

Lesson 27 - Pascha: the New Passover

Objectives

By the end of this lesson the student should be able to:

- Know that the term Pascha means Passover, as in the Jewish deliverance in Egypt under Moses.
- Understand that Christ is the new and ultimate Passover, delivering us from death to eternal life.
- See the connection between the sacrifice of the Passover lambs and the Gospel teaching that Christ is the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world.
- Understand the difference between the Scriptural term Pascha and the originally pagan term, Easter.

For the Catechist

Each year in the *God With Us Series* there has been at least one lesson focusing on the celebration of Christ's resurrection (Pascha) to help the students see this festival as the greatest in the Church's calendar. In Grade Six the emphasis is on explaining the connection of the Christian Pascha with its antecedent, the Mosaic Passover, the Divine Liturgy, and the heavenly liturgy.

Exodus 12 recounts how the Hebrews were delivered from death in Egypt when their doorposts were daubed with lamb's blood, the event celebrated yearly on the Jewish festival of Passover. The New Testament affirms that Christ is our Passover because His blood delivers us from eternal death and affords us eternal life. As Christ is the ultimate Passover, the Christian festival of Pascha (Passover) is thus the fulfillment of the Old Testament observance.

Passover, Pascha, and Christ, the Lamb of God, are also connected with our celebration of the Divine Liturgy by which we unite with Christ, sacrificed for the sins of the world. The Western tradition identifies Passover with the Last Supper and Christ's sacrifice with His death on the cross. The Eastern tradition (and this lesson) sees Christ Himself as our Passover and His entire saving work as His sacrifice, including its offering to the Father and eventual return to us.

Thus the Liturgy also connects us with the heavenly liturgy in which the Lamb is glorified forever and ever. All these threads are interwoven in this lesson so that the students may catch a glimpse of the cosmic and eternal significance of what we celebrate at Pascha.

We cannot hope to communicate or absorb the riches of this mystery. Yet, this is what the Church regularly affirms. As the priest says at the Divine Liturgy, *"Remembering the cross, the tomb, the ascension into heaven, the sitting at the right hand of the Father, and the second and glorious coming again, we offer You Your own of what is Your own in all and for the sake of all"*

Materials Needed:

Opening Prayer: Icon corner, student texts

Introduction: Easel or wall pads, markers,

Guided Reading: Bibles

Activity A: Plastic eggs, "Egg Hunt" Worksheet, cut as indicated.

Activity B: *Come Bless the Lord* Icon Packet #21 and *Teaching Pics* #F2.

Activity C: Worksheet C

- 1. Opening Prayer** Begin with the closing prayer from the previous lesson, reminding the students of this prayer's connection with the theme of that lesson.
- 2. Review** Review the main points of the previous lesson using the pages from your wall or easel pad. Lessons in this unit are not taught consecutively, so review the last lesson taught.
- 3. Introduction**

Begin by asking the students to name their *favorite* holiday of the year and why. (Christmas is a likely choice, because of the gifts.) Then ask them what they think might be the *most important* holiday of the year and why.

Note that in the tradition of our Church, Pascha is the greatest festival of all because it celebrates the defeat of Death and the victory of Christ over sin. Note how we prepare for it by the 40-day-long Great Fast with its special services and practices. We celebrate it daily for over a week, beginning with Lazarus Saturday, and continue to celebrate it for another 50 days, until the Feast of Pentecost.

Indicate that in today's lesson we will learn the connection between Christ's resurrection, our celebration of Pascha, and the Old Testament celebration of Passover. We will see why we call our festival "Passover" (the meaning of "Pascha"), and how our Divine Liturgy unites us with Christ, our Passover.

Background Reading (Celebration of Pascha):

"The principal feast of the Christian year is the feast of Passover (in Greek, *Pascha*—the English name 'Easter' derives from a pagan spring festival), for the resurrection of Christ stands at the center of our faith. Though we have no direct experience of the future kingdom, our faith rests upon a real event that transformed the apostles and became the foundation of the life of the Church" (LLII 34).

"The celebration of the resurrection of Christ remains the most glorious experience of the Byzantine Churches. The joy of the ointment-bearing women at discovering the empty tomb of Jesus is relived in processions, music, and gestures which tell us more about the mystery of the resurrection than a thousand books or lectures" (LLII 37).

4. Guided Reading, Pages 138 - 139



Before the reading, **summarize the objectives of the lesson** on a wall pad or easel pad so that the page can be preserved and used for review next week.

Have the students **read the first two paragraphs on page 138** which describe the significance of Pascha. Have the students recall and/or **review Lesson 8**, particularly the sidebar (page 40) and Worksheet B (*Teacher's Manual* page 152). Ask:

- What does the Jewish Passover remember? (*Deliverance under Moses in Egypt*)
- What kind of deliverance do we celebrate in the Christian Pascha? (*Deliverance from sin and death in Christ*)

Read the remaining paragraphs in this section and ask the students where they have heard the phrase "Lamb of God" (*Story of John the Baptist, Great Doxology*).

Background Reading (The Paschal Celebration):

"The paschal celebration is self-consciously modeled on the Jewish passover. On this day the Jews solemnly remember the event that constituted them as a nation: their liberation from the Egyptian Pharaoh and their exodus into the Promised Land under the leadership of God. Christ had given the passover a new meaning. He replaced the sacrifice of the passover lamb - commemorating the salvation of Israel from the angel of death and from slavery in Egypt - with His own self-sacrifice for the salvation of all mankind from bondage to death and sin. The parallels are astounding. In place of the lamb, Christ offered His own life upon the cross; in place of the blood of the lamb upon the lintel, the blood of Christ flowed upon the cross; instead of liberation of a chosen people from slavery to a worldly king, He accomplished the freedom from the power of slavery to sin for all humanity; and instead of the Promised Land, we were given the promise of the resurrection and life with God. The Christians began to celebrate a passover with an entirely new dimension. St. Paul can exhort his converts, 'Christ our passover has been sacrificed. Let us celebrate the feast not with the old yeast, that of corruption and wickedness, but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth' (I Cor 5:7-8)" (LLII 34).

Stress how there are many parallels between the old and the new Passover. Copy the following comparative chart on a newsprint pad or poster board. Have the students suggest the answers.

	<i>Old Testament Passover</i>	<i>Old Testament Passover</i>
<i>Name of Deliverer</i>	Moses	Christ
<i>Deliverance from</i>	Death/slavery in Egypt	Eternal Death/slavery to sin
<i>Means of Deliverance</i>	Blood of a lamb	Blood of the Lamb of God
<i>Destination</i>	The Promised Land	The Kingdom of Heaven
<i>Celebrated at</i>	Passover / Passover meal	Pascha / Divine Liturgy

Remind that students of what they learned while studying the Old Testament earlier in the year: many Old Testament persons and events are "types" or hints of a New Testament reality yet to come.

4. Guided Reading Continued, Pages 139-140



Have **one group of students read** the section, "**The Passover Lamb.**" Before they begin, ask part of the group to list the number of comparisons between the Old and New Passovers as they are read in this section. (*Passover lamb/Christ; where lambs/Christ were killed; where and by whom lambs/Christ were offered; how lambs/Christ are returned to the people.*)

Continue by having **the rest of the class read** the section "**The Sacrifice Accepted.**" Note that Revelation says that the Lamb was worthy and deserves honor, glory, and power as does the One on the throne. Ask:

- If the Lamb that was slain is worthy of all that attention, what can we say about His sacrifice? (*It was accepted.*)
- Where have you phrases like this: "honor, glory and power...forever and ever"? (*The Divine Liturgy - which is a kind of preview of the heavenly liturgy*)

Have the students **review the section "Our Share in the Passover,"** looking for more comparisons. If necessary, help them to identify points comparing the Passover sacrifices, the sacrifice of Christ, and the Divine Liturgy:

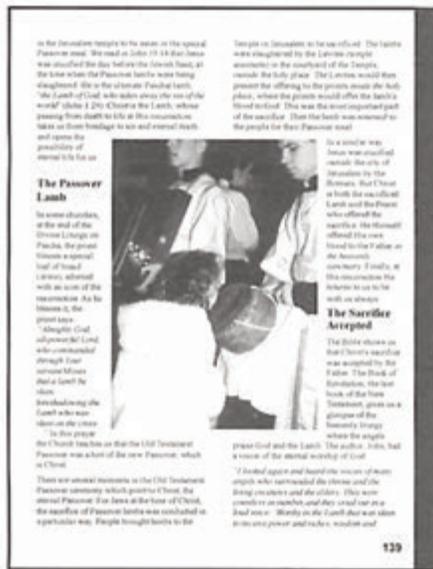
- place of the slaughter of the lamb / the cutting of the Eucharistic Lamb
- Presentation of the lambs / Entrance with the holy gifts
- Return of the lambs / Return of the gifts as Holy Communion

Stress that these comparisons show that the work of Christ our Passover is not complete. In the Divine Liturgy we are connected with a "work in progress," to be completed only at His second and glorious coming.

Reinforce these comparisons until you feel that the students see the connections you are trying to make.

Easter or Pascha?
Some Paschal Foods Page 141

Have one half of the group read the sidebar "***Easter or Pascha?***" and the other half read the section "**Some Paschal Foods.**" Then have each group teach the others what they have learned. Stress how both the name of this festival and the foods we eat at it reinforce our faith in Christ as our Passover.



Background Reading (Christ Our Passover):

"Christ fulfilled this mystery when He Himself took the place of the paschal lamb and shed His blood on the doorpost of the Cross. He is God's first-born and only Son, whose blood saved the whole world from sin and led us all from death to life. St. Paul exclaims in joy, 'Christ our Passover has been sacrificed' (I Cor 5:7). The Gospel of St. John places our Lord's death on the Day of Preparation, when the passover lambs were being slaughtered in the Jerusalem temple, to show that Jesus fulfilled all the sacrifices of the Old Testament. This mystery expressed, 'Christ entered [the sanctuary], not with the blood of goats and calves, but with his own blood and achieved eternal redemption' (Heb 9:12). Here was fulfilled St. John the Baptist's prophetic identification of Jesus at the beginning of His ministry, 'Here is the Lamb of God' (Jn 1:36)" (LLII 57)

5. Activity A (“Egg Hunt”)

In advance duplicate Worksheet A, cut apart the individual verses and place each verse in a plastic egg. Hide the eggs in your room or outside, if possible, and allow a certain time for the students to return.

Have each student **read the verse in the egg, and then explain it** in the light of what was taught in the lesson. Reward each explanation with an appropriate gift (small icon, Easter candy, etc.).

If a search for eggs is not possible, have the students pick an egg from a basket by identifying its color.

6. Activity B (Pascha Good Enough to Eat)

Not all parishioners may still be able to make the traditional foods for Pascha. Enlist the help of a knowledgeable parishioner to work with the students to make one of these foods. If you prefer, use one of the recipes on Worksheet B. Have the students deliver what they made to the chosen recipients.

7. Activity C (Dr. Turi's Paschal Mystery Cookies)

Use Worksheet C to show your group how to "teach" the project to younger children in your church school and arrange for them to do the project with a younger grade.

8. Summary

End the lesson by summarizing the lesson from the aims on page 376, from the elements in the student text on which you focused and/or from any other points raised in the lesson.

9. Closing Prayer

Conclude with the selections from the Paschalia on page 142 of the students' text.

“Egg Hunt”

Christ our Passover has been sacrificed for us (*1 Corinthians 5:7*).

For Christ did not enter into a sanctuary made by hands, a copy of the true one, but heaven itself, that he might now appear before God on our behalf (*Hebrews 9:24*).

It was preparation day for Passover, and it was about noon. And [Pilate] said to the Jews, "Behold, your king!" They cried out, "Take him away, take him away! Crucify him!" (*John 19:14*).

Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power and riches and wisdom and strength, honor and glory and blessing (*Revelation 5:12*).

The next day he saw Jesus coming toward him and said, "Behold the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world" (*John 1:29*).

To the One who sits on the throne and to the Lamb be blessing and honor, glory and might, forever and ever (*Revelation 5:13*).

But when Christ came as high priest of the good things that have come to be, passing through the greater and more perfect tabernacle not made by hands, that is, not belonging to this creation, he entered once for all into the sanctuary, not with the blood of goats and calves but with his own blood, thus obtaining eternal redemption (*Hebrews 9:11-12*).

The Lamb of God is sacrificed for the sins of the world: He who is the life and salvation of the world (*Divine Liturgy*).

Today is the day of the resurrection: O nations, let us be jubilant. For this Passover is the Passover of the Lord, in that Christ has made us pass from death to life and from earth to heaven: we who sing this song of victory (*Paschal Canon, First Ode*).

Christ, our blessed crown, has sacrificed Himself for us of His own will, like a yearling lamb, so as to become a cleansing Pascha. He shone forth upon us from the tomb as the beautiful Sun of righteousness (*Paschal Canon, Fourth Ode*).

O Christ, when those who were captive in Hades' bonds saw Your boundless compassion, they ran to the light with a joyful step, exalting in the eternal Pascha (*Paschal Canon, Fifth Ode*).

O Christ, the Godlywise women followed You in haste with the ointment. They were seeking, You, lamenting, for You as dead, but now with joy they worship You as the living God. Then to the disciples they announced the glad news of Your mystical Pascha (*Paschal Canon, Seventh Ode*).

O Christ, the great and most holy Pascha, O Wisdom of God, Word and Power of God, grant us that we may more perfectly partake of You in the never-ending day of Your kingdom (*Paschal Canon, Ninth Ode*).

In the flesh, O Lord and King, thou You fell asleep as mortal, but You rose on the third day, raising Adam from corruption and destroying death, O Pascha of incorruption, Salvation of the world (*Exapostilarion, Matins of Pascha*).

Pascha good Enough to Eat

Invite a knowledgeable parishioner to teach the group how to make one of the traditional pascha foods to take to a shut-in or elderly parishioner. If you need a recipe, try one of the following:

a) Cheese Pascha

2 8-oz. packages cream cheese
1/2 pint cottage cheese
1/4 pound sweet butter
1/4 cup confectioner's sugar
3/4 cup granulated sugar
cheesecloth
clean flower pot about 6" in diameter

With a mixer or food processor, blend the cottage cheese until it is smooth.

Add the cream cheese and butter and blend until smooth.

Add the two types of sugar and blend until smooth.

Add raisins, slivered almonds, candied fruits as desired.

Line the flowerpot with three layers of damp cheesecloth.

Pour in mixture.

Put a weight on top (10 pounds is good) and let sit in the refrigerator until no more drainage is seen (normally 1 - 2 days).

Remove from mold and unwrap cloth. Make an XB on it in sugared almonds. Serve with Pascha bread.

b) Artos

2 cups chickpea flour
4 cups whole wheat flour
10 cups unbleached flour
3 Tablespoons yeast
5 cups sugar
1 cup olive oil
1 Tablespoon rose water
6 cups water

Add yeast to 1/2 cup of water and add 1 Tbsp sugar. Let sit until foaming.

Mix everything together in one large bowl and add flour to adjust texture so you have a firm dough.

Knead until elastic, about 15 minutes.

Let rise 2-4 hours so it doubles in volume.

Divide into 8 loaves and make into balls.

Put balls on a greased sheet and preheat oven to 350° for 20 minutes.

Add decorations with white dough below if desired.

Bake at 350° for 40-50 minutes or until 190° F internal temperature until it sounds hollow when tapped on the bottom.

Decoration dough: We normally decorate the loaves with crosses, wheat heads, etc. made out of the following:

4 cups bleached flour
1/4 cup clear vegetable oil
Water as needed

Make a stiff dough and roll out to about 1/16" thick between pieces of waxed paper (greased).

Cut out designs and attach to dough using water to help adhere.

Dr. Turi's "Paschal Mystery" Cookies

The website of St Elias Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church in Brampton, Ontario (www.saintelias.com) gives this cookie-making project to teach the Paschal Mystery to younger children. Show your group how to "teach" the project to younger children in your church school and arrange for them to do the project with a younger grade.

Fun, Food & Catechesis for the Kids

Baking these cookies is an activity to do with children to help them understand Pascha. We hope all our friends who are parents will use this recipe to teach the children the real reason why we celebrate Pascha.

Ingredients: 1 cup whole pecans
1 tsp. vinegar
3 egg whites
pinch salt
1/2 to 1 cup sugar (depending on taste)

Other items: zipper baggie
wooden spoon
tape
Bible

1. **Preheat oven to 300°F** (This is *very important*. Don't wait until you're halfway done with this recipe!)
2. **Place pecans in zipper baggie and let the children beat them with the wooden spoon to break into small pieces.** (*Note:* How finely you beat the nuts has a direct impact on how hollow or lumpy the cookies are. Finely beaten nuts yield better hollow cookies; however the cookies will not be as representative of the rocky tomb. Coarsely broken nuts look more like the rocky tomb, but may not produce the desired hollowness. **The size of the cookie is also important.** A small soup spoon makes about the right size. Small cookies {made with a teaspoon} may dry too quickly to allow for the internal shrinkage that causes the holes.)
Say: "Glory to your long-suffering, O Lord." Explain that after Jesus was arrested, the Roman soldiers beat him. At Jerusalem Matins, together with the Theotokos and the Myrrhbearers, we lament at the tomb and venerated Jesus' Body. "Come all things created, let us sing a hymn of sorrow, to honor our Creator." *Read John 19:1-3.*
3. **Let each child smell the vinegar.** Put 1 tsp. vinegar into mixing bowl. Explain that when Jesus was thirsty on the cross, all he was given to drink was vinegar. Say: "He who hung the earth upon the waters is hung upon the Tree." *Read John 19:28-30.*

4. **Add egg whites to vinegar.** Eggs represent life. Explain that Jesus gave His life to give us life. "How, O Life, can you die? In a grave, how can you dwell?" *Read John 10:10-11.*
5. **Sprinkle a little salt** into each child's hand. Let them taste it and brush the rest into the bowl. Explain that this represents the salty tears shed by Jesus' followers, and the bitterness of our own sin. "With fervent tears, his maiden Mother cried..." *Read Luke 23:27.*
6. "So far the ingredients are not very appetizing." **Add 1 cup sugar.** "Your voice so sweet, let us hear again..." Explain that the sweetest part of the story is that Jesus died because He loves us. He wants us to know and belong to Him. *Read Ps 34:8 and John 3:16*
7. **Beat with mixer on high speed** for 12 to 15 minutes until stiff peaks are formed. "Hasten. Word, in rising and release from sorrow..." Explain that the color white represents the purity in God's eyes of those whose sins have been cleansed by Jesus. *Read Is 1:18 and John 3:1-3.*
8. **Fold in broken nuts.**
9. **Drop by teaspoons onto a wax paper covered cookie sheet.** "Stone that man has wrought now conceals the cornerstone of Promise..." Explain that each mound represents the rocky tomb where Jesus' body was laid. *Read Matt. 27:57-60.*
10. **Put the cookie sheet in the oven.** Close the door and turn the oven off. Give each child a piece of tape and **seal the oven door shut.** Explain that Jesus' tomb was sealed. On Great Friday, after the Procession, we too enter the Tomb to be buried with Christ, as symbolized by our bending low and walking under the Holy Shroud. *Read Matthew 27:65-66.*
11. Go home or to church, Explain that they may feel sad to leave the cookies in the oven "When You, the Redeemer of all, were placed in tomb, all Hell's powers quake in fear..." *Read John 16:20 and 22.*
12. After Liturgy, open the oven and give everyone a cookie. Notice the cracked surface and take a bite. The cookies are hollow!! On the first Pascha, Jesus' followers were amazed to find the tomb open and empty. ""Christ is risen from the dead, trampling down death by death! And to those in the tombs, bestowing Life!" *Read Matthew 28:1-9*