

Today's Suggested Schedule—April 2022, Week 2

Today's Bible Story: That's What Fronds Are For (Palm Sunday) • *John 12:9-16 (supporting: Matthew 21:1-11)*

Today's Bottom Line: Whatever happens, remember God is still working.

Monthly Memory Verse: *In this world you will have trouble. But be encouraged! I have won the battle over the world.* John 16:33b (NIRV)

Monthly Life App: Hope—Believing that something good can come out of something bad

Basic Truth: I can trust God no matter what.

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Video (Media Package): Countdown (30- or 60-second version)

OPENER

LEADER: “Hello, everyone! It’s Palm Sunday, which means we’re just ONE week away from Easter. I can hardly wait! Spoiler alert: this is the perfect time of year to talk about hope. That’s because . . .

Video (Media Package): Theme Transition to Life App

“Hope is believing that something good can come out of something bad.

Video (Media Package): Life App Transition to Theme

“If you’re PUZZLED about Palm Sunday and what it has to do with Easter, well just stick around for a bit. Also come back next week, and it’ll all make sense! Because believe me, there is a bigger picture! Speaking of puzzles and bigger pictures, we’ve got both in today’s game!

Stand next to the dry erase board(s).

“As you can see, we have five fill-in-the-blank words here. We’ll take turns guessing the letters in each word, one by one. If you guess a letter and it’s NOT in the word, then we’ll reveal one piece of the puzzle on screen. Your goal is to guess the word BEFORE all four pieces of the puzzle are revealed. We’ll move along until we solve all five words. Let’s get started!

One by one, quickly call on the kids to call out a letter for the first dry erase board. (Note: Do each word one by one.) If a kid guesses a letter that's part of the first word (DONKEY), write it in the blank on the board. If they guess a letter that isn't part of the word, then write the letter below the blanks and reveal the first 1/4th of the picture on screen.

Give each kid a chance to guess the word before you move on to the next kid. If a kid successfully guesses the word before the full picture is revealed, fill in the rest of the blanks and show the full picture on screen. (This will be easy for the first word, DONKEY, but more difficult for the other rounds.)

Note: You also have the option of making the puzzle quadrants from printed pages and putting them on the wall with construction paper covering them until you reveal each one.

SLIDE: Puzzle Picture 1a (donkey)

SLIDE: Puzzle Picture 1b

SLIDE: Puzzle Picture 1c

SLIDE: Puzzle Picture 1d

Continue with this same process through each of the five words, seeing if the kids can guess the word before the picture is fully revealed.

SLIDE: Puzzle Picture 2a-d (colt)

SLIDE: Puzzle Picture 3a-d (coats)

SLIDE: Puzzle Picture 4a-d (palm)

SLIDE: Puzzle Picture 5a-d (friends)

Video (Media Package): Theme Loop

Keep the dry erase board(s) displayed so the kids can see the words later during the story.

“Great job, everyone! You are excellent puzzle solvers! You may be wondering what in the world these words have to do with each other. It'll all become clear in a minute. But for now, everyone stand up because we've got some worshipping to do!”

WORSHIP

LEADER: “Sometimes, when life is hard, we can forget that God is ALWAYS with us. But we can cling to that truth and remember that **[Basic Truth] we can trust God no matter what.** As we read in David's words from 1 Chronicles 16:11 (NIRV), ‘*Look to the Lord and to his strength. Always look to him.*’ Let's sing this song and remind ourselves that whenever we're in need, we can look to God for help!

Video: “Your Way”

Then video: Live Loud Video from Get Reel

SLIDE: Theme Background

“We can have hope because we know that God can bring something good out of something bad. That's what happened when Jesus died on the cross then came back to life. Hope is alive because JESUS is alive—and that is worth singing about. So let's do it! Lift your voices with me.”

Video: “Hope Is Alive”

BIBLE STORY

SLIDE: Theme Background

SETTING UP THE STORY

LEADER: “Remember those word puzzles you solved earlier? It's time to put them to work.

Reference the words on the dry erase board(s) from the game.

“As I share this story with you today, sometimes I'll pause. Then you'll need to choose one of these five words to fill in the blank so the story can continue. Let's quickly practice.

“It was a cold day, so we grabbed our *(Pause to let the kids respond with “Coats.”)*

SLIDE: Puzzle Picture 3d (coats)

“ . . . and headed out the door. Nice job!

SLIDE: Theme Background

“Last week, we talked about the time Jesus raised Lazarus from the dead. When this happened, news spread quickly! Many people believed in Jesus, which made the religious leaders very angry. These leaders didn’t believe that Jesus was the Son of God, and they knew that if Jesus continued to perform miracles, everyone would believe in Him. They wanted to arrest Jesus to stop Him.

“For a time, Jesus went away to the village of Ephraim with His *(Pause to let the kids respond “Friends.”)*.

SLIDE: Puzzle Picture 5d (friends)

“As the Passover Feast neared, people in Jerusalem began to look for Jesus. It might have seemed foolish for Jesus to return to Jerusalem, knowing that the Pharisees were looking to arrest Him. But Jesus wasn’t threatened by the religious leaders. He was following a plan that God had set in motion long before.”

SLIDE: Theme Background

THE DONKEY

LEADER: “Jesus returned with His disciples to the town of Bethany. From there, He made plans to enter Jerusalem. He spoke to two of His . . . *(Pause to let the kids respond “Friends.”)*

SLIDE: Puzzle Picture 5d (friends)

“Jesus told them . . .

Open the Bible to Matthew 21:2-3 (NIRV) and read.

*“Go to the village ahead of you. As soon as you get there, you will find a . . .
(Pause to let the kids respond “Donkey.”)*

SLIDE: Puzzle Picture 1d (donkey)

“. . . tied up. Her (Pause to let the kids respond “Colt.”)

SLIDE: Puzzle Picture 2d (colt)

*“. . . will be with her. Untie them and bring them to me. If anyone says anything
to you, say that the Lord needs them. The owner will send them right away.*

SLIDE: Theme Background

*“The disciples entered the town and found a donkey and colt tied up, just as
Jesus had said. We don’t know exactly what this looked like, but the owner
released the donkey and colt to Jesus’ (Pause to let the kids respond “Friends.”).”*

SLIDE: Puzzle Picture 5d (friends)

THE PROPHECY

LEADER: *“Jesus’ (Pause to let the kids respond “Friends.”) brought the (Pause
to let the kids respond “Donkey.”)*

SLIDE: Puzzle Picture 1d (donkey)

“. . . and the (Pause to let the kids respond “Colt.”)

SLIDE: Puzzle Picture 2d (colt)

“. . . to Jesus. They placed their (Pause to let the kids respond “Coats.”)

SLIDE: Puzzle Picture 3d (coats)

“. . . over the backs for Jesus to sit on as He rode.

SLIDE: Theme Background

“Jesus wasn’t sitting because He was tired, though. He was carrying out God’s

plan. Hundreds of years earlier, the prophet Zechariah told the people about a promise from God. The promise was that God would send a Savior and the Savior would ride into Jerusalem on a donkey. It's true! Listen to Zechariah's words.

Open the Bible to Zechariah 9:9 (NIV) and read.

*"City of Zion, be full of joy!
People of Jerusalem, shout!
See, your king comes to you.
He always does what is right.
He has won the victory.
He is humble and riding on a (Pause to let the kids respond "Donkey.")*

SLIDE: Puzzle Picture 1d (donkey)

"He is sitting on a donkey's (Pause to let the kids respond "Colt.")

SLIDE: Puzzle Picture 2d (colt)

SLIDE: Theme Background

"Amazing, right? As Jesus rode into Jerusalem, He was showing everyone that He was the King God had promised!"

THE PEOPLE

LEADER: "The people were so excited to see Jesus that they threw their (Pause to let the kids respond "Coats.")

SLIDE: Puzzle Picture 3d (coats)

"... on the ground. They did this to honor Jesus and make a path for Him. Others broke large branches off nearby (Pause to let the kids respond "Palm.")

SLIDE: Puzzle Picture 4d (palm)

"... trees. They laid the branches across the road and waved them in the air. They shouted ...

Open the Bible to John 12:13 (NIV) and read.

“Hosanna!”

“Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord!”

“Blessed is the king of Israel!”

SLIDE: Theme Background

“The people were shouting with joy as Jesus came to town riding a (Pause to let the kids respond “Donkey.”)

SLIDE: Puzzle Picture 1d (donkey)

“. . . over the road that was covered with (Pause to let the kids respond “Palm.”)

SLIDE: Puzzle Picture 4d (palm)

“. . . branches and (Pause to let the kids respond “Coats.”).”

SLIDE: Puzzle Picture 3d (coats)

SLIDE: Theme Background

WRAPPING UP THE STORY

LEADER: “In all the excitement, one group of people was not pleased—the religious leaders. It seemed to them that the whole world was following Jesus. So they continued to look for a way to ARREST Jesus, even though He’d done nothing wrong.

“Still, none of that was a surprise to Jesus. He knew what He had come to do. In a short time, He would have to die on the cross for our sins; even this was part of God’s rescue plan. God was still at work. And nothing that anyone did would stop God’s plan to save the world.

“It’s important to remember that God is always working, even when things in our lives don’t seem to make sense. We can always have hope, because we know that God has a bigger plan. God can see the bigger picture . . . even when we can’t.

SLIDE: Bottom Line

[Bottom Line] “Whatever happens, remember God is still working.

“Let’s pray and talk to God about that.”

Video: BIBLE STORY VIDEO

SLIDE: Theme Background

PRAY

LEADER: “Dear God, thank You for not only creating this world but for having a good plan for us. You’ve always had a plan to save us and make things right again. We can see how Your plan came true when You sent Jesus to be our Savior. And that’s what the people were celebrating as they welcomed Jesus to their city. Even when things are hard, sad, and challenging, whatever happens, we know You are still working. Help us find hope in that truth! We love You, and we pray these things in Jesus’ name. Amen.”

CLOSER

LEADER: “Many people believed that Jesus was the Messiah—the Savior who had come to rescue them. And they were right! But at the time, they thought it meant that Jesus would take over right then and there as their king. They couldn’t have imagined what was about to happen—that Jesus was about to die on the cross for the sins of the whole world. They also couldn’t have imagined the JOY that would come when they knew that Jesus came back to life!

“God was working on a much bigger plan, not to just rescue the people who lived in Jerusalem, but to rescue all people for all time. It helps to remember that we can only see one piece of the puzzle but God can see the whole picture.

SLIDE: Bottom Line

[Bottom Line] “Whatever happens, remember God is still working. Say that with me.”

LEADER and KIDS: **[Bottom Line]** “Whatever happens, remember God is still working.”

LEADER: “Sometimes, tough things happen in our lives, and it’s hard for us to see the bigger picture. We get frustrated when things don’t go how we want or expect. Like maybe you’re hurt because you didn’t get invited to someone’s birthday party. You’re worried because your mom or dad lost their job. You’re sad because someone we love is sick or hurt. We can see the bad things happening right now, and it can be hard for us to see how God is working out a plan for our future.

“But God sees everything. God KNOWS everything. When you’re disappointed with the way things are going, it’s important to remind yourself that God isn’t finished yet. God is still putting the puzzle together.

SLIDE: Theme Background

OFFERING