

Scene 1: Palm Sunday

Bible

Matthew 21:1-11; Mark 11:1-11; Luke 19: 28-38; John 12:12-15

Aim

To introduce the idea that the people were looking for a special person or leader, perhaps a king who would lead them against the Romans and restore their country. However, they began to realise that Jesus was not that kind of king. What sort of king is Jesus? He is an unexpected king!

Setting the scene

Encourage the children to role-play the part of the crowds who welcomed Jesus into the city of Jerusalem.

Character(s)

Storyteller

Helpers join in the role-play to give a lead to the children.

Costume

None needed

Scenery

None needed

Props

Coconut shells to sound like donkey's hooves

An imitation microphone to use for interviews

Storyteller: It all began on a Sunday; the first day of the week. Rumours were flying around... (*encourage the children to whisper to each other*).

Jesus was arriving for the festival. Jesus said such wonderful things and did such amazing things that people always looked forward to his arrival. Somehow, whenever he turned up, unexpected things happened. Some people were even saying he was the new king—the one they were all expecting: the Messiah. They were hoping that he would rescue them from the Romans (*encourage the children to boo or hiss*).

Suddenly people heard the news that Jesus was arriving soon via the gate into the city known as Sheep Gate.

The crowds rushed to line the streets (*arrange the children in two lines*).

Everyone strained to see what was happening (*mime straining to see*).

Was he coming? Was that him? Hope was in the air (*encourage general excitement*).

Suddenly, people caught sight of Jesus in the distance. A cloud of dust... that must be him! Everyone began to shout and cheer (*encourage the children to cheer*).

Someone had a good idea. Why not welcome him like a real king and wave palm branches? They climbed the trees and cut down branches. Other people took off their outer cloaks and laid them on the road, so that Jesus would have a sort of royal carpet to tread on (*encourage the children to either mime waving palm branches or to pretend to take off an outer garment and lay it on the road*).

Everyone wanted a king who would rescue them from the Roman army, so they began calling out 'Rescue us', which in their language is, 'Hosanna!' (*encourage the children to call out 'Hosanna!'*).

Suddenly, a sound could be heard... it was the sound of donkey's hooves (*use coconuts to make the sound and encourage the children to look to the top of the room as if watching to see Jesus enter*).

The shouting died down (*encourage the children to be quiet*). But what was this? What was Jesus riding? A donkey? That was no way for a king to arrive. Surely he should be on a horse! A big, powerful horse would be much more suitable for a king!

(*Freeze the scene and interview some of the children using the microphone*).

What sort of king do you think Jesus is? What sort of person was God sending to rescue his people? What would you have expected Jesus to do? (*Encourage role-play answers from several children.*)