



APRIL THEME

BRIGHT SIDE
Find the Light in the Dark

BIBLE STORY

John 12:9-16

This I Promise You | Palm Sunday
Spark Story Bible, pg. 454-459
Palm Sunday

BOTTOM LINE

Whatever happens, remember God keeps God's promises

MEMORY VERSE

"In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world."

John 16:33b, NIV

LIFE APP

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

BASIC TRUTH

I can trust God no matter what

FOR LEADERS ONLY

GOD VIEW: the connection between **HOPE** and God's character, as shown through God's big story.

Key Question: What promises does God have for you? Jesus fulfilled a promise that God had since the beginning. God had been promising a Savior, and Jesus was the fulfillment of that promise. But God still has promises for us today. We will help families discover those promises and how these promises can help them find hope.

This week we'll head to an incredible moment John records in **John 12:9-16**. God's people had waited for generations for God to send the Messiah. They were overwhelmed when Jesus made his triumphal entry into Jerusalem. God kept God's promise. The mission to save the world was happening. This didn't go exactly how they expected, but God was up to something bigger than they could imagine!

Bottom Line: Whatever happens, remember God keeps God's promises. Because God keeps promises, we can trust God no matter what. Families will face moments in life where they might wonder if God will come through for them. We want them to understand that God will come through. It might not be as they expected, but they can have hope that God will help them through their situation.

SOCIAL: PROVIDING TIME FOR FUN INTERACTION

Welcome kids and spend time engaging in conversation and catching up. Get ready to experience today's story.

Before kids arrive, **PRAY** for each group member by name. Ask God to help you and your kids remember that whatever happens, God keeps God's promises. Ask God to help kids understand that even when things don't go as they expect, God keeps God's promises.

•• EARLY ARRIVER IDEA

Made to Connect | An activity that invites kids to share with others and build on their understanding

What You Need: "Waiting Strips", "Waiting Cards"

What You Do:

- Show kids the "Waiting Strips." Point to each one as you read it aloud to the group, or invite a volunteer to read. Lay the strips on your table in order from shortest time to longest time.
- Guide kids to take turns drawing a "Waiting Card." Guide kids to look at the cards, decide how long they would need to wait for that thing, and then place the card by the appropriate time.
- Invite kids to name other things they've waited for. How long did they have to wait? Was it hard to wait? Why or why not?



●● **MADE TO WORSHIP**

Made to Create | An activity that explores spiritual ideas through the process of drawing, building, and designing

What You Need: “Palm Templates” activity page, green crayons, scissors, craft sticks, masking tape

What You Do:

- Hand out 2 “Palm Templates” and 2 craft sticks to every group member.
- Encourage kids to color their palm leaves green.
- Help your group cut out their palm leaves. It’s okay if they aren’t perfect!
- Lead kids to tape a craft stick “branch” to the end of each leaf to make a “handle.”

What You Say: “What do you think you just made? *(Pause.)* Yes, giant leaves! In fact, they’re palm leaves. Do you know what palm leaves are called? *(Pause.)* Yes, palm fronds. **[Transition]** Today in Sunday CM worship/WOW family worship, you’ll hear/you heard about a crowd of people who used palm fronds for something very important.”

[Sunday Leaders: Lead your group to the Family Room for Children’s Ministry worship. Wednesday Leaders: Continue with the study.]

GROUPS: CREATING A SAFE PLACE TO CONNECT

Create a safe place to connect and learn how the Bible story applies to real life experiences, through interactive activities and discussion questions.

●● **DONKEY!** [Hear from God | Memory Verse Activity]

Made to Move | An activity that increases the oxygen in the brain and taps into the energy in the body

What You Need: Bible; “Tunic,” “Fronds,” and “Donkey Kick” activity pages

What You Do:

- Guide kids to line up at one end of your space.
- Line four “Tunics” in front of your group, placing them as far apart as your space allows. Set two “Fronds” on each “Tunic.”
- At your signal, the first child walks on all fours to the first “Tunic,” does a “Donkey Kick” (see illustration on activity page), picks up one “Fronde,” returns to the group—still walking on all fours—and tags the next child in line.
- The second child walks on all fours to the first “Tunic,” collects the remaining “Fronde,” and returns to the group.
- Play continues, with kids doing “Donkey Kicks” at each “Tunic” they pass until they collect a “Fronde.”
- When your group has all its “Fronds,” guide kids to work together to put the verse in order.
- Finally, help your group look up John 16:33 in the Bible. Read the verse aloud, encouraging kids to say it with you.

What You Say: “John 16:33 tells us that when we have trouble, we don’t have to be sad or discouraged. Instead, we can have hope. Hope is believing that something good can come out of something bad. We can have hope because Jesus always, always, always keeps promises.

[Make It Personal] *(Tell the kids about a time God kept a promise to you and worked something good from something bad, like helping you not be afraid during a difficult time or giving you peace when you prayed.)*

“So **[Bottom Line]** whatever happens, remember God keeps God’s promises—every time, forever and always.”



●● **HOSANNA!** [Talk about God | Bible Story Review]

Made to Imagine | An activity that promotes empathy and facilitates biblical application through role-play and reenactment

What You Need: Spark Story Bible, palm fronds from “Made to Worship” activity

What You Do:

- Read “Palm Sunday” from the Spark Story Bible (p. 454-459).
- If you didn’t do the “Made to Worship” activity before, do it now.
- Lead your group in a parade around the Christian Life Center, waving their palm branches as they sing and shout, “Hosanna! Hosanna! Here comes God’s king! Hosanna! Praise God!” (You can explain to your group that the word “Hosanna!” was used by people in biblical times to express praise and joy.)

What You Say: “The people had waited years and years and YEARS for God to send the Messiah, the Savior. And now Jesus had come! The people were SO excited! Jesus, God’s Son, was coming into Jerusalem to be king! God had kept God’s promise! God’s plan to save the world was happening.

“Long ago, God kept God’s promise to send Jesus; and today—right now—God keeps promises to you. **[Basic Truth] You can trust God no matter what! So [Bottom Line] whatever happens, remember God keeps God’s promises.”**

●● **GOD KEEPS GOD’S PROMISES** [Live for God | Application Activity]

Made to Explore | An activity that extends learning through hands on experimentation and discovery

What You Need: Palm fronds from earlier, “God’s Promises” strips (2 per group), glue sticks

What You Do:

- Let each child choose a palm frond.
- Read the “God’s Promises” strips to the kids, or invite volunteers to read.
- Invite kids to choose one promise strip to glue to their palm frond.

What You Say: “Long ago, the people praised God for keeping the promise to send Jesus. What’s one promise God has made that YOU can praise God for? (Pause for kids to read their verses.)

“The people praised God by shouting, ‘Hosanna!’ How can you praise God? (I’ll sing to God; I’ll shout, “Hosanna!”; I’ll dance for God; etc.) **[Make It Personal] (Tell kids a way that you’ll praise God, too.)**

“God loves you more than you could ever imagine! Long ago God loved you and kept the promise to send Jesus to be your Savior. And today—right now—God loves you and keeps promises to you, too. So **[Bottom Line] no matter what happens, remember God keeps God’s promises.”**

PRAY AND SEND [Talk to God | Prayer Activity]

Made to Reflect | An activity that creates space for personal understanding and application

What You Need: Completed palm fronds from the “God Keeps God’s Promises” activity, GodTime Cards

What You Do:

- Read several promises from the kids’ palm fronds. After each promise, guide kids to wave their fronds and shout, “Hosanna! God

