The JOY of the GOSPEL

Four Lessons for January 2019

January 6, 2019 – The Epiphany of the Lord
January 13, 2019 – The Baptism of the Lord
January 20, 2019 – The Second Sunday in Ordinary Time
January 27, 2019 – The Third Sunday in Ordinary Time
The Joy of the Gospel
The Visit of the Magi
(Lower Elementary)

January 6, 2019 – 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 analyze their story to determine the meaning of their visit to Jesus.

Directions

1. Read the Gospel passage aloud to your students as they follow along. Then discuss the focus and reflection questions with them as a class.
2. Read aloud the information about the magi from What is the Meaning of the Visit of the Magi? Then, discuss the focus questions with them.
3. Have students draw a picture of the magi giving the baby Jesus their gifts.

Answer Key

1. Bethlehem.
2. The magi travelled from the East.
3. The chief priests and scribes knew where Christ was born because of an Old Testament prophecy that announced His birthplace as Bethlehem.
4. Herod sent the magi to search for the child and to send him word when they had found him so that he too could come and pay homage. (It is likely Herod did not wish to pay Jesus homage, but rather sought to kill Him.)
5. A star which led them to Bethlehem and stopped over Jesus’ house.
6. They offered Him gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh.
7. They were warned in a dream not to.
What is the Meaning of the Visit of the Magi

1. Every nation on earth.
2. The Gentiles are coheirs to the promises of Christ, the Good News of Salvation in the Gospel, and members of the one Body of Christ, the Church.
3. The magi came to honor Jesus because He is Savior of all people throughout the world.
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. Where was Jesus born?
2. Where did the magi travel from?
3. How did the chief priests and scribes know where Christ was born?
4. What did the magi follow to find Jesus?
5. What mission were the magi sent on by the king?
6. What gifts did the magi offer to Jesus?
7. Why did the magi not report back to the king?
What is the Meaning of the Visit of the Magi?

**Directions:** Read the description of the magi and the Responsorial Psalm and Second Reading for this Sunday’s liturgy and then answer the Focus and Reflection Questions.

**The Magi**

While we don’t know for sure, the magi were probably priests from other religions in the East. The Bible doesn’t even tell us how many there were. The popular idea is that there were three magi. This is because the Bible tells us they gave Jesus three gifts: gold, frankincense, and myrrh.

The magi were very talented at using the stars to guide them. The Bible also tells us they could interpret dreams. This is how they came to know about Jesus. It is also how they came to know to not return to the king as they left.

Why did the magi visit baby Jesus? Why did they travel so far to honor him?

The Psalm and Second Reading for this Sunday’s liturgy help us to answer these questions.
Responsorial Psalm

Lord, every nation on earth will adore you.

Reading 2: Ephesians 3:3-2A, 5-6

Brothers and sisters: You have heard of the stewardship of God’s grace that was given to me for your benefit, namely, that the mystery was made known to me by revelation. It was not made known to people in other generations as it has now been revealed to his holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit: that the Gentiles are coheirs, members of the same body, and copartners in the promise in Christ Jesus through the Gospel.

Focus Questions

1. Who does the Responsorial Psalm tell us will adore the Lord?
2. A Gentile is someone who is not Jewish. What did St. Paul teach us about the Gentiles?
3. The magi were Gentiles. Why do you think they came to honor Jesus?
Now draw a picture of the Magi giving the baby Jesus their gifts.
The Joy of the Gospel

The Baptism of the Lord
(Lower Elementary)

January 13, 2019 – The Baptism of the Lord

Overview
In this week’s Gospel passage, John the Baptist foretells of the coming Messiah who will baptize with the Holy Spirit and with fire. He then baptizes Jesus, upon whom the Holy Spirit descends and comes to rest, while the Father proclaims Him to be His beloved Son. In this spot the differences lesson, students will reflect on the meaning of Christ’s baptism.

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 students complete the The Baptism of Christ Spot the Differences activity. Tell your students to compare the two versions of the painting The Baptism of Christ by Antoine Coipel and find 7 differences between the two images. Have them circle the differences.

Answer Key

1. Expectation. They were asking in their hearts if John was the Messiah.
2. John told them that he was baptizing them with water.
3. The one coming after him would baptize them with the Holy Spirit and fire.
4. Heaven opened up and the Holy Spirit descended upon Jesus like a dove.
5. “You are my beloved Son; with you I am well pleased.”
The Baptism of Christ Spot the Differences Answer Key
Sunday Reading


The people were filled with expectation, and all were asking in their hearts whether John might be the Christ. John answered them all, saying, “I am baptizing you with water, but one mightier than I is coming. I am not worthy to loosen the thongs of his sandals. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire.”

After all the people had been baptized and Jesus also had been baptized and was praying, heaven was opened and the Holy Spirit descended upon him in bodily form like a dove. And a voice came from heaven, “You are my beloved Son; with you I am well pleased.”

Focus Questions

1. What were the people filled with? What were they asking in their hearts?
2. What did John say that he baptizes the people with?
3. What would the one coming after him baptize with?
4. What happened after Jesus was baptized?
5. What did the voice from Heaven say about Jesus?
Why was Jesus Baptized?

**Directions:** Compare the two images of *The Baptism of Christ* by Antoine Coipel. See if you can spot 7 differences between the two images. Circle the differences when you find them.
The Joy of the Gospel
The Wedding at Cana
(Lower Elementary)

January 20, 2019 – Second Sunday in Ordinary Time

Overview

In this week’s Gospel passage Jesus begins His public ministry at His mother’s request by changing water into wine at a wedding feast in Cana. Jesus’ first miracle is the continuation of a series of mysterious and miraculous events in Salvation History that culminate in the Eucharist. In this lesson, students will reflect upon the place of Jesus’ first miracle in the economy of salvation.

Directions

1. Read the Gospel passage aloud to your students as they follow along. Then discuss the focus and reflection questions with them as a class.
2. Complete the Water, Wine, and Christ’s Blood activity with your students. Have them color the three chalices according to the directions.
3. Conclude by praying the Memorare together.

Answer Key

1. Mary, Jesus, and Jesus’ disciples
2. She told Jesus that they had run out of wine. She had noticed that this had happened, which would be an embarrassment for the bride and groom.
3. Jesus said to her, “Woman, how does your concern affect me? My hour has not yet come.”
4. “Do whatever He tells you.” Mary is a powerful intercessor for us today. She will take our prayers and concerns to her son and petition Him on our behalf. And Jesus, being the loving son that He is, will honor His mother’s request.
5. Jesus changes water into wine. He directs the servants to fill six stone jars with water and then draw some out to take to the head waiter. By the time it has reached the head waiter, it has become wine.
6. So that His glory might be revealed and the disciples would believe.

**Water, Wine, and Blood Focus Questions**

1. Jesus changes bread into His Body.
2. Jesus changes wine into His blood.
4. In both, Jesus changes one thing into something else. Both involve wine.
Sunday Readings

A Reading from the Gospel of John 2:1-11: The Wedding at Cana

There was a wedding at Cana in Galilee, and the mother of Jesus was there. Jesus and his disciples were also invited to the wedding. When the wine ran short, the mother of Jesus said to him, “They have no wine.” And Jesus said to her, “Woman, how does your concern affect me? My hour has not yet come.” His mother said to the servers, “Do whatever he tells you.” Now there were six stone water jars there for Jewish ceremonial washings, each holding twenty to thirty gallons. Jesus told them, “Fill the jars with water.” So they filled them to the brim. Then he told them, “Draw some out now and take it to the headwaiter.” So they took it.

And when the headwaiter tasted the water that had become wine, without knowing where it came from — although the servers who had drawn the water knew —, the headwaiter called the bridegroom and said to him, “Everyone serves good wine first, and then when people have drunk freely, an inferior one; but you have kept the good wine until now.” Jesus did this as the beginning of his signs at Cana in Galilee and so revealed his glory, and his disciples began to believe in him.
Focus Questions

1. Who was present at the wedding at Cana in Galilee?
2. What did Mary tell Jesus and why?
3. How did Jesus respond to Mary’s request?
4. What did Mary tell the servers?
5. What miracle did Jesus perform? How did He do it?
6. What is the reason for this first miracle of Jesus’?
Water, Wine, and Christ’s Blood

Introduction
In Jesus’ first miracle, He changed water into wine. At the Last Supper, Jesus performed another miracle using wine. Read about the Last Supper and answer the questions.

The Last Supper
While they were eating, Jesus took bread, said the blessing, broke it, and giving it to his disciples said, “Take and eat; this is my body.” Then he took a cup, gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, “Drink from it, all of you, for this is my blood of the covenant, which will be shed on behalf of many for the forgiveness of sins. I tell you, from now on I shall not drink this fruit of the vine until the day when I drink it with you new in the kingdom of my Father.” Then, after singing a hymn, they went out to the Mount of Olives. – Matthew 26:26-30

Focus Questions
1. What does Jesus change into His Body?
2. What does He change into His Blood?
3. How is what Jesus did at the Last Supper similar to His first miracle at the Wedding at Cana?
At the Wedding at Cana, Jesus announced to us the beginning of His public ministry. But He also began to teach us about the Eucharist. He began to reveal to us just how He was would remain with us (in the Eucharist) after He ascended into Heaven.

Color the chalices below. Color the first chalice so that it is filled with water. Color the second chalice so that is filled with wine. Color third chalice (with the Host) so that it is filled with Christ’s Blood.
Memorare Prayer

Remember, O most gracious Virgin Mary, that never was it known that anyone who fled to thy protection, implored thy help, or sought thine intercession was left unaided.

Inspired by this confidence, I fly unto thee, O Virgin of virgins, my mother; to thee do I come, before thee I stand, sinful and sorrowful. O Mother of the Word Incarnate, despise not my petitions, but in thy mercy hear and answer me.

Amen.
The Joy of the Gospel

The Beginning of Jesus’ Ministry
(Lower Elementary)

January 27, 2019 – Third Sunday in Ordinary Time

Overview
In this week’s Gospel passage, Jesus returns home to Nazareth and reads from a prophecy from Isaiah in the synagogue. Jesus proclaims to the people that this prophecy is fulfilled in Him. In this lesson, students will consider how they too can follow Jesus’ example and participate in His mission.

Directions
1. Read the Gospel passage aloud to your students as they follow along. Then discuss the focus and reflection questions with them as a class.
2. Have students complete the Jesus’ Mission Activity. When complete, ask for student volunteers to share and discuss their responses.

Answer Key
1. He has investigated everything accurately anew.
2. In the power of the spirit.
3. Jesus went to Nazareth, where He grew up.
4. Jesus stood and read from a scroll from the prophet Isaiah.
5. Jesus proclaimed that the scroll from Isaiah from which He read was fulfilled in Him.
Sunday Reading


Since many have undertaken to compile a narrative of the events that have been fulfilled among us, just as those who were eyewitnesses from the beginning and ministers of the word have handed them down to us, I too have decided, after investigating everything accurately anew, to write it down in an orderly sequence for you, most excellent Theophilus, so that you may realize the certainty of the teachings you have received. Jesus returned to Galilee in the power of the Spirit, and news of him spread throughout the whole region. He taught in their synagogues and was praised by all. He came to Nazareth, where he had grown up, and went according to his custom into the synagogue on the sabbath day. He stood up to read and was handed a scroll of the prophet Isaiah. He unrolled the scroll and found the passage where it was written:

*The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to bring glad tidings to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim liberty to captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to let the oppressed go free, and to*
proclaim a year acceptable to the Lord.

Rolling up the scroll, he handed it back to the attendant and sat down, and the eyes of all in the synagogue looked intently at him. He said to them, “Today this Scripture passage is fulfilled in your hearing.”

Focus Questions

1. What caused the author of this Gospel to write this Gospel?
2. How did Jesus return to Galilee?
3. Where did Jesus go while in Galilee? What is important about this place?
4. A synagogue is a Jewish place of worship. What did Jesus do while in the synagogue?
5. What did Jesus proclaim about Himself?
Jesus’ Mission Activity

In this Sunday’s Gospel, Jesus read this verse from the prophet Isaiah:

*The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to bring glad tidings to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim liberty to captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to let the oppressed go free, and to proclaim a year acceptable to the Lord.*

This is Jesus’ mission on earth.

We are called to imitate Jesus. That means we are called to be like Him. We can do each of these things in our own lives!

In the boxes, draw a picture of, or write about how you can do each of these parts of Jesus’ mission in your own life.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The Spirit of the Lord is upon me...</th>
<th>Bring glad tidings to the poor...</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Proclaim liberty to captives...</td>
<td>Proclaim recovery of sight to the blind...</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Let the oppressed go free...

Proclaim a year acceptable to the Lord.