

Teaching Guide

Joshua 5.9-12; 2 Corinthians 5.17-21; Luke 15.1-3,11-32

OVERVIEW

Gospel Theme: God is like a forgiving father.

In Sunday's Gospel Jesus tells his followers a story of a runaway son who comes home. Rather than scold him, his father welcomes him with open arms. That welcome tells the son he is forgiven and can again be part of the family. The older son cannot understand his father's forgiving attitude. Jesus leaves his story unfinished at that point. Will the older brother understand and forgive or will he run away from what family means?

Doctrinal Concept: Sin wounds the loving relationship that God has initiated with us. It is an offense against God that turns the human heart away from God's love. It wounds human nature and injures human solidarity (*National Directory for Catechesis #42.D*). *Catechism of the Catholic Church #1439, 2214-19, 2251.*

Materials: Pencils, scissors, crayons or markers.

SHARING LIFE STORIES

GATHER AND SING Gather the children in the open area. Stand in a circle and sing "Jesus, I Will Stay With You" from the *Promise* CD. Or sing the following words to the tune of "London Bridge."

When my brother hits me hard,
I am sad. I am sad.
Then he says, forgive me please.
I forgive him.

When I disobey my mom,
she is sad. She is sad.
Then I say forgive me please.
She forgives me.

OPENING PRAYER The children sit down in their circle and listen as you pray the opening prayer. They respond "Amen."

Loving God, we have come to Promise class to learn about your Son, Jesus. He teaches us to forgive people who make us unhappy. He teaches us to ask forgiveness when we make others unhappy. Help us learn today how we can follow his teachings.

Objective: The children will recognize the need to forgive and be forgiven.

STORY: Cecilia and the Rubber Ball Gather the children in the story circle. Tell them the following story.

Cecilia got a new yellow and orange rubber ball for her birthday. It had a wonderful bounce. Her mom was glad

Cecilia liked her ball but told her to bounce it outside, not inside the house. One day when her mom was busy paying bills Cecilia sat admiring her ball on her shelf. Soon she took the ball down, threw it into the air, and caught it. She took it with her into the living room. She threw it a little higher and still caught it. Cecilia was getting so good that she gave the ball a really high throw but she wasn't quite quick enough to catch it. It crashed down on her mom's beautiful crystal vase. The sound of glass breaking filled the room as the vase hit the floor. Her mother came running. "Cecilia, what have you done? How could you play with your ball in the house when I told you it was an outdoor ball?" Cecilia started to cry. Her mom told her to get a kitchen chair, put it in the corner of the living room, sit there, and think about what obeying is. Cecilia sat crying and crying. She was sorry she had disobeyed and broken her mom's vase. Ten minutes later her mom came and gave her some green olives to eat. Cecilia knew her mom had forgiven her. She was so happy she ate every olive. Cecilia's mom gave her a hug, and said, "Everything is okay." Cecilia thanked her mom and said, "I am very sorry. I will never bounce the ball in the house again." And to this day Cecilia loves green olives.

Discuss the story. Bring out Cecilia's need for forgiveness and how happy she feels when her mother forgives her. Ask the children about their own experiences of forgiving and being forgiven.

HOW CAN I FORGIVE? Divide the children into groups of 3 or 4. Tell them each group is a set of actors. You will tell a story and they can act it out in their group. There are three stories to act out. If you have time, choose groups to act out their story for the other children. Make sure each group has a chance at least once.

1. A group of children were playing UNO. Tony got angry because he wasn't winning. He picked up the stack of UNO cards and threw them on the floor. "I don't want to play anymore," Tony said and walked away. The other children picked up the cards and kept on playing. Tony thought about what he did. He came back to the group and said, "I'm sorry." The other children said, "That's okay." Tony sat down to play again.

2. Jane had a birthday party with her friends. When they were all playing games, Jane's little sister Sally opened the present Teresa had brought. It was a pretty bracelet. Sally was trying on the bracelet when Jane and her friends came into the room. "You opened my present!" Jane said, and snatched it away from Sally. Sally started to cry. Mom said, "Sally, please tell Jane you are sorry you opened her present." "I am sorry," Sally said. "That's okay," said Jane. Jane let Sally help her blow out the candles on her birthday cake.

3. Michael loved baseball. He also loved to win. One day Michael was batting and he struck out. He was so upset that he threw the bat. It flew toward the other children and almost hit them. The coach asked Michael to apologize for being a bad sport. "I'm sorry," said Michael. "That's okay," the other players said.

STRETCH AND MOVE Move to the open area and have the children stand so they can swing their arms without touching anyone. Have them do 20 jumping jacks while you count. Then have them run in place while you count to 15. Finally, ask them to tiptoe to the work area while you count to 10.

LISTENING TO THE GOSPEL

Objective: The children will appreciate the importance of asking for forgiveness.

COVER: Who forgives me? Distribute *Promise*. Have the children identify what is happening on the cover—a celebration. Ask why someone is still on the tractor working and not enjoying the picnic. Tell the Gospel story of the forgiving father.

A father had two sons whom he loved dearly. The older son always helped his father on the farm. The younger son was very restless. He did not like working on the farm. One day he told his father that he wanted to have some money and leave. His father felt very sad. But he gave his son money and blessed him. The younger son went far away and made bad friends who loved to spend his money. He made many wrong choices. Soon his money was gone. He had no food and no place to sleep. Finally he got a job taking care of pigs, but the pigs had more to eat than he did. The younger son began to think about his father. He felt sorry that he had left home and made such foolish choices. He decided to go back. "I'll tell him I am sorry. He can treat me like a servant."

When his father saw his son coming down the road, he was delighted. The younger son said, "I'm sorry. Treat me like a servant but let me come home." The father hugged him, ordered a big party for him, gave him new clothes and a ring. When the older son found out about the party for his brother, he felt angry and hurt. After all, he had stayed with his father and helped him on the farm. He told his father how he felt. The father looked at his older son and said, "We must be happy and forgiving because your brother has come home. I will always love you. You are very special to me. Now come and be happy because your brother was lost and now he is found."

Discuss the story. Ask: How did the younger son feel when he went away? Why did he come back? How did the father feel when the younger son left? When he came back? How did the older son feel about the brother's party?

GOSPEL STORY CARDS (pages 3-4) Direct the children to page 4. Have them identify the scenes from the Gospel story, then cut out the story cards and fold them on the dotted line so that the pictures show. With the cards on the table in front of them, go through each card reading the words that tell whom each illustration shows: *forgiving father,*

younger son, older son, pigs. Read the words on the inside of the cards. Have the children retell the story to each other using the cards.

BUILDING CHRISTIAN COMMUNITY

Jesus asks us to... (page 2) Gather the children in the work area. Read the words across the top of the page. Direct the children's attention to the pictures in the pie. Point to the fish and ask the children to identify it. Ask what is the beginning sound of fish. Have them print an F on the line above 1. Explain that when they put all the beginning sounds of the things in each piece of the pie on the line with its number, they will be able to complete the sentence. Identify the illustrations before they start—*fish, guitar, owl, igloo, rabbit, vest, elephant.* Read the title sentence together when the children are finished.

CONCLUDING SONG Sing "The Whole World Is in God's Hands" once through with the children. Then make up verses for the characters in the Gospel story, and finally for this *Promise* class and its teacher.

EXTENDING ACTIVITIES

FORGIVENESS CHAIN Cut several sheets of typing paper into 1 1/2" x 8 1/2" strips. Have the children print *I can forgive* on the strips. For the next few *Promise* sessions, notice when a child forgives another for bumping him or her, spilling crayons, pushing ahead, not listening. Every time you hear a child forgive another, or you, call attention to it and ask for a volunteer to make a link out of one of the forgiveness strips you have prepared. As your chain grows, the children will become more aware of how forgiveness makes a classroom a happy place.

THE OUR FATHER We ask for forgiveness and promise to forgive each time we pray the *Our Father*. Teach the children the following gestures.

Our Father...hands raised in prayer

Your kingdom come...hands crossed over heart

Your will be done...arms in circle as if embracing earth

Give us this day...hands cupped and raised up

Forgive us...shake hands with neighbors

Lead us...hands clasped in prayer

But deliver us...hands raised in prayer

Amen!

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OVERVIEW

Gospel Theme: Jesus teaches about forgiveness.

In Sunday's Gospel Jesus refuses to blame a woman whom others accuse. He is more interested in the woman's future life than in her past. *Promise* explores the children's feelings about what is fair and what is unfair.

Doctrinal Concept: Catechesis for life in Christ ... is a catechesis about sin and forgiveness that helps us confront our sinfulness and accept God's mercy (*National Directory for Catechesis* #40). *Catechism of the Catholic Church* #594, 1432-33, 2330.

Materials: Pencils, crayons, or markers. Separate pages 1-2 of *Promise* from pages 3-4 before class.

SHARING LIFE STORIES

GATHER AND SING Gather the children in the open area, standing in a circle. Teach them this song to the tune of "Skip to My Lou." When they are comfortable with the words, have them hold hands in the circle and add the gestures.

Jesus says, "Love your friends." *Move to the right.*

Jesus says, "Help them out." *Move to the left.*

Jesus says, "We are all *Move to the center.*
one big family." *Yay! Raise joined hands high.*

We all say, "Thank you, God."

We all say, "Thank you, God."

We all say, "Thank you, God,
For our family." *Yay!*

OPENING PRAYER The children sit in their places in the circle while you pray the following prayer or one of your own. They respond "Amen."

Dear God, you love each one of us, even when we make mistakes. You love us, even when we are unkind to others. You forgive us and help us to forgive people who hurt us. Thank you for your love.

COVER ACTIVITY: I can change. Stay in the circle. Tell the children that the artist who drew the picture on this week's copy of *Promise* went to the beach one day and saw all kinds of things going on there. Some were loving actions; some were not. Some were mistakes and accidents. Distribute *Promise* and give the children time to look at the illustration. You may wish to divide them into pairs, and instruct them to take turns pointing out what is happening. After a minute call them together as a group, read the questions one at a time, and ask for their responses.

Loving actions: *showing the fish to friends, taking Grandma to the beach, bringing a drink to someone.*

Making mistakes: *scout leader gets lost, lady backs over*

picnic blanket, spilling juice, stumbling over the sand castle.
Acting mean: *fishermen throwing litter into the water, splashing the girl swimmer, people on the beach pointing and laughing, boy not controlling his dog, child keeping kids from using the slide, children tying something on the dog's tail.*

Read the cover sentence: I can change. Ask what the people who are making mistakes or doing mean things can do to make things better? Enjoy this discussion with the children, then tell them you know a story about a boy who got blamed for something he didn't do. Have them put their *Promise* copies on the floor in front of them so they can listen to the story.

Objective: The children will identify their feelings about being blamed.

STORY: Who Took the Wrench? Ask if any of the children's parents have tools in the house or garage. What kind of tools are they? After the children have told you about tools, ask if they know what a wrench is. Show them the one you brought to class and tell them. Tell them the dad in this story wants to use his wrench and can't find it.

One Saturday morning Dad went out to the garage to work on the car. When he went to get his tools, he saw one of his wrenches was missing. Those crazy kids, Dad thought. Always playing around with my tools and never putting them back. Tony came into the garage. "Where is my wrench?" asked Dad. "I don't know, Dad," Tony answered. "I didn't take it." "Are you sure?" said Dad. "Last week when my screwdriver was missing, you had used it to fix your bike and did not put it back. Maybe you borrowed my wrench, too." "No, Dad," Tony answered again, "I didn't use the wrench at all." Dad was frustrated. "Well, the wrench didn't just walk away by itself," he said. "Are you sure you didn't take it?"

Tony helped his Dad look, but they couldn't find the wrench. Dad kept grumbling, and Tony knew Dad thought he had taken the wrench and lost it. Just then their neighbor Mr. Brown appeared at the door of the garage with a wrench in his hand. "Here is the wrench you lent me last week," Mr. Brown said to Dad. "Thank you very much."

Ask: How did Tony feel when his dad blamed him about the wrench? How did he feel when Mr. Brown brought the wrench back? How did Dad feel? What do you suppose happened next? Discuss the story in light of the children's own experiences. Ask if they have ever been blamed for something they did not do. Ask if they have ever blamed others.

STRETCH AND MOVE Gather the children in pairs or threes in the open area. Ask them to pantomime the following actions with each other. This is a fun way for them to build up each other, instead of putting each other down.

You are jumping rope together.

You are playing soccer together.

You take turns shooting baskets.

You play follow the leader.

You push little kids in the swings.

You get on your ponies, pick up your copy of *Promise*, and ride to our work area.

LISTENING TO THE GOSPEL

STORY: The Glue Mess (page 3) Have the children remain in the work area and turn to page 3 of *Promise*. Ask them to study the pictures and see if they can tell the story. *Title panel: A boy makes a mess with his gluing project. Panel 2: Other children laugh at the boy and tease him. Panel 3: The teacher asks the children which of them has never made a mess. Panel 4: The children recognize mistakes happen to anybody and help the boy clean up.* After you have made up the story together, have the children cut out the four panels and arrange them face up before them in a row.

Objective: The children will recognize Jesus doesn't blame.

GOSPEL STORYTELLING: Jesus Doesn't Blame (page 3) Tell the children that one day Jesus met some people who were picking on a woman. Tell them to turn over the first panel of the glue story and examine the illustration on its opposite side.

People bring a woman to Jesus and are complaining about something she has done. They say that according to the law the woman should be punished. (Turn over the second panel.) Jesus is talking to the angry men who now have rocks in their hands. Jesus asks them if they have ever done anything wrong. If they haven't, then they can go ahead and throw rocks at the woman. (Turn over the third panel.) Jesus starts drawing on the ground. The people with the rocks are afraid that Jesus is going to write things about them, so they put down their rocks and go away. (Turn over the fourth panel.) Jesus asks the woman if anyone has stayed to stone her. She says no. Jesus says that he doesn't blame her either, so she can go, but "Don't sin again," he says.

Discuss the story bringing out the behavior of Jesus. *He did not want the woman to die; he wanted her to change her life for the better.*

CREATIVE DRAMA If you have time, lead the children in acting out this Gospel. Choose one child to be the woman

and one to be Jesus. Half of the rest of the children are Jesus' friends who are listening to him teach. The others are the people who bring the woman to Jesus. Tell the story simply as follows.

- *Jesus is sitting in the courtyard of the Temple teaching.*
- *Some people grab a woman and bring her to Jesus. She is scared.*
- *The people tell Jesus the woman is bad. They want to throw rocks at her.*
- *Jesus says, "Anyone who has never done something bad can throw the first rock."*
- *Jesus starts to write on the ground.*
- *The people put down their rocks, and go away.*
- *Jesus looks up when only the woman is left. He says, "Go now, but don't sin any more."*

BUILDING CHRISTIAN COMMUNITY

WHO GETS THE BLAME? (page 2) Turn to page 2. Have the children identify the objects on the left side of the page and what the problem of each is. *Bike has a flat; girl is getting wet; ice cream cone is melting; apple has a hole; cat is up a tree.* Ask them to look at the objects on the right side of the page and draw lines matching the problems and their causes. Point out that blame means being the one who makes something happen, being responsible for what happens.

JESUS DOESN'T BLAME; The Glue Mess (pages 3-4) Lead the children in retelling these two stories using their four story squares. Conclude that Jesus taught people not to blame the woman because they had done things wrong, too. The children helped the boy who made the glue mess instead of laughing at him because they had made messes, too.

CONCLUDING PRAYER Say the following prayer: Jesus loves and forgives us. (*hands and arms raised up high*) Jesus asks us to forgive each other. (*turn to another child and shake hands*) Jesus loves and forgives us. (*repeat motion*) Jesus asks us to forgive each other. (*shake a different child's hand*) Conclude by saying the *Our Father* together, using the gestures you learned last week.

LETTER TO FAMILIES

Celebrate Holy Week with Your Children

Do you remember going to Holy Week services when you were a child? Perhaps your parish had a Palm Sunday procession with everyone carrying palms. Perhaps you witnessed the washing of feet on Holy Thursday or the veneration of the cross—kissing the cross, genuflecting before it, or touching it reverently—on Good Friday. These are vivid memories, times at church when we play an active part.

Make memories for your own children during this Holy Week. Find out what your parish does on

these special days and commit to going to at least one service with your children. Except for the Easter Vigil, the services of Holy Week are not long. If your children get restless, there is no need to stay for the entire time.

When you go to church with your children, you share your faith with them in a very concrete way. What is more, they also witness the faith of many others. This year, give them the gift of participation in this most Holy Week.

Promise

Teaching Guide

March 28, 2010 • Palm/Passion Sunday

Luke 19.28-40; Isaiah 50.4-7; Philippians 2.6-11; Luke 22.14—23.56

OVERVIEW

Gospel Theme: Jesus dies and rises.

Jesus shows his love for us all throughout his life, but especially in his passion and death. Palm/Passion Sunday begins the Church's Holy Week remembering and celebrating of the last events in Jesus' life. *Promise* provides a concrete way for young children to learn the events and liturgical celebrations of this holiest week of the Christian year.

Doctrinal Concept: The Easter Triduum celebrates the Lord's passion, death, and Resurrection and is the culmination of the entire liturgical year. The Easter Vigil marks the sacramental initiation of the catechumens into God's own life and the life of the Church (*National Directory for Catechesis* #37.A). *Catechism of the Catholic Church* #629, 1168, 1189.

Materials: Scissors, crayons or markers, pencils, brads.

SHARING LIFE STORIES

GATHER AND SING Gather the children in a circle and sing the Easter song, "Jesus Lives," from the *Promise* music CD.

Jesus lives. Jesus lives today.
He is Lord and he lives today.

Jesus lives. Jesus lives today.
In you and me, Jesus lives today.

Jesus lives. Jesus lives today.
Where there's love, Jesus lives today.

OPENING PRAYER Ask the children to sit down in the circle as you pray the opening prayer. They respond "Amen."

Jesus, we welcome you into our hearts. Be with us as we learn about the last week of your life.

Objective: The children will recall ways they are welcomed and welcome others.

COVER: We can welcome Stay in the story circle.

Distribute *Promise* and ask the children to tell what is happening in the cover photo. *The children are welcoming adults to their classroom. Perhaps it is Grandparents Day or perhaps the adults are visiting all the classrooms in the school.* Ask how the children are making their guests feel welcome. *They have decorated with balloons, boy greets guests at the door; girl is serving a snack; another boy shows his work; lady has a special chair.* Ask when your class has welcomed a guest, maybe someone who teaches music or the pastor or the person in charge of the school or religious education program. What did they do to make their guests feel welcome?

If your class has had the opportunity to welcome a new child into their group during the year, talk about how they made that child feel welcome. This will lead into today's story.

STORY: The New Student Ask the children to put their copies of *Promise* on the floor in front of them and listen to this story about a first grader whose best friend moved to another town.

Emily was very sad. Her best friend at school, Kristen, had moved to another city. Kristen's desk was right next to Emily's. They had been best friends since the first day of school. Emily said to her mom, "I don't like to go to school now. Kristen's desk is empty and I miss her." Mom said, "Maybe a new first grader will come to take her place." "MOM!" Emily said, "No one will ever take Kristen's place."

The next Monday Ms. Cullen said, "I have an announcement. A new student will join our first grade tomorrow. Her name is Maria. She will sit in the desk next to Emily. What can we do to welcome her?" The children had many ideas. "Make a welcome banner," Charley said. "Show her where the bathroom is," Tanya said. "Ask her to eat lunch with us," Juan said. "Those are all good ideas," Ms. Cullen said. Then Emily put her hand up. "Can I be her buddy for her first day?" Emily asked. "That's another good idea," Ms. Cullen said. "Yes, you may, Emily."

On Tuesday Maria's mother brought her to the first grade classroom. Maria was pretty and very shy. All the children said, "Welcome, Maria." Then they sang a song for her. Maria saw the welcome banner and started to smile. The girls asked her to jump rope with them at recess. Juan and the other boys showed her what table they sat at in the lunchroom. But Emily stayed with Maria all day long. At the end of the day Maria said to Emily. "Thank you for making me feel welcome today. I was scared to come to a new school. Now I can hardly wait for tomorrow. I hope we can be best friends." "Me, too," said Emily and gave Maria a big hug.

Review the story by asking what the children did to welcome Maria. Did having a new friend mean Emily didn't like Kristen any more?

STRETCH AND MOVE Ask the children if they have ever been at a parade welcoming an important person or if they have seen one on television. Ask what the parade was like. Bring out the fact that most parades have marching bands. Discuss the different instruments in a band—trumpets, bassoons, snare drums and bass drums, flutes and piccolos, trombones, saxophones. Have the children stand, line up like a marching band, and choose which instrument they want to play. Conduct a practice session where they pantomime the motions of a person playing that instrument. Have a tape or CD with march music ready. Choose a leader of the band, begin the music, and have the children march

around the room playing their instruments. Choose another leader and allow children to switch instruments if they wish and march again.

LISTENING TO THE GOSPEL

GOSPEL RITUAL Move to the Gospel storytelling area and use the ritual you have developed to ready the children for this Sunday's Gospel. If at all possible, have palms in a vase near the Bible or lectionary. Most parishes get palms well before Palm Sunday so you should be able to borrow some for this lesson. Teach the children the song refrain they will probably use at Eucharist today.

All glory, laud, and honor,
to thee, Redeemer King.
To whom the lips of children
make sweet hosannas ring.

You will need to explain the words to them so they know what they are singing. The people of Jerusalem shout "Hosanna" when they see Jesus. This Hebrew word means "God, save your people!"

Objective: The children will explore the last events of Jesus' life, which the days of Holy Week celebrate.

GOSPEL STORYTELLING: We welcome Jesus. Tell the children that this Sunday has a special name. Does anyone know what the name is? Ask the children if they know what a palm is. Those from warmer climates will be familiar with palm trees. Point out the palms in the vase. Take one out and let the children feel it and hold it a moment. Return the palm to the vase and tell this story of Jesus' being welcomed into the city of Jerusalem.

One day Jesus decided to go to Jerusalem, the most important city in his country, the city where all Jews went to worship in the Temple. Jesus wanted to celebrate the Feast of Passover in Jerusalem near the Temple. Some of Jesus' friends went with him. Jesus had his friends bring a small donkey to ride into the city. Riding the small donkey was a way to let people know he was a man of peace. When people saw Jesus riding toward the city, many of them were very excited to see Jesus. "Welcome, Jesus, welcome!" they cried. They cut palm branches off the trees and waved them as he went by. The children were so happy to see Jesus that they skipped and danced in the road ahead of Jesus, waving their branches and singing a welcome to Jesus.

Open your copy of *Promise* and fold it back so the children see only the art and photo in column 1 on page 2. Ask them to explain to you what they see. In the art, Jesus is seated on a donkey and people are waving palms. Everyone is happy because Jesus is coming in the name of God as a man of peace. In the photo children are carrying the palms they received on Palm Sunday.

PROCESS AND SING After your Gospel discussion return to the children's work places singing "All Glory, Laud, and Honor." You can lead the procession waving the palms.

BUILDING CHRISTIAN COMMUNITY

HOLY WEEK CELEBRATES JESUS NEW LIFE

(pages 2-3) Have the children open *Promise* to pages 2-3. Read the title aloud with them. Ask if they know what Holy Week is. Explain it is a very special time in the Church when we learn about Jesus' last days before his death and about his resurrection to new life. Ask for volunteers to point to the days of the week, one at a time, and read them aloud. Notice that four of the days have special names. Begin with Palm Sunday, which you have already looked at together. Review the Gospel story and what will happen (or has happened) at Mass. Point out the next three days on your copy of *Promise* and ask children to put their fingers on that place in their own copies. Read the direction and ask the children to identify the signs of new life. Tell them you will return to those illustrations. Move on to the next three columns. Have the children read the head for each column and explain what is happening in the illustration and photo. Do not worry if they have incomplete ideas of what is represented. Instead, take the opportunity to listen to their understandings and allow them to teach each other.

THE STORY OF HOLY WEEK (page 4) Use this rebus to put in story form the chronology of Jesus' last days on page 2-3. Identify the four pictures at the top of the page and read the words beneath them. Then read the story aloud with the children. Pause where there is a picture so that even the non-readers can say the word. Tell the children they can read this story to their families at home so everyone will know what a special time Holy Week is.

Objective: The children will explore signs of new springtime life in nature.

COLOR THE SIGNS OF NEW LIFE (page 2) To conclude this lesson return to page 2 of *Promise*. Look again at the illustrations of new life. Tell the children we celebrate Easter in springtime when all the animals are having babies and the flowers and grass are coming back to life after a long winter. Take a quick walk outside if you have time. When you return give the children quiet time to draw a picture of something they saw and add color to the illustrations.



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Teaching Guide

*Acts 10.34,37-43; Colossians 3.1-4; John 20.1-9
Acts 5.12-16; Revelation 1.9-13,17-19; John 20.19-31*

OVERVIEW

Gospel Theme: Jesus is risen!

Jesus' resurrection was such a powerful event to his friends and followers that they recorded their experiences of it in great detail. *Promise* tells these Easter stories and provides several hands-on activities to help children retell them and to reflect on their experience of Jesus today.

Doctrinal Concept: Christ's saving action in the Paschal Mystery is celebrated in the sacraments, especially the Eucharist, (*National Directory for Catechesis* #20.2). *Catechism of the Catholic Church* #638, 642, 1169, 1193.

Materials: Scissors, crayons or markers.

SHARING LIFE STORIES

GATHER AND SING Gather the children in the open space. Ask them to stand in a circle facing each other. Sing "Jesus Lives," the Easter song from the *Promise* CD, or sing an Easter Alleluia the children know from church.

OPENING PRAYER Children sit in their places in the circle and listen quietly as you pray this prayer. They respond with a sung or spoken "Alleluia."

Loving God, thank you for the good news of Jesus' resurrection. Thank you for all the new life we see in nature. Thank you for the new life in us as we learn and grow.

EASTER IS A TIME OF JOY If possible, begin this class in your church sanctuary. Ask the children to look around and tell you what is different about their church that tells them about Easter. What is different about the church building on Easter Sunday? *Flowers, especially lilies, church is full, people dress up, new Easter candle, priest has white vestments, special songs.* Ask what is different in children's homes at Easter. *Easter egg hunts, Easter baskets, special breads and other foods, family meals, visitors, new clothes.* Ask what kinds of Easter objects they see or receive as gifts—*eggs, flowers, chicks, rabbits, butterflies.* After you have gathered all these signs of Easter from the children, give them time to speculate about what they tell us about Easter. *It is a time of joy, a time we celebrate being followers of Jesus, a time when new life comes out of the earth just as Jesus came out of the tomb.* Summarize the children's ideas by reflecting that Easter is a time to celebrate the life of Jesus, our lives as Jesus' followers, and the life of nature all around us.

STORY: The Little Tree This short story will lend itself to creative drama. Tell it dramatically, so the children will begin to imagine ways they can act it out.

Sarah's birthday was in September. Grandma gave her a very unusual present—a crabapple tree. Grandma helped Sarah dig a hole in the yard outside her bedroom window for the tree to grow in. Together they packed down the dirt around the tree and watered it.

In October, Sarah called Grandma. "The leaves on my little tree have changed color, Grandma," Sarah said. "They are dark red now, and very pretty."

In November, Sarah called Grandma again. "All the leaves on my tree are gone," she said. "A big wind blew them away. I think my tree has died!"

"Don't worry," Grandma said. "Your tree is just sleeping."

"When will it wake up?" Sarah asked.

"Wait and see," Grandma said.

In December, snow covered Sarah's tree. In January and February it snowed even more. The little tree was almost buried in snow. When March came, the snow began to melt. Sarah noticed the branches on the little tree were a lighter color. She called Grandma. "Do you think my tree is waking up?" she asked.

"Wait and see," Grandma said.

Soon it was almost Easter Sunday. Sarah liked Easter because Grandma always came to stay with them. This time Sarah met Grandma right by her car and gave her a big hug. "I have a surprise for you, Grandma," Sarah said. She took Grandma by the hand and led her around the side of the house. There was the little tree, all covered with beautiful pink blossoms. "My tree is not dead any more," Sarah said. "It is alive and it has beautiful flowers on it."

Your tree was always alive," Grandma said. "It was just sleeping."

CREATIVE DRAMA Ask the children to retell quickly the story of Sarah's tree. Then gather them in the open area. Choose two children to be the wind, two to be the snow and one child to be the sun. The other children plant trees and then become the trees. Retell the story as they act out the motions. After they are planted, they sway softly in the breeze. In October they get a little chilly and shriveled. Then the big wind blows all their leaves away and they stand very still as the snow comes dropping down and covers their branches. In spring the sun moves among the trees and melts the snow. The trees begin to move their branches. They move their fingers to show the tiny buds opening up. End by having all the children become rabbits hopping around under the trees.

LISTENING TO THE GOSPEL

REMEMBERING HOLY WEEK Move to the work area. Recall with the children stories about Jesus—he healed the sick, taught us how to be happy, showed us how to understand others and help them.

Objective: The children will identify witnesses to Jesus' resurrection.

GOSPEL STORYTELLING Distribute *Promise*. Direct children's attention to the cover picture of Jesus' followers running to the tomb. Tell the Easter Gospel in your own words or use the following text.

Mary Magdalene was with Jesus when he died and was buried. She wanted to make sure everything was all right at Jesus' tomb so she got up early on Easter morning and went to the cemetery. The stone that had been in front of the entrance was moved away! Mary looked inside. Jesus was not there! Mary ran to tell Peter and the person they called Jesus' beloved disciple. We think his name was John. They raced back to the tomb with Mary. They saw that Jesus was gone, but they didn't know what had happened to him. They didn't understand who Jesus was and what God had done for him.

Peter and John went back to talk to Jesus' other friends. Mary stayed to look for Jesus. She was crying. She looked into Jesus' tomb again. This time there were two angels there. "Why are you crying?" the angels asked. "I can't find Jesus," Mary said. Then she looked up and saw a man. Mary thought he was the gardener. "Please tell me where you have taken Jesus' body," she said. The man looked at her. "Mary," he said. Mary recognized that the man was Jesus! "Rabbouni!" she said. This word means teacher. "Go tell my friends that I am returning to my Father," Jesus said. So Mary went and told everyone, "Jesus is risen!"

Discuss the Gospel with the children, emphasizing how the friends of Jesus were witnesses to his rising from the dead. How did they feel after he died? How did they feel when they saw his empty tomb? When Mary met him and then told the others? Draw children's attention to the cover, pointing out the excitement of Peter and John coming with Mary. Distribute scissors and show the children how to cut open the tomb on the heavy dark line and fold it back on the dotted line. Talk about the flowers as a sign of new life.

The Gospel for the 2nd Sunday of Easter is from John 20.19-31. If you meet on that Sunday or during the week preceding, read this portion to the children then. The activity incorporates witnesses of the resurrection from both stories.

BUILDING CHRISTIAN COMMUNITY

Objective: The children will recognize how Jesus is present in their Christian community.

ACTIVITY: Jesus is with us. Have children turn to page 2 and tell you what they see. Explain that the Mass is how we remember Jesus. We go to church together to witness to Jesus' new life in us. Identify the Easter candle, the bread and wine, the Bible, the people and priest, the altar as signs of Jesus' presence with us. Ask the children how people will know that they are witnesses to Jesus' new life. *By our actions people will know that we follow Jesus.*

ACTIVITY: Peace be with you. Direct the children to page four. Discuss how beautiful and happy Jesus is in his risen life. Point out the friends of Jesus. Ask how they look. Why are they so happy? Tell the children that when Jesus appeared to his friends he always said to them, "Peace be with you." Have the children draw themselves in the empty box.

Turn to page 3. Have them cut on the heavy lines marked *cut*, trace the outline words with crayons or markers, and write their name on the line. Starting with Mary Magdalene, the first of Jesus' followers to see him risen, fold back each box to identify the witnesses of Jesus' resurrection.

CONCLUDING PRAYER Gather in the prayer circle with the folding activity. Children sit with the picture of Jesus facing them. Starting with the picture of Mary Magdalene, have them fold each picture in towards Jesus, saying, "Peace be with you" and then saying the name written. End with the children shaking hands and saying, "Peace be with you."

EXTENDING ACTIVITIES

SARAH'S TREE Have the children make branches of Sarah's tree which you can cluster on a bulletin board to make the whole tree. Give each child a 9" by 12" piece of white construction paper. Paste on a strip of brown paper to serve as a branch. Cut out leaves from green construction paper and blossoms from pink or red paper. Children paste these on or near the branch.

EASTER CANDLES Use another sheet of white construction paper to make candles. Decorate the page with signs of spring. Roll the paper into a candle shape and tape it. Cut out a flame from a square of yellow construction paper and paste or tape it at the top.

BUTTERFLY Draw a simple butterfly shape on sheets of white construction paper. Children can decorate their butterfly with crayons, markers, or colored paper, or a combination of all three. Cut out the butterflies and fold their wings. Use them as a mobile in your classroom or somewhere in your church building.

Promise

Teaching Guide

Acts 5.27-32, 40-41; Revelation 5.11-14; John 21.1-14

OVERVIEW

Gospel Theme: Jesus appears to his friends.

In Sunday's Gospel the risen Jesus helps his friends make a great catch of fish and then invites them to come and eat with him. This Easter appearance story is also a Eucharistic story. Jesus' friends recognize him in sharing the meal together.

Gathering to remember Jesus by telling his story and sharing his body and blood constitutes the Christian community. Children's participation in Eucharist, even at this early age, forms them as Catholic Christians. This week's lesson focuses on celebrating Jesus' presence among us in Word, in sacrament, and in each other.

Doctrinal Concept: The missionary mandate is Trinitarian in nature. It was born in the Father's heart; it was articulated in the Son's announcement of the Kingdom of heaven on earth, present already in mystery in the Church; it is continually sanctified by the presence and guidance of the Holy Spirit. The ultimate purpose of this mission is to incorporate men and women into the communion between the Father and the Son in their Spirit of love (*National Directory for Catechesis* #4). *Catechism of the Catholic Church* #1085.

Materials: Crayons or markers, scissors, something for celebration cups (popcorn, goldfish crackers), transparent tape.

SHARING LIFE STORIES

GATHER AND SING Bring to the open area bells, triangles, tambourines, or anything else that makes a joyful noise. Be sure each child will have something to play or shake. Teach the children St. Augustine's famous Easter quotation to the tune of "Frere Jacques."

Alleluia! Alleluia!

Is our song. Is our song.

We are Easter people. We are Easter people.

Sing along. Sing along.

When the children are comfortable with the words and melody, gather in a circle, distribute the instruments, and sing the song several times. Ask the children to sing and play quietly the second time around. They can let loose again the third time.

OPENING PRAYER Have the children sit quietly in their circle with the instruments on the floor in front of them. Pray the following prayer.

Loving God, thank you for the good news of Jesus' resurrection. Thank you for all the new life we see in nature. Thank you for the new life in us as we learn and grow.

The children respond with one more rendition of the song, complete with instruments. Collect the instruments but ask the children to stay in the story circle.

REMEMBERING HOLY WEEK Gather the children in the story area. Review the events of Jesus' last supper and death. Ask the children how Jesus' friends felt when he died. *Sad their friend was gone. Worried and afraid someone might arrest them. Disappointed Jesus didn't turn out to be a great king.* Then ask how Jesus' friends felt when some of them told the others they had seen Jesus alive. *Happy, excited, amazed, wanting to see Jesus to believe the news he was alive.* Ask if the children were Jesus' friends would they want to see him to believe it?

LISTENING TO THE GOSPEL

GOSPEL STORYTELLING: Jesus invites his friends.

Distribute pages 1-2 of *Promise*. Have the children look at the cover as you tell the Gospel story. Use your own words, or the story that follows.

Some of Jesus' friends went fishing. They fished all night long but caught nothing. At daylight they saw a man standing on the shore. They did not know that it was Jesus. He called out to them, "Have you caught anything, my friends?" "No," they answered. So Jesus said, "Throw your nets out on the other side of the boat." They did what Jesus said, and they caught so many fish that they had to get help to haul the fish to shore.

When Jesus' friends got to shore, they saw a fire and a man cooking fish and some bread. "Come and eat your meal," the man said. Not one of Jesus' friends had to ask, "Who is this man?" They knew it was Jesus. Jesus took the bread and gave it to them and did the same with the fish. Their hearts were filled with joy and happiness.

Ask how Jesus' friends recognized him. Ask when Jesus took bread and gave it to his friends during Holy Week.

DRAMATIZE THE GOSPEL Have the children sit down in a straight line with enough room between them that they can stretch out their arms and not touch another child. Sit on the floor yourself, so they can imitate your actions. Tell the children they are Jesus' disciples who still don't know what to think about Jesus' tomb being empty and his appearances to them. So they decide to go fishing. Let's row out to the best spot to fish. Everyone pull on your oars. Now drop the anchor. Get out your fishing pole. Put a worm on the hook. Now make a big cast into the deep water. The little red and white bobber is floating on the water and your hook is hanging down just below it. If the bobber disappears under the water, you have a fish! People who fish have to be very patient. It takes a while for the fish to find your hook and decide if they like your worm. Just watch your bobber. It's still just floating on the water. Someone is standing on the shore. He yells, "Have you caught any fish?" We all say, "No." He says, "Cast your lines on the other side of the boats." Turn around in your boat and do what he says. Look your bobber is

gone! You can feel the tug on your fishing pole. You have a fish. Wind up the line on your reel. Wind it some more. The fish is coming close to your boat. Lift the point of your fishing pole high in the air. Swing the fish into your boat. You have your first fish. Put another worm on and try again. The fish are coming fast now. As soon as you cast your line, you get a fish. And another. And another. Who do you think that man is? Maybe it's Jesus. Your boat is full of fish now, so put down your fishing pole and row to shore. The man is Jesus, and he is cooking breakfast for everyone—fish sandwiches. Land your boat on the beach, get out, and take a sandwich. Jesus is with us today and he will be with us every day of our lives.

Objective: The children will explore how we recognize people by the special foods they like.

STORY: Who has come to visit? (page 2) Gather the children in the work area. Have them open to page 2 and describe what they see. Distribute crayons or markers so they are ready to complete the ice cream sundae on the page as you read or tell the story.

One Sunday afternoon Carlos came in from playing. His dad was in the kitchen making sundaes. "Who are the sundaes for?" Carlos asked. "One is for you, and one is for me, and one is for someone special who has come to visit," Dad said. "Who has come?" Carlos asked. "Just watch me," Dad said. "You will know who our visitor is by the way I make this last sundae."

So Carlos watched. First his dad put two scoops of ice cream in the last sundae dish. It was strawberry ice cream. (Children color the ice cream.) "I know our special guest is not Grandma," Carlos said. "She doesn't like strawberry ice cream."

Dad picked up the little bottle of sprinkles and the can of nuts. He put the nuts down and shook red and blue and green and yellow sprinkles over the ice cream. (Children draw sprinkles on the ice cream.) "I like sprinkles, but who else does?" Carlos asked. "Keep watching," said Dad. Dad picked up the bag of M&Ms in one hand and the blueberries in the other. Then he put the blueberries down and poured lots of M&Ms on top of the ice cream and the sprinkles. (Children draw M&Ms.)

"I know who is here!" Carlos said. "Aunt Maria. She likes strawberry ice cream and sprinkles, and she loves M&Ms."

Dad handed Carlos the whipped cream can so he could put just a little on top of the sundae. "She surprised us," Dad said, "and she can stay all week." Dad picked up the other two sundaes. He and Carlos went out to the patio where Aunt Maria was waiting to give Carlos a big hug.

Discuss the story. Ask how Carlos knew who came to visit. Ask how Jesus' friends knew who he was. Explain we remember Jesus is with us when we celebrate his special meal—Sunday Eucharist.

BUILDING CHRISTIAN COMMUNITY

Objective: The children will celebrate that Jesus is present with them.

GOSPEL ACTIVITY: We celebrate with Jesus (pages 3-4) Have the children gather in the work area with their copies

of *Promise*. This week's activity has two parts. The children will create a headband as illustrated on page 4 and a celebration cup as shown on page 3. Talk for a minute about how Jesus' friends felt when they saw him by the lake. *They were excited and happy, almost unable to believe it was Jesus until he ate with them as he always did.* How did Carlos feel when he knew whose sundae his dad was making? *Happy that Aunt Maria was here for a long visit.* Ask what other celebrations make people happy. *Birthdays, Christmas, picnics, weddings, visits to grandparents.* Explain that everyone likes to celebrate. That is why Jesus celebrated his resurrection with his friends.

Distribute scissors and tell the children to cut off the banner on the cover that has the word *Promise*. They set that aside, turn to page four, and cut out the square with fish on it on it. Finally they cut off the two strips from the top of page 4. Collect the scissors.

Start with the celebration headband. Ask the children to lay out their three strips of paper. The *Promise* strip is bigger than the other two. Distribute crayons or markers so each child can write his or her name in the blank space. Have the children place the two smaller strips on either side of the *Promise* strip. Go around the room taping the three strips together as shown in the illustration on page 4. Then tape the headbands to fit the children's heads. Let them wear them as they complete the folding activity.

Follow the directions on page 3 to create celebration cups. Have your own cup folded to serve as a model. Fill the cups with popcorn or little goldfish crackers or any other snacks.

CONCLUDING PRAYER Invite the children to gather in a prayer circle with their celebration cups. Tell them we will toast Jesus after each prayer by raising our cups in the air. Use the following words or prayers of your own.

Jesus, you served a meal to your friends by the lake. You serve a meal to us every time we go to Mass. Thank you, Jesus! (*All repeat "Thank you, Jesus!" and raise their cups in a toast. Repeat this after each prayer.*)

Jesus, you give us family and friends who feed us and eat with us. Thank you, Jesus!

Jesus, you trust us to help feed all the hungry children of the world. Thank you, Jesus!

Jesus, you are with us when we have worries or are afraid. Thank you, Jesus.

Jesus, you are with us when we are happy and celebrate together. Thank you, Jesus!

Alleluia! Alleluia!

Enjoy the snacks in the celebration cups together.

EXTENDING ACTIVITY

CIRCLES OF LOVE Give each child a large square of colored paper and three circles of different colors and sizes. The children paste circles on top of the square and write the names of people they love on the circles. You may want to suggest they write names of their family members on the inside circle, friends on the next circle, and neighborhood people or people they know from the news or from their classroom learning on the outside circle.

OVERVIEW

Gospel Theme: Jesus is our good shepherd.

In Sunday's Gospel Jesus compares himself to good shepherds who care for and protect their sheep. Jesus assures his friends no one will snatch his sheep, that is, his followers, from him. Jesus promises us eternal life with him and his Father. *Promise* helps children recognize that Jesus cares for them.

Doctrinal Concept: We who are made in God's image share God's communal, social nature. We are called to reach out and to build relationships of love and justice (*National Directory for Catechesis* #43). *Catechism of the Catholic Church* #604-05, 1274-75.

Materials: Markers or pencils, pennies or dice, scissors, paste, construction paper squares.

SHARING LIFE STORIES

GATHER AND SING Begin by singing "Jesus Lives" from the *Promise* CD or the St. Augustine song the children learned last week.

OPENING PRAYER The children sit quietly at their place in the circle as you pray this prayer. They respond "Alleluia."

Loving God, thank you for the good news of Jesus' resurrection. Thank you for all the new life we see in nature. Thank you for the new life in us as we learn and grow.

STORY: Quacker This animal story prepares the children to talk about their own experiences of caring for a pet or other animal.

Jason and his family lived outside a small town in a little house by a lake. The lake was surrounded by trees. Graceful white-tailed deer and swift little red foxes lived in the woods. Sometimes at night Jason could hear wolves howl. Then one summer Jason met a special friend. He was sitting on the dock by his house one day when a blue-winged teal swam by. Behind her swam nine little ducklings. Jason ran to get cracked corn to feed them. He stayed back a little to watch them eat. Jason noticed one of the ducklings was smaller than the others. This little duckling was always last in line to eat and the last one in the water as the ducklings swam away behind their mother. "Quack! Quack!" the duckling would say. "Wait for me! Wait for me!" Jason named the duckling Quacker. He always threw extra corn her way. All summer the ducks came to Jason's dock to get their corn. He watched them grow bigger and bigger. Even Quacker got bigger and stronger.

One day Jason noticed flocks of ducks flying overhead. Autumn was coming, and ducks were moving to a warmer climate. "Will Quacker leave when she can fly?" Jason asked his mother. "I think so," his mother said. One day Jason watched the ducklings try to fly. They would paddle their feet very hard to lift their bodies out of the water. They flapped their wings. Jason knew that soon they would get it right and off they would go.

Jason went to visit his Grandma at the end of August. When he came back home, he ran right down to the dock. He looked for Quacker and the other ducklings, but he didn't see any of them. "I guess they are gone," Jason said to himself. Then Jason heard a quack! Quack! Quack! It was Quacker! Jason opened the sack of corn he had brought to the dock. He spread some on the ground. Quacker swam to the shore and walked over to the corn. Then Jason heard flapping wings. It was the other ducklings. They could all fly now.

For the rest of the summer, Jason fed Quacker. Sometimes she came alone, and sometimes her brothers and sisters were with her. Every day Jason saw more and more ducks flying south. Even Quacker was taking practice flights around the lake. Jason knew that Quacker would leave soon, too. "When Quacker goes south, do you think she will remember how to get back here?" Jason asked his mom. "I'm sure she will," Mom answered. "Maybe she will have a family herself next year."

STRETCH AND MOVE Ask the children to stand in the open area and stretch out their arms to make sure no one is within touching distance. Have them squat and waddle like ducks. Choose a mother duck and have the rest of the children waddle in a line behind that child. Ask the children to try flapping their wings and then fly around the room, landing at their place in the story circle.

Objective: The children will recognize people in their lives who care for them.

COVER ACTIVITY: Jesus is like a shepherd. Gather the children in the story circle. Distribute *Promise*. Have the children look at the cover. Explain to them that the child in the photo lives in Guatemala and helps tend his family's sheep. Ask the children what shepherds have to do to take care of their sheep. Explain how a shepherd must take the sheep out onto the hillside so that they might find food. The shepherd stays near the sheep to keep them safe from wild animals. The shepherd watches so the sheep don't get their wool tangled in bushes or fall into deep places. Sometimes the children who are the shepherds tell stories to each other or play reed instruments to pass the time. Point out how proud this boy is of the sheep for which he cares.

The photographer asked the boy's father how many sheep he had. The man said he didn't know. The photographer assumed he couldn't count high enough to tell. "How will you know if one of your sheep is lost?" the photographer asked. "I will know," the man replied, smiling.

Ask the children if they take care of anyone or anything the way the boy takes care of his sheep. Many children will have a pet. Ask them how they feed the pet, give it exercise, take care of its coat or fur, give it water, clean its place. Some children may have some responsibility for younger siblings or for an older adult who needs a willing errand-runner. Give each child a chance to contribute to the discussion.

LISTENING TO THE GOSPEL

GOSPEL STORYTELLING: The Good Shepherd Tell the children that in this Sunday's Gospel Jesus says that he is like a shepherd to us, a good shepherd who will always be there for his sheep. These are Jesus' words.

My sheep hear my voice.

I know them and they follow me.

*I give them eternal life,
and they will never die.*

*No one can take my followers
away from me.*

Remind the children what they said about shepherds. Good shepherds take their sheep to a pasture where there is plenty of grass to eat; they protect the sheep from wolf attacks. Good shepherds watch so sheep don't get lost or fall over cliffs or into holes. If one of the sheep gets lost, the good shepherd goes after it. Jesus wants us to know that he loves us even more than shepherds love their sheep. Jesus watches over us and protects us from harm. Jesus wants us to be happy. Jesus told us he was like a shepherd, so we know how much he cares for us.

A child might ask why people die if Jesus said they wouldn't. This will be a good opportunity to refer to the Easter mystery we are celebrating. Jesus died because he had a human nature, but God raised him to be with God forever. This is what happens to those of us who are Jesus' followers, also.

Remind the children of their baptisms. Ask: What happens when you are baptized? *Become part of Christ's family, get sponsors, whole church prays for you and welcomes you, are part of worshiping community.* Point out to the children that Jesus wants the Church to be a good shepherd to us now, just as Jesus is to the Church.

CREATIVE DRAMA Gather in the open area. Choose a shepherd and three wolves. The rest of the children are the sheep. Put chairs or pillows in a circle to make a pasture. There is only one small entrance to the pasture. All the sheep move around in the pasture eating grass and baaing once in a while. The three wolves roam around outside the pasture. The shepherd chases them away. Choose one sheep to leave the pasture. The shepherd gets him back before the wolves get him. Then the sheep go to sleep and the shepherd stays on guard.

BUILDING CHRISTIAN COMMUNITY

Objective: The children will understand how they can care for and show love to others.

GOSPEL ACTIVITY: Jesus gives us all we need (page 4) Gather the children in the work area. Ask them to take turns telling about people who take care of them the way a shepherd takes care of the sheep. When they mention a person, ask, "What does ____ give to you that you need?" They will suggest food, clothes, books, fun, help. After a moment, ask them to turn to page 4. Read the headline together. Then look at the first word on the left side and the illustration that pictures the word. Ask the children to guess at the next word and the picture that matches it. Let them fill in the missing letter and draw a line to the illustration of milk and a sandwich. Complete the rest of the page in this manner or have the children complete it on their own.

SAFE OR SCATTER (pages 2-3) Open *Promise* to the game in the center. Explain the rules. The game is like *Chutes and Ladders*. The object of *Safe or Scatter* is to get the circular sheep marker from the bottom of the page to the sheepfold at the top of the page. Have the children cut out the markers. To make them more sturdy, paste them on construction paper squares. Play in partners. Players shake a die or flip a penny to move ahead. Move the number the die indicates. With a penny, heads is two moves, tails is one. When a player's sheep marker lands on a square with an arrow pointing up, the marker moves up the game board. When a player lands on an arrow pointing down, the marker moves down a line on the game board. When a marker lands in the hole, waterfall, or well, the player can just walk through. This game can be played at tables or on the floor. Play until the end of the session. Conclude by asking the children what they learned about taking care of sheep from playing the game.

EXTENDING ACTIVITIES

PAPER PLATE SHEEP Use a small, white paper plate to make sheep. Cut off the top two inches of the plate. Take the piece you cut off and snip it in two. Paste the two pieces on the plate to make ears. Use a marker or crayon to draw the eyes and nose of the sheep. Use the sheep on a bulletin board to keep track of loving actions that children do for each other.



WHO IS LIKE A SHEPHERD? Ask the children to draw a picture of someone who helps them like the shepherd helps the sheep—parent, crossing guard, police officer, bus driver, etc. Arrange the pictures as a collage in your classroom.

Teaching Guide

Acts 14.21-27; Revelation 21.1-5; John 13.31-35

OVERVIEW

Gospel Theme: Jesus has one rule for us: Love.

Love is the main message. First, love of God for us in sending Jesus. Second, the love we show God and each other. Sunday's Gospel celebrates the risen Jesus' new commandment that we love one another as he has loved us. *Promise* helps children recognize ways they can grow in their ability to love.

Doctrinal Concept: All catechesis occurs within the life of a worshipping community. Drawn together by the Holy Spirit, this community gives praise and thanks to God (*National Directory for Catechesis* #31). *Catechism of the Catholic Church* #2028, 2196, 2774.

Materials: Pencils or markers, crayons, scissors, paper punch, yarn.

SHARING LIFE STORIES

GATHER AND SING Gather the children in a circle, holding hands. Sing these words to the tune of "Mary Had a Little Lamb." Add the gestures when the children are sure of the words.

We will always show our love,
show our love, show our love.

Move to the left.

We will always show our love,
just as Jesus does.

Move to the right. Drop hands and clap once at the end.

OPENING PRAYER Ask the children to sit down in the circle as you pray this prayer or one of your own making. They respond, "Amen. Alleluia."

Dear Jesus, you showed love to people by talking to them, listening to them, and helping them when they were sick or worried. Help us to be like you. We want to love others, too. Please show us the way.

Objective: The children will recognize Jesus asks us to love each other the way he loves us.

COVER ACTIVITY: Find the Message Gather the children in the work area. Distribute *Promise* and crayons or markers. Tell the children that Jesus gave us a very important message about how we are to be like him. Explain that the *Promise* cover is a find-the-message game. Lead them in doing it. Direct their attention to the first row of pictures at upper left.

Have them name each object—*ball, teddy bear, leaf, blocks*. Ask the children which item is not like the rest. *The leaf is not a toy*. Have the children circle the leaf. Do this with the other three rows. The children will circle the octopus, which doesn't fly, the violin, which is not a heavenly body, and the elephant, which is not something kids wear. Ask the children to name the first letter of each object with a circle around it. As they answer, write the four letters on the chalkboard. Ask the children to read the word *LOVE*. Conclude: The message Jesus gives us this Sunday is to love one another.

Objective: The children will identify concrete ways to love people in their lives.

STORY: Mary's Party Tell the children you know a story about a very friendly little girl. Ask: What does friendly mean? *Getting to know other people, interested in what people are thinking and what they feel like*. Listen to see how Mary's friendliness gets a party started.

One Tuesday the school bus dropped Mary off at the corner, as usual. She ran by Lucas's house, as usual, but stopped when she saw him sitting on the steps looking sad. "What's wrong?" Mary asked. Lucas held up his left hand. His little finger had a big white bandage on it. "I broke my finger playing soccer. Now I can't play for two weeks. It's dull just being home after school."

"Come to my house after school tomorrow," said Mary. "I'm having a party."

"Great!" said Lucas. "I'll be there."

Mary climbed the steps to her building. She met the mail carrier coming out. He looked tired. "Hi, Mr. Martin," Mary said. "Do you want to come to my party tomorrow? It's at 3:00." Mr. Martin smiled. "Sure," he said. "I'll be here with your mail and I will come to your party, too." "Thank you," Mary said.

As Mary walked into her family's apartment, the phone rang. "I'll get it!" Mary said. It was Aunt Lilly. "How are you, Aunt Lilly?" Mary asked. "Oh, my arthritis is very bad today," Aunt Lilly said. "Some days I can hardly get out of bed."

"You should come to my party tomorrow," Mary said.

"Well, maybe I will," said Aunt Lilly. "A party might do me good."

Just before dinner, Mary's mother realized they were almost out of milk. "Please go to the market," she said to Mary. "Hurry back." Mary got the milk and was on her way home when she saw Mr. Stevens and his little grandson walking very slowly ahead of her. Mary caught up and said, "Hi, Mr. Stevens. Hi, Tyrell. I'm having a party tomorrow when I get home from school. Do you want to come?" Mr. Stevens bent down to look at Tyrell. "Do you like parties?" he asked. "Yes!" Tyrell said. Mr. Stevens straightened up and smiled at Mary. "We'll be there," he said.

When Mary got home, her mom said, “What took you so long?” “I stopped to talk to Mr. Stevens and Tyrell,” Mary said. “They are coming to the party.” “What party?” said her mom. “I’m having a party tomorrow,” Mary said. “Is that okay?” “Who is coming?” Mom asked. Mary counted on her fingers. “Lucas, because he broke his finger, and Mr. Martin, because he has lots of mail for us, and Aunt Lilly, because of her arthritis, and Mr. Stevens and Tyrell because Tyrell likes parties, and you and me. They can all come at 3:00 when I get home from school.” Mom laughed. “It sounds like fun. What shall we serve?” “Can we make a yellow cake with chocolate frosting?” asked Mary. “Yes, we can,” Mom said. “This sounds like a great party.”

Ask the children to imagine the party the next day. Who will come first? Who will help cut the cake? What will people drink with their cake? Will everyone enjoy themselves? Why? Will Mary have a good time? Why or why not?

STRETCH AND MOVE Gather the children in the open area. Tell them they can pantomime some party games for the party. First, play *Pin the Tail on the Donkey*. Children pretend to blindfold each other and turn each other around. Then pretend there is a piñata for the children to swing at. Finally, play a game of tag. As soon as the person who is IT tags another child, IT can go to the Gospel area.

LISTENING TO THE GOSPEL

Objective: The children will recognize Jesus asks us to love each other the way he loves us.

GOSPEL STORYTELLING: Jesus’ rule is to love each other. Gather the children in a listening circle. Remind them that Jesus knew he would not always be with his friends in a regular kind of way—walking, talking, fishing, eating together. But Jesus did not want his friends to forget him. So he told them he had a way that they could always be close. Here are Jesus’ words.

My friends, I am not going to be with you very much longer.

I am giving you a new rule:

Love one another.

You know how much I love you.

I want you to love each other just as much as that.

Everyone will know you are my friends if you love each other.

Give the children a minute to sit with these words and then ask what they think Jesus meant. How can people know the children in this room are Jesus’ friends? How will they know the teacher here is Jesus’ friend? Name other places the children interact with others and ask how they show they are Jesus’ friends in each place or situation. Summarize by having each child tell you what is the big rule Jesus wants us to keep. *Jesus wants us to show we are his friends by the way we love one another.*

CREATIVE DRAMA Gather in the open area and divide into groups of three. Have the children sit in a circle with the groups of three sitting side by side. One at a time, ask the groups to come into the center of the circle and show with both actions and words how they would show love in one of the following situations.

- You and a friend are seeing who can kick a football the farthest. A boy is watching you.
- A big wind has blown little sticks and leaves all over your yard. Your mom asks you to help pick them up.
- A neighbor has lots of grocery bags to bring from his car to the house.

BUILDING CHRISTIAN COMMUNITY

Objective: The children will identify concrete ways to love people in their lives.

I CAN SHOW LOVE (page 2) Ask the children to turn to page 2. Read the headline, and ask the children to identify the loving act in each picture. Have them draw and color a picture of themselves doing a loving action for someone. Invite the children to show and tell the class what they drew.

WHOM DO I SHOW LOVE? (page 3) Look at the heart on page 3. Read the words at the top of the page. Ask the children to tell about people in their lives with whom they share their love. Have them give concrete examples. Next, have them write the names or draw the faces of these people in the six empty hearts on page 3.

GOSPEL ACTIVITY: Jesus teaches us (page 4) Have the children look at the heart on page 4. Have them start in the center with the head of Jesus, and follow along with their fingers as you read Jesus’ message. Then have them cut the heart out, following the dark line. Remind them to stop cutting where the line ends, so they don’t cut Jesus’ head off. Punch a hole in the top near Jesus’ head, and put yarn through the hole. Tell the children they can hang their Gospel message spirals in a special place at home.

CONCLUDING PRAYER Have the children stand in a circle with their Gospel message spirals. Holding them high, have the children move their spirals back and forth as they sing the opening song. End with an *Amen*.

OVERVIEW

Gospel Theme: Jesus sends the Spirit to us.

When Jesus prepares his followers for the fact that he will leave them, he assures them he will send the Spirit to be with them. We live in these Spirit-filled times. *Promise* helps the children see that their entire lives, not just their prayer and church lives, are lived in the Spirit and are good. This is the message they will take into summer vacation.

This is the last *Promise* lesson for the year. The children have sung, prayed, imagined, cut and folded their way through 32 Sunday Gospels. Congratulate each child on learning about Jesus and on practicing ways to act as Jesus' follower. Your affirmation will stay with each of them a lifetime.

Doctrinal Concept: The Holy Spirit, through whom the living voice of the Gospel rings out in the Church—and through her in the world—leads believers to the full truth, and makes the word of Christ dwell in them in all richness (*National Directory for Catechesis* #16B). *Catechism of the Catholic Church* #747, 767, 1086, 1266.

Materials: Scissors, markers or crayons.

SHARING LIFE STORIES

OPENING PRAYER Gather the children in a prayer circle. Recall the events of the past issues of *Promise*—Jesus' passion and death, his resurrection and appearances to his friends, his telling about being a good shepherd, his rule about loving. Ask the children their favorite thing about Jesus. What do they each like about being a follower of Jesus? Summarize this sharing with the following prayer or with a prayer of your own.

Loving God, you sent Jesus to teach us how to love you and love each other. Thank you for giving us the gift of Jesus. Help us learn today about the gift of the Holy Spirit that Jesus gave us. Amen.

WARM-UP ACTIVITY Gather the children in the open area and play this participation game. Write a message on a piece of paper, fold it and hand it to a child saying: "Give this message to someone with curly hair." Then tell the child who has received the message, "Give the message to someone with glasses." Continue in this way until everyone has had the message and it gets back to you. Ask:

- Who got to give the message? *Everyone.*
- What did the messenger have to do? *Listen, follow instructions, find the right person, hand the message over.*
- Who got the message? *Everyone.*

If your children are good at playing *Telephone*, give a verbal message and have them pass that around the circle.

In this game the message is usually garbled by the end. Ask why that is so and what could keep it from happening.

Talk together about messages children take to others every day—call family members to dinner, take phone messages, mail letters, and other examples the children will have. Conclude by saying that being a person who brings a message is a very important job.

Objective: The children will understand that the Spirit of Jesus is always with them no matter what they do or how they feel.

COVER ACTIVITY: Jesus gives us peace Distribute *Promise*. Ask the children to tell you what is happening in the illustration. *Four children are imagining bad things that could happen.* Ask volunteers to describe the illustrations one by one. After each description, ask if anyone in this class has that worry or had it at one time. *The boy at left is worried about someone yelling, either at him or at someone else. The girl worries her house, or maybe the house of a friend, is for sale. The third child has a worry about an adult who is sick. The boy worries the teacher will call on him and he won't know the answer.* Point out Jesus at the top of the page. Read together the words in his voice balloon. This is today's Gospel message. Ask the children why Jesus tells them not to worry. What can the Holy Spirit do to help?

LISTENING TO THE GOSPEL

GOSPEL STORYTELLING: Jesus promises to send the Spirit. Sunday's Gospel is difficult for young children. *Promise* recommends reading only this core message.

My Father will send the Holy Spirit to you.

The Spirit will remind you of everything I have told you.

Do not be sad or afraid. Peace is my gift to you.

Ask: How can the Spirit help us today? *To remember Jesus' rule about love, to be kind as Jesus was kind, to celebrate together as Jesus' followers did and as we do at church.*

BUILDING CHRISTIAN COMMUNITY

Objective: The children will recognize the Spirit in their daily actions.

GOSPEL ACTIVITY: Loving Actions Lotto Gather the children at the work tables. Talk about how the Holy Spirit helps us share Jesus' good news. Turn to pages 2-3 and ask what loving actions are happening in each of the four illustrations. Read the word by each illustration. Direct the

children to cut out the long strip of letters across the bottom of pages 2-3 and then cut the letters apart. Each child finds a partner. Both children turn their letters upside down and then take turns turning over a letter and using it to cover the same letter near one of the four pictures. Play until one child has all the letters on one picture covered. Continue until all four words are finished. Have the children put the letters in an envelope so they can play the game at home.

Objective: The children will go out to bring Jesus' good news to their friends and families.

CONCLUDING PRAYER: I am sending ____ Have the children cut out the megaphone on page 4 and write their names on the line beneath the words, "I am sending." Go around the room signing and dating the megaphone. Show the children how to roll up and tape the megaphone.

Gather the children in the prayer circle. Children use their megaphones to shout their response. Have them practice a few times before you start.

Leader: I am sending you to tell the good news of Jesus to everybody.

Children: We have good news!

Leader: Jesus' followers can love.

Children: We have good news!

Leader: Jesus' followers can forgive others.

Children: We have good news!

Leader: Jesus' followers don't fight. They make peace.

Children: We have good news!

Leader: We are Jesus' followers.

Children: We have good news!

EXTENDING ACTIVITY

GLORY BE A lectionary-based program such as *Promise* has many opportunities to introduce the concept of the Trinity to children. Jesus' baptism at the Jordan and readings from John's Gospel on the Sundays after Easter are two of these times.

Write the words to the *Glory Be* in dotted letters as in the example below. Use 8 1/2" x 11" paper and duplicate a copy for each child. They will enjoy tracing over the letters and will have a prayer to pray with their families.

Glory be
to the Father,
and to the Son,
and to the
Holy Spirit.