

## OVERVIEW

### Gospel Theme: God is a forgiving Father.

Jesus' parable of the forgiving father and the prodigal son is so familiar that we forget there are two sons in the story. The forgiving father welcomes home the self-centered, high-living brother who is sorry he went away. The faithful, hard-working son sulks in indignant jealousy and refuses to join in a welcome party for his brother.

Like the two sons, young children experience daily at very concrete levels getting and not getting their fair share. They notice who gets the largest piece of cake and the length of time one gets to play with a coveted toy. *Seeds* introduces them to Jesus' story about a father who welcomes the son who went away and who invites the jealous son to celebrate his brother's return. Our ever-present, forgiving God loves all of us as the father loves both sons.

A *Seeds* lesson can be comfortably completed in 30 minutes or take as long as an hour. Teachers who have more time can use extending activities. Teachers who have less time can abbreviate discussion and direct the children to complete the activity at home. Consider duplicating this guide and sending it home.

**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* #2839-40.

**Materials:** Scissors, crayons, yarn, tape.

## SHARING LIFE STORIES

**1. GATHER AND SING** Gather the children in a story circle. Begin class by singing the opening song. Clap your hands at the word *clap*. Sing the song again and invite them to clap, too.

### Gathering With Jesus

(to the tune of *Did You Ever See a Lassie?*)

|   |   |
|---|---|
| We gather here together,<br>together, together. | To hear Jesus' stories.<br>To clap, pray, and sing. |
| We gather here together<br>to show we love God. | We gather here together<br>to show we love God.     |

**2. OPENING PRAYER** Ask the children to listen quietly as you say the following prayer. They respond "Amen."

*Dear God, help me to listen well today. I want to learn about you. I want to be kind and forgiving to others as you are.*

**3. GOSPEL STORY WARMUP** Ask the children about parties they have been to.

- What kind of parties were they? *Birthday, wedding, baptism, graduation, Halloween, picnics.*
- Who was invited? *Relatives, friends, classmates, neighbors.*
- What did people do? *Play games, eat cake, give presents, sing, laugh.*
- Where was the party? *Home, rented hall, park, church.*

Give everyone a chance to answer once. Then tell the children you know a girl who got a teapot for a birthday present, a talking teapot.

**4. STRETCH AND SING** Ask children to stand and follow you in this familiar song and stretching exercise.

*I'm a little teapot, short and stout.*

*Here is my handle (Put one hand on hip.)*

*Here is my spout (Extend opposite hand outward and slant it down to make a spout.)*

*When the tea is ready, I will shout.*

*Just tip me over and pour me out (Bend body toward arm extended as spout.)*

## LISTENING TO THE GOSPEL

**Objective:** The children will appreciate God's love for them.

**5. GOSPEL STORY: The son who went away** Ask the children to sit back down in the story circle and distribute *Seeds*. Ask them to tell what they see on the cover. *A party, food, happiness, a father and his son. A special ring on the son's finger.* Read the title sentence to the children and tell them that in the Gospel story we hear this Sunday Jesus tells a good story about a father and two sons. Ask the children to put *Seeds* on the carpet in front of them and listen as hard as they can to Jesus' story.

*There was a father who had two sons. The younger son was not happy at home. He wanted to go far away. No more helping out at home. So his father gave him money and told him he could leave. The father wanted his son to be happy. The older son stayed with his father at home and worked with him on their farm. The younger son set off for a big town. He wanted to make friends, so he gave parties with lots of food and wine. Many people wanted to be his friends. But soon his money was all gone. Then his new friends forgot all about him. He had no place to sleep and nothing to eat. Then this son remembered his dad and how good his dad was. He decided to go home.*

The father had missed his son very much. Every day he climbed the hill and looked down the road to see if his son was coming home. Finally one day he did see him. The father was so glad. He ran to meet his son. The son started to say he was sorry he went away and wasted all his money. His father just hugged him. He invited all the neighbors to come to a welcome home party and gave his son a beautiful ring as a welcome home gift.

Ask the children to look at their cover picture again and show a partner which person is the father, which is the son with the ring.

**6. GOSPEL CREATIVE DRAMA** Ask the children to stand and show you with their bodies and faces:

- how the father feels when his son wants to go away;
- how the son feels when he has used up all his money and has no food or place to sleep.

Continue by asking the children to be the father looking down the road for his son.

- What does he do when sees the son?
- What does the son do when he sees his father?

**7. GOSPEL STORY: The son who stayed home** Ask the children to sit again. Mount the inside pages of *Seeds* on tagboard or cardboard so you can hold up the pages 2-3 illustration for the whole class to look at. Ask them to describe what is happening. The party is still going on, but the father is outside talking to someone. The children may guess it is the other brother. Continue the story.

*The other brother, the one who had stayed home to help his dad, wouldn't come to the party. He was mad that his brother had wasted money and not helped at home and still got a big party. "How come you never gave a big party for me?" this son asked his dad when his dad came out to talk to him. The dad tried to explain to his son. "We should be happy your brother is back. He is very sorry for what he did. He has come home to tell us that. Come in now and rejoice with your brother. He wants to be your friend again."*

Have the children tell you what they see in the illustration. Ask the following questions:

- How does the older son, the one who stayed home and helped his dad, feel? Ask if they have felt jealous sometimes when someone else gets a new toy or gets to go with their parents alone.
- How does the father feel when the older son won't come to the party?
- What does the father tell the older son?
- Do you think the older son will come to the party? Would you go if this was your brother's party? Relate the story to the children's own lives. *They can forgive a brother or sister and share fun with them.*

**8. GOSPEL CREATIVE DRAMA** Ask children to stand. Have them show with their bodies and their faces how the father felt when his son left, how he felt when his son came home. Then show how the older son felt when he saw the party and how he felt after his dad talked to him.

# BUILDING CHRISTIAN COMMUNITY

**Objective:** The children will identify ways they share with others.

**9. WE CAN SHARE** Gather in the work area and ask children to look at the back page of *Seeds*. Read the title. Ask what share means. *To let someone else be part of something you have or something you are doing.* Look one at a time at the illustrations in the left-hand column and let the children describe what is happening. Then go back to the top left illustration and ask if there is one in the other column which shows children sharing. *Bottom right.* Children can draw a line between the two illustrations with a crayon or pencil or with just their fingers. Continue the same way with the other pairs of illustrations.

**10. WELCOME RING ACTIVITY** Distribute scissors and have the children cut out the rectangle at the bottom of page 4. Tape both ends to make a ring like the one the father gave the son. Tie the ring on a piece of yarn for each child to wear around his or her neck. This will remind them that God will always forgive us and that God wants us to share happiness with others.

You can prepare these rings before your *Seeds* session and just slip them around the children's necks at this part of the lesson. The suggestion for parents tells a way the ring can be used at home during the week.

**11. CLOSING PRAYER AND SONG** Gather in the prayer circle and sing "Gathering With Jesus" again. Then pray the following prayer and give the children time to add names of people they forgive at the end.

*God, you are like the father in Jesus' story. Thank you for forgiving us when we get mad and do not share with others. Help us to forgive others, too. I have forgiven \_\_\_\_\_.*

## EXTENDING ACTIVITY

**12. CREATIVE DRAMA** Creative dramatics is a good way for young children to experience a situation rather than just hear about it. Invite them to take parts in the following scenarios to have a chance to experience what it is like to forgive and to be forgiven.

Janette builds a tower of blocks. Billy is running across the room, bumps into the tower, and knocks it over. How does Janette feel? What does she say? How does Billy feel? What does he say?

Mary is watching *Sesame Street*. She gets up to get a drink of water. Her brother Andy takes her chair and switches channels. Mary takes the remote control away from Andy and he starts to cry. Their mother comes to see what is wrong. What does Mary say? What does her mom say? What does Mary do?

## OVERVIEW

### Gospel Theme: Jesus is forgiving.

In Sunday's Gospel some of the teachers of the Law try to trick Jesus. They have caught a woman and a man in the act of adultery. They bring the woman to Jesus and ask him if they shouldn't stone her. The Law says they can. Jesus tells them the one who has never sinned can throw the first stone. At this, all the woman's accusers depart. No other Gospel story makes it clearer that in Jesus' eyes we always have the opportunity to say we are sorry and start over.

Young children are very prone to blame others. They perceive lots of unfairness in their lives, although as adults we know it is sometimes because they don't understand why things are as they are. They want to be sure everyone around them takes the blame the way they have to. The story of the woman gives them another model: Jesus, who is not interested in blame but only in growing more loving.

This *Seeds* lesson helps children learn how to deal with their problems in a constructive manner and on their own. It also encourages cooperative play.

**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* #2448.

**Materials:** Crayons, scissors, used envelopes.

## SHARING LIFE STORIES

**1. GATHER AND SING** Begin your *Seeds* session by gathering the children in a circle and singing together the opening song you learned last week.

|   |   |
|---|---|
| We gather here together,<br>together, together. | To hear Jesus' stories.<br>To clap, pray, and sing. |
| We gather here together<br>to show we love God. | We gather here together<br>to show we love God.     |

**2. OPENING PRAYER** Have the children remain standing and holding hands while you say the following prayer. The children respond "Amen."

*Dear God, we are your children. You love us, and we love you. Sometimes we make mistakes and big messes. We know you give us lots of chances to grow more loving like you.*

**3. A PLAYTIME PROBLEM** Prepare to begin discussion of Sunday's Gospel by creating a story circle. Have the children gather closely around you in a circle holding hands. As you count 1,2,3, have them step back three steps, drop hands, and sit cross-legged on the floor.

Ask the children if anyone has ever blamed them for something they didn't do, perhaps taking a toy away from a brother or sister or hitting someone. Ask if any of the children has ever tattled on their brothers or sisters. After every child has a chance to contribute to the discussion, tell the following story.

*The children in Miss Karen's preschool were very busy. Some were painting, some were reading in the book corner, some were playing in the sandbox, and one child, Gregory, was playing with the blocks. Sarah came to Miss Karen. "Gregory is not supposed to be playing with the blocks," Sarah told Miss Karen. "It is not his turn. It is my turn." Miss Karen listened to Sarah. Then she said, "This is not something I need to know. Go talk to Gregory about it." So Sarah said to Gregory, "It is not your turn to play with the blocks. I had to wait for my turn. You should wait for your turn, too." Gregory listened to Sarah. Then he said, "Okay," and he went to play in the sandbox.*

Discuss the story by asking some of these questions.

- How did Sarah feel?
- What was Gregory doing that she minded?
- Why did Sarah care what Gregory was doing?
- What did she want Gregory to do?
- What did Gregory do?
- Why did Miss Karen ask Sarah to talk to Gregory herself?

Your class will work together much better if you make ground rules about handling conflict. Rather than have the children tattle on each other to you, direct them to follow the pattern in the story.

1. Talk to the child involved rather than tell the teacher.
2. Say how I feel about what the other child is doing.
3. Say why I feel that way and what I want to happen.
4. Listen to what the other child says and decide together what to do.

Discuss times when it is necessary to tell the teacher or your parents what is happening. *If someone is hurting someone or is hurting themselves.* Ask:

- Was Gregory hurting anyone?
- What if Gregory started throwing the blocks at the other children? Should the children tell Miss Karen? Why?

Distribute *Seeds*. Ask the children to open their issues to page 2 and tell the story to a partner by looking at the pictures. Have them number the story squares so they can tell Sarah and Gregory's story to their families.

**4. STRETCH** Ask the children to stand and lead them in this stretching activity.

Stretch, stretch your hands up high.  
Now let your fingers fly.  
Stamp your feet both left and right, left and right.  
Now stretch up tall and reach your height.

# LISTENING TO THE GOSPEL

**Objective:** The children will appreciate Jesus as someone who invites us to say I'm sorry and start over.

**5. GOSPEL STORYTELLING:** **The woman who got blamed** Gather in the prayer area for the telling of the Gospel. If your space is small, use the same area you have for the story circle. You can make it the prayer area by putting the Bible or lectionary on a table or on the floor in the middle of the circle. Find a nice piece of cloth to put under the book, and bring candles and flowers. Children enjoy ceremony and can take turns bringing the Bible forward and opening it to Sunday's Gospel passage. Invite the children to sit in a circle around the lectionary or Bible with their copies of *Seeds* in front of them.

Tell the children that in the Gospel story we hear this Sunday Jesus tells us about not tattling or blaming others. Instead Jesus shows us that God loves people even when they make mistakes.

*One day Jesus was teaching the people. Some of the people brought a woman to Jesus and told him that she had broken the law. They said to Jesus: "She must be punished. She must be punished. She broke the law." Jesus did not answer them. So they said again. "She must be punished. Isn't that right?" Jesus said to the people, "Is there any one of you who has never broken a law or never made a mistake? If there is, that person may punish this woman." One by one the people turned around and walked away. Jesus said to the woman, "No one is here to blame you any more. Go now, and don't break the law again."*

Have the children look at the cover illustration. Ask:

- How does the woman in the picture feel?
- How does Jesus feel?
- How do the other people feel?
- Why did the people want to punish the woman?
- Why didn't they punish her?
- Did Jesus punish her?
- What does this story tell us about Jesus?
- How do you think Jesus feels about me when I make a mistake? How does Jesus feel when you make a mistake?

**6. GOSPEL CREATIVE DRAMA** Invite the children to recreate the cover scene by asking one child to be the woman, one to be Jesus, and the rest to be the people who accuse the woman. Tell the Gospel story again, slowly, and have children show with their bodies and faces:

- how the woman feels when the people tell Jesus they have caught her breaking a law;
- how the people feel when they think Jesus is going to have to agree with them about punishing the woman;
- how Jesus feels when he sees the woman is scared and embarrassed; what the people who are tattling on the woman do when Jesus says that those who have never done anything wrong can go ahead and punish her;
- how the woman feels when everyone goes away.

Conclude this Gospel discussion by asking the children what they learn about Jesus from this story. *He believes in giving people who make mistakes the chance to say I'm sorry and start over.*

# BUILDING CHRISTIAN COMMUNITY

**Objective:** The children will learn to work out problems and cooperate in play.

**7. PLAYING TOGETHER** Young children are not yet very capable of cooperative play. This simple activity with its take-turns rule gives them a chance to play together and work out the simple conflict of whose turn it is without recourse to the teacher.

Ask the children to bring their copies of *Seeds* to the table area. Have a crayon and scissors for each child. (If your class time is short or your children do not enjoy cutting, separate pages 3-4 of *Seeds* from pages 1-2 before class and cut out the blocks ahead of time.) Open to page 3 of *Seeds*. Have the children look at the blocks. Direct them to connect the dots on each block. Have the children read the numbers. Next, have them cut the blocks apart and turn them over. Have them count the objects in each box. Have them turn over the block to see the number on the other side. In partners, have them take turns putting their blocks in order. First the number side, then the object side. If they have any problems working with their partner, ask them to solve it themselves without tattling to you.

Have used envelopes available so the children can take their blocks home and play with their families.

**8. CLOSING PRAYER AND SONG** Gather in a prayer circle and sing "Gathering With Jesus" to conclude your *Seeds* session. Pray the following prayer.

*Jesus, you love us even when we make mistakes. Help us to love others when they make mistakes and not to blame them. Help us not to tattle on others but to try to solve our own problems. We can do this with your love and your help. Amen.*

**9. SNACK** If there is time for a snack, pass out Cheerios and have the children put them in groups of 1-4 before they eat them.

# EXTENDING ACTIVITY

**10. COOPERATIVE GAMES** Any version of *Concentration* is fun for young children. Don't be too concerned if the children don't follow the actual game rules. As long as they agree how they will play, the game will be fun.

# Seeds

## 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: We welcome Jesus.

This Sunday's Gospel begins with a special ritual. The congregation gathers outside the church building for the blessing of palm branches. Waving the branches and singing "Hosanna," everyone processes into the church, reenacting Jesus' entry into Jerusalem the week of his passion and death. Many people take the blessed palm home and keep it as a sacramental reminder of Holy Week.

Children are not able to grasp the meaning of Jesus' passion and death. They can appreciate, however, that Jesus' life shows them how tenderly and persistently God cares for them. Through the use of puppets, the children will reenact Jesus entering Jerusalem. This gives them the opportunity to praise Jesus for his love for them.

**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* #638, 1677-79.

**Materials:** Scissors, paste or tape, 4 tongue depressors per child, a large piece of palm.

## SHARING LIFE STORIES

**1. GATHER AND SING** Gather the children in a circle and sing "Gathering With Jesus" or "The Seed Song" from the *Seeds* music CD.

**2. OPENING PRAYER** Have the children remain standing and bow their heads while you say the following prayer. Children respond "Amen."

*Dear Jesus, we welcome you into our hearts. Help us be kind and welcoming to others during this Seeds class.*

**3. WELCOMING OTHERS** Sit in the story circle. Ask the children if anyone special is coming to visit at their house on Easter. What will the members of your family do to get ready for them? What will you do? *Pick up the things in your room, put your toys away, help get special food ready.* Who has had a new baby in their family? How did you get ready for the new baby? Perhaps you had a visitor in your *Seeds* class. How did you get ready for him or her? *Learn a song, make a welcome poster, decide where the person will sit, have something special to eat.*

Now pretend you are going to your grandma's house. How does she welcome you? *She probably has cookies or*

*something special that she knows you like or maybe a special toy or book. All those are ways to say welcome.* How does Grandma show you that she's happy that you came to her house? Keep asking for details of how they know Grandma is happy they have come.

**4. STRETCH AND SING** Ask the children to stand in an open space. Play "Today's a Special Day" from the *Seeds* music CD. Tell the children that we will learn this song so we can sing it to two children in today's story.

Today's a special day!

Today's a special day!

Who is having a special day today?

Today's a special day!

Today's a special day!

Tell me now whose day it is today!

**Objective:** The children will identify ways they welcome people into their homes and into their *Seeds* sessions.

### 5. STORYTELLING: Welcome Sharon and Karen

Return to the story circle. Tell the children this is a story about a *Seeds* class just like theirs.

*One day Miss Lutz came to Seeds class with a big announcement. "Guess what?" Miss Lutz said. "We are going to have two new children in our Seeds group. They are twins. Their names are Sharon and Karen. Their family just moved to our town. How can we get ready to welcome them?"*

*Lou Anne said, "We will need to get two more chairs."*

*Stephen said, "We will need two more spaces on the shelf for them to put their work."*

*Von said, "We can fix a box with crayons, scissors, and paste for each of them."*

*Miss Lutz asked, "Can you think of anything else?"*

Ask your group to tell what ways the children can welcome the twins when they come to the *Seeds* group: *be kind to them; teach them; show them where the restroom is; play with them; share toys and books during free time; pass snacks to them.*

*Miss Lutz praised the children for all the ways they found to welcome Sharon and Karen. "Sharon and Karen might be a little afraid and scared because they just moved here and they don't have a lot of friends yet. They had to leave their friends at home before they came all the way here. It's really important to say welcome. I will write it big on the board and we can spell it. W-E-L-C-O-M-E. That spells welcome. Welcome, Sharon and Karen."*

Have the children stand to sing "Today's a Special Day" again. At the end they can shout together: Welcome, Sharon and Karen.

# LISTENING TO THE GOSPEL

**6. GOSPEL WARMUP** Review how Miss Lutz's *Seeds* class welcomes Sharon and Karen. Then tell the children that when Jesus came to Jerusalem, the people gathered around to welcome him. They sang a special song like the one we sang for Karen and Sharon. They waved pieces of palm branches to say hello to Jesus. Sunday in our church we wave palm branches, too, and sing a special song to welcome Jesus. Show the children a piece of the palm your parish blesses.

## 7. GOSPEL STORYTELLING: We welcome Jesus

Tell the Gospel story in your own words or use the following version.

*One day Jesus decided to go to Jerusalem, the most important city in his country. Jesus wanted to celebrate the Feast of Passover in Jerusalem near the Temple. Some of Jesus' friends went with him. They walked and walked until they could see the big walls of the city in the distance. When they got closer, they could see the white walls of the Temple gleaming in the sun. They stopped on top of a big hill just outside the city gates. One of Jesus' friends put his cloak on a donkey and Jesus climbed on. Riding a donkey was a way to let people know Jesus was a peaceful man, not a king who would make wars. When the people in Jerusalem saw Jesus riding down the hill on the donkey, they became very excited. They took off their coats and cloaks and laid them on the road. They cut branches from the palm trees in their gardens and waved them at Jesus. They sang, "Hosanna! Praise to you, Jesus. Welcome!" The children were so happy to see Jesus that they skipped and danced in the road ahead of him, waving their branches and singing, "Hosanna!"*

**8. STRETCH AND SING** Play "If You're Happy and You Know It" from the *Seeds* music CD. Add this verse.

If you're happy and you know it, shout Hosanna!  
If you're happy and you know it, shout Hosanna!  
If you're happy and you know it,  
and you really want to show it,  
If you're happy and you know it, shout Hosanna!

# BUILDING CHRISTIAN COMMUNITY

**Objective: The children will dramatize welcoming Jesus to Jerusalem.**

**9. PALM SUNDAY PUPPETS** Gather the children in the work area and distribute *Seeds*. Open the issue flat, with the cover showing, and talk about the pictures. Begin: Look in the corner, who do we see? *A man and a woman.* Look at their faces. What do their faces tell us? *They are happy Jesus is coming and anxiously waiting for him.* Look at the next picture, the lady with the baby. What does she have in her hands? *Palm branches.* Look at the bottom of the page to find a big palm branch. These come from palm trees. Find the palm trees in the picture of the city.

Now identify the cloaks, which are coats without arms. The people will put them down on the ground so that Jesus and the donkey can walk on them. That's how happy they are to welcome Jesus. Call the children's attention to the city of Jerusalem which was mentioned in the Gospel story. Identify the donkey and Jesus. Does Jesus look sad? *No, he looks happy that the people are happy to see him. He has his hand up and is waving at the people.* It's like a big parade! You've been to parades and seen how the people wave. Let's practice waving as they do at a parade. Move your hand back and forth. It's a way to say welcome and we're glad to see you.

Have the children turn the page over. The donkey looks the same, but we only see Jesus' back. Find the other people pictures and the cloak pictures. Discuss the people pictures one by one with them.

If your children do not enjoy cutting activities, you may wish to pre-cut this issue. Otherwise, proceed now to cut out the four cards and the palm branch, using the heavy black lines on page 2-3 as a guide. Then cut out Jesus and the donkey. If you cut along the central fold of Jesus' robe, he will sit on the donkey. Give the children four tongue depressors to tape the people and donkey pictures and the palm branch to.

**10. GOSPEL DRAMA** The children can act out the Gospel in groups of three. They each hold up their palm branch and put down their cloaks. Then one child holds up Jesus and the donkey and the other two children hold up the people and their palm. They place the six cloaks in a line and then wave their palms and move their stick puppets up and down. Jesus sits on the donkey and walks on the cloaks.

**11. CONCLUDING PRAYER AND SONG** Gather in the prayer circle. The children have Jesus and the donkey in one hand and the palm branch in the other. Sing "If you're happy and you know it, shout Hosanna!" Then pray:

*Dear Jesus, we learn today how important it is to welcome people. Help us to welcome others. Like the people of Jerusalem, we welcome you.*

Children wave their palm branches as they answer, "Amen."

# EXTENDING ACTIVITIES

**12. PAINTING PALM TREES** Show pictures of palm trees to the children. Explain these are very common trees in Jerusalem, where Jesus was visiting. If time allows, have them paint palm trees using sponges and tempera.

**13. PALM CROSSES** Staple two 3-inch pieces of blessed palm in a cross shape, one for each child. They take them home to show their families and to tell about the Palm Sunday procession.

**14. MOSAIC CROSS** Let the children work together on a classroom-size mosaic cross. They paste small pieces of colored construction paper on a piece of 8 1/2" X 11" paper that has the outline of a cross.

## OVERVIEW

### Gospel Theme: Jesus is risen!

Jesus' resurrection was such a powerful event in the life of the first Christians that they recorded their experiences of it in great detail. The Gospels of these two Sundays begin the telling of these stories.

Young children understand Easter best in terms of new life. They can witness the Easter renewal of life in nature and the life of the family which gathers for church and for Easter meals. This prepares them for the awareness at a later age of the parallel between the new life of springtime and the new life Jesus experiences and offers to us.

In the Easter lesson for the other two lectionary cycles, *Seeds* pictures Jesus encountering Mary Magdalene at the empty tomb. This year the cover illustration pictures Jesus in the upper room on Easter night, greeting all those gathered there in fear and bringing them peace.

**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, 641-42, 658, 1193.

**Materials:** Crayons, scissors, tape, glue or paste, stapler.

## SHARING LIFE STORIES

**1. GATHER AND SING** Gather the children in the story circle and sing the Easter song from the *Seeds* music CD. If you do not have the CD, sing the following words to the tune of "Are You Sleeping?" Remind the children that *alleluia* is a Hebrew word that means *praise God*.

Alleluia, Alleluia,  
is our song, is our song.  
We are Easter people.  
We are Easter people.  
Sing along. Sing along.

**2. OPENING PRAYER** Have the children sit or stand quietly as you read this prayer or say one of your own. They respond "Amen."

*Happy Easter, Jesus! We are glad you have risen and are with us. We welcome you and all the new life we have because of you. We love the flowers and birds and green grass and blue sky. We are happy for new babies and for our friends and families. Thank you very much.*

### 3. STORYTELLING: Trouble in Bunny Kingdom

Ask: Who had a visit from the Easter Bunny? What did the Easter Bunny bring to your house? After the children have had time to share, tell them that there was trouble in the Easter Bunny's headquarters this year. If they listen very

carefully, they will find out what the trouble was and how it got fixed.

*The trouble started late one afternoon when Bobby Bunny hopped out of his hollow tree trunk to stretch his bunny arms and legs. Bobby Bunny had been working very hard to prepare chocolate Easter eggs for all the little Kidoo children in the world. He felt good about the eggs he had made, but he was very tired.*

*Betty Bunny came out of her tree trunk at the same time. She was also tired, but she was smiling from one floppy ear to the other. "Oh, Bobby," Betty said, "I have just finished making perfect chocolate Easter eggs for all the little Kidoodles in the world. The Kidoodles will be the happiest children the Easter Bunny visits."*

*"I am sure you have made some nice eggs," Bobby said, "but perfect eggs that will make the Kidoodles happier than the Kidoos? I don't think so."*

*"Well," Betty Bunny said in a loud, challenging voice, "let's see what the Easter Bunny says when he returns on Easter morning." Betty went back inside her hollow tree and slammed the door shut.*

*Buford and Bonnie Bunny heard Bobby and Betty arguing. They left their work stations and came out of their trees. Buford said, "No need to get upset and argue if the Kidoos or the Kidoodles will be the happiest. My chocolate eggs are the best-tasting eggs and I'm making them for all the Kidlets in the world. The Kidlets will definitely be happiest. You two don't need to argue any more."*

*"Buford, what are you saying?" Bonnie asked. "You have seen my chocolate eggs. You know they are the best. I am making them for all the little Kiddems. The Kiddems will surely be the happiest children in the world."*

*The tired bunnies continued to argue. Betty came out of her tree trunk to defend her chocolate eggs. Betty, Bobby, Buford, and Bonnie were each certain they had made the best chocolate Easter eggs of all.*

*"Let's ask the Easter Bunny," Buford said in an attempt to settle the disagreement. The bunnies quickly gathered a sampling of their chocolate egg creations. They journeyed to the largest tree trunk which was the home of the Easter Bunny.*

*"Easter Bunny, Easter Bunny!" the four bunnies hollered as they approached the big tree. "Easter Bunny, we need to see you!"*

*"What is going on out here?" Easter Bunny said as he came out of his tree trunk, removing his glasses. "I've never heard such commotion. What is the trouble?"*

*"My chocolate eggs are the best and the Kidoos will be the happiest children," Bobby said.*

*"Mine are best," Buford said loudly.*

*"Kiddems will be happier than ever before," Bonnie stated firmly.*

Betty quickly said, "The Kidoodles will be overjoyed." "I think I'm beginning to see the problem here," Easter Bunny said. "Each of you has been working very hard to create special Easter gifts for children. But now you are only thinking about whose eggs are the best. You must remember that the love that goes into the eggs is important. That way every child will get the best Easter egg ever. They will all get eggs that you made with love."

The Easter Bunny went to all four bunnies and gave them big hugs. "It doesn't matter if the Kidoodles or the Kidoos or the Kidlets or the Kiddems are the happiest. It only matters that all kids receive our very best gift. I will deliver all the chocolate eggs tomorrow and all the children will be happy."

Betty, Bobby, Buford, and Bonnie Bunny were happy, too, because they knew the Easter Bunny was right!

Review the story by having the children act out this conflict without using words. First they pantomime making their eggs, then arguing about whose egg is best, trooping over to the Easter Bunny, and finally, giving the Easter Bunny hugs and giving a handshake of peace to each other.

**4. STRETCH AND SING** Play "Everything Is Growing" from the *Seeds* music CD. The children may need to listen to the song before acting out the verses.

## LISTENING TO THE GOSPEL

**5. GOSPEL RITUAL** Gather in the area you have set aside to proclaim the Gospel. Sing "Two Little Ears" from the music CD to help the children prepare themselves to listen carefully. If you do not have the CD, lead the children in saying the words and making gestures.

Two little ears to hear God's word.

Two little eyes to see God's love.

Two little hands to work each day.

Alleluia! Hear me pray.

**Objective: The children will connect the greeting of peace at Mass with Jesus' greeting to his disciples on Easter night.**

**6. GOSPEL STORYTELLING: Jesus Brings Us Peace** Tell this version of the resurrection story to the children or a version of your own or read John 20 aloud. Mary's finding of the empty tomb is the Easter Gospel. Jesus' appearance on Easter night is the Gospel we hear on the Sunday after Easter. The *Seeds* version below includes the appearance of Jesus to Mary Magdalene to complete the story of the first Easter day.

*After Jesus died on the cross, his friend Joseph helped Jesus' women friends bury him. They put Jesus' body in a kind of cave, and rolled a big rock to block the entrance. Then everyone went home, because it was almost dark. The next day was Saturday. Because it was the Sabbath day, Mary Magdalene and the other women didn't come to the place where Jesus was buried. But, bright and early on Sunday, Mary set out. When she got to the tomb, she noticed*

*the big rock had been rolled away. Mary looked inside the tomb. Jesus was gone! Mary looked around and saw a man she thought was the gardener. "Where have you put Jesus?" Mary asked, crying. "Please tell me." The man said, "Mary." The man was really Jesus! Mary was so happy to see him. Jesus asked her to go tell everyone that he was risen from the dead. So Mary did.*

*That night, all of Jesus' friends were gathered together. All of a sudden Jesus was there. People could hardly believe their eyes. They were so happy. Jesus gave people hugs and they gave him hugs. Jesus picked up little children and shook hands all around. "Peace be to you all," Jesus said. Then he breathed on them. "Receive the Holy Spirit." That was Jesus' special gift to his friends.*

Distribute *Seeds* and ask the children to tell you what is happening in the cover illustration. Have them use what they remember of the story you just told to identify the people in the picture and to imagine what they are saying and what Jesus is saying.

## BUILDING CHRISTIAN COMMUNITY

**7. MY EASTER EGG** Move to the work area. Distribute scissors and show the children how to cut pages 2-3 apart on the heavy black line. Set pages 3-4 aside. Give the children crayons to color their Easter egg. Remind them of the story and what a special gift their Easter egg can be to themselves or to a family member. Be sure they notice the cross shape, a symbol of Jesus.

**Objective: The children will create a booklet celebrating the kinds of new life they experience in their Easter celebrations.**

**8. MY EASTER BOOK** Using their scissors, the children will cut pages 3 and 4 on the two horizontal heavy lines. Have them set the small strip of five pictures aside. Show them how to fold the picture pieces to make a booklet. Check to see that the page numbers are in order. They then cut out the five pictures on the small strip. Identify the pictures together: *tulip, bunny, lamb cake, butterfly, Easter candle*. Go through the Easter booklets together. Discuss what kind of Easter celebration is happening on each page, and give the children time to place and paste the pictures in the appropriate squares. They can also find the hidden eggs on pages 2-3, color the Alleluia banner on pages 4-5, and count the butterflies on pages 6-7. If there is time, have them draw their own pictures on page 8. You may staple the booklets together to make them more permanent.

**9. CLOSING PRAYER AND SONG** Gather the children in their circle with their Easter books. Ask the children each to thank Jesus for one living thing. Close with the Alleluia song.

## OVERVIEW

### Gospel Theme: The risen Jesus meets his friends again.

In Sunday's Gospel some of Jesus' friends are fishing. When Jesus calls to them from the shore, they do not at first recognize him. It is only when he makes a meal and invites them to eat that they recognize Jesus. The Gospel writer notes that this is the third time Jesus appeared to his disciples after God raised him from the dead. Many of these appearances include the familiar act of eating together, a sure way for his followers to know that it is indeed Jesus with them. *Seeds* focuses on the happiness children experience in being together with family and friends. The security and love they find in family gatherings help them be open to people and experiences outside the family and prepare to find their place in the parish family.

**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* #2204-2206.

## SHARING LIFE STORIES

**1. GATHER AND SING** Gather the children in the story circle and sing the Easter song from the *Seeds* music CD. If you do not have the CD, sing the words to the tune of "Are You Sleeping?"

Alleluia, Alleluia,  
is our song, is our song.  
We are Easter people. We are Easter people.  
Sing along. Sing along.

**2. OPENING PRAYER** The children remain standing while you say the following prayer. They answer "Amen."

*Jesus, you liked to eat meals with your friends and talk with them. In our Seeds class and at home we talk about you and share food with each other. Thank you for giving us family and friends. Thank you for being our special friend.*

**Objective: The children will recognize the joy and happiness of sharing with their families and friends.**

**3. STORYTELLING: A Surprise for David** Remain in the story circle. Introduce the story by asking the children if they have ever had a surprise party. How did they feel? Who came? What was the occasion? Ask them to listen carefully to the story of a surprise for a boy named David.

David was going to be four years old on Saturday. He was very excited. He crossed off the days on the calendar until

finally it was Friday night. Just one more sleep until his birthday. Grandma and Grandpa called from Arizona to wish him an early happy birthday. "I wish Grandma and Grandpa could come for my birthday," David said after he had hung up.

On Saturday morning David woke up earlier than usual. When he went into the kitchen, his mom and dad were drinking coffee. They gave David big hugs and sang the birthday song. David wanted to open his gifts right away but Mom said, "Wait just a little while, until we all get dressed." Dad helped David get dressed and then David helped Dad decide what shirt and sweater to wear. Then David and Dad filled the bird feeder on the back porch and put out an ear of corn for the squirrels. Mom opened the kitchen window and said, "Will you two please come in?" "Good, time for my presents!" said David. But when David and Dad went into the kitchen, Mom wasn't there. "Let's look in the family room," Dad said. He pushed open the swinging door, and let David walk through first. All of a sudden a whole lot of people started to sing "Happy Birthday." David almost ran back in the kitchen he was so surprised. Then everyone came up to give him hugs—his friends, Jen and John; his Aunt Becky and Uncle Chip; his cousins Gary, Sue, and Jeanine; and his godmother, Shirley.

Dad looked out the window and said to David, "Two more special people are coming to your party. Why don't you go to the door and let them in?" David ran to the front door and opened it. A man and a woman were getting out of a shiny red car. They had presents in their hands. The lady had on a big hat. *Who is that lady?* David wondered to himself. Then the lady looked up and saw David waiting by the door. She smiled a big, big smile and waved. Then David knew who the lady was. He would know that smile anywhere. "Grandma, you came to my party!" David yelled, running down the steps to hug her. "We got on a plane this morning and here we are," said the man. He picked David up and whirled him around in circles. "Grandpa, is it really you?" David asked. "It is really us, David," said his grandparents. "We are here to celebrate your special day with you."

Ask the children how David felt when he saw all his family. Why did he not recognize his grandparents at first? What did he recognize about them?

**4. STRETCH AND SING** Gather the children in the open area. Have them make a big circle holding hands. Sing the following song and add the actions.

The more we get together, together, together  
(*Move to the right.*)

The more we get together, the happier we are  
(*Move to the left.*)

For your friends are my friends  
(*Point at someone else and then at self.*)

And my friends are your friends  
(*Point at self first and then at someone else.*)

The more we get together the happier we are  
(*All jump up and clap hands on "we are."*)

# LISTENING TO THE GOSPEL

**Objective:** The children will identify the feelings of Jesus' friends when they ate with him after his resurrection.

**5. GOSPEL STORYTELLING: Jesus meets his friends again** Gather the children in the Gospel area. Help them recall the events of Easter Sunday by asking these questions. What happened to Jesus after he died on the cross? *His friends buried him.* What happened after they went home? *God raised Jesus up from the tomb. He became alive in a new way.* Who met Jesus after he was raised from the dead? *Mary Magdalene, Peter and John, Thomas, all the women, men, and children who were gathered together in a room when Jesus came.* How did Jesus' friends feel when they saw him? *They were very happy. Some of them didn't believe it was Jesus until they touched him or until he ate with them.* Tell the children that today's story is about one of the times Jesus appeared to his friends after his resurrection.

*After Jesus died, some of his friends went back to Lake Galilee, where their families lived, and went fishing. They fished all night long, but they didn't catch any fish at all. When the sun came up, they could see a man standing on the shore of the lake. They did not know that the man was Jesus. The man called out to them, "Have you caught anything, my friends?" "No, we haven't," they answered. The man said, "Throw your nets out on the other side of the boat." They did that and they caught so many fish that they could not lift the net into the boat. John said to Peter, "That man is Jesus!" Peter jumped right in the water and swam to shore.*

*The rest of Jesus' friends rowed the boat to shore slowly. When they got there, they pulled in the net and counted the fish they had caught. There were 153 fish in their net. Jesus took some of the fish and cooked them. He had some bread, too, so everyone got a good breakfast. No one asked, "Is this really you, Jesus?" because they knew it was. Eating together with them was something Jesus always did. Their hearts were filled with happiness. This was the third time Jesus had appeared to his friends since God had raised him from the dead.*

Ask: How did the friends know it was Jesus? *They recognized his voice and the way he liked to eat with them.* How did David recognize his grandparents? *By Grandma's smile and by how Grandpa whirled him around.*

Distribute *Seeds* and have the children identify Jesus and his friends having a meal together in the cover illustration. Have them point out the bread and the fish and the joy and happiness on the faces of Jesus' friends.

**6. CREATIVE DRAMA** Have the children act out the Gospel story. Use chairs for the boat. The children all practice throwing out their nets to catch the fish. They look very unhappy when they do not catch any fish. You can be Jesus and keep the conversation going by asking questions. "Have you caught any fish yet? Have you tried the other side of the boat? Just throw out your net one more time." Children act surprised at all the fish they catch. Peter jumps off the boat and the other children row to shore and count the fish. You call them to another part of the classroom where you pantomime cooking fish and serving breakfast. The children recognize Jesus and give him hugs before they eat with him.

# BUILDING CHRISTIAN COMMUNITY

**Objective:** The children will identify with whom they share food and with whom they gather for the Eucharist.

**7. PICNIC AT PROSPECT PARK** Gather the children at the work tables and have them open to pages 2-3 of *Seeds*. Explain that three families got together for this big picnic at Prospect Park. Tell this story about the people in the illustration or let the children make up their own.

1. The Olson family is getting the food ready. What is Dad cooking? What is Mom putting on the table? What is the baby on the rug playing with? What food is on the table?
2. The Perez family are neighbors of the Olson family. Mr. Perez is taking his son to play on the swings and go sliding. His two daughters are playing with the kites.
3. The Erickson family are related to the Olsons. Mom is helping the twins use the remote to move the sail boat on the water. Her daughters are throwing the Frisbee to the dog.
  - Put an X on your favorite food.
  - Put an X on the activity you like to do best.
  - Put an X on the litter container.
  - Draw yourself coming down the slide or by the pool next to one of the twins.

**8. WHO EATS WITH ME?** Talk with the children about the family picnic. Discuss how much fun it is to eat with others and to enjoy each other's company. Ask who eats with them at breakfast, at lunch, and in the evening. Talk about the special foods they eat at parties, at Christmas, at Easter, at Fourth of July.

Ask the children to look at the last page of *Seeds*. Read the words *Who eats with me?* Point to the ice cream and cake. Ask when they might eat this food and who might eat with them. Continue with the ham dinner, asking what food is in each dish. Next look at the lunch meal. What kind of sandwich? Who eats lunch with you? Last of all, the bread and wine. This is the special food Jesus' friends share when they go to church. Be sure the children understand they are not yet old enough to eat the food at church.

Have the children put their fingers on the child in the center of the picture and then follow the path to the ice cream. When they have done this successfully with their finger, have them draw it with the marker. Continue in the same way with the other three groups of food.

**9. CLOSING PRAYER AND SONG** Gather the children in the prayer circle. Sing the opening song from today's lesson. Children stand quietly while you say the following prayer. *Dear Jesus, thank you for my family and friends. May we always enjoy each other. And may we always love and serve you. Amen.*

**10. SNACK** In the Gospel story Jesus' friends knew him when he cooked fish for them. Serve cookies in the shape of fish or goldfish crackers with milk.

## OVERVIEW

### **Gospel Theme: God cares for us like a good shepherd.**

In this Sunday's Gospel Jesus tells us that he is a good shepherd and that we are his sheep. A shepherd takes care of a flock of sheep, seeing that they have food, water, and security. Jesus cares that we are safe and happy, too. He wants us to be free to live in love of his Father and of our brothers and sisters.

Young children are very accustomed to care because parents and other adults—grandparents, siblings, babysitters—care for them. Young children can also care for others in their own simple ways. They care for the environment, pets, their younger siblings, and sometimes older adults. This *Seeds* lesson helps children reflect on how they both give and receive care.

**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* #1821, 1843, 2590, 2596-97.

**Materials:** Scissors, markers, removable tape or glue, a cane or walking staff.

## SHARING LIFE STORIES

**1. GATHER AND SING** Gather the children in a circle. Sing one of your favorite gathering songs to begin this *Seeds* session.

**2. OPENING PRAYER** Have the children remain standing while you say the following prayer. They respond "Amen" after each sentence.

*God is my shepherd. God gives me everything I need to be happy. God gives me strength and intelligence. God gives me people to take care of me. God is always with me. I thank and praise God today and every day.*

**Objective: The children will recognize ways they can show care.**

### **3. GOSPEL STORY WARMUP: What do I care for?**

Ask the children to tell you about a time they took care of something or someone. What does taking care mean? You might need to prompt them by asking if they have pets in the family or plants in the home or in the yard. Do they have any responsibility for them? For instance, what kind of care does a puppy need? *Exercise, food, water, attention, discipline.* Some children may live with older adults who need help walking or eating. Others may care for plants or help a parent with the garden or yard.

Distribute *Seeds*. Have the children take turns telling you about one of the children in the cover picture. Add to the fun

by asking them to count the fish in the fish bowl and the steps leading to the door. Then go back one by one and ask the children to draw a circle around a caring action they have done. They will probably circle them all, but that is all right. Children often need to imagine themselves doing an action before they can actually perform it.

Conclude by asking how we show care in our *Seeds* class. *We take care of the space we share, of each other, plants and animals, our coats and boots, our copies of Seeds.*

**4. STRETCH AND SING** Have the children stand. If you have the *Seeds* CD, play "God Made the Animals." The children will enjoy making the animal sounds and movements.

God made the animals and God made me.

God gave us all a song to sing.

God made the animals and God made me

And I love the songs we sing.

The dog goes bow wow, bow wow

The cow goes moo, moo

The kitty goes meow, meow

The rooster goes cock-a-doodle-doo

The sheep goes baa, baa

The bird goes tweet, tweet

The duck goes quack, quack

And I love to sing along!

## LISTENING TO THE GOSPEL

**5. GOSPEL RITUAL** Gather the children in the area you set aside for proclamation of the Gospel. Lead them in singing or saying the words to "Two Little Ears" from the *Seeds* CD.

**Objective: The children will appreciate the good shepherd as an image of God's unceasing care for us.**

### **6. GOSPEL STORYTELLING: Jesus is the Good Shepherd**

Ask the children to sit in a circle in the area you have reserved for the Gospel story. Have them place their copies of *Seeds* in front of them. Tell them 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. Ask the children if they know what a shepherd is. What does a shepherd do? Do you know any shepherds? When have you seen a shepherd? *At the crib at Christmas.* Why do you think the shepherd has a staff with a curve at the end? Explain this is called a crook. The shepherd uses his crook to pull back the sheep when they start to stray. The shepherd tries to keep the sheep safe. One day Jesus told his friends that he was like a shepherd. This is what he said.

*I am a good shepherd.*

*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.*

Have the children open *Seeds* and turn the page so they have the picture of the shepherd in front of them. Ask: Do you see Jesus? Do you see the staff he is holding? That is his crook. Ask the children what Jesus might be thinking. How does the lamb he is holding feel? Do you see anything that could be dangerous for the sheep? *They could get hurt on the rocks or they could get caught in the bushes.* The shepherd watches out for all of them.

**7. CREATIVE DRAMA** This is a fun Gospel for the children to act out. Tell the children that they can take turns being the shepherd and the rest of the children will be the sheep. Have the shepherd hold the cane and the other children can crawl around and say “baa.” There can be one or two that go away from the group. The shepherd pulls them back with the end of the cane. Ask: How does the shepherd feel when the sheep run away? How do the sheep feel when the shepherd pulls them back?

**8. STRETCH AND SING** To conclude this Gospel portion of the lesson, play “Follow Me” from the *Seeds* music CD and have the children follow you, their shepherd, around the room in the ways the song suggests.

**9. JESUS TAKES CARE OF \_\_\_\_\_.** Move to the work area and demonstrate to the children how to cut the strip of sheep from page 3 by cutting on the heavy line. Then have them cut the four sheep apart. Go around the group and write each child’s name on one of the sheep. Have removable tape available and have the children tape their sheep next to the shepherd at the top only. That way they can lift up the sheep and read the name underneath. If there is time, ask children what other names they want written on the three remaining sheep each of them has.

## BUILDING CHRISTIAN COMMUNITY

**Objective:** The children will understand that many people care for them.

**10. WHO TAKES CARE OF TOBY?** After the children have cleaned up their work area, have them bring their copy of *Seeds* to the story circle. Have them put page 4 of *Seeds* face up in front of them. Ask: Who takes care of you? Give each child a chance to name someone who takes care of them. Then read the title, “Who takes care of Toby?” and ask where Toby is on the page. Tell the children they will have to listen to the story to find out.

*When Toby woke up, he knew right away it was going to be a very good day. He ate his breakfast and got dressed and made his bed. Then Toby went back to the kitchen and watched his mom make him a peanut butter and jelly sandwich to take to school. Mom waved from the door as*

*Toby walked to the corner with the other neighborhood children.*

Put your finger on the circle with Mom’s picture. Then follow the dotted line. Whom does Toby meet at the corner? *It is the crossing guard. He has a sign that says, “Stop.”* How is that person helping to take care of Toby? *He keeps Toby safe as he crosses the street. He makes the cars stop.* Do you know anybody who keeps you safe as you cross the street?

Follow the dotted line to the next picture. When Toby plays on the playground at school, who is there? *The coach.* How does the coach take care of Toby and the other children? *He teaches them to play ball and to be fair and not to hurt each other. When he blows the whistle, everybody stops.* What do you think Toby and his friends are playing?

*When Toby is walking home from school, he sees his friend Peter, who is in fourth grade. Peter is walking his bicycle on the sidewalk because he doesn’t want to run into someone on the sidewalk. He is being very careful that he doesn’t hit Toby or anybody else on the sidewalk. Toby says “Hi” to Peter and Peter says, “How are you doing, Toby?” Toby says, “I had a good day today. I learned a lot about kickball.” Peter said, “I was on the softball field and I learned a lot, too. I almost hit a home run. See you, Toby!”*

*When Toby rounds the corner he hears excited barking from his yard. It is Buddy, his dog. Buddy wags his tail and jumps around. He is excited that Toby is home. Toby hugs Buddy and Buddy licks Toby’s face. They are good friends who show how much they care for each other. Toby brings Buddy into the house to give him his after-school treat.*

Have the children think of all the people who cared for them today. You may wish to help them remember by saying, “When you got up, who showed you they cared by saying ‘Good morning,’ or giving you a hug, or helping you with breakfast,” and so on. Be sure they recognize the care they show each other in *Seeds* class.

**11. CONCLUDING PRAYER** Have the children gather standing in a circle with their shepherd posters. Begin the prayer by saying, “Jesus is a good shepherd. Jesus cares for me,” a paraphrase of the beginning of Psalm 23. Go around the group with each child repeating the statements. Conclude by asking who the children want Jesus, the good shepherd, to care for today. Encourage them to mention family members, people they know who are sick, and others they care about.

**12. SNACK** Serve animal crackers and milk for your snack. Compliment children on caring behaviors you notice them doing towards each other and you.

## EXTENDING ACTIVITY

**13. CARING COLLAGE** Supply a variety of magazines that the children can cut up to make collages of people doing caring activities. Circulate among the children and hear why they are choosing particular pictures.

## OVERVIEW

### **Gospel Theme: Jesus commands us to love one another.**

This Sunday's Gospel calls us to love one another as Jesus has loved us. Young children who hear these words may think that it is a wonderful idea for others. Preschoolers are only beginning to come out of their self-focused existence. This is a very natural stage in their growth. Adults need to show how to be loving by their example, by reinforcing children's loving actions, and by sharing the story of Jesus' love with their children. This *Seeds* lesson helps children see ways they can share love with their family and friends, as well as with the larger world. The activities strengthen their understanding at their own concrete level of Jesus' rule to love one another as he has loved us.

**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:** One bathroom tissue tube or paper towel tube per child. Cut the tubes so they are about 4 1/2" long. One 4" waxed paper square, one rubber band, and one large paper plate per child. Crayons, scissors, paper punch, yarn.

## SHARING LIFE STORIES

**1. GATHER AND SING** Gather the children standing in a circle. Sing "The Seed Song" from the *Seeds* music CD.

**2. OPENING PRAYER** Have the children respond "Amen" to your prayer.

*Dear Jesus, we will share our time together by following your rule to love each other. We will be thoughtful and respectful. We will also remember to take good care of the world around us.*

**Objective: The children will recognize recycling is a way to show love for our planet and its people.**

**3. STORYTELLING: Our family recycles and reuses.** Tell the children a little boy is telling this story.

*My mom and dad recycle everything in our house. "Plastics go in this tub and newspaper goes in that bin," Dad says. "Soda cans go in this bag and glass bottles and jars over here," Mom says. They don't need to tell me. Even though I am only 6 years old, I have heard it so often that I can do the recycling with my eyes closed.*

*Mom and Dad say, "If everyone does their part, our world will stay beautiful for years to come." We really practice this rule at our house.*

*Sometimes recycling is fun. Mom saves our old clothes for the clothing collection at our church. But the old, old clothes, that we really wear out, Mom puts away in trash bags in our attic. I wondered why Mom saves old, old clothes with holes in the knees and all the buttons off.*

*Then, one day, Mom brought three bags of old, old clothes to our family room. She began cutting the material into squares. Mom cut squares of material from Beth's favorite old, old dress. She threw away the part where Beth spilled paint. Mom cut squares from my old, old lion pajamas and threw away the thin part that you could almost see through. She cut squares from Dad's old, old shirt and didn't use the sleeve with the big hole in it.*

*Mom continued cutting the old, old clothes into squares that were each the same size. It took a lot of cutting to get even a small bunch of squares. But Mom said it was relaxing to just sit and cut squares after a long day at work. Dad, Beth, and I started cutting squares, too. We all cut squares and talked about things we did when we wore the clothes. It was fun!*

*Next, we ironed the squares and piled them neatly into boxes. Mom put the boxes away because she got real busy. But one day she brought the boxes out again. We all remembered how much fun we had cutting up all the squares from our old, old clothes. Mom and Dad sewed the squares together, using the sewing machine. They used up every square of material we had cut and made two really big squares. Mom sewed a bed sheet to the back of each large square and put fluffy cotton batting between the two pieces. We made knots with bright red yarn all over to hold everything together. As we tied the knots, we remembered how much fun we had cutting the squares and how much fun it is to make a quilt.*

*When we were finished, we had two quilts, one for Beth's bed and one for mine. I fall asleep thinking about all the happy times my family have shared. Beth must think happy thoughts too, because she is saving her old, old clothes in Mom's special bags to make more quilts.*

Ask the children to share any recycling practices their families do.

**4. MAKING KAZOOS** Gather in the work area and distribute the bathroom tissue tube or paper towel tube, waxed paper squares, and rubber bands mentioned in the materials section at the beginning of the lesson. Use a pencil or scissor to poke a small hole about half way up each tube. Cover one end of each tube with a square of waxed paper and use a rubber band to hold the paper in place. Use a marker to write each child's name on his or her kazoo.

The children play their musical kazoos, made from recycled material, by humming into the hollow end of the tube. Play "Like Jesus" from the *Seeds* music CD and let the children hum along with the kazoos.

# LISTENING TO THE GOSPEL

**Objective:** The children will recognize that loving one another goes beyond our families.

**5. GOSPEL STORYTELLING:** Jesus says, “Love one another.” Tell the children that before Jesus went back to be with his Father he told his friends a lot about how to live. Basically he wanted them to remember one thing. Ask: What is that one thing? Let the children guess, and then have them be quiet as you tell Jesus’ words.

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

*So I am giving you a rule to live by: 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.*

Distribute *Seeds*. Ask the children if they see Jesus in the cover illustration, as they usually do. Jesus is not there, but there are people who are acting like Jesus and keeping his one rule. Look at the illustrations together, and describe what is happening. *A girl is helping to make something grow; a boy and dad are hugging; children are playing together; a child is praying.* Distribute crayons. Have them color the heart near each picture that shows a loving action they have done.

## BUILDING CHRISTIAN COMMUNITY

**6. CLEANING UP THE PARK** Return to the work area. Ask the children what loving action they heard about today that is not pictured on the cover. It is an activity children are very good at. *Recycling.* Turn to page 2 of *Seeds*. Discuss what the family is doing to clean up the park. Then give the children time to find and circle all the hidden trash. When everyone is finished, count the number of things they have found. Ask if this will make the park a nicer place for everyone.

**Objective:** The children will create a mobile showing God’s loving family.

**7. ACTIVITY: We Are God’s Family Mobile** Distribute scissors and have the children separate pages 3-4 from pages 1-2 by cutting on the heavy vertical line. Direct them to cut the six mobile pieces apart. The children complete the picture of themselves. Take time to discuss the other two picture squares.

Use a paper punch to make a hole in the top of each picture. Punch six holes around the edge of the paper plate and make one hole in the middle of the plate. Thread various lengths of yarn through the holes and tie them to the paper plate. Knot a long piece of yarn to use in hanging the plate. Talk about where the children can best hang their mobiles at home so they will remind them to love their family members.

**8. CLOSING SONG AND PRAYER** Have the children gather in a circle with their mobiles. Be sure they stand far enough apart that they do not get tangled up. Sing “Like Jesus” again and conclude with this prayer.

*Dear God, thank you for loving us and sending us Jesus. Thank you for our good families, good friends, and the beautiful earth. We will love and respect all that you have made. Amen.*

**9. SNACK** Make a sheet cake look like a quilt by piping frosting in squares and sprinkling different kinds of decorations, jelly beans, chocolate chips, and so on in the squares. Compliment the children on loving actions you see them doing during snack time.

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## OVERVIEW

### Gospel Theme: The Spirit brings us peace.

This is the last *Seeds* for 2009-2010. The children are completing a year of sharing, learning, and friendship. The Sunday Gospels have been the basis of their weekly lessons. The fun and sharing around the Gospel stories aim to inspire and encourage them to live the Gospel message in their daily lives. It is appropriate that as our publication year ends, Jesus promises to send the Spirit to help us live out the Gospel. This last *Seeds* lesson focuses on the message of peace that the Spirit brings. It recognizes both family and church as communities of peace.

**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, punch, yarn, markers. You may wish to separate pages 1-2 of *Seeds* from pages 3-4 before class and cut out the medallions.

## SHARING LIFE STORIES

**1. GATHER AND SING** Gather the children in a circle and have them stretch out their arms. Have them make the circle bigger and bigger until they can stretch out both arms and not touch anyone. Play “Everything’s Growing” from the *Seeds* music cassette. The children stoop low and curl up like a small seed. They grow all through the first verse and then sway as beautiful flowers in the second verse.

**2. OPENING PRAYER** The children stand quietly while you say this prayer or one of your own. They respond “Amen.”

*Jesus, we thank you for our year together. We thank you for our friendship with each other and the joy of your teachings. Help us to be good listeners and respectful. Amen.*

### 3. END-OF-THE-YEAR CELEBRATION

Have the children sit in the story circle. Tell them that today we celebrate their year of learning about Jesus. Review with the children some of the things they have learned this year: Jesus loves us; Jesus wants us to love and care for each other; Jesus wants us to share with our friends and our families; Jesus wants us to pray to him when we are happy or sad or fearful.

Distribute *Seeds* and direct the children’s attention to the planting of the seed in the upper left corner of the cover

illustration. Ask what a seed needs to grow. Point out the hand planting the seed, the dirt, the rain, and the sun. Follow the illustration around the page until the flower appears. Explain that during the year we have been like the seed that was planted. We have grown to be more like Jesus each week. To celebrate our time together we will make a medallion to wear.

Move to the work area. Give the children scissors and ask them to cut pages 1-2 from pages 3-4. Put pages 3-4 aside. Read the words on the medallion aloud to them. Children who are able may print their own names. Go around the room to sign and date all the medallions. Then assist children in cutting them out. Punch a hole in the top and distribute lengths of yarn for the children to string through and tie. When they are finished, have them put their medallions around their necks and move to the Gospel storytelling area.

## LISTENING TO THE GOSPEL

**Objective:** The children will rejoice in Jesus’ gift of the Holy Spirit.

**4. GOSPEL STORYTELLING: Jesus promises to send the Spirit** When all the children are seated with medallions around their necks, ask if they remember last week when Jesus told his friends about his one special rule. What is the rule? *Love one another*. This week, just before he leaves the world to go back to his Father, Jesus gives us a wonderful surprise. Listen carefully to what Jesus promises.

*When I go, 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.*

Discuss what peace means to the children. Help them to understand that we are peaceful when we try to help other people, when we share, when we care about each other, when we help each other if we are sad or lonely. By being good to ourselves and to others, we have the peace of Jesus.

**5. STRETCH AND SING** Play “The Spirit Song” from the *Seeds* music CD. If you do not have the CD, sing the words to the tune of “London Bridge.”

1. The Spirit is a ‘moving, moving, moving.

The Spirit is a ‘moving, all around (*Children make sweeping gestures with their arms.*)

2. The Spirit’s up above us, above us, above us.

The Spirit’s up above us, all around (*Children raise arms above heads.*)

3. The Spirit’s down below us, below us, below us.

The Spirit’s down below us, all around (*Children stoop to brush the ground with their hands.*)

4. The Spirit is inside me, inside me, inside me.

The Spirit is inside me, all around (*Children hug themselves.*)

# BUILDING CHRISTIAN COMMUNITY

**Objective:** The children will recognize their parish as a family of peace.

## 6. STORYTELLING: The Parish Who Helped

Sit in the circle again. Tell the children to listen carefully to this story about a family who needed help.

*Mary's family didn't have a lot of money. Her mother worked hard so she could buy groceries. Her dad cleaned offices so he could pay the rent and buy school clothes for the children. Mary knew her parents worried about money a lot. Then one day Mary's dad came home and said he had lost his job. The family was very sad. That night they prayed extra hard, asking God to bless and take care of them. The next day Mary's dad got a call from Spirit of Peace parish. Father Tim had heard that Dad needed a job. Father Tim needed a janitor to open and close the church, to clean it, and to take care of things if anything went wrong. The people at the church welcomed Mary's family. They gave Dad a living wage, so he could buy what he needed for his family. Mary met new friends at church. They came to play with her and she went to their homes to play. Dad and Mom met many new friends. Father Tim said Dad was a very good janitor and gave him a raise. Mary's family was happy that they could pay their bills, now. But best of all, they had a wonderful church family who loved and cared about them.*

Discuss with the children the many ways the Spirit of Peace church family brought peace and happiness to Mary's family.

## 7. OUR PARISH IS A FAMILY OF PEACE

Gather the children in the work area. Distribute pages 3-4 of *Seeds*. Read the title on page 3 and explain this is the inside of Spirit of Peace church. Point out the stained glass window above the altar. The dove is a sign of God's spirit of peace embracing or hugging the world. Next look at the altar. Have the children identify the book for Mass, the bread and wine, candles. Ask the children if they have brought food to their church. Identify the food collection box in front of the altar. Point out the Easter candle, which reminds us that Jesus rose from the dead and brings peace and happiness, and the lectern with the book that has stories about the life of Jesus. Read the word "Peace" on the banner.

Distribute markers. Have the children find all the ways the people in the picture bring peace and happiness to each other. When they find a peace action, they trace the X and O near that action. (Children use X and O to mean love and kisses, so they will interpret these actions as signs of love.) After the children have finished, review the page with them, letting them tell you what they found.

Ask the children to turn the page over. Identify the outside of the Spirit of Peace church. Discuss all the things people are doing. *A woman and a child are carrying out the food box collection. A girl is watering plants that two other children are planting. A man is greeting a woman and child. A boy is giving the priest a can for the food collection box.* Read the

sign on the left of the church, "Senior Citizen Lunch Today," and point out the two helping children. See if children notice the church sign and the stained glass windows of the Good Shepherd and Our Lady of Guadalupe. Once again, they trace the X and O near the actions that show people bringing peace and happiness to each other.

**8. CLOSING PRAYER** Gather the children in the prayer circle. Ask them to put one hand on the medallion around their neck as you say the concluding prayer.

Thank you, God for all our time together this year.  
Thank you for our families and friends.  
Thank you for sending us your Spirit of peace.  
Thank you for the happy times we have shared.  
Thank you for our parish church  
and the people who belong there.

Close by singing the Spirit song.

**9. SNACK** Since this is the last class, have a special cake with the word "peace" on it or special cookies and juice to celebrate the end of the *Seeds* year. Children can make place mats to help decorate the tables.

As the children leave the classroom, shake their hands and say, "Peace be with you." Have them shake each other's hands, also.

## EXTENDING ACTIVITIES

**10. PLANTING** Have the children plant a bush near the church in memory of their year together. Ask the children to come during the summer time and see how it is growing.

**11. SONG FEST** Have a song fest with the children. Sing all the *Seeds* songs and any other songs they have learned during the year. Be sure to do all the actions that go with them.

**12. PEACE BANNER** Stretch a long sheet of paper on the floor. Have the children make a peace banner. Print the word "Peace" in the center and have the children color it in. Each child can draw a picture of a flower on the banner. Print their names near the flowers.

**13. CREATIVE DRAMA** Have the children act out one of the stories from the Gospels of this year—the Good Shepherd and his sheep, the Christmas story, or The Prodigal Son are good possibilities. Another creative movement action is to do movement that is happy, sad, angry or joyful. Use music for this activity. Be sure there is enough room for the children to move so that they do not run into each other. Use props, such as scarves.

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