

JESUS WANTS TO BE  
MY FRIEND FOREVER.

WEEK

ONE

APRIL 2020

SMALL GROUP

3-5

YEAR-OLDS



first look™

## TEAM

### CEO

Reggie Joiner

### DIRECTOR OF MESSAGING

Kristen Ivy

### DIRECTOR OF PRESCHOOL STRATEGY

Brittany Compton Robertson

### DIRECTOR OF CURRICULUM

Kathy Hill

### DESIGN AND BRAND MANAGER

Sharon van Rossum

### CREATIVE TEAM

Brittany Compton Robertson

Kathy Hill

Autumn Ward

Ashley Hiers

Donna High

Sharon van Rossum

Deb Springer

McKenzie Causey

Missy Purcell

### WRITERS

Donna High

Emily Meredith

Autumn Ward

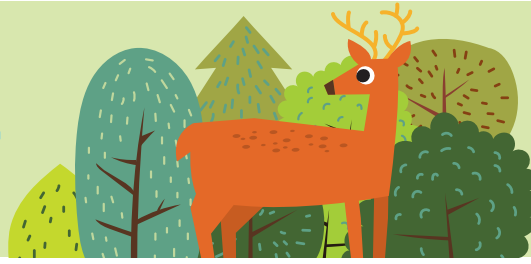
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PRELUDE

SOCIAL

WORSHIP

STORY

GROUPS

HOME



**BIBLE STORY**

We celebrate Jesus because  
He is special.

**PALM SUNDAY**  
MATTHEW 21:1-11, 15-16

**MEMORY VERSE**

"I am alive for ever and ever!"

**REVELATION 1:18, NIV**

**KEY QUESTION**

Who is alive?

**BOTTOM LINE**

Jesus is alive.

**BASIC TRUTH**

Jesus wants to be my  
friend forever.

**PRELUDE: Setting the tone for the experience**

For Leaders Only  
Monthly Overview  
Create the Environment

**15**  
MIN

**SOCIAL: Providing time for fun interaction**

Offer one or more of these activities as preschoolers arrive.  
Palm Leaf Dancing  
Walk the Path  
Plush Friends Party

**10**  
MIN

**WORSHIP: Inviting people to respond to God**

He's Alive Oh Yeah  
Follow On

**10**  
MIN

**STORY: Communicating God's truth in engaging ways**

Introductory Sketch  
Bible Story  
Prayer

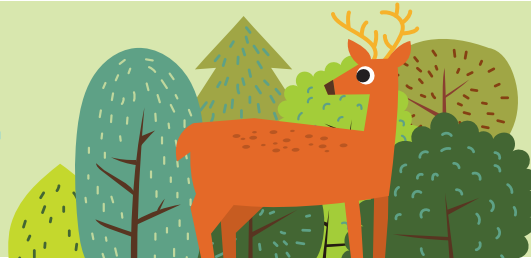
**25**  
MIN

**GROUPS: Creating a safe place to connect**

Offer as many of these activities as your time, facilities, resources, and leadership allow.  
Memory Verse with Motions  
Jesus' Triumphal Entry  
Cut It Out  
Hosanna Dancing  
Puppet Theater  
Journal and Prayer

**HOME: Prompting action beyond the experience**

Going Home  
Parent Cue



PRELUDE

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15 MINUTES

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## MOVE

an activity that uses a preschooler's natural desire to move  
to help them learn

### 1. PALM LEAF DANCING

**WHAT YOU NEED:** A three-foot square piece of butcher paper, green crepe paper, scissors, painter's tape, and a permanent marker

**WHAT YOU DO:**

**BEFORE THE ACTIVITY:** Use the permanent marker to draw a large tree trunk and its branches on the butcher paper. Cut the green crepe paper into two-foot long pieces and use the painter's tape to attach them to the butcher paper tree as the palm leaves. Tape the completed tree to a wall near the activity area at a child's eye level with the painter's tape.

**DURING THE ACTIVITY:** Let the children take turns walking to the tree to pull a "leaf" from the tree. Lead the children to wave around their leaves as you introduce today's Bible story.

**AFTER THE ACTIVITY:** Gather the palm leaves for clean-up.

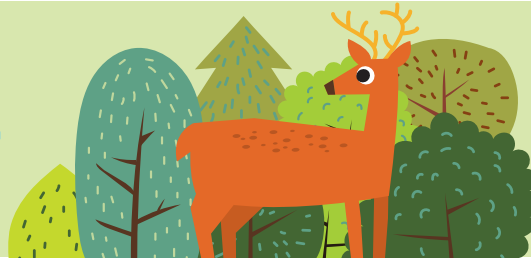
**WHAT YOU SAY:**

**BEFORE THE ACTIVITY:** "Friends, what do you see on our wall here? Yes, a tree! I'll call on you one at a time to move forward and select a leaf. You can pull it right off the tree! Then listen to instructions as we wave our leaves together."

**DURING THE ACTIVITY:** "Let's wave our leaves to the left. (*Demonstrate.*) Good! Now let's wave them to the right. (*Demonstrate.*) And now up and down like this. (*Demonstrate.*) Great job!"

**AFTER THE ACTIVITY:** "In our Bible story today, we'll hear about how a crowd welcomed Jesus to town by waving palm branches as he passed by. Let's go!"

**TRANSITION:** Move to Worship and Story by continuing to "wave" as if they have palm branches in their hands.



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15 MINUTES

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## PLAY

an activity that encourages preschoolers to follow guidelines  
while having fun and learning new concepts

### 2. WALK THE PATH

**WHAT YOU NEED:** Masking tape, Little People® figures, small toy cars, and small plastic animals

**WHAT YOU DO:**

**BEFORE THE ACTIVITY:** Use the masking tape to create a line down the center of a table or the floor in the activity area to create a path.

**DURING THE ACTIVITY:** Place the figures, cars, and animals on the table. Encourage the children to use the items to walk down the path.

**AFTER THE ACTIVITY:** Be sure each child gets a turn to walk an item down the path.

**WHAT YOU SAY:**

**BEFORE THE ACTIVITY:** "Let's get walking!"

**DURING THE ACTIVITY:** "We have a path on the table. (*Point.*) We have many different items that can go down the path. You can walk the people, drive the cars, or make the animals run down the path." (*Do activity.*)

**AFTER THE ACTIVITY:** "Way to go! All of our items are down the path! In our Bible story today, we are going to hear about how Jesus went down a path, too!"

**TRANSITION:** Move to Bible story time by telling the children to follow you down a path to the story area.

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15 MINUTES

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## IMAGINE

an activity that lets preschoolers pretend, imagine,  
and role play to enhance their learning

### 3. PLUSH FRIENDS PARTY

**WHAT YOU NEED:** Several plush animals, paper party hats, paper cups, paper plates, and a plastic tablecloth

**WHAT YOU DO:**

**BEFORE THE ACTIVITY:** Cover the table with a tablecloth. Set the party supplies and plush animals in the center of the table.

**DURING THE ACTIVITY:** Encourage the children to set up a party for their plush friends! Instruct them to place a hat on each plush friend and place them around the table. Then guide them to set the table with the cups and plates. Children may use their imaginations to create a party for their plush friends.

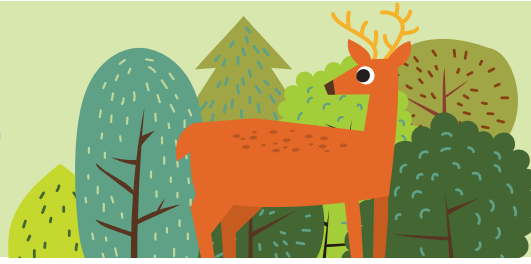
**AFTER THE ACTIVITY:** Collect all the plush animals, cups, and plates for clean-up.

**WHAT YOU SAY:**

**BEFORE THE ACTIVITY:** "I thought it would be fun to create a party for our plush friends! Do you see these party hats? Let's give each friend a hat today and then set the table for a party!"

**AFTER THE ACTIVITY:** "What a fun celebration! You are awesome party planners. In our Bible story today, we'll hear about someone else who is ALWAYS worth celebrating. Let's go find out who it is!"

**TRANSITION:** Move to Worship and Story by calling out things you do at a party that children can pantomime as they walk, such as: dancing, hugging a friend, eating some yummy cake and ice cream, opening presents, etc.



PRELUDE

SOCIAL

WORSHIP

STORY

GROUPS

HOME

25 MINUTES

**HEAR  
FROM GOD**  
MEMORY VERSE  
REVIEW



**MOVE**

an activity that uses a preschooler's natural desire to move to help them learn

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**1. MEMORY VERSE WITH MOTIONS**

**WHAT YOU NEED:** No supplies needed

**WHAT YOU DO:**

**BEFORE THE ACTIVITY:** Say the Memory Verse and do the following motions in front of the children. "I am alive (*point both hands up*) for ever and ever!" (*Twirl around.*) Revelation 1:18. (*Open your hands like a book.*)

**DURING THE ACTIVITY:** Say the verse again with the motions and invite the children to do it with you. Repeat several times.

**WHAT YOU SAY:**

**BEFORE THE ACTIVITY:** "I am going to say our new Memory Verse today. Everyone, watch me! "I am alive (*point both hands up*) for ever and ever!" (*Twirl around.*) Revelation 1:18." (*Open your hands like a book.*)

**DURING THE ACTIVITY:** "Now let's do it all together! Are you ready?" (*Lead the children in saying the verse and doing the motions several times.*)

**AFTER THE ACTIVITY:** "Our Memory Verse tells us that **Jesus is alive! Who is alive? Jesus is alive!**"



PRELUDE

SOCIAL

WORSHIP

STORY

GROUPS

HOME

25 MINUTES

**TALK**  
**ABOUT GOD**  
BIBLE STORY  
REVIEW



**IMAGINE**

an activity that lets preschoolers pretend, imagine,  
and role play to enhance their learning

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**2. JESUS' TRIUMPHAL ENTRY**

**WHAT YOU NEED:** Several coats, artificial palm leaves, "Donkey Cutout" Activity Page, cardstock, a paint stick or large craft stick, and masking tape

**WHAT YOU DO:**

**BEFORE THE ACTIVITY:** Copy the "Donkey Cutout" onto cardstock and cut out. Tape the cutout to the paint or craft stick with the masking tape. Set the coats and palm branches on the floor of your activity area. If you have a large class, consider providing more than one donkey.

**DURING THE ACTIVITY:** Gather the children in the activity area. Encourage them to select a coat or palm branch. Give one child the donkey. Let the children act out waving the palm branches or laying down the coats as the child with the donkey cutout walks by. Encourage them to say, "Hosanna! Hosanna! Yay, Jesus!"

Every thirty seconds or so, stop the children with two claps and say, "SWITCH!" Children must put down what they have and choose a different prop to play a different role for each round. Make sure as many children as possible have a chance to hold the donkey cutout.

**AFTER THE ACTIVITY:** Gather the coats, branches, and the donkey cutout and set aside for clean-up.

**WHAT YOU SAY:**

**BEFORE THE ACTIVITY:** "When Jesus came to town, the people were so excited to see Him. What did they wave as He entered Jerusalem? (*Hold up the palm branch.*) Yes, they waved palm branches and said, 'Hosanna!' What did they lay on the road? (*Hold up a coat.*) Yes, they put down their coats along the path. And Jesus entered riding on a what? (*Hold up the donkey.*) Yes! A donkey."

**DURING THE ACTIVITY:** "I want everyone to grab a coat or a palm branch or the donkey. Let's pretend we were there that day! As the donkey walks by, say, 'Hosanna! Hosanna! Yay, Jesus!' If you have a palm branch, wave it! When I clap twice like this (*demonstrate*) and say, 'Switch,' I want you to switch what you have with someone else."

**AFTER THE ACTIVITY:** "Everyone place your coats or branches or donkey right here. (*Designate a place for children to place these items.*) That was so fun! Can

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**TALK**  
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**MATTHEW 21:1-11, 15-16**

you imagine what it must have been like to see Jesus come to your own town?  
What a reason to celebrate. We celebrate because Jesus is special. **Jesus is alive**  
today, and He loves it when we celebrate Him! **Who is alive? Jesus is alive."**

**MEMORY VERSE**

"I am alive for ever and ever!"

**REVELATION 1:18, NIV**

**KEY QUESTION**

Who is alive?

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**LIVE  
FOR GOD  
APPLICATION  
ACTIVITY**



**THINK**

an advanced activity specifically designed for older preschoolers

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**3. CUT IT OUT**

**WHAT YOU NEED:** "Cut" Activity Page, green cardstock, adult scissors, and preschool-safe scissors

**WHAT YOU DO:**

**BEFORE THE ACTIVITY:** Cut the Activity Page leaves out on the dotted lines. Each child will need one leaf.

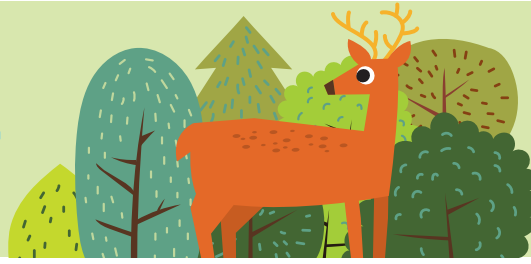
**DURING THE ACTIVITY:** Give each child a leaf. Instruct the child to cut on the solid black lines around the leaf.

**WHAT YOU SAY:**

**BEFORE THE ACTIVITY:** "We are going to cut it out!"

**DURING THE ACTIVITY:** (Give each child a leaf.) "Use the scissors to cut on the black lines. (Assist children as needed.) Nice work!"

**AFTER THE ACTIVITY:** "Awesome! We have leaves just like in our Bible story today. The people waved the leaves as Jesus rode down the path. **Jesus is alive! Who is alive? Jesus is alive!**"



PRELUDE

SOCIAL

WORSHIP

STORY

GROUPS

HOME

25 MINUTES

**LIVE  
FOR GOD  
APPLICATION  
ACTIVITY**



**MOVE**

an activity that uses a preschooler's natural desire to move to help them learn

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**4. HOSANNA DANCING**

**WHAT YOU NEED:** Music player, palm branches, and "Hosanna Rock" song (available on Spotify® or iTunes®)

**WHAT YOU DO:**

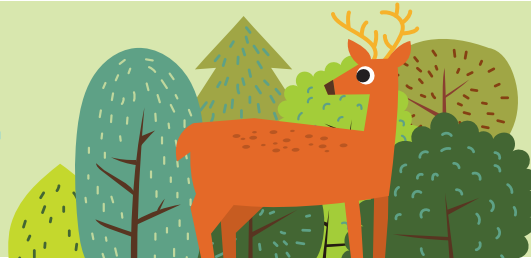
**DURING THE ACTIVITY:** Play the "Hosanna Rock" song and encourage the children to wave their palm branches and dance to the music. Repeat as desired.

**WHAT YOU SAY:**

**BEFORE THE ACTIVITY:** "Let's wave our palm branches and dance to the music."

**DURING THE ACTIVITY:** "When you hear the music, start waving those palm branches. Let's celebrate Jesus because He is SO special! **Who is alive? Jesus is alive.**"

**AFTER THE ACTIVITY:** "That was so fun! Jesus is worth celebrating. He wants to be our friend forever, and He is alive today! **Who is alive? Jesus is alive.**"



PRELUDE

SOCIAL

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GROUPS

HOME

25 MINUTES

**LIVE  
FOR GOD  
APPLICATION  
ACTIVITY**



**CREATE**

an activity that allows preschoolers to review the Bible story, bottom line, or memory verse by creating a craft to take home

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**5. PUPPET THEATER**

**WHAT YOU NEED:** "Puppet" and "Theater" Activity Pages, cardstock, scissors, green tissue squares, one-inch fabric squares, and glue sticks

**WHAT YOU DO:**

**BEFORE THE ACTIVITY:** Copy the Activity Pages onto the cardstock. Cut the "Puppet" Activity Page on the dotted lines. Each child will need one puppet.

**DURING THE ACTIVITY:** Give each child a "Theater" Activity Page. Help the children glue the tissue squares and fabric squares on the top of the page, above the gray line. Fold the page on the gray line so that the glued squares are on the bottom and flush with the table and the top of the page will stand up.

**AFTER THE ACTIVITY:** Give each child a cutout and encourage them to walk the puppet across the squares and in front of the backdrop.

**WHAT YOU SAY:**

**BEFORE THE ACTIVITY:** "We are going to make a puppet show of our Bible story today!"

**DURING THE ACTIVITY:** (*Hold up the Activity Page.*) "This will be our stage for our puppet show. Our puppet show will be of Jesus walking on the coats and leaves. We need to glue all of the coats and leaves on our stage. (*Do activity.*) Great job! Now when we fold the page like this (*demonstrate*), it is a stage! Here is our puppet (*hold up cutout*). It is Jesus! Walk Jesus across the stage." (*Finish activity.*)

**AFTER THE ACTIVITY:** "Your puppet shows are awesome! You can take them home and act out our Bible story for your family. You can tell everyone that Jesus is ALIVE! **Who is alive? Jesus is alive!**"

**PRAY  
TO GOD**  
PRAYER  
ACTIVITY



**REFLECT**

an activity that encourages personal application and prayer

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**6. JOURNAL AND PRAYER**

**WHAT YOU NEED:** Paperclip "Memory Verse Card" in your Bible at Revelation 1:18. Provide a journal and a fun-shaped pen for each small group.

**SMALL GROUP LEADER (SGL):** "It's Small Group time. We are going to cheer for Jesus like they did in our story today while we walk to our Small Group spot. Follow me, and let's cheer for Jesus!"

*(Cheer for Jesus as you lead the children to your Small Group spot.)*

CHILDREN and **SGL:** "Hosanna! Hosanna! Yay, Jesus!"

*(Repeat as you walk to your spot.)*

**SGL:** "We made it! Let's sit down and talk about today's Bible story. One, two, three, sit down with me!"

*(Open the Bible and lay it open in front of the children.)*

"Our Bible story today was about the very first Palm Sunday. People got so excited when they heard Jesus was coming that they quickly cut some palm branches from trees and began waving them in the air! Some people took off their coats and spread them on the road for Jesus to walk on. Everyone wanted to celebrate Jesus because He is so special!

"We still celebrate how special Jesus is because **Jesus is alive! Who is alive?"**

**CHILDREN AND SGL: "Jesus is alive."**

**SGL:** "And the Bible verse we are learning will help us remember that **Jesus is alive.**

*(Turn the pages of your Bible to the Memory Verse Card.)*

"The verse says: "I am alive for ever and ever!" Revelation 1:18.

PRELUDE

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HOME

25 MINUTES

**PRAY  
TO GOD**  
PRAYER  
ACTIVITY



**REFLECT**

an activity that encourages personal application and prayer

*(Close Bible and lay it down.)*

“Those are Jesus’ words. Jesus is saying: “I am alive (*point both hands up*) for ever and ever!” (*Twirl around.*) Revelation 1:18. (*Open your hands like a book.*) Let’s stand up and say that together with the motions.

*(Lead the children in saying the verse with the motions several times.)*

“You sound awesome!

*(Give high fives to the children.)*

“Now let’s sit down so we can write in our prayer journal and talk to God.

*(Hold the journal and fun-shaped pen.)*

“The people in our story showed Jesus He is special by waving branches in the air and putting coats on the road. What are some ways we can show Jesus He is special? Let’s make a list of ways we can show Jesus He is special. Maybe it’s telling Jesus we love Him, singing Him a song, or drawing Him a picture. There are lots of ways we can show Jesus we think He is super special!

*(Say each child’s name and write down what they say. Remember to print the names so the children can recognize their names and the letters.)*

“This is a fantastic list! We can use it when talk to God. Would anyone like to pray before I pray?”

*(Give each child who wants to pray the opportunity to do so.)*

**PRAYER**

**SGL:** “Dear God, help us remember that **Jesus is alive** and we can celebrate Him every day. We want to show Jesus how special He is by doing things like (*read the list the children made*). We love You, God. In Jesus’ name, amen.”