

Jesus Is King

Bible Passage: Matthew 21:1–11; Mark 11:1–11;

Luke 19:28–38

(Triumphal Entry)

INTRODUCTION

The people of Israel were crying out for a king. As Jesus rode into Jerusalem the people celebrated while they shouted, “Hosanna, Hosanna!” This cry was a cry for salvation. It was a plea to be rescued. Jesus rode into the city as a King who was coming to rescue His people. He came not as a political savior, but as the One who redeems us from our sin.

SCHEDULE

CONNECT

15 min.

RESPOND

15 min.

GATHER

25 min.

BLESS

5 min.

Leader Prep

Each week you'll find a list of resources along with encouraging articles that help you prepare your heart to present the lesson.

Inspire

Shares personal stories from fellow ministry leaders about how God has worked in their lives

He's a preacher from North Carolina who rose to fame as an evangelist. Stadiums filled with thousands of people who made the decision to follow Christ. Viewers at home knelt in front of their TVs as they gave their lives to Jesus. After the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, he gave a powerful speech based on Scripture and focusing on our need of God. Americans were consoled through their loss and reminded of the hope found in Jesus!

Billy Graham has told God's story of redemption to more than 215 million people worldwide. He has advised presidents, prime ministers, and kings. He has written dozens of books, and is quoted in hundreds more. He stands as an example of a righteous man. “My one purpose in life is to help people find a personal relationship with God, which, I believe, comes through knowing Christ,” he said. That is his role in The Big God Story.

I'm not Billy Graham. I won't ever meet a president or king. Ninety-nine point nine percent of America has no idea who I am. I'm a teacher, a mother, a daughter, and a friend. I have influence in a much smaller and different way. Your part and my part and Billy's part are all unique and important in God's plan. Together we get to spread the good news that Jesus is King.

Equip

Offers perspective and context to the lesson's Bible passage

The triumphal entry took place the Sunday before the crucifixion and shortly after Jesus raised Lazarus from the dead. There's little doubt that news of the resurrection of Lazarus preceded Jesus to Jerusalem, adding to the number of people looking to Jesus for leadership. The account of Palm Sunday appears in all four Gospels. Both Matthew and Luke link this event to the messianic prophecy in Zechariah 9:9.

Zechariah was among the 50,000 or so Jews who returned in the first wave of Hebrews released from Babylonian captivity in 539 B.C. He wrote about five centuries before the birth of Jesus. In his declaration that the king was coming,

Zechariah uses a verb tense that indicates the Messiah was in the process of coming even as he wrote—five hundred years before Jesus rode into Jerusalem. He arrived exactly when God had planned and “when the time had fully come” (Galatians 4:4).

Even though Jesus’ entry into Jerusalem was foretold by the prophets and pointed to the coming of the Messiah King, the manner in which He came was unexpected by the Jewish people of His day. Just as in the Old Testament with Saul, they were crying for a king, but they wanted to prescribe to God what that king should be. They wanted a warrior, but the Son of God “made himself nothing by taking the very nature of a servant . . . he humbled himself by becoming obedient to death—even death on a cross!” (Philippians 2:7–8). But there will come a day when Jesus will again ride into Jerusalem. On that day He will be clothed in regal splendor, riding on a white horse. He will enter victorious into the city as the King of Kings and Lord of Lords (Revelation 19:11–16). Jesus is King.

Support

Provides reflection and assessment through encouragement, prayer, and time in God’s Word

The Lord Jesus is King throughout all eternity (Psalm 10:16). When we think about forever, we often focus on the future. But what this verse is really saying is that Jesus has always been, is now, and forever will be King. On that first Palm Sunday, God’s people had already been anticipating the coming King for centuries. They were desperate for Him to come. At His appearance, their joy was uncontainable and it spilled out in shouts of praise.

At this time of year, we celebrate Jesus as our King while joyfully anticipating His return. Take some time this week to think about joy. What is it and why is it important? Read John 15:9–13 and ask God to restore your joy if you have lost it. Ask God to fill you up with His joy until you can’t contain it. And then let it flow out from you to those around you.

Further Resources

You may wish to download the following overview resources to help you plan and lead Tru Fire Blessings lessons:

- Tru Fire Blessings [How It Works](#) document
- [Scope and Sequence](#)

If you have questions about Tru Fire curriculum or are looking for great training, blogs, and other support resources, visit <https://trufirecurriculum.com>.

CONNECT:: 15 min.

Children develop relationships with their leaders and one another through simple activities and conversation starters.


For additional CONNECT ideas, see the [How It Works](#) document in Resources.

Option 1: Painted Palm Branches

As children prepare to learn how palm branches were used in The Big God Story, they paint some palm branches green.

SUPPLIES

- [Palm Branch template](#) (see Resources)

- Card stock (white, 1 sheet per child)
- Washable paint (green)
- Paintbrushes (1 per child)
- Cups (small, 3–4)
- Wet wipes 
- Water
- Optional: scissors, table covering

PREPARE AHEAD

Print *Palm Branch template* onto white card stock paper, one per child. Cut out palm branches (optional).

SET UP

Place the optional table covering on the table. Place one palm branch at each child's place setting. Add green washable paint to the small cups (though you may want to wait until you start the activity so the paint doesn't dry out). Set green paint, cups, and paintbrushes on the table. Fill cups with water and set in the center of the table with the paint.

RELATE

Invite children to the table. **We're going to paint something very special. This is a palm branch. Today in The Big God Story, we're going to hear how a palm branch was used. What color is this palm branch right now? Allow children to respond. You're right—it's white. This palm branch needs to be green. Can you paint it green?**

Point children to the paintbrushes and cups of green paint. Make sure every child gets a paintbrush. Model for the children how to paint the palm branches and then encourage them to do the same. Once the palm branches have been painted, place them on a flat surface to dry. Be sure to collect all of the paintbrushes and rinse them in water right away. Use the wet wipes for cleaning fingers or spilled paint.

Option 2: Tissue Paper Palm Branches

Children decorate palm branches by gluing tissue paper to a palm branch template.

SUPPLIES

- [Palm Branch template](#) (see Resources)
- Card stock (white, 1 sheet per child)
- Tissue paper or crepe paper (green)
- Glue
- Water
- Pie tin or paper plate
- Paintbrushes (1 per child)
- Optional: scissors, table covering

PREPARE AHEAD

Print *Palm Branch template* onto white card stock, one per child. Cut out the palm branches (optional). Cut the tissue or crepe paper into one-inch by one-inch squares. Mix glue and a little water in the pie tin to create a spreadable paint-like consistency.

SET UP

Place the optional table covering on the table. Place the palm branches at the seats around the table. Set the tissue paper, glue, and paintbrushes in the center of the table.

RELATE

Invite children to the table. **Hello, friends. What do you see on the table?** Interact with children and their responses.

You are going to decorate something special. Do you know what this is? Allow children to respond. **This is a picture of a palm branch. Today in The Big God Story, we're going to hear how a palm branch was used. But first we need to cover the leaf with the green tissue paper.**

Model for the children how to use the paintbrushes to spread the glue mixture over the top of the palm branches. Then show them how to stick the pieces of green tissue or crepe paper to the glue, covering the palm branches. Encourage children to decorate their own palm branch and provide any help as needed.

Children move into a time where they can participate in discovering God's Word through storytelling, worship, and interactive experiences.

Transition Song: "The Cleanup Song"

STORY SPOTS

"Story Spot" refers to an item used to mark the place where each child sits. Consider using carpet squares, small circle-shaped rugs, or large sturdy place mats. When children hear "*The Cleanup Song*," cue them to choose a Story Spot, place it in the gathering space, and sit down. At the close of your time together in The Big God Story, encourage children to return their Story Spots to their original location.

GATHER:: 25 min.

Children experience and learn more about God through traditions, song, and storytelling from The Big God Story.

Welcome

SUPPLIES

- "TruBlessings Theme Song" (see Resources)
- Bible
- Story spots
- Hamilton puppet
- Hamilton's house
- Palm branch (small)

Ponder Point: *Jesus Is King*

Hi, friends! Welcome! I'm so excited to be here with you today. Let's all praise God by singing and dancing together! Play the "*TruBlessings Theme Song*" and lead kids in dance and celebration.

Wow! That was great! Now, everyone, take a seat—it's time to hear a part of The Big God Story! Hey, friends, do you know who else loves The Big God Story? That's right! Hamilton the Hedgehog! Let's call him to come out and join us. Call with me: Hamilton, where are you? Encourage kids to call for Hamilton. **Hmmm ... Maybe he's on a picnic with his friends and can't hear us. Let's try again. Hamilton, where are you?** Hamilton the Hedgehog comes out of his house holding a small palm branch.

Hi, Hamilton! It's so good to see you. Hamilton, what do you have in your hands? Hamilton waves the palm branch in front of himself so the children can see. **Oh, it's a palm branch! Friends, Hamilton has a palm branch that**

looks a little like those we made earlier today. I think we're going to hear more about this palm branch in The Big God Story.

Are you ready to hear this part of The Big God Story? Children will respond. Hamilton, are you ready to hear about Jesus and The Big God Story? Hamilton nods excitedly. **Me too! But first, we need to find The Big God Story. Hamilton, do you know where we can find The Big God Story?** Have Hamilton nod his head and point to the Bible. **That's right, we can find The Big God Story in the Bible! Hamilton, we know how much you love to dig, dig, dig right into God's Word to find out what He has to say to us.** Hamilton nods his head. **Let's get started by standing and singing our Bible Song together.**

Bible Song (sung to the tune of "Mary Had a Little Lamb")

Now it's time to hear God's Word

Hear God's Word

Hear God's Word

Now it's time to hear God's Word

So let's look in the Bible

As the song ends, have the children return to their Story Spots. Hamilton can model this for the children by sitting quietly as he listens to The Big God Story.

DEVELOPMENTALLY SPEAKING

Most three-year-olds enjoy getting messy, so don't worry if there's some hand cleanup to do after an activity! (This is why it's always good to have wet wipes available.) You may find, though, that some children are picky about what touches their skin or may even have sensory issues that keep them from enjoying a messy activity. Be aware of this possibility and provide alternative craft items if necessary.

The Big God Story

The Big God Story is written for a three-year-old audience. It can be told in its entirety or shortened if the class is on the younger side.

Bible Story: Triumphal Entry

Ponder Point: Jesus Is King

Bible Passage: Matthew 21:1–11; Mark 11:1–11; Luke 19:28–38

SUPPLIES

- [The Big God Story images 1–2: Donkey, Jesus riding donkey](#) (see Resources)
- Bible
- Fabric or large overcoat to act as a cloak
- Optional: toy donkey, paper palm branches (1 per child, from CONNECT) or strips of construction paper (12", green, 1 per child)
- Hamilton puppet
- Hamilton's palm branch

PREPARE AHEAD

Plan to use the palm branches children made in CONNECT or cut 12-inch strips of green construction paper to be used as palm branches in the storytelling section. Print *The Big God Story images*.

SET UP

As children sit in the storytelling area, arrange them in two groups with an aisle down the middle.

RELATE

Friends, before we go any further, let's all pray together and ask God to teach us. Lead children in a Prayer of Release to pause, be still, and ask the Holy Spirit to quiet their hearts and minds.

You may choose to use Hamilton and his palm branch to help you tell the story. Make sure you have children sitting in two sections with an aisle down the middle as stated earlier. **One day Jesus was walking with two of His friends. He asked them to go and find a donkey in the town.** Show *Donkey (image 1)* or a toy donkey. **What kind of sound does a donkey make?** Let children respond; interact with their responses. **A donkey says, "Hee-haw, hee-haw." Let's make that sound together.** Allow children to make sounds like donkeys. **Good job!**

Jesus told His friends that if anyone asked why they were taking the donkey, they should tell them, "The Lord needs it." Can you say that with me? On the count of three let's say, "The Lord needs it." One, two, three. "The Lord needs it." Good job! Well, the disciples did what Jesus asked. They found a donkey and untied him. Some of the men in town asked, "Why are you taking that donkey?" What do you think the disciples told the men? Children will answer. That's right, they said, "The Lord needs it." Did the disciples obey Jesus? Kids will answer. Yes, they did. Is it important to obey Jesus' words? Allow children to respond. It's very important. Jesus' friends were good listeners just like you're good listeners. Let's turn up our listening ears as we hear the rest of The Big God Story. Pretend to turn up your listening ears with the children.

The disciples brought the donkey to Jesus and placed a coat on its back. Jesus got on the donkey and started riding into Jerusalem. Show *Jesus riding donkey (image 2)*. Many of the people were excited that Jesus was coming into town. So, they put their coats and palm branches on the ground in front of Jesus and the donkey. Lay fabric or coat in the aisle between the children. You may choose to have a volunteer help.

Hamilton hops up and down excitedly waving his palm branch. You're right, Hamilton—the people didn't just lay coats in the road. The people also placed palm branches on the ground in front of King Jesus. Have a volunteer pass out the palm branches or strips of green paper. Everyone is going to get a pretend palm branch. When you get your palm branch, hold it tightly in your hand. When I call your name, you'll get to lay your palm branch on the road. Call up children two at a time to lay down their branches. Be sure to call up Hamilton too!

The people were so excited to see Jesus that they began to shout praises to Him. They shouted the word "Hosanna." Can you say that word with me? Say "Hosanna" with the kids. Now let's shout it. "Hosanna!" Wow, great job! This word was telling God that the people needed a king who could save them. Do you know who that King is? It's Jesus. Guess what? Jesus is our King too! That makes me so excited! I want to shout "Hosanna!" again. Let's all shout it out one more time. Shout "Hosanna!" with the kids. Now let's shout, "Jesus is King!" Wait for kids to repeat after you.

Have the children say good-bye to Hamilton as he goes back into his house and thank him for coming to be a part of The Big God Story.


RESPOND:: 15 min.

Children reflect on what the Holy Spirit is teaching them and respond through worship, creative activities, and games.

Song of Celebration

The people shouted “Hosanna!” when Jesus came into town. Were they excited? Encourage answers. **Yes, they were very excited. We’re going to sing a song that talks about the people shouting “Hosanna.” Jesus is the Son of God and He is King!**

Lead kids in a celebratory worship song. Suggested song: “The People Shout, Hosannah!” from Jana Alayra’s *Jump into the Light*.

Snack: If you’d like to tie in the snack with the lesson, you can make leaf cookies. As the kids eat, sit down with them and engage them in conversation. Be sure to consider any food allergies or check with parents ahead of time. 

Option 1: Jesus Is King

Children decorate a poster to remind them that Jesus is King.

SUPPLIES

- Poster board (white)
- Marker
- Cotton swabs
- Washable paint
- Disposable bowls

PREPARE AHEAD

Write the words “Jesus Is King” across the top of the poster board with a marker.

SET UP

Place poster board in the center of the table. Put small amount of paint in several disposable bowls. Put cotton swabs and paint in the center of the table around the poster board.

RELATE

Invite children to sit at the table. **Who is King?** Allow kids to respond. **That’s right, Jesus is King! In The Big God Story, the people shouted “Hosanna” when Jesus came into town. On this poster it says “Jesus Is King!” Let’s decorate this sign together. When we’re finished, we’ll place it in our doorway so our families can remember that Jesus is King.** Encourage kids to decorate the poster board with the cotton swabs and paint.

Option 2: Palm Branch Dance

Children wave their palm branches in the air along to music as they praise God for sending Jesus to be our King.

SUPPLIES

- Palm branches (from CONNECT)
- Fast-paced, upbeat music

RELATE

Earlier today you made palm branches. We also used palm branches in The Big God Story. We’re going to wave our branches high in the sky to praise God for sending Jesus to be our King as we listen to the music. When you hear the music play, wave your branches in the air. When the music stops, stop waving your branches. Model this action for the children. Then start the music and allow children to wave their branches, encouraging them to stop waving their branches whenever you stop the music.

Option 3: Let's Act It Out

To remember how Jesus rode into town on a donkey and people laid their coats on the ground, children pretend they're donkeys and walk on their hands and knees across a coat path.

SUPPLIES

- Coats (5–10)

SET UP

Place the coats on the ground forming a path across the room.

RELATE

When Jesus rode into town on the donkey, people laid their coats on the ground. We're going to pretend we're donkeys and walk across the coats. We need to get down on our hands and knees. What kind of sound does a donkey make? Allow children to respond, "Hee-haw, hee-haw." **When you walk across the coats, be sure to make loud donkey sounds!**

Line up children at the start of the path covered in coats. You can lead the way. Get down on all fours and encourage kids to do the same. Then crawl across the coat-path, saying, "Hee-haw, hee-haw" along the way. Children should follow behind you making donkey sounds as well. Have fun with this and encourage the kids to have fun too!

Hamilton's Box of Fun

SUPPLIES

- "The Cleanup Song" (see Resources)
- Box or basket
- Toddler Movement Scarves (available at discount stores or online)
- Puppets
- Interlocking blocks
- Toy animals
- Magnifying glasses (available at discount stores or online)

SET UP

Put a variety of fun objects/toys in the box or basket. Hide it somewhere in the room. Clean the objects each week after use.

RELATE

Invite the kids to your circle time area and sing together:

Hamilton's Box (sung to the tune of "Oh Where, Oh Where Has My Little Dog Gone?")

*Oh where, oh where is Hamilton's Box?
Oh where, oh where can it be?
It's full of fun toys that we sure like a lot
Oh where, oh where can it be?*

Pick one or two kids to help find the box or basket. Once it's found, you can place it in the middle of your circle time area and invite the kids to come and explore what's inside. **Come on over, everyone! What fun things can we explore today? Let's take turns playing with things and even play together.**

When it's time to put the toys away, cue the kids with "The Cleanup Song."

BLESS:: 5 min.

Children receive a blessing from their leaders and sometimes one another. A blessing can be a prayer of commission, a portion of Scripture, or words to encourage and guide.

SUPPLIES

- [Coloring sheet](#) (see Resources, use as it works with your schedule)
- [At Home Weekly: Lessons 3–4](#) (see Resources)
- Bible

RELATE

Gather the children around you to bless them. Pray this prayer of blessing over them:

Children, may you always know that Jesus is King every day and every night.

Open a Bible and read Psalm 10:16a:

The LORD is King for ever and ever.

Send home the *At Home Weekly* 5–8 with any families who may need one.