

## Lesson 1

### Share

**Objective** To reflect on water's importance in life

### Praying with Scripture

- Gather the young people in the prayer center. Then light the candle near the Bible.
- Draw attention to the bowl of water and the sprig of evergreen in the prayer center. Explain that water is a sacred gift from God and a reminder of God's life within us.
- Open the prayer with the Sign of the Cross. Then pray together the Scripture verse at the top of page 354. Talk about the meaning of the verse.
- Close the prayer by listening to or singing together "Streams of Living Water" or another appropriate Easter song.

### Sharing Experiences

- Engage the young people in a discussion of what habits people would need to change if water were very scarce in your hometown. (*Responses will vary.*)
- Tell the young people that they are going to learn more about Easter, the Church's great feast of the Resurrection, and the importance that water plays in the Easter rites.

### Hear and Believe

**Objective** To learn about Easter and the role of water in the Church's celebration of Easter

### Discussing the Text

- Invite the young people to read Easter Holy Water. Suggest that while they read they look for information about the relationship between Easter and Baptism. Then ask them to describe how water is a sign of life in each of the photos on pages 354 and 355.
- Call on volunteers to name the uses for which water is blessed at Easter. (*The Baptism of the elect; the filling of Holy Water fonts; the sprinkling rite at Mass; and for use by parishioners, who can take it home to bless their families and homes*)
- Remind the young people that we celebrate Easter to commemorate Christ's Resurrection.

For all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ.  
Galatians 3:27

## Easter Holy Water

The word *Easter* means "fullness of spring." As nature abounds with new life each spring, so the Church celebrates spiritual rebirth—our new life in the Risen Christ—during the Easter Season. We rejoice in the Resurrection of Jesus as well as our own Baptism. We are continually reminded of our Baptism throughout Easter. At Masses during the Easter Season, the priest leads the people in a renewal of their baptismal promises. The assembly repeats promises to reject sin and to live as children of God.

The celebrant blesses water in an elaborate ritual at the Easter Vigil. This water is used to baptize the elect, to fill holy water fonts at church entrances, and in the sprinkling rite that replaces the Penitential Act at Masses during this season. During this rite, the priest walks throughout the church blessing the people with the new Easter water as they in turn, bless themselves, making the Sign of the Cross. Some people bottle this water and use it to bless their families and homes.

Easter is a time when we commemorate Christ's Death and Resurrection. It is a time when we celebrate our new life in Christ gained for us by his Paschal sacrifice. Easter is a celebration of Christ's Resurrection and of our Redemption. This holy season invites us to renew our lives as children of God and members of the Body of Christ, the Church.



354 Easter

### LITURGY CONNECTION

#### In the Prayer Center

- Prepare the prayer center before the session. Gather the following materials: a cross, a white cloth for the prayer table, a Bible, a Bible stand, and a large candle.
- Also place in the prayer center a large clear bowl of water and a sprig of evergreen.

## Water and Life

Water is a vital ingredient for life. Did you know that the human body is ninety percent water? Without water living things would soon wither and die. Wherever there is water there is the potential for life.

Water is a powerful symbol of life. Throughout the Easter Season the Church uses water to remind us of the new life Jesus won for us through his saving Death and Resurrection. Jesus died and was raised from the dead. The Easter liturgy bids us to die to sin and rise from the waters of Baptism to new life with God.

### ACTIVITY

Read or recall the following passages from the Bible. What does water symbolize in each passage?

The Great Flood (Genesis 7:6-8:12)  
the power of water; death

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Crossing the Red Sea (Exodus 14:15-31)  
freedom

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The Baptism of Jesus (Matthew 3:13-17, Mark 1:9-11, or Luke 3:21-22)  
being named as God's Son / God's daughter

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O God, who on  
this day, through your Only  
Begotten Son, have conquered  
death and unlocked for us the path  
to eternity, grant, we pray, that  
we who keep the solemnity of the  
Lord's Resurrection may, through  
the renewal brought by your Spirit,  
rise up in the light of life. Amen.

Collect, Easter Sunday  
Roman Missal



## Respond

**Objective** To explore the religious symbolism of water

### Doing the Activity

- Invite a volunteer to read aloud *Water and Life* on page 355.
- Discuss with the young people reasons that water is a powerful symbol of life. (*Responses will vary.*)
- Read aloud the directions for the activity on page 355. Give the young people sufficient time to complete the activity. Allow volunteers to share their responses.

### Prayer

Have the young people quiet themselves for prayer. Then pray together the closing prayer at the top of page 355. Close the prayer with the Sign of the Cross. You may wish to sing another Easter hymn at the end of your prayer.

### ENRICHMENT

#### Science

Invite the group to explore the Web site "Water Science School" at [water.usgs.gov/edu](http://water.usgs.gov/edu). You might also explore this site on your own to find information to share with the group. This Web site teaches young people about the many uses and basic properties of water. It also contains a glossary, activities, and links to related Web sites.

## ADDITIONAL ACTIVITY

### Writing Cinquains

- Invite the young people to write cinquains about the role that water plays in our celebration of Easter.
- Explain how to write a cinquain as follows.  
**First line:** Write a title, preferably one word that is a noun.  
**Second line:** Write two words that describe the title.  
**Third line:** Write three action words that end in -ing that describe the title.  
**Fourth line:** Write four words that describe a thought or feeling about the title.  
**Fifth line:** Write another word for the title.
- Invite volunteers to share their cinquains with the group.

## Lesson 2

## Share

**Objective** To identify knowledge about Jesus to share with others

## Praying with Scripture

- Gather the young people in the prayer center. Then light the candle by the Bible.
- Draw attention to the "Jesus Came for All People!" sign. Emphasize that Jesus lived, died, and rose to new life so that all people would come to know him.
- Pray together the Sign of the Cross and the Scripture verse at the top of page 354. Discuss the meaning of the verse.
- Conclude by listening to or singing together "People of God/Alleluia" or another Easter song.

## Sharing Experiences

- Invite volunteers to share how to tell someone who never heard of Jesus about him. (*Responses will vary.*)
- Tell the young people that they are going to learn about two important figures in the early days of the Church.

## Hear and Believe

**Objective** To learn about Peter and Cornelius and how these two men established the early Church

## Discussing the Text

- Invite volunteers to read aloud the text in the scroll on page 356.
- Ask how messages Peter and Cornelius received are significant for all people. (*Through them, God spoke to the entire Church, explaining that all people are welcome to know and believe in Jesus.*)
- Ask how God communicated with both Peter and Cornelius. (*Through spiritual visions*)

## Peter and Cornelius

## Greetings from Palestine!

*My name is Peter. My reputation was a mixed bag, as they say. One minute I was very much a follower of Jesus. The next, I denied him and ran away. The coming of the Holy Spirit changed me in many ways, but I still had a lot to learn. I came to know Jesus personally and was hand-selected to be one of his first Apostles. Apostles are entrusted with the mission of bringing the Good News to everyone they meet. I understand that now, but you can be sure that I didn't always understand the "everyone" part.*

*That's where my new friend Cornelius came in. You see, Cornelius was one of "them"—a Gentile, or a person who is not a Jew. I was a faithful, observant Jew from birth, just like Jesus. I believed that only the Jews could be baptized and could come to know and follow Jesus. Now, if you wanted to become Jewish first, it would be no problem. I would be happy to have you on board. Yet I struggled to understand at first how a Gentile could accept Jesus as the Messiah. But with the coming of Cornelius into my life, my thinking was about to change.*

*Before I met him, Cornelius was quietly praying when an angel of the Lord appeared to him with a message for me. Cornelius knew he must send some of his men to the city of Joppa, where I was staying. These men were to bring me back to his home in Caesarea. While Cornelius's men were coming to Joppa to find me, I too had a vision. I envisioned a large white cloth containing many different kinds of animals, coming down out of the sky. God's voice became clear to me in this vision. God said, "Peter, eat your fill of any of these animals." I was stunned. You see, I was not supposed to eat the flesh of most of these animals because, in my Jewish faith, they are considered to be unclean. But God reminded me that everything he creates is clean and holy. Who was I to call it unclean?*

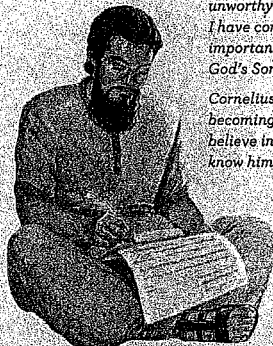
*God was trying to let me know that no person created by him is unworthy of knowing and believing in his Son, Jesus. Cornelius and I have come to see that God went out of his way to show something important to us: Everyone is welcome to come to know and believe in God's Son, Jesus.*

*Cornelius came to believe in Jesus and was baptized without first becoming a Jew. He and his family now worship with us Jews who believe in Jesus. Cornelius is highly respected among all those who know him.*

*That's the Good News that we are given to proclaim with our words and our lives.*

*Your brother in the Lord,  
Peter*

*Based on Acts 10*



## LITURGY CONNECTION

## In the Prayer Center

Prepare the prayer center before the session. Gather the following materials: a cross, white and red cloths for the prayer table, a Bible, a Bible stand, a large candle, and a poster that reads "Jesus Came for All People!"

*Graciously be present to your people, we pray, O Lord, and lead those you have imbued with heavenly mysteries to pass from former ways to newness of life. Through Christ our Lord. Amen.*

Prayer after Communion, Wednesday,  
Second Week of Easter, Roman Missal

### ACTIVITY

Think about the people you interact with in your community or during non-school activities. Does everyone believe in Christ as you do? How comfortable are you talking about your faith with friends who are Christian, but not Catholic? How about friends of other faith traditions or no faith tradition at all? If you have the opportunity to share your faith in Christ, what do you tell them? Write your response here, and then create a symbol that expresses your faith in Jesus Christ.

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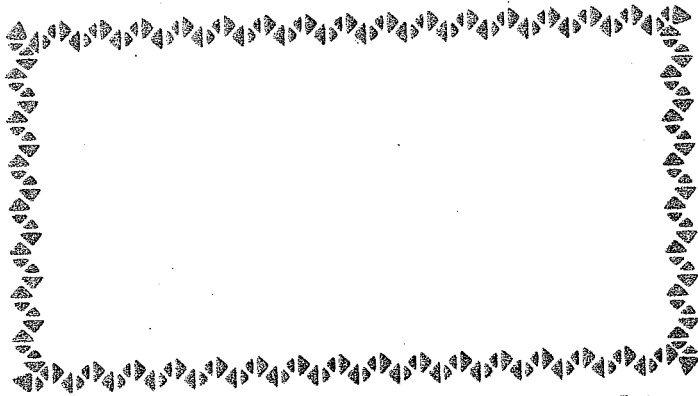
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Easter 357

## Respond

**Objective** To reflect on ways to share our faith with others

### Doing the Activity

- Read aloud the directions for the activity on page 357.
- Give the young people sufficient time to complete the activity. Invite volunteers to share their responses.

### Prayer

Have the young people quiet themselves for prayer. Then pray together the closing prayer at the top of page 357. Close the prayer with the Sign of the Cross. You may wish to sing another Easter hymn after the prayer.

## CULTURAL AWARENESS

### Eastern Catholic Churches

Many Roman Catholics are not aware of their brothers and sisters who belong to the Eastern Catholic Churches. To give the young people a better understanding of the Church's origins, share the following information with them.

Catholicism has roots in Rome, Alexandria, Antioch, Constantinople, and Jerusalem. From those roots have developed many different Catholic traditions, such as Byzantine-Ukrainian, Coptic, Melkite, Ethiopian, Maronite, and the Roman (or Western) Catholic Church. The Eastern and the Roman Churches share an allegiance to the pope, but their cultures and traditions differ.

## ADDITIONAL ACTIVITY

### Dramatizing the Scripture Passage

- Arrange the young people into groups of four. Challenge each group to dramatize the visions of Peter and Cornelius and their meeting described in Acts 10.
- Each group should select young people to speak the parts of Peter, Cornelius, the angel, and the voice of God speaking to Peter.
- Invite young people in each group to reenact the Scripture passage using their own words.

## Lesson 3

## Share

**Objective** To reflect on the challenges of being Christian

## Praying with Scripture

- Gather the young people in the prayer center. Then light the candle near the Bible.
- Draw attention to the open Bible that displays the beginning of the Book of Revelation. Explain that this book of the Bible is not the only form of Divine Revelation. All the books of Sacred Scripture contain God's Revelation of himself.
- Open the prayer with the Sign of the Cross. Then pray together the Scripture verse at the top of page 354.
- Close the prayer by listening to or singing together "Alleluia, Christ Is Risen" or another Easter song.

## Sharing Experiences

- Invite the young people to talk about times when it is difficult or uncomfortable to be a follower of Jesus Christ. (*Responses will vary.*)
- Tell the young people that they are going to learn about John's Book of Revelation and its message for them at Easter.

## Hear and Believe

**Objective** To learn about apocalyptic literature and the encouraging message of the Book of Revelation

## Discussing the Text

- Invite the young people to read The Book of Revelation. Suggest that they look for an explanation of the purpose of apocalyptic literature.
- Call on a volunteer to explain the ways that the Book of Revelation is like a secret code. (*Its style of writing includes symbolism and many layers of meaning that only Church members could understand.*)
- Ask a volunteer to identify the person who is considered to be "the Lamb" mentioned in Revelation 5. (*Jesus*)

## The Book of Revelation

The Easter Season is a time for Catholics to ask questions, such as "What does it mean to be a baptized Christian?" or "What difference is my Baptism making in how I live my life?" Unlike the readings for the other seasons, the three Scripture readings at Mass on Sunday during the Easter Season are always taken from the New Testament. These readings help us focus on the Risen Jesus and reflect on how the early Christians lived out their baptismal promises.

Passages from the Book of Revelation are read at Mass during the Easter Season once every three years. This book is the "revelation of Jesus Christ" (see Revelation 1:1), and it proclaims the Good News of Jesus just as the Gospels do. However, it tells the story in a very different way than the four accounts of the Gospel do. Its style of writing includes much symbolism and many layers of meaning. In some ways, it is like a secret code. When the Book of Revelation was written, members of the Church understood the meanings of the symbols, but these symbols seemed like nonsense to others.

The Book of Revelation is known as an *apocalypse*, a particular type of writing in which something that is hidden is made known. *Apocalypse* comes from a Greek word that means "to remove the veil." In the late first century, many Christians were suffering persecution at the hands of the Romans. These Christians believed in God's plan to save them but that this plan was veiled, or hidden, from them. The writer of the Book of Revelation exhorts the faithful that they have no need to fear. They must continue to trust God, who will save them.

Two of the Revelation passages for Easter are Revelation 5:11-14 and Revelation 21:10-14, 22-23. These passages proclaim the power of Jesus as the Risen Lord.



In Revelation 5:11-14, John—who is named in Revelation as the author of the book—finds himself in Heaven, where he observes the dramatic opening of a scroll sealed with seven seals. When "the Lamb" opens the scroll, the members of the heavenly court sing out, "Worthy are you to receive the scroll/and to break open its seals,/for you were slain and with your blood you purchased for God/those from every tribe and tongue, people and nation./You made them a kingdom and priests for our God,/and they will reign on earth" (Revelation 5:9-10). The early Christians understood the Lamb to be Jesus, who was put to death so that all of humankind could live with God forever. The scroll and the Lamb are symbols of the power and authority that Jesus has as Lord of the universe. Jesus is the Risen Savior who has conquered sin and death forever.

In Revelation 21:10-14, 22-23, John describes a new Heaven and a new Earth, where there will be no more sorrow, evil, or suffering. John sees a magnificent new Jerusalem, but one without the Temple, "... for its temple is the Lord God almighty and the Lamb" (Revelation 21:22). The new Jerusalem is the fulfillment of the Kingdom of God that Jesus announced and came to establish. The message of the vision is that God the Father, through the Death and Resurrection of his Son, Jesus, has conquered evil forever.

## LITURGY CONNECTION

## In the Prayer Center

Prepare the prayer center before the session. Gather the following materials: a cross, a white cloth for the prayer table, a Bible, a Bible stand, and a large candle. Open the Bible to the beginning of the Book of Revelation for the introductory prayer.

## Be True to Jesus

When John recorded his visions, he believed that some Christians were being influenced by the Greek and Roman cultures to water down their faith, and that they were not being completely true to Jesus. John encouraged them to grow in their Christian commitment even in times of persecution. Through symbols and veiled meanings, John's writing revealed God's plan for Christians. It tells of God's ultimate triumph over the evil of the world and the salvation of the faithful.

Today our culture can tempt us to lose our focus on Jesus too. Sometimes we have to make difficult choices to overcome those temptations. Sometimes we have to choose our Christian faith over the values and policies of our society.

### ACTIVITY

Below are some examples of situations you might face in your world today. Respond by writing some choices that you believe you would make as a faith-filled person when faced with the situations listed. Then share your responses with a partner or in a small group.

1. You and your friends are at the mall. One of your friends dares the rest of you to shoplift a cellphone case from a kiosk.
2. It is the morning of a big test. You didn't feel like studying for it last night. The class "brain" is sitting across the aisle from you.
3. You saw your mom put some money in a drawer in her home office, and you really need some spending money.
4. Someone hurt your feelings with unkind remarks. You know the perfect way to get back at the person.

Christian Responses:

1. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

*Jesus, it is not easy to be a Christian in this world. You promised to send the Holy Spirit to help us make good choices. May we always turn to your Spirit when we are lost, afraid, or without courage. Amen.*

## Respond

**Objective** To propose Christian responses to difficult life situations

### Doing the Activity

Invite the young people to read Be True to Jesus on page 359. Then read aloud the directions for the activity. Give the group sufficient time to complete the activity. Invite volunteers to share their responses.

### Prayer

Have the young people quiet themselves for prayer. Then pray together the closing prayer at the top of page 359. Close the prayer with the Sign of the Cross. You may wish to sing another Easter hymn after the prayer.

## ENRICHMENT

### Language Arts

This lesson offers a good opportunity to build on the young people's interest in symbolism and mystery and to familiarize them with the use of symbolism in literary genres, such as prose, poetry, and drama. For example, in the novel *Moby Dick* by Herman Melville, a great white whale is a symbol of eternity, evil, dread, and even death. *The Compact Bedford Introduction to Literature*, edited by Michael Meyer (Bedford/St. Martin's, 2003), contains other examples that can be used to introduce the young people to the world of literary symbolism.

## ADDITIONAL ACTIVITY

### Creating Modern Christian Codes

- Discuss the secret code John used to speak to the early Church.
- Challenge the young people to create their own codes that use images and symbols for important Christian messages. Suggest that they write in code a simple Christian message, such as "Jesus is risen. We share in his new life."
- Allow the young people to work in pairs or small groups to complete this activity.
- Invite the pairs or small groups to exchange their work with each other and to solve the messages and codes.

## Lesson 4

## Share

**Objective** To reflect on the symbolism of light

## Praying with Scripture

- Gather the young people in the prayer center. Then light the candle by the Bible.
- Pray together the Sign of the Cross and the Scripture verse at the top of page 354. Draw attention to the bowl of water and the evergreen sprig as symbols of new life.
- Listen to or sing together "This Is the Day" (Psalm 118) or another Easter song.

## Sharing Experiences

- Invite volunteers to tell what light symbolizes for them. (*Responses will vary.*)
- Tell the young people that they are going to participate in a prayer that expresses how those who have been baptized are called to live as followers of Jesus.

## Hear and Believe

**Objective** To explore the meaning of the phrase "children of light"

## Discussing the Text

- Invite the young people to review the text of the prayer. If Bibles are available, invite the young people to read ahead of time the Scripture passage, Ephesians 5:8-14.
- Explain that the phrase "children of light" is used to describe those who have been baptized.
- Ask a volunteer to identify, according to the Letter to the Ephesians, what light produces. (*Every kind of goodness and righteousness and truth*)
- Engage the young people in a discussion of ways that we can live as children of light.

## Easter Prayer

## Celebrate New Life

**Leader:** During the Easter Season, we recall and renew our Baptism into the saving Death and Resurrection of Jesus. This blessed water is a reminder of Baptism. As we begin our prayer, let us each bless ourselves with this water.

*(Go forward and bless yourself with the water, and invite the students to do the same.)*

**Leader:** Let us pray.

God our Father,  
you raised your Son Jesus from the dead,  
and you offer us a share in his eternal kingdom.  
Through the cleansing and life-giving waters  
of Baptism,  
help us live always as children of light.

We ask this through Christ our Lord.

**All:** Amen.

**Reader:** *(Proclaim Ephesians 5:8-14)*

**Reader:** The word of the Lord.

**All:** Thanks be to God.

**Leader:** In the Letter to the Ephesians we are told, "Live as children of light." Think about people you know whom you would describe as children of light. What kinds of actions show that someone is a child of light?

*(Pause for reflection. Invite volunteers to share their thoughts.)*

## LITURGY CONNECTION

## In the Prayer Center

Prepare the prayer center before the session. Gather the following materials: a cross; a white cloth for the prayer table; a Bible; a Bible stand; a large candle; a large, clear bowl of water; and an evergreen sprig. Place the large candle near the bowl of water.

**Leader:** One sign that we are living as children of light is that we pray sincerely for people in need. Let us place our petitions before God.

**Reader:** Let us pray for nations at war.  
**All:** May they soon find the blessing of peace.

**Reader:** Let us pray for communities that suffer hunger, poverty, and injustice.  
**All:** May they receive help in their need.

**Reader:** Let us pray for all who have been harmed by scandal or dishonesty.  
**All:** May the light of truth lead them to freedom.

**Reader:** Let us pray for the newly baptized and all who will celebrate Sacraments during this season.  
**All:** May they walk always in the light of Christ's Resurrection.

**Reader:** Let us pray for ourselves, as we strive to live as children of light.  
**All:** May we learn what is pleasing to the Lord.

**Leader:** Generous God,  
 you open your hand  
 and all blessings come to us.  
 Look kindly on us in our need.

**All:** Grant what we ask through Christ, our Lord.  
 Amen.

**Leader:** When the Risen Jesus first appeared to his followers after the Resurrection, he said, "Peace be with you." The Risen Lord is the source of our peace—true and lasting peace, peace that the world cannot give. Let us share a sign of this peace with one another.

**All:** *(Exchange a sign of peace with one another.)*

## Respond

**Objective** To pray petitions for others that they all may live in God's light

## Prayer

### Preparing for Prayer

- Choose a Leader and a Reader. Allow time for them to review their parts. When they are prepared, invite the entire group to join you in the prayer center.
- Draw attention to the two ritual actions in the prayer: the blessing with water and the exchanging of a sign of peace.
- Explain that the blessing with water reminds us of our Baptisms and the Sign of Peace is a greeting used during Mass to show our desire to live together in unity and peace as followers of Jesus.

### Celebrate New Life

- Have the young people quiet themselves for the prayer.
- Play a recording of an Easter song softly in the background while the Leader begins the prayer.
- Continue with the prayer, having the young people respond aloud as a group for the parts marked All.
- Conclude the prayer by sharing a sign of peace.

## ENRICHMENT

### A Church Tour

Take the young people to church and give them a tour of the baptistery and sanctuary. While at the baptistery, talk with the young people about the significance of water at Baptism and why new members are brought into the Church at the Easter Vigil. Show the young people the Paschal (Easter) candle in the sanctuary and explain its significance—it is a symbol for the Risen Christ, the Light of the World.