



The King of Glory Comes

Goal: To recognize Jesus' sacrificial love.

RECOGNIZING GOD'S GRACE . . .

. . . In Luke 19:28-40; 23:32-47

Jesus entered Jerusalem triumphantly on Palm Sunday. The crowds who met him believed he would be a powerful king, driving out the nation's enemies and bringing peace. They hailed him with ancient words: "Blessings on the king who comes in the name of the Lord. Peace in heaven and glory in the highest heavens" (19:38, CEB).

In just a few days, Jesus was crucified on a cross. Some mocked him: "If you really are the king of the Jews, save yourself" (23:37, CEB). But the King of Glory reigned from the cross.

Instead of bringing powerful vengeance on his enemies, Jesus forgave them. In his agony he cried: "Father, forgive them, for they don't know what they're doing" (23:34, CEB). This was gracious forgiveness.

This is where the King's true glory was shown. In his sacrifice of himself, Jesus offered forgiveness and reconciliation, even to those who were killing him. Here was pure grace. It is love without limits. Jesus reconciles us. The real glory of God is shown in the sacrifice of Jesus offering all of us sinners a way for forgiveness and new life. This grace creates our deep gratitude. Jesus forgives us and can make our lives fresh and new.

. . . In Your Children's Experiences

We offer God's grace when we say thanks, when we welcome others, and when we forgive. These three themes are at the heart of the biblical text and Reformed theology. These are themes and practices of faith that children will wrestle with all their lives.

This is not an easy story! The children have been learning about the teaching and healing ministry of Jesus. They may have questions about the turn of events. Encourage their questions and acknowledge that it is hard for many to understand what went so wrong for Jesus. There are many emotions in the movement of this story from joy and celebration of the welcome of Jesus into Jerusalem to the confusion, sadness, and pain of his trial and crucifixion. Be attentive to the children you are leading, the questions they ask, and how they relate to this entire story.

. . . In Your Relationships with the Children

In a short time, children learn about Jesus' royal entry into Jerusalem and his death on a cross. At each stage of their development, children will bring their questions and their connections with this story.

Though the story for today seems like the end, we know it begins again. Jesus' love was so strong that he was able to forgive those who put him to death. You can help children remember that even when something feels like the end, God's love is there, reminding them they are never alone. The story does not end with death, but with new life!

*Holy God, be present in my preparation so I might welcome
your children in the spirit of gratitude. Amen.*

Supplies

Music & Melodies

bit.ly/GGGMusicMelodies

Stories, Colors & More (SCM) i–iv, 6, 22, 24

basic supplies
(see p. vii)

audio stories (optional)
(see p. vii)

internet-connected
device

purple table covering

six votive candles
(purple if possible)

twigs, floral wire

Responding

Claiming

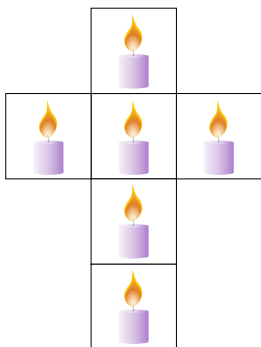
air-dry clay, twig
crosses from
“Welcoming and
Preparing”

Praying

copies of **Grace Notes**
(GN) 1–2, stickers
(optional)

Extra

copies of **GN 3**



GATHERING IN GOD’S GRACE

Before the children arrive, post **SCM i–ii**, “Your Visual Schedule.” Cut out and glue the arrow marker on a clothespin. Use the schedule to provide clear expectations and a visual cue for the group.

See **SCM iii–iv** for the key to icons (for example, **LG T**) and ways to adapt for children who have special needs or disabilities.

“Claiming God’s Grace” requires more prep.

Welcoming and Preparing



Play “Sanna, Sannanina” as children arrive. Greet each child by name and with the words “Grace be with you, (*Name*).” Prompt the children to say the same words to you.

Invite the children to prepare the space for Palm Sunday/Passion Sunday worship. Explain that the word *passion* means “suffering” and is the word used to remember Jesus’ crucifixion, when he died on a cross. Wonder what the group could add to the worship table to signify Palm Sunday/Passion Sunday. Ask the children to include a Bible and a purple cloth, the color for Lent. Have them place six votive candles in the shape of a cross in the space. See the sidebar for placement of the candles.

Ask some children to help prepare today’s “Responding in Gratitude” activities. Suggest that one or two prepare to lead today’s singing.

Today’s Scripture reading is lengthy, and it may be difficult for a child to read about Jesus’ death. Be aware of the children in your group and decide if you want volunteers to read from the Bible or from **SCM 6**, or if you will read. If you choose for children to read, ask for several volunteers to practice reading the Scripture passage for today from the Bible or **SCM 6**.

Invite the children to make palm leaves and crosses. For the palm leaves, have children draw and color large palm leaves on green construction paper. Have them cut out their leaves and place them on the worship table. For crosses, have children use two twigs and lash them together in a cross shape using floral wire or yarn. Place crosses on the worship table.

LG *Activities that encourage teamwork model qualities of good leadership.*

Singing

Sing “Sanna, Sannanina”—**SCM 24**. Encourage the children to wave a palm branch while they dance to the song.

Praying

Turn on all the candles. Sit quietly for a few moments. Invite the children to repeat, beginning softly, then repeat each time louder until you are shouting:



Hosanna to the Son of David! /
Blessed is the one /
who comes in the name of the Lord! /

Preparing to Hear the Story

M L

Point out the votive candles. Comment that since today is the sixth Sunday in Lent, six votives will be extinguished. Invite volunteers to turn off six votives.

Explain that today, the last Sunday in Lent, is Palm Sunday. Ask the children if they know what the coming week is called in the church. Explain that it is called Holy Week, remembering Jesus' last week. There is a lot that happens during Holy Week that has excitement and joy as well as sadness and grief. Assure the children that one thing we know for sure is what comes next—Easter Sunday!

Hearing the Story

L MS

Invite a child to find Luke 19 in the Bible. Read, or have volunteers read, Luke 19:28–40; 23:32–47 or **SCM 6**. Conclude by saying, “Word of wisdom, Word of grace,” and prompt the children to say, “Thanks be to God.” Place the open Bible on the worship table.

Invite the children to act out the beginning of the story, using the palms they made earlier, as you read it again from **SCM 6** or play the story audio. Stop the story after “Now Jesus can take charge.” Then have the children return the palms to the worship table to pick up a cross and hold it quietly as you read or play the remainder of the story audio. Put the crosses back on the worship table.

Reflecting on God's Grace

C

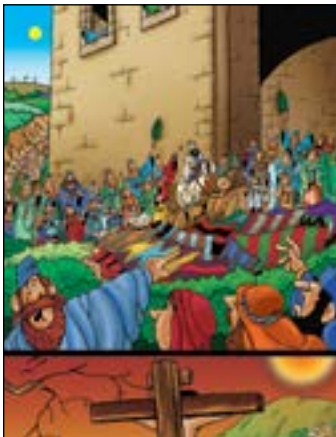
Wonder why Jesus was welcomed so joyously on Palm Sunday and treated so badly on Friday.

Wonder why Jesus—who taught about God's great grace, forgiveness, and love—was killed. Invite the children's questions, acknowledging that it is not easy for Christians, including adults, to understand the meaning of Jesus' death. Suggest that some people liked that they had more than others—more power, more wealth, more status—and they thought that Jesus' message about God's way of living and caring for one another meant that they would have less, not that everyone might have enough, and that scared them. They thought that killing Jesus would stop his message.

Tell the children that the story does not end with Jesus' death. Explain that the very best story comes next week, and knowing that it is coming will help us live with the sad stories of this week.

Singing

Listen to “Jesus Loves Me”—**SCM 22**. Play the song a second time, and invite the children to sing along quietly.



Avoid going into detail about the means of Jesus' death. The children need to hear simply that Jesus died on a cross and was buried. It is important, however, to acknowledge that Jesus died so that he could be raised on Easter.

Also be aware that talking about Jesus' death may prompt some children to talk about loved ones who have died. Acknowledge their feelings and assure them of God's loving presence.



RESPONDING IN GRATITUDE

Select activities appropriate for your group and for the time available.



Claiming God's Grace



Tell the children that before Jesus was killed, he was with his friends—his disciples. He talked with them about love. Read aloud John 15:12–13. Explain that this is what Jesus did on the cross. He loved all of us so much that he gave up his life for us. This is called sacrificial love. It was a sacrifice. A sacrifice is giving up something important for someone else, like a mother spending her weekend coaching a team or a father baking cupcakes for school late at night. Wonder with the children what other sacrifices are made for them out of love. Ask how the children may have sacrificed something for someone else.

Tell the children that the cross is a symbol that we use as Christians to remember Jesus' love for us. Invite the children to take a cross from the worship table and make it into a reminder of Jesus' love for us. Give the children air-dry clay and have them make a heart shape. Instruct them to press the clay heart onto their cross or the cross onto the clay heart. Encourage them to take their crosses home and remember how much Jesus loves each one of us.

Celebrating God's Grace



Recall that the crowds shouted, “Hosanna!” as Jesus rode into Jerusalem. Explain that *hosanna* is a word of praise, celebration, and hopefulness. The word means “save us.”

Wonder why the people might have shouted, “Hosanna!” as they saw Jesus riding into town. Explain that God's people knew that God was gracious. They called out to Jesus as a powerful king sent by God to save them. Wonder:

- ▼ What words do you use to express praise or great celebration?
- ▼ What words do you use when you need God's help?

Brainstorm as many words as the children can think of and record the words on index cards—one word per card. Ask for suggestions to use the words to create poems of praise or celebration by moving the cards into different configurations. Use extra index cards for additional words you may need in your poems. If a child wants to create a drawing instead of a word, allow him or her to do so. Tape the finished poems to newsprint.

A *Adapt any activity to suit your children's needs. Ask yourself, “How can I change this activity so this child can do it?”*

Praying God’s Grace

Distribute copies of **GN 1** and **GN 2**, scissors, glue sticks, and pencils to the children. Invite the children to cut apart the emotion faces on **GN 2**. Point out that each square on **GN 1** represents one day between Palm Sunday and Saturday. Taking a day at a time, read, or invite volunteers to read, the Scripture reference. Suggest that the children glue an emotion face to each square to remember the emotion of that part of the story. Children may choose to glue more than one to a story.

Ask the children to brainstorm ways of remembering the story through different actions each day. For example, on Monday, when Jesus calls the temple a house of prayer, children could lead their households in prayer; or on Wednesday, when Judas decides to betray Jesus, children can find ways to be a loyal friend. Help the children write one or two ways they want to remember for each day. Suggest they select three things they will do to celebrate Holy Week at home.

Extra Activity

Distribute copies of **GN 3**. Ask the children what the first picture represents (*Palm Sunday and Jesus’ triumphal entry into Jerusalem*). Ask the children to count the number of palm branches, not counting the tree (22).

Allow time for the children to work the math problems and use the solutions to decode the message (*Hosanna in the highest!*). Read the message together loudly and with enthusiasm. Ask the children to share the message with their family and friends.



Ask parents and caregivers for their email addresses so that you can provide them with the link to www.pcusastore.com/GGGdownloads, where they can download coloring pages, *Grace Sightings*, audio stories, and songs (see p. vii).

LOVING AND SERVING GOD

LG

Invite the children to gather and lead them in cleaning up the worship space.

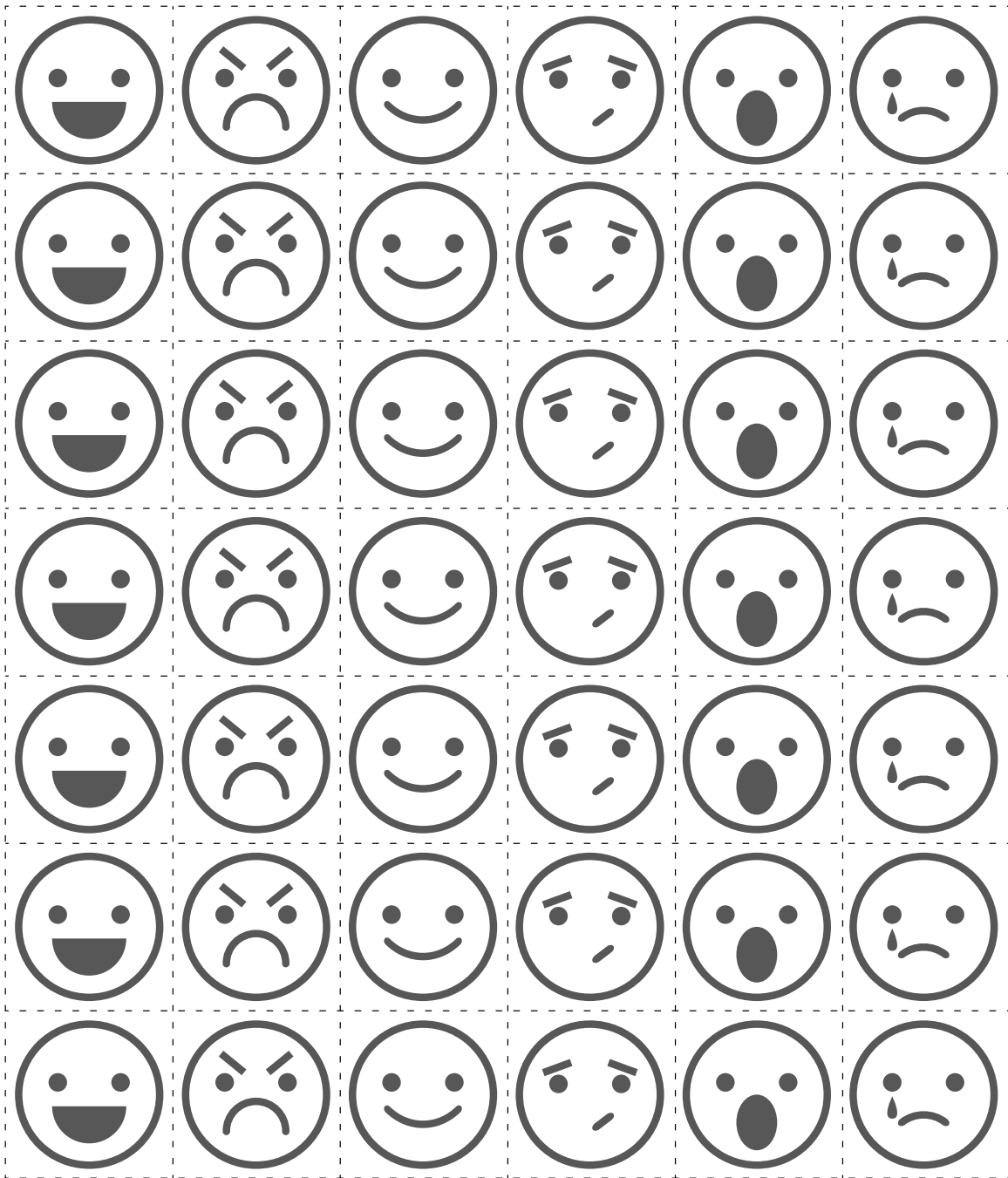
Sing “Jesus Loves Me”—**SCM 22**.

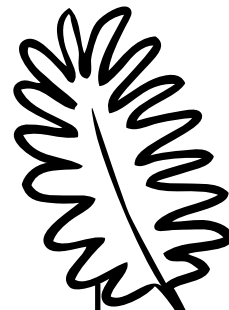
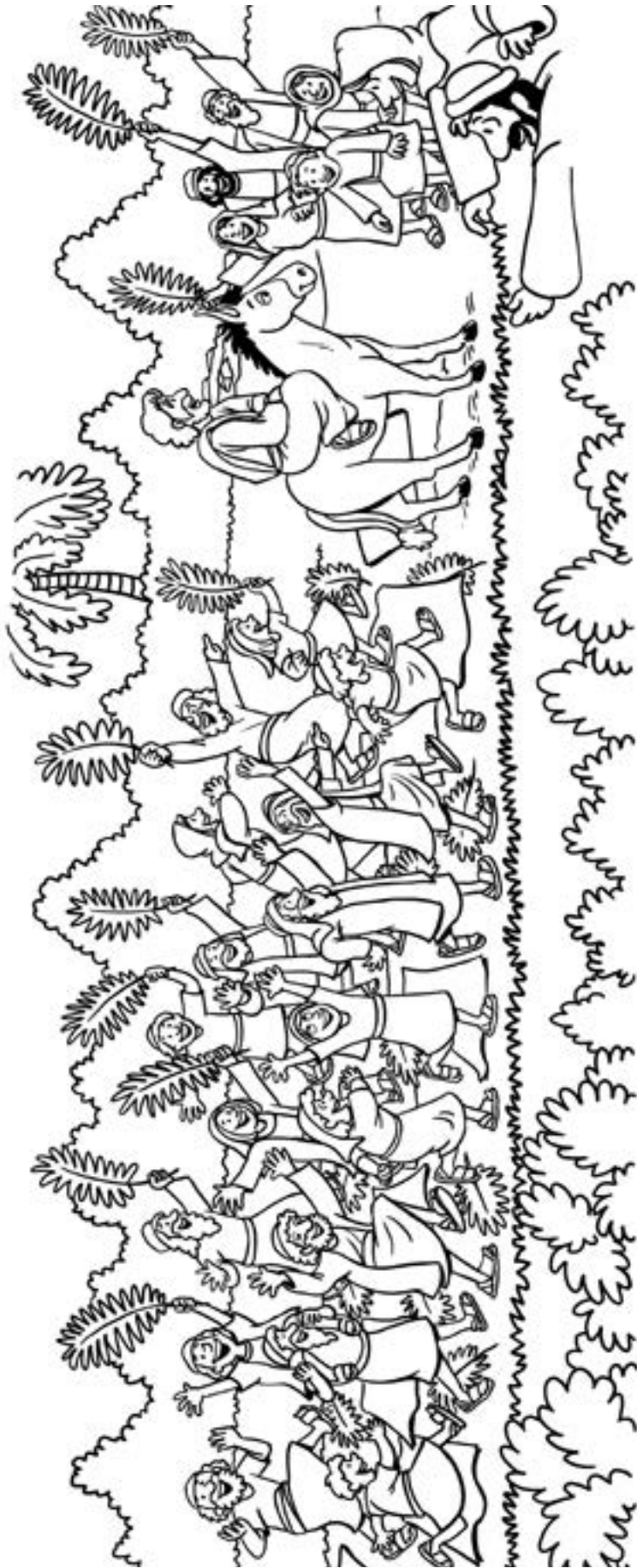
Pray the following prayer or one of your own choosing:

Loving God, be with us as we enter Holy Week. Thank you for Jesus and for his grace given to us and to our families. Help us to remember all the things that he did out of love this week. Amen.

As the children leave, bless each one: “(Name), go out and love as Jesus does. May God be with you.”

<p>Holy Week</p> <hr/> <p>(Name)</p>	<p>Palm Sunday</p> <p>Read Luke 19:35-40.</p>	<p>Monday</p> <p>Read Luke 19:45-48.</p>	<p>Tuesday</p> <p>Read Luke 21:1-4.</p>
<p>Wednesday</p> <p>Read Luke 22:1-6.</p>	<p>Maundy Thursday</p> <p>Read Luke 22:13-20.</p>	<p>Good Friday</p> <p>Read Luke 23:33-35, 44-46.</p>	<p>Saturday</p> <p>Read Luke 23:50-54.</p>





KEY

A	E	G	H	I	N	O	S	T
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9

2x2	21÷3	15-7	5-4	3x2	36÷6	9-8	20-15	7-1	3x3	16÷4	1+1	7-3	5x1	12÷4	6-2	2+0	4x2	10-1
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