

4th Sunday of Lent through the 6th Sunday of Easter  
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# Venture

## Teaching Guide

### Unit 4: Followers of the Risen Christ

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**Pflaum**  **Gospel Weeklies**

Supplement to the *Pflaum Gospel Weeklies*

# Connecting Gospel and Doctrine

During Lent the Church not only prepares catechumens for Baptism but immerses all of us in the mystery of our redemption. In celebrating Holy Week, we remember the final events of Jesus' life—the new covenant he makes in pledging his lifeblood for us, his death on the cross, his resurrection to new life.

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

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

## 4th Sunday of Lent

Our salvation flows from God's initiative of love for us, because "God loved us and sent the Son to be the expiation for our sins" (620). The process of conversion and repentance was described by Jesus in the parable of the prodigal son, the center of which is the merciful father (1439). "A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another even as I have loved you." It is impossible to keep the Lord's commandment by imitating the divine model from outside; there has to be a vital participation, coming from the depths of the heart, in the holiness and the mercy and the love of our God (2842). Also 1847, 2774-2776, 2838-2845, 2862, 2798-99

## 5th Sunday of Lent

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

## Palm/Passion Sunday

The Paschal mystery of Christ's cross and resurrection stands at the center of the Good News that the apostles, and the Church following them, are to proclaim to the world. God's saving plan was accomplished "once for all" by the redemptive death of God's Son Jesus (571). "Christ died for our sins in accordance with the scriptures" (619). Jesus freely offered himself for our salvation. Beforehand, during the Last Supper, he both symbolized this offering and made it really present: "This is my body which is given for you" (621). By his loving obedience to the Father, "into death, even death on a cross," Jesus fulfills the atoning mission of the suffering Servant (623). Also 607, 616, 629, 1168, 1169, 1187, 1189

## Easter/2nd Sunday of Easter

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

## 3rd Sunday of Easter

Jesus is at the same time the suffering Servant who silently allows himself to be led to the slaughter and who bears the sin of the multitudes, and also the Paschal Lamb, the symbol of Israel's redemption at the first Passover. Christ's whole life expresses his mission: "to serve and give his life as a ransom for many." (608). The Paschal mystery of Christ cannot remain only in the past, because by his death he destroyed death, and all that Christ is—all that he did and suffered for all—participates in the divine eternity, and so transcends all times while being made present in them all. The event of the Cross and Resurrection abides and draws everything toward life (1085). Also 96, 638, 654, 656, 658

## 4th Sunday of Easter

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

## 5th Sunday of Easter

In response to the question about the first of the commandments, Jesus says: "The first is, 'Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one; and you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind, and with all your strength.' The second is this, 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.' There is no other commandment greater than these" (2196). The New Law is the grace of the Holy Spirit received by faith in Christ, operating through charity. It finds expression above all in the Lord's Sermon on the Mount and uses the sacraments to communicate grace to us (1983). Also 96, 2011, 2017

## 6th Sunday of Easter

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

## Gospel Theme: Jesus shows us how to forgive.

Last Sunday God was a gardener who wanted to fertilize a barren fig tree for one more year. This Sunday God is shown as a forgiving father. The father has every reason to admonish and punish his son when he comes home after wasting his inheritance. Instead the father welcomes the lost son with new clothes and a party. In this story Jesus teaches us that nothing is unforgivable. God is like the father in the Gospel, always willing to welcome us back home.

Children may see this parable acted out in their own lives, especially if they have older siblings who test boundaries, break their parents' rules, and get into trouble but are still loved and accepted. *Venture* shows the children that examples of forgiveness can be found within their own families. This week the children continue their study of Old Testament ancestors with Joshua. They also explore the forgiveness we pray for in the *Our Father*.

**Materials:** Crayons or colored markers, Bibles, drawing paper, pail, rocks (one per child), newspapers and magazines (optional).

## Share Our Life Stories

**Opening Prayer** Gather in a prayer circle, join hands, and pray the *Our Father*.

**Objective:** The children will explore the land in which people from the Old Testament lived.

**Cover Activity: Old Testament Map Activity** Distribute Bibles. Do the cover activity together, allowing time for the children to color and to look up the Joshua passage. Have them draw their pictures on drawing paper. This is the last time the people ate the manna God had provided.

**Objective:** The children will reflect on how our choices shape how we see each other.

**Story: My Brother the Loser (pages 2-3)** Have the children read the story aloud. Discuss *THINK* 1-3. Answers: **1.** *Nick's usual attitude of ignoring his family and his getting into trouble make his siblings dismiss him as a loser. While no one deserves to be labeled a loser, Nick comes close. He beats on his brother, lies to his parents, and hangs with older kids who drink.*

**2.** *Nick's mom sees his potential and thinks honoring his graduation will give him the second chance he needs to straighten out; Rocco sees more of the same delinquent behaviors in Nick.* **3.** *Nick wants to spend time with his family and possibly not attend the keg party; Rocco sees a different side of Nick; Rocco himself may not think Nick is a loser anymore.*

## Listen to the Gospel

**Objective:** The children will recognize God is like the forgiving father of the Gospel parable.

**Gospel: God Forgives and Welcomes Us Home (page 4)** The

children may know this Gospel as the Parable of the Prodigal Son. But this story is about more than a younger son's turnaround and a father's mercy. It's about the elder son's hard-hearted righteousness, too. Jesus alerts us that this parable is about three people by saying, "There was a man who had two sons." Have six students take the parts of Narrator, Jesus, Younger Son, Father, Older Son, and Servant to proclaim the Gospel. Divide the rest of the class into two groups, one to read the part of the Pharisees, the other to read the part of the Teachers. Because this is such a long Gospel, encourage students to act it out. Discuss *THINK* questions. Answers: **1.** *He realizes he wasted his time and money and asks for forgiveness.* **2.** *Jealous and angry.* *Open-ended.* **3.** *Nick rebels against his family as the younger son does; Rocco is like the older son who listens to his parents and does what's expected of him. Nick's parents, like the forgiving father, forgive Nick and give him a second chance.*

**Definition: Grace (page 7)** Read aloud this definition. Ask the children to relate it to Jesus' story of reunion and forgiveness.

**Objective:** The children will explore the context of this Sunday's First Reading.

**Our Catholic Faith: Joshua Leads Israel to the Land of Promise (page 5)** Distribute Bibles. Ask strong readers to take turns reading aloud paragraphs of the introductory text. Have children work separately or in pairs to fill in the Bible verses.

## Build Christian Community

**Objective:** The children will reflect on their own experiences of needing and giving forgiveness.

**Living the Gospel: We Study the *Our Father* During Lent (pages 6-8)** Bring to class a pail and enough rocks so each child can have one. Read the introduction and directions to the activity on page 6 aloud to the children. Give the children time to finish this part of the activity and to share answers with the class.

Distribute the rocks and read aloud the *Preparation* on page 7. After a short quiet time, gather to celebrate the *Forgiveness Prayer Service*. After the prayer service, focus the children's attention on the *Forgiveness Survey* on page 7. Read the directions aloud and ask students to bring their responses to your next class. Have the children turn to page 8. Point out the rocks at the top of the page and read what is written in them aloud. Ask the children to write in the empty rock what it feels like to them to need forgiveness. Share responses. Then draw attention to the rocks at the bottom of the page and read what's written in them aloud. Direct the children to write in the empty rock how it feels when they forgive another. Share responses. If time allows, have the children find a headline or story in a newspaper or magazine that shows someone who is forgiving or is seeking forgiveness and add it to the *Our Father* poster. Add a page 8 to the class poster.

**Doctrine: Jesus Teaches About Forgiveness (page 6)** Read aloud this summary of the Gospel concept of forgiveness.

## Gospel Theme: Jesus encourages rather than condemns.

In the Gospel this Sunday the Teachers of the Law attempt to trap Jesus into defending a woman caught in adultery and therefore into speaking against the Law. The woman is one of the sinners, outcasts, and tax collectors with whom the Teachers think Jesus spends too much time. The scribes are so certain Jesus is not from God that to get evidence against him, they are willing to use a woman, publicly shame her, protect her male partner—who, under Mosaic Law, also deserves stoning—and forget they themselves are sinners.

Unlike the scribes and Pharisees, Jesus condemns no one in this Gospel. Instead, with his silence and attentive writing on the ground, he creates space for them to see themselves. Jesus encourages the woman to change and grow. As in the Gospel stories of the gardener and the barren fig tree and the forgiving father and his two sons, Jesus again shows us how loving and forgiving God is.

**Materials:** Pens, pencils, scissors.

## Share Our Life Stories

**Opening Prayer** Tell the children that this week they will complete their study of the *Our Father*. Pray it together to begin class.

**Objective:** The children will identify what they think is hurtful.

**Cover Activity: What Is Hard?** Forgiveness, the theme of this week's lesson, requires compassion. Read the copy at top left aloud with the children. Give them time to complete the survey and talk with one other classmate. You may wish to tally as a class the hurts that most children rated extremely or very hard. Briefly discuss ways to help those who are hurting.

**Objective:** The children will explore honesty and fairness through a dramatized traditional Chinese folktale.

**Play: The Magic Pear Seed of Sha-shih Ya-po (pages 2-4)**

Have the children read the play silently or in pairs to familiarize themselves with the story and imagine the action. Then encourage them to act out the scenes with movement and expression. Discuss *TALK* on page 3. Answers: **1.** *They have each stolen or cheated at some time in their lives and know they cannot meet the character requirements of honesty and fairness.* **2.** *Have the students compare the Emperor's, Prime Minister's, Commander's, and Magistrate's crime in turn; rate their crimes on a scale of 1 to 10; have the students give reasons for their ratings. Sha-shih went to jail because he didn't have any status in his community to get excused from jail.*

**NOTE** Tell the children that next week they will follow Jesus' example and wash each other's feet. They may wish to wear good socks!

Also, duplicate the letter on page 13 for the children to take home to their parents. Set as a class goal that everyone attend at least one of the Holy Week liturgies.

## Listen to the Gospel

**Objective:** The children will recognize that Jesus forgives rather than condemns.

**Gospel: Jesus Refuses to Condemn (page 4)** Choose five students to proclaim the Gospel. Discuss *THINK* 1-3.

Answers: **1.** *They caught her in the act of adultery, and the law of Moses provided that such a woman could be stoned. They leave when they realize that they, too, are sinners.*

**2.** *Jesus doesn't condemn but gives her another chance and encourages her to sin no more. Jesus wants us to forgive and understand others, not blame, judge, and condemn them.*

**3.** *Jesus is like Sha-shih, using people's own words and actions to show them as wrongdoers. The officials who don't admit their guilt are like the teachers and Pharisees who want Jesus to condemn the woman.*

**Objective:** The children will identify prayers at Mass in which we acknowledge our need for God's mercy and help.

**Our Catholic Faith: At Mass We Admit We Are Sinners**

**(page 5)** Read this feature aloud and allow the children time to match parts of the Mass with the prayers that express sorrow and ask for forgiveness and help. Answers: *Penitential Act—I confess; Creed—We acknowledge; Eucharistic Prayer—This is the cup; Our Father—Forgive us; Breaking of Bread—Lamb of God; Prayer Before Communion—Lord, I am not worthy.*

**Definition: Sin (page 4)** Use this definition as a way to summarize the first part of this lesson.

## Build Christian Community

**Objective:** The children will practice non-blaming responses to situations.

**Living the Gospel: We Study the *Our Father* During Lent**

**(pages 7-8)** Give the children time to cut out the cards and place them face down without reading them. Find the card with the introduction and directions and read it together. Ask one person to pick a Blame Card and read it aloud. Then ask him or her to follow the instructions and give two more endings which don't rely on blaming someone else. Divide the class into pairs and allow them time to play. When everyone is finished, ask for volunteers to share with the group their responses to one of the nine situations. Conclude by pointing out that Jesus recognized blaming is not a forward-looking activity. He asked the woman to take responsibility for her behavior and asked the woman's accusers to look at their own lives.

**Doctrine: Jesus Encourages Us (page 5)** Read aloud this summary of the qualities of God, which Jesus teaches us in the Gospels of Lent.

**Closing Prayer** Allow the children at least ten minutes of quiet time to add names and drawings to the page 6 *Our Father* poster. Then gather with the pages to make prayers of thanks for the people they mentioned.

## Gospel Theme: Jesus accepts death for our sakes.

Our faith is an Easter faith. We follow Jesus, who died for us and was raised to new life. During Holy Week, which begins this Sunday, we remember the events that founded Christianity. The Church does not obligate us to attend the liturgies on Holy Thursday, Good Friday, and Holy Saturday; nonetheless, these days celebrate the most important events of Jesus' life—the Last Supper, the crucifixion, and the resurrection—as well as the building up of the Church through the initiation of catechumens and others who have taken part in the RCIA.

This issue of *Venture* stresses the days of the Triduum, which begins with the celebration of Jesus' Last Supper on Holy Thursday evening and extends through the Easter Vigil on Holy Saturday to evening prayer on Easter Sunday. Urge the children to attend Holy Week services. If they cannot, *Venture* activities will give them a sense of these holy events that continue to shape our lives.

**Materials:** Crayons or colored markers, water pitchers, basins, towels, Bibles, bread and fruit to share.

## Share Our Life Stories

**Objective:** The children will identify the events celebrated on each of the important days of Holy Week.

**Cover Activity: We Celebrate Jesus' Death and Resurrection During Holy Week.**

Before class, prepare note cards for each of your students with the proclamation: "Hosanna! Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord!" Begin class by proclaiming the Palm Sunday procession Gospel, Luke 19.28-40. Invite your class to role play the Gospel by assigning the parts of Jesus, Disciples, Donkey Owner, and Pharisees. Distribute the cards and have the rest of the children praise Jesus as he enters the town. Serve as narrator/director as the children go through the actions of the story.

Distribute *Venture*. Have the children identify peers in the photos and ask them what they remember about Palm Sunday celebrations they have attended—*blessing of palms, processions, reading of the passion story*. Ask them to share ways their families display palms in their homes. Find out the times of parish Holy Week liturgies and assist the children in completing the participation commitments in the church shapes throughout this lesson.

## Listen to the Gospel

**Objective:** The children will experience a foot-washing service and a symbolic meal.

**Holy Thursday: Jesus Washes His Friends' Feet as an Example to Us (pages 2-3)** Bring enough pitchers of water, basins, and towels to class so every four children share a set. Plastic ice cream buckets work, too. If your class is very small, one set may suffice. Invite the class to look at the photos as you read aloud the introduction and instructions for

the activity. Point out that the Gospel reading for Holy Thursday comes from John, who does not describe the Last Supper, but rather stresses Jesus' service and his command to serve others in the same way he serves.

Assign children to take the parts of Storytellers 1, 2, 3, Peter, and Jesus. Have the class choose a hymn; then arrange their chairs in groups of four. Sing the hymn and begin the reading. Encourage the children to think about Jesus' example as they wash each other's feet; then discuss the four *We Reflect on Our Experience* questions within their groups. When everyone is finished, make one prayer circle and continue with *We Pray to Be Like Jesus*. Close with the hymn.

**Objective:** The children will become familiar with the story of the Passion by doing a Bible study.

**Good Friday: We Journey With Jesus in the Story of His Passion (pages 4-5)** Distribute Bibles. Do the activity as a class or have the children work in pairs to complete it.

*Answers: feet; garden; Caiaphas, the High Priest; Pilate; the Place of the Skull; tomb.* Encourage the children to bring *Venture* with them to the Good Friday liturgy and use the map and photos to follow the reading of the Passion.

**Definition: Stations of the Cross (page 5)** Children can see the stations every Sunday without thinking about what they are. Consider making the stations as a class.

**Objective:** The children will complete activities describing the Easter Vigil.

**Holy Saturday: We Celebrate Jesus' Resurrection at the Easter Vigil (pages 7-8)**

This activity follows the four parts of the Easter Vigil liturgy—light, word, Baptism, Eucharist. Plan to provide cut fruit or bread for the children to share in their symbolic meal.

Follow the directions on page 6 to create a booklet with the Easter candle on the cover. Read the large headline together. Explain that a vigil means staying up and waiting for the new day to dawn. The early Christians stayed up all night the night before Easter and remembered all that Jesus had taught and done. They baptized new members who had been learning about Jesus and the Church during Lent. Then they all celebrated Eucharist together. This is what we do on Holy Saturday. Read through all four pages with a different volunteer reading the two kinds of type, one of which explains the meaning of that part of the Vigil and the other which gives the activity direction. Conclude by gathering to do the coloring and writing activity and to share food as directed.

## Build Christian Community

**Objective:** The children will use Ukrainian symbolism to decorate eggs as a sign of new life.

**Easter Sunday: We Celebrate New Life (page 6)** Read the introduction and directions aloud to the students. Ask if any have Ukrainian ancestry; if so, ask them to talk about their tradition of decorating eggs with the class. Encourage students to use the symbols to decorate the egg space provided or real eggs at home.

## Gospel Theme: Jesus is risen.

Easter Sunday celebrates Jesus' resurrection from the dead. This is the core of Christian faith: that God raised Jesus, who was crucified, from the dead. The promise of Jesus is that all who believe in him will be raised up to new life with God as he has been.

The act of raising Jesus from the dead reveals most ultimately who God is—the one who gives life. By accepting death, Jesus reveals who God is, too. The power that gives life, as Jesus reveals it, is love, especially its concrete forms such as forgiving, serving others, and giving one's life.

*Venture* gives children a story of a boy coming to terms with his grandfather's recent death. Middle-grade children, especially those who have experienced the death of a loved one, may be filled with conflicting emotions about death. Easter and the Sundays after Easter are a good time to talk about how new life comes from death and how our loved ones' actions and words live on in our memories.

**Materials:** Crayons or colored markers, pens or pencils, scissors.

## Share Our Life Stories

**Objective:** Children will recognize signs of new life around them.

**Cover: Jesus Is Risen!** Distribute *Venture* and give children time to find a rabbit, cat, two birds, nest of eggs, four decorated eggs, wheat, five-pointed flower, tulip, butterfly, and chick in this Easter illustration. Have them color it with crayons or markers in class or at home.

**Opening Prayer** Alleluia is our Easter prayer. It expresses our faith that Jesus is risen to new life and that our lives in him can be lives of hope and joy. Have the children take turns naming one of the signs of Easter they found in the cover illustration. To each name, the group responds, "Praise God for \_\_\_\_\_. Alleluia!"

**Objective:** The children will appreciate how people live on in other people's memory.

**Story: The Future Lies in You (pages 2-3)** Before reading this story, ask the children if they remember a grandparent's death and how they felt at that time. Lead discussion by sharing how you felt at the death of a grandparent or somebody else close to you. Then read the story aloud as a class. In this story a boy is still coming to terms with his grandfather's recent death. Discuss *THINK* on page 2.

Answers: **1.** *Ronnie is sad, upset, misses his grandpa and doesn't want to forget about him.* **2.** *It symbolizes Grandpa's ways which will grow in Ronnie like seeds planted in a field.*

**3.** *Open-ended.*

## Listen to the Gospel

**Objective:** The children will learn how the first witnesses to the risen Jesus believed.

**Gospel: Jesus Is Risen and Appears to His Friends (pages 4-5)** This long Gospel is actually three Gospels: the Easter morning Gospel (Scene 1), the Gospel for the Second Sunday of Easter (Scenes 3 and 4), and the Gospel about Mary Magdalene that John includes between them (Scene 2). Choose six strong readers to proclaim the parts of Narrator 1, Mary Magdalene, Narrator 2, Beloved Disciple, Jesus, and Thomas, and assign the rest of the class to be Angels and Other Disciples. Because this Gospel is so long, act it out in a large, open space, moving from one corner to the next with each new scene as the first *THINK* question on each page suggests. Discuss *THINK* 2-3 on page 4. Answers: **2.** *Mary feels concerned, sad, confused, surprised. She believes because she has great faith.* **3.** *He feels anxious and eager to see the tomb and interested and concerned at what he saw there. He believes immediately.* Discuss *THINK* 2-3 on page 5. Answers: **2.** *Peter was probably confused; he may have gone to tell more people about the empty tomb. He was with his friends, talking about what he saw that morning; they feared the Jews. Reassured, calmed.* **3.** *He doubts them; he wants to see Jesus before he believes. He believes when he touches Jesus' wounds.*

**Definition: Resurrection (page 7)** Summarize the Easter message with this definition of the founding event of our faith.

## Build Christian Community

**Objective:** The children will decipher Easter symbols.

**Living the Gospel: Easter Symbols Show Us New Life**

**(pages 6-8)** Read the introduction and direction on the top of page 6 aloud to the children. Give them time to complete the rhymes on their own or do them as a class. Answers are on the bottom of page 8. Afterward, call attention to the cut-and-fold activity on page 7. Read the directions with the children. Demonstrate how to cut out the puzzle and how to fold the squares to find matches. Make sure the children recognize that the completed rhymes are "clues" to the pictures in the cut-and-fold activity. As the children discover the various Easter symbols in the puzzle, ask questions like the following. For *light*: What does light do for us? What does light tell us about Jesus' resurrection? For *eggs*: What makes eggs symbols of Easter? For *seed*: Why is a seed a good symbol of life coming from death? For *lamb*: At what parts of the Mass do we refer to Jesus as a lamb? (*Glory to God* and at the *Breaking of the Bread*) For *flower*: Why is a flower a good Easter symbol? For *butterfly*: How is each part of a butterfly's journey like Jesus' journey from death to life?

**Doctrine: Jesus Gives Us Joy (page 8)** Read summary of the Easter message: Jesus' resurrection brings us life.

**Closing Prayer** Close with an Easter hymn the children know.

### Gospel Theme: The risen Jesus calls us to new life.

Because he is human like us, Jesus reveals God more clearly to us than any of the ways in which God's self-communication happened in Old Testament times. Jesus reveals the depth of God's love for us in giving his life for us. Jesus expresses his abiding presence with his friends in making bread the sign of his love.

Jesus lives on in the nourishing Eucharistic bread that is his body. Jesus lives in the word of the Gospel. Jesus lives in our prayer together. Jesus lives in the way each of us acts on his Gospel teachings to spread the good news of his death and resurrection. The Gospels after Easter proclaim Jesus' risen presence among us and help us recognize him.

**Materials:** Pens or pencils, Bibles.

### Share Our Life Stories

**Opening Prayer** Write SPRING in large block open letters on a poster or chalkboard. Invite the children to write or draw in or around the letters a sign of spring they have seen this week. Flowers, birds, breezes, warm sun, squirrels, melting ice—everyone will have something to share. Start a chain prayer by saying, Thank you, God, for—.

**Objective:** The children will recognize ways Jesus is present in the Church today.

**Cover Activity: What Is Church?** Ask the children to infer from the art on the cover several answers to the cover question. *Church is Jesus' alive in the world. Church is the People of God who live and celebrate as Jesus' followers. Church is a physical structure for teaching and worship.* Read together the five synonyms for Church on the right and the definitions at left. Call attention to the note at the bottom, giving the Latin meanings for the parts of the word *Companions*. Do the matching as a group. Answers:

1. God saves...People of God
2. Group with...Community
3. People who...Companions
4. One bread...Body of Christ
5. Eucharist...Communion

**Objective:** The children will appreciate how children their age are caring for creation.

**Article: Green and Gold (pages 2-4)** Have the children examine the photos and read the outlines to speculate what the story is about. Green is a concept they all know. Read the story aloud with different children reading each paragraph. Ask for immediate reactions to the school's efforts to be good to our planet. Then discuss the TALK questions. **1.** *They got everyone involved, including the children's families at home. It is an all-school effort. The older kids are teaching the younger ones to take their places when they graduate.* **2.** *Take plenty of time with this discussion. Your class may be able to lead*

*your whole school or parish in at least one of the 4Rs.*

**3.** *Again, take time to appreciate all the things that are already happening. Children will learn practical approaches they can take home or practice by themselves.*

### Listen to the Gospel

**Objective:** The children will identify ways we remember Jesus.

**Gospel: Jesus Makes Breakfast for His Friends (page 4)**

Have eight readers take the parts of Peter, Narrators 1 and 2, Thomas, Nathanael, James, John, and Jesus and ask two others to read the part of Disciples. Have them dramatize the Gospel, encouraging them to pantomime the fishing and breakfast scenes. Discuss THINK 1-3. Answers: **1.** *John remembers the other time Jesus made a great catch of fish for Peter (5th Sunday of Ordinary Time Gospel).* **2.** *Jesus performs a miracle, prepares a meal for his disciples, breaks the bread, and says, "Come and eat."* **3.** *We read stories of our ancestors in faith and of Jesus; we do what Jesus told us to do by sharing bread and wine; we sing songs that remind us of God's care for us; we celebrate saints who have shown us what being Christian means.*

### Build Christian Community

**Objective:** The children will explore the metaphor of Jesus as the Lamb of God.

**Living the Gospel: Jesus Is the Lamb of God (page 5)** Have the children read the background information about Jesus as the Lamb of God. Have them complete the wordfind in class or assign it as homework. Answers are on the bottom of page 5.

**Objective:** The children will become acquainted with the beginnings of the Christian community.

**Living the Gospel: How Did the Earliest Christians Live? (pages 6-7)** Distribute Bibles. Divide the class into five groups. Help the children find the *Acts of the Apostles* in their Bibles. Read aloud the introduction and directions on page 6. Do the first question as a class. Look up Acts 2.1-4, 22-24, 36-41 with the children. Help them sum up what they read and direct them to write their response on the lines provided. Then assign each small group to one of the remaining five questions. Instruct the groups to read their scripture passages and compose their answer together. Allow time for the groups to share their findings with the entire class.

**Definition: Mission (page 6)** Read this definition aloud to summarize this lesson on the beginnings of the Church.

**Saints: Macrina (page 8)** Allow time in class for the children to read this cartoon story of a saint of the early Church.

**Doctrine: Jesus' Love Gives Us Life (page 8)** Read aloud this summary of Sunday's Gospel theme—Jesus shows us God's love by giving his life for us.

## Gospel Theme: Jesus Is the Good Shepherd.

The Gospels after Easter witness the good news of Jesus' living presence with us. We know Jesus through the stories and word pictures that proclaim his words, actions, and new life with his friends after his death. In the Gospel this Sunday Jesus is a good shepherd who has given his life for his flock.

The metaphor of the good shepherd helps middle-grade children understand the roles that leaders and caretakers play in their lives. *Venture* tells about a boy who finds he has a lot to learn about his new pet dog. *Venture* also invites the children to trace God's continuing presence in the Christian community since Jesus' time.

**Materials:** Crayons or colored markers, dice, scissors, coins or buttons.

## Share Our Life Stories

**Objective:** The children will recognize that good leaders know their followers and what they can do.

**Cover Activity: Who Is Like Jesus, the Good Shepherd, Today?** Start the class by asking the children what they think shepherds do. *Guard their flocks, find food for them; see that none get lost; open-ended.* Brainstorm what kinds of people do similar things for them in their lives; e.g., their teachers, coaches, parents, the school patrol, a bus driver, the pastor, a social worker, the Pope.

Distribute *Venture*. Identify Jesus in modern clothes at the center. He is holding a shepherd's staff. Read aloud the headline and the type in the first balloon—who cares for people? Encourage the children to identify real people by name. Perhaps they know a social worker, a police officer, someone who works for the homeless, child advocates like Craig Kielburger, or someone at school who protects children from bullies. Do not let them write or draw yet. Do as many other questions as you think the children need to warm up to the activity. Give them a few minutes to draw or write in response to at least two of the questions.

**Objective:** The children will recognize that people are different and have unique talents.

**Story: Daniel's Dog (pages 2-4)** Have the children read this story aloud as a class, in pairs of weak and strong readers, or alone silently. Discuss *THINK* on page 3. Answers: **1.** *He learns what his dog can do and likes to do; he appreciates Andy for who he is. Dogs are fun to play with, to train, and are good company. Ask students who own dogs to tell why their dogs are good pets.* **2.** *They like his tricks. Daniel is too busy teaching Andy to catch a Frisbee. Good pet owners know their dogs' talents and limitations. Andy has to teach Daniel to appreciate him.* **3.** *That he is loved even if he can't catch a Frisbee. That dogs, like people, have unique talents; that it's okay to be different; that bragging gets you into trouble.*

**Definition: Faith (page 4)** Read aloud this definition of how our faith makes us members of the Church.

## Listen to the Gospel

**Objective:** The children will explore the metaphor of Jesus as the good shepherd.

**Gospel: Jesus and the Father Are One (page 4)** Have four readers take the Jesus parts and proclaim the Gospel.

Discuss *THINK* on page 4. Answers: **1.** *Both love, guard, and protect their animals; they keep them safe.* **2.** *One who cares for and loves his flock and lays down his life for them.* **3.** *That he loves and protects us and considers us his sheep.*

**Our Catholic Faith: Jesus Leads and Cares for His Followers (page 5)** This feature explores the history and current meaning of Jesus as our good shepherd. Choose strong readers to take turns reading paragraphs. If you wish, divide the class into two groups and have them alternate verses of the psalm. Afterward, give the children time to answer the two questions. Encourage children to discuss as a class their answers to the last question. To conclude, call attention to the photo of a bishop talking to a mentally-challenged young person. His staff, which is like a shepherd's staff, is called a *crozier*. Bishops are the shepherds of their diocesan flocks.

## Build Christian Community

**Objective:** The children will recognize ways they make Church happen.

**Living the Gospel: Who Makes Church Happen Today? (pages 6-7)** Bring enough dice to class so each group of players will have one. Read aloud the instructions for play on page 7. Provide a pair of scissors for each group to cut out a set of cards. Allow time for the children to play four rounds of the game. This game will show children that in their loving, sharing, and leading, they are making the Church alive today.

**Doctrine: Jesus Shows God's Love (page 8)** Have the children look closely at the illustration. *It is a modern Good Shepherd in African dress.* Then read aloud this summary of how Jesus and his Father are like good shepherds.

**Closing Prayer** The *Venture* year is drawing to a close. The last lesson is two weeks from this Sunday, May 9. Make today's closing prayer special by writing a note to each child telling how he or she contributed to making this a good year together. Make copies of the Good Shepherd psalm (found on page 12 of this guide) and pray it together. Then call the children by name to come and receive their note from you. Close with a song you all know. Be sure the children know they do not have to share their note with anyone else.

**Activity Alert: The Rosary** The reproducible activity on page 14 will familiarize your students with the Rosary. If your class continues to meet after May 9, the last *Venture* lesson, you could use this activity for an entire lesson.











## Dear Parents,

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

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

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

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

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



# The Rosary

The Rosary is a prayer in which we honor Mary, the Mother of God, and think about events in her life and in the life of Jesus. We call these events the mysteries of the Rosary. We think about one of the mysteries while we pray the 10 *Hail Marys* that make up a decade of the rosary. Decade means *ten*. The Luminous Mysteries are new. Luminous means *light*. Pope John Paul II added them in 2002.

Choose one set of the Rosary's mysteries. Look up the Scripture references. Draw pictures or symbols of each of the five mysteries in the large bead shapes. Color each bead on which we pray a *Hail Mary* blue. Use another color for the *Our Father* and *Glory be* beads near the crucifix.

## Joyful Mysteries

1. The Annunciation (Luke 1.26-38)
2. The Visitation (Luke 1.39-56)
3. The Nativity (Luke 2.1-7)
4. The Presentation (Luke 2.22-40)
5. The Finding in the Temple (Luke 2.41-52)

## Sorrowful Mysteries

6. The Agony in the Garden (Mark 14.32-42)
7. The Scourging at the Pillar (Mark 15.15)
8. The Crowning with Thorns (Mark 15.16-20)
9. The Carrying of the Cross (Luke 23.26-31)
10. The Crucifixion (John 19.18-30)

## Glorious Mysteries

11. The Resurrection (Mark 16.1-8; John 20.1-18)
12. The Ascension (Acts 1.6-9)
13. The Sending of the Holy Spirit (Acts 2.1-4)
14. The Assumption (based on Church tradition)
15. The Coronation (based on Church tradition)

## Luminous Mysteries

16. The Baptism of Jesus (Matthew 3.13-17)
17. The Wedding at Cana (John 2.1-11)
18. The Proclamation of the Kingdom of God (Mark 1.14-15)
19. The Transfiguration (Mark 9.2-8)
20. The Institution of the Eucharist at the Last Supper (Matthew 26.26-29)

# How Am I Doing?

Name \_\_\_\_\_

## A. Multiple Choice Questions

Circle the letters beside all the correct answers.

1. He led the people of Israel into the promised land.
  - a. Moses.
  - b. Joshua.
  - c. Joseph.
  - d. Abner.
2. She is a saint who had three younger siblings who are also saints.
  - a. Lucy.
  - b. Agatha.
  - c. Martha.
  - d. Macrina.
3. At what parts of the Mass do we ask for forgiveness?
  - a. in the Penitential Act.
  - b. in the Second Reading.
  - c. in the Eucharistic Prayer.
  - d. in the *Our Father*.
4. On what day of Holy Week do we wash one another's feet?
  - a. Holy Thursday.
  - b. Palm Sunday.
  - c. Good Friday.
  - d. Holy Saturday.
5. At which of these Holy Week liturgies are new members of the Church baptized?
  - a. Holy Thursday.
  - b. Good Friday.
  - c. Easter Vigil.
  - d. Easter Sunday.
6. Which of the following is not a symbol of new life?
  - a. butterfly.
  - b. oil.
  - c. lamb.
  - d. seed.
7. On Easter morning Mary Magdalene met the risen Jesus and thought he was
  - a. a soldier.
  - b. the gardener.
  - c. an angel.
  - d. a vision.
8. To what does psalm 23 compare God?
  - a. a merchant.
  - b. a vineyard owner.
  - c. a shepherd.
  - d. a traveler.
9. Complete Jesus' farewell command: "Love one another"
  - a. as brothers and sisters."
  - b. as I have loved you."
  - c. and keep all my rules."
  - d. and be kind."

## B. Vocabulary Words

Match the following vocabulary words with their definitions.

1. Commandments
  2. Grace
  3. Sin
  4. Stations of the Cross
  5. Resurrection
  6. Mission
  7. Faith
  8. Holy Spirit
- a. Trusting that God loves, holds, and supports us in being; the truth we believe about God.
  - b. God raising Jesus from death as a promise that all who believe will share God's life forever.
  - c. The third person of the Holy Trinity.
  - d. A free, deliberate choice to turn away from God's love.
  - e. A way of praying and reflecting on Jesus' passion and death.
  - f. A job or task a person is sent to do.
  - g. The gift of God's own life.
  - h. Guides for moral behavior from both the Old Testament and from Jesus' teaching.

## C. Write or Talk

1. What was your favorite story or article in *Venture*? Why?

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2. What signs of new life best help you appreciate the resurrection? Why?

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