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This
Season
Calls Us



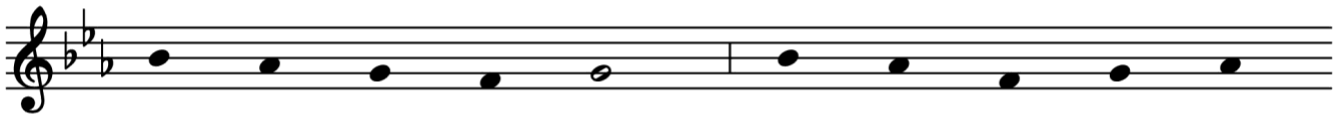
A LENTEN PLANNING RESOURCE
FOR CATHOLIC SCHOOLS

THIS SEASON CALLS US

CONDITOR ALME SIDERUM



1. This sea - son calls us to re - turn That by re -
2. O may the joy of ho - ly Lent Bring us the
3. Come make our yoke, O Christ, so sweet, Our bur - den



1. pen - tance we may learn To seek but Christ and
2. pa - tience to re - pent, To lose our lives for
3. light, our joy com - plete, That we may praise the



1. Christ a - lone, Who by his cross makes us his own.
2. Christ this day And run by faith the gos - pel way.
3. Trin - i - ty This day and all e - ter - ni - ty.

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WHAT THIS IS, and WHO IT IS FOR

Every Catholic School celebrates the liturgy. We all have school Masses and prayer services; we pray to start the day and at other important times. We pray the Rosary; we spend time before the Blessed Sacrament. This is one of the great blessings of Catholic education – the ability to pray and worship as a school community.

If your school is like mine, each teacher does much of the planning for these various prayer experiences. When it is time for their class to be in charge, they pick the music, assign readers and other roles, rehearse and practice, prepare any additional needs like environment, make copies, communicate with the presider and musicians, and more. It's exhausting and, often, overwhelming.

This can be especially true during a season like Lent. There is so much richness, so much depth, so many additional practices and traditions. It's also so important! We all want our students, staff, and community to have a meaningful experience of the season so that we will all be prepared to celebrate the Resurrection at Easter.

This document is meant to be helpful, especially to teachers or staff members who are in charge of planning and leading a school Mass, prayer service, Stations of the Cross, or other prayer experience. It includes overview information and reminders (like don't sing or say "Alleluia!"), planner templates, music suggestions, and links.

This is only one resource! It cannot include every option, idea, song, or suggestion. But hopefully it will be a place to start and will provide you with tools that you can use to help navigate this holy season.

Finally – THANK YOU. The work you do to immerse your students in the prayer life of the Church is critical. It makes a difference in the lives of each student and, by extension, our world. I know it can be tough or confusing; we are all so grateful for your "yes."

If there is something missing, or some other way we can be helpful to you, let us know! We're happy to help support you in whatever ways we can.

Matt Reichert

Center for Learning director

learning@ocp.org

PLANNING FOR THE SEASON

OVERVIEW

Regardless if they are “practicing,” most Catholics are familiar with Lent. But, if you ask a Catholic to define what Lent is, you might be surprised by the varying responses you are sure to receive. The liturgy documents and ritual books of the Church describe Lent as a movement, a “special season for the ascent to the holy mountain of Easter.” It is a time when, “listening more intently to the word of God and devoting [ourselves] to prayer, [we] are prepared through a spirit of repentance to renew [our] baptismal promises.” In another place, we read that Lent is the “joyful season” in which we “prepare to celebrate the paschal mystery with mind and heart renewed.” It is a symbol-rich season with liturgies focused on “twofold themes of repentance and baptism.” It is a time for prayer, fasting, and almsgiving.

To help us prepare, listen more intently, and embrace more fully a spirit of repentance, the liturgies of Lent are distinct in the following ways:

- The “Alleluia” is not sung or recited from Ash Wednesday until the Easter Vigil.
- The “Glory to God” is not sung or recited on Sundays or weekdays, except for Solemnities (Saint Joseph and The Annunciation) and The Evening Mass of the Lord’s Supper (Holy Thursday).
- We use violet or purple, seen most clearly in the presider’s vestments, to reflect the penitential nature of the season.
- Decorations in the Church or prayer space during the season of Lent should be simple.
- The spirit of repentance and preparation is supported by additional devotional prayer such as the Stations of the Cross, the Rosary, and Eucharistic Adoration.
- Music should reflect the more somber mood of Lent, providing a contrast with the festive music of the Easter season that will follow.

CONSIDERATIONS

Plan seasonally

We encourage you to plan seasonally. What does this mean? Approach your planning of the season of Lent as one sustained experience instead of six weeks of various Masses, prayer services, and devotions. Adopting a theme for the season can help ensure coherence and connection, especially if different people plan different parts of your school’s Lenten observance.

Connection to the Sunday experience

Where possible, find ways to connect the liturgies you plan to the Sunday experience. Why? On the surface, it helps build a more cohesive experience of the entire Lenten season. While we are observing forty days over six-ish weeks, it’s all one movement to prepare ourselves to celebrate the Resurrection at Easter.

But in addition to this, we all are aware that young people are increasingly distanced from the practice of religion and tradition. There isn't the same reinforcement of religious ideas and practices, including communal worship and attendance at liturgy. To state it plainly, many – maybe most – of the students enrolled in Catholic schools are not attending Mass or participating in the prayer life of a parish outside of what they experience in their school. Will connecting your prayer to the Sunday experience change this? Probably not. BUT, it will reinforce the importance of the Sunday celebration of the Eucharist.

So, what does this look like? Find out what music is being sung at your parish and utilize this same repertoire where possible. If you're planning a prayer service and don't know what readings, psalms, or prayers to choose, look to the past or upcoming Sunday texts. When planning your school Mass, use the same acclamations and Mass setting as your parish. If the music director or musicians at your parish aren't involved in your school liturgies, invite them to assist with your Masses and prayer services during Lent.

To help you make these connections, we've provided a full overview of each Sunday in the Lenten season as an appendix. You'll find the citation and a short summary for each Scripture reading as well as corresponding questions for reflection.

Less is more

The liturgies you plan should clearly reflect the nature of the Lenten season. Use simple decorations for your liturgical environment and remove anything that is unnecessary. Use simple or simplified arrangements of hymns and songs. Use simpler prayers and texts in prayer services.

This simplicity helps emphasize the character of Lent and can draw us more deeply into the prayer and contemplation we need to prepare ourselves for Easter. When done well and thoughtfully, simplicity lowers the barriers to participation.

Another expression of simplicity is repetition. Some ideas include Use a seasonal gathering hymn for every prayer service (or meditation song or sending hymn) or a seasonal preparation hymn for every Mass. Use the same Universal Prayers. Use the readings and psalm from the previous Sunday for your mid-week prayer service. Use the same prayer schedule to build a prayer rhythm each week, incorporating Mass, prayer service, Adoration, Rosary, etc.

Don't neglect silence

Related to the previous point, be intentional about the way you use and incorporate silence into all the liturgies and prayer experiences you plan. Some ideas include: Keep silence before the gathering hymn. Observe a longer pause before the Penitential Act. Train your lectors and readers to provide a longer period of silence before and after readings. Spend time in silence after the Communion Rite, or after a homily or reflection at a prayer service.

Incorporation of styles and traditions

Where possible, ensure a variety of styles are represented in the music you choose. If you're accustomed to hymnody, consider something more contemporary. If your community usually sings contemporary music, ensure you use hymns and chant. There is a significant treasury of Lenten music, texts, prayers, and images that will help illuminate this holy season for your school community.

Incorporation of the senses

While your prayer planning will reflect the simplicity of the season, don't neglect the opportunities to engage the senses. Some ideas include: Use simple but effective visual symbols. Use textures that might not be commonly used during other times of the liturgical year (i.e., sand, burlap, tree bark, stone, etc.) Even if these textures are not encountered physically by all, the visual of the texture change will be impactful. Use incense in your Masses and prayer services, if possible.

SEASONAL CALENDAR

OVERVIEW

The following general calendar includes each day of the Lenten season, including weekends. Each date is linked to the Lectionary readings for that day's Mass, found on the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops website. We are in Year A of the Sunday Lectionary and Cycle I of the Weekday Lectionary.

As always, make sure you are in communication with priest celebrant, liturgist/music director, and sacristan to coordinate your liturgies. Check with them, too, about any local observances, celebrations, or customs that you might need to be aware of that may affect this general calendar.

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
			February/22 Ash Wednesday	2/23 Thursday after Ash Wednesday	2/24 Friday after Ash Wednesday	2/25 Saturday after Ash Wednesday
2/26 First Sunday of Lent	2/27 Monday of the First Week of Lent	2/28 Tuesday of the First Week of Lent	March/1 Wednesday of the First Week of Lent	3/2 Thursday of the First Week of Lent	3/3 Friday of the First Week of Lent	3/4 Saturday of the First Week of Lent
3/5 Second Sunday of Lent	3/6 Monday of the Second Week of Lent	3/7 Tuesday of the Second Week of Lent	3/8 Wednesday of the Second Week of Lent	3/9 Thursday of the Second Week of Lent	3/10 Friday of the Second Week of Lent	3/11 Saturday of the Second Week of Lent
3/12 Third Sunday of Lent	3/13 Monday of the Third Week of Lent	3/14 Tuesday of the Third Week of Lent	3/15 Wednesday of the Third Week of Lent	3/16 Thursday of the Third Week of Lent	3/17 Friday of the Third Week of Lent	3/18 Saturday of the Third Week of Lent
3/19 Fourth Sunday of Lent	3/20 Solemnity of Saint Joseph	3/21 Tuesday of the Fourth Week of Lent	3/22 Wednesday of the Fourth Week of Lent	3/23 Thursday of the Fourth Week of Lent	3/24 Friday of the Fourth Week of Lent	3/25 Solemnity of the Annunciation of the Lord
3/26 Fifth Sunday of Lent	3/27 Monday of the Fifth Week of Lent	3/28 Tuesday of the Fifth Week of Lent	3/29 Wednesday of the Fifth Week of Lent	3/30 Thursday of the Fifth Week of Lent	3/31 Friday of the Fifth Week of Lent	April/1 Saturday of the Fifth Week of Lent
4/2 Palm Sunday of the Lord's Passion	4/3 Monday of Holy Week	4/4 Tuesday of Holy Week	4/5 Wednesday of Holy Week	4/6 Evening Mass of the Lord's Supper Chrism Mass	4/7 Good Friday of the Lord's Passion	4/8 Easter Vigil in the Holy Night of Easter
4/9 The Resurrection of the Lord	4/10 Monday in the Octave of Easter	4/11 Tuesday in the Octave of Easter	4/12 Wednesday in the Octave of Easter	4/13 Thursday in the Octave of Easter	4/14 Friday in the Octave of Easter	4/15 Saturday in the Octave of Easter

SCHOOL MASSES

REMINDERS

To help us prepare, listen more intently, and embrace more fully a spirit of repentance, the liturgies of Lent are distinct in the following ways:

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- The “Glory to God” is not sung or recited on Sundays or weekdays, except for Solemnities (Saint Joseph and The Annunciation) and The Evening Mass of the Lord’s Supper (Holy Thursday).
- We use violet or purple, seen most clearly in the presider’s vestments, to reflect the penitential nature of the season.
- Decorations in the Church or prayer space during the season of Lent should be simple.
- Music should reflect the more somber mood of Lent, providing a contrast with the festive music of the Easter season that will follow.

DETAILS

Ash Wednesday (*February 22, 2023*)

Ash Wednesday is one of the most significant days on the entire liturgical calendar and is recognized everywhere as a day of fasting. If your school Mass is normally scheduled on a different day of the week (i.e., Thursday), your school community should gather for Mass also (or instead) on Ash Wednesday.

- On Ash Wednesday there is no Penitential Act (i.e., *Kyrie* or *Confiteor*.)
- There is both a First and Second Reading in addition to the Responsorial Psalm and Gospel. As a result, you may need to plan for an additional reader.
- The Blessing and Distribution of Ashes takes place after the homily concludes and before the Universal Prayer. The text for the Blessing and the instructions for the Distribution are included in the Roman Missal. Depending on your needs, assistance from additional ministers may be required during the Distribution of Ashes.

Masses on a weekday in Lent

The celebration of Lenten weekdays takes precedence over any Optional or Obligatory Memorials. If an important Memorial for your school or parish community falls on a Lenten weekday (like the Optional Memorial of Saint Patrick on Friday, March 17), check with your presider, liturgist, and or sacristan to discuss your options.

Solemnity of Saint Joseph (*March 20, 2023*)

The Solemnity of Saint Joseph is normally celebrated on March 19. However, because this date falls on a Sunday, and because Sundays of Lent take precedence over other liturgical days, the Solemnity is moved to the following day.

- ❑ Because this celebration is a Solemnity we sing (or recite) the “Glory to God” during the Introductory Rite, even though it is Lent.
- ❑ There is both a First and Second Reading in addition to the Responsorial Psalm and Gospel. As a result, you may need to plan for an additional reader.
- ❑ Though it is a Solemnity and there is the added festivity of a Gloria and Second Reading, we still use the Lenten Gospel Acclamation. There are still no “Alleluias”!

Mass on a weekday during Holy Week *(April 3-5, 2023)*

If your school celebrates Mass on a weekday during Holy Week, remember that these liturgies should be generous in their simplicity and use of silence.

Mass on a weekday during the Octave of Easter *(April 10-14, 2023)*

Though this planning guide does not address the Season of Easter, don’t forget the following points as you plan your school Mass during the first week of Easter. This week is called the “Octave of Easter,” when the Church prolongs the celebration of Easter Sunday for eight days. We do the same for the eight days following Christmas (known as the “Octave of Christmas”).

- ❑ We sing (or recite) the “Glory to God” at each Mass of the Octave of Easter. No matter what day your school Mass takes place during this week, you’ll need to prepare a Gloria.
- ❑ Despite the added festivity, there is no Second Reading at these weekday Masses (just like a regular weekday Mass).
- ❑ Don’t forget to switch the Gospel Acclamation (“Alleluia!”) and Mass acclamations (Mass Setting) to mark the change in liturgical season.

RESOURCES

Your parish, chapel, campus ministry office, or diocesan office should have the following resources (or should be able to help you find a copy):

[General Instruction of the Roman Missal](#)

Universal Norms on the Liturgical Year and the General Roman Calendar

Directory for Masses with Children

The Lectionary for Masses with Children

Helpful links

[Federation of Diocesan Liturgical Commissions seasonal planning guide](#)

[Liturgy.com planning resource](#)

[“Today’s Liturgy” music planner](#)

[Catholic High School Mass Planner and Checklist \(Archdiocese of Los Angeles\)](#)

Music suggestions

See the “Music for the Season of Lent” section of this document.



School Mass Planner

Celebration: _____	Date: _____
Priest celebrant(s): _____	Assisting deacon: <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Altar server(s): _____	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes Incense: <input type="checkbox"/> No

INTRODUCTORY RITE

Gathering Hymn: _____

Penitential Act: _____

[Glory to God:] _____

Processional cross carried by: _____

LITURGY OF THE WORD

First Reading: _____

Responsorial Psalm: _____

[Second Reading:] _____

Gospel Acclamation: _____

Gospel: _____

Universal Prayer: _____

Read by: _____

Sung/Read by: _____

Read by: _____

Sung/Read by: _____

Proclaimed by priest
 Proclaimed by deacon

Read by: _____

LITURGY OF THE EUCHARIST

Presentation Hymn: _____

Eucharistic Acclamations: _____

Communion Hymn: _____

Gift bearers: _____

Extraordinary ministers of Holy Communion: _____

CONCLUDING RITE

Sending Hymn: _____

CHECKLIST	<input type="checkbox"/> Communication with presider (and homilist)	<input type="checkbox"/> Practice with readers
	<input type="checkbox"/> Communication with sacristan	<input type="checkbox"/> Practice with gift bearers
	<input type="checkbox"/> Communication with accompanist/musician(s)	<input type="checkbox"/> Practice with altar server(s) <i>(if needed)</i>
	<input type="checkbox"/> Worship aid/slides prepared <i>(if needed)</i>	<input type="checkbox"/> Copies of readings and Universal Prayer

SCHOOL PRAYER SERVICES

REMINDERS

To help us prepare, listen more intently, and embrace more fully a spirit of repentance, the liturgies of Lent are distinct in the following ways:

- The “Alleluia” is not sung or recited from Ash Wednesday until the Easter Vigil.
- We use violet or purple, seen most clearly in the presider’s vestments, to reflect the penitential nature of the season.
- Decorations in the Church or prayer space during the season of Lent should be simple.
- Music should reflect the more somber mood of Lent, providing a contrast with the festive music of the Easter season that will follow.

CONNECTION TO SUNDAY

As we described in the introduction, where you are able, connect your prayer to the Sunday experience. Use music that your students will encounter at Sunday Mass. Consider using the psalm and/or a reading from the past or upcoming Sunday in your prayer service. Put your prayer service in the context of what we hear on Sunday. To get some ideas, check out our overview of the Sundays of Lent in the appendix.

CONSIDERATIONS

Structure and format

The prayer service planner uses a structure drawn from the *Liturgy of the Hours*, the official daily prayer of the church. The general outline includes the following:

INTRODUCTORY RITE

Prayer usually begins with a gathering hymn or song, followed by an opening prayer. The wording of this prayer helps set the tone and focus for the prayer service. Additionally, you may wish to use a “Call to Worship,” a brief song or refrain that is repeated before the gathering hymn to focus our hearts and minds and ready ourselves to enter into prayer.

LITURGY OF THE WORD

One or two psalms are sung (or recited). These psalms are chosen because they suit the focus or time of the prayer service. A psalm prayer – or period of silence – follows each psalm. A reading from Scripture is offered, also chosen because of the focus of the prayer service. This could be a reading from the Old or New Testament, or a Gospel. If it is a Gospel reading, the Lenten Gospel Acclamation can be sung before it is proclaimed.

A reflection can be offered by a member of the school community, or a homily if a priest or deacon is presiding. Typically, the morning Canticle (*Benedictus*) follows this period of reflection. You may or may not choose to sing (or recite) it. Sometimes a song or hymn can be used to help support meditation and quiet prayer.

The Universal Prayer brings the needs of the Church, the world, the local community, and each of us. After the Universal Prayer, the Lord's Prayer ("Our Father") is prayed by all.

CONCLUDING RITE

Before our prayer ends, we pray a closing prayer and ask for God's blessing. Like the opening prayer, the wording of the closing prayer should echo the focus of our prayer and serves to send us forth. If a priest or deacon is presiding, they may wish to offer a blessing. If not, a prayer of blessing is said or sung. Prayer usually ends with a sending hymn or song, but may also end in solemn silence, if appropriate.

This format of prayer is easily adapted to your needs: you can make it shorter or longer, add a prayer or ritual for a specific need, commemorate an important event or celebration, and so forth.

Selecting Scripture and psalms

It is recommended that you select the reading from Scripture first, as the psalms, hymns, and prayers you choose should support the reading. Liturgical prayer creates the opportunity for dialogue between God and the community gathered in prayer, and this is made possible through the Word. Don't start with that favorite song or poem, as tempting as it is to do so. Our goal is to hear God's voice, so begin with God's Word.

- **Brevity.** The reading should only be as long as it needs to be. Effective prayer is focused. Since Scripture is so very rich, it's important that the passage you select is focused, too. Beware, however, that in editing the reading you do not "editorialize" – that is, change the nature or message of the reading.
- **Context.** Use the richness of the Lenten season to help select the reading. Look to the readings of the day or the past/upcoming Sunday. Use a Concordance to find passages related to Lenten themes of fasting, prayer, penance, forgiveness, mercy, repentance, and so forth. You might also look for connections to your religion curriculum, as many lessons are structured around specific passages from Scripture.
- **The Lectionary.** It is recommended that you use Scripture from the Lectionary. These passages are usually of reasonable length already. Also, praying with these Scriptures allows for a deeper connection between your school prayer service and the liturgical life of the parish.

After the Scripture reading has been selected, look for the psalms you will pray. Because of their personal nature, the psalms play an important role in opening a dialogue with God. While it is recommended that you pray two psalms, it is possible to use only one.

- **Theme-based psalms.** Each psalm has a certain tone or focus, like praise, joy, lament, mercy, and so forth. You can choose psalms that fit the particular focus of the prayer service you are creating.

- **Appointed psalms.** Certain psalms are assigned to a time of year or a time of day. There are psalms commonly used during Lent (like Psalms 51, 91, and 130). There are also psalms typically used during morning prayer (like Psalms 63 and 149). You might also look to include the appointed psalm for the past or upcoming Sunday of Lent.

As with the readings from Scripture, it is recommended that you use psalms from the Lectionary. This also helps to ensure that a musical setting of the psalms you select both exist and are available to you.

Creating a prayerful environment

In planning your prayer service, don't forget all of the other steps necessary to creating a prayerful environment for everyone who will gather.

- **Worship aid or slides.** The goal of good liturgical prayer is the full, conscious, and active participation of the gathered community. A printed worship aid – or projection slides, if suitable – can help ensure that everyone has the texts and music needed to participate. A printed worship aid can be simple, including a simple outline of the prayer service and corresponding numbers in the hymnal.
- **Hospitality.** Intentionally plan ways to make participants feel comfortable, welcomed, and invited. This is a great opportunity to involve students who might not be able to lead or read or might feel uncomfortable doing so.
- **Environment.** This is a particularly important concern if you will be praying somewhere other than a church or chapel like a gymnasium, gathering space, auditorium, classroom, etc. Give careful consideration to the way you will arrange the prayer space and how you will use clear signs and symbols. Simple, consistent decorations make all the difference in a non-liturgical prayer space. Use the symbols, textures, colors, and signs of Lent to the extent that you are able.

RESOURCES

[*A Future with Hope: Praying with Youth Preparing for Confirmation \(Stachowski, Reichert\)*](#) is a collection of eight full prayer services and scripts for praying with young people throughout the liturgical year.

Music suggestions

See the “Music for the Season of Lent” section of this document.

Prayer Service Planner

Celebration: _____ Presider/Leader: _____ Homilist/Speaker: _____	Date: _____
--	--------------------

INTRODUCTORY RITE

[Call to
Worship:] _____
 Gathering
Hymn: _____

LITURGY OF THE WORD

Psalm A: _____	Sung/Read by:
[Psalm B:] _____	Sung/Read by:
[Gospel Acclamation:] _____	Sung/Read by:
Reading [Gospel]: _____	Proclaimed by:
[Meditation Song:] _____	
Universal Prayer: _____	Read/Sung by:

CONCLUDING RITE

[Sung
Blessing:] _____
 Sending
Hymn: _____

CHECKLIST	<input type="checkbox"/> Communication with presider/leader <input type="checkbox"/> Communication with homilist/speaker <input type="checkbox"/> Communication with accompanist/musician(s) <input type="checkbox"/> Plan to decorate prayer space completed <i>(if needed)</i> <input type="checkbox"/> Presider script prepared <input type="checkbox"/> Worship aid/slides prepared <i>(if needed)</i>	<input type="checkbox"/> Practice with presider <input type="checkbox"/> Practice with reader(s) <input type="checkbox"/> Copy of presider script in place <input type="checkbox"/> Copies of readings and Universal Prayer in place
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Prayer Service Script *(sample)*

The presider, reader(s), cantor(s), and other prayer leaders are seated along with the community. When it is time to begin, the presider gestures for all to stand. If there is a gathering hymn (or call to worship), the music begins immediately.

GATHERING HYMN:

insert music here

After the gathering hymn concludes, the presider continues with the opening prayer.

Presider: In the name of the Father,
and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

All: Amen.

Presider: Let us pray.

God of endless mercy and love,
you know what is in our hearts.
You know our joy and happiness,
our sins and our failures.
Be with us in this holy season of Lent.
Open our hearts.
Give us the grace to seek your forgiveness.
Help us to follow you more closely.

We pray this through Christ our Lord.

All: Amen.

After the opening prayer, the presider gestures for all to be seated. The cantor (or reader) moves into place to lead the first psalm.

PSALM A

insert music here

After the psalm is proclaimed, all sit for a moment of prayerful reflection. If a psalm prayer is to be led by the presider, all stand for the prayer. If no psalm prayer is to be offered, all remain seated for the second psalm.

(optional) PSALM B

insert music here

After the psalm is proclaimed, all sit for a moment of prayerful reflection. If a psalm prayer is to be led by the presider, all stand for the prayer. If no psalm prayer is to be offered, all remain seated for the reading.

The reader moves into place to proclaim the reading from Scripture. If the reading is taken from the gospel, a Lenten gospel acclamation may be sung before the reading is proclaimed.

READING FROM SCRIPTURE: _____

After the reading has been proclaimed, the reader returns to their seat. The person offering the reflection (or homily) should move into place after the reading concludes.

REFLECTION (HOMILY) GIVEN BY: _____

After the reflection (or homily, all remain seated for a time of quiet reflection.

If a meditation or reflection song is to be used, it should begin after this period of silence.

(Optional) MEDITATION/REFLECTION SONG:

insert music here

The presider begins the Universal Prayer by proclaiming the following:

Presider: Merciful God,
hear us now as we place our needs before you.

Following the introduction, the reader leads the intercessions.

Reader: For the Church:
for authentic witness,
for communities of welcome.
We pray to the Lord.

All: *Lord, hear our Prayer.*

Reader: For our nation and our world:
for mercy and forgiveness,
for justice and peace.
We pray to the Lord.

All: *Lord, hear our Prayer.*

Reader: For our sisters and brothers in need:
for the immigrant, the imprisoned,
the unhoused, the addict, and the unemployed.
We pray to the Lord.

All: *Lord, hear our Prayer.*

Reader: For our school community:
for teachers and students, parents and staff,
and for all who long to deepen their faith in Christ Jesus.
We pray to the Lord.

All: *Lord, hear our Prayer.*

Reader: For those most in need of our prayers:
for all who are sick,
all the dying, and for all who will die this day.
We pray to the Lord.

All: *Lord, hear our Prayer.*

Reader: For all who have died:
for our family, friends, and neighbors in heaven,
and for all who now see Jesus, face to face.
We pray to the Lord.

All: *Lord, hear our Prayer.*

After the intercessions conclude, the presider invites the community to pray the Lord's prayer by saying the following.

Presider: Gathering all of our prayers and praise into one,
let us pray together the words that Jesus himself gave to us.

All: Our Father, who art in heaven,
hallowed be thy name;
thy kingdom come, thy will be done
on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread,
and forgive us our trespasses,
as we forgive those who trespass against us;
and lead us not into temptations,
but deliver us from evil.

For the kingdom, the power, and the
glory are yours,
now and forever. Amen.

Immediately following the Lord's Prayer, the presider introduces the closing prayer with the following.

Presider: Let us pray.

Good and gracious God,
you are the source of all love and goodness.
Continue to bless us during the holy season of Lent.
Give us the strength to continue our journey
of prayer and fasting
so that our hearts will be prepared to receive you
at the celebration of Easter

We ask this and all things through Christ, our Lord.

All: Amen.

After the closing prayer, the presider immediately introduces the blessing.

Presider: Let us now ask for God's blessing.

If a sung blessing is to be used, the music begins immediately.

SONG OF BLESSING:

insert music here

If the blessing is to be spoken, the presider leads the following as all make the Sign of the Cross.

Presider: May the Lord bless us,
protect us from all evil,
and bring us to everlasting life.

All: Amen.

Immediately following the blessing, the presider invites the community to share a sign of peace with the following:

Presider: Before we go forward to continue our Lenten journey toward Easter, let us share with one another a sign of Christ's peace.

All exchange a sign of peace. As the sign of peace concludes, a final hymn or song may be sung by the entire community.

SENDING HYMN:

insert music here

The prayer concludes after the sign of peace (or the final hymn). All depart.



SACRAMENT OF PENANCE

OVERVIEW

From the [United States Catholic Catechism for Adults](#):

Penance is an experience of the gift of God's boundless mercy. Not only does it [the Sacrament of Penance] free us from our sins but it also challenges us to have the same kind of compassion and forgiveness for those who sin against us. We are liberated to be forgivers. We obtain new insight into the words of the Prayer of St. Francis: "It is in pardoning that we are pardoned."

Jesus entrusted the ministry of reconciliation to the Church. The Sacrament of Penance is God's gift to us so that any sin committed after Baptism can be forgiven. In confession we have the opportunity to repent and recover the grace of friendship with God. It is a holy moment in which we place ourselves in his presence and honestly acknowledge our sins, especially mortal sins. With absolution, we are reconciled to God and the Church. The Sacrament helps us stay close to the truth that we cannot live without God. "In him we live and move and have our being" (Acts 17:28).

It is important that your school community have the opportunity to access the Sacrament of Penance during the season of Lent. If you have students preparing to receive the Sacrament for the first time, they might participate in an evening celebration with the parish community. But don't stop there, and don't assume each student who is able to receive the Sacrament is given the opportunity to access the Sacrament outside of your school day.

We can provide no better resource for school communities looking to plan a prayer service with the Sacrament of Penance than the [Liturgical Preparation Aid for Lent, the Sacred Paschal Triduum, and the Easter Season](#) from the Federation of Diocesan Liturgical Commissions. The first section of this invaluable resource includes an outline of the Sacrament, suggested Scripture and music, texts, a list of sample penances (to be used by the priest), and more.

RESOURCES

[Example Rite of Penance Worship Aid](#)

[An Examination of Conscience for children](#)

[An Examination of Conscience for young adults](#)

["How to go to Confession" article](#)

Music suggestions

See the "Music for the Season of Lent" section of this document.



MUSIC for the SEASON OF LENT

OVERVIEW

Music is critical to liturgical prayer. In liturgy, we sing all the time. Lent is no exception! While we might approach music in a simpler way, and while the musical elements of Lent will sound different than the Easter or Christmas seasons, we still need to sing together.

Because Lent is a season of preparation for all of us – through prayer, fasting, and almsgiving – it is important that all of us participate as fully as possible. So, wherever you can, select music that the entire community sings. Avoid “performance” or “solo” pieces, even though you might be tempted to choose them as a way to induce “reflection.” As the proverb states, “whoever sings prays twice.” Give everyone the chance to sing.

Who should be involved

Consult your parish music director or liturgist as early as possible. They can help you with suggestions, find copies of music, ensure proper reporting and licensing, and connect your plans to the Sunday experience.

Consult your students, both those who will be involved in leading the music and those who will be praying as members of the assembly. Find out what they find meaningful. They will tell you!

CONSIDERATIONS

Selecting music for Mass or prayer services

Take care to select music that is appropriate for prayer, well-matched to the context/theme of that prayer, and is accessible both to those who are gathered to pray and those who will be leading the music.

- Musical considerations: Is this song stylistically appropriate? Can the entire assembly sing this (i.e., not too high, not too low, etc.)? Can our musicians successfully lead this song?
- Liturgical considerations: Will this song help support this prayer experience? Does the text of the song enhance the focus of our prayer? Are the songs and texts appropriate for the season of Lent?
- Pastoral considerations: Will the text of this song connect or resonate with the school community? Are the themes appropriate for the focus of our prayer? Are the languages and cultures present in our community adequately presented in the songs we have chosen? Are we asking too much (or too little) of our school community in selecting this song?

Be aware of the repertoire your school community already knows. Also, be aware of the repertoire your school community doesn't know but should. Work to use what is familiar while carefully introducing new music. It is best to reinforce repertoire by using hymns and songs more than once, where possible. Use a seasonal gathering song or use psalm settings more than once. If you sing the Universal Prayer, Lord's Prayer, or Blessing, use the same setting each time – don't keep changing them! Do what you can to ensure your school community feels comfortable with the music you have chosen.

Use outside of prayer

Music is incredibly powerful. We put a lot of time and energy into selecting the right music for prayer. How can we further harness these hymns and songs? How can we help our students become more familiar with these songs so that they can enter more deeply into prayer?

All of the music suggestions listed in the appendix have recordings that can be found on YouTube and Spotify. Make a playlist and use them in your classroom. Play the recordings during quiet activities like reading or homework time, or while students are working on art projects or other activities. Send links to these playlists home and share them with parents. Everyone is looking for something to listen to with their children in the car or at home.

Fair use and copyright

All printed and recorded music, even church music, is covered by legal copyright protection. This means that you need to follow certain guidelines and licensing requirements in order to use songs and recordings at Mass and prayer. If your community uses a physical hymnal or music resource (i.e., everyone has a book in the pews), your usage is likely covered. If you are creating and printing a worship aid, making slides for projection that include music or prayer/Scripture text, or recording or livestreaming your Masses or prayer services that use copyrighted music, then you need to have the appropriate music license and complete reporting processes. Speak with your music director or liturgist for more information and for guidance. Your parish or campus ministry may already have such a license.

SUGGESTIONS

Hymns and songs for Mass and prayer (NOTE: This is not a comprehensive list, just a list to get you started)

TITLE	G	P	C	S
40 Days (Maher)	X			X
Again We Keep This Solemn Fast (ERHALT UNS, HERR)	X			X
Amazing Grace (NEW BRITAIN)	X	X		X
Ashes (Conry)	X			X
Ashes to Ashes (Schutte)		X		
Be Merciful, O Lord (Angrisano)			X	
Be Not Afraid (Dufford)		X		
Be Still and Know That I Am God (C. Walker)		X		
Be with Me, Lord (Hart)			X	
Behold the Lamb (Willett)			X	
Beyond the Days (Manalo)	X			X
Bread of Angels (Stephen)			X	
Bread of Heaven (Manibusan)			X	
Change Our Hearts (Cooney)	X			X
Christ Before Us (SUO GÂN)	X			X
Christ in Me Arise (Thomson)	X			

TITLE	G	P	C	S
Christ, Be Our Light (Farrell)			X	
Come Home (Landry)		X	X	
Come to Me and Drink (B. Hurd)			X	
Create in Me (B. Hurd)		X		
Create in Me (Kendzia)			X	
Do Not Fear to Hope (Cooney)	X			X
Do This in Memory of Me (Muglia)			X	
Eat This Bread (Berthier)			X	
Enter the Journey (Friedman)	X			X
Flow River Flow (B. Hurd)		X	X	
Fly Like a Bird (Canedo)		X	X	
Forty Days and Forty Nights (HEINLEIN)	X			X
From the Depths We Cry to Thee (HEINLEIN)	X			
From the Wounds of Christ (Zaragoza)			X	
God Be in My Head (Brown)		X		
God of Mercy (Manalo)			X	
God Our Source and Life, Unite Us (Thomson)	X			
Gracious God (Manibusan)				X
Have Mercy on Me (Hart)		X	X	
Have Mercy on Us, Lord (ATTENDE DOMINE)	X	X		
Healed in Christ (Hart)			X	
Healing Waters (Thomson)		X		
Here I Am, Lord (Schutte)			X	
High Above Our Way (Angrisano)				X
Hold On to Love (Manibusan)		X		
Hosea (Norbet)			X	
I Am the Bread of Life (Come and Follow Me) (Angrisano, Booth)			X	
I Am the Resurrection and the Life (B. Hurd)		X		X
I Heard the Voice of Jesus Say (KINGSFOLD)				X
I Will Choose Christ (Booth)				X
In Every Age (Whitaker)		X		
In the Silence (Blakesley)			X	
In These Days of Lenten Journey (Manalo)	X			X
Into the Desert (Stephan)				X

TITLE	G	P	C	S
Jesu, Joy of Our Desiring (WERDE MUNTER)		X		
Jesus, Heal Me (E. García-López)		X		
Lead Me to the Desert (Hart)		X		
Lead Me, Guide Me (Akers)				X
Lead Me, Lord (Becker)				X
Lead Us to the Cross (Muglia)				X
Lift High the Cross (CRUCIFER)	X			X
Lord, Who Throughout These Forty Days (ST. FLAVIAN)	X			
Loving and Forgiving (Soper)			X	
Mercy on Me (Hart)		X		
My Soul Is Thirsting (Brown)			X	
My Soul Is Thirsting/As Morning Breaks (Angrisano)			X	
Now Is the Acceptable Time (Bridge)	X			
O Bless the Lord, My Soul (ST. THOMAS)				X
O God, You Search Me (Farrell)		X		
O Jesus, Healer of Wounded Souls (Rubalcava)		X		
O Sacrament Most Holy (FULDA)			X	
Oh Dios, Crea en Mí (E. Cortés)			X	
On Eagle's Wings (Joncas)			X	
One Bread, One Cup (Fisher)			X	
Open My Eyes (Manibusan)		X		
Our God is Here (Muglia)	X			
Our God, Our Help in Ages Past (ST. ANNE)	X			
Overflow (Maher)				X
Parce Domine/Spare Your People, Lord (chant)	X	X		
Pardon Your People (Landry)				X
Purify My Heart (Doerksen)		X		
Remember Not the Things of the Past (B. Hurd)		X		
Remember Your Love (Ducote)	X		X	
Renew (Hart)	X			
Repent (J. Cortez)	X			
Revive Us, O God (Manibusan)				X
Sacred Silence (Booth)		X		
Shepherd of Souls (ST. AGNES)	X			

TITLE	G	P	C	S
Show Us Your Mercy (Friedman)			X	
Signed by Ashes (Keil)		X		
Softly and Tenderly Jesus is Calling (THOMPSON)			X	
Sweet Redeemer (Angrisano)	X			
Take the Word of God with You (C. Walker)				X
Take These Ashes/To the Desert Follow Me (HART)	X			
Take Up Your Cross (Cortez)				X
Take Up Your Cross (ERHALT UNS, HERR)	X			
The Breastplate of St. Patrick (Hart)				X
The Feast Meant for Everyone (Hart, Booth)			X	
The Glory of These Forty Days (ERHALT UNS, HERR)	X			
The Goodness of the Lord (Soper)			X	
The King of Love My Shepherd Is (ST. COLUMBA)	X			
The Lord is My Light (C. Walker)		X	X	
There Is a Balm in Gilead (BALM IN GILEAD)			X	
There Is a Longing (Quigley)		X		
This Season Calls Us (CONDITOR ALME SIDERUM)	X	X		X
Transfigure Us, O Lord (B. Hurd)		X	X	
Ubi Caritas (B. Hurd)		X	X	
Ubi Caritas (Rosania)		X	X	
Unless a Grain of Wheat (B. Hurd)		X	X	
We Are the Light of the World (GREIF)	X			X
We Belong to You (Thomson)	X			X
We Come to You (Blakesley)		X	X	
We Remember (Haugen)			X	
We've Come This Far by Faith (Goodson)	X			X
What Wondrous Love Is This (WONDROUS LOVE)	X	X		X
With Ashes and Sorrow (Montgomery)		X	X	
With the Lord There Is Mercy (Modlin)		X	X	
You Alone (Hart)		X		
You Are the Healing (Soper)		X		X
You Are the Light (Hart)		X	X	
You Have Called Us (Farrell)	X			X
Your Grace is Enough (Maher)				X

Responsorial Psalms

Recall that, in place of the appointed Responsorial Psalm in the Lectionary, you may choose to substitute one of the Common Psalms for the season. The Common Psalms for Lent are **Psalm 51**, **Psalm 91**, and **Psalm 130**, with **Psalm 22** for the weekday Masses during Holy Week.

The Responsorial Psalm used at Mass should be a setting of the approved Lectionary Psalm text. A paraphrase or text based on a Psalm should not be used. The hymnal or missal your school or parish uses should have at least one setting for each Common Psalm, if not more. If you are looking for additional Psalm settings, [visit this catalog of Lectionary Psalms](#) (i.e. settings approved for use at Mass) in a variety of musical styles and set in English and Spanish.

Mass Acclamations

It is especially fitting to use the Mass acclamations from the Roman Missal. These [Chant acclamations \(Roman Missal\)](#) are available for download and use, free of charge. Every student should be familiar with these chants, whether sung in English or Latin.

We encourage you to use the Mass setting employed at your parish, or common to parishes in your area. Other Mass settings you might consider for the Lenten season include:

[Missa Ubi Caritas \(B. Hurd\)](#)

[Misa San José \(Reza\)](#)

[Wondrous Love Mass \(Keil, Hillebrand\)](#)

[Mass of Renewal \(Stephan\)](#)

[Heritage Mass \(Alstott\)](#)

[Mass of Mary Magdalene \(Hart\)](#)

MUSIC FOR OTHER DEVOTIONS

Stations of the Cross

Praying the Way of the Cross is a powerful experience for students and adults, alike, especially during the Lenten season. If it is not your school's current practice to use music, we encourage you to introduce singing wherever possible. The following hymns and songs are suitable for this kind of experience. Many have a long association with the Way of the Cross. These are offered in addition to the titles in the table above.

[At the Cross Her Station Keeping/Stabat Mater Dolorosa](#)

[Behold the Cross \(Hurd\)](#)

[Behold the Wood \(Schutte\)](#)

[Jesus, Remember Me \(Berthier\)](#)

[O Sacred Head, Surrounded \(PASSION CHORALE\)](#)

[Parce Domine/Spare Your People, Lord \(chant\)](#)

[Take Up Your Cross \(HERHALT UNS, HERR\)](#)

[Way of the Cross \(Francisco\)](#)

[Were You There \(WERE YOU THERE\)](#)

[When I Survey the Wondrous Cross](#)

[Wood of the Cross \(Alstott\)](#)

Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament (Adoration)

There is a basic structure to the Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament, where the Blessed Sacrament placed in a monstrance and particular prayers and ritual takes place. In this structure, there is great flexibility, and great opportunity to bring in Lenten themes of mercy, renewal, and preparation. If it is not your practice to offer your students time in prayer before the Blessed Sacrament, please consider doing so, even if it is only for a few minutes of prayer before the Tabernacle.

As with the Way of the Cross, incorporating music and sung prayer into the practice of Adoration adds to the power and depth of the devotion. The following hymns and songs are suitable, and many of them are a part of the core repertoire that all Catholics should know. These are offered in addition to the titles in the table above.

[Adoro Te Devote/Godhead Here in Hiding \(chant\)](#)

[Ave Verum Corpus \(chant\)](#)

[Exposition/O Saving Victim \(Angrisano\)](#)

[Jesus, My Lord, My God, My All \(SWEET SACRAMENT\)](#)

[Lord, to Whom Shall We Go \(Soper\)](#)

[O Lord, I Am Not Worthy \(NON DIGNUS\)](#)

[O Sacrament Most Holy \(FULDA\)](#)

[O Saving Victim/O Salutaris Hostia](#)

[Pange Lingua, Gloriosi/Sing, My Tongue the Savior's Glory](#)

[Panis Angelicus/Holy and Living Bread \(Lambillotte\)](#)

[See Us, Lord, About Your Altar \(DRAKES BROUGHTON\)](#)

[Soul of My Savior \(ANIMA CHRISTI\)](#)

SAMPLE UNIVERSAL PRAYER

OVERVIEW

The Universal Prayer is used at Mass following the homily and before the presentation of the gifts. It is recommended that it also be used at prayer services, as through intercessions we are able to offer our response to the Word of God and present our prayers on behalf of all God's people.

The typical structure of the Universal Prayer is a.) for the needs of the Church, then b.) for public authorities and the salvation of the whole world, then c.) for those burdened by any kind of difficulty, and then d.) for the local community.

The following intercessions are meant to be useful, either to use as they are, to edit and adapt them, or to use them as a starting point to write your own prayer. More intercessions are provided than you need to use for each Mass or prayer service. The Universal Prayer is a great opportunity to involve students in identifying the needs that need to be prayed for.

For the Church:

for authentic witness,

for communities of welcome.

We pray to the Lord.

Lord, hear our Prayer.

For our nation and our world:

for mercy and forgiveness,

for justice and peace.

We pray to the Lord.

Lord, hear our Prayer.

For those who hunger:

those who hunger for food,

and those in need of spiritual nourishment.

We pray to the Lord.

Lord, hear our Prayer.

For our sisters and brothers in need:

for the immigrant, the imprisoned,

the unhoused, the addict, and the unemployed.

We pray to the Lord.

Lord, hear our Prayer.

For all those seeking forgiveness:

for the grace to forgive,

for the strength to ask forgiveness.

We pray to the Lord.

Lord, hear our Prayer.

For those whom we love:
for family and friends,
for all who help support our learning.
We pray to the Lord. *Lord, hear our Prayer.*

For our school community:
for teachers and students, parents and staff,
and for all who long to deepen their faith in Christ Jesus.
We pray to the Lord. *Lord, hear our Prayer.*

For each of us on this Lenten journey:
for the needs we've shared with others,
for the needs we hold in the quiet of our hearts.
We pray to the Lord. *Lord, hear our Prayer.*

For those most in need of our prayers:
for all who are sick,
all the dying, and for all who will die this day.
We pray to the Lord. *Lord, hear our Prayer.*

For all who have died:
for our family, friends, and neighbors in heaven,
and for all who now see Jesus, face to face.
We pray to the Lord. *Lord, hear our Prayer.*

SAMPLE PRAYERS

OVERVIEW

The following prayers are meant to be useful, either to use as they are, to edit and adapt them, or to use them as a starting point to write your own prayer.

Prayers like these might come in handy:

- as opening or closing prayers for a class or school prayer service,
- at the beginning or end of the school day,
- at the beginning or end of a staff meeting,
- to include in the class or school weekly newsletter, or
- for individual or personal prayer.

Each prayer comes from [Disciples in Prayer: A Resource for Faith Sharing, Year A \(OCP\)](#).

Father,
through our observance of Lent,
help us to understand the meaning of your Son's death and resurrection,
and teach us to reflect it in our lives.
Grant this through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son,
who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,
God, for ever and ever.
Amen.

Father of light,
in you is found no shadow of change
but only the fullness of life and limitless truth.
Open our hearts to the voice of your Word
and free us from the original darkness that shadows our vision.
Restore our sight that we may look upon your Son
who calls us to repentance and a change of heart,
for he lives and reigns with you for ever and ever.
Amen.

Father of forgiveness,
you have taught us to overcome our sins by prayer, fasting and works of mercy.
When we are discouraged by our weaknesses,
 give us confidence in your love.
We ask this through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son,
 who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,
 God, for ever and ever.
Amen.

Father of peace,
we are joyful in your Word, your Son Jesus Christ,
 who reconciles us to you.
Let us hasten toward Easter with the eagerness of faith and love.
We ask this through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son,
 who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,
 God, for ever and ever.
Amen.

You can find prayers and prayer resources all over the place. The Liturgy of the Hours has appointed prayers for each day (morning, midday, evening) and the Roman Missal has Collect prayers for each day, as well. These could be easily used or adapted for a prayer service, classroom, meeting, or personal use.

You can also find resources like [One Prayer a Day for Lent \(Creighton University\)](#) – a free PDF collection of short prayers, one for each day of the season.

THE SUNDAYS OF THE LENTEN SEASON

OVERVIEW

As has been stated several times throughout this resource, we encourage you to connect the prayer experiences you create to the Sunday experience. The “Seasonal Calendar” appendix provides you with the dates for each Sunday in the Lenten season as well as links to the Lectionary readings. To further help your planning and the Sunday connection, we are happy to provide the following guide.

Each Sunday in Lent is listed below along with citations and short summaries of each Scripture reading. We’ve also included questions for reflection that are based on the appointed Scripture readings. The readings and psalms appointed for Sunday would make excellent choices for a school prayer service. A corresponding reflection question can help shape a homily, reflection, or quiet time for personal meditation.

First Week of Lent (February 26 – March 4)

Scripture for the First Sunday of Lent

First Reading *Genesis 2:7–9; 3:1–7*

The Lord God created Adam and Eve and set them in the garden of Eden. They had all they needed, but the serpent tempted them, and they disobeyed God’s command.

Responsorial Psalm *Psalms 51:3–4, 5–6, 12–13, 17*

Be merciful, O Lord, for we have sinned.

Second Reading *Romans 5:12–19 or 5:12, 17–19*

Just as through Adam’s disobedience all became sinners, through Christ’s obedience all shall become just.

Gospel *Matthew 4:1–11*

After Jesus fasted for forty days and nights in the desert, the devil tempted him in three ways. Through all these, Jesus resisted temptation and remained faithful to the Lord God. When the devil left, angels came and ministered to Jesus.

Questions for reflection

- We hear of the introduction of sin into our world and we also hear that through Jesus we are redeemed. How do these two concepts – sin and redemption – impact your life as a disciple of Jesus?
- In the Responsorial Psalm we pray, “Be merciful, O Lord, for we have sinned.” How do you, as a disciple, invite others to experience the mercy of God?
- The daily news bombards us with examples of the effects of sin and evil. As a follower of Jesus, how can you be a witness to “good news” during this first week of Lent?

Second Week of Lent (March 5 – 11)

Scripture for the Second Sunday of Lent

First Reading *Genesis 12:1–4a*

Abram was commanded by the Lord to leave his home and go to a new land. There the Lord God would make of him a great nation, and all would be blessed because of him.

Responsorial Psalm *Psalm 33:4–5, 18–19, 20, 22*

Lord, let your mercy be on us, as we place our trust in you.

Second Reading *2 Timothy 1:8b–10*

God saves all people and calls them to a holy life, not because of their own merit but because of the grace held out in Christ. Christ “destroyed death and brought life and immortality to light through the gospel.”

Gospel *Matthew 17:1–9*

Jesus went up to a high mountain. With Moses and Elijah at his side, he was transfigured before the eyes of his disciples. A voice from the cloud said, “This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased; listen to him.”

Questions for reflection

- Genesis uses the words *blessed* or *blessing* five times. What specific blessings in my life have deepened my relationship and discipleship with God?
- God appears in a bright cloud and reveals Jesus as his “beloved son.” How have I responded to the Good News? Am I afraid? Has the Gospel transformed my words and actions, making me a better disciple?
- The Gospel often troubles people just as the voice of God troubled the apostles at first. During the coming week, what will I do to bring hope and joy, not fear?

Third Week of Lent (March 12 – 18)

Scripture for the Third Sunday of Lent

First Reading *Exodus 17:3–7*

The Israelites grumbled against Moses for leading them out of Egypt. They were thirsty, and there was no water in the desert, so Moses struck a rock with his staff, and water flowed out for the people to drink.

Responsorial Psalm *Psalm 95:1–2, 6–7, 8–9*

If today you hear his voice, harden not your hearts.

Second Reading *Romans 5:1–2, 5–8*

“The love of God has been poured into our hearts,” and that love is immeasurable.

Gospel *John 4:5–42 or 4:5–15, 19b–26, 39a, 40–42*

Jesus met a Samaritan woman at the well. She offered him water from the well and he, in turn, offered her the living water of eternal life. As a result, she and many others came to know that Jesus is the savior.

Questions for reflection

- As a disciple, when I approach God what thirst do I bring? What water and refreshment do I seek? How do I prepare myself to pray and to encounter Scripture so that I can grow in a deeper relationship with Jesus, who gives living water?
- Jesus says we reap the harvest others have prepared. Who first shared the Gospel with me? Who prepared me to be a disciple? What part of their story still touches me? Today, how do I sow and water the fields of faith for others?

Fourth Week of Lent (March 19 – 25)

Scripture for the Fourth Sunday of Lent

First Reading *1 Samuel 16:1b, 6–7, 10–13a*

The Lord sent Samuel to Bethlehem to the house of Jesse, where Samuel was to anoint the new king of Israel. After Jesse presented each of his sons, the Lord instructed Samuel to anoint the youngest, David.

Responsorial Psalm *Psalm 23:1–3a, 3b–4, 5, 6*

The Lord is my shepherd; there is nothing I shall want.

Second Reading *Ephesians 5:8–14*

Live as children of light in goodness, justice, and truth. “Awake, O sleeper...and Christ will give you light.”

Gospel *John 9:1–41 or 9:1, 6–9, 13–17, 34–38*

Jesus cured a man born blind. The Pharisees became upset because he did this on the sabbath. After the Pharisees rejected the man's story, he met Jesus again. Jesus, “Son of Man,” explained how the blind will see, but those who hold on to sin will remain in darkness.

Questions for reflection

- Samuel is challenged for grieving Saul whom God rejected. When anointed, the spirit of the Lord rushed upon David. For what must I, Christ's disciple, be challenged?
- John's story of the man born blind exposes human foibles to Christ's light. As a disciple, how do you proclaim, “One thing I know...I was blind...now I see?”
- Paul urges: “take no part in the fruitless works of darkness, rather expose them.” Discuss the works of darkness that as a disciple you will expose to the light of Christ.

Fifth Week of Lent (March 26 – April 1)

Scripture for the Fifth Sunday of Lent

First Reading *Ezekiel 37:12–14*

The Lord God told the people: “I will put my spirit in you that you may live...says the Lord.”

Responsorial Psalm *Psalm 130:1–2, 3–4, 5–6, 7–8*

With the Lord there is mercy and fullness of redemption.

Second Reading *Romans 8:8–11*

God, who raised Jesus from the dead, will also raise those in whom the Spirit dwells.

Gospel *John 11:1–45 or 11:3–7, 17, 20–27, 33b–45*

Lazarus died, and Jesus raised him from death. Jesus said, “I am the resurrection and the life; whoever believes in me, even if he dies, will live, and everyone who lives and believes in me will never die.”

Questions for reflection

- The Psalmist sings, “I wait with longing for the Lord...” What is your experience, as Christ's disciple, of waiting with longing for the Lord?
- “I am the resurrection and the life...Do you believe this?” Jesus invites Martha to acknowledge her faith. How do you invite others to faith and to discipleship?
- “Jesus wept” and pleaded, “Lazarus, come out! Untie him and let him go.” Jesus, divine, reveals his humanity. How will you proclaim Christ through your humanity?

Holy Week (April 2 – 8)

Scripture for Palm Sunday

First Reading *Isaiah 50:4–7*

The servant of the Lord God was rebuffed but did not turn back; he was beaten and spat upon. The suffering one knew the Lord God was with him.

Responsorial Psalm *Psalm 22:8–9, 17–18, 19–20, 23–24*

My God, my God, why have you abandoned me?

Second Reading *Philippians 2:6–11*

Just as through Adam's disobedience all became sinners, through Christ's obedience all shall become just.

Gospel *Matthew 26:14–27:66 or 27:11–54*

The passion and death of Jesus includes accounts of his betrayal, trial, condemnation, suffering, crucifixion, and burial.

Questions for reflection

- In Matthew's account of the Passion, Jesus says to the disciples: "This night all of you will have your faith in me shaken." As a disciple, how has your faith been shaken and what has sustained you?
- Jesus emptied himself, humbled himself, becoming obedient to the point of death for our sakes. When have you emptied yourself for another, even for Christ? How do you witness to this in your life?
- At the moment of Jesus' death, the centurion and his men said: "Truly, this was the Son of God!" What are some of the moments in your journey when you knew absolutely of the presence of God? How will you share this with others?

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