

4th Sunday of Lent through the 6th Sunday of Easter
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Good News for Children

Teaching Guide

Unit 4: Followers of the Risen Christ

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Pflaum  **Gospel Weeklies**

Supplement to the *Pflaum Gospel Weeklies*

Connecting Gospel and Doctrine

During Lent the Church not only prepares catechumens for Baptism but immerses all of us in the mystery of our redemption. We remember in the First Readings of Lent great events in our holy history—God’s promises to Abraham and Sarah, God’s hearing the cries of the Hebrew slaves and calling Moses to help free them, God’s bringing the people of Israel home from exile.

We remember Jesus’ Gospel parables to give one another second chances and cultivate healing in our relationships rather than condemning others. Forgiveness gives life and cultivates fruitful relationships. Jesus teaches us God is like a forgiving father who seeks out the lost. In his passion and death, Jesus reveals his love for us. During Lent the *Good News* children explore the *Our Father*, the summary of the whole Gospel.

In celebrating Holy Week, we remember the final events of Jesus’ life—the new covenant he makes in pledging his lifeblood for us, his death on the cross, his resurrection to new life.

The 50 days of Easter celebrate the risen Jesus’ continuing presence with us and our lives in his Holy Spirit. Like his first followers, Jesus calls us to gather others into our community, to love one another as he loved us, to share the Spirit of love that is the very life of God. This is the mystery of our redemption—that we share the very life of God, who lives three-in-one love.

Quotations below from the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* indicate the doctrinal emphasis in each *Good News* issue.

4th Sunday of Lent

Our salvation flows from God’s initiative of love for us, because “God loved us and sent the Son to be the expiation for our sins” (620). The process of conversion and repentance was described by Jesus in the parable of the prodigal son, the center of which is the merciful father (1439).

5th Sunday of Lent

Only God forgives sins. Since he is the Son of God, Jesus says of himself, “The Son of man has authority on earth to forgive sins” and exercises this divine power: “Your sins are forgiven.” (1441). During his public life Jesus not only forgave sins, but also made plain the effect of his forgiveness: he reintegrated sinners into the community of the people of God from which sin had alienated or even excluded them (1443). When we say “Our” Father, we are invoking the new covenant in Jesus Christ, communion with the Holy Trinity, and the divine love which spreads through the Church to encompass the world (2801). Also 574, 594, 620, 1492, 2774, 2776, 2846-2854, 2857, 2863-64

Palm/Passion Sunday

The Paschal mystery of Christ’s cross and resurrection stands at the center of the Good News that the apostles, and the Church following them, are to proclaim to the world. God’s saving plan was accomplished “once for all” by the redemptive death of God’s Son Jesus (571). “Christ died for our sins in accordance with the scriptures” (619). Jesus freely offered himself for our salvation. Beforehand, during the Last Supper, he both symbolized this offering and made it really present: “This is my body which is given for you” (621). By his loving obedience to the Father, “into death, even death on a cross,” Jesus fulfills

the atoning mission of the suffering Servant (623). Also 607, 616, 629, 1168, 1169, 1187, 1189

Easter/2nd Sunday of Easter

The Resurrection of Jesus is the crowning truth of our faith in Christ, a faith believed and lived as the central truth by the first Christian community; handed on as fundamental by Tradition; established by the documents of the New Testament; and preached as an essential part of the Paschal mystery along with the cross (638). Christ’s resurrection—and the risen Christ himself—is the principle and source of our future resurrection (655). Faith in the Resurrection has as its object an event which is historically attested to by the disciples, who really encountered the Risen One. At the same time, this event is mysteriously transcendent insofar as it is the entry of Christ’s humanity into the glory of God (656). Also 179, 180, 639, 641, 654, 1089, 1169

3rd Sunday of Easter

Christ’s whole life expresses his mission: “to serve and give his life as a ransom for many.” (608). The Paschal mystery of Christ cannot remain only in the past, because by his death he destroyed death, and all that Christ is—all that he did and suffered for all—participates in the divine eternity, and so transcends all times while being made present in them all. The event of the Cross and Resurrection abides and draws everything toward life (1085). Also 96, 638, 654, 656, 658

4th Sunday of Easter

The Church is a sheepfold, the sole and necessary gateway to which is Christ...the Good Shepherd and Prince of Shepherds, who gave his life for his sheep (754). The Church is the Body of Christ. Through the Spirit and his action in the sacraments, above all the Eucharist, Christ, who once was dead and is now risen, establishes a community of believers as his own Body (805). Every person, through the gift given to him or her, is at once the witness and the living instrument of the mission of the Church itself “according to the measure of Christ’s bestowal” (913). Also 71, 782, 810, 866-869, 1591

5th Sunday of Easter

The New Law is the grace of the Holy Spirit received by faith in Christ, operating through charity. It finds expression above all in the Lord’s Sermon on the Mount and uses the sacraments to communicate grace to us (1983). “God is love” and love is God’s first gift, containing all others. “God’s love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit who has been given to us” (733). Also 96, 2011, 2017

6th Sunday of Easter

The Holy Spirit, whom Christ the head pours out in his members, builds, animates and sanctifies the Church. She is the sacrament of the Holy Trinity’s communion with people (747). The Spirit manifests the risen Lord to Christ’s faithful, recalls his words to them and opens their minds to the understanding of his Death and Resurrection (737). Also 726, 729, 743, 777, 809-10.

Gospel Theme: Who's right? Who's wrong?

Is finding who is most to blame in a situation the real point? In Sunday's Gospel Jesus says no. Teachers of the Law ask Jesus what to do with a woman who committed a sin that could be punished by stoning to death. Jesus tells the accusers that those who have never committed a sin can be the ones to punish the woman. One by one they walk away. *Good News* invites children to look at their own experiences of blaming and being blamed and of forgiving and being forgiven.

Share Our Life Stories

Opening Prayer Gather in a prayer circle. Remind the children of the story last week of the forgiving father. Ask them to be quiet for a moment and think of a time they forgave someone who hurt them or bothered them. Let volunteers share one or two experiences. Then summarize all their thoughts in this prayer.

Loving God, you always forgive us and welcome us back. Thank you for helping us forgive others who hurt us or bother us. We want to be loving like you. Amen.

Objective: The children will experience a variety of ways we need to forgive and ask forgiveness.

Cover Activity: What Can I Forgive? Stay in the story circle and distribute *Good News*. Read the headline and the introductory copy under it. Divide your group into four small groups. Assign a story to each group. Ask them to read their story together and decide on a way to act it out for the whole group. The group takes a vote on whether forgiving the person(s) in the story was easy or hard or very hard. Keep a tab on the chalkboard or on newsprint. Don't take too long with this introductory activity. It aims to get children ready to identify with a variety of ways children learn to accept responsibility and to forgive.

Story: The Whiskers Dilemma (pages 2-3) Have the children speculate from the illustration and title what the story is about. Read the story aloud together, taking turns a paragraph at a time. After the reading have the children act out the story so you can check their comprehension of the situation. Then read the question. After discussion, have five children read the five solutions offered. Take a moment of silence for the children to make their selections of best and worst plans privately. Tally the results; discuss them until the children are satisfied with their solution to the Whiskers dilemma.

Listen to the Gospel

Objective: The children will appreciate Jesus' forgiving love.

Gospel: Who Will Blame This Woman? (page 3, top) Have the children read the title, look at the illustration, and speculate on what must be happening. *The woman looks very sad. Two*

of the men are pointing at her and talking about her. Two others look unsure. Jesus has his hand on the woman's arm in a comforting way and is speaking to the men. Then read the two questions as a way of focusing the children's listening to the Gospel message. Have the children proclaim the Gospel in drama form. Read the questions again, and let the children respond to them. Point out Jesus' care for the woman, especially as contrasted with the blaming of the others. Ask: How do you think the woman felt? What do you think she did next? If the children ask how the woman broke the Law, explain she was with a man who wasn't her husband. What matters is that Jesus forgives her and asks her not to break the Law again.

Build Christian Community

Objective: The children will decide how to respond to unloving actions at school and on the playground.

What Do You Decide? (page 4) Examine the illustration to discover that today's activity takes place in the classroom and on the playground at school. Have someone read the first statement; take time for the children to name as many "wrong" actions as they can and tell why each is wrong. *Some activities are rule-breaking: playing football near the little kids' part of the playground; disrupting class. Others are mean: playing keepaway with a child's backpack; spoiling fun on the slide.*

Read the three questions aloud and be ready for a great discussion! In small groups of three or four or as a total group, have the children share their responses. Then ask the children to share wrong things that have happened in their classroom or playground. Note these on the chalkboard or newsprint. Have them apply the same three questions to each situation they suggest. Conclude by asking how they decide what is a right way to act in a given situation.

Wordfind: Loving and Unloving (page 3, bottom) Brainstorm loving and unloving words and write them on the chalkboard. Be sure the ones included in the wordfind are among them—share, forgive, hug, invite, love, help, tease, blame, bully, fight, lie, cheat. Give the children time to complete the wordfind. The final message—Jesus forgives us!

Prayer Divide the class in two. Read aloud the unloving words you noted on the chalkboard. After each one, half the class will respond, "Jesus forgives us," and the other half, "We can forgive, too." Conclude with the *Our Father*.

Definition: Sin (page 4) Read the definition aloud together and relate it to Jesus' actions toward the woman in the Gospel.

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Dear Parents,

The liturgies of **Holy Week** have more for children to see and hear than any other liturgies of the year. In religion class children learn with other children. At liturgies the whole Church gathers—young and old. We see and witness others' faith. Watching other Christians worship tells children how adults value and express their faith.

Children learn concretely. Concrete symbols fill the Holy Week liturgies and make them memorable for young people. **On Holy Thursday the priest, and in some parishes the people, wash each others' feet just as Jesus washed his friends' feet—a concrete act of service.**

On Good Friday we hear the long story of Jesus' passion and venerate the cross by touching or kissing it. Some parishes have outdoor stations of the cross. We kneel again and again to pray for the people of the world and their needs on this day when Jesus gave his lifeblood for us.

On Holy Saturday the liturgy begins with the new fire kindled in the dark of night to symbolize the resurrection. Everyone processes into church in darkness and lights a candle from the new Easter Candle. The church fills with light. We hear Scripture stories that remind us of all God has done for us from the creation of the world until now. We baptize the catechumens into Jesus' new life. The priest sprinkles the whole community with newly blessed Easter water. The newly baptized put on white robes to be confirmed and receive first Holy Communion. Some of them may be children. The smell of Easter lilies fills the church. Alleluias fill the songs.

The *Pflaum Gospel Weeklies* have prepared your child to celebrate Holy Week. When you take part in these liturgies with them, you share with them your Easter faith and experience together the mystery of God's life-giving love for us. **Happy Easter!**



We Are The Church

Dedicated to Ethel Davis

Richard Avery
Donald Marsh

Chorus

G G6 Em D7

I am the church! You are the church! We are the church to - geth-er!

G Em Am D Bm Em D7 G G

All who fol-low Je - sus, All a-round the world! Yes, we're the church to - geth-er.

Verse

G C

1. The church is not a build - ing,	The church is not a stee - ple,	The
2. We're man - y kinds of peo - ple	With man - y kinds of fac - es,	All
3. Some - times the church is march - ing,	Some - times it's brave - ly burn - ing,	Some -
4. And when the peo - ple gath - er	There's sing - ing and there's pray - ing,	There's
5. At Pen - te - cost some peo - ple	Re - ceiv - ed the Ho - ly Spir - it	And
6. I count if I am nine - ty,	Or nine, or just a ba - by;	There's

D G C D7

(1) church is not a rest - ing place, the	church	is	a	peo - ple!
(2) col - ors and all ag - es, too, from	All	times	and	plac - es.
(3) times it's rid - ing, some - times hid - ing,	Al -	ways	it's	learn - ing;
(4) laugh - ing and there's cry - ing some - times,	All	of	it	say - ing;
(5) told the Good News through the world to	All	who	would	hear it.
(6) one thing I am sure a - bout and	I	don't	mean	may - be;

How Am I Doing?

Name _____

A. Vocabulary Matching

Match the following vocabulary words from your *Good News* lessons with their definitions.

- | | |
|-----------------|--|
| 1. Eucharist | a. Freely choosing to do what we know is wrong. |
| 2. Resurrection | b. Rising from the dead. |
| 3. Holy Spirit | c. A sacrament that gives us the gifts of the Spirit. |
| 4. Prodigal | d. Third Person of the Trinity. |
| 5. Holy Week | e. Days remembering Jesus' passion, death, and resurrection. |
| 6. Sin | f. Someone who wastes money. |
| 7. Confirmation | g. Mass: Jesus' body and blood. |

B. True or False?

Circle the T next to statements you think are true. Change the statements you think are false to make them true.

- | | | |
|---|---|---|
| T | F | 1. The prodigal son's father forgives him because he pays back all the money his father gave him. |
| T | F | 2. Jesus didn't punish the woman who had sinned because there wasn't enough evidence against her. |
| T | F | 3. John and Peter were the first to see Jesus when he rose from the dead. |
| T | F | 4. After Jesus rose from the dead, he could still eat food. |
| T | F | 5. The fish is a symbol the early Christians used to stand for Jesus. |
| T | F | 6. Alleluia is a word we don't use during Lent. We save it to show our Easter joy. |

C. Holy Week

Draw a line from the days of Holy Week to the words that describe them.

- | | |
|------------------|--|
| 1. Palm Sunday | a. We remember how Jesus died on the cross. |
| 2. Holy Thursday | b. We process with palms as people of Jerusalem did for Jesus. |
| 3. Good Friday | c. We baptize people on this night. |
| 4. Holy Saturday | d. We celebrate Jesus' resurrection |
| 5. Easter Sunday | e. We remember that Jesus gave us his body and blood. |

D. Multiple Choice

Circle all of the correct answers.

- Moses lived most of his life in
 - the United States
 - France
 - Egypt
 - Syria
- Moses led his people
 - Out of slavery.
 - On a path through the sea.
 - To find water in the desert.
 - To God's mountain to get the Ten Commandments.
- When his friends were fishing on Lake Galilee and saw Jesus,
 - They invited him to row out to their boat.
 - They ignored him.
 - Peter told John that it was really Jesus.
 - Peter jumped in the water and swam to shore.
- When Jesus came to be with his friends on Easter Sunday night, he said,
 - "Hello."
 - "Peace be with you."
 - "I am really angry with you."
 - "Where is everybody?"
- The Holy Spirit is
 - The Third Person of the Trinity.
 - The pep that helps win games.
 - The name of a rock group.
 - The giver of life.

