

Liturgical Year Supplemental Lesson

Lent and Easter

Correlated Materials

Student Text: Chapter 20, pp. 83–86;
Chapter 21, pp. 87–90

LESSON FOCUS

Through the Lenten and Easter liturgy, we walk with Christ and enter into the mysteries of Christ. Through our participation, we come to know, love, and serve Christ more fully. Lent is a penitential (related to sorrow and penance) season that begins with Ash Wednesday and ends with Holy Week. During Holy Week, we are invited to walk with Christ so that we can become like Christ.

AIMS

- Students will become more familiar with the meaning of Lent and Easter.
- Students will know that when they walk with Christ and enter into the mysteries of Christ, they participate in the story of God's saving plan.
- Students will learn about Holy Week in order to prepare themselves for a better understanding of spiritual aspects of the Paschal Mystery.
- Students will reflect on areas in their lives that they can change and practices they can make

Begin the Lesson

Preparation (5 minutes)

Use one or more of the following resources for prayer and student preparation for the lesson.

SCRIPTURE: Student Text, p. 83

“And walk in love, as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us, a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God” (Ephesians 5:2).

Through his suffering, death, and Resurrection, Jesus shows us his love. During Holy Week we can walk in love as we keep our eyes on Christ.

SACRED ART: Student Text, p. 83

Saint Dominic Adoring the Crucifix, Fra Angelico

We too, like Saint Dominic, should adore Christ and give thanks for all that he has done so that we may go to heaven.

Student Text, p. 87

The Three Marys at the Tomb, Duccio

Jesus Christ rose from the dead; we too shall rise one day.

PRAYER WITH CHILDREN: Paschal Candle Prayer, Student Text, p. 90

Proclamation (1 minute)

(Proclaim slowly, then repeat.)

Lent is a penitential season that begins with Ash Wednesday and ends with Holy Week. During Holy Week we are invited to walk with Christ so that we can become like Christ.

Lesson Explanation (35–55 minutes)

Explain focus points in your own words or use the discussion points and questions.

during Lent that will help them to make changes in their lives.

Note: See p. xvi for overall supplemental lesson aims, CCC, and Scripture.

MATERIALS

- Bible
- White board and markers
- Paper for letter to Jesus (see Application)

WORDS TO KNOW

penitential: expressing sorrow or penance

Celebrating Easter in Poland

In Poland, the homeland of Pope John Paul II, there are many ancient customs in celebration of the greatest feast of the Catholic Church. One custom familiar to us is the sharing of Easter eggs as symbols of the new life of the Resurrection. In Poland it is traditional to have hard-boiled Easter eggs blessed by a priest before adding salt and pepper and sharing them among relatives. Another treat of Easter in traditional Polish homes is the sugar lamb that decorates the table and symbolizes Jesus, the Lamb of God. There are many cakes associated with the Easter feast, all of which must be prepared before Sunday, as traditional Poles never cook on Easter Sunday.

Focus 1: Lent is a penitential season. This means that we express our penance in order to help us to walk with Christ in his Passion.

- Think of a time you took a walk with someone and just talked. *Did you get to know that person better?* (Answers will vary.)
 - *What did you learn?* (Answers will vary.)
 - Today we are going to learn about the importance of taking a walk with Jesus during Lent and Easter. *As we walk with Jesus during Lent and Easter, what do you think may happen?* (By taking this walk we will come to know, love, and serve Christ better, especially in his suffering.)
- Lent is a **penitential** season in which we make sacrifices to remind us of the sacrifices of Christ.
 - *What is the first day of Lent? What liturgical rite do we participate in on this day?* (Ash Wednesday; we receive ashes to remind us that without Christ we are nothing, and we are therefore called to turn to Christ.)
 - *What is the most important day during Lent?* (Good Friday because this is the day Jesus died on the Cross to save mankind.)
 - *What does Lent remind us of and what are we called to do?* (Lent reminds us of the forty days Christ spent in the desert before his public ministry. We are called to pray, sacrifice, and give alms.)
- *What happened on the third day after Jesus died?* (The Resurrection; Jesus rose from the dead.)
 - *What is the importance of the Resurrection?* (Because Jesus rose from the dead, we too will rise one day; the power of Christ's Resurrection gives us new life.)
 - Our participation in the seasons of Lent and Easter helps us to be a part of God's saving plan. If we participate as we should, God's story of love becomes our story of love.
- *What do we do during Lent?* (We offer small sacrifices of prayer or giving up something for God; we participate in the liturgical rites of the Faith such as receiving ashes on Ash Wednesday, making the Stations of the Cross, receiving palms on Palm Sunday, etc.)
 - *Why do we do these things?* (We pray and offer sacrifices to be like Christ and to show our love for Christ.)
 - *What will happen if we show our love for Christ during Lent?* (He will bless us; our acts of love and sacrifice will never go unnoticed with God.)

Conclusion: When we participate in Lenten and Easter rites, we actually walk with Christ and enter into the mysteries of Christ; in this way we participate in the story of God's saving plan. Through our participation, we come to know, love, and serve Christ more fully. God will bless us for our love.

Focus 2: A Walk through Holy Week with Scripture and Sacred Art.

- **What does Holy Week celebrate?** (The events of the Passion of Christ.)
 - **Why is Holy Week important?** (Through Jesus' death and Resurrection, we are redeemed; the price is paid for our sins. We can walk with Christ, know him, and love him for all that he has done for us.)
- We are going to walk through the events of Holy Week. We will discuss the symbols and the meaning of each of these days, using Scripture and artwork in the text. This will help us prepare to enter into a deeper understanding of the Paschal Mystery, the mystery of God's saving works—the suffering, death, and Resurrection of Jesus. (Write the events of Holy Week on the board, which are set in bold.)
 - **Palm Sunday:** Sunday before Easter. (If possible, show students *Christ's Entry into Jerusalem*, Fra Angelico, in the Grade 6 Student Text on page 9 and/or *Entry into Jerusalem*, Duccio, in the Grade 7 Student Text on page 52. Also, these images easily can be found online.)
 - Palm Sunday celebrates the Lord's triumphal entry into Jerusalem to accomplish the Father's will, in obedience to the Father, to offer his life for the sins of mankind.
 - **Read** John 12:12–13: "The next day a great crowd who had come to the feast heard that Jesus was coming to Jerusalem. So they took branches of palm trees and went out to meet him, crying, 'Hosanna! Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord, even the King of Israel!'"
 - Palms are used in the celebration of Palm Sunday, and the Gospel reading is the Passion of the Lord.
 - **Easter (or Sacred) Triduum:** The three days before Easter.
 - **Holy Thursday** (Have students see *The Last Supper*, Fra Angelico, Student Text, p. 74.)
 - Holy Thursday is the celebration of the Last Supper. Jesus was celebrating the Passover feast.
 - Jesus washes the feet of the Apostles, and he institutes the Sacrament of the Eucharist. At the Last Supper, Jesus makes the twelve Apostles the first priests of the Church.
 - **Read** John 13:1–15 and/or Matthew 26:26–29.
 - **Good Friday** (Have students see *St. Dominic Adoring the Crucifix*, Fra Angelico, Student Text, p. 83.)
 - Good Friday is a celebration of the Lord's Passion.
 - Veneration of the Cross and Stations of the Cross are also held on this day.
 - Through Jesus' Crucifixion, the sacrifice of the Old Covenant was ended and the sacrifice of the New Covenant was established.
 - **Read** John 19:17–37.

- **Easter Vigil** (Have students see *Altar “Maesta,”* Duccio, Student Text, p. 89.) This painting depicts Jesus’ descent into hell. As we say in the Apostles’ Creed, “He descended into hell; on the third day he rose again from the dead.” Jesus defeats sin and conquers death. Note that in the painting, Jesus is crushing Satan, who brought death into the world.

- The readings of the Easter Vigil tell the story of salvation history.
- Jesus descends into hell to rescue the good souls who have died. After the Fall of Adam and Eve, all souls went to Hades, the place of the dead; no souls could go to heaven until Jesus made the perfect sacrifice for our sins by dying on the Cross.
- The Easter Vigil is the culmination of the Paschal Mystery—the suffering, death, and Resurrection of Jesus Christ, by which we are saved from our sins.
- **Easter Sunday:** Celebration of the Resurrection of Jesus Christ; Jesus rises from the dead. (Have students see *The Three Marys at the Tomb*, Duccio, Student Text, p. 87.)
- Jesus Christ rose from the dead; we too shall rise one day.

- **Read the sidebar** about celebrating Easter in Poland.

Conclusion: As we walk through Holy Week, we share in the suffering, death, and Resurrection of Jesus Christ. Jesus had to die so that we could have eternal life. We too must die to our sins (give them up) so that we can have new life in Christ.

Review Supplemental Lesson—Liturgical Year: Lent and Easter (3 minutes)

- Lent is a penitential season. This means that we express our penance in order to help us to walk with Christ in his Passion.
- As we walk through Holy Week, we walk through the suffering, death, and Resurrection of Jesus Christ.

Application (15–20 minutes)

Choose one or more of the following for discussion.

- When we participate in Lenten and Easter rites, we actually walk with Christ and enter into the mysteries of Christ; in this way we participate in the story of God’s saving plan.
- One way to walk with Christ is to die to our sinfulness (give up our sins). Jesus gave up his life for us; we should give up our sins for him.
- (Give students a few minutes to reflect on their personal sins of pride, selfishness, etc. After a few minutes, explain to students that if they die to these sins—that is, let go of their sins—they will experience God’s blessings of great joy and peace.)

- ***Give an example of letting go of your sins and how this can bring you or another person great joy.*** (If I am constantly teasing or bothering a brother or sister, I could make a point of letting go of my selfish ways; this would bring great joy and peace in my family; if I give my time for a neighbor in need, he will be happy and God will bless me with joy in my heart.)
- ***Give an example of how, through our prayers and fasting, God will bless us with the ability to let go of our sins.*** (We will receive grace from prayer and fasting, as well as from attending Mass and going to confession, and then God will bless us with the strength and will to let go of our sins, changing our lives.)
- ***Give ideas of specific prayer and fasting that we can offer so that we can become more like Christ.*** (Get up early in the morning to pray the Rosary, attend one or more weekday Masses, give up something we like, etc.)
- It is not just a matter of giving up our sins, but we need God to help us. Through our Lenten prayers and sacrifices, God will help us to be like Christ. ***Can you name a time when you tried to change your ways but were unsuccessful because you did not call on God's help?*** (Answers will vary.)
- **Have students** write down some intentions (specific ways they will change during Lent) in the form of a letter to Jesus.

Celebration (5–10 minutes)

Choose one or more of the following.

- Pray the Our Father. Quiet students and listen to the refrain of “Jesus Christ Is Risen Today” in the *Adoremus Hymnal*, #410. Go to www.ignatius.com/promotions/adoremus-hymnal/downloadable-mp3s.htm for downloadable MP3s.
- Focus on the image of the risen Christ, Student Text, p. 87.

CHAPTER 20

The Perfect Sacrifice

"And walk in love, as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us, a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God."

Ephesians 5:2

To **sacrifice** is to give up completely something we would rather keep for the love of God or neighbor. There are many ways to sacrifice. You may give up some of your money to help the poor or give up some of your free time to help your mother when she is tired. The value of a sacrifice does not always depend on the size of the thing one gives up. Once Jesus watched some people offering money in the temple. Some people gave large amounts, but since they were very rich their sacrifices were not great. Then, a poor widow came, and she offered two copper coins of little value. Jesus remarked that her sacrifice was worth more than all the others because it was all she had to live on.

Mankind has had a long tradition of offering sacrifices to God in response to God's command and as a way to show sorrow for sin, to show love for God, and to thank God for the good things he has given them. At the very beginning of the Bible, Cain and Abel, the sons of Adam and Eve, made sacrifices of their crops and animals to the Lord.

The Jewish people made the offering of sacrifice a regular part of their worship. They would bring to the temple the best of what their farms produced. If it were an animal, such as a

lamb, calf, or goat, the priests would slaughter it and sprinkle its blood upon the altar. Offerings



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of wine were poured over the altar, and cakes of fine wheat flour were burned. When Mary and Joseph presented the infant Jesus in the temple, they brought along two doves as a sacrifice (Lk 2:24).

Although God was pleased with many of these offerings and sacrifices, they were not enough to make up for sin and completely restore mankind to its original friendship with God. Without sanctifying grace, no one could make a perfect sacrifice. That is why Jesus came. As the sinless man, he could make the acceptable sacrifice. As the sinless man, he could make that sacrifice on behalf of the human race. In this supreme sacrifice, Jesus was both priest and victim. In other words, he not only took the place of the victim (the animal) that was offered to God by a priest, but he was himself the priest as well. The role of the priest was to stand between God and mankind to make the offering. Jesus, being both God and man, was the perfect "link" between heaven and earth. He offered, not an animal, but himself, as the sacrifice for sin. In the Gospels, John the Baptist called Jesus the "Lamb of God." Just as the blood of a slaughtered lamb saved the first-born of each Hebrew family from death in Egypt, the blood of Christ saves us from the eternal death that comes from sin.

Until Christ's saving sacrifice, heaven had been closed to all who had died since the time of Adam. This did not mean that all souls were suffering in hell. The souls of those who had lived good lives (Noah, Abraham, Saint Joseph, and many others) were in a place of waiting. (The Apostles' Creed calls this place *hell*, although it was not the same as the hell of eternal punishment.) When Jesus died, he released the souls of the just men and women who had died in the past. Finally they could live with God in heaven. The sacrifice of Jesus was great enough to save all mankind: those from the past, those who lived at the

*Sing, my tongue, the Savior's glory;
Tell his triumph far and wide;
Tell aloud the famous story
Of his body crucified;
How upon the Cross a victim,
Vanquishing in death, he died.*

—Holy Thursday Hymn

time of the Incarnation, and all those who would ever live in the future.

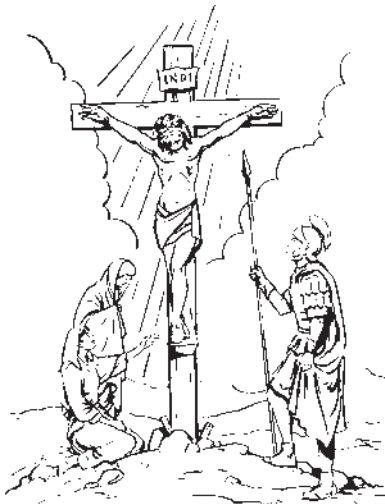
Jesus opened heaven and won back, or *redeemed*, the souls of all mankind. Now the gift of sanctifying grace would be available to all in the Sacrament of Baptism.

The Sacrifice Goes on

Although Jesus died at one moment in history, the saving action of God is an eternal act. Jesus will not die again, but his saving grace will go out to all the earth until the end of time. To perpetuate his redemptive act, our Lord instituted the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass. The Mass is a re-presentation of the same sacrifice Jesus made two thousand years ago. The priest says the words of Christ, and he changes bread and wine into the Body and Blood of our Savior. Remember, Jesus gave his Apostles the power to do this at the Last Supper. Later, the Apostles passed this power on to other men, and this has continued for centuries, through the Sacrament of Holy Orders, right up to the priests we have today. At the Mass, through the priest, Jesus offers himself to the Father on behalf of the whole human race.

When we participate in the Mass, we share in the priest's action by offering ourselves along with Jesus as a sacrifice to

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God. There is no better way to pray than to join ourselves to Jesus, in the Sacrifice of the Mass. Christ chooses ordinary bread and wine to become his Body and Blood. When we give him our own ordinary, sinful souls, he can also make us into something wonderful: a precious gift to God.

Persecutions

The Mass is the way in which Christ's saving grace goes out to the world. It is no wonder, then, that throughout history it has been

under attack. But brave Christians were always willing to risk anything for the Holy Sacrifice.

In England during the late 1500s, Queen Elizabeth I made it a crime to attend Mass. Priests had to travel in disguise from one Catholic home to another to celebrate Mass in secret. Catholic families built secret compartments in the walls or floors of their homes to hide the sacred vessels and other items needed to celebrate Mass. Sometimes, if government officials arrived, it was necessary for the visiting priest to squeeze into these hiding places. Many of these priests were caught and hanged,

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as were some of the lay people. Some of them are now saints of the Church, because they were martyrs.

In North America in the 1600s, Indians who became Christians had to face persecution if they participated in Mass. One of them, Blessed Kateri Tekakwitha, was chased all the way to the church by the pagan Indians of her tribe. They threw stones at her and threatened her with tomahawks. Her own family would not let her eat on Sundays if she went to Mass. But Kateri loved God more than her

own life, and she refused to give up going to Mass.

Even recently, in some countries, communist police watched to see who went to church on Sunday. Their names were taken down, and these people were usually not allowed good-paying jobs or nice houses. But the Mass meant more to them than any earthly treasures.

Words to Know:

sacrifice

Q. 86 How is Jesus' death on the Cross a sacrifice?

Jesus' death on the Cross was a sacrifice of love to God the Father, offered by his only Son. It is the perfect sacrifice of the Son himself, who obeyed the Father to atone and repair the damage done by man's disobedience (CCC 614).

Q. 87 Is the bloody sacrifice of the Cross the same as the unbloody Sacrifice of the Mass?

Yes, the bloody sacrifice of the Cross and the unbloody Sacrifice of the Mass are one and the same sacrifice; only the manner of the sacrifice is different (CCC 1367).

Q. 88 Did Jesus Christ die as God or as man?

Jesus Christ died as man because as God he could neither suffer nor die (CCC 469, 626).

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CHAPTER 21

He Is Risen

"They were at the tomb early in the morning and did not find his body; and they came back saying that they had even seen a vision of angels, who said that he was alive."

Luke 24:22-23

Early in the morning on the Sunday after Jesus died, Mary Magdalene and some other women walked along the road that led to the tomb. They wanted to complete the Jewish burial customs and anoint the body of Jesus with spices. There had not been enough time for this earlier because the Jewish Sabbath had begun Friday evening and lasted all day Saturday. During the Sabbath it was forbidden to handle a dead body.

Although it may have been a beautiful spring morning, the women's hearts were not light. The teacher they had loved and honored as the Messiah was dead. The disciples were still heartbroken over Jesus' death and in fear for their lives. On top of everything else, the women worried that they would not be able to perform this last act of love, the anointing of their dead master. The tomb was shut with a large stone which they themselves could not move. And it did not seem likely that the Roman guards, sent to the tomb to keep Jesus' disciples away, were going to help them. It must have seemed to the women that the forces of evil had won a terrible victory.

Arriving at the tomb, they were astonished to see the stone rolled away. An angel sat upon the stone and said, "Do not be afraid; for I know that you seek Jesus who was crucified. He is not here; for he has risen, as he

said. Come, see the place where he lay. Then go quickly and tell his disciples that he has risen from the dead..." (Mt 28:5-7).

The women rushed back to the house where the disciples were staying. The disciples did not know what to think of their story, but Peter and John immediately left to see the tomb, running all the way. Mary Magdalene ran back with them. They looked into the tomb. The linen cloths that had covered the body of Jesus were lying there. John recalled what Jesus had said about rising again. Yes! That was it! It had actually happened! At this moment,



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John and Peter became the first Apostles to believe in the Resurrection. Peter and John ran back again to tell the others what they had seen.

But Mary Magdalene remained behind. Tired and distressed by all that had happened, she could not think clearly. All she knew was that the body of Jesus was gone, perhaps stolen by wicked men. She began to cry. She heard a voice behind her: "Woman, why are you weeping? Are you looking for someone?" Her eyesight blurred by tears, Mary thought it was the cemetery gardener. But when the man spoke again, his voice was unmistakable. "Mary," he said. Mary looked again, and there stood Jesus! "Teacher!" she replied, almost speechless with joy. Jesus sent her to tell the disciples that he had risen from the dead.

Jesus had won the greatest victory of all. He had defeated sin and conquered death, the punishment for sin. His Resurrection showed all

his followers that Jesus was truly the Son of God, the King of Kings and Lord of Lords. It was a sign that God had accepted the sacrifice which Jesus made to redeem us.

After the Resurrection, the body of Jesus was changed, or *glorified*. Now he was no longer restricted by his body as the rest of us are. He could disappear and appear anywhere he wanted. He could pass through walls and locked doors. He no longer suffered any pain or discomfort, such as hunger or thirst. At the same time, Jesus still had a real body. He was not a ghost, and when he appeared to his disciples he proved this by eating food and allowing them to touch him.

The Resurrection of Jesus is one of the central truths of our Faith. Saint Paul said, "If Christ has not been raised... your faith is in vain" (useless). Because Jesus came to life again, our souls, dead from sin, become alive in sanctifying grace through Baptism. Because Jesus is alive forever, we too can hope to live forever in heaven.

Exult, let them exult, the hosts of heaven,
exult, let Angel ministers of God exult,
let the trumpet of salvation
sound aloud our mighty King's triumph!
Be glad, let earth be glad, as glory floods
her,
ablaze with light from her eternal King,

let all corners of the earth be glad,
knowing an end to gloom and darkness.
Rejoice, let Mother Church also rejoice,
arrayed with the lightning of his glory,
let this holy building shake with joy,
filled with the mighty voices of the
peoples.

—Exultet

"He descended into hell; on the third day he rose again from the dead. . ."

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**The Lord is risen from the grave, alleluia, alleluia,
who hung for us upon the Tree, alleluia, alleluia.**

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The Easter Vigil Mass

We celebrate the Resurrection at every Mass but in a special way at Easter. If possible, try to go to the Easter Vigil Mass. It is held late on Holy Saturday evening. Even more than the other Easter Masses, the Easter Vigil Mass teaches us how the death and Resurrection of Jesus brought us to new life.

At the Vigil:

You will see the blessing of the new paschal candle. This candle is decorated with symbols of Christ. Besides being used during the Easter season, during the year it will be lit at Baptisms and funerals.

You will see the blessing of new baptismal water. You may be able to take some holy water home with you.

Very often, adults or older children who convert to the Catholic Faith are baptized at the Easter Vigil Mass. For them and for us this is a

wonderful way to see how Baptism is our own sharing in the death and Resurrection of Jesus. You will have an opportunity to renew your baptismal vows.

Christ yesterday and today
the Beginning and the End
the Alpha and the Omega.

All time belongs to him
and all the ages.
To him be glory and power
through every age and for ever. Amen.

By his holy and glorious wounds,
may Christ the Lord guard us and protect
us. Amen.

—Prayer when the
paschal candle is lit

Q. 89 After his death, what did Jesus Christ do?

After his death, Jesus Christ descended into hell to take the souls of the just who had died before that time into paradise. Then he rose from the dead, taking up his body, which had been buried (CCC 631).

Q. 90 How long did the body of Jesus Christ remain buried?

The body of Jesus Christ remained buried from Friday evening to Easter Sunday morning (CCC 638, 641).

Q. 91 What is the significance of the Resurrection?

Because of the Resurrection we know that Jesus is God. We may trust that we too shall rise from the dead and live forever with him in heaven, as he promised (CCC 651, 654).

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