

The Faces of Easter

Liturgical Action

Focus: The Life Death and Resurrection of Jesus.

You will need:

- Eight illustrations of the life, death and resurrection of Jesus on seven cards.
- Purple and white underlay, Purple felt 150 cm long X 22 cm wide with a rectangle of white felt on one end, 22cm X 25cm.

The material consists of a set of seven faces of Christ laminated, with matt pouches if possible, in a box or tray.

The underlay is a purple and white, felt, "scroll" that unrolls to fit six laminated illustrations on the purple section and one on the white rectangle.

The underlay unrolls toward the storyteller and the story 'grows' out of the rolled up underlay.

Background:

Lent is the season when we prepare for Easter. This lesson helps the children to prepare for the Mystery of Easter by hearing the stories of Christ's journey toward the cross and resurrection. The lesson can be presented in one session or you can tell the story over two or more lessons remembering to recap on 'the story so far' before you continue. A suitable break would be after the 5th picture 'Jesus as Healer and Parable-Maker.

No 1 Jesus Mary and Joseph

Children sit in a circle on the floor. Place the underlay on the floor in front of the children unrolling enough to fit one illustration. Hold the first picture of 'Jesus' Birth and Growth', up for the children to see while you say:

In the beginning the baby was born. God chose Mary to be the Mother of God. Listen carefully to the words.

God chose Mary to be the mother of God, and the Word was born a wordless child.

Mary and Joseph held the baby close, they kept the baby warm, they gave the baby everything that he needed to grow. And the baby began to grow.

No 2 Jesus in the Temple

Place the picture on the end of the underlay and hold up the 2nd picture, 'Jesus is Lost and Found' and say:

The baby grew and became a boy. When he was about twelve years old he went with Mary and Joseph, and many other people from their village of Nazareth, to the city of Jerusalem for the festival of Passover. When the celebration was over, the people from Nazareth went out through the city gates and started on their journey home.

As they travelled along Mary and Joseph discovered that Jesus was not with their group. They hurried back to Jerusalem to find him.

They looked everywhere and finally even looked in the Temple – and there he was talking to the rabbis. When he spoke they listened because he knew so much. Jesus listened and learned as well. Mary and Joseph asked Jesus the question all parents ask, the question that you can never answer: “Why did you do this? And Jesus said something very strange. He said, “Didn’t you know I would be in my Father’s house?” Mary and Joseph did not understand, but they did not forget what Jesus had said.

No 3 Jesus’ Baptism

Place the picture end to end with the first picture on the underlay and hold up the 3rd picture, ‘Jesus’ Baptism and Blessing by God,’ and say:

Jesus grew and became a man. When he was about thirty years old, he went to the River Jordan, where his cousin, John, was baptising people. This is John, he was a wild man!

Jesus went into the river and asked John to baptise him. John said, “but you should be baptising me.” Jesus went down in the darkness and chaos of the water. When John lifted him back up into the light, there were people there who said they saw a dove come down from heaven. They heard a voice say “This is my beloved son, in whom I am well pleased.”

After Jesus was baptised he went on across the River Jordan into the desert and stayed there for forty days and forty nights.

No 4 Jesus in the Desert

Place the picture end to end with the second picture on the underlay and hold up the 4th picture, ‘Jesus’ Desert and Discovery Experience,’ and say:

While Jesus was in the desert he was tempted three times. He was by himself and there was nothing to eat. “Why don’t you turn the stones into bread?” said a voice. But Jesus knew that he needed more than just bread to be a real human being.

Suddenly it was as if Jesus was on top of the great Temple in Jerusalem. The voice came back, “If you are really the Son of God, why don’t you jump and see if God sends the angels to catch you? Jesus answered “No. We do not test God.

Then it was as if Jesus could see all the Kingdoms of the world. The voice came back again: “If you follow me, I will make you king over all these kingdoms.

Jesus said, “I am to be a king but not an earthly one.

After forty days Jesus went back across the Jordan and began to do his work.

No 5 Jesus Cures the Blind Man

Place the picture end to end with the third picture on the underlay and hold up the 5th picture, 'Jesus as healer and parable maker,' and say:

What was Jesus' work? His work was to come close to people, especially the people no one else wanted to come close to.

Point to the blind man. See he has come close to this blind man; he is so close that he has touched the blind man's eyes.

When Jesus came close to people, they changed. They could see things they could never see before. They could do things they could never do before. They became well.

Jesus also told parables. Finally he knew that he had to become a parable, so he turned towards Jerusalem for the last time.

IF YOU NEED TO HAVE A BREAK IN THE LESSON THIS WOULD BE A GOOD TIME. WHEN YOU TAKE UP THE STORY AGAIN JUST RECAP QUICKLY WHAT HAS ALREADY BEEN TOLD.

No 6 The Last Supper

Place the picture end to end with the fourth picture on the underlay and hold up the 6th picture, 'Jesus offers the Bread and Wine,' and say:

Jesus went to Jerusalem for the last time. It was the time of the Passover, and the city was full of people from many different lands. They thought Jesus was coming to be King, but they weren't paying attention.

On that Sunday when Jesus rode into Jerusalem the people waved Palms as if he were a king. During the week he went into the Temple each day to teach the people.

On Thursday night Jesus and his Disciples celebrated a special meal, it was to be their last meal together. After they had eaten Jesus took the Bread and blessed it then he took the Wine and did the same. The apostles did not really understand, Jesus told them to do what he had done and to serve others.

Later while Jesus was praying in the garden the soldiers arrested him and took him away, the apostles disappeared in fright.

No 7 Jesus is Crucified

Place the picture end to end with the fifth picture on the underlay and hold up the 7th picture, 'The One who was Easter and Still Is,' and say:

The night was a confusing one. The next day, Jesus was taken outside the walls of the city and crucified.

That afternoon Jesus died. The sky grew dark, Jesus was taken down from the cross and placed in a fresh tomb.

On Sunday it was the women who had the courage to go to the tomb to be close to Jesus. When they came to the tomb they found that the stone had been rolled back and the tomb was empty.

Jesus had died on a cross but somehow he was still with them as he is with us, especially in the Eucharist.

No 7 Back The Risen Jesus

Turn the picture slowly back and forth as you describe the faces in this part of the story. Now unroll the white part of the underlay.

When you look at this side (crucifixion) you know that the other side is there (Easter). When you look at this side (Easter), you know that this side (crucifixion) is there. You cannot have one without the other. This is the mystery of Easter ... and so the colours change.

Place the seventh picture down on the white rectangle, with the face of the risen Christ facing up.

Allow the children some time to reflect on the story before you invite them to 'Wonder'.

I Wonder:

- I wonder what part of this story you liked the best?
- I wonder what part of the story was the most important part?
- I wonder where you are in this story? What part of the story is about you?
- I wonder if there is any part of the story that we can leave out and still have all the story we need?

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