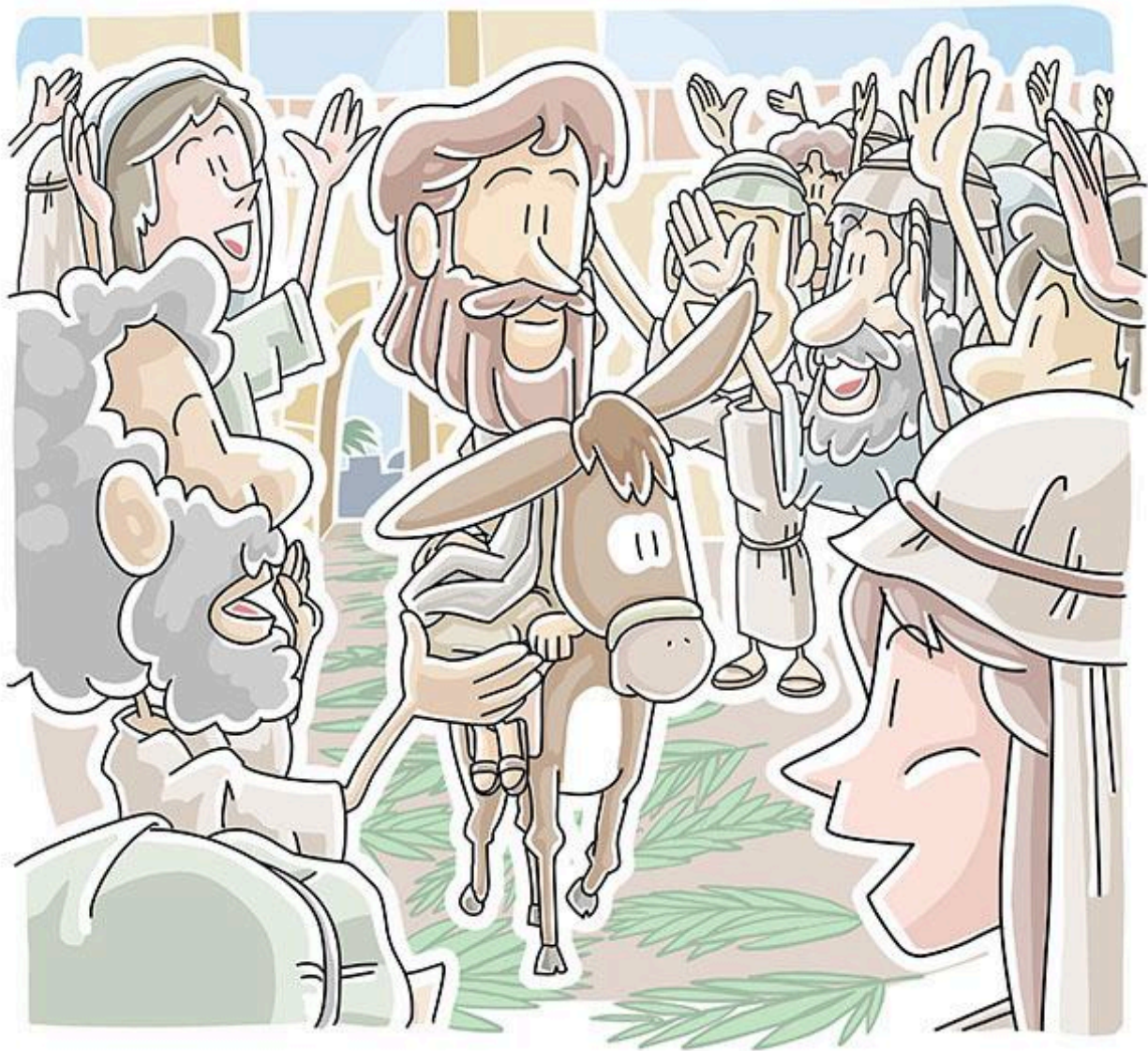


# An Unusual Parade

## The Triumphal Entry of Palm Sunday

Mark 11:1-11 *NIV*

*Bible Lesson & Activities for Children*



THE **SUNDAY SCHOOL** STORE

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# Parade of Palms

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Palm Sunday opens up the celebration of Holy Week, when we look at the events leading up to the crucifixion of Christ. With Palm Sunday, we celebrate the entry of Jesus into Jerusalem. His triumphal march was not what we'd expect of a typical "parade", just as His victory on the cross is not what we'd expect of a typical king. But Jesus does the unexpected in amazing and life-changing ways. This lesson reminds us of how and why He rode into town on a donkey, and why it's important for us to honor and praise Him every day of our lives.

Jesus came humbly, to seek and save the lost. He didn't always do things in the ways that we (or anyone else) would expect, but He fulfilled God's plans and redeemed us from sin. Palm Sunday reminds us that He is great and mighty and worthy of our praise and adoration. Whether we lift up palms or lift our voices in song, we can rejoice in who He is and celebrate why He came. Unlike the people on the first Palm Sunday, we know the end of the story and recognize Jesus as Lord, not just for a day but for eternity.

**Passage:** Mark 11:1-11 (See also John 12:12-16, Matthew 21:1-11)

**Target Audience:** Kindergarten-6th grade

**Materials Needed:** Pictures or examples of things that change; baggy sweaters or jerseys; construction paper or cardstock; markers or crayons; decorative supplies; paper bags; paper plates or bowls; noisemakers; dried rice or beans; streamers; palm branches; sporting equipment; coats/cloaks; scissors; glue or tape; Bibles.

## More Resources Online

- Watch the [video demonstration of the object lesson](#).
- Watch the [video example for the craft projects](#).
- Watch the [video Bible story "The Story of Easter"](#) from Saddleback Kids Club
- Watch the [video Bible story "Jesus and Palm Sunday"](#) from Crossroads Kids
- For more free illustrations, visit [Christian Clip Arts](#) and [Ministry-To-Children](#)

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## Object Lesson (5 minutes)

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*Greet children and discuss parades...*

Hello, Children of God!

Have you ever seen a parade/ Or perhaps you've even gotten to be part of a parade. What happens during one of these? Why do people have parades? Usually, a parade is a time to celebrate something special, and involves people lining up on the sides of a street to watch and cheer for things. As you describe parades, have items on hand to hold up as examples of parade celebrations. Some parades are held in honor of holidays, like the Fourth of July or Thanksgiving or New Years. In New Orleans, Louisiana, they have a big parade for Mardi Gras, and throw out beads and candy for people. Other times there are parades in honor of people. Perhaps a sports team has won a big championship, and people in the town gather to celebrate the team as they walk or ride down the street to big cheers. People might wave flags or hold up signs, or they cheer and make noises for people and floats.

Have you ever waved around plants or branches for a parade? Have you ever spread a coat on the ground for the parade people to walk or drive over? That sounds a little strange to us, but it's exactly what happened in a parade of sorts that was featured in the Bible. Today we are looking at a special parade for Jesus. We often call this "Palm Sunday" or the "triumphal entry." The Lord was coming into Jerusalem, and people got very excited to celebrate. Jesus sent some of His disciples into town to get a donkey for Him to ride. That's one interesting element: He didn't come in on a war horse or a limo. Riding a donkey showed that He was humble. It also fulfilled a prophecy spoken many years earlier, saying that the king would come riding on a colt (baby donkey). Jesus rode the foal into town, and people gathered to welcome Him. They took their cloaks and spread

them out in the road for Him to ride over, sort of like rolling out a red carpet. The people also had palm branches that they waved in the air. This was like waving flags to cheer someone on. As He went by, they shouted “Hosanna,” which means “save us.” They knew that Jesus was someone special. They understood He came to save. However, they didn’t quite understand how it would happen...

All of these things happened in ways that might seem contrary to what we would typically expect. This wasn’t the kind of parade you’d expect to see. Jesus wasn’t the kind of king people would expect to have. They might have thought He would come storming in to defeat their earthly oppressors and do mighty amazing things. Instead, He rode in on a donkey colt. This took place in the days leading up to the crucifixion. Jesus came to town knowing that he was soon going to die. By the end of the week, the people would be calling for Him to hang on a cross. That wasn’t the way they would have expected salvation to come. Jesus often did (and does) things in ways that defy expectation. But we know that He is the king. We know that His purpose wasn’t personal glory, but death to give others life. The ride into Jerusalem was only the beginning of His journey to the cross. The cross wasn’t the end, though...but that’s getting ahead of things.

What does this mean for us? We rejoice in the saving work of Jesus. We recognize why He came to Earth. We can celebrate His coming and give Him thanks and praise. Unlike the Israelites so many years ago, we know the end of the story. Jesus was a different sort of king, who came not for glory but to die. By that death, He broke the power of death. So we can honor and rejoice in Him. We can praise Him not just for a day, but all the time. We can praise Him not just with palm branches, but with our lives. When we pray, worship, and simply live in His presence, we glorify Him with thanks and praise. Hosanna! He saves us!

**Prayer: (Invite the children to repeat each line)**

Dear God,

Thank you for giving us Jesus,

A different sort of king.

Help us to honor you with our lives

And praise you always.

Thank you for your love.

We love you, God!

In Jesus name, Amen!

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# Game & Activities Suggestions

## (10 minutes)

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The Palm Sunday story shows us how Jesus was honored and glorified as He entered Jerusalem during Holy Week to fulfill God's plan. It might not have been a typical parade, king, or transportation method, but God's ways are anything but typical! Start with an activity that uses these themes and gets kids thinking:

- Palm parade: Have a parade with students in a Sunday School classroom or building wing. Invite kids to get energy out and celebrate the story as they march around with palm branches or even pom poms.
- Donkey race: have students take turns acting like donkeys. Provide a small toy or item for each person to balance on his or her back while walking or crawling on all fours. This can be done with multiple students in a designated "race" area, or as a relay race.
- Palm branch pass relay: Have students sit in a row in chairs. Provide the first person in each row with a palm branch, and have them pass it down the row. When the last person receives the branch, he/she should run around with the branch, while everyone else in the row scoots down a chair. Once the person returns to the end of the row, the branch gets passed again, until all students have run it. For extra challenge, pass the branch behind the backs of the chairs. With smaller groups, have extra activities to make the branch running longer.
- "Rock band praise": Jesus said that if the people didn't praise Him, even the rocks would cry out. Invite students to take part in worship and praise of God. Use small instruments (or make your own) to create a "rock band," and invite students to make a joyful noise with songs or rhythms. Make sure to shout "Hosanna!"
- Cloaks on the ground race: provide students with old T-shirts, blankets, or coats. Have them line up and take turns going from one side of the room to the other, stepping on the coats only. Each student should have two coats at a time, and must place them one in front of the other to move across the room.

Explain to students that today's story is an important time when Jesus was honored in a special sort of parade, as He rode into Jerusalem to fulfill God's Word.

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# Main Bible Teaching

## (15 minutes)

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This lesson contains a wonderful story that can be found in three of the four gospels (the one used here is from Mark). While not very lengthy, the verses have important meaning. It's a passage that can be acted out in skit or with interactive movements, or simply read and described. Older students can read out loud, and teachers can read and discuss with younger ones.

**Mark 11:1-3 NIV** *As they approached Jerusalem and came to Bethphage and Bethany at the Mount of Olives, Jesus sent two of his disciples, (2) saying to them, "Go to the village ahead of you, and just as you enter it, you will find a colt tied there, which no one has ever ridden. Untie it and bring it here. (3) If anyone asks you, 'Why are you doing this?' say, 'The Lord needs it and will send it back here shortly.'"*

This is a rather interesting direction from Jesus to His disciples. He wanted them to go into the village and told them they would find a new colt there. They were to bring Him the animal. By comparison to today's world, this would be sort of like driving someone's car out of their driveway, and telling the owner "the Lord needs to borrow this; I'll bring it right back." The disciples knew to trust the instructions of Jesus, though, and they did as He asked.

**Ask:** Have you ever been given strange instructions to follow? What were they? When can you trust someone enough to carry out odd-sounding directions?

**Mark 11:4-7 NIV** *They went and found a colt outside in the street, tied at a doorway. As they untied it, (5) some people standing there asked, "What are you doing,*

*untying that colt?" (6) They answered as Jesus had told them to, and the people let them go. (7) When they brought the colt to Jesus and threw their cloaks over it, he sat on it.*

Even with odd directions, the disciples and the donkey owners trusted what Jesus had them do. In doing so, they were actually fulfilling a prophecy given long before. In the book of Zechariah, we read the prophet say "Behold, your king is coming to you; righteous and having salvation is he, humble and mounted on a donkey, on a colt, the foal of a donkey." (Zechariah 9:9). Zechariah came long before Jesus, but spoke those words that let people know Jesus was the king. He didn't show up with marvelous fanfare or typical royal fashion, but followed God's plan. Riding a donkey was a sign of humility, indicating that Jesus came to serve and to lead people in a unique way. He came in peace.

**Ask:** Have you ever seen something turn out differently than you expected? What was it? When do we see God at work in unexpected things?

**Mark 11:8-11 NIV** *Many people spread their cloaks on the road, while others spread branches they had cut in the fields. (9) Those who went ahead and those who followed shouted, "Hosanna!" "Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord!" (10) "Blessed is the coming kingdom of our father David!" "Hosanna in the highest heaven!" (11) Jesus entered Jerusalem and went into the temple courts. He looked around at everything, but since it was already late, he went out to Bethany with the Twelve.*

Here is the "parade" part of the passage. The people were honoring Jesus, knowing that He was someone significant. Remind students that "Hosanna" means "save us!" The people of Jerusalem knew that Jesus had saving power. They cried out to Him to rescue them. What were they expecting? Well, maybe they wanted Jesus to be a king who would

save them from political oppression. In those days, the Romans were in charge, and did not make life easy for Jewish people. There was a desire for Jesus to overthrow the Romans and take command. Or perhaps the people knew that they wanted a Messiah, but didn't realize what that would mean.

The palm branches were a symbol of the nation, sort of like waving a flag in honor of someone special at a parade. They knew Jesus was worthy of attention and treatment. They cheered and waved to give Him respect...unfortunately, by the end of the week, the same crowd was calling for His death. This might seem strange, but how often do we praise God on Sunday, and then act differently in other environments? We should be careful to worship the Lord not only at church, but everywhere we go. We can "wave our branches" or lift our voices in praise knowing that He has, does, and will provide all we need, loving us and caring for us always. Jesus is evidence of God's faithfulness, and we can give back to Him with all of our actions!

**Ask:** How can you praise God today?

Palm Sunday is the start of Holy Week, which leads us to the cross but culminates in the triumphal victory of Easter. This passage reminds us that Jesus often had unusual or unexpected methods, but that we can find God at work in all of the most unexpected places!

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## Craft Activities (15 minutes)

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Palm Sunday celebrates the triumphal entry of Jesus into Jerusalem, just a few days before His betrayal and execution. On Palm Sunday, people celebrated Him and cheered, calling for salvation. Jesus brought salvation, of course, but not quite as they had anticipated. These crafts recall the events of Palm Sunday and remind us to praise God in all circumstances. A "Donkey Driver Puppet" recounts the way Jesus entered Jerusalem. A "Palm Tambourine" offers a joyful noise maker to celebrate Christ. Let's get crafty!

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# Craft one: “Donkey Driver Puppet”

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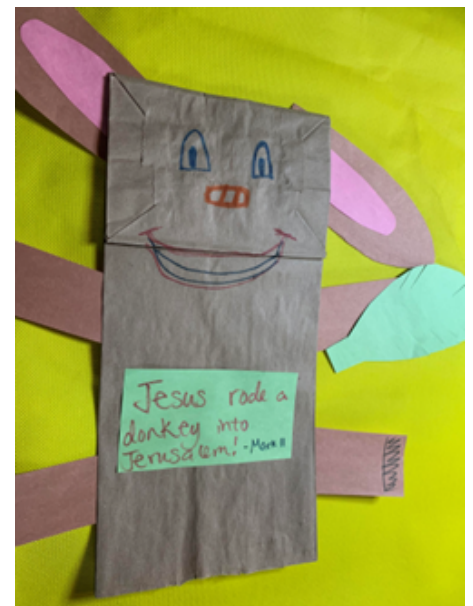
You will need:

- Construction paper/cardstock
- Paper bag
- Markers/crayons
- Optional decorations: google eyes, fabric, etc.
- Glue or tape
- Scissors



Procedure:

1. Decorate the paper bag with a “face” to resemble a donkey. Draw or glue eyes, nose, and mouth.
2. Out of paper or cardstock, cut ear and leg pieces. Glue or tape these onto the paper bag for donkey features.
3. Optional: add a “coat” or “palm branches” with paper or fabric. Add other decorations as desired.
4. Add captions or verses with paper.
5. Use the donkey puppet as a reminder of Palm Sunday and how Jesus entered Jerusalem on a humble donkey.



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## Craft Two: “Palm Tambourine”

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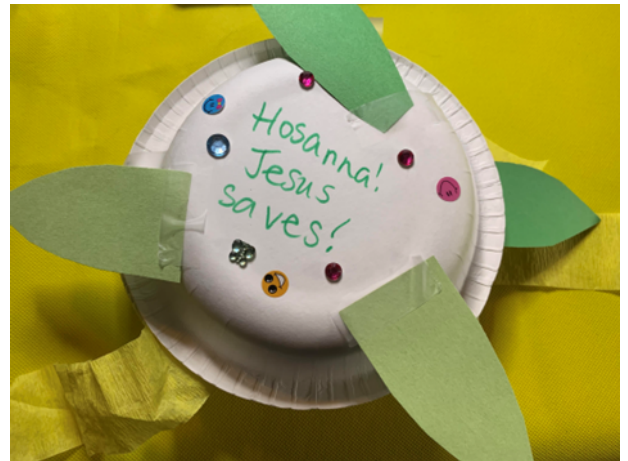
You will need:

- Construction paper or cardstock
- Paper bowls or plates
- Dried rice or beans
- Scissors
- Glue, tape, or staples
- Streamers, stickers, or other decor (optional)
- Markers or crayons



Procedure:

1. Place dried rice or beans in plate or bowl.
2. Place another plate or bowl on top of the first. Secure the two together with glue, tape, and/or staples.
3. Add decorations such as streamers, stickers, or glitter.
4. Add verses or captions. Optional: place on a long stick or baton to shake.
5. Use the tambourine to remember the Palm Sunday story and make a joyful noise to Jesus!

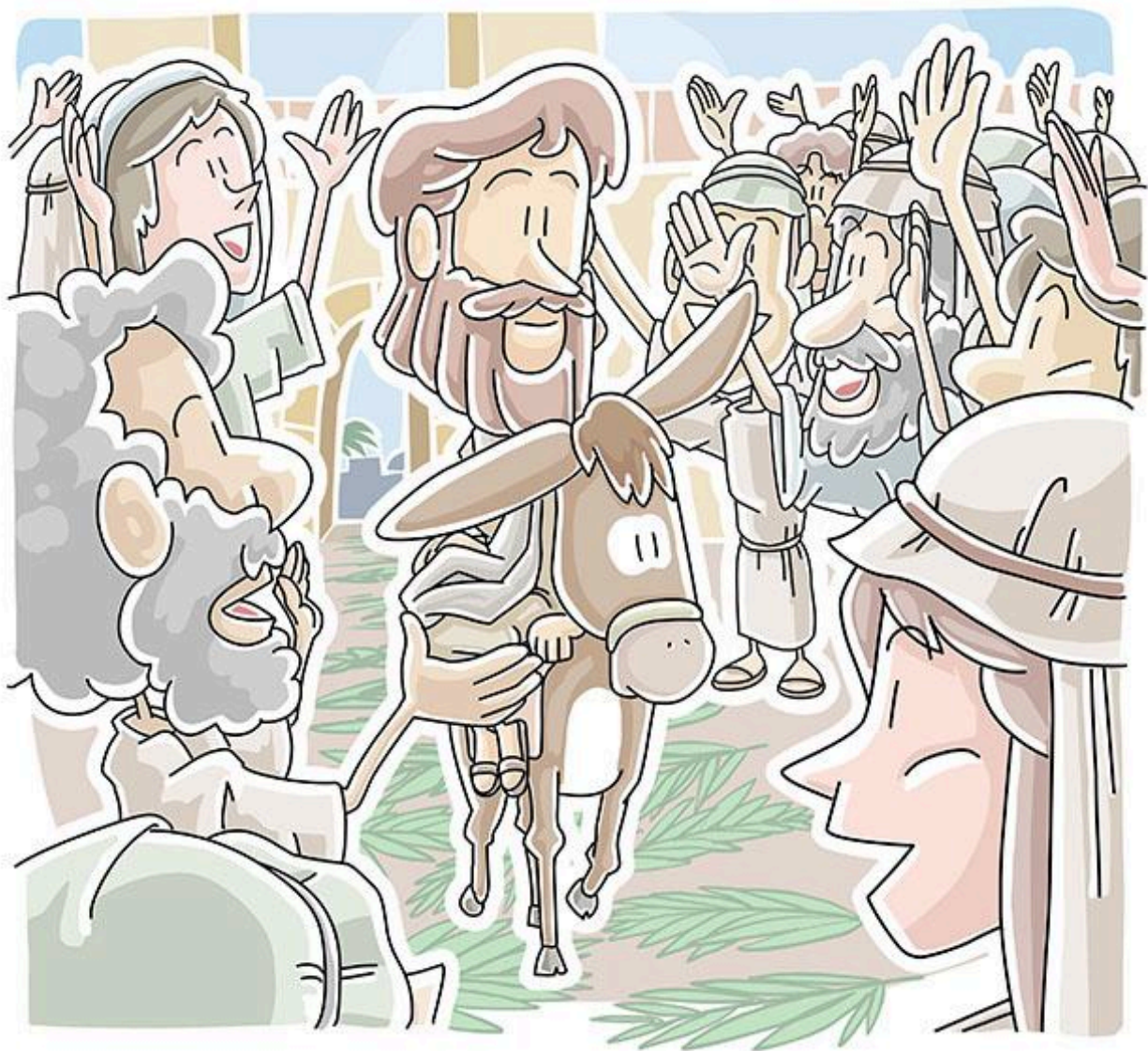


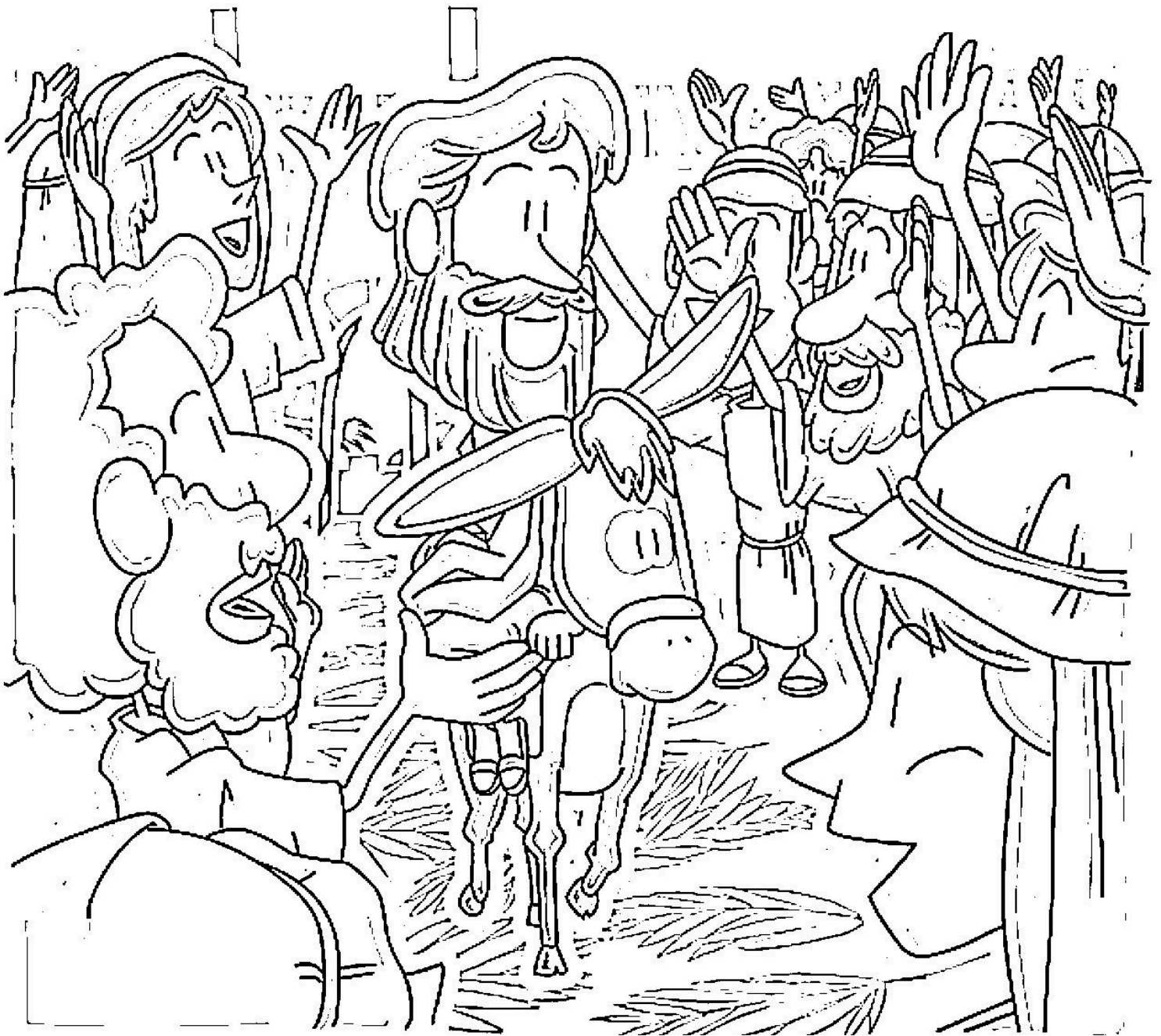
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## Mark 11:9b NIV

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*"Hosanna!" "Blessed is he who comes in  
the name of the Lord!"*





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## Word Search Puzzle

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Jerusalem - Bethphage - Mount - Olives - Village - Cloak -

Colt - Temple - Bethany - Twelve - Hosanna - Branch

B	H	H	O	S	A	N	N	A	I	B	M
N	V	I	L	L	A	G	E	J	X	E	I
P	W	K	R	D	I	L	I	E	L	T	M
O	N	A	O	T	T	V	S	R	G	H	F
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S	O	N	A	J	A	C	O	L	T	G	B
U	H	U	Z	V	N	L	E	E	E	E	E
T	A	I	N	A	C	O	D	M	R	Z	G
S	K	B	E	T	H	A	N	Y	E	A	L
H	D	O	Y	T	G	K	S	U	O	C	A

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## Word Search Answers

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