

Jesus through the Church Year

Intergenerational Session



Activity Objective

To experience the liturgical year as a “year of the Lord’s favor” (Luke 4:19), an opportunity to journey with Christ through the seasons.

Connections to the Catechism

Catechism of the Catholic Church #1168-1173

Activities at a Glance

- Opening Prayer – The People Who Lead Us to Jesus Through the Church Year (10 minutes)
- Opening Learning Activity: The Pattern of Our Year (25 minutes)
- Learning Activity: Experiencing Christ in the Advent and Christmas Season (30 minutes)
- Learning Activity: Experiencing Christ through the Symbols of Lent (30 minute)
- Learning Activity: Experiencing Christ in the Easter Season (35 minutes)
- Reflection/ Application: Church Year True or False (10 minutes)
- Closing Prayer – The Gifts of Our Year (10 minutes)

Prepare in Advance

Opening Prayer: The People Who Lead Us to Jesus through the Church Year

Activity Objective

To engage learners in celebrating the diversity of scriptural people we meet over the church year and their experience with God and/or Jesus.

Supplies and Preparation

- Make copies of the opening prayer and invite readers to speak the parts of the readings, and if possible have them dress up like the holy man or woman they have been assigned.

Opening Learning Activity: The Pattern of Our Year

Activity Objective

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To name the pattern of the church year and remember the intent behind its structure

Supplies and Preparation

- Using butcher paper, create a long poster on which to create the church year overview for activity step # 4.
- Copy for each group Handout 1- Events of the Church Year handout – using a paper cutter cut into slips and place them in an envelope.
- Scrap paper and markers to illustrate liturgical year events for step # 3.
- Mass Missals (yearlong version if possible) with the readings for each group.

Learning Activity: Experiencing Christ in the Advent and Christmas Season

Activity Objective

To explore the “who” of Jesus through the Advent readings.

Supplies and Preparation

- Sunday missals, 3 or 4 per group.
- Modeling clay, markers, pipe cleaners, paper.
- Copies of Handout 2 – one or two per group, or post the handout on a power point slide.

Learning Activity: Experiencing Christ through the Symbols of Lent

Activity Objective

To explore the “who” of Jesus through the central symbols of the season of Lent – Year C

Supplies and Preparation

- Slips of paper on which are written a symbol or image or person from the Lenten season – one symbol/person per piece of paper:
 - desert/sand (1st Sunday of Lent)
 - Abraham (2nd Sunday of Lent)
 - cloud (2nd Sunday of Lent – transfiguration reading)
 - fig tree (Gospel 3rd Sunday of Lent)
 - Moses (3rd Sunday of Lent)
 - swine (Prodigal Son story – Gospel 4th Sunday of Lent)
 - Prophet Isaiah (5th Sunday of Lent)
 - stone (Gospel – 5th Sunday of Lent)
 - Prophet Joel (Ash Wednesday)
 - Ashes (Ash Wednesday)

Learning Activity - Experiencing Christ in the Easter Season

Activity Objective

To explore the “who” of Jesus through the ritual actions of the Easter season.

Supplies and Preparation

- Set up 4 learning stations for participants to experience, numbering each (if your group is large, set up 3 to 4 of the same stations):
 1. Hand washing – pitchers of water, basins, and towels. At this station participants wash and dry the hands of another person.
 2. Simple adoration of the cross – wooden cross in holder. At this station participants quietly reverence the cross with a touch, bow, or kiss.
 3. Making the sign of the cross using holy water – bowls of water. At this station participants dip their finger in the holy water and make the sign of the cross.
 4. New Light – white paper to roll into candles, glue to fashion the roll, and pre-cut flames to paste into the center of the roll. At this station the participants examine the paschal candle – have someone explain to the group the meaning of the markings on the candle, then create a paper candle as a reminder.
 5. Oil – small bowls of oil. Participants are anointed by a group leader, making the sign of the cross on their foreheads.

Review of Church Year

Supplies and Preparation

- Create or purchase a liturgical year calendar for each household. For one option, check out the calendars sold 25 for \$13 at:
<http://www.ltp.org/p-2664-el-ao-de-gracia-2015-paper-notebook.aspx>

Closing Prayer: The Gifts of Our Year

Activity Objective

To celebrate the gifts the church year offers us as we live out our relationship with God and each other.

Session Plan

Opening Prayer:

The People Who Lead Us to Jesus through the Church Year (10 minutes)

Welcome

Welcome participants and provide a brief introduction to the session topic:

We gather to reflect on and celebrate the riches of the Church Year, our journey in faith. As we begin, we will listen to the stories and ponder the meaning of the year as we journey with the holy men and women whom we celebrate throughout the year.

Gather

Begin with a Sign of the Cross.

Listen/Respond

John the Baptist: I'm John the Baptist, the man of locusts and honey, who lived simply in the desert preparing the way for the Messiah. How are you preparing the world to receive Jesus Christ? May all your actions lead people to see the gift of Jesus' life for the world.

Elizabeth: I'm Elizabeth, cousin to Mary, Mother of Jesus. I placed my faith in God, that I would be blessed with a child, and I was blessed to see Mary as the Mother of God. Are you blessed to see the presence of God? May your heart and eyes be open to recognize Jesus in all whom you meet.

St. Paul: I'm St. Paul, whose conversion you celebrate in the ordinary time of January. Not many of you will be knocked off of your horse like I was, but I hope and pray that you keep your eyes and ears open to the voice of God calling you through the ordinary moments of your life. Are you open to hearing God calling you? May God disturb you, challenge you, and invite you to serve him.

Joel: I'm the prophet Joel – each Ash Wednesday I call to you from the first reading, “return to the Lord your God”. Hear my voice calling you from the business and challenges of your life to remember that the fullness of life resides in God. Is your heart resting in God's love for you? May God wrap you with love and forgiveness.

St. Joseph: I'm the husband of Mary, the simple man whose feast you celebrate in the middle of your fasting, praying, and almsgiving of Lent. I gave my all to provide a home for Mary and Jesus, that God's love may be renewed in the world. How are you giving your all to bring love to the world? May the work of your hands and the labor of your homes give glory to God!

Moses: I'm Moses, the reluctant leader of the Hebrew people. You hear of the story of God parting the Red Sea to free his people from the Egyptians when you gather for the high point of

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our liturgical year, the Easter Vigil. Are you there? Are you celebrating this feast of all feasts with your parish community? May you feel the freedom of being God's sons and daughters.

Peter: I'm Peter, one of Jesus' first disciples. I'm the one who denied him three times, I'm the one whom Jesus forgave and assured me of his everlasting presence. I was in that room when Jesus gave us the Holy Spirit, and I am with you as you celebrate the Feast of Pentecost each year. May the Spirit always call forward courage and hope from you!

St. Benedict: I'm St. Benedict, in the warmth and Sabbath time of July you celebrate my feast day. I know that God works through all the aspects of our daily life – working, eating, studying, praying. When's the last time you stopped to pay attention to God in the ordinary moments of your life? May God gently tap you on your shoulder and remind you of his goodness in each moment.

Blessed Mother Teresa: I'm Blessed Mother Teresa. As you begin the fall season of your year, you mark my memorial on September 5th. God spoke to me so vividly through the poor and marginalized – is your heart open to love those no one else in this world chooses to love? May you be blessed with courage and patience to love all those God gifts your life with.

All Saints: I'm a saint – a saint like all of you are. When we gather to celebrate All Saints Day we remember those saintly people who have gone before us and those saintly people we are called to be. May we embrace our call to be saints in the ordinary and extraordinary moments of our lives.

Go Forth

Loving God, the gift of the church year helps us to renew our relationship with you again and again. May we be present to the readings and symbols of our year, that we might come to know Jesus ever more fully. Amen.

Opening Learning Activity: The Pattern of Our Year (25 minutes)

1. Invite participants, working in small groups, to place the events of the church year in their chronological order by placing the slips you have pre-cut in the correct order (see handout one that follows). Here's the correct order:

Advent	1.
Christmas	2.
Feast of the Holy Family	3.
Baptism of the Lord	4.
Lent	5.
Palm Sunday	6.
Triduum	7.
Easter Sunday	8.
Season of Easter	9.
Trinity Sunday	10.

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Pentecost	11.
Feast of Corpus Christi/Solemnity of the Body and Blood	12.
Feast of the Assumption of Mary	13.
All Saints Day	14.
Feast of Christ the King	15.

2. Share the correct answers with the group and see how many they got right.
3. Assign each group, depending on the number of groups you have, at least one of the liturgical events for them to think of at least 3 symbols, scripture people, readings, or liturgical actions that are connected to each liturgical event. Also challenge them to name one way the event is connected to life as we live it. For example, the season of Advent challenges us to be patient, an important quality the world needs. Hint: give each group a missalette to help them out. Invite them to write words or draw pictures to illustrate their event.
4. Beginning with Advent, invite each group to come forward and attach their words or drawings to a wall size chart of the liturgical year. Make sure to add any comments that you feel are necessary to help learners understand the season or event, and accentuate that the high point of the liturgical year is the Easter Vigil.
5. Close this activity by inviting participants to share with each other their favorite church year feast or season.

Learning Activity: Experiencing Christ in the Advent and Christmas Season (30 minutes)

1. Assign each group one of the Sundays from Advent and the Christmas season to read together (give them a mass missal to read from).
2. After they have read the readings together, invite them to identify (use handout two that follows to assist them):
 - a. What is the image of Jesus that comes through most strongly through the readings?
 - b. What challenge does that image offer us in living out our faith?
 - c. Create a symbol using modeling clay or pipe cleaners or markers and paper that portrays the image of Jesus and its challenge.
3. Invite each group to share their “creation” and its meaning with the large group.

Learning Activity: Experiencing Christ through the Symbols of Lent (30 minutes)

Activity Plan

1. Distribute to each group a slip of paper with a symbol or person on it, along with a Sunday missal (that includes the readings for Ash Wednesday) for research if needed.
2. Challenge each group to create a description, or a list of clues, about the symbol or person as it relates to Jesus' life.
3. Once each group has completed their description/clue list invite them to present it to the large group to see if the large group can identify the symbol or person.
4. Review the list of symbols and people with the group and summarize how they lead us to understand Jesus better.

Learning Activity - Experiencing Christ in the Easter Season (35 minutes)

1. Depending on the number of participants, assign each group a starting place for their ritual experiences.
2. After each table group has experienced all 5 centers, invite them to read together and complete the worksheet (handout three below).
3. Summarize this learning activity by gathering sound bytes from volunteers at different table groups in response to the two questions from the handout.

Activity Plan – Review of Church Year (10 minutes)

1. Read out loud the questions to the large group, and invite them to name together their answer:

True or False:

- I. The last feast of the church year is Christ the King Sunday.
(True - Our first Sunday of the year is the first Sunday of Advent, which follows the Feast of Christ the King)
- II. At the heart of every liturgical celebration is Jesus Christ.
(True - Every liturgical celebration is about Jesus' life, death, and resurrection)

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- III. Christmas is the high point of our liturgical year.
(False - Easter, in particular the Easter Vigil, is the high point of our year)
 - IV. We celebrate the church year to remember what Christ has done for us.
(False - We celebrate the church year to make Christ present now)
 - V. Catholics created the liturgical year and fit the seasons of nature around them.
(False - The liturgical year was created in response to the already existing cycle of nature. The church year is the way we add a religious or spiritual dimension to the natural seasons, months, weeks, and days.)
 - VI. Most of our liturgical year is spent in the season of ordinary time.
(True - Most of our lives are ordinary - yet extraordinarily blessed with the presence of God!)
 - VII. Each period and season of the liturgical year has its own color, mood, prayers, and rituals.
(True - Each season highlights a particular aspect of Christ's life.)
 - VIII. The liturgical year is optional - you can choose to partake in it or wait until the event happens again the following year.
(False - Being a Christian is optional through the gift of free will. The church year is offered to us as a gift to unite our life with Christ's and His community.)
2. Give each household a liturgical calendar to take home.

Closing Prayer: The Gifts of Our Year (10 minutes)

Leader: **Jesus you challenge us through the season of Advent to be the voice and hands of justice in the world...**

All: Jesus, be with us.

Leader: **Jesus you challenge us in the ordinary times of our year to be faithful to our call to be disciples...**

All: Jesus, be with us.

Leader: **Jesus, you challenge us through the season of Lent to focus on what is most important in lives: love...**

All: Jesus, be with us.

Leader: **Jesus you challenge us through Holy Week and the Easter season to be people of hope...**

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All: Jesus, be with us.

Leader: Thank you Jesus for being a part of our lives, may the world be a more loving place through our witness to you. Amen.

Handout 1 - Putting the Church Year in the Right Order



Advent

Christmas

Feast of the Holy Family

Baptism of the Lord

Lent

Palm Sunday

Triduum

Easter Sunday

Season of Easter

Trinity Sunday

Pentecost

Feast of Corpus Christi/Solemnity of the Body and Blood

Feast of the Assumption of Mary

All Saints Day

Feast of Christ the King

Handout 2 - Jesus in the Advent and Christmas Season



Jesus in the Advent and Christmas Season

1. Read the readings from the missal for your assigned Sunday.
2. What is the image of Jesus that comes through most strongly through the readings?
3. What challenge does that image offer us in living out our faith?
4. Create a symbol using modeling clay or pipe cleaners or markers and paper that portrays the image of Jesus and its challenge.
5. Prepare to share your creation and its meaning with the large group.

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Jesus in the Advent and Christmas Season

1. Read the readings from the missal for your assigned Sunday.
2. What is the image of Jesus that comes through most strongly through the readings?
3. What challenge does that image offer us in living out our faith?
4. Create a symbol using modeling clay or pipe cleaners or markers and paper that portrays the image of Jesus and its challenge.
5. Prepare to share your creation and its meaning with the large group.

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Jesus in the Advent and Christmas Season

1. Read the readings from the missal for your assigned Sunday.
2. What is the image of Jesus that comes through most strongly through the readings?
3. What challenge does that image offer us in living out our faith?
4. Create a symbol using modeling clay or pipe cleaners or markers and paper that portrays the image of Jesus and its challenge.

5. Prepare to share your creation and its meaning with the large group.

Handout 3 - Experiencing Christ in the Easter Season

Experience	What struck you about this experience?	What does this experience teach us about Jesus?
<p>1. Hand washing On Holy Thursday, we remember Jesus washing the feet of his disciples. Washing feet is a sign of service and the self-sacrificing nature of Jesus' love.</p>		
<p>2. Adoration of the Cross On Good Friday we pause to reverence the cross, for it was upon the cross that Jesus revealed the fullness of his love for us.</p>		
<p>3. Sign of the cross with Holy Water. The waters of baptism bring us into Christ's body, and marking ourselves with the sign of the cross like we do each time we enter church reminds us that we belong to Christ.</p>		
<p>4. New Light We light the new fire at the Easter Vigil, to remind us that Christ the light has conquered the darkness of sin.</p>		
<p>5. Oil On Holy Thursday we carry in the oil of chrism, the oil of the sick, and the oil of the catechumens. Oil reminds us of Christ the anointed one, Christ the healer, Christ the giver of life. At the Easter Vigil the newly baptized are marked with the oil of chrism as a sign of being sealed with the Holy Spirit.</p>		

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