

Guide for Catechists

Journey 2012-13

St. Paul's Episcopal Church Bellingham, Washington



"Catechesis is not so much instruction,
as it is nurturing and encouraging people to respond to the scriptures
as they connect to their lives."

– *Journey Notebook, "The Catechumenate Team"*

Sample Schedules

During Inquiry

- 5.00 Meal
- 5.45* Thanksgiving for meal
Catechism/address
Reading of the Gospel
Collect
- 6.00 Story telling / Ice Breaker
- 6.25* Discussion
- 6.45* Intercessory Prayer
- 6.50* Group Closure

After Inquiry

- 5.00 Meal
- 5.45* Thanksgiving for meal
Catechism/address
Reading of the Gospel
Collect
- 6.00 Ice Breaker
- 6.15* Discussion
- 6.45* Intercessory Prayer
- 6.50* Group Closure

Calendar

Date	Gospel	Catechism	<i>Public Rite</i> (Prayer)
Catechist Training			
7 Oct	Mk 10.2–16		<i>Invitation</i>
14 Oct	Mk 10.17–31		<i>Invitation</i>
Inquiry			
21 Oct	Mk 10.35–45	(Welcome)	<i>Invitation</i>
28 Oct	Mk 10.46–52	(The Church Year)	
4 Nov	Mk 12.28–34	The New Covenant	
11 Nov	Mk 12.38–44	The Old Covenant	
18 Nov	Mk 13.1–8	The Holy Scriptures	
25 Nov	Jn 18.33–37	God the Son	
Advent / Catechumenate			
6 Jan	Mt 2.1–12	Prayer and Worship	<i>Welcome</i>
13 Jan	Lk 3.15–17, 21–22	Holy Baptism	
20 Jan	Jn 2.1–11	The Sacraments	
27 Jan	Lk 4.14–21	The Holy Spirit	
Intense Preparation			
17 Feb	Lk 4.1–13	The Ten Commandments	<i>Enrollment</i>
24 Feb	Lk 13.31–35	Sin and Redemption	(Intercession)
3 Mar	Lk 13.1–9	Human Nature	(Penitence)
10 Mar	Lk 15.1–3, 11b–32	God the Father	(Praise)
17 Mar	Jn 12.1–8	The Holy Eucharist	(Adoration)
24 Mar	Easter (no meeting)		<i>Baptism or Renewal</i>
Mystagogy			
7 Apr	Jn 20.19–31	The Creeds	(Creed)
14 Apr	Jn 21.1–19	The Ministry	(Oblation)
21 Apr	Jn 10.22–30	The Christian Hope	(Thanksgiving)
28 Apr	Jn 13.31–35	The Church	(Petition)
5 May	Jn 14.23–29/5.1–9	(Aural Bible Study)	
12 May	Jn 17.20–26	Other Sacramental Rites	
19 May	(no meeting)		<i>Affirmation of Baptismal Vocation in the World</i>

7 October: Proper 22, Year B

Genesis 2:18-24

Hebrews 1:1-4; 2:5-12

Psalm 8

Mark 10:2-16

Almighty and everlasting God, you are always more ready to hear than we to pray, and to give more than we either desire or deserve: Pour upon us the abundance of your mercy, forgiving us those things of which our conscience is afraid, and giving us those good things for which we are not worthy to ask, except through the merits and mediation of Jesus Christ our Savior; who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.

Overview of Training

Goals:

- introduction/initiation/renewal
- think deeply about Scripture in community (HS)
- skills useful to believers (study, prayer, community)

Participants' Stories

Recruit for next week

Ice Breaker

What does the term "catechist" mean to you?

About Being a Catechist

- Be ready to say "I don't know"
- Answer questions:
 - 1. Do I belong? (hospitality)
 - 2. Is there order here? (norms, group dynamics)
- Showing up
- Preparation
- Homework: read the catechism

Intercessory Prayer

Pray for the catechumenoi with whom we will be working. Are there any individuals you have invited or would like to invite? Pray for them!

14 October: Proper 23, Year B

Amos 5:6-7, 10-15

Hebrews 4:12-16

Psalms 90:12-17

Mark 10:17-31

Lord, we pray that your grace may always precede and follow us, that we may continually be given to good works; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. Amen.

Participants' Stories

Ice Breaker

What was interesting or new or curious to you in the catechism?

About Story Telling

- timer, silence, thanks. Problems?

About Ice Breaker

About Discussions

- structure
 - pick and choose questions, watching time
 - get down the list ASAP: goal is Application!
 - Real goal is discussion: engagement
- Questions (types; hogging/bogging/frogging)
- Guide to Fruitful Discussion on back
- Aural Bible Study

About Intercessory Prayer

- 1:1 or groups of 3, max. Sponsors with catechumens?
- Greater intimacy; training in prayer.

Intercessory Prayer

Pray for one another as we serve those who come to Journey.

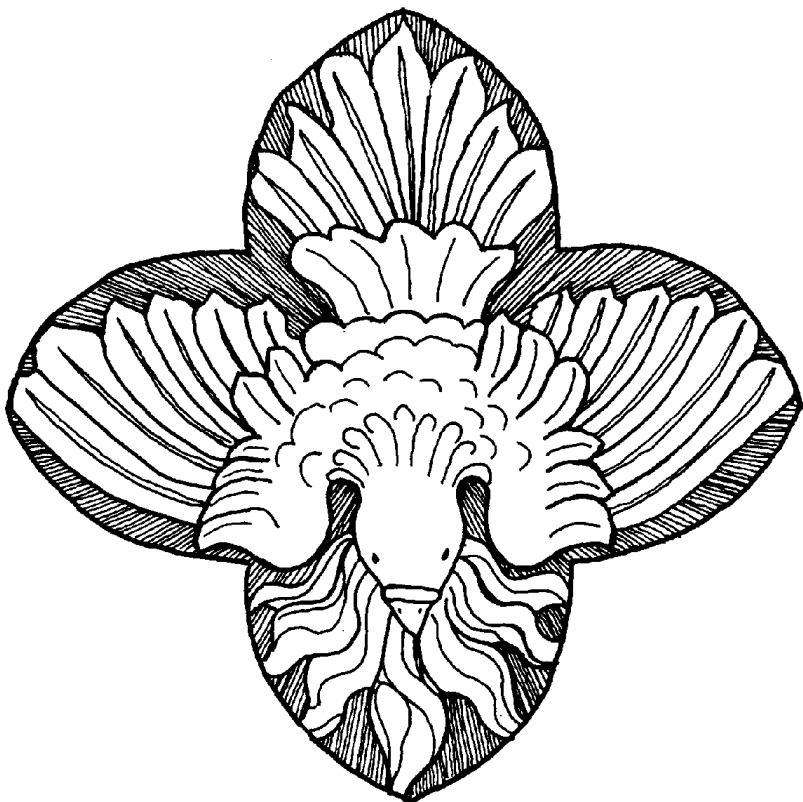
Resources

<http://www.lectionarypage.net/>

Perason & Szoke, eds., *The Prayer Book Guide to Christian Education*

Linda Grenz, *A Guide to the New Church's Teaching Series*

Note to catechist: Discussion questions follow. Please remember you don't have to use them all! The point is to generate conversation about the Gospel. If something catches and sparks a (remotely relevant) conversation, let it flow and discover where it goes. This may be God's Spirit leading your group!



21 October: Proper 24, Year B

Isaiah 53:4-12

Hebrews 5:1-10

Psalms 91:9-16

Mark 10:35-45

Almighty and everlasting God, in Christ you have revealed your glory among the nations: Preserve the works of your mercy, that your Church throughout the world may persevere with steadfast faith in the confession of your Name; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.

Participants' Stories

First week: catechist and a forewarned sponsor.

Recruit for next week (five weeks left)!

Ice Breaker

What brought you to St. Paul's?

Read / Observation

1. James and John are brothers. What do they want?
2. What does Jesus give them in return? Is this a curse or a blessing?
3. What does Jesus say leadership means among his disciples?

Interpretation

1. What might Jesus be speaking of with the terms "cup" and "baptism"? (*cf, Mk 14.36 for cup and Mk 10.34 for baptism*)
2. What is the relationship between the glory and the cup?
3. How does Jesus exercise leadership in the church?
4. What does this say about human nature?

Application

1. What would you request of Jesus? What would he give?
2. How might you become a leader in Jesus' community?
3. What relationship does the cup bear to baptism in the Christian church?

Intercessory Prayer

Our help is in God: for what would you like prayer in your life?

28 October: Proper 25, Year B

Jeremiah 31:7-9

Hebrews 7:23-28

Psalm 126

Mark 10:46-52

Almighty and everlasting God, increase in us the gifts of faith, hope, and charity; and, that we may obtain what you promise, make us love what you command; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.

Participants' Stories

Recruit for next week (four weeks left)!

Ice Breaker

What was your favorite part of today's liturgy? Why?

Read / Observation

1. What is the crowd's response to Bartimaeus?
2. What is Jesus' response to Bartimaeus?
3. What is Bartimaeus' response to Jesus after being healed?
4. Who are the different players in this account?

Interpretation

1. With which of the players do you identify in this account?
2. Why did the crowd speak to Bartimaeus so rudely?
3. What attracted Jesus to Bartimaeus?
4. What other things might Bartimaeus have asked of Jesus?

Application

1. Are there people like Bartimaeus in our communities?
2. What is Bartimaeus' example to us?

Intercessory Prayer

In what ways are you blind, disabled and in need of Jesus' healing touch?

4 November: Proper 26, Year B

Deuteronomy 6:1-9

Hebrews 9:11-14

Psalms 119:1-8

Mark 12:28-34

Catechism: BCP p. 850, The New Covenant

Almighty and merciful God, it is only by your gift that your faithful people offer you true and laudable service: Grant that we may run without stumbling to obtain your heavenly promises; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. Amen.

Participants' Stories

Recruit for next week (three weeks left)!

Ice Breaker

Have you ever gotten something new (e.g., car, computer, etc.) but wished you still had the old one instead?

Read / Observation

1. What are the greatest commandments? In what order?
2. What is the value of religious ritual relative to these commands?

Interpretation

1. Are these commandments something Jesus made up? (Cf., Dt. 6.4–9, Lev 19.9–18)
2. Why do they stand out as the most important?
3. Why is their order important?
4. What is the kingdom of God from which the scribe is not far?

Application

1. How do these commandments shape our church's life?
2. What would the world be like if everyone lived by these commands?
3. How would your life be different if you lived by these commands?

Intercessory Prayer

Where might you have opportunity to put this new covenant into practice this week?

11 November: Proper 27, Year B

1 Kings 17:8-16

Hebrews 9:24-28

Psalms 146

Mark 12:38-44

Catechism: BCP p. 846, The Old Covenant

O God, whose blessed Son came into the world that he might destroy the works of the devil and make us children of God and heirs of eternal life: Grant that, having this hope, we may purify ourselves as he is pure; that, when he comes again with power and great glory, we may be made like him in his eternal and glorious kingdom; where he lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.

Participants' Stories

Recruit for next week (two weeks left)!

Ice Breaker

Tell us (briefly!) about someone you admire.

Read / Observation

1. What does Jesus say about the scribes?
2. What does Jesus say about the widow?

Interpretation

1. What distinction does Jesus draw between the scribes and the widow?
2. Whom does Jesus hold up as a model worthy of emulation? Why?
3. What does Jesus mean by saying that the widow gave more?

Application

1. What response does God require of us?
2. Why do Christians give?
3. What do Christians give?
4. To whom do Christians give?
5. Is the "amount" you give important?

Intercessory Prayer

How is God calling you, personally, to give?

18 November: Proper 28, Year B

Daniel 12:1-3

Hebrews 10:11-14 (15-18) 19-25

Psalms 16

Mark 13:1-8

Catechism: BCP p. 853, The Holy Scriptures

Blessed Lord, who caused all holy Scriptures to be written for our learning: Grant us so to hear them, read, mark, learn, and inwardly digest them, that we may embrace and ever hold fast the blessed hope of everlasting life, which you have given us in our Savior Jesus Christ; who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.

Participants' Stories

Recruit for next week (one week left)!

Ice Breaker

What is your most meaningful experience of the Bible?

Read / Observation

1. Where do we hear Scripture in the liturgy? What Scripture? Why?
2. In today's Gospel, What is Jesus' prediction?
3. What further detail do some disciples request?
4. What is Jesus' response? Does he answer their question?

Interpretation

1. Why might Jesus have chosen not to answer with a definitive date?
2. Thinking of the collect, are there certain questions the Bible is interested in answering? Like what?
3. Are there certain questions the Bible might not answer? What? Why?

Application

1. What kinds of questions might one bring to the study of Scripture?
2. What are some resources one might use when Scripture seems ambiguous or doesn't seem to address one's own questions?
3. What are some different ways people spend time with Scripture?

Intercessory Prayer

How will you spend time with Scripture this week?

25 November: Christ the King, Proper 29, Year B

Daniel 7:9-10, 13-14

Revelation 1:4b-8

Psalm 93

John 18:33-37

Catechism: BCP p. 849, God the Son

Almighty and everlasting God, whose will it is to restore all things in your well-beloved Son, the King of kings and Lord of lords: Mercifully grant that the peoples of the earth, divided and enslaved by sin, may be freed and brought together under his most gracious rule; who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. Amen.

Participants' Stories

Last week!

Follow up from last week: Does anyone have stories of spending time with Scripture this past week to share with the group? What was it like? (*Counsel perseverance: requires practice, like any worthwhile endeavor.*)

Reflections on the Journey so far.

1. What has been meaningful/helpful to you?
2. What have you learned?
3. What have you experienced?
4. What do you still wish you could learn/experience?
5. What do you find attractive about Christianity? About this community?
6. What do you find challenging about Christianity? About this community?

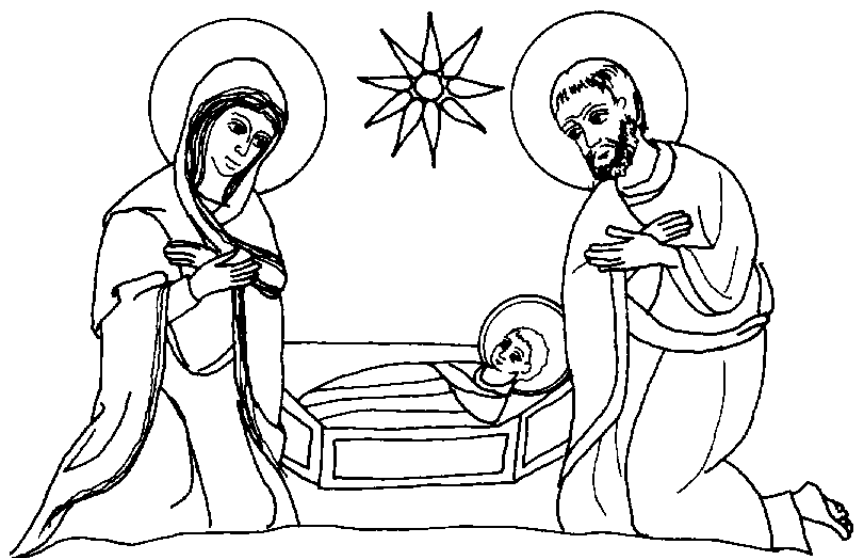
Read Gospel

Invitation to continue the Journey in January.

Intercessory Prayer

What does it mean for you to listen to Jesus' voice?

(Break for December)



6 January: The Epiphany

Isaiah 60:1-6

Ephesians 3:1-12

Psalms 72:1-7,10-14

Matthew 2:1-12

Catechism: BCP p. 856, Prayer and Worship

O God, by the leading of a star you manifested your only Son to the peoples of the earth: Lead us, who know you now by faith, to your presence, where we may see your glory face to face; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. Amen.

Ice Breaker

To what kind of prayer do you tend to turn most frequently?

Observation

1. Who are the different characters in this narrative? In what different ways did they respond to the birth of Jesus?
2. Where were Jesus' family living at this time? (*not in the stable!*)
3. What were the gifts offered to Jesus?

Interpretation

1. What did "wise men from the East" have to do with Jesus, even if he was a king? Why was it these, foreigners, who came to worship instead of Jesus' countrymen?
2. Why was Herod frightened?
3. What do you imagine Jesus' family did with these gifts? (*travel expenses?*)

Application

1. What "star" or other phenomenon led you to seek Jesus? Where did you find him?
2. How are prayer and worship like the wise men's gifts? What is their importance/value in the Christian life? (*cf., temple worship vs. today*)
3. When do you find space in your life for prayer and worship?
4. What difference do your encounters with Jesus make in your life?

Intercessory Prayer

What type of prayer do you require today? (Thanksgiving, oblation, etc. from our list in the catechism)

13 January: First Sunday after the Epiphany, Year C

The Baptism of our Lord

Isaiah 43:1-7

Acts 8:14-17

Psalms 29

Luke 3:15-17, 21-22

Catechism: BCP p. 858, Holy Baptism

Father in heaven, who at the baptism of Jesus in the River Jordan proclaimed him your beloved Son and anointed him with the Holy Spirit: Grant that all who are baptized into his Name may keep the covenant they have made, and boldly confess him as Lord and Savior; who with you and the Holy Spirit lives and reigns, one God, in glory everlasting. Amen.

Ice Breaker

Describe a rite of passage or some other experience that left you a changed person, different afterwards than before.

Questions

(Ancient growers of wheat would cut the stalks, then beat them to separate the wheat from the chaff. Using a rake, the winnower would toss the beaten wheat into the air above the threshing floor so that the chaff would blow away in the breeze and the heavier wheat would settle back to the floor to be collected and stored. Note that the Greek and Hebrew words translated "spirit" also mean "breath" or "wind.")

1. Why did people wonder whether John was the Messiah?
2. How does John characterize the difference between his baptism and that of the Messiah? What do you think he means?
3. Why was Jesus baptized?
4. What might Jesus have felt when he heard that voice from heaven?

Application

1. What are the requirements for baptism?
2. What is the relationship between grace and baptism?
3. How does baptism bring death? How does it bring life?
5. What is symbolized in Eucharist? How does it relate to baptism?
6. Why do you seek (your own or another's) baptism/re-affirmation? How will that shape your life during the week to come?

Intercessory Prayer

Pray for one another, that we will be bold in showing others the outward, visible signs of God's grace in us and in showing ourselves the inward.

20 January: Second Sunday after the Epiphany, Year C

Isaiah 62:1-5

1 Corinthians 12:1-11

Psalms 36:5-10

John 2:1-11

Catechism: BCP p. 857, The Sacraments

Almighty God, whose Son our Savior Jesus Christ is the light of the world: Grant that your people, illumined by your Word and Sacraments, may shine with the radiance of Christ's glory, that he may be known, worshipped, and obeyed to the ends of the earth; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who with you and the Holy Spirit lives and reigns, one God, now and for ever. Amen.

Ice Breaker

What is a special memory you carry of participating in the Eucharist?

Observation

1. What was the purpose of the stone jars?
2. How much wine did Jesus provide?
3. Who witnessed this miracle?

Interpretation

1. What is the nature of the interaction between Jesus and his mother here? And what does Jesus mean when he says, "My hour has not yet come"?
2. Do you hear echoes of the Old Testament in this account?
3. Do you hear echoes of the eucharist in this account?
4. What is the purpose of a sign? What is the purpose/result of *this* sign?
5. Why didn't Jesus make this sign more/less public?

Application

1. How are you illumined by God's Word and Sacraments?
2. How is the radiance of Christ's glory revealed to you?
3. How have you received God's grace in your life?

Intercessory Prayer

How do you need to see God's grace in your life right now?

27 January: Third Sunday after the Epiphany, Year C

Nehemiah 8:1-3, 5-6, 8-10

1 Corinthians 12:12-31a

Psalms 19

Luke 4:14-21

Catechism: BCP p. 852, The Holy Spirit

Give us grace, O Lord, to answer readily the call of our Savior Jesus Christ and proclaim to all people the Good News of his salvation, that we and the whole world may perceive the glory of his marvelous works; who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.

Ice Breaker

What is some good news you have received recently?

Observation

1. How was Jesus received by the people in the countryside?
2. How does the description of what happens in the synagogue remind you of the practice of the church today?
3. What are the marks of the "year of the Lord's favor"?

Interpretation

1. What do you think it means that Jesus was "filled with the power of the Spirit"?
2. What does Jesus/Isaiah suggest it means to be "filled with the power of the Spirit"?
3. What does Jesus mean when he speaks of this scripture's fulfillment "today" and "in your hearing"?
4. For whom is this good news? For whom is it bad news?

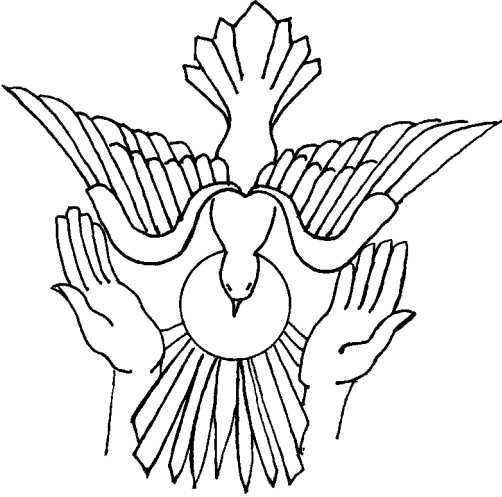
Application

1. What is the work of the Holy Spirit today?
2. What good news does the church share today?
3. For what were you / will you be anointed after baptism?

Intercessory Prayer

How do you perceive God's Spirit at work in you?

(Break to initiate those seeking baptism/reaffirmation, Lent begins.)



17 February: First Sunday in Lent, Year C

Deuteronomy 26:1-11

Romans 10:8b-13

Psalms 91:1-2, 9-16

Luke 4:1-13

Catechism: BCP p. 847, The Ten Commandments

Almighty God, whose blessed Son was led by the Spirit to be tempted by Satan: Come quickly to help us who are assaulted by many temptations; and, as you know the weaknesses of each of us, let each one find you mighty to save; through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. Amen.

Ice Breaker

What is your experience of the spiritual discipline of fasting? Why is it done, to what end?

Observation

1. Why did Jesus enter the wilderness? What did he do there?
2. What is the first temptation offered by the devil? To what does he appeal? Why should Jesus refuse?
3. What is the second temptation? Its appeal? Why refuse?
4. What is the third temptation? Its appeal? Why refuse?
5. Where does Jesus find words and strength to refuse temptation?

Interpretation

1. Do you think fasting for 40 days left Jesus more ready or less ready to meet the devil's challenge?
2. Do you think Jesus was actually tempted by the devil's offers? Did he find them difficult to resist?
3. What is sin?
4. Are the devil's promises to be trusted?

Application

1. What such bargains are on offer today? Who is offering them?
2. How does one tell truth from fiction in these bargains?
3. What resources do we have for meeting temptation?

Intercessory Prayer

What is your duty to God and your duty to neighbor during this lenten season?

24 February: Second Sunday in Lent, Year C

Genesis 15:1-12, 17-18

Philippians 3:17-4:1

Psalms 27

Luke 13:31-35

Catechism: BCP p. 848, Sin and Redemption

O God, whose glory it is always to have mercy: Be gracious to all who have gone astray from your ways, and bring them again with penitent hearts and steadfast faith to embrace and hold fast the unchangeable truth of your Word, Jesus Christ your Son; who with you and the Holy Spirit lives and reigns, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.

Ice Breaker

When have you seen redemption in action?

Observation

1. Who is Herod?
2. What is Jesus' mission today?
3. What does Jesus anticipate in the very near future?
4. What are Jesus' feelings about Jerusalem?

Interpretation

1. Why would Herod want to kill Jesus?
2. Why does Jerusalem kill prophets?
3. How is Jesus a prophet? (What is a prophet?)
4. Why does Jesus willingly go to his death?
5. What is this house that is left to Jerusalem? (*the temple?*) What does Jesus mean by this reference?
6. Can this Messiah redeem the actions of Herod / Jerusalem?

Application

1. Do you recognize a line from our liturgy in this passage? Where in the liturgy? Why do you think we include it?
2. How has Jesus cast out demons or performed cures in your experience?
3. What exorcism/cure do you require of Jesus? Jesus longs to gather you under his wings: what is lacking for you to acquiesce?

Intercessory Prayer

Where do you require redemption in your life today? Where are you taking matters into your own hands instead of seeking God's will?

3 March: Third Sunday in Lent, Year C

Exodus 3:1-15

1 Corinthians 10:1-13

Psalms 63:1-8

Luke 13:1-9

Catechism: BCP p. 845, Human Nature

Almighty God, you know that we have no power in ourselves to help ourselves: Keep us both outwardly in our bodies and inwardly in our souls, that we may be defended from all adversities which may happen to the body, and from all evil thoughts which may assault and hurt the soul; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.

Ice Breaker

When have you received a second chance?

Observation

1. What are the tragedies here under discussion?
2. What is the theory about their cause which Jesus seeks to refute?
3. What explanation does Jesus offer instead? (*none?*)
4. What is Jesus' warning?

Interpretation

1. Do bad things happen to good people?
2. What do the various characters in Jesus' parable represent?
3. What might the figs represent?
4. What is the message of the parable?
5. Where do you see yourself in this passage?

Application

1. What might Christians infer from the presence of adversity in their lives? (*Not much? The lot of humanity?*)
2. What are Christians called to do when they see a dearth of good fruit in their lives?
3. What is repentance? What does it look like in your life?
4. What are the benefits of repentance? What is the alternative?

Intercessory Prayer

Pray a prayer of repentance together. Use your own words and as much or as little specificity as you feel comfortable sharing. God knows and understands. Pray for the forgiveness of each other.

10 March: Fourth Sunday in Lent, Year C

Joshua 5:9-12

2 Corinthians 5:16-21

Psalms 32

Luke 15:1-3, 11b-32

Catechism: BCP p. 846, God the Father

Gracious Father, whose blessed Son Jesus Christ came down from heaven to be the true bread which gives life to the world: Evermore give us this bread, that he may live in us, and we in him; who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. Amen.

Ice Breaker

Have you ever lost anything vitally important to you?

Observation / Interpretation

1. What did the younger son want?
2. How do you think the father might have felt about his son's request?
3. What did the younger son do with what he received?
4. How did the father receive the son on his return? What did he feel?
5. How did the brother receive the son on his return? What did he feel?
6. How do you think the younger son felt in the end?
7. Who might have enjoyed hearing this story?
8. Who might have responded negatively to this story?

Application

1. With whom in this story do you most identify? Why?
2. Whom might the other characters in the story represent?
3. What does this story teach us about the nature of God?
4. What does this story teach us about our relationship with God?
5. What does this story teach us about our relationship with one another?

Intercessory Prayer

How are you turning your back on God, or running away from God, or being bitter towards God?

17 March: Fifth Sunday in Lent, Year C

Isaiah 43:16-21

Philippians 3:4b-14

Psalms 126

John 12:1-8

Catechism: BCP p. 859, The Holy Eucharist

Almighty God, you alone can bring into order the unruly wills and affections of sinners: Grant your people grace to love what you command and desire what you promise; that, among the swift and varied changes of the world, our hearts may surely there be fixed where true joys are to be found; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. Amen.

Ice Breaker

What is a great sacrifice you have made?

Observation

1. What is the backstory behind Lazarus? (*cf.*, *John 11*)
2. What is the backstory behind Martha and Mary? (*cf.*, *Luke 10.38-42*)
3. How much is a denarius? (*a day's wages for a laborer*)
4. What is Judas's complaint?

Interpretation

1. How would you characterize Mary's action?
2. How do you think Mary came by such an extravagant gift?
3. Why Jesus' feet?
4. Where does Jesus stand on caring for the poor?
5. Why was this story, among so many, chosen to be written down in John's Gospel? What does it communicate to us today?
6. To whom do you relate in this story?

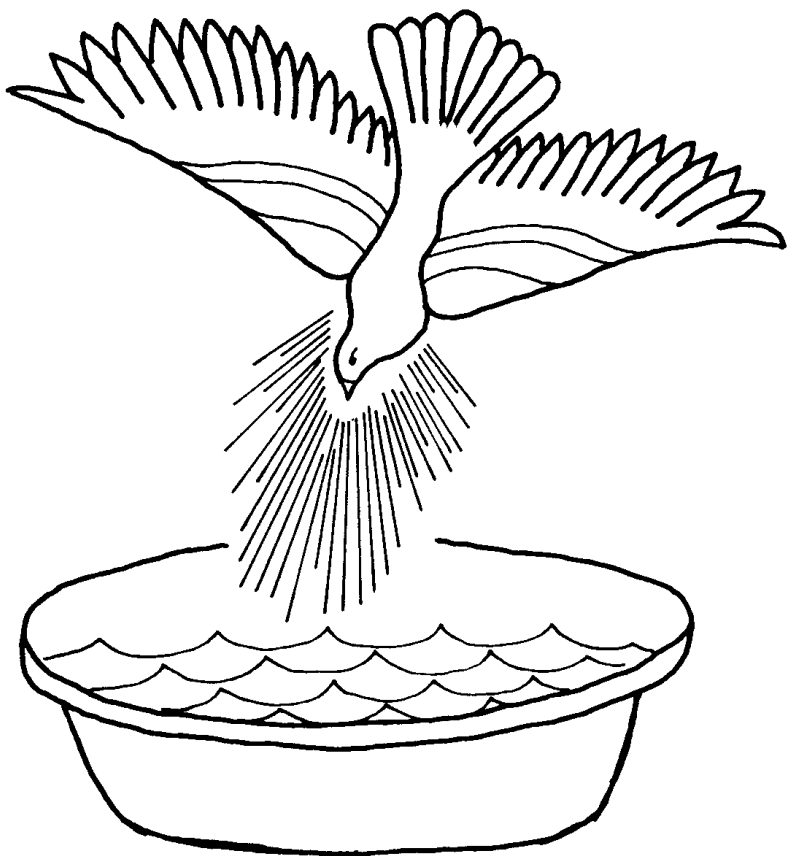
Application

1. How might Christians care for the poor? How do you?
2. How might Christians today emulate Mary's action? How do you?
3. How does God show his extravagance in your life?
4. For silent thought: How do you show extravagance toward God?

Intercessory Prayer

How can you honor God's extravagance toward you?

(Easter break; baptisms!)



7 April: Second Sunday of Easter, Year C

Acts 5:27-32

Revelation 1:4-8

Psalm 118:14-29 or Psalm 150

John 20:19-31

Catechism: BCP p. 851, The Creeds

Almighty and everlasting God, who in the Paschal mystery established the new covenant of reconciliation: Grant that all who have been reborn into the fellowship of Christ's Body may show forth in their lives what they profess by their faith; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.

Ice Breaker

What was something which was striking or memorable to you from the Holy Week festivities?

Observation

1. How many times did Jesus appear to his disciples after his resurrection?
2. What is Jesus' standard greeting here?
3. What authority seems to come with the reception of the Holy Spirit by the disciples?
4. What does Thomas demand? What is Jesus' response?
5. What is the purpose of the signs recorded throughout John's Gospel?
6. What is the result of believing that Jesus is the Messiah?

Interpretation

1. Why does John point out the doors were locked?
2. Why does John tell the story of Thomas's doubts? How is it relevant to us today?

Application

1. What does it mean to believe that Jesus is the Messiah? How does "believing" look in your life?
2. To whom was granted the authority to forgive sins?
3. How does reciting the creeds reinforce our faith?
4. How do the creeds promote unity in Christ's church?

Intercessory Prayer

With what kinds of doubts do you presently struggle?

14 April: Third Sunday of Easter, Year C

Acts 9:1-6, (7-20)

Revelation 5:11-14

Psalm 30

John 21:1-19

Catechism: BCP p. 855, The Ministry

O God, whose blessed Son made himself known to his disciples in the breaking of bread: Open the eyes of our faith, that we may behold him in all his redeeming work; who lives and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. Amen.

Ice Breaker

Have you ever failed to recognize someone close to you after a long absence (or a radical haircut)?

Observation

1. Where were the disciples? What were they doing?
2. How many fish did the disciples catch before seeing Jesus? How many after?
3. Where did Jesus get the food he was preparing?
4. What is Jesus' final instruction to Peter?

Interpretation

1. Why did the disciples choose to go fishing?
2. Why didn't the disciples recognize Jesus at first?
3. How did Jesus make his identity known to the disciples?
4. Why did Jesus have such an odd conversation with Peter? How many times does Jesus ask Peter the same question? Why?
5. What is meant by Jesus' strange prophecy about Peter's future?
6. How could an apostle's death glorify God?!?

Application

1. Are we ever slow to recognize Jesus' presence?
2. How does Jesus make his presence known to us today?
3. Has Jesus ever called you to difficult things? To death?
4. To what is Jesus calling you today? How does your life (or possibly your death) glorify God?

Intercessory Prayer

What do you need to change in your life for others to recognize you as an ambassador of Christ?

21 April: Fourth Sunday of Easter, Year C

Acts 9:36-43

Revelation 7:9-17

Psalm 23

John 10:22-30

Catechism: BCP p. 861, The Christian Hope

O God, whose Son Jesus is the good shepherd of your people: Grant that when we hear his voice we may know him who calls us each by name, and follow where he leads; who, with you and the Holy Spirit, lives and reigns, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.

Ice Breaker

For what do you hope?

Observation

(Feast of Dedication = Channukah)

1. What is the accusation of Jesus' questioners?
2. How has Jesus attempted to answer their questions in the past?
3. What reason does Jesus give for his questioners' unbelief?

Interpretation

1. Why do Jesus' questioners believe neither Jesus' words nor Jesus' signs?
2. What does it mean to belong to Jesus' sheep? What do Jesus' sheep do? What do they receive?
3. How secure are Jesus' sheep?
4. From where does Jesus receive his power/authority?

Application

1. Is it possible to see such a sharp contrast between Jesus' sheep and those who are not of Jesus' sheep in the world today?
2. How does one become one of Jesus' sheep?
3. How does one recognize Jesus' sheep?
4. Are you tuned in to God's voice? How does one recognize Jesus' voice?

Intercessory Prayer

Do you struggle with hope or with confidence in your acceptance by God?

28 April: Fifth Sunday of Easter, Year C

Acts 11:1-18

Revelation 21:1-6

Psalms 148

John 13:31-35

Catechism: BCP p. 854, The Church

Almighty God, whom truly to know is everlasting life: Grant us so perfectly to know your Son Jesus Christ to be the way, the truth, and the life, that we may steadfastly follow his steps in the way that leads to eternal life; through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord, who lives and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.

Ice Breaker

How does your family or other intimate community show its love for one another?

Interpretation

1. Jesus says the time is now. How is he about to be glorified?
2. Why cannot the disciples follow where Jesus is going?
3. At the very end of his ministry, Jesus leaves his disciples with one final instruction. What is it?
4. How does loving one another demonstrate that one is Jesus' disciple?
5. What is the connection between Jesus' final act and final command?
6. What is the context for this traumatic message? (*If you have lots of time, consider relating this to 1 Cor 11.17-34 or Acts 11.1-18.*)

Application

1. How relevant is this commandment for us today? How do you carry it out in your own life and in the church?
2. How does this commandment relate to conflict within the church? Between churches or denominations?
3. How does one show love to someone with whom one disagrees?
4. How does one show love to a person who is being destructive toward themselves or others?

Intercessory Prayer

Where and with whom is God calling you to love one other?

5 May: Sixth Sunday of Easter, Year C

Acts 16:9-15

Revelation 21:10, 22-22:5

Psalms 67

John 14:23-29 or John 5:1-9

O God, you have prepared for those who love you such good things as surpass our understanding: Pour into our hearts such love towards you, that we, loving you in all things and above all things, may obtain your promises, which exceed all that we can desire; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.

Aural Bible Study for this morning's Gospel (Handout)

Note to participants: you can do this with anyone, anyplace! This is a way to listen to God speaking both through Scripture and through the Holy Spirit in one's companions.

- One person reads the passage.
- Following a moment of reflection, each person says a word or short phrase from the passage which caught their attention.
- A different person reads the passage.
- Following 3-5 minutes of silent reflection on the question, "Where does this passage touch my life today?" each person shares, "For me..."
- A different person reads the passage.
- Following 3-5 minutes of silent reflection on the question, "From what I have heard and shared, what does God want me to do or be this week? How does God want invite me to change?" each person shares, "For me..."
- Ask each person to pray in turn for the fulfillment of what the person to their left shared. Close with the Lord's prayer.

12 May: Seventh Sunday of Easter, Year C

Acts 16:16-34

Revelation 22:12-14, 16-17, 20-21

Psalm 97

John 17:20-26

Catechism: BCP p. 860, Other Sacramental Rites

O God, the King of glory, you have exalted your only Son Jesus Christ with great triumph to your kingdom in heaven: Do not leave us comfortless, but send us your Holy Spirit to strengthen us, and exalt us to that place where our Savior Christ has gone before; who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, in glory everlasting. Amen.

Ice Breaker

What are you going to do next Sunday instead of coming to Journey?

Observation

1. These are Jesus' final words of instruction to his disciples before his crucifixion. What does Jesus want to get across?
2. Who are those who will believe through the apostles' words?
3. How does God's activity in believers change the world?
4. How does Jesus characterize God's love for believers?

Interpretation

1. What does it mean for the believers to be "one"? (*unity vs. uniformity*)
2. What is the "glory" that Jesus has given to believers (v. 22)?
3. The trinity might be conceived of us as a "divine community." What does this passage teach about that community?

Application

1. How will Jesus' final prayer shape your life of faith moving forward?
-

Debriefing

What would you say is the most important thing that happened to you on this Journey of the last several months? Why? How is your life different now than it was before?

Guide to Fruitful Discussion

1. Listen to and consider each contribution
2. Allow others to speak
3. Disagree without confrontation
4. Focus on the topic
5. Keep within the group personal stories (confidentiality)

THE GOAL IS NOT CONSENSUS



Thanks for help building this booklet to:
Doug Bosscher
Becky Foster
Pat Smith
Linda Ward

Comments/Questions/Suggestions to: Todd Foster