

# TEACHER BACKGROUND AND PREPARATION SHEET

*For Teacher Study Only — Not Read Aloud*

## LESSON IDENTIFICATION

<b>Week Number:</b>	13
<b>Date:</b>	March 29, 2026
<b>Lesson Title:</b>	Jesus the Promised King Enters Jerusalem
<b>Primary Scripture:</b>	Matthew 21:1-11
<b>Supporting Scripture:</b>	Zechariah 9:9; Psalm 118:25-26; Luke 19:28-44; John 12:12-19; Philippians 2:5-11; Revelation 19:11-16
<b>Bible Timeline:</b>	Holy Week begins. Jesus has ministered throughout Galilee and Judea, performed miracles, and set His face toward Jerusalem. Now He enters as the promised King, days before His crucifixion and resurrection.

## PURPOSE OF THIS LESSON

Children should learn that Jesus is the promised King God said would come. He did not enter Jerusalem by accident and He was not merely a popular teacher. He came exactly as God had promised in Scripture. Jesus entered Jerusalem humbly, peacefully, and purposefully, on His way to the cross.

This lesson should help children see that Palm Sunday matters because it begins the final steps of Jesus' saving work. Children should understand that Jesus is a different kind of King: holy, gentle, truthful, and willing to lay down His life for His people. They should also see that the crowd's excitement was not enough. Each person must truly trust Jesus as Savior and King.

## BOOK AND PASSAGE BACKGROUND

<b>Book Name:</b>	Matthew
<b>Traditional Author:</b>	Matthew, the tax collector and apostle of Jesus
<b>Approximate Date:</b>	Commonly dated to the first century AD
<b>Original Audience:</b>	Early Christians, with strong attention to Jewish readers and to showing that Jesus fulfills the Old Testament promises about the Messiah and King
<b>Purpose of the Book:</b>	Matthew presents Jesus as the promised Messiah, the Son of David, the Son of Abraham, the authoritative Teacher, and the true King. From the opening genealogy in Matthew 1:1, Matthew is showing that Jesus is the promised One in God's plan. Matthew highlights fulfilled prophecy so readers can see that Jesus is exactly who God said He is.

## HISTORICAL AND CULTURAL CONTEXT

Jerusalem was the spiritual and national center of Jewish life. During Passover, the city would fill with many pilgrims who came to remember how God rescued His people from slavery in Egypt. This means Jesus entered Jerusalem at a time of great expectation, remembrance, and national hope. Many people longed for rescue. Some were hoping for political freedom from Rome. Others longed for God's promised salvation.

When Jesus sent His disciples to get a donkey and a colt in Matthew 21:2, this was not random. Kings and rulers sometimes rode horses for war, but a king riding on a donkey could signal peace. Zechariah 9:9 had already said that the king would come righteous and victorious, lowly and riding on a donkey. Jesus deliberately fulfilled this prophecy.

The cloaks spread on the road in Matthew 21:8 were signs of honor and submission. The palm branches mentioned in John 12:13 were also expressions of rejoicing and welcome. The cry 'Hosanna' came from Psalm 118:25-26. Originally it meant 'save, please' or 'save now,' and over time it became a shout of praise connected to God's saving help. The crowd was speaking better than they fully understood.

'Son of David' in Matthew 21:9 is an important royal title. God had promised David that one of his descendants would reign forever (2 Samuel 7:12-16). By calling Jesus the Son of David, the crowd was connecting Him to God's promise of a coming King.

## IMMEDIATE BIBLICAL CONTEXT

### What Happens Before This Passage

Before Matthew 21, Jesus has already revealed His authority through teaching, miracles, and fulfilled prophecy. He has healed the blind, cleansed lepers, cast out demons, calmed storms, fed crowds, and raised the dead. He has told His disciples more than once that He is going to Jerusalem to suffer, die, and rise again. In Matthew 20:17-19, Jesus plainly says He will be condemned, mocked, flogged, crucified, and raised on the third day. Just before entering Jerusalem, He heals two blind men near Jericho in Matthew 20:29-34, and they call Him 'Lord, Son of David' in Matthew 20:30-31.

### What Happens After This Passage

After entering Jerusalem, Jesus cleanses the temple in Matthew 21:12-17, showing His authority over worship and exposing false religion. He continues teaching, confronting unbelief, and preparing His disciples. Then, during Holy Week, Jesus is betrayed, arrested, crucified, buried, and raised from the dead. Palm Sunday is not the end of the celebration. It is the beginning of the final road to the cross.

### Why This Moment Matters in God's Plan

This entry openly presents Jesus as the promised King while also moving Him toward His sacrificial death. The King enters His city not to crush Rome, but to bear sin. He comes in humility first, and one day He will come again in glory. Palm Sunday joins together promise, prophecy, kingship, sacrifice, and hope.

## KEY THEOLOGICAL TRUTHS

### **CORE TRUTH 1: What This Lesson Teaches About God**

God keeps His promises exactly. Matthew 21:4-5 explicitly says Jesus' entry happened 'to fulfill what was spoken through the prophet.' God had spoken long before through Zechariah 9:9, and now that promise came true in Jesus. This means God is not making things up as history moves along. He rules history and fulfills His Word with precision.

This lesson also shows God's wisdom. Many people wanted rescue, but not everyone understood what kind of rescue they needed most. God sent the King they truly needed, not merely the ruler many expected. Jesus came to save from sin, which is a deeper rescue than political freedom. Matthew 1:21 had already said, 'you are to give him the name Jesus, because he will save his people from their sins.'

### **CORE TRUTH 2: What This Lesson Teaches About People**

People can be excited about Jesus without truly understanding Him. The crowds shouted, praised, and welcomed Him in Matthew 21:8-9, but many still did not receive Him rightly. Some wanted a king for their own plans rather than God's plan. This shows the human heart can be noisy and emotional while still needing true repentance and faith.

This lesson also shows that people need a King. Children may think kings are old-fashioned, but the Bible teaches that every person lives under some kind of rule. We are not meant to rule ourselves. We need Jesus to lead us, forgive us, and teach us what is true and good.

### **CORE TRUTH 3: What This Lesson Teaches About Salvation**

Palm Sunday points directly to the cross. The crowd cried 'Hosanna,' which means 'save us,' and that is exactly what Jesus came to do. But He would save not by military power or force. He would save by laying down His life. Philippians 2:8 says Jesus 'humbled himself by becoming obedient to death, even death on a cross!'

Jesus is our Savior in the deepest sense. He does not only make life easier. He rescues sinners from guilt, judgment, and death. Palm Sunday should therefore be taught not as a parade disconnected from the gospel, but as the beginning of the last steps toward Good Friday and Easter.

In CMA language, this lesson strongly connects to Jesus our Savior, Jesus our Sanctifier, Jesus our Healer, and Jesus our Coming King.

### **CORE TRUTH 4: Trusting God's Word**

Matthew's wording makes this point plain. Matthew 21:4 says, 'This took place to fulfill what was spoken through the prophet.' Scripture is not decorative background. It is the very reason we understand what is happening. Without the Old Testament promise, children might think Jesus simply found a donkey and rode into town. But with Scripture, we see that this event is God's planned revelation.

Psalms 118:25-26 also helps us trust God's Word. The crowd's words in Matthew 21:9 echo this psalm. The Bible fits together as one unified account. God said what He would do, and then He did it.

## CORE TRUTH 5: God as Trinity

God is one God in three Persons: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

This passage most clearly reveals God the Son, Jesus Christ, entering Jerusalem as the promised King. He receives messianic praise and fulfills the Scriptures. The Father is the One who sent the Son according to His saving plan, and the Spirit has already been active throughout Jesus' ministry, including His baptism in Matthew 3:16-17 and His Spirit-empowered work.

In Matthew 21, the focus is especially on Jesus the Son as the promised King. Yet this King is not separate from the Father's will or the Spirit's work. The triune God is carrying out the plan of salvation. Children can say, 'God is one God in three Persons.'

## RELIABILITY OF SCRIPTURE

This lesson provides a strong reliability emphasis through fulfilled prophecy. Matthew himself tells us the event fulfills Zechariah 9:9. This matters because Christianity is rooted in real events that happen in public places and in fulfillment of God's earlier Word.

The crowd's language also connects with Psalm 118:25-26, showing how Jesus' entry fits the larger flow of Scripture. The Bible was written over many centuries, yet it tells one united account centered on God's saving plan. Palm Sunday is one more clear example that the Bible is coherent and trustworthy.

The setting also fits known first-century Jewish life. Passover brought crowds to Jerusalem, the temple stood at the center of worship, and hopes for God's promised deliverance were strong. These details place the event in real history, not in a make-believe world. Historical support is helpful, but the strongest foundation is Scripture itself: God promised, and God fulfilled.

## APOLOGETICS FOUNDATION

Children may ask whether Palm Sunday really happened or whether people simply invented a parade for Jesus later. Scripture gives us solid reasons for confidence.

First, this event is recorded in all four Gospels: Matthew 21:1-11, Mark 11:1-11, Luke 19:28-44, and John 12:12-19. When all four Gospel writers include an event, that signals its importance in the life and mission of Jesus.

Second, Matthew directly anchors the event in prophecy. Jesus did not accidentally match Zechariah 9:9. He knowingly entered Jerusalem in a way that revealed His identity. This is the kind of detail that helps us see God's hand in history.

Third, the event includes elements that do not sound like a made-up victory march. Jesus enters humbly, not with soldiers, weapons, or earthly splendor. Soon after the crowd's praise, He is rejected and crucified. This is not the kind of account people would invent if they were trying to create a simple political hero. The Bible tells the truth, even when that truth overturns human expectations.

## ANTICIPATED CHILD QUESTIONS

**Q: What does 'Hosanna' mean?**

A: 'Hosanna' means 'save us' or 'save now.' It is a cry for rescue and also a shout of praise. In Matthew 21:9 the people are calling to Jesus for salvation.

**Q: Why did Jesus ride a donkey instead of a horse?**

A: Jesus was showing that He is the promised King from Zechariah 9:9. He came humbly and peacefully. He was not entering Jerusalem to start a war. He was coming to obey the Father and go to the cross.

**Q: Did the people understand who Jesus really was?**

A: Some understood part of the truth, but many did not understand fully. They welcomed Him, but many were still expecting a different kind of king. That is why it is important not only to cheer for Jesus, but to truly trust Him.

**Q: Why is Palm Sunday important?**

A: Palm Sunday begins Holy Week. It shows Jesus entering Jerusalem as King on His way to die for our sins and rise again. It helps us see that the cross was part of God's plan.

**Q: If Jesus is King, why did He let people hurt Him?**

A: Jesus allowed Himself to suffer because He came to save us. John 10:18 teaches that no one took His life from Him against His will. He laid it down willingly. That shows His love and His authority.

**Q: Will Jesus come again?**

A: Yes. Jesus came first in humility, but He will come again in glory. Revelation 19:11-16 shows Jesus as the victorious King who will judge rightly and rule forever.

## COMMON MISUNDERSTANDINGS

**Misunderstanding 1: 'Palm Sunday is just a happy parade.'**

Correction: Palm Sunday is joyful, but it is not shallow celebration. It begins the final week before the cross. The joy of the King's arrival and the sorrow of His coming suffering belong together.

**Misunderstanding 2: 'Jesus became King on Palm Sunday.'**

Correction: Jesus did not become King that day. He already is the eternal Son and rightful King. Palm Sunday is a public presentation of who He is.

**Misunderstanding 3: 'The crowd believed everything rightly because they shouted praise.'**

Correction: The crowd said true words, but many did not fully understand what kind of King Jesus is. Real faith means more than excitement. It means trusting and following Jesus.

**Misunderstanding 4: 'Jesus was weak because He came humbly.'**

Correction: Jesus' humility is not weakness. It is holy strength under the Father's will. Philippians 2:6-8 shows that His humility is part of His glory and obedience.

## GOSPEL CONNECTION

Palm Sunday is full of gospel meaning. The King enters the city where He will die for sinners. The One praised with 'Hosanna' is the One who will answer that cry through His own blood. Jesus is not merely a symbol of hope. He is the actual Savior who goes willingly to the cross and then rises from the dead.

This lesson should make clear that children do not just need a helper, a hero, or an example. They need a Savior. Jesus is the promised Son of David, but He is greater than David. He is the King who saves by sacrifice. He is the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world. The road covered with cloaks and branches leads to Calvary and then to the empty tomb.

Teachers should clearly present the gospel: We have sinned against God. We cannot save ourselves. Jesus died on the cross for sinners and rose again. Everyone who repents and trusts in Him is forgiven and made God's child.

## TEACHER HEART PREPARATION

Ask the Lord to help you teach Palm Sunday with both joy and seriousness. Children often enjoy the image of branches, singing, and a king riding into the city. That joy is good. But help them also feel the weight of where Jesus is going. He is moving toward the cross because He loves sinners.

Pray that you will not teach this lesson as a disconnected holiday moment. Teach it as part of the one gospel account that leads to Good Friday and Easter Sunday. Ask the Lord to help you speak warmly, clearly, and reverently.

Some children may know how to say Christian words without yet understanding the gospel. Pray that God will move them from mere excitement about Jesus to true faith in Jesus.

*Encouragement for the teacher: Jesus is the faithful King. He does not fail in His mission, and His Word does not fail in your teaching. As you open Scripture, you are not giving children mere information. You are placing before them the promised King.*

## CMA ALIGNMENT NOTE FOR THE TEACHER

This lesson strongly reflects the Christian and Missionary Alliance emphasis on the Fourfold Gospel. Official Alliance teaching describes Jesus as our Savior, Sanctifier, Healer, and Coming King. Palm Sunday especially highlights Jesus our Savior and Jesus our Coming King: He comes first in humility to save, and He will come again in glory to reign. The Alliance also explicitly identifies the Fourfold Gospel as central to its spiritual DNA.