

JESUS RIDES INTO JERUSALEM

Matthew 21:1-11 // Palm Sunday

This week is Palm Sunday, and this service centers around Jesus' entry into Jerusalem. This story corresponds with the sixth Sunday in Lent. Here are some materials to help you create your own worship service.

MAIN THEME: *How do we follow Jesus, no matter the cost?*

CHOOSING MUSIC // FOR SINGING

- 🎵 **All Glory Laud and Honor** [Key of A]
Words and Music: Tehodulph of Orleans and Melchoir Teschner
Public Domain
- 🎵 **Hosanna (Be Lifted Higher)** [Key of C]
Words and Music: Israel Houghton and Sidney Mohede
© 2010 Integrity's Praise! Music, Sound of the New Breed, Insight Unlimited Publishing
- 🎵 **Hosanna (Praise is Rising)** [Key of G]
Text and Music: Brenton Brown, Paul Baloche
© 2005, 2006 Thank You Music, Integrity's Hosanna! Music
- 🎵 **Sanna Sannanina** [Key of C]
Words and Music: South African; arr. Geoff Weaver
© 1993 Jubilate Hymns

CREATING DRAMA // FOR HEARING

We really like **The Story of Palm Sunday** by Worship House Media [www.worshiphousemedia.com] It could work well after the gospel reading.

Enlist a group of six or more people present the scripture reading, preferably by memory. There should be three individuals to recite the words of the narrator, Jesus, and the prophet; and a group of three or more to recite the words of crowd in unison. Be sure that the group rehearses before hand and uses good vocal production and dramatic gestures. Check out our video in The Studio on reading scripture in public for help [samford.edu/worship-arts]

FINDING ART // FOR SEEING

A few days before worship, gather a team to make origami crosses out of palm branches. Create one for each worshiper to take home as a reminder that our journey to the cross is nearing completion. If you're like us and need help folding the crosses, search "Palm Branch Craft Easter Cross - How To" on YouTube. [youtube.com]





There are many paintings depicting Jesus' entrance into Jerusalem. We really like this one by Wilhem Morgner. It is public domain, via Wikimeida Commons, so feel free to use it how you wish! It would work great as a moment of silent reflection with this quote by Kurt Vonnegut: "Trust a crowd to look at the wrong end of a miracle every time." [from *Palm Sunday: An Autobiographical Collage*]

LIVING WORSHIP // FOR DOING

The fact that Jesus entered a city on a donkey must have been pretty perplexing, or even funny, to those who saw him that day. Instead of introducing a reign of militaristic pomp and circumstance, Christ came as the peaceful lamb-king, whose kingdom is realized through deeds of love and mercy.

Give worshipers a notecard on which they can write down an activity that they can do during Holy Week to be agents of peace through deeds of love and mercy in their community. After worshipers have done so, someone might send the worshipers with this blessing:

"Brothers and sisters, go forth in the name of Jesus Christ, by the power of his Spirit, ready to show acts of love and mercy that move the Kingdom of God in our world. May these final days that bring us to the cross stir Easter life deep within our hearts; a life that grows, spreads, and enlivens all that is around us. Amen."

MAKING SPACE // FOR WORSHIPPING

When Jesus rode into Jerusalem, people celebrated by waving palm branches in the air. This week, use palm branches in the worship space, symbols of peaceful triumph and eternal life. You might consider having worshipers process into the worship space waving palm branches in the air during the opening song, a favorite tradition in many settings. Don't forget to save the palm branches if you want to use them to make ashes next Ash Wednesday!

Consider using the palms from worship to create a decorative wreath, a great family or intergenerational activity. Keep it for your home, church, or visit an elderly person in your community and give it to them as a gift.

WRITING POETRY// FOR PRAYING

Write your own prayer of praise based on the phrase "Hosanna in the highest!" You might consider using Psalm 118 as a starting point.

You can also use this prayer from the Book of Common Prayer.

Almighty and ever living God, in your tender love for the human race you sent your Son our Savior Jesus Christ to take upon him our nature, and to suffer death upon the cross, giving us the example of his great humility: Mercifully grant that we may walk in the way of his suffering, and also share in his resurrection; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, forever and ever. Amen.



SAMPLE WORSHIP SERVICE

Palm Sunday // Matthew 21:1-11 // Jesus Rides Into Jerusalem

PRE-WORSHIP ACTIVITY

Have tables set up around the room with activities for making palm wreaths or origami crosses out of palm branches. Consider beginning this worship gathering outside and processing inside, or having the whole worship outside.

WELCOME

Say hi to other worshipers and welcome one another in the name of Christ.

LENT // JOURNEY TO THE CROSS

If Lent isn't common to your tradition, you might explain it at the end of the welcome. You might also explain the significance of Palm Sunday. You can read about that on the CWA website.

CALL TO WORSHIP

The Story of Palm Sunday

Video from Worship House Media

SONGS OF PRAISE

Hosanna (Praise is Rising)

All Glory, Laud and Honor

PRAYER OF PRAISE

Almighty and ever living God, in your tender love for the human race you sent your Son our Savior Jesus Christ to take upon him our nature, and to suffer death upon the cross, giving us the example of his great humility: Mercifully grant that we may walk in the way of his suffering, and also share in his resurrection; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.

-Book of Common Prayer

SONG OF THE KINGDOM

Hosanna (Be Lifted Higher)

Intersperse three testimonies of worshipers between the choruses of this song. A few days before worship, ask them to prepare a response to

the question, "How do you follow Jesus, no matter the cost?"

Wrap up this testimony time by singing the final refrain of Hosanna (Be Lifted Higher).

SCRIPTURE READING

Matthew 2:1-11

VISUAL REFLECTION // ENTRY OF JESUS

Display the image "Entry of Jesus" by Wilhem Morgner with the quote from Kurt Vonnegut: "Trust a crowd to look at the wrong end of a miracle every time."

MESSAGE

SONG OF COMMITMENT

God of Justice

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

One: Lord God, because Jesus has taught us to trust you in all things, we hold to his Word and share his plea.

ALL: **Your kingdom come, your will be done.**

One: Where nations budget for war, while Christ says, "Put down your sword"

ALL: **Your kingdom come, your will be done.**

One: Where countries waste food and covet fashion, while Christ says, "I was hungry... I was thirsty..."

ALL: **Your kingdom come, your will be done.**

One: Where powerful governments claim their policies are heaven blessed, while Scripture states that God helps the powerless.

ALL: **Your kingdom come, your will be done.**

One: Where Christians seek the kingdom in the shape of their own church, as if Christ had come to build and not to break barriers.

ALL: **Your kingdom come, your will be done.**

One: Where women who speak up for their dignity are treated with scorn or contempt.

ALL: **Your kingdom come, your will be done.**

One: Where men try hard to be tough, because they are afraid to be tender.

ALL: **Your kingdom come, your will be done.**

One: Where we, obsessed with being adults, forget to become like children.

ALL: **Your kingdom come, your will be done.**

One: Where our prayers falter, our faith weakens, our light grows dim.

ALL: **Your kingdom come, your will be done.**

One: Where Jesus Christ calls us.

ALL: **Your kingdom come, your will be done.**

One: Lord God, you have declared that your kingdom is among us. Open our ears to hear it, our hands to serve it, our hearts to hold it. This we pray in Jesus' name.

ALL: **Amen.**

CLOSING SONG

Hosanna (Praise is Rising)

ANNOUNCEMENTS

BENEDICTION

Brothers and sisters, go forth in the name of Jesus Christ, by the power of his Spirit, ready to show acts of love and mercy that move the Kingdom of God in our world. May these final days that bring us to the cross stir Easter life deep within our hearts; a life that grows, spreads, and enlivens all that is around us. Amen.

-Book of Common Prayer