Journey through Lent

FIVE LESSONS for April 2019

Upper and Middle Elementary
Journey through Lent
FIFTH SUNDAY OF LENT

Upper and Middle Elementary

Materials
- Handout A: Gospel Reading for Sunday April 7, 2019
- Handout B: Acts of Penance

Learning Goals
In this week's Gospel passage, the Pharisees bring a woman caught in the act of adultery before Jesus to test His application of the Law so that they might have charges to bring against Him. As the crowd is about to stone her to death for her sin, as was allowed by the law, Jesus turns the tables on the crowd and asks for those without sin to throw the first stone. As the crowd one by one leaves, Jesus forgives the woman her sins and calls her to sin no more. In this lesson, students will contemplate their own sinfulness and consider acts of penance they can make in their own lives.

Gospel Reflection
A. Have students read the Gospel passage, or read it aloud to them, 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 students have finished.

Activity
A. Have students read and complete the “Acts of Penance” activity.
B. Conclude by creating a prayerful atmosphere in your classroom by turning down the lights, displaying sacred art, and lighting a candle if possible. Play some soft instrumental music as well. Have your students take some time to reflect upon the examination of conscience. Consider prayerfully reading this aloud to your students as they reflect and read along. Encourage your students to receive the Sacrament of Reconciliation in these remaining weeks of Lent. If possible, invite your parish priest to hear student confessions.
A Reading from the Gospel of John 8:1-11: A Woman Caught in Adultery

Jesus went to the Mount of Olives. But early in the morning he arrived again in the temple area, and all the people started coming to him, and he sat down and taught them. Then the scribes and the Pharisees brought a woman who had been caught in adultery and made her stand in the middle. They said to him, “Teacher, this woman was caught in the very act of committing adultery. Now in the law, Moses commanded us to stone such women. So what do you say?” They said this to test him, so that they could have some charge to bring against him.

Jesus bent down and began to write on the ground with his finger. But when they continued asking him, he straightened up and said to them, “Let the one among you who is without sin be the first to throw a stone at her.” Again he bent down and wrote on the ground. And in response, they went away one by one, beginning with the elders. So he was left alone with the woman before him. Then Jesus straightened up and said to her, “Woman, where are they? Has no one condemned you?” She replied, “No one, sir.” Then Jesus said, “Neither do I condemn you. Go, and from now on do not sin any more.”

1. What was Jesus doing in the Temple area?

2. Whom did the scribes and Pharisees bring to Jesus?

3. What question did the scribes and Pharisees ask of Jesus to test Him?

4. In response, what does Jesus do first? What does He then say?
5. How did the crowd respond to Jesus?

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6. Does Jesus condemn the woman for her sin? What does He tell her to do?

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Reflection Question

Some scholars suggest that when Jesus wrote in the ground with His finger, He was writing out the sins of the people in the gathered crowd. This parable shows us that we do not need to be afraid of going to Confession. Jesus already knows our sins and He does not condemn us for them. What is important is that we recognize our sins and bring them to Jesus so that we can receive His mercy and forgiveness and be reconciled to the Church.

What have your past experiences with the Sacrament of Reconciliation been like? How can you prepare your own heart to better receive the Sacrament of forgiveness and mercy?

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In this Gospel story, Jesus forgives the sins of the woman caught in adultery. Our culture often points to this Gospel as an example of Jesus’ unconditional love for everyone. What is often missed, however, is perhaps equally important as Jesus’ forgiveness: Jesus tells the woman to go and sin no more. We are called to not only accept forgiveness for our sins, but to do all that we can to avoid sin in our lives. Jesus calls us to change and to conversion. He calls us to leave behind our sinful ways and live in the freedom from sin that only He can offer.

In this Lenten season and Year of Mercy, we are asked to make various acts of penance, to take action to make up for our sins. As we have learned already, one meaningful way we can do this is by fasting. The bishops of the United States said this of fasting:

"Fasting, a very special form of penance, and Jesus' second call, has been a consistent part of our Catholic tradition. Fasting assists us in getting our own house in order. All of us have to deal with areas of servitude, whether in regard to smoking or alcohol consumption, misused sexuality, uncontrolled gambling, psychological hang-ups, spiritual obsessions, use of stimulants, immoderate use of the Internet, excessive amounts of television watching, or preoccupations with other forms of entertainment. By fasting and self-denial, by living lives of moderation, we have more energy to devote to God's purposes and a better self-esteem that helps us to be more concerned with the well-being of others."

1. What reasons do the bishops give for the importance of fasting?

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2. Why do you think it is so hard for us to fast?

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3. What are three specific ways that you can fast during the remainder of this Lenten season?

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An Examination of Conscience for Children

(Taken from USCCB.org)

Responsibilities to God

- Have I prayed every day?
- Have I prayed my morning prayers and night prayers?
- Have I prayed with my parents and family?
- Have I been moody and rebellious about praying and going to church on Sunday?
- Have I asked the Holy Spirit to help me whenever I have been tempted to sin?
- Have I asked the Holy Spirit to help me do what is right?

Responsibilities to others

- Have I been obedient and respectful to my parents?
- Have I lied or been deceitful to them or to others?
- Have I been arrogant, stubborn, or rebellious?
- Have I talked back to parents, teachers, or other adults?
- Have I pouted and been moody?
- Have I been selfish toward my parents, my brothers and sisters, my teachers, or my friends and schoolmates?
- Have I gotten angry at them? Have I hit anyone?
- Have I held grudges or not forgiven others?
- Have I treated other children with respect, or have I made fun of them and called them names?
- Have I used bad language?
- Have I stolen anything? Have I returned it?
- Have I performed my responsibilities, such as homework and household chores?
- Have I been helpful and affectionate toward my family?
- Have I been kind and generous with my friends?

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Handout A: Gospel Reading for Sunday April 7, 2019

1. He was teaching the crowds that came to Him.

2. A woman who had been caught in adultery.

3. What did Jesus have to say about the Law of Moses that commanded them to stone a woman such as the one they brought to Him, who had been caught in adultery.

4. He bent down and wrote in the ground with His finger. He said “Let the one among you who is without sin be the first to throw a stone at her.”

5. They went away, one by one.

6. He does not condemn her for her sin. He tells her to “not sin anymore.”
Journey through Lent
Palm Sunday

All Grades

Materials
- Christ’s Passion in Sacred Art PowerPoint (available here: SophiaOnline.org/PassionSacredArt)
- The text of the Sunday Gospel (available at SophiaOnline.org/PalmSunday)

Learning Goals
The Gospel for Palm Sunday contains the entire Passion narrative. When we hear it proclaimed, we are meant to journey with Christ as He takes up His Cross and gives His life for us. In this lesson, students will meditate on Jesus’ Passion through the words of the Gospel and sacred art.

Gospel Reflection
The Gospel reading this week is the Passion narrative from Luke 22:14–23:56 (middle and upper elementary students). The abridged version of the Passion narrative is from Luke 23:1–49. Read both versions at SophiaOnline.org/PalmSunday.

Activity
A. First, download Christ’s Passion in Sacred Art PowerPoint available for free at the following link: SophiaInstituteforTeachers.org/lent-supplement.

B. Create a prayerful atmosphere in your classroom or, if possible, take your students to a chapel.

Activity (continued)

D. For lower elementary students: Read aloud to your students the abridged version of the Gospel reading (Luke 23:1-49).

E. Project the images of Christ’s Passion from Christ’s Passion in Sacred Art PowerPoint as you read through the account of the Passion. Noted next to each image is a line from the Gospel reading that indicates when to begin projecting that new image.

› For lower elementary students, begin the PowerPoint at slide number 7.

F. Give students a few minutes of silence when each new image is projected to allow reflection on it in their own hearts.

G. For middle and upper elementary students: When finished, have students choose one of the images that stood out to them and write a brief paragraph about what God might be speaking to them through it.

H. For lower elementary students: Ask your students to share which moment from the Passion narrative and/or which painting stood out to them the most. Project again the images from the PowerPoint as students reference them. Ask your students what about these moments and paintings in particular stood out to them and why they think so.
# Journey through Lent

## Triduum

### Upper and Middle Elementary

### Materials
- Handout A: What Is Triduum?
- Handout B: The Last Supper

### Learning Goals
Triduum is the shortest liturgical season in the Church year. It comprises three days from the evening of Holy Thursday through the evening of Easter Sunday. During this time, we remember and celebrate the very events of our salvation: Christ's Last Supper and Institution of the Eucharist and the ordained priesthood, and His Passion, Death, and Resurrection. In this lesson, students will learn about Triduum and reflect on the Last Supper with sacred art and Scripture.

### Activity
A. Have students read the information on Handout A: What Is Triduum?. Then, have your students answer the questions, or discuss them together as a class.

B. Have students complete Part 1 from the Handout B: The Last Supper activity. Make markers and/or colored pencils available for students to add their drawing to the painting The Last Supper by Vicente Juan Macip. When they have finished their drawings, show students the original painting, located at the following link: SophiaOnline.org/TheLastSupperMacip.

C. Then, have your students complete Part 2 from Handout B by reading the story of the Last Supper from Luke 22:14-20 and answering the questions.
What Is Triduum?

Directions: Read about Triduum. Then answer the questions.

**What is Triduum?**
Triduum is the shortest season of the liturgical year – a total of three days! In fact, the word Triduum is Latin for “the three days.” It is the most solemn season and the highest point of the entire liturgical year. During the three days of Triduum we remember and celebrate the events that won our very salvation.

Triduum begins with the evening Mass of the Lord’s Supper on Holy Thursday, and ends with Evening Prayer on Easter Sunday. It includes the Celebration of the Lord’s Passion and Adoration of the Holy Cross on Good Friday, the Easter Vigil in the evening of Holy Saturday, and the celebration of Mass on Easter Sunday. Even though there is a lot going on during Triduum, in reality, everything from the beginning of Mass on Holy Thursday evening to the end of Mass at the Easter Vigil on Holy Saturday night makes up one single liturgical celebration.

**Holy Thursday**
On Holy Thursday we celebrate the origin of two Sacraments. During the Last Supper Jesus instituted the Eucharist. For the first time, Jesus took ordinary bread and wine and changed them into His true Body and Blood, Soul and Divinity. It is also at the Last Supper that Jesus made His Apostles the first priests. He gave them the authority to celebrate the Eucharist when He said “do this in memory of me.” During the Last Supper Jesus also washed the feet of the Apostles, giving them an example of humble service to follow in their own ministry.

We honor both of these Sacraments during the Mass of the Lord’s Supper on Holy Thursday evening, which marks the beginning of Triduum. During this Mass the bishop or priest washes the feet of twelve people from the congregation. This symbolized Jesus washing the feet of His Apostles. We recall in a special way institution of the Eucharist during the Liturgy of the Eucharist. At the end of the Mass, the bishop or priest does not offer the usual concluding blessing. Instead, the faithful are invited to stay and worship our Lord in the Eucharist during Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament, which lasts into the night. A concluding blessing will not be offered again until the end of the Easter
Vigil, signifying the one liturgical celebration that extends throughout Triduum.

Also of importance, earlier in the day on Holy Thursday, every local bishop celebrates a special Mass with the priests of his diocese to honor the institution of the priesthood. At that Mass, the bishop will bless all of the chrism oil for the next year. This holy oil will be used in the Sacraments of Baptism, Confirmation, and Anointing of the Sick in every parish throughout the diocese.

**Good Friday and Holy Saturday**

Good Friday is the one day in the entire year that no Masses are offered anywhere in the world. Instead, we focus our attention on the remembrance of Christ’s suffering and death on the Cross. It is Good Friday nearly two-thousand years ago that Jesus was put on trial, sentenced to death, beaten and flogged, made to carry His own cross, stripped of His clothing, nailed to the cross, and freely gave His life for the salvation of all souls.

The main liturgy on Good Friday is the Celebration of the Lord’s Passion. While not a Mass, this liturgy includes a Liturgy of the Word, adoration of the Cross, and a communion service with hosts that were consecrated at the Holy Thursday Mass. Adoration, or veneration, of the Cross is a unique form of Catholic devotion. The faithful approach the altar where a cross has been placed (or where an extraordinary minister stands holding a cross), and perform some act of reverence, usually kissing the foot of the Cross.

From the end of the Celebration of the Lord’s Passion, typically around 3 PM, the time that Jesus died, through Holy Saturday, there are no more liturgical celebrations until the Easter Vigil. Our Lord’s body has been placed in the tomb and He has descended to the dead. As a Church, we are at the Lord’s tomb. During this time, we meditate on the events of Christ’s Passion and Death, and we await
His Resurrection, just as the Apostles, Mary Magdalene, and His mother Mary did two thousand years ago.

The Easter Vigil and Easter Sunday
The Church’s memorial and celebration of the events of our salvation during Triduum reaches its peak at the Easter Vigil. Taking place at nightfall on the evening of Holy Saturday, the Easter Vigil marks the beginning of Easter. The Vigil begins with a Service of Light. Typically, the Church is completely dark. The priest lights and blesses a fire outside of the Church and a new Paschal Candle is presented, blessed, and lit from the flame. The lit Paschal Candle is then processed into the Church as other candles are lit from this one flame, brightening the once dark Church. This light represents Jesus, who is the Light of the World, returning to life.

The Easter Vigil concludes with a Liturgy of the Word. Up to nine readings are proclaimed that recount God’s saving actions throughout Salvation History. We also sing once again the Gloria and the Alleluia, joyful songs of praise to God that we have refrained from singing throughout Lent.

Then, those who have been preparing to enter into the Catholic Church and receive full communion with the Church receive the Sacraments of Baptism and Confirmation. This great and joyful moment culminates with a sprinkling rite in which the entire congregation is blessed with holy water and renews their baptismal promises. The Mass then continues with the Liturgy of the Eucharist. Throughout, we pray special prayers recalling and joyously celebrating all of Christ’s saving acts and His triumphant Resurrection from the dead.

The Vigil concludes with an antiphon that we repeat at the end of every Mass throughout the Easter season:

Celebrant: The Mass is ended, go in peace, alleluia, alleluia.
Congregation: Thanks be to God, alleluia, alleluia.

The Easter Sunday Masses continue the joyful celebration of Jesus’ Resurrection. Easter is not a single day, however, but an entire season, which lasts for seven weeks, or fifty days. It concludes with Pentecost, when the Holy Spirit descended upon the Apostles and filled them with His gifts, enabling them to go out and proclaim the Gospel to the whole world.
1. What are the five most important liturgical events during Triduum?
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2. Which two Sacraments’ origins do we honor and celebrate on Holy Thursday?
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3. What do Bishops do on Holy Thursday morning?
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4. What happened on the first Good Friday?
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5. What happens during veneration of the Cross?
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6. What does the procession of the Paschal Candle at the Easter Vigil represent?
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7. What is recounted by the various readings at the Easter Vigil?
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8. What three Sacraments are celebrated to bring people who have been preparing for it into full communion with the Catholic Church?
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9. When does the Easter season end?
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10. Have you ever been to one of the Triduum liturgies? Which one? What was it like?

Or:

If you haven't been to one of the Triduum liturgies before, which one would you most like to go to? Why?
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The Last Supper

Directions: Look for the items below in the painting *The Last Supper* by Vicente Juan Macip and answer the questions.

Part 1: Complete the painting by drawing your own version of Jesus at the Last Supper in the white space. In the original version of this painting, Jesus is holding the Eucharist and giving it to His Apostles for the first time. Sitting on the table in front of Jesus is a chalice that holds His Precious Blood. There is also a halo surrounding Jesus’ head. Be sure your drawing includes all of these things.

Part 2: Read the story of the Last Supper from Luke 22:14-20. Then, answer the questions:

When the hour came, he took his place at table with the apostles. He said to them, “I have eagerly desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer, for, I tell you, I shall not eat it [again] until there is fulfillment in the kingdom of God. Then he took a cup, gave thanks, and said, “Take this and share it among yourselves; for I tell you [that] from this time on I shall not drink of the fruit of the vine until the kingdom of God comes.” Then he took the bread, said the blessing, broke it, and gave it to them, saying, “This is my body, which will be given for you; do this in memory of me.” And likewise the cup after they had eaten, saying, “This cup is the new covenant in my blood, which will be shed for you.”

1. How does the painting (and your drawing of Jesus) illustrate this Gospel story?

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2. What does Jesus say when He gives His Apostles the Eucharist for the first time?

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3. What in this Gospel story tells you that Jesus made the Apostles the first priests?

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4. How would you describe the way the Apostles are reacting to Jesus giving them the Eucharist in the painting?

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5. Imagine that you were there at the Last Supper with the Apostles. How would you have felt when Jesus gave you the Eucharist?

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**Answer Key**

**Handout A: What Is Triduum?**

1. Mass of the Lord’s Supper on Holy Thursday, Celebration of the Lord’s Passion and Adoration of the Holy Cross on Good Friday, the Easter Vigil on Holy Saturday, Easter Sunday Masses, and Evening Prayer on Easter Sunday.

2. The Eucharist and Holy Orders.

3. They will bless all of the chrism oil for the next year.

4. Jesus was put on trial, sentenced to death, beaten and flogged, made to carry His own cross, stripped of His clothing, nailed to the cross, and freely gave His life for the salvation of all souls.

5. The faithful approach the altar where a cross has been placed (or where an extraordinary minister stands holding a cross), and perform some act of reverence, usually kissing the foot of the Cross.

6. Jesus, the Light of the World, returning to life.

7. God’s saving actions throughout Salvation History.

8. Baptism, Confirmation, Eucharist (the Sacraments of Initiation).

9. Pentecost, fifty days after Easter.

10. Accept reasoned answers.

**Handout B: The Last Supper Look and Find**

1. Accept reasoned answers.

2. “This is my body, which will be given for you; do this in memory of me,” and, “This cup is the new covenant in my blood, which will be shed for you.”

3. Jesus said to the Apostles, “do this in memory of me.”

4. Accept reasoned answers.

5. Accept reasoned answers.
The Joy of Easter
EASTER SUNDAY

Upper and Middle Elementary

Materials
- Handout A: Gospel Reading for Sunday April 21, 2019
- Handout B: A Good Lent
- Handout C: Celebrate Christ's Resurrection

Learning Goals
In the Gospel for Easter Sunday, we read about Mary Magdalene and two Apostles finding Jesus' tomb empty on the first Easter morning. In this lesson, students will reflect on their Lenten Journey and celebrate the most important feast in the life of the Church, Christ's Resurrection.

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. Review and discuss the correct answers when finished.

B. Or assign your students to read the Gospel passage at home with their parents over Easter Vacation and discuss the focus questions together.

Activity
A. Have your students complete Handout B: A Good Lent 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. You may also assign students to complete the activity at home with their parents over Easter vacation.

B. Have your students take home Handout C: Celebrate Christ's Resurrection during their Easter vacation. Encourage them to consider celebrating Christ's Resurrection using the ways listed. Then, after you return from Easter vacation, consider having students share stories about the various ways they celebrated Easter.
A Reading from the Gospel of John 20:1-9: The Empty Tomb

On the first day of the week, Mary of Magdala came to the tomb early in the morning, while it was still dark, and saw the stone removed from the tomb. So she ran and went to Simon Peter and to the other disciple whom Jesus loved, and told them, “They have taken the Lord from the tomb, and we don’t know where they put him.” So Peter and the other disciple went out and came to the tomb. They both ran, but the other disciple ran faster than Peter and arrived at the tomb first; he bent down and saw the burial cloths there, but did not go in. When Simon Peter arrived after him, he went into the tomb and saw the burial cloths there, and the cloth that had covered his head, not with the burial cloths but rolled up in a separate place. Then the other disciple also went in, the one who had arrived at the tomb first, and he saw and believed. For they did not yet understand the Scripture that he had to rise from the dead.

1. Who was the first to see the empty tomb? How did this person react?

2. Who were the next two people to visit the empty tomb?
3. Summarize what happened during their visit to the tomb. What is significant about their visit in regards to helping us understand the structure of the Church?

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4. What would have been your reaction if you witnessed this event? Explain.

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**Directions:** The long journey of Lent has ended! As a Church we have prepared our hearts to receive the gift of salvation Jesus offers to us. We have entered deeply into His Passion and Death, and have stood at entrance to His tomb. And now, after these long weeks of penance and contemplation, we encounter Jesus’ Resurrection, His victory over sin and death! Alleluia! He is Risen!

Remember the three pillars of Lent: almsgiving, fasting, and prayer. Think back over these past weeks of Lent: how did your Lent go? Did you help the poor and needy in some way? Did you fast? Did you spend more time in prayers? Take a look at the assessment below and honestly rate your Lent. Then, answer the reflection questions.

1. Overall, my Lenten journey was successful. Agree/Disagree
2. I chose to give something up for Lent. Agree/Disagree
3. I was successful in giving up what I chose for all of Lent. Agree/Disagree
4. I fasted on Ash Wednesday and Good Friday. Agree/Disagree
5. I did not eat meat on Fridays during Lent. Agree/Disagree
6. I helped others in some way during Lent. Agree/Disagree
7. I gave money to the poor sometime during Lent. Agree/Disagree
8. I prayed more often during Lent. Agree/Disagree
9. I prayed in a different way than I normally do during Lent. Agree/Disagree
10. I read the Bible more often during Lent. Agree/Disagree
11. I received the Sacrament of Penance and Reconciliation at least once during Lent. Agree/Disagree
12. I feel renewed after my Lenten journey. Agree/Disagree
13. I feel like I have a stronger relationship with God after my Lenten journey.

Agree/Disagree

14. I have a deeper understanding and appreciation for Jesus’ sacrifice for my Lenten Journey.

Agree/Disagree

15. I understand why Lent is important to my faith.

Agree/Disagree

**Reflection Questions:**

1. What was your most meaningful experience this Lent? Why?

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2. What was the most difficult part of your Lenten journey? Why?

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3. What is one thing that you did this Lent that you would like to continue to do now that Lent is over? Why?

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Celebrate Christ’s Resurrection!

Jesus is Risen! Alleluia! During your Easter break, try some of the following ideas to celebrate Christ’s Resurrection at home with your family and friends.

1. Re-read the Gospel story of Christ’s Resurrection together with your family and then talk about what Easter is and why it matters whether or not Jesus rose from the dead.
2. Show your love for your parents or sibling by doing an extra chore around the house without being asked.
3. Spend some time outside and reflect on the beauty of God’s creation.
4. Tell a friend or family member who doesn’t go to Church with you about Jesus and how He died and rose again for us.
5. Draw a picture of the Risen Jesus on Easter Sunday and display it in your home.
6. Watch a movie with your family about a Bible story such as The Ten Commandments, Prince of Egypt, or Jesus of Nazareth. Afterwards, discuss how the movie celebrated God’s saving actions in human history. What was your favorite part of the movie? Why?
7. Create a list of ten things that you thank God for. Read the list every night before bed and tell God how thankful you are for the good things He has given you.
8. Spend extra time in prayer talking with God.
9. Read the different Gospel accounts of the Resurrection of Jesus. They can be found in the following passages: Matthew 28, Mark 16, Luke 24, and John 20–21. Think about how the four stories of Jesus’ Resurrection are similar and how they are different. What did you learn that surprised you? What did you read that challenged you? Imagine that you were one of the eleven Apostles when the Risen Jesus first appeared to them. What would you have felt? What would you have though? How would you have reacted? Think about how your life is different today because of Jesus’ Resurrection. Say a prayer to Jesus and thank Him for all that He has done for you.
10. Consider attending an Easter Vigil Mass and rejoice with the new Christians who are entering into the New Life Jesus gives us through Baptism.

And of course...go to Easter Sunday Mass with your family!
Answer Key

Handout A: Gospel Reading for Sunday April 21, 2018

1. Mary of Magdala. She ran to share the news with the Peter and John.

2. Peter and John. Although John is not mentioned by name, tradition tells us that the disciple who is referred to as: “The Disciple whom Jesus loved” throughout the Gospel of John is John.

3. Peter and John both ran to the tomb but John got there first. Even though John arrived first, he waited for Peter to enter before he did. This fact points to the fact that Peter had a primacy among the Twelve from the very beginning. It is Scriptural support for Peter as the first Pope and that the Church is hierarchical.

4. Accept reasoned answers.
Journey through Lent
SECOND SUNDAY OF EASTER; SUNDAY OF DIVINE MERCY

Upper and Middle Elementary

Materials
- Handout A: Sunday Reading
- Handout B: Excerpts from the Diary of St. Faustina

Learning Goals
This week concludes the Octave of Easter with the great feast of Divine Mercy. While the Octave comes to an end, we continue in the Easter Season. This Sunday we reflect on and rejoice in the beauty that is the mercy of God.

Activity
Note: You may send this week's activities home for students to complete with their parents.

A. Have students read the Gospel passage for the week.
B. Project or show an image of the Divine Mercy painting, such as the one here: SophiaOnline.org/DivineMercy.
C. Discuss with your students how the way we see Jesus in this painting connects to the Gospel reading this month.
D. Have students read the excerpts from St. Faustina's Diary, and then answer the questions. Call on students to share some of their responses when they have finished.
A Reading from the Gospel of John 20:19-31: 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.”

Thomas, called Didymus, one of the Twelve, was not with them when Jesus came. So the other disciples said to him, “We have seen the Lord.” But he said to them, “Unless I see the mark of the nails in his hands and put my finger into the nailmarks and put my hand into his side, I will not believe.”

Now a week later his disciples were again inside and Thomas was with them. Jesus came, although the doors were locked, and stood in their midst and said, “Peace be with you.” Then he said to Thomas, “Put your finger here and see my hands, and bring your hand and put it into my side, and do not be unbelieving, but believe.” Thomas answered and said to him, “My Lord and my God!” Jesus said to him, “Have you come to believe because you have seen me? Blessed are those who have not seen and have believed.”

Now, Jesus did many other signs in the presence of his disciples that are not written in this book. But these are written that you may come to believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that through this belief you may have life in his name.
Directions: After reading the Sunday Gospel for the week, read the excerpts from the diary of St. Faustina. Then answer the questions.

“My Heart overflows with great mercy for souls (...). If only they could understand that I am the best of Fathers to them and that it is for them that the Blood and Water flowed from My Heart as from a fount overflowing with mercy. For them I dwell in the tabernacle as King of Mercy. I desire to bestow My graces upon souls, but they do not want to accept them (...). Oh, how indifferent are souls to so much goodness, to so many proofs of love! (...). They have time for everything, but they have no time to come to Me for graces” (Diary 367).

“Tell sinners that no one shall escape My Hand; if they run away from My Merciful Heart, they will fall into My Just Hands. Tell sinners that I am always waiting for them, that I listen intently to the beating of their heart... When will it beat for Me? Write that I am speaking to them through their remorse of conscience, through their failures and sufferings, through thunderstorms, through the voice of the Church. And if they bring all My graces to naught, I begin to be angry with them, leaving them alone and giving them what they want” (Diary 1728).

“This firm resolution to become a saint is extremely pleasing to Me. I bless your efforts and will give you opportunities to sanctify yourself. Be watchful that you lose no opportunity that My providence offers you for sanctification. If you do not succeed in taking advantage of an opportunity, do not lose your peace, but humble yourself profoundly before Me and, with great trust, immerse yourself completely in My mercy. In this way, you gain more than you have lost, because more favor is granted to a humble soul than the soul itself asks for...” (Diary 1361).

Conversation Questions

1. Why is reflecting on the infinite mercy of God so fitting a conclusion to the Easter Octave?

___________________________________________________________________________________________________
___________________________________________________________________________________________________

2. How is this week’s Gospel appropriate for the Feast of Divine Mercy?

___________________________________________________________________________________________________
___________________________________________________________________________________________________
3. Which Sacrament is instituted in this week’s Gospel passage? In what verse(s) is this shown?


4. Can you relate to St. Thomas the Apostle? Explain. How does St. Thomas’ experience relate to this Feast of Divine Mercy?


5. How do the words taken from St. Faustina’s Diary relate to the Gospel passage?


6. What words or phrases from the excerpts in St. Faustina’s Diary are most interesting or important to you? Explain.


7. How can we seek out and receive God’s mercy in our own lives?


8. What are the misunderstandings, behaviors, or tendencies that most often keep people from trusting in God’s mercy? How can these obstacles be overcome?


