



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.

41As 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.

45Then 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: DVD movie (online at www.rfour.org/media.html. Or you can contact me at support@rfour.org about receiving a DVD with all the movies on it for Season 3); TV w/DVD player; 4 to 5 scripts for puppets (see *Storytelling Supply Document S3-S7*); some sort of upright material to for the puppeteers to hide behind and put their puppets above (a large, modified cardboard box works perfectly – if you really want to get into it, get a refrigerator box from an appliance store); camcorder; popsicle puppets (see “How to make popsicle puppets” directly below)
- **How to make popsicle puppets:** Print out the pictures as provided in the *Storytelling Supply Document S3-S7*. Cut them out and either paste or tape them to large craft/popsicle sticks. I often times tape the pictures to dark-colored construction paper to help with support and contrast.

Classroom Statement

This Storytelling class consists of reading the scripture story of Jesus entering Jerusalem and clearing out the Temple, watching a movie about the story and then putting on a popsicle puppet play.

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 was where the most powerful people of Israel 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 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 in parentheses)

- When Jesus sends two disciples to get the colt, what do the disciples do? (go and get the colt)
- Does the owner of the colt let the disciples have the colt? (yes)
- Once Jesus is on the colt, what do the people do with their cloaks? (put them on the ground before the colt)
- Why do you think they do this? (it's a way to keep dust from kicking up; it's also a show of respect)
- Do you remember what the people are shouting when they are praising God? (Blessed is the King who comes in the name of the Lord! Peace in heaven and glory in the highest heaven)
- Who do you think the king is when they say "Blessed is the King who comes in the name of the Lord? (Jesus!)
- Up to this point in the story, has anyone told Jesus what to do? (No)
- Then the Pharisees speak up. What do they tell Jesus? (They tell him to tell his disciples to stop)
- Are you supposed to tell kings what to do? (No!)
- So do you think the Pharisees think Jesus is a king who comes in the name of the Lord? (no)
- What does Jesus do when he sees the city of Jerusalem? (he cries for it)
- Why do you think Jesus cries for the city? (One of the reasons Jesus cries for the city is because he sees how the city is led by people like the Pharisees who don't let God or the people who seek God be king in their lives; also he sees how the potential ["potential" is a concept that is studied in the Science class for this session] of the city will never be realized because they aren't seeking God first)
- Once Jesus enters the Temple, what does he do? (clears out the merchants)
- Why do you think he does this? (To make room in God's house for God)
- What does Jesus do after he clears out the Temple (he teaches in it)

TELL

- Well done with listening to the story and answering the questions!
- To help see the layout of the city of Jerusalem and the Temple, we're going to watch a video now of this story.
- We don't know for sure what entrance or road Jesus took to get into Jerusalem.
- So this video is a "what might have been" story regarding some of the details.

WATCH DVD Video

ASK

- Did watching the video help you to think of what the city and Temple looked like?

TELL

- We're now going to make our own movie.
- The characters needed are: Jesus, the disciples, the Pharisees and the Temple merchants.
- We'll also need someone to hold the background of the city.
- (If need be, you can assign an "audience" part to the less than enthusiastic students).
- Our shepherd here will record our play (or maybe have a student help out here, too).

- So we're going to go behind the screen, here.
- We'll do a practice run through, where I'll be the director, helping y'all know what to do and when to do it.
- Once we got through the practice run, then we'll film it.

PRACTICE then RECORD Popsicle Puppet Play

POPSICLE PUPPET SCRIPT

Characters: Jesus, Jesus on the donkey, the disciples, the Pharisees and the Temple merchants

Background: The city of Jerusalem; the Temple

Jesus: We're going to Jerusalem!

Disciples: But there are people there that want to kill you!

Jesus: Yes there are. Go get me a donkey.

Disciples: Let's not argue with him – he seems to know what he's doing.

Jesus: The donkey will be over there [nod head of puppet left or right]

Disciples: What will be the donkey's name?

Jesus: Dominic.

Disciples: Come here, Dominic, Come here!

[drop down Jesus puppet and replace with Jesus puppet on a donkey]

Jesus: You got him! Good job!

Disciples: Let's tell God how happy we are for Jesus

Jesus: Let's go to Jerusalem

Disciples: It's a parade! Praise God! Hallelujah! Thank you God for Jesus! WHEEEEE!

[move disciples and Jesus toward Jerusalem]

[have Pharisees pop up]

Pharisees: YOU'RE TOO LOUD!

Jesus: We're going to Jerusalem

Disciples: Hallelujah! Praise God! We're having a parade!

Pharisees: YOU'RE TOO LOUD!

Jesus: If they stopped praising God, then the rocks would celebrate God's goodness!

Disciples: Hallelujah! We're having a parade! WHHEEEEE!

[pull down Pharisee puppets]

Jesus: Oh Jerusalem! God made you so good but instead of living God's way, you live like these Pharisees.

Disciples: Wait...is Jesus crying? What happened to the parade?

Jesus: OK! We're going to Jerusalem!

Disciples: Hallelujah! Praise God! We're having a parade!

[puppets arrive at city. Pull down city and put up Temple background. Pull down Jesus on donkey and put up the first Jesus puppet; put up merchants puppet]

Jesus: Let's clean house!

Disciples: What? But we don't wanna do chores!

Jesus: Alright you Temple merchants, get out of here! This is God's house!

Merchants: We're not going anywhere!

Jesus: You'll go wherever your money goes.

Disciples: Whoa! Jesus is throwing the merchants' money all over the place! AWESOME!

Merchants: Our money! Follow our money!

[pull down merchant puppets]

Jesus: Now it's time to do some teaching!

Disciples: The parade is done?

Jesus: The parade is done.

Disciples: What do you think we should do with Dominic the Donkey?

THE END

CLEAN UP