Teaching the Liturgical Year

LESSONS for January 2020

SOPHIA INSTITUTE FOR TEACHERS
Teaching the Liturgical Year

Four Lessons for January 2020

January 5, 2020: The Epiphany of the Lord
January 12, 2020: The Baptism of the Lord
January 19, 2020: The Second Sunday in Ordinary Time
January 26, 2020: The Third Sunday in Ordinary Time
The Visit of the Magi (Lower Elementary)

January 5, 2020 – The Epiphany of the Lord

Overview
In this week’s Gospel passage, the magi visit the infant Jesus to bring Him gifts and honor Him. In this lesson, students will come to a deeper understanding of the identity of the magi and consider ways in which they too can be like the wisemen as they come to adore the Lord.

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 Epiphany Maze activity.
C. After your students have completed the activity, ask them to think about how they can follow the example of the Magi in their own lives. Guide a discussion on the ways we can offer gifts to Jesus every day.

Answer Key

Focus Questions

1. Magi from the east. They were looking for the newborn king of the Jews to pay him homage.
2. Bethlehem.
3. A star which came to rest over the place where the child was.
4. They had been warned not to do so in a dream.
Epiphany Maze
Sunday Reading

A Reading from the Gospel of Matthew 2:1-12: The Visit of the Magi

When Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea, in the days of King Herod, behold, magi from the east arrived in Jerusalem, saying, "Where is the newborn king of the Jews? We saw his star at its rising and have come to do him homage." When King Herod heard this, he was greatly troubled, and all Jerusalem with him. Assembling all the chief priests and the scribes of the people, He inquired of them where the Christ was to be born. They said to him, "In Bethlehem of Judea, for thus it has been written through the prophet: And you, Bethlehem, land of Judah, are by no means least among the rulers of Judah; since from you shall come a ruler, who is to shepherd my people Israel." Then Herod called the magi secretly and ascertained from them the time of the star's appearance. He sent them to Bethlehem and said, "Go and search diligently for the child. When you have found him, bring me word, that I too may go and do him homage." After their audience with the king they set out. And behold, the star
that they had seen at its rising preceded them, until it came and stopped over the place where the child was. They were overjoyed at seeing the star, and on entering the house they saw the child with Mary his mother. They prostrated themselves and did him homage. Then they opened their treasures and offered him gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh. And having been warned in a dream not to return to Herod, they departed for their country by another way.

**Focus Questions**

1. Who came to Jerusalem? Why?
2. Where did the prophecy say the king of the Jews would be born?
3. What led the Magi to the baby king?
4. Why did the Magi not go back to king Herod?
Epiphany Maze

Directions: Help the Magi get through the maze to Jesus!
The Baptism of the Lord (Lower Elementary)

January 12, 2020 – The Baptism of the Lord

Overview

In this week’s Gospel passage, Jesus comes to John the Baptist at the River Jordan to be baptized. At first John objects to baptizing Jesus, but then Jesus reveals why he should allow it. John baptizes Jesus, upon whom the Holy Spirit descends and comes to rest, while the Father proclaims Him to be His beloved Son. In this lesson, students will consider the meaning of Christ’s Baptism and the invitation it extends to all of us.

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 Baptism Fill-in-the-Blank activity.
C. Play for your students the Matt Maher song “Come to the Water” found at sophiaonline.org/CometotheWater. Have students follow along with the lyrics from the “Come to the Water” Reflection handout.
D. After listening to and thinking about the song, have your students respond to the questions on the “Come to the Water” Reflection handout. When finished, discuss their responses to the reflection questions.

Answer Key

Focus Questions

1. To be baptized by John.
2. John felt unworthy to baptize Jesus, saying “I need to be baptized by you, and yet you are coming to me?”
3. Heaven opened up and the Holy Spirit descended upon Jesus like a dove.
4. “You are my beloved Son; with you I am well pleased.”

“Come to the Water” Reflection

1. To come to the Lord/come to the water.
2. Accept reasoned answers.
A Reading from the Gospel of Matthew 3:13-17: The Baptism of Jesus

Then Jesus came from Galilee to John at the Jordan to be baptized by him. John tried to prevent him, saying, “I need to be baptized by you, and yet you are coming to me?” Jesus said to him in reply, “Allow it now, for thus it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness.” Then he allowed him. After Jesus was baptized, he came up from the water and behold, the heavens were opened [for him], and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove [and] coming upon him. And a voice came from the heavens, saying, “This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased.”

Focus Questions
1. Why did Jesus go to the Jordan?
2. Why did John try to stop Jesus?
3. What happened after Jesus was baptized?
4. What did the voice from Heaven say about Jesus?
Baptism Fill-in-the-Blank

**Directions:** What did Jesus say His baptism would fulfill? Use the key below to fill in the blanks and find the answer.

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“Come to the Water” Reflection

O let all who thirst
Let them come to the water
And let all who have nothing
Let them come to the Lord
Without money, without price
Why should you pay the price
Except for the Lord?

And let all who seek
Let them come to the water
And let all who have nothing
Let them come to the Lord
Without money, without strife
Why should you spend your life
Except for the Lord?

And let all who toil
Let them come to the water
And let all who are weary
Let them come to the Lord
All who labor without rest
How can your soul find rest
Except for the Lord?

And let all the poor
Let them come to the water
And let the ones who are laden
Let them come to the Lord
Bring the children without might
Easy the load and light
Come to the Lord

Come to the Lord
Come to the Lord
Come to the Lord

I will run to you, I will run to you
I will run to you my Lord
Reflection Questions:

1. What does this song call us to do?

________________________________________________________________________

2. How does this song make you think of Jesus’ Baptism?

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________
John the Baptist’s Testimony to Jesus (Lower Elementary)

January 19, 2020 – Second Sunday in Ordinary Time

Overview
In this week’s Gospel passage, John the Baptist reveals to his followers the Messiah, the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world. John makes clear that he came to prepare the way for Jesus who will baptize not just with water, but with the Holy Spirit. In this lesson students will compare Jesus, the Lamb of God, to the first Passover lamb.

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 Lamb of God Stained Glass Window activity.
C. When your students have completed the activity, ask volunteers to share their pictures. Ask them what, or Who, they think the Lamb signifies. Guide a discussion on what it means to call Jesus the Lamb of God.

Answer Key

Focus Questions
1. He called Him the Lamb of God.
2. He said Jesus would take away the sin of the world.
3. The Spirit came down like a dove from Heaven and remained upon Him (Jesus).
4. God had told him that the one whom the Spirit came down upon and remained was the one who would baptize with the Holy Spirit.

Lamb of God Stained Glass Window
1. Accept reasoned answers.
2. Accept reasoned answers. The Lamb, the halo, the standard depicting a cross, the Lamb is on an altar, the red background, the seven medals of gold below the lamb.
Sunday Reading

A Reading from the Gospel of John 1:29-34: John the Baptist’s Testimony to Jesus

John the Baptist saw Jesus coming toward him and said, "Behold, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world. He is the one of whom I said, 'A man is coming after me who ranks ahead of me because he existed before me.' I did not know him, but the reason why I came baptizing with water was that he might be made known to Israel." John testified further, saying, "I saw the Spirit come down like a dove from heaven and remain upon him. I did not know him, but the one who sent me to baptize with water told me, 'On whomever you see the Spirit come down and remain, he is the one who will baptize with the Holy Spirit.' Now I have seen and testified that he is the Son of God.

Focus Questions

1. What did John the Baptist call Jesus when he saw Him?
2. What did John say Jesus would do?
3. What did John see at Jesus’ Baptism?
4. How did John know that Jesus was the Son of God?
Lamb of God Stained Glass Window

Directions: Look at the stained glass window and answer the questions below. Then draw your own Lamb of God stained glass window in the box, and color it in.

1. What does this image make you think of? Why?

________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________
2. What are some signs in the image that point to Jesus?

__________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________

My Lamb of God Stained Glass Window
Teaching the Liturgical Year

The Beginning of the Galilean Ministry and the Call of the First Disciples (Lower)

January 26, 2020 – Third Sunday in Ordinary Time

Overview
In this week’s Gospel passage, Jesus begins His Galilean ministry by calling the first Apostles. These men leave their old lives behind and immediately follow Christ. In this lesson, students will consider the sacrifices required to be a follower of Christ and how they can respond to Jesus’ call in their own lives.

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. Show your students part of the video “Fishers of Men” produced by the USCCB Secretariat for Vocations and Priestly Formation (from 6:46 to the end of the video). The video can be found at the following link: sophiaonline.org/FishersOfMen.
C. Then, have students work individually to complete the The Call of a Disciple activity. When complete, ask for student volunteers to share and discuss their responses.

Answer Key

Focus Questions

1. Galilee. A prophecy of Isaiah’s was fulfilled.
2. “Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.”
3. Simon Peter and his brother Andrew. They were fishermen. Jesus said He would make them “fishers of men.”
4. They all immediately left what they were doing and followed Him.

The Call of a Disciple

1. Accept reasoned answers.
2. Accept reasoned answers.
When Jesus heard that John had been arrested, he withdrew to Galilee. He left Nazareth and went to live in Capernaum by the sea, in the region of Zebulun and Naphtali, that what had been said through Isaiah the prophet might be fulfilled: 

Land of Zebulun and land of Naphtali, the way to the sea, beyond the Jordan, Galilee of the Gentiles, the people who sit in darkness have seen a great light, on those dwelling in a land overshadowed by death light has arisen. From that time on, Jesus began to preach and say, “Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.” As he was walking by the sea of Galilee, he saw two brothers, Simon who is called Peter, and his brother Andrew, casting a net into the sea; they were fishermen. He said to them, “Come after me, and I will make you fishers of men.” At once they left their nets and followed him. He walked along from there and saw two other brothers, James, the son of Zebedee, and his brother John. They were in a boat, with their father
Zebedee, mending their nets. He called them, and immediately they left their boat and their father and followed him. He went around all of Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, proclaiming the gospel of the kingdom, and curing every disease and illness among the people.

Focus Questions

1. Where did Jesus go after John the Baptist was arrested? Whose prophecy did He fulfill?
2. What did Jesus preach in this land?
3. Who were the first two Apostles Jesus called? What was their job? What did Jesus say He would make them?
4. What did the men in the Gospel do as soon as Jesus called them?
The Call of a Disciple

**Directions:** Watch the video clip from “Fishers of Men.” Then answer the questions below.

1. A priest in the video clip said, “When there’s love, sacrifice is easy.” What is a sacrifice you have made for someone you love?

   __________________________________________________________
   __________________________________________________________

2. Serving others is a form of sacrifice. By serving others, we can be like Christ. What are three ways you can serve others today?

   __________________________________________________________
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