

April 13, 2025 "Palm Sunday" – Matt 21:1-17 **(Leader's Guide)**

1. Our world is going through some turbulent times. How might this help us identify with the crowds welcoming Jesus on Palm Sunday?

The crowds who welcomed Jesus on Palm Sunday were looking for a leader who might free them from oppression, bring justice, and restore the Kingdom of God. We too may be in a place of yearning for a leader who would be able to step up and 'make things right'.

2. What are some of the signs that Jesus fulfills that show he's the Messiah?

- *He starts at the Mt of Olives. (Zech 14:4)*
- *He's riding a donkey. (Zech 9:9)*
- *He's accepting the people's praises – Hosannas, palm branches, cloaks – just like the revolutionary leader Judas Maccabeus did.*
- *He clears out the Temple and restores it to worship. (Mal 3:1; Zech 14:21)*

3. Why did Jesus defend the children who were praising him in the Temple?

He knew they were right – he was the Son of David – and therefore it was right that they should praise him in the Temple.

4. "The ways of the kingdoms of this world do not make for a lasting peace." What are some of the ways of the kingdoms of this world? How do they contrast with the way of the kingdom of God?

There is a lot that could be said here, so allow space for discussion. The primary point is that the kingdom of God is not won by force, but by love.

5. Do you find yourselves on the ways of the kingdom of this world these days, in the face of everything that is heartbreaking in the world? How do we choose the way of the kingdom of God instead?

It is normal to find ourselves reacting to world events with despair, anger, fear, helplessness, etc. But Holy Week shows us that the way of love is a stronger and more all-encompassing than anything of the world, and it is the way that leads to a kingdom that will last forever.

6. As time permits, spend some time reflecting on St Francis' Prayer and how it can apply in our world today and in your own life.

Lord, make me an instrument of your peace:
where there is hatred, let me sow love;
where there is injury, pardon;

where there is doubt, faith;
where there is despair, hope;
where there is darkness, light;
where there is sadness, joy.

O divine Master, grant that we may not so much seek
to be consoled as to console,
to be understood as to understand,
to be loved as to love.
For it is in giving that we receive,
it is in pardoning that we are pardoned,
and it is in dying that we are born to eternal life. Amen.