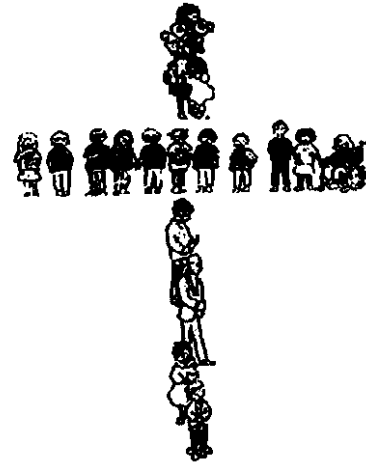




What is the Church?

Catechist's Guide: Unit 5

We are People who Follow Jesus



You will need to gather in the children's worksheets from the previous unit (unless this has already been done or unless they are keeping them at home).

Spend a few moments seeing what the children remember from their last session with you - or from any celebration that took place.

Remind them that they are preparing to become full members of the Church family through Confirmation and Holy Communion.

The aim of this unit is to explore the ways in which we, as the People of God, are called to follow Jesus. This will be done by reflecting with the children on a number of themes:

- ♦ The love that Jesus has for us - to the point of being crucified
- ♦ The gifts God gives us to use for the love and service of other people
- ♦ The way we offer our gifts to God during Mass
- ♦ Lent as the special season of the Church's year for concentrating on following Jesus
- ♦ The gifts of the Holy Spirit that help us to be followers of Jesus

In preparation for this session, you might like to think of some of the ways in which we can do something special during Lent.

You might also like to look back over the four previous sessions because there are a number of connections that can be drawn here.

INITIATION

What is the Church?

Children's Worksheet Unit 3

**We are People
who Follow Jesus**



Jesus shows us how to love



The way of life that Jesus lived, which we read about in the Gospels, is one that led to him being crucified.

During his life on earth, Jesus showed us how to love and care for other people.

Jesus carrying his cross shows how far he was prepared to go out of love for us.

We are called to be followers of Christ.

This does not simply mean walking behind him, like the crowds did on his way to Calvary. It means we must imitate him in the way we love and care for other people.



Complete the words which describe some of the ways we can show love to other people:



H_l_i_g



S_a_i_g



C_r_n_

Page 1

Talk with the children about the way in which Jesus loves us. He was prepared to die on the cross to show that love (cf. *Additional Suggestions and Resources*, No. 1).

Remind them that in the previous unit (*We are People who Celebrate God's Word*) they thought about the stories of Jesus that are told to us in the Gospels each week.

Remind them too that in preparing for Reconciliation they were told about Jesus' law of love - for God and neighbour.

Using the picture of people looking at Jesus carrying the cross, talk about the way in which we could simply be bystanders (allowing Jesus to be crucified but not really paying much attention to it) or we could be followers (people who are so impressed by him that we want to imitate what he does).

Talk about the ways in which we can imitate Jesus in terms of loving others and complete the words - Helping, Sharing and Caring.

The Presentation of Gifts

God gives us a lot of gifts that we can use in loving other people.

Complete these words to show some of those gifts:

T_m_ Sk_l_s T_l_n_s

Sometimes we are not able to help people ourselves but we can give money or other things which someone else can use to help them.

At Church we have collections which are used to pay the costs of running the Church and to help people who are in need. We give from what we have for the sake of others.



At Mass we offer our gifts to God.



After the Readings and Bidding Prayers, the gifts of bread and wine are brought to the altar.

The bread and wine are "fruits of the earth" and "work of human hands". They are wheat and grapes which people have made into bread and wine.

They represent all the gifts that we are offering to use, as followers of Jesus, in loving and serving other people.

For all the gifts that God gives us, we say:

Blessed be
God forever

Page 2

Ask the children to think about the different gifts that God has given them and how they can use these in helping others. Complete the words - Time, Skills and Talents.

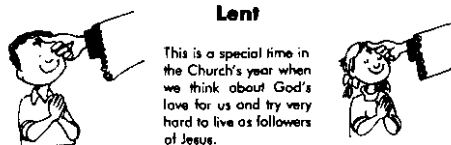
Emphasise the fact that we cannot do it all ourselves. Sometimes we will need to rely on other people and our best way to help will be by providing money or other things.

The Offertory collection at Church is one way we can help. (cf. *Additional Suggestions and Resources*, No. 2).

Ask the children where they have heard the phrases "fruits of the earth" and "work of human hands" (i.e. in the Offertory prayers). Say a little about what this means in terms of what God provides and what humanity creates from this.

Explain the word "represents" in terms of the bread and wine being signs/symbols of all that we offer to God.

If you wish, let the children colour in the words "Blessed be God forever" which is our response to the Offertory prayers.



Lent

This is a special time in the Church's year when we think about God's love for us and try very hard to live as followers of Jesus.

The season of Lent begins on **Ash Wednesday** when we are marked with ashes in the sign of the cross. This is a reminder of the sign of the cross made on our foreheads at Baptism.

It is in Baptism that we are called to live as followers of Jesus. During Lent we try to do this better. We are invited to spend time:

- Praying - talking to God and listening to God
- Fasting - doing without some of the things we enjoy
- Almsgiving - sharing what we have with those in need

Lent is not just about giving things up. It is also about doing extra things to show that we are followers of Jesus. Write down what you will do this Lent:

The Holy Spirit helps us to follow Jesus

During Lent we should pray for the gifts of the Holy Spirit to be given to us to help us to live as followers of Jesus. These gifts are:

- Wisdom
- Understanding
- Counsel
- Fortitude
- Knowledge
- Piety
- The Fear of the Lord



The emphasis here is on Lent as a special season for developing what it means to be a follower of Jesus.

In terms of the sign of the cross made on Ash Wednesday, remind the children of the first unit (We are the People of God) where they thought about their baptism and how important the sign of the cross is for us.

Help the children to think a little bit about how they might be able to pray, fast and give alms during Lent (cf. *Additional Suggestions and Resources No. 3*)

Give the children a few moments to think about what they might do for Lent. Help them to be positive about this (i.e. not just thinking about what they might give up).

Talk to the children about the gifts of the Holy Spirit that they will receive in Confirmation (cf. *Additional Suggestions and Resources No. 4*)

At Home...

Try to do something special on the days of Lent to show that you are a person who follows Jesus. Draw in the boxes, using the special code, to make a note of the things you do.



A star if you spend some time on prayer



A cross if you give something up for the day



A heart if you do something kind

	Ash Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
First Sunday of Lent				
Second Sunday of Lent				
Third Sunday of Lent				
Fourth Sunday of Lent				
Fifth Sunday of Lent				
Palm Sunday				

These are not part of Lent but days when we celebrate the love Jesus has for us and prepare to celebrate his resurrection

This worksheet belongs to: _____

Ask the children to complete this page of the worksheet at home but, if time allows, take them through the idea that it contains:

Lent is a time of doing things which show that we are followers of Christ.

We ought to do these things all the time but we make a special effort during Lent.

The chart and special code enables the children to record the kind of special things they do each day of Lent.

Get the children to write their name on the worksheet and remind them to bring their worksheet back to the next session. Thank them for taking part, or tell them how much you have enjoyed working with them.

Additional Suggestions and Resources

1. The Stations of the Cross

Point out to the children that the story of Jesus being crucified is told in pictures which are displayed in churches. These show the journey to Calvary, the suffering on the way, and the people that Jesus met on that final journey.

2. The Offertory

In the earliest days of the Church, people actually brought to the altar a whole range of goods that could be used in Church or given to those in need. By about the fourth century this became restricted to the bread and wine, though other goods were often collected elsewhere. Nowadays, the bread and wine (together with the collection) represent all that we are able to give of ourselves to God and to others.

3. Lent

The Gospel of Ash Wednesday sets the scene for Lent and urges us to pray, fast and give alms. Help the children to understand this by reminding them that:

- ♦ Prayer can be in their own words and at any time of the day
- ♦ Fasting is not just from food but from anything that they enjoy (e.g. not watching TV or playing computer games for an evening/day)
- ♦ They don't have to give big amounts to charity; every little helps

4. The Gifts of the Holy Spirit

The Holy Spirit is given to us to help us in our day to day living of the Christian life. Each of the seven gifts makes a special contribution to this. Perhaps here we need to stress fortitude (bravery/strength to be followers of Christ in the world today).