaches us that love is stronger than death.

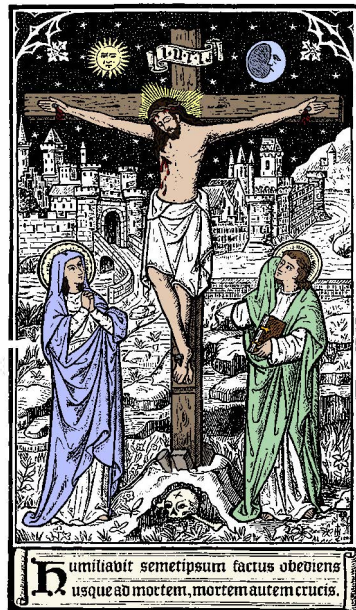
Holy Week

Did you know that this week is the most important one in the whole year? Holy Week has Holy Thursday, Good Friday and Holy Saturday. On these days we remember and celebrate the most important things that Jesus did before His resurrection on Easter Sunday.

On Holy Thursday Jesus said the first Mass and made his apostles the first priests. Go to Mass on Thursday if you can, and think about what Jesus did- He made bread and wine into Himself so that He could still be with us after He went back into Heaven.

On Good Friday Jesus suffered terribly and then died on the cross because of our sins. He offered up His life, even though He had never sinned, so that all of us could go to Heaven. That's why we call it "Good" Friday. Can you offer some sacrifice to Jesus in return for what He did for you?

On Holy Saturday Jesus' body was in the tomb. His friends were all shocked by what had happened and were afraid and sad. They did not remember what was going to happen next... Do you remember what happened after Holy Saturday?

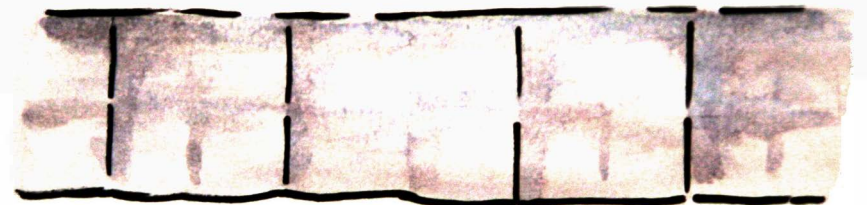


Answer to Puzzle on Front: This is my Blood of the New Covenant which will be shed for many.
Answer to Word-Find: He died for sinners.

The Kids' Bulletin

Palm Sunday / Passion Sunday

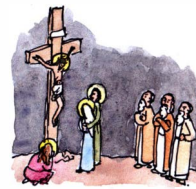
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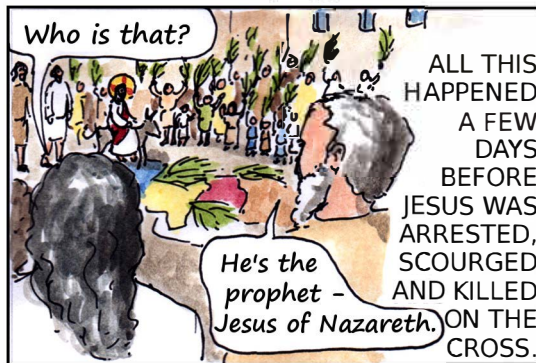
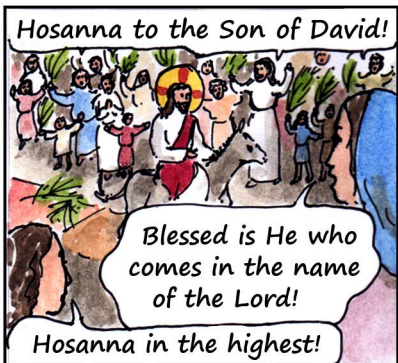
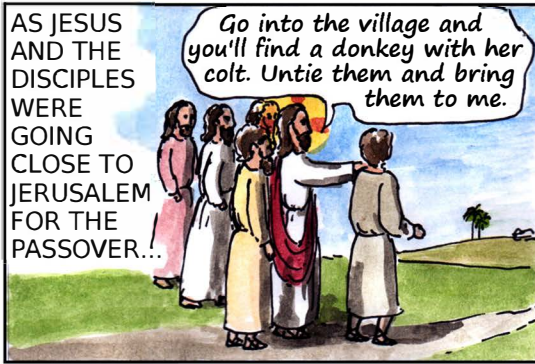
Use every second letter to fill in the blanks.

T H

Palm Sunday



Good Friday Word-Find



ON PALM SUNDAY EVERYBODY CHEERED FOR JESUS, BUT A FEW DAYS LATER THEY SHOUTED AT HIM AS HE WAS LED TO HIS DEATH. WE MUST BE FAITHFUL TO JESUS WHEN IT'S EASY AND EVERYONE AROUND US IS, AND WE MUST ALSO BE FAITHFUL WHEN IT'S REALLY HARD AND EVERYONE ELSE IS AGAINST HIM.

H H W E D B H E A V Y
 D I E D M U E S J I V
 J L P C A R R I E D E
 O L T A R I O M S N R
 S E D L Y E D O U I O
 E S A V E D F N S C N
 P I L A T E O F R O I
 H S C R O S S E S D C
 I N C Y R E N E T E A
 N E H A N D S T O M B
 N A I L S J O H N U R
 M A G D A L E N E S S

See if you can find all the words in CAPITALS in the puzzle.

Use the leftover letters to fill in the blanks:

What did Jesus do on the cross?

On Good Friday JESUS was taken before King HEROD and the governor, PILATE. Even though He had not committed any crime He was scourged and condemned to die on the CROSS. He CARRIED the cross as far as He could up CALVARY hill, but when He got too weak a man named SIMON of CYRENE was forced to help Him. On the way He met His mother, MARY, who WEPT at seeing her Son in such pain. A woman named VERONICA wiped the blood and sweat from His face with a cloth. At the top of the HILL Jesus was thrown onto the cross and His HANDS and FEET were fastened to it with NAILS. They raised the cross, where Jesus hung for three hours before He DIED. He did all this to SAVE us from Hell. At the cross were JOHN, Mary MAGDALENE, His mother, and some other women. At the moment He died the curtain of the old Temple was TORN in half. When His body was taken down from the cross JOSEPH of Arimathea and NICODEMUS BURIED Him in a new TOMB and rolled a HEAVY STONE in front of the door.

