

St. Joseph's Children's Liturgy of the Word Holy week and Easter 2024 (Year B)



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St. Joseph is the patron saint of the family, and the family is the “domestic Church.” These sheets were developed to support my parish of St. Joseph in Great Malvern, Worcestershire, but they are now used by parishes and schools not just in the UK, but some are sent to contacts abroad as well. As always, feedback and suggestions are most welcome.



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Sunday Mass is the cornerstone of our week; These resources are designed to be used in a family setting or in Children's Liturgy of the Word at Mass, or in the classroom. Please make them your own and feel free to pass them on for free.

Two weeks of emotional highs and lows.

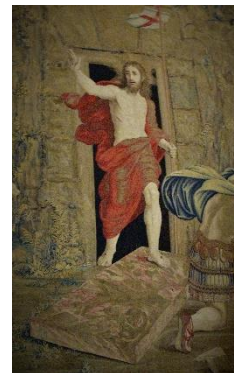
These two weeks have a complete change of mood, and this chasuble shows that at the centre of everything the Church does is the celebration of Holy Mass. Of course, this chasuble is worn by the priest when He celebrated Mass, and the beautiful embroidery illustrates the Last Supper; the First Mass. St. John leans on Christ's breast as described in the Gospel (Jn. 13:23) and we too are invited to lean closer and closer to Jesus every day. At the bottom, Mary stands in prayer. She is the mother of Christ and the mother of the Church, and prays for us constantly, bringing our petitions to her Son. These sheets explore these very special two weeks in detail, much like the Christmas edition did. Draw what you can from them, and I pray that you and those you care for whether it's your family or school or parish will be able to grow in faith over this hallowed time. The next edition will begin with the third Sunday of Easter Year B. As ever, please do feel free to share these sheets with others and send me any photos of anything you did.

There are Four Dimensions of our Faith, and the activities all reflect one or more of each of these dimensions.

Professing the faith (speaking about it and learning the faith)

Celebrating our faith in the liturgy and the sacraments

The Resurrection, tapestry, Vatican Museums © Carol Ann Harnett 2022.



Living the faith in Christ (making choices by the grace of Jesus Christ)

A prayer-filled life where the Our Father takes centre stage

Children's liturgy of the word for this week



Gospel for Palm Sunday Year A

Mark 11:1-10

When they drew near to Jerusalem, to Bethphage and Bethany, at the Mount of Olives, Jesus sent two of his disciples, and said to them, 'Go into the village opposite you, and immediately as you enter it you will find a colt tied, on which no one has ever sat; untie it and bring it. If any one says to you, "Why are you doing this?" say, "The Lord has need of it, and will send it back here immediately."' And they went away, and found a colt tied at the door out in the open street; and they untied it. And those who stood there said to them, 'What are you doing, untying the colt?' And they told them what Jesus had said; and they let them go. And they brought the colt to Jesus, and threw their garments on it; and he sat upon it. And many spread their garments on the road, and others spread leafy branches which they had cut from the fields. And those who went before and those who followed cried out, 'Hosanna! Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord! Blessed is the kingdom of our father David that is coming! Hosanna in the highest!'

The Gospel of the Lord

R/: *Praise to you Lord Jesus Christ*

Discussion on the Gospel for Palm Sunday

- ✠ Light a candle
- ✠ Someone read the Gospel slowly

Of course, the main Gospel is the Passion today and this Gospel is read before Mass. If you are leading a children's liturgy, you can re-read this Gospel to the children and then starting from here, go through the main aspects of the Passion. The related activity is either to order the History of Salvation or to order the events of Holy Week and Easter, depending upon whom you have. If you are doing this at home, you may be able to do both activities over the coming week.

Q: What did Jesus ride into Jerusalem on? (A: An ass/colt or a young donkey)

Q: What did Jesus' disciples do with their garments (cloaks or clothes) and leafy branches? (A: They put them on the donkey before Jesus sat on it and spread some on the ground, along with leafy branches.)

Explain this background to Jesus' action: This fulfilled the prophesy of Zechariah: "Behold, your king comes to you, triumphant and victorious is He, humble and riding on a donkey, on a colt, the foal of a donkey" (Zec 9:9). Jesus was showing people that He was the long-awaited king which the Jews were waiting for. This is why people were so excited to see Him do this and welcomed Him with such joy.

Q: What did the people shout when Jesus was riding into Jerusalem? (A: Hosannah...).

Q: When do we say these words? (A: At Mass just before the Eucharistic Prayer).

Q: Why do you think that we say these words here? (A: Because we know that Jesus is our King and He is about to become present in the bread and wine as His Body and Blood. We are reminded that although we see only the Host and the Chalice, in fact Jesus is our King.)

Q: When Jesus died on the Cross, what did Pilate write on the label? (A: The King of the Jews).

Q: Kings (and queens) have thrones – what is Jesus' throne? (A: His Cross.)

Finish by prayerfully making the Sign of the Cross and by joyfully praying the *Holy Holy Holy* (words on the next page) and younger children may like to colour in the picture of Jesus on the cross, or colour and order the pictures on the next page.

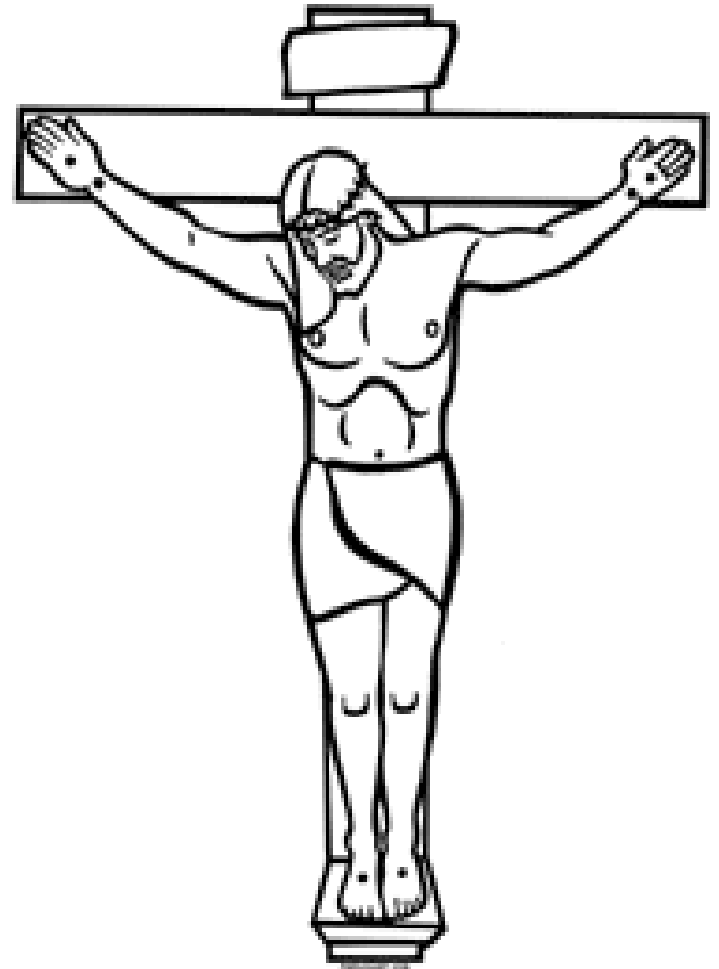
Holy, Holy, Holy Lord
God of hosts.

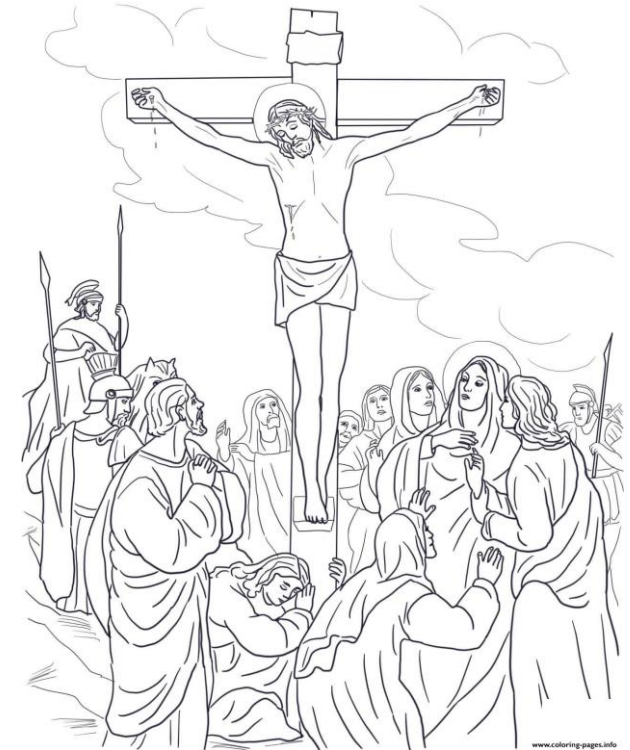
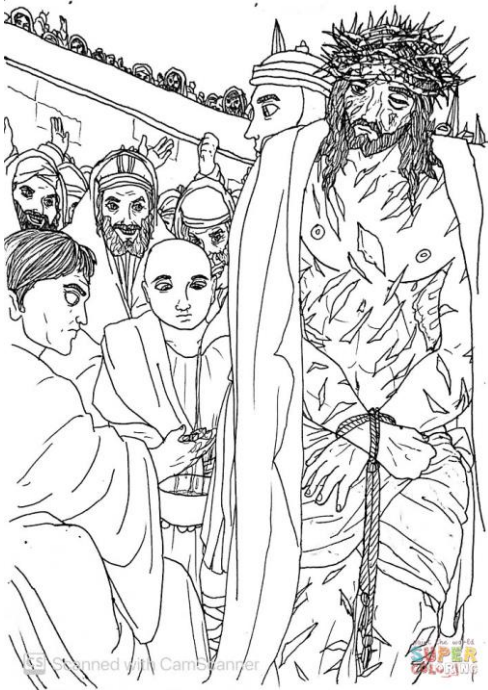
Heaven and earth are
full of your glory.

Hosanna in the highest.

Blessed is he who comes
in the name of the Lord.

Hosanna in the highest.





Why did Jesus ride into Jerusalem on a donkey?

This is what is called the History of Salvation: Read this out and then cut out the pieces below and put in the right order. (The different colours will help sort the pieces out)

God created (made) us so that we could have a very close and loving relationship with Him - closer than with any person on earth, but our first parents (Adam and Eve) sinned by disobeying Him, by eating the forbidden fruit, and that meant death. When God saw what they had done He was very sad. They had sinned and this meant that they could not be really close to God any more. So they had to leave His presence, that is, leave the garden of Eden. Before this however, God told Eve that one of her descendants would crush the devil. (God was talking about His own Son, but they did not know that then).

God spent thousands of years preparing His people to be ready for the coming of His Son, Jesus Christ. He sent prophets and other wise people who spoke about God. God made promises to care for His people, with Abraham, Moses and King David. He gave a set of rules (the Ten Commandments) and even His Holy Spirit inspired men to write about Him (the Bible). Eventually the Angel Gabriel told Mary that she was going to have God's Son and was to call Him Jesus. The Son of God was born as a tiny baby in a stable in Bethlehem. God had now become one of us! Jesus is a real human being and is also God! He grew up and taught people about His Father and about the Holy Spirit who would help us to love God and one another.

Remember the death promised to Adam and Eve for being disobedient? Jesus, God the Son agreed to suffer the death on our behalf, and so to get ready for this, He rode into Jerusalem on a donkey, and showed everyone that He is the true king. In Jerusalem, He got ready to celebrate the Jewish Passover which is when they celebrate being set free from slavery in Egypt. Normally, they ate a lamb that had been sacrificed, but instead, Jesus offered them the bread and wine which He had changed into His Body and Blood. The next day, which we call "Good Friday" Jesus was condemned to death and carried His cross up the hill to Calvary. He died at 3pm, just at the time that the lambs were being sacrificed in the Temple. That is why we call Jesus "The Lamb of God". At His trial, Pilate asked Jesus if He was a king and He said that His kingdom is not of this world, which means that it's a much bigger kingdom than the world. Jesus' Kingdom is both heaven and earth! Pilate did not understand that and so put a label up on Jesus' Cross saying, "The King of the Jews."

When Jesus died, we were no longer separated from God and it was as if God was saying to Adam and Eve "come back into Eden". In fact, Tradition tells us that on Easter Saturday, Jesus rescued Adam and Eve and all those who had died before Him and took them up to heaven.

Because Jesus is God, He could not stay dead and rose on what we call Easter Sunday. Because this is such an amazing event, we celebrate this every week - so every Sunday is a mini Easter! That is why Sunday is so special!

He later ascended (went up) into heaven and sent the Holy Spirit on the Apostles. They went everywhere teaching that Jesus has saved us from sin and death and that because of Him, we could all love His Father and have a perfect relationship with Him, here on earth and for ever in heaven. Jesus promised that He would come again, and we are still waiting - but we don't know when He will come.

Can you cut out these labels and put them in the correct order along a line like the one below which has been started for you. Do send photos if you do this.

Adam and Eve disobeyed God	God made promises (covenants) with Abraham, Moses and King David	The Church is waiting for Jesus to come again
Jesus taught the people about His Father and the Holy Spirit	Jesus celebrates the Last Supper by changing the bread and wine into His Body and Blood	All through the Old Testament, God prepared His people for the coming of His Son
God promised Eve that one of her descendants would crush the devil	Jesus rose from the dead on the first day of the week (Easter Sunday)	The Angel Gabriel told Mary that she would have a baby who would be the Son of God
Jesus rode into Jerusalem on a donkey	Mary's Son Jesus Christ, was born in Bethlehem	Jesus ascended into heaven to be with His Father
God said that if Adam and Eve ate the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, they would die	The Apostles went everywhere telling people about Jesus	The Holy Spirit descended upon the Apostles of Pentecost day
Before Jesus ascended into heaven, Jesus promised that He would back	Jesus died on a cross	God created everything especially Adam and Eve

God created Adam and Eve

Jesus was born in Bethlehem

Jesus will come again

Easter Triduum

The Easter Triduum is the three great days which come at the end of Holy Week. The main liturgies, (the Mass of the Last Supper, the Good Friday Liturgy and the Easter Vigil) are in effect one big liturgy (service) which happens over three days. If it is not suitable to bring the whole family to these (generally quite long) celebrations, the family can still mark the days with other prayerful and reflective activities.

Maundy Thursday

This is the day when we celebrate the Institution of the Eucharist, which means the "First Mass". The Last Supper had two important features:

1. In the Gospel of John, we read that first Jesus washed His disciples' feet and when He finished, He told them that as He, their Lord and Teacher has washed their feet (a job that only the lowest of the servants would do) then they need to follow His example and wash each other's feet. (Jn. 1-20).
2. At the Last Supper Jesus gave us His very own self as food. We all need food for our bodies. If we don't eat then we die, it's as simple as that. Our souls also need food and so receiving Jesus in Holy Communion is the best way to keep us fit and healthy spiritually. When we receive Jesus it's like we welcome Him into our home, our body represents our home as it's where our heart is. Receiving Jesus also unites us to everyone else who is receiving Jesus as Jesus gives Himself completely and entirely to each one of us.

Think about how as a family you can "wash other people's feet" that is, serve them. Suggestions for the family are:

- Help someone without being asked.
- Make some cakes or biscuits to take to a neighbour who will be on their own over Easter.
- May be as a family a "good deed" can be done for a neighbour.

Holy Communion prayer

If you have made your First Holy Communion, why not write a special prayer to use this year for the Easter liturgies, thanking Jesus for the gift of Himself in Holy Communion, and also may be adding a prayer for those who are still suffering because of the covid pandemic.

If you have not made your First Holy Communion, you can still write a prayer to say at communion time.

Good Friday

Many children ask why Good Friday is called "good" if it was the day Jesus died on the cross. If that is a question which comes up, remind them about the History of Salvation and that we are created to be united to God and because of sin, we were separated from Him. Jesus' death on the Cross has restored that communion, that close friendship with God.

Prayer for Good Friday

If you can't get to the Good Friday liturgy or a celebration of the stations of the Cross today, do have a time of prayer in the family. May be read a short version of Jesus' death on the cross and then spend a few moments in silence looking at a crucifix. If you don't have one, then you can use this photo of the crucifix in the church of Santa Croce in Florence. (Santa Croce means Holy Cross). It would be good to give everyone a chance to venerate the wood of the cross - that is, to be able to reverently kiss the cross. Remember, we do not worship the actual material the crucifix is made of, but in kissing the crucifix, we are showing our love for Jesus. Just as you might kiss a photo of an absent of deceased family member.



Try making hot cross buns! As they need to rise, you can start them on Thursday evening and bake them on Friday morning. Maybe each member of the family can make a bun for another family member. Home-made hot cross buns are incredibly special.

Symbols of the Last Supper, Christ's Passion, and His Resurrection

Quite often in our churches we find symbols of the Last Supper, Christ's Passion and Resurrection. They might be carved or painted onto the Altar, the lectern, the tabernacle, or as in St. Joseph's Malvern on the reredos. (At St. Joseph's these carvings are very small and are really only obvious to those on the sanctuary). How many of them can you see below? See if you can find the following symbols in these images in your churches: **wheat** (for the bread that becomes Christ's Body) **grapes** (for the wine that becomes Christ' blood) **vine** (indicating that Jesus is the vine and we are a part of that vine, by our Baptism) instruments of the Passion - **nails**, **pillar** (that Jesus was whipped against) **cross**, **wounds** (holes in Jesus, hands, feet and side) **spear**, **hyssop on a pole**, **pincers to remove the nails**, **A stork feeding plucking her breast** (symbolizing the blood Christ shed on the Cross) and then symbols of the Resurrection: **Lamb**, **flag of victory**.



Holy Saturday

This is a very special time in the Church. Mass is not celebrated in the morning. The only Mass today is the Easter Vigil. Quite often people, especially adults, are baptised or a received into the Church at the Easter Vigil.

In the evening, before children go to bed, it would be lovely to have a special time of prayer and think about Jesus' friends who had spent this day quietly, very sad because they thought that they had lost their friend for ever. Maybe you can pray for people you know who have died.

Easter Sunday

This is a joyous day indeed! The best day of the year! I hope that you are able to enjoy Easter eggs. They are a sign of new life and because Jesus rose from the dead we all have the promise of new life for ever in heaven! We can begin to enjoy that new life here first! The more we spend time with Jesus, the more He is able to live in us and we can share in His wonderful life, by His grace.

Today (and last night) the congregation renew their baptismal vows. May be in preparation you can look at them with the family during the week and think about what each part means.

Prayer for the Evening of Holy Saturday

As those who are at the Easter Vigil liturgy are celebrating Jesus' Resurrection, why don't you say the glorious mysteries of the Rosary before bedtime? The meditations are:

- Jesus rises from the dead
- Jesus ascends into heaven
- The Holy Spirit descends upon the Apostles at Pentecost
- Mary is assumed into heaven at the end of her early life
- Mary is crowned queen of heaven

The Renewal of Baptismal Promises

Do you renounce Satan?

I do.

And all his works?

I do.

And all his empty show?

I do.

Do you believe in God,
the Father almighty,
Creator of heaven and earth?

I do.

Do you believe in Jesus Christ,
his only Son, our Lord, who was
born of the Virgin Mary,

suffered death and was
buried,

rose again from the dead
and is seated at the right hand
of the Father?

I do.

Do you believe in the Holy
Spirit,

the holy Catholic Church,
the communion of saints,
the forgiveness of sins,
the resurrection of the body,
and life everlasting?

I do.

Gospel for Easter Sunday

Year B

Mark 16:1-8

When the sabbath was over, Mary of Magdala, Mary the mother of James, and Salome, bought spices with which to go and anoint him. And very early in the morning on the first day of the week they went to the tomb, just as the sun was rising.

They had been saying to one another, 'Who will roll away the stone for us from the entrance to the tomb?' But when they looked they could see that the stone – which was very big – had already been rolled back. On entering the tomb they saw a young man in a white robe seated on the right-hand side, and they were struck with amazement. But he said to them, 'There is no need for alarm. You are looking for Jesus of Nazareth, who was crucified: he has risen, he is not here. See, here is the place where they laid him. But you must go and tell his disciples and Peter, "He is going before you to Galilee; it is there you will see him, just as he told you."'

The Gospel of the Lord

Praise to you Lord Jesus Christ

Children's liturgy of the word for this week

Discussion on the Gospel



✠ Light a candle

✠ Someone read the Gospel slowly

Q: What did the women do? (A: Went to the tomb on the first day of the week)

Q: What happened when they arrived at the tomb? (A: There was an earthquake and an angel rolled away the stone.)

Q: How did the guards react? (A: They were (dead) scared.)

Q: What did the men say to the women? (A: Jesus is not here, He has risen as he said.)

Q: How did the women feel at this news? (A: They were really happy/were filled with great joy.)

Q: What happened as the women started to run off? (A: Jesus appeared to them.)

Q: What did the women do then? (A: They fell at Jesus' feet and clasped them.)

Q: This shows us that Jesus was not just a vision of the women, but that He was real. Does anyone know what else Jesus did on another occasion to show that his Resurrection was real? (A: He ate some food.)

Q: Whom did Jesus say that the women had to tell? (A: His brothers [the disciples].)

Q: Because Jesus has risen from the dead, we, who are baptised into Him are all brothers and sisters in Him. Let's just think about this a moment. Who else do we know who is baptised? (A: Open – but maybe begin to help by suggesting people in the parish.)

All these people are our brothers and sisters in Jesus. Let us finish by praying for them. Start by saying a name and then add "Lord Jesus bless our brother/sister N."

On the next page is a poster to colour and put in your window. Images from <https://www.bestcoloringpagesforkids.com/religious-easter-coloring-pages.html>

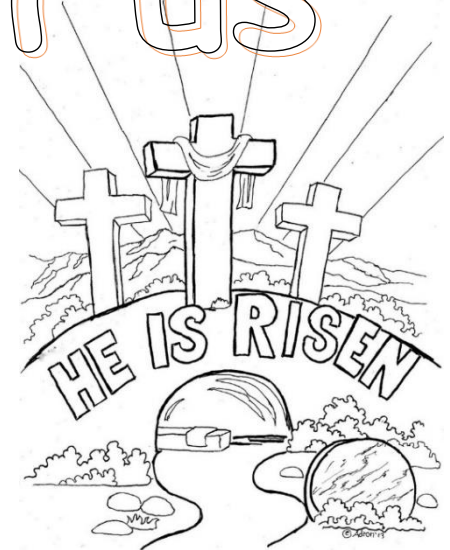
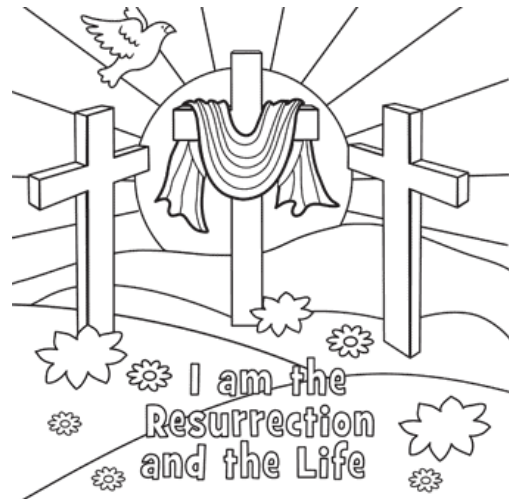
Hallelujah! Jesus is Risen!

Hallelujah!

Jesus is Risen!

He has given us

hope!



Here is a Holy Week and Easter word-search to keep you busy. Colour in the boxes with the letters you find, and then the 4 boxes with stars * in them. What shape do you have?

X	F	G	C	A	L	L	H	W	Y
A	M	R	A	*	A	*	F	P	B
K	F	M	L	N	S	Y	M	R	Y
P	O	O	V	A	T	A	M	A	N
Y	R	C	A	I	S	D	D	*	H
D	A	A	R	L	U	I	I	U	O
M	A	R	Y	S	P	R	E	*	J
B	K	D	A	U	P	F	Y	F	J
W	Q	R	T	S	E	D	S	T	U
V	W	X	H	E	R	O	W	K	P
O	N	S	O	J	I	O	T	J	Q
B	P	R	R	E	S	G	F	S	Y
M	N	Y	N	W	E	N	A	M	W
V	N	T	S	I	N	S	Y	T	G
G	S	Y	A	M	E	N	P	W	Q

AMEN
 CALL
 CALVARY
 CROSS
 CRY
 DIE
 GOOD FRIDAY
 JESUS
 JOHN
 JUDAS
 LAST SUPPER
 LORD
 MAN
 MARY

NAIL
 NEW
 ORA (it means
 "pray" in Latin)
 PRAY
 RISEN
 SEE
 SINS
 SON
 THORNS



The Octave of Easter

Each day in the Octave of Easter (the eight days from Easter Sunday to the following Sunday) the Gospels focus on the moment of the Resurrection and the reaction of the Apostles and disciples. In the first readings we also begin the seven-week reading of the Acts of the Apostles, which is a great read for teens and adults to read through without omitting anything, as it's a wonderful adventure story! We see how the Apostles gain confidence as the Holy Spirit guides and strengthens them and also the many miracles and stories of courage and determination to pass on the Good News of salvation in Jesus Christ despite the opposition from the Jews, Greeks and the Romans. One of my favourite moments is when the angel released St. Peter from the prison, and he knocks on the door of the house where everyone else is but was not let in as those inside were too astonished to open the door! (See Acts chapter 12).

Easter Monday: Acts 2:14.22-33, Mt. 28:8-15

In the Acts of the Apostles, St. Peter is preaching on Pentecost day about the Resurrection. If you have not coloured in yesterday's poster, why not do that today and put it up as your way of telling the world that Jesus is risen from the dead.

In the Gospel, we hear that the guards from Jesus' tomb were bribed to say that someone had stolen Jesus' body.

Lying is sometimes an easy way out of trying to cover ourselves if we have done something wrong. Think about the times when we have told a lie in order not to get into trouble. Maybe say sorry to Jesus for lying and if you are really sorry, maybe you could say sorry to the person you have lied to?

Easter Tuesday: Acts 2:36-41, Jn. 20:11-18

In the first reading, St. Peter's teaching has made a big impression on the people in Jerusalem. They were "cut to the heart" and asked what to do. His answer was to be baptised for the forgiveness of their sins. We have just renewed our baptismal promises. Have another look at these (above) and say thank you to God who is Father, Son and Holy Spirit for His gift of new life in Baptism.

Light a candle (your baptism candle or another one if you don't have it), saying this prayer to the Holy Trinity:

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

**Easter Wednesday: Acts 3:1-10,
Lk.24:13-35**

Today in the first reading we see St. Peter and St. John healing a lame man in the name of Jesus. The Holy Spirit is working in them, and He works in us too. **Say a prayer for someone who is ill.** Jesus will heal them in the way that He wants, maybe they will get better or maybe he will heal them inside in a way only He knows.

Today's Gospel is that wonderful story of the disciples on the road to Emmaus who meet Jesus on the road, but who do not recognise Him. They invite them to stay and suddenly recognise Him in the breaking of bread.

We are invited into Jesus' house every day to see Him and recognise Him in the Sacred Host, the Eucharist. We see a round disc, but it's Jesus we are looking at. **Q: How many times/when does the priest raise up the bread at Mass? A: 5.**

On the other half of this page, write a short prayer you can say at each of these "raisings" at Mass. Don't forget to take it with you next time you go to Mass. E.g. "Thank you" or "I love you" or "My Lord and my God" etc...

At Mass I can say these prayers to Jesus:

1. At the beginning of the liturgy of the Eucharist when the priest says "Blessed are You....." (We, the Church, thank God for His gifts)

2. At the consecration, when the priest says "This is my Body.... This is my Blood" the bread and wine become Jesus' Body and Blood.

3. When the priest says "Through Him, with Him and in Him.... This is the conclusion to the Eucharistic Prayer, and we will all say or sing "Amen."

4. Behold the Lamb of God..... again we are invited to worship Jesus Christ Our Lord, who takes away our sins.

5. At the distribution of Holy Communion. If you receive Jesus the Sacred Host is raised up and you say "Amen", but what can you pray as you walk up to receive Him or for a blessing?

Easter Thursday: Acts 3:11-26, Lk.24:35-48

Both today's readings carry on from where yesterday's left off. In Acts, St. Peter teaches that Jesus' Resurrection was foretold in the Scripture (the Old Testament) and in the Gospel, Jesus appears to the disciples and says the same thing.

The Old Testament is really important and has prepared the people of God for the coming of Jesus Christ for centuries. The Catechism says that the whole of the Bible is the "One Word of God (CCC 102).

At every Mass there is a Psalm as a response to the first reading. It is called the "Responsorial Psalm," not because there is an antiphon we repeat, but because it *responds* to the theme of the first reading. The Psalms have a lovely way of repeating themselves, to the first line makes a statement and then the second line says more or less the same thing. Look at how this works in today's Psalm, which is a beautiful Psalm praising God for the dignity of human beings. Then have a go at writing your own Psalm of praise. Remember, line one praises or thanks God and line two says the same thing in a different way. Or you ask God for something on one line and then ask again in the next. I have given you a few lines to get going, but you can copy this and carry on.

Please send in your own psalms.

Responsorial Psalm: Psalm 8:2,5-9

How great is your name, O Lord our God, through all the earth!

How great is your name, O Lord our God,
through all the earth!

What is man that you should keep him in mind,
mortal man that you care for him?

Yet you have made him little less than a god;
with glory and honour you crowned him,
gave him power over the works of your hand,
put all things under his feet.

All of them, sheep and cattle,
yes, even the savage beasts,
birds of the air, and fish
that make their way through the waters.

How great is your name, O Lord our God, through all the earth!

Thank you, O God for all that you have given me

Thank you for

Bless all the people I know and love

Bless especially

Easter Friday: Acts 4:1-12, Jn.21:1-14

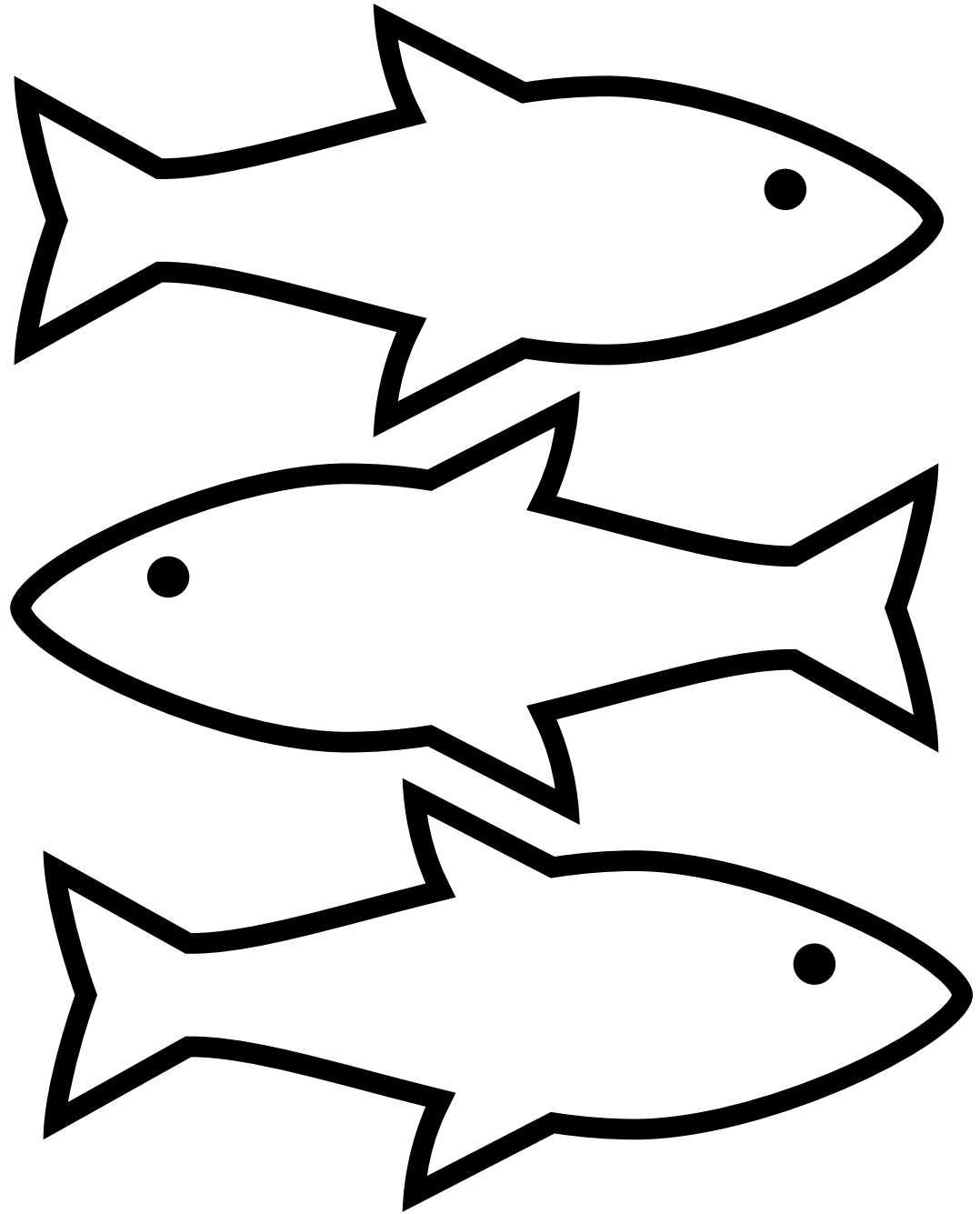
In the reading from the Acts of the Apostles, St. Peter is gaining in confidence and has the courage to stand up and accuse the religious leaders of crucifying Jesus and said that it is only by the name of Jesus that we can be saved. This is as challenging to modern society as it was then, as many people like to think that all ways lead to heaven. But Jesus had explicitly told His disciples to go out and teach EVERYTHING that He had taught them (Mt. 28:19-20).

What are the most important things that you know about Jesus? Write them on the fish and cut them out to stick on the fridge or hang up in your bedroom.

The Gospel is John's version of the miraculous catch of fish. In the other Gospels, it's at the beginning of Jesus' ministry, but here it's at the beginning of the Apostles' ministry to the world. What is so lovely about this, is that Jesus invites the Apostles to a BBQ breakfast!

We may not have a BBQ at breakfast, but we can invite Jesus back. Remember to say a special "good morning" to Jesus by saying this morning offering, or any other that you know.

**O my God, I offer you today,
All I think and do and say.
In union with what was done
On earth by Jesus Christ your Son, Amen**



Easter Saturday: Acts 4:13-21, Mk.16:9-15

In the Acts of the Apostles, we see how the Apostles astonish the leaders as they should have been cowering and frightened, but they were not, and the leaders could not think of how to punish them. All they said was to stop talking about Jesus. Did they?

And we have the same thing in the Gospel - but we hear Jesus' instructions to them before His Ascension, to "Go out to the whole world, proclaim the Good News of salvation to all creation" (Mk. 16:15).

This week we have been reminded many times that we all have a duty to go out and tell people about Jesus. It is not easy in our society where many people laugh at us for loving Jesus, but it was not easy for the first Christians either! However, we have a helper, do you know who that is?

The Holy Spirit. Yes, He helps us to find the words to say when we need to tell someone something about Jesus. It is a good idea to practice the one thing we want to say. Sometimes I get asked who the "little man" on my crucifix is, and I say, "This is Jesus Christ and He's my best friend because He came to lead me to heaven."

Have another look at the History of Salvation above. Then in the cross-shape, write the four most important things that you remember from that, one in each of the sections.

The 4 most important things about Jesus

	1	
2		3
	4	

Children's liturgy of the word for this week



Discussion on the Gospel

Gospel for 2nd Sunday of Easter (Divine Mercy Sunday)

John 20:19-31

In the evening of that same day, the first day of the week, the doors were closed in the room where the disciples were, for fear of the Jews. Jesus came and stood among them. He said to them, 'Peace be with you', and showed them his hands and his side. The disciples were filled with joy when they saw the Lord, and he said to them again, 'Peace be with you. 'As the Father sent me, so am I sending you.'

After saying this he breathed on them and said:

'Receive the Holy Spirit. For those whose sins you forgive, they are forgiven; for those whose sins you retain, they are retained.'

Thomas, called the Twin, who was one of the Twelve, was not with them when Jesus came. When the disciples said, 'We have seen the Lord', he answered, 'Unless I see the holes that the nails made in his hands and can put my finger into the holes they made, and unless I can put my hand into his side, I refuse to believe.' Eight days later the disciples were in the house again and Thomas was with them. The doors were closed, but Jesus came in and stood among them. 'Peace be with you' he said. Then he spoke to Thomas, 'Put your finger here; look, here are my hands. Give me your hand; put it into my side. Doubt no longer but believe.' Thomas replied, 'My Lord and my God!' Jesus said to him:

'You believe because you can see me.

Happy are those who have not seen and yet believe.'

There were many other signs that Jesus worked and the disciples saw, but they are not recorded in this book. These are recorded so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing this you may have life through his name.

✠ Light a candle

✠ Someone read the Gospel slowly

Q: When did Jesus appear to the disciples? (A: The evening of the first day of the week).

Q: What day of the week is this? (A: Sunday. *Note: Saturday was the seventh day of the week when God "rested" after creation. The Jews also rested on that day (and practicing Jews still do). Jesus rose early in the morning on the first day of the week, which we in English call Sunday.*

Q: What did Jesus say to the disciples? (A: Peace be with you....)

Q: Why do you think that He said that? (A: They were afraid and thought that He was a ghost).

Q: What did Jesus say as He breathed on His disciples? (A: "Receive the Holy Spirit," and said that they could forgive sins. *Note: this is a kind of ordination; the Apostles are given authority to forgive sins in Jesus' name. This is why priests forgive our sins, as their authority comes from Jesus through the Apostles. Here, the Apostles receive the Holy Spirit before Pentecost. It's like we receive the Holy Spirit when we are baptised as babies but then we are strengthened in that same Spirit when we are confirmed.*)

Q: Why did Jesus give the Apostles the Holy Spirit? (A: To forgive sins and have the courage to go out and tell everyone about Jesus).

Q: Can you remember what any Jesus' last word were on the Cross? (A: "Father, forgive them for they don't know what they are doing" [Lk. 23:24] *There are others, but this is what to focus on.*)

Q: This is Jesus showing us that He is merciful, forgiving. How does Jesus show us His mercy today? (A: In the Sacrament of Reconciliation/Confession /at Mass in the "I confess"/ reception of Holy Communion).

Finish with a time of silent prayer asking Jesus to forgive us for something that we have done that hurt another person.

Divine Mercy Sunday

Since 2000, the second Sunday of Easter has also been known as Divine Mercy Sunday. Here are some extracts from a sermon given by Pope John Paul II on the occasion of the canonization of Sister Faustina Kowalska (who inspired this devotion to the divine mercy of Christ) on 30 April 2000.

"Sr Faustina Kowalska was a Polish nun, and between the First and Second World Wars Jesus gave this message of mercy to her when He said, "Humanity will not find peace until it turns trustfully to divine mercy."

"This is not a new message, but it can help us to relive the Gospel of Easter more intensely, to offer it as a ray of light to people of our time. The readings on the second Sunday of Easter (one week after Easter Sunday) show the path of mercy which each of us need to take: they show us that our relationship with God can be reset and also that our relationships with other people can be healed. Having received God's mercy, we can be merciful to other people. In other words, because we are so completely loved by God, we can love others in the same way.

"Each person is precious in God's eyes; Christ gave his life on the Cross for each one; to everyone the Father gives his Spirit and offers intimacy. To them the gentle face of Christ in this image is offered; those rays from his heart touch them and shine upon them, warm them, show them the way and fill them with hope. And we can all pray, "Jesus, I trust in you,"



Jesus, I Trust in You

Say the Divine mercy chaplet on your rosary beads:

First say one 'Our Father', 'Hail Mary', and 'I believe'.

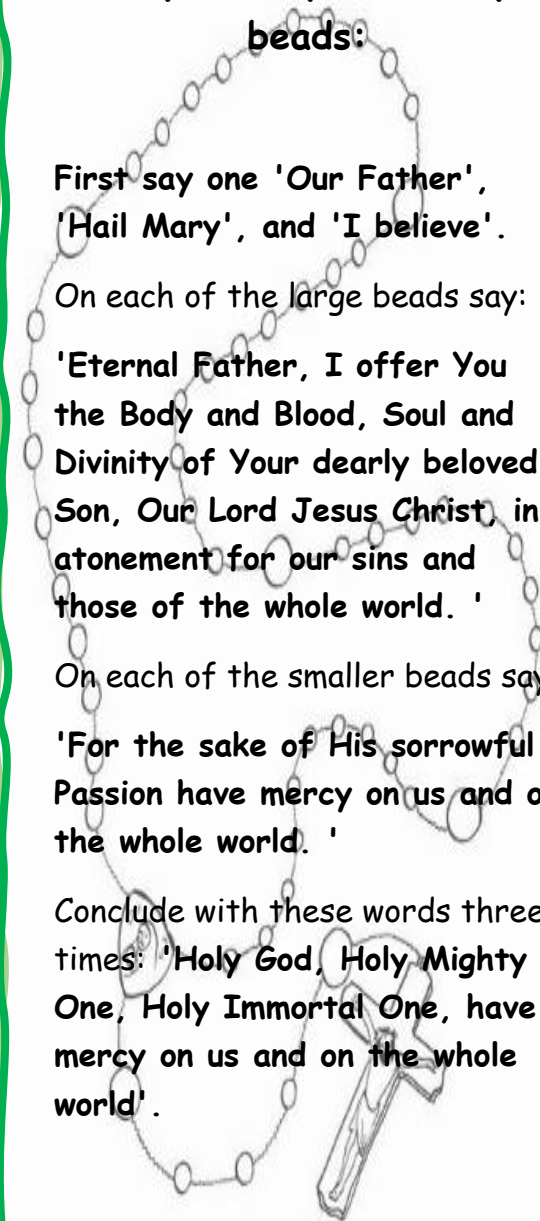
On each of the large beads say:

'Eternal Father, I offer You the Body and Blood, Soul and Divinity of Your dearly beloved Son, Our Lord Jesus Christ, in atonement for our sins and those of the whole world.'

On each of the smaller beads say:

'For the sake of His sorrowful Passion have mercy on us and on the whole world.'

Conclude with these words three times: **'Holy God, Holy Mighty One, Holy Immortal One, have mercy on us and on the whole world'.**



The Acts of the Apostles

This is a wonderful "adventure story" which older children and adults can read straight through. On the weekdays of the Easter season almost the whole book is read bit by bit and on Sundays we hear key extracts. The book is about how the Holy Spirit led and inspired early Church after Pentecost. It is full of exciting adventures; the Apostles being captured and miraculously released, amazing conversions, shipwrecks, and even humour! It is worth following the daily readings of this book - you can access the readings at www.universalis.com

Here some of the extracts for this week (direct quotes are in italics) and some suggested follow up activities and prayers you can consider doing.

Monday 2nd Week of Easter: Acts 4:23-31

Peter and John have been released by the authorities (who tried to stop them from preaching about Jesus). Back with the others they praised God and *"As they prayed, the house where they were assembled rocked; they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to proclaim the word of God boldly."*

Suggested activity:

Every single one of us, through our Baptism is responsible for telling other people about Jesus. May be make a poster about Jesus's Resurrection to put in the window of your home.

Tuesday 2nd Week of Easter: Acts 4:32-37

"The whole group of believers was united, heart and soul; no one claimed for his own use anything that he had, as everything they owned was held in common... None of their members was ever in want, as all those who owned land or houses would sell them, and bring the money from them, to present it to the apostles; it was then distributed to any members who might be in need."

Suggested actions:

Who do you know might be in need? What can you give them? (this might include time – does a neighbour need their lawn mowing or help with weeding?)

Wednesday 2nd Week of Easter: Acts 5:17-26

Once again, the apostles were arrested for talking about Jesus and were put in gaol. *"But at night the angel of the Lord opened the prison gates and said as he led them out, 'Go and stand in the Temple, and tell the people all about this new Life.' They did as they were told; they went into the Temple at dawn and began to preach."* In the morning it was discovered that *"the gaol was securely locked and the warders on duty at the gates, but when (they) unlocked the door (they) found no one inside."* Then they learned that Peter and the Apostles were once again in the Temple *"preaching to the people!"*

Suggested activities:

Draw this out as a series of pictures:

1. The Apostles preaching
2. Being arrested and put in prison
3. An angel leading them out
4. Them preaching again in the Temple

Thursday 2nd Week of Easter: Acts 5:27-33

The high priest was very cross with Peter and the apostles for continuing to teach about Jesus, but Peter replied, that they had to obey God before they obey people. Then He accused the chief priest of putting Jesus to death, but that Jesus has risen from the dead and He has sent the Holy Spirit to them all so that they can tell others about Jesus.

(This was very brave of St. Peter as he was speaking to the same people who had killed Jesus.)

Suggested activities:

Write out what St Peter could have said to the high priest about Jesus. (You could look at the History of Salvation timeline above to get some ideas.)

Friday 16th April: Acts 5:34-42

A member of the ruling council advised the others to leave the Apostles alone as he said, *“If this movement of theirs, is of human origin it will break up of its own accord; but if it does in fact come from God you will not only be unable to destroy them, but you might find yourselves fighting against God.”* This is what happened, the Apostles were flogged (beaten) but were allowed to carry on preaching about Jesus.

Suggested activities:

In many countries of the world people are not allowed to teach about Jesus or go to church. Write or say a prayer for people who cannot go to Mass/cannot talk about Jesus. Go to here for specific ideas of how to pray. <https://acnuk.org/>

Saturday 17th April: Acts 6:1-7

The Church is growing and now we see that they need to begin to organise how they are going to support the people in need. It was realised that the apostles needed to continue to focus on preaching so it was agreed to elect others to serve as deacons whose role would be to make sure that no one was needy or had not food. Seven men were chosen who were *“presented to the apostles, who prayed and laid their hands on them”*.

Suggested activities:

We see here the beginning of the diaconate (ordained men who help in the parish). Some parishes have permanent deacons who are married men with families who serve their parish. Say a prayer for all priests and deacons. Pray that men will hear God inviting them to this privileged role in the Church.

Do continue to read the Acts of the Apostles next week and every week this Easter season.

Suggestions for the Easter Holidays

Can you unscramble these Easter related words or phrases? (answers at the bottom of the page)

trin eco surer _____

swis net _____

yamm drag laene _____ / _____

my mob pett _____ / _____

sir see us jins _____ / _____ / _____

more gaster nin _____ / _____

lea all ui _____

sure toad moam _____ / _____ / _____

Make an Easter garden: In a shallow tray put some sand or garden soil. Gather some stones to make a kind of "cave" and put one offset to be the stone that is rolled away. Put moss and any tiny flowers you can gather around. Nearby, place a cross made out of two sticks tied or stuck together (or a palm cross). Some people like to put three empty crosses together to indicate the two thieves who also were crucified with Jesus.

If you are very creative, may be add figures of the women who came to the tomb and the angel. Use small dolls or may be figures made out of some twigs or even clay or plasticine, which you have wrapped in cloth. But these are not necessary - it's more important to create something really beautiful to reflect the joy of new life in Jesus Christ.

Decorate eggs: Blown eggs can keep for years and can be used again and again for Easter decorations. Otherwise, hard boil some eggs and use vegetable dyes or food colouring to decorate them, or stick coloured paper on them. You can either create patterns, or if you have a very still hand, you can paint pictures of the Easter story on the eggs.

Email photos to stjoe.fam.activities@gmail.com Note: By sending in photos, you agree that they can be used in future editions of these pages, credited or not as you wish.



Decorated eggs: On the right, the eggs are covered with pretty paper torn into small pieces and glued with a weak solution of PVA glue. On the left, the eggs have been painted with scenes reflecting Holy Week and Easter.

