



The Lord is God

A Joyous Feast!

On Palm Sunday, we celebrate Christ's entry into the city of Jerusalem. This was no ordinary arrival – it reveals that **Jesus, our Lord, is God**.

In raising Lazarus from the dead, Christ reveals that He is the Son of God, all-powerful, especially over the devil and death!

☞ *Rocks can talk if...*

The disciples aren't sure what to make of these events. First, they see a dead man walk out of a tomb. Now they hear **children shouting "Hosanna!"** while waving branches and rejoicing at Jesus' arrival in the city.

The rulers of the city are annoyed. What's going on here? They try to get Jesus to downplay the shouts of joy from the children, He says, "I tell you, if these were silent, **the very stones would cry out.**" (Luke 19:40)

Clearly, Jesus is causing a stir, and like the children, we need to **pay attention to Him**.

☞ *King and God*

Jesus has been preparing His disciples (and us) for this moment. He came into the city to fulfill the **Old Testament prophecies** foretelling His betrayal, crucifixion, death, and Resurrection.

If we've been using the days of Great Lent properly, we've prepared ourselves to accompany Jesus in the coming days on His **journey to the Cross**.

The path Christ takes is voluntary, knowing His death will give us life. God gives us that same freedom to make our own choices in life to follow Him.

As Orthodox Christians, we can ask Christ to **guide our steps** as we follow Him.

☞ *Faithfulness*

Be careful, the devil won't give up in trying to keep us from being with Christ. Making the right choices will mean the devil putting up challenges and distractions for us. Remember to call out to Jesus for help, so He can bring us back.

Christ didn't come just to enter the city of Jerusalem, but to enter into **our lives**. Let today be the time we shout "Hosanna!", **opening our hearts** to receive Him.

Make an effort! This is the time to focus on Jesus Christ so the next week can transform us into His followers, worthy of experiencing the Resurrection. The effort is worth it - Pascha is almost here - let's do this!

The Scripture Readings

to be read on Palm Sunday

Epistle: **Philippians 4:4-9**

Gospel: **John 12:1-18**

☞ The Festal Hymns

to be sung or read on Palm Sunday

Troparion/Apolytikion — Tone 1

O Christ our God, before Your Passion, You raised Lazarus from the dead to confirm the common Resurrection for all.

Therefore, we carry the symbols of victory as did the youths, and we cry out to You, the victor over death, "Hosanna in the highest. Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord."

Troparion/Apolytikion — Tone 4

O Christ, Our God, we have been Buried with You through Baptism, and by Your Resurrection made worthy of Life immortal.

Praising You, we cry out, "Hosanna in the highest, blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord."

Kontakion — Tone 6 (Plagal 2)

In Heaven, He is seated upon a Throne and on earth He rides upon a foal.

O Christ our God, accept the praise of the Angels and the hymn of the Children who cry out to You, "Blessed are You who comes to recall Adam."

Parents, Church School Teachers & Youth Directors:
Watch for the ☞ to indicate topics/questions you can use to inspire conversations with youth. Or use the corresponding study guide for this resource.

Icons are often called windows to Heaven, because they show and teach us how historic events and the saints are to be understood in the saving message of Jesus Christ.

Icons do not portray people like we see them in person or in photos, but instead transfiguring them with the light of Christ, emanating from within, by their encounter with God. Likewise, each element of an icon has a purpose or meaning.

➤ Let's take a closer look at the icon for the feast of The Lord's Entry into Jerusalem.

Can you use the word list below to identify who's who, and what's what?

Who's Who in the Icon

Jesus Christ

In the center of the icon, Jesus Christ is portrayed as King and _____. Everyone in the icon is either looking at Him or pondering the meaning of His entry into the city. The presence of the donkey calls to mind Isaiah 1:3 which is also referenced with the Nativity of Christ on _____, noting the donkey recognizes Christ as his _____.

Jesus is seated side-saddle, a more formal way of _____ an animal. His right hand is extended in _____ affirming that He is God, while His left hand holds a _____, referencing the prophecies being fulfilled by His Entry into Jerusalem.

Mountains

_____ was founded on a hill, referred to as _____. In icons, mountains are depicted as places where we encounter God (ex: _____ on Mount Sinai, the feast of the Transfiguration, etc.), as Christ is revealed as our _____ when He entered the city.

Apostles and Disciples

After being present for the raising of _____ from the dead, the disciples and apostles accompanied Jesus at his entry into Jerusalem, trying to understand what was happening. _____ disciples are recognizable (left to right): St. _____ the Theologian, St. Andrew, and St. Peter.

Donkey

_____ fulfilled the prophecy of Zechariah (Zech. 9:9) about the King of Zion entering Jerusalem on a donkey. Christ didn't arrive with fanfare or in a _____, but with humility on a borrowed _____ (Matt. 21:1-5).

Children

Jesus commands us to be like _____, humble and able to recognize what He is doing. While the _____ don't recognize Christ as a spiritual King and _____, the children did, honoring him with palms and shouts of "Hosanna" and "Blessed is the King of _____."

The Rulers

As Jesus got closer to the city, the _____ and _____ came out to question Him because they were annoyed, believing _____ was leading the people astray with His teachings. In the Gospel of _____ (Chp. 23, read on Holy Monday) Jesus calls them _____ for their ungodly behavior.



Children in the Tree

While Christ enters the holy city, children are seen taking branches down to wave while shouting, "_____!" The tree also foreshadows Christ being raised on the _____ at His crucifixion outside the city walls, _____ days after entering Jerusalem.

Jerusalem

The walled city of the _____ nation was founded by King _____ in 1,000 BC. In the middle of the city is the Temple (shown with a _____ dome) for Jewish worship, which was first established by King _____, while the tent to the left is the Upper room where the Eucharist will be celebrated on Holy _____.

The Crowds

When the _____ of Jerusalem heard Jesus had raised Lazarus from the dead in _____, they came out of the city in curiosity, hoping He was going to save them from the _____ occupiers.

adults
Bethany
blessing
Blue
chariot
Chief Priests

children
Christ
Christmas
Cross
David
donkey

five
God
Hebrew
Hosanna
hypocrites
Israel

Jerusalem
Jesus
John
King
Lazarus
master

Matthew
Moses
Mount Zion
people
riding
roman

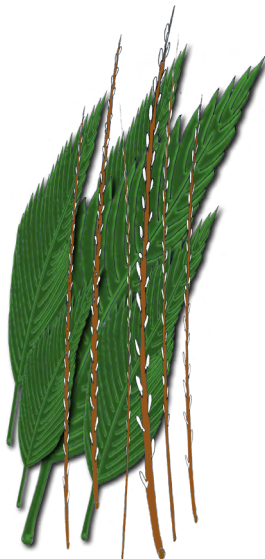
Savior
scribes
scroll
Solomon
Three
Thursday

PALM SUNDAY TRIVIA



#1. What is blessed in church on the Feast of Our Lord's Entry into Jerusalem?

#2. What do we do with these items in church?



#3. What do we do with these items when we bring them home?

#4. Can you unscramble the names of the prophets who foretold:

Scrambled Name	...is Prophet	Prophecy	Scriptural Clue
HERAZICHA	_____	Christ's entering Jerusalem	Chap. 9 verse 9
MUSALE	_____	The young colt which had never borne a yoke	1st Book Chap. 6, verse 7
AHISHA	_____	Christ, the Suffering Servant	Chap. 52, verse 13 - Chap. 53, verse 12

BIG Words

☞ What do they mean?!?!

Chief Priests (highest ranking clergy)

The religious leaders of the Hebrew people during the earthly life of Jesus Christ. They were responsible for daily worship in the Temple.

Scribes (ancient human copy machine)

Those who studied the law and were responsible for interpreting the Jewish law, and often in conflict with Jesus, because He claimed to have authority over the law which they could not accept.

Hosanna (Hoe - saw - nawh)

A Hebrew word meaning "Blessed is God!" sung at every divine liturgy during the Anaphora, and shouted by the children who greeted Jesus during his entry into Jerusalem.

Prophecy (Prah - pheh- see)

The written texts found in 16 books of the Old Testament scriptures, named after the prophet to whom the text is ascribed. The texts are direct inspiration of God, and do not always serve to foretell the future.

Gather as Community

Learn about the divine services for the Entry into Jerusalem

Vespers

The evening service for the eve of the feast frames the entry into Jerusalem within the events of Holy Week with texts like this:

Six days before the Feast of Passover Jesus entered Bethany.

His disciples asked Him: "Where should we prepare for You to eat the Passover?"

He answered: "When you have entered the city, a man carrying a jar of water will meet you. Follow him into the house which he enters, and tell the master of the house: 'The Teacher says to you: 'Here I shall eat the Passover with my disciples.'"

Other texts show **our liturgical worship mirrors the heavenly worship**:

Today the Savior comes to Jerusalem, fulfilling the Scriptures.

He is greeted with palms and a carpet of clothes. All know it is He: the Lord, Whom the Cherubim praise: "Hosanna in the highest! Blessed are You, O greatly merciful One! Have mercy on us!"

Matins

After the festal gospel reading, the priest will **bless palms and willows** with holy water, distributing them to the faithful who will hold them during divine liturgy.

Divine Liturgy

Festal hymns throughout the service repeat the phrase, "Blessed is He that comes in the Name of the Lord!" perhaps, most importantly when the Eucharist is brought before the people.

The typical antiphons are replaced with festal verses from the Psalms (114, 115, and 117) and the **festal troparion**, "By raising Lazarus..." is sung instead of the Beatitudes for the Third Antiphon.

Additional special hymns sung include the festal prokeimenon announcing the Epistle reading, and the **Hymn to the Theotokos**, drawn from the 9th Ode of the festal Canon of Matins.

Collectively, these hymns are for us to make our own prayers, **rejoicing in the majesty and power of God**, that He raised Lazarus from the dead, and we recognize and worship Him as our Lord and God.

2-Day Feast / 1 Troparion

This weekend is a unique because it features two feasts back-to-back.

Did you ever notice the **same festal hymn** (troparion/apolytikion) is sung on Lazarus Saturday and on Palm Sunday?

That's because these two feasts are **historically** and **theologically** linked: meaning the events took place on two consecutive days, and the raising of Lazarus is the reason for Jesus' triumphant entrance into Jerusalem.

The text of the hymn explains this, encouraging us to be like the disciples: **witnesses of Lazarus being raised** from the dead on Saturday. It also encourages us to be like the children: **singing praises to God** when Christ enters Jerusalem, glorifying Him for all of the wonderful things He does for humanity, *and for us.*



Palms

...and branches Willows?!

Did you know some churches hand out pussy willow branches instead of – or in addition to – palms?



Palm trees don't grow in Canada, Finland, the northern United States, Russia, and other northern regions of the world.

Instead, church leaders used pussy willows as they were some of the first plants showing **signs of new life** in the spring, making them ideal replacements for palms. In other countries, like Georgia, branches of boxwood bushes are used.

Today, global distribution capabilities make it possible to have both willows and palms **blessed in churches** regardless of climate.

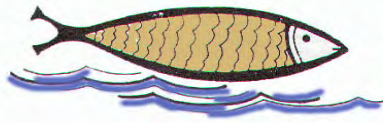
It's traditional to take your blessed palms, willows, and branches home, placing them behind, above, or next to your icons, as a reminder to include **"Hosanna"** ("Blessed is God!") in your daily prayers.

Breaking the Fast...sort of

Like the feast of the Annunciation, Palm Sunday is one of the 12 great feast days of the church year.

It is always celebrated one week before Pascha, but that date changes each year based on the cycle of the moon (meaning there isn't a fixed date for Palm Sunday each year.)

Because of the festal nature of Palm Sunday, **our fasting is eased for one day.**



We still cannot eat meat or dairy, but the Church encourages us to rejoice in our King, Jesus Christ, by enjoying a more festive meal **after receiving the Eucharist** at the divine liturgy, possibly with fish or a favorite meal which includes wine or oil in the ingredients.

The Church provides us with these moments helping us with physical nourishment for the coming days of Holy Week, and its even more intense fasting and prayers.

So let's rejoice today and celebrate!

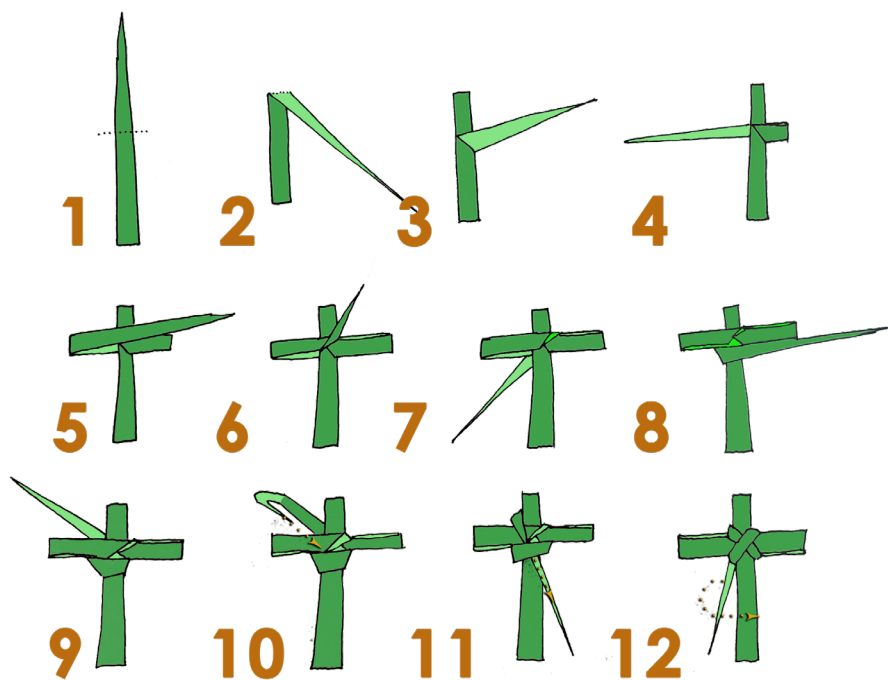
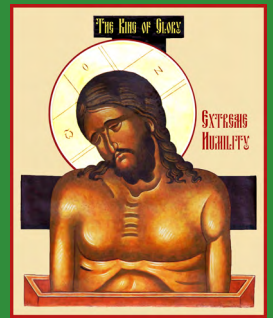
Bridegroom Matins of Holy Monday

By the afternoon of Palm Sunday, the palms and branches are put aside, and the decorative covers on the icon stands in church have been changed from gold or light colors to black. **We're quickly entering Holy Week.**

Time doesn't stand still, and **Bridegroom Matins**, typically celebrated on the evening of Palm Sunday, details the events the day after Christ's entry into Jerusalem.

The icon of **"Extreme Humility"** is placed in the middle of the church reminding us as we sing hymns and hear the readings, that in all things, Christ was merciful, loving, patient, and humble.

Christ is the perfect example of love.



Making Palm Crosses

The cross is the image of our salvation, and it's customary on Palm Sunday to take a single palm leaf, and braid it into the shape of a cross.

Use the instructions above to **create your own palm cross**, or visit Pinterest for more ideas and DIY instructions to braid all kinds of palm crosses: <https://bit.ly/making-palm-crosses>

Jesus Christ
1. God
2. Christmas
3. Riding
4. blessing
5. scroll
Mountains
6. Jerusalem
7. Mount Zion
8. Moses
9. King
Apostles & Disciples
10. Lazarus
11. Three
12. John
Donkey
13. Jesus
14. chariot
15. donkey
Children
16. children
17. adults
18. Israel
Children in the Tree
19. Hosanna
20. Cross
21. Five
Jerusalem
22. Hebrew
23. David
24. blue
25. Solomon
The Crowds
26. people
27. Bethany
28. Roman
The Chief Priests
29. Chief Priests
30. Scribes
31. Matthew
32. hypocrites
Trivia
1. Palms, pussy
willows, boxwood,
branches
2. We hold them
and raise them
when we sing
"Hosanna" in the
festal hymns
3. We place them
behind, above, or
next to our icons
4a. Zechariah
4b. Samuel
4c. Isaiah

Describing the Feast

Part A:

Can you match the elements of the festal icon with those found in the festal troparion/apolytikion?

Circle the words in the hymn, drawing lines to the same element in the icon to see how our iconography and liturgical music teach us about God!



O Christ our God, before Your
Passion, You raised Lazarus
from the dead to confirm
the common Resurrection
for all. Therefore, we carry
the symbols of victory as did
the youths, and we cry out
to You, the victor over death,
"Hosanna in the highest.
Blessed is He who comes in
the name of the Lord."

Part B:

Draw a picture based on today's
kontakion:

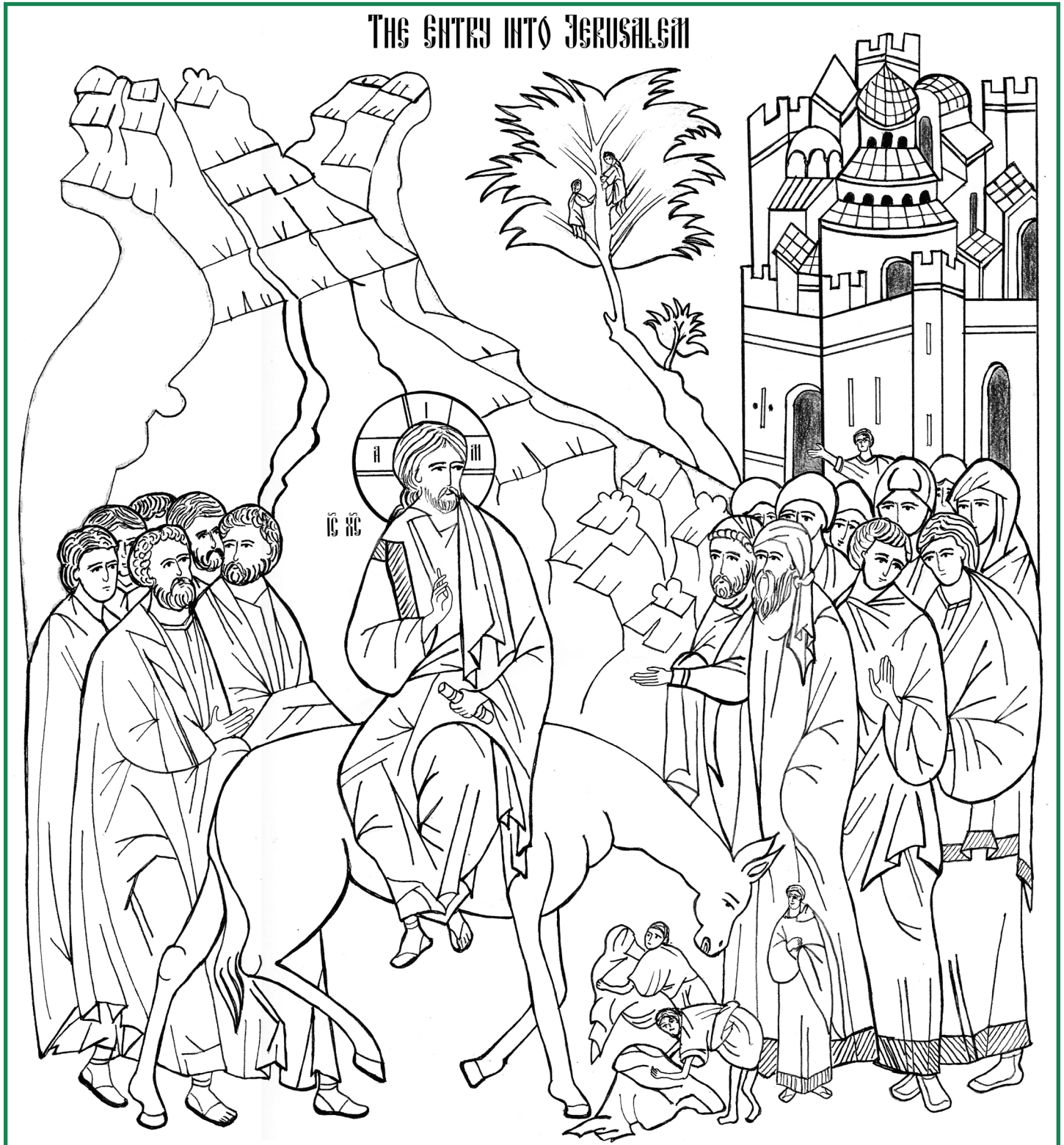
**In Heaven, He is seated
upon a Throne and on
earth He rides upon a foal.
O Christ our God, accept
the praise of the Angels
and the hymn of the
Children who cry out to
You, "Blessed are You who
comes to recall Adam."**

Instructions

- Using your choice of medium (pencil, crayons, markers, colored pencils, paints, etc.) create an image reflecting the meaning of the hymn
- Congratulations! You've created an icon: a image expressing a belief about God, describing the teachings of our Orthodox Faith!
- Take a photo of your creation and email the image to us at: orthodoxjourneys@gmail.com (Be sure to include your first name, age, parish, city, and state/province.)

Color the Festal Icon

- Can you add color to the icon below? Use your favorite markers, colored pencils, or paints to bring the icon to life!
- When you're finished, take a photo of your drawing and email it to orthodoxjourneys@gmail.com to be featured in our youth art gallery, where we celebrate your talents!
- Trim the page to the shape of the icon, and place it in your icon corner to celebrate the feast!
- This is a one day feast, so display the icon on Palm Sunday, then place it in a safe location for use next year.



Hosanna to the Son of David, the King of Israel!