

WEEK 1

UPSIDE NMOD

ADULT DISCUSSION GUIDE

1. When Jesus arrives in Jerusalem it is the time of Passover. This means the city would be filled with Jews who had come to the temple to make sacrifices. After Jesus raised Lazarus from the dead, he was a wanted man. Read John 11:55-57. Yet Jesus “went on ahead, going up to Jerusalem.” (Luke 19:28) Why?

2. In verse 29, Jesus instructs the disciples to say “the Lord needs” the colt. Why did Jesus need it? He had walked for many miles (Galilee to Bethany). Couldn't he walk another mile or two? Remember Zechariah 9:9 from the teaching video and re-read it, if necessary.

3. Kings often rode horses to show military might and prowess. Consider the paintings you've seen of great United States generals like President George Washington and the above picture of a statue of President Andrew Jackson on his horse on the following page. How is a donkey different from this image? Compared to a horse, a donkey was considered a humble animal ridden by men of peace. We call Jesus King of Kings and Lord of Lords, but what other name for Jesus is a good fit for a man who rides into town on a donkey?

4. We call Jesus' ride into Jerusalem the “triumphal” entry, but it wasn't a large presidential (or Caesarian) motorcade. And, as we just discussed, it wasn't an army with chariots ready to overthrow the Jewish oppressors. What was so triumphal about it? Example: good triumphs over evil.

5. What other virtuous concepts/ideas/characteristics triumphed over sinful concepts/ideas/characteristics during the triumphal entry?

6. When victorious kings returned home from war songs of praise/acclamation would be sung as they rode throughout the city until they reached the city's temple and made sacrifices to the gods thanking them for the victory. But the gospel accounts take these well-known celebrations and flip them upside down with a humble celebration where the symbols of power were coats and palm branches (this is why we call the Sunday before Easter “Palm Sunday”). This same fickle crowd that praised Jesus' entry to the city would be calling for his crucifixion just a few days later. Why? What would change? What lesson does this teach us about seeking the praise and acclamation of men? When Jesus gets to the temple, he doesn't offer sacrifices like a king might. Read Luke 9:45-48. What does Jesus do instead? How does this help answer the question about what might have changed between Palm Sunday and the end of the week?

7. What does vs. 37 tell us is the reason for the people's praise? In our culture (America 2020) do you think our praise is often more habitual or intentional? What are some ways to praise God more specifically as the people did in this passage? Read Psalm 96:11-13. How does this fit with Jesus' statement in v. 40 that, “if they keep quiet, the stones will cry out.”? If creation will praise Him, God doesn't need our praise, does He? How does praising God benefit us (the ones offering the praise)? Consider the coats and palm branches on the street. Does God require fancy and exorbitant gestures of praise? What does God require from our praise?



"THE UNION MUST
AND
SHALL BE PRESERVED."



STUDENTS DISCUSSION GUIDE

1. When was a time when you felt celebrated the most? Explain the situation and what you were feeling in detail.
2. Kings in that time had a “grand-entry” and Jesus’ entry was far from that. Name 3 characteristics we can learn about Jesus through him asking for a “not so grand” entry.
3. How would you feel if you were being celebrated in front of people (Pharisees) that wanted to see you (Jesus) fail? How hard would it be to respond in humility as Jesus did? Why?
4. When asked why they needed it, the disciples told the owner of the colt, “The Lord has need of it.” What do you have (strengths and weaknesses) in your life that you need to give up to the Lord to be used for his glory? In what ways can you see him using those things?
5. Jesus displayed that both happiness and pain can exist in the same scenario in a person’s life. What uncertainties/challenges are you facing in your life right now? How can you find joy in the middle of them?

Here’s Your Challenge:

- In the midst of questions, uncertainties, and yes maybe even a lot of boredom, your mind can easily drift away from the goodness and presence of God. The best way to stay focused on the goodness of God is to recognize and praise him for it. **TO DO:** Start a gratitude journal to write in everyday from now until the end of your quarantine (or longer if you choose.) Write down/type 3 things you were thankful for/saw God’s presence in. They could even be things like, “Mom made my favorite meal” or “I didn’t get mad at my little brother today” or even “I did something productive!” Recognizing the goodness of God in the little ways helps us, in humility, understand that he is the one who deserves praise, not us.

KIDS DISCUSSION GUIDE

1. Can you think of a time when you watched a BIG PARADE or were part of a BIG CELEBRATION for someone or something? What did it feel like? What caught your attention? What do you remember most about the celebration?
2. If you had the opportunity to welcome Jesus into your city, how would you plan for His arrival and entry? What would you do to welcome Him? What would you choose to SHOUT so that all could hear you?
3. If Jesus asked you to do something, would you do it? Have you ever felt like Jesus asked you to do something and you were disobedient? Think about a time when your mom or dad asked you to do something. Did it turn out well when you followed instructions? Jesus gave VERY specific instruction to His disciples for getting the donkey.
4. Someone in our story gave up their donkey for Jesus. Animals were very precious to people during these days. They were a way to be able to live. But, this person was willing to give the Lord what was needed. What do you think you have that you could offer Jesus?
5. Jesus came to turn things UPSIDE DOWN! What is different about King Jesus that separates Him from other kings (or rulers) you’ve known or studied?

Family Activities:

- Now it’s time for a family REENACTMENT of the Triumphal Entry. What can you use in your house to put on the ground before Jesus? What can you wave in the air to worship Him? Where are you going to find the donkey? Who is willing to be the donkey in the story? Who’s going to play Jesus? Have a PRAISE PARTY! Find ways in your home to bring God praise together today and enjoy a celebration!
- We’re in the season of falling leaves. Take your preschooler or elementary student and gather leaves to throw in the air or wave. While you do this, talk about reasons we can praise God!