



***Discover!* Parish Lenten Lessons**

Kindergarten	2
Grade 1	15
Grade 2	34
Grade 3	51
Grade 4	68
Grade 5	85



saint mary's press
touching hearts. enlivening minds.



Kindergarten Lenten Lesson



saint mary's press
touching hearts. enlivening minds.

Jesus Teaches Us That God Forgives



Jesus told this story: "There once was a boy who ran away from home. But then he decided to come back. His father was watching for him! Finally, the father saw his son coming down the road. The father ran to him and hugged him!

The boy said, 'I am sorry, Father. I should not have left you. I do not deserve to be called your son.'

The father said, 'Never mind about that! I am just glad you are home. I forgive you! We are going to celebrate! You were lost and now you are found!' And so they had a big feast and celebrated together!"

Based on **Luke 15:11, 20-24**



Forgiveness in Lent

Fill in the blank with the letter of the picture that completes the sentence.

1. _____ told a story.
2. It was about a boy who _____ away.
3. It was also about a _____ who forgave him.
4. God is the Father in this _____ story.
5. We are the sons and _____ .
6. We can _____ God for forgiveness. God will forgive us!

A



father

B



ask

C



Jesus

D



daughters

E



Bible

F



ran

Lent



**Growing
Closer
to
Jesus**





Lesson at a Glance

Scripture Focus

Luke 15:11, 20–24

Lesson Goals

- to understand that Lent is a season of preparation for Easter
- to recognize that Lent is a time of turning back to God
- to name “little things for Jesus” we can do during Lent

Catechism References

976–987, 1846–1851

Materials Needed

- the Lent child’s page, removed from each Bible story booklet
- copies of the Lent family page, on page 259 of the catechist guide, one for each child
- materials for any of the activity ideas you choose from pages 256–257 of the catechist guide

Lent

Background Reflection

The death of Jesus was covered in chapter 16. This event is also covered in this liturgical season lesson, but with a broader focus. It introduces the children to the entire season of Lent and its important elements: preparation for Easter, turning back to God in prayer and service, and our growth in following Jesus from death to life in our personal lives. We know this last element as the Paschal Mystery, but this concept will be simplified for the children: love calls us to do hard things sometimes! But after these little deaths, our new life begins, life in the Risen Christ, now and forever.



Get Ready! (10 minutes)

Opening Prayer

- Begin by leading the children in the Sign of the Cross.
- Continue as follows:
 - God our Father, we are beginning another special Church season. In this new season, help us follow Jesus more closely every day. Amen.
- End with the Sign of the Cross.

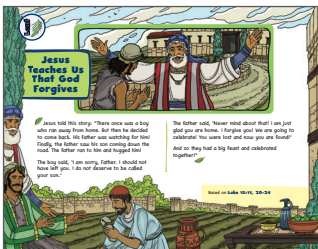
Engage

- Ask the children if they have ever had to do something that was hard for them to do. Invite them to share their stories.
- Explain that today's lesson is about a season in the Church year called Lent. Tell them that in Lent, we follow Jesus when he goes through a very hard time, when he suffers and dies for us. Share that the whole Church is with Jesus in this season and is turning back to God in a special way.
- Tell the children that Lent is also a season of preparation for Easter, when we celebrate that Jesus is risen and gives new life to us all. Explain that they will learn more about this after reading the Bible story.



Dive In! (15 minutes)

Bible Story



- Distribute the child's page, and ask the children to look at the main picture above the Bible story. Briefly discuss the picture by asking the following questions:
 - Who remembers seeing this picture before? Who remembers the son who ran away and came back? Who remembers the father who forgave the son?
 - Who remembers that we are the sons and daughters of God our Father?
 - Let's look at the main picture again. Look at the father with his arms open wide. How do you think he is feeling? (*happy*)
 - Who is the young man in this picture? (*the son*)
 - Look at the son's hands. He looks like he is praying or begging. What is he asking for? (*He is asking to come home.*)

- Explain that Lent is a season when we prepare for Easter, and that in Lent we can follow Jesus more closely and, just like the son, come running back to God our Father. Tell the children that during Lent, we all ask to come back to God our Father. Invite the children to listen as you read the story to find out more.
- Read the Bible story to the children slowly, stopping briefly after each sentence. If the children are readers, invite them to follow along. If not, invite them to look at the main picture as you read.

Today's Bible Story

Jesus Teaches Us That God Forgives

Jesus told this story: "There once was a boy who ran away from home. But then he decided to come back. His father was watching for him! Finally, the father saw his son coming down the road. The father ran to him and hugged him!

The boy said, 'I am sorry, Father. I should not have left you. I do not deserve to be called your son.'

The father said, 'Never mind about that! I am just glad you are home. I forgive you! We are going to celebrate! You were lost and now you are found!'

And so they had a big feast and celebrated together!"

(Based on Luke 15:11, 20–24)

Lent



Discover! (25 minutes)

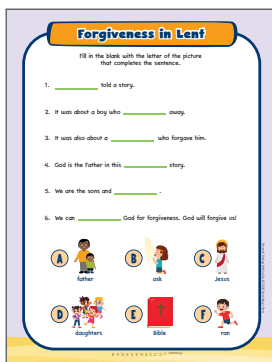
Core Teaching

- Ask the children to think about how the father might have felt when his son ran away. (*sad*)
- Point out that the father wasn't angry when his son returned home. Invite them to share how they can tell the father wasn't angry. (*He told his son he forgave him and threw a big party.*)
- Continue with the following points:
 - When you have hurt someone, and that person is kind to you and says, "That's okay. I know you didn't mean what you said," or whatever it was, what do we call that? (*forgiveness*)

- Being loving and forgiving is a good way to be close to Jesus during Lent. Because Jesus was loving and forgiving, he told this story about the father to show us that God our Father is loving and forgiving.
- Do you know another word for being loving and forgiving? (*Accept responses.*) Being loving and forgiving means being full of mercy. That is what God our Father is like, just as the father in the story was with the son: full of mercy.
- Show the children a calendar. Mark the days of Lent and Holy Week. Draw a circle around the date of Easter Sunday.
- Explain that Lent is a season when we prepare for Easter, when we can follow Jesus more closely and, just like the son, come back to God our Father.
- Invite the children to look at the picture at the bottom of the page. Ask them if they see the ring on the son's finger. Point out the man with the red hat giving the son a new pair of shoes.
- Comment that Lent is our chance to make our lives new so that at Easter we will be ready to live a new life with Jesus. Remind the children that at Easter, we often get something new to wear—a new dress, a new shirt, or a new pair of shoes. Explain that wearing new clothes at Easter—being new on the outside—reminds us we are also new on the inside, ready to live a new life with Jesus.
- Share that during Lent, we try to be close to Jesus and to live as he would want us to live, even when it is not easy. Ask the children the following questions:
 - What do you think are good ways to be closer to Jesus in Lent, and how might we follow him even when it is not easy? (*Accept responses, for example, listening to our parents, helping at home, being kind to others, sharing our toys, playing fair, helping our brothers and sisters, etc.*)
 - These are all good ways! And we can offer them all to Jesus in Lent! We can spend Lent doing little things for Jesus. Sometimes these little things will be easy to do. Sometimes they will be harder to do. But every time we do something good, we can say, "That is one more little thing for Jesus!"

Learning Activities

- Choose an activity from the ideas outlined on pages 256–257 of the catechist guide, and explain the directions to the children.
- Lead the children in the activity, taking time to help them connect the activity and today's lesson.
- Introduce the activity on the child's page, reading any directions that are offered.
- Assure the children that if they do not finish the child's page activity by the end of the session, they can complete it at home.

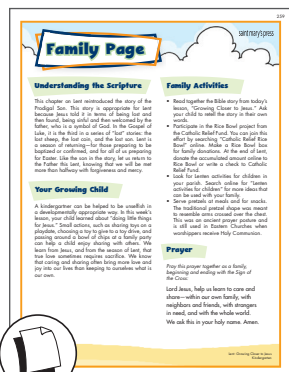




Go! (10 minutes)

Lesson Wrap-Up

- Recall the lesson goals by asking the following questions:
 - What is the Church season called in which we prepare for Easter? (*Lent*)
 - Who do we turn back to during Lent? (*God our Father*)
 - What are some little things we can do for Jesus during Lent? (*Accept responses.*)
- Remind the children to take the child's page home.
- Distribute the family page, and encourage the children to share it at home. You may want to staple the child's page and the family page together as the children are getting ready to leave.



Also available in full color in both English and Spanish at www.smp.org/discover_kindergarten_p

Closing Prayer

- Begin by leading the children in the Sign of the Cross.
- Ask the children to repeat the response after you each time.
 - Lord Jesus, you told us that your Father was loving and full of mercy. Lord, have mercy. (*Lord, have mercy.*)
 - Lord Jesus, you told us that your Father was full of forgiveness. Christ, have mercy. (*Christ, have mercy.*)
 - Lord Jesus, help us do little things for you this Lent. Lord, have mercy. (*Lord, have mercy.*)
- Close with the Sign of the Cross.

Lent

Activity Ideas

Materials Needed

- white index cards, one for each child
- purple crayons, one for each child
- a sample of the craft for the class to view

Lent

Lenten Crosses

- Distribute the index cards and purple crayons to the children.
- Ask them to turn their cards. Write "Jesus" on the board or somewhere the children can see it. Invite them to copy it onto the top of their cards.
- Direct them to draw a simple cross under the name of Jesus, with one longer vertical line and one slightly shorter horizontal line. Hold up your sample so that all can see.
- Mention that the cross is purple because it is a Lenten cross, and purple is the color of being sorry and turning back to God our Father. Comment that we honor the name of Jesus because he loved us so much and even died for us on the cross.
- Explain that Lent is a special time of following Jesus and that this cross will remind the children to do little things for Jesus, even things that are hard, and to turn to God our Father when they need forgiveness.
- Ask the children for examples of little things they can do for Jesus during Lent.
- Write some of their ideas on the board in simple phrases (e.g., be kind, help others, say nice things). Help each child choose one phrase to write on the back of their card as a reminder of a particular intention or resolution to focus on during Lent.
- Invite the children to write their name on the back of their card.
- Conclude the activity by asking the children to stand and hold their crosses up high. Ask them to repeat after you: "Jesus, help us follow you this Lent. Amen!"
- Encourage the children to place their crosses in a place where they will see them every day, perhaps tucked in the frame of a mirror or taped to a wall.

Materials Needed

- copies of the handout "A Prayer for Lent," on page 258 of the catechist guide, one for each child
- purple construction paper, one sheet for each child
- glue sticks one for each child

A Prayer for Lent

- Distribute the purple construction paper and the handout. Ask the children to fold their construction paper in half to make a card.
- Direct the children to color the picture of Jesus on the handout.
- Invite the children to fold the handout in half, in the middle, where the fold line is.
- Instruct the children to glue the handout into the folded purple construction paper.
- Read the prayer to the children, and then ask them to write their name at the bottom of the prayer.
- Suggest that the children take their prayer card home and stand it up where they will see it. Encourage them to say this prayer each day during Lent.

Materials Needed

- jelly beans or other small tokens in a plastic, resealable bag, one for each child
- a resealable empty bag labeled “Little Things for Jesus,” one for each child
- a computer with internet access
- a computer projector

Little Things for Jesus

- Prepare the bags in advance, including the number of jelly beans or tokens corresponding to the number of days left in Lent (depending on when this lesson occurs). Remember that Sundays are not counted as days of Lent.
- Remind the children that in the lesson they learned about doing little things for Jesus.
- Explain that in this activity, they will receive two bags. Share that one bag will be empty and will be labeled “Little Things for Jesus.” Tell them that the other bag will contain jelly beans (or tokens)—one for each day of Lent.
- Distribute the empty bags and the bags of jelly beans (or tokens) to the children. Continue your explanation as follows:
 - Each day, near the end of the day, maybe before bed, look at your bag. Ask yourself, “Did I do good things for Jesus today? Did I try to be kind and helpful?” If you did, take one jelly bean (token) out of the bag and put it in the empty bag labeled “Little Things for Jesus.” Even one good thing is enough to move a jelly bean (token) into the “Little Things for Jesus” bag.
 - If you cannot think of one good thing you did, then you must leave the jelly bean (token) in the unlabeled bag and not move it. However, if you do two good things the next day, you can make up for the day when you didn’t do anything. But I think you can do at least one good thing each day so that you can move all the jelly beans (tokens), day by day, into the bag labeled “Little Things for Jesus.”
 - Sundays are not days of Lent, so you will not have a jelly bean (token) for Sundays. But you can still do little things for Jesus on Sundays.
 - *(Omit this step if using tokens.)* At the end of Lent, when it is Easter, and all the jelly beans are in the “Little Things for Jesus” bag, you may put the jelly beans into your Easter basket and eat them, but not all at once!
- Show the video “I’m So Little, What Can I Do? | A Story About Serving Others” (YouTube, 5:53), and ask the children to think of examples of little things they can do for Jesus during Lent.
- Assure them that they are never too little to do things for Jesus during Lent.

Cut on the dashed lines. Fold the paper in the middle, on the fold line.
Glue the prayer paper inside a piece of purple construction paper.
Place your prayer card where you can see it each day.



A Prayer for Lent

Dear Jesus,
Help me come
closer to you
by being
kind and helpful
this Lent.
I love you!
Amen.

Name _____



fold



Family Page

Understanding the Scripture

This chapter on Lent reintroduced the story of the Prodigal Son. This story is appropriate for Lent because Jesus told it in terms of being lost and then found, being sinful and then welcomed by the father, who is a symbol of God. In the Gospel of Luke, it is the third in a series of “lost” stories: the lost sheep, the lost coin, and the lost son. Lent is a season of returning—for those preparing to be baptized or confirmed, and for all of us preparing for Easter. Like the son in the story, let us return to the Father this Lent, knowing that we will be met more than halfway with forgiveness and mercy.

Your Growing Child

A kindergartner can be helped to be unselfish in a developmentally appropriate way. In this week’s lesson, your child learned about “doing little things for Jesus.” Small actions, such as sharing toys on a playdate, choosing a toy to give to a toy drive, and passing around a bowl of chips at a family party can help a child enjoy sharing with others. We learn from Jesus, and from the season of Lent, that true love sometimes requires sacrifice. We know that caring and sharing often bring more love and joy into our lives than keeping to ourselves what is our own.

Family Activities

- Read together the Bible story from today’s lesson, “Growing Closer to Jesus.” Ask your child to retell the story in their own words.
- Participate in the Rice Bowl project from the Catholic Relief Fund. You can join this effort by searching “Catholic Relief Rice Bowl” online. Make a Rice Bowl box for family donations. At the end of Lent, donate the accumulated amount online to Rice Bowl or write a check to Catholic Relief Fund.
- Look for Lenten activities for children in your parish. Search online for “Lenten activities for children” for more ideas that can be used with your family.
- Serve pretzels at meals and for snacks. The traditional pretzel shape was meant to resemble arms crossed over the chest. This was an ancient prayer posture and is still used in Eastern Churches when worshippers receive Holy Communion.

Prayer

Pray this prayer together as a family, beginning and ending with the Sign of the Cross:

Lord Jesus, help us learn to care and share—within our own family, with neighbors and friends, with strangers in need, and with the whole world. We ask this in your holy name. Amen.



Grade 1 Lenten Lesson



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touching hearts. enlivening minds.



Discover!
Finding Faith in Life

saint mary's press

Following Jesus More Closely

Luke 15:11, 20-24

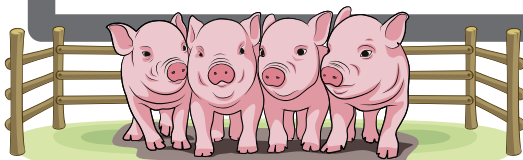
Prayer

God, you are a loving father who forgives his children. Help us to be kind. Help us to love. Help us to forgive. We ask this in the name of Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.



Use the Featured Story on page 1620 of *The Catholic Children's Bible* (Luke 15:11, 20-24) to remind you of God's love and forgiveness. Solve the maze to show the son returning to his father.

Finish



Start





Leader: Let us begin our prayer with the Sign of the Cross.

All: In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Leader: Let us remember that we are in the holy presence of God. . . .
As we gather together this Lent, we remember the many needs of people throughout the world. First, we ask God to fill our hearts with love toward others.

All: Lord, hear our prayer.

Leader: For those who do not have enough to eat and drink,

All: Lord, hear our prayer.

Leader: For those who do not have clean and warm clothes,

All: Lord, hear our prayer.

Leader: For those who do not have safe homes,

All: Lord, hear our prayer.

Leader: For those who are alone in the world,

All: Lord, hear our prayer.

Leader: For those who are afraid to do the right thing,

All: Lord, hear our prayer.

Leader: For those who need forgiveness and those who need to forgive,

All: Lord, hear our prayer.

Leader: For those who do not yet know God,

All: Lord, hear our prayer.

Leader: We ask all of this in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

All: Amen.

Family Page

Background Reflection

As children are learning, they naturally make mistakes, and sometimes these mistakes hurt others. As adults, we too make mistakes that hurt others, and sometimes these mistakes involve or are witnessed by children. Our mistakes can become excellent opportunities to learn and teach the forgiveness we are called to ask for and offer to others.

When we forgive our child or ask his or her forgiveness, we give our child an opportunity to see, experience, and practice important skills he or she can use throughout life. And sometimes we may find that our child can teach us about forgiveness.

The scriptural focus of this chapter offers a beautiful image of how God forgives us. It is the best model for how we might respond to the grace of forgiveness by practicing this important skill in all of our relationships.

Family Activities

- Choose one of the extra liturgies or prayer services offered at your parish during Lent and go as a family. Take the opportunity to discuss why we pray and why it is important to give time to God every day, not just on Sundays and special feasts.
- Read together the Featured Story on page 1620 in *The Catholic Children's Bible* (Luke 15:11, 20–24). Invite your child to tell you what he or she remembers about the meaning of this Scripture.
- Watch the video “Giving Makes You Happy—children” (YouTube, 1:27) together. Discuss your child’s individual plan for Lent, and affirm his or her wishes to do good actions. Make practical plans for giving time, talent, or treasure as a family.

People of Faith

Saint Joseph (first century)

Saint Joseph was Mary’s husband and Jesus’ earthly father. Joseph cared for and protected Mary and Jesus. In the same way, he cares for and protects the Church, which is all of us. We celebrate the feast of Saint Joseph, patron saint of the Church, on March 19.

Prayer

Pray this prayer together as a family, beginning and ending with the Sign of the Cross.

Lord Jesus, fill our hearts with your forgiveness. Help our family always to ask for forgiveness when we need it and to offer forgiveness even before it is asked. We ask in your holy name. Amen.



The Forgiving Father

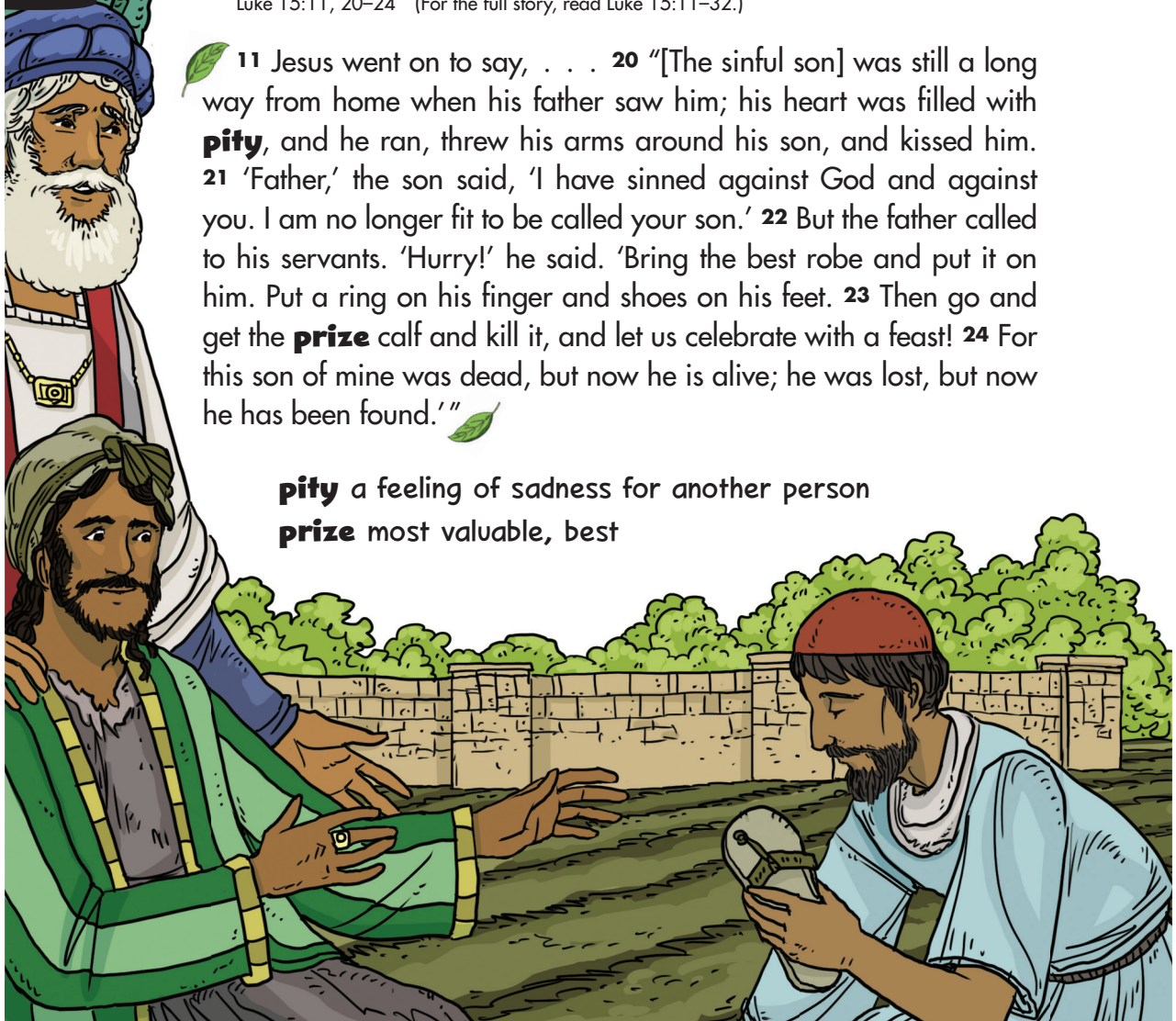


Luke 15:11, 20–24 (For the full story, read Luke 15:11–32.)

11 Jesus went on to say, . . . 20 “[The sinful son] was still a long way from home when his father saw him; his heart was filled with **pity**, and he ran, threw his arms around his son, and kissed him. 21 ‘Father,’ the son said, ‘I have sinned against God and against you. I am no longer fit to be called your son.’ 22 But the father called to his servants. ‘Hurry!’ he said. ‘Bring the best robe and put it on him. Put a ring on his finger and shoes on his feet. 23 Then go and get the **prize** calf and kill it, and let us celebrate with a feast! 24 For this son of mine was dead, but now he is alive; he was lost, but now he has been found.’”

pity a feeling of sadness for another person

prize most valuable, best



Understand It!

This story Jesus told could be called "A Foolish Son and His Big-Hearted Father." This son asked his dad for a lot of money and then left home. He wasted every penny. When he was starving because he had no money left, he wanted to go home.

The father could have been angry. Instead, he loved his son so much that he ran to meet him. The father hugged his son even before the son said he was sorry. The father was so happy to have his son back that he gave him a gift. He held a big party to welcome him home. Jesus wants us to know that our Father in Heaven is like this loving father. No matter how much we sin, God will always love us and forgive us. He always welcomes us back when we turn to him.

STORY
Luke 15

Live It!

Think about a time when you behaved in a way that upset your mom or dad. What did you do to let them know you were sorry? How did they react? God is like a loving parent. He always welcomes us back when we turn to him after we've disobeyed his commandments. Thank God for loving you like the father in the story.

Tell It!



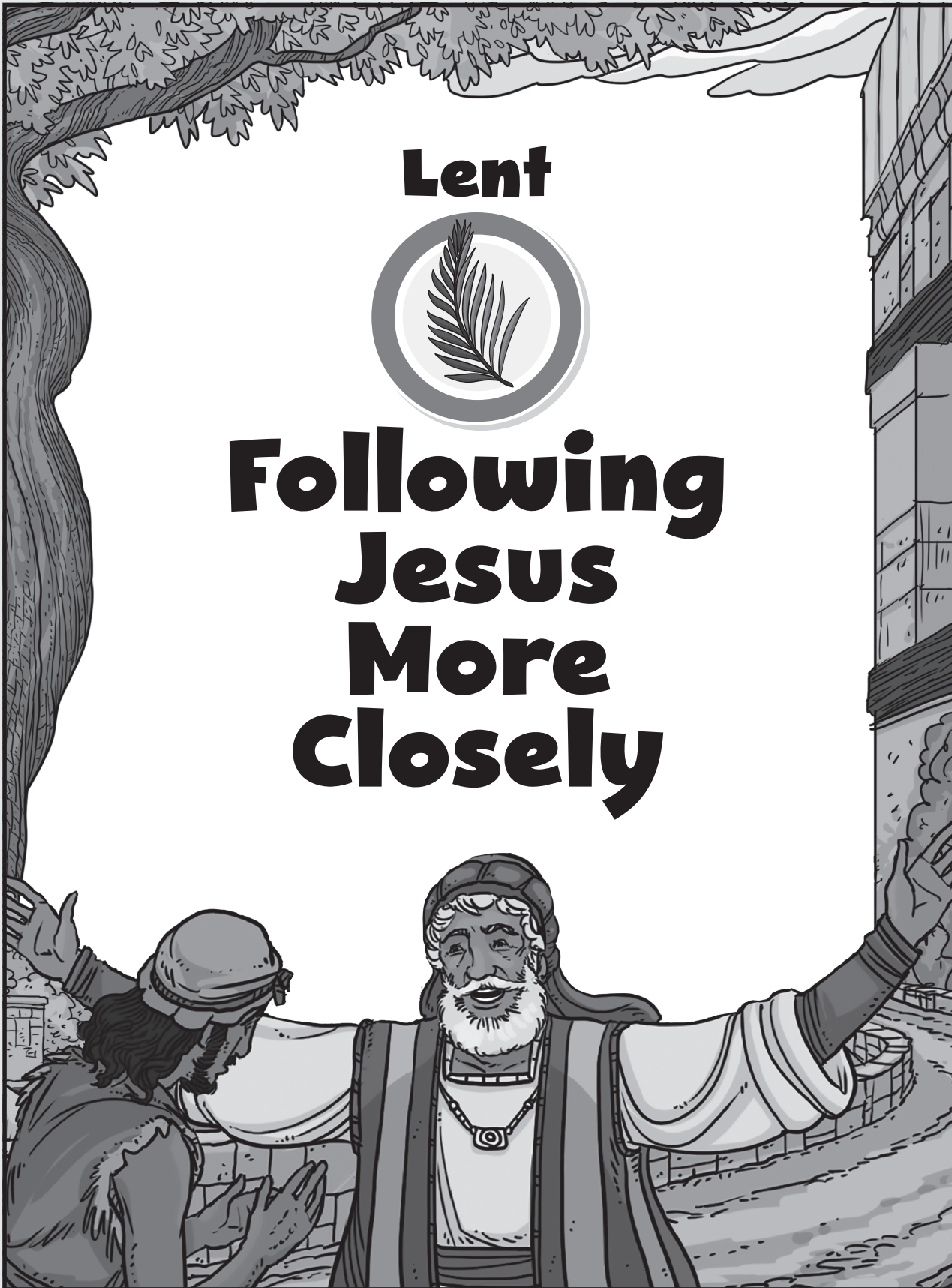
Using the pictures above, retell this story in your own words.



Lent



Following Jesus More Closely





Lesson at a Glance

Scripture Focus

Luke 15:11, 20–24

Lesson Goals

- to identify that the father in the story is a reminder of God and his forgiveness
- to state that during Lent we make a special effort to be kind and to forgive others
- to recall our need to ask for forgiveness

Catechism References

976–987, 1846–1851

Church Year Calendar

A Church year calendar is available in black-and-white and full-color at www.smp.org/discover_grade1.

Key Words

pity, prize, Alleluia, almsgiving

Music Suggestions

- “Every Little Thing,” by Cat.Chat (Cat.Chat Productions)
- “He’s Got the Whole World in His Hands,” by The Wonder Kids (Wonder Workshop)

Materials Needed

- *The Catholic Children’s Bible* and the Lent activity booklet
- a board or poster to write on
- copies of the handout “Following Jesus More Closely,” one for each child
- craft sticks, two for each child
- markers or crayons
- several pairs of scissors
- several bottles of glue
- a candle (optional)
- a board or poster to write on
- materials for any of the additional activities you choose

Lent

Background Reflection

As children are learning, they naturally make mistakes, and sometimes these mistakes hurt others. As adults, we too make mistakes that hurt others, and sometimes these mistakes involve or are witnessed by children. Our mistakes can become excellent opportunities to learn and teach the forgiveness we are called to ask for and offer to others.

When we forgive children or ask them for forgiveness, we give them an opportunity to see, experience, and practice important skills they can use throughout their lives. And sometimes we may find that children can teach us about forgiveness.

The scriptural focus of this lesson offers a beautiful image of how God forgives us. It is the best model for how we might respond to the grace of forgiveness by practicing this important skill in all of our relationships.



Get Ready! (10 minutes)

Opening Prayer

- Invite the children to turn to page 1 of the Lent activity booklet.
- Begin prayer by leading the children in the Sign of the Cross. Then say, "Let us remember that we are in the holy presence of God." Allow about 10 seconds of silence.
- Read aloud the prayer on page 1 of the activity booklet. Invite all the children to say "Amen," and then close with another Sign of the Cross.

Engage Activity

- Invite the children to think of as many ways as they can to be kind to others. List everyone's ideas on the left side of the board.
- Ask the children to think about actions that are unkind to others. Invite volunteers to share their ideas, and list as many as possible on the right side of the board.
- Invite the children to think about the way they feel when someone is kind to them. Encourage responses, and write these under the list of actions on the left. Then ask them to think about the way they feel when someone is *unkind* to them. Encourage responses, and write these under the list of actions on the right.
- Ask the children, "When you have been unkind, what can be done to make things right again?" Invite responses, and affirm all reasonable answers. When someone offers the answer "apologize" or "say you are sorry," point out that this is asking for forgiveness. Explain that we all do wrong from time to time. Tell the group that when we do, we need to ask forgiveness from God and from others.
- Tell the children that they are about to hear a story that Jesus told about forgiveness. Explain that it shows us how to ask for forgiveness and how God responds to us when we do this.

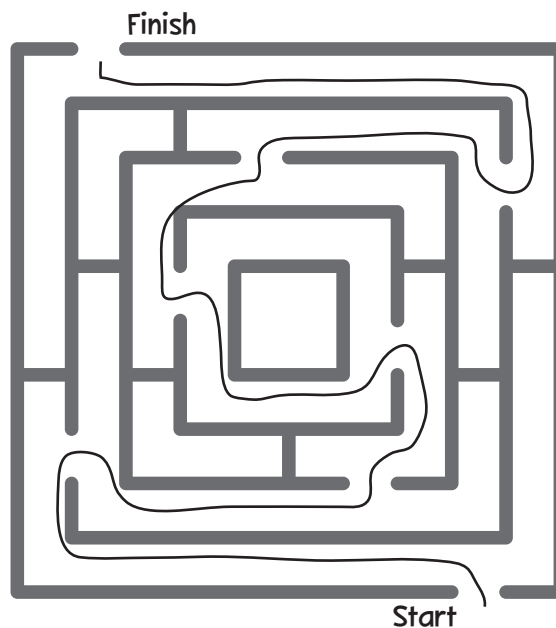


Dive In! (15 minutes)

Scripture Focus

- Invite the children to find Luke 15:11–32 in *The Catholic Children's Bible* (pages 1619 and 1622). Point out the green leaf at the beginning and at the end of the passage.
- Have the children turn to the Featured Story on page 1620. Explain that the green leaves on this page mark that this is a shortened version of the same Scripture passage found on the other pages.

- Ask the children to look at the artwork on pages 1620–1621. Invite the children to identify the father in the pictures. Then ask them how the son is different in the top picture versus the bottom picture. *(In the top image, he is wearing ragged clothing. In the bottom image, he is wearing a new green robe and a ring.)*
- Explain that the man with the red cap is a servant who is helping to put shoes on the son's feet.
- Read the Scripture passage to the children. Then ask the children several questions to check for comprehension, such as the following:
 - When the son was still a long way from home, what did the father do? *(He saw his son on the way. He ran to his son, hugged and kissed him, and called to the servants to bring him the best clothing.)*
 - How did the father feel when he saw the son on his way? *(His heart was filled with pity. This means he had a feeling of sadness for his son.)*
 - Why do you think the father felt this way? *(Allow all reasonable answers.)*
- Have the children turn to the activity on page 2 of the activity booklet and complete it. *Solution:*



Understand It!

- Read aloud the Understand It! on page 1621.
- Invite the children to summarize what they just heard, asking them key questions about the reading to check for comprehension.
- Review some of the key points with them:
 - The story began when the son asked his father for money, then left home and wasted all of it. When the son ran out of money, he returned home for help.
 - The father could have been angry. Instead, he felt happy and joyful that his son had come home.

- The father forgave the son even before the son asked for forgiveness. The father gave the son gifts and threw a party to welcome him home.
- God is like the father in the story. God forgives us whenever we are sorry for our sins, no matter what. He always loves and forgives us. He always welcomes us back to him.

Live It!

- Read aloud the Live It! on page 1621.
- Invite the children to think quietly over the questions. Allow a couple of quiet minutes for thinking.
- Close by inviting the children to take a quiet moment to pray as directed. Invite them to close their prayer with the Sign of the Cross.

Tell It!

- Ask the children to look at the images in the Tell It! on page 1621.
- Invite a volunteer to try retelling the story using the images. Help him or her identify what is happening in each image and how each image relates to the Scripture story. (*Image 1 shows the son coming home. Image 2 shows the son admitting his mistake. Image 3 shows the ring, robe, and shoes the father gives to the son. Image 4 shows the food for the celebration feast.*)

Lent



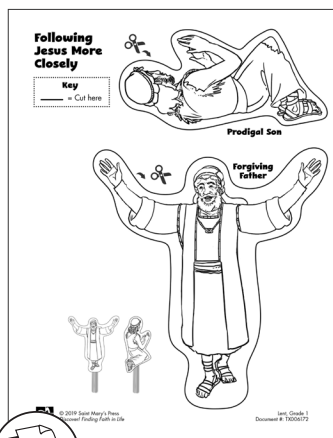
Discover! (25 minutes)

Core Learning Activity (Craft)

A Forgiving Father Play Set

- Prepare by making two stick puppets, the Forgiving Father and the Prodigal Son, as samples.
- Show your samples to the children. Explain that they will make their own stick puppet father and son set, which they can use to act out the story of the Forgiving Father.
- Set out materials on a table ahead of time. You may also want to set out crayons or markers if the children do not have their own sets.
- Give each child two craft sticks and a copy of the handout. Allow them to use markers or crayons to color the figures.
- Explain that after coloring the figures, they may cut them out with scissors and then glue the figures to the craft sticks.
- Ask volunteers to tell the story of the Forgiving Father, using their stick puppets.

Note: The handout can be found at the end of this chapter or accessed online at www.smp.org/discover_grade1.



Process the Activity

- Encourage the children to use their stick puppets at home. Emphasize that reading, telling, and listening to favorite stories over and over is a good way to remember and understand them.
- Tell the children that just as they often want to play through a story again and again, the action of forgiving is something that we need to practice again and again. Explain that no one who is walking on Earth is perfect yet. Tell them that we will all make mistakes from time to time, and the more we practice forgiving one another, the better we understand it, and the easier it can become.
- Remind the children that we can always ask God to help us!

Additional Activity Options

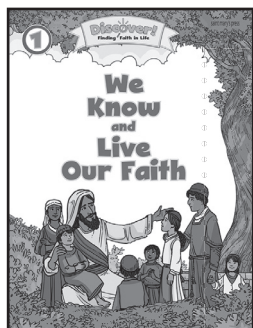
If the core activity would not work for your group for any reason, you may choose to use any of the additional activities on pages 255–256 in its place.

Lent

Core Teaching

- Explain that we are in the season of Lent, and cover the following points:
 - Lent is a time of year when we prepare to celebrate the Resurrection of Jesus at Easter.
 - During Lent, we think of the ways we can follow Jesus more closely.
 - One of these ways is by asking forgiveness when we hurt others. Another way is by being kind and doing good things for others.
- Tell the children that during Lent, we decorate the insides of churches with purple to stand for our sorrow for sin and for Jesus' suffering on the cross. Explain that we do not sing or say the word **Alleluia** during Lent. Tell them that *Alleluia* is a joyful word that means "Praise the Lord!" Emphasize that we do not use it during Lent because we are expressing our sorrow for Jesus' death.
- Explain that during Lent, we try to follow Jesus more closely by doing extra acts of kindness. Tell the children that we can also give up treats like candy or TV. Explain that these are nice things to have, but if we go without them, we can use that time or money instead to help people who are in need. Tell the group that this is called **almsgiving**. Explain that almsgiving is using what we have to help those who would otherwise have to go without.

- Ask the children some questions to check for comprehension, such as the following:
 - What do we focus on during Lent? *(During Lent, we prepare for Easter. We find ways to follow Jesus more closely. One of the ways is by asking forgiveness when we hurt others. Another way is by being kind and doing good for others.)*
 - What does the color purple mean? *(It shows our sorrow for sin and for Jesus' suffering on the cross.)*
 - Why do we not sing or say the word *Alleluia* in Lent? *(Alleluia is a joyful word, and not using it shows our sorrow for Jesus' death.)*
 - Why might we give up treats in Lent? *(If we go without treats, we can use the time or money spent on them to help others instead.)*
 - What is almsgiving? *(Almsgiving is using what we do have to help others who do not have what they need.)*
- Have the children turn to page 4 of the activity booklet. Read the "People of Faith" section aloud. Add any other information you know about Saint Joseph, and encourage the children to say, "Saint Joseph, pray for us," during the next week.



We Know and Live Our Faith

The following article in the *We Know and Live Our Faith* resource corresponds to concepts introduced in this lesson:

- "Lent," page 33

Read the selection aloud as time allows. Check for understanding by asking several questions.



Go! (10 minutes)

Lesson Wrap-Up

- Invite the children to think back over all the different things they did in this lesson, and invite volunteers to share some of the key things they learned.
- Ensure that the following points are made, write them on the board, and circle them:
 - The father in the story is a reminder of God and his forgiveness.
 - During Lent, we make a special effort to be kind and to forgive others.
 - We need to ask for forgiveness.

Short Closing Prayer (*optional*)

Note: Use this prayer if you do not intend to use the longer prayer service on the next page to close this lesson.

- Begin prayer by leading the group in the Sign of the Cross, then saying, "Let us remember that we are in the holy presence of God," followed by a few seconds of silence.
- Explain that the prayer "Lord, have mercy" is a prayer that the first Christians, the very first followers of Jesus, prayed often.
- Remind the children that we also pray this prayer at Mass, at the very beginning, when we ask forgiveness for our sins.
- Ask the children to repeat "Lord, have mercy" (*Roman Missal*) as you pray this short litany:

Leader: For all the times we have hurt others,

All: Lord, have mercy.

Leader: For the times when we have disobeyed or talked back to our parents, teachers, or others in charge of us,

All: Lord, have mercy.

Leader: For the times when we have not been kind in playing with others,

All: Lord, have mercy.

Leader: For the times when we used mean words to or about others,

All: Lord, have mercy.

- Pray the following for the group:
 - Let us pray together: Lord Jesus, we ask forgiveness for things we have done that hurt others. Help us come closer to you this Lent. Help us to be as kind and loving as you are. Amen.
- Conclude by leading the group in the Sign of the Cross.

Prayer Service

For the Needs of the World

Seat children together in a large circle. If it is allowed, you may consider lighting a candle near your own place in the circle as a reminder of the presence of God. As you pray the petitions, you may pass a small globe around the circle to symbolize God's care and love for the whole world.

Leader: Let us begin our prayer with the Sign of the Cross.

All: In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Leader: Let us remember that we are in the holy presence of God. *(Allow about 10 seconds of silence.)* As we gather together this Lent, we remember the many needs of people throughout the world. First, we ask God to fill our hearts with love toward others.

All: Lord, hear our prayer.

Leader: For those who do not have enough to eat and drink,

All: Lord, hear our prayer.

Leader: For those who do not have clean and warm clothes,

All: Lord, hear our prayer.

Leader: For those who do not have safe homes,

All: Lord, hear our prayer.

Leader: For those who are alone in the world,

All: Lord, hear our prayer.

Leader: For those who are afraid to do the right thing,

All: Lord, hear our prayer.

Leader: For those who need forgiveness and those who need to forgive,

All: Lord, hear our prayer.

Leader: For those who do not yet know God,

All: Lord, hear our prayer.

Leader: We ask all of this in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

All: Amen.

Close by singing "He's Got the Whole World in His Hands" or a similar song that recalls God's love and care for all people.

Additional Activities

Materials Needed

- wooden or plastic beads of equal size, at least ½-inch across, with a large hole, ten for each child (pony beads work well)
- long plastic or fabric strings (if fabric, must have plastic shoelace-type ends), one for each child

Materials Needed

- plastic baggies filled with pretzels, one for each child
- index cards, one for each child
- tape
- markers or crayons

Sacrifice Beads (15 minutes)

- Explain to the children that they will make a set of sacrifice beads that can be used to keep track of Lenten sacrifices and kind actions. Explain that moving a bead each time they do something good for others will help them be aware of their actions, and will help them decide to be more loving, like Jesus.
- Make a set ahead of time to show the children before they begin.
- Distribute the beads and strings, and then show the children how to start by threading one bead onto the center of the piece of string, so that the amount of string on either side of the bead is the same. Have the children thread ten beads.
- Assist the children as needed to tie a knot when they are done lacing the beads. Take the loose ends of the string, and tie a double knot no more than an inch away from the last bead in line. When the string is firmly tied, children should be able to move the beads one at a time toward the knot and then away from it again, to count their actions of Lenten practice.

Pretzel Prayer Cards (15 minutes)

- Prepare by first checking with parents about any food allergies that could affect a child's participation in this activity. If necessary, plan to have gluten-free pretzels or other alternate treats available for any child with allergies.
- Write "Jesus, help me follow you" on each index card, and tape a card to each baggie.
- Tell the children the story of how pretzels were first invented:
 - A long time ago, a monk had an idea for making a little bit of bread into a nice treat for children. He rolled a piece of bread dough until it was long and thin.
 - Then he folded it over itself twice, so that it looked like a pair of arms crossed in prayer. (*Demonstrate this by crossing your arms over your chest.*) He baked it in the oven until it became crispy.
 - The monk gave this to children as a reward for saying their prayers each day.
- Ask the children to cross their arms in prayer. Then ask the children to repeat this prayer after you: "Jesus, help me follow you."
- Distribute the pretzels with prayer cards taped to the bags. Tell the children that the cards say "Jesus, help me follow you." Challenge them to say their prayer each day for a week, or even throughout the whole season of Lent.
- Distribute the markers or crayons and allow the children to decorate the index cards if there is time.

Materials Needed

- a computer with internet access
- a computer projector
- blank paper
- crayons or colored pencils

Lent Is For-Giving (15 minutes)

- Watch the video [Children's Songs] Giving Makes You Happy (YouTube, 1:27).
- Explain that during Lent, we try to find ways to give to others and to help others. Review ways the boy in the video helped at home. Share ideas on ways children in your group could help others at home and at school, especially during Lent.
- Distribute the blank paper and crayons or colored pencils. Ask the children to make a drawing of themselves carrying out a loving action at home or at school. Encourage the children to take their drawings home and share them with their families.

Following Jesus More Closely

Key

— = Cut here



Prodigal Son



Forgiving Father





Grade 2 Lenten Lesson



saint mary's press
touching hearts. enlivening minds.



Preparing for Easter

Genesis 7:1–5

Prayer

Loving God, you walk with us through all moments of life. You take us through every challenge and every struggle. Fill our life with your Spirit, give us courage to make good choices, and bring us closer to you. Amen.





Find and circle the words from the Featured Story
on page 34 of *The Catholic Children's Bible*
(Genesis 7:1–5).

animals

reproduce

birds

boat

clean

commanded

family

flood

forty

pairs

right

unclean

C O M M A N D E D Q
L F O R T Y H D B S
E L L P A I R S O T
A O K U N C L E A N
N O E B I R D S T Q
B D F A M I L Y F F
D V D C A G Z U S M
K D Z X L H S A E F
F G M T S T B T I L
R E P R O D U C E Y



God's Love Saves Us

Leader: Let us begin our prayer with the Sign of the Cross. Let us remember that we are in the holy presence of God.

Leader: Loving God, you brought Noah safely through the forty days of the Flood. Help us prepare our hearts during these forty days of Lent and remember that we too are saved through the waters of Baptism.

All: *(hands folded and bowing)* **Be with us as we prepare our hearts.**

Leader: Loving God, we recall the incredible sacrifice of Jesus. Help us focus on ways that we can give up something or do good works to help us grow in faithfulness.

All: *(hands folded and bowing)* **Be with us as we prepare our hearts.**

Leader: Loving God, during this Lenten season, help us recall that we can always come to you in prayer. Be with us as we come to you in prayer this season.

All: *(hands folded and bowing)* **Be with us as we prepare our hearts.**

Leader: Loving God, thank you for the gift of Baptism and the promises we made to be followers of Christ. Increase our faith and help us to draw closer to you as we prepare for the joy of Easter. We ask this in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.



Family Page

Background Reflection

At times it seems that Baptism can take a backseat to other aspects of our faith. For many of us, Baptism happened so long ago that we remember it only slightly, or only through photographs and family stories.

For all Catholics, Baptism deserves closer attention. It is the root of our life in God. It is central to our faith. Only by passing through the waters of Baptism can we enter into the fullness of the love and grace God offers us. Only by understanding what happens in this sacrament can we truly understand what we receive in the other sacraments. Baptism marks Christians distinctly and definitively.

As we travel through the Season of Lent, accompanying those preparing to receive Baptism and readying ourselves for the renewal of our baptismal promises at Easter, let us learn more about Baptism and about how everything in the Christian life flows from this initial, indispensable gift.

Family Activities

- Read together the Featured Story on page 34 of *The Catholic Children's Bible* (Genesis 7:1–5). Ask your child to retell the story to you in her or his own words. Then invite your child to ask any questions he or she may have. If you find any questions difficult to answer on your own, make a plan to look up answers together.
- Find a cookbook that you enjoy, and spend some time looking up recipes for meatless meals together with your child. Invite your child to point out foods he or she would like to try. You might allow him or her to mark pages with reusable sticky flags or other bookmarks. Plan to make at least one of the recipes on a Friday during Lent.
- Watch the video “Ash Wednesday and Lent in 60 seconds With LEGO!” (YouTube, 1:15) together. Take some time to work on a family Lenten plan that includes giving up things that you don't really need, giving to others, and saying special prayers.

People of Faith

Saint Brigid of Ireland (c. 452–524)

Saint Brigid led a large community of nuns, and her monastery was a center of faith, art, and care for those who are poor. On her feast day, people make crosses out of reeds, like she did, and they hang them over their front doors. Brigid's feast day is February 1.

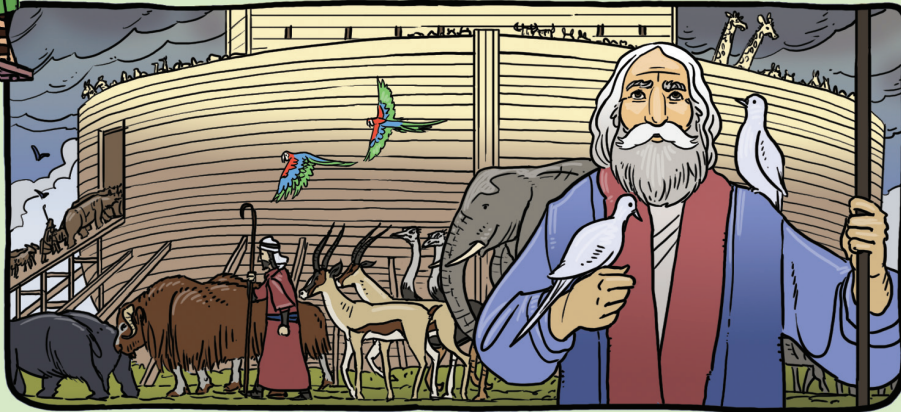
Prayer

Pray this prayer together as a family, beginning and ending with the Sign of the Cross.



Loving God, we are grateful for the season of Lent in which we can pause and prepare our hearts for the joy of Easter. Help us become closer to you as we journey through these forty days. We ask this in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.



God Saves Noah's Family

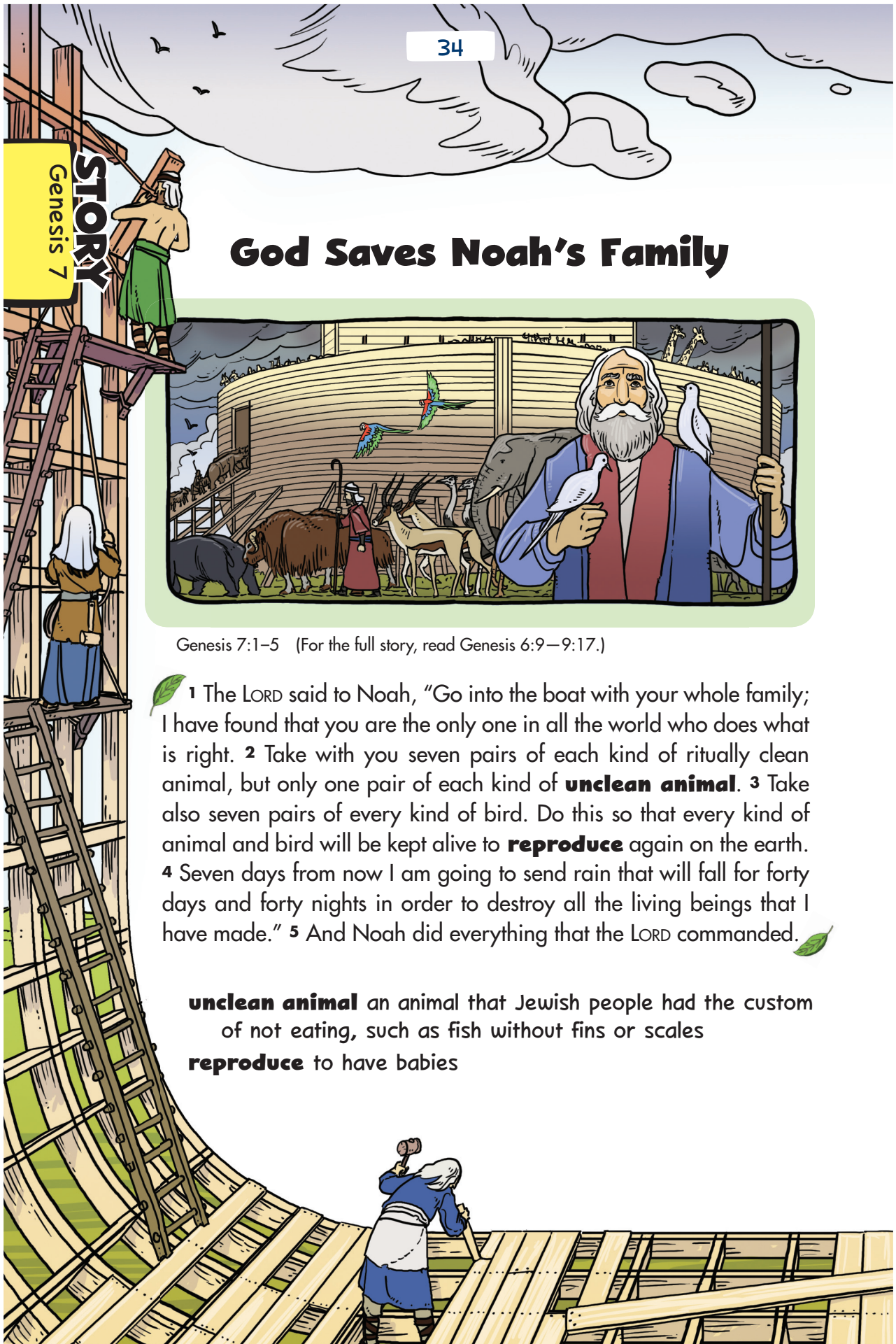


Genesis 7:1–5 (For the full story, read Genesis 6:9–9:17.)

 **1** The LORD said to Noah, “Go into the boat with your whole family; I have found that you are the only one in all the world who does what is right. **2** Take with you seven pairs of each kind of ritually clean animal, but only one pair of each kind of **unclean animal**. **3** Take also seven pairs of every kind of bird. Do this so that every kind of animal and bird will be kept alive to **reproduce** again on the earth. **4** Seven days from now I am going to send rain that will fall for forty days and forty nights in order to destroy all the living beings that I have made.” **5** And Noah did everything that the LORD commanded. 

unclean animal an animal that Jewish people had the custom of not eating, such as fish without fins or scales

reproduce to have babies



Understand It!

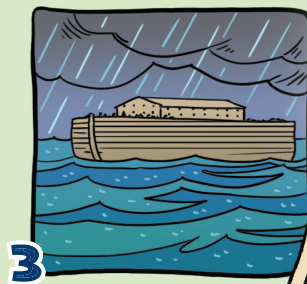
We imitate others. You might like to wear the kind of clothes other children wear. You may want the games they have. Noah was strong enough to be different from others. When he lived, everyone was sinning. Only Noah and his family still served God. So when the world was punished by a flood, God saved Noah and his family. God told Noah to build a boat, or ark. Noah worked on the boat even though people probably made fun of him. This boat kept Noah, his family, and animals from drowning.

You need to have courage like Noah to be different. Even when other children do the wrong thing, you need to stand strong and not sin. God will bless you for it.

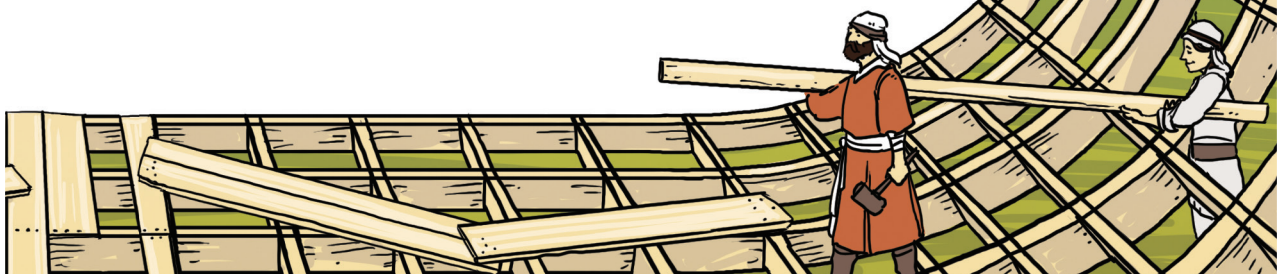
Live It!

Noah listened to God and served him. We listen to God when we pray and read the Bible. We serve him when we sing and pray at Mass. We serve him when we are kind to other people. How will you listen to God this week? How will you serve him this week?

Tell It!



Using the pictures above, retell this story in your own words.

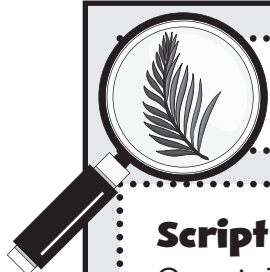


Lent



Preparing for Easter





Lesson at a Glance

Scripture Focus

Genesis 7:1–5

Lesson Goals

- to state that Lent is a season of preparation for Easter
- to explain that during Lent we remember that we went through the waters of Baptism and were saved by God
- to state that in Lent we recall that Jesus saves us through his death and Resurrection

Catechism References

1094–1095, 1217–1220, 1438

Church Year Calendar

A Church year calendar is available in black-and-white and full-color at www.smp.org/discover_grade2.

Key Words

unclean animal, reproduce, Passion, Resurrection, Holy Week, penance

Music Suggestions

- “I Need You Now (Live),” by Matt Redman (sixstepsrecords/Sparrow Records)
- “Be with Me, Lord,” by Tom Booth (OCP)

Materials Needed

- *The Catholic Children’s Bible* and the Lent activity booklet
- pencils and paper
- a sample paper-plate ark
- paper plates, two for each child
- sets of markers, including all colors of the rainbow plus at least brown or gray, one set for each small group
- a ruler and a pair of scissors for each small group
- a hole punch
- paper fasteners (brads), one for each child
- a board or poster to write on
- materials for any of the additional activities you choose

Background Reflection

At times it seems that Baptism can take a backseat to other aspects of our faith. For many of us, Baptism happened so long ago that we remember it only slightly, or only through photographs and family stories.

For all Catholics, Baptism deserves closer attention. It is the root of our life in God. It is central to our faith. Only by passing through the waters of Baptism can we enter into the fullness of the love and grace God offers us. Only by understanding what happens in the sacrament can we truly understand what we receive in the other sacraments. Baptism marks Christians distinctly and definitively.

As we travel through the season of Lent, accompanying those preparing to receive Baptism and readying ourselves for the renewal of our baptismal promises at Easter, let us learn more about Baptism and about how everything in the Christian life flows from this initial, indispensable gift.



Get Ready! (10 minutes)

Opening Prayer

- Invite the children to turn to page 1 of the Lent activity booklet.
- Begin prayer by leading the children in the Sign of the Cross. Then say, "Let us remember that we are in the holy presence of God." Allow about 10 seconds of silence.
- Read aloud the prayer on page 1 of the activity booklet. Invite all the children to say "Amen," and then close with another Sign of the Cross.

Engage Activity

- Gather the children in a large circle in a central part of the room. Invite them to think about a time when they chose to do the right thing, even though it made them look or feel different from other people.
- Invite responses from volunteers. Assure the children that it can be challenging to do the right thing sometimes, especially if we're concerned about what others might think about us.
- Tell the children that in today's story, they will learn about one man who was not afraid to look different from everyone around him. Explain that his courage saved many people and animals from a natural disaster.



Dive In! (15 minutes)

Scripture Focus

- Invite the children to find Genesis 6:9–9:17 in *The Catholic Children's Bible* (pages 32–33 and 36). Point out the green leaf at the beginning and end of the passage.
- Have the children turn to the Featured Story on page 34. Explain that the green leaves on this page mark that this is a shortened version of the same Scripture passage found on the surrounding pages.
- Ask the children to look at the artwork on pages 34–35 and describe what they see. Invite them to imagine what it would be like to build such a big boat, or ark, as the one Noah built.
- Read the Scripture passage to the children. Then ask the children several questions to check for comprehension, such as the following:
 - What did God ask Noah to do? (*He asked him to go into the boat with his whole family, plus pairs of animals.*)
 - Why did God ask Noah to do this? (*God wanted to be sure there would be enough of each animal after the Flood to reproduce on the Earth.*)

- What was God planning to do? (God was going to send enough rain to cause a flood that would wipe out all living beings on the Earth, except those Noah had rescued.)
- What did Noah do? (Noah did everything that God commanded.)
- Have the children turn to the activity on page 2 of the activity booklet and complete it. *Solution:*



Understand It!

- Read aloud the Understand It! on page 35, or have a volunteer read it.
- Invite the children to summarize what they just heard, asking them key questions about the reading to check for comprehension.
- Review some of the key points with them:
 - We imitate others to be like the people around us. It takes courage to be different from others.
 - Noah had the courage to be different from others. When others were sinning, he and his family served God. So God saved Noah and his family from the Flood.
 - Others may have made fun of Noah for building the ark, but the boat kept Noah, his family, and the animals safe.
 - If we do what God wants us to do, even when it makes us different from others, God will bless us for it.
- Explain to the children that the story of Noah and the Flood reminds us of our Baptism. Remind them that we are saved from Original Sin through the waters of Baptism. Point out that Noah, his family, and the animals were saved as they passed through the waters of the Great Flood.

Live It!

- Read aloud the Live It! on page 35, or have a volunteer read it.
- Ask the children to take out a pencil and paper, and instruct them to write down two things:
 - Write down one idea for how you can listen to God this week.
 - Write down one idea for how you can serve God this week.
- Encourage the children to take their paper home and reread it later. Explain that this plan is just for their own reminder, not for anyone else to see.

Tell It!

- Ask the children to look at the images in the Tell It! on page 35.
- Invite volunteers to retell the Scripture story in their own words, using the images shown. (*Image 1 shows Noah listening to God. Image 2 shows Noah leading animals into the ark. Image 3 shows the ark floating on the floodwaters as rain falls.*)

**Discover! (25 minutes)****Core Learning Activity (Craft)****Paper-Plate Ark**

- Prepare a sample paper-plate ark in advance that you can use to demonstrate the steps to the children.
- Tell the children that they will make a paper-plate ark to remind them of the ark Noah built to survive the Flood.
- Arrange the children into small groups to share art supplies. Distribute two paper plates and a metal brad to each child, and give each group a ruler, a pair of scissors, and a set of markers.
- Show the children how to use a ruler and a marker to draw a straight line across both of their paper plates. Have them set one plate aside. Instruct them to draw a rectangle topped by a triangle—a house shape—above the line on the second plate.
- Show the children how to use the scissors to cut around the house and line on the second plate. They will end up with the house shape (what they drew) on top of a boat shape (the rest of the paper plate). Explain that this is their ark. Allow them to color their arks as they choose. They may wish to add some animals to their arks.
- Instruct the children to color a rainbow around half of their first (uncut) paper plate. Tell them to color the rainbow only up to the line dividing the plate.

- Go around the groups and punch a hole in the center of each child's two plates.
- Show the children how to attach the paper plates together—ark plate on top of the rainbow plate—with brads through the center hole of both plates, so that the rainbow can rotate around behind the ark.

Process the Activity

- Remind the children that the story of Noah is a story of passing through waters to be saved by God—just like the story of our own Baptism.
- Explain to the children that we prepare for Easter by remembering our Baptism and baptismal promises. Tell them that this season of preparation for Easter is called Lent.
- Tell the children that at the end of Noah's story, we read that God sent the rainbow as a sign of his promise to never again destroy the Earth with a flood.

Additional Activity Options

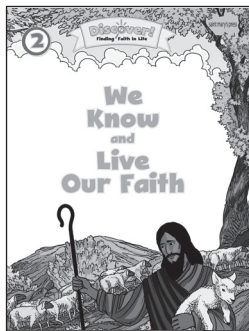
If the core activity would not work for your group for any reason, you may choose to use any of the additional activities on page 251 in its place.

Lent

Core Teaching

- Explain to the children that during Lent the whole Church recalls the **Passion** and death of Jesus and prepares to celebrate his **Resurrection** at Easter. Jesus' *Passion* refers to his suffering to save us: from his betrayal after the Last Supper on Holy Thursday, until his death for us on the cross. Jesus' *Resurrection* is his rising from the dead to new life on Easter. Recall that by his death and Resurrection, Jesus saved us from sin.
- Tell the group that the Church uses the color purple during Lent to symbolize our preparation, just as purple symbolizes preparation during Advent. Explain that during Lent, purple also stands for sorrow. Point out that we feel sad about the reality of sin and about Jesus' suffering.
- Share that Lent ends at the Mass of the Lord's Supper on Holy Thursday during **Holy Week**. Tell the children that Holy Week is the week when we remember Jesus' suffering and death. Explain that it begins with Palm Sunday and ends with Easter Sunday, when we celebrate the Resurrection.
- Recall that Easter reminds us of Baptism. Explain that we prepare for Easter in the season of Lent by remembering our baptismal promises to follow Christ. Remind the children that in Baptism we pass through water, as Noah did, to enter into new life with God. Share that Baptism gives us courage to act in the ways God shows us are right, just as Noah followed God and was saved.

- Tell the children that because we love and honor Jesus, we want to become better Christians and make good choices. Explain that Lent is a time to focus on following Jesus with special practices:
 - During Lent, we give to the Church and to those in need. We practice saying no to some things we want so that we can say yes to the best and most important things.
 - During Lent, we practice acts of **penance**—that is, prayers or good actions that show we are sorry for sin. Penance helps us to prepare for the Easter celebration.
- Ask the children some questions to check for comprehension, such as the following:
 - What is the season of Lent? (*Lent is a time when the whole Church recalls the Passion and death of Jesus and prepares to celebrate his Resurrection at Easter.*)
 - What are Jesus' Passion and Resurrection? (*Jesus' Passion refers to his suffering for us. His Resurrection refers to his act of rising from the dead.*)
 - What color do we see in Church during Lent, and why? (*We see the color purple, which symbolizes preparation and sadness.*)
 - How is Baptism like the story of Noah? (*Both involve passing through water to be saved by God.*)
 - What is an act of penance? (*An act of penance is a good action that shows we are sorry for sin. Penance helps us prepare for Easter.*)
- Have the children turn to page 4 of the activity booklet. Read aloud the "People of Faith" section. Add any other information you know about Saint Brigid of Ireland, and encourage the children to say, "Saint Brigid, pray for us," during the next week.



We Know and Live Our Faith

The following article in the *We Know and Live Our Faith* resource corresponds to concepts introduced in this lesson:

- "God the Father Sent His Son to Us," page 12

Read the selection aloud, or invite a volunteer to read, as time allows. Check for understanding by asking several questions. You may want to summarize the key concepts for the children.



Go! (10 minutes)

Lesson Wrap-Up

- Invite the children to think back over all the different things they did in this lesson, and invite volunteers to share some of the key things they learned.
- Take time to get input from the group, and write their answers on the board.
- Ensure that the following points are made, write them on the board, and circle them:
 - Lent is a season of preparation for Easter.
 - During Lent, we remember that we went through the waters of Baptism and were saved by God.
 - In Lent, we recall that Jesus saves us through his death and Resurrection.

Short Closing Prayer (optional)

Note: Use this prayer if you do not intend to use the longer prayer service on the next page to close this lesson.

- Begin prayer by leading the children in the Sign of the Cross and saying, "Let us remember that we are in the holy presence of God," followed by a few seconds of silence.
- Lead the children in the following prayer:
 - Loving God, you brought Noah, his family, and the animals safely through the Flood on the Ark. Help us use the season of Lent to recall how we were saved through the waters of Baptism and to focus on how we might be better Christians. We look forward to celebrating the Resurrection of Christ on Easter.
- Invite the children to respond with "Amen," and then close with a final Sign of the Cross.

Prayer Service

God's Love Saves Us

Tell the children that they will fold their hands and bow their heads each time they repeat the response, "Be with us as we prepare our hearts." Practice this so the children are familiar with the action and response.

Leader: Let us begin our prayer with the Sign of the Cross. *(All make Sign of the Cross.)* Let us remember that we are in the holy presence of God. *(Allow about 10 seconds of silence.)*

Leader: Loving God, you brought Noah safely through the forty days of the Flood. Help us prepare our hearts during these forty days of Lent and remember that we too are saved through the waters of Baptism.

All: *(with hands folded and bowing)*
Be with us as we prepare our hearts.

Leader: Loving God, we recall the incredible sacrifice of Jesus. Help us focus on ways that we can give up something or do good works to help us grow in faithfulness.

All: *(with hands folded and bowing)*
Be with us as we prepare our hearts.

Leader: Loving God, during this Lenten season, help us recall that we can always come to you in prayer. Be with us as we come to you in prayer this season.

All: *(with hands folded and bowing)*
Be with us as we prepare our hearts.

Leader: Loving God, thank you for the gift of Baptism and the promises we made to be followers of Christ. Increase our faith and help us to draw closer to you as we prepare for the joy of Easter. We ask this in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Close by playing one of the music suggestions or another appropriate Lenten song of your choice.

Additional Activities

Materials Needed

- four large containers of water
- four trays of items, such as a stone, a foam ball, a feather, a block of wood, a rubber band, a metal clip, and so on

Sink or Float (15 minutes)

- Prepare four stations ahead of time with the same materials at each station: a large container of water (preferably with high sides) and a tray of items.
- Arrange the children into four small groups and have them gather around the stations.
- Invite the groups to look at their tray of items. Tell them to discuss among themselves which items will sink or float. Invite each child in each group to place at least one item into the group's water tub to find out whether it will float.
- Gather the children back into the large group. Invite them to think about how difficult it must be to build a huge, heavy object that floats, especially when loaded with animals and people. Lead them to understand that Noah's project was not an easy one.

Materials Needed

- none

Alphabet Ark Memory Game (15 minutes)

- Clear a large area in the middle of the classroom.
- Gather the children in a large circle on the floor. Share the following instructions:
 - The child who is at the starting place will say, "Noah took an [animal] on the ark," filling in the blank with an animal name beginning with A.
 - The next child will do the same thing, repeating the A animal and adding a B animal.
 - The next child must repeat the A and B animals and add a C animal, and so on.
 - The game will continue until someone forgets an animal in the series. Then it will start over again at A with the next person in the circle, until time is up.
- Pick a child at random to start the game. Affirm the group's efforts to play a good game and remember one another's contributions.

Materials Needed

- a computer with internet access
- a computer projector
- blank paper

Making Lenten Plans (15 minutes)

- Show the video "Ash Wednesday and Lent in 60 seconds With LEGO!" (YouTube, 1:15) to the group.
- Ask the children to name some features of Lent that the video explains. Affirm all correct responses.
- Distribute the blank paper. Invite the children to write or draw their own plan for fasting, giving to others, and saying special prayers during Lent.
- Ask the children to take home their plans and complete them later, if they need more time. Encourage them to check and follow their plans each day.



Grade 3 Lenten Lesson



saint mary's press
touching hearts. enlivening minds.



A New Kind of King

Matthew 21:6-9

Prayer

Lord God, may this Palm Sunday help us to praise you always. Thank you for the gift of new life in your Son, Jesus, our King. Hosanna in the highest! Amen.



Show Jesus entering into Jerusalem by completing the maze.



Start



Finish





Following Jesus to Jerusalem

Leader: Let us begin our prayer with the Sign of the Cross. . . . Let us remember that we are in the holy presence of God.

Leader: Loving God, as we enter into Holy Week, bless us and bless the donkeys that we have made. Today, as we follow Jesus to Jerusalem, may we continue to follow him all the days of our lives.

All: Amen.

Reader 1: Lord Jesus, a donkey carried you to Jerusalem. Help us to carry your peace and love to all we meet.

All: Hosanna!

Reader 2: Lord Jesus, you chose a donkey as a sign of your peaceful and humble kingship. Help us to be peaceful and humble in our relationships with others.

All: Hosanna!

Reader 3: Lord Jesus, you rode into Jerusalem in peace and love. Help us to follow you always.

All: Hosanna!

Leader: Lord Jesus, you came as a peaceful and loving king.

All: Hosanna!

Leader: Let us place our donkeys in "Jerusalem." Like Jesus, we have made it to Jerusalem! We have followed our king. Let us pray together: Hosanna in the highest!

All: Hosanna in the highest!

Leader: Let us go now and be a people of peace and love, hope and joy. Hosanna in the highest!

All: Hosanna in the highest!

Family Page

Background Reflection

Palm Sunday begins Holy Week on a high note. Jesus rides into Jerusalem and is greeted by cheers and waving palm branches. He knows this week will end in his death, yet he sits serenely on a donkey. This Sunday welcomes the King of Kings, triumphant and glorious. Here indeed is the promised king, but a king who is not quite what anyone was expecting.

The glorious ride on the donkey into Jerusalem amid the cheering crowds flows into the crushing defeat of Good Friday, the stark emptiness of Holy Saturday, and the glory of the Resurrection on Easter. This is the paradigm of our lives and of our spiritual journeys as well.

On this Sunday, we receive a palm to take home. This palm is a symbol that Jesus is truly the King, the King of eternal life, triumphant over death, who brings us with him to Easter life, now and always.

Family Activities

- Read together the Featured Story on page 1500 in *The Catholic Children's Bible* (Matthew 21:6–9). Invite your child to summarize what she or he remembers about the meaning of this story.
- Discuss together where you will place your palms this year. Remind your child that the palm is blessed. It reminds us of the victory of Jesus, so it should be treated with respect.
- Watch the video "Palm Sunday HD" (YouTube, 2:58) together, for a good explanation of Palm Sunday as celebrated in the Catholic Church around the world. With your child, compare the video to your own parish celebration.

People of Faith

Saint Cecilia (second century)

Saint Cecilia suffered for Christ and was martyred by the Roman emperor. The Church of Saint Cecilia in Rome was built on the site of her house. Because Cecilia was inspired by music to praise God, she is often pictured with a musical instrument and is the patron saint of musicians. Her feast day is November 22.

Prayer

Pray this prayer together as a family, beginning and ending with the Sign of the Cross.

Lord our God, the palms we receive on Palm Sunday remind us of the victory of Jesus. May they be signs of hope on tough days and signs of joy as we prepare to celebrate Jesus' rising from the dead on Easter. We ask this through Christ our Lord. Amen.



The Crowds Praise Jesus

STORY
Matthew 21

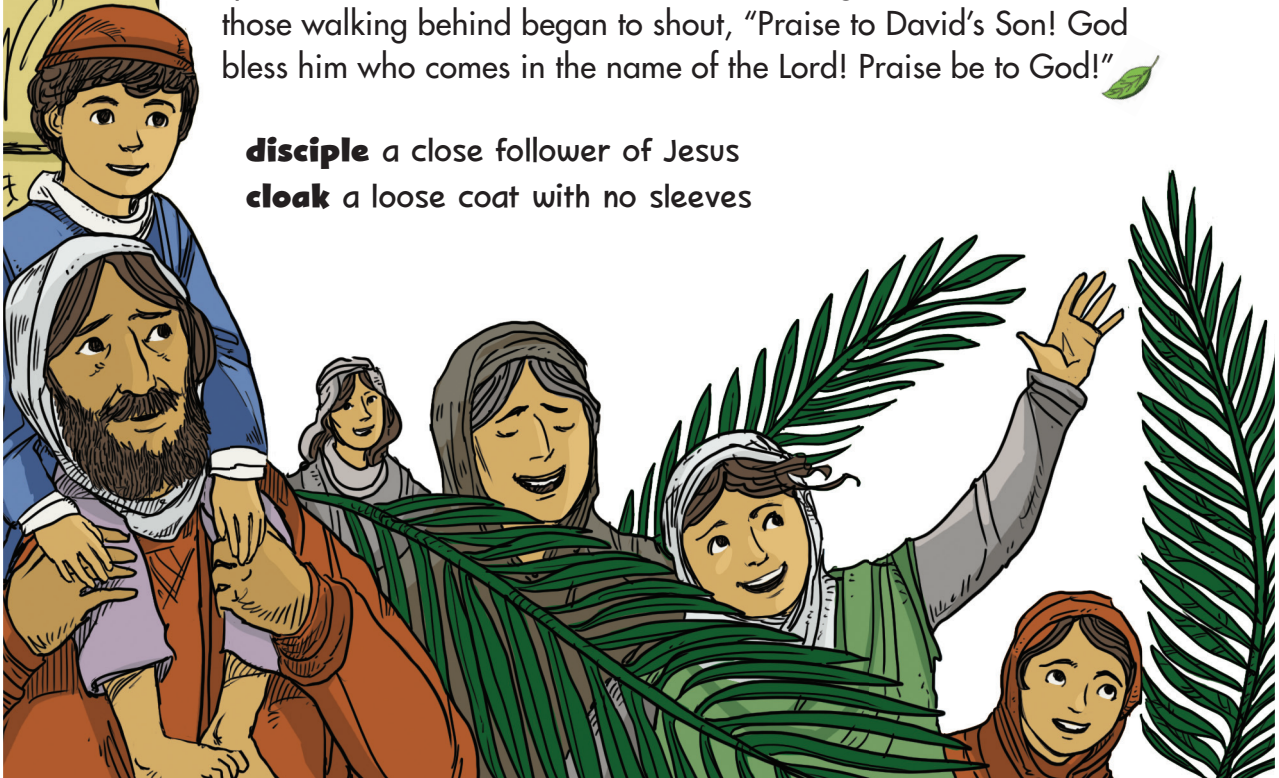


Matthew 21:6–9 (For the full story, read Matthew 21:1–17.)

6 [T]he **disciples** went and did what Jesus had told them to do: 7 they brought the donkey and the colt, threw their **cloaks** over them, and Jesus got on. 8 A large crowd of people spread their cloaks on the road while others cut branches from the trees and spread them on the road. 9 The crowds walking in front of Jesus and those walking behind began to shout, "Praise to David's Son! God bless him who comes in the name of the Lord! Praise be to God!"

disciple a close follower of Jesus

cloak a loose coat with no sleeves



Understand It!

The Sunday before Easter is called Passion Sunday, or Palm Sunday. On that day we remember when Jesus entered Jerusalem as a king. At church we receive palm branches. The people in this Bible story from Matthew used palm branches to welcome Jesus. They realized that Jesus was the promised savior, called the Messiah. So they praised him when he rode into Jerusalem. They greeted Jesus as the son of King David, as their king.

The people had prayed for a king who would lead them in a fight for their freedom. They thought Jesus would be that kind of king. But Jesus did not come to lead a battle. He did not ride on a horse like a warrior. He rode a lowly donkey. He saved us not by fighting but by giving up his life.

Matthew 21
STORY

Live It!

Make your own "Praise God" bookmark. Cut a heavy sheet of paper in the shape of a bookmark. Decorate it with a palm branch like the one shown here. Write "Praise be to God!" on it and keep it in your Bible. Whenever you see it, remember to praise God for sending his Son, Jesus.



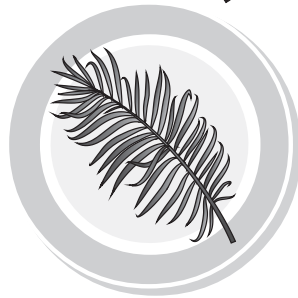
Tell It!



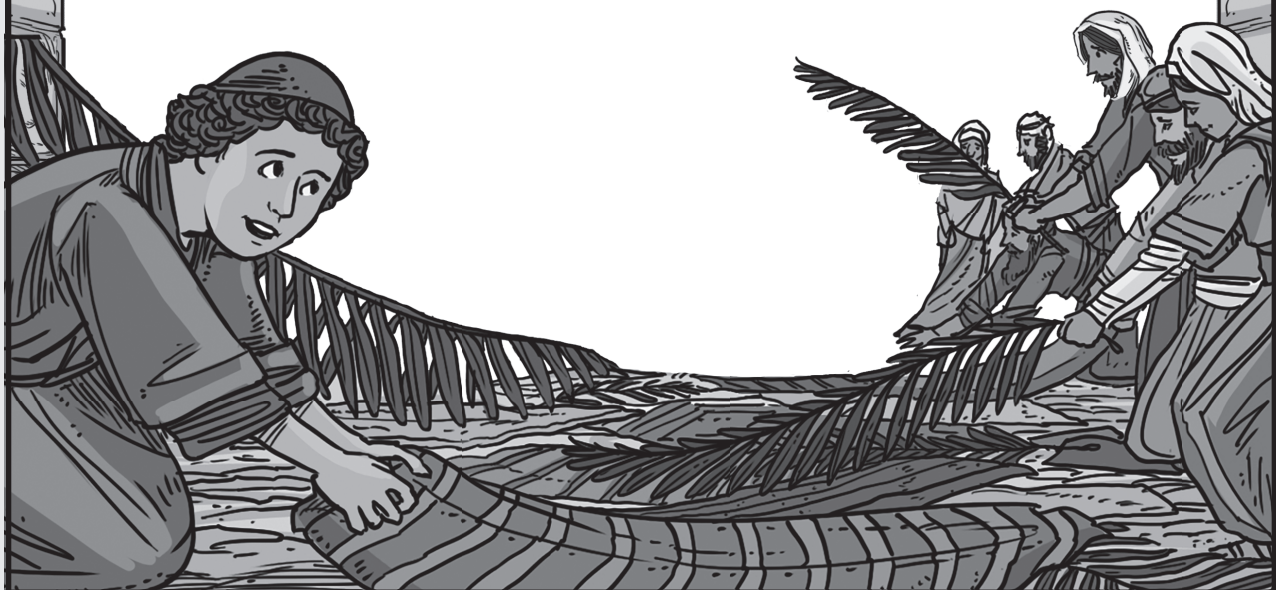
Using the pictures above, retell this story in your own words.

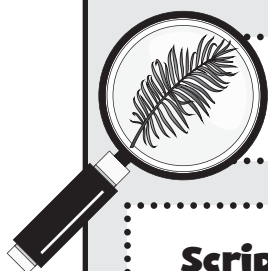


**Palm
Sunday**



A New Kind of King





Lesson at a Glance

Scripture Focus

Matthew 21:6–9

Lesson Goals

- to state that Palm Sunday is the day we celebrate Jesus' coming to Jerusalem before his Passion
- to name Palm Sunday as the beginning of Holy Week
- to identify Jesus as the King who saved us by giving up his life

Catechism References

559–560, 570, 1674

Key Words

disciple, cloak, Passion, hosanna, humble

Music Suggestions

- “Hosanna (Praise Is Rising),” by Worship For Kids (Integrity Music)
- “Hosanna,” by Spring Harvest (Elevation Kids)

Materials Needed

- *The Catholic Children's Bible* and the Palm Sunday activity booklet
- the *Discover!* folder
- copies of the handout “A New Kind of King,” one for each child
- clothespins with springs, two for each child
- a sample completed donkey
- a prayer table, a red cloth, palm branches (one for each child), a bowl of sand, holy water (*optional*)
- scissors, crayons, and pencils
- a board or poster to write on
- materials for any of the additional activities you choose

Background Reflection

Palm Sunday begins Holy Week on a high note. Jesus rides into Jerusalem and is greeted by cheers and waving palm branches. He knows this week will end in his death, yet he sits serenely on a donkey. This Sunday welcomes the King of Kings, triumphant and glorious. Here indeed is the promised king, but a king who is not quite like what anyone was expecting.

The glorious ride on the donkey into Jerusalem amid the cheering crowds flows into the crushing defeat of Good Friday, the stark emptiness of Holy Saturday, and the glory of the Resurrection on Easter. This is the paradigm of our lives and of our spiritual journeys as well.

On this Sunday, we receive a palm to take home. This palm is a symbol that Jesus is truly the King, the King of eternal life, triumphant over death, who brings us with him to Easter life, now and always.



Get Ready! (10 minutes)

Opening Prayer

- Invite the children to turn to page 1 of the Palm Sunday activity booklet.
- Begin prayer by leading the children in the Sign of the Cross. Then say, "Let us remember that we are in the holy presence of God." Allow about 10 seconds of silence.
- Read aloud the prayer on page 1 of the activity booklet. Invite the children to say "Amen," and then close with another Sign of the Cross.

Engage Activity

- Invite the children to share times they have been to a big parade or a football or baseball game where people waved flags. Explore with them the feelings of excitement at these events and help them understand that we cheer to offer people encouragement, to celebrate our happiness, and to show our support as a group.
- Explain that on the first Palm Sunday, Jesus came to Jerusalem and the people had a parade for him. Tell the group that the people did not wave flags, but they waved something else. Explain that when the children read today's Bible passage, they will find out more about this parade.

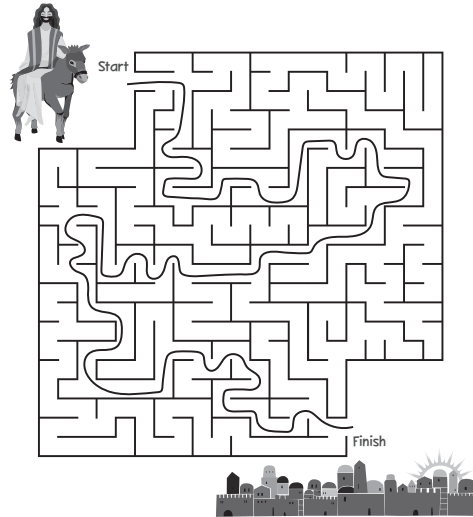


Dive In! (15 minutes)

Scripture Focus

- Invite the children to find Matthew 21:1–17 in *The Catholic Children's Bible* (pages 1498–1499). Point out the green leaf at the beginning and end of the passage.
- Have the children turn to the Featured Story on page 1500. Explain that the green leaves on this page mark that this is a shortened version of the same Scripture passage found on the previous page.
- Ask the children to look at the artwork on pages 1500–1501, and see if anyone can name the green branches that are shown on these pages (*palm branches*). Encourage the children to listen for the way these branches are used.
- Read the Scripture passage to the children. Ask the children several questions to check for comprehension, such as the following:
 - What animals did the disciples of Jesus bring to him? (*a donkey and a colt*)
 - What did they put on the donkey's back? (*their cloaks*)
 - What did Jesus do? (*He got on and rode into the city.*)
 - What did the people spread on the road for Jesus to ride on? (*their cloaks and branches they cut from the trees*)

- What were they shouting? (*"Praise to David's Son! God bless him who comes in the name of the Lord! Praise be to God!"*)
- Why were they so excited? (*They were happy because their King was here.*)
- Have the children turn to the activity on page 2 of the activity booklet and complete it. *Solution:*



Understand It!

- Read aloud the Understand It! on page 1501, or have a volunteer read it.
- Invite the children to summarize what they just heard, asking them key questions about the reading to check for comprehension.
- Review some of the key points with them:
 - The Sunday before Easter is called Passion Sunday, or Palm Sunday. On this day, we remember when Jesus entered Jerusalem as a king.
 - At church we receive blessed palm branches.
 - When Jesus came into Jerusalem, the people cut palm branches, waved them, and laid them down to cover the dusty road.
 - The people thought Jesus was a king who would lead them in battle against their enemies. But Jesus was not that kind of king. He rode a lowly donkey, not a warhorse.
 - Jesus saved us by giving up his own life.
- Explain to the children that sometimes they might even hear this Sunday called by its long name, which is: Palm Sunday of the **Passion** of the Lord. Explain that the *Passion* is another word we use for the suffering of Jesus.

Live It!

- Read aloud the Live It! on page 1501, or have a volunteer read it.
- Explain to them that we say "Praise be to God!" to show our thankfulness for all that God has done for us. Recall that the people in the Scripture passage were praising God for sending Jesus, and we can praise God for the same reason.
- Encourage the children to show the Live It! activity to their parents and to create the bookmark at home. Tell them that they can use this bookmark in their Bibles.

Tell It!

- Ask the children to look at the images in the Tell It! on page 1501. (*Image 1 shows the disciples throwing their cloaks on the donkey. Image 2 shows Jesus riding into Jerusalem and palm branches waving. Image 3 shows the people spreading palm branches and cloaks before Jesus. Image 4 shows the people praising God.*)
- Invite volunteers to tell the story in their own words using the pictures in this section.
- Discuss the fourth image and explain that another way to say "Praise be to God" is to say "**Hosanna**" (which means, "Salvation is here!"). Remind the children that we sing or say, "Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord" and "Hosanna in the highest," at every Mass, during the "Holy, Holy, Holy" prayer.



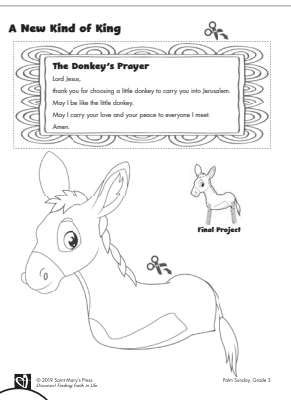
Discover! (25 minutes)

Core Learning Activity (Craft)

A Palm Sunday Donkey

- Prepare by making a sample donkey to show to the children.
- Give each child a copy of the handout.
- Distribute scissors, and instruct the children to cut out the figure of the donkey. Ask them to cut out the prayer and set it aside for now.
- Direct them to color the donkey's body gray or brown and the mane and tail black. Explain that they should color both sides of the donkey and add an eye and a smile to the other side of the donkey's head.
- Distribute two clothespins to each child. Show them how to add legs to the donkey by clipping the clothespins onto the bottom of its body so it can stand on the ends.
- Close the activity by praying "The Donkey's Prayer" together.

Note: The handout can be found at the end of this chapter or accessed online at www.smp.org/discover_grade3.



Process the Activity

- Ask the children to stand their donkeys in front of them. Congratulate the group on their good work.
- Explain that a donkey, even today, is considered a hardworking but lowly animal. Ask the children why Jesus chose a donkey to carry him to Jerusalem. (*Jesus wanted to show that he was not a warlike king but a humble and lowly king. He wanted his followers to be humble too.*)
- Explain that the word *humble* means being down-to-earth and not thinking you are better than everyone else.
- Point out that the donkey is smiling, and ask the children why they think this might be. (*The donkey is happy to be chosen to carry Jesus. He knew Jesus would be kind to him. Accept other reasonable responses.*)
- Explain that we will learn more about this happy day when a donkey carried Jesus into Jerusalem, a day we still celebrate in our Church and in our parish each year.

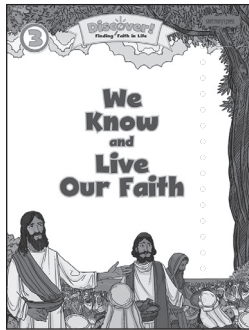


Additional Activity Options

If the core activity would not work for your group for any reason, you may choose to use any of the additional activities on page 294 in its place.

Core Teaching

- Explain to the children that Palm Sunday is the Sunday before Easter and it begins Holy Week, when we remember the Passion, or suffering, of Jesus, our Lord.
- Remind the children that during Holy Week we remember that Jesus is our King who saved us, not by fighting, but by giving up his life on the cross.
- Explain that Palm Sunday is our celebration of the day Jesus came into Jerusalem and the people cheered and greeted him like a king, waving branches and laying their cloaks on the ground.
- Tell the children that on Palm Sunday we receive palm branches in church. Explain that the priest blesses the palms so they become a holy reminder to us of all that Jesus did for us. Remind the children that Jesus is our King, and we honor him and praise him with palm branches on Palm Sunday, just like the people in the Bible did. Explain that we take the palm branches home and put them in a special place where we can see them.
- Explain that palms are signs of victory. Mention to the children that they might see palms in stained-glass windows to show that a saint died for their faith in Christ and is now victorious with him in Heaven. Continue by explaining that the palm branch can remind us to be strong and victorious in times of trouble and to remember that God loves us so much that he sent his Son, Jesus, to save us.
- Ask the children some questions to check for comprehension, such as the following:
 - What is the Sunday before Easter called? (*Palm Sunday*)
 - What week begins with this Sunday? (*Holy Week*)
 - Why is Holy Week important to us? (*We remember the Passion of Jesus during this week. We remember that Jesus gave his life to save us.*)
 - What happened on the first Palm Sunday? (*The people honored and praised Jesus with palm branches. They praised God for giving Jesus to us as our Savior.*)
 - Why do we get palms in church on Palm Sunday? (*We honor and praise Jesus with palms like the people in the Bible did. We keep the palms at home as a reminder that Jesus is our King who came to save us.*)
- Have the children turn to page 4 of the activity booklet. Read the "People of Faith" section aloud. Add any other information you know about Saint Cecilia, and encourage the children to say, "Saint Cecilia, pray for us," during the next week.



We Know and Live Our Faith

The following articles and activities in the *We Know and Live Our Faith* resource correspond to concepts introduced in this lesson:

- “The Church Year” + activity, pages 28–29
- “The Prayer of Praise” + activity, pages 60–61

Read aloud, or invite a volunteer to read, the selections as time allows. Check for understanding by asking several questions. Invite the children to begin the activities, or have them complete the activities with their families at home.



Go! (10 minutes)

Lesson Wrap-Up

- Invite the children to think back over all the different things they did in this lesson, and invite volunteers to share some of the key things they learned.
- Take time to get input from the group and write their answers on the board.
- Ensure that the following points are made, write them on the board, and circle them:
 - Palm Sunday is the day we celebrate Jesus’ coming to Jerusalem before his Passion.
 - Palm Sunday is the beginning of Holy Week.
 - Jesus is the King who saved us by giving up his life.

Short Closing Prayer (optional)

Note: Use this prayer if you do not intend to use the longer prayer service on the next page to close this lesson.

- Begin prayer by leading the group in the Sign of the Cross. Then say, “Let us remember that we are in the holy presence of God.” Allow a few seconds of silence.
- Ask the children to stand their donkey crafts in front of them. Ask them to find the prayer they had set aside, “The Donkey’s Prayer.” Ask the group to read the prayer together.
- Close the prayer by making a final Sign of the Cross together.

Prayer Service

Following Jesus to Jerusalem

Set up a prayer table at the front of the room, covered with a red cloth. Place a sign on the prayer table with "Jerusalem" written on it. Choose three readers and mark or circle their parts for them. Ask the children to form a line across the back of the room, carrying their donkeys.

Leader: Let us begin our prayer with the Sign of the Cross. *(All make Sign of the Cross.)* Let us remember that we are in the holy presence of God. *(Allow about 10 seconds of silence.)*

Leader: Loving God, as we enter into Holy Week, bless us and bless the donkeys that we have made. Today, as we follow Jesus to Jerusalem, may we continue to follow him all the days of our lives.

All: Amen.

Reader 1: Lord Jesus, a donkey carried you to Jerusalem. Help us to carry your peace and love to all we meet.

All: Hosanna! *(Have the children move one or two steps toward "Jerusalem.")*

Reader 2: Lord Jesus, you chose a donkey as a sign of your peaceful and humble kingship. Help us to be peaceful and humble in our relationships with others.

All: Hosanna! *(Have the children move one or two steps toward "Jerusalem.")*

Reader 3: Lord Jesus, you rode into Jerusalem in peace and love. Help us to follow you always.

All: Hosanna! *(Have the children move one or two steps toward "Jerusalem.")*

Leader: Lord Jesus, you came as a peaceful and loving king.

All: Hosanna! *(Have the children move one or two steps toward "Jerusalem.")*

Leader: Let us place our donkeys in "Jerusalem." *(Have the children move the rest of the way and place their donkeys on the prayer table.)* Like Jesus, we have made it to Jerusalem! We have followed our King. Let us pray together: Hosanna in the highest!

All: Hosanna in the highest!

Leader: Let us go now and be a people of peace and love, hope and joy. Hosanna in the highest!

All: Hosanna in the highest!

Close with one of the music suggestions or another appropriate song.

Additional Activities

Materials Needed

- scarves and towels
- a stick horse
- green construction paper
- a pair of scissors
- a video recording device (optional)

Palm Sunday Play (15 minutes)

- Prepare by gathering scarves, towels, and a stick horse. If a stick horse is not available, designate a chair or stool as “the donkey.”
- Cut out palm branch outlines from green construction paper. Lines can be added if desired.
- Explain to the children that they will act out the entry of Jesus into Jerusalem.
- Give everyone a part as townspeople, disciples, and Jesus.
- Distribute towels, scarves, and palm branches.
- Have the children decide how best to act out the scene. Give them direction and guidance as needed.
- Videotape, if possible, the completed effort. Show the video to the children and parents at an appropriate time.

Materials Needed

- plastic Easter eggs, one for each child
- small pieces of green paper to represent palm branches, one for each egg
- small brown crosses, one for each egg
- small rocks, one for each egg
- small strips of white cloth, one for each egg

The Holy Week Egg (15 minutes)

- Prepare by gathering enough plastic Easter eggs for each child to have one. Fill each egg with the following small items: a small palm made from green construction paper, a small brown cross, a small rock, and a small piece of white cloth.
- Distribute the eggs, and explain to the children that the story of Holy Week and Easter can be told using this egg.
- Ask the children to open up their eggs and to take out the pieces with you, one at a time. Explain what each item represents.
 - On Palm Sunday Jesus rode into Jerusalem on a donkey. (*Hold up the small palm.*)
 - On Good Friday Jesus died on the cross. (*Hold up the cross.*)
 - His friends buried him. They closed the tomb with a large rock. (*Hold up the rock.*)
 - On Easter Sunday, when the women came to the tomb, the stone was moved away. All they found was the white cloth that had been wrapped around him. (*Hold up the white cloth.*)

Materials Needed

- a computer with internet access
- a computer projector

Shout Hosanna (15 minutes)

- Show the video “Shout Hosanna from the ‘On Tour’ DVD on Donutman.com—Rob Evans is The Donut Man” (YouTube, 1:35).
- Ask the children to watch and listen to the video.
- Repeat the video and ask the children to imitate the gestures of the children in the video as they watch.
- Remind the children that part of the song comes from the Scripture passage we read today.
- Explain that the last verse of the song, about Jesus rising, is a verse about what we celebrate at Easter: Jesus is alive and risen from the dead!

A New Kind of King



The Donkey's Prayer

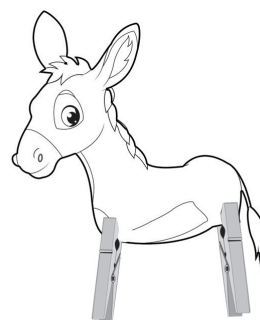
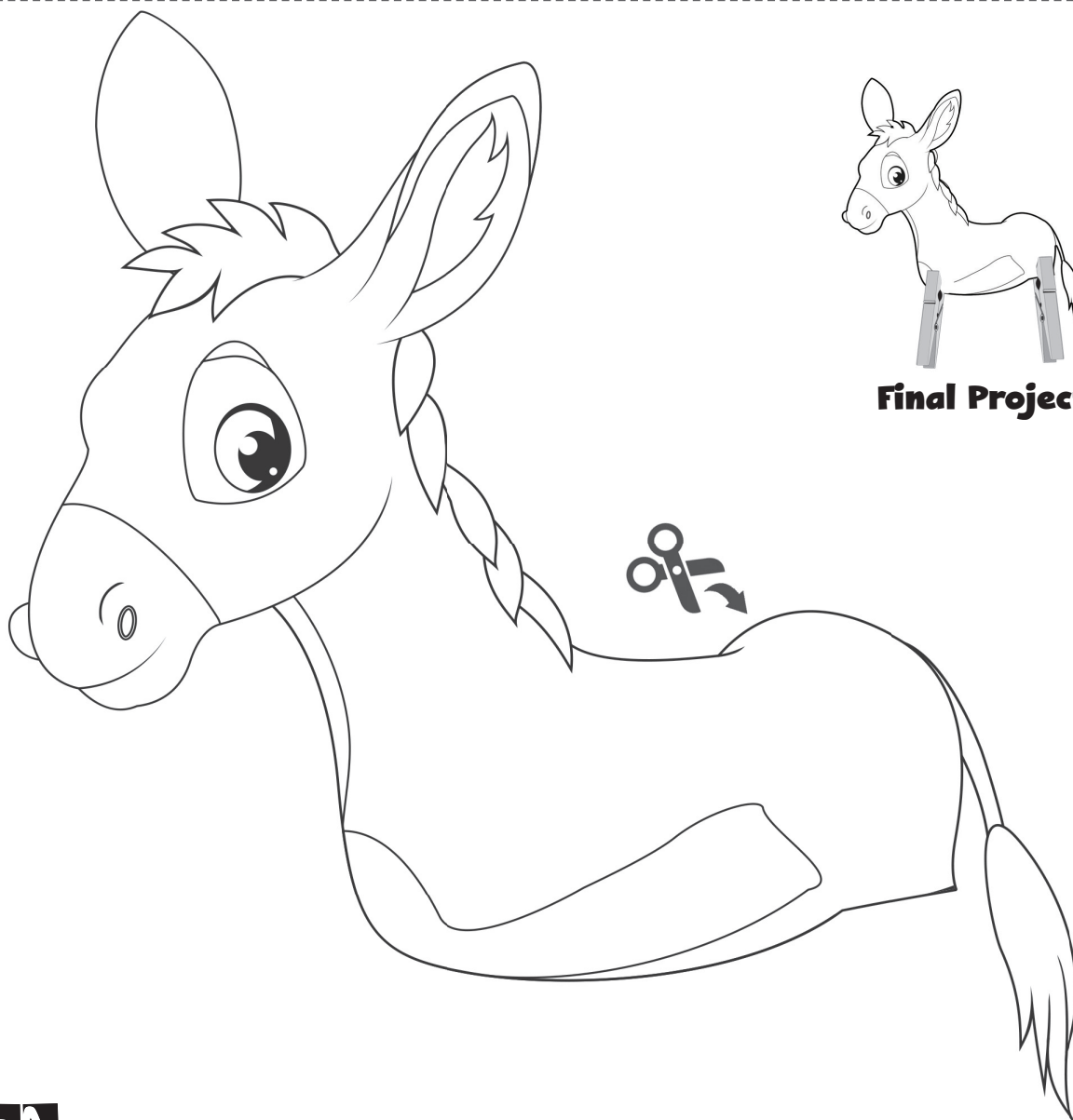
Lord Jesus,

Thank you for choosing a little donkey to carry you into Jerusalem.

May I be like the little donkey.

May I carry your love and your peace to everyone I meet.

Amen.



Final Project





Grade 4 Lenten Lesson



saint mary's press
touching hearts. enlivening minds.



Discover!
Finding Faith in Life


A Time of Preparation

Exodus 14:21–25

Prayer

Dear God, we remember that our Baptism made us members of your family, the Church. Help us to understand the meaning of the season of Lent and how we might use this time to come closer to you. Amen.





Use the Featured Story on page 122 in *The Catholic Children's Bible* (Exodus 14:21–25) to help you unscramble the words in the following sentences.

1

OSSEM held out his hand over the sea.

2

God drove the sea **KACB** with a strong east wind.

3

The wind blew all night and turned the **AES** into dry land.

4

The **WTEAR** was divided, and the Israelites went through.

5

The Egyptians **DEURSUP** the Israelites into the sea.

6

The Egyptian army was thrown into a **CNAPI**.

7

God made the wheels of the Egyptians' **THSACIOR** get stuck.



Our Baptismal Promises

Leader: Let us begin our prayer with the Sign of the Cross. . . . Let us remember that we are in the holy presence of God.

Leader: Lent is a time to remember our Baptism, when we became free as children of God.

All: Thanks be to God.

Leader: Lent is a time to prepare to renew our baptismal promises, made for us by our parents and godparents.

All: Thanks be to God.

Leader: Lord, as you led your people through the sea, we thank you for leading us through the waters of Baptism.

All: Thanks be to God.

Leader: Lord, we thank you for making us your children through Baptism.

All: Thanks be to God.

Leader: Let us renew our baptismal promises now by saying "I do" after each question.

- Do you reject sin so as to live in the freedom of God's children? **(I do.)**
- Do you reject evil? **(I do.)**
- Do you reject Satan? **(I do.)**
- Do you believe in God? **(I do.)**
- Do you believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son? **(I do.)**
- Do you believe in the Holy Spirit? **(I do.)**
- Do you believe in the holy Catholic Church? **(I do.)**

Leader: We thank you God, for the gift of faith, given to us in Baptism.

All: Thanks be to God.

Leader: Lord, may we live our Baptism as your free sons and daughters. We ask this through Jesus, our Lord.

All: Amen.

(Blessing with holy water.)

**Part of this prayer service is based on the Renewal of Baptismal Promises found in the Roman Missal.*

Family Page

Background Reflection

Easter approaches—but first the Church encourages us to journey through the season of preparation we call Lent. Lent is the time when we, together as an entire Church, root ourselves more deeply in the salvation we have in Christ. Traditionally a time of fasting, prayer, and almsgiving, the forty days of Lent are also a personal time of spiritual growth, rooted in our Baptism.

Just as Moses led God's people to freedom through water, our Baptism leads us to the freedom of being God's sons and daughters. This gift of Baptism is renewed in Lent, as we especially remember and pray for the catechumens who are preparing for the Sacraments of Christian Initiation (Baptism, Confirmation, and the Eucharist) at the Easter Vigil. The renewing of our own baptismal promises is our best response to the new life begun in Christ in the Sacrament of Baptism. Encourage your child to see his or her Baptism as a wonderful beginning to a new life of grace—a new life of joy, peace, and love.

Family Activities

- Count your blessings as a family. Each day this week, gather as a family and write down the blessings your family sees. Each Sunday morning this Lent, take time to read this list of your family's blessings, and thank God.
- Obtain a list of the RCIA candidates who will join the Church at your parish this Easter. Each evening this week, invite your child to pray for the candidates by name.
- Watch the video "2016 Lent Calendar—Kids talk about Lent" (YouTube, 2:57). Discuss some of the ideas suggested by the children in the video. Then brainstorm how your child can make Lent a holy time as you journey with the Church to Easter.

People of Faith

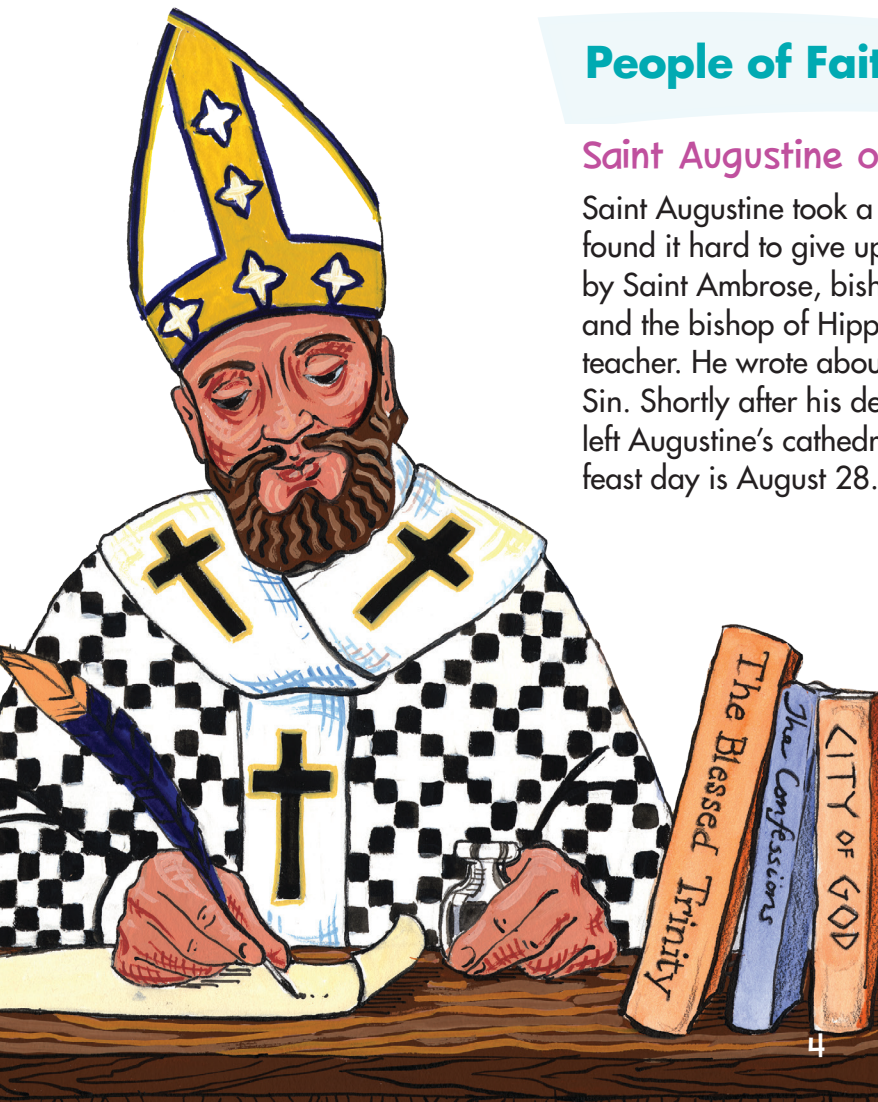
Saint Augustine of Hippo (354-430)

Saint Augustine took a long time to become a Christian because he found it hard to give up his sinful habits. He was baptized as an adult by Saint Ambrose, bishop of Milan. Augustine later became a priest and the bishop of Hippo, in North Africa. Augustine was a writer and teacher. He wrote about grace, forgiveness, the Trinity, and Original Sin. Shortly after his death, invaders came to destroy Hippo, but they left Augustine's cathedral and library untouched. Saint Augustine's feast day is August 28.

Prayer

Pray this prayer together as a family, beginning and ending with the Sign of the Cross.

Jesus, walk with our family as we prepare to celebrate your Resurrection at Easter. Help us through our fasting, prayer, and good works to come closer to you and to grow in compassion for those in need. Amen.



God Leads the Israelites Out of Egypt



Exodus 14:21–25 (For the full story, read Exodus 14:5–29.)

21 Moses held out his hand over the sea, and the LORD drove the sea back with a strong east wind. It blew all night and turned the sea into dry land. The water was divided, 22 and the Israelites went through the sea on dry ground, with walls of water on both sides. 23 The Egyptians **pursued** them . . . into the sea with all their horses, **chariots**, and drivers. 24 Just before dawn the LORD looked down . . . at the Egyptian army and threw them into a **panic**. 25 He made the wheels of their chariots get stuck. . . . The Egyptians said, “The LORD is fighting for the Israelites [IZ-ry-el-yts] against us. Let’s get out of here!”

pursued chased people in order to catch them
chariot two-wheeled horse-drawn cart
panic a sudden feeling of being very afraid



Understand It!

In this Bible story, water played a role in keeping God's people alive. When the Israelites arrived at the shore of the Red Sea, the Egyptians were chasing them. The Egyptians wanted to capture the Israelites and make them slaves again. So God did something wonderful. When Moses raised his stick over the Red Sea, God sent a wind to split the water in two. The Israelites walked safely through the walls of water on dry ground! God loves his people so much that he brought them through the water to be real close to him.

When water was poured on you at Baptism, God saved you through water too. You received God's special gift, which is called grace. The grace God gives you at Baptism makes you his child and keeps filling you with new life. It is good for children to be close to their parents. Baptism makes you so close to God the Father that he actually works in you. He wants you close to him, too.

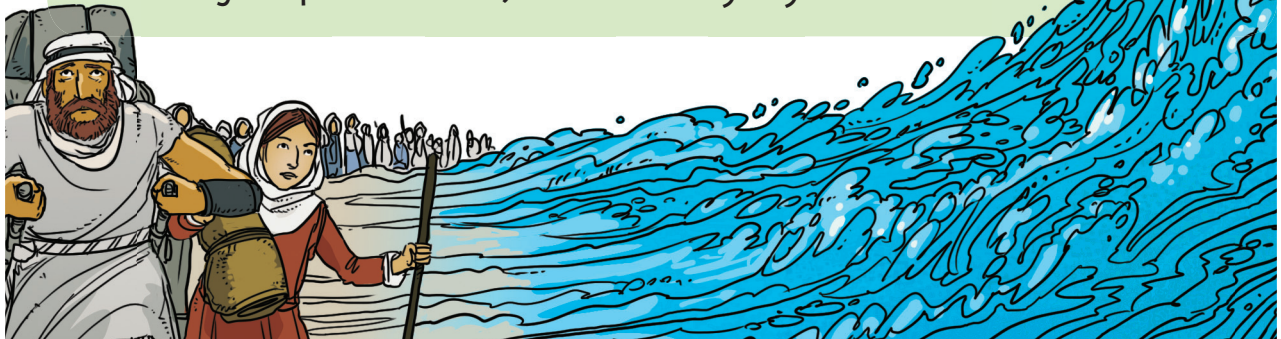
Live It!

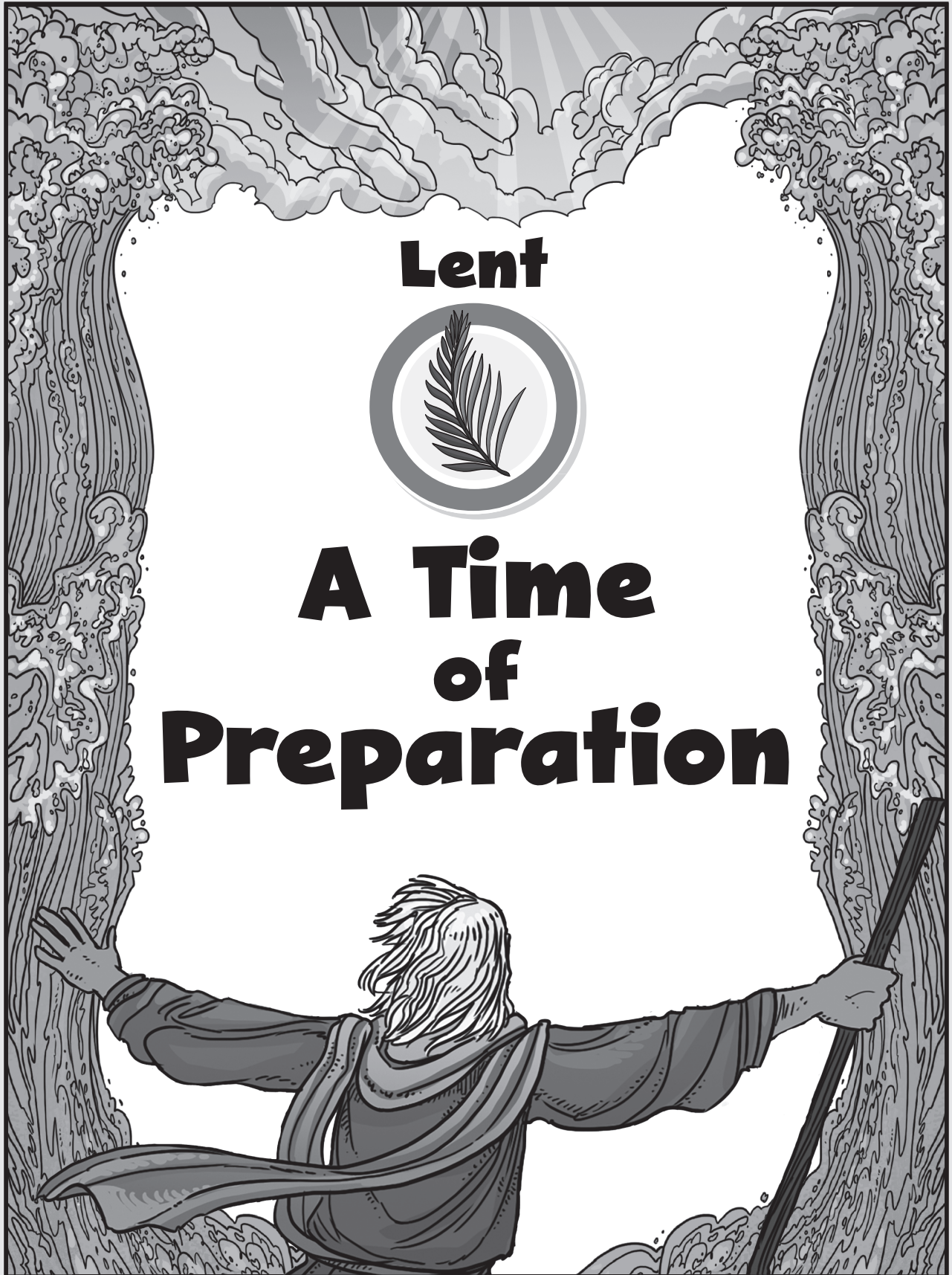
Use paper and crayons to create a picture of the Israelites going through the Red Sea. Paint how you see the two huge walls of water and the people walking through them. When you are done with the picture, add a title that reminds you of how God helps people. Display your picture at home for others to see.

Tell It!



Using the pictures above, retell this story in your own words.

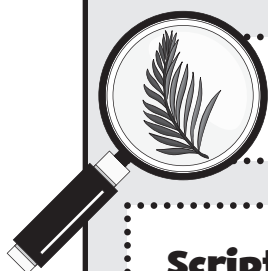




Lent



**A Time
of
Preparation**



Lesson at a Glance

Scripture Focus

Exodus 14:21–25

Lesson Goals

- to explain that the waters of Baptism lead us to freedom from the slavery of sin
- to identify Lent as a season in which we prepare for the renewal of our baptismal promises at Easter
- to define the Easter Vigil as the night when new Christians receive the Sacraments of Initiation

Catechism References

1217–1222, 1229–1233

Church Year Calendar

A Church year calendar is available in black-and-white at the end of this book and in full-color at www.smp.org/discover_grade4.

Key Words

pursued, chariot, panic

Music Suggestions

- “You’re All I Need (Live),” by Hillsong Kids (Hillsong Church)
- “Come to the Water,” by Jaime Thietten (Alturas Productions)

Materials Needed

- *The Catholic Children’s Bible* and the Lent activity booklet
- a board or poster to write on
- blank paper
- crayons
- blank stapled booklets, one for each child
- a copy of the parish calendar
- a bowl of holy water
- materials for any of the additional activities you choose

Background Reflection

Easter approaches—but first the Church encourages us to journey through the season of preparation we call Lent. Lent is the time when we, together as an entire Church, root ourselves more deeply in the salvation we have in Christ. Traditionally a time of fasting, prayer, and almsgiving, the forty days of Lent are also a personal time of spiritual growth, rooted in our Baptism.

Just as Moses led God’s people to freedom through water, our Baptism leads us to the freedom of being God’s sons and daughters. This gift of Baptism is renewed in Lent, as we especially remember and pray for those catechumens who are preparing for the Sacraments of Christian Initiation (Baptism, Confirmation, and the Eucharist) at the Easter Vigil. The renewing of our own baptismal promises is our best response to the new life begun in Christ in the Sacrament of Baptism. Encourage your children to see their Baptism as a wonderful beginning to a new life of grace—a new life of joy, peace, and love.



Get Ready! (10 minutes)

Opening Prayer

- Invite the children to turn to page 1 of the Lent activity booklet.
- Begin prayer by leading the children in the Sign of the Cross. Then say, "Let us remember that we are in the holy presence of God." Allow about 10 seconds of silence.
- Read aloud the prayer on page 1 of the activity booklet. Invite the children to say "Amen," and then close with another Sign of the Cross.

Engage Activity

- Ask the children to recall a time in their life or in their family life when their biggest question was, "How will I, or we, get through it?" Give examples and ask for others. (*Examples may include a flood or other natural disaster, an accident, an illness, even a music recital, a race or game, or other personal challenge.*)
- Ask the children to share anything they remember about this challenge. Accept all reasonable responses, and write key information on the board.
- Tell the children that they will read about a challenge Moses and the Israelites faced in Egypt and will see how God's miraculous action through Moses is connected to our Baptism and a season in the Church called Lent.



Dive In! (15 minutes)

Scripture Focus

- Invite the children to find Exodus 14:5–29 in *The Catholic Children's Bible* (pages 120–121). Point out the green leaf at the beginning and end of the passage.
- Have the children turn to the Featured Story on page 122. Explain that the green leaves on this page mark that this is a shortened version of the same Scripture passage found on the previous pages.
- Ask the children to look at the artwork on pages 122–123. Invite volunteers to describe what they see happening in the pictures.
- Read the Scripture passage to the children. Then ask several questions to check for comprehension, such as the following:
 - Who was able to cross the sea on dry ground? (*the Israelites*)
 - Who was following the Israelites? (*the Egyptians*)
 - What happened to the Egyptians? (*The Egyptians got stuck, and they realized that God was with the Israelites.*)
 - Who was fighting for the Israelites and helping them? (*God*)
 - Who fights for us and helps us get through what we need to get through in life? (*God*)

- Explain that our faith in God does not prevent us from facing difficulties. Assure the children that our faith in God does help us get through the difficulties we face, just as the Israelites got through the sea with God's help.
- Have the children turn to the activity on page 2 of the activity booklet and complete it. *Answers: 1. Moses, 2. back, 3. sea, 4. water, 5. pursued, 6. panic, 7. chariots*

Understand It!

- Read aloud the Understand It! on page 123, or have a volunteer read it.
- Invite the children to summarize what they just heard, asking them key questions about the reading to check for comprehension.
- Review some of the key points with them:
 - Water kept the Israelites safe when the Egyptians were chasing them.
 - God did something wonderful at the Red Sea: Moses raised his stick, and God split the Red Sea in two so the Israelites could safely cross the water on dry ground.
 - In the waters of our Baptism, God gives us grace, his special gift that makes us his children.
- Tell the children that some children are baptized as infants, and others receive Baptism when they are older—but God wants all of us to be close to him through Baptism.
- Remind the children that the grace of Baptism leads us to freedom from the slavery of sin.

Live It!

- Read aloud the Live It! on page 123, or have a volunteer read it.
- Distribute the blank paper and crayons to each child. Ask the children to use crayons to draw the picture suggested in the Live It! Remind them to add a title. Allow a few minutes for the children to work.
- Invite volunteers to share their drawings and titles, time permitting.

Tell It!

- Ask the children to look at the images in the Tell It! on page 123.
- Invite volunteers to retell the story using the images. (*Image 1 shows Moses raising his hand over the Red Sea, with the Israelites behind him. Image 2 shows the Israelites walking between the walls of divided water. Image 3 shows the Egyptian army about to get stuck in the water. Image 4 shows the Egyptians knowing it's time to leave.*)



Discover! (25 minutes)

Core Learning Activity (Craft)

Lenten Reminder Booklets

- Prepare blank booklets, one for each child, before class by stapling five half-sheets of paper together.
- Invite the children to brainstorm things they can do for Lent to draw closer to Jesus. Write their answers on the board, and suggest possibilities if they get stuck. (*Possible answers include: cleaning up after meals without being asked, reading to a younger sibling, reading Scripture, praying for others, helping a friend with homework, or making cards to send to nursing homes.*)
- Explain that giving up treats like candy and ice cream are also good ideas, because these things can help us remember what Jesus gave up for us. Tell the young people that we can make this a prayer for all of those who have less than we do. Remind the young people to ask their families to help them keep this kind of resolution.
- Distribute the blank booklets and crayons to the children. Have the children write one Lenten act of prayer or service on each sheet of paper in the booklet. Then invite them to title the booklet and decorate the covers and pages.
- Tell the children to take the booklet home and to choose one of the activities to do each week as a Lenten practice.

Process the Activity

- Invite volunteers to share some of the ideas they wrote in their booklets.
- Tell the children that they are now going to learn about the season of Lent and why Lent is a good time to spend extra time focused on our relationship with Jesus and doing good works for others.

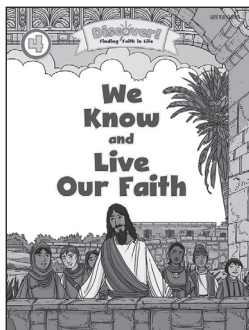
Additional Activity Options

If the core activity would not work for your group for any reason, you may choose to use any of the additional activities on page 263 in its place.

Core Teaching

- Explain to the children that Lent is forty days long. Show them a parish calendar, and count the days of Lent, from Ash Wednesday through Holy Saturday. (Remember that Sundays are not counted as “days of Lent,” although we usually keep up our chosen Lenten practices on Sundays as well.) Continue with the following additional points about Lent:
 - The forty days of Lent remind us of the forty years the Israelites wandered in the wilderness after passing through the Red Sea.
 - The forty days also remind us of the forty days Jesus spent fasting and praying in the desert. This reference is found in the Gospels of Matthew, Mark, and Luke.
 - Lent is a time to renew our lives in Christ.
 - Three traditional practices during Lent are praying, fasting, and doing good works (also called almsgiving). These practices help prepare for the renewal of our baptismal promises at Easter.
 - Fasting means more than just giving up food. We can also make small sacrifices, such as “fasting from,” or giving up, mean words, too much time with electronics, or other things that take us away from time with our family or time in prayer.
 - Spending more time in prayer is a wonderful practice for the season of Lent. We should make an effort to pray more often during this season.
 - Good works can be any action that helps or shows care for someone else.
- Tell the children that on the night before Easter, many adults and older children officially enter the Church at the Easter Vigil. Explain that those who were not already baptized receive Baptism at the Easter Vigil and receive the Sacraments of Confirmation and First Holy Communion. Remind the children that together these three sacraments are the Sacraments of Christian Initiation.
- Point out to the children that today’s Scripture reading is read as part of the Easter Vigil liturgy to remind us of God’s saving action. Explain that just as crossing through the waters of the sea brought the Israelites freedom, we are freed from sin by the waters of Baptism.
- Remind the children that Lent is a preparation for Easter, and at Easter we renew our baptismal promises. Explain that in these promises we say that we believe in God and renounce the ways of sin. Assure the children that faith in God leads to joy and love, and that the ways of sin lead to unhappiness for ourselves and others.

- Ask the children some questions to check for comprehension, such as the following:
 - What is the season of Lent? (*Lent is a season of forty days in which we renew our lives in Christ; we prepare for the renewal of our baptismal promises at Easter.*)
 - What three practices are helpful during Lent? (*fasting, praying, and doing good works*)
 - What are the three Sacraments of Christian Initiation that new Catholics receive the night before Easter? (*Baptism, Confirmation, and the Eucharist*)
 - What do we promise in our baptismal promises? (*We promise to follow God's way in faith and love, and we renounce the ways of sin.*)
- Have the children turn to page 4 of the activity booklet. Read aloud the "People of Faith" section. Add any other information you know about Saint Augustine of Hippo, and encourage the children to say, "Saint Augustine, pray for us," during the next week.



We Know and Live Our Faith

The following articles in the *We Know and Live Our Faith* resource correspond to concepts introduced in this lesson:

- "Life in Christ," page 47
- "Prayer Is God's Idea," page 76

Read the selections aloud, or invite a volunteer to read, as time allows. Check for understanding by asking several questions. You may want to summarize the key concepts for the children.

**Go! (10 minutes)****Lesson Wrap-Up**

- Invite the children to think back over all the different things they did in this lesson, and invite volunteers to share some of the key things they learned.
- Take some time to get input from the group, and write their answers on the board.
- Ensure that the following points are made, write them on the board, and circle them:
 - The waters of Baptism lead us to freedom from the slavery of sin.
 - Lent is a season in which we prepare for the renewal of our baptismal promises at Easter.
 - The Easter Vigil is the night when new Christians receive the Sacraments of Initiation.

Short Closing Prayer (optional)

Note: Use this prayer if you do not intend to use the longer prayer service on the next page to close this lesson.

- Begin prayer by leading the children in the Sign of the Cross and saying, "Let us remember that we are in the holy presence of God," followed by a few seconds of silence.
- Create a spontaneous prayer for all of those who are preparing to enter the Church through Baptism and the other Sacraments of Christian Initiation at the Easter Vigil.
- Invite the children to respond with "Amen," and then close with a final Sign of the Cross.

Prayer Service

Our Baptismal Promises

Prepare a small bowl with some holy water, and place it on your prayer table or in your prayer space. Gather the young people around the prayer table, and explain that at the end of this prayer you will be inviting them to come forward, one at a time, to bless themselves with holy water to remind them of the waters of Baptism.

Leader: Let us begin our prayer with the Sign of the Cross. *(All make the Sign of the Cross.)* Let us remember that we are in the holy presence of God. *(Allow about 10 seconds of silence.)*

Leader: Lent is a time to remember our Baptism, when we became free as children of God.

All: Thanks be to God.

Leader: Lent is a time to prepare to renew our baptismal promises, made for us by our parents and godparents.

All: Thanks be to God.

Leader: Lord, as you led your people through the sea, we thank you for leading us through the waters of Baptism.

All: Thanks be to God.

Leader: Lord, we thank you for making us your children through Baptism.

All: Thanks be to God.

Leader: Let us renew our baptismal promises now by saying "I do" after each question.

- Do you reject sin so as to live in the freedom of God's children? (I do.)
- Do you reject evil? (I do.)
- Do you reject Satan? (I do.)

- Do you believe in God? (I do.)
- Do you believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son? (I do.)
- Do you believe in the Holy Spirit? (I do.)
- Do you believe in the holy Catholic Church? (I do.)

Leader: We thank you, God, for the gift of faith, given to us in Baptism.

All: Thanks be to God.

Leader: Lord, may we live our Baptism as your free sons and daughters. We ask this through Jesus, our Lord.

All: Amen.

Invite the children to come forward, one by one, to bless themselves with holy water and then return to their places. You might consider playing some quiet music as the children come forward and bless themselves, especially if you have a large group. Consider ending with an appropriate song.

(Part of this prayer service is based on the "Renewal of Baptismal Promises" in the English translation of The Roman Missal.)

Additional Activities

Materials Needed

- slips with the names of this year's RCIA catechumens and candidates from your parish, one slip for each child
- construction paper in spring colors
- markers or crayons

Cards for RCIA Candidates (15 minutes)

- Prepare in advance by creating slips of paper with the names of your parish's RCIA catechumens and candidates. Put one name on each slip of paper, creating enough slips for each child to get one. (Some names may be listed multiple times if necessary.)
- Explain to the children that many people will join the Church during the Easter Vigil service. Explain that these people have been studying all during Lent and will now celebrate the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults, or RCIA.
- Give each child one of the slips with the name of an RCIA catechumen or candidate. Tell the children that they will make a card to welcome their assigned person into the Church.
- Distribute the construction paper and drawing materials. Have the children fold the construction paper in half to make a card. Allow them 5–10 minutes to write and decorate their cards.
- Collect the cards and provide them to the RCIA coordinator or other volunteer or staff person to distribute to the RCIA catechumens and candidates.

Materials Needed

- brown and blue construction paper, one sheet of each for each child
- several pairs of scissors
- several glue sticks

I Am a Follower of Jesus (15 minutes)

- Tell the children that through our Baptism, we all are children of God, called to follow Jesus. Ask the children to brainstorm ways fourth graders can be followers of Jesus. Affirm all reasonable answers.
- Distribute the brown and blue construction paper, one sheet of each color per child. Have each child trace both feet onto the brown paper.
- Distribute the scissors and glue sticks. Have the children cut out their footprints and then glue the footprints onto the blue paper.
- Have the children write "Because of my Baptism, I follow Jesus" at the top of their papers.
- Tell them that their crafts represent their journey through the waters of Baptism, like the Israelites' journey through the waters of the Red Sea.

Materials Needed

- a computer with internet access
- a computer projector

Kids Talk about Lent (15 minutes)

- Show the video "2016 Lent Calendar—Kids Talk about Lent" (YouTube, 2:57) to the group.
- Ask the children to recall what the children in the video shared about their understanding of Lent.
- Invite the children to brainstorm what they also can do to make Lent a holy time during the journey to Easter. Affirm all reasonable answers, and write the ideas on the board.
- Remind the children that we should use this season to grow closer to Jesus.



Grade 5 Lenten Lesson



saint mary's press
touching hearts. enlivening minds.



Three Holy Days

John 19:16b–18, 28–30

Understand It!

Why did Jesus have to die? This is a deep question, and it has to do with human life itself. We learn from the Book of Genesis, the very first book of the Bible, that death is the result of sin. Yet Jesus came to free us from sin and death, to make it possible for us to follow him along the path of love. That path of love leads through death to life forever with God.

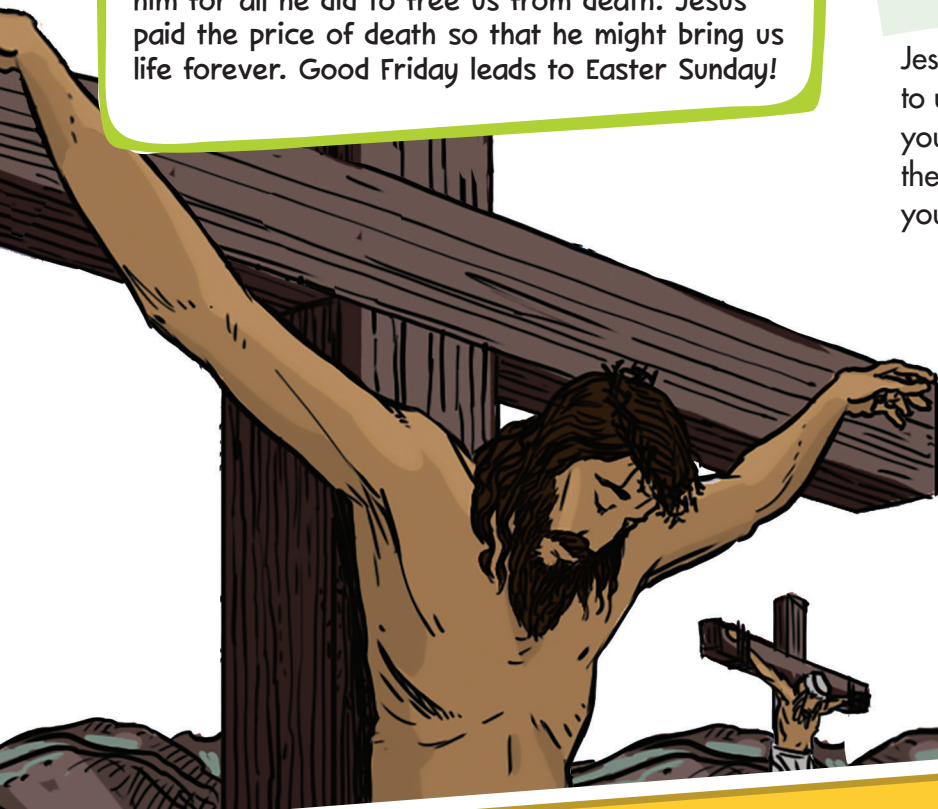
This is the path that Jesus walked. Because death is part of human life, and because Jesus was like us in all ways except sin, Jesus had to go through death also. During the Easter Triduum, and especially on Good Friday, we thank him for all he did to free us from death. Jesus paid the price of death so that he might bring us life forever. Good Friday leads to Easter Sunday!

Live It!

We have many “Good Fridays” in our lives—times of sadness and sorrow. When we look at Jesus on the cross, we are strengthened in knowing that pain, struggle, and even death can lead to new life. On a small piece of paper, write the name of someone you know who is going through a hard time. Tuck or tape the paper to the crucifix. Pray that this person will find strength in Jesus.

Prayer

Jesus, you suffered and died for us. Help us to understand your great love that would offer yourself to free us from sin and death. Show us the path of love that you walked. Help us to follow you from Good Friday to Easter Sunday. Amen.



Use the Scripture passage in *The Catholic Children's Bible* (John 19:16b–18, 28–30) on page 1700 to answer the following questions.

1. Jesus carried his own _____.
2. Golgotha means "Place of the _____."
3. Jesus was crucified with _____ other men.
4. Jesus knew that everything had been _____.
5. Jesus made the _____ come true.
6. Jesus said, "I am _____."
7. Jesus was given a sponge _____ in wine.
8. Jesus drank the _____.
9. At his death, Jesus said, "It is _____!"
10. Jesus bowed his head and gave up his _____.

Then **[JESUS]**
bowed his
head
and gave up
HIS SPIRIT.

John 19:30





The Holy Cross of Jesus Christ

Leader: Let us begin our prayer with the Sign of the Cross. Let us remember that we are in the holy presence of God. *(Leader's remarks follow.)* Please stand and face the first station.

Reader 1: Station 1: Jesus Is Condemned to Death

Lord Jesus, you were a teacher, a healer, a prophet, a friend. You were condemned by lies, rumors, and popular opinion. Help us, Lord, when we are misunderstood by others.

All: We adore you, O Christ, and we bless you, because by your holy cross you have redeemed the world.

Reader 2: Station 9: Jesus Falls for the Third Time

Lord Jesus, the cross you carried was heavy. And you were too weak to carry it. You fell under its weight three times. Sometimes, when life gets hard and we feel overwhelmed, help us to remember that it is okay to fall. Help us to keep following you.

All: We adore you, O Christ, and we bless you. . . .

Reader 3: Station 12: Jesus Dies on the Cross

Lord Jesus, just before you died, you said, "Father, into your hands I commend my spirit." Jesus gave his whole life—the best parts and the worst parts—back to the Father. We can do this, too. We can give our lives to God every day—the best parts and the worst parts—and when we do, our lives become a prayer: "Father, into your hands I commend my spirit."

All: We adore you, O Christ, and we bless you. . . .

Reader 4: Station 15: Jesus Rises from the Dead

This station is sometimes added to the Stations of the Cross to recognize that the life of Jesus does not end in death. It ends in Resurrection. This is true of our lives too. It is true every day, when we go through little deaths and little resurrections. But we know that the Risen Jesus is alive and with us always.

Lord Jesus, help us know more and more that you are alive and with us now, especially in the Holy Eucharist. Thank you for all you did during your Passion, and help us to follow you from death to life, now and forever. Amen.

All: We adore you, O Christ and we bless you. . . .

Leader: Let us go in peace, now, to proclaim the Gospel with our lives.

All: Thanks be to God.

Family Page

Background Reflection

Every year, in the liturgical cycle, we confront the mystery of Jesus' suffering and death on Good Friday, during the primary celebration of the Church Year called the Easter Triduum. This is the name of the period of liturgical services between Holy Thursday evening and Easter Sunday evening.

Our young people are also confronted by the mystery of death that weaves itself into our lives. Like us, they too ask, "Why?" when a loved one dies. We might also ask: "Why did Jesus have to suffer and die? Wasn't there an easier way to save the world?"

Jesus would not have been fully human if he had not fully died a human death. Jesus did not avoid the hard parts of human life. By dying he destroyed death itself and conquered it forever. After the Resurrection, death became the doorway to new life with God: "Indeed for your faithful, Lord, \ life is changed not ended" (*Roman Missal*).

Jesus assures us that Good Friday leads to Easter Sunday—not only for him, but for us as well.

Family Activities

- Plan to participate with your child in the liturgies of Easter Triduum—Holy Thursday, Good Friday, and the Easter Vigil. A fifth grader is capable of understanding much of what is happening, and this once-a-year event, with the most dramatic liturgies of the Church year, is at the very heart of our faith.
- Read together the account of Jesus' Crucifixion and death (John 19:16b–18, 28–30) with your fifth grader. Use the Background Reflection on this page to deepen your own understanding of Jesus' death. Assure your daughter or son that Jesus rose from the dead and is with us today, especially in the Holy Eucharist.
- Watch the video "Lord I Lift Your Name on High—Maranatha Singers (With Lyrics)" (YouTube, 3:13) together. Talk about both the Good Friday and the Easter Sunday aspects of this song.

People of Faith

Saint Joseph of Arimathea (first century)

Saint Joseph was a wealthy man who followed Jesus. He kept his beliefs secret, because he was also a member of the Sanhedrin, or Jewish Council. But after Jesus died, Joseph asked Pilate for permission to take Jesus' body from the cross. Joseph wrapped Jesus' body in fine linen and laid him in a new tomb. The Church remembers Saint Joseph of Arimathea on March 17.

Prayer

Pray this prayer together as a family, beginning and ending with the Sign of the Cross.

Lord Jesus, your suffering on Good Friday ended in your Resurrection on Easter Sunday. Help us bear our own Good Fridays and look forward to celebrating new life on Easter. We ask this in your name, Lord Jesus. Amen.

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Jesus Is Crucified

So they took charge of Jesus. **17** He went out, carrying his cross, and came to "The Place of the Skull," as it is called. (In Hebrew it is called "Golgotha.") **18** There they crucified him; and they also crucified two other men, one on each side, with Jesus between them. **19** Pilate wrote a notice and had it put on the cross. "Jesus of Nazareth, the King of the Jews," is what he wrote. **20** Many people read it, because the place where Jesus was crucified was not far from the city. The notice was written in Hebrew, Latin, and Greek. **21** The chief priests said to Pilate, "Do not write 'The King of the Jews,' but rather, 'This man said, I am the King of the Jews.' "

22 Pilate answered, "What I have written stays written."

23 After the soldiers had crucified Jesus, they took his clothes and divided them into four parts, one part for each soldier. They also took the robe, which was made of one piece of woven cloth without any seams in it. **24** The soldiers said to one another, "Let's not tear it; let's throw dice to see who will get it." This happened in order to make the scripture come true:

"They divided my clothes among themselves

and gambled for my robe."

And this is what the soldiers did.

25 Standing close to Jesus' cross were his mother, his mother's sister, Mary the wife of Clopas, and Mary Magdalene. **26** Jesus saw his mother and the disciple he loved standing there; so he said to his mother, "He is your son."

27 Then he said to the disciple, "She is your mother." From that time the disciple took her to live in his home.

The Death of Jesus

28 Jesus knew that by now everything had been completed; and in order to make the scripture come true, he said, "I am thirsty."

29 A bowl was there, full of cheap wine; so a sponge was soaked in the wine, put on a stalk of hyssop, and lifted up to his lips. **30** Jesus drank the wine and said, "It is finished!"

Then he bowed his head and gave up his spirit.

Jesus' Side Is Pierced

31 Then the Jewish authorities asked Pilate to allow them to break the legs of the men who had been crucified, and to take the bodies down from the crosses. They requested this because it was Friday, and they did not want the bodies to stay on the crosses on the Sabbath, since the coming Sabbath was especially holy. **32** So the soldiers went and broke the legs of the first man and then of the other man who had been crucified with Jesus. **33** But when they came to Jesus, they saw that he was already dead, so they did not break his legs. **34** One of the soldiers, however, plunged his spear into Jesus' side, and at once blood and water poured out. (**35** The one who saw this happen has spoken of it, so that you also may believe. What he said is true, and he knows that he speaks the truth.)

36 This was done to make the scripture come true: "Not one of his bones will be broken." **37** And there is another scripture that says, "People will look at him whom they pierced."

The Burial of Jesus

38 After this, Joseph, who was from the town of Arimathea, asked Pilate if he could take Jesus' body. (Joseph

was a follower of Jesus, but in secret, because he was afraid of the Jewish authorities.) Pilate told him he could have the body, so Joseph went and took it away. **39** Nicodemus, who at first had gone to see Jesus at night, went with Joseph, taking with him about one hundred pounds of spices, a mixture of myrrh and aloes. **40** The two men took Jesus' body and wrapped it in linen cloths with the spices according to the Jewish custom of preparing a body for burial. **41** There was a garden in the place where Jesus had been put to death, and in it there was a new tomb where no one had ever been buried. **42** Since it was the day before the Sabbath and because the tomb was close by, they placed Jesus' body there.

The Empty Tomb

20 ¹ Early on Sunday morning, while it was still dark, Mary Magdalene went to the tomb and saw that the stone had been taken away from the entrance. ² She went running to Simon Peter and the other disciple, whom Jesus loved, and told them, "They have taken the Lord from the tomb, and we don't know where they have put him!"

³ Then Peter and the other disciple went to the tomb. ⁴ The two of them were running, but the other disciple ran faster than Peter and reached the tomb first. ⁵ He bent over and saw the linen cloths, but he did not go in. ⁶ Behind him came Simon Peter, and he went straight into the tomb. He saw the linen cloths lying there ⁷ and the cloth which had been around Jesus' head. It was not lying with the linen cloths but was rolled up by itself. ⁸ Then the

other disciple, who had reached the tomb first, also went in; he saw and believed. (⁹ They still did not understand the scripture which said that he must rise from death.) ¹⁰ Then the disciples went back home.

Jesus Appears to Mary Magdalene

¹¹ Mary stood crying outside the tomb. While she was still crying, she bent over and looked in the tomb ¹² and saw two angels there dressed in white, sitting where the body of Jesus had been, one at the head and the other at the feet. ¹³ "Woman, why are you crying?" they asked her.

She answered, "They have taken my Lord away, and I do not know where they have put him!"

¹⁴ Then she turned around and saw Jesus standing there; but she did not know that it was Jesus. ¹⁵ "Woman, why are you crying?" Jesus asked her. "Who is it that you are looking for?"

She thought he was the gardener, so she said to him, "If you took him away, sir, tell me where you have put him, and I will go and get him."

¹⁶ Jesus said to her, "Mary!"

She turned toward him and said in Hebrew, "Rabboni!" (This means "Teacher.")

¹⁷ "Do not hold on to me," Jesus told her, "because I have not yet gone back up to the Father. But go to my brothers and tell them that I am returning to him who is my Father and their Father, my God and their God."

¹⁸ So Mary Magdalene went and told the disciples that she had seen the Lord and related to them what he had told her.

Easter Triduum



Three Holy Days





Lesson at a Glance

Scripture Focus

John 19:16b–18, 28–30

Lesson Goals

- to state that *Triduum* means “three days”
- to identify the Easter Triduum as the primary celebration of the entire Church year
- to recall Good Friday as the day we remember and participate in Jesus’ Passion and death in a special way

Catechism References

571–573, 595–598, 612–618, 1168–1171

Church Year Calendar

A Church year calendar is available in black-and-white (TX006169) and full-color (TX006170) at www.smp.org/discover_grade5.

Key Words

Triduum, triptych

Music Suggestions

- “Jesus, Remember Me,” by Taizé (GIA)
- “He Is Risen,” by Scripture Lullabies (BreakAway Music)

Materials Needed

- *The Catholic Children’s Bible* and the Easter Triduum activity booklet
- a classroom crucifix plus four others
- a candle and matches
- small pieces of paper
- clear tape
- purple construction paper, one sheet for each person
- copies of the handout “A Triduum Triptych” (TX006197), one for each young person plus one extra
- several bottles of glue
- several pairs of scissors
- crayons
- a board or poster to write on
- materials for any of the additional activities you choose

Background Reflection

Every year, in the liturgical cycle, we confront the mystery of Jesus’ suffering and death on Good Friday, during the primary celebration of the Church Year called the Easter Triduum. This is the name of the period of liturgical services between Holy Thursday evening and Easter Sunday evening.

Our young people are also confronted by the mystery of death that weaves itself into our lives. Like us, they too ask, “Why?” when a loved one dies. We might also ask: “Why did Jesus have to suffer and die? Wasn’t there an easier way to save the world?”

Jesus would not have been fully human if he had not fully died a human death. Jesus did not avoid the hard parts of human life. By dying, he destroyed death itself and conquered it forever. After the Resurrection, death became the doorway to new life with God: “For your faithful, Lord, / life is changed not ended” (*Roman Missal*).

Jesus assures us that Good Friday leads to Easter Sunday—not only for him, but for us as well.



Get Ready! (10 minutes)

Opening Prayer

- Invite the young people to turn to page 1 of the Easter Triduum activity booklet.
- Begin prayer by leading the group in the Sign of the Cross. Then say, "Let us remember that we are in the holy presence of God." Allow about 10 seconds of silence.
- Read the prayer on page 1 of the activity booklet to the group. Invite the young people to say "Amen," and then close with another Sign of the Cross.

Engage Activity

- Have a crucifix and a candle (real or electric) at the front of the room. Dim the lights in the room and make the room as dark as possible.
- Ask the young people to keep perfect silence for a few moments. Invite them to close their eyes or put their heads down on their arms.
- Light the candle and ask the group to look up and focus on the light of the candle. Gradually raise the shades, etc., and turn on the lights. Ask the following questions:
 - What atmosphere was created when everything was dark? (*gloomy, sad, deep, etc.*)
 - How did the darkness affect your feelings? (*I felt "down"; I felt prayerful; I felt sad, etc.*)
 - How did your mood change when the lights came back on? (*I woke up, I was more "up" than down, I felt more energy, I felt happier, etc.*)
- Explain that, every year, the Church helps us to deal with the death of Jesus by celebrating Good Friday. Share that this is the most solemn day of the Church year, and that the Church helps us remember and participate in the sacrifice of Jesus by bringing us into a quiet and sometimes dark space of deep prayer.



Dive In! (15 minutes)

Scripture Focus

- Invite the young people to find John 19:16b–18, 28–30 in *The Catholic Children's Bible* (pages 1699–1700).
- Ask one or more volunteers to read the Scripture passage aloud. Then ask the group several questions to check for comprehension, such as the following:
 - What does *Golgotha* mean? (*"The Place of the Skull"*)
 - Was Jesus crucified alone? (*No, two other men were crucified with him, one on each side.*)
 - When Jesus was thirsty, what was he given to drink? (*a sponge soaked in cheap wine*)

- What were the last words of Jesus? (*"It is finished." This means that he had accomplished everything he had set out to do during his years on Earth.*)
- What does "He gave up his spirit" mean? (*The spirit in us is sometimes called the soul. When the spirit of life leaves the body, we are no longer alive. Jesus gave up his spirit means he gave up his life. It was not taken from him. He gave it up freely for us.*)
- Have the group turn to the activity on page 2 of the activity booklet and complete it. *Answers: 1. cross, 2. skull, 3. two, 4. completed, 5. Scripture, 6. thirsty, 7. soaked, 8. wine, 9. finished, 10. spirit*

Understand It!

- Read the Understand It! on page 1 of the activity booklet to the group, or have a volunteer read it.
- Invite the young people to summarize what they just heard, asking them key questions about the reading to check for comprehension.
- Review some of the key points with them:
 - Jesus had to die because death is part of human life, and Jesus is fully human and fully God.
 - The death of Jesus freed us from sin and death. We can follow Jesus in the path of love and live with God forever.
 - Jesus paid the price of death so that we might live forever. Good Friday leads to Easter Sunday!
- Explain that **Triduum** comes from the prefix *tri*, which means "three"; *duum* is Latin for "days." Share that the Easter Triduum is three days, starting with Holy Thursday evening and ending on the evening of Easter. Emphasize that the Easter Triduum is the primary celebration of the entire Church year. Tell the young people that they will learn more about this shortly.

Live It!

- Read the Live It! on page 1 of the activity booklet, or have a volunteer read it.
- Distribute small pieces of paper to the young people. Ask them to think of someone they know who is having a hard time and to write that person's name on the piece of paper. Then instruct them to fold their pieces of paper in half and tape them to the classroom crucifix.
- Invite the group to do the same at home as a reminder to pray for the person they thought of.

Tell It!

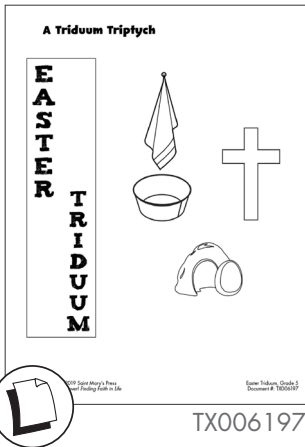
- Arrange the young people into groups of two or three.
- Ask each group to take turns retelling the Scripture passage in this manner: one person begins, another person adds more detail, and a third person adds more and finishes.



Discover! (25 minutes)

Core Learning Activity (Craft)

Note: The handout can be found at the end of this chapter or accessed online at www.smp.org/discover_grade5.



A Triduum Triptych

- Use the handout to construct a sample triptych in advance. Show the triptych to the young people, and explain the meaning of the word **triptych**. Ask the young people to recall what the prefix *tri* means (“three”), and tell them that *triptych* literally means “three folds.”
- Distribute a piece of purple construction paper to each young person. Tell them to fold it in thirds, horizontally. Then have them unfold the paper.
- Instruct the young people to title the sections at the top of each interior third of the triptych as follows: the first third—Holy Thursday, the second third—Good Friday, the last third—Easter Sunday. Tell them to leave room at the bottom to add some symbols.
- Distribute a copy of the handout to each young person. Ask them to cut out the box with the words “Easter Triduum” in it. Then have them fold their triptych together and glue the “Easter Triduum” box to the outside of the triptych as a cover.
- Have the group color the symbols on the handout. The basin can be any color. The towel should remain white. The cross should be colored brown. The empty tomb can be grey, with a golden light shining inside the doorway.
- Have the young people cut out the symbols and glue them onto the appropriate sections of the triptych: Holy Thursday—basin and towel, Good Friday—brown cross, Easter Sunday—empty tomb.

Process the Activity

- Ask the group to stand their triptychs on their desks. Ask them to note that the three days are not separated but are all connected. Explain that this reflects the Church’s liturgy: There is an entrance procession at the beginning of the liturgy on Holy Thursday, but there is no Dismissal rite until the end of the Easter Vigil liturgy on Saturday night.
- Emphasize that the liturgy of the three days, the Triduum, is really one continuous liturgy. Explain that this three-day event tells us that we cannot separate following Jesus in service (washing of the feet on Holy Thursday) from suffering and death (on Good Friday) from Resurrection (on Easter Sunday).
- Discuss the symbolism of each third of the triptych: the basin and towel, the simple cross, and the empty tomb. Ask if the young people have seen these symbols in other places (*i.e. stained glass window, church bulletin, religious or secular newspaper, etc.*)
- Suggest that the young people take their triptychs home to share with their families. Explain that passing along the triptych to a neighbor or friend who cannot come to church would be a good way to share these special days.

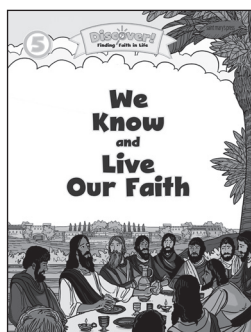
Additional Activity Options

If the core activity would not work for your group for any reason, you may choose to use any of the additional activities on pages 263–264 in its place.

Core Teaching

- Remind the group that the season of Lent helps us to remember the suffering and death of Jesus. Remind the young people that in Lent we recalled, by our own fasting and abstinence, that Jesus fasted in the desert to prepare himself for his mission.
- Remind the young people that Easter Triduum is the primary celebration of the entire Church year. Note that these three days are a special time set apart for us to participate in the suffering, death, and Resurrection of Jesus. Mention that we celebrate the Easter Triduum with special Church liturgies.
- Ask the group to stand their triptychs on their desks as you discuss the meaning of the Holy Triduum and Good Friday. Explain that the Triduum consists of the following:
 - (Day 1) Holy Thursday evening and Good Friday
 - (Day 2) Good Friday evening and Holy Saturday
 - (Day 3) Holy Saturday evening to Evening Prayer on Easter Sunday.
- Point out that what is being counted as a day starts on one evening and goes to the following evening. Tell the young people that this follows the Jewish custom of beginning a day on the evening before.
- Summarize briefly the meaning of each liturgical service of the Triduum:
 - Holy Thursday (Mass of the Lord's Supper)
 - Good Friday (reading of the Passion and veneration of the cross)
 - Holy Saturday (a day of waiting and expectation until the beginning of the Easter Vigil in the evening); Easter Vigil (blessing of the new fire, Paschal candle, readings, reception of new Christians into the Church)
 - Easter Sunday (Mass of the Resurrection)
- Tell the young people that in the liturgy *remembering* means "making present." Explain that when we remember Christ's death in the liturgical service on Good Friday, his death becomes present through the power of the Holy Spirit. Explain that on Good Friday, we are given the opportunity to show up for Jesus. Share that at Easter, we are also present at his Resurrection.
- Remind the group that in our own lives, we will also follow Jesus in service (Holy Thursday, when Jesus instituted the Holy Eucharist and washed the feet of his disciples), in suffering (Good Friday, when Jesus died on the cross for us), and in Resurrection (the Easter Vigil and Easter Sunday, when we celebrate the Resurrection of Jesus from the dead). Explain that we will also have hard times of suffering, but the death and Resurrection of Jesus tells us that our suffering and death will also lead to Resurrection.

- Explore times that suffering in our lives can lead to an “Easter experience.” For example, explain to the group that if they work hard and study now, they will eventually graduate from grade school and go on to high school. Ask for other examples of hard times leading to better things.
- Ask the young people some questions to check for comprehension, such as the following:
 - What are the three days of the Triduum? (*Day 1 is Holy Thursday evening and Good Friday. Day 2 is Good Friday evening and Holy Saturday. Day 3 is Holy Saturday evening to Evening Prayer on Easter Sunday.*)
 - What do we celebrate during the Triduum? (*the service, suffering and death, and Resurrection of Jesus Christ*)
 - What does the Triduum tell us about our own suffering and death? (*that it will lead to Resurrection with Jesus*)
- Have the young people turn to page 4 of the activity booklet. Read the “People of Faith” section to the group. Add any other information you know about Saint Joseph of Arimathea, and encourage the young people to say, “Saint Joseph of Arimathea, pray for us,” during the next week.



We Know and Live Our Faith

The following articles in the *We Know and Live Our Faith* resource correspond to concepts introduced in this lesson:

- “The Sacraments,” page 28
- “The Sacrament of Baptism,” page 28
- “The Sacrament of Confirmation,” page 30
- “The Sacrament of the Eucharist,” page 33
- “Christ Works in the Liturgy,” pages 22–23

Read the selections aloud, or invite a volunteer to read, as time allows. Check for understanding by asking several questions. You may want to summarize the key concepts for the young people.



Go! (10 minutes)

Lesson Wrap-Up

- Invite the young people to think back over all the different things they did in this lesson, and invite volunteers to share some of the key things they learned.
- Take some time to get input from the group, and write their answers on the board.
- Ensure that the following points are made, write them on the board, and circle them:
 - Triduum means “three days.”
 - The Easter Triduum is the primary celebration of the entire Church year.
 - Good Friday is the day we remember and participate in Jesus’ Passion and death in a special way.

Short Closing Prayer (optional)

Note: Use this prayer if you do not intend to use the longer prayer service on the next page to close this lesson.

- Begin the prayer by leading the group in the Sign of the Cross and saying, “Let us remember that we are in the holy presence of God,” followed by a few seconds of silence.
- Pray aloud:
 - Jesus, we thank you for your suffering and death. Help us to follow you, now and always, no matter what the cost. We know that following you leads to life, now and forever. Amen.
- End with the Sign of the Cross.

Prayer Service

The Holy Cross of Jesus Christ

Gather four crucifixes for the four stations to be prayed. Choose four cross-bearers to hold the crucifixes in various parts of the room. Choose four readers, one for each station, to stand next to the cross-bearers. Give the readers a short time to prepare their readings. Ask them to say both the number of the station and the title. Ask the group to stand for this prayer. It would be ideal, if possible, for the young people to walk to each station.

Leader: Let us begin our prayer with the Sign of the Cross. *(All make Sign of the Cross.)* Let us remember that we are in the holy presence of God. *(Allow about 10 seconds of silence.)*

Leader: The Stations of the Cross are a traditional devotion that helps us to meet Jesus in his suffering and death, that we may be victorious with him in his Resurrection. We will pray just a few of the stations. Please stand and face the first station.

Reader 1: Station 1: Jesus Is Condemned to Death

Lord Jesus, you were a teacher, a healer, a prophet, a friend. You were condemned by lies, rumors, and popular opinion. Help us, Lord, when we are misunderstood by others.

All: We adore you, O Christ, and we bless you, because by your holy cross you have redeemed the world.

Reader 2: Station 9: Jesus Falls for the Third Time

Lord Jesus, the cross you carried was heavy. And you were too weak to carry it. You fell under its weight three times. Sometimes, when life gets hard and we feel overwhelmed, help us to remember that it is okay to fall. Help us to keep following you.

All: We adore you, O Christ, and we bless you. . . .

Reader 3: Station 12: Jesus Dies on the Cross

Lord Jesus, just before you died, you said, "Father, into your hands I commend my spirit." Jesus, you gave your whole life—the best parts and the worst parts—back to the Father. We can do this, too. We can give our lives to God every day—the best parts and the worst parts—and when we do, our lives become a prayer: "Father, into your hands I commend my spirit."

All: We adore you, O Christ, and we bless you. . . .

Reader 4: Station 15: Jesus Rises from the Dead

This station is sometimes added to recognize that the life of Jesus does not end in death, but in Resurrection. This is true of our lives too, every day, when we go through little deaths and little resurrections. But we know that the Risen Jesus is alive and with us always.

Lord Jesus, help us know more and more that you are alive and with us now, especially in the Holy Eucharist. Thank you for all you did during your Passion, and help us to follow you from death to life, now and forever. Amen.

All: We adore you, O Christ, and we bless you. . . .

Leader: Let us go in peace now, to proclaim the Gospel with our lives.

All: Thanks be to God.

Additional Activities

Materials Needed

- two popsicle sticks for each young person
- 3 feet of gold yarn for each person
- a gift box *(optional)*

A Wooden Pocket Cross (15 minutes)

- Make a sample of a wooden pocket cross ahead of time by forming two popsicle sticks into a cross and wrapping yarn around the center of the cross.
- Show the group the cross, and explain that they will be making these crosses as gifts for children who will be celebrating First Holy Communion after Easter.
- Distribute two popsicle sticks (the wider craft version) and 3 feet of gold yarn (for the Resurrection) to each person.
- Demonstrate how to cross the sticks and wrap the yarn diagonally around the intersection of the two sticks.
- Ask the young people to print carefully on the front of the vertical stick, from bottom to top, "Come, Lord Jesus!" and on the back of the vertical stick, from bottom to top, "First Communion Day, [insert date]."
- Create a plan for presenting the crosses to the children. Plan a time for the fifth graders to give their crosses in person, or place the crosses in a gift box for presentation to the First Communion group.

Materials Needed

- *The Catholic Children's Bible*

Washing of the Feet (15 minutes)

- Invite the young people to find John 13:1–17 in *The Catholic Children's Bible* (page 1685), and explain that this is the Scripture story we read on Holy Thursday.
- Ask several volunteers to read the Scripture passage aloud for the whole group.
- Invite the young people to share their reactions to this Scripture passage. Ask them what stood out to them and what was the main point Jesus was trying to make.
- Emphasize that Jesus constantly calls us to be of service to others.
- Have the young people form small groups and brainstorm ways that fifth graders might serve other people. Invite them to create a skit that they can show the larger group.
- Call the different groups to display their skit, and discuss the main points being made in their actions.
- Encourage the young people to commit to one or more acts of service during the next few weeks. Tell them that they can report back to the group at a later session after they have completed their acts of service.
- Remind them that people can be of service in both big and small ways, and all are important.

Materials Needed

- a computer with internet access
- a computer projector
- blank paper
- crayons

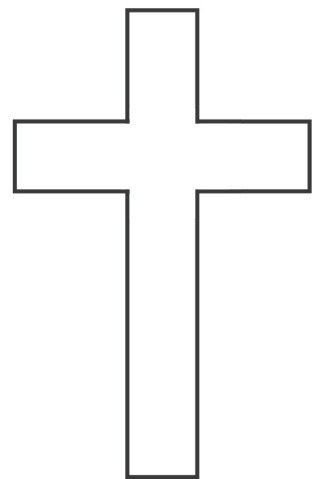
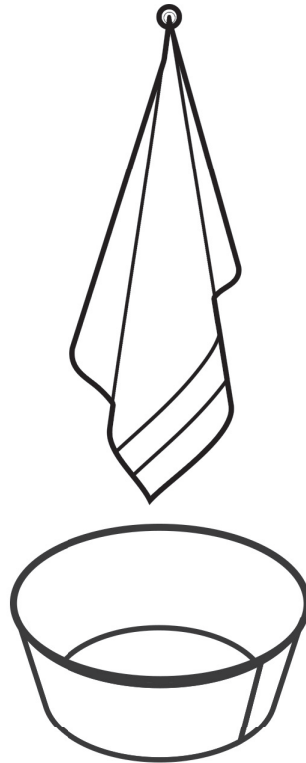
Lord, I Lift Your Name on High (15 minutes)

- Show the video “Lord I Lift Your Name on High—Maranatha Singers (With Lyrics)” (YouTube, 3:13). Encourage the young people to notice the photos and to remember the ones that impacted them the most.
- Ask volunteers to share their impressions of the song and of the photos. Ask: Why is this a song for Good Friday? Why is this a song for Easter Sunday?
- Show the video again, asking the young people to keep in mind the comments made about the song and the photos.
- Distribute blank paper and crayons. Ask the students to draw the photo that impressed them the most, or to write in a decorative style the lyrics to the chorus and the verses of the song. Play the video softly in the background as the young people work.

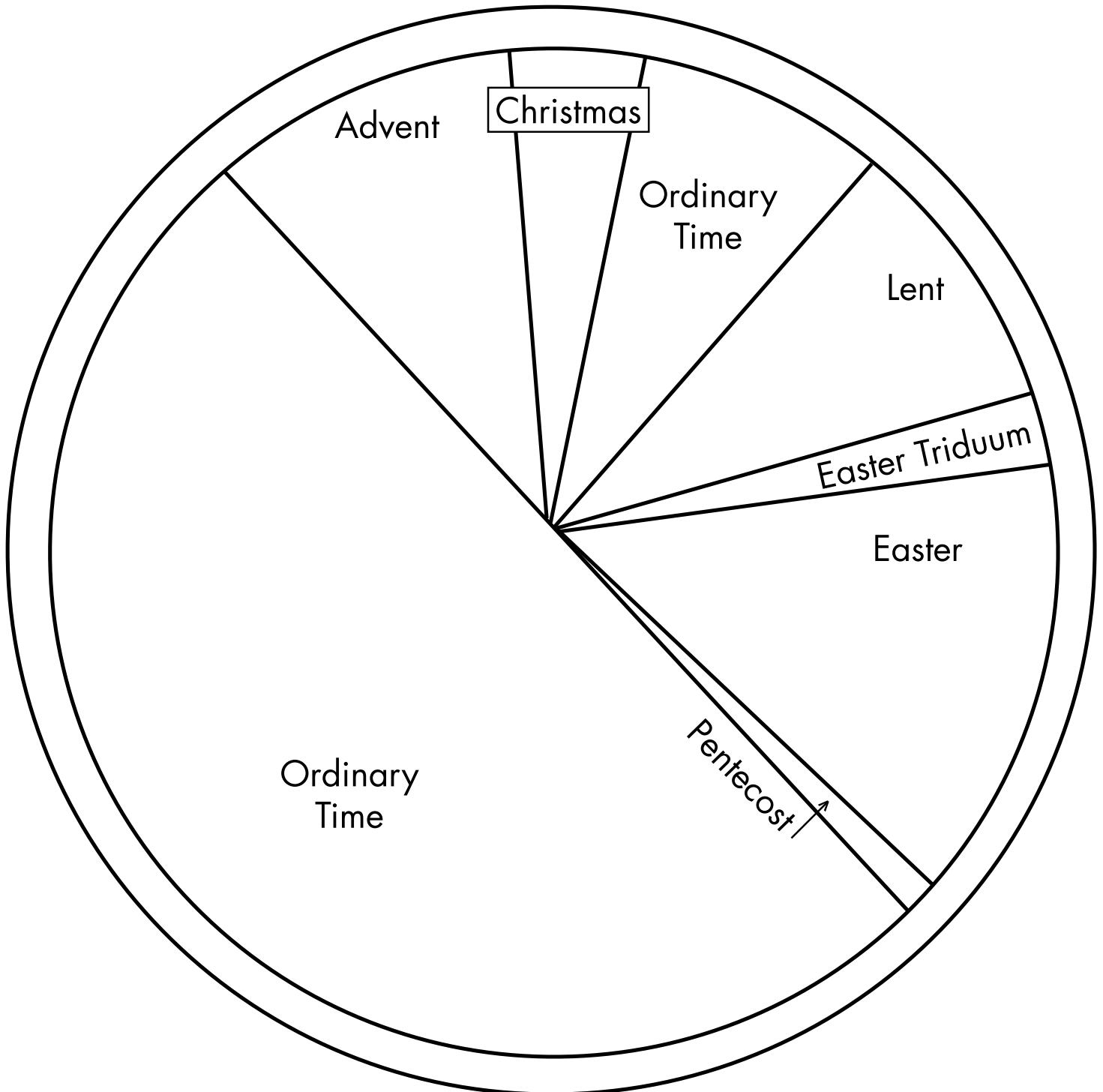
A Triduum Triptych

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Church Year Calendar



Church Year Calendar

