



WEEK  
**TWO**  
APRIL 2022

LARGE GROUP  
**PRETEEN**

## TODAY'S SUGGESTED SCHEDULE

### TODAY'S BIBLE STORY

**That's What Fronds Are For**  
Palm Sunday  
John 12:9-16

### TODAY'S KEY QUESTION

What are you hoping for?

### TODAY'S BOTTOM LINE

Whatever happens, remember  
God is still working.

### MONTHLY MEMORY VERSE

In this world you will have  
trouble. But be encouraged!  
I have won the battle over  
the world.  
John 16:33b, NIV

### HOST SUPPLIES

- Taped start and finish lines for Puzzled Bridges game
- Random objects for Puzzled Bridges game
- Timer

### STORY SUPPLIES

- Palm branches (real or paper)
- Coats
- Three signs
  - Hosanna
  - Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord
  - Blessed is the King!

### PRELUDE: Setting the tone for the experience

See the **Getting Ready** pages at the end of this document for a detailed description of what you'll need for today. In the **Prelude** folder of your curriculum, you'll find a variety of other resources to help you prepare.

### SMALL GROUP

15  
MIN

**SOCIAL: Providing time for fun interaction**  
Just for Fun  
Opening Activity

### LARGE GROUP

35  
MIN

#### ANNOUNCEMENTS:

- HAPPY APRIL
- HOPE
  - All month long, we will be focusing on the message of HOPE
  - HOPE: Believing that something good can come out of something bad
  - For HOSTS and COMMUNICATORS, please be ready to share your own stories of HOPE while
- Preteen Guys Hang Event TODAY: GAME TRUCK APRIL 10th
- Preteen Girls Hang Event: Mom/Daughter Paint Party May 1st
- SUMMER CAMPS - Still time to sign up
- EASTER INVITE CHALLENGE - VIDEO ANNOUNCEMENT

#### MONTHLY WORSHIP LINEUP:

Week 1 - Graves Into Gardens  
Week 2 - **Never Gonna Stop Singing**  
Easter - WHAT I SEE & GRAVES INTO GARDENS  
Week 4 - Let Go & Who You Say I Am



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**PRELUDE**      **SOCIAL**      **STORY**      **WORSHIP**      **GROUPS**      **HOME**

25 MINUTES

10 MINUTES

**TODAY'S BIBLE STORY**

**That's What Fronds Are For**  
Palm Sunday  
John 12:9-16

**TODAY'S KEY QUESTION**

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**TODAY'S BOTTOM LINE**

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**MONTHLY MEMORY VERSE**

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**MONTHLY LIFE APP**

Hope—Believing that  
something good can come  
out of something bad

**BASIC TRUTH**

I can trust God no matter what.

**LARGE GROUP**

ENGAGE KIDS' HEARTS THROUGH A DYNAMIC AND INTERACTIVE BIBLE STORY, WORSHIP, AND PRAYER EXPERIENCE IN A LARGE GROUP SETTING.

**AUDIO:** PLAY HIGH-ENERGY MUSIC AS STUDENTS ENTER.

**SLIDE:** THEME

**OPTIONAL VIDEO (MEDIA PACKAGE):** THEME LOOP

**WORSHIP**

Worship Leaders enter

**WORSHIP LEADER:**

**AUDIO:** NEVER GONNA STOP SINGING

**AUDIO:**

Host enters . . .

**OPTIONAL VIDEO (MEDIA PACKAGE):** COUNTDOWN (30- OR 60-SECOND VERSION)

**OPTIONAL VIDEO (MEDIA PACKAGE):** THEME

**WELCOME**

Host enters. Host has lots of energy as he or she welcomes everyone to [Name of Environment]. Host is relatable and inviting. Host can talk about something that happened culturally throughout the week (Palm Sunday, Easter Week, National Pet Day, National Scrabble Day, Passover), a big sports game, movie opening, a viral video on YouTube, etc. Host tells them how excited he or she is that they're there and briefly runs through what they can expect. This is especially helpful for first-time guests to make them feel like they know what's happening.

**OPENER**

**HOST:** "Hey, everyone! So good to see you here today! I am excited because we have an incredibly puzzling challenge to start us off today. This challenge will test your group's ability to problem-solve and work together. I call it Puzzled Bridges."

**SLIDE:** "PUZZLED BRIDGES"



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“Here’s how it works. As you can see, we have a few piles of what some might call ‘junk.’ Or you could call them piles of ‘extremely creative building supplies.’ In just a moment, I will have a team attempt to get from this taped line here (*Point to the start of obstacle course.*) to that taped line there (*Point to the end.*) without touching the ground. How will you not touch the ground, you ask. Well, that’s where these piles of extremely creative building supplies come in. You’ll use only each other and these supplies to build a bridge from one end to the other. If anyone touches the ground, your whole team must all come back to the start. Make sense? I will time your group and then see who can do it fastest.”

*Depending on the number of groups, you can either set up multiple courses or just have a few small groups participate. Note: You can also have multiple piles and have teams compete simultaneously.*

“(First group up and ready) Let’s do this! On your mark, get set, go!”

**AUDIO: FUN BACKGROUND MUSIC**

*Have as many groups participate as you have time for.*

“(After the game) Wow! Your puzzle-solving today was top-notch. Well done!”



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25 MINUTES

## COMMUNICATOR SCRIPT (STORY)

SLIDE: THEME BACKGROUND

*Communicator enters*

### INTRODUCTION

**COMMUNICATOR:** “Well, hey, everyone! So great to see you all. April is already off to a great start! I have a question for you. Have you ever gotten a present for your birthday or maybe Christmas and, well . . . the gift wasn’t quite what you were hoping for? Check out some of these reactions.”

VIDEO: VIDEOS OF KIDS REACTING TO PRESENTS

*Note: Provide engaging commentary while the videos are playing by building anticipation and offering punch lines as the kids react to the presents. This will help keep the audience interested in situations presented.*

“Those were amazing, right? Now, let me ask you something. Did any of those videos hit too close to home? I mean, have any of you ever had one of those moments?”

### TENSION

**COMMUNICATOR:** “We’d probably like to say that we haven’t. However, chances are pretty good that we’ve had similar moments. We expect one thing, get another, and don’t respond too well when we figure it out. Unfortunately, that’s the way life is sometimes, isn’t it? Life doesn’t always go as we want or at least as we expect it to. When that happens—and it will happen—how should we respond? Disappointment is real. Frustration happens. We can be sad. But along with that, what could it look like to remain hopeful when life doesn’t go exactly how we expected it to go?”

“That’s a great question. In fact, that’s a question that followers of God have asked for thousands of years. We can even read about it in the Bible. Remember, the Bible is a great place to start when you have big questions about life. We can learn from the experiences we read about as people experienced God and the love of Jesus. God inspired them to write down their experiences to help people like us all these years later. Let’s check out a moment that might help us as we think about our expectations and how we can remain hopeful.”

### TRUTH

**COMMUNICATOR:** “Today we’re going to look at the last week of Jesus’ life . . . moments we can read about in the Gospels. As Jesus grew in popularity, more and more people were convinced that He was the Messiah they had been waiting for. What exactly did that mean? Well, for hundreds of years, the prophets spoke of a day when God’s anointed One would come and set everything right. The Messiah, the Savior, would lead the nation in truth and justice. And at this time in history, God’s people, the Jews, faced some incredibly difficult situations. You see, the nation of Rome ruled over them, and the Romans could be quite the bully. Yet the Jews remained hopeful. They believed that when the Messiah came, He would finally get rid of their enemies and restore them back to the great nation they once were. So for those who believed that Jesus really could be God’s promised Messiah, they lived in the hope that their freedom would be coming very soon.”

“For this next part, I need a little help from three volunteers.”



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*Communicator selects three volunteers and brings them on stage.*

"In our story, crowds play an important part. How about you stand right here."

*Communicator stand volunteers on middle of stage.*

"Jesus and His disciples were about to head into Jerusalem. Now Jerusalem was the capital where the temple was located, and to top it off, it was a festival week when people came to the temple to celebrate. The place was packed! Packed with . . . *(Point to volunteers.)* crowds of people who were more than ready for something to happen."

*Open the Bible to Matthew 21:1-3 (NIRV) and read.*

*"As they all approached Jerusalem, they came to Bethphage. It was on the Mount of Olives. Jesus sent out two disciples. He said to them, "Go to the village ahead of you. As soon as you get there, you will find a donkey tied up. Her colt will be with her. Untie them and bring them to me. If anyone says anything to you, say that the Lord needs them. The owner will send them right away."*

"Now we'll come back to the donkeys here in a moment, but this was when the crowds got involved. As Jesus made His way to Jerusalem, the crowds did something quite interesting."

*Open the Bible to John 12:12-13a (NIRV) and read.*

*"The next day the large crowd that had come for the feast heard that Jesus was on his way to Jerusalem. So they took branches from palm trees and went out to meet him.*

"We read in another Gospel that they took these branches as well as their coats and were laying them on the road."

*Communicator hands branches and coats to the volunteers and instructs them to line a path.*

"Now this probably seems a little odd to us. But those crowds knew exactly what they were doing. And we can start to see it in what they say next and in what Jesus did."

"We read on."

*Open the Bible to John 12:13 (NIRV) and read.*

*"So they took branches from palm trees and went out to meet him. They shouted, "Hosanna!" "Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord!" "Blessed is the king of Israel!"*

*Communicator hands a sign to each of the volunteers.*

"*(To volunteers)* Let me hear you say that!"

*Communicator leads the volunteers in repeating those cheers and waving their signs.*



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"Hosanna! That sounds nice, but that's not a word you hear too often in 2022. You might be wondering what that word means. Well, 'Hosanna' is a cry for salvation. It means 'Lord, save us.' As the crowds shouted 'Hosanna' (*Look at the three volunteers and prompt them to say it again.*) they were crying out, 'Lord, save us!'

"These were also words from an ancient psalm or song of Israel, along with these next words: 'Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord. Blessed is the king of Israel!' (*Prompt volunteers.*) But what was with the palm branches and coats?! Well, back in the time of Israel's kings, people put down branches or coats on the road when a king was approaching to recognize that this was God's chosen one.

"So between the branches and the coats and the shouting . . . what do you think the crowds were thinking?

*Pause for responses.*

"That's right! The king was coming. And if the king was coming, what do you think they might have been hoping for? Remember, they had an enemy in charge of them . . .

*Pause for responses.*

"Nailed it. Freedom! Save us, Lord! Get rid of our enemies!

"Can you thank our volunteers for helping out?

*Volunteers sit down.*

"Alright, let's go back to the beginning of the story with the donkeys. Let's think about why Jesus was collecting barnyard animals before going to Jerusalem. Well, we read that Jesus was going to ride a donkey to Jerusalem this time. All these years later, when many of us have heard this story before, Jesus on a donkey might not seem all that strange to us. Back then, though, Jesus' disciples might have questioned this a bit. After all, Jesus had been to Jerusalem many times before, and usually He just walked. Why ride a donkey now? Was He tired? Did He just want to experience something different? Not quite. Check this out."

*Open the Bible to John 12:14-15 (NIV) and read.*

*"Jesus found a young donkey and sat on it. This is just as it is written in Scripture. It says, "City of Zion, do not be afraid. See, your king is coming. He is sitting on a donkey's colt."*

"Many years earlier, the prophet Zechariah had talked about a day when the king would ride into Jerusalem, or Zion, on the colt of a donkey. So what did Jesus do? He rode into Jerusalem on the colt of a donkey. He was fulfilling the Scriptures! And while His disciples didn't understand what Jesus was doing while it was happening, they did understand it later. Jesus was doing exactly what He was supposed to do.

"The people there didn't quite understand what Jesus was doing either. They thought the king was finally here and their enemies didn't stand a chance. They must have imagined their freedom from Rome was so close!

"But that's not what happened. After coming into Jerusalem, Jesus didn't go after the Romans. In fact, the religious leaders and the Romans would soon go after Him. And the cries of the crowds would soon turn from 'Lord, save us' to 'Crucify him' at the influence of the religious leaders.



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“And in the week leading up to Jesus’ death, the disciples, along with the rest of the Jewish people, experienced unmet expectations. And along with that a lot of confusion. What was Jesus doing? Some might have started to wonder if He cared about their freedom or if He really was the Messiah after all. But Jesus knew exactly what He was doing. He knew that what He was about to do . . . would rescue people and offer freedom in a way in which the people would be more free than they could ever imagine.

**APPLICATION**

**COMMUNICATOR:** “We will face times during our lives when we expect things to turn out a certain way. And because of our expectations, we get all of our hopes up. But when the moment comes and doesn’t go as we expected, we end up finding ourselves disappointed. Sometimes this is because life is hard. Other times, the reason might be more because our expectations were off in the first place. People expected Jesus to be this conquering king who would come and destroy enemies and make Israel a great nation again. But that was not what Jesus did, so a lot of people left disappointed. But they couldn’t see in that moment that they needed different expectations. Because what Jesus eventually did was WAY better for the entire world, more than anyone could have imagined.

“I don’t know about you, but there are certainly times when I can get caught hoping God will do things one certain way. I put all of my hope in that expectation. Answer my prayer this way. Deal with mean people that way. Give ME what I want. But God might not always respond the way we expect. But just like Jesus entering into Jerusalem the final week of His life, just because God doesn’t do what you hope doesn’t mean God isn’t about to do something even greater. You can still put your hope in God.”

**LANDING**

**COMMUNICATOR:** “Today as you go to groups, think about this question:

**SLIDE: KEY QUESTION SLIDE**

**“What are you hoping for?** What are some of your expectations for the situations happening in your life right now? How can you find a way to stay hopeful, even if things don’t happen the way you expect them to? If you’re not quite sure how you’d answer those questions, that’s totally ok. You’ll have a chance to chat more about that when you get to Small Groups. Before you head out, let’s pray and thank God for being faithful to us and a constant source of our hope in life. Let’s pray.”

*Communicator leads group in a prayer related to what they just heard. After prayer, Communicator dismisses kids to Small Group.*

**AUDIO: PLAY HIGH-ENERGY MUSIC AS STUDENTS EXIT.**

**SLIDE: THEME**

**OPTIONAL VIDEO (MEDIA PACKAGE): THEME LOOP**