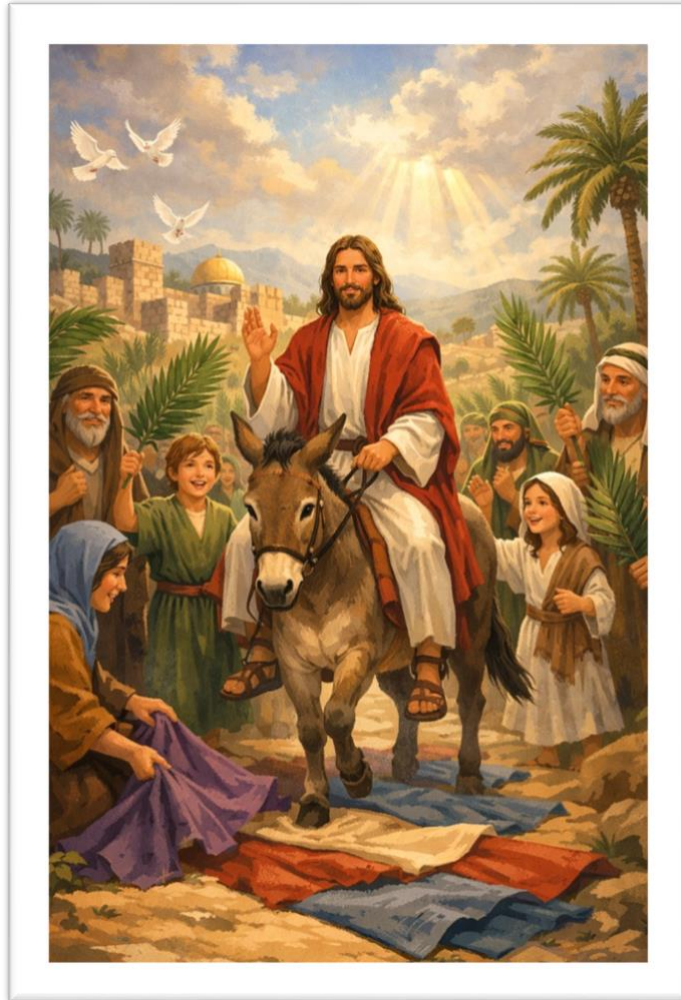


Welcome Jesus



A Play for Palm Sunday

For Sunday School Students Ages 5-13

(age adjustments applicable)

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Children and Family Ministry

Diocese of the Armenian Church of America (Eastern)

Palm Sunday Play

Note: This event is designed to follow the Divine Liturgy as an educational celebration for families.

Roles (Flexible - adjust as needed)

- **Narrators** – 2 to 4 students
- **Boy and Girl** – in Armenian traditional clothing
- **Armenian Ladies** – 4-6 children dressed as mothers and grandmothers in traditional Armenian clothing

Script

Opening Scene:

Accompanied by spiritual music, children enter from both sides of the hall, holding and waving willow /palm branches. They form a semicircle, leaving the center open.

Hymn plays softly in the background: "Surb, Surb"

Narrator 1: One of the most beautiful feasts of the Armenian Church, Palm Sunday, is dedicated to remembering Jesus Christ's triumphant entry into Jerusalem.

Narrator 2: The Gospels tell us that as the final days of Jesus' life approached, He journeyed to Jerusalem with His disciples. When they neared the village of Bethany, close to the city, Jesus instructed two of His disciples, Peter and John, to go into the village and bring back a donkey with its colt. They followed His directions, and soon Jesus entered Jerusalem riding on a white donkey. He was greeted by large crowds cheering for Him, waving palm leaves, spreading their clothes before Him, and exclaiming, "Hosanna! Hosanna! Hosanna in the highest!"

Song: "Hosanna in the Highest"

As the song ends, soft music continues.

Narrator 3: Before Easter comes Great Lent, which lasts forty days across six Sundays. Palm Sunday falls one week before Easter.

Narrator 4: On Palm Sunday, people bring fresh willow/palm branches to church. After the Divine Liturgy, the priest blesses the branches, which people take home and keep until the next Palm Sunday.

Hadig Scene:

Accompanied by clapping and music, several girls dressed as Armenian mothers and grandmothers enter, carrying plates of sweet "hadig" (boiled wheat). *Recipe included in Appendix.*

Armenian Lady 1: Look at what we've brought for you! The most delicious Palm Sunday treat!

They offer the treat to participants and the audience while the song "Karkacha" plays.

Song: "Karkacha"

Armenian Lady 1: Hadig (Հասիկ) is a traditional Armenian sweet dish made from boiled wheat. It is connected to Palm Sunday (Dzaghgazart, Ծաղկազարդ) because the seeds and hadig represent renewal, life, and spiritual blessings.

Armenian Lady 2: Hadig is made simply with boiled wheat, honey, dried fruits, and nuts. It follows the Lenten tradition of eating plant-based foods while also serving as a joyful yet humble treat.

Armenian Lady 3: In many Armenian villages, priests would bless boiled wheat on Palm Sunday. Families believed that eating it brought blessings, good fortune, and spiritual protection for the coming year.

Armenian Lady 4: Hadig is so much more than a simple dish—it is a cherished tradition, a symbol of gratitude and renewal, and a sweet reminder of God's blessings on Palm Sunday.

Armenian Ladies together: Gerek, gerek! Anoosh arek! (*Eat, eat! May it be sweet!*)

Holy Week Teachings:

Narrator 1: With Palm Sunday, we enter a special week that leads us to Easter. This week is called Holy Week. It reminds us of the final important events in Jesus' life. Each day during this week teaches us a lesson about the importance of being humble and ready when Christ comes.

Narrator 2: Holy Monday reminds us of the parable of the barren fig tree. One day, when Jesus was hungry, He saw a fig tree and wanted to pick fruit from it, but upon approaching, He found that it bore no fruit. The tree wasn't ready for Jesus.

Narrator 3: Holy Tuesday gives us a similar message with Jesus' parable of the ten virgins. Five were wise and five were foolish. They took their lamps and went to meet the bridegroom. However, the foolish virgins brought little oil. When their lamps ran out, they left to get more. Upon returning, they found that the bridegroom had already arrived, and the banquet hall door was closed. Because they weren't properly prepared, they were left outside.

Narrator 4: Holy Wednesday is the day of Jesus' betrayal. One of His disciples, Judas, betrayed Jesus for thirty pieces of silver and prepared to hand Him over to His enemies.

Narrator 1: Holy Thursday is the most profound day of the week. On this day, Jesus knelt before His disciples and washed their feet, teaching them by example to remain humble, never be arrogant, and to serve one another.

Narrator 2: Also on Holy Thursday, Jesus had His Last Supper with the disciples. During the meal, He broke bread, blessed wine, and gave them to His disciples, establishing the Holy Eucharist. Following Jesus' example, priests offer bread and wine to the faithful every Sunday during the Divine Liturgy. This is called Holy Communion.

Narrator 3: Holy Friday is the day of Jesus' crucifixion and death.

Narrator 4: On Holy Saturday, everyone prepares for the Easter celebration. In the evening, people hurry to church to attend the Divine Liturgy, after which they share the light and good news of Christ's Resurrection. Easter is one of our most beloved and anticipated feasts. However, we will celebrate that next Sunday.

All Narrators together: Today we celebrate Palm Sunday!

Song: "Parootyan Dzar" - "Tree of Kindness"

Everyone waves their palm leaves.

Appendix

Blessing of the Children

Note: If this event takes place after Divine Liturgy and the priest is present, consider inviting him to bless the children after the blessing of the palm leaves.

For Sunday School Assemblies: Adjust the script to coordinate the best timing for students to go to the church to receive the priest's message, Holy Communion, and special blessing, then lead people out from the church with their palm leaves.

Educator: By the direction of His Holiness Karekin II, Catholicos of All Armenians, Palm Sunday has been designated as Children's Blessing Day. On this day, all children are blessed in churches, following Jesus' words: "Let the little children come to me." Therefore, every year on Palm Sunday, let us all go to church to receive a blessing.

Optional Games

Game Animators: A boy and a girl dressed in Armenian traditional clothing can help conduct the games.

Game 1: "Aghves u Hav" (Fox and Hen)

A lively chasing game symbolizing protection and community care.

Materials Needed:

- Open space (indoors or outdoors)
- 5 or more children

Roles:

- 1 child is the "fox" (Aghves)
- 1 child is the "hen" (Hav)
- Remaining children are "chicks" (Bavak)

Setup:

1. Line up the "chicks" behind the "hen" in a single file, holding onto each other's waist or shoulders.
2. The hen stands at the front and spreads their arms wide, acting as a shield.
3. The fox stands a few feet away, ready to chase.

How to Play:

1. The fox's goal is to catch a chick from the back of the line.
2. The hen moves side to side, spreading their arms to block the fox while keeping the chicks safe.
3. The chicks must stay in line and follow the hen's movements.
4. If the fox touches a chick, that chick is "caught" and must leave the game or switch places with the fox.
5. The game continues until all chicks are caught or after a set time limit.

Winner:

- The hen wins if they successfully protect the chicks for the set time.
- The fox wins if they catch all the chicks.

Symbolism: This game represents protection and care, much like how Jesus protects His followers.

Game 2: "Twig" Game

A simple, competitive game testing the strength of willow branches.

Materials Needed:

- Long, flexible willow or poplar branches (1 per child)
- Red dye or ribbon (optional)

Preparation:

1. Each child receives one long willow or poplar branch.
2. (Optional) Dye the branches red by soaking them in red dye, or tie red ribbons around them for decoration.
3. Decide on a playing order: children can play in pairs or take turns.

How to Play:

1. One child places their branch against a wall (or on a hard surface) in a standing position.
2. Another child strikes the first child's branch with their own.
3. The goal is to see which branch remains unbroken.
4. If a branch breaks first, that player loses.
5. The winner continues playing with other participants until a final champion is determined.

Winner: The child whose branch stays intact the longest is the final winner.

Symbolism: This game represents strength and endurance, much like Jesus' perseverance on His journey to Jerusalem.

Hadig (Palm Sunday Treat) Recipe

Ingredients:

- 2 cups whole wheat berries
- Water (for soaking and boiling)
- 1/2 cup honey or granulated sugar
- 1/2 teaspoon ground cinnamon
- 1/4 teaspoon salt
- 1/2 cup chopped nuts (walnuts or almonds)
- 1/2 cup dried fruits (raisins, apricots, or cranberries)
- Pomegranate seeds for garnish (optional)

Instructions:

1. **Soak the Wheat Berries:**
 - Rinse the wheat berries thoroughly under cold water.
 - Place in a large bowl, cover with water, and let soak overnight (8-12 hours) to soften.
2. **Cook the Wheat:**
 - Drain and rinse the soaked wheat berries.
 - In a large pot, combine wheat berries with 6 cups of water and a pinch of salt.
 - Bring to a boil over medium-high heat.
 - Once boiling, reduce heat to low, cover, and simmer for 1.5 to 2 hours, or until wheat berries are tender and have absorbed most of the water. Stir occasionally to prevent sticking.
3. **Sweeten and Flavor:**
 - Once the wheat is cooked and tender, stir in honey (or sugar) and ground cinnamon. Adjust sweetness to taste.
 - Add chopped nuts and dried fruits, mixing well.
4. **Serve:**
 - Transfer the hadig to a serving bowl.
 - Garnish with pomegranate seeds for added color and flavor, if desired.
 - Serve warm or at room temperature.

Storage Note: Hadig can be stored in the refrigerator for up to 3 days. Reheat gently before serving, if preferred warm.

Direct Links:

Song: "[Baroutyan Tzar](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=umzMrq_MnpQ)" (Tree of Kindness): https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=umzMrq_MnpQ

Hymn (plays softly in the background): "[Surb, Surb](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Y1B4yKkHCm4)":

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Y1B4yKkHCm4>

Song: "[Hosanna in the Highest](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=B_p7810nDx0)": https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=B_p7810nDx0

Song: "[Karkacha](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HgRgm2wIOjw)": <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HgRgm2wIOjw>