



CATHOLIC
EDUCATION
MELBOURNE

Seeking to Live the Good News

CATECHIST BOOK

YEAR
3

Seeking to Live the Good News Catechist Book Year 3

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Introduction

Seeking to Live the Good News, with the *Preparing to Receive the Sacrament* series, form a Year One to Year Six parish religious education program. It consists of a Catechist Book and a Student Book covering eight lessons per term per year. It is designed to help catechists facilitate student learning in the parish environment.

The world is where we are called to experience God as Creator, Jesus as Saviour and the Holy Spirit as Guide. The Church engages us in reflecting on, and being open to, the revelation of God in the world, through sacrament, word and service. The Church calls catechists to be witnesses to Jesus Christ in their interactions with students and in their preparation of lessons. The Church calls them not only to assist students to grow in faith but also to continue their own faith formation.

Seeking to Live the Good News contributes to this reflective process by offering a variety of strategies and approaches consonant with current educational practice. The program assists catechists to share and pass on the story of Jesus Christ and to nurture the students' growing relationship with Christ.

+ Denis J. Hart

Denis J. Hart DD
Archbishop of Melbourne

Made in God's Image

Background for the Catechist

Please take 10 minutes to reflect on the following introduction to this lesson.

Reflection/Doctrinal Reference

Being in the image of God the human individual possesses the dignity of a person, who is not just something, but someone. He/she is capable of self-knowledge, of self-possession and of freely giving himself/herself and entering into communion with other persons. And he/she is called by grace to a covenant with his/her Creator, to offer him a response of faith and love that no other creature can give in his/her stead (CCC, n. 357).

To be 'made in the image and likeness of God', a fundamental teaching about who we are, is really quite extraordinary. It affirms that every single human being shares something of the dignity, wisdom and mystery of God's own being. Humans alone, among all that exists, are able to reflect on themselves, their lives, their origins and purpose. They can think and reason, deliberate, make decisions and use their imagination in ways that other creatures apparently cannot. They can interact creatively with the world and with other human beings. All these aspects of being human express the way in which we are made in the image and likeness of God. But the most significant way we humans reflect the image and likeness of God who is love is our ability to love. When we love we become what St Irenaeus described as the glory of God: human beings fully alive.

Student Focus

Students of this age are usually aware of their gifts. They can know, understand, reason and love. It is not a big step to see that these abilities are God-like.

Teaching Point

God made us in God's image and likeness.

Remembering Point

We are made in God's image and likeness.

Beginning

(15 minutes)

Welcome the students to the new year. Introduce yourself and invite each student to talk to the person beside them to find out their name and which school they go to.

Invite each student to introduce the person beside them. You could also have a name tag of some kind for the students to help you remember their names.

Hand out the workbooks and the name tags.

Invite the students to sit around the prayer focus with their workbook open at page 2.

Catechist: Let's make the Sign of the Cross together.

All: In the name of the Father ...

Catechist: You might like to follow the prayer in your workbook or listen and respond with **Praise to you, God of love.**

Catechist: God of love, you made all the beautiful things that we see,

Students: Praise to you, God of love.

Catechist: You made each of us, and the world in which we live,

Students: Praise to you, God of love.

Catechist: You made us to be in the world from the beginning,

Students: Praise to you, God of love.

Catechist: You made us in your image, to be like you,

Students: Praise to you, God of love.

Catechist: God, help us to understand how we can live as you want us to.

Students: Praise to you, God of love.

Catechist: We make this prayer through Christ our Lord,

All: Amen.

Secure a long sheet of greaseproof paper divided into five sections to the whiteboard.

Ask the students the following:

- What happened on the first day of the creation story?

(Take a few answers if the students know the story or give them some clues by holding up the picture from Appendix 1b, on page 6 that shows the first day of creation.) When you have enough answers select two students to go to the pile of cut out magazine pictures that are on the floor beneath the First Day section, and select a few pictures and stick them onto the greaseproof paper.

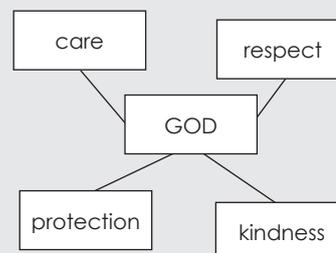
PREPARATION

1. Prayer focus: A bright yellow cloth, the Bible, a globe of the world or an atlas and a candle. See Appendix 1a, page 5, for further information about Prayer Focuses.
2. Workbooks.
3. A name tag for each student.
4. A long piece of greaseproof paper (approx 2.5 metres) divided into five sections, glue/sticky tape.



5. Cards.
6. Pictures for each day in the story of creation, taken from magazines and newspapers (day and night; sky; land/earth/plants; sun, moon and stars; birds and animals). Place them in piles under the appropriate sign.
7. Enlarged copies of pictures in Appendix 1b, pages 6–8, of the days from the creation story. Alternately, borrow a set of creation pictures from the local Catholic school library.

8. Word Web



9. NB Keep the mural you create in this lesson so that you can use it again in Lesson 19.

- What happened on the second day of the creation story?

(Take a few answers if the students know the story or give them some clues by holding up the next picture from Appendix 1b, on page 6, that shows the second day of creation.) When you have enough answers select two students to go to the pile of cut-out magazine pictures that are on the floor beneath the Second Day section, and select a few pictures from the pile and stick them onto the greaseproof paper.

- What happened on the third day of the creation story?

Repeat the process as described above.

- What happened on the fourth day of the creation story?

Repeat the process as described above.

- What happened on the fifth day of the creation story?

Repeat the process as described above.

Middle

(35 minutes)

Ask the students to go to their seats.

Tell the students: This activity has provided us with a very simple picture of the story of creation. However, there are two more days in the story. Let's look at day six.

Read Gen 1: 24– 31.

Ask the students: What is the same and what is different about this day compared with the other days in the story?

(Accept a few of the students' answers and then direct them to complete the grid in their workbook on page 3. Help the students to see that God not only made the animals on this day but also humankind and that God gave more instructions and responsibility to the humans than to the animals.)

Ask the students: What did God mean when he said 'Let us make humankind in our image, according to our likeness.' Help the students to explore the significance of humans made in God's image and likeness. Assist the students to recognise what God gave to the humans: food, animals, as well as responsibility for all that is given to them.

Tell the students: God made us because God loves us. God did not have to make any of the things we read about in the creation story. God chose to make us in God's image and likeness because God wanted to and loves us.

Ask the students: What does it mean to be made in the image and likeness of God?

Invite the students to think about this question and turn to the person beside them and share their answer. Each pair is to create a list of words that answers the question. Hand out the recording sheet from Appendix 1c, on page 9, for the students to record their answers.

Direct the students to choose one word from their list that they think best provides an answer for the question, and share it with the whole group. Put it on the whiteboard around the central word – God. *(You will end up with a Word Web like the one in the preparation column.)*

Tell the students: These are fantastic words that you have chosen. They remind me of one word that I think covers them all. **LOVE.** Love is the reason we do all these things. We have said that God made us because God loves us. This love is God and since we are made in God's image and likeness, we can love just like God.

Tell the students: If I am made in the image and likeness of God, then so is the person beside me, the person in the street, the person sleeping on the park bench or the prisoner in jail. What I have to remember is that because 'I' am made in God's image, then 'I' have a responsibility to respect, love and care for other humans, who are also made in the image and likeness of God.

Ask the students: How can I show that I am made in the image and likeness of God?

Allocate the students to three groups. Invite the students to choose one of the words in the Word Web. **Direct the students** to open their workbook at page 4, and write a very short script or story about a real or imaginary event that describes how they show they are made in the image and likeness of God.

Direct the students to rehearse this script/story. *(Allow only a few minutes for this.)*

4

Invite the students to perform the short script for the others in their class. Invite the other students to guess the word. *(Allow 3 minutes for each group.)*

End

(3 minutes)

Gather the students around the prayer focus and invite them to be still and silent for a few moments, thinking about what it means to be made in God's image.

Catechist: Let us make the Sign of the Cross together.

All: In the name of the Father ...

Catechist: God, you made us in your image and likeness.

Students: Help us to see you in each other.

Catechist: God, you ask us to be responsible for all that you have given us.

Students: Help us to look after the gifts you have given us.

Catechist: God, be with us each day as we try to live our lives as you would want.

All: Amen.

All: In the name of the Father ...

Collect the workbooks and dismiss the students as usual.

PREPARATION

Bag of 'Tricks'

Collect items to build a prayer focus and store them in a bag or a box. This can help eliminate last-minute searching.

A Basic Set

1. Candle and candle holder, e.g. tea light in a container
2. Matches/safety gas lighter
3. Variety of coloured cloths for liturgical seasons
4. Bible.

Optional Items

- Cross
- Icons, posters, photos
- Rocks, pebbles, shells, twigs
- Bowl
- Oil/oil burner
- Wheat, grapes
- Small vase
- Prayer cards
- Intention box.

Design Principles

- Simple and uncluttered
- Connected to lesson
- Consistency, i.e. always have one
- Diversity, i.e. use a variety of items, locations, times.

Appendix 1a – Prayer Focus

A Prayer Focus:

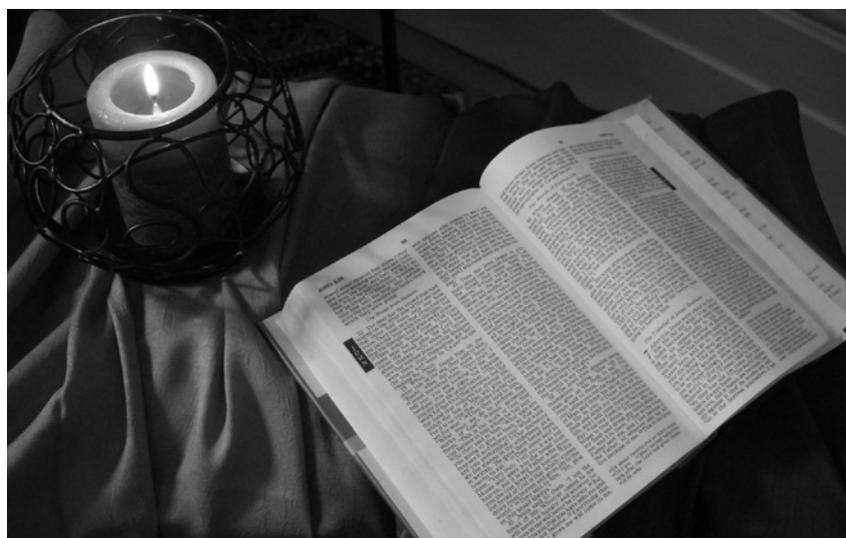
- Helps establish a prayerful atmosphere
- Stimulates the imagination
- Provides a glimpse of beauty/colour
- Provides an object of attention/focus
- Helps visual learners
- Provides a centring point
- Contributes to a prayerful atmosphere
- Teaches students about signs and symbols without many words
- Provides a structure/framework on which to build prayer
- Becomes routine with variety
- Helps students:
 - to become quiet, to settle
 - to anticipate what is to come
 - to be ready for prayer
 - to wonder.

How to Set up a Prayer Focus

- Set it up before the session (if the teaching space is available) to provide a point of attention and interest.
- 'Build' it as the opening activity of the session.
- 'Build' it as the session proceeds
- Invite students to participate at your direction.
- Invite students to create a prayer focus.

Where to Place a Prayer Focus

- On a table (or a raised object like an upturned crate)
- On the floor
- In a corner or in the centre of the learning space
- In an adjacent area to the learning space, e.g. the next room, in the corridor, so that students physically move from one location to another.



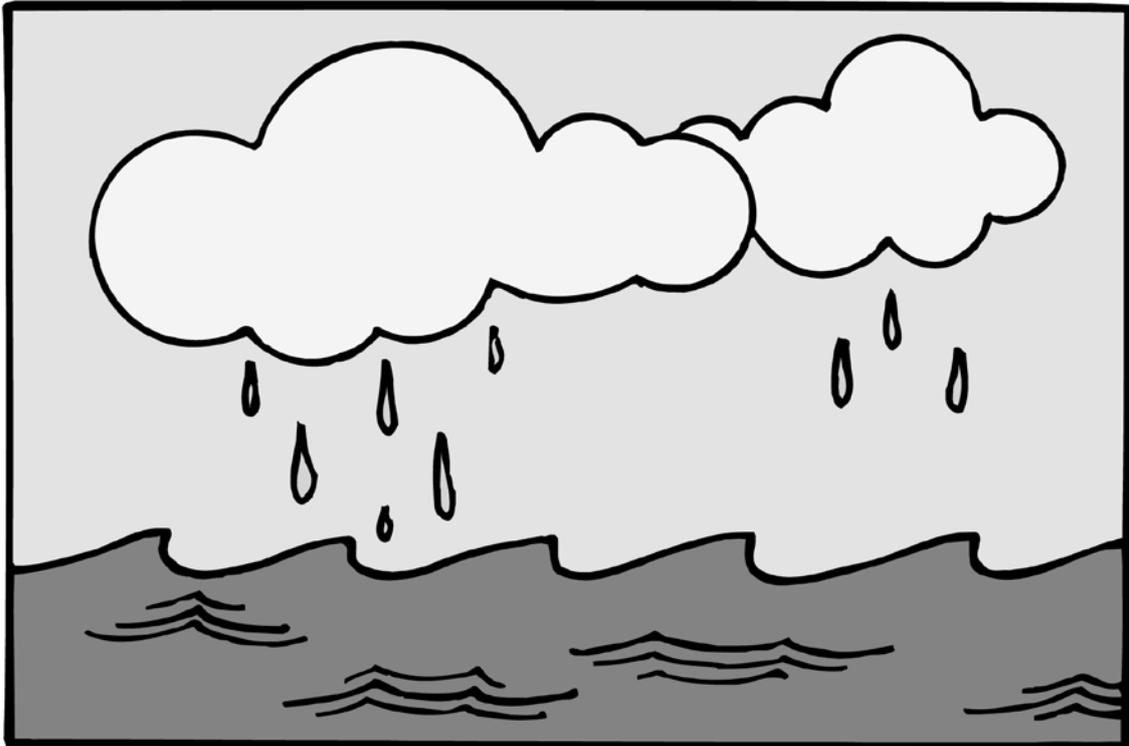
Appendix 1b – The first five days of creation according to Gen 1: 24 – 31

Day 1

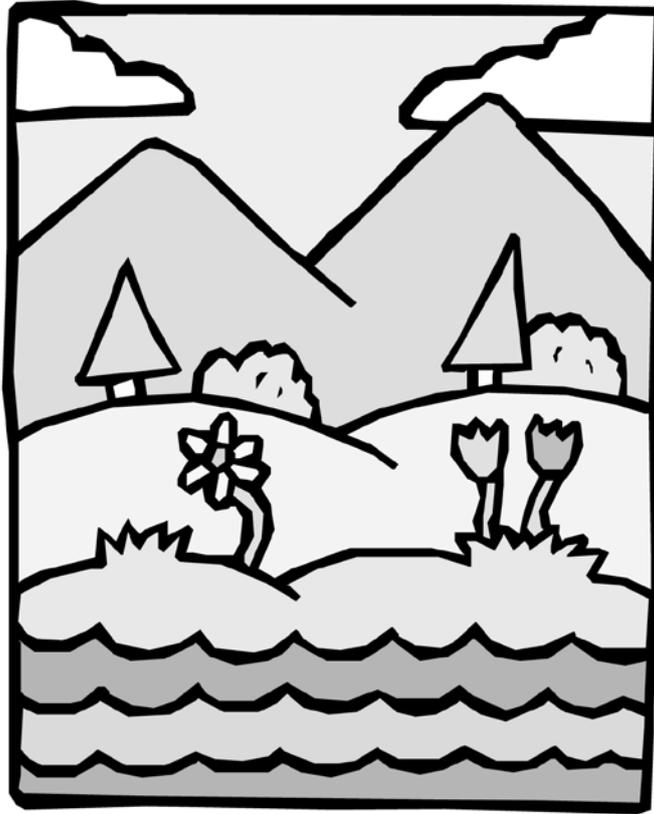


6

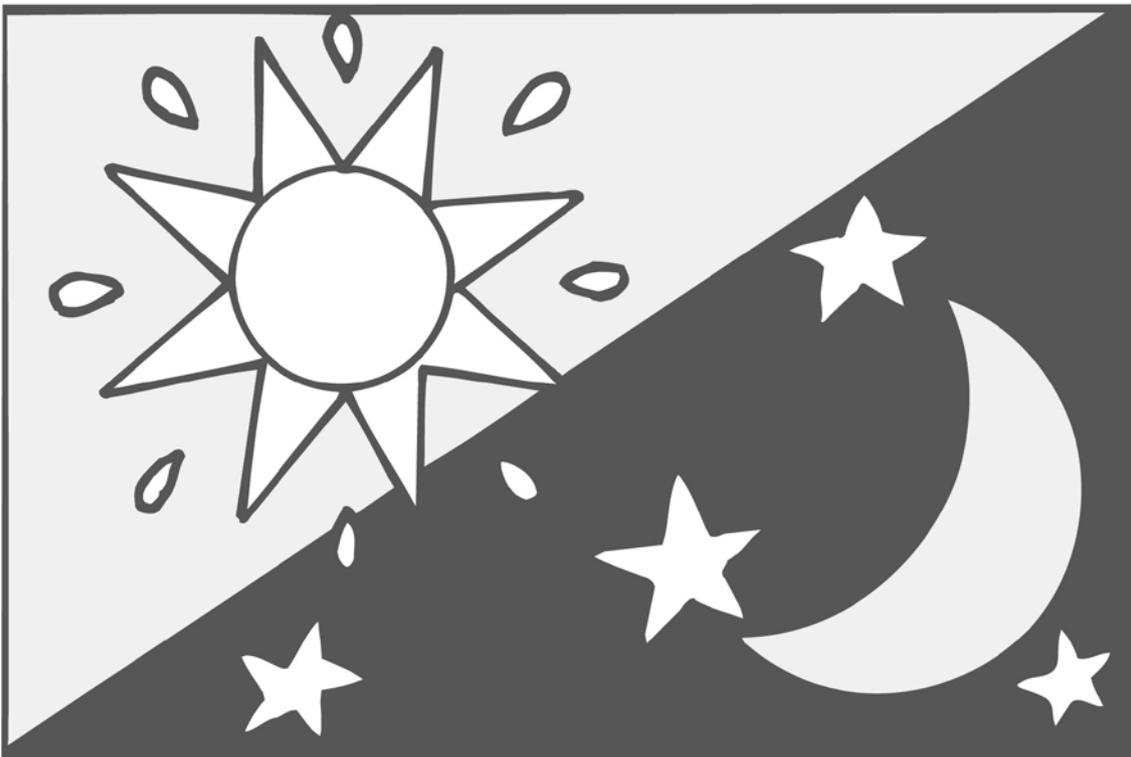
Day 2



Day 3

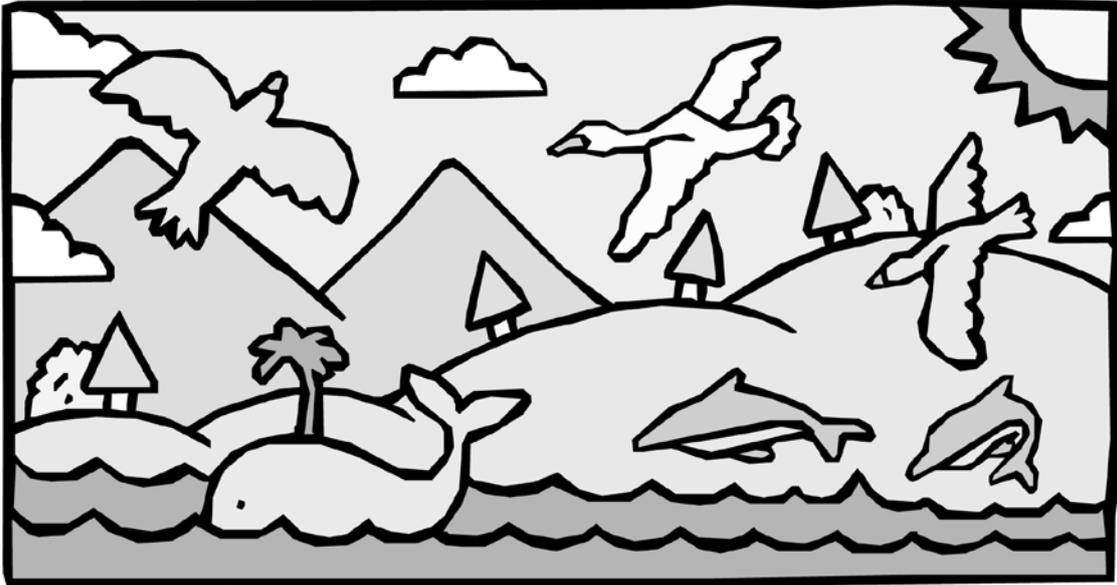


Day 4



Appendix 1b (continued)

Day 5



We Live in Community

Background for the Catechist

Take 10 minutes to reflect on the following introduction to this lesson.

Reflection/Doctrinal Reference

It has pleased God to make men holy and save them, not merely as individuals without any mutual bonds, but by making them into a single people, a people which acknowledges him in truth and serves him in holiness (GS, n. 9).

Life is social. We live in community; we need other people; we depend on one another. We contribute to the life of others. God has created us to discover more about ourselves through our relationships with others. Within these life experiences of community, we develop our identity and learn to love ourselves and others.

It is important for us to know the security of belonging – of being wanted, respected and loved – as this enables us to accept ourselves. Self-esteem is a pre-requisite to forgiving oneself and others.

Our relationship with God is both personal and social. We experience God's love for us in all God's activity. Our love of God and our love for one another are inseparable. The faith, love and service that bind us together manifest God's love to the world.

Student Focus

Students experience belonging in a family, a peer group, school, clubs, and Church community. They know the feeling of security that is part of being with people who love them. That feeling is a base from which they begin to understand that God loves them and is always with them. They know, too, the experience of not belonging, of being left out. Through these life experiences they come to understand that belonging to a group involves responsibility to others.

Teaching Point

Through living in community we come to know that God is present in all our experiences.

Remembering Point

God is with me in everything I do.

PREPARATION

1. Prayer focus: A cloth, a candle and the Bible.
 2. A copy for each student of the Bingo Activity (Appendix 2a, page 14).
 3. Workbooks.
 4. My Reconciliation Book (Appendix 2b page 15). Copy back and front for each student. The sheet is cut and folded to form a small booklet which can be used to support the students through their sacramental preparation.
 5. Blue, red and yellow pens or pencils or felt-tip markers.
 6. Strips of paper the length of an A4 sheet of paper and 2.5—3.0cm wide. (enough for three per student in a variety of colours) and sticky tape or a stapler. Make the chain by interlocking the strips and taping or stapling together, as below.
-
7. Have the response written on a card for students to read:

God is always with me
in everything I do
 8. On conclusion of prayer collect the chain and keep for future prayer times.

Beginning

(14 minutes)

Welcome the students and allow some further time to help the students get to know one another:

Use the 'Bingo' activity in Appendix 2a on page 14. Give each student a 16-square grid on a sheet of paper with different attributes in each square, e.g. 'Blue eyes', 'Likes porridge', 'Plays football' etc. Have students move through the group to find people who have these attributes and write the name of the person in the square. The first person to fill all sixteen squares shouts 'Bingo'!

Settle the students in their seats and distribute the workbooks and the *My Reconciliation Book*.

Invite the students to turn to page 6 in their workbook and complete the Sorting Images activity. Invite the students to add to the list the things they do, either individually or as a group.

Collate results from the class into a Venn Diagram (an example can be found in Appendix 2c on page 17).

Middle

(15–20 minutes)

Help students explore the benefits of being a part of a community of people.

Ask the students:

- Can you play tennis by yourself?
- Can you play football or netball by yourself?
- Is it fun to have a party by yourself?

On the whiteboard list the 'positives' and 'negatives' of working or living together.

Ask the students: Why is working as a group sometimes better than working on our own? (*2 or 3 people working together can lift a heavy object, a group has more ideas than an individual, ...*)

Tell the students: In groups we can do things that we could not do by ourselves. Being part of a community enables us to do more than we can alone. As members of a community we build relationships with others. It is this 'being with' other people in relationship that strengthens our sense of belonging.

Ask the students:

- How does it feel to be left out? (lonely, miserable, ...)
- How does it feel to be included? (warm, happy, ...)

Tell students: It is by strengthening our relationship with God that we continue to strengthen our sense of God's presence with us. We grow in our ability to see God's action in our daily lives. Even though we can

be left out of groups or excluded from joining things we really want to be a part of, God is always with us in everyone and everything we experience. In the sad times and the happy times we can be sure of God's presence. We can experience this more when we actively work towards strengthening our relationship with God.

Invite the students to turn to page 8 in their workbook and complete the fill the gaps activity.

End

(10 minutes)

Invite each student to take three differently coloured strips of paper and write an experience in their life on one side of the paper.

Tell the students that they will use these strips to make a chain by interlocking the strips and taping or stapling them together. *(See the sample in the Preparation column on page 11. When all the strips have been joined together to form one long chain it will be placed on the prayer focus.)*

Tell the students: We have written down many experiences. God is present in all of them, even the ones that have been difficult for us.

Gather the students round the prayer focus.

Tell the students: The cloth creates a special place to put special things for our time of prayer together. The candle is a symbol of the presence of Christ who is with us now. The Bible is the special collection of the stories about God. We come to know many things about God and about Jesus by reading the stories in the Bible. Invite 2 students to place the chain on the cloth.

Catechist: Let us now get ready for prayer. Let's begin with the Sign of the Cross.

All: In the name of the Father...

Catechist: Our paper chain tells us something very important about God. It tells us that God is always with us, not just me but with each one of us and together we form community. Let us pray with thanks to God for always being with all of us. Our response is: 'God is always with me in everything I do'.

Students: God is always with me in everything I do.

Catechist: Thank you, God, for being with us when we wake up in the morning.

Students: God is always with me in everything I do.

Catechist: Thank you, God, for being with us when we are with our friends.

Students: God is always with me in everything I do.

Catechist: Thank you, God, for being with us when we are left out of the games our friends play.

Students: God is always with me in everything I do.

PREPARATION

Catechist: Thank you, God, for being with us when we pray.

Students: God is always with me in everything I do.

Catechist: Thank you, God, for being with all of us as we come together as a community.

Students: God is always with me in everything I do.

Catechist: Thank you, God, for always being present in everyone and everything we experience.

Students: God is always with me in everything I do.

Catechist: Let's finish with the Sign of the Cross:

All: In the name of the Father ...

Ask the students to bring to the next lesson a photo or a symbol of a person who they know tells them something about God and God's love.

Collect the workbooks and prayer chain and dismiss the students as usual.

Appendix 2a – Bingo

Photocopy this page and distribute one to each student.

| | | | |
|-----------------------------------|----------------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------------------|
| Likes meat | Plays football | Has blue eyes | Wears a green jumper |
| Likes apples | Likes comics | Goes to Scouts | Has brown hair |
| Enjoys reading books | Has a pet | Plays tennis | Favourite colour is yellow |
| Goes to ... (local school) | Has an older sister | Likes school | Has a brother |

Appendix 2b – My Reconciliation Book

Enlarge this page and the next page to A3 size. Copy back to back, one for each student. Cut along the dotted lines and fold the pages.

- 5 -

- 4 -

I need to work on

I think about my life

At Reconciliation

My Name:

Greeting

- Me: In the name of the Father and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.
 Father: May God, who has enlightened every heart, help you to know your sins and trust in his mercy.
 Me: Amen.

Reading and Confession

- Me: I tell Father about the gospel story I've read. Bless me Father for I have sinned. This is my first reconciliation. *(I tell Father what I am sorry for.)*

Prayer of Sorrow and Absolution

- Me: I say a prayer of sorrow from p. 6.
 Priest: God the Father of mercies, through the death and resurrection of his Son has reconciled the world to himself and the Holy Spirit among us for the forgiveness of sins; through the ministry of the Church may God give you pardon and peace, and I absolve you in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

Dismissal

- Give thanks to the Lord for he is good.
 Me: His mercy endures forever.
 Priest: The Lord has freed you from your sins. Go in peace.

- 8 -



My Reconciliation Book

Glory be to the Father
and to the Son
and to the Holy Spirit:
as it was in the beginning,
is now, and ever shall be,
world without end.
Amen.

Glory Be

Hail Mary, full of grace,
The Lord is with thee!
Blessed art thou among women,
And blessed is the fruit of thy womb, Jesus.
Holy Mary, Mother of God,
Pray for us sinners,
Now and at the hour of our death.
Amen.

Hail Mary

Sign of the Cross

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

Our Father

Our Father
who art in heaven
Hallowed be thy name
Thy kingdom come
Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread
And forgive us our trespasses
As we forgive those who trespass against us.
And lead us not into temptation
But deliver us from all evil. Amen.

My Prayer of Sorrow (Use the box for the first letter)

Jesus showed us.
I want to say sorry to you and to those I've hurt.
I am glad that you want to forgive me and to help me
keep on growing as your friend.

Prayers of Sorrow

Lord Jesus you came to show people how to
love God our Father and how to live in peace
with each other.
Please forgive me and help me to live more
like you.

Getting Ready

Prayer before reading Scripture

Lord Jesus help me to understand what this story
means in my life. Amen.

**Questions I ask myself about
Gospel stories**

What does this story mean for me?
What is Jesus asking me to do?

Prayer after reading Scripture

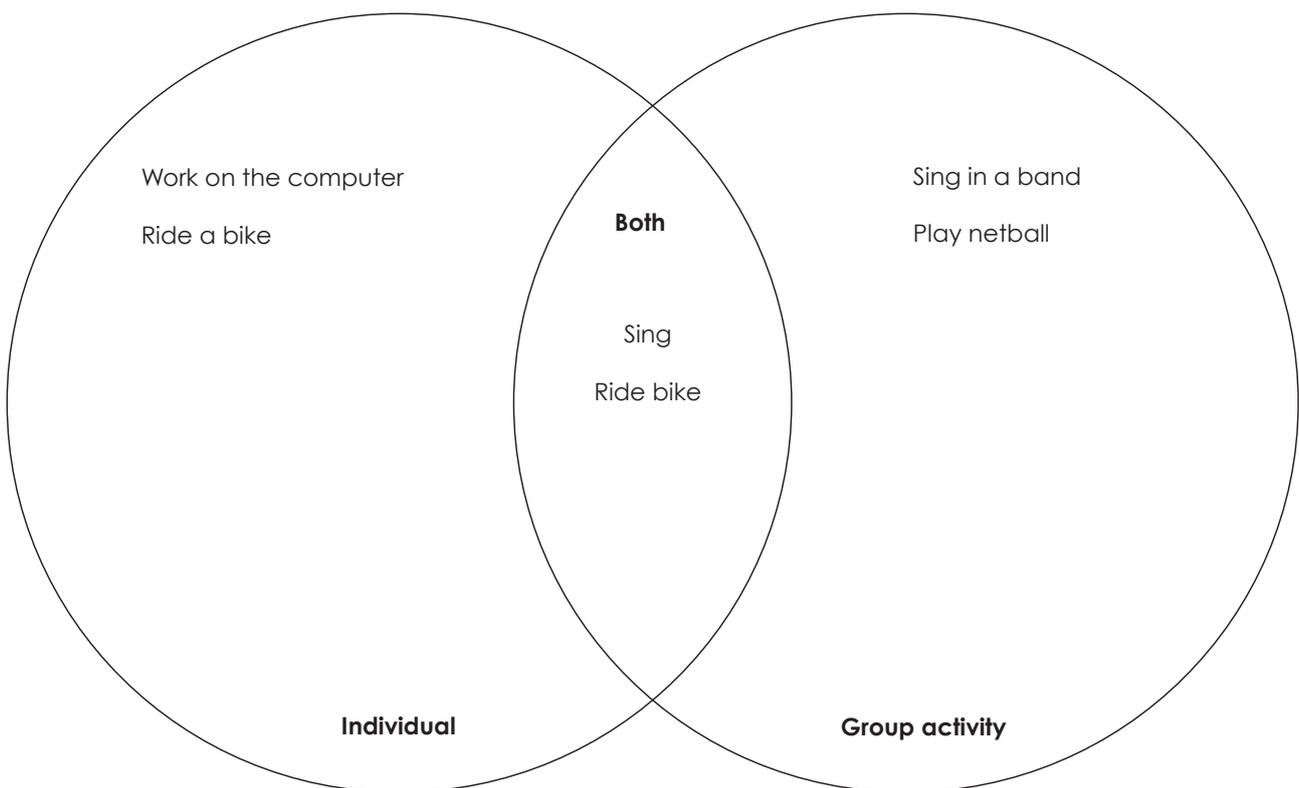
Lord Jesus, you want me to grow more like you but
sometimes I don't try to do the right thing. Help me
to be strong and to change. Amen.

Appendix 2c – Venn Diagram

A Venn diagram is a tool that allows you to collate the results of a sorting activity. It helps the students see how the activities are grouped and in particular what kinds of activities are able to be done either on their own or with others.

In this activity, the Venn diagram is used as a visual recording tool to assist the students in talking about group and individual activities.

Below is an example of what the Venn Diagram might look like for this lesson.



Appendix 2c – Fill-in-the-Gaps: Answers

When I am sad, **God** is with me. When I am **happy**, God is with **me**. God is **always** with me in **everything** I do. When I go out, **God** is **with** me. When I **play** or sing or fight or **forget** to do the things Mum asked me to do, **God** is with **me**. God is **present** in **everything** I do.

People Tell Me about God

Background for the Catechist

Please take 10 minutes to reflect on the following introduction to this lesson.

Reflection/Doctrinal Reference

The transmission of the Christian faith consists primarily in proclaiming Jesus Christ in order to lead others to faith in him. From the beginning, the first disciples burned with the desire to proclaim Christ: 'We cannot but speak of what we have seen and heard' (Acts 4: 20). And they invite people of every era to enter into the joy of their communion with Christ (CCC, n. 425).

For most of us faith in God and the desire to follow Christ come about through connection with other people. When we have a conversation that fills us with hope and confidence in God, when we see sick or unhappy people being treated with tenderness and care, when we are surprised by forgiveness instead of blame, when we hear someone speak with grace and conviction about their faith, we are experiencing the mystery of God mediated through these human experiences. Even at prayer or at Mass it is often the engagement and energy of others that opens a way for us to God. Archbishop Frank Little described a vivid experience of catching sight of his father (who had lost a leg in World War I) kneeling beside his bed in prayer. This sight, like no other, conveyed to his son his father's deep faith and love of God.

Student Focus

Most students have experienced interactions of love, care, compassion and forgiveness with others, no matter how difficult their backgrounds. These human experiences or the longing for these experiences open them to the possibility of faith in God, if they can be helped to see and understand God as the source of all these good things.

Teaching Point

I can come to know God in the people around me.

Remembering Point

The people around me help me know something about God.

PREPARATION

1. Prayer focus: A coloured cloth, a candle and the Bible, a picture of Blessed Mother Teresa, the Pope, or St Mary of the Cross (Mary MacKillop).
2. Obtain three images: these might be of Blessed Mother Theresa, the Pope and St Mary of the Cross or others who are inspirational and show us God's love. These might be suitable people who are likely to be familiar to the students. You can obtain some images of St Mary of the Cross by contacting the Mary MacKillop Heritage Centre, 362 Albert Street, East Melbourne. (Inquiries: 9926 9300)
3. On whiteboard or butcher's paper or A3 sheet write these questions:
 - What is special about this person?
 - What does this person do that shows you something about God?
 - How does this person inspire you to come to know God better?
4. Workbooks.

Beginning

(15 minutes)

Welcome the students as usual and gather them around the prayer focus.

Invite the students to place the photos/symbols that they have brought with them on the prayer focus.

Catechist: Let us make the Sign of the Cross together.

All: In the name of the Father ...

Catechist: Loving God, we pray,
Help us to see you and come to know you through the people around us. We ask this through Christ, our Lord,

All: Amen.

Place the three images of inspirational and well-known people of the church on the floor.

Ask the students: Who can tell me who these people are? (*St Mary of the Cross or Mary MacKillop, the Pope or similar*).

Invite the students to share what they know of these people and how they have helped others to know about the love of God.

Tell the students that through the work that these people do (or have done) we come to know more about God.

Using one of these people, explain in greater detail how they have contributed to the life of the Church and knowing God, e.g. Mary MacKillop, St Mary of the Cross, took on the work of educating students and caring for orphans and needy women. The Josephite Sisters (the order Mary founded) walked the streets to visit the poor. They lived with them and shared their possessions as equals. Her motto was, 'never see a need without trying to do something about it'. Her life reveals to us a compassionate God, a God of love.

Middle

(20 minutes)

Tell the students: We don't know these people personally but there are people in our lives who also show us the love of God.

Ask the students: Who helps you know about God? (*Affirm the students' answers. You will probably get suggestions like: the parish priest, school principal, family member.*) Write the students' responses on a whiteboard or a piece of butcher's paper or an A3 sheet.

Tell the students: We are now going to spend time looking at and thinking about the photo/symbol that you have brought and how that person helps us to see God.

Ask the students to collect their photo/symbol from the prayer focus.

Divide the group into pairs.

Using the pictures and/or symbols that the students have brought with them, use the 'Think/Pair/Share' strategy to discuss the following questions that have been written on the whiteboard/butcher's paper.

- What is special about this person?
- What does this person do that shows you something about God?
- How does this person inspire you to come to know God better?

THINK (one minute)

Allow the students one minute 'thinking time' to silently think about the questions in relation to the person who shows them something about God. It is important that there is no talking at this time.

PAIR (two minutes)

In their pairs, allow each student one minute each to share with their partner the answers to the above questions.

Hand out the workbooks.

Invite the students to return to their seats and to complete the People Who Tell Me about God activity in their workbooks at page 10.

Tell the students: We learn about God in many ways from people around us. In the boxes below, write about the people you have selected.

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(E.g. My Auntie Mary always went to the Soup Kitchen on a Friday night to help feed the homeless. This tells me she was generous. This tells me that God is generous to us. It also tells me that I can show others how God is generous by being generous myself).

Move around the group, asking the students who their persons are and what they say about God.

SHARE (five minutes)

Invite the group to come together and sit around you on the floor.

Invite one student from each pair to share their answers with the whole group.

Invite the students to recite with you the Remembering Point on page 11 of the workbook.

End

(15 minutes)

Invite the students to turn to page 11 in their workbook. In the template provided they can write a prayer for the person who helps them to know God.

Gather the students together around the prayer focus with their workbooks.

Invite the students to read their prayer when invited, after which everyone will respond with: God, help us to see you in the people we meet.

Catechist: Let us be quiet for a few moments. Let us remember the people we have talked about today.

Pause

Catechist: These people in our lives show us something about God. Let us listen to each prayer and then respond:

All: God, help us to see you in the people we meet.

Student: (Each student takes a turn reading their prayer in the following form:

Lord God, thank you for_____, who helps me to know God and God's love by_____.

All: God, help us to see you in the people we meet.

Catechist: We offer these, and all our prayers, through your Son, Jesus,

All: Amen.

Collect the workbooks and dismiss the students as usual.

Background for the Catechist

Please take 10 minutes to reflect on the following introduction to this lesson.

Reflection/Doctrinal Reference

For this reason the Church, especially during Advent and Lent and above all at the Easter Vigil, re-reads and re-lives the great events of salvation history in the 'today' of her liturgy. But this also demands that catechesis help the faithful to open themselves to this spiritual understanding of the economy of salvation as the Church's liturgy reveals it and enables us to live it (CCC, n. 1095).

Lent recalls Jesus' journey into the desert where he fasted, prayed and prepared himself to proclaim the Kingdom of God. It is also a time when the Church invites its members to a more intense experience of our Christian life. In imitation of Jesus, we are asked to free ourselves from some of the distractions of life and make a focused effort at prayer and self-giving. It is also a 40-day preparation for the feast of Easter. We can use the gospels of the Sundays of Easter to direct us on the journey and thus invite Jesus to be our companion and guide through the season.

Student Focus

Students of this age welcome the recurring patterns of preparation and celebration in both the secular and the sacred calendar. Therefore, the idea of Lent as a journey to Easter can be appealing to the students.

Teaching Point

During Lent we follow Jesus on a journey to Easter.

Remembering Point

During Lent we follow Jesus on a journey to Easter.

PREPARATION

1. Prayer focus: A brown cloth, a candle to match and the Bible. You can also add some rocks of different sizes.
2. Have some images of landscapes of the Middle East and the Australian bush. Some of these images should include wilderness, rocky mountain, desert, valley, bush.
3. Workbooks.
4. A copy of Appendix 4b (page 28) for each student.

Beginning

(5 minutes)

Welcome the students as usual.

Ask the students to sit in a circle on the floor around the prayer focus.

Catechist: Let us ready ourselves for prayer by being still.

Let us now make the Sign of the Cross together and pray the Lord's Prayer.

All: In the name of the Father ...

All: Our Father, who art in heaven ...

Middle

(35 minutes)

Place images of various landscapes on the floor, face down.

Tell the students: Our first task today is to solve a mystery. The clues we need to solve this mystery are hidden in our discussion about the pictures. As we look at the pictures, we will reflect on questions which will help us discover a mystery word. This mystery word will be an important part of our lesson today. I am quite positive that we can uncover it together.

Choose a student to turn over all the images.

Ask the students:

- What do you see in these images? *(Accept the students' answers, give the students only 2 minutes to explore the images.)*
- What might it be like to be alone here? *(Accept all the answers, encourage the students to think carefully about what the places might be like, particularly when they are alone.)*
- Is there anything comfortable about this place? *(Again, there can be a variety of answers. The students might come up with something we hadn't thought about. Allow the students to suggest things but do get them to justify their answers.)*
- Is there anything about this environment that would make this place uncomfortable? *(This is important to the lesson so encourage the students to answer and to justify why they think something would make it uncomfortable.)*
- How would you feel being in this place? *(Since this is a personalised question, all answers from the students are correct. Accept and affirm them.)*

Ask the students: What might be some words that could link or describe all of our pictures here? *(The answers here will be important. You are wanting the students to draw out words and phrases like wilderness, desert, over-grown, isolation, loneliness, boring, searching, dry, no one is there, empty, alone, sad.)*

Record these answers on a blackboard, a whiteboard or butcher's paper.

Ask the students: Can you think of a word that could describe all these pictures? This word will be the key to unlock our mystery today. *(Students may not be able to give you an answer, so don't keep asking if no one knows.)*

Tell the students: Our mystery word is 'wilderness'. All of the things we have spoken about and all the words we have listed tell us something about a wilderness. A wilderness may not necessarily be a desert. It could be one of these images that we have in front of us.

Jesus went into a wilderness before he began his special work. Let us listen to the story which we find in the gospels. Today we will read from the Gospel of Matthew.

Read Mt 4: 1– 11, 'The Temptation of Jesus'. The story can be found in Appendix 4a, page 27.

Ask the students to move into three groups and open their workbooks at page 12. Ask each group to write their answers on the copies of Appendix 4b that you have copied for them.

Tell the students that as they will later report back to the whole group they should designate one student to report back.

- What is this story trying to tell us about Jesus?
- What can I learn about Jesus from this story?
- What can I learn about myself from this story?
- What is the message of this story?

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Allow 20 minutes for this activity.

Ask the students to gather back on the floor. Invite each group to report back one at a time about what they discussed. *(Affirm the students' answers and accept the students' discussion as a rich form of faith exploration.)*

Tell the students: Our word, WILDERNESS, tells us a lot about what Jesus was going through at this time. It really does give us the answer to some of the MYSTERY of Jesus' life before his ministry. We can now try to solve our mystery.

This was a very special time for Jesus. He was tempted many times. If he only thought of himself and not of others, he would do what the tempter asks him to do. Jesus does not think about himself, he thinks about what he can give to us and to other people. He is a giver, not a taker. This special time when we think of other people should happen all year but we particularly focus on this during Lent.

Ask the students: What are some ways in which we can think of others? *(Record the answers on the board. Group the students' responses into the three main Lenten ways: Doing something for others, praying and giving up something so that we might consider others.)*

Tell the students: We have come up with three ways in particular that we can think of others: prayer, giving up something, and doing something for others. Just as Jesus went into the desert, we are called to be more like him. Jesus prayed, gave up food and then ministered to the people.

The time when Jesus went into the desert or wilderness was a very special time in his life. As we are called to be more like him, it is also a special time for all of us.

Each year during Lent, we are called to think about our life. Just as Jesus went into the desert or the wilderness, we are reminded to imitate him during the 40 days of Lent. Just as Jesus went out and began his ministry, we too are called to help our family and friends in a special way throughout the whole year.

Direct the students to turn to page 13 of their workbook.

Tell the students: Let's look at the questions on page 13. Let's read them together.

- What might Jesus have prayed about during his time in the desert?
- What are some things I can pray about in Lent to help me become more like Jesus?
- Jesus gave up food and drink to help him think of others. If you could take a photograph of Jesus in the desert, what would it look like?
- Like Jesus, what things can I give up to make me think of others?
- Jesus gave us the gift of his own life, so that he could give eternal life to all. Explore with words and colour how this makes you feel.
- What can I do this Lent to be more like Jesus, so that I can bring life to others?

Ask the students: Are there any further questions about the worksheet?

Invite the students to return to their seats to complete the page in their workbook.

End

(10 minutes)

Invite the students to sit on the floor together with their workbooks open to the page they have just been working on.

Ask the students:

- Is there anyone who would like to share some of the things they will pray about during Lent? *(Take a few answers, but affirm the students in what they are going to do.)*
- Would anyone like to share the things that they will give up so that they can think of others? *(Again, take a few answers, but affirm the students in what they are going to do.)*

- Would anyone like to share how they can bring life to others this Lent? *(Again, take a few answers, but affirm the students in what they are going to do.)*

Tell the students: Thank you helping us solve our mystery. Thank you too for sharing your responses.

Gather the students around the prayer focus and prepare them for prayer.

Catechist: Let us be quiet and think about what we have been talking about today. (Pause for a moment.)

Let us now make the Sign of the Cross.

All: In the name of the Father ...

Catechist: God our Father, you sent Jesus, your Son, to be with us. By his example in the wilderness, Jesus showed us how we can prepare for important events in our lives. He showed us how we can prepare for Easter.

During Lent, help us to be like Jesus, to pray and to think of others by doing things for them as well as by going without.

We make our prayer through Christ, your Son.

All: Amen.

Appendix 4a – The Temptation of Jesus

Then Jesus was led up by the Spirit into the wilderness. He fasted for forty days and forty nights, and afterwards he was famished.

The tempter came and said to him, 'If you are the Son of God, command these stones to become loaves of bread.' But he answered, 'It is written, "One does not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes from the mouth of God".'

Then the tempter took him to the holy city and placed him on the pinnacle of the temple, saying to him, 'If you are the Son of God, throw yourself down; for it is written, "He will command his angels concerning you", and "On their hands they will bear you up, so that you will not dash your foot against a stone".'

Jesus said to him, 'Again it is written, "Do not put the Lord your God to the test".'

Again, the tempter took him to a very high mountain and showed him all the kingdoms of the world and their splendour; and he said to him, 'All these I will give you, if you will fall down and worship me.' Jesus said to him, 'Away with you, Satan! For it is written, "Worship the Lord your God, and serve only him".'

Then the tempter left him, and suddenly angels came and waited on him.

(Mt 4: 1 – 11)

I Can Make Choices

Background for the Catechist

Please take 10 minutes to reflect on the following introduction to this lesson.

Reflection/Doctrinal Reference

Interior repentance is a radical reorientation of our whole life, a return, a conversion to God with all our heart... At the same time it entails the desire and resolution to change one's life, with hope in God's mercy and trust in the help of his grace (CCC, n. 1431).

The moral development of a person is a life-long process. We go through stages at different rates. The basis of our Christian morality rests on the challenge to love as Christ himself loves. For most of us it is not difficult to identify with the words of St Paul in his letter to the Romans, 'I cannot understand my own behaviour, I fail to carry out the things I want to do and I find myself doing the things I hate' (Romans 7: 15–16). It is important to reflect on the great gift of freedom that is ours and the responsibility we have in using this gift.

Student Focus

Students are aware of the power they have to make choices. They can name the effect their choices have on themselves and others. They are conscious of rules and laws within the community and why we have them. Students respond to the values and teachings of the adults who guide them. Their interpretation of 'right' and 'wrong' develops through childhood years. Young students are likely to attach ideas of right and wrong to the imposition of reward or punishment: for them the size of the disaster usually determines the seriousness of the incident, whether the act was deliberate or accidental is not considered. An understanding of the importance of the intention behind the action grows during childhood and gradually there is less stress on reward and punishment and much more attention to group expectations.

Teaching Point

God gives me the freedom to make choices.

Remembering Point

God gives me the freedom to make choices.

Beginning

(10 minutes)

Welcome the students as usual.

Invite the students to make the Sign of the Cross together.

All: In the name of the Father ...

Catechist: Let us now pray the Glory be to the Father.

All: Glory be to the Father ...

Recall with the students the important learning from the previous lesson.

Ask the students:

- When can I be sure that God is with me? *(All the time, in everything I do)*
- What about the times when I am sad – is God with me? *(Ask a few deepening questions that remind the students of the importance of knowing that God is always with us and that we can always turn to God no matter what is happening.)*

Distribute the magazine pictures to each student.

Tell the students: Select from the cut-out magazine pictures 'the food I choose to eat'.

Ask the students:

- What did you choose?
- What other choices could you have made?

Invite the students to display their choices by holding the picture beneath their chins for everyone to see.

Ask the students:

- Did everyone make the same choice?
- Was it difficult to make some choices? Why?

Tell the students: No matter what you selected, you were making a choice. No matter what we do, we are all making choices.

Middle

(15–20 minutes)

Tell the students: Jesus made choices too. In pairs look up the following texts from Scripture and identify the choice Jesus made in each. *(Catechist might need to read the text for the students).*

Mk 1: 16–20 – Jesus calls the first four disciples. *(Chooses Peter and Andrew and then John and James).*

Lk 6: 12–16 – Jesus chooses the Twelve. *(Jesus chooses to pray and chooses the twelve out of the many disciples).*

Mt 8: 1–3 – Cure of a leper. *(Jesus chooses to heal the leper)*

PREPARATION

1. Prayer focus: A cloth, a candle, a crucifix and the Bible.
2. Food magazines — cut out pictures of food that the students can select from.
3. Have a sheet or cloth for the display of the students' selections when they are invited to answer the questions and share their choices.

Lk 17: 11–19 – The 10 lepers. (*Jesus chooses to heal the 10 lepers*).

Jn 2:1–11 – The wedding at Cana. (*Jesus chooses to listen to his mother and chooses to help*).

Mk 1:35–39 – Jesus goes to pray. (*Jesus chooses to pray and chooses to go to preach*).

Hand out the workbooks and **invite** the students to work on pages 14, identifying the choices Jesus made in each text.

Tell the students: Jesus had the freedom to make choices. God has also given you the freedom to make choices too.

End

(10 minutes)

Direct the students to page 16 of the workbook and **invite the students** to complete the activity, 'I can make choices'.

Tell the students: As human beings we are able to choose; this is a special gift from God. God gives us the freedom to make our own choices. We can grow in this freedom – the freedom to love, live and to make our choices. We also choose our friends. **Invite the students** to record two people they have chosen to be friends with on page 17.

Invite the students to write 'God gives me the freedom to make choices.' in the space provided on page 17.

Collect the workbooks.

Gather the students to pray.

Light the prayer candle.

Catechist: Let us pray the Sign of the Cross together:

All: In the name of the Father ...

Catechist: Thank you God for giving us the freedom to make choices. Help us make choices that are good and not sinful.

Students: Amen.

Dismiss the students as usual.

My Choices Affect Others

Background for the Catechist

Please take 10 minutes to reflect on the following introduction to this lesson.

Reflection/Doctrinal Reference

Sin is before all else an offence against God, a rupture of communion with him and, as a result, affects ourselves and others and causes our relationships to fracture. At the same time it damages communion with the Church. For this reason conversion entails both God's forgiveness and reconciliation with the Church, which are expressed and accomplished liturgically by the sacrament of Penance or Reconciliation (CCC, n. 1440).

The Hebrew words for sin mean to shoot an arrow and 'miss the mark', i.e. to fail to achieve a goal. To sin is to be deliberately unfaithful to what God asks of us. In the New Testament, sin is the result of failing to live the new life in Christ. This failure affects our relationship with God, other people and ourselves, (Woods 1999, p. 58).

In choosing a direction to reach our goals we must be aware that we are not alone. Our decisions affect others and are made in the light of our commitment and responsibilities within the Christian community and the broader society.

Student Focus

During these years the students are growing in awareness of their ability to make choices about what they see and hear. They are also growing in awareness of the various influences in their lives. It is the educator's responsibility to help students to understand themselves and to provide an atmosphere of confidence and trust where they can express their feelings. It is at this stage in the context of home, play and school that the students need to be encouraged to grow beyond the earlier ego-centric stage towards an attitude based on the Christian ideal of love. (It is only if students believe in themselves that they are likely to be able to make decisions about their personal sin and the sinfulness of the community.)

Teaching Point

The choices I make affect other people.

Remembering Point

My choices affect others.

PREPARATION

1. Prayer focus: A cloth, a candle, the Bible.
2. Coloured pencils.
3. Workbooks.

Beginning

(10 minutes)

Welcome the students as usual.

Gather the students around the prayer focus, hand out the workbooks and direct the students to page 21, inviting them to pray the prayer with you.

Invite the students to begin with the Sign of the Cross.

All: In the name of the Father ...

Catechist: Let us pray together:

All: God, my Father, you love me all the time.
I am sorry for the times when I have done what is wrong.
I know that you have taken me back. Help me to be like
this with my friends. In the name of the Father ...

Revisit the Remembering Point from the last lesson: 'God gives me the freedom to make choices'. Recall some of the learning from last week.

Tell the students: You'll remember that last week we learnt that God gives us the freedom to make choices. Today we're going to explore that a bit more. Let's listen to this story, *The Little Town of Renville*. (Read it in sections with questions at the end of each section.)

Invite the students to follow in their workbook on page 18.

There was once a little town called Renville. The people of Renville rarely went anywhere else because everything they needed was there.

One day a new family, the Kettal family, came to live at Renville. They came from the big township of Dadenburger, a busy city where people didn't take the time to chat and pass the time of day. The people of Renville were very surprised by the new family, who always seemed to be in a hurry.

Jackson, the oldest boy, didn't talk with anyone at school, except a little girl named Jenny, who would stop and talk with him. He sat by himself reading his books.

Ask the students:

- Why do you think that Jenny stopped to talk to Jackson?
- Why do you think that Jackson sat by himself reading his books?

Continue reading: The other students complained bitterly. 'Jackson just sits in the corner and reads, he doesn't want to join in any of our games.'

One day, as Jenny listened to their angry comments, she felt her face redden and her heart begin to pound. Suddenly she jumped to her feet. 'Have you invited him?' she shouted. The whole group turned towards her. 'Have we invited him?' she questioned again, this time with a strong, sure voice. The children, amazed that timid little Jenny could speak out like this, were stunned. No one knew what to say.

After a few seconds Bill stood, and walked slowly across the playground to Jackson. 'Would you like to join our football team?' asked Bill.

Ask the students:

- Why do you think Jenny suddenly spoke out?
- How might Jackson respond?

Continue reading: Jackson stood and followed Bill back to the group. The next week the big football match was on. The coach decided to take the chance and put Jackson in the ruck. The whistle blew, the game began. Jackson jumped, punched the ball. 'What a beauty!' screamed the crowd. 'What a knock out!' and Jackson was off after it. The crowd couldn't believe it. The players smothered the ball on the half-forward flank and Jackson was up with them. The ball flew out of the pack. Jackson picked it up. Players rolled off him like they'd hit an express train, he kept going. He kicked; it was a goal, straight through the middle! The crowd went wild. Jackson had goaled with one punch, one kick and all by himself. The players rushed towards him to pat him on the back. The game finished two goals ahead for Renville. The team crowded round Jackson. As they threw him onto their shoulders he looked across the crowd and saw Jenny waving and smiling happily. Her choice had changed the whole town!

(Catholic Education Office Melbourne, *Let's Celebrate Reconciliation*, 1984)

Ask the students: What happened when Jenny chose to speak out? *(made a difference to a lot of people)*

Tell the students: Yes, Jenny's choice hit the mark of being faithful to God's call to love one another. Bill also hit the mark of being faithful to God's call.

Distribute the coloured pencils.

Middle

(20 minutes)

Tell the students: Think about the choices you make. Complete the table on page 19 of your workbook "My Choices Affect Others" *(choices with both positive and negative effects)*. Illustrate the choices that hit the mark of being faithful to God's call to love one another. Choose a colour to underline the choices that missed the mark.

In pairs share how you felt when one of your choices missed the mark and how it affected you. **Share** what the effects are of missing the mark.

Depending on the size of the group **invite one student** from each group to give an answer.

Record these on a blackboard or a whiteboard.

Tell the students: When our actions miss the mark we are choosing not to be faithful to what God asks of us. We call this sin. Sin affects us and affects other people and affects our relationship with God. Our choices will then affect our relationship with God: times when we tell lies to others, our parents or teachers; times we take things from other students'

bags or desks without asking; times when we call other students names to deliberately hurt them.

We can always make other choices when we are faced with the temptation to respond in these ways. We can always call on Jesus to help us to choose wisely.

Tell the students: Let us look at our *My Reconciliation Book* and let's read through the first pages: These are the prayers we need to remember and be able to say when we go to Reconciliation. We also need to think about the things we have done that affect our relationship with God: our sins. On page 4 of the *My Reconciliation Book*, headed 'I think about my life', write down the things you think you do well and are good choices. On page 5, 'need to work on', write down the times and places in your life where you need to make better choices – where, maybe, you have been making bad choices that lead to broken relationships and sin. These are for you to add to throughout these lessons. They can help you to know what to ask Jesus for forgiveness for when you go to receive the sacrament of Penance.

Allow the students five minutes to complete these two pages.

End

(10 minutes)

Tell the students: Read the story of the Good Samaritan on page 19 of the workbook.

Ask the students: What choice did each character make?

Direct the students to the Good Samaritan activity on page 20. For each character in the story **invite the students** to respond to the questions in word and picture.

Invite the students to read the paragraph in the box on page 21.

God has given each person the gift of freedom and the ability to make choices. The choices we make affect ourselves and others.

Invite the students to trace over the Remembering Point in the workbook on page 21, 'My choices affect others.'

Invite the students to get ready to pray with you. (See page 21 of workbook.)

Catechist: Let us begin with the Sign of the Cross.

All: In the name of the Father ...

Catechist: Let us pray together:

All: God, my Father, you love me all the time. I am sorry for the times when I've done what is wrong. I know that you have taken me back. Help me to be like this with my friends. In the name of the Father ...

Collect the workbooks and dismiss the students as usual.

Special Times in Jesus' Life

Background for the Catechist

Please take 10 minutes to reflect on the following introduction to this lesson.

Reflection/Doctrinal Reference

Beginning with the Easter Triduum as its source of light, the new age of the Resurrection fills the whole liturgical year with its brilliance. Gradually, on either side of this source, the year is transfigured by the liturgy. It really is a 'year of the Lord's favour' (Lk 4:19) The economy of salvation is at work within the framework of time, but since its fulfilment in the Passover of Jesus and the outpouring of the Holy Spirit, the culmination of history is anticipated 'as a foretaste,' and the kingdom of God enters into our time (CCC, n. 1168).

The Church's Liturgical Year enables us to experience the life and work and teaching of Jesus, Sunday by Sunday. It also highlights the significant times in the life of Jesus and encourages the celebration of these key events. The liturgical calendar presents to us the great feasts of Christmas which focuses on the birth of Christ and Easter which focuses on his death and resurrection. We are invited to celebrate these mysteries of Jesus' life as if we were present at them. At Easter in particular we celebrate Jesus' last supper, his agony in the garden, his trial, passion, death and resurrection in 'real' time as if we were present at the historical events.

Student Focus

Students are aware of the special times in their own lives and the lives of their families and friends, like birthdays, holidays and anniversaries. They understand that it is important to celebrate these events. It is easy for them to transfer this knowledge to the Church's celebration of special times in Jesus' life.

Teaching Point

During the year we celebrate special times in Jesus' life.

Remembering Point

We celebrate special times in Jesus' life.

PREPARATION

1. Prayer focus: A candle, a cloth and matches.
2. Find an old calendar with a month to a page. Cut it into months (enough for each child).
3. Prayer Strip

Jesus, you are with us in
4. Enlarge the Liturgical Calendar in Appendix 7a page 40.
5. Enlarge the pictures in Appendix 7b on pages 41–47 and cut them out.
6. A pillowcase in which to place the pictures.
7. Workbooks.

Beginning

(7 minutes)

Welcome the students as usual.

Give out month pages cut from a calendar. Ask the students to put the calendar in order. Ask the students if they know of something that happens in their month.

Invite the students to share what their family celebrates every year. (e.g. *Chinese New Year, Anzac Day, Name day, National Day*).

Tell the students: As Catholic Christians we celebrate special events in Jesus' life. Gather with me now around the prayer focus. We will light our candle to remind us that Jesus is always with us.

Catechist: Let's make the Sign of the Cross together.

All: In the name of the Father ...

Catechist: *(while lighting the candle)* Jesus, our light, you are with us always.

Catechist: Taking turns, each of you place your month on the prayer table while praying 'Jesus, you are with us in ...'

All: Jesus, you are with us in ...

When everyone has placed their 'month' on the prayer focus, invite everyone to respond:

All: Amen.

Middle

(35 minutes)

Tell the students: As Catholic Christians we celebrate special events in Jesus' life.

Ask the students: What do you think they might be? (*Jesus' birth, healing of the blind man ...*)

Ask the students: Have you ever seen a Church calendar? (*Show them a liturgical calendar, Appendix 7a on page 40. Explain the diagram, explaining what it shows.*)

Have a pillowcase beside you with the pictures of Jesus' life, enlarged and cut out from Appendix 7b, pages 41–47.

Tell the students: In this pillowcase I have pictures of some of the main events in the Church's year.

Invite eight students to have a lucky dip. As each student withdraws a picture ask them to tell the group what their picture is about. Encourage the students to tell as much of the story as they can. (*You may need to tell some of the stories.*)

Tell the students: All these pictures tell us about Jesus' life. Let's see if we can work out together, when we celebrate them in the Church's year.

Invite individual students: Can you show us on the Church calendar when your story is read at Mass on Sunday?

Invite the students to open their workbooks at page 22, and draw a picture for Christmas and one for Easter inside the pentagon. If there is time they can colour the pictures provided for Lent, Advent and Ordinary Time.

Invite the students to tell the person beside them about one of the special times in Jesus life. Remind the students that we celebrate the special times in Jesus' life.

Invite the students to complete the 'fill-the-gap' activity on page 23 of the workbook, using the words provided.

Collect the workbooks and pictures.

End

(10 minutes)

Turn the pictures over and shuffle them. Fan them out and **invite the students** to pick one.

Invite the students to look at the picture without letting anyone else seeing it. **Ask the students** to think of a clue to give the class to see if anyone can guess what the picture is about. *(Catechist should also take a picture and say: In my picture there is a star. What is my picture about?)*

Gather the students around the prayer focus.

Tell the students: During our prayer, when I mention your story, place your picture on the prayer focus while we all say the response.

Invite the students to get ready to pray.

Catechist: Let us pray together:

All: In the name of the Father ...

Catechist: The response is, Thank you, Jesus, for coming to live among us.

Students: Thank you, Jesus, for coming to live among us.

Catechist: You were born in a stable ... (invite the child with the picture to place it on the prayer table as we all say the response.)

Students: Thank you, Jesus, for coming to live among us.

Catechist: John the Baptist prepared the people for you.

Students: Thank you, Jesus, for coming to live among us.

Catechist: You were baptised in the river Jordon.

Students: Thank you, Jesus, for coming to live among us.

Catechist: You invited Peter, Andrew, James and John to be with you.

Students: Thank you, Jesus, for coming to live among us.

Catechist: At the Last Supper you celebrated a special meal with your disciples.

Students: Thank you, Jesus, for coming to live among us.

Catechist: On Good Friday you died on the cross.

Students: Thank you, Jesus, for coming to live among us.

Catechist: You rose from the dead at the first Easter.

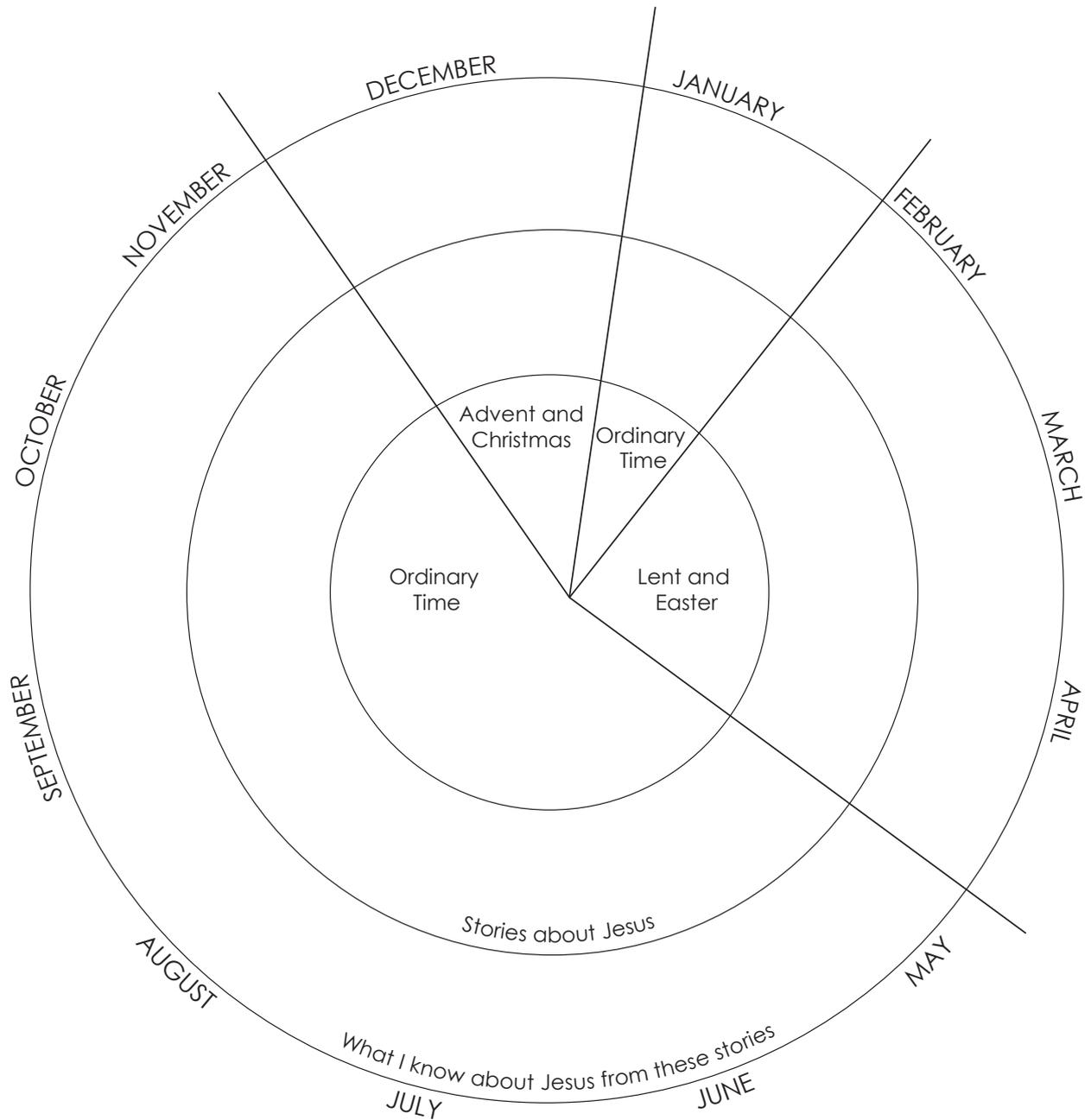
Students: Thank you, Jesus, for coming to live among us.

Catechist: Let us finish by praying together,

All: In the name of the Father ...

Dismiss the students as usual.

Appendix 7a – A Liturgical Calendar



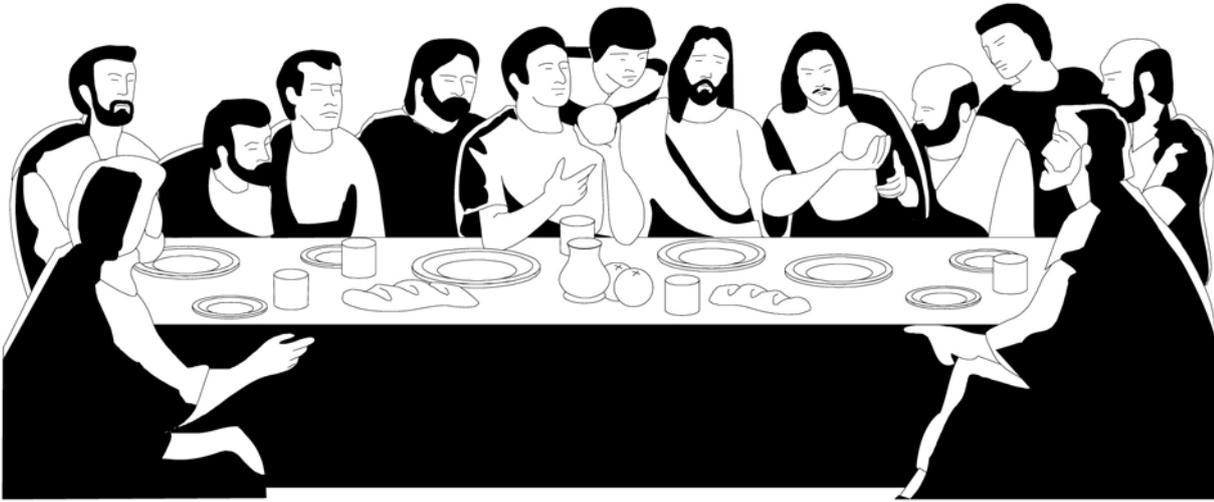
Appendix 7b – Stories from Jesus' Life

Resurrection (Easter), Nativity (Christmas), John the Baptist (Advent), The Transfiguration (Lent), Jesus calling the disciples (Ordinary Time), Last Supper (Easter), Crucifixion (Easter) the Baptism of Jesus (Ordinary Time).

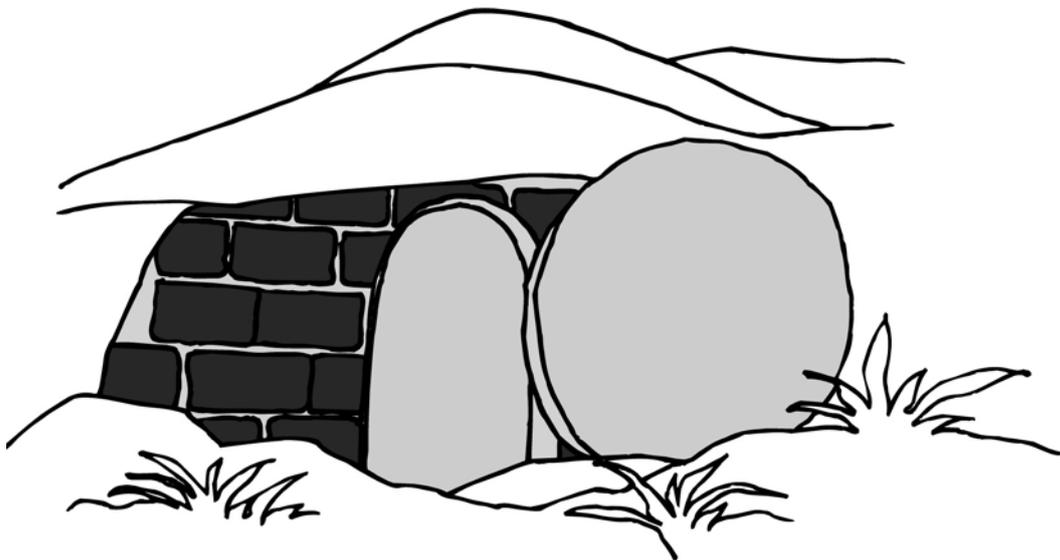


The Nativity – Christmas

Appendix 7b – Stories from Jesus' Life (continued)



The Last Supper – Easter



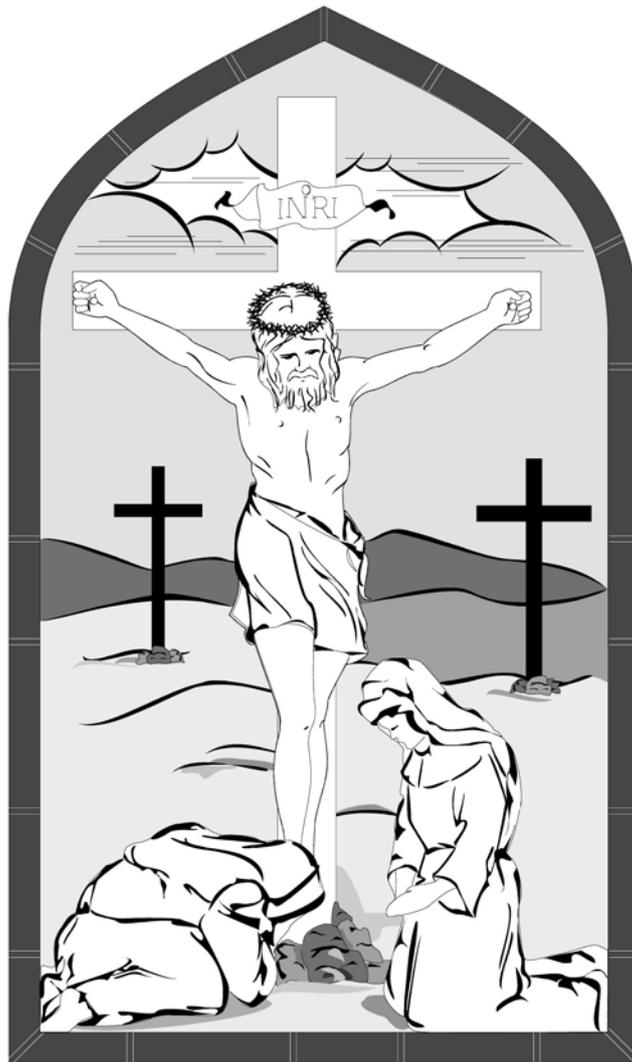
The Empty Tomb (Resurrection) – Easter

Appendix 7b – Stories from Jesus' Life (continued)



The Baptism of Jesus – Ordinary Time

Appendix 7b – Stories from Jesus' Life (continued)



The Crucifixion – Easter

Appendix 7b – Stories from Jesus' Life (continued)



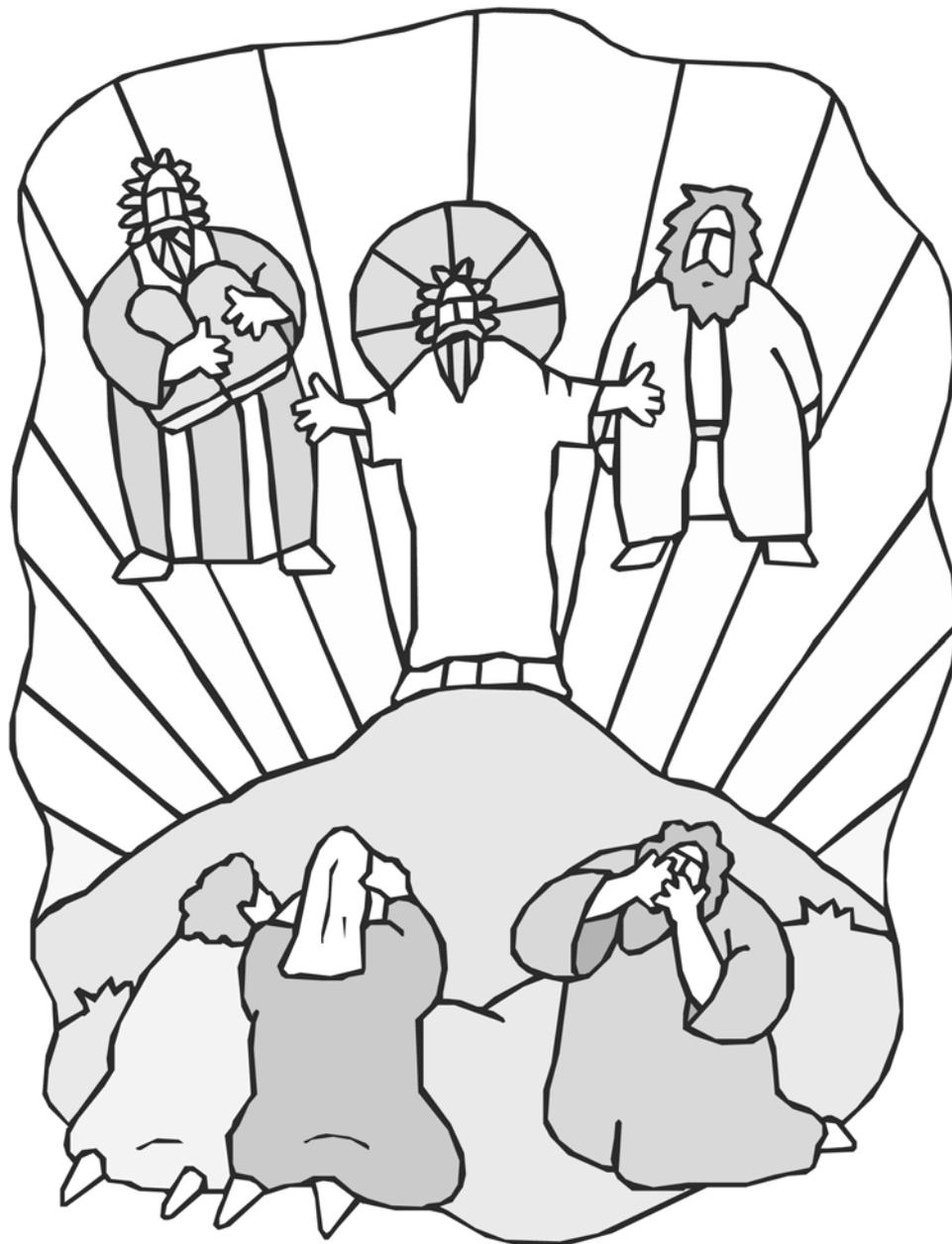
John the Baptist – Advent

Appendix 7b – Stories from Jesus' Life (continued)



Jesus Calls the Disciples – Ordinary Time

Appendix 7b – Stories from Jesus' Life (continued)



Transfiguration – Ordinary Time

Easter

Background for the Catechist

Please take 10 minutes to reflect on the following introduction to this lesson.

Reflection/Doctrinal Reference

'At the heart of catechesis we find, in essence, a Person, the Person of Jesus of Nazareth, the only Son from the Father... who suffered and died for us and who now, after rising, is living with us forever.' To catechise is 'to reveal in the Person of Christ the whole of God's eternal design reaching fulfilment in that Person. It is to seek to understand the meaning of Christ's actions and words and of the signs worked by him'. Catechesis aims at putting 'people... in communion... with Jesus Christ: only he can lead us to the love of the Father in the Spirit and make us share in the life of the Holy Trinity' (CCC, n. 426). [All quoted text is from CT, n. 5]

Jesus' walk to Emmaus with a couple of his disappointed disciples is a wonderful vignette of how catechesis works. Walking alongside the two despondent men, Jesus draws from them what is on their minds. He allows them space to explain their difficulties and then helps them find the meaning of the things they have experienced. Jesus is able to move from information to formation. They are transformed: their hearts burn, not because of the facts – they already knew the details of the death of Jesus and some of the rumours of the resurrection – but because Jesus helps them understand the meaning of the facts and to discover who it is that is accompanying them. Catechesis always has elements of both dimensions. It is necessary to know the content of our faith but even more to know who it is that is at its heart.

Student Focus

Friends are very important for students of this age. They like to talk about their families, their interests, and their difficulties. They can readily understand how Jesus' friends needed each other's support after his death and especially before his resurrection.

Teaching Point

After Jesus died and rose again he visited some of the disciples to help them understand.

Remembering Point

After his resurrection, Jesus appeared to the disciples.

PREPARATION

1. Prayer focus: Two brightly coloured cloths, the Bible, an image of the Emmaus Story e.g. Supper at Emmaus by Caravaggio, and items that indicate a celebration, e.g. balloons, streamers, ribbons.
2. Collect in a bag or basket: A piece of black or brown cloth to represent a road (approx 70–80cm in length) and a set of puppets from Appendix 8b, page 55. A large block and a smaller block to represent the city of Jerusalem and the town of Emmaus. A bread roll/flat bread to break.
3. Activities set up around the room as set out on page 50. Materials needed include – paints, felt-tip pens, coloured pencils, craft materials, scissors, tape, glue, bibles, paper, playdough. Set up what you are able to collect together. If you can't collect everything that is fine. Make sure that there are at least four response activities that the students can choose from. These activities need to encourage reflection and creativity.
4. Workbooks.

Beginning

(5 minutes)

Welcome the students as usual.

Gather the students around the prayer focus ready for prayer. Tell the students that today we are celebrating the Resurrection of Jesus and that after Jesus died and rose again he visited some of the disciples to help them understand what had happened.

Tell the students: The response to the prayer is – Christ is risen.

Catechist: Let us make the Sign of the Cross together.

All: In the name of the Father ...

Catechist: You raised Jesus from the dead to be with us.

Students: Christ is risen.

Catechist: You have given us new strength.

Students: Christ is risen.

Catechist: As we celebrate Christ's resurrection, increase our awareness of all our blessings.

Students: Christ is risen.

Catechist: We pray this prayer through the Risen Jesus.

All: Amen. In the name of the Father ...

Middle

(40 minutes)

Gather the students in a circle on the floor. It may be best to sit next to you the students who may find it difficult to listen to the story. (If a student does become disruptive just stop telling the story and quietly wait for that student to stop. Avoid drawing a lot of attention to the student.)

Have a basket ready next to you with all the materials that you will need to tell the story.

Tell the story in a reflective and prayerful way. Do not be afraid of pausing in silence and giving the students some thinking time.

(Practise telling the story a few times before the lesson so that it flows freely and you are comfortable with telling the story. Use the script in Appendix 8a, pages 53–54. It is important that as much as possible your use of the script doesn't distract the students. The better you know the story 'by heart' the easier it is to tell the story.)

Tell the students: I'm going to tell you a special story about Easter.

(Continue following the script in Appendix 8a, pages 53–54.)

Tell the students: This is your opportunity to think quietly about the story and if you like, share your answers to the questions that I ask.

Invite the students to reflect on the following:

- I wonder why the disciples were leaving Jerusalem and going to Emmaus.

(Pause)

*(Allow time for students to respond. **If the students do not say anything, do not offer any suggestions.** Be comfortable with the silence.)*

- I wonder how the disciples were feeling.

(Pause)

- If you were one of the disciples, I wonder what different feelings you might have had.

(Pause)

- I wonder what this experience meant for the disciples and how it might have changed them.

(Pause)

- I wonder what you would have asked Jesus if you were one of the disciples.

(Pause)

- I wonder why it took so long for the disciples to recognise Jesus.

(Pause)

Tell the students: Around the room there are a number of different activities set up for you to reflect on the Emmaus Story. These are activities that we do silently on our own as we think about the story that we just heard.

You are able to use art materials to draw/paint what you would like, in response to the Emmaus Story.

You are able to read the Emmaus Story again and re-tell the story using the figures.

You are able to use some of the craft materials and make something to do with the story. You might like to make your own Emmaus Story figures.

You are able to use playdough to create a response to the story.

You might like to spend some time writing about the Emmaus Story.

(There are many possibilities for the students to respond and you may have some ideas of your own. If you are unable to set up all of these opportunities, that is fine. Make sure that there are activities that the students can choose from that encourage reflection and creativity. These activities are for the student to do on their own. Students are encouraged to work silently. You need to leave the students alone to reflect. This is their opportunity to engage with the story they have just heard. Their insights need to be nurtured in silence.)

Invite each student to choose an activity to do. Call out each student one by one by name and ask them to choose an activity they would like to do. Allow the students 15–20 minutes to engage with the activity and respond to the Scripture passage.

Once the students have been given enough time to respond to the story, **invite the students** to come back together around you on the floor.

Tell the students: You are able to take your work home with you today. We are not going to share our work today because this was your own, special reflection that is especially for you to think about.

Tell the students: When Jesus visited his close friends, he helped them to understand what had happened to him in the days before. He wanted them to know that he was still with them in a special way and to walk with them in their struggle to do what he asked of them. Their lives were changed and they went from being sad to being excited as they carried their experience back to Jerusalem and the other disciples.

Hand out the workbooks to the students and invite the students to return to their desks.

Tell the students: Turn to page 25 of your workbooks. There is a Word Activity which we need to work out.

The task asks us to colour the first box, then colour in each second box across from left to right until you finish the whole grid. When you have finished, write down the coloured letters in the spaces below to make two sentences.

Ask the students: Are there any questions about the worksheet?

(Answer any questions and allow the students 5 minutes to complete the task.)

End

(10 minutes)

Ask the students to come and sit on the floor together with their workbook open to the page they have just been working on.

Ask the students:

- Would anyone like to share the two sentences which they found from the puzzle? *(Were not our hearts burning within us while he was talking to us on the road? Jesus made a difference to the disciples and makes a difference to me.)*
- Would anyone like to explain in their own words what these two sentences mean to them? *(Take all the responses from the students. Affirm the students in their answers.)*

Tell the students: Let us end our time together today with a prayer, remembering that just as Jesus appeared to the disciples, Jesus wants us to know that he is alive in our hearts.

Ask the students to open their workbooks at page 26.

Catechist: Let's join our hands in prayer (pause for a moment) and now let us make the Sign of the Cross together.

All: In the name of the Father ...

Catechist: Let us read the prayer together.

All: Risen Lord Jesus,
We pray that you will be our special friend and that we will always see you in those that we meet. Jesus, give us hope and joy and peace forever.
Amen.

Collect the workbooks and dismiss the students as usual.

Appendix 8a – The Road to Emmaus Script

After I have told you the story I am going to ask you some questions. If you would like to answer the question you don't need to put your hand up but you can just share your thoughts with the whole group. It is fine not to say anything as well.

(Pause)

Tell the students: In this basket I have all the special things that I will need to tell the story.

Then silently take out the long, black strip of material that will be used as the road and stretch it out horizontally before you. Use your hands to stretch and smooth out the fabric to make it look like a road.

(Pause)

Take out the larger block (representing Jerusalem) and place it on one end of the 'road'. Take out the smaller block (representing Emmaus) and place it at the other end of the 'road'.

(Pause)

Take out the 'first disciple' and place it at the end of the road with the larger block. Take out the 'second disciple' and place it next to the 'first disciple'.

(Pause)

Tell the students: I think we are ready to begin the story.

Catechist: Two disciples were going to a village named Emmaus, about seven miles from Jerusalem. *(Move the disciples slowly up the road, away from 'Jerusalem' towards 'Emmaus'.)*

Catechist: They were talking with each other about all the things that had happened.

(Pause)

Catechist: While they were talking and discussing together, Jesus himself came up and walked with them but they did not recognise him. *(Take out 'Jesus' from the basket and place the figure between the two 'disciples' on the road. Place a finger on the figure of Jesus to indicate he is talking.)*

Catechist: Jesus asked the disciples, 'What are you discussing together as you walk along?'

(Pause)

Catechist: *(Place a finger on the figure of a disciple to indicate that he is talking and turn the figures to face the figure of Jesus).* 'Are you the only one visiting Jerusalem who does not know the things that have happened there in these days?'

Catechist: *(Place your finger on the figure of Jesus to indicate that he is talking).* 'What things?'

(Pause)

Catechist: *(Place your finger on the figure of a disciple to indicate that he is talking).* 'About Jesus of Nazareth.'

(Pause)

Catechist: 'The chief priests and our rulers handed him over to be crucified but we had hoped that he was the one who was going to redeem Israel. It has been three days since all this took place.'

(Pause)

Catechist: 'Some women went to the tomb early this morning but didn't find his body. They came and told us that they had seen a vision of angels, who said he was alive. Then some of our companions went to the tomb and found it just as the women had said, but they did not see Jesus.'

(Pause)

Catechist: *(Place your finger on the figure of Jesus to indicate that he is talking).* 'How foolish you are, and how slow to believe all that the prophets have spoken.'

(Pause)

Catechist: And beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, he explained to them what was said in all the Scriptures concerning himself.

(Pause)

Catechist: *(Continue to move the figures along the road. Move Jesus on a little further than the disciples).* As they approached the village to which they were going, Jesus continued on as if he were going on.

Catechist: *(Place your finger on the figure of a disciple to indicate that he is talking).* 'Stay with us, for it is nearly evening; the day is almost over.'

Catechist: So Jesus stayed with them. *(Slowly move the three figures close to the 'Emmaus' end of the road with the two disciples facing the figure of Jesus.)*

(Pause)

Catechist: When he was at the table with them, he took bread *(Remove the bread roll/flat bread from the basket)*, gave thanks, *(lift the bread to heaven)* broke it *(break the bread in half)* and began to give it to them. *(Place the bread in front of the road.)*

(Pause)

Catechist: The disciples' eyes were opened and they recognised Jesus and Jesus disappeared. *(Remove the figure of Jesus and place it behind you.)*

Catechist: *(Place your finger on the figure of a disciple to indicate that he is talking.)* 'Were not our hearts burning within us while he talked with us on the road and opened the Scriptures to us?'

(Pause)

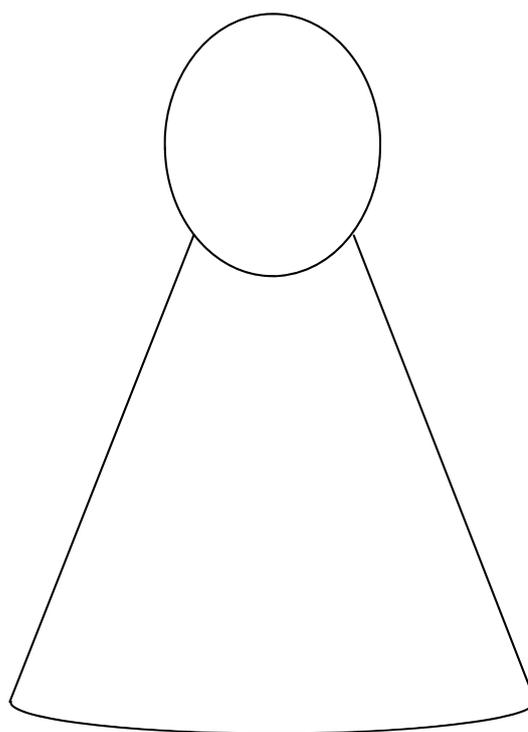
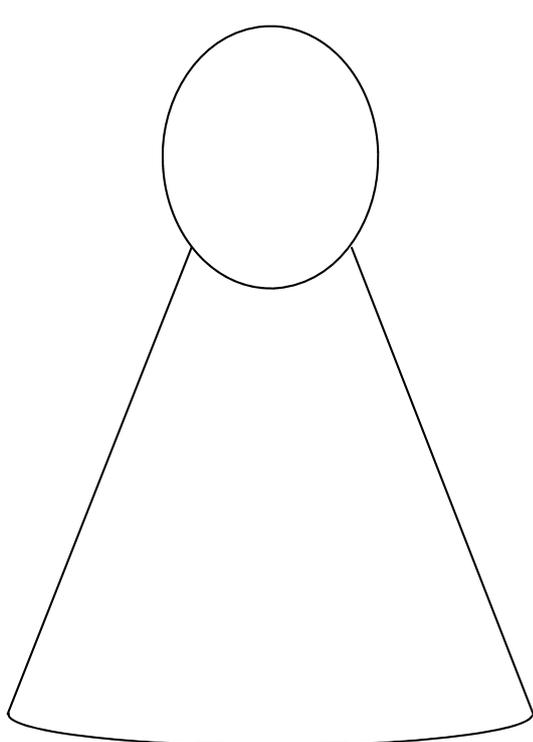
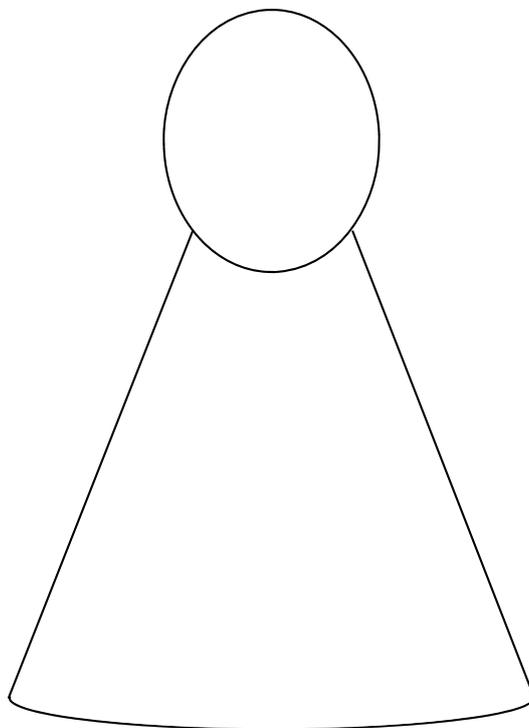
Catechist: They got up and returned at once to Jerusalem. *(Move the disciples, like they are walking along the road back towards Jerusalem. Place the disciples in front of 'Jerusalem' as you conclude the story.)*

Catechist: There they found the Eleven and those with them, assembled together. The disciples said, 'It is true! The Lord has risen and has appeared to Simon.' Then they told what had happened on the way, and how Jesus was recognized by them when he broke the bread.

(Pause)

Appendix 8b – Puppets for telling the Emmaus Story

Enlarge these templates on a photocopier. Cut them out and stick onto an upturned drink cup or yoghurt carton. The figures do not need decoration or faces. They simply represent the characters and allow the listeners' imagination to create the detail.



Appendix 8c – Answers to Word Activity

| | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| W | A | E | A | R | A | E | A | N | A | O | A | T | A | O |
| B | U | B | R | B | H | B | E | B | A | B | R | B | T | B |
| S | C | B | C | U | C | R | C | N | C | I | C | N | C | G |
| D | W | D | I | D | T | D | H | D | I | D | N | D | U | D |
| S | F | W | F | H | F | I | F | L | F | E | F | H | F | E |
| G | W | G | A | G | S | G | T | G | A | G | L | G | K | G |
| I | H | N | H | G | H | T | H | O | H | U | H | S | H | O |
| J | N | J | T | J | H | J | E | J | R | J | O | J | A | J |
| D | K | ? | K | J | K | E | K | S | K | U | K | S | K | M |
| L | A | L | D | L | E | L | A | L | D | L | I | L | F | L |
| F | M | E | M | R | M | E | M | N | M | C | M | E | M | T |
| N | O | N | T | N | H | N | E | N | D | N | I | N | S | N |
| C | O | I | O | P | O | L | O | E | O | S | O | A | O | N |
| P | D | P | M | P | A | P | K | P | E | P | S | P | A | P |
| D | Q | I | Q | F | Q | F | Q | E | Q | R | Q | E | Q | N |
| R | C | R | E | R | T | R | O | R | M | R | E | R | • | R |

WERE NOT OUR HEARTS BURNING WITHIN US WHILE HE WAS TALKING TO US ON THE ROAD?
 JESUS MADE A DIFFERENCE TO THE DISCIPLES AND MAKES A DIFFERENCE TO ME.

Jesus Helps Us to Choose Good

Background for the Catechist

Please take 10 minutes to reflect on the following introduction to this lesson.

Reflection/Doctrinal Reference

During his public life Jesus not only forgave sins, but also made plain the effect of this forgiveness: he reintegrated forgiven sinners into the community of the People of God from which sin had alienated or even excluded them. A remarkable sign of this is the fact that Jesus receives sinners at his table, a gesture that expresses in an astonishing way both God's forgiveness and the return to the bosom of the People of God (CCC, n. 1443).

As Christians, we belong to a people who journey with Jesus and his Spirit to the Father. Our relationship with God is intimately bound up with our relationships with all people and in fact all creation. Jesus' reconciling mission in the world continues today for us and through us.

Student Focus

Students at this age are becoming more aware of how their actions and words can affect others. They are beginning to understand the concept of conscience. Students may need to practise decision-making strategies, to spend time listening to their peers and being actively involved in discussing and solving simple moral dilemmas.

Teaching Point

We can recognise our need for Jesus' help in choosing good.

Remembering Point

With Jesus' help I make good choices.

Beginning

(5 minutes)

Welcome the students as usual.

Tell the students: Last term we learnt that we're free to make choices and that our choices affect others. Today I am going to tell you a story about a man called Zacchaeus, who chose to follow Jesus. Let's listen to his story.

Tell the story of Zacchaeus (Lk 19: 1–10) using the text on page 27 of the student workbook.

Middle

(25–30 minutes)

Ask the students:

- What choices did Jesus make? (Jesus chose to stop under the tree where Zacchaeus sat. Jesus chose to invite himself to Zacchaeus' house.)
- How did Jesus' choices affect Zacchaeus? (Zacchaeus decided to give half of all he owned to the poor. Zacchaeus was willing to repay anyone he had cheated.)

Tell the students: When Jesus stopped to speak to Zacchaeus he helped him to choose to be faithful to what God was asking of him. Jesus helps us to choose to be faithful to what God asks of us.

Prepare the students for a meditation coming out of the story of Zacchaeus.

Tell the students to put everything out of their hands, to close their books and sit with their feet flat on the floor (or if numbers and space allow, you might like to move the students to a spot on the floor where they could sit in a circle).

Follow the script in Appendix 9 on page 60 or use your own.

After the meditation **invite the students** to open their workbooks on page 28 and write one thing they have chosen to do as a result of talking to Jesus. Invite them to draw a picture of Zacchaeus.

End

(10 minutes)

Direct the students to page 29 in their workbook. Invite them to complete the fill-the-gap activity using the words provided at the top of the page.

Jesus helps me to make good choices. Making a choice to do wrong is how I commit a sin.

PREPARATION

1. Prayer focus: cloth, candle, Bible opened at Lk 19: 1–10, response to the prayer on a strip of paper.
2. Workbooks.
3. Prepare your meditation script or practise using the one in Appendix 9a on page 60.

Read the paragraph underneath this activity with the students:

We can choose to do what is right, even when it is hard. Can you think of times when you have had to make a hard choice? When we do this we are using the free will God has given us. In using our free will we have a choice to do either good or bad. God wants us to choose to be happy by choosing good. But God loves us so much that he will not force us to do good. The actions and teachings of Jesus help us use our gift of free will to make good choices and decisions.

Collect the workbooks.

Gather the students round the prayer focus. Invite them to get ready for prayer by closing their eyes and being still.

Catechist: The response to our prayer is: Lord, help me to make good choices.

All: Lord, help me to make good choices.

Catechist: When my friends upset me,

All: Lord, help me to make good choices.

Catechist: When I want something that does not belong to me,

All: Lord, help me to make good choices.

Catechist: When something I want to do might hurt another person,

All: Lord, help me to make good choices.

Catechist: When I ignore others and care only about myself,

All: Lord, help me to make good choices.

Catechist: Lord, help us to make good choices. Help us to know that you are always there guiding us along the right path. We ask this through Christ, our Lord.

All: Amen.

Dismiss the students as usual.

Appendix 9 – Meditation

Speak slowly and gently, helping the students move into a quiet space. Invite the students to:

Close your eyes and sit very comfortably, hands relaxed.

Listen carefully to all the noises you can hear around you, the wind outside, the sound of voices, students playing, cars passing in the street (*Identify the noises you hear*).

Listen carefully to all these noises and let them drift away. (*Pause*)

Focus on the sound of your breathing, each breath in and out. With each breath become still. (*Pause*)

Now with your next breath go inside yourself to the place where you are most quiet. Imagine yourself in your street at home. (*Pause*)

You have heard that Jesus is going to pass along the street and you want to see him.

There are lots of people and it is so difficult to see anyone on the road, so you run ahead and find a great place to climb up and look over the crowd. You will certainly see Jesus now. Climb up and settle down for Jesus to come along.

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Here he is. (*Excited voice*) (*Pause*)

He's coming closer to you. You can see him (*Getting more excited*). Wow! (*Pause*)

Oh my goodness, he's going to stop near you. He's stopped below you and is speaking to you!

Listen carefully to what Jesus says to you. (*Pause*)

What is your response? Answer Jesus, speak to him. (*Pause*)

Jesus moves on and you sit remembering how you felt and what was said. (*Pause*)

Listen to your breathing.

Once again hear the sounds around you, the cars, the people, the wind. Slowly come back to the room.

When you are ready, open your eyes.

Allow the students a few minutes to reorient themselves to the room.

Direct the students to open their workbooks to page 28 and complete the task: Write one thing you have chosen to do as a result of talking with Jesus.

LESSON 10

I Can Forgive

Background for the Catechist

Please take 10 minutes to reflect on the following introduction to this lesson.

Reflection/Doctrinal Reference

Mercy can penetrate our hearts only if we ourselves learn how to forgive – even our enemies. Now even if it seems impossible for us to satisfy this requirement, the heart that offers itself to the Holy Spirit can, like Christ, love even to love's extreme; it can turn injury into compassion and transform hurt into intercession. Forgiveness participates in the divine mercy and is a high-point of Christian prayer (CCCC, n. 595).

The human need to forgive and be forgiven is a need in each of us. God constantly reaches out to forgive all people. Jesus shows this forgiveness in his relationships with both friends and those who opposed him. Jesus reminds his followers that there is no limit to how often forgiveness is to be given.

Through experiences of forgiveness in our lives, we continue on this journey of reconciliation. When we forgive others and accept their forgiveness we show that we are part of this life of Jesus Christ. God is always ready to forgive us and to help us continue in the life of Jesus Christ, his Son. I can forgive by celebrating and passing on the forgiveness of God.

Student Focus

The experience of forgiveness is a powerful contact with Christ's forgiveness. The children's experience of forgiveness is primarily within the situations of parents, family, friends and peer groups. They know the unrest and alienation of broken situations, as well as the peace and joy after working through to forgiveness. Prayers and celebrations of forgiveness and healing are important in the life of the class.

Teaching Point

As followers of Jesus we grow in our ability to forgive and be forgiven.

Remembering Point

I can forgive and be forgiven.

Beginning

(10 minutes)

Welcome the students as usual.

Gather the students round the prayer focus. Invite the students to get ready for prayer by being still and closing their eyes.

Catechist: Let us pray together

All: In the name of the Father ...

Catechist: Repeat after me:
God, our Father,

Students: God, our Father,

Catechist: I am sorry

Students: I am sorry

Catechist: for all the times

Students: for all the times

Catechist: I have done wrong.

Students: I have done wrong.

Catechist: Help me not to do the wrong thing again. Amen.

Students: Help me not to do the wrong thing again. Amen.

Invite the students to return to their seats. Recall the learning from the previous week.

Ask the students: Who was the story about last week? What was important about Zacchaeus? (*He chose to give up his old ways and follow what Jesus wanted. Help the students realise that with Jesus' help they will be able to make good choices.*)

Hand out the workbooks and tell the students to turn to page 30 for this week's lesson.

Tell the students: The story, *Sienna and Ruby Forgive*, is divided into four sections that are not in the correct order. Take a few minutes to read it and try to work out which section comes first. Write the number 1 in the box. Then work out the rest and write the numbers 2–4 in the remaining boxes. (Allow about five minutes)

Read the story below (omit the numbers at the beginning of the paragraphs) and invite the students to correct their work.

Sienna and Ruby Forgive

1. Sienna and Ruby were best friends. They'd been friends for years, had been together in the same class last year and had shared many good times together. Sometimes they rode together to school and they always played together at lunchtime. Everyone knew they were friends.

PREPARATION

1. Prayer focus: cloth, candle, Bible opened at Mt 18: 21–22.
2. Workbooks.
3. Pens & pencils.
4. *My Reconciliation Book*.

2. One day, they were playing with Ruby's electronic game. Sienna became angry when she lost, so angry in fact that she threw down the game, breaking it. Now both girls were angry. They called each other names. They didn't ride to school or play together for a whole week.
3. Sienna talked to her mum about what had happened and her mum suggested she think about how she and Ruby could be friends again.
4. The next day, Sienna waited at her gate for Ruby. When Ruby came along and saw her friend she felt scared because she didn't know what to do. Then Sienna said, 'I'm sorry' and Ruby said, 'I'm sorry, too'. They were friends again and rode to school together. At lunchtime they played together and everything was back to normal.

Ask the students:

- Who was in the story? (*Ruby, Sienna, Sienna's Mum*)
- Sienna and Ruby shared many good times together. How did they miss the mark in choosing not to be faithful to what God wanted? (*Sienna reacted badly to losing the game and damaged Ruby's electronic game.*)
- What were the girls' feelings after the fight? (*Angry, upset, ...*)
- What were some of the feelings when the girls met next time? (*scared, possibly unsure of what would happen, hopeful, ...*)
- How was Sienna's mother a help in the situation? (*Helped Sienna think about what had happened and whether she wanted the friendship.*)

Then ask: How did the girls hit the mark of choosing to be faithful to what God wanted? (By saying sorry and making up with each other.)

Middle

(15–20 minutes)

Tell the students: By saying sorry the girls were asking each other for forgiveness. Whenever we say sorry we are asking for forgiveness.

The peace and happiness Sienna and Ruby felt when they had forgiven each other lets us know something of God's love, which helps us to grow.

Ask the students: How do you feel when you say sorry?

Direct students to draw themselves on page 31 of their workbooks.

Tell the students: In the story of Peter and Jesus, Peter wanted to know how often he should forgive those who hurt him. Jesus told him he should forgive all the time. Let us listen to the words in the story (Mt 18: 21–22).

Read the Scripture from page 32 of the workbook.

Invite the students to draw a picture of Peter and Jesus in the space provided on page 32.

Tell the students: Jesus forgave people. He knew that his Father always forgives.

God, our Father, wants us to forgive all the people who hurt us, too.

Invite the students to draw a picture of someone forgiving them in the space provided on page 32.

End

(10 minutes)

Direct the students to page 33 of their workbooks to decode the words which consist of forgiveness phrases.

Gather the students around the prayer candle and pray together one of the prayers of sorrow from My Reconciliation Book.

Catechist: In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, Amen. *(Choose one of the following from the My Reconciliation Book.)* Let us pray together:

All: Lord Jesus you came to show people how to love God, our Father, and how to live in peace with each other.

Please forgive me and help me to live more like you.

Or

All: Loving Father, sometimes I fail to live as Jesus showed us.

I want to say sorry to you and to those I've hurt.

I am glad that you want to forgive me and to help me keep on growing as your friend.

Catechist: We make this prayer through Christ, our Lord,

All: Amen.

Appendix 10 – Answers to the Decoding Activity

I'm sorry.

That's alright.

Let's be friends again.

It's okay.

Do you want to play?

Let's forget it.

I Am Forgiven

Background for the Catechist

Please take 10 minutes to reflect on the following introduction to this lesson.

Reflection/Doctrinal Reference

God's healing and forgiving love is realised in the actions and words of Jesus, who came to forgive sin and heal wounded relationships. The Church continues this ministry in the celebration of the sacrament of Penance (CCCC, n. 201).

The acknowledgment that we are always in need of healing accompanies the awareness we have of our struggles and experiences of powerlessness. There is a yearning from within to be whole, physically, spiritually, emotionally. When Jesus heals, he reaches into the inner depths of a person, freeing him or her from the bonds of sinfulness. The person is called to conversion, to a change of heart. God's gift of grace allows this conversion to take place.

Student Focus

The students are aware of their own struggle to be whole and need assistance to come to understand that through Jesus' loving forgiveness they are healed. Such an experience can bring peace and freedom.

Teaching Point

God is always present when I seek and accept forgiveness.

Remembering Point

God is always present when I am forgiven.

PREPARATION

1. Prayer focus: cloth, candle, a copy of *My Reconciliation Book*, the Bible opened at the story of Zacchaeus (Lk 19: 1–10).
2. Workbooks.
3. *My Reconciliation Book*.

Beginning

(10 minutes)

Welcome the students as usual.

Gather the students around the prayer focus. Invite them to be still and quiet as they get ready to pray.

Catechist: Let us begin with the Sign of the Cross

All: In the name of the Father ...

Catechist: Repeat after me

Lord, help me to be more like Zacchaeus.

Students: Lord, help me to be more like Zacchaeus.

Catechist: Help me to be determined and strong in following you.

Students: Help me to be determined and strong in following you.

Catechist: Help me to admit when I do wrong,

Students: Help me to admit when I do wrong,

Catechist: to say sorry and ask forgiveness from those I've hurt.

Students: to say sorry and ask forgiveness from those I've hurt.

Catechist: We ask this through Christ, our Lord. Amen.

Students: We ask this through Christ, our Lord. Amen.

Review the Zacchaeus story from lesson three by **asking these questions:**

- What is Zacchaeus like? (*Zacchaeus was prepared to: go out of his way to see Jesus, accept Jesus' invitation, give half of his possessions to the poor, repay anyone he'd cheated four times as much.*)
- How can I be like Zacchaeus? (*Be prepared to: learn about Jesus by listening and participating in class; help others; reflect on my actions towards others; apologise for my wrong-doing.*)
- What did the contact with Jesus do for Zacchaeus? (*It gave Zacchaeus the opportunity to change. He could choose to make up for things he did wrong. He felt better when Jesus visited him.*)

Middle

(15–20 minutes)

Tell the students: If we want to be like Zacchaeus who got to know Jesus ... then we need to reflect on our lives like he did. When we read the gospel story about Jesus and Zacchaeus we can ask ourselves questions about it.

Explore with the students the following:

- Do I always accept Jesus' invitation to pray? (*Ask them for examples, e.g. When do you pray? Do you forget to pray?*)

- Do I help others or do I turn away from them? (*Ask them for examples, e.g. do I help others in the class when they are struggling with their work? Do I help someone who is being picked on by others or do I join in? When someone is different do I ignore them or refuse to include them in games and activities?*)
- Do I try to learn during my R.E. classes or do I just play? (*Draw out examples from the students that reflect times they have put in the effort and times they have been more interested in playing or being distracted.*)
- Do I grumble and moan when others have what I want? (*Ask students for examples, e.g. Do I become jealous of those who have things I don't have? Do I always want what other people have?*)

Tell the students: Open your workbooks at page 34. These questions we have just answered about the story of Zacchaeus form what we call an 'examination of conscience'. This is when we think about our life, what we do and how we do it. We think about how we have broken our friendship with God.

We ask ourselves these questions, so that we know what we should ask forgiveness for when we go to Reconciliation.

Now you can complete the questions in your book.

When you receive your first Reconciliation, you can take your *My Reconciliation Book* with you and run through the 'Examination of Conscience', so that you know what to confess.

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Invite the students to think about which of the above issues they most need to work on. They can then write it in their *My Reconciliation Book* on page 5, 'Things I need to work on'. (This is a private matter for students so allow them the opportunity not to write in their booklet. Allow them to answer the questions for themselves.)

Have the students think about ways in which they can respond positively to life events, and make a list on page 35 of the workbook. Encourage them to practise changing their behaviour during the week. Encourage them to make good choices and to think about their actions.

Tell the students: When we find we have been responding negatively we can participate in the sacrament of Reconciliation and seek forgiveness.

Remember – God is always present when I am forgiven.

Invite the students to read along with you the passage on page 36 of the workbook:

'Today we can receive this forgiveness of Jesus and the strength he gives us through the sacrament of Penance. In the sacrament of Penance we are sorry for our sins and we ask for God's forgiveness. Our coming back to God is called repentance. Through the priest, we meet Jesus who wants to forgive us and help us to make things right again with God and other people. Knowing we have been forgiven by God brings us a feeling of peace and encouragement to try to live again as children of God.'

End

(10 minutes)

Gather the students around the prayer focus. Make sure the students have their My Reconciliation Book and their workbooks. Light the candle and invite the students to sit on the floor. Invite the students to open their workbooks at page 37.

Catechist: We have spent some time thinking about how we can grow closer to Jesus and respond to his invitation. When we celebrate the sacrament of Penance we are trying to do what Zacchaeus did, we are trying to make things right.

Each time we receive the sacrament we are strengthened and hopefully feel better for having returned to Jesus to be forgiven.

Let us now pray that we will always return to Jesus for forgiveness and remember that God is always present.

We will respond to the prayer with:

All: God, you are with me when I seek forgiveness.

Speaker 1: Lord, help me to turn to you when I know I have done wrong.

All: God, you are with me when I seek forgiveness.

Speaker 2: Lord, help me to think of others first.

All: God, you are with me when I seek forgiveness.

Speaker 3: Lord, help me to accept Jesus' invitation to be with him in prayer.

All: God, you are with me when I seek forgiveness.

Speaker 4: Lord, help me to pray for your help and guidance.

All: God, you are with me when I seek forgiveness.

Catechist: Be with us, Lord, as we try to do good. Help us to turn to you when we have missed the mark. May we always remember that you are with us when we ask for forgiveness. We make our prayers through Christ, your Son.

All: Amen.

The Prodigal Father

Background for the Catechist

Please take 10 minutes to reflect on the following introduction to this lesson.

Reflection/Doctrinal Reference

To return to communion with God ... is a process born of the grace of God who is rich in mercy and solicitous for (our) salvation (CCC, no. 1489).

The parable of the prodigal father (Lk 15: 11–32) is in one of the best known and best loved chapters of Luke's Gospel. It is among three parables which bring out the joy of God when the lost sinner is found. We need to remember the context of this parable – all the tax collectors and sinners were coming near to listen to Jesus and the Pharisees and scribes were grumbling about his welcoming and eating with sinners. The chapter before ends with 'Let anyone with ears to hear, listen'.

The opening reference in this story is 'a man who had two sons', so the elder is in the story from the beginning. The younger son asks for the share of the property that will fall to him, and he gathers all he has, leaving nothing that would serve as an anchor to his home. He immediately squanders his money in 'loose living'. Two disasters strike him together: he runs out of money and runs into famine. He needs a job but in times of famine this is not easy to come by. This may explain why he hires himself out to feed the pigs, a job considered 'unclean' (Lev 11: 7) for a Jew. Disillusionment has set in. His initial motive is not particularly lofty but the confession he plans is excellent. He expresses sorrow not just for what he has lost but for what he has done – he has sinned first against God and against his father.

The father has obviously hoped that his son may return one day. He sees him 'while he was still far off' and is 'filled with compassion'. He runs towards him (unusual in an elderly Oriental at that time) and kisses him – a sincere greeting, not just politeness. The father sends his slaves scurrying for 'the robe – the best one' (this was a sign of position) and the ring (this conveyed authority). The shoes for his feet would have marked him as a free man and not a slave, and the fatted calf would have been kept for some special occasion.

The nation's religious leaders had, as yet, not shown much compassion for penitent sinners. There is no doubt that the father's welcome is teaching that the heavenly Father welcomes returning sinners. When

PREPARATION

Jesus turns the story to the elder brother, we see his concern with the Pharisees and others like them. This section is needed for the full lesson that Jesus is teaching.

The elder son is angry about the banquet. His refusal to go in and join the celebration likens him to the Pharisees. The elder son is self-righteous and cannot understand the father's attitude to the returning younger son. He can't even refer to him as his brother but calls him 'this son of yours'.

To this son, as to the other, the father's words are tender and he makes it clear that he loves them both. The elder son, like the Pharisees, does not realise the extent of his privileges but the father does not back down on the welcome of the younger son and says, 'we had to celebrate ...' Joy is the only reaction in such a situation. He finishes by repeating the wonderful thing that has happened: 'he was lost and has been found'.

Basic to the sacrament of Penance is God's relationship of love with us. The sacrament celebrates what the Gospel proclaims about this relationship to us. Hence, the parables and the incidents of forgiveness in the gospels are the foundation of our teaching on this sacrament.

In the sacrament we are celebrating the relationship of God to the sinner as seen in the gospels. The call to repentance is the call to live our lives oriented to the Father. In union with Christ we abandon ourselves to the Father. We take up the stance of the publican who stood afar off and prayed, 'Lord, be merciful to me, a sinner'. We have confidence in his mercy as proclaimed in the gospel. With the Prodigal Son we hear our forgiving Father say, '... this son of mine was dead and has come back to life; he was lost and is found' and they began to celebrate (Luke 15: 24).

The story of the prodigally forgiving father in Luke's Gospel is an excellent example of how God is the one who forgives and loves (Luke 15: 11–32). Just as the father forgave his son and welcomed him back with open arms, God does this to us. We are called to do the same with others. The stories of forgiveness in the scriptures are many and they are examples of how we are called to forgive.

Fallon, Michael MSC 1997, *The Gospel According to St Luke*, Chevalier Press, Kensington.

LaVerdiere, Eugene SSS 1973, *Luke*, Veritas Publications, Dublin.

Morris, Leon 1999, *Luke*, Intervarsity Press, Leicester.

Johnson, Luke Timothy 1991, *The Gospel of Luke*, Liturgical Press, Minnesota.

Student Focus

Through the growing experiences of reconciliation with the people in their lives, students come to know something of God as a reconciling Father. Their knowledge of Jesus and their relationships with him are also developing. In this way the students are coming to see God as a reconciling Father.

Teaching Point

We can return to God because God loves and forgives us.

Remembering Point

God always loves and forgives.

Beginning

(7 minutes)

Welcome the students as usual.

Gather the students round the prayer focus and invite them to pray.

Catechist: Let's get ready to pray by making ourselves still.

All: In the name of the Father, ...

Catechist: Please repeat after me.
God, our loving Father,

All: God, our loving Father,

Catechist: you sent Jesus to teach us about you.

All: you sent Jesus to teach us about you.

Catechist: Help us to be attentive during our class today. Amen.

All: Help us to be attentive during our class today. Amen.

Gather the students round you on the mat. Tell the story of the Prodigal Father from Luke 15: 1–3, 11–32, using puppets or small figures. The text for the story is in Appendix 12a on page 74 and templates for puppets are in Appendix 12b on pages 75–76.

Middle

(25 minutes)

Explore the story by having the students respond to the following Understanding the Story activity, in their workbooks on pages 39–42. Questions 1, 4, 10, 13, 14 are not in the workbook. They require oral answers.

1. What was happening that caused Jesus to tell this story? (*The Pharisees and scribes complained that Jesus welcomed sinners and ate with them.*)
2. Draw and name the three main characters. (*Father, younger son, older son*)
3. Why do you think the younger son asked for his share of the property?
4. Why do you think the father gave the son half of the property?
5. Draw the scene when the younger son came to his senses.
6. Draw the scene of the father seeing the younger son when he was still a long way off.
7. Draw a shape and choose a colour that describes the younger son's feelings when his father welcomed him back.
8. If you were one of the servants, what might you have thought about the older son's feelings?
9. What do you think the father meant when he said, 'This son of mine was lost and is found'? (*This son of mine through his own choice*)

PREPARATION

1. Prayer focus: coloured cloth, the Bible, a candle.
2. Puppets to tell the story. Templates are in Appendix 12b on pages 75–76.
3. Workbooks.

went away from the family. He chose to have no more contact with the Father. In the end, however, the son chose to return as if from the dead.)

10. Do you think the father acted sensibly? Why? *(Explore possible options. Reach the understanding that no, the father wasn't sensible, he was way over the top, excessive, giving far more than the son deserved. This is what the writer Luke wants us to understand, that God will forgive and love us in an even more excessive way. This is why we use the word Prodigal for the Father in this story, since it expresses how excessive is God's love for us.)*
11. Have you ever been like the older brother? Write down the times you have.
12. Draw an example from your life that might be similar to the actions of the younger son.
13. Who do you think this story is really about? *(God, our loving Father)*
14. What does Jesus want us to learn from this story? *(God always loves and forgives.)*

End

(8 minutes)

Gather the students around the prayer focus of cloth, candle and Bible. Invite the students to bring their workbooks with them.

Tell the students: The cloth creates a special place for us to put things for our time of prayer together. The candle is a symbol of the presence of Christ, who is with us now. The Bible is the special collection of the stories about God. We come to know many things about God and about Jesus by reading the stories of the Bible.

Catechist: The response to our prayer today is:
God, you always love and forgive me.

Catechist: God, our Father you show your love for us in many ways.

All: God, you always love and forgive me.

Catechist: God, our Father, you are always ready to take us back.

All: God, you always love and forgive me.

Catechist: God, our Father, you help us to take one another back after we have quarreled.

All: God, you always love and forgive me.

Catechist: Let us pray together:

All: God, my Father, you love me all the time. I am sorry for the times when I have done what is wrong. I know that you have taken me back. Help me to be like this with my friends.

Dismiss the students as usual.

Appendix 12a – The Prodigal Father

He also said, 'A man had two sons. The younger said to his father, "Father, let me have the share of the estate that would come to me". So the father divided the property between them. A few days later, the younger son got together everything he had and left for a distant country where he squandered his money on a life of debauchery.

'When he had spent it all, that country experienced a severe famine, and now he began to feel the pinch, so he hired himself out to one of the local inhabitants, who put him on his farm to feed the pigs. And he would willingly have filled his belly with the husk the pigs were eating but no one offered him anything. Then he came to his senses and said, "How many of my father's paid servants have more food than they want, and here am I dying of hunger! I will leave this place and go to my father and say: Father, I have sinned against heaven and against you; I no longer deserve to be called your son; treat me as one of your paid servants." So he left the place and went back to his father.

'While he was still a long way off, his father saw him and was moved with pity. He ran to the boy, clasped him in his arms and kissed him tenderly. Then his son said, "Father, I have sinned against heaven and against you. I no longer deserve to be called your son." But the father said to his servants, "Quick! Bring out the best robe and put it on him; put a ring on his finger and sandals on his feet. Bring the calf we have been fattening, and kill it; we are going to have a feast, a celebration, because this son of mine was dead and has come back to life; he was lost and is found." And they began to celebrate.

'Now the elder son was out in the fields, and on his way back, as he drew near the house, he could hear music and dancing. Calling one of the servants he asked what it was all about. "Your brother has come," replied the servant, "and your father has killed the calf we had fattened because he has got him back safe and sound." He was angry then and refused to go in, and his father came out to plead with him; but he answered his father, "Look, all these years I have slaved for you and never once disobeyed your orders, yet you never offered me so much as a kid for me to celebrate with my friends. But, for this son of yours, when he comes back after swallowing up your property – he and his women – you kill the calf we had been fattening."

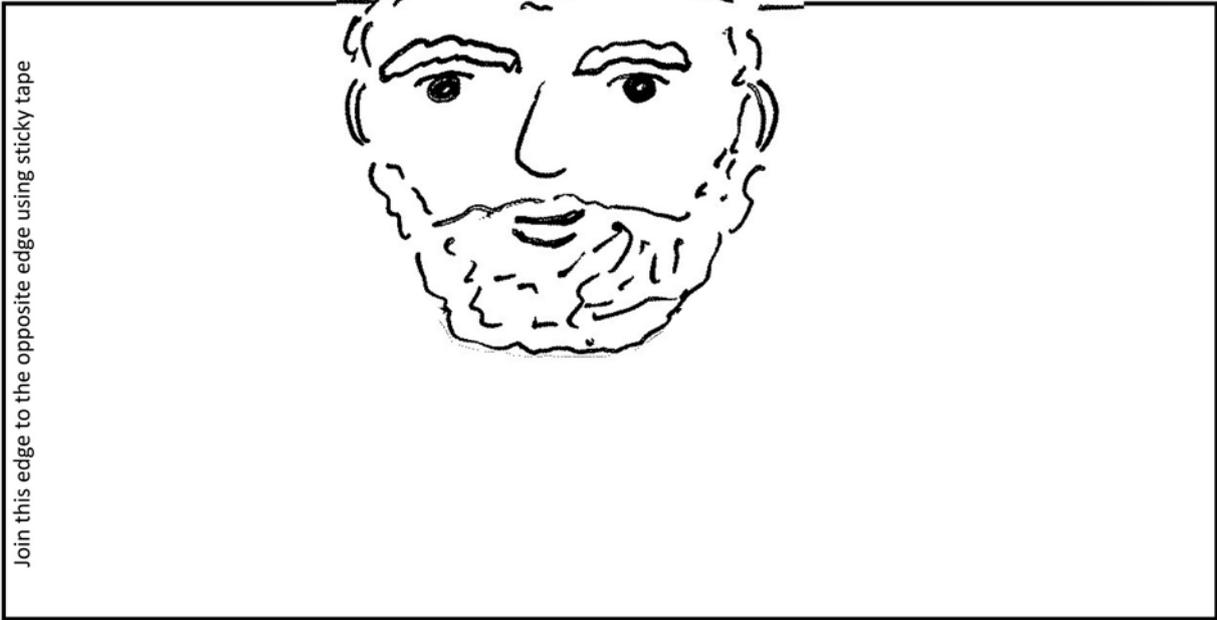
'The father said, "My son, you are with me always and all I have is yours. But it was only right we should celebrate and rejoice, because your brother here was dead and has come to life; he was lost and is found.'"

(Lk 15: 11–32)

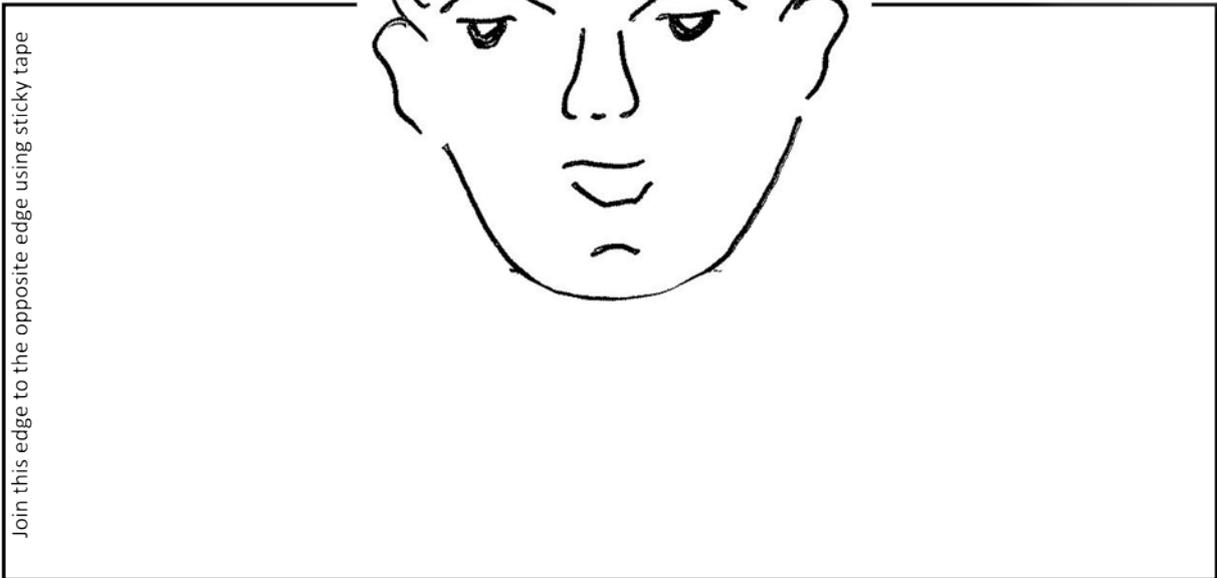
Appendix 12b – Puppets

Photocopy each character onto card. Cut out around the black line. Using sticky tape, stick the opposite ends together to make a tube. Decorate as you wish and use the characters to tell the story of the Prodigal Father.

Father



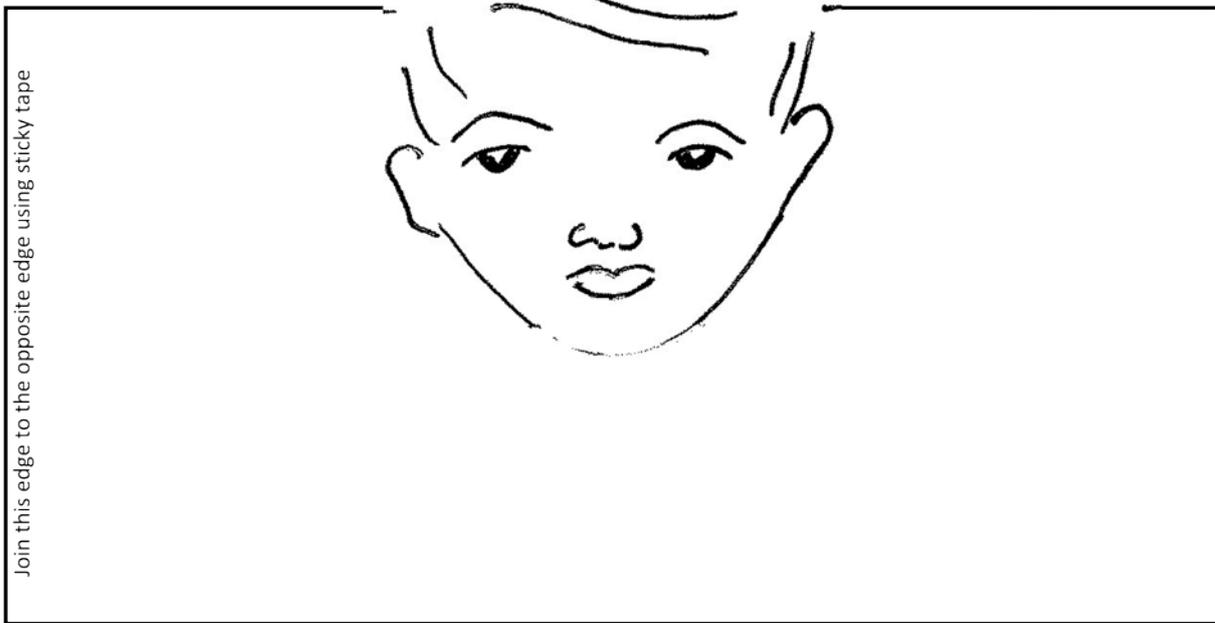
Older Son



Appendix 12b – Puppets (continued)

Photocopy the character onto card. Cut out around the black line. Using sticky tape, stick the opposite ends together to make a tube. Decorate as you wish and use the characters to tell the story of the Prodigal Father.

Younger Son



We Grow in a Reconciling Family

Background for the Catechist

Please take 10 minutes to reflect on the following introduction to this lesson.

Reflection/Doctrinal Reference

Indeed, through a contrite heart and within the sacrament of Reconciliation we are 'drawn by divine grace to respond to the merciful love of God' (CCCC, n. 300).

We have the opportunity to enter into a true 'spiritual resurrection,' the restoration of the dignity and blessings of the life of the children of God, of which the most precious is friendship with God (CCC, n. 1468).

The foregoing lessons and our own life experiences have highlighted the recurrence of sin and alienation in our lives. The sacrament of Penance in the Church is our opportunity to celebrate and share in God's forgiveness. We are invited to turn more and more towards God our reconciling Father. Through the many celebrations of this sacrament throughout our lives we are continually being healed and brought closer to one another and the God who is always loving us.

Student Focus

The students will soon be celebrating the sacrament of Penance and this will be uppermost in their minds. It is important to explore how the sacrament contributes to their daily living, so that its importance will be emphasised and its benefits understood.

Teaching Point

Regular celebration of Penance helps us grow closer to one another and to God.

Remembering Point

Whenever I go to Reconciliation I grow closer to God and others.

Beginning

(5 minutes)

Welcome the students as usual.

Gather the students around the prayer focus.

Invite the students to get ready for prayer by being still and closing their eyes.

Catechist: Let us begin by making the Sign of the Cross.

All: In the name of the Father ...

Catechist: God, our loving Father and Parent, help us to learn more about you in our lesson today.

All: Amen.

Review the work from last week.

Ask the students: What story from the Bible did we hear last week?
(*The Prodigal Father*)

What does the story tell us about God? (*That God is a loving and forgiving Father, who will forgive us no matter what.*)

Tell the students: We know that God is taking us back whenever we return; Jesus told us that in the story from last week. We are sure then, that every time we go to the sacrament of Penance we are drawing on God's love and returning to God through Jesus, in a special way.

Tell the students: Think of a time in your life when you experienced the same forgiveness from a member of your family or friends.

- How did you feel?
- How does it make you feel about that person? (*Discuss the answers with the students. Work at drawing out values such as trust, friendship, love, kindness, confidence. You might be able to talk about compassion. Discuss how important it is to continue to keep the friendship alive, to restore the friendship with family and others. Often we have to want to continue to be friends.*)

Middle

(15–20 minutes)

Tell the students: God, our Father, is with us in our move towards restoring friendship with others. When we do take these first steps to restore friendship God is working through and in us to heal and reconcile ourselves and others. We are brought back into the *Family of God*.

Being within the *Family of God* makes it easier for us to live our lives as Jesus wants. We can return to God more easily when we know the value of seeking forgiveness.

PREPARATION

1. Prayer focus: cloth, candle, Bible opened at Lk 15: 11–32, puppets from last week (see Appendix 12b on pages 75–76).
2. Workbooks.

We can celebrate God's healing, reconciling action in our lives through the sacrament of Penance. Whenever we approach Reconciliation we ask for forgiveness for our sins, and we praise and thank God, our loving Father, who always forgives.

Invite the students: Open your workbooks at page 43. Complete the sentence on the page by filling in the gaps:

'I can go to the **sacrament** of Penance often and **receive** God's loving **forgiveness**. Whenever I go to **Reconciliation** I **grow** closer to **God** and **others**. When I am **reconciled** with God and with others, God's **healing** is **working** within **me**.'

Tell the students: Let us read the passage from your workbook on page 44.

Read together with the students:

Jesus showed God's love for us in the many ways he healed people. Jesus had a real compassion for people who were rejected because of their sin or illness.

Those who were forgiven by Jesus made things right not just between themselves and God, but also with other people.

God always wants us to come back to say we are sorry and to be forgiven.

End

(15 minutes)

Ask the students: Think back to the story of the Prodigal Father that we read last week and think about what you have learnt today. What are some of the things you've learnt about yourself?

Invite the students to complete the crossword on page 44 of the workbook.

Invite the students to gather for prayer:

Catechist: Let us pray together:

All: In the name of the Father...

Catechist: Forgiving Father, help us to take the first step in making friends again. You are always there for us, may we be there for others.

All: Amen.

The Sacrament of Penance

Background for the Catechist

Please take 10 minutes to reflect on the following introduction to this lesson.

Reflection/Doctrinal Reference

'Those who approach the sacrament of Penance obtain pardon from God's mercy for the offence committed against him, and are, at the same time, reconciled with the Church which they have wounded by their sins and which by charity, by example, and by prayer labours for their conversion' (CCC, n. 1422).

The Church offers guidelines for the following two rites for celebrating the sacrament of Penance:

1. The First Rite is called 'The Rite of Reconciliation of an Individual Penitent'. The priest welcomes the penitent and prepares with the penitent by prayer and the reading of Scripture. After discussing his or her life with the priest, the penitent confesses his or her sins. The priest offers counsel and gives a penance that will help the penitent resolve to begin a new life. The penitent expresses sorrow and the priest pronounces the absolution. Together they thank God and the priest bids the penitent go in peace.
2. The Second Rite is 'The Rite for the Reconciliation of Several Penitents with Individual Confession and Absolution'. This is to be used where there are a number of penitents. The Rite follows the form of the Liturgy of the Word at Mass until the homily. After the homily, there is an examination of conscience, led by the priest, and then prayers of sorrow. The Lord's Prayer is to be said always and then there is the opportunity for individual confession and absolution. When this is completed, there is a shared thanksgiving with final blessing and dismissal.

Those involved in the preparation of students for their initial celebration of the sacrament should consider:

- the students' needs and readiness
- the number of students and families involved
- the number of priests available for the celebration of the sacrament.

Student Focus

At this stage of their preparation the students need to become familiar with the ways of celebrating and participating in the sacrament. They will then be able to approach their first celebration in a spirit of confidence and a growing appreciation of this particular encounter with the merciful Lord in his Church.

Teaching Point

When we participate in the sacrament of Penance we celebrate God's forgiveness.

Remembering point

When we participate in the sacrament of Penance we celebrate God's forgiveness.

Please note: As this is the immediate preparation for the sacrament this lesson is not written under the usual headings but extends the understanding of the previous lesson.

PREPARATION

Rite 2

(15 minutes)

Welcome the students as usual. *(As the students will most likely celebrate their first experience of the sacrament of Penance through the Second Rite, the lesson will begin with an exploration of this rite, followed by an exploration of the First Rite of Reconciliation.)*

Introduce the lesson by recalling the invitation to the Church family celebration of Reconciliation. Using pictures as well as the photos in the student book, move through the different stages of 'How we celebrate Rite 2' in the student book on pages 46–47, enabling the students to understand what will happen and how they will participate.

1. **The people gather.** Relate this to your local situation and encourage the students to talk about the people who will participate. If other priests are being invited, mention them by name and, if possible, arrange for them to meet the students prior to the celebration. *Why do we come together? (To show we belong to God's people; to admit our need for God's forgiveness; to show we need God's healing power to live in a new way.)*
2. **We sing and pray together.** Refer to some of the hymns learnt through the program. We sing together because we are happy to be invited to the celebration; we want to praise God and tell him how much we need him.
3. **Father welcomes us** and we all reply.
4. **We listen to God's word.** Refer to the gospel accounts presented through the program, e.g. 'The Prodigal Father', 'Zacchaeus'. Present to the students the scripture reading to be used in the celebration. Perhaps, if time permits, the students could mime the reading or present it in visual form. Explain that after the reading the priest will speak to us to help us understand Jesus' message.
5. **We take time to think about our lives. Tell the students:** We think about God's plan for us and for our world. We know God wants us to be happy and to enjoy our lives and his gifts to us. We remember that he wants us to be peace-makers in our world. We think of Jesus' words: 'Love God with all your heart, and love each other just as you love yourselves' (cf. Mk 12: 30–32). We think of how we are trying to live as God's friends and how we need his help and forgiveness.
6. **We pray together. Tell the students:** We say 'sorry' for the times we have failed to love God and other people. We trust that God will help us to live in a new way and that we may grow as peace-makers in his family. **We pray together** Jesus' special prayer, the Our Father.
7. **Time to talk to Father and receive God's forgiveness. Tell the students:** Father welcomes you and helps you to confess your sins. You ask for God's forgiveness and help. Father suggests a penance – something to do or say as an important sign that you want to live in a new way. You make the Act of Contrition: 'O my God, I am sorry that I have sinned against you because you are so good, and with your help,

I will not sin again'. The priest gives you God's forgiveness through a special sign. He places his hands over your head and says the words of forgiveness: 'And I absolve you from your sins, in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen'.

8. Together we all say 'thank you' to God and sing a hymn to show we are glad that we have come together to celebrate God's forgiveness and help.

RITE 1

(15 minutes)

The following outline is designed to assist in the preparation of students for Rite 1 of the sacrament. It could also be used for subsequent lessons on the sacrament, especially in situations wherein students have initially been prepared for Rite 2. Remind the students that when they go to receive the sacrament themselves, they might find that it is this rite that is used.

Introduce the lesson by recalling the invitation to celebrate the sacrament.

Explain to the students that there are different ways of celebrating the sacrament (just as there are different ways of celebrating special events to suit the people and the occasion). Explain, also, that this sacrament is an important way of meeting Jesus and receiving his forgiveness, peace and help to live in a new way. There are different signs in our celebration through which Jesus helps us to be at peace with God, with other people and with ourselves.

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Using pictures found in the workbook on pages 48–49, explain to the students how they will participate in this rite of Reconciliation.

Present the following in reference to your own local situation.

Tell the students: Before you go to Reconciliation, you spend some time in the church thinking about your life and the things you are sorry about and for which you want to ask Jesus' forgiveness. You pray that you will make a good confession. This is an important time and helps you continue to work at being a good Catholic.

- **Father welcomes me.** Explain that Father says some words of welcome and greeting. The friendliness and welcome of Father is a special sign of God's care and interest. It is also a sign of the welcome and care of everyone in the Church community. Father says 'welcome' on behalf of all these people.
- **Together you and Father make the sign of the cross.** Run through this with the students. **Tell the students:** You remember how Jesus died on the cross and how God, his Father, gave him a new life at the resurrection. The sign of the cross is a way of remembering and showing that you are friends of Jesus, sharing his death and new life.
- **Father might read God's word to you** (or he might ask me to read it). **Tell the students:** The Reading tells you something about God's love, his forgiveness, his kindness, his healing. It is Jesus' message to you and he wants you to listen very carefully.

- **You talk to Father about your life** and confess your sins. **Tell the students:** Father is there as a friend and as a member of the reconciling Church. He wants to help you so you tell him the ways in which you are trying to live as Jesus' friend and how you try to show your love for God and other people. Then you tell him how you have failed to love, how you have broken your relationship with God through your sins. You know you need God's help and healing if you want to grow as his friend.
- **Father will encourage you. Tell the students:** He will instruct you to do something or give you a prayer to say as a sign that you want to grow in Jesus' way of living. This is called a 'penance'.
- **You say a prayer – an Act of Contrition – telling God that you are sorry** for the times when you have failed to do the right thing; you really believe and trust that he can help you.
- **God's forgiveness, help and healing come to you** when Father says the words of forgiveness and places his hands above your head. When you hear these words: 'And I absolve you from your sins, in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit,' and see this sign, you know that God is really with you and you say: Amen.

Tell the students: Finally, Father might wish you God's peace. You can say 'thank you' and wish him peace, too. When Father dismisses you, you return to your seat and kneel to pray. You think about the penance you have been given and either say the prayers or pray about how you might carry out the penance.

You then say a 'thank you' prayer. God has been so good to you and you want to say how glad and grateful you feel.

End

(10–15 minutes)

To conclude the lesson, ask the students if they have any questions. It is important that the students understand what is going to happen at the celebration of the sacrament and how they can continue to receive the sacrament after this first time.

Tell the students: Turn to page 49 in your workbooks and let's read the Act of Contrition once again. You will need to memorise this prayer and be very familiar with it.

Catechist: Together let us pray:

All: O my God, I am sorry that I have sinned against you because you are so good, and with your help, I will not sin again.

Hand out a sheet of paper to each student and tell the students: From your workbook, page 49, copy the Act of Contrition onto the paper, so that you can take it home and learn it for next week.

If there is time available, **direct the students** to colour in the 'something to remember' box at the bottom of page 49.

Dismiss the students as usual.

LESSON 15

Preparing for the Sacrament of Penance

Background for the Catechist

Please take 10 minutes to reflect on the following introduction to this lesson.

Reflection/Doctrinal Reference

The call of Christ to conversion continues to resound in the lives of the baptised. Conversion is a continuing obligation of the whole Church. She is holy but includes sinners in her midst (CCCC, n. 299).

Reconciliation is an important feature in the life of Jesus. He came to reconcile the world to God, his Father. The Scriptures often remind us that God is eager to forgive all people. Given that God calls us sons and daughters, we too are required to demonstrate a readiness to forgive others. Indeed we pray: 'Forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us'.

In approaching this sacrament we are preparing ourselves to receive Jesus in the Eucharist. We anticipate the fullness of our incorporation into the Body of Christ, made possible by our baptism and approached with a contrite heart renewed in the love of God through the sacrament of Penance.

Student Focus

Experiences of saying 'sorry' help students to understand and appreciate the sacrament of Penance. Recognising the need, and being willing, to say sorry is a sign that students are ready to participate in this sacrament. Catechists can reinforce this attitude.

Teaching Point

We take steps to prepare to celebrate Reconciliation.

Remembering Point

I can use My Reconciliation Booklet to help me to prepare for Reconciliation.

PREPARATION

1. Prayer focus: cloth, candle, Bible, *My Reconciliation Book*, response to the prayers on a strip of paper.
2. Sheets of A3 paper with each of the sections of the sacrament written on them.
3. *My Reconciliation Book* for review.
4. Workbooks.

Beginning

(10 minutes)

Welcome the students as usual.

Have each of the headings below on a large piece of paper. Scatter the sheets around the floor at different parts of the room. Invite the students to work cooperatively to put the pieces in the correct order of what will happen during their reception of the sacrament of Reconciliation.

- The people gather.
- We sing and pray together.
- The priest welcomes us.
- We listen to God's word.
- We think about our lives.
- We say sorry.
- We pray the Our Father together.
- We talk to the priest, confess our sins, receive our penance and receive God's forgiveness.
- Together we all say 'thank you'.

Middle

(20–25 minutes)

When the headings are all in the correct order students write the list in their workbooks and draw what is happening beside each action (pages 50–53).

Tell the students: When we celebrate this sacrament we are making sure we have restored our broken relationship with God but not just so that we feel good: we are doing this so that we might be ready to receive Jesus in the Eucharist. We will have a good relationship with God and with Jesus that will make going to Mass and receiving Holy Communion very special. We will be ready. We need to be sure that our friendship with Jesus is okay before we go to the table of the Lord at the Eucharist.

Hand out the *My Reconciliation Book*.

Tell the students: In a few days you will be receiving the sacrament of Reconciliation for the first time. We have covered a lot of material over the past nine lessons and have reviewed the celebration in our activity today. Let's look at your *My Reconciliation Book* and go through the things you need to remember and anything you would like me to explain again.

Go through the book with the students reminding them when they can use the prayers on pages 2 and 3.

Make sure the students have an examination of conscience written down on pages 4 and 5 (you might like to recall lesson 6 if they don't have one written down) and remind them that they need to use one of these after they have listened to the scripture reading. It would be good to run through these questions with them.

When looking at the prayer of sorrow or Act of Contrition, you might have a specific one that the parish priest requires the students to use. Make sure the students have it written down and are familiar with reading it and understand what they are actually saying. There is value in their knowing this prayer off by heart.

The last page is an overview of the actual reception of the sacrament.

Invite students to ask questions for clarification and understanding about their up-coming reception of the sacrament of Penance.

End

(5 minutes)

Remind the students once again about the time, date and location of the celebration. Have this on a piece of paper for them to take home. Confirm and organise any last-minute requirements.

Remind the students that they can use their *My Reconciliation Book* to help them through the celebration of the sacrament.

Gather the students around the prayer focus and candle.

Invite the students to hold hands in a circle as you pray together.

Catechist: Let us pray for each one of us that we might celebrate the sacrament of Reconciliation well, that we might let God into our lives and turn to Jesus each day of our lives.

Students: Be with us, Lord Jesus.

Catechist: I invite you now to pray for something special for the celebration of the sacrament. After each prayer the response is 'Be with us, Lord Jesus.'

Students: Be with us, Lord Jesus.

Catechist: Lord, take these and all our prayers and hold them dear to your heart. May we always love you and turn to you and may we always remember your love for us. We make this prayer through Christ, our Lord.

Students: Amen.

Dismiss the students and remind them once more of the date and time of the celebration of the sacrament.

Pentecost

Background for the Catechist

Please take 10 minutes to reflect on the following introduction to this lesson.

Reflection/Doctrinal Reference

On the day of Pentecost when the seven weeks of Easter had come to an end, Christ's Passover is fulfilled in the outpouring of the Holy Spirit, manifested, given, and communicated as a divine person: of his fullness, Christ, the Lord, pours out the Spirit in abundance. On that day, the Holy Trinity is fully revealed. Since that day, the Kingdom announced by Christ has been open to those who believe in him: in the humility of the flesh and in faith, they already share in the communion of the Holy Trinity. By his coming, which never ceases, the Holy Spirit causes the world to enter into the 'last days,' the time of the Church, the Kingdom already inherited though not yet consummated (CCC, nn. 731–2).

Pentecost comes 50 days after the feast of Easter and concludes the Easter season. The Spirit of Jesus is poured out on the Church. The earthly life of Jesus has come to an end. From Pentecost to the end of time, the Church will be the place where we meet Jesus. The Church is called the Body of Christ and though it is shot through with the weakness and human limitations of all who belong to it, it is still the means through which Jesus' words and work are carried on through the ages. It is the Holy Spirit who inspires, renews and invigorates the Church and it is the Holy Spirit poured out at Pentecost who is behind every good, generous and unselfish act we do.

Student Focus

Students of this age tend to think in concrete images, though they are beginning to understand imagery. They can understand imagery like 'The school football team was on fire' or 'The girls were blown away when they heard the news'. They can readily apply such understandings to the description of Pentecost in the Acts of the Apostles.

Teaching Point

The Church celebrates the coming of the Holy Spirit to us at Pentecost.

Remembering Point

At Pentecost we celebrate the coming of the Holy Spirit.

Beginning

(15 minutes)

Welcome the students as usual.

Gather the students around you sitting on the floor. Make the Sign of the Cross and pray the Our Father together.

Ask the students: Who can tell me what the following phrases mean and where you might hear them used?

Hold up the phrase cards one at a time, each time selecting a different student to answer. The phrases: 'blown away', 'on fire', 'built like a house', 'sly as a fox'.

Tell the students: We often use words and phrases that explain our experience better than just a simple description. When we listen to the story today, try to see where these types of phrases could be used to explain the experience.

You have probably heard today's story before. It is a story about Jesus' followers, his disciples. *(Provide the following introduction in your own words emphasising the bold section.)*

While Jesus was alive he showed the disciples how they were to live and how they could help others. After Jesus had risen from the dead he visited his followers, helping them to understand what had happened. When he was ready to go to heaven, **Jesus told his disciples what they were to do to carry on his message after he was gone. They were to bring people to believe in God and God's great works.**

You can imagine how the disciples must have felt when Jesus was gone from them. *(Ask the students to contribute here if you wish.)* Jesus had asked them to bring more people into their group of believers. They would be wondering how they might do this.

This was what brought the disciples together in one place when the day of Pentecost came round. Pentecost is 50 days after Jesus rose from the dead on Easter Sunday. Let's listen to the story once again, remembering why the disciples were together and what they might have been feeling.

Tell the story to the students using the script in Appendix 16a, page 94.

Middle

(30 minutes)

Send the students back to their desks and invite them to complete the Senses Grid in their workbook on page 55.

Tell the students: Find the answers to the questions in the grid by rereading the story. Write an answer in the space provided.

Have the students share their answers with the person beside them.

PREPARATION

1. Prayer focus: A Red or white cloth, a red or white candle and the Bible.
2. Write the following phrases on large cards: 'blown away', 'on fire', 'built like a house', 'soft as butter', 'sly as a fox', e.g.

BUILT LIKE A HOUSE

ON FIRE

3. Large sheets of paper with the questions from page 91 clearly written on them – one for each group.
4. Flames for each student. Use the template in Appendix 16b, page 95.
5. Have the prayer response on a card or blackboard, e.g.

Come, Holy Spirit,
be with us each day.

6. Workbooks.

PREPARATION

Then have one of each pair share what they have written for one question (go through the questions asking a different student each time).

Divide the group into threes. Invite them to discuss the following questions in their group. (Put these questions on a sheet or on large strips of paper for each group.)

- What might the disciples (friends of Jesus) have been thinking about when they gathered together?
- What sorts of questions might they want answered?
- What question would you ask the disciples about what happened?
- How were the disciples changed because of the Holy Spirit?
- What do you think the story is telling us?

Tell the students: Each group needs a time-keeper, a recorder and a leader, so decide who is going to record, who is going to keep time and who will make sure everyone has a turn. You have three minutes for discussion per question.

Invite the leader from each group to share what they have discussed taking one question at a time. (Allow the students to provide whatever answers they like. Accept them and help the students to articulate their own understanding. There are no right or wrong answers to what the story is telling us, so encourage the students to think about what it is saying.)

When the students have finished their discussion and reporting back (allow 12 minutes for the discussion and sharing of answers in their groups and a couple of minutes per group to report back).

Tell the students: The Church remembers this day when the Holy Spirit came to Jesus' disciples every year on Pentecost Sunday. Each year we – as part of the Church – celebrate the coming of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost in a special way.

The answers you gave to the questions I asked about the story are important. The message of the story is something that we can use to help us live our lives the best way we can, just as the Holy Spirit helped the disciples of Jesus live their lives as Jesus wanted them to. This is what we celebrate with the Church on Pentecost Sunday.

Let's look more closely at what the Church celebrates. What does the Church celebrate at Pentecost?

Let's list them: What effect did the Holy Spirit have on the disciples? *(Draw these from the answers that the students' gave to the questions you asked earlier. If you find the students are unable to provide answers, then you could provide them with a prompt by reminding them what their own answers were, such as: the Holy Spirit changed the lives of the disciples by making them more confident and giving them strength to do what they needed to do to take Jesus' message to the world.)* Record their answers on the whiteboard or on paper.

Tell the students: The Church celebrates Pentecost in a special way each year by recalling how important the coming of the Holy Spirit was for the disciples. Today we are going to make little reminders for ourselves about how the coming of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost can benefit us now.

Hand out a flame to each student.

Invite the students to choose words that capture what you have been talking about – how the Holy Spirit helped the disciples and how the Holy Spirit helps them: words such as courage, strength etc. Encourage the students to use words that you have talked about and listed. Students can record their own list of words inside the flame shapes on page 56 in their workbook.

Invite the students to choose two words from their list and record these words on the cut-out flame. They might like to record one word on each side of the flame.

End

(5 minutes)

When the students have completed decorating and writing on their flame **invite them** to join you around the prayer focus, bringing their flame with them.

Catechist: Today we have looked at the story of how the coming of the Holy Spirit helped the disciples to have the courage and strength to do what Jesus asked of them. We also saw that the Holy Spirit will help us to do what Jesus wants us to do. So let us pray today that the Holy Spirit will continue to help us. Our response is: Come, Holy Spirit, be with us each day.

All: In the name of the Father ...

Catechist: Bring your flame and put it on the focus, saying the word you have written. (When they have all put their flame on the focus invite the group to make the response together.)

Students: Come, Holy Spirit, be with us each day.

Catechist: Jesus promised the Holy Spirit to the disciples and to us, so that we might have the help we need to carry on Jesus' work. May we always remember to ask the Holy Spirit for help.

Students: Come, Holy Spirit, be with us each day.

Catechist: The Church celebrates the coming of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost. We can also celebrate with the Church that the Holy Spirit is here for us. Let us be thankful for the help of the Holy Spirit.

Students: Come, Holy Spirit, be with us each day.

Catechist: Every time we make the Sign of the Cross, or say the Glory Be, we are calling on and praising the Holy Spirit. May we never forget the importance of the Holy Spirit in our lives as we pray the Glory be together now

All: Glory be to the Father ...

Tell the students: Next week our lesson will be conducted in the Church. So do not come to this room next week. Rather, meet me in the foyer (narthex) of the church. Collect the workbooks.

Dismiss the students as usual.

Appendix 16a – The Coming of the Holy Spirit at

Pentecost

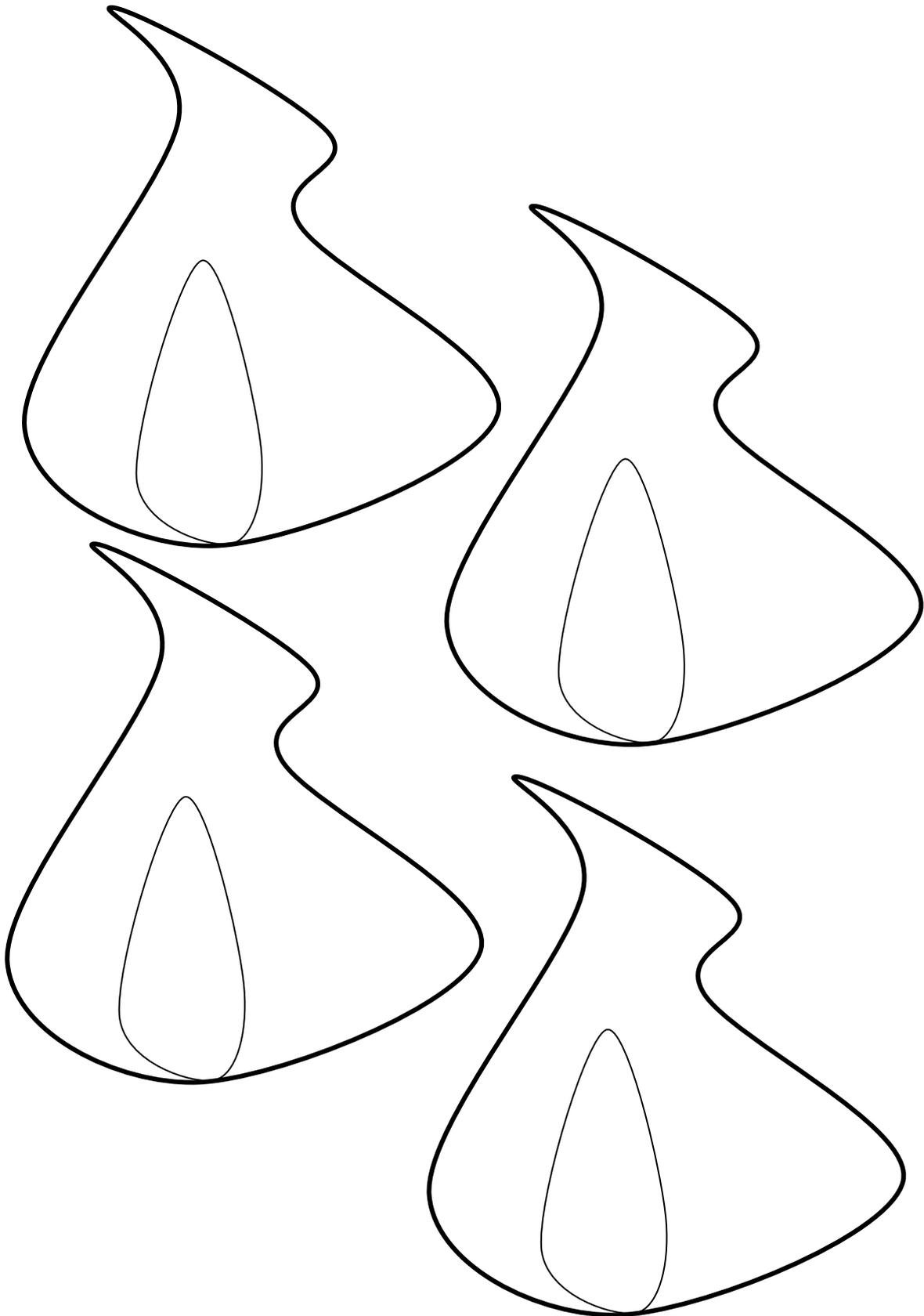
When the day of Pentecost had come, they were all together in one place. And suddenly from heaven there came a sound like the rush of a violent wind, and it filled the entire house where they were sitting. Divided tongues, as of fire, appeared among them, and a tongue rested on each of them. All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other languages, as the Spirit gave them ability.

Now there were devout Jews from every nation under heaven living in Jerusalem. And at this sound the crowd gathered and was bewildered, because each one heard them speaking in the native language of each. Amazed and astonished, they asked, 'Are not all these who are speaking Galileans? And how is it that we hear, each of us, in our own native language? Parthians, Medes, Elamites, and residents of Mesopotamia, Judea and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia, Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and the parts of Libya belonging to Cyrene, and visitors from Rome, both Jews and proselytes, Cretans and Arabs—in our own languages we hear them speaking about God's deeds of power.' All were amazed and perplexed, saying to one another, 'What does this mean?'

(Acts 2: 1 – 12)

Appendix 16b – Flame Templates

Make as many copies as you have students.



Our Parish

Background for the Catechist

Please take 10 minutes to reflect on the following introduction to this lesson.

Reflection/Doctrinal Reference

'A *parish* is a definite community of the Christian faithful established on a stable basis within a particular church; the pastoral care of the parish is entrusted to a pastor as its own shepherd under the authority of the diocesan bishop' (CIC 1983, can. 515, § 1). It is the place where all the faithful can be gathered together for the Sunday celebration of the Eucharist. The parish initiates the Christian people into the ordinary expression of the liturgical life: it gathers them together in this celebration; it teaches Christ's saving doctrine; it practises the charity of the Lord in good works and brotherly love (CCC, n. 2179).

A parish is the usual community unit of those who belong to the Church. Members of the parish come together to pray and to celebrate Mass, and to love and support each other and the community they live in. A parish is usually led by a priest, who is responsible to the bishop. In turn the bishop meets regularly with other bishops and from time to time with the pope. This helps to maintain the unity of the whole Church, each parish playing its own unique part in the building up of the Church .

Student Focus

Students of this age are gaining a sense of belonging to groups beyond their family. Most, of course, belong to special-interest groups: school, sports clubs, dancing or music groups. However, a parish is unique in that it would be almost the only multi-age, multi-interest group the students belong to. Faith in Christ is the one thing that unites all members of a parish, but each parish is unique because each is made up of a different group of people and inherits a particular history.

Teaching Point

Our Parish has its own identity.

Remembering Point

My parish is and it is unique.

PREPARATION

1. Organise with the parish priest to have your lesson in and around the church building.
2. Prayer focus: A cloth, a crucifix, the Bible and a picture of your parish patron.
3. Copy the prayer on this page on to a large sheet (Alternatively, use the parish prayer if there is one).
4. You will need to have found the location of the foundation stone or blessing plaque. For an older church it might be a stone in the wall on the outside of the building. For a newer church it might be inside the narthex (foyer). Ensure that there are enough Sunday bulletins for each student and various pieces of information about the parish available in the narthex for the students to pick up and use during this lesson.
5. Workbooks.
6. Pencils.
7. A strip of paper on which you've written the name of the parish. Place this on the prayer focus.

Beginning

(5 minutes)

Welcome the students as usual and hand out the student workbooks.

Gather the class in the narthex (foyer) of the church around you and the prayer focus.

Catechist: Let us get ready for prayer by being quiet.
Let's begin with the Sign of the Cross.

All: In the name of the Father ...

Catechist: Let us read the prayer together:

All: God, our Father,
You called us to be your Church.
When we gather as your people in your name
May we always love you and seek to follow your ways.
Through Jesus, your Son. Amen.

Tell the students: Today we are having our lesson in the church because we will be trying to find out what makes our parish unique.

Middle

(40 minutes)

Tell the students: Finding out about our parish can help us to understand what sort of community we belong to and how our church community is unique. Let's research what has happened in our parish over the years. We'll begin at the Foundation Stone (Memorial Plaque).

Activity 1: *(allow 10 minutes for this activity)*

Take the students to the foundation stone/memorial plaque. Invite them to read the inscription and to open their workbooks at page 58. **Tell the students** to write information in the 'Response Box 1'.

Activity 2: *(allow 10 minutes for this activity)*

Take the students into the narthex (if you're not already there).

Invite the students to look at all the groups displayed on the notice board and to pick one. Invite the students to read about the group. **Tell the students** to write information in the 'Response Box 2' provided in their workbooks on page 59.

Activity 3: *(allow 10 minutes for this activity)*

Ask a student to give out a copy of the Parish Bulletin.

Invite the students to read the Parish Bulletin for information to write in the 'Response Box 3' on page 59 of their workbooks.

Activity 4: *(allow 10 minutes for this activity)*

Take the students inside the Church. Point out to them the plates under, near or on various articles, e.g. pews, statues, stained glass ...)

Invite the students to pick one item and then to write information in the 'Response Box 4' in their workbooks, page 60.

End

(10 minutes)

Gather the students around you in the narthex.

Ask one student to tell the others one thing they learnt from the foundation stone/memorial plaque.

Invite another student to tell the others the name of the group they researched and one thing they learnt about that group. Then invite another student to tell the others one thing they learnt about the parish from the parish bulletin. Finally, ask one student to tell the others one thing they learnt about the inside of the church.

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Tell the students: Our parish is unique because *(summarise the facts gleaned from the students' research. Begin: Our parish is unique because ...)*

Invite the students to open their workbooks at page 60, and finish the sentence:

My parish is unique because ...

Gather the students around you and the prayer setting. Place the parish name on it as well.

Catechist: Let us get ready for prayer by being quiet.

All: In the name of the Father ...

Catechist: Let us read the prayer together:

All: God, our Father,
You called us to be your Church.
When we gather as your people in your name
May we always love you and seek to follow your ways.
Through Jesus, your Son. Amen.

Dismiss the students as usual.

The Priest – Minister of the Word

Background for the Catechist

Please take 10 minutes to reflect on the following introduction to this lesson.

Reflection/Doctrinal Reference

'And such is the force and power of the Word of God that it can serve the Church as her support and vigour, and the children of the Church as strength for their faith, food for the soul, and a pure and lasting fount of spiritual life' (DV, n. 21). Hence 'access to Sacred Scripture ought to be open wide to the Christian faithful' (DV, n. 22). 'Therefore, the "study of the sacred page" should be the very soul of sacred theology. The ministry of the Word, too – pastoral preaching, catechetics and all forms of Christian instruction, among which the liturgical homily should hold pride of place – is healthily nourished and thrives in holiness through the Word of Scripture' (DV, n. 24) (CCC, nn. 131–2).

Priest and people share the proclamation of the Liturgy of the Word but the priest is responsible for helping the people hear and interpret the Scriptures in the most helpful way possible. He does this by arranging formation and training for lay ministers and by taking care to study and pray over the readings proclaimed at each gathering of the people to celebrate either word or sacrament. In particular through his homilies he helps people hear the Word of God and take it into their lives.

Student Focus

The students at this level still have a sense of respect and admiration for leaders, which naturally extends to the priest of their parish. They are open to guidance and easily understand that part of the priest's role is to teach the word of God by using the Bible.

Teaching Point

The priest is the teaching Minister of the word.

Remembering Point

Father teaches us the word of God.

Beginning

(10 minutes)

Welcome the students as usual and **gather the students** at the entrance of the room to organise a prayer procession. Have quiet music playing as you organise the students and during the procession.

Organise one student to carry the Bible, one student to carry the candle, one student to carry the cross and one student to carry the prayer cloth.

Direct the students to a location in the room where they will eventually place the objects. **Tell the students** where they are to position themselves.

Have the remaining students process in line behind the other four students. The first student places the prayer cloth on the ground, then the other three students place their object onto the prayer cloth. The remaining students form a circle around the prayer space.

Invite the students to stand and pray in silence for one minute.

Take the Bible and raise it to eye-height. Rotate, holding the Bible, so that all the students can see.

Catechist: This is the word of God.

God speaks to us through His word.

May we be open to hearing the word.

Students: God, our Father, teach us the your word.

All: In the name of the Father ...

Middle

(40 minutes)

Gather the students around the lectern.

Tell the students: Today, we gather around the lectern where we hear Father proclaim the word at Mass.

When we go to Mass we see Father reading from a big book called the lectionary. In this book are all the readings that are read at Mass. These stories have come from the Bible, which we call 'The word of God'. Today we are reading one of those stories from the Gospel of John. (You can use another gospel story if you wish.)

(If Father is available, he could proclaim the word to the students. If Father is unavailable, the catechist will tell the students that this is what Father would say and do and act in the role of the priest.)

Tell the students: When we listen to the gospel being proclaimed, particularly at Mass on Sunday, we stand to listen and show that it is important.

Invite the students to stand and recite or sing the gospel acclamation.

PREPARATION

1. Invite the parish priest to join your class to proclaim the word to them. Father might like to talk to the students about his ministry of the word.
2. Prayer focus: A cloth, a candle, a crucifix and the Bible.
3. CD player and reflective music.
4. Prayer Strip

God, our Father,
teach us your word.

5. Lectern (if possible) – Drape with a green banner/cloth displaying the liturgical season.
6. Use the Bible to proclaim the word (Jn 10: 3 – 4, 14), or you might like to use the text in Appendix 18, page 102.
7. Write the Gospel acclamation and the response to the Gospel on a sheet of paper or on the whiteboard, before the lesson begins, e.g. Alleluia, Alleluia (this can be sung if you have music available).
8. Butcher's paper to record answers and for the 'Y' chart below.



9. Workbooks.

Father/Catechist: A reading from the Gospel according to John.
(Trace the Sign of the Cross on the book.)

Tell the students: We now make a small Sign of the Cross on our forehead, our lips and our heart. When we do this we are asking God to be **in our mind, on our lips and in our hearts**, as we live out the gospel and try to be like Jesus through the week.

Father/Catechist: Lots of people wanted to be near Jesus ...
(Conclude by holding up the word)

Father/Catechist: This is the Gospel of the Lord.

All: Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.

Invite the students to sit in pairs, hand out the workbooks and invite the students to open at page 61.

Tell the students: I want you to work with the person beside you, to complete the Y chart. Write down what you saw, heard and felt while you were listening to the proclamation of the word. (Allow five minutes for the completion of this activity.)

Explain the activity further by giving the following examples:

What did you **see**? e.g. *Father kissed the word of God.*

What did you **hear**? *Father telling the story*

What did you **feel**? What feelings did you have when you heard different parts of the story?

Invite one student from each pair to share one answer for each question. Record the answers on the 'Y Chart' on the butcher's paper.

Tell the students that after Father has proclaimed the word he uses his own words to help us to understand the story that we have just heard. We call this the homily. This is a special job given only to the priest. This is how Father teaches us the word of God. It is at this time that we are helped by Father to understand the message of the Gospel and the readings. Father gives us direction about how we can live our lives as followers of Jesus.

Invite the students to open their workbooks at page 62 and complete the 'fill-the-gap' activity. When they have finished, read the sentence together. (*Father teaches us the word of God*).

End

(2 minutes)

Say to the students, today we have learnt about how Father teaches us the word of God.

Catechist: Let's stand and together make the Sign of the Cross and say the Our Father.

All: In the name of the Father ...

All: Our Father ...

Dismiss the students as usual.

Appendix 18 – The Good Shepherd

A reading from the Gospel according to John.

'Very truly, I tell you, anyone who does not enter the sheepfold by the gate but climbs in by another way is a thief and a bandit. The one who enters by the gate is the shepherd of the sheep. The gatekeeper opens the gate for him, and the sheep hear his voice. He calls his own sheep by name and leads them out. When he has brought out all his own, he goes ahead of them and the sheep follow him because they know his voice... I am the good shepherd. I know my own and my own know me, just as the Father knows me and I know the Father.

This is the gospel of the Lord.

(Jn 10: 1–4, 14–15)

We Praise God's Goodness in Creation

Background for the Catechist

Please take 10 minutes to reflect on the following introduction to this lesson.

Reflection/Doctrinal Reference

Because God creates through wisdom, his creation is ordered: 'You have arranged all things by measure and number and weight' (Wis 11: 20). The universe, created in and by the eternal Word, the 'image of the invisible God', is destined for and addressed to man, himself created in the 'image of God' and called to a personal relationship with God (Col 1: 15; Gen 1: 26). Our human understanding, which shares in the light of the divine intellect, can understand what God tells us by means of his creation, though not without great effort and only in a spirit of humility and respect before the Creator and his work. Because creation comes forth from God's goodness, it shares in that goodness – 'And God saw that it was good ... very good' (Gen 1: 4, 10, 12, 18, 21, 31) – for God willed creation as a gift addressed to man, an inheritance destined for and entrusted to him (CCC, n. 299).

The beauty and diversity of creation are key pointers to the greatness and glory of their creator. The world points us towards its maker; everything we see or experience or learn about the world's wonders, intricacies and grandeur leads us to more profound appreciation of, and rejoicing in, God. From this appreciation and rejoicing grows authentic praise, a vital part of the Christian response to God.

Student Focus

The natural world, the scientific world, landscapes and seascapes and flowers, animals, insects, experiments, why stones fall, how kites fly – is there anything in creation that is not a source of interest and wonder to an eight or nine-year-old? Making the connection between this sense of wonder and excitement and praise and thanks with its Creator is an easy and natural one.

Teaching Point

We praise God's goodness in creation.

Remembering Point

We praise God's goodness in creation.

Beginning

(10 minutes)

Welcome the students as usual and gather them around you at the front. Invite the students to make the Sign of the Cross together and then pray the Our Father.

Point to the mural displayed on the whiteboard.

Ask the students: Can anyone tell me what we might be going to look at today in our lesson? *(Take all the answers from the students, encouraging them with comments like, 'Thank you, Paula, that is a good answer, we might be looking at the plants and trees around us. Can anyone add to that?')*

Tell the students that this lesson will be revisiting God's creation.

Point to the mural and **ask the students:** Which day from our story about creation do you like best, and why?

Invite the students to turn to the person beside them and share their answer. Then after two minutes invite the pairs to share with the whole group.

Middle

(35 minutes)

Hand out the student workbooks. Then **ask the students:** Of all of God's creation what is the most marvellous and why? *(Encourage the students to be specific about God's creation and what they like about creation. Encourage the students to be as descriptive as possible about why they like something. Give students an example such as 'I especially like the stars because there are so many and they light up the night'.)*

Invite the students to record their answers in the workbook on page 63. Give the students about 10 minutes for this task.

Invite the students to sit around you on the floor and **ask them:** Why are these creations of God so marvellous? *(Generally all the answers that the students give will be acceptable. Draw the students toward the conclusion that creation is marvellous because God is good and creation shares in God's goodness.)*

Tell the students: In the story of creation that we looked at in our very first lesson this year, we read that on each day after God had created something, God looked at it and saw that it was good. All of God's creation is good. We can and should praise God for the goodness that is in creation.

Ask the students: How might we praise God for the goodness of creation? *(List the students' answers on the whiteboard, e.g. create music, sing, pray, dance, write, draw, ...)*

PREPARATION

1. Prayer focus: Any coloured cloth, a candle and the Bible.
2. Pachelbel's Canon in D or other appropriate music.
3. CD player.
4. Workbooks.
5. Instruction cards from Appendix 19, pages 107–108, one for each student.
6. Responses to the prayer written on cards:

We praise God's goodness.

We praise God for the goodness of creation.
7. Mural from lesson one attached to the whiteboard.
8. A3 sheet of paper for each student in the drawing group.
9. Coloured pens or pencils.
10. Any musical instruments that you have access to.
11. Blu-Tack.
12. If you have decided to have some parents in to help, make sure you have run through the lesson with them. Clearly outline what they are to do to help with the lesson.

PREPARATION

Tell the students: Let's use some of these ways of praising God and come up with how we might praise God today in our closing prayer for the goodness of creation.

Allocate the students to three groups: music, dance or drawing.

Hand out the instruction cards to the groups and allow 15 minutes for the groups to prepare their response to creation. Provide music for the dance group and instruments, if available, for the music group.

Move between the groups and assist as necessary. (You might find it helpful to have a couple of parents in to help you with this activity.)

(The drawing group will create the prayer focus by bringing forward the cloth, the candle and the Bible. As part of the prayer, they will also bring forward their posters while everyone responds with a set response. After the drawing group the music group will share their musical expression of creation and everyone responds. Then the dance group shares their movement in response to the goodness of creation after which all respond.)

Choose the students in the drawing group who will create the prayer focus, and explain their task.

After the groups have finished preparing their response, gather the students around you for the prayer.

End

(15 minutes)

Have all the necessary elements for the prayer focus beside you. Ensure that the drawing group have their pictures with them and the music group have their instruments.

Invite the students to be still and quiet.

Catechist: Today we have looked at how we can praise God's goodness in creation. We are now going to share our praise through drawing, music and movement. Let us begin our prayer by preparing our prayer focus. Would the students who are preparing the focus come forward and do so.

Pause to allow the students to prepare the prayer focus.

Catechist: Each day we see the glory of God's creation in the things around us. Let us pray today in praise of God's creation.

(First student from drawing group) will now share with us her/his praise for God's goodness in creation.

First student: In the ... (part of creation)

All: We praise God's goodness.

Second student: In the ... (part of creation)

All: We praise God's goodness.

... (continue until all pictures have been shared)

Catechist: (First student from music group) will now introduce the sounds of creation

First student: In the sound of ... (part of creation)

(All students in the music group make sounds)

All: We praise God's goodness.

Second student: In the sound of ... (part of creation)

All: We praise God's goodness.

... (continue until all sounds are shared.)

Catechist: (First student in dance group) will now introduce the movement of creation.

First student: In the movement of ... (part of creation)

All: We praise God's goodness.

Second student: In the movement of ... (part of creation)

All: We praise God's goodness.

(Repeat until all movement is shared.)

Catechist: We have seen the pictures, we have heard the sounds and we have watched the movement. Let us now sit in silence thinking about the goodness of God's creation.

Pause

Catechist: Let us praise God's goodness together.

All: We praise God for the goodness of creation. Amen.

Thank the students for their participation and collect the workbooks.

Dismiss the students as usual.

Appendix 19 – Responding to God's Creation

DRAWING

Each person choose one of the marvels of creation from page 63 of your workbook.

Draw your individual choice of creation on an A3 sheet.

At the beginning of the prayer three students from your group will prepare the Prayer focus with the cloth, the candle and the Bible. (The catechist will tell you who will do this task.)

During the prayer the catechist will ask each student to take their picture up to the prayer focus, hold it up facing the group and say:

E.g. *In the ...* (your choice of creation)

All respond: We praise God's goodness.

Then place your drawing on the prayer focus and return to your seat.

MUSIC

Each person choose one of the marvels of creation from page 63 of your workbook.

As a group decide what sound might best describe this marvel of creation. E.g. The wind might be represented by everyone blowing noisily.

Do this for each member of the group.

During the prayer the catechist will invite your group to present your sounds one at a time.

One student will be allocated to introduce each sound as follows:

In the ... (the marvel of creation you have chosen) ... The group then produces the sound for the count of five.

After the sound all respond with: We praise God's goodness.

Each student will need to count to five in their head while making the sound.

The sounds can be created through the mouth, through instruments (if available) or through whatever can be found in the room that will make the sounds you want.

Appendix 19 – Responding to God's Creation (Continued)

DANCE

Each person choose one of the marvels of creation from page 63 of your workbook.

As a group decide what movement might best describe this marvel of creation. e.g. The wind might be represented by everyone swaying to the music.

Do this for each member of the group.

During the prayer the catechist will invite your group to present your movement one at a time. One student will be allocated to introduce each movement as follows:

In the ... (the marvel of creation you have chosen) ...

The movement then follows for the count of five.

After the movement all respond with: We praise God's goodness

Each student will need to count to five in their head while making the movement.

Some music will be provided to accompany your movement.

LESSON 20

Jesus' Life and Teaching

Background for the Catechist

Please take 10 minutes to reflect on the following introduction to this lesson.

Reflection/Doctrinal Reference

The Gospels are the heart of all the Scriptures 'because they are our principal source for the life and teachings of the Incarnate Word, our Saviour' (DV, n. 18) (CCC, n. 125).

The New Testament deals explicitly with God's self-revelation in Jesus. The four gospels at the heart of the New Testament are four testimonies to the life of Jesus, written so that we might have a means of understanding both his life as a human person and the great themes of his teaching.

Student Focus

Students are vitally interested in story. This lesson offers an insight into one aspect of Jesus' life as a child in Nazareth and one aspect of his teaching.

Teaching Point

The gospels, part of the New Testament, are one of the ways we know about the life and teachings of Jesus.

Remembering Point

The gospel stories tell us about Jesus' life and teachings.

Beginning

(5 minutes)

Welcome the students as usual.

Gather the students to stand around the prayer focus.

Invite the students to get ready for prayer.

All: In the name of the Father ...

(Catechist lights the candle and says something like: we light this candle to remind us of God's presence.)

Catechist: We thank you, God, for the gift of the Bible, especially the New Testament, because that's where we learn lots about Jesus' life and teaching.

Students: We praise you, we bless you, we thank you.

Catechist: We thank you, God, for the gift of Jesus' life among us.

Students: We praise you, we bless you, we thank you.

Catechist: We thank you, God, for the teachings of Jesus.

Students: We praise you, we bless you, we thank you.

Catechist: Let's pray together:

All: Glory be to the Father ...

Middle

(30 minutes)

Invite the students to return to their places. Tell the students that there are two main parts of the Bible: the Old Testament and the New Testament. (Show the students the title pages of these sections.)

Remind the students that the stories about Jesus are in gospels in the New Testament.

Tell the students: Today we are going to look at two different stories from Luke's Gospel. One is a story about Jesus when he was a boy; the other is a story that Jesus told about a shepherd and his sheep.

Read the story of the boy Jesus in the Temple (Lk 2: 41–51). See Appendix 20a on page 113 for the text. Invite the students to open their workbooks at page 66 and to follow the text as you read it.

Ask the students:

- How can we tell that Mary and Joseph were travelling in a crowd of people? (*There must have been a crowd with lots of children because Mary and Joseph didn't notice that Jesus was missing.*)
- How long do you think it would take to walk 105 kilometres? (*A week, a day, a few days ...*)

PREPARATION

1. Prayer focus: cloth, candle, Bible.

2. Prayer strip:

We praise you, we bless you, we thank you.

3. Workbooks.

4. Practise saying the mirror mime by heart. See Appendix 20c on page 114. (A mirror mime involves the catechist telling the story with actions and inviting the students to mirror or copy those actions.)

Tell the students: This story tells something about Jesus when he was a boy. Now we're going to hear a story that Jesus told when he was a man.

Tell the story (using a mirror mime) of the lost sheep (Lk 15: 1–7) found in Appendix 20c on page 114.

Invite the students to stand and copy your actions as you read the text. (You might have to repeat it so that the students get a sense of the story and the message.)

Send the students back to their seats.

Ask the students: Why do you think Jesus said God will be happier about one sinner saying sorry than about the 99 who don't need to say sorry? (Accept the students' answers.)

Tell the students this story is a story Jesus made up. He told the story to teach people about God.

Place six chairs at the front of the class with one 'hot seat' slightly forward in the middle.

Invite the students to play Hot Seat. Select five students to sit in each of the five chairs at the front. Keep the 'hot seat' empty.

Pick one of the five students for the 'hot seat.

Play the game. Ask one question at a time. The student may answer or pass and leave the chair. A correct answer allows the student to stay in the chair. An incorrect answer puts the student out of the game. Pass means that student goes to the end of the line and waits for another chance.

Ask the following questions: (The answers are in bold type).

HOW FAR IS IT FROM NAZARETH TO JERUSALEM?

- a. 20 km **b. 105 km** c. 100 metres d. 1000 miles

HOW MANY SHEEP WERE NOT LOST?

- a. 1 b. 100 **c. 99** d. None

HOW OLD WAS JESUS WHEN HE STAYED BEHIND IN THE TEMPLE?

- a. 10 years b. 11 years **c. 12 years** d. 13 years

TO WHOM DID JESUS TELL THE STORY OF THE LOST SHEEP?

- a. Pharisees** b. Pharaoh c. sinners d. tax collectors

HOW LONG WOULD YOU KEEP LOOKING FOR THE LOST SHEEP?

- a. 3 days b. a day c. an hour **d. until you find it**

HOW LONG WAS JESUS IN JERUSALEM?

- a. 3 days **b. 11 days** c. a month d. a weekend

HOW MANY MAIN PARTS ARE THERE IN THE BIBLE?

- a. 50 b. 4 c. 12 **d. 2**

WHAT WAS JESUS DOING IN THE TEMPLE?

- a. listening** b. cleaning c. teaching d. hiding

WHAT DOES GOD OUR FATHER DO WHEN SINNERS SAY SORRY?

- a. Say I forgive you b. Put them in a naughty chair
c. Rejoice in heaven d. Hug them

End

(10 minutes)

Invite the five students to return to their seats and hand out the workbooks.

Tell the students: Today we listened to two stories from the New Testament. One was about Jesus' life as a young boy and the other was a story Jesus told the people who followed him.

Ask the students: What have we learnt about Jesus' life and teachings? *(Accept the answers provided. The learning will be different for each student. Affirm them in their answers.)*

Invite the students to open to page 67 in their workbook at the 'What have we learnt' section. Tell them to record their answers to the question in the space provided. When they have completed this, direct the students to complete the break-the-code activity on page 67 (cf. Appendix 20b, page 113 for the answer).

Invite the students to say the secret message together.

Gather the students around the prayer focus.

Catechist: Today we have listened to the stories in the New Testament. I will read the story of the Lost Sheep, and we will do the actions together.

But first, let us make the Sign of the Cross.

All: In the name of the Father ...

Use the mirror mime to tell the story of the Lost Sheep.

Catechist: This is just one story Jesus told; there are many more. Let us take a few moments to think about how much more we can know about God and about Jesus by reading and hearing the stories from the New Testament.

Catechist: Repeat after me: Thank you, God, for all the stories Jesus told.

Students: Thank you, God, for all the stories Jesus told.

Catechist: Glory be to the Father ...

All: Glory be to the Father ...

Dismiss the students as usual.

Appendix 20a – Jesus is Found in the Temple

Now every year his parents went to Jerusalem (about 105 kilometres) for the festival of the Passover (which lasted for about eight days). And when he was twelve years old, they went up as usual for the festival. When the festival was ended and they started to return, the boy Jesus stayed behind in Jerusalem, but his parents did not know it. Assuming that he was in the group of travellers, they went a day's journey. Then they started to look for him among their relatives and friends. When they did not find him, they returned to Jerusalem to search for him. After three days they found him in the temple, sitting among the teachers, listening to them and asking them questions. And all who heard him were amazed at his understanding and his answers. When his parents saw him they were astonished; and his mother said to him, 'Child, why have you treated us like this? Look, your father and I have been searching for you in great anxiety.' He said to them, 'Why were you searching for me? Did you not know that I must be in my Father's house?' But they did not understand what he said to them. Then he went down with them and came to Nazareth, and was obedient to them. His mother treasured all these things in her heart.

(Lk 2: 41–51)

Appendix 20b – Answer for the Break-the-Code Activity

The gospel stories tell us about Jesus' life and teachings.

Appendix 20c – Mirror Mime: The Lost Sheep

| TEXT | ACTIONS |
|--|---|
| Jesus often talked to tax-collectors and sinners. | <i>Talking hands.</i> |
| The Pharisees and the scribes thought them unsuitable companions. | <i>Hold nose.</i> |
| Jesus said, 'If you had a hundred sheep | <i>Open and close both hands 10 times.</i> |
| And one went missing | <i>Hold up one finger and put your hand behind your back.</i> |
| You would go and look for the lost one. | <i>Walk on the spot with one hand shielding your eyes.</i> |
| You would keep looking for it until you found it. | <i>Look up, down, left and right.</i> |
| You would carry it home on your shoulders. | <i>Pretend to put sheep across shoulders and walk.</i> |
| You would call your friends together | <i>Put hands on either side of mouth.</i> |
| to celebrate finding the lost sheep'. | <i>Pretend to drink and laugh.</i> |

Jesus finished by saying, 'God will be happier about one sinner saying sorry than about 99 who don't need to say sorry'.

(Lk 15: 1-7)

Baptism, Confirmation and Eucharist

Background for the Catechist

Please take 10 minutes to reflect on the following introduction to this lesson.

Reflection/Doctrinal Reference

The sacraments of Christian initiation – Baptism, Confirmation, and the Eucharist – lay the foundations of every Christian life. 'The sharing in the divine nature given to men through the grace of Christ bears a certain likeness to the origin, development, and nourishing of natural life. The faithful are born anew by Baptism, strengthened by the sacrament of Confirmation, and receive in the Eucharist the food of eternal life. By means of these sacraments of Christian initiation, they thus receive in increasing measure the treasures of the divine life and advance toward the perfection of charity' (DCN) (CCC, n. 1212).

The wonderful thing about the sacraments is that they are not just words but symbolic actions which bring about in us the reality they symbolise. It is the difference between being told about something and actually experiencing it. Catholic sacramental life places great emphasis on the use of basic materials like water, bread, wine and oil. Just a small reflection on the usual function of these things can open us up to the effect that they have on our lives of faith. Water gives life, cleanses, and refreshes. Oil anoints and marks people out for special roles, e.g. kings and priest are anointed (and so were prophets). Bread sustains and enables life and growth. Wine cheers us and makes us glow. Each of the sacraments of initiation does the same for us in relation to the Church. Baptism gives us life in Christ and cleanses from sin. At Confirmation we are marked out for Christ by the seal of the Holy Spirit imprinted with chrism on our foreheads. His identity is our identity, his mission, our mission. At the Eucharist we come again and again to be fed and to be incorporated into Christ as our bodies absorb his sacramental body and blood.

Student Focus

As students of this age quite often have experiences of joining different clubs and groups, they come to realise that different groups have different ways of incorporating new members. Therefore they should have no difficulty understanding that the Church too has special periods of preparation and rituals to introduce and support members of the Church.

Teaching Point

The sacraments of Baptism, Confirmation and Eucharist draw us more deeply into the life of the Church.

Remembering Point

The sacraments of Baptism, Confirmation and Eucharist bring me into the life of the Church.

Beginning

(5 minutes)

Welcome the students as usual.

Gather the students at the entrance to the room. Use an appropriate song for the procession, such as 'Come to the Water' from *As One Voice*.

Choose eight students to process in with the symbols to the prayer space. Give one symbol to each of the eight students. i.e. One student to process in with the Bible and one with a candle. The other six to carry symbols of the sacraments of Baptism, Eucharist and Confirmation.

Tell the students to process in reverently and place their symbols on the prayer cloth.

Invite the students to form a circle and stand around the prayer cloth. Those who do not have a symbol are to process in and join the circle. Once everyone has gathered prepare the students for prayer.

Catechist: Today we pray that we will come to understand that through the sacraments of initiation we are welcomed as members of the Church. We ask this through Christ, our Lord,

All: Amen.

Middle

(30 minutes)

Ask the students:

- Who belongs to a group or club? (*Football club, ballet class. Accept the responses and affirm the students.*)
- What happened when you first joined the group? (*I was welcomed, I was introduced to people, things were explained to me.*)

Tell the students: The Catholic Church, too, has ways of welcoming people to give them a sense of belonging. We have three sacraments in particular that welcome us into the Church. They are called Baptism, Eucharist and Confirmation.

Ask the students:

- What can you tell me about Baptism? (*The priest uses water, we all have Godparents.*)

Tell the students: Through Baptism we are welcomed into God's family, the Church. The priest pours water over our head and says, 'I baptise you in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit,' and he anoints you with oil.

PREPARATION

1. Prayer focus: A brightly coloured cloth large enough to hold all the symbols. Also a candle and the Bible, to be brought in in the procession.
2. The following symbols of the sacraments of initiation:
 - Bowl, and jug filled with water (Baptism)
 - Grapes and bread (Eucharist)
 - Clear glass vessel of olive oil and cut-out red flame (Confirmation).

These will be used in the closing prayer at the end of the lesson.

3. Prayer strip:

Welcome me, Lord,
into your family.

4. Appropriate music for prayer such as 'Come to the Water' from *As One Voice*.
5. Copy and cut out the strips of paper with the sacrament names, provided in Appendix 21a on page 119.
6. Stick a sacrament strip to the middle of A3 sheets of paper, as below. Laminate if possible. You will need a set for each group.

Baptism
7. Copy, laminate (if possible) and cut out one set of images for each group. See Appendix 21b on pages 120–123.
8. Blu-Tack or sticky tape.
9. Workbooks.

Ask the students: What can you tell me about the Eucharist? (We use bread and wine)

Tell the students: Receiving the sacrament of the Eucharist means that we are being welcomed to the table of the Lord. We are being nourished by the body and blood of Jesus. We share in the bread and wine that becomes the real presence of Jesus.

Ask the students: What can you tell me about Confirmation? (Confirmed by the Bishop, a special sacrament of the Holy Spirit.)

Tell the students: Preparing for the sacrament of Confirmation helps us to understand better the gift of the Holy Spirit that we received at Baptism. We are strengthened in the gifts and fruits of the Holy Spirit that help us live as the disciples did. We are anointed with the oil of chrism like we were at our Baptism and the Bishop says, 'Be sealed with the Holy Spirit'.

Organise the students into groups of three or four. Give each group a set of A3 sheets of paper labelled with Baptism, Confirmation and Eucharist. Give each group a set of the laminated images. Tell the students that in their group they need to decide which images belong to which sacrament and stick the images to the correct sheet.

For example, **ask the students:** Where might the image of water go? (If the students do not respond, help the students to come to the response, 'Baptism'.)

Show the students where to place the image of water. Tell the students to complete the task attaching all of the images they have been given.

When each group has completed the activity **invite the students** to bring their answer sheets with them and form a circle around the prayer space. Tell the students to stay in their groups.

Ask the students: Where does the image of ... belong?

Work through each image, asking for the students' response. Assist the students to come to the answer themselves, especially where they have placed an image incorrectly.

End

(10 minutes)

Tell the students: The sacraments of Baptism, Eucharist and Confirmation are called the sacraments of initiation. These three sacraments welcome us and bring us into the life of the Church.

Invite the students to open their workbooks at page 68 and complete the Fill-the-Gap activity.

When the students have finished, **invite the students** to gather around the prayer focus.

Tell the students: In our prayer today, we are going to use some of the symbols of Baptism, Eucharist and Confirmation to remind us of the sacraments.

Invite the students to pray: Let us think about what we have been doing today, the new things we have learnt and the things we already knew and were reminded of.

Catechist: Our response to our prayer today is:

Welcome me, Lord, into your family.

Catechist: While pouring the water from the jug into the bowl say:

Jesus, we were baptised in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. May we always feel welcomed as members of the Church.

Students: Welcome me, Lord, into your family.

Catechist: Take the loaf of bread and while breaking it in half say:

Jesus, you are the bread of life. May we be nourished by the bread and wine we share.

Students: Welcome me, Lord, into your family.

Catechist: Take the bowl of oil and while making the sign of the cross on your forehead say: Jesus, you call us to action. May we always be good disciples.

Students: Welcome me, Lord, into your family.

Catechist: We pray this through Christ, our Lord

All: Amen.

Dismiss the students as usual.

Appendix 21a – Names of the Sacraments

BAPTISM

EUCHARIST

CONFIRMATION

Appendix 21b – Image Set of the Symbols of Baptism, Confirmation and Eucharist

Photocopy these images, laminate them and distribute a set to each group.



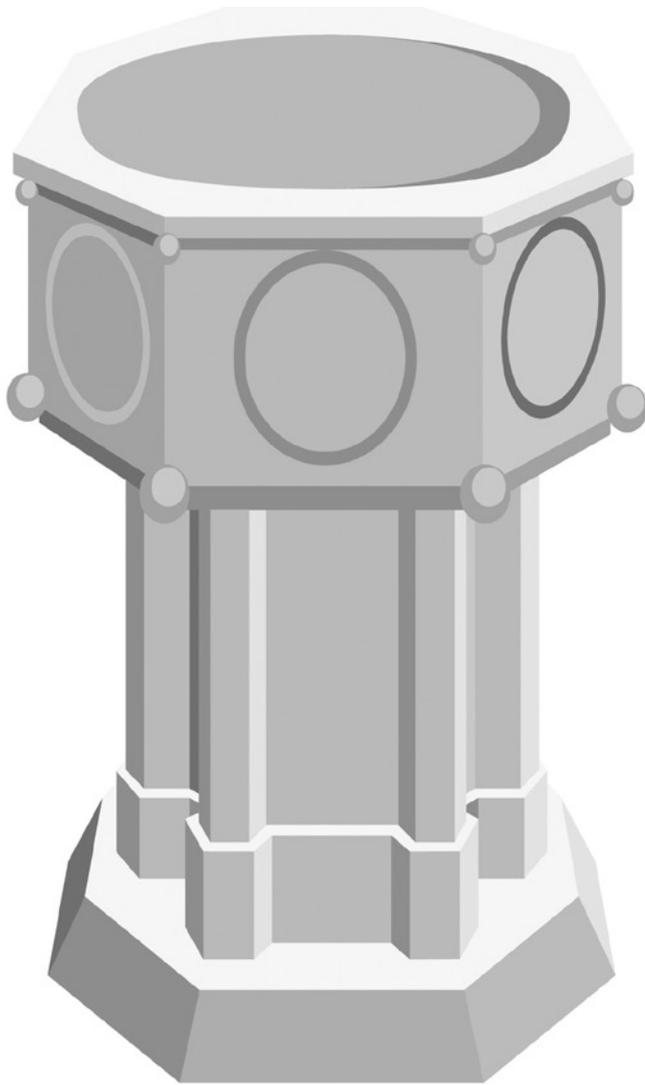
Candle



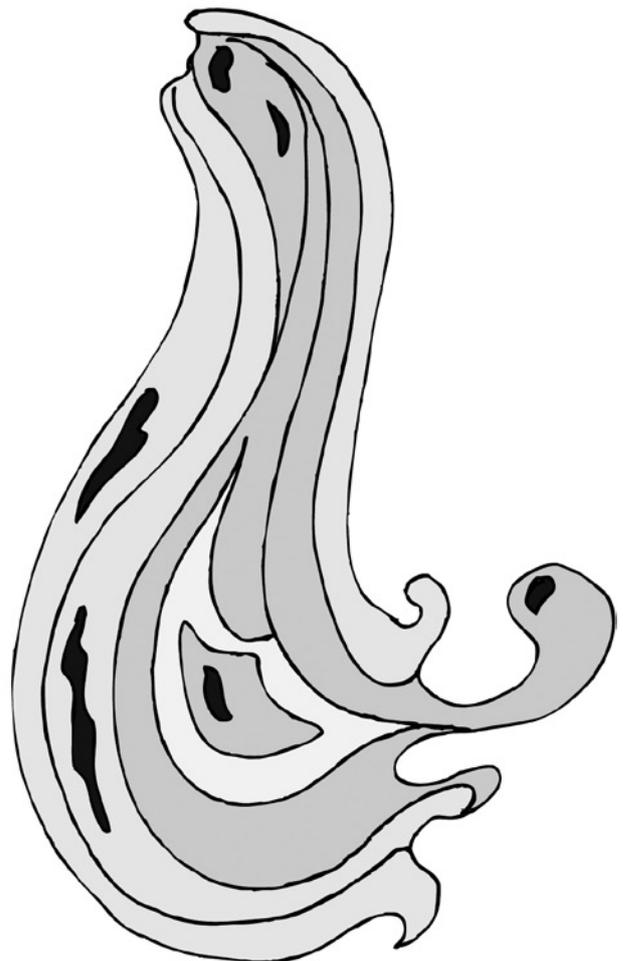
Chalice and Host

Appendix 21b – Image Set of the Symbols of Baptism, Confirmation and Eucharist (continued)

Photocopy these images, laminate them and distribute a set to each group.



Baptismal Font



Water

Appendix 21b – Image Set of the Symbols of Baptism, Confirmation and Eucharist (continued)

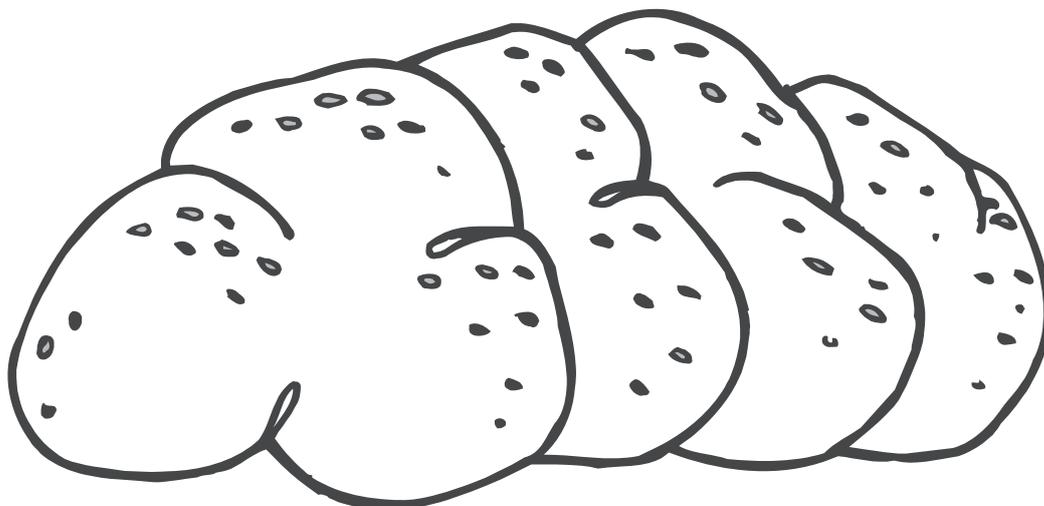
Photocopy these images, laminate them and distribute a set to each group.



Dove



Grapes for Wine



Bread

Appendix 21b – Image Set of the Symbols of Baptism, Confirmation and Eucharist (continued)

Photocopy these images, laminate them and distribute a set to each group.



Oil



White Garment

Mary is the Mother of the Church

Background for Catechist

Please take 10 minutes to reflect on the following introduction to this lesson.

Reflection/Doctrinal Reference

By her complete adherence to the Father's will, to his Son's redemptive work, and to every prompting of the Holy Spirit, the Virgin Mary is the Church's model of faith and charity. Thus she is a 'preeminent and ... wholly unique member of the Church'; indeed, she is the 'exemplary realization' of the Church. Her role in relation to the Church and to all humanity goes still further. 'In a wholly singular way she cooperated by her obedience, faith, hope, and burning charity in the Saviour's work of restoring supernatural life to souls. For this reason she is a mother to us in the order of grace' (CCC, nn. 967–968).

We are used to thinking of Mary as the mother of Jesus but often overlook her role as mother and model of the Church. In John's Gospel, as Jesus is dying he looks on his mother and the beloved disciple standing at the foot of the cross and gives these most loved sharers of his lifework into the care of each other. The Beloved Disciple represents each believer in Christ. All of us are invited to look to Mary as our mother, asking her prayers for us and those we love, trusting in her care and modelling our response to God on her response. Mary is also called 'first among the faithful', the first and greatest believer. In her faith in Christ and in her love for him and for others, she is the perfect model for all members of the Church.

Student Focus

While students at this stage love and appreciate their mothers, their focus is beginning to move beyond home to the wider world of friends, school, games, sport and various other interests. They are free to explore their world because they have the security of their mother's love. This concrete personal experience can apply also to the life of faith. Having the assurance of a loving mother, we are free to explore, to test, to savour the variety of experiences God's world offers.

Teaching Point

Mary is the mother of the Church.

Remembering Point

Mary is the mother of the Church.

PREPARATION

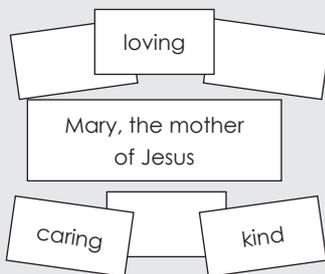
1. Prayer focus: white cloth, green candle, an icon of Mary (if you have one), and the Bible.
2. NB Some students' home life might not be ideal. This does not mean that you can't talk about motherhood and the positive qualities of mothers. Ask the questions as the ideal of motherhood and not especially referring to their own experience.
3. Cut out the flashcards (Appendices 22a and 22c on pages 127, 128 and 130.)

4. Make two flashcards:

Mary, the mother
of Jesus

Mary, the mother
of the Church

5. Concept Web:



6. Collect images of Mary and the Beloved Disciple at the foot of the cross, and of Mary with the disciples at the first Pentecost (at least 1 of each), from art books, and religious calendars. Religious images are also available on the Internet. (Sometimes the twelfth Station of the Cross shows Mary and the Beloved Disciple at the foot of the cross.)

7. Prayer strip:

Mary, the Mother
of the Church, is ...

8. Workbooks.

Beginning

(10 minutes)

Welcome the students as usual and gather them around the prayer focus.

Invite the students to make the Sign of the Cross and to pray the Hail Mary together.

Ask the students: What is special about the mother you would most like to have?

To answer this question use the cards from Appendix 22a (page 127–128) that you have prepared, and place them on the floor or table upside down in front of the students. Invite the students to take turns to select a card and decide if the word answers the question. If yes, then they can place the card on the motherhood pile. If not, then it can be placed on the other pile. When the cards are sorted, invite the students to select one card each that describes Mary as mother of Jesus.

Middle

(35 minutes)

Using Blu-Tack, place the flashcard 'Mary, the mother of Jesus' on the whiteboard and invite the students to place their cards around it to form a concept web.

Invite the students to open their workbooks at page 71 and order the phrases chronologically to create a story about Mary. (You might need to help the students with this activity. Answers can be found in Appendix 22b, page 129.)

Tell the students that you want them to listen carefully as different students read the story and to be ready to continue at the right place when asked. **Select one student** who has put the first two in the correct order to begin reading. Then ask another student to continue, then another, and so on until they reach the end.

Tell the students that when Jesus was dying he looked at his mother and the beloved disciple standing at the foot of the cross and gave them into the care of each other.

Invite the students to look carefully at the image of Mary and the beloved disciple.

Ask the students these questions: (Allow them to respond freely.)

- What do you notice in this image?
- What do you think is interesting?
- What are you wondering about? (Don't try to answer their wonderings. Affirm their contribution.)

Ask the students: How do you think Mary and the disciples felt when Jesus died on the cross? (*Sad, sorry, upset, worried ...*)

Tell the students: Yes, they were all very sad and they were also afraid that what happened to Jesus might happen to them too.

Show the students an image of the first Pentecost. Remind them (cf. Lesson 16) that 50 days after Jesus rose from the dead the Holy Spirit came on the disciples.

Ask the students: *(Allow them to respond freely.)*

- What do you notice in this image?
- What do you think is interesting?
- What are you wondering about?
- What do you think the artist was trying to say about Mary?

Ask the students: What words would you use to describe Mary? *(strong, faithful, prayerful, loyal, ...)* *(Write these on the whiteboard.)*

Invite the students to choose a word and to write it on a blank card (Appendix 22c on page 130). Invite them to add their cards to the concept web.

Tell the students: When Jesus gave the beloved disciple and his mother into each other's care he was giving Mary to the whole Church, he was making Mary the mother of the Church, our mother. Mary, mother of the Church, helps us to be like her: strong, loving, kind, loyal, ... *(all the words used in the concept web).*

Place the flashcard 'Mary, the mother of the Church' over the previous one (Mary, the mother of Jesus) and tell them that all these words describe Mary, the mother of the Church, too.

Invite the students to complete the sentence, 'Mary, the mother of the Church is ... ' on page 71 of their workbook.

Tell the students: You can use the words on the concept web to help you.

End

(5 minutes)

Ask the students to collect from the whiteboard the card that they had put there and to bring it with them as they gather around the prayer focus.

Catechist: Let's get ready to pray by being still and quiet. *(Pause for a few seconds.)*

Let's begin with the Sign of the Cross.

All: In the name of the Father ...

Catechist: I invite you to finish this sentence with the word on your card. Then I invite you to place your card on the prayer focus.

Student: Mary, the mother of the Church, is ...

Catechist: Let's say the Hail Mary.

All: Hail, Mary, full of grace ...

Dismiss the students as usual.

PREPARATION

Appendix 22a – Characteristics of Mothers

Enlarge this and the following page onto A3 sheets, cut out the words and either laminate them or use them as they are for the activity on page 71 of the workbook.

Kind

Nasty

Funny

Understanding

Strong

Gentle

Bossy

Cuddly

Shares

Appendix 22a – Characteristics of Mothers (continued)

Enlarge this and the preceding page onto A3 sheets, cut out the words and either laminate them or use them as they are for the activity on page 71 of the workbook.

Loving

Thoughtful

Faithful

Gracious

Friendly

Hateful

Cold

Caring

Selfish

Appendix 22b – Mary’s Story (Answers)

Mary’s story has been jumbled up. Read the phrases and work out the order in which they happened. Write the numbers 1 – 8 in the boxes to unjumble the story.

Mary ...

- was with Jesus when he died on the cross.
- searched for Jesus when he was lost in Jerusalem.
- was with the disciples when the Holy Spirit came on them at Pentecost.
- married Joseph the carpenter.
- was born in Israel.
- visited her cousin Elizabeth when she needed help.
- had a visit from a messenger from God.
- said ‘Yes’ to God about becoming the mother of Jesus.

Appendix 22c – Blank Cards

Enlarge this onto A3 sheets, cut out the cards and use them for the second part of the concept web.

Jesus Showed Us How to Love God and Others

Background for Catechist

Please take 10 minutes to reflect on the following introduction to this lesson.

Reflection/Doctrinal Reference

The Son of God ... worked with human hands; he thought with a human mind. He acted with a human will, and with a human heart he loved. Born of the Virgin Mary, he has truly been made one of us, like to us in all things except sin (CCC, n. 470).

When someone asks him, 'Which commandment in the Law is the greatest?' Jesus replies: 'You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind. This is the greatest and first commandment. And a second is like it: You shall love your neighbour as yourself' (CCC, n. 2055).

Sometimes Jesus is relegated even by adults to a fantasy world where he does marvellous deeds or tells quirky stories and lives a kind of life that can seem far removed from ours. It is easy to lose sight of the fact that he was one of us. He walked our earth, he looked up and saw the sun and moon in the sky just as we do. More importantly he saw the sadness and lovelessness and pain that can spoil so many lives. He not only saw it but addressed it and overcame it, teaching all he encountered of the love of God and the role of love for others as the way to genuine happiness. The especially good news is that the life of Jesus is not a fairytale – it is real.

Student Focus

Students want to be a part of the 'group'. They want to do what is right and what will help them remain part of the group. Helping the students to recognise the 'template' that Jesus' life provides for us to follow, provides them with the means to remain as full members of the Church. Students of this age also like to hear stories of their heroes, so that they might identify with them. Jesus is a great role model or hero for these students.

Teaching Point

Jesus lived on earth and showed us how to love God and each other.

Remembering Point

Jesus showed us how to love God and others.

Beginning

(5 minutes)

Welcome the students as usual.

Gather the students around the prayer focus. Invite the students to get ready to pray by being still and quiet. Have the prayer response in a prominent place, easily seen.

Catechist: Let's begin with the Sign of the Cross.

All: In the name of the Father ...

Catechist: Jesus showed us how to love God and others.

Students: Jesus showed us how to love God and others.

Catechist: When Jesus shared meals with others,

Students: Jesus showed us how to love God and others.

Catechist: When Jesus washed the disciples' feet,

Students: Jesus showed us how to love God and others.

Catechist: When Jesus told parables like the lost sheep,

Students: Jesus showed us how to love God and others.

Catechist: God, help us today to learn more about how we can be like Jesus in loving God and others.

Students: Jesus showed us how to love God and others.

All: In the name of the Father ...

Invite the students to return to their places.

Middle

(40 minutes)

Divide the class into four groups. Assign two groups to read 'The Wedding at Cana' and the other two to read 'Jairus' Daughter' from their workbooks on page 72 or 73. Tell them to read the story carefully.

Ask the students to decide on one word that best describes Jesus' action in this story.

Ask one student from each group to tell the class what their story was about and what their word describing Jesus' action was. *(They might begin telling the class as follows: My group's story was about ...)*

Distribute a set of action cards to each group (see Appendix 23 on page 134).

Ask the groups to decide which card best describes Jesus' action and place it at the front of their group, ready to share their choice with the large group. Go round each group inviting them to share their action word.

Invite the students to open their workbooks at page 74, and complete the Jesus' Miracles Activity using the text they worked on in their group.

PREPARATION

1. Prayer focus: cloth, candle, Bible.
2. Workbooks.
3. Have the responses: *Jesus showed us how to love God and others, and Jesus, help us to love God and others, on prayer cards or written on the whiteboard.*
4. One set of action cards per group (see Appendix 23 on page 134).

Ask the students to tell you their responses to the last part of the miracle activity.

Tell the students: Jesus did all these things to show us that he loved God and others and he wants us to love God and each other.

Invite the students to think about what this means for them. Direct the students to the Complete-the-Sentence activity on page 75 of their workbooks. Invite them to complete the sentence: I show I love God by ...

Direct the students to the 'Something to Remember' section in the workbook on page 75. Point to the remembering point, which you have displayed on the whiteboard – Jesus showed me how to love God and others – and ask them to copy it in the space provided.

End

(5 minutes)

Gather the students round the prayer focus. Have the prayer response in a prominent place where it will be easily seen. Invite the students to pray.

Catechist: Let us begin with the Sign of the Cross.

All: In the name of the Father ...

Catechist: Jesus showed us how to love God and others.

Jesus, help us to love God and others by visiting our sick friends.

Students: Jesus, help us to love God and others.

Catechist: Jesus, teach us to reach out in friendship to those in need.

Students: Jesus, help us to love God and others.

Catechist: Jesus, remind us to pray for our friends and our own needs.

Students: Jesus, help us to love God and others.

Catechist: Jesus, energise us to care for others.

Students: Jesus, help us to love God and others.

All: In the name of the Father ...

Dismiss the students as usual.

Appendix 23 – Action Cards

Copy a set of these cards for each group of students.

healing

helping

134

134

serving

caring

reaching out

LESSON 24

Jesus Taught Using Parables

Background for the Catechist

Please take 10 minutes to reflect on the following introduction to this lesson.

Reflection/Doctrinal Reference

Jesus' invitation to enter his kingdom comes in the form of parables, a characteristic feature of his teaching. Through his parables he invites people to the feast of the kingdom, but he also asks for a radical choice: to gain the kingdom, one must give everything. Words are not enough, deeds are required. The parables are like mirrors for man: will he be hard soil or good earth for the word? What use has he made of the talents he has received? Jesus and the presence of the kingdom in this world are secretly at the heart of the parables. One must enter the kingdom, that is, become a disciple of Christ, in order to 'know the secrets of the kingdom of heaven'. For those who stay 'outside', everything remains enigmatic (CCC, n. 546).

135

Short stories called parables are a feature of the teaching style of Jesus. They are the kind of story that can be read over and over again. They can be interpreted in all sorts of ways. They can be related to Jesus himself, to the idea of the reign of God and also to our own lives and responses. They are also the kind of stories that are accessible at different levels. They describe the unknown by using the known. They help the listener to discover the deeper meaning and underlying truth of the reality being portrayed. Jesus' parables are further enlivened by the faith of his hearers. Some of the stories are easily accessible to our ordinary human understanding, but without the element of faith some are hard to understand and interpret.

Student Focus

Students of this age can listen to and absorb the meaning of parables. They, like us, make meaning from what they hear. They like to work out what stories mean, to wonder, and to think about them.

Teaching Point

Through the parables of Jesus I know more about God.

Remembering Point

Jesus often used parables to teach about God.

Beginning

(10 minutes)

Welcome the students as usual.

Invite the students to sit in a circle around the prayer focus and light the candle and say:

Catechist: Let us make the Sign of the Cross together.

All: In the name of the Father ...

Catechist: Jesus, you taught us to understand the message of your Father by teaching us through parables. Help us to listen to these stories and learn more about you.

All: Amen.

Ask the students to think about the following:

- I wonder why Jesus used stories to teach us how to love others. (Accept and affirm the answers from the students. As you are wondering, there is no right or wrong answer.)

Tell the students: Jesus told many stories to help us understand how much God loves us and to teach us how we should love others. These special stories are called parables.

Jesus often used parables to teach us about God. They deepen our faith. They help us understand how God wants us to live and how God acts in our lives. We know from these stories of Jesus, that God is **always** looking for us when we stray (the Lost Sheep). That God is **always** there when we want to come back (the Prodigal Father). We know from the Lost Coin parable that God will **always** look for us, that even the smallest and seemingly unimportant of us **is important to God**.

Middle

(40 minutes)

Invite the students to gather in a circle.

Tell the students to turn to page 76 of their workbooks. Read with the students the parable of the lost sheep (Lk 15: 1–7).

Ask the students the following questions. (Allow about 15 minutes for this reflection.)

- Why do you think Jesus told this story? (Accept all responses from the students.)
- A shepherd does not own the sheep he looks after. Why do you think the shepherd left the ninety-nine sheep and went to search for the lost one?
- What do you think Jesus is telling us about God in this parable?

Invite the students to write their response to the last question in their workbook on page 76.

PREPARATION

1. Prayer focus: A coloured cloth, a candle and the Bible.
2. Workbooks.

When the students have had five minutes for this task invite them to share their responses with the whole group. *(Take all the responses from the students. This is an opportunity for them to reflect deeply on the meaning of the parables. Sometimes it is hard, but try not to jump in with your answer. It is okay to leave the students with just their own answers, thoughts and reflections.)*

Invite the students to join with the person beside them (or you divide the class into pairs) to work on this activity.

Tell the students: Today we are going to see what we can learn about God from some of the parables that Jesus told.

You will see two parables on pages 77 and 78 of your workbook. With your partner, decide what the message of each parable is and what it is telling us about God. Record your responses in both of your books, in the Listing Activity.

Instruct the students as follows:

- To begin, one of you will need to read the parable to the other person.
- Then take turns in telling the other person what you think the parable is about.
- Then take turns in saying what it is telling us about God.
- Decide together what these parables tell you about God. You can write your answers as a list about both parables.

Gather the students back together and invite two or three students to share their responses about the message of the parable and what the parable tells us about God. (Again accept their answers and encourage them to think deeper. Don't give them your answer.)

Thank the students for their contribution and their work. Invite them to continue to think about the parables and what they are telling us about God and about how we can live.

End

(5 minutes)

Gather the students around the prayer focus.

Tell the students: Today we have focused on parables and how Jesus told stories to help teach us about God and his message. We are blessed to have so many wonderful stories that Jesus told to us.

Catechist: Let us make the Sign of the Cross together.

All: In the name of the Father ...

Catechist: Let us sit quietly.

Let's think about the parables we have read today and what Jesus wants us to know about God.

Pause

Catechist: Let us now pray together the prayer that Jesus gave us,

All: Our Father ...

In the name of the Father ...

Dismiss the students as usual.

LESSON 25

St Mary of the Cross and St Vincent de Paul

Background for the Catechist

Please take 10 minutes to reflect on the following introduction to this lesson.

Reflection/Doctrinal Reference

The witnesses who have preceded us into the kingdom, especially those whom the Church recognizes as saints, share in the living tradition of prayer by the example of their lives, the transmission of their writings, and their prayer today. They contemplate God, praise him and constantly care for those whom they have left on earth. When they entered into the joy of their Master, they were 'put in charge of many things'. Their intercession is their most exalted service to God's plan. We can and should ask them to intercede for us and for the whole world (CCC, n. 2683).

Among our brothers and sisters in the Church are those men, women and children who have led lives of great, even heroic, holiness. The Church acknowledges these people and holds them up as witnesses and models of faith. The saints show us how a life lived in Christ looks in vastly different eras and contexts. Apart from saints who have been canonised, there are countless men and women who have lived exemplary Christian lives but who are unknown to us. Known or unknown, the saints are friends of God and our friends. They pray for us and inspire us by their lives to love and serve God in whatever circumstances we find ourselves. Two saints who exemplify holiness in very different circumstances are St Mary of the Cross in nineteenth century Australia and St Vincent de Paul in seventeenth century France.

Student Focus

Students of this age are attracted to and by 'famous' people. They want to know their stories and they try to emulate them. Saints have interesting stories that can capture students' imaginations and can lead to emulation.

Teaching Point

Saints show us how to live like Jesus did.

Remembering Point

St Mary of the Cross and St Vincent de Paul showed us how to live like Jesus.

PREPARATION

1. Prayer focus: A candle, a cloth and an image of Saint Vincent de Paul and Saint Mary of the Cross (Mary MacKillop).
2. Large sheet of paper, felt pens, glue.
3. Print a copy of the 'Project Sample', from Appendix 25a on page 142.
4. Workbooks.
5. Information about the two saints: St Mary of the Cross and Saint Vincent de Paul. Try the Mary MacKillop Heritage Centre in Melbourne (362 Albert Street, East Melbourne) for some good books about Saint Mary of the Cross as well as the Internet. Some good saints books will have some valuable information about Saint Vincent de Paul. In Appendices 25b and 25c on pages 143 and 144 you will find brief outlines of the life of these two saints. You will probably want to supplement these with your own research.

Beginning

(15 minutes)

Welcome the students as usual.

Gather the students around the prayer focus.

(The prayer for today is a 'Litany of the Saints'. You may wish to include other saints of significance to your parish.)

Invite the students to pray:

Catechist: Let us make the Sign of the Cross together.

All: In the name of the Father ...

Catechist: Today we are going to pray a 'Litany of the Saints' where we ask the saints to pray to God for us.

Our response is: Pray for us.

All: Pray for us.

Catechist: Holy Mary, Mother of God,

All: Pray for us.

Catechist: Saint Joseph,

All: Pray for us.

Catechist: Saint Mary of the Cross,

All: Pray for us.

Catechist: Saint Vincent de Paul,

All: Pray for us.

Catechist: Saint Francis and Saint Dominic,

All: Pray for us.

Catechist: Saint Catherine,

All: Pray for us.

Catechist: Saint (enter your parish saint's name),

All: Pray for us.

Catechist: All you saints of God,

All: Pray for us.

All: In the name of the Father ...
Amen.

Tell the students: Today the focus of our lesson is that saints show us how to live like Jesus.

Ask the students: What do you think it means to be a saint? (Accept all answers from all students.)

Record the answers on a large sheet of paper or the whiteboard (e.g. *helping others, doing good things, praying*). (If students mention a saint by name, write it in a separate column to come back to later.)

Middle

(40 minutes)

Ask the students to name a saint and recount something about the saint. Take responses from the students and add them to the sheet of paper. (You might like to remind the students, if appropriate, that in Year 2 they learnt about St Elizabeth and St Patrick.)

Tell the students: A saint is a man, woman or child who has led a life of great holiness. These holy people act as models for us for how to live like Jesus. There are some saints whom the Church has recognised in a special way; we call this 'canonisation'. God would like us all to be saints; that is, men, women and children who are friends of God and who live like Jesus did.

Hold up a copy of the Saint Maximilian Kolbe project sheet.

Tell the students: This is a project about Saint Maximilian Kolbe. Maximilian Kolbe was a brave man in a prison camp during World War II. He took the place of another man who was going to be killed. He is considered a martyr. A martyr is someone who dies for their belief in God. He showed us how to live like Jesus. *(Explore the various parts of the project with the students, explaining what each 'bubble' contains.)*

Tell the students: Today, you are going to prepare a group miniproject on either Saint Mary of the Cross or Saint Vincent de Paul. Your project needs to cover some of the same things as the project we have just discussed, such as where they were from, what they did and especially why you think they were made a saint. You can draw pictures of the things they did and write down words that help to describe them. You can choose in whose workbook you will record your information. You can then copy the contents into the other books. It is important, however, to keep it simple, with not too much information. Remember, this is about how Saint Mary of the Cross and Saint Vincent de Paul showed us how to live like Jesus.

Hand out the student workbooks and direct them to page 80.

Organise the students into groups of three. Give them the materials they will need to complete their mini-project: felt pens, glue, copies of the saint's story. While the students are working walk around the groups and help students when they indicate they need your assistance. Give your students as much time as possible to work together to complete this task. Allow at least 25 minutes for this part of the lesson.

Invite each group of students to gather in turn out the front of the class with their mini-project. Invite a representative from each group to present their group's work. After each presentation, ask if anyone has any questions.

End

(5 minutes)

Invite the students to place their mini-project on the cloth of the prayer focus and then gather round to pray.

Tell the students: We are going to finish our time together today with another Litany of the Saints. Remember, the response is 'Pray for us'. Let's make the Sign of the Cross together.

All: In the name of the Father ...

Catechist: Let us pray, (pause)

Catechist: Saint Patrick,

All: Pray for us.

Catechist: Saint Vincent de Paul,

All: Pray for us.

Catechist: Saint Mary MacKillop,

All: Pray for us.

Catechist: Saint Elizabeth,

All: Pray for us.

Catechist: Saint Maximilian Kolbe,

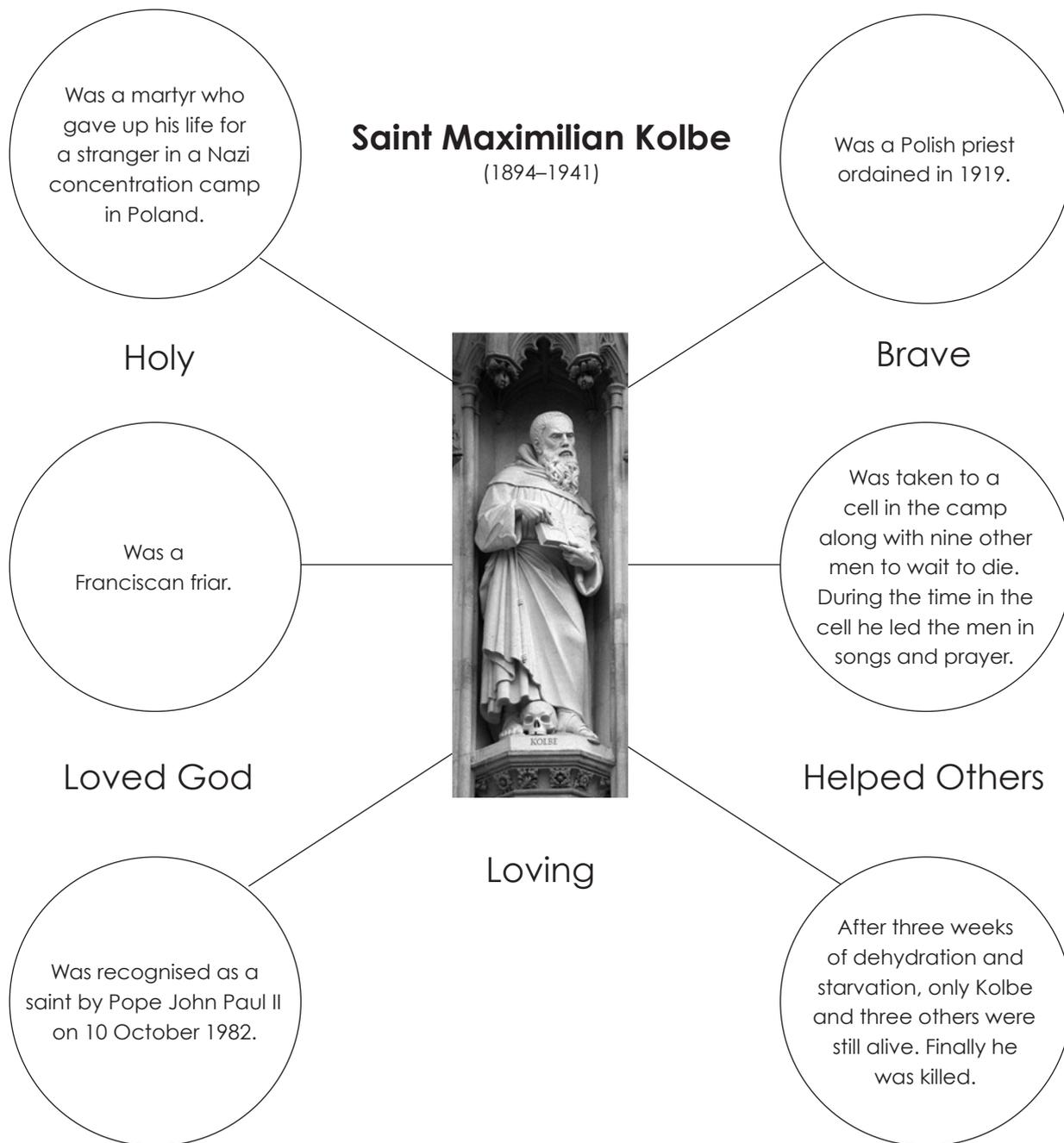
All: Pray for us.

Catechist: All you holy men and women,

All: Pray for us.

Dismiss the students as usual.

Appendix 25a – Project Sample



Saint Maximilian Kolbe, over the Great West Door of Westminster Abbey, London.
Photo: Jean-Christophe Benoist

Appendix 25b – St Vincent de Paul

St Vincent was born in Gascony in southwest France in 1580 and he died in Paris on the 27 September 1660.

Vincent was born into a poor family who managed to ensure he had a good education. Part of that education was to study to become a priest. Vincent was ordained when he was about 19 years of age.

Around 1605 he went to Marseilles, a town in the south of France, to collect his inheritance. On his way back by sea, Turkish pirates captured him and took him to a foreign country far away from his home in France. There he was sold as a slave, but he escaped after two years, in 1607.

When he returned to France he went to Avignon to work for the papal legate. Later he went to Rome where he continued his studies. Vincent took charge of a parish near Paris in about 1612, but several months later he entered the service of a wealthy French family, to educate their children. During this time, while he was with the family, he began teaching and preaching to the poor. Very soon after, he left and went to Bresse, where he became the parish priest. It was here that Vincent realised that something needed to be done to help educate the poor. He knew that even the poor should know about God. It was here in Bresse that he founded the first group of people interested in assisting the poor. he called them a 'Conference of Charity'. In 1617 he resumed preaching to the poor. Several other priests from Paris saw what he did and decided to join him. Mostly, after each of these times of special preaching, a special Conference of Charity group was founded to help the poor.

Vincent's other concern was with the prisoners in Paris who were kept in ships on the river. He and another priest visited these convicts and cared for them because they were not cared for at all. They were starving, had terrible sores and were often very sick. St Vincent would speak kind words to them, helped to keep them clean, and bandaged smelly sores. He won their hearts and many chose to become Catholics. Later, Vincent built a few hospitals to provide care for those in these prisons and those who could not afford medical care.

Appendix 25c – St Mary of the Cross

Mary MacKillop was born in Brunswick Street, Fitzroy, on 15 January 1842. She was the eldest of eight children.

Her family struggled financially and, from the age of 14, Mary needed to work to help support the family. In 1860, she went to Penola in South Australia to be governess to her uncle's children. She spoke with the local priest, Fr Julian Tennison Woods, about her desire to become a nun and together they dreamed of starting a religious group. Six years later, on 19 March 1866 (St Joseph's Day) Mary wore a plain black dress to signify that she had begun to live a Religious life. Within two years 120 women had joined the Religious Institute. They took on the work of educating children in small parish schools, and caring for orphans and needy women.

Little did Fr Woods and Mary know what was to spring from so small a beginning. These 'Josephite' Sisters walked the streets to visit the poor, and lived in twos and threes in rented houses in isolated areas or city slums. The Sisters lived and shared their possessions as equals.

Mary overcame many obstacles to follow her dream, but she never lost hope. Mary's motto was 'never see a need without trying to do something about it.' Her life reveals to us a compassionate God, a God of love. Her actions acknowledged the human dignity of each person. Her life speaks to Australians, in a unique way, of the message of God's love for all, especially for the 'underdog' and the 'battler.' She embodies all that is best in our Australian nation and its people.

(Taken from CEOM *Mary MacKillop, St Mary of the Cross pamphlet*, Catholic Education Office Melbourne, 2010.)

LESSON 26

The Bible Reveals God

Background for the Catechist

Please take 10 minutes to reflect on the following introduction to this lesson.

Reflection/Doctrinal Reference

Through an utterly free decision, God has revealed himself and given himself to man. This he does by revealing the mystery, his plan of loving goodness, formed from all eternity in Christ, for the benefit of all men. God has fully revealed this plan by sending us his beloved Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, and the Holy Spirit (CCC, n. 50).

In Sacred Scripture, the Church constantly finds her nourishment and her strength, for she welcomes it not as a human word, 'but as what it really is, the word of God'. In the sacred books, the Father who is in heaven comes lovingly to meet his children, and talks with them' (DV, n. 21) (CCC, n. 104).

One of the main ways in which God is revealed to human beings is through the special relationship between God and the people of Israel. The history of this relationship is set out in the Bible, which contains the Scripture sacred to Israel and revered by the Christian Church (the Old Testament). The New Testament is the account of God's relationship extended to all in and through Jesus Christ. The Bible reveals to us a God who is one, holy, just and merciful. God became one of us in Jesus, the Son of God and the Son of Mary. Jesus lived and died and rose to show the limitless and unconquerable love of God for all humankind and continues to pour out his Holy Spirit on the world through his Church. This is the Bible's key revelation about God.

Student Focus

Students of this age love story and love variety. Through engaging with stories they gain meaning.

Teaching Point

The Bible reveals God to us.

Remembering Point

The Bible reveals God to us.

Beginning

(15 minutes)

Welcome the students as usual, make the Sign of the Cross and pray the Our Father together.

Invite two students to come out to the front of the class and take turns to choose students for their team. (You might consider inviting students who are not normally chosen to lead groups.) The leaders are to continue choosing until all the students have been chosen. (It will not matter if the teams are uneven.)

Hold a slip of paper in each hand. On one slip is written MOSES, and on the other is written GOD. Hold each slip tightly in each hand, making fists. **Ask one of the leaders** to choose a fist. This is to assign these characters to each group.

Tell the students: The story we are going to read today is from the Old Testament part of the Bible. We are going to read it in parts. I will be the narrator, X's group will be Moses and Y's group will be God.

Invite the students to sit in groups according to their character, open their workbooks at page 81 and read the story of Moses and the Burning Bush in parts.

Middle

(25 minutes)

Ask the students:

- What are the actions in this story? (*List them on whiteboard: leading, listening, looking, answering, learning, fearing, asking, negotiating, choosing, directing, ...*)
- Who does each of these actions? (*Some are done by both God and Moses. Write the person's name next to the action.*)

Invite the students to turn to page 82 in their workbook and use the information recorded on the board to complete the Venn Diagram. The students are to write in the appropriate circle the actions of God and the actions of Moses. In the overlapping section the students are to record the actions that both God and Moses did. An example of a completed Venn Diagram is available in Appendix 26 on page 148.

Ask the students: What does this story tell us about God? (*that God is the God of Moses' ancestors, God is holy, God cares about his people, God chooses people to put things right ...*)

Invite the students to record what they have learnt about God from this story in the space provided on page 83 of their workbook.

Tell the students: Through this story we have discovered that God is holy and sacred and good. We have also learnt that God cares for us and is always aware of us, and knows what our difficulties are. We recognise that God chooses people to solve problems for him, just like asking Moses to lead the people out of Egypt.

PREPARATION

1. Prayer focus: a cream or beige coloured cloth, a candle and a Bible.
2. Two slips of paper small enough to be hidden in your hand. One with MOSES written on it and the other with GOD.
3. Workbooks.
4. If you are unsure about the tune for 'Bingo' the following web site might be useful: [http:// kids.niehs.nih.gov/games/songs/childrens/bingomid.htm](http://kids.niehs.nih.gov/games/songs/childrens/bingomid.htm).

End

(15 minutes)

Teach the students to sing the remembering point to the tune of *Bingo*:

There is a book that reveals God.

The Bible is its name oh!

B – I – BLE

B – I – BLE

B – I – BLE

The Bible is its name oh.

Alternately, if you are unsure of this song, put the remembering point to a familiar tune that you can teach to the students.

Invite the students to gather round the prayer focus.

Tell the students that since the word 'Amen' is a way of saying 'yes' to God, we will respond to our prayer today by saying 'amen, amen'.

Catechist: Let's begin by making the Sign of the Cross.

All: In the name of the Father ...

Catechist: Speak to us today, God, as you spoke to Moses in the wilderness,

All: Amen, Amen.

Catechist: Help us to listen to you, Lord.

All: Amen, Amen.

Catechist: Give us the courage to try our best.

All: Amen, Amen.

Catechist: Help us to work out what our talents are.

All: Amen, Amen.

Catechist: Help us to make wise choices.

All: Amen, Amen.

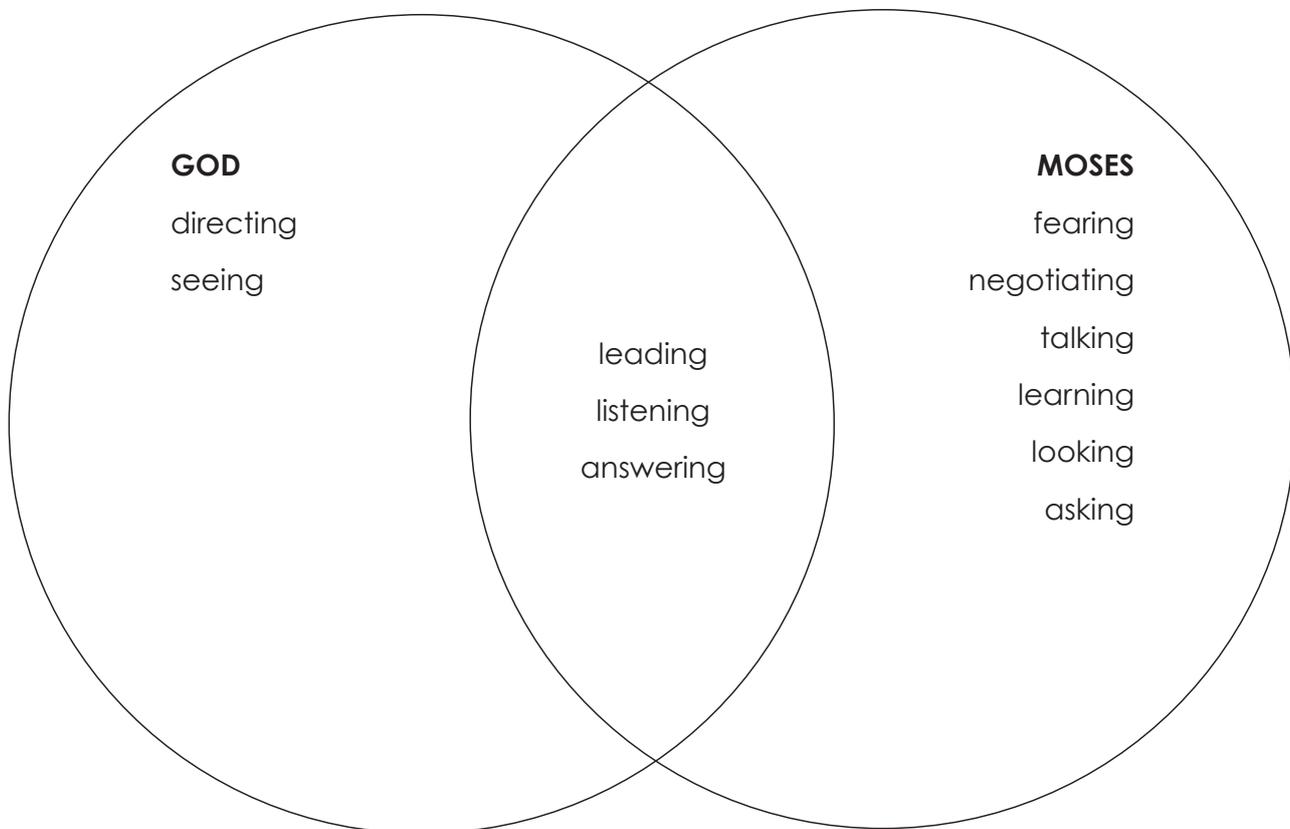
Catechist: Let's finish by saying together.

All: In the name of the Father ...

Dismiss the students as usual.

Appendix 26 – Venn Diagram for Moses and the Burning Bush

This is an example of the actions undertaken by each character in the story.



LESSON 27

Old Testament Stories

Background for the Catechist

Please take 10 minutes to reflect on the following introduction to this lesson.

Reflection/Doctrinal Reference

'By faith, Abraham obeyed when he was called to go out to a place which he was to receive as an inheritance; and he went out, not knowing where he was to go' (Heb 11: 8). By faith, he lived as a stranger and pilgrim in the promised land. By faith, Sarah was given to conceive the son of the promise. And by faith Abraham offered his only son in sacrifice (CCC, n. 145).

The Old Testament stories are not simply stories about ancient times but are meant to invite us to respond to God in our own way in imitation of the great figures of Israel's past. When we read or listen to the stories of Abraham and Sarah, we see their growing understanding of God and their deepening faith. Their story shines a light on our own story. How do we understand the God who is gradually being revealed to us through these Scriptures? Abraham and Sarah responded in their particular way to the invitation of God. How will we respond? Abraham and Sarah came to trust God implicitly even in very difficult circumstances. Can I also trust God?

Historical and geographical details about biblical times can help to make the Scriptures real but should not replace the core business of reading the Scripture and relating the stories of faith to our own lives.

Student Focus

Students of this age are literal thinkers who are beginning to move into conceptual thinking. They are also open to imagery and the figurative. Biblical stories are more about imagery and the figurative than the literal.

Teaching Point

The Old Testament stories invite us to form a relationship with God.

Remembering Point

We can have a relationship with God just like Abraham and Sarah.

Beginning

(12 minutes)

Welcome the students as usual.

Gather the students around the prayer focus. Light the candle and invite the students to pray.

All: In the name of the Father ...

Catechist: Help us to listen to the stories of the Old Testament, so that we might respond to your invitation. We make our prayer through Jesus, your Son.

All: Amen.

Divide the class into five groups and give each group a piece of A4 paper with one of the five headings.

Invite the students to record as much as they know about the topic in one minute. After the minute ring a bell and then rotate the sheets to the right. **Invite the students** to record as much as they know about this new topic in one minute. After the minute, ring the bell and rotate the sheets again. Repeat these steps until each group has recorded something for each topic.

At the conclusion of the last minute **invite a student** representative from each group to share what has been recorded on their sheet. (This is the time for you to discover what the students know about the Old Testament. Do not try to re-teach these stories. If the students do not know, then that is what you have learnt.)

Middle

(35 minutes)

Tell the students: Today we are going to look at more stories from the Old Testament that tell us about God's friendship with God's people, particularly Abraham and Sarah.

Read the story of Abraham from Appendix 27 on page 152.

Ask the students: Does anyone have a question that they would like to ask about the story of Abraham? *(By doing this the students can clarify the meaning of the text and can come to a deeper appreciation of God. You will need to have done some reading about the story by using a good commentary, so that you too have a deeper appreciation of God's action in the life of Abraham and Sarah.)*

(The following questions might help lead the students to a deeper appreciation of God and God's relationship with Abraham and Sarah and how we can also share in this relationship.)

Ask the students:

- How might Abraham and Sarah have felt about leaving their home?
- What might Abraham have said to God when God promised him a great family?

PREPARATION

1. Prayer focus: coloured cloth, a candle and the Bible.
2. Five sheets of A4 paper. At the top of each sheet have one of the following headings:

What do you know about ... The Old Testament?

What do you know about ... David?

What do you know about ... Joseph?

What do you know about ... Moses?

What do you know about ... Noah?

3. A good commentary that covers the story of Abraham and Sarah (Gen 12: 1–9; 15: 1–6, 18–21; 17: 1–8, 15–22).

4. Place each of the words of the remembering point on separate cards:

| | | |
|------|--------------|------|
| We | can | have |
| a | relationship | |
| with | God | just |
| like | Abraham | |
| and | Sarah | |

5. Workbooks.

- How might we divide this story into eight scenes?
- What might be a caption for each scene?

Invite the students to turn to pages 84–85 in their workbook and illustrate the story of Abraham and Sarah in the cartoon strip, and write a caption for their scenes.

When they have completed their illustrations and captions, **gather the students** together.

Ask the students:

- How might Abraham and Sarah describe their relationship with God?
- How is the story of Abraham and Sarah similar to the stories from the Old Testament that we talked about earlier? *(Draw on the reflections that students made earlier on the five sheets of paper. The important similarity is that God chose each of these people and invited them into relationship with God.)*

Tell the students: Each of these Old Testament figures was called by God into relationship. They were all given something special to do. Moses was asked to free the Israelites from Egypt and David was chosen to be king. Abraham and Sarah also responded to God in their particular way; they came to trust God even in difficult situations. Just like Abraham and Sarah, and all the other Old Testament people we have spoken of, God invites us into relationship.

Invite the students to turn to page 86 in their workbook and answer the question:

- How might you respond to God's invitation to enter into relationship with God?

End

(5 minutes)

Gather the students together at the front of the class. Distribute the word cards to the students, making sure each has one word or is buddied up with someone who has. **Invite the students** to place their cards in the correct order to make the remembering point: 'We can have a relationship with God just like Abraham and Sarah.'

Invite the students to repeat the sentence together.

Gather the students round the prayer focus.

Catechist: Let's make the Sign of the Cross.

All: In the name of the Father ...

Catechist: God, our Father, Abraham and Sarah responded to your call and invitation in a special way. Help us to hear your call and respond, so that we might have a relationship with you. We ask this through Christ, our Lord.

All: Amen.

Dismiss the students as usual.

Appendix 27 – The Story of Abraham and Sarah

Now the Lord said to Abram, 'Go from your country and your kindred and your father's house to the land that I will show you. I will make you a great nation ... So Abram went, as the Lord had told him ... Abram took his wife Sarai and his brother's son, Lot, and all the possessions that they had gathered ...

[Abram and his companions] set forth to go to the land of Canaan ... Abram passed through the land of Shechem ... At the time the Canaanites were in the land. Then the Lord appeared to Abram and said, 'To your offspring I will give this land.' So Abram built an altar to the Lord... [Abram] moved on to the hill country east of Bethel and pitched his tent ... and there he built an altar to the Lord...

[The Lord said to Abram], 'Rise up, walk through the length and the breadth of the land, for I will give it to you.' So Abram moved his tent, and came and settled by the oaks of Mamre which are at Hebron; and there he built an altar to the Lord...

... the word of the Lord came to Abram in a vision, 'Do not be afraid, Abram, I am your shield; your reward shall be very great'. But Abram said, 'O Lord God, what will you give me, for I continue to be childless ... [The Lord] brought him outside and said, 'Look towards heaven and count the stars, if you are able to count them.' Then he said to him, 'So shall your descendants be.'

[God said to Abram], 'You shall be the ancestor of a multitude of nations. No longer shall your name be Abram, but your name shall be Abraham ... and I will give to you, and your offspring after you, the land where you are now an alien, all the land of Canaan, for perpetual holding; and I will be their God.'

... God said to Abraham, 'As for Sarai your wife, you shall not call her Sarai, but Sarah shall be her name. I will bless her ... I will give you a son by her ... Then Abraham fell on his face and laughed, and said to himself, 'Can a child be born to a man who is a hundred years old? Can Sarah, who is ninety years old bear a child?' ... God said, '... your wife Sarah shall bear you a son, and you shall name him Isaac.'

... Sarah ... bore Abraham a son ... Abraham gave the name Isaac to his son.

... Now Abraham was old, well advanced in years. ... Abraham said to his servant ... 'go to my country and to my kindred and get a wife for my son Isaac.' [The servant found a wife for Isaac, called Rebekah.] Isaac took ... Rebekah, and she became his wife; and he loved her. [Abraham and Sarah's family grew and grew and became as many as the stars in the sky and the grains in the sand.]

(Gen 12: 1–9; 13: 17–18; 15: 1–2, 5; 17: 4–58, 15–19; 21: 2–3; 24: 1–4, 67)

The Holy Spirit Guides and Strengthens

Background for the Catechist

Please take 10 minutes to reflect on the following introduction to this lesson.

Reflection/Doctrinal Reference

'No one can say "Jesus is Lord" except by the Holy Spirit' (1Cor 12: 3). 'God has sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, crying, "Abba! Father!"' (Gal 4: 6). This knowledge of faith is possible only in the Holy Spirit: to be in touch with Christ, we must first have been touched by the Holy Spirit. He comes to meet us and kindles faith in us. By virtue of our Baptism, the first sacrament of the faith, the Holy Spirit in the Church communicates to us, intimately and personally, the life that originates in the Father and is offered to us in the Son (CCC, n. 683).

The Holy Spirit has been described as the bond of love between God the Father and God the Son, Jesus Christ, a love so strong and life-giving that it draws all that exists into the relationship between Father and Son and so strong that it is expressed in terms of personhood. The Holy Spirit is called the third person of the Trinity. It is the Holy Spirit who enables people to believe in Jesus, to persevere in faith, to forgive others, to live unselfishly, to recognise their own sinfulness and repent, to persist in their efforts to live in a Christ-like way. In fact, whenever people live in a way that is truthful, unselfish and generous the Holy Spirit is at work in them.

Student Focus

Students of this age find meaning in various ways, through story, through play, through observation of people and the world. Therefore they can readily come to recognise the action of the Holy Spirit in the lives of others and themselves.

Teaching Point

The Holy Spirit guides and strengthens us in living the life of Jesus.

Remembering Point

The Holy Spirit guides us and gives us strength.

Beginning

(10 minutes)

Welcome the students as usual. Gather around the prayer focus.

Tell the students: Today's prayer is one of the Church's traditional prayers to the Holy Spirit. In our lesson today we are going to explore how the Holy Spirit guides us and gives us strength. So let us begin with this prayer. Read the prayer as we say it together.

All: In the name of the Father ...
Come, Holy Spirit, fill the hearts of your faithful and kindle in them the fire of your love.
Send forth your spirit and they shall be created and you will renew the face of the earth.

Tell the students: Last year you had a number of lessons about the Holy Spirit. Let's find out what you can remember.

Ask the students to take turns and share with the group anything they can recall about what they have learnt about the Holy Spirit from previous lessons. Write down their reflections on the whiteboard or on a large sheet of paper. (This will help you to have an understanding of what the students have remembered and understood about the Holy Spirit).

Tell the students: The Holy Spirit is God's special gift to us. When Jesus returned to his Father in heaven, God promised to send the Holy Spirit to be with us and help us so that we would never be alone. We can't see the Holy Spirit, but the Spirit guides and strengthens us so that we can become the best people that Jesus wants us to be.

Show the students the beautifully wrapped box that looks like a present.

Ask the students:

- What do you think this gift is? (*The students will obviously not know what is inside the box, although they may try to guess.*)
- How will we find out what is inside? (*Open it.*)

Respond to the students: But I don't want to open it. It looks so pretty like this. Is there another way? (*The students may make other suggestions, but will eventually agree that the only way to find out what is inside is to open it.*)

Tell the students: Yes, you are right. The only way to find out what is inside this gift is by opening it up. This is a little like the Holy Spirit. The only way to get to know the Holy Spirit in our lives is to open up the gift that God has given us and to realise that there is a wonderful surprise inside if we look for it. Just like this present, if we keep it closed and don't open it, we will never know what is inside.

PREPARATION

1. Prayer focus: a white and a red cloth, a red or white candle, a Bible.
2. Have the prayer written on the whiteboard or on an A3 sheet large enough for the students to follow, or use the students' workbook, page 87.
3. A whiteboard/or a large sheet of paper to record students' responses.
4. A beautifully wrapped box that looks like a special gift for someone.
5. Images of superheroes.
6. Workbooks.

Middle

(35 minutes)

Tell the students: We are going to put the gift aside for the moment and look at these pictures. *(Have a number of pictures of superheroes that students would recognise, e.g. Superman, Wonder Woman, Spiderman, Batman etc.)*

Ask the students:

- Who do we see in these pictures? *(Allow the students to identify the images of the superheroes and share the different things that they know about the superheroes and their powers. Students may bring up their own examples of superheroes as well.)*
- Why do we like superheroes so much? *(Give the students time to respond to the question. Students may suggest possible reasons such as: they do good things for others, they make sacrifices for others, they save the world with their superpowers.)*

Tell the students: Wouldn't it be great to have such powers like these superheroes? Superheroes like the ones we watch on TV or read about in books don't really exist. However, there are people in the world who allow the power of the Holy Spirit to guide them and strengthen them in extraordinary ways.

Although we are not talking about the type of power 'superheroes' have, these people have the power of the Holy Spirit and also do amazing things to help other people. They may be building schools in very poor countries, or spending a lot of time praying for others. They might be trying to obtain medical treatment for people who would otherwise die or they could be organising a special event for their parish church.

The Holy Spirit works in all sorts of different situations in all sorts of different people. God sent the Holy Spirit to guide and strengthen us all, including you and me.

Ask the students: How has the Holy Spirit been a guide and strengthened you in your life?

Tell the students: You will have one minute to silently think about how the Holy Spirit has been at work in your life.

After the minute, **ask each student** to share his or her response.

Record the students' answers on the whiteboard or large sheet of paper. *(Students may respond with answers such as, The Holy Spirit gives me courage when I need to do something I don't want to do; The Holy Spirit guides me to make good decisions; The Holy Spirit helps me to understand when I may have done something wrong and helps me to say sorry.)*

Tell the students: I am going to organise you into groups of three or four. In your groups you will be given 10 minutes to prepare a short play that you will present to the class. You will act out a situation in which you may need to call on the Holy Spirit to be your strength and your guide. You can use the examples that you have already come up with and that we have written down on the board, to help you. What you have to do in your group is decide what your play will be and who are the characters

and who will play the parts. When you have decided what you are going to do, write it down in your workbooks. *(Every person writes their own.)*

Direct the students to page 87 in their workbooks, to the *My Play* box where they can write their play.

Organise the students into their groups and direct them to a place to plan their play. Allow 10–15 minutes to plan their presentation. Remind the students that their play will be no longer than three minutes.

Gather the students together at the front of the room to view the plays. Allow each group the opportunity to present their play. At the end of each presentation **ask all the students:** How did the Holy Spirit guide and strengthen the people in this presentation? *(Take all responses the students share.)*

End

(10 minutes)

Gather the students around you and the prayer focus. Pick up the present once again. Tell the students that it is now time to open the present. Open the present and show the students that there is nothing in the box.

Tell the students: It looks like there is nothing in the box. Just like this, we can't see the Holy Spirit, but it doesn't mean that the Holy Spirit isn't active and working in our lives. We do need to open up, turn to the Holy Spirit and find out how the Holy Spirit can be our strength and guide.

Invite the students to open their workbooks at page 88 and complete the sentence in the Something to Remember section. (Answer: The Holy Spirit guides us and gives us strength.)

Catechist: So let's get ready to pray. Our response is:
Holy Spirit, be my strength and my guide.

All: Holy Spirit, be my strength and my guide.

Catechist: Let us pray,

All: In the name of the Father ...

Catechist: When things don't always go as I would like,

All: Holy Spirit, be my strength and my guide.

Catechist: When I need help to make good decisions,

All: Holy Spirit, be my strength and my guide.

Catechist: When I am feeling sad,

All: Holy Spirit, be my strength and my guide.

Catechist: When I need to apologise for my actions,

All: Holy Spirit, be my strength and my guide.

Catechist: When I am trying to do the right thing,

All: Holy Spirit, be my strength and my guide.

All: In the name of the Father ...

Dismiss the students as usual.

LESSON 29

Stories of Jesus' Love

Background for the Catechist

Please take 10 minutes to reflect on the following introduction to this lesson.

Reflection/Doctrinal Reference

Jesus is sent to 'preach good news to the poor'; he declares them blessed, for 'theirs is the kingdom of heaven'. To them – the 'little ones' – the Father is pleased to reveal what remains hidden from the wise and the learned ... Jesus identifies himself with the poor of every kind and makes active love toward them the condition for entering his kingdom. Jesus invites sinners to the table of the kingdom: 'I came not to call the righteous, but sinners.' He invites them to that conversion without which one cannot enter the kingdom, but shows them in word and deed his Father's boundless mercy for them and the vast 'joy in heaven over one sinner who repents'. The supreme proof of his love will be the sacrifice of his own life 'for the forgiveness of sins' (CCC, nn. 544–545).

The heart of the whole Christian message is that God loves us and that this love has been fully revealed in and through Jesus. The gospels especially repeatedly portray Jesus' compassion, mercy and forgiveness, which he extended to those he encountered in his life's work of announcing and inaugurating the Kingdom of God. Jesus' love for people is illustrated by many stories in the gospels.

Student Focus

Students of this age identify with characters in stories. Placing themselves in the characters' shoes enables them to understand the meaning of the story and to apply that meaning to their lives.

Teaching Point

There are many stories that show that Jesus loves us.

Remembering Point

Jesus loves us.

Beginning

(10–15 minutes)

Welcome the students as usual.

Gather the students round the prayer focus and invite them to get ready for prayer by being still and quiet.

Catechist: Let's begin our prayer with the Sign of the Cross.

All: In the name of the Father ...

Catechist: Repeat after me:

Jesus, your actions show us your love.

All: Jesus, your actions show us your love.

Catechist: Jesus, your words show us your love.

All: Jesus, your words show us your love.

Catechist: Jesus, your suffering shows us your love.

All: Jesus, your suffering shows us your love.

Catechist: Jesus, your stories show us your love.

All: Jesus, your stories show us your love.

Divide the group into three teams who will compete to be the first to complete their puzzle.

Distribute to each team a puzzle in a container and a die. Each student in the team takes a turn to roll the die. If a six is rolled the student can take a piece of puzzle from the container. Continue until all the pieces are out of the container and the picture is complete.

Ask the students if they can recognise the gospel story that each puzzle illustrates (Zacchaeus, widow of Nain, washing the disciples' feet).

Middle

(35 minutes)

Read the story about Zacchaeus (Lk 19: 1–10) in Appendix 29b, page 162. Invite the students to follow in their workbooks on page 89.

Ask the students:

- Why do you think Jesus invited himself to Zacchaeus' house? (*He was hungry, he needed somewhere to rest, he was interested in Zacchaeus, he wanted to get to know Zacchaeus better, he thought Zacchaeus needed a friend ...*)
- Why do you think everyone grumbled about Jesus going to Zacchaeus' house? (*He was unpopular, he was a tax collector, no-one wanted to be his friend ...*)

(Accept all answers but conclude by making the point that Jesus shows his love for Zacchaeus by this action.)

Read the story about the Widow of Nain (Lk 7: 11–15) in Appendix 29c on page 162. Invite the students to follow in their workbooks on page 89.

PREPARATION

1. Prayer focus: cloth, candle, Bible, jigsaws in containers, three dice.
2. Mount pictures in Appendix 29a (page 160–161) on cardboard and cut into jigsaw pieces.
3. Workbooks.

Ask the students: Why did Jesus raise the young man? *(He was all she had, he was sorry for the widow. Accept all answers but conclude by making the point that Jesus shows his love for the widow by raising her son.)*

Read the story Jesus Washes the Disciples' Feet (Jn 13: 1–14) in Appendix 29d, page 163. **Invite the students** to follow in their workbooks on page 90.

Ask the students: Why do you think Jesus washed the feet of the disciples? *(Because he wanted to do something for the disciples, Jesus wanted to show the disciples how to act.) (Accept all answers but conclude by making the point that Jesus shows his love for the disciples by washing their feet when they arrive for the meal.)*

Invite the students to go to their desks and open their workbooks at page 91 to complete the Heart Activity. (The answers come from the stories of Zacchaeus, the Widow of Nain and the Washing of the Disciples' Feet.)

Ask the students to draw a line from each heart to the matching picture and turn to page 92 to break the code to see who else Jesus loves. (Jesus loves us.)

End

(5 minutes)

Take up the workbooks and **gather the students** round the prayer focus.

Catechist: Today we've listened to stories about how Jesus loved people. We know that Jesus loves us just like he loved Zacchaeus, the widow and the disciples. Let's make our prayers to Jesus and respond with, 'Jesus, help us to remember that you love us'.

Catechist: When we feel left out like Zacchaeus, let us say:

All: Jesus, help us to remember that you love us.

Catechist: When we are sad like the widow, let us say:

All: Jesus, help us to remember that you love us.

Catechist: When we are embarrassed, and don't know what to do, let us say:

All: Jesus, help us to remember that you love us.

Catechist: When people think we've done the wrong thing like Zacchaeus, let us say:

All: Jesus, help us to remember that you love us.

Catechist: When we are missing someone we love, like the widow, let us say:

All: Jesus, help us to remember that you love us.

Catechist: When we are asked to serve others as Jesus did when he washed the disciples feet, let us say:

All: Jesus, help us to remember that you love us.

Catechist: Lord, we make all these prayers in faith and love.

All: Amen.

Dismiss the students as usual.

Appendix 29a – Jigsaw Puzzles

Enlarge these pictures as required. Photocopy them onto card. Laminate each one (if possible) and cut into jigsaw pieces. Have one complete, un-cut set for your own reference.



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Appendix 29a – Jigsaw Puzzles (continued)

Enlarge the pictures as required. Laminate each one (if possible) and cut into jigsaw pieces.



Appendix 29b – Zacchaeus

[Jesus] entered Jericho and was passing through it. A man was there named Zacchaeus; he was a chief tax-collector and was rich. He was trying to see who Jesus was, but on account of the crowd he could not, because he was short in stature. So he ran ahead and climbed a sycamore tree to see him, because he was going to pass that way. When Jesus came to the place, he looked up and said to him, 'Zacchaeus, hurry and come down; for I must stay at your house today.' So he hurried down and was happy to welcome Jesus. All who saw it began to grumble and said, 'He has gone to be the guest of one who is a sinner.' Zacchaeus stood there and said to the Lord, 'Look, half of my possessions, Lord, I will give to the poor; and if I have defrauded anyone of anything, I will pay back four times as much.' Then Jesus said to him, 'Today salvation has come to this house, because he too is a son of Abraham. For the Son of Man came to seek out and to save the lost'.

(Lk 19: 1–10)

Appendix 29c – Widow of Nain

Soon afterwards [Jesus] went to a town called Nain, and his disciples and a large crowd went with him. As he approached the gate of the town, a man who had died was being carried out. He was his mother's only son, and she was a widow; and with her was a large crowd from the town. When the Lord saw her, he had compassion for her and said to her, 'Do not weep.' Then he came forward and touched the bier, and the bearers stood still. And he said, 'Young man, I say to you, rise!' The dead man sat up and began to speak, and Jesus gave him to his mother.

(Lk 7: 11–15)

Appendix 29d – Jesus Washes the Disciples' Feet

Now before the festival of the Passover, Jesus knew that his hour had come to depart from this world and go to the Father. Having loved his own who were in the world, he loved them to the end. The devil had already put it into the heart of Judas, son of Simon Iscariot, to betray him. And during supper Jesus, knowing that the Father had given all things into his hands, and that he had come from God and was going to God, got up from the table, took off his outer robe, and tied a towel around himself. Then he poured water into a basin and began to wash the disciples' feet and to wipe them with the towel that was tied around him. He came to Simon Peter, who said to him, 'Lord, are you going to wash my feet?' Jesus answered, 'You do not know now what I am doing, but later you will understand.' Peter said to him, 'You will never wash my feet.' Jesus answered, 'Unless I wash you, you have no share with me.' Simon Peter said to him, 'Lord, not my feet only but also my hands and my head!' Jesus said to him, 'One who has bathed does not need to wash, except for the feet, but is entirely clean. And you are clean, though not all of you.' For he knew who was to betray him; for this reason he said, 'Not all of you are clean.'

After he had washed their feet, had put on his robe, and had returned to the table, he said to them, 'Do you know what I have done to you? You call me Teacher and Lord—and you are right, for that is what I am. So if I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet.

(Jn 13: 1–14)

Love One Another

Background for the Catechist

Please take 10 minutes to reflect on the following introduction to this lesson.

Reflection/Doctrinal Reference

Jesus makes charity the new commandment. By loving his own 'to the end', he makes manifest the Father's love which he receives. By loving one another, the disciples imitate the love of Jesus which they themselves receive. Whence Jesus says: 'As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you; abide in my love'. And again: 'This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you' (Jn 15: 9, 12) (CCC, n. 1823).

Jesus' new commandment, 'Love one another as I have loved you', moves us on even further from the great commandment, 'You shall love the Lord your God with your whole heart, your whole soul and all your strength and your neighbour as yourself'. Jesus' new commandment makes his love for us the benchmark for our love for others. Jesus' kind of love is forgetful of self, seeks no reward, is extended to all and culminates in his giving of his life for the sake of others.

Student Focus

Students of this age have experienced love from parents and extended family. They know that love involves care, concern, discipline and sacrifice. They also know that love requires action.

Teaching Point

Jesus asks us to love one another as he has loved us.

Remembering Point

Jesus asks us to love one another as he loves us.

PREPARATION

1. Prayer focus: A candle, a Bible, a heart, a cross and the cut-out shape of a person (see Appendix 30 on pages 168–169).
2. Prayer strip:

| |
|--|
| Jesus, help us to do as you ask and love one another as you have loved us. |
|--|
3. The complete uncut set of pictures from Lesson 29, Appendix 29a, pages 160–161.
4. Photocopy the hearts & crosses Banner Shapes sheet for each student (see Appendix 30 on page 168). Cut out the hearts and crosses and keep them in separate containers.
5. One person outline per student (see Appendix 30 on page 169).
6. Felt-tip pens, glue or sticky tape, Blu-Tack.
7. Workbooks.
8. If required, copies of scripture texts from Appendices 29a–c, on pages 162–163.
9. A banner made from a three-metre length of greaseproof paper. Divide it into three columns. In the left-hand column write the heading 'Love is...'; in the middle write the heading 'Jesus showed love by...'; and in the right column write the heading 'I can show love like Jesus by...'.

| | | |
|-------------|--------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| Love is ... | Jesus showed love by ... | I can show love like Jesus by ... |
|-------------|--------------------------|-----------------------------------|

10. A4 paper for students to write on.

Beginning

(5 minutes)

Welcome the students as usual and gather them round the prayer focus.

Tell the students: Today our response is: Jesus, help us to do as you ask and love one another as you have loved us.

Catechist: Let us pray:

All: In the name of the Father ...

Catechist: Lord, help us to love others like Jesus loved.

All: Jesus, help us to do as you ask and love one another as you have loved us.

Catechist: Lord, help us to forgive others like Jesus forgave.

All: Jesus, help us to do as you ask and love one another as you have loved us.

Catechist: Lord, help us to serve others as Jesus served.

All: Jesus, help us to do as you ask and love one another as you have loved us.

Catechist: Lord, help us to seek God's will as Jesus sought God's will.

All: Jesus, help us to do as you ask and love one another as you have loved us.

Catechist: We make this prayer through Christ, our Lord.

All: Amen.

Middle

(40 minutes)

Tell the students: Last week we looked at three stories in Jesus' life that showed how he loved us.

Show the pictures from last week, one at a time and **invite the students** to tell you what the stories are about.

Tell the students: Today in our lesson we are going to take this one step further and look at what it means for us to love one another, just as Jesus loved us. Jesus said, 'Love one another as I have loved you'. What does this mean for us? First of all, let us think about what love is.

Organise students into groups of three and distribute two heart shapes to each student (Appendix 30, page 168). Place the banner on the whiteboard or pin-up board or across some desks.

Tell the students: In your group, brainstorm answers to the phrase, 'Love is ...' Can anyone give us an example of what this might be? (*Sharing with others, being with someone when you could be elsewhere ...*)

Invite the students to use coloured felt tip pens to write their answer on the heart shapes, one answer for each heart. Have the students glue their hearts onto the banner, in the first column headed 'Love is ...'.

While the students are working, **go to each group** and listen to what the students are saying. (You will probably hear many of the same ideas and this is fine. Help their thinking by asking a question that extends their thinking about the concept of 'love', e.g. 'When is love easy?' or 'When is loving someone hard?'.)

Distribute the crosses, three per group. Distribute copies of the Scripture texts from lesson 29 (Appendix 29b, 29c, and 29d, on pages 162–163) or ask the students to read directly from their workbook (pages 89–90).

Tell the students: These are the same stories we heard last week, so we are familiar with them. Even so, take turns in reading the text to the others in the group. Then recall how Jesus showed love in each text and share with each other in the group. Everyone is to listen without interruption to what each person is saying. Then, when everyone has had a turn, write the suggestions you are all happy with onto the cut-out crosses. Use coloured felt tip pens. You can then glue the crosses on to the banner at the front, under the 'Jesus showed love by ...' heading.

Move around the groups, monitoring their dialogue.

Invite the students to gather around you at the front of the class.

Review with the students what they have done so far by looking at the banner of hearts and crosses.

Ask the students:

- What do you see when you look at our banner? *(Take all the answers from the students. The purpose is to see what connections and links the students can make between 'love' and 'how Jesus loved'. Allow the students to exhaust their contributions before you reflect and ask any other question.)*
- What do you think the stories of Jesus are saying to us? *(Take all the answers from the students.)*

Tell the students: You can now go back to your groups and each of you is to think about what Jesus told the disciples when he washed their feet. Then write how you can do as Jesus asked.

Distribute a sheet of paper to each student to record his or her suggestions.

Tell the students: Remember that what you write has to be things that you can do, not something that is difficult or requires you to do something that is unsafe. When you have written your responses, share with the others in your group and then together decide which ones you will put on your figure to stick on our poster.

Invite the students to share their responses with each other in their group.

Hand out the person outlines, one to each student, and invite the students to use a coloured felt tip pen to write one of their responses on the shape. This shape can be found in Appendix 30, page 169.

Invite the students to stick their figures on the poster under the heading: 'I can love others like Jesus by ...'

End

(10 minutes)

Gather the students around you at the front of the class. Have the banner in a position where all the students can see it clearly.

Ask the students:

- What can we now see in our banner? *(Again allow the students to answer freely, affirming their answers. This is an important review time to make the connections between what Jesus did and how we can be like Jesus by loving others.)*
- What have we learned today? *(This is again, an open question. It will help the students affirm their learning and for you to clarify any elements that might need extra comment. Be cautious with the amount of comment you make. This is the students' learning.)*

Hand out the workbooks and ask the student to answer the 'Loving Like Jesus' questions on page 94.

Invite the students to pray.

Catechist: Let us make the Sign of the Cross together.

All: In the name of the Father ...

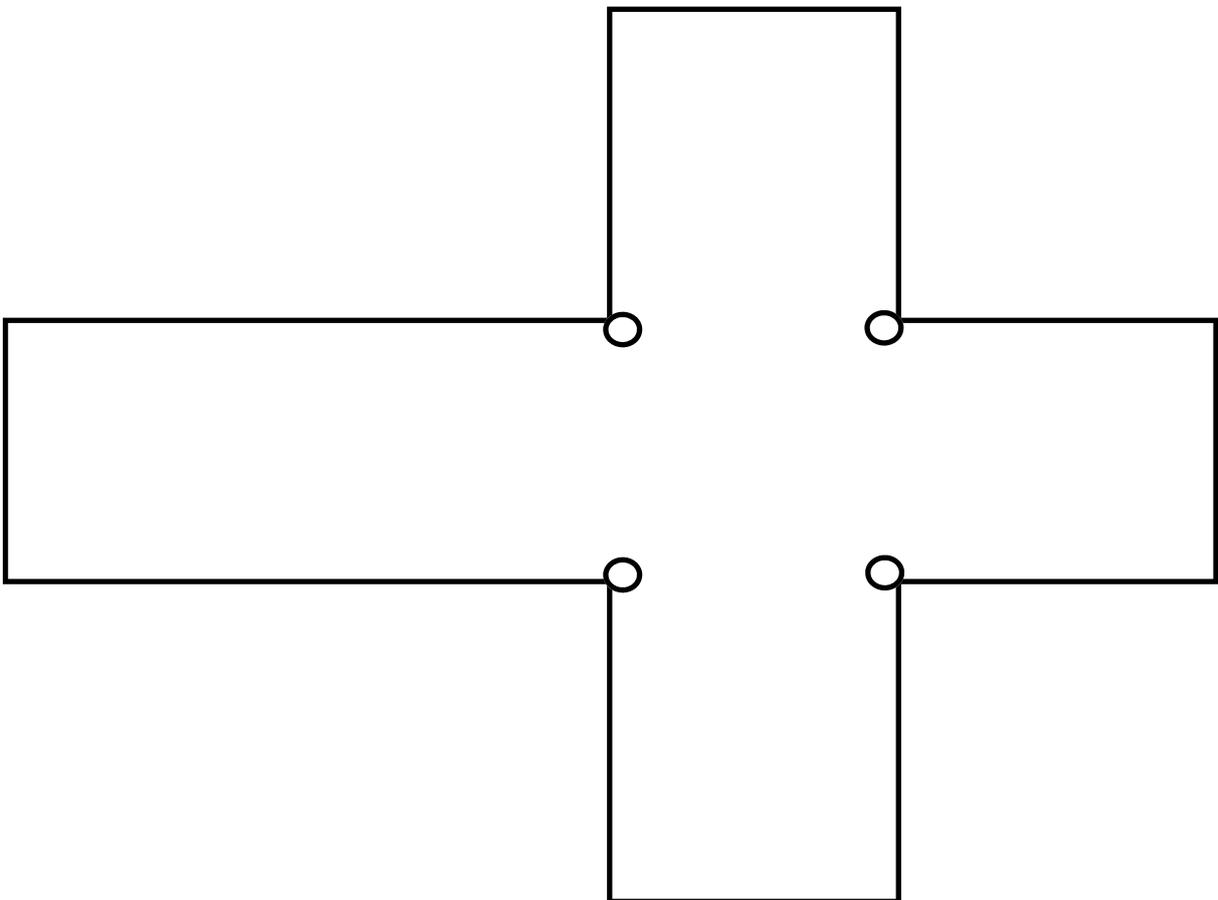
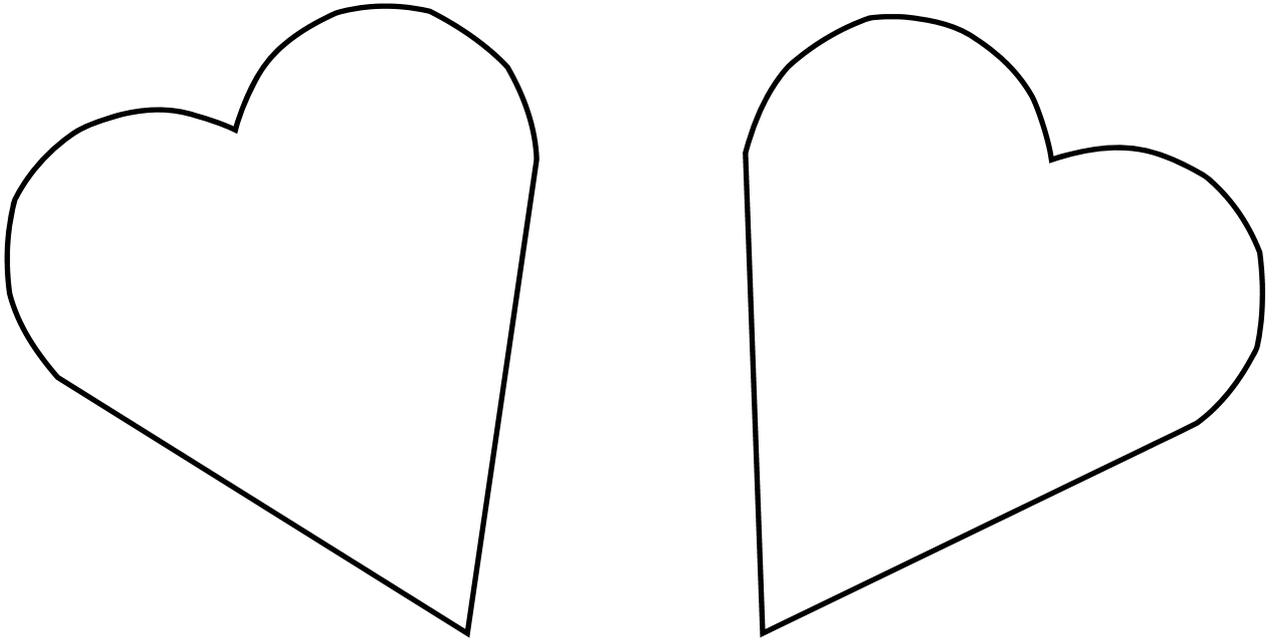
Catechist: Jesus, you showed us how to love, help us to be like you and love others.

All: Glory be to the Father ...

Dismiss the students as usual.

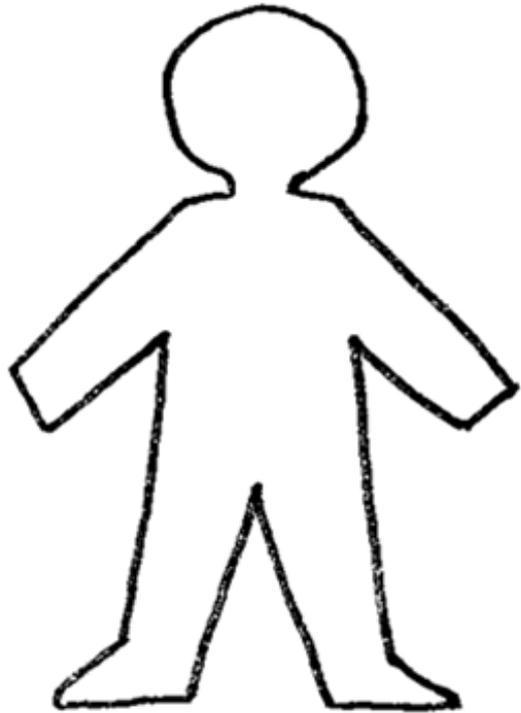
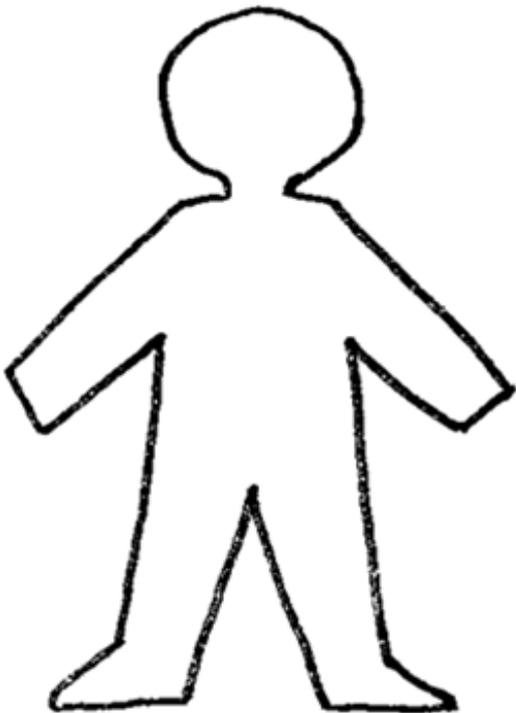
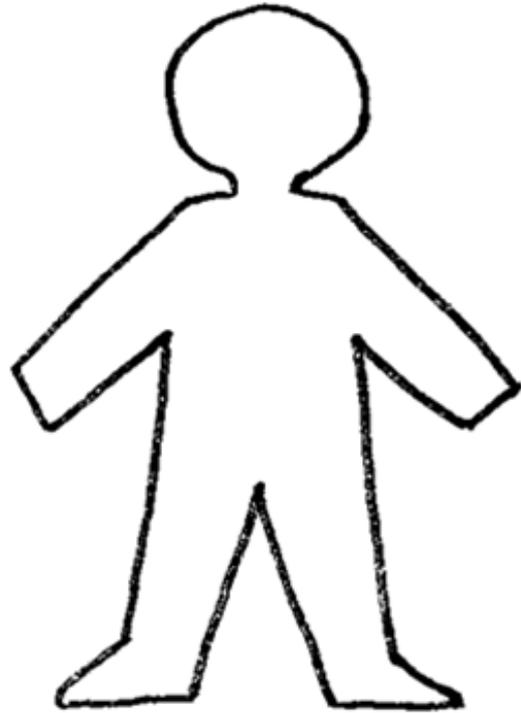
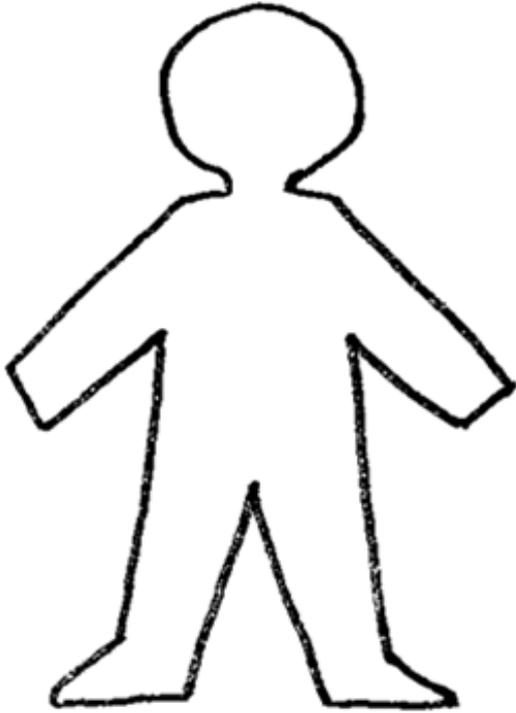
Appendix 30 – Banner Shapes

Photocopy and cut out enough for one per student.



Appendix 30 – Banner Shapes (continued)

Photocopy and cut out enough for one per student.



Background for the Catechist

Please take 10 minutes to reflect on the following introduction to this lesson.

Reflection/Doctrinal Reference

When the Church celebrates the liturgy of Advent each year, she makes present this ancient expectancy of the Messiah, for by sharing in the long preparation for the Saviour's first coming, the faithful renew their ardent desire for his second coming (CCC, n. 524).

Advent is the beginning of the Church's liturgical year. It is the four-week period which leads up to the celebration of Christmas. The weeks of Advent (the word is based on the Latin word meaning 'coming') focus our attention on three comings of Christ. In the first week we focus especially on *the second coming* of Christ at the end of time to establish conclusively the reign of God and consummate history. During the next two weeks we are offered the testimony of John the Baptist, whose voice calls out to us across the centuries to make a pathway in our lives for the *coming of Christ in our own time*. During the final week of Advent the Church invites us to ponder again over the events leading to the birth of Jesus in Bethlehem, *the first coming*, and discern their meaning for our lives and the life of the world.

Student Focus

Students of this age long for Christmas. They are interested in the various customs which mark the sense of expectancy associated with Advent.

Teaching Point

The Advent season is the beginning of the Church's celebration of Jesus' life and mission.

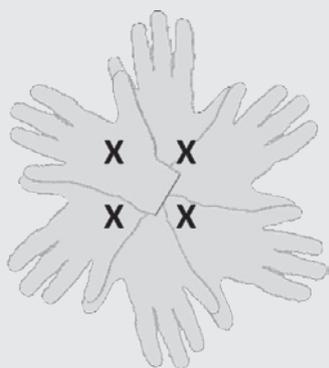
Remembering Point

The Advent season is the beginning of the Church's celebration of Jesus' life and mission.

NB: It may not be Advent when you are presenting this lesson. Therefore appropriate adjustments will need to be made.

PREPARATION

1. Prayer focus: Purple cloth, an Advent wreath.
2. Green card or paper, scissors, and glue.
3. Paper/whiteboard to record responses from students.
4. Six hand shapes for each student, already cut out from Appendix 31a, page 174.
5. Four candles for each student cut out from the template in Appendix 31b, page 175.
6. Practise making the Advent wreath from the cut-out hands and candles. Place the cutout hands on top of each other, overlapping the little finger with the thumb. This will form a circle (wreath). Glue the hands together. Make sure that the wrist parts of the hands overlap. The fingers from the cutout hands act as the leaves of the wreath. Cut out the candles. Be careful of the thin wick. Fold the bottom section under and glue this onto the hands. They are usually glued in a square formation (note 'x' on diagram below). Cut out the candles and stick them on the spots marked with an 'x'.



Beginning

(5 minutes)

Welcome the students as usual.

Gather the students around the prayer focus. Light the appropriate candles on the Advent wreath according to the week of Advent this lesson is being presented and **invite the students** to pray.

Tell the students: Today we are going to use a special prayer that Mary prayed when she was expecting Jesus. She was waiting for Jesus to be born. The response to our prayer is: 'My soul rejoices in my God'. Invite the students to repeat the response.

Catechist: Let us pray:

All: In the name of the Father ...

Catechist: My soul glorifies the Lord,
my spirit rejoices in God, my Saviour.
He looks on his servant in her nothingness;
henceforth all ages will call me blessed.

Students: My soul rejoices in my God.

Catechist: The Almighty works marvels for me.
Holy his name!
His mercy is from age to age,
on those who fear him.

Students: My soul rejoices in my God.

Catechist: He fills the starving with good things,
sends the rich away empty.
He protects Israel, his servant,
remembering his mercy.

Students: My soul rejoices in my God.

All: Amen.

Middle

(30 minutes)

Ask the students:

- Has anyone had to wait for the birth of a baby in their family?
- How did your mother and family prepare?
- What things did you have to do to get ready?

Invite the students to answer these questions even if they haven't the experience of waiting for the birth of a baby. Invite them to imagine what it would be like if they were waiting for the birth of a baby.

Distribute the workbooks and invite the students to answer the following questions which are also on page 95 in the workbook in the section, 'Waiting for the birth of a baby'.

- How did you feel? (How might you feel?)

- What questions did you think about (might you think about) while you were waiting for your brother or sister to be born?
- How do you think Mary would have felt waiting for Jesus to be born?

Invite some of the students to share their answers with the whole group. *(Accept all the students' reflections on these questions. Affirm their answers and encourage their deeper thinking.)*

Tell the students: Just as we have thought about what it has been like waiting for our brother or sister to be born or imagining how that might be, each year we wait for the celebration of Jesus' birth. As we get closer to the time of Jesus' birth the Church helps us to prepare for the special celebration. We are now in this special time of preparation called Advent. Just as Mary waited for the birth of her son, Jesus, so too do we prepare and anticipate the birth of Jesus. This is a very special time that helps us to get ready for Christmas.

Ask the students: Why might we need to prepare for the celebration of Jesus' birth? *(Encourage the students to answer freely and think about the importance of preparation for important events.)*

Tell the students: Yes, we do need to prepare for all the reasons you have given. It is very important that we take the time to prepare, because Jesus is central to our faith.

During Advent the Church asks us to pray and to listen to the stories about Jesus and how he came to save us. We listen to the stories about Jesus' life and his message of God's love.

An Advent wreath helps us to remember that Advent is a time for preparing for Jesus' coming at Christmas.

Show the students the Advent wreath on the prayer focus. Explain that the four candles help us remember how close we are to Christmas. There are three purple candles and one pink candle.

Tell the students: We use the colour purple to show that it is a time of preparation, prayer and penance (saying sorry). We do things to help us to get ready to remember and celebrate the birth of Jesus at Christmas. We light a purple candle on the first and second Sundays of Advent. In the third week of Advent we light a rose or pink candle. This candle means 'joy' and helps us to remember that Christmas is nearly here and it is a time of rejoicing.

Invite the students to turn to page 96 in their workbooks and draw their attention to 'Something to Remember' – 'The Advent season is the beginning of the Church's celebration of Jesus' life and mission.' Read this together with the students. **Direct the students** to complete the Fill-the-gap activity on page 96.

Tell the students: Today we are going to make our own Advent wreath to take home and use with our families to help us prepare for Christmas.

Demonstrate the process, step by step, for the students.

Distribute a set of six cut-out hand shapes and some glue to each student.

Invite the students to place their cut-out hands on top of each other, overlapping the little finger with the thumb. This will form a circle

(wreath). Glue the hands together. Make sure that the wrist parts of the hands overlap. The fingers from the cut out hands act as the leaves of the wreath. (Note the example in the Preparation column.)

Hand out a set of candles to each student. (Remember to include enough candles with flames to match the particular week of Advent you are in.) **Invite the students** to colour three candles purple and one candle pink. (If you are in the third week of Advent ensure the students colour one of the three candles with a flame, pink.)

End

(15 minutes)

Ask the students: What things can we do over the next weeks to prepare for Christmas? *(Take all reasonable responses, recording them on the whiteboard or a sheet of paper so that everyone can see them. Suggestions might include: saying a prayer for peace in the world, saying sorry for something they have done wrong, being extra helpful around the house, inviting a student who is often left out to play with them in their group, ...)*

Invite the students to choose one idea from the list for each purple candle (three in total) and write each idea on the purple candles of their wreath.

Tell the students: During the coming weeks look back at what you have chosen and see if you can complete the tasks. By doing this, you will be preparing for Christmas and the coming of Jesus in a special way.

Invite the students to write the word 'Joy' on the pink candle.

Tell the students: Think of something special or 'joyful' that you can do during this week that would help you prepare for Christmas *(e.g. sing a Christmas carol, go on a special outing with your family)*.

Invite the students to cut out the candles. Remind them to be careful of the thin wick. Assist the students to fold the bottom section under and glue this onto the hands. Assist the students to do this with the other three candles, gluing them in a square formation (as indicated in the Preparation column).

Remind the students to take the wreaths home with them and to use them during Advent with their family.

Gather the students round the prayer focus and light the Advent candles once again. Invite the students to pray.

Catechist: Let us make the Sign of the Cross together.

All: In the name of the Father ...

Catechist: Let us pray:

Lord, help us to prepare for the coming of Jesus at Christmas during this Advent season.

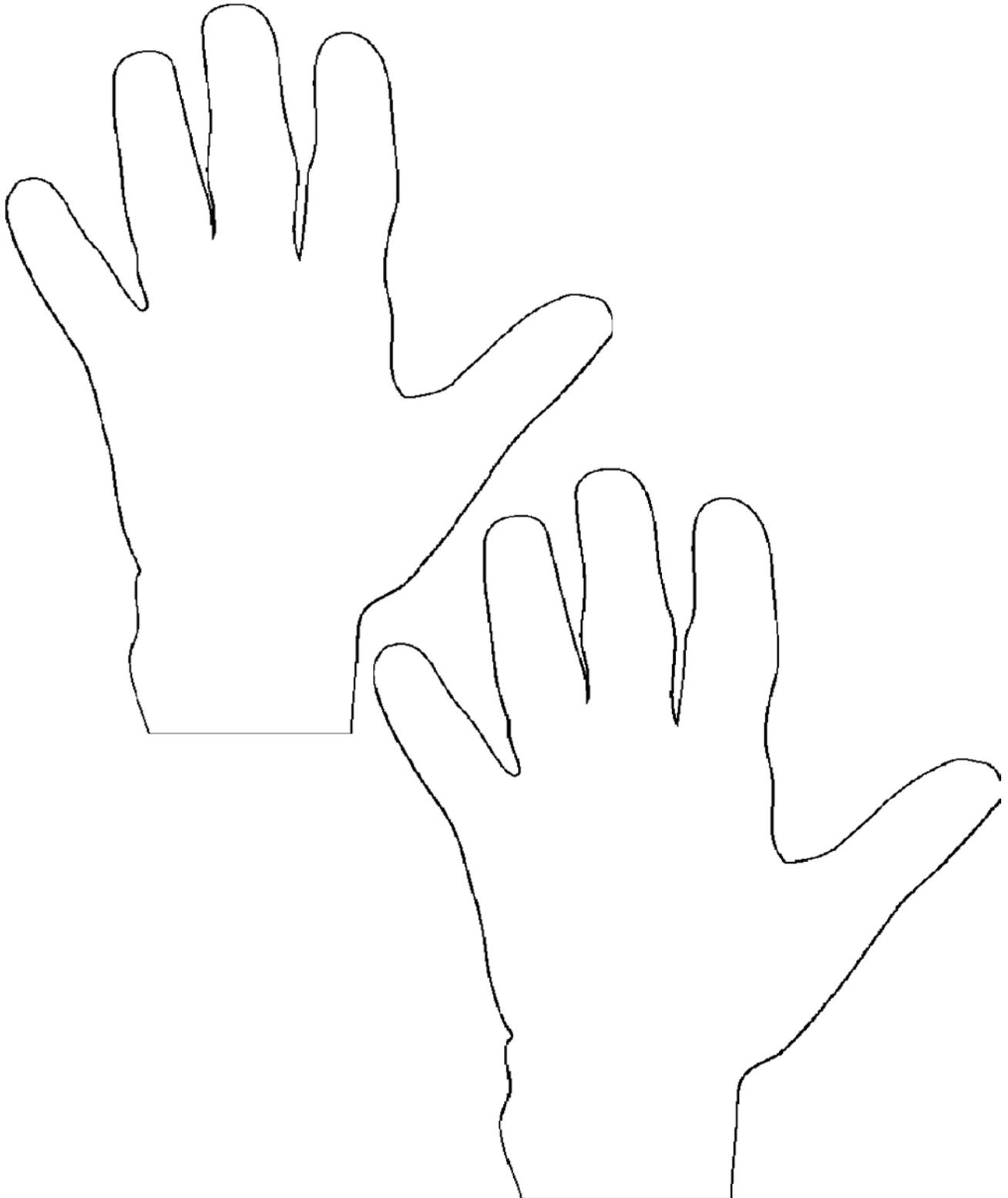
We make this prayer through Christ, our Lord.

All: Amen.

Dismiss the students as usual.

Appendix 31a – Advent Wreath Hand Template

Trace around your own hand or photocopy these hands onto green paper or card and cut out. You will need six per student.



Appendix 31b – Advent Wreath Candle Template

Photocopy one set of four for each student. If you are in the first week of Advent copy each set with one candle with a flame and three without. For week two copy each set with two candles with a flame and two without. For week three copy each set with three candles with a flame and one without. For week four copy each set with four candles with a flame.



The finished wreath might look like this:



The Christmas Story

Background for the Catechist

Please take 10 minutes to reflect on the following introduction to this lesson.

Reflection/Doctrinal Reference

Jesus was born in a humble stable, into a poor family. Simple shepherds were the first witnesses to this event. In this poverty heaven's glory was made manifest. The Church never tires of singing the glory of this night (CCC, n. 525).

The quietness and unobtrusiveness of the coming of Jesus contrasts with his unimaginable glory as the Son of God. Matthew's and Luke's infancy narratives are meditations on the meaning of a few details of the birth of Jesus. It is only in view of the life and work of Jesus, and especially of his death and resurrection, that we can appreciate properly the great mystery of his quiet coming among us. This is the way Jesus comes to us even now, in the quietness and unobtrusiveness of our daily prayer and the daily events and encounters of life.

Student Focus

Students of this age appreciate story in all forms, simple, complex, imaginative, concrete. The story of Jesus' birth contains all these elements and students can enter the story at all or any of these levels.

Teaching Point

In Luke's Gospel we come to know the story of Jesus' birth that the Church celebrates and remembers at Christmas.

Remembering Point

At Christmas we remember Jesus was born.

PREPARATION

1. Prayer focus: white cloth, Advent wreath from last week, Bible, map showing Nazareth & Bethlehem (see Appendix 32a on page 179).
2. Workbooks.
3. For each character in the story prepare a sticky label with the name of the character: Joseph, Mary, Jesus, shepherds, angels (or strip of paper and sticky tape).
4. Phrases from the text on strips enlarged onto A3 paper, if possible (see Appendix 32c on pages 181–182).
5. A copy of the small version of phrases for each student (see Appendix 32d on page 183).
6. Scissors and glue or sticky tape.
7. CD player and a CD of *Angels We Have Heard on High* or *While Shepherds Watched Their Flocks by Night* or something similar. You might have the words on a sheet of paper.

Beginning

(10 minutes)

Welcome the students as usual.

Gather the students round the prayer focus. Invite the students to get ready to pray by being still and quiet.

Ask the students: What can you see on the prayer focus? What do you think our lesson might be about today? Accept all answers and if necessary tell them that the lesson today is about the birth of Jesus.

Catechist: Let's begin with the Sign of the Cross.

All: In the name of the Father ...

Catechist: As we light the first Advent candle we think of the joy of the angels awaiting the birth of Jesus.

All: We thank you, Lord, for the gift of Jesus.

Catechist: As we light the second Advent candle we remember that the humble shepherds were the first to hear the good news of Jesus birth.

All: We thank you, Lord, for the gift of Jesus.

Catechist: As we light the third Advent candle we wonder with Mary about the future of her child.

All: We thank you, Lord, for the gift of Jesus.

Gather the students round you at the front of the room. Take the Bible from the prayer focus.

Tell the students: Let's listen to Luke's story about Jesus' birth (Lk 2: 1–20). *(A copy of the text can be found in Appendix 32b on page 180. Read it to them.)*

Ask the students:

- Who are the people in this story? (*angels, shepherds, Joseph, Mary, Jesus*)
- What are the settings? (*a place where there was a manger, in the fields*)
- Did anything in the story surprise you? (*no wise men, no donkey, no star, no ox*)

(Remember that this is Luke's version of the birth of Jesus. If students wonder about details that seem to be missing, explain to them that the details might be found in Matthew's version.)

Middle

(25 minutes)

Tell the students: Listen carefully to see if you recognise in the story I've just read any of these phrases. If you do, raise your hands. *(If the students don't raise their hands, don't worry, just move on.)*

Read the phrases on the strips to the students and place them on the desk or table in front of you. (See Appendix 32c on pages 181–182.)

Select five students. Stick the character name on the foreheads of these five students.

Read a phrase and ask the group to decide which character it concerns. Then give the strip to that character. Repeat until all the strips have been distributed.

Ask each character to read their phrases. (You may need to help some students.)

Invite the students to return to their desks and open their workbooks at page 97 at the Matching Activity. Give each student a small set of phrases from Appendix 32d, page 183. Hand out a pair of scissors and glue and have them cut out the phrases and then paste the strips next to the appropriate character in their workbook.

Ask the students: What do we remember at Christmas? *(Jesus was born.)*

Tell the students: When the Jewish people write in Hebrew they don't use any vowels. If you look at the message on page 98 of your workbook, it is also written without vowels. Try to work out what it means and write the answer underneath.

† Chrstms w rmmbr Jss ws brn.

(Some students may need help.)

End

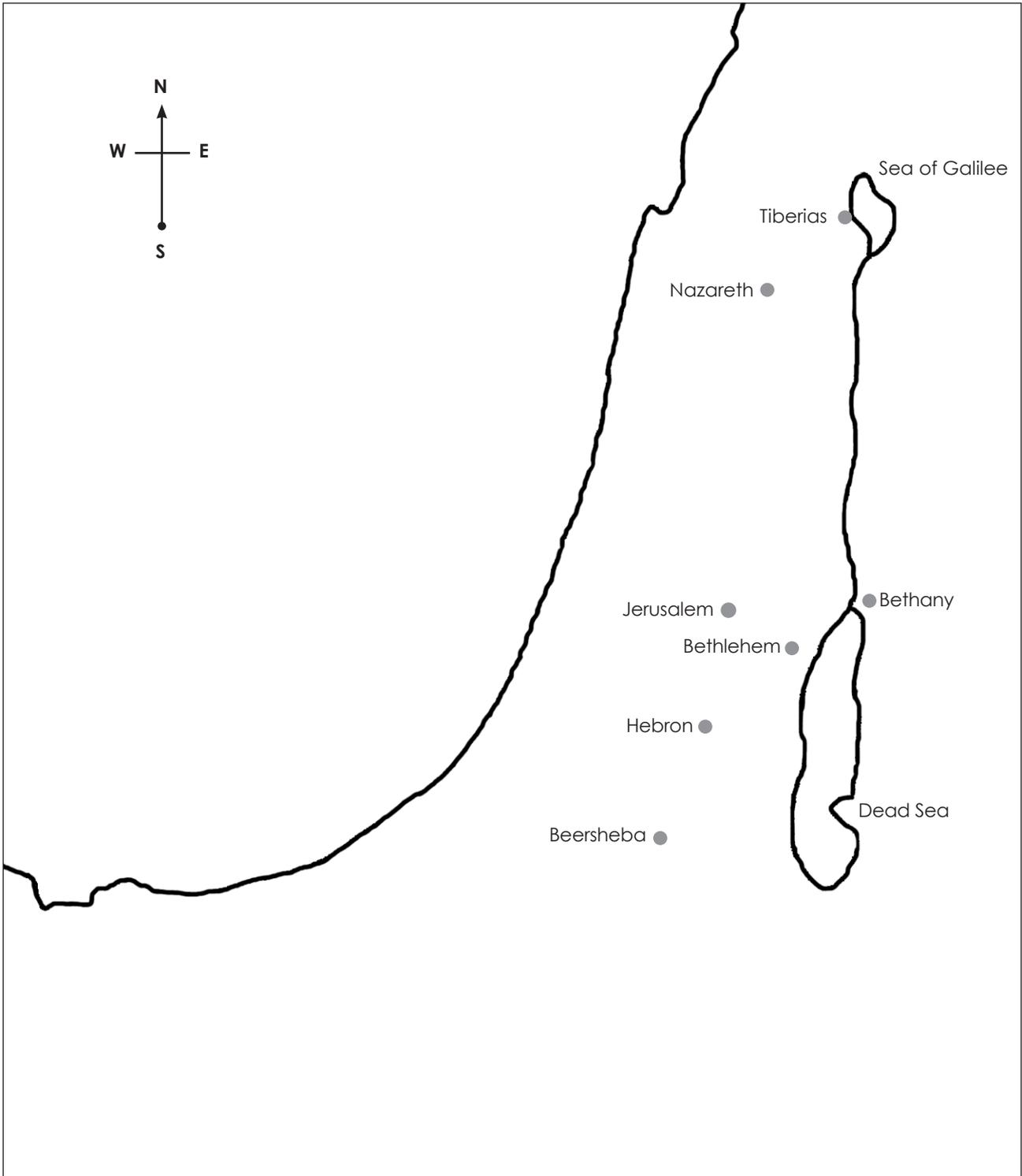
(5 minutes)

Gather the students around the prayer focus. Play *Angels We Have Heard on High* or *While Shepherds Watched Their Flocks by Night* and ask them to join in. You might have the words on a sheet of paper.

Invite the students to take their workbooks home.

Dismiss the students as usual.

Appendix 32a – Map of the Holy Land at the Time of Jesus



Appendix 32b – Luke’s Story about Jesus’ Birth

In those days a decree went out from Emperor Augustus that all the world should be registered. This was the first registration and was taken while Quirinius was governor of Syria. All went to their own towns to be registered. Joseph also went from the town of Nazareth in Galilee to Judea, to the city of David, called Bethlehem, because he was descended from the house and family of David. He went to be registered with Mary, to whom he was engaged and who was expecting a child. While they were there, the time came for her to deliver her child. And she gave birth to her firstborn son and wrapped him in bands of cloth, and laid him in a manger, because there was no place for them in the inn.

In that region there were shepherds living in the fields, keeping watch over their flock by night. Then an angel of the Lord stood before them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. But the angel said to them, ‘Do not be afraid; for see – I am bringing you good news of great joy for all the people: to you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, who is the Messiah, the Lord. This will be a sign for you: you will find a child wrapped in bands of cloth and lying in a manger.’ And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host, praising God and saying, ‘Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth peace among those whom he favours!’

When the angels had left them and gone into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, ‘Let us go now to Bethlehem and see this thing that has taken place, which the Lord has made known to us.’ So they went with haste and found Mary and Joseph, and the child lying in the manger. When they saw this, they made known what had been told them about this child; and all who heard it were amazed at what the shepherds told them. But Mary treasured all these words and pondered them in her heart. The shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all they had heard and seen, as it had been told them.

(Lk 2: 1–20)

Appendix 32c – Phrases from Lk 2: 1–20

Was expecting a child

Lived in the fields

The Messiah

Said, ‘Glory to God in the highest’.

Was descended from the family of David

**Went with haste and found Mary
and Joseph and the child**

**Said, ‘Born today in the city of David,
a Saviour, who is the Messiah, the Lord’.**

Watched over their flock

Appendix 32c – Phrases from Lk 2: 1–20 (cont.)

Gave birth to a son

Were terrified

Treasured all these words

Was wrapped in bands of cloth

Glory of the Lord shone around them

Pondered these words

Was engaged to Mary

Said, 'I bring you good news of great joy for all people'.

Appendix 32d – Small Version of Phrases

Photocopy enough for one set per student.

Was expecting a child

Gave birth to a son

Lived in the fields

Were terrified

The messiah

Treasured all these words

Said, 'Glory to God in the highest'

Was wrapped in bands of cloth

**Was descended from
the family of David**

Glory of the Lord shone around them

Watched over their flock

Pondered these words

**Went with haste and found Mary
and Joseph and the child**

**Said, 'I bring you good news
of great joy for all people'.**

Was engaged to Mary

**Said, 'Born today in the city of David, a
Saviour, who is the Messiah, the Lord'.**

Abbreviations

| | |
|-------------|---|
| CCC | Catechism of the Catholic Church |
| CCCC | Compendium of the Catechism of the Catholic Church |
| CIC | Codex Iuris Canonici (Code of Canon Law) |
| CT | Catechesi Tradendae (Catechesis in Our Time) |
| DCN | Divinae consortium naturae |
| DV | Dei Verbum (Dogmatic Constitution on Divine Revelation) |
| GS | Gaudium et Spes (Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World) |

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