



# Jesus' Triumphal Entry

Matthew 21:1–11



## LESSON GOAL

The child will not only praise Jesus with his lips but will also obey Him with his life.

## BIBLE TRUTHS

- Jesus rode into Jerusalem on a donkey's colt.
- The crowds praised Jesus as the Messiah.
- The people were not willing to make Jesus the king of their hearts.

## KEY VERSE

"Then the multitudes who went before and those who followed cried out, saying: 'Hosanna to the Son of David! Blessed is He who comes in the name of the LORD! Hosanna in the highest!'" —Matthew 21:9

## APPLICATION

- Rejoice that Jesus is the Son of David.
- Obey Jesus as king in every area of your life.
- Model Jesus' meekness in your own life.

## NEXT WEEK

Jesus Confronts the Pharisees  
Matthew 21:33–46

### Symbol Key



Craft



Finger Play



Memory Verse



Object Lesson



Game



Visual Aid



Center



Activity



Q & A



Age Group

4



## PREPARE WITH THE TRUTH

*"Therefore you shall lay up these words of mine in your heart and in your soul... you shall teach them to your children." —Deuteronomy 11:18–19*

Please take time to prepare your mind and heart to accurately handle the truths of God's Word (2 Tim. 2:15). Read through the Bible background and study the truths contained in this lesson. Crucial background information is included here that will aid you in understanding the Scripture.

### Bible Background

#### Introduction

Jesus' resurrection of Lazarus was His greatest miracle before His death (John 11). While some believed in Jesus when they heard about Lazarus (John 11:45), the Pharisees and chief priests responded to the miracle by plotting to kill Him (John 11:53). As the last Passover of Jesus' life neared, Jerusalem was inundated by Jews who had come to observe the feast. (Over two million Jews may have been in the city.) The city was abuzz with rumors of whether Jesus would come to observe the Passover or not (John 11:55–56). Ever since the priests and Pharisees had agreed to kill Jesus, Jesus "no longer walked openly among the Jews" (John 11:53). The crowds were anxious to see if Jesus would come into the city. The chief priests and Pharisees were also anxious, having given a command "that if anyone knew where He was, he should report it, that they might seize Him" (John 11:57).

Although Jesus had avoided the chief priests and Pharisees, the time had come for Jesus' last journey to Jerusalem before His death. After starting out, Jesus took the disciples aside and again told them how He was going to be betrayed, condemned, tortured, killed, and resurrected (Matt. 20:17–19). Jesus stopped in Jericho along the way, a city about fifteen miles northeast of Jerusalem. In Jericho, He healed Bartimaeus and another blind man (Matt. 20:29–34; Mark 10:46–52; Luke 18:35–43) and pronounced the salvation of Zacchaeus (Luke 19:1–10). Jesus arrived in Bethany six days before the Passover, probably in time to spend the Sabbath with Mary, Martha, and Lazarus. (Bethany was on the east side of the Mount of Olives, only about two miles from Jerusalem.) At dinner, Mary anointed Jesus' feet and wiped them with her hair (John 12:1–3). When the news spread to Jerusalem that Jesus was in Bethany, curious Jews traveled there, not only to see Jesus, but also to see Lazarus, whom Jesus had raised from the dead (John 12:9).

On the next day, word spread from Bethany to Jerusalem that Jesus was coming to the great city (John 12:12). A great multitude "took branches of palm trees and went out to meet Him, and cried out, 'Hosanna! Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord! The King of Israel!'" (John 12:13). The Jewish multitude was eager to accept Jesus as their earthly king. Sadly, the offering of their lips did not reflect the disposition of their hearts. They wanted to be delivered from every oppressor but their own wickedness.

#### Preparation for Jesus' Entrance (Matt. 21:1–3)

After leaving Bethany to go to Jerusalem, Jesus began to prepare for His entrance into the city. (Perhaps He had heard or seen the crowds coming toward Him from Jerusalem.) Jesus sent two of His disciples into the nearby village of Bethphage to get a colt for Him to ride into the city. Jesus gave them specific instructions: "Go into the village opposite you, and immediately you will find a donkey tied, and a

colt with her. Loose them and bring them to Me" (Matt. 21:2). Jesus was aware that the disciples' action could be interpreted as theft, so He told them to respond, "The Lord has need of them," when asked what they were doing (21:3). It is impossible to know if Jesus had made plans with the donkey's owner ahead of time or if He was exercising His omniscience and omnipotence over the situation. The disciples did just what Jesus told them to (21:6). Although Matthew does not mention the details, Mark and Luke reveal that the disciples found the donkeys exactly where Jesus said they would be and responded to the men who asked what they were doing exactly as Jesus had commanded (Mark 11:4–6; Luke 19:32–34).

### **Prophecy of Jesus' Entrance (Matt. 21:4–5)**

When Jesus told the disciples to get the colt, He was intentionally fulfilling Old Testament prophecy and proclaiming Himself to be the promised Messiah. Referring to Jesus' riding of a colt, Matthew says, "All this was done that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet" (Matt. 21:4). The Old Testament prophet Zechariah announced to the "daughter of Zion," the inhabitants of Jerusalem, that their king would come (Zech. 9:9). But He would not come like the kings of other nations, riding a war-horse or chariot. Instead, Zechariah prophesied that He would come "sitting on a donkey, a colt, the foal of a donkey" (Matt. 21:5). Zechariah attributes three characteristics to the coming King: He is just; He has salvation; and He is lowly (Zech. 9:9). Of those three, Matthew emphasizes that Jesus is "lowly." Instead of the warrior king Israel wanted to deliver them from Roman bondage, Jesus revealed that He was a humble and meek king who did not come to liberate His people physically but spiritually. Jesus did not come to make war with Rome but to bring men to peace with God.

### **Praise at Jesus' Entrance (Matt. 21:6–11)**

After the two disciples returned with the donkeys, Jesus continued on His way toward Jerusalem. The disciples placed their clothes on the donkey for Jesus to sit on (Matt. 21:7). Although Jesus only sat on the colt, the mother's presence would have been soothing to the untrained donkey. The great crowds showed submission to Jesus by "paving" the roads with their clothes (21:8). They also "cut down branches from the trees and spread them on the road" (21:8). John 12:13 reveals that the people had cut off palm branches. During the Feast of Tabernacles, God commanded that the people take palm branches and "rejoice before the Lord your God for seven days" (Lev. 23:40). The palm branches were not part of the Passover feast but they had become a national symbol of rejoicing. Two centuries earlier the Israelites had welcomed the military hero Simon the Maccabee with palm branches. Following the tradition, Jerusalem eagerly welcomed Jesus, hoping He would deliver them from Rome.

The crowd not only laid down their clothes and palm branches but also lifted up their voices. Both the crowds who went before Jesus and those who followed praised God and proclaimed the Messiah (Matt. 21:9; Mark 11:9). Luke 19:37 depicts the "multitude of the disciples" as they began "to rejoice and praise God with a loud voice for all the mighty works they had seen." Perhaps Lazarus or Bartimaeus were with Jesus as living testimonies of His marvelous power. The people proclaimed, "Hosanna to the Son of David!" (Matt. 21:9). "Hosanna" was a transliteration of the Hebrew phrase "Save us!" Both "Hosanna" and "Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord" are phrases that come from Psalm 118:25–26. The term Hosanna had become a way to express exaltation and honor. The people's praise of Jesus as the "Son of David" and as the one "who comes in the name of the Lord" (Matt. 21:9) pointed to their belief that Jesus was the promised Messiah. Similarly, the people shouted, "Blessed is the kingdom of our father

David that comes in the name of the Lord!" (Mark 11:10) and they praised Jesus as the "The King of Israel!" (John 12:13). The crowds rejoiced that God had sent a king to deliver His people. For a short time, the crowds had placed their faith in Jesus as the only hope for Israel.

As the procession entered Jerusalem, news of Jesus' dramatic but humble entrance spread across the city. Matthew describes the whole city as curious and asking, "Who is this?" (21:10). The city was jam-packed with possibly more than two million people. Many of those present had seen Jesus' miracles and heard His teachings, while others had only heard about Him. They city quickly asked the praising crowd for their estimation of who Jesus was. The crowd answered, "This is Jesus, the prophet from Nazareth of Galilee" (21:11). Jesus, the great Prophet and King of Israel, had entered the city of Jerusalem.

### Conclusion

Before a week had passed, the crowds were calling for the crucifixion of Christ. Their voice of praise had turned into a vote for destruction. Their shouts of Hosanna had turned into shouts of hatred. While the masses were eager to be delivered from Rome, they were not willing to be delivered from their sins. When they had to choose, they chose the insurrectionist Barabbas over the lowly Jesus. The people were willing to lend their lips to Jesus but not their lives.

## POINT TO THE TRUTH

*"Give ear, O my people, to my law; incline your ears to the words of my mouth."  
—Psalm 78:1*

This section includes questions to review last week's lesson and ideas to prepare students for this week's lesson. Choose from the following ideas to point to the truths of this lesson.



### Review Questions

What kind of lesson did Jesus teach in last week's lesson?  
*Jesus taught a parable.*

What did the landowner do?  
*The landowner hired men to work in his vineyard.*

What did the landowner say he would pay the first group?  
*He said that he would pay them a denarius.*

How many times did the landowner go out and hire laborers to work in the vineyard?  
*He went out five times*

What happened at the end of the day?  
*The landowner paid the servants for their work.*

What did the landowner pay everyone?  
*The landowner paid all the workers a denarius no matter how long they worked.*



## Difficult Concepts

**Hosanna:** Hosanna is an expression which originally meant "Save now!" By the time of Jesus, the expression had largely become a term of praise. Perhaps a comparable expression today would be "God is great!," "God is powerful!," or "God saves!" The teacher can have the children proclaim the praises and then proclaim "Hosanna."

**Donkey:** Donkeys would sometimes be ridden by kings in times of peace. Leaders of nations today ride in limousines with bullet-proof glass, not on donkeys. Teacher can ask what the president arrives in when he comes to a city.

**Palm Branches:** Palm branches had become a symbol of rejoicing in Israel. A parallel to the people's laying palm branches before Jesus may be either the throwing of confetti at a party or the throwing of rice or blowing bubbles at a wedding. Both are traditional American symbols of rejoicing.

**"Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord:"** If someone comes in the name of someone else, they come as that person's representative and with their blessing. Tell children how someone could come in the president's name. If the president really sent him, he would have authority and would represent the president.

**Triumphal:** Because the people of Jerusalem rejoiced in Jesus' arrival, it was a triumphal entry. He was praised as the Messiah. The people received him as a conqueror, a victor and their savior. A parallel for today could be how a sports team is welcomed back to their home town after winning a championship or a nation's military is welcomed back after winning a war.



## Find the Ride

Before today's lesson cut a piece of poster board in the shape of a donkey. After decorating the donkey, hide it somewhere in the classroom. The class should have their eyes closed while you hide the donkey. Divide the class into two teams and have them look for the donkey around the room one team at a time. Each team will be timed and the team with the fastest time of finding the donkey wins the game. After playing this games several times, introduce the students to the donkey in today's lesson. Jesus sends two of his disciples into the village of Bethpage where they would find a donkey for him to ride into Jerusalem. (The donkey piece can then be used for the lesson time.)



## A Special Guest

Have another teacher dress as either an Israelite or the donkey from today's lesson. At the beginning of class, inform the students that you have a special guest that has come to visit them today. Before the guest enters the room, instruct the class on some different ways that they as a class can give their guest a warm welcome (i.e. loud applause, cheering, saying thank you, shaking their hand, serving them, or even bowing at their feet etc.) This would be a good time to go over some different ways that people might greet a very special guest. As the guest enters, the class warmly welcomes the visiting Israelite. At this point the visiting Israelite thanks the class for such a wonderful welcome, telling them how special it has made him feel to have been so nicely welcomed. Then the visitor goes on to tell the class, "But I would like to tell you about another great welcome that I saw in Israel many many years ago!" The visitor can then go on to teach today's lesson, telling of Jesus' triumphal entry into Jerusalem as if he had actually been there.





## Rolling out the Red Carpet

As an activity in class the children can make preparations for a royal welcome. Have them cut out palm branches, make paper link chains for streamers, and practice shouting "Hosanna." Some butcher paper can be rolled out to form a pathway and the children can stand on either side to form a welcoming procession. Show them some pictures of modern-day parades. Have they ever been part of one? Who is the center of attention in a parade, the crowds or the person whom the crowds have come to see? In today's lesson, we are going to focus our attention on Jesus, just as all the crowds did when He came into Jerusalem.



## How to Treat a King

Choose a student from the class to be the king. Ask the rest of the students how they would expect this king to rule his country. How would they treat him? In today's lesson, they will learn how Jesus presented Himself as the Messiah and King. We will also learn how the people responded to Him.

# PROCLAIM THE TRUTH

*"Telling to the generation to come the praises of the LORD, and His strength and His wonderful works that He has done." —Psalm 78:4*

This section includes the Bible lesson, lesson questions, and praise and worship ideas. Song suggestions are included that you can use to proclaim your worship to God. Use the lesson questions to check the students' understanding. This section also includes various presentation ideas to use alongside the teaching time. Read the Bible passage several times before you read these pages. All teaching should be done right from the Bible.

## Bible Lesson

Jesus had warned the disciples that the time of His death was coming soon. His miracles had made the chief priests and Pharisees even angrier with Him, and they planned a way to kill Him. Jesus had been staying away from them for some time, but He knew it was time to start His journey back to Jerusalem to face them.

On the way to Jerusalem Jesus sent His disciples to get a young donkey that He might ride it into the city. He told them, "Go into the village opposite you, and immediately you will find a donkey tied, and a colt with her. Loose them and bring them to Me. And if anyone says anything to you, you shall say, 'The Lord has need of them,' and immediately he will send them" (21:3).

Jesus was fulfilling an Old Testament prophecy. The prophet Zechariah had not said that the king of the Jews would not come to them riding on a war-horse or a chariot, but that He would come riding on a young donkey. This is a very lowly way to make an entrance, on the back of a donkey. Jesus did not come to make war with other nations and free the Jews from the Romans, but to save the Jews from their sins. Jesus was not arriving as their earthly king, who would have certainly arrive on a war-horse or on chariot, but as their heavenly king.

The disciples did exactly what Jesus had asked them to do and found the young donkey. When they were asked why they were taking it, they told the man just what Jesus had told them to say, and he sent them on their way with the donkey. When they brought it to Jesus, they all continued on to Jerusalem.

The disciples prepared the donkey for Jesus to ride by laying some of their clothing on its back. Jesus sat on top of the donkey as they came to the great crowds that had gathered in Jerusalem. In respect of Jesus the people spread their clothes on the road. They also cut down big palm branches and laid them on the road before Him. The crowds were honoring Jesus with their actions, and then they began honoring Him with their voices. They praised Him with loud voices, saying, "Hosanna to the Son of David! Blessed is He who comes in the name of the LORD! Hosanna in the highest!" (21:9). The word hosanna means "save us". By calling Jesus the Son of David, and saying that He came in the name of the Lord, they were recognizing that Jesus was the Messiah that God had promised to send them. They believed that Jesus would deliver Israel from Rome but they did not understand that He had come to deliver Israel from their sins.



## Lesson Questions

Where were Jesus and His disciples traveling to?

*They were heading to Jerusalem.*

Where does Jesus send His disciples and what does He ask them to do?

*Jesus sends them into the town and asks them to bring the donkey colt back to Him.*

How does Jesus enter into Jerusalem?

*The disciples put their clothing on the colt and Jesus rides it into Jerusalem.*

What did the crowds say when they saw Jesus entering the city?

*They said, "Hosanna to the Son of David! Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord! Hosanna in the highest!" (21:9).*

What did the people do as Jesus came down the street?

*The people in Jerusalem laid their coats and palm branches on the road before Jesus.*

## Presentation Ideas



### A Beka Book® Flash-A-Cards®

Use appropriate A Beka Book® Flash-A-Cards® with the lesson.



### Betty Lukens Flannel Graph

Use appropriate flannel graph pieces with the lesson.



### Can You Hear It?

In a parade, we often focus on all the sights, but what about the sounds? Divide the class into different groups, each having their own sound to make: the clip-clop of a donkey, the swoosh of palm branches, the clapping of hands, the shouting of praises, the murmuring of the Pharisees, etc. As you retell the story, allow each group to participate by making their sound at the appropriate time.



### Welcome

Give the children some streamers and blowers and instruct them to be ready to welcome a special guest whom you have invited. Have one of the teachers come in dressed up as an Israelite. After thanking the class for their warm welcome he



can tell them about the day he part of this massive crowd of people who welcomed Jesus into Jerusalem as their king. He can show them some palm branches and cloaks to show what they used instead of streamers. He can also explain what the crowds were shouting and what it meant. Then have the man's countenance change as he hangs his head in sorrow, "If only..." After the man leaves the teacher can ask the children if they know what had upset the man so much. He had left saying, "if only." Explain that "if only" the crowds had really meant what they said—then they would never have crucified the Lord only a few days later. Like them, we need to really love Jesus rather than just say nice things with out lips.

## Praise and Worship

*Bless His Holy Name*

*Crown Him With Many Crowns*

*Majesty*

## PRACTICE THE TRUTH

*"That they may set their hope in God, and not forget the works of God, but keep His commandments." —Psalm 78:7*

Choose ideas from this section that review and apply the truths of the Bible lesson.



### Enhanced Coloring Page

After coloring the page, have the children glue cutouts of shirts and palm leaves.



### "Bringing the Donkey and Colt to Jesus"

Materials: copies of "Bringing the Donkey and Colt to Jesus" craft pages, crayons, glue, 10" piece of yarn, and scissors

Directions: Give each student a copy of the base sheet (with holes already punched where indicated, and slits cut along the lines), one donkey, and one strip. Instruct them to color the donkeys and the tree. Then have them fold the strip along the dotted lines and set it aside. The students can then pull the yarn through the holes going from the front to the back and back through the front. Insert the folded strip through the slits and glue it to itself to keep from unfolding. (the strip should slide back and forth) Have students glue the donkeys to the slider so that they can slide across the page. Tie the yarn loosely around the necks of the donkeys.



### "What Were They Saying"

Materials: copies of "What Were They Saying" craft page, scissors, glue, crayons  
Directions: Give each child a copy of the craft page. Have them cut off the bottom strip and then cut out each word balloon. Have them color the face and then glue the word balloons around the face.



### "Palm Branch"

Materials: copies of "Palm Branch" on green paper, scissors, glue

Give the students copies of the "Palm Branch" craft page. Have them cut out the palm branch and verse. Then have them glue the verse to the palm branch.



### **"Triumphal Entry Scene"**

Materials: copies of "Triumphal Entry Scene," construction paper, scissors, glue, and crayons

Directions: Color and cut out the pieces from the "Triumphal Entry Scene" craft page and glue them to a blank piece of construction paper.

### **Coloring Pages**

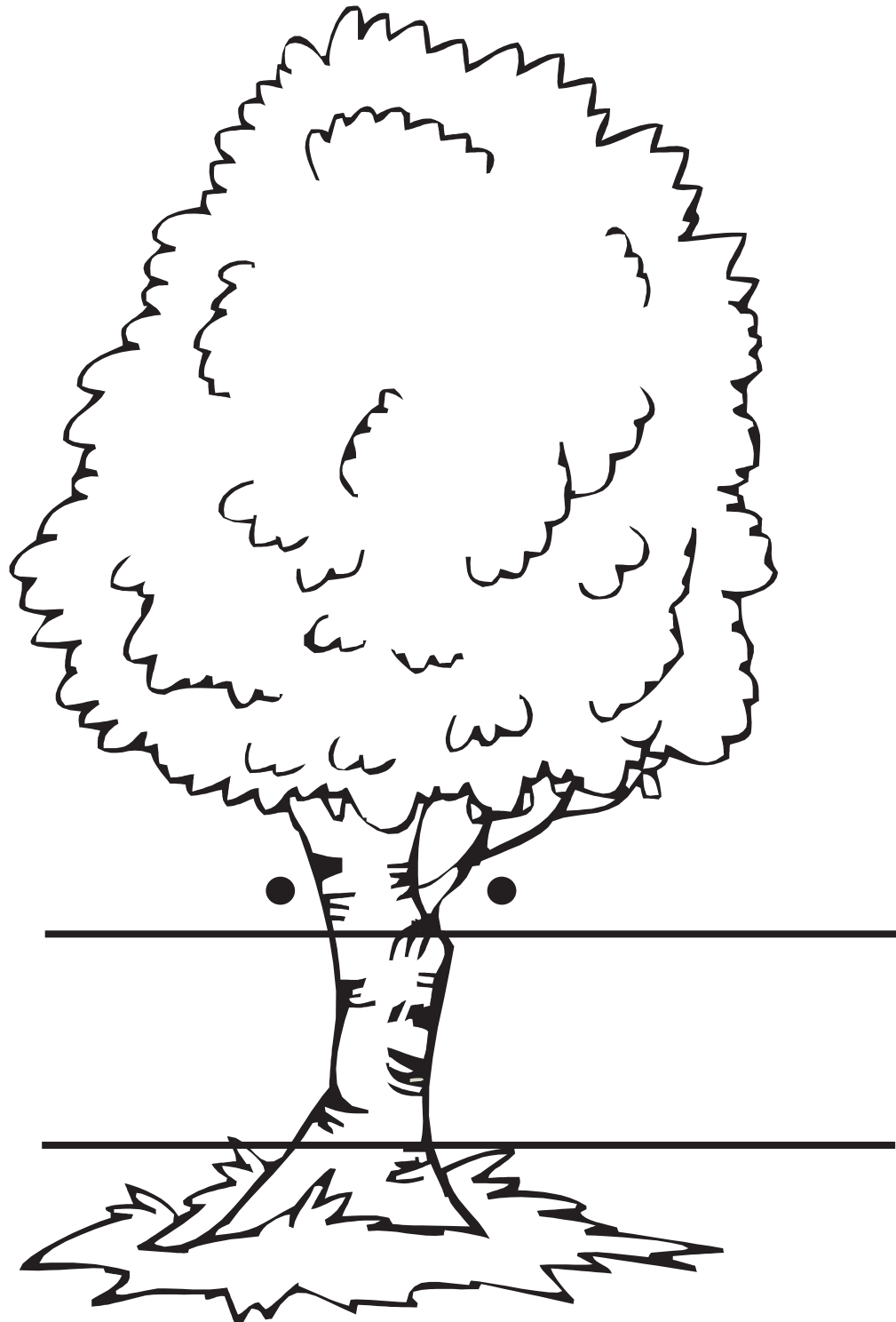
Give each child a copy of the coloring pages at the back of the lesson. He or she can color the pages in class or take them home to color.



### **MEMORY VERSE**

"Hosanna to the Son of David! 'Blessed is He who comes in the name of the LORD! Hosanna in the highest!'" —*Matthew 21:9b*

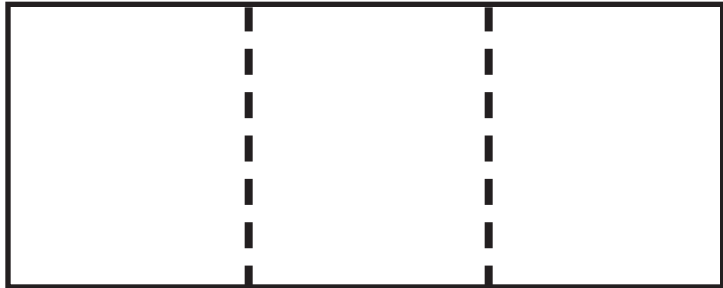
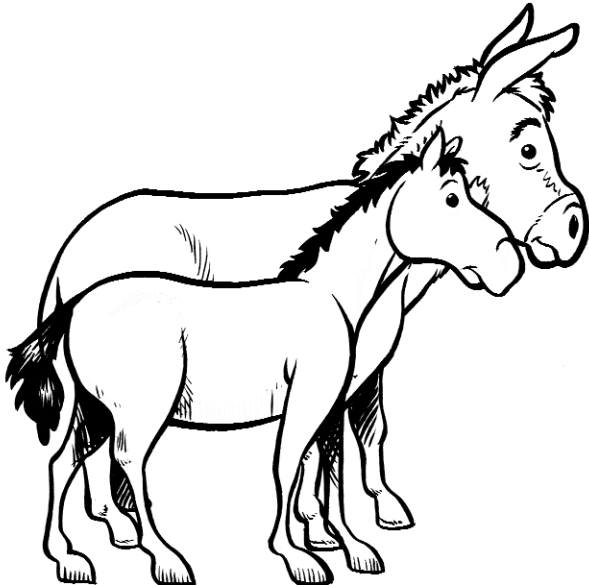
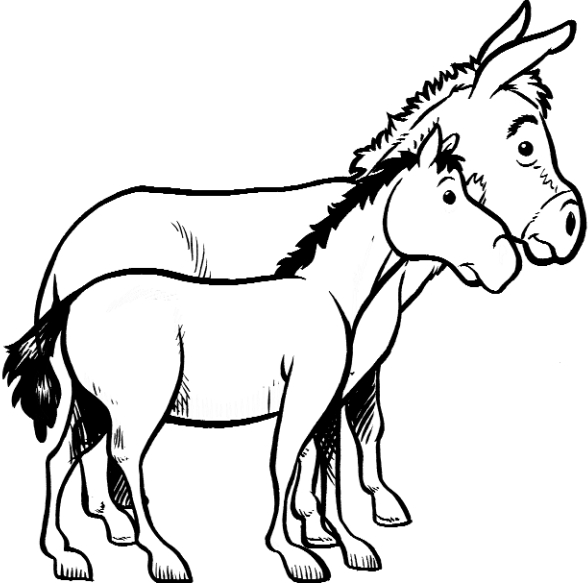
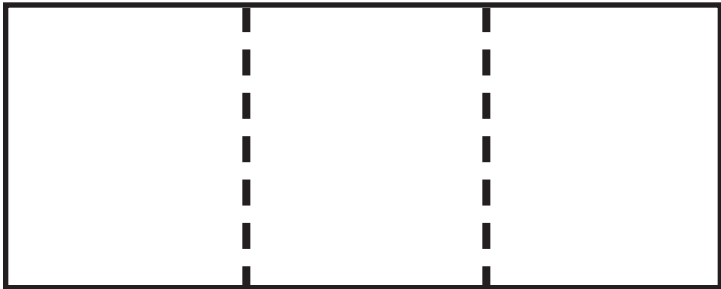
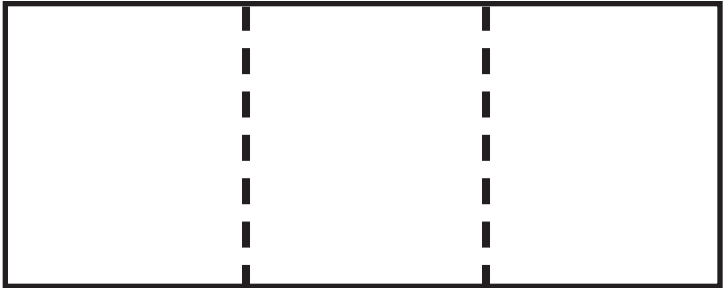
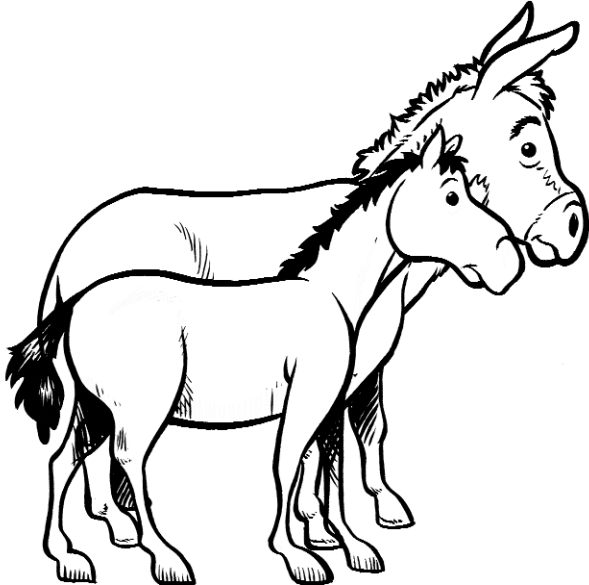
# Bringing the Donkey and Colt to Jesus



Jesus said to two of His disciples, "Go into the village opposite you, and immediately you will find a donkey tied, and a colt with her. Loose them and bring them to me" (Matt. 21:2).



# Bringing the Donkey and Colt to Jesus






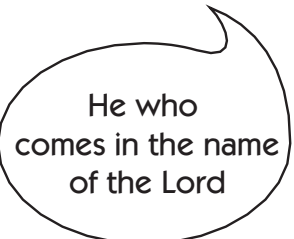




# What Were They Saying?

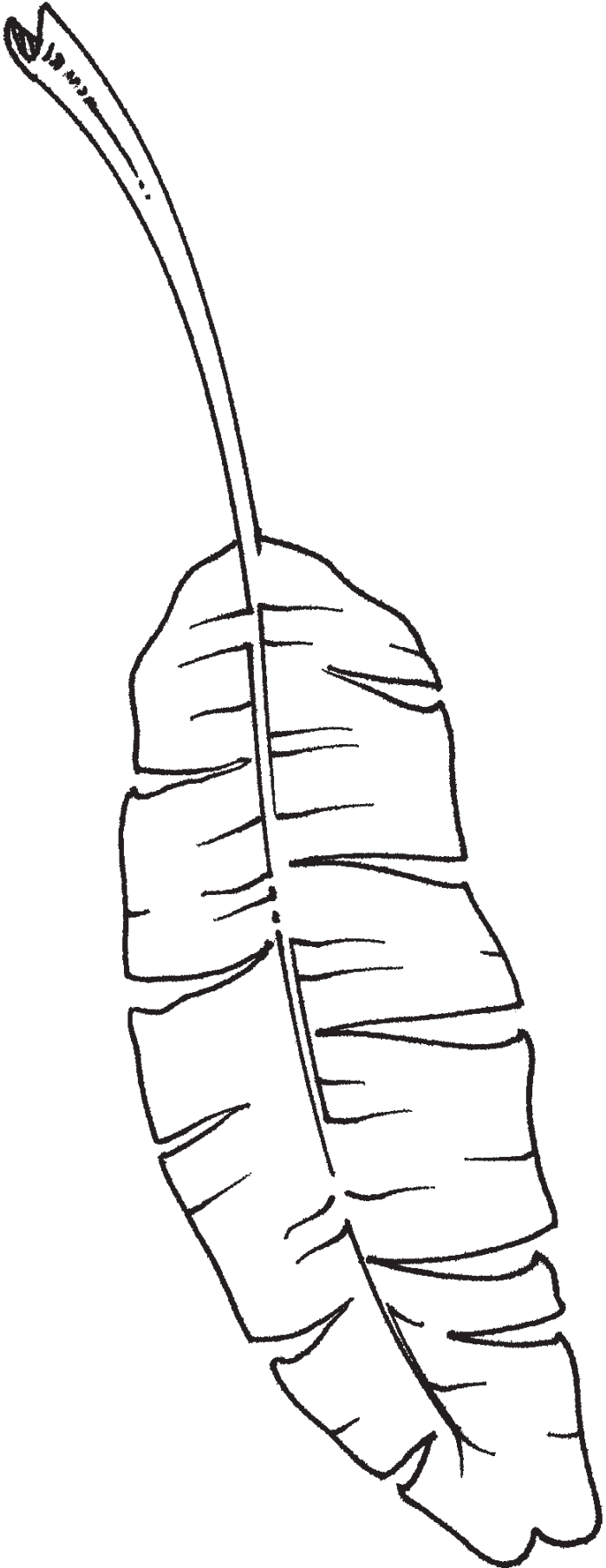


Matthew 21:9

 <p>Hosanna!</p>	 <p>Son of David</p>	 <p>Blessed</p>	 <p>He who comes in the name of the Lord</p>
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# Palm Branch



**"Hosanna to the Son of David! 'Blessed is He who comes in the name of the LORD!' Hosanna in the highest!" —Matthew 21:8**



# Triumphal Entry Scene

