



YEAR LEVELS	Foundation
TITLE	Lent and Easter
STRAND	CHURCH AND TRADITION
SUGGESTED DURATION	5 weeks
ENDURING QUESTIONS	What does the Church look like in our community? How can I be like Jesus in our community?

Unit Focus

In this unit the students will be introduced to Lent and Easter as part of the liturgical year. They will explore the significance of Lent and Easter for Christians and will develop an awareness of the signs and symbols associated with Lent and Easter.

Achievement Standards

By the end of **Foundation**:

Students identify that the Church celebrates special times in the year.

Unit Outcomes

By the end of this unit students should be able to:

1. Identify Lent as a special time in the Church.
2. Retell the story of Palm Sunday.
3. Recall and share family experiences of Easter.

Key Understandings for Students

- Lent begins with Ash Wednesday.
- Holy Week begins with Passion (Palm) Sunday.
- Easter is the most important celebration in the Church.
- At Easter we celebrate that Jesus is with us.

Student Context

Foundation students are beginning to separate fantasy from reality and are ready to understand the meaning behind symbols. They are developing the ability to think symbolically and to use symbols, including words and images, in communicating ideas with others.

They possess a vivid imagination, responding well to stories and re-enactments of exciting events. They are interested and easily motivated to be involved in learning related to the Lent and Easter story especially when we are mindful of the developmental characteristics mentioned.

It is important to acknowledge the students' past experience, or lack thereof, of family, school and parish community, and to help them own their own experience and be able to build on it.

Theological Background for Teachers

- The name of the first day of Lent, Ash Wednesday, comes from the old custom of blessing ashes and marking the foreheads of the people with ashes on this day. Today the ashes are prepared by burning the palms from the preceding Passion Sunday. The symbol of ashes comes from the Old Testament times, when mourners or penitents clothed themselves in sackcloth and sprinkled their hands and faces with dust or ashes.
- On the first "Passion Sunday" Jesus entered Jerusalem with a triumphal welcome in the week before the traditional Jewish feast of the Passover. Jewish crowds who were there for the feast days waved palm branches (a custom of the time used to welcome visiting kings) and cheered Jesus' arrival on a donkey.
- Passion Sunday is celebrated in Catholic Parishes as the beginning of Holy Week. Passion Sunday is also known as Palm Sunday. The Gospel reading for the Sunday liturgy recalls the triumphal entry into Jerusalem as well as the passion and arrest of Jesus.
- Holy Week begins on Passion Sunday and comprises the seven days before Easter. The Easter Triduum (meaning "three days") of the passion and resurrection of the Lord begins with the evening Mass of the Lord's Supper, reaches its high point in the Easter Vigil, and closes with the evening prayer on Easter Sunday, the Sunday of the Lord's Resurrection.
- Proclaiming Alleluia! Christ is Risen on Easter Sunday is a joyous event. It is a time of great hope, for death has been overcome by God's Power and grace. God has made this great promise to all of us by raising Jesus from the dead: Life, not death will have the final say, Love is stronger than hate, Hope is stronger than despair, and God's peace is stronger than our fears.

Scripture

Godly Play: Jesus Enters Jerusalem (Palm Sunday)

NB: This unit may be taught as a whole or in two parts (Lent / Easter) depending on the timing of Holy Week and Easter in the school term.

Suggested Teaching & Learning Experiences

Focusing Activity: Display the word 'Lent.' Ask students if they have heard this word before or what the word sounds like. Share with students how you are changing the prayer cloth to purple. What does this mean? Use a picture of a life cycle of a butterfly or an image of regeneration from a fire. Record students' wonderings about what they see, what they think. Discuss the images. What changes are happening?

- Organise for students receive the cross of ashes on their foreheads as part of a school or class liturgy. Students draw an image of the cross. These can be displayed around the room.
- Ask students to think about how they prepare and celebrate Easter. Eg: Special meal, chocolate, family trip. Students draw and write these responses. The Catholic Church prepares for Easter throughout the weeks of Lent.
- Lent is a quiet time when we try to be more like Jesus. We prepare for Easter. We think about using our hands to do good things, about how we love others with our heart. Students draw around their hands and list all the things they can do with their hands to help others. Provide students with an outline of the shape of a heart, invite them to draw how they can show love to members of their family this Lent.

There are three pillars of Lent: Prayer, Fasting and Almsgiving.

Prayer- This is often the most overlooked pillar in Lent. More time given to prayer during Lent should draw us closer to God. There are many wonderful ways to pray during Lent.

Fasting- Fasting can be voluntarily abstaining from lollies, cakes, our favourite food, or drinks. It can also mean giving up certain luxuries, spending less time with technology. Fasting can also encourage us to donate money to charity that we would otherwise have spent on the things we are giving up.

Almsgiving- Almsgiving is not just donating money it encompasses our time and talent given freely to others in need.

- Access Caritas Project Compassion Resources, these may support students explore Almsgiving or helping those in need.
- Using the ideas and prompts recorded early each student writes or draws on a purple card 1 thing they are going to focus on in Lent. This is displayed under the heading, "During Lent I will...."

NB: As this is a Foundation unit and many children will have limited experience of Church and the liturgical seasons, Palm Sunday is the main focus of Holy Week. Holy Thursday and Good Friday are introduced in more detail in years 1 and 2.

- Godly Play "Jesus Enters Jerusalem." (**Appendix 1**) Students engage in wonderings.

- Students dramatise the first Palm Sunday. Teacher reads Matthew 21:1-3 and tells the story. Students recreate Jesus' entrance into Jerusalem. Students mime sections and then form frozen scenes. Audience and teacher ask questions about what is happening
- As a class students respond verbally to process questions, 'who, what, where and when' about Matthew 21:1-3. After these have been recorded students draw the key elements of the scripture in a three frame.
- Students learn "Sing it Hosanna" by Michael Mangan. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9XU0ptQH-eo> (lyrics can be found on <https://www.coursehero.com/file/49703383/holy-week-songsdocx/>)
Teacher explains that Hosanna was used to express praise or joy.
When the people called out Hosanna, they were praising Jesus. Children make palms to wave whilst singing this song. This could be sung at a school assembly for Holy Week.
- Use the story Eric Carle's "*The Very Hungry Caterpillar*" as a stimulus to share experiences of life changes e.g. the life cycle or new life from death to assist students' understanding of Jesus' new life after death. Students retell the story in words, paintings, pictures or drawings. As a class students collect, create or draw symbols of new life and Jesus' resurrection. These are displayed around the learning space. Students are invited to share with a partner why they have created the symbol they have.

Prayer and Ritual

Prayer is an important element of Lent and Easter. Support students to engage in School or Parish Easter Liturgical Celebrations.

Appendices

Appendix: 1 Godly Play - Jesus enters Jerusalem