

Jesus Enters Jerusalem

Small Group Questions



The following questions are intended to start conversations. Use only the ones your group finds helpful. Explore others as they come up.

Our preaching series during the season of Epiphany will pick up stories in John 12-15 (Light in Dark Places). Questions will be provided each week to help you think about these stories in further ways.

- Read **John 12:12-36**. What stands out for you in these stories?
- The story of Jesus entering Jerusalem on a donkey is familiar to many of us. As you hear the story again, is there anything that you notice for the first time?
- Palm branches were likely a nationalistic symbol (associated with Simon the Maccabee in 144 BC, when he drove the Syrian forces out of Jerusalem). Who chose this symbol? What does Jesus choose? Why does this matter?
- Jesus did not meet the expectation of the crowd and within the week, they turned on him. Take a moment to consider what you are expecting (hoping) Jesus to do? Has Jesus met that expectation? If not, what do you do with this disappointment? Take your time.
- Reread **John 12:23-33**. Instead of choosing the way of power (force), Jesus embraces the way of love (death on a cross). Furthermore, “when he is lifted up from the earth, he will draw all people to himself.” Is it naïve to think that love can conquer oppression in our world? Why or why not?
- What else will happen when Jesus is lifted up? Have these things happened?
- Reread **John 12:26**. What does it mean to follow Jesus as he is about to lay down his life?
- Consider the current moment. Maybe you are concerned about political division, abuse of power, economic instability, climate change, cultural moral decline, or more personal issues in your own life. What does it mean to follow Jesus in these places? Be specific.

OPTIONAL MOVIE SUGGESTION: *The Mission* (1986). Eighteenth-century Spanish Jesuits try to protect a remote South American tribe in danger of falling under the rule of pro-slavery Portugal. Among other things, this movie is an interesting exploration of the way of love versus the way of power.