



OVERVIEW SECTION

How to Read This Lesson Plan

The **Overview Section** is the foundation of this lesson plan. The questions and activities for the class that you will be teaching on Sunday morning have been based (sometimes loosely) upon what you read in this section. The **Overview Section** is composed of five components (each component is underlined in the lesson plan):

How to Read This Lesson Plan (defines all components of the lesson plan)

Purpose of Sunday Morning Spiritual Formation (a reminder of why we do this)

Scripture(s) for the Session (a reminder that the scripture is to be read in every class)

Key Verses & Theology (background for teachers to ponder)

Themes to Focus on from the Scripture (the ideas that the session's lessons are based on)

The actual lesson is found in the second section, **The Sunday Morning Experience Section**. Think of this section as the step-by-step instruction guide to your Sunday morning teaching experience. There are four components to this section (again, each component is underlined in the actual lesson plan):

Preparation (including supplies needed)

Classroom Statement (a brief explanation of what will be taught/happening in the classroom)

Step-by-step process of the lesson (including the scripture to be read)

Suggested variations for age groups (Self-explanatory but not always applicable)

We encourage you to read the rest of this **Overview Section** before reading the **Sunday Morning Experience Section**.

Purpose of Sunday Morning Spiritual Formation

The purpose of Sunday Morning Spiritual Formation is, with God's help and in community, to hear and interact with the stories of our faith tradition, to pray, worship and play together, and to equip and support the building of relationships with God and with each other.

Scripture(s) for the Session: Luke 19:29-48

Please READ this aloud in every class you teach. The actual words to the scripture can be found in **The Sunday Morning Experience Section: Step-by-Step process of the lesson**. When reading to the class, please read it from the lesson plan (not an actual Bible) as the wording of the scripture has been modified to help clarify some language issues.

Key Verses & Theology: These are provided to help the teachers think about and build a framework for understanding the story to help in answering some of the questions that the students might raise in class.

³⁹*Some of the Pharisees in the crowd said to [Jesus], 'Teacher, order your disciples to stop.'* Until this verse, things in the first part of this story move very smoothly. There's an arrangement/pick-up of the colt, there's the organizing of the "parade" (the throwing of cloaks on and in front of the colt; moving down the path towards Jerusalem) and then there's the spontaneous and enthusiastic praise of God. The reason why this part moves so smoothly is because Jesus is at the center of it. The people are focused on him, they are not questioning his authority, and as their praise of God (not of Jesus) indicates, they feel comfortable and at ease in the presence of Jesus. There is nothing at all forced about this scene. There's a natural feel to it. Until...the Pharisees decide that they will tell Jesus what to do. The Pharisees are like sand in a swimming suit, or a rock in a shoe. They create an uncomfortable situation, putting themselves somewhere where they don't belong (as the authorities of Jesus) and making a good moment not as good.

⁴¹*As he came near and saw the city, he wept over it, saying... 44b because you did not recognize the time of your visitation from God.'* This verse captures very well that "could have been" feeling you can sometimes get when looking back on your life or the life of a good friend, especially when the potential of a person or situation is never reached. Jesus knows how brightly Jerusalem could've shone God's light and love, but because it did not, then what little light Jerusalem and its people shine by their own power is going to be extinguished soon enough (70 A.D. to be specific). When we say no to God's invitation to be at work in us, then we're also saying no to a fuller, better life.

⁴⁵*Then Jesus entered the temple and began to drive out those who were selling things there...47 Every day he was teaching in the temple.* Earlier in his ministry, Jesus says, "[24] *When an evil spirit comes out of a man, it goes through arid places seeking rest and does not find it. Then it says, 'I will return to the house I left.'* [25] *When it arrives, it finds the house swept clean and put in order. [26] Then it goes and takes seven other spirits more wicked than itself, and they go in and live there. And the final condition of that man is worse than the first"* (Luke 11:24-26). Jesus puts this teaching into action when he cleans out the Temple. He does not leave it empty after cleaning it. Instead, he teaches there every day. He fills the Temple with the Good News. But there is great cost to the individual who confronts the ingrained, inbred ways humans live without God. Especially when those ways are considered to be sacred. Jesus cleaning out of the Temple certainly pushes the Pharisees closer to enacting their death threats. With this in mind, this is truly a courageous act that Jesus carries out.

Themes to Focus on from the Scripture: Themes are provided to help teachers understand the teaching of the *session* (not necessarily the class). Sometimes an activity in one class may not match up with any of the themes.

Opposition – At the beginning of this story, the disciples keep their focus on Jesus. And everything goes according to plan. There are no hitches in the arrangements. No interruptions. They do what Jesus says and subsequently, they put on a parade and a party. But the Pharisees oppose this noise. They do not afford Jesus any authority, instead they tell him what to do. The disciples sing praises to

God but the Pharisees give out orders. The Pharisees are the foil – the opposite – of what the kingdom of God looks like. And because the Pharisees do not submit or surrender to God and God's Way, then they become the enemies of God and God's Way.

Potential – The whole reason the Pharisees exist in the first place is because they are part of the promise God made to Abraham 1600 years earlier – that God would make a people from Abraham (the Israelites) who would be a blessing and light unto the world. A light that would shine with God's light. It is not just irony that the Pharisees oppose Jesus and the way of God that Jesus embodies. It is tragic. Israel started from the very beginning with such promise! Jesus recognizes this tragedy of “what was to be” and weeps. Not just because of the loss of potential, but also because when we don't choose God's Way, then we're choosing a way that dead-ends. Jesus foresaw and grieved the dead-end that Jerusalem was headed towards.

Abide – In 1st century Jerusalem, merchants filled the outer court yard of the Temple. I've read scholars who believe that 80% of Jerusalem's economy rested on the commerce in the Temple in Jesus' time. That number seems high, but even if we cut that number in half, that's still a *huge* amount of business happening in what is to be God's house and *the* place for worship for Israelites. But the merchants there are not seeking first God's Kingdom, instead, they are seeking first higher profit margins. So when Jesus cleans the Temple, he doesn't then leave afterwards. This isn't spring cleaning. Instead, he moves in and fills the space he has cleared. For the Temple to be God's House, God must abide in it. And how else is God going to live in the Temple, but by abiding in the people who are there? And so, that is what Jesus does. Because God abides in Jesus, and Jesus then abides in the Temple, then the Temple becomes, again, albeit briefly, God's house. The clearing of the Temple is to me the penultimate story (second to the crucifixion) that demonstrates how we cannot just “accommodate” God in our lives, but instead, must cut out, remove and let go of old ways of living in order to make room for God and God's ways to live and thrive in our lives. Whether it be our personal lives or our church institutions, the ways we live that do not center on God must be let go of in order for God to live fully and vibrantly within us.



THE SUNDAY MORNING EXPERIENCE SECTION

Preparation

- Print out this lesson plan and bring it with you on the Sunday Mornings you are teaching
- Arrive at pre-arranged time to join other teachers, shepherds and staff for an opening prayer.
- Supplies Needed... **For Crown:** Cloth/Flexible measuring tape (@ Michaels); Blue and other colored duct tape (@ Target); a whole bunch of flexible straws (between 15 to 20 per student – Dollar Store or Target); pipe cleaners (about 3 per 4 straws - @ Michaels); Star garland, cut into 6-inch lengths (@ Michaels); Tacky glue; Pom-poms (@ Michaels). **For Maracas:** Four paper lunch bags per student; dried rice; 12" square piece of foil per student; Rubber bands; 8" x 1" strips of felt; Tape. **For bubble-shooter:** duct tape, scissors, non-bending straws; bubble solution. (Note: To do all three crafts would take at least an hour for most age groups. If you have a 30 to 40 minute-long class, I recommend skipping the “maracas” craft).

Classroom Statement

This Arts & Crafts class will consist of reading the Palm Sunday scripture story (Jesus entering Jerusalem; Jesus crying for Jerusalem and Jesus clearing out the Temple) and creating 3 items as a way to prepare for their own “Jesus Parade.” These three crafts are: A crown, a maraca-type noise maker and a bubble blower. (Note: To do all three crafts would take at least an hour for most age groups. If you have a 30 to 40 minute-long class, I recommend skipping the “maracas” craft).

Step-by-Step Process of Lesson

Shepherd comes in with students

SHEPHERD ASKS “Question of the Day.”

INTRODUCE yourself

Hi, my name is ____ and I want you call me (tell the students how they may address you).

PRAY Short and simple is perfect. For example:

God, thank you for this day and for each other. We need your help. Help us to learn about you this day. Amen.

TELL

- The story we're about to read is usually called the "Palm Sunday" story.
- This story marks the beginning of the last week of Jesus' life and ministry (by the end of the week Jesus is crucified).
- Almost all of Jesus' ministry (or "work" if you will) has taken place outside of Jerusalem.
- Jerusalem was the capital of Israel, and it was where the most powerful people lived and worked, just like Washington DC is the capital of America and where our leaders work and sometimes live.
- Jesus knows that by going to Jerusalem that he's putting his life at risk.
- Think of how you would act if you thought your life was in danger. Now listen to what Jesus does:

READ (Palm Sunday and clearing out of the Temple) Luke 19:29-48

29 When Jesus had come near the small towns of Bethphage and Bethany, at the place called the Mount of Olives, he sent two of the disciples, 30 saying, 'Go into the village ahead of you, and as you enter it you will find tied there a colt that has never been ridden. Untie it and bring it here. 31 If anyone asks you, "Why are you untying it?" just say this: "The Lord needs it." ' 32 So those who were sent, departed and found it as he had told them. 33 As they were untying the colt, its owners asked them, 'Why are you untying the colt?' 34 They said, 'The Lord needs it.' 35 Then they brought it to Jesus; and after throwing their cloaks on the colt, they set Jesus on it. 36 As he rode along, people kept spreading their cloaks on the road. 37 As Jesus was now approaching the path down from the Mount of Olives, the whole multitude of the disciples began to praise God joyfully with a loud voice for all the deeds of power that they had seen, 38 saying,

'Blessed is the king
who comes in the name of the Lord!
Peace in heaven,
and glory in the highest heaven!'

39 Some of the Pharisees in the crowd said to him, 'Teacher, order your disciples to stop.' 40 But Jesus answered, 'I tell you, if these people were silent, the stones would shout out.'

41 As Jesus drew closer and saw the city, he wept over it, 42 saying, 'If you, even you, had only recognized on this day the things that make for peace! But now they are hidden from your eyes. 43 Indeed, the days will come upon you, when your enemies will set up armies around you and surround you, and hem you in on every side. 44 They will crush you to the ground, you and your children within you, and they will not leave within you one stone upon another; because you did not recognize the time of God leading you.'

45 Then Jesus entered the temple and began to drive out those who were selling things there; 46 and he said, 'It is written,

"My house shall be a house of prayer";
but you have made it a den of robbers.'

47 Every day Jesus was teaching in the temple. The chief priests, the scribes, and the leaders of the people kept looking for a way to kill him because he was so disruptive to their way of life; 48 but they did not find anything they could do, for all the people were spellbound by what they heard.

ASK (answers are in parenthesis)

- So even though Jesus knows that his life is in danger, does he hide? (nope)
- What does he do instead? (rides into town in the middle of a parade and then cleans out the Temple)
- What does Jesus tell the disciples to “untie and bring to him”? (a colt)
- Once Jesus is on the colt, what do the people do with their cloaks? (put their cloaks on the colt and on the ground in front of the colt – they do this to show respect and to keep the dust from kicking up so that Jesus remains visible)
- Once Jesus started moving, what did the disciples do? (began to praise God joyfully with a loud voice)
- What do you think it means to praise God? (another question to help the students think about this: Have you ever been praised for doing something? What did that look like?) **[If students don't offer this answer, please share with them: Praising God means to tell God that God's doing a good job and/or telling God things that you like about who God is.]**
- Do you remember what the disciples actually said? (Blessed is the king who comes in the name of the Lord)
- Who do you think they are calling “the king?” (Jesus)
- Then, the Pharisees tell Jesus to do something. Do you remember what they tell Jesus to do? (They tell Jesus to tell his disciples to stop what they are doing)
- Are people supposed to tell a king what to do? (no!)

TELL

- So it seems that the Pharisees do not recognize or accept that Jesus is a king.
- But the disciples DO think Jesus is a king and praise God for Jesus.
- And even if they did stop praising God, Jesus says “the rocks would cry out.”
- So today, we're going to make some crafts that will help us to participate in our own “Jesus Parade.”

EXPLAIN Crown Craft

- The first thing we're going to do is create a crown-like hat that reminds us that Jesus is the king that comes in the name of the Lord.
- This is a picture of what our crown might look like: →



- First thing we're going to do is, using this flexible measuring tape, we're going to measure our heads.
- Then we'll cut some blue duct tape to the length you just measured plus 2 inches.
- Once the tape is cut, lay it on the table with the sticky side face up.
- Put the straws on the tape, but leave 4 inches free on each end of the tape (use a ruler to determine the four inches) →



- Once that's done, cut a second length of blue duct tape that's the same length as the first piece of tape.
- Place this piece of tape on top of your first piece of tape sticky-side down as a way to "sandwich" the straws.
- Cut a piece of duct tape, this time from a differently colored roll of tape, to the same length.
- Fold this length of duct tape over the bottom edge of the "blue tape sandwich" so that half of the headband is now a different color.
- Fit the headband to your head and then tape the ends of it together to hold the shape/circle.
- Now we'll take the pipe cleaners and garland and slide them into the tops of the straws.
- We can also glue the pom-poms on to the end of the pipe cleaners.
- Bend the straws as you so wish.
- And now, we have a crown-like parade hat that will remind us that Jesus is king!

EXPLAIN Noise-maker Craft

- Now that we have a crown, we need a way to make even more noise than we already do so that the rocks don't need to cry out because we're being quiet.
 - So we're each going to make a noise-maker to help in our praising of God.
 - We'll start with these paper lunch bags.
 - Everyone needs to have three of them.
 - Open all three bags and then slide one open bag into the other open bag. Then slide those two bags into the last open bag. When you're done it should look like you only have ONE bag. This is called "nesting." →
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- Next, take a square of aluminum foil. Place your hand in the form of a fist in the middle of the foil and move the foil up and around your hand so that it loosely surrounds your fist. Now place your hand with the foil still around it into the bags and place the foil on the bottom of the bag. →
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- Spread the sides of the foil up and around the sides of the bag so that you could pour something into the foil pretty easily.
 - Take a handful of dried rice and place it in foil in the bottom of your bag.
 - Once you've done that, turn the edges of the foil in on the rice, so that none of the rice can escape. However, don't press the foil too far down, because then the rice won't have room to move and make noise. →
 - Take another paper lunch bag.
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- Take a pair of scissors and cut down one of the sides and then cut around the perimeter (the edge) of the bottom of the bag. Then lay the bag flat on the table. →



- Fold the bottom flat in, then starting at one edge, roll up the bag to create a long skinny tube – this will be your handle. Roll it tight and then tape it closed. →



- Finish taping the handle closed by running a long piece of tape down the protruding edge of the almost completed handle.
- Put a long piece of tape across the middle of the handle, but let the edges of the tape dangle so that you can attach the handle to the bag.



- Place the handle in the bags that are holding the rice. Press the tape to the side of the bag as a way to attach it to the bag. The handle should be about halfway in and halfway out of the bag. →



- Gather the top of the open bag around the handle and hold it closed with a rubber band or two. →
- Tie a felt strip around the rubber band to conceal it.
- You now have a noise-maker so that even if your voices become hoarse, you can continue to create joyful noise as a way to celebrate Jesus' arrival in Jerusalem! (don't shake it too hard, though, it's not super-sturdy)

EXPLAIN Bubble-making Craft

- Now that we have crowns and noise-makers, we're going to create bubble-makers that will help our praises make it to the "highest heavens."
- Take three non-bendable straws and cut them in half.
- Line all six pieces of the straws into two rows; one row on top of the other row.
- Wrap duct tape around the two rows of straws. Make sure you keep the ends uncovered and that all six straws are tightly attached – but not so tightly that air can't get through them.

- You now have a Six-shooter Bubble Blower!
- Dip one end of the bubble blower into the bubble solution and blow through the other end to make many little bubbles at one time.
- We are now well-prepared to be in a parade!

DO Parade

If there is time and if they seem up to it (the oldest class maybe not so much?), let the class have a parade, or at least enact a parade in the classroom: Blow bubbles, shake their noise-makers and say “Thank you, God for Jesus” or “Hallelujah.”

CLEAN UP

Party hat idea modified from <http://familyfun.go.com/crafts/crowning-glory-674251/>

Maracas idea modified from <http://crafts.kaboose.com/paper-lunch-bag-maracas.html>