

Mark 11:1-10 or
John 12:12-16

Isaiah 50:4-7

Psalms 22:8-9, 17-18, 19-20,
23-24

Philippians 2:6-11

Mark 14:1-15:47 or 15:1-39

Palm Sunday of the Passion of the Lord

March 24, 2024



REFLECTION

Until recently, every Palm Sunday since 1986 had been designated as World Youth Day by the Catholic Church. Why would the Church have made Palm Sunday, where the Gospel proclaims the death of Jesus, be the day designated for youth? Jesus' death transforms us and draws us closer to God, something that is essential for young people (and all Christians!) striving to live out their faith in the world.

When we look upon the cross, we see what love has done for us. We are the reason that Jesus suffered and died. He believed that each of us was worth the cost of pain, humiliation, and death. The cross, once a symbol of torture, was changed by Christ to be a symbol of renewal and hope.

The nails could not keep Jesus on the cross. He was God. At any moment he could have ended the pain, summoned the host of heaven, and turned the tables on the authorities who sentenced him to die. But love kept Jesus on the cross. His love for us and his desire to redeem us held him there. He was paving a path for us, a way we could follow, a way upon which sin would no longer destroy us. Christ died for us, so let us live for him.



ACTION

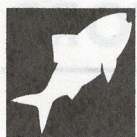
Each Gospel writer gives a slightly different account of the passion of Christ. This week, read the accounts of Jesus' arrest, trial, crucifixion, and death in Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John. Compare the details between the Gospels. What stands out to you? Pray about God's message to you in these stories. How is he speaking to you at this moment in your life?



"Center of All History"
—Steffany Gretzinger (with
Matt Maher) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=t6-7gNeaWEY>

? QUESTIONS

- ❖ What do today's readings teach you about the Christian life?
- ❖ What are the unique ways that young people can bear the Gospel to the world?
- ❖ What aspect of Jesus' death surprises you?



March 24, 2024

PALM SUNDAY OF THE PASSION OF THE LORD

LECTIONARY #37B AND 38B

Mark 11:1-10 or John 12:12-16

(at the Blessing of the Palms)

Isaiah 50:4-7

Psalms 22:8-9, 17-18, 19-20, 23-24

Philippians 2:6-11

Mark 14:1-15:47 or 15:1-39

Prepare for the Word

The following elements may be used by the catechist, teacher, or youth minister to prepare to facilitate today's session with teens. You may integrate this information into the reflection and discussion on today's readings.

Leader's Context

As Jesus prepares to enter Jerusalem, he sends two disciples ahead of him to prepare things. Christ will not enter in like a warrior king about to conquer some earthly enemy. Rather, he rides on this colt in peaceful humility to conquer sin. This points us to a prophecy in the Old Testament book Zechariah, where it speaks of the king who will bring restoration. We reflect on the shifting attitudes of the crowd and the way Jesus will be abandoned just a few days later during his passion and death. The young people are invited to consider how they welcome Jesus into their lives.

Q **FOCUS:** *Welcome Jesus more deeply into your life.*

Liturgical Calendar Connection

Today we enter into Holy Week. The Sacred Paschal Triduum is the three days before Easter. On Holy Thursday the Evening Mass of the Lord's Supper is celebrated. It highlights the Last Supper and the institution of the sacrament of the Eucharist. It is often accompanied by the washing of feet, which also happened at the Last Supper and which gives us a model of servant leadership. On Good Friday, the Church enters into the mystery of Christ's death on the cross. The liturgy includes the veneration of the

cross and a communion service. The Easter Vigil on Saturday evening is a beautiful liturgy that highlights Jesus as the light of the world, recounts the story of salvation history and Christ's resurrection, and celebrates the initiation of new Catholics through baptism, confirmation, and the Eucharist.

Church Teaching Connection

"The young people of Jerusalem shouted: '*Hosanna to the Son of David!*' Young people, my friends, do you too want to acknowledge Jesus as the Messiah, the Saviour, the Teacher, the Leader, the Friend of your life, as your peers did on that day so long ago? Remember: he alone knows deeply what is in every human being (cf. Jn 2:25); he alone teaches us to be open to the mystery and to call God our Father, '*Abba*'; he alone makes us capable of selfless love for our fellow human beings, accepted and recognized as '*brothers*' and '*sisters*'" (Pope John Paul II, Homily, March 28, 1999).

Hear the Word

Use this resource, a Lectionary, or a Bible to proclaim the reading. The book should be held reverently or placed on a lectern. If possible, light a candle that is placed near where the Gospel will be proclaimed. Gesture for teens to stand.

Gospel Acclamation

Use the same musical setting that is used in your parish or at school Masses. Teens may help with music and proclaim the Gospel.

**Praise to you Lord Jesus Christ, king of
endless glory.**

Gospel

Mark 11:1-10

Reader: A reading from the holy Gospel
according to Mark.

All: Glory to you, O Lord.

*All make the sign of the cross on their forehead, lips,
and heart.*

When Jesus and his disciples drew near to Jerusalem, to Bethphage and Bethany at the Mount of Olives,

he sent two of his disciples and said to them, "Go into the village opposite you, and immediately on entering it, you will find a colt tethered on which no one has ever sat. Untie it and bring it here. If anyone should say to you, 'Why are you doing this?' reply, 'The Master has need of it and will send it back here at once.'" So they went off and found a colt tethered at a gate outside on the street, and they untied it. Some of the bystanders said to them, "What are you doing, untying the colt?" They answered them just as Jesus had told them to, and they permitted them to do it. So they brought the colt to Jesus and put their cloaks over it. And he sat on it. Many people spread their cloaks on the road, and others spread leafy branches that they had cut from the fields. Those preceding him as well as those following kept crying out: / "Hosanna! / Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord! / Blessed is the kingdom of our father David that is to come! / Hosanna in the highest!"

Reader: The Gospel of the Lord.

All: Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.

Everyone may be seated.

Reflect on the Word

When beginning the reflection and discussion about today's readings, first refer to the handout for today. Ask teens what they learned about themselves and about Christian discipleship from performing the action for the week and journaling. Ask teens about the readings of the day: What struck them? What do they think the readings mean? How do the readings affect their own lives? Then begin the following reflection:

Jesus gives some very specific instructions to two of his disciples as he prepares to enter Jerusalem. Although Mark does not reference it in the account we hear today, Matthew's Gospel account of this entry into Jerusalem recalls these words of the Old Testament prophet Zechariah: "Exult greatly, O daughter Zion! / Shout for joy, O daughter Jerusalem! / Behold: your king is coming to you, / a just savior is he, / Humble, and riding on a donkey, / on a colt, the foal of a donkey" (Zec 9:9, NABRE). This prophecy was fulfilled in today's reading and two of Jesus' disciples had a role to play in carrying it out.

► Describe a time when you felt called by God to carry out a certain task. What was it? How did things turn out?

► Even if you haven't had this type of experience, do you believe you have a significant role to play in God's actions in the world? Why or why not?

Even though they might not have understood exactly what they are doing, the disciples followed Jesus' command. We can't always see how God is working in our lives and the world, but each one of us is called to do our part by listening to the Word of God and obeying Jesus' commands. When we cooperate with Jesus, our actions can lead others to him.

The crowd's reaction to Jesus is quite startling. He had been to Jerusalem before, and this type of thing hadn't happened. There was something about this time, this moment in his ministry, that led the people to rejoice and make a very big deal. The people welcomed Jesus by laying down their cloaks and leafy branches before him (so that he wouldn't get dusty!) and shouting out joyful cries. What a welcome!

► If Jesus were to enter your city, school, or home, how do you think people would react? How would you react?

► How would you describe our current culture's attitude toward Jesus, faith, and Catholicism?

We know that just a few days after the events in today's Gospel, Jesus is arrested and abandoned by most everyone who received him with joy, including his disciples. The sudden shift in attitude toward Jesus by the crowds reminds us of our own changing attitudes toward God. Sometimes we are excited about our faith and have a passion for Jesus. But then there are other times we feel apathetic or might even reject our faith, like those times when we sin.

► What are some things you can do to remain excited about your faith?

Wrapping It Up

Consider these points to conclude the discussion and reflection. Integrate the thoughts and ideas that surfaced during the discussion as well as the "Church Teaching Connection" on page 158.

Consider how you welcome Jesus into your life.

Palm Sunday marks the beginning of Holy Week.

Jesus is our king and savior; stay faithful to him even if those around you reject him.

Act on the Word

Welcoming Committee

For this activity, you will need blank cards and envelopes, paper, pens, colored pencils, markers, holy cards or prayer cards, and a list of the names of new members coming into parish at the Easter Vigil.

In this activity, the teens will be making cards to welcome those people in your parish or diocese who will be fully initiated into the Church at the Easter Vigil. You will need to collect names of the elect ahead of time. Contact your parish office to find the names of those coming into the Church. If you want to extend this to the diocese, you can contact the faith formation department at the diocesan office to help you with the collection of names and parishes.

Begin by telling the teens a little bit about the baptismal catechumenate. This is the process through which unbaptized adults (or even children who are older than seven who have not been baptized) are brought into the life of faith through discernment, prayer, formation, and, ultimately, participation in the sacraments of initiation (baptism, confirmation, and the Eucharist). The celebration of that initiation usually takes place at the Easter Vigil. It would be a powerful experience if you could invite someone who has gone through this process to share their story of conversion.

Invite the teens to select a name (or several) and make a card for each person, using the art supplies you have on hand. Here are some ideas for things they can include in their cards:

- ✱ A welcome message congratulating the person on his or her initiation into the Church
- ✱ A favorite Bible verse or story
- ✱ A prayer card
- ✱ A personal story of how God has changed the teen's life

After all cards have been made, collect them and sort by parish if you made cards for multiple parishes. Mail them to the correct parishes or hand deliver them to the appropriate person so they can be distributed to the new members of the faith community.

Closing Prayer

God our Father,
just as your Son claimed his authority
over Jerusalem,
so he enters our own hearts
in order to guide and govern us.
May our Lord Jesus Christ
reign triumphant
in all that we do
and in every moment of our lives,
for he lives and reigns with you
in the unity of the Holy spirit,
God, for ever and ever.
Amen.

For Next Sunday

To help teens prepare for next Sunday's Mass, print, email, or share on a blog or social media the handout found on the next page. The JPG and PDF files are available at www.ltp.org/lwgr. Encourage teens to attend the Triduum liturgies and Easter Sunday Mass with family or friends.