

Pascha

Objective: The students will be able to state that Pascha celebrates Jesus Christ's Resurrection that granted us eternal life. Our Church gives us many ways to recall the importance of the Resurrection.

For the Catechist

The six lessons in Unit 4 have been about the Great Fast and Holy Week to help the children realize the preparation for Pascha is very important. Through praying, fasting, and giving alms, they have grown closer to God. That is the reason the celebration of Pascha is so happy. We asked God to forgive us and He did! For the past seven weeks we have prepared ourselves to be united to God. On Pascha we celebrate our union with God. Jesus' suffering, death, and resurrection saved us from eternal death and gained for us eternal life.

The icon of the Myrrh-Bearers is considered an icon of the Resurrection although less familiar than the icon of the Descent into Hades. We recall the journey of the Myrrh-bearers in the procession of Resurrection matins.

The women came back after the Sabbath to anoint the body as was the custom. It is upon their return that they learn that Jesus has risen from the dead. Although Jesus chose 12 men to be His apostles, the joyful message of the resurrection was first heard by three women, who then transmitted it to the apostles.

The four Gospel writers offer different expressions of the Resurrection story. No one saw the resurrection of Jesus Christ. What they saw and what all the accounts record is the empty tomb. That is the reason the Resurrection is the greatest mystery. Our Church gives us many beautiful ways to celebrate this mystery. This lesson helps the children see and experience our Church's joy on Pascha.

We have many traditions that help us celebrate Pascha. Some people bless the foods from which they fasted since the beginning of the Great Fast. The pascha, a round bread decorated with a cross, is included in the foods to be blessed. Some people make pysankies, decorated eggs that include symbols recalling the mystery of the Resurrection. Have the children discuss their traditions that have made Pascha a memorable celebration for their family and for their church.

Lesson Plan Overview

Opening: Hirmos of Pascha and Troparion of Pascha

Introduction: Discussion of the light of Jesus Christ

Read Text Aloud: Have students volunteer to read the text. Use questions in the teacher manual to discuss the lesson.

Activity Tracks:

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

- *Basic:* The Resurrection
- *Group:* Our Pascha Basket
- *Craft:* "Hirmos of Pascha" and "Troparion of Pascha" Prayer Pages

Closing: Hirmos of Pascha and Troparion of Pascha

Icon Packets:

Come Bless the Lord:
The Descent into Hades
The Myrrh-bearing Women

Teaching Pics:

Pascha (GL17, GL18, GL19)

Background Reading

(Direct quotations from the sources noted)

Resurrection Icons

"The Icon of the Resurrection is either the 'Descent Into Hades' or the 'Myrrh-bearing Women.' The Icon of the Descent into Hades shows Christ as the Life-giver.... Our Lord's entrance into Hades, into the depths of the earth, transforms it. Through death He entered the realm of Hades which in the icon is shown by the black gaping abyss. His presence in Hades showed that He took upon Himself every humility and degradation of mankind. His appearance in Hades is not as its captive, but as its conqueror. He is shown with a radiant halo, the symbol of glory. His garments are no longer those in which He was seen on earth, but they are brilliant and they illumine the darkness of Hades. He fills the darkness with the light of His divine presence. He stands upon the broken gate of the kingdom of Death, thus indicating His victory over Death by His own death and resurrection. Through His humiliation and death He raised all creation to participate in Divine Life. Bolts, broken chains, and keys are scattered about to signify the freeing of those held captive and the breaking of Death's hold over men. By Christ's descent, Hades is destroyed and its gates trampled" (*CBL 22*).

"Having broken the bonds of Death's power, Christ is seen raising Adam and Eve from the grave. In freeing our first parents, Christ also frees those who put their faith in His coming. This truth is seen in the presence of Kings, David and Solomon, vested in royal robes and crowns. They stand together with John the Baptist at Christ's right. Moses and the Prophets of the Old Covenant stand at His left. With them, all of humanity is raised" (*CBL 23*).

Pascha: The Center of the Movable Cycle of Feasts

"The celebration of Pascha is the center of the movable cycle of feasts, that sequence by which we experience the meaning of Christ's gift of salvation. Periods of repentance, emptying us to feel our need for God's love, alternate with joyful celebrations of His wondrous deeds in our behalf giving us life. Immediately after Pascha, a period of fifty days—traditionally without fasting or kneeling—re-creates the time from the resurrection to the descent of the Holy Spirit" (*Acts 2:1-12*) (*LLII 37*).

A Celebration of Resurrection and Baptism

"The feast of the Pascha still retains this twofold character of a celebration of resurrection and baptism. A troparion of the Paschal Canon connects the ideas of Christ's resurrection in baptism: 'Yesterday I was buried with You, O Christ [in baptism at the Vigil Liturgy on Holy Saturday]; but today I rise resurrected with You. Yesterday I crucified myself with You, O Savior. Now glorify me with You in Your Kingdom'" (*LLII 36*).

New Week or Bright Week

"The joyful observance of the resurrection is extended through the week after the Sunday of Pascha. Because the newly-baptized Christians wore their white baptismal robes during these seven days, it is called the *New Week or Bright Week*. Given St Paul's imagery of baptism as a joining of ourselves to the death and resurrection of Christ (cf. Rom 6:3-4), it is not surprising that the annual celebration of Christ's death and resurrection became the privileged time for celebrating mysteries of Christian initiation. Even today the Vesper-Liturgy of Holy Saturday remains the most appropriate time for baptism in the Byzantine liturgical cycle" (*LLII 36-37*).

The Lesson Plan

Opening

Today we are going to learn special prayers that are said during the Divine Liturgy from Pascha until Pentecost. Let's say the words together: [Give the children a copy of the prayers for your jurisdiction.] "The Angel . . ." and "Christ is risen . . ."

Introduction

Let's close our eyes for a few seconds. We are now in darkness. Now let's turn on the lights. [Have the children open their eyes.] Describe what happens when it is light. (We can see things.) Why is it good with the lights on? (We know where we are.) Without the lights, we are alone. We are lost. When we turn on the lights, we see where we are.

That is the way we feel when we are not listening to God. We don't know where we are going. We can't see what God wants us to do. What do we call that when we don't listen to God? (We sin.) God always loves us, but at times we turn away from God's love. Jesus wants us to be in God's love always.

What happened on Great Friday? (Jesus was crucified.) He suffered and died. Then in 3 days He rose from the grave. What did Jesus' resurrection show us? (We would not be in the grave forever.) We would be with God even after we died. Jesus Christ's suffering, death, and resurrection united us to God forever.

Let's turn to our books and learn more about Pascha.

Pascha

The death of Jesus Christ on Great Friday saddened all of His disciples and friends. One of His friends, Joseph of Arimathea, wrapped Jesus' body in a clean cloth. He laid Jesus' body in a tomb cut out from a rock. Joseph rolled a stone across the entrance of the tomb.

Three days after Jesus died, three women went to the tomb cut out from a rock. They went with oil to anoint Jesus' body to prepare it for burial. The women were surprised to find the heavy stone covering the entrance rolled away. They looked in the tomb, and it was empty.



When they looked up, they saw that the stone had been rolled back; it was very large. On entering the tomb they saw a young man sitting on the right side, clothed in a white robe, and they were utterly amazed. He said to them, "Do not be amazed! You seek Jesus of Nazareth, the crucified. He has been raised; he is not here."

(Mark 16:4-6)

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).

"He has been raised; He is not here." (Mk. 16:4-6).

Why were the women going to the tomb? (To anoint Jesus' body) After Jesus' body was taken down from the cross, there was not enough time to anoint it because the Sabbath was beginning. The Sabbath is like our Sunday. It was a day of rest, and no one was allowed to do any work — even anoint a dead body. What would you have done if you found the grave empty? What did the women do? (They listened to the angels and went to tell the others.)

Our Church is shining with the Light of Christ.

What are some ways we show that we believe Jesus rose from the dead? (The Holy Shroud is on the altar, not in the tomb; our candles are lit because Jesus' death took us from eternal darkness; the royal doors are open to show the gates of heaven are open; we sing and say, "Christ is risen")

... on Holy Saturday night.

What is the greeting we offer during the Paschal season? ("Christ is risen ") Do you say that to anyone on Pascha? Who says it to you? We should be saying this greeting to everyone we meet. We want everyone to know the Good News. What foods do we bless at Pascha? (Eggs, cheese, meat)

We start our celebration of the Good News that Christ is risen on Holy Saturday night. At the Resurrection Matins, most churches have a procession. The people carry lit candles and walk around the church. This procession recalls the way the women went to the tomb. The people stop in front of the church doors and listen to the priest announce "Christ is risen!" The church bells ring, and the priest and the people sing.

"Christ is risen..."

The doors are opened, and the church is filled with light. The Holy Shroud is on the Holy Table as a sign that Jesus Christ is risen from the dead. The people walk into church singing, "Christ is risen."

We notice many changes in the church. The doors on the icon screen are open. They will remain open from Pascha until after the Divine Liturgy on Bright Saturday. For one week the doors are open to remind us that Jesus Christ rose from the dead and saved us from eternal death. He opened the gates of Heaven for us and granted us eternal life.

The priest's vestments and the Holy Table covers are bright. Many candles and lights make the church shine. We are celebrating Jesus' Resurrection and victory over death. Our Church is shining with the Light of Christ.

We use our bodies to show our happiness. We stand throughout the Divine Liturgy. We stand for all our prayers. On Pascha we start standing to show we are celebrating our union with God. We do not kneel at any church services until Pentecost Sunday.

On Pascha the priest blesses the kinds of foods which we did not eat during the Great Fast. He also blesses the special feast day bread called Artos. The priest says, "Christ is risen" and we respond, "Indeed, He is risen." We do all these things to show that we believe in the resurrection of Christ on Holy Saturday night.

... who believe in Him eternal life.

Some people put an icon of the Resurrection in their basket. What do we see on the icon of Pascha? (Jesus in the center; He is standing on a cross; He is pulling Adam and Eve from the grave.) Why does our church give us many traditions for the Pascha season? (To remember we are in a season of joy. Jesus gained for us eternal life.)

Let's review: What do we celebrate on Pascha? (Jesus rose from the grave and granted us eternal life with God)

The icon of the Resurrection of Christ shows us the reason we are celebrating. We see Christ standing on the cross. Jesus Christ is pulling Adam and Eve from the darkness. He is taking them to God. Jesus Christ's Resurrection has saved all of us from eternal death and has granted all of us who believe in Him eternal life.



Christ is risen. He is truly risen.

Words to Remember:
Pascha: The celebration of the Resurrection of Jesus Christ.
The Good News: Jesus' death and resurrection saved us from eternal death and granted us eternal life.

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Activity Tracks

Basic: The Resurrection

[This worksheet is in the student text.]

Today's worksheet has three Bible passages included. Use the words from the word box to complete the passages. Then draw the picture of the passage in the circle.

The Resurrection

Below are three sayings about the Resurrection. One includes the words of Jesus. Another is the message of the Angels. The third are the words of the Church. Can you fill in the spaces to show what was said about the Resurrection? Then draw a picture of the one who said it in the circle provided. Complete the Easter Troparion in the center of the page.

I know you are looking for **JESUS** the **CRUCIFIED**, but He is not here. He has been **RAISED**.
(Matthew 28: 5-6)

Christ is risen from the **DEAD**.
By death He conquered **DEATH**
and to those in the graves He granted **LIFE**.
(Easter Troparion)

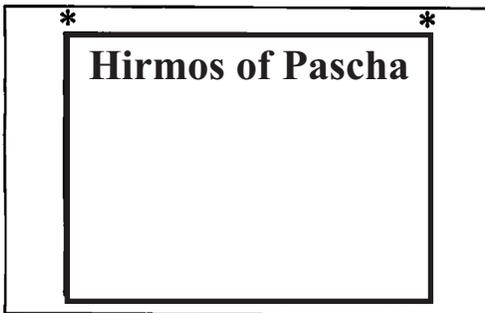
I am the Resurrection and the **LIFE** whoever believes in **ME** though he should die, will come to life.
(John 11: 25)

Words for the Sayings:
Dead Jesus Life Crucified Death Raised Me

Group: Our Pascha Basket

Materials: "Our Pascha Basket" worksheet, white construction paper, pencils, markers, scissors, and glue

During the Great Fast, we were not eating certain foods to remind us to think about Jesus. On Pascha we get many of these foods blessed by the priest before we eat them. We thank Jesus for uniting us with God. Today we are going to draw and color pictures of the foods and paste them in the basket.

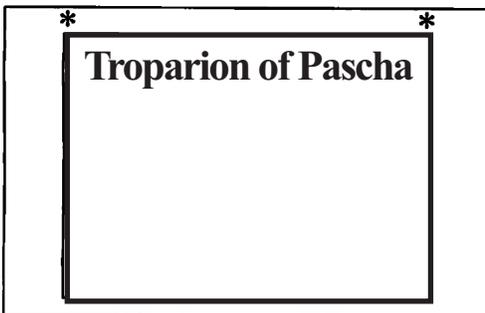


Craft: "Hirmos of Pascha" and "Troparion of Pascha" Prayer Pages

Materials: Prayer worksheet, heavier white paper or construction paper, markers, stickers or stars

[Have sample ready to show children.]

Today we are going to make two pages for our prayer book. We started saying these prayers during the Divine Liturgy on Pascha. They are called the Hirmos of Pascha and the Troparion of Pascha. Let's look at the words; do you remember hearing them during the Divine Liturgy?



Paste the prayers on half sheets of construction paper or the heavier white paper. You can draw pictures around the prayer, 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 our prayer book cover and add this new page. Now pull the yarn through the holes and tie.

Closing: Today we learned special prayers that we started saying during the Divine Liturgy on Pascha.

Hirmos of Pascha

The angel cried out to the One who is
full of grace: Hail, O immaculate
Virgin! Hail again, for your Son has
risen from the tomb on the third day.

Shine, shine, O new Jerusalem, for the
glory of the Lord has shone upon you.
Rejoice and be glad, O Sion; and you,
O pure one, O Mother of God, exult in
the resurrection of your Son

Melkite
Greek
Catholic
Church

Troparion of Pascha

Christ is risen from the dead and by
His death

He has trampled upon Death;
and has given life to those who were in
the tomb.

Melkite
Greek
Catholic
Church

Hirmos of Pascha

The angel declared unto her who is full of grace: Rejoice, O pure Virgin! And again I say, Rejoice! for thy Son has risen on the third day from the grave and has raised the dead. O you peoples, rejoice!

Shine, shine, O new Jerusalem, for the glory of the Lord has dawned over thee. Leap for joy and be glad, O Sion; and thou, O pure Mother of God, rejoice in the resurrection of thy Son.

Romanian
Greek
Catholic
Diocese of
Canton

Troparion of Pascha

Christ has risen from the dead
trampling down Death with death
and granting life to those in the graves.

Romanian
Greek
Catholic
Diocese of
Canton

Hirmos of Pascha

The angel exclaimed to her, full of grace:
Rejoice, O pure Virgin! Again I say
rejoice! Your Son has risen from the grave
on the third day.

Shine in splendor, O new Jerusalem, for the
glory of the Lord is risen upon you, O Sion.
Sing with joy and rejoice. And you, pure
Mother of God, rejoice in the resurrection of
your Son.

Ruthenian
Byzantine
Catholic
Metro-
politan
Province

Troparion of Pascha

Christ is risen from the dead,
trampling down Death by death,
and upon those in the tombs
bestowing life.

Ruthenian
Byzantine
Catholic
Metro-
politan
Province

Hirmos of Pascha

The angel exclaimed to the Lady full of grace: Rejoice, O pure Virgin! And again I say, Rejoice! Your Son is risen from the grave on the third day. With Himself He has raised all the dead. All you peoples, rejoice!

Shine, O shine, new Jerusalem, for the glory of the Lord has shone on you. Sing now and exult with joy, O Sion; and you, O pure Mother of God, adorn yourself in the splendor of your Son's resurrection.

Ukrainian
Catholic
Diocese of
St.
Josaphat

Troparion of Pascha

Christ is risen from the dead.

By death He conquered Death,

and to those in the grave He granted life.

Ukrainian
Catholic
Diocese of
St.
Josaphat

Hirmos of Pascha

The angel cried out to the One full of grace:
O chaste Virgin, rejoice! And again I say,
Rejoice! Your Son is risen from the tomb on
the third day and raised the dead. Let all
people rejoice!

Shine, shine, O Jerusalem, for the glory of
the Lord has risen upon you. Exalt now and
be glad, O Sion; and you, O chaste Mother
of God, take delight in the resurrection of
your Son.

Ukrainian
Catholic
Synod

Troparion of Pascha

Christ is risen from the dead,
trampling Death by death
and to those in the tombs giving life.

Ukrainian
Catholic
Synod

