



WEEK FOUR – MARCH 2024 – SECOND/THIRD

Bible Story: *Palm Sunday | Matthew 21:1-11*

Bottom Line: *Jesus came to be our Savior*

Memory Verse: *“God so loved the world that He gave his one + only Son. Anyone who believes in him will not die but have eternal life.” – John 3:16 NIrV*

Virtue: *Easter – Celebrating that Jesus is alive*

Basic Truth: *I can trust God no matter what*

Series Overview: Throughout Scripture, we can see how peace is something near to God’s heart. Even though people chose to break their relationship with God, God made a way to fix that relationship through Jesus. And because we reflect God’s image, making peace with others should be a priority for us as well. That’s why we’re taking the first three weeks of March to highlight some passages and stories about peace to help kids understand more about how they can be peacemakers in their world.

Bottom Line: Jesus came to be our Savior. Jesus was more than a good teacher and miracle worker. Jesus is God’s very own Son. God promised that Jesus would come and save us from the consequences of our sin. When Jesus came, He fulfilled all of the promises that God made. On top of that, Jesus is the Savior we all need to have a forever relationship with God. We pray that all kids choose to trust Jesus as their Savior this Easter season.

9:00 - 9:15 | 11:00 – 11:15 | EARLY ARRIVERS ACTIVITY

Opening Small Group Activity

Move: an activity that increases the oxygen in the brain + taps into the energy in the body

What You Need: Plastic Easter eggs; plastic spoons; floor tape

What You Do:

- Welcome kids by name as they arrive + make sure to introduce yourself to any guests who may be visiting for the first time
- Use the floor tape to create four different paths across the floor. For example:
 - Straight line
 - Zig Zag
 - Curvy line
 - Loop-de-loop
- Divide the kids into four groups
- Instruct each group to line up behind one of the paths of floor tape
- Give the first kid in each group a plastic Easter egg and a spoon
- At your signal, invite the kids to use only their spoons to move their plastic Easter eggs along the pathway
- Once the kid reaches the end of the path, instruct them to turn around, pick up their Easter egg, run it back to their team + place the egg and the spoon on the floor in front of the next kid in the group
- Direct the next kid in the group to move the egg down the path with the spoon in the same way
- Encourage the kids to cheer for their teammates + celebrate their return from the path
- See which team can get all their teammates and celebrate their return from the path
- See which team can get all their teammates through their path the fastest!

- Continue playing by giving different teams opportunities to try out different paths

What You Say:

“Wow, that was so much fun! Which path was the easiest path to follow? (*Pause for responses.*) And which paths were the hardest to follow? (*Pause for responses.*) I loved hearing you cheer for your teammates and celebrate throughout the game. **[Transition]** Today we’re going to hear about Someone who crowds of people cheered for as He arrived. Let’s go hear about it!”

9:15 - 9:45 | 11:15 – 11:45 | LARGE GROUP

Large Group Overview: We kick off Easter week with the story of Palm Sunday as described in **Matthew 21:1-11**. By this time, God’s people had been waiting hundreds of years for God’s promised Savior. As Jesus’ ministry grew, the people were starting to believe that Jesus WAS that Savior. They were sure that God’s promises were finally coming true! So when Jesus entered Jerusalem on a donkey, just like a prophesy foretold, the people celebrated and worshipped Him. And while they might not have fully understood how Jesus was about to make peace, they could celebrate because God was faithful to send a Savior.

9:45 – 10:05 | 11:45 – 12:05 | SMALL GROUP

Promise Keepers

[Live for God | Application Activity]

Create: an activity that explores spiritual ideas through the process of drawing, building + designing

What You Need: “Promise Keepers” Activity Page; Embroidery floss; colorful beads; letter beads; dry erase board; dry erase marker; tape

What You Do:

- Remind the kids that God has given us many promises in the Bible
- One at a time, read a verse listed on the “Promise Keepers” Activity Page
- After you read each verse, invite the kids to share a promise the verse speaks about
- Write down the promises on the dry-erase board
 - Ideas are listed below each Scripture on the Promise Keepers activity page
- Set out the embroidery floss and beads
- Invite the kids to create a bracelet (or “promise keeper”) to remind them of a promise God has made to them
- Invite kids to use the letter beads to spell out one word that will remind them of one of God’s promises
- Kids can use the other colorful beads to decorate their bracelet
- Use the tape to tape down one end of the floss as the kids place the beads on the floss
- Once each kid is done, remove the tape + tie the bracelet around their wrists, leaving ample room to pull the bracelet on + off

What You Say:

“The Bible is filled with promises that God has given us! What are some of the promises we heard today? (Pause for responses.) That’s incredible!”

“It’s life-changing to know that there’s a God who sees us, knows us, and loves us. Even when people turned away from God and the world was broken, God had a plan to restore us. God promised to send a Savior, and that promise came true when God sent us Jesus. Jesus didn’t come to rescue the people from the Romans, like a lot of people thought. He came for an even bigger rescue. He came to rescue everyone from their sin and make a way for everyone to have a relationship with God that lasts forever!”

*“It’s true, **Jesus came to be our Savior.** That’s the best promise of all!”*

Pray + Dismiss

[Pray to God | Prayer Activity]

Reflect: an activity that creates space for personal understanding + application

What You Need: Bibles

What You Do:

- Direct the kids to sit in a circle
- Make sure each kid has a Bible
- Together, look up John 3:16, using the Bible Navigation Tips below:
 - **Finding Verses w/ 2nd + 3rd Graders:** *Guide them to open their Bibles to the front and find the table of contents. (Hold up a Bible opened to the table of contents to show the kids what the page looks like.) When the kids find the table of contents, lead them to find John in the list under “New Testament.” When the kids find John, lead them to look at the page number beside the word. Explain that the number tells them on what page they can find John. Help the kids find the page. When they find John, explain that the big numbers on the page are the chapter numbers. Help them find chapter 3. Explain that the small numbers are verse numbers. Help them find verse 16 in chapter 3.*
- Read John 3:16 several times together
- Use the discussion below to talk about the first half of the Memory Verse
- Lead your Group in prayer

What You Say:

“This is a wonderful verse to remember as we get ready to celebrate Easter.

“God so loved the world: *God loves the world so much and everyone in it. That includes everyone in the world—you, me, everyone in this room, and everyone in our families.*

“that he gave his one and only Son. Jesus was given to us as a gift, as a way to make things right between us and God. When we follow Jesus, we can have peace and a relationship with God. That’s right—Jesus came to be our Savior.

“Let’s pray!

“God, thank You so much for loving us. Thank You for giving us Jesus, who came to be our Savior. Help us to understand how big that love is! Give us opportunities to show love and kindness to others as we remember how much You loved us first. Help us to remember the promises You’ve given us, and to trust that You always keep Your promises. Thank You for everything You’ve done for us. We love You and we pray these things in Jesus’ name. Amen.”

As adults arrive to pick up, encourage kids to show the adults their “promise keeper” bracelets. Invite kids to explain why they chose the word they chose.