

Age-Level Overview

	Open the Bible	Activate Faith
Lower Elementary		
WORKSHOP FOCUS: Jesus holds us in the palm of his hand.	SPARK RESOURCES: Spark Story Bibles, Spark Song CD (optional)	SPARK RESOURCES: None
HIGH FIVE: Kids create palms out of their palms.	SUPPLIES: Large palm leaf (real, if possible), "Parade" music CD, CD player	SUPPLIES: Bulletin board with "Jesus Holds Us in the Palm of His Hands," and construction paper "stem" of palm leaf, wallpaper books, decorative papers, and/or wrapping paper, scissors, pencils, staplers
Upper Elementary		
WORKSHOP FOCUS: Jesus is the resurrection and the life.	SPARK RESOURCES: Spark Bibles, Spark Bible Stickers	SPARK RESOURCES: None
LIGHT AT THE END: Kids create a tri-fold brochure to tell the story.	SUPPLIES: Chart paper, markers, pencils	SUPPLIES: Heavy white paper, template for tri-fold (page 23), craypas, black charcoal, glitter paint, brushes, glitter markers, markers, colored pencils, scissors
All Kids		
WORKSHOP FOCUS: Jesus is the rock as we roll along in life.	SPARK RESOURCES: Spark Story Bibles, Spark Bibles, Spark Bible Stickers	SPARK RESOURCES: None
ROCK 'N' ROLL NEON PAINTING: Kids create a rocking painting.	SUPPLIES: None	SUPPLIES: Black construction paper, shoeboxes with lids, white crayons, small rocks (marble-sized), neon paints (glow in the dark optional), small plastic cups, plastic spoons, drying area



Visit www.sparksundayschool.org for more Spark content. Watch a short Lesson Prep Video that will prepare you and give you confidence to explore this Bible story with the kids you are leading. You will also find a downloadable Family Page for this rotation's story filled with ideas for families to use to explore this story and live out their faith at home.

Workshop Focus: Jesus holds us in the palm of his hand.

Keep these tips in mind as you welcome kids to the workshop and explore the story together.

- Each week, remember to welcome kids to the rotation. Keep in mind that for some kids it may be the first time they are visiting your workshop!
- If kids have heard the story several times during previous weeks, read it again! Kids learn through repetition, and every workshop will explore the Bible story in a slightly different way.
- Remember that the Shepherds are there to support you as they accompany kids each week.
- Be sure to visit www.sparksundayschool.org to download the Family Page for this story. Make copies of it and ask Shepherds to distribute it during the Wrap Up.

Open the Bible (10 minutes)

Palm Sunday to Easter Sunday Storytelling

Activity Instructions

Start today with a parade! As the kids enter the room, have parade music playing (or select song from Spark Song CD). Hold a palm leaf in your hand as kids enter and invite them to parade around the room with you. Expect some excitement. Act like you're looking for something or someone. Keep encouraging the kids to play along and celebrate.

Hey, parade-goers! Are you having fun? Can you shout a big "Hosanna" to encourage everyone? Have you seen anything or anyone yet? It's getting a bit hot from all of this walking! Let's take a break on the parade route and visit for a moment.

Gather the kids together to talk about the day and the Bible story, focusing on Palm Sunday. Engage kids in a lively conversation about their experiences with parades and celebrations. Expect some stories . . . and be prepared to have to stop the conversations a bit short to save time for the art project.

Spark Resources

Spark Story Bibles
Spark Song CD (optional)

Supplies

Large palm leaf, paper or real
"Parade" music CD
CD player

Have any of you ever watched a parade? Been in a parade? What are some of your favorite parts? Why do we have parades? Did you ever scoop up candy from the side of the road? Visit with a character? Watch for a favorite float? Listen to music? Parades can be a lot of fun.

Did you know that there was a big parade event in the Bible? Pass out Spark Story Bibles. **Find page 457 in your Spark Story Bibles. What are the people in the road doing? What are they waving? What do you think they are saying?** Accept answers with enthusiasm.

Turn back a page (page 456). **There's Jesus and some of the disciples. Let's find out how this whole celebration got started and what happened on this day.** Read pages 454-459 with the class.

Great job! I could really hear the enthusiasm as you read. Accept all answers to the following questions. **What is a "king of peace"?** Accept kids' answers. **How do you think Jesus felt about being a king of peace? Why did he choose to ride on the donkey? Why did he say that the whole earth was celebrating?**

Take the story to another level. Lift up your large palm leaf. **Did you notice all of the bits of green on pages 456-458? Those palm leaves are a big part of the story. What happens when you wave a palm leaf?** (*breeze, fresh air, celebration*) **Why did the people put them on the ground?** (*a carpet, recognizing Jesus' entry*) **Take a look at your own hands. What is the inside of your hand called?** (*the palm*) **Isn't it cool that we can look at our own "palms" and remember this story? We wave our palms** (in greeting, to fan ourselves, for high fives) **and we put them "down" or put them together in prayer. What else do we do with our palms?** (hold things) **Have you ever held a small kitten or animal in your hands? When we have a living creature in our hands we often want to protect it and keep it safe. That is exactly what Jesus does for us. He wants to love us, protect us, and keep us safe so that is why we say that Jesus holds us in the palm of his hand. So now whenever you look at your own palm you can remember the Palm Sunday story and how much Jesus loves us!**

Activate Faith (25 minutes)

High Five

Set Up: Prepare a bulletin board with a long piece of green construction paper to serve as the central stem of the palm and the heading "Jesus holds us in the palm of His hands." Assemble a collection of wallpaper books, decorative papers, and/or wrapping paper. Enlist a couple of volunteers to help kids staple projects to bulletin board.

Activity Instructions

The palm leaf is a great reminder that Jesus holds us in the palm of his hand. Today we will work together to create an enormous "palm leaf" project. When we're finished, we'll be able to stand back and see a great celebration of our palms that have come together to celebrate Palm Sunday and remember that Jesus holds us in the palm of his hands.

I'll show you what to do and then you'll be able to start creating. First, here's our blank canvas. Point to bulletin board with palm stem. **Next, here's a collection of super-cool paper choices.** Show a couple of samples.

Here's what you will need to do: (demonstrate each step for them while you are giving directions)

- 1) Select a piece of wallpaper or other kind of paper that you like.**
- 2) Turn the paper pattern side down.**
- 3) Place your non-writing hand on the paper with fingers spread out.**
- 4) Hold it down firmly.**
- 5) Trace your non-writing hand with a pencil. (Or you can have a friend trace it.)**
- 6) Use a pair of scissors to cut out your wallpaper hand.**
- 7) Use a pencil and roll each of the paper fingers around it to "curl" it and make it look more like a leaf.**
- 8) Repeat all these steps! And make as many as you can!**

When you have three or more hands ready to go, bring them over to the board and we will start stapling them on to create our enormous palm leaf.

Have a volunteer helper or two with staplers ready to start creating the giant palm leaf on the bulletin board. As the "paper palm leaves" start arriving, staple them onto the central stem and overlap them to create the group project.

What a great celebration of palms we made! As we look at this creation, what do you notice? Accept all answers. **Each time that you see this bulletin board or a palm branch remember the love Jesus has for every one of us and how he holds us always in the palm of his hand.**

Spark Resources

None

Supplies

Bulletin Board "Jesus Holds Us in the Palm of His Hands" and construction paper "stem" of palm leaf
Wallpaper books, decorative papers, and/or wrapping paper
Scissors
Pencils
Staplers

Send (5 minutes)

Wrap Up

Remind the Shepherds to distribute the Family Pages for this story if the kids haven't already received it, and come together for Wrap Up.

Let's take a parade around the room and meet up at our giant palm leaf! Let's all wave our "palms" in the air as we walk. Lead the kids with hands/palms in the air and shouts of "Hosanna!" until everyone is gathered in front of the finished art piece.

Let's put our "palms" together and pray. There are a few actions you will need to do, so listen and follow what I do.

Spark Resources

Family Pages



Supplies

Finished bulletin board

Prayer Time

Dear Jesus,

Thank you for being the king of peace.

You rode into Jerusalem on a donkey,

And the whole world celebrated.

We celebrate, too!

We clap our hands together in praise. (lead kids in clapping)

We high five each other in happiness. (lead kids in giving high fives)

We wave our hands in greeting. (lead kids in waving hands)

We put our hands together in prayer. (lead kids in clasping/folding hands in prayer)

All of this, because you hold us in the palm of your hands.

Amen.

Workshop Focus: Jesus is the resurrection and the life.

Keep these tips in mind as you welcome kids to the workshop and explore the story together.

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- If kids have heard the story several times during previous weeks, read it again! Kids learn through repetition, and every workshop will explore the Bible story in a slightly different way.
- Remember that the Shepherds are there to support you as they accompany kids each week.
- Be sure to visit www.sparksondayschool.org to download the Family Page for this story. Make copies of it and ask Shepherds to distribute it during the Wrap Up.

Open the Bible (10 minutes)

Palm Sunday to Easter Sunday Storytelling

Activity Instructions

Prepare three pieces of chart paper with the headings *Life*, *Death*, and *Resurrection*.

Have any of you written or read an awesome story or novel? There are lots of important parts that go into making a story that has an impact on people. One of the most important things is the details. Today is all about the details that make up the Easter story. When we think about the final week of Jesus' life on earth, there are a lot of interesting details.

First, there is Palm Sunday. Who can recall some details from that part of the story? Record kids' answers on LIFE chart.

Then, there is the dark day of his death, Good Friday. What are some of the images or moods from that day? Record what kids can remember on the DEATH chart.

Finally, there is Easter. What does the resurrection part of the story bring to mind? Record kids' answers on the RESURRECTION chart.

Spark Resources

Spark Bibles
Spark Bible Stickers

Supplies

Chart paper, 3 pieces
Markers
Pencils

Did you know that all four of the Gospels (Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John) contain an Easter story? That gives us a clue that it is central to the Bible and to our Christian faith. Sometimes our memory of the story is missing some pieces because we've heard it so many times. Or, perhaps, now that you are older, there are things that you will notice that you didn't see before.

I'm going to divide you into three groups today and ask you to read together one of the sections of the story and see if you can add details, images, moods, feelings, or impressions to the charts that we've started.

Pass out Spark Bibles. Divide groups and monitor as they work together to read the text and add to their charts.

Group 1: Life Text: Luke 19:28-40

Group 2: Death Text: Luke 22:14-23; Luke 23:26-49

Group 3: Resurrection Text: Luke 24:1-12

Encourage open responses and ask questions to assist groups that may need encouragement. Look for kids to dig deep.

Thank you for looking deeper to find more details. These details will help shape the artwork that you will create today. This story has a great progression, and even though the middle is painfully dark, we know that Jesus is the life and resurrection.

Place a Makes Me Feel sticker in your Spark Bibles at a point that you experienced a deep emotion. You may write what you felt next to the sticker or keep it to yourself.

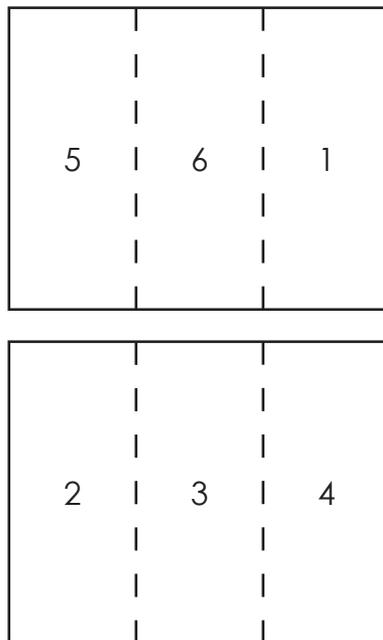
Activate Faith (25 minutes)

This is a big story to wrap around in one session. The discussion will hinge on subdividing the story into three main parts: life, death, and resurrection. An emphasis on color and texture and mood will be incorporated into each phase of the story to help lead this into the art project. Help kids identify that there is a progression to the story, even with the sad middle, which is important to this Palm Sunday to Easter story.

Light at the End

Set Up: Prefold paper into a “tri-fold” template that kids will use to create their artwork. Note: See example below. It is helpful for kids to put a small number on each of their brochure pages so they know which corresponds to the artwork:

Front/Back: 5 6 1
Inside pages: 2 3 4



Spark Resources

None

Supplies

Heavy white paper, at least 1 per kid
Template for tri-fold on this page
Craypas
Black charcoal
Glitter paint
Brushes
Glitter markers
Markers
Colored Pencils
Scissors

Activity Instructions

Hold up a tri-fold template (clearly labeled Front/Back: 5 6 1 and Inside pages: 2 3 4)

Have any of you ever picked up a brochure advertisement? What caught your eye? What was it advertising? What are some elements of design work that make it interesting? (*color, texture, font choice, layout*)

Today, we're going to use the details you collected from the Palm Sunday to Easter Sunday story to create a tri-fold brochure piece of artwork.

The basic concept is easy to follow. What will bring this story to life is your eye for adding color, imagination, and details.

Here's the information you need to get started:

1. The front page of your tri-fold brochure (section 1) will represent LIFE. Use the images and moods and details of Palm Sunday to create this page. Your medium for this section will be craypas. Use them in solid strokes, blend them together with a piece of tissue paper or your fingers, or overlap them. Think bright, full of life, and palms as you create the celebration piece.

2. The next piece (sections 2 and 5) will be what you see when you open up the tri-fold. Section 5 will be representative of death and darkness. Use the event of Good Friday to inspire this section. Black charcoal will be your medium to create this section.

Note that section 2 will become somewhat messy with the charcoal. Allow that to happen as you open and close the tri-fold. Jesus' story does not fall simply into sections, and as the charcoal rubs onto section 2 it will remind us of the significance and importance of his death as part of the progression of the story.

3. Finally, open your tri-fold to show sections 2, 3, and 4. On these sections you will explore the wonder and glory of the resurrection. Use a combination of glitter paints and colored pencils and markers to create an amazing burst of the resurrection. How will section 2 (already smudged with charcoal) play into your creation?

4. To finish your piece, you have the option of cutting in a couple of glimpses or peeks into the death and resurrection segments. To do this, use a scissors and carefully cut slits or small segments out of section 1 and also cut through section 5. Doing this will allow parts of the story to be revealed.

When you are finished, share this art creation with a friend or family member and tell them about the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus . . . what a detailed and memorable story!

Send (5 minutes)

Wrap Up

Remind the Shepherds to distribute the Family Pages for this story if the kids haven't already received it, and come together for Wrap Up.

Give kids time to share their art tri-fold with a friend. Ask them to look for a detail that they found interesting or unique and that helped to tell the story. **Let's use our choice of art supplies to help guide our prayer today.**

Spark Resources

Family Pages



Supplies

None

Prayer Time

Dear God,

As we spend time in the details of your word, we ask that you help us to learn more about you and how we fit into the story. We know that through the darkness of Jesus' death we can see the gift of life and the resurrection. We ask you to be with us as the story pieces blend together, when the darkness rubs into the life, and to always let the shining moments glitter through in the end. Amen.

Workshop Focus: Jesus is the rock as we roll along in life.

Keep these tips in mind as you welcome kids to the workshop and explore the story together.

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Open the Bible (10 minutes)

Palm Sunday to Easter Sunday Storytelling

Activity Instructions

So, I have a brainstorming question for all of you today. What might you find under a rock? Encourage kids to shout out answers and have fun. **Okay, what if the rock was REALLY big . . . like in a canyon . . . what might you find there?** Accept answers.

You know where this rock story is headed, don't you? Take guesses. **That's right, to the rock that was in front of Jesus' tomb.**

Pass out Spark Story Bibles to the younger kids and Spark Bibles to the older kids. **Take a look at the Spark Story Bible on pages 482-483. There are some women headed toward the tomb. How do they look?** (*nervous, worried, sad, on a mission*) **The women had a very important job ahead of them. They were going to anoint Jesus' body with oil and spices. They were a bit concerned. Let's find out why. Can someone read page 484 for us?**

What a shock! Not only was the rock rolled away, but they found Jesus missing. Let's keep reading and see what else they found. Can someone read the first paragraph on page 485?

Spark Resources

Spark Story Bibles
Spark Bibles
Spark Bible Stickers

Supplies

None

An angel? This story just keeps getting better and better. There is no darkness here, but light. What kind of light? (*blinding light*) **Now the women have an even greater job to do. Who can read what happens next?** Read pages 485-487. **What did the women need to do?** (*tell people Jesus was alive, share the good news*) **What do you think they will tell people?** Accept answers. **How will they act? What do you think people will say?** Accept all answers . . . focus on sharing, excitement, surprise, light.

Pick a Spark Spot sticker and put it by the good news on page 487: "Jesus is alive."

This is such a long story that I will focus on the women at the tomb and rolling away the rock. The image of the rock and the contrast between the darkness of the tomb and the light that shines out will help set the stage for the art project that creates a bright painting from blackness.

Activate Faith (25 minutes)

Rock 'n' Roll Neon Painting

Set Up: Fill cups with neon-colored paint. Prep painting and drying areas.

Activity Instructions

In today's story the women had a task ahead of them. What did they need to do? (*care for Jesus' body*) **When they got to the tomb they found that the rock had been rolled away. Then, they had a surprise. What was it?** (*Jesus was gone. An angel/bright light appeared.*) **Finally, they had an amazing new job to do. What was that amazing job?** (*tell everyone that Jesus was alive*)

Today, each of you will get to share in the excitement of rolling the rock away and finding a surprise as you create a Rock 'n' Roll Neon Painting.

Here's how it works:

- 1. Put your name on the back of a black piece of paper using a white crayon.**
- 2. Take that piece of black paper and place it snugly in the bottom of the shoebox. The sides of the paper will curve up the side of the box a little bit.**
- 3. Now, take a small rock and place it in a cup of neon colored paint.**
- 4. Lift the rock out using a plastic spoon. Let most of the extra paint drip off into the cup.**
- 5. Place the rock gently on top of the black paper in the box.**

Spark Resources

None

Supplies

Black construction paper
Shoeboxes with lids, 1 per 2-3 kids
White crayons
Small rocks (marble-sized)
Neon paints (glow in the dark optional)
Small plastic cups
Plastic spoons
Drying area

6. **Cover four to six more rocks with different colors of neon paint and place them gently into the box.**
7. **Put the cover on the box. Inside the box it is now dark as the tomb.**
8. **Shake the box side to side and in a rotating motion. (Not too much up and down—remember, the black paper isn't on the lid of the box.)**
9. **Now, open up the box (tomb) and empty out the rocks** (into a “used rock” area).
10. **Remove the black piece of paper and lay flat to dry in our designated drying area.**
11. **What a cool Rock ‘n’ Roll Neon Painting!**

Great job on your paintings today! As we think about the rock that was rolled away at the tomb on Easter morning, has anyone ever heard of Jesus being called “The Rock”? What does that mean? How is Jesus “The Rock” for our lives? Accept kids’ responses.

Send (5 minutes)

Wrap Up

Remind the Shepherds to distribute the Family Pages for this story if the kids haven't already received it, and come together for Wrap Up.

Keep the theme “rolling” by using a fist-sized rock as the centerpiece for the closing prayer. Kids will hold the rock and say a prayer asking for Jesus to continue reminding them that the stone was rolled away and he is here with us as “The Rock” during all of our days.

Spark Resources
Family Pages



Supplies
Fist-sized rock

Prayer Time

Dear Jesus,

Thank you for being “The Rock” as we roll along in our life. Hear our prayers today.

Pass the rock from one person to the next. They may pray aloud or silently and then pass to the next person.

Amen.