

## EXPLORING THE SUNDAY GOSPEL

# PALM CROSSES

### EXPLORING NEXT SUNDAY'S THEME

#### *Introducing the Gospel*

##### *Jesus' entry into Jerusalem (Matthew 21:1-11)*

The events of Holy Week begin with Jesus' triumphal entry into Jerusalem. Each of the three synoptic Gospels (Matthew, Mark, and Luke) tells the story in a slightly different way, but the key idea remains the same. Drawing on imagery from the Old Testament, the gospel writers make it plain that Jesus is entering Jerusalem as the Messiah. Many local churches now capture the Palm Sunday theme by blessing and distributing palm crosses, and by arranging a procession through the streets.

The image to stimulate reflection on this passage is *palm crosses*.

#### *Core extract from the Gospel (Matthew 21: 6-9; for reflection throughout the week)*

The disciples went and did as Jesus had directed them;  
they brought the donkey and the colt,  
and put their cloaks on them, and he sat on them.  
A very large crowd spread their cloaks on the road,  
and others cut branches from the trees  
and spread them on the road.  
The crowds that went ahead of him  
and that followed were shouting,  
'Hosanna to the Son of David!  
Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord!  
Hosanna in the highest heaven!'

#### *Gospel prayer (for use throughout the week)*

Lord Jesus Christ,  
you rode into Jerusalem with shouts of praise.  
Inspire us now to shout your praises.  
Hosanna to the Son of David.  
Blessed is the one who comes  
in the name of the Lord.  
Hosana in the highest heaven;  
for you are our Lord and Saviour,  
now and always.  
Amen.

**READING NEXT SUNDAY'S GOSPEL**

**Matthew 21: 1-11**

**Jesus' Triumphal Entry into Jerusalem**

When they had come near Jerusalem and had reached Bethphage, at the Mount of Olives, Jesus sent two disciples, saying to them, 'Go into the village ahead of you, and immediately you will find a donkey tied, and a colt with her; untie them and bring them to me. If anyone says anything to you, just say this, "The Lord needs them." And he will send them immediately.' This took place to fulfil what had been spoken through the prophet, saying,

'Tell the daughter of Zion,

Look, your king is coming to you,

humble, and mounted on a donkey,

and on a colt, the foal of a donkey.'

The disciples went and did as Jesus had directed them; they brought the donkey and the colt, and put their cloaks on them, and he sat on them. A very large crowd spread their cloaks on the road, and others cut branches from the trees and spread them on the road. The crowds that went ahead of him and that followed were shouting,

'Hosanna to the Son of David!

Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord!

Hosanna in the highest heaven!'

When he entered Jerusalem, the whole city was in turmoil, asking, 'Who is this?' The crowds were saying, 'This is the prophet Jesus from Nazareth in Galilee.'

## **ENGAGING WITH THE THEME**

### ***Dwelling with the text (Matthew 21: 1-11)***

Begin to explore Matthew's account of Jesus' triumphal entry into Jerusalem by employing the SIFT approach of Sensing, Intuition, Feeling, and Thinking. You may find that one of these approaches comes easier to you than the others. But it is worth trying all four.

- What details in the passage catch your attention (Sensing)?
- What big ideas in the passage spark in your mind (Intuition)?
- What most touches your heart in the passage (Feeling)?
- What most stretches your mind and makes you think in the passage (Thinking)?

### ***Thinking and talking***

Identify topics within the passage that can get you thinking and talking. Here are some ideas to get you started.

- What is the significance of the donkey?
- Why are people spreading their cloaks on the road?
- Why are people cutting branches from the trees?
- What is the significance of shouting 'Hosana to the Son of David'?
- What does this narrative say for us today?

### ***Using your Bible***

Explore how the other two synoptic Gospels (Mark and Luke) related the Palm Sunday narrative.

- Mark 11: 1-10
- Luke 19: 29-38

Explore key images in the Old Testament that are reflected in the Palm Sunday narrative

- Zechariah 9: 9
- 2 Kings 9: 13
- Psalm 118: 25-26
- Isaiah 62: 11

## PALM SUNDAY (YEAR A) Sunday 29 March 2026

### *Exploring online*

Widen your exploration of Palm Sunday and of Matthew's account of Jesus' triumphal entry into Jerusalem by looking up some of the following themes and others of your own choosing.

- Liturgy of palms
- Palm Sunday celebrations around the world
- Making palm crosses

### *Drawing on experience*

The image to stimulate reflection on Palm Sunday and on Matthew's account of Jesus' triumphal entry into Jerusalem is *palm crosses*. Draw on your experience of Palm Sunday celebrations and palm crosses. For example:

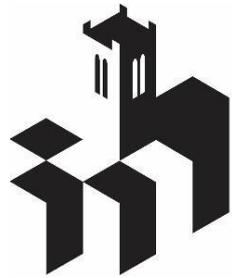
- Have you experienced Palm Sunday processions with palm crosses?
- What do you recall most about Palm Sunday services and events?
- What do you do with your palm crosses during the year?

What have you learned about palm crosses?

### *Creating and making*

This section offers pointers to some creative activities that may be inspired by Matthew's account of Jesus' triumphal entry into Jerusalem or by the image of palm crosses.

- Make palm crosses and display them around your home or church.
- Create a mural about Jesus' triumphal entry into Jerusalem.
- Make a collage of pictures of Palm Sunday around the world.
- Create a reflection, poem, or prayer on the Palm Sunday theme or on the image of palm crosses.



# Liverpool Cathedral

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Each week we are inviting people in their homes to look forward to those Sunday services that follow the Revised Common Lectionary Gospel readings. We employ the SIFT approach (Sensing, Intuition, Feeling, and Thinking) to encourage reflection on the Sunday Gospel. We are suggesting a variety of ways in which people of all ages, and households working together, may engage with the Gospel reading and celebrate that engagement with shared activities.

These materials have been developed by the Canon Theologian of Liverpool Cathedral working in collaboration with the staff team here at the Cathedral, and with sponsorship and support from the St Mary's Centre in Wales.



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