

NOTE: This lesson is not structured like the others. This reading in church is very long and this lesson plan has been adjusted to take that into account.

Focus: Jesus gave everything he had for us.

Materials:

Prayer Altar: Cross, Candle, Chasuble on stand (priest's vestment) and Altar Cloth
Video: The Story of Easter
Book: Read and Share Bible
Book: The Giving Tree
Book: The Donkey Who Served the King.
CD: Toddler Bible Songs

Gathering (children find/sit on a carpet square)

Say: Good Morning everyone, my name is _____. Last week we talked about Jesus telling his disciples that his time had come to be taken to the Father. What miracles did you see this week that reminded you of God? Today we are going to talk about Holy Week. The week before Easter. It is very important to remember that Jesus died for us, so that we can be happier on Easter, when we celebrate his rising from the dead.

Opening Prayer

Together we make the Sign of the Cross (do in reverse so children can mirror).

Say: Now let's put our hands together and bow our heads.

Almighty Father, help us remember the love you have for us. We ask this through your son, Jesus Christ, our Lord, who lives and reigns with you in heaven forever and ever. Amen.

Song/Movement

SHOW VIDEO

Play: "The Story of Easter" video. Stop the video after the entrance into Jerusalem. (approx. 4 minutes long)

Main idea:

- *The people believed Jesus was going to be the new kings. They put palm leaves in front of him and thought he should be the new ruler of Jerusalem.*

Play music, encourage children to stretch or move to the music (clapping, stamp feet march in place to the beat), turn to each other and shake hands, saying hello, etc.

Gospel Story

Say: Today we are reading from the Gospel of Mark

Have children make sign of the cross on their forehead, mouth and heart saying. *"Lord, open my mind, my lips and my heart so that I may learn it, speak it and love it."*

Read: Read and Share Bible, pp. 360-363, Jesus Borrows a Donkey and Jesus Rides Like a King

After the reading say: *The Gospel of the Lord*

Children respond: *Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ*

Discussion Starters:

- *When was the first passover celebrated?*
- *What did Jesus tell his disciples to bring him?*
- *What did he do with the colt?*
- *What did the people shout?*
- *What did they remember from scripture (or Bible stories)?*

Gospel Activity

Activity 1:

Read "The Giving Tree"

Explain that just how the tree gave everything it could to the boy/man, Jesus gave everything he could to us so that all believers could live with him in heaven. Jesus loves us that much. We should always remember to live like Jesus wants us to as a 'Thank you' to him for loving us so much.

(This is a hard concept for small children. Try to help them understand that the life Jesus is raised to is not like it is here on earth. In heaven everything will be made perfect and we will live with God forever.)

Complete the weekly bulletin as a group

Activity 2:

If after completing the bulletin as a group, you still need another activity.

Read "The Donkey Who Served the King"—See last page of book for discussion points.

Closing Prayer

(Children respond: "I Believe!")

Ask: *Do you believe in God, who sent Jesus to give his life for us?*

Do you believe in Jesus, who did what God needed him to do and loved us so much?

Do you believe in the Holy Spirit, who gives us the wisdom and strength to obey God?

Sending Forth

Say: *This week the whole church remembers what Jesus did for us. Jesus gave us a very special gift. You can remember what Jesus did by giving away a toy or book that you don't play with anymore to someone who does not have one, a friend, a brother or sister.*

Lining Up/Closing Song

Play "Jesus Loves Me" track 1 from Toddler Bible Songs while children put away any materials and lineup. Hand out weekly bulletins. Remind them it is important that they return to their family quietly so that we may all listen and pray together in church.