

Contents

Foreword	5	Nineteenth Sunday of the Year	110
Introduction	7	Twentieth Sunday of the Year	112
A suggested model for celebrating the Liturgy of the Word with children	9	Twenty-first Sunday of the Year	114
Year A		Twenty-second Sunday of the Year	116
Advent	13	Twenty-third Sunday of the Year	118
First Sunday of Advent	14	Twenty-fourth Sunday of the Year	120
Second Sunday of Advent	16	Twenty-fifth Sunday of the Year	122
Third Sunday of Advent	18	Twenty-sixth Sunday of the Year	124
Fourth Sunday of Advent	20	Twenty-seventh Sunday of the Year	126
Christmas Day (Years A, B and C)	22	Twenty-eighth Sunday of the Year	128
The Holy Family	26	Twenty-ninth Sunday of the Year	130
Second Sunday after Christmas (Years A, B and C)	28	Thirtieth Sunday of the Year	132
The Epiphany of the Lord (Years A, B and C)	30	Thirty-first Sunday of the Year	134
The Baptism of the Lord (Years A, B and C)	32	Thirty-second Sunday of the Year	136
Lent	35	Thirty-third Sunday of the Year	138
First Sunday of Lent	36	Christ the King	140
Second Sunday of Lent	38	Year B	
Third Sunday of Lent	40	First Sunday of Advent	144
Fourth Sunday of Lent	42	Second Sunday of Advent	146
Fifth Sunday of Lent	44	Third Sunday of Advent	148
Palm (Passion) Sunday (Years A, B and C):		Fourth Sunday of Advent	150
Liturgy of the Palms	46	The Holy Family	152
Palm (Passion) Sunday (Years A, B and C):		First Sunday of Lent	154
Liturgy of the Passion	48	Second Sunday of Lent	156
Easter Day (Years A, B and C)	56	Third Sunday of Lent	158
Second Sunday of Easter	58	Fourth Sunday of Lent	160
Third Sunday of Easter	60	Fifth Sunday of Lent	162
Fourth Sunday of Easter	62	Second Sunday of Easter	164
Fifth Sunday of Easter	64	Third Sunday of Easter	166
Sixth Sunday of Easter	66	Fourth Sunday of Easter	168
The Ascension of the Lord (Years A, B and C)	68	Fifth Sunday of Easter	170
Seventh Sunday of Easter	70	Sixth Sunday of Easter	172
Pentecost Sunday (Years A, B and C)	72	Seventh Sunday of Easter	174
Trinity Sunday (Years A, B and C)	74	Second Sunday of the Year	176
Second Sunday of the Year	76	Third Sunday of the Year	178
Third Sunday of the Year	78	Fourth Sunday of the Year	180
Fourth Sunday of the Year	80	Fifth Sunday of the Year	182
Fifth Sunday of the Year	82	Sixth Sunday of the Year	184
Sixth Sunday of the Year	84	Seventh Sunday of the Year	186
Seventh Sunday of the Year	86	Eighth Sunday of the Year	188
Eighth Sunday of the Year	88	Ninth Sunday of the Year	190
Ninth Sunday of the Year	90	Tenth Sunday of the Year	192
Tenth Sunday of the Year	92	Eleventh Sunday of the Year	194
Eleventh Sunday of the Year	94	Twelfth Sunday of the Year	196
Twelfth Sunday of the Year	96	Thirteenth Sunday of the Year	198
Thirteenth Sunday of the Year	98	Fourteenth Sunday of the Year	200
Fourteenth Sunday of the Year	100	Fifteenth Sunday of the Year	202
Fifteenth Sunday of the Year	102	Sixteenth Sunday of the Year	204
Sixteenth Sunday of the Year	104	Seventeenth Sunday of the Year	206
Seventeenth Sunday of the Year	106	Eighteenth Sunday of the Year	208
Eighteenth Sunday of the Year	108	Nineteenth Sunday of the Year	210
		Twentieth Sunday of the Year	212

Twenty-first Sunday of the Year	214	Eighth Sunday of the Year	290
Twenty-second Sunday of the Year	216	Ninth Sunday of the Year	292
Twenty-third Sunday of the Year	218	Tenth Sunday of the Year	294
Twenty-fourth Sunday of the Year	220	Eleventh Sunday of the Year	296
Twenty-fifth Sunday of the Year	222	Twelfth Sunday of the Year	298
Twenty-sixth Sunday of the Year	224	Thirteenth Sunday of the Year	300
Twenty-seventh Sunday of the Year	226	Fourteenth Sunday of the Year	302
Twenty-eighth Sunday of the Year	228	Fifteenth Sunday of the Year	304
Twenty-ninth Sunday of the Year	230	Sixteenth Sunday of the Year	306
Thirtieth Sunday of the Year	232	Seventeenth Sunday of the Year	308
Thirty-first Sunday of the Year	234	Eighteenth Sunday of the Year	310
Thirty-second Sunday of the Year	236	Nineteenth Sunday of the Year	312
Thirty-third Sunday of the Year	238	Twentieth Sunday of the Year	314
Christ the King	240	Twenty-first Sunday of the Year	316
Year C			
Advent	245	Twenty-second Sunday of the Year	318
First Sunday of Advent	246	Twenty-third Sunday of the Year	320
Second Sunday of Advent	248	Twenty-fourth Sunday of the Year	322
Third Sunday of Advent	250	Twenty-fifth Sunday of the Year	324
Fourth Sunday of Advent	252	Twenty-sixth Sunday of the Year	326
The Holy Family	254	Twenty-seventh Sunday of the Year	328
First Sunday of Lent	256	Twenty-eighth Sunday of the Year	330
Second Sunday of Lent	258	Twenty-ninth Sunday of the Year	332
Third Sunday of Lent	260	Thirtieth Sunday of the Year	334
Fourth Sunday of Lent	262	Thirty-first Sunday of the Year	336
Fifth Sunday of Lent	264	Thirty-second Sunday of the Year	338
Second Sunday of Easter	266	Thirty-third Sunday of the Year	340
Third Sunday of Easter	268	Christ the King	342
Fourth Sunday of Easter	270	Special Feasts (Years A, B and C)	
Fifth Sunday of Easter	272	Mary, Mother of God – 1 January	346
Sixth Sunday of Easter	274	The Presentation of the Lord (Candlemas)	
Seventh Sunday of Easter	276	– 2 February	348
Second Sunday of the Year	278	Solemnity of Saints Peter and Paul – 29 June	350
Third Sunday of the Year	280	Feast of the Transfiguration of the Lord – 6 August	352
Fourth Sunday of the Year	282	Solemnity of the Assumption – 15 August	354
Fifth Sunday of the Year	284	Solemnity of All Saints – 1 November	356
Sixth Sunday of the Year	286	Acclamations and Glorias	
Seventh Sunday of the Year	288	Gospel Readings	

CD track listing

The CD included with this volume is for use with the Acclamations and Glorias on pages 361-367. Tracks 1-20 are with vocals to assist in learning; tracks 21-40 are backing tracks to help with rehearsals or in an actual performance.

She'll be coming round the mountain	10 (30), 11 (31), 12 (32)	Row, row, row your boat	8 (28)
Twinkle, twinkle, little star	3 (23), 13 (33)	Pat-a-cake	9 (29)
The big ship sailed	1 (21)	The wheels on the bus	14 (34)
London Bridge is falling down	2 (22)	I'm a little teapot	15 (35), 19 (39)
The farmer's in his den	4 (24)	Old McDonald had a farm	16 (36)
Dingle dangle scarecrow	5 (25), 6 (26)	Oh we can play the big bass drum	17 (37)
Little Bo-Peep	7 (27)	See, see black sheep	18 (38)
		What shall we do with a drunken sailor?	20 (40)

Fifth Sunday of Lent

Focus

Some crumpled bandages or strips of cloth, and a sheet of paper with the word 'Help!' written on it.

Introduction

(Today's Gospel underlines Christ's humanity; his love for Lazarus and his sisters, and his genuine sadness at the death of his friend. This astonishing episode foreshadows Christ's own death, and reminds us of the effects of baptism when we die (to sin) with Christ in the font water, and rise to new life as children of God.)

Today Jesus receives an urgent message from some very good friends who desperately need his help. Rather surprisingly he does not hurry to their aid and arrives when it seems too late to do any good. But never forget that nothing is impossible for God – so listen carefully to hear what happens!

Gospel Acclamation

Light the Gospel candle and sing Acclamation 8.

Gospel

A reading from the Gospel of St John (11:1-45)
(See page 369.)

Reflection

Why did Martha and Mary send an urgent message to Jesus?

Their brother Lazarus was seriously ill and they wanted Jesus to use his healing powers.

How might they have sent such an urgent message?

Such things as telephones, e-mail and fax machines did not exist at the time of Jesus. Today we can send a message to someone living on the other side of the world and know that they will receive it very quickly. Martha and Mary probably had to send their message for help with someone travelling on horseback or by foot.

When Jesus finally arrived in Bethany, how long had Lazarus already been buried?

Lazarus had been dead for four days. According to tradition, his body had been wrapped and bound with cloth, together with sweet smelling herbs and spices.

What did Jesus do when he saw how upset Martha and Mary were?

He shared their sense of loss and grief, and wept with sadness.

Had Martha and Mary given up all hope that Jesus could somehow help their brother?

They believed that Jesus was the Christ, the Son of God. They had asked for his help in the first place because they knew that Jesus could cure their brother's illness. Although they had such complete faith and trust in him, they probably couldn't imagine that Jesus would raise their beloved brother from the dead.

Imagine you were one of the onlookers standing outside the tomb of Lazarus. How would you have felt as you watched Lazarus walk from the tomb?

How do you imagine Martha and Mary reacted when they saw their brother alive?

Activity

Photocopy and cut out the small figures from various colours of ordinary paper. Show the children how to fold them carefully, helping whenever necessary. Have a wide basin or bowl of water ready (you will need more than one for large groups). Carefully place the figures on the surface of the water, with the folded side upwards, and wait to see what happens! (They should magically unfold and appear to 'come alive'. This can take a short time – so carry on with the prayers of intercession.)

Intercessions

As brothers and sisters in one loving family, together let us pray to our heavenly Father:

That the faith of the Church continues to grow and flourish.

Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

That the sick and the suffering may find comfort and healing through God's love.

Lord in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

That those who have died may rise to new and everlasting life.

Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

That our love for one another may make our world a happier place to live.

Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

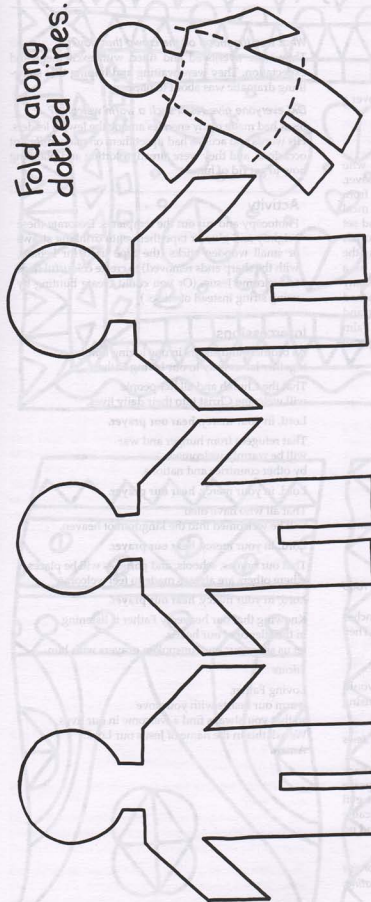
Knowing that our heavenly Father is listening, in the silence of our hearts let us share our own unspoken prayers with him.

Silence

Loving Father,
listen to the prayers of your children.
Bring comfort to those who are sad
and hope to those who believe in your love.
Grant this through Christ our Lord.

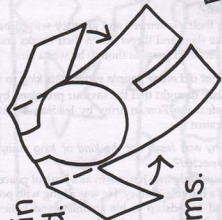
Amen.

Fold along dotted lines.

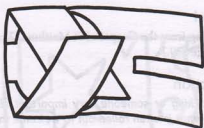


Fold in head.

Fold in arms.



Fold in legs.



Place on surface of

Water folded sides up!



Palm (Passion) Sunday (Years A, B and C)

Liturgy of the Palms

Focus

Branches or palms (real or made from paper) laid over a brightly coloured piece of cloth or garment.

Introduction

Jerusalem was bustling with crowds of people who were there to celebrate the Jewish feast of Passover, which celebrates the escape of the Israelite people from Egyptian slavery (Exodus 12:10-30). This special meal reminded people of how God had saved them and set them free. As Jesus entered Jerusalem, the crowds waved branches from the palm trees growing along the roadside and threw them down on the ground as a welcoming carpet. As they greeted him in song, many believed that he was the king the Jewish people had been waiting for to conquer their Roman enemy and once again to set them free from oppression. Palm Sunday marks the beginning of Holy Week as we recall Christ's triumphant procession into Jerusalem.

Gospel Acclamation

Light the Gospel candle and sing Acclamation 9

Gospel

A reading from the Gospel of St Matthew (21:1-11)
(See page 369.)

Reflection

When a king or someone very important visits somewhere, what is often rolled out to welcome them?

We roll out the red carpet for very special visitors.

What did the crowds outside Jerusalem 'carpet' the road with?

In their excitement and joy they waved palm branches like flags and threw down their cloaks and coats. They welcomed Jesus as though he was a king.

What did many people expect this king to do?

They thought that the saviour promised by God would defeat the Roman army by leading a war or uprising against it.

Why was Jesus not the kind of king many of the Jews expected?

Jesus rode into Jerusalem as a king of peace, on the back of a humble donkey. He was a king who preached peace and friendship to his enemies, and believed that evil could be conquered by love and forgiveness. He came as one of the people, with no army, no grandeur and no intention of fighting the Romans.

The people welcomed Jesus by singing psalms of praise from the Bible. What was the word they kept repeating, which we still use today?

'Hosanna' means 'please save' or 'save us, we pray', and the people used it as a shout of welcome.

What was the mood of the crowd that day?

They were overjoyed and filled with excitement and expectation. They were waiting and hoping that something dramatic was about to happen.

Did everyone give Jesus such a warm welcome?

Jesus had made many enemies among the Jewish leaders. His words and actions had upset them on many different occasions, and they were already plotting and planning how to get rid of him.

Activity

Photocopy and cut out the templates. Decorate these brightly and glue or tape them onto drinking straws or small wooden sticks (the type used for kebabs, with the sharp ends removed) to create colourful flags to welcome Jesus. (Or you could create bunting by using string instead of sticks.)

Intercessions

As brothers and sisters in one loving family, together let us pray to our loving Father:

That the Church and all her people will welcome Christ into their daily lives.

Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

That refugees from hunger and war will be warmly welcomed by other countries and nations.

Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

That all who have died will be welcomed into the kingdom of heaven.

Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

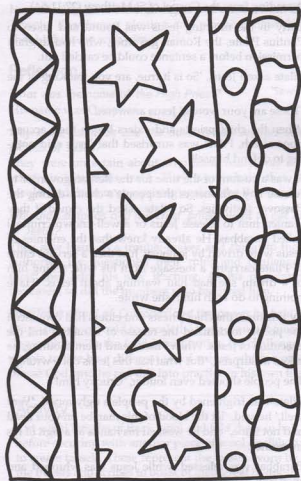
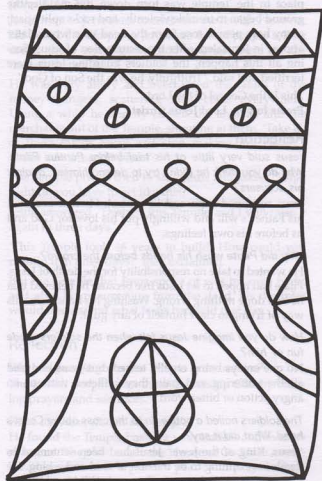
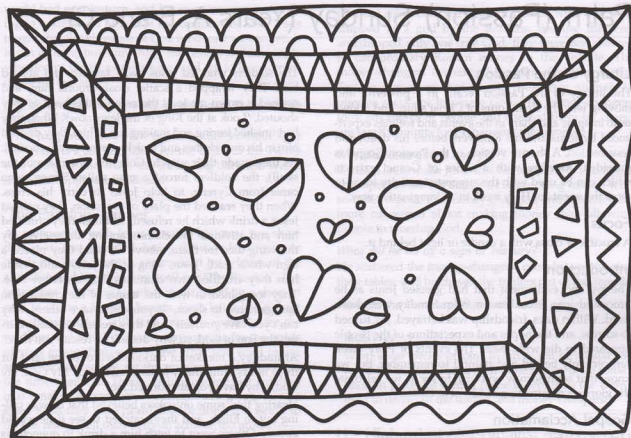
That our homes, schools, and parishes will be places where others are always made to feel welcome.

Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Knowing that our heavenly Father is listening, in the silence of our hearts let us share our own unspoken prayers with him.

Silence

Loving Father,
warm our hearts with your love
so that you always find a welcome in our lives.
We ask this in the name of Jesus our Lord.
Amen.



Palm (Passion) Sunday (Years A, B and C)

Liturgy of the Passion

The liturgy of the Passion recalls in a powerful and moving way the final hours of Christ's life, and allows us to imagine and share in the events and feelings experienced by Jesus and his followers before his death and resurrection. A shorter version of the Passion Gospel is provided, together with a series of Gospel extracts which can be used with the suggested activity ideas to retell the events of Holy week in an imaginative way.

Focus

A crucifix or cross with a candle or light behind it.

Introduction

The joy and excitement that had greeted Jesus as he processed into Jerusalem on Palm Sunday was short-lived. Within days, friendship was betrayed, joy turned to sorrow, and the hopes and expectations of the people appeared to die with Jesus. The events of Holy Week can certainly be sad and painful to remember, but we know that soon sorrow will turn to joy as we celebrate the glorious resurrection of Christ at Easter.

Gospel Acclamation

Light the Gospel candle and sing Acclamation 9.

Gospel

A reading from the Gospel of St Matthew (27:11-54)

Early in the morning Jesus was bound and taken to Pontius Pilate, the Roman governor, who had to grant permission before a sentence could be carried out.

Pilate asked Jesus, 'So is it true, are you the King of the Jews?'

'These are your words,' Jesus answered.

When the chief priests and elders began their accusations afresh, Pilate was surprised that Jesus said nothing to defend himself.

It was a custom of the time for the Roman governor to release any prisoner of the people's choice during the Passover festivities. So Pilate asked the crowd if they wanted him to release Jesus or a well-known criminal called Barabbas. He already knew that the enemies of Jesus were driven by jealousy. Just then a servant came to Pilate carrying a message from his wife, telling him of a dream she had had warning about Jesus. 'Have nothing to do with him!' she wrote.

By this time, the chief priests and elders had convinced the people to demand the release of Barabbas and the execution of Jesus. When Pilate heard them shouting, he asked in surprise, 'But what has this Jesus done wrong?'

The people shouted even louder, 'Crucify him!'

Pilate was frightened by the people's ugly mood. 'Very well,' he said, 'let the blood of this man be on your head and not mine,' and he washed his hands as a sign of his innocence.

Barabbas was released, while Jesus was whipped and then sent to be crucified.

The soldiers who led Jesus away taunted and abused him. They wrapped a scarlet cloak around him, and pressed a crown made of thorns on to his head as they shouted, 'Look at the King of the Jews now!' When they had finished jeering and making fun of him, they dressed him in his own clothes and took him away to be crucified. As they made their way to Golgotha (the place of the skull), the soldiers forced a man called Simon, who came from Cyrene, to help Jesus to carry his cross. When they reached the place of execution, they offered Jesus a drink which he refused, and then they crucified him and divided his clothes among themselves by throwing dice for them. Above his head they placed a sign which read, 'Jesus, King of the Jews', and beside him they crucified two criminals, one on either side. They too joined in with the taunts of the crowd who had gathered to shout, 'If you could save others, why can't you save yourself'; and they jeered, 'You call yourself the Son of God, so why doesn't he rescue you now!' At midday a blanket of darkness fell over the land for three hours until finally Jesus cried aloud, 'My God, my God, why have you abandoned me?'

Hearing this, some onlookers believed that he was calling out to Elijah, and they watched to see if he would appear. Others went to fetch him a drink to quench his thirst, but Jesus called out once more, and then he died.

At that moment the veil that guarded the most holy place in the Temple was torn down the middle; the ground began to tremble violently, and rocks split apart; many holy people rose from the dead who would later appear in Jerusalem after the resurrection of Jesus. Seeing all this happen, the soldiers guarding Jesus were terrified and said, 'Truthfully, he was the Son of God!'

This is the Gospel of the Lord.

Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.

Reflection

Jesus said very little at his trial before Pontius Pilate. Why do you think he didn't try to defend himself against his accusers?

Jesus remained calm and in control. He had accepted his Father's will and willingly put his love for God and us before his own feelings.

Why did Pilate wash his hands before the crowd?

He wanted to take no responsibility for the death of Jesus. Pilate had hoped to set Jesus free because he believed that he had done nothing wrong. Washing his hands was his way of trying to clear himself of any guilt.

How do you imagine Jesus felt when the soldiers made fun of him?

No one enjoys being cruelly teased, but Jesus endured all the suffering and pain they inflicted without an angry action or bitter word.

The soldiers nailed a notice on to the cross above Christ's head. What did it say?

'Jesus, King of the Jews.' Jesus had been sentenced to death for claiming to be the Son of God and a king. He was indeed a king but one who was unlike any king the

world had ever known, and his enemies were not willing to understand or accept his kingdom of love. Jesus taught that the kingdom of God is not one we can see. It is not a place, but something that exists within people who accept Christ as their king, and try to live according to his teaching.

Why do you think that the sky grew so dark in the middle of the day?

What happens if you blow out a candle? Without light the world is a darker place. As the Light of the World was dying on the cross, the increasing darkness was a sign of his approaching death.

'The Passion' banner

As we journey with Jesus towards his cross, we share the events that unfolded during the days leading up to his death. Each event is represented by a letter of the alphabet, and together they spell out 'The Passion'. The letters can be strung together or arranged on a sheet of card to create a Passion banner. Each letter has a short activity associated with it to create a symbol. Use the readings and activity ideas as appropriate for the needs of your group. Pick and choose what you want to use and what is practical for the numbers of children and the time available. Think about dividing the children into smaller groups, and then gathering together to share what they have heard and / or done. It is better to do less really well than to try to achieve too much!

T – Temper in the Temple

(John 2:13-25)

Jesus went to Jerusalem to celebrate the Jewish Passover. He found the Temple in Jerusalem full of people selling cattle, sheep and pigeons, and amongst them sat the money-changers.

He was very angry and overturned the tables of the money-changers, scattering their coins everywhere. Using a whip he angrily chased the animals and the merchants out of the Temple, shouting at them, 'Take all of these things away and stop making my Father's house into a market place!'

The Temple priests tried to stop Jesus and asked, 'What right do you have to act like this?'

Jesus answered, 'Destroy this Temple and I will raise it again in three days.'

'This Temple took 46 years to build! How could you rebuild it in three days?' they exclaimed.

But the Temple that Jesus spoke of was his own body, and after his resurrection from the dead, his disciples would understand what Jesus had said that day.

Reflection

Why did people go to the Temple in Jerusalem?

The Jewish people went there to worship God by offering prayers and sacrifices.

What did Jesus find in the Temple?

He found the Temple bustling with traders and money-changers. They had made the House of God into a market place instead of a place of peace and prayer where people could feel close to God.

(Roman coins bore the head of Caesar who was worshipped as a god by the Romans. Because the Jews worshipped only one true God, they were not allowed to use ordinary Roman money in the Temple. The money-changers exchanged Roman coins for special Temple money so that people could buy animals to offer as sacrifices to please God. The money-changers took advantage of people and cheated them by charging large amounts for exchanging these coins.)

Why did Jesus get so angry?

It took a lot to make Jesus lose his temper! He was angry and upset to see his Father's House being treated with so little respect. The money-changers and traders were more concerned about making money than allowing people to worship God.

What did he do as a sign of his fury?

He scattered the money-changers' coins by overturning their tables, and he chased the traders out of the Temple.

How did the Temple priests react to his actions?

Activity

Wrap some circles of card in silver foil or similar to represent the coins used as Temple money or tie some knots in pieces of garden twine to represent the whip used to drive out the traders and money-changers.

H – High priest plots against Jesus

(Mark 11:18)

When news reached the chief priests and scribes about Jesus chasing the money-changers and traders from the Temple, they began plotting and planning how they should do away with him.

Reflection

What was the name of the High Priest?

His name was Caiaphas.

Why were Caiaphas and the other Jewish leaders suspicious of Jesus?

They were uncertain about who Jesus really was and what his intentions were. They were afraid that he would lead them in an uprising against the Romans.

Why did Caiaphas and the chief priests want to get rid of Jesus?

They saw Jesus as a trouble-maker and threat to their authority. He questioned their rules and challenged their laws with his new teaching. As his popularity increased, so did the numbers who followed him.

Was Jesus afraid of Caiaphas and the power he held?

Jesus was never afraid to speak the truth even if it meant disagreeing with the Jewish authorities. He challenged people to live by a different set of values which would please God, and he put this into practice in his own life.

Activity

Cut equal lengths of thick wool and fold them in half before securing with another piece of wool or ribbon to create tassels. These represent the tassels worn by the priests and scribes to boast of their great holiness.

E – Entrapment

(Matthew 26:14-16)

The disciple called Judas went to the chief priests to make a deal with them. 'How much will you pay me to hand Jesus over to you?' he asked.

Having agreed on a price, they sent Judas away with thirty pieces of silver, and waited for news of the betrayal he had promised.

Reflection

Which disciple betrayed Jesus?

No one really knows what made Judas betray Jesus. Whatever his reasons were, Judas went to the chief priests and made a deal.

How much was he paid for his help?

Thirty pieces of silver (shekels) was the price paid for handing Jesus over. (At the time, this was the value placed on a slave).

Why was Judas able to betray Jesus so easily?

Judas was one of the twelve disciples who were particularly close to Jesus their master. Because Judas would have known their plans for celebrating the Passover together, it was easy for him to plot and plan to hand Jesus over.

How do you think Judas felt when he learned that Jesus had been sentenced to death?

(Matthew 27:3-5)

He was filled with deep regret and sadness. He returned the money he had been given by the chief priests and went away and killed himself.

If Judas had known what would happen to Jesus, do you think he might have acted differently?

We all make mistakes at times and do things that we later regret. We cannot undo what has already been done, but we can express our sorrow and ask to be forgiven.

Activity

Use small rectangles of cloth (sewn, stapled or glued along both sides) to create 'money bags' filled with dried lentils or rice to represent the price paid for entrapping Jesus.

P – Passover

(Matthew 26:17-19, 26-29)

As they were eating, Jesus took some bread and said a prayer of blessing. He broke the bread into pieces and shared it with them saying, 'Take this and eat it, this is my body.'

Then he took a cup of wine and said a prayer of thanks. He passed the cup to each of them and said, 'Take this and drink it, for this is my blood. Just as my Father promised, it will be poured out to save you from your sins. I shall not drink wine again until I do so with you in my Father's kingdom.'

Then they sang a hymn together before setting off for the Mount of Olives.

Reflection

Why did the Jews celebrate the Feast of Passover?

As a reminder that God had saved the people of Israel from slavery in Egypt and set them free (Exodus 12:1-30).

How did Jesus give the Passover meal new meaning?

Jesus told his friends that the bread and wine he shared with them was his own body and blood which would save people by setting them free from sin and filling them with his life and love.

Why do we call this meal the 'Last Supper'?

It was the final or last meal that Jesus shared with his disciples before he died.

Activity

Use the template to create a mosaic picture using small squares of coloured paper. Make individual copies or one large mosaic for the group to complete.

A – Agony in the garden

(Matthew 26:36-50)

When they reached the Garden of Gethsemane, Jesus took Peter, James and John with him to pray. He was filled with great sadness and fear, and said to his disciples, 'Stay awake because I need you with me tonight.' Then he went away a little further and began to pray, 'Father, I am afraid of what lies ahead but I will always do whatever you ask.'

When he returned to the three disciples he found them asleep. 'Wake up!' he said. 'Could you not stay awake with me for such a short time?' Then Jesus said to Peter, 'Stay awake and pray that you will not be put to the test.'

Twice more Jesus went away and prayed as before but returned to find them all asleep again. When he returned for the third time he said to them, 'Are you still asleep? The time has arrived for the Son of Man to be handed over to sinners. Get up, my betrayer is close by. Get up, the time has come.'

Then Judas, one of the twelve disciples, appeared with a crowd of people carrying weapons, who had been sent by the chief priests and elders. Judas stepped forward and, as pre-arranged, he kissed Jesus to signal to the crowd which man they should arrest. Then they came up and seized hold of Jesus.

Reflection

After sharing the Passover meal together, where did Jesus and his disciples go to pray?

The Garden of Gethsemane was (and still is) an olive grove or orchard on the hillside outside the walls of Jerusalem at a place called the Mount of Olives.

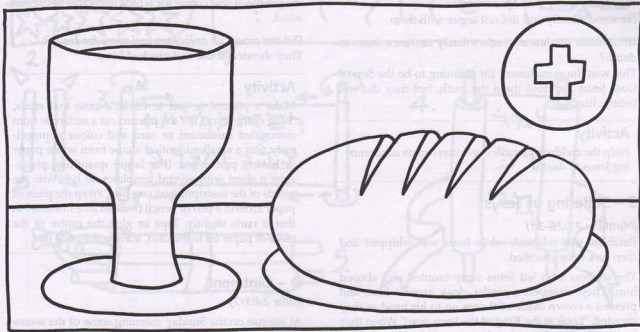
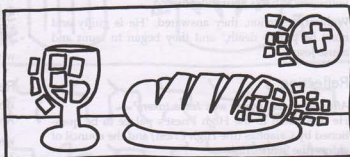
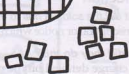
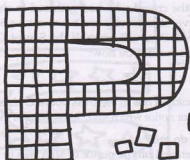
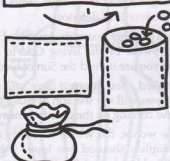
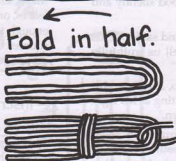
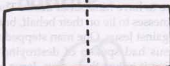
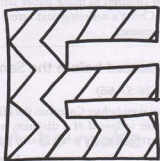
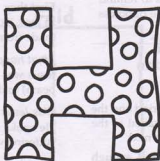
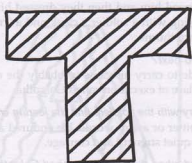
Why was Jesus so afraid?

What temptation did he face?

He could have avoided suffering and dying by running away before Judas came to betray him. He chose instead to accept death, even though he was afraid to die.

By what sign did Judas betray his Master?

Jesus was betrayed with a kiss, which is a sign of peace and friendship.



Activity

Help the children to make paper lanterns to remind them of Christ's suffering and arrest in the darkness of Gethsemane.

S – Sentenced before the Sanhedrin

(Matthew 26:57-66)

Jesus was taken before Caiaphas the High Priest and the elders. Peter followed at a distance, and waited in the palace courtyard to see what would happen next.

The accusers of Jesus were desperate to find enough evidence to have him put to death. They produced several witnesses to lie on their behalf, but still they had no proof against Jesus. One man stepped forward and told how Jesus had spoken of destroying the Temple and rebuilding it in just three days. Jesus stood silently and offered no words of defence.

Caiaphas grew increasingly frustrated and said to Jesus angrily, 'Swear by the living God to tell us truthfully whether you are indeed the Son of God!'

Jesus replied, 'You yourself have said so, and from this time on you will see the Son of Man sitting at his right hand and coming on the clouds of heaven.'

At these words, the whole assembly erupted in anger and Caiaphas shouted out loud, 'We ourselves have heard this blasphemy! We have no need of any other witnesses! What is your judgement?'

Without hesitation, they answered, 'He is guilty and must be put to death,' and they began to taunt and abuse Jesus.

Reflection

After his arrest, where was Jesus taken?

He was taken to the High Priest's palace to be questioned by Caiaphas (the High Priest) and the council of elders (the Sanhedrin).

Was Jesus angry with his accusers?

He stood silently and did not argue with them.

What made the Jewish leaders finally sentence Jesus to death?

This was the punishment for claiming to be the Son of God. Jesus had told them the truth, but they did not believe him.

Activity

Help the children to make execution orders condemning Jesus to death.

S – Suffering of Jesus

(Matthew 27:26-31)

Barabbas was released, while Jesus was whipped and then sent to be crucified.

The soldiers who led Jesus away taunted and abused him. They wrapped a scarlet cloak around him, and pressed a crown made of thorns on to his head as they shouted, 'Look at the King of the Jews now!' When they had finished jeering and making fun of him, they dressed him in his own clothes and took him away to be crucified.

Reflection

How did the Roman soldiers make Jesus suffer?

First they whipped him and then they dressed him up to look like a king with a soldier's cloak and a 'crown' made from sharp thorns.

What happened next?

Jesus was made to carry his cross (probably the cross-beam) to the place of execution called Golgotha.

Was Jesus angry with the soldiers and the jeering crowd?

He spoke no bitter or angry words. He endured all his suffering with quiet strength and courage.

What happened when they finally reached Golgotha?

The soldiers crucified him by nailing him to the cross.

Activity

Make small crowns from lengths of ivy stripped of leaves, or thornless branches and twigs that are pliable enough to bend and twist. These can be arranged on squares of red cloth representing the cloak wrapped around Jesus.

I – Inscription

(Matthew 27:37-44)

Above his head they placed a sign which read 'Jesus, King of the Jews', and beside him they crucified two criminals, one on either side. They too joined in with the taunts of the crowd who had gathered to shout, 'If you could save others, why can't you save yourself'; and they jeered, 'You call yourself the Son of God, so why doesn't he rescue you now!'

Reflection

What did the soldiers nail to the cross above Christ's head?

An inscription or notice which said, 'Jesus, King of the Jews'.

Why did they do this?

The charge detailed on the notice or sign was to inform the people of the 'crime' for which Jesus was being punished.

Did the crowd of onlookers feel sorry for Jesus?

They shouted abuse and mocked him.

Activity

Make a placard to nail to Christ's cross that reads, 'King of the Jews'. For the placard cut a rectangle from corrugated cardboard or card and colour appropriately. Cut a smaller identical shape from white paper or baking parchment. (For larger quantities, photocopy a sheet with several templates on it.) Write the words of the inscription on one side. Wrap the piece of paper around a pen or pencil (written side inwards) so that it curls slightly. Tape or glue the centre of the piece of paper on to the card, leaving the ends free.

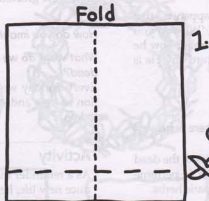
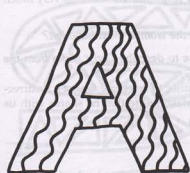
O – Ointment

(Luke 24:1-7)

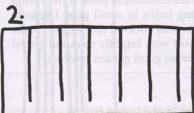
At sunrise on the Sunday morning some of the women took the burial spices and ointments they had prepared and went to the tomb where Jesus had been laid.

As they hurried away to tell the disciples their news, whom did they meet?

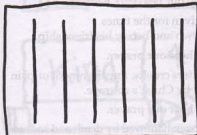
As they hurried away to tell the disciples their news, whom did they meet?



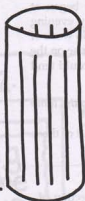
Cut to make handle.



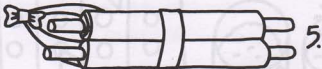
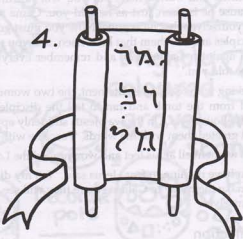
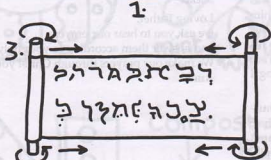
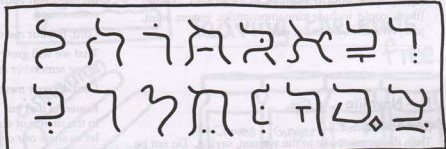
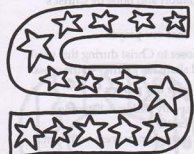
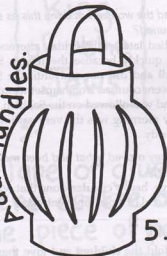
Cut $\frac{3}{4}$ way through.



4. Join and staple or glue.



Add handles.



To their surprise they found that the stone had been rolled away from the entrance to the tomb, and the body of Jesus was gone.

As they stood wondering what had happened, two angels appeared next to them and asked, 'Why do you look for the living among the dead? Remember how he told you that he would rise again on the third day. He is not here because he is risen!'

Reflection

Why were the women going to the tomb where Jesus was buried?

It was the Jewish custom to anoint the bodies of the dead with sweet-smelling ointment such as nard (a perfume extracted from an aromatic plant) and aromatic herbs.

Why had the women not done this as soon as Jesus had been buried?

Jesus died late on the Friday afternoon and had to be buried quickly because the Jewish Sabbath began at nightfall and did not end until the Saturday evening (days were counted from sunset to sunset). No work of any kind was allowed on the Sabbath, so sunrise on the Sunday morning was the very earliest they could tend to his body.

When they arrived, what had been moved from the tomb entrance?

The large, heavy circular stone that was typical of those used to seal or close tomb entrances.

Activity

Blindfold the children and give them a selection of herbs, spices and fragrances to smell and identify (these could include cinnamon sticks, ginger, mint, juniper berries, lavender oil).

N – New life

(Matthew 28:5-10)

Then the angel spoke to the women, saying, 'Do not be afraid! I know that you are looking for Jesus who was crucified and buried here, but you will not find him because he is risen, just as he told you. Come and see for yourselves that he is gone! Now you must go to his disciples and tell them that he is risen, and you will see him again in Galilee. Go, and remember everything I have told you.'

Shaking with fear and excitement, the two women hurried from the tomb and ran to tell the disciples their marvellous news. On the way Jesus suddenly appeared and greeted them with the words, 'Peace be with you!'

The women fell at his feet and worshipped the Lord.

'You have nothing to fear,' Jesus said. 'Tell my disciples to make their way to Galilee where they will see me for themselves.'

Reflection

Who first told the women that Jesus had risen?

An angel was the first to share this wonderful news with them.

As they hurried away to tell the disciples their news, whom did they meet?

They were greeted by Jesus himself who was very much alive!

How do you imagine the women must have felt?

What word do we use to describe Christ rising from the dead?

Every Sunday we gather to celebrate Christ's resurrection to new and everlasting life that he shares with us today.

Activity

As a reminder that what appears to be dead can produce new life, help the children to plant some spring or summer flowering bulbs in small pots. Decorate the pots with sequins and stick-on shapes, and cover the top of the compost with brightly coloured gravel or stones (found in most good garden centres).

Intercessions

As brothers and sisters in one loving family, together let us pray to our heavenly Father:

That we may be forgiven for the times when we let Jesus down and betray his friendship.

Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

That anyone who suffers cruelty, imprisonment or pain may be strengthened by Christ's courage.

Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

That lives which are overshadowed by death and sadness may be filled with comfort and hope by Christ's resurrection.

Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

That we will grow closer to Christ during this week as we remember and share his journey to the cross.

Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

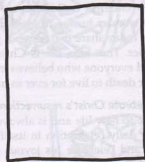
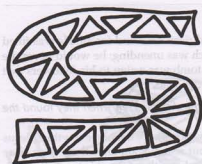
Knowing that our heavenly Father is listening, in the silence of our hearts let us share our own unspoken prayers with him.

Silence

Loving Father,
we ask you to hear our prayers
and answer them according to your holy will.
We make our prayers through Christ your Son.
Amen.

Continued

All notes on the Sunday morning, some of the women took the burial spices and ointments they had prepared and went to the tomb where Jesus had been laid.



1.



2.



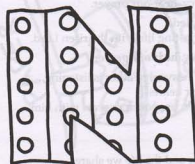
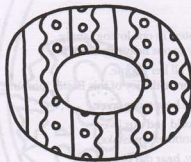
3.



4.



5. Tape or glue the centre of the piece of paper onto the card, leaving the ends free.



Compost

Bulb.



Decorate pots

Brightly coloured gravel or stones.



Easter Day (Years A, B and C)

Focus

A crucifix or cross with a hardboiled egg at its base, surrounded by fresh flowers.

Introduction

As Christians we believe that Jesus rose from the dead to new life at Easter. We also believe the promise he made to his followers, that whoever believes in Christ and lives in friendship with God will be forgiven for their mistakes in life, and even though their bodies will die, their spirits will enjoy new life with God. Easter is the greatest feast of the Church's year, and it is appropriate for the whole community to worship and celebrate together. A suitably adapted reading and Gospel are provided, together with some reflection ideas to help children gain a greater understanding of the meaning and importance of Christ's resurrection from the dead.

Gloria

First reading

A reading from the Acts of the Apostles (10:34, 37-43)
(See page 369.)

Gospel Acclamation

Light the Gospel candle and sing Acclamation 8 (or a suitable alternative for the whole congregation).

Gospel

A reading from the Gospel of St John (20:1-9)
(See page 369.)

Reflection

One of the great Easter traditions is to give and receive Easter eggs. Often these are made from chocolate and frequently have surprises hidden inside them; they can also be real eggs which have been hard-boiled or blown (emptied of their yolk and white) before being painted or decorated in bright colours. (Ask the children about the size and variety of eggs they have been given for Easter.)

So why do people give each other eggs at Easter?

An egg can look and feel as dead and lifeless as a stone. It is hard and cold; it makes no sound and shows no obvious signs of life. In many ways it is just like the stone tomb where the lifeless body of Jesus was laid by his followers on Good Friday. Both have cold, hard 'shells' that seem to cover a dark, lifeless space inside them. And yet something amazing happens which takes us by surprise. New life breaks free from the egg just as Jesus broke free from death and rose to life from his tomb.

What is left behind when a new chick hatches?

An empty eggshell is all that remains. In springtime we often find all kinds of eggshells scattered on the ground. They are a sign that somewhere a baby bird has hatched; they are a symbol of new life.

What was left behind after Jesus rose from the dead?

An empty tomb with its entrance stone rolled away.

Jesus had died and risen once and for all. He was filled with new life which was unending; he would never die again. The empty tomb was a sign to his followers that he had risen from the dead.

How do you think the disciples felt when they found the empty tomb?

They were taken by surprise – despite everything Jesus had told them about rising again after three days, they had not dared to believe that something so extraordinary and wonderful could happen. Soon their amazement and wonder turned to great joy and celebration. Christians today share that sense of joy and celebration and wonder. That new life is Christ's gift to his followers and everyone who believes in him. He will raise us up after death to live for ever in his love.

Do we celebrate Christ's resurrection only at Easter?

Christ rose to new life and is always with us, which is reason for daily celebration in itself, but as Christians we recall and celebrate his joyous resurrection every Sunday when we gather to relive the surprise and joy of that first Easter morning.

Activity

You will need empty eggshells (washed and dried) that have already been painted inside and outside with brightly coloured poster paint. Decorate, and tape lengths of coloured paper, ribbon or thread to the inside. Tuck some shredded tissue paper inside and complete with a small fresh flower or mini egg placed on top. Display as a mobile or hang from the branch of a tree.

Intercessions

As brothers and sisters in one loving family, together let us pray to our heavenly Father:

For the Church and all her people, as together we celebrate the joy of this Easter morning.

Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

For peace in our world and our lives, as we forgive one another's mistakes.

Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

For people who have lost hope and faith, as we share the Good News with the world.

Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

For all who have died, as they enjoy everlasting life with the risen Lord.

Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Knowing that our heavenly Father is listening, in the silence of our hearts let us share our own unspoken prayers with him.

Silence

Loving Father, let the joy of Easter and the life we share help us to believe in you and follow you faithfully. We ask this through Christ our risen Lord. **Amen.**

Second Sunday of Easter



Branch or mobile.

WOOL

PAPER

RIBBON

EGG SHELLS

GLUE

SEQUINS

FLOWER

MINI EGGS

GLITTER

Second Sunday of Easter

Focus

A candle next to an apparently 'blank' sheet of paper (use lemon juice to write the message 'BELIEVE IN ME').

Introduction

'Seeing is believing' is a well-known saying. People often do not believe something until they have seen it for themselves. It might be something so surprising or incredible that they are unable to accept its existence without proof. The followers of Jesus had been told that he had risen from the dead – some of the women even claimed to have spoken to him – yet they were still filled with doubt and uncertainty. In today's Gospel we hear how their faith and belief was restored.

Gloria

Gospel Acclamation

Light the Gospel candle and say:

Alleluia, alleluia,
may the Word of God
make our thoughts loving,
our words kind,
and our hearts warm.

Gospel

A reading from the Gospel of St John (20:19-31)
(See page 370.)

Reflection

Do you always believe what other people tell you?

If I told you that I could run faster than a car, would you believe me? How could I convince you? If I told you that I could eat twenty bars of chocolate, one after another, would you believe what I said? What would I have to do to convince you?

When someone tells us something incredible, we need to be convinced and want to see some proof!

What convinced the disciples that Jesus was really alive?

When Jesus appeared in person the disciples were able to see and hear for themselves that he really was alive.

Which disciple wasn't there when Jesus appeared?

Thomas reacted in a typically human way – he was filled with doubt and couldn't believe what they were saying without some proof. It was only seeing Jesus for himself that finally convinced Thomas.

What was the first thing Jesus said to greet his disciples?

He offered them the gift of his peace to calm their fears and troubles. He offers that same gift of peace to his followers today. We do not have the physical or bodily presence of Jesus to convince us that he is alive, but we do have the Holy Spirit. He strengthens our faith and helps us to recognise and see Jesus alive and working in the people all around us.

When do we use the words, 'Peace be with you'?

Before we share the Eucharist together we express our love for one another and pray for peace and unity.

Activity

Show the children what appears to be a blank sheet of paper on the focal display. Ask them to read the message written there. Do they believe that there is a message there if they can't see it with their own eyes? Make the message visible by warming the paper with a hair drier. Show the children what you did and let them write or draw their own invisible words or pictures to reveal to their families at home. (Instead of lemon juice and a hair drier, you could use 'invisible writing pens' that are available from toyshops.)

Intercessions

As brothers and sisters in one loving family, together let us pray to our heavenly Father:

That the Church and its people may share the Gospel of peace through acceptance, understanding and forgiveness.
Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

That we continue to support the efforts of peacemakers as they work to heal division and reconcile differences.
Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

That families and homes divided by anger and violence may discover the healing peace of Christ.

Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

That people who are filled with doubt and uncertainty may find faith in our risen Lord.

Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

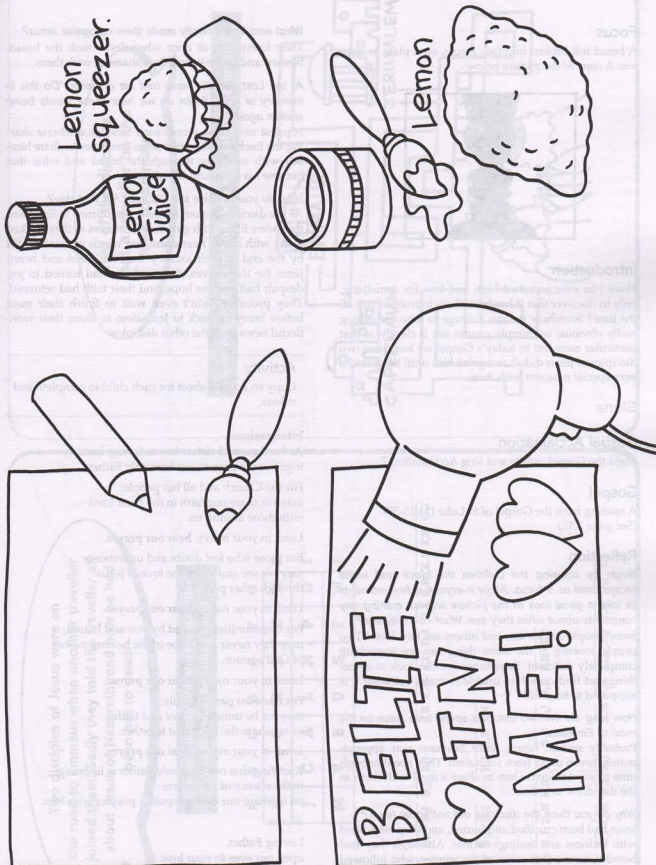
Knowing that our heavenly Father is listening, in the silence of our hearts let us share our own unspoken prayers with him.

Silence

Loving Father,
you sent your beloved Son Jesus
to transform our world with his peace and love.

As his followers,
help us to share that living love and peace
with one another.

We make our prayers through Christ our Lord.
Amen.

Lemon
squeezer.

Lemon



BELIEVE
IT!
ME!