



Journey *through* Lent

SIX LESSONS
for LENT 2021

Upper and Middle Elementary and
Lower Elementary Lessons

SOPHIA
INSTITUTE
FOR TEACHERS

Journey *through* Lent

**Lessons for
Upper and Middle
Elementary**



Journey through Lent

ASH WEDNESDAY

Upper Elementary

Materials

- Handout A: Gospel Reading for February 17, 2021
- Handout B: Journey through Lent

Learning Goals

In the Gospel passage for Ash Wednesday, the beginning of Lent, Jesus teaches His disciples, and us, about the how we should give alms, pray, and fast. These three practices have traditionally formed the pillars of Catholic Lenten practice. In this lesson, students will learn about the season of Lent and consider these three pillars of Lenten practice.

Gospel Reflection

- 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.

Activity

Have students complete the **Handout B: Journey Through Lent** activity. Then discuss the answers when finished.

Gospel Reading for February 17, 2021

A Reading from the Gospel of Matthew 6:1–6, 16–18:

Teaching About Almsgiving and Fasting

Jesus said to his disciples: “Take care not to perform righteous deeds in order that people may see them; otherwise, you will have no recompense from your heavenly Father. When you give alms, do not blow a trumpet before you, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets to win the praise of others. Amen, I say to you, they have received their reward. But when you give alms, do not let your left hand know what your right is doing, so that your almsgiving may be secret. And your Father who sees in secret will repay you.

“When you pray, do not be like the hypocrites, who love to stand and pray in the synagogues and on street corners so that others may see

them. Amen, I say to you, they have received their reward. But when you pray, go to your inner room, close the door, and pray to your Father in secret. And your Father who sees in secret will repay you.

“When you fast, do not look gloomy like the hypocrites. They neglect their appearance, so that they may appear to others to be fasting. Amen, I say to you, they have received their reward. But when you fast, anoint your head and wash your face, so that you may not appear to be fasting, except to your Father who is hidden. And your Father who sees what is hidden will repay you.”

1. What did Jesus warn about when doing righteous deeds?

2. Who will see our good deeds and almsgiving in secret?

3. What did Jesus warn about when praying?

4. Who will see when we pray in secret?



Christ in the Wilderness by Ivan Kramskoy

5. What did Jesus warn about when fasting?

6. Who will know when we fast?

Journey through Lent

Directions: Read the essay about Lent and then answer the focus and reflection questions.

For Catholics, **Ash Wednesday** is the beginning of the liturgical season of Lent. We receive ashes on our foreheads as the words “Remember, you are dust and to dust you shall return” are spoken. This humble act recalls the creation of Adam from the dust of the ground. And it symbolizes our need for ongoing repentance throughout our lives. Our journey through Lent begins with this focus on our need for God’s mercy.

Lent is a forty-day time period that leads up to the Church’s memorial of Christ’s Passion and Death during **Holy Week** and the celebration of His Resurrection from the dead on **Easter Sunday**. This time period reflects the forty days Jesus spent in the wilderness before the beginning of His public ministry. There, Jesus fasted, prayed, and endured temptation to strengthen Himself for the work of salvation He was about to undertake. Likewise, during Lent, we are asked to prepare ourselves to receive the gift of salvation from sin by repenting from our sins, doing good works, and by renewing our commitment to our Faith in Christ. Lent is also the time in which people who have been preparing to receive the Sacraments of Baptism, Confirmation, and Holy Communion in order to enter full communion with the Catholic Church begin their final preparations. They will be welcomed into the Body of Christ and receive their Sacraments at the Easter Vigil on Holy Saturday.

There are a number of ways that the Church offers us to enter more deeply into Lent. In



St. Lawrence Distributing Alms,
by Bl. Fra Angelico.

the Gospel reading for Ash Wednesday, Jesus teaches His disciples about almsgiving, prayer, and fasting. These three practices are the pillars of our Lenten journey.

Almsgiving

Almsgiving is giving food or money (alms) to the poor. More broadly speaking, almsgiving means to care for the needs of others, especially those who are in the most need, such as the poor, the sick, the suffering, and the outcast. In the Gospel of Matthew we read about Jesus teaching His disciples the Corporal

Works of Mercy (feed the hungry, give drink to the thirsty, shelter the homeless, clothe the naked, visit the imprisoned, visit the sick, and bury the dead). He also taught that whenever we perform these good works, we are not just loving our neighbor, but we are loving Christ himself. The Works of Mercy should be a guide for our own actions to care for the needs of others, not only (and especially) during Lent, but throughout the year.

Prayer

Prayer is to be in relationship with God. Prayer is talking with God, asking good things of Him for ourselves and for others, being in His presence, and listening to Him talk to us. There are many different ways to pray: formal prayers such as the Our Father or the Hail Mary; in our own words; reflecting on the words of Scripture or the writings of the saints; in and through the liturgies of the Church; in contemplation of the beauty of creation and the works of God; or in silence. Whatever the method of prayer, Lent is a time for us to focus on our relationship with God in an intentional way so that we can grow closer to Him.

Fasting

Fasting is to intentionally give something up or deny ourselves something as a sacrificial offering. Fasting helps to strengthen our will so that we are better able to say no to temptations and avoid sin. Traditionally, many Catholics will

give up something during the entire season of Lent such as candy, soda, or watching TV. Catholics between the ages of 18 and 59 (if they are healthy and able) are required to fast from food on Ash Wednesday and Good Friday. When fasting, Catholics are permitted to eat one full meal and two small meals that together are not equal to a full meal, and should avoid snacking between meals. Also, Catholics 14 years-old and older are required to not eat meat (**abstain**) on Ash Wednesday, Good Friday, and every Friday during Lent.

Some other Lenten practices include not saying the word Alleluia during Mass. Alleluia means “praise the Lord” and is typically sung as an acclamation before the Gospel reading during Mass. We respectfully reserve the use of this word during Lent so that we can use it again during Easter to joyfully acclaim Christ’s Resurrection. The singing of the Gloria during Mass is similarly reserved during Lent for much the same reason.

The liturgical color of Lent is purple, or violet. Purple is a color that represents penance. It serves as a reminder of the solemnness of the season and our focus on fasting and repentance from sin. It reminds us of our call to do acts of penance to make up for our sinfulness. The Church strongly encourages the faithful to receive the Sacrament of Reconciliation during Lent, and to extend forgiveness to those who have hurt us.

1. What is Ash Wednesday? What do we receive on this day and what is its meaning?

2. What is Lent?

3. How does Lent reflect Jesus' time in the wilderness before the beginning of His public ministry?
What does this mean for us?

4. For whom is Lent a special time of preparation?

5. What does it mean to give alms?

6. What is prayer?

7. What is fasting? What are the rules of fasting during Lent?

8. Why don't we sing or say the Alleluia during Lent?

9. What is the liturgical color of Lent? Why?

10. What does the Church strongly encourage the faithful to do during Lent?

Reflection Question

Choose one of the three pillars of Lenten practice (almsgiving, prayer, and fasting) and write about at least two ways that you can focus on doing it in your own life during this Lent.

Answer Key

Handout A: Gospel Reading for February 17, 2021

1. Not doing righteous deeds so that people can see them.
2. God our Father, who will repay us.
3. Praying like the hypocrites so that others can see you.
4. God our Father, who will repay us.
5. Looking gloomy, like the hypocrites, so that others know we are fasting.
6. God our Father, who will repay us.

Handout B: Journey Through Lent

1. Ash Wednesday is the beginning of Lent. We receive ashes on our foreheads which symbolize the creation of Adam and our need for repentance and God's mercy.
2. Lent is the forty-day time period that leads up to the Church's memorial of Christ's Passion and Death during Holy Week and the celebration of His Resurrection on Easter.
3. During Jesus' time in the wilderness He fasted, prayed, and endured temptation to strengthen Himself for the work of salvation. For us during Lent, we are asked to prepare ourselves to receive the gift of salvation by repenting from sin, doing good works, and renewing our commitment to our faith in Christ.
4. Those who will receive the Sacraments of Baptism, Confirmation, and Holy Communion for the first time and be welcomed into full communion with the Catholic Church.
5. To care for the needs of others, especially those who are in most need, such as the poor, the sick, the suffering, and the outcast.
6. Being in relationship with God, talking with God, asking good things of Him, being in His presence, and listening to Him.
7. Intentionally giving something up or denying ourselves as a sacrifice to help strengthen our will so that we are better able to resist temptation and avoid sin. Catholics between the ages of 18 and 59 (if they are healthy and able) are required to fast from food on Ash Wednesday and Good Friday. When fasting, Catholics are permitted to eat one full meal and two small meals that together are not equal to a full meal, and should avoid snacking between meals. Also, Catholics 14 years-old and older are required to abstain from eating meat on Ash Wednesday, Good Friday, and every Friday during Lent.
8. To reserve its use for Easter to joyfully acclaim Christ's Resurrection.
9. Purple, or violet.
10. Receive the Sacrament of Reconciliation

Reflection Question: Accept reasoned answers.



Journey through Lent

FIRST SUNDAY OF LENT

Upper and Middle Elementary

Materials

- › Handout A: Gospel Reading for February 21, 2021
- › Handout B: Examen Journal
- › Teacher Resource: Examen Journal Template

Learning Goals

In the Gospel for this first Sunday in Lent, Jesus spends forty days in the desert preparing for His public ministry. In many ways, Lent is our time in the desert in which we prepare to receive the salvation Christ won for us on the Cross. In this lesson, students will reflect on their own daily spiritual journey using an examen.

Gospel Reflection

- 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.

Activity

Go over the **Handout B: Examen Journal** explanation with your students. Then, lead them in the examen journal exercise. You may have your students write in their own journals, or photocopy the **Teacher Resource: Examen Journal Template** for your students to use. Consider beginning religion class every day during Lent (or every other day, or once a week) with a few minutes of reflection using the **Examen Journal** as a guide.

Gospel Reading for February 21, 2021

A Reading from the Gospel of Mark 1:12–15:

The Temptation of Jesus

At once the Spirit drove [Jesus] out into the desert, and he remained in the desert for forty days, tempted by Satan. He was among wild beasts, and the angels ministered to him. After

John had been arrested, Jesus came to Galilee proclaiming the gospel of God: “This is the time of fulfillment. The kingdom of God is at hand. Repent, and believe in the gospel.”

1. Where did Jesus go? For how long was He there? What happened to Him there?

2. What happened before Jesus came to Galilee?

3. What did Jesus proclaim in Galilee?

Examen Journal

The Gospel reading for the first Sunday of Lent tells us of the forty days Jesus spent in the desert before beginning His public ministry. During this time Jesus fasted, prayed to His Father, and resisted the temptations of Satan. Even Jesus, who is fully God and fully man, took time to reflect and to pray in order to better prepare Himself to do the will of His Father.

In part, Lent is a time for us to imitate Christ's forty days in the desert. Lent is a time for us to fast, to pray, and strengthen ourselves to resist temptation and avoid sin. One great way of reflecting on our lives during Lent is to reflect each day using a method of prayer and reflection called the examen. This style of prayerful reflection on our lives, being aware of God's presence, and recognizing how we have loved God and others and how we have failed to do so was first developed by St. Ignatius of Loyola, the founder of the Jesuit religious order. It is simple and can be done quickly, but always invites us to be more prayerful, reflective, and aware of God's will in our lives.

Every day during Lent (or as often as your class chooses to do it) use the following examen questions to reflect and to pray.



*St. Ignatius of Loyola,
by Peter Paul Rubens*

1

Begin with prayer

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

Lord Jesus Christ, we thank you and praise you for this day and for all the blessings that you have given to us. Help us to prayerfully reflect on all the ways we have loved you and others and all the ways that we have failed to do so. Please continue to bless us today and every day. Show us your way in all we do. Amen.

2

Examen reflection

Take a moment to remember and reflect upon the fact that you are always in the presence of God. He is with us every day, in everything we do, and in everyone we meet. Quietly thank Him for His love for you.

Think back over the last 24 hours (or however long it has been since your last examen reflection). Then, reflect upon and journal about the following:

- What are you most thankful for during this time?
- How have you loved God during this time?
- How have you loved others during this time?
- How have you failed to love God during this time? What is one thing you can do to make up for this?
- How have you failed to love others during this time? What is one thing you can do to make up for this?

3

Think ahead to tomorrow

Think ahead to the next day. Then, reflect upon and journal about the following:

- What do you most need God's help with in the next day?
- Who would you like to pray for?

4

Conclude with prayer

Lord Jesus Christ, we praise you for your goodness. Thank you for the gift of life and for your mercy and love. Help us today and every day to love you and to love one another according to your will. Amen.

Examen Journal

[illegible]

Answer Key

Handout A: Gospel Reading for February 21, 2021

1. The desert. For forty days. He was tempted by Satan.
2. John (the Baptist) was arrested.
3. The Gospel: “This is the time of fulfillment. The kingdom of God is at hand. Repent and believe in the gospel.”



Journey through Lent

SECOND SUNDAY OF LENT

Upper and Middle Elementary

Materials

- › Handout A: Gospel Reading for February 28, 2021
- › Handout B: Jesus' Divinity and Humanity
- › Handout C: God and Man

Learning Goals

In the Gospel for the second Sunday of Lent, Jesus is revealed in His full glory as God at the Transfiguration. During Lent, we reflect in a special way on the full humanity and full divinity of Christ and how our God fully knows our human condition. In this lesson, students will analyze sacred art to help them contemplate the mystery of the Incarnation.

Gospel Reflection

- 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.

Activity

Arrange students into small groups and have them read the essay on **Handout B: Jesus' Divinity and Humanity**, and then reflect on the paintings together using the discussion questions. You may alternately choose to read the essay and reflect on the paintings together as a class. Then, have them create their own drawing of Jesus that shows that He is both God and man using **Handout C: God and Man**.

Gospel Reading for February 28, 2021

A Reading from the Gospel of Mark 9:2–10: The Transfiguration of Jesus

Jesus took Peter, James, and John and led them up a high mountain apart by themselves. And he was transfigured before them, and his clothes became dazzling white, such as no fuller on earth could bleach them. Then Elijah appeared to them along with Moses, and they were conversing with Jesus. Then Peter said to Jesus in reply, “Rabbi, it is good that we are here! Let us make three tents: one for you, one for Moses, and one for Elijah.” He hardly knew what to say, they were so terrified. Then a cloud came, casting a shadow over them; from the cloud came a voice, “This is my beloved Son. Listen to him.” Suddenly, looking around, they no longer saw anyone but Jesus alone with them. As they were coming down from the mountain, he charged them not to relate what they had seen to anyone, except when the Son of Man had risen from the dead. So they kept the matter to themselves, questioning what rising from the dead meant.



Transfiguration, by Rafael

1. Whom did Jesus take with Him and where did they go?

2. Jesus was transfigured in front of His disciples. How does the Gospel describe this?

3. Who else appeared with Jesus? What were they doing?

4. What did the disciples want to do for them?

5. Whose voice spoke from a cloud? What did it say?

6. What did Jesus ask his disciples to do as they came down the mountain?

Jesus' Divinity and Humanity

Part I: Essay

Directions: Read the essay about Jesus' humanity and divinity.

In this week's Gospel, Jesus is revealed in all of His glory as God. His divinity shines through, literally, as a blinding light. And yet, Jesus is still Jesus. His humanity doesn't go away. His divinity, the glory of God, whom He is fully, is made known in and through His humanity. This is part of the mystery of the Incarnation, the Son of God assuming a human nature and becoming man in the Person of Jesus Christ. How is it that Jesus is both 100% fully God and 100% fully human?

Rather than being a mystery for us to solve, the mystery of the Incarnation is a great truth that only God can make known to us. The dual nature of Christ is a profoundly beautiful reality that invites us to contemplate how great God's love is for us – that the all-powerful God of the universe would humble Himself and become

one of His creatures, a human being, in order to show us His love, be our model of holiness, and save us from sin.

During Lent, we are reminded of both the humanity and divinity of Jesus. Soon, we will memorialize Jesus' Passion and Death on the Cross. In His humanity, Jesus suffered greatly, and poured out His life for us on the Cross. But He did not stop being God in those moments of suffering. That means that our God deeply and personally knows what it is like to be one of us, even in our greatest moments of suffering. And then, on Easter Sunday, Jesus rose from the dead. Our God defeated death and conquered sin!

Let us reflect on these great truths of our Faith all throughout this Lenten season.

Part II: Sacred Art Reflection

Directions: Using the questions provided, reflect on the humanity and divinity of Jesus using the two paintings by Carl Bloch.

1. Take a moment to observe the first painting, *The Sermon on the Mount*. What first stands out to you about this painting?
2. In the Gospels, the Sermon on the Mount is the greatest example of Jesus teaching His disciples. How does this painting show us Jesus teaching?
3. How would you describe the people in the crowd and how they are relating to Jesus?
4. In what way does this painting emphasize Jesus' humanity? What evidence of his divinity is present in the painting?

Sermon on the Mount



Transfiguration



5. Take a moment to observe the second painting, *Transfiguration*. What do you first notice about this painting?
6. How is this week's Gospel illustrated by this painting?
7. In what ways does this painting emphasize Jesus' divinity? What evidence of His humanity is present in the painting?
8. How is this painting similar to *The Sermon on the Mount* painting? How are they different?
9. Why do you think it is important that Jesus was Transfigured?

God and Man

Directions: In the frame below, draw your own picture of Jesus that shows that He is both fully God and fully human.



Answer Key

Handout A: Gospel Reading for February 28, 2021

1. They went up a high mountain.
2. His clothes became dazzling white, brighter than any cleaner or bleach could make them.
3. Moses and Elijah. They were conversing.
4. Make three tents, one for each them.
5. God the Father. He said, "This is my beloved Son. Listen to him."
6. Not to tell anyone what they had seen until the Son of Man had risen from the dead.



Journey through Lent

THIRD SUNDAY OF LENT

Upper and Middle Elementary

Materials

- › Handout A: Gospel Reading for March 7, 2021
- › Handout B: Spring Cleaning
- › Broken Vessels (Amazing Grace) song video: **SophiaOnline.org/BrokenVessels**

Learning Goals

In the Gospel for the third Sunday of Lent, Jesus drives out the merchants and money changers from the Temple. They had reduced worshipping God to a commercial act, and even prevented some people from being able to worship God at all. In this lesson, students will reflect on their Lenten journey thus far, and consider ways they can renew and refresh their own spiritual life.

Gospel Reflection

- 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.

Activity

- Have students complete the **Handout B: Spring Cleaning** activity. Then, ask for volunteers to share about how their Lenten journey has been going so far. Specifically, ask what students have done to help others, how their Lenten fast has been going, what challenges they have encountered in keeping their fast, and if they have any experiences of prayer they'd like to share about.
- Conclude by showing the video of the song "Broken Vessels (Amazing Grace)" by Hillsong Worship, found at the following link: **SophiaOnline.org/BrokenVessels**. Invite your students to prayerfully reflect on their Lenten journey using the song. They may close their eyes and listen, or follow the lyrics in the video.

Gospel Reading for March 7, 2021

Directions: Read the Gospel passage. Then answer the questions.

A Reading from the Gospel of John 2:13–25: Cleansing of the Temple

Since the Passover of the Jews was near, Jesus went up to Jerusalem. He found in the temple area those who sold oxen, sheep, and doves, as well as the money changers seated there. He made a whip out of cords and drove them all out of the temple area, with the sheep and oxen, and spilled the coins of the money changers and overturned their tables, and to those who sold doves he said, “Take these out of here, and stop making my Father’s house a marketplace.” His disciples recalled the words of Scripture, *Zeal for your house will consume me*. At this the Jews answered and said to him, “What sign can you show us for doing this?” Jesus answered and said to them, “Destroy

this temple and in three days I will raise it up.” The Jews said, “This temple has been under construction for forty-six years, and you will raise it up in three days?” But he was speaking about the temple of his body. Therefore, when he was raised from the dead, his disciples remembered that he had said this, and they came to believe the Scripture and the word Jesus had spoken. While he was in Jerusalem for the feast of Passover, many began to believe in his name when they saw the signs he was doing. But Jesus would not trust himself to them because he knew them all, and did not need anyone to testify about human nature. He himself understood it well.

Background information:

The animals that were being sold in the Temple area were the kinds of animals the Jewish people offered as sacrifice in the Temple. At certain times of year, the Jews were required to offer an animal sacrifice to God, according to Jewish law. People from all over the world came to the Temple to worship God and to offer sacrifice. The people selling animals for sacrifice could charge whatever they wanted for the animals. Sometimes people could not afford an animal and were unable to offer sacrifice. The sellers had turned the act of

worship into a business and made money off of the people. The same was true of the money changers. They would charge people a fee to change foreign money into the form of money that was accepted in the Temple area.

Being angry is not a sin. Anger is an emotion and all emotions are neither morally good nor morally sinful. It is what we do with an emotion that gives it a moral quality, either good or sinful. Sometimes anger can cause us to act righteously when we encounter something that is unjust or evil.

1. What did Jesus find in the Temple when He went there for Passover?

2. What did Jesus do in response to what He found in the Temple?

3. What did Jesus tell these people as He did this?

4. What sign did Jesus promise the people? What was He really talking about?

5. At the end of this Gospel, what do we learn that Jesus understood?

6. Why do you think Jesus' actions in this Gospel were not sinful?

Spring Cleaning

For many households, spring is a time for cleaning. The house has been closed up all winter and is in need of fresh air. We remove, donate, put away, or throw out that which we no longer need, that which has grown old or stale, or that which we won't need until next winter. We open the windows to let the sun and air in. As the snow melts and the spring plants start to grow, we wash away the winter grime, and, like nature itself, start the season fresh and renewed. Cleaning, however, isn't always fun. It takes hard work. It is dirty, and smelly. But, it is necessary. And the end result is always more satisfying than where we started.

Lent is a sort of spiritual spring cleaning. This week's Gospel helps us to remember that our spiritual lives need a freshening up from time to time. Sometimes we need to let go of past hurt in our lives and forgive those who have harmed us. Sometimes we need to remove obstacles that are standing in our way of having a better relationship with God. Sometimes we need to pray more or differently in order to let the "fresh air" of God's grace into our lives.

Remember the three pillars of our Lenten journey: almsgiving, prayer, and fasting. These three practices are the perfect way to begin our spiritual spring cleaning.

1. What are two obstacles in your life that are making it harder for you to have a better relationship with God? What is one thing you can do to begin to overcome each of them?

2. Think about someone you need to forgive for hurting you. Without naming them, write a brief prayer below asking God to give you the strength and courage to forgive them.

3. How has your Lenten fast been going so far this Lent? Have you been successful in your fasting? How has it been difficult to fast? What can you do to recommit (if necessary) to your Lenten fast?

4. How have you helped others so far this Lent? In what ways can you continue to help others in the time remaining this Lent?

5. Remember, prayer is entering into relationship with God – by talking to Him, letting Him talk to you, and by listening to Him. How would you describe your current relationship with God? What are two things you can do this week to improve your relationship with God?

Answer Key

Handout A: Gospel Reading for March 7, 2021

1. People selling animals (oxen, sheep, and doves), and money changers.
2. He made a whip out of cords and drove the people selling animals (along with their animals) out of the Temple area, spilled the money of the money changers, and overturned their tables.
3. “Take these out of here, and stop making my Father’s house a marketplace.”
4. “Destroy this temple and in three days I will raise it up.” Jesus was really talking about His own body and His Death and Resurrection on the third day.
5. Human nature.
6. Jesus saw that worship of God in the Temple, the main and most holy house of worship for the Jewish people, had become irreverent and commercialized. The actions of the sellers and moneychangers in the Temple area did not lead people to true worship, and, in fact, prevented those who could not pay from worshipping God. Jesus’ actions were justifiable. His anger at the situation prompted Him to act justly by cleaning out the Temple area so that the people could worship God as they were meant to. Accept other reasoned answers. Be sure to make it clear that Jesus was not acting sinfully in this Gospel story, and that His anger was righteous and justified.



Journey through Lent

FOURTH SUNDAY OF LENT

Upper and Middle Elementary

Materials

- ▶ Handout A: Gospel Reading for March 14, 2021
- ▶ Handout B: The *Kerygma* Pre-Reading Questionnaire
- ▶ Handout C: The *Kerygma*

Learning Goals

The Gospel for the fourth Sunday of Lent contains some of the best-known words of the Bible: “For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him might not perish but might have eternal life” (John 3:16). This passage is so well-known for good reason – it summarizes the entirety of the Gospel message, or, the *Kerygma*. In this lesson, students will analyze the basic proclamation of the Gospel and consider how they can share the Good New with others.

Gospel Reflection

- 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

Activity

- Have your students respond to the questions on **Handout B: The *Kerygma* Pre-Reading Questionnaire**. When finished, call on students to share and discuss their answers.
- Introduce and define the word *Kerygma* to your students. (The *Kerygma* is a Greek word for “preaching” from the New Testament. We use it today to refer to the basic proclamation of the Gospel message.) Then, have your students read **Handout C: The *Kerygma*** and answer the questions. Discuss the answers when finished.

Gospel Reading for March 14, 2021

Directions: Read the Gospel passage. Then answer the questions.

A Reading from the Gospel of John 3:14–21: The Good News of the Gospel

Jesus said to Nicodemus: “Just as Moses lifted up the serpent in the desert, so must the Son of Man be lifted up, so that everyone who believes in him may have eternal life.” For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him might not perish but might have eternal life. For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world might be saved through him. Whoever believes in him will not be condemned, but whoever does not believe has already been

condemned, because he has not believed in the name of the only Son of God. And this is the verdict, that the light came into the world, but people preferred darkness to light, because their works were evil. For everyone who does wicked things hates the light and does not come toward the light, so that his works might not be exposed. But whoever lives the truth comes to the light, so that his works may be clearly seen as done in God.

1. What did Jesus say must happen to the Son of Man so that everyone who believes in him may have eternal life? What is Jesus really referring to?

2. What did God do because He loved the world? Why did He do this?

3. What did God NOT send His Son to do? What will He do instead?

4. Why do those who do wicked things (i.e. sin) prefer the darkness over the light?

5. Why do those who live the truth come to the light?

The *Kerygma* Pre-Reading Questionnaire

Directions: Answer the questions below honestly and to the best of your ability.

1. Who is Jesus?

2. What does Jesus mean to you? Explain.

3. Why did Jesus come to earth, suffer and die on the Cross, and rise from the dead?

4. What does Jesus ask of you?

5. What is your reaction when you hear that Jesus loves you?

6. Do you believe in Jesus and His promises? Why or why not?

The *Kerygma*

Directions: Read about the *Kerygma*. Then, answer the questions and respond to the writing prompt.

Kerygma is a Greek word for “preaching” used in the New Testament. We use it today to mean the proclamation of the most basic Gospel message, which is understood and believed by all Christians. This week’s Gospel reading is often said to be the heart of the Gospel. In fact, the *Kerygma* is summarized by one of the most well-known Scripture passages, John 3:16, which we read as part of this week’s Gospel:

For God so loved the world that he gave his only
Son, so that everyone who believes in him might not
perish but might have eternal life. (John 3:16)

Because the *Kerygma* is so precisely captured in this one sentence, many people have this verse memorized.

The *Kerygma* emphasizes the following key concepts:

- God loves us and made us in His image and likeness to love Him and to love one another.
- The first man and woman sinned and rejected God’s love. God continues to love us and promised to send the Messiah to save us from sin. God prepared us to receive salvation throughout Salvation History.
- Jesus is God’s promised Messiah, who was crucified and rose from the dead to save us from our sins and invite us to eternal life with God in Heaven.
- He Ascended into Heaven and is seated at the right hand of God the Father.
- Jesus calls everyone to Him through the ministry of the Church.
- The *Kerygma* requires a response from us to repent of our sins, receive the sacrament of Baptism, and keep Jesus’ commandments.

1. Circle the part of John 3:16 that includes the first two bullet points of the *Kerygma*.
2. Draw a box around the part of John 3:16 that includes the third and fourth bullet points of the *Kerygma*.
3. Underline the part of John 3:16 that includes the fifth and sixth bullet points of the *Kerygma*.
4. Write a paragraph in your own words that explains the *Kerygma* to someone who has never heard the basic proclamation of the Gospel before.

Answer Key

Handout A: Gospel Reading for March 14, 2021

1. The Son of Man must be lifted up. He is referring to His own Crucifixion and Death.
2. He gave His only Son so that everyone who believes in Him would not perish (die) but have eternal life.
3. God did not send His Son to condemn the world. Instead, God sent His Son to save the world.
4. Because their works are evil and the light will expose their evil works.
5. So that their works may be clearly seen as done in God.

Handout B: The Kerygma Pre-Reading Questionnaire

Accept reasoned answers for all questions. The goal of this activity is to get students thinking about what they already know and think about Jesus and the basic Gospel message.

Handout C: The Kerygma

1. 1, 2, and 3

For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him might not perish but might have eternal life. (John 3:16)

2. Accept reasoned answers.



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

- 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.

Activity

- 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.
- 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.
- 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.

Gospel Reading for March 21, 2021

Directions: Read the Gospel passage. Then answer the questions.

A Reading from the Gospel of John 12:20–33: The Coming of Jesus' Hour

Some Greeks who had come to worship at the Passover Feast came to Philip, who was from Bethsaida in Galilee, and asked him, “Sir, we would like to see Jesus.” Philip went and told Andrew; then Andrew and Philip went and told Jesus. Jesus answered them, “The hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified. 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. Whoever loves his life loses it, and whoever hates his life in this world will preserve it for eternal life. Whoever serves me must follow me, and where I am, there also will my servant be. The Father will honor whoever serves me.

“I am troubled now. Yet what should I say? ‘Father, save me from this hour’? But it was for this purpose that I came to this hour. Father, glorify your name.” Then a voice came from heaven, “I have glorified it and will glorify it again.” The crowd there heard it and said it was thunder; but others said, “An angel has spoken to him.” Jesus answered and said, “This voice did not come for my sake but for yours. Now is the time of judgment on this world; now the ruler of this world will be driven out. And when I am lifted up from the earth, I will draw everyone to myself.” He said this indicating the kind of death he would die.

1. Jesus says to His disciples, “The hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified.” What do you think Jesus is speaking of?

2. Jesus uses the image of wheat to make an analogy. What analogy does He make and what do you think it means?

3. What does the voice of God the Father say in this Gospel reading? What do you think this means?

4. We have learned during this Lenten journey that Lent is a time for reflecting in a special way on the Passion, Death, and Resurrection of Christ, and for doing penance for our sins. It is also a time for a spiritual “spring cleaning,” when we renew our relationship with God. We are called to give alms, to pray, and to fast. How do you think the message of Lent is present in this Gospel?

5. What is this Gospel passage calling us to in our own lives? What promises does this Gospel make if we live what it teaches?

Take Up Your Cross

Directions: Read the information below and then answer the reflection questions.

Next Sunday is Palm Sunday. It is the beginning of the holiest week of the liturgical year – Triduum. During Triduum we prayerfully enter into Christ’s suffering and Death on the Cross before His victorious Resurrection on Easter Sunday. In this week’s Gospel, Jesus tells us that the time for His suffering and Death is near. He told us of His coming Passion numerous times in the Gospels. He told us that following Him meant that we must also follow Him to the Cross. He told us plainly that to be His disciple means that we too will suffer and be persecuted, and that we will have to carry our own crosses.

Jesus knew that the path to Easter Sunday would be hard. Remember, Jesus is fully God and fully human. He suffered greatly – physically and emotionally. He knows what it is

like to be you and me – even in our suffering. And He knows that following Him and being a faithful Christian is hard too. But He also promised us that despite the challenges we would face as Christians, we will find our reward in Heaven. He promised us eternal life with God in Heaven. He promised us His glory. And then, He proved all of His promises to us by rising from the dead.

Jesus challenged all of us when He said, “If anyone wishes to come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me. For whoever wishes to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake will save it.” (Luke 9:23-24). Being a disciple of Jesus means carrying our own cross and following in His footsteps.

1. What are three ways that it can be hard to be a follower of Jesus?

2. What are two specific things that you can do this week to take up your own cross and follow Jesus?

Answer Key

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.

Journey *through* Lent

**Lessons for
Lower Elementary**



Journey through Lent

ASH WEDNESDAY

Lower Elementary

Materials

- ▶ Handout A: Gospel Reading for February 17, 2021
- ▶ Handout B: Lent

Learning Goals

In the Gospel passage for Ash Wednesday, the beginning of Lent, Jesus teaches His disciples, and us, about the how we should give alms, pray, and fast. These three practices have traditionally formed the pillars of Catholic Lenten practice. In this lesson, students will learn about the season of Lent and consider these three pillars of Lenten practice.

Gospel Reflection

- 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.

Activity

Have students complete the **Handout B: Lent** activity. You may choose to have your students read about Lent on their own, or you may read together as a class. Then discuss the answers when finished.

Gospel Reading for February 17, 2021

A Reading from the Gospel of Matthew 6:1–6, 16–18 Teaching About Almsgiving And Fasting

Jesus said to his disciples: “Take care not to perform righteous deeds in order that people may see them; otherwise, you will have no recompense from your heavenly Father. When you give alms, do not blow a trumpet before you, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets to win the praise of others. Amen, I say to you, they have received their reward. But when you give alms, do not let your left hand know what your right is doing, so that your almsgiving may be secret. And your Father who sees in secret will repay you.

“When you pray, do not be like the hypocrites, who love to stand and pray in the synagogues and on street corners so that others may see them. Amen, I say to you, they have received their reward. But when you pray, go to your inner room, close the door, and pray to your Father in secret. And your Father who sees in secret will repay you.



Christ in the Wilderness by Ivan Kramskoy

“When you fast, do not look gloomy like the hypocrites. They neglect their appearance, so that they may appear to others to be fasting. Amen, I say to you, they have received their reward. But when you fast, anoint your head and wash your face, so that you may not appear to be fasting, except to your Father who is hidden. And your Father who sees what is hidden will repay you.”

1. What did Jesus warn about when doing righteous deeds?

2. Who will see our good deeds and almsgiving in secret?

3. What did Jesus warn about when praying?

4. Who will see when we pray in secret?

5. What did Jesus warn about when fasting?

6. Who will know when we fast?

Lent

Directions: Read about Lent. Then use the Lent Code to solve the puzzle and answer the questions.

Lent is the 40 days before **Easter**. Jesus rose from the dead on Easter Sunday. Lent begins on **Ash Wednesday**. A cross made of ashes is put on our foreheads on Ash Wednesday. The ashes remind us of when God made Adam. They also remind us of God's mercy and love for us.

Lent is a season for us to grow closer to God. Jesus taught us a few ways to do this. He taught us to help others, to pray, and to fast.



Help others

Jesus tells us to help others. Some examples of people who need our help are the poor, the hungry, the sick, and the lonely. We can help by giving food or money. We can spend time with someone or do good things for them.



Pray

We talk to God when we pray. God talks to us too. We are friends with God when we pray.



Fast

When we fast, we give something up and give it back to God. Some people give up candy or chocolate, or even watching TV for Lent as a gift to God. What can you give up for God?

Lent Code

A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I
5	11	15	26	1	8	17	4	19

J	K	L	M	N	O	P	Q	R
25	20	9	3	2	12	24	21	10

S	T	U	V	W	X	Y	Z
7	14	16	6	23	18	22	13

What three things can we do during
Lent to grow closer to God?

1. _____
24 10 5 22

2. _____
4 1 9 24 12 14 4 1 10 7

3. _____
8 5 7 14

Answer Key

Handout A: Gospel Reading for February 17, 2021

1. Not doing righteous deeds so that people can see them.
2. God our Father, who will repay us.
3. Praying like the hypocrites so that others can see you.
4. God our Father, who will repay us.
5. Looking gloomy, like the hypocrites, so that others know we are fasting.
6. God our Father, who will repay us.

Handout B: Lent

1. Pray
2. Help others
3. Fast



Journey through Lent

FIRST SUNDAY OF LENT

Lower Elementary

Materials

- Handout A: Gospel Reading for February 21, 2021
- *Christ in the Desert*
- Teacher Resource: *Christ in the Desert* Discussion Guide
- Handout B: Christ in the Desert Coloring Page

Learning Goals

In the Gospel for this first Sunday in Lent, Jesus spends forty days in the desert preparing for His public ministry. In many ways, Lent is our time in the desert in which the Church encourages us to prepare to receive the salvation Christ won for us on the Cross. In this lesson, students will reflect on prayer using sacred art.

Gospel Reflection

- 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.

Activity

Lead your students in a reflection on the sacred art image *Christ in the Desert* by Ivan Kramskoi. Use **Teacher Resource: Christ in the Desert Discussion Guide** to help guide the activity. Then, have students color **Handout B: Christ in the Desert Coloring Page**. On each of the blank lines provided, have your students write one thing that they want to pray to Jesus for during Lent.

Gospel Reading for February 21, 2021

Directions: Read the Gospel passage. Then answer the questions.

A Reading from the Gospel of Mark 1:12–15: The Temptation of Jesus

At once the Spirit drove [Jesus] out into the desert, and he remained in the desert for forty days, tempted by Satan. He was among wild beasts, and the angels ministered to him. After John had been arrested, Jesus came to Galilee proclaiming the gospel of God: “This is the time of fulfillment. The kingdom of God is at hand. Repent, and believe in the gospel.”



Angels Ministering to Christ in the Wilderness,
by Thomas Cole

1. Where did Jesus go? For how long was He there? What happened to Him there?

2. What happened before Jesus came to Galilee?

3. What did Jesus proclaim in Galilee?

Christ in the Desert

BY IVAN KRAMSKOI (1872)



Oil on canvas. Tretyakov Gallery, Moscow

***Christ in the Desert* Discussion Guide**

Note to Teacher: Lead your students in a discussion about the painting *Christ in the Desert* by Ivan Kramskoi. Use the discussion questions below to help guide your conversation. Feel free to allow the conversation to go in unexpected places and add or substitute your own questions for discussion.

1. Take a moment to look at the painting of *Christ in the Desert*. What do you first notice? *Accept reasoned answers.*
2. Does this painting make you feel happy or sad? Why? *Accept reasoned answers.*
3. What is happening in this painting? *Jesus is praying alone in the desert.*
4. What do you think Jesus might be praying for? *Accept reasoned answers.*
5. Is there someplace that you like to go to be alone? Where is it? What do you like about it? *Accept reasoned answers.*
6. What is something that you can pray to God for? *Accept reasoned answers. Offer possible suggestions such as for your parents and siblings, to do well on a test, for someone who is sick, for the poor or hungry, for yourself if you're feeling sad, to tell God thank you for something good in your life, and so forth. Help your students recognize that there are a lot of different reasons we can pray to God.*
7. How can Jesus be an example of prayer for us? *Jesus took time away from everything to pray to His Father. He prayed alone and in silence. Jesus often gave thanks to God, and He also prayed to God for other people. Accept other reasoned answers.*
8. The artist of this painting painted his own version of Jesus praying and fasting in the desert for forty days. If you could paint your own version, or add to this one, what would you paint differently? Why? *Accept reasoned answers.*

Christ in the Desert Coloring Page



What is one thing you want to pray to Jesus for during Lent?

Answer Key

Handout A: Gospel Reading for February 21, 2021

1. The desert. For forty days. He was tempted by Satan.
2. John (the Baptist) was arrested.
3. The Gospel: “This is the time of fulfillment. The kingdom of God is at hand. Repent and believe in the gospel.”



Journey through Lent

SECOND SUNDAY OF LENT

Lower Elementary

Materials

- › Handout A: Gospel Reading for February 28, 2021
- › Handout B: Jesus Is God and Man
- › Handout C: God and Man

Learning Goals

In the Gospel for the second Sunday of Lent, Jesus is revealed in His full glory as God at the Transfiguration. During Lent, we reflect in a special way on the full humanity and full divinity of Christ and how our God fully knows our human condition. In this lesson, students will create their own art and solve a puzzle to help them understand the mystery of the Incarnation.

Gospel Reflection

- 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.

Activity

Have your students read about how Jesus is both God and man from **Handout B: Jesus Is God and Man** (or read the information to your students while they follow along). Then, have them complete the word search and fill in the blanks. Finally, have your students create their own drawing of Jesus that shows that He is both God and man using **Handout C: God and Man**.

Gospel Reading for February 28, 2021

A Reading from the Gospel of Mark 9:2–10: The Transfiguration of Jesus

Jesus took Peter, James, and John and led them up a high mountain apart by themselves. And he was transfigured before them, and his clothes became dazzling white, such as no fuller on earth could bleach them. Then Elijah appeared to them along with Moses, and they were conversing with Jesus. Then Peter said to Jesus in reply, “Rabbi, it is good that we are here! Let us make three tents: one for you, one for Moses, and one for Elijah.” He hardly knew what to say, they were so terrified. Then a cloud came, casting



Transfiguration, by Rafael

a shadow over them; from the cloud came a voice, “This is my beloved Son. Listen to him.” Suddenly, looking around, they no longer saw anyone but Jesus alone with them. As they were coming down from the mountain, he charged them not to relate what they had seen to anyone, except when the Son of Man had risen from the dead. So they kept the matter to themselves, questioning what rising from the dead meant.

1. Whom did Jesus take with Him and where did they go?

2. Jesus was transfigured in front of His disciples. How does the Gospel describe this?

3. Who else appeared with Jesus? What were they doing?

4. What did the disciples want to do for them?

5. Whose voice spoke from a cloud? What did it say?

6. What did Jesus ask his disciples to do as they came down the mountain?

Jesus Is God and Man

Directions: Read the information. Then find the words in the word search and fill in the blanks.

Jesus is God. He is one with the Father and the Holy Spirit.

Jesus is also a man. He is like us in all things but sin.

Jesus is fully God and fully man. That means that God knows what it is like to be you and me. He knows what it is like to be happy and to be sad. He knows what it is like to have friends and to laugh. He also knows what it is like to sometimes feel lonely and hurt.

The good news is that Jesus died on the Cross to save us from sin. He invites us to love Him and accept His gift of salvation.



Transfiguration, by Bl. Fra Angelico

Word Search

**Words to
find:**

Cross
God

Man
Like

Gift

D	G	N	P	O	R	R	O	D	R
R	A	I	R	N	O	I	Z	Z	K
M	G	H	F	H	F	B	C	G	J
R	K	F	A	T	I	Y	G	A	G
S	V	C	R	O	S	S	H	N	S
L	T	D	B	D	Q	J	C	D	O
C	I	W	G	Z	Q	X	J	I	R
U	X	K	L	K	N	D	D	O	B
Z	W	F	E	R	N	O	J	T	E
X	M	S	Q	S	G	Y	W	Q	O

Fill-in-the-Blanks

Word bank

Cross

God

Man

Like

Gift

1. Jesus is fully _____.
2. Jesus is fully _____.
3. Jesus is _____ us in all things but sin.
4. Jesus died on the _____.
5. Jesus gives us the _____ of salvation from sin.

God and Man

Directions: Draw your own picture of Jesus that shows that He is both fully God and fully human.



Answer Key

Handout A: Gospel Reading for February 28, 2021

1. They went up a high mountain.
2. His clothes became dazzling white, brighter than any cleaner or bleach could make them.
3. Moses and Elijah. They were conversing.
4. Make three tents, one for each them.
5. God the Father. He said, "This is my beloved Son. Listen to him."
6. Not to tell anyone what they had seen until the Son of Man had risen from the dead.

Handout B: Jesus Is God and Man

Word Search

See answers at the right.

Fill-in-the-Blanks

1. God
2. Man
3. Like
4. Cross
5. Gift

D	G	N	P	O	R	R	O	D	R
R	A	I	R	N	O	I	Z	Z	K
M	G	H	F	H	F	B	C	G	J
R	K	F	A	T	I	Y	G	A	G
S	V	C	R	O	S	S	H	N	S
L	T	D	B	D	Q	J	C	D	O
C	I	W	G	Z	Q	X	J	I	R
U	X	K	L	K	N	D	D	O	B
Z	W	F	E	R	N	O	J	T	E
X	M	S	Q	S	G	Y	W	Q	O



Journey through Lent

THIRD SUNDAY OF LENT

Lower Elementary

Materials

- › Handout A: Gospel Reading for Sunday March 7, 2021
- › Handout B: Clean My Room
- › Handout C: Spot the Differences

Learning Goals

In the Gospel for the third Sunday of Lent, Jesus drives out the merchants and money changers from the Temple. These people had reduced worshipping God to a commercial act, and even prevented some people from being able to worship God at all. In this lesson, students will consider ways they can renew and refresh their own spiritual life, and reflect on sacred art.

Gospel Reflection

Read the Gospel passage aloud to your students as they follow along. Then, discuss the focus questions with them as a class. Share the background information with your students before discussing the focus questions.

Activity

- Have students read the information on **Handout B: Clean My Room** (or read it aloud as they follow along). Then, have your students answer the questions, or discuss them together as a class.
- Have students complete the **Handout C: Spot the Differences** activity. Tell your students to compare the two versions of the painting *Casting Out Money Changers* by Carl Bloch and find 9 differences between the two images. Have them circle the differences.

Gospel Reading for Sunday, March 7, 2021

Directions: Read the Gospel passage. Then answer the questions.

A Reading from the Gospel of John 2:13–25: Cleansing of the Temple

Since the Passover of the Jews was near, Jesus went up to Jerusalem. He found in the temple area those who sold oxen, sheep, and doves, as well as the money changers seated there. He made a whip out of cords and drove them all out of the temple area, with the sheep and oxen, and spilled the coins of the money changers and overturned their tables, and to those who sold doves he said, “Take these out of here, and stop making my Father’s house a marketplace.” His disciples recalled the words of Scripture, *Zeal for your house will consume me*. At this the Jews answered and said to him, “What sign can you show us for doing this?” Jesus answered and said to them, “Destroy this temple and in three days I will raise it up.” The Jews said, “This temple has been under construction for forty-six years, and you will raise it up in three days?” But he was speaking about the temple

of his body. Therefore, when he was raised from the dead, his disciples remembered that he had said this, and they came to believe the Scripture and the word Jesus had spoken. While he was in Jerusalem for the feast of Passover, many began to believe in his name when they saw the signs he was doing. But Jesus would not trust himself to them because he knew them all, and did not need anyone to testify about human nature. He himself understood it well.

Background information

The animals that were being sold in the Temple area were the kinds of animals the Jewish people offered as sacrifice in the Temple. At certain times of year, the Jews were required to offer an animal sacrifice to God, according to Jewish law. People from all over the world came to the Temple to worship God and to offer sacrifice. The people selling animals for sacrifice could charge whatever they wanted for the animals. Sometimes people could not afford an animal and were unable to offer sacrifice. The sellers had turned the act of worship into a business and made money off of the people. The same was true of the money changers. They would charge people a fee to change

foreign money into the form of money that was accepted in the Temple area.

Being angry is not a sin. Anger is an emotion and all emotions are neither morally good nor morally sinful. It is what we do with an emotion that gives it a moral quality, either good or sinful. Sometimes anger can cause us to act righteously when we encounter something that is unjust or evil.

1. What did Jesus find in the Temple when He went there for Passover?

2. What did Jesus do in response to what He found in the Temple?

3. What did Jesus tell these people as He did this?

4. What sign did Jesus promise the people? What was He really talking about?

5. Why do you think Jesus' actions in this Gospel were not sinful?

Clean My Room

Directions: Read about cleaning your room. Then answer the questions.

Sometimes we have to clean our rooms. Maybe our mom or dad asked us to. Maybe we wanted to. We have to put away our toys. We have to make our bed. We have to throw away the trash. Cleaning is important, even though it might not be fun. It makes us feel good to have a clean room. After we put away our toys and throw out the trash, there's a lot more space. Cleaning from time to time makes it easier to play in our room.

Our Christian lives can be like our rooms. Sometimes we have to do a bit of cleaning up. Sometimes there are things that stand in the way of our friendship with God. These things need to be thrown away. Sometimes our feelings have been hurt by someone else. We need to forgive them. Sometimes we forget to pray. God wants us to pray and talk to Him every day. Lent is a time for us to clean up our faith life. This

week's Gospel reminds us of this fact. We can begin to do this by giving up something for Lent, by helping others, and by praying every day.

1. What is one way you have helped others so far this Lent?

2. What have you given up this Lent? Has it been easy or hard to do so? Why?

3. Have you prayed every day this Lent? What can you do to remember to pray?

Spot the Differences

Directions: Compare the two images of *Casting Out Money Changers* by Carl Bloch. See if you can spot 9 differences between the two images. Circle the differences when you find them.



First Image



Second Image

Answer Key

Handout A: Gospel Reading for Sunday March 7, 2021

1. People selling animals (oxen, sheep, and doves) and money changers.
2. He made a whip out of cords and drove the people selling animals (along with their animals) out of the Temple area, spilled the money of the money changers, and overturned their tables.
3. "Take these out of here, and stop making my Father's house a marketplace."
4. "Destroy this temple and in three days I will raise it up." Jesus was really talking about His own body and His Death and Resurrection on the third day.
5. Jesus saw that worship of God in the Temple, the main and most holy house of worship for the Jewish people, had become irreverent and commercialized. The actions of the sellers and moneychangers in the Temple area did not lead people to true worship, and, in fact, prevented those who could not pay from worshipping God. Jesus' actions were justifiable. His anger at the situation prompted Him to act justly by cleaning out the Temple area so that the people could worship God as they were meant to. Accept other reasoned answers. Be sure to make it clear that Jesus was not acting sinfully in this Gospel story, and that His anger was righteous and justified.

Handout C: Spot the Differences





Journey through Lent

FOURTH SUNDAY OF LENT

Lower Elementary

Materials

- › Handout A: Gospel Reading for Sunday March 14, 2021
- › Handout B: The *Kerygma* Discussion Guide
- › Handout C: The *Kerygma* Acrostic Poem

Learning Goals

The Gospel for the fourth Sunday of Lent contains some of the best-known words of the Bible: “For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him might not perish but might have eternal life” (John 3:16). This passage is so well-known for good reason – it summarizes the entirety of the Gospel message, or, the *Kerygma*. In this lesson, students will analyze the basic proclamation of the Gospel and create an acrostic poem.

Gospel Reflection

Read the Gospel passage aloud to your students as they follow along. Then, discuss the focus questions with them as a class.

Activity

- Use **Handout B: The *Kerygma* Discussion Guide** to conduct a class discussion about your students’ knowledge and thoughts about the Gospel message and to teach them about the *Kerygma*.
- Have your students create an acrostic poem about the Gospel message using **Handout C: *Kerygma* Acrostic Poem**. Each line of the poem should begin with a different letter from the word *Kerygma*. Alternately, you could write the word *Kerygma* on the board or on a piece of poster board or butcher paper and write an acrostic poem together as a class using suggestions from your students.

Gospel Reading for March 14, 2021

Directions: Read the Gospel passage. Then answer the questions.

A Reading from the Gospel of John 3:14–21: The Good News of the Gospel

Jesus said to Nicodemus: “Just as Moses lifted up the serpent in the desert, so must the Son of Man be lifted up, so that everyone who believes in him may have eternal life.” For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him might not perish but might have eternal life. For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world might be saved through him. Whoever believes in him will not be condemned, but whoever does not believe has already been condemned, because he has not believed in the name of the only Son of God. And this is the verdict, that the light came into the world, but people preferred darkness to light, because their works were evil. For everyone who does wicked things hates the light and does not come toward the light, so that his works might not be exposed. But whoever lives the truth comes to the light, so that his works may be clearly seen as done in God.

1. The Son of Man is a title for Jesus. What do you think He meant when He said that the Son of Man must “be lifted up, so that everyone who believes in him may have eternal life”?

2. What did God do because He loved the world? Why did He do this?

3. To condemn something is to judge it to be wrong or evil. What did God send His Son to do instead of condemn the world?

4. Another title for Jesus is Light of the World. Why do you think this is a good title for Jesus?

The *Kerygma* Discussion Guide

Directions: Conduct a discussion with your class using the questions and information below.

1. Who is Jesus?
2. What does Jesus mean to you? Explain.
3. Why did Jesus come to earth, suffer and die on the Cross, and rise from the dead?
4. What does Jesus ask of you?
5. What is your reaction when you hear that Jesus loves you?
6. Do you believe in Jesus and His promises? Why or why not?
7. Explain the following points to your students:
 - *Kerygma* is a Greek word for “preaching” used in the New Testament.
 - We use *Kerygma* today to mean the proclamation of the basic Gospel message that all Christians understand and believe.
 - The Apostles and the early Church used the basic points of the *Kerygma* to tell others about Jesus and invite them to become members of the Church.

- This week's Gospel reading can be thought of as the heart of the Gospel. The Kerygma is summarized by one of the most well-known Scripture passages, John 3:16, which we read as part of this week's Gospel: "For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him might not perish but might have eternal life."
 - » *Write the whole passage of John 3:16 on the board.*
- Many people memorize John 3:16 because it contains the *Kerygma*.
 - » *Challenge your students to memorize John 3:16. You can have them practice writing it out and reciting it over a period of days to commit it to memory.*
- The following are the most important parts of the *Kerygma*: *(Consider writing these on the board as you discuss them.)*
 - » God loves us and made us in His image and likeness to love Him and to love one another.
 - » The first man and woman (Adam and Eve) turned away from God's love. God never stopped loving us and promised to send a Savior (the Messiah) to save us from sin. God prepared us to receive salvation throughout Salvation History (which we read about in the Bible).
 - » Jesus is God's promised Savior (the Messiah), who was crucified and rose from the dead to save us from our sins and invite us to eternal life with God in Heaven.

- » Jesus ascended into Heaven and is seated at the right hand of God the Father.
- » Jesus calls everyone to Him through the ministry of the Church.
- » The *Kerygma* requires a response from us to repent of our sins, receive the sacrament of Baptism, and keep Jesus' commandments.
- Ask your students the following questions, referring to the written out John 3:16 on the board:
 - » Which part of John 3:16 refers to how God loves us? (*Circle "For God so loved the world..."*)
 - » Which part of John 3:16 refers to how God sent us a Savior, Jesus His Son, who died on the Cross for our sins so we could have eternal life? (*Draw a box around "...He gave His only Son..." and "...might not perish but might have eternal life."*)
 - » Which part of John 3:16 refers to what we have to do in response to the Gospel message? (*Underline "...everyone who believes in Him..."*)

Kerygma Acrostic Poem

Directions: Write an acrostic poem about the Gospel message.
Each line of the poem should begin with a letter from the word *Kerygma*.

K _____

E _____

R _____

Y _____

G _____

M _____

A _____

Answer Key

Handout A: Gospel Reading for March 14, 2021

1. Jesus was referring to His Crucifixion.
2. He gave His only Son, so that everyone who believes in Him might not perish but might have eternal life.
3. Save the world.
4. Jesus, the Light of the World, shines in the darkness and makes our good works known as works of God. He guides our path in the darkness. Accept other reasoned answers.



Journey through Lent

FIFTH SUNDAY OF LENT

Lower Elementary

Materials

- › Handout A: Gospel Reading for Sunday March 21, 2021
- › Handout B: Follow Jesus
- › Crayons, markers, and/or colored pencils

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 solve a puzzle and contemplate how they can take up their own crosses and follow Jesus.

Gospel Reflection

Read the Gospel passage aloud to your students as they follow along. Then, discuss the focus questions with them as a class.

Activity

Have your students read (or read aloud to them as they follow along) **Handout B: Follow Jesus**. Then, have them solve the puzzle and answer the reflection question. You may also have your students color the picture of the student following in Jesus' footsteps.

Gospel Reading for March 21, 2021

Directions: Read the Gospel passage. Then answer the questions.

A Reading from the Gospel of John 12:20–33:

The Coming of Jesus' Hour

Some Greeks who had come to worship at the Passover Feast came to Philip, who was from Bethsaida in Galilee, and asked him, “Sir, we would like to see Jesus.” Philip went and told Andrew; then Andrew and Philip went and told Jesus. Jesus answered them, “The hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified. 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. Whoever loves his life loses it, and whoever hates his life in this world will preserve it for eternal life. Whoever serves me must follow me, and where I am, there also will my servant be. The Father will honor whoever serves me.

“I am troubled now. Yet what should I say? ‘Father, save me from this hour’? But it was for this purpose that I came to this hour. Father, glorify your name.” Then a voice came from heaven, “I have glorified it and will

glorify it again.” The crowd there heard it and said it was thunder; but others said, “An angel has spoken to him.” Jesus answered and said, “This voice did not come for my sake but for yours. Now is the time of judgment on this world; now the ruler of this world will be driven out. And when I am lifted up from the earth, I will draw everyone to myself.” He said this indicating the kind of death he would die.

1. Jesus said to His disciples, “The hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified.” What do you think Jesus is speaking of?

2. When a grain of wheat is planted in the ground, it is the seed of a new wheat plant. In a way, the grain of wheat stops being a grain of wheat and becomes a new thing: a new wheat plant. How are we like the grain of wheat?

3. What does Jesus say He will do when He is “lifted up”?

Follow Jesus

Directions: Read about following Jesus. Then, solve the puzzle and answer the question.

Jesus said, “If anyone wishes to come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me.” (Luke 9:23).

Our cross is not like Jesus’. It is not big and wooden. It is not something we carry on our shoulders. Our crosses are the hard things we have to face in our lives. Some people might be very sick. Some people might be lonely and need friends. Other people are poor or homeless. Some people have a hard time in school. Everyone’s cross is different.

Jesus asks each of us to carry our own cross – the hard things we face in life. When we follow Jesus, we accept the hard things in our lives and walk in Jesus’ footsteps. He knows what it is like to be you and me. And He knows that following Him is hard to do. Jesus only asks us to do things that He already knows we can do. Even though following Him is hard, Jesus loves us. And He helps us carry our crosses every day.

Lent Code

A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I
5	11	15	26	1	8	17	4	19

J	K	L	M	N	O	P	Q	R
25	20	9	3	2	12	24	21	10

S	T	U	V	W	X	Y	Z
7	14	16	6	23	18	22	13

1. Jesus asks me to carry my

15 10 12 7 7

2. Jesus knows what it is like to be

_____ and _____

22 12 16 3 1

3. When we follow Jesus, we walk in His

8 12 12 14 7 14 1 24 7

I will follow Jesus today by....



Answer Key

Handout A: Gospel Reading for March 21, 2021

1. His suffering, Crucifixion, and Death on the Cross.
2. 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 allow God to make us new creations (as in Baptism).
3. Draw everyone to Himself.

Handout B: Follow Jesus

1. Cross
2. You/me
3. Footsteps