

YEAR LEVEL	1 & 2
TITLE	Lent and Easter
STRAND	CHURCH AND TRADITION
SUGGESTED DURATION	5 weeks
ENDURING QUESTIONS	<p>What does the Church look like in our community?</p> <p>How can I be like Jesus in our community?</p>



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 **Year 2** students should be able to:

Identify the Church as a community where people gather to celebrate their faith. They identify and explain why we gather as God's Church.

Identify that the Church celebrates special times in the year.

Unit Outcomes

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

1. Identify Lent as a special time in the Church.
2. Recount the key events of Holy Week and the first Easter Sunday morning.
3. Recognise signs and symbols associated with Lent and Easter.
4. Describe how the Paschal Candle and the 'Alleluia' are used in the Easter season liturgies to celebrate that Jesus is risen.

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

Students in years 1 and 2 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.

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. (Roman Missal: Calendar nn.18-19).
- “Alleluia” is a Greek word derived from the Hebrew “Hallelujah” meaning “Praise the Lord”. Use of the word is suppressed during Lent as Catholics await to celebrate Jesus’ resurrection on Easter Sunday.
- Christ 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.
(Zanig, T., (1988), *Understanding Catholic Christianity*, Winona: St. Mary’s College Press.).
- Eastertide includes the whole period of fifty days starting with the Easter Vigil and concluding at Pentecost. commemorates Jesus’ Resurrection, Ascension and the coming of the Holy Spirit.
- In inviting the apostles to share a meal with him, Jesus gave them a sacrament, a sacred meal through which they could uniquely experience his presence. Vatican II states that the Liturgy ‘... most of all the divine sacrifice of the Eucharist, is the outstanding means whereby the faithful can express in their lives, and manifest to others, the mystery of Christ and the real nature of the true Church.’ (Constitution of the Sacred Liturgy, n.2) The Council also describes the Eucharist as the ‘source and summit’ of the entire Christian life. (Dogmatic Constitution on the Church, n.11) The Last Supper on Holy Thursday evening was a special meal. Whether originally a Passover meal or farewell meal, it was celebrated with a view to the coming of the

Kingdom of God. By sharing broken bread and wine poured as his flesh and blood, Jesus gave his disciples a share in the power of his death to make atonement for sins and to establish a new Covenant.

- The story of the Last Supper and its links to the Eucharist challenges the students to think symbolically and to recognise symbols, including words and images. The Church's sacramental celebrations use many symbolic actions and signs that seek to make tangible realities that are inexpressible.
- 'Eucharist' is a Greek word that means *thanksgiving*.
- The Resurrection story is about the religious response of people to the risen Christ.
- A powerful symbol used throughout the Easter season is the Paschal Candle. In the early centuries practical necessity required the lighting of a fire and lamps to provide light. This simple necessity easily took on a special solemnity and the natural symbolism of fire and light was expanded to include a reference to religious truths. The lighted Paschal candle became a symbol of Christ, Light of the world. In the blessing of the candle, a cross is traced on it. The first and last letters of the Greek alphabet, Alpha and Omega, are added above and below; then around the centre, the numbers of the current year. While making the sign, the priest says, "Christ yesterday and today, the beginning and the end, Alpha and Omega, all time belongs to him, and all the ages to him the power and the glory, through every age for ever. Amen." Five grains of incense are placed in the Cross to represent the five wounds of Jesus. As the priest lights the Candle from the new fire he says, "May the light of Christ, rising in glory, dispel the darkness of our hearts and minds." (Diocese of Broken Bay, *Lent and Easter units*)

Scripture

Matt. 26:26- 28a The Lord's Supper

During the meal Jesus took some bread in his hands. He blessed the bread and broke it. Then he gave it to his disciples and said, "Take this and eat it. This is my body."

Jesus picked up a cup of wine and gave thanks to God. He then gave it to his disciples and said, "Take this and drink it. This is my blood and with it God makes his agreement with you."

Godly Play: The Last Supper.

Godly Play From Death to New Life

Assessment Task

Students design symbols of Lent and Easter onto large squares with "Ash Wednesday", "Palm Sunday", "Holy Thursday", "Good Friday" and "Easter Sunday" titles.

They display these once completed in the learning space.

OR

Students sequence the events of Holy Week and include the word "Alleluia" and an image of the Paschal Candle.

Suggested Teaching & Learning Experiences

Focusing Activity

Ask students how to prepare for the coming of a special or different time, e.g. start of school, end of the year, change of season. List all the responses. Explain to students that the Catholic Church has seasons, just as there are four seasons, and that the season of Lent is beginning. Show students a liturgical calendar (e.g. <https://www.teachingcatholickids.com/the-liturgical-year-a-journey-with-jesus/>). Have students compare the Church seasons and colours to the four seasons and the months in which they occur. Ask students what they recall from past Easter or Lent celebrations.

- Students receive the cross of ashes on their foreheads as part of a school or class liturgy on Ash Wednesday. Discuss the cross as the sign that helps us remember that Jesus died for us. They draw an image of the cross and write a sentence about their experience at the Ash Wednesday Mass or Liturgy.
- With the children read To Know, Worship and Love Chapter 6 Part I: A Journey to New Life, Ash Wednesday and Lent. Use the chapter to launch discussions about Lent and how we prepare ourselves for Easter. Students discuss in small groups the main ideas within the chapter and share these back to the class. The teacher records these responses and wonderings.
- Lent is the special time that we prepare for the death and resurrection of Jesus. The liturgical colour for this time is purple. Use the letters of the word LENT to make a class display.
- Create a class collage of the word “Alleluia” only using shades of purple. Class discussion regarding the meaning of the word and why it is not heard during Lent (see Theological Background). Bury the completed collage using a waterproof container in an agreed position in the school grounds for the period of Lent. Discuss with students that the class will return to reveal the word at the end of Lent and display it in their classroom.
- Focus on the words almsgiving, fasting, prayer. These are the three pillars of Lent. What do they mean? How can we do this in our class? Students list or draw responses under the display.
- Students write their own Lenten prayer reflecting on one of the pillars. Display these prayers so they are available for use in class prayer time for the duration of Lent.
- Almsgiving is connected to helping others in our community. Explore with students this focus using resources such as Caritas or Project Compassion. Explore a weekly story from the Project Compassion resource.
- Students recall a special meal or celebration. Focus on the reason for the celebration, how the table was set, who was there, etc. Children then break into small groups to share their own stories of special celebration meals. Students draw an image of the meal and complete process questions: Who, What, Where, Why.
- Students engage in the Godly Play of The Last Supper. Complete Wonderings.
- Read Matt. 26:26- 28a The Lord’s Supper. Students draw an image of one key element from the scripture and reflect in writing why they have drawn this image. Complete a gallery walk of the images.

- Explain to students that this scripture is reflective of Jesus' model of service. Students Reflect on this model of service and how we can be like Jesus in serving others. Individually students draw and write ways they can serve and help others in their family and in their community.
- Prepare a class / school Lenten prayer ritual using the drawings and reflections from the Last Supper and Jesus washing the disciples feet.
- Palm Sunday: Read Matthew 21: 1-11 to the students from the Bible. Show them a map of the named locations (bradflack.com/2017/04/09/palm-sunday-of-easter-week/). Ask why Jesus rode on a donkey and a colt (A. to fulfil the words from Hebrew scripture). Explain "Hosanna" as expressing praise to God; it comes from Hebrew and Greek words meaning "Save us". Ask who / what the people wanted saving from. Ask how the crowds described Jesus (in verse 11) and the significance of this.
- Ask students to recall times when they have welcomed someone e.g. at home or school. What were the words and actions that welcomed these visitors? Design something that you could use to welcome someone to your school, e.g. decorations, flags, banners, cards

NB: Please note these learning experiences may be split between the school holidays depending on when Easter is celebrated.

- Listen to the story of *The Very Hungry Caterpillar/ A Mama for Owen*. Talk about the new life in the story.
- Godly Play from Death to New Life. Complete wonderings.

During the Easter service on Saturday night the Paschal Candle is lit and is carried up through the church, reminding the people of the light of Christ's resurrection overcoming the darkness of the tomb. Therefore, the Paschal candle is a symbol of Christ rising from the dead.

- Take students to the Church and show them the newly lit Paschal Candle. Encourage students to notice the candle's size and prominence in the Church. Teach students the symbols on the Paschal Candle (see Theological Background; also liturgybrisbane.net.au/resources/liturgy-lines/the-paschal-candle/). Explain the candle's role in the Easter Saturday liturgy when it is lit for the first time and subsequently at baptisms during the year. Students draw the candle.
- Jesus' resurrection is the time to celebrate and reflect on the gift of life. What symbols can we draw to remind us of new life? Students create their own symbols and display these around the prayer focus.

Prayer Ritual

Begin by gathering students around the various symbols of Lent and Easter as gathered throughout the unit. Begin with the sign of the cross.

Re-introduce the students to **Mt 28:1-10**. Reread the story.

Listen to and sing '*Alleluia He is Risen*' by Michael Mangan. Invite students to incorporate actions, where appropriate.

Conclude with the Sign of the cross.

Appendices

Appendix 1: Godly Play- Last Supper

Appendix 2: Godly Play- Death to New Life