

Journey to Pascha

Introduction



During Great Lent we prepare ourselves for the Great Feast of Pascha. In this unit we will be studying the events that we celebrate during Holy Week and Pascha. Included in this unit are icons, activities, and both texts and explanations of services and prayers.

The unit covers many Bible stories, but sometimes the source from which you are reading or telling the story will not be an actual Bible. When you are using another source, have a Bible at hand (or, preferably, copy the story and put the copy in the open Bible) to show that it is a Bible story. Of course, every classroom should have Bibles.

Journey to Pascha

Each session will focus on a different theme that is part of our Journey to Pascha. We will begin with the story of Lazarus, whom Jesus raised from the dead, and continue with our celebration of Jesus' joyful Entrance into Jerusalem. In the following sessions, we will learn about each day of Holy Week, what Jesus taught His disciples during this time, and what happened to Jesus as He was brought to trial, put to death and buried. Finally, we will celebrate the events that led to His Resurrection from the dead.

Special Notes

Role Plays: Several lessons include role plays, and some include words said by Jesus Christ. If you, the teacher, do not want a child to take the role of Christ, use a narrator to say the words of the Lord.

Gathering for Prayer: We suggest having a gathering place for the class to pray together. You might have a candle, flowers, and the appropriate icon for the lesson. Icons are provided in the Resource Section of each lesson. You can reproduce these and put them on backing and then display them on a small stand (like a plate stand.) Of course you can use your own icons, which is why in some lessons the Resource Section lists icons as "optional."

Preparing Your Lessons: Lessons in this unit include themes, objectives, resources attached to the lesson and step-by-step procedure, as well as a list of materials. In some lessons, the Materials section will give you special notes for lesson preparation. These enable you, as you prepare by reading through the lesson and getting materials ready, to be aware of any special preparations you'll need to make.

Timing Your Lessons: Because our church schools vary widely in the time they have for teaching, we have not timed the procedural steps of these lessons specifically. You are free to adapt, shorten or expand the material, or to spread it over more than one session.

Palm Cross Activity: A great activity, suitable for older students, making a palm cross.

Resources for Every Age

The following resources can be found within the lessons of this unit, or on the Department of Christian Education website (dce.o.ca.org)

- Liturgical texts and resources for Holy Week
- Biblical texts, charts and guides to using the Bible
- Icons, graphics and coloring pages for school and home use
- Short musical settings for hymns and verses
- Brief reviews of good books for home and classroom reading
- Activities and outreach projects for families and mixed generation groups
- Information on teaching skills, ideas for classroom use, human development patterns, writing projects, etc.

Highlights of individual lessons in this unit (upper levels) include:

- **Lazarus Saturday: Jesus raises His friend from the dead.**
Mary and Martha plead with the Lord to come quickly to heal their brother Lazarus. Jesus delays his return until Lazarus is dead four days. Martha confesses her belief in Jesus as the Christ, the Son of God. Jesus says: "I am the resurrection and the life; he who believes in me, though he die, yet shall he live..." Jesus has the power to raise the dead, and raises Lazarus. Jesus is the Resurrection and Life of all people.
- **Palm Sunday: Jesus Enters Jerusalem as a King!**
Jesus enters Jerusalem and is honored as a King. The children greet Jesus waving palms and branches, crying out "Hosanna!" The people shout their praises to Him: "Hosanna! Blessed is He who comes in the Name of the Lord! Hosanna in the highest!" In our celebration of the feast, the palms we hold are a sign of our allegiance to Christ.
- **Holy Monday, Tuesday & Wednesday: Parables of the Bridegroom, Last Judgment and the "End"**
God has made us stewards of His world, to serve and care for it. He calls us to bear fruit by using the talents He has given us. Christ will come to judge the world, and He will come at Midnight, at an hour when we least expect Him. He will come as a Bridegroom, to take us, the Church, as His Bride. God calls us to be prepared, for only those who are ready will enter His Kingdom. The Bridegroom Matins.
- **Holy Thursday: The Supper, Anointing, and Betrayal of Christ**
A woman anoints Christ's feet with oil, as a sign of love, as well as a preparation for His burial. Jesus' enemies seek to kill Him and Judas agrees to betray his Master. Jesus shows the disciples how they must serve others, by washing the feet of His own disciples, and shares a Passover meal with them. He blesses bread and a cup of wine, saying "Do this in remembrance of Me." Jesus teaches the disciples about love, and promises to send them a Comforter, the Holy Spirit, after He is gone. The Mystical Supper
- **Holy Friday: The Trial and Crucifixion of Christ.**
Jesus takes the disciples to a place to pray and tells them that one of them shall betray Him and the others will deny Him and run away. Jesus is arrested and brought before the chief priests and scribes who sentence Him to death for equating Himself with God. He is brought before Pilate, the Roman governor, and then to Herod, to be sentenced to death and killed. Jesus is put to death on a Cross, along with two thieves. Mary, Jesus' mother, and the women followers who served Him stand by the

Cross until the end. Joseph of Arimathea and Nicodemus take Jesus' body down from the Cross, prepare it for burial and lay Him in a new tomb. The Death & Burial of Christ.

- **Holy Saturday & Pascha: Descent into Hades & Resurrection**

Jesus died in order to give us new life! Through His death on the Cross, Jesus defeated the power of death. Having died as a man, Jesus descended to Hades, the place of death, to destroy death and bring life to those in the tombs. Jesus' Life was more powerful than death. At the moment of His death, the earth shook, the tombs were opened and many bodies of the saints were raised. By His Resurrection from the dead, Jesus, who is the Christ-God, gives new life to all who believe in Him and do His will. Although we will die, we know that "death can no longer hold men captive," for when Christ comes again, all those in the tombs will be raised from the dead. Christ the Lord of all will come to judge the living and the dead, and grant life eternal in the world to come, to all who believe in Him as King and as God. "Christ is Risen! "

Journey to Pascha • Lesson 1



Lazarus Saturday *(Ages 10-12)*

Overview

Jesus' Love Brings Life

Objectives

By the end of this Lesson, learners should be able to:

- Identify Lazarus, Mary and Martha as people whom Jesus loved and who loved Him as a friend
- Describe the raising of Lazarus from the dead
- Relate the Troparion of the feast to the Scripture story

Materials

- Bibles (Note: Activities, such as the Reviewing the Story sheet for this session, as well as quotations, use the Revised Standard Version. We suggest having this version for each student to use, or for 2 or 3 students to share)
- Icon of the Raising of Lazarus
- Copies of the Resource *Reviewing the Story* for groups of 3 or 4 students to share
- Wall charts (simple ones you make) with the words of the Opening Prayer and Closing Prayer. Mount these on the wall to use each time you pray these prayers.
- Small, simple wall calendar of Holy Week (that you make) with the days from Lazarus Saturday to Pascha boxed and labeled. This should be mounted on the wall to look at each week.
- Paper and pencils

Resources

Required Resources

[My Guide to Holy Week and the Feast of Palms](#) (PDF)

[Reviewing the Story \(John 11: 1-43\)](#) (PDF)

[The Raising of Lazarus \(John 11:1-45\)](#) (PDF)

[Lazarus Saturday & Palm Sunday Troparion](#)(HTML)

Optional Resources

[Icon of The Raising of Lazarus](#) (Image)

Procedure

1 Opening Prayer

(Have students stand, for this and for all opening and closing prayers.)

In the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

O Heavenly King, the Comforter, the Spirit of Truth,

Who are everywhere present and fill all things,

Treasury of Blessings and Giver of Life,

Come and abide in us and cleanse us from every impurity,

And save our souls, O Good One.

Use the wall chart you have provided to go over the words as needed. Ask students about the meanings of the following words, or any others they have questions about, and help them understand their meanings:

Passion: the suffering and death of Jesus Christ.

Universal resurrection: Jesus had power to raise Lazarus from the dead. So we know He will keep His promise that we can be with God in His Kingdom, too.

Vanquisher: winner or one who has a victory.

2 Brief Relection on Opening Prayer

Talk with students about the meaning of the phrase “cleanse us from every impurity.” Let them give their ideas about what this phrase means. (Suggestions: This prayer, directed to the Holy Spirit, asks that the Spirit help us overcome sins, bad thoughts, and other things that are painful and bad for us--things that may keep us away from God.)

3 Scripture & Discussion (Part 1)

- **Read with the class the first part of the Gospel for Lazarus Saturday, John 11: 1-27.** *Be sure students understand that this is the day on which we remember Jesus raising His friend Lazarus from the dead. Tell them that in this lesson and the following five lessons you will be talking about Lazarus Saturday and Palm Sunday, and then the days of Holy Week leading to Pascha.*
- **Divide the class into groups of four, Give each group a Bible and pencils and paper. Put the following four questions (not the suggested answers) on the chalkboard, and ask each group to come up with their own answers. Discuss the responses all**

together. Their answers may be somewhat different from those suggested here, but these give basic points that should be emphasized.

- ***Suggested answers are in italics.***

1. How does the first part of the passage tell us that Jesus had real friends who loved Him? *Verses 3 and 5 tell us this.*

2. Why does Jesus wait two days to go to Bethany?

Verse 4 tells us that God's glory will be shown in Lazarus' dying and being raised from the dead. Jesus' words about daylight and night in verse 9 refer to His doing the work He was sent to do at the time ordained, meaning chosen and decided, by His Father. This work is seen by all, being done in the "daytime". The world, therefore, cannot undermine it.

3. What are the disciples afraid of?

Verses 7-10 tell us that Jesus has just recently been stoned and persecuted in the place He now wants to return to.

4. What promise does Jesus make to Martha?

In verse 25 Jesus says, "Though he die yet shall he live." His promise to believers is that though they die to their life on earth, they will be raised to live with God forever.

4 Troparion & Icon of the Feast

- Have students stand. Sing or say together the *Troparion for Lazarus Saturday and Palm Sunday*: Use the chart you created; the words are also used as the Closing Prayer for this lesson.
- Be sure students understand the meaning of certain words in the hymn:
 - ***Passion***: The passion of Christ is His suffering and agony. This is the original meaning of the word.
 - ***Universal resurrection***: All human beings will be raised when Christ comes again.
 - ***Vanquisher***: Conqueror.
- Point out that the words "children with the palms of victory" look ahead to Palm Sunday.
- Look at the icon of the Raising of Lazarus together. Note details such as the grave clothes, and that Mary and Martha are depicted differently from each other. Mary is usually shown with her head bowed, while Martha is looking up or around to see what is happening. In some icons (details can vary slightly from icon to icon) she is holding a handkerchief to her nose! Ask students why they think the sisters are depicted differently. *(This difference reflects the differences between the sisters that Scripture tells us about: Mary was quiet, thoughtful, and willing to sit at home. Martha was more active, talkative, and eager to know what was going on around her. Be sure students understand that Jesus loved and accepted both sisters as they were.)*

5 Scripture & Discussion (Part 2)

Continue with a discussion on the day's Scripture reading (John 11: 28-45):

- **What does Mary say to Jesus that her sister Martha said before?**

In verse 32 she "scolds" Jesus for not having come sooner as Martha did in verse 21.

This ability to speak their minds and even "scold" Jesus shows the comfortable closeness that these sisters had with Him.

- **Why do you think Jesus weeps at Lazarus' tomb?**

Jesus' grief is not only that of a friend, but He grieves as Creator of the universe to see the power of death in His creation.

6 Reviewing the Story

- Divide the class into groups of 3 or 4 and give each group a copy of the Resource: *Reviewing the Story*, and Bibles (Revised Standard Version) to work with.
- Tell them how to do the activity, as explained in the the Answer Key. As noted there, the word for #3 is found in John 10:40, and it is "baptized." The rest of the words are in John 11:1-43.
- You may wish to make this activity a contest to see which group can be first to figure out what the letters spell out. However, if a group figures out what the letters spell before finishing, they should, nevertheless, complete the exercise and fill in each statement.
- Go over the answers together when all the groups have finished.

Have a student mark off Lazarus Saturday on the wall calendar you have provided.

7 Closing Prayer

(Have students stand. Use the wall chart to go over the words. Sing or recite the hymn.) In the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

By raising Lazarus from the dead before Thy passion,
Thou didst confirm the universal resurrection, O Christ God.
Like the children with the palms of victory,
We cry out to Thee, O Vanquisher of death,
Hosanna in the highest!
Blessed is He that comes in the Name of the Lord.

Note: Tell students that at the next session you will look more closely at the "children with the palms of victory" that the words of the hymn describe. Let them tell what they remember about the story of Palm Sunday and Christ entering Jerusalem as a king.

Journey to Pascha • Lesson 2



Palm Sunday (Ages 10-12)

Overview

Christ the King

Objectives

By the end of this Lesson, learners should be able to:

- Tell how Jesus' kingship is different from that of earthly kings
- Describe the scene of Christ's entry into Jerusalem as told in Scripture and shown in the festal icon
- Relate the Scripture story to a few Old Testament prophecies

Materials

- Bibles
- Colored pencils or markers, pencils, paper
- Icon of the Entry of Christ into Jerusalem (Palm Sunday)
- Pictures in books, magazines, from internet clip art or from any source, showing kings in chariots, ornately robed and crowned, or on horses looking magnificent (as a contrast to Christ the King riding humbly on a donkey)
- **For the Review Activity:** An inflated lightweight beach ball (or something else light) that students can throw to each other for the review, which covers this week's and last week's sessions.
- A timer of any kind (one that counts seconds). For each question in the review activity, students will be given 5 seconds to answer.
- Write each of the following questions on a small piece of paper, then fold them up and put them into a basket (or some other container.) Answers and Scripture citations are provided in parentheses here, but should not be put on the papers.

Questions:

1. Where do Mary, Martha, and Lazarus live? (Bethany; John 11:1)
2. Which disciple says that they should all go to Judea with Jesus and die with Him? (Thomas; John 11:16.)
3. How many days had Lazarus been dead when Jesus comes? (Four; John 11: 17)
4. On Palm Sunday Jesus entered what city? (Jerusalem; Matthew 21: 10)
5. On Palm Sunday the crowds shout, " Hosanna to the _____ of _____; (Son, David; Matthew 21:9)
6. Who first said to Jesus, "Lord, if you had been here my brother would not have died"? (Martha; John 11: 21)
7. What did Jesus tell the people at the tomb of Lazarus to do? (Take away the stone that was on it; John 11: 39)

8. What do the people spread on the road as Jesus enters Jerusalem? (Their garments and branches they have cut; Matthew 21: 8)
9. What does Jesus first do when He sees the tomb of Lazarus? (He weeps; John 11: 35)
10. What does Jesus say as He raises Lazarus from the dead? ("Lazarus, come out." John 11: 43)

Resources

Required Resources

[Holy Week Teacher Planning Worksheet](#) (PDF)

[The Feast of Palms: Saturday-Sunday](#) (PDF)

[Entry into Jerusalem](#) (Image)

Optional Resources

[Icon of The Entry Into Jerusalem](#) (Image)

[Palm Sunday Icon](#)

[Palm Sunday: Entry Into Jerusalem](#)

Procedure

1 Opening Prayer

(Have students stand.) In the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

The Troparion (*Tone 1*)

By raising Lazarus from the dead before Thy passion,
Thou didst confirm the universal resurrection, O Christ God.
Like the children, with the palms of victory,
We cry out to Thee, O Vanquisher of Death,
Hosanna in the Highest!
Blessed is He that comes in the Name of the Lord.

Use the wall chart you have provided to go over words, and review meanings as necessary, using the notes from the previous session.

2 Bridging to Scripture

Give each student paper, pencils, and colored pencils or markers. Have them draw or write about what they think it means to be a loyal friend. This could mean either how they would show loyalty, or how they would like someone to show loyalty to them or to others. They might also write or illustrate an actual account of loyalty in their own lives, or create a story about loyalty. Let students share what they have drawn or written if they wish to.

3 Reading Activity

Read together from the Bible the Gospel for Matins of Palm Sunday: Matthew 21: 1-11.

4 Discussion Questions

- Let students give their own answers to the following questions. Suggested answers are offered in parentheses, and these contain some basic points that you can emphasize, but students should also express their own ideas.
- If you had been one of the people along the road in Jerusalem that day, what might have surprised you? *(Jesus was riding humbly on a donkey, not on a horse or in a chariot.) Look together at the icon and at the pictures of magnificent kings you have brought, to show the contrast. Point out the children with palms in the icon, as mentioned in the Troparion.*
- **Note:** *Students might make jokes about the word “ass” in the Scripture passage. Just remind them that its original meaning was the same as “donkey” and drop the subject! We don’t suggest bringing it up yourself; talk about it only if students do bring it up or notice it.*
- Were there differences between Jesus as King and earthly kings? *(The Kingdom Jesus promises is with God in heaven. He was not trying to have power like a king in this world. He taught that we can begin to be part of His Kingdom here and now, but not by gathering worldly power. Instead we must serve others.)*
- *Remind students that Christ’s kingship was prepared for through the whole Old Testament. Read together Zechariah 9:9. Ask: What does Jesus say about these words from a prophet of the Old Testament? (He says that He is fulfilling them--He is the one the words were talking about.)*
- Talk again about loyalty in friends. How many of the people who were shouting “Hosanna” (which means “save us now”) would still be Jesus’ friends at the time of His arrest and trial? *(Some of them would be the same people who would shout to have Him crucified.)*
- Ask: Why do you think some people turned away from Jesus? *(When He turned out not to be a powerful earthly king who would destroy their enemies, they no longer followed Him or gave Him their loyalty.) So Our Lord shared our human experience fully. He had loyal and loving friends like Lazarus, Mary, and Martha. But He also knew that some friends are not loyal. He suffered the disappointments that we sometimes experience.*

5 Review Questions

See the "Materials" section to prepare for this activity. Have ready a Bible, basket of questions, timer, beach ball and pencil and paper for you to keep score.)

Have students stand in two lines, as two teams. Toss a coin, or have each team choose a number between one and ten, to decide which team will go first. Throw the beach ball to one student on

the team going first. The student chooses a question from the basket, and together the team decides on an answer. If the team can answer the question without looking in the Bible, the team gets three points.

If the team needs to check in the Bible to answer the question, they get one point for a correct answer. (If the team can't answer, or answers incorrectly, no points are given.) The time limit for giving each answer is 8 seconds. When the question has been answered, the student with the ball throws to someone on the other team, who then picks a question from the basket and answers or confers in the same way. (No player should get more than one turn unless your group is small. In that case, each player should get a turn, or more than one if necessary. If you have an uneven number of students, one can be a "floater" and stand with the team answering the question each time.)

The winning team will be the one with the most points after all ten questions have been answered. Go over the answers together at the end, helping students find them in the Bible if necessary.

Have a student mark off Palm Sunday on the wall calendar.

6 Closing Prayer

Have students stand. Sing or recite the Troparion.) In the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

The Troparion (*Tone 1*)

By raising Lazarus from the dead before Thy passion,
Thou didst confirm the universal resurrection, O Christ God.
Like the children, with the palms of victory,
We cry out to Thee, O Vanquisher of Death,
Hosanna in the Highest!
Blessed is He that comes in the Name of the Lord.

Ask students: How are we "like the children with the palms of victory"? (*We, too, are preparing to welcome Jesus Christ at Pascha. But we will not abandon Him--instead we will keep vigil and stay with Him by attending the services of Holy Week.*)

Journey to Pascha • Lesson 3



Holy Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday *(Ages 10-12)*

Overview

The Bridegroom Services - Following the Lord

Objectives

By the end of this Lesson, learners should be able to:

- Identify the "Bridegroom" of the first services of Holy Week as Jesus Christ
- Relate the parable of the wise and foolish maidens to our own lives
- Name some "fruits of repentance" that they will offer to Christ

Materials

- Bibles
- Bowl with several kinds of fruit for students to choose from and eat at the end of the class (also have napkins and knife, kept out of sight till ready to use)
- Icon of the Wise and Foolish Maidens (Note: "Maidens" is the word used in the Revised Standard Version of the Bible)
- Candle and matches
- A simple drawing of a bare branch, about 10 inches long, posted in the room, or an actual bare branch standing upright in a pot of sand or secured in some other way to stand up
- Scissors, various colors of construction paper, markers for students to share
- One sheet of poster board (appr. 12" by 18")
- Words of the Opening Prayer and Closing Prayer, either on the chalkboard before class starts or written in big letters on paper or poster board and mounted in the classroom.

Resources

Required Resources

[The Bridegroom Services of Holy Week](#) (PDF)

[Icon of the Wise and Foolish Maidens](#)(Link)

Procedure

1 Opening Prayer

From the Apostikha for Great and Holy Monday

(Have students stand, for this and for all opening and closing prayers) In the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

The fig tree was withered up because it was unfruitful.

We should fear the same punishment, O brothers and sisters,

And bring worthy fruits of repentance to Christ, who brings us great mercy.

Ask students whether they know what the "withered up fig tree" refers to. Let them identify it as a reference to something Jesus said, if they know. It may be that they won't know what it is. In either case, tell them you will be talking more about it in this lesson.

2 Discussion Starter

Ask students what they know about the services of Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday of Holy Week. *(Perhaps they can tell you what they remember about attending these services, or what they have heard about them.)* Remind or tell them that one theme of these days is preparation. We are called to be watchful, and to be prepared, because the Lord Jesus Christ might come at any time to judge the world. We should be ready to greet Him with joy. We should never be unprepared or unready to meet Him.

Say to the class that you are going to find out more about this. Read together Matthew 25: 1-13. Tell them that this is the story Jesus told as a way of urging us to be prepared. Then give students some background: The maidens here are following the custom of accompanying a bridegroom who is going to get his bride from her home. While waiting for him, they may fall asleep, but they must be ready right away to light their lamps and go with him, because they don't know when he will come. They must be prepared with plenty of oil. If they have not brought enough, there may not be time for them to get some from the others and get their lamps lighted if he comes at a time they do not expect.

The Church compares Christ to the Bridegroom, who may come at any time. Let students suggest ways in which we can be prepared to meet Christ *(for example, by doing good and helping others, by praying, by trying to live as Christians and to come closer to God, by learning more about our faith so we can share it with others, by not making excuses for the things we have done or the things we have failed to do that we should have done. Being ready means not making excuses!)*

3 Icon and Scripture Memorization

Look together at the Icon of the Wise and Foolish Maidens, and note ways in which the details of the icon match the details of the story. Then, light the candle, and read together John 12: 46.

Spend a few minutes having students memorize the verse:

I have come as light into the world,

[so] that whoever believes in Me may not remain in darkness.

Note: We have added the word “so”, which appears in some translations, to make the verse a little easier for students to understand. Blow out the candle when you have finished.

Have students work together on a poster with these words from John's Gospel. They can write it in big letters, and decorate it with the markers. Post it in the room, to stay there as a reminder.

4 Scripture, Discussion, Activity

Tell students that another short passage is also part of the readings for these first days of Holy Week. Read it together: Matthew 21: 19. Ask students to consider how the Church applies this to us. Go back to the Opening Prayer, which shows us that we are meant to be “fruitful” and not “fruitless” as the fig tree was.

Give students a few minutes of silence to think about “fruits of repentance” they will offer to Christ. This means things that they want to make better and more truly Christian in their lives, or new efforts they want to make to be close to God. These things should be more specific than the discussion of the Wise and Foolish Maidens. They can look at the bare branch or drawing of the bare branch which you have posted, and think about it as an example of what we do not want to be--a branch with no fruit.

Ask students: “Does this verse tell us that God will punish us for not being fruitful?” Let them offer ideas. *(The verses are not about God punishing us, because He does not do that. As the verses say, Jesus Christ offers us great mercy. But if we make no effort to follow Him, to live as He wants us to, we will be “punished” by having no fruit, and having nothing good in us. That will be our choice. We need to practice the Christian life while we are on earth, or else we won't be ready for life in the Kingdom with God.)*

Have students cut out shapes like pieces of fruit from the construction paper, and write their plans, the fruits they will offer Christ, on the “fruit pieces.” Then they can attach the fruits to the drawing or branch with tape.

5 Closing Prayer

Repeat the Opening Prayer together as your Closing Prayer. Have each student choose a piece of fruit from the bowl, and then eat together. Remind students of the plan and pledge they have made to offer the Lord “fruits of repentance.”

In the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

The fig tree was withered up because it was unfruitful.

We should fear the same punishment, O brothers and sisters,

And bring worthy fruits of repentance to Christ, who brings us great mercy.

Practice the memorized verse together a few times, using the poster students created. Then have them remove their "fruits" from the tree to take them home as reminders of their plan to develop their own spiritual fruits.

A student, or more than one, can mark off Holy Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday on the wall calendar.

Journey to Pascha • Lesson 4



Holy Thursday *(Ages 10-12)*

Overview

The Last Supper, the Anointing and the Betrayal - Jesus' Love for His Friends, the Disciples

Objectives

By the end of this Lesson, learners should be able to:

- Describe Jesus' act of washing the disciples' feet as an example of humility
- Contrast the sinful woman (who anoints the feet of Christ) with Judas
- Relate the Last Supper to our reception of Holy Communion

Materials

- Bibles
- Clear pitcher or glass of water
- Icon of the Last Supper (also called the Mystical Supper)
<http://saints.oca.org/IconDirectory/LG/HolyWeek/mysticalsupper02.jpg>
- Paper and regular pencils for each student
- Colored pencils for students to share
- Wall charts with the words of the Opening Prayer and of the Troparion in #4 of the Procedure. You can make these very simple. Keep them mounted in the room, and use them to help students learn and remember the words

Resources

Required Resources

[The Mystical Supper icon](#)

[The Bridegroom Services of Holy Week \(PDF\)](#)

Procedure

1 Opening Prayer

In the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

O Heavenly King, the comforter, the Spirit of truth,
Who art everywhere and fillest all things,
Treasury of blessings and giver of life,

Come and abide in us, and cleanse us from every Impurity,
And save our souls, O Good One.

Review the meaning of the phrase "cleanse us from every impurity" using the notes in the first session.

2 Review

Review the memorized verse from the last session: "I have come as light into the world, [so] that whoever believes in me may not remain in darkness" (John 11: 46.)

3 Activity and Discussion

Bridging to Scripture: Ask students (seeing the pitcher or glass of water) to name things one could do with water that would serve others (give someone a drink, clean or wash things for another person to use, water crops for food, put out a fire, etc.)

Then, write these phrases on the chalkboard:

1. prepare an iced drink when the weather is very warm
2. do a load of laundry
3. wash someone else's feet
4. swim or paddle around on a float in a beautiful pool

Have students stand. Say, "All of these things involve water. Think about which of these you would most like to do." After about five seconds of time for students to think about their choice, point to one corner or area of the room for #1, another area for #2, and so on. Have students move to the area of the room that represents their choice. It's likely that nobody will choose #3 as their favorite thing.

Next, ask which would be the thing they would least like to do. Again, indicate areas of the room for each answer. Chances are that this time most of the students will choose #3, as the thing they'd least like to do.

Ask students what they know about traveling by foot in the time of Jesus. Let them tell the class if they know, or else you can tell them, that in those days people traveled on dusty roads wearing sandals or foot coverings that did not cover the whole foot. So it was a courtesy to a guest who had walked to wash that person's feet. It was the lowliest of jobs, and was usually left to a slave or servant.

Ask, "What did Jesus do, on the night of the Last Supper, that astonished His disciples?" Students may know that He washed their feet. Read the story together in John 13: 1-17. Discuss:

Ask, "Why did Jesus choose this particular act?" Let students give their own ideas or answers. (Help them see the point that Jesus was giving His disciples a real example of humility: it was such a lowly task, and He wanted those who knew Him as Lord to have the truest example of humility that He could possibly give them.)

What do verses 1-3 tell us about Jesus' divinity? (He knew things that only the Son of God could know, both about Judas and about the terrible ordeal He was about to face for the sake of all human beings.)

4 Icon and Troparion

Look at the icon of the Last Supper together. Notice signs of closeness (such as John leaning near Jesus.) Sing or say together the Troparion (Matins of Holy Friday):

When the glorious disciples were enlightened at the washing of their feet before the supper, then the impious Judas was darkened, ailing with avarice, and to the lawless judges he betrays Thee, the righteous judge.

Behold, O lover of money, this man who because of money hanged himself.

Flee from the greedy soul which dared such things against the Master.

O Lord, who art good towards all men, glory to Thee.

Make sure students understand certain words:

Impious (pronounced **im**-pea-us) means lacking respect and reverence for God

Avarice is an overwhelming desire for or love of money; notice that the hymn compares it to or calls it an ailment

5 Scripture

Read together Matthew 26: 6-30. Ask students to compare (as the services do) the woman who anoints Christ's feet with Judas. Use these questions, and let students give answers. Suggestions of points to emphasize are in italics:

What does Jesus mean by saying, "You always have the poor with you" in verse 11? *(He means that the poor can always be helped and shown love, but there is a limited time for people to show their love for Him, since He will not be in the world much longer. This is why he tells Judas not to trouble the woman who has done a beautiful thing for Him. He knows Judas' heart, and knows that Judas' concern for the poor is not sincere.)*

Ask, "Do you agree that to do a "beautiful thing' for someone else is important? How do we as Christians try to do 'beautiful things' for God?" *Let students respond. Suggested answers: We make churches and vestments beautiful, we give our best to God by coming to church on time and paying attention to the prayers we are saying, and by showing love to the other people who worship with us. Of course we still have the responsibility to care for the poor and those in need. This is why in the Divine Liturgy we pray for "those who remember the poor."*

Give each student paper and regular pencils as well as colored pencils. Ask them to describe, in words or with a picture or some symbol, a beautiful thing they know of that was done for them or for someone else. Then ask them to write about or depict a way that they can try to do something similarly beautiful for another person.

Have students share what they have written or depicted, if they wish to.

6 Closing Prayer

Say or sing the Troparion (words above in Procedure #4) together.

Journey to Pascha • Lesson 5



Holy Friday *(Ages 10-12)*

Overview

The Crucifixion - Where Do We Stand?

Objectives

By the end of this Lesson, learners should be able to:

- Tell the main events of Jesus' arrest, trial, and sentence
- Relate the events of the Crucifixion to the words "like the thief will I confess Thee" that we say before receiving Holy Communion
- Relate the risk taken by Nicodemus and Joseph of Arimathea to the risk taken by Saint Maria Skobtsova, in following Jesus Christ

Materials

- Bibles
- Resource Media: Icon of the Crucifixion
- Resource Media: Icon of Saint Maria Skobtsova
- Resource Handout: Our Lord's Last Days on Earth (1 per student)
- Simple charts made by you, with the words of the Opening Prayer and the Closing Prayer, mounted in the classroom

Resources

Required Resources

[My Guide to Holy Week and the Feast of Palms \(PDF\)](#)

[The Bridegroom Services of Holy Week \(PDF\)](#)

[Newly Canonized Saint Mother Maria Skobtsova Icon \(Image\)](#)

[Our Lord's Last Days on Earth\(HTML\)](#)

[Prayer From Holy Thursday Matins\(HTML\)](#)

Optional Resources

[Icon of The Crucifixion of the Lord \(Image\)](#)

Procedure

1 Opening Prayer

(Have students stand, and use the chart you have provided to go over the words of the prayer)

In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

Lord, You said to Your disciples:

My beloved, see that no fear separates you from Me.

Though I suffer, it is for the sake of the world.

I came, not to be served, but to serve,

To give Myself for the salvation of the world.

If you are My friends, then imitate Me.

Let the first among you be the last.

Let the master be like the servant.

Abide in me and bear fruit,

for I am the vine of life. Amen. (From Matins of Holy Thursday)

Discuss the following questions and have students offer answers. Suggested points to emphasize are in italics:

What "fear" do you think Jesus believes His disciples might have? *(When the disciples see what is happening to Him during His arrest, trial, and execution, they might fear for their own safety and lives and might leave Him because of that fear. Also, seeing that He is not able to save Himself, they might feel that they should not have followed Him because He is not the kind of Savior they were expecting or hoping for)*

What does Jesus say is His reason for coming to the world? *(He says He has come to serve, but even more, He says He has come to "give Himself" for us--He has come to die for us, and to save us by overcoming the power of death for us)*

What does Jesus ask the disciples to do if they are truly His friends? *(He asks them to serve others humbly, and gives them a word picture of what He means: "Let the master be like the servant")*

2 Scripture Activity

As a way of going through the story of the arrest, trial, and sentence of Jesus Christ, have students take turns reading aloud the numbered items on the sheet *Our Lord's Last Days on Earth*.

Give each student a copy of the sheet. Some students really do not enjoy reading aloud in front of others. Encourage them to take part in the reading, but let them sit and listen if they prefer. Ask them to pay close attention.

Have students who are going to read take a few minutes to look through the text. Answer any questions they have. Then they can stand in a line, and read the items in order.

Then, as a review, divide students into 2 groups. Have the first group devise 5 review questions based on items 1-12 on the sheet. Have the second group devise 5 review questions based on items 13-24 on the sheet. They can take turns asking each other their questions. (This doesn't have to be a competition, but you might want to commend either or both groups if they have devised thoughtful, rather than superficial, questions.

3 Scripture Reading and Discussion, Icon

Continue the reading of the Scripture story from Bibles. Read together Mark 15: 16-32 and Luke 23: 32-49. Students will probably note that some details are repeated. That is because we read from all four Gospels in the course of this Holy Friday Matins service, so that we get the details and full meaning of the events.

Read together Luke 23: 21 and 23, and Mark 15: 29-30. Ask students, "Do you think the people who said these things were some of the same ones who had shouted 'Hosanna' on Palm Sunday?" (*Certainly there were some who turned away from Christ when they realized He was not the kind of worldly political King they wanted. This is the kind of fear, or disappointment, against which Jesus warned His disciples*)

Look together at the icon of the Crucifixion. Note that there is not a crowd of people to stand by Christ as He dies. The crowds that surrounded Him on Palm Sunday are gone.

Remind students of the words we say in the prayer before Holy Communion: "Like the thief will I confess Thee." Ask students where these words come from. If necessary, help them find the basis for the words in Luke 23: 39-43. We, as Christians, want to be like the thief who confessed Jesus to be the Christ.

We also say in the Communion prayer, "Neither like Judas will I give Thee a kiss." Ask students, "Why do you think the Church has chosen these examples of being like one person, the thief, and not like the other, Judas?" Let them offer answers. (We do not want to be like Judas, who betrayed the Lord, his friend and teacher, to powerful enemies. We strive to have faith like that of the thief, who loved and trusted Christ even in dire circumstances.)

4 Discussion & Icon

Show students the icon of Saint Maria Skobtsova, and if possible also some photos. Tell students that she was a nun who died in a Nazi concentration camp on Holy Friday of 1945. She did many things to help others, but the main thing that got her sent to the concentration camp was giving false baptismal certificates to Jews, in order to save their lives. She said that she must help everyone, in order to show her love for Jesus Christ.

Now read together John 19: 38-42. Ask students what is similar in these two men's actions (Joseph of Arimathea and Nicodemus) to the actions of Saint Maria. *(The two men took risks in order to show their love for Jesus Christ. Help students see the point that people who lived much closer to our own time, like Mother Maria, still do the same brave and loving things that Joseph of Arimathea and Nicodemus did, because they, like the apostles and like others who actually knew Him, are following Jesus Christ.)*

Note: Students are probably aware that Joseph of Arimathea is a completely different person from Joseph the husband of Mary. Mary's husband had died years before Jesus was crucified. You may want to check that students know the two men are not the same.

5 Wrap Up

Ask students to think, this coming week, about taking risks to show their love for Jesus Christ. This does not include risks that involve physical danger, but could include being ridiculed for going to church often, being teased or derided for trying to follow the teachings of the Church, defending an unpopular position they feel is right, sustaining a friendship with a person others reject, and so on. If there is time, let them suggest these kinds of risks they might take.

6 Closing Prayer

Have students stand and use the chart you have provided to go over the words of the prayer:
In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

Come, O faithful, let us enjoy the Master's hospitality;

The banquet of immortality.

In the upper chamber with uplifted minds, Let us receive the exalted words of the Word, whom we magnify. Amen. *(From the Odes of the Matins of Great and Holy Thursday)*

Make sure students understand that "magnify" here means to praise highly. Ask them what the "banquet of immortality" is. *(Holy Communion. We are like the apostles with Jesus in the upper chamber sharing the Last Supper with Him. He is the Word of God, who speaks the words of God to us.)*

Journey to Pascha • Lesson 6



Holy Saturday & Pascha (Ages 10-12)

Overview

Christ is Risen! - Jesus Christ is the Lord of Life

Objectives

By the end of this Lesson, learners should be able to:

- Tell how the Old Testament prepares us for Christ's Resurrection
- Relate the icon of the Resurrection to a verse from the Vespers Liturgy of Holy Saturday
- Explain how the hymns of Holy Saturday lead us toward the joy of Pascha

Materials

- Bibles
- Copies of pages 33-36 ("For Gloriously Has He Been Glorified") of the booklet *Great and Holy Saturday*, published by the Department of Religious Education of the Orthodox Church in America, 1986 (Have enough copies for 2 or 3 students to share) Go over the words so that you can be prepared to say and sing them, and help students do so, during class. Be ready, also, to sing the refrain on page 33. If you need help with the singing, ask a choir member to help you, or play a recording of the hymn
- Icon of the Resurrection (sometimes called the "Harrowing of Hell") in the Resources section
- For the "Icon and Hymn Verse" step in the Procedure, put the verse on the chalkboard before class, or make and mount a chart with the words. Students probably know the Opening Prayer, *O Heavenly King*, but you may want to put the words on the chalkboard or a chart. You may also want to do the same with the verses that are used for the Wrap-Up and Closing Prayer
- Construction paper in various colors, white paper for writing, scissors, tape and various colored markers for students to share

Resources

Required Resources

[Great and Holy Saturday \(PDF\)](#)

[My Guide to Holy Week and the Feast of Palms \(PDF\)](#)

Optional Resources

[For Gloriously Has He Been Glorified \(PDF\)](#)

[Icon of The Resurrection of Christ \(Image\)](#)

Procedure

1 Opening Prayer

(Have students stand. If needed, use the chart of the words you have provided, or refer to the words you have put on the board)

In the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

O Heavenly King, the comforter, the Spirit of truth,
Who art everywhere and fillest all things,
Treasury of blessings and giver of life,
Come and abide in us, and cleanse us from every impurity,
And save our souls, O Good One.

2 Old Testament Bridging to New Testament

Ask students, "What do we find in the Old Testament that prepares us for the coming of Jesus the Savior in the New Testament?" (*Let them give answers, or remind them of some Old Testament prophecies, such as Psalm 118: 25-6 and Zechariah 9:9 You might also read Micah 5: 2 and Isaiah 7: 14.*)

Say, "Let's go on and look at another way God prepares us, in the Old Testament, for what Jesus Christ will do." Read together I Kings 17: 8-24, a story about the prophet Elijah. This is the 8th reading at the Vespers and Divine Liturgy for Great and Holy Saturday. Ask students, "How does this reading help prepare us for the coming of Christ?" (*Elijah is given the grace to raise the son of the widow. It's by this action that the woman knows that Elijah is a man of God, and that the word of God in his mouth is truth. The reading prepares us for Jesus Christ being raised from the dead. He not only has the true word of God in His mouth, He is the Word of God. He is the divine Son of the Father who does His Father's will.*)

3 Icon and Hymn Verse

Look together at the icon of the Resurrection. Then refer to this verse from the Holy Saturday Vespers:

Today Hades cries out groaning: I should not have accepted the Man born of Mary. He came and destroyed my power. He shattered the gates of brass. As God, He raised the souls I had held captive.

Glory to Thy cross and resurrection, O Lord!

Invite students to find phrases in the verse that are depicted in the icon: Hades "accepted" Jesus

Christ, the Man born of Mary because He went there, as the icon shows. The icon also shows the “gates of brass” being shattered, and Jesus “raising” the souls Hades had held, pulling them out with His own hands. The old man at the bottom of the icon represents Hades, or Satan, crying out and groaning.

Make the point that in the Church we often say the same things in Scriptural words, in icons, and in hymns.

4 A Sung and Said Prayer

Give students copies of “Gloriously Has He Been Glorified”, which we say and sing during the Holy Saturday service. Tell them this is another way that in the Orthodox Church we “tell” a Scripture story: by singing it. This is the story of the Hebrews escaping from the Egyptian pursuers by passing through the Red Sea as if it were dry land. God has always been with His people, from the time of this miracle to the time that His Son came to be with us and save us.

Practice singing the refrain with the class. Have everyone stand. Then have those students who are willing take turns reading the verses, with everyone singing the refrain. You may have just a few willing students; if necessary read some of the verses yourself.

5 Scripture Reading

Read together the Gospel for the Liturgy: Matthew 28: 1-20.

6 Discussion Questions

Discuss these points about verses 17-20:

- **What words tell us that Jesus Christ really is fully divine and fully human?**
(He says, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to Me.” This assures us that He is what He claims to be, and that we can rely on and trust Him and His promises)
- **What is the promise Jesus makes to us?** *(That He will be with us forever)*
- **How do you think we can fulfill Jesus’ words to us in verses 19 and 20?**
(Give students paper, scissors, tape and markers. Let them express in words, drawings, cut-out shapes or another medium that occurs to them their own answer to this question. They can share their creations with the class if they wish to.)

7 Wrap Up

Read to the class the hymn to the Theotokos from the Liturgy for this day:

**Do not lament me, O Mother, seeing me in the tomb,
The Son conceived in the womb without seed.**

For I shall arise and be glorified with eternal glory as God.

I shall exalt all who magnify you in faith and in love.

- **Ask the class, “In the nymn, who is saying these words?”**

Christ says them, addressing His mother, who of course is “lamenting” and sorrowful at the suffering and death of her beloved Son. But He reminds her that He will rise and be glorified, because He is God. He calls us to “magnify” or praise her because she gave birth to Him, thus doing God’s will in the most important way.

- Sing “Christ is Risen” together. The sorrow of the Mother of God’s lament gives way to joy for her and for all of us. If you can, sing or say “Christ is Risen” in some other languages as well as English.

8 Closing Prayer

In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

Do not lament me, O Mother, seeing me in the tomb,

The Son conceived in the womb without seed.

For I shall arise and be glorified with eternal glory as God.

I shall exalt all who magnify you in faith and in love.