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Advent

The Advent and Christmas seasons are a wonderful time of year, full of expectation, hope, and joy. It is also a time when we see many people who may only come to church at a couple different times of year. There is a special opportunity for them and the whole community of believers to draw closer to Christ and his great message of mercy, love, and peace.
1st Sunday of Advent

God’s Faithfulness

God is faithful; by him you were called into the fellowship of his Son, Jesus Christ our Lord. (1 Corinthians 1:9)

- Isaiah 63:16b-17, 19b; 64:2-7 - Prayer for the return of God’s favor
- 1 Corinthians 1:3-9 - Thanksgiving
- Mark 13:33-37 - Need for watchfulness

Adults: How do you know when you’re following Christ and living his teachings faithfully?
Kids: What good thing might God be asking you to do right now?

2nd Sunday of Advent

Patience

The Lord is not slow about his promise, as some think of slowness, but is patient with you, not wanting any to perish but all to come to repentance. (2 Peter 3:9)

- Isaiah 40:1-5, 9-11 - Promise of salvation
- 2 Peter 3:8-14 - Christ will come in judgment
- Mark 1:1-8 - John the Baptist

Adults: With whom could you be more patient this week, as God has been patient with you?
Kids: With whom can you be more patient?

3rd Sunday of Advent

Bringing Joy through Justice

I will greatly rejoice in the Lord, my whole being shall exult in my God; for he has clothed me with the garments of salvation. (Isaiah 61:10)

- Isaiah 61:1-2a, 10-11 - The mission to the afflicted
- 1 Thessalonians 5:16-24 - Christian conduct; blessing
- John 1:6-8, 19-28 - John as witness to the light

Adults: What work of justice could you do this week to bring someone joy?
Kids: What could you do for someone this week to make them happy?
4th Sunday of Advent

Acceptance of God’s Will

Then Mary said, “Here am I, the servant of the Lord; let it be with me according to your word.” Then the angel departed from her. (Luke 1:38)

- 2 Samuel 7:1-5, 8b-12, 14a, 16 - The Lord’s promises to David
- Romans 16:25-27 - Doxology
- Luke 1:26-38 - The annunciation of the Lord

Adults: How do you open your heart to what God wants for you? How do you follow the pathway that leads to happiness?

Nativity of the Lord

His own did not accept him. (John 1:10–11)

- Isaiah 52:7-10 - The one who brings glad tidings
- Hebrews 1:1-6 - God speaks through his Sin
- John 1:1-18 - In the beginning was the Word

Adults: If Jesus were to be born today, do you think you would accept him and follow him? Why or why not?

Kids: What could you and your family do for others during the next week to celebrate the birth of Jesus?

The Holy Family

Respect for Elders

Jesus went down with them and came to Nazareth, and was obedient to them. (Luke 2:51a)

- Sirach 3:2-6, 12-14 - Duties toward parents
- Colossians 3:12-21 - The practice of virtues
- Matthew 2:13-15, 19-23 - The flight to Egypt

Adults: What does your family do to honor and respect its older members?

Kids: Why did Joseph leave Israel? How can he be an example for you?
JANUARY

This month we round out the Christmas season and settle into Ordinary Time, when we hear stories from the early days of Jesus’ ministry. It’s a great time to focus on the basic call to discipleship and following Jesus.

JAN 1

Mary, Mother of God

Find great resources on Mary: [http://pastoral.center/mary](http://pastoral.center/mary)

JAN 7

Epiphany of the Lord

Overcoming Jealousy

Then Herod sent the [magi] to Bethlehem, saying, "Go and search diligently for the child; and when you have found him bring me word so that I may also go and pay him homage." (Matthew 2:8)

- Isaiah 60:1-6 - Glory of the new Zion
- Ephesians 3:2-3a, 5-6 - Commission to preach God’s plan
- Matthew 2:1-12 - The visit of the magi

- Adults: When have you been jealous or fearful of another person? When are such feelings harmful?
- Kids: When have you been jealous because something good happened to another person instead of you? What is the problem with feeling that way?

JAN 14

2nd Sunday in Ordinary Time

Come and See

They said to him, "Rabbi" (which translated means Teacher), "where are you staying?" He said to them, "Come and see." They came and saw where he was staying, and they remained with him that day. (John 1:38b–39)

- 1 Samuel 3:3b-10, 19 - Revelation to Samuel
- 1 Corinthians 6:13c-15a, 17-20 - Against sexual immorality
- John 1:35-42 - The first disciples

- Adults: What qualities do you have that would cause others to recognize you as a disciple of Jesus?
- Kids: What does it take to be a follower of Jesus?
3rd Sunday in Ordinary Time 68

Repent and Believe

Now after John was arrested, Jesus came to Galilee, proclaiming the good news of God, and saying, "The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God has come near; repent, and believe in the good news." (Mark 1:14–15)

▶ Jonah 3:1-5, 10 - Conversion of Ninevah
▶ 1 Corinthians 7:29-31 - Encouragement within a hostile world
▶ Mark 1:14-20 - Call of the first disciples

▶ Adults: What part of your life is Jesus calling you to change right now?
▶ Kids: In what way do you think you can be a better follower of Jesus?

4th Sunday in Ordinary Time 71

Sharing Good News

They were astounded at his teaching, for he taught them as one having authority, and not as the scribes. (Mark 1:22)

▶ Deuteronomy 18:15-20 - A prophet like Moses
▶ 1 Corinthians 7:32-35 - The state of virginity
▶ Mark 1:21-28 - Cure of a demoniac

▶ Adults: What can you tell others about Jesus with the most assurance?
▶ Kids: What is the most important thing you would like others to know about Jesus? How will you show or tell them?
FEBRUARY

It’s time to get your plans in place for Lent, which begins on (wait for it...) Valentine's Day. What a wacky year! Make sure you give your people some help and a little nudge to decide what they want to commit to for this Lenten season.

FEB 4
5th Sunday in Ordinary Time

Comfort for the Sorrowful

That evening, at sundown, they brought to him all who were sick or possessed with demons. And the whole city was gathered around the door. And he cured many who were sick with various diseases, and cast out many demons. (Mark 1:32–34a)

- Job 7:1-4, 6-7 - Job’s first reply
- 1 Corinthians 9:16-19, 22-23 - Paul’s recompense
- Mark 1:29-39 - Cure of Peter’s mother-in-law and other miracles

Adults: When have you felt the sadness of Job? When have you felt the joy of those who witnessed the healing works of Jesus?

Kids: What could you do this week to comfort someone who is sad?

FEB 11
6th Sunday in Ordinary Time

Models of Christ

Be imitators of me, as I am of Christ. (1 Corinthians 11:1)

- Leviticus 13:1-2, 44-46 - On leprosy
- 1 Corinthians 10:31-11:1 - Imitation of Christ
- Mark 1:40-45 - Healing of a leper

Adults: Would you have the courage to tell others to do as you do in order to be a Christian? Why or why not?

Kids: What can you do this week to be an example to others?

Fun Bible Skits 2 - Jesus Heals Someone with Leprosy (Mark 1:40-44)
The Lenten season is a great opportunity to help your people be particularly intentional about their faith journey. During this time, we take concrete steps to pray, fast, and give alms as we follow the way of the Cross. Help your families start the season well and decide together how they want to observe it this year.

**PRACTICAL, PASTORAL LENTEN RESOURCES**

**Around the Lenten Circle 2018**
Small Group Sessions Based on the Sunday Readings
All small group resources: [http://pastoral.center/lent-small-groups](http://pastoral.center/lent-small-groups)

**Walking Together in Freedom**
Illustrated, down-to-earth booklet for teens & adults with The Message.
All Lenten booklets: [http://pastoral.center/lent-booklets](http://pastoral.center/lent-booklets)

**Radiate Christ: Lenten Retreat Kit**
Flexible sessions to reflect on this counter-cultural season.
All Lenten retreat resources: [http://pastoral.center/lenten-retreats-spirituality](http://pastoral.center/lenten-retreats-spirituality)

**Lenten Plans for Busy Families**
Whole Family Catechesis Session - Help families prepare for the season
All Lenten family resources: [http://pastoral.center/lent-families](http://pastoral.center/lent-families)

**Bearing the Cross Today**
Downloadable Stations of the Cross Event Kit
All Stations of the Cross: [http://pastoral.center/stations-of-the-cross](http://pastoral.center/stations-of-the-cross)

**Make Your Hearts Firm**
Bulletin inserts/handouts: Lent Day-by-Day with Pope Francis
All Lenten eResources: [http://pastoral.center/lenten-resources](http://pastoral.center/lenten-resources)
1st Sunday of Lent

A Change of Heart

For Christ also suffered for sins once for all, the righteous for the unrighteous, in order to bring you to God. (1 Peter 3:18)

- Genesis 9:8-15 - Covenant with Noah
- 1 Peter 3:18-22 - The purpose of Christ’s suffering
- Mark 1:12-15 - Jesus’ temptation; the call to conversion

Adults: When or how could you step away from your daily responsibilities to renew yourself, so that you can do a better job of following in the footsteps of Jesus?

Kids: What good habit could you work on during Lent so you could grow closer to God?

FEB 25

2nd Sunday of Lent

The Assurance of Faith

Then Peter said to Jesus, "Rabbi, it is good for us to be here; let us make three dwellings, one for you, one for Moses, and one for Elijah." (Mark 9:5)

- Genesis 22:1-2, 9a, 10-13, 15-18 - The testing of Abraham
- Romans 8:31b-34 - God’s love for humanity
- Mark 9:2-10 - Jesus transfigured

Adults: How deeply do you believe that since God is for you, no one can destroy you?

Kids: What would you like to ask God to do for you and your family?
MARCH

Lent continues on. Help your people continue their reflection and Lenten practices.

3rd Sunday of Lent

Trust and Doubt

For Jews demand signs and Greeks desire wisdom, but we proclaim Christ crucified, a stumbling block to Jews and foolishness to Gentiles. (1 Corinthians 1:22–23)

- Exodus 20:1-17 - The ten commandments
- 1 Corinthians 1:22-25 - The wisdom and folly of the cross
- John 2:13-25 - Cleansing of the temple

- Adults: When has the message of the cross seemed absurd to you, and when have you seen its wisdom?
- Kids: What puzzles you in the gospel stories? Which story makes you the most hopeful?

Scrutinies (Year A Readings)

Source of Strength

Jesus said to her, "Everyone who drinks of this water will be thirsty again, but those who drink of the water that I will give them will never be thirsty. The water that I will give will become in them a spring of water gushing up to eternal life." (John 4:13–14)

- Exodus 17:3-7 - Water from the rock
- Romans 5:1-2, 5-8 - Faith, hope, and love
- John 4:5-42 - The Samaritan woman at the well

- Adults: Where have you found a source of "living water" for your own journey of faith?
- Kids: Name some times when your belief in Jesus helped make you stronger.

4th Sunday of Lent

Through the Eyes of Faith

Jesus said to Nicodemus, "Indeed, God did not send the Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him." (John 3:17)

- 2 Chronicles 36:14-16, 19-23 - Dissolution of Judah
- Ephesians 2:4-10 - Generosity of God’s plan
- John 3:14-21 - Jesus’ teaching to Nicodemus

- Adults: Do you see the world as basically evil, or as good? What difference does this make in the way you live?
Scrutinies (Year A Readings)  31

Source of Light

For once you were darkness, but now in the Lord you are light. Live as Children of light—for the fruit of the light is found in all that is good and right and true. (Ephesians 5:8–9)

▶ 1 Samuel 16:1b, 6-7, 10-13a - Samuel anoints David
▶ Ephesians 5:8-14 - Duty to live in the light
▶ John 9:1-41 - The man born blind

▸ Adults: What are you doing in your life right now to move toward light rather than darkness?
▸ Kids: How can you let the light of your faith in Jesus shine for others to see?

5th Sunday of Lent  35

The Reward of Faith

Those who love their life lose it, and those who hate their life in this world will keep it for eternal life. (John 12:25)

▶ Jeremiah 31:31-34 - The new covenant
▶ Hebrews 5:7-9 - Jesus, compassionate high priest
▶ John 12:20-33 - The coming of Jesus’ hour

▸ Adults: When and in what way have you seen life come from death?
▸ Kids: When have you felt stronger because you sacrificed something for a friend or member of your family?

Scrutinies (Year A Readings)  34

Life Everlasting

Jesus said to Martha, “I am the resurrection and the life. Those who believe in me, even though they die, will live, and everyone who lives and believes in me will never die. Do you believe this?” (John 11:25–26)

▶ Ezekiel 37:12-14 - Prophecy of restoration
▶ Romans 8:8-11 - The flesh and the Spirit
▶ John 11:1-45 - The raising of Lazarus

▸ Adults: Christ calls us from death to new life. To what new life are you being called during this Lent?
▸ Kids: How does Jesus help you do what is good and avoid what is not?
Palm Sunday of the Passion of the Lord  

Love and Betrayal

The Lord turned and looked at Peter. Then Peter remembered the word of the Lord, how he had said to him, "Before the cock crows today, you will deny me three times." (Luke 22:61)

- Mark 11:1-10 - Welcomed with palms
- Isaiah 50:4-7 - Salvation only through the Lord’s servant
- Philippians 2:6-11 - Jesus, compassionate high priest
- Mark 14:1-15:47 - The passion of Jesus

Adults: When have you felt that you betrayed the confidence of another, as Peter did when he denied Jesus?

Kids: When have you let someone down who trusted you? How did you feel?

Holy Thursday

Called to Serve

Jesus said, "If I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet. For I have set you an example, that you also should do as I have done to you." (John 13:14–15)

- Exodus 12:1-8, 11-14 - The Passover ritual prescribed
- 1 Corinthians 11:23-26 - The Lord's Supper
- John 13:1-15 - The washing of the feet

Adults: What is the most difficult thing you have done as a service to another person?

Kids: What is the hardest thing you have ever done for another person who needed your help?

Good Friday

Perfection through Suffering

When you make his life an offering for sin, he shall see his offspring, and shall prolong his days; through him the will of the Lord shall prosper. (Isaiah 53:10)

- Isaiah 52:13-53:12 - Suffering and triumph of the servant of the Lord
- Hebrews 4:14-16; 5:7-9 - Jesus, compassionate high priest
- John 18:1-19:42 - The passion of our Lord Jesus Christ

Adults: Can you say that you have grown through your experiences of physical or emotional suffering? Why or why not?

Kids: How can the story of Jesus' suffering make it easier for you to face something painful or uncomfortable?
This month April is a month full of Easter. Even if Holy Week pooped you and your fellow ministers out, make sure you come back with some serious Easter life and joy!

Easter Season

As Catholics, we put so much emphasis on the Lenten Season and Triduum that the Easter Season can feel like an afterthought. Help your families revel in the stories of the Risen Christ and the early church, and what it all means for them today.

▶ All Easter Resources: http://pastoral.center/easter

APR 1

Easter Sunday

Made new by Christ

Clean out the old yeast so that you may be a new batch, as you really are unleavened. For our paschal lamb, Christ, has been sacrificed. (1 Corinthians 5:7)

› Acts 10:34a, 37-43 - Peter’s discourse
› Colossians 3:1-4 - Mystical death and resurrection
› John 20:1-9 - Peter and the disciple at the tomb

› Adults: What change could the hope of the resurrection of Christ inspire you to make?
› Kids: What bad habit would you like to "clear out" during the hopeful time of this Easter season?

APR 8

2nd Sunday of Easter

Following the Example of Jesus

Now the whole group of those who believed were of one heart and soul; no one claimed private ownership of any possessions; everything they owned was held in common. (Acts 4:32)

› Acts 4:32-35 - Life of the Christians
› 1 John 5:1-6 - Belief in Jesus Christ
› John 20:19-31 - Appearance to the disciples

› Adults: What could you do this week to inspire your family to resemble the early Christians more closely?
› Kids: What could you and your family do to help others who are in need?
3rd Sunday of Easter 47

**The Living Christ**

Jesus said to them, "Why are you frightened, and why do doubts arise in your hearts? Look at my hands and my feet; see that it is I myself." (Luke 24:38–39)

- 1 John 2:1-5a - Keeping the commandments
- Luke 24:35-48 - Jesus appears to the Eleven

**Adults:** What questions about Jesus still arise in the midst of your faith?

**Kids:** What question would you like to ask someone about Jesus' appearance to the Apostles?

4th Sunday of Easter 50

**Called to Be Shepherds**

Jesus said, "I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep." (John 10:11)

- Acts 4:8-12 - The stone that has become the cornerstone
- 1 John 3:1-2 - Recognizing the Son
- John 10:11-18 - The Good Shepherd

**Adults:** Whom are you shepherding in your life right now, and who shepherds you?

**Kids:** Who has been like a shepherd to you by their example? For whom could you be a shepherd?

5th Sunday of Easter 53

**Strengthening Your Faith**

[The vine grower] removes every branch in me that bears no fruit. Every branch that bears fruit he prunes to make it bear more fruit. (John 15:2)

- Acts 9:26-31 - Saul visits Jerusalem
- 1 John 3:18-24 - The actions of believers
- John 15:1-8 - The vine and the branches

**Adults:** When have you been "pruned" by your experiences in a way that led to greater abundance?

**Kids:** When have you felt stronger or better because you did something hard to help another person?
MAY

This month we celebrate Mary, mothers, and Pentecost—the birthday of the church.

MAY 6

6th Sunday of Easter 56

Love of Your Neighbor

Jesus said, “This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you.” (John 15:12)

▶ Acts 10:25-26, 34-35, 44-48 - Peter in Caesarea
▶ 1 John 4:7-10 - God’s love and ours
▶ John 15:9-17 - A disciple’s love

Adults: How is love of others connected to love for God?
Kids: Who needs Jesus’ love this week? How can you show them his love?

MAY 10

Ascension of the Lord 58B

The Gift of Wisdom

[T]hat the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give you a spirit of wisdom and revelation resulting in knowledge of him. (Ephesians 1:17)

▶ Acts 1:1-11 - The Ascension of Jesus
▶ Ephesians 1:17-23 - A Spirit of wisdom
▶ Mark 16:15-20 - The Commissioning and Ascension

Adults: Who in your family has the gift of wisdom? How does he or she use this gift?
Kids: Who is the wisest person you know? What has he or she taught you?
7th Sunday of Easter

*Pray for Others*

Jesus prayed, "I pray not only for them, but also for those who will believe in me through their word, so that they may all be one, as you, Father, are in me and I in you, that they also may be in us, that the world may believe that you sent me." (John 18:20–21)

- Acts 1:15-17, 20a, 20c-26 - Stephen’s martyrdom
- 1 John 4:11-16 - Blessed are those who follow the Lamb
- John 17:11b-19 - Prayer for all believers

- **Adults:** What are some of the most important things to ask of God?
- **Kids:** What are some of the most important things to ask of God?

or Ascension of the Lord (see May 10)

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Pentecost

*Gifts for Service*

Now there are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit; and there are varieties of services, but the same Lord. (1 Corinthians 12:4–5)

- 1 Corinthians 12:3b-7, 12-13 - Many gifts, one Spirit, and the analogy of the body
- John 20:19-23 - Appearance to the disciples

- **Adults:** What gift of service have you received from the Holy Spirit and how well are you using it right now?
- **Kids:** What gift do you hope to receive from the Holy Spirit? How could you use it to serve others?

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Holy Trinity

*Signs of God’s Love*

Moses said to the people, "For ask now about former ages, long before your own, ever since the day that God created human beings on the earth; ask from one end of heaven to the other: has anything so great as this ever happened or has its like ever been heard of?” (Deuteronomy 4:32)

- Deuteronomy 4:32-34, 39-40 - Proofs of God’s love
- Romans 8:14-17 - Sons of God through adoption
- Matthew 28:16-20 - Commission of the Apostles

- **Adults:** What signs of God’s love have you witnessed in your life?
- **Kids:** How can you be a sign of God’s love to others this week?
JUNE

If you don’t do so already, consider offering a Vacation Bible School during the summer months. Our Growing Up Catholic VBS gives you a sane, affordable, fun way to do so. Many parishes who are putting one on for the first time have chosen one of our programs and have told us how much they have loved it!

Summer

Find some fresh ideas and resources for the summer months:

▶ All Summer Resources: http://pastoral.center/summer

JUN 3

Body and Blood of Christ

Bread for Others

While they were eating, he took a loaf of bread, and after blessing it he broke it, gave it to them, and said, "Take; this is my body." (Mark 14:22)

▶ Exodus 24:3-8 - Ratification of the covenant
▶ Hebrews 9:11-15 - The sacrifice of Jesus
▶ Mark 14:12-16, 22-26 - Passover preparation

▶ Adults: In what ways have you practiced the words of Jesus and been bread for others?
▶ Kids: What can you do to prepare to celebrate Holy Communion with your parish family?

JUN 10

10th Sunday in Ordinary Time

Love for All

Jesus said, "Whoever does the will of God is my brother and sister and mother." (Mark 3:35)

▶ Genesis 3:9-15 - The fall
▶ 2 Corinthians 4:13-5:1 - Paradox of the ministry
▶ Mark 3:20-35 - Jesus and Beelzebub; Jesus and his family

▶ Adults: In what way could you widen the circle of your family to include someone in need?
▶ Kids: Whom could you invite to share a happy time with your family?
Living in God's Kingdom

Yet when [the mustard seed] is sown it grows up and becomes the greatest of all shrubs, and puts forth large branches, so that the birds of the air can make nests in its shade. (Mark 4:32)

- Ezekiel 17:22-24 - Prophecy of the restoration of Israel
- 2 Corinthians 5:6-10 - Walking by faith
- Mark 4:26-34 - Seed grows by itself and the mustard seed

Adults: What is the "good soil" that has allowed your faith to grow like the mustard seed and provide shelter for others?

Kids: How do you help your faith grow like the mustard seed?

Nativity of John the Baptist

John heralded [Jesus'] coming by proclaiming a baptism of repentance to all the people of Israel (Acts 13:24)

- Isaiah 49:1-6 - Servant of the Lord
- Acts 13:22-26 - Salvation from the family of Abraham
- Luke 1:57-66, 80 - The nativity of John the Baptist

Adults: In what ways do you help people in your life prepare themselves for meeting Jesus?

Kids: How do you help others to be their best, as John did?
• **Affordable.** Both our downloadable and physical kits are priced below other popular VBSs and allow you to reproduce almost all pieces.

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**Three Great Themes**

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Learn more at [GrowingUpCatholicVBS.com](http://GrowingUpCatholicVBS.com)
JULY

Ordinary Time marches on. Enjoy a break during this usually quieter time of the year!

13th Sunday in Ordinary Time 98

Rich in Love

For you know the generous act of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, so that by his poverty you might become rich. (2 Corinthians 8:9)

- Wisdom 1:13-15; 2:23-24 - God’s justice and its rejection by the wicked
- 2 Corinthians 8:7, 9, 13-15 - Liberal giving
- Mark 5:21-43 - The daughter of Jairus; the woman with a hemorrhage

- **Adults:** When have you felt enriched by a sacrifice you made for another?
- **Kids:** Whom could you help by your acts of kindness this week?

14th Sunday in Ordinary Time 101

Self-acceptance

[Paul said,] Three times I appealed to the Lord about this, that it would leave me, but he said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for power is made perfect in weakness." (2 Corinthians 12:8)

- Ezekiel 2:2-5 - The Lord speaks to Ezekiel
- 2 Corinthians 12:7-10 - Paul’s weakness
- Mark 6:1-6 - Jesus at Nazareth

- **Adults:** What unavoidable weakness in yourself do you struggle to accept?
- **Kids:** What have you wished would be different or better about you?
15th Sunday in Ordinary Time

Sharing Good News

He called the twelve and began to send them out two by two, and gave them authority over the unclean spirits. (Mark 6:7)

- Amos 7:12-15 - Amos called by God to prophecy
- Ephesians 1:3-14 - Blessing for Jew and Gentile
- Mark 6:7-13 - The mission of the Twelve

- Adults: What good news of Jesus can you share with others this week?
- Kids: What good news of Jesus can you share with others this week?

16th Sunday in Ordinary Time

Come Away and Rest

The apostles gathered around Jesus, and told him all that they had done and taught. He said to them, "Come away to a deserted place all by yourselves and rest a while." (Mark 6:30–31a)

- Jeremiah 23:1-6 - Messianic reign
- Ephesians 2:13-18 - All united in Christ
- Mark 6:30-34 - Return of the disciples

- Adults: What do you do to rest so that you can return to work refreshed?
- Kids: When will you take time to stop and pray this week?

17th Sunday in Ordinary Time

Gifts of Hope

When [the people] were satisfied, he told his disciples, "Gather up the fragments left over, so that nothing may be lost." So they gathered them up, and from the fragments of the five barley loaves, left by those who had eaten, they filled twelve baskets. (John 6:12–13)

- 2 Kings 4:42-44 - Elisha: the multiplication of loaves
- Ephesians 4:1-6 - Unity in the Mystical Body

- Adults: When has the generous gift of another offered you hope?
- Kids: What loving gift could you give to another person this week?
Help Your Families Reflect On Their Way to and from Mass Each Week

Growing Up Catholic Mass Transit Cards

*Lectionary-based conversation starters for families*

- Includes a card for each Sunday in the catechetical year, with a reflection, questions, and a short prayer.
- Developed and tuned for years at an Illinois parish.
- Hold weekly prize drawings in class to encourage their use. We’ve tried, and it works!
- Downloadable, reproducible, and affordable.
- Learn more at [http://pastoral.center/mass-transit-cards](http://pastoral.center/mass-transit-cards)
Need to Talk This Through?

Introducing a whole family approach to your parish or school is not always easy. That's why we offer free, unlimited coaching by phone or email to support you.

We're happy to chat about your specific situation and help you with your approach. We're pastoral ministers ourselves, and we'd love to support you.

Just call us toll-free at 844-727-8672 or email at resources@pastoralcenter.com.
AUGUST

It’s time for the year when the catechetical year gets underway and the energy picks up! Make sure your catechetical leaders get their free copy of our *Growing Up Catholic Whole Family Catechetical Planner*.

AUG 5

18th Sunday in Ordinary Time

The Eyes of Faith

So they said to Jesus, "What sign are you going to give us then, so that we may see it and believe you? What work are you performing?" (John 6:30)

- Exodus 16:2-4, 12-15 - Manna in the desert
- Ephesians 4:17, 20-24 - Renewal in Christ
- John 6:24-35 - Discourse on the bread of life

- Adults: When has your faith helped you believe without "seeing signs" from God?
- Kids: Who helps you believe in things you cannot see?

AUG 12

19th Sunday in Ordinary Time

Life for the World

Jesus said, "I am the living bread that came down from heaven. Whoever eats of this bread will live forever; and the bread that I will give for the life of the world is my flesh." (John 6:51)

- 1 Kings 19:4-8 - Elijah’s flight to Horeb
- Ephesians 4:30—5:2 - Vices to be avoided
- John 6:41-51 - Discourse on the bread of life, continued

- Adults: When has the bread of life given you the strength you needed to face a difficult situation in your life?
- Kids: What will you ask Jesus to help you with when you receive Holy Communion this week?

AUG 15

Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary

Death has been swallowed up in victory (1 Corinthians 15:54)

- Revelation 11:19a; 12:1-6a; 10ab - The ark brought to Jerusalem
- 1 Corinthians 15:20-27 - Glorification of the body
- Luke 1:39-56 - True happiness by keeping the word of God

- Adults: How does your belief in external life affect your daily life?
- Kids: What does it mean to have hope?
20th Sunday in Ordinary Time

Promise of Eternal Life

Jesus said, "Those who eat my flesh and drink my blood have eternal life, and I will raise them up on the last day." (John 6:54)

- Proverbs 9:1-6 - Forsake foolishness
- Ephesians 5:15-20 - Sing praise to the Lord
- John 6:51-58 - Discourse on the bread of life, continued

- Adults: How does Jesus’ promise of eternal life affect the way you live today?
- Kids: How often do you think about heaven? Does it make a difference in the choices you make?

21st Sunday in Ordinary Time

Christian Marriage

This is a great mystery, and I am applying it to Christ and the church. Each of you, however, should love his wife as himself, and a wife should respect her husband. (Ephesians 5:32–33)

- Joshua 24:1-2a, 15-17, 18b - Reminder of the divine goodness
- Ephesians 5:21-32 or 5:2a, 25-32 - Christian wives and husbands
- John 6:60-69 - Effect of the bread of life discourse

- Adults: In what way has the example of Christian marriage (your own or that of another couple) helped you understand the relationship between Christ and his church?
- Kids: What can you do for your family to show them Jesus’ love and care?
SEPTEMBER

We hope you're enjoying fall, even if it's a bit hectic. Take a moment to step back and see how God is working in your community.

22nd Sunday in Ordinary Time

Doers of the Word

Welcome with meekness the implanted word that has the power to save your souls. But be doers of the word, and not merely hearers who deceive themselves. (James 1:21–22)

▶ Deuteronomy 4:1-2, 6-8 - Advantages of fidelity
▶ James 1:17-18, 21b-22, 27 - Response to God's gift
▶ Mark 7:1-8, 14-15, 21-23 - Jesus and the Pharisees

Adults: Which words of Jesus provide the most inspiration for the Christian work that you do?
Kids: How do you welcome the words of Jesus into your heart?

23rd Sunday in Ordinary Time

Rich in Faith

Listen, my beloved brothers and sisters. Has not God chosen the poor in the world to be rich in faith and to be heirs of the kingdom that he has promised to those who love him? (James 2:5)

▶ Isaiah 35:4-7a - Israel's deliverance
▶ James 2:1-5 - Against favoritism
▶ Mark 7:31-37 - Healing of a deaf-mute

Adults: When has your faith in Jesus enabled you to speak out on an issue of importance?
Kids: What does your belief in Jesus mean to you?
24th Sunday in Ordinary Time

**Faith and Works**

Faith by itself, if it has no works, is dead. But someone will say, "You have faith and I have works." Show me your faith apart from your works, and I by my works will show you my faith. (James 2:17–18)

- Isaiah 50:4-9a - Salvation through the Lord’s servant
- James 2:14-18 - Faith and good works
- Mark 8:27-35 - First teaching of the Paschal event and the doctrine of the Cross

- Adults: Why should faith always lead to good works?
- Kids: What good works can you do to show your faith in Jesus?

25th Sunday in Ordinary Time

**True Wisdom**

He sat down, called the twelve, and said to them, "Whoever wants to be first must be last of all and servant of all." (Mark 9:35)

- Wisdom 2:12, 17-20 - The wicked speak
- James 3:16—4:3 - True wisdom and worldly desires
- Mark 9:30-37 - Second teaching of the Paschal event and words against ambition and envy.

- Adults: What evidence do you see in the world around you that many do not accept Jesus’ teaching on power and ambition?
- Kids: Why is it wrong to feel envy for what belongs to another?

26th Sunday in Ordinary Time

**Setting Priorities**

Listen! The wages of the laborers who mowed your fields, which you kept back by fraud, cry out, and the cries of the harvesters have reached the ears of the Lord of hosts. (James 5:4)

- Numbers 11:25-29 - Sharing the gift of prophecy
- James 5:1-6 - Saving the right focus
- Mark 9:38-43, 45, 47-48 - Sharing our possessions

- Adults: What are the three most important values motivating your daily decisions?
- Kids: Could a poor person who is wise be richer in a way than a foolish person who has many things? Why?
OCTOBER

October is the month of the Rosary and a good chance to spend some time learning more about and praying to Mary.

27th Sunday in Ordinary Time

Childlike Faith

Jesus said, “Truly I tell you, whoever does not receive the kingdom of God as a little child will never enter it.” (Mark 10:15)

- Genesis 2:18-24 - Second story of creation, the creation of woman
- Hebrews 2:9-11 - Jesus’ exaltation through abasement
  - Mark 10:2-16 or 10:2-12 - Question of divorce and Jesus blessing the children

- Adults: What could keep you from embracing the kingdom of God like a little child?
- Kids: How do you feel when you hear the wonderful stories of God’s love for you?

28th Sunday in Ordinary Time

Danger of Riches

Jesus said, “It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for someone who is rich to enter the kingdom of God.” (Mark 10:25)

- Wisdom 7:7-11 - Solomon and the riches of wisdom
- Hebrews 4:12-13 - God’s living word
  - Mark 10:17-30 or 10:17-27 - The danger of riches—Jesus and the rich man

- Adults: How can the pleasures and comforts of this world become barriers to your relationship with God?
- Kids: What favorite toy, game, video, etc., of yours would you be willing to share with someone this week?
29th Sunday in Ordinary Time

Promise of Eternal Life

Jesus said, "Whoever wishes to become great among you must be your servant, and whoever wishes to be first among you must be slave of all." (Mark 10:44)

- Isaiah 53:10-11 - The suffering servant
- Hebrews 4:14-16 - Jesus, compassionate high priest
- Mark 10:35-45 or 10:42-45 - Ambition of James and John

Adults: Why is it hard to do good works if you will not be acknowledged for them?
Kids: Are you willing to do a good deed even if no one knows that you did it? Why?

30th Sunday in Ordinary Time

The Eyes of Faith

Jesus said to him, "Go; your faith has made you well." Immediately he regained his sight and followed him on the way. (Mark 10:52)

- Jeremiah 31:7-9 - The restoration
- Hebrews 5:1-6 - Jesus, the high priest
- Mark 10:46-52 - The blind Bartimaeus

Adults: What have your eyes of faith helped you see in a new way?
Kids: What do you like most about the story of Bartimaeus? Why?
The month of November is a great time to focus on the communion of saints: remembering those who went before us, realizing that we are also saints, and learning how we can be more saint-like (as Jesus taught us to be). The end of November is an opportunity to spend some time on gratitude and thankfulness, especially in the United States where we celebrate Thanksgiving Day.

**NOV 1**

**All Saints 667**

See what love the Father has bestowed on us that we may be called the children of God. Yet so we are. The reason the world does not know us is that it did not know him. (1 John 3:1)

- Revelation 7:2-4, 9-14 - Rejoicing of the elect
- 1 John 3:1-3 - Children of God
- Matthew 5:1-12a - The Beatitudes

**Adults:** What qualities do you see in yourself that mark you as a child of God?

**Kids:** What is good about being a child of God?

**NOV 2**

**All Souls 668**

"For this is the will of the Father, that everyone who sees the Son and believes in him may have eternal life, and I shall raise him up on the last day." (John 6:40)

- Wisdom 3:1-9 - The souls of the just
- Romans 5:5-11 - Christ’s death for us
- John 6:37-40 - Eternal life

**Adults:** How have those you have known who have died taught you how to live a holy life?

**Kids:** How can those who died help us learn to be more like Jesus? Ask an adult to tell you stories of someone they knew.
31st Sunday in Ordinary Time

The Greatest Commandment

[The scribe] asked him, "Which commandment is the first of all?" Jesus answered, "The first is, 'Hear, O Israel: the Lord our God, the Lord is one; you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind, and with all your strength.'" (Mark 12:28–30)

- Deuteronomy 6:2-6 - The Great Commandment
- Hebrews 7:23-28 - Jesus, the eternal high priest
- Mark 12:28b-34 - The Greatest Commandment

- Adults: Why is love of neighbor as important as love of God?
- Kids: When do you show that you love God and your neighbor with your whole heart?

32nd Sunday in Ordinary Time

Giving from Our Need

Jesus said, "Truly I tell you, this poor widow has put in more than all those who are contributing to the treasury. For all of them have contributed out of their abundance; but she out of her poverty has put in everything she had, all she had to live on." (Mark 12:43–44)

- 1 Kings 17:10-16 - Elijah and the widow
- Hebrew 9:24-28 - The sacrifice of Jesus
- Mark 12:38-44 or 12:41-44 - Hypocrisy of the scribes, and the widow's mite

- Adults: What are you willing to give out of love for God that would be a hardship for you?
- Kids: What would you be willing to give up for someone else?

33rd Sunday in Ordinary Time

Ready for the Lord

Jesus said, "Beware, keep alert; for you do not know when the time will come." (Mark 13:33)

- Daniel 12:1-3 - Daniel's conclusion to the apocalypse
- Hebrews 10:11-14, 18 - Christ's eternal sacrifice
- Mark 13:24-32 - The Second Coming

- Adults: What would you be doing differently in your life if you truly believed you would meet Christ soon?
- Kids: What would you do for others today if you thought you would not have another chance to do it?
Our Lord Jesus Christ the King

Given the Kingdom

To him who loves us and freed us from our sins by his blood, and made us to be a kingdom, priests serving his God and Father, to him be glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen. (Revelation: 1:5b–6)

▶ Daniel 7:13-14 - Daniel’s vision of one like the Son of man
▶ Revelation 1:5-8 - Praise to Jesus Christ
▶ John 18:33b-37 - The blood and water

▲ Adults: In what ways is Jesus the ruler of your life?
▲ Kids: How can you show that you honor Jesus as the king of your life?