



Introduction

This activity creates an exciting 'sound' picture of Palm Sunday by looking at three key events - the parade/procession, the temple and the children's praise - and then tying them together into one exciting story. Perhaps you could use the result for a performance as part of collective worship on another day.

Preparation

You will need:

- a good set of various percussion instruments, suited into 'sets' and preferably kept in different trays - shakers, tambourines, wooden with beaters, drums, etc.
- a loud 'leader' instrument, preferably the largest drum you can lay your hands on.

Development

Sit the children in small groups, without the instruments, and first explain that they are going to explore the story of Palm Sunday through sound and movement.

Talk about the different types of instruments and demonstrate how to get the most out of them. Explain that the secret to all good musical performances is not just to play your instrument the best you can but also to listen to what other people are playing - it's not just about you.

Also teach them a 'silence signal' - hands up in the air, then arms folded. Explain that this is to help get everyone's attention so they can listen to instructions and/or move on to the next task. Practise the silent signal by asking each pupil to make three different sounds with their chosen instrument. Allow them a minute of mayhem and then use the silence signal to get their attention - be firm with this - they need to know when to put things down.

The procession

Explain that their 'sound' story is going to start with a procession. Ask them about any sorts of processions they have experienced - a carnival, a visiting celebrity, a funeral, a parade. Discuss possible crowd reactions.

In the procession in the story, people were getting very excited. Jesus was leading a crowd of his supporters into the big city of Jerusalem, and lots of people were expecting him to make some big changes.

- Was he leading an army?
- Would he start a war?
- Many people hated the Roman soldiers who had invaded their country. Would he drive them



out?

Assign each group a personality and a viewpoint:

- Group 1: Local traders - they're fed up paying tax to the Romans.
- Group 2: Zealots - they want to start an armed revolution.
- Group 3: Pharisees - they want Jesus to get rid of the Roman gods.
- Group 4: Disciples - they want Jesus to be their king.

Now, set each group the challenge of creating a repeated chant that they can play together on their instruments as a repeated ostinato, encouraging them to be creative - for example, RO-MANS OUT!, GIVE US OUR MONEY!, ONLY ONE GOD!, GOD IS GREAT! or HERE COMES THE KING! When they have all had the chance to practise their chant, explain that you are going to do a short introduction and then bring in each group, one after the other, to play their piece and stop. Finally, as the parade really kicks off, everyone will play together as Jesus enters the city until you give the silence signal.

With your drum, play a slow and steady 1-2-3-4 beat.

Who was Jesus? As the parade moved on, different groups of people would shout their demands, beating out the words on anything they could find...

The traders were saying...

The zealots were saying...

The Pharisees were saying...

The disciples were saying...

And all the voices and sounds came together in a great symphony of sound...

Silence signal!

The temple



Explain that many of those in the crowd seemed to expect Jesus to lead the parade into the city and maybe lead an attack on the Roman garrison. But he didn't. Instead, he headed for the temple to an area put aside for Gentiles - people who loved God but weren't Jews and so were not allowed in the usual parts of the temple. It was a place where they could pray too - but Jesus found that the temple keepers had let out this space to market traders - the keepers weren't too bothered about helping Gentiles to pray anymore and, instead, they just wanted to make money.

- What would the place have sounded like?
- What would the different market traders have been doing? Shouting! Calling out their wares!

Assign each group a trade and, again, set them the task of creating some street chants for their wares to play together on their instruments - for example, doves and pigeons for sacrifice (PIGEONS! THEY'RE LOV-E-LY!), lambs, calves and sheep (BUY YOUR LAMBS HERE!), fresh water (FRESH COLD WATER!), money changers (because Gentile money wasn't accepted inside the temple - MONEY, MONEY, MONEY!).

Ask your group if any of them have a special place, a sacred place, somewhere that's precious, and how they would feel if someone spoilt it. Jesus felt this about the temple. He was furious:

STOP! he cried. THIS IS MY FATHER'S HOUSE, A HOUSE OF PRAYER! YOU HAVE TURNED IT INTO A DEN OF THIEVES! He kicked over tables. The money went flying! He waved a large knotted rope in the air - and he drove the traders and their animals out of the place!

Set each group the task of playing their new piece, but this time, as each group is introduced, the groups already playing keep going until all the groups are playing together. (Naturally, you'll have to keep them together with your steady drumbeat.) Tell them that you're going to play the role of Jesus who comes in, tells them all to stop and then drives them all out. Once you've said his words, everyone has the freedom to create musical mayhem until the silence signal is made!

With your drum, play a slow and steady 1-2-3-4 beat.

Jesus headed for the temple. When he arrived, what did he find?

Street chants...

STOP! he cried. THIS IS MY FATHER'S HOUSE, A HOUSE OF PRAYER! YOU HAVE TURNED IT INTO A DEN OF THIEVES!

He drove them all out!



Musical chaos...

Silence signal!

The children's praise

But then something else happened: he healed a woman who was blind, he mended somebody else's legs. One by one, he started touching and healing people - it was amazing! The adults didn't see it but some street children did, and they started singing and yelling a new message about Jesus - 'Hosanna to the Son of David' (which means our king is here and he cares!). The priests in charge of the temple came marching up, demanding that he shut the children up.

No, said Jesus. They're praising God. If they were silent, the very rocks would be crying out with joy! And so the day ended, not with fighting - but with the sounds of children singing their hearts out.

Set the final task of using whispers (Ho-sanna-to-the Son-of-Da-vid) and musical instruments to create a slow crescendo, where the volume raises as you gradually raise one arm, until the final signal on your drum and a loud AMEN!

But when he started healing people, the street children began praising God.

Ho-sanna-to-the Son-of-Da-vid, Ho-sanna-to-the Son-of-Da-vid...

Crescendo - to finish with a loud AMEN!

If there's time, join all three sections together for a final performance. You could record this and play it back. Or it could be performed at some group celebration approaching Easter.