



SESSION

1

Palm Sunday



MEETING AIM

To enter into the joy and excitement of Palm Sunday.



BIBLE PASSAGE

Luke 19:28-44



BACKGROUND

At the start of the Easter week, Jesus enters Jerusalem in triumph. Telling the story from the viewpoint of the donkey that carried him will help young children 'feel' the noise and excitement. Here is a gentle king who rides, not on a war horse, but on a young colt, a 'people's' king who knows each one of his subjects.

+ CIRCLE TIME



As the children arrive, sit them in a circle. Ask if they have seen or done anything exciting this week. Show pictures of crowds waiting to see someone famous, such as the Queen or a celebrity. Chat about what it is like to be in a big crowd (noisy, exciting, sitting on a parent's shoulders, waving flags). End with a picture of the Queen on horseback at a Trooping the Colour ceremony or a mounted police officer. How does the horse work in that noise?

+ HORSEPLAY



Ask everyone to stand up and imagine they are a young horse or donkey in a field. They have never given anyone a ride yet. What colour is their coat, mane and tail? Practise walking, trotting and galloping about. Make ears with hands on heads. Put the ears up to be curious or happy, lay them back to be scared or unhappy. Swish tails by wiggling bottoms, lift chins and make a loud neigh or 'hee-haw' sound.

+ BIBLE STORY



You will need: a toy donkey to focus on; coconut halves for sound effects (optional)

Gather the children together and tell this story, encouraging them to join in with the actions.

A little donkey lived in a village not far from Jerusalem. He had big brown eyes and long pointed **ears** that he could move backwards and forwards... *Do 'ear' action each time you hear the word 'ears'.*

The little donkey loved to stand in the shade of the olive trees, or to gallop over the hillside and gaze at the city of Jerusalem on the next hill.

One day, as the donkey stood tied to a tree, he heard voices. Who was that? He put his **ears** right forward... Two men were coming through the gate. They had smiling faces and stripy cloaks.

"Ah, here's the little donkey Jesus was telling us about," they said.

"Come on, let's untie him!"

The donkey didn't belong to these men. Back went his **ears**... Then he opened his mouth, and gave a very loud: "Hee-haw!" *Everyone make the noise.*

"Hey! Why are you untying my donkey?" called the owner.

"Jesus, our Master, needs him," said one of the men. "But we'll bring him back soon!"

The donkey trotted out of the gate between the two men. His hooves made a funny sound on the road. *Use your coconut shells or make a clip-clop noise with your voice. What an adventure!* He put his **ears** forward again...

Soon they came to some people laughing and chatting at the roadside. Back went the donkey's **ears**... until they touched his mane. But a man stepped out of the crowd and came towards him.

"Don't be frightened," he whispered into the donkey's **ears**. "I'm your friend, Jesus. I sent my disciples to fetch you. Will you carry me on your back down the road and up the hill into Jerusalem?"

The donkey wasn't sure. He hadn't given anyone a ride before! But he stood quite still as the men draped their cloaks over him, and he let Jesus climb onto his back. Then they all set off along the road. *Use your coconut shells or make a clip-clop noise with your voice.*

"Look who's coming!" shouted crowds of people who were waiting to see them. "It's Jesus, our gentle king, riding on a little donkey!"

As they started to go down the hillside, the disciples began to shout for joy! The little donkey twitched his **ears** and listened...

"Thank you, God, for all the wonderful things we have seen Jesus do!" they sang out.

"Hosanna!" cheered the people on either side of him. They waved branches of palm trees and laid their cloaks upon the ground. *Muffle the coconut shell clip-clop.* The little donkey wasn't worried or scared by all the noise anymore. His **ears**

stayed pointing forwards and he just kept walking up the hill and through the gate into the city of Jerusalem.

+ CHATTING TOGETHER



Ask the children these questions, making sure everyone has the chance to contribute:

- What's your favourite part of this story?
- I wonder why the people were so excited to see Jesus.
- I wonder if Jesus knew each person in the crowd.
- The little donkey helped Jesus. Do you think Jesus needs *our* help sometimes?

+ CREATIVE RESPONSE



You will need: a large sheet of paper; felt-tip pens; crayons

Before the session, write: "Here comes Jesus..." at the top of a large sheet of paper, and then pencil in lots of circles to represent the heads of a crowd. Encourage the children to colour in their own faces and those of family or friends. Chat about how they would feel waiting to see Jesus. Add green spikes to represent palm leaves (waved to welcome someone very important).

+ PRAYER



You will need: paper palm leaves made in advance by cutting leaf shapes from green paper and snipping V-shapes from the edges

Give everyone a leaf and stand as if waiting for Jesus to ride by. Encourage them to think quietly about what they would like to say to Jesus (a thank you, a request for help, or a word of praise, perhaps). After thanking God together for all the joy and excitement of Palm Sunday, wave the palms and shout: "Hosanna!"