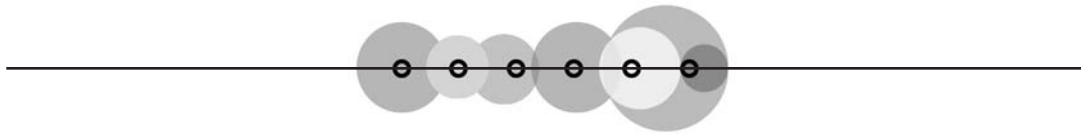


Leader's Guide for

Journey of Faith

for Easter and Pentecost



Creating a Sense of Belonging
Between Young People and the Church

Mary Shrader and Jenni Vankat



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Introduction

THE SEASON OF EASTER

The ultimate joy of the Resurrection on Easter has arrived! The stone has been rolled away, Jesus is no longer in the tomb, his burial cloths have been left behind, and his disciples are stunned!

A dead Jesus is alive, sins are forgiven, life is eternal, and God has wonderful things in store for the newly charged Apostles. Life could hardly get any better! Fortunately, Jesus's message and mission are timeless. Young people may find it difficult to really grasp these amazing Easter facts of Resurrection, forgiveness, and eternal life. It may be difficult even to comprehend our mission as modern-day disciples.

Our liturgical calendar is cyclical. This gives us the opportunity to renew our faith in God's promise every Easter season. The Easter season gives us several opportunities to experience joy and celebration and cheerfully proclaim, "Alleluia! He is risen!"

In addition, Ascension and Pentecost further our celebratory spirit of new life and new mission, such as the disciples' mission to go out and preach and live the Good News of Jesus Christ.

What? No bunny? What about the chocolate rabbits and colored eggs? How about the Easter grass and marshmallow ducks?

As is the case for other religious celebrations, marketing and merchandising have expanded upon Easter. While the decorations, candy, special clothes, and colored eggs certainly add to the fun of the celebration, nothing can compare with the incredible miracle that happens on Easter morning. In fact, these traditions of egg coloring and hiding, wearing special clothes, and preparing a basket can all be relevant to the process of welcoming Jesus into our lives in a special way. Work with the schedules, natural cycles, and needs of families to help celebrate Easter with the top priority in mind: Resurrection.

Pentecost is significant, as well. It is so significant that the Church might not have existed after Jesus's death if the disciples had not received the courage (by the Holy Spirit) to continue Jesus's mission and work.

Pentecost is the day that not only reminds us, but also charges us, to live out that Easter joy. The disciples might not have had the confidence, strength, or courage to spread Jesus's message had he not sent the Holy Spirit to them on Pentecost to remind them of his continued presence.

Even though we know Jesus is always with us, we need the extra encouragement of Easter and Pentecost each year to renew our confidence in our mission as Christians.

Easter Colors

Liturgical colors are not merely decoration. They are visual aids that point to reasons and rhythms in the liturgical calendar. Whenever possible, use the seasonal color of Easter, white, during the Easter season. Throughout the Easter season, white is used as a symbol of new life, joy, purity, and resurrection. Other colors are used on days near the Easter season. For example, Good Friday uses the color red to signify the blood of Christ. Pentecost uses the color red to signify the fire of the Holy Spirit.

Easter Symbols

Easter water: Water is death dealing and life giving. We use water in Baptism, because Baptism is also about death and life—death to sin that separates us from God and the birth of a new life in the Holy Spirit.

Water is blessed each Easter as a symbol of new life and new commitment to Christ. Some churches remove holy water from fonts and door holders during the Lenten season and then refill them at Easter to demonstrate the difference between life with and without water.

Easter candle: Each Easter, a new Paschal candle is lit. This signifies the beginning of a newness in the Church and a newness in our mission to spread Christ's message. The Easter fire is blessed at the Easter vigil as a reminder that God is our light, and in God is no darkness. The Paschal candle is a constant reminder of God's presence. The symbol of fire is also significant to the celebration of Pentecost, at which the Holy Spirit came to the Apostles like fire and created in them a new passion for carrying out Jesus's mission.

Timing: The Days Before Easter, the Easter Season, and Special Feasts

You may have heard the term *Holy Week* used to describe the time from Palm Sunday to Easter Sunday. This can be a confusing term, because it may make people think that Lent ends on Palm Sunday. Lent actually continues until the time when the Holy Thursday liturgy begins. At that point, we enter into the Triduum (pronounced TRI-doo-uhm), which literally means "three days." In fact, many people call the Triduum just that. The three main liturgies are Holy Thursday, Good Friday, and the Easter Vigil (the night before Easter morning). Most parishes also have Easter Sunday Masses, and some even have an evening prayer service on Sunday to mark the end of the three days. The three days of the Triduum are some of the most special days in the life of the Church. It is three days but just one celebration.

The Easter season includes Easter Sunday and the six weeks following. We celebrate Jesus's Ascension into heaven forty days after Easter Sunday. Pentecost, the descent of the Holy Spirit upon the Apostles, is celebrated fifty days after Easter Sunday. Throughout much of the Easter season, the *Lectionary* readings tell us about the life of the Apostles after Jesus's death and resurrection. We also hear the recounting in John's Gospel of the symbols, stories, and teachings Jesus preached immediately before his death.

JOURNEY OF FAITH FOR EASTER AND PENTECOST: AN OVERVIEW

We experience and express our faith in various ways. One way is through the use of the *Lectionary* at Mass. The *Lectionary* readings tell the story of our community's faith journey and highlight the teachings that are the core of who we are as Christian people. The activities in this leader's guide will help the young people explore various Triduum and Easter readings and meet a variety of scriptural people. The young people will also explore some of the symbols of our sacramental tradition, such as light. By drawing from the Scriptures of the liturgical seasons and from our sacramental tradition, the participants will dig more deeply into their own faith and explore aspects of the community's faith tradition during these important seasons.

Each chapter in this leader's guide points to the readings for a designated day or week of the Easter season. The activities highlight core ideas, themes, images, symbols, and meanings of the season. Essentially, each activity provides the structure, content, and context for continuing the Scripture reflection often begun at the Sunday Eucharist. This format offers young people insight into and connection to what is happening in the parish community during the Church's celebration of the Easter season. Each chapter encourages and challenges young adolescents to uncover what it means to be Jesus's disciple, how to act on the call to discipleship within their parish or school community, and how God works in and through their lives.

HOW TO USE THIS MANUAL

You may present the materials in this leader's guide in their entirety, or you may choose sessions and activities that will work best for the young people with whom you work. Each chapter begins with a brief overview and a listing of the Scripture readings for the week or day. The next element is a suggested schedule—a starting point that can be modified according to your circumstances. Each activity begins with a checklist of required materials and preparation, followed by a complete description of the activity procedure.

The sessions in the Journey of Faith series follow the STUDY IT! PRAY IT! LIVE IT![®] format. These three components make up a 45- to 60-minute session. In the STUDY IT! and LIVE IT! components, the participants explore the session theme in depth through the Scriptures, activities, and discussion. Ministry leaders present additional background and information to periodically augment the participants' work. The student workbook is frequently used as a tool in these activities.

Optional STUDY IT! Longer activities allow you to extend a session to 90 minutes or longer. These activities connect what the participants have read, seen, written, and heard to their own lives.

Each session includes opportunities and suggestions for prayer that is focused on the session's theme. Prayer forms include guided meditation, shared prayer, music, silence, prayers by the young people, reflective reading, and experiences created by the participants. The PRAY IT! component gives the young people an opportunity to bring their insights and concerns to God in prayer. Prayer experiences range from 5 to 20 minutes.

The Student Workbook

The student workbook is an integrated resource for the youth who participate in the sessions of the Journey of Faith series. All the sessions in the leader's guide are linked to the workbook. Ideally, every young participant will have a workbook.

Preparing Yourself

Read each chapter or activity before you facilitate it, then use it creatively to meet the needs of the young people in your group. Knowing your audience will help you determine which strategies work best. Some of the activities require preparation. Allow yourself adequate time to get ready. Think about additional ways to include members of the parish community in the activities. Throughout the activities are suggestions for involving other parish adults in mentoring young people as they learn to be active participants in the life of the parish.

Standard Materials

To save time, consider gathering frequently used materials in bins and storing those bins in a place accessible to all staff and volunteer leaders. Following are some recommendations for organizing the bins:

Supply Bin

The following items appear frequently in the materials checklists:

- *The Catholic Youth Bible* or another Bible, one for each participant
- student workbooks, one for each participant
- masking tape
- cellophane tape
- washable and permanent markers (thick-line and thin-line)
- pens or pencils
- self-stick notes
- scissors
- newsprint
- blank paper, scrap paper, and notebook paper
- index cards
- baskets
- candles and matches
- items to create a prayer space (for example, a colored cloth, a cross, a bowl of water, and a vase for flowers)

Music Bin

Young people often find profound meaning in the music and lyrics of songs, both past and present. Also, the right music can set the appropriate mood for a prayer or an activity. Begin with a small collection of tapes or CDs in a music bin, and add to it over time. You might ask the young people to put some of their favorite music in the bin. The bin might include the following styles of music:

- *Prayerful, reflective instrumental music.* This kind of music is available in the adult alternative section of music stores. Labels that specialize in this music include Windham Hill and Narada.
- *Popular songs with powerful messages.* If you are not well versed in popular music, ask the young people to offer suggestions.
- *The music of contemporary Catholic artists.* Many teens are familiar with the work of Catholic musicians such as Steve Angrisano, Sarah Hart, David W. Kauffman, Michael Mahler, Jesse Manibusan, and Danielle Rose.

Including copies of your parish's chosen hymnal is a suitable option. You might also check with your liturgy or music director for recordings of parish hymns.

SOME CLOSING THOUGHTS

We hope these sessions will connect the young people to both their faith and their faith community in ways that will kindle the fire within them to better understand what it means to be a disciple of Christ and to act on that call.

YOUR COMMENTS OR SUGGESTIONS

Saint Mary's Press wants to know your reactions to the materials in the Journey of Faith series. We are open to all kinds of suggestions, including these:

- an alternative way to conduct an activity
- an audiovisual or other media resource that worked well with this material
- a book or an article you found helpful
- an original activity or process
- a prayer experience or service
- a helpful preparation for other leaders
- an observation about the themes or content of this material

If you have a comment or suggestion, please write to us at 702 Terrace Heights, Winona, MN 55987-1318; call us at our toll-free number, 800-533-8095; or e-mail us at smp@smp.org.



Chapter 1

Holy Thursday: Service with a Smile



OVERVIEW

On Holy Thursday, we celebrate the beauty and mystery of the Last Supper. At the Last Supper, Jesus broke bread, shared wine with his disciples, and foretold his own death. The sharing of that meal and Jesus's words "Do this in remembrance of me" (Luke 22:19) are the foundation of what we celebrate each week at Mass to this day.

After sharing that sacred and symbolic meal, Jesus surprised his companions when he stood up and began to wash their feet. Though the breaking of bread and sharing of wine have become the central images of Christian worship, the washing of feet has become one of the central images of Christian life. In Jesus's time, even slaves weren't expected to wash their masters' feet. When Jesus washed the feet of the Apostles, he demonstrated an incredible act of humility and service to his friends and followers, for all time.

The following activities, involve sensory experiences. Though symbols speak for themselves, it is helpful to do some "unpacking" so young people (and people of all ages) have an opportunity to prepare to enter fully into the meaning behind these symbols and rituals. The following activities allow participants to do just that. The young people learn about the various symbols involved in the Holy Thursday liturgy by visiting sensory stations that ask them to look, listen, read, think, touch, feel, talk, and notice. The **STUDY IT!** activity includes these sensory tables. The **LIVE IT!** activity encourages participation in the regular Holy Thursday liturgy. The **PRAY IT!** activity encourages participation in solemn adoration. Heavy preparation is required for this chapter in setting up the sensory tables and recruiting older adolescent and adult volunteers to assist at each table.



READINGS

Holy Thursday of the Triduum

- Exodus 12:1–8, 11–4; 1 Corinthians 11:23–26; John 13:1–15



AT A GLANCE

STUDY IT!

Stinky Feet (30 minutes)

LIVE IT!

Holy Thursday Liturgy (60 minutes)

PRAY IT!

Adoration (10–40 minutes)

STUDY IT! Longer

Parish

Families

Other Generations

**STUDY IT!****Stinky Feet** (30 minutes)**Materials and Preparation**

- Gather the following items:
 - Easter and Pentecost* workbooks
 - pens or pencils, enough for each participant
 - sensory stations or tables
 - three index cards or card stock with the words *Know*, *Do*, and *Reflect* on each card, enough for each item (twenty-four cards total)
 - water (one large or several small pitchers of water and empty bowls)
 - thirty pieces of silver in several small bags
 - several hand towels
 - a loaf of bread to be torn or shared, placed in a basket or on a plate
 - a pitcher of grape juice with several small bowls to be used as cups
 - one tablecloth or several cloths that will be layered on top of one another
 - sandals (one or several pairs of brown, simple sandals in various sizes)
 - monstrance (without a consecrated host)
 - bowl
 - pitcher with comfortably warm water
 - towel, one or more
 - chair
- Prepare the sensory stations throughout the room by designating a table or area for each of the items listed below and labeling each table accordingly. The number of items at each table depends on how many participants you have and how quickly you want them to complete each station. For example, you may want to have two, three, or four pitchers of water instead of just one.
 - water
 - thirty pieces of silver
 - towel
 - bread
 - grape juice
 - tablecloth
 - sandals
 - monstrance

- Fill several small bags with thirty each of large metal tokens, metal washers, or silver coins.

1. Ask the group to recall doing something for someone in need that may have been gross. Give an example from your own experience, such as cleaning baby spit-up, pulling out a splinter, cleaning a wound, cleaning up a spilled raw egg, or changing a dirty diaper.

2. Ask the group to respond to the following question:

- Why do we do these things if they are gross, icky, stinky, or slimy? (Encourage the participants to think about relevant answers such as the following: because it is a need; because I want to help a baby brother, parents, or a friend; because I am capable and someone needed my help.)

3. Tell the participants that Holy Thursday is the day we celebrate the institution of the Lord's Supper, the first Eucharist. On the same evening that Jesus began the Lord's Supper, he also instructed the Apostles to serve others. Share the following points in these or your own words:

- Jesus demonstrated serving others by washing the Apostles' feet.
- When we attend Holy Thursday Mass, we might purposely wash our feet ahead of time because we know what to expect.
- When the Apostles gathered with Jesus for dinner, they had no idea he would wash their feet. Therefore, they had not washed their feet.
- They had been traveling for miles in sandals on dirt and dusty roads. You can imagine they didn't have clean, manicured feet. So washing their feet was probably a pretty dirty job for Jesus. It didn't matter to him.
- In Jesus's time, even slaves weren't expected to wash their masters' feet. When Jesus washed the feet of the Apostles, he demonstrated an incredible act of humility and service to his friends and followers, for all time.
- By kneeling down to wash the feet of his disciples, Jesus redefined his relationship with them. From that point on, the relationship changed from followers to friends.

4. Choose a person from the crowd (a young person if both parents and youth are present) and gently ask if you may wash her or his feet. If the person is reluctant, do not force the issue; simply invite someone else. Once you have found a willing person, proceed to gently and silently wash the person's feet.

5. Tell the group that Jesus gave us a great commandment: "You shall love your neighbor as yourself" (Matthew 22:39). Explain that we sometimes hear this commandment as "Do unto others as you would have them do unto you." Ask the participants what they think this means. Share the following points with them:

- "Do unto others" does not mean we should seek revenge ("Do unto others after they do unto you.").
- It does mean we should treat people the way we want to be treated: with respect, equality, compassion, and honor.
- Doing things for other people, even when it is gross, uncomfortable, or unusual, reminds us that we are not perfect.
- It also reminds us that, if we ever needed something, we would want the same courtesy extended to us.

- Refer to your gentle and careful washing of the person's feet.
- Make any relevant references to having the right temperature water, being gentle as you wash, and refraining from judging a person for any foot issues like having stinky or sweaty feet or sock lint.

6. Offer the participants an opportunity to ask questions they may have about washing the feet of another person. Then share the following:

- In the readings at Holy Thursday Mass, we hear these words from Jesus: "Unless I wash you, you have no share with me. . . . So if I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet. For I have set you an example, that you also should do as I have done to you." (John 13:8,14–15)
- Jesus very specifically tells us not only to serve others, but also to serve humbly and lovingly. In serving others, we not only help others, but also we humble ourselves and admit that we are not perfect.

7. Tell the participants that our Catholic liturgy is full of symbols. Let them know they will visit table stations that will help them further understand and identify the symbols and rituals of the Holy Thursday liturgy.

8. Distribute the pens and pencils and give the following instructions in these or similar words:

- Visit and move from one table to another in silence. Speak only when there are specific instructions to do so.
- Visit each table only once.
- There is no particular order or sequence to visiting the tables.
- Chapter 1 of the student workbook provides instructions on what to do at each table. Look for the appropriate heading for each table. For example, the table labeled "water" has a corresponding section on page 8 also labeled "water." Follow the directions in the workbook.

The table activities appear on page 8 of the student workbook, as follows:

- Water
 - + Know: Jesus washed the Apostles' feet with water. Water is also a symbol of new life and rebirth.
 - + Do: Slowly pour water into a bowl.
 - + Reflect: What part of your life do you need the Lord to wash?
- Thirty pieces of silver
 - + Know: The price that Judas received to turn in Jesus was thirty silver pieces.
 - + Do: Pick up the bag and feel the weight of the coins in the bag.
 - + Reflect: Ask yourself the following questions: What do I gain from sinning? What price do I pay for sins I commit?
- Towel
 - + Know: Jesus tied a towel to his waist and knelt down to wash the feet of the Apostles.
 - + Do: Kneel down as if you are preparing to wash someone's feet.
 - + Reflect: Ask yourself the following questions: How do I serve others in my life? What areas of my life call for me to serve others?
- Bread
 - + Know: Jesus broke and blessed bread at the Last Supper. Today, the priest blesses and breaks bread at Mass.

- + Do: Break a piece of bread and eat it.
- + Reflect: The sharing of the Last Supper formed an even closer bond between Jesus and his disciples. How does celebrating the Mass unite you with others and with God?
- Grape juice
 - + Know: Grape juice is a symbol of the wine that Jesus blessed and poured at the Last Supper.
 - + Do: Pour and drink a sip of grape juice from a shallow bowl.
 - + Reflect: Think about Jesus's giving his life for you.
- Tablecloth
 - + Know: We clothe the altar table in preparation for the Eucharist at Mass. Tablecloths are also used for meals at home and in restaurants. Using a tablecloth often signifies a special meal.
 - + Do: As a group, unfold the cloth and place it on the table. Refold it for the next group.
 - + Reflect: Think about what happens when we prepare the altar at Mass. Pay special attention to this the next time you attend liturgy. Notice what is placed on the table, who brings up the gifts, and the special tablecloths that are laid down.
- Sandals
 - + Know: In Jesus's time, people wore sandals. These shoes easily collected dirt and dust. A sandal is a symbol of journey, service, and compassion (walking in someone else's shoes).
 - + Do: Place the sandal on your foot.
 - + Reflect: Imagine what it is like to walk miles upon miles on hills, dirt roads, and stone streets.
- Monstrance
 - + Know: This is a vessel that keeps the host visible during adoration.
 - + Do: Have the table leader show you where and how the host is placed.
 - + Reflect: Ask yourself the following questions: How important is the Eucharist to me personally? Do I show reverence when receiving communion?
 - A leader at each table will assist you as needed.
 - You have 15 minutes to visit all of the tables.
 - When you are finished, write your responses to the following reflection questions in your student workbook on pages 9–10 while you wait:
- What is different about Holy Thursday Mass from other regular Sunday masses? (If you can't think of anything now, answer this question after you have attended Holy Thursday Mass.)
- Which table station was most interesting or insightful to you personally? How so?
- What do you think Jesus wants you to do?
- Who has served you?
- Whom have you served?

Note: If this activity is done on Holy Thursday, invite families to participate with the young people. When the entire family has visited all the tables, invite them to proceed to the church for the Holy Thursday liturgy. Be sure to give any additional information about adoration that will take place after Mass.

9. If your group is large, have the participants form eight small groups. Label the tables 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, and 8. Have the groups visit the stations in the following sequence to help crowd flow:

- Group 1 visits station 1 first, then stations 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, and 8.
- Group 2 visits station 2 first, then stations 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, and 1.
- Group 3 visits station 3 first, then stations 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 1, and 2.
- Group 4 visits station 4 first, then stations 5, 6, 7, 8, 1, 2, and 3.
- Group 5 visits station 5 first, then stations 6, 7, 8, 1, 2, 3, and 4.
- Group 6 visits station 6 first, then stations 7, 8, 1, 2, 3, 4, and 5.
- Group 7 visits station 7 first, then stations 8, 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, and 6.
- Group 8 visits station 8 first, then stations 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, and 7.

Variation. If you choose to conduct this session on a day other than Holy Thursday, extend the time for visiting tables, allowing the small groups to talk about the reflection questions in their *Easter and Pentecost* workbooks. You could also set up a time for the group to attend adoration together.



LIVE IT!

Holy Thursday Liturgy (60 minutes)

1. Invite the participants and their families to attend the liturgy and allow the Holy Thursday liturgy to speak for itself.



PRAY IT!

Adoration (10–40 minutes)

Plan to encourage youth participation in the parish's evening adoration or "night watch" after the Holy Thursday liturgy. Encourage the young people and their families to spend at least a few minutes in the chapel or other area that holds the tabernacle. If your parish does not have a planned time for adoration, talk with the teens about the significant points of adoration and allow the teens to spend quiet time in the chapel as a group or with their families.



STUDY IT! LONGER

Parish

Connect with the parish outreach or community service coordinator. Plan times that parishioners of all ages can reach out to others within and outside the parish community. Encourage the idea of serving as an attitude, not just a project. Remind the participants that sometimes in serving others, we also gain insight, appreciation, or humility in a way we did not have before.

Families

Encourage families to wash one another's feet—really! Take time at home to wash one another's feet, paint toenails, give a gentle massage, or prepare a footbath. Grooming one's feet is such a personal task, mostly because we often think it is gross or stinky. Suggest that the families take the time to care for one another through foot-washing. Refrain from poking fun at anyone's long toenails or misshapen feet. Talk about how important it is to serve one another and take care of one another.

Other Generations

Plan a time when the teens can visit people in a nursing home, children in a hospital, or homebound parishioners. Be sure to provide adequate supervision. Have the teens help with simple, day-to-day tasks that the patients could not otherwise do, such as combing hair, coloring, sorting old newspapers, or organizing a kitchen cabinet. Remind participants that there are many things we do every day that we might take for granted.



Acknowledgments

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