

## PASSION SUNDAY

### YEAR A

#### PRAYER OF THE DAY:

Dearest God, through Jesus you show us that to love you we must be humble, as he was, and put up with tough times. When we are proud of what we have done, may we thank you for your gifts to us. When we are tempted not to follow Jesus, may we pray to you to be strong, through Jesus, your Son, who lives with you, forever and ever.

#### FOCUS OF THE READINGS:

Jesus, eternal God, humbled himself to be identified with humankind. Those who sought their own importance humiliated Jesus and denied his identity: Messiah, King of the Jews, builder of the temple. They put him to death, but God raised him up and proclaimed his true identity—Jesus Christ is Lord!

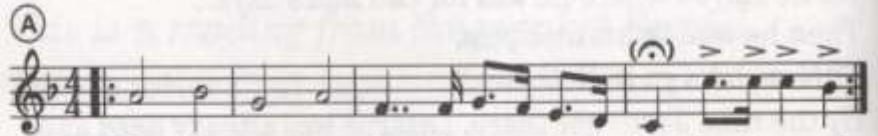
Jesus suffers and dies.

*Note on reading the Passion in parts:*

1. Each leader will need to determine how many children will do each part, according to the number in the group. The goal is to involve as many children as possible.

2. It is very important that the role of those yelling "crucify him" be assigned to a small group (2-3 children) rather than asking all the children to take this part as we have traditionally done in the adult community. To have the entire community take that part suggests that the ordinary people of the congregation are the sinners who willingly, even eagerly, call for the death of Jesus. While this practice is widespread, it is not really appropriate for the adult congregation. It is even less appropriate—and may even be harmful—with children.

## THE PROCESSION WITH PALMS:



Sing ho - san - na, sing ho-san-na, to the King, sing ho-san-na!

#### GOSPEL: *Matthew 21:1-11*

*This is a reading from the Gospel of Matthew.*

When Jesus and his disciples were on their way to Jerusalem, they stopped on the Mount of Olives. Jesus said to two of his disciples,

"Go into the next village, and you will find a young donkey tied there. Untie it and bring it to me. If anyone asks you why you are doing that, just say, 'The Lord needs it, but he will send it right back.'"

This happened to make clear what the prophet meant a long time ago when he said,

"Your king is coming to you. He is humble and is riding on a donkey."

The two disciples went and did everything Jesus had told them. When they brought the donkey to Jesus, they put their coats on its back, and Jesus got onto the donkey. Many of the people spread their coats on the road in front of him, and others cut branches and laid them on the road. The crowd of people that were with him shouted,

"Hosanna to the Son of David. Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord. Hosanna in the highest."

And when he came into Jerusalem, everyone was excited and asked,

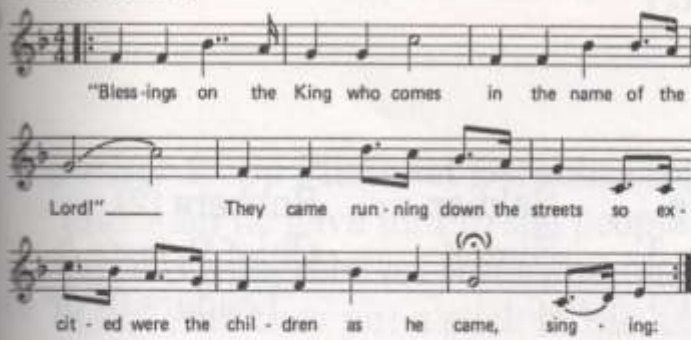
"Who is this?"

The people said,

"He is Jesus, the prophet from Galilee."

*The Gospel of the Lord.*

## REFRAIN:



"Bless-ings on the King who comes in the name of the Lord!" They came run-ning down the streets so ex-cit-ed were the chil-dren as he came, sing-ing:

## FIRST READING: *Philippians 2:6-11*

*This is a reading from Paul's letter to the Philippians.*

Brothers and sisters,  
you must think and live like Christ.  
Even though he was always God,  
Jesus did not try to hold onto that.  
Instead, he became a human being just like us.  
As a human being, he lived a humble life.  
Jesus obeyed God in everything,  
even though it meant he would die on a cross.  
Because he obeyed God in everything,  
God raised Jesus up and gave him the name  
which is above every other name,  
so that at the name of Jesus  
everyone should kneel and worship.  
Everyone in heaven and earth and everywhere,  
should give glory to God by proclaiming,  
"Jesus Christ is Lord!"

*The Word of the Lord.*

## RESPONSE: *Psalms 34*



RESPONSE:  
Glo-ri-fy God, glo-ri-fy God, glo-ri-fy God with me. Let us  
praise God's ho-ly name. Glo-ri-fy God glo-ri-fy God's ho-ly name!

## GOSPEL ACCLAMATION:



Leader:  
Je-sus has giv-en his life for us.  
All:  
Je-sus has giv-en his life for us.

## REFLECTING ON THE READINGS WITH CHILDREN:

We suggest that the Passion be read in parts as has become customary in many parish communities.

The experience of Holy Week is more of a meditation than a theological study. These reflections should allow the children to enter into the drama of the Passion in a way that touches them personally.

*After the Passion*, ask the children to recall the scene:

- Who was there? (Jesus, chief priests and other leaders, Pilate, a crowd of people, soldiers, Simon, the two criminals crucified with him.)
- Why did the people take Jesus to Pilate? Why did they want Jesus crucified?
- How do you think Jesus felt when they made fun of him as a king?
- Who was the man Pilate wanted to let out of prison?
- How do you think Jesus felt when his own people kept shouting, "Crucify him, crucify him"?
- Why were the people making fun of him on the cross? What did they say? How do you think Jesus felt when they said these things?
- After Jesus died, what did one of the soldiers say? How do you think that soldier felt?

If some of the older children have done the reading, you might ask those who read:

- How did you feel being Jesus?
- How did you feel being Pilate?
- How did you feel being the chief priests and leaders?
- How did you feel when you were shouting "crucify him"?
- How did you feel being the soldier at the end?

