



WEEK FOUR – MARCH 2024 – KINDER/FIRST

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

Bottom Line: *Jesus came to be our Savior*

Memory Verse: *“If possible, live in peace with everyone. Do that as much as you can.” – Romans 12:18 NIRV*

Virtue: *Peace – Proving you care more about each other than winning an argument*

Basic Truth: *I should treat others that way I want to be treated*

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

Explore: an activity that extends learning through hands-on experimentation + discovery

What You Need: Leaf cutouts; scissors; craft sticks; glue sticks; markers

What You Do:

- Welcome kids by name as they arrive
- Give each kid a pair of scissors, two leaf cut outs, and a craft stick
- Instruct the kids to fold their leaves in half, lengthwise
- Show kids how to cut slits along the edge of each leaf + instruct them to do so on both of their leaf cutouts
- Set out the glue sticks
- Direct the kids to open up their leaves
- Instruct the kids to glue both leaves to each side of a craft stick
 - To make sure the glue sticks properly, lead the kids to say their ABC's or sing "Happy Birthday" as they press down on the leaf to let the glue set
- Set out the markers
- Help kids to write their names on their leaves + set them aside
 - You will use these leaves for one of the activities after LG

What You Say:

"Your leaves look awesome! *[Transition]* In our Bible Story today, we'll hear about some people who waved palm branches like these to honor Someone very special who came to town! Let's go find out who they honored."

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

Hosanna! Yay, Jesus!

[Talk About God | Bible Story Review]

Imagine: an activity that promotes empathy and facilitates biblical application through role-play + reenactment

What You Need: “Palm Sunday Retelling” Activity Page; Palm Leaves from Opening Activity

What You Do:

- Give each kid the palm leaf craft stick they made
- Instruct the kids to stand + spread out
- Read the “Palm Sunday Retelling” Activity Page, directing the kids to wave their palm leaves at the appropriate places

What You Say:

“Have a seat, friends. Jesus entered Jerusalem to find a huge parade in His honor! Why? (Invite responses.) Because the crowds recognized that Jesus was the Savior

God had promised. Jesus did not come to rescue the people from the Romans as many people may have expected. Jesus knew that He was going to rescue people from something even bigger.

*The crowds that day didn't know that Jesus was about to do something no one else could do. Jesus was ready to save all of us from our sins and mistakes, to make a way for everyone to have a relationship with God that lasts forever. Jesus came as our Rescuer. **Jesus came to be our Savior.**"*

[Make It Personal] (Share why it's important to you that Jesus came to be our Savior. What does that truth mean to you? How does that change the way you think about yourself?)

Memory Verse Motions

[Hear From God | Memory Verse Activity]

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

What You Need: Bibles

What You Do:

- Instruct the kids to get into pairs
- Give each pair of kids a Bible
- Together, look up John 3:16 using the Bible Navigation Tips below
 - **Finding Verses w/ Kinders:** *Guide children to open the Bibles to the marked page. Point to the word John at the top of the page as you say "John" aloud. Then guide children to find the big number 3 on the page. Explain that this is the chapter number. Finally, guide them to look under the big 3 for the little 16; this is the verse number. Tell them to leave their finger on the verse as you read the verse aloud. Then lead everyone to say the verse together.*
 - **Finding Verses w/ 1st Graders:** *Guide the kids 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.” You can help by telling them that John starts with the letters J-O. 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 together or have them repeat after you
- Teach the kids the motions below to help them learn the verse
- Practice the motions together several times
 - *God*: point to the sky
 - *So loved*: hands crossed over chest
 - *The world*: make a big circle with your hands
 - *That he gave*: hold hands together as if holding a gift
 - *His one and only Son*: make a cross with your forearms
 - *Anyone who believes*: motion hands out and away from body (palms up)
 - *In him*: point to the sky
 - *Will not die*: Move finger as if saying “no”
 - *But will have eternal life (John 3:16)*: point to heaven

What You Say:

*“Great job! This verse tells us exactly why **Jesus came to our Savior**. Have you ever seen a lifeguard at the pool? What does a lifeguard do? (Pause for responses) They watch the water, and they’re ready to rescue someone who’s in trouble!*

*“Even though people turned away from God, God had a plan all along to save us, to rescue us, because we couldn’t do that ourselves. God sent Jesus because God **LOVES** us. God sent Jesus to make a way for all of us to have a relationship with God. God made a promise to send us a Savior, and God kept that promise by sending Jesus.”*

Pray + Dismiss

[Pray to God | Prayer Activity]

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

What You Need: Whiteboards; dry-erase markers

What You Do:

- Direct the kids to sit in a circle
- Give each a whiteboard and a dry-erase marker
- Instruct the kids to write their names on the center of their plate and pass it to the kind on their left
 - If it works better for your group, you can help them write the first letter of their name then fill in the rest of the letters for them
- Instruct the kids to pray for on the plate by saying, “Thank you, God, that Jesus came to be [kid’s name] Savior.”
- Direct the kids to place their boards on the floor in front of them
- Close your group time in prayer, saying each of the kids’ names as you pray + remember that **Jesus came to be our Savior**

What You Say:

“Thanks for praying for each other. Now, I want to pray for each of you! Let’s pray.

Dear God, You are an awesome God. Thanks for allowing us to come here today, to hear the good news about Jesus, and to have so much fun together. We know that You love us. You proved that love by sending Your only Son, Jesus. Thank You for sending Jesus to be (name each person around the circle, including you)’s Savior. We are so grateful for what Jesus has done for us. We love You and we pray these things in Jesus’ name. Amen.”

As adults arrive to pick up, invite the kids to teach the adults the motions they learned to help them remember John 3:16 and that Jesus came to be our Savior.