

## VIRTUAL SMALL GROUP GENERAL INFO

### TIPS & TRICKS

- Watching the Bible story video: use your meeting app's "share my screen" option to play the video yourself. (Be sure to click "share computer audio" so kids can hear the video.)
  - We recommend watching the video together as a group, so your few can have a shared experience and you'll know that the follow-up activity will make sense to all of your kids.
- Navigating a virtual conversation:
  - Make "eye contact" as much as possible. The more "locked in" and engaged you are, the most your few will be as well.
  - Use the "host" functionalities of your meeting software to your advantage! Turn kids' mute buttons on and off as needed instead of leaving it to them to regulate.
  - At the beginning of every small group time, remind kids of the "house rules": try not to talk when someone else is talking, make sure you're listening to your friends and giving "eye contact" when they're talking.
  - If kids are talking over each other, let them know you're trying to get their attention and then wait for them to settle down. Don't try to talk over them in order to regain control of the conversation.
- Keep Small Group time short. Thirty minutes is about the maximum amount of time kids can be expected to sit in one place and focus on one thing. Expect about a 2-minute attention span for every year of your kids' lives. For a 7-year-old, that's about 14-18 minutes! Keep them engaged by doing that day's suggested activity (in the Leader Guide) along with the suggested conversation, instead of separating them.
- Your shy or more introverted kids might be used to participating in a virtual group setting by now, but if they still seem reluctant to share or fully engage, look for easy, low-impact ways to let them join in.
- Say their names! It sounds simple, but say their names so each kid knows you want to hear from them.
- Hope for a great time of connection, but don't expect it to be revolutionary! Simply by showing up virtually and spending time focusing on your few, you're communicating that you're there for them and they're important to you.

### GAMES & ICE BREAKERS

Here's a list of games and icebreakers you can have on hand for when you need them.

#### WHERE'S THE WIDGET?

- Pretend like you're holding something small in your hand.
- Tell kids that they get pretend to hide it from you and you get to guess who's got it!
- Close your eyes or turn around while the kids silently decide who is going to be the one "holding" the widget.
- Slowly count to 10 and then open your eyes or turn around and face the computer.
- Based on facial expressions, overheard conversations, and general giddiness, take a guess as to who is holding the widget.
- (If you play this game enough, eventually your few will become rather adept at deception!)

#### WOULD YOU RATHER:

- Ask a few "would you rather" questions and lead kids to take turns quickly responding with their choice.
- Let them take turns asking their own "would you rather" questions of the group.
- This website has a huge list of "this or that" type questions for kids: <https://bit.ly/2Y0gg8q>
- You can also get really silly and random with what you ask, like,
  - "Would you rather eat dessert whenever you want to, but you can only have the same type for the rest of your life; OR only be allowed to eat dessert once a week, but you can choose whichever dessert you want?"
  - "Would you rather touch an alligator or hug a panda bear, if you knew neither one would bite you?"

#### TWENTY QUESTIONS:

- Choose one person to start, or ask for a volunteer.
- This person must think of an object. It can be any object, (as long as it's appropriate) and would be something everyone in the group would know.
- The rest of the group then takes turns asking yes or no questions about the object.
- The person who has the object in mind should answer

## VIRTUAL SMALL GROUP GENERAL INFO

the question with a simple yes or no, avoiding giving any other details.

- After hearing the answer, the kid asking the question is allowed one guess at what the object is.
- If a total of 20 questions gets asked with no one guessing what the object is, the kid who thought of the object wins and gets to reveal what the object was.
- If someone does guess correctly, they now get to think of a new object.

### HIDE AND SEEK

- Choose three or four kids to be “hidiers” and one kid to be the “seeker.”
- The kids who will be hiding get to choose if they’ll move left or right of their device’s camera, or down below so they can’t be seen.
- When you say “Go,” the seeker closes their eyes while you count to 10.
- The “hidiers” will then hide by moving left, right, or down. Instruct the hidiers to stay put until you tell them to move.
- After counting to 10, let the seeker open their eyes and guess which direction each kid moved.
- If the seeker gets them all right, they get to be the seeker again.
- If they get any of them wrong, they choose the next seeker.
- The game is basically a game of chance, unless any kids accidentally reveal themselves by moving part of their bodies back into the range of their device’s camera!

### SCAVENGER HUNT

- Make sure you have everyone’s attention.
- Tell them you’re going to give them an object to find and the first person who returns and shows you the object first wins!
- Think of an object all kids would have in their homes. (Ideas and suggestions are below.)
- Tell kids what the object is and give them a second or two to think of where that object might be.
- Count to three and call out, “GO!”
- Kids should go find that object as fast as they (safely) can.
- You are the judge of who makes it back first. To keep it fair, you can make the stipulation that the winner

must be back in their seat in front of their device and you must be able to clearly see the object they’re holding.

- You can play a few rounds of this game and keep score. The kid who won the most rounds is the overall winner!
- Scavenger hunt object suggestions:
  - A spoon
  - A sock
  - Something fuzzy
  - Something orange (or any other color)
  - A sibling (only use this one if all kids have at least one sibling at home)
  - A grownup
  - A remote control
  - A ball
  - A shoe
  - A crayon/marker (for safety, no pencils)
  - Tape
  - Something edible
  - Something you can drink from (cup, water bottle, etc.)
  - A Bible or devotional book
  - A regular book
  - A pillow
  - Something artsy
  - A pet
  - Something electronic

### SHOW AND TELL

- Kids love sharing about themselves and what they like! Give them a chance to do that in this virtual twist on an old classic.
- If you’re doing show and tell, you may want to let families know ahead of time so kids can pick out that perfect show and tell item!
- As kids share about their item, encourage their peers to stay quiet and listen.
- Limit sharing to two minutes for each kid, and give them a countdown when their time is almost over. (You can hold up 10 fingers and lower them one at a time to show kids how much time is left.)
- If your group likes doing show and tell, you can do it often and choose a different theme each time!

### ICEBREAKER CONVERSATION STARTERS:

- What’s your favorite thing you ate this week?

## VIRTUAL SMALL GROUP GENERAL INFO

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- What or who do you play with when you're outside?
- Who has a family pet that they can show on camera?
- What was the best part of yesterday?
- What's the longest you've gone (during social distancing) without showering?
- If you could BE any famous person, who would you be and why?
- How many stuffed animals are on your bed right now?
- What's one thing you don't miss when school is out for summer or holiday breaks?
- What's one thing you DO miss when school is out for summer or holiday breaks?
- If you could add one thing to your bedroom, what would it be?

## SOCIAL DISTANCE ADAPTATIONS

### STEPS FOR ADAPTING CURRICULUM

**Disclaimer: These are suggestions. Your local government offices will publish unique policies and procedures for how groups should start gathering again in your area. Be sure to contact the Center for Disease Control for the most up-to-date information.**

#### 1. START WITH THE OFFICIAL GUIDELINES

for reopening and gathering. You'll want to consider your staff and volunteers, as well as, the kids and families that will attend. The CDC has published documents that address both. The CDC also provides capacity and ratio guidelines to consider.

- Drop-off and Pick-up procedures
- Screening procedures
- Diapering and toilet procedures
- Water fountain procedures

#### 2. CONSIDER HOW YOU CAN SOCIAL DISTANCE

with these new capacity and ratio guidelines. For younger kids, be sure to space out carpet squares or chairs at tables for small group distancing. Have kids sit farther apart during large group. Questions to think through:

- Do you need to add services to accommodate the families that want to come?
- How will you turn families away when you've reached capacity?
- How will you continue to provide online experiences for families who are at a higher risk and can't yet return to the building?
- Will kids and volunteers need to wear masks throughout programming? Will you provide masks for families who don't have them?
- How will you communicate new/changing expectations to parents and kids?

#### 3. ADAPTING YOUR ENVIRONMENT

- Simplify your entrances and exit to limit personal contact.

- Limit the amount of extra toys and games, especially those that are hard to sanitize between services and/or are prone to carry germs.
- Limit small group size to ensure social distancing.
- Put tape on the floor to show kids where they should sit so they don't get too close to each other
- Space kids out during large group to keep social distancing guidelines.
- Discontinue providing snacks.
- Create a list of items for your families to prepare (Bible, mask, blanket to sit on, etc.)

#### 4. ADAPTING THE CURRICULUM

- Small Group:
  - Adapt activities to reduce or limit shared items and touching.
  - Prepare all supplies in advance to limit the amount of people touching the items.
  - For shared supplies like markers, pencils, etc., have kids pick out a few colors and keep those in their individual spot for the day. Have a place they can drop them off at the end for sanitizing.
  - Have kids bring their own Bibles rather than use church ones that may not be easily sanitized.
  - Use disposable items when possible.
  - If you can't socially distance during small group, consider having kids and leaders wear face masks.
  - Include hand sanitizer and disinfectant wipes in small group supplies.
- Large Group:
  - Adapt games where kids would be close together to play.
  - Spread out people who are on stage (Host,

## SOCIAL DISTANCE ADAPTATIONS

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- Storyteller, Worship Team)
- Adapt storytelling conventions where kids are on stage and touching each other.
  - Limit use of props that would be used by multiple kids each morning.
  - Limit costumes and masks that would be used by multiple kids each morning.
  - Use disposable items when possible

# Small Group Leader Guide

March 7, 2021 Week 1

## K3

**Today's Bible Story:** Wait for It (Simeon Waits for the Messiah) • *Luke 2:25-35*

**Today's Bottom Line:** When you have to wait, remember God is with you.

**Monthly Memory Verse:** *Wait for the LORD. Be strong and don't lose hope. Wait for the LORD.* Psalm 27:14 (*NIRV*)

**Monthly Life App:** Patience—Waiting until later for what you want now

**Basic Truth:** I can trust God no matter what.

### What You Need:

- Bibles

### What You Do:

- As kids join the meeting and get settled, engage them in conversation about the past week.
- If you choose, consider using one of the ice breakers or games on the “Virtual Small Group General Info” page.
- After the Bible story video, transition into the activity below.

### Activity:

#### What You Do:

- Look up Luke 2:25-32 and ask kids to look up the passage as well, if they have their Bibles or a Bible app.
- If possible, invite a few kids to take turns reading the passage out loud, switching readers every couple of sentences.
- Otherwise, read the passage to the kids yourself.
- Quickly review the story, asking:
  - In our Bible story, who was waiting?
  - What was he waiting for?
  - How long did he have to wait?
  - What did he do when the wait was over?
  - How do you think he felt once he could finally stop waiting?
- Then play a game of “Patience Charades”!
- Take a few moments to make a verbal list of times when it's hard to wait, such as waiting in traffic, waiting for a birthday or Christmas to come, walking a dog and waiting for it to use the bathroom, waiting for a baby to be born.
- After you've made your list, ask for a volunteer to go first, choosing one of the things the group listed and silently acting that thing out.
- Prompt kids to raise their hands when they think they know what's being acted out.
- The kid who guesses correctly gets to be the next actor.
- Play as time and interest allow, or when kids run out of ideas of things that can be acted out!

### What You Say:

“I don't usually like waiting. Do you? What is the hardest to wait for, usually? (*Pause for responses.*) It can be really hard to wait, especially for something we really look forward to or

when something is hard. No matter what it is you have to wait for, God is always with you. You can trust Him while you wait, just like Simeon did in our Bible story. ***[Bottom Line]* When you have to wait, remember God is with you.** Just like Simeon, we can have patience and wait, because we know God is in control and His plan for us is good.”

Close your group in prayer:

“Dear God, we are so thankful that You don’t leave us alone while we wait. Even when we don’t get the answers we hope for or when we wish our waiting didn’t last so long, You are always with us! This week as we meet people and experience times where we know we need patience; we ask that You help us show others what You are like through our waiting. May our actions show others that ***[Bottom Line]* when you have to wait, remember God is with you.** In Jesus’ name, Amen!”

# Wait For It

Simeon Waits for the Messiah - Luke 2:25-35

(Elementary / March Week 1)



**Life App:** Patience - waiting until later for what you want now.

**Bottom Line:** When you have to wait, remember God is with you.

**Basic Truth:** I can trust God no matter what.

**Memory Verse:** Psalm 27:14 NIrV

# Small Group Leader Guide

March 14, 2021 Week 2

## K3

**Today's Bible Story:** Sitting, Waiting, Wishing (Golden Calf) • *Exodus 32:1-35*

**Today's Bottom Line:** When you have to wait, remember what's true.

**Monthly Memory Verse:** *Wait for the LORD. Be strong and don't lose hope. Wait for the LORD. Psalm 27:14 (NIRV)*

**Monthly Life App:** Patience—Waiting until later for what you want now

**Basic Truth:** I can trust God no matter what.

### What You Need:

- No supplies needed

### What You Do:

- As kids join the meeting and get settled, engage them in conversation about the past week.
- If you choose, consider using one of the ice breakers or games on the "Virtual Small Group General Info" page.
- After the Bible story video, transition into the activity below.

### Activity:

#### What You Do:

- Tell kids you're going to play a game called "I'm thinking of something that's true!"
- Read a true description of a person or thing from the list below, and the kids will guess what you are describing.
- After a few good guesses, if the kids have not figured out the answer, you can give them the answer to keep the game rolling.
- After you read the statements, you can give the kids a turn at coming up with their own descriptions!

Statements (or feel free to make up your own):

1. I'm thinking of something yellow and big with feathers and a beak. (*Big Bird™*)
  2. I'm thinking of something heavy that has a handle that leads us into rooms, houses, or buildings. (*a door*)
  3. I'm thinking of something crunchy that comes in different flavors. It's normally gold and is an under-the-sea, animal-shaped snack. (*Goldfish® crackers*)
  4. I'm thinking of something that is hot. You would sip it when it's cold outside. Something that is normally topped off with marshmallows. (*hot chocolate*)
  5. I'm thinking of something white that is normally used when you have something coming out of your nose. It also rhymes with "issue." (*tissue*)
- After the game, review the story with your group. Ask them to share what they remember and what details stood out to them.
  - Remind them that the Israelites built a golden calf to worship instead of God because they got impatient and failed to remember what the real God had done for them.
  - Guide kids to come up with ideas for how the Israelites could have shown patience.
  - Prompt them with ideas like:

- They could have remembered God's truth.
- They could have talked about all the promises God had kept and made for them in the past.
- They could have done something to occupy their time so they didn't panic.

**What You Say:**

"It's easy for us to be shocked about what the Israelites did when they didn't choose to be patient. It's easy for us to point fingers and wonder how they could just forget about everything God had rescued them from. The thing is, it's easy for *us* to grow impatient and forget God's truth for us when we have to wait. ***[Make it Personal] (Talk about how you've personally had to be patient during this time, whether it was waiting out a quarantine after exposure to the virus, waiting for your favorite restaurant to open back up, waiting to find out more information, etc.) [Bottom Line] When you have to wait, remember what's true.*** God is always in control and He will help us wait patiently with the big things and the small things.

Close your group in prayer:

"Dear God, in this season where we have experienced a lot of waiting, there are times when we just wish we didn't have to wait. We thank You for teaching us today that ***[Bottom Line] when you have to wait, remember what's true.*** Help us, this week, to focus on the truths we know each time we need to be patient! Thank You for helping us stay strong and trust in You while we wait. We love You! In Jesus' name, amen!"

# Sitting, Waiting, Wishing

Golden Calf - Exodus 32:1-35

(Elementary / March Week 2)



**Life App:** Patience - waiting until later for what you want now.

**Bottom Line:** When you have to wait, remember what's true.

**Basic Truth:** I can trust God no matter what.

**Memory Verse:** Psalm 27:14 NIrV

# Small Group Leader Guide

Virtual Small Group

March 21, 2021 Week 3

**K3**

**Today's Bible Story:** Can't Hardly Wait (Esau's Impatience) • *Genesis 25:24-34*

**Today's Bottom Line:** If you don't wait, it could cost you.

**Monthly Memory Verse:** *Wait for the LORD. Be strong and don't lose hope. Wait for the LORD.* Psalm 27:14 (NIRV)

**Monthly Life App:** Patience—Waiting until later for what you want now

**Basic Truth:** I need to make the wise choice.

## What You Need:

- "Take Your Pick" Activity Page

## What You Do:

- As kids join the meeting and get settled, engage them in conversation about the past week.
- If you choose, consider using one of the ice breakers or games on the "Virtual Small Group General Info" page.
- After the Bible story video, transition into the activity below.

## Activity:

### What You Do:

- Choose a scenario to read from the Activity Page.
- Guide the group to think of an impatient response (or guide them to talk about the impatient response from today's Bible story).
- Ask kids what that impatient response could cost the person in the scenario.
- Then guide them to come up with a patient alternative instead.

## What You Say:

"Those impatient responses could really cause us all a lot of trouble—just like it did for Esau! Sometimes you'll miss out on small things, like cookies or screen time. But sometimes it could be something bigger, like missing out on a friend's birthday party because you lost your cool. Patience means that we wait for what's best. It's not settling for a quick fix. **[Bottom Line] If you don't wait, it could cost you.**"

Close your group in prayer:

"Dear God, we know that our hope is found in You no matter what we are praying and waiting for. Thank You for teaching us that even though waiting isn't fun and can be super tough at times, **[Bottom Line] if you don't wait, it could cost you.** We totally trust that You have our best interest in mind, Jesus. Even when we can't see it and doubt Your perfect plan, we will choose patience and wait on You! Help us cling to You in our waiting this week, whether big or small. We love You. In Jesus' name we pray, amen!"

**Esau came in from the fields SO HUNGRY,  
and he saw that his twin brother had stew . . .**

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**Jacob asked Esau for his birthright  
in exchange for some food . . .**

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**Sarah wanted a turn at the video game right away . . .**

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**Jalen went to grab a piece of chocolate cake  
as soon as it came out of the oven . . .**

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**Annie's mom told her not to eat a snack  
so she'd be hungry for her favorite dinner . . .**

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**Dax ran out into the snow without any shoes,  
socks, or a coat because he was so excited to play . . .**

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**Isa was so excited to play with her new bike,  
but it needed to be put together first . . .**

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**Jack was so excited about the wrapped  
gifts under the Christmas tree . . .**

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**WHAT TO DO:**

Have this page ready when Small Group time begins.

# Can't Hardly Wait

Esau's Impatience - Genesis 25:24-34

(Elementary / March Week 3)



**Life App:** Patience - waiting until later for what you want now.

**Bottom Line:** If you don't wait, it could cost you.

**Basic Truth:** I need to make the wise choice.

**Memory Verse:** Psalm 27:14 NIrV

# Small Group Leader Guide

March 28, 2021 Week 4

## K3

**Today's Bible Story:** I Will Wait (Palm Sunday) • *Matthew 21:1-11*

**Today's Bottom Line:** You can celebrate even when you're waiting.

**Monthly Memory Verse:** *Wait for the LORD. Be strong and don't lose hope. Wait for the LORD.* Psalm 27:14 (*NIRV*)

**Monthly Life App:** Patience—Waiting until later for what you want now

**Basic Truth:** I can trust God no matter what.

### What You Need:

- a sheet of paper, a green marker, and child-safe scissors,
- Palm Activity Page

### What You Do:

- As kids join the meeting and get settled, engage them in conversation about the past week.
- If you choose, consider using one of the ice breakers or games on the "Virtual Small Group General Info" page.
- After the Bible story video, transition into the activity below.

### Activity:

#### What You Do:

- Let kids color palm green and then cut it out.
- Give them a few minutes to draw, color, and cut out their own palm branch.
- When everyone has made their palm branches, go through the questions below.
  - If kids think the answer to the question is "A," they wave their palm branch in the air.
  - If they think it is "B," they wave it side to side.

#### Review questions: (**correct answer bolded**)

1. How long had God's people been waiting for a Savior?  
**A. Hundreds of years**  
B. Five years
2. What kind of animal did Jesus ask His disciples to bring Him?  
A. A llama  
**B. A donkey and its colt**
3. When the owner of the donkeys asked why they were untying his donkeys, what did the disciples say?  
**A. The Lord needs them**  
B. Wait for the Lord
4. What did the disciples place over the backs of the donkeys?  
A. Blankets  
**B. Their coats**
5. What did people lay down on the road for Jesus' donkey to walk on?  
**A. Coats**  
B. A red carpet

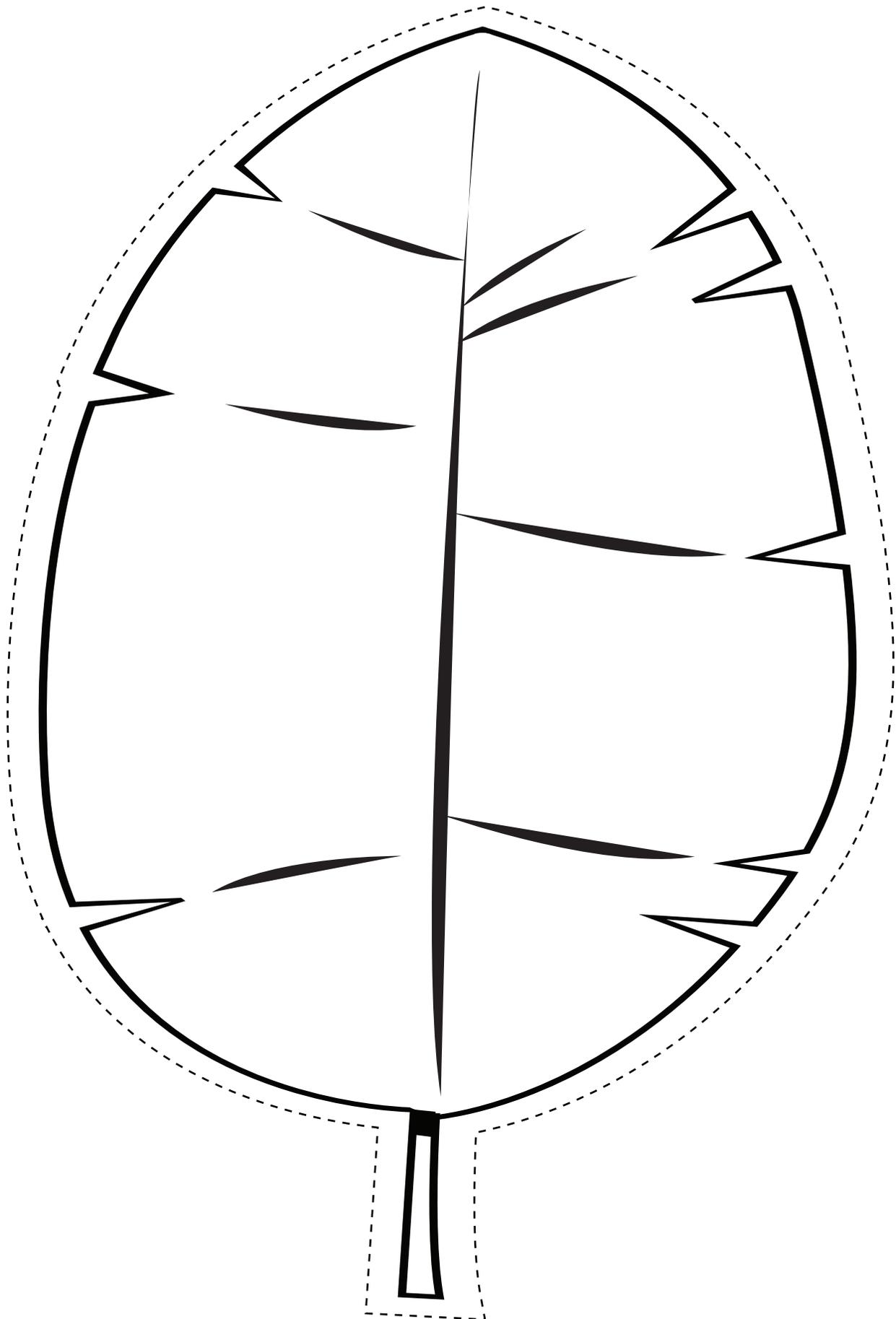
6. What did the people take off the trees and wave in the air when Jesus walked by?  
**A. Palm branches**  
B. Twigs
7. What word did the people shout when they saw Jesus?  
**A. Hosanna!**  
B. Hooray!
8. Was everyone excited to see Jesus?  
A. Yes! Absolutely everyone.  
**B. No, there were some religious leaders who were not so happy.**
9. What did Jesus tell the religious leaders would happen if the other people remained quiet?  
**A. If they keep quiet, the stones will cry out.**  
B. If they keep quiet, the trees will blow in the breeze.

**What You Say:**

“You guys waved your palm branches just like the people did when they saw Jesus enter the city on a donkey! Could you imagine having to wait for something for HUNDREDS of years? That means a lot of people who started waiting for a Savior died without knowing that Jesus came. I don’t know about you, but I’m not sure I would have the best attitude if that were me. But not this crowd. They knew **[Bottom Line] you can celebrate even when you’re waiting.**”

Close your group in prayer:

“Dear God, thank You for reminding us that waiting doesn’t always have to be boring! If we look hard enough, there is joy and celebration to be found, even in the challenging times. When we are tempted to be irritated or impatient this week, remind us that **[Bottom Line] you can celebrate even when you’re waiting.** Let our responses to waiting show the people around us that You are worth celebrating and praising! In Jesus’ name, amen!”



**What to Do:**  
Print one for each kid.

# I Will Wait

Palm Sunday - Matthew 21:1-11

(Elementary / March Week 4)



**Life App:** Patience - waiting until later for what you want now.

**Bottom Line:** You can celebrate even when you're waiting.

**Basic Truth:** I can trust God no matter what.

**Memory Verse:** Psalm 27:14 NIrV



“Wait for the Lord.

Be strong and

don't lose hope.

Wait for

the Lord.”

Psalms 27:14