

# A King On A Donkey! - Footsteps

LJ17

**Bible Verses:** 1Kings 1:32–35, Psalm 19:1–4, Zechariah 9:9, Matthew 21:1–11, Mark 11:8–10, Luke 19:28–40, John 12:12-13.

**To explore the account of Palm Sunday focussing on the recognition of Jesus as King, the sort of King He is and our response when we recognise Him as King of Kings.**

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## Leader's notes

When reading the account of Palm Sunday it would be good if the young people could grasp some of the excitement and joy of this one day in Jesus' life. Whilst at the same time being challenged to make their own choice as to whether or not they can worship Jesus as their personal King.

Within the account there are a number of paradoxes. On the face of it, it would seem foolish for the King of Kings, the Messiah, and the Saviour of the world to choose to ride a donkey when making His triumphant entry into Jerusalem. However, in reality this was the best choice not only showing the people part of His nature, but in line with Old Testament Scriptures. These portrayed Him as being a King in the tradition of David and Solomon and also fulfilling Old Testament prophecies on how the Messiah could be recognised. These last two points would have been recognised and seen as more relevant by the local Jewish people than possibly by today's generation of young people.

As the Galilean people recognised Jesus as being King and Messiah, they responded with worship, shouting and singing, waving palm branches and laying their cloaks and palm branches on the road for Him to ride over. This was a very multi-sensory approach to worship – involving most of the senses. This was also sacrificial with the laying down of their cloaks and symbolic as they bowed down to do this. It all seems to have been very spontaneous and a wonderful response to the Messiah.

The challenge for youth leaders is to maintain this freshness of response to Jesus, week by week. To accept that different people worship in different ways and that what might appear chaotic and raucous on the outside may well be very acceptable to God.

The Response sections do just this by encouraging different ways of expressing worship to God. By using flags, youngsters who may not yet be ready to sing the songs, may be able to join, in a different way. Homemade instruments and flags etc. are just as good as expensive technology and gadgets for worship – it's the heart response that's important. Well used cloaks and palm leaves from the fields were acceptable to Jesus, so whatever we can offer is acceptable as well.

Finally there is the fact that come what may, God will always be proclaimed. He will always be worshipped and if we don't do it then even the stones will do it. Let's pray that during this session the young people will come to worship God in spirit and in truth.

The 15+ meeting plan equivalent to this plan – LJ17 – 'Palm Sunday' - has recently undergone a full review and the following two new activities have been added which will be good to use with young people who have little or no Church experience:

- Digging In – 'To Make Him Feel Special.'
- Response – 'Palm Sunday Today.'

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# If I Were King For A Day

Warming Up

15 mins

Activity

Get everyone to sit on the floor in a circle. Then put a chair in the circle (as part of the circle).

Each person in turn sits on the chair and gives a command to the rest of the group. The rest of the group have to perform whatever actions they have been commanded to do, after responding with *'Whatever you say, your majesty!'*

Examples of commands might be to touch all four corners of the meeting place, to do 10 star jumps, to sing Humpty Dumpty etc.

Once everyone has had their turn, change the activity by getting each person to sit on the throne (chair) again, in turn. This time they need to wear the crown and cape and finish the phrase *"If I were king I would ....."* saying one thing they would do if they had the power of a king.

**The Point:** Just for fun and also as a slight introduction to Jesus' Kingship and the one day that the people recognised Him as King.

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## Equipment

Crown (from cracker) and a cape (tea towel or similar).

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## Choices

Getting Started

10 mins

Activity

Explain that you are going to play a game where the young people will have to make some choices. Each time you will give 2 choices and then will explain which end of the meeting room represents each choice. If they really have no preference or don't know then they can stay in the middle of the room. Should they have a slight preference they can just move a little way towards the end of the room of their choice.

Stress that no one is going to criticise them for their choices, they just need to be as honest as they can be.

To help make the activity work well, congratulate those who move quickly and with decision in the first couple of rounds. Start with everyone standing in the middle of the room. After the first choice there is no need to bring everyone back into the middle, they can move from where they are.

1. McDonalds or Kentucky Fried Chicken (say the choices and then state which end of the room is for each choice)?
2. Custard or Jelly?
3. Cinema or Theatre?
4. Long hair or Short hair?

5. City or Beach?
6. Singing songs or Listening to music?
7. Praying by self or Praying with others?
8. Loud or Quiet?
9. Donkey or Horse?
10. Jesus a King or Jesus a good man?

Thank everyone for joining in so well (hopefully) and explain that the activity illustrated some of the choices which people had to make in today's account from Jesus' life. We all have choices to make and it's good if we can make them independently.

**The Point:** To encourage the young people to start to think about making choices and encouraging them to make them independently.

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## ***Equipment***

None.

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## **Donkey Riding**

Digging In

20 mins

 Bible Study

In pairs spend a few minutes designing a 'King Mobile' – a vehicle fitting for a king. If you want to you could show some pictures of the Pope Mobile which was designed to keep the Pope very visible but also very safe and comfortable (with climate control). For pictures just type Pope Mobile into search engine and request images.

After a few minutes ask everyone to share their drawings, explaining any special features.

Explain to the group that you are now going to discover how Jesus was recognised and welcomed as King by the people. When He made His way into Jerusalem it was a right royal procession! But at first glance his form of transport seems a bit unglamorous for a king.

All together read about it from Matthew 21:1–11.

Ask the young people to get back in their pairs and to think of one reason why Jesus may have chosen a donkey as his mode of transport when He made his way from Bethphage into Jerusalem. Listen to their answers and thank them for their ideas. Ask them to get back into their pairs and to look up the following 2 references:

Zechariah 9:9

1 Kings 1:32-35

For each reference they need to say what the link is with these bits from the Old Testament to the event you have just read together.

Again, listen to their ideas and then say that by travelling in just the way described by Zechariah, Jesus was living out the Old Testament prophecy that the promised King, Messiah, Saviour would be

recognised by His riding on a donkey. The verses from the book of Kings show how Solomon, the son of King David, rode on a donkey to his anointing as king. The people following Jesus would know all about that and they would have thought it fitting that Jesus should do the same.

In choosing to ride on a donkey Jesus was confirming that He was a King – like King David and King Solomon, but more than that for He was the promised Messiah sent by God to rescue his people. The Galilean people certainly seemed to have understood who He was – cheering, waving branches and putting down their cloaks and branches for Him to travel over. Definitely a welcome fit for a king.

Finish by saying that the cheering crowds may have had an understanding of who Jesus was but in Matthew 21:10 there is an undercurrent of suspicion as well as curiosity as it says that the city people of Jerusalem were stirred up by Jesus' arrival and wanted to know who He was.

**The Point:** Jesus' choice of a donkey at first seems incongruous with His Kingship but in the light of Old Testament Scriptures was the most appropriate choice.

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## ***Equipment***

Bibles, pens and paper.

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## **Flags Or Banners**

Response

15 mins

 Craft Ideas

Lay out the materials to make flags or banners. The young people can work in pairs or individually to create their own flag or banner which can then be used in worship.

Due to the limited time, suggest they keep their designs simple, perhaps suggesting just one characteristic of Jesus e.g. a crown (His Kingship), a donkey (His humility) etc.

**The Point:** To encourage the young people to reflect again on who Jesus is and to make something that will encourage them to worship Him.

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## ***Equipment***

Pieces of material, fabric pens, doweling, needles and thread or strong glue, scissors, pencils and chalks.

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## **Tell The World**

Response

10 mins

 Worship and Reflection

Use the flags you made in the previous Response section, to worship God as you play a couple of

worship songs.

Suggested songs:

'I see the King of Glory (Hosanna)' by Hillsong United

'King of Kings, Majesty' by Jarrod Cooper

'Tell the world' by Jonathon Douglas, Joel Houston & Marty Sampson/Hillsong Publishing

**The Point:** To encourage the young people to worship God more fully by using songs and flags.

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## ***Equipment***

Flags from previous Response section, CD player, worship CDs and the words to songs.

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# **Your King Is Coming**

Response

10 mins

 Memory Verse

The memory verse is:

***“Rejoice greatly, people of Jerusalem!  
Shout for joy, people of Jerusalem!  
Your king is coming to you.  
He does what is right, and he saves.  
He is gentle and riding on a donkey,  
on the colt of a donkey.”***

**Zechariah 9:9 (NCV)**

Divide the young people into two groups. Display the memory verse on the wall using PowerPoint, acetate or a large sheet of paper. Have one group start by saying the first 3 lines of the memory verse and then get the second group to respond with the next 3 lines.

Then see how many different ways you can do it – slowly, quickly, whispering etc. At sometime swap over so the groups do the opposite 3 lines.

Finish by switching off the words and get each group to say their lines as loudly and with as much enthusiasm as possible.

**The Point:** To encourage the young people to learn Scripture which will help build them up in their own walk with Jesus.

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## ***Equipment***

Words of the memory verse.

