

Session 7

Crowds Welcome Jesus to Jerusalem

Psalm 118:19-29; Matthew 21:1-11



Worship Theme:



It is good to praise Jesus.

Weaving Faith Into Life:



Children will praise Jesus for specific things in several fun and creative ways.

Session Sequence	What Children Will Do	Supplies
1 Let's Praise God! <i>(up to 25 minutes)</i>	Sing <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "No Matter What I'm Facing" • "Fairest Lord Jesus" • "My Hope Is in the Lord" • "I Have Been Crucified" (Galatians 2:20) • "This Little Light of Mine" • "Doxology" 	KidsOwn Worship Kit: <i>KidsOwn Worship DVD</i> Classroom Supplies: Video equipment, markers, tape, newsprint

Preschool

Session Sequence	What Children Will Do	Supplies
2 Let's Learn the Point! <i>(up to 25 minutes)</i>	Here Comes Jesus! Sing a song about the Bible story.	
	Praise Hands Make praising hands, and use them to praise Jesus.	Classroom Supplies: Green construction paper, markers, safety scissors, tape, craft sticks
	* Everlasting Praise Create an "everlasting" praise parade.	Bible-times costume

Elementary

Session Sequence	What Children Will Do	Supplies
2 Let's Learn the Point! <i>(up to 25 minutes)</i>	* Welcoming Committees Work in teams to plan how to welcome Jesus to town.	Classroom Supplies: Bibles, paper, pencils
	Praise Psalms Search Psalms for examples of praise, and make praise murals.	Classroom Supplies: Bibles, markers, newsprint
	* Praise Party Use crepe paper to praise God.	KidsOwn Worship Kit: <i>KidsOwn Worship DVD</i> Classroom Supplies: Video equipment, green crepe paper streamers, markers

Session Sequence	What Children Will Do	Supplies
3 Let's Pray! <i>(up to 10 minutes)</i>	The Offering Offer their gifts to God.	KidsOwn Worship Kit: <i>KidsOwn Worship DVD</i> Classroom Supplies: Offering bowls, video equipment
	What if Jesus Were Here? Think about what they would say to Jesus and how they would praise him in person.	
	Closing Praises Invite the children to close the session with praise prayers.	

* Starred activities can be used successfully with preschool and elementary children together. Customize your session to fit your needs. You can separate preschoolers and elementary children for Let's Learn the Point! Or, if you keep the children all together for the entire worship session, we suggest you choose from the starred activities.

Crowds Welcome Jesus to Jerusalem

Psalm 118:19-29; Matthew 21:1-11

This passage begins with an incident that raises questions. Why did Jesus send his disciples to “borrow” a donkey and her colt without asking? And why would he tell them to say only “The Lord needs them” if they were questioned? Imagine attempting such a thing today! Some have speculated that Jesus had arranged in advance to borrow the donkey. Others suggest that even if he hadn’t arranged it, he likely knew the owner and knew that the donkey would be offered to him if the need were known.

The Gospels give slightly varying accounts about the donkey and the colt. Matthew is the only one to mention two animals, but Jesus obviously couldn’t ride both at the same time. He rode on the colt, to fulfill the prophecy from Zechariah 9:9. Riding on a colt also demonstrated Jesus’ humble spirit. The mother donkey likely walked alongside. Apparently the other Gospel writers didn’t feel it necessary to mention the mother.

Jesus’ triumphal entry into Jerusalem was the high point of his earthly ministry. Military victors were often treated with such a procession when they returned from battle. Jesus’ acceptance of the praise bestowed on him told people that he didn’t deny being who they were claiming he was—the messianic descendant of David whom they had been anticipating for hundreds of years. Placing their cloaks on the street as a carpet on which Jesus’ donkey would pass was not only an act of honor, but of submission as well. And they apparently took their actions so far that they ran out of clothing to lay down, so they turned to cutting branches from the trees to complete the carpet. These acts fulfilled some prophecies about Jesus.

The passage that people were quoting as they shouted “Hosanna” is Psalm 118:25-26. There we see that the word *Hosanna* is translated “Lord save us!” Or it could be simply translated “Save!”—more like an expression of praise.

How ironic it is that a crowd of people worshipping and praising Jesus stirred up the city so dramatically that many asked who Jesus was, and then five days later a crowd in that same city demanded that Jesus be crucified (Matthew 27:22-26)! If the story ended there, we would have little reason to praise. Many would have concluded that Jesus was a fake or a crazy man. But when Jesus rose from the dead one week after the triumphal entry, he demonstrated without room for doubt who he really was. And because Jesus is God, he deserves all our praise!

Devotion for Leaders

Jesus’ life, death, and resurrection made it possible for us to have eternal life through a relationship with him. He is the reason for our hope and our happiness. Praise Jesus for everything he is!

Weaving Faith Into Your Life: Praising Jesus is more than thanking him. It keeps us focused on his love for us. Jesus wants us to praise him privately and publicly so others see his love as well. What can you personally praise Jesus for? Praise him by writing down some things he has done for you and thanking him, and share them with someone else so that person can be blessed, too.

Why We Worship for Leaders

Today the children will see that, when Jesus entered Jerusalem before his last Passover celebration, the people of Jerusalem welcomed him with enthusiastic praises. They'll see that it's good and it's fun to praise Jesus because he is our good and awesome God. Have fun this week praising God with the children in your children's church. Thank you for showing a new generation that it's fun to praise Jesus!

Easy Prep for Leaders

Let's Praise God!—

- Make sure your video equipment is ready.
- Write the following words on seven sheets of newsprint, one word per sheet: *power, wealth, wisdom, strength, honor, glory, and praise*. Tape the posters to the walls so that they're spread out around the room. Set markers by the newsprint sheets.

Preschool Activities—Refer to the preschool pages for preparations.

1 Let's Praise God!

Play KidsOwn Worship music videos as children arrive. Greet children by name, and say to each one, "Hello! Welcome to children's church." Tell the children that it's their job to make sure everyone feels welcome. As each child arrives and is welcomed, have him or her become a greeter and welcome others. When everyone has arrived and welcomed each other, begin the worship session.

Say **Hello! Welcome to children's church. Today we're here to praise Jesus. We're going to talk about all the reasons it's good to praise Jesus. Let's start our time together with a praise song.**

 Sing "No Matter What I'm Facing."

Say **Let's take a moment to tell each other about all the good things Jesus has done. Think of something good that Jesus has done. Then, on the count of three, we'll all shout out what we thought of together as praise for Jesus. Ready? One, two, three!**

Great job! Jesus loves to hear our praises!

Ask • **Why is it good to praise Jesus?** (Because Jesus deserves praise; because praising Jesus reminds me that he loves me.)

• **Why do you think Jesus loves to hear our praise?** (Because then Jesus knows we believe in him; because Jesus cares about us.)

Say **Listen to this verse from the book of Revelation in the Bible. It talks about the Lamb. Jesus is the Lamb. The verse says, "Worthy is the Lamb, who was slain, to receive power and wealth and wisdom and strength and honor and glory and praise!"**

Worship Leader Tip

Ask older children to help preschoolers understand what each word means. Preschoolers may also need some help drawing something to represent that word.

Show the children the seven sheets of newsprint you taped to the wall. Point out that there is one sheet for each description of what the Lamb is worthy to receive. Have children choose a word and stand by it. Make sure that there are about the same number of children standing by each word.

Say ▶ **Take a moment to write a prayer or draw a picture on the poster that shows that Jesus is worthy of the word on your poster.**

Give children about five minutes to add to the posters.

▶ Play "Fairest Lord Jesus" while they work.

Say ▶ **Jesus is worthy of power, wealth, wisdom, strength, honor, glory, and praise! It's good to praise Jesus! Let's praise him with a song right now.**

▶ Sing "My Hope Is in the Lord."

Say ▶ **Jesus really is a true friend to us. He is worthy of our praise. Praising Jesus is fun! Let's praise him some more.**

▶ Sing "I Have Been Crucified" (Galatians 2:20).

Have the children form one big circle around the perimeter of the room.

Say ▶ **The Bible tells us that one day all people from all nations will praise God. Let's see how many different countries we can name.**

Have the kids take turns around the circle calling out the names of different countries. It's all right if there are some repeats. Be ready to suggest countries to children who can't think of one.

Say ▶ **One day, people from all countries all around the world will sing praises to God. That will be a wonderful day. But we can praise God right now. Let's sing "This Little Light of Mine."**

▶ Sing "This Little Light of Mine."

Say ▶ **Singing praises to Jesus is a good thing to do. When we praise Jesus, we tell him how much we love him, and we tell him we recognize what a good God he is. Let's sing one more praise song. Let's sing this song as a prayer to God. While you sing this song to God, be thinking of how much you love God. Let's praise and worship God together.**

▶ Sing the "Doxology."

2 Let's Learn the Point!

Preschool Activities, pages 89-90

At this time, have the preschool leader invite the preschoolers to go to their own room for this section of activities. Tear out the Preschool Activities page, and give it to the preschool leader. Have the preschool leader bring the preschoolers back to participate in Let's Pray! with the older children. If you prefer to keep all the children together, do the starred (*) activities. They will work well with both elementary and preschool children.

Elementary Activities

** Welcoming Committees*

Have the children form groups of three or four. Give each group Bibles, paper, and pencils.

Say ▶ **Today the Bible story is about the time Jesus came into Jerusalem and was welcomed by people with palm branches. Read the story with the others in your group. Then pretend that you're a welcoming committee. Pretend you know that Jesus is coming to our town, and come up with a plan to welcome Jesus.**

Give kids five to seven minutes to read Matthew 21:1-11 and plan how to welcome Jesus to your town. Then have each group share its plan with the rest of the groups.

- Ask** ▶
- **Why did you choose the activities you did?** (Answers will vary.)
 - **What did you decide to praise Jesus for?** (Healing people; doing miracles; teaching.)
 - **If Jesus really were to visit our town, how do you think he'd react to your plans to welcome him?** (Jesus would be glad to know we're thinking about him; he might feel happy.)
 - **Why is it good to praise Jesus?** (We should tell Jesus we're glad he loves us; Jesus is worthy of praise.)

Say ▶ **It's always good to praise Jesus! The people in the Bible story praised Jesus with shouts of praise and by placing palm branches in front of him when he came to Jerusalem. You all came up with many different ways to praise Jesus, and they're all good! Jesus always loves to hear our praises.**

We don't have to wait for Jesus to come to town in bodily form to praise him. If you're a Christian, you can be sure that Jesus is always with you. He lives inside you! You can praise Jesus whenever you want to.

Worship Leader Tip

If it's convenient for you, wait until the preschoolers can join in the hanging of the murals. Explain that you are encouraging others to experience the joy of praising Jesus, too.

Praise Psalms

Have the children form new groups of three. Make sure that each child has a Bible. Hand out markers and large sheets of newsprint.

Say **The book of Psalms is like a songbook of praises to God. In your group, glance through the book of Psalms, and find a verse that you like that praises God. Then write the verse on the sheet of newsprint, and use the markers to design a praise mural.**

Give kids five to seven minutes to work on their murals.

Then have each group show its mural to the others. Have children respond to each of the murals by saying, "It's good to praise God!"


Ask

- **Why did you choose the verse you chose?** (Answers will vary.)
- **What do you appreciate most about God?** (God helps me not be afraid; God forgives me; God made the world.)
- **The writer of these psalms praised God by writing these songs. How can you praise God?** (By living the way God wants me to; by telling people about God; by singing praise songs.)

Say **One way we can praise God is by inviting others to praise him, too. Let's take these murals to other places in our church so we can encourage others, including our pastor!**

Decorate your church with the murals. These would be a wonderful encouragement for a pastor or director. You can hang one of the murals in the pastor's office or on the door, hang another in the children's ministry wing or hallway, and hang another one near the supply closet or somewhere similar. Be creative as you think of other places to hang the murals. Thank kids for being a wonderful encouragement to the church family and for praising God in a creative way!

** Praise Party*

 Have kids tear pieces of green crepe paper streamers long enough to wave around. Set out markers, and have kids write praises on their streamers. Then play "Leaning on the Everlasting Arms" as kids wave their streamers to praise Jesus.

Ask

- **Why is it good to praise Jesus?** (Because Jesus is good; because Jesus forgives us; because praising Jesus makes us happy.)
- **What kinds of things can you do to praise Jesus?** (Pray to thank him; tell people about him; sing praise songs.)
- **What can you do to remind yourself to praise Jesus every day?** (Write myself a note; keep a cross with me; think about Jesus.)

Say **It's always good to praise Jesus! We can take time to praise Jesus every day.**

(continued on page 91)

Crowds Welcome Jesus to Jerusalem

Psalm 118:19-29; Matthew 21:1-11

Worship Theme:



It is good to praise Jesus.

Easy Prep for Leaders

Everlasting Praise—Invite an adult male to play the part of Jesus. Have this person dress in a Bible-times costume and come in for that activity when you're ready.

Using Theo

Consider using Theophilus the FaithRetriever puppet today in these ways:

- Have Theo lead the preschoolers from the main worship area to the preschool room.
- Have Theo sing the song with the children in "Here Comes Jesus!"
- See the KidsOwn Worship Kit for a puppet skit written for today's worship session.



Here Comes Jesus!

Say Hello, preschoolers! Today we're talking about a time Jesus came to town. He rode on a donkey. Let's sing about that time.

Have the children stand in a circle and turn to face right. Show the children how to hold their hands as if holding the reins of a donkey. Encourage the children to skip or trot in a circle and pretend to hold a donkey's reins as they sing this song to the tune of "Frère Jacques."

**Here comes Jesus, here comes Jesus,
Getting near, getting near,
Riding on a donkey, riding on a donkey.
Let's all cheer! Let's all cheer!**

After the last line, have the children stop trotting, jump up and down, and cheer. After singing the song three or four times, have the children sit in a circle.

- Ask**
- How do you think the people felt when they saw Jesus coming on a donkey?
 - How would you feel if Jesus came to visit us?

Say The Bible tells us that one day Jesus came riding into town on a donkey. Let's find out what the people did when they saw him coming.

Extra Impact

Bring in wood blocks or jingle bells. Have the children clop the blocks or shake the bells in time to the music.

Preschool Activities

Praise Hands

Give each child a sheet of green construction paper and a marker. Show the children how to use a marker to trace around first one hand and then the other. Have the children keep their fingers close together to make the hands easier to cut out. You may want to quickly trace around young preschoolers' hands yourself. Then have the children cut out the hand shapes. Have the children tape each hand to a craft stick.

Say The Bible tells us that the people were very excited on the day Jesus rode into town on a donkey. They cut branches from palm trees, and they waved them to welcome Jesus. Let's wave our praise hands right now to welcome Jesus.

Have the children wave their praise hands.

Say The people called out praise to Jesus, too. This is what they said: "Blessed is he who comes in

the name of the Lord." Let's say that together. "Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord."

The people wanted to praise Jesus. They were excited to see him coming to their town. It's good to praise Jesus. We can praise Jesus, too. Let's praise him right now!

Preschool Leader Tip

If your time is limited, make the hand cutouts before the worship session. Then during the worship session, the children can simply tape the hand cutouts to the craft sticks.

Having children make only one praise hand would also save time.

* Everlasting Praise

Push the tables against the wall.

Invite the person who is playing the part of Jesus to come into your room.

Have the children line up along the "road." The road can be as simple as the perimeter of your room.

Have "Jesus" walk along the road toward the line of children. Show the children how to make an "everlasting" line of praise. As "Jesus" comes even with the first child along the road, that child will step back and hurry to the other end of the line.

Then the next child will step back from the road and hurry to the other end of the line. Be ready to guide the children to where they should be.

As "Jesus" walks, have the children wave their praise hands (if they made them) and shout praises to Jesus. Play until you've circled the room at least once.

- Ask**
- Did you enjoy praising Jesus? Why?
 - What makes praising Jesus so much fun?
 - How do you think Jesus feels when we praise him?


Say It's good to praise Jesus! Jesus loves to hear about all the things we love about him.

(continued from page 88)

3 Let's Pray!

The Offering

Say The hymn "Doxology" is about praising God. It tells us to "praise God from whom all blessings flow." That means that we praise God because all of our blessings—the good things in life—come from God. When we give God our offerings, it's a way to say thank you to God for the good things he's given us. Let's sing the "Doxology" while we give God our gifts. While we sing, praise God because of the good things he's given to you.

 Sing the "Doxology."

Take the offering.

What if Jesus Were Here?

Say What if Jesus were standing here right now? What would you say to him? What things would you like to praise him for? We don't have to wait until we see Jesus to praise him. He can hear everything we say; he even knows what we're thinking. Let's offer our praises to Jesus right now.

Have each child call out a praise to Jesus.

Say He can also see us and sense our love for him. What would you do to show him your praise and love?

Give kids time to choose something to do, such as kneel, act like they're giving him a hug, or raise their hands to him.

Say Jesus loves to hear our praises, and he loves to see us praising him. Let's close in praise prayers as we bring Jesus joy.

Closing Praises

Invite children to say closing prayers of praise. Encourage them to praise Jesus for his compassion and power, as well as his forgiveness and grace. Allow several children to pray. Then close the worship session in prayer.