

Lent and Easter – A Journey of Hope

In this unit students explore the seasons of Lent and Easter as a journey of Christian hope. They learn about the symbols, colours, texts and events of these seasons and what they mean. Throughout the Lenten journey students are supported to take on acts of service and hope. They examine the events of Holy Week and Easter with a particular focus on the actions and responses of the characters throughout these events. Throughout the unit students create a prayer place of symbols, objects, texts and prayers that take them through their journey from Lent to Easter.

DOCTRINAL FOCUS

In planning to teach this unit the following references from the Catechism of the Catholic Church and the Compendium of the Catechism of the Catholic Church are recommended:

#1435 Taking up one's cross each day and following Jesus is the surest way of penance.
(See *Compendium* #123 *Why does Jesus call upon his disciples to take up their cross?*)

#1437 Reading Sacred Scripture, praying the Our Father – every sincere act of worship or devotion revives the spirit of conversion and repentance within us and contributes to the forgiveness of sins.
(See *Compendium* #301 *What forms does penance take in human life?*)

#1939 The principle of solidarity, also articulated in terms of 'friendship' or 'social charity', is a direct demand of human and Christian brotherhood.
(See *Compendium* #414 *How is human solidarity manifested?*)

#1946 The differences among persons belong to God's plan, who wills that we should need one another. These differences should encourage charity.
(See *Compendium* #194 *What is the communion of saints?*)

#1394 By giving himself to us Christ revives our love and enables us to break our disordered attachments to creatures and root ourselves in him.

SPIRITUAL REFLECTION FOR TEACHERS

Lent is a time of reflection and renewal. It is a time for Christians to consider how they live the word of God and to renew this living. The Lenten practices of prayer, fasting and almsgiving are one way in which Christians embody the values of justice, compassion and generosity and the giving up of oneself. Do these practices have significance in your life during Lent? How can you live generously and justly during Lent?

To me, God and compassion are one and the same. Compassion is the joy of sharing. It's doing small things for the love of each other – just a smile, or carrying a bucket of water, or showing some simple kindness. These are the small things that make up compassion. Compassion means trying to share and understand the suffering of people (Mother Teresa, Blessed Teresa of Calcutta).

Who are the people in the local and global communities who experience suffering? How can you enable students to empathise with them this Lent? How can you and your students be signs of hope and compassion during Lent?

LINKS WITH STUDENTS' EXPERIENCES

Growing in relationship with another person involves listening, trusting and loving. The development of students' relationships with Jesus is influenced by loving, affirming and positive relationships at home, school and in the local community. *How can Jesus be made real for the students?*

At school and the local parish students have been immersed in the story and rituals of Lent and Easter. *What understandings and associations do students have of the Lent and Easter symbols?*

At times the call to love involves giving up our time or possessions for the good of others. *During Lent how can students link their acts of self giving with that of Jesus' self giving?*

EXPLANATION OF SCRIPTURE

Lk 19: 36–38 Palm Sunday

In the previous verse we hear the disciples have put their cloaks on the colt and set Jesus on it. The others spread their garments on the road, thereby making a triumphal carpet on which Jesus Christ rode. Luke does not mention spreading branches as the other Evangelists do – John tells us they were palm branches. This was a happy scene as the disciples rejoiced. They praised God for all the mighty deeds of power they had seen. Although Luke does not explain the disciples' enthusiasm, there seems no doubt that the multitude saw Jesus' entry to the city in the light of Zechariah's prophecy that Zion's king would come on an ass' colt. He was seen as a King, the Messiah and the Prince of Peace.

Lk 22: 14–23 The Last Supper

The supper begins with Jesus Christ telling his apostles how much he has looked forward to celebrating this Passover with them. In verses 15 and 16 he tells us he will not do it (again) until it is fulfilled in the Kingdom of God. Luke has set the Eucharist explicitly within the context of the Kingdom. Jesus Christ will be present in the community that celebrates his memorial in the Eucharistic Rite. This will enable the Church to continue in Jesus' name the celebration of the hospitality of God that has been foremost in his mission.

Jesus' body will be broken in death so that others may find life. His blood will be shed in death so that others may enter the new covenant of life. All Christians share in the blessings of that night.

Lk 23: 33–34 Crucifixion and Death

This is the scene of Jesus' death and crucifixion on the cross. Luke shows us a solemn tableau with many participants, but Jesus Christ is always the central figure. By reminding us it is 'the place of the skull' we have an image of death and destruction. Luke merely recounts that they killed him there. The prayer that Jesus utters is not unusual in Luke's Gospel as we often see Jesus at prayer in times of trial. He has forgiven many throughout his ministry – it is fitting that he does it here.

Lk 24: 1–12 The Women Discover the Empty Tomb

Luke opens his Easter narrative with the coming of the dawn, symbolising a new beginning. Jesus Christ's death had completed one part of Luke's story. Now the new life of the risen Lord begins. But it does not happen peacefully. Fear, confusion, disbelief, surprise and amazement are some of the reactions to the Easter event as depicted in the tradition Luke passes on to us.

In the Jewish culture of the first century women had little legal status and could not give public witness, yet Luke presents women as the first to remember what Jesus had taught them about the meaning of his death and resurrection. They were the first to believe and to proclaim that Jesus Christ had really risen from the dead. Luke's account tells us about faith and seeing with the eyes of faith. We must also look for the risen Lord in life with the eyes of faith.

POSSIBILITIES FOR PRAYER AND WORSHIP

- Decorate the prayer space with purple cloths. Add a bowl of ashes for Ash Wednesday and the early part of Lent. Prepare a prayer service for Ash Wednesday:

Leader: As we journey through this season of Lent we pray for strength to make the changes that are needed in our lives. May we know that God is with us in every moment, helping us to choose what is right.

All: *Amen.*
(Time of quiet reflection)
(Blessing with ashes)

Leader: Turn away from sin and be faithful to the gospel.

Response: *Amen.*

All: *God, your love is never-ending. You know me in my inward being. You cleanse me from my sin and bring me peace and happiness.*

Leader: Let us enter the season of Lent, ready to follow Jesus Christ.

All: *Amen. Thanks be to God!*

- During the season of Lent establish a pattern of daily prayer. *Daily Prayer Under the Southern Cross* (Elizabeth McMahon Jeep, Sr Margaret Smith SGS) is an excellent resource for this purpose.
- Use one of the Scripture passages recommended for this unit in a *Lectio Divina* (sacred reading) style of prayer:
 - Read the passage slowly.
 - Invite the children to choose from it a word or short phrase.
 - Allow one or two minutes of silence for them to meditate on the word or phrase (this can be done with the breathing, i.e. repeat the word/phrase silently on every second or third 'out' breath).
 - Conclude by rereading the passage together.
- Have the students write a reflection on each *Station of the Cross*. Illustrate these and make them into a booklet. Use this to pray two or three of the *Stations* on each Friday of Lent. Use an antiphon or chant, e.g. 'We Adore You O Christ' (Br Michael Herry, *Sing Spirit, Sing Life*, Marist Brothers Music).

- Decorate the prayer space for Holy Week using palms, red cloth and a large cross. Gather for a time of shared reflection and song. Suggestions include 'I Am the Way' and 'Jesus Our Saviour' (Michael Mangan, *Setting Hearts On Fire*, Litmus Productions).
- During the Easter season use white and yellow cloths, a large candle and a bowl of holy water in the prayer space. Establish a pattern of daily prayer for the season around the Easter candle and the water.

Prayer structure to include:

We Gather ... We Listen ... We Respond ... We Go Forth

A model to assist in preparing a Litany of Thanksgiving can be found in *Praying With Children: A Resource Book for Primary Teachers*, Barbara Ann Bretherton, pp. 12–13.

- In prayer celebrate the new life of the risen Jesus. A model to assist in preparing a class prayer liturgy is 'Easter: Jesus is Alive, He is with Us' in *Praying With Children: A Resource Book for Primary Teachers*, Barbara Ann Bretherton, pp. 50–51.
- Participate in a guided meditation of Lk 24: 1–12. An example of how to organise a guided meditation using Scripture can be found in *Prayer Strategies: A Teacher's Manual*, Beth Nolen, pp. 58–60.

Related Chapters – *KWL*, 2nd edn, Year 3: Chapter 4, Jesus Teaches Us How Much He Loves Us; Chapter 5, Lent, Holy Week and Easter.

Faith concepts: seasons, time, journey, symbol, sign, ritual, story, hope.

Seeking understanding:

What does following Jesus Christ mean during Lent?

How can Christians grow closer to Jesus Christ during the Lenten season?

What is the relationship between the story, the symbols and the rituals of Holy Week and Easter?

Understandings:

Lent is a season when Christians think about the way Jesus Christ gave himself to others. They can follow Jesus Christ by loving and giving of themselves.

During Lent groups and individuals share what they have to bring hope to others.

During Holy Week and Easter Christians remember and celebrate that Jesus Christ shared the gift of himself in his Last Supper, and in his death and in resurrection.

The symbols, signs, actions and rituals of Holy Week and Easter remember the Passion, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

Scripture Text:

Palm Sunday: Lk 19: 36–38

Holy Thursday: Lk 22: 14–23

Good Friday: Lk 23: 33–34

Easter Sunday: Lk 3: 34; Lk 24: 1–12

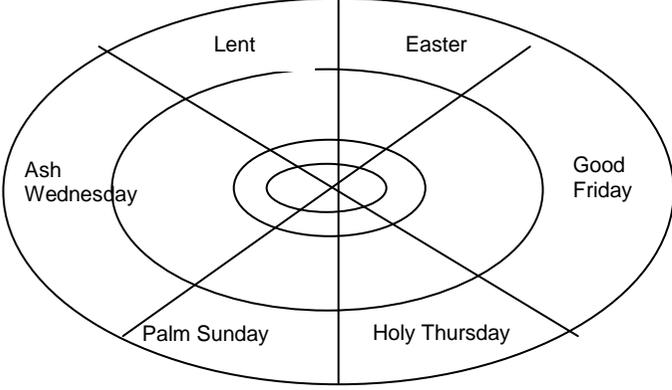
Unit specific learning:

Students will learn about	Students will learn to	Students will undertake to
<i>Knowledge and Understanding</i>	<i>Reasoning & Responding</i>	<i>Personal & Communal Engagement</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The symbols, colours, texts, rituals and events of Lent, Holy Week and Easter, and the meaning of these. • The Lenten practices of almsgiving, prayer and fasting, and how these apply to modern life. • Gospel stories that explore Christian love and service. • How to locate scripture texts in the Bible. • The characters of the Holy Week and Easter events and their reactions and responses to the events of Jesus Christ's Passion, death and resurrection. • Ways in which people experience the risen Christ in their own lives today. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Choose an action that is a sign of hope and an expression of service during Lent. • Represent their interpretations of the characters in the Holy Week and Easter events. • Identify ways in which they feel close to Jesus Christ . • Reflect on Lent, Holy Week and Easter Scripture and symbols through meditation. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Engage in acts of love and service during Lent, e.g. almsgiving for Caritas. • Create a prayer space of symbols, objects and texts which are part of the Lent to Easter journey.

PHASES OF STUDENT INQUIRY

Additional Reading for Teachers	Orientation to Inquiry	Assessment: for learning, as learning, of learning
<p>Lent is the season in the Church's calendar that prepares for the celebration of the death and resurrection of Jesus at Easter. It is also the time when we especially remember those</p>	<p><i>What do students already know, think or feel in relation to the topic? What are students' questions about the topic? What experiences and reflections can we offer students to become engaged with the topic?</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Setting the Scene: Preparation for the Lenten Journey Read or view stories about journeys, e.g. <i>Where The Wild Things Are; The Journey</i> 	<p>Assessment of Learning The development of the prayer space throughout the unit will indicate the class's emerging thinking and beliefs.</p>

<p>nearing the end of their journey to baptism.</p> <p>Lent lasts forty days – the length of time Jesus spent praying and fasting in the desert before his ministry began. Beginning on Ash Wednesday, Lent finishes on Holy Thursday and leads into the Triduum – the great Three Days – which celebrates the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ.</p> <p>The church often looks quite different in Lent as it is a time of penance. Purple is the colour that represents penitence. There are no flowers round the altar and the Alleluia is not sung during the forty days.</p>	<p><i>Home; Highway; Mr Grumpy's Motor Car.</i> How do people plan a journey? What do they take? What happens to them on the way?</p> <p>Introduce students to the idea that during Lent and Easter they will be on a journey with Jesus. How will we plan? What will we take on the journey? I wonder what will happen on the way?</p> <p>Place a backpack in the prayer space and ask students to suggest what kind of symbols and objects might be appropriate for the journey, e.g. bible, cross. Students add to the backpack as their learning develops.</p> <p>Daily prayer can focus on the notion of journey through Lent, and the symbols, texts, objects, etc. for the journey can be focal points for prayer.</p>	
<p>A special focus in the Mass during Lent is the Penitential Rite, which focuses on the great mercy of God and expresses our need for forgiveness.</p> <p>The Lenten journey begins with Ash Wednesday. The gospel calls the whole people of God to repentance, and the people receive on their foreheads the cross of ashes which starts the journey of Lent.</p> <p>The gospel texts during the Sundays of Lent help us see the road to travel to Easter.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Concept Spiral Each student is given a concept spiral diagram to record on throughout the unit. They record information about the significant days and practices in Lent, Holy Week and the Triduum. <p>On the inner wedge students draw a symbol or ritual that features in the liturgy at this time. In the inner circle they illustrate an event associated with Jesus' life at this time. In the outer circle they write or draw how this season relates to life.</p>	<p>Assessment for/as Learning The concept spiral will indicate the knowledge and experiences students bring to the topic. Students add to the spiral throughout the unit, completing it at the end of the development section. This will enable students to evaluate their learning. Alternatively, students complete a concept spiral now and another one at the end of the unit and compare the development in their knowledge and understanding of Lent and Easter.</p>

		
<p>Additional Reading for Teachers</p>	<p>Development</p> <p><i>What experiences and religious texts will provide new learning for students? What skills will students need in order to work with these resources? What strategies and tools will enable students to think and reflect on these experiences and texts? How will students process their thinking and learning?</i></p>	<p>Assessment: for learning, as learning, of learning</p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Investigating Lent and Easter: Jigsaw Teachers establish a Myclasses page for the students to use throughout their investigation. In Expert Groups students are given a season or feast to explore. <p>They are firstly placed in Home Groups with which they will share their findings at the end of the investigation. After these groups are established students move into Expert Groups which research their specific feast or season.</p> <p><i>Investigation tasks:</i></p>	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – List the main symbols and colours of the season or feast. 	<p>Assessment as Learning The responses to the investigation</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Illustrate the events of a Scripture text associated with the season or feast. – Create a headline that summarises the meaning or theme of the season. <p>Back in Home Groups students share their Expert Groups' findings.</p>	<p>tasks will demonstrate students' knowledge and understanding of the symbols, colours, events and meaning of the Lent and Easter seasons.</p>
<p>During Lent the Church asks that we:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • take extra time to pray – speaking and listening to God • fast from foods or give up things that we normally enjoy • generously give of ourselves, our money or our time to others. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Our Lenten Journey: The Three Lenten Practices Students read <i>KWL</i>, 2nd edn, Year 3, Chapter 5, p. 38. Develop a concept map with words and pictures to describe what each practice is about and how it looks in modern-day living. • Our Lenten Journey in Scripture During Lent what can you do to follow Jesus Christ's way of praying, loving and giving? In pairs or small groups locate and read one of the following Lenten scriptures with the above question in mind. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Jesus Christ in the desert fasting and praying: Mt 4: 1–11. Add to backpack in prayer space: desert picture/stones. – Jesus Christ meeting a Samaritan woman at a well: Jn 4: 5–14. Add to backpack in prayer space: water bottle. – Jesus Christ enlightening a blind man: Jn 7: 1–7. Add to backpack in prayer space: torch. 	<p>Assessment as Learning The concept map will demonstrate how students understand the Lenten practices and how they relate to modern day living.</p>

	<p>Discuss:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – What does Jesus say and do in each story? – What are the consequences for others? – How would this story look in our school or local community today? <p>Using a template of a footprint, students choose an action that they will engage in during Lent as a commitment to loving and giving and being a sign of hope to others. It could take the form of a Lenten practice such as almsgiving for Project Compassion, or an action inspired by the scripture texts. Students record their action on the footprint and display in the classroom as footprints leading to the prayer space.</p>	<p>Assessment of Learning In identifying and carrying out an action students demonstrate their capacity to engage in a Lenten practice in response to scripture or to the practices of the Church.</p>
<p>The Stations of the Cross is a dynamic meditation on Jesus Christ's suffering and death where we walk with him along the Way of the Cross. Each 'station' is an image that recalls a moment in the last day of Jesus' life on earth. We stop at each station to reflect on the events of Jesus' suffering and death. It is a way of prayer. We walk in spirit with Jesus Christ on his journey to Calvary.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Jesus Christ's Journey to the Cross This may be an alternative task to the following task on the Holy Week scripture. Students view the Stations of the Cross. Each student creates a Stations of the Cross booklet with words, images and symbols that depict each station. These can be used in prayer during Holy Week or each Friday during Lent. The booklets can be placed in the backpack for the journey to Easter. 	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Journey Through Holy Week Scripture This may be an alternative task to the Stations of the Cross. Students in pairs choose and explore one of the Holy Week texts: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Palm Sunday, Lk 19: 36–38 	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Holy Thursday, Lk 22: 14–23 – Good Friday, Lk 23: 33–34 – Easter Sunday, Lk 24: 1–12. <p>Use 2 or 3 of de Bono’s hats to reflect on the story. If students are unfamiliar with this strategy try using the red and white hats only. Challenge students by using other hats to deepen their reflection.</p> <p>Red: How do you feel as you read this story? White: What are the events in this story? Green: How do you think Jesus’ family felt in this story? Yellow: What positive things does the story tell us about people on Jesus’ journey? Black: What negative things does it tell us about people on Jesus’ journey? Blue: What have you learned about Jesus or others in this story?</p> <p>Alternative task: visual arts</p> <p>Each pair of students creates a visual interpretation of the text they explored, depicting the feelings, reactions and responses of characters. Place all interpretations in sequence to create a class portrayal of Jesus’ journey in Holy Week.</p>	<p>Assessment of Learning Students’ responses to the de Bono questions and their visual works will demonstrate how they interpret the events of Holy Week and Easter, and the actions and responses of characters in these events.</p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Concept Spiral Students record new learnings on their concept spirals. As a class discuss their new learning and discoveries through their Lent and Easter journey: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – What did you like about the unit? – What is the most important thing you learned? 	<p>Assessment of/as Learning The concept spiral will demonstrate the development of students’ knowledge and understanding over the unit. It will provide students with an opportunity to reflect on and evaluate their learning in the unit.</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Have any of your ideas changed over this unit? - What has been the biggest surprise or challenge in the unit? 	
Additional Reading for Teachers	SYNTHESIS <i>How will students demonstrate their understandings, beliefs, values, skills and feelings in relation to the topic? How will students take action based on their learning? What strategies and tools will enable students to discern their action, to plan and implement action and to evaluate their action?</i>	Assessment: for learning, as learning, of learning
To long for a more just, peaceful and compassionate world and to allow an imagined future to guide our behaviour is distinctively human. The Church teaches that justice is one of the four cardinal virtues which are the hinges of a good moral or virtuous life.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Jesus Christ Alive Today Where is Jesus today? Students create a description of when they feel close to Christ in their own lives through one of the following modes: PowerPoint presentation; painting; banner; collage of images and words; concept map. • Holy Week and Easter Prayer Times Each day of Holy Week and Easter lead students through a guided meditation on the Holy Week Scripture from the previous task. Alternatively lead students through a meditation on the symbols and images of Easter that students have put into the backpack in the prayer space. 	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A Sign of Hope on the Journey Students celebrate and reflect on the action they took during Lent as a sign of love, hope and service. What did you do? How did others respond? What have you learned about yourself, others, 	Assessment as Learning This self-assessment enables students to reflect on and monitor what they have learned about themselves and God through loving and serving others.

	God?	
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RESOURCES

To Know, Worship and Love, 2nd Edition

Year 3: Chapter 4, Jesus Teaches Us How Much He Loves Us; Chapter 5, Lent, Holy Week and Easter.

Student Resources

McKay, L Jr 1998, *Journey Home*, D & K Lee (illus.), Lee & Low.

Ball, D & Rawlins, D 1990, *Jeremy's Tail*, Scholastic.

Hathorn, L & Fleming, G 1999, *Magical Ride*, Hodder Headline.

Smyth, G 1989, *A Pet for Mrs Arbuckle*, Penguin.

Wheatley, N & McLean, A 1998, *Highway*, Omnibus.

Lester, A 1994, *The Journey Home*, Hodder & Stoughton.

Sendak, M 1967, *Where the Wild Things Are*, HarperCollins.

Thompson, C & Ottley, M 1996, *Sailing Home*, Hodder Children's Australia.

Websites

The Benziger website has a diagram of the Liturgical calendar.

<<http://www.mhschool.com/benziger/program/cjtw/home/ordinary.shtml>>

The Cyberfaith website has a diagram of the liturgical year and a description of the colours of each season.

<http://cyberfaith.com/liturgical_year.cfm>

The Refuel website has a retelling of the major events of the Passion.

<http://www.refuel.org.uk/curric/infant_topics/easter/index.html>

The Request , Woodlands Junior School and Wilstar sites have basic information on Ash Wednesday, Holy Week and the seasons of Lent and Easter.

<<http://www.request.org.uk/main/festivals/festivals.htm>>

<<http://wilstar.net/holidays/lent.htm>>

<<http://www.woodlands-junior.kent.sch.uk/customs/easter/ashwednesday.htm>>

The Request and Topmarks sites have scripture stories associated with Holy Week.

<<http://www.request.org.uk/infants/jesus/easter/easter00.htm>>

<<http://www.topmarks.co.uk/christianity/easter/easter.htm>>

The Crypton site has a prayerful reflection on the Stations of the Cross for students.

<<http://www.cptryon.org/prayer/child/stations/01.html>>

The BBC has an explanation of the symbolism of the ashes.

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/religion/religions/christianity/holydays/lent_3.shtml>

The Refuel site has some simple material on the journey through Lent with links to artwork depicting stories and people associated with this season.

<<http://www.refuel.org.uk/curric/festivals/lent/index.html>>

The Topmarks site has material for primary students on the symbols and colours of Ash Wednesday, Lent, Holy Week and Easter.

<<http://www.topmarks.co.uk/easter/AshWednesday.aspx>>

<<http://www.topmarks.co.uk/easter/HolyWeek.aspx>>

<<http://www.topmarks.co.uk/easter/Lent.aspx>>

<<http://www.topmarks.co.uk/easter/GoodFriday.aspx>>

<<http://www.topmarks.co.uk/easter/EasterSunday.aspx>>

The Whyeaster site describes how Easter traditions and customs came into being, how Easter is celebrated in different countries around the world and, most importantly, why Easter exists, to celebrate and remember what Jesus did for us.

<<http://www.whyeaster.com/>>

The section on symbols at the Holiday Spot site is fine. Use the rest of the site with caution.

<http://www.theholidayspot.com/easter/easter_symbols.htm>

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION STANDARDS

This unit may be used to assess some of the Level 3 standards.

Students identify with biblical characters and people in the past and present Church by making inferences about their actions, feelings and motives. Students interpret key actions, signs and symbols of liturgy and sacrament by providing a meaningful explanation of their significance. Students evaluate their choices and actions by reflecting on Scripture and Church teaching.