



# The JOY of the GOSPEL

*Lessons for June 2<sup>nd</sup>, June 9<sup>th</sup>, and Summer 2019*

**June 2, 2019** – The Ascension of the Lord

**June 9, 2019** – Pentecost Sunday

**Summer 2018** – *Lectio Divina*

## **The Ascension (Upper and Middle Elementary)**



**June 2, 2019 – The Ascension of the Lord**

### **Overview**

In this week's Gospel passage, we read about Jesus' Ascension into Heaven. Before He returns to His Father, Jesus gathers His disciples for His final words to them, which come with a mission – preach the Gospel to the nations. This command to the Apostles becomes the mission of the Church. In this lesson, students will create their own personal witness of Jesus.

### **Directions**

- A. Have students read the Gospel passage, or read it aloud to your students, and then answer the focus questions. You may have students answer them on their own or you may discuss them together as a class.
- B. Review and discuss the correct answers when finished.
- C. Have your students read about what the Church teaches about evangelization from **The Mission of the Church: Our Mission**. Then, have students reflect on their own personal witness of Jesus using the **My Personal Witness** worksheet. You may have students write their responses to the questions or keep notes on the worksheet. If time permits, consider having students practice sharing their witness stories with a partner.

### **Answer Key**

1. The Christ would suffer and rise from the dead on the third day and that repentance for the forgiveness of sins would be preached in His name to all the nations.
2. A witness is someone who has seen or has knowledge of something happen. Typically, a witness, especially in a court of law, tells others what they have seen or know as evidence of that something's truthfulness.
3. Tell others what they have seen and know.
4. "The promise of my Father." In other words, the Holy Spirit.
5. returned to Jerusalem with great joy and praised God in the Temple.

# Sunday Reading

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## A Reading from the Gospel of Luke 24:46-53: The Ascension

Jesus said to his disciples:

"Thus it is written that the Christ would suffer and rise from the dead on the third day and that repentance, for the forgiveness of sins, would be preached in his name to all the nations, beginning from Jerusalem. You are witnesses of these things. And behold I am sending the promise of my Father upon you; but stay in the city until you are clothed

with power from on high."

Then he led them out as far as Bethany, raised his hands, and blessed them. As he blessed them he parted from them and was taken up to heaven. They did him homage and then returned to Jerusalem with great joy, and they were continually in the temple praising God.

## Focus Questions

1. What two things did Jesus say to His disciples were "written"?
2. Jesus tells His disciples that they are "witnesses of these things." What is witness and what does a witness do?
3. Because Jesus tells His disciples they are witnesses, what is He telling them to do?
4. What did Jesus say He would send to the disciples?
5. What did the Apostles do after Jesus ascended into Heaven?

# The Mission of the Church: Our Mission

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**Directions:** Read about what the Church teaches about evangelization. Then, reflect on your own personal witness of Jesus.

Pope St. Paul VI wrote an encyclical, or an official teaching letter to the faithful, called *Evangelii Nuntiandi*, or *Evangelization in the Modern World*. In it, he wrote the following:

Evangelizing is in fact the grace and vocation proper to the Church, her deepest identity. She exists in order to evangelize, that is to say, in order to preach and teach, to be the channel of the gift of grace, to reconcile sinners with God, and to perpetuate Christ's sacrifice in the Mass, which is the memorial of His death and glorious resurrection. (14)

...For the Church, the first means of evangelization is the witness of an authentically Christian life, given over to God in a communion that nothing should destroy and at the same time given to one's neighbor with limitless zeal. As we said recently to a group of lay people, "Modern man listens more willingly to witnesses than to teachers, and if he does listen to teachers, it is because they are witnesses." (41)

The first of these very important quotes tells us that the Church exists to evangelize – that is, to share the Good News of the Gospel.

Then, the pope goes on to tell us ways the Church does this. The next quote tells us of the first way of evangelizing, which is our own witness of life as Christians. In fact, the pope believes that in our modern world our witness is more important than anything we might say or preach.

Each one of us is a witness of Christ. Each one of us can share our example of life and joy with others and can tell others about our relationship with Jesus.

**What is your story? How can you show and tell others about Jesus?**

# My Personal Witness

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**Directions:** Using the questions below as a guide, tell the story of your personal witness of Jesus in a way that you could share with others.

1. What was your life like before you met Jesus? (What was the most important thing in your life? What made you the happiest?)

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2. How did you discover that this life would not make you as happy as you expected or wanted?

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3. How did you meet Jesus? (Did you have a sudden conversion? Or was it over time?)

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4. What was it like coming to know the truth of the Gospel?

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5. How does Christ give you the happiness, security, and fulfillment that you searched for before your conversion? Give a specific example.

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*The Joy of the Gospel*  
**Pentecost Sunday**  
**(Upper and Middle Elementary)**



**June 9, 2019 – Pentecost Sunday**

## **Overview**

In the Gospel for Pentecost Sunday, Jesus promises His disciples that He will send them the Holy Spirit to teach them and to guide them. In this lesson, students will explore the various symbols of the Holy Spirit found in Scripture.

## **Directions**

- A. Have students read the Gospel passage, or read it aloud to your students, and then answer the focus questions. You may have students answer them on their own or you may discuss them together as a class.
- B. Review and discuss the correct answers when finished.
- C. Have your students read the story of Pentecost from Acts 2:1-11, printed on the **Symbols of the Holy Spirit** worksheet, and have them answer the reflection questions. Then, arrange your students into six groups (or more, and assign multiple groups to the same symbol). Assign each group one of the symbols of the Holy Spirit to look up in the given Scripture passage, determine which symbols is revealed by that passage and why they think so, and then draw an artistic representation of that symbol. Make markers and/or colored pencils available. When groups have finished, have each group share their findings and their drawings.

## **Answer Key**

### **Focus Questions**

#### **Option A:**

1. “Peace be with you.”
2. “Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, so I send you.”
3. He breathed on them.

4. The authority to forgive and retain sins.

**Option B:**

1. Keep His commandments and His word.
2. The Advocate (the Holy Spirit).
3. He will teach us everything and remind us of all that Jesus taught us.

**Symbols of the Holy Spirit:**

**Reflection Questions:**

1. The reading from Acts fulfills the promise Jesus makes in the Gospel. Both readings provide us with an understanding of who the Holy Spirit is.
2. Because the Holy Spirit was necessary to strengthen and guide the Apostles in the establishing of the early Church and continues to be necessary until the Second Coming.

**Graphic Organizer**

1. A dove/The Spirit of God descended upon Jesus at His Baptism like a dove.
2. Tongues or flames of fire/God's spirit often appears in fire, which is symbol of power and might.
3. Wind/The Spirit filled the room with the sound of a rushing wind, and God's Spirit hovered over the waters of creation.
4. Water/Water is often connected with an outpouring of the Holy Spirit in Baptism.
5. A cloud/God led His people at various points in the Old Testament by appearing in a cloud or a pillar of fire.
6. Anointing with oil/Anointing with oil represented being sealed with God's Spirit.

# Sunday Reading

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## Option A: John 20:19-23: Appearance to the Disciples

On the evening of that first day of the week, when the doors were locked, where the disciples were, for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood in their midst and said to them, "Peace be with you." When he had said this, he showed them his hands and his side. The disciples rejoiced when they saw the Lord.

Jesus said to them again, "Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, so I send you."

And when he had said this, he breathed on them and said to them, "Receive the Holy Spirit. Whose sins you forgive are forgiven them, and whose sins you retain are retained.

## Focus Questions

1. How does Jesus greet His disciples?
2. After He shows the disciples His hands and side, what does He say to them?
3. With what action did Jesus give the disciples the Holy Spirit?
4. What authority did Jesus give to the disciples?

# Sunday Reading

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## Option B: John 14:15-16, 23B-26: The Advocate

Jesus said to his disciples: "If you love me, you will keep my commandments. And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Advocate to be with you always.

"Whoever loves me will keep my word, and my Father will love him, and we will come to him and make our dwelling with him. Those who do not love

me do not keep my words; yet the word you hear is not mine but that of the Father who sent me.

"I have told you this while I am with you. The Advocate, the Holy Spirit whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you everything and remind you of all that I told you."

### Focus Questions

1. What will the disciples (and us) do if we love Jesus?
2. Whom does Jesus say He will ask the Father to send?
3. What will the Holy Spirit do?

# Symbols of the Holy Spirit

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**Directions:** Pentecost marks the end of the Easter season. For the past 50 days, we have celebrated Christ’s Resurrection from the dead and His glorious Ascension into Heaven. Now, we celebrate the fulfillment of Christ’s promise to send the Holy Spirit to lead His Church into a new age. Read the story of Pentecost from Acts 2:1-11 below and answer the reflection questions. Then, complete the symbols of the Holy Spirit activity.

When the time for Pentecost was fulfilled, they were all in one place together. And suddenly there came from the sky a noise like a strong driving wind, and it filled the entire house in which they were. Then there appeared to them tongues as of fire, which parted and came to rest on each one of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in different tongues, as the Spirit enabled them to proclaim. Now there were devout Jews from every nation under heaven staying in Jerusalem. At this sound, they gathered in a large crowd, but they were confused because each one heard them speaking in his own language. They were astounded, and in amazement they asked, “Are not all these people who are speaking Galileans? Then how does each of us hear them in his native language? We are Parthians, Medes, and Elamites, inhabitants of Mesopotamia, Judea and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia, Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and the districts of Libya near Cyrene, as well as travelers from Rome, both Jews and converts to Judaism, Cretans and Arabs, yet we hear them speaking in our own tongues of the mighty acts of God.” – Acts 2:1-11

## Reflection Questions:

1. How are the Gospel readings for this Sunday and this reading from Acts of the Apostles connected?

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2. Why do you think it was necessary for Jesus to send the Holy Spirit?

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## Symbols of the Holy Spirit:

<p>1. Matthew 3:16</p> <p>Symbol:</p> <p>Why?</p>	
<p>2. Acts 2:3 and Exodus 3:2</p> <p>Symbol:</p> <p>Why?</p>	
<p>3. Acts 2:2 and Genesis 1:2</p> <p>Symbol:</p> <p>Why?</p>	

<p>4. Matthew 3:11 and John 3:5</p> <p>Symbol:</p> <p>Why?</p>	
<p>5. Exodus 16:10</p> <p>Symbol:</p> <p>Why?</p>	
<p>6. Acts 10:38 and 1 John 2:20-27</p> <p>Symbol:</p> <p>Why?</p>	

# *The Joy of the Gospel* Summer 2019



## *Lectio Divina*

### Overview

Summer is a great time to relax, to enjoy the outdoors, and to be with friends and family. It is also a great time to spend some time in prayer. This lesson contains an essay describing *Lectio Divina* and a guide to help your students continue to read the Sunday Gospels over the summer and pray using *Lectio Divina*.

### Directions

- A. Send the *Lectio Divina* Essay home with your students to read with their parents or on their own. You may also read it together in class before your students leave for summer vacation to help them understand the steps of *Lectio Divina*.
- B. Give your students the *Lectio Divina* Guide to use over summer vacation. Challenge them to read the Sunday Gospel every week and to spend a few minutes praying with it using this guide.
- C. Have a great summer!

# *Lectio Divina* Essay (Middle and Upper Elementary)

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**Directions:** Read about how to pray with *Lectio Divina*.

*Lectio Divina* means “Divine Reading.” It is an ancient form of praying with Scripture. Many still pray in this way today. When praying with *Lectio Divina*, we listen to the Word of God in Scripture. We think about how God’s Word applies to our own lives. We talk to God in prayer and then let God speak to us in silence.

There are four steps to *Lectio Divina*. In Latin, they are *Lectio*, *Meditatio*, *Oratio*, and *Contemplatio*, or reading, mediation, prayer, and contemplation.

## ***Lectio:***

*Lectio* means “reading.” Here, we read to listen as if God is speaking to us. This means we should read the words of Scripture slowly and carefully. The goal is not to read as much as we can, but for the words to be meaningful to us. A couple of verses is better than a lot of them. It’s even better to read the Scripture out loud or have someone read to you. It is also helpful to read the Scripture multiple times.



***Meditatio:***

*Meditatio* means “meditation.” Here, we focus on a word or phrase that stood out to us from what we just read. It can be anything that we found interesting, or meaningful. Then, we ask ourselves why it stood out to us? What is God saying to us? Finally, we take a moment to reflect on what God has said to us.

***Oratio:***

*Oratio* means “prayer.” In this third step of *Lectio Divina* it is our turn to talk to God about what He has said to us. Talk to God about what you read and how you feel about it. Speak to Him as if he was there with you. Or, use formal prayers like the Our Father or the Hail Mary.

***Contemplatio:***

*Contemplatio* means “contemplation.” This is hardest of the four steps of *Lectio Divina* because we need to be quiet. Here, in the silence, we sit with God and let Him speak to our hearts. The best way to hear God is to be quiet and listen.

# *Lectio Divina* Guide for Summer

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Summer vacation is a great time to take a break from school. It's finally warm and sunny outside. You can play all day and hang out with your friends. Summer vacation is also a great time to spend some time with God. Just like during the school year, you can read the Sunday Gospel readings and reflect on them! A great way to do that is by using *Lectio Divina*.

Try to read the Sunday Gospel every week during the summer and pray. It only takes a few minutes!

Use the following guide to help you!

## *Lectio*

### **Step 1: Look up this week's Sunday Gospel.**

- You can find the Sunday readings here: [Sunday Readings](#)

### **Step 2: Make the Sign of the Cross and say the following prayer:**

- Lord Jesus, open my mind and heart to your Word. Help me to hear you speak to me. Help me to listen to you. Help me to pray today. Amen.

### **Step 3: Slowly read the Gospel for this week.**

- Try to take in the whole story and understand what is happening.

### **Step 4: Slowly read the Gospel for this week for a second time.**

- Listen carefully for a word or phrase that stands out to you. Write it down.

**Step 5: Slowly read the Gospel for this week for a third time.**

- Listen for the word or phrase that stood out to you. Begin to think about why it stood out to you.

**Meditatio**

**Step 6: Spend a few minutes thinking about the word or phrase that stood out to you.**

- Why do you think you noticed it? How does it make you feel? Can you think of something that God is saying to you through it?

**Oratio**

**Step 7: Spend a few minutes talking to God in prayer.**

- Tell Him what stood out to you. Ask Him to help you hear what He is telling you through it. Tell Him how you feel. Tell Him what is on your mind and heart.

**Contemplatio**

**Step 8: Spend a few minutes sitting in silence. Be with God in the quiet.**

- Let God speak to you. Or, just be peaceful in the quiet.

**Step 9: End with by praying and Our Father. Then, make the Sign of the Cross.**