



Sunday of the Entry into Jerusalem

Study Guide - Level 4 (Grades 9–12 / Ages 14–18)

Today is Palm Sunday

Lesson Order

- Opening Prayer
- Intro / Recap last week's lesson
- Review the scripture readings
- Review the hymns of the day
- Read front page of handout together
- Use study guide lesson and Q&A
- Complete handout activities
- Preview next week's lesson
- Closing Prayer

Tips & Hints

- Use as much or as little of the content in this study guide helping the students discover how the Orthodox Faith can be a part of their daily life.
- Use open-ended questions, encouraging young people to share their experiences or ideas, drawing connections to the topics of the day, strengthening their relationship with Jesus Christ and His holy Orthodox Faith.
- Questions, ideas, feedback, and suggestions can be directed to the publisher at orthodoxjourneys@gmail.com

✓ Goal

After completing this week's lesson, students should be able to articulate the following:

- How today's scripture readings and liturgical hymns apply to their life
- Understanding what God is expecting us to live as His followers and members of the Orthodox Faith
- How being part of the Orthodox Church gives us the tools and skills to live godly lives regardless of our circumstances
- Why they believe and follow Jesus Christ as Orthodox Christians

✂ Overview

Last Week

Was the fifth and last Sunday of Great Lent honoring the Venerable Mary of Egypt for her repentance. Mary turned from being a sinful woman to one of the most holy examples of the Church.

Each of us can learn from St. Mary, returning to face God with humility, repenting of our sins and living as Christ commands us. The Church encourages us to honor and be like Mary, fleeing from bad behavior, living in a desert of prayer, fasting, service to others - being examples of God's love and faithfulness.

This Week

is the Sunday of the Entry into Jerusalem by Our Lord Jesus Christ is a great feast of the Church. We remember the joy of Lazarus being raised from the dead and worship Jesus Christ as God.

Christ's entry as the King of Israel annoys the religious leaders, because they refuse to believe Jesus is the Messiah. We know and believe that Jesus is the Savior; He rose from the dead as God. So like the children who sing "Hosanna!," we carry palms and branches proclaiming the wonders of God, and our belief in Jesus Christ.

📖 Apostolos / Epistle and Gospel Readings

Have one student read today's Apostolos/Epistle and another read the Gospel lesson.

Epistle/Apostol:
Hebrews 9:11-14

Gospel:
Mark 10:32-45

1. What is the author of today's epistle/apostol talking about?
2. How does the message of this epistle apply to our lives?

Possible Answers

- As Orthodox Christians we rejoice in the glory and majesty of our God
- Jesus came as a humble king, being welcomed into Jerusalem for His miracles and saving acts - we can also greet Him and welcome Him into our daily lives
- When we have faith, trusting in God, we reject anxiety and worries, knowing that God will guide us in what to do for our salvation
- By obeying the teachings of Christ, according to the Orthodox Faith, we can draw closer to God in this life and the next
- When we're gentle and loving (like Christ) others will see Him in us

1. What took place in today's lesson?
2. Why is this important for us living in the 21st century?

Possible Answers

- As our King, Jesus calls us to obedience and faithfulness - we have the choice to follow Him (and do what He expects of us: repent, love others, live according to His teachings)
- Jesus came in humility on a donkey, as an example for us to also live in humility with those around us
- We give honor to God by helping those less fortunate (giving of our blessings and possessions)
- We proclaim our belief in God by our actions (like the children carrying palms and branches)
- If we believe in Christ as the Son of God, there is nothing to fear, for He is our Savior

🎵 Hymnography

Have a student read the hymn(s) on the front page of the handout.

1. What do the hymns teach us about today's commemoration?
2. How can the message of these hymns apply to our lives?

Possible Answers

- We glorify God for raising Lazarus from the dead
- Jesus has power over the living and the dead - reminding us that as our Savior, we celebrate His love and care for us
- We sing in joy to God, because His saving acts give us hope and meaning to our life
- Celebrating this annual feast is a reminder that God cares for us every day, He frees us from the devil, and when we repent of our sins, He restores us to being His followers
- The Name of Jesus is powerful - we bow in worship, because He is our Savior from death and isolation

A Closer Look

Let's take a closer look at today's primary topic.

Summary of Gospel Reading

Today is one of the twelve great feasts of the church year. It is a single day celebration, and very important, because we hear in today's Gospel reading about Jesus being revealed as the Messiah.

He doesn't arrive in a chariot, or on a horse, or carried on the shoulders of others. Instead, Jesus arrives in humility, teaching us by His own actions that He comes out of love and compassion for every single person in human history.

The people respond with enthusiasm and joy - proclaiming Him to be the Savior and Messiah. While this infuriates the religious leaders, it shows us how we are to celebrate this feast - with joy, gratitude, and open arms, welcoming Jesus to dwell in our hearts and daily lives.

What Does This Mean For Us?

Jesus will be glorified on the cross this coming Friday, when we hear the readings from scripture of the crucifixion. We might live in a society with a President or Prime Minister which rejects the concept of a king who has "absolute authority."

Today, Jesus arrives in Jerusalem announcing a Kingdom which goes beyond human expectations and political constructs. He reveals that His Kingdom is universal, for all people whether we believe in Him or not. As Orthodox Christians, we believe Jesus Christ has absolute authority and uses that power to save us.

As the Son of God, Jesus' Kingship shows us the perfect way to live: in love and compassion for others. It doesn't mean using our money to buy expensive things and then brag about how wealthy we are compared to others. We can be more like Christ by buying the less expensive item and using the savings to share with someone less fortunate.

Wrap Up

Before entering Jerusalem, Jesus corrects Judas' false desire to help the poor, by reminding His disciples there will always be poor in society. As Orthodox Christians, we have a responsibility to worship God in church AND by helping those in society who are in need. Our worship and our charitable service are both liturgical acts, shaping and defining what type of followers of Jesus Christ we are.

Christ came to die on the cross for us. We are invited to walk with Him this week to see Him raised in glory on the Cross. The love of Christ should inspire us to make the gospel reading we heard on the Sunday of the Last Judgment a guide for our way of life.

The joy we feel today gets us excited for Pascha. It also reminds us that Jesus is our merciful Savior, who invites us to follow His example. To get to Pascha, we need to experience Jesus' Passion, death, and burial. The days of bright sadness are here, revealing how loving God truly is towards each of us.

May we give thanks for God's perfect and saving example of love, and live the same way for every day of our life.

Discussion Questions

Choose from these possible questions to explore today's topic.

1. Why were the people of Jerusalem excited when Jesus arrived?
2. Why did the Chief Priests want to kill Lazarus as well as Jesus?
3. How would you react if someone had been raised from the dead?
4. Why do we celebrate Jesus' entry into Jerusalem?

Possible answers

- It's a historical event which is also a timeless revelation of Jesus as the Son of God and our Savior
 - It reminds us of His Passion and Resurrection which are also timeless events in our lives
 - We worship Jesus as God, therefore we celebrate events which reveal His divine Kingship
5. Why do we receive blessed palms and branches in church today?
 6. What should we do with the palms and branches?
 7. Does Jesus say our lives as Christians will be easy? Why or why not?

Possible answers

- If we follow Him, we'll need to deny ourselves and take up our own cross as believers
 - The world doesn't follow Christ, so it will be filled with temptations and distractions
 - The benefit of following Jesus is that we do what is needful for salvation
 - Loving others requires humility and patience
8. How does Christ being revealed as a King today prefigure His glorification on the Cross?
 9. How does God's grace help us endure struggles? (love, patience, gentleness, self-control, chastity, humility)

On The Web

Learn more about this week's topics on the web:

Christ's Sovereignty (3:00 min)
<https://youtu.be/DboE1L-67rI>

Exploring the Feast of Palm Sunday (16:48 min)
https://youtu.be/th15vool_mo

Homily on the Lord's Entry into Jerusalem, +Metropolitan Anthony
<https://www.oca.org/fs/sermons/the-lords-entry-into-jerusalem>

Festal Hymns in various languages (14:18 min)
https://youtu.be/KLRy8CdiK_M

What the Saints Say

Hear what they say about today's topic.

"The sign of sincere love is to forgive wrongs done to us. It was with such love that the Lord loved the world."

– **St. Mark the Ascetic**

"The truly intelligent person pursues one sole objective: to obey and to conform to the God of all. With this single aim in view, they discipline their soul, and whatever they may encounter in the course of life, they give thanks to God for the compass and depth of His providential ordering of all things. For it is absurd to be grateful to doctors who give us bitter and unpleasant medicines to cure our bodies, and yet to be ungrateful to God for what appears to us to be harsh, not grasping that all we encounter is for our benefit and in accordance with His providence. For knowledge of God and faith in Him is the salvation and perfection of the soul."

– **St. Anthony the Great**

"The person who loves God values knowledge of God more than anything created by God, and pursues such knowledge ardently and ceaselessly."

– **St. Maximos the Confessor**

"When we have attained some degree of holiness we should always repeat to ourselves the words of the Apostle: 'Yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me' (1 Cor. 15:10), as well as what was said by the Lord: 'Without Me you can do nothing' (John 15:5). What right, then, do we have to be proud as though we could achieve perfection through our own efforts?"

– **St. John Cassian**

"God did not create us for wrath but for salvation (cf. I Thes. 5:9), so that we might enjoy His blessings; and we should therefore be thankful and grateful towards our Benefactor."

– **St. Peter of Damascus**

Saints of the Week

Learn about this week's feasts and saints.

May 1 - Saint Tamara, the King of Georgia was a great Christian ruler beginning in 1178, when she was 12 years old.

Her father appointed her to the throne, so they could rule together, but her died when she was only 17. St. Tamara was recognized as the King (not a Queen), because of her great leadership and compassion like our Lord, Jesus Christ, the divine King.

She encouraged people to be faithful Christians, building churches and monasteries to strengthen the faith across Georgia. When her husband acted inappropriately, she sent him away, refusing to accept un-Christian behavior.

When St. Tamara was 29, a massive invasion threatened to destroy the Georgia nation. After commanding the people to pray before battle, St. Tamara removed her royal robes and went humbly, barefoot, to pray kneeling before the icon of the Virgin Mary in the main cathedral in Tbilisi, the capital.

The Georgian people were victorious in withstanding the attack, as the Theotokos protected them through St. Tamara's prayers.

St. Tamara often gave of her possessions, caring for the poor, and lived humbly in private. Her countless hours in prayer led to physical exhaustion and pain, which ultimately led to her death.

Holy Saint Tamara, pray to God for us!

On The Calendar

The International Orthodox Christian Charities (IOCC) is looking for high school seniors to participate in their Serv-X-Treme youth leadership program.

Two week-long conferences will take place in Minneapolis, MN this summer:

- July 17-23, 2021
- July 24-30, 2021

Learn more about the program with a video:

<https://iocc.org/take-action/serv-x-treme>

Preview

Next Week

Is the Feast of Feasts: Pascha, the Resurrection of our Lord, God, and Savior Jesus Christ.

We celebrate and rejoice in the rising of Jesus from the dead on the third day after His crucifixion. By dying on the cross, Jesus takes all of our sins to Himself as the ultimate voluntary sacrifice. By rising from the dead, Jesus destroys any power the devil has over us, restoring to us, a path to salvation.

For the next 40 days, we will sing "Christ is risen..." and other festal hymns glorifying God for His great mercy towards us.

Terminology

Hosanna: A Hebrew word which means "Savior" which is found in the Book of Psalms and the gospel accounts of Christ's entry into Jerusalem (Matthew 21:1-11, Mark 11:1-11, Luke 19:28-44, and John 12:12-19). When saying "Hosanna," we professing obedience and faithfulness before Jesus Christ, that He is our Savior.

Passover: A religious commemoration, remembering when God delivered His people (the nation of Israel) from slavery in Egypt, as recorded in the book of Exodus. The Jewish Passover was a freeing of God's people from slavery to Pharaoh, foreshadowing our Pascha (the Greek version of the word Passover) when Jesus Christ died on the cross and rose from the dead, leading us in a passover from death to life.

Prophecy(ies): The message(s) sent from God to select individuals in the Old Testament. Many prophecies spoke of future events for the people of Israel, in particular the coming Messiah, Jesus Christ Who would save the people of God.

Obedience: The act of following God. It is not demeaning to be obedient to God, instead it is freeing and a blessing, since God loves those who freely choose to follow Him.

Repentance: The act of admitting wrong doing, and making a conscious decision to change one's behavior, giving up bad choices and doing the things God wants from those who follow Him. True repentance leads to forgiveness.

