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Seeking to Live the Good News

CATECHIST BOOK

YEAR

6

Seeking to Live the Good News Catechist Book Year 6

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This Catechist Book is a companion to *Seeking to Live the Good News Student Workbook, Year 6*.

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God Speaks to Us

Background for the Catechist

Please take 10 minutes to reflect on the following introduction to this lesson.

Reflection/Doctrinal Reference

Created in God's image and called to know and love him, the person who seeks God discovers certain ways of coming to know him. These are also called proofs for the existence of God, not in the sense of proofs in the natural sciences, but rather in the sense of 'converging and convincing arguments', which allow us to attain certainty about the truth. These 'ways' of approaching God from creation have a twofold point of departure: the physical world, and the human person (CCC, n. 31).

This is the reality of our Christian belief: we come to know God via something because God is not immediately accessible to us. God cannot be simply comprehended by humankind, for God is inexpressible, invisible, yet desires to be known.

So God is discovered through mediations that we experience, explore and strive to understand. These mediations, or signs and symbols, are many. Some are more powerful than others and at different times in our lives they are stronger. The key element to remember is that there are many ways God communicates with us and we need to be attentive to them. The trick is not only to note God's presence but also to respond to the encounter.

Another element to remember is the complementarity in these mediations. God speaks to us through 'many microphones' and they all speak to each other. World events, and human life, and sacraments and Scripture can all be used by God to teach us something about his loving plan for the world. God sustains our world, our existence, our very being and we can come to some knowledge of his presence through symbols that signal God is there.

Student Focus

Year six students are around 11 and 12 years of age. Students of this age are more able to understand symbol. They have a good grasp of the world. They are also starting to engage critically with events in their family, school and social setting. The students have probably received a few years of lessons like this lesson and therefore have some understanding of God. Helping the students to become more conscious and aware of the world around them and God's presence in the world is key to this lesson.

Teaching Point

We come to know God through the world, through people and through Scripture.

Remembering Point

I come to know God through the world, other people and through Scripture.

Beginning

(12 minutes)

Welcome the students as usual.

Gather the students around the prayer focus and **invite the students** to introduce themselves by saying their name, the school they go to, and the thing they like doing most. **Introduce yourself** to the students in the same way.

Invite the students to pray,

All: In the name of the Father ...

Catechist: Let us pray the 'Glory be to the Father' prayer.

All: Glory be to the Father ...

Invite the students to go to their seats.

Tell the students: Today we are going to explore how and when God speaks to us in our life.

Distribute the workbooks and **invite the students** to turn to the activity 'What I know about God' on page 2.

Tell the students: Pair up with the person beside you and brainstorm all the things you know about God. In the space provided, record your answers.

2

Invite one student from each pair to share with whole group.

Ask the students:

- Where is God? (*Accept all the answers from the students. These might include the church, in heaven, in other people.*)
- How do we know that God is in those places? (*Again accept all answers. Students might say something like: Adults have told us, we can see goodness in the actions of people.*)
- How can you learn about God? (*From other Christians, from the Bible, from going to Mass*)

Tell the students: We learn about God from other people, from our experiences, from the world and from the Bible (Scripture).

Middle

(35 minutes)

Tell the students: Today we will be looking at a few of the ways that we come to know and learn about God. One important way is through Scripture. When we read or listen to the word of God we hear what God wants to say to us. Turn to page 3 and the 'Spot God in Action' activity. Let's run through this first passage from Scripture. I'll read it and you are to identify God's action. You can follow the reading in your workbook.

Read the scripture passage yourself or **invite one of the students** who can read well to read the text out loud.

PREPARATION

1. Prayer focus: a cloth, a crucifix, a candle, the clover leaf from Appendix 1b on page 7 and a Bible. Instructions about how to set up a prayer focus can be found in Appendix 1a, page 6.
2. A3 sheets of paper with heading: God in Action – enough for one per group of four students.
3. Scissors and glue.
4. Newspapers, at least one per group, but preferably two per group.
5. Workbooks.

PREPARATION

Mk 1: 40–45

⁴⁰A leper came to him begging him, and kneeling he said to him, 'If you choose, you can make me clean.'⁴¹Moved with pity, Jesus stretched out his hand and touched him, and said to him, 'I do choose. Be made clean!'⁴²Immediately the leprosy left him, and he was made clean.

⁴³After sternly warning him he sent him away at once, ⁴⁴saying to him, 'See that you say nothing to anyone; but go, show yourself to the priest, and offer for your cleansing what Moses commanded, as a testimony to them.'⁴⁵But he went out and began to proclaim it freely, and to spread the word, so that Jesus could no longer go into a town openly, but stayed out in the country; and people came to him from every quarter.

Ask the students: Remembering that the actions of Jesus also tell us something about God, what is God saying to us in the action in this story? (*Accept the students' answers. They will probably come up with something like God is a healing God, God cares for us ...*) Invite the students to record their answer in the space provided under the text.

Tell the students: Having thought about your answer to this question, record it in the space provided under the text in your workbook.

Invite the students to join with another student and work on the other scripture texts together.

Mt 15: 29–31

²⁹Jesus had left that place, he passed along the Sea of Galilee, and he went up the mountain, where he sat down. ³⁰Great crowds came to him, bringing with them the lame, the maimed, the blind, the mute, and many others. They put them at his feet, and he cured them, ³¹so that the crowd was amazed when they saw the mute speaking, the maimed whole, the lame walking, and the blind seeing. And they praised the God of Israel.

Luke 15: 1–7

³So he told them this parable: ⁴Which one of you, having a hundred sheep and losing one of them, does not leave the ninety-nine in the wilderness and go after the one that is lost until he finds it? ⁵When he has found it, he lays it on his shoulders and rejoices. ⁶And when he comes home, he calls together his friends and neighbours, saying to them, 'Rejoice with me, for I have found my sheep that was lost.'⁷Just so, I tell you, there will be more joy in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine righteous people who need no repentance.

Tell the students: One of your pair reads the text out loud. Next, talk together about what you think God is telling us in the story. When you both agree, record your answers in the space underneath the text in your workbook.

Invite some of the students to share their responses with the whole group.

Tell the students: When we listen or read the stories of Jesus we know that we find out things about God. The actions in these stories are God in action. Even when we don't see God we can see God's gifts of love, kindness, peace, compassion, thankfulness. Our task is to look at the world as well as the Bible, to find where God is in action. God also speaks to us in the created world: the beauty, the power, the magnificence, all speak about God.

Combine the pairs into groups of four.

Distribute a copy of a newspaper to each group. If you have enough, provide two per group. Provide each group with scissors and glue, and an A3 sheet with the heading 'God in Action'.

Invite the students to look through the newspapers for stories and pictures of people who are showing God in action and pictures of things in nature that show God in action.

Tell the students: When you have cut out your collection of stories and pictures, glue them onto the large sheet of paper. Underneath each picture or story write what the action in the story or picture tells us about God.

Allow the students 10 minutes to complete this task.

Tell the students: When you have completed this first task, find another picture and another story and turn to page 4 in your workbook and glue them into the space titled 'God in Action'. Write a word that describes the action of God that is obvious in the story and one word that describes the action of God in the picture.

4

(You might find that the students select stories about the internet and technology. Affirm the students' answers and encourage them to consider the full breadth of God's action in the world. Help the students to acknowledge that although we don't see God, we can see God through God's creation and in our capacity to create.)

Gather the students at the front of the class. **Invite the students** to think for a few moments about the next question.

Ask the students: Who in your life shows God in action?

Tell the students: Remember that the person you are to think about is not someone who is popular or a star. Think of someone in your family or among your friends, or people you are acquainted with.

When you have thought for a few moments, turn to the person beside you and share who the person is and why you think they show God in action.

Invite one or two students to share with the whole group one of the people they have been talking about and why that person shows God in action.

Tell the students: All these people are just ordinary people—people in your life. Yet they show just how God can be seen in the actions of their lives. They show us what God is like.

Even though we can't see God, we can know God exists, and know how wonderful God is, through the people around us who show us God in action.

PREPARATION

PREPARATION

Invite the students to return to their seats and to open their workbooks at page 5.

Tell the students: In the Clover Leaf activity, under each heading, write one example of how we see God in action.

Collect the workbooks.

End

(5 minutes)

Gather around the prayer focus.

Take the clover leaf from the focus and show the students.

Tell the students: We have looked at how we can see God in action in three ways. This clover leaf shows us that we can see God in the people around us, in the stories of Jesus and in the world we live in.

Let us now pray.

Catechist: Our response is, God, we know you and we love you.

Students: God, we know you and we love you.

Catechist: God, you are the creator of all things. Through being more attentive to the world around us we grow closer to knowing you.

Students: God, we know you and we love you.

Catechist: God, Jesus told us about you. Help us to pay attention to your word spoken in the scriptures.

Students: God, we know you and we love you.

Catechist: God, our friends and family tell us something about you through the way they live. Help us to remember that we can show you to others.

Students: God, we know you and we love you.

All: Glory be to the Father ...
Amen.

Dismiss the students as usual.

Appendix 1a – Prayer Focus

What is a Prayer Focus?

A Prayer Focus:

- helps establish a prayerful atmosphere
- stimulates the imagination
- provides a glimpse of beauty/colour
- provides an object of attention/focus
- helps visual learners
- provides a centring point
- teaches students about signs and symbols without many words
- provides a structure/framework on which to build prayer
- becomes routine with variety
- helps students to
 - become quiet, to settle
 - anticipate what is to come
 - be ready for prayer
 - wonder.

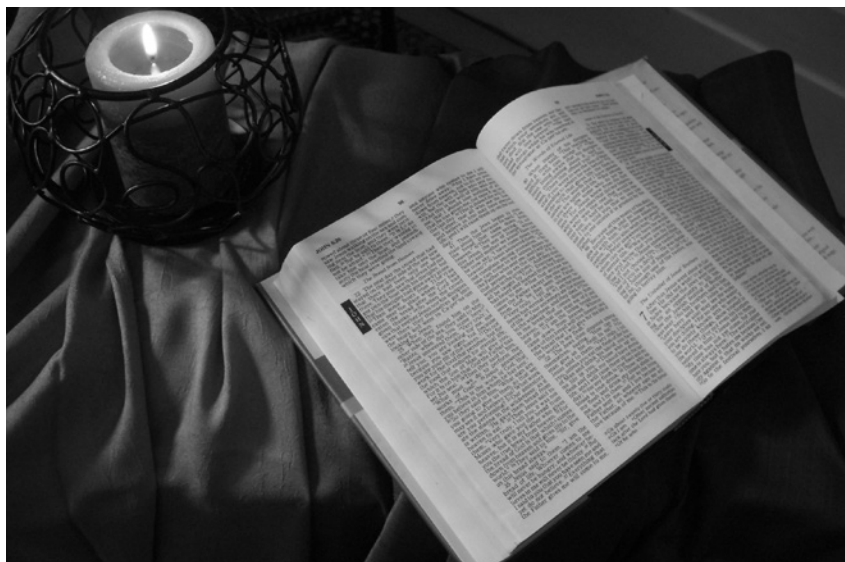
How to Set up a Prayer Focus

There are a number of ways to approach setting up a prayer focus:

- Set it up before the session (if the teaching space is available) to provide a point of attention and interest.
- 'Build' it as the opening activity of the session.
- 'Build' it as the session proceeds.
- Involve students in setting up at your direction.
- Invite students to create a prayer focus.

Where to Place a Prayer Focus

- On a table (or a raised object like an upturned crate)
- On the floor
- In a corner
- In the centre of the learning space
- In an area adjacent to the learning space, e.g. the next room or in the corridor, so that students physically move from one location to another.



PREPARATION

Bag of 'Tricks'

Collect items to build a prayer focus and store them in a bag or a box. This can help eliminate last-minute searching.

A Basic Set

- candle and candle holder, e.g. tea light in a container
- matches/safety gas lighter
- variety of coloured cloths for liturgical seasons
- Bible.

Optional Items

- Cross/crucifix
- icons, posters, photos
- rocks, pebbles, shells, twigs
- bowl
- oil/oil burner
- small vase
- prayer cards
- intention box.

Design Principles

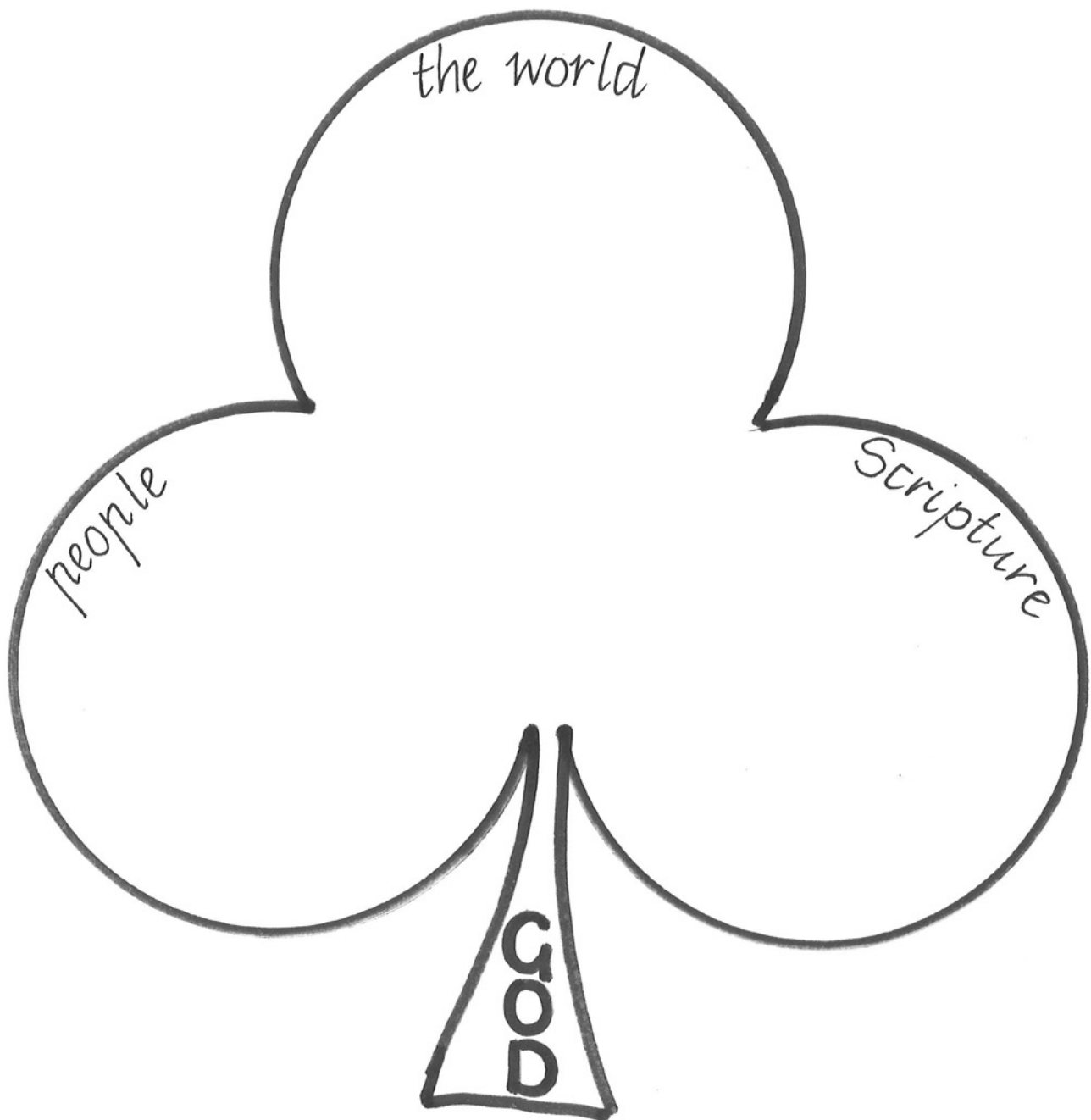
The prayer focus should be:

- simple and uncluttered
- connected to the lesson
- consistent, i.e. always have one
- varied, i.e. use a variety of items, locations, times.

Appendix 1b – Clover Leaf for the Prayer Focus

Copy, laminate and cut out this leaf. Using water-based markers, add names of people in the local community who show God in action. Also include examples for the other two leaves: Scripture and the world. Place on the prayer focus.

I come to know God through...



The Trinity

Background for the Catechist

Please take 10 minutes to reflect on the following introduction to this lesson.

Reflection/Doctrinal Reference

The divine persons are really distinct from one another. 'God is one but not solitary'. 'Father', 'Son', 'Holy Spirit' are not simply names designating modalities of the divine being, for they are really distinct from one another: 'He is not the Father who is the Son, nor is the Son he who is the Father, nor is the Holy Spirit he who is the Father or the Son'. They are distinct from one another in their relations of origin: 'It is the Father who generates, the Son who is begotten, and the Holy Spirit who proceeds'. The divine Unity is Triune.

The divine persons are relative to one another... 'In the relational names of the persons the Father is related to the Son, the Son to the Father, and the Holy Spirit to both. While they are called three persons in view of their relations, we believe in one nature or substance'. Indeed 'everything (in them) is one where there is no opposition of relationship'. 'Because of that unity the Father is wholly in the Son and wholly in the Holy Spirit; the Son is wholly in the Father and wholly in the Holy Spirit; the Holy Spirit is wholly in the Father and wholly in the Son' (CCC, n. 254–255).

Human reason and human speech are stretched to the limit in trying to express our faith in the mystery of the God who is one, yet three. The great religious insight of the Jewish people which is inherited by the Christian tradition is that God is One, Holy, Mighty and Merciful, seeking to deliver, not to destroy. The great religious insight of Christianity is that God chose to enter the human story in Jesus Christ, God's pre-existent Word. In Jesus, we see the fullest and most complete revelation of God. The Holy Spirit is the bond of love between Father and Son. The Holy Spirit continues to reveal the God who is love to human beings and through the Holy Spirit human beings are drawn into God's self-giving love.

The doctrine of the Trinity was not thought up to confuse people but to express the experience of the Christian community, who recognised in Jesus, in his words and deeds, and especially in his death and resurrection, the very action and presence of the God he addressed as Father. After Jesus' earthly life was over, the Church continued to experience his Holy Spirit alive and active among them. Father, Son and Spirit, unity in trinity, express the truth about the nature of God.

Student Focus

Students of this age are familiar with the differences between relationships. The students before you will know the difference between family relationships and friendships. Helping the students tap into this personal understanding and experience will assist them in recognising the love of God and the love relationship between Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

Teaching Point

God is the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit.

Remembering Point

We call God the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, the Trinity.

PREPARATION

1. Prayer focus: a colourful, multi-coloured cloth, a Bible, three candles all the same size but different colours.
2. A laminated copy of the sculpture of the Trinity, (See Appendix 2 page 12).
3. Workbooks.

Beginning

(2 minutes)

Welcome the students as usual.

Gather the students around the prayer focus and invite the students to pray.

Choose three students to light a candle on the naming of each member of the Trinity as you make the Sign of the Cross.

All: (slowly) In the name of the Father ...

Catechist: We acknowledge that God is with us by naming the three persons of the Trinity. So let us pray the prayer to the Trinity, the *Glory Be*.

All: Glory be to the Father ...

Invite the students to return to their seats.

Middle

(30 minutes)

Hand out the workbooks.

Direct the students to page 6 and the scripture text on that page.

Invite one of the students who reads well to read Mt 3: 16–17.

¹⁶And when Jesus had been baptised, just as he came up from the water, suddenly the heavens were opened to him and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and alighting on him. ¹⁷And a voice from heaven said, 'This is my Son, the Beloved, with whom I am well pleased.'

Ask the students:

- Who are the characters in this story? (*The Spirit of God who looked like a dove, the Beloved Son, Jesus, and a voice from heaven.*)
- What are they doing? (*The Spirit of God is hovering over Jesus; Jesus is standing in the water of the Jordan river, and the voice is speaking from above.*)
- Who might the 'voice' be? (*The answers might be varied. Tell the students that traditionally the Church has looked on this as a sign of God the Father, the first person of the Holy Trinity.*)

Tell the students: What we have in this story is a description of God, as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. This is a scriptural example of the Holy Trinity, three persons in the one God. If we look at the Gospel of Mark and the account of Jesus' baptism, we will see a similar description. Let's have a look.

Invite the students to follow as you read the text: Mk 1: 9–11.

⁹In those days Jesus came from Nazareth of Galilee and was baptised by John in the Jordan. ¹⁰And just as he was coming up out of the water, he saw the heavens torn apart and the Spirit descending like a dove on him. ¹¹And a voice came from heaven, 'You are my Son, the Beloved; with you I am well pleased.'

Tell the students: Use a coloured pencil to underline the reference to God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit. As you can see, the words are almost identical to the Matthean account.

These accounts help us understand something important about God.

Tell the students: I'm going to ask you a question that requires some thought and reflection. You will need to sit quietly, and reflect on the question. Let your thoughts about the answer come to you, then think carefully about what these answers mean for you. After a few minutes, write your answer in 'The relationship in the Holy Trinity' space provided in your workbook on page 6.

Ask the students: What do these scripture texts tell us about the relationship between these three descriptions of God?

When they have finished writing, **tell the students:** People throughout history have written prayers that help us understand and pray to the Holy Trinity. We will look at these at the end of the lesson. Another way of understanding the Holy Trinity is to think of them as three distinct persons in one God. It is difficult to understand. It is a mystery. Many people have tried to explain it. The scripture texts we have looked at give us a sense of this, and this sculptor has tried to represent this image in stone.

10

Invite the students to look at the image of the sculpture of the Trinity on page 7 of the workbook. Hand the laminated copy around if this helps.

Ask the students:

- What do you see? *(Allow the students to explore the sculpture/ picture. Some will see things that others don't. Invite students to describe in as much detail as possible what they see.)*
- What feelings does this evoke for you? *(Accept all the feelings the students express. All are valid.)*

Now ask the students: What human attributes might you use to describe each of the members of the Trinity in the sculpture?

Invite the students to talk about their answer to this question with the person beside them. Then **invite the students** to record their answers in their workbooks on page 8 in the space titled 'Human Attributes of the Trinity'.

Invite two or three students to share some of their answers. Affirm the students in their answers. There are no right or wrong answers.

PREPARATION

PREPARATION

End*(10 minutes)*

Gather the students around the prayer focus with their workbooks open at page 8.

Catechist: Let us pray to God, who is Father, Son and Holy Spirit. God, our Father, we praise you in all creation.

Students: Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit.

Catechist: Jesus, Son of God, thank you for coming to live among us.

Students: Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit.

Catechist: Holy Spirit of God, be alive in our lives.

Students: Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit.

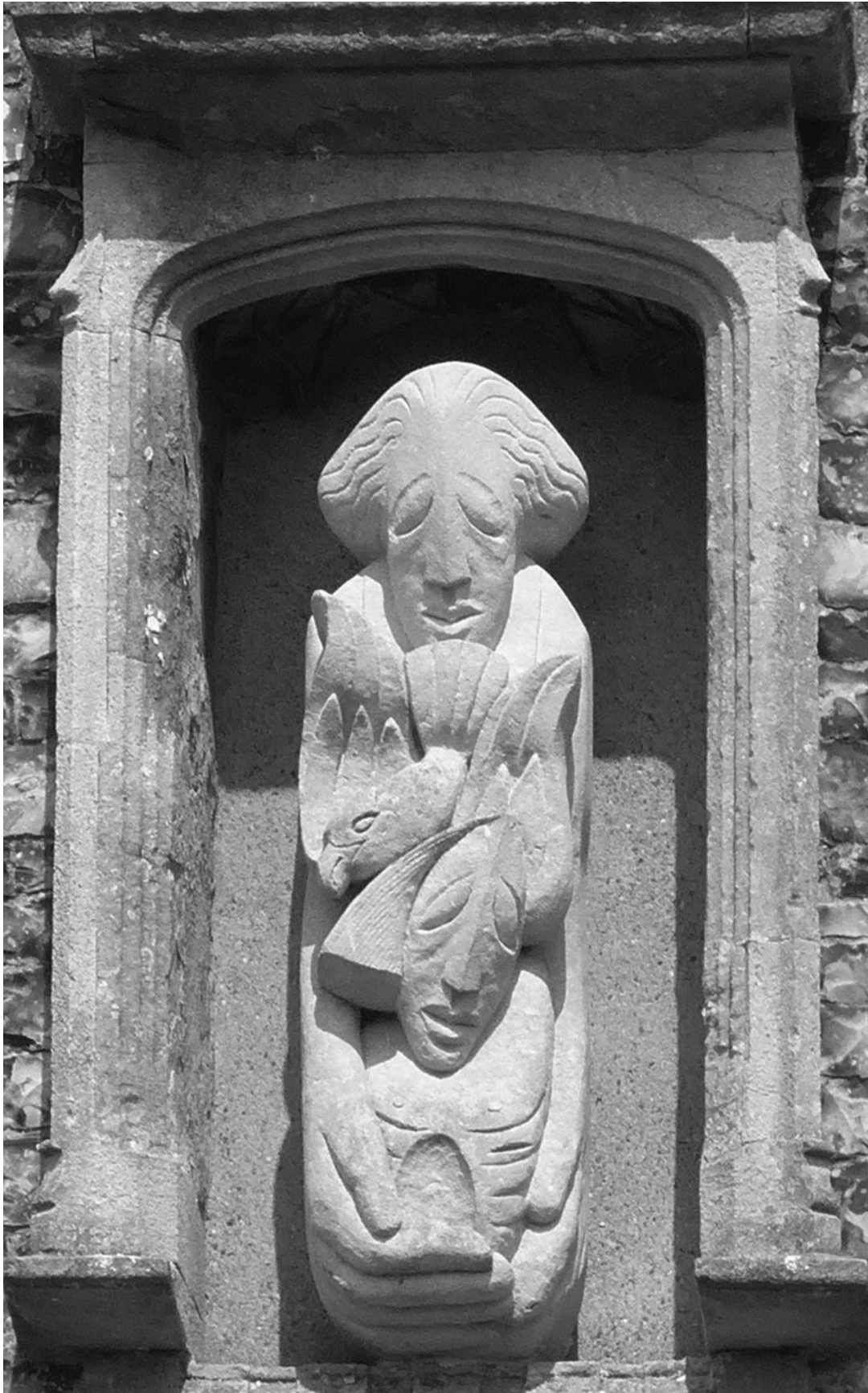
Catechist: Let us finish with the Sign of the Cross.

All: In the name of the Father ...

Collect the workbooks and dismiss the students as usual.

Appendix 2 – A Sculpture of the Trinity

Cut out and laminate the picture of the sculpture of the Trinity.



Penance

Background for the Catechist

Please take 10 minutes to reflect on the following introduction to this lesson.

Reflection/Doctrinal Reference

It is through the sacrament of Penance that the baptised can be reconciled with God and with the Church ... (CCC, n. 980).

'The whole power of the sacrament of Penance consists in restoring us to God's grace and joining us with him in an intimate friendship' (Roman Catechism II, V, 18). Reconciliation with God is thus the purpose and effect of this sacrament. For those who receive the sacrament of Penance with contrite heart and religious disposition, reconciliation 'is usually followed by peace and serenity of conscience with strong spiritual consolation' (Council of Trent (1551): DS 1674). Indeed the sacrament of Reconciliation with God brings about a true 'spiritual resurrection', restoration of the dignity and blessings of the life of the children of God, of which the most precious is friendship with God. (CCC, n. 1468).

The most fundamental reconciliation celebrated in the sacrament of Penance is that with God. In this sacrament, the sinful person recognises and admits sin and failure and relies on the mercy and goodness of God for restoration of relationship. As Pope John Paul II comments in the quotation above from 'Reconciliation and Penance' (RP), this reconciliation reaches further. The person who has sinned, genuinely repented and been forgiven is restored inwardly. Life can go on. There is freedom to move on, to be happy, to resume relationships with others that might have been strained by both the sinful offence or the guilt attached to it, freedom to make up for what has been done, freedom to fix things up, freedom to live at peace with the world and all in it, regardless of whether others have known of the sin or not. Life becomes once again truly worth living, the motivation to love is restored and so relationships with family, friends and community are re-established and can flourish.

Student Focus

Students in Year 6 would most likely have celebrated their first Reconciliation. These students may not have been back to the sacrament very often, however. Students of this age know the difference between right and wrong. They generally can tell you what is sinful and what isn't. They also know the importance of making up or restitution for poor or bad choices they have made. Students will need to be helped to understand that the sacrament of Penance is more than just 'telling my sins to Father', but rather an opportunity to be reconciled with God, with the Church and most especially with one another.

Teaching Point

Penance helps us to be reconciled with God and with one another.

Remembering Point

We are reconciled with God and with others in the sacrament of Penance.

Beginning

(10 minutes)

Welcome the students as usual.

Gather the students around the prayer focus and **invite the students** to prepare for prayer.

Catechist: Let's think about our day. How did we show our love of God? (Pause) How did we disrupt harmony? (Pause)
Repeat after me: Lord, have mercy.

Students: Lord, have mercy.

Catechist: Christ, have mercy.

Students: Christ, have mercy.

Catechist: Lord, have mercy.

Students: Lord, have mercy.

All: In the name of the Father ...

Invite the students to go to their tables.

Ask the students: Think about your first Reconciliation – what was it like, how did you feel and what do you remember?

Tell the students: In pairs, tell each other about your first Reconciliation.

Ask three or four students to tell the whole class something that they heard.

Tell the students: In the sacrament of Penance (Reconciliation) the priest, in God's name, forgives us our sins and helps us to be in harmony with God and others. Today we're going to explore the notion of reconciliation and how we can seek reconciliation with God and others.

Middle

(30 minutes)

Invite the students to take a few moments to think about the following questions:

- When might we need to be reconciled to God and to others?
- How might we sin?

Divide the class into two or four groups (no more than four in a group). Hand out one scenario card to each group. **Invite each group** to appoint a timekeeper and a recorder.

Tell the students: Read your scenario and brainstorm your answers to the question. Discuss the possibilities carefully, as you will be sharing your answers with another person with a different scenario later.

PREPARATION

1. Prayer Focus: a purple cloth, a candle, a crucifix.
2. Scenario Cards, (See Appendix 3 on page 17) – copy enough for one per group.
3. Workbooks.
4. An A4 sheet of paper for each group.

PREPARATION

Allow the students six minutes to work through the scenario card.

Direct the students to find a partner who worked with the other scenario. Invite them to tell each other about the situation they considered and how harmony or sin was evident.

Gather the students together and **invite three or four students** to tell the class how they thought one person was sinning and why that person might need to be reconciled to God and others.

Distribute the workbooks and invite the students to open their books at page 9 to the Definitions Activity.

Invite the students to find a partner with whom to work.

Tell the students: Choose one of the definitions and discuss with your partner what you think it means. Share examples from your own experience or observation. In your own workbook, write an example from your discussions in the space below the definition you chose.

Invite a few students to share their examples of reconciliation.

Tell the students: Reconciliation is an everyday activity in our world. Some situations requiring reconciliation are relatively trivial, such as agreeing to disagree about which is the best sports game. Other situations requiring reconciliation are quite significant or important, such as agreeing to disagree to subsidise free or affordable access for all to medical services. Society only works if each member works to be in harmony with the other. People have to reconcile their differences for the common good.

The Church teaches us that when we sin and fall out of harmony with others God calls us to seek reconciliation with them and with God through the sacrament of Penance that we call Reconciliation.

Invite the students to take up a comfortable position and close their eyes. Then **invite the students** to ask themselves the following questions:

- When have I excluded someone?
- When have I been unkind and hurtful in making fun of others?
- When might I have put myself first and hurt someone?
- What have I done that breaks the harmony of my family? my class? my group of friends?
- What can I do to restore harmony?

Tell the students that the sacrament of Reconciliation or Penance provides us with the opportunity to admit failure and look for ways of healing or reconciliation. Penance helps us to be reconciled with one another.

End

(5 minutes)

Gather the students around the prayer focus with their workbooks open at page 10.

Invite the students to get ready for prayer by being still and quiet.

Catechist: Let us begin with the Sign of the Cross.

All: In the name ...

Catechist: Sometimes we make poor choices that result in others being hurt or distressed. Let's consider an action for which we are sorry. (Pause for a few moments)

Catechist: Let us pray together:

All: Loving Father, sometimes I fail to live as Jesus showed us.
I want to say sorry to you and to those I've hurt.
I am glad that you want to forgive me and to help me keep on growing as your friend. Amen.

Collect the workbooks and dismiss the students as usual.

PREPARATION

Appendix 3 – Scenarios

Scenario 1

Appoint a timekeeper and a recorder.

1. Read the scenario:

Jackson has just enrolled in your class. He has a hearing disability and speaks in a strange way. Jackson is very good at reading and research and works hard at maths. He has some difficulty in communicating verbally because of his disability. He sits next to Aiden, who teases and makes fun of him. Liam won't let Jackson join the football team. Mason thinks Jackson should be allowed to join the team but goes along with Liam.

2. Brainstorm your responses to the question: Who is sinning or breaking harmony?
3. Consider your responses to the question, giving reasons for why you think the person is sinning or breaking harmony.

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Scenario 2

Appoint a timekeeper and a recorder.

1. Read the scenario:

Emma is the most popular girl in the class. She is best friends with Sophie and Mia. She likes working with Sophie because she is good at following directions. Emma likes playing netball with Mia because she always passes the ball to her. Olivia asks Emma if she can join their group. Emma says no because the group is already big enough. Sophie tells Emma that Olivia's not good enough to be in the group. Mia says that no-one wants to be friends with Olivia.

2. Brainstorm your responses to the question: Who is sinning or breaking harmony?
3. Consider your responses to the question, giving reasons for why you think the person is sinning or breaking harmony.

Jesus

Background for the Catechist

Please take 10 minutes to reflect on the following introduction to this lesson.

Reflection/Doctrinal Reference

The Paschal mystery has two aspects: by his death, Christ liberates us from sin; by his Resurrection, he opens for us the way to a new life. This new life is above all justification that reinstates us in God's grace, 'so that as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in newness of life' (CCC, n. 654).

Since Jesus shares the divine life of the Father and the Spirit then anything we learn about his life and person will educate us about the nature of the Triune God. Jesus taught by word and example, calling people to discipleship, mission and friendship. We might like the friendship and mission component of this call but the discipleship element demands that we take up our cross! This is a more difficult task. By reading and discussing the Sunday Gospel we can grow in knowledge of God's love for us as shown in the stories of Jesus. It is in the study of Christ's death and resurrection that we learn the amazing account of his faithfulness to and acceptance of the will of the Father. These accounts trace Jesus' dependence on God. In any passage you read concerning Jesus you can hear the voice of God in the background.

Student focus

Generally the majority of students in this class will have had a number of lessons about Jesus. They will have explored the many stories, and each year will have looked at the passion, death and resurrection of Jesus from different angles. Many students will not attend Sunday Mass on a regular basis, but they have shared in many lessons about the Eucharistic celebration, the word and what it means to follow Jesus.

Teaching Point

Coming to understand the life of Jesus helps to deepen our relationship with God.

Remembering Point

I can grow closer to God by understanding more about the life of Jesus.

PREPARATION

1. Prayer focus: a cloth, a candle, a statue or icon of Jesus.
2. Join together two sheets of A3 paper or use two 40 cm lengths of grease proof paper joined together.
3. Strips of paper for students to write their discovery about Jesus.
4. Flashcards for each place name (see Appendix 4a, page 23).
5. Glue Sticks or sticky tape.
6. Task Card for each group (see Appendix 4c, page 25).
7. Create a long strip of paper approximately 5cm wide by 120cm long.
8. Workbooks.

Beginning

(15 minutes)

Welcome the students as usual and **gather the students** around the prayer focus.

Invite the students to look at the icon of Jesus, inviting them to pray.

All: In the name of the Father ...

Catechist: Let us pray the Our Father as we reflect on the icon.

All: Our Father ...

Tell the students: Today we will be exploring Jesus' life so that we might come closer to God.

Invite the students to open their workbooks at page 11, to a map of Palestine at the time of Jesus.

Ask the students: What places do you recognise on the map, and what happened there? *(Take the answers from the students without correcting any mistakes.)*

Tell the students: Now we will look at Jesus' life and see if these places are important in his life and if your answers are correct.

Place the large sheet of paper on a table and gather the students around so that they can all see clearly.

Tell the students: Now we are going to draw our own 'story of Jesus' map. I will need your help to record what we know about the life of Jesus, where he went, and what he did in each of these places. You can use your workbook map to help locate the places and follow where Jesus lived and worked.

Start by drawing the Jordan River. Draw a line from the north down to the south. Add the Dead Sea at the lower, southern end and the Sea of Galilee at the upper, northern end. Label the line with 'The Jordan River' and the event: 'Jesus' baptism'.

Invite the students to tell you where Jesus was born, baptised, lived, started his ministry, and died and rose again. You might invite the students to add the location on the map.

When the students add a location ask: What did Jesus do at
(name of place)?

You or the students record the action or event close to the place name. *(You will end up with place names like Bethlehem, and a list of events such as Jesus' birthplace, visit by shepherds and wise men. The more actions the better the story map of Jesus' life. Encourage the students to think about all they know of the life of Jesus.)*

As the students mark each place on the story map, talk about the story and event that they identify with the place.

You should end up with a story map, an example of which you can see in Appendix 4b on page 24.

Middle

(30 minutes)

Tell the students: Now we are going to read some passages from Scripture about the life of Jesus. Through knowing more about Jesus and his life we can be helped to deepen our friendship with God.

Invite the students to turn to page 12 in their workbook and to the Scripture titled: 'The Life of Jesus'.

Organise the students into three groups and allocate a different scripture passage to each group. Hand out strips of paper for each group to record their answers. For Group One provide the long strip of paper (5cm x 120cm) as detailed in the preparation column.

Lk 2: 1–20 – Jesus' Birth

¹In those days a decree went out from Emperor Augustus that all the world should be registered. ²This was the first registration and was taken while Quirinius was governor of Syria. ³All went to their own towns to be registered. ⁴Joseph also went from the town of Nazareth in Galilee to Judea, to the city of David called Bethlehem, because he was descended from the house and family of David. ⁵He went to be registered with Mary, to whom he was engaged and who was expecting a child. ⁶While they were there, the time came for her to deliver her child. ⁷And she gave birth to her firstborn son and wrapped him in bands of cloth, and laid him in a manger, because there was no place for them in the inn.

⁸In that region there were shepherds living in the fields, keeping watch over their flock by night. ⁹Then an angel of the Lord stood before them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. ¹⁰But the angel said to them, 'Do not be afraid; for see – I am bringing you good news of great joy for all the people: ¹¹to you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, who is the Messiah, the Lord. ¹²This will be a sign for you: you will find a child wrapped in bands of cloth and lying in a manger.' ¹³And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host, praising God and saying,

¹⁴'Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth peace among those whom he favours!'

¹⁵When the angels had left them and gone into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, 'Let us go now to Bethlehem and see this thing that has taken place, which the Lord has made known to us.' ¹⁶So they went with haste and found Mary and Joseph, and the child lying in the manger. ¹⁷When they saw this, they made known what had been told them about this child; ¹⁸and all who heard it were amazed at what the shepherds told them. ¹⁹But Mary treasured all these words and pondered them in her heart. ²⁰The shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all they had heard and seen, as it had been told them.

PREPARATION

PREPARATION

Mt 6: 5–15 – Jesus Teaches His Disciples to Pray

⁵And whenever you pray, do not be like the hypocrites; for they love to stand and pray in the synagogues and at the street corners, so that they may be seen by others. Truly I tell you, they have received their reward. ⁶But whenever you pray, go into your room and shut the door and pray to your Father who is in secret; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you.

⁷When you are praying, do not heap up empty phrases as the Gentiles do; for they think that they will be heard because of their many words. ⁸Do not be like them, for your Father knows what you need before you ask him.

⁹Pray then in this way:

Our Father in heaven,
hallowed be your name.

¹⁰Your kingdom come.

¹¹Your will be done,
on earth as it is in heaven.

¹²Give us this day our daily bread.

And forgive us our debts,
as we also have forgiven our debtors.

¹³And do not bring us to the time of trial,
but rescue us from the evil one.

¹⁴For if you forgive others their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you; ¹⁵but if you do not forgive others, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.

Lk 7: 36–49 – Jesus Forgives

³⁶One of the Pharisees asked Jesus to eat with him, and he went into the Pharisee's house and took his place at the table. ³⁷And a woman in the city, who was a sinner, having learned that he was eating in the Pharisee's house, brought an alabaster jar of ointment. ³⁸She stood behind him at his feet, weeping, and began to bathe his feet with her tears and to dry them with her hair. Then she continued kissing his feet and anointing them with the ointment. ³⁹Now when the Pharisee who had invited him saw it, he said to himself, 'If this man were a prophet, he would have known who and what kind of woman this is who is touching him—that she is a sinner.' ⁴⁰Jesus spoke up and said to him, 'Simon, I have something to say to you.' 'Teacher,' he replied, 'speak.' ⁴¹'A certain creditor had two debtors; one owed five hundred denarii, and the other fifty. ⁴²When they could not pay, he cancelled the debts for both of them. Now which of them will love him more?' ⁴³Simon answered, 'I suppose the one for whom he cancelled the greater debt.' And Jesus said to him, 'You have judged rightly.' ⁴⁴Then turning towards the woman, he said to Simon, 'Do you see this woman? I entered your house; you gave me no water for my feet, but she has bathed my feet with her tears and dried them with her hair. ⁴⁵You gave me no kiss, but from the time I came in she has not stopped kissing my feet. ⁴⁶You did not anoint my head with oil, but she has anointed my feet with ointment. ⁴⁷Therefore, I tell you, her sins, which were many, have been forgiven; hence she has shown great love. But the one to whom little is forgiven, loves little.' ⁴⁸Then he said to her, 'Your sins are forgiven.' ⁴⁹But those who were at the table with him began to say among themselves, 'Who is this who even forgives sins?'

Tell the students: In your group allocate one person to read, one person to keep time, and one person to keep everyone on track, to be the tracker. The reader is to read the passage out loud, with the rest of you following in your workbooks. The timekeeper is to ensure that, as you get closer to the time allocation for each section, you alert the others, and the tracker then ensures that all the questions and parts of the task have been completed.

You will have 15 minutes to complete the first task, as outlined on your Task Card.

When the students have listened to the reading, **ask each group in turn:** Is there anything in the story that you need further clarification about or explaining?

Take questions from each group about the scripture text only, explaining words or locating places on the map from the earlier activity.

When the students have completed the Task Cards, **invite a student** from each group to share their answers.

Tell the students: Now each of you is to complete the second task on page 15, titled 'My Response'. Remember to write the text reference at the top of the ticket where it says 'Text'. Record your response in your workbook. You will have five minutes for this task.

Invite the students to join with the person next to them and take turns to share their response.

When the sharing is finished, **invite the students** to respond to the following question in their workbooks. Recording their answer in the space titled 'Growing Closer to God'.

Ask the students: What in the story of Jesus' life has helped me know God a little better?

End

(10 minutes)

Invite the students to turn to page 16 in their workbook, titled 'Thank you God for Sending Jesus'.

Tell the students: In the space on this page, write some form of 'thank you' to God. You might like to write a poem, or a prayer of thanks. You might wish to write a letter thanking God for sending Jesus and explaining what it means to you and to the world. *(Allow about seven minutes.)*

Gather the students around the prayer focus when they have completed the task.

Invite the students to pray by sharing what they have written, if they wish.

All: In the name of the Father ...

Invite any student to start sharing their 'thank you' to God.

Catechist: Let us now pray our prayer to the Holy Trinity

All: Glory be to the Father ...

Collect the workbooks and dismiss the students as usual.

PREPARATION

Appendix 4a – Flashcards for Mapping Activity

Copy these flashcards onto coloured paper, cut them out, and stick them on to the map as you and the students identify the locations.

BETHLEHEM

JERUSALEM

GALILEE

SEA OF GALILEE

NAZARETH

SAMARIA

JORDAN RIVER

CANA

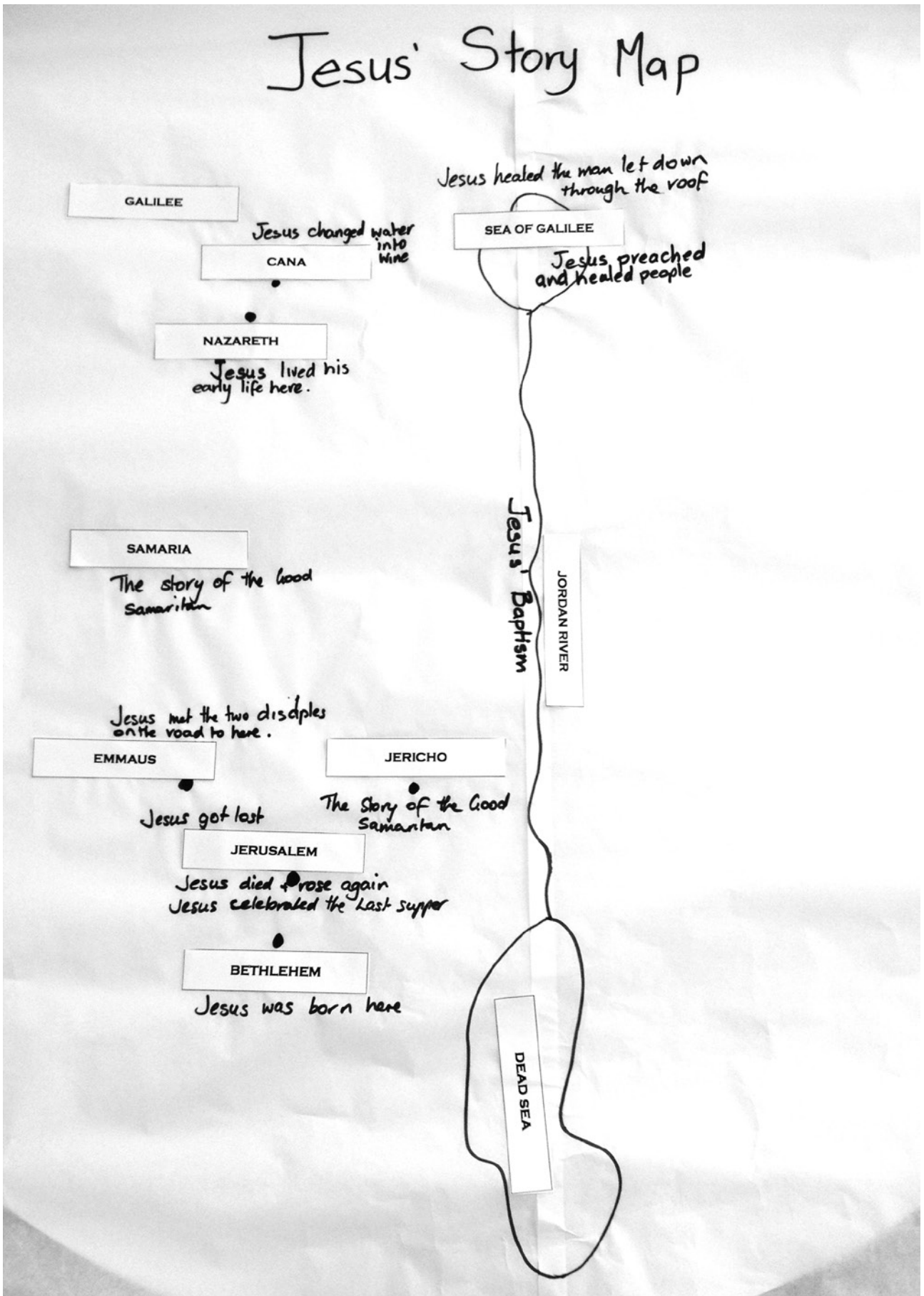
DEAD SEA

EMMAUS

JERICHO

JUDEA

Appendix 4b – Story Map example



Appendix 4c – Task Cards

Copy and laminate these cards and distribute one card to each group.

GROUP ONE

Luke 2: 1–20 Jesus' Birth

1. Listen to the reading of the passage. While you are listening, underline any words or phrases that you would like clarified or explained.
2. After you have had the words or phrases explained, answer the questions in your workbook on page 12.
3. When you have answered the questions, share your ideas with the person beside you.
4. Then join with the other members of your group. Decide on the best four answers (ensure that you have at least one answer for each question), and create a 'news banner' by using the strip of paper available.
5. When you are invited, share the top four Good News items with the whole group.

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GROUP TWO

Matthew 6: 5–15 Jesus teaches his disciples to pray

1. Listen to the reading of the passage. While you are listening, underline any words or phrases that you would like clarified or explained. The context for this part of the gospel is that Jesus was preaching on the mountain to a large group. Traditionally, we call this the Sermon on the Mount. It is the time when Jesus offers us guidance about how we should live in order to be a good follower of God.
2. After you have had the words or phrases explained, answer the questions in your workbook on page 13 by discussing the possible answers with members of your group.
3. Decide on the best answer for each of the question and record on the strip of paper provided.
4. When you are invited, share your reflections on Jesus, with the whole group.

GROUP THREE

Lk 7: 36–49 Jesus Forgives

1. Listen to the reading of the passage. While you are listening underline any words or phrases that you would like clarified or explained.
2. After you have had the words or phrases explained, answer the questions in your workbook on page 14 .
3. Decide on the best answer for each of the questions.
4. Record your best answer on the strip of paper provided.
5. When you are invited, share your reflections on Jesus, with the whole group.

Palm Sunday

Background for the Catechist

Please take 10 minutes to reflect on the following introduction to this lesson.

Reflection/Doctrinal Reference

Jesus' entry into Jerusalem manifested the coming of the kingdom that the King-Messiah was going to accomplish by the Passover of his Death and Resurrection. It is with the celebration of that entry on Palm Sunday that the Church's liturgy solemnly opens Holy Week.

'The whole of Christ's life was a continual teaching: his silences, his miracles, his gestures, his prayer, his love for people, his special affection for the little and the poor, his acceptance of the total sacrifice on the Cross for the redemption of the world, and his Resurrection are the actualisation of his word and the fulfillment of Revelation' (John Paul II, CT 9) (CCC, n. 560–561).

Holy Week is the most solemn and important week of the Christian year. St Athanasius called it 'the Great Week'. It opens with Palm/Passion Sunday, which recalls both Jesus' triumphal entry into Jerusalem on the first day of the week and also his passion and death at the end of that week. People carry palms in procession on that day not simply to re-enact past events but as a way of participating in Jesus' journey to the city, to the cross and to resurrection. We celebrate these moments so that we can realise that we ourselves are a part of them. During Holy Week, the prayer and penance undertaken during Lent are intensified and the gospels of each day invite people to relive with Jesus his last days on earth. During this week, many people try to attend Mass each day and many others pray a walking meditation called The Stations of the Cross. This is based on a practice in Jerusalem where people walked from place to place in the city recalling Jesus' journey carrying his cross through the city. Now, most churches have plaques or pictures recalling incidents along the way of the cross on the walls or in their gardens. People move from 'station' to 'station' as they contemplate Jesus' last hours.

Student Focus

Students of this age might be familiar with the nature of Holy Week and particularly Palm Sunday. They may have received a palm from previous years' liturgies. The story of Jesus' entry into Jerusalem is popular and frequently recalled so one could presume that the students would be building on previous experience.

Teaching Point

Palm Sunday is the beginning of Holy Week.

Remembering Point

Palm Sunday is the beginning of Holy Week.

Beginning

(10 minutes)

Welcome the students as usual.

Gather the students around the prayer focus.

Have one student distribute the palm branches and another student distribute the workbooks. Invite the students to open at page 17.

Catechist: Let us make the Sign of the Cross, recognising that as we make this sign we are calling upon the Holy Trinity, Father, Son, and Spirit to be with us.

All: In the name of the Father ...

Catechist: You each have a palm or branch in your hands. Today we are going to look at the story in Scripture that uses palms in a special way. This week we celebrate Jesus' entry into Jerusalem when people laid their cloaks and palms on the ground and sang Hosanna.

Let us spend a few moments thinking about the implications of this kind of welcome and then listen to the story.

Reader: A reading from Mark's Gospel.

¹When they were approaching Jerusalem, at Bethphage and Bethany, near the Mount of Olives, he sent two of his disciples ²and said to them 'Go into the village ahead of you, and immediately as you enter it, you will find tied there a colt that has never been ridden; untie it and bring it. ³If anyone says to you, "Why are you doing this?" just say this, "The Lord needs it and will send it back here immediately."' ⁴They went away and found a colt tied near a door, outside in the street. As they were untying it, ⁵some of the bystanders said to them, 'What are you doing, untying the colt?' ⁶They told them what Jesus had said; and they allowed them to take it. ⁷Then they brought the colt to Jesus and threw their cloaks on it; and he sat on it. ⁸Many people spread their cloaks on the road, and others spread leafy branches that they had cut in the fields. ⁹Then those who went ahead and those who followed were shouting, 'Hosanna! Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord! ¹⁰Blessed is the coming kingdom of our ancestor David! Hosanna in the highest heaven!' ¹¹Then he entered Jerusalem and went into the temple; and when he had looked around at everything, as it was already late, he went out to Bethany with the twelve (Mk 11: 1–11).

Catechist: Our response is 'Hosanna in the highest heaven'.

All: Hosanna in the highest heaven.

Catechist: Lord, may we rejoice in expectation of your coming.

All: Hosanna in the highest heaven.

PREPARATION

1. Prayer focus: a brightly coloured cloth, the Bible, a palm cross and a basket or bowl holding the palm branches.
2. A palm or branch for each student.

PREPARATION

Catechist: Lord, may we be ready to recall your suffering on Good Friday and rejoice in your resurrection on Easter Sunday

All: Hosanna in the highest heaven.

Catechist: Lord, help us to rejoice, singing Hosanna in the highest heaven

All: Hosanna in the highest heaven.
Glory be to the Father ...

Tell the students: This story is the gospel reading for the Sunday before Holy Week. Palm Sunday, which is the name we give this Sunday, is the beginning of the last week of Jesus' life. Holy Week is one of the most important weeks in the Church's year.

Ask the students: Why do you think we call it Palm Sunday?

Tell the students: Yes, we are recalling how people in the story put palms on the ground for Jesus to ride across. It's a special recognition of someone special. These people recognised something special in Jesus.

Let's look a little closer at this story about Jesus.

Middle

(30 minutes)

Invite the students to turn to page 18 in their workbook and to the activity titled 'Jesus' entry into Jerusalem'.

Tell the students: I would like you to read the scripture passage again for yourself, and write a newspaper report about the event. Write as if you were a bystander, watching what was happening. Pose some questions or wonderings that this event raises for you. If you finish the task early write a Side Story and/or an Advertisement and put in the spaces provided.

After 10 minutes, **invite a selection** of students to share their newspaper article.

Invite all the students to offer suggested answers or possibilities for the questions and wonderings considered by the journalist.

Tell the students: There are some cultural elements that are important to this story of Jesus and would help us appreciate the story more. Since Jesus' intention was to bring peace to the world, he chose a highly symbolic entry into Jerusalem. When Jesus rode the colt (or donkey) into Jerusalem he was proclaiming that he was coming in peace. This contrasts with the arrival of soldiers who ride in on horses to assert their authority.

At this time in Israel, when a person of significance was arriving in a village or town, the local people would go out to meet him or her. The people would form a guard of honour in welcome. The further out they went the more honour they were giving to the person. With Jesus, they began their guard of honour near Bethphage a village outside Jerusalem.

We read that 'many people spread their cloaks on the road'. For people in Palestine in the first century it was customary for subjects of a king to spread their clothes on the road and wave branches in recognition of his sovereignty (White & O'Brien 2010, p 116).

Ask the students: After re-reading the text, what do you think the author of this gospel wants us to know, what message is he trying to give us? (Take all the answers and encourage deepening understanding.)

Tell the students: In your workbook on page 19, in the space titled 'The Message in the Text', write what you think this story of Jesus is telling you.

Invite the students to bring their workbooks with them as they gather around the prayer focus.

End

(5 minutes)

Tell the students: This triumphant entry of Jesus into Jerusalem marks the beginning of the most important week in the Catholic calendar. Holy Week has all the significant days, Holy Thursday, Good Friday, and Easter Day. Jesus' entry into Jerusalem helps us remember that the coming days are important and we can remember Jesus as the King of Peace, and recall his death and resurrection. Now turn to page 19 in your workbooks for the prayer.

Catechist: So let us pray.

All: In the name of the Father ...

Catechist: Lord Jesus, you rode into Jerusalem as a King but your kingdom is not of this world.

Students: Hosanna, Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.

Catechist: Lord Jesus, the people were eager to follow you, help us always follow in your way.

Students: Hosanna, Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.

Catechist: Lord Jesus, some of the people doubted you, help us to always have faith in you.

Students: Hosanna, Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.

Catechist: Lord Jesus, you faced your death with courage. Give us the courage to face our fears as you did.

Students: Hosanna, Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.

All: Glory be to the Father ...

Collect the workbooks. Dismiss the students as usual.

PREPARATION

The Triduum

Background for the Catechist

Please take 10 minutes to reflect on the following introduction to this lesson.

Reflection/Doctrinal Reference

In the liturgy of the Church, it is principally his own Paschal mystery that Christ signifies and makes present. During his earthly life Jesus announced his Paschal mystery by his teaching and anticipated it by his actions. When his Hour comes, he lives out the unique event of history which does not pass away: Jesus dies, is buried, rises from the dead, and is seated at the right hand of the Father 'once for all'. His Paschal mystery is a real event that occurred in our history, but it is unique: all other historical events happen once, and then they pass away, swallowed up in the past. The Paschal mystery of Christ, by contrast, cannot remain only in the past, because by his death he destroyed death, and all that Christ is – all that he did and suffered for all men – participates in the divine eternity, and so transcends all times while being made present in them all. The event of the Cross and Resurrection abides and draws everything toward life (CCC, n. 1085).

The three days from the evening celebration of the Mass of Holy Thursday through to evening Prayer on Easter Sunday are known as the Triduum, which is Latin for Three Days. The celebrations of the Triduum take place over the three days but they essentially celebrate the one mystery, which is the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. It is through the Paschal mystery of God's love that we know ourselves to be rescued from sin and death. Jesus breaks the cycle of vengeance and blame. He empties himself utterly and is raised up by God and given that name which is beyond all other names. The Paschal mystery means that it is possible to resist sin; evil will not ultimately triumph and death is not the end. This is the good news we celebrate at the Triduum. Each of the days illumines the others. We do not celebrate the events of Holy Thursday without reflecting on their relationship to what will happen on Good Friday. We do not celebrate Good Friday as though we forget what happened on Easter morning. The Liturgy itself expresses this through its rituals. The entrance rites of Holy Thursday invite us to 'glory in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ'. There is no formal dismissal at the end of Mass. Good Friday's ceremonies begin without introduction and conclude with a simple prayer. The Easter Vigil begins around the fire outside and it is not until the final blessing that the liturgical action begun on Holy Thursday is properly concluded.

Student Focus

Year 6 students will have heard the story of Easter a number of times. Familiarity can sometimes cause a lack of interest and requires the catechist to present the message of Easter in a way that is relevant to the students.

Teaching Point

The Triduum is the most important time of the Church's year.

Remembering Point

The Triduum is Holy Thursday evening and Good Friday through to Easter Sunday.

Beginning

(10 minutes)

Welcome the students as usual.

Invite the students to go to their seats. **Pray** the Lord's prayer together.

While pointing to the word Triduum on the whiteboard or the sheet of paper, **tell the students:** Today we will learn about the Easter Triduum.

Invite the students to look closely at the word and see if there is any clue to its meaning.

Split the word after the "tri", eg TRI/DUUM.

Tell the students: If we look at the first part of the word we can see that it reminds us of other words such as triangle, triple, tricycle, triplets. As you would know, this means three. *Triduum* is a Latin word which means three days. The three days that are most important to us as Catholics are Holy Thursday, Good Friday and Easter Sunday. These three days are the most sacred days in the Church's calendar.

Hand out the student workbooks and **invite the students** turn to page 20 and the activity titled 'Triduum'.

Tell the students: In the space write your definition of the word 'Triduum'.

Middle

(35 minutes)

Invite the students to form into triads (groups of three).

Tell the students: In your groups, talk about what happens during the Triduum – the three days of Easter. When you think you have it clear, record your description of each day in your workbooks next to their names: Holy Thursday, Good Friday, and Easter Sunday.

Invite a student from three groups to share their description of each day.

Tell the students: As you have said, Holy Thursday is the day Jesus joined with his disciples to celebrate a special meal. We call this meal the Last Supper. If we read the account in the Gospel of John, we see Jesus washing the feet of the disciples. In the other three gospels, Jesus institutes the Eucharist; takes the bread and wine, blesses it and shares it. We will now put the bread and the glass of wine on the prayer focus.

Invite a student to place the bread and the wineglass on the prayer focus.

Tell the students: As you have said, Good Friday is the day Jesus died on the cross. For Catholics, in particular, the crucifix is the symbol that reminds us of this day.

Show the students the crucifix.

Tell the students: We are reminded of all the suffering that Jesus went through. We are reminded that Jesus freely took on this suffering so that we might be saved and our place with God assured. We are also reminded that this wasn't the end of the story of Jesus.

PREPARATION

1. Prayer focus: a cloth, a candle. The remainder of the symbols to be added as the lesson progresses: a white cloth neatly folded, a bread roll and some grape juice in a wine glass, a crucifix.
2. Photocopy and enlarge the templates in Appendix 6 on pages 38–39.
3. Write the word TRIDUUM in the centre of a whiteboard or an A3 sheet in large letters. For example:



TRIDUUM

4. Workbooks.

PREPARATION

Invite a student to place the crucifix on the prayer focus.

Tell the students: After Good Friday, Jesus was laid in the tomb. Early Sunday morning the women went to the tomb and found Jesus gone. Easter Sunday, as you have said, is the day we remember and celebrate as the day of Jesus' resurrection. God raised Jesus from the dead. This cloth reminds us that this is all the women saw when they went to the tomb. Jesus was gone, he had risen.

Show the students the neatly folded white cloth and invite a student to place it on the prayer focus.

Tell the students: All these symbols help us understand something about the Triduum. The best place to go to help us understand these days is the scriptures. So let us look at the texts while we do the next activity.

With the students still in their triads, distribute one storyboard template to each group. Allocate one of the days with its scripture text to each triad. Ensure that all three days are covered at least once. If you have only a few students, you could have them work in pairs or even individually.

Have the students turn to pages 22–24 in their workbook and find the scripture text for the day their group has.

The days and texts are:

Holy Thursday – Mt 26: 14–50

¹⁴Then one of the twelve, who was called Judas Iscariot, went to the chief priests ¹⁵and said, 'What will you give me if I betray him to you?' They paid him thirty pieces of silver. ¹⁶And from that moment he began to look for an opportunity to betray him.

¹⁷On the first day of Unleavened Bread the disciples came to Jesus, saying, 'Where do you want us to make the preparations for you to eat the Passover?' ¹⁸He said, 'Go into the city to a certain man, and say to him, "The Teacher says, My time is near; I will keep the Passover at your house with my disciples."' ¹⁹So the disciples did as Jesus had directed them, and they prepared the Passover meal.

²⁰When it was evening, he took his place with the twelve; ²¹and while they were eating, he said, 'Truly I tell you, one of you will betray me.'

²²And they became greatly distressed and began to say to him one after another, 'Surely not I, Lord?' ²³He answered, 'The one who has dipped his hand into the bowl with me will betray me. ²⁴The Son of Man goes as it is written of him, but woe to that one by whom the Son of Man is betrayed! It would have been better for that one not to have been born.' ²⁵Judas, who betrayed him, said, 'Surely not I, Rabbi?' He replied, 'You have said so.'

²⁶While they were eating, Jesus took a loaf of bread, and after blessing it he broke it, gave it to the disciples, and said, 'Take, eat; this is my body.' ²⁷Then he took a cup, and after giving thanks he gave it to them, saying, 'Drink from it, all of you; ²⁸for this is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins.

²⁹I tell you, I will never again drink of this fruit of the vine until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father's kingdom.'

³⁰When they had sung the hymn, they went out to the Mount of Olives.

³¹Then Jesus said to them, 'You will all become deserters because of me this night; for it is written, "I will strike the shepherd, and the sheep of the flock will be scattered."

³²But after I am raised up, I will go ahead of you to Galilee.' ³³Peter said to him, 'Though all become deserters because of you, I will never desert you.' ³⁴Jesus said to him, 'Truly I tell you, this very night, before the cock crows, you will deny me three times.' ³⁵Peter said to him, 'Even though I must die with you, I will not deny you.' And so said all the disciples.

³⁶Then Jesus went with them to a place called Gethsemane; and he said to his disciples, 'Sit here while I go over there and pray.' ³⁷He took with him Peter and the two sons of Zebedee, and began to be grieved and agitated. ³⁸Then he said to them, 'I am deeply grieved, even to death; remain here, and stay awake with me.' ³⁹And going a little farther, he threw himself on the ground and prayed, 'My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from me; yet not what I want but what you want.' ⁴⁰Then he came to the disciples and found them sleeping; and he said to Peter, 'So, could you not stay awake with me one hour?

⁴¹Stay awake and pray that you may not come into the time of trial; the spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak.' ⁴²Again he went away for the second time and prayed, 'My Father, if this cannot pass unless I drink it, your will be done.' ⁴³Again he came and found them sleeping, for their eyes were heavy. ⁴⁴So leaving them again, he went away and prayed for the third time, saying the same words. ⁴⁵Then he came to the disciples and said to them, 'Are you still sleeping and taking your rest? See, the hour is at hand, and the Son of Man is betrayed into the hands of sinners. ⁴⁶Get up, let us be going. See, my betrayer is at hand.'

⁴⁷While he was still speaking, Judas, one of the twelve, arrived; with him was a large crowd with swords and clubs, from the chief priests and the elders of the people. ⁴⁸Now the betrayer had given them a sign, saying, 'The one I will kiss is the man; arrest him.' ⁴⁹At once he came up to Jesus and said, 'Greetings, Rabbi!' and kissed him. ⁵⁰Jesus said to him, 'Friend, do what you are here to do.' Then they came and laid hands on Jesus and arrested him.

Good Friday – Mk 15: 21–47

²¹They compelled a passer-by, who was coming in from the country, to carry his cross; it was Simon of Cyrene, the father of Alexander and Rufus. ²²Then they brought Jesus to the place called Golgotha (which means the place of a skull). ²³And they offered him wine mixed with myrrh; but he did not take it. ²⁴And they crucified him, and divided his clothes among them, casting lots to decide what each should take.

²⁵It was nine o'clock in the morning when they crucified him. ²⁶The inscription of the charge against him read, 'The King of the Jews.' ²⁷And with him they crucified two bandits, one on his right and one on his left. ²⁸Those who passed by derided him, shaking their heads and saying, 'Aha! You who would destroy the temple and build it in three days, ³⁰save yourself, and come down from the cross!' ³¹In the

PREPARATION

PREPARATION

same way the chief priests, along with the scribes, were also mocking him among themselves and saying, 'He saved others; he cannot save himself. ³²Let the Messiah, the King of Israel, come down from the cross now, so that we may see and believe.' Those who were crucified with him also taunted him.

³³When it was noon, darkness came over the whole land until three in the afternoon. ³⁴At three o'clock Jesus cried out with a loud voice, 'Eloi, Eloi, lema sabachthani?' which means, 'My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?' ³⁵When some of the bystanders heard it, they said, 'Listen, he is calling for Elijah.' ³⁶And someone ran, filled a sponge with sour wine, put it on a stick, and gave it to him to drink, saying, 'Wait, let us see whether Elijah will come to take him down.' ³⁷Then Jesus gave a loud cry and breathed his last. ³⁸And the curtain of the temple was torn in two, from top to bottom. ³⁹Now when the centurion, who stood facing him, saw that in this way he breathed his last, he said, 'Truly this man was God's Son!'

⁴⁰There were also women looking on from a distance; among them were Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of James the younger and of Joses, and Salome. ⁴¹These used to follow him and provided for him when he was in Galilee; and there were many other women who had come up with him to Jerusalem.

⁴²When evening had come, and since it was the day of Preparation, that is, the day before the sabbath, ⁴³Joseph of Arimathea, a respected member of the council, who was also himself waiting expectantly for the kingdom of God, went boldly to Pilate and asked for the body of Jesus. ⁴⁴Then Pilate wondered if he were already dead; and summoning the centurion, he asked him whether he had been dead for some time. ⁴⁵When he learned from the centurion that he was dead, he granted the body to Joseph. ⁴⁶Then Joseph bought a linen cloth, and taking down the body, wrapped it in the linen cloth, and laid it in a tomb that had been hewn out of the rock. He then rolled a stone against the door of the tomb. ⁴⁷Mary Magdalene and Mary the mother of Joses saw where the body was laid.

Easter Sunday – Lk 23: 50 – 24: 35

⁵⁰Now there was a good and righteous man named Joseph, who, though a member of the council, ⁵¹had not agreed to their plan and action. He came from the Jewish town of Arimathea, and he was waiting expectantly for the kingdom of God. ⁵²This man went to Pilate and asked for the body of Jesus. ⁵³Then he took it down, wrapped it in a linen cloth, and laid it in a rock-hewn tomb where no one had ever been laid. ⁵⁴It was the day of Preparation, and the sabbath was beginning. ⁵⁵The women who had come with him from Galilee followed, and they saw the tomb and how his body was laid. ⁵⁶Then they returned, and prepared spices and ointments.

On the sabbath they rested according to the commandment.

²⁴But on the first day of the week, at early dawn, they came to the tomb, taking the spices that they had prepared. ²They found the stone rolled away from the tomb, ³but when they went in, they did not find the body. ⁴While they were perplexed about this, suddenly two men in dazzling clothes stood beside them. ⁵The women were terrified and bowed their faces to the ground, but the men said to

them, 'Why do you look for the living among the dead? He is not here, but has risen. ⁶Remember how he told you, while he was still in Galilee, ⁷that the Son of Man must be handed over to sinners, and be crucified, and on the third day rise again.' ⁸Then they remembered his words, ⁹and returning from the tomb, they told all this to the eleven and to all the rest. ¹⁰Now it was Mary Magdalene, Joanna, Mary the mother of James, and the other women with them who told this to the apostles. ¹¹But these words seemed to them an idle tale, and they did not believe them. ¹²But Peter got up and ran to the tomb; stooping and looking in, he saw the linen cloths by themselves; then he went home, amazed at what had happened.

Tell the students: One person in your group is to read aloud the text from the workbook. Then together talk about what is important in the text. Decide on the main scenes that you wish to record in your storyboard. Then, draw the scenes in the template.

Move around the room encouraging the students and answering any questions that might arise.

Invite a representative from each triad to share with the whole group the story of one of the days of the Triduum using the storyboard. (You will probably find that the storyboards look different as each group chooses slightly different aspects of the story to emphasise. This is fine and should be encouraged. There is no one way to represent the story.)

Tell the students: What we have just listened to is the story of the passion, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. We have heard it from the perspective of three different gospel writers and from your own interpretations. This story, the story of the Triduum, offers us the central message of our faith. Jesus freely chose to do what had to be done. Jesus suffered and died and rose again so that we might share in the glory of God.

Invite the students to turn to the activity titled 'The Triduum is about ...'

Tell the students: Each of you is to complete the sentence in the space provided.

Invite two students to share with the whole group. Collect the workbooks.

PREPARATION

PREPARATION

End*(5 minutes)*

Gather around the prayer focus and light the candle saying: Today we remember as we light the candle that Jesus died and rose again and is always with us.

Catechist: Let us pray,

All: In the name of the Father ...

Catechist: On Holy Thursday Jesus broke bread with his disciples and left for us a lasting memory and a true presence in the Eucharist. For this we give thanks. Our response is: 'Lord God, we thank you.

All: Lord God, we thank you.

Catechist: On Good Friday, Jesus suffered and died for our sins so that we might share in eternal life. For this we give thanks.

All: Lord God, we thank you.

Catechist: On Easter Day we celebrate with joy the resurrection of Jesus. The Lord raised up Jesus, his son so that we might become your sons and daughters. For this we give thanks.

All: Lord God, we thank you.

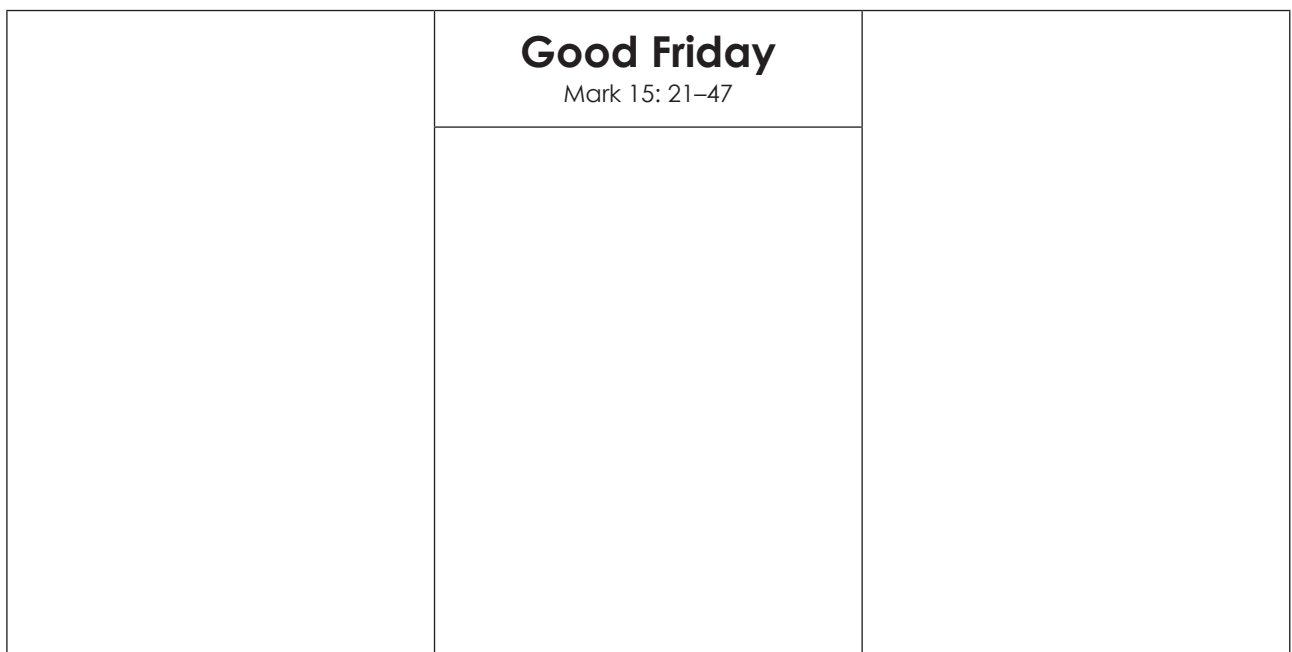
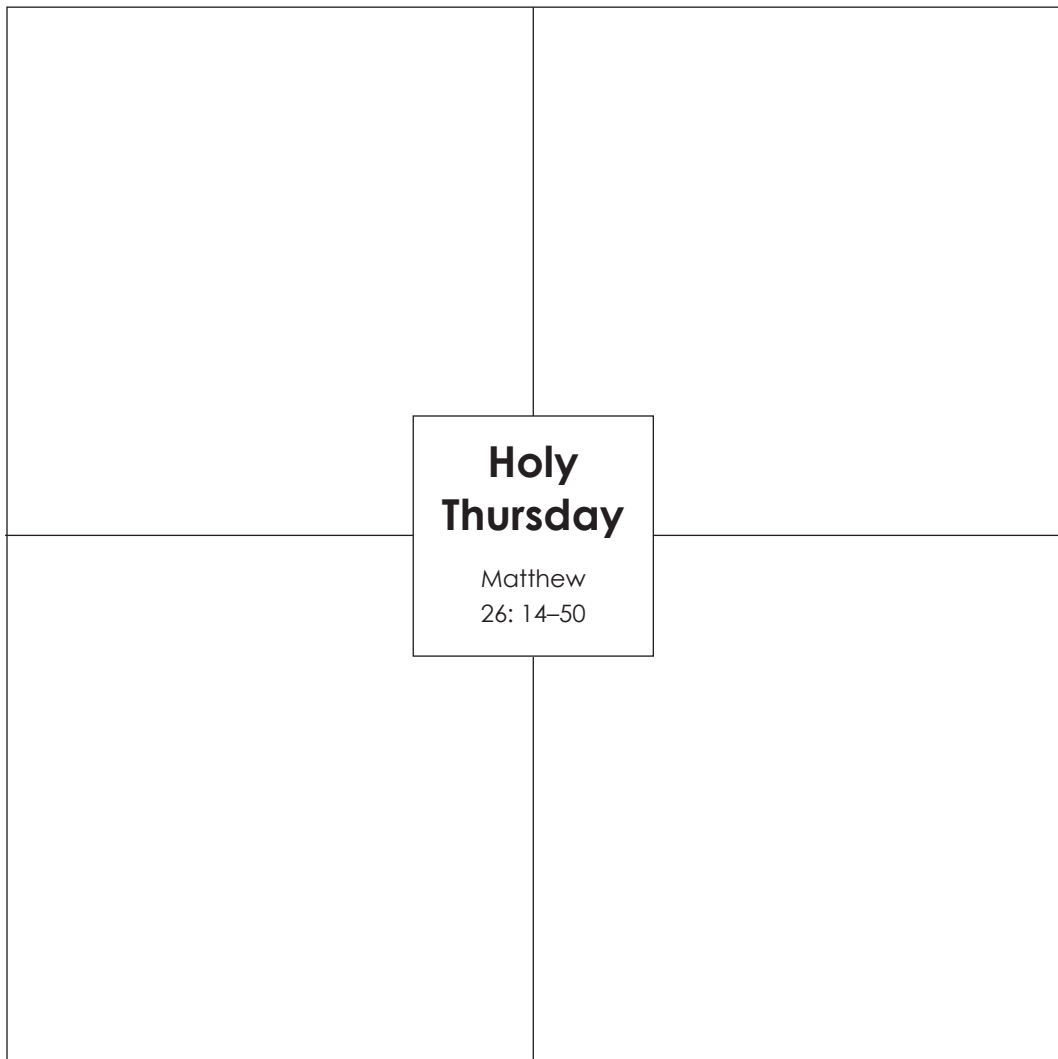
Catechist: We thank you Lord, for all that you have given us and for the Triduum which reminds us of the message of Jesus and his love for us all. So together let us pray:

All: Our Father ...

Dismiss the students as usual.

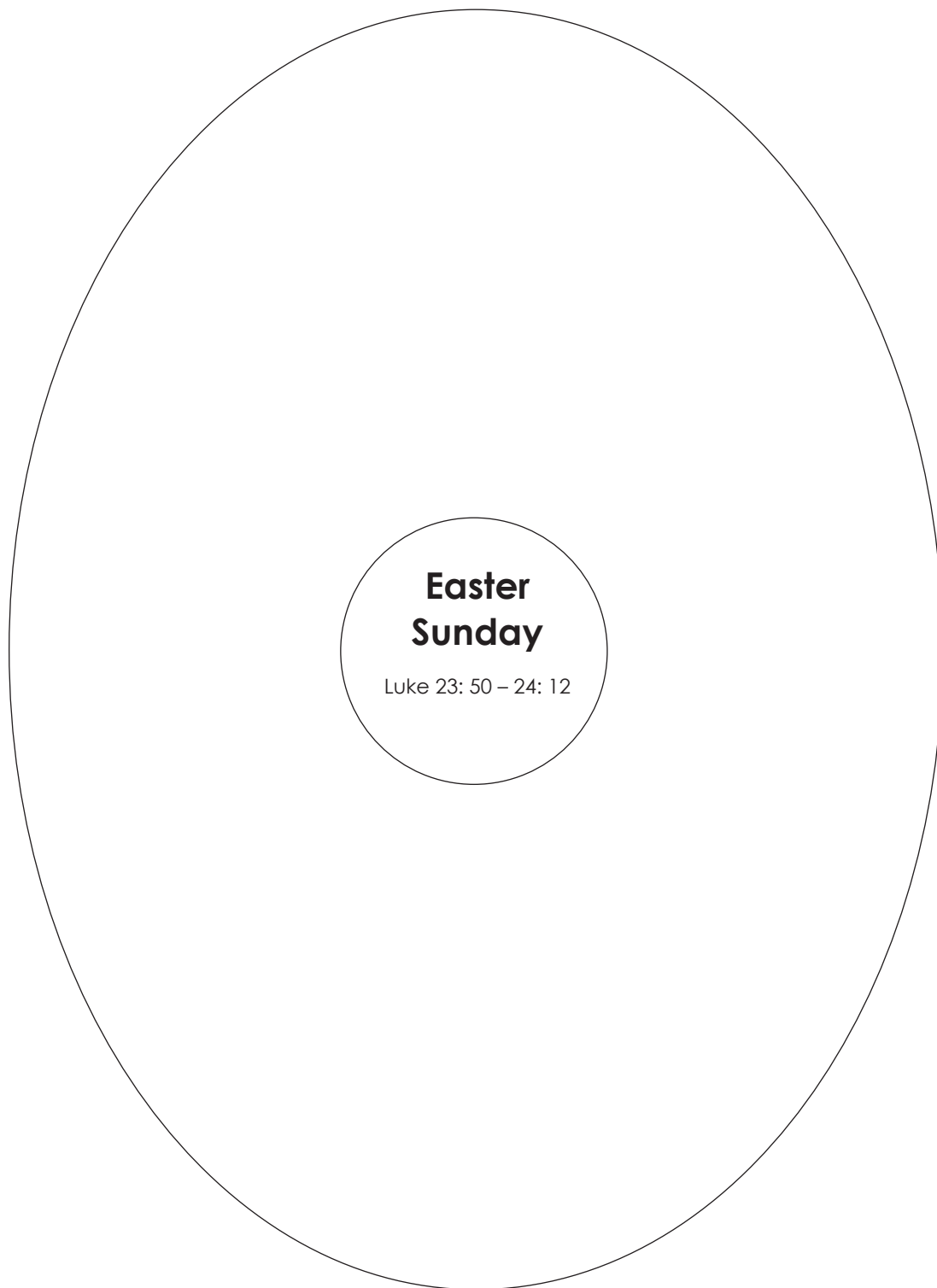
Appendix 6 – Storyboard Templates

Photocopy and enlarge these templates for groups to use.



Appendix 6 – Storyboard Templates (continued)

Photocopy and enlarge as necessary.



Jesus Washes the Disciples' Feet

Background for the Catechist

Please take 10 minutes to reflect on the following introduction to this lesson.

Reflection/Doctrinal Reference

The Lord, having loved those who were his own, loved them to the end. Knowing that the hour had come to leave this world and return to the Father, in the course of a meal he washed their feet and gave them the commandment of love (CCC, n. 1337).

Jesus makes charity the new commandment. By loving his own 'to the end', he makes manifest the Father's love which he receives. By loving one another, the disciples imitate the love of Jesus which they themselves receive. Whence Jesus says: 'As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you; abide in my love'. And again: 'This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you' (CCC, n. 1823).

Holy Thursday celebrates and extends into Christian experience in every age two mysteries that are at the heart of our faith: the commandment of love and service of others and the gift of the Eucharist. The first is exemplified in the gospel of the day, which is the account of Jesus at the Last Supper kneeling before his disciples and washing their feet, the task usually allotted to the humblest servant. He says to his friends, 'I have given you this example which you must follow ...'. In our service of others there is to be no standing on our dignity, no superiority, no refusal, no delegation of the dirty work to others. This very difficult example of Jesus, and the commandment to love which follows it, is one of the great challenges to Christians of all eras. The second emphasis of Holy Thursday is Jesus' action in taking bread and wine and associating them with his own body and blood, which on the next day will be broken and poured out in the supreme act of faithfulness and love on the cross. It is only because Jesus shares himself with us in every Eucharist, as he shared himself with his disciples, that we can have real hope that we too will be able to fulfil his command to love.

Student Focus

Students of this age are quite aware of being of service to others. The many charitable organisations that offer service to the poor will have been explored in previous lessons. Many may have been a part of special services to the sick and elderly, singing carols, visiting etc. These students will be conscious of the need for service towards others and providing help.

Teaching Point

By washing his disciples' feet, Jesus shows us how to love and serve each other.

Remembering Point

Jesus showed us how to love and serve each other.

PREPARATION

1. Prayer focus: a cloth, a candle and the Bible. Include a pair of sandals and a basin with a towel.
2. Write the prayer response on a whiteboard or a large sheet of paper:

Jesus, help us to serve
our community.
3. Red, green and yellow pencils or felt-tip markers or highlighters for each student.
4. Workbooks.

Beginning

(10 minutes)

Welcome the students as usual.

Gather the students around the prayer focus and distribute the workbooks.

Invite the students to turn to the scripture reading on page 26 in their workbook and indicate the response to the sections of the reading, on the whiteboard or sheet of paper.

As you light the candle remind the students that the lit candle is a symbol of Christ, present with us always.

All: In the name of the Father ...

Catechist: Let us listen to John 13: 1–10, 12–16.

Now before the festival of the Passover, Jesus knew that his hour had come to depart from this world and go to the Father. Having loved his own who were in the world, he loved them to the end. The devil had already put it into the heart of Judas son of Simon Iscariot to betray him. And during supper Jesus, knowing that the Father had given all things into his hands, and that he had come from God and was going to God, got up from the table, took off his outer robe, and tied a towel around himself.

All: Jesus, help us to serve our community.

Catechist: Then he poured water into a basin and began to wash the disciples' feet and to wipe them with the towel that was tied around him. He came to Simon Peter who said to him, 'Lord, are you going to wash my feet?' Jesus answered, 'You do not know what I am doing, but later you will understand.' Peter said to him, 'You will never wash my feet.' Jesus answered, 'Unless I wash you, you have no share with me.' Simon Peter said to him, 'Lord, not my feet only but also my hands and my head!' Jesus said to him, 'One who has bathed does not need to wash, except for the feet, but is entirely clean. And you are clean, though not all of you.'

All: Jesus, help us to serve our community.

Catechist: After he had washed their feet, had put on his robe, and had returned to the table, he said to them, 'do you know what I have done to you? You call me Teacher and Lord – and you are right, for that is what I am. So if I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet. For I have set you an example, that you also should do as I have done to you. Very truly, I tell you, servants are not greater than their master, nor are messengers greater than the one who sent them.'

All: Jesus, help us to serve our community.

Catechist: Now that we have heard the word of God, listened to the story of Jesus washing the feet of his disciples, we can think about what this means for us as we pray the words of Jesus.

All: Our Father ...

Invite the students to go to their seats.

Middle

(30 minutes)

Tell the students: You have heard this account of Jesus washing the feet of the disciples many times over the years. Now take a little time and think about what it means.

In your workbooks on page 27, in the space titled 'Washing the disciples' feet', write down what you think this story means. Why do you think John, the author of the gospel, included this story? You have five minutes for this task.

Ask the students: Would anyone like to share what they have written? (Take a few answers.)

Tell the students: Thank you for sharing your thoughts on the text. We will now look more closely at the text and see what else we can discover. Turn to page 26 and read the story again carefully. Underline in red all the characters. Circle in green all the actions or verbs. Underline in yellow anything you want clarifying.

Ask the students: What clarifying questions do you have? (Take time to answer any questions the students might have about the text.)

Direct the students to page 28 of the workbook and the table titled 'Looking at Peter'.

Tell the students: We will look more closely at what happens with Peter. Reread the story and answer the questions in the table. Record your answers in the spaces provided.

After 10 minutes, **tell the students:** Now we will look at the writing style of the author. Go to the 'pie' diagram on page 29, titled 'What is important in this text?'. Pair up with the person beside you, and talk together about the setting of this story, the characters and the events. You are to decide how important each of these aspects is and show it on the 'pie' diagram. Consider these questions when discussing how important the setting, characters and events are.

Ask the students:

- How important is the setting?
- Do we know where the story is set?
- Would the meaning change if the setting changed?
- Are the characters important?
- Are some characters more important than others?
- Could some characters be left out without changing the meaning?
- How important is what happened (the events)?
- Are the events more or less important than the characters or the setting?

Tell the students: In your own workbooks, you each need to divide the 'pie' into three, showing by the size of the pieces how important each aspect is in relation to the others.

After 10 minutes invite the students to think about their response to the story we have just explored.

PREPARATION

PREPARATION

Tell the students: Turn to page 30 and the activity titled 'My response'.

Complete the sentence first, then in the space provided draw around your hand. On the palm write a title for the passage of Scripture we have been working on. On each finger write one thing that we believe, as Catholic Christians, that this scripture text has helped us understand better.

Invite two or three students to share what they have written for one of the tasks.

End

(5 minutes)

Collect the workbooks.

Gather the students around the prayer focus.

Invite one student to light the candle.

Catechist: As _____ (name) lights the candle for us, we remember that this is a reminder that Christ is present with us, always. Our response is: Lord, hear our prayer.

All: Lord, hear our prayer.

All: In the name of the Father ...

Catechist: Lord God, Jesus showed us how to love each other by washing the feet of his disciples. May we always look for ways to be of service to others. Lord, hear us.

Students: Lord, hear our prayer.

Catechist: Lord God, you want us to love each other just as you love us. Help us to show our love through prayer as well as through action. Lord, hear us.

Students: Lord, hear our prayer.

Catechist: Lord God, you show us all these things so that we might be friends with you, always. Help us to always seek your friendship. Lord, hear us.

Students: Lord, hear our prayer.

All: Glory be to the Father ...

Dismiss the students as usual.

The Disciples' Experience of the Risen Jesus

Background for the Catechist

Please take 10 minutes to reflect on the following introduction to this lesson.

Reflection/Doctrinal Reference

... no one was an eyewitness to Christ's Resurrection and no evangelist describes it. No one can say how it came about physically. Still less was its innermost essence, his passing over to another life, perceptible to the senses. Although the Resurrection was an historical event that could be verified by the sign of the empty tomb and by the reality of the apostles' encounters with the risen Christ, still it remains at the very heart of the mystery of faith as something that transcends and surpasses history. This is why the risen Christ does not reveal himself to the world, but to his disciples, 'to those who came up with him from Galilee to Jerusalem, who are now his witnesses to the people' (Acts 13: 31) (CCC, n. 647).

Belief in the resurrection of Jesus is a cornerstone of Christianity. 'If Christ has not been raised then our preaching is in vain and your faith is in vain', says Paul to the Corinthians (1 Cor 15: 14). However, the nature of the resurrection is a mystery. The gospel accounts of the empty tomb and the encounters with the risen Christ all testify to the historical fact that the disciples, who were shattered and scattered at Jesus' death, experienced him alive amongst them after his death. But no-one witnessed the resurrection, No-one can say, or will ever be able to say, what happened or how Jesus' earthly body was transformed into a 'spiritual body', as Paul puts it. Nevertheless because of this event, the turning point of the ages, we know, with the certainty of faith, that death will not conquer and that 'as in Adam all die, so also in Christ shall all be made alive' (1 Cor 15: 22).

Student Focus

Students of this age have grown up in a world that expects proof for everything. Eyewitness reports and capturing newsworthy events on mobile phones to send to the television news shows are accepted parts of life. To believe something without clear proof or eyewitness validation is counter-cultural. It is faith. It is an important aspect of this lesson that students may struggle with. However, they do have belief in their favourite teams and in the basics for life, of air to breath and sunlight to see by.

Teaching Point

The disciples' faith in the resurrection was born from their experience of the appearances of the risen Jesus.

Remembering Point

Our faith in the resurrection is strengthened by the stories of the disciples' experience of the risen Jesus.

PREPARATION

1. Prayer focus: a multi- coloured cloth or a white cloth, the Bible, a large white candle decorated on the front in the same way as the Paschal candle in the church. Note the picture below:



2. A bowl filled with sand to hold the lighted tapers.
3. A taper for each student.
4. Workbooks.
5. Cut A4 paper into three strips, enough for about seven strips per group.
6. Blu-Tack.
7. Felt-tip markers.
8. A sheet of A4 paper cut in half lengthwise and stuck together to form a banner. Write on it 'The Empty Tomb'.
9. Make 4 posters using A3 paper. Write the name of one of the four gospel writers at the top of each. Stick these on the whiteboard in preparation for the lesson.

Beginning

(5 minutes)

Welcome the students as usual.

Gather the students around the prayer focus.

Invite a student to light the Paschal candle, and invite the students to pray.

Catechist: The Paschal candle reminds us that the great joy of Easter is the rising of Jesus from the dead. Let us pray.

All: In the name of the Father ...

Catechist: God, our Father, Increase in our minds and hearts the risen life we share with Christ. Help us to grow as your people on our journey to eternal life with you.

All: Amen.

Catechist: Each of you can come up in turn, pick up a taper and light it from our Paschal candle and place it in the sand. As you are doing this we will all say (or sing) 'Christ is risen, alleluia'. We will keep repeating the phrase until we have all lit a taper.

All: Christ is risen, alleluia.

Catechist: Let us now pray to the Father, in the words Jesus gave us.

All: Our Father ...

Invite the students to return to their seats.

Middle

(40 minutes)

Distribute the workbooks and **divide the students** into four groups.

Tell the students: Three weeks ago we read Luke's account of Jesus' resurrection as part of the lesson about Holy Week. Today we're going to concentrate on Jesus' resurrection, which we celebrate especially at Easter.

Invite the students to turn to pages 31–34 in their workbook.

Assign a different text to each group. Hand out seven strips of paper to each group.

Tell the students: You will be using the same scripture text for two different activities. Each group needs to appoint a reader, a recorder and a timekeeper. You will have seven minutes for this task. The reader reads the text aloud and the rest follow it in your books. Then do the following tasks, recording the answers on the strips. You are to:

- Name the women mentioned in the text
- List what the women saw and heard.

(e.g. the stone rolled back, frightened guards, two men in dazzling clothes, ... See Appendix 8 for a list of possible answers.)

Invite two or three students from each group, starting with the group focusing on the reading from Matthew, to stick their answers on the appropriate poster. *(You may need to reorder the strips so that similar items are in the same row.)*

Ask the students: What is the one thing that is common to all these accounts? *(Jesus' body was not there – the tomb was empty).*

Stick the Empty Tomb banner above the four posters.

Tell the students: The gospel writers, in their own ways, described how the women or woman went to the tomb expecting to anoint Jesus' body and how they discovered that Jesus' body was not in the tomb. Each gives the impression that the women and the disciples were upset, confused and afraid. Most of the gospel writers describe how Jesus appeared to the disciples. We'll now examine two of these stories.

Direct the students to continue to work in the same groups with the same texts.

Tell the students to read the text carefully and to answer these questions about each text:

- How did the disciples / Mary Magdalene see Jesus?
- What do Jesus' words and actions tell us about the risen Jesus?
- What do you think the gospel writers wanted their readers to believe about Jesus?

(The last question is open-ended, allowing for the students to answer from their own lives and perspective. This is an opportunity to allow students to interpret the text for themselves. They will have insights that we, because of familiarity, might not see.)

Ask one student from two groups to tell the class how the disciples/Mary Magdalene saw Jesus.

Ask one student from the two other groups to share their answers to the second question: What do Jesus' words and actions tell us about the risen Jesus?

Ask one student from all groups to share their answers to the third question: What do you think the gospel writers wanted their readers to believe about Jesus?

Tell the students that after the disciples were shocked to discover that Jesus' tomb was empty, they then experienced Jesus alive but in way different to how he was before his death. Through these experiences they came to believe that Jesus had been raised from the dead to a new glorious life with his heavenly Father. They experienced his promise to send the Spirit to be with them always. Under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, the disciples came to believe and understand all that Jesus had taught them. They passed this message on to everyone they met and invited them to believe too.

Invite the students to consider for themselves the following question:

- How do these accounts strengthen your belief in the resurrection of Jesus?

PREPARATION

PREPARATION

End*(5 minutes)*

Collect the workbooks and gather the students around the prayer focus.

All: In the name of the Father ...

Catechist: Today we have learnt that each Gospel writer wrote about Jesus' resurrection in different ways but with the same intention – to lead their readers to believe in Jesus. Now let us pray that we might also be alert to meeting the risen Christ in our lives.

Our response is: Lord, help us to be open to the presence of the risen Christ in our lives.

All: Lord, help us to be open to the presence of the risen Christ in our lives.

Catechist: As we go about our usual daily activities,

Students: Lord, help us to be open to the presence of the risen Christ in our lives.

Catechist: As we sit quietly in prayer,

Students: Lord, help us to be open to the presence of the risen Christ in our lives.

Catechist: As we spend time with family and friends,

Students: Lord, help us to be open to the presence of the risen Christ in our lives.

All: Glory be to the Father ...

Dismiss the students as usual.

Appendix 8 – The Empty Tomb

Matthew (28: 1–10)	Mark (16: 1–8)	Luke (24: 1–12, 36–49)	John (20: 1–18)
Mary Magdalen, other Mary saw and heard.	Mary Magdalen, Mary mother of James and Salome saw and heard.	Mary Magdalen, Joanna, Mary mother of James and other women saw and heard.	Mary Magdalen saw and heard.
An angel rolled back the stone.	stone already rolled back	stone rolled away	stone had been removed
angel's clothing white as snow	young man dressed in white	two men in dazzling clothes	two angels in white
frightened guards			
Do not be afraid.	Do not be alarmed.		
Jesus is not here; he has been raised.	Jesus has been raised.	He is not here, but he has risen.	saw that Jesus was not in the tomb

Jesus Reveals God

Background for the Catechist

Please take 10 minutes to reflect on the following introduction to this lesson.

Reflection/Doctrinal Reference

Finally, in Jesus the name of the Holy God is revealed and given to us, in the flesh, as Saviour, revealed by what he is, by his word, and by his sacrifice. This is the heart of his priestly prayer: 'Holy Father ... for their sake I consecrate myself, that they also may be consecrated in truth.' Because he 'sanctifies' his own name, Jesus reveals to us the name of the Father. At the end of Christ's Passover, the Father gives him the name that is above all names: 'Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father' (CCC, n. 2812).

One of the remarkable elements in the gospel stories is the large number of people who were attracted to Jesus' preaching early in his public ministry. His message has great resonance with his audience because they discovered something new: a God who loves them. Every word and action of Christ made known his life and person, but also divulged his father. 'To have seen me is to see the Father' (Jn 14: 8-11). For the disciples this revelation about the nature of God was something they embraced and wanted to proclaim. The Father who created and sustains the cosmos is intimately concerned with our welfare. Our God is ever-forgiving and eternally caring for us. In exploring the actions of Jesus, from his sharing a simple meal to his courageous acceptance of death, we detect the love of the Father. In reading and discussing the teachings, parables and challenges of Jesus we can see revealed the presence of God.

Student Focus

Students will appreciate the dynamic of friendship and how the more we know about someone, the more closely we can become friends. Students will have covered a number of lessons in previous years regarding this same point. Reminding the students of what Jesus says and does, and how this reveals something about God, is important.

Teaching Point

Everything that Jesus did and said reveals himself and God to us.

Remembering Point

Everything that Jesus did and said reveals himself and God to us.

Beginning

(10 minutes)

Welcome the students as usual.

Gather the students around the prayer focus. Hand out the workbooks and open to page 36.

Tell the students: Today we are exploring how everything Jesus says and does reveals something about God. First let us pray.

All: In the name of the Father ...

Catechist: Today we will listen to a story from the Gospel of Mark (14: 32–42).

Reader: ³²They went to a place called Gethsemane and he said to his disciples, 'Sit here while I pray'. ³³He took with him Peter and James and John, and began to be distressed and agitated. ³⁴And he said to them, 'I am deeply grieved, even to death; remain here, and keep awake.' ³⁵And going a little farther, he threw himself on the ground and prayed that, if it were possible, the hour might pass from him. ³⁶He said, 'Abba, Father, for you all things are possible; remove this cup from me; yet, not what I want, but what you want.' ³⁷He came and found them sleeping; and he said to Peter, 'Simon, are you asleep? Could you not keep awake one hour? ³⁸Keep awake and pray that you may not come into the time of trial; the spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak.' ³⁹And again he went away and prayed, saying the same words. ⁴⁰And once more he came and found them sleeping, for their eyes were very heavy; and they did not know what to say to him. ⁴¹He came a third time and said to them, 'Are you still sleeping and taking your rest? Enough! The hour has come; the Son of Man is betrayed into the hands of sinners. ⁴²Get up, let us be going. See, my betrayer is at hand.'

Catechist: Take a few moments to think about what you have heard and what you think is important about this passage. Consider: why do you think Jesus went to the Garden of Gethsemane?

Pause

Catechist: I invite each of you to share with everyone what you think was Jesus' reason for going to the garden. We won't take turns, but we will speak only one at a time. The rest of us will listen carefully to what each person is saying.

Allow each student to speak.

When all have had the opportunity as well as the Catechist, continue the prayer as follows:

Catechist: This is what we have all reflected on and what we think about this reading from Scripture. Let us now offer our thoughts to God in prayer:

PREPARATION

1. Prayer focus: a multi-coloured cloth, a candle and the Bible.
2. Workbooks.
3. Leaf templates (see Appendix 9a, page 53) two per student.
4. Twig tree drawn on a large sheet of paper and displayed. Instructions for constructing and using the 'twig tree' are in Appendix 9b, page 54.
5. Blu-Tack.
6. Dialogue Cards (see Appendix 9c, page 55), one per group of three students.
7. A blank sheet of A4 paper for the brainstorming activity.
8. Highlighters, one per student.

PREPARATION

All: Heavenly Father, we offer you our thoughts about Jesus in the garden of Gethsemane. We have come to realise more about Jesus as a man and how he relied on you and trusted you. Help us to come to know Jesus more and in doing so come to know you more. We make our prayer in Jesus' name.

Amen.

Invite the students to return to their seats.

Middle

(30 minutes)

Invite the students to pair up with another student. **Hand out** a highlighter to each student.

Tell the students: Now I would like you to re-read the text we just read during prayer time. With the coloured highlighter, underline all the emotions that you can identify.

Invite the students to turn to the 'Exploring the Text' activity in the workbook on pages 37–39, and in pairs complete the four tasks as outlined.

Invite three of the pairs to share their answers to the fourth task. *(Students might ask why would God let his Son go to his death? One answer is to return to the choices Jesus could make as outlined in task three. This says that Jesus knew what would be the possible outcome to his imminent arrest and chose to take that path. God did not make Jesus die on the cross. It is because Jesus chose to take the path he did, that his sacrifice offers us entry into the fullness of God's goodness.)*

If you have enough students, **invite them** to form into groups of three. **Distribute a sheet** of A4 paper for the brainstorming activity as well as two leaf templates, and a Dialogue Card.

Tell the students: We have just looked at one story of Jesus' life from the Gospel of Mark. As we said at the beginning, everything that Jesus says and does tells us something about God. As you know, there are many more stories that tell us about Jesus. In your group, list all the things you know about Jesus, and write them on your blank sheet of paper. They can come from any story and any gospel.

Choose two examples from this list *(they need to be different for each student)* and write each one on a leaf template. Place all six leaves on the table in front of you and think about what they are saying about Jesus. Then identify what you think each one of these reveals about God. You might like to use the Jotting Page in your workbook on page 40 to record your answers.

Invite the students to take turns sharing what they think is revealed about God. **Remind the students** to listen to each other respectfully and to use the dialogue process as per the Dialogue Card from Appendix 9c, page 55.

After 10 minutes **invite the students** to record their answer to 'What do we now know about God?' on the reverse of one leaf. *(The learning does not have to relate to what is already written on the leaf.)*

Invite one person from each group to read what they now know about God and to use Blu-Tack to stick it onto the twig tree. *(Affirm the students' answers and reflections.)*

Collect the workbooks.

End

(5 minutes)

Gather the students around the prayer focus.

Collect the leaves from the twig tree that have the statements about God. These will form part of the prayer.

Catechist: Today we have been thinking about Jesus and God. We have reflected on Jesus' life and how everything he said and did revealed something about God. Let us now pray to God, our Father, acknowledging what we now know about God.

All: In the name of the Father ...

Take one leaf at a time and use it to form the prayer with the following beginning and end, adjusting the words to suit what the students have written.

Catechist: Father, ...
May we always seek to know more about you.
(Adjust 'leaf words' to suit prayer. For example, if the students have written, 'God is always our friend', then the prayer would be: Father, you are our friend, May we always seek to know more about you.)

All: Praise to you, God, our Father.

Repeat for each leaf.

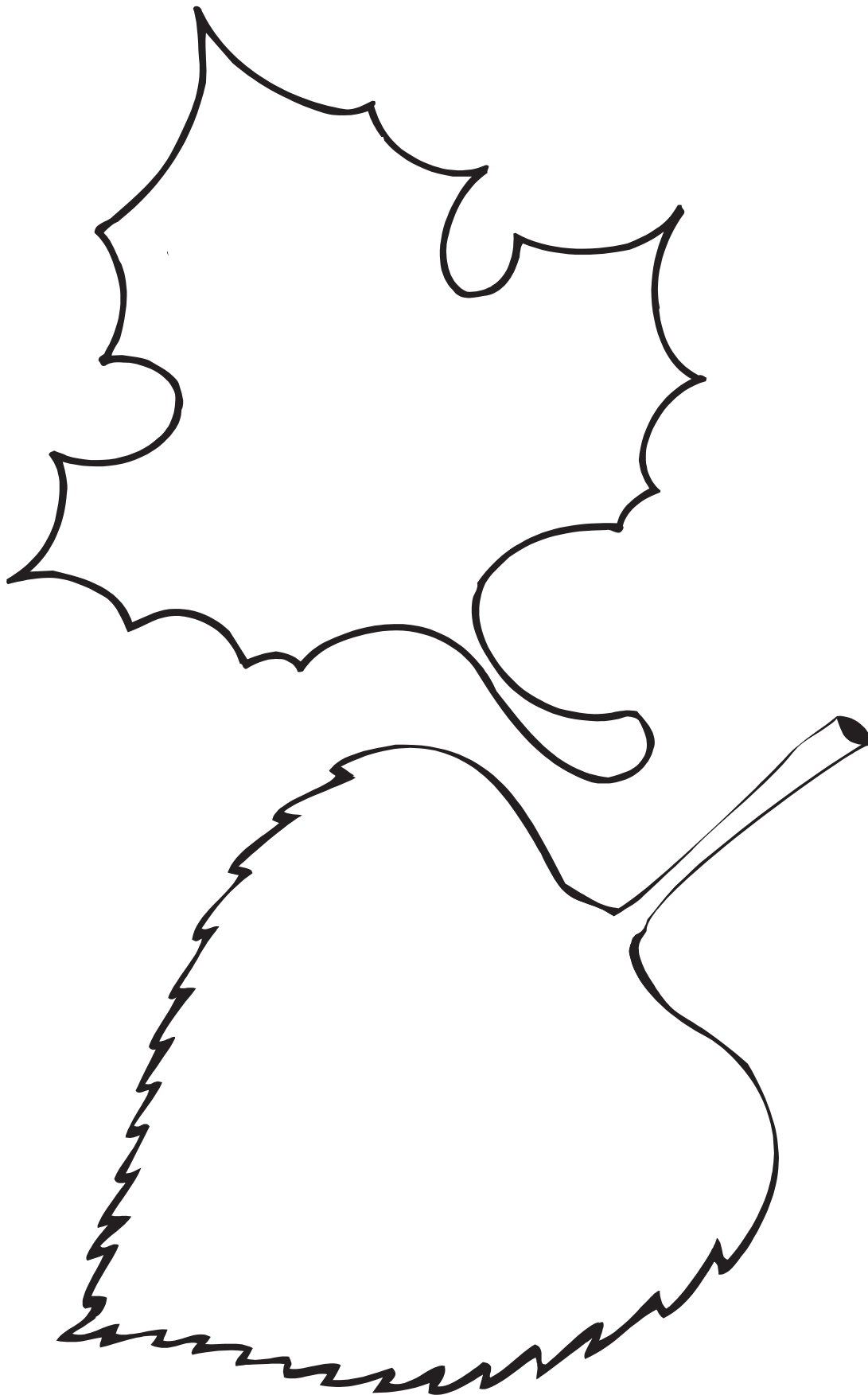
All: Our Father ...

Dismiss the students as usual.

PREPARATION

Appendix 9a – Leaf Template

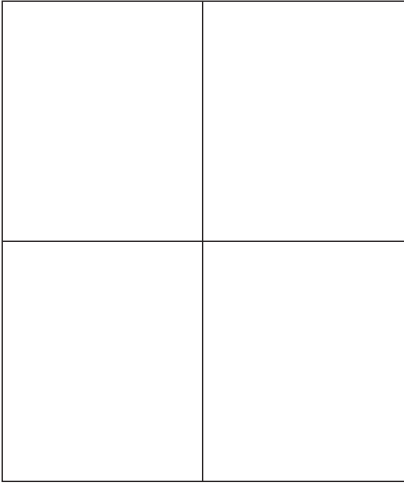
Photocopy, laminate and cut out enough leaves for two per student.



Appendix 9b – Twig Tree Instructions

Join four sheets of A3 paper together as per the diagram, or alternately have a very large piece of paper or butchers' paper.

For example:



On the paper draw a simple tree shape. You might like to enlarge the drawing below as an example. You could just draw a trunk and a few branches. The purpose is to provide somewhere for the students to stick their leaves.



Appendix 9c – Dialogue Cards

Photocopy and laminate enough cards for one per group.

Dialogue Card

Dialogue is about speaking, listening and sharing your ideas. So that everyone gets a chance to speak and is listened to carefully by everyone else, you are asked to follow the steps below when undertaking group dialogue.

- 1 Read the questions you are required to answer carefully and prepare your own answers in your head, or write them, if that helps you.
- 2 You each have no more than two minutes to share your answers to the questions – **without interruption**. Everyone else in the group listens and thinks about what the person is saying. You might like to write a word or sentence about what the person has said or a question that you think about, but you are not to say anything yet.
- 3 After everyone has had the opportunity to share their answers, anyone from the group can ask a question of another person or can share a thought about what someone else has said. You must remain on task and only ask questions that are relevant to the issue.

55

Dialogue Card

Dialogue is about speaking, listening and sharing your ideas. So that everyone gets a chance to speak and is listened to carefully by everyone else, you are asked to follow the steps below when undertaking group dialogue.

- 1 Read the questions you are required to answer carefully and prepare your own answers in your head, or write them, if that helps you.
- 2 You each have no more than two minutes to share your answers to the questions – **without interruption**. Everyone else in the group listens and thinks about what the person is saying. You might like to write a word or sentence about what the person has said or a question that you think about, but you are not to say anything yet.
- 3 After everyone has had the opportunity to share their answers, anyone from the group can ask a question of another person or can share a thought about what someone else has said. You must remain on task and only ask questions that are relevant to the issue.

Liturgy

Background for the Catechist

Please take 10 minutes to reflect on the following introduction to this lesson.

Reflection/Doctrinal Reference

For it is in the liturgy, especially in the divine sacrifice of the Eucharist, that 'the work of our redemption is accomplished', and it is through the liturgy especially that the faithful are enabled to express in their lives and manifest to others the mystery of Christ and the real nature of the true Church (CCC, n. 1086).

Many cultural and religious groups around the world have specific rituals to commemorate a special event. In the Catholic Church the Eucharist is not only a memorial of Jesus' suffering, death and resurrection, but much more! This liturgy, celebrated with word and actions, does not merely recall a great person and his wonderful achievement; it re-enacts that event. The liturgy re-enacts and re-actualises the death and resurrection of Christ.

In the Eucharist, under the form of bread and wine on the altar, the Paschal mystery of Jesus' saving death and resurrection is celebrated; that is, made now, again. So, this mystery of God becoming present, sharing our life, and living among us is celebrated at every Mass, at every sacrament. What Christ began is not merely celebrated; his work of redemption is continued by the Christian community by its worship and action in the world.

As the Body of Christ we are called to continue his saving work in our lives, in our world. Just as Christ's whole life was a ministry for the good news of God's love, we are commissioned at every Mass to do the same. 'Go in peace, glorifying the Lord by your life'. All our liturgical celebrations incorporate the same actions: praising God for the wonderful work achieved in Christ and commissioning the Church to continue to live out her Christian mission.

Student Focus

Students in this age group will generally have received their first Communion. They will have had a number of lessons on the Eucharist. However, you cannot be sure just how familiar these students will be with the liturgical experience of the Eucharist and other sacraments. Help the students understand, rather than be critical of what knowledge they may not have retained. See this as an opportunity to strengthen the students' understanding.

Teaching Point

In the liturgy we celebrate Jesus' saving works.

Remembering Point

In the liturgy we celebrate Jesus' saving works.

PREPARATION

Beginning*(5 minutes)***Welcome the students** as usual.**Invite the students** to gather around the prayer focus and look at it carefully.**Ask the students:** What do you think we might be learning about today? *(Accept their answers.)***Tell the students:** When we gather together for Mass we are participating in the liturgy of celebrating Jesus' death and resurrection. Today we are going to explore the concept of liturgy.**Invite the students** to prepare for prayer by being quiet and still.**Catechist:** Let us pray:**All:** In the name of the Father ...**Catechist:** The response to our prayer is 'Come, Holy Spirit, enlighten us'.**Students:** Come, Holy Spirit, enlighten us.**Catechist:** Come, Holy Spirit, enlighten our minds and hearts as we participate in this lesson.**Students:** Come, Holy Spirit, enlighten us.**Middle***(30 minutes)***Divide the class** into four groups and assign a group to each of the four parts in the gospel reading on page 41 of the workbook.**Tell the students** to read aloud their parts and to follow the rest of the dialogue in their books.**Narrator:** Now on that same day two of them were going to a village called Emmaus, about seven miles from Jerusalem, and talking with each other about all these things that had happened. While they were talking and discussing, Jesus himself came near and went with them, but their eyes were kept from recognising him. And he said to them,**Jesus:** What are you discussing with each other while you walk along?**Narrator:** They stood still, looking sad. Then one of them, whose name was Cleopas, answered him,**Cleopas:** Are you the only stranger in Jerusalem who does not know the things that have taken place there in these days?**Jesus:** What things?**Cleopas & Other Disciple:** The things about Jesus of Nazareth – who was a prophet mighty in deed and word before God and all the people – and how our chief priests and leaders handed him over to be condemned to death and crucified him. But we had hoped that he was the one to redeem Israel. Yes, and besides all this, it is now the third day since these things took place. Moreover, some women of our group

astounded us. They were at the tomb early this morning, and when they did not find his body there, they came back and told us that they had indeed seen a vision of angels who said that he was alive. Some of those who were with us went to the tomb and found it just as the women had said; but they did not see him.

Jesus: Oh, how foolish you are, and how slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have declared! Was it not necessary that the Messiah should suffer these things and then enter into his glory?

Narrator: Then beginning with Moses and all the prophets, he interpreted to them the things about himself in all the Scriptures.

As they came near the village to which they were going, he walked ahead as if he were going on. But they urged him strongly, saying,

Cleopas & Other Disciple: Stay with us, because it is almost evening and the day is now nearly over.

Narrator: So he went in to stay with them. When he was at the table with them, he took bread, blessed and broke it, and gave it to them. Then their eyes were opened, and they recognised him; and he vanished from their sight. They said to each other,

Cleopas & Other Disciple: Were not our hearts burning within us – while he was talking to us on the road, while he was opening the Scriptures to us?

Narrator: That same hour they got up and returned to Jerusalem; and they found the eleven and their companions gathered together. They were saying,

Eleven & Companions: The Lord has risen indeed, and he has appeared to Simon!

Narrator: Then they told what had happened on the road, and how he had been made known to them in the breaking of the bread (Lk 24: 13–35).

Tell the students that biblical scholars and theologians point out that all the elements of the Mass are contained in this story. The early Church used to call the Mass the 'breaking of bread' because that is what Jesus did at the Last Supper.

Tell the students: Turn to page 43 in your workbook to the activity titled 'The Liturgy and Scripture'

Invite the students to read the description of the Liturgy of the Word in the first row of the middle column.

Ask the students: Which part of the gospel reading do you think relates to the Liturgy of the Word?

Tell the students: In the top left column, identify the section of the gospel that relates to the Liturgy of the Word. (*Jesus talked about the prophets and himself.*) Walk around the class as students do this work, giving help where necessary.

Tell the students: Read the description of the Liturgy of the Eucharist in the second row of the middle column.

PREPARATION

1. Prayer Focus: a white cloth, two candles, a lectionary (open at Lk 24: 13–35), a glass goblet and a glass saucer.
2. Workbooks.

PREPARATION

Ask the students: Which part of the gospel do you think relates to the Liturgy of the Eucharist?

Tell the students: Write your description in the second row of the first column. (*Jesus took bread, blessed, broke and gave it to them.*) Walk around the class as students do this work, giving help where necessary.

Invite the students to read the description of the Concluding Rites in the third row of the middle column.

Ask the students: Which part of the gospel do you think relates to the Concluding Rites?

Tell the students: Write your description in the third row of the first column. (*The disciples returned to Jerusalem to tell their story.*) Walk around the class as students do this work, giving help where necessary.

Invite the students to work in pairs to talk about:

- How can I listen and respond to the Word (find ways of being like Jesus in his care for others ...)
- How can I praise and thank God (praise God when I see something beautiful, thank God for blessings, thank God for family and friends ...)
- How can I show that I follow Jesus (go to Mass, care for others, help others ...)

Allow about 10 minutes for the students to share their ideas.

Invite the students to write their individual responses in the third column.

End

(8 minutes)

Invite the students to gather around the prayer focus with their workbooks open at page 44.

Catechist: Today for our closing prayer I invite you to share one of your responses. Let us begin with the Sign of the Cross.

All: In the name of the Father ...

Catechist: When we listen to Jesus' teachings and actions in the Liturgy of the Word we are called to respond:

Students read their responses.

All: Father, Son, and Spirit, help us to live the Good News.

Catechist: When we praise and give thanks to God with the priest in the Liturgy of the Eucharist, we offer our own thanks and praise:

Students read their responses.

All: Father, Son, and Spirit, we thank and praise you.

Catechist: When the priest commissions us to glorify the Lord in our lives, we:

Students read their responses.

All: Father, Son and Spirit, be with us as we try to glorify you by the way we live.

Collect the workbooks and dismiss the students.

Eucharist

Background for the Catechist

Please take 10 minutes to reflect on the following introduction to this lesson.

Reflection/Doctrinal Reference

The inexhaustible richness of this sacrament is expressed in the different names we give it. Each name evokes certain aspects of it. It is called:

Eucharist, because it is an action of thanksgiving to God ...

The Lord's Supper, because of its connection with the supper which the Lord took with his disciples on the eve of his Passion ...

The *Breaking of Bread*, because Jesus used this rite, part of a Jewish meal, when as master of the table he blessed and distributed the bread, above all at the Last Supper. It is by this action that his disciples will recognise him ...

The *Eucharistic Assembly (synaxis)*, because the Eucharist is celebrated amid the assembly of the faithful, the visible expression of the Church.

The *memorial* of the Lord's Passion and Resurrection.

The *Holy Sacrifice*, because it makes present the one sacrifice of Christ the Saviour and includes the Church's offering ... it completes and surpasses all the sacrifices of the Old Covenant.

The *Holy and Divine Liturgy*, because the Church's whole liturgy finds its centre and most intense expression in the celebration of this sacrament ...

Holy Communion, because by this sacrament we unite ourselves to Christ, who makes us sharers in his Body and Blood to form a single body ...

Holy Mass (Missa), because the liturgy in which the mystery of salvation is accomplished concludes with the sending forth (*missio*) of the faithful, so that they may fulfil God's will in their daily lives (CCC, nn. 1328–1332).

The titles given to the celebration of the Eucharist express the impossibility of confining the meaning of this central act of the Church to any single definition while suggesting to us a rich variety of ways of reflecting on the Eucharist and its many meanings. Each title suggests multiple possibilities for prayer, reading, personal response and discussion. The extract from the Catechism shows that arguments about whether the Eucharist is a meal or a sacrifice, an act of Christ or the work of the Church, and so on, are pointless because the Eucharist embraces all these meanings and more. As the central and defining act of Christian life, the Eucharist has sustained and continues to sustain the whole Church until the end of time.

Student Focus

These students have celebrated their first Communion and had many lessons about the Eucharist. It might be useful to look at the relevant lessons in the Catechist book for previous years. You can be sure that some of your students will not be regular attendees at Mass. Keep this in mind throughout the lesson.

Teaching Point

The Eucharist is the centre of Christian life.

Remembering Point

The Eucharist is the centre of Christian life.

PREPARATION

1. Prayer focus: a cloth, a small bread roll and a glass of grape juice, a Mass book and a candle.
2. Workbooks.
3. Concentration Cards copied and laminated from Appendix 11 on page 64.
4. The prayer response for the opening and concluding prayer written on the whiteboard or on an A3 sheet of paper. For example:

Catechist:
The Lord be with you.

All:
And with your spirit.

Beginning

(10 minutes)

Welcome the students as usual.

Hand out the workbooks and invite the students to open them at page 45.

Invite one student to do the reading while the others follow the text.

Gather the students around the prayer focus, and **invite them** to prepare for prayer. **Light the candle.**

All: In the name of the Father ...

Catechist: The Lord be with you.

All: And with your spirit.

Catechist: Let us pray in silence that we might grow in understanding of the Eucharist as the centre of Christian life.

Pause

Catechist: We make this prayer through Christ our Lord.

All: Amen.

Reader: A reading from the holy Gospel according to Matthew (26: 26–29).

All: Glory to you, Lord.

Reader: While they were eating, Jesus took a loaf of bread, and after blessing it he broke it, gave it to the disciples, and said, 'Take, eat; this is my body.' Then he took a cup, and after giving thanks he gave it to them, saying, 'Drink from it, all of you; for this is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins. I tell you, I will never again drink of this fruit of the vine until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father's kingdom.' The Gospel of the Lord.

All: Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.

Move away from the prayer focus and **gather** in a circle on the floor.

Invite one student to lay the Concentration Cards face down on the floor in four rows of four.

Tell the students: We are now going to play Concentration. You are to take turns in turning over two cards. If the cards match you keep the pair and the next person has a go. If they do not match then flip them back over and the next person has a turn. The game will end when all the cards have been gathered up. The winner is the person with the most cards.

Invite the students to place one of each pair back on the ground in front of them.

Ask the students: What do you think these cards are describing?
(Accept all answers. Make the point that all these words describe the Mass that we attend each week.)

Middle

(35 minutes)

Allocate students into groups of three and invite them to return to their desk with two of the terms. (If you have more groups than four, copy another set of cards. If you have fewer groups than four, allocate all the cards to the groups you have and invite the students to record their extra answers on another sheet of paper.)

Invite the students to open their workbooks at page 47 and to complete the 'Names for the Eucharist' activity.

Tell the students: In your groups take turns to share what you think the words on the card mean in ordinary life. Read the definitions from your workbook on page 46 as a help to understand what each title means in terms of the Eucharist. Come to a group answer and record your agreed answer in the space provided.

For example, Liturgy means the formal rituals of the Church. What formal rituals are part of your family? Do you celebrate birthdays in a particular way? For instance, the person celebrating the birthday gets to choose how they want to celebrate, where they go and what they eat.

Allow 15 minutes for sharing and discussion, and writing their responses.

Tell the students: Now that you have finished your discussion, complete individually the sentences in the 'Understanding the Eucharist' activity on page 48 of the workbook. You are to complete:

- Understanding this helps me celebrate Eucharist better by ...
- Understanding this helps me to live better by ...

Invite the students to share their responses with their other group members, listening carefully to each other. **Allow the students** to add anything to their responses that would make it better.

Invite one student from each group to share their responses with the whole class.

Collect the workbooks and **invite the students** to gather around the prayer focus.

PREPARATION

PREPARATION

End*(5 minutes)*

Have the prayer response in a place visible to all students.

Catechist: Let us make the Sign of the Cross.

All: In the name of the Father ...

Catechist: Lord God, we now have a greater understanding of what the Eucharist means. We ask that this knowledge leads us to be better Christians.

All: Amen.

Catechist: The Lord be with you.

All: And with your spirit.

Catechist: May almighty God bless us:

All: In the name of the Father ...

Catechist: Let us go in peace and glorify the Lord by our lives.

All: Amen.

Dismiss the students as usual.

Appendix 11 – Concentration Cards

Make two copies of this page, stick on card if possible, and cut out the cards.
Alternately, laminating the cards will strengthen them.

**The Lord's
Supper**

**The Breaking
of Bread**

**Eucharistic
Assembly**

Memorial

Sacrifice

Liturgy

Communion

Mass

Prayer – Communicating with God

Background for the Catechist

Please take 10 minutes to reflect on the following introduction to this lesson.

Reflection/Doctrinal Reference

The Holy Spirit, who teaches the Church and recalls to her all that Jesus said, also instructs her in the life of prayer, inspiring new expressions of the same basic forms of prayer: blessing, petition, intercession, thanksgiving, and praise (CCC, n. 2644).

Since God created us and loves us eternally, he desires us to communicate with him throughout our lives. Clearly human life has many ups and downs, and therefore to converse with God each day concerning whatever befalls us will demand a variety of dialogues. Just as our conversing with family and friends takes different modes from time to time so, too, our prayer to God finds different forms of communication. The prayers of the people of Israel are especially instructive for Christian prayer. The 150 psalms have praise and lament elements. The prayer of Jesus also ranged from acclamations – ‘I praise you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth...’ – to cries of abandonment: ‘My God, My God, why have you deserted me?’.

The key thing to remember in these prayers of Jesus is that they are addressed to the Father, who sustains all that exists. Jesus had a wide variety of prayers that he prayed, some set forms and some spontaneous. Despite the different styles, two elements were consistent in his prayer: they emerged from the real situations he encountered, and they led to deep refreshment and joy. Jesus' prayer was based on his conviction of companionship with God. For Jesus, prayer was taken for granted. He was wholly dependent on the Father as the ground of his being, and hence the assurance he brought to his prayer.

Student Focus

For these students this lesson offers the opportunity to experience alternatives in prayer. Students will have had a number of lessons on prayer in previous years. You can presume that they will have some sense of the differences between formal and informal prayers. They may also have had some experience in meditation and similar prayers.

Teaching Point

Through prayer we communicate with God – we can use blessing, petition, sorrow, thanksgiving and praise.

Remembering Point

I can pray to God using blessing, petition, sorrow, thanksgiving and praise.

Beginning

(5 minutes)

Welcome the students as usual. **Gather around** the prayer focus.

All: In the name of the Father ...

Catechist: Let us say the words that Jesus gave us to pray to the Father:

All: Our Father ...

Tell the students: This prayer is a special prayer that we treasure because it gives us the words to pray to God, our Father. Today we will look closely at how we pray.

Middle

(45 minutes)

Ask the students: Why do we pray? (We pray to ask God for things, to talk to God, to thank God ...)

(Take the students' answers and record them on the whiteboard or a piece of paper large enough for all students to view.)

Tell the students: If we look closely at these answers, we will be able to group them into different categories.

Work with the students in grouping their answers. You will probably end up with some of the following: praise, blessing, petition, sorrow, thanks. If you do not get all of these, then add those that are missing at the end.

Tell the students: These five types of prayer provide us with a variety of ways of praying to God. If we take our life experiences and use these types of prayer to pray about our life, then our life will be happier. When we focus on the good things that have happened and thank God for these, our life will be better for it. It is important not to always pray in the same way. When we use these five ways of praying it helps keep variety in our prayer.

We praise God, we ask God to help us live our life in a way that is healthy and focused on God, and we pray for the needs of those around us. We can give thanks to God for all the good things that we experience in our lives and ask God to bless those who need God's love in a special way.

Hand out the workbooks and **ask the students** to turn to page 50 and the 'Our Father' activity.

Tell the students: We have prayed the Our Father at the beginning of our lesson, so now we will look at it in a little more detail. Each of you is to take a different coloured pencil for each of the types of prayer: praise, thanks, asking, sorrow, and blessing, and either circle or underline where you find these types of prayer in the Our Father.

Ask the students: Now that you have finished, what is missing? (Thanks and blessing.)

PREPARATION

1. Prayer focus: a coloured cloth, a candle, the Bible, and a crucifix.
2. Join two sheets of A3 paper together lengthwise. Use this to record the responses from the students.
3. Coloured pencils or felt-tipped pens or highlighters.
4. Workbooks.
5. Set up four prayer stations, with enough space for a group of students to work together. The activities involve:
 - A Music and singing.
 - B Actions.
 - C Writing.
 - D Drawing.

Station A might need to be somewhere apart from the others.

At each station place the Prayer Station Card, coloured paper and coloured pencils or felt-tipped pens or highlighters.

PREPARATION

Tell the students: Now add two stanzas that include thanks and blessing. You might find it helpful to discuss the possibilities with the student beside you. An example of what you might add is:

We give thanks, Father, for your love.
You bless us, Lord, in all that we do.

Invite the students to share their additions.

Divide the students into four groups.

Tell the students: Prayer is communicating with God. We can talk, but we also need to listen. That is what makes the difference between a monologue and communicating.

Today we have four 'Prayer Stations' for you to work at. Each station invites you to prepare a prayer using one of the forms we have been talking about – praise, thanks, petition, blessing, sorrow. When you get to your station you will find a card that will tell you what you are to do. All the items you require will be at the station or in your workbook on pages 51–53. Record your work in the appropriate place in your workbook.

You will all have a chance to do two of the four activities. After 10 minutes at your first activity, I will tell you it is time to move on to the next one.

Allocate each group to one of the four stations.

Set the students to work. Ensure that you keep time, or allocate a time-keeper. Move around the groups advising and assisting as necessary. When nine minutes have elapsed, instruct the students to finish up their task. On the 10-minute mark, move each group to the next station.

When the last 10 minutes is complete, **invite a student** from each group to share with the whole group the results of their work from one station. Try to have all stations covered in the sharing.

Collect the workbooks.

End

(3 minutes)

Gather the students together around the prayer focus.

Ask the students: What have you learnt about prayer today? *(Accept the students' answers and affirm them.)*

Catechist: Let us be still, remembering what we have learnt ... Let us pray ...

All: In the name of the Father ...

Catechist: As we have spent today communicating with God, let us now stop and listen.

Pause

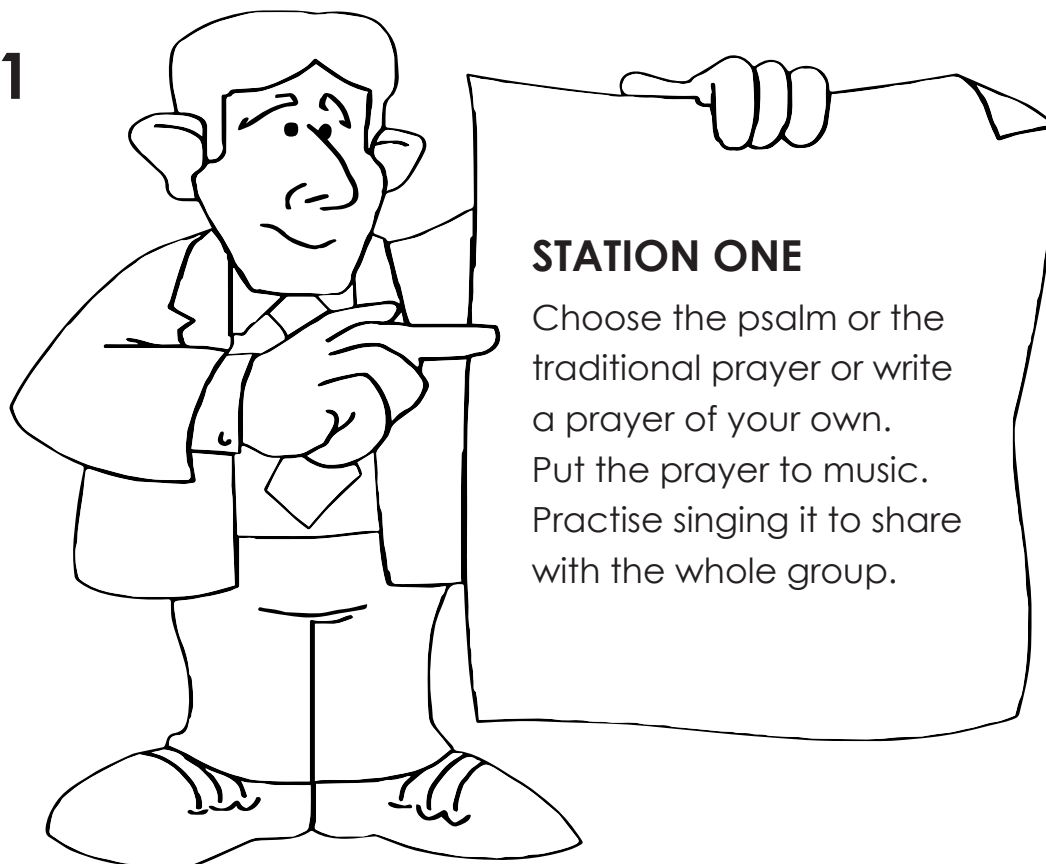
Catechist: Let us give thanks to God, our Father, for all that we have been blessed with: for our lives, for our parents, for our friends and the world in which we live. We make this prayer, through Christ, our Lord.

All: Amen.

Appendix 12 – Prayer Station Cards

Photocopy and laminate these cards.

1

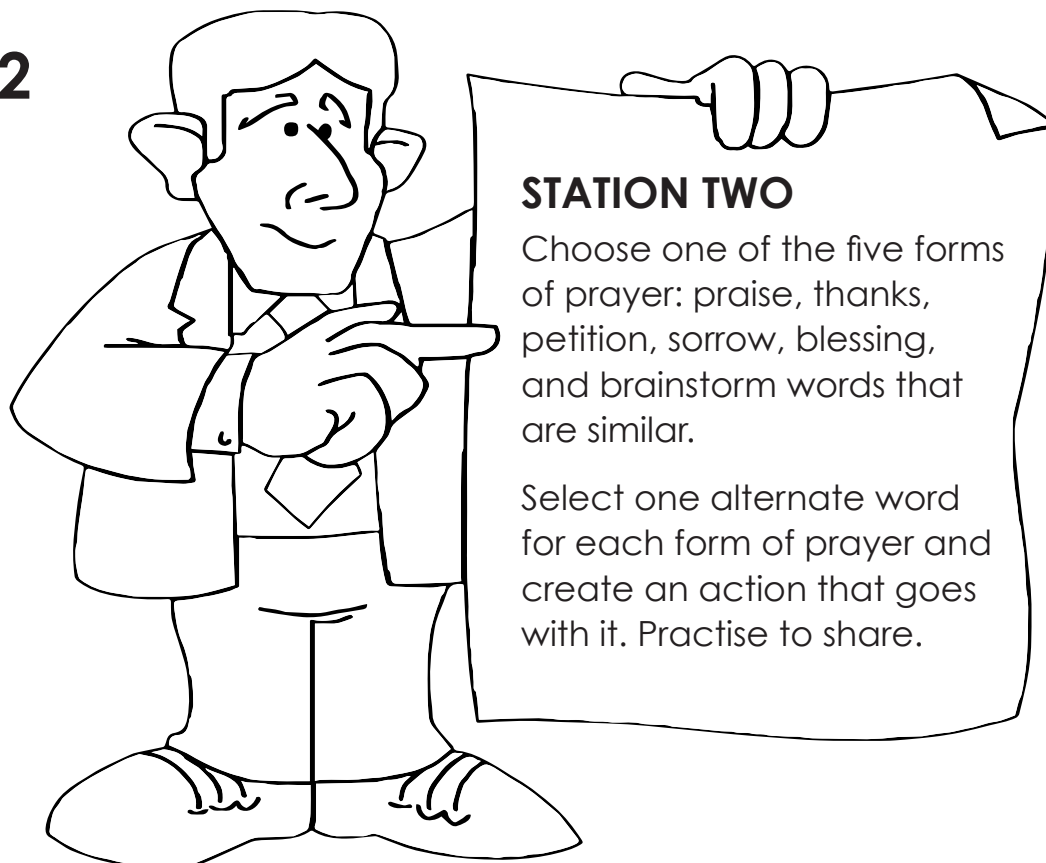


STATION ONE

Choose the psalm or the traditional prayer or write a prayer of your own. Put the prayer to music. Practise singing it to share with the whole group.

68

2



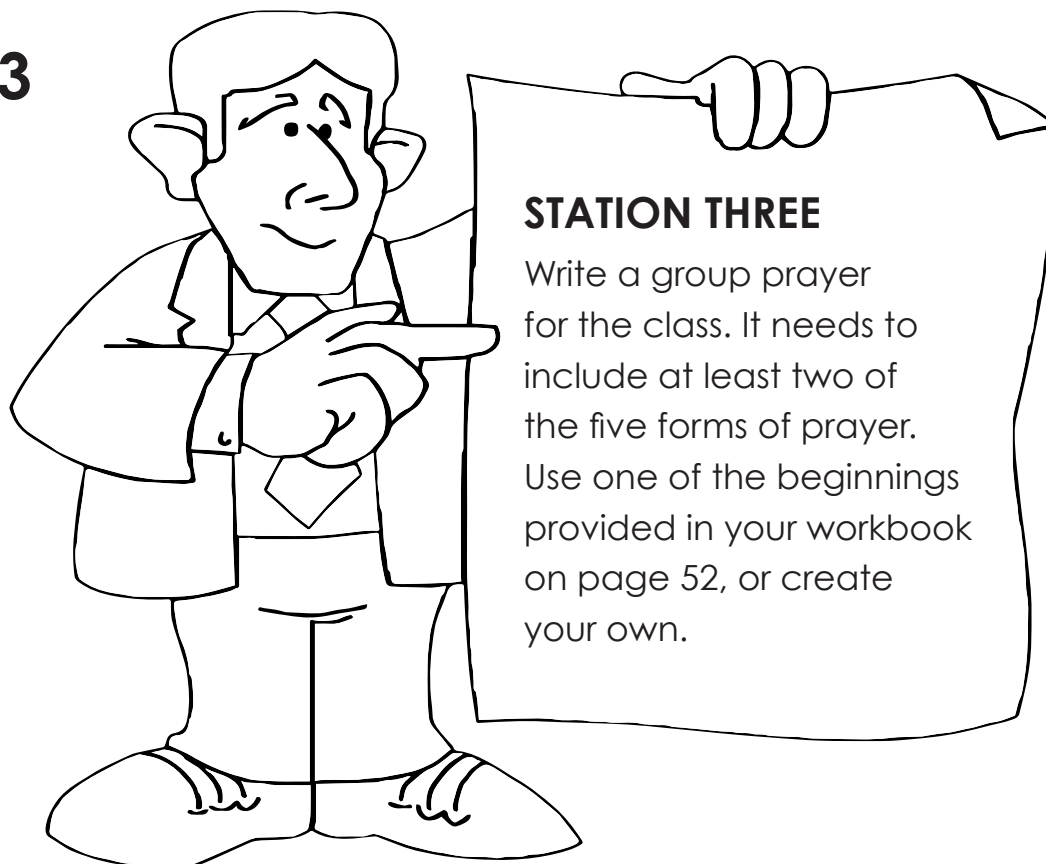
STATION TWO

Choose one of the five forms of prayer: praise, thanks, petition, sorrow, blessing, and brainstorm words that are similar.

Select one alternate word for each form of prayer and create an action that goes with it. Practise to share.

Appendix 12 – Prayer Station Cards (continued)

3

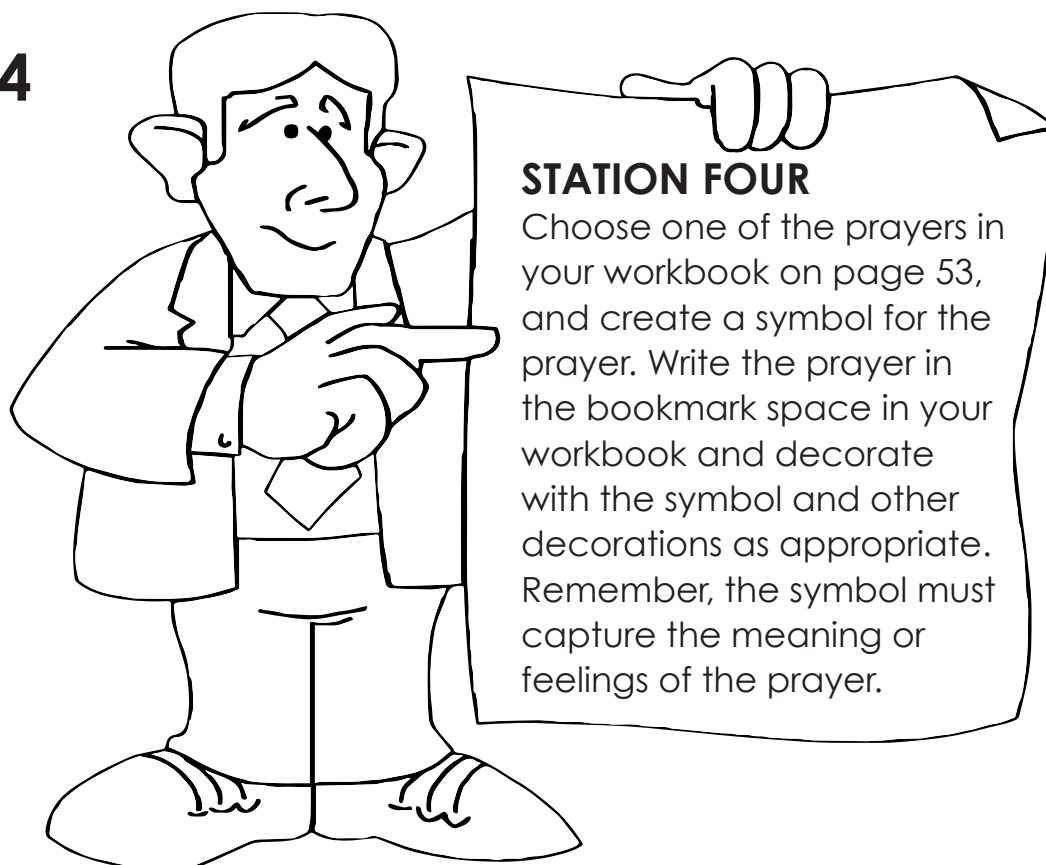


STATION THREE

Write a group prayer for the class. It needs to include at least two of the five forms of prayer. Use one of the beginnings provided in your workbook on page 52, or create your own.

69

4



STATION FOUR

Choose one of the prayers in your workbook on page 53, and create a symbol for the prayer. Write the prayer in the bookmark space in your workbook and decorate with the symbol and other decorations as appropriate. Remember, the symbol must capture the meaning or feelings of the prayer.

The Beatitudes

Background for the Catechist

Please take 10 minutes to reflect on the following introduction to this lesson.

Reflection/Doctrinal Reference

The Beatitudes depict the countenance of Jesus Christ and portray his charity. They express the vocation of the faithful associated with the glory of his Passion and Resurrection; they shed light on the actions and attitudes characteristic of the Christian life; they are the paradoxical promises that sustain hope in the midst of tribulations; they proclaim the blessings and rewards already secured, however dimly, for Christ's disciples; they have begun in the lives of the Virgin Mary and all the saints (CCC, n. 1717).

The beatitude we are promised confronts us with decisive moral choices. It invites us to purify our hearts of bad instincts and to seek the love of God above all else. It teaches us that true happiness is not found in riches or wellbeing, in human fame or power, or in any human achievement ... or indeed in any creature, but in God alone, the source of every good and of all love (CCC, n. 1723).

The Beatitudes, as well as being a source of consolation, propose a blueprint for the specifically Christian way of life: a life of service and self-giving which is radically counter-cultural. The Beatitudes teach that happiness comes not from who we are, what we can accomplish, what we can acquire or the level of comfort and wellbeing we can achieve for ourselves, but from a focus on the other: both on God and other people. Jesus' words praise and declare blessed those who are often set aside from polite society: those who are poor in one way or another, those who mourn, those who have a passion for justice, those who are ridiculed for the faith and so on. The Beatitudes are one of the key parts of the gospels which need to be constantly re-thought, reflected on and readjusted to because they are so difficult yet promise us everything if we can set our hearts on them.

Student Focus

The students have had a number of lessons in previous years that look at the Beatitudes. Students of this age understand that there is a 'right' or moral way of living that will help us live as Jesus wants. What will be important for these students to work with and understand is how these texts about the Beatitudes can make sense in today's world. The Beatitudes are timeless, and continue to call us to become disciples of Jesus.

Teaching Point

In the Beatitudes we can learn about who and what we are called to become.

Remembering Point

The Beatitudes help us know what we are called to become.

PREPARATION

1. Prayer focus: a yellow or white cloth, a candle in a contrasting colour and a Bible.
2. Familiarise yourself with the two versions of the Beatitudes. See Appendix 13, page 74.
3. Blue, green, pink felt pens or highlighters.
4. Cut A4 paper crosswise into five strips, enough for each pair of students to have at least 10 strips.
5. A sheet of A4 paper for each group to record their sharing.
6. Two sheets of A3 paper joined together lengthwise to form a poster. (If you have a large group of students you may need to make a bigger poster.) Put this on display.
7. Blue-Tack.
8. Workbooks.

Beginning

(5 minutes)

Welcome the students as usual.

Gather the students around the prayer focus.

Hand out the workbooks and ask the students to open to page 54.

Invite the students to pray.

All: In the name of the Father ...

Catechist: Jesus, you taught us how to live. Help us to respond to your word.

Students: Blessed are you, Lord Jesus.

Catechist: Jesus, you told us what is important in life. Help us to make choices that respond to your teaching.

Students: Blessed are you, Lord Jesus.

Catechist: Jesus, you call us to love our enemies and do good to others. Help us to choose what is right.

Students: Blessed are you, Lord Jesus.

Catechist: Let us pray to the Father in the words Jesus gave us:

All: Our Father ...

Middle

35 minutes

Tell the students: Today we are going to look at the Beatitudes as we find them in the Gospel of Luke. Last year you worked with the Beatitudes as they are presented in Matthew's Gospel. These two accounts are a little different from each other. Let us look at these and find the differences and similarities. Open your workbooks at page 55.

Invite two students to read one text each.

Ask the students: Does anyone have any questions about the texts that might need clarifying? *(This is only to ensure that the texts are actually understood in terms of language, not in terms of meaning. Clarify language and words as questions arise.)*

Invite the students to find a partner to work with. **Distribute** the highlighters and strips of paper.

Tell the students: Using the blue highlighter/felt pen, underline all the phrases that are **exactly the same** in both texts.

Now, take the green highlighter/felt pen and underline those phrases that are **almost the same**, with only one or two words different, but they mean the same thing.

Then take the pink highlighter/felt pen and circle **opposites** between the two narratives. *(These are mostly found in the introductory verses).*

Invite the students to look at the phrases that are the same and similar (those underlined in blue and green).

Ask the students: What is important in these phrases for us to know ?

Tell the students: Share your answer with the person beside you and then both of you record your answer in the space provided on page 56.

Tell the students: The Beatitudes are a guide for us to live by. Just like all things that Jesus talks about, the Beatitudes also tell us something about God. God wants us to share in God's kingdom, in the happiness and goodness of a life lived well in support of others. Jesus said many times, the kingdom of God is here, now. We can share in it if we choose. Jesus is telling us something about the kingdom of God in these Beatitudes.

Look at the Lucan text and the things you have written about the Beatitudes. Talk to your partner about what you think these Beatitudes are telling us about the kingdom of God. Write your best five responses on the slips of paper.

Invite a student from each pair to share their responses and to place the strips of paper on the poster you have displayed.

Ask the students:

- What do you notice about these responses?
- What might we now know about the kingdom of God?
- From what you know about God's kingdom from the stories of Jesus you have heard and studied, what would you add to these Beatitudes?

Invite the students to turn to page 56 in their workbooks and to complete the task titled 'My Beatitude'.

Tell the students: Re-read the account of the Beatitudes in Luke and considering what was shared a few moments ago about additions to the Beatitudes, write your own beatitude that will guide and uplift Catholic Christian believers. Record your beatitude in the space provided.

Form the students into pairs and **invite them** to share their beatitude with each other. **Decide on the best** one and **write it** on a slip of paper.

Invite a student from each pair to share their beatitude with the whole group and to add the slip of paper to the poster.

Tell the students: These are all important things to remember and listen to and they make us feel good. They are not just for an ideal world, however. Jesus did not tell us these things for us to just think about them. As Catholics we are committed through our baptism to live out these Beatitudes, to make them really happen in our daily lives. We are expected to look for ways to make the kingdom happen, now, today.

Invite the pairs of students to join another pair to form a group of four.

Allocate at least two of the Beatitudes from the poster (one from the Lucan account and one from the students' additions) to each group.

Distribute a sheet of A4 paper to each group.

Tell the students: In your group one of you is to read aloud the Beatitudes you have been given. Then each of you is to think about your role in bringing about these Beatitudes and ultimately the kingdom. Take turns

PREPARATION

PREPARATION

to share your ideas about how you might make the Beatitudes happen in your life. Have one person in the group record the ideas on the sheet of paper. Then, decide on the best three ways that you can be involved today in bringing about the kingdom of God. Each of you is to record the answers in your workbook on page 57 in the space titled 'I can bring about the kingdom by ...'. You will have 15 minutes to complete the task.

(Walk around the groups, keeping the students on track and focused. Encourage and affirm the students' work.)

Invite a student from each group to share with the whole group the ways they might live the Beatitudes.

(You might wish to record the students' responses, if you have time.)

End

(10 minutes)

Gather the students around the prayer focus with their workbooks open at page 57.

Invite the students to pray and **light the candle**, reminding them that in doing so we are conscious that Christ is with us as we gather to pray.

All: In the name of the Father ...

Catechist: Through our baptism we are called to live the Beatitudes in order that the kingdom of God might be made real. As we gather to pray today, let us think about all those people who have helped us live our Beatitudes, our parents, grandparents and other significant people.

Pause for a moment's silence.

Catechist: Blessed are the poor in spirit,

Students: For theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

All: Glory be to the Father ...

Catechist: Blessed are the merciful,

Students: For they shall know mercy.

All: Glory be to the Father ...

Catechist: Blessed are we when we live as God wants us to
Students: For we are making God's kingdom present.

All: Glory be to the Father ...

Collect the workbooks and dismiss the students as usual.

Appendix 13 – Beatitude Texts in Luke and Matthew

Luke 6: 17–23

¹⁷He came down with them and stood on a level place, with a great crowd of his disciples and a great multitude of people from all Judea, Jerusalem, and the coast of Tyre and Sidon.

¹⁸They had come to hear him and to be healed of their diseases; and those who were troubled with unclean spirits were cured.

¹⁹And all in the crowd were trying to touch him, for power came out from him and healed all of them.

²⁰Then he looked up at his disciples and said: 'Blessed are you who are poor, for yours is the kingdom of God.

²¹'Blessed are you who are hungry now, for you will be filled.

'Blessed are you who weep now, for you will laugh.

²²'Blessed are you when people hate you, and when they exclude you, revile you, and defame you on account of the Son of Man.

²³Rejoice on that day and leap for joy, for surely your reward is great in heaven; for that is what their ancestors did to the prophets.'

Matthew 5: 1–12

¹When Jesus saw the crowds, he went up the mountain; and after he sat down, his disciples came to him. ²Then he began to speak, and taught them, saying:

³'Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

⁴'Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted.

⁵'Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the earth.

⁶'Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled.

⁷'Blessed are the merciful, for they will receive mercy.

⁸'Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God.

⁹'Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God.

¹⁰'Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

¹¹'Blessed are you when people revile you and persecute you and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely on my account. ¹²Rejoice and be glad, for your reward is great in heaven, for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you.'

St Peter, St Paul and St Teresa of Avila

Background for the Catechist

Please take 10 minutes to reflect on the following introduction to this lesson.

Reflection/Doctrinal Reference

By canonising some of the faithful, i.e. by solemnly proclaiming that they practised heroic virtue and lived in fidelity to God's grace, the Church recognises the power of the Spirit of holiness within her and sustains the hope of believers by proposing the saints to them as models and intercessors. ... Indeed, 'holiness is the hidden source and infallible measure of her apostolic activity and missionary zeal' (CL 17, 3)(CCC, n. 828).

Since Jesus is fully human and fully divine his life and work is instructive for our living the Christian message. Those close to Christ, who learned firsthand his approach to prayer, service and obedience to the Father's will, are instructive for our lives. St Peter with his energy, impulsiveness, insights, failings and repentance is a great human being, upon whom Christ relied strongly. He is one whose spirituality grows and deepens through contact with Christ.

The early Church gained a wide variety of people who lived like Jesus and embraced his message. Some became great figures in the Church by their preaching and steadfast commitment to Christ. St Paul is not only a contemporary of Christ but he shows that decisive changes sometimes have to be made. He also needed the cooperation of others in establishing the churches. Paul kept in touch with the communities he established, always concerned about their following and proclaiming the Christian message.

Through the centuries many great people have been acclaimed as saints for their outstanding example of commitment to Christ. St Teresa of Avila is another figure who lived in tumultuous times but gradually grew closer to Christ, refining her practice of prayer and establishing Carmelite houses that lived as Jesus did. Our call to discipleship is advanced by the example of saints, past and present, whose lives model for us an authentic Christian existence.

Student Focus

Students in this age group are frequently following role models. Students will model themselves after their father or mother, a favourite teacher, a sportsperson, a television personality. All of these individuals present particular traits and abilities that appeal to the student at that particular time. This modelling can be drawn upon to assist the student to understand the role of the saints in our lives of faith. The saints are there to help us and guide us on our journey in following Jesus.

Teaching Point

Saints show us how to live like Jesus. Remembering Point Saints show us how to live like Jesus.

Remembering Point

Saints show us how to live like Jesus.

Beginning

(5 minutes)

Welcome the students as usual.

Gather the students around the prayer focus.

Catechist: Today we will begin our prayer with the traditional sign of our faith. Let us make the Sign of the Cross together.

All: In the name of the Father ...

Catechist: Close your eyes and listen as I read from St Paul's first letter to the Corinthians.

¹⁰According to the grace of God given to me, like a skilled master builder I laid a foundation, and someone else is building on it. Each builder must choose with care how to build on it. ¹¹For no one can lay any foundation other than the one that has been laid; that foundation is Jesus Christ (1 Cor 3: 10–11)

Catechist: Lord, help us to continue the work of building on the foundation that you laid.

All: Help us to know how to build as you want us to build, following in the footsteps of your saints.

Catechist: We make this prayer through Christ, our Lord.

All: Amen.

Tell the students: St Paul describes himself as a master builder. He said the foundation of his life is Jesus Christ. Jesus is the foundation of our life, too. Like Paul, Peter and Teresa were also builders. The wonderful thing about saints is that they show us different ways of living like Jesus.

We all have our favourite saints, but today we will be looking at the way these three saints – Peter, Paul and Teresa of Avila – tried to live like Jesus.

Middle

(30 minutes)

Distribute the workbooks and **invite the students** to open them at pages 58–60, at the stories of St Peter, St Paul and St Teresa. (See Appendix 14b pages 80–81 for the stories of these saints.)

Tell the students: We will read the stories of these three saints, and while we are listening, let us think about how each one tried to live like Jesus.

As you finish reading the story of Peter, ask the students:

- What can you tell me about St Peter? *(This will be a summary of the story, don't dwell too long on this question.)*
- Why do you think Peter was frightened? *(This is an open-ended question, which means you can accept most of their answers. There is no one answer.)*

PREPARATION

1. Prayer focus: a candle, pictures of St Teresa, St Peter and St Paul (see Appendix 14c on page 82), the Bible opened at a reading from one of the letters of St Paul.
2. Have the response to the prayer on an A3 sheet and displayed where all the students can see it. E.g.

Help us to know how to build as you want us to build, following in the footsteps of your saints.

3. Sheet of A4 paper for the badge or certificate design.
4. Workbooks.
5. Coloured felt-tip pens, pencils or highlighters.
6. A large sheet of paper or a whiteboard for drawing a concept map (See Appendix 14a, page 79.)
7. Familiarise yourself, if necessary, with the example of the concept map in Appendix 14a, page 79.

PREPARATION

- Why do you think Jesus chose Peter to be the leader of his Church? *(This will draw forth discussion about Peter's suitability as a leader as well as the characteristics of leadership. Encourage the students to explore this question deeply.)*

Tell the students: Now we listen to the story of Paul. While we are listening, think about how Paul tried to follow Jesus.

At the conclusion of the story **ask the students:**

- Why do you think Paul persecuted the Christians? *(Again, this is an open-ended question that has no right answer. Encourage the students to explore the possibilities.)*
- How would you have felt if you were Ananias?

Tell the students: While we listen to the story of St Teresa of Avila, remember to think about how she tried to live like Jesus.

At the conclusion of the story, **ask the students:**

- Is there anything that you would like to be explained or clarified? *(Students may not know what a Carmelite nun is, or what words like 'contemplative' mean. If these two are not asked about, give a brief meaning for the terms. A Carmelite nun is someone who has formally committed their life to service of Jesus. They live in community with other women and follow a set of rules that are common for all Carmelite nuns. These nuns have regular times to pray and generally don't go outside the convent other than for emergencies. They are often called an 'enclosed' order of Sisters. Carmelite nuns are also called 'contemplative', which means they spend a lot of time in prayer and silence, contemplating, thinking about, meditating on God and how they can best serve God through living as Jesus wants them.)*

Ask the students:

- Why do you think Teresa found it hard to pray after she was sick?
- How do you think Teresa's message of reform was welcomed by the Sisters?

(Again these are open-ended questions and are asked to encourage the students to think a little more deeply about Teresa and what she was doing.)

Divide the students into groups of three or four.

Invite the students to open their workbooks at page 61 and the activity titled 'Saints live like Jesus'.

Tell the students: In your groups, consider each saint. What are the main points of each story. Discuss these with the other members of your group. Listen to each other, considering carefully what you might record in the space for each saint. Agree on the main points and write them in the appropriate space on page 61 of your workbook. Do tasks 2 and 3 and share your response with your group.

When the students have completed the task, **invite one student** from each group to share their answers. (Take one saint at a time.)

Collect together the main concepts or answers into a concept map. (Have 'Living Like Jesus' as the central item and connect all the ways

the saints have lived like Jesus, as indicated in the students' work. Leave space below each concept so that more can be written. An example of what the concept map might look like is in Appendix 14a, page 79.)

Taking each concept separately, **ask the students:** How can we ... *(be prayerful, for example, or How can we help others? Record all the answers under each label. The result will be a collection of ideas that link directly with the daily life of the students and how they might use what the saints have shown about living as Jesus wants.)*

Invite the students to select one concept and one idea that they can undertake during the coming weeks, and record it in their workbooks on page 62, in the space titled 'I can live like Jesus'.

Distribute the sheets of paper for the badge or certificate design.

Invite the students to design a badge or a certificate that can be awarded to someone in their class who, from what they have heard or seen, has shown them how to live like Jesus.

(If you would like to and have time, take a quick vote among the students to select which badge or certificate you might use as a group. When the vote is finished, agree to organise making copies to hand to people who show us how to live like Jesus.)

End

(7 minutes)

Gather the students around the prayer focus with their workbooks open at the prayer on page 62.

Invite a student to light the candle. As they light it, say:

Catechist: When we light our candle before we pray, we are remembering that Christ is the light of the world and is with us always.

All: In the name of the Father ...

Catechist: We thank you, Lord, for the saints and all those who have shown us how to live more like Jesus. Let us pray together one of the special prayers prayed by St Teresa.

All: Let nothing disturb you,
Let nothing frighten you,
All things are passing away:
God never changes.
Patience obtains all things,
Whoever has God lacks nothing;
God alone suffices.

Catechist: We make this prayer through Christ, our Lord.

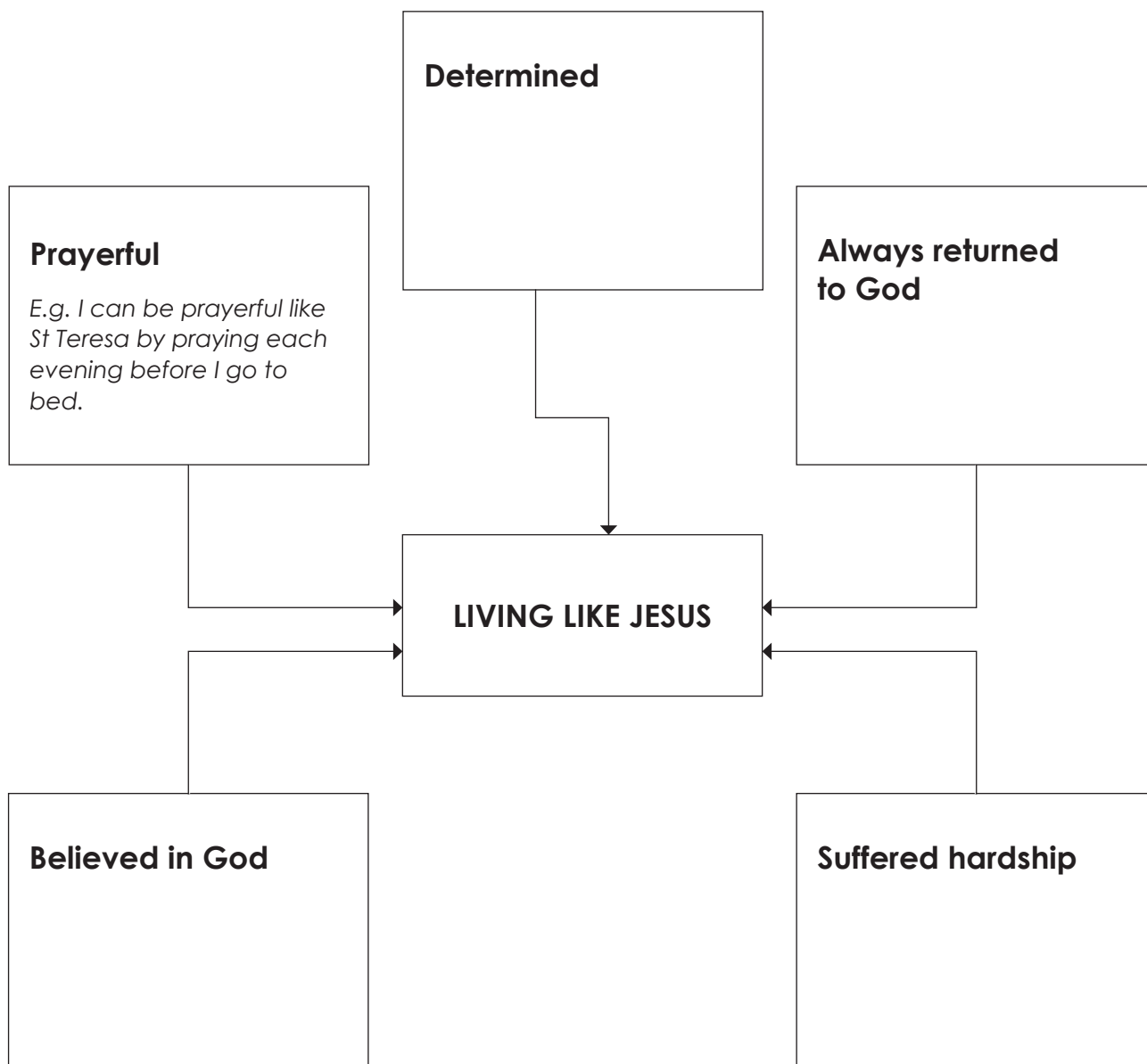
All: Amen.

Collect the workbooks and dismiss the students.

PREPARATION

Appendix 14a – Concept Map example

Below is an example of the concept map activity. Your class will produce something different. It is not necessary to have everything that is on this map appear on yours.



Appendix 14b – The Stories of St Peter, St Paul and St Teresa of Avila

The Story of St Peter

Our knowledge of the life of St Peter is limited to what we read in the Scriptures. Peter was a fisherman. He owned his own boats and fished alongside his brother. Peter was the first Apostle to be called by Jesus. We read in the Gospel of Mark that Peter was married. We know this because we are told that Jesus healed Peter's mother-in-law. There are many stories about him in the gospels and Acts.

Peter was a devoted follower of Jesus and remained with Jesus as he taught, healed and worked miracles, even up to Jesus' passion and death. In the garden of Gethsemane, we read in one account that Peter was ready to fight for Jesus and he cut off the high

priest's slave's ear. Yet we read in another account that, after Jesus was arrested and taken before the high priest, Peter was afraid. Peter was so afraid that he denied knowing Jesus.

Despite all of this, Jesus chose Peter to be the head of his Church (Mt 16: 13–20). He was the first Bishop of Rome. During the first century the early Christians suffered persecution at the hands of the Romans. During this time, according to tradition, Peter was imprisoned and finally executed on the same day as St Paul. Peter chose to be crucified upside down, saying he was unworthy to follow in Jesus' footsteps. We celebrate his feast day on 29 June.

The Story of St Paul

Paul was first known as Saul. He was both a Jew and a Roman citizen who viciously persecuted the first Christians. He had a dramatic conversion on the road to Damascus. We can read about his experience in the Acts of the Apostles:

Suddenly a light from heaven flashed around him. He fell to the ground and heard a voice saying 'Saul, Saul why do you persecute me?' He asked 'Who are you, Lord?' The reply came: 'I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting. But get up and enter the city, and you will be told what you are to do...' Saul got up from the ground, and though his eyes were open, he could see nothing; so they led him by the hand and brought him into Damascus. For three days he was without sight, and neither ate nor drank.

Now there was a disciple in Damascus named Ananias. The Lord said to him in a vision, 'Ananias.' He answered, 'Here I am, Lord.' The Lord said to him, 'Get up and go to the street called Straight, and at the house of Judas look for a man of Tarsus named Saul. At this moment he is praying, and he has seen in a vision a man named Ananias come in and lay his hands on him so that he might regain his sight.' Ananias protested saying, 'Lord, I have heard from many about this man, how much evil he has done to your saints in Jerusalem ...' But the Lord said to him, 'Go, for he is an instrument that I have chosen ... I myself will show

him how much he must suffer for the sake of my name.' So Ananias went and entered the house. He laid his hands on Saul and said, 'Brother Saul, the Lord Jesus, who appeared to you on your way here, has sent me so that you may regain your sight and be filled with the Holy Spirit.' And immediately something like scales fell from his eyes, and his sight was restored. Then he got up and was baptised ...' (Acts 9: 1–19).

After this, Paul began proclaiming in the synagogue that Jesus is the Son of God and because of this he too was hunted by the Jews.

Throughout Paul's life he travelled to many places to bring the teachings of Jesus Christ to the gentiles (non-Jewish people). Paul described his life in his writings to the churches he established. He said he had to face many hardships, including robbers and criticism from those of his own nation. Even the gentiles to whom he preached attacked him at times. He faced difficulties in the city, in the wilderness, and at sea. In Paul's many journeys to spread the word of God he was beaten, stoned, shipwrecked, and imprisoned. Paul's final journey was to Rome as a prisoner. It was there that he was beheaded.

St Paul, according to tradition, died on the same day as St Peter. Much of our knowledge of the early Church comes from the writings of St Paul. We celebrate his feast day on 29 June.

Appendix 14b – The Stories of St Peter, St Paul and St Teresa of Avila (continued)

The Story of St Teresa of Avila

St Teresa was born in Avila in Spain in 1515. At the age of seven she ran away with her brother to be martyred in Morocco. Her parents found them and brought them home. When her mother died, Teresa was 12 years old and became devoted to Our Lady as her spiritual mother. When Teresa was 16, her father sent her to a convent school to be educated. It was here that Teresa deepened her spiritual life and decided to become a nun. Teresa joined the Carmelite order but was disappointed with the lack of discipline in the convent.

Teresa contracted malaria, an illness that left her weak and in pain for many days. During her illness, Teresa experienced a closeness to God that helped her cope with the pain. For a time after her illness, Teresa found it hard to pray. Then she met a priest who encouraged her to go back to praying. Slowly, through patience and consistency, Teresa found her connection with God again.

When Teresa was 43 years of age she was determined to reform the Carmelite convents. Teresa wished for

the simple contemplative life of prayer and poverty to be the part of the Carmelite nuns' way of living. After she had established the renewed way of living as a Carmelite nun, Teresa undertook much travelling around Spain to establish convents and spread her reforms. To support her Sisters, Teresa wrote many spiritual works about prayer and our relationship with God. Regardless of what people said about her, Teresa continued to do the work of God.

Although she was the founder of the convent, she continued to work at all tasks like her fellow Sisters. She would take her turn at sweeping, spinning and other household tasks. Teresa wrote many things to help her fellow Sisters in their spiritual life. Her spiritual works are considered so important that she was made the first woman Doctor of the Church. Through her writings and her life she showed us how to live like Jesus.

She died in 1582 and her feast day is celebrated on 15 October.

Appendix 14c – Images of Sts Peter, Paul and Teresa of Avila



St Peter



St Paul



St Teresa of Avila

Prayer and Meditation

Background for the Catechist

Please take 10 minutes to reflect on the following introduction to this lesson.

Reflection/Doctrinal Reference

Meditation is above all a quest. The mind seeks to understand the why and how of the Christian life, in order to adhere and respond to what the Lord is asking. The required attentiveness is difficult to sustain. We are usually helped by books ... the Sacred Scriptures, particularly the gospels, holy icons, liturgical texts of the day or season, writings of the spiritual fathers, works of spirituality, the great book of creation, and that of history – the page on which the 'today' of God is written (CCC, n. 2705).

Sacred images in our churches and homes are intended to awaken and nourish our faith in the mystery of Christ. Through the icon of Christ and his works of salvation, it is he whom we adore. Through sacred images of the holy Mother of God, of the angels and of the saints, we venerate the persons represented (CCC, n.1192).

Two very helpful and longstanding ways of praying in the Catholic Tradition are meditation and the prayerful contemplation of sacred images and other symbols. Meditation requires the quiet, unhurried turning of the mind and heart to God through focusing on either a part of Scripture or words from other texts or simply, a focused consideration of an aspect of our faith. Meditating on the mysteries of the Rosary is for many a particularly helpful way of meditating. The physical saying of the prayers marks out a period in which the mind and heart can dwell on a particular incident in the life of Christ. Others find it easier simply to imagine a scene and try to enter it with all their heart or to seek the inner meaning for them of whatever person or event they are meditating upon. Similarly images and symbols both sacred and natural, can lay hold of not only our eyes but our imagination and lead us to union with the holy ones they represent or to a deeper understanding of the significance of Christ and the saints.

Student Focus

Students of this age have probably played many games that require the use of the imagination and are quite familiar with creating inner images. They may not be comfortable with, or used to, long periods of silence and require 'training' or practice in meditation and silence.

Teaching Point

There are various ways of praying: meditation and praying with images and symbols.

Remembering Point

We can pray in different ways.

Beginning

(10 minutes)

Welcome the students as usual.

Gather the students around the prayer focus.

Distribute the student workbooks and **invite the students** to open them at page 63.

Catechist: Let us make the Sign of the Cross together.

All: In the name of the Father...

Catechist: Come, Holy Spirit, be with us as we begin our lesson. May we deepen our relationship with God, our Father, and Jesus, his Son, and you, Holy Spirit, through entering into prayer through meditation.

All: Come, Holy Spirit, and guide us in our prayer.

Catechist: We make this prayer to the Father, through the Son, and in the Holy Spirit.

All: Amen.

Direct the students' attention to the large sheet of paper on display.

Ask them: What do you think the word 'meditation' means?

Give each student a felt pen and **invite them** to record their answers around the word on the large sheet of paper. *(The students may not know what the word means. If this is the case, tell the students. An explanation is provided below.)*

Invite the students to return to their seats.

Tell the students: Meditation is a way of praying. You have reflected on many different ways of praying in other lessons. Today we will be looking at what meditation means as well as practising how to meditate.

Invite the students to turn to page 63 in their workbook to the section titled 'Meditation'. **Invite one** of the students to read the description.

Ask the students: Is there anything that you would like clarified? *(Answer the students' questions regarding meditation. If they get off track, remind them that these questions are to clarify or further explain what they have read.)*

Middle

(35 minutes)

Tell the students: Today we are going to try to meditate on a passage from Scripture. The first thing you need to do is come out to the front and either sit on a chair or sit on the floor, whichever is more comfortable.

When the students are settled use the following script. (If the students are not familiar with, or used to, quiet and meditation, you will need to shorten this to a length that works for them.)

PREPARATION

1. Prayer focus: a yellow or bright-coloured cloth, a contrasting candle, the Bible, an icon of either Jesus, a saint or Mary.
 2. Join two sheets of A3 paper to form a poster. Write 'Meditation' in the middle of the poster. E.g.
- MEDITATION**
3. Workbooks.
 4. CD of reflective music and a CD player.
 5. Felt-tip pens.

PREPARATION

Tell the students: Sit in a comfortable position. If you would like to lie flat, then do so. Make sure you are not close to anyone else. *(Adjust this instruction to suit your setting and space. Have the students seated if you have little space or take the students to the church if it is close by.)*

As you sit, (or lie still), become conscious of the sounds around you. Identify each sound and then listen for the next one. *(Pause)*

Now let all those sounds go and become aware of your breathing, breathing in ... and breathing out ... Allow your breathing to slow down and as you take each breath, in then out, allow yourself to relax.

(After three or four slow breaths) Now as I read this story from the life of Jesus, create the pictures in your mind, following my instructions.

(Pause)

Imagine yourself on a road in the rocky and rugged desert heading towards a town called Jericho, not far from Jerusalem.

You are with Jesus and his apostles. Imagine that you are one of Jesus' chosen twelve. Are you Peter, James or John? Or imagine that you are observing as someone in the crowd.

You have travelled a long way with Jesus, listened to him and talked with him. Now, on the road, heading to Jerusalem, you come across a man on the side of the road.

The man is blind and he is holding his hand out begging. When he hears the crowd going by, he asks someone what is happening.

Some people from your group tell him: 'Jesus of Nazareth is passing by.'

Then he begins to shout, 'Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!' The people who are standing in front of him, order him to keep quiet, but the blind man shouts even louder. 'Son of David, have mercy on me!'

Jesus stops.

Jesus looks around and tells you to go and bring the man to him.

As you get close to Jesus with the blind man, Jesus asks him: 'What do you want me to do for you?'

The blind man beside you stands up tall and says, 'Lord, let me see again.'

Jesus looks at him and says: 'Receive your sight: your faith has saved you'.

While you are looking at the man you notice a broad smile appear on his face as his eyes focus on Jesus.

It is obvious to you that the man can now see. You look at Jesus, astounded.

Take a few moments to talk to Jesus about what you have seen.

Listen to what Jesus says in return to you. *(Pause, allow a few moments for this part.)*

Jesus invites you to continue to walk with him and be with him on his journey. The man whose sight has returned joins the group and follows as Jesus, you and the other apostles continue on the journey to Jerusalem.

(Pause)

Now become aware of your breathing ... breathe in ... and breathe out. Slowly become aware of how you are sitting or lying.

When you are ready, open your eyes, sit up if you are lying down, and move back in your seat if you are on the floor.

Take time with the students to 'debrief' them and their experience.

Ask the student:

- How did you find that experience of meditation?
- What did you find hard or easy?

Tell the students: Sit for a few moments, savouring the experience. What you have just experienced is a form of prayer that you can do yourself. You can place yourself into the scene of any story in Scripture. You can talk and listen to Jesus, any time. Listen closely to what he says and respond seriously from the heart.

You know there are many ways of praying. We can 'say' prayers, we can sing, we can move prayerfully. We have just used our imagination to pray, to hear what Jesus has to say to us. Another way is to use the images that we see in the church or on different posters and bookmarks. These images are often referred to as 'Sacred Images'. We are not praying to the image but rather using the image to guide our prayer through Jesus to God. They help focus us in prayer.

Let us look at an icon which is a particular type of sacred image.

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Invite the students to gather in a semi-circle.

Display the icon of Jesus, Mary or a saint in a prominent position where all the students can see it clearly.

Tell the students: We can use all our senses to pray. In the Middle-Ages when most people were unable to read, images and pictures were used to help them understand about their faith. Icons, in particular, were used to help people pray. The icon gave people an image to think about, to reflect on and focus their thoughts so that they might turn their mind and heart to God.

So let's give it a try.

Once again, sit quietly and comfortably. Look at the image in front of you.

Ask the students:

- Who do you see?
- What's happening in the image?
- What is the image about?
- Do you like this image? Why or why not?
- Have you seen anything similar?
- What does this say to you about God, Jesus, Trinity, Spirit?
- What might you say to God at the moment, about the picture, about others, about your life?
- If you had to name this art piece, what might you call it?

Allow about 15 minutes for the reflection.

PREPARATION

PREPARATION

End*(15 minutes)*

Direct the students to page 64 in their workbook and the activity titled 'My response'.

Tell the students: You have had two experiences of praying and meditation today. Now I invite you to sit quietly and think about the experience. When you are ready, respond in some way in the space provided. You might like to write a journal entry, or you may feel moved to write a poem. You might want to write a prayer or draw a symbol. However you wish to respond to the experience, you can do so. You will have 10 minutes. I will play some quiet reflective music. Remember, this is a private reflection, not group work, so I ask you to work on your own.

When the students have finished, **invite them** to join you around the prayer focus.

Catechist: As I light this candle to remind us that Jesus Christ is and has been with us today, let us be still and sit close to God.

All: In the name of the Father ...

Catechist: Let us give thanks to God, through his Son, Jesus, for the special opportunity we have had to pray.

All: Our Father ...

Collect the workbooks and dismiss the students.

Jesus, the Word of God

Background for the Catechist

Please take 10 minutes to reflect on the following introduction to this lesson.

Reflection/Doctrinal Reference

For this reason the apostles confess Jesus to be the Word: 'In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God'; as 'the image of the invisible God'; as the 'radiance of the glory of God and the very stamp of his nature' (CCC, n. 241).

Everything God wanted to tell humankind about God's nature is found in the person of Christ. All human life has a dignity, not merely because we were created by God but because God came and shared every element of our existence. Therefore young children are especially blessed by God, not merely because Jesus said 'blessed are they' but more importantly because *he was once a child*.

So every element of his life will teach us something about God, and God's nature: his origins, birth, baptism, temptations, early ministry, parables, healings, warnings, suffering, death, resurrection, ascension and enthronement as Lord. This notion of Jesus being the image of God is a rich, mysterious one that we can explore and probe in order to learn about God's love for us.

Student Focus

Your students will have been involved in many lessons about Jesus. They will have some sense of Jesus' life and contribution to our understanding of God. It is important that these students see Jesus as more than just a teacher or preacher 2000 years ago, but rather as a person who embodied the full meaning of God. Your students will know how people in their lives convey many messages through their words and especially through their actions. This understanding will help them understand some of what this lesson is about.

Teaching Point

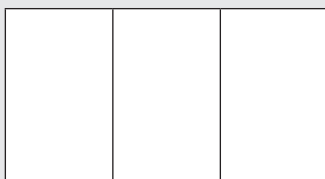
Jesus is the Word of God.

Remembering Point

Everything about Jesus tells me something about God.

PREPARATION

1. Prayer focus: a cloth, a candle, a statue or picture of Jesus or a picture story book of the Life of Christ.
2. Workbooks.
3. Prepare a storyboard by dividing into three a metre-long piece of greaseproof paper. E.g.



4. A whiteboard or a large piece of paper on which to write student responses toward the end of the lesson.
5. Coloured pencils, felt-tip pens or highlighters.

Beginning

(12 minutes)

Welcome the students as usual.

Hand out the workbooks and **invite the students** to open them at page 65. **Invite one** student to read the Scripture passage during the prayer.

Gather around the prayer focus.

Catechist: Let us begin our prayer in the usual way.

All: In the name of the Father ...

Catechist: We will now listen to the reading from the Gospel of Luke (1: 26–38), read by _____ (add student's name)

Student: ²⁶In the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent by God to a town in Galilee called Nazareth, ²⁷to a virgin engaged to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David. The virgin's name was Mary. ²⁸And he came to her and said, 'Greetings, favoured one! The Lord is with you.' ²⁹But she was much perplexed by his words and pondered what sort of greeting this might be. ³⁰The angel said to her, 'Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favour with God. ³¹And now, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you will name him Jesus. ³²He will be great, and will be called the Son of the Most High, and the Lord God will give to him the throne of his ancestor David. ³³He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there will be no end.' ³⁴Mary said to the angel, 'How can this be, since I am a virgin?' ³⁵The angel said to her, 'The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; therefore the child to be born will be holy; he will be called Son of God. ³⁶And now, your relative Elizabeth in her old age has also conceived a son; and this is the sixth month for her who was said to be barren. ³⁷For nothing will be impossible with God.' ³⁸Then Mary said, 'Here am I, the servant of the Lord; let it be with me according to your word.' Then the angel departed from her.

Catechist: Let us now pause and think about what we have heard. Let us consider: What was the message to Mary? How might she have felt? What is the message from God to us, today? (Pause)

Let's now pray the Angelus, a traditional prayer of the Church.

Catechist: The angel spoke God's message to Mary,

Students: And she conceived of the Holy Spirit.
Hail Mary ...

Catechist: I am the lowly servant of the Lord:

Students: let it be done to me according to your word.
Hail Mary ...

Catechist: And the Word became flesh

Students: And lived among us.
Hail Mary...

Catechist: Pray for us, holy Mother of God,

Students: That we may become worthy of the promises of Christ.

All: In the name of the Father ...

Invite the students to return to their seats.

Tell the students: Let us look back at the text on page 65. Underline in one colour who God sent to Nazareth and in another colour who the favoured one was.

Now if we look at the Angelus prayer, we will also see the words that Mary spoke. Underline those words of Mary (*I am the lowly servant of the Lord, be it done to me according to your word.*)

Ask the students: What do you think the phrase 'the Word became flesh' means? (*That Jesus was the Son of God, born in the world to a human mother, and sent by God.*)

Middle

(30 minutes)

Tell the students: Today we are going to be talking about the life of Jesus. We are going to explore how everything about Jesus tells us something about God. We will do this by studying the stories in Sacred Scripture that show what Jesus taught about God in his preaching and actions. By studying these stories we are better able to understand why, as Catholics, we believe what we believe.

Gather the students at the front of the class or space.

Read the following text to the students. **Invite the students** to follow in their workbooks on page 66:

³⁵On that day, when evening had come, he said to them, 'Let us go across to the other side.' ³⁶And leaving the crowd behind, they took him with them in the boat, just as he was. Other boats were with him. ³⁷A great windstorm arose, and the waves beat into the boat, so that the boat was already being swamped. ³⁸But he was in the stern, asleep on the cushion; and they woke him up and said to him, 'Teacher do you not care that we are perishing?' ³⁹He woke up and rebuked the wind, and said to the sea, 'Peace! Be still!' The wind ceased, and there was a dead calm. ⁴⁰He said to them, 'Why are you afraid? Have you still no faith?' ⁴¹And they were filled with great awe and said to one another, 'Who then is this, that even the wind and the sea obey him?' (Mk 4: 35–41)

Ask the students: Who are the characters in the story? (*The disciples and Jesus are the main characters.*)

Invite the students to underline what the disciples say with one colour and, using another colour, to circle the words of Jesus.

Ask the students: What are the three main scenes of this story?

PREPARATION

PREPARATION

Using the greaseproof paper with the storyboard marked into three scenes, **invite the students** to draw each of the scenes. Divide the group between the three scenes. (If the group is too large, you might consider using two storyboards.)

At the bottom of the last scene **tell the students** to write the words Jesus spoke.

Ask the students: What is Jesus trying to tell us about God through his words and actions in this story?

When the students have answered, **invite them** to complete the sentence: Jesus is telling us ... about God, and **write it** under Jesus' words on the storyboard.

Invite the students to return to their seats.

Tell the students: You will see a number of scripture texts about Jesus on the next few pages of your workbook. I will allocate one of the texts to you. Read the text, and underline the words of Jesus. Answer the questions about the text in the space provided.

Then divide the text into three scenes and draw the scenes on the storyboard on page 71. Beside each scene write what Jesus said and then identify what Jesus is telling us about God. Complete the sentence: 'Jesus is telling us ... about God', as we did earlier. Then turn your book sideways and complete the following: Why is this important for me as a Christian?

You will have 15 minutes for this activity.

(Move around the group offering encouragement and keeping the students on track. Remind the students that the drawing is not the most important part, but rather the words of Jesus, what Jesus is telling us about God, and why this is important for us to know.)

Invite each student to share their completed sentences: Jesus is telling us ...

On the whiteboard or on a large sheet of paper, record only a simple word or phrase from the students' answer, e.g. God forgives.

Ask the students:

- What have we learnt about God in these passages?
- What Christian beliefs or teachings about God come to mind now that you have read and studied the Scriptures?

Highlight the answers that match what you already have written and add anything that has not already been said. Record the teachings underneath the appropriate sections.

Tell the students: All of these answers tell us something about God. We can see clearly that everything that Jesus said and did tells us something about God and God's goodness.

Collect the workbooks.

End

(10 minutes)

Gather the students around the prayer focus.

Tell the students: Today we have looked at a number of stories about Jesus and what he did. You even looked closely at one yourself, and identified what Jesus was telling us about God. Now I invite you to close your eyes and think about the story for which you drew the storyboard.

Ask the students:

- What is the message of the story you read?
- What is the message for you as a Christian today?

(Pause)

Catechist: Let us begin our prayer:

All: In the name of the Father ...

Catechist: God, our Father,
You sent Jesus, your Son to teach us about your goodness.
Help us to listen closely to your Word in Jesus Christ.
May we hear what you are telling us for our lives,
now and always.
We make this prayer through Christ, Our Lord.

All: Amen.

Dismiss the students as usual.

PREPARATION

The Promise of the Holy Spirit

Background for the Catechist

Please take 10 minutes to reflect on the following introduction to this lesson.

Reflection/Doctrinal Reference

Only when the hour has arrived for his glorification does Jesus promise the coming of the Holy Spirit, since his Death and Resurrection will fulfil the promise made to the fathers. The Spirit of truth, the other Paraclete, will be given by the Father in answer to Jesus' prayer (CCC, n. 729).

'And when you turn to the right or when you turn to the left, your ears shall hear a word behind you, saying, "This is the way; walk in it."' This famous text from Isaiah 30: 21 places God as the guide in your life. All people need someone to assist them in their journey of life. People are guided by their conscience, by their key influences, by parents, by special events and by chance: all people take guidance from someone or some group – good or bad! This truism also operates in the Church: we need guidance. God works through mediators to lead people on their journey. The Holy Spirit of Christ was mysteriously left to the Church to be present in the community. The Spirit is a voice, a prayer behind you, within you, assisting you to select your direction in life.

Student Focus

These students are preparing to receive the sacrament of Confirmation. It is a serious time for them and they will take this seriously. They are generally familiar with the third person of the Holy

Trinity, the Spirit, and have explored the story of Pentecost many times over the years. They are at the end of their primary school years and have a particular confidence and belief that they are moving on to something bigger and better. It is a good opportunity to encourage their maturity and responsibility and how they might benefit from receiving this sacrament.

Teaching Point

Jesus promised the disciples he would send the Holy Spirit to help and guide them.

Remembering Point

The Holy Spirit guides my life.

Beginning

(10 minutes)

Gather the students as usual. **Invite the students** to gather around the prayer focus and prepare for prayer.

Catechist: Let us begin by asking the Holy Spirit to be with us as we begin our lesson. Our response is: Come, Holy Spirit, Come.

All: Come, Holy Spirit, come.

Catechist: Jesus promised to send the Holy Spirit.

All: Come, Holy Spirit, come.

Catechist: Holy Spirit, enlighten our minds.

All: Come, Holy Spirit, come.

Invite the students to return to their seats and to open their workbooks at page 72.

Invite one student to read the extract from John's Gospel and invite the others to follow in their books.

Jn 14: 15–17a, 25–26 (Jesus promised the disciples that he would send the Spirit).

¹⁵If you love me, you will keep my commandments. ¹⁶And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Advocate, to be with you for ever. ¹⁷This is the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees him nor knows him.

²⁵I have said these things to you while I am still with you. ²⁶But the Advocate, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you everything, and remind you of all that I have said to you.

Invite the students to read the definition of 'advocate' in their workbooks on page 73.

Advocate: A person who acts on another's behalf, e.g. solicitor, supporter, sponsor, guide, helper, someone who encourages us.

Pentecost: Jewish festival held 50 days after the Passover; Christian festival celebrating the first coming of the Holy Spirit; festival held 50 days after Easter; the celebration of the birth of the Church.

Ask the students: How is the Holy Spirit an advocate? (*Encourage the students to attempt to answer the questions. The glossary will help them with the answer.*)

Invite the students to:

- underline or highlight Jesus' promise
- circle the names that Jesus gives the Holy Spirit
- using a different colour, underline or highlight the actions of the Holy Spirit.

Walk around the class as the students do this work, helping as necessary.

PREPARATION

1. Prayer focus: a cloth, a candle, the Bible.
2. Workbooks.
3. Highlighters or coloured pencils.

PREPARATION

Middle*(35 minutes)***Tell the students:** Now we will read the story of how Jesus kept his promise.**Invite the students** to read the story of Pentecost with you.**Tell them:** You will take the narrator's part and I will take the crowd's part.**Acts 2: 1–12 (The Coming of the Holy Spirit)**

Narrator: ¹When the day of Pentecost had come, they were all together in one place. ²And suddenly from heaven there came a sound like the rush of a violent wind, and it filled the entire house where they were sitting. ³Divided tongues, as of fire, appeared among them, and a tongue rested on each of them. ⁴All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other languages, as the Spirit gave them ability.

⁵Now there were devout Jews from every nation under heaven living in Jerusalem. ⁶And at this sound the crowd gathered and was bewildered, because each one heard them speaking in the native language of each. ⁷Amazed and astonished, they asked,

Crowd: ⁸'Are not all these who are speaking Galileans?' ⁹And how is it that we hear, each of us, in our own native language? ⁹Parthians, Medes, Elamites, and residents of Mesopotamia, Judea and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia, ¹⁰Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and the parts of Libya belonging to Cyrene, and visitors from Rome, both Jews and proselytes, ¹¹Cretans and Arabs—in our own languages we hear them speaking about God's deeds of power'.

Narrator: ¹²All were amazed and perplexed, saying to one another,

Crowd: 'What does this mean?'

Tell the students: Now read the definition of Pentecost in the glossary on page 73. When you have completed that, look at the text again and highlight or underline the words which answer the following questions:

- What did the disciples see and hear? (Fire, wind)
- What was the sign that the disciples were filled with the Holy Spirit?

Invite the students to form into pairs and share their answers to these questions:

- How do you think the disciples felt when they began speaking in other languages?
- What else do you think the Holy Spirit enabled them to do? Invite some students to share their responses with the whole group. Invite the pairs to form into groups of four.

Tell the students: In your group, discuss the possible answers to the questions in your workbook on page 74 titled, 'The First Pentecost'.

When you have decided what the best answer is for each question, each of you is to record your answer in the flame for each question.

Ask the students:

- The story of the first Pentecost contains three symbols of the Holy Spirit. What do you think they are? (*Wind, fire, speech. If the students can't work it out, tell them.*)
- What effect does wind have in our world? (*Drives wind turbines, soothes on a hot day, ...*)
- What effect does fire have in our world? (*Keeps us warm, gives light, ...*)
- What effect does speech have in our world? (*To communicate, share ideas, inform, ask ...*)
- If wind, fire and speech have these effects in everyday life, what might they mean as symbols of the Holy Spirit?

Tell the students: When you have finished answering these questions, each of you is to complete the 'Illustrating the Symbols' activity on page 75 of your workbook.

In the space provided, draw something that represents each symbol. Then write an explanation as to why you have chosen this image and what it says about the Holy Spirit.

Walk around the groups, giving help and encouragement where required.

Invite two or three students to share their responses, if time allows.

Tell the students: Now, just for yourself to consider, think carefully and quietly about the following question:

How is the Holy Spirit living in you? (*Allow the students a few minutes to consider their response to this question.*)

Collect the workbooks.

End

(5 minutes)

Invite the students to gather around the prayer focus.

Catechist: During our prayer, there will be a time when we can say silently how the Holy Spirit is living in us.

Catechist: The response to our prayer is 'Come, Holy Spirit, come'. The same Holy Spirit who filled the disciples is also living in us in lots of different ways.

All: Come, Holy Spirit, come.

Catechist: The Spirit gives us encouragement to live a faith-filled life.

All: Come, Holy Spirit, come.

Catechist: The Spirit helps us to remember Jesus' teachings.

All: Come, Holy Spirit, come.

Catechist: The Holy Spirit lives in me. (Pause to allow the group to recall how the Holy Spirit is living in them.)

All: Come, Holy Spirit, come.

Dismiss the students as usual.

PREPARATION

The Church: Pentecost Today

Background for the Catechist

Please take 10 minutes to reflect on the following introduction to this lesson.

Reflection/Doctrinal Reference

The Church was made manifest to the world on the day of Pentecost by the outpouring of the Holy Spirit. The gift of the Spirit ushers in a new era in the 'dispensation of the mystery' – the age of the Church, during which Christ manifests, makes present, and communicates his work of salvation through the liturgy of his Church, 'until he comes' (CCC, n. 1076).

The Pentecost story is the story of a group that recognises that God was powerfully present with them. Though the Pentecost experience was momentous, it was followed by the ordinariness of a daily proclamation of the gospel. Discipleship is not always a riveting experience or a Damascus Road conversion but a life-long commitment to the task. The Church today is filled with God's Holy Spirit of life and love. Occasionally the energy of the Spirit is palpably sensed in heightened awareness, and at other times it is the regular breathing of the Body of Christ that sustains us. It is, as Pope Francis calls it, the *common sanctity* of people going about their lives. The Spirit of God lives in our Church in our world today. We are called to make manifest to others the 'new era' that Pentecost inaugurated.

Student Focus

Students of this age are able to apply teachings and understandings of faith to their daily lives. These students, being older, have more life experiences to call upon. They are interested in talking about and discussing issues that cause them to think and apply beliefs and understandings. Challenging students of this age to think beyond themselves is appropriate in that it assists students to grow in empathy and understanding of others.

Teaching Point

Pentecost continues today in the life of the believing community, the Church.

Remembering Point

The Holy Spirit lives in the Church, in me, today.

Beginning

(15 minutes)

Welcome the students as usual.

Gather the students around the prayer focus.

Organise the students into two groups.

Hand out the workbooks and **invite the students** to open them at the prayer on page 76.

Tell the students: For our prayer today, we will alternate sides, with those on my left reading the first paragraph and those on my right reading the second paragraph, and continue like this for the whole prayer.

Invite one of the students to light the candle.

Catechist: We remember that Christ is present with us always and lighting this candle reminds us of this today.

All: In the name of the Father ...

Catechist: As we gather today to understand more about the love of God, we pray in thanksgiving and praise that in Jesus we have the example to follow, and the gift of the Holy Spirit to strengthen us on our mission.

(Ps 138: 1–5, 8)

Left side: I give thanks, O Lord, with my whole heart ... I sing your praise; I bow down toward your holy temple and give thanks to your name for your steadfast love and your faithfulness; for you have exalted your name and your word above everything. On the day I called, you answered me, you increased my strength of soul.

Right side: All the kings of the earth shall praise you, O Lord, for they have heard the words of your mouth. They shall sing of the ways of the Lord, for great is the glory of the Lord.

Left side: The Lord will fulfil his purpose for me; your steadfast love, O Lord, endures forever.

Right side: Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit,

Left side: as it was in the beginning is now and ever shall be, world without end.

All: Amen.

Invite the students to return to their seats.

Ask the students:

- What was the impact of the Holy Spirit coming at Pentecost?
(*The arrival of the Holy Spirit was an injection of enthusiasm into a group disabled by fear and disappointment. This is not necessarily the answer that the students will give. Encourage the students to think in a diverse way and welcome all answers.*)

PREPARATION

1. Prayer focus: a red cloth, a yellow or white candle and the Bible.
2. Copies of the scenario starters for each group, in Appendix 18, page 102.
3. Workbooks.

PREPARATION

- How did the Holy Spirit affect the disciples? *(Encourage the students to reflect on the previous lesson. There will be a variety of answers that articulate something like: It enabled them to joyously go out and proclaim the message of a risen Christ. They were to tell all the world that people could change and be saved.)*
- How would you describe the Holy Spirit and his impact on the early Church after Pentecost? *(Encourage the students to answer. Again, there will be a variety of answers which will deepen the understanding of the impact of the Holy Spirit. Accept them all.)*
- What does this mean for us today? *(This is a personalised question and as such is very open-ended with no one answer. Encourage the students to offer diverse answers that will broaden their thinking and ultimately their own actions.)*

Middle

(35 minutes)

Invite the students to open their workbooks at page 77 and the activity titled 'The Holy Spirit'.

Tell the students: In the space provided, write down what you know about the Holy Spirit.

Ask the students:

- What stories have you heard about Pope Francis? *(Encourage students to recall stories from the television news and newspapers.)*
- How has Pope Francis responded to the gifts of the Holy Spirit? *(Students' answers will probably include some of the actions of Pope Francis mentioned in response to the previous question.)*

Invite the students to find a partner.

Ask the students: Who do you know, or have heard about, who lives as a Spirit-filled person like Pope Francis?

Tell the students: In your pair, identify people who live using the gifts of the Holy Spirit. Choose one person. Then, in your workbook on page 77 in the space titled 'A Spirit-filled Person', write the person's name and list all the attributes of the person that identify them as being Spirit-filled. List their gifts and how they use their gifts for others. Identify what attracted you to this person and how they continue Pentecost today.

Invite one student from each pair to share what they have written.

Tell the students: These people all live their lives as Spirit-filled people. The Pentecost experience was momentous, but it was followed by the ordinariness of daily living. We are not able to do wonderful things every day. One of the things that often makes a person stand out is how they live the ordinary part of their life. How do they talk to people, how do they share their lives at home, washing and cleaning, caring for their family? This is what we are called to do. We are called to live like Jesus in our ordinariness.

Invite the students to join with another pair, making a group of four.

Give each group the beginning of a scenario and invite them to act out what happens next, showing how they live in the Spirit in the ordinariness of their lives.

Scenario 1. A group of children is shooting hoops. One child is being teased, taunted and excluded. One of the group is unwilling to accept the taunting and exclusion ... What happens next?

Scenario 2. A child is sitting at the kitchen table trying to do homework. The child works, rubs out, works, rubs out and finally bursts into tears. An older brother notices ... What happens next?

Scenario 3. An older person is walking down the street with a shopping bag in each hand. One of the bags gives way and all the contents spill onto the ground. A passing student sees the problem ... What happens next?

Invite the groups to act out their scenarios with their conclusions.

Tell the students: Pope Francis talks about the breathing of the Holy Spirit enabling us to live our ordinary lives in an extraordinary way – a common sanctity. How is a common sanctity being lived in these examples? Turn to page 78 in your workbook and individually record your answers for each scenario in the space provided, titled 'A Common Sanctity'.

Invite three or four different students who don't usually speak to share their answers.

Tell the students: In your groups, discuss how you might live this common sanctity, live your ordinary lives in an extraordinary way. Then individually write in your workbooks on page 79 in the space titled 'I can be a Spirit-filled person ...' all the ways you can act like Jesus in the ordinary things you do each day. This is how we live a Spirit-filled life. We can't all go off to help the sick and dying, neither can we all work for nothing with the poor. But we can all live our daily, ordinary life in a way that uses the gifts of the Holy Spirit and follows Jesus.

You will have 10 minutes for this activity.

PREPARATION

PREPARATION

End*(5 minutes)*

Gather the students around the prayer focus.

Catechist: Let us pray to the Holy Spirit, asking that we might become truly Spirit-filled. Let us begin with the Sign of the Cross.

All: In the name of the Father ...

Catechist: Come, Holy Spirit, and fill our hearts.

All: May we be filled with the Holy Spirit

Catechist: God of all goodness, light the flame of your glory and grant us the desire to live each moment filled with the Holy Spirit.

All: Come, Holy Spirit, and fill our hearts.

Catechist: God, source of all that is beautiful and right, open our eyes that we might see the needs of others around us, that we might respond with the gifts of the Holy Spirit, and that we might always seek to do what is right in the ordinariness of our lives.

All: Come, Holy Spirit, and fill our hearts.

Catechist: We make this prayer through Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever.

All: Amen.

Collect the workbooks and dismiss as usual.

Appendix 18 – Scenarios

Photocopy these scenarios onto card, laminate them, cut them into strips and distribute them to the groups. Ensure you have enough for one per group. If you have more than three groups, then double up on the scenarios.

Scenario 1

A group of children is shooting hoops. One child is being teased, taunted and excluded. One of the group is unwilling to accept the taunting and exclusion ... What happens next?

In your group, discuss what could happen and decide on what would be the Spirit-filled response. Practise acting out the scenario with your ending.

Scenario 2

A child is sitting at the kitchen table trying to do homework. The child works, rubs out, works, rubs out and finally bursts into tears. An older brother notices ... What happens next?

In your group, discuss what could happen and decide on what would be the Spirit-filled response. Practise acting out the scenario with your ending.

Scenario 3

An older person is walking down the street with a shopping bag in each hand. One of the bags gives way and all the contents spill onto the ground. A passing student sees the problem ... What happens next?

In your group, discuss what could happen and decide on what would be the Spirit-filled response. Practise acting out the scenario with your ending.

Baptism

Background for the Catechist

Please take 10 minutes to reflect on the following introduction to this lesson.

Reflection/Doctrinal Reference

Incorporated into Christ by Baptism, the person baptised is configured to Christ. Baptism seals the Christian with the indelible spiritual mark (character) of his belonging to Christ (CCC, n. 1272).

The Church, a communion living in the faith of the apostles which she transmits, is the place where we know the Holy Spirit: in the Scriptures he inspired; in the Tradition, to which the Church Fathers are always timely witnesses; in the Church's Magisterium, which he assists; in the sacramental liturgy, through its words and symbols, in which the Holy Spirit puts us into communion with Christ; in prayer, wherein he intercedes for us ... (CCC, n. 688).

In the baptismal ceremony, we read the Good News of Jesus Christ: we recall the story of God's love for each and every person. The symbols of Baptism are many: the water, the lighted candle, the oil and the white garment. The water is a key symbol in this sacrament but it is surprisingly connected to death rather than washing and cleansing. Finally, at Baptism the newly initiated is brought to the altar as a sign that the fullness of Initiation will be gained at the reception of First Eucharist and Confirmation. The ritual of naming a child, being announced at the Church door and making the sign of Christ's cross on the forehead of the one to be welcomed into the Church, all work to raise our awareness of the importance of this act of faith. Each ritual reminds us of the communal and personal nature of this sacrament. By exploring the meaning of the symbols employed in Baptism, we can gain a glimpse of the mystery of the sacrament being celebrated.

Student Focus

Many students will have younger siblings whom they have seen being baptised. This is a great opportunity to recall with them what happened. Students of this age will be very familiar with ritual and the importance of doing the same things in the same way each time, so that it gains a significance beyond the ordinary. This is particularly true of sportspeople who follow particular rituals before important games. Students themselves will have rituals of their own for particularly important events.

Teaching Point

Through exploring the symbols of Baptism, we grow in understanding of how we can live in Jesus.

Remembering Point

The symbols of Baptism help me understand about living in Jesus.

Beginning

(7 minutes)

Welcome the students as usual.

Gather the students around the prayer focus placed in the middle of the room.

Invite the students to look at the symbols.

Ask the students:

- Why do you think I have put all of these items here?
- What might they remind us of? *(Take any responses the students give. If no one recognises the items as part of a Baptism ritual, tell them that today we are looking at how the symbols of Baptism help us understand more about living in Jesus.)*

Give out the workbooks and **invite the students** to open them at page 80.

Tell the students: We will now prepare for our prayer by being still and quiet. Have one student turn on the music.

After a few minutes of quiet reflection, **invite the students** to pray.

All: In the name of the Father ...

Catechist: Let us pray together

All: God, our Father, when we were baptised you gave us your Spirit to help us live like you. We look forward to Confirmation when you will give us the fullness of your Spirit. So we pray together,
Come, Holy Spirit, come.
Amen.

Send the students to their seats.

Tell the students: Today we're going to explore some of the symbols used when we were baptised. I don't remember my Baptism because I was still a baby. Can anyone remember being baptised? Perhaps some of you have been to someone's Baptism. What do you remember? *(Take any responses students give but don't worry if they don't remember.)*

Middle

(35 minutes)

Organise the students into four groups and assign each group to a different symbol of Baptism (oil, water, light, white garment). If you have a large number of students, you could form eight groups and assign two groups to each symbol.

Distribute the A3 sheets and felt-tipped pens to each group.

PREPARATION

1. Prayer focus: a white cloth, a large bowl of water, a lighted candle, a white garment, a small bowl of oil.
2. CD of quiet reflective music to be played during the prayer.
3. Felt-tipped pens.
4. On each of four A3 sheets of paper, write the names of each symbol.
5. Workbooks.

PREPARATION

Tell the students: Now turn to pages 80–82 in your workbook and to the symbol to which your group has been assigned. You will need to appoint a timekeeper, a leader and a recorder.

When you have these people appointed, start the tasks listed in your workbook under your symbol.

(Move around each group to offer encouragement, and help as required.)

Invite the recorder from each group to place their list on the noticeboard, whiteboard, etc. (where all students can see them clearly) and to share with the whole group the name of the symbol they have been exploring and one meaning the group thought the symbol had in Baptism.

After each group has reported, **invite one or two** people from each group to read the sentence they wrote about the symbol.

End

(10 minutes)

Tell the students: Baptism is the first step in Christian initiation, the beginning of our lives in following Jesus.

Ask the students: Now that we have considered the meaning of the symbols used in Baptism, how do you think they help you to understand more about living in Jesus?

Invite the students to record their answers to the following question in the space provided on page 84: 'How do you live like Jesus?'

Gather the students around the prayer focus with their workbooks open at page 84.

Invite the students to prepare for prayer.

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

All: In the name of the Father ...

God, our Father, when we were baptised you gave us your Spirit to help us live like you. We look forward to Confirmation when you will give us the fullness of your Spirit. So we pray together: Come, Holy Spirit, come. Amen.

Collect the workbooks and dismiss the students as usual.

Appendix 19 – Baptismal Symbol Tasks

The tasks outlined below are for your information. The students will have a copy of these in their workbooks.

Oil

- On the A3 sheet of paper, create a list of ways in which oil is used or experienced in everyday life. *(10 minutes)*
- Place an asterisk beside any that have a negative aspect, e.g. spills. *(2 minutes)*
- Think of a time when oil has been significant for you, and tell the rest of the group. *(5 minutes)*
- Sit quietly and reflect on the prayer said as the priest anoints the person with the Oil of Catechumens: I anoint you with the oil of salvation in the name of Christ, our Saviour; may he strengthen you with his power. *(2 minutes)*
- Consider your responses and reflections. As a group, discuss with each other what meaning oil might have in the sacrament of Baptism. *(6 minutes)*
- Each person, individually, completes the sentence on page 82: 'I think oil is used in Baptism because ...' *(5 minutes)*

Water

- On the A3 sheet of paper, create a list of ways in which water is used or experienced in everyday life. *(10 minutes)*
- Place an asterisk beside any that have a negative aspect, e.g. floods. *(2 minutes)*
- Think of a time when water has been significant for you, and tell the rest of the group. *(5 minutes)*
- Sit quietly and reflect on the prayer that is said over the baptismal water: Father, we use your gift of water as a symbol of the grace you give in baptism. Send your Holy Spirit upon the water of this font. *(2 minutes)*
- As a group discuss with each other what meaning water might have in the sacrament of Baptism? *(6 minutes)*
- Each person, individually, completes the sentence on page 83: 'I think water is used in Baptism because ...' *(5 minutes)*



Appendix 19 – Baptismal Symbol Tasks (continued)

Garment

- On the A3 sheet of paper, create a list of ways in which garments are used or experienced in everyday life. *(10 minutes)*
- Place an asterisk beside any that have a negative aspect, e.g. too warm. *(2 minutes)*
- Think of a time when a garment has been significant for you, and tell the rest of the group. *(5 minutes)*
- Quietly reflect on the prayer said when clothing with the white garment: See in this white garment the outward sign of your Christian dignity. Bring that dignity unstained into the everlasting life of heaven. *(2 minutes)*
- As a group, discuss with each other what meaning the white garment might have in the sacrament of Baptism? *(6 minutes)*
- Each person, individually, completes the sentence on page 83: 'I think a white garment is used in Baptism because ...' *(5 minutes)*

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Light

- On the A3 sheet of paper, create a list of ways in which light is used or experienced in everyday life. *(10 minutes)*
- Place an asterisk beside any that have a negative aspect, e.g. overexposure. *(2 minutes)*
- Think of a time when light has been significant for you, and tell the rest of the group. *(5 minutes)*
- Prayer: Pass the candle around the group. When you give the lighted candle, say: Receive the light of Christ. Walk in the light and keep the light of faith alive in your heart. *(2 minutes)*
- As a group, discuss with each other what meaning light might have in the sacrament of Baptism. *(6 minutes)*
- Each person, individually, completes the sentence on page 84: 'I think light is used in Baptism because ...' *(5 minutes)*



The Symbols of Confirmation

Background for the Catechist

Please take 10 minutes to reflect on the following introduction to this lesson.

Reflection/Doctrinal Reference

Very early, the better to signify the gift of the Holy Spirit, an anointing with perfumed oil (*chrism*) was added to the laying on of hands. This anointing highlights the name 'Christian', which means 'anointed' and derives from that of Christ himself whom God 'anointed with the Holy Spirit' (CCC, n. 1289).

For a team the 'High Five' is a gesture that shares a goal or victory. The embrace, the handshake and the hug are all symbols that can have deep meaning for us: they can mean forgiveness, compassion, sorrow, love and care. In the sacrament of Confirmation, we employ some special symbols to signify God's loving care for us. Oil is a wonderful gift that moisturises the skin, soothes soreness and revitalises the muscles. The gift of oil makes one feel loved and cared for.

The key symbols of Confirmation are oil and the laying on of hands. The sweet smelling fragrance that fills the room and gladdens everyone is a quality of scented oil. The Church employs sacred oil (*chrism*) to signify the gift of the Holy Spirit.

Student focus

Students in these classes will have some knowledge of the benefits of oil and the effects of hands, even if only in the context of rubbing oil into sore muscles after a strenuous sports game. Many would know the different oils that their parents, or they themselves, use to cook with, such as olive oil, walnut oil and the like. From when children are very young, they are told to rub a knock or bang on the arm or leg, with words like 'rub it better'. Many of these students will know the tenderness of their mother's or father's caress. There will be students whose only experience is to be hit with the hand. Try not to enter into discussions about family members but encourage discussion about the positive aspects of using hands in life. Always approach this type of lesson with care and respect for all possible experiences. (A reminder: if you have cause to believe that the child is being abused, then you are required by law to report your concerns to the police.)

Teaching Point

We can explore the meaning of Confirmation by examining the symbols used in the Rite.

Remembering Point

The symbols of Confirmation are the laying on of hands and anointing with *chrism*.

NB: If you wish to have a Mass for lesson 23, then you will need to begin to start the organisation this week. Speak with your coordinator and parish priest. Give students plenty of notice, and readers time to practise. If you are not going to have a Mass, you will still need to give students time to prepare for the prayer celebration.

PREPARATION

1. Prayer focus: a red cloth, a candle, the Bible, a small jar or jug of perfumed oil, and a small glass bowl of oil.
2. Workbooks.
3. A sheet of A4 paper for the brainstorm activity. Have enough for one per group of four students.
4. A sheet of butcher's paper or two A3 sheets of paper joined together, to record the brainstorm responses.
5. A small jar of perfumed oil and a small glass bowl or saucer. Pour oil in the bowl and place the jar and the bowl on the prayer focus. Have enough oil for each student to 'anoint' another student's palms as the oil is passed around.
6. Some disposable wipes so that students can clean the oil from their hands.
7. A sheet of A3 paper with the words 'Live your life in Christ' written in the centre, large enough for the students to read.
8. See answers to Cloze activity and Word Find in Appendix 20a on page 113.

Beginning

(5 minutes)

Welcome the students as usual.

Gather the students around the prayer focus, displaying symbols of Confirmation – scented oil (or chrism).

Distribute the workbooks and have the students open them at page 85 at the prayer.

Catechist: Let us make the Sign of the Cross together.

All: In the name of the Father ...

Catechist: As you prepare to receive the Sacrament of Confirmation you declare your belief in God, Jesus and the Church. So let us together pray the prayer, called the Apostles' Creed, that provides us with the words.

All: I believe in God,
the Father almighty,
Creator of heaven and earth.

I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord,
who was conceived by the Holy Spirit,
born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate,
was crucified, died and was buried.
He descended to the dead.
On the third day, he rose again.
He ascended to heaven and is seated at the right
hand of the Father.
He will come again to judge the living and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Spirit,
the holy catholic Church,
the communion of saints,
the forgiveness of sins,
the resurrection of the body,
and life everlasting. Amen.

All: In the name of the Father ...

Send the students back to their seats with their workbooks.

Middle

(40 minutes)

Tell the students: Today, we will be learning about the significance of the symbols used in the Rite of Confirmation. The main symbols are the laying on of hands and anointing with oil. Turn to page 86 in your workbook and the text titled 'The Laying On of Hands'.

THE LAYING ON OF HANDS

The laying on of hands is an ancient symbol. In the Bible, hands were laid on the prophets as a sign of God's favour. In the early Church, the apostles raised their hands over the newly baptised person and

called on the Holy Spirit to be with them. This blessing continues today in the sacrament of Confirmation, when the bishop lays hands on the candidates while he prays.

During the Rite of Confirmation, the bishop prays for the candidates to receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. The candidates are asked to stand and the bishop extends his hands over the people to be confirmed, saying,

Almighty God, Father of our Lord Jesus Christ,
 who brought these your servants to new birth
 by water and the Holy Spirit, freeing them from sin:
 send upon them, O Lord, the Holy Spirit, the Paraclete;
 give them the spirit of wisdom and understanding,
 the spirit of counsel and fortitude,
 the spirit of knowledge and piety;
 fill them with the spirit of the fear of the Lord.
 Through Christ, Our Lord.

Tell the students: During the Rite of Confirmation, the bishop extends his hands and says this prayer. When he does this, he is continuing the tradition of the sacraments and the Church. Through this symbol of blessing, healing and being set apart, the bishop calls down the Holy Spirit to be with you, to strengthen you. You will be drawn into the community of the faithful, our parish family. You will be *set apart* as someone called by God, gifted with the Holy Spirit to live your life as Jesus wants. You will be blessed in order to be strengthened in your faith and love of Jesus Christ and able to consciously draw on the gifts of the Holy Spirit.

Invite the students to turn to page 87 in their workbook to the activity titled 'A Symbol of Confirmation'.

Tell the students: Your first task is to complete the cloze activity, by filling in the spaces with the words that you think will best fit the sentence. Then, when you have completed this, your task is to find the seven gifts of the Holy Spirit in the word find. The third task is to complete the sentence below in the space provided below the word find.

Invite a student to share their completed cloze activity and a different student to share the seven words they have found.

Tell the students: The sentences you should have written down are: The laying on of hands at Confirmation is a symbol of the Holy Spirit empowering us with gifts. These gifts are wisdom, understanding, counsel, fortitude, knowledge, piety and the fear of the Lord. *(The gifts do not have to be in this order.)*

Now we will look at the other symbol used in the Rite of Confirmation, the anointing with chrism.

Ask the students: What do you think chrism might be? *(Students might know or remember from previous lesson; however, most will not. This is fine since this is what the lesson is about.)*

Tell the students: That's right, chrism is the scented oil used during some of the sacraments. The oil is blessed by the bishop and priests of the archdiocese, along with the oils of healing and the oil of catechumens during a special Mass of Oils during Holy Week. The Church chooses this

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day in Holy Week because it is near to the time of year when Christ died and rose from the dead.

Invite the students to join with three other people.

Tell the students: In your group, brainstorm the ways in which we use oil in our everyday life. Record your group's answers on the A4 sheet provided.

(After about five minutes, invite a student from each group to share their ordinary uses for oil with the whole group.)

Record the responses on a whiteboard or the sheets of A3 paper. If a group has the same answer, place a tick beside the phrase.

Invite the students to turn to page 86 in their workbook and read the passage: 'Anointing with the Oil of Chrism'.

ANOINTING WITH THE OIL OF CHRISM

Chrism is the scented oil used during some of the sacraments. The oil is blessed by the bishop and priests of the archdiocese, along with the oil of healing and the oil of catechumens during a special Mass of Oils during Holy Week. The Church chooses this day in Holy Week because it is near to the time of year when Christ died and rose from the dead.

During the celebration of Confirmation, candidates are 'marked' by being anointed with the oil of chrism. They are given the seal of the Holy Spirit, which is the sign that they totally belong to Christ and will spread his word. When the bishop makes the sign of the cross on the forehead of each candidate with chrism, he is marking them with the sign of consecration – they are joined with Christ.

This sign of consecration reminds Christians that they share fully in the mission of Jesus Christ. The bishop anoints the candidates with the holy oil, says their name, and makes the sign of the cross on their foreheads while saying, 'Be sealed with the gift of the Holy Spirit'. Being anointed with chrism helps the candidates to be more conscious of how the Holy Spirit can be active in their life. The Christian can call on the Holy Spirit for the help needed to continue the work of Christ each day.

Invite the students to stand around the prayer focus and place their workbooks on the floor in front of them.

Create a quiet and reflective atmosphere. You might consider some reflective music.

Hold up the jar or jug of oil and **tell the students:** This perfumed oil is similar to the oil that will be used at your Confirmation. It has not been blessed by the bishop and therefore is not holy or sacred. We are using it to get a sense of what it feels like on the skin. When we make the sign of the cross, however, this is a sacred sign and carries with it the blessing of Jesus Christ.

When you are confirmed, the bishop will put his thumb into the oil and mark you with the sign of the cross. Today, I invite you to put your thumb into the oil and make the sign of the cross on the palms of the person on your right. I also invite you to say 'live your life in Christ' as you make the sign of the cross.

(Turn to the student on your right and make the sign of the cross on their palms and say:)

Live your life in Christ.

(Hand the bowl to the student to do the same for the student on the right of them.)

When everyone has been anointed, **invite the students** to sit quietly.

Tell the students: I invite you to sit quietly, reflecting on the question: 'How will you show that you are a genuine follower of Christ after you have been sealed with the gift of the Holy Spirit?'

You might like to close your eyes and think about the question. When you have had a few minutes I will clap my hands and then you can clean your hands of excess oil. Then you can take your workbook back to your seat and respond in whatever way you wish on page 88, in the space provided. If you want to draw a scene or write a poem or list ways that you might be a genuine follower of Christ, or any other way of responding, then feel free.

Walk around the group, encouraging the students in their response.

Invite any student who would like to, to share their response.

Collect the workbooks.

End

(10 minutes)

Gather the students around the prayer focus.

All: In the name of the Father ...

Catechist: Let us extend our hands towards each other, and pray for God's blessing. Repeat after me:

May we be blessed as we try to be true followers of Christ.

Students: May we be blessed as we try to be true followers of Christ.

Catechist: May the Holy Spirit guide us and strengthen us to live out our baptismal promises.

Students: May the Holy Spirit guide us and strengthen us to live out our baptismal promises.

Catechist: May the blessing of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit be with us all, now and always.

Students: May the blessing of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit be with us all, now and always.

Catechist: Amen.

Students: Amen.

(NB: Lesson 23 is intended to be a celebration of Mass. If you would like to do this, then please talk to your catechist coordinator and your parish priest this week to organise the celebration. You might like to invite parents to be a part of this celebration.)

Dismiss the students as usual.

PREPARATION

Appendix 20: Answers to Cloze Activity and Word Find

Cloze Activity

The **laying** on of **hands** at Confirmation is a symbol of the **Holy Spirit** empowering us with gifts.

Word Find

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

These gifts are:

Understanding, Piety, Fortitude, Fear of the Lord, Wisdom, Counsel and Knowledge.

The Gifts of the Holy Spirit

Background for the Catechist

Please take 10 minutes to reflect on the following introduction to this lesson.

Reflection/Doctrinal Reference

The seven *gifts* of the Holy Spirit are wisdom, understanding, counsel, fortitude, knowledge, piety, and fear of the Lord. They belong in their fullness to Christ, Son of David. They complete and perfect the virtues of those who receive them (CCC, n. 1831).

Most of the seven gifts of the Holy Spirit come from the prophet Isaiah (Is 11: 2); however, St Paul's letter to the Galatians (Gal 5: 22) also lists other gifts given by the Spirit. But Christian life is a vast symphony of gifts – not just faith, hope and love or the seven specially signalled out in the Confirmation ceremony. There are plenty of others – gratitude, care, compassion, forgiveness, kindness and humility – the list goes on! The grace of the Holy Spirit can touch any element of our lives and bring about Christ's healing and transforming power. The many ways that God's love is made present in human life cannot be limited to a finite number of graces and gifts. The mystery of God's love and how we experience it for ourselves fills our entire lives. It is something we will spend a lifetime exploring.

Student focus

Exploring giftedness is fun for students preparing to receive the sacrament of Confirmation. All students understand how each of us brings something particular and special to a group and our lives. We might call this 'being gifted', and can often fail to see the gift within everyone. Help the students to recognise their own gifts and how the special gifts offered through the Holy Spirit can enhance their lives.

Teaching Point

The gifts of the Holy Spirit empower us to live a Christian life.

Remembering Point

The gifts of the Holy Spirit empower us to live a Christian life.

PREPARATION

1. Prayer focus: a red cloth, a candle, the Bible, a gift box or gift bag.
2. Bowl of water.
3. Answers for the activity on the Gifts of the Holy Spirit. (See appendix 21 on page 119.)
4. Workbooks.
5. Write the following questions on the whiteboard or on A3 sheets of paper, large enough for the students to read:
 - If we are to follow Jesus, and respond as he wants us to, how might we fulfil his message?
 - How might we gain help and assistance to carry out Jesus' call to 'bring the good news to the poor'?

Beginning

(5 minutes)

Welcome the students as usual and **gather them** around the prayer focus.

Distribute the workbooks and invite the students to open them at page 89. **Invite the students** to pray and light the candle.

Catechist: Today, we continue with our preparation to receive the sacrament of Confirmation. We acknowledge that we all belong to one faith and believe in the one God. So, together, let us use the action that focuses our belief: the Sign of the Cross.

All: In the name of the Father ...

Catechist: The Holy Spirit empowers us to live a Christian life.

Students: The Spirit of the Lord is upon me because he has anointed me to bring good news to the poor.

Catechist: The Holy Spirit gives us the gift of wisdom.

Students: The Spirit of the Lord is upon me because he has anointed me to bring good news to the poor.

Catechist: The Holy Spirit give us the gift of understanding.

Students: The Spirit of the Lord is upon me because he has anointed me to bring good news to the poor.

Catechist: The Holy Spirit gives us the gift of counsel.

Students: The Spirit of the Lord is upon me because he has anointed me to bring good news to the poor.

Catechist: The Holy Spirit give us the gift of fortitude.

Students: The Spirit of the Lord is upon me because he has anointed me to bring good news to the poor.

Catechist: The Holy Spirit gives us the gift of knowledge.

Students: The Spirit of the Lord is upon me because he has anointed me to bring good news to the poor.

Catechist: The Holy Spirit gives us the gift of piety.

Students: The Spirit of the Lord is upon me because he has anointed me to bring good news to the poor.

Catechist: The Holy spirit gives us the gift of fear of the Lord.

Students: The Spirit of the Lord is upon me because he has anointed me to bring good news to the poor.

All: Amen.

Middle

(40 minutes)

Tell the students: The response we said in our prayer comes directly from Scripture, Lk 4: 18. You might recall that this is when Jesus was visiting the synagogue and proclaims the word of God from the scroll of Isaiah.

Let's read the story and familiarise ourselves with what was happening. Follow in your workbooks on page 90.

Invite a student to read Lk 4: 16–22, or read it yourself.

¹⁶When he came to Nazareth, where he had been brought up, he went to the synagogue on the Sabbath day, as was his custom. He stood up to read, ¹⁷and the scroll of the prophet Isaiah was given to him. He unrolled the scroll and found the place where it was written:

¹⁸'The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to bring good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to let the oppressed go free, ¹⁹to proclaim the year of the Lord's favour.'

²⁰And he rolled up the scroll, gave it back to the attendant, and sat down. The eyes of all in the synagogue were fixed on him. ²¹Then he began to say to them, 'Today this scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing.'²²All spoke well of him and were amazed at the gracious words that came from his mouth. They said, 'Is not this Joseph's son?'

Invite the students to form into groups of three.

Distribute the workbooks and **invite the students** to talk together about the questions on page 90.

Tell the students: Each of you is to record your answers to the questions in the space titled 'The Scripture is fulfilled'.

Ask the students:

- What do you think Jesus meant when he said that 'Today this scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing'?
- What challenge is the gospel writer, Luke, offering us?
- What is the message of faith being given to us in this text?

Invite a student from each group of three to share their answers with the whole group.

Tell the students: Now consider the following questions in your groups and come up with an answer for each question.

Ask the students:

- If we are to follow Jesus, and respond as he wants us to, how might we fulfil his message?
- How might we gain help and assistance to carry out Jesus call to 'bring the good news to the poor'? *(The students may find this a difficult question to answer. Pursue the possibilities of needing assistance such as courage, strength, determination and belief in order to fulfil Jesus' message.)*

PREPARATION

PREPARATION

Invite a student from each group to share their answers.

Tell the students: When we were baptised, the Holy Spirit became part of our lives. We were given the gift of the Holy Spirit to help us live our Christian life. When we were babies, our parents made various choices about how we would live and we learnt to listen carefully to what they were teaching us. Now that we are older we are better able to use the gifts of the Holy Spirit to help us respond to the message of Jesus in the Scriptures. When you are confirmed you will be reassured and reminded that these gifts of the Holy Spirit are there to help you, to strengthen you as you try to be a Christian. Today, we are going to look more closely at these gifts of the Holy Spirit. You need to understand what they are, so that you can work at using them in your lives.

Invite the students to turn to page 91 in your workbooks, to the page titled 'The Gifts of the Holy Spirit.'

Tell the students: Read the passage from Isaiah and underline all the gifts mentioned by the prophet. Then, when you have finished, read the passage titled 'The Rite of Confirmation' and underline the gifts mentioned.

Isaiah 11: 2

The spirit of the Lord shall rest on him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and the fear of the Lord.

The Rite of Confirmation

The bishop says:

Almighty God, Father of our Lord Jesus Christ,
who brought these your servants to new birth
by water and the Holy Spirit,
freeing them from sin:
send upon them, O Lord, the Holy Spirit, the Paraclete;
give them the spirit of wisdom and understanding,
the spirit of counsel and fortitude, the spirit of knowledge and piety;
fill them with the spirit of the fear of the Lord.
Through Christ, our Lord.

Ask the students: What do you notice about these two texts? (*The Isaiah text has only six gifts and the Rite has the full seven.*)

Tell the students: When you are confirmed the words in the Rite will be used. As you can see, the gifts come from the prophet Isaiah as well as from the history of the Church, in the Church's tradition. Turn to page 92 in your workbook and the page titled 'The Gifts'.

From your knowledge and understanding of the words in the gift boxes, match the words to the definitions in the squares by drawing a line to connect them. You can discuss the possible answers with the person beside you. You will have five minutes to complete the task. (See Appendix 21 on page 119 for the answers.)

Invite the students to turn to page 93 in their workbook and the activity titled 'Using the Gifts of the Holy Spirit'.

Tell the students: Review the meanings of the gifts as you have identified them. Decide which gift you have in abundance. In the space provided, write how you show the gift in which you are strongest. Then, choose a gift that you think you need the most. Write a short prayer to the Holy Spirit asking for guidance and assistance with your particular need. You can start your prayer with, 'Come, Holy Spirit ...'

Move around the group, helping the students as needed. After about 10 minutes **invite a few students** to share something they wrote, if they would like to. Remember there is no requirement for students to share this personal reflection and prayer. Collect the workbooks.

End

(5 minutes)

Gather the students around the prayer focus.

Catechist: Let us pray.

All: In the name of the Father ...

Catechist: The word of God is from the Gospel of Luke.

The spirit of the Lord is upon us because he has anointed us to bring good news to the poor.

Pause

Let us go to love and serve the Lord,

As we pray the prayer to the Holy Trinity.

All: Glory be to the Father ...

Dismiss the students as usual.

PREPARATION

Appendix 21 – The Answers to The Gifts Activity

1. **Wisdom:** The gift that helps you know what it means to live a life close to God. It helps you know the difference between right and wrong, to make good choices.
2. **Understanding:** This gift helps you grasp the teaching of Christ. It helps you grow in your ability to be compassionate to others. It enhances your ability to recognise and respond to the needs of others because of your faith.
3. **Counsel:** The gift that strengthens your common sense so that you can live a life closer to Jesus. This gift helps you choose the right things to do so that you can follow Jesus.
4. **Fortitude:** This gift helps you stand up for your faith. It strengthens your confidence in your belief and helps you to declare yourself as a member of God's family. This gift helps you to act as a person of faith.
5. **Knowledge:** This gift helps you discover how to be like Christ. It helps you to search out the teachings of Christ and avoid the obstacles that can prevent you from growing in God's love.
6. **Piety:** This gift strengthens your confidence in and admiration of God. You trust God and seek to follow Jesus in order to know God more. You willingly want to worship and serve God because you love God.
7. **Fear of the Lord:** This gift encourages you to respect God and delight in God's goodness. It strengthens you to do the right thing in order to show your love for God.

Living in a Spirit-filled Community

Background for the Catechist

Please take 10 minutes to reflect on the following introduction to this lesson.

Reflection/Doctrinal Reference

The disciple of Christ must not only keep the faith and live on it, but also profess it, confidently bear witness to it, and spread it: 'All however must be prepared to confess Christ before men and to follow him along the way of the Cross, amidst the persecutions which the Church never lacks' (LG, n. 42) / (CCC, n. 1816).

To respond to God and live as a disciple of Jesus, this is our Christian call. Baptism was not a gift we received to hide in a cupboard. It is an active, ongoing grace that demands use and requires a life of witness. It is a membership card we use each day, a recipe that we add to, a Google map offering new tracks to get to a destination. To live out our baptismal call is simply to follow Christ. It is our responsibility to be active in our faith. Fortunately we are not alone in this task; we have a community that shares this role of discipleship.

Student Focus

Students will be familiar with community and communities that support its members. Students will understand the importance of full participation by all members of a group to ensure that it functions properly. Knowing how they can continue to participate in a community of faith is an important application of their understanding.

Teaching Point

Living a Spirit-filled life is the responsibility of every baptised person.

Remembering Point

The gifts of the Holy Spirit enable me to live and respond as a Spirit-filled person.

PREPARATION

1. Prayer focus: a yellow or white cloth, a candle, and a Bible.
2. Two cards for each group to record their answer. The cards are to be at least 10cm x 12cm.
3. Have a card with the words: Isaiah 61: 1–3 written in the centre. Stick it on the whiteboard or in a place that can be seen by all the students, allowing for the students' cards to be placed around them.
4. Eight sheets of A4 paper, two per group, to record each set of responses.
5. Coloured markers enough for two different colours per group.
6. Sticky tape or Blu Tack.

Beginning

(5 minutes)

Welcome the students as usual.

Gather the students around the prayer focus and distribute the workbooks.

Light the candle and **invite the students** to pray with their workbooks open at page 94.

All: In the name of the Father ...

Catechist: Today we will listen to the Word of God as spoken through the prophet Isaiah. Our response after the reading is 'Thanks be to God'.

¹The spirit of the Lord God is upon me,
Because the Lord has anointed me;
He has sent me to bring good news to the oppressed,
To bind up the broken-hearted,
²To proclaim liberty to the captives,
And release to the prisoners;
To proclaim the year of the Lord's favour,
And the day of vengeance of our God;
To comfort all who mourn;
³To provide for those who mourn in Zion –
To give them a garland instead of ashes,
The oil of gladness instead of mourning,
The mantle of praise instead of a faint spirit (Is 61: 1–3).

The word of the Lord.

All: Thanks be to God.

Catechist: God, you give us your Spirit.

Students: Lord, help us to be open to your Spirit.

Catechist: God, you provide us with people who can lead and guide us.

Students: Lord, may we listen to these people.

Catechist: God, you welcome us into your family, the community of the faithful.

Students: Lord, help us to recognise the love, friendship and guidance offered in our faith community.

All: Glory be to the Father ...

Invite the students to form into four groups and gather together.

Middle

(40 minutes)

Tell the students: On page 95 in your workbook, you will see the activity titled 'The Spirit of the Lord is upon me'. In your groups, discuss how the words of the prophet Isaiah translate for today's world. Consider the application in the world in general, not just at your local or personal level.

Individually record your answers in the space provided. Some of the phrases of the text might be difficult to interpret. For instance, we would not be literally releasing all prisoners, but we might be talking about how to bring about a freedom from being a 'prisoner to sinfulness' or a 'prisoner to addiction'. Think and discuss with each other and try to find an answer. If it is too hard, then simply leave the space empty. But don't leave them all.

In about 10 minutes, when you have completed the task, listen to each other's answers. Decide on the best two answers and transfer them to the cards I will give you.

Distribute two cards per group.

When all of the groups have completed the task, **invite a student** from each group to read out all their answers and to bring out their two cards to place around the title card – Isaiah 61: 1–3.

Tell the students: This collection of responses to the prophet Isaiah tells us that the Spirit of the Lord is alive and well in the world and that we can be a part of this by being an active part of our faith community.

Distribute two sheets of A4 paper to each group, along with two different-coloured markers.

Invite the students to appoint a scribe, a time-keeper, and a leader for the group, if possible, to discuss the following questions and record the group's answers on the first sheet of A4 paper.

Ask the students: What are the characteristics of a good member of a group or team – what actions do they do that identify them as a good member? *(You might suggest that they think about their own experiences of a good group or team – you could suggest sporting teams or scouting groups. Remember to offer suggestions using broad and diverse examples. Encourage answers such as 'works as a team member not as a lone ranger', or 'helps others in the group to get the task completed'.)*

After no more than seven minutes, **tell the students:** Now think about the individuals who make up the group or team. On the second sheet of A4 paper, record words that you believe best describes the good team member.

Tell the students: When we were baptised, we became members of a Spirit-filled community – the Catholic Church. When the members are confirmed it is the opportunity for them to proclaim their baptismal vows again, for themselves, and accept responsibility to be active in their faith.

PREPARATION

PREPARATION

We are not alone in this task. Being a part of a faith community means that we share the task of discipleship. In fact, we are called, and have the responsibility, to be witnesses by the way we live our lives.

Invite the students to have another look at their lists of descriptions and words.

Tell the students: With a different coloured pen, underline or tick or circle any of the characteristics and words that you believe apply to the members of the Church community of faith.

After five minutes **invite the students** to open their workbooks to page 96 and the activity titled 'A Spirit-filled Community'.

Tell the students: In the space provided, write your description of what is required to be a member of a Spirit-filled community. Draw on the reflections your groups identified as characteristics of a good member of a group.

Invite three students to share their answers.

Tell the students: Now you need to think about how you can be a good member of a Spirit-filled community. With the person beside you, talk about how you can become like your description of a good member of a Spirit-filled community. What you decide on is not just for today, but rather it is something that you can work towards for the rest of your life. This is what the sacrament of Confirmation is about. You are called to take your faith seriously, for the rest of your life, to look for ways of being an active member of the faith community. Throughout your life you can show this by your actions and activities and involvement in the parish community, a Spirit-filled community.

In the space titled 'What I can do?' on page 97 write your thoughts about how you will become this good member.

Collect the workbooks.

End

(7 minutes)

Invite students to gather around the prayer focus.

Catechist: Today we have talked a lot about being in a Spirit-filled community. Now we will sit quietly and listen. Listen to the Spirit of God moving within us.

Let us close our eyes, sit comfortably and relax. If you wish to lie down, then do so. Be sure to keep away from others.

Together we can make the Sign of the Cross.

All: In the name of the Father ...

Catechist: Making yourself relaxed and still, gently breathe in, and out.

Pause

Now listen to the prayer, and at the end simply respond with 'Amen'.

Living a Spirit-filled life is the responsibility of every baptised person.

We bring to mind and pray for the Leaders of the Church.

We pray for Catholics throughout the world.

We pray that we will make right choices in difficult situations throughout our lives.

We pray that we will be faithful to God.

We pray that we will use the gifts of the Holy Spirit to respond as a disciple of Jesus.

We bring to mind and pray for the sick people in the parish.

We bring to mind and pray for the people who have died.

Thank you God for the gifts of the Holy Spirit that help me to be a disciple of Jesus.

We make this prayer through Christ, our Lord.

All: Amen.

(If you are having a Mass next week, remind the students about this. You might wish to send a note home to parents to remind them and invite them to celebrate with the class.

Ensure that students selected to read have had a chance to practise the readings and the prayers. Organise students able to act as reserve readers in case the student selected is unable to attend the following week.)

Dismiss the students as usual.

PREPARATION

Celebrating in a Spirit-filled Community

Background for the Catechist

Please take 10 minutes to reflect on the following introduction to this lesson.

Reflection/Doctrinal Reference

At the heart of the Eucharistic celebration are the bread and wine that, by the words of Christ and the invocation of the Holy Spirit, become Christ's Body and Blood. Faithful to the Lord's command the Church continues to do, in his memory and until his glorious return, what he did on the eve of his Passion: 'He took bread...' 'He took the cup filled with wine...'. The signs of bread and wine become, in a way surpassing understanding, the Body and Blood of Christ; they continue also to signify the goodness of creation (CCC, n. 1333).

At the Eucharist there is a hidden dynamic going on: We think that we get up, we arrive at the church, we enter the building and settle into our seats, yet it is really Christ who gathers us together! This is not an assembly that is like any other. The Spirit of Jesus moves us, calls us and prompts us to attend. So, instead of looking at those who walk into the church, we need to see Christ. Instead of standing to sing, we need to recognise Christ who is present in the gathering. This requires new eyes, a new vision and a different frame of reference. Without this Spirit-filled focus we miss the force of the event. This new vision is not just a recognition of something, it forms and moulds us into the people of God.

NB: If possible, this lesson is the celebration of the Mass. If you intend to have a Mass instead of this lesson, then please ensure that you have planned for it ahead of time. Allow at least three weeks.

In consultation with your Parish Priest and Catechist Coordinator, organise a Mass for all students from every class, but if not possible, a Year 6 Mass would be fine. Alternatively, if celebrating the Eucharist is not possible during the lesson time, the prayer can be used instead.

Student Focus

The students will have completed a number of lessons on the Eucharist. They will have some concept of the presence of Christ in the gathered community. Students of this age also know the need to be motivated to achieve something, particularly a sporting achievement. Therefore they will be better disposed to understand how the Holy Spirit can act within a person to strengthen, motivate, encourage and assist them in becoming the person God wants them to become.

Teaching Point

As members of a Spirit-filled community, we gather to celebrate Jesus, who forms us as the People of God.

Remembering Point

As people who belong to a Spirit-filled community, we gather at the Eucharist.

Beginning

(10 minutes)

Welcome the students as usual.

Gather the students around the prayer focus.

Catechist: Let us begin our prayer as we usually do, with the Sign of the Cross.

All: In the name of the Father ...

Catechist: As we come together today to learn more about the Holy Spirit and our responsibilities as fully initiated members of the faith community, let us recall all that has been happening this week.

Let us think about how we have responded to other people. Have we been thoughtful of others, kind, helping when we could, rather than walking away?

Have we worked hard at school, putting our full effort into what is asked of us?

Have we welcomed new friends into our circle of friends or have we shunned them, or even been nasty to them?

Whatever the situations of this week, let us ask Jesus to forgive us our faults, and be with us as we seek to know more about God.

Pause

So let us pray the words that Jesus gave us.

All: Our Father ...

Focus attention on a large sheet of paper or the whiteboard with the word Eucharist written on it.

Hand out the sticky notes to the students.

Tell the students: You will have four minutes to recall everything you know about the Eucharist. It can include the celebration, as well as your understanding about the Eucharist. Write down each idea on a separate sticky note. You do not have to use all the notes. When the four minutes are up, I will invite you to come up, one at a time, and to put your sticky notes around the words on the sheet. You have four minutes.

Invite a student to come up and place the sticky notes on the sheet.

Invite the next student and **tell everyone:** If you find that someone has already written what you have, then attach your sticky note to the previous one. From now, just come up one at a time.

(When all the students have placed their sticky notes there will be a clear indication as to what the students know well and what parts are missing. Briefly, taking no more than five minutes, remind students of any significant omissions.)

PREPARATION

1. Prayer focus: a yellow cloth, a Bible, a glass of grape juice, a small bread roll or loaf of bread.
2. A large sheet of butcher's paper or two A3 sheets of paper joined together, or the whiteboard. In the middle of the paper have the words 'The Eucharist' written in the middle. For example:

THE EUCHARIST
3. Sticky notes; enough for about eight notes per student.
4. Workbooks and pencils (if you're not having Mass).
5. If you are not having a Mass:
 - copy the prayer service in Appendix 23b, page 133. Make enough copies for parents and visitors; the students can use their workbooks
 - copy the dove template in Appendix 23a, one for everyone participating in the prayer and place them on the prayer focus
 - have an elevated stand for the Bible
 - mark the bible readings clearly.

PREPARATION

Tell the students: The celebration of the Eucharist, and our participation, is central to our faith. As members of the Spirit-filled community, we join with other members of the community to celebrate the life, death and resurrection of Jesus. We bring ourselves, everything we do, and all that we are, to the celebration. How we respond to this great gift is our contribution to the Spirit-filled community. When you have received the sacrament of Confirmation you will be a fully initiated member of the Catholic community. The community of the faithful gathers to pray and worship together, particularly at the Mass.

Let us now go across to the church to join with the other students and Father in the celebration of Mass.

Or alternatively: Let us now move to our prayer space to share in our prayer celebration.

Middle

(35–45 minutes)

If you are unable to celebrate Mass with the students, then you may still wish to take the students to the church and use the prayer celebration, see Appendix 23b, page 133. The prayer is also in the student workbook page 98.

Alternatively, you can conduct the prayer celebration in the classroom or learning space. If you choose this option, create a welcoming and prayerful atmosphere. Arrange the chairs around the prayer focus and play some quiet music, if possible.

Remind the students: Next week's class will be in the church and you need to go straight to the church and not to the usual place for the lesson.

Tell the students: You will need to bring with you to next week's class the date and place of your Baptism and the date and place of your first Eucharist.

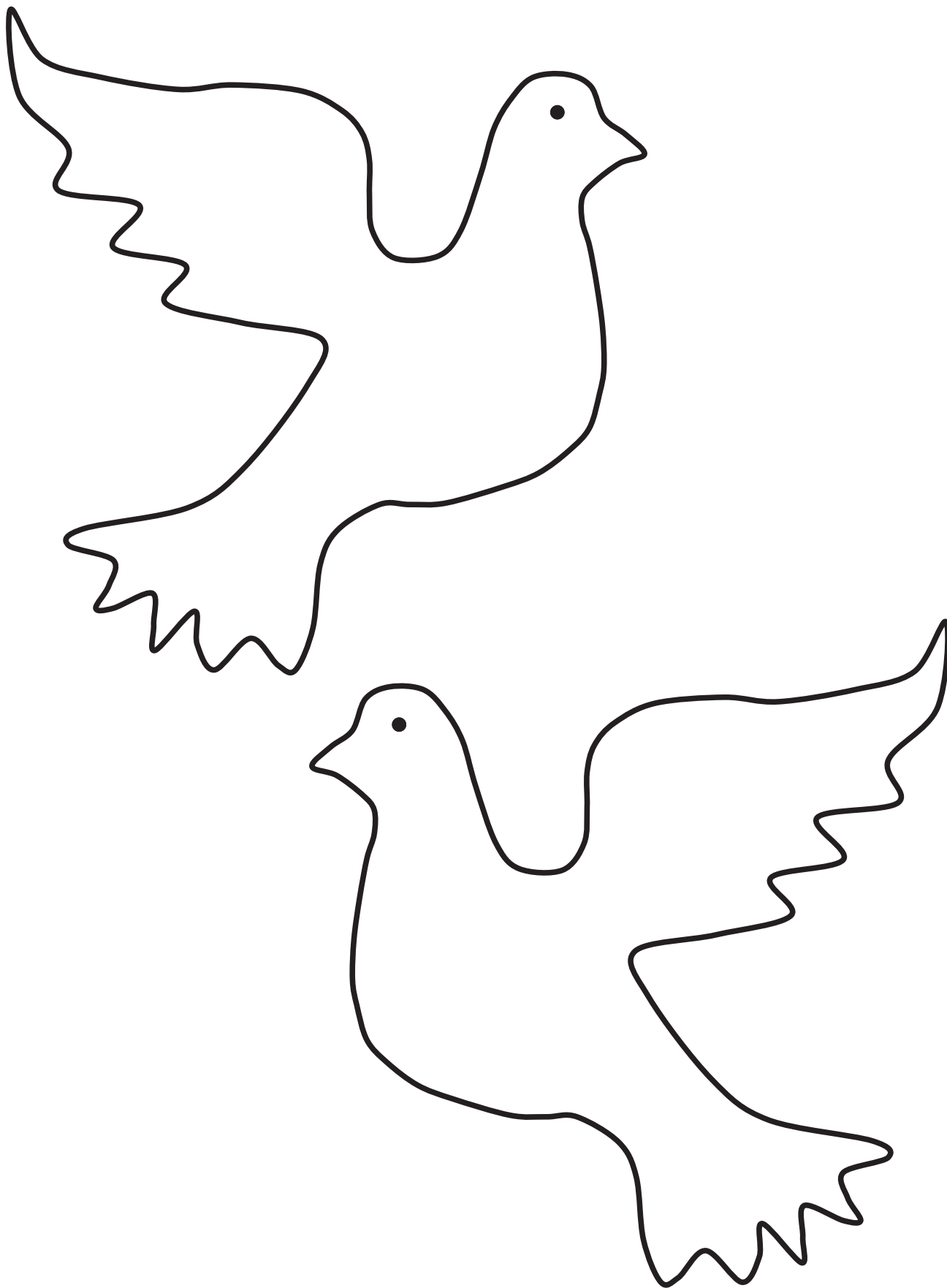
End

(3 minutes)

If you attended the Mass, dismiss the students as usual. If you have the prayer celebration, collect the workbooks and dismiss the students.

Appendix 23a – Dove Template

Copy and cut out enough for each participant at the prayer celebration.



Appendix 23b – Prayer Celebration

Set up the room to create a prayerful space. Include a prayer focus, candles, cut-outs of doves and pencils, enough for one per participant. Have the Bible on an elevated stand if possible, and proclaim the gospel reading from this point. Make a copy of the prayer for each participant.

The Spirit With Us (Catechist's Copy)

Gather and Welcome

Sing an entrance hymn: Use the hymn that will be used at the Confirmation Mass.

As the group is singing, have the readers process from the back of the group to the front. The student bringing in the gospel places the Bible open at the page to be read on the elevated stand. Ensure that both the readings and the psalm are either marked or written clearly for the students to read.

Welcome parents and students to the gathering:

Leader: Today, we gather to celebrate the Holy Spirit in our community. We recognise that just simply gathering together is a sign of our belonging to a Spirit-filled community. Those of us who have completed our initiation, as well as those of you who will be completing your initiation in a few weeks time, share in God's presence: Father, Son, and Spirit.

Light the candles while saying:

So, as we gather together in the name of God our Father, and light our candles as a sign of Christ's presence, let us make the Sign of the Cross.

All: In the name of the Father ...

Leader: O God, you who bless everything that is good,
bless your whole Church, every people and every nation.
Grant us the gifts of your Holy Spirit.
May the Holy Spirit shine across the face of the earth
and fill our hearts once more, as believers of your word.
We make this prayer through Christ, our Lord.

All: Amen.

Leader: Let us now prepare ourselves to hear the word of God.

The readers of the first reading and the responsorial psalm go out to the front together. The first reader picks up the Bible and proclaims the word from the front.

Reader 1: **A reading from the letter of Paul to the Ephesians (1: 15–19)**

I have heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus and your love toward all the saints, and for this reason I do not cease to give thanks for you as I remember you in my prayers. I pray that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give you a spirit of wisdom and revelation as you come to know him, so that, with the eyes of your heart enlightened, you may know what is the hope to which he has called you, what are the riches of his glorious inheritance among the saints, and what is the immeasurable greatness of his power for us who believe, according to the working of his great power.

The word of the Lord.

All: Thanks be to God.

The first reader hands the Bible to the second reader.

Reader 2: Our response is: Let all the people praise you, O God; let all the people praise you.

All: Let all the people praise you, O God; let all the people praise you.

Reader 2: May God be gracious to us and bless us
and make his face shine upon us,
that your way may be known upon earth,
your saving power among all nations.

All: Let all the people praise you, O God; let all the people praise you.

Reader 2: Let the nations be glad and sing for joy,
for you judge the peoples with fairness
and guide the nations upon the earth.

All: Let all the people praise you, O God; let all the people praise you.

Reader 2: The earth has yielded its increase;
God, our God, has blessed us.
May God continue to bless us;
Let all the ends of the earth revere him.

All: Let all the people praise you, O God; let all the people praise you.

The readers leave the reading space, while the third reader comes forward to read the gospel.

Reader 3: A reading from the Gospel of John (14: 23–27)

Jesus answered him, 'Those who love me will keep my word, and my Father will love them, and we will come to them and make our home with them. Whoever does not love me does not keep my words; and the word that you hear is not mine, but is from the Father who sent me. I have said these things to you while I am still with you. But the Advocate, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you everything, and remind you of all that I have said to you. Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled, and do not let them be afraid.'

The gospel of the Lord.

All: Praise to you, Lord, Jesus Christ.

Pause

The Reader leaves the reading space.

Invite the participants to sit quietly and think about what the Holy Spirit means to them. Invite them to ask themselves, 'What has the Holy Spirit taught me?'

Invite the participants to share a word or something the Holy Spirit has taught them, if they wish. Allow people to speak, but if you have a longer pause, then move on with the next part.

After a few minutes to allow people to respond, distribute a dove shape and a pencil from the prayer focus to everyone and invite them to write a single word that answers the question,

'What has the Holy Spirit taught me?' If you are concerned about the silence, play some quiet, reflective music.

After a little time of quiet, continue with the celebration.

Leader: As we listen to the hymn to the Holy Spirit, I invite you to bring out your dove and place it on the prayer focus or on the floor around it. (Allow the participants time to come forward and place their doves.)

If numbers permit, invite everyone to gather around the prayer focus with their workbooks and/or prayer sheets. Have a song/hymn to the Holy Spirit playing in the background. Choose a hymn that is familiar to the students. You might consider playing a hymn that will be used during the Confirmation Mass.

Leader: Let us now pray together to the Holy Spirit.

All: Breathe in me, O Holy Spirit, that my thoughts may all be holy.
Act in me, O Holy Spirit, that my work, too, may be holy.
Draw my heart, O Holy Spirit, that I love only what is holy.
Strengthen me, O Holy Spirit, to defend all that is holy.
Guard me, then, O Holy Spirit, that I always may be holy. Amen. (St Augustine)

Invite the students and parents to return to their seats.

Leader: As people of faith, we pray not only for ourselves but for all those whom God loves. God promised us the Holy Spirit so that we could follow in Jesus' footsteps. The Holy Spirit is given to us, to our community, to enable us to reach out, tell others about Jesus, and show others how much God loves us all.

So with this in mind we pray, asking God, through Jesus and the Holy Spirit, to guide us and help us be strong members of a Spirit-filled community, who can celebrate Jesus in our lives, together.

Leader: For those who lead our Church, Pope and Archbishop: that they may be open to and guided by the Holy Spirit in their discussions and decision-making. Lord, hear us.

All: Lord, hear our prayer.

Leader: For the leaders of our country: that they have the good of the people at heart and seek only to do good. Lord, hear us.

All: Lord, hear our prayer.

Leader: For all of us here today, especially those who are going to receive their Confirmation soon: may the Holy Spirit be alive and active in their lives, today and always. Lord, hear us.

All: Lord, hear our prayer.

Leader: For all members of our Spirit-filled community: that we recognise the prompting of the Holy Spirit when we work and speak with each other, enabling the message of Jesus to be lived and celebrated in our lives each day. Lord, hear us.

All: Lord, hear our prayer.

Leader: For those of our Spirit-filled community who are sick: that they may find comfort and strength in the knowledge of our prayers and the prayers of all those in the community, asking for the Holy Spirit to be with them. Lord, hear us.

All: Lord, hear our prayer.

Leader: So, with these prayers offered to God our Father, through Jesus, God's Son, and the Holy Spirit, we pray together.

All: Glory be to the Father ...

Leader: As we have prayed together and gathered as a Spirit filled community, we now ask God to bless us and send us on our way. Let us hold out our hands with our palms uppermost as we pray:

Come, God our Father, bless each and every one of us as we go to live our lives in a Spirit-filled community. Help us to reach out to you through your Son, Jesus, and with the strength and guidance of the Holy Spirit, so that we might spread your message to all whom we meet. We ask this through Christ, our Lord.

All: Amen.

In the name of the Father ...

Thank parents and visitors for coming. Collect the students' workbooks and dismiss as usual.

Appendix 23b – Prayer Celebration (continued)

Photocopy enough for visitors. You might prefer a paper copy for the students instead of using the workbooks, in which case photocopy enough for each student.

The Spirit With Us

Gather and Welcome

Sing the Entrance Hymn

The reader of the gospel will process from the back of the group to the front.

We welcome parents and students to the gathering:

Leader: Today, we gather to celebrate the Holy Spirit in our community. We recognise that just simply gathering together is a sign of our belonging to a Spirit-filled community. Those of us who have completed our initiation, as well as those of you who will be completing your initiation in a few weeks time, share in God's presence: Father, Son, and Spirit.

So, as we gather together in the name of God our Father, and light our candles as a sign of Christ's presence, let us make the Sign of the Cross.

All: In the name of the Father ...

Leader: O God, you who bless everything that is good,
bless your whole Church, every people and every nation.
Grant us the gifts of your Holy Spirit.
May the Holy Spirit shine across the face of the earth
and fill our hearts once more, as believers of your word.
We make this prayer through Christ, our Lord.

All: Amen.

Leader: Let us now prepare ourselves to hear the word of God.

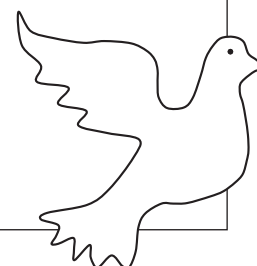
The readers go out to the front. The first reader picks up the Bible and proclaims the word from the front.

Reader 1: **A reading from the letter of Paul to the Ephesians (1: 15–19)**

I have heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus and your love toward all the saints, and for this reason I do not cease to give thanks for you as I remember you in my prayers. I pray that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give you a spirit of wisdom and revelation as you come to know him, so that, with the eyes of your heart enlightened, you may know what is the hope to which he has called you, what are the riches of his glorious inheritance among the saints, and what is the immeasurable greatness of his power for us who believe, according to the working of his great power.

The word of the Lord

All: Thanks be to God



The second reader takes the Bible.

Reader 2: Our response is: Let all the people praise you, O God; let all the people praise you.

All: Let all the people praise you, O God; let all the people praise you.

Reader 2: May God be gracious to us and bless us and make his face shine upon us, that your way may be known upon earth, your saving power among all nations.

All: Let all the people praise you, O God; let all the people praise you.

Reader 2: Let the nations be glad and sing for joy, for you judge the peoples with fairness and guide the nations upon the earth.

All: Let all the people praise you, O God; let all the people praise you.

Reader 2: The earth has yielded its increase;
God, our God, has blessed us.
May God continue to bless us;
Let all the ends of the earth revere him.

All: Let all the people praise you, O God; let all the people praise you.

The readers leave the reading space, while the third reader comes forward to read the gospel.

Reader 3: **A reading from the Gospel of John** (14: 23–27)

Jesus answered him, 'Those who love me will keep my word, and my Father will love them, and we will come to them and make our home with them. Whoever does not love me does not keep my words; and the word that you hear is not mine, but is from the Father who sent me. I have said these things to you while I am still with you. But the Advocate, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you everything, and remind you of all that I have said to you. Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled, and do not let them be afraid.'

The gospel of the Lord.

All: Praise to you, Lord, Jesus Christ.

Pause

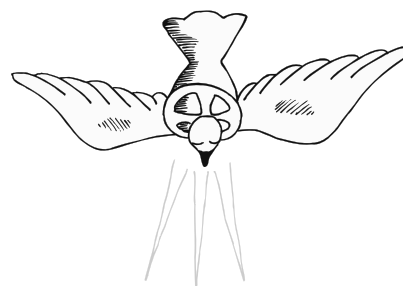
The Reader leaves the reading space.

You are invited to sit quietly and think about what the Holy Spirit means to you. Ask yourselves: 'What has the Holy Spirit taught me?'

Leader: As we listen to the hymn to the Holy Spirit,
I invite you to bring out your dove
and place it on and around the prayer focus.

Stand, gather around the prayer focus with your workbooks and prayer sheets, and pray together:

All: Breathe in me, O Holy Spirit, that my thoughts may all be holy.
Act in me, O Holy Spirit, that my work, too, may be holy.
Draw my heart, O Holy Spirit, that I love only what is holy.
Strengthen me, O Holy Spirit, to defend all that is holy.
Guard me, then, O Holy Spirit, that I always may be holy.
Amen.



Leader: As people of faith, we pray not only for ourselves but for all those whom God loves. God promised us the Holy Spirit so that we could follow in Jesus' footsteps. The Holy Spirit is given to us, to our community, to enable us to reach out, tell others about Jesus, and show others how much God loves us all.

So with this in mind we pray, asking God, through Jesus and the Holy Spirit, to guide us and help us be strong members of a Spirit-filled community who can celebrate Jesus in our lives, together.

Leader: For those who lead our Church, Pope and Archbishop: that they may be open to and guided by the Holy Spirit in their discussions and decision-making. Lord, hear us.

All: Lord, hear our prayer.

Leader: For the leaders of our country: that they seek only to do good in their decision making. Lord, hear us.

All: Lord, hear our prayer.

Leader: For all of us here today, especially those who are going to receive their Confirmation soon: may the Holy Spirit be alive and active in their lives, today and always. Lord, hear us.

All: Lord, hear our prayer.

Leader: For all members of our Spirit-filled community: that we recognise the prompting of the Holy Spirit when we work and speak with each other, enabling the message of Jesus to be lived and celebrated in our lives each day. Lord, hear us.

All: Lord, hear our prayer.

Leader: For those of our Spirit filled community who are sick: that they may find comfort and strength in the knowledge of our prayers and the prayers of all those in the community, asking for the Holy Spirit to be with them. Lord, hear us.

All: Lord, hear our prayer.

Leader: So, with these prayers offered to God our Father, through Jesus, God's Son, and the Holy Spirit, we pray together:

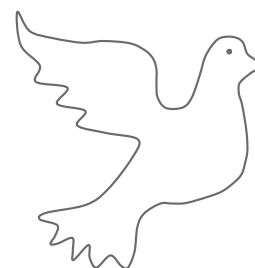
All: Glory be to the Father ...

Leader: As we have prayed together and gathered as a Spirit-filled community, we now ask God to bless us and send us on our way. Let us hold out our hands with our palms uppermost as we pray:

Come, God our Father, bless each and every one of us as we go to live our lives in a Spirit-filled community. Help us to reach out to you through your Son, Jesus, and with the strength and guidance of the Holy Spirit, so that we might spread your message to all whom we meet. We ask this through Christ, our Lord.

All: Amen.

In the name of the Father ...



We Celebrate Confirmation

Background for the Catechist

Please take 10 minutes to reflect on the following introduction to this lesson.

Reflection/Doctrinal Reference

The sacraments of Christian initiation – Baptism, Confirmation, and the Eucharist – lay the foundations of every Christian life. 'The sharing in the divine nature given to men through the grace of Christ bears a certain likeness to the origin, development, and nourishing of natural life. The faithful are born anew by Baptism, strengthened by the sacrament of Confirmation, and receive in the Eucharist the food of eternal life' (DCN, n.63) (CCC, n. 1212).

Many people are inducted into different groups these days: halls of fame, sporting teams and new schools or leisure groups. But there are key questions to be answered: Have we given the new member all the information, support and time that is needed to welcome them into the new role? Are there any questions that are unanswered? Have they made friends? Do the new ones feel comfortable in the group?

We know that the fully initiated member of a group is able to go out and gain new adherents to the group. They feel comfortable in the gathering and can take leadership positions in the future. The process of Initiation does not stop at Confirmation; it is an ongoing education, and given that the students are young, they need very much more education into the rites and practices of the Church.

Student Focus

Students will be very excited about the up-coming celebration. Like anyone, the students will feel more confident if they know what is coming and how they are expected to conduct themselves. Giving the students as much information as possible will assist the students to be calm and confident on the day.

Teaching Point

When we participate in the sacrament of Confirmation, we celebrate the gift of the Holy Spirit.

Remembering Point

When we participate in the sacrament of Confirmation we celebrate the gift of the Holy Spirit.

PREPARATION

1. Arrange to have the lectionary ready on the lectern, the presider's chair in front of the altar, oils on the altar (or in the ambry) and a small amount of olive oil in a bowl.
2. Workbooks.
3. Pens and pencils.
4. Familiarise yourself with the Rite of Confirmation – a copy is available in Appendix 24 on page 139. There is also a copy in the student workbooks.

Beginning

(10 minutes)

This lesson will be conducted in the Church.

Gather the students in the narthex (foyer) and welcome them as usual.

Invite the students to sit quietly as they prepare for prayer.

Catechist: Let us make the Sign of the Cross.

All: In the name of the Father ...

Catechist: Lord, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, help us in our lesson to be attentive and to participate enthusiastically. We make this prayer in Jesus' name.

All: Amen.

Distribute the workbooks.

Invite the students to open their workbooks at page 101 at the 'Sacraments of Initiation' activity. Tell them to fill in the details in the space provided.

Tell the students: Next week, when you are confirmed, you will be fully initiated into the Catholic Church within this parish. You will be joining the students and their families from the parish Catholic school. We will now run through the Rite of Confirmation as you will experience it.

Middle

(35 minutes)

Tell the students: Today we're going to *practise* what will happen at Confirmation – you will *not* be confirmed at the end of this lesson. The Rite of Confirmation takes place within the celebration of the Eucharist (Mass). Look at page 102 in your workbook and you will see the Rite of Confirmation. This is what will happen at your Confirmation.

(Read aloud the paragraph about gathering and The Entrance from Appendix 24 on page 139. Then invite the students to process with you to the front seats of the Church.)

Invite a student to read aloud the paragraph about the Liturgy of the Word. Then **ask the students** to gather round the lectern as a student reads the first reading from the Confirmation liturgy.

Invite the students to return to their seats and direct them to 'The Instruction' on page 102.

Read the opening sentences of The Instruction.

Invite four students to read aloud a paragraph each of The Instruction. Stand at the Presider's chair on the sanctuary and take the part of the bishop for the remainder of the Rite (including the 'Renewal of Baptismal, Promises' and 'The Sacrament of Confirmation').

Invite the students to turn to the Renewal of Baptismal Promises on page 103, and to stand and renew their Baptismal promises.

Tell the students: the next part, on page 103, is the Sacrament of Confirmation. All of you are to read together the first paragraph.

(When the students have finished reading the paragraph, stretch out your arms and read the prayer.)

Show the students the sacred oils in the ambry and tell them that these oils were blessed by the archbishop at the Chrism Mass or the Mass of the Holy Oils.

Invite a student to bring the bowl of olive oil. (Remind the students that this is not chrism and that we're only practising.)

Tell the students: Line up in twos in order to practise the anointing.

Invite a student to read the next paragraph. When the student finishes the paragraph trace a cross in oil on the forehead of each student, while saying the prayer, then give the sign of peace.

Tell the students the Mass then continues as usual.

End

(10 minutes)

Invite the students to gather around the altar for the final prayer on page 104.

Invite two students to read the prayers.

Catechist: Let us prepare ourselves for prayer.
God, our Father, made us his children by water and the Holy Spirit: may he bless us and watch over us with fatherly love.

All: Amen.

Reader 1: Jesus Christ, the Son of God, promised that the Spirit of truth would be with his Church forever: may he bless us and give us courage in professing the true faith.

All: Amen.

Reader 2: The Holy Spirit came down upon the disciples and set their hearts on fire with love: may he bless us, keep us one in faith and love and bring us to the joy of God's kingdom.

All: Amen.

Catechist: May almighty God bless us,
the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.

All: Amen.

Give any final instructions to the students about arrangements for the ceremony of Confirmation.

Dismiss the students as usual.

PREPARATION

Appendix 24 – The Rite of Confirmation

The Entrance

The celebration of the Rite of Confirmation takes place within the celebration of the Eucharist. When we gather with our family and other parish members, we are joining with the family of the Church. At this time we will be finalising our initiation into the Catholic Church.

During the gathering and entrance, the bishop and priests will process into the church. The congregation sing an appropriate hymn.

Liturgy of the Word

The Liturgy of the Word is the proclamation of the readings from Sacred Scripture. These readings can be found in the Lectionary. Take some time to read them and think about what they mean for you and the celebration of the sacrament of Confirmation.

The Instruction

After the gospel, the candidates for Confirmation are presented to the bishop. The bishop then delivers an instructional homily in these or similar words:

(From the Rite of Confirmation)

The Apostles, who had received the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost in fulfilment of the Lord's promise, had power to complete the work of Baptism by the giving of the Holy Spirit, as we read in the Acts of the Apostles. When Saint Paul had laid his hands on certain people who had been baptised, the Holy Spirit came upon them, and they spoke in tongues and prophesied.

The Bishops, as successors of the Apostles, possess the same power and, either in their own right or through Priests lawfully appointed to fulfil this ministry they confer the Holy Spirit on those who have already been born again in Baptism.

Even if today the coming of the Holy Spirit is no longer widely made manifest by the gift of tongues, we know by faith that the Spirit, through whom the love of God has been poured into our hearts and through whom we are gathered in unity of faith and in diversity of callings, is received by us and is working invisibly to make the Church holy and one.

Dearly beloved, the gift of the Holy Spirit, which you are about to receive, will be a spiritual seal, by which you will be conformed to Christ and will be made more fully members of his Church. For Christ himself, anointed by the Holy Spirit in the baptism he received from John, was sent forth for the work of his ministry, to pour out on the earth the fire of the same Spirit.

Therefore, you who are already baptised will now receive the power of his Spirit and be signed with his Cross on your foreheads. And so, you must always bear witness to his Passion and Resurrection before the world, so that your manner of life, as the Apostle says, may be in every place the pleasing fragrance of Christ. His Mystical Body, which is the Church, the People of God, receives from him diverse graces, which the same Holy Spirit distributes to individuals for the building up of that Body in unity and love.

Be living members of this Church, therefore, and under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, seek to serve all people like Christ, who came not to be served but to serve.

After all have been instructed by the bishop, the candidates renew their baptismal promise by rejecting Satan and professing their faith in the Lord and the Church. In this way, the candidates are reminded that Confirmation completes the sacraments of initiation. They accept the Christian way of life as their own.

Appendix 24 – Rite of Confirmation (continued)

Renewal of Baptismal promises

(From the Rite of Confirmation)

Bishop: Do you renounce Satan, and all his works and empty promises?

Candidate: I do.

Bishop: Do you believe in God, the Father almighty, creator of heaven and earth?

Candidate: I do.

Bishop: Do you believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord, Who was born of the Virgin Mary, suffered death and was buried, rose again from the dead, and is seated at the right hand of the Father?

Candidate: I do.

Bishop: Do you believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life, who today through the Sacrament of Confirmation is given to you in a special way just as he was given to the Apostles on the day of Pentecost?

Candidate: I do.

Bishop: Do you believe in the holy Catholic Church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and life everlasting?

Candidate: I do.

The Sacrament of Confirmation

After the bishop has given the 'Instruction' or homily, the Sacrament is conferred on those presenting themselves for Confirmation and who are prepared in heart and mind to receive the seal of the Holy Spirit.

The bishop asks the assembled community to pray for the candidates. After all have prayed in silence, the bishop holds his hands over the candidates, asking the Holy Spirit to come in power upon them.

With outstretched arms, he prays:

Bishop: Almighty God, Father of our Lord Jesus Christ,
who brought these your servants to new birth
by water and the Holy Spirit,
freeing them from sin:
send upon them, O Lord, the Holy Spirit, the Paraclete;
give them the spirit of wisdom and understanding,
the spirit of counsel and fortitude, the spirit of knowledge and piety;
fill them with the spirit of the fear of the Lord.
Through Christ, our Lord.

All: Amen.

The oil of chrism is then brought to the bishop.

Each candidate is presented to the bishop and stands or kneels before him.

The candidate's sponsor places his or her hand on the shoulder of the candidate, and the bishop, with his thumb moistened in the sacred chrism, makes the sign of the cross on the forehead of the one to be confirmed while saying:

Bishop: N., be sealed with the Gift of the Holy Spirit.

The newly confirmed responds: Amen.

The bishop gives the newly confirmed a sign of peace.

Bishop: Peace be with you.

The newly confirmed responds: And with your spirit.

Liturgy of the Eucharist

After the Sacrament is conferred, the Mass continues. The newly confirmed receive Holy Communion.

The Writers of the Gospels (Part 1)

Background for the Catechist

Please take 10 minutes to reflect on the following introduction to this lesson.

Reflection/Doctrinal Reference

We can distinguish three stages in the formation of the Gospels:

1. The life and teaching of Jesus. The Church holds firmly that the four Gospels, 'whose historicity she unhesitatingly affirms, faithfully hand on what Jesus, the Son of God, while he lived among men, really did and taught for their eternal salvation, until the day when he was taken up' (DV, n. 19).
2. The oral tradition. 'For, after the ascension of the Lord, the apostles handed on to their hearers what he had said and done, but with that fuller understanding which they, instructed by the glorious events of Christ and enlightened by the Spirit of truth, now enjoyed' (DV, n. 19).
3. The written Gospels. 'The sacred authors, in writing the four Gospels, selected certain of the many elements which had been handed on, either orally or already in written form; others they synthesised or explained with an eye to the situation of the churches, the while sustaining the form of preaching, but always in such a fashion that they have told us the honest truth about Jesus' (DV, n. 19) (CCC, n. 126).

Recent scholarship has noted that some original stories of Jesus' life, emerging from the Jerusalem community around the person of Peter, may have formed the basis for Mark's Gospel. The life and teachings of Jesus carried forward in an oral tradition is similar to the family stories of our families – our grandparents will narrate remembrances of the early days (or arrival) in Australia. The key elements of any family story are carefully preserved and are shaped and re-shaped in the retelling, depending upon the audience.

The intent of the gospel writers was primarily to present the life and message of Jesus in such a way that the hearers might embrace the Christian narrative as their own. The unique action of Jesus' resurrection, however, takes the storytelling of an event to a whole new level. The gospel writers wrote their own unique account of the life, death and resurrection of Jesus and provide us with a rich source for understanding Jesus and his message.

Student Focus

These students will most likely have covered a number of lessons about the gospels. Some of this work might be easily understood by some, while others might find it new and unusual. Students of this age are still fairly literal, but do have the capacity to explore alternatives. This is to be encouraged when looking at Scripture. There are always different ways of understanding and applying the message of Jesus in the Scripture.

Teaching Point

The gospel writers wrote unique accounts of Jesus' life, death and resurrection.

Remembering Point

Each gospel is different but has similar characteristics.

Beginning

(10 minutes)

Welcome the students as usual.

Gather the students around the prayer focus.

Catechist: Let us join together as believers in Jesus Christ in making the Sign of the Cross.

All: In the name of the Father ...

Catechist: The response is: Come, Holy Spirit, open our hearts.

Students: Come, Holy Spirit, open our hearts.

Catechist: Jesus lived on this earth, was born in Bethlehem, grew up in Galilee and died in Jerusalem. He left disciples, men and women, with the task to spread the good news. We benefit from these people passing down the stories and teachings of Jesus. So let us pray to the Holy Spirit that we might be open to the word of God, the message of Jesus.

Students: Come, Holy Spirit, open our hearts.

Catechist: As people of the 21st century, we live in a world different from that in which disciples first proclaimed the message of Jesus. God's word, God's message of love, is available to us today if only our hearts and our minds are open, and so we pray:

Students: Come, Holy Spirit, open our hearts.

Catechist: May we who have ears to hear, eyes to see and minds to think, be moved to respond to the message of Jesus Christ and therefore reach out to others. We pray:

Students: Come, Holy Spirit, open our hearts.

Catechist: We make this prayer to you Father, through Jesus, your Son, who lives with us and guides us, now and always.

Students: Amen.

Invite the students to go to their seats. **Hand out** the workbooks.

Tell the students: Today's lesson is the first of two lessons that will look at the writers of the gospels. The lessons will explore how the gospels were written; how the stories are similar, yet in many cases are different, and are told for different reasons. Since the gospels are documents that carry a message of faith, they are not meant to be historical or factual documents as we might understand them. They help us become the person that God wants us to be, fully human and living a God-filled life. Today we will look particularly at how the gospels were written.

Select six students to play 'Whispers'.

- Stand the students in a row about a metre apart from each other.
- Whisper into the ear of the first student a simple message. It doesn't have to be clearly spoken, but it must be whispered quietly so that no one else hears it. Say it only once.
- Then that student is to whisper the message they think they have heard to the next student.

PREPARATION

1. Prayer focus: a cloth, a candle, a crucifix and the Bible.
2. Student workbooks.
3. Perspectives for Rewriting the Story for each group (see Appendix 25b, page 147).

PREPARATION

- The whispering continues from student to student very quietly and quickly.

No one is to clarify any part of the whisper and it is only to be whispered once to each student. The students have to concentrate carefully.

The result will probably be a confused message that doesn't sound anything like the original whisper.

Ask the students:

- What do you think prevented the message getting through? *(This answer will include such things as softness of student's voice, not understanding what was said first, different accents. Accept all the answers that are reasonable.)*

Tell the students: The message was changed as it went from person to person. This can also happen when we are telling stories about an event. It depends on many different criteria when we tell a story. This is just what happened when the gospels were written.

Middle

(40 minutes)

Allocate the students to four groups.

Invite the students to turn to page 105 in their workbook to the page titled 'Beautiful Music'. (See also Appendix 25a on page 146.)

Tell the students: You all have the same story, but I want each group to retell the story from a different perspective. You are to make it a lot shorter than it appears in your book. One group will write the story from the perspective of Felix's grandparent, another group will be a member of the troupe. The third group will retell the story from the perspective of the landlord, and the fourth group will rewrite the story from the perspective of the mother, Rebecca.

I will allocate the perspectives to each group and you are to talk about how you will retell the story. Appoint a scribe and use the piece of paper provided to work on your story. You must keep the plot the same. However, you can add little bits that will help your purpose and describe the message from your perspective. You can also leave bits out as well. Keep the same characters but change their names only if it is necessary for the perspective. For example, if a character has a nickname throughout the story and you are the grandmother, you will probably call the person by their real name.

You will have 20 minutes to complete the task.

Distribute the different perspectives, one per group.

When the groups have finished rewriting the story, **invite a student** from each group to read the story. (Allow all groups to share their story.)

Ask the students:

- What perspective was each group coming from?
- How do we know that they are writing from this perspective?
- What markers or pointers are there in the story that give us a clue to the perspective? *(Encourage a lively discussion and engagement.)*
- What is interesting about these stories? *(They are similar yet different.)*

Tell the students: After Jesus' resurrection the disciples were left to tell the story of Jesus. Initially the apostles and those who were with him passed on the stories from one community to another. So we have what is called the Oral tradition – the stories that the disciples told the different groups of believers as they went from place to place preaching about Jesus.

Invite the students to turn to page 106 and the activity titled 'The Writing of the Gospels'.

Tell the students: Under the title 'The Oral Tradition', write the sort of things that happened in this stage of the development of the gospels.

Ask the students: What do you think might have happened next? *(Invite the students to speculate about what could have happened. We don't know, so their answers can be accepted as possibilities.)*

Tell the students: Scholars tell us that probably what happened before the gospels were written down is that some people who heard the disciples and apostles speak wrote down the stories so that they could pass them on to others. There was probably no structure to what they wrote. Some would have written just the sayings of Jesus, where others would have written the parables and stories that Jesus told.

Ask the students: What else might have been written down at this time?

Tell the students: In your workbook on page 106, in the section titled 'The collection of stories', write down what you think happened at this time.

Ask the students: What might be the next step?

Tell the students: That's right, some people decided to write the story of Jesus to help their particular community. The stories that were circulating among the communities were collected together and the authors each decided what they would copy, keep and discard or rewrite to suit their particular communities' problem or need. This part is called 'The written gospels'.

In your workbook on page 107, in the space titled 'The Written Gospels', write what you think happened at this time.

Invite two students to share their three steps in the process of the writing of the gospels.

Tell the students: Each of the gospel writers had a particular community in mind. Just as you wrote your story from a particular perspective and each ended up with a similar but different story, so too with the writers of the gospels.

PREPARATION

PREPARATION

End*(7 minutes)*

Invite the students to turn to page 107 in their workbooks and write a sentence or two about what they have learned today.

Tell the students: In the space titled 'My Learning', write one or two sentences about what you have learned today.

Collect the workbooks.

Gather the students around the prayer focus

Invite one student to light the candle.

Catechist: Today we have explored how the gospels were written. Let us join together to pray some of the words that have come down to us through this wonderful process. Together let us say the Lord's prayer.

All: Our Father ...

Catechist: May almighty God bless all of us today.
May we listen to God's word that was written
in four different ways in the gospels.
We ask this through Christ, our Lord.

All: Amen.

Dismiss the students as usual.

Appendix 25a – The Story

Beautiful Music

There was once a boy named Felix, who lived with his mother, Rebecca. The boy's father had died during a particularly bad winter a couple of years earlier. On a wild and stormy night, the wind blew tiles from the family's roof. When Felix's dad went out to fix it, he slipped and fell to his death. So now, Felix and Rebecca were together, trying to keep themselves fed and comfortable.

One day, the owner of the house demanded that Rebecca pay him an extra \$50 rent. The only problem was that he wanted it before the rent was due; in fact, within the next week. Felix was just 13 years old and Rebecca only had a part-time job, so finding an extra \$50 was impossible. The one thing they had to sell was the jersey cow, Daisy, which provided them with rich, creamy milk every day.

Desperate, Rebecca told Felix that the next day he was to take Daisy to the market in town and sell her. He was not to come back without at least \$50.

Early the next morning, Felix awoke, washed and got dressed ready to go to market. He had no transport so he would have to walk the five kilometres to town. Felix wasn't too happy about the walk, but knew he had better do what his mother had asked him. So Felix went out to the field where Daisy was grazing, caught her and put a rope around her so that he could lead her to market. Felix didn't eat any breakfast because there wasn't anything ready and he needed to get to market early to get a good price for the cow.

On his way to market, Felix met a group of performing artists who were also going to town. They juggled, tumbled, told jokes and sang. The leader of the troupe liked Daisy very much and asked Felix to exchange the cow for a musical instrument, the clarinet. Felix was quite taken with the beautiful sound, so he agreed to hand over the cow.

After the troupe had moved on, Felix then realised that he no longer needed to go to market, so went home. Rebecca was surprised to see Felix home so soon and asked how much he had received for the cow. Felix suddenly realised he had a problem, since he had no money and only the clarinet. He showed his mother the clarinet and quickly explained that he could go busking to raise the \$50. Rebecca was furious and told Felix to get outside and do his chores, as now they were likely to starve to death, as well as have no roof over their heads.

Felix was very sad and upset. He hadn't meant to cause this trouble – he had just been mesmerised by the music and the clarinet. So he sat at the back of the barn where Daisy used to be milked, and tried to play the clarinet. He didn't know anything about music but still, he put the clarinet to his mouth and blew.

To his surprise, a most beautiful note came out of the instrument. He blew again, and again another lovely note came forth. Felix just simply enjoyed making and listening to the sound. At last, he decided that he had better get on with his chores: sweeping the barn, changing the hay and collecting any eggs that the chickens had laid. When Felix went into the barn, he found to his amazement that the chickens had laid golden eggs. Solid gold! He collected all six of them and took them to Rebecca.

Rebecca was sure there was something illegal about all of these golden eggs, so she interrogated Felix as to where he found them and how they got there. Felix told her that all he did was play the clarinet. He showed her exactly how, and what beautiful music it made. When Felix played, Rebecca noticed something amazing: the eggs duplicated and the six golden eggs turned into 12 golden eggs.

The two of them were so happy! Rebecca selected two of the eggs and hid the remaining 10 and the clarinet. She told Felix that he wasn't to tell anyone about the clarinet or the golden eggs. Rebecca took the eggs to market herself and sold them for more than \$50. When she returned, she was able to pay the owner of the house and still have enough for their needs.

Appendix 25b – Re-writing the story

Copy this page and cut the four perspectives into strips to give one to each group.

1. Your group will write the story from the perspective of Felix's grandparent.

2. Your group will write from the perspective of a member of the troupe.

3. Your group will retell the story from the perspective of the landlord.

4. Your group will rewrite the story from the perspective of the mother, Rebecca.

The Writers of the Gospels (Part 2)

Background for the Catechist

Please take 10 minutes to reflect on the following introduction to this lesson.

Reflection/Doctrinal Reference

We can distinguish three stages in the formation of the Gospels:

1. The life and teaching of Jesus. The Church holds firmly that the four Gospels, 'whose historicity she unhesitatingly affirms, faithfully hand on what Jesus, the Son of God, while he lived among men, really did and taught for their eternal salvation, until the day when he was taken up' (DV, n. 19).
2. The oral tradition. 'For, after the ascension of the Lord, the apostles handed on to their hearers what he had said and done, but with that fuller understanding which they, instructed by the glorious events of Christ and enlightened by the Spirit of truth, now enjoyed' (DV, n. 19).
3. The written Gospels. 'The sacred authors, in writing the four Gospels, selected certain of the many elements which had been handed on, either orally or already in written form; others they synthesised or explained with an eye to the situation of the churches, the while sustaining the form of preaching, but always in such a fashion that they have told us the honest truth about Jesus' (DV, n. 19) (CCC, n. 126).

Recent scholarship has noted that some original stories of Jesus' life, emerging from the Jerusalem community around the person of Peter, may have formed the basis for Mark's Gospel. The life and teachings of Jesus carried forward in an oral tradition are similar to the family stories of our families – our grandparents will narrate remembrances of the early days (or arrival) in Australia. The key elements of any family story are carefully preserved and are shaped and re-shaped in the retelling, depending upon the audience.

The intent of the gospel writers was primarily to present the life and message of Jesus in such a way that the hearers might embrace the Christian narrative as their own. The unique action of Jesus' resurrection, however, takes the story-telling of an event to a whole new level. The gospel writers wrote their own unique account of the life, death and resurrection of Jesus and provide us with a rich source for understanding Jesus and his message.

Student Focus

These students will most likely have covered a number of lessons about the gospels. Some of this work might be easily understood by some, while others might find it new and unusual. Students of this age are still fairly literal, but do have the capacity to explore alternatives. This is to be encouraged when looking at Scripture. There are always different ways of understanding and applying the message of Jesus in the Scripture.

Teaching Point

The gospel writers wrote unique accounts of Jesus' life, death and resurrection.

Remembering Point

Each gospel is different but has similar characteristics.

PREPARATION

1. Prayer focus: a cloth, a candle, a crucifix and the Bible.
2. Worksheet, Examining Texts about Jesus, one per group (see Appendix 26a on page 154).
3. On the whiteboard or a sheet of A3, draw a grid with two columns, one titled 'similarities' and one titled 'differences'.
4. On a whiteboard or another sheet of A3 paper, draw a Venn Diagram using four circles. An example is in Appendix 26b, page 155.
5. Workbooks.

Beginning

(5 minutes)

Welcome the students as usual.

Gather the students around the prayer focus and light the candle.

Tell the students: When we read the gospels, we find that Jesus prayed many times in different situations. He prayed before choosing his apostles, before critical events in his life. He prayed alone and with others. He taught others to pray.

We too can pray as Jesus did, using the words that he taught us. Let us say the Our Father together.

All: Our Father ...

Invite the students to find their seats and **hand out** the workbooks.

Middle

(35 minutes)

Form the students into four groups by counting each student, 1–4.

1. Start with the first student as one, then the next student two, the next three and the next one four.
2. Start again from one with the next student and keep counting one through four until all students have a number.
3. You will now have four groups.
4. Invite all students with a number one to form group one, all those with number two to form group two, the threes to form group three and the fours form group four.

Tell the students: Turn to page 109 in your workbook and you will see the title, 'The First Disciples of Jesus'.

Allocate two scripture texts to each group:

Group One & Group Two – Mt 4: 18–22

¹⁸As he walked by the Sea of Galilee, he saw two brothers, Simon, who is called Peter, and Andrew his brother, casting a net into the lake — for they were fishermen. ¹⁹And he said to them, 'Follow me, and I will make you fish for people.' ²⁰Immediately they left their nets and followed him. ²¹As he went from there, he saw two other brothers, James son of Zebedee and his brother John, in the boat with their father Zebedee, mending their nets, and he called them. ²²Immediately they left the boat and their father, and followed him.

Group Three & Group Four – Mk 1: 16–20

¹⁶As Jesus passed along the Sea of Galilee, he saw Simon and his brother Andrew casting a net into the lake – for they were fishermen. ¹⁷And Jesus said to them, 'Follow me and I will make you fish for people.' ¹⁸And immediately they left their nets and followed him. ¹⁹As he went a little farther, he saw James son of Zebedee and his brother

John, who were in their boat mending the nets. ²⁰Immediately he called them; and they left their father Zebedee in the boat with the hired men, and followed him.

Group One & Group Two – Lk 5: 1–11

Once while Jesus was standing beside the lake of Gennesaret, and the crowd was pressing in on him to hear the word of God, ²he saw two boats there at the shore of the lake; the fishermen had gone out of them and were washing their nets. ³He got into one of the boats, the one belonging to Simon, and asked him to put out a little way from the shore. Then he sat down and taught the crowds from the boat. ⁴When he had finished speaking, he said to Simon, 'Put out into the deep water and let down your nets for a catch.' ⁵Simon answered, 'Master, we have worked all night long but have caught nothing. Yet if you say so, I will let down the nets.' ⁶When they had done this, they caught so many fish that their nets were beginning to break. ⁷So they signalled to their partners in the other boat to come and help them. And they came and filled both boats, so that they began to sink. ⁸But when Simon Peter saw it, he fell down at Jesus' knees, saying, 'Go away from me, Lord, for I am a sinful man!' ⁹For he and all who were with him were amazed at the catch of fish that they had taken; ¹⁰and so also were James and John, sons of Zebedee, who were partners with Simon. Then Jesus said to Simon, 'Do not be afraid; from now on you will be catching people.' ¹¹When they had brought their boats to shore, they left everything and followed him.

Group Three & Group Four – Jn 1: 35–51

³⁵The next day John again was standing with two of his disciples, ³⁶and as he watched Jesus walk by, he exclaimed, 'Look, here is the Lamb of God!' ³⁷The two disciples heard him say this, and they followed Jesus. ³⁸When Jesus turned and saw them following, he said to them, 'What are you looking for?' They said to him, 'Rabbi' (which translated means Teacher), 'where are you staying?' ³⁹He said to them, 'Come and see.' They came and saw where he was staying, and they remained with him that day. It was about four o'clock in the afternoon. ⁴⁰One of the two who heard John speak and followed him was Andrew, Simon Peter's brother. ⁴¹He first found his brother Simon and said to him, 'We have found the Messiah' (which is translated Anointed). ⁴²He brought Simon to Jesus, who looked at him and said, 'You are Simon son of John. You are to be called Cephas' (which is translated Peter). ⁴³The next day Jesus decided to go to Galilee. He found Philip and said to him, 'Follow me.' ⁴⁴Now Philip was from Bethsaida, the city of Andrew and Peter. ⁴⁵Philip found Nathanael and said to him, 'We have found him about whom Moses in the law and also the prophets wrote, Jesus son of Joseph from Nazareth.' ⁴⁶Nathanael said to him, 'Can anything good come out of Nazareth?' Philip said to him, 'Come and see.' ⁴⁷When Jesus saw Nathanael coming towards him, he said of him, 'Here is truly an Israelite in whom there is no deceit!' ⁴⁸Nathanael asked him, 'Where did you come to know me?' Jesus answered, 'I saw you under the fig tree before Philip called you.' ⁴⁹Nathanael replied, 'Rabbi, you are the Son of God! You are the King of Israel!' ⁵⁰Jesus answered, 'Do you believe because I told you that I saw you under the fig tree? You will see greater things than these.' ⁵¹And he said to him, 'Very truly, I tell you, you will see heaven opened and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of Man.'

PREPARATION

PREPARATION

Tell the students: In your workbook on page 108, you will see the title 'Examining Texts about Jesus'. Each of you is to read this page to yourself. When you have finished, turn to page 111 and the graphic organiser titled 'Jesus calls his disciples'. Complete the activity using the questions from page 108. Talk to each other in your group about how you might answer the question for each text. Record your answers in the space provided.

When the students have completed the task, **invite a student** from each group to read their texts aloud.

Ask the students:

- What do you notice about these texts that have been read? *(Accept all answers.)*
- What are the similarities and differences? *(Use the chart to record the differences and similarities.)*
- Why do you think there are differences in each story? *(Accept all answers.)*

Tell the students: What we see here are stories that are similar, telling us basically the same story, but with differences that add something and convey a particular message – just like our story from last week. You wrote the same story, but with a different focus or purpose in mind.

Now turn to page 113 in your workbook to the activity titled 'The Life of Jesus'. In your groups, read the texts and complete the Venn Diagram activity on page 115. Place all the things that are similar in the overlapping parts and all the things that are unique to each text only in the parts relevant to that text. Each of you is to record your group's answers in your workbook.

Mt 28: 1–10

After the sabbath, as the first day of the week was dawning, Mary Magdalene and the other Mary went to see the tomb. ²And suddenly there was a great earthquake; for an angel of the Lord, descending from heaven, came and rolled back the stone and sat on it. ³His appearance was like lightning, and his clothing white as snow. ⁴For fear of him the guards shook and became like dead men. ⁵But the angel said to the women, 'Do not be afraid; I know that you are looking for Jesus who was crucified. ⁶He is not here; for he has been raised, as he said. Come, see the place where he lay. ⁷Then go quickly and tell his disciples, "He has been raised from the dead, and indeed he is going ahead of you to Galilee; there you will see him." This is my message for you.' ⁸So they left the tomb quickly with fear and great joy, and ran to tell his disciples. ⁹Suddenly Jesus met them and said, 'Greetings!' And they came to him, took hold of his feet, and worshipped him. ¹⁰Then Jesus said to them, 'Do not be afraid; go and tell my brothers to go to Galilee; there they will see me.'

Mk 16: 1–8

When the sabbath was over, Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of James, and Salome bought spices, so that they might go and anoint him. ²And very early on the first day of the week, when the sun had risen, they went to the tomb. ³They had been saying to one another, 'Who will roll away the stone for us from the entrance to the tomb?' ⁴When they looked up, they saw that the stone, which

was very large, had already been rolled back. ⁵As they entered the tomb, they saw a young man, dressed in a white robe, sitting on the right side; and they were alarmed. ⁶But he said to them, 'Do not be alarmed; you are looking for Jesus of Nazareth, who was crucified. He has been raised; he is not here. Look, there is the place they laid him. ⁷But go, tell his disciples and Peter that he is going ahead of you to Galilee; there you will see him, just as he told you.' ⁸So they went out and fled from the tomb, for terror and amazement had seized them; and they said nothing to anyone, for they were afraid.

Lk 24: 1–12

But on the first day of the week, at early dawn, they came to the tomb, taking the spices that they had prepared. ²They found the stone rolled away from the tomb. ³but when they went in, they did not find the body. ⁴While they were perplexed about this, suddenly two men in dazzling clothes stood beside them. ⁵The women were terrified and bowed their faces to the ground, but the men said to them, 'Why do you look for the living among the dead? He is not here, but has risen. ⁶Remember how he told you, while he was still in Galilee, ⁷that the Son of Man must be handed over to sinners, and be crucified, and on the third day rise again.' ⁸Then they remembered his words, ⁹and returning from the tomb, they told all this to the eleven and to all the rest. ¹⁰Now it was Mary Magdalene, Joanna, Mary the mother of James, and the other women with them who told this to the apostles. ¹¹But these words seemed to them an idle tale, and they did not believe them. ¹²But Peter got up and ran to the tomb; stooping and looking in, he saw the linen cloths by themselves; then he went home, amazed at what had happened.

Jn 20: 1–18

Early on the first day of the week, while it was still dark, Mary Magdalene came to the tomb and saw that the stone had been removed from the tomb. ²So she ran and went to Simon Peter and the other disciple, the one whom Jesus loved, and said to them, 'They have taken the Lord out of the tomb, and we do not know where they have laid him.' ³Then Peter and the other disciple set out and went towards the tomb. ⁴The two were running together, but the other disciple outran Peter and reached the tomb first. ⁵He bent down to look in and saw the linen wrappings lying there, but he did not go in. ⁶Then Simon Peter came, following him, and went into the tomb. He saw the linen wrappings lying there, ⁷and the cloth that had been on Jesus' head, not lying with the linen wrappings but rolled up in a place by itself. ⁸Then the other disciple, who reached the tomb first, also went in, and he saw and believed; ⁹for as yet they did not understand the Scripture, that he must rise from the dead. ¹⁰Then the disciples returned to their homes.

¹¹But Mary stood weeping outside the tomb. As she wept, she bent over to look into the tomb; ¹²and she saw two angels in white, sitting where the body of Jesus had been lying, one at the head and the other at the feet. ¹³They said to her, 'Woman, why are you weeping?' She said to them, 'They have taken away my Lord, and I do not know where they have laid him.' ¹⁴When she had said this, she turned round and saw Jesus standing there, but she did not know that it was Jesus. ¹⁵Jesus said to her, 'Woman, why are you weeping? For whom are you looking?' Supposing him to be the gardener, she said

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to him, 'Sir, if you have carried him away, tell me where you have laid him, and I will take him away.' ¹⁶Jesus said to her, 'Mary!' She turned and said to him in Hebrew, 'Rabbouni!' (which means Teacher). ¹⁷Jesus said to her, 'Do not hold on to me, because I have not yet ascended to the Father. But go to my brothers and say to them, "I am ascending to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God." ' ¹⁸Mary Magdalene went and announced to the disciples, 'I have seen the Lord'; and she told them that he had said these things to her.

When the students have finished the activity, **invite a student** from each group, someone who has not shared anything previously, to read their texts and share their answers to the activity.

Record the responses to the activity on a large Venn Diagram on an A3 or larger sheet of paper placed in an observable place or on the whiteboard.

Ask the students: What have these two activities taught us about the gospels and the writers' approach?

Invite the students to talk to the others in their groups and decide on one thing they have discovered about the gospels and the gospel writers.

Invite a different student from each group to share the group's answers with everyone.

Tell the students: The gospel writers wanted to present the life and message of Jesus. They did this by using what they heard through the oral tradition and what was handed on to them from the apostles' witness of what Jesus had said and done while he lived among them. The authors of the gospels, inspired by God, chose from what had been handed down and what had been written, to formulate their own account of the life and message of Jesus. The gospel writers wanted to convey, not a historical document, but rather a faith document that would help the communities of believers in which they lived and worked to understand their faith and follow Jesus better.

Tell the students: In your workbook, write down something you discovered today, in the space titled 'I have learnt today ...'

Collect the workbooks.

End

(5 minutes)

Invite the students to gather around the prayer focus.

Catechist: Let us now pray together in the words from Scripture that Jesus gave us.

All: Our Father ...

All: In the name of the Father ...

Dismiss the students as usual.

Appendix 26a – Examining Texts about Jesus

Whenever you have a text from the gospels, you can look at it and break it open by asking and answering these questions:

THE CHARACTER

What titles are given to Jesus? Is Jesus the main character?
How does Jesus initiate contact with other characters?

THE PLOT

What happens?
Why do you think Jesus chose to do this? How did the other characters react?

THE TIME

When does this story take place? Is a day mentioned?
When in Jesus' life does this happen? Why do you think that?

THE SETTING

Where does this story take place? Is a place mentioned?
Is a building mentioned?
Why do you think Jesus was in that place?

THE PURPOSE

What does the text show us about Jesus?
What message does it convey?
Why might the author have included it?

THE PLACEMENT

How do the stories before and after the text relate to it?

THE CULTURE AND CUSTOMS

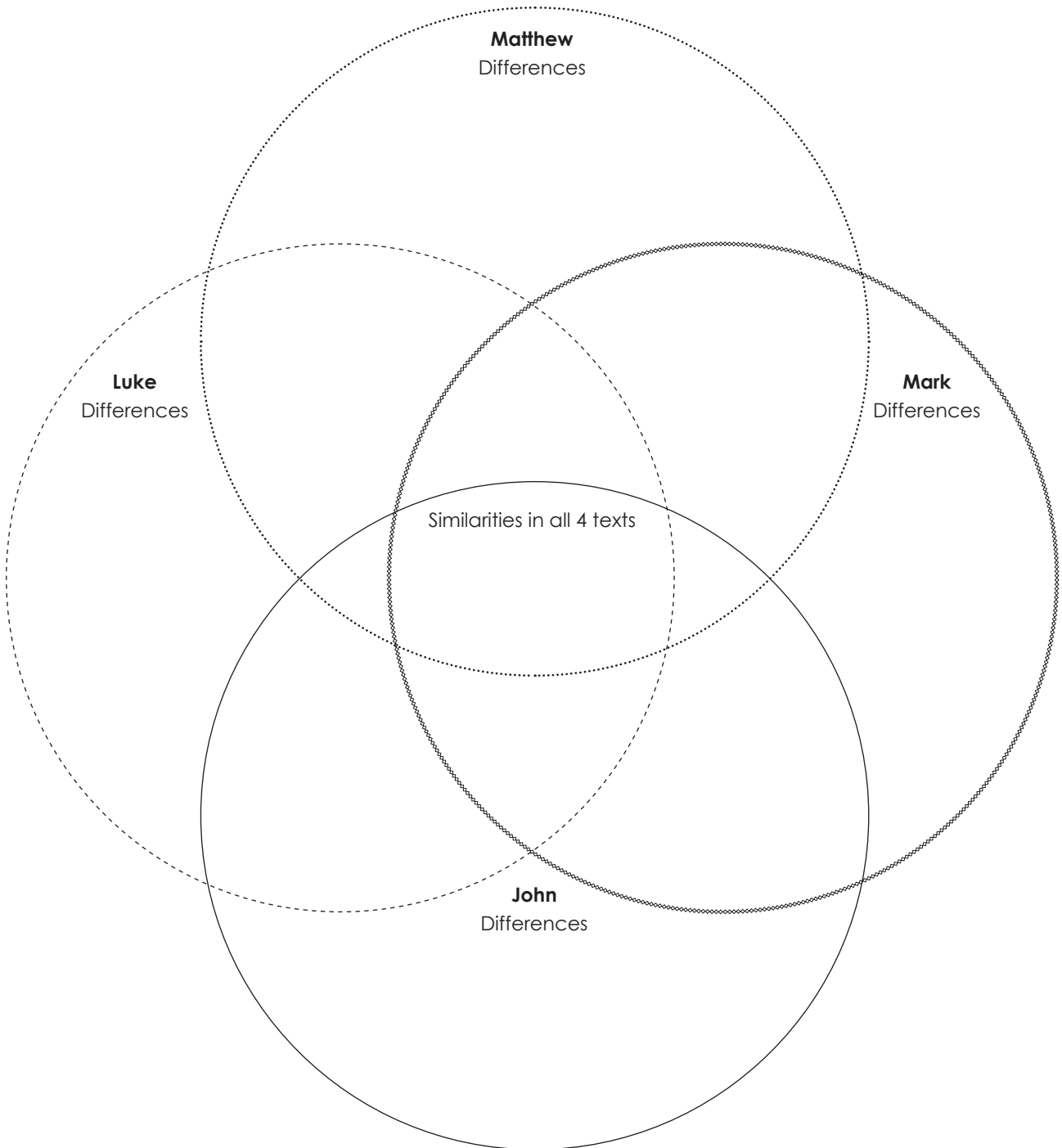
What religious customs do the people practise?
What cultural practices are evident?
Why do you think these customs were important?

THE WRITING STYLE

What genre is used?
What questions are raised by the text? Why do you think the author used that genre?

Appendix 26b – An Example of a Venn Diagram

If you wish, you can enlarge this diagram onto an A3 sheet and use it during this lesson.



We Remember the Dead

Background for the Catechist

Please take 10 minutes to reflect on the following introduction to this lesson.

Reflection/Doctrinal Reference

By death the soul is separated from the body, but in the resurrection God will give incorruptible life to our body, transformed by reunion with our soul. Just as Christ is risen and lives forever, so all of us will rise at the last day (CCC, n. 1016).

'We believe that the souls of all who die in Christ's grace ... are the People of God beyond death. On the day of resurrection, death will be definitively conquered, when these souls will be reunited with their bodies' (Paul VI, CPG § 28) (CCC, n. 1052).

The feast of All Souls, 2 November, is a commemoration of the faithful departed and is closely connected to the celebration of All Saints, 1 November. These two days commence the month during which we continue to pray for our deceased loved ones. From the middle ages, these days have been set aside for a special remembrance of the dead.

This month, we are encouraged to remember the dear departed in a variety of prayers. The loss of a loved one affirms the reality, power and sadness of death, but for Christians this is not the end. Our faith asserts that a new goal in life is attainable after death: the communion of Saints, when our souls are reunited with our bodies. Our belief, throughout the year but especially marked in November, is the hope for our own resurrection.

Student Focus

Death, and the loss associated with death, is always a sensitive topic with anyone, and no less with children. Consideration for what students might have experienced in the recent past – the loss of a parent, friend, grandparent – is essential when working with this lesson. It is useful for students to appreciate that in the Catholic Church we remember those who have gone before us, each year at this time.

Teaching Point

The month of November has been set aside for a special remembrance of the dead.

Remembering Point

In November, we remember all the dead.

PREPARATION

1. Prayer focus: a cloth, a candle, the Bible.
2. A shape for each student (Appendix 27a, page 161).
3. A length of wool for each student.
4. Blank bookmarks, one for each student (Appendix 27b, page 162).
5. Workbooks.

Beginning

(7 minutes)

Welcome the students as usual.

Distribute the workbooks.

Gather the students around the prayer focus and light the candle, recalling that the light reminds us that Christ is the light of the world.

Catechist: November is the month when we remember in a special way those who have died. All Souls' Day, 2 November, is when we remember all those who have died. This feast is closely linked with the celebration on 1 November called All Saints' Day. These two days, and the month of November, give us the opportunity to recognise and remember all those who have died. We recall those whom we call 'saints', in recognition of how they lived their life as Jesus wanted and we also remember all those we know who have died, especially our family and friends. Throughout November, we recognise these two elements in a special way.

In our prayer, we are going to recall some of the names of saints in a litany. A litany is a form of prayer, asking the saints to pray to God for us. So let us begin ...

All: In the name of the Father ...

Catechist: Our response to each title of the saint is: Pray for us.

Holy Mary, Mother of God,

All: pray for us.

St Andrew, the fisherman

All: pray for us.

St Anthony, the miracle-worker,

All: pray for us.

St Anne, mother of the blessed Virgin,

All: pray for us.

St Augustine, bishop and doctor of the Church,

All: pray for us.

St Barbara, a brave martyr,

All: pray for us.

St Bernadette, little girl from Lourdes,

All: pray for us.

St Dominic, the great preacher,

All: pray for us.

St Elizabeth, mother of John the Baptist,

All: pray for us.

St ...(add your parish saint if appropriate)

All: pray for us.

Catechist: Let us pray:

God, our Father, we recall the good men and women of every time and place who have lived their lives in honour of you. May we, who also try hard to live as you wish us to live, share in their peace and your love, here on earth and in heaven. We make this prayer through Christ, our Lord.

All: Amen.

Middle

(25 minutes)

Invite the students to go to their seats.

Tell the students: I want you now to sit quietly and to think about any family members or friends who have died. I don't want you to think about the sadness of the loss, but rather to think about the fun times, the stories that they told or that you were part of with them.

Invite the students to form into pairs and share with one another one of the stories about the person they were thinking about. (Ensure the students let each other know what relationship they have with the person. Allow eight minutes for this activity.)

Distribute the shapes, one per student, and a length of wool to each student. A set of template shapes is available in Appendix 27a, page 161.

Tell the students: On one side of the shape, draw a picture of the person you were sharing about and write their name underneath. On the reverse side, write a short version of the story you were sharing. When you are finished, you can punch a hole at the top and thread through the wool. When you take this home, you will be able to remember this person all through November in a special way. You will have five minutes for this task.

Invite the students to open their workbooks at page 117 and the activity, 'A prayer for a loved one this November'.

Tell the students: You might remember how we have written prayers before. First you write down a name for God such as 'Heavenly Father', or 'God of Creation', then you describe or praise God by commenting on an attribute. For example: 'Your love reaches out and wraps us in your embrace'. Then identify what you are praying about: 'May your love be with those who have died as we remember and pray for them'. Then praise God with a phrase such as 'For you are glorious and full of compassion'. Conclude with: 'We ask this through Christ, our Lord. Amen'.

(The prayer will look something like this:

Heavenly Father, Your love reaches out and wraps us in your embrace. May your love be with those who have died as we remember and pray for them. For you are glorious and full of compassion. We ask this through Christ, our Lord. Amen.)

In the space in your workbook, you are to write your prayer about the person you have talked about.

When the students have finished, **hand out** the bookmark-shaped card, one per student.

Invite the students to write out their prayer onto the card. Remind them that when they take it home with their picture and story of their loved one, they can pray this prayer throughout November and beyond for their loved one.

PREPARATION

PREPARATION

Choose two or three students to share their prayer with the group.

Tell the students: Our Church has a prayer that we say for all those who die. So if you can't remember your own prayer, you can always pray this one. You will find it on page 117 in your workbook. Let us say it together:

Eternal rest grant to them, O Lord,
And let perpetual light shine upon them.
May they rest in peace. Amen.

End

(15 minutes)

Gather the students to sit around the prayer focus with their workbooks opened at page 118.

Tell the students: We will now have a short prayer service for all those who have died and gone before us.

Allocate the reading to one student and the prayers to another student.

Catechist: All around us, we see people, animals and plants come to life, grow and then die. There is a season for everything. 'A time for giving birth, a time for dying ...' (Eccl 3: 1, 2). During the month of November, we remember all our family, friends and all those who have died. We ask God to take them into God's presence and embrace them in God's love.

Let us begin with the sign that points to our belief in God who is three yet one.

All: In the name of the Father ...

Catechist: Listen kindly to our prayers, O Lord. May our friends and family be drawn ever closer to your presence.

All: Amen.

Reader 1: A reading from the holy Gospel according to John (Jn 6: 37-40).

All: Glory to you, O Lord.

Reader 1: Jesus said to the crowds: 'Everything that God gives me will come to me, and I will not reject anyone who comes to me, because I came down from heaven not to do my own will but the will of the one who sent me. And this is the will of the one who sent me, that I should not lose anything of what was given me, but that I should raise it on the last day. For this is the will of my God, that all who see the Son and believe in him may have eternal life, and I shall raise them on the last day.'

Catechist: While we are quiet, let us think about those friends and family who have died.

Pause

Catechist: Let us pray.

Jesus Christ is risen from the dead and sits at the right hand of the Father, where he intercedes for his Church. We all know someone who is in Heaven – someone who loved Jesus very much and is now with Jesus in Heaven.

Reader 2: We pray for our family members who have died. May they find peace with God. Lord, hear us.

All: Lord, hear our prayer.

Reader 3: We pray for those in our world who die alone with no one to care about them. May they find friendship and peace with God. Lord, hear us.

All: Lord, hear our prayer.

Reader 4: We pray for ourselves that we might continue to remember to pray for those who have died. May our prayers, Lord God, rise up to you like incense. Lord, hear us.

All: Lord, hear our prayer.

Catechist: During November we remember all the dead.

Lord, remember those who have died and have gone before us in faith, especially those who have died recently. May these, and those who sleep in Christ, rest in your presence experiencing light, happiness and peace.

We ask this through Christ, our Lord.

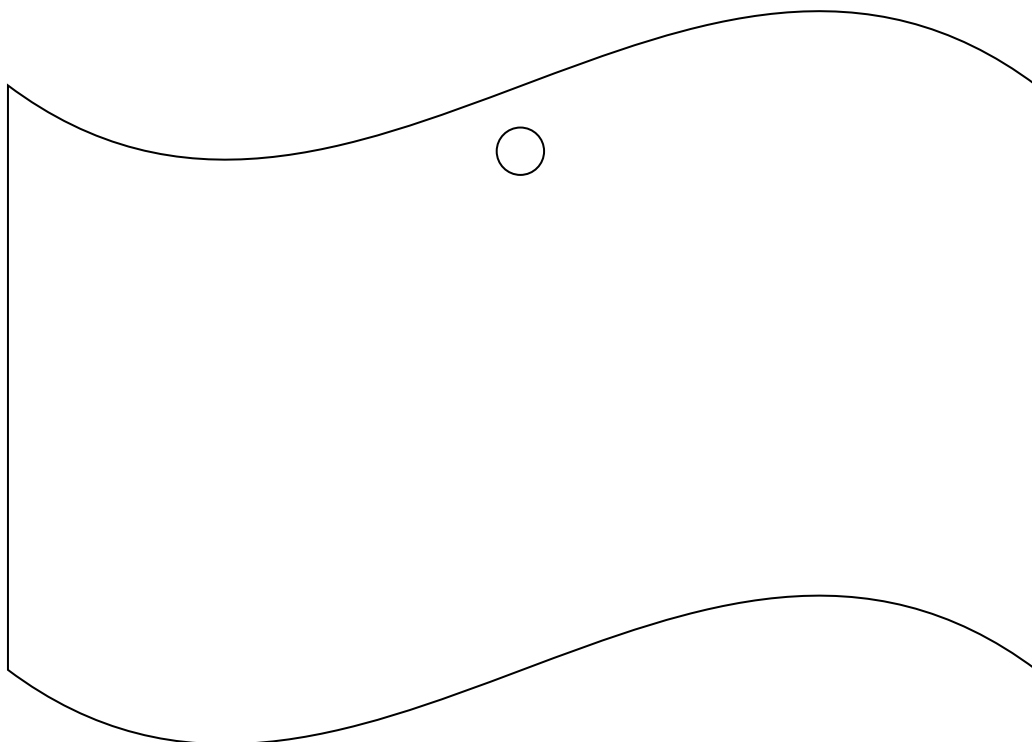
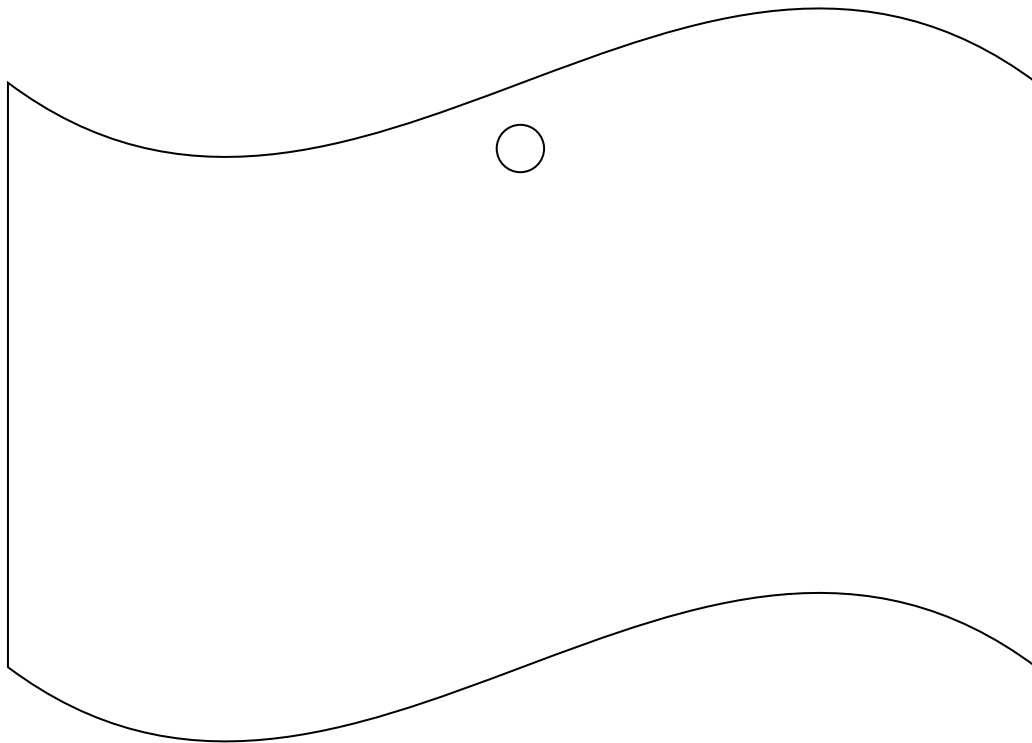
All: Amen.

Collect the workbooks and dismiss the students as usual.

PREPARATION

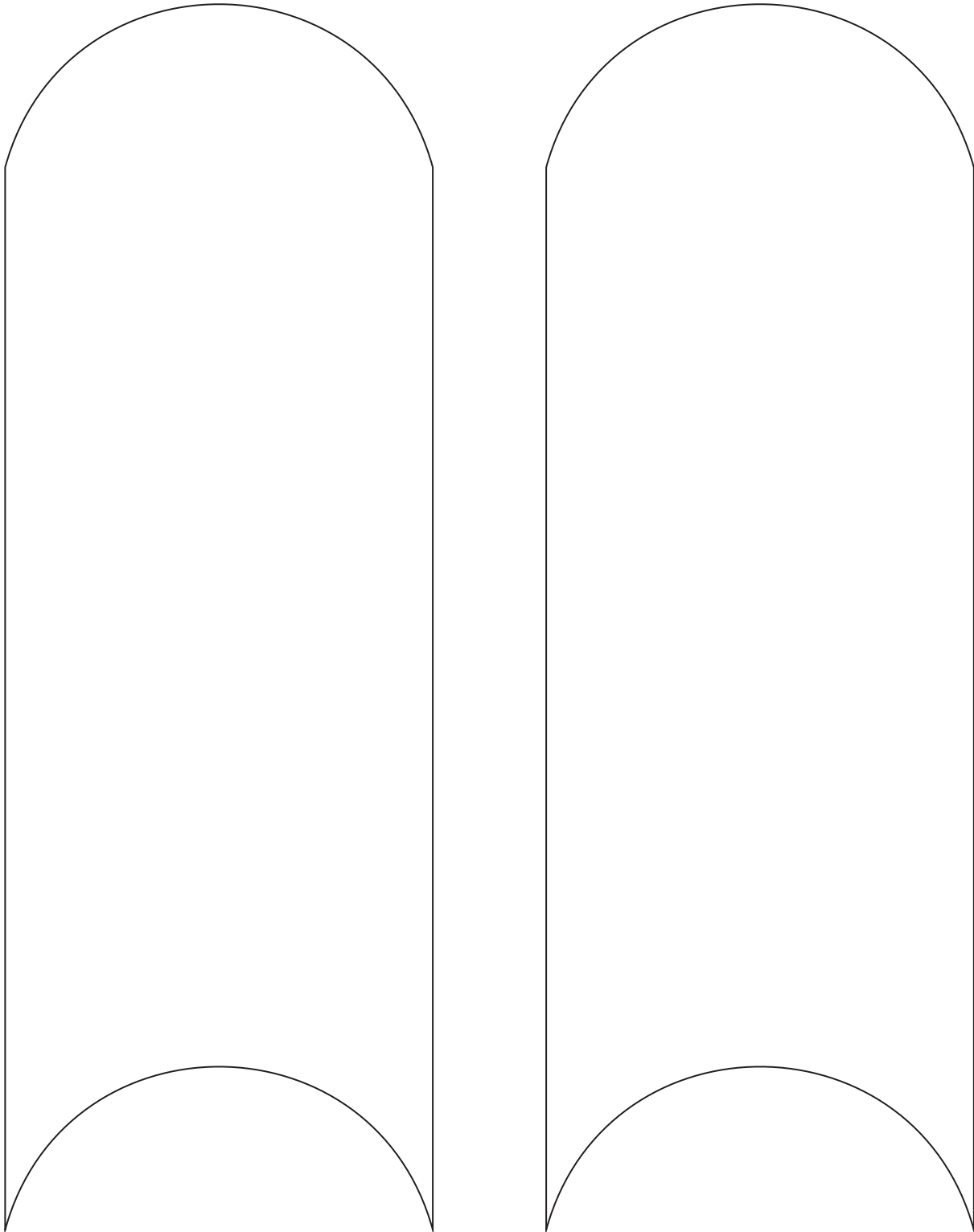
Appendix 27a- Shape Templates

Photocopy enough for one shape per student.



Appendix 27b- Bookmark Templates

Photocopy enough for one of each shape per student.



The Spirit Alive in Me

Background for the Catechist

Please take 10 minutes to reflect on the following introduction to this lesson.

Reflection/Doctrinal Reference

'No one can say "Jesus is Lord" except by the Holy Spirit' (1 Cor 12: 3).
'God has sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, crying, "Abba! Father!"'
(Gal 4: 6) This knowledge of faith is possible only in the Holy Spirit: to be in touch with Christ, we must first have been touched by the Holy Spirit. He comes to meet us and kindles faith in us. By virtue of our Baptism, the first sacrament of the faith, the Holy Spirit in the Church communicates to us, intimately and personally, the life that originates in the Father and is offered to us in the Son (CCC, n. 683).

Since we have been created by God, and are continually sustained by God's loving power, we are at our most authentic when we are in communion with the centre of our being. Moreover, as we have been baptised into the life of Christ, we are filled with God's Holy Spirit, who empowers us with the gift of faith and love.

In order to respond to any person in life, one must, first, hear the summons. As the Spirit of life created us, we might think a response to the Spirit would be a somewhat straightforward affair. But God's Spirit has to be earnestly listened for, and freely submitted to. The mystery of God's presence and listening to God demand us to live a life that is connected to the power and action of the Spirit.

Student Focus

This is the year of the Holy Spirit for these students. They will probably have received the sacrament of Confirmation and have a heightened sense of the Holy Spirit that you can draw on. Emphasising the importance of the Holy Spirit in our lives is always valuable.

Teaching Point

I can respond to the Spirit active in my life.

Remembering Point

I can respond to the Spirit active in my life.

Beginning

(10 minutes)

Welcome the students as usual.

Gather the students around the prayer focus.

Distribute the workbooks and ask the students to open them at page 119.

Catechist: Let us begin with the Sign of the Cross.

All: In the name of the Father ...

Catechist: The Spirit was alive in St Teresa and Sts Peter and Paul. Help us to allow the Spirit to live in us. Lord, hear us.

All: Lord, hear our prayer.

Catechist: Let us ask the saints to help us.
St Teresa,

All: Pray for us.

Catechist: Sts Peter and Paul,

All: Pray for us.

Catechist: Let us finish with the Sign of the Cross.

All: In the name of the Father ...

Invite the students to go to their seats and to think back to a lesson they had about St Teresa and Sts Peter and Paul.

Ask them: What do you remember about any of these saints? Take two or three responses. *(If they can't remember any, move onto the next activity.)*

Middle

(30 minutes)

Invite the students to open their workbooks at the stories of St Teresa and Sts Peter and Paul on page 58–60. **Tell the students** that their task is to read about these saints and find evidence of the Spirit alive in them.

Divide the students into three groups and assign one of these saints to each group.

Tell the students: Each of you individually is to read the text and to see what evidence there is of the Spirit alive in that person. You can circle or underline in the story where you find the evidence. You will have five minutes for this task.

Invite the students to pair up with someone from their group and to look together at the evidence of the Spirit alive in the saint.

Tell the students: With your partner, use good dialogue skills in order to decide on two or three characteristics of the saint. For example, because St Paul persisted in teaching people about Jesus even though

PREPARATION

1. Prayer focus: a cloth, a candle, pictures of Sts Teresa, Peter and Paul, the Bible.
2. Workbooks.
3. Strips of paper, enough for each pair to have at least four.
4. Sheet of A3 paper with heading: How the Spirit is Alive.
5. Blu Tack.
6. Pencils.

PREPARATION

he suffered as a result – one of his characteristics was courage. When you have identified the characteristics of the saint, write each one on a separate strip of paper which you will be given.

Hand out four strips of paper to each group. **Gather all the students** together at the front of the room and **invite each pair** to tell the group the characteristics of the Spirit alive in their saint and to Blu Tack the strips onto the A3 sheet.

Affirm the work the students have done in identifying characteristics of the Spirit alive in others.

Tell the students: The Spirit is always present in our lives. Teresa, Peter and Paul responded to the Spirit alive in them and so they were able to do the extraordinary things they did. The evidence of the Spirit being alive in a person does not have to be extraordinary or heroic. It might be simply doing things in the best possible way, e.g. singing with all one's heart, being a team player, working hard at maths, considering members of one's family, etc. Whenever we try to study, interact with others and play to the best of our ability, we are responding to the Spirit who is alive in us.

Ask the students: Think about people you know who have some of these characteristics.

Invite each student to share with one other student. Then, **invite three or four** to tell the whole group about the people they were just discussing.

Invite the students to return to their seats and consider their own lives and how the Spirit is alive in themselves.

Tell the students: Choose one of the characteristics on the sheet and think about the evidence of this in your own lives. *(If any students think there is no evidence in their lives, invite them to consider what evidence there would be if they were courageous.)* You will have two to three minutes thinking time. Then turn to page 120 in your workbook and complete a character analysis of yourself as a Spirit-filled person. When you have finished you can share with the person beside you.

(Walk around the class, offering support where needed and giving praise.)

End

(7 minutes)

Gather the students around you at the front of the room and affirm their work. Remind them that the Holy Spirit is alive in each one of us and is always ready to help us to do things to the best of our ability.

Invite the students to consider when they have responded to the Holy Spirit alive in them by doing things to the best of their ability, e.g. riding their bike, throwing a ball.

Tell the students: In your workbook on page 121, in the space provided, complete the prayer: Holy Spirit, you are alive in me when I ...

Gather the students around the prayer focus.

Tell the students: As part of our closing prayer, you are invited to share your prayer to the Holy Spirit if you wish. *(Have one of your own ready to start with.)*

Catechist: Let us begin with the Sign of the Cross.

All: In the name of the Father ...

Catechist: Holy Spirit, you are always present in my life.
Holy Spirit, you are alive in me when I ...

All: Holy Spirit, you are alive in me.

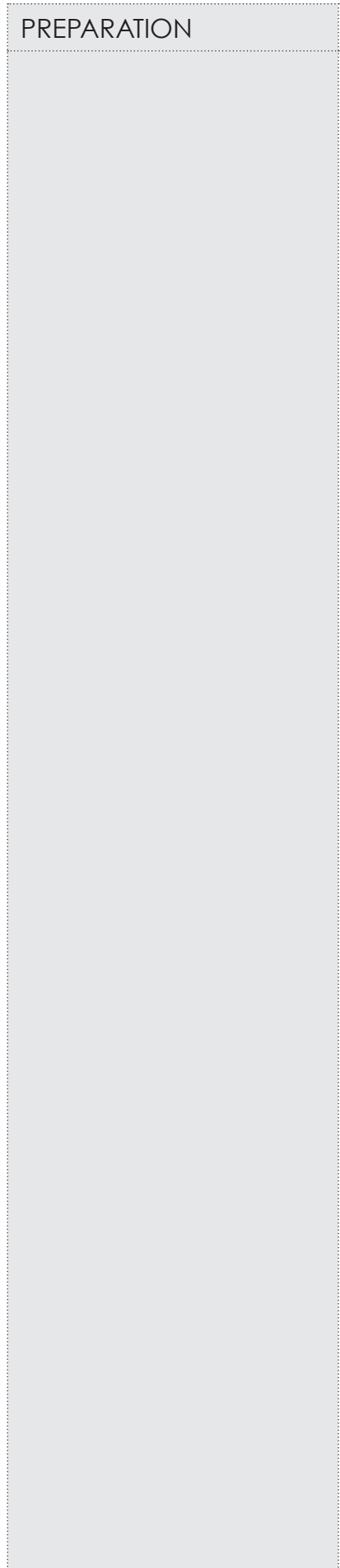
Leave a few moments of silence for students to read their prayers. At the end of each prayer pray the response. After all who wish to say a prayer have done so, or when you judge it is a suitable time to finish, say:

Catechist: Holy Spirit, you are always present in our lives.
Holy Spirit, you are alive in us. Let us pray together:

All: Glory be to the Father ...

Collect the workbooks and dismiss the students as usual.

PREPARATION



Stewards of Creation

Background for the Catechist

Please take 10 minutes to reflect on the following introduction to this lesson.

Reflection/Doctrinal Reference

In the beginning God entrusted the earth and its resources to the common stewardship of mankind to take care of them, master them by labour, and enjoy their fruits. The goods of creation are destined for the whole human race. However, the earth is divided up among men to assure the security of their lives, endangered by poverty and threatened by violence. The appropriation of property is legitimate for guaranteeing the freedom and dignity of persons and for helping each of them to meet his basic needs and the needs of those in his charge. It should allow for a natural solidarity to develop between men. Because creation comes forth from God's goodness, it shares in that goodness – 'And God saw that it was good ... very good' (Gen 1: 25b, 31 a) – for God willed creation as a gift addressed to man, an inheritance destined for and entrusted to him. On many occasions the Church has had to defend the goodness of creation, including that of the physical world (CCC, n. 2402).

The Old Testament God was a unique figure in the history of religions. This Jewish God was not a sun, star or mountain but God, who actually created the whole cosmos merely by speaking. The insight of the ancient Jewish theologians was that their God offered all of creation into human hands to nurture it, survive by its gifts, and share its fruits and blessings. Creation emerged from God's goodness and with this gift humans are called to protect and defend it.

The Preface of the Mass (Ordinary Time V) celebrates God's creation and asserts that God formed humankind in God's image and set humanity over the whole world, in all its wonder. We live in special times, for we can carefully trace the success of caring for the land, sea and the air we breathe. We can also more easily gauge the disregard we show our planet, our polar regions, forests, rivers and oceans.

Student Focus

The students of this age will be familiar with 'care of the earth' campaigns and programs. They may be involved in projects at their school that address issues such as global warming. There will be many experiences in and around the local community that can be highlighted as cause for care and responsibility on our part as Christians.

Teaching Point

We care for the gift of creation.

Remembering Point

We care for the gift of creation.

Beginning

(15 minutes)

Welcome the students as usual.

Gather the students around the prayer focus and **distribute** the workbooks.

Invite a student to light the candle.

Catechist: We will pray psalm 148 on page 122 in your workbooks.

Half of you (indicate which half) will be side one, the other half (indicate) will be side two.

Our prayer today praises God for the gift of creation. We share in this gift through the use of, and access to, nature. So let us pause and think about the beauty and grandeur of creation, and what it says about God.

All: In the name of the Father ...

Side One: Praise the Lord!
 Praise the Lord from the heavens;
 praise him in the heights!
 Praise him, all his angels;
 praise him, all his host!
 Praise him, sun and moon;
 praise him, all you shining stars!
 Praise him, you highest heavens,
 and you waters above the heavens!
 Let them praise the name of the Lord,
 for he commanded and they were created.
 He established them for ever and ever;
 he fixed their bounds, which cannot be passed.

Side Two: Praise the Lord from the earth,
 you sea monsters and all deeps,
 fire and hail, snow and frost,
 stormy wind fulfilling his command!
 Mountains and all hills,
 fruit trees and all cedars!
 Wild animals and all cattle,
 creeping things and flying birds!
 Kings of the earth and all peoples,
 princes and all rulers of the earth!
 Young men and women alike,
 old and young together!

Side One: Let them praise the name of the Lord,
 for his name alone is exalted;
 his glory is above earth and heaven.
 He has raised up a horn for his people,
 praise for all his faithful,
 for the people of Israel who are close to him.
 Praise the Lord!

All: Glory be to the Father ...

PREPARATION

1. Prayer focus: a green cloth, a green candle, a healthy growing plant in a plant pot, the Bible.
2. Workbooks
3. A sheet of butcher's paper with the word STEWARDSHIP written in the middle.
4. Strips of paper or card, enough for one for each pair of students. Fold an A4 sheet of paper in half, and then in half again. Cut along the folds. You will have four strips of paper large enough for the task.
5. Blu Tack.
6. Newspapers. Enough for at least one per group of four students.
7. Scissors and glue for each student or at least one of each per group of four.
8. A sheet of butcher's paper for each group.

PREPARATION

Invite the students to go to their seats.

Tell the students: With the person beside you, discuss what you think is the meaning of stewardship.

Distribute a strip of paper to each pair and invite the students to record their agreed definition on the paper.

Display a sheet of paper with the word STEWARDSHIP written in the middle somewhere where all the students can see it. Alternatively use the whiteboard. Write the word STEWARDSHIP on the board and allow plenty of space around the word.

Invite a student from each pair to bring their definition forward and Blu Tack the strip around the word on the board or paper.

Review the definitions with the students, encouraging them to ask questions for clarification, if necessary.

Tell the students (if it doesn't become clear in the activity): Stewardship is being responsible for caring for something or someone. Just as a steward on a ship cares for the needs of the passengers, so when we are called stewards of the earth, we are expected to care for and look after the needs of the earth, the world in which we live.

Today's lesson is about how we might be stewards, how we might care for the earth that is a gift to us from God.

Middle

(35 minutes)

Invite the students to form into groups of four (or allocate them to groups).

Distribute the newspapers (one or two per group depending upon the number of papers you have), a piece of butcher's paper, scissors and glue.

Tell the students: You are to look through your newspaper(s) and choose pictures or headlines that indicate situations in the natural world that require our stewardship. These situations or examples are not necessarily bad – in the media there are many examples of things that are good but which also require our stewardship.

When you have found examples, cut them out and lay them together for your group to see. Take turns explaining your choices to the rest of your group.

Use the following pattern for sharing: 'I chose this _____ (describe the picture or story) as an example requiring our stewardship because ...'

The group can ask questions for clarification. After everyone has had a chance to share, then the group decides which example is the one you want to use.

At the top of your sheet of paper, write the following heading: Stewardship, Our Planet, Our Future. Directly underneath the heading, glue the example chosen by your group.

(Allow about 10 minutes for this selection process.)

Tell the students: Now that you have all chosen an example, discuss as a group what this example requires of humanity to care for it, keep it in the best condition it can be, or to restore it to how it should be. How can we in society be good stewards for this particular issue? For example, you might suggest that we need to carefully consider where we allow new factories to be built and how they get rid of their waste.

If you need a reminder about the question you are to discuss, turn to page 123 in your workbook where you will find the question that I have just asked under the title 'Stewardship'.

Appoint one person as the scribe to record your group's suggestions in the space underneath the item that you have glued onto your sheet. You will have 15 minutes for this activity of discussion and recording.

Invite a student from each group to share what their group has discussed and written.

Ask the students: What insights have you gained about stewardship and being a steward of creation? *(Take all answers, encouraging students to consider not just the item they have selected but any insights they gained generally about stewardship.)*

Tell the students: Turn to page 123 in your workbook and in the space titled, 'I am a steward of creation', write what you believe you are called to do in your local situation to be a good steward of creation. What is expected of you? What can you do?

Invite a selection of students to share their responses if they wish.

Tell the students: God gave us creation as a gift. This gift keeps us alive. The sun shines on us and on the crops in the fields, producing our food. We all share in the water that covers the earth. Humanity benefits from the resources that are dug from the ground, minerals and metals that go towards construction. All of this is given to all of us – not just to one group of people, not just the wealthy, or the toughest, or those with the biggest army. We all share in God's gift of creation.

All of us, therefore, are called to respect and care for the earth, the gift from God. In caring for the earth, in being a good steward, we are ensuring that the gift continues beyond us for those who come after us. Stewards do not own the property or thing that they are caring for; they are guardians of it, there to protect the item, make it grow. As good stewards of creation, we too are called to guard and protect.

Discuss with the person beside you about how to be a good steward and record your five best answers in your workbook on page 123 in the space titled 'Five Ways to be a Good Steward of Creation'.

Invite the students to share their answers with the rest of the group. *(Make a list of their answers on the whiteboard or on a sheet of butcher's paper. Tick where repeated ideas are shared.)*

PREPARATION

PREPARATION

End*(5 minutes)*

Gather the students around the prayer focus where they can see the list of ways to be a good steward.

Invite the students to be still, to sit quietly, to listen attentively to the sounds around them.

Catechist: In the name of the Father ...
Slowly recite the list of ways to be a good steward of creation. Begin with the following:

As we sit here today, we have considered how to be good stewards of God's gift of creation. In response we can ...

(Recite the list of stewardship ideas created by the students. At the conclusion, **invite the students** to pray the psalm they prayed at the beginning of the lesson.)

Catechist: Turn to page 122 and the psalm we prayed earlier in our lesson. Let us now do the same again:

Side One: Praise the Lord!
Praise the Lord from the heavens;
praise him in the heights!
Praise him, all his angels;
praise him, all his host!
Praise him, sun and moon;
praise him, all you shining stars!
Praise him, you highest heavens,
and you waters above the heavens!
Let them praise the name of the Lord,
for he commanded and they were created.
He established them for ever and ever;
he fixed their bounds, which cannot be passed.

Side Two: Praise the Lord from the earth,
you sea monsters and all deeps,
fire and hail, snow and frost,
stormy wind fulfilling his command!
Mountains and all hills,
fruit trees and all cedars!
Wild animals and all cattle,
creeping things and flying birds!
Kings of the earth and all peoples,
princes and all rulers of the earth!
Young men and women alike,
old and young together!

Side One: Let them praise the name of the Lord,
for his name alone is exalted;
his glory is above earth and heaven.
He has raised up a horn for his people,
praise for all his faithful,
for the people of Israel who are close to him.
Praise the Lord!

All: Glory be to the Father ...

Collect the workbooks and dismiss the students as usual.

I Can Pray the Rosary

Background for the Catechist

Please take 10 minutes to reflect on the following introduction to this lesson.

Reflection/Doctrinal Reference

Meditation engages thought, imagination, emotion, and desire. This mobilisation of faculties is necessary in order to deepen our convictions of faith, prompt the conversion of our heart, and strengthen our will to follow Christ. Christian prayer tries above all to meditate on the mysteries of Christ, as in lectio divina or the rosary. This form of prayerful reflection is of great value, but Christian prayer should go further: to the knowledge of the love of the Lord Jesus, to union with him (CCC, n. 2708).

The Rosary is a traditional prayer that has as its intent meditation on the life and message of Jesus. It offers the opportunity to praise God. Through the meditation on significant stories in the life of Jesus and the intercession of Mary, his mother, we are able to recall the mystery of salvation. The recitation of the Hail Mary is said to allow time for reflection on the mystery of Jesus' life, to deepen our understanding and knowledge of Jesus.

Student Focus

The students may have been to funerals of family members where the rosary has been recited on the evening before the funeral Mass. Although the praying of the rosary is not necessarily a common experience for children today, they are familiar with all of the elements: the Hail Mary, the Our Father and the Glory Be. Helping the students to see this traditional prayer in its original intent of meditation on the life of Jesus, will help to make its purpose more relevant.

Teaching Point

We pray the Rosary to remember Jesus' life and to praise God.

Remembering Point

The Rosary helps me to pray about and remember the life of Jesus.

PREPARATION

1. Prayer focus: a cloth, a candle, a set of rosary beads.
2. A sheet of A4 paper for each of the four groups.
3. Workbooks.
4. The full list of the decades of the rosary in Appendix 30a on page 177.
5. To make a single-decade rosary for each student you will need:
 - eleven 5 cm square pieces of aluminum foil
 - about 20 cm of thin crochet cotton, a darning needle, and a small cross (as per the template in Appendix 30b on page 178).

The instructions for construction of the rosary can also be found in Appendix 30b on page 178.

Alternatively, you might purchase a set of beads and cord that can be quickly and easily threaded to form a rosary. Make only one decade and you require the same quantities as for the aluminum foil version above.
6. Coloured pencils and highlighters.

Beginning

(5 minutes)

Welcome the students as usual.

Gather the students around the prayer focus and light the candle.

Catechist: Today we will look more closely at the traditional prayer of the rosary. The rosary uses the traditional prayers we know already: the Hail Mary, the Our Father, and the Glory Be. So let us begin our lesson by praying the prayer that recognises Mary as mother of God and asks for her intercession to God on our behalf.

All: Hail Mary ...

Invite the students to go to their seats.

Middle

(30 minutes)

Ask the students:

- If the Rosary is made up of the traditional prayers of the Hail Mary, the Our Father and the Glory Be, why do you think we have the Rosary? *(The students may not be clear about the Rosary. They have had a lesson on the Rosary in Year One, but they may not have had any cause to say or participate in the Rosary since then. Accept the answers from the students. This will help you understand where they are at, and what you can assume they know.)*

Tell the students: The Rosary is a way of praying the Scriptures, of recalling the events in Jesus' life and giving praise and thanks to God for the gift of Jesus. The Rosary is described as a 'Marian' prayer, which means it has a strong connection with Mary, the mother of God. The Hail Mary is part of the prayer which is ultimately directed to God.

Distribute the workbooks.

Tell the students: Turn to page 124 in your workbooks, to the page titled 'The Rosary'. This drawing shows what rosary beads look like.

(Hold up a set of rosary beads for the students to see the comparison between the drawing and the real thing.)

Tell the students: All of these beads are joined together in this way to help us remember where we are while praying the Rosary. They also help us focus and pay attention to what we are doing.

The rosary consists of five lots of 10 beads; as we count these beads, we pray a Hail Mary for each bead. Each decade is introduced by praying the Our Father, and concluded with the praying of the Glory Be.

Direct the students to the drawing of the rosary and invite them to colour the small beads in one colour and each of the set of 10 beads in a different colour.

Tell the students: Link the names of the prayers to the appropriate beads.

Invite two students to share their answers with the group.

Allocate the students to four groups.

Tell the students: On the sheet of paper I will give you, your group is to brainstorm all the events in Jesus' life that you can remember. You will have five minutes for this task.

Hand out a sheet of A4 paper to each group, along with the coloured pens and highlighters.

Now turn to page 125 to the activity titled 'The Mysteries of the Rosary'. As a group, decide under which heading each of your events in Jesus' life belongs. Individually record your answers in your workbook.

Invite a student from each group to share their responses.

Take all the students' answers and record on a whiteboard or large sheet of butcher's paper. Use the headings: Joyful Mysteries, Mysteries of Light, Sorrowful Mysteries, Glorious Mysteries.

(A full list of the scripture stories associated with each of these mysteries can be found in Appendix 30a, page 177.)

Tell the students: You have done a great job remembering the stories about Jesus. The Rosary helps us recall the life of Jesus through his stories. Each of these sets of 'Mysteries' contains five decades of the rosary. Each decade recalls one part of Jesus' life. So let's see if you have included the stories of Jesus under the headings that we use in the Rosary.

Using a different coloured highlighter for each of the four mysteries, highlight in the list of stories those that fit within that mystery. Any stories that have been listed under other headings simply highlight in the correct colour. Add any stories that are missing from the lists.

Tell the students: As you can see, there are four sets of 'mysteries' of the Rosary. The Joyful Mysteries consider the happy things that happened in the early life of Jesus.

The Mysteries of Light consider life-giving episodes in Jesus' adult life. The Sorrowful Mysteries remind us about the sadder things that happened at the end of Jesus' life.

The last set of mysteries, the Glorious Mysteries, recalls the events in Scripture and in our faith that truly glorify God.

Tell the students: Use the stories in our collective list to fill in any spaces you have in your list.

(If you have time and you wish to give the students an activity to do, then you can make a decade of the rosary with the students. Prepare one beforehand and show the students what it will look like. The instructions are in Appendix 30b on page 178. This will take about 10 to 15 minutes depending upon the dexterity of the students.)

Tell the students: Traditionally, the first thing that is said when beginning the Rosary is the Apostles' Creed, followed by the Our Father, then three Hail Marys and a Glory Be to the Father. After this introduction is the

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announcing of the mysteries followed by the Our Father and the 10 Hail Marys. Normally, to conclude the rosary, the Hail, Holy Queen is recited. This prayer can be learnt later if you wish.

End

(15 minutes)

Invite the students to bring their rosary with them (if they made a decade) as they gather around the prayer focus.

Tell the students: We will now use our rosary and pray a decade of the Rosary together. As I have said before, the Rosary helps us reflect upon the life stories of Jesus. We can think about and pray about the message that Jesus wants us to know.

Now I invite you to sit quietly, hold the rosary in your hand and when we pray the Our Father and the Hail Marys, count them off as we move through the prayer. I will read the story from Scripture in three parts. We will begin with the Our Father, then listen to the story, then pray three Hail Marys then listen to the next part, and after the last part of the story we will say four Hail Marys. Then we will all pray the Glory Be together.

Catechist: So let us begin with the Sign of the Cross. Hold the cross in your hand and pray together.

All: In the name of the Father ...

Catechist: We will now pray the Joyful Mysteries of the Rosary; the first mystery is the Annunciation.

Pause

All: Our Father ...

Catechist: In the sixth month, the angel Gabriel was sent by God to a town in Galilee called Nazareth, to a virgin engaged to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David. The virgin's name was Mary. And he came to her and said, 'Greetings, favoured one! The Lord is with you.' But she was much perplexed by his words and pondered what sort of greeting this might be.

Let us sit quietly, thinking about Mary and the visit from God's messenger, Gabriel. What words strike you? What does the story make you think about? Ponder these quietly, yourself.

All: Hail Mary ... (three times)

Catechist: 'Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favour with God. And now you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you will name him Jesus. He will be great, and will be called the Son of the Most High, and the Lord God will give to him the throne of his ancestor David. He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there will be no end.' Mary said to the angel, 'How can this be since I am a virgin?'

Let's sit quietly thinking about what the angel Gabriel said to Mary. What is new to you? What words stand out for you? Why do you think the author wanted to tell us this story?

All: Hail Mary ... (three times)

Catechist: The angel said to her, 'The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; therefore the child to be born will be holy; he will be called Son of God. And now, your relative Elizabeth in her old age has also conceived a son; and this is the sixth month for her who was said to be barren. For nothing will be impossible with God.' Then Mary said, 'Here am I, the servant of the Lord; let it be with me according to your word'. Then the angel departed from her.

Let us sit quietly. How would you respond to the Holy Spirit if you were being asked to do something quite unusual and outrageous?

All: Hail Mary ... (four times)

All: Glory be to the Father ...

All: In the name of the Father ...

Tell the students: The way we have prayed the Rosary is how we should use this special prayer acknowledging Mary. We need to reflect on the mystery of Jesus' life and the mystery of Mary's life. How Mary lived her life in total acceptance of God. While we reflect on these mysteries, we give praise to God.

Often, however, when people pray the rosary they presume that you know the scripture story and so will just announce the story and pray the Hail Marys.

When you pray the Rosary with a group of people, one person will lead the prayers, announce the mystery, start the Our Father and pray it on their own to half way, then the rest of the group or congregation joins in. This is repeated for the Hail Marys as well. In this way, you join a communal prayer and have someone lead you through. When you pray on your own, however, you simply pray all the prayers yourself, and you can pause and think about the special story of Jesus or Mary that is the mystery for the decade of the Rosary you are praying.

I invite you to pray the Rosary at home by yourself, or with others in the family if they would like to join you.

Collect the workbooks

Dismiss the students as usual.

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Appendix 30a – The Mysteries of the Rosary

The following are the scripture stories for meditation while saying the mysteries of the rosary.

The Joyful Mysteries

The Annunciation	God's messenger tells Mary that she has been chosen to be the mother of Jesus.
The Visitation	Mary visits Elizabeth.
The Nativity	Jesus is born in a stable in Bethlehem.
The Presentation	Mary and Joseph take the infant Jesus to the Temple to present him to God.
The Finding of the Child Jesus in the Temple	Jesus is found in the Temple, discussing his faith with the teachers.

The Mysteries of Light

The Baptism of Jesus in the River Jordan	God identifies Jesus as his beloved Son.
The Wedding Feast at Cana	When Mary asks, Jesus performs his first miracle.
The Proclamation of the Kingdom of God	Jesus calls all to conversion and service to the Kingdom.
The Transfiguration of Jesus	Jesus is revealed in glory to Peter, James, and John.
The Institution of the Eucharist	Jesus offers his Body and Blood at the Last Supper.

The Sorrowful Mysteries

The Agony in the Garden	Jesus prays in the Garden of Gethsemane on the night before he dies.
The Scourging at the Pillar	Jesus is tied to a pillar and whipped.
The Crowning With Thorns	Jesus is mocked and crowned with thorns.
The Carrying of the Cross	Jesus carries the cross on which he will be crucified.
The Crucifixion	Jesus is nailed to the cross and dies.

The Glorious Mysteries

The Resurrection	God raises Jesus from the dead.
The Ascension	Jesus returns to his Father in heaven.
The Coming of the Holy Spirit	The Holy Spirit comes to bring new life to the disciples.
The Assumption of Mary	At the end of her life on earth, Mary is taken body and soul into heaven.
The Coronation of Mary	Mary is crowned Queen of Heaven and Earth.

Appendix 30b – Making a Rosary

If you have purchased beads and cord, then the quantity and instructions will be the same as if you are using the foil option.

To make a decade of the rosary for each student you will need:

- 11 squares of foil 5 cm x 5 cm (or 11 beads)
- Thin crochet cotton approximately 20 cm long (or 20 cm of cord)
- A darning needle (may not be necessary if the hole through the beads is large enough)
- A small cross cut out of an old Christmas or birthday card.

Construction:

Roll up each square of foil until it is a tight ball.

Take the darning needle and thread it with the cotton.

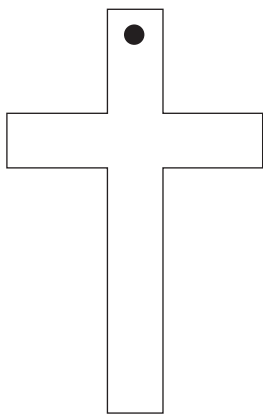
Push the needle-point through the centre of 10 of the balls of foil and push the foil balls down to the end of the cotton, but not off the bottom.

Join the bottom loose end of cotton to form a circle just above the last foil ball used. This will produce a circle attached to the needle and cotton.

Now put the needle through the last foil ball, allowing a space between the join and the ball. Put the needle through one end of the cross, go through a couple of times and tie off.

Cut any loose or stray ends to tidy the rosary.

The Cross: trace or photocopy and use as a template on an old card.



The Jesse Tree

Background for the Catechist

Please take 10 minutes to reflect on the following introduction to this lesson.

Reflection/Doctrinal Reference

When the Church celebrates the *liturgy of Advent* each year, she makes present this ancient expectancy of the Messiah, for by sharing in the long preparation for the Saviour's first coming, the faithful renew their ardent desire for his second coming. By celebrating the precursor's birth and martyrdom, the Church unites herself to his desire: 'He must increase, but I must decrease' (CCC, n. 524).

From the fourth century when the seasons of Lent–Easter and Advent–Christmas emerged in the Eastern and Western Churches we saw the preparation for the birth of Christ take a clearly defined time.

The season of Advent, like Lent, intends to offer the faithful an opportunity to explore the richness of the era. Rather than a 52-week year with one Sunday different (Easter), the fourth century Church saw the value in an extended time of preparation and celebration. In short, you cannot comprehend the magnitude of God becoming human in one Christmas Mass! The season of Advent or 'looking forward' has a Christ-centred focus. The three comings of Christ are anticipated in this season: his coming in history, his coming in grace and his coming at the end of time. The use of a 'tool' such as the Jesse Tree helps all of us to follow this pattern of waiting for the coming of Christ throughout biblical history and today.

The Jesse Tree helps us connect the custom of decorating Christmas trees to the events leading to Jesus' birth. The title 'Jesse Tree' comes from Isaiah 11: 1: 'A shoot shall come out of the stock of Jesse, and a branch shall grow out of his roots.' Jesse was the father of King David. When we use a Jesse Tree, we hang ornaments or symbols that depict the people, prophecies, and events leading up to the birth of Jesus. When we hang our symbols, we recall the story of God's intervention and promise of the Messiah throughout the Old Testament and the birth of Jesus. We connect Advent with the faithfulness of God.

Student Focus

The students in Year 6 have had a number of lessons on Advent. They will be familiar with the idea of preparation for and anticipation of Christmas and the birth of Jesus. Depending on when this lesson is taught, the community will also be preparing for Christmas (albeit in a commercial sense). This lesson on the Jesse Tree will draw together many of the stories and characters explored by these students over the past six years.

Teaching Point

Advent is a season of preparation and longing for Christ.

Remembering Point

The Jesse Tree helps me prepare for the celebration of the coming of Jesus at Christmas.

Beginning

(10 minutes)

Welcome the students as usual.

Gather the students around the prayer focus and pray the Our Father together.

Tell the students: Our lesson today is about Advent.

Ask the students: What is the season of Advent? *(By now the students will have attended a number of classes about Advent and should be able to give some kind of answer. If the students are unable to provide an answer, move on.)*

Tell the students: Yes, the season of Advent is a time of preparation. A time when we can anticipate the celebration of the birth of Jesus. Over the years you have made Advent wreaths to mark the weeks before Christmas. You have also looked at John the Baptist, who prepared the way for Jesus' coming.

Today we will look at Advent from a slightly different angle. The Old Testament tells us that, from the beginning, God promised to send a Messiah so that we might be one with God in heaven. All through the stories in the Old Testament, we read of different people who did significant things to glorify God and proclaim God's involvement in the world. The Hebrew people wrote the Hebrew Scriptures to recognise God's action in the world in fulfilling this promise. They wrote to remind their people that God had promised the coming of the Messiah and that God was involved in the Hebrew people's lives in order to bring about this promise. We can read these stories and accounts in the Old Testament section of the Bible. As Catholics, we believe that Jesus is the fulfillment of God's promise of a Messiah. Each year we recall this and remind ourselves of the involvement of God in our faith history.

So, today, we will look at this story of our salvation which comes about through the birth of Jesus, his death and his resurrection.

We are also going to represent this story of salvation, the story of the coming of Jesus, God's Son, into our world, through pictures and symbols.

We will be making a Jesse Tree.

Middle

(30 minutes)

Place the branch secured in a bucket of sand at the front of the group. Indicate the lower branches and **tell the students:** this is the beginning of our story and progressively we will build up the story of anticipation and preparation for Jesus, as we move up the tree to the top.

We will make the pictures and symbols that will represent the key characters in the story, as well as some of the important stories.

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1. Prayer focus: a coloured cloth, the Bible, some of the symbols that could be used on the Jesse Tree (Appendix 31b, page 186).
2. Draw a grid on a large sheet of butcher's paper or on a whiteboard e.g.

Name	Information	Scripture	Symbol

3. A branch with many twigs on which you can hang the symbols and drawings. A bucket of sand or soil in which the branch can stand. Wrap a piece of paper around the bucket and write the title, 'A Jesse Tree', onto the paper.
4. Wool, string or ribbon to tie the symbols to the Jesse Tree.
5. Workbooks.
6. A set of laminated symbols to place on the grid as the lesson progresses and a set of symbols and scroll shapes with holes punched for students to hang on the Jesse Tree. (See Appendix 31c, page 188.)
7. A set of synopses and scripture texts to place on the grid and the relevant scripture text for each pair (Appendix 31a, page 183).
8. Blu Tack, sticky tape or glue for sticking items on the grid.

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Distribute the workbooks and **invite the students** to open them at page 126 and the activity titled 'People in God's story of salvation'.

Tell the students: The list of characters are all from Scripture. All of these people have had some involvement in our story of faith, the story of salvation. A Jesse Tree will often have 25 different characters, one for every day of December, but we are only going to look at 10 of the main characters in the story of salvation.

The list of names you have before you includes some people you would know from previous lessons and some that will be new to you. We will be looking more closely at all of these characters.

Invite the students to form into groups of three.

Tell the students: The task for your group is to share what you know about any of the characters. Record your group's agreed answers in the information column in your workbook. You will have 10 minutes for your sharing.

Invite a student from each group to share their answers.

Tell the students: When you give your answers, only share characters that have not been mentioned by another student or something that has not been said about a character.

Record students' answers on the grid on the whiteboard or butcher's paper. Fill in the stories about the remaining characters about whom the students know little or nothing. In the appropriate row in the Information column stick the cut-out synopsis from Appendix 31a on page 183. Likewise, stick the scripture texts also from Appendix 31a in the Scripture column.

Invite the students to individually complete their own grids, filling in the spaces using the descriptions from the group list to compose their summary. Write the scripture reference in the Scripture column. (Allow about seven minutes.)

Tell the students: Each of these characters can be represented with a symbol that helps to remind us of the person and their contribution to God's plan for our salvation. (**Place your laminated copy in the appropriate column of the grid on the whiteboard.**)

Tell the students: We will now make these ornamental symbols and hang them on our Jesse Tree.

Invite the students to form into pairs.

Distribute the symbols and a copy of the relevant scripture text in Appendix 31b on pages 186–187 to each pair. Hand out one of the scroll shapes to each pair. Give each group two pieces of string/wool/ribbon to thread through the hole in the symbol and the scroll and tie to the Jesse Tree.

Tell the students: Match the symbol you have with the character list we have at the front of the class. One of your pair is to write the name of the biblical character on the back of the symbol and colour-in the symbol, then thread the string/wool/ribbon through the hole. The other person in your pair is to write on the scroll a summary of the passage from Scripture that is relevant to the character. If you want to decorate it and have time, then do so. You will have 10 minutes to complete this task.

End

(10 minutes)

Gather the students around the Jesse Tree at the front of the class.

Tell the students: We will now listen carefully to the stories of our ancestors in faith who were part of the plan of salvation. From the earliest times and the stories of our beginnings in Genesis, we can follow God's continued commitment to God's people.

As I call the character, the two students who worked on that character are to stand. When I have read the piece about the character and the passage from Scripture, come forward and tie your symbol and scroll to the Jesse Tree. We will begin from the bottom and then work upwards.

We will do this as if we are praying, so we will give this activity as much respect and reverence as we usually give to our prayer.

Catechist: Let us make the Sign of the Cross

All: In the name of the Father ...

Catechist: God, you love us and have given us your greatest gift in Jesus, your Son. Through Jesus, we know of your promise of salvation. May we journey through the weeks of Advent, recalling the promise you made to our Fathers in faith, as we wait and prepare for the coming of Jesus, your Son. We make this prayer through Jesus, our saviour.

All: Amen

Catechist: Call the names of the characters and read the synopsis and Scripture as the students stand and then tie the symbols onto the Jesse Tree.

Catechist: To conclude the recognition of this time of waiting, let us pray the words that Jesus taught us.

All: Our Father ...

Collect the workbooks and dismiss the students as usual.

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Appendix 31a – Characters for the Jesse Tree

Below, and on the following pages, is a list of the 10 characters for the Jesse Tree with a synopsis about each and a piece of Scripture relevant to their story. Photocopy this page and cut out the synopses and stick them onto the class grid as you tell the story. Make another copy of the scripture texts and give one as appropriate to the pair working on each character.

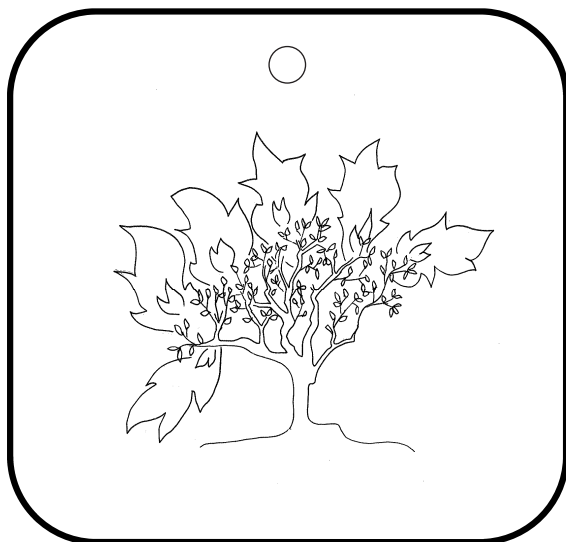
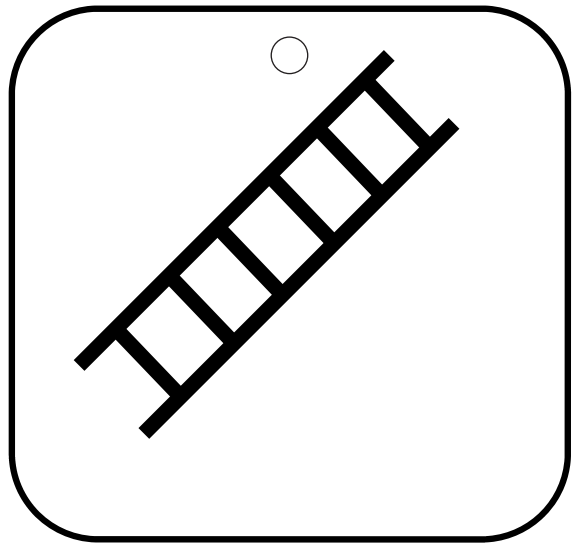
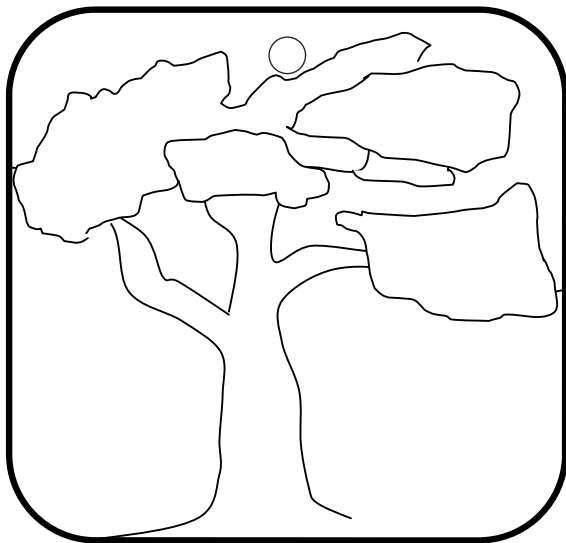
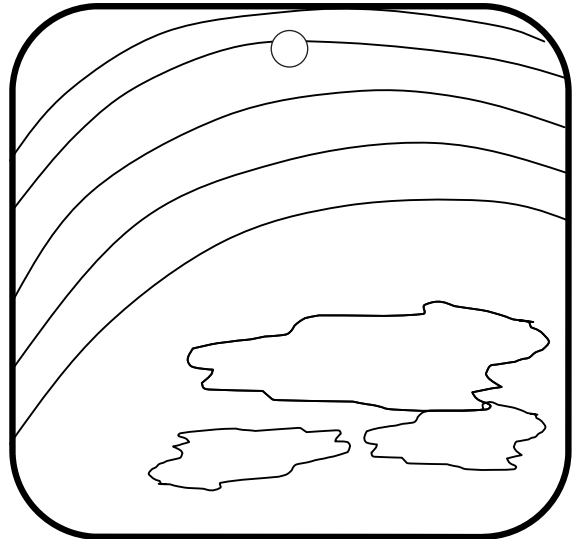
Character	Information about the character	Scripture
Adam & Eve	In the beginning, God created the earth and all that exists: the water, the sky, the air, the plants, the animals and finally humans, 'and indeed, it was very good' (Gen 1: 31).	Then God said, 'Let us make humankind in our image, according to our likeness ... So God created humankind in his image, in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them' (Genesis 1: 26–27).
Noah	As people forgot about God, they lived lives that were not prayerful and good. They shunned God and believed that they could live without God. For Noah, who listened to God and did as God asked, God made a promise. God promised to be with God's people for ever. At the time of the receding flood and the promise made by God, Noah saw a rainbow that symbolised God's enduring love.	Then God said to Noah and to his sons with him, 'As for me, I am establishing my covenant with you and your descendants after you, and with every living creature that is with you and your descendants after you, and with every living creature that is with you ...' God said, 'This is the sign of the covenant that I make between me and you and every living creature that is with you, for all future generations: I have set my bow in the clouds, and it shall be a sign of the covenant between me and the earth' (Genesis 9: 8–10, 12–13).
Abraham	Abraham, considered the father of faith for us, was part of a nomadic family. At the call from God, Abraham travelled many kilometres from his home area to settle in the land of Canaan. Abraham put his total trust in God and was completely faithful to the promise, the covenant God made with him. Abraham had a son, Isaac. God tested Abraham's trust by asking Abraham to sacrifice Isaac, but before Abraham could go through with it, God stopped him and provided a sheep caught in a bush close by. Abraham took the sheep and sacrificed it instead of his son, Isaac.	When Abram was 99 years old, the Lord appeared to Abram and said to him, 'I am God Almighty; walk before me, and be blameless. And I will make my covenant between me and you, and will make you exceedingly numerous'. Then Abram fell on his face; and God said to him, 'As for me, this is my covenant with you: You shall be the ancestor of a multitude of nations. No longer shall your name be Abram, but your name shall be Abraham' (Genesis 17: 1–5).
Jacob	Jacob was a twin with his brother, Esau. Esau was the elder and should have inherited but Jacob stole his birthright from Esau. Jacob escaped the wrath of Esau and while on his way to his relatives, he had a vision from God at a place called Bethel. It is here that God reaffirmed the covenant he was originally made with Abraham. Jacob had a dream. In the dream he saw a ladder reaching to heaven with angels going up and down. Then God spoke to him, renewing the promises God made to Abraham. Jacob had 12 children. God renamed Jacob 'Israel'.	And the Lord stood beside him and said, 'I am the Lord, the God of Abraham your father and the God of Isaac; the land on which you lie I will give to you and to your offspring; and your offspring shall be like the dust of the earth, and you shall spread abroad to the west and to the east and to the north and to the south; and all the families of the earth shall be blessed in you and in your offspring. Know that I am with you and will keep you wherever you go, and will bring you back to this land; for I will not leave you until I have done what I have promised you' (Genesis 28: 13–15).

Character	Information about the character	Scripture
Moses	As a baby, Moses was left in the reeds by the river and was adopted by the Egyptian princess. Moses had everything he wanted as he grew. When he was an adult, he observed the Hebrew people, who were slaves in Egypt, being treated badly. After Moses had killed an Egyptian overseer, he escaped into the hill country and worked as a shepherd. While he was out tending sheep he noticed a bush on fire, yet not burning up. Then God spoke to him from within the bush. God called Moses to go to the Hebrew people and tell them that God was with them and would rescue them from their situation. Moses accepted God's call and went to the Pharaoh demanding the release of the Hebrews. When the Pharaoh refused, God told Moses to tell the Pharaoh that plagues and pests would sweep the land. Then Moses led his people out from Egypt across the Red Sea and into the desert. It was in the desert on the top of Mount Sinai that Moses received the Ten Commandments from God.	Moses was keeping the flock of his father-in-law Jethro, the priest of Midian; he led his flock beyond the wilderness and came to Horeb, the mountain of God. There the angel of the Lord appeared to him in a flame of fire out of a bush; he looked, and the bush was blazing, yet it was not consumed. Then Moses said, 'I must turn aside and look at this great sight, and see why the bush is not burned up.' When the Lord saw that he had turned aside to see, God called to him out of the bush 'Moses, Moses!' And he said, 'Here I am.' Then he said, 'Come no closer! Remove the sandals from your feet, for the place on which you are standing is holy ground.' He said further, 'I am the God of your father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac and the God of Jacob.' And Moses hid his face, for he was afraid to look at God (Exodus 3: 1–6).
David	David was the youngest son of Jesse from Bethlehem. Samuel was sent by God to anoint David, King of Israel. Before David became king, he played the lute for King Saul. For many years, David fought at the head of Saul's army and people grew to love him. Just as with Abraham and Jacob, God renewed God's covenant promise to David. David prayed often to God and is attributed with having written the psalms.	Then all the tribes of Israel came to David at Hebron and said, 'Look, we are your bone and flesh. For some time, while Saul was king over us, it was you who led out Israel and brought it in. The Lord said to you: It is you who shall be shepherd of my people Israel, you who shall be ruler over Israel.' So all the elders of Israel came to the king at Hebron; and King David made a covenant with them at Hebron before the Lord, and they anointed David king over Israel (2 Samuel 5: 1–3).
Jeremiah	At about the age of 20, Jeremiah was called by God to be a prophetic voice for the people, to call them back to follow and worship the one God, the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. The people had fallen back into their old ways of worshipping idols and conducting human sacrifice. Jeremiah took the word of God to them, challenging them to change their ways and return to God. Jeremiah declared a New Covenant between God and God's people, the house of Judah. However, the Israelites did not live up to their side of the agreement. So Jeremiah kept challenging them, but the people did not like what he said and frequently tried to kill him. Because the people did not listen to Jeremiah, we notice in the writings how he is extremely sad and sorrowful. Jeremiah is considered one of the major prophets in Old Testament times with his ministry occurring between 627 BC (before Christ) and 582 BC.	The word that came to Jeremiah from the Lord: 'Come, go down to the potter's house, and there I will let you hear my words.' So I went down to the potter's house, and there he was working at his wheel. The vessel he was making of clay was spoiled in the potter's hand, and he reworked it into another vessel, as seemed good to him. Then the word of the Lord came to me: Can I not do with you, O house of Israel, just as this potter has done? says the Lord. Just like the clay in the potter's hand, so are you in my hand, O house of Israel. (Jeremiah 18: 1–6).

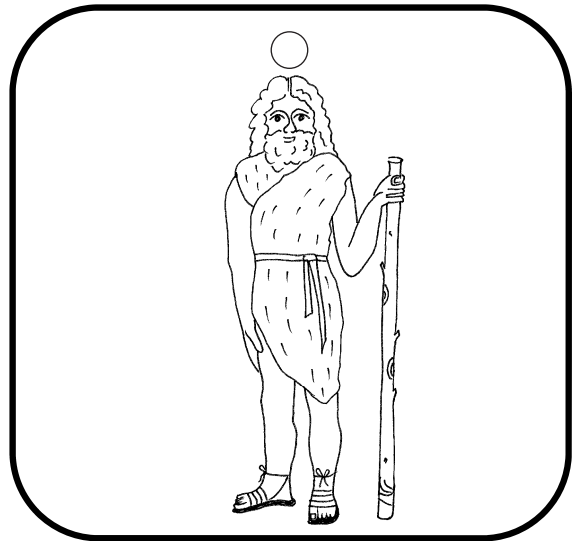
Character	Information about the character	Scripture
John the Baptist	Jesus had immense respect for John the Baptist saying, 'Among those born of women, no one has arisen greater than John the Baptist' (Mt 11: 11). John was called by God to be a prophet. John wanted people to know that the time for the Messiah to come was near. This meant that they needed to reconsider what they were doing and how they were living their lives. John baptised Jesus in the Jordan River and it was at this time that God the Father proclaimed Jesus as God's Son and the Holy Spirit, in the form of a dove, descended upon him. John told his followers that 'one who is more powerful than I is coming after me; I am not worthy to carry his sandals' (Mt 3: 11). John came to prepare the way of the Lord as the prophet Isaiah had proclaimed.	In those days, John the Baptist appeared in the wilderness of Judea proclaiming, 'Repent, for the kingdom of heaven has come near.' This is the one of whom the prophet Isaiah spoke when he said, 'The voice of one crying out in the wilderness: "Prepare the way of the Lord, make his path straight."' Now John wore clothing of camel's hair with a leather belt around his waist, and his food was locusts and wild honey (Matthew 3: 1-4).
Mary	Mary, the model of faith, accepted God's request to be the mother of Jesus. Although we have few accounts of Mary the mother of Jesus in the Scriptures, we know that she had a significant role in the fulfilment of God's plan for our salvation. Mary took a huge risk, stepping out into the unknown. She was young and didn't know what would be required of her. However, because Mary said yes to God, we too can follow and accept what God asks of us.	The angel said to her, 'Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favour with God. And now, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you will name him Jesus. He will be great, and will be called the Son of the Most High, and the Lord God will give to him the throne of his ancestor David. He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there will be no end' ... Then Mary said, 'Here am I, the servant of the Lord; let it be with me according to your word' (Luke 1: 30-33, 38).
Jesus	Jesus, born in a stable, wrapped in swaddling clothes and laid in a manger, had a humble beginning, according to Scripture and the Tradition of the Church. Jesus was born in Bethlehem and grew up in Nazareth, a town in Galilee. Jesus' ministry of preaching the word of God began in the towns around Galilee and spread ultimately to Jerusalem. It was in Jerusalem that the total love Jesus had for us is displayed. Jesus followed the will of God, his Father. Jesus gave himself up totally, freely choosing to suffer and die so that we might share in the totality of God's love, being one with God in heaven. Jesus, the Christ, was the salvation of all people.	Joseph also went from the town of Nazareth in Galilee to Judea, to the city of David called Bethlehem, because he was descended from the house and family of David. He went to be registered with Mary, to whom he was engaged and who was expecting a child. While they were there, the time came for her to deliver her child. And she gave birth to her firstborn son and wrapped him in bands of cloth, and laid him in a manger, because there was no place for them in the inn (Luke 2: 4-7).

Appendix 31b – Symbols for the Jesse Tree

Photocopy, cut out the symbols and the scroll, punch a hole at the top of each symbol and give one symbol and a scroll to each pair of students. The symbols are in the same order as the descriptions on the previous pages. You also need to cut out and laminate a set to use on the grid, 'People in God's Story of Salvation'. See Appendix 31c, page 188 for a sample.



Appendix 31b – Symbols for the Jesse Tree (continued)










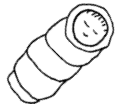


Scroll for the text from Scripture – Cut out and punch a hole at the point indicated and thread with ribbon.



Appendix 31c – Sample Grid

Your finished 'People in God's Story of Salvation' grid could look like this.

CHARACTER	INFORMATION ABOUT THE CHARACTER	SCRIPTURE	SYMBOL
Adam & Eve	In the beginning, God created the earth and all that exists: the water, the sky, the air, the plants, the animals and finally humans, 'and indeed, it was very good' (Gen 1: 31).	Then God said, 'Let us make humankind in our image, according to our likeness ... So God created humankind in his image, in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them' (Genesis 1: 26–27).	
Noah	As people forgot about God, they lived lives that were not prayerful and good. They shunned God and believed that they could live without God. For Noah, who listened to God and did as God asked, God made a promise. God promised to be with God's people for ever. At the time of the receding flood and the promise made by God, Noah saw a rainbow that symbolised God's enduring love.	Then God said to Noah and to his sons with him, 'As for me, I am establishing my covenant with you and your descendants after you, and with every living creature that is with you and your descendants after you, and with every living creature that is with you ...' God said, 'This is the sign of the covenant that I make between me and you and every living creature that is with you, for all future generations: I have set my bow in the clouds, and it shall be a sign of the covenant between me and the earth' (Genesis 9: 8–10, 12–13).	
Abraham	Abraham, considered the father of faith for us, was part of a nomadic family. At the call from God, Abraham travelled many kilometres from his home area to settle in the land of Canaan. Abraham put his total trust in God and was completely faithful to the promise, the covenant God made with him. Abraham had a son, Isaac. God tested Abraham's trust by asking Abraham to sacrifice Isaac, but before Abraham could go through with it, God stopped him and provided a sheep caught in a bush close by. Abraham took the sheep and sacrificed it instead of his son, Isaac.	When Abram was 99 years old, the Lord appeared to Abram and said to him, 'I am God Almighty; walk before me, and be blameless. And I will make my covenant between me and you, and will make you exceedingly numerous'. Then Abram fell on his face; and God said to him, 'As for me, this is my covenant with you: You shall be the ancestor of a multitude of nations. No longer shall your name be Abram, but your name shall be Abraham' (Genesis 17: 1–5).	
Jacob	Jacob was a twin with his brother, Esau. Esau was the elder and should have inherited but Jacob stole his birthright from Esau. Jacob escaped the wrath of Esau and while on his way to his relatives, he had a vision from God at a place called Bethel. It is here that God reaffirmed the covenant he was originally made with Abraham. Jacob had a dream. In the dream he saw a ladder reaching to heaven with angels going up and down. Then God spoke to him, renewing the promises God made to Abraham. Jacob had 12 children. God renamed Jacob 'Israel'.	And the Lord stood beside him and said, 'I am the Lord, the God of Abraham your father and the God of Isaac; the land on which you lie I will give to you and to your offspring; and your offspring shall be like the dust of the earth, and you shall spread abroad to the west and to the east and to the north and to the south; and all the families of the earth shall be blessed in you and in your offspring. Know that I am with you and will keep you wherever you go, and will bring you back to this land; for I will not leave you until I have done what I have promised you' (Genesis 28: 13–15).	
Moses	As a baby, Moses was left in the reeds by the river and was adopted by the Egyptian princess. Moses had everything he wanted as he grew. When he was an adult, he observed the Hebrew people, who were slaves in Egypt, being treated badly. After Moses had killed an Egyptian overseer, he escaped into the hill country and worked as a shepherd. While he was out tending sheep he noticed a bush on fire, yet not burning up. Then God spoke to him from within the bush. God called Moses to go to the Hebrew people and tell them that God was with them and would rescue them from their situation. Moses accepted God's call and went to the Pharaoh demanding the release of the Hebrews. When the Pharaoh refused, God told Moses to tell the Pharaoh that plagues and pests would sweep the land. Then Moses led his people out from Egypt across the Red Sea and into the desert. It was in the desert on the top of Mount Sinai that Moses received the Ten Commandments from God.	Moses was keeping the flock of his father-in-law Jethro, the priest of Midian; he led his flock beyond the wilderness and came to Horeb, the mountain of God. There the angel of the Lord appeared to him in a flame of fire out of a bush; he looked, and the bush was blazing, yet it was not consumed. Then Moses said, 'I must turn aside and look at this great sight, and see why the bush is not burned up.' When the Lord saw that he had turned aside to see, God called to him out of the bush 'Moses, Moses!' And he said, 'Here I am.' Then he said, 'Come no closer! Remove the sandals from your feet, for the place on which you are standing is holy ground.' He said further, 'I am the God of your father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac and the God of Jacob.' And Moses hid his face, for he was afraid to look at God (Exodus 3: 1–6).	
David	David was the youngest son of Jesse from Bethlehem. Samuel was sent by God to anoint David, King of Israel. Before David became king, he played the lute for King Saul. For many years, David fought at the head of Saul's army and people grew to love him. Just as with Abraham and Jacob, God renewed God's covenant promise to David. David prayed often to God and is attributed with having written the psalms.	Then all the tribes of Israel came to David at Hebron and said, 'Look, we are your bone and flesh. For some time, while Saul was king over us, it was you who led out Israel and brought it in. The Lord said to you: It is you who shall be shepherd of my people Israel, you who shall be ruler over Israel.' So all the elders of Israel came to the king at Hebron; and King David made a covenant with them at Hebron before the Lord, and they anointed David king over Israel (2 Samuel 5: 1–3).	
Jeremiah	At about the age of 20, Jeremiah was called by God to be a prophetic voice for the people, to call them back to follow and worship the one God, the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. The people had fallen back into their old ways of worshipping idols and conducting human sacrifice. Jeremiah took the word of God to them, challenging them to change their ways and return to God. Jeremiah declared a New Covenant between God and God's people, the house of Judah. However, the Israelites did not live up to their side of the agreement. So Jeremiah kept challenging them, but the people did not like what he said and frequently tried to kill him. Because the people did not listen to Jeremiah, we notice in the writings how he is extremely sad and sorrowful. Jeremiah is considered one of the major prophets in Old Testament times with his ministry occurring between 627 BC (before Christ) and 582 BC.	The word that came to Jeremiah from the Lord: 'Come, go down to the potter's house, and there I will let you hear my words.' So I went down to the potter's house, and there he was working at his wheel. The vessel he was making of clay was spoiled in the potter's hand, and he reworked it into another vessel, as seemed good to him. Then the word of the Lord came to me: Can I not do with you, O house of Israel, just as this potter has done? says the Lord. Just like the clay in the potter's hand, so are you in my hand, O house of Israel. (Jeremiah 18: 1–6).	
John the Baptist	Jesus had immense respect for John the Baptist saying, 'Among those born of women, no one has arisen greater than John the Baptist' (Mt 11: 11). John was called by God to be a prophet. John wanted people to know that the time for the Messiah to come was near. This meant that they needed to reconsider what they were doing and how they were living their lives. John baptised Jesus in the Jordan River and it was at this time that God the Father proclaimed Jesus as God's Son and the Holy Spirit, in the form of a dove, descended upon him. John told his followers that 'one who is more powerful than I is coming after me; I am not worthy to carry his sandals' (Mt 3: 11). John came to prepare the way of the Lord as the prophet Isaiah had proclaimed.	In those days, John the Baptist appeared in the wilderness of Judea proclaiming, 'Repent, for the kingdom of heaven has come near.' This is the one of whom the prophet Isaiah spoke when he said, 'The voice of one crying out in the wilderness: "Prepare the way of the Lord, make his path straight."' Now John wore clothing of camel's hair with a leather belt around his waist, and his food was locusts and wild honey (Matthew 3: 1–4).	
Mary	Mary, the model of faith, accepted God's request to be the mother of Jesus. Although we have few accounts of Mary the mother of Jesus in the Scriptures, we know that she had a significant role in the fulfilment of God's plan for our salvation. Mary took a huge risk, stepping out into the unknown. She was young and didn't know what would be required of her. However, because Mary said yes to God, we too can follow and accept what God asks of us.	The angel said to her: 'Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favour with God. And now, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you will name him Jesus. He will be great, and will be called the Son of the Most High, and the Lord God will give to him the throne of his ancestor David. He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there will be no end' ... Then Mary said, 'Here am I, the servant of the Lord; let it be with me according to your word' (Luke 1: 30–33, 38).	
Jesus	Jesus, born in a stable, wrapped in swaddling clothes and laid in a manger, had a humble beginning, according to Scripture and the Tradition of the Church. Jesus was born in Bethlehem and grew up in Nazareth, a town in Galilee. Jesus' ministry of preaching the word of God began in the towns around Galilee and spread ultimately to Jerusalem. It was in Jerusalem that the total love Jesus had for us is displayed. Jesus followed the will of God, his Father. Jesus gave himself up totally, freely choosing to suffer and die so that we might share in the totality of God's love, being one with God in heaven. Jesus, the Christ, was the salvation of all people.	Joseph also went from the town of Nazareth in Galilee to Judea, to the city of David called Bethlehem, because he was descended from the house and family of David. He went to be registered with Mary, to whom he was engaged and who was expecting a child. While they were there, the time came for her to deliver her child. And she gave birth to her firstborn son and wrapped him in bands of cloth, and laid him in a manger, because there was no place for them in the inn (Luke 2: 4–7).	

Christmas

Background for the Catechist

Please take 10 minutes to reflect on the following introduction to this lesson.

Reflection/Doctrinal Reference

To become a child in relation to God is the condition for entering the kingdom. For this, we must humble ourselves and become little. Even more: to become 'children of God' we must be 'born from above' or 'born of God'. Only when Christ is formed in us will the mystery of Christmas be fulfilled in us. Christmas is the mystery of this 'marvellous exchange'. O marvellous exchange! Man's Creator has become man, born of the Virgin. We have been made sharers in the divinity of Christ who humbled himself to share our humanity (CCC, n. 526).

The Gospel of Mark commences with the baptism and public ministry of Jesus. The Gospels of Matthew and Luke start with Jesus' conception and birth. Even as a vulnerable baby, the Christ child reveals the nature of God. The visitors to the Bethlehem stable are already evangelised by the birth of God's Son. This is an amazing chapter in our Christian story, that the Word of God became flesh and shared completely our human existence.

This self-emptying of God, to walk among us, in turn requests us to self-empty ourselves and become like God sharing the divinity. Christmas is the great feast that celebrates the great exchange: God becoming human, and the human story of us becoming God-like.

Student focus

Christmas is such a frequent event that it may become commonplace. Students will have some idea regarding the focus of the celebration and the purpose. They may be familiar with nativity plays and the characters involved in these events. The challenge for the students will be to see with different eyes, to look critically at what happens around them at this time of the year. It is important to help students see that it is not just the gift-receiving that is important.

Teaching Point

During the Christmas season, the Church celebrates the birth of Jesus and the Epiphany.

Remembering Point

During the Christmas season, the Church celebrates the birth of Jesus.

Beginning

(7 minutes)

Welcome the students as usual.

Gather around the prayer focus.

Catechist: Let us begin with the Sign of the Cross.

All: In the name of the Father ...

Catechist: Let us pray the Hail Mary together.

All: Hail Mary ...

Invite the students to go to their seats.

Tell the students: Today we will look at Christmas in a slightly different way. You all know about Christmas, and I am sure you could tell me that we celebrate the birth of Jesus on this day, recalling that this is the beginning of Jesus' mission on earth, the fulfilment of God's promise.

Ask the students: What sorts of things do we do for Christmas? *(This will include: give presents, have a family meal, go to midnight Mass, give Christmas cards ...)*

Record the responses on the whiteboard or on a large sheet of paper, under the title 'The Things We Do at Christmas'.

Ask the students: Why do we do these things? Why do YOU do these things? *(Take all the students' answers. This is an open-ended question and encourages the students to think more deeply about the celebrations they participate in.)*

Middle

(35 minutes)

Tell the students: Depending upon which country you come from or the size of your family, you will have many traditions that you repeat each Christmas. These traditions are intended to capture something about Christmas and remind us about the meaning of this special day. One way your parents, or you, might have recognised Christmas is through the sending of Christmas cards. Christmas cards tell us something about the nature of Christmas for us.

Ask the students: What sorts of things do you find on Christmas cards? *(Students will respond with bells, holly, baubles, Christmas decorations, Christmas trees. You might get the nativity setting, the wise men and Jesus, Mary and Joseph. Accept them all.)*

Tell the students: The modern-day Christmas card conveys many things about Christmas; some of the messages are clear but some really don't capture what the celebration is about. The 'traditional' Christmas card usually offers us some idea about the story of Jesus' birth.

So let's look at a traditional Christmas card.

PREPARATION

1. Prayer focus: a brightly coloured cloth, a candle, the Bible, a traditional Christmas card.
2. A large sheet of butcher's paper for the recording of responses to 'The Things We Do at Christmas'.
3. CD or iTunes of the carol, 'The First Noel'.
4. CD player, tablet or smart phone for playing 'The First Noel' carol.
5. Workbooks.

PREPARATION

Distribute the workbooks and **invite the students** to turn to page 128 and the activity titled 'Analysing a Christmas Card'.

Tell the students: In this activity you are to identify the characters and items in the picture and record the names in the spaces provided. Then, when you have finished, answer the question: Which gospel tells the story depicted on the card?

Invite three students to share their answers. *(You may get a variety of answers to the question; clearly it is a composite story from both the Gospel of Matthew and the Gospel of Luke. If they don't know, tell them.)*

Organise the students into two groups. Give one group the Nativity narrative from the Gospel of Matthew (1: 18 – 2: 12). Give the second group the Nativity narrative from the Gospel of Luke, (2: 1–20).

Tell the students: You can either read the text yourself individually or one member of your group can read it out with the rest of you following in your workbooks. Underline significant words or phrases that stand out for you or you are surprised about.

Answer the following questions in your workbook for both texts.

- In what town is Jesus born?
- In what building is Jesus born?
- How is Jesus covered/dressed?
- Who visited Jesus?

You can answer with just a word/phrase. If the answer isn't clear then write that. Be prepared to defend your position with reference to the text. You will have six minutes for this activity.

Invite one student from each group to share their answers. Ensure that you ask the students to give the verse numbers that refer to their answer.

Tell the students: You will no doubt have noticed that each account of Jesus' birth is different. There is no specific mention of a stable in either Matthew or Luke, and Jesus is born in a house in Matthew's account.

Ask the students: What else do you notice about these two accounts? *(The fact that the two accounts are different is not a problem. These scriptural accounts are not a factual history, they are sacred stories, or stories of faith that carry important messages for all who believe in Jesus. They help us to understand why Jesus came and what his message is for us. The purpose of these activities with the students is to help them see that the stories are different and contain different events that sometimes contradict each other, but they convey particular messages about the person of Jesus, his message and importance to us as written by each gospel writer.)*

Invite the students to turn to page 131 in their workbook to the activity titled 'A Christmas Carol'.

Tell the students: With this task, you are to answer the questions that appear on the right of the carol. Use the Scripture to help with the answers.

The First Noel

The First Noel the angel did say
 Was to certain poor shepherds in fields as they lay;
 In fields as they lay, keeping their sheep,
 On a cold winter's night that was so deep.

Noel, Noel, Noel, Noel, Born is the King of Israel.

They looked up and saw a star
 Shining in the east beyond them far,
 And to the earth it gave great light,
 And so it continued both day and night.

And by the light of that same star
 Three wise men came from country far;
 To seek for a king was their intent,
 And to follow the star wherever it went.

This star drew nigh to the northwest,
 O'er Bethlehem it took its rest,
 And there it did both stop and stay
 Right over the place where Jesus lay.

Then entered in those wise men three
 Full reverently upon their knee,
 and offered there in his presence
 Their gold, and myrrh, and frankincense.

Then let us all with one accord
 Sing praises to our heavenly Lord;
 That hath made heaven and earth of naught,
 And with his blood mankind hath bought.

Invite a few students who haven't had the chance to share previously to share their answers with the whole group.

Invite the students to form into groups of three.

Tell the students: Turn to page 132 in your workbooks and answer the question, 'What should a Christmas carol include?' in the space provided.

Invite two students to share their answers. These answers will include many things that the students consider to be important about Christmas. Don't reject the answers if they are not 'holy' but encourage the students to consider the inclusion of the importance and purpose of Christmas – the celebration of Jesus' birth. Other focuses for Christmas carols are also valid, such as a call for peace, a focus on family, a search for friendship and love. All these form an important part of Jesus' message.

Tell the students: We will now have a discussion about Christmas carols. On page 132 of your workbook, you will see the statement 'Christmas carols that don't include something about Jesus are useless'. I would like you all to think about that statement and decide if you agree or disagree with it. Below the statement, you will find a space in which you can record your arguments for or against the statement. If you are able to use scripture to support your argument, then do so. When you have recorded your own position, share this with others in your group.

PREPARATION

PREPARATION

Remember that when we share and discuss with each other we are respectful, listen to the other person, we don't talk over the top of them and we ensure that everyone has a chance to put forward their point of view. You will have 15 minutes for this activity.

(While the students are working **move** around the groups, ensuring that the group dynamics are working well.)

You might like to invite some opinions to be shared, you might also take a vote as to who thinks which position has the better argument, positive or negative. Remember, you are not trying to find a right or wrong answer, you are giving the students the opportunity to argue a point and to think through something that has a strong presence at Christmas time.

Remind the students that there are both kinds of Christmas carols and they are both important in our culture and help us to understand the message of Jesus, as well as the more contemporary implication of this message for us.

End

(5 minutes)

Gather the students around the prayer focus with their workbooks.

Invite the students to stand with their books open to page 132 and the Christmas carol, 'The First Noel'.

Catechist: Let us remember that when we see the lighted candle we are reminded that Jesus Christ is with us and among us.
Let us make the Sign of the Cross.

All: In the name of the Father ...

Catechist: Let us now sing our carol together.

All: The First Noel ...

All: In the name of the Father ...

Dismiss the students as usual.

Abbreviations

CCC	<i>Catechism of the Catholic Church</i>
DCN	<i>Divinae consortium naturae, Paul IV, (1971)</i>
DV	<i>Dei Verbum, Vatican II (1965)</i>
LG	<i>Lumen Gentium, Vatican II (1965)</i>
SC	<i>Sacrosanctum Concilium (1963)</i>

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