Teaching the Liturgical Year

LESSONS for February 2020
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Lessons for Lower Elementary
TEACHING THE LITURGICAL YEAR

The Presentation in the Temple
(Lower Elementary)

February 2, 2020 – The Presentation of the Lord

Overview
In this week's Gospel passage, Mary and Joseph bring the infant Jesus to the Temple to present Him to God according to the Old Mosaic law. In the Temple they meet the prophet Simeon and the prophetess, Anna. Simeon foretells the future suffering of Christ and Mary. In this lesson, students will encounter the prayer of Simeon in the life of the Church and in sacred music and consider how prayer raises our minds and hearts to God.

Directions
A. Read the Gospel passage aloud to your students as they follow along. Then discuss the focus and reflection questions with them as a class.
B. Create a prayerful atmosphere. Then, play for your students the recording of Palestrina's hymn, Nunc Dimittis, which can be found at the following link: SophiaOnline.org/NuncDimittis.
C. When the recording is over, have your students work individually to respond to the Nunc Dimittis reflection question, or ask your students to share about the question orally. Have students share their answers with the class. Then lead a discussion on the different ways we can pray. Close the class by praying the Nunc Dimittis together (prayer provided). Read the prayer aloud once to your students as they follow along. Then, read it again slowly and have them say the words highlighted in red with you. Finally, have your students color the image of the Presentation.

Answer Key
Focus Questions
1. To the Temple in Jerusalem. To present Jesus to the Lord.
2. Simeon was a devout man who was waiting for the Messiah—for Jesus. The Spirit told him that he would see the Messiah before he died.
3. He said “Behold, this child is destined for the fall and rise of many in Israel, and to be a sign that will be contradicted.” He was foretelling the Passion and Crucifixion of Jesus.
4. When Anna saw Jesus “she gave thanks to God and spoke about the child to all who were awaiting the redemption of Jerusalem.” Accept reasoned answers.
Sunday Reading


When the days were completed for their purification according to the law of Moses, they took him up to Jerusalem to present him to the Lord, just as it is written in the law of the Lord, “Every male that opens the womb shall be consecrated to the Lord,” and to offer the sacrifice of “a pair of turtledoves or two young pigeons,” in accordance with the dictate in the law of the Lord. Now there was a man in Jerusalem whose name was Simeon. This man was righteous and devout, awaiting the consolation of Israel, and the holy Spirit was upon him. It had been revealed to him by the holy Spirit that he should not see death before he had seen the Messiah of the Lord. He came in the Spirit into the temple; and when the parents brought in the child Jesus to perform the custom of the law in regard to him, he took him into his arms and blessed God, saying: “Now, Master, you may let your servant go in peace, according to your word, for my eyes
have seen your salvation, which you prepared in sight of all the peoples, a light for revelation to the Gentiles, and glory for your people Israel.” The child’s father and mother were amazed at what was said about him; and Simeon blessed them and said to Mary his mother, “Behold, this child is destined for the fall and rise of many in Israel, and to be a sign that will be contradicted (and you yourself a sword will pierce) so that the thoughts of many hearts may be revealed.” There was also a prophetess, Anna, the daughter of Phanuel, of the tribe of Asher. She was advanced in years, having lived seven years with her husband after her marriage, and then as a widow until she was eighty-four. She never left the temple, but worshiped night and day with fasting and prayer. And coming forward at that very time, she gave thanks to God and spoke about the child to all who were awaiting the redemption of Jerusalem. When they had fulfilled all the prescriptions of the law of the Lord, they returned to Galilee, to their own town of Nazareth. The child
grew and became strong, filled with wisdom; and the favor of God was upon him.

Focus Questions
1. Where did Mary and Joseph take Jesus to present Him to God? Why?
2. Who was Simeon? What did the Holy Spirit tell him?
3. What did Simeon say would happen to Jesus?
4. What did Anna do when she saw Jesus? How can we imitate her?
Nunc Dimittis

Directions: Listen to the music. Then, answer the question below.

What did the music you heard make you think of? Can you explain why?

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________
Now, Master, you may let your servant go in peace, according to your word,

For my eyes have seen your salvation, which you prepared in sight of all the peoples,

A light for revelation to the Gentiles,

and glory for your people Israel.

Amen.
The Similes of Salt and Light (Lower Elementary)

February 9, 2020 – The Fifth Sunday in Ordinary Time

Overview
In this week's Gospel passage Jesus tells His disciples to be “salt of the earth” and the “light of the world.” In other words, Jesus calls them, and us, to make the joy and love of our Christian Faith known to others and allow it to change the world. In this lesson, students will reflect on how they can be the “salt” and “light” of the world today.

Directions
A. Read the Gospel passage aloud to your students as they follow along. Then discuss the focus and reflection questions with them as a class.
B. Have your students complete the Gospel Break-the-Code activity.
C. When they are done, guide a discussion on what it means to be the light of the world.

Answer Key

Focus Questions
1. We normally use salt to season and bring out flavor in food. Jesus was telling His disciples that they “season” the earth. Christ's followers bring life, joy, and love, to the world, in essence, “flavoring” the earth.
2. The light from a lamp covered by a basket would not be able to be seen.
3. He wanted their “light” to be seen, like the city on a mountain or a lit lamp. Christians truly living the life of Christ are a source of love and joy for the world and must allow their joy to be known.

Break-the-Code
Light of the World
Sunday Reading

A Reading from the Gospel of Matthew 5:13-16: The Similes of Salt and Light

Jesus said to his disciples: Nor do they light a lamp and
"You are the salt of the then put it under a bushel
earth. But if salt loses its basket; it is set on a
taste, with what can it be lampstand, where it gives
seasoned? It is no longer light to all in the house. Just
good for anything but to be so, your light must shine
thrown out and trampled before others, that they may
underfoot. You are the light see your good deeds and
do the world. A city set on a glorify your heavenly
mountain cannot be hidden. Father."

Focus Questions

1. What do we use salt for? Why do you think Jesus would call
   His disciples “salt of the earth”?
2. Why wouldn’t you light a lamp and then cover it with a
   basket?
3. Why do you think Jesus called His disciples “the light of the
   world?”
Gospel Break-the-Code

**Directions:** Use the key to solve the code. What did Jesus tell His Disciples to be?

A=1  B=2  C=3  D=4  E=5  F=6  G=7  H=8
I=9  J=10  K=11  L=12  M=13  N=14  O=15
P=16  Q=17  R=18  S=19  T=20  U=21
V=22  W=23  X=24  Y=25  Z=26

Jesus told His Disciples to be

the ___ ___ ___ ___ ___   ___ ___   ___ ___ ___
12  9  7  8  20  15  6  20  8  5

___ ___ ___ ___ ___.
23  15  18  12  4
Teachings about the Law (Lower Elementary)

February 16, 2020 – Sixth Sunday in Ordinary Time

Overview

In this week’s Gospel passage, Jesus delivers a powerful teaching on the Law. Jesus makes it clear that the Old Law will not go away in the New Covenant, but instead, the truth at the heart of the Law will be restored and deepened. In this lesson, students will contemplate together the meaning of the Law and Jesus’ teaching regarding how the Law pertains to our lives today.

Directions

A. Note: This week's Gospel is especially long and may prompt questions about divorce and other potentially sensitive topics. Handle this subject charitably.

B. Read the Gospel passage aloud to your students as they follow along. Then discuss the focus and reflection questions with them as a class.

C. Have your students complete the Jesus Explains the Law activity.

D. When they are done, call on volunteers to share their pictures, and answers, with the class.

Answer Key

Focus Questions

1. Jesus said: “Do not think that I have come to abolish the law or the prophets. I have come not to abolish but to fulfill.”

2. Jesus said: “whoever obeys and teaches these commandments will be called greatest in the kingdom of heaven.”

3. Accept reasoned answers.
Teaching about the Law

“Do not think that I have come to abolish the law or the prophets. I have come not to abolish but to fulfill. Amen, I say to you, until heaven and earth pass away, not the smallest letter or the smallest part of a letter will pass from the law, until all things have taken place. Therefore, whoever breaks one of the least of these commandments and teaches others to do so will be called least in the kingdom of heaven. But whoever obeys and teaches these commandments will be called greatest in the kingdom of heaven. I tell you, unless your righteousness surpasses that of the scribes and Pharisees, you will not enter into the kingdom of heaven.

Teaching about Anger

“You have heard that it was said to your ancestors, ‘You shall not kill; and whoever kills will be liable to judgment.’ But I
say to you, whoever is angry with his brother will be liable to judgment, and whoever says to his brother, ‘Raqa,’ will be answerable to the Sanhedrin, and whoever says, ‘You fool,’ will be liable to fiery Gehenna. Therefore, if you bring your gift to the altar, and there recall that your brother has anything against you, leave your gift there at the altar, go first and be reconciled with your brother, and then come and offer your gift. Settle with your opponent quickly while on the way to court with him. Otherwise your opponent will hand you over to the judge, and the judge will hand you over to the guard, and you will be thrown into prison. Amen, I say to you, you will not be released until you have paid the last penny.

**Teaching about Adultery**

“You have heard that it was said, ‘You shall not commit adultery.’ But I say to you, everyone who looks at a woman with lust has already committed adultery with her in his heart. If your right eye causes you to sin, tear it out and throw it away. It is better for you to lose one of your members than to
have your whole body thrown into Gehenna. And if your right hand causes you to sin, cut it off and throw it away. It is better for you to lose one of your members than to have your whole body go into Gehenna.

**Teaching about Divorce**

“Again you have heard that it was said to your ancestors, ‘Do not take a false oath, but make good to the Lord all that you vow.’ But I say to you, do not swear at all; not by heaven, for it is God’s throne; nor by the earth, for it is his footstool; nor by Jerusalem, for it is the city of the great King. Do not swear by your head, for you cannot make a single hair white or black. Let your ‘Yes’ mean ‘Yes,’ and your ‘No’ mean ‘No.’ Anything more is from the evil one.

“Whoever divorces his wife must give her a bill of divorce.’ But I say to you, whoever divorces his wife (unless the marriage is unlawful) causes her to commit adultery, and whoever marries a divorced woman commits adultery.
Focus Questions

1. What did Jesus come to do about the law and the prophets?
2. Who does Jesus say will be called greatest in the Kingdom of Heaven?
3. What is a rule you have at home that is hard for you to follow? Do you know why that rule is in place?
Jesus Explains the Law

Directions: Jesus teaches that the Law shows us how to love. What is one thing you can do this week to show Jesus that you love Him? Draw yourself doing it in the box below.
Teaching about Retaliation and Love of Enemies (Lower Elementary)

February 23, 2020 – Seventh Sunday in Ordinary Time

Overview

In this week’s Gospel passage, Jesus continues His teaching on the Law. Here, He deepens His command to love our neighbor by telling us that our neighbor includes our enemy. In this lesson, students will reflect on sacred art and the parable of the Good Samaritan as an illustration of Jesus’ teaching.

Directions

A. Read the Gospel passage aloud to your students as they follow along. Then discuss the focus and reflection questions with them as a class.
B. Have your students complete the Spot the Difference activity.
C. When they are done, lead a conversation on the story of the Good Samaritan being an example of how to love our neighbor as Jesus wants us to.

Answer Key

Focus Questions

1. Offer no resistance, turn the other cheek, if someone asks something of you, give them more and do not turn your back.
2. The Old Law said: “Love your neighbor, hate your enemy.”
3. He tells us to “love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you.”
4. The old teaching to hate your enemy is an action that would keep us separate from those who harm us. This is not a bad thing. However, it may lead to a growing dislike of them. When we love our enemies, we have a greater chance of changing their hearts and preserving our own life as well.
5. Jesus says: “be perfect, just as your heavenly Father is perfect.”
Spot the Differences
Sunday Reading

A Reading from the Gospel of Matthew 5:38-48: Teaching about Retaliation and Love of Enemies

Jesus said to his disciples:

"You have heard that it was said, An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth. But I say to you, offer no resistance to one who is evil. When someone strikes you on your right cheek, turn the other one as well. If anyone wants to go to law with you over your tunic, hand over your cloak as well. Should anyone press you into service for one mile, go for two miles. Give to the one who asks of you, and do not turn your back on one who wants to borrow. "You have heard that it was said, You shall

love your neighbor and hate your enemy. But I say to you, love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, that you may be children of your heavenly Father, for he makes his sun rise on the bad and the good, and causes rain to fall on the just and the unjust. For if you love those who love you, what recompense will you have? Do not the tax collectors do the same? And if you greet your brothers only, what is unusual about that? Do not the pagans do the same? So be perfect, just
as your heavenly Father is perfect.”

**Focus Questions**

1. What new teaching does Jesus give about dealing with those who might do us harm?
2. How does the Old Law tell us to treat our neighbors and our enemies?
3. How does Jesus tell us to treat our enemies?
4. How does Jesus’ new teaching *not* cancel out the old teaching?
5. Who does Jesus tell us to imitate?
Spot the Differences

**Directions:** The Good Samaritan loved his neighbor. Compare the two versions of the painting. Can you find 10 differences?