

# Palm Sunday – Ideas for All Age Worship

The activities in this outline are designed with all ages and abilities in mind. They can be interspersed with hymns, worship songs and Scripture readings as suits your congregation. Why not use the ideas as part of an Easter outreach event and journey together from the church, back to the church for refreshments. Try and find three stopping places large enough for a crowd to gather – one for quiet reflection, one for the donkey keeper to share their story, and one for making and praying with palm crosses. Consider accessibility for different capabilities, and perhaps have chairs ready for those that cannot stand for long.



The icon gives tips for amendments that might need to be made for working outside

## *Call to Worship (based on Psalm 118)*

Leader: This is the day the Lord has made!

All: Give thanks to the Lord for he is good!

Leader: The Lord is our strength and our song.

All: Give thanks to the Lord for he is good!

Leader: He has become our victory!

All: Give thanks to the Lord, for he is good!

Leader: His faithful loves endures forever.

All: Give thanks to the Lord for he is good!



The refrain words for the congregation are simple so if you are not using a printed order of service, they are easy for people to remember and join in with. You might need to encourage them to shout joyfully to be heard though

## *Reflection and Confession*



Encourage everyone to stand in silence and listen. Ask them to think about what is it that they are glad of, and what is it that is bothering them or they are worried about.

Do the Active Prayer together (see the instruction sheet in downloadable resources). If this is new to your congregation then do it a couple of times giving more time and space the second time

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Bible Story (Matthew 21, Mark 11, Luke 19, John 12)

Ask someone to play a donkey keeper and share the Palm Sunday story from their perspective (see the script in downloadable resources)



If you can set the donkey keeper story in a stable or lean some wood against the wall and use hay bales to make it look like an animal shelter. See if you can get hold of some real animal manure!

Read *The Great Parade* from the Lion Storyteller Bible

## Talk

- I wonder if you have ever met somebody who you think you recognise and can't remember where from. Or maybe you finally meet a friend of a friend who you feel like you know because they have told you so much about them. And how many of us have friends on social media that we know way too much about, and others who we can't even remember how we met them!
- Jesus friends' had spent day after day with him as he travelled around telling the crowds all about God and performing amazing miracles. But even they were a bit bewildered when he asked them to borrow a young donkey and then proceeded to ride it into Jerusalem. They must have known what his favourite food was. They would have known whether he made noises in his sleep. They could probably repeat some of his stories word for word. But the Bible tells us that they still didn't really know who he was, and why he was there. They knew that God's word had promised a Messiah, a saviour, but some of them thought that that meant that he was going to overthrow the Romans. They knew that he said that his kingdom was coming, but they didn't realise that it is an upside down kingdom where the first will be last and the last will be first. They knew that he had God's power to heal and perform miracles, but they didn't know that the plan was to put all that aside to save humanity.
- The crowds that lined the streets welcoming him into Jerusalem appeared to know who Jesus was. They put their coats and palm branches on the road and treated him like the king they said he was. They shouted praises to God for sending someone to help them. But it was the same crowd that we will think about on Good Friday who shout 'crucify him'
- As we head towards Easter it is easy to forget what it is really all about. If we have been friends with Jesus for a long time, just like the disciples, we might be over familiar with the story and forget the truth of what he represents and what he asks of us. If we don't know Jesus, then we might be like the crowd and think he's an alright bloke but when it really comes to the crunch isn't worth the bother.
- As the people in our Bible story put down their branches and picked up their coats to return to their homes or continue their journey to Jerusalem, I wonder that they were thinking. I wonder if they had the same hopes and fears that we have today. I wonder if they realised that Jesus can offer the same comfort and joy. As the events of Holy week and beyond unfold we will find out just how much the disciples were set to learn about their amazing friend. I wonder what we are set to learn too!

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## *Respond*

Give everyone some space to wonder...

I wonder what the people who were singing and shouting were hoping that Jesus was going to do  
I wonder whether Jesus knew what was coming later in the week as he rode into Jerusalem  
I wonder how well I really know Jesus  
I wonder what difference knowing Jesus could or should make to the way I live my life

Encourage them to share some of their thoughts in small groups, making sure that everyone gets an opportunity to share whatever their age



You could encourage people to wonder and walk at the same time. Setting a new wondering question at intervals

Hosanna Rock by Praise Team is a catchy and simple song. See [youtube video](#)

Do We're all going on a Jesus Hunt – Interactive rhyme based on The Bear Hunt poem - together.  
(See downloadable resources)

## *Palm cross prayer*

Encourage the congregation to gather in small groups to help each other to make palm crosses from [palm leaves](#) or strips of green paper. There are lots of different sets of instructions on the internet, but [this Youtube video](#) seems the simplest to follow.



If you are doing this outside then have photocopies of a set of instructions available for people to follow. It is possible to do without a table

As everyone holds their completed crosses say (and do) the following prayer

*Wave it like a branch*—Thank you for this wonderful planet: for the sea, sky, plants and animals.  
Creator God help us look after your creation

*Hold it like a sword* - We pray for all those who are caught up in conflict and war. Jesus, Prince of Peace, help us to be peace bringers too

*Curl fingers around the centre or hug it to your chest*— We pray for all those that are lonely, worried or unwell. Holy Spirit, Jesus called you the comforter, help us to bring comfort to those around us too