

LESSON 4: The Church's Year

AIM

To familiarise the learners with the church's liturgical cycle (5.1.16)

OUTCOME

Learners are aware of the different seasons of the Church's year.

LEARNING ACTIVITIES

- 1 **Bible Reading:** Read [Ecclesiastes 3:1 - 2] prayerfully. Let the learners copy the text into their RE books. Explain that these words from the Bible tell us that there is a season or a time for everything.

There is an appointed time for everything,
And a time for every affair under the heavens.
A time to be born and a time to die;
a time to plant, and a time to uproot the plant.

- 2 **Show pictures of different seasons** in the year, one by one. Get the learners to list their favourite activities for that season. Point out that every year has seasons; each of them is different and prepares us for the next season. The cycle of life continues, the same season repeats itself year after year. Just as our calendar has names for its seasons, so the church year is also divided into special seasons, with special names for each season. These seasons make up the **liturgical year** or calendar of the church.

- 3 **Liturgical seasons:** Point out to the learners that during the liturgical year we remember and celebrate different events in the life of Jesus Christ. The liturgical calendar provided in the worksheet could be enlarged for the purpose:

Advent - preparation for the birth of Jesus: during this time we celebrate the feast of the Immaculate Conception of Mary.

Christmas - the Birth of Jesus: we celebrate Jesus' birth, the feast of the Holy Family, the Epiphany and the Baptism of Jesus.

Ordinary Time 1 - split into two parts. The first part is normally about 7 weeks long.

Lent -: we celebrate Ash Wednesday, the beginning of the forty days before Easter and Holy Week.


Easter - we remember the Last Supper, the death of Jesus on Good Friday and the Easter Vigil, the Resurrection, Ascension and Pentecost.

Ordinary Time 2 - between 25-30 weeks long. We celebrate the Spirit's presence in and among us, and we mark every Sunday as the Lord's Day - a celebration of the resurrection of Jesus. The liturgical year ends with the feast of Christ the King.

- 4 Use the **worksheet**, Seasons of the Church Year, for learners to colour in. Explain the **colour** used for each season.  ⇒



WHAT YOU NEED

- * Bible (1)
- * Pictures showing different seasons of the year, or a symbol for each season (learners could draw their own.) (2)
- * An ordinary calendar (2)
- * A liturgical calendar (3)
- *  Liturgical cycle worksheet (4) ⇒
- * Liturgical colours (4) ⇒

- 5 It would also be instructive for learners to know how the **seasons** of the church year compare with our seasons here in Southern Africa and in the Northern Hemisphere where they are reversed.
- 6 **Check Your Memory:** Beside each celebration, write the name of the liturgical season to which it belongs.
1. Baptism of Jesus _____
 2. Ascension of Jesus _____
 3. All Saints _____
 4. Ash Wednesday _____
 5. Jesus' Birth _____

ADDITIONAL ACTIVITIES

- 7 **Word Search:** Learners to compile their own word search using the following words:
1. Liturgical
 2. Easter Vigil
 3. Lent
 4. All Saints
 5. Christmas
 6. Advent
 7. Pentecost
 8. Ascension
 9. Easter
 10. Alleluia

MATERIALS

LITURGICAL COLOURS

ADVENT **purple**

CHRISTMAS **white**

LENT **purple**

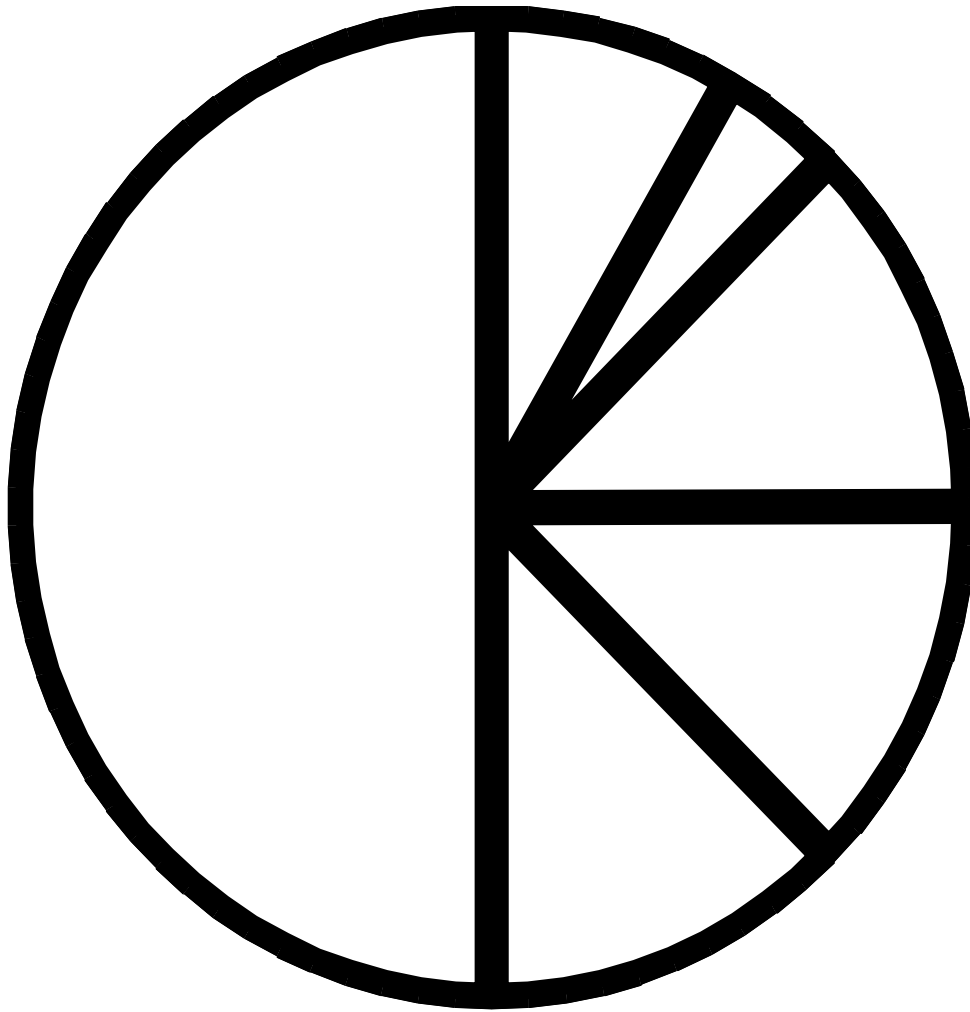
EASTER **white**

ORDINARY TIME **green**

red is used for PALM SUNDAY,
GOOD FRIDAY and PENTECOST

Seasons of the Church's Year

Start at twelve o'clock on the circle and colour in the wedges in the correct liturgical colours. Fill in the key below so that the different seasons can be recognised.



	ADVENT
	CHRISTMAS
	ORDINARY TIME I
	LENT
	EASTER
	ORDINARY TIME 2

LESSON 5: Ash Wednesday

AIM

To involve learners in preparing a paraliturgy for Ash Wednesday (5.4.12)

OUTCOME

Learners understand the significance of Ash Wednesday.

LEARNING ACTIVITIES

What follows is a suggested outline for a paraliturgy, which could be used in the church or classroom. The lesson would be spent in preparing the paraliturgy.

1 INTRODUCTION

Explain that Ash Wednesday is the beginning of Lent and that Lent is the time when Christians prepare themselves for Easter. Make reference to the fact that all the major religions of the world have times of preparation, fasting and atonement e.g. Jews (Yom Kippur), Muslims (Ramadan).

Leader: During our Ash Wednesday paraliturgy our songs, our prayers and actions will be the signs which express sorrow for our sinfulness and our willingness to change. Lent will be a time to die to our selfishness, laziness and pride. It will be a time to grow in our determination to be more like Jesus. Let us ask him today for his help to do these things.

Song: *Come Back to Me or Sing for Life – Wilderness* (p.50)

Reader 1: How many of you have a school blazer or a shirt with a badge on it? Why do you wear it? When you wear your school blazer everyone knows where you go to school. In fact, we usually wear uniforms and badges because we are proud of them. It shows that we “belong” to that school or team. Words like _____ Name of school/team), and symbols like a badge are signs that tell other people about us.

Reader 2: Today we will receive a special sign which will show others - and remind ourselves - a little more about who we are. Today we bless ashes and put them on our foreheads. The ashes remind us that we belong to God, and that we should die to all that separates us from God. They call us back to our Creator today with the words which accompany the sign: “Repent and believe the good news.” The followers of Jesus wear his cross on their foreheads and show others that they follow him.

Prayer: Loving God, you sent your son, Jesus, to show us how to live. Today we ask you to help us learn from his example. Help us to be sorry for the ways in which we have hurt one another. Help us begin to change.



WHAT YOU NEED

- * *Come Back to Me or Sing for Life – Wilderness* (p.50) (1)
- * A school blazer with badge (1)
- * Bible (3)
- * Copies of **My Lenten Intention** (4) ⇒
- * Taped music (4)
- * Purple yarn (4)
- * Ashes (maybe from old burnt palm crosses) (5)
- * Copies of the Lord’s Prayer (6) ⇒
- * *Follow Christ* (6)

2 PENITENTIAL RITE

Leader: Ash Wednesday marks the beginning of Lent. Lent is 40 days of special growing time. Jesus promises us a new life which we celebrate at Easter. During Lent we can help each other grow closer to Jesus so that at Easter we can come more alive with him.

Reader 3: Lent is a time to slow down and think about the God we have neglected, the prayers we have left unsaid, the people we have hurt, and the good we have left undone.

All: Lord have mercy

Reader 4: Lent is a time to grow - to change for the better. It is a time to really decide to become more like Jesus. Lent is a time to suffer growing pains - because it is hard to change. It is hard to fight against bad habits, to conquer laziness, to try, fail, and then pick ourselves up again. But each time we try, our goodness grows stronger.

All: Christ have mercy

Reader 5: Lent is a time to be happy, because we are moving closer to God, the source of all happiness. The more we let God's life grow in us, the greater our happiness.

All: Lord have mercy

3 LISTENING TO THE WORD

Reader 6: [Luke 8: 5 - 8]. A story about growing seeds and the kind of soil you need.

Homily: The leader asks the children whether they understand the story, and points out that:

The seed is the word of God.

The farmer in the story is God.

We are the soil.

If we listen to God's word and live by it, then God's love will grow strong in us.

How will we make our home, school and world a better place to live in?

The leader then asks how the learners plan to prepare their soil for growing closer to Jesus this Lent. A list to help them choose might be helpful, for example:

Doing my chores without being asked or reminded

Tidying up after myself

Accepting responsibility for my own actions

Eating fewer sweets and chips, and giving the money to an organisation that helps the poor


Giving away something special - a toy or clothing

Planning and completing a group service project

Keeping a gratitude journal

Praying for victims of crime, war and natural disasters

4 RESPONDING TO THE WORD

Distribute copies of **My Lenten Intention** to learners, teachers, parents - whoever is at the paraliturgy- to be filled in to the accompaniment of taped music and then rolled up and tied with purple yarn. (Learners should not be asked to share their intentions with others. They are kept through Lent as a reminder.)  ⇒

5 BLESSING AND DISTRIBUTION OF ASHES

Different learners may be asked to read different sections, so that all participate.

Reader 1: We ask God to bless these ashes, which we will use as a sign of our redemption.

Reader 2: Dust to dust and ashes to ashes, may we remember this day that we come from God and that we will go to God.

Reader 3: Dust to dust and ashes to ashes, may we remember this day that we need the Lord's blessing.

Reader 4: Dust to dust and ashes to glory. May we remember this day that Jesus died and rose from the dead.

Reader 5: What does it mean when we believe that we came from the dust of the earth?

Reader 6: Not that we were once clay or mud or dust. That was a way of saying that we came from God. It is a way of admitting that we are not masters of ourselves. We did not call ourselves into being, we came from the breath and life of God.

Reader 7: Warmth breathing life into nothing, life growing in the safety of the womb, life bursting forth as flowers from the earth.

Reader 8: What does it mean when we believe that we came from the dust of the earth? What does it mean to be alive?

Reader 9: The same answers: Gift of God, Joy of God, promise of God, I am dust, and flowers grow in dust moistened by the breath of God.

The leader says a prayer over the ashes:

Blessed are you, Lord our God'
 Creator of the universe
 and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ:
 in obedience to His command and His example,
 we begin this time of penance and of prayer.
 Let these ashes be a sign
 that we are turning away from sin
 and that we are ready to live
 a new life with Jesus for you.
 Destroy the power of sin in our lives,
 and bring us ever closer to you.

Blessed and praised are you, God our
 Father,
 through Jesus Christ your Son
 in the love of your Holy Spirit,
 one God for ever and ever.

All: Amen!

The leader places some ashes on the forehead of each person who comes forward to receive them. The leader may give the ashes in silence, or using these words:

Turn away from your sins, and believe the Good News of Jesus Christ.

Someone can be chosen to give the ashes to the leader at the start or the end of the distribution

6 CONCLUSION

The Lord's Prayer – (A new English version is given above)

Song: *Follow Christ and Love the World As He Did*

MATERIALS

THE LORD'S PRAYER

Our Father in heaven,
 hallowed be your name.

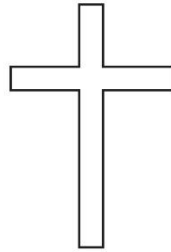
Your kingdom come.

Your will be done on earth, as in heaven.

Give us today our daily bread
 and forgive us our sins,

as we forgive those who sin against us.

Save us from the time of trial
 and deliver us from evil.



My Lenten Intention

DURING LENT I WILL

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IN ORDER TO SHOW MY LOVE FOR JESUS
AND GET READY FOR EASTER.

SIGNED