



Date: _____
Series: Signs on Believers Hwy
Winter Year 4, Lesson 47

Praise Rocks

Primary Scripture: Luke 19:28-40; Matthew 21:1-11

Key Verse: Luke 19:40; “Jesus replied, ‘I can guarantee that if they are quiet, the stones will cry out.’”

How does this address a need in our kids' lives?

Kids need to recognize that Jesus truly is the king of the universe, who came into this world to give his all for us. As they grow in understanding the depth of God's love for them, they also need to grow in their response to him. The key components of our response are praise and worship. In today's text, kids will hear Jesus say that, “If the disciples are quiet, even the stones will cry out.” The rocks presented throughout the lesson will be reminders of their need to give God praise and to call, “Hosanna!” to him. This means, “Save now, oh Lord!” As Jesus quoted “...*From the mouths of little children and infants, you have created praise.*” (Matthew 21:16b)

How does Jesus fill this need?

Jesus for us:

Jesus gave his life for us so that we can praise him with all of our lives as well.

Jesus in us:

God has ordained praise through even the smallest of his people. As Jesus lives in their hearts, they can respond with praise.

Jesus through us:

Our proclamation of praise and saying “Hosanna to the king!” becomes a witness to the world. Jesus uses our praise to invite others to praise as well.

Stamp of Excellence

Remind the kids what excellent worship looks like. We are in God's presence to honor him. Put on your best manners. This might include wearing your name tag, participating eagerly at all times, listening when the leader is talking, raising your hand to speak, not distracting others, playing the learning game with cooperation, singing enthusiastically, and praying reverently. Offer rewards or positive reinforcement to those who worship with excellence.



Worship

Invocation:

Let kids bring forward the worship symbols such as the cross, candles, Bible, and offering plate. Invite God's presence and call by name Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

Attention Grabber:

Capture the children's attention and help them focus on the worship theme for the day.

Supplies: small rocks scattered around the stage

In advance, prepare two adults and one child to help with the presentation. One adult and the child must know that they will be called on to listen to a rock. Tell them to say that yes, they do hear sounds coming from the rocks. The child will say he/she hears the word, "Hosanna!" The adult will say that he/she hears the phrase, "Hosanna, hosanna in the highest!" Another adult should be prepared to proclaim boldly from offstage and hidden, "Hosanna, hosanna in the highest!" when you say, "Wait a minute; I think we ALL can hear it!"

Be still

Boys and girls, today I'd like everyone to be absolutely still and absolutely quiet.

Wait until kids are very quiet and still.

I THOUGHT I asked for the room to be absolutely still and absolutely quiet! WHAT is that voice I hear? Pause. Do YOU hear it? Pause.

Wait a minute! I think it is coming from over here.

Act as if you are following your listening ear to one of the rocks at a different part of the stage. Pick it up and hold it close to your ear.

Listen to a rock

Well, THERE it is! This is the problem! Can you hear it?

Hold up the rock and pause.

You can't hear that? Then tell me what you do hear.

Call up the prepared child. Have the child hold the rock close to his/her ear and ask what he/she hears. The child will say, *"Hosanna!"* Invite the prepared adult to come up and ask what he/she hears when he/she listens to the rock. He/she will respond, *"Hosanna, hosanna in the highest!"*

Wait a minute; I think we ALL can hear it!

The adult from offstage announces, *"Hosanna, hosanna in the highest!"*

Yes, this rock is crying out, "Hosanna, hosanna in the highest!" How many of you kids want to hear it for yourself? *(Hands will fly up.)* Well, truthfully, we were just using our imaginations to pretend that the rock was crying out, "Hosanna!"

Explanation: Praise parade

But we did this to remind us all of what happened when Jesus was coming as a triumphant king into Jerusalem for the last time. People shouted, "Hosanna!" and, "Hosanna in the highest!" This is how the people showed their praise to him.

Praise rocks

The religious rulers decided that they didn't like what Jesus taught. So they told the people to STOP praising him. Jesus said that if they did stop praising him, even the rocks would cry out, "Hosanna!" Isn't that cool?!

Let's praise him today

What if God did make the rocks sing? How would that make God feel? Would that make him feel loved and honored? Of course not. What good is it to force rocks to sing? God would much rather listen to the praises that his children willingly bring. So, let's praise him now.

Songs of Worship:

Choose two or three songs. Briefly introduce songs so kids can better understand what they are singing and be drawn into a more focused worship. Keep the attention on God!

Your choice of music.

The Power of the Cross:

Jesus has given his life for us that we might have forgiveness and power to live for him.

Does anyone know what the word “Hosanna” means?

Wait for an answer.

I’m going to give you a hint.

Take some of the rocks that are scattered on the stage floor and place them into the shape of a cross in the center of the stage.

The word “Hosanna” means, “Save now, oh Lord!”

If you have ever felt like you needed someone to help you, you know that you are ready to say, “Hosanna!” to Jesus. That’s like saying, “I’m glad you are here and can rescue me. Save me now!” Why don’t we pray for that?

Prayer

Dear God, thank you for sending Jesus as the king. For this, we can say, “Hosanna.” Today is the Sunday that we remember Jesus in a parade as he entered into Jerusalem. Just like the people watching the parade long ago shouted, “Hosanna to the king!” we also say, “Hosanna! Save us now!” All of us need your forgiveness. All of us need the power of the cross in our lives. Thank you, Jesus, for giving your life on the cross to take away our sins and to make us free to serve you. In Jesus’ name, we pray. Amen.

Song of Response:

Choose a song to help the children turn to Jesus. Or, you may want to help them celebrate what God has done by singing a song of praise.

Offering:

Teach the importance of giving and talk about the mission activities they are supporting.

Place the rocks in a circle around the offering plate.

When we give our offerings to the Lord, it's a way of praising him. We are thanking him not with our voices but with our gifts. Maybe you didn't bring your offering as a gift. If you didn't, you may come forward if you like and pretend that you are placing your heart in the plate as an offering or gift to him as a way of saying, "I love you."



The Word

Learning Game:

Some churches dismiss children from the adult service at this time to join Kids Church. The learning game provides a fun kinesthetic activity to help kids connect with each other. The learning point will help reinforce the theme of the day.

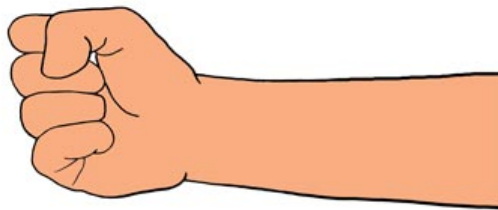
Rock-Paper-Scissors

Supplies: masking tape for lines

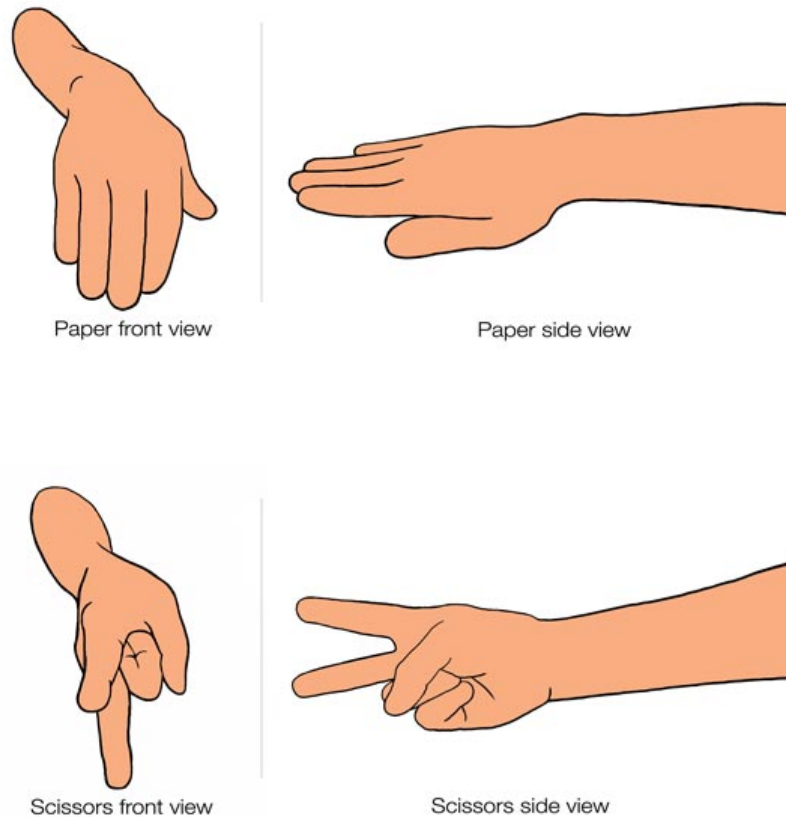
A common game that children play is "Rock-paper-scissors." Normally the game is played between two people who face each other, and in rhythm together, make a fist and hit it into the palm of their other hand three times. On the fourth hit, players make a sign with their fist hand, representing either a rock, a piece of paper, or a pair of scissors. The sign of a rock is a fist. The sign of paper is a flat palm held perpendicular and the sign of a scissors is two fingers extended into a V shape to resemble a scissors.



Rock front view



Rock side view



To help kids catch the rhythm, the first time they hit a fist into the palm of their other hand, they say, “Rock.” The second time they say, “Paper.” The third time they say, “Scissors.” Finally the fourth time they show the hand sign that they choose, letting it rest in the palm of the other hand. In this game, the rock beats the scissors because it can crush the scissors. Paper will always beat a rock because it can cover it. Scissors always beats the paper because paper can be cut. If both use the same sign, they start again.

Explain the rules. Have kids find a partner and practice a round or two to ensure that they understand. Once they understand the basic rules, explain how to play in teams.

Playing as Teams

In advance, make two lines on the floor with masking tape, fifteen or twenty feet apart. Each team gathers behind one of the lines and claims it as its “base.” Have teams go to their base, huddle up, and secretly decide what sign they will all do when they face the other team. Have kids decide on a backup sign, in case both teams pick the same one. Once they have agreed, have them come to the middle between the two lines, facing

their opponents. They do not have to line up directly across from anyone specific, since all the kids on each team will be gesturing the same sign they agreed to in their huddle.

Lead them all in saying, “Rock – Paper – Scissors.” Each side then displays their agreed-upon sign. If the teams show the same sign, start over with the chant and have kids show their backup sign. The “losing team” turns around and runs for their base, the “winning” team chases after them. Kids on the losing team who are tagged before they get to their base then join the winning team for the next round.

No team ever wins because people are continually changing sides. The fun is in thinking fast whether you are a chaser or chasee.

Learning point

Notice how much fun, laughter and shouting happened during this game as we played it. Jesus the King’s coming into the world and giving his life for us is something worth shouting and being happy about, as well. This is just like the praise parade on Palm Sunday. As a matter of fact, that is why Jesus said, “If people are quiet” or are not having fun or singing praises, “even the rocks would cry out.”

Bible Presentation:

Help children pay attention by giving them a word or concept to listen for as you read. Consider letting a child read who could do so with excellence.

Supplies: a rock for each student small enough to fit in their hands, colored bits of paper, glue, crazy eyeballs, markers, etc. to decorate the rocks

The scripture references are from Matthew 21:1-11 and Luke 19:28-40. Rather than read these passages, show a video that illustrates Jesus’ triumphal entry into Jerusalem.

Video Options:

- *Jesus of Nazareth*, Bridgestone Group, Inc. 1995
- *Visual Bible: Matthew*, by Visual Bible International 1997
- *JESUS*, The Jesus Project, Inspirational Films 1979
- *Gospel of John*, Visual Bible International, 2003

Before the video begins, introduce it by challenging the children to listen for key words and telling them to hold up the rocks in their hands when they hear those words (See the script below.)

Hand out a rock to each child.

Introduction – The rocks will cry out

Today is Palm Sunday. On this day we remember that Jesus came into Jerusalem and was hailed as king. So many people were shouting and praising him that some religious leaders said, “Have them stop!”

Jesus replied, “...if they keep quiet, the stones will cry out.” (Luke 19:40, NIV)

We don’t want STONES to out-praise us, do we? Did you know that even the children were yelling, “Hosanna to the Son of David!” And when the religious leaders told Jesus to make THEM be quiet, Jesus said, “No.”

It says in the Bible, “From the mouths of little children God has created praise.” So let’s watch this video and when you hear the words, “Hosanna,” or “King,” or if you hear the phrase, “Son of David,” then raise the rock in your hand. These words the people used because they thought Jesus was the promised Messiah.

Video

Show the video of Jesus’ triumphal entry into Jerusalem.

Discussion Questions:

- **What things caught your attention as you watched the video?**
- **Did anything surprise you?**
- **What should we learn from this event in Jesus’ life?**

Group art project: Praise rocks

Pass out colored bits of paper, glue, crazy eyeballs, markers or anything kids might like to use to decorate their rocks.

Have kids decorate their rocks to be praise rocks with an open mouth as singing praises. Let kids give the praise rocks a name, and then have them place their praise rocks in a line in the front of the worship center to construct a rock choir.

Ask that the room be completely quiet and watch as everyone strains to listen to any sound coming from the rock choir. Suggest that the rock choir probably needs some help. Have the kids join together in praise with their rocks.

During prayer time, the kids can each think of something to praise God for while holding their rocks. They can start out with the phrase, “My praise rock and I would like to praise you, God, for _____.”



Witness

Witness and Tell:

Give children opportunities to share how God is working in their lives. It is best to use a microphone to ask children interview questions around the theme for the day.

Kids can introduce their praise rocks to help them describe one of the things for which they would like to praise God.

Prayer:

Let the kids pray out loud. If you are using a microphone, invite children to form a prayer line and speak their thanksgivings or requests. If you have portable microphones, you can roam the audience. Kids can also go to prayer stations set up for specific types of prayer.

Options: (select one from the options below)

_____ **Prayer Line Option:** Kids line up and take turns stepping in front of the microphone to speak their prayers briefly.

_____ **Prayer Chair:** Adults or children with special prayer needs are invited to sit in the chairs. Kids gather around them, lay hands on their shoulders or knees and take turns praying.

_____ **Popcorn Prayer:** The leader moves through the crowd with a microphone and turns it toward kids who are raising their hands to pray. The kids speak their prayers into the microphone.

Lord's Prayer: Lead the children through the Lord's Prayer, phrase by phrase, or let them pray the entire prayer along with you.

Blessing:

Speak a blessing prayer over the children. Personalize this to your setting. Use a special scripture verse or blessing around the theme of the day.

Song of Sending:

Choose one song. Briefly introduce song so kids can better understand what they are singing and be drawn into a more focused worship. Keep the attention on God.

Supplies:

Attention Grabber:

- small rocks scattered around the stage

Offering:

- rocks in a circle around the offering plate

Learning Game:

- masking tape

Bible Presentation:

- a rock for each student small enough to fit in their hands
- colored bits of paper, glue, crazy eyeballs, markers, etc. to decorate rocks
- video of Jesus' triumphal entry into Jerusalem—options:
 - *Jesus of Nazareth*, Bridgestone Group Inc. 1995—order from <http://shopping.discovery.com/product-14796.html?jzid=40587878-6-0>
 - *Visual Bible: Matthew*, by Visual Bible International 1997—order from http://www.christianbook.com/Christian/Books/product?item_no=03416&netp_id=294389&event=ESRCN&item_code=WW
 - *JESUS*, The Jesus Project, Inspirational Films 1979—order from http://www.jesusfilmstore.com/Merchant2/merchant.mvc?Screen=PROD&Product_Code=JFP0012&Category_Code=008
 - *Gospel of John*, Visual Bible International, 2003—order from www.gospelofjohn.com

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