

Palm Sunday to Easter Sunday

Welcome to the story of Palm Sunday to Easter Sunday! As the caring leader of your small group of kids, you are an important part of their Spark experience. You also support the other Rotation leaders by being a consistent and friendly presence with your group. Use these Small Group Builders, Conversation Sparks, and Transition Tips to generate conversation and build relationships with your kids. Have fun as you grow in faith together!

Small Group Builders

Try these tips to build relationships, trust, and friendship with your small group of kids when you have a few minutes at the beginning of Sunday school or between activities.

- **Sharing a Meal**

Jesus shared the Passover meal with his disciples. Talk about how you share a meal in your family. Share ways you cook, serve, eat, and clean up the meal. How does sharing a meal bring you together as a family?

- **Breaking Bread**

Jesus broke bread with the disciples. Make your group into a big loaf of bread. Stand shoulder to shoulder in a rectangle. Break the bread into two halves. Break each half into two halves. Keep breaking the bread until you have a loaf of slices.

- **Circle of Caring**

Jesus talked to the disciples about serving and caring for others. Stand in a circle. Pass around a ball. As you pass the ball, say these words, "I give you this gift." Go around the circle several times. As a group, talk about this question: Is the giver more important than the receiver?

Conversation Sparks

Spark some faith-filled conversation during time you wait for activities to start or between activities. Use these questions with the kids in your group whenever you have a minute or two.

- How did people feel on Palm Sunday?
- I wonder how Peter felt after he said he did not know Jesus.
- How do you feel about Jesus and his resurrection on Easter?
- Why do we feel both sadness and joy during Holy Week?
- Why did the crowds change their yelling at Jesus from joy to the angry cry, "crucify him"?

Transition Tips

As your group moves from one place to another, keep things fun and story-focused! Try these tips as you transition.

- **Joyful Praise**
Move to your next activity while shouting with joy these words of praise: "Blessed is the King" and "Peace in heaven." Use joyful praise to welcome Jesus.
- **Prayer Posture**
Jesus prayed on the Mount of Olives. Put your bodies into a posture of prayer. Move to your next location, praying all the way.
- **Meet and Greet**
Herod was glad to finally meet Jesus. Shake hands and greet others as you go to your next location. Meet and greet everyone you pass.
- **Jesus Is the Leader**
People followed Jesus on Palm Sunday and as he carried the cross. As you move to your next activity, follow the actions of the first person in line. When we follow Jesus, we listen and watch carefully.

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- **Pattern of Feelings**
The people had many feelings from Palm Sunday through Easter Sunday. Identify the feelings in each of these events: entry to Jerusalem, serving the Last Supper, discussion after supper, praying at Mount of Olives, Judas' betrayal, trial before Pilate, the cross. Do you see a pattern?
- **Life from Death**
God brings life from death every day. Talk about some examples in nature where life comes from death. Remember how the natural world was created.
- **How Far?**
Jesus was faithful all the way to the cross. Peter and Judas were only faithful for part of the story. Faith means going far ahead with confidence. Share some times you have gone ahead in faith as a courageous believer.

Conversation Sparks

Spark some faith-filled conversation during time you wait for activities to start or between activities. Use these questions with the kids in your group whenever you have a minute or two.

- How far is "a stone's throw"?
- Why did Judas point out Jesus to the soldiers?
- How does breaking bread and pouring wine relate to worship?
- Jesus asked, "Who is greater, the one who is at the table or the one who serves?" How would you answer that question?
- Why did Peter deny that he knew Jesus?
- Have you ever prayed so hard that you sweated?

Transition Tips

As your group moves from one place to another, keep things fun and story-focused! Try these tips as you transition.

- **Casting Lots**

The Roman soldiers rolled dice to decide who got to keep Jesus' clothes. Pretend you are rolling dice as you relocate. Shout when you win and groan when you lose.

- **Marching Soldiers**

Soldiers are found all through these stories. March like soldiers as you move to the next activity. Stay in a tight line. Left, right, left, right.

- **Dark and Light**

From Palm Sunday to Easter Sunday, there are images of both darkness and light. Cover your eyes to show darkness. Make a sun over your head to show light. Slide your feet along as your hands make the motions for dark and light.

- **Angry Shouts**

The people went from celebrating the presence of Jesus to angry shouts of "crucify him." Make fists, jump, and say "crucify him" as you go to your next location. How did this make you feel?

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- **Facial Expressions**

There are many emotions in this story. Read the feeling words and show the emotions in your facial expressions (joy, eagerness, thankful, betrayal, suffering, judging, willingness, strength, weeping, insist, grief, accusing, questioning).

- **The Rest of the Story**

Easter is only part of the story of faith. Share events and people of faith that have come since the death of Jesus. How does the story of the resurrection happen every day in our faith lives?

- **Forgiveness Forever**

Jesus asked God to forgive the people that crucified him. Talk about times when you have needed forgiveness. Was it given? When you feel forgiven, are you able to forget what you did?

Conversation Sparks

Spark some faith-filled conversation during time you wait for activities to start or between activities. Use these questions with the kids in your group whenever you have a minute or two.

- Why is it important to remember both the joy and sadness around the death of Jesus?
- Why was Jesus crucified with criminals?
- Have you ever sat around a campfire? How did it make you feel?
- Why did the soldiers want to keep Jesus' clothes?
- How did Joseph from Arimathea help Jesus?

Transition Tips

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- **Sleeping Disciples**

The disciples fell asleep after the Last Supper. Close your eyes and snore as you head to your next activity. You might want to peek sometimes so you don't bump into anyone.

- **Cock-a-doodle Dance**

As you move to your next location, have fun dancing like a chicken and singing, "cock-a-doodle-do" to remind you of Peter's denial when the cock crowed.

- **Cross Walk**

Jesus was crucified on a cross, and the cross became a symbol of faith. Walk slowly to the next activity with your body in the shape of a cross, arms outstretched. Smile at everyone you meet to remind them that Jesus rose from the cross to bring us life.

- **Weaving Joy and Sadness**

The story of Palm Sunday to Easter Sunday has joy and sadness. Half of your group will be joyful. Half of your group will be sad. Weave back and forth as you glide along to the next place. As you weave joy and sadness together, remember the stories of Palm Sunday and Easter Sunday.