



seeking:

*Where are
you headed?*

children's curriculum

MATTHEW 21:1-11

by Rev. Anna Strickland

MAIN IDEA: *I will follow Jesus.*

engaging the story

storytelling materials

- **wilderness:** A tan piece of felt, fabric, or paper.
- **Mount of Olives:** An aquarium cave, Godly Play® tomb, or papier-mâché tomb with the opening facing toward the back, or a large rock.
- **road:** A wide brown ribbon or strip of paper/felt.
- **Jerusalem:** A large box or wall made of blocks.
- **Jesus:** A clothespin person, Godly Play® people of God figure, or felt figure.
- **disciples/crowd:** More clothespin people or Godly Play® people of God figures, or felt cutouts with multiple faces (*the crowd will not interact as individuals, so they can be a single unit of multiple figures*).
- **donkey:** A donkey or horse figure.
- **coats:** Fashion doll clothes or felt shapes.
- **palm branches:** Green leaves, leaf shapes cut from paper/felt (*Tip: use a punch like [this one](#) for paper*), or [confetti](#).



scripture retelling

Jesus was traveling toward Jerusalem from the Mount of Olives. Place the wilderness backdrop with the mountain on one side and Jerusalem on the other. Place the road connecting the two.

His followers were with him. Place the Jesus figure and the disciples figure near the mountain.

Before going into Jerusalem, he asked his followers to bring him a donkey to ride. They brought him a donkey to ride and laid their coats on the donkey as a saddle. Place the donkey next to the Jesus figure and place a coat on its back.

As the emperor was riding his horse into the city, leading the parade, Jesus began his own parade. Place a crowd of figures all along the road and around Jesus.

People laid their coats and palm branches on the ground in front of him as he rode. Place coats and palm leaves on the road. Place Jesus on the donkey and move them along the road toward Jerusalem.

They were shouting, "Hosanna! Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord! Praise God!" Move Jesus and the donkey to just outside Jerusalem.

When Jesus entered the city, everyone was excited and wondered who this man could be that so many people were following him. The followers told everyone about Jesus.

This is one of our sacred stories.

wonder wall

Ask the children what questions they have about the story. Add these questions to your "Wonder Wall." To model, you might ask some of the following questions:

- I wonder... Why did the people put their coats on the ground in front of Jesus?
- I wonder... What does "Hosanna!" mean?
- I wonder... What happened to the donkey when Jesus got to Jerusalem?

discussion

- Would you like to be part of Jesus' parade into Jerusalem? What would you be doing in the parade?
- Do you know what happens after this story? (You might share a brief overview of the passion narrative here.) Do you think Jesus' followers would still be giving Jesus a parade if they knew what was going to happen?
- What does it mean for us to follow Jesus?

prayer

Dear God, we want to follow Jesus. Help us to love like Jesus loved and live like Jesus lived. Amen.

extension activities

Depending on time, you might add one or more of the following activities. We also recommend making storytelling materials available to children to retell the story, either as an option for independent play during the Sunday School hour, as a take-home kit, in worship bags, or any combination of these. Instructions and templates to create felt storytelling kits for children are included separately with this resource.

Activity A) Play a Game: Follow the Leader

Materials:

- Palm branches (*optional*).

Instructions:

Take turns leading a parade through your children's area. If you have palm branches for a processional during worship, you might use this time to practice waving them and shouting, "Hosanna!"

Activity B) Read a Book: *Love Matters Most*

Love Matters Most. Written by Mij Kelly, illustrated by Gerry Turley. Little, Brown Books for Young Readers, 2016.

Like the polar bear in this story, Jesus begins a long journey and we follow, all because love matters most. Read the book together or make it available for older children to read independently. You might also choose to read this book as a children's moment in worship or send a video read-aloud to parents during the week.

Activity C) Creative Expression: Palm Leaf Sandals

Materials:

- Sandal template for each child (*included*).
- Materials to decorate the sandals, such as oil pastels, pencils, crayons, markers, stickers, paint, sticky gems, sequins and glue, etc.
- Palm branches.
- Tape.

Instructions:

Create sandals to remember to follow Jesus like the people in the Palm Sunday parade. Print the included sandal template on cardstock and cut out one shoe per child. Let children decorate the shoe shape using oil pastels, markers, crayons, stickers, paint, sticky gems, sequins and glue, or anything else you have on hand. When children are finished decorating their sandals, wrap one or two individual palm leaf strips across the widest part of the shoe as sandal straps and attach on the back side of the sandal with tape. Refer to this [flip flop craft](#)¹ to get an idea of what the sandals might look like, but add palm leaf strips instead of blue strips of paper.

¹ allkidsnetwork.com/crafts/summer/flip-flops-craft.asp



about the creator

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Anna Strickland (*she/her*) looks for the Divine in the everyday like treasure in clay jars and first encountered God in the integration of her spiritual self and artistic self. She is a native Austinite and graduated from the University of Texas where she now works as a college minister, especially serving LGBTQ students.

A Sanctified Art LLC is a collective of artists in ministry who create resources for worshiping communities. The Sanctified Art team works collaboratively to bring scripture and theological themes to life through film, visual art, curriculum, coloring pages, liturgy, graphic designs, and more. Their mission is to empower churches with resources to inspire creativity in worship and beyond. Driven by the connective and prophetic power of art, they believe that art helps us connect our hearts with our hands, our faith with our lives, and our mess with our God. Learn more about their work at sanctifiedart.org.