

Facts and Inquiry Worksheet

Subject/Course: Religious Education – **Primary**

Topic: **Prayer in the Liturgical Season of Lent & Easter**

Liturgical Days: Ash Wednesday, Palm Sunday, Holy Thursday, Good Friday, Easter Sunday

The season of Lent begins with Ash Wednesday and lasts 40 days. It comes to an end before the evening Mass on Holy Thursday.

Holy Week also includes Palm Sunday, Good Friday and Easter Sunday when we celebrate Christ's resurrection. Lent is a time of prayer, fasting, abstinence and giving to the poor in preparation for Easter where we renew a sense of who we are –a renewal of baptism as Christians and what we stand for.

1. Liturgical Meanings

What is the liturgical significance of each of these days? Explain what the church Extra Focus on Lent and Easter

2. Our Saint, Mary MacKillop

Make sure the students are familiar with the story of St Mary MacKillop. Read prayers from the book written by primary aged students and illustrated in Australiana theme to reflect Mary's cultural background.

The **Mary MacKillop** themes from the book:

- Finding courage
- Forgiving everyone
- Giving Thanks
- Caring for Everyone
- Believing in Goodness
- Meeting challenges
- Trusting in God
- Welcoming all people

- a. Make this an Australian Prayer Section on the Notice Board with Australian natural bush and native animals, as well as some Mary MacKillop quotes.
- b. Students choose a theme in groups and write their own prayer, using Mary as an example of who to be like. They then illustrate it with Australiana.

3. A great naturalist saint - St Francis of Assisi. His prayers are filled with praise to God for nature and animals.

- a. Read the 'Canticle of the Sun' prayer to the students. Discuss how St Francis, like Mary MacKillop, was close to animals.
- b. Reflect on these lines from the prayer, which evoke beautiful imagery of the natural world.

'Be praised my lord, through all our creatures, especially through my lord Brother Sun, who brings the day.
...through Sister Moon and the stars...
...Brothers Wind and Air, and clouds and storms, and all the weather...
Sister Water... Brother Fire...Mother Earth...'

- c. Each student chooses an image from the prayer to illustrate and this becomes the cover for their Gratitude Journal for the 40 Days of Lent.

4. During Lent, students are asked to make a special effort to pray every day.

Popular Prayer Themes (from *365 Children's Prayers*)

- Animals
- Easter
- Families
- Forgiveness and saying sorry
- Friends
- God and Jesus
- Love
- Thanking God
- The natural world
- Asking for God's help
- Blessings
- For Bedtime
- For peace
- For the seasons

- a. Create a quiet and reflective space for students to write a prayer daily on a topic. In the morning before school begins, you may put on reflective music as a cue to start writing a prayer. Use one of these topics above for starters. Read some of the prayers in one of the book sections. You may wish to colour code the themes so that children are aware of the kind of prayer they are making and vary it.
- b. Place a black box with a slot in which students can put in their prayers during Lent. Black represents darkness (death) before the light (Easter). Read one prayer daily. After Easter, change the box to White.

5. Prayers and Liturgy

There are special prayers and blessings we say for important church events and rituals:

- Feast days such as Easter and Christmas
- Pentecost
- Baptism
- Confirmation
- Marriage
- Funeral

- a. Ask students to choose their favourite prayer and share with the class.
- Why do you like that prayer?
 - How does it make you feel?
 - What does it mean?
 - What is it used for?

Students will make an emotional association with a traditional prayer and ritual. It's important for the student to feel 'involved' in the praying process.

a. **Jesus Christ's Journey to the Cross**

Source:

<http://resource.fraynetwork.com.au/object.cfm?o=137&pid=1393&showrm=0&uptam=1>

This may be an alternative task to the Stations of the Cross.

- a. **Students in pairs choose and explore one of the Holy Week texts:**
- Palm Sunday, Lk 19: 36–38
 - Holy Thursday, Lk 22: 14–23
 - Good Friday, Lk 23: 33–34
 - Easter Sunday, Lk 24: 1–12.
- b. **Use 2 or 3 of de Bono's hats to reflect on the story. If students are unfamiliar with this strategy try using the red and white hats only. Challenge students by using other hats to deepen their reflection.**
- Red: How do you feel as you read this story?
White: What are the events in this story?
Green: How do you think Jesus' family felt in this story?
Yellow: What positive things does the story tell us about people on Jesus' journey?
Black: What negative things does it tell us about people on Jesus' journey?
Blue: What have you learned about Jesus or others in this story?

4. Stations of the Cross Activity.

- a. **Link the idea of what a pilgrim is and the idea of a pilgrimage being a sacred and spiritual walk – much like a 'walking' prayer.**
- b. **Would you walk with Jesus on his way to the cross? If you could, what would you take with you?**
- c. **Imagine you had a backpack. What would you put in it?**
1. Sunscreen and hat
 2. Band-aids for blisters
 3. Water bottle
 4. etc
- d. **What would you offer Jesus out of your backpack when he falls 3 times?**
- e. **What do you think Jesus would say?**
- f. **What do you think the soldiers or the crowd would say?**

Activity: Cut out cardboard pics of these items and a larger real life size cut-out of a backpack. Students stick down the items on the cut-out.

Reflection: In your real life at school, home, community, in what ways can you support and help others around you?

5. Create a virtual map of Jesus' walk to the cross or a poster with footsteps leading from one station to another.

Include the topography, geography, flora and fauna, street view (as in Google Maps), satellite view, and other relevant parts of the journey.

Reflection: Report any one section of Jesus' walk to the cross from the point of view as Jesus' best friend. What would you say? How would you report it live?

6. Obituary: After the crucifixion, write an obituary for Jesus as it would appear in the print newspaper or online.

7. Easter Symbols

After the darkness of Lent comes light – the Easter Candle (Paschal) represents the light and fire of the resurrected Christ.

There are many symbols to remind us of the importance of Easter.

a. Assignment: Research these symbols that go back to the early Christian church and their meanings and use. Draw these symbols and put them up in the classroom.

- Easter Candle – what symbols are on it? What do they mean?
- Water – what does water do? Look at baptism, cleansing, water as life giving source for us to survive
- Oil – in what ways were fragrant oils important for the early Christians – how do we use oils today – in perfumes etc
- White clothing – the colour white and relevant to baptism/Holy Communion
- Bread – how does it represent nourishment and Christ's body as symbol?
- Wine – how does this symbol represent Christ's blood and what does it say about the function of our blood (life source)

b. Write a simple prayer on Jesus being risen after students hear the scripture story of the empty tomb:

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'Thank you, Lord, that you rose from the dead so that I can one day live with you in heaven.

Thank you, Lord Jesus!'

(Prayer no.311, *365 Children's Prayers*)

Resources:

- *Breakthrough! The Bible for Young Catholics*
- *The Mary MacKillop Prayerbook* for Children
- *365 Children's Prayers*, B James
- *Words for the Journey for Kids– Ten-Minute Prayer Services for Schools*, L. Freemantle & L. Miller