

Introduction

During Great Lent we prepare ourselves for the Great Feast of Pascha. In this unit we will be studying the events that we celebrate during Holy Week and Pascha. Included in this unit are icons, activities, and both texts and explanations of services and prayers.

The unit covers many Bible stories, but sometimes the source from which you are reading or telling the story will not be an actual Bible. When you are using another source, have a Bible at hand (or, preferably, copy the story and put the copy in the open Bible) to show that it is a Bible story. Of course, every classroom should have Bibles.

Journey to Pascha

Each session will focus on a different theme that is part of our Journey to Pascha. We will begin with the story of Lazarus, whom Jesus raised from the dead, and continue with our celebration of Jesus' joyful Entrance into Jerusalem. In the following sessions, we will learn about each day of Holy Week, what Jesus taught His disciples during this time, and what happened to Jesus as He was brought to trial, put to death and buried. Finally, we will celebrate the events that led to His Resurrection from the dead.

Special Notes

Role Plays: Several lessons include role plays, and some include words said by Jesus Christ. If you, the teacher, do not want a child to take the role of Christ, use a narrator to say the words of the Lord.

Gathering for Prayer: We suggest having a gathering place for the class to pray together. You might have a candle, flowers, and the appropriate icon for the lesson. Icons are provided in the Resource Section of each lesson. You can reproduce these and put them on backing and then display them on a small stand (like a plate stand.) Of course you can use your own icons, which is why in some lessons the Resource Section lists icons as "optional."

Preparing Your Lessons: Lessons in this unit include themes, objectives, resources attached to the lesson and step-by-step procedure, as well as a list of materials. In some lessons, the Materials section will give you special notes for lesson preparation. These enable you, as you prepare by reading through the lesson and getting materials ready, to be aware of any special preparations you'll need to make.

Timing Your Lessons: Because our church schools vary widely in the time they have for teaching, we have not timed the procedural steps of these lessons specifically. You are free to adapt, shorten or expand the material, or to spread it over more than one session.

Palm Cross Activity: A great activity, suitable for older students, making a palm cross.

Resources for Every Age

The following resources can be found within the lessons of this unit, or on the Department of Christian Education website (dce.o.ca.org)

- Liturgical texts and resources for Holy Week
- Biblical texts, charts and guides to using the Bible
- Icons, graphics and coloring pages for school and home use
- Short musical settings for hymns and verses
- Brief reviews of good books for home and classroom reading
- Activities and outreach projects for families and mixed generation groups
- Information on teaching skills, ideas for classroom use, human development patterns, writing projects, etc.

Highlights of individual lessons in this unit (upper levels) include:

- **Lazarus Saturday: Jesus raises His friend from the dead.**
Mary and Martha plead with the Lord to come quickly to heal their brother Lazarus. Jesus delays his return until Lazarus is dead four days. Martha confesses her belief in Jesus as the Christ, the Son of God. Jesus says: "I am the resurrection and the life; he who believes in me, though he die, yet shall he live..." Jesus has the power to raise the dead, and raises Lazarus. Jesus is the Resurrection and Life of all people.
- **Palm Sunday: Jesus Enters Jerusalem as a King!**
Jesus enters Jerusalem and is honored as a King. The children greet Jesus waving palms and branches, crying out "Hosanna!" The people shout their praises to Him: "Hosanna! Blessed is He who comes in the Name of the Lord! Hosanna in the highest!" In our celebration of the feast, the palms we hold are a sign of our allegiance to Christ.
- **Holy Monday, Tuesday & Wednesday: Parables of the Bridegroom, Last Judgment and the "End"**
God has made us stewards of His world, to serve and care for it. He calls us to bear fruit by using the talents He has given us. Christ will come to judge the world, and He will come at Midnight, at an hour when we least expect Him. He will come as a Bridegroom, to take us, the Church, as His Bride. God calls us to be prepared, for only those who are ready will enter His Kingdom. The Bridegroom Matins.
- **Holy Thursday: The Supper, Anointing, and Betrayal of Christ**
A woman anoints Christ's feet with oil, as a sign of love, as well as a preparation for His burial. Jesus' enemies seek to kill Him and Judas agrees to betray his Master. Jesus shows the disciples how they must serve others, by washing the feet of His own disciples, and shares a Passover meal with them. He blesses bread and a cup of wine, saying "Do this in remembrance of Me." Jesus teaches the disciples about love, and promises to send them a Comforter, the Holy Spirit, after He is gone. The Mystical Supper
- **Holy Friday: The Trial and Crucifixion of Christ.**
Jesus takes the disciples to a place to pray and tells them that one of them shall betray Him and the others will deny Him and run away. Jesus is arrested and brought before the chief priests and scribes who sentence Him to death for equating Himself with God. He is brought before Pilate, the Roman governor, and then to Herod, to be sentenced to death and killed. Jesus is put to death on a Cross, along with two thieves. Mary, Jesus' mother, and the women followers who served Him stand by the

Cross until the end. Joseph of Arimathea and Nicodemus take Jesus' body down from the Cross, prepare it for burial and lay Him in a new tomb. The Death & Burial of Christ.

- **Holy Saturday & Pascha: Descent into Hades & Resurrection**

Jesus died in order to give us new life! Through His death on the Cross, Jesus defeated the power of death. Having died as a man, Jesus descended to Hades, the place of death, to destroy death and bring life to those in the tombs. Jesus' Life was more powerful than death. At the moment of His death, the earth shook, the tombs were opened and many bodies of the saints were raised. By His Resurrection from the dead, Jesus, who is the Christ-God, gives new life to all who believe in Him and do His will. Although we will die, we know that "death can no longer hold men captive," for when Christ comes again, all those in the tombs will be raised from the dead. Christ the Lord of all will come to judge the living and the dead, and grant life eternal in the world to come, to all who believe in Him as King and as God. "Christ is Risen!"

Lazarus Saturday *(Ages 7-9)*

Overview

Jesus Raises Lazarus from the Dead

Objectives

By the end of this Lesson, learners should be able to:

- Identify Mary, Martha and Lazarus as friends of Jesus
- Recount the events leading up to and including the raising of Lazarus
- Sing the Troparion of the Feast of Palms

Materials

- Icon of the Raising of Lazarus
- Black line drawing of the Raising of Lazarus (Resource section)--have one for each group of **four** students
- Colored pencils, crayons, markers
- For the Holy Week mural: Roll of mural or drawing paper or butcher paper--plan enough for six panels
- Felt pieces (available at craft stores) in colors to match the clothing in the Raising of Lazarus icon (see icon in Resources section.) Students will be cutting and then pasting the felt pieces onto the black line drawing of the icon, with the icon's colors as their template. This method will be used in all but one of the following lessons, so plan to have a good supply of felt pieces, and a variety of colors
- Glue
- Scissors for students to share
- **Note:** If you do not wish to use felt and glue for the mural, Lesson One for ages 4-6 suggests two other options for creating the mural panels
- Chart with the words of the troparion which is the Opening Prayer to be mounted (after students have decorated it) and kept in the classroom for following class sessions
- Toilet paper in which to wrap Lazarus' body in the tomb for role play
- Wall calendar, to be mounted in the room, showing the nine days from Lazarus Saturday to Great and Holy Pascha, with each day labeled. Each week students will mark off the days as you finish talking about them.
- Tape or wall-mounting material

Resources

Required Resources

[Jesus Raising Lazarus \(PDF\)](#)

[The Raising of Lazarus \(John 11:1-45\) \(PDF\)](#)

Optional Resources

[Icon of The Raising of Lazarus \(Image\)](#)

[Raising Lazarus from the Dead](#)

[Jesus Raises Lazarus from the Dead\(HTML\)](#)

Procedure

1 Opening Prayer

(Have students stand, for this and for all opening and closing prayers.) Say or sing the Troparion.)

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

The Troparion (*Tone 1*)

By raising Lazarus from the dead before Thy passion,
Thou didst confirm the universal resurrection, O Christ God.
Like the children, with the palms of victory,
We cry out to Thee, O Vanquisher of Death,
Hosanna in the Highest!
Blessed is He that comes in the Name of the Lord.

Use the chart you've made to help with learning the words.

Go over the meanings of the following words; plan to review them in the coming weeks as you say or sing the troparion again:

passion: this refers to Jesus' suffering and crucifixion.

confirm: to say that something is true

universal resurrection: this means that by raising Lazarus from the dead, Jesus showed us that He will raise all of us--everyone and everything in the universe.

vanquisher: conqueror or one who wins a victory and does away with something (in this case, Jesus won the victory over death.)

Have students decorate the chart with drawings of palms. Then mount it on the wall.

2 Bible Story

Choose one of the following to read to or with the students. If your students are older, you may want to use the Bible; if they are younger you may want to use the story in the Resource section.

- **Raising of Lazarus** (John 11:1-45)

- **Jesus Raises Lazarus from the Dead** (Resource section)

If you choose to read from the Resource section, have an open Bible to show that the story is from the Bible.

3 Role Play

Look at the icon of the Raising of Lazarus together. Identify Jesus, Mary, Martha and Lazarus.

If you have a space such as a closet, use it as a "tomb" for Lazarus (but with the door slightly ajar at all times.) If you don't have such a space, arrange chairs to suggest an enclosed space, leaving an exit path.

Assign parts of narrator, Lazarus, Mary, Martha, and "amazed onlookers." Have students wrap "Lazarus" in toilet paper as grave clothes, of course being careful not to impede the student's breathing, vision, or ability to take a few steps.

Role play the scene by having Lazarus in the tomb, Mary and Martha prayerful and weeping, and the onlookers talking about what they think will happen. Then a narrator will read John 11:38-44, and when he or she comes to the words "Lazarus, come out!" everyone should join in enthusiastically. Lazarus can then step forward and burst out of the grave clothes.

If your class is large, two groups or more can present the role play. Let students add their own details to what the characters do.

4 Wrap Up and Holy Week Mural

Divide the class into groups of four, and give each group a black line drawing of the Raising of Lazarus (Resource section), as well as crayons, colored pencils, and/or markers, glue, assorted felt pieces, and scissors. Have the icon of the Raising of Lazarus prominently displayed. Have the groups follow these steps:

- Work together to fill in the faces, body parts and background of the drawing with the crayons, pencils and/or markers. (The drawing is a simpler version of the icon, so the job will not be too complicated.)
- Cut the felt to fill in the clothing of the people in the drawing, using the colors in the icon as their model.
- Glue the cut pieces of felt onto the correct spaces in the drawing. (It may not be possible for the students to cut and match very small areas of clothing; these can be filled in with crayons, pencils, or markers. Other parts of the icon can also be colored in.)
- Arrange and attach the completed drawings on the "Lazarus Saturday" panel of the mural.

When they finish, as they are cleaning up and preparing for the closing prayer, ask the following:

- How do we know Jesus was a good friend to Mary, Martha, and Lazarus? *(He came to their home when Lazarus died, as the sisters asked Him to. he wept at the tomb of His friend Lazarus.)*
- Did Jesus do some of the things with His friends that you do with your friends? *(Yes. He spent time with them, walked and talked with them, shared meals with them, and went to a wedding. He healed, comforted, and taught many grown-ups and children.)*
- What did Jesus do for His friend Lazarus? *(Raised him from the dead.)*

5 Closing Prayer

(Have students stand.) In the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

The Troparion (Tone 1)

By raising Lazarus from the dead before Thy passion,
Thou didst confirm the universal resurrection, O Christ God.
Like the children, with the palms of victory,
We cry out to Thee, O Vanquisher of Death,
Hosanna in the Highest!
Blessed is He that comes in the Name of the Lord.

Have a student come up and "mark off" Lazarus Saturday on the wall calendar.

Palm Sunday *(Ages 7-9)*

Overview

Jesus is our King and God

Objectives

By the end of this Lesson, learners should be able to:

- Describe what a king looks like, and does
- Name some ways in which Jesus Christ was different from other kings
- Tell the story of the Entrance into Jerusalem of Jesus, the King of All, using the icon of Palm Sunday

Materials

- Crayons & Markers
- Drawing Paper
- Icon of Entry into Jerusalem/ Palm Sunday
- Black line drawing of Entry into Jerusalem/Palm Sunday, one for each group of four students
- Palm Sunday (Resource section)
- Pictures or photos of kings--these can be modern or from older times, but should show crowns, robes, possibly swords and other things that look as "royal" as possible. Check history books and the internet for photos and pictures
- Pieces of felt to match colors in Entry/Palm Sunday icon (see "Materials" list in previous lesson)
- Scissors
- Glue

Resources

Required Resources

[Palm Sunday \(PDF\)](#)

[Entry into Jerusalem \(Image\)](#)

Optional Resources

[Icon of The Entry Into Jerusalem \(Image\)](#)

[Palm Sunday: Entry Into Jerusalem](#)

Procedure

1 Opening Prayer

Have students stand.

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

By raising Lazarus from the dead before Thy passion,

Thou didst confirm the universal resurrection, O Christ God.

Like the children with the palms of victory,

We cry out to Thee, O Vanquisher of death,

Hosanna in the Highest! Blessed is He that comes in the name of the Lord.

Review the meanings of words and phrases using the wall chart, as in the previous lesson.

2 Discussion Starter

Ask: *What do you think of when you hear the word "king"?* Put students' responses on the chalkboard. Words like powerful, strong, tall, rich, etc. will probably be suggested. Look together at any pictures you have brought.

Ask: *How would you greet a king?* (Bowling, standing up if you are sitting, etc.)

Say: *We don't have kings, but we do have important people like presidents. How would you greet the President?* (Let students suggest ways--cheering, waving, standing, etc.)

Say: *One person who might visit us is a person we greet in a special way--the bishop. How do we greet him?* (Let students answer. Review the way we greet a bishop--kissing his hand, receiving a blessing, singing. Practice the way we receive a blessing, with hands open, right on top of left.)

Say: Let's see how Jesus was greeted when He came as a king on Palm Sunday into the city of Jerusalem.

3 Holy Week Mural

Divide the class into four groups, and give each group a black line drawing of the icon of the Entry into Jerusalem/Palm Sunday. As in the previous lesson, the group members can fill in the faces, background, and other details of the icon, leaving the clothing. Using the icon's colors as their model, students will cut felt pieces to fit the clothing parts of the drawing, and then glue them on.

They can arrange and attach their finished drawings as the second panel of the mural, entitled "Entry into Jerusalem/Palm Sunday."

As students are cleaning up, ask the following:

- Did Jesus do some of the things with His friends Mary, Martha and Lazarus that you do with your friends? *(Yes. He spent time in their home, walked and talked with them, shared meals with them, and taught them.)*
- What did Jesus do for His friend Lazarus? *(Raised him from the dead.)*

4 Palm Sunday - The King Enters

Look together again at the icon of the Entry into Jerusalem/Palm Sunday

Have students point out things in the icon that are different from the pictures or descriptions of kings that you talked about and looked at earlier. *(Encourage students to see that Jesus Christ is close to the people rather than being separate from them in a closed coach. He rides a simple donkey, not a big, proud horse. He carries no weapons or signs of power. His clothes are simple, not fancy and expensive. He is a different kind of king: He is God's own Son, so He is the true King. But He loves us, and came to be with us. So He is not a king who puts Himself above us)*

Ask students, as a review, "What was it that Jesus did for Lazarus?" *(Raised him from the dead.)*

Ask, "Could a king who is just a king, and not God's Son, do that?" *(No. Even a king with the strongest horse, the shiniest crown, the fanciest clothes, the biggest kingdom, cannot do that. Only God's Son could do that. And He does it because He loved Lazarus. He loves us, too. So He has promised that someday we can live forever with Him in His heavenly Kingdom)*

Read "Palm Sunday" from the Resource section together. Have an open Bible to show that this is a Bible story.

Say: "Our story tells us that Jesus knew some people would turn against Him. They would stop being His friends. They would stop being thankful for the good things He was doing. Why do you think some people would turn against Him?" *(Let students answer. Suggest these reasons: Jesus was not a king who would destroy their enemies, as some of them hoped. Some did not understand what He meant when He talked about His kingdom, because it was not right in front of them.)*

5 Wrap Up and Closing Prayer

As the students are cleaning up getting ready for the closing prayer, practice saying what the people said as Jesus entered Jerusalem: Hosanna! Blessed is He That Comes in the Name of the Lord.

Have a student "mark off" Palm Sunday on the wall calendar.

As the closing prayer, say or sing the Troparion of Palm Sunday, using the wall chart to review the words:

By raising Lazarus from the dead before Thy passion,

Thou didst confirm the universal resurrection, O Christ God.

Like the children with the palms of victory,

We cry out to Thee, O Vanquisher of death,

Hosanna in the highest! Blessed is He that comes in the name of the Lord.

Holy Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday *(Ages 7-9)*

Overview

The Bridegroom Services - Being Ready

Objectives

By the end of this Lesson, learners should be able to:

- Tell, in a simple way, the story of the Wise and Foolish Maidens (Note: "Maidens" is the word used in the Revised Standard Version of the Bible)
- Tell why it is important to be prepared for Jesus Christ when He comes to be with us

Materials

- Icon of the Wise and Foolish Maidens
- Black line drawings of the icon, one for each group of 4 students
- For the mural, felt pieces, glue, scissors, mural paper, tape as for previous lessons

For the Review Activity, have for **each group** of 4 students the following:

- Five Ziploc bags
*Each containing 1" squares of heavy paper or card stock, each with a single letter. In each bag the letters will spell out **one** of the following words: LAZARUS, MARTHA, RAISED, JERUSALEM, PALMS. Each envelope should be shaken so the letters are well mixed. Use a marker to number the outside of each envelope, in the order of the words given above: 1/Lazarus, 2/Martha, 3/Raised, 4/Jerusalem, 5/Palms*
- Pencils
- Wall chart with the words of the prayer "O Heavenly King"
- Wall chart with the words of the Lord's Prayer, if you feel the class needs it

Resources

Required Resources

[My Guide to Holy Week and the Feast of Palms \(PDF\)](#)

[The Bridegroom Services of Holy Week \(PDF\)](#)

[Icon of the Wise and Foolish Maidens\(Link\)](#)

Optional Resources

Procedure

1 Opening Prayer

(Have students stand.)

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

O Heavenly King, the Comforter, the Spirit of truth, Who art everywhere and fillest all things, Treasury of blessings and giver of life, Come and abide in us, and cleanse us from every impurity, And save our souls, O Good One.

Ask: "In this prayer, we are addressing one of the three Persons of the Holy Trinity. Which one is it?" (*The word "Spirit" in the first line should make this clear.*)

Go over these words as needed:

- "Comforter" means one who both guides and comforts. The word applies here to a person
- "Abide in us" means stay with us, be close to us, be part of us
- "Cleanse us from every impurity" means help us choose to do good things, and to stay away from things that are wrong

2 Review

Sing or say together the Troparion for Palm Sunday, the Entrance of the Lord into Jerusalem:

By raising Lazarus from the dead before Thy Passion,

Thou didst confirm the universal resurrection, O Christ God.

Like the children with the palms of victory,

We cry out to Thee, O Vanquisher of death,

Hosanna in the Highest! Blessed is He that comes in the name of the Lord!

Make sure students understand the following words and phrases:

1. **passion:** this means the suffering and death of Jesus Christ when He died on the cross

2. **universal resurrection:** this is God's promise that even though our lives on earth, we will all rise to live with Him forever
3. **vanquisher:** conqueror, someone who wins a battle

Continue the review by dividing the class into groups of 4. Give each group pencils, paper, a set of five numbered envelopes (numbered 1 to 5) containing letters, and a desk or table space to work on.

Have the groups work on spelling out the names and words in each envelope, arranging the squares in order on the workspace. Walk around among the groups and give help (especially with spelling) as needed. As students work out the words and names, they should be able to write sentences using each name or word, and the sentences should describe (in order) the events we remember on Lazarus Saturday and Palm Sunday. Let students work from memory, only reviewing the story from the Bible if they need to. (Have a Bible open to John 11, for students to consult only after trying to complete the activity from memory.) You may want to make the activity a contest to see which group can be first to spell out the words in the bags and write correct sentences. (The sentences should contain the following basic facts and chronology, though students may write them differently, and may compose more or fewer sentences. So long as the basic facts are presented, the sentences students create may vary quite a bit):

Lazarus, the brother of **Martha** and Mary, had died.

Jesus **raised** Lazarus from the dead.

Jesus entered **Jerusalem**.

The people welcomed Jesus by waving **palms** and cheering.

Review the answers with the whole class when everyone has finished.

3 Scripture & Discussion

Tell the class this story, based on the Parable of the Wise and Foolish Maidens that Jesus told. (The Resource section contains commentary on the services of the first days of Holy Week, which you can read for your own information.)

Jesus told this story to His followers:

There were ten maidens (that means girls) who were waiting for a bridegroom to come to a wedding. Their job was to walk with him and light the way with oil lamps. They needed to have plenty of oil for their lamps, so they would be ready. Five of them did have plenty of oil, but the other five had not bothered to make sure they had lots of oil.

It got so late that all the maidens fell asleep. At midnight, the bridegroom came and everyone called, "He is here! Come to meet him!" The maidens all woke up and started to get their

lamps ready. The foolish ones said to the wise ones, "Give us some of your oil."

But there was not enough time for the wise maidens to share their oil, and still have enough. The foolish girls rushed out to buy some. But while they were gone, the bridegroom went with the wise maidens to the wedding party. The door was closed.

The foolish maidens returned, and knocked on the door. They said, "Let us in!" But it was too late. The bridegroom said, "I do not know you."

After He finished telling this story, Jesus said, "Keep watch and be ready, for you do not know the day or the hour when the Son of Man is coming."

4 Discussion Questions

When we come to church on Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday of Holy Week, we will sing about the "bridegroom." (Ask students: "*Who do you think is the bridegroom?*")

Let them come up with the answer that it is Jesus Christ.)

Say "*The bridegroom in the story calls himself the "Son of Man." That is also Jesus Christ. He wants us to be ready for Him whenever He comes. We won't go out to meet Him with oil lamps. But we will think about the things we have done, and the way we live. We can be ready to meet Him by trying to do good things. We can be ready by being sorry for the bad things we have done, the things that make us feel bad inside, and that we know are not what He wants us to do. We can be ready by trying to keep doing the good things, and making up for the bad things we do, as much as we can. Then when we meet Him we can be joyful, and not ashamed of things we have done.*"

Give students one or two minutes of silence to think about what these words mean to them, and to ask questions if they wish to. It's important to assure them that Jesus Christ wants us to be with Him - He will never leave us out if we really want to be with Him.

Continue: "On Pascha (Easter) we will sing and celebrate Jesus Christ rising from the dead. Someday we will meet Him face to face. This story helps us get ready for that wonderful day. It is such a great day that we see the name of it written as Great and Holy Pascha."

5 Holy Week Mural

Look together at the icon of the Wise and Foolish Maidens, and see how it reflects the story. Put the following phrases on the chalkboard. Have groups of four, each with paper, crayons, colored

pencils, and markers, write out one of the phrases, using color and "flourishes" on the letters as they wish (if your class is large, more than one group can write out the same phrase or choose another from the Bible story:

- Give us some of your oil
- I do not know you
- Lord, lord, open to us
- Five were wise, and five were foolish
- Behold, the bridegroom!

They can then arrange and attach their completed phrases to the panel. It can be labeled: Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday: The Bridegroom Comes.

Have three students mark off Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday on the wall calendar.

Look together at the "Jesus the Holy Wisdom" line drawing from the Resource section to see another way in which the story of the Wise and Foolish Maidens is depicted. Jesus is shown as the fountain of wisdom. We see the maidens and the closed doors.

6 Troparion & Icon Reflection

Look again at the icon of the Wise and Foolish Maidens together. Say part of the Troparion together:

Behold, the bridegroom comes at midnight, and blessed is the servant whom He shall find watching, and again, unworthy is the servant whom He shall find heedless.

Ask students to define "heedless." If they are not sure of its meaning, tell them it means not paying attention and not caring about what God wants us to do. Ask them to say how the foolish maidens give us an example of being "heedless" (they did not care enough to provide themselves with enough oil to be ready to go with the bridegroom)

7 Closing Prayer

(Have students stand)

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

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 evil.

Holy Thursday *(Ages 7-9)*

Overview

The Last Supper - Jesus Shows Love for His Disciples

Objectives

By the end of this Lesson, learners should be able to:

- Describe the Last Supper as a sign of Jesus' love for His disciples
- Describe Jesus' washing of the feet of His disciples as an example of humble service to another
- Relate the Last Supper to our reception of Holy Communion

Materials

- Icon of the Last Supper
- Black line drawing/s of the Last Supper icon, one for each group of four students
- A clear pitcher or glass of water
- Section A: Children's Bible Stories (Resource section)
- Materials for mural, as in previous lessons (crayons, colored pencils, markers, felt pieces, scissors, glue, mural paper)
- Wall chart with words of the Opening Prayer. **Note:** Since this prayer is only for today, and is fairly short, you may prefer to put the words on the chalkboard before class.

Resources

Required Resources

[Palm Sunday \(PDF\)](#)

[Section A: Children's Bible Stories \(PDF\)](#)

[The Last Supper \(PDF\)](#)

[Last Supper Icon \(Image\)](#)

Optional Resources

[The Last Supper line drawing \(PDF\)](#)

Procedure

1 Opening Prayer

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

O Heavenly King, the comforter, the Spirit of truth,
Who art everywhere and fillest all things,
Treasury of blessings and giver of life,
Come and abide in us, and cleanse us from every impurity,
And save our souls, O Good One.

Review words and phrases in this prayer as you did in the previous session, using the wall chart you provided.

2 Discussion Starter

Ask students, "Do you like to have a meal with people you love? What is nice about eating with people you like and love?" (Let them give answers and say a little about their experiences of sharing meals.)

Continue by saying, "Jesus Christ liked it, too. One of the last things He did while He was on earth was to share a special meal with His disciples. Here is an icon of that meal. (Show the icon of the Last Supper.) Do you see how close everyone is sitting? They loved Jesus and He loved them. Jesus showed His love in a way that really might surprise you. We will read about it, but first I want to ask you something."

Pointing out the pitcher or glass of water, ask students, "What can you do with water?" (*Let students give answers such as: take a drink, clean something, water the garden, wash your face, etc.*) Then have students stand. Tell them you are going to read a list of things, and that they should sit down if they hear something they would NOT want to do with water. They can stay standing as long as the things you say are things they would be willing to do. Read these items slowly, one by one:

--take a drink

--give someone else a drink

--make ice cubes

--help a grownup clean things

--make lemonade or another kind of drink

--fill a birdbath

--turn on the sprinkler and run through the water on a warm day

--wash someone else's dirty, sweaty feet.

Chances are the students will remain standing till you say the last item, and then most or all will sit down. Say, "Let's find out what Our Lord did that was a surprise."

3 Scripture Story

Read together "Jesus' Last Supper with His Disciples" from Section A: Children's Bible Stories in the Resource section. Make special note of the reason Jesus did this surprising thing of washing His disciples' feet--ask students what the reason was. (*He did it to give them an example of real service. He wanted them to show love by serving others.*) When this point has been made, tell students that He wants us to serve others, too.

Also point out that when we receive Holy Communion at church, we are doing what Jesus asked us to do at the Last Supper. What we receive in Holy Communion is bread and wine. But He is with us as we receive it, in a special way that only God can be.

As a way of helping you explain this to your young students, here are the words of Mrs. Sophie Koulomzin in her book Our Church and Our Children: "One can say that this is the food Jesus gave to His disciples when He had supper with them for the last time, and that every time we eat this holy food, it is like Jesus Himself giving it to us" (p. 43.) The idea that Our Lord is One who feeds us is a good one to emphasize with young students.

4 Holy Week Mural

Have students, in groups of four each working on a line drawing, construct the fourth panel of the mural in the same way as in previous lessons, with the icon of the Last Supper as their model. They will fill in the non-clothes parts with color, and cut felt pieces to fit the clothing parts. They will glue these on, and then arrange and attach completed pictures to the mural panel.

Note: Since the anointing of Jesus' feet is not included in the version of the Last Supper story used here, it has not been included in the mural. But do remind students that Jesus did this after the supper. The event is part of our Holy Thursday worship.

Note: While students are working on the mural, write the words of the Kathisma Hymn (slightly adapted) from Tone 1 and Tone 2 of the Vespers of Great and Holy Wednesday on the chalkboard. The words of the hymn are below, in the Closing Prayer section (6).

5 Wrap Up

Look at the words of the Kathisma Hymn on the chalkboard together. Remind students that you talked about several things that we can do with water. Here the hymn shows us that Our Lord Jesus Christ, with His Father and the Holy Spirit, created all water. Then, when He came to be with us on earth, He used water in a very humble way: by washing His disciples' feet.

Ask students to think about a way they can serve someone else in a humble way during the coming week. (Make sure they understand the meaning of “humble.” It means not showing off, not looking for praise, not trying to stand out or impress.) Let those who wish to volunteer suggestions do so.

Have a student mark off Holy Thursday on the wall calendar.

6 Closing Prayer

Use the Kathisma Hymn as your closing prayer:

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

The Lord, who loves mankind, who created the lakes, the rivers, and the seas,
Gave us a special commandment of love when He wrapped a towel around His waist and washed the feet of His disciples; He humbled Himself in the greatness of His goodness, raising us from the depths of evil. We pray: Grant us great mercy.

Holy Friday *(Ages 7-9)*

Overview

Will We Be True Friends to Christ?

Objectives

By the end of this Lesson, learners should be able to:

- Briefly describe the events of the arrest, trial, and death of Jesus Christ
- Describe how, even while dying on the cross, Jesus cared for His Mother by asking His disciple John to take care of her
- State simply that Jesus Christ rose from the dead

Materials

- Icon of the Crucifixion of Jesus Christ
- Black line drawings of the icon of the Crucifixion, one for each group of four students
- Section A: Children's Bible Stories (Resource Section)
- Simple materials to serve as "robes" for bystanders in role play; if desired, also a walking stick (for Peter) and a bowl and rag for the servant girl who questions him as Jesus is being questioned
- Materials for the Holy Week mural as in previous lessons--colored pencils, crayons, markers, felt pieces, scissors, glue, mural paper

- Chart with the words of the Opening Prayer, mounted on the wall

Resources

Required Resources

[My Guide to Holy Week and the Feast of Palms \(PDF\)](#)

[Section A: Children's Bible Stories \(PDF\)](#)

[The Crucifixion \(PDF\)](#)

Optional Resources

[Crucifix](#)

[Icon of The Crucifixion of the Lord \(Image\)](#)

Procedure

1 Opening Prayer

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

We magnify You, O Jesus, our King.

We worship Your passion and Your burial,

For by them, You have saved us from death.

Be sure students understand that "magnify" here means to praise greatly. Review the word "passion" as meaning the suffering and death of the Lord. (*The verses are taken from the Praises in the Matins of Holy Saturday.*)

2 Scripture Reflection

Read the stories [Jesus is Betrayed](#), [The Trial of Jesus](#), [Jesus is Put to Death on a Cross](#), and [The Burial and Resurrection of Christ](#) in *Section A: Children's Bible Stories, page 8 to near the bottom of page 11*. Be sure students understand the meaning of the word "betray": to act like a friend, but really be an enemy. If students ask about the reasons for Judas' betrayal, say that Judas wanted money. Also, perhaps he did not believe that a real King would let Himself be treated badly, as Jesus did. Judas did not understand that Jesus did all this for us.

3 Discussion Questions

- **Do you think Jesus hated the people who hurt Him?**
No, He is God and loves everyone forever, unconditionally.
- **What were some strange things that happened as Jesus was dying on the cross?**
It became very dark, rocks split open, saints who had died came back to life, and the curtain in the Temple in Jerusalem was torn in two pieces.
- **How did Jesus show His love for His Mother as He was dying on the cross?**
He told His disciple John to take care of her, and John did so.

Look at the icon together. Notice that there are far fewer people than there were in the crowd on Palm Sunday. Some people turned away from Jesus Christ when they no longer thought He was a powerful king.

4 Role Play

Have students role play the scene of Peter waiting outside as Jesus is being questioned. Students can take the roles of bystanders, Peter, and the servant girl who confronts him. Have students take turns, if your group is large. The servant girl and Peter can have their dialog, while bystanders comment on who Peter is, what is happening to Jesus, and any experiences they may have had with Jesus as He traveled, preached, taught and healed.

When they have finished, ask, “Why do you think Peter pretended he did not know Christ?” (*He was afraid of getting in trouble, and being associated with the one who was in trouble*)

Ask, “Do you think Jesus forgave Peter for pretending he was not Jesus’ friend?” (*Yes. Later, after Jesus rose from the dead, Peter became a great servant of God. He traveled far, and told many people that Jesus Christ is God, encouraging them to become Christians and baptizing them.*)

5 Holy Week Mural

Have students, in groups of four, construct the fifth panel of the mural in the same way as in previous lessons, using the Icon of the Crucifixion as their model. They will fill in the non-clothing parts of the line drawing with colored pencils, crayons or markers, and cut felt to fit the clothing pieces. These should be glued on, and the completed drawings arranged and attached to the mural paper. The title of this panel is Holy Friday.

When they finish, have a student mark off Holy Friday on the wall calendar.

While students are working on the mural, put the verses for the closing prayer on the chalkboard.

6 Closing Prayer

Spend a few minutes having students memorize these verses, and use them as a closing prayer.

Blessed is He that comes in the name of the Lord. God is the Lord, and has revealed Himself to us.

Holy Saturday & Pascha (Ages 7-9)

Overview

Christ is Risen! - Jesus Christ the Lord is Alive

Objectives

By the end of this Lesson, learners should be able to:

- Tell in a simple way the story of the empty tomb
- Relate the icon of the Resurrection to the Troparion of the feast

Materials

- Icon of the Resurrection
- Section A Children's Bible Stories (Resource Section)
(1 copy per student)
- Black line drawings of the Resurrection icon, one for each group of four students
- Materials for the final panel of the mural, as in previous lessons (crayons, colored pencils, markers, felt pieces, scissors, glue, mural paper)

Resources

Required Resources

[Section A: Children's Bible Stories \(PDF\)](#)

[Entry into Jerusalem \(Image\)](#)

Optional Resources

[Descent Into Hades: Line Drawing](#)

[Descent Into Hades: The Holy Resurrection](#)

[Icon of The Entry Into Jerusalem \(Image\)](#)

[Icon of The Resurrection of Christ \(Image\)](#)

Procedure

1 Opening Prayer

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

Christ is Risen from the dead,
Trampling down death by death,
And upon those in the tombs bestowing life!

Note: Make sure students know that "bestowing" means giving.

2 Icon of the Feast

Look together at the Resurrection icon. Let students find the way Jesus is "bestowing life" on those in the tombs. *He pulls Adam and Eve out from the power of death. Others who have died will be pulled out, too.*

The power of death is shown in the gates or doors, with locks and keys, that Christ is trampling on. *If students are not sure what "trampling" means, the icon shows it - Christ is stepping firmly on and destroying the gates or doors of death and hell.*

Ask students: How are the things we talked about in the icon related to the Troparion of the Feast?
The hymn mentions Christ trampling down death and bestowing life.

3 Scripture Story

As a review of the last session, read [The Burial and Resurrection of Christ](#), and then go on to [Christ is Risen](#). The texts are in the Resource section, in Section A: Children's Bible Stories, page 11 to page 13.

4 Discussion Questions

- **After Jesus was buried, some women went to the tomb. What did they talk about on the way there?**
They were worried that they would not be able to roll away the big, heavy stone covering the tomb.
- **What did they find at the tomb?**
A bright, shining angel was there. The tomb was open, with the stone rolled away. The soldiers guarding the tomb were so frightened by the brightness of the angel that they had fallen on the ground.
- **A little later, Mary Magdalen saw Jesus. She knew that He had risen from the dead. What did Jesus tell her to do?**
He said, "Go and tell the disciples that I am going to My Father."

5 Memorization Review

Review with students the verses they memorized from the last session: *Blessed is He that comes in the name of the Lord. God is the Lord and has revealed Himself to us.* (These could be written on the chalkboard.) When you have reviewed the verses, talk briefly about their meaning. Tell students that God has revealed or shown Himself to us by rising from the dead. Only God, the Lord, could do this.

6 Holy Week Mural and Unit Review

Have students finish the final panel of the mural. As in previous lessons, divide the class into groups of four and have each group work on a black line drawing, this time of the icon of the Resurrection. They will fill in the non-clothing parts with crayon, colored pencils and markers, and then cut felt to fit the clothing parts. They will then glue them onto the drawing, and arrange and attach the completed sheets to the mural paper. The title can be Resurrection: Christ is Risen!

Put any necessary finishing touches on it, and decide together on a place where you might display the mural so parents, parishioners, and other people can readily see it.

As a review of the unit, divide the class into two teams, and have each team stand together so that they are clearly divided. Have each team choose a name, and put the names on the chalkboard. Beneath each name make two columns titled SIT and STAND, with room to record numbers.

Be sure each student has a chair readily available. Explain that you will ask questions, and to each question you will give two possible answers. Only one answer is correct. You will tell students to sit if they choose one answer, or stay standing and raise their arms above their heads if they choose the other. Go through the following question as an example. Say, "I betrayed Jesus to his enemies. Who am I? Stand if my name is Judas. Sit if my name is John." (Judas; standers are correct.)

After the students respond to each question, you will ask them to stay sitting or standing, while you count and record on the board the number of "sitters" and the number of "standers" on each team. The eight questions are lettered from A to H, so you can mark each one on the board with its letter. After recording the numbers, tell students which answer was correct. The team with the most correct answers (the ones who sat or stood correctly most often) will be the winner. Remind the standers to put their hands in the air; this will make your counting easier. Be sure to have students stand after you finish counting and before you ask the next question. Read the questions slowly, and repeat them once if needed. But don't let students make you repeat them several times; they should be listening. **Questions:**

A. Jesus raised me from the dead. Who am I? SIT if my name is Luke. STAND if my name is Lazarus. **(Lazarus; standers are correct.)**

B. Jesus told a story about young women who didn't have enough of this for their lamps. What was it? SIT if it was water. STAND if it was oil. **(Oil; standers are correct.)**

C. I went to Jesus' tomb early in the morning. Who am I? SIT if I am Mary. STAND if I am Martha.

(Mary; sitters are correct.)

D. Jesus rode into this city on Palm Sunday. What city is it? SIT if it is Bethlehem. STAND if it is Jerusalem. **(Jerusalem; standers are correct.)**

E. I am a sister of Lazarus. What is my name? SIT if it is Elizabeth. STAND if it is Martha.

(Martha; standers are correct.)

F. Jesus used this to show His disciples how to be servants. SIT if it is water. STAND if it is oil.

(Water; sitters are correct.)

G. When Jesus was dying on the cross, He told me to take care of His mother. Who am I? (STAND if I am Mark. SIT if I am John. **(John; sitters are correct.)**

H. I was afraid, so I said I didn't know Jesus even though He was my friend. Who am I? SIT if my name is Peter. STAND if my name is Matthew. **(Peter; sitters are correct.)**

If students are interested, give them a chance to think up 2 or 3 more questions. (The winning team can go first.)

Have a student mark off Pascha on the wall calendar.

7 Closing Prayer

Christ is Risen from the dead,
Trampling down death by death,
And upon those in the tombs bestowing life!

Note: *If possible, sing or say the troparion in one or more languages in addition to English.*

Getting Ready for Pascha (Ages 4-6)

Overview

During Great Lent We Get Ready for Pascha

Objectives

By the end of this Lesson, learners should be able to:

- State that Great Lent is a time of getting ready for Pascha
- State that Great Lent is a time to try to be more like Jesus Christ

Materials

- Construction paper (8 1/2 x 11), one sheet per child. Have enough sheets to offer a choice of colors. The colors should be light enough so that the children's drawings will show up well.
- Colored markers or crayons
- Tape or glue
- Pictures of a church, a Bible, someone praying, people showing kindness and helping others in various ways. These should be things that can be used to show how the children will get ready for Pascha. Sources for pictures include magazines, the internet, and computer clip art. An excellent Orthodox source is the Prayer Journal produced by International Orthodox Christian Charities, available at IOCC.org.
- Wall calendar showing the days of Great Lent and Holy Week. Have this large enough for children to see easily. You can make it yourself on a large piece of butcher paper or poster board, with a box for each day. Number the days of Great Lent (no labels), but number and label Lazarus Saturday, Palm Sunday, the days of Holy Week--Great and Holy Monday through Great and Holy Saturday--and Pascha. This should be mounted on the wall and remain there for all the weeks of the unit.
- Poster with the words of the opening prayer, *O Heavenly King*, in large letters. This also should be mounted on the wall and remain there throughout the unit.
- Cut-out picture of a dove and tape to attach it to the poster during the lesson. (Pictures and outlines of a dove can be found on the internet or in computer clip art.)
- Paper fan with which you can gently fan the children during the lesson. Keep it on hand for review in following lessons.
- Blank wall chart to record names of people children choose to pray for.

Resources

Optional Resources

[Icon of The Resurrection of Christ \(Image\)](#)

Procedure

1 Opening Prayer

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

O Heavenly King, the comforter, the Spirit of truth,
Who art everywhere and fillest all things,
Treasury of blessings and giver of life,
Come and abide in us, and cleanse us from every impurity,
And save our souls, O Good One.

Help children understand these parts of the prayer. As you talk about the parts, point to the words in the mounted poster:

Spirit of Truth: This is the Holy Spirit, the Person we are addressing or "talking to" in this prayer. Tell children that we have never seen the Holy Spirit. But the Bible tells us that people have seen and felt the Spirit in some ways. One is as a wind blowing. (Have the children close their eyes, and gently fan them with the paper fan.) The Holy Spirit also came as a dove to Jesus' friends as a sign of God's love. (Tape the dove picture to the poster.)

Come and abide in us: Be with us and stay close to us.

Cleanse us from every impurity: Help us to do good things, and to make good choices in the things we do, so that we will be living the way Jesus wants us to. Ask children to give examples of good choices. (Suggestions: Being kind and not mean, saying things nicely using "please" and "thank you", helping someone when we can, etc.) Do simple role play:

Have one child pretend to carry and then accidentally drop a pile of books. Ask another child to think of and act out a good choice (helping to pick them up.)

Have one child sit in a chair, and pretend it's the only seat left on a crowded bus. Another child pretends to be a tired, old person and walks slowly by. Ask the child in the chair to think of and act out a good choice (offer the seat.)

Have one child ask another to borrow a pencil, and choose a good way of asking ("May I borrow your pencil" rather than "Hey, would ya gimme your pencil") Let several children take turns asking each other to borrow something, and role play helping clean up something spilled.

If time permits, have children think of other situations in which to make good choices, or offer some suggestions to them. Then remind them that this is what "cleanse us from every impurity" means.

2 Discussion Starter

Explain to the children that Great Lent is a time of getting ready--use these words rather than "preparing" with your young learners--for Pascha, the day when we celebrate Jesus being raised from the dead. (Remind them that many people call this day "Easter.") Look together at the icon of the Resurrection (in the Resources section) and ask children to notice how Jesus Christ is helping people. (He is pulling them out of the place of death. This is the first thing He did after He rose from the dead. He did it because He loved us so much that He wanted us to live with Him forever.)

This is why Pascha is so special--we thank Jesus Christ for saving us, and celebrate the fact that one day we will be able to live with Him forever. So Great Lent is a time when we get ready for that special day by trying to do good things, and doing what Jesus wants us to do. Some of the things we do to are as follows; let children add other ideas, and perhaps tell about some of their own Lenten experiences:

- **Go to church more often**
- **Help others and give to others in need (ask children to give examples of how we can do this)**
- **Pray more**
- **Read stories from the Bible**
- **Not eat meat, and eat fewer "treats" (Be sensitive to various family practices in the children's homes.) Suggest that children could save the money they would otherwise spend on treats, and ask their parents to use it for the poor**
- **Watch less television, play fewer video games, and spend less time on the computer. Use the time instead to pray more, and to help others**

3 Discussion Question

Ask: What things can you do to get ready for Pascha?

Give sufficient time for each child who wishes to respond. Responses will vary, some may involve getting new clothes, Easter baskets, or having a special meal with the family. You may suggest that the children think about ways they can carry out some of the things you have talked about already in this lesson. For example, they might choose a specific person they could help in some way, or a job they could do at home.

4 Preparing for Pascha

Have the children choose a sheet of construction paper, and fold it into fourths (with your help, if necessary.) On the construction paper have students show four ways they will get ready for Pascha – one in each quarter section. These can either be pictures you have provided, which you

help them paste or tape onto the paper, or something the child draws. Label the sections to help parents identify the things the children will do during Great Lent.

Have each child identify one person or group, other than immediate family members, for whom they will pray during Great Lent. On the chart you have provided, place each child's name and the person for whom they will pray. (Suggestions: your priest, choir director, their school principal, teacher, or nurses, firefighters, soldiers, police.) Invite children to explain why they selected this person or group; some may be more ready to do this than others, and only those who wish to need to say anything. The chart should remain posted in the classroom as a reminder. The children may offer suggestions of a title for the chart, or you may create one.

As an option, plan during the coming week to send home a letter to parents telling them who their child plans to pray for. Encourage the parents to remind the child and also take part in the prayers.)

5 Project Introduction: Holy Week Mural

Tell the children that, during some of your class time together, they will be doing a mural project that will show the events of Holy Week – the week that follows Great Lent and leads us to Pascha. Be sure they know that a "mural" is a large chart with pictures.

6 Wrap Up

As the children are cleaning up and preparing for the closing prayer, ask:

- *What is the first thing you will start doing to get ready for Pascha?* Time permitting, let those who wish to silently "mime" what they are going to do, while the others guess what it is. If time is shorter, just invite brief oral answers. Have the children take their labeled construction paper sheets home. Ask the children to tell you the other word many people use for "Pascha" (Easter.)
- Remind children that today you have talked about Great Lent. Point out the calendar, which shows us those weeks of Great Lent leading up to Pascha.

7 Closing Prayer

(Have children stand.) You may want to tell children that, when the priest prays this prayer during the Divine Liturgy, he raises his hands and offers the prayer to God while asking for a blessing from God. Children could also raise their hands for this prayer, thus offering and asking.

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

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 evil.

(Go over words of this prayer as needed. For example, ask children what "trespasses" means. When you feel sure they know it means the bad things that people do, ask what the prayer wants us to do about them. The answer, of course, is to forgive them--not keep them in our hearts and be mad at the person who did them. That's because we want to be like Jesus, and Jesus forgives us. So we should forgive others.)

8 Teacher Tips

1. We have made these lessons flexible in terms of the time they will take. Especially with very young children, you may adapt, shorten, expand, or divide the material among sessions in any way that works well for you, the children, and your parish situation.
2. "Call-backs" are a good way to get the children's attention when you need to, especially when the children are excited, or have been moving around the room for an activity. Teach the children an answer to something you say, and use that to call their attention back to you. Examples: When you say "Jesus said" they answer "Follow me", or you say "God grant you" and they answer "Many Years." The words could be any combination you choose; teachers have used their city and state (teacher says "Detroit" and students answer "Michigan.") The point is to let children know that they are to answer and give their attention when they hear this particular word or phrase. Change the call-back after a few weeks.
3. We suggest creating a prayer corner in the classroom, where you can gather with the children for opening and closing prayers. Have an icon, candles, and flowers or a plant. The icon can be the one related to the lesson.

Jesus' Friends *(Ages 4-6)*

Overview

Jesus Visits Lazarus

Objectives

By the end of this Lesson, learners should be able to:

- State that Mary, Martha and Lazarus were friends of Jesus
- Tell why Jesus went to visit Lazarus (to raise him from the dead, or bring him back to life)

Materials

- Orthodox Study Bible – John 11:1-45
- Lazarus story, paraphrased for children (see "Jesus Raises Lazarus from the Dead" in Resource section)
- Large pieces of fabric for live re-creation of the icon and several rolls of toilet paper to wrap Lazarus in burial cloths
- Icon of the Raising of Lazarus
- Icon of the Resurrection (Jesus raising Adam and Eve from hell and eternal death)
- Mural project materials list
 - Roll of mural paper/paper on a roll--plan enough for five panels, and mark off five sections/panels
 - Crayons or markers
 - One or more black line drawings--see Resource section-- of the Raising of Lazarus (depending on the number of children in your class, cut the drawing/s into pieces so that each child can have one piece. They will color and put together the pieces for the mural.)
 - Scissors
 - Masking tape, thumb tacks, or other wall mounting

Resources

Required Resources

[The Raising of Lazarus \(John 11:1-45\) \(PDF\)](#)

Optional Resources

[Icon of The Raising of Lazarus \(Image\)](#)

[Raising Lazarus from the Dead](#)

Procedure

1 Opening Prayer

(Have children stand.) In the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

O Heavenly King, the comforter, the Spirit of truth,
Who art everywhere and fillest all things,
Treasury of blessings and giver of life,
Come and abide in us, and cleanse us from every impurity,
And save our souls, O Good One.

Review parts of this prayer as you did at the previous session. Ask the children, "Who are we talking to in this prayer?" (The Holy Spirit)

Review the chart showing people or groups children chose to pray for at the last session. Ask how they did at home, remembering to pray. If you chose the option of sending a letter home, remind them to invite their parents to pray with them. Then pray together for all the names on the chart. Tell the children that Jesus is always happy when we pray, especially when we pray for others.

Call children's attention to the wall calendar, and remind them that we are talking about Great Lent, the time of getting ready for Pascha.

2 Discussion Starter

Explain to the children that Lazarus Saturday comes a week before the feast of Pascha. Point out the day on the calendar. Say that "Lazarus" is the name of a man who was Jesus' good friend. Read or tell the story of the Raising of Lazarus. (See "Jesus Raises Lazarus from the Dead" in the Resource section.)

Say: As you listen to the story I am going to read (or tell), see whether you can tell me what wonderful thing Jesus did for His friend Lazarus. Have the Bible open even if you are retelling the story or reading a shorter version of the Biblical text. Also have the icon of the raising of Lazarus prominently displayed.

3 Discussion Questions

Note: Give sufficient time for children to respond--they may need "thinking time."

- What was the wonderful thing Jesus did for His friend Lazarus?
He raised Lazarus from the dead.
- How were Mary, Martha and Lazarus related? Were they cousins, or brother and sisters, or a dad and mom with their daughter? *(These examples should help young children*

understand what "related" means if they are not sure. You can also mention people the children are related to--parents, grandparents, siblings, cousins, etc.)

(Answer: They were a brother and his two sisters.)

- Were Lazarus and Mary and Martha related to Jesus?
No, but they were all good friends.
- What are some things you do with your friends? *(Let children offer answers.)*
- Do you think Jesus did any of these things with His friends? *(Yes. He ate, talked, walked around, and had good times with His friends. He often prayed with them. We know that He went to a wedding, and that He invited little children to come and talk with Him.)*
- When Jesus arrived at the home of Mary, Martha, and Lazarus, what had happened to Lazarus?
He had died and was buried.
- What did we say Jesus did for His good friend Lazarus?
He raised him from the dead.
- There were many people watching when Jesus raised Lazarus. Do you think they were happy when they saw what Jesus did? *Yes, they were happy. They saw that Jesus really loved Lazarus. We are happy too, because Jesus promises us that someday we can live with Him forever in heaven. By raising Lazarus, Jesus showed that He is God, and He can keep His promise. We are happy because we know He loves us so much that He wants us to have life in heaven.*
- Look together at the Resurrection icon, and review what is happening, repeating what you said in the previous lesson.

4 The Living Icon

Look together at the icon of the the Raising of Lazarus, and have children tell who is pictured in the icon. *(Jesus, Lazarus, Mary, Martha, neighbors and others watching.)* Have them also note the burial cloths in which Lazarus is wrapped. Using the pieces of fabric you have provided, children can dress and portray people in the icon, telling who they are and what their relationship is to Jesus. Have the class wrap one member, portraying Lazarus, in toilet paper, being careful of course not to obstruct the child's breathing, vision, or ability to take a few steps. You might want to put chairs around "Lazarus" to suggest the closed space of the tomb, but leaving a path for the child to exit.

Have the children take places as depicted in the icon, and read the story of the raising of Lazarus from the text in the Resources section. At the appropriate point in the story, the children can call, "Lazarus, come out!" and the child portraying Lazarus can come forward and burst out of the toilet paper wrappings.

Since it's likely that several or all children will want the chance to "be" Lazarus in his wrappings, you can do the activity more than once if time permits. You could also suggest to parents, in a letter or email, that they do this role play activity at home. Describe the activity, and write out the story from the Resource section.

5 Holy Week Mural

Have children color and construct the Lazarus Saturday panel in this way: Give each child a piece of the black line drawing of the Raising of Lazarus, and let them color it while looking at the icon to approximate the colors (the icon and the line drawing are not exactly the same). Then the children can put the pieces together in the correct pattern, and glue them to the "Lazarus Saturday" panel of the mural. (If you have a large number of children, they can do more than one icon for the panel.) Label the panel as "Lazarus Saturday."

Note: For this **and the following lessons**, if you don't wish to cut the line drawing(s), give each group of 2 or 3 children a line drawing, and have them color it together. Then arrange their finished drawings to create the panel.

6 Extra Activity

Begin practicing the singing of Paschal Troparion (*Christ is Risen*).

***Christ is risen from the dead,
Trampling down death by death,
And upon those in the tombs bestowing life.***

Be sure students know that "bestowing" means "giving."

You might add motions to the singing: For the first line, children can raise their hands; for the second they can stomp and "trample" death; for the third they can hold their hands out like someone giving a gift. If time permits, children can suggest other motions or gestures for each line.

7 Wrap Up

As the children are cleaning up and preparing for the closing prayer, remind them to continue praying for the person/s they chose.

An option, if you have time, is to begin a "prayer wall" in the classroom. Have a large chart to which children can add names of people to pray for. You could add a list, separate from that for people, of pets children want to pray for. Plan each week to pray for some or all of the people on the list, and for some or all of the pets.

8 Closing Prayer

(Have children stand.) In the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

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 evil.

Jesus Comes to Jerusalem (Ages 4-

6)

Overview

Welcoming Jesus to Jerusalem -

Objectives

By the end of this Lesson, learners should be able to:

- Tell how the people welcomed Jesus when He came to Jerusalem

Materials

- Orthodox Study Bible – John 12: 1-18
- Palm Sunday story paraphrased for children (see Resource section)
- Icon of Palm Sunday/Entry into Jerusalem
- Black line drawing/s--see Resource section-- of Entry into Jerusalem/Palm Sunday icon, cut into enough pieces for children each to have one to color and assemble for Palm Sunday mural panel
- Mural project materials as for previous lesson
- Sheet of green construction paper (11 by 17) for each child
- Scotch tape
- Thumb tacks, or other wall mounting
- Stapler
- Scissors for children to share, using them with your help

Resources

Required Resources

[Palm Sunday \(PDF\)](#)

[Entry into Jerusalem \(Image\)](#)

Optional Resources

[Icon of The Entry Into Jerusalem \(Image\)](#)

Procedure

1 Opening Prayer

(Have children stand.) In the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

O Heavenly King, the Comforter, the Spirit of truth,
Who art everywhere and fillest all things,
Treasury of blessings and giver of life,
Come and abide in us, and cleanse us from every impurity,
And save our souls, O Good One.

Review the words of the prayer as you did in the first lesson.

2 Discussion Starter

Let the children tell what they know about Palm Sunday. Make sure they know that Palm Sunday celebrates the Entrance of Our Lord into Jerusalem, when grown-ups and children met Him waving palms. That is why we receive blessed palms in our churches on this Sunday--we are like those people, welcoming Jesus Christ as our Lord. Say that some churches are in countries where palms do not grow. When these churches celebrate Palm Sunday, they use what they have--pussywillows, for example. (If your parish uses both palms and pussy willows, you can say, "We use both because we have both.")

As you read or tell the story of Palm Sunday, from the story in the Resource section, ask the children to listen for what the people call out to Jesus. Tell the story of Jesus entering Jerusalem and discuss how the people honored Him as a king. Have the Bible open even if you are telling the story from the Resource section.

3 Review Questions

Ask:

- **Where was Jesus going when He traveled on Palm Sunday?**
To Jerusalem
- **What kind of animal was He riding on?**
A donkey
- **How did the people honor Him as a king?**
Waving palm branches
- **What did the children and people shout out?**
"Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord" and "Hosanna"
- **How do we greet presidents or other important people today?**
Clapping, cheering, standing, etc. (Let the children demonstrate)
- **One important person who might visit us is the bishop. How do we greet him?**
Singing, kissing his hand, standing

4 Hosanna in the Highest!

Look together at the icon of the Entrance into Jerusalem/Palm Sunday and discuss who is in the icon and what each person is doing. Point out the children who are shown in the trees, having climbed up to get a better view since they might not be able to see over the crowd of adults. The icon also shows them cutting branches to wave in greeting.

Sing or say the words:

Hosanna in the Highest! Blessed is He that comes in the name of the Lord.

(Tell the children that "Hosanna" means "Save Us!")

5 Extra / Optional Activity

Practice singing the Paschal Troparion (*Christ is Risen*). If time is short, make this practice very brief.

***Christ is risen from the dead,
Trampling down death by death,
And upon those in the tombs bestowing life.***

Add motions, as you did for the previous lesson.

6 Projects: Paper Palms and Holy Week Mural

Have each child make a paper palm. Help them cut into the short side of a piece of green construction paper about 6 inches down, to make half-inch wide strips. These will be the palm fronds. Then have them roll up the paper lengthwise, and tape the uncut part together so they can hold it. The cut part, the fronds, will be on top.

Have a procession with one child holding the icon of the feast. The others will form two lines, waving their palms and saying or singing "Hosanna" while the icon-holder processes down the center. If time permits, let each child have a turn processing with the icon.

If you are doing this lesson well before Palm Sunday, ask your priest whether it would be all right for the children to stand at the front of the church, with palms and/or willows, while the Gospel is being read on Palm Sunday. If he agrees, let parents know that this will be taking place, and talk to the children about it—they should be attentive and hold their palms high. Remind them that palms are a sign of victory, or winning, because Jesus had a victory over death, and now so do we.

For the Holy Week mural, give each child pieces of the line drawing, and let them color the pieces approximately as they are in the icon. Then they can assemble the pieces and attach them to the

mural for the "Palm Sunday" panel, which you can label.

Point out Palm Sunday on the wall calendar.

7 Closing Prayer

(Have children stand.) In the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Hosanna in the highest! Blessed is He that comes in the name of the Lord.

Remind students to pray for the person they chose to pray for at the initial class session. Pray together for the people on your prayer chart or prayer wall.

Jesus Has Supper with Friends

(Ages 4-6)

Overview

The Last Supper

Objectives

By the end of this Lesson, learners should be able to:

- State that the disciples were at the Last Supper with Jesus
- Explain the difference between Holy Communion and the blessed bread we receive after Holy Communion

Materials

- Orthodox Study Bible – Matthew 26: 26-30
- Icon of the Last Supper/Mystical Supper
- The Last Supper story paraphrased for children (see Resource section)
- Black line drawing/s of the Last Supper Icon (see Resource section). Depending on the number of children in your class, have drawing/s cut into pieces so that each child will have a piece to color and then put back together for the mural panel
- Antidoron (blessed bread) to share with students at end of class--arrange with your priest to get this before or after a Liturgy
- Crayons
- Mural project materials as in previous lessons

Resources

Required Resources

[The Last Supper \(PDF\)](#)

[Last Supper Icon \(Image\)](#)

Optional Resources

[The Last Supper line drawing \(PDF\)](#)

Procedure

1 Opening Prayer

(Have children stand.)

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

O Heavenly King, the comforter, the Spirit of truth,
Who art everywhere and fillest all things,
Treasury of blessings and giver of life,
Come and abide in us, and cleanse us from every impurity,
And save our souls, O Good One.

Continue to review the meanings of parts of this prayer as in previous lessons.

2 Discussion Starter

Tell or read the story of the Last Supper from the Resource section. Say: *While I am reading/telling the story of the Last Supper, see if there are words in the story that you hear in church. In the story you will hear the supper called a "holiday supper" because it took place on a special feast day of the Jewish people. Jesus and His disciples were taking part in that feast day.* Have the Bible open even if you are retelling the story or reading a shorter version of the Biblical text.

Note: Make sure the children know that the "disciples"--the word used in the story--are the men who traveled with Jesus, learned from Him, loved and obeyed Him as their Master and Teacher, and tried to be like Him. *(Note: Ask the children what "obey" means. Establish that it means to do what someone tells you to do. Ask, "Why would someone obey another person?" Establish that we obey someone who is wise, who cares for us, and who knows what is best for us. Then ask, "Do you think this is the way the disciples felt toward Jesus?" Of course, it is the way they felt.)*

After the story, ask students whether they heard any words they also hear in church. "Take, eat" and "Drink of it, all of you" are the important words here.

We suggest that you do not stress the words "body" and "blood" with these young children. Mrs. Sophie Koulomzin in her book *Our Church and Our Children* suggests that the "best approach is to tell the children...the story of the Last Supper, telling them that this was the way Holy Communion was given for the very first time, that Jesus Christ Himself gave it to His disciples, using the very same words we hear in church now... The children's attention can be focused on the icon of the Last Supper [or a picture of it] which is often seen above the Royal Doors." She adds, "One can say that this is the food Jesus gave to His disciples when He had supper with them for the last time, and that every time we eat this holy food, it is like Jesus Himself giving it to us" (Koulomzin, p. 43). This idea that Our Lord is One who feeds us because He loves us is a good one to emphasize.

Look together at the icon of the Last Supper, and note the food and drink on the table. Relate Jesus' act of sharing food and drink with His friends, the disciples, to the bread and wine He shares with us at Holy Communion.

Note: The term "Mystical Supper" is sometimes used. The term may be one that some children have heard. If not, there's no need to introduce it, but if they have heard it, you can explain that it is another name for the Last Supper and Holy Communion.

3 Discussion Questions

Ask, "How do we hold our hands when we go to receive Holy Communion?" (*Right hand over the left, crossed on our chests - over our hearts.*) Have children practice this.

Ask, "How should we return to our places after receiving Holy Communion?" (*Walking slowly and quietly.*)

Ask, "Why do you think we want to be quiet and careful when we receive Holy Communion?" (Let the children give answers; the general idea is that we are receiving a special gift from Jesus Himself, and so we are respectful and quiet. We keep our arms folded so that we will not spill any Holy Communion bread or wine.)

4 Blessed Bread

Show and explain what antidoron/blessed bread is. Say that it is bread that the priest blesses with prayers, and then we receive it after Holy Communion time. Tell the students they will each receive a piece at the end of the class. (**Note:** *Antidoron means "in place of the gifts." It is blessed but not consecrated, as the Holy Communion bread is. We receive this blessed bread, and in some churches also diluted wine, after Holy Communion.*) Practice again with the children the correct way of going to receive Holy Communion and returning to their places.

5 Holy Week Mural

For the "Holy Thursday" panel of the Holy Week mural, have children each color pieces of the line drawing of the Last Supper, approximating the colors in the icon. They can then reassemble the pieces and glue them to the panel of the mural which you can label "Holy Thursday."

6 Wrap Up

As the children are cleaning up and preparing for closing prayer, talk about the following:

- Ask: When do we remember the Last Supper at church on Sunday, in the Liturgy?
When we receive Holy Communion.
- Look together at the icon of the Last Supper. Ask children to find Jesus, His friend John (close to Him and leaning on Him) and to point out, again, the food and drink on the table. Ask children to tell you what things on the table we still have today when we receive Holy Communion (cup, spoon, bread, wine)
- Practice once more the proper way of going to and returning from receiving Holy Communion
- Point out Holy Thursday on the wall calendar

7 Closing Prayer

(Have children stand.) In the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

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 evil.

When you finish the prayer, distribute antidoron.

Pray together for the people on your classroom lists (also pets if you have listed them) and remind children to pray with their families at home.

Jesus Serves His Friends *(Ages 4-6)*

Overview

Jesus Shows Us How to Love Others

Objectives

By the end of this Lesson, learners should be able to:

- Explain how Jesus showed love for His disciples in a special way (by washing their feet)
- State that Jesus wanted His disciples to serve others
- Name ways we can serve others

Materials

- Orthodox Study Bible – Matthew 26: 26-30
- Last Supper story paraphrased for children (see Resource section)
- Icon of the Last Supper/Mystical Supper
- Paper and crayons or markers for drawing
- Scissors for children to share
- Scotch tape
- Mural project materials as from previous lessons

Resources

Required Resources

[The Last Supper \(PDF\)](#)

[Last Supper Icon \(Image\)](#)

Optional Resources

[The Last Supper line drawing \(PDF\)](#)

Procedure

1 Opening Prayer

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

O Heavenly King, the Comforter, the Spirit of truth,
Who art everywhere and fillest all things,
Treasury of blessings and giver of life,
Come and abide in us, and cleanse us from every impurity,
And save our souls, O Good One.

Review parts of the prayer as you have in previous lessons.

2 Discussion Starter

Ask the children to retell what they can of the story of the Last Supper that you read last week. If they have difficulty, retell the story for them, asking them to "chime in" as details come back to them while they listen. Review the meaning of the word "disciples" as meaning the men who traveled with Jesus, learned from Him, loved and obeyed Him as their Master and Teacher, and tried to be like Him.

3 Discussion Questions

- Ask the children what do we do in church that reminds us of the Last Supper? (*We receive Holy Communion.*)
- Ask them whether, when they went to Holy Communion, they saw other people crossing their hands over their hearts as they went up.
- Ask whether they themselves did remember to do this and to return to their seats quietly? (*Be encouraging, and try to remind the children of what a great gift we receive in Holy Communion--Jesus Himself is with us in a special way, and He gives us the special food we receive in church.*)

4 The Last Supper

Look together at the icon of the Last Supper and review what it shows. (Jesus having supper with His friends the disciples; food and drink are on the table.)

Go back to the 5th paragraph of the Last Supper story in the Resource section. (The paragraph begins, "You remember...") Read the paragraph, and ask: Why did people have to wash their feet when they visited someone's home? (*They walked on dusty roads barefoot or in sandals, and their feet would be dusty and dirty.*) Note: Make sure the children know what sandals are. You can compare them to flip flops or the kinds of open summer shoes children often wear.

Ask: Why do you think people wear those kinds of shoes all the time? (*Because the country where they lived was dry and warm almost every day.*)

Who usually washed a guest's feet? (*A servant.*)

At the Last Supper, who washed the feet of His friends? (*Jesus did.*)

What did Jesus tell His friends when He did this? (*He said He wanted them to love others and serve them, just as He did.*)

Do you think Jesus' friends were surprised when Jesus did this? (*Yes! He was their Master, their Lord, their Teacher. Yet He washed their feet like a servant. He was really showing them and us that we should love others by serving them.*) Reivew the meaning of the word "disciples" as being the men who traveled with Jesus, learned from Him, loved and obeyed Him and tried to be like Him.

What are some ways we can serve others? (*As you discuss this, look together at the icon of the Last Supper. Let the children offer ideas about ways of serving, and feel free to suggest some of your own. One, of course, would be to share or cook a meal.*)

5 Holy Week Mural

- Have each child draw and color small pictures of a large bowl (perhaps with water in it) and a towel. The towels can be colorful, with stripes or fringe, if the children wish. Cut the pictures out. Arrange them on the fourth panel with a title like "Jesus Washes His Friends' Feet" or "Jesus Serves Others." The children can help you think of a title. (**Note:** The previous panel is the Holy Thursday panel. Today's panel depicts an event that is not directly part of the meal at the table, though it is an integral part of Holy Thursday.)
- Review with the children the reason why you had a bowl and towel for this panel (Jesus' washing of the disciples' feet.)

6 Extra Activity

Practice singing the Paschal Troparion (*Christ is Risen*).

***Christ is risen from the dead,
Trampling down death by death,
And upon those in the tombs bestowing life.***

7 Wrap Up

As students are cleaning up and preparing for the closing prayer, ask:

- **What did Jesus do at the Last Supper that shows us how to serve others?**
He washed the feet of His friends, the disciples.
- Point out Holy Thursday, the day of the Last Supper and also the day when Jesus washed His discciiples' feet, on the wall calendar, as you did last week.

8 Closing Prayer

(Have children stand)

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

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 evil.

Pray for those on your classroom lists and remind the children to pray at home with their families.

Christ is Risen! *(Ages 4-6)*

Overview

The Cross and The Resurrection

Objectives

By the end of this Lesson, learners should be able to:

- State that Jesus Christ died, and rose from the dead
- State that because Jesus Christ rose from the dead, we will be able to live with Him and the people we love in heaven
- Recite the Pascha greeting " Christ is risen" and the response, " Indeed He is risen" (or with slightly different words, as practiced in your parish)

Materials

- Orthodox Study Bible - John 19:38-42; John 20:1-10; Mark 15:42-47; Mark 16:1-8
- The Resurrection story paraphrased for children (see Resource section)
- Icon of the Resurrection (Christ's Descent into Hades)
- Black line drawing/s of the Resurrection Icon
- Mural project materials as in previous lessons
- Photos of cave tombs, like that in which Christ was buried (available on line)

Resources

Required Resources

[Christ is Risen \(PDF\)](#)

Optional Resources

[Descent Into Hades Icon: Line Drawing](#)

[Descent Into Hades: Line Drawing](#)

[Descent Into Hades: The Holy Resurrection](#)

[Icon of The Resurrection of Christ \(Image\)](#)

Procedure

1 Opening Prayer

(Have children stand.)

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

O Heavenly King, the comforter, the Spirit of truth,
Who art everywhere and fillest all things,
Treasury of blessings and giver of life,
Come and abide in us, and cleanse us from every impurity,
And save our souls, O Good One.

Review parts of this prayer as you have in previous lessons.

2 Discussion Starter

In order to teach about the Resurrection in this section, you first need to say something about Jesus' death. To approach the delicate subject of Christ's death and burial with these young children, we suggest that you *not go into detail about the crucifixion*, but emphasize the joy of the Resurrection and the love Christ showed for us by facing and overcoming death, as well as His promise of everlasting life for us. Here is a way of presenting these concepts:

Say: Jesus died on the cross. He was buried in a tomb, just like any person. (Explain that a tomb is a place where a dead person is buried. Today we see graves where people are buried.) But Jesus Christ was not just any person. He was God's own son, and God loved Him very much. Jesus did not stay dead in the tomb. He rose from the dead. He is alive forever with His Father.

Jesus died and then rose from the dead so that we could have life forever with Him and with the people we love. (At this point, read the story of the Resurrection, entitled "Christ is Risen", in the Resource section. Note that the word "Easter" is used in the story; be sure children know that this is the same as Pascha)

Say: The story tells us why, on the Feast of Pascha and for many days after Pascha, we tell each other the good news. We say, "Christ is Risen!" and when someone greets us that way, we answer, "Indeed He is Risen!" (Note: Teach this response as it is said in your parish, for example "Truly He is Risen!" or some variation.)

Have the children stand and offer each other the greeting and response. Then ask children to think of ways they would greet others if they could not say any words. Encourage them to create gestures and movements that show happiness and liveliness. Give them plenty of room to move, stretch, and dance.

3 Discussion Questions

Note: Give sufficient time for responses from children who wish to offer answers. Ask:

- Where else have you heard the words “Christ is risen”?
The song they have been practicing – the Paschal Troparion
- Where was Jesus put after He died?
In a tomb
- When the women went to the tomb on the third day after Jesus’ death, what did they find?
An empty tomb
- If you have pictures of cave tombs, show them now. This is the way people were buried in Jesus’ time. Ask the children: Why was Jesus’ tomb empty? *Because Jesus had risen from the dead*

4 Activity

- Discuss with the children how they will celebrate Pascha at home. Talk about the special night of Pascha when we come to church very late, while it is dark, to show that Jesus Christ is stronger than darkness
- Ask students to again review what they did/are doing to prepare for Pascha, such things as *reading the Bible; praying more; helping others*
- Have children practice the Paschal greeting
Christ is risen. Indeed He is risen
- Tell the children that you would like to exchange this greeting and response with them at Pascha and in the days and weeks after Pascha
- Indicate Pascha on the wall calendar, and say that this is the day we wait for and get ready for all during Great Lent

5 Holy Week Mural

Give the children each a piece of the black line drawing/s of the Resurrection, which they can color while looking at the icon to approximate the colors. They can reassemble the pieces and put them on the "Pascha--Christ is Risen!" panel of the mural.

Plan to display the mural in the classroom, or in a hall near the classroom, or in some other place where parishioners can see it. If you keep it in the classroom, invite parents and parishioners to come and see it, and let the children tell the adults about what is on it.

6 Extra Activity

Practice singing the Paschal Troparion (*Christ is Risen*). Encourage the children (and parents when you see them) to come to the Paschal services so that the children can sing the hymn in church.

***Christ is risen from the dead,
Trampling down death by death,***

And upon those in the tombs bestowing life.

7 Wrap Up

As the children are cleaning up and preparing for closing prayer, ask the following:

- **What is the most important feast day we have?**

Pascha

Point out Great and Holy Pascha on the wall calendar once again.

8 Closing Prayer

(Have children stand) In the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen. **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 evil.**

Pray for the people on your classroom lists, and pets too if you have them. End the unit by having students share the Paschal greeting and response.

Lazarus Saturday *(Ages 18+)*

Overview

Having Fulfilled The Forty Days - The unit of lessons called Journey to Pascha begins with Lazarus Saturday and goes to the Resurrection. In this lesson we begin with a pause to reflect on the journey to Pascha that began with the Triodion and continued through Lent. We journey to learn about ourselves and our relationship to Jesus. In looking back we determine what we have learned about ourselves, what benefits we have gained by observing the Lenten discipline and what Lazarus Saturday teaches us so that we may proceed on this Journey to Pascha.

Objectives

By the end of this Lesson, learners should be able to:

- Evaluate reasons for observing the Lenten discipline
- Note ways in which Mary and Martha's attitudes are different from each other at the time of their brother's death and Jesus' visit
- Describe how Jesus shows both His divinity and His humility in the raising of Lazarus
- Relate our baptismal pledge to a pledge we make to follow Christ on Lazarus Saturday and Palm Sunday

Materials

- Icon of the Raising of Lazarus
- Notebooks for Journaling
- Copies for each student of *The Feast of Palms: Saturday--Sunday* (Resource Section)
- Copies for each student of *Our Pledge* (Resource Section)
- Bibles
- Pens and paper
- Mounted chart with the words of the Lazarus Saturday/Palm Sunday Troparion, which is the Opening Prayer (keep to use at the next session)
- Mounted blank chart on which students can write words (keep to use at every session)

Two Special Notes to the Teacher/Facilitator:

It would be a great idea to plan some sort of community service project as part of this unit of study. You can find many local possibilities for such service.

We have referred to participants in this unit of study as "students" throughout the five levels, even though some participants may be well beyond school age. This seemed appropriate to us because all of us can learn more about the faith, and go deeper into it, throughout our lives.

Resources

Required Resources

[My Guide to Holy Week and the Feast of Palms \(PDF\)](#)

[The Feast of Palms: Saturday-Sunday \(PDF\)](#)

[Our Pledge\(HTML\)](#)

Optional Resources

[Icon of The Raising of Lazarus \(Image\)](#)

Procedure

1 Opening Prayer

(Have students stand.) Sing or say the Troparion together. Use the chart with the words you've provided so everyone can be sure of them.

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

The Troparion (*Tone 1*)

By raising Lazarus from the dead before Thy passion,
Thou didst confirm the universal resurrection, O Christ God.
Like the children, with the palms of victory,
We cry out to Thee, O Vanquisher of Death,
Hosanna in the Highest!
Blessed is He that comes in the Name of the Lord.

Make sure students understand the following words in the Troparion:

Passion: the suffering of Jesus Christ that led to His death

Vanquisher: conqueror

Ask: *What "children" is the Troparion referring to?* (The children who greeted Jesus on the road to Jerusalem, as we remember on Palm Sunday, the day after Lazarus Saturday.)

Ask: *What does the Troparion mean when it says the raising of Lazarus "confirmed the universal resurrection"?* (Jesus will raise those who love and believe in Him, as He raised Lazarus. But that coming raising will be to a life that lasts forever. This is the promise we constantly remember and thank God for in church.)

2 Scripture Activity: Attitudes

Give each student a copy of *The Feast of Palms: Saturday--Sunday*. Divide the class into groups of 3 or 4 and have the groups read the part of the text entitled "Divine Liturgy of Lazarus Saturday"

together. Have the icon of the Raising of Lazarus prominently displayed nearby.

Ask the groups to discuss what differences they see between the attitudes of the sisters Mary and Martha after their brother dies and Jesus arrives. Let them share their conclusions. (*Suggested ideas: In the earlier verses, Martha needs to act, while Mary is able to be still and contemplate. Martha seeks out Jesus with many words, while Mary waits till He calls for her and then says only a few words to Him. Martha almost seems reproachful; Mary seems more peaceful, though very sad. Later, Martha is very "housewifely" in her concern about an odor coming from Lazarus' grave. Mary doesn't express such a concern.*) Look together at the icon of the Raising of Lazarus. How does it reflect a difference between the two sisters? (*Mary has her head bowed to the ground. Martha is alert, with her head up, wanting to see what's going on.*)

Discuss: *What is Jesus' attitude toward Martha? Toward Mary?* (Though Jesus commends Mary's willingness to be still and listen to His teaching (in Luke 10: 41--read this from the Bible), He loves and honors both Mary *and* Martha. Notice, for example, that He reveals to Martha that He is the Son of God in John 11:25, and gives her the opportunity to make a thrilling and decisive declaration of faith.)

Discuss: How could knowing that Jesus loves and honors these two help us as we think about our relationship with Him, when some of us are more "Martha types" and some more "Mary types"?

When you have finished, collect the copies of *The Feast of Palms: Saturday--Sunday* to use at the next session.

3 Journaling and Numbering

Tell students to consider this sentence from the Vespers of Lazarus Saturday:

We have completed the forty days which profit our souls.

Distribute notebooks for journaling, and assure students that nobody will read what they have written unless, in a few weeks, they volunteer to share their writing. Ask students to write in their journals about how the forty days of Great Lent can "profit our souls." When students finish, collect the journals and put them away.

Write these 4 phrases, describing Lenten practices, on the chalkboard:

- Lenten fasting
- Attending Lenten services
- Personal prayer
- Service to others

Invite any willing students to come up and put a number by each phrase, with "1" as the phrase which is most important to them as a Lenten practice, then 2, 3 and 4 as the second, third and fourth most important. (*You may wish to point out, before students start, that one of these practices*

may be the most important for someone not because the other practices are unimportant, but because that one practice inspires the person to engage in others. For example, someone who prays more during Lent may be inspired to do more in serving others.)

When all those who wish to put numbers up have done so, talk together about which phrase, if any, got the most "1"s and why students think it did. Let students add to the chalkboard list other phrases that are important parts of their personal Lenten practices.

4 Icon and Discussion

Look together again at the icon of the Raising of Lazarus. Discuss:

Who are the three disciples directly behind Jesus? (Peter, James, and between them, John)

How does the icon show us something true about the three men? (John is clearly younger than the other two.)

What other detail in the icon shows us a very human reaction to the event? (Two figures are about to hold their noses, expecting the odor from the grave that concerned Martha.)

What words of Jesus show His care to meet people's normal human expectations? (He shows them the glory of God by doing something they can see, understand, and remember. Then they can believe in and be comforted by the "universal resurrection" that the raising of Lazarus confirms. They can also believe in Him as the Son of God who can do, and wishes to do, these wonderful things for humankind.)

5 Discussion: Jesus and Lazarus

Read the following to the class:

In John 11: 44, after raising Lazarus, Jesus speaks just six words. He says, "Unbind him, and let him go."

Saint John Chrysostom writes that In these few words Jesus does two important things. First, He lets bystanders unbind Lazarus. To do so they must get very close to him and touch him. This gives them solid proof that the raised-up man really is Lazarus. There has been no trickery, no substitution, no deviousness. .

Second, Chrysostom writes, Jesus simply lets Lazarus go on his way, rather than parade the man around as a trophy of His divine power. Jesus doesn't use Lazarus to show off.

After reading this, ask students to stand. Write on the chalkboard:

Divine power: Jesus raises Lazarus

Divine humility: Jesus doesn't show off His power

Now ask students to imagine themselves present at the raising of Lazarus. Which would more strongly convince them that Jesus was truly the Son of God: His divine power, or His divine humility? Ask those who choose "power" to go to one side of the room; those who choose "humility" to go to the other. (Some may not wish to, or be able to, choose. They can remain at their seats.)

Ask a few on each side of the room to tell why they chose as they did.

6 Discussion: Our Pledge

Distribute copies of *Our Pledge*, written by Father Paul Lazor, from the Resource Section, and read through it together.

Read together John 11: 55. Discuss:

Why was it dangerous for people in Jesus' time to "pledge" themselves to Him?

Is it difficult, or dangerous, for us in our time to "take the branch and raise it up" as Father Paul writes, and say, "I accept Him as King and God"?

Ask students to write about some ways they will pledge themselves to Christ during Holy Week, Pascha, and beyond. Invite anyone wishing to share what they have written to do so.

7 Discussion: Why Do We Do It?

Say to the class:

*Orthodox Christians perform many physical actions that some other Christians do not. We bow, kiss icons, bless things and people with water, make the sign of the cross, and so on. On Palm Sunday we don't just hold our palms or willow branches; our prayers and hymns ask us to hold them **high!***

Ask and discuss: *Why do you think the Church asks us to perform these physical actions? How do they or can they affect our worship and faith?* (Let students give their own answers.)

8 Wrap Up

Invite students to write, on the blank wall chart you have provided, a word or phrase from this lesson that is significant for them

9 Closing Prayer

(Have students stand.)

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

The Troparion (*Tone 1*)

By raising Lazarus from the dead before Thy passion,
Thou didst confirm the universal resurrection, O Christ God.
Like the children, with the palms of victory,
We cry out to Thee, O Vanquisher of Death,
Hosanna in the Highest!
Blessed is He that comes in the Name of the Lord.

Palm Sunday (Ages 18+)

Overview

- On Palm Sunday we continue to participate in the "joyful cycle of the triumphant days of Lazarus Saturday and Palm Sunday" both in words and actions. We dare "to take the branch and raise it up and answer the same question addressed to us at Baptism, 'Do you accept Christ?' 'I accept Him as King and God!'" Note: Quotations from *The Feast of Palms Resource* by V. Rev. Paul Lazor p.9

Objectives

By the end of this Lesson, learners should be able to:

- Recall the story of Jesus' Entry into Jerusalem
- Note ways in which the icon of the feast reflects the events of the feast
- State ways in which the events of Palm Sunday are prophesied in the Old Testament
- Consider the meaning of the liturgical color of the feast--green

Materials

- Bibles
- Icons of Jesus' Entry to Jerusalem (two are offered in Resource Section, and we suggest using both, or any of your own that clearly show children)
- Journal notebooks
- Mounted wall chart with words of the Troparion of Lazarus Saturday/Palm Sunday (from previous session)
- Mounted wall chart for students' words (from previous session)
- Copies of *The Feast of Palms: Saturday--Sunday* for each student
- Copies of *Commentary: The Entry into Jerusalem* (Resource Section) for each student
- Pens/pencils, paper
- For the "Find the Match" review game: 14 small pieces of paper.
 - On each of 7 pieces write one of these names: **chief priests, Mary, Martha, Lazarus, Judas, crowd, apostles**. Fold them and put them in a basket or any open container. Mark the basket with some kind of tag or note as the "Person" basket.
 - On each of the other 7 pieces write one of these descriptions: **planned to kill Lazarus, anointer, table server, sat at supper with Jesus, thief, wanted to see Lazarus, didn't understand**. Put these in a basket/container and mark it as the "Description" basket.
 - A simple chart, with a line down the middle. Title one side "Person" and the other "Description." Number both sides from 1 to 7, leaving plenty of room for students to tape the pieces of paper on each side to match each person with the correct description.
- Scotch tape

Resources

Required Resources

[My Guide to Holy Week and the Feast of Palms \(PDF\)](#)

[The Feast of Palms: Saturday-Sunday \(PDF\)](#)

[Entry into Jerusalem \(Image\)](#)

Optional Resources

[Icon of The Entry Into Jerusalem \(Image\)](#)

[Commentary: The Entry into Jerusalem\(HTML\)](#)

[The Meaning of Icons \(Image\)](#)

Procedure

1 Opening Prayer

(Have students stand.) Sing or say the Troparion together. Refer to the word chart as needed.

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

The Troparion (*Tone 1*)

By raising Lazarus from the dead before Thy passion,
Thou didst confirm the universal resurrection, O Christ God.
Like the children, with the palms of victory,
We cry out to Thee, O Vanquisher of Death,
Hosanna in the Highest!
Blessed is He that comes in the Name of the Lord.

2 Review and Discussion

As a review, ask: *What would you say are the main things Jesus Christ was teaching when He raised Lazarus?* (Students may give answers about His love for people and friends, His ability to do miracles which showed that He was truly God's divine Son, etc. These answers are good. Also stress again a point from the Troparion of the feast: In raising Lazarus, Jesus Christ "confirm the universal resurrection.")

Distribute Bibles, pencils and copies of *The Feast of Palms: Saturday--Sunday* to each student. Read together the Gospel for the Matins of Palm Sunday and the Gospel for the Divine Liturgy of Palm Sunday. Then have students read the following passages from the Old Testament, and mark on their papers the places where they are referred to in the passage (answers given in parentheses):

- Psalm 8:1-2 (Out of the mouths of babes)
- Zechariah 9:9 (Tell the daughter of Zion)

- Psalm 118: 26 or 117: 26 in *Septuagint* (Blessed is he who comes)

Go over the answers together, and then ask: *Based on this exercise, what do you think is one main thing Jesus was teaching as He rode into Jerusalem on Palm Sunday?* (Again, answers may vary, but the main point to stress is that He was showing Himself to be the fulfillment of Old Testament prophecies)

3 The Feast and the Icon

Read together the Divine Liturgy Gospel of Palm Sunday in *The Feast of Palms*. Have icons of the feast, clearly showing children, prominently displayed.

Distribute copies of *Commentary: The Entry into Jerusalem* (taken from the book [The Meaning of Icons](#) by Ouspensky and Lossky) to each student. Read it together, and note the details in the icon that it describes, especially in the third paragraph.

Ask: *What does the Commentary tell us is the reason children are featured in these icons?* (The second-last paragraph gives a good answer. The adults turned against Jesus when He did not give them what they expected. The children, in contrast, were welcoming Him with no "ulterior motive.") The paragraph before that also reminds us that Jesus did come to save Israel, just as God had promised the Savior would. But the saving was not through "physical annihilation" of enemies; rather it was "spiritual salvation."

Ask: *What words in the Troparion tell us who we are meant to be like?* (The words "like the children with the palms of victory")

4 Review

As a review of the Bible story text in *The Feast of Palms: Saturday--Sunday*, have a game of "Find the Match."

- Have the seven folded PERSON papers in one basket or container, and the seven folded DESCRIPTION papers in another. Have the papers in each basket well mixed.
- Mount the two-column chart on the wall or chalkboard, with tape nearby. Also have nearby a copy of *The Feast of Palms: Saturday--Sunday*, which students can consult at any time.
- Explain to students that the PERSON basket contains seven names of people or groups mentioned in the Palm Sunday Gospel. The DESCRIPTION basket contains papers that each describe one of those people. The class will try to match them up.
- Have everyone stand, and let one student start by taking a paper from the PERSON basket, and taping it in the PERSON column on the chart. (The paper doesn't have to be put in the #1 spot.)
- Have a second student take a paper from the DESCRIPTION basket. If the student believes it describes the PERSON on the paper taped to the chart, they should tape it

opposite the PERSON paper, in the DESCRIPTION column. If it doesn't describe that person it's not a match, and they should tape it anywhere in the DESCRIPTION column except next to that PERSON. (Again, the answer pairs don't need to be in any particular order on the chart, so long as the PERSON and DESCRIPTION papers do match.)

- Have the next student choose from the PERSON column, and put their paper opposite the DESCRIPTION column if it matches, or somewhere else in the PERSON column if it does not.
- Continue with students taking turns, till all the matches are made as follows:

Chief priests / planned to kill Lazarus

Judas / thief

Mary / anointer

Crowd / wanted to see Lazarus

Martha / table server

Apostles / didn't understand

Lazarus / sat at supper with Jesus

5 Journaling: Being Like Children

Put this question on the chalkboard:

What does it mean to be "like the children with the palms of victory" in the Troparion?

Ask students to reflect on this question in their journals.

6 Discussion: Liturgical Colors

Ask: *What color are the vestments and coverings for Palm Sunday? (Green)*

Discuss: *The colors of Lent have been dark and the colors of Holy Week will be dark. What does this "break" to a festal green tell us? (Let students come up with answers. A central point is that even though we are coming upon Holy Week with its terrible events, Jesus' coming as King remains as the unshakable promise of true life in the Kingdom for us.)*

7 Wrap Up

Invite students to write personally meaningful words from the lesson on the wall chart.

8 Closing Prayer

(Have students stand)

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

The Troparion (*Tone 1*)

By raising Lazarus from the dead before Thy passion,
Thou didst confirm the universal resurrection, O Christ God.
Like the children, with the palms of victory,
We cry out to Thee, O Vanquisher of Death,
Hosanna in the Highest!
Blessed is He that comes in the Name of the Lord.

Holy Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday *(Ages 18+)*

Overview

- During the first three days of Holy Week, Christ ends His discourses in Jerusalem. He speaks openly about himself and His Second Coming. Through His actions and words we learn what is expected of those who desire to enter the Kingdom.

Objectives

By the end of this Lesson, learners should be able to:

- Note the themes of the first three days of Holy Week, in particular the Parable of the Talents
- Discuss the idea of "watchfulness" as a theme of these three days
- Give examples of "readiness" to meet the Lord, as reflected in the parables and in prayers and services of the Orthodox Church

Materials

- Icon of the Wise and Foolish Maidens
- Journal notebooks
- Bibles
- Copies for each student of *My Guide to Holy Week and the Feast of Palms*
- Poster materials: For each group of 3-4 students, have a piece of poster board 2' by 3'. For each group or for everyone to share, have thin and thick markers in various colors, construction paper in various colors, rulers, scissors, tape and glue
- Wall chart with the words written by Prof. Veselin Kesich (in #5 of Procedure)
- Wall chart for students' words (from previous sessions)
- Pens/pencils, paper

Resources

Required Resources

[My Guide to Holy Week and the Feast of Palms \(PDF\)](#)

[The Bridegroom Services of Holy Week \(PDF\)](#)

[Icon of the Wise and Foolish Maidens\(Link\)](#)

Optional Resources

[Jesus the Holy Wisdom and the Parable of the Ten Wise and Foolish Virgins](#)

Procedure

1 Opening Prayer

(Have students stand.)

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

O Heavenly King, the comforter, the Spirit of truth,
Who art everywhere and fillest all things,
Treasury of blessings and giver of life,
Come and abide in us, and cleanse us from every impurity,
And save our souls, O Good One.

2 Role Play and Discussion

Give each student a copy of *My Guide to Holy Week and the Feast of Palms*. Divide the class into groups of 3 or 4, and have the groups read the section "The Gospel Lessons and Their Themes" under the heading Great and Holy Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday on the page marked Holy Week-3 at the bottom. Then have them read the parable in Matthew 25: 14-30. Ask one or two groups to take turns role playing the Parable of the Talents. Discuss these questions afterwards:

What kind of "readiness" is a theme of this parable? *(Let students give their own responses. One central idea is that we must be ready to answer to God for what we have done with the gifts He has given all of us)*

What is Christ saying about those who waste, or fear to use, their gifts? *(Again, let students give their own answers. The "weeping and gnashing of teeth" is the result of our regrets if we don't strive to use our gifts to bring us closer to God, and closer to being the fully-alive and even glorious creatures He intends us to be. If we don't become what we could have become, and what God called us to be, our lives will never be full. Thus we create our own punishment and regret, which is well described here as weeping and gnashing of teeth)*

Look together at the icon of the Wise and Foolish Maidens. Then have groups read the Parable of the Wise and Foolish Maidens in Matthew 25:1-13. Ask:

How does Christ, personified as the "bridegroom who comes at midnight" here, fit in with the idea of using our talents? *(Have students give their ideas. One point to stress is that Christ loves us in the close, intimate way that a bridegroom loves His bride, and wants us to use our gifts. But there is an unavoidable moment when He will come again, and we have to be ready and willing for that moment of meeting when we'll show whether or not we want to be with Him. He won't force us into the Kingdom!)* As you talk about this, keep the icon of the Wise and Foolish Maidens prominently displayed.

You can give some historical background:

The wedding custom in Christ's time was for the bridegroom to come in the evening to his bride's home and take her to his own home, where festivities would follow. The bridegroom would be accompanied, in the dark evening hours, by maidens with oil lamps to light the way. They had to be ready when he came. It was all right for them to sleep a little while waiting, so long as they were prepared when he came, which might be earlier or later.

In the parable, five maidens have been wise and provided themselves with plenty of oil. Five have been careless, or lazy, or not really interested in their job of accompanying the bridegroom. They must be responsible for themselves; the five wise maidens may not have enough oil to share. The five foolish maidens must take their chances, and sadly for them, the bridegroom comes when they are away, trying to buy oil. The point is that we must prepare for Christ's coming; each of us is responsible for herself or himself.

The bridegroom's words "I do not know you" may seem harsh, but Christ is telling us that when He comes, those who love Him will be ready, just as any of us would be ready as we anticipate the arrival of someone we love. Those who don't bother to be ready are showing that they don't really love him and don't want to be with Him. They don't know Him. If we do not know Him, He cannot know us.

Look together at the black and white drawing (from the Resource section) called *Jesus the Holy Wisdom* to see another way this story is depicted in an icon. We see Jesus Christ as the font of wisdom, with the maidens and the closed doors.

When you have finished, collect the copies of *My Guide to Holy Week and the Feast of Palms* to use again.

3 Journaling: Talents

Ask students to write about in their journals about this question, which you can put on the chalkboard:

What talent or gift could I develop further to serve God?

4 Discussion Questions

Discuss, and put answers on the chalkboard:

What are some things in life that require extensive or significant preparation?

Why are we willing to give time and energy to preparing for these things? What "bumps along the way" might there be when we are preparing for things? (*We are willing to give time and energy to*

things we care about, or that will benefit us in some way. But the "bumps" are that we can't control events, and those events or circumstances can interrupt or cancel our plans.)

What kinds of things can we do to prepare for the Second Coming of Christ? What "bumps" might there be as we prepare for the Second Coming of Christ? *(Students can give ideas about how to prepare. In terms of "bumps" we know that life may present difficulties and hardships that could shake our faith; we have to be strong enough not to let them, and not allow them to deter us from preparing to meet and be with Our Lord)*

5 A Reading

Read together the following, from the chart you have provided:

Whenever Jesus spoke about the end of the present age, of the Last Judgment, and of his Second Coming, he spoke with an absolute certainty that these events would take place, and therefore he put stress on readiness or watchfulness. The word "watch" in Jesus' sayings and parables refers to the last days. "*Watch* therefore--for you do not know when the master of the house will come, in the evening, or at midnight, or at cockcrow, or in the morning" (Mk. 13:35.) "That day" will come suddenly; therefore "*watch* at all times" (Lk. 21:34.) "For the Son of Man is coming at an hour you do not expect" (Mt. 24:44.) *From The Passion of Christ, Veselin Kesich, SVS Press, 2004.*

Discuss: This reading mentions Jesus' "absolute certainty" about the events of the end, the Last Judgment, and the Second Coming. Ask participants whether they have met or read about people who shared this certainty. How did their certainty impact the way they lived? *(Stories of favorite saints who lived, and died, in this certainty might come to mind here. Students might also have pious family members or friends who lived in certainty.)*

6 Poster

Give each group of 3-4 students a piece of poster board. Then give each group (or have the groups share) markers, construction paper, ruler, glue, tape and scissors.

Ask each group to choose one theme from the services of Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday of Holy Week, and make a poster telling something about it. The groups can illustrate, decorate or represent their themes in any way they decide together.

When the groups have finished, ask each to tell the others about the poster they have made--why they chose the theme they did, and how they chose to depict it.

7 Wrap Up

Invite participants to write a meaningful word from the lesson on the wall chart.

8 Closing Prayer

Hymn from the Bridegroom Services of Holy Week:

Thy Bridal Chamber I see adorned, O my Savior,
but I have no wedding garment that I may enter.
O Giver of Light, enlighten the vesture of my soul, and save me.

"Vesture" is clothing. If time permits, ask students to consider why we might ask our Savior to "enlighten the vesture of my soul." (*Let students give answers. Suggested answer: Just as we are concerned with what we wear, we need to be concerned with the way we "clothe" our souls--the way we live our spiritual lives of prayer, worship, and knowledge of God*)

Holy Thursday *(Ages 18+)*

Overview

The Supper, Anointing and Betrayal of Christ - "Could You Not Keep Watch?" - The main theme of great and Holy Thursday is the Lord's Supper. Jesus continues to teach and prepare the disciples for the completion of His mission, the mission of the Suffering Servant of God. Speaking of the woman who poured ointment on His head, He said, "In pouring this ointment on my body she has done it to prepare me for burial." (Matt 26.12). The trinity of events listed in the theme of this lesson lead to Christ's crucifixion and death. "With His death and the pouring out of His blood, a new covenant, that is, a new and final relationship between God and man, will be inaugurated." The passion of Christ, Kesich, p. 65

Objectives

By the end of this Lesson, learners should be able to:

- Compare and contrast the attitudes of Judas and the sinful woman toward their own sins and toward the use of money
- Examine the meanings of two hymns
- Identify statements made by various people, as a review of this and previous lessons

Materials

- Icon of The Last Supper/Mystical Supper
- Bibles
- Mounted wall chart with the words of the verses from the Matins of Holy Wednesday, in #2 of the Procedure
- Mounted wall chart for students' words (from previous sessions)
- Copies of *My Guide to Holy Week and the Feast of Palms* for each student
- Pens, paper, pencils
- **Special Note to the Teacher:** In the Resource Section you will find *The Betrayal and Passion of Our Lord*, which gives information about the prayers, hymns, services and teachings of this Holy Week period. Though it will not be specifically used in class, it is excellent background material for you, and you may wish to look at some of the liturgical verses with students

Resources

Required Resources

[The Mystical Supper icon](#)

[My Guide to Holy Week and the Feast of Palms \(PDF\)](#)

[The Betrayal and Passion of Our Lord \(PDF\)](#)

[Eucharistic Prayer\(HTML\)](#)

Optional Resources

Procedure

1 Opening Prayer

(Have students stand.)

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

O Heavenly King, the comforter, the Spirit of truth,
Who art everywhere and fillest all things,
Treasury of blessings and giver of life,
Come and abide in us, and cleanse us from every impurity,
And save our souls, O Good One.

2 Discussion Starter

For this discussion and the rest of the lesson, have the icon of the Last Supper/Mystical Supper prominently displayed.

Divide the class into groups of 3 or 4 and ask them to read Matthew 26: 6-16 and John 12: 3-8 together. Then ask them to reflect on the attitudes of the woman and of Judas. How does she seem to feel about love, and about the use of money? How does Judas feel about these things? Have each group make a list of 4 adjectives describing the woman, and 4 describing Judas. Ask them to use the chart you have provided, with verses from the Matins of Holy Wednesday, as a further source of reflection.

While the sinful woman brought oil of myrrh, the disciple came to an agreement with the transgressors

She rejoiced to pour out what was very precious, he made haste to sell the One who is above price

She acknowledged Christ as Lord, he severed himself from the Master

She was set free, but Judas became the slave of the enemy.

Ask a representative of each group to write the words their group came up with on the chalkboard. Then talk about them together. Use these questions to guide the discussion:

- What adjectives, if any, do students feel are especially appropriate, and why?
- Are there some adjectives that were chosen by most of the groups ?

- Which adjective do students feel is most important in describing the woman? In describing Judas?

3 Journaling: Attitudes

Put these verses from the previous discussion on the board:

She acknowledged Christ as Lord; he severed himself from the Master.

Ask students to write in their journals about examples of these two attitudes in contemporary society. Ask them to reflect on ways they can encourage more of the attitude of "acknowledging Christ" in our society.

4 Two Hymns

Distribute copies of *My Guide to Holy Week and the Feast of Palms*. Have students read about Great and Holy Thursday in the column marked "Holy Week--4" at the bottom. Sing or say together the words of the hymn found there: the Eucharistic Prayer. Then ask students to look over and think about the words of that hymn and of the 9th Ode from the Canon of Saint Cosmas. (The words are below for your convenience and any notes you wish to make.)

Eucharistic Prayer (Vesperal Liturgy of St. Basil the Great)

Of Thy Mystical Supper, O Son of God,
Accept me today as a communicant,
For I will not speak of Thy Mystery to Thine enemies,
Neither like Judas will I give Thee a kiss;
But like the thief will I confess Thee:
Remember me, O lord, in Thy Kingdom.

Canon of St. Cosmas (9th ode)

Come, O faithful, Let us enjoy the Master's hospitality:
The Banquet of Immortality!
In the upper chamber with uplifted minds,
Let us receive the exalted words of the Word, Whom we magnify!

When you have finished, collect the copies of *My Guide to Holy Week and the Feast of Palms* to use again.

5 Reflection on a Hymn

Put this line from the Canon of Saint Cosmas on the chalkboard:

In the upper chamber with uplifted minds, let us receive the exalted words of the Word, whom we magnify.

Also put 3 Scriptural references on the chalkboard:

- Philippians 4:8-9
- Luke 11: 9-13
- Luke 12: 22-30

Divide the class into 3 groups. Ask each group to read the three passages, and then create a brief statement of how they tell us we can develop "uplifted minds" ready to hear the exalted words of Jesus, the Exalted Word of God.

Let each group read the statement they have developed.

(Groups will probably come up with similar answers. Points to stress include these: Philippians tells us to keep our minds focused on good and worthwhile things, not descending into pettiness or complaint. Luke 11 calls us to have faith that God answers heartfelt, constant prayer. Luke 12 tells us not to worry, and not to seek earthly things too much, but to seek the eternal life of God's kingdom. These points can be worked into a brief statement, worded as the groups wish.)

6 Reflection on Another Hymn

Discuss:

In the last line of the familiar hymn beginning *Of Thy Mystical Supper...* we are called to be "like the thief." How would you explain to a younger person why we are called to be like a person who had stolen and been put to death as a criminal? *(Let students give their ideas. A main point is that this thief, a despised person in the last extremity of life, was still willing to trust God. God accepts his faith with the same joy as He would accept that of any more "respectable" person.)*

7 Review

As a quick review, divide the class into groups of three or four. Tell the class that you will read words said by someone you've talked about in a previous lesson.

The groups can confer, and as soon as they are ready to name the person(s) who spoke the words, and the circumstances in which they were spoken, someone in the group should stand up. They will then get a chance to answer.

The group that answers the most questions first and correctly is the winning group. (You can keep track.) Correct answers are in parentheses. Read the following one by one, first asking each time,

"Who said"

- Take away the stone (*Jesus in front of Lazarus' tomb, preparing to raise him.*)
- You ought to have invested my money with the bankers (*The master to the servant who hid his talent in the ground*)
- Give us some of your oil (*The five unwise maidens to the five wise maidens who brought enough oil*)
- There will be an odor (*Martha at the tomb of Lazarus, concerned because he has been dead four days*)
- Blessed is he that comes in the name of the Lord (*The crowd greeting Jesus as He enters Jerusalem on Palm Sunday*)
- I do not know you (*The bridegroom to the unwise maidens who have come too late to enter the marriage feast*)
- You have been faithful over a little; I will set you over much (*The master to the servant who used his talents well and made a profit*)
- She has done a beautiful thing to me (*Jesus, speaking about the woman who anoints His feet, telling the indignant apostles not to trouble her*)
- Lord, not my feet only but my hands and my head! (*Peter, when Jesus washes the feet of Peter and all the twelve at the Last Supper*)
- How did the fig tree wither at once? (*The disciples, marveling when a fig tree withers at Jesus' command*)

8 Scripture Reflection

Read together John 14: 1-15. This passage contains many well-known verses. Ask students to choose a verse, or set of verses, that they would like to memorize, and take a few minutes now to do so. (Some may wish to write down their chosen verses.)

Anyone who wants to may share with the class the verse they chose and the reasons for choosing it.

9 Wrap Up

Invite students to put a meaningful word from the lesson on the wall chart.

10 Closing Prayer

(Have students stand)

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

Of Thy Mystical Supper, O Son of God,
Accept me today as a communicant,
For I will not speak of Thy Mystery to Thine enemies,
Neither like Judas will I give Thee a kiss;
But like the thief will I confess thee:
Remember me, O Lord, in Thy Kingdom.

Holy Friday *(Ages 18+)*

Overview

The Death and Burial of Christ - Woman, Behold Thy Son! - When Christ died on the Cross He fulfilled the Scriptures, He completed His mission. "Thus the barrier that divided humanity from God disappeared. By Christ's death the separation between the two was overcome. The new relation between them was inaugurated."

Objectives

By the end of this Lesson, learners should be able to:

- Recall the final events of the life of Christ
- Relate Old Testament prophecies to the events of Christ's Passion
- Describe the risks taken by Joseph of Arimathea and Nicodemus

Materials

- Icon of the Crucifixion
- Notebooks for Journaling
- Copies of *My Guide to Holy Week and the Feast of Palms* for each student
- A recording of "The Noble Joseph" to be played during class if you wish

Resources

Required Resources

[My Guide to Holy Week and the Feast of Palms \(PDF\)](#)

Optional Resources

[Icon of The Crucifixion of the Lord \(Image\)](#)

Procedure

1 Opening Prayer

(Have students stand.)

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

O Heavenly King, the comforter, the Spirit of truth,
Who art everywhere and fillest all things,
Treasury of blessings and giver of life,

Come and abide in us, and cleanse us from every impurity,
And save our souls, O Good One.

2 Great and Holy Friday

Distribute copies of *My Guide to Holy Week and the Feast of Palms*. Read together the section on Great and Holy Friday in the columns marked at the bottom "Holy Week--4" (last part of column) and "Holy Week--5." Discuss two questions:

Ask: *Which words of the hymn for the 15th Antiphon tell us that Jesus created the world?* (The first line, "hung the earth upon the waters" is a reference to the creation story in Genesis.)

Ask: *How did Christ "free Adam in the Jordan?"* (Jesus' baptism showed Him to be the Divine Savior when the Father spoke and the Holy Spirit "confirmed the truthfulness of His words." So Jesus restored water to what God meant it to be by stepping into it. He also "restored" Adam, Eve, and all of us by being baptized. He freed us from the bondage of death,)

Collect the copies of *My Guide to Holy Week and the Feast of Palms* to use again.

3 Old Testament Prophecies

Have the icon of the Crucifixion prominently displayed for this section and the rest of the class session.

As a way of seeing that many events of Jesus' passion are prophesied in the Old Testament, have students do an activity in which they pair up OT passages with the New Testament events they prophesy.

Divide the class into four groups. Give each group one or two Bibles, six small pieces of paper, six envelopes and one or two pencils. List the following Bible references on the chalkboard under the headings OT and NT.

OT	NT
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Zechariah 12:10• Micah 5: 1• Psalm 34: 20• Psalm 41:9• Psalm 69:21• Zechariah 13: 7	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• John 19: 33• John 13: 21-26• Mark 14: 50• John 20: 24-25• Matthew 26: 57• John 19: 28

Have 2 of the groups copy the OT references (as on the chalkboard--references only, not texts) onto the papers. Have the 2 other groups copy the NT passages. Have two teams, each made up of one OT group and one NT group. Using Bibles, the teams will look up the passages, and then pair up the ones that match--passages that describe (NT) or prophesy (OT) the same event. They should put each pair of "matching" NT/OT papers into an envelope.

For fun, you can make it a contest to see which team fills their envelopes first.

Correct pairs:

- Zechariah 12: 10 / John 20: 24-25
- Micah 5: 1 / Matthew 26: 67
- Psalm 34: 20 / John 19: 33
- Psalm 41: 9 / John 13:21-26
- Psalm 69: 21 / John 19: 28
- Zechariah 13: 7 / Mark 14: 50

4 Psalm Reflection

Distribute Bibles, and say: *Like the passages we have just looked at, Psalm 22 contains some prophecies of Christ's passion, or suffering.*

Ask students to read through the psalm on their own, and then name verses that prophesy things that happened to Christ. (*Verses 7, 8, and 14 through 18 all describe such things.*)

Ask: *We are all familiar with the first verse of this psalm, which Christ said as He was dying on the cross. Would you say that the psalm continues in this tone of abandonment?* (Let students give their ideas. Notice with them verse 10, in which the psalmist is still ready to call on God, and trust Him, even when things are terrible. Verse 26 is a good expression of this willingness to trust: "The afflicted shall eat and be satisfied." So the tone of the psalm really does change.)

5 Discussion: Responding with Silence

Read together Mark 14: 56-61 and 15: 1-5.

Tell the class that in *Go Forth*, a book about the mission of the Orthodox Church in Albania (Conciliar Press, 2009), Father Luke Veronis writes about Archbishop Anastasios, who is the spiritual father of the Albanian Orthodox, and well known for his work all across the country. Fr. Luke describes what happened when the Archbishop was told about slanderous attacks on him in

some anti-Church Albanian newspapers. The Archbishop said, "Sometimes I think the best response is silence. Let us do our work, and our work will speak for itself."

Ask students about their opinions, observations and experiences of silence as a response. When is it appropriate, effective? When, if ever, is it the best or the only way to respond to something?

Ask: *Why do you think Christ responded with silence?* This is not an easy question, but it seems that Christ always answered as a way of teaching, as in Mark 12: 13-17, or as a way of encouraging compassion, as in 3: 1-5. Read these together.

(Some ideas for discussion: With Pilate and with the crowd, there was no teaching Christ could do--the crowd wanted to destroy Him, and was in no mood to hear about compassion. Pilate was obviously impressed and bewildered by Christ--we read that he was "amazed" that He did not defend Himself--but did nothing to help. Yet even here Jesus was teaching by fulfilling Isaiah's prophecy about the Messiah. Read together Isaiah 53:7.)

6 Journaling: Taking Risks

Read together about the actions of Joseph of Arimathea and Nicodemus in John 19: 38-42.

Briefly discuss: What kinds of risks were these two men taking?

Ask students to write in their journals about situations in our lives today that involve risks taken for the faith.

You may wish to play a recording of *The Noble Joseph* as students are writing.

7 Wrap Up

Invite students to write a meaningful word from this lesson on the word chart.

8 Closing Prayer

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

The noble Joseph,
When he had taken down
Thy most pure Body from the tree,
Wrapped it in fine linen,

And anointed it with spices,
And placed it in a new tomb.

Holy Saturday & Pascha (Ages 18+)

Overview

Descent into Hades and Resurrection

Objectives

By the end of this Lesson, learners should be able to:

- Describe the nature of Great and Holy Sabbath as "transforming"
- Name some elements of the services of Great and Holy Saturday and Great and Holy Pascha
- Note ways in which Christ's care for His Mother, even on the cross, is related to His love and care for all of us
- Choose meaningful words from the prayers and hymns of these services

Materials

- Bibles
- Copies of *My Guide to Holy Week and the Feast of Palms* for each student
- Copies of *Great and Holy Saturday* (Resource section) for each student
- Blank 5" by 7" index cards in various colors, enough for each student to have four or five
- Colored markers (thick and thin) and colored pencils for students to share
- Small decorative stickers (stars, crosses, Easter eggs, dots, etc.) for students to share
- Icons of the Crucifixion and of the Resurrection (Christ's descent into Hades)
- Mounted wall chart for students' words

Resources

Required Resources

[Great and Holy Saturday \(PDF\)](#)

[My Guide to Holy Week and the Feast of Palms \(PDF\)](#)

Optional Resources

[Icon of The Crucifixion of the Lord \(Image\)](#)

[Icon of The Resurrection of Christ \(Image\)](#)

Procedure

1 Opening Prayer

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

Do not lament me, O Mother, seeing me in the tomb,
The Son conceived in the womb without seed.
For I shall arise, And be glorified with eternal glory as God.
I shall exalt all who magnify you in faith and love.

2 Discussion Starter

Have the icon of the Crucifixion prominently displayed. Discuss these questions:

How do the words of the hymn in the Opening Prayer reflect the care Jesus had for His mother? What promises does He make? (*He promises not only that He will rise, but also that He will exalt those people who honor her. He also assures her that He will rise, and that she should not lament as if she had truly lost Him.*)

Read together the verses that reflect another example of care Christ took for His mother, in John 19: 25-27. Note, looking at the icon, how few people stayed with Jesus at His last moments on the cross. Yet He, while in extreme agony, continued to care for others.

Discuss: How are Jesus' promises to His Mother important for us? (*Let participants give their own answers. One important point is that she is the first created human being to be raised from the dead after the Resurrection. She is an example for us, just as she has in her life been an example of true faith and dedication to Christ.*)

3 Reflection

Distribute copies of *Great and Holy Saturday*. Have the icon of the Resurrection, or The Descent of Christ into Hades, prominently displayed.

Read together the 3 sections entitled "The Transition", "Trampling Down Death by Death", and "The Icon of the Descent into Hades." Discuss:

- *How is "transformation" different from "replacement" as described here? (To experience the transforming of sorrow into joy, we have to go through the "journey" that the services of Holy Saturday offer us. If we go to church on Friday and don't go again till the Pascha service, the sorrowful tone has simply been replaced by bright colors, flowers, and joyful music and prayers)*
- *How does the icon, as described in the section "The Icon of the Descent into Hades", reflect this "transformation"? (Christ, strong and determined in His pure colors and surrounded by light, is shown bringing that strength and light into hell to destroy it)*
- *How are the verses beginning "Today Hell cries out groaning..." reflected in the icon? (Christ tramples on the devil and on the doors and locks of Hades or hell, the devil's domain)*

4 Reminder cards

Together, read "The Vesperal Liturgy of Holy Saturday" in *Great and Holy Saturday*. Then distribute copies of *My Guide to Holy Week and the Feast of Palms*. Have students read on their own the columns labeled "Holy Week--7" and "Holy Week--8." (Their copies are now theirs to keep.)

Give each student several blank 5" by 7" cards, and have thin markers, colored pencils and decorative stickers ready for everyone to share. Have them choose one or more lines from hymns and prayers contained in the pages they have just read. They can make for themselves and/or for others a few decorative "reminder" cards with lines they feel are important to remember during the Paschal season. The finished cards, of course, will be theirs to keep.

Invite students to share, if they wish to, what they have written.

5 Journaling:

Put this quotation on the chalkboard:

Christ's love does not know how to measure and divide, does not know how to spare itself.

Saint Maria of Paris (Mother Maria Skobtsova)

Ask students to write in their journals about Mother Maria's words.

Give students their journals to keep. Take a few moments for them to leaf through their journals and share with the class, if they wish to, anything they have written.

6 Wrap Up

Invite students to write a meaningful word from the lesson on the wall chart. Take a few minutes to have students, if they wish to, pick out a word or words they have written during the six sessions, and talk about why the word/s had meaning for them.

7 Closing Prayer

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

Christ is Risen from the dead,
Trampling down death by death,
And upon those in the tombs, Bestowing life.

Plan with the class members that you will share the Paschal greeting with each other and with parishioners over the weeks between Pascha and Ascension.

Lazarus Saturday *(Ages 13-17)*

Overview

Jesus and His Friends

Objectives

By the end of this Lesson, learners should be able to:

- Describe friendships of Jesus Christ with Mary, Martha, Lazarus and others
- Name some elements of friendship that are important to them
- List ways in which they can be true friends to others

Materials

- Bibles
- Bible Concordance for students to share; more than one if class is large
- Icon of the Raising of Lazarus (**Note: Keep this icon and those you will use in following lessons together, to review as part of the unit's final lesson**)
- Small notebook for each student, to serve as a journal, and an envelope into which the notebook will fit
- Blank wall chart (poster board or heavy paper about 2' by 3' for students to write on with markers (Plan to keep this chart posted, and added to if more space is needed, through the whole unit of lessons)
- Colored markers (various colors)
- Pencils and/or pens for each student
- Resource: *My Guide to Holy Week and the Feast of Palms* for your own background reading (not for use in class)
- Simple chart with the words of the Opening and Closing Prayer (Troparion), posted in the room for this session and the next
- For the "Our Friendships" activity, small inexpensive pads of paper for each student, or enough small pieces of paper so that each student can make copies of six words/phrases for every member of the class. You will need a cleared space on which these papers, once completed, can be laid out so they are visible to everyone
- A copy for each student of this brief list:

FRIENDSHIP IS...

Complete honesty

Active concern for the other person's needs and desires

Shared beliefs and interests

Loyalty

Resources

Required Resources

[My Guide to Holy Week and the Feast of Palms \(PDF\)](#)

Optional Resources

[Icon of The Raising of Lazarus \(Image\)](#)

[Raising Lazarus from the Dead](#)

Procedure

1 Opening Prayer

(Have students stand for this and for all prayers in class.)

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

Sing or say the Troparion for Lazarus Saturday, using the chart of the prayer that you have provided :

The Troparion (*Tone 1*)

By raising Lazarus from the dead before Thy passion,
Thou didst confirm the universal resurrection, O Christ God.
Like the children, with the palms of victory,
We cry out to Thee, O Vanquisher of Death,
Hosanna in the Highest!
Blessed is He that comes in the Name of the Lord.

Ask students to tell what they know or remember about the events of the Raising of Lazarus and of Palm Sunday. You can go over the accounts of these events in John 11: 1-45 and Mark 11: 1-10.

Make sure students understand the following words in the Troparion:

Passion: the suffering of Jesus Christ that led to His death

Vanquisher: conqueror

Ask: *What "children" is the Troparion referring to?* (The children who greeted Jesus on the road to Jerusalem, as we remember on Palm Sunday, the day after Lazarus Saturday.)

Ask: *What does the Troparion mean when it says the raising of Lazarus "confirmed the universal resurrection"?* (Jesus will raise those who love and believe in Him, as He raised Lazarus. But that

coming raising will be to a life that lasts forever. This is the promise we constantly remember and thank God for in church.

Tell students that in this lesson and the following five lessons you will be talking about Lazarus Saturday, Palm Sunday, and the days of Holy Week and Pascha.

2 Scripture Activity

Look together at the icon of the raising of Lazarus, and identify Christ, Lazarus, Mary and Martha. (*In the icon, Martha's head is up and she is looking around; Mary's head is bowed. This reflects the difference between the more active Martha and the more contemplative Mary.*) Read together (or review, if you read it at the beginning of the class) the Lazarus Saturday Gospel: John 11:1-45. Divide students into groups of 3 or 4. Give groups Bibles, pens or pencils and paper, and ask them to go through the reading and write down sentences, phrases or words that indicate that Jesus shared a close friendship with Mary, Martha and Lazarus. Have the groups share the words/phrases they come up with. (*Suggested answers :*)

- *Verse 5 says Jesus loved them*
- *Martha feels free to "scold" Jesus, yet has faith in Him (verse 21)*
- *Mary "rises quickly" to go to Jesus when He asks for her (verse 31)*
- *Jesus weeps and is "deeply moved" at the tomb of Lazarus (verses 35 and 38)*

Next, have students look together at the Bible concordance. (You may need to explain how it is used--a concordance is an alphabetical listing of key words and names, showing all the Biblical references to each of those words or names.) Ask each group to have one member come forward. Together, these students will share the following tasks:

- Open the concordance to "Martha"
- Look up in the Bible passages about Martha, listed in the concordance, that they did not look at before. (The other passages are Luke 10:38, 10:40 and 10:41, and John 12: 2.)
- Write the references (not the entire passages) on the chalkboard.

Then have the group members return to their groups, and have the groups find sentences, phrases or words in these passages that indicate Jesus' friendship with Mary, Martha and Lazarus. (*Suggested answers:*)

- *Martha receives Jesus into her house (Luke 10:38)*
- *Though Jesus reproves her, He does so with love (10:40, 41)*
- *Martha, Mary and Lazarus all have Jesus as their guest at supper (John 12: 2)*

3 Discussion Questions: Jesus' Other Friends

Have students, still in their groups, read together Matthew 9:9 and Luke 19: 1-10. As they are reading, put these questions on the chalkboard:

1. Do you think the two men in these passages were popular with other people?
2. How does Jesus show friendship to these two men?

Give the groups time to discuss the questions, and then have the whole class talk about their answers.

Suggested ideas to emphasize:

1. Both Matthew and Zacchaeus, tax collectors, were probably quite unpopular--nobody enjoys paying taxes, and Zacchaeus, in addition to collecting taxes, had the reputation of being a cheat.

2. Jesus invites Matthew to be one of His closest followers. He goes to Zacchaeus' home, and offers him forgiveness for his past sins.

Have the groups read John 15:15 together. Ask: *When He raised Lazarus from the dead, Jesus did something nobody else could do for His friend. At this wedding, what did He do that nobody else could do?* (He changed water into wine.) Emphasize that Jesus fulfilled His human friendship by attending the wedding, but in addition He showed His divine love, compassion and friendship by a miracle. Similarly, He fulfilled His human friendship by going to Lazarus' tomb, and then showed His divine love, compassion and friendship by raising him.

4 Activity: Our Friendships

For this activity, students will work on their own rather than in groups.

Give each student pieces or pads of paper and a pen or pencil.

Give each student a copy of the list *Friendship Is...*

Ask them to write on each piece of paper a quality (in a word or a short phrase) that they feel is necessary for true friendship, at least three and up to six qualities. They should make enough copies of each piece for every student to be able to have one. (Prepare a cleared space where students will be able to lay out all their papers once they have finished.)

Tell students they are free to use some, all or none of the qualities on the list you have passed out--the items on the list are just to help them think about qualities of friendship.

When everyone has finished their papers, have students lay them out on the cleared space.

Have students, one by one or a few at a time, walk around and pick up papers that have words/phrases that express their ideas about true friendship. Ask them to try not to pick up their own papers, though they may if they feel their own words or phrases best express their ideas.

Once everyone has chosen papers, have them go back to their seats. Ask a few volunteers to tell you what words/phrases they chose. As they say each word or phrase, ask others who chose the same or a similar word or phrase to raise their hands. Put on the board those that were chosen by several students.

5 Journal: The Qualities of Friendship

Ask students to consider the words you have put on the board, which are based on the class's choices, as well as what they know about Jesus' friendships. Give each student a journal notebook, an envelope, and a pen or pencil. Ask them to write their names on their envelopes, in which the journals will be kept. Tell them they'll be writing in the journals each week. Assure them that nobody will read what they write unless, in the coming weeks, they give permission.

Have students write in their journals, describing concrete ways they can demonstrate the qualities of true friendship.

Collect the journals, in the named envelopes, and put them away.

6 Wrap Up

Ask students to choose a word/phrase that describes Jesus' friendship with Mary, Martha, Lazarus, Matthew or Zacchaeus, and write it on the blank wall chart with a marker. Have the icon of the Raising of Lazarus prominently displayed near the chart.

7 Closing Prayer

(Have students stand. Refer to the chart you have provided to go over the words.)

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

The Troparion (*Tone 1*)

By raising Lazarus from the dead before Thy passion,
Thou didst confirm the universal resurrection, O Christ God.

Like the children, with the palms of victory,
We cry out to Thee, O Vanquisher of Death,
Hosanna in the Highest!

Blessed is He that comes in the Name of the Lord.

Palm Sunday *(Ages 13-17)*

Overview

Loyalty to Christ - Loyalty

Objectives

By the end of this Lesson, learners should be able to:

- Compare Peter's confession of faith and expression of loyalty to Jesus Christ (Matt. 16:13-20 and 26:30-35) with his later denial of Christ (Matt. 26: 69-75)
- Locate an Old Testament prophecy and explain how it is fulfilled by Jesus' Entry to Jerusalem on Palm Sunday. (Zech. 9:9 and Matt. 21:1-11)
- List possible reasons why some who exalted Jesus on Palm Sunday deserted Him later in the week
- Describe their personal experiences of loyalty

Materials

- Icon of Jesus' Entry into Jerusalem (Palm Sunday)
- Bibles
- Journal notebooks in envelopes
- Pens/pencils
- Mounted wall chart with words of Troparion for Lazarus Saturday/Palm Sunday
- Mounted wall chart with students' words
- Markers in various colors
- My Guide to Holy Week and the Feast of Palms (for your information as a teacher--not for use in class)
- Simple props such as cloaks for the role play, if you wish to use them. Students can sit on the floor around the "fire" or you might use chairs/stools.

Resources

Required Resources

[My Guide to Holy Week and the Feast of Palms \(PDF\)](#)

[Entry into Jerusalem \(Image\)](#)

Optional Resources

[Icon of The Entry Into Jerusalem \(Image\)](#)

[Palm Sunday Icon](#)

[Palm Sunday: Entry Into Jerusalem](#)

Procedure

1 Opening Prayer

Have students stand. Use the wall chart you have provided to go over the words, and review meanings, if necessary, as you did in the previous session.

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

The Troparion (Tone 1)

By raising Lazarus from the dead before Thy passion,
Thou didst confirm the universal resurrection, O Christ God.
Like the children, with the palms of victory,
We cry out to Thee, O Vanquisher of Death,
Hosanna in the Highest!
Blessed is He that comes in the Name of the Lord.

2 The Apostle Peter

Ask students to read the Bible passages that tell of Peter's confession of faith, his statement of loyalty to Jesus Christ, and his later denial. (These passages, in order, are Matthew 16:13-20 and Matthew 26: 30-35 and 69-75.) Write three headings on the chalkboard: **Faith, Loyalty, Denial.** Ask students to suggest one word that describes Peter in each episode. Put their words on the board under each heading.

3 Role Play

Divide the class into groups of three or four. (If you have a large class, divide the students into larger groups.) Ask each group to prepare a role play based on Mark 14: 66-72, which describes Peter's denial of Jesus. Use simple props if you wish to, and remind students that though a fire is not specifically mentioned here, it says Peter was warming himself, which means that he and the others were probably huddled around a fire built in the courtyard.

After the groups have presented their role plays, have the whole class look together at the following Bible passages:

- Mark 9: 2-8 (The Transfiguration)
- Luke 4: 38-41 (Jesus heals Peter's mother-in-law; the "Simon" here is Peter)
- Matthew 14: 22-33 (Jesus calms the storm)

Ask: *After seeing all these things, how could Peter fail to be loyal to Jesus in the courtyard that night?* (Let students give their own answers. Suggested ideas: Peter was afraid of getting in trouble, or his faith wavered, as it had when the boat began sinking.)

Remind students that after the Resurrection, Peter became a strong and fearless worker for Christ. Read Acts 2: 43-46 together--a description of what Peter and the other apostles were doing after the Holy Spirit came upon them at Pentecost.

Add a fourth column to those referring to Peter on the board, this one describing Peter as he appears in Acts. Have students give the column a title, and offer words. (*Title of the column could be "true faith" or "deeper faith" or something similar that reflects Peter's matured faith and matured courage.*) Ask students to think about these words in the columns for a moment, and ask what they tell us. Suggest that they show us that Our Lord is One who gives us time to grow in faith, and is patient with us.

4 Scripture Reflection and Icon

Have students locate and read the following Biblical reference: Zechariah 9:9. Then read together Matthew 21: 1-11 and ask them to explain how the verse in Zechariah is a prophecy of Matthew. (*The words in Zechariah should remind them of what happened on Palm Sunday, when Jesus came into Jerusalem humbly on a donkey. Here we see that this was already prophesied in the Old Testament, in the words of the prophet Zechariah.*)

Discuss the meaning of the word "prophecy" and ask students to offer their own definitions. (*Prophecy is a telling of God's will. Sometimes it involves telling what will happen in the future, but not always. On many occasions, the prophets simply told the people that God wanted them to change their ways, or told them how God wanted them to behave.*)

Discuss: Why did God send prophets, and give prophecies? (*Let students give their own answers, and help them understand that God wanted His people to be prepared for the Savior. So He let the prophets tell the people what the Savior would be like and what the Savior would do. Then when Jesus came, people would know He was the Savior because He fulfilled and did those things that the prophets had talked about.*)

Look together at the icon of the Entry of Jesus into Jerusalem. Let students compare what it shows with the words of the Troparion (the Opening Prayer.) Similarities to notice: We see the children, the palms, the people excited and shouting "Hosanna!" just as in the Troparion.

5 Palm Sunday and Lazarus Saturday Review

As an easy review, have all the students stand together in the middle of the room. Tell them you are going to read some statements about Palm Sunday and Lazarus Saturday, and that you want them to decide whether each statement is true or false. Designate one side of the room as "TRUE" and the other as "FALSE" and ask students to walk to the TRUE side if they think the statement is true, or to the FALSE side if they think the statement is false. Make sure there is a clear space for them to walk in. Read each statement slowly, twice. Correct answers follow in parentheses.

1. On Palm Sunday we remember Jesus riding into Bethlehem. (False; He rode into Jerusalem)
2. Big crowds welcomed Jesus as He rode into the city. (True)
3. The crowds shouted "Hosanna!" (True)
4. The people spread palms in the road for Jesus to ride over like a king (False; they waved palms and branches and spread their garments in the road)
5. On His way to entering the city, Jesus had told the disciples He would be crucified and would rise on the third day (True)
6. The day before Palm Sunday is called Mary and Martha Saturday (False; it is called Lazarus Saturday, when we remember Jesus raising Lazarus--the brother of Mary and Martha--from the dead)
7. Mary, Martha and Lazarus lived in the town of Bethany. (True)
8. When Jesus came to Lazarus's tomb, Lazarus had already been dead for three days. (False; he had been dead for four days)
9. Jesus raised Lazarus from the dead by saying, "Where are you, Lazarus?" (False, Jesus said, "Lazarus, come out!")

If students don't do well with statements about Lazarus Saturday, review the event with them.

6 Discussion

Say: We know that some people who in the crowds who welcomed Jesus on Palm Sunday were shouting, "Crucify him!" a few days later. Why do you think some people turned against Him? (Let students give their own ideas. Then read together three passages that give some reasons:

Matthew 27:20 (This is one example of Jesus' enemies constantly trying to stir up the people against Him, and sometimes succeeding)

Luke 4: 16-30 (Here Jesus greatly angers the people by telling them the truth--that God loves and cares for all people, not just the people of Israel)

Acts 1: 6 (Many people had hoped Jesus would be a conqueror who would release them from hated Roman rule. He was not that kind of king, and some were deeply angry and disappointed)

7 Journaling: Loyalty

Distribute the journals in envelopes, and pens/pencils. Ask students to write about their own experiences of loyalty--when they tried to be loyal in difficult circumstances, or when someone they know of was loyal, to them or to another person. When students have finished, have them put their journals in their envelopes. Collect them and put them away.

8 Wrap Up

On the wall chart have each student write a word or phrase that represents something personally meaningful about Palm Sunday and the ideas discussed in this lesson.

9 Closing Prayer

(Have students stand. Use the chart you have made to go over the words as needed.)

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

The Troparion (*Tone 1*)

By raising Lazarus from the dead before Thy passion,
Thou didst confirm the universal resurrection, O Christ God.
Like the children, with the palms of victory,
We cry out to Thee, O Vanquisher of Death,
Hosanna in the Highest!
Blessed is He that comes in the Name of the Lord.

Holy Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday *(Ages 13-17)*

Overview

The Bridegroom Services - Choosing the Right Path

Objectives

By the end of this Lesson, learners should be able to:

- Describe the common themes of preparedness and judgment as they are presented in the Holy Week services of Great and Holy Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday
- Give brief summaries of parables included in the services of Great and Holy Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday
- Name some ways we can practice the themes of Great and Holy Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday in our lives

Materials

- Icon of the Wise and Foolish Maidens
- Mounted wall chart with students' words from previous sessions
- Mounted wall chart with the words of the Closing Prayer ("Behold, the Bridegroom")
- Mounted wall chart with the words of the Opening Prayer "O Heavenly King" (even though students may know this prayer well, making a chart of the words will help you as you study the prayer a little more closely with the class. Keep this chart for use in the next session)
- Bibles
- Journal notebooks in envelopes
- 8" x 11" posterboard or card stock for each group of 3-4 students
- Colored markers (both thin and thick)
- Copies of *My Guide to Holy Week and the Feast of Palms* (in the Resource Section) for each student

Resources

Required Resources

[My Guide to Holy Week and the Feast of Palms \(PDF\)](#)

[Icon of the Wise and Foolish Maidens](#)(Link)

Procedure

1 Opening Prayer

(Have students stand.)

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

O Heavenly King, the Comforter, the Spirit of truth,
Who art everywhere and fillest all things,
Treasury of blessings and giver of life,
Come and abide in us, and cleanse us from every impurity,
And save our souls, O Good One.

Ask students to consider the many things this prayer, addressed to the Holy Spirit, tells us about the Spirit. Let them pick out the words (*king, comforter, Spirit of truth, treasury of blessings, and giver of life*) which are all applied to the Spirit here. In addition, the prayer tells us that the Spirit is everywhere, and we ask that the Spirit *abide*, or stay, in us, to cleanse us and save us. These are the gifts that the Holy Spirit brings to us.

Read together John 15:26 and 16:13 to see how Jesus, in His great love for us, sent us the Spirit to do and provide these things for us. (The word "Counselor" in verse 26 is another name for the Spirit.)

2 Discussion Starter

Have the icon of the Wise and Foolish Maidens prominently displayed. Distribute copies of *My Guide to Holy Week and the Feast of Palms*, and read together about the Bridegroom Services. The information is under the heading "Some Basic Characteristics of the Great and Holy Week of the Lord's Passion" in the single column numbered at the bottom *Holy Week--2*. After reading through the whole column with the class, comment on the first two numbered parts:

Part 1. Read the parable of the Wise and Foolish Maidens together in Matthew 25: 1-13, and then give students some historical background: The wedding custom in Christ's time was for the bridegroom to come in the evening to his bride's home and take her to his own home, where festivities would follow. The bridegroom would be accompanied, in the dark evening hours, by maidens with oil lamps to light the way. They had to be ready when he came. It was all right for them to sleep a little while waiting, so long as they were prepared when he came, which might be earlier or later.

In the parable, five maidens have been wise and provided themselves with plenty of oil. Five have been careless, or lazy, or not really interested in their job of accompanying the bridegroom. They must be responsible for themselves; the five wise maidens may not have enough oil to share. The five foolish maidens must take their chances, and sadly for them, the bridegroom comes when they are away, trying to buy oil. The point is that we must prepare for Christ's coming; each of us is responsible for herself or himself.

The bridegroom's words "I do not know you" may seem harsh, but Christ is telling us that when He comes, those who love Him will be ready, just as any of us would be ready as we anticipate the arrival of someone we love. Those who don't bother to be ready are showing that they don't really love him and don't want to be with Him. They don't know Him. If we do not know Him, He cannot know us.

Read together the Troparion sung at Matins (Morning Service) on Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday of Holy Week, which begins "Behold, the Bridegroom comes at midnight" and have students note the way the Troparion reflects the Bible parable. (*The Troparion refers to the wise ones watching for the bridegroom with their lamps prepared, while others are "heedless" or unprepared and not watching. Those who allow themselves to be "weighed down with sleep" rather than alert will be "shut out" as the foolish maidens were.*) Look together at the icon of the Wise and Foolish Maidens to see how it, too, reflects the parable.

The verse which begins "Thy Bridal Chamber I see adorned, O my Savior" comes in the services as we finish the first three days of Holy Week and enter Holy Thursday. It's another reminder not to be lazy about preparing for Christ's coming and our readiness to enter His Kingdom. Read together Matthew 22: 11-14 to see the source of the "wedding garment" reference. (*Once again, the final words here may seem harsh to students. But it is truly a matter of our eternal salvation to be ready to meet Christ and enter His Kingdom. We cannot be casual, not bothering to "wear the wedding garment" that is appropriate for the King's marriage feast "Many are called but few are chosen" reminds us that though we are His people, our actions must still show our readiness and willingness to be with Him. We cannot be complacent.*)

Part 2. The "bridegroom" theme continues here. We don't know when the bridegroom (Jesus Christ) will come, so like the maidens we must be ready, and must show that we *want* to be with Him by having sufficient oil to get up and accompany Him. Read together the passages from John and Matthew. Here Jesus speaks to His apostles openly about the approaching end of His life, and the judgment to come. This is the event for which we must be ready.

Collect the copies of *My Guide to Holy Week and the Feast of Palms* to be used at the next session.

3 Oral Summaries and Poster

Divide the class into groups of 3 or 4. Assign a parable to each group, or if you have a large class have several groups work on each parable. If the class is small, one or two people can be assigned each parable.

Have each group read and then prepare an oral summary of its assigned parable. These are all read during the first days of Holy Week:

The Publican and the Pharisee (Luke 18: 10-14) *A warning not to judge others or think they are less than we are; in fact we should be like children before God*

The Fig Tree (Matthew 21: 18-22) *We must not be "fruitless" like this fig tree, and when God calls us to do something we must be ready and able to do it*

The Talents (Matthew 25: 14-30) *We are called to use the many gifts and talents God has given us, not waste them or, out of laziness or fear, simply "bury" them. We should even be willing to take a few risks with them, if that means we can do more of God's work)*

Each group can make a mini-poster that includes the name of the parable and a short summary. Then they can add a phrase or sentence that embodies the main theme of the parable, and a graphic of their choosing. The mini-posters should be displayed for the discussion segment of class. (*Suggestions of the theme of each parable are in italics after its title above, but students should come up with their own*)

4 Presentation

Have groups present and describe their mini-posters on the parables.

5 Discussion Review Questions

- What common themes do we find in the parables of the Wise and Foolish Maidens, the Publican and the Pharisee, the Fig Tree and the Talents? (*Answers could include the need to be prepared, the importance of humility and not looking down on others, the requirement that we "bear fruit" in our lives*)
- Why do you think these themes are presented to us during the first three days of Holy Week? (*Let students give their ideas. Suggested ideas to emphasize: As we prepare for Pascha, we need to be aware that preparation for the Kingdom really is important. It's easy to forget this, but in the "slowed-down" time of Lent we have time to think about it and do something about it. Then, in Holy Week, when we share Christ's urgent message that time is short, the Church reminds us forcefully.*)

6 Journaling: Holy Week Themes in Our Lives

Distribute the journals in envelopes. Ask students to write about ways they can "live out" the themes of Holy Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday in their lives.

When students have finished and put their journals in envelopes, collect them and put them away.

7 Wrap Up

Invite students to put meaningful words from today's lesson on the wall chart.

8 Closing Prayer

(Have students stand.) Briefly review the parable of the Wise and Foolish Maidens by looking at the words of the Troparion, which is the Closing Prayer, on the chart you have prepared. Have the icon prominently displayed. Say or sing the prayer together.

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

Behold! The Bridegroom comes at midnight,
And blessed is the servant whom He shall find watching;
And again, unworthy is the servant whom He shall find heedless.
Beware, therefore, O my soul, do not be weighed down with sleep,
Lest you be given up to death, and lest you be shut out of the Kingdom.
But rouse yourself, crying: "Holy! Holy! Holy! Art Thou, O our God,
Through the Theotokos, have mercy on us!"

Holy Thursday *(Ages 13-17)*

Overview

The Mystical Supper - Confrontation with Enemies

Objectives

By the end of this Lesson, learners should be able to:

- Describe and discuss the themes of Great and Holy Thursday
- List some religious and political groups of Jesus' time
- Contrast the thoughts and actions of the sinful woman and Judas as they related to Christ in the last days before His Crucifixion

Materials

- Bible Dictionary (more than one if possible)
- Wall chart with students' words from previous sessions
- Bible Encyclopedia (more than one if possible)
- Bibles
- Colored markers
- Journal notebooks in envelopes
- Wall chart with the words of the hymn "Of Thy Mystical Supper", which is the Closing Prayer
- Paper and pencils
- Wall chart with the words of the Holy Week hymn in the "Scripture Reflection" section of the lesson (# 5 in the Procedure)
- Copies of *My Guide to Holy Week and the Feast of Palms* for each student
- Icon of the Last Supper/Mystical Supper

Resources

Required Resources

[The Mystical Supper icon](#)

[My Guide to Holy Week and the Feast of Palms \(PDF\)](#)

Procedure

1 Opening Prayer

(Have students stand.) Briefly review the meaning of the prayer, using information from the previous session.

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

O Heavenly King, the comforter, the Spirit of truth,
Who art everywhere and fillest all things,
Treasury of blessings and giver of life,
Come and abide in us, and cleanse us from every impurity;
And save our souls, O Good One. Amen.

2 Reading and Icon

Distribute copies of *My Guide to Holy Week and the Feast of Palms*, and read together about Great and Holy Thursday in the single column marked *Holy Week--4* at the bottom. Discuss the text by posing questions, which may (or may not) be easy for your students to answer. In any case they are a good review. Have the icon of the Last Supper prominently displayed as you go through this section.

Ask: When do we take part in the "Mystical Supper" described in the hymn? (*When we take Holy Communion. The Mystical Supper is another name for the Eucharist, or Holy Communion, and also for the Last Supper that Jesus shared with His apostles. That Last Supper is what we remember on this day, Great and Holy Thursday. Look together at the icon and notice the closeness of Jesus and His apostles, sitting together and eating together as loving friends and families do*)

Ask: What do you think it means to say that we will not "speak of Thy Mystery to Thine enemies"? (*Those who opposed Jesus Christ and wanted to condemn Him refused to believe that He was God's Son. They also refused to understand that He offered Himself to suffering and death as God. He was not some average man seeking to gain glory. Because of their refusal, it would do no good to speak to such people, His enemies, about the mystery of His death and resurrection. In fact, they might twist our words to use them against Him in some way we never intended. However, we are called to pray that they will see the truth and come to Jesus Christ*)

Ask: What does "neither like Judas will I give Thee a kiss" mean? (*Read together the scene in the Garden of Gethsemane and the betrayal of Jesus Christ to His enemies with Judas's kiss in Matthew 26: 36-56*)

Ask: Who is the "thief" referred to in the hymn? (*Read together Luke 23: 32-43 for the description of the "wise thief", and remind students that this is how he is referred to in the Church's hymns*)

Ask: Why do we want to be like the thief? (*Because the thief understood who Jesus was, and wanted to be with Him. The thief's suffering on the cross didn't make him angry or bitter against God*)

(Collect the copies of *My Guide to Holy Week and the Feast of Palms* to use at the next session.)

3 Discussion Starter

Divide students into groups of 3 or 4, and give each group pens/pencils and paper. Put on the chalkboard the names **Pharisees, Sadducees, Zealots** and **Sanhedrin**.

Using Biblical references and aids (e.g. Bible with notes, Bible dictionary, Bible encyclopedia) the groups of students can create a description of each of these four groups we read about in the Bible, and also a reason why each might have opposed or disagreed with Jesus.

Answers should include at least this basic information, though students may offer other reasons or ways of describing the groups and their reasons:

Pharisees: *Learned Jews who kept the Old Testament law very seriously, often to its most minute points. (A reason for their opposition: Jesus sometimes challenged them if He saw that their adherence to law was getting in the way of compassion.)*

Sadducees: *Jewish leaders who did not believe in the resurrection of the dead, or in angels. (A reason for their opposition: They did not believe in the Resurrection that Jesus preached about, nor in the angels He referred to.)*

Zealots: *Jews who wanted to overthrow Palestine's Roman rulers. (A reason for their opposition: They were disappointed that Jesus was not going to lead their fight.)*

Sanhedrin: *The highest Jewish political and religious court, including both Pharisees and Sadducees. (A reason for their opposition: Jesus threatened their authority.)*

Discuss the student groups' findings together.

4 Discussion

Say to students: *Jesus had many encounters with people who opposed or accused Him. Let's look at three of these.*

Read together Mark 2: 23-27, Luke 5: 27-32 and then Mark 15: 1-3.

Ask students: *What is different in Jesus' actions in these encounters?* (In the first two, Jesus answers His opposers. In the third, He is silent.)

Discuss this question:

Why do you think Jesus answered in the first two encounters, but was silent in the third? (Let students give answers. These are not easy questions, but it seems that Jesus always answered as a way of teaching, as in the first encounter, or as a way of encouraging compassion, as in the second encounter. With Pilate and with the crowd, there was no teaching He could do--the crowd

wanted to destroy Him, and Pilate was "amazed" that He did not defend Himself, but did nothing to help. Yet even here Jesus was teaching by fulfilling Isaiah's prophecy about the Messiah. Read this together: Isaiah 53:7.)

Ask: *Do you think there are times in our own lives when it is best to answer with silence?* (Let students give answers. There are really no right or wrong answers here; it is more something to think about, and students may want to talk about their own experiences or their observations of others.)

5 Scripture Reflection

Have students stand, and clear an imaginary line running across the room, so that they can stand on the line. Explain that you are going to read some statements about attitudes toward money. Students should stand on the line (the continuum) at a place that represents their personal opinion of each statement. If they strongly agree, they should go to one end of the room (point to that end.) If they strongly disagree, they should go to the other end (point to that end.) If they have an opinion somewhere in between, they should go to a place on the line that best represents that opinion.

Read each of the statements slowly, twice, and point each time to one end of the room, saying "Strongly agree" and then to the other end, saying "Strongly disagree." Give students a few seconds each time to think and then find their place on the continuum.

1. Money is the root of all evil.
2. Having money is OK; it depends on what you do with it.
3. Those who have more money must give away more money.
4. The best use of my money is for my personal security.
5. Money can't buy happiness.
6. A Christian should never be concerned with money.
7. Blessed is the person who helps the poor.

When you've completed the exercise, talk about any issues it raised for students. Look together at I Timothy 6: 10. Ask: *Does Paul tell Timothy that money is the root of all evil?* (No, he says that the love of money is the root of all evil. To pursue money can lead us astray. This is why Christ told some people to give up their pursuit of money--it was spiritually dangerous for them. Yet He did not always say this--some people use their money for good, and they control it. They follow the commandment to help the poor and never be either stingy with money or deceitful in making it.)

Read together Matthew 26: 6-16, and then the words of the Holy Week hymn based on it, using the chart you have provided:

The sinful woman brought oil of myrrh; the disciple Judas came to an agreement with the transgressors.

She rejoiced to pour out what is very precious; he made haste to sell the One who is above all price.

She acknowledged Christ as Lord; He cut himself off from the Master.

She was set free, but Judas became the slave of the enemy.

Ask students: *How would you describe the woman's attitude toward money; how would you describe Judas's attitude?* (Let students give answers. Suggested ideas to emphasize:

The woman was generous enough to do something purely out of love for Jesus. He appreciated her gift, and reminded the indignant disciples that we can always help the poor, but that doesn't keep us from also doing a "beautiful thing" for God. This is one reason why, as Orthodox Christians, we make our churches beautiful but also must help those in need. One does not cancel out the other.

Judas was greedy enough to sell and betray Christ to His enemies. He would never have understood the woman's gift, and the money he received for his betrayal would not have been given to the poor--it was for himself.

6 Journaling: Christlike Service

Put this Bible reference on the chalkboard: John 13: 1-15. Ask students to read it, and then write in their journals about ways we can follow Jesus' example of humble service at the Last Supper.

When students have finished, collect the journals in their envelopes and put them away.

7 Wrap Up

Invite students to write meaningful words from today's lesson on the wall chart.

8 Closing Prayer

(Have students stand.) Have the icon of the Last Supper prominently displayed.

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

Of Thy Mystical Supper, O Son of God,
Accept me today as a communicant
For I will not speak of Thy Mystery to Thine enemies,
Neither like Judas will I give Thee a kiss
But like the thief will I confess Thee:
Remember me, O lord in Thy Kingdom.

Holy Friday *(Ages 13-17)*

Overview

The Crucifixion - The hour has come: Where do we stand?

Objectives

By the end of this Lesson, learners should be able to:

- Briefly describe the events of Great and Holy Friday
- Consider psalms which prophesy the events of Great and Holy Friday
- Contrast Joseph of Arimathea with the disciples who abandoned Christ

Materials

- Icon of Jesus on the Cross
- Mounted wall chart with students' words from previous sessions
- Journal notebooks in envelopes
- Bibles
- Mounted wall chart with the words of "O Heavenly King" from previous session
- Mounted wall chart with the words "The Noble Joseph" (Closing Prayer)
- Recording of "The Noble Joseph" (sung on Holy Friday) to play during class if you wish to
- Copies of *My Guide to Holy Week and the Feast of Palms* for each student
- For the poster in #4 of the Procedure, have the following for each group of 3-5 students: a piece of poster board (2' by 3') and a black line drawing of the icon of the Crucifixion (from the Resource Section.) Give each group, or have everyone share: scissors, ruler, glue, tape, crayons, thin and thick markers in various colors, and a few sheets of construction paper in varied colors
- **Note:** For review at the next session, have the icons of the Raising of Lazarus, the Entry into Jerusalem, the Wise and Foolish Maidens, and the Last Supper.

Resources

Required Resources

[My Guide to Holy Week and the Feast of Palms \(PDF\)](#)

Optional Resources

[Icon of The Crucifixion of the Lord \(Image\)](#)

Procedure

1 Opening Prayer

(Have students stand.)

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

O Heavenly King, the comforter, the Spirit of truth,
Who art everywhere and fillest all things,
Treasury of blessings and giver of life,
Come and abide in us, and cleanse us from every impurity,
And save our souls, O Good One.

Review words and meanings in the prayer as needed, using information in previous sessions and the chart you have provided.

2 Discussion Starter

Distribute copies of *My Guide to Holy Week and the Feast of Palms* to students. Read together about Great and Holy Friday in the columns marked "Holy Week--4" and "Holy Week--5" at the bottom.

Read Genesis 1: 6-10 together, and note with students the way in which the hymn describes this poetically: "He (Christ) who hung the earth upon the waters." The same poetic kind of description is in the third line: "He (Christ) who wraps the heavens in clouds." These magnificent acts of creation are contrasted with the brutal way Christ is mistreated by the people He himself created: "He who freed Adam in the Jordan (at His baptism) is slapped on the face."

Review the meaning of the word "passion" which here refers to Christ's suffering leading to His death on the cross.

Collect the copies of *My Guide* to use at the next session.

3 Scripture Reflection

Read together Mark 14:32-15:15, and look together at the icon of the Crucifixion. Ask students to identify the followers of Jesus who were with Him at the Cross, then to name some people or groups who had been with Him but abandoned Him.

(Possible answers: Usually, as in the icon provided with this lesson, Mary and a few other women, plus John the beloved disciple, are shown at the foot of the cross. Those who had been with Jesus and abandoned Him were the other disciples, who in fact deserted Him at His most terrible hour. As noted in a previous lesson, some of the people who greeted Him joyfully as He entered Jerusalem on Palm Sunday became part of the mob demanding His crucifixion. Even people who had received help or healing from Him hid themselves from the authorities, rather than speaking up for Him, when He was arrested.)

4 Discussion and Activity

Divide the class into three groups of 3 to 5 students, or six groups if the class is large.

Put these psalm references on the chalkboard:

Psalm 2, verses 1 to 2 (up to word "anointed")

Psalm 22, verses 16-18

Psalm 109, verses 1 to 5

Give each group a black line drawing of the Icon of the Crucifixion and a piece of poster board. Also give each group, or have everyone share, the following: scissors, glue, ruler, crayons, markers, and construction paper.

Ask each group to make a poster by coloring the icon and putting it on the poster board, and then choosing words of one or more of the psalms. They can write the words around the icon in any style or pattern they choose, and add borders or decoration they wish.

Look together at the finished posters and talk about how the verses are prophecies of what will happen to Christ, and what He will do. Ask groups to tell why they chose the words they did.

Plan to display the finished posters where parents and parishioners can see them.

5 Journaling: The Cross

Distribute journals in their envelopes. Ask students to reflect in their journals on this question: (You may want to put it on the chalkboard):

What does "Take up your cross and follow Christ" mean to you?

When students have finished, collect the journals in their envelopes and put them away.

6 The Noble Joseph

Read together about Joseph of Arimathea in Luke 27: 57-61. Then read the Closing Prayer together--the hymn about Joseph. Ask students: *Why do you think the Church refers to Joseph of Arimathea as "the noble Joseph?"* (Let students give their own answers. A point to emphasize is that most of the twelve disciples abandoned Jesus. Yet Joseph, the only person explicitly called a "disciple" who is not one of the twelve, respects and loves Jesus enough to give His body a decent

burial. This took courage, since the Romans and his own people were no friends of Jesus. Love that demands courage, as Joseph's did, can be called noble.)

7 Wrap Up

Ask students to put meaningful words from the lesson on the wall chart.

8 Closing Prayer

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

The noble Joseph,
When he had taken down Thy most pure Body from the tree,
Wrapped it in fine linen,
And anointed it with spices,
And placed it in a new tomb.

If you have a CD or tape of "The Noble Joseph" you could play it, and have students practice singing it.

Holy Saturday & Pascha *(Ages 13-17)*

Overview

Christ Is Risen! - Jesus is the Way, the Truth and the Life of all.

Objectives

By the end of this Lesson, learners should be able to:

- Explain how four Old Testament readings prefigure the Passion and Resurrection of Christ
- Describe some of the elements of the services of Great and Holy Saturday and Pascha
- Name some ways in which icons of the events of Holy Week and Pascha depict those events

Materials

- Bibles
- Paper, pens, pencils, colored markers
- Wall chart with the words of the Closing Prayer ("Do Not Lament Me...")
- Wall chart with students' words from previous lessons
- Icons to review: Raising of Lazarus, Entry into Jerusalem, Wise and Foolish Maidens, Last Supper
- Icon of the Resurrection (Christ's descent into Hades)
- For the "Hot Potato" review game in # 6 of the Procedure: 14 small pieces of paper with the 14 words and phrases listed there. Put **only** the words/phrases on the papers, not the definitions. Fold the papers up, and have them in a small basket or other container. Also have a clean raw potato, a stopwatch or something to time ten seconds, and paper/pencil ready at hand to keep score.
- Paschal music you can play during class, if you want it
- Journal notebooks in envelopes

Resources

Required Resources

[My Guide to Holy Week and the Feast of Palms \(PDF\)](#)

Optional Resources

[Descent Into Hades: The Holy Resurrection](#)

[Descent Into Hades: The Holy Resurrection](#)

[Icon of The Resurrection of Christ \(Image\)](#)

Procedure

1 Opening Prayer

(Have students stand.)

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

We have been freed from suffering by Your suffering, O Christ,

We have been delivered from corruption by Your resurrection,

O Lord, glory to You! Amen. (*From the Vespers of Great and Holy Saturday*)

Be sure students understand the meaning of "corruption": the rot and decay brought on by death. Now, through Christ's Resurrection, we will rise to eternal life, no longer corrupt but whole and perfectly healthy.

2 Prophecies in the Old Testament

Put the following Old Testament citations on the chalkboard:

Isaiah 53: 12

Jonah 1: 17

Jeremiah 31: 31-33

2 Kings 4: 32-37

Divide students into groups of 3 or 4. Ask each group to read all four passages and then write down a key word or phrase for each one. Have the groups take turns reading one of their key words/phrases aloud, and having the rest of the class guess which passage it refers to. This should be easy, and is a way of becoming familiar with these Old Testament prophecies of the work and resurrection of Christ. The groups may choose different words and phrases, but they should have some reference to these central points:

***Isaiah** describes how the Savior will accomplish His saving work by suffering and taking on the sins of others; **Jeremiah** speaks about a "new covenant (or pledge), which God will fulfill through Christ; **Jonah** prefigures (meaning foretells, describes or represents beforehand) Christ's 3 days in the tomb; **2 Kings** shows God's love as He gives a prophet the power to raise a boy from the dead, a foretelling of Christ's raising of Lazarus and all humanity from the dead.*

Make the point that the Orthodox Church always understands the Old Testament as preparing us for the coming of Christ. These prophecies are examples of that.

3 Reflection on a Hymn

Read with students the text of the Closing Prayer for this lesson, which is the Ninth Ode of the Nocturn Canon of Pascha. (For now, just read the text--at the end of the lesson you will use it as a prayer.)

Have students, again in their groups of 3 or 4, rewrite the Ode, keeping the meaning but using words they think would be clear to someone who was not familiar with the Scriptures.

Main points are that Jesus was truly born and grew in His mother's womb, but was conceived through the power of the Holy Spirit rather than sexual relations. Though His suffering and death are terrible for His Mother to witness, He will rise from the dead, and will resume His eternal place of heavenly glory with His Father. Those who honor His Mother will receive His divine blessing, because in honoring, or magnifying, His Mother, they show that they believe in Him and love Him.

Let students come up with their own ideas and wording, but make sure they understand these main points as being truths of Christianity.

4 Discussion and Icon Reflection

Distribute copies of *My Guide to Holy Week and the Feast of Palms*. Read together about the Three Day Pascha and Great and Holy Saturday--Matins in the column marked "Holy Week-6" at the bottom.

Look together at the icon, and ask students to describe how it reflects the words you have read. (*The icon shows Jesus raising Adam--and Eve--from the power of death in Hades or hell, pulling His creatures up with His own hands. Adam and Eve stand for the whole human race.*)

Next read together *Great and Holy Saturday--Vespers and Liturgy* in the columns marked "Holy Week-7" and "Holy Week-8" at the bottom. Emphasize important points with these questions:

How could you summarize what the 15 Old Testament readings at the Vespers Liturgy tell us? (See Column 7 #2. They tell us of God's power and His desire to save people and bring them into the light, even from the time of Adam, Abraham, and all the people of the Old Testament.)

During the Vespers Liturgy, why are the colors of vestments and cloths changed from dark to white? (See Column 7 #4. We sing the verse "Arise, O God" and at this point Christ's work of raising the dead in Hades has begun.)

At the Liturgy of Holy Pascha a famous sermon by Saint John Chrysostom is read. What does this sermon say has happened to death as a result of Christ's Resurrection? (See the last paragraph of Column 8. Death is overthrown, or defeated.) What do the angels do? (They rejoice.)

5 Journaling: The Resurrection

Put this line from the Paschal stikhera on the chalkboard:

Let us forgive all by the Resurrection.

Ask students to write in their journals about what this line means to them.

(If you have a recording of Paschal music, play it softly as students are writing.)

When students have finished, give everyone a few moments to leaf through their journals and share anything they want to with the rest of the class. The journals are now theirs to keep and take home.

6 Wrap Up and Review

As a review of the unit, have a game of "Hot Potato." Divide the class into 2 teams. Tell them:

In the basket are 14 words or phrases taken from the lessons you have studied together.

- The teams will each get 7 chances to identify the words or phrases correctly. (Example: the phrase "palm branches" would correctly be identified as what the people waved on Palm Sunday as Jesus entered Jerusalem.)
- You (teacher) will throw the potato to someone on the first team. That person will choose a paper from the basket with a word or phrase. Then the person has 10 seconds to identify the word/phrase correctly--you will keep time. Others on the team can help the person answering.
- If the person answers within ten seconds, he or she throws the potato to someone on the other team, and that person chooses and tries to answer. Each time a team member answers within ten seconds, the team gets a point. If they still haven't answered and still have the potato when ten seconds are up, their team gets no points. Then they throw it to someone on the other team. The winning team, of course, is the one with most points. You can keep score.
- Teams should treat the potato as if it is hot, and try to get rid of it as quickly as possible!

The 14 words/phrases are as follows (students' definitions should be close to these):

1. **Fig Tree** (It bore no fruit, and reminds us we must produce good "fruit" for God)
2. **Foolish Maidens** (They failed to provide enough oil; were shut out of wedding banquet)
3. **Come Out!** (Jesus' command to Lazarus as He raised Lazarus from the dead)
4. **Mystical Supper** (Another name for Holy Communion or the Last Supper Jesus shared with His disciples)

5. Pontius Pilate (Roman governor who reluctantly but spinelessly authorized Jesus' crucifixion)

6. Foot Washing (Jesus' example of humble service to His disciples)

7. Bridegroom Matins (Services of the first 3 days of Holy Week. The "Bridegroom" is Jesus Christ)

8. Martha: Sister of Lazarus and Mary, good friend of Jesus

9. Noble Joseph: Joseph of Arimathea, who courageously gave Jesus' body a decent burial)

10. Hosanna: The greeting people shouted to Jesus as He entered Jerusalem on Palm Sunday)

11. Pharisees: Learned Jews who opposed Jesus

12. Judas's kiss: Judas betrayed Jesus to His enemies with a kiss to identify Him

13. Bethany: The home of Lazarus, Mary and Martha

14. Hades: The place of death, which Christ conquered for us by His Resurrection

As a further review, look together at the icons of the Raising of Lazarus, the Entry into Jerusalem, the Wise and Foolish Maidens, and the Last Supper. Ask students to give a few details about each. Ask them also to put the events depicted in correct chronological order. (The titles are listed in order.) Of course students will know that the Crucifixion and the Resurrection came after these.

Have students put meaningful words from the lesson on the wall chart. Invite students to share with the rest of the class any words they put up, and why those words were meaningful to them.

Give students their journals, which are now theirs to keep. Take a few moments for them to page through the journals, and share with the class, if they wish to, any thoughts or ideas they wrote during your class meetings.

7 Closing Prayer

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

Do not lament me, O Mother, seeing me in the tomb,

The Son conceived in the womb without seed.

For I shall arise and be glorified with eternal glory as God.

I shall exalt all who magnify you in faith and love.

Tell the class that over the weeks following Pascha you will greet them with "Christ is Risen" and you want them to respond with "Truly (or Indeed) He is Risen"!

Lazarus Saturday *(Ages 10-12)*

Overview

Jesus' Love Brings Life

Objectives

By the end of this Lesson, learners should be able to:

- Identify Lazarus, Mary and Martha as people whom Jesus loved and who loved Him as a friend
- Describe the raising of Lazarus from the dead
- Relate the Troparion of the feast to the Scripture story

Materials

- Bibles (Note: Activities, such as the Reviewing the Story sheet for this session, as well as quotations, use the Revised Standard Version. We suggest having this version for each student to use, or for 2 or 3 students to share)
- Icon of the Raising of Lazarus
- Copies of the Resource *Reviewing the Story* for groups of 3 or 4 students to share
- Wall charts (simple ones you make) with the words of the Opening Prayer and Closing Prayer. Mount these on the wall to use each time you pray these prayers.
- Small, simple wall calendar of Holy Week (that you make) with the days from Lazarus Saturday to Pascha boxed and labeled. This should be mounted on the wall to look at each week.
- Paper and pencils

Resources

Required Resources

[My Guide to Holy Week and the Feast of Palms \(PDF\)](#)

[Reviewing the Story \(John 11: 1-43\) \(PDF\)](#)

[The Raising of Lazarus \(John 11:1-45\) \(PDF\)](#)

[Lazarus Saturday & Palm Sunday Troparion\(HTML\)](#)

Optional Resources

[Icon of The Raising of Lazarus \(Image\)](#)

Procedure

1 Opening Prayer

(Have students stand, for this and for all opening and closing prayers.)

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

O Heavenly King, the Comforter, the Spirit of Truth,

Who are everywhere present and fill all things,

Treasury of Blessings and Giver of Life,

Come and abide in us and cleanse us from every impurity,

And save our souls, O Good One.

Use the wall chart you have provided to go over the words as needed. Ask students about the meanings of the following words, or any others they have questions about, and help them understand their meanings:

Passion: the suffering and death of Jesus Christ.

Universal resurrection: Jesus had power to raise Lazarus from the dead. So we know He will keep His promise that we can be with God in His Kingdom, too.

Vanquisher: winner or one who has a victory.

2 Brief Reflection on Opening Prayer

Talk with students about the meaning of the phrase “cleanse us from every impurity.” Let them give their ideas about what this phrase means. (Suggestions: This prayer, directed to the Holy Spirit, asks that the Spirit help us overcome sins, bad thoughts, and other things that are painful and bad for us--things that may keep us away from God.)

3 Scripture & Discussion (Part 1)

- **Read with the class the first part of the Gospel for Lazarus Saturday, John 11: 1-27.** *Be sure students understand that this is the day on which we remember Jesus raising His friend Lazarus from the dead. Tell them that in this lesson and the following five lessons you will be talking about Lazarus Saturday and Palm Sunday, and then the days of Holy Week leading to Pascha.*
- **Divide the class into groups of four, Give each group a Bible and pencils and paper. Put the following four questions (not the suggested answers) on the chalkboard, and ask each group to come up with their own answers. Discuss the responses all**

together. Their answers may be somewhat different from those suggested here, but these give basic points that should be emphasized.

- ***Suggested answers are in italics.***
 1. How does the first part of the passage tell us that Jesus had real friends who loved Him? *Verses 3 and 5 tell us this.*
 2. Why does Jesus wait two days to go to Bethany?
Verse 4 tells us that God's glory will be shown in Lazarus' dying and being raised from the dead. Jesus' words about daylight and night in verse 9 refer to His doing the work He was sent to do at the time ordained, meaning chosen and decided, by His Father. This work is seen by all, being done in the "daytime". The world, therefore, cannot undermine it.
 3. What are the disciples afraid of?
Verses 7-10 tell us that Jesus has just recently been stoned and persecuted in the place He now wants to return to.
 4. What promise does Jesus make to Martha?
In verse 25 Jesus says, "Though he die yet shall he live." His promise to believers is that though they die to their life on earth, they will be raised to live with God forever.

4 Troparion & Icon of the Feast

- Have students stand. Sing or say together the *Troparion for Lazarus Saturday and Palm Sunday*: Use the chart you created; the words are also used as the Closing Prayer for this lesson.
- Be sure students understand the meaning of certain words in the hymn:
 - ***Passion***: The passion of Christ is His suffering and agony. This is the original meaning of the word.
 - ***Universal resurrection***: All human beings will be raised when Christ comes again.
 - ***Vanquisher***: Conqueror.
- Point out that the words "children with the palms of victory" look ahead to Palm Sunday.
- Look at the icon of the Raising of Lazarus together. Note details such as the grave clothes, and that Mary and Martha are depicted differently from each other. Mary is usually shown with her head bowed, while Martha is looking up or around to see what is happening. In some icons (details can vary slightly from icon to icon) she is holding a handkerchief to her nose! Ask students why they think the sisters are depicted differently. *(This difference reflects the differences between the sisters that Scripture tells us about: Mary was quiet, thoughtful, and willing to sit at home. Martha was more active, talkative, and eager to know what was going on around her. Be sure students understand that Jesus loved and accepted both sisters as they were.)*

5 Scripture & Discussion (Part 2)

Continue with a discussion on the day's Scripture reading (John 11: 28-45):

- **What does Mary say to Jesus that her sister Martha said before?**

In verse 32 she "scolds" Jesus for not having come sooner as Martha did in verse 21.

This ability to speak their minds and even "scold" Jesus shows the comfortable closeness that these sisters had with Him.

- **Why do you think Jesus weeps at Lazarus' tomb?**

Jesus' grief is not only that of a friend, but He grieves as Creator of the universe to see the power of death in His creation.

6 Reviewing the Story

- Divide the class into groups of 3 or 4 and give each group a copy of the Resource: *Reviewing the Story*, and Bibles (Revised Standard Version) to work with.
- Tell them how to do the activity, as explained in the the Answer Key. As noted there, the word for #3 is found in John 10:40, and it is "baptized." The rest of the words are in John 11:1-43.
- You may wish to make this activity a contest to see which group can be first to figure out what the letters spell out. However, if a group figures out what the letters spell before finishing, they should, nevertheless, complete the exercise and fill in each statement.
- Go over the answers together when all the groups have finished.

Have a student mark off Lazarus Saturday on the wall calendar you have provided.

7 Closing Prayer

(Have students stand. Use the wall chart to go over the words. Sing or recite the hymn.) In the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

By raising Lazarus from the dead before Thy passion,
Thou didst confirm the universal resurrection, O Christ God.
Like the children with the palms of victory,
We cry out to Thee, O Vanquisher of death,
Hosanna in the highest!
Blessed is He that comes in the Name of the Lord.

Note: Tell students that at the next session you will look more closely at the "children with the palms of victory" that the words of the hymn describe. Let them tell what they remember about the story of Palm Sunday and Christ entering Jerusalem as a king.

Palm Sunday *(Ages 10-12)*

Overview

Christ the King

Objectives

By the end of this Lesson, learners should be able to:

- Tell how Jesus' kingship is different from that of earthly kings
- Describe the scene of Christ's entry into Jerusalem as told in Scripture and shown in the festal icon
- Relate the Scripture story to a few Old Testament prophecies

Materials

- Bibles
- Colored pencils or markers, pencils, paper
- Icon of the Entry of Christ into Jerusalem (Palm Sunday)
- Pictures in books, magazines, from internet clip art or from any source, showing kings in chariots, ornately robed and crowned, or on horses looking magnificent (as a contrast to Christ the King riding humbly on a donkey)
- **For the Review Activity:** An inflated lightweight beach ball (or something else light) that students can throw to each other for the review, which covers this week's and last week's sessions.
- A timer of any kind (one that counts seconds). For each question in the review activity, students will be given 5 seconds to answer.
- Write each of the following questions on a small piece of paper, then fold them up and put them into a basket (or some other container.) Answers and Scripture citations are provided in parentheses here, but should not be put on the papers.

Questions:

1. Where do Mary, Martha, and Lazarus live? (Bethany; John 11:1)
2. Which disciple says that they should all go to Judea with Jesus and die with Him? (Thomas; John 11:16.)
3. How many days had Lazarus been dead when Jesus comes? (Four; John 11: 17)
4. On Palm Sunday Jesus entered what city? (Jerusalem; Matthew 21: 10)
5. On Palm Sunday the crowds shout, " Hosanna to the _____ of _____; (Son, David; Matthew 21:9)
6. Who first said to Jesus, "Lord, if you had been here my brother would not have died"? (Martha; John 11: 21)
7. What did Jesus tell the people at the tomb of Lazarus to do? (Take away the stone that was on it; John 11: 39)

8. What do the people spread on the road as Jesus enters Jerusalem? (Their garments and branches they have cut; Matthew 21: 8)
9. What does Jesus first do when He sees the tomb of Lazarus? (He weeps; John 11: 35)
10. What does Jesus say as He raises Lazarus from the dead? (“Lazarus, come out.” John 11: 43)

Resources

Required Resources

[Holy Week Teacher Planning Worksheet \(PDF\)](#)

[The Feast of Palms: Saturday-Sunday \(PDF\)](#)

[Entry into Jerusalem \(Image\)](#)

Optional Resources

[Icon of The Entry Into Jerusalem \(Image\)](#)

[Palm Sunday Icon](#)

[Palm Sunday: Entry Into Jerusalem](#)

Procedure

1 Opening Prayer

(Have students stand.) In the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

The Troparion (*Tone 1*)

By raising Lazarus from the dead before Thy passion,
Thou didst confirm the universal resurrection, O Christ God.
Like the children, with the palms of victory,
We cry out to Thee, O Vanquisher of Death,
Hosanna in the Highest!
Blessed is He that comes in the Name of the Lord.

Use the wall chart you have provided to go over words, and review meanings as necessary, using the notes from the previous session.

2 Bridging to Scripture

Give each student paper, pencils, and colored pencils or markers. Have them draw or write about what they think it means to be a loyal friend. This could mean either how they would show loyalty, or how they would like someone to show loyalty to them or to others. They might also write or illustrate an actual account of loyalty in their own lives, or create a story about loyalty. Let students share what they have drawn or written if they wish to.

3 Reading Activity

Read together from the Bible the Gospel for Matins of Palm Sunday: Matthew 21: 1-11.

4 Discussion Questions

- Let students give their own answers to the following questions. Suggested answers are offered in parentheses, and these contain some basic points that you can emphasize, but students should also express their own ideas.
- If you had been one of the people along the road in Jerusalem that day, what might have surprised you? *(Jesus was riding humbly on a donkey, not on a horse or in a chariot.) Look together at the icon and at the pictures of magnificent kings you have brought, to show the contrast. Point out the children with palms in the icon, as mentioned in the Troparion.*
- **Note:** *Students might make jokes about the word “ass” in the Scripture passage. Just remind them that its original meaning was the same as “donkey” and drop the subject! We don’t suggest bringing it up yourself; talk about it only if students do bring it up or notice it.*
- Were there differences between Jesus as King and earthly kings? *(The Kingdom Jesus promises is with God in heaven. He was not trying to have power like a king in this world. He taught that we can begin to be part of His Kingdom here and now, but not by gathering worldly power. Instead we must serve others.)*
- *Remind students that Christ’s kingship was prepared for through the whole Old Testament. Read together Zechariah 9:9. Ask: What does Jesus say about these words from a prophet of the Old Testament? (He says that He is fulfilling them--He is the one the words were talking about.)*
- Talk again about loyalty in friends. How many of the people who were shouting “Hosanna” (which means “save us now”) would still be Jesus’ friends at the time of His arrest and trial? *(Some of them would be the same people who would shout to have Him crucified.)*
- Ask: Why do you think some people turned away from Jesus? *(When He turned out not to be a powerful earthly king who would destroy their enemies, they no longer followed Him or gave Him their loyalty.) So Our Lord shared our human experience fully. He had loyal and loving friends like Lazarus, Mary, and Martha. But He also knew that some friends are not loyal. He suffered the disappointments that we sometimes experience.*

5 Review Questions

See the "Materials" section to prepare for this activity. Have ready a Bible, basket of questions, timer, beach ball and pencil and paper for you to keep score.)

Have students stand in two lines, as two teams. Toss a coin, or have each team choose a number between one and ten, to decide which team will go first. Throw the beach ball to one student on

the team going first. The student chooses a question from the basket, and together the team decides on an answer. If the team can answer the question without looking in the Bible, the team gets three points.

If the team needs to check in the Bible to answer the question, they get one point for a correct answer. (If the team can't answer, or answers incorrectly, no points are given.) The time limit for giving each answer is 8 seconds. When the question has been answered, the student with the ball throws to someone on the other team, who then picks a question from the basket and answers or confers in the same way. (No player should get more than one turn unless your group is small. In that case, each player should get a turn, or more than one if necessary. If you have an uneven number of students, one can be a "floater" and stand with the team answering the question each time.)

The winning team will be the one with the most points after all ten questions have been answered. Go over the answers together at the end, helping students find them in the Bible if necessary.

Have a student mark off Palm Sunday on the wall calendar.

6 Closing Prayer

Have students stand. Sing or recite the Troparion.) In the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

The Troparion (*Tone 1*)

By raising Lazarus from the dead before Thy passion,
Thou didst confirm the universal resurrection, O Christ God.
Like the children, with the palms of victory,
We cry out to Thee, O Vanquisher of Death,
Hosanna in the Highest!
Blessed is He that comes in the Name of the Lord.

Ask students: How are we "like the children with the palms of victory"? (*We, too, are preparing to welcome Jesus Christ at Pascha. But we will not abandon Him--instead we will keep vigil and stay with Him by attending the services of Holy Week.*)

Holy Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday *(Ages 10-12)*

Overview

The Bridegroom Services - Following the Lord

Objectives

By the end of this Lesson, learners should be able to:

- Identify the “Bridegroom” of the first services of Holy Week as Jesus Christ
- Relate the parable of the wise and foolish maidens to our own lives
- Name some “fruits of repentance” that they will offer to Christ

Materials

- Bibles
- Bowl with several kinds of fruit for students to choose from and eat at the end of the class (also have napkins and knife, kept out of sight till ready to use)
- Icon of the Wise and Foolish Maidens (Note: “Maidens” is the word used in the Revised Standard Version of the Bible)
- Candle and matches
- A simple drawing of a bare branch, about 10 inches long, posted in the room, or an actual bare branch standing upright in a pot of sand or secured in some other way to stand up
- Scissors, various colors of construction paper, markers for students to share
- One sheet of poster board (appr. 12" by 18")
- Words of the Opening Prayer and Closing Prayer, either on the chalkboard before class starts or written in big letters on paper or poster board and mounted in the classroom.

Resources

Required Resources

[The Bridegroom Services of Holy Week \(PDF\)](#)

[Icon of the Wise and Foolish Maidens\(Link\)](#)

Procedure

1 Opening Prayer

From the Apostikha for Great and Holy Monday

(Have students stand, for this and for all opening and closing prayers) In the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

The fig tree was withered up because it was unfruitful.

We should fear the same punishment, O brothers and sisters,

And bring worthy fruits of repentance to Christ, who brings us great mercy.

Ask students whether they know what the "withered up fig tree" refers to. Let them identify it as a reference to something Jesus said, if they know. It may be that they won't know what it is. In either case, tell them you will be talking more about it in this lesson.

2 Discussion Starter

Ask students what they know about the services of Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday of Holy Week. (*Perhaps they can tell you what they remember about attending these services, or what they have heard about them.*) Remind or tell them that one theme of these days is preparation. We are called to be watchful, and to be prepared, because the Lord Jesus Christ might come at any time to judge the world. We should be ready to greet Him with joy. We should never be unprepared or unready to meet Him.

Say to the class that you are going to find out more about this. Read together Matthew 25: 1-13. Tell them that this is the story Jesus told as a way of urging us to be prepared. Then give students some background: The maidens here are following the custom of accompanying a bridegroom who is going to get his bride from her home. While waiting for him, they may fall asleep, but they must be ready right away to light their lamps and go with him, because they don't know when he will come. They must be prepared with plenty of oil. If they have not brought enough, there may not be time for them to get some from the others and get their lamps lighted if he comes at a time they do not expect.

The Church compares Christ to the Bridegroom, who may come at any time. Let students suggest ways in which we can be prepared to meet Christ (*for example, by doing good and helping others, by praying, by trying to live as Christians and to come closer to God, by learning more about our faith so we can share it with others, by not making excuses for the things we have done or the things we have failed to do that we should have done. Being ready means not making excuses!*)

3 Icon and Scripture Memorization

Look together at the Icon of the Wise and Foolish Maidens, and note ways in which the details of the icon match the details of the story. Then, light the candle, and read together John 12: 46.

Spend a few minutes having students memorize the verse:

**I have come as light into the world,
[so] that whoever believes in Me may not remain in darkness.**

Note: We have added the word “so”, which appears in some translations, to make the verse a little easier for students to understand. Blow out the candle when you have finished.

Have students work together on a poster with these words from John's Gospel. They can write it in big letters, and decorate it with the markers. Post it in the room, to stay there as a reminder.

4 Scripture, Discussion, Activity

Tell students that another short passage is also part of the readings for these first days of Holy Week. Read it together: Matthew 21: 19. Ask students to consider how the Church applies this to us. Go back to the Opening Prayer, which shows us that we are meant to be “fruitful” and not “fruitless” as the fig tree was.

Give students a few minutes of silence to think about “fruits of repentance” they will offer to Christ. This means things that they want to make better and more truly Christian in their lives, or new efforts they want to make to be close to God. These things should be more specific than the discussion of the Wise and Foolish Maidens. They can look at the bare branch or drawing of the bare branch which you have posted, and think about it as an example of what we do not want to be--a branch with no fruit.

Ask students: “Does this verse tell us that God will punish us for not being fruitful?” Let them offer ideas. *(The verses are not about God punishing us, because He does not do that. As the verses say, Jesus Christ offers us great mercy. But if we make no effort to follow Him, to live as He wants us to, we will be “punished” by having no fruit, and having nothing good in us. That will be our choice. We need to practice the Christian life while we are on earth, or else we won't be ready for life in the Kingdom with God.)*

Have students cut out shapes like pieces of fruit from the construction paper, and write their plans, the fruits they will offer Christ, on the “fruit pieces.” Then they can attach the fruits to the drawing or branch with tape.

5 Closing Prayer

Repeat the Opening Prayer together as your Closing Prayer. Have each student choose a piece of fruit from the bowl, and then eat together. Remind students of the plan and pledge they have made to offer the Lord “fruits of repentance.”

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

The fig tree was withered up because it was unfruitful.

We should fear the same punishment, O brothers and sisters,

And bring worthy fruits of repentance to Christ, who brings us great mercy.

Practice the memorized verse together a few times, using the poster students created. Then have them remove their "fruits" from the tree to take them home as reminders of their plan to develop their own spiritual fruits.

A student, or more than one, can mark off Holy Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday on the wall calendar.

Holy Thursday *(Ages 10-12)*

Overview

The Last Supper, the Anointing and the Betrayal - Jesus' Love for His Friends, the Disciples

Objectives

By the end of this Lesson, learners should be able to:

- Describe Jesus' act of washing the disciples' feet as an example of humility
- Contrast the sinful woman (who anoints the feet of Christ) with Judas
- Relate the Last Supper to our reception of Holy Communion

Materials

- Bibles
- Clear pitcher or glass of water
- Icon of the Last Supper (also called the Mystical Supper)
<http://saints.oca.org/IconDirectory/LG/HolyWeek/mysticalsupper02.jpg>
- Paper and regular pencils for each student
- Colored pencils for students to share
- Wall charts with the words of the Opening Prayer and of the Troparion in #4 of the Procedure. You can make these very simple. Keep them mounted in the room, and use them to help students learn and remember the words

Resources

Required Resources

[The Mystical Supper icon](#)

[The Bridegroom Services of Holy Week \(PDF\)](#)

Procedure

1 Opening Prayer

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

O Heavenly King, the comforter, the Spirit of truth,
Who art everywhere and fillest all things,
Treasury of blessings and giver of life,

Come and abide in us, and cleanse us from every Impurity,
And save our souls, O Good One.

Review the meaning of the phrase "cleanse us from every impurity" using the notes in the first session.

2 Review

Review the memorized verse from the last session: "I have come as light into the world, [so] that whoever believes in me may not remain in darkness" (John 11: 46.)

3 Activity and Discussion

Bridging to Scripture: Ask students (seeing the pitcher or glass of water) to name things one could do with water that would serve others (give someone a drink, clean or wash things for another person to use, water crops for food, put out a fire, etc.)

Then, write these phrases on the chalkboard:

1. prepare an iced drink when the weather is very warm
2. do a load of laundry
3. wash someone else's feet
4. swim or paddle around on a float in a beautiful pool

Have students stand. Say, "All of these things involve water. Think about which of these you would most like to do." After about five seconds of time for students to think about their choice, point to one corner or area of the room for #1, another area for #2, and so on. Have students move to the area of the room that represents their choice. It's likely that nobody will choose #3 as their favorite thing.

Next, ask which would be the thing they would least like to do. Again, indicate areas of the room for each answer. Chances are that this time most of the students will choose #3, as the thing they'd least like to do.

Ask students what they know about traveling by foot in the time of Jesus. Let them tell the class if they know, or else you can tell them, that in those days people traveled on dusty roads wearing sandals or foot coverings that did not cover the whole foot. So it was a courtesy to a guest who had walked to wash that person's feet. It was the lowliest of jobs, and was usually left to a slave or servant.

Ask, "What did Jesus do, on the night of the Last Supper, that astonished His disciples?" Students may know that He washed their feet. Read the story together in John 13: 1-17. Discuss:

Ask, "Why did Jesus choose this particular act?" Let students give their own ideas or answers. (Help them see the point that Jesus was giving His disciples a real example of humility: it was such a lowly task, and He wanted those who knew Him as Lord to have the truest example of humility that He could possibly give them.)

What do verses 1-3 tell us about Jesus' divinity? (He knew things that only the Son of God could know, both about Judas and about the terrible ordeal He was about to face for the sake of all human beings.)

4 Icon and Troparion

Look at the icon of the Last Supper together. Notice signs of closeness (such as John leaning near Jesus.) Sing or say together the Troparion (Matins of Holy Friday):

When the glorious disciples were enlightened at the washing of their feet before the supper, then the impious Judas was darkened, ailing with avarice, and to the lawless judges he betrays Thee, the righteous judge.

Behold, O lover of money, this man who because of money hanged himself.

Flee from the greedy soul which dared such things against the Master.

O Lord, who art good towards all men, glory to Thee.

Make sure students understand certain words:

Impious (pronounced **im**-pea-us) means lacking respect and reverence for God

Avarice is an overwhelming desire for or love of money; notice that the hymn compares it to or calls it an ailment

5 Scripture

Read together Matthew 26: 6-30. Ask students to compare (as the services do) the woman who anoints Christ's feet with Judas. Use these questions, and let students give answers. Suggestions of points to emphasize are in italics:

What does Jesus mean by saying, "You always have the poor with you" in verse 11? *(He means that the poor can always be helped and shown love, but there is a limited time for people to show their love for Him, since He will not be in the world much longer. This is why he tells Judas not to trouble the woman who has done a beautiful thing for Him. He knows Judas' heart, and knows that Judas' concern for the poor is not sincere.)*

Ask, "Do you agree that to do a "beautiful thing' for someone else is important? How do we as Christians try to do 'beautiful things' for God?" *Let students respond. Suggested answers: We make churches and vestments beautiful, we give our best to God by coming to church on time and paying attention to the prayers we are saying, and by showing love to the other people who worship with us. Of course we still have the responsibility to care for the poor and those in need. This is why in the Divine Liturgy we pray for "those who remember the poor."*)

Give each student paper and regular pencils as well as colored pencils. Ask them to describe, in words or with a picture or some symbol, a beautiful thing they know of that was done for them or for someone else. Then ask them to write about or depict a way that they can try to do something similarly beautiful for another person.

Have students share what they have written or depicted, if they wish to.

6 Closing Prayer

Say or sing the Troparion (words above in Procedure #4) together.

Holy Friday *(Ages 10-12)*

Overview

The Crucifixion - Where Do We Stand?

Objectives

By the end of this Lesson, learners should be able to:

- Tell the main events of Jesus' arrest, trial, and sentence
- Relate the events of the Crucifixion to the words "like the thief will I confess Thee" that we say before receiving Holy Communion
- Relate the risk taken by Nicodemus and Joseph of Arimathea to the risk taken by Saint Maria Skobtsova, in following Jesus Christ

Materials

- Bibles
- Resource Media: Icon of the Crucifixion
- Resource Media: Icon of Saint Maria Skobtsova
- Resource Handout: Our Lord's Last Days on Earth (1 per student)
- Simple charts made by you, with the words of the Opening Prayer and the Closing Prayer, mounted in the classroom

Resources

Required Resources

[My Guide to Holy Week and the Feast of Palms \(PDF\)](#)

[The Bridegroom Services of Holy Week \(PDF\)](#)

[Newly Canonized Saint Mother Maria Skobtsova Icon \(Image\)](#)

[Our Lord's Last Days on Earth\(HTML\)](#)

[Prayer From Holy Thursday Matins\(HTML\)](#)

Optional Resources

[Icon of The Crucifixion of the Lord \(Image\)](#)

Procedure

1 Opening Prayer

(Have students stand, and use the chart you have provided to go over the words of the prayer)

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

Lord, You said to Your disciples:

My beloved, see that no fear separates you from Me.

Though I suffer, it is for the sake of the world.

I came, not to be served, but to serve,

To give Myself for the salvation of the world.

If you are My friends, then imitate Me.

Let the first among you be the last.

Let the master be like the servant.

Abide in me and bear fruit,

for I am the vine of life. Amen. (From Matins of Holy Thursday)

Discuss the following questions and have students offer answers. Suggested points to emphasize are in italics:

What "fear" do you think Jesus believes His disciples might have? *(When the disciples see what is happening to Him during His arrest, trial, and execution, they might fear for their own safety and lives and might leave Him because of that fear. Also, seeing that He is not able to save Himself, they might feel that they should not have followed Him because He is not the kind of Savior they were expecting or hoping for)*

What does Jesus say is His reason for coming to the world? *(He says He has come to serve, but even more, He says He has come to "give Himself" for us--He has come to die for us, and to save us by overcoming the power of death for us)*

What does Jesus ask the disciples to do if they are truly His friends? *(He asks them to serve others humbly, and gives them a word picture of what He means: "Let the master be like the servant")*

2 Scripture Activity

As a way of going through the story of the arrest, trial, and sentence of Jesus Christ, have students take turns reading aloud the numbered items on the sheet *Our Lord's Last Days on Earth*.

Give each student a copy of the sheet. Some students really do not enjoy reading aloud in front of others. Encourage them to take part in the reading, but let them sit and listen if they prefer. Ask them to pay close attention.

Have students who are going to read take a few minutes to look through the text. Answer any questions they have. Then they can stand in a line, and read the items in order.

Then, as a review, divide students into 2 groups. Have the first group devise 5 review questions based on items 1-12 on the sheet. Have the second group devise 5 review questions based on items 13-24 on the sheet. They can take turns asking each other their questions. (This doesn't have to be a competition, but you might want to commend either or both groups if they have devised thoughtful, rather than superficial, questions.)

3 Scripture Reading and Discussion, Icon

Continue the reading of the Scripture story from Bibles. Read together Mark 15: 16-32 and Luke 23: 32-49. Students will probably note that some details are repeated. That is because we read from all four Gospels in the course of this Holy Friday Matins service, so that we get the details and full meaning of the events.

Read together Luke 23: 21 and 23, and Mark 15: 29-30. Ask students, "Do you think the people who said these things were some of the same ones who had shouted 'Hosanna' on Palm Sunday?" (*Certainly there were some who turned away from Christ when they realized He was not the kind of worldly political King they wanted. This is the kind of fear, or disappointment, against which Jesus warned His disciples*)

Look together at the icon of the Crucifixion. Note that there is not a crowd of people to stand by Christ as He dies. The crowds that surrounded Him on Palm Sunday are gone.

Remind students of the words we say in the prayer before Holy Communion: "Like the thief will I confess Thee." Ask students where these words come from. If necessary, help them find the basis for the words in Luke 23: 39-43. We, as Christians, want to be like the thief who confessed Jesus to be the Christ.

We also say in the Communion prayer, "Neither like Judas will I give Thee a kiss." Ask students, "Why do you think the Church has chosen these examples of being like one person, the thief, and not like the other, Judas.?" Let them offer answers. (We do not want to be like Judas, who betrayed the Lord, his friend and teacher, to powerful enemies. We strive to have faith like that of the thief, who loved and trusted Christ even in dire circumstances.)

4 Discussion & Icon

Show students the icon of Saint Maria Skobtsova, and if possible also some photos. Tell students that she was a nun who died in a Nazi concentration camp on Holy Friday of 1945. She did many things to help others, but the main thing that got her sent to the concentration camp was giving false baptismal certificates to Jews, in order to save their lives. She said that she must help everyone, in order to show her love for Jesus Christ.

Now read together John 19: 38-42. Ask students what is similar in these two men's actions (Joseph of Arimathea and Nicodemus) to the actions of Saint Maria. *(The two men took risks in order to show their love for Jesus Christ. Help students see the point that people who lived much closer to our own time, like Mother Maria, still do the same brave and loving things that Joseph of Arimathea and Nicodemus did, because they, like the apostles and like others who actually knew Him, are following Jesus Christ.)*

Note: Students are probably aware that Joseph of Arimathea is a completely different person from Joseph the husband of Mary. Mary's husband had died years before Jesus was crucified. You may want to check that students know the two men are not the same.

5 Wrap Up

Ask students to think, this coming week, about taking risks to show their love for Jesus Christ. This does not include risks that involve physical danger, but could include being ridiculed for going to church often, being teased or derided for trying to follow the teachings of the Church, defending an unpopular position they feel is right, sustaining a friendship with a person others reject, and so on. If there is time, let them suggest these kinds of risks they might take.

6 Closing Prayer

Have students stand and use the chart you have provided to go over the words of the prayer:
In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

Come, O faithful, let us enjoy the Master's hospitality;

The banquet of immortality.

In the upper chamber with uplifted minds, Let us receive the exalted words of the Word, whom we magnify. Amen. *(From the Odes of the Matins of Great and Holy Thursday)*

Make sure students understand that "magnify" here means to praise highly. Ask them what the "banquet of immortality" is. *(Holy Communion. We are like the apostles with Jesus in the upper chamber sharing the Last Supper with Him. He is the Word of God, who speaks the words of God to us.)*

Holy Saturday & Pascha (Ages 10-12)

Overview

Christ is Risen! - Jesus Christ is the Lord of Life

Objectives

By the end of this Lesson, learners should be able to:

- Tell how the Old Testament prepares us for Christ's Resurrection
- Relate the icon of the Resurrection to a verse from the Vespers Liturgy of Holy Saturday
- Explain how the hymns of Holy Saturday lead us toward the joy of Pascha

Materials

- Bibles
- Copies of pages 33-36 ("For Gloriously Has He Been Glorified") of the booklet *Great and Holy Saturday*, published by the Department of Religious Education of the Orthodox Church in America, 1986 (Have enough copies for 2 or 3 students to share) Go over the words so that you can be prepared to say and sing them, and help students do so, during class. Be ready, also, to sing the refrain on page 33. If you need help with the singing, ask a choir member to help you, or play a recording of the hymn
- Icon of the Resurrection (sometimes called the "Harrowing of Hell") in the Resources section
- For the "Icon and Hymn Verse" step in the Procedure, put the verse on the chalkboard before class, or make and mount a chart with the words. Students probably know the Opening Prayer, *O Heavenly King*, but you may want to put the words on the chalkboard or a chart. You may also want to do the same with the verses that are used for the Wrap-Up and Closing Prayer
- Construction paper in various colors, white paper for writing, scissors, tape and various colored markers for students to share

Resources

Required Resources

[Great and Holy Saturday \(PDF\)](#)

[My Guide to Holy Week and the Feast of Palms \(PDF\)](#)

Optional Resources

[For Gloriously Has He Been Glorified \(PDF\)](#)

[Icon of The Resurrection of Christ \(Image\)](#)

Procedure

1 Opening Prayer

(Have students stand. If needed, use the chart of the words you have provided, or refer to the words you have put on the board)

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

O Heavenly King, the comforter, the Spirit of truth,
Who art everywhere and fillest all things,
Treasury of blessings and giver of life,
Come and abide in us, and cleanse us from every impurity,
And save our souls, O Good One.

2 Old Testament Bridging to New Testament

Ask students, "What do we find in the Old Testament that prepares us for the coming of Jesus the Savior in the New Testament?" (*Let them give answers, or remind them of some Old Testament prophecies, such as Psalm 118: 25-6 and Zechariah 9:9 You might also read Micah 5: 2 and Isaiah 7: 14.*)

Say, "Let's go on and look at another way God prepares us, in the Old Testament, for what Jesus Christ will do." Read together I Kings 17: 8-24, a story about the prophet Elijah. This is the 8th reading at the Vespers and Divine Liturgy for Great and Holy Saturday. Ask students, "How does this reading help prepare us for the coming of Christ?" (*Elijah is given the grace to raise the son of the widow. It's by this action that the woman knows that Elijah is a man of God, and that the word of God in his mouth is truth. The reading prepares us for Jesus Christ being raised from the dead. He not only has the true word of God in His mouth, He is the Word of God. He is the divine Son of the Father who does His Father's will.*)

3 Icon and Hymn Verse

Look together at the icon of the Resurrection. Then refer to this verse from the Holy Saturday Vespers:

Today Hades cries out groaning: I should not have accepted the Man born of Mary. He came and destroyed my power. He shattered the gates of brass. As God, He raised the souls I had held captive.

Glory to Thy cross and resurrection, O Lord!

Invite students to find phrases in the verse that are depicted in the icon: Hades "accepted" Jesus

Christ, the Man born of Mary because He went there, as the icon shows. The icon also shows the “gates of brass” being shattered, and Jesus “raising” the souls Hades had held, pulling them out with His own hands. The old man at the bottom of the icon represents Hades, or Satan, crying out and groaning.

Make the point that in the Church we often say the same things in Scriptural words, in icons, and in hymns.

4 A Sung and Said Prayer

Give students copies of “Gloriously Has He Been Glorified”, which we say and sing during the Holy Saturday service. Tell them this is another way that in the Orthodox Church we “tell” a Scripture story: by singing it. This is the story of the Hebrews escaping from the Egyptian pursuers by passing through the Red Sea as if it were dry land. God has always been with His people, from the time of this miracle to the time that His Son came to be with us and save us.

Practice singing the refrain with the class. Have everyone stand. Then have those students who are willing take turns reading the verses, with everyone singing the refrain. You may have just a few willing students; if necessary read some of the verses yourself.

5 Scripture Reading

Read together the Gospel for the Liturgy: Matthew 28: 1-20.

6 Discussion Questions

Discuss these points about verses 17-20:

- **What words tell us that Jesus Christ really is fully divine and fully human?**
(He says, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to Me.” This assures us that He is what He claims to be, and that we can rely on and trust Him and His promises)
- **What is the promise Jesus makes to us?** *(That He will be with us forever)*
- **How do you think we can fulfill Jesus’ words to us in verses 19 and 20?**
(Give students paper, scissors, tape and markers. Let them express in words, drawings, cut-out shapes or another medium that occurs to them their own answer to this question. They can share their creations with the class if they wish to.)

7 Wrap Up

Read to the class the hymn to the Theotokos from the Liturgy for this day:

**Do not lament me, O Mother, seeing me in the tomb,
The Son conceived in the womb without seed.**

For I shall arise and be glorified with eternal glory as God.

I shall exalt all who magnify you in faith and in love.

- **Ask the class, “In the nymn, who is saying these words?”**

Christ says them, addressing His mother, who of course is “lamenting” and sorrowful at the suffering and death of her beloved Son. But He reminds her that He will rise and be glorified, because He is God. He calls us to “magnify” or praise her because she gave birth to Him, thus doing God’s will in the most important way.

- Sing “Christ is Risen” together. The sorrow of the Mother of God’s lament gives way to joy for her and for all of us. If you can, sing or say “Christ is Risen” in some other languages as well as English.

8 Closing Prayer

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

Do not lament me, O Mother, seeing me in the tomb,

The Son conceived in the womb without seed.

For I shall arise and be glorified with eternal glory as God.

I shall exalt all who magnify you in faith and in love.

