

Journey to Pascha

Introduction

During Great Lent we prepare ourselves for the Great Feast of Pascha. In this unit we will be studying the events that we celebrate during Holy Week and Pascha. Included in this unit are projects, icons, music, books, activities, and crafts. There are also many suggestions of things you can do for others.

Journey to Pascha

Each session will focus on a different theme that is part of our Journey to Pascha. We will begin with the story of Lazarus, whom Jesus raised from the dead, and continue with our celebration of Jesus' joyful Entrance into Jerusalem. In the following sessions, we will learn about each day of Holy Week, what Jesus taught His disciples during this time, and what happened to Jesus as He was brought to trial, put to death and buried. Finally, we will celebrate the events that led to His Resurrection from the dead.

Resources for Every Age

Resources for Every Age

- Liturgical texts and resources for Holy Week
- Biblical texts, maps and guides to the use of Bible aids and charts
- Photos, icons, graphics and coloring pages for school and home use
- Short musical settings for psalm verses, troparia, kontakia and other special hymns for Holy Week and Pascha, recommended CD's, etc.
- Brief reviews of dozens of good books for home and classroom reading
- Crafts, activities and outreach projects for families and mixed generation groups
- Information on teaching skills, ideas for classroom use, human development patterns, writing projects, etc.

Highlights covered in the individual sessions include:

- **Lazarus Saturday: Jesus raises His friend from the dead.**
Mary and Martha plead with the Lord to come quickly to heal their brother Lazarus. Jesus delays his return until Lazarus is dead four days. Martha confesses her belief in Jesus as the Christ, the Son of God. Jesus says: "I am the resurrection and the life; he who believes in me, though he die, yet shall he live..." Jesus has the power to raise the dead Jesus raises Lazarus from the dead. Jesus is the Resurrection and Life of all people.
- **Palm Sunday: Jesus Enters Jerusalem as a King!**
Jesus enters Jerusalem and is honored as a King. The children greet Jesus waving palms and branches, crying out "Hosanna!" The people shout their praises to Him: "Hosanna! Blessed is He who comes in the Name of the Lord! Hosanna in the highest!" In our celebration of the feast, the palms we hold are a

sign of our allegiance to Christ. Jesus enters the Temple in Jerusalem and chases out the money-changers. Jesus teaches in the Temple.

- **Holy Monday, Tuesday & Wednesday: Parables of the Bridegroom, Last Judgment and the "End"**

God has made us stewards of His world, to serve and care for it. He calls us to bear fruit by using the talents He has given us. Jesus warns us of the Day of Judgment, the time of the "End," when we will appear before God and have to account for our deeds. Christ will come to judge the world. He will come at Midnight, at an hour when we least expect Him. He will come as a Bridegroom, to take us, the Church, as His Bride. God calls us to be prepared, for only those who are ready will enter His Kingdom. The Bridegroom Matins.

- **Holy Thursday: The Supper, Anointing, and Betrayal of Christ**

A woman anoints Christ's feet with oil, as a sign of love, as well as a preparation for His burial. The Jews seek to kill Jesus and Judas agrees to betray his Master. Jesus shows the disciples how they must serve others, by washing the feet of His own disciples. Jesus shares a Passover meal with His disciples. He blesses bread and a cup of wine, saying "do this in remembrance of Me." Jesus teaches the disciples about love, and promises to send them a Comforter, the Holy Spirit, after He is gone. The Mystical Supper

- **Holy Friday: The Trial and Crucifixion of Christ.**

Jesus takes the disciples to a place to pray and tells them that one of them shall betray Him and the others will deny Him and run away. Jesus is arrested and brought before the chief priests and scribes who sentence Him to death for equating Himself with God. He is brought before Pilate, the Roman governor, and then to Herod, to be sentenced to death and killed. Jesus is put to death on a Cross, along with two thieves. Mary, Jesus' mother and the women followers who served Him stood by the Cross until the end. Joseph of Arimathea and Nicodemus take Jesus' body down from the Cross, prepare it for burial and lay Him in a new tomb. The Death & Burial of Christ.

- **Holy Saturday & Pascha: Descent into Hades & Resurrection**

Jesus died in order to give us new life! Through His death on the Cross, Jesus defeated the power of death. Having died as a man, Jesus descended to Hades, the place of death, to destroy death and bring life to those in the tombs. Jesus' Life was more powerful than death. At the moment of His death, the earth shook, the tombs were opened and many bodies of the saints were raised. By His Resurrection from the dead, Jesus, who is the Christ-God, gives new life to all who believe in Him and do His will. Although we will die, we know that "death can no longer hold men captive," for when Christ comes again, all those in the tombs will be raised from the dead. Christ the Lord of all will come to judge the living and the dead, and grant life eternal in the world to come, to all who believe in Him as King and as God. "Christ is Risen!"

Journey to Pascha • Lesson 1

Lazarus Saturday (Ages 7-9)

Overview

Jesus Raises Lazarus from the Dead

Objectives

By the end of this Lesson, learners should be able to:

- Identify Mary, Martha and Lazarus as friends of Jesus
- Recount the events leading up to and including the raising of Lazarus
- Tell how we know Jesus loved Lazarus
- Answer the question: Why do you think Jesus waited to go see Lazarus?
- Sing the Troparion of the Feast of Palms

Materials

- Icon of the Raising of Lazarus
- *Resource Materials* discussed in Holy Week Mural Activity
- colored pencils or crayons

Resources

Required Resources

- [Holy Week Mural](#) (PDF)
- [The Raising of Lazarus \(John 11:1-45\)](#) (PDF)

Optional Resources

- [Icon of The Raising of Lazarus](#) (Image)
- [Jesus Raises Lazarus from the Dead](#)(HTML)

Procedure

1 Opening Prayer

In the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

The Troparion (*Tone 1*)

By raising Lazarus from the dead before Thy passion,
Thou didst confirm the universal resurrection, O Christ God.
Like the children, with the palms of victory,
We cry out to Thee, O Vanquisher of Death,
Hosanna in the Highest!
Blessed is He that comes in the Name of the Lord.

Go over the meanings of these words; you may want to review them in the coming weeks as you say or sing the troparion again:

passion: this refers to Jesus' suffering and crucifixion.

universal resurrection: this means that by raising Lazarus from the dead, Jesus showed us that He will raise all of us--the whole universe.

vanquisher: conqueror or one who wins a victory and does away with something (in this case, Jesus won the victory over death.)

2 Bible Story

Choose one of the following Resources to read to or with the students, based on the students' comprehension level:

- **Raising of Lazarus** (John 11:1-45)
- **Jesus Raises Lazarus from the Dead**

3 Role Play

Look at the icon of the Raising of Lazarus together. Identify Jesus, Mary, Martha and Lazarus.

Locate an open space and a closet or other space separated by a door to be used as the tomb of Lazarus .

Assign parts and have students recount the events that happened when Jesus came to the tomb of Lazarus and the raising of Lazarus. For larger groups, split group in half and have students give 2 play presentations.

4 Wrap Up and Resource Project

Have students draw and color, on half sheets of 8 1/2 by 11 paper, figures or events from the lesson. These should be placed on or around the first panel of the mural described in the Resources section. This will be the same method as for mural panels in the lessons that follow this one.

When they finish, as they are cleaning up and preparing for closing prayer, ask the following:

- Was Lazarus really dead or was he just very, very sick? (*He had died.*)
- How do we know that Jesus really loved Lazarus? (*Let students give answers. One major way we know Jesus loved His friend is that He wept at Lazarus' tomb.*)
- Why do you think Jesus waited a few days to come to Lazarus' tomb instead of coming right away? (*Let students give answers. Suggest that Jesus wanted people to see the power of God, and to believe in Him. He waited so that everyone would know Lazarus was really dead, and that God's loving power could raise him*)

from death.)

5 Closing Prayer

In the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

The Troparion (*Tone 1*)

By raising Lazarus from the dead before Thy passion,
Thou didst confirm the universal resurrection, O Christ God.
Like the children, with the palms of victory,
We cry out to Thee, O Vanquisher of Death,
Hosanna in the Highest!
Blessed is He that comes in the Name of the Lord.

Journey to Pascha • Lesson 2

Palm Sunday (Ages 7-9)

Overview

Jesus is our King and God

Objectives

By the end of this Lesson, learners should be able to:

- Name some of the Old Testament kings and tell what you know about them
- Research and illustrate examples of the responsibilities of a king to the people in his kingdom
- Tell the story of the Entrance into Jerusalem of Jesus, the King of All, using the icon of Palm Sunday
- Explain how we might prepare ourselves to meet a great king or president and compare this to how we should prepare ourselves to meet Christ

Materials

- Crayons & Markers
- Drawing Paper
- Entry into Jerusalem/ Palm Sunday Icon
- Children's Bible Stories Resource
- Palm Sunday Resource
- Gospel of Palm Sunday Resource (*Supplemental*)
- The Feast of Palms Resource (*Supplemental*)

Resources

Required Resources

- [Divine Liturgy Gospel of Palm Sunday](#) (PDF)
- [Holy Week Mural](#) (PDF)
- [Matins Gospel of Palm Sunday](#) (PDF)
- [Palm Sunday](#) (PDF)
- [Section A: Children's Bible Stories](#) (PDF)
- [The Feast of Palms: Saturday-Sunday](#) (PDF)
- [Entry into Jerusalem](#) (Image)

Procedure

1 Opening Prayer

In the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

The Troparion (*Tone 1*)

By raising Lazarus from the dead before Thy passion,
Thou didst confirm the universal resurrection, O Christ God.
Like the children, with the palms of victory,
We cry out to Thee, O Vanquisher of Death,
Hosanna in the Highest!
Blessed is He that comes in the Name of the Lord.

2 Discussion Starter

Begin by asking the following, allowing students to answer and discuss the possibilities:

- What is a king?
- How does he live, and what does he do?

3 Palm Sunday

Present icon of Palm Sunday/ Entry into Jerusalem

Have students point out which things in the icon do not match the life of the king that they described above. *Encourage students to see Christ's humility--He rides a humble donkey, He is close to the people rather than being enclosed in a coach or above them on a proud horse, He carries no weapons or insignias of power.*

Section A: Children's Bible Stories

Ask students:

Do you know of any kings in the Old Testament? Tell what you know about them.
(*e.g, King David, King Solomon*)

What are the responsibilities of a king to the people in his kingdom? (*Let students give their own answers*)

Read or Tell:

Section A: Children's Bible Stories

Children's Bible Stories & Paraphrased Texts

Palm Sunday

The story of Palm Sunday, the Entrance into Jerusalem, written for young children

The story of the Entrance into Jerusalem of Jesus, the King of All using the icon of Palm Sunday.

Ask:

Why are the people holding palm branches? (*They think he is the new king for their nation*) Why are they

happily welcoming Jesus? (*He raised Lazarus*)

Let students give their own answers to the following:

What would you do if the President of the United States came to your neighborhood?

How would you prepare your home for a visit from the President of the United States?

How would you prepare yourself to meet a great king or president?

How should we prepare ourselves to meet Christ? Is this different from the way we would prepare for the President?

4 What is a King?

Have students illustrate 2 pictures separated by a line down the middle. One half is to be of an earthly king (as discussed) and the other half is to be of Jesus as King (like in the icon).

5 Resource Project: Mural of Events

Have students construct the second panel of the mural.

6 Extra Activity: Role Play

Divide the class into groups of four. In each group, have one student be a roving reporter and interview the other three as people in the crowd, to find out why they are there and who they think Jesus is. The groups can present their skits to the rest of the class. (Adjust the activity according to the number of students you have.)

7 Wrap Up

As students are cleaning up and preparing for closing prayer, ask the following:

- What did the crowd exclaim as Jesus rode in? (*"Hosanna", "Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord"*)
- Was Jesus meant to be an earthly king? (*No, He wanted to show humility even as He came to do God's work--work that only He, the divine Son of God, could do*)
- Why didn't Jesus ride in a beautiful chariot instead of on a donkey? (*Students can give their own answers to this--it has to do with Jesus' intention to show Himself as a different kind of king*)

8 Closing Prayer

In the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

The Troparion (Tone 1)

By raising Lazarus from the dead before Thy passion,
Thou didst confirm the universal resurrection, O Christ God.
Like the children, with the palms of victory,
We cry out to Thee, O Vanquisher of Death,
Hosanna in the Highest!
Blessed is He that comes in the Name of the Lord.

Journey to Pascha • Lesson 3

Holy Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday (Ages 7-9)

Overview

The Bridegroom Services - Being Ready

Objectives

By the end of this Lesson, learners should be able to:

- Tell simply the story of the Wise and Foolish Maidens (Note: "Maidens" is the word used in the Revised Standard Version of the Bible)
- Tell why it is important to be prepared for Jesus Christ when He comes to be with us

Materials

- Bible
- Icon of the Wise and Foolish Maidens
- For **each group** of 3 or 4 students, have the following:
 1. Five Ziploc bags, each containing 1" squares of heavy paper or card stock, each square with a single letter. In each bag the letters will spell out **one** of the following words: LAZARUS, MARTHA, DONKEY, PALMS, JERUSALEM.

Each envelope should be shaken so the letters are well mixed. Use a marker to number the outside of each envelope, in the order of the words given above:
1/Lazarus, 2/Martha, 3/Donkey, 4/Palms, 5/Jerusalem
 2. Pencils

Resources

Required Resources

- [Holy Week Mural](#) (PDF)
- [The Bridegroom Services of Holy Week](#) (PDF)
- [Icon of the Wise and Foolish Maidens](#)(Link)

Procedure

1 Opening Prayer

In the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

O Heavenly King, the comforter, the Spirit of truth,
Who art everywhere and fillest all things,
Treasury of blessings and giver of life,
Come and abide in us, and cleanse us from every purity,
And save our souls, O Good One.

2 Review

Sing or say together the Troparion for Palm Sunday, the Entrance of the Lord into Jerusalem:

By raising Lazarus from the dead before Thy Passion,

Thou didst confirm the universal Resurrection, O Christ God,

Like the children with the palms of victory,

We cry out to You, O Vanquisher of death,

"Hosanna in the Highest! Blessed is He that comes in the name of the Lord!"

Make sure students understand the following words and phrases:

1. **passion:** this means the suffering and death of Jesus Christ when He died on the cross
2. **universal resurrection:** this is God's promise that we will all rise to live with Him forever
3. **vanquisher:** conqueror, someone who wins a battle

Continue the review by dividing the class into groups of 3 or 4. Give each group pencils, paper, a set of five numbered envelopes containing letters, and a desk or table space to work on.

Have the groups work on spelling out the names and words in each envelope, arranging the squares in order on the workspace. Walk around among the groups and give help (especially with spelling) as needed. As students work out the words and names, they should be able to write sentences using each name or word, and the sentences should describe (in order) the events we remember on Lazarus Saturday and Palm Sunday. Let students work from memory, only reviewing the story from the Bible if they need to. You may want to make the activity a contest to see which group can be first to spell out the words in the bags and write correct sentences. (The sentences should contain the following basic facts and chronology, though students may write them differently, and may compose more or fewer sentences):

Lazarus, the brother of **Martha** and Mary, had died.

Jesus raised His friend Lazarus from the dead.

After raising Lazarus, Jesus entered **Jerusalem** humbly, riding a **donkey**.

The people welcomed Jesus by waving **palms** and cheering.

Review the answers with the whole class when everyone has finished.

3 Scripture & Discussion

Ask students to tell what they remember about what you talked about during the last session - preparing for someone important to visit them, and preparing for Jesus Christ to visit them. Tell them this story, based on the Parable of the Wise and Foolish Maidens that Jesus told.

Jesus told this story to His followers:

There were ten maidens (that means girls) who were waiting for a bridegroom to come to a wedding. Their job was to walk with him and light the way with oil lamps. They needed to have plenty of oil for their lamps, so they would be ready. Five of them did have plenty of oil, but the other five had not bothered to make sure they had lots of oil.

It got so late that all the maidens fell asleep. At midnight, the bridegroom came and everyone called, "He is here! Come to meet him!" The maidens all woke up and started to get their lamps ready. The foolish ones said to the wise ones, "Give us some of your oil."

But there was not enough time for the wise maidens to share their oil. The foolish girls rushed out to buy some. But while they were gone, the bridegroom came. He and the wise maidens went to the wedding party. The door was closed.

The foolish maidens returned, and knocked on the door. They said, "Let us in!" But it was too late. The bridegroom said, "I do not know you."

After He finished telling this story, Jesus said, "Keep watch and be ready, for you do not know the day or the hour when the Son of Man is coming."

4 Discussion Questions

When we come to church on Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday of Holy Week, we will sing about the "bridegroom." (Ask students: "*Who do you think is the bridegroom?*") Let them come up with the answer that it is Jesus Christ.)

The "Son of Man" is also Jesus Christ. He wants us to be ready for Him whenever He comes. We won't go out to meet Him with oil lamps. But we will think about the things we have done, and the way we live. We can be ready to meet Him by trying to do good things. We can be ready by being sorry for the bad things we have done, the things that make us feel bad inside, and that we know are not what He wants us to do. We can be ready by trying to keep doing the good things, and making up for the bad things as much as we can. Then when we meet Him we can be joyful, and not ashamed of things we have done.

Give students one or two minutes of silence to think about what these words mean to them, and to ask questions if they wish to. It's important to assure them that Jesus Christ wants us to be with Him - He will never leave us out if we really want to be with Him.

5 Resource Project: Mural of Events

Have the class construct the third panel of the mural.

6 Troparion & Icon Reflection

Look at the icon of the Wise and Foolish Maidens together. Say part of the Troparion together:

Behold, the bridegroom comes at midnight, and blessed is the servant whom He shall find watching, and again, unworthy is the servant whom He shall find heedless. Tell students that "heedless" means not paying attention and not caring about what God wants us to do.

7 Closing Prayer

In the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name.

Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.

Give us this day our daily bread;

And forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us;

And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.

Journey to Pascha • Lesson 4

Holy Thursday (Ages 7-9)

Overview

The Last Supper - Jesus Shows Love for His Disciples

Objectives

By the end of this Lesson, learners should be able to:

- Describe the Last Supper as a sign of Jesus' love for His disciples
- Describe Jesus' washing of the feet of His disciples as an example of great humility
- Relate the Last Supper to our reception of Holy Communion

Materials

- Bible.
- Icon of the Last Supper
- A clear pitcher or glass of water
- Section A: Children's Bible Stories
- Children's Bible Stories and Paraphrased Texts (Note: We suggest making a copy of the story and, when you read/tell it to the class, inserting it in the open Bible so that it's clear the story is from the Bible)

Procedure

1 Opening Prayer

In the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

O Heavenly King, the comforter, the Spirit of truth,
Who art everywhere and fillest all things,
Treasury of blessings and giver of life,
Come and abide in us, and cleanse us from every purity,
And save our souls, O Good One.

2 Discussion Starter

Ask students, "Do you like to have a meal with people you love?" (Let them give answers and say a little about their experience of sharing meals.)

Continue by saying, "Jesus Christ liked it, too. One of the last things He did while He was on earth was to

share a special meal with His disciples. Here is an icon of that meal. (Show the icon.) Do you see how close everyone is sitting? They loved Jesus and He loved them. Jesus showed His love in a way that really might surprise you. We will read about it, but first I want to ask you something.”

Pointing out the pitcher or glass of water, ask students, “What can you do with this?” (Let students give answers such as: take a drink, clean something, wash your face, etc.) Then have students stand. Tell them to sit down if they hear something they would NOT want to do. They can stay standing as long as the things you say are things they would be willing to do. Read these items slowly, one by one:

--take a drink

--give someone else a drink

--make ice cubes

--help a grownup clean things

--wash someone else’s dirty, sweaty feet. Chances are the students will remain standing till you say the last item, and then most will sit down. Say, “Let’s find out what Our Lord did that was a surprise.”

3 Scripture Story

Read together *Jesus’ Last Supper with His Disciples* from Section A: Children’s Bible Stories. Make special note of the reason Jesus did this surprising thing of washing His disciples’ feet. He did it to give them an example of real service. He wanted them to serve others. And He wants us to serve others, too.

Also point out that when we receive Holy Communion at church, we are doing what Jesus asked us to do at the Last Supper. What we receive in Holy Communion is bread and wine. But He is with us as we receive it, in a special way that only God can be.

4 Resource Project: Mural of Events

Have students construct the fourth panel of the mural. See Mural: Days/Events from Lazarus Saturday-Pascha.

Note: Since the anointing of Jesus’ feet is not included in the version of the Last Supper story used here, do not include it in the mural.

Note: While students are working on the mural, write the words of the Kathisma Hymn (slightly adapted) from Tone 1 and Tone 2 of the Vespers of Great and Holy Wednesday on the chalkboard. The words of the hymn are below, in the Closing Prayer section (6).

5 Wrap Up

Look at the words of the Kathisma Hymn on the chalkboard together. Remind students that you talked about several things that we can do with water. Here the hymn shows us that Our Lord created all water. Then, when He came to be with us on earth, He used water in a very humble way: by washing His disciples’ feet.

Ask students to think about a way they can serve someone else in a humble way during the coming week. (Make sure they understand the meaning of “humble.” It means not showing off, not looking for praise, not trying to stand out or impress.) Let those who wish to volunteer suggestions do so.

6 Closing Prayer

Use the Kathisma Hymn as your closing prayer:

In the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

The Lord, who loves mankind, who created the lakes, the rivers, and the seas,
Gave us a special commandment of love when He wrapped a towel around His waist and washed the feet of His disciples; He humbled Himself in the greatness of His goodness, raising us from the depths of evil. We pray: Grant us great mercy.

Journey to Pascha • Lesson 5

Holy Friday (Ages 7-9)

Overview

Will We Be True Friends to Christ?

Objectives

By the end of this Lesson, learners should be able to:

- Briefly describe the events of the arrest, trial, and death of Jesus Christ
- Describe how, even while dying on the cross, Jesus cared for His Mother by asking His disciple John to take care of her
- State simply that Jesus Christ rose from the dead

Materials

- Bible
- Icon of the crucifixion
- Section A: Children's Bible Stories Children's Bible Stories and Paraphrased Texts (Note: We suggest making a copy of the story and, when you read/tell it to the class, inserting it in the open Bible so that it's clear the story is from the Bible)
- Simple materials to serve as "robes" for bystanders in role play; if desired, also a walking stick (for Peter) and a bowl and rag for the servant girl who questions him as Jesus is being questioned

Resources

Required Resources

- [My Guide to Holy Week and the Feast of Palms](#) (PDF)
- [Section A: Children's Bible Stories](#) (PDF)

Optional Resources

- [Icon of The Crucifixion of the Lord](#) (Image)

Procedure

1 Opening Prayer

In the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

We magnify You, O Jesus, our King.
We worship Your passion and Your burial,
For by them, You have saved us from death.

2 Scripture Reflection

Read the stories Jesus is Betrayed, The Trial of Jesus, Jesus is Put to Death on a Cross, and The Burial and Resurrection of Christ in *Section A: Children's Bible Stories*. Be sure students understand the meaning of the word "betray": to act like a friend, but really be an enemy. Don't bring up the subject of the reasons for Judas' betrayal of Jesus Christ. But if they ask, say that Judas wanted money. Also, perhaps he did not believe that a real King would let Himself be treated badly, as Jesus did. Judas did not understand that Jesus did all this for us.

3 Discussion Questions

- **Do you think Jesus hated the people who hurt Him?**
No, He is God and loves everyone forever, unconditionally.
- **What were some strange things that happened as Jesus was dying on the cross?**
It became very dark, rocks split open, and the curtain in the Temple in Jerusalem was torn in two pieces.
- **How did Jesus show His love for His Mother as He was dying on the cross?**
He told His disciple John to take care of her, and John did so.

Look at the icon together. Notice that there are far fewer people than there were in the crowd on Palm Sunday. Some people turned away from Jesus Christ when they no longer thought He was a powerful king.

4 Role Play

Have students role play the scene of Peter waiting outside as Jesus is being questioned. Students can take the roles of bystanders, Peter, and the servant girl who confronts him. Have students take turns, if your group is large.

When they have finished, ask, "Why do you think Peter pretended he did not know Christ?" (He was afraid of getting in trouble)

Ask, "Do you think Jesus forgave Peter for pretending he was not Jesus' friend?" (Yes. Later, after Jesus rose from the dead, Peter told many people that Jesus Christ is God, and helped them become Christians)

5 Resource Project: Mural of Events

Have students construct the fifth panel of the mural, individually drawing events they choose from what you studied in this lesson. Their pictures should each be on half of an 8 1/2 by 11 sheet, and then the sheets can be gathered and put on the mural panel, or around it. *While students are working on the mural, put the verses for the closing prayer on the chalkboard.*

6 Closing Prayer

Spend 2 minutes having students memorize these verses, and use them as a closing prayer.

Blessed is He that comes in the name of the Lord. God is the Lord, and has revealed Himself to us.

Journey to Pascha • Lesson 6

Holy Saturday & Pascha (Ages 7-9)

Overview

Christ is Risen! - Jesus Christ the Lord is Alive

Objectives

By the end of this Lesson, learners should be able to:

- Tell in a simple way the story of the empty tomb
- Relate the icon of the Resurrection to the Troparion of the feast

Materials

- Bible
- Icon of the Resurrection
- *Resource:* Children's Journey to Pascha Bible Stories
(1 copy per student)

Resources

Required Resources

- [Section A: Children's Bible Stories](#) (PDF)

Optional Resources

- [Icon of The Resurrection of Christ](#) (Image)

Procedure

1 Opening Prayer

In the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Christ is Risen from the dead,
Trampling down death by death,

And upon those in the tombs bestowing life!

Note: Make sure students know that "bestowing" means giving.

2 Icon of the Feast

Look together at the Resurrection icon. Let students find the way Jesus is "bestowing life" on those in the tombs. He pulls Adam out from the power of death. Eve and others who have died will be pulled out, too.

The power of death is shown in the gates or doors, with locks and keys, that Christ is trampling on. If students are not sure what "trampling" means, the icon shows it - Christ is stepping firmly on and destroying the gates or doors of death and hell.

Ask students: How are the things we talked about in the icon related to the Troparion of the Feast? *The hymn mentions Christ trampling down death and bestowing life.*

3 Scripture Story

As a review of the last session, read *The Burial and Resurrection of Christ*, and then go on to *Christ is Risen*.

4 Discussion Questions

- **After Jesus was buried, some women went to the tomb. What did they talk about on the way there?**
They were worried that they would not be able to roll away the big, heavy stone covering the tomb.
- **What did they find at the tomb?**
A bright, shining angel was there. The tomb was open, with the stone rolled away. The soldiers guarding the tomb were so frightened by the brightness of the angel that they had fallen on the ground.
- **A little later, Mary Magdalen saw Jesus. She knew that He had risen from the dead. What did Jesus tell her to do?**
He said, "Go and tell the disciples that I am going to My Father."

5 Memorization Review

Review with students the verses they memorized from the last session: *Blessed is He that comes in the name of the Lord. God is the Lord and has revealed Himself to us.* (These could be written on the chalkboard.)

When you have reviewed the verses, talk briefly about their meaning. Tell students that God has revealed or shown Himself to us by rising from the dead. Only God, the Lord, could do this.

6 Resource Project: Mural of Events

Have students finish the final panel of the mural.

Put any necessary finishing touches on it, and review all the panels and the events they depict. Decide together on a place where you might display the mural so people can readily see it.

7 Closing Prayer

Christ is Risen from the dead,
Trampling down death by death,

And upon those in the tombs bestowing life!

Note: If possible, sing or say the troparion in one or more languages in addition to English.

Journey to Pascha • Lesson 1

Preparing for Pascha (Ages 4-6)

Overview

During Great Lent We Get Ready for Pascha

Objectives

By the end of this Lesson, learners should be able to:

- State that Great Lent is a preparation for Pascha
- State that Great Lent is a time for change

Materials

- Construction paper folded into four sections
- Colored markers or crayons
- Tape or glue
- Magazine pictures of a church, someone praying, a Bible etc. Things that can be used to show how they will prepare for Pascha.

Resources

Optional Resources

- [Descent Into Hades Icon: Line Drawing](#)
- [Descent Into Hades: Line Drawing](#)
- [Descent Into Hades: The Holy Resurrection](#)

Procedure

1 Opening Prayer

In the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

O Heavenly King, the comforter, the Spirit of truth,
Who art everywhere and fillest all things,
Treasury of blessings and giver of life,
Come and abide in us, and cleanse us from every impurity,
And save our souls, O Good One.

Help students understand these parts of the prayer:

Spirit of Truth: This is the Holy Spirit

Come and abide in us: Be with us, like someone who loves us very much

Cleanse us from every impurity: Help us to do good things, and to get rid of the things that make us feel bad or make us feel far away from God

2 Discussion Starter

Explain to children that Great Lent is a time of preparation for Pascha, the day when we celebrate Jesus being raised from the dead. It is a time for change. Some of the things we do to prepare for Pascha are to:

- **Go to church more often.**
- **Pray more**
- **Read stories from the Bible**
- **Not eat meat**
- **Watch less television**

3 Discussion Questions

Give sufficient time for each student to respond if they so desire. Responses will vary.

- *What things can you do to prepare for Pascha?*

4 Preparing for Pascha

On the construction paper have students show four ways they will prepare for Pascha – one in each section. These can either be pictures the teacher provides, pasted or taped onto the paper, or something the student draws. The teacher should label the section to help parents identify the things the children will do during Great Lent.

Have the students identify one person, other than a member of their immediate family, for whom they will pray during Great Lent. On the chalkboard or on a chart place the student's name and the person for whom they will pray. Have students explain why they selected this person. The chart should be posted in the church schoolroom as a reminder.

5 Project Introduction

Explain to the class that, during some of your classtimes together, they will be doing a mural project that will show the events of Holy Week – the last week of Great Lent.

6 Wrap Up

As students are cleaning up and preparing for closing prayer, ask the following:

- *What will you be doing to prepare for Pascha?*

7 Closing Prayer

In the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name.
Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread;
And forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us;
And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.

Journey to Pascha • Lesson 2

Jesus' Friends (Ages 4-6)

Overview

Jesus visits Lazarus

Objectives

By the end of this Lesson, learners should be able to:

- State that Mary, Martha and Lazarus were friends of Jesus
- Tell why Jesus went to visit Lazarus

Materials

- Orthodox Study Bible – John 11:1-45
- Lazarus story, paraphrased for children (see Resources)
- Black line drawing of the Icon for Lazarus Saturday
- Large pieces of fabric for live recreation of the icon
- Mural project materials list
 - Roll of mural paper/paper on a roll
 - Crayons or markers
 - Appropriate icon
 - Scissors
 - Masking tape, thumb tacks, or other wall mounting

Resources

Required Resources

- [Holy Week Mural](#) (PDF)

Optional Resources

- [Jesus Raises Lazarus from the Dead](#)(HTML)

Procedure

1 Opening Prayer

In the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

O Heavenly King, the comforter, the Spirit of truth,
Who art everywhere and fillest all things,
Treasury of blessings and giver of life,
Come and abide in us, and cleanse us from every impurity,
And save our souls, O Good One.

2 Discussion Starter

Explain to students that Lazarus Saturday is the beginning of Holy Week – the week before the feast of Pascha. Read or tell the story of the Raising of Lazarus.

Say: As you listen to the story I am going to read (or tell), see whether you can tell me what wonderful thing Jesus did. Have the Bible open even if you are retelling the story or reading a shorter version of the Biblical text.

3 Discussion Questions

Note: Give sufficient time for each student to respond if they so desire.

- What miracle did Jesus perform at Lazarus' home?
He raised Lazarus from the dead.
- How were Mary, Martha and Lazarus related? Were they cousins, or brother and sisters, or a dad and mom with their daughter? (*These examples should help young children understand what "related" means if they are not sure. You can also mention people the children are related to--parents, grandparents, siblings, cousins, etc.*)
They were brother and sisters.
- Were Lazarus and Mary and Martha related to Jesus?
No, but they were all good friends.
- When Jesus arrived at the home of Mary, Martha, and Lazarus, what had happened to Lazarus?
He had died and was buried.
- Who in our group here today has a really good friend? What is his/her name? What are some things you might do to help your friend?
Responses will vary.
- What did Jesus do for His good friend?
He raised him from the dead.
- Why is the raising of Lazarus important to us?
This is a difficult question, but one that young children can think about on a simple level. Explain that Jesus promises us that we can be with God forever in heaven. By raising Lazarus, Jesus shows that He has the power to keep that promise.

4 The Living Icon

Show the icon of the Raising of Lazarus and tell who is pictured in the icon. Using the pieces of fabric students can dress and portray someone in the icon telling who they are and what their relationship is to Jesus.

5 Resource Project: Mural of Events

Have students color and construct the Lazarus Saturday panel. Ask the children to recall the events you have read about, and then assign each an event. They can each draw very simple depictions of their assigned

events on small pieces of paper, which you can place in and around the mural panel. Or have them all draw the same event (such as Jesus standing in front of the open tomb) and place them in and around the panel. You might also have them draw small pictures to take home.

6 Extra Activity

Begin practicing the singing of Paschal Troparion (*Christ is Risen*).

*Christ is risen from the dead,
Trampling down death by death,
And upon those in the tombs bestowing life.*

Explain this is sung at all services beginning with Pascha, is sung for 40 days, and that we will be practicing it until Pascha. Make sure students know that "bestowing" means "giving."

7 Wrap Up

As students are cleaning up and preparing for closing prayer, ask the following:

- When someone in our family is sick, whom do we call? *You call a doctor.*
- Who else might you call? *A priest.*
- What do **you** do for the person who is sick? *You pray for them.*

8 Closing Prayer

In the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name.
Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread;
And forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us;
And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.

Journey to Pascha • Lesson 3

Jesus Came to Jerusalem (Ages 4-6)

Overview

Welcoming Jesus to Jerusalem -

Objectives

By the end of this Lesson, learners should be able to:

- Tell how the people welcomed Jesus when He came to Jerusalem

Materials

- Orthodox Study Bible – John 12: 1-18
- Palm Sunday story paraphrased for children (see Resources)
- Black Line drawing of Entry into Jerusalem Icon
- Mural project materials list
 - Roll of mural paper/paper on a roll
 - Crayons or markers
 - Appropriate icon
 - Scissors
- Palm project
- Masking tape
- Thumb tacks, or other wall mounting
- 18” narrow dowels or sturdy branches
- Green construction paper
- Stapler and/or scotch-tape
- White glue
- Scissors

Resources

Required Resources

- [Holy Week Mural](#) (PDF)
- [Palm Sunday](#) (PDF)
- [Paper Palms on Sticks](#)(HTML)

Optional Resources

- [Palm Sunday: Entry Into Jerusalem](#)

Procedure

1 Opening Prayer

In the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

O Heavenly King, the Comforter, the Spirit of truth,
Who art everywhere and fillest all things,
Treasury of blessings and giver of life,
Come and abide in us, and cleanse us from every impurity,
And save our souls, O Good One.

2 Discussion Starter

Let students tell what they know about Palm Sunday. Make sure they know that Palm Sunday celebrates the Entrance of Our Lord into Jerusalem; that people and children met him waving palms. Say that some churches are in countries where palms do not grow. When these churches celebrate Palm Sunday, they use what they have--pussywillows, for example.

As you read or tell the story of Palm Sunday, ask the students to listen for what the children and people call out to Jesus. Tell the story of Jesus entering Jerusalem and discuss how the people honored Him as a king. Have the Bible open even if you are retelling the story or reading a shorter version of the Biblical text

3 Discussion Questions

Give sufficient time for each student to respond if they so desire.

- **Where was Jesus going?**
To Jerusalem
- **On what was he riding?**
A donkey
- **How did the people honor Him as king?**
Waving palm branches
- **What did the children and people shout out?**
"Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord"
- **How do we greet presidents or kings today?**
Clapping, cheering etc.

4 Hosanna in the Highest!

Show the icon of the Entrance into Jerusalem/Palm Sunday and discuss who is in the icon and what each person is doing. Sing or say the words:

Hosanna in the Highest! Blessed is He that comes in the name of the Lord.

5 Extra Activity

Practice singing of Paschal Troparion (*Christ is Risen*).

*Christ is risen from the dead,
Trampling down death by death,
And upon those in the tombs bestowing life.*

6 Resource Project: Paper Palms on Sticks

Have each student make 2 paper palms on sticks. One of the paper palms will be sent home with the student and the other will be kept for Palm Sunday. Have the students color line drawings which can be placed on the mural. (If you have several students, the drawings can be placed above and below the mural as well as on it.)

Ask your priest whether it would be all right for students to stand at the front of the church, with either real palms/willows or those they make, while the Gospel is being read on Palm Sunday.

Have each student draw a small picture of a palm, and place these on the "Palm Sunday" panel of the mural.

7 Closing Prayer

In the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Hosanna in the highest! Blessed is He that comes in the name of the Lord.

Journey to Pascha • Lesson 4

Jesus has Supper with Friends (Ages 4-6)

Overview

The Last Supper

Objectives

By the end of this Lesson, learners should be able to:

- State that the Apostles were at the Mystical Supper with Jesus
- State that the Mystical Supper is what we celebrate when we take communion

Materials

- Orthodox Study Bible – Matthew 26: 26-30
- The Last Supper story paraphrased for children (see Resources)
- Black line drawing of the Mystical Supper/Last Supper Icon
- Antidoron to share with students at end of class
- Crayons

Resources

Required Resources

- [Holy Week Mural](#) (PDF)
- [The Last Supper](#) (PDF)

Optional Resources

- [The Last Supper line drawing](#) (PDF)

Procedure

1 Opening Prayer

In the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

O Heavenly King, the comforter, the Spirit of truth,

Who art everywhere and fillest all things,
Treasury of blessings and giver of life,
Come and abide in us, and cleanse us from every purity,
And save our souls, O Good One.

2 Discussion Starter

Discussion Starter: (10 minutes)

Tell or read the story of the Mystical Supper. Say: *While I am reading/telling the story of the Mystical Supper, see if there are words in the story that you hear in church.* Have the Bible open even if you are retelling the story or reading a shorter version of the Biblical text.

3 Discussion Questions

Give sufficient time for each student to respond if they so desire.

Ask the children, "We have read how the apostles had a special meal with Jesus Christ. We get a chance to be with Him that way, too. When do we have that chance in church? (*Children may or may not be able to answer--when we take Holy Communion.*)

Ask, "How do we hold our hands when we go to Communion?" (*Right hand over the left, crossed on their chest - over their hearts.*) Have students demonstrate what they should be doing.

Ask, "How should we return to our places after Communion?" (*Walking slowly and quietly.*)

4 Mystical Supper

Show and explain what antidoron/prosphora is and say that the priest blesses it with prayers, and then we receive it at Holy Communion time. (*Tell the students they will each receive a piece at the end of the class.*) Show the icon of the Mystical Supper/Last Supper and identify a few of the people in the Icon. Relate the Holy Communion we receive in church to Jesus' act of sharing bread and wine with His disciples at the Supper, as shown in the icon.

Practice again the correct way of going to communion and returning to their place.

Explain to children that their friends may call the Mystical Supper by a different name – the Last Supper. Have students color their copies of the line drawing. Again, go over the identities of Jesus and one or two other people in the icon. Ask the students to review the names of the people who were at the Mystical Supper with their parents at home.

5 Extra Activity

Practice singing of Paschal Troparion (*Christ is Risen*). Send a copy home for parents to help the students.

*Christ is risen from the dead,
Trampling down death by death,
And upon those in the tombs bestowing life.*

6 Wrap Up

As students are cleaning up and preparing for closing prayer, talk about the following:

- **When do we remember the Mystical supper in the Liturgy?**
Holy Communion

7 Closing Prayer

In the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread; and forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us; and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.

When you finish the prayer, distribute antidoron.

Journey to Pascha • Lesson 5

We Receive Communion (Ages 4-6)

Overview

God Forgives Us

Objectives

By the end of this Lesson, learners should be able to:

- Explain that when we receive communion God is forgiving us and showing us His love
- State that we have Holy Communion as the apostles had the Last Supper/ Mystical Supper with Jesus Christ

Materials

- Orthodox Study Bible – Matthew 26: 26-30
- Last Supper story paraphrased for children (see Resources)
- Prayer before communion
- A black line drawing of the Mystical Supper Icon
- Paper and crayons or markers for drawing
- Mural project materials list
 - Roll of mural paper/paper on a roll
 - Crayons or markers
 - Appropriate icon
 - Scissors

Resources

Required Resources

- [Holy Week Mural](#) (PDF)
- [The Last Supper](#) (PDF)

Procedure

1 Opening Prayer

In the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

O Heavenly King, the comforter, the Spirit of truth,
Who art everywhere and fillest all things,
Treasury of blessings and giver of life,
Come and abide in us, and cleanse us from every purity,
And save our souls, O Good One.

2 Discussion Starter

Ask children to retell the story of the Mystical Supper (Last Supper) that you read last week. If they have difficulty, retell the story for the children.

3 Discussion Questions

Give sufficient time for students to think about and respond to the following:

Ask the children when we take part in the Mystical Supper. Ask whether, when they went to Communion, they saw other people crossing their hands over their hearts as they went up. Did the children remember to do this and to return to their seats quietly?

Ask the children what kinds of things they do that God will forgive? (*Answers will vary, but try to help children understand that God forgives all things for which we are truly sorry, and helps us to do better next time. Things we are sorry for include being mean or selfish, forgetting to pray and be close to God.*)

Why does God forgive us? *Because He loves us.*

Ask children if they are still praying for the person they selected at the beginning of Great Lent.

Remind the children that Lent is a time for change. (Lesson 1).

Ask if they have changed what they are doing during Great Lent. Discuss what else they can do during this period. (*Examples: Pray more. Read the Bible with their parents. Do things to help at home.*)

4 The Last Supper

Show the icon of the Last Supper and review those who are in the icon.

5 Resource Project: Holy Thursday Panel

- Have students color events of the Last Supper. Put their papers on the Holy Thursday panel of the mural, surrounding the space with them if they don't all fit on the mural.
- Have students draw pictures of things they can do during the remainder of Great Lent that will make God happy.

6 Extra Activity

Practice singing the Paschal Troparion (*Christ is Risen*). Send a copy home for parents to help the students.

*Christ is risen from the dead,
Trampling down death by death,
And upon those in the tombs bestowing life.*

7 Wrap Up

As students are cleaning up and preparing for the closing prayer, ask:

- **Why do we go to communion?**

To be with Jesus Christ as His apostles were when they shared bread and wine with Him at the Last Supper.

8 Closing Prayer

In the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread; and forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us; and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.

Journey to Pascha • Lesson 6

Christ is Risen! (Ages 4-6)

Overview

The Cross and The Resurrection

Objectives

By the end of this Lesson, learners should be able to:

- State that Jesus Christ died for us
- State Jesus Christ rose from His grave to save us
- Recite the Pascha greeting " Christ is risen" and the response, " Indeed He is risen"

Materials

- Orthodox Study Bible - John 19:38-42; John 20:1-10; Mark 15:42-47; Mark 16:1-8
- The Resurrection story paraphrased for children (see Resources)
- Icon of the Resurrection
- Black line drawing of the Resurrection Icon
- Mural project materials list
- Roll of mural paper/paper on a roll
- Crayons or markers
- Appropriate icon
- Scissors
- Masking tape, thumb tacks, or other wall mounting media

Resources

Required Resources

- [Christ is Risen](#) (PDF)
- [Holy Week Mural](#) (PDF)

Procedure

1 Opening Prayer

In the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

O Heavenly King, the comforter, the Spirit of truth,

Who art everywhere and fillest all things,
Treasury of blessings and giver of life,
Come and abide in us, and cleanse us from every purity,
And save our souls, O Good One.

2 Discussion Starter

To approach the delicate subject of Christ's death and burial with these young children, we suggest that you *not go into detail about the crucifixion*, but emphasize the joy of the Resurrection and the love Christ showed for us by facing and overcoming death, as well as His promise of everlasting life for us. Here is a way of presenting these concepts:

Say: Jesus died on the cross. He was buried in a tomb, just like any person. But Jesus Christ was not just any person. He was God's own son, and God loved Him very much. Jesus did not stay dead in the tomb. He rose from the dead. He is alive forever with His Father.

Jesus died and then rose from the dead so that we could have life forever with Him. That's why we are so happy to know that He rose from the dead. That's why, on the Feast of Pascha and for many days after Pascha, we tell each other the good news. We say, "Christ is Risen!" and when someone says that to us, we answer, "Indeed He is Risen!"

If your students are very young, you may want to skip this discussion. You might review the events of Palm Sunday. Still, it is good for very young children to hear the words of the Paschal troparion, even without explanation.

3 Discussion Questions

Note: Give sufficient time for each student to respond if they so desire.

- Where else have you heard the words "Christ is risen?"
The song they have been practicing – The Paschal Troparion
- Where was Jesus put after he died?
In a tomb
- When the women went to the tomb on the third day after Jesus' death, what did they find?
An empty tomb

4 Activity

- Discuss how they will celebrate Pascha at their home. Explain how important it is to attend church at midnight.
- Tell students that, if they would like to, they can tell the person for whom they were praying about the class prayer project.
- Ask students to again review what they did/are doing to prepare for Pascha. *Reading the Bible; praying more; helping others.*
- Have students practice the Paschal greeting.
Christ is risen. Indeed He is risen.
- Remind students that this is only said after Matins – the beginning part of the Resurrection (Pascha) service. They must wait for Pascha to express their joy about Christ having risen from the dead. Remind students that you would like to be greeted by them in this way.

5 Resource Project: Resurrection Panel

Have students color the Resurrection Icon for the Mural of days/events from Lazarus Saturday to Pascha. After the mural of days/events is completed review the happenings of the week before Jesus' resurrection. If the students each made individual murals, they can take their murals home. If only one class mural was made, display it in the classroom, in a hall near the classroom, or in some place where parishioners can see it.

6 Extra Activity

Practice singing the Paschal Troparion (*Christ is Risen*). Send a copy home for parents to help the students.

*Christ is risen from the dead,
Trampling down death by death,
And upon those in the tombs bestowing life.*

7 Wrap Up

As students are cleaning up and preparing for closing prayer, ask the following:

- **What is the most important feast day we have?**
Pascha

8 Closing Prayer

Sing/Recite together (1 minute)

In the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen. **Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread; and forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us; and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.**

Journey to Pascha • Lesson 1

Lazarus Saturday (Ages 18+)

Overview

Having Fulfilled The Forty Days - The lessons called the Journey to Pascha, begin with Lazarus Saturday and go to the Resurrection. In this lesson we begin with a pause to reflect on the journey to Pascha that began with the Triodion and continued through Lent. We journey to learn about ourselves and our relationship to Jesus. In looking back we determine what we have learned about ourselves, what benefits we have gained by observing the Lenten discipline and what Lazarus Saturday teaches us so that we may proceed on this Journey to Pascha.

Objectives

By the end of this Lesson, learners should be able to:

- Evaluate and have an understanding about the benefits, struggles and reasons for observing the Lenten discipline
- Note the different attitudes of Mary and Martha at the time of their brother's death and Jesus' visit
- Tell how participation in the Lazarus Saturday services teaches an understanding of life, death and their relationship with Christ

Materials

- Icon of the Raising of Lazarus
- Personal Journal
- Raising of Lazarus Resource

Resources

Required Resources

- [My Guide to Holy Week and the Feast of Palms](#) (PDF)
- [The Feast of Palms: Saturday-Sunday](#) (PDF)
- [The Raising of Lazarus \(John 11:1-45\)](#) (PDF)
- [Our Pledge](#)(HTML)

Optional Resources

- [Icon of The Raising of Lazarus](#) (Image)

Procedure

1 Opening Prayer

In the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

The Troparion (*Tone 1*)

By raising Lazarus from the dead before Thy passion,
Thou didst confirm the universal resurrection, O Christ God.
Like the children, with the palms of victory,
We cry out to Thee, O Vanquisher of Death,
Hosanna in the Highest!
Blessed is He that comes in the Name of the Lord.

2 Scripture Activity: Attitudes

Divide the class into groups of 3 or 4 and ask the groups to read the Resource text on the raising of Lazarus. Ask the groups to discuss what, if any, differences they see in the attitudes of the sisters Mary and Martha after their brother dies and Jesus arrives. Let them share their conclusions. (*Possible ideas: In the first verses, Martha needs to act, while Mary is able to be still and contemplate. Martha seeks out Jesus with many words, while Mary waits till He calls for her and then says only a few words to Him. Martha almost seems reproachful; Mary seems more peaceful, though very sad.*)

3 Journal Activity

- Tell students to consider this sentence from the Vespers of Lazarus Saturday:

We have completed the forty days which profit our souls.

- Ask students to prepare to discuss how the forty days "profit our souls" and why in looking to the Journey to Pascha that begins on Lazarus Saturday we need to have our souls prepared.
- Ask students to write thoughts in their personal journal to use in the discussion to follow. They might note how they do or do not observe the Great Fast and what they learned about their relationship to Christ as well as share their understanding about the benefits, struggles and reasons for observing the Lenten discipline.

4 Discussion Starter

Ask students to share the ideas they recorded in their personal journal. Ask students to discuss what lessons they learned from observing the Lenten discipline and to consider how these lessons taught them about their relationship with Christ.

5 Discussion Question

- Ask students to discuss the different ways people respond to events like illness, sudden hardship,

loss of a family member or friend. The students might include what they learned about Mary's and Martha's reactions to the death of their brother and Jesus' visit. Ask them also to consider what Jesus was trying to teach the people through His actions when Lazarus died. (*Let them come up with their own answers. One important point is that Jesus tells us that He is showing people God's glory by raising Lazarus. People should not despair over death, even though it is real, because it is not the final end.*)

6 Our Pledge

Read the resource handout entitled *Our Pledge* in V. Rev. Paul Lazor's commentary about Lazarus Saturday and Palm Sunday. Ask students to pay particular attention to the first and last paragraphs.

7 Review Questions

- How does participation in the events of Lazarus Saturday bring us to our own moment of life and death and entrance into the Kingdom of God?
- What are three pledges that we make on the eve of Christ's passion?
- How does the citation from Philippians 3:10-11 teach us what our relationship with Christ should be?

8 Wrap Up

Ask students to write three thoughts from today's lesson that they want to keep with themselves during Holy Week.

9 Closing Prayer

In the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

The Troparion (*Tone 1*)

By raising Lazarus from the dead before Thy passion,
Thou didst confirm the universal resurrection, O Christ God.
Like the children, with the palms of victory,
We cry out to Thee, O Vanquisher of Death,
Hosanna in the Highest!
Blessed is He that comes in the Name of the Lord.

Journey to Pascha • Lesson 2



Palm Sunday (*Ages 18+*)

Overview

- On Palm Sunday we continue to participate in the "joyful cycle of the triumphant days of Lazarus Saturday and Palm Sunday" both in words and actions. We dare "to take the branch and raise it up and answer the same

question addressed to us at Baptism, 'Do you accept Christ?' 'I accept Him as King and God!'" Note: Quotations from The Feast of Palms Resource by V. Rev. Paul Lazor p.9

Objectives

By the end of this Lesson, learners should be able to:

- Recall the story of Jesus' Entry into Jerusalem
- Describe the interaction or involvement of Jesus, Lazarus and the crowd as Jesus entered Jerusalem
- Understand the underlying reasons or motivation for the actions of people at His entrance and put themselves at the event
- Outline the episodes in the Gospels from Jesus' Triumphal Entry to the City of Jerusalem to the eve of His Passion

Materials

- Bible
- Icon of Jesus' Entry to Jerusalem (more than one icon if possible)
- Personal Journal (to be used in all sessions)
- 2 Foam boards at least 2' x 3'

Resources

Required Resources

- [My Guide to Holy Week and the Feast of Palms](#) (PDF)
- [The Feast of Palms: Saturday-Sunday](#) (PDF)
- [Entry into Jerusalem](#) (Image)

Optional Resources

- [Icon of The Entry Into Jerusalem](#) (Image)
- [Commentary: The Entry into Jerusalem](#)(HTML)
- [The Meaning of Icons](#) (Image)

Procedure

1 Opening Prayer

In the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

The Troparion (Tone 1)

By raising Lazarus from the dead before Thy passion,
Thou didst confirm the universal resurrection, O Christ God.
Like the children, with the palms of victory,
We cry out to Thee, O Vanquisher of Death,

Hosanna in the Highest!
Blessed is He that comes in the Name of the Lord.

2 Review

Tell students to recall the story of the Raising of Lazarus and Jesus' Entry into Jerusalem and in their personal journal cite a conversation or event from the story that made them think about something, or revealed something to them.

3 The Entry into Jerusalem

Read the Ouspensky/Lossky hand-out: The Entry into Jerusalem.

At least one icon of the Entry into Jerusalem should be visible to students as the reading is done so they can see what they are reading about. (You can find two different ones in the Resource section, or use one or more of your own.) Tell students to highlight the different groups of people in the icon and any information about what they are doing and why.

4 Discussion Starter

On the foam board make a two column chart: column I list a person or group of persons found in the icon; column II describe what they are doing. This chart, the icon and citations in the students personal journals will aid in the discussion to follow.

5 Discussion Questions

- Describe the interaction of Jesus and the crowd as He entered Jerusalem.
- What do you think is the underlying motivation for the actions of each person or group of persons in the icon?
- How would you have reacted to this unusual entrance? Why?
- Do you think most of the people in the crowd understood why Jesus had come to the world? Were their expectations in line with His words preparing them for his soon-to-come betrayal and death?

Note: Let students come up with their own answers to these questions. There are really no right or wrong answers.

6 Activity

On the poster board, using one person in the class as a recorder, use the accounts of Matthew (Ch 21-26:5) and Luke (19:28-22:2) to outline the events in the Gospels from Jesus' Triumphal Entry to the City of Jerusalem to the eve of His Passion, and highlight the events (or specific passages) that provoked His arrest and trial.

7 Wrap Up

Ask students to enter a brief prayer they were moved to write as a result of this lesson. They might consider one that gives them direction for the study of Holy Week, a reminder of the importance of the Lazarus Saturday/Palm Sunday celebration.

8 Closing Prayer

In the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

The Troparion (*Tone 1*)

By raising Lazarus from the dead before Thy passion,
Thou didst confirm the universal resurrection, O Christ God.
Like the children, with the palms of victory,

We cry out to Thee, O Vanquisher of Death,
Hosanna in the Highest!
Blessed is He that comes in the Name of the Lord.

Journey to Pascha • Lesson 3

Holy Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday (Ages 18+)

Overview

- During the first three days of Holy Week, Christ ends His discourses in Jerusalem. He speaks openly about himself and His Second Coming. Through his actions and words we learn what is expected of those who desire to enter the Kingdom.

Objectives

By the end of this Lesson, learners should be able to:

- Examine and determine the themes of the lessons Jesus gave in his actions and words during the first three days of Holy Week: The Cleansing of the Temple, The Parable of the Fig Tree that Bore No Fruit, The Parable of the Ten Virgins and The Parable of the Talents
- Compare and contrast what expectations Jesus has for how His followers should spend their lives and how they really are living
- Explain how the lessons He teaches between His Entry into Jerusalem and His betrayal clearly define why Christians must live in a state of readiness

Materials

- Foam board: 2' x 3'
- Personal journal (*to be used in all sessions*)
- Bibles

Resources

Required Resources

- [My Guide to Holy Week and the Feast of Palms](#) (PDF)
- [The Bridegroom Services of Holy Week](#) (PDF)

Procedure

1 Opening Prayer

In the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

O Heavenly King, the comforter, the Spirit of truth,
Who art everywhere and fillest all things,

Treasury of blessings and giver of life,
Come and abide in us, and cleanse us from every purity,
And save our souls, O Good One.

2 Parables

Tell students to read in groups pp 2-3 of *My Guide to Holy Week and the Feast of Palms* resource handout to recall the parables that Christ taught. Ask a volunteer to read the parable of the talents from the Bible: Matthew 25:14-30.

3 Discussion Starter

On the foam board ask a student to record a list of activities suggested by the class that could be practiced to put them in a "state of readiness." Students may consider fulfilling that which was not fulfilled by people in the parables.

4 Discussion Questions

- Describe the importance of finding ways to increase our hopefulness and preparedness.
- What are things that might keep us from doing this?
- Reflect on the level of hopefulness and preparedness that someone has for a wedding or other big event in life. Compare it to the level of anticipation to enter the Kingdom of God.

5 A Reading

Read together the following:

Whenever Jesus spoke about the end of the present age, of the Last Judgment, and of his Second Coming, he spoke with an absolute certainty that these events would take place, and therefore he put stress on readiness or watchfulness. The word "watch" in Jesus' sayings and parables refers to the last days. "Watch therefore-- for you do not know when the master of the house will come, in the evening, or at midnight, or at cockcrow, or in the morning" (Mk. 13:35.) "That day" will come suddenly; therefore "watch at all times" (Lk. 21:34.) "For the Son of Man is coming at an hour you do not expect" (Mt. 24:44.) From *The Passion of Christ*, Veselin Kesich, SVS Press, 2004.

6 Reading Reflection

Ask students to consider and discuss their understanding of the meaning of "watch" as it appears in the passage you have read. Does it have physical, spiritual, and emotional dimensions? If so, what are some of these? (Let them give their own answers.)

7 Wrap Up

Ask students to write two concrete, attainable resolutions for raising the level of their state of readiness.

8 Closing Prayer

Beware, therefore, O my soul,

do not be weighed down with sleep,
lest you be given up to death,
and lest you be shut out of the Kingdom.

But rouse yourself, crying:
"Holy! Holy! Holy!
Art Thou, O our God,
through the Theotokos,
have mercy on us!

Hymn from the Bridegroom Services of Holy Week

Thy Bridal Chamber I see adorned, O my Savior,
but I have no wedding garment that I may enter.
O Giver of Light, enlighten the vesture* of my soul, and save me.

***Note:** Because "vesture" is not a commonly used term, the students might be interested to note that, as used in this hymn, "vesture" refers to something covering the outside, or clothing. If time permits, ask students to consider why we might ask our Savior to "enlighten the vesture of my soul"

Journey to Pascha • Lesson 4

Holy Thursday (Ages 18+)

Overview

The Supper, Anointing and Betrayal of Christ - "Could You Not Keep Watch?" - The main theme of great and Holy Thursday is the Lord's Supper. Jesus continues to teach and prepare the disciples for the completion of His mission, the mission of the Suffering Servant of God. Speaking of the woman who poured ointment on His head, He said, "In pouring this ointment on my body she has done it to prepare me for burial." (Matt 26.12). The trinity of events listed in the theme of this lesson lead to Christ's crucifixion and death. "With His death and the pouring out of His blood, a new covenant, that is, a new and final relationship between God and man, will be inaugurated." The passion of Christ, Kesich, p. 65

Objectives

By the end of this Lesson, learners should be able to:

- Compare and contrast the attitudes of Judas and the sinful woman toward their own sins and toward the use of money
- Describe the Eucharistic prayer of St. Basil the Great and relate it to the events of Christ's supper with His disciples
- Examine how their personal willingness to follow Christ has changed because of their experience of Holy Week and Pascha

Materials

- Icon of The Last Supper
- Personal journal (*to be used in all sessions*)
- Bibles

Resources

Required Resources

- [The Mystical Supper icon](#)
- [My Guide to Holy Week and the Feast of Palms](#) (PDF)
- [The Betrayal and Passion of Our Lord](#) (PDF)
- [Eucharistic Prayer](#)(HTML)

Optional Resources

- [Canon of St. Cosmas \(9th ode\)\(HTML\)](#)

Procedure

1 Opening Prayer

In the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

O Heavenly King, the comforter, the Spirit of truth,
 Who art everywhere and fillest all things,
 Treasury of blessings and giver of life,
 Come and abide in us, and cleanse us from every purity,
 And save our souls, O Good One.

2 Discussion Starter

Divide the class into groups of 3 or 4 and ask them to read Matthew 26: 6-16 together. Then ask them to reflect together on the attitudes of the woman and of Judas. How does she seem to feel about love, and about the use of money? How does Judas feel about these things? Have each group make a list of 5 adjectives describing the woman, and 5 describing Judas.

As a further source for the students' reflection, put these verses from the Matins of Holy Wednesday on the chalkboard:

While the sinful woman brought oil of myrrh, the disciple came to an agreement with the transgressors

She rejoiced to pour out what was very precious, he made haste to sell the One who is above price

She acknowledged Christ as Lord, he severed himself from the Master

She was set free, but Judas became the slave of the enemy.

Ask a representative of each group to share the results of their group's findings, and have the whole class discuss them. What adjectives do they find especially appropriate, and why? Are there some adjectives that most groups came up with?

3 Personal Reflection

Tell the students to write in their personal journals their reaction to the study and discussion of the attitudes of Judas and the sinful woman. They might want to evaluate their own attitudes based on what they have learned. They also might want to think of what they would change in their life because of what they learned.

4 Hymn Review

By recitation, singing or listening to a tape request the students to review the text of the Eucharistic prayer of St. Basil the Great and the hymn sung just before Communion in place of the hymn to the Theotokos.

Eucharistic Prayer of St. Basil the Great

Of Thy Mystical Supper, O Son of God,
 Accept me today as a communicant,

For I will not speak of Thy Mystery to Thine enemies,
Neither like Judas will I give Thee a kiss;
But like the thief will I confess Thee:
Remember me, O lord, in Thy Kingdom.

Canon of St. Cosmas (9th ode)

Come, O faithful, Let us enjoy the Master's hospitality:
The Banquet of Immortality!
In the upper chamber with uplifted minds,
Let us receive the exalted words of the Word, Whom we magnify!

5 Prayer Reflection

Ask students to consider the words "upper room" and "uplifted" and "exalted." Why are these words used in the Canon of Saint Cosmas, and what are they telling us about how we are supposed to be?

6 Group Work

Have the students work in groups of 3 or 4 again. Have them read Matthew 16:21-23, 19: 23-30, and 26:57-75. Ask each group to write a "letter to a friend" from Peter, telling how each of the encounters affected his understanding of the mission of Jesus Christ. If he gets a chance to apologize to Jesus for abandoning Him, what does he think Jesus' reaction will be?

7 Prayer Reflection

Have students look again at the eucharistic prayer of Saint Basil. Like Peter, we need guidance in understanding the mission of Jesus Christ. Discuss: How does this prayer help us understand?

8 Activity

Have groups share their "letters from Peter" with the whole class.

9 Wrap Up

Invite students--any who care to--to share a new insight they have received during this class session.

10 Closing Prayer

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

Of Thy Mystical Supper, O Son of God,
Accept me today as a communicant,
For I will not speak of Thy Mystery to Thine enemies,
Neither like Judas will I give Thee a kiss;
But like the thief will I confess thee:
Remember me, O Lord, in Thy Kingdom.

Journey to Pascha • Lesson 5

Holy Friday (Ages 18+)

Overview

The Death and Burial of Christ - Woman, Behold Thy Son! - When Christ died on the Cross He fulfilled the Scriptures, He completed His mission. "Thus the barrier that divided humanity from God disappeared. By Christ's death the separation between the two was overcome. The new relation between them was inaugurated."

Objectives

By the end of this Lesson, learners should be able to:

- Recall the final events of the life of Christ: the trial, the sentence, the scourging and mocking, the crucifixion, the death, the taking down of His body from the Cross and the burial
- Contrast the trial of Jesus with trials in our own day
- Examine the example given by Jesus on the Cross, still showing love and concern for others, and reflect on how that guides them to list things they need or want to do for others
- Understand that Christ's death on the cross is a time of hope because death on the cross made possible a new Age in His Resurrection

Materials

- Icon of the Crucifixion
- Personal journal (to be used in all sessions)

Resources

Required Resources

- [My Guide to Holy Week and the Feast of Palms](#) (PDF)

Optional Resources

- [Icon of The Crucifixion of the Lord](#) (Image)

Procedure

1 Opening Prayer

In the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

O Heavenly King, the comforter, the Spirit of truth,
Who art everywhere and fillest all things,
Treasury of blessings and giver of life,
Come and abide in us, and cleanse us from every purity,
And save our souls, O Good One.

2 Activity

Have each student make a chart with two columns:

- Column A: list the events from objective 1
- Column B: write their ideas about each event helped to accomplish Christ's work on earth

If you have a large class, this could be an activity for pairs or groups.

Ask students to compare their charts and explain why they wrote what they did about each event.

3 Discussion Starter

Direct students to reflect on the example of Jesus on the Cross. When He was on the Cross, He still showed love and concern for others, particularly Mary, His mother, whom He entrusted to the care of John, the youngest disciple.

Ask students to consider those for whom they are responsible, and in their journals list things they need or want to do for others.

4 Scripture Reflection

Have students read Mark 14: 53-65. Reflect together on these questions: Why do you think Jesus was silent? Is there any similarity between this trial and any of the trials we know about in our own time? If so, what does this tell us about Our Lord's willingness to put Himself at the mercy of His people?

5 Activity: Psalm 22

Read together Psalm 22.

6 Discussion

Consider the words about Christ's death from the introduction to the service book for the Vespers of Holy Friday:

At this ultimate solemn moment of Vespers, the theme of hope once again occurs---this time more strongly and clearly than ever. As knees are bent and heads are bowed, and often tears are shed, another troparion is sung which penetrates through this triumph of evil, to the new day which is contained in its very midst:

The Angel came to the myrrh-bearing women at the tomb and said: "Myrrh is fitting for the dead, but Christ has shown Himself a stranger to corruption."

A new Age is dawning. Our salvation is taking place. The One who died is the same One who will rise on the third day, to "trample down death by death." And to free us from corruption.

Therefore, at the conclusion of Holy Friday Vespers, at the end of this long day of darkness, when all things are apparently ended, our eternal hope for salvation springs forth. For Christ is indeed a stranger to corruption...

Discuss why at this darkest moment the theme of hope occurs.

7 Wrap Up

Ask students to record a reaction to this lesson in their journal.

8 Closing Prayer

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

The noble Joseph,
When he had taken down
Thy most pure Body from the tree,
Wrapped it in fine linen,
And anointed it with spices,
And placed it in a new tomb.

Journey to Pascha • Lesson 6

Holy Saturday & Pascha (Ages 18+)

Overview

Descent into Hades and Resurrection

Objectives

By the end of this Lesson, learners should be able to:

- Describe the nature and meaning of the Great and Holy Sabbath (Holy Saturday)
- Understand Christ's work in Hades: the reason for it, the outcome, the relationship to the Cross and Resurrection
- Reflect on the emotions that each of the three days of Pascha evoke in their hearts and souls

Materials

- Personal journal (to be used in all sessions)
- Foam board at least 2' x 3'

Resources

Required Resources

- [Great and Holy Saturday](#) (PDF)
- [My Guide to Holy Week and the Feast of Palms](#) (PDF)

Optional Resources

- [Descent Into Hades: The Holy Resurrection](#)
- [Icon of The Crucifixion of the Lord](#) (Image)

Procedure

1 Opening Prayer

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

Do not lament me, O Mother, seeing me in the tomb,

The Son conceived in the womb without seed.
For I shall arise, And be glorified with eternal glory as God.
I shall exalt all who magnify you in faith and love.

2 Discussion Starter

Look together at the image of Christ on the cross from the Resources. Then discuss these questions:

How do the words of the hymn in the Opening Prayer reflect the love of Jesus for His mother that we have talked about before? What promise does He make? (*He promises not only that He will rise, but also that He will exalt those people who honor her.*)

3 Activity

Ask students to reflect on the section "The Transition" in the Resource *Great and Holy Saturday*. Why is the word "transformed" important?

4 Discussion Questions

- After reading the whole *Great and Holy Saturday* resource and the section on Great and Holy Saturday in *My Guide to Holy Week and the Feast of Palms* together, discuss:
 - How does the real meaning and nature of the Great and Holy Sabbath (Great and Holy Saturday) contrast with what many perceive the day to be?
 - Do you think most people know that in Orthodox teaching (and in ancient Christianity) the "Sabbath" is Saturday rather than Sunday?
 - How would you say the character of the Great and Holy Sabbath, as presented in Father Schemann's description, is related to the character of a Christian life?
 - How do the parts of the Vespereal Divine Liturgy of Holy Saturday teach us the meaning of our journey to Pascha?

5 Activity

On the foam board make three sections. Put three titles: Good Friday, Holy Saturday, Pascha. Select a student to write emotions, suggested by class members, that each day elicits.

6 Wrap Up

Ask students to enter their reflections on the emotions listed in activity 5.

7 Closing Prayer

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

Christ is Risen from the dead,
Trampling down death by death,
And upon those in the tombs, Bestowing life.

Journey to Pascha • Lesson 1

Lazarus Saturday (Ages 13-17)

Overview

Love: The Power of Life

Objectives

By the end of this Lesson, learners should be able to:

- Describe and compare the friendships of Lazarus, Mary and Martha with Jesus
- List and/or classify different types of relationships they have with other people and explain how they prioritize them
- List reasons, positive or negative, why they might relate to people differently

Materials

- Bible Concordance: raising of Lazarus
- Icon of the raising of Lazarus
- Foam board at least 2' x 3'
- Highlighter
- Copies of Resource: *My Guide to Holy Week and the Feast of Palms* (1 per student)

Resources

Required Resources

- [My Guide to Holy Week and the Feast of Palms](#) (PDF)

Optional Resources

- [Icon of The Raising of Lazarus](#) (Image)

Procedure

1 Opening Prayer

In the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

The Troparion (*Tone 1*)

By raising Lazarus from the dead before Thy passion,

Thou didst confirm the universal resurrection, O Christ God.
Like the children, with the palms of victory,
We cry out to Thee, O Vanquisher of Death,
Hosanna in the Highest!
Blessed is He that comes in the Name of the Lord.

2 Scripture Activity

- **Read the Lazarus Saturday Gospel: John 11:1-45.** As students are reading, ask them to highlight phrases/sentences that they will use to discuss the friendships of Lazarus, Mary and Martha with Jesus. Tell students that at the end of the lesson they will be asked why they chose these particular phrases or sentences.
- **Use the concordance to discover more about Lazarus', Mary's and Martha's relationships with Christ.** Have students look up each of the three names in the concordance and find passages that tell about their relationships. (If necessary, tell students how a concordance is used: it is a listing of key names or words and where they are found in the Bible.) Make sure the students look up the correct "Mary"--the sister of Martha and Lazarus--since there are several Marys in the New Testament.

3 Discussion Questions

- Describe and compare the friendships of Lazarus, Mary and Martha with Jesus using examples you found.
- How can we use these examples to help us find positive relationships? What are their characteristics?

4 Activity

Tell students to select three relationships they have with other people (family, friends, acquaintances), prioritize them and be ready to explain why they relate to them differently.

Note: Students can jot notes to be used in discussions.

5 Discussion Questions

- What things influence our relationships with others?
- How can we make these relationships positive?
- How can the events of Lazarus Saturday be a lesson from Jesus Christ the Teacher to help us find the way to positive relationships?

6 Wrap Up

Ask students to select words, phrases, sentences to write on the foam panel with the Lazarus Saturday icon that will remind them of what they learned in this lesson. They can explain why they chose their selections.

7 Closing Prayer

In the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

The Troparion (Tone 1)

By raising Lazarus from the dead before Thy passion,
Thou didst confirm the universal resurrection, O Christ God.
Like the children, with the palms of victory,

We cry out to Thee, O Vanquisher of Death,
Hosanna in the Highest!
Blessed is He that comes in the Name of the Lord.

Journey to Pascha • Lesson 2

Palm Sunday (Ages 13-17)

Overview

Confessing Christ as **King** - Loyalty among friends

Objectives

By the end of this Lesson, learners should be able to:

- Compare Martha's confession of faith (John 11:1-7, 17-27) with Peter's confession (Matt. 16:13-20) and denial (Matt. 26:30-35, 69-75)
- Locate the biblical references and explain the fulfillment of the prophecies related to Jesus' Entry to Jerusalem (Bible: Zech. 9:9, Isaiah 62:10-12, Matt. 21:1-11)
- Give examples of those who exalted Jesus on Palm Sunday and deserted Him later in the week
- Compare these examples with their personal experience of loyalty among friends

Materials

- Icon of Jesus' Entry into Jerusalem
- Foam board at least 2' x 3' (per student)
- Bible and/or handout of biblical passages noted in the objectives

Resources

Required Resources

- [My Guide to Holy Week and the Feast of Palms](#) (PDF)

Procedure

1 Opening Prayer

In the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

The Troparion (*Tone 1*)

By raising Lazarus from the dead before Thy passion,
Thou didst confirm the universal resurrection, O Christ God.
Like the children, with the palms of victory,
We cry out to Thee, O Vanquisher of Death,
Hosanna in the Highest!

Blessed is He that comes in the Name of the Lord.

2 Activity

Ask students to read the Bible passages that tell of Martha's and Peter's confessions of faith and Peter's denial. (These passages are noted in the Objectives, above.) Ask students to list 3-4 words or phrases they feel describe each confession. They will use the list when they share and compare.

3 Role Play

Using the phrase list and the biblical references ask each student to imagine that they are Martha or Peter and explain their confession of Christ and why they confess Him as they do. Peter will add his denial.

4 Scripture Reflection

Locate the biblical references and explain the fulfillment of the prophecies related to Jesus' Entry to Jerusalem: (Zech 9:9, Isaiah 62:10-12, Matt. 21:1-11)

5 Introduction to Palm Sunday

Read and discuss: Father Paul Lazor's introduction to Palm Sunday Resource Handout in: The Feast of Palms The Services of Lazarus Saturday and Palm Sunday, pp 7-9.

6 Discussion Starter

- When Jesus says to His disciples, at the news of His friend's death: "For your sake I am glad that I was not there, so that you may believe." (John 11:14), what do you think He wants the disciples to believe?
- In what ways do Christ's actions both on Lazarus Saturday and Palm Sunday show that He is a loving teacher and friend?
- Standing at the beginning of Holy Week, what affirmations do you think we should be ready to make because of the Lazarus Saturday/Palm Sunday events?

7 Discussion Questions

Compare the confessions of Martha and Peter.

Add names of others who exalted Jesus on Palm Sunday and deserted Him later in the week.

- What made people change their minds?
- Why do you think the mood changed between the triumphal entry into Jerusalem and later in the week?
- What personal experiences have you had that you are reminded of by your study of Palm Sunday? These might involve loyalty or lack of loyalty.

8 Wrap Up

On the icon board have each student write words, phrases or sentences that they chose to remind them of important ideas from this lesson.

9 Closing Prayer

In the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

The Troparion (*Tone 1*)

By raising Lazarus from the dead before Thy passion,
Thou didst confirm the universal resurrection, O Christ God.

Like the children, with the palms of victory,
We cry out to Thee, O Vanquisher of Death,
Hosanna in the Highest!
Blessed is He that comes in the Name of the Lord.

Journey to Pascha • Lesson 3

Holy Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday (Ages 13-17)

Overview

The Bridegroom Services - Choosing the Right Path

Objectives

By the end of this Lesson, learners should be able to:

- Reflect upon and compare themes of pre-lenten and Holy Week parables
- Describe the common themes of judgement and the end of time as they are presented in the Holy Services of Great and Holy Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday
- Utilizing the lessons learned during the first three days of Holy Week discuss and reflect upon how these biblical stories guide our life

Materials

- Icon of the Wise and Foolish Maidens
- Foam board at least 2' x 3'
- Bible
- Notebook: to be used to write a personal journal entry
- 8" x 11" poster paper

Resources

Required Resources

- [My Guide to Holy Week and the Feast of Palms](#) (PDF)
- [Icon of the Wise and Foolish Maidens](#)(Link)

Procedure

1 Opening Prayer

In the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

O Heavenly King, the comforter, the Spirit of truth,
Who art everywhere and fillest all things,
Treasury of blessings and giver of life,
Come and abide in us, and cleanse us from every purity,

And save our souls, O Good One.

2 Discussion Starter

Read about the Bridegroom Services in *My Guide to Holy Week and the Feast of Palms*. The information is under the heading "Some Basic Characteristics of the Great and Holy Week of the Lord's Passion, and the column is numbered at the bottom "Holy Week--2." Tell students that as they read they should note words and phrases that remind them of the guidance for living that we are given, both in the Scriptures and services of the first three days of Holy Week.

3 Oral Summaries

Ask the students to prepare an oral summary of the parables: The Wise and Foolish Maidens (Matthew 25: 1-13), the Publican and the Pharisee (Luke 18: 10-14), the Prodigal Son (Luke 15: 11-32) ; the Fig Tree (Matthew 21: 18-22), and the Talents (Matthew 25: 14-30). Describe the theme of each.

Depending on class size, this can be an individual or group activity.

Each student or each group can make a mini-poster that includes the name of the parable, a short summary, a description of the theme and a graphic if desired. The mini-poster should be displayed for the discussion segment of class.

4 Presentation

Ask the students to present their parable mini-posters

5 Discussion Questions

- What common themes do we find in the parables of the Wise and Foolish Maidens, the Publican and the Pharisee, the Prodigal Son, the Fig Tree and the Talents? (*Answers could include the need to be prepared, humility, the requirement that we "bear fruit" in our lives*)
- Why do you think these themes are presented to us during the first three days of Holy Week? (*As we prepare for Pascha, we need to do these things--let students give other answers--their own ideas*)
- How do these biblical examples help you to deal with the challenges and options that you meet in today's society in terms of values, behavior and pressures to conform?

6 Journal Prompt

Ask students to write a page in their journal that reflects their plans to use the themes of Holy Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday in their lives.

7 Wrap Up

Invite students to put comments on the poster.

8 Closing Prayer

In the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Behold! The Bridegroom comes at midnight,
And blessed is the servant whom He shall find watching;
And again, unworthy is the servant whom He shall find heedless.
Beware, therefore, O my soul, do not be weighed down with sleep,
Lest you be given up to death, and lest you be shut out of the Kingdom.
But rouse yourself, crying: "Holy! Holy! Holy! Art Thou, O our God,
Through the Theotokos, have mercy on us!"

Journey to Pascha • Lesson 4

Holy Thursday (*Ages 13-17*)

Overview

The Mystical Supper - The Confrontation with Evil

Objectives

By the end of this Lesson, learners should be able to:

- Describe and discuss the main theme of Great and Holy Thursday
- List and classify some religious and political groups of Jesus' time
- Contrast the thoughts and actions of the sinful woman and Judas as they related to Christ in the last days before His Crucifixion

Materials

- Bible Dictionary
- Foam boards at least 2' x 3'
- Bible Encyclopedia
- Bibles

Resources

Required Resources

- [The Mystical Supper icon](#)
- [My Guide to Holy Week and the Feast of Palms](#) (PDF)

Procedure

1 Opening Prayer

In the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

O Heavenly King, the comforter, the Spirit of truth,
Who art everywhere and fillest all things,
Treasury of blessings and giver of life,
Come and abide in us, and cleanse us from every purity,
And save our souls, O Good One.

2 Activity

Read together about Great and Holy Thursday in *My Guide to Holy Week and the Feast of Palms*, in the column marked "Holy Week--4."

3 Discussion Starter

Tell the students to list and briefly describe some religious and political groups of Jesus' time using biblical references and aids (e.g. Bible, dictionary, encyclopedia etc.) and recalling those mentioned in previous lessons.

Answers should include at least these basic groups:

Pharisees: *Learned Jews who kept the Old Testament law very seriously. Jesus sometimes challenged them if He saw that their adherence to law was getting in the way of compassion.*

Sadducees: *Jewish leaders who did not believe in the resurrection of the dead, or in angels.*

Zealots: *Jews who wanted to overthrow Palestine's Roman rulers, and were disappointed that Jesus would not lead their fight.*

Sanhedrin: *The highest Jewish political and religious court, including both Pharisees and Sadducees.*

4 Discussion Questions

- Describe a time or times when Christ was confronted with evil. (*Let students come up with their own ideas. Certainly when Jesus was falsely accused, when He was mocked, and when He was jeered at on the cross are important instances.*)
- How did the confrontation take place?
- What was Jesus' reaction?
- How might you feel or act in comparable circumstances? Would you react with silence or speech, and why?

5 Scripture Reflection

Read together Matthew 26: 6-16. Compare the attitudes of the sinful woman and Judas toward money.

6 Discussion Questions

- Read together Matthew 26: 6-16 and then discuss: What were the attitudes of Judas and of the sinful woman toward the use of money?
- How do the following words of the hymn (Matins of Great and Holy Wednesday compare them?) (*Let students give their own ideas.*)

The sinful woman brought oil of myrrh; the disciple Judas came to an agreement with the transgressors

She rejoiced to pour out what is very precious; he made haste to sell the One who is above all price

She acknowledged Christ as Lord; he severed himself from the Master

She was set free, but Judas became the slave of the enemy.

7 Wrap Up

Tell students to select words, phrases, sentences to write on the foam panel to remind them of what they learned in this lesson.

8 Closing Prayer

Look together at the icon of the Last Supper, and ask students how we take part in this meal in a special way. (Holy Communion.) That is the "Mystical Supper" referred to. Close with the prayer that follows:

In the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Of Thy Mystical Supper, O Son of God,
Accept me today as a communicant
For I will not speak of Thy Mystery to Thine enemies,
Neither like Judas will I give Thee a kiss
But like the thief will I confess Thee:
Remember me, O lord in Thy Kingdom.

Journey to Pascha • Lesson 5

Holy Friday (Ages 13-17)

Overview

The Crucifixion - The hour has come: Where do we stand?

Objectives

By the end of this Lesson, learners should be able to:

- Recount why and how the disciples and followers of Christ abandoned Him during His last hours with them
- Describe how Jesus still showed love and concern for others even when He was on the cross
- Evaluate the expression "keep watch" and apply it to our lives

Materials

- Icon of Jesus on the Cross
- Foam board at least 2' x 3'
- Journal
- Bible

Resources

Required Resources

- [My Guide to Holy Week and the Feast of Palms](#) (PDF)

Optional Resources

- [Icon of The Crucifixion of the Lord](#) (Image)

Procedure

1 Opening Prayer

In the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

O Heavenly King, the comforter, the Spirit of truth,
Who art everywhere and fillest all things,
Treasury of blessings and giver of life,

Come and abide in us, and cleanse us from every purity,
And save our souls, O Good One.

2 Discussion Starter

Tell students to write a journal entry on what they believe it means to "take up your cross and follow Christ." If any wish to do so, they may share some of what they have written, and it's possible that a discussion could follow.

3 Scripture Reflection

Read together Mark 14:32-15:15, and look together at the icon. Ask students to identify the followers of Jesus who were at the Cross, then to name 3 people who had been with Him but abandoned Him. (*Possible answers: the disciples as a group or individual disciples, the people who greeted Him on Palm Sunday.*) Ask students to suggest reasons why people might have done this.)

4 Discussion Questions

- What does the expression "keep watch" mean?
- When are we willing to "keep watch" and why?
- What examples can we give of our failure to "keep watch"?
- What qualities help a person to "keep watch"?

5 Personal Reflection

Ask the students to make a list of behaviors and attitudes that can help lead us (as persons or as groups) back (or closer) to God.

6 Discussion Questions

- What lesson do we learn from Christ's example on the cross?
- What can you do to benefit others?
- What things do you want to do to accomplish, correct or make right again?

7 Wrap Up

Ask students to select words, phrases, sentences to write on the foam panel to remind them of what they learned in this lesson.

8 Closing Prayer

In the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

The noble Joseph,
When he had taken down Thy most pure Body from the tree,
Wrapped it in fine linen,
And anointed it with spices,
And placed it in a new tomb.

Journey to Pascha • Lesson 6

Holy Saturday & Pascha (Ages 13-17)

Overview

Christ Is Risen! - Jesus is the Way, the Truth and the Light of all.

Objectives

By the end of this Lesson, learners should be able to:

- Name and explain three Old Testament readings and/or biblical figures that foreshadow or prefigure the Resurrection Christ
- Describe the relationships of Nicodemus, Joseph of Arimathea and the Myrrh-bearing Women to Jesus
- Give examples of words or elements of the Paschal stikihera, verses, hymns that encourage them to make a new life

Materials

- Bible Dictionary
- Bible Encyclopedia
- Foam board at least 3' x 5'
- Tape or CD of the Pascal stikhera
- Journal

Procedure

1 Opening Prayer

In the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Do not lament me, O Mother, seeing me in the tomb,
The Son conceived in the womb without seed.
For I shall arise and be glorified with eternal glory as God.
I shall exalt all who magnify you in faith and love.

2 Discussion Starter

Put the following Old Testament citations on the chalkboard:

Isaiah 53: 12

Jonah 1: 17

Ezekiel 37: 1-10

2 Kings 4: 32-37

Divide students into groups of 3 or 4. Ask each group to read the citations, and then write a key word or phrase for each one. Have the groups take turns reading one of their key words aloud, and having the rest of the class guess which citation it refers to. This should be easy, and is a way of becoming familiar with these Old Testament prophecies of the work and resurrection of Christ, which is how the Church understands them.

Discuss each reading a little:

Isaiah describes how the Savior will accomplish His saving work; Ezekiel tells us of the resurrection of all people; Jonah prefigures Christ's 3 days in the tomb; 2 Kings shows us God's loving power in giving a prophet the power to raise a boy from the dead.

3 Do not lament me...

Ask students to read again the text of the Ninth Ode of the Nocturn Kanon of Pascha: "Do not lament me...", which is the Opening Prayer of this lesson. Divide students into groups of 3 or 4, and have each group rewrite the words of the Kanon, keeping the meaning but using words they think would be clear to someone who was not familiar with the Scriptures. (Main points here would be that Jesus was truly born and grew in His mother's womb but was conceived through the power of the Holy Spirit rather than sexual relations. Though His suffering and death are terrible, He will rise from the dead, and will come with glory to judge all. Those who honor His mother will be glorified--in honoring her, they show that they believe in Him. His words clearly show His love for her.) Let students come up with their own ideas and wording, but make sure they understand these main points as being truths of Christianity.

4 Biblical Reflection

Using a concordance or Bible dictionary for sources, ask students to describe the relationships of Nicodemus, Joseph of Arimathea and the Myrrh-bearing Women to Jesus, and the risks they took at the time of His Crucifixion and Burial. (Students can come up with their own ideas.)

5 Personal Reflection

- Read, or listen to recordings of, the Paschal stikhera. Ask students to select words or elements from the text that encourage them to make a new effort in their life.
- Invite students (those who wish to) to share their selections, explaining why they chose them.

6 Wrap Up

Ask students to put comments on the foam board poster. Review the Old Testament exercise by asking students to look again at the citations on the chalkboard and write about at least 3 of them--what they foretell about Jesus Christ and the Resurrection. Let students share their answers if they wish to.

7 Closing Prayer

In the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Do not lament me, O Mother, seeing me in the tomb,
The Son conceived in the womb without seed.
For I shall arise and be glorified with eternal glory as God.
I shall exalt all who magnify you in faith and love.

Journey to Pascha • Lesson 1

Lazarus Saturday (Ages 10-12)

Overview

Jesus' Love Brings Life

Objectives

By the end of this Lesson, learners should be able to:

- Identify Lazarus, Mary and Martha as people whom Jesus loved and who loved Him as a friend
- Describe the raising of Lazarus from the dead
- Relate the Troparion of the feast to the Scripture story

Materials

- Bibles (Note: Activities, such as the Reviewing the Story sheet for this session, as well as quotations, use the Revised Standard Version. We suggest having this version for each student to use, or for 2 or 3 students to share)
- Icon of the Entry of Jesus Christ into Jerusalem (the Feast of Palms)
- Copies of the Resource *Reviewing the Story* for groups of 3 or 4 students to share

Resources

Required Resources

- [My Guide to Holy Week and the Feast of Palms](#) (PDF)
- [The Raising of Lazarus \(John 11:1-45\)](#) (PDF)
- [Lazarus Saturday & Palm Sunday Troparion](#)(HTML)

Optional Resources

- [Reviewing the Story \(John 11: 1-43\)](#) (PDF)
- [Icon of The Entry Into Jerusalem](#) (Image)

Procedure

1 Opening Prayer

In the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

O Heavenly King, the Comforter, the Spirit of Truth,
Who are everywhere present and fill all things,
Treasury of Blessings and Giver of Life,
Come and abide in us and cleanse us from every impurity,
And save our souls, O Good One.

2 Brief Relection on Opening Prayer

Talk with students about the meaning of the phrase “cleanse us from every impurity.” This prayer, directed to the Holy Spirit, asks that the Spirit help us overcome sins, bad thoughts, and other things that are painful and bad for us--things that may keep us away from God.

3 Scripture & Discussion (Part 1)

- **Read with the class the first part of the Gospel for Lazarus Saturday, John 11: 1-27.**
Be sure students understand that this is the day on which we remember Jesus raising His friend Lazarus from the dead.
- **Discuss the following questions, giving students a chance to answer. Suggested answers are in italics.**
 1. How does the first part of the passage tell us that Jesus had real friends who loved Him? *Verses 3 and 5 tell us this.*
 2. Why does Jesus wait two days to go to Bethany?
Verse 4 tells us that God’s glory will be shown in Lazarus’ dying and being raised from the dead. Jesus’ words about daylight and night in verse 9 refer to His doing the work He was sent to do at the time ordained by His Father. This work is seen by all, being done in the "daytime". The world, therefore, cannot undermine it.
 3. What are the disciples afraid of?
Verses 7-10 tell us that Jesus has just recently been stoned and persecuted in the place He now wants to return to.
 4. What promise does Jesus make to Martha?
In verse 25 Jesus says, “though he die yet shall he live.” His promise to believers is that though they die to their life on earth, they will be raised to live with God forever.

4 Troparion & Icon of the Feast

- Have students stand. Sing together the *Troparion for Lazarus Saturday and Palm Sunday*: the words are below as the Closing Prayer.
- Be sure students understand the meaning of certain words in the hymn:
 - **Passion:** The passion of Christ is His suffering and agony. This is the original meaning of the word.
 - **Universal resurrection:** All human beings will be raised when Christ comes again.
 - **Vanquisher:** Conqueror.
- Point out that the words “children with the palms of victory” look ahead to Palm Sunday.
- Look at the icon together. Note details such as the grave clothes, and that Mary and Martha are

depicted differently. Mary is usually shown with her head bowed, while Martha is looking up or around to see what is happening. In some icons (details can vary slightly from icon to icon) she is holding a handkerchief to her nose!

5 Scripture & Discussion (Part 2)

Continue with a discussion on the day's Scripture reading (John 11: 28-45):

- **What does Mary say to Jesus that her sister Martha said before?**
In verse 21 she "scolds" Jesus for not having come sooner. This shows the comfortable closeness that these sisters had with Him.
- **Why do you think Jesus weeps at Lazarus' tomb?**
Jesus' grief is not only that of a friend, but He grieves as Creator of the universe to see the power of death in His creation.

6 Reviewing the Story

- Divide the class into groups of 3 or 4 and give each group a copy of the Resource: *Reviewing the Story*, and Bibles (Revised Standard Version) to work with.
- Explain how this activity works as explained in the the Answer Key.
- You may wish to make this activity a contest to see which group can be first to figure out what the letters spell out. However, if a group figures out what the letters spell before finishing, they should, nevertheless, complete the exercise and fill in each statement.
- Go over the answers together when all the groups have finished.

7 Closing Prayer

In the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

By raising Lazarus from the dead before Thy passion,
Thou didst confirm the universal resurrection, O Christ God.
Like the children with the palms of victory,
We cry out to Thee, O Vanquisher of death,
Hosanna in the highest!
Blessed is He that comes in the Name of the Lord.

Note: Tell students that at the next session you will look more closely at the "children with the palms of victory" that the words of the hymn describe. Let them tell what they remember about the story of Palm Sunday and Christ entering Jerusalem as a king.

Journey to Pascha • Lesson 2

Palm Sunday (Ages 10-12)

Overview

Christ the King

Objectives

By the end of this Lesson, learners should be able to:

- Tell how Jesus' kingship is different from that of earthly kings
- Describe the scene of Christ's entry into Jerusalem as told in Scripture and shown in the festal icon
- Relate the Scripture story to a few Old Testament prophecies

Materials

- Bibles
- Colored pencils or markers, pencils, paper
- Icon of the Entry of Christ into Jerusalem (Palm Sunday)
- Pictures in books, magazines, from internet or from any source, showing kings in chariots or on horses looking magnificent (as a contrast to Christ the King riding humbly on a donkey)
- An inflated lightweight beach ball that students can throw to each other for the review activity, which covers this week's and last week's sessions.
- A timer of any kind (one that counts seconds) for the review activity. (For each question in the review activity, students will be given 5 seconds to answer.)
- Questions for the review activity. Write each of the following questions on a small piece of paper, then fold them up and put them into a basket (or some other container.) Answers and Scripture citations are provided in parentheses here, but should not be put on the papers.

Questions:

1. Where do Mary, Martha, and Lazarus live? (Bethany; John 11:1)
2. Which disciple says that they should all go to Judea with Jesus and die with Him? (Thomas; John 11:16.)
3. How many days had Lazarus been dead when Jesus comes? (Four; John 11: 17)
4. On Palm Sunday Jesus entered what city? (Jerusalem; Matthew 21: 10)
5. On Palm Sunday the crowds shout, "Hosanna to the Son of _____?" (David; Matthew 21: 9)
6. Who first said to Jesus, "Lord, if you had been here my brother would not have died"? (Mary; John 11: 21)
7. What did Jesus tell the people at the tomb of Lazarus to do? (Take away the stone that was on it; John 11: 39)
8. What do the people spread on the road as Jesus enters Jerusalem? (Their garments and branches they have cut; Matthew 21: 8)
9. What does Jesus first do when He sees the tomb of Lazarus? (He weeps; John 11: 35)
10. What does Jesus say as He raises Lazarus from the dead? ("Lazarus, come out." John 11: 43)

Resources

Required Resources

- [Holy Week Teacher Planning Worksheet](#) (PDF)
- [The Feast of Palms: Saturday-Sunday](#) (PDF)
- [Lazarus Saturday & Palm Sunday Troparion](#)(HTML)

Optional Resources

- [Review Questions \(John 11: 1-43\)](#) (PDF)

Procedure

1 Opening Prayer

In the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

The Troparion (*Tone 1*)

By raising Lazarus from the dead before Thy passion,
Thou didst confirm the universal resurrection, O Christ God.
Like the children, with the palms of victory,
We cry out to Thee, O Vanquisher of Death,
Hosanna in the Highest!
Blessed is He that comes in the Name of the Lord.

2 Bridging to Scripture

Give each student paper, pencils, and colored pencils or markers. Have them draw or write about what they think it means to be a loyal friend. This could mean either how they would show loyalty, or how they would like someone to show loyalty to them or to others. Let students share what they have drawn or written if they wish to.

3 Reading Activity

Read together from the Bible the Gospel for Matins of Palm Sunday: Matthew 21: 1-11.

4 Discussion Questions

- If you had been one of the people along the road in Jerusalem that day, what might have surprised you? (*Jesus was riding humbly on a donkey, not on a horse or in a chariot.*) Look together at the icon and at the pictures of magnificent kings you have brought, to show the contrast. Point out the children with palms in the icon, as mentioned in the Troparion. (Note: Students might make jokes about the word “ass” in the Scripture passage. Just remind them that its original meaning was the same as “donkey” and drop the subject! We don’t suggest bringing it up yourself; talk about it only if students do bring it up or notice it.)
- Were there differences between Jesus as King and earthly kings? (*The Kingdom Jesus promises is with God in heaven. He was not trying to have power like a king in this world. He taught that we can begin to be part of His Kingdom here and now, but not by gathering worldly power. Instead we must serve others.*) Also, Christ’s kingship was prepared for through the whole Old Testament. Read together Psalm 118: 25-6 and note that Jesus points out that He is fulfilling this prophecy. Also read Zechariah 9:9.
- Talk again about loyalty in friends. How many of the people who were shouting “Hosanna” (which means “save us now”) would still be Jesus’ friends at the time of His arrest and trial? (*Some of them*

would be the same people who would shout to have Him crucified.) So Our Lord shared our human experience fully. He had loyal and loving friends like Lazarus, Mary, and Martha. But He also knew that some friends are not loyal. He suffered the disappointments that we sometimes experience.

5 Review Questions

Have students stand in two lines, as two teams. Toss a coin to decide which team will go first. Throw the beach ball to one student on that team. The student chooses a question from the basket. If the student can answer the question with no help, the team gets three points.

If the student needs to confer with others or check in the Bible to answer the question, the team gets one point. (If the team can't come up with an answer, or answers incorrectly, no points are given. The time limit for giving each answer is 5 seconds, though if a team is really stumped they may have 5 extra seconds.) When the question has been answered, the student throws the ball to someone on the other team, who then picks a question and answers or confers in the same way.

The winning team will be the one with the most points after all ten questions have been answered. (If there are questions to which students cannot come up with answers, give the answers. But they should be able to find them all. Go over all the answers together at the end.)

6 Closing Prayer

In the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

The Troparion (Tone 1)

By raising Lazarus from the dead before Thy passion,
Thou didst confirm the universal resurrection, O Christ God.
Like the children, with the palms of victory,
We cry out to Thee, O Vanquisher of Death,
Hosanna in the Highest!
Blessed is He that comes in the Name of the Lord.

Go over the meanings of some words; ask students whether they know what the following words and phrases mean, and if not, tell them:

Passion: the suffering and death of Jesus Christ.

Universal resurrection: Jesus had power to raise Lazarus from the dead. So we know He will keep His promise that we can be with God in His Kingdom, too.

Vanquisher: winner or one who has a victory.

Ask students: How are we "like the children with the palms of victory"? (*We, too, are preparing to welcome Jesus Christ at Pascha. But we will not abandon Him--instead we will keep vigil and stay with Him by attending the services of Holy Week.*)

Journey to Pascha • Lesson 3

Holy Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday (Ages 10-12)

Overview

The Bridegroom Services - Following the Lord

Objectives

By the end of this Lesson, learners should be able to:

- Identify the “Bridegroom” of the first services of Holy Week as Jesus Christ
- Relate the parable of the wise and foolish maidens to our own lives
- Name some “fruits of repentance” that they will offer to Christ

Materials

- Bibles
- Bowl of several kinds of fruit (napkins and knife out of sight, to share fruit later)
- Icon of the Wise and Foolish Maidens (Note: “Maidens” is the word used in the Revised Standard Version of the Bible)
- Candle and matches
- A drawing of a bare branch, posted in the room
- Scissors, various colors of construction paper, markers for students to share

Resources

Required Resources

- [The Bridegroom Services of Holy Week](#) (PDF)
- [Icon of the Wise and Foolish Maidens](#)(Link)

Procedure

1 Opening Prayer

From the Apostikha for Great and Holy Monday

In the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

The fig tree was withered up because it was unfruitful.

We should fear the same punishment, O brothers and sisters,

And bring worthy fruits of repentance to Christ, who brings us great mercy.

2 Discussion Starter

Ask students what they know about the services of Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday of Holy Week. *(Perhaps they can tell you what they remember about attending these services, or what they have heard about them.)* Remind or tell them that one theme of these days is preparation. We are called to be watchful, and to be prepared, because the Lord Jesus Christ might come at any time. We should be ready to greet Him with joy. We should never be unprepared or unready to meet Him.

Say to the class that you are going to find out more about this. Read together Matthew 25: 1-13. The maidens here are following the custom of accompanying a bridegroom who is going to get his bride from her home. While waiting for him, they may fall asleep, but they must be ready right away to light their lamps and go with him, and they must be prepared with plenty of oil. If they have not brought enough, there may not be time for them to get some from the others and get their lamps lighted if he comes at a time they do not expect. The Church compares Christ to the Bridegroom, who may come at any time. Let students suggest ways in which we can be prepared to meet Christ *(for example, by doing good and helping others, by praying, by trying to live as Christians and to come closer to God, by not making excuses for the things we have done or the things we have failed to do that we should have done. Being ready means not making excuses!)*

3 Icon and Scripture Memorization

Look together at the Icon of the Wise and Foolish Maidens, and note details. Then, light the candle, and read together John 12: 46. Spend a few minutes having students memorize the verse:

**I have come as light into the world,
[so] that whoever believes in Me may not remain in darkness.**

Note: We have added the word “so”, which appears in some translations, to make the verse a little easier for students to understand.

Blow out the candle when you have finished.

4 Scripture, Discussion, Activity

Tell students that another short passage is also part of the readings for these first days of Holy Week. Read it together: Matthew 21: 19. Ask students to consider how the Church applies this to us. Go back to the Opening Prayer, which shows us that we are meant to be "fruitful" and not "fruitless" as the fig tree was.

Give students a few minutes of silence to think about “fruits of repentance” they will offer to Christ. This means things that they want to make better and more truly Christian in their lives, or new efforts they want to make to be close to God. These things should be more specific than the discussion of the Wise and Foolish Maidens. They can look at the drawing of the bare branch which you have posted, and think about it as an example of what we do not want to be--a branch with no fruit.

Have student cut out shapes like pieces of fruit from the construction paper, and write their plans, the fruits they will offer Christ, on the “fruit pieces.” They can take these home as reminder of their plans.

5 Closing Prayer

Repeat the Opening Prayer together. Have each student choose a piece of fruit from the bowl, and then eat together. Remind students of the plan and pledge they have made to offer the Lord "fruits of repentance."

In the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

The fig tree was withered up because it was unfruitful.
We should fear the same punishment, O brothers and sisters,
And bring worthy fruits of repentance to Christ, who brings us great mercy.

Journey to Pascha • Lesson 4

Holy Thursday (Ages 10-12)

Overview

The Last Supper, the Anointing and the Betrayal - Jesus' Love for His Friends, the Disciples

Objectives

By the end of this Lesson, learners should be able to:

- Describe Jesus' act of washing the disciples' feet as an example of humility
- Contrast the sinful woman with Judas
- Relate the Last Supper to our reception of Holy Communion

Materials

- Bibles
- Clear pitcher or glass of water
- Icon of the Last Supper <http://saints.oca.org/IconDirectory/LG/HolyWeek/mysticalsupper02.jpg>

Resources

Required Resources

- [The Mystical Supper icon](#)
- [The Bridegroom Services of Holy Week](#) (PDF)

Procedure

1 Opening Prayer

In the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

O Heavenly King, the comforter, the Spirit of truth,
Who art everywhere and fillest all things,
Treasury of blessings and giver of life,
Come and abide in us, and cleanse us from every purity,
And save our souls, O Good One.

2 Review

Review the memorized verse from the last session: "I have come as light into the world, [so] that whoever

believes in me may not remain in darkness” (John 11: 46.)

3 Activity and Discussion

Bridging to Scripture: Ask students (seeing the pitcher or glass of water) to name things one could do with water that would serve others (give someone a drink, clean or wash things for another person to use, water crops for food, put out a fire, etc.)

Then, write these phrases on the chalkboard:

1. prepare an iced drink when the weather is very warm
2. do a load of laundry
3. wash someone else’s feet
4. swim or paddle around on a float in a beautiful pool

Have students stand. Say, “All of these things involve water. Think about which of these you would most like to do.” After about five seconds of time for students to think about their choice, point to one corner or area of the room for #1, another area for #2, and so on. Have students move to the area of the room that represents their choice.

Next, ask which would be the thing they would least like to do. Again, indicate areas of the room for each answer. Chances are that this time most of the students will choose #3 as the thing they’d least like to do.

Ask students what they know about traveling by foot in the time of Jesus. Let them tell the class if they know, or else tell them yourself, that in those days people traveled on dusty roads wearing sandals or foot coverings that did not cover the whole foot. So it was a courtesy to a guest who had walked to wash that person’s feet. It was the lowliest of jobs, and was usually left to a slave or servant.

Ask, “What did Jesus do, on the night of the Last Supper, that astonished His disciples?” Students may know that He washed their feet. Read the story together in John 13: 1-17. Discuss:

Why did Jesus choose this particular act? (Probably because it was such a lowly task, and He wanted those who knew Him as Lord to have the truest example of humility that He could possibly give them.)

What do verses 1-3 tell us about Jesus’ divinity? (He knew things that only the Son of God could know, both about Judas and about the terrible ordeal He was about to face for the sake of all human beings.)

4 Icon and Troparion

Look at the icon together. Notice signs of closeness (such as John leaning near Jesus.) Of course, students

will also want to pick out the figure of Judas! Sing or say together the Troparion (Matins of Holy Friday):

When the glorious disciples were enlightened at the washing of their feet before the supper, then the impious Judas was darkened, ailing with avarice, and to the lawless judges he betrays Thee, the righteous judge.

Behold, O lover of money, this man who because of money hanged himself.

Flee from the greedy soul which dared such things against the Master.

O Lord, who art good towards all men, glory to Thee.

Make sure students understand certain words:

Impious (pronounced im-pea-us) means lacking respect and reverence for God

Avarice is an overwhelming desire for or love of money

5 Scripture

Read together Matthew 26: 6-30. Ask students to compare (as the services do) the woman who anoints Christ's feet with Judas. Use these questions:

What does Jesus mean by saying, "You always have the poor with you" in verse 11? (He means that the poor can always be helped and shown love, but there is a limited time for people to show their love for Him, since He will not be in the world much longer. This is why he tells Judas not to trouble the woman who has done a beautiful thing for Him. He knows Judas' heart, and knows that Judas' concern for the poor is not sincere.)

Do you agree that to do a "beautiful thing" for someone else is important? How do we as Christians try to do "beautiful things" for God? (We make churches and vestments beautiful, we give our best to God by coming to church on time and paying attention to the prayers we are saying, and by showing love to the other people who worship with us. Of course we still have the responsibility to care for the poor and those in need. This is why in the Divine Liturgy we pray for "those who remember the poor.")

6 Closing Prayer

Say or sing the Troparion (words above) together.

Journey to Pascha • Lesson 5

Holy Friday (Ages 10-12)

Overview

The Crucifixion - Where Do We Stand?

Objectives

By the end of this Lesson, learners should be able to:

- Tell the main events of Jesus' arrest, trial, and sentence
- Relate the events of the Crucifixion to the words "like the thief will I confess Thee" that we say before receiving Holy Communion
- Relate the risk taken by Nicodemus and Joseph of Arimathea to the risk taken by Saint Maria Skobtsova, in following Jesus Christ

Materials

- Bibles
- Resource Media: Icon of the Crucifixion
- Resource Media: Icon of Saint Maria Skobtsova
- Resource Handout: Our Lord's Last Days on Earth (1 per student)

Resources

Required Resources

- [My Guide to Holy Week and the Feast of Palms](#) (PDF)
- [The Bridegroom Services of Holy Week](#) (PDF)
- [Newly Canonized Saint Mother Maria Skobtsova Icon](#) (Image)
- [Our Lord's Last Days on Earth](#)(HTML)
- [Prayer From Holy Thursday Matins](#)(HTML)

Optional Resources

- [Icon of The Crucifixion of the Lord](#) (Image)

Procedure

1 Opening Prayer

In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. (From Matins of Holy Thursday)

Lord, You said to Your disciples:
My beloved, see that no fear separates you from Me.
Though I suffer, it is for the sake of the world.
I came, not to be served, but to serve,
To give Myself for the salvation of the world.
If you are My friends, then imitate Me.
Let the first among you be the last.
Let the master be like the servant.
Abide in me and bear fruit,
for I am the vine of life. Amen.

2 Scripture Activity

As a way of going through the story of the arrest, trial, and sentence of Jesus Christ, have students take turns reading aloud the numbered items on the sheet *Our Lord's Last Days on Earth*.

Give each student a copy of the sheet. Some students really do not enjoy reading aloud in front of others. Encourage them to take part in the reading, but let them sit and listen if they prefer. Ask them to pay close attention.

Have students who are going to read take a few minutes to look through the text. Answer any questions they have. Then they can stand in a line, and read the items in order.

3 Scripture Reading and Discussion, Icon

Continue the reading of the Scripture story from Bibles. Read together Mark 15: 16-32 and Luke 23: 32-49. Students will probably note that some details are repeated. That is because we read from all four Gospels in the course of this Holy Friday Matins service, so that we get the details and full meaning of the events.

Look together at Luke 23: 21 and 23, and Mark 15: 29-30. Ask students, “Do you think the people who said these things were some of the same ones who shouted ‘Hosanna’ on Palm Sunday?” (*Certainly there were some who “turned on” Christ when they realized He was not the kind of worldly political King they wanted.*)

Look together at the icon of the Crucifixion. Note that there is not a crowd of people to stand by Christ as He dies. The crowds that surrounded Him on Palm Sunday are gone.

Remind students of the words we say in the prayer before Holy Communion: “Like the thief will I confess Thee.” Ask students where these words come from. If necessary, help them find the basis for the words in Luke 23: 39-43. We, as Christians, want to be like the thief who confessed Jesus to be the Christ. We also say in the Communion prayer, “Neither like Judas will I give Thee a kiss.” We do not want to be like Judas, who betrayed the Lord to His enemies.

4 Discussion & Icon

Show students the icon of Saint Maria Skobtsova, and if possible also some photos. Tell students that she was a nun who died in a Nazi concentration camp on Holy Friday of 1945. She did many things to help others, but the thing that got her sent to the concentration camp was giving false baptismal certificates to Jews, in order to save their lives. She said that she must help everyone, in order to show her love for Jesus Christ.

Now read together John 19: 38-42. Ask students what is similar in these two men's actions to the actions of Saint Maria. (*They took risks in order to show their love for Jesus Christ.*) *Help students see the point that people much closer to our own time, like Mother Maria, still do the same brave and loving things that Joseph of Arimathea and Nicodemus did because they are following Jesus Christ.*)

5 Wrap Up

Ask students to think, this coming week, about taking risks to show their love for Jesus Christ. This does not mean the kinds of risks that involve physical danger, but could include being ridiculed for going to church often, for trying to follow the teachings of the Church, and so on.

6 Closing Prayer

Pray together these words from the Odes (Matins of Great and Holy Thursday):

In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

Come, O faithful, let us enjoy the Master's hospitality;

The banquet of immortality.

In the upper chamber with uplifted minds,

Let us receive the exalted words of the Word,

Whom we magnify. Amen.

Journey to Pascha • Lesson 6

Holy Saturday & Pascha (Ages 10-12)

Overview

Christ is Risen! - Jesus Christ is the Lord of Life

Objectives

By the end of this Lesson, learners should be able to:

- Tell how the Old Testament prepares us for Christ's Resurrection
- Relate the icon of the Resurrection to a verse from the Vespers Liturgy of Holy Saturday
- Explain how the hymns of Holy Saturday lead us toward the joy of Pascha

Materials

- Bibles
- Copies of pages 33-36 ("For Gloriously Has He Been Glorified") of the booklet *Great and Holy Saturday*, published by the Department of Religious Education of the Orthodox Church in America, 1986 (Have enough copies for 2 or 3 students to share) Go over the words so that you can be prepared to say and sing them, and help students do so, during class. Be ready, also, to sing the refrain on page 33. If you need help with the singing, ask a choir member to help you, or play a recording of the hymn
- Icon of the Resurrection (sometimes called the "Harrowing of Hell")
- For the section Icon and Hymn Verse, you may wish to put the verse on the chalkboard before class

Resources

Required Resources

- [Great and Holy Saturday](#) (PDF)

Optional Resources

- [For Gloriously Has He Been Glorified](#) (PDF)
- [Icon of The Resurrection of Christ](#) (Image)

Procedure

1 Opening Prayer

In the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

O Heavenly King, the comforter, the Spirit of truth,
Who art everywhere and fillest all things,
Treasury of blessings and giver of life,
Come and abide in us, and cleanse us from every purity,
And save our souls, O Good One.

2 Old Testament Bridging to New Testament

Ask students, “What have we found in the Old Testament that prepares us for the coming of Jesus the Savior in the New Testament?” (Let them give answers, or remind them of some Old Testament prophecies you have looked at together, such as Psalm 118: 25-6 and Zechariah 9:9) You might also read Micah 5: 2 and Isaiah 7: 14.

Go on to look at another way God prepares us, in the Old Testament, for what Jesus Christ will do. Read together I Kings 17: 8-24, a story about the prophet Elijah. This is the 8th reading at the Vespers and Divine Liturgy for Great and Holy Saturday. Ask

students, “How does this reading help prepare us for the coming of Christ?” (*Elijah is given the grace to raise the son of the widow. It’s by this action that the woman knows that Elijah is a man of God, and that the word of God in his mouth is truth. The reading prepares us for Jesus Christ being raised from the dead. He not only has the true word of God in His mouth, He is the Word of God. He is the divine Son of the Father who does His Father’s will.*)

3 Icon and Hymn Verse

Look together at the icon of the Resurrection. Then put this verse from the Vespers on the chalkboard:

Today Hades cries out groaning: I should not have accepted the Man born of Mary. He came and destroyed my power. He shattered the gates of brass. As God, He raised the souls I had held captive.

Glory to Thy cross and resurrection, O Lord!

Invite students to find phrases in the verse that are depicted in the icon: Hades “accepted” the Man born of Mary because He went there, as the icon shows. The icon shows the “gates of brass” being shattered, and Jesus “raising” the souls Hades had held, pulling them out with His own hands. The old man at the bottom of the icon represents Hades, or Satan, crying out and groaning.

Make the point that in the Church we often say the same things in Scriptural words, in icons, and in hymns.

4 A Sung and Said Prayer

Give students copies of “Gloriously Has He Been Glorified”, which we say and sing during the Holy Saturday service. Tell them this is another way that in the Orthodox Church we “tell” a Scripture story by singing it. This is the story of the Hebrews escaping from the Egyptian pursuers by passing through the Red Sea as if it were dry land. God has always been with His people, from the time of this miracle from the time that His Son came to be with us and save us.

Practice singing the refrain with the class. Have everyone stand. Then have those students who are willing take turns reading the verses, with everyone singing the refrain. You may have just a few willing students; if necessary read some of the verses yourself.

5 Scripture Reading

Read together the Gospel for the Liturgy: Matthew 28: 1-20.

6 Discussion Questions

Discuss these points about verses 17-20:

- **What words tell us that Jesus Christ really is fully divine and fully human?**
He says, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to Me." This assures us that He is what He claims to be, and that we can rely on and trust Him and His promises.
- **How do you think we can fulfill Jesus' words to us in verses 19 and 20?**
Let students give their own answers.

7 Wrap Up

Read to the class the hymn to the Theotokos from the Liturgy for this day:

**Do not lament me, O Mother, seeing me in the tomb,
The Son conceived in the womb without seed.
For I shall arise and be glorified with eternal glory as God.
I shall exalt all who magnify you in faith and in love.**

- **Ask the class, "Who is saying these words?"**
Christ says them, addressing His mother, who of course is "lamenting" and sorrowful at the suffering and death of her beloved Son. But He reminds her that He will rise and be glorified, because He is God. He calls us to "magnify" or praise her because she gave birth to Him, thus doing God's will in the most important way.
- Sing "Christ is Risen" together. The sorrow of the Mother of God's lament gives way to joy for her and for all of us. If you can, sing or say "Christ is Risen" in some other languages as well as English.

8 Closing Prayer

In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

Do not lament me, O Mother, seeing me in the tomb,
The Son conceived in the womb without seed.
For I shall arise and be glorified with eternal glory as God.
I shall exalt all who magnify you in faith and in love.