

Jesus Helps Us Prepare for Pascha

Objective: Students will be able to identify the Great and Holy Week observances that allow us to participate in the many ways Jesus prepares us for Pascha.

For the Catechist

This year the children have learned that they are the Church. This lesson invites them to join the Church family during the most solemn time of the liturgical year. The best way for them to experience the solemnity of Holy Week is by attending as many of the observances as possible. Parents and children need to be encouraged to join the Church family as it prepares to celebrate Pascha.

Lesson 20 and 21 work together to present the final days of Jesus' life on earth. Although the children had lessons on the Great Fast in all the previous grades, this is the first year they are introduced to all the specific observances of Great and Holy Week. They begin by learning about the excitement surrounding Jesus raising Lazarus from the dead. The Church remembers this excitement by celebrating Palm Sunday. In some jurisdictions, Palm Sunday is called Willow Sunday or Flowery Sunday. Our palms and pussy willows or olive branches [and in some churches a procession] recall the way Jesus was honored in Jerusalem.

As children become aware of the painful way in which Jesus died, they often ask why He had to suffer. In the Garden of Gethsemane, Christ spoke of His ordeal in terms of "God's will." Does this mean that the Father willed the death of Christ? Christ fulfilled God's will here by not reacting in kind, not fighting back, not calling in legions of angels to defend Him from the sin of the world. He did this, no matter what the cost. Children should be helped to see that a follower of Christ does the right thing, too, no matter what the cost

Lesson Plan Overview

Opening: "Let My Prayer Rise"

Introduction: Discussion of the final week of our journey

Read Text Aloud: Have students volunteer to read.

Activity Tracks:

Choose a basic, group, or craft activity to reinforce the lesson (detailed on the pages that follow).

- *Basic:* Great and Holy Week
- *Group:* "Great and Holy Week" Calendar
- *Craft:* "Let My Prayer Rise" Prayer Page

Closing: "Let My Prayer Rise"

Icon Packets:

Come Bless the Lord:

- The Raising of Lazarus
- The Entry of Christ into Jerusalem

Teaching Pics:

- St. Mary of Egypt (GL9)
- Lazarus Saturday . . . (GL10)

By the end of Lesson 20, the children are aware of the services our Church gives us to grow closer to Jesus. (The Last Supper is only briefly mentioned because Lesson 15 in this Grade 3 text is the lesson on Holy Communion.) But this lesson about Great and Holy Week is taught during the last week of the Great Fast. The reason is that next week's entire lesson is devoted to Great Friday. Lesson 21, "Jesus Gives Himself Totally for Us," is planned for Great and Holy Week.

This is the first year the children will be asked to think about the Eastern concept of "kenosis," or pouring out (giving fully or self-emptying) one's life as Christ did in the Crucifixion. "The man who loves his life loses it, while the man who hates his life in this world preserves it to life eternal" (John 12:25).

Background Reading

(Direct quotations from the sources noted)

Holy Week

"This feast of Pascha was subsequently expanded to a full week called the *Great and Holy Week*. The Sunday before Pascha celebrates the historical entrance of our Lord into the city of Jerusalem to enter into His passion. The previous Saturday recalls His raising of Lazarus from the dead, the event which triggered the first Palm Sunday (cf Jn 12:9). Lazarus Saturday would become an important baptismal day in Constantinople, to allow the neophytes to take part in the celebrations of Great Week. Holy Monday, Holy Tuesday and Holy Wednesday recall the Lord's teachings in the temple and the events that took place during the week before His arrest. Holy Thursday commemorates the giving of the Eucharist and the betrayal and arrest of our Lord. To contrast with this betrayal, it became the day for the reconciliation of those who were doing public penance" (LLII 36).

Solemn Observance

"The celebration of the Death and Resurrection of our Lord is at the heart of Christian worship. Each of the sacraments in some way brings us from the death of sin into life in the Trinity through Christ and by the power of the Spirit. We celebrate this pattern of our salvation in the most solemn way during Holy Week and Bright Week (the week after Pascha). At Matins and Vespers we follow the final confrontations of Jesus and His enemies in the Gospel of St. Matthew, and the whole story of Jesus' death according to the four Gospels is told in the Matins and Royal Hours of Great Friday. On Great Friday evening the burial of Jesus is dramatically reenacted by the procession with the burial shroud, a cloth upon which is depicted an icon of the body of our Lord taken from the cross" (LLI 54).

Holy Week—Walking in the Footsteps of the Apostles

"Following the example of the Church in Jerusalem, Byzantine Christians observe the Great and Holy Week by walking in the footsteps of the apostles. We liturgically represent the events of the last week of Christ's earthly life and in this way enter into the experience of His death and resurrection.

"Each day of this week special services recall what Christ called His hour: the time set by the Father for His saving work to be accomplished. In many of these services we liturgically reenact these moments, making them present to us once more" (DC 69-70).

The Lesson Plan

Opening

This morning we are going to say The Prayer of St. Ephrem. I hope you have been saying this prayer often during Great Lent. Do you remember what we do when we say this prayer? (We make profound bows.) Let's pray. "O Lord and Master..." [Have the children make a profound bow after each stanza.] This morning we are going to say another prayer. Some of you might have heard this one during the Liturgy of the Presanctified Gifts. [At the end of this lesson are the prayer verses according to the jurisdictions. Make copies for the children.] Let's say the words together, "Let my prayer..."

Introduction

Let's start at our first footprint and count to this Sunday. Let's stop at each sign and read the name of that Sunday. One, two . . . seven, Sunday of Orthodoxy. What did we do on that Sunday? (Carried icons in church—[if that is the tradition in your jurisdiction]) Eight, nine . . . fourteen, Second Sunday. Fifteen, sixteen . . . twenty one, Veneration of the Holy Cross. How do we venerate the Holy Cross? (We bow and kiss it.) Twenty two, twenty three . . . twenty eight, Fourth Sunday. Twenty nine, thirty . . . thirty five, Fifth Sunday. Let's put up the sign for this Sunday. How many weeks do we have left? (One) What are we supposed to be doing during all these days? (Praying, fasting, and giving alms) I hope all of you have been trying to do all three. Which prayers are some of you saying more often? [Give the children time to share.]

We are beginning our last week of the Great Fast. After this week, we have one more week to prepare for Pascha. That week is called Great and Holy Week.

Let's turn to our books.

Jesus Helps Us Prepare for Pascha



We have been preparing for Pascha for five weeks. This week is our last week in the Great Fast.

After this week, we have one more week to prepare. The last week before Pascha is called Great and Holy Week. The Church gives us that week to pray and think about how much Jesus loves us. We are to pray, fast, and give alms—even more than we usually do. We want to thank Jesus for everything He did to unite us to God.

During Great and Holy Week the Church gives us many beautiful services. As a Church family, we gather to meditate on the last days of Jesus' life on earth. We help each other prepare to celebrate Pascha.

Reading of Text

As the children read aloud, help them interact with the text using the comments or questions below which are keyed to the text phrases (in bold type).

We help each other prepare to celebrate Pascha.

What is the week before Pascha called? (*Great and Holy Week*) What does meditate mean? (*To think*) When we meditate, we are silent. We are thinking about Jesus. What should we do during Great and Holy Week? (*Pray, fast, and give alms*) What does it mean to give alms? (*To share what we have with those who have less*)

We think about the way Jesus will rise from the dead on Pascha.

Why do we celebrate Lazarus Saturday? (*To remember Lazarus being raised from the dead*)

They are like the people of Jerusalem who greeted Jesus.

What do we call this Sunday? (*Palm, Pussy Willow, or Flowery Sunday*) Why were the people honoring Jesus? (*Jesus had Lazarus rise from the dead*) They treated Jesus like a king.



Great and Holy Week begins with **Lazarus Saturday**. Lazarus was a friend of Jesus. When Jesus heard he died, He was sad. Jesus went to the tomb where Lazarus was buried for four days. He said, "Lazarus, come out!" The dead man came out, bound hand and foot with linen strips, his face wrapped in a cloth" (John 11: 43-44). We celebrate this miracle. We think about the way Jesus will rise from the dead on Pascha.

Palm Sunday celebrates Jesus' entrance into Jerusalem. When the people heard about Jesus raising Lazarus from the dead, they were excited. They waved palm branches to honor Jesus as He rode on a donkey through the streets of Jerusalem. The people treated Jesus like a king. Some churches have a procession on this day. The people carry palms and pussy willows or olive branches. They are like the people of Jerusalem who greeted Jesus.



Great Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday honor the last days Jesus teaches in the temple. Our Church celebrates Liturgy of the Presanctified Gifts and the Bridgroom Service on these days. Some churches have an anointing service on Great Wednesday. The people receive the Mystery of Healing. They are blessed with holy oil used to anoint the sick.

... Jesus prepares us for Pascha.

[Ask the students to identify the observances of Holy Week.] *Why does our Church have all these observances during Holy Week? Why is it good to attend as many of these observances as possible? (Jesus wants us to be with Him) Jesus shows and tells us in many ways that we can be prepared to celebrate Pascha. Now we must listen and be with Him as much as we can.*

Let's review: *What is the week before Pascha called? (Great and Holy Week) What do all the observances do? (Allow us to participate in the many ways Jesus prepares us for Pascha) Great and Holy Week gives us the opportunity to walk with Jesus during His passion. Passion means his suffering and death.*

On **Holy Thursday** we remember the Last Supper Jesus had with the disciples. At this Paschover meal, he took bread and wine. He gave it to His disciples and said, "Take, eat, this is my body. Drink all of this, this is my blood." This is the night Jesus was betrayed by Judas. Judas kissed Jesus as a sign to the soldiers to take Jesus away. The soldiers took Him to be crucified. We hear the story of His sufferings as we listen to the twelve Gospel readings.

On **Great and Holy Friday** evening the priest leads a procession around the church. He carries the Holy Shroud and places it in a tomb in the church.

On **Great Saturday** we remember how Jesus' body was in the tomb. We are looking forward to celebrating His Resurrection!

Our Church gives us Great and Holy Week observances. They allow us to participate in the many ways Jesus prepares us for Pascha.

Words to Remember:
Great and Holy Week: The last week before the celebration of Pascha.
Lazarus: A friend of Jesus
Anointing Service: On Great Wednesday, the people receive a blessing of Holy Oil used to anoint the sick. They receive the Mystery of Anointing.
Holy Shroud: A cloth with an icon of the body of Jesus written on it. It is placed in the tomb on Great and Holy Friday.

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Activity Tracks

Basic: Great and Holy Week

[This worksheet is in the student text.]

Today we learned about many observances we have during Great and Holy Week. Write in the guideposts what you will do and the services you will attend each day in this week.

Great and Holy Week

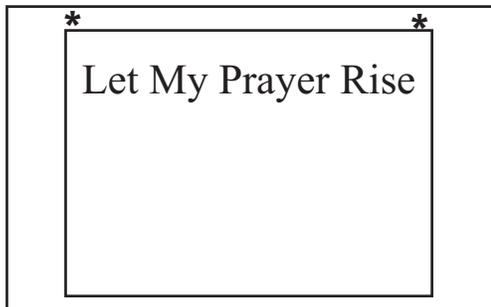
The path on this page will show how we prepare during Great and Holy Week. In the guideposts and on the pathway, write what you will do and the services you will attend during the week. Add footsteps for you and your family as you prepare to greet Jesus at Pascha.

Group: "Great and Holy Week" Calendar

Great and Holy Week		
Great and Holy Monday	Great and Holy Tuesday	Great and Holy Wednesday
Great and Holy Thursday	Great and Holy Friday	Great and Holy Saturday

Materials: "Calendar" worksheet, construction paper, markers, icon worksheet

[Have sample ready to show children. Use the student book pages to identify the names of the services.] *Today we are going to make a calendar to put on our icon table. It will name all the ways we can be together as a Church family during Holy Week. The calendar looks like the one we made a few weeks ago, but this time the squares are bigger. That will give us room to write what happens each day. Let's list the church services we have at our church.*



Craft: "Let My Prayer Rise" Prayer Page

Materials: Prayer worksheets according to each translation, heavier white paper or construction paper (1/2 sheet per student), hole punch, markers, stickers or stars, scissors, and glue

[Have sample ready to show children.] *Today we are going to make another page to add to our prayer book.*

When do we hear this prayer? (During the Liturgy of the Presanctified Gifts)

Paste the words on a half sheet of construction paper. You can draw pictures around the words, or you can add the stars or stickers I have here. Punch two holes to match the ones on the prayer cover. Untie the yarn on your prayer book cover and add this new page. Now pull the yarn through the holes and tie.

Closing

"Let my prayer. . . ."

Let My Prayer Rise

Let my prayer rise like incense
before You,

the lifting up of my hands like an
evening sacrifice.

Melkite
Greek
Catholic
Church

Let My Prayer Rise

Let my prayer rise like incense
before You,

the lifting up of my hands like an
evening sacrifice.

Romanian
Greek
Catholic
Diocese of
Canton

Let My Prayer Rise

Let my prayer ascend to You like
incense,
and the lifting up of my hands like an
evening sacrifice.

Ruthenian
Byzantine
Catholic
Metro-
politan
Province

Let My Prayer Rise

Let my prayer arise before You
like incense,
the lifting up of my hands like the
evening sacrifice.

Ukrainian
Catholic
Diocese of
St.
Josaphat

Let My Prayer Rise

Let my prayer rise like incense
before you;

and the lifting up of my hands as an
evening sacrifice.

Ukrainian
Catholic
Synod

Great and Holy Week

<i>Great and Holy Monday</i>	<i>Great and Holy Tuesday</i>	<i>Great and Holy Wednesday</i>
<i>Great and Holy Thursday</i>	<i>Great and Holy Friday</i>	<i>Great and Holy Saturday</i>