

GOODNESS / Week 1

A heart that reflects the excellent character of God



GOSPELS

“A good person produces good things from the treasury of a good heart, and an evil person produces evil things from the treasury of an evil heart. What you say flows from what is in your heart.” LUKE 6:45

PARENT DEVO

(Parents, this is for you to do ahead of time as you prepare your hearts to lead your kids.)

READ Matthew 21:1-11 and Luke 19:28-40. What is similar and different about these two versions of Jesus' triumphal entry? What's the difference between this crowd and the crowd Jesus encountered a week later in Luke 23:13-25?

DID YOU KNOW? Palm branches were symbols of Jewish nationalism and victory, common on coins and in synagogues. Coats were laid on the ground for a king. This crowd thought Jesus was there to free them from the Romans, and they quickly turned on Him when they realized that wasn't His plan.

REFLECTION: Psalm 103. What verses stand out to you? Make a list of all the words that come to mind when you think about God. How does this list impact the way you live your life, spend your time, and interact with others? Write your own psalm of praise to God from the list you made.

PRAY: Think about some attributes of God and thank Him for who He is. Ask God to prepare your heart to celebrate Easter this year. Thank Him for all the ways you have seen Him work in your life recently.

HELPFUL HINTS BEFORE YOU START:

- The Finish Line is the key teaching point of the lesson
- Everything in **BOLD** is meant to be read out loud. The rest is either answers to questions, instructions, or suggestions for supplies
- You will need a Bible, pen or marker, scissors, palm leaf activity page OR green or white construction paper

FINISH LINE: *THE EXCELLENT CHARACTER OF GOD DESERVES OUR PRAISE!*

READ LUKE 19:28-40

- **What did Jesus send His disciples to do in verses 30-31**? To go and find a colt and bring it to Him. **Did they find what they were looking for just like Jesus said they would? Look at verse 32**. Yes!
- **How do you think Jesus knew what they would find?** Because He is God, the all-knowing, all-seeing Creator of everything.
- **How did the people celebrate and praise Jesus as He rode into Jerusalem?** They threw their coats on the ground for the donkey to walk on and shouted praises to Him.
- **This happened just ONE WEEK before Jesus was crucified on the cross for our sins. He chose to enter Jerusalem like this to fulfill a prophesy from the Old Testament about the Messiah written hundreds of years earlier.**
- **READ ZECHARIAH 9:9**. What's the same between this verse and the story in Luke? How is the rider of the donkey described in verse nine? Can we describe Jesus like that?
- **Look at Luke 19:39**. Did everyone like it that Jesus was getting all this attention? No. What did they tell Jesus to do? The Pharisees told Jesus to make the people stop.
- **Reread verse 40**. What did Jesus say would happen if the people stopped and didn't praise Him? Even the rocks would cry out in praise!
- **What do you learn about Jesus through this story? How would you describe His character?**

In the Bible, the book of Psalms is full of songs people wrote praising God for His excellent character. Let's take a look at one of these songs and see what it has to teach us about who God is.

READ PSALM 103:1-12

- **As you read these verses, circle all the words that describe God. What do you learn about the character of God from these verses? What is God like?** Talk about some of the reasons God deserves our praise.
- **When you think about God, what comes to mind? What words would you use to describe Him? What's your favorite thing about God? Have you thanked Him for that lately?**
- **Are you ever worried that you might not have just the right words to say to God? Do the rocks or trees or birds use words when they praise God?** God isn't waiting for you to say exactly the right thing to Him. He is most concerned about what is in your heart.
- **There are lots of different ways to praise God! What are some ways that you could praise Him this week?** Example: You can sing worship songs to Him. You can take a verse you've read in the Bible, like Psalm 103:8, and pray that to God. This can help when you don't know what words to use!

ACTIVITY – *Palm Leaf Praise*

Supplies: You can print out the palm leaf activity page or draw your own leaf on construction paper

Explain: When Matthew and Mark wrote about Jesus' entry into Jerusalem, they said that people cut palm branches, laid them on the street, and waved them in the air to celebrate Jesus. For our activity today, we will look up verses that tell us more about who God is and why He deserves our praise.

Directions: Look up different verses listed below. Have one person read a verse out loud to the group. Talk about what that verse tells you about God. Write one word inside the picture of the leaf reminding you what that verse teaches you about the **goodness of God**. Say a quick, one or two sentence prayer to God thanking Him for that part of His character. Do the same thing with some of the other verses listed. Afterwards, you can decorate and cut out the leaf and use it to celebrate Palm Sunday!

Verse options:

- Deuteronomy 32:4
- Psalm 103:8
- Isaiah 6:3
- Isaiah 40:28
- Jeremiah 10:12
- 1 Corinthians 10:13
- 1 Timothy 1:17
- Titus 3:5-6
- Hebrews 13:8
- 1 John 4:9