

Interactive lesson



picture from MMMS collection

It's Palm Sunday! What is a palm? <Let them respond>

What do you do with them? <Let them respond>

What is another kind of palm? <Let them respond>

We have palms on our hands. What do we do with them?
<Let them respond; e.g., make noises, carry/hold>

What did Jesus do with His palms? <Let them respond>

On Friday, at the Tenebrae service, we will hear about what Jesus went through during the Passion.

What does Jesus call us to do with our palms?

<Let them respond>

May all the things we do with our palms be pleasing in the sight of the Lord.

Gospel lesson

Let us hear now about Jesus spending time with His disciples during Holy week:



picture from <https://www.freebibleimages.org/photos/Lumo-Light-world/>

John 13:1-17, 31b-35 (NRSV)

¹ Now before the festival of the Passover, Jesus knew that his hour had come to depart from this world and go to the Father. Having loved his own who were in the world, he loved them to the end.

² The devil had already put it into the heart of Judas son of Simon Iscariot to betray him. And during supper

³ Jesus, knowing that the Father had given all things into his hands, and that he had come from God and was going to God,

⁴ got up from the table, took off his outer robe, and tied a towel around himself.

⁵ Then he poured water into a basin and began to wash the disciples' feet and to wipe them with the towel that was tied around him.

⁶ He came to Simon Peter, who said to him, "Lord, are you going to wash my feet?"

⁷ Jesus answered, "You do not know now what I am doing, but later you will understand."

⁸ Peter said to him, "You will never wash my feet." Jesus answered, "Unless I wash you, you have no share with me."

⁹ Simon Peter said to him, "Lord, not my feet only but also my hands and my head!"

¹⁰ Jesus said to him, "One who has bathed does not need to wash, except for the feet, but is entirely clean. And you are clean, though not all of you."

¹¹ For he knew who was to betray him; for this reason he said, "Not all of you are clean."

¹² After he had washed their feet, had put on his robe, and had returned to the table, he said to them, "Do you know what I have done to you?"

¹³ You call me Teacher and Lord--and you are right, for that is what I am.

¹⁴ So if I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet.

¹⁵ For I have set you an example, that you also should do as I have done to you.

¹⁶ Very truly, I tell you, servants are not greater than their master, nor are messengers greater than the one who sent them.

¹⁷ If you know these things, you are blessed if you do them.

^{31b} When [Judas] had gone out, Jesus said, "Now the Son of Man has been glorified, and God has been glorified in him.

³² If God has been glorified in him, God will also glorify him in himself and will glorify him at once.

³³ Little children, I am with you only a little

longer. You will look for me; and as I said to the Jews so now I say to you, 'Where I am going, you cannot come.'

³⁴I give you a new commandment, that you love one another. Just as I have loved you, you also should love one another.

³⁵By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another."

The word of God for the people of God

<Hymn "Wounded World that Cries for Healing"
TFWS #2177>

Message: Blessed is the One



picture from

<https://www.umcdiscipleship.org/worship-planning/depths-of-love/palm-passion-sunday-year-b-lectionary-planning-notes/palm-passion-sunday-year-b-graphics>

Please pray with me?

Glorious King of all,

who chose to lead through service to all,
as we take time now to further consider today's
scriptures, please

- speak Your words through my mouth,
- open our ears to hear Your message, and
- abide in our hearts,

That we may be inspired to live within this world
according to Your example. Amen.

Today our “Depths of Love” series calls out “Blessed is the One”:

“[F]or Palm/Passion Sunday, it is striking that even Mark has slowed down the action a bit, filling in details about Jesus’ instructions to the disciples and the response of the bystanders who questioned them when they went to find the colt for Jesus to ride.”

It's true; the urgent Gospel of Mark, “immediate” about almost everything, suddenly slows down for Holy Week. But did you notice that I had us read the triumphal entrance story from the Gospel of John instead this year? It is an alternate passage that we do not normally get to hear.

In John, the storyline goes from:

- † Jews wanting to stone Jesus in the temple, because they asked if He was the Messiah and He said that His works testified to it, to
- † the raising of Lazarus from the dead, with crowds believing in Jesus as God’s Son and the chief priests & Pharisees plotting to kill Jesus (and even Lazarus), to
- † a thank-you dinner at Lazarus’s home, where Mary anoints Jesus’ feet with costly perfume and Judas gets upset at her wastefulness, to
- † Jesus’ triumphal entry into Jerusalem, with crowds

shouting “Hosanna! Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord!” and the Pharisees noting that the whole world has gone after Jesus, to

† (what we talked about last week, with) Greeks coming to see Jesus, and Jesus talking about what he must go through, to

† the Passover meal, where Jesus washes the disciples’ feet, Judas leaves to betray Him, and Jesus gives the command to love one another, knowing that he is soon to be crucified.

I think Judas was like a lot of people nowadays. He wanted to do what was right and thought he knew what right was. I am guessing that he believed [the temple leadership, who said they wanted Jesus for questioning], not realizing they were out for His blood.

And Jesus had been strange of late, accepting over-the-top gifts and accolades of a great leader but then acting like a servant. What’s more, He wanted His disciples to be servants too. That’s not what the expected Messiah was supposed to do. That’s not what His closest allies expected to be rewarded with.

So off Judas went, to see if the temple leadership could talk some sense into Jesus. And the Lord knew Judas’ turmoil, that wanting to control events to prevent bad things from happening, that trying to

play God. But Christ had a mission to fulfill, so He used Judas' sinful weakness to demonstrate God's glory and power, to bless the entire world with salvation from sin.

Paul described it eloquently in his letter to the Philippians: "Jesus, who...did not regard equality with God as something to be exploited, but emptied himself, taking the form of a slave... humbled himself and became obedient to the point of death-- even death on a cross."

I had the occasion recently to remind someone that God brings beauty out of even the most terrible things. What is more, God is willing to come to those places where we are covered with the filth of sin and minister to our needs - just like Jesus washed the feet of the disciples.

Often when we pray, we seek (like Peter did) for God to do more for us - to take care of things which the Lord knows we do not really need. Jesus did not come to make us incompetent, but to enable us to live.

Let go of insisting that we know how things must work out; humble yourself and trust Jesus. Wave your palms in the air to celebrate God, then use them to show love for one another.

As we go forth into transformation this week,

as an easy ride develops into menial labors of love,
as the “Hosanna!” of the crowd changes to “Crucify!”
Remember how our Lord calls us to respond, what Jesus
Himself did for us.

Go and show that you are His disciples, with love for
one another and for all whom you encounter, because
“Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the
Lord!”