

UPS AND DOWNS

**BIBLE BASIS:** Lesson Scripture: Jesus enters Jerusalem on Sunday and is welcomed as a king. John 12:12-19

**BIBLE TRUTH:** Emotions alone are not a reliable indicator of discipleship.

**MEMORY VERSE:** Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit; so shall ye be my disciples. John 15:8

**LESSON AIM:** That your students will begin to consider more than their feelings when evaluating their walk with God.

**TEACHER PREPARATION**

**MATERIALS NEEDED:** Bibles and Student Books, pencils, pens or markers, Extra Paper, chalkboard and chalk or poster, Teaching Aids “What’s Up?” worksheet, and A small basket and assorted colored gum balls or candy for the Pre-session Activity.

**LIFE NEED FOR TODAY’S LESSON**

**FOCUS**

- Complete a worksheet about emotions.
- Discuss ways feelings change.
- Read an article from the Student Book.

**OTHER MATERIALS NEEDED/  
TEACHER’S NOTES:**

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**BIBLE LEARNING**

**BIBLE STUDY**

- Work through a Bible Study about Jesus’ entry into Jerusalem.
- Discuss the Memory Verse.
- Act out the reaction of the crowd and the Pharisees.

**LESSON OVERVIEW**

**BIBLE APPLICATION**

Students give advice based on Scripture, in response to example situations.

Invite a student or guest to tell how people influenced him or her to come to Christ.

### **STUDENTS' RESPONSE (ACTION)**

Students make a commitment to trust God, despite their feelings.

### **LESSON SCRIPTURE**

#### **JOHN 12:12-19**

**12. On the next day much people that were come to the feast, when they heard that Jesus was coming to Jerusalem,**

**13. Took branches of palm trees, and went forth to meet him, and cried, Hosanna: Blessed is the King of Israel that cometh in the name of the Lord.**

**14. And Jesus, when he had found a young ass, sat thereon; as it is written,**

**15. Fear not, daughter of Sion: behold, thy King cometh, sitting on an ass's colt.**

**16. These things understood not his disciples at the first: but when Jesus was glorified, then remembered they that these things were written of him, and that they had done those things unto him.**

**17. The people therefore that was with him when he called Lazarus out of his grave, and raised him from the dead, bare record.**

**18. For this cause the people also met him, for that they heard that he had done this miracle.**

**19. The Pharisees therefore said among themselves, Perceive ye now ye prevail nothing? behold, the world is gone after him.**

### **LIGHT ON THE WORD**

*John 12:12-19.* John 12 supplies John's version of Jesus' triumphal entry into Jerusalem. John is the only one of the Gospels that identifies the branches waved as palm branches (12:13). The Passover pilgrims, many of whom came from Galilee, probably saw Jesus when He was there.

The people who met Jesus sang Psalm 118. The word "hosanna" in Hebrew means "save now" and comes from Psalm 118:25. The Jewish historian Josephus claimed that there were over two million people at the Passover, though many scholars feel that his figures are inflated.

Jesus intentionally chose to ride into the city on a donkey (Matthew 21:1-9; Mark 11:1-10; Luke 19:28-40). Jesus' entry on a donkey is a fulfillment of Zechariah 9:9, which is quoted in John 12:15. The donkey symbolized humility, peace, and Davidic royalty.

Jesus is called "King of Israel" (verse 13) by the crowd. They had high expectations for Jesus as the one who would deliver them from the Roman government. Actually, the people didn't have high enough expectations.

In II Samuel 7:12-14, God promised Israel a king whose throne would be established forever. No mere human king could fulfill such a promise. Only after the Resurrection would the disciples understand that Jesus fulfilled God's promise to David. It's interesting to note John's observation that the crowd that was with Jesus when He raised Lazarus from the dead kept spreading the word. Perhaps these people hoped for more miracles or even a miraculous deliverance from Rome.

The size of the crowd alarmed the Pharisees, who were already plotting to destroy Jesus (John 8:59; 10:39; 11:57). Certainly the intensity of the religious leaders' hatred toward Jesus increased with the triumphal entry.

## **UNDERSTANDING YOUR JUNIOR HIGH STUDENTS**

If you like diversity, you must love working with Junior High students! Look around your class and you probably see some students punching each other, taking each other's possessions, and acting like children. Other students might act more like High school students, adopting a cool and confident look. No other age-group has a greater mix of shapes and sizes, mental abilities, and emotional ups and downs.

With the onset of puberty, young adolescents experience physical and emotional changes. Most junior high school students, however, are more aware of the physical changes taking place (such as that zit on the forehead) than the emotional changes. So a young teen might

feel as if he or she is on an emotional roller coaster and wonder if he or she is normal.

As a Junior High Sunday School teacher, you can assure your students that they really are okay and help them discover what lies ahead.

## **TEACHING TIPS AND IDEAS**

The aim for this lesson is to encourage your students to consider more than their feelings when evaluating their walk with God. As you teach, steer clear of labeling feelings as good or bad. Feelings are part of being human. Instead, help your students balance their feelings with facts about God and living the Christian life.

## **PRESESSION ACTIVITY**

### **Color Me**

**AIM: To help students express their feelings.**

Before class, buy assorted colors of gumballs or hard candy. Place the candy or gumballs in a basket. As students arrive, tell them to choose the color that best describes how they felt this past week (or how they feel this morning). For example, Tameka might choose yellow because she had a good week and was happy most of the time. LaDarius might choose purple because something made him angry.

If you brought gumballs to class, have each student chew the gum, blow a bubble, and then tell why he or she chose that color. If you have candy, have

students explain their choices before eating the candy.

## TEACHING THE BIBLE LESSON

### LIFE NEED FOR TODAY'S LESSON

#### FOCUS

**AIM: That your students will express their feelings about themselves, friends, family, and God.**

Pass out the worksheet "What's Up?" from your Creative Teaching Aids. Have someone read the introduction, and give students time to fill in the boxes.

When students finish, have volunteers show and explain their feelings. Encourage students to talk about specific events that may have affected their feelings. You might want to share how you felt about your week.

Suppose I had you fill in this worksheet a week ago, or I was planning to have you fill it in again next week, would your boxes look the same? Why or why not?

To help students realize how feelings change, read the following situation. (Of course, change the scenario if you have lots of girls or only girls.)

You are the most popular student in school. You've broken a school record in track or have just been elected class president. Everyone asks you to help them with their algebra, and you have so

many dates you can hardly keep track of them. You are saved and a leader in your Purity Class, YPWW, or other youth group.

Stop reading at this point and ask students how they might be feeling about life.

This day hasn't been going so well. First, you forgot that the free day was canceled because officials were visiting the school and everyone is wearing their uniform except you. Next, after a speech in the second hour you had bread stuck in your front teeth. Not only that, but some students booed you during your speech.

The thing that really hurt, though, was that the new student in track beat your record in the first heat at practice. This student is the fastest thing on two feet, and all the coaches are wild about him or her. To top it off, the person you're crazy about is walking home with the new track star.

How are you feeling about things now? Call on volunteers to express their feelings. Ask students to explain any change in the way they felt.

What did this story tell you about feelings? (**Feelings change. Feelings are usually determined by what is going on in your life.**)

Have students read the article "Ups and Downs" in the Student book and discuss briefly.

## BIBLE LEARNING

### BIBLE STUDY

**AIM: That your students will examine the reaction of the crowds and Pharisees to Jesus' triumphal entry.**

Hand out this week's Student Book and have students turn to the Bible Study.

### ACTIVITY

As a way of introducing today's Bible study, have students act out the parts of the crowd and the Pharisees in John 12:12-19. For example, students who are the crowd could enter the room waving their hands and shouting, "Hosanna!" The students who are the Pharisees could stand off to one side and make their remarks. When students finish with their skit, continue with the Bible Study questions.

Today's Bible Study takes place a week before Jesus was crucified. He was coming to Jerusalem to celebrate the Passover feast. As Jesus entered the city, excited crowds swarmed around Him. Let's take a close look at this crowd.

Read the introduction to the study, and then answer the question as a class.

### FROM THE STUDENT BOOK

#### Caught Up in the Moment

*It's the night of the big game. The bleachers are jammed; the noise level is deafening. As the home team walks in, the crowd goes crazy. Everyone is caught up in the excitement.*

*Take the same crowd, and send it back in time to wait for Jesus to enter Jerusalem. Read John 12:12-19 to discover the crowd's reaction.*

**1. Read John 12:12; 17-18.** Why do you think the crowd was so excited to see Jesus? **(They were excited because of the miracles He'd done. They were especially excited when they heard He raised Lazarus from the dead. People probably wanted a chance to greet someone with such incredible power. Perhaps some were hoping Jesus would perform a great miracle for them.)**

Do you think people today would have the same reaction to Jesus?

Allow students to speculate here. So much of what the youth receive from the media attempts to diminish Jesus and His power. Therefore some people today are so skeptical, they would refuse to believe in miracles, even if they saw one performed. Other people would probably react the same way to Jesus, hoping for a miracle or two of their own.

**2. Read John 12:13.** What kind of expectations did the crowd have about Jesus? **(Hint: Palm branches were used to celebrate a victory. The people were honoring Jesus as a great hero and conqueror.)**

Some of your students probably know the Jews were looking for the Messiah to deliver them from their enemies. They obviously thought Jesus was the one.

**3. Read John 12:14-16.** Jesus, the star attraction, came riding into the city on a donkey, which doesn't seem like the most royal animal in the world. Look up and read Zechariah 9:9. How does this verse describe the king God would send His people? **(Have someone read Zechariah 9:9, which is quoted and fulfilled in John 12:15. The Old Testament prophecy describes Zion's king as righteous, having salvation, gentle, and riding on a donkey.)**

God's king, Jesus, was a humble, gentle king. True, He came to deliver people, but to deliver them from their sins.

**4.** Not everyone in the crowd was happy to see Jesus. Read John 12:19. How did the Pharisees react to everything that was going on? Do you think the Pharisees were overreacting? Why or why not? **(The Pharisees weren't thrilled. They didn't like all the attention Jesus got. As far as they were concerned, the whole world followed after Jesus.)**

**5.** Describe the tone of voice and expression the Pharisees may have used when they made this comment. If you'd like, read the verse aloud, with expression. **(Allow students to have fun as they read the Pharisees' comments. Perhaps one of your students may have been sarcastic, or another student might think the Pharisees were disgusted with the whole affair. Be sure students explain their choices.)**

Why did the Pharisees hate Jesus? **(Some students may be aware of the antagonism between Jesus and the religious leaders. The Pharisees were**

**zealous. They were threatened by Jesus and jealous of His popularity.)**

**6.** By week's end, Jesus would be crucified. Do you think the crowd knew who Jesus really was and what He came to do? Explain. **(No. The crowd was fickle. They followed Jesus only when they happened to like what He did.)**

What caused the people's feelings to change so quickly about Jesus?

Use the following information to help your students understand:

- The crowd wanted a political Messiah, one who would deliver them from the Romans. Jesus came to deliver people from sin, not just bad politicians.
- The crowd wanted a miracle worker. Although Jesus did perform miracles, His purpose in coming was to die for the sins of humankind.
- The crowd wanted to remain the same. They didn't want any demands placed on them. Jesus wanted His followers to change and walk in light instead of darkness.

It's likely that the majority of the people in the crowd weren't serious about following Christ. Perhaps it just felt good at the moment to shout hosanna to Jesus. Because feelings change so frequently, God says there is another way to show that someone is following Him. Have your students look up and read today's Memory Verse, John 15:8.

What kind of fruit is Jesus talking about

in this verse? (**Explain that this fruit represents the product of a godly life or godly traits—the traits mentioned in Galatians 5:22-23. Ask someone to look up and read these two verses.**)

## **BIBLE APPLICATION**

**AIM: That your students understand that their commitment to God doesn't depend on their feelings.**

Once we trust Christ, we have to be committed to following Him too, not bailing out because we feel—or don't feel—a certain way.

Read these situations, and have students suggest advice. If you like, divide students into groups of two or three and assign each group a situation. Give each group extra paper and pens to record their advice.

1. Candace doesn't feel God's forgiveness. Even when she asks God to forgive her, she doesn't feel anything. Give Candace advice, based on I John 1:9 and Psalm 103:10-12.

2. Kwame is worried about being held back another year. His family is not a member of your church, and now he's so miserable that he's stopped coming to YPWW or any of the youth services. You are worried. Give Kwame advice based on I Peter 5:7 and Galatians 6:2.

3. Alexis feels that she's just a peon of a saint. Her dad is a well-known preacher in the community, and her sister organized the church's annual youth retreat. Why would God need to use

her? Give Alexis advice, based on Ephesians 2:10.

Students will suggest a variety of advice, but do bring out these points:

- God's forgiveness is based on His just and perfect character. He also has compassion on us.
- God wants His children to throw all their worries on Him because He cares for them. Also, part of the church's responsibility is to support each other.
- God has a purpose for each of His followers. This purpose is to do good deeds, not necessarily to make a grand contribution to humankind.

In this last situation, you might want to relate it to John 15:8. We show we're disciples by our godly lifestyles, not by our accomplishments.

## **STUDENTS' RESPONSE (ACTION)**

**AIM: That your students will choose to follow God, even when they may not feel like it.**

Feelings aren't good or bad. In fact, it's natural to feel excited about an answer to prayer or discouraged when things are tough.

Have your class turn to "Sympathy Pains" in their Student book. Take a few minutes to go over some of these facts about our sympathetic nervous system. Help your students begin to understand the connection between the emotions and the physical body.

The important thing to remember is not to let your feelings be the only way you evaluate your relationship with God.

Now ask the students to take out the worksheet “What’s Up?” that they filled out earlier. As students are doing that, write this open-ended sentence on the chalkboard or a piece of poster board:

*Even when I feel \_\_\_\_\_  
about God, I will follow and trust Him.*

Take a look at what you put in box 3. If you have room in the box, copy this sentence in it and fill it in. If you don’t have room, write the sentence off to the side and fill it in.

Give students a minute to copy and fill in the sentence. Encourage your junior high school students to be aware of other ways they are growing in Christ and learning to trust Him at all times. You might even suggest that they take their worksheet home and post it somewhere they will see it frequently. It could serve as a reminder of what they studied in this lesson. It will also help them remember to follow and trust God even when they don’t feel like it.

Encourage your students to use the daily devotional material (located in their Student book) this week. This is a good resource to help students remember this week’s lesson and prepare for next week.