

LESSON 5: The Liturgical Year



REFERENCE

Page 215-216 [THE LITURGICAL YEAR]



WHAT YOU NEED

- (1) Four sets of cards
- (1) TSM: 'The Liturgical Year' (or liturgical wall chart)
- (3) Examples of chasubles and stoles
- (3) Coloured Pencils

AIM

- To explore the Church's the Liturgical Year and its relationship to the lives of Christians

OUTCOMES

- KUI Learners have a basic knowledge of the Church's Year.
- KUI Learners understand how the Liturgical Year is designed to assist Christians in their worship.
- DAP Learners have an appreciation of the power of symbols to assist in the nurturing of faith and spiritual life.

TEACHER'S NOTE

The aim of this lesson is to familiarise learners with the Liturgical Year of the Church. Make sure that you have all the necessary things that will help you to impart this knowledge to the learners, especially the liturgical vestments from the school chapel or the local parish church. You could even ask the parish priest or a catechist to assist you with this lesson.

LESSON OUTLINE

1 The Liturgical Year

Prepare cards for four groups with all the elements of the Liturgical Year as found on the Lesson Materials page 'The Liturgical Year'.

- i. Divide the learners into four groups.
- ii. Introduce the lesson by giving each group a set of shuffled cards. Ask them to arrange the cards chronologically as best as they can. Monitor the progress of the groups, suggesting alterations where necessary.
- iii. Briefly introduce the Church's Liturgical Year by presenting the chart on the Lesson Materials page 'The Liturgical Year'. Alternatively, you might have access to a liturgical wall chart for the current year.

2 Liturgical Colours

Separate the class into groups of four, allocating the five colours gold, white, green, red, purple/violet (for Lent) and dark blue/violet (for Advent).

Groups are asked to consider the following questions:

- i. For which season in the Liturgical Year is your colour used?
- ii. Why, do you think, did the Church adopts this particular colour for the season it represents? (Focus on the symbolism of the colour for the particular season.)

The colours are used as follows:

- *Gold: the major feast of Christmas and Easter*
- *White: important feasts, Marian feasts, and Masses of the Dead*
- *Red: feasts of the Holy Spirit, of the Sacred Heart, of the Cross, of Apostles and Martyrs,*
- *Purple: the penitential seasons of Advent and Lent*
- *Green: ordinary times and less important feasts*

(Michael Burke. 1991 'Liturgical Colours' 164 in Connections. Pietermaritzburg: Centaur Publications, p 141)

3 Liturgical Design

Show the learners a few samples of a chasuble and a stole from the school chapel or the local parish church. Explain the symbols that are found on these samples. The groups then set about designing either a chasuble or a stole, incorporating symbols which are relevant to the Eucharist, and their cultural heritage. Groups could explain their designs and good colour sketches could be displayed on the class notice board.

OTHER IDEAS

4 Religious Calendars and Reflection on Sacred Time

Collect diagrams that show the religious calendars of various faiths. Alternatively, your school calendar may mark days of religious significance to various learners in the school. If possible, display these on the classroom walls as a reminder that for all people of faith, time is always sacred time – a gift to us from God; an opportunity for growth on our spiritual path. All religions, even one such as Buddhism which does not necessarily concern itself with God, provide guidance on how we might wisely use our time. Invite learners to consider what this might mean for them, in their particular faith.

5 The Eternal Now

The liturgical celebration of events in the life of Christ are not focused on the past, but on the present. This is because the Church is the living symbol of the presence of Christ in the world today. Just as the historical Jesus was born, lived, suffered, died, and rose from the dead, so the Church, the Body of Christ, continues to experience this same pattern in its members.

MATERIALS

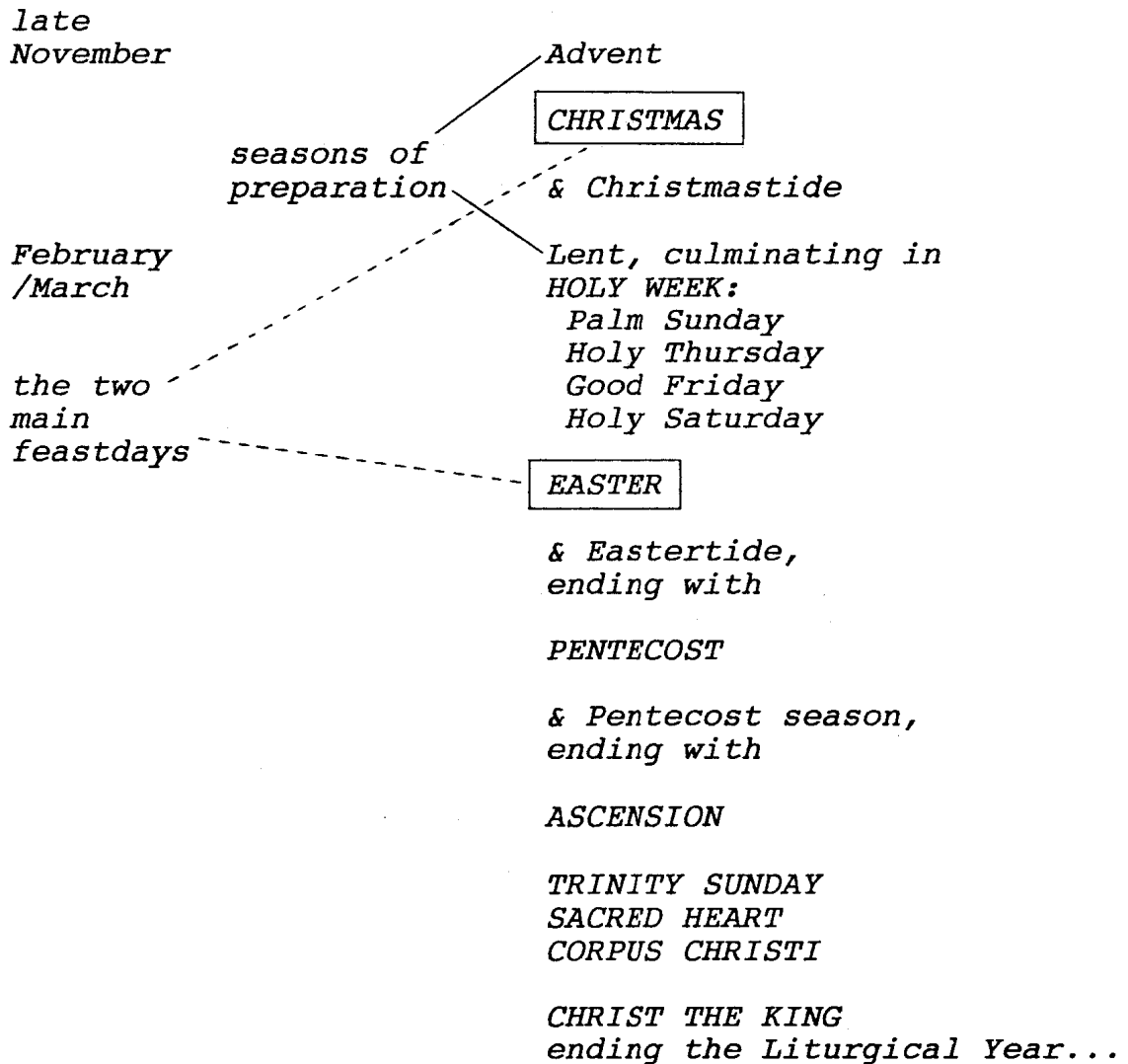
TEACHER

Michael Burke, Michael. 1991. 'The Pattern and Outline of the Liturgical Year' in *CORD: A Curriculum for Catholic High School Religious Education*. Pietermaritzburg: Centaur Publications, p 215



Lesson Materials

The Liturgical Year



LESSON 6: Preparation for Lent



REFERENCE

Page 217 [THE LITURGICAL YEAR]



WHAT YOU NEED

- (2) (4) LSM: 'Lenten Roots '
- (2) LSM: 'Seasons of Our Lives' (alternative)
- (3) Lenten Tree materials
- (4) Bibles

AIM

- To encourage learners to focus on Lent as a time of renewal and spiritual growth for Christians

OUTCOMES

- KUI The learners understand Lent as a time of growth and renewal.
- DAP The learners appreciate the wisdom of Lenten practices.

TEACHER'S NOTE

Make sure that you gather materials for making the Lenten Tree in due time for the lesson. You might even ask learners to gather these material for themselves. In that case, you will have to explain the exercise prior to the lesson.

LESSON OUTLINE

1 Introduction

Introduce the lesson by asking learners some questions relating to Lent as a season in the liturgical year. Ask them questions such as the following, and add your own if need be.

- i. What do you understand by 'Lent'?
- ii. Why is it necessary and important for Christians to observe a period of Lent?
- iii. How many days are there in the period of Lent and what are Christians expected to do during this days?
- iv. Invite a few learners to share their experiences of Lent.

2 Reflection

Distribute the Lesson Materials page 'Lenten Roots' to each learner. Ask them to read it reflectively. An alternative page 'Seasons of Our Lives' is provided for the same purpose. Choose whichever one is most suitable.

3 Lenten Tree

Ask learners to make a drawing of a tree, or to make a tree using any material that you or they have provided for the purpose. Explain how they are to make their tree. The roots symbolise the learner's gifts, talents and individual characteristics. The leaves symbolise those areas they would like to shed during the Lenten period, and the fruits which will appear gradually during Lent, symbolise each person's area of growth during the 40 days. They can start working on their tree in class, and finish them at home where they will keep it. If you allow time for journaling occasionally during Lent, they could be encouraged to write about the state of their tree.

4 Jesus in the Desert

- i. Ask learners to read the following passage: [Luke 4:1-13].
- ii. Ask them to reflect on Jesus' experience. The reproduction of a painting on the Lesson Materials page 'Lenten Roots' might help in this.
- iii. Invite them to share their understanding of this gospel passage, especially how it relates to the experience and practice of Lent.
- iv. Ask learners to pick a 'word of life' that arises from this gospel reading. They could contemplate this word or phrase throughout the Lenten season to draw nourishment for their spiritual life.
- v. Conclude by reading one of the two poems provided on the Materials page.

OTHER IDEAS

5 Prompts

Another way of introducing the lesson would be to choose one of the following prompts:

- If I believed that I were immortal, would I carry on living as I am doing?
- Let God be God.
- 'Lent' = Spring (Northern hemisphere . . .) (cf. Afrikaans 'Lente': Lent as a reawakening, a new beginning.
- Today is the first day of the rest of your life.
- Nothing is more expensive than a start. (Nietzsche)
- Every exit is an entry somewhere else. (Tom Stoppard)
- Don't just stop something; *start* something.
- In the southern hemisphere, Lent falls in Autumn: a time of shedding, turning, changing . . . (Michael Burke. 1991. 'Lent – some thoughts' 166 in Connections. Pietermaritzburg: Centaur Publications, p 141)

6 Biblical References

Learners could explore the idea and meaning of Lent through the biblical reference given on the Lesson Materials page 'Lenten Roots'.

7 Other Faith Traditions

Lent calls Christians to penance, fasting, and almsgiving - the doing of charitable works. It's a time to work on and renew one's relationship with God, and to be mindful of one's relationships with others. Here are ways learners from Jewish or Muslim backgrounds (or any who are interested) could pick up on similar themes in their own faith practice:

- Texts from the Sunday Lectionary's first readings (i.e. from the Christian Old Testament / Hebrew Bible) and Psalms reflect key moments in the life of the Hebrew or Jewish nation. Learners might like to explore the significance of these texts for the Jewish people, their identity, and self-understanding. Christian learners would see how these texts can be read for Jewish significance, and how an awareness of this can deepen their understanding and appreciation of Jewish and Christian roots.
- Some learners might like to consider the significance of Ramadan for Muslims – among other things, fasting reminds the practitioner of their absolute dependence on God (and renews an awareness of blessing with regard to the simple things we need for our survival, but which we are prone to take for granted).

MATERIALS

LEARNER

- CIE. 2005. 'Lenten Roots'
- CIE. 2005. "Seasons of Our Lives"



Lesson Materials

Lenten Roots

The word *Lent* is derived from the Old English word *lencten*, meaning “the spring” and has links with the Dutch (*lente*) and German (*lenze*) words for Spring. The liturgical season of Lent may, therefore, be seen as a time of growth, renewal and preparation for the new life that Easter promises us.

(A M Macdonald 1972 *Chambers Twentieth Century Dictionary*, Edinburgh, Chambers, p754)

WHY FORTY DAYS?

In the first three centuries, it was customary to fast for about a week to prepare for the very special days of the Easter Triduum. By the end of the fourth century, a forty-day fast was generally accepted. The number forty was probably taken from the fasts we read about in the Bible – Moses, Elijah and Jesus all observed forty day fasts. (But note that Sundays in Lent are not fast days!)

Jesus' Temptation in the Desert by Sieger Köder



PRAYER, FASTING, ALMSGIVING

Jesus tells us how important these aspects of our lives are, **all the time, not just in Lent** – have a look at St Matthew's Gospel 6:1 -18. However, as the days go by, we often find that we have slipped up – Lent is a time for getting ourselves into training once again, a time for living intensely the way we should always live.

Through PRAYER we link up with God; we praise him for the wonder of the world, for the wonder of our own being; we intercede with him for those suffering, those in need of any kind; we ask him to forgive the things we have done wrong, - our laziness, our selfishness, our stubbornness or pride; we ask him for those things that we need to live good lives; and sometimes we are just quiet and listen to God ...

The idea of FASTING is found many times in the Old and New Testaments. At the beginning of Jesus' public life, he fasted in the desert for forty days and forty nights. He recommended it to help people become humble before God and to prepare them for making important decisions. Fasting nowadays is understood as having one main meal and two small ones. Often in Lent we are asked voluntarily to do without something we enjoy – it may be food, or sweets, or cold drinks, or going to the cinema – or even gossiping! We do it to support our prayer, to promote self-discipline; to help cleanse ourselves of previous abuses or sin. It enables us to be in solidarity with the poor and with those who are severely tempted. It also helps us to use the money we have saved to give alms – that is to help those who are poor in some way.

The people of the Old Testament/...

Lesson Materials
LENTEN ROOTS (cont.)



The people of the Old Testament were encouraged always to remember the poor – if some of the harvest was left, the widows and orphans would come and gather it; poor people were to be helped generously and with dignity. In the New Testament Jesus tells his followers to give without showing off, and without expecting anything in return. He says ‘As often as you did it for one of the least of my brothers (or sisters), you did it for me.’ ALMSGIVING is not just about giving money or food or clothing. It is also about giving our time and our talents to help others help themselves, and so make our society a better place. Almsgiving is not just about doing good for our neighbour – **it is concerned giving, transformed by grace, for the kingdom of God.**

Biblical References: Jonah 3:7; Acts 9:9; 2 Sam 3:35; 1 Sam 7:6; Psalm 35:13; Tobit 12:8; Ex 34:28; Lk 4:2; Acts 13:2-3; Lev 19:9; 23:22; Ruth 2; Deut 15:11; Prov 3:2f; Mt 6:16; Lk 6:30-35; 14:14; Mt 25:40

The Presence

I am the silent mountain
The lilt of singing stream
The stairway of the angels
The God of Jacobs’ dream.

I am the sand of desert
The wind that sweeps the plain
The cloud that swirls the hilltop
The sound of the falling rain.

I am the wing that flutters
The song of the patient stone
I am the sky that blushes
After the sun has gone.

I am the stars of morning
The stones of the riverbed
The sigh of the reeds at sunset
The petals the roses shed

I am the pines and the mosses
The roots on the forest floor
I am the eye of the eagle
I am the speed of the hare.

I am the force of the fountain
The feathersoft fall of the snow
I am the dance of the wavelets
The rhythm, the ebb and the flow.

I am the air that enfolds you
Touch the green bough, I am there
The quiet of the earth that upholds you
I am your God, I am near.

(Maria Mackey OP *The Presence and Other Poems*, Cape Town, Dominican Region House, p3)

Thou art indeed just, Lord

Thou art indeed just, Lord, if I contend
With thee; but, sir, so what I plead is just.
Why do sinners’ ways prosper? And why must
Disappointment all I endeavour end?
Wert thou my enemy, O thou my friend,
How wouldst thou worse, I wonder, than thou
dost
Defeat, thwart me? Oh, the sots and thralls of lust
Do in spare hours more thrive than I that spend,

Sir, life upon thy cause. See, banks and brakes
Now, leaved how thick! laced they are again
With fretty chervil, look, and fresh wind shakes
Them; birds build- but not I build: no, but strain,
Time’s eunuch, and not breed one work that
wakes.
Mine, O thou lord of life, send my roots rain.

(Gerard M Hopkins)

(R Malan(Ed) 1997 *Worldscapes* Cape Town, Oxford University Press, p28) © CIE. 2005



Lesson Materials

Seasons of Our Lives

Lent and Holy Week

Being sorry for our sins, and doing penance for them, is an essential part of the Christian life because none of us can measure up to the tremendous vocation that is the Christian's. Lent is a time when we pay particular attention to these matters, and the tone of the scripture readings in the liturgy reflects this.

A reading from the prophet Joel teaches us what our attitude should be:

"But now, now – it is the Lord who speaks –
Come back to me with all your hearts,
Fasting, weeping, mourning."

Let your hearts be broken, not your garments torn,
turn to the Lord your God again,
for he is all tenderness and compassion,
slow to anger, rich in graciousness,
and ready to relent.

(First reading, Ash Wednesday, Joel 2: 12-18)

The gospel of the same day provides us with ideas about the forms our penance should take - but Jesus reminds us that these are things that should remain private:

"Be careful not to parade your good deeds before men to attract their notice; by doing this you will lose all reward from your Father in heaven. So when you give alms, do not have it trumpeted before you; this is what the hypocrites do and in the synagogues and in the streets to win men's admiration. ...

And when you pray, do not imitate the hypocrites: they love to say their prayers standing up in the synagogues and at the street corners for people to see them.
...

When you fast, do not put on a gloomy look as the hypocrites do: they pull long faces to let men know they are fasting."

(Gospel of Ash Wednesday, Mt 6: 1-18)

As Lent continues/...

Lesson Materials
SEASONS OF OUR LIVES (cont.)

As Lent continues through six weeks, we draw nearer and nearer to Holy Week when we commemorate the passion and death of Jesus. During the final two weeks, all signs of joy are removed from the church.

Psalm 129 captures the spirit of the season well:

Out of the depths I cry to you, O Lord,
Lord, hear my voice!
O let your ears be attentive
to the voice of my pleading.

If you, O Lord, should mark our guilt,
Lord, who would survive?
But with you is found forgiveness:
for this we revere you.

My soul is waiting for the Lord,
I count on his word.
My soul is longing for the Lord
more than watchman for daybreak.

Because with the Lord there is mercy
and fullness of redemption.
Israel indeed he will redeem
from all its iniquity.

(Fifth Sunday of Lent, Ps 129)