

Objective: Students will be able to 1) explain that through Jesus' death and resurrection, we have been granted eternal life and 2) identify Scripture that reveals the resurrection of Christ

For the Catechist

The four Gospel writers offer different expressions of the Resurrection story. In all the readings we hear that no one saw the actual 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. Encourage the children to read the story of the Resurrection in all the Gospels even though it is not required for the lesson.

If it can be arranged, have the students go into the church to notice the changes from the Great Fast and Great and Holy Week to Bright Week:

1) the tomb is empty; 2) the shroud is on the altar; 3) the dark altar cloths are changed to a bright color; 4) the priest wears bright vestments; and 5) beautiful flowers and decorations help to create the festive atmosphere. While you are in church, have the students stand to pray; do not kneel. Help the students realize that our entire church and our whole being announce "Christ is risen! Indeed He is risen!"

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. Included in the foods is a round bread called *Artos* or *pascha*. Some people make pysankies, decorated eggs that have symbols recalling the mystery of the Resurrection. Each of these traditions helps us continue to celebrate Pascha and helps us share the Good News - Christ is risen!

Lesson Plan Overview

Opening: Troparion of Pascha

Introduction: Discussion of Pascha

Need: candles for students, matches, white cloth, bells

Read Text Aloud: Have the students volunteer to read the text aloud or have the students read sections silently.

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

- *Basic:* The Five Sundays after Pascha
- *Group:* Pascha News
- *Craft:* The Good News

Closing: Troparion of Pascha

Icon Packets:

Come Bless the Lord:

The Descent into Hades

Teaching Pics

Pascha (GL 17-20)

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*).

The New Passover

"... as the Israelites passed from slavery in Egypt to freedom, those who are in Christ pass from death to life. This identification of Christ's saving work with the Passover is at the origin for the name of the Feast of the Resurrection in all Eastern and some Western European languages, Pascha (Paques, Fisih, etc.) As we chant in the ninth ode of the Matins on that day: 'Christ is indeed a new Passover, a living sacrifice, the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world'" (*ID 50*).

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*).

The Lesson Plan

Opening

Today we are going to pray the Troparion of Pascha. [Distribute the handout from the back of this lesson.]

Introduction

[If possible arrange to go into the church to notice the differences between Great and Holy Week and Bright Week. In the "For the Catechist" section for this lesson, you will find some changes to identify. If this cannot be arranged, do the following:]

Today I have on my desk some things that are used during the services for Pascha.

Let's see if we can remember what gets used and why. [Have bells, white cloth, flowers or a picture of flowers, candles. Let the children share what they remember.] *Imagine how excited the women and disciples who went to the tomb were when they did not find Jesus. What do you think you would have done? Our Church wants everyone to know that Jesus Christ is risen. Everything we looked at today is a reminder that something wonderful happened and our Church announces it in many ways.*

We should continue to announce Christ's Resurrection by greeting everyone we meet with the greeting, "Christ is risen!"

Let's turn to our lesson to learn more about Pascha.

26

Pascha



With Jesus' coming on earth and His saving death and resurrection, He has won for us the victory over sin and death. By His death and resurrection, Jesus is shown to be the Lord of the living and the dead. As Lord, He brings release to those who are held captive by the power of sin. We no longer need to be afraid of death, for Jesus has conquered death.

We learn about Jesus' resurrection from the four Gospels. Each one tells us about the empty tomb and the people who found it. Let's read **John 20:1-18** and list the names of the people who went to the tomb.

Mary Magdala

Simon Peter and the other disciples

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).

Let's read **John 20:1-18** and list the names of the people who went to the tomb.

What would you have done if you found the tomb empty?

Pascha is our celebration of this life-giving event.

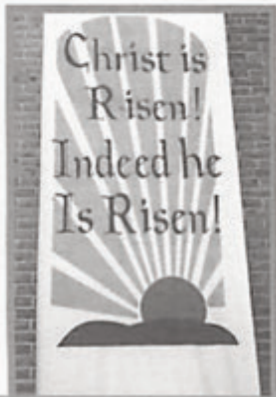
What is the name of the icon? (Descent into Hades) In this icon we see the words we sing in the troparion of Pascha. Let's sing the words while we look at the icon.

What does Pascha mean in Greek? (Passover) Why is Jesus called the New Passover? (He is taking us from death and leading us to eternal life with God.) Just as we see in the icon.

The icon of the Descent into Hades helps us learn about what happened on the day of Jesus Christ's resurrection. It shows Christ's victory over death. We see Christ standing upon the broken gates of the Kingdom of death with the bolts, broken chains, and keys scattered about. All these signs tell us that the power of death has been broken by Christ's death and resurrection.

All those who were held as death's prisoners are now freed. Christ gently raises up Adam and Eve from the grave and, with them, all of mankind. To the right of Christ, we see Kings David and Solomon dressed in royal robes and crowns. They stand together with John the Baptist. To the left of Christ, we see Moses and the prophets of the Old Covenant. In this icon we see "Christ is risen from the dead. By death He conquered Death, and to those in the graves, He granted life"—the words we sing in the troparion of Pascha.

We call the Feast of Christ's Resurrection *Pascha*. *Pascha* is taken from the Greek word for Passover. Passover is the celebration of the events that led to the freedom of the Israelites. Just as Moses was chosen to lead the Israelites to their freedom from slavery, Jesus was sent by God to free us from the slavery of sin. Christ is the New Passover who brings us from death to eternal life. Through His death and resurrection, we have been freed from eternal death and granted eternal life. Pascha is our celebration of this life-giving event.



... lights shine throughout the church.

*Why are the doors on the icon screen open for Bright Week?
(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.)*

Do you know any of them?

One hymn we sing every Sunday begins, "O Son of God. . . ." What is the rest? (Risen from the dead, save us who sing to you, Alleluia) Every time we sing that we are remembering Pascha.

Words to Remember: [Read the words together, and use them to introduce, summarize, and/or review the lesson.]

Activity Tracks

Basic: Five Sundays of Pascha

[This worksheet is on two pages the student text.
A Church calendar is needed for this activity.]


Let's learn more about what happened after the resurrection of Jesus Christ.

Our Church celebrates Pascha in many beautiful ways. Resurrection Matins begins with a procession. The people carry lit candles and walk around the church. They 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. As we walk into church singing, "Christ is risen," we see the doors on the icon screen are open. They will remain open from Pascha until after the Divine Liturgy on Bright Saturday. The priest's vestments and the Holy Table covers are bright, and many candles and lights shine throughout the church.

During the Great Fast we often kneel and make prostrations in our prayers. But during the time from Pascha to Pentecost, we never kneel. We keep standing in our prayers as a sign that we share in Christ's rising.

Our Church asks us to celebrate Pascha every Sunday throughout the year. We sing hymns that celebrate Christ's resurrection. Do you know any of them?



Words to Remember:
Hades: The place of eternal death.
Pascha: Greek word for Passover. Christ is the New Passover who brings us from death to eternal life.

128

Five Sundays After Pascha

We celebrate the Resurrection of Jesus for 40 days after Pascha. On the Sundays during this period, we read Gospels that help us understand the meaning of the resurrection. On your Church calendar, find the names of these five Sundays and write them in the appropriate spaces. Then read the paragraph and use the scriptural passage to complete the sentences.

1. Sunday of **Thomas** _____

When Jesus appeared on the first day of the week, He appeared to His Disciples and said, (John 20:21) - **Peace be with you** _____ -

(John 20:24) **Thomas** was absent when Jesus appeared. Jesus came to them again later on during the week. When Thomas saw Jesus, he said (John 20:28) - **My Lord and my God** - Jesus answered him, saying, (John 20:29) - **Have you come to believe because you have seen me** -

2. Sunday of **the Ointment-Bearing Women** _____

(Mark 15:43) - **Joseph** _____ took Jesus down from the cross, wrapped Him in a linen cloth and placed Him in a tomb. When the women, (Mark 16:1) **Mary Magdalene, Mary** and **Salome** _____ went early the next morning to anoint Jesus, the stone had been rolled back. A young man sitting in a white robe said to them, (Mark 16:6) **He has been raised; he is not here.** _____ -

129

[Have the students work together on these worksheets or they can take them home to complete. Hopefully, this will encourage them to read their New Testament at home.]

3. Sunday of the Paralytic Man

Jesus went about doing good, teaching the people of the Kingdom of God and healing the sick. One day He saw a man who had been sick for 38 years. Jesus went up to him and asked, (John 5:6) - Do you want to be well?

_____ "After telling Jesus that there was no one to put him into the pool, Jesus, (John 5:8) - said to him, "Rise, take up your mat and walk

4. Sunday of the Samaritan Woman

After a very long journey, Jesus was tired and stopped by a well to rest.

A (John 4:9) Samaritan woman came by to get water from the well. Jesus asked her for a drink of water and then further said to her,

"The water I give shall become (John 4:14) in him a spring of water-welling up to eternal life

5. Sunday of the Man Born Blind

One day Jesus met a man born blind. He said to him, (John 9:7) - _____

Go wash in the pool of Siloam _____

After he had washed, he was able to see. Then Jesus asked him, "Do you believe in the Son of Man?" The man answered, (John 9:38) - _____

I do believe, Lord _____

130

Group: Pascha News

Materials: New Testament

Today we are going to work in groups. Each group will read one of the four Gospels written about the Resurrection of Jesus Christ. After your group completes the reading, work together on a short skit that shows us what happens in that Gospel. Then we will come together and present the skits. We will notice what changes in some of the readings. [Note: Details, such as the number of angels, vary in the different Gospels.]

The following are the scriptural readings:

Matthew 28:1-10

Mark 16:1-8

Luke 24:1-12

John 20:1-18

Craft: The Good News

Materials: Plastic colorful eggs (at least two per student), "The Good News" worksheet, pens and markers

Today we are going to read some verses from our New Testament. We are going to put them into a plastic egg and take them home. Then throughout our celebration of Pascha, I am going to ask you to open one of the eggs and read the verse about twice a week. You might want to do it every day. Then you put the verse back into the egg for the next time you will read it. Every time you open the egg and read the verse, you will remind yourself about how wonderful it is to be united to God. Where are some places to keep the eggs? (Near our bed, in our icon corner, on our family table) Maybe you could read your verse to your family. Would anyone like to make any eggs to keep in our classroom? [Have the students cut out the verses they want to use or have them find their own.]

Closing:

Let's pray the Troparion of Pascha. [The handout is at the end of this lesson.]

The following are a few verses that can be cut and placed in their eggs. There are many more in the New Testament. Encourage the students to turn to the study guide and find some verses on their own.

**"For the scripture says, "No one who believes in him will be put to shame."
(Romans 10:11)**

"Peace be with you." (John 20:19)

**"And the Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us, and we saw his glory,
the glory as of the Father's only Son, full of grace and truth." (John 1:14)**

**"Why do you seek the living one among the dead? He is not here, but he has
been raised." (Luke 24:5-6)**

**"Go into the whole world and proclaim the gospel to every creature." (Mark 16:15)
"And behold, I am with you always, until the end of the age." (Matthew 28:20)**

Every student should place the appropriate translation in one of their eggs:

Christ is risen! He is truly risen!	<i>(Melkite Greek Catholic Church)</i>
Christ is risen! He is truly risen!	<i>(Romanian Greek Catholic Church)</i>
Christ is risen! Indeed He is risen!	<i>(Ruthenian Metropolia)</i>
Christ is risen! Truly He is risen!	<i>(Ukrainian Metropolia)</i>
Christ is risen! Truly He is risen!	<i>(Ukrainian Catholic Diocese of St. Josaphat)</i>

Hades

Pascha

Greek word for Passover. Christ is
the New Passover who brings us
from death to eternal life.

The place of eternal death.

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 tombs.

Melkite
Greek
Catholic
Church

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

Troparion of Pascha

Christ is risen from the dead. By death He conquered
death, and to those in the graves He granted life

Ruthenian
Byzantine
Catholic
Metropolitan
Province

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

Troparion of Pascha

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

Ukrainian
Catholic
Synod