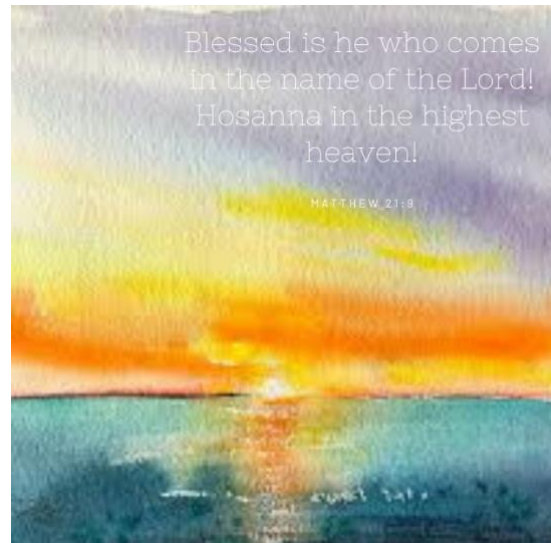


Sunday School Lesson Palm Sunday - Sunday, April 5

Welcome, y'all!

As we would have most likely been separate on Palm Sunday this year, we thought it would be prudent for you and your family to do this lesson together. If your whole family is not into it, then that is ok too! We welcome Holy Week by gathering together and celebrating Jesus' entrance into Jerusalem, so gather together after the worship service and dig into the scripture with us.



Game: Magic Carpet Team Building

Materials: bathroom mat or similar size rug

The Goal of the Game: To turn the rug right side up with every participant maintaining contact

To Start the Game: have everyone stand on the mat (with the mat facing upside down) and say, "Your group is going on a Magic Carpet ride, high above the fields of the surrounding area. You suddenly realize that you are going the wrong direction because the carpet you are riding on is facing upside down! Since you are no longer touching the ground, you must turn the carpet over, without anyone stepping off the carpet."

Opening Prayer:

As Derek has been practicing on Instagram every Thursday morning, we're going to start off our Sunday school lesson by praying in psalm 118. In praying of a psalm, we're going to be reading the passage three times. Try to see if three different people in your family want to read it and discuss the questions together!

Psalm 118:1-2;19-29

O give thanks to the LORD, for he is good; his steadfast love endures forever! Let Israel say, "His steadfast love endures forever." Open to me the gates of righteousness, that I may enter through them and give thanks to the LORD. This is the gate of the LORD; the righteous shall enter through it. I thank you that you have answered me and have become my salvation. The stone that the builders rejected has become the chief cornerstone. This is the LORD's doing; it is marvelous in our eyes. This is the day that the LORD has made; let us rejoice and be glad in it. Save us, we beseech you, O LORD! O LORD, we beseech you, give us success! Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the LORD. We bless you from the house of the LORD. The LORD is God, and he has given us light. Bind the festal (festival) procession with branches, up to the horns of the altar. You are my God, and I will give thanks to you; you are my God, I will extol you. O give thanks to the LORD, for he is good, for his steadfast love endures forever.

First Reading: What word or phrase stood out to you?

Second Reading: What idea makes you uncomfortable or confused? What idea makes you confident or understanding?

Third Reading: What do you think that God is speaking to you about through this passage?

Lesson:

Scripture: Matthew 21

What is Palm Sunday and why do we celebrate it?

Palm Sunday is a well known day in our Christian tradition; but do we really know what this day means or symbolizes?

Six days before the start of the Jewish holiday of Passover, we see Jesus come to the village of Bethphage outside of Jerusalem. Jesus had been performing miracles and traveling all over with his disciples. As he enters the city of Jerusalem it is the beginning of the journey to the cross. We see Jesus entering the city on a donkey, not a white horse or with an army like the people were expecting. The people wanted a conquering king, someone with power, like King David in the Old Testament. The donkey, however, symbolizes humility and peace. Jesus comes with a different motive. Not to start a war or a hostile takeover, but to restore his people in peace. As Jesus comes down on his donkey the crowds gather and they laid down their cloaks and branches from the trees for Jesus, the donkey, and the colt to walk over. The people were so excited that they were shouting praises like, "Hosanna to the Son of David. Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord." (Matthew 21:9) Some were filled with excitement and some wondered who the man was.

Can you imagine seeing someone and everyone getting so excited, but you had no idea who it was?

In the simplest of terms, Palm Sunday is an opportunity to start reflecting upon the final week of Jesus' life. Jesus did not fulfill the image that the crowd expected -- the hopes that Jesus would be their earthly king, destroying the Roman government, and bringing Israel back to power. Instead, Jesus humbly entered Jerusalem to give His life on a cross. BUT the disciples, the crowd, and even the Roman government didn't know that in six days that Jesus would be nailed on a cross to defeat sin and death.

So when you think about Palm Sunday, remember it was the beginning of Jesus' journey. Remember the day as unexpected. Remember Palm Sunday is a reminder of our humanity & remember to be thankful for Jesus' life on earth.

Questions to Reflect with Family:

- What other stories' details do you remember? (Luke, Mark, John) How do those differ from what we see here? How are they the same?

- How do you think Jesus felt coming into a crowd full of excitement knowing what was to come? What would you be thinking? How would you be feeling?
- How have you celebrated Palm Sunday? How can you remember Palm Sunday every year with your family or loved ones going forward? (Parents: This would be a great time to share some of your memories of your kids in years waving branches or other fun memories!)
- How do you see Jesus? As a humble king riding a donkey or a sword-wielding battle-ready King? What are some attributes that you know Jesus to have? What, in scripture, tells us that Jesus is that way?
- Going into Holy Week, how will you remember and walk the journey as Jesus did? (Parents: Can you have stations of the cross in your own home? - Look for an email from the church this week to help you out!)