



## GETTING READY

### 1. Opener/Closer

#### What You Need:

- Host
- Camping lantern (or large flashlight)
- Enough Easter baskets for each Leader to have one (all the exact same color and style)
- Easter grass (all the same color) to put inside the baskets
- Some kind of light to hide in one of the baskets (flashlight, light bulb, headlamp, glow stick, etc.)
- Host's phone
- Bible

#### Music and Sound Effects (SFX):

- Upbeat music to use as kids enter and exit the room
- Fun music for the game (suggestion: "Chicken Dance")

#### Large Group Visuals:

- Theme Slide
- Hope Slide
- Blank Bottom Line Slide
- Bottom Line Slide

#### Optional Videos (available for purchase through the 252 Media Package):

- Theme Loop
- Countdown (30- or 60-second version)
- Theme
- Theme Transition to Life App
- Life App Transition to Theme

#### What You Do:

- Put Easter grass in each Easter basket, making the baskets look as similar as possible.

### 2. Bible Story

#### What You Need:

- Storyteller

- Bible
- Faux palm branches; one for each kid, one for every two kids, or one for each small group
- Masking tape (or gaffer's tape)

*Large Group Visuals:*

- Blank Bottom Line Slide
- Bottom Line Slide

**What You Do:**

- Tape a simple path through the room. Use 6-8 kids to wave palm branches and make a path for the story.

**3. Worship**

**What You Need:**

- Every Beat
- Through It All

# This I Promise You

**Bible Story:** This I Promise You (Palm Sunday) • *John 12:9-16*

**Bottom Line:** Whatever happens, remember God keeps His promises.

**Memory Verse:** *“In this world you will have trouble. But be encouraged! I have won the battle over the world.”*

John 16:33b, NIV

**Life App:** Hope—Believing that something good can come out of something bad

**Basic Truth:** I can trust God no matter what.

## **Story: Communicating God’s Truth in Engaging Ways (Large Group, 35 minutes)**

Engage kids’ hearts through a dynamic and interactive Bible story, worship, and prayer experience in a Large Group setting.

**SFX:** *Play high-energy music as kids enter.*

**CG:** *Theme Slide*

**Optional CG (Media Package):** *Theme Loop Video*

*Host enters.*

### **Opener**

**HOST:** “What’s up, everybody? My name is [your name], and it’s so great to be here with you all today. This month we’re talking about finding the light in the dark. We all have times when things don’t go the way we want them to. When that happens, it can feel like we’re walking around in the dark. That’s why I’m so glad we have the light of hope!

*Hold up the camping lantern.*

**CG:** *Hope Slide*

**Optional Video (Media Package):** *Theme Transition to Life App*

**“Hope is believing that something good can come out of something bad.**

**CG:** *Theme Slide*

**Optional Video (Media Package):** *Life App Transition to Theme*

“We’ve definitely got something good coming up with our game today. And everyone gets to play! First, I’ll need every Leader on the stage.

*As Leaders come up on stage, hand each of them an Easter basket with Easter grass inside.*

“Easter is coming up one week from today, so each Leader has an adorable Easter basket. But only ONE of those baskets has a light hidden inside.

*Hold up the light and then tuck it under the Easter grass in one of the baskets.*

*(To audience)* “For the rest of you, your job is to keep an eye on the basket with the light hidden inside. Your Leaders will be passing the baskets back and forth and moving around to try to distract you. If you’ve ever been to a baseball game, it’s just like the cap shuffle you might see on the big screen. When the music stops, we’ll all vote on which basket you think has the light. Ready? Thirty seconds on the clock . . . and go!

*Set a timer on your phone for 30 seconds.*

**CG: Fun music (suggestion: “Chicken Dance”)**

**Optional Video (Media Package): Countdown (30-second version)**

*When the music starts, have the Leaders start trading baskets with each other. They should have fun with it, tossing baskets, spinning around, trading places with each other, etc.*

*(When the music stops)* “All right, everyone freeze! *(To audience)* Now, when I point to a basket, I want you to clap and cheer if you think it’s the basket with the light inside. Here we go!

*Stand by each basket, one by one, getting the kids to vote by applause. After giving them a chance to vote, reveal where the light was hidden.*

“Great job, everyone! Thanks for your help, Leaders.

*Dismiss the Leaders to their seats.*

## **Announcements**

*Use this as an example of what to say. Make it your own and help the kids feel welcomed. Then take a moment to share any/all announcements.*

**HOST:** “I’m so excited to be here with all of you today and get a little crazy! If it’s your first time here, I want to welcome you and I would love to have a chance to meet you and get a high-five! Your group leaders are here almost every week... they’re pretty amazing. Here at Mission, we believe that this is a place for you and you belong here no matter who you are or what you believe. At the core of who we are as a church, we believe that **JESUS CHANGES EVERYTHING FOR EVERYONE!**

“I have just a few announcements for you all today...

*Share any/all announcements.*

“One of the things we do each week to help us focus on God is to sing... some of you will know the words to the songs, so we want you to shout and sing them out really loud. If you don’t know the words... they’ll be on the screen for you. Feel free to clap, jump, sing and shout along with us! The best part about this is the message of the song and how good God is! Let’s all stand up and sing together!”

*Worship Leaders enter. Host exits.*

“Let’s take some time to worship God and thank Him for being our awesome Creator. Everyone stand up and get ready to sing!”

### **Worship**

**WORSHIP LEADER:** “Thank you, *[Name of Host]*. Let’s get up and get loud as we sing and dance for who God is and what he’s done for us!

### **Every Beat**

**WORSHIP LEADER:** “That was amazing! (*Take a moment to say something about the next song*). So let’s give everything we have and worship God together!

### **Through It All**

**WORSHIP LEADER:** “Thank you guys for worshiping God with us today. Let’s pray and ask God to help remind us that He is with us THROUGH IT ALL!

### **PRAY**

*Communicator enters as Worship Leaders exit.*

### **CG: Blank Bottom Line Slide**

### **Setting up the story**

**STORYTELLER:** “Hi, everyone! I’ve got a question for you. Can you imagine if you knew someone who could tell you what would happen in the future? Wouldn’t it be amazing if someone could tell you what was going to happen before it did?”

“Well, many years ago, there were some very special men and women who were called prophets. They were given the very important job of telling the world about things that were going to happen in the story of God. One of these men was the prophet Zechariah. We can read one of Zechariah’s prophecies in the Bible. Listen to this.

*Open the Bible to Zechariah 9:9 (NIRV) and read.*

**“City of Zion, be full of joy! People of Jerusalem, shout! See, your king comes to you. He always does what is right. He has won the victory. He is humble and riding on a donkey. He is sitting on a donkey’s colt.” Zechariah 9:9**

“Okay. So Zechariah predicted that there would be a king riding on a donkey. Can you guess who that king was? (*Pause for response.*) Yep. Jesus. And here’s the really amazing part. Zechariah wrote these words HUNDREDS of years before Jesus was born! And just like Zechariah said, Jesus did end up riding into Jerusalem on a donkey.

“Let’s see what was happening with Jesus at the time.”

### **religious leaders weren’t happy**

**STORYTELLER:** “Jesus had just raised His friend Lazarus from the dead. But the religious leaders weren’t very happy about it. They could see that many people were believing in Jesus and following Him. They didn’t like how Jesus said He was the Son of God. So they decided to come up with a plan to try to KILL Jesus.

“For a while, Jesus stayed in the desert near Ephraim, which was a day’s journey from Jerusalem. Even though it was dangerous, Jesus traveled to Jerusalem for the Passover celebration. He stopped on the way to Jerusalem at the home of his friends Mary, Martha, and Lazarus.”

### **why palm branches?**

**STORYTELLER:** “As Jesus and His disciples began to travel toward Jerusalem, the crowds of people in the city heard He was coming. They were so excited to see Jesus! He was riding into the city on a donkey—just like the prophet Zechariah had written so long ago. The people were so excited that they waved palm branches and put down their coats to make a path for Jesus.

*(Pause.)* “You know what that reminds me of? It reminds me of that time when [your favorite or local sports team] won the [big game]. I got so excited that I ran out and found a palm tree, ripped some branches off, and then waved them all around in the air. *(Pause.)* Just kidding!

“To us, waving palm branches might seem like a rather strange thing to do. I mean, that’s not really the way we celebrate today. But back then, that was a normal way for people to show honor to someone when they were really excited.

“The whole palm branch thing might be a new idea to us, but I know you understand what it means to be really, really excited. Imagine you’re at a surprise party for your best friend, and you’re hiding, waiting for her to open the door. You can’t wait to scream, ‘SURPRISE!’ and see her reaction. Well, that’s pretty much how the people felt when Jesus came to town. They really believed He was the king Zechariah was talking about. They were SO excited!”

### **he’s here!**

**STORYTELLER:** “I think we should wave some palm branches of our own and imagine what it must have been like for the people who welcomed Jesus. Leaders, could you come up and help me pass these out?”

*Pass out the faux palm branches to the Leaders. You could do this with one palm branch per kid, one per pair of kids, or one per small group.*

“Okay! I want you to imagine that you’re in the city of Jerusalem. You’ve heard wonderful, amazing things about this man named Jesus. You’ve heard that He heals the sick. You’ve heard how He raised Lazarus from the dead. You’ve heard that He fed 5,000 people with a couple of fish and some bread.

“You’ve heard all about Jesus, but you’ve never SEEN Him until today! Today, Jesus is about to ride into Jerusalem on a donkey. You know this is a big deal because you’ve always heard the words of the prophet Zechariah—that the king would be riding on a donkey. Now those words are coming true, right in front of your eyes! Let’s wave our palm branches and shout, ‘Hosanna!’”

**KIDS:** “Hosanna!”

**STORYTELLER:** “Good! ‘Hosanna’ is something you shout when you feel really joyful and excited!”

*Encourage the kids to wave their palm branches and then lay them down on the taped path. Then walk over to the path for this next part.*

“Jesus rode a donkey down a path like this one. The religious leaders were not happy about all this commotion. They told Jesus to tell everyone to stop waving palm branches and shouting, ‘Hosanna.’ But Jesus told the religious leaders that if the people stopped praising God, then the rocks would do it for them!”

### **wrapping up THE STORY**

**STORYTELLER:** “The religious leaders refused to see it, but Jesus had once again shown His followers that God was keeping His promises. Jesus was the king and Savior that Zechariah and others had written about so long ago.

“Of course, things were about to get really dark for Jesus. He was about to go to the cross to die for our sins and then come back to life. That’s what we celebrate next week at Easter. But all of these things were part of God’s plan. God would ALWAYS keep His promises, no matter how dark things would get.

**CG: Bottom Line Slide**

**[Bottom Line] “Whatever happens, remember God keeps His promises.**

“It’s true! He ALWAYS does. He has promised that He will be with us through everything we might face in life. Even in the dark times, we can always have hope because we know He’s in control. **[Basic Truth] We can trust Him no matter what.**

*(If you have enough branches for each kid)* “You can keep your palm branch. Put it somewhere you’ll see it every day so you can remember that God keeps His promises.

“Let’s talk to God now and thank Him for being a God we can trust.”

**CG: Blank Bottom Line Slide**

### **Pray**

**STORYTELLER:** “Dear God, thank You so much for always keeping Your promises. Jesus came to Jerusalem just like Zechariah said He would! It’s so good to know that we can always **[Basic Truth] trust You no matter what.** Help us to remember that when life seems dark or confusing. Help us to remember that we can have hope because You are good, and You are in control of everything in our lives. We love You, and we ask these things in Jesus’ name, amen.”

*Host enters as Storyteller exits.*

### **Closer**

**HOST:** “You know, sometimes it’s hard for us to understand that God always keeps His promises, because we might know some people who DON’T keep their promises. And, if we’re totally honest, we don’t always keep our promises, either.

“But God is different. God ALWAYS keeps His promises!

**CG: Bottom Line Slide**

**[Bottom Line] “Whatever happens, remember God keeps His promises.**

“There are amazing examples of God’s promises all throughout the Bible. (*Hold up Bible.*) God promised Abraham that he would have a huge family, even though Abraham was really old at the time and didn’t have any kids yet. God gave Joseph a dream that showed he would be an important ruler when he grew up, even though his brothers sold him into slavery. And, of course, God kept His promise to send Jesus to be our Savior.

“There are promises in the Bible that Jesus made to us, too. Jesus promised that He would always be with us. So even when bad things happen or we feel afraid, even when we don’t understand what’s going on, we can trust Jesus and know that He’s right there with us. We can remember to have hope and know that God can bring something good out of something bad.

“You know what? I HOPE you all have a fantastic time talking some more about this in Small Group. In fact, I KNOW you will! I’ll see you later!”

*Dismiss kids to their small groups.*

*SFX: Play high-energy music as the kids exit.*

*CG: Theme Slide*

*Optional Video (Media Package): Theme Loop*