Journey through Lent
FIFTH SUNDAY OF LENT

Upper and Middle Elementary

Materials
- Handout A: Gospel Reading for March 21, 2021
- Handout B: Take Up Your Cross
- Purple construction paper or cardstock
- Scissors
- Markers

Learning Goals
In the Gospel for the fifth Sunday of Lent, Jesus reminds us once again that to be His follower means following Him to the Cross. In this lesson, students will reflect on how being a faithful Christian can be hard, and contemplate how they can take up their own crosses and follow Jesus.

Gospel Reflection
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.

Activity
A. Have your students read Handout B: Take Up Your Cross and answer the reflection questions. When finished, call on students to share and discuss some of the ways that being a faithful Christian can be hard.
B. Distribute to each student a piece of purple construction paper or cardstock. Have your students draw and cut out a cross. Then, have students write in marker on the vertical beam, “I Will Carry,” and on the horizontal beam, “My Cross.” Students may then decorate the other side of their cross cut-out with images of Jesus and Lent.
C. Have your students place their cross somewhere they will see it every day during the rest of Lent: as a bookmark in their textbook, taped to their locker, hung on their refrigerator at home, and so forth. Challenge them that every time they look at the cross they made to be reminded of their Lenten sacrifice and to do something intentional that day to follow Jesus.
Handout A: Gospel Reading for March 21, 2021

1. His suffering, Crucifixion, and Death on the Cross.

2. “Amen, amen, I say to you, unless a grain of wheat falls to the ground and dies, it remains just a grain of wheat; but if it dies, it produces much fruit.” A grain of wheat is the seed from which a new wheat plant will grow and bear fruit. When a seed is planted, it “dies,” or, stops being a seed and grows into a plant. The old “seed” is no more, in place of the new plant that will bear fruit. Much like wheat, if we want to bear fruit in our own lives, that is, do good works according to God’s will, we must deny ourselves and be willing to “die.” Our “old selves” must pass away and be replaced with a new person in Christ, who is obedient to the will of God. This teaching reminds us of Baptism, in which we die to our old selves so that we may rise up a new creation in Christ.

3. “I have glorified it and will glorify it again.” God has glorified His name through creation and He will glorify it again through the Passion and Resurrection of Jesus.

4. In a special way, we are called to live like Jesus during Lent, and so, we sacrifice, we deny ourselves, and we love and serve others during Lent. Those who are tied up in earthly concerns and pleasures are not open to receiving God's love and living the life He calls us to, that of serving Jesus.

5. This Gospel calls us to be a servant of God – to keep Jesus’ commandments, love Him, and love our neighbor. Jesus promises that He will always be with those who serve Him.