



WEEK FOUR – MARCH 2024 – PRESCHOOL

Bible Story: *Palm Sunday | Matthew 21:1-11, 15-16*

Key Question: *Who wants to be your friend forever?*

Bottom Line: *Jesus wants to be my friend forever.*

Memory Verse: *“I have called you friends.”– John 15:15 NIV*

Basic Truth: *Jesus wants to be my friend forever.*

Series Overview: Waiting to be picked by a team in grade school is agonizing. If you’re some of the last people chosen by a team, it means while everyone else is cheering, “Go team!” you’re probably thinking something like, “They don’t want me, and I don’t want to be here.” The truth is, we don’t all have the skills to hit home runs or run really fast. And that’s okay. What’s not okay is being unwanted. Thankfully, for all of us, Jesus wants everyone on His team! Jesus wants everyone everywhere to follow Him and be His friend forever. No matter what we can or can’t do, what we have done, what we look like, or where we live, Jesus is alive and He wants to be our friend...forever! And that kind of Good News makes us all want to say, “GO TEAM!”

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

Opening Small Group Activity

Play: an activity that encourages preschoolers to follow guidelines while having fun + learning new concepts

What You Need: “Coats + Leaves” Activity Page; scissors

What You Do:

- *BEFORE THE ACTIVITY*
 - Place the black-and-white sheets spaced out on the table with color cutouts around them
- *DURING THE ACTIVITY*
 - Encourage the children to work together to complete the patterns by placing the cutouts on the black-and-white version
 - Repeat as desired
- *AFTER THE ACTIVITY*
 - Introduce today’s Bible story

What You Say:

- *BEFORE THE ACTIVITY*
 - “Friends, come gather around the SG space!”
- *DURING THE ACTIVITY*
 - “Look! Do you see the coat and leaf patterns? There are color pictures that match! I want you to work together to complete the patterns. *(Pause.)* Great job, completing the patterns! Do you recognize these things? *(Pause.)* Yes, I see coats and palm leaves.”
- *AFTER THE ACTIVITY*
 - “In our Bible Story today, we’ll hear about some people who celebrated Jesus with coats and leaves! Let’s go find out what happened!”
- *TRANSITION*

- Move to Worship and Story by pretending to wave big palm branches as you go.

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

Story Focus: We can celebrate Jesus. As Jesus enters Jerusalem on a donkey, the people are so excited that they lay palm branches and coats on the road to make a special path for Jesus while they cheer and shout, “Hosanna! Hosanna! Yay, Jesus!” The people waved their palm branches in the air and celebrated Jesus. And we can celebrate Jesus today and everyday because Jesus wants to be our friend forever.

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

Go Team Jersey

[Live for God | Application Activity]

Create: an activity that allows preschoolers to review the Bible story, bottom line or memory verse by creating a craft to take home

What You Need: “Go Team Jersey” activity page; markers; stickers; stamps; washable ink pads; hole punch; yarn; baby wipes; permanent marker

What You Do:

- *BEFORE THE ACTIVITY*
 - Write each child’s name on their jersey, above the statement: **Jesus wants to be my friend forever**
- *DURING THE ACTIVITY*
 - Encourage the children to decorate their jerseys, then wear them
- *AFTER THE ACTIVITY*
 - Review the Bible story

- Clean up the supplies

What You Say:

- *BEFORE THE ACTIVITY*
 - “Friends, let’s make a cool team jersey! Come sit down in the circle and we’ll get started.”
- *DURING THE ACTIVITY*
 - “Decorate your team jersey with the markers, stickers, and stamps. (*Pause.*) Great job! Jesus loves you and wants you to be part of His team! Let’s put your jersey on and you can wear them while we review today’s Bible Story.”
- *AFTER THE ACTIVITY*
 - “Today we learned about the very first Palm Sunday. Jesus was going to the town of Jerusalem and the people were so excited! They wanted to celebrate and cheer for Jesus because they knew He was special, and they had heard about all the amazing things Jesus had done. The whole town lined up on the street to see Jesus. They took their coats off and laid them on the ground to make a special path for Jesus, then waved palm branches and shouted, “Hosanna! Hosanna! Yay, Jesus!” The people waved their palm branches and celebrated Jesus! We can celebrate Jesus today and every day because Jesus wants to be our friend forever. **Who wants to be your friend forever? Jesus wants to be my friend forever!**”

Journal + Prayer

[Pray to God | Prayer Activity]

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

What You Need: “Memory Verse Card” Activity Page; Bible; journal

What You Do:

- *BEFORE THE ACTIVITY*
 - Place “Memory Verse Card” in Bible at John 15:15
 - Keep this card in your Bible all month long

- *DURING THE ACTIVITY*
 - Sit down and gather the children around you.
 - Review the Memory Verse and motions, then encourage the children to help you make a list of things they about Jesus in the journal
- *AFTER THE ACTIVITY*
 - Pray with the children using the list you made in the journal

What You Say:

- *BEFORE THE ACTIVITY*
 - “Yay, Jesus! Now let’s sit down and talk about today’s Bible Story. One, two, three, sit down with me!”
- *DURING THE ACTIVITY*
 - *“(Open the Bible and lay it in front of the children.) “In our Bible Story today, lots of people cheered for Jesus when they saw Him coming down the road. What else did the people do? (Pause.) Yes, they spread their coats on the road, and they cut tree branches and spread them on the road too. They knew Jesus was special, but they didn’t know the BEST part yet! Jesus was coming because He wanted to be their friend forever! **Who wants to be your friend forever? Jesus wants to be my friend forever!** You got it! Jesus wants to call everyone His friend, just like He said in the Bible verse we have been learning. Jesus said, ‘I (point up) have called you (two fingers on top of two fingers) friends,’ (hook index fingers twice) John 15:15. (Open hands like a book.) Stand up with me and let’s say Jesus’ words together! Just say what I say and do what I do. ‘I (point up) have called you (two fingers on top of two fingers) friends,’ (hook index fingers twice) John 15:15. (Open hands like a book.) You sound wonderful! Now let’s sit down so we can write in our prayer journal and talk to God. (Open journal.) Today, we’re going to make a list of things we love about Jesus. You could love that Jesus wants to be your friend forever. Jesus always listens when you pray. Jesus wants to help you. Jesus loves you. Jesus loves EVERYONE! Jesus can do anything! Jesus is God’s Son. Jesus is always with you. Wow! There is so much to love about Jesus! When I say your name, tell me one thing you love about Jesus and I will write it in our journal. (Remember to print as you write in the journal, so the children can recognize their names and the letters.)”*
- *AFTER THE ACTIVITY*

- *(Hold up journal.) “Look at all the things we love about Jesus! Let’s use this list when we pray. Would anyone like to pray before I pray? (Give each child who wants to pray the opportunity to do so.) Dear God, thank You for giving us Jesus! We love Jesus so much! We love Jesus because (read the list the children made). Please help us to cheer for Jesus every day because Jesus is AMAZING! We love You, God. In Jesus’ name. Amen.”*