



**WELCOMING
CHILDREN
in WORSHIP**

THE **CATHOLIC
UNIVERSITY**
OF AMERICA



A PROGRAM FUNDED BY LILLY ENDOWMENT INC.

Liturgical Formation of Children for Hispanic Families and Communities

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**A liturgical formation resource for
parents, pastors,
catechists and teachers.**

LENT, HOLY WEEK AND EASTER

Patty Mazariegos, M.A. Catechesis, writer

Rachel Ryan, illustrator

The Catholic University of America

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Introduction

Welcome and thank you for your ministry that serves the liturgical formation of children for their participation in the Eucharist, the “source and summit of the Christian life.” We welcome you to this virtual community and hope you find this guided liturgical formation resource in English and Spanish a support to your ministry with children.

Here you will find reflections to guide children through the liturgical season with catechesis and children’s activities to prepare them to participate fully in the Lent and Easter liturgies.

Through the Church’s liturgical calendar, we journey through sacred time to lead children to encounter the Word of God and God’s presence and action in the world and in their lives.

In these sessions, we invite you to gather children around the table of the home or the table of the classroom as a preparation for their participation at the sacred table of the Eucharist.

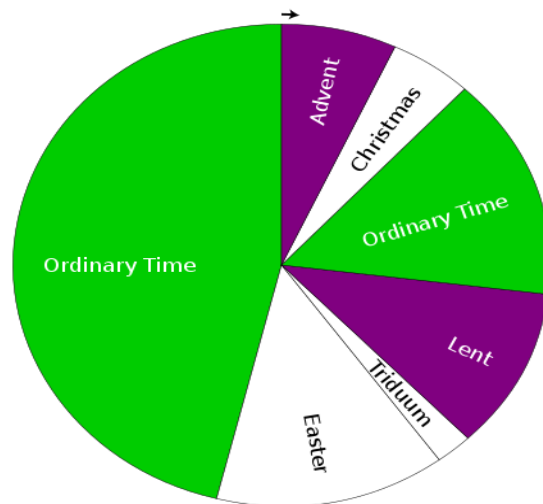
Each session with children follows these moments with supporting materials:

- 1. Opening Prayer**
- 2. Reading of Sacred Scripture**
- 3. Reflect with Children**
- 4. Faith in Practice**
- 5. Activities with children.**

Thank you for joining this virtual community.

The Liturgical Calendar

The liturgical year consists of a seasonal cycle and a sanctoral cycle, called the Proper of Time and the Proper of Saints, respectively. Both are organized and published in a liturgical calendar. The Church's liturgical calendar is enriched by observances proper to local Churches, whether national, diocesan, parish-level, or religious community.



The liturgical year has six seasons. The Church presents a cycle calendar of sacred time with the invitation to children and their families to live in the mystery of Jesus' life, death and resurrection at home, school and at play.

- **Advent** – beginning of the Church's liturgical calendar with four weeks of preparation before the celebration of Jesus' birth;
- **Christmas** - recalling the Nativity of Jesus Christ and his manifestation to the peoples of the world;
- **Lent** - a six-week period of penance before Easter
- **Sacred Paschal Triduum** - the holiest "Three Days" of the Church's year, when the Christian people recall the suffering, death, and resurrection of Jesus, that is the Paschal Mystery.
- **Easter** - 50 days of joyful celebration of the Lord's resurrection from the dead and his sending forth of the Holy Spirit
- **Ordinary Time** - divided into two sections (one span of 4-8 weeks after Christmas Time and another lasting about six months after Easter Time), wherein the faithful consider the fullness of Jesus' teachings and works among his people.”¹

¹ USCCB

Unit 2 - Liturgical Catechesis for Lent and Easter

Session V: Liturgical Catechesis for Lent (1)

1. Opening Prayer

Prayer: Make Me An Instrument of Your Peace ²

Lord, make me an instrument of your peace.
Where there is hatred, let me sow love;
where there is injury, pardon;
where there is doubt, faith;
where there is despair, hope;
where there is darkness, light;
and where there is sadness, joy.

O Divine Master, grant that I may not so much seek
to be consoled as to console;
to be understood as to understand;
to be loved as to love.
For it is in giving that we receive;
it is in pardoning that we are pardoned;
and it is in dying that we are born to eternal life. Amen.

2. Reading of Sacred Scripture

Matthew 6: 1-6 16-18

Jesus said to his disciples: "Take care not to perform righteous deeds in order that people may see them; otherwise, you will have no recompense from your heavenly Father. When you give alms, do not blow a trumpet before you, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets to win the praise of others. Amen, I say to you, they have received their reward. But when you give alms, do not let your left hand know what your right is doing, so that your almsgiving may be secret. And your Father who sees in secret will repay you.

"When you pray, do not be like the hypocrites, who love to stand and pray in the synagogues and on street corners so that others may see them. Amen, I say to you, they have received their reward. But when you pray, go to your inner room, close the door, and pray to your Father in secret. And your Father who sees in secret will repay you.

"When you fast, do not look gloomy like the hypocrites. They neglect their appearance, so that they may appear to others to be fasting. Amen, I say to you, they have received their reward. But when you fast, anoint your head and wash your face,

² Prayer attributed to St. Francis of Assisi.

so that you may not appear to be fasting, except to your Father who is hidden. And your Father who sees what is hidden will repay you."

Commentary:

In this Gospel, Jesus teaches the three pillars of Lent: prayer, fasting, and almsgiving. Lent is a time for renewing faith, hope, and charity. As Pope Francis tells us, "The Lenten journey, like the entire pilgrimage of the Christian life, is even now illumined by the light of the resurrection, which inspires the thoughts, attitudes, and decisions of the followers of Christ. Fasting, prayer, and almsgiving, as preached by Jesus, enable and express our conversion. The path of poverty and self-denial (fasting), concern and loving care for the poor (almsgiving), and childlike dialogue with the Father (prayer) make it possible for us to live lives of sincere faith, living hope, and effective charity."³

3. Reflect with Children

The Season of Lent

Lent commemorates the forty days that Jesus spent in the desert. This time of prayer prepared Jesus for the years of his public ministry in preaching and healing. Jesus' public life culminated in his loving and willing acceptance of the suffering of the cross that led to his resurrected glory at Easter. The Lenten season consists of forty days of prayer and penance to prepare for the celebration of the resurrection of Jesus celebrated during the Easter season. In Lent, the Church invites us to return to the Lord, to purify our souls and begin anew as disciples of Jesus. The season of Lent "begins on Ash Wednesday and finishes just before the Mass of the Lord's Supper on Holy Thursday. The seasons and days of penance in the course of the liturgical year (Lent, and each Friday in memory of the death of the Lord) are intense moments of the Church's penitential practice."⁴

Ash Wednesday

The first Scripture reading we hear on Ash Wednesday invites us to return to the Lord in penance and purification of heart, mind and body. The prophet Joel invites us with powerful words: "Now, says the LORD, return to me with your whole heart, with fasting, and weeping, and mourning; rend your hearts, not your garments, and return to the Lord, your God. For gracious and merciful is He, slow to anger, rich in kindness, and relenting in punishment. Perhaps he will again relent and leave behind him a blessing, offerings and libations for the LORD, your God..."⁵

³ Pope Francis. Message for Lent 2021

⁴ Code of Canon Law, c.1250.

⁵ Joel 2: 12

The priest places ashes on the forehead while saying these words from the Book of Genesis: "For you are dust, and to dust you shall return"⁶ As Lent begins we are reminded that without God we are nothing. And God desires our friendship. To be a friend of God we must first detach ourselves from all that is not of God so that we can return to God's love and friendship. Lent is an invitation to turn away from sin and to find true life, joy and happiness in being a disciple of Jesus.



What do Lenten ashes symbolize? ⁷

- Ashes were used as a sign of penance in the Old Testament and through the history of Christianity.
- Ashes are a public sign of our intent to die to worldly desires and to live as a disciple of Jesus.
- Ashes symbolize pain, in this case, the pain we feel from sins against God and neighbor.

- As our foreheads are marked, the priest reminds us that we are creatures created by God as he says: "For you are dust, and to dust you shall return."

- The ashes come from the blessed palms that were part of Palm Sunday Mass in the previous year.

Activity for Children

Invite the children to color the following page. Then discuss with them the meaning of Ash Wednesday with the reflection above as guide.

⁶ Genesis 3:19

⁷ Information from archtoronto.org and catholic.org



Fast and Abstinence

Catholics observe Ash Wednesday and Good Friday as days of fasting and abstinence, that is not eating meat. Fridays during Lent are days of abstinence from meat. Typically the age of fasting covers the age of 18 to 59. For the Church's norms on fasting during Lent we have guidance from the American bishops.⁸

In Lent, the Church also invites us to be generous and to give alms with a merciful heart. Through our generosity we seek to console those in need or to contribute, according to our means, to the efforts of the Church in evangelization for the good of souls.

" All Christians can practice almsgiving, not only the rich and powerful, but those who are not well off, and even the poor. In this way, people who are unequal in the capacity to give alms are equal in the love and affection with which they give."⁹

In Lent, the Church invites all to offer to God some daily form of penance and almsgiving that is offered to Jesus during times of prayer.

4. Faith in Practice at home

Prayer, fasting and almsgiving are the concrete ways in which we put faith into practice during Lent. Invite each child to prepare a simple, concrete and measurable plan to grow in faith during Lent.

We are often willing to offer general things, such as "I want to pray more," or "I want to be more generous," or "I want to be a saint." It is helpful to prepare concrete ways to grow in faith during Lent. So instead of saying, "I want to pray more," we could say "I will pray one Our Father, one Hail Mary with my family." If it is possible, the family can take time to pray the Rosary once a week. Or we might say, "I want to be more generous." A concrete way to grow in generosity is not buy a special treat and give the money to the poor instead.

Here are some practical examples and concrete ideas to help you plan how you will live the three essential pillars of Lent – prayer, fasting and almsgiving.

A. ALMSGIVING

Almsgiving leads us to see others, to love them, to listen to their needs, and to give them our time, help, advice, money, shelter, company, or affection. It is not limited to giving material goods. It also involves giving the gift of ourselves to others in simple acts of service. This Lenten practice based on charity reminds us to love God and

⁸ USCCB Pastoral Statement on Penance and Abstinence and the [complementary norm to Canon 1253](#).

⁹ St. Francis of Sales. Sermon on Fasting

others as ourselves. By giving alms we are united to Jesus in his love for the poor and in his own poverty and simplicity of life.

For Parents:

- Find opportunities to serve in your local food pantry or parish outreach to the poor.
- Take time in the day to talk one-one with your spouse and children at least once a week.
- Identify a charity to set aside money each week that will accumulate during Lent.
- Refrain from a special treat and offer the money to charity.
- Look in your closet for unused clothes or items to donate to local donation centers.
- Offer help to your spouse or children with a task that is challenging for them.
- Call a friend or relative who may be going through rough times.
- Visit a friend or relative who is sick.
- Visit or write to a prisoner through local prison ministries.
- Reach out to someone who is sick or homebound in your parish, or to a new mother, and offer to bring them a meal.

For children:

- Offer to help your parents with a simple chore that you can manage and be responsible for.
- Ask your parents if you can join in service with them at your parish or school.
- Look in your closet for clothes or toys that you can donate to the needy.
- Save some of your allowance to give to the poor or an organization that cares for the needy, even if it is a small amount.

Lent allows us to focus on our intentions, love, and generosity in giving to others. It is what is in our heart, mind and will that matter to God, not the quantity or volume of what we give or do.

"Didn't you see the light in Jesus' eyes as the poor widow left her little alms in the temple? Give Him what you can. The merit is not in whether it is big or small, but in the intention with which you give it."¹⁰

B. FASTING

Fasting during Lent is understood as choosing to limit or deny the eating of food or drink for the glory of God. The goal is not simply to lose weight or change eating habits but to limit food and drink to focus our desire on God. The Church invites us

¹⁰ St. Josemaria Escriva. The Way # 829

to this penitential practice of fasting, in some way or another, on Ash Wednesday and Good Friday. Catholics also observe abstinence (that is not eating meat) every Friday of Lent.

By fasting we can also deprive ourselves of things that are harmful to the body and the soul, for instance, excess alcohol, or too much food, excessive use of technology or the temptation of harmful images. The way we fast can also be adapted to habits that we wish to change, such as fasting from gossiping or speaking harshly or negatively about others.

For Parents:

- Strive to practice fasting and abstinence in the best way possible during the days given by the Church. This unites us to the Christian community of all those who are observing Lent.
- Choose smaller portions of food, especially favorite foods.
- Reduce or eliminate the consumption of alcohol during Lent.
- Give up a favorite dessert or one meal, as your schedule permits.

For children:

- Express thanks for the food your parents give you, instead of complaining.
- Try your best to eat the food that is on your plate.
- Give up candy or other favorite sweets once a week or throughout Lent.
- Be mindful of those who go without the basics of life such as food, clothing and shelter and pray for children who go hungry because of poverty and war.

C. PRAYER

The Church invites us in Lent to focus on the life of prayer by setting aside time for prayer, and for reading and meditating on the Word of God. But what is prayer?

The Catechism of the Catholic Church tells us that, "prayer is the raising of one's mind and heart to God or the requesting of good things from God." But when we pray, do we speak from the height of our pride and will, or "out of the depths" of a humble and contrite heart? He who humbles himself will be exalted; *humility* is the foundation of prayer, Only when we humbly acknowledge that "we do not know

how to pray as we ought, " are we ready to receive freely the gift of prayer. "Man is a beggar before God." ¹¹

Prayer is not a mere obligation to complete, but a time of conversation with God who desires to speak to us in the very concrete circumstances of our life. To pray is to speak with God and to listen to God's voice of love, forgiveness, and mercy. Lent is a perfect time to grow in the habit and practice of prayer, to read the word of God, and silently and prayerfully meditate on God's word addressed to us.

For Parents:

- Set aside a specific time for prayer during the day, for example, a few minutes before breakfast, in the afternoon, or after dinner.
- Participate in Mass once or twice times a week, as your schedule permits.
- Pray the Rosary, or one decade of the Rosary with your family once a week.
- Pray the Station of the Cross with your family or in your parish.
- Visit the Blessed Sacrament, when possible, to take time to pray with the Word of God silently and reflectively. Find the time(s) that works best for you.
- Read and reflect on the daily Mass readings, as much as possible.

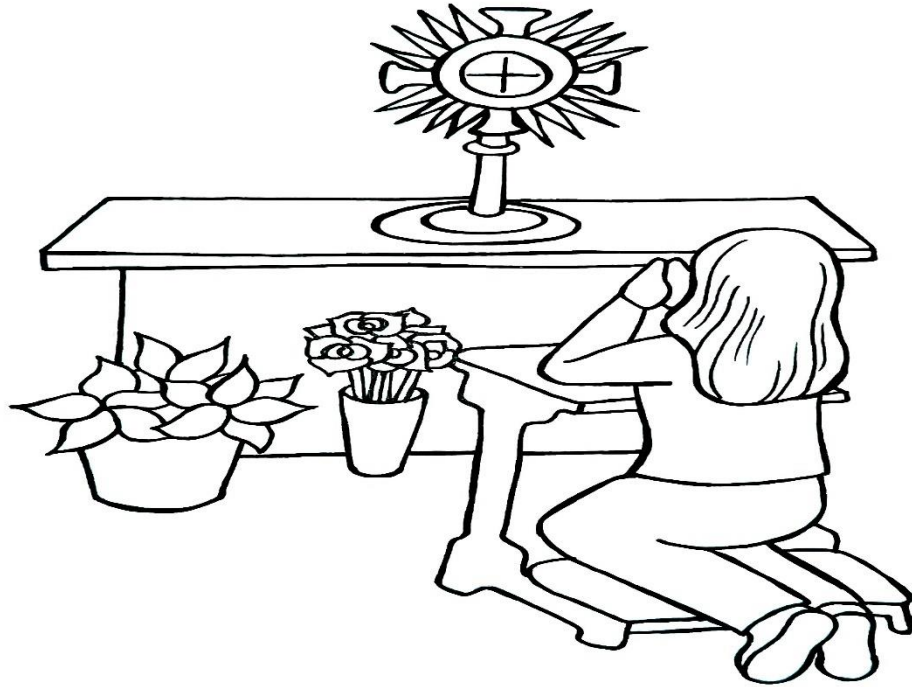
For Children:

- Bless the food you receive by praying grace before meals.
- Memorize a favorite prayer and ask your parents to teach you one new prayer during Lent.
- Pray before bedtime and ask a parent or family member to read you a Bible or saint story.
- Ask a parent or family member to bring you to Church and spend a few minutes in quiet prayer as you visit Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament.

Activity for Children

Invite the children to color the following page. Then discuss with them the meaning of Lenten observances of prayer, fasting and almsgiving from the above reflection.

¹¹ CIC # 2559



The Way of the Cross

The Way of the Cross, or the Stations of the Cross, is a Christian devotion that commemorates the events of Good Friday, from the moment that Jesus was condemned to death to the time He was laid to rest in the tomb. It is a prayerful meditation with 14 stations or pauses that is traditionally prayed during the Lenten season, and on Fridays during the rest of the year.

Praying the Stations of the Cross can be done in a group or individually. It can be experienced as a mini-pilgrimage that is prayed in Church. You and your family can even pray the Stations of the Cross at home.

Typically, one stands or kneels before each Station as one begins by praying:

“We adore you, O Christ, and we bless you because, by your Holy Cross, you have redeemed the world.”

Then a Bible passage or reflection on the scene of Jesus' passion is read and contemplated before moving on to the next station with the same pattern of prayer repeated at each station. Some parishes and groups sing or recite additional prayers between stations.

In Latin America, this pious devotion is very well established as a living tradition of Catholic culture and popular devotion. In many countries, the Way of the Cross is prayed as processions or live representations that are publicly celebrated. In the United States, parishes with large Hispanic presence practice this devotion. The Church invites and encourages all to participate in this Lenten devotion with the family and your parish community. You may also wish to initiate this Lenten prayer in your parish.



II. Session VI: Liturgical Catechesis for Lent (2)

HOLY WEEK

1. Opening Prayer

Prayer before the crucifix

Behold, o good and most sweet Jesus, I fall upon my knees before Thee, and with most fervent desire beg and beseech Thee that Thou wouldst impress upon my heart a lively sense of faith, hope, and charity, true repentance for my sins, and a firm resolve to make amends.

And with deep affection and grief, I reflect upon Thy five wounds, having before my eyes that which Thy prophet David spoke about Thee, o good Jesus: "They have pierced my hands and feet, they have counted all my bones."

2. Reading of Sacred Scripture

John 18: 1-19

When he had said this, Jesus went out with his disciples across the Kidron valley to where there was a garden, into which he and his disciples entered. Judas his betrayer also knew the place, because Jesus had often met there with his disciples. So Judas got a band of soldiers^[c] and guards from the chief priests and the Pharisees and went there with lanterns, torches, and weapons. Jesus, knowing everything that was going to happen to him, went out and said to them, "Whom are you looking for?" They answered him, "Jesus the Nazorean."^[c] He said to them, "I AM." Judas his betrayer was also with them. When he said to them, "I AM," they turned away and fell to the ground. So he again asked them, "Whom are you looking for?" They said, "Jesus the Nazorean." Jesus answered, "I told you that I AM. So if you are looking for me, let these men go." This was to fulfill what he had said, "I have not lost any of those you gave me." Then Simon Peter, who had a sword, drew it, struck the high priest's slave, and cut off his right ear. The slave's name was Malchus. Jesus said to Peter, "Put your sword into its scabbard. Shall I not drink the cup that the Father gave me?"

So the band of soldiers, the tribune, and the Jewish guards seized Jesus, bound him, and brought him to Annas first. He was the father-in-law of Caiaphas, who was high priest that year. It was Caiaphas who had counseled the Jews that it was better that one man should die rather than the people. Simon Peter and another disciple followed Jesus. Now the other disciple was known to the high priest, and he entered the courtyard of the high priest with Jesus. But Peter stood at the gate outside. So the other disciple, the acquaintance of the high priest, went out and spoke to the gatekeeper and brought Peter in. Then the maid who was the gatekeeper said to Peter, "You are not one of this man's disciples, are you?" He said,

"I am not." Now the slaves and the guards were standing around a charcoal fire that they had made, because it was cold, and were warming themselves. Peter was also standing there keeping warm. The high priest questioned Jesus about his disciples and about his doctrine.

3. Reflect with Children

For Catholics Holy Week is the most sacred week of the liturgical year. It is the week from Palm Sunday when the Church journeys through Holy Thursday and Good Friday to the Solemnity of Easter. Holy Week is observed with special solemnity as a time of prayerful remembering of and entering into the mystery of the Passion of Jesus that completed his earthly life and mission.

As the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* tells us, "in the liturgical year, the various aspects of the one Paschal mystery unfold. They commemorate the beginning of our salvation and communicate to us the first fruits of the Paschal mystery."¹²

All the faithful and their families are encouraged to join in the Church's celebration of the sacred rites of Holy Week and share in the graces that flow from the passion, death and glorious resurrection of Jesus.

Overview of celebrations during Holy Week taken from the Roman Missal.¹³

- **Palm Sunday:** On this day the Church recalls the entrance of Christ the Lord into Jerusalem to accomplish his Paschal Mystery. Accordingly, the memorial of this entrance of the Lord takes place at all Masses, by means of the Procession or the Solemn Entrance before the principal Mass or the Simple Entrance before other Masses. It is the commemoration of Jesus' triumphal entrance to Jerusalem. The liturgy begins with a blessing and procession of palms, but attention is given to a lengthy reading of the Passion, with parts taken by the priest, lectors, and congregation.



¹² CCC # 1171

¹³ The Roman Missal. 2010 International Commission on English in the Liturgy Corporation ICEL

- **The Sacred Pascal Triduum:** In these days, the Church solemnly celebrates the greatest mysteries of our redemption, keeping by means of special celebrations the memorial of her Lord, crucified, buried, and risen. The Paschal Fast should also be kept sacred. It is to be celebrated everywhere on the Friday of the Lord's Passion and, where appropriate, prolonged also through Holy Saturday as a way of coming, with spirit uplifted, to the joys of the Lord's Resurrection.

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As the Catechism of the Catholic Church notes, "Beginning with the Easter Triduum as its source of light, the new age of the Resurrection fills the whole liturgical year with its brilliance. Gradually, on either side of this source, the year is transfigured by the liturgy. It really is a "year of the Lord's favor."⁴² The economy of salvation is at work within the framework of time, but since its fulfillment in the Passover of Jesus and the outpouring of the Holy Spirit, the culmination of history is anticipated "as a foretaste," and the kingdom of God enters into our time."¹⁴

- **Thursday of the Lord's Supper:** The Mass of the Lord's Supper is celebrated in the evening, at a convenient time, with the full participation of the whole local community and with all the Priests and ministers exercising their office. The altar may be decorated with flowers with a moderation that accords with the character of this day. The tabernacle should be entirely empty, but a sufficient amount of bread should be consecrated in this Mass for the Communion of the clergy and the people on this and the following day. During this Mass, the Church commemorates the institution of the Eucharist and Priesthood during the Last Supper. Also, the Church celebrated the "Mandatum novum do vobis" ("a new commandment I give to you." John 13:34) to love each other.

Reflect with children on the gift and mystery of the Eucharist that Jesus instituted at the Last Supper that is the "source and summit of the Christian life." All forms of prayer in the Catholic tradition flow from and lead to the supreme prayer of the Eucharist. Invite the children to reflect on Jesus' institution of the Eucharist as his supreme gift of love given to the disciples, to the Church, and to each baptized Catholic. Every time we participate fully, consciously, and actively in Mass, we remember Jesus' words to "do this in memory of me." At every Mass we join our lives in offering with the offering of the priest who joins his prayer to the offering of Jesus to his heavenly Father.

Invite the children to share their "Eucharistic amazement" at the gift of Jesus' presence in his Body and Blood at every Mass.

¹⁴ CCC # 1168

In some Latin American countries, families make altars to commemorate the Last Supper. They also create a "huerto" or "garden" to remember the time Jesus prayed in the Garden of Gethsemane. These are small altars decorated with flowers, fruits, and candles. Families are encouraged to make their own "huerto" at home with their children, as a way to recall this Latin American cultural tradition and the solemnity of this sacred week. Families pray together around the "huertos". Good Friday is set aside as a time of silence and prayer.

Here is an example of a "huerto" in a church.



And here is an image of "huerto" created in a home that remains in place for the Triduum.



- **Friday of the Passion of the Lord**

(Good Friday): On this and the following day, by a most ancient tradition, the Church does not celebrate the Sacraments at all, except for Penance and the Anointing of the Sick. The Celebration of the Passion of the Lord is celebrated on the afternoon of this day, about three o'clock (unless a later hour is chosen for a pastoral reason), there takes place the celebration of the Lord's Passion consists of three parts, namely, the Liturgy of the Word, the Adoration of the Cross, and Holy Communion.

Here we see an image of a Good Friday Procession in Guatemala.



- **Holy Saturday:** On Holy Saturday the Church waits at the Lord's tomb in prayer and fasting, meditating on his Passion and Death and on his Descent into Hell, and awaiting his Resurrection. The Church abstains from the Sacrifice of the Mass, with the sacred table left bare, until after the solemn Vigil, that is, the anticipation by the night of the Resurrection, when the time comes for paschal joys, the abundance of which overflows to occupy fifty days.
- **The Easter Vigil in the Holy Night:** By most ancient tradition, this is the night of keeping vigil for the Lord (Ex 12:42), in which, following the Gospel admonition (Lk 12: 35-37), the faithful, carrying lighted lamps in their hands, should be like those looking for the Lord when he returns, so that at his coming he may find them awake and have them sit at his table. Of this night's Vigil, which is the greatest and most noble of all solemnities, there is to be only one celebration in each church. The entire celebration of the Easter Vigil must take place during the night so that it begins after nightfall and ends before daybreak on Sunday.

4. Faith in Practice at home

Holy Week in Latin America is characterized by festive foods and vibrant colors. A common feature is the preparation of foods with fish and seafood to observe the abstinence of Good Friday. Make a family tradition to cook a particular food for these holy days and remind the children of the reasons for these traditions.

Below are examples of the Latin American cuisine for Holy Week. In Ecuador there is fanesca, in South America there is Bacalao Guisado, in Peru there is ceviche, and in the Caribbean, fried fish with tostones.



Activity for Children

Invite the children to color the following pages. Then discuss with them the meaning of Palm Sunday, Holy Thursday, and Good Friday with the reflections as guide.





III. Session VII Liturgical Catechesis for Easter (1)

Easter

1. Opening Prayer

Heavenly Father, our hearts are so full of joy today. You are so near to us on this glorious day of Easter. May the love we feel this morning stay with us the rest of the day and always.

As we begin this day celebrating Jesus's victory over death, we pray, O Heavenly Father, that you remain near to us and continue to guide us until we join in the unending celebration in heaven. In Your name, we pray.

I offer up this day to you, Lord, and pray in gratitude for the gift of salvation that Jesus won for us. As the day gets busier, may I never stray far from the quiet peace I feel in my heart right now, knowing how deep Your love is for me. Amen.

2. Reading of Sacred Scripture

John 20: 1-9

On the first day of the week, Mary of Magdala came to the tomb early in the morning, while it was still dark, and saw the stone removed from the tomb. So she ran and went to Simon Peter and to the other disciple whom Jesus loved, and told them, "They have taken the Lord from the tomb, and we don't know where they put him."

So Peter and the other disciple went out and came to the tomb. They both ran, but the other disciple ran faster than Peter and arrived at the tomb first; he bent down and saw the burial clothes there, but did not go in. When Simon Peter arrived after him, he went into the tomb and saw the burial cloths there, and the cloth that had covered his head, not with the burial cloths but rolled up in a separate place. Then the other disciple also went in, the one who had arrived at the tomb first, and he saw and believed. For they did not yet understand the Scripture that he had to rise from the dead.

3. Reflect with Children

"The word "Easter" comes from Old English, meaning simply the "East." The sun which rises in the East, bringing light, warmth, and hope, is a symbol for the Christian of the rising Christ, who is the true Light of the world. The Paschal Candle used during the Easter Vigil is a central symbol of this divine light, which is Christ. It is kept near the ambo throughout Easter Time and lit for all liturgical celebrations."¹⁵

The Church celebrates Easter for an entire season that lasts for forty days till Pentecost. So Easter Sunday is the beginning of a time of reflecting on the mystery of Jesus' resurrection and our participation in the new life of the risen Lord Jesus.

¹⁵ USCCB Article: What is Easter? April 2022

So we read in Scripture that “our Lord was put to death for our trespasses and raised for our justification”¹⁶ Easter is a time of hope and deep joy.

The *Catechism of the Catholic Church* notes that, “Easter is not simply one feast among others, but the “Feast of feasts,” the “Solemnity of solemnities,” just as the Eucharist is the “Sacrament of sacraments” (the Great Sacrament). St. Athanasius calls Easter “the Great Sunday”¹⁷ and the Eastern Churches call Holy Week “the Great Week.” the mystery of the Resurrection, in which Christ crushed death, permeates with its powerful energy our old time until all is subjected to him.”¹⁷

When we consider the whole liturgical calendar we see that the Resurrection of Jesus Christ is the most important feast of the Church’s year. Easter is truly the foundation of our Christian faith.

“If Christ has not been raised, then our preaching is in vain and your faith is in vain. We are even found to be misrepresenting God because we testified of God that he raised Christ” (1 Cor 15:14-15). As Pope Benedict XVI notes, “with these words, Saint Paul explains quite drastically what faith in the Resurrection of Jesus Christ means for the Christian message overall: it is its very foundation. The Christian faith stands or falls with the truth of the testimony that Christ is risen from the dead.”¹⁸

The Church invites us to celebrate Easter by attending the Easter liturgies celebrated at the Easter Vigil or on Easter Sunday Mass. We gather with family around a special meal to celebrate God’s power in raising Jesus from the dead and the hope of new life in Jesus that we are called to live and for all time.

4. Faith living at Home

During the Easter season take time as a family to visit a shrine, the local cathedral, or place of pilgrimage.

Discuss with children how the event of Jesus’ resurrection celebrated on Easter Sunday continues each day of the Easter season, especially in the Mass and in personal prayer.

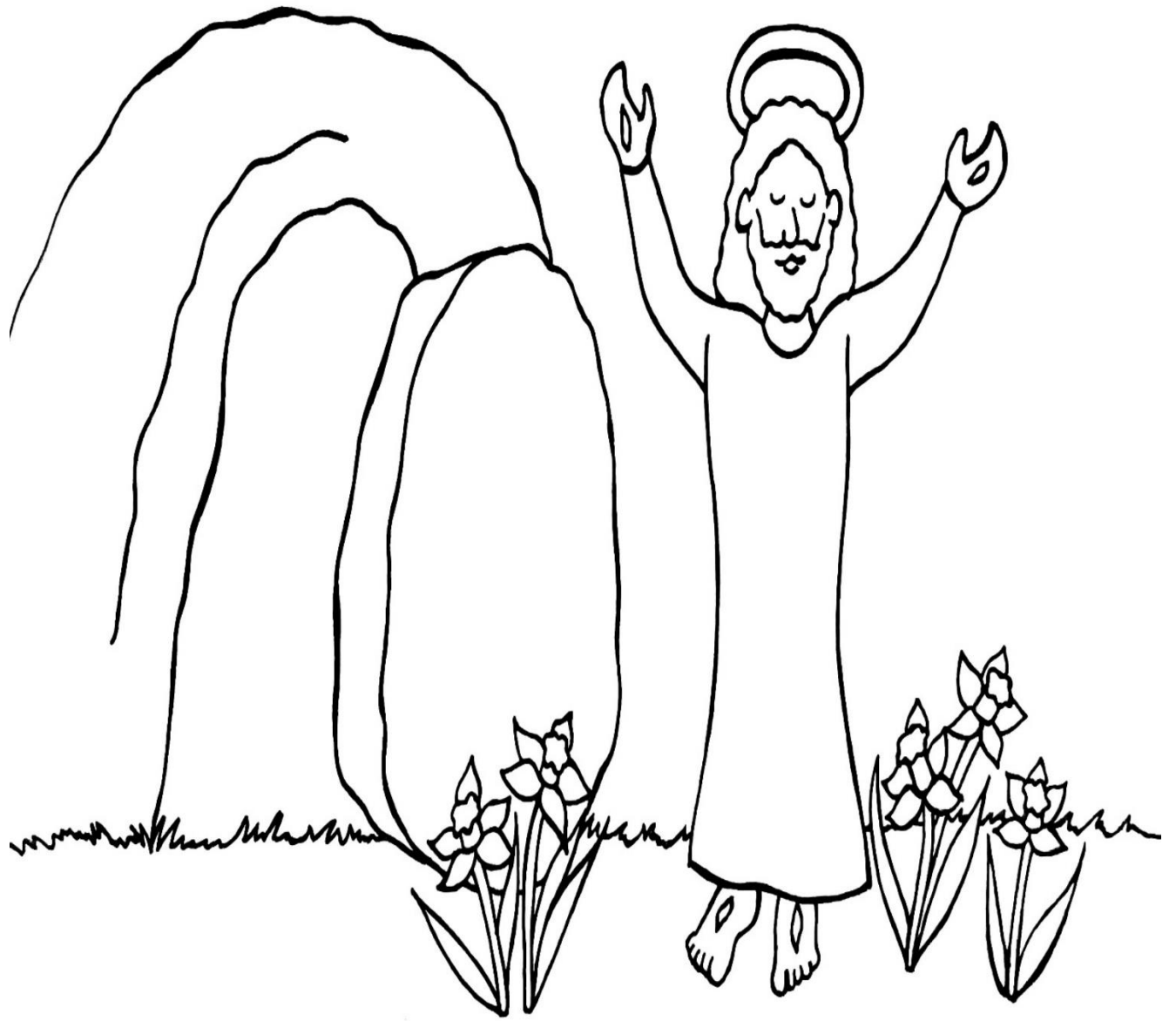
Activity for Children

Invite the children to color the following page. Then discuss with them the meaning of Jesus’ resurrection and the Church’s celebration of Easter Sunday for their daily lives with the reflections as guide.

¹⁶ Rom. 4: 25

¹⁷ CCC # 1169

¹⁸ Pope Benedict XVI, *Jesus of Nazareth, Holy Week: From the Entrance Into Jerusalem To The Resurrection*. Ignatius Press, p. 241.



IV. Session VII Liturgical Catechesis for Easter (2)

The Fifty Days of Eastertide

1. Opening Prayer

God of everlasting mercy,
who in the very recurrence of the paschal feast
kindle the faith of the people you have made your own,
increase, we pray, the grace you have bestowed,
that all may grasp and rightly understand
in what font they have been washed,
by whose Spirit they have been reborn,
by whose Blood they have been redeemed.
Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son,
who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
one God, for ever and ever. Amen.¹⁹

(Collect for Second Sunday of Easter (or Divine Mercy Sunday))

2. Reading of Sacred Scripture

Matthew 28: 8-15

Then they went away quickly from the tomb, fearful yet overjoyed, and ran to announce^[a] this to his disciples. And behold, Jesus met them on their way and greeted them. They approached, embraced his feet, and did him homage. Then Jesus said to them, "Do not be afraid. Go tell my brothers to go to Galilee, and there they will see me." While they were going, some of the guard went into the city and told the chief priests all that had happened. They assembled with the elders and took counsel; then they gave a large sum of money to the soldiers, telling them, "You are to say, 'His disciples came by night and stole him while we were asleep.' And if this gets to the ears of the governor, we will satisfy [him] and keep you out of trouble." The soldiers took the money and did as they were instructed. And this story has circulated among the Jews to the present [day].

3. Reflect with Children

While we are familiar with the forty days of Lent, we may not realize that after Easter Sunday there are fifty days to celebrate the Easter Season. As Pope Francis notes, "*The joy of the gospel fills the hearts and lives of all who encounter Jesus. Those who*

¹⁹ Easter Collect for Second Sunday of Easter (Divine Mercy Sunday)

accept his offer of salvation are set free from sin, sorrow, inner emptiness and loneliness. **With Christ joy is constantly born anew.**²⁰

The Easter Octave

The week following Easter Sunday is known as the Easter Octave. As the Roman Missal notes, “the first eight days of Easter Time constitute the Octave of Easter and are celebrated as Solemnities of the Lord.”²¹ It includes Easter Sunday and the seven days that follow, culminating in the celebration of Divine Mercy Sunday (also known as the Second Sunday of Easter).

The Easter Octave is a time of rejoicing and giving thanks to God for Jesus' resurrection by which we are saved. In this time, we enjoy the company of family and friends. The Church invites families to continue reflecting on the goodness and mercy of God in prayer and closeness to the sacraments.

In many Latin American countries, the Resurrection is celebrated with processions. Here are some examples in images of these Easter Octave celebrations.



²⁰ Pope Francis, *Evangelii Gaudium*, 24 November 2013, 1.

²¹ *Roman Missal*, “Universal Norms on the Liturgical Year and the General Roman Calendar,” no. 24.

4. Faith living at Home

Take time as a family to pray the Divine Mercy Chaplet. Explain to children the meaning of this devotion as it relates to the Second Sunday of Easter, also known as Divine Mercy Sunday.

Invite the children to reflect on and share on how they will experience the power of Jesus' resurrection throughout the Easter season and in their daily lives throughout the year.