

EPISCOPAL CHILDREN'S CURRICULUM

INTERMEDIATE

CROSS



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Intermediate Cross

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Note: The following letter is for teachers and parents of children in the Intermediate level of church school. These pages can be reproduced or used as a model for a personalized letter.

Episcopal Children's Curriculum

Unit I: Psalms and Wisdom

Dear Parents and Guardians,

The first unit of the Intermediate Cross Year offers a unique opportunity to immerse class members in the rich language and imagery of psalms as well as the poetry and stories of the “wisdom” literature. Exposure to both kinds of literature should help your student appreciate more fully the long story of God’s people—their times of joy and of sorrow, of triumph and of despair.

When we are received at Holy Baptism into “the household of God,” we take our places in a tradition that encompasses the whole of Hebrew and Christian history. Our prayers are united with those of our spiritual ancestors who gathered in temple and synagogue to glorify the Lord—the Holy One who had preserved them in those mighty deeds recorded in Scripture. And we are “one in the Spirit” with Christians of the last two thousand years who have assembled to praise God for the marvelous gift of Jesus Christ, risen Lord and Savior.

We hope the students will be captivated by the variety, color, and emotional power of *The Psalms*. Similarly, we will explore together the poetry and rich stories of the wisdom books of the Old Testament and the Apocrypha, a section of the Bible that includes historical information about the Hebrew people and New Testament concepts such as eternal life.

Plan to spend some time talking to your student about what he or she is learning. You can do this by reading the Scripture identified below, discussing the **Symbol Cards** and **Church Times** sent home each week, and by reading together Part I of the *Cross Year Treasurebook*, which includes information about The Psalms and wisdom literature in the Bible.

The first three sessions of Unit I are designed to explore the general character and history of *The Psalms*. Sessions 4-6 are devoted to wisdom literature in the Old Testament while Sessions 7 and 8 are based on books in the Apocrypha. Session 9 is devoted to All Saints’ Day. Following is a more detailed overview of the unit:

Session 1: “The Songs of God’s People” provides a general history of *The Psalms*. Activities are designed to help students see the connection between the Hebrew songs and our present-day worship, allowing them to appreciate more fully the great variety of moods and themes within The Psalter in *The Book of Common Prayer*. (*Psalms 100*)

Session 2: “Psalms Are Poetry” challenges students to explore the shape of Hebrew poems. With assistance, the class members will try their hand at writing in the style of the biblical psalms. A music activity introduces a familiar hymn that paraphrases a psalm. Other activities will focus on how psalms communicate deeply felt human emotions. (*Psalms 46:1-4*)

Session 3: “Types of Psalms” is devoted to the five identifiable types of psalms: historical, praise, thanksgiving, royal, and lament. We will explore repeated themes of disobedience, miracles, and the exodus from Egypt in the historical psalms. We will look at the rich musical traditions of the praise psalms and ways to express praise for God’s love and faithfulness in the thanksgiving psalms. Students will analyze what a royal psalm says about a ruler’s character and mission. Finally, they will discover how candidly the Hebrews expressed feelings of frustration, sorrow, despair, and anger. (*Psalms 148:1-6*)

Session 4: “The Suffering of Job” reflects on the meaning of suffering and God’s relationship with those

who suffer. *The Book of Job* confronts the troublesome question of why suffering and trouble assail people who are good and just. Activities will emphasize the unconditional love of God and the promise of God's presence in every circumstance. (*Job 19:25-27*)

Session 5: “Proverbs” looks at the collection of sayings about how to live the good life, that is, the life that God approves. Because God is a part of all life, we are called to live joyfully as well as responsibly. Students will explore the importance of obedience and dealing with evil influences. (*Proverbs 1:8-10, 15*)

Session 6: “Ecclesiastes” has been called the strangest book of the Bible. The author deals with the big questions of life and death while talking about ordinary daily life. Activities will help students explore contrasts in life such as speaking and listening or love and hate. (*Ecclesiastes 3:1-8*)

Session 7: “Righteous Tobit” explores the story of the family of Tobit, a righteous Jew in exile. God sends the angel Raphael to help his son Tobias on a journey to reclaim his father's fortunes. Tobias meets Sarah, who is tortured by a demon in Media. With God's help they find answers to their prayers. Activities will emphasize the personal faith of the main characters. (*Tobit 13:13-15*)

Session 8: “The Maccabees” describe the history of the Hebrew people and their conflicts with neighboring and conquering nations. The stories were written to strengthen the people in their faith and to warn persecutors that the Hebrews would resist and that God would protect them. Activities reflect the drama of the conflicts and the traditions that have arisen from this period. (*II Maccabees 10:1-3*)

Session 9: “For All the Saints” is to be used on a date near to All Saints' Day. It focuses on *Psalm 149*, which is part of the All Saints' Day service in *The Book of Common Prayer*. This Hebrew song celebrates the presence of God with God's faithful people in ancient Israel and in all periods of history. Students will look at words and phrases used in the Bible to refer to saints such as faithful and faithful ones. Activities will help them understand why the Church observes All Saints' Day. (*Psalm 149:1-4*)

Yours in Christ,
Church School Teachers

FOCUS

The Psalms are the Hebrews' book of poems and hymns, used in worship by both Jews and Christians at all times of the day and in every season. The students should be able to identify different types of psalms, and cite examples of different moods they represent.

PSALMS AND WISDOM

Session 1

The Songs of God's People

GETTING READY

The first three sessions of this Unit are on selected themes from *The Psalms*. The word “psalm” is from a Greek root that means to pluck the strings of a harp. It is a translation of the Hebrew word that means simply a song. We use the word “psalter” to name the whole collection of 150 biblical psalms. “Psalmody” can mean the singing of psalms in worship, composing and arranging psalms for singing, or a collection of psalms.

In these sessions, students will discover the great variety of themes and emotions expressed in the diverse collection of Hebrew poems which have lasted longer than any other words employed in both Jewish and Christian worship. Every day, in every part of the world, the psalms are sung, said, or read silently—in every known language. To explore the remarkable history behind The Psalter is to feel a deep sense of awe.

The Psalms were written over a period of seven or eight hundred years, between the tenth and third or second centuries BCE. Many were used in the first temple of Jerusalem. Our present 150 psalms are frequently called “the hymnal of the Second Temple” (dating from around 516 BCE, when the Jerusalem temple was rebuilt after the Jews' return from exile in Babylon).

Scripture scholars continue to look for the origins of the psalms. Some are believed to be from David. (In New Testament times, Jewish people attributed the whole collection to that great king.) It is now clear that a variety of writers produced the songs for use in a wide area, including Mesopotamia, Syria, Palestine, and Egypt.

We have many English versions of The Psalms. *The Book of Common Prayer* contains all of the Bible's psalms, in a translation adapted from Miles Coverdale (1535 CE). This is The Psalter that was used in the *1549 Book of Common Prayer*. The original was based on the Latin psalter, but the contemporary version relies on a comparison with the original Hebrew.

Almighty God, the fountain of all wisdom: Enlighten by your Holy Spirit those who teach and those who learn, that, rejoicing in the knowledge of your truth, they may worship you and serve you from generation to generation; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. *Amen.*

For Education

The Book of Common Prayer, p. 261

TEACHING TIP

Members of Episcopal congregations serve as readers of Scripture (lectors) in services of worship. The church school classroom can be a good place for intermediate-age students to gain this skill. As much as possible, all class members should be encouraged to serve in this role for the Gathering.

Be aware, however, that some students may have learning disabilities or other reasons for not wanting to participate in this way.

GATHERING

Display Poster No. 1 from the Teacher's Packet showing illuminated letters, "The Psalms." Below or near the poster, place various versions of the Bible and *The Book of Common Prayer*—all of them marked at The Psalter. Prepare a basket or box containing enough slips of paper for each person with a sample of numbers from 1 through 150 (the numbers of the psalms).

As the students arrive, invite them to choose a slip of paper, locate the psalms corresponding to the number, and select lines they would like to share aloud later with the other class members. (To conserve time, divide large classes into teams for this task.)

When everyone is present, the teacher says:

Let us pray. (Use the Collect "For Education" or a prayer of your own choosing.)

The chosen student lector leads the reading from The Psalter, in the Prayer Book:

Let us read in unison Psalm 100, from The Book of Common Prayer, beginning on page 729:

Be joyful in the Lord, all you lands;
serve the Lord with gladness
and come before his presence with a song.

Know this: The Lord himself is God;
he himself has made us, and we are his;
we are his people and the sheep of his pasture.

Enter his gates with thanksgiving;
go into his courts with praise;
give thanks to him and call upon his Name.

For the Lord is good;
his mercy is everlasting;
and his faithfulness endures from age to age.

INTRODUCING THE STORY (*Time: 10-20 minutes*)

Ask the students to find *Psalm 100* in their Bibles. Practice reading it in unison and responsively (first by whole verse, then by half-verse).

Tell the story of the Hebrews' songs of praise in the temple from the student newspaper, *Church Times* (Unit I, Issue 1). Announce that this Unit features three sessions about The Psalms, the ancient hymnal of the Hebrew people and of Christians as well. We will be discovering why *The Psalms* have been loved and treasured for so long.

Share aloud the Psalm verses students selected at the Gathering. Share with the group your favorite psalm and why it is meaningful to you.

Ask: Do you have a favorite psalm? Why do you like it? Share briefly your own experiences with *The Psalms* as prayers or hymns that offer

spiritual comfort or challenge. Point out that many persons have committed psalms to memory.

Draw on the information provided in Getting Ready (above) and in *Cross Year Treasurebook* to describe the development of The Psalter, with its varied themes and poetic patterns.

EXPLORING (Time: 15-20 minutes)

Option 1. Psalm Rhythms

As a group, read the article about Miles Coverdale in the *Church Times* or tell his story in your own words. Compare his work with contemporary rap music that we listen to on the radio today.

Working in small groups, select a psalm that you find interesting. Ask the groups to find the rhythm of their selections by reading the words aloud and clapping. (Expect a lot of noise for this activity!) In addition to clapping, students could tap sticks or use other percussion instruments.

Save time for each group to present its psalm to the others. Talk about the use of poetry and rhythm in the psalms.

Option 2. Moods in Colors

Discuss briefly the kinds of themes and moods found in *The Psalms*. Refer to Poster No. 3 in the Teacher's Packet illustrating images from *The Psalms*. Focus especially on joy and rejoicing; praise and thanksgiving; and feelings like anger, sorrow, and loneliness.

Supply various colors of tissue paper, glue, water, mixing dishes, brushes, strips of white construction paper, markers, and a sheet of posterboard. Ask the students to mix glue and water that can be brushed onto the posterboard. Tear tissue into jagged strips, and place them randomly on the poster. Try to cover all the space. Brush with more of the liquid so that the colors bleed together.

On the construction paper strips, print words expressing the themes and moods of *The Psalms*. Match these feelings with the colors and glue them over the tissue. Examples: yellow for rejoicing; dark red for thanksgiving; blue for sorrow.

Option 3. Word Puzzle

In the student newspaper, *Church Times*, Unit I, Issue 1, turn to the puzzle titled "Hymn Words." Students may solve it individually, in pairs, or as a total group.

MUSIC (Time: 10 minutes)

Ask the students to turn, in *The Hymnal 1982*, to the section, S2-S15. Point out that the "Venite" is from *Psalms* 95, and that the "Jubilate" is *Psalms* 100. Venite is Latin for "come," and Jubilate means "be joyful." (See especially *The Book of Common Prayer*, pp. 82-83.) Choose one of these pieces of Service Music to sing, accompanied by music from the *Children Sing!* tape for the Cross Year.

CONNECTING/SPEAKING OUT (Time: 15-20 minutes)

Option 1. Group Discussion

Pass out copies of the church bulletin for this Sunday or a previous Sunday. Ask: When are The Psalms used in worship? Invite the students to locate the lectionaries in *The Book of Common Prayer*, pp. 889-1,001, to discover that psalms are listed for every Sunday and daily service.

Ask the students to turn to the section called “Concerning the Psalter” on page 582 in *The Book of Common Prayer*. Together, find the word “psalmody” in line 3. Explain that it means congregational speaking or singing of the psalms. Review the four methods of reciting psalms in worship. Once the class members have grasped the differences among the methods, suggest that they choose a psalm and divide into groups to try out all four methods.

Option 2. Current Events

Take a poll of the kinds of songs the students enjoy (in church, at school, or elsewhere). Identify a song that praises God or rejoices in the wonders of nature. Preferably, choose one that most of the group is familiar with. Ask: How does this song make us feel? Why? Point out that the Bible's psalms have the same power to affect our thoughts and feelings.

Note that music, especially singing, is enjoyed by all peoples all over the world. Ask: Why do you think this is the case? If there were no songs, what would take their place?

REFLECTING (*Time: 10 minutes*)

Obtain for each student a sturdy envelope approximately 9 x 12 inches in size. Label each one “Psalms and Wisdom.” Encourage the class members to add their names and appropriate decorations to their envelopes. These are to be used for storing and saving personal reflections and written prayers during the course of the Unit. (This may be an activity that occurs regularly, or just occasionally. In either event, it is important to preserve what the students write in a private place. Envelopes are stored between sessions and taken home at the end of the Unit.)

Either orally or in writing, offer direction on what to write for the reflection times. Use something like the following for this session:

Play one of the psalms from the *Children Sing!* music tape for the Intermediate Cross Year. After listening in silence, ask: What are you hearing? What do the words say to you?

Think of people all over the world who sing the psalms in their worship. Think of how old the psalms are. Write or draw to express your thoughts. You may want to write your own psalm or include a prayer composed in your own words.

LEARNING SKILLS (*Time: 10-15 minutes*)

Option 1. Class Memory Challenge

During the course of this Unit, invite the class members to memorize the Venite of *The Book of Common Prayer* (p. 82), which is taken from *Psalms* 95:1-7. Note that the word “venite” is a Latin word meaning “come” (as in the opening phrase, “Come, let us sing . . .”).

Also note that the Venite contains three stanzas, beginning with these words: 1. “Come, let us sing”; 2. “For the Lord is a great God”; 3. “Come, let us bow down.”

In this session, suggest that the students spend several minutes working in teams of two or three. Team members will recite the opening words to each other several times: “Come, let us sing to the Lord; let us shout for joy to the Rock of our salvation.” To help the group memorize the passage, suggest that they mentally underline the words “sing” and “shout,” both of which begin with the letter “s.”

Note that the lines to be memorized for each session are highlighted in the text printed in the student newspaper, *Church Times*, Unit I, Issues 1-9.

Option 2. Learning Scripture

The Psalms of *The Book of Common Prayer* contain familiar lines known to many people, whether they are regular worshipers or not. It is helpful to learn psalm passages, along with their locations. Invite the class members to learn one or both of the following before the next class session: *Psalms 100:2* or *Psalms 51:16*. See “Learning Scripture” in the student newspaper, *Church Times*. Additional verses will be suggested at each session.

To encourage the students to accomplish this task, prepare a poster labeled “Psalms and Wisdom.” Add decorations to suggest the cover of a large book. Attach nine colored ribbons to simulate book markers. The ribbons should be at least an inch wide and 12 to 15 inches in length.

Copy each verse to be memorized during the Unit onto an index card. Glue or staple the cards to the ribbons. As individuals learn and recite the verses, ask each one to draw a small Star of David in the margin of the appropriate card. (This star is made by drawing two equilateral triangles on top of each other, one pointing upward and the other down to form six points.)

ONGOING PROJECT (*Time: 5-10 minutes*)

Encourage the class members to collaborate in developing a series of panels entitled “Psalms and Wisdom.” If adequate wall space is available for display of this project throughout the Unit, use a long sheet of butcher, wrapping, or other sturdy paper that can be displayed on a wall (or walls)—approximately 28 inches by 18 feet. Mark off and number a series of nine panels, each one about 24 inches wide. (If wall space is limited, use nine separate sheets 28 by 24 inches in size. Store and display these in a suitable place at the end of the Unit.)

For this session, focus on the theme of singing, which appears often in The Psalms. Label the panel, “God's People Sing.” Invite the students to add lines from psalms that contain the word “sing.” Some possible psalm lines for the panel are: *Psalms 30:4a; 57:9b; 66:1; 67:4a; 98:1, 5-6*. Individuals may use crayons, markers, and pencils to create attractive entries on the panel. (Make sure markers do not bleed through the paper onto the wall surface.)

Other students may prefer to draw illustrations suggesting God's people singing together.

SYMBOL CARD and TREASUREBOOK

Card 1 contains a picture of a harp or lyre, a psalm verse, and an explanation of the symbol on the back.

Invite the students to explore in the *Cross Year Treasurebook*, Part I, Sections 1 and 2, to gain more information on *The Psalms*. How long have God's people been using *The Psalms* in worship? Who wrote them?

GOING FORTH

Gather the group for the dismissal. The teacher or a student will say:

I ask your prayers for all who seek God, or a deeper knowledge of him.

Pray that they may find and be found by him.

Silence

[Learners may add their petitions.]

Praise God for those in every generation in whom Christ has been honored especially those whom we remember today.

Pray that we may have grace to glorify Christ in our own day.

From The Prayers of the People

The Book of Common Prayer, p. 386

Teacher: Let us go forth in the name of Christ.

Students: Thanks be to God.

TEACHER'S ASSESSMENT

A significant goal of this Unit is to help the students to appreciate the antiquity of psalm recitation in both Hebrew and Christian worship. From your observations, are the students conscious of how old *The Psalms* are? Could they identify different moods of *The Psalms*?

LOOKING AHEAD

The next session focuses on *The Psalms* as a body of Hebrew poetry. What are some of your own favorite lines from psalms? If possible, compare these in several Bible translations. You may want to try your hand at paraphrasing a psalm in modern rhyme.

PSALMS AND WISDOM

Session 2

Psalms Are Poetry

FOCUS

The Psalms are a unique form of poetry, praising God and sharing the deep feelings of the Hebrew people. They include couplets in which the same thoughts are shared in an echo of different words. Many of our hymns contain paraphrases of psalms. The students should be able to describe Hebrew poetry and to locate examples of couplets, compare several English translations, and try their hand at writing a psalm of their own.

GETTING READY

The Psalms contain shouts of praise to the Lord and pleas for God to listen. They express deep joy in the presence of God, and cries of distress because God seems absent. Virtually every human emotion is echoed in these ancient hymns. That is why they continue to speak to our hearts at every stage in our lives.

Hebrew poetry in *The Psalms* is arranged in lines called *stichs* (pronounced “sticks”). They do not form rhyme and meter like that of a traditional English hymn, although the syllables frequently offer a pleasant cadence for recitation or singing.

The Psalms are often characterized by parallel lines—or couplets—expressing similar or contrasting thoughts. Following are examples:

Similarity. “The Lord is my light and my salvation;
whom then shall I fear?
the Lord is the strength of my life;
of whom then shall I be afraid?” (*Psalms* 27:1)

Note the parallel of the two affirmations about the Lord, followed by the same question asked in two ways.

Contrast. “Some put their trust in chariots and some in horses,
but we will call upon the Name of the Lord our God.”
(*Psalms* 20:7)

We can sense the parallels when the congregation reads a psalm antiphonally. Antiphonally means that one group reads the first half (ending at the asterisk). Another group responds by reading the second half. Psalms can also be read antiphonally by whole verse, producing much the same effect.

The parallel structure dramatizes the Hebrew poets' words about both God and the human situation.

Blessed Lord, who caused all holy Scriptures to be written for our learning: Grant us so to hear them, read, mark, learn, and inwardly digest them, that we may embrace and ever hold fast the blessed hope of everlasting life, which you have given us in our Savior Jesus Christ; who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever.
Amen.

Proper 28
The Book of Common Prayer, p. 236

TEACHING TIP

In order to introduce intermediate-age students to psalm-like poetry, it may be helpful to read aloud samples of poetry that many students are already familiar with. Select poetry that has definite rhythms and rhyme patterns. Compare the poetry to a psalm to illustrate a different pattern of rhythm.

GATHERING

On a chalkboard or large sheet of paper, write the question, “What is poetry?” Below, add “Poetry is”

As the students arrive, provide markers and encourage them to add phrases and sentences expressing their understanding of the word. They may work individually, in pairs, or in small groups.

When everyone is present, the teacher says:

Let us pray. (Use Proper 28, above, or a prayer of your own choosing.)

The chosen student lector invites the class members to form two groups for reciting a psalm from the Prayer Book:

From The Book of Common Prayer, let us read Psalm 46, verses 1 through 4, beginning on page 649. We will read antiphonally, by half verse:

Group 1: God is our refuge and strength, *

Group 2: a very present help in trouble.

Groups continue, breaking at asterisks:

Therefore we will not fear,
though the earth be moved, *
and though the mountains be toppled
into the depths of the sea;

Though its waters rage and foam, *
and though the mountains tremble
at its tumult.

The Lord of hosts is with us; *
the God of Jacob is our stronghold.

INTRODUCING THE STORY *(Time: 10-20 minutes)*

Examine the responses the class members suggested for the question about poetry in the Gathering exercise. Ask if any in the group have memorized poetry. Were they required to learn poetry or did they do it on their own? Do they know lyrics to songs? Could these be called poetry? (You may want to use suggestions in the Teaching Tip.)

Tell in your own words the story of the boyhood of David using information from the student newspaper, *Church Times* (Unit 1, Session 2). Describe the forms of poetry used in *The Psalms* (p. 3) and how the Hebrews used psalms in their worship (p. 2). Which form is used in *Psalm 46*? How would the Hebrews use this psalm in their worship?

If possible, show the class members a portion of *The Psalms* from the

King James Version of the Bible. Note that the verses are printed the same way as the prose in the other parts of the Bible. Compare the same verses in the New Revised Standard Version of the Bible.

Invite the class members to turn in their Bibles to *Psalms 117*, and then find the same psalm in *The Book of Common Prayer* (p. 760). Point out that this is the shortest of the 150 psalms. Be ready to define words that students may not be familiar with. Which words have similar meanings?

EXPLORING (Time: 15-20 minutes)

Option 1. Writing Psalms

In your own words, describe the information in the article in the *Church Times* about David as an author of psalms. Describe situations that David experienced that he might have written about in a psalm. For example, the joy of his friendship with Jonathan, or his sorrow when he learned Jonathan died.

Ask students to think of a recent event that occurred in their church, community, or somewhere else in the world (for example, a new building at their church, an issue at their school, or a natural disaster). Challenge the class members to write a psalm about the event as David might have.

Begin by everyone thinking of phrases about the event and how God and people might react. Using a drum or some substitute, beat out a simple rhythm. Ask the group to match the phrases to the rhythm.

As individuals make suggestions, refine the contributions and the order. You may want to tape the group chanting the whole composition to the adopted rhythm. Consider sharing the tape with other groups in your church.

Option 2. Creating Jigsaw Puzzles

For each student, provide a section of posterboard approximately 8 by 10 inches in size. Supply pens and colored markers or crayons. Encourage class members to choose from the Bible or *The Book of Common Prayer* a psalm passage (two to four lines only). Ask them to copy their choices on the posterboard, then decorate the background colorfully. Use scissors to cut the sheets into shapes to form jigsaw-type puzzles. Store each one in a paper or plastic bag. Suggest that the students exchange the puzzles, put them back together, and read the words aloud to the group.

Option 3. Psalm Exercise

Turn in the student newspaper, *Church Times*, Unit I, Issue 2, to the exercise titled “Skeleton Psalm.” Students may finish the psalm by working alone, in pairs, or as a total group. Consider how to share examples of their creativity.

MUSIC (Time: 10 minutes)

Introduce “From all that dwell below the skies” (*The Hymnal 1982*, 380; *We Sing of God*, 61) or listen to the hymn on the *Children Sing!* tape. The first two stanzas, by Isaac Watts, are a paraphrase of *Psalms 117*. Ask the students to read the words aloud, then compare the stanzas to the psalm in *The Book of Common Prayer*, p. 760. Then read stanza 3, by Thomas Ken. We call these familiar words The Doxology. (“Doxology” comes from

Greek words meaning “to give praise.”) Notice the natural divisions of the stanzas. You may want to experiment with antiphonal singing by dividing the students into two groups.

CONNECTING/SPEAKING OUT *(Time: 15-20 minutes)*

Option 1. Group Discussion

Invite the students to share the stories they remember about King David. What was his occupation as a young man? How was he chosen to lead God's people? How would you describe his life?

Although the authorship of *Psalms 23* is uncertain, its shepherd imagery has reminded many readers of King David. Read it aloud. Ask: What does the psalm teach us about David's faith? How did he think of God? How did David's experiences affect his writing?

Option 2. Current Events

Suggest that the students name some traditional folk songs they have learned in school or at camp. Take a poll of the group, and choose one of these songs as a focus for discussion. Ask the class members to dictate the words of one or more verses as you write them on a chalkboard or newsprint.

Ask: How would you describe this song? Which of the words rhyme? What does the song say about people? Could the tune be used to compose a song (hymn) about God and God's people? Why, or why not?

REFLECTING *(Time: 10 minutes)*

Either orally or in writing, share the following to introduce a time for the students to do some personal reflecting:

Think about rhymes and poems you have heard in your lifetime. Where did you first hear poetry?

The Psalms are poems written in Hebrew long, long ago. They are both songs and prayers. They still speak to us today because they express many kinds of human feelings. Identify a feeling you have had recently, such as sadness, joy, thankfulness, or anger. Write several phrases or draw a picture about this feeling. Try writing a prayer of your own in the form of a psalm using the phrases you wrote or the picture you drew.

If the students prepared envelopes labeled “Psalms and Wisdom” (see Session 1), add the sheets from this session. Envelopes may be started at any time during the Unit.

LEARNING SKILLS *(Time: 10-15 minutes)*

Option 1. Class Memory Challenge

As a total group, review the first two lines of the Venite from *The Book of Common Prayer*, p. 82. Again, divide the class members into teams of two or three, and ask them to repeat to one another the second half of the first stanza: “Let us come before his presence with thanksgiving and raise a loud shout to him with psalms.” (Suggest that the students underline mentally the words “thanksgiving” and “psalms.”)

In conclusion, lead the group in saying the complete first stanza of the Venite one or more times. Refer to the highlighted text in the student newspaper, *Church Times*, Unit I, Issue 2.

Option 2. Learning Scripture

If class members have memorized verses given in the previous session, ask for recitation (including where to find each one by psalm and verse numbers). Ask each one who completed the task to draw a small Star of David on the card attached to the ribbons on the poster simulation of a book, “Psalms and Wisdom.”

Invite the students to memorize either or both of the following before the next class session: *Psalm 117:1* or *Psalm 119:105*. See “Learning Scripture” in the student newspaper, *Church Times*.

ONGOING PROJECT (*Time: 5-10 minutes*)

Continue working on the wall panels, “Psalms and Wisdom,” as described in Session 1. The theme for Panel 2 is “Psalms Are Poems.” Place this heading at the top, and invite the students to choose and copy selected lines or stanzas from Psalm paraphrases found in *The Hymnal 1982*. Use crayons, markers, and pens for adding color.

Among the possible hymns are 645, “The King of love my shepherd is” (*Psalm 23*); 687, “A mighty fortress is our God” (*Psalm 46*); “Earth and all stars” (*Psalm 98*); 377, “All people that on earth do dwell” (*Psalm 100*); 432, “O praise ye the Lord!” (*Psalm 150*).

Some students may prefer to draw illustrations to go with the selected psalms, converting the hymn’s poetry into pictures.

SYMBOL CARD and TREASUREBOOK

Card 2 has a picture of the Star of David, a verse of Scripture, and an explanation on the back.

Invite the students to explore in the *Cross Year Treasurebook*, Part I, Section 3. What do The Psalms have to say about the history of God’s people?

GOING FORTH

Gather the group for the dismissal. The teacher or a student will say:

I ask your prayers for all who seek God, or a deeper knowledge of him.

Pray that they may find and be found by him.

Silence

[Learners may add their petitions.]

Praise God for those in every generation in whom Christ has been honored especially those whom we remember today.

Pray that we may have grace to glorify Christ in our own day.
From The Prayers of the People
The Book of Common Prayer, p. 386

Teacher: Let us go forth in the name of Christ.
Students: Thanks be to God.

TEACHER'S ASSESSMENT

What did the students reveal about their concepts of poetry? of songs? From your observations, are they appreciative of poetic expression? How well do the class members sense the importance of The Psalms for worship today?

LOOKING AHEAD

The Psalms include five identifiable types: historical, praise, thanksgiving, royal, and lament. Find examples of each type in *Psalm 78, 148, 138, 72, and 6*. Read each and select your favorite type. Why does this type of psalm appeal to you? Do you find other types more appealing at other times?

PSALMS AND WISDOM

Session 3

Types of Psalms

FOCUS

Great events in the history of God's people, hymns that praise God lavishly, thanksgivings for God's love and protection, celebrations of the rule of a king, and poems of sadness and despair are all found in The Psalms. The students should be able to name the five types of psalms and cite examples of each.

GETTING READY

In this session, we will look at the five major types of psalms, including historical, praise, thanksgiving, royal, and lament.

It is hardly possible to grasp the full significance of *The Psalms* without a knowledge of Hebrew history. The poetry celebrates the past, calls for faithfulness in the present, and looks ahead to a future over which God reigns. Sprinkled throughout are names of people and places that are part of the story of the Hebrew people (see *Psalms* 78).

The music of the Israelites was famous throughout the Eastern world. Priests, choirs, and the whole congregation of the temple—accompanied by instruments—would burst into praise of God, beginning with the shout, “Hallelujah!” Prime examples are *Psalms* 146-150.

More than twenty of *The Psalms* are expressions of thanksgiving to God. In *Psalms* 124, the people celebrate a day of victory; in *Psalms* 103, an individual worshiper offers praise for spiritual salvation; and in *Psalms* 138, the writer offers thanks for deliverance, proclaims God's power, and expresses trust in God's care and protection.

Even though some Hebrews were ambivalent about human kings, they wanted a sovereign who would help them face threats from other nations. Several psalms were probably written when a particular king ascended to the throne, such as *Psalms* 72. As the people turned their thoughts to a coming Messiah, the royal psalms were transformed into descriptions of the one whom God would send.

About a third of *The Psalms* are regarded as laments. Most are personal, heartfelt petitions to God. Some are penitential. Personal laments have themes of bodily sickness (*Psalms* 6), death (*Psalms* 69), sin (*Psalms* 51), unjust treatment (*Psalms* 35), and abandonment (*Psalms* 22). Other songs of sorrow come from the whole community and speak of war, famine, plague, and other perils (*Psalms* 74).

O God, from whom all good proceeds: Grant that by your inspiration we may think those things that are right, and by your merciful guiding may do them; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. *Amen.*

Proper 5

The Book of Common Prayer, p. 229

TEACHING TIP

The texts of The Psalms invite us to sing about deep human emotions (from exultant joy to profound sadness and despair). At the same time, *The Psalms* teach us about God and the history of God's people. Seek to encourage both prayerful listening and thoughtful reflection. Invite class

members to identify with the feelings of the psalmists—from praise and thanksgiving to awe and great sadness.

GATHERING

Assemble a collection of typical rhythm instruments or substitutes (blocks, pan lids, jars half-filled with sand, and metal spoons). On a chalkboard or newsprint, write: “Hallelujah! Praise the Lord!” As students arrive, invite them to work in teams to plan ways of chanting the words to the accompaniment of selected instruments.

When everyone is present, the teacher says:

Let us pray. (Use Proper 5 above or a prayer of your own choosing.)

The chosen student lector leads the class members in a reading of the psalm:

Let us read by half verse, Psalm 148, verses 1 through 6, from The Book of Common Prayer, beginning on page 805.

Group 1: Hallelujah!

Praise the Lord from the heavens;*

Group 2: praise him in the heights.

Groups continue, breaking as asterisks:

Praise him, all you angels of his;*

Praise him, all his host.

Praise him, sun and moon;*

praise him, all you shining stars.

Praise him, heaven of heavens,*

and you waters above the heavens.

Let them praise the Name of the Lord;*

for he commanded, and they were created.

He made them stand fast for ever and ever;*

he gave them a law which shall not pass away.

INTRODUCING THE STORY (*Time: 10-20 minutes*)

Across the top of a chalkboard, write the five types of psalms: historical, praise, thanksgiving, royalty, and lament. Divide into five groups and ask each group to find in the Bible one of the following psalms: 78 (historical), 148 (praise), 138 (thanksgiving), 72 (royalty), and 6 (lament). Do not tell them the category for their psalms. After a few minutes ask the groups to write the number of their psalm under the correct heading.

Using the stories in the student newspaper, *Church Times* (Unit I, Issue 3), as a guide, talk about the five different types of psalms. Use the psalms in the activity above as examples. Include information from the Getting Ready section.

Ask: What kind of stories and poems do you like best? Do your tastes change if your mood changes? Why did the writers use different themes in the psalms? Which type of psalms do you like best?

EXPLORING (Time: 15-20 minutes)

Option 1. Game, 'Psalm-O'

Poster No. 2 in the Teacher's Packet includes a pattern for a bingo-like game card, with five boxes across and five down. Also provided are 25 quoted phrases from *Psalm 78* (BCP, pp. 694-700) printed in boxes. Make enough photocopies to provide one card and one set of the phrases for each class member. Hang Poster No. 3 as an example of Hebrew history.

The phrases on Poster No. 2 are: the power of the Lord; stubborn and rebellious generation; they forgot what God had done; God worked marvels; God split the hard rocks; God led . . . with a cloud by day; God opened the doors of heaven; God split open the sea; they tested God; they went on sinning; they had no faith in God; God rained down manna; they ate and were filled; they were not faithful; God brought them to his holy land; they turned away and were disloyal; God forgave their sins; they did not remember God's power; they grieved God; God was angry; God led them to safety; they were not afraid; God was their rock; God delivered the ark into captivity; God chose David.

Ask the students to quickly cut out all the phrase boxes and attach them randomly to their cards—one phrase to a space. (Each card should be arranged differently from the others.) Make an extra set of the phrase boxes to place in a container.

Provide tokens or pebbles for the group. When everyone is ready, draw phrases and read them off until someone calls out "Psalm-O!" The winner may become the reader for repeating the game.

Option 2. Hallelujah! Silhouettes

For each student, provide large sheets of construction paper in two contrasting colors. Gather scissors, markers, and glue. Make photocopies of the silhouette pattern on Poster No. 2 in the Teacher's Packet. The human figures in the pattern are raising their arms in praise to Almighty God.

Ask the students to cut out the patterns, trace them onto sheets of one color, and cut finished figures for mounting on a sheet of the other color. Use markers to print "Hallelujah!" several times at the top of the background sheet. Leave ample room to add the silhouettes below. Fold strips of paper accordion-fashion and glue one side to the figures and the other to the background sheet for a three-dimensional look.

Option 3. Word Exercise

Turn in the student newspaper, *Church Times*, Unit I, Issue 3, to the puzzle titled "We Give Thanks."

Students may work individually, in pairs, or as a total group.

MUSIC (Time: 10 minutes)

Use this opportunity to explore versions of *Psalm 148* from *The Hymnal 1982*. Introduce Hymn 373, "Praise the Lord! ye heavens adore him." Listen to the *Children Sing!* tape, then sing both stanzas with the tape. Then divide the group to sing alternate phrases. The students may want to add an accompaniment with the rhythm instruments used at the Gathering.

As an in-reach project, take materials to make instruments to a class of

younger students. Help them make the instruments, and then teach them the hymn using the tape. Sing the hymn together at an appropriate gathering.

CONNECTING/SPEAKING OUT *(Time: 15-20 minutes)*

Option 1. Group Discussion

The Hebrew Scriptures include many sharp contrasts between the character of God and of God's people. Encourage the students to name these contrasts in their own words.

Ask: How did God feel toward the people of Israel? What had God done for them? What could God expect from the people? What could the people expect from God? (Because this was a covenant relationship, God promised to do certain things as partner in the relationship.)

In turn, how did the people feel about God? When were they faithful? When did they disobey or rebel?

Finally, discuss: How do people today (including ourselves) act toward God? Why? Is our behavior better, worse, or the same as that of the people in the Bible?

Option 2. Current Events

From newspapers and news magazines, clip stories and pictures of deep emotional crises. Which events in your local community, the nation, and the world cause sadness, sorrow, and feelings of hopelessness? (If there have been occasions in your own congregation involving persons known to the students, be sensitive to their impact.)

Point out that many people through the centuries have found the psalms of lament to be comforting. Knowing that the Bible's writers themselves cried out to God in pain can help us to get through our own troubles.

Read *Psalms 70* aloud. Point out the abiding faith of the psalmist. The psalms of lament virtually always declare the goodness and mercy of God everlasting. Ask: Where is God in the clippings from the media?

REFLECTING *(Time: 10 minutes)*

Either aloud or in written form, share the following for the students' personal reflections:

Imagine you live long ago in the days when kings and queens were the rulers of nations. You have been invited to help prepare for the crowning of your own king or queen (a coronation).

What would the music and singing be like at this great event? If you could choose the instruments and the words, how would you begin? (Refer to the psalm on Poster No. 2 in the Teacher's Packet.)

Write or draw your reflections. Consider writing a psalm-like song in which you offer prayer to God.

If the students have prepared envelopes labeled "Psalms and Wisdom" (see Session 1), add the sheets from this session. Envelopes may be started at any time during the Unit.

LEARNING SKILLS *(Time: 10-15 minutes)*

Option 1. Class Memory Challenge

Continue working on the memorization of the Venite from *The Hymnal 1982*, p. 82. Begin by inviting the total group to repeat together the first complete stanza. Introduce the opening words of the second stanza: “For the Lord is a great God, and a great King above all gods.” Repeat these phrases three times in unison.

Divide the class members into teams and ask them to write, from memory, all six lines memorized thus far. They may check their work by referring to the text in the student newspaper, *Church Times*, Unit I, Issue 3. Encourage the students to underscore “Lord,” “God,” and “King.”

Option 2. Learning Scripture

If class members have memorized Psalm verses given at previous sessions, ask for recitation (including where to find each one, by psalm and verse numbers). Add Stars of David to the verse cards, as described in Session 1. Remind the students that any verse cited during this Unit may be memorized at any time; the complete list of passages for the Unit appears in the student newspaper, *Church Times*.

Invite the students to memorize either or both of the following before the next class session: *Psalm 78:1-2* (BCP) or *Psalm 78:70* (NRSV).

ONGOING PROJECT (*Time: 5-10 minutes*)

Move to Panel 3 of this project, “Psalms and Wisdom,” as described in Session 1. For this session, label the panel “Types of Psalms.” Supply crayons, markers, and pens.

Invite the students to identify the five types of psalms and illustrate them separately or as a collage. Look at the panel on Poster No. 2 called “Psalm Mood” for ideas of using colors to illustrate the different types of psalms.

SYMBOL CARD and TREASUREBOOK

Card 3 contains a picture of a crown, a verse of Scripture, and an explanation on the back.

Invite the students to explore in the *Cross Year Treasurebook*, Part 1, Sections 4 through 7. Encourage them to imagine they are worshipers in the temple in Jerusalem in Biblical times.

GOING FORTH

Gather the group for the dismissal. The teacher or a student will say:

I ask your prayers for all who seek God, or a deeper knowledge of him.

Pray that they may find and be found by him.

Silence

[Learners may add their petitions.]

Praise God for those in every generation in whom Christ has been honored especially those whom we remember today.

Pray that we may have grace to glorify Christ in our own day.

From The Prayers of the People
The Book of Common Prayer, p. 386

Teacher: Let us go forth in the name of Christ.

Students: Thanks be to God.

TEACHER'S ASSESSMENT

The psalms cover issues and topics ranging from history to deeply felt emotions. Can the class members identify the five different types of psalms? Can they place psalms in the different categories? Is there evidence that students view *The Psalms* as a comfort in times of need?

LOOKING AHEAD

The next session in on the story of Job. Consider a time when you or someone you know faced great tragedy. How was God's presence felt or experienced?

FOCUS

The first wisdom book to appear chronologically in the Bible is *Job*. His story helps us confront unfairness we find in the world. Students should be able to tell the story of Job and discuss his relationship with God.

PSALMS AND WISDOM

Session 4

The Suffering of Job

GETTING READY

The story of Job has been a source of comfort for countless generations of suffering believers who question the justice of a loving God. Some scholars maintain that Job's tale was a response to a crisis in Israel's wisdom movement: Blessings do not always come to the righteous even when they follow wisdom's teachings.

Ancient Israel's wisdom movement lifted the original plot of Job from a Babylonian story about their chief god Marduk, who allowed one of his heavenly adversaries to inflict suffering on an innocent man, resulting in unnecessary suffering and property loss. The god is put on trial and questioned by the innocent sufferer.

The same fate befalls righteous Job when God allows the Adversary (the proper name "Satan" does not enter Israel's vocabulary until later) to remove Job's property, family, and health. His friends attempt to explain the mystery of undeserved pain by applying traditional Old Testament ideas that Job cannot accept, alerting the reader that wisdom's traditions do not offer easy solutions.

Job responds by putting God on trial. His speeches are painful examples of traditional Israelite laments laced with anger and frustration. With an attorney's dogged perseverance, Job asks what kind of God allows the righteous to suffer unfairly.

In the end, the story tells us that God can not be put on trial. An exhausted Job finally understands that God is not judged by the same standards that apply to human beings. Job is right to be outraged, but even the most righteous human being cannot fathom the depths of God's own standards because they have not been revealed. Job's questions remain unresolved, as do ours. God restores his fortunes, punishes the friends, and Job gains a new vision of God.

Almighty and everlasting God, whose will it is to restore all things in your well-beloved Son, the King of kings and Lord of lords: Mercifully grant that the peoples of the earth, divided and enslaved by sin, may be freed and brought together under his most gracious rule; who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. *Amen.*

Proper 29

The Book of Common Prayer, p. 236

TEACHING TIP

Intermediate-age students are aware of suffering in the world from first-hand experience or through the media. They are beginning to ask questions such as, "Why do bad things happen to good people?" This is a question that has no easy answer. Assure them of God's promise to always be with us in

whatever circumstances we find ourselves. Emphasize both God's love and God's unending power of forgiveness.

GATHERING

Display Poster No. 4 from the Teacher's Packet, a depiction of Job with his friends. On a piece of newsprint or on a chalkboard, write the word "Job" on one side and "Friends" on the other.

As class members arrive, ask them to look at the poster. Tell them it is a picture of a man who is ill with his friends. Invite them to add their names under the heading "Job" and list the names of one to three of their closest friends under the heading "Friends."

When everyone is present, the teacher says:

Let us pray. (Use Proper 29, above, or a prayer of your own choosing.)

The chosen student lector leads in a reading from the wisdom book of *Job*.

A Reading from the Book of Job, chapter 19, verses 25 through 27.

For I know that my Redeemer lives,
and that at the last he will stand upon the earth;
and after my skin has been thus destroyed,
then in my flesh I shall see God,
whom I shall see on my side,
and my eyes shall behold, and not another.
My heart faints within me!

INTRODUCING THE STORY *(Time: 10-20 minutes)*

Tell the story of Job in your own words (see Getting Ready). You may want to refer to the article on page 1 of the student newspaper, *Church Times* (Unit I, Issue 4), for ideas. Include the basic story of how the Adversary is allowed to take everything from Job, a righteous and good man. Job lost his property, his children, his home, and his health.

Alone and in poverty, Job is joined by three friends who come to console him. For seven days and nights they sit with him without speaking, sharing his suffering. Then they lecture him about why he has met such sorrow, drawing on their opinions about divine justice.

One notes that God treats the just justly, while punishing the unjust. Therefore, Job must accept his suffering as God's judgment. Job answers that he has done all that a righteous person should do.

Another says that Job is suffering from the sins of his children. But Job had earlier offered sacrifices in case his children had sinned. The third says that Job is being punished for his guilt.

In exasperation, Job calls for an audience with God. He finally understands that even the most righteous human beings cannot fathom the depths of God. In a possible addition to the *Book of Job*, God restores Job's fortunes.

Refer back to the Gathering exercise. Ask: Have your friends ever comforted you when you were down? How did they do that? Did they always say the right thing? Have you ever been in a situation where you could help a friend?

Invite the students to reread the scripture passage, *Job 19:25-27*. Compare it to the middle paragraph of the opening of the Burial II service in *The Book of Common Prayer*. How are they similar? Who do you think the “Redeemer” is?

EXPLORING (Time: 15-20 minutes)

Option 1. Rap Song

Point out to the students that most of the *Book of Job* is written in the form of poetry (see the article on page 2 of *Church Times*). Invite them to write their own rap song of the story of Job, using the names of the three friends.

On a chalkboard, write the names of the friends next to their advice to Job.

Eliphaz the Temanite: suffering is the punishment of God (*Job 4:8-9*)

Bildad the Shuhite: Job suffers for the sin of his children (*Job 8:4-6*)

Zophar the Naamathite: Job is punished for his guilt (*Job 11:5-6*)

Encourage the students to read some of the verses in Job for ideas. Point out imagery that you find interesting and encourage them to find others. Be ready to help them pronounce the names. If the group is large, divide into three smaller groups and assign each a name.

When the rap song has been written, perform it with percussion instruments or clap along with the beat. You may wish to share your song with another group in the church.

Option 2. God in the Whirlwind

After Job repeatedly asks God to give Job an audience, God appears as a voice in a whirlwind. The poet of the *Book of Job* chose this image to illustrate the mystery and majesty of God.

Invite the students to put themselves in the poet's place. How would they depict God's meeting with Job? Pass out paper, pencils, markers, and crayons. Ask the class members to illustrate their answers to that question in a drawing or through poetry. After everyone is finished, invite those who feel comfortable doing so to share their work. Talk about God's love for each person and how God is always near to help us.

Option 3. Word Puzzle

Turn in the student newspaper, *Church Times*, Unit I, Issue 4, to the word puzzle titled “Job and His Friends.” Students may work individually, in pairs, or as a total group.

MUSIC (Time: 10 minutes)

Introduce “O God, our help in ages past” (*The Hymnal 1982*, 680) by reading it or listening to the *Children Sing!* tape. Point out that this hymn is based on *Psalms 90:1-5*. Suggest that the students compare the hymn's stanzas to the psalm's verses. Then call their attention to *Psalms 90:12*. This is an example of “wisdom” writing (like *Job*). You may want to divide the class members into two groups so that they can sing the phrases of the hymn in an alternating pattern.

CONNECTING/SPEAKING OUT *(Time: 15-20 minutes)*

Option 1. Group Discussion

Talk about friends helping friends. Ask class members if they can describe a situation they have observed or may have seen on television about friends helping each other in a difficult situation.

As one student tells a story, ask the others to listen for answers to these questions:

What was the problem?

Did the person in trouble ask for help?

Did the friend respond without being asked?

Did the friend always know what to say or do?

How did the person in trouble know whether the friends gave good advice?

What was the outcome?

You may want to keep a tally of the answers at the end of each story. Then, as a group, go back over the questions. Figure out answers that would be most helpful in most situations. Compare your answers to the advice Job's friends gave him. Were they helpful at all?

Option 2. Current Events

If possible, bring in pictures of people who are homeless or who have lost all they owned as a result of a natural disaster. Or, ask students to describe pictures they have seen in the media or from personal experience.

Ask: How are these people like Job? How do you feel about them? Do they make you feel uncomfortable? If you were their friend, what could you say or do to comfort them? Where is God in these pictures?

During the time of intercession at the dismissal, mention the places and people the group discussed during this exercise.

REFLECTING *(Time: 10 minutes)*

Either orally or in writing, share the following possibilities for the students' personal reflections:

Imagine that your friend's home has just been destroyed by a fire. Your friend was not harmed, but a younger sibling is in the hospital. You see your friend sitting alone in the lunchroom looking sad. You are having a good time with others when you see your friend.

What would you do? What would you say to your friend? What words of comfort could you share?

Put down your thoughts by drawing or by writing a dialogue that might occur between you and your friend. Include a prayer.

If the students have prepared envelopes labeled "Psalms and Wisdom" (see Session 1), add the sheets from this session. Envelopes may be started at any time during the Unit.

LEARNING SKILLS *(Time: 10-15 minutes)*

Option 1. Class Memory Challenge

Note aloud that the Venite in *The Book of Common Prayer*, p. 82, is from a psalm of praise (*Psalms 95:1-7*). Review the portion memorized thus far. Then invite the students to form mental pictures of “hills” and “caverns” they may have seen or read about. Take time to allow individuals to share descriptions.

Introduce this portion of the second stanza: “In his hands are the caverns of the earth, and the heights of the hills are his also.” Repeat in unison three times, then say together the entire memorized text. Refer to the printed passage in the student newspaper, *Church Times*, Unit I, Issue 4.

Option 2. Learning Scripture

Provide time for any students who have memorized verses suggested in previous sessions to recite these, either individually or in unison. (Be sure to include the psalm and verse numbers.) Add small Stars of David to verse cards attached to the ribbon markers of the simulated book, “Psalms and Wisdom,” as described in Session 1.

Remind the class members that any verse cited during this Unit may be memorized at any time. The complete list of passages for the Unit appears in the student newspaper, *Church Times*.

Invite students to learn one or both of the following before the next class session: *Psalms 148:13* or *Psalms 150:6*.

ONGOING PROJECT (*Time: 5-10 minutes*)

Move on to Panel 4 of this project, titled “Psalms and Wisdom.” The theme is the passage, “I know that my Redeemer lives.” Label the panel, “God’s Love in Times of Sorrow.”

Supply crayons, markers, and pens. Suggest that the students devise creative ways to add selected lines from the *Book of Job* or the Prayer Book, p. 491.

Some class members may prefer to draw illustrations showing their images of God’s voice in the whirlwind (see Exploring, above).

SYMBOL CARD and TREASUREBOOK

Card 4 contains a sparrow on a housetop, a verse of Scripture, and an explanation on the back.

Invite the student to explore the Cross Year Treasurebook, Part I, Section 8. What is wisdom literature? What does the writer of *Job* conclude?

GOING FORTH

Gather the group for the dismissal. The teacher or a student will say:

I ask your prayers for all who seek God, or a deeper knowledge of him.

Pray that they may find and be found by him.

Silence

[Learners may add their petitions.]

Praise God for those in every generation in whom Christ has been honored especially those whom we remember today.

Pray that we may have grace to glorify Christ in our own day.

From The Prayers of the People

The Book of Common Prayer, p. 386

Teacher: Let us go forth in the name of Christ.

Students: Thanks be to God.

TEACHER'S ASSESSMENT

From your observations, are the class members able to state that God is with us at all times, even in the hard times? Did they seem to relate to the story of Job and his friends? Can they name at least one way they could be a better friend?

LOOKING AHEAD

The next session is about the sayings in *Proverbs* that describe how to live the good life—the life that God approves. Consider words from scripture or other places that have inspired you to live responsibly. Why do these passages have meaning for you?

PSALMS AND WISDOM

Session 5

Proverbs

FOCUS

The *Book of Proverbs* is a collection of sayings about how people are to live the good life, a life that is approved by God. The students should be able to state that questions and doubt are positive ways that we can come to a better understanding of God.

GETTING READY

Proverbs is an anthology of wisdom collections addressed to the reader as “my child” and appears to be directed toward children in their formative years. Relying on a mix of literary forms and styles, the book's wise sayings see life as a journey. It presents alternatives for youth who are uncertain of life and are free to choose among its many options.

The goal of *Proverbs* is religious education, described as the “fear of God,” which *Proverbs* equates with the knowledge of God. “The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom” (*Proverbs 1:17*) that brings success, while fools embrace folly, which leads to ruin.

For some people the fear of God becomes a terrorizing blockade that prevents them from questioning God's purposes and justice as Job did. But *Proverbs* reminds us that the fear of God means to recognize the limits of humanity, and to be fully human, which includes the ability to question God and probe God's mystery.

Wisdom literature teaches Israel to depend on every God-given ability to make decisions and to discern the will of God. *Proverbs* calls God's people to be perceptive. “Blind faith” is not part of the wisdom tradition. Israel's ancient sages support the use of knowledge, skill, and intelligence in making life choices that lead to a deeper awareness of God and honor God's power, presence and mystery.

O heavenly Father, who has filled the world with beauty: Open our eyes to behold your gracious hand in all your works; that, rejoicing in your whole creation, we may learn to serve you with gladness; for the sake of him through whom all things were made, your Son Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

For Joy in God's Creation
The Book of Common Prayer, p. 814

TEACHING TIP

Intermediate-age students are beginning to question many of the teachings and people they have always believed in. The authority of both parents and teachers is beginning to come under scrutiny. Take seriously the doubts and uncertainties of your students as they began to explore changing relationships. This can be a positive time in the life of a pre-adolescent if the lines of communication are kept open.

GATHERING

Ahead of time, write on newsprint or a chalkboard the heading “I Believe. . . .” Underneath, write random statements, including several from the Baptismal Covenant (BCP, p. 304-305). For example: The earth is flat, God

is the creator of heaven and earth, the American Revolution began in 1776, Jesus is the Son of God, the first president of the United States was Thomas Jefferson.

Set out markers in two different colors. Ask students to put an “X” in one color next to the statements they don’t believe, and a star in another color next to the statements they do believe. Listen to their conversations as they make their decisions.

When everyone is present, say:

Let us pray. (Use the Collect “For Joy in God’s Creation” above, or a prayer of your own choosing.)

The chosen student lector reads from the class Bible (NRSV):

A reading from the Book of Proverbs, chapter 1, verses 8 through 10 and verse 15.

Hear, my child, your father’s instruction,
and do not reject your mother’s teaching;
for they are a fair garland for your head,
and pendants for your neck.
My child, if sinners entice you,
do not consent. . . .
my child, do not walk in their way,
keep your foot from their paths.

INTRODUCING THE STORY *(Time: 10-20 minutes)*

Look at the list from the Gathering exercise and talk about the responses students had. Note the similarities and differences among the answers. Ask: Do beliefs always come from what you know? How do you know what to believe? Did the answers of others influence your choices? Who do you listen to for advice?

Discuss beliefs students had when they were younger that they no longer have. For example, many used to believe in Santa Claus. Ask: When did you first begin to have doubts? What made you question this belief? Was your discovery painful?

Invite students to reread the Scripture passage, *Proverbs 1:8-10, 15*, in their Bibles. Where does the writer suggest we look for advice? Who should we not listen to? Who might be a “sinner” today? How do we know who to listen to?

Talk to the students about the *Book of Proverbs*, drawing from information in Getting Ready (above) and the student newspaper, *Church Times* (Unit I, Issue 5). Emphasize the importance of asking questions and exploring doubts.

EXPLORING *(Time: 15-20 minutes)*

Option 1. I Doubt It

Play a game of “I Doubt It” using sayings from *Proverbs*. Beforehand, select enough sayings from the *Book of Proverbs* for every person in the class. On index cards, write the saying on one side, and the citation on the other. Change key words on about half the cards to make them incorrect.

Suggested changes are in brackets in the samples below (add additional ones of your own from *Proverbs*):

The Lord reproves [ignores] the one he loves (*Proverbs 3:11*)

Happy are those who find wisdom [wealth] (*Proverbs 3:13*)

Let your eyes look directly forward [backward] (*Proverbs 4:25*)

Whoever winks [opens] the eye causes trouble (*Proverbs 10:10*)

Fools [wise people] think their own way is right (*Proverbs 12:15*)

Do not deceive with your lips [feet] (*Proverbs 24:28*)

Divide the group into two teams. Read the saying from one of the cards to a person on Team 1. That person replies by saying either, “That’s true” or “I doubt it.” Give the passage reference to Team 2 to look up. If the person is correct, the team gets a point. Take time to talk about the passage and what the saying means. Continue by reading the next card to a person from Team 2. Team 1 then checks the answer. Make sure every person on both teams has a chance to play.

Option 2. Sayings for Today

If possible, bring in several books that have sayings and quotes from a variety of sources. You should be able to find these in most libraries. There are many books of sayings, including *Bartlett’s Familiar Quotations* or the more recent series that stemmed from the original *Chicken Soup for the Soul*.

Find several quotes or sayings that you feel are appropriate to share. Then give the students time to look through the books themselves. Then announce that the class is going to put together its own book of sayings.

Work together in small groups, pairs, or individually. Encourage class members to include sayings they have heard from family members and friends as well as their own. Write the sayings on light-colored construction paper that has been folded in half. The group can decide how they want to arrange the sayings on the pages. A volunteer could make a colorful cover.

When the project is complete, ask several volunteers to read the sayings aloud. Display the booklet at an appropriate gathering of the congregation.

Option 3. Word Puzzle

Turn in the student newspaper, *Church Times*, Unit I, Issue 5, to the puzzle titled “Sayings.” Students may work individually, in pairs, or as a total group.

MUSIC (*Time: 10 minutes*)

Distribute photocopies of *Psalm 95* from *The Book of Common Prayer*, pp. 724-725. Listen to “To God with gladness sing” on the *Children Sing!* tape and then find it in *The Hymnal 1982* (399). Compare the words of the psalm with the hymn text. You may want to try singing the phrases antiphonally by dividing class members into two groups. This will help the students in completing the Class Memory Challenge for this Unit.

CONNECTING/SPEAKING OUT (*Time: 15-20 minutes*)

Option 1. Group Discussion

God's people have been having doubts and asking questions throughout history. Divide the class into two groups to look at two examples of people in the Bible who had doubts.

Assign the first group the character of Jonah. Ask them to look up *Jonah 1:1-3* to find out what he did in response to God's command. Ask the second group to look up *John 20:24-25* to find out what Thomas, one of the twelve disciples of Jesus, said when his friends told him they had seen the Lord.

Ask both groups to report their findings. Ask: How did Jonah express his doubts? What did Thomas say to his friends about his doubts? What happened to each? Briefly tell the end of both stories. (Jonah ended up in the belly of a big fish and then did what God asked of him; Thomas saw Jesus and said he no longer needed proof, but Jesus insisted he touch Jesus' wounds to put his doubt to rest.)

Encourage the group to share times that they have had doubts or questions. What did they do? Did the doubt ever go away?

Option 2. Current Events

Bring in several copies of help-wanted ads from a local newspaper. Invite students to look at the papers for ads for specific categories, such as health professionals, construction workers, computer technicians, and others.

Then ask them where people their age can go for help. On a piece of newsprint, write the heading "Help Wanted." Brainstorm places and people students could go to for help and write them under the heading. Possible answers are: parents, teachers, clergy, youth leaders, coaches, music and dance instructors, and school counselors. Remind them that many people care about them and want to help them with their problems and questions.

REFLECTING (*Time: 10 minutes*)

Either orally or in writing, share the following possibilities for the students' personal reflection:

Your parents have limited your telephone calls to fifteen minutes on school nights. You feel this is unfair, especially since they don't have similar limits. You ask them to talk about this with you.

What will you say? How will you approach them? How can you disagree without going against the saying in *Proverbs* that says to hear "your father's instruction, and do not reject your mother's teaching"?

Write or draw a picture about the meeting. Include a solution that you think is fair.

If the students have prepared envelopes labeled "Psalms and Wisdom" (see Session 1), add the sheets from this session. Envelopes may be started at any time during the Unit.

LEARNING SKILLS (*Time: 10-15 minutes*)

Option 1. Class Memory Challenge

Review the memorized portion of the Venite from *The Book of Common Prayer*, p. 82. Ask the total group to recite in unison.

Urge the students to close their eyes and form images of a "sea" with a shoreline of "dry land." Encourage individuals to share descriptions of their mental pictures.

Introduce the final words of the second stanza: “The sea is his, for he made it, and his hands have molded the dry land.” Repeat several times in unison, then say together the first two complete stanzas of the Venite. Refer to the highlighted text in the student newspaper, *Church Times*, Unit I, Issue 5.

Option 2. Learning Scripture

If class members have memorized verses suggested in previous sessions, call on them for recitation of these (either individually or in groups). Include psalm and verse numbers. Add Stars of David to the verse cards on the simulated book, “The Psalter.”

Invite the students to commit to memory one or both of the following: *Psalm 138:1a* or *Psalm 24:1*. See “Learning Scripture” in the student newspaper, *Church Times*.

ONGOING PROJECT (*Time: 5-10 minutes*)

Work on Panel 5 of this project, titled “Psalms and Wisdom.” The theme is getting advice and the panel may be labeled “Finding Help From Others.”

Ask the students to use crayons, markers, and pens to add lines from the *Book of Proverbs* they find in the Bible. Use a concordance to find verses addressed to “my child.” Some class members may wish to draw illustrations related to the theme.

Refer to Option 1 of Exploring for possible quotations for the panel.

SYMBOL CARD and TREASUREBOOK

Card 5 shows a sheaf of wheat, a verse of Scripture, and an explanation on the back.

Invite the students to explore in the *Cross Year Treasurebook*, Part I, Section 8. Who wrote the proverbs?

GOING FORTH

Gather the group for the dismissal. The teacher or a student will say:

I ask your prayers for all who seek God, or a deeper knowledge of him.

Pray that they may find and be found by him.

Silence

[Learners may add their petitions.]

Praise God for those in every generation in whom Christ has been honored especially those whom we remember today.

Pray that we may have grace to glorify Christ in our own day.

From The Prayers of the People

The Book of Common Prayer, p. 386

Teacher: Let us go forth in the name of Christ.

Students: Thanks be to God.

TEACHER’S ASSESSMENT

Were students able to state the positive aspects of doubts and questions? Could they list people who could help them with their questions? How could the Church help them deal with doubts in their journeys of faith?

LOOKING AHEAD

The next session is about the wisdom book of *Ecclesiastes*. Activities will help students look at contrasts in life such as love and hate. How do you deal with life's contrasts? Are you a better listener or speaker? How do you handle conflicting emotions?

PSALMS AND WISDOM

Session 6

Ecclesiastes

FOCUS

The Teacher who wrote *Ecclesiastes* deals with the big questions of life and death by looking at ordinary daily life. The students should be able to describe contrasts that occur in life, such as speaking and listening or love and hate.

GETTING READY

Ecclesiastes is a frustrating book for people who want immediate answers to the puzzling questions about faith in God. Its author searches relentlessly for answers, but in the end can only say, “Who knows?” The anonymous author, called the “Teacher,” allows us to forgive ourselves when we can not do everything we would like to do, or fathom every mystery that perplexes us. The Teacher is at home with ambiguity and mystery.

The Teacher (Qoheleth in Hebrew) is an old sage gazing back at his life, warning the reader that it is easy to consider the power of evil in the world and become depressed. He encourages his audience to be content with who they are and be at peace.

Scholars differ on the Teacher's intentions in introducing the concept of “vanity,” repeated thirty-seven times in *Ecclesiastes*. The word in Hebrew means “vapor” or “breath,” something that appears for an instant, cannot be grasped, and disappears. The Old Testament portrays military power as “vanity”: it appears to give nations power but really does not. Foreign gods, physical beauty, and life itself are also considered vanity. Some interpreters believe that the Teacher encourages his audience to enjoy spontaneity, while others insist it is a cynical look at life's futility.

The lines in chapter 3, verses 1-8 remind us of all the contrasting aspects of human life, each with an appointed “time.” For everything, there is a season.

Almighty God, the fountain of all wisdom, you know our necessities before we ask and our ignorance in asking: Have compassion on our weakness, and mercifully give us those things which for our unworthiness we dare not, and for our blindness we cannot ask; through the worthiness of your Son Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one god, now and for ever. *Amen.*

Proper 11

The Book of Common Prayer, p. 231

TEACHING TIP

Most adults have an understanding of the cycles and rhythms of human experience. By contrast, intermediate-age students can recall only a few years. For them the demanding and exciting dimensions of adolescence are just ahead. Help them celebrate the present while they anticipate the future.

GATHERING

On a chalkboard or newsprint, write “Opposites” at the top. Provide chalk, crayons, or markers.

As the students arrive, invite them to work alone or with friends to write

pairs of contrasts under the heading. Challenge them to think in particular of contrasting actions, such as loving and hating, writing and erasing, standing or sitting, or speaking and listening.

When everyone is present, say:

Let us pray. (Use Proper 11 above or a prayer of your own choosing.)

The chosen student lector reads a lesson from the Bible (NRSV):

A reading from Ecclesiastes, chapter 3, verses 1 through 8.

For everything there is a season, and a time for every matter under heaven:

a time to be born, and a time to die;
a time to plant, and a time to pluck up what is planted;
a time to kill, and a time to heal;
a time to break down, and a time to build up;
a time to weep, and a time to laugh;
a time to mourn, and a time to dance;
a time to throw away stones, and a time to gather stones together;
a time to embrace, and a time to refrain from embracing;
a time to seek, and a time to lose;
a time to keep, and a time to throw away;
a time to tear, and a time to sew;
a time to keep silence, and a time to speak;
a time to love, and a time to hate;
a time for war, and a time for peace.

Reader: Here ends the lesson.

INTRODUCING THE STORY *(Time: 10-20 minutes)*

Tell the students that the Scripture passage for today repeats the same word over and over again. We use it repeatedly ourselves, every day. Use a guessing game to help them discover the word. Read aloud the following clues until the group calls out the word, “time”:

You have all the _____ in the world.

I don't have enough _____ to do that.

What _____ is it?

_____ out!

_____ flies when you're having fun.

Spend a few minutes talking about time. Ask: Do you ever wish you had more time to do something? Do you ever want time to pass by more quickly? Would you like to be at a different time and place than you are now? What does the Scripture passage say about time?

Invite students to look up the passage in *Ecclesiastes 3:1-8*. Talk about living in the present at the same time you dream about the future. What should you be enjoying now?

Then ask the students to identify the contrasts or opposites in the passage. List them on the chalkboard or on newsprint next to the list the group made for the Gathering exercise. How many are in both lists?

If there is time, tell the story from page 1 of the student newspaper, *Church Times* (Unit I, Issue 6), about King Solomon's wisdom in dealing

with two women who claimed to be the mother of a child. The author of the *Book of Ecclesiastes* was identified as “son of David” (1:1), and therefore the work has been attributed to Solomon. Although scholars believe this is probably not the case, the book is consistent with wisdom literature attributed to Solomon.

Tell the story in your own words from the newspaper or *I Kings 3:16-28*. Ask: How did Solomon's decision illustrate his wisdom? What would you have done if you had been Solomon?

EXPLORING (Time: 15-20 minutes)

Option 1. Illustrations

Create illustrations to accompany the scripture passage in *Ecclesiastes 3:1-8*. Divide up the statements that begin with “a time” among the students. Talk about the different statements and brainstorm ways that they could be illustrated. For example, “a time to be born” could be a baby in a crib or an acorn, and “a time to die,” a tombstone or an autumn leaf.

Pass out one piece of construction paper for each line of scripture. Provide markers, crayons, pens, glue, and various craft items such as glitter and sequins. Ask students to write the line that goes with their illustrations. Encourage the students to talk to each other about their ideas as they work. A volunteer could also make a cover sheet that has the words of verse 1.

When everyone has finished, share the illustrations with each other. Bind them with staples or by punching holes and securing the sheets together with yarn. Display the booklet in the room or on a bulletin board for others to enjoy.

Option 2. Charades

Ask the students to think of things they want to do or hope to be in the future. Pass out index cards that have been cut in half. Invite the class members to write on the cards one of the things they have been thinking about. Tell them that they can fill out as many as three, but should write at least one.

Pass around a paper bag to collect the cards. Divide students into two groups to play a game based on Charades. A person from the Team 1 will draw a card from the bag and act out what is written on the card. Remember, no words can be said—only pantomimes! Then the second group does the same thing. If a card says the same thing as an earlier card, the person can select another.

Keep repeating until everyone has had a chance to act out a card. Talk about what the students want to do and be in the future. Ask: What can you do now to help that happen? Are you already doing things in the present for the future?

Option 3. Code Puzzle

Turn in the student newspaper, *Church Times*, to the code puzzle titled “Wisdom.” Students may work individually, in pairs, or as a total group.

MUSIC (Time: 10 minutes)

The hymn “Come, ye thankful people, come” (*The Hymnal 1982*, 290; *We Sing of God*, 47) reminds us of the themes of praise and thanksgiving. Listen to it on the *Children Sing!* tape and then look at the words of the first verse. Ask: Which season does it make you think of?

CONNECTING/SPEAKING OUT (*Time: 15-20 minutes*)

Option 1. Group Discussion

Begin by listening to a recording of a “Time for Every Purpose” by the Byrds. Ask: Why would a rock group use Scripture as a basis for a popular song? Share with the group information from Getting Ready (above) about the anonymous writer of *Ecclesiastes* called the “Teacher.” The writer is depicted as an older person looking back at life.

Tell the students to imagine that they have been assigned the role of the “Teacher,” and together they will write a version of *Ecclesiastes 3:1-8* from their viewpoint for a modern song. Remind them to look for contrasts and keep focused on the present. Write the ideas on a piece of newsprint.

Some examples might include:

a time to eat dinner, and a time to wash dishes;

a time to do homework, and a time to watch television;

a time to be in school, and a time for recess;

a time to sing in the school choir, and a time to hear a symphony orchestra.

Talk about the activities they do each week that are important to them. Are these included in the list the group made? Are things that are important to your parents on the list? What is left out? Add new ideas the group might have after this discussion. If there is time and interest, write a new words to be set to the Byrds' tune.

Option 2. Current Events

Beforehand, divide a sheet of paper into eight boxes and label each box with a day of the week, leaving one box blank. Make enough photocopies for each person in the class.

Pass out the sheets and ask the students to list their normal activities for each day. For example, on Monday, they might list school, music lesson, set the table, homework. In the empty box, invite them to list activities they would like to do (such as play video games or read a book).

Next, ask them to put time estimates beside each item listed in every box. Ask: How much time do you have to do the things you want to do? How much time do you spend on homework or watching television?

Talk about opposites in life and the need to both work and play. Suggest that they be aware of how they spend time for the rest of the day.

REFLECTING (*Time: 10 minutes*)

Either orally or in writing, share the following possibilities for the students' person reflection:

Imagine that you could travel through time and could see yourself at age 16. What activities are you involved in? What things are you doing at church? What kind of student are you? What is your relationship with your parents like? Who are your friends?

Put your thoughts down on paper or illustrate them in drawings. Add a prayer at the end of your reflection about your future.

If students have prepared envelopes for storing their reflections during this Unit (see Session 1), add the sheets from this session.

LEARNING SKILLS *(Time: 10-15 minutes)*

Option 1. Class Memory Challenge

As the students continue to memorize the Venite (*Psalms 95:1-7*), point out that God is called King in line 6. Such royal descriptions are used often in *The Psalms*.

Review the first two stanzas (lines 1-10) by repeating them in unison. Then introduce verse 6: “Come, let us bow down, and bend the knee, and kneel before the Lord our Maker.” Encourage the students to underline mentally the words “bow” and “bend,” both of which begin with “b.” Discuss bowing and bending as acts of humility in the presence of God.

Divide the class members into two groups to recite the two lines back and forth antiphonally. Alternate several times so that everyone repeats both lines. Conclude by reciting verses 1-6 in unison.

Refer to the text printed in the student newspaper, *Church Times*, Unit I, Issue 6.

Option 2. Learning Scripture

Call on any students who have memorized verses suggested in previous sessions to recite the words of each, together with where it may be found (by psalm and verse numbers). Place Stars of David on the cards attached to the simulated book, “The Psalter.”

Invite the class members to memorize before the next class session one or both of the following: *Psalms 72:1* or *Psalms 27:1*. See “Learning Scripture” in the student newspaper, *Church Times*.

ONGOING PROJECT *(Time: 5-10 minutes)*

Turn to Panel 6 of this continuing project, titled “Psalms and Wisdom.” Label the panel “Ecclesiastes.”

Supply crayons, markers, pens, and Bibles. Invite the students to enter selected lines from the passage in *Ecclesiastes 3:1-8* or from other parts of the book. Suggest that they look at verses that are in poetry form (chapters 1, 3, 7, and 9-11.).

Some class members may want to illustrate the verses.

SYMBOL CARD and TREASUREBOOK

Card 6 contains an oil lamp, a verse of Scripture, and an explanation on the back.

Invite the students to explore in the *Cross Year Treasurebook*, Part I, Section 8, on *Ecclesiastes*. What did a later editor probably add to this book?

GOING FORTH

Gather the group for the dismissal. The teacher or a student will say:

I ask your prayers for all who seek God, or a deeper knowledge of

him.

Pray that they may find and be found by him.

Silence

[Learners may add their petitions.]

Praise God for those in every generation in whom Christ has been honored especially those whom we remember today.

Pray that we may have grace to glorify Christ in our own day.

From The Prayers of the People

The Book of Common Prayer, p. 386

Teacher: Let us go forth in the name of Christ.

Students: Thanks be to God.

TEACHER'S ASSESSMENT

How did the students react to the wisdom literature of *Ecclesiastes*? Are the class members showing signs of being able to reflect on the meaning of what they read in the Bible? If not, what could be done to help them find meaning that is related to their own experiences?

LOOKING AHEAD

The next two sessions are based on Scripture found in the Apocrypha section of the Bible. Most of the books in this section were written in Greek between about 200 BCE and 100 CE, between the New and Old Testaments. They contain important teachings which are helpful to our growth as persons of faith. Look over the contents of the Apocrypha in the coming week. What surprises you?

PSALMS AND WISDOM

Session 7

Righteous Tobit

FOCUS

The exciting story of Tobit is an introduction to the Apocrypha section of the Bible. The students should be able to find the Apocrypha in the Bible and define what it is. They also should be able to recount the story found in the *Book of Tobit*.

GETTING READY

The Apocrypha, originating in the period 200 BCE to 100 CE, is not part of the canon or the books of the Bible recognized by the Church as Holy Scripture. The early Anglican Church recognized the books of the Apocrypha as having value for personal use. Now scholars value the history of these books as well as New Testament concepts such as eternal life and resurrection.

The story of Tobit is filled with romance, courageous acts of piety, and moral teaching about faithfulness to Torah, making this wisdom book one of the most popular tales in the Apocrypha.

Tobit is a pious Jew living in exile with his wife, Anna, and son, Tobias, in Nineveh some seven centuries before Christ. In spite of his righteous deeds, kindly Tobit loses his eyesight and his fortune. It is a Job-like story.

Instead, God hears Tobit's prayers for help, as well as the prayers of demon-possessed Sarah in the remote city of Media, and dispatches the angel Raphael to help them. Through a series of trials and misfortunes Tobit's son, Tobias, is aided by the angel on his mission to recover the family's money and rescue Sarah from the demons who torment her. Tobias marries Sarah, cures his father's blindness, and restores the family's savings with the help of Raphael.

In this allegory, Tobit stands for Israel who is encouraged to remain faithful to the teachings of Jewish law—Torah. Israel must exist in the face of jeering neighbors and temptations presented by a foreign culture to abandon life with God. In the end Tobit affirms that God is working out a purpose even in difficult times of suffering.

Almighty God our heavenly Father, guide the nations of the world into the way of justice and truth, and establish among them that peace which is the fruit of righteousness, that they may become the kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. *Amen.*

For Peace Among the Nations

The Book of Common Prayer, p. 816

TEACHING TIP

Young people today face as many temptations from our culture as the people in Israel did when Tobit was written. Just as Israelites heard cacophonous messages from their neighbors, students get conflicting messages from the media, popular music, and their peers. However, leaders and teachers should not be overly negative about youth culture. Listen to your students and gently direct them to the teachings of Jesus and the message of God's unending love.

GATHERING

Display Poster No. 5 in the Teacher's Packet, a classical picture of a youthful Tobias leaving his family. Cover the title with a sticky note. As students arrive, invite them to look at the picture.

Ask: Who do you think is in the picture? What is happening? On a separate piece of paper on a table or hanging near the poster, invite them to write a caption for the poster.

In addition to the poster or in lieu of it, display several copies of a Bible opened to the Apocrypha section. Invite students to look at it. Have you heard of the books in this section before?

When everyone is present, say:

Let us pray. (Use the Collect "For Peace Among the Nations," above or a prayer of your own choosing.)

The chosen student lector reads a lesson from the Bible (NRSV):

A reading from the Book of Tobit, chapter 13, verses 13 through 15.

Go, then, and rejoice over the children of the righteous,
for they will be gathered together
and will praise the Lord of the ages.
Happy are those who love you,
and happy are those who rejoice in your prosperity.
Happy also are all people who grieve with you
because of your afflictions;
for they will rejoice with you
and witness all your glory forever.
My soul blesses the Lord, the great King!

Reader: Here ends the lesson.

INTRODUCING THE STORY (*Time: 10-20 minutes*)

Read the captions the students wrote for the Gathering exercise. How many sound alike? Which are different?

In your words, tell the story of Tobit and his family, the angel Raphael, and Sarah from information in the Getting Ready (above) and the article on page 1 of the student newspaper, *Church Times* (Unit I, Issue 7). You may wish to read the book of Tobit to prepare.

As you begin, remind students about the story of Job (Session 4) and compare the beginnings of Job and Tobit's stories. Introduce the characters of the angel Raphael, who Tobias (Tobit's son) mistook as a guide, and Sarah, the woman possessed by demons. Talk about the journey Tobias made and how he met and later married Sarah. Conclude with the healing of Tobit and how Raphael discloses his identity to father and son.

Look back at Poster No. 5 from the Gathering activity. Were any of the captions close to the real story? Now that you know the identity of the characters (Tobit, Anna, Tobias, and Raphael), write a new caption. Which part of the story did the artist capture? Which part would you have painted?

Introduce the term allegory—a story in which each character represents an idea or religious principle. In this story, Tobit represents the people of Israel who are to remain faithful to their covenant with God even though

they are tempted by others to abandon it. With God's help (represented by the angel Raphael), the people can prevail against suffering and temptation.

Invite the students to look in their Bibles at *Tobit 13:13-15*. This passage comes near the end of the story when Tobit's health and fortunes have been restored. In the allegory, who is the message for?

EXPLORING (Time: 15-20 minutes)

Option 1. Packing for a Journey

Tell the students that they are going to play a game to help Tobias pack for his journey. Remember that the trip is long, and there may not be many places to stay or eat. Tobias does find a guide to help him (Raphael), but he still must prepare for many unknown situations along the way.

Arrange the students' chairs in a circle. Give the group time to think of one or two items they would want to pack for this kind of a trip. Begin the game by saying, "My name is Tobias and I'm going to take a [tent, water, dried meat, and the like]." The next person in the circle says the same thing, but adds a new item. The list gets longer and harder to remember as each person adds a new item.

To make the game more interesting, add a rhythm to the words by patting the right hand on the right thigh, the left hand on the left thigh, then clapping hands together, ending by two snaps of the fingers. If someone loses the beat, the rest of the group should maintain it until the person can get back on. Be ready for laughter and confusion.

Afterwards, talk about the items people added to the list. What was left out? Did anyone remember to add prayer?

Option 2. Illustrating the Story

Look again at Poster No. 5 and identify which part of the story it illustrates. Talk about different scenes in the story such as the introduction of Tobit as a charitable person, preparations for Tobias' journey, his encounter with Sarah, their wedding, the restoration of Tobit's fortunes, and Raphael's revelation of his identity.

Make a mural that tells the story of Tobit's family. Decide whether the students want to make individual panels to put together, or one picture that includes smaller scenes like a collage. Some in the group may prefer to write a poem about part of the action. Invite them to look at the poetry in Sarah's prayer of anguish in chapter 3 or Tobit's thanksgiving poem in chapter 13.

Display the mural and the poetry in your classroom or in a place where others in the congregation can enjoy it.

Option 3. Word Puzzle

Turn in the student newspaper, *Church Times*, Unit I, Issue 7, to the word puzzle titled "Matching Phrases."

Students may work individually, in pairs, or as a total group.

MUSIC (Time: 10 minutes)

Listen to the hymn "Hail to the Lord's Anointed" (*The Hymnal 1982*, 616)

on the *Children Sing!* tape. This is an example of how Christians have adapted a psalm to express adoration and praise for Jesus Christ.

The hymn is a paraphrase of *Psalms 72* that probably was familiar to the writer of *Tobit*. Look it up in the Bible to see how the words were adapted for a Christian message. Which qualities of a king mentioned in the psalm also appear in this hymn's description of Jesus?

CONNECTING/SPEAKING OUT *(Time: 15-20 minutes)*

Option 1. Group Discussion

Mention again the use of the allegory by the writer of the *Book of Tobit*. *Tobit* stands for Israel who must remain faithful to the law, or Torah. Israel must ignore jeering neighbors and temptations presented by a foreign culture to abandon life with God. Ask: Could this story be an allegory for our own times? What are some of the temptations we face?

Brainstorm the kinds of temptations in our culture that class members face each day. Remind them to think about music they listen to, music videos, movies, television shows and other influences from the media. Other temptations they may face include trying to look and act like their peers, ignoring a person who is different, or disobeying family rules.

Talk about ways to deal with these temptations. Add a prayer during the dismissal asking God to help all Christians to remain faithful to the teachings of Jesus.

Option 2. Current Events

If possible, bring in several handheld video games. Pass them out and give students time to take turns playing the games for a few minutes. Or, ask several volunteers to describe in detail their favorite video or computer games.

Ask: What is happening in most of the games? What is the message? How do you “win”? What do you learn from the game?

With the group's help, construct a game that offers the same kind of fun and requires similar skills, but is based on the adventures of Tobias and Raphael. What will the goal of the game be? What obstacles will the heroes have to face?

Afterward, spend a few minutes talking about how games and the media influence us.

REFLECTING *(Time: 10 minutes)*

Orally or in writing, share the following for the students' personal reflection:

Everyone faces unhappy times, when we feel angry or out of sorts with the world. At such times, we may feel like no one cares—not even God. Sarah faced terrible anguish. She felt betrayed and angry. And yet she took her anguish to God.

Have you ever felt angry and betrayed? Where did you turn for help?

Write your own poem or “lament” in the form of a prayer as Sarah did in *Tobit 3*. Tell God about your true feelings.

If the student have prepared envelopes labeled “Psalms and Wisdom” (see Session 1), add the sheets from this session. Envelopes may be started at any

time during the Unit.

LEARNING SKILLS *(Time: 10-15 minutes)*

Option 1. Class Memory Challenge

Review the memorized portion of the Venite (*Psalm 95:1-7*) by reciting verses 1-6 in unison. For this session, focus on the final three lines (verse 7). Begin by asking the students to recall the image of God as shepherd, in *Psalm 23*, then note that this same theme appears in the Venite: “For he is our God, and we are the people of his pasture and the sheep of his hand.”

Call attention to the exclamation point at the end of the final line: “Oh, that today you would hearken to his voice!” Ask: What does “hearken” mean?

Recite the closing lines in unison several times, then invite the class members to stand and say the entire Venite together. Refer to the text in the student newspaper, *Church Times*, Unit I, Issue 7.

Option 2. Learning Scripture

Allow time for recitation of any verses students have learned, from suggestions offered in previous sessions. (Call for psalm and verse numbers of passages learned.) Add small Stars of David to the appropriate cards on the simulated book, “The Psalter.”

Invite the class members to learn one or more of the following before the next class session: *Psalm 30:5b* (NRSV); *Psalm 46:1* (NRSV); or *Psalm 102:70* (BCP). (The first verse is a lament, and the other two offer comfort.) See “Learning Scripture” in the student newspaper, *Church Times*.

ONGOING PROJECT *(Time: 5-10 minutes)*

If the students have developed the series of panels titled “Psalms and Wisdom,” continue working on the project. For this session, label Panel 7, “The Apocrypha—Tobit.”

Supply crayons, markers, and pens. Invite the group to select a scene from the story of Tobit or write a group poem similar to Tobit's poem of thanksgiving in chapter 13. Some students may choose to draw illustrations to accompany the poem.

Some students may choose to draw illustrations to accompany the selected lines.

SYMBOL CARD and TREASUREBOOK

Card 7 contains a burning censer, a verse of Scripture, and an explanation on the back.

Invite the students to explore in the *Cross Year Treasurebook Part I*, Section 8, about the Bible's wisdom literature.

GOING FORTH

Gather the group for the dismissal. The teacher or a student will say:

I ask your prayers for all who seek God, or a deeper knowledge of

him.

Pray that they may find and be found by him.

Silence

[Learners may add their petitions.]

Praise God for those in every generation in whom Christ has been honored especially those whom we remember today.

Pray that we may have grace to glorify Christ in our own day.

From The Prayers of the People

The Book of Common Prayer, p. 386

Teacher: Let us go forth in the name of Christ.

Students: Thanks be to God.

TEACHER'S ASSESSMENT

Are the students able to find and describe the Apocrypha section of the Bible? Can they recount the main points of Tobit's story? Are they able to relate the message of Tobit to their own world? What can we do in the future to help them find ways to reach out to God in times of trouble?

LOOKING AHEAD

The next session looks at the *Maccabees*, several books in the Apocrypha that describe the later history of the Hebrew people. Look over the stories that were written to strengthen the people in their faith. What is their spiritual appeal for you?

PSALMS AND WISDOM

Session 8

The Maccabees

FOCUS

The Maccabee books of the Apocrypha describe the history of the Hebrew people and the conflicts with their neighbors and conquerors. The stories were recounted to shore up the people's faith in God during this difficult time. Students will be able to identify the period of the Maccabees and relate the ancient stories of faith to their own world.

GETTING READY

The history of the Hebrew people in the 200 years before Christ's birth was filled with wars and conflicts with neighboring countries and oppressive conquerors. The period ended with the final conquest by the great Roman armies. The vivid stories found in the first two Maccabee books were written to help the people maintain their faith. The stories also contained a warning for those who would persecute the Hebrew people: The people would resist and God would protect them.

The term "Maccabee" might have meant "hammer" and was widely used to refer to Judas, the third son of the priest Mattathias. Judas and his two brothers led a revolt to overthrow a cruel foreign king who controlled Palestine. His rebels became known as the "Maccabees" who staged an uprising in 167 BCE. Their story is told in the *First Book of the Maccabees* through letters, poetry, and prose reminiscent of Old Testament histories.

The revolt came after King Antiochus IV Epiphanes had initiated a ruthless campaign of religious intolerance against the conquered Jews. The revolution was touched off when Antiochus defiled the Jerusalem temple. The books of the Maccabees chronicle the military achievements of Judas and his militia fighters, culminating in the recapture of Jerusalem and the rededication of the temple in 164 BCE. This triumph is celebrated by Jews today in the Feast of Hanukkah, also called the Feast of Dedication.

The *Second Book of the Maccabees* contains several concepts that are familiar to Christians. It acknowledges the role of angels in God's work in history and affirms the resurrection of the dead. A climax in the book comes when Antiochus personally supervises the burning of seven Jewish resisters and their mother who stood against his intolerant policies (chapter 7, verse 9). They served as courageous reminders of God's call to faithfulness in the face of suffering and injustice.

Note: The *Third Book of the Maccabees* is a misnomer because the stories deal with the struggles of Egyptian Jews rather than the exploits of the Maccabean heroes. The *Fourth Book of Maccabees* is an interpretation of Judaism in terms of Greek philosophy. Both the ideas and terminology are similar to writings of the Greek Stoics.

O God, from whom all good proceeds: Grant that by your inspiration we may think those things that are right, and by your merciful guiding may do them; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. *Amen.*

Proper 5

The Book of Common Prayer, p. 229

TEACHING TIP

The purpose of this session is to emphasize the importance of the Hebrew peoples' faith in God in overcoming hostilities with other nations. Students may be fascinated with the excitement of the battles. Emphasize the importance of God's presence to the people and how their faith led them to victory. The most important goal of the people was to remove the altars of foreign gods from the temple to return it to a place to worship the one true God.

GATHERING

Display Poster No. 6 of a painting of a Hebrew man standing with open arms on the outskirts of Jerusalem about the time of the Maccabees. Next to the poster make two columns on newsprint or a chalkboard. At the top of one write, "Places I Have Lived," and over the second, write "Where Home Is."

As students arrive, invite them to look at the picture and then list their responses to the headings in the two columns. Encourage them to write their responses even if they have only lived in one place or their response is already recorded.

When everyone is present, say:

Let us pray. (Use Proper 5 above or a prayer of your own choosing.)

The chosen student lector reads a lesson from the Bible (NSRV):

A reading from the Second Book of the Maccabees, chapter 10, verses 1 through 3.

Now Maccabeus and his followers, the Lord leading them on, recovered the temple and the city; they tore down the altars that had been built in the public square by the foreigners, and also destroyed the sacred precincts. They purified the sanctuary, and made another altar of sacrifice; then, striking fire out of flint, they offered sacrifices, after a lapse of two years, and they offered incense and lighted lamps and set out the bread of the Presence.

Reader: Here ends the lesson.

INTRODUCING THE STORY *(Time: 10-20 minutes)*

Look at the responses the students gave during the Gathering exercise. Ask: What is home? What does "home" feel like? Talk about the comfort of being home during a storm or returning home after a trip. Tell students that today you will be talking about a special homecoming that happened a long time ago in Jerusalem.

In your own words, tell the story of the Maccabees and how they fought to regain their home. Use the information from Getting Ready (above) or from the article on page 1 of the student newspaper, *Church Times* (Unit I, Issue 8).

Before the time of the Maccabees, the Hebrew people had lived in relative peace with foreign rulers. Since the time of Jeremiah, many believed that this was part of God's plan of redemption. Some of the people did not join

the rebellion and tried to stay true to the Torah in their own ways.

The *First Book of the Maccabees* opens with the death of Alexander the Great, as Antiochus attacks Jerusalem and desecrates the temple. Judas, a son of Mattathias, rallies the people to recover the temple and purify it. The Hebrews felt that the tolerance they had once shown to their oppressors was no longer feasible under the harsh rule of Antiochus.

One story about his cruelty, recorded in *II Maccabees 7* and *IV Maccabees*, is about the martyrdom of seven brothers and their mother. This further incited the Hebrew people. After several battles with the Syrian armies, Judas and his army prevailed. They entered Jerusalem to reclaim the temple.

Invite the students to reread the scripture passage in *II Maccabees 101-3*. What is the first thing the Maccabees did when they came into Jerusalem? How did they purify the sanctuary of the Lord? How do you think they felt?

EXPLORING (Time: 15-20 minutes)

Option 1. Getting to Jerusalem

Play a game using an obstacle course as a relay between two teams or by timing participants with a stopwatch as they complete the course. Tell the students that they are going to recreate some of the obstacles faced by the Maccabees as they sought to reclaim Jerusalem. Let them help you set up two identical obstacle courses for a relay race or one course for everyone.

Here are possible obstacles: climbing a mountain, crossing a river, fighting the good fight, tearing down and rebuilding the altar. For a mountain, set a sturdy table in the relay path for each person to climb over. To cross a river, runners must fill a cup of water from one location and take it to another; if they spill any water, they have to start over. Make a cardboard sword or set out a stick identified in some way as the “Sword of Truth.” Runners must pick up the sword and brandish it three times in the air before continuing. Finally, set up nine or more wooden blocks in a pyramid shape. Runners must completely knock the stack down and then rebuild it before returning to tag the next runner.

At the end of the game talk about obstacles the Maccabean army probably faced. Where did they find the courage to fight Antiochus?

Option 2. Designing the Altar

Design an altar for the classroom. Note: You may want to complete the Discussion exercise before working on this option. Provide candles, a tablecloth, posterboard, markers, a Bible, and a Prayer Book.

First of all, talk about the different components on an altar and what each is used for. What colors would you use for the table cover? Would you display a picture behind the altar? Who or what would be in the picture?

As students brainstorm, ask a volunteer to make a sketch of their ideas. Using the supplies you provided, make an altar that looks similar to the sketch. At the end of the class period, gather around your altar for the dismissal.

Option 3. Code Puzzle

Turn in the student newspaper, *Church Times*, Unit I, Issue 8, to the code puzzle titled “Wisdom.” Students may work individually, in pairs, or as a total group.

MUSIC (*Time: 10 minutes*)

Sing again “Hail to the Lord's Anointed” (*The Hymnal 1982*, 616) or listen to it on the *Children Sing!* tape. Focus especially on the words of stanza 2. Ask: What do these lines say to people who are sad and in despair? Would the words have been of comfort to the Maccabees?

CONNECTING/SPEAKING OUT (*Time: 15-20 minutes*)

Option 1. Group Discussion

Visit the altar area in your church. If possible, ask a member of the altar guild to show the students around and answer questions. Ask the students to note the items that actually rest on the altar itself, and the things that are close by. Note the covering of the altar and other hangings in the area.

Ask a volunteer to make a list of everything the students see. Ask: Who makes sure everything is prepared each week? What stays on the altar during the week? What are “reserve elements”? How many candles are there? Does that number ever change?

Talk about your visit and how the students felt while they were there. Why is this place special?

Option 2. Current Events

In recent history, there were a number of churches burned, primarily in the South. If possible, bring information from the library or the Internet about these events that occurred in the 1990s. Ask: How would you feel if this happened to our church?

Tell students that churches today are still the targets of vandals and thieves. Ask: What would you do if someone desecrated our church? How would you feel? What could we do to make the church holy again?

During the dismissal, pray for churches that have been destroyed through violent acts or natural disasters.

REFLECTING (*Time: 10 minutes*)

Either orally or in writing, share the following possibilities for the students' personal reflection:

Throughout history, people have had to flee their homes because of wars, famines, floods, or other events. Think about how it would feel to be forced to leave your home. What would you miss most? What would you take if you had time to get just one item?

Write a prayer for those who have lost their homes. Include a thanksgiving for your own home.

If the students have prepared envelopes for storing their reflections during this Unit (see Session 1), add the sheets from this session.

LEARNING SKILLS *(Time: 10-15 minutes)*

Option 1. Class Memory Challenge

Ahead of time, write on a chalkboard or newsprint the opening lines of the three stanzas of the Venite from *The Book of Common Prayer*, p. 82. Leave plenty of space below each one:

“Come, let us sing to the Lord; . . .

“For the Lord is a great God, . . .

“Come, let us bow down, and bend the knee. . .

Distribute chalk or markers to volunteers and ask them to fill in the missing lines. Then repeat together the entire Venite in unison. Divide the class into two groups and say the passage again antiphonally. (Call attention to the asterisks in the printed text in *Church Times*, Unit I, Issue 8.)

Option 2. Learning Scripture

Provide opportunity for students to recite verses they have committed to memory. Add Stars of David to the cards on the simulated book, “The Psalter.”

Challenge class members to memorize one or more of the following verses from the Bible's wisdom literature: *Ecclesiastes 3:1*; *Proverbs 3:5*; or *Proverbs 15:1*. When individuals have memorized these, decide on a way to mark the verse cards so that it is clear they are not a part of *The Psalms*. (Perhaps different colors and shapes could be used for the cards and the ribbon to which they are attached.)

See “Learning Scripture” in the student newspaper, *Church Times*.

ONGOING PROJECT *(Time: 5-10 minutes)*

Complete the series of panels on “Psalms and Wisdom” that the students have created. For this session, label Panel 8, “The Maccabees.”

Supply crayons, markers, and pens. Invite the group to draw a picture of an altar using ideas from the Exploring or Discussion exercises. Before they begin, think about how the altar should look and what should be on it. Select a phrase or portion of the passage in *II Maccabees 10:1-3* to include on the panel.

Encourage the group to decide on a way to display the completed wall panel project where everyone in the congregation may see it.

SYMBOL CARD and TREASUREBOOK

Card 8 contains a picture of a candlestick with seven branches (a regular menorah), a verse of Scripture, and an explanation on the back.

Invite the student the review Part I or the *Cross Year Treasurebook*. Which sections did they like the best?

GOING FORTH

Gather the group for the dismissal. The teacher or a student will say:

I ask your prayers for all who seek God, or a deeper knowledge of him.

Pray that they may find and be found by him.

Silence

[Learners may add their petitions.]

Praise God for those in every generation in whom Christ has been honored especially those whom we remember today.

Pray that we may have grace to glorify Christ in our own day.

From The Prayers of the People

The Book of Common Prayer, p. 386

Teacher: Let us go forth in the name of Christ.

Students: Thanks be to God.

TEACHER'S ASSESSMENT

As they explored the story of the Maccabees, how did the students react? Had they every heard of the Maccabees? Are students able to relate the stories about the Maccabees to their own lives? What more could be done to help them feel God's presence in their lives?

LOOKING AHEAD

The session that follows has been prepared for use around November 1 (All Saints' Day). Insert it in your teaching schedule at the most appropriate time.

PSALMS AND WISDOM

Session 9

For All the Saints

FOCUS

At services for All Saints' Day, *Psalm 149* is said or sung. This hymn of praise celebrates the presence of God with God's faithful servants in Israel of old and in all periods of history. The students should be able to explain why the Church observes All Saints' Day, and to cite one or more lines from the psalm that would express our joy in remembering faithful people of every generation.

GETTING READY

In the King James Version of the Bible, the word “saints” is used in thirteen psalms. It appears three times in *Psalm 149*, a likely reason for its having been chosen for the All Saints' Day liturgy.

In all instances, the New Revised Standard Version substitutes “faithful ones,” “the faithful,” or “loyal followers” for the word saints. The Psalter of *The Book of Common Prayer* uses “the faithful” or “servants” in all cases except *Psalm 97:10*: “The Lord loves those who hate evil; he preserves the lives of his saints and delivers them from the hand of the wicked.”

It is appropriate to equate the concept of sainthood with faithfulness. On this Feast Day of the Church, we recall and celebrate the lives of all God's people who have stayed close to the Lord in their daily life and work. To them has been given the gift of faith. For many, it has been costly to remain loyal to God and stay earnest in seeking the Spirit's leading.

Students of the intermediate age level are now able in new ways to sense that they belong to the blessed community of all God's servants. They take their places alongside the ancient Hebrew and Christian servants. Also, they are privileged to be numbered with today's baptized people who form the Church's company of saints.

Almighty God, you have knit together your elect in one communion and fellowship in the mystical body of your Son Christ our Lord: Give us grace so to follow your blessed saints in all virtuous and godly living, that we may come to those ineffable joys that you have prepared for those who truly love you; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who with you and the Holy Spirit lives and reigns, one God, in glory everlasting. *Amen.*

All Saints' Day

The Book of Common Prayer, p. 245

TEACHING TIP

Continuity can be difficult with the weekly meetings of the typical church school class. Time is limited for extensive review periods, so the teacher must connect the content of the sessions. The All Saints' session is not an interruption but an enhancement of the Unit's themes. Emphasizing the psalms in this session pulls together material from the beginning of the Unit.

GATHERING

Obtain one or more Bible concordances, and place them on a table with Bibles. Mark the concordances at the page containing the word “saints.” (You may prefer to make photocopies of the page instead of using the volumes themselves.)

As students arrive, demonstrate how to use the concordance page to find Scripture passages containing the highlighted word. Ask them to practice the procedure by finding several of the listed references for “saints.”

When everyone is present, say:

Let us pray. (Use the Collect “All Saints' Day,” above, or a prayer of your own choosing.)

The chosen student lector leads the class in reading the psalm responsively, using the Prayer Book:

Let us read Psalm 149, verses 1 through 4, found on page 807 of The Book of Common Prayer. We will read responsively by whole verse.

Hallelujah!

Sing to the Lord a new song;
sing his praise in the congregation of
the faithful.

Let Israel rejoice in his Maker;
let the children of Zion be joyful
in their King.

Let them praise his Name in the dance;
let them sing praise to him with timbrel
and harp.

For the Lord takes pleasure in his people
and adorns the poor with victory.

INTRODUCING THE STORY *(Time: 10-20 minutes)*

Discuss the task assigned at the Gathering. How many biblical references did the class members find that contained the word “saints”? Were any found in *The Psalms*?

List the Sunday Lectionary readings (Propers) for All Saints' Day, as found in *The Book of Common Prayer*, p. 925. Ask the students to find the Gospel passage (*Matthew 5:1-12*) in their Bibles. Ask: Was this passage listed in the concordances under the heading of saints? Why or why not?

On a chalkboard or newsprint, write: faithful, the faithful, faithful ones. In your own words, share the information from Getting Ready (above). The older King James Version used “saints” often in psalms. Newer translations have substituted the concept of faithful people. That is what saints are: persons with faith in God. Ask: Why do you think the passage in Matthew was selected for this day?

Using the article of page 1 of the student newspaper, *Church Times* (Unit 1, Session 9), describe the celebrations of All Saints' Day. In this celebration, we remember faithful servants of God from the past. Some gave their lives for what they believed.

We also celebrate all the faithful people of our own time. In the New Testament, baptized people in Christian churches are called “saints.”

EXPLORING *(Time: 15-20 minutes)*

Option 1. Chain of Saints

Provide strips of construction paper in varied colors, approximately 1.5 by 8 inches; clear transparent tape; and marking pens.

Invite the students to survey the lists of saints in the Church Calendar, pages 19-30 of *The Book of Common Prayer*. Divide the twelve months among individuals, pairs, or teams. For each month, choose four or five saints' names to be listed on the paper strips. (If students know facts about the saints they choose, these can be added as well.) Add strips with the names of other faithful Christians whom the class members would like to honor.

Use tape to join the strips into a paper chain. Decide on where to exhibit the finished product so that it may be seen by other members of the congregation. Make a placard titled "Our Chain of Saints."

Option 2. All Saints' Greetings

Supply construction paper, colored tissue, yarn and ribbon, glue, crayons, markers, and other art materials.

Suggest that the students make All Saints' greeting cards to be shared with shut-ins or residents of nursing homes or convalescent centers in the community. Decide on appropriate scripture verses from *The Psalms* to be included on the cards. Make plans for delivering the greetings.

Option 3. Word Puzzle

Turn in the student newspaper, *Church Times*, Unit I, Issue 9, to the puzzle titled "Remembering the Saints."

Students may work individually, in pairs, or as a total group.

MUSIC (*Time: 10 minutes*)

Using the *Children Sing!* tape for the Intermediate Cross Year, sing stanzas 1 and 4 of "For all the saints, who from their labors rest" (*The Hymnal 1982*, 287; *We Sing of God*, 46). Call the students' attention to these words: faith, communion, fellowship, one. If time permits, lead the group in composing a stanza of their own. Suggest they include phrases to describe their own congregation (or the class members themselves).

CONNECTING/SPEAKING OUT (*Time: 15-20 minutes*)

Option 1. Group Discussion

Share with the students a brief history of All Saints' Day. It dates from the fourth century and commemorates all the martyrs who died in persecutions of the Church. (Relatives and descendants of many martyred Christians were still living at that time.) On November 1, around 731-741 CE, Gregory II dedicated a church in the name of "All the Saints." From then on, that date was established as a feast day on the Church's calendar.

All Hallows Eve, the Eve of All Saints' Day, came to America from Europe. "Halloween" is an abbreviation for that day. You may want to include information in the *Church Times* story about the festival's relationship to Halloween.

Ask: What does Halloween seem to mean today? How do you celebrate

this day? How could our celebrations be linked with All Saints' Day? Encourage class members to brainstorm about costumes on themes related to the saints and the Church's life. For ideas, look through *Lesser Feasts and Fasts* for stories about the saints.

Would a change in emphasis on Halloween affect the celebration? How?

Option 2. Current Events

Bring in the local and national news sections from newspapers from the previous week. Ask the class members to look at the stories and pictures for people who have done “saintly acts.” Look at the stories together and make lists on a chalkboard or on newsprint of people's names (or the group they represent) and what they did.

Define again the word saint: a person with faith in God. Go back to the list and identify the people who acted in response to their faith in God. For example, a story about Habitat for Humanity that highlights a church group that comes faithfully every week to build a house for a family living in a shelter.

Ask: Are we saints? Repeat the definition. How can we be saints each day?

REFLECTING (Time: 10 minutes)

Either orally or in writing, share the following possibilities for the students' personal reflection time:

Saints are people in the past and the present who are faithful in serving God. Who are the people you know who seem to be truly faithful followers and servants of God? What do you admire about them? What have they said and done?

Think about the activities and plans you have for the coming week. How can you be a faithful follower of God? Identify one act you could do to be a servant of God, and write it down. For example, you could write a friend or grandparent a letter thanking them for the role they play in your life. Or, you could help your parent make dessert for a local homeless shelter.

Think about how and when you will complete this task. Write a prayer asking God to help you in the coming week to find ways to be a faithful follower.

If the students have prepared envelopes titled “Psalms and Wisdom” (see Session 1), add the sheets from this session. Envelopes may be started at any time during the Unit.

LEARNING SKILLS (Time: 10-15 minutes)

Option 1. Class Memory Challenge

If the students wish to do so, review the portion of the Venite from *The Book of Common Prayer*, page 82, that they have memorized thus far in the Unit. See the text in the student newspaper, *Church Times*, Unit I, Issue 9.

Option 2. Learning Scripture

Add Stars of David to the simulated book, “Psalms and Wisdom,” for the verses that students have memorized since the last class meeting.

Invite the class members to look at *Psalms 149:1* and *Psalms 140:12* and

choose a verse to be committed to memory before the next class session. See “Learning Scripture” in the student newspaper, *Church Times*.

ONGOING PROJECT (Time: 5-10 minutes)

For this All Saints session, regardless of when it fits into the Unit calendar, use Panel 9 of the project, “Psalms and Wisdom.” Label the panel: “God’s Saints Are Faithful.”

Supply crayons, markers, and pens. Encourage the students to work cooperatively in designing and completing an illuminated version of *Psalms 97:10*. Highlight the word “saints” (which might also be translated “his faithful,” as in the New Revised Standard Version of the Bible). The class members may want to add small illustrations around the border, showing faithfulness of God’s saints.

Encourage the group to be thinking of a way to display the project, when it is completed, for others in the congregation to see and enjoy.

SYMBOL CARD and TREASUREBOOK

Card 9 contains an All Saints’ shield, a verse of Scripture, and an explanation on the back.

Invite the students to review, in the *Cross Year Treasurebook*, Part I, Sections 1 and 2. Why are psalms prominent in the Church’s worship?

GOING FORTH

Gather the group for the dismissal. The teacher or a student will say:

I ask your prayers for all who seek God, or a deeper knowledge of him.

Pray that they may find and be found by him.

Silence

[Learners may add their petitions.]

Praise God for those in every generation in whom Christ has been honored especially those whom we remember today.

Pray that we may have grace to glorify Christ in our own day.

From The Prayers of the People

The Book of Common Prayer, p. 386

Teacher: Let us go forth in the name of Christ.

Students: Thanks be to God.

TEACHER'S ASSESSMENT

How would you describe the students’ understanding of All Saints’ Day? To what degree do they feel included in this special celebration? What experiences might deepen their appreciation? Think back over the Unit, with its focus on *The Psalms* and wisdom literature. What gains have the students made in grasping the significance of the ancient Hebrew songs? Do they know where to look for “wisdom” in the Bible?

Note: The following letter is for teachers and parents of children in the Intermediate level of church school. These pages can be reproduced or used as a model for a personalized letter.

Episcopal Children's Curriculum

Unit II: THE REIGN OF GOD

Dear Parents and Guardians,

In the second unit for this year, we will use activities to look intently at our lives in the reign of God—that is, in “the kingdom of God” or “the kingdom of heaven.”

In our Lord's life, death, and resurrection, the reign of God has broken into our human situation. Things will never be the same again since his victory over life and death.

To be a baptized disciple of Jesus Christ is to be welcomed into the very household of God. Life under the reign of God imposes serious responsibilities. That is why we enter, at Holy Baptism, into a binding Covenant (*The Book of Common Prayer*, page 304). We profess our belief in God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit. And we pledge ourselves to a life of prayerful and loving service and advocacy among our neighbors.

Schedule some time to talk to your child about what he or she is learning. You can do this by reading the scripture passages cited below, discussing the **Symbol Cards** and *Church Times* sent home each week, and by reading together Part II of the *Cross Year Treasurebook*, which includes information about God's reign.

The first five sessions of this unit are related to the early weeks of the Church Year, in the seasons of Advent, Christmas, and Epiphany. The Biblical texts put us in touch with the role of Jesus Christ as Messiah and Savior of the world.

The four sessions that follow are based on clear-cut teachings of Jesus about the radical character of God's reign in the affairs of humankind. The following summaries portray the flow of the Unit's nine sessions:

Session 1: “The Peaceable Kingdom” focuses on a vision of the prophet Isaiah. It anticipates a day when a new and different order would prevail in the world, exceeding even the great days of Israel under King David. A Messiah, descended from that great king, would be the Savior of all. He would usher in a time of peace among all God's creatures. The activities are intended to help the students to explore this Advent theme and to ponder the power and glory of God that were present in the Child born to the Virgin Mary. (*Isaiah 11:1-10*)

Session 2: “The Reign of God is Near” focuses on the ministry of John the Baptist. He called upon his listeners to repent and be baptized in preparation for the kingdom of God that he proclaimed to be fast approaching. The session explores the concept of penitence—sorrow for doing that which is wrong. The students will consider the meaning of Advent as a penitential season in which we prepare our hearts and minds for the good news of the Savior's birth. (*Matthew 3:1-6*)

Session 3: “Joseph's Dream” provides a fresh look at the experience of Joseph, betrothed husband of the Virgin Mary. According to the *Gospel of Matthew*, he received the news from God that Mary would bear a son whose name was to be Jesus. The revelation came from an angel who appeared in a dream. The child was to be Emmanuel, which is Hebrew for “God with us.” Through activities and projects, the students will gain a fuller picture of the role of Joseph, so often regarded as a shadowy figure in the background. (*Matthew 1:18-25*)

Session 4: “The Word Became Flesh” immerses the students in the prologue to the *Gospel of John*. These opening verses parallel the first lines of *Genesis*: God makes a beginning. In its proclamation of God in human flesh, this passage is regarded as a Christmas text. Students will be asked to think about the repeated theme of light. The light of Christ's birth overcomes the darkness of the world. Varied activities are related directly to the celebration of the Nativity. (*John 1:1-14*)

Session 5: “Simeon and Anna Recognize Jesus” is designed for Epiphany, although the story is about the presentation of the baby Jesus in the temple. Simeon and Anna declare that the child is marked for a unique destiny as the world's Savior. Students will explore the story through role playing. They will pay special attention to the Song of Simeon (*Nunc dimittis*). (*Luke 6:25-38*)

Session 6: “Jesus Speaks with Nicodemus” is the first of four sessions about the kingdom or reign of God. This session focuses on a teacher named Nicodemus who came to visit Jesus stealthily in the night. Jesus tells his puzzled visitor that he must experience a spiritual rebirth to enter the kingdom. The student will be asked to memorize *John 3:16*, and to locate other Bible texts related to this verse. (*John 3:1-10, 16*)

Session 7: “Like a Child” gives the class members an opportunity to identify ways they can be a part of the Church. They will also discuss how to share in the Church's ministry of hospitality in Christ's name. The students will hear again the story of how Jesus welcomed children in his name. (*Matthew 18:1-5*)

Session 8: “Jesus Gave a Golden Rule” is about commands Jesus gave as he taught his disciples. His ethical teachings went against the grain of many of our natural human impulses. The tenth command summed up all of the others: “Do unto others as you would have them do to you” (*Luke 6:31*). The students will explore the ramifications of the Golden Rule in their own lives. This rule exacts a special kind of obedience to God's will. (*Luke 6:27-36*)

Session 9: “The Great Commandment” is about Jesus' Summary of the Law found in *Matthew*, *Mark* and *Luke*. In an original way, Jesus summed up all of the commandments in two sentences taken from the books of *Deuteronomy* and *Leviticus*. He said that all of the writings about the law and the prophets could be captured in the commands to love our neighbors as ourselves. (*Mark 12:28-34*)

Yours in Christ
Church School Teachers

FOCUS

As Advent arrives, we recall the words of the prophet Isaiah who spoke of a day when a successor of David would reign over a world free of conflict and hatred. Christians understand this vision to be a description of the rule of Christ, the Savior. The students should be able to locate the passage and explain how it relates to the season of Advent.

GETTING READY

As a new Church Year begins, the season of Advent is a time for deepening our commitment to Jesus Christ. What do we believe about him? What is he like? What has he accomplished?

In the three-year Lectionary Cycle for Advent, seven of the twelve chosen passages from Hebrew Scripture (the Old Testament) are found in the Book of Isaiah. A shining example is *Isaiah 11:1-10*. This prophet shares a glorious vision of a time when the rule of God will be a visible reality.

It was evident in the circumstances of Israel that the people and their rulers alike had failed to believe and obey God. They were risking judgment and destruction. In this very situation, Isaiah was given a message from God: The day would come when a new and different order would prevail.

Everyone in Israel would agree that there had never been a time like that of the great King David. Surprisingly, God had made a new beginning for the people when David was chosen from the simple family of Jesse. Isaiah foresaw a day when such a fresh start would occur once again: God would reach into that same family (the descendants of David) and bring forth a new and altogether different leader who would usher in the true reign of God. This chosen leader would be like a new green shoot coming up out of a decaying stump.

What would it be like under such a ruler? There would be both wisdom and understanding. Judgments would be unaffected by human sin and prejudice. The love and justice of God would be completely manifest.

The prophet illustrates this coming divine reign with a concrete picture of peace among all creatures. The enmity between people and animals would disappear. No longer would anyone need to fear for their children as they now did. The bite of poisonous reptiles would no longer injure and kill.

As Christians read this passage, they see in it a description of the reign of God under Jesus Christ. The vision of a peaceable kingdom has not yet come to pass in all its fullness. Still, the glory of the risen Lord and the power of the Holy Spirit among the Church's people offers a new beginning for humankind. New possibilities are always before us because of the rule of Christ in the hearts of believers. This is what we recall in Advent as we give thanks for the coming of Christ, the Savior, in the form of a child born to the Virgin Mary. It came about in Bethlehem, which is the ancestral city of David.

Eternal God, in whose perfect kingdom no sword is drawn but the sword of righteousness, no strength known but the strength of love: So mightily spread abroad your Spirit, that all peoples may be gathered under the banner of the Prince of Peace, as children of one Father; to whom be dominion and glory, now and for ever. *Amen.*

THE REIGN OF GOD

Session 1

The Peaceable Kingdom

For Peace
The Book of Common Prayer, p. 815

TEACHING TIP

Because of the prevalence of the media in our lives, intermediate-age students have grown up knowing about strife and conflict throughout the world. It may be difficult for them to understand how Christians can have a vision of the peaceable kingdom amid this turmoil. Be ready to listen to students' concerns. Talk about the comfort of God's presence in our lives and the hope of the risen Christ.

GATHERING

Prepare a classroom Advent wreath. If a regular circular form is available, place the candles and surround them with greens. A good substitute holder can be made from a styrofoam ring or molding clay. Invite the students to replenish greens each week and tend the candles.

When everyone is present, gather around the wreath as the first candle is lighted. Invite the students to join in choral reading of stanzas 1-2 of "O come, O come, Emmanuel" (*The Hymnal 1982*, 56; *We Sing of God*, 12) found on Poster No. 7 in the Teacher's Packet.

When everyone is present, say:

Let us pray. (Use the prayer "For Peace," above, or a prayer of your own choosing.)

The chosen student lector reads from the class Bible (NRSV):

A Reading from the Book of Isaiah, chapter 11, verses 1 through 10.

A shoot shall come out from the stump of Jesse, and a branch shall grow out of his roots. The spirit of the Lord shall rest on him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and the fear of the Lord. His delight shall be in the fear of the Lord. He shall not judge by what his eyes see, or decide by what his ears hear; but with righteousness he shall judge the poor, and decide with equity for the meek of the earth; he shall strike the earth with the rod of his mouth, and with the breath of his lips he shall kill the wicked. Righteousness shall be the belt around his waist, and faithfulness the belt around his loins. The wolf shall live with the lamb, the leopard shall lie down with the kid, and the calf and the lion and the fatling together, and a little child shall lead them. The cow and the bear shall graze, their young shall lie down together; the lion shall eat straw like the ox. The nursing child shall play over the hole of the asp, and the weaned child shall put its hand on the adder's den. They will not hurt or destroy on all my holy mountain; for the earth will be full of the knowledge of the Lord as the waters cover the sea. On that day the root of Jesse shall stand as a signal to the peoples; the nations shall inquire of him, and his dwelling shall be glorious.

Reader: The Word of the Lord.

Response: Thanks be to God.

INTRODUCING THE STORY *(Time: 10-20 minutes)*

Ask the students to locate *Isaiah 11:1-10* in their Bibles. Be sure everyone has access to a recent version, preferably the RSV or NRSV. Call attention to the way the passage is printed on the page. What is different about verse 10. Note that the translators have made clear which lines in Isaiah are poetry and which are prose.

Display a calendar large enough for all class members to see. Call the students' attention to the weeks of Advent, and explain that the season always begins four Sundays before Christmas Day. Compare the calendar with the Advent wreath made during the Gathering.

Show class members Poster No. 8 of the painting "The Peaceable Kingdom," from the Teacher's Packet. Include information about the painter, Edward Hicks, from page 2 of the student newspaper, *Church Times* (Unit II, Issue 1) Ask: What makes the scene unusual? What was the artist portraying?

In your own words or from the story in the *Church Times*, tell the story about the prophet predicting the coming of a king. Include material from Getting Ready (above). Emphasize the Church's understanding that Jesus Christ fulfilled the vision of peace described by Isaiah. Explain that Advent is a time for quiet reflection about the coming of Jesus.

EXPLORING *(Time: 15-20 minutes)*

Option 1. Talk Radio on Peace

Present a radio talk show on the subject of peace. Choose an announcer to be the "anchor person." If the class is large, select students to be on the "expert" panel. For example, one could represent the military and another a peace organization.

First, identify where conflict is occurring in our community, country, and the world. The announcer can then ask the "radio audience" to "call in" comments on these questions: What would have to happen to produce fairness and peace in these situations? Who could take responsibility for bringing about peace?

The "experts" and anchor person can also ask the audience questions. You may want to tape the "show" to listen to later or to share with another group in the church.

Option 2. Peace Collages

Gather art materials, such as glue, scraps of colored paper and fabric, markers, and crayons. Also, collect a stack of magazine pages containing pictures and headlines featuring people, events, animals, and plant life.

Give the students sheets of heavy white construction paper or tagboard, and pass out a number of the magazine pages. Ask everyone to create a small collage on the theme of peace, including the concept of God as the source of all true peace.

Option 3. Word Puzzle

Turn in the student newspaper, *Church Times*, Unit II, Issue 1, to the word search titled “The Peaceable Kingdom.”

Students may work individually, in pairs, or as a total group.

MUSIC (*Time: 10 minutes*)

Listen to the Advent hymn, “The King shall come when morning dawns” (*The Hymnal 1982*, 73) on the *Children Sing!* tape. This hymn was written in Greek and translated into English.

Read the words aloud together and note the theme of “light” in the different stanzas. Ask: What is the hymn writer's vision? In what ways is it like Isaiah's vision of the peaceable kingdom?

CONNECTING/SPEAKING OUT (*Time: 15-20 minutes*)

Option 1. Group Discussion

Ask the group how many have made family trees as part of a school assignment. Encourage several class members to share interesting information they learned about their families. Ask: Why are family relations important?

Next, ask the students to work in four groups or teams to locate verses in the Gospels that describe Jesus as a descendant of King David (in keeping with Isaiah's vision of the Messiah who was to come). Assign one Gospel to each group:

Matthew 1:1, 9:27

Mark 10:47, 12:35

Luke 2:4; 18:38

John 7:42

Ask: How did the Jewish people feel about David? What did they remember about him? Why would they hope for a Messiah who would be like David?

Using Poster No. 7 from the Gathering, call the students' attention to stanzas 4 and 5 of “O come, O come, Emmanuel” (*The Hymnal 1982*, 56). Jesse was David's father, and Isaiah's vision included the idea of a new beginning from the “tree of Jesse.” “Key of David” is a title for Jesus.

Option 2. Current Events

Encourage the students to reflect on what they are now seeing and hearing in stores and shopping malls. What are the decorations like? What sounds are most prominent?

Ask: Have you seen or heard any reminders of what Advent is about? Remind the group that it is a season of quiet reflection to prepare for celebrating Christ's birth. Why is this theme missing in public places? Can you think of one way you could make Advent more meaningful in your home?

REFLECTING (*Time: 10 minutes*)

For this Unit, set up a “Reflection Center” to enable students to make personal responses to session themes. Supply a box of art materials that may be used for producing colorful drawings or collages. Students who prefer to write can develop their responses as journal entries, poems, or essays. Add

new materials and replenish the supplies as needed for each session's work. (This activity may be done at each session or occasionally during the Unit.)

Provide large envelopes approximately 9 x 12 inches in size for each student. Class members may add their names and decorate the envelopes, which will be used to store items produced during the sessions. Assure the students that the contents are private and may be taken home at the end of the Unit. (Similar envelopes were used for Reflecting activities in Unit I. Students can continue to use those envelopes if they wish.)

Either orally or in writing, offer direction for student responses. Use something like the following:

Look at Poster No. 8 of the picture of The Peaceable Kingdom. Think about people or things in your home or community that seem to always be in conflict. In your mind, picture these people or things living in harmony. Describe in words or a drawing the picture you see. You may even want to make an abstract illustration using colors or other objects.

When you have completed either drawing or writing your responses, compose a brief prayer.

LEARNING SKILLS *(Time: 10-15 minutes)*

Option 1. Class Memory Challenge

For this Unit, Sessions 1-5, challenge the students to memorize and recite *Psalm 121*. It is a song of tenderness, declaring that God gives us care and protection. (See the “Memory Challenge” block in the student newspaper, *Church Times*.)

In this session, work on verses 1-2. Note that the key word is “help.” The first verse asks a question about the source of help, and the second verse answers that it comes from God. Divide the class members into two groups. The first group says verse 1, and the second group responds with verse 2. Repeat, then shift groups and do the verses responsively again. Finally, ask for a recitation in unison.

Option 2. Learning Scripture

Use pieces of construction paper to create a large orange circular sun. Make twenty-two long, pointed yellow rays that can be attached around the circumference of the sun. The rays should be narrow, extending outward several inches. Mount the sun alone on a display board or on sheets of posterboard taped together.

Note that the sun stands as a symbol of the light of Advent, Christmas, and Epiphany—as well as a reminder that the reign of God extends over all creation, just as the sun lightens everything in the world.

As students memorize Scripture during this Unit, invite them to write it on a ray to be attached to the sun (using glue or transparent tape). Each time class members report having learned an assigned verse, they may use a red pencil to add a small asterisk to the appropriate ray. Challenge the class members to learn, before the next session, one or more of the following: *Isaiah 11:6*; *Matthew 5:9*; or *John 14:27*.

See “Learning Scripture” in the student newspaper, *Church Times*.

ONGOING PROJECT *(Time: 5-10 minutes)*

As an ongoing project for Sessions 1-5 of this Unit, invite the class members to create a Jesse tree window, using the patterns from Poster No. 9 in the Teacher's Packet. They may make one large window to be displayed in the church building or individual sections to take home.

Supply the following materials: black construction paper, sheets of semi-transparent copying paper (available from art supply stores), colored permanent markers, scissors, vegetable oil, and sponges.

At this session, describe the finished window and assist the students in making the figure of Jesse for the bottom section of the window. Trace the design onto the copying paper, preferably using a photocopy of the pattern. Fill in the entire window with carefully selected colors. Surround the panel with black strips to represent the leading that surrounds stained glass panes.

On the reverse side of the completed section, apply a very light coating of vegetable oil to create a translucent effect when it is held up to the light or displayed in a large classroom window.

SYMBOL CARD and TREASUREBOOK

Card 10 has a wolf and a lamb pictured together, a verse of Scripture, and an explanation on the back.

Invite the students to explore in the *Cross Year Treasurebook*, Sections 1 and 2, a fuller discussion of the concept of God's reign. How does the authority and rule of God differ from that of human leaders?

GOING FORTH

Gather the group for the dismissal. The teacher or a student will say the following, pausing for the students' response of "Lord, have mercy":

With all our heart and with all our mind, let us pray to the Lord, saying, "Lord, have mercy."

For the peace from above, for the loving kindness of God, and for the salvation of our souls, let us pray to the Lord.

Lord, have mercy.

For the peace of the world, for the welfare of the holy Church of God, and for the unity of all people, let us pray to the Lord.

Lord, have mercy.

For _____ [learners may add their own petitions], let us pray to the Lord.

Lord, have mercy.

From The Prayers of the People
The Book of Common Prayer, pp. 383-384

Teacher: Let us go forth in the name of Christ.

Students: Thanks be to God.

TEACHER'S ASSESSMENT

As you think back over the images and key phrases from this first session for the season of Advent, which ones were of greatest interest to the students? What were their questions and concerns? How well did they seem able to enter into Isaiah's vision of the peaceable kingdom?

LOOKING AHEAD

The next session is on the preaching of John the Baptist, who prepared the way for the ministry of Jesus. He proclaimed a message of repentance as he called upon people to be baptized. In our current day, how would such a message be received? When, in your own life, have you sensed a need for a time of penitence and confession?

FOCUS

The season of Advent announces that the reign of God has come in Jesus Christ. John the Baptist announced that the kingdom was near, and he called on his hearers to repent and turn away from their sins. The students should be able to explain that Advent is a season for self-examination as we prepare for the good news of Christmas.

GETTING READY

In Advent we remember the work of John the Baptist. The tender story of his birth to Elizabeth, cousin of the Virgin Mary, is told only in Luke's Gospel. He was just six months older than Jesus.

In the *Gospel of Matthew*, John simply appears in the wilderness of Judea and assumes his role of preparing the way for the ministry of Jesus (*Matthew 3:1-6*). He declared with fervor that God's reign ("the kingdom of heaven") was fast approaching, and it was time for people to repent (turn around) and prepare themselves in heart and soul to welcome the long-awaited Messiah. This involved confessing their wrongdoing and turning toward humble obedience to God.

Scholars believe that John was influenced by the Essenes, an ascetic Jewish community. His attire emphasized the simplicity of his life. It was not unusual to consume locusts. To this day, they are a nutritious food in the diet of Arabs on the desert.

The Essenes practiced self-baptism repeatedly as a ritual of cleansing from sin. John took a different approach when he himself baptized repentant sinners in the river Jordan.

The Church has long considered Advent to be a "penitential" season—a time of serious inner reflection. Just as in Lent, we pray for forgiveness from sin and prepare spiritually for the good news of Christmas. In this season we recall with gratitude our own baptisms. We reaffirm the promises made in that sacrament.

Intermediate students are quite able to appreciate the good news of the Christian gospel—that God is faithful and just to forgive when we confess the wrongs we have committed.

Almighty God, by whose providence your servant John the Baptist was wonderfully born, and sent to prepare the way of your Son our Savior by preaching repentance: Make us so to follow his teaching and holy life, that we may truly repent according to his preaching; and, following his example, constantly speak the truth, boldly rebuke vice, and patiently suffer for the truth's sake; through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever.
Amen.

The Nativity of Saint John the Baptist
The Book of Common Prayer, p. 241

TEACHING TIP

Even older intermediate-age students are unlikely to remember more than five or six Christmases. In their young lives, they are not yet attuned to the rhythms of the Church Year. And because the period before Christmas Day

THE REIGN OF GOD

Session 2

The Reign of God Is Near

is so filled with the popular frenzy of secular celebrations, a proper understanding of Advent is “counter-cultural.” Only in our Christian liturgical tradition do we encounter the theme of penitence. In teaching, explain gently what makes the Church's services different on these four Sundays.

GATHERING

As the students arrive, prepare the Advent wreath with fresh greens. When all are present, gather around the wreath. Describe the symbolism of the wreath and other information from the article in the student newspaper, *Church Times* (Unit II, Issue 2). Light two candles, and invite the students to join in a choral reading of stanzas 3-4 of “O come, O come, Emmanuel” (*The Hymnal 1982*, 56; *We Sing of God*, 12) found on Poster No. 7 in the Teacher's Packet.

When everyone is present, say:

Let us pray. (Use the Collect “The Nativity of Saint John the Baptist,” above, or a prayer of your own choosing.)

The chosen student lector reads from the class Bible (NRSV):

A Reading from the Gospel of Matthew, chapter 3, verses 1 through 6.

In those days John the Baptist appeared in the wilderness of Judea, proclaiming, “Repent, for the kingdom of heaven has come near.” This is the one of whom the prophet Isaiah spoke when he said, “The voice of one crying out in the wilderness: `Prepare the way of the Lord, make his paths straight.” Now John wore clothing of camel's hair with a leather belt around his waist, and his food was locusts and wild honey. Then the people of Jerusalem and all Judea were going out to him, and all the region along the Jordan, and they were baptized by him in the river Jordan, confessing their sins.

Reader: The Word of the Lord.

Response: Thanks be to God.

INTRODUCING THE STORY (*Time: 10-20 minutes*)

Ask the students to turn in their Bibles to *Matthew 3:1-6*. Notice that John uses words from the prophet Isaiah. Find *Isaiah 40:3* and compare this verse with *Matthew 3:3*.

Draw on the material in Getting Ready (above) and the first article in the student newspaper, *Church Times*, to present in your own words a description of the ministry of John the Baptist. Note that we remember him each year as the one who called for repentance as he prepared the way for Jesus' ministry.

Share the Church's tradition of regarding Advent as a season for penitence as we prepare for the happy announcement of Jesus' birth. Talk about the meaning of repentance using the article on page 3 of the *Church Times*. Emphasize that it means more than being sorry because we get caught doing something wrong. It is wanting to change our behavior so that we will not do it again.

Explain that Advent is a time to think about the things we want to change in our lives. Pass out pencils and index cards to the students. Ask them to write down one thing they have done that has hurt their relationship with God, a family member, or a friend. On the other side, ask them to name one thing they will do to change this behavior.

Invite them to fold the cards and put them in a brown paper bag at the front of the room. Assure them that no one will read them; their words are between them and God. Explain that God forgives us when we admit doing wrong. In a prayer or at the dismissal, thank God for his goodness and express the joy of the good news that we are forgiven.

EXPLORING (*Time: 15-20 minutes*)

Option 1. Role Play

Plan a role play about the work of John the Baptist. Choose a class member to play the part of John, and allow time for the person to prepare a sermon and decide on how to do the baptizing. Divide the other students into two groups:

Group 1 will be a part of the scene with John. They listen approvingly to his message and eagerly seek baptism.

Group 2 will be modern “observers” from this century. As John is engaged in baptizing, they may interrupt and ask him questions. For example, they may ask John: Why do you dress that way? How did you happen to start preaching? Who is this person you're preparing the way for? They may ask crowd members: Why would you listen to this strange person? What made you want to be baptized?

When both groups are clear on their roles, call for action. If interest warrants, replay the scene with different students taking the major roles.

Option 2. Advent Tokens

Ahead of time, prepare a generous supply of circles cut from white posterboard (approximately 1.5 inches in diameter). Gather pens and markers.

Invite the students to create tokens to give out to another class or at coffee hour. The tokens are to be used as reminders of the Advent message. Students can use their imaginations to add symbols or words to the tokens, decorating them in any way that is appropriate. Possible words to include on the tokens: God forgives us, God listens to us, the “real” meaning of Christmas.

Option 3. Word Puzzle

Turn in the student newspaper, *Church Times*, Unit II, Issue 2, to the word puzzle titled “Advent Message.”

Students may work individually, in pairs, or as a total group.

MUSIC (*Time: 10 minutes*)

Listen to “On Jordan's bank the Baptist's cry” (*The Hymnal 1982*, 76) on the *Children Sing!* tape. Read stanza 1 aloud together, pausing to discuss these words: nigh (near), hearken (listen), and tidings (news). Continue reading, and invite the students to ask about any other expressions that may

not be familiar.

Which lines in the hymn reflect the story of John the Baptist in Matthew's Gospel? What are the images added by the hymn writer?

CONNECTING/SPEAKING OUT *(Time: 15-20 minutes)*

Option 1. Group Discussion

Invite the students to engage in a fact-finding mission concerning John the Baptist, using the New Testament as their source. Assign to each of four groups a chapter from a Gospel, as follows: Group 1, *Matthew*, chapter 3; Group 2, *Mark*, chapter 1; Group 3, *Luke*, chapter 3; Group 4, *John*, chapter 1.

Give each group a sheet of newsprint and a marker. Ask the groups to make lists of statements about John from their chapters. (It may be useful to suggest that they look for what, when, and where kinds of statements.) Students serving as recorders may abbreviate the group's findings.

When all are finished, display the sheets side by side and talk about the findings as a group. Which Gospels share the same information? Which Gospels include a statement not found in the others?

Option 2. Current Events

Set out the front sections of newspapers from the previous week. Invite the students to imagine that John the Baptist is visiting us where we live and worship. Use the newspapers as reminders of events that occurred in the community and the world. Ask: If John read this week's newspapers and heard the television news, what might he say? How do you think people would respond to his message?

Wonder aloud: What do you think John would say or do if he visited your school? your playground? our church? this class? Would his message be different from his preaching in Judea long ago? Why, or why not?

REFLECTING *(Time: 10 minutes)*

Hand out the students' reflection envelopes and set up the Reflection Center, as described in Session 1. Check the art supplies. Do they include colors and textures that would be appropriate for portraying John the Baptist?

Either orally or in writing, offer direction for the students' responses. For this session, use something like the following:

Imagine you could enter a time machine and suddenly be living in the time of John the Baptist and Jesus. A friend has invited you to come to an open space down near the bank of the river Jordan, where you can listen to John's preaching. You have never seen this man before, but you have heard about the unusual clothes he wears and his strange diet.

John begins to speak in a loud, clear voice. You are caught up in his message. When he finishes, you turn to your friend and ask, "Should we go into the water to be baptized by John?"

Use the art materials to express your reflections about this scene, or write about it.

When you have finished, you may write a brief prayer.

Ask the students to place their completed work in the reflection

envelopes, and store them with care.

LEARNING SKILLS *(Time: 10-15 minutes)*

Option 1. Class Memory Challenge

Invite the class members to continue the task of memorizing *Psalm 121*, as introduced in Session 1. In unison, recite verses 1-2 one or more times.

Work together on verses 3-4. Notice that the word “slumber” is used in both verses. God can be depended on not to go asleep and forget us. Again, divide the students into two groups, and ask them to repeat the verses in an echo pattern, reversing the order to assure that everyone has mastered both. Finally, recite all of verses 1-4 in unison.

Refer as needed to the “Memory Challenge” block in the student newspaper, *Church Times*.

Option 2. Learning Scripture

Allow time for students to attach rays to the paper sun for verses they memorized, as described in Session 1. Write the verses on the rays, and ask students to add red asterisks on the rays containing the verses they have learned.

Suggest that students learn, before the next session, either *Matthew 3:2* or *Matthew 3:4*. See “Learning Scripture” in the student newspaper, *Church Times*.

ONGOING PROJECT *(Time: 5-10 minutes)*

Continue working on the Jesse tree window as described in Session 1. Use Poster No. 9 in the Teacher's Packet to find the pattern for the drawings labeled “David.” When completed, it will be attached directly above Jesse.

SYMBOL CARD and TREASUREBOOK

Card 11 shows the shield of St. John the Baptist, along with a verse of Scripture, and an explanation on the back.

Invite the students to explore in the *Cross Year Treasurebook*, Part II, Section 3, the background material on the Nativity stories of the Gospels. Can you think of a person today who reminds you of John the Baptist?

GOING FORTH

Gather the group for the dismissal. The teacher or a student will say the following, pausing for the students' response of “Lord, have mercy”:

With all our heart and with all our mind, let us pray to the Lord, saying, “Lord, have mercy.”

For the peace from above, for the loving kindness of God, and for the salvation of our souls, let us pray to the Lord.

Lord, have mercy.

For the peace of the world, for the welfare of the holy Church of God, and for the unity of all people, let us pray to the Lord.

Lord, have mercy.

For _____ [learners may add their own petitions], let us pray to the Lord.

Lord, have mercy.

From The Prayers of the People

The Book of Common Prayer, pp. 383-384

Teacher: Let us go forth in the name of Christ.

Students: Thanks be to God.

TEACHER'S ASSESSMENT

Consider the students' general reactions to the themes of this session, especially John's message of repentance and the element of penitence in Advent. What evidence did you gather that the young persons grasped the significance of these concepts? How did they respond to the various activities? Which aspect of the session seemed most relevant to their lives?

LOOKING AHEAD

The next session is devoted to Joseph's dream about the birth of Jesus to the Virgin Mary. Read the story from Matthew's Gospel daily for several days in succession. Consider your own feelings about messages received in dreams. How important are they? What do you believe about angels?

THE REIGN OF GOD

Session 3

Joseph's Dream

FOCUS

Joseph was visited by an angel of the Lord in a dream. The angel gave him the news that Mary would bear a son who was to be called “Jesus,” meaning “God will save.” The students should be able to tell the story of Joseph's dream and explain its significance.

GETTING READY

The first Gospel tells the story of Jesus' birth very briefly, and Joseph is the key figure. (See *Matthew 1:18-25*.)

A descendant of David, Joseph was a righteous man. He and Mary were engaged to be married, but they had not been together sexually. He heard the distressing news that she was pregnant. According to Jewish law, such a situation could result in a sentence of death for the woman. Joseph determined not to disgrace Mary in public; he would arrange for a quiet dissolution of the engagement.

But Joseph received a revelation from God that directed him to receive Mary as his wife. An angel appeared to him in a dream and explained that the child she had conceived was from the Holy Spirit. The son of Mary would be called Jesus, for he would save people from their sins. Jesus is the Greek version of the Hebrew name “Joshua,” which means “God will save.”

This account of decisive news from God communicated in a dream is the first of six such instances reported in Matthew.

The Gospel writer is passing along the Christian tradition as he had received it. He was eager to relate the life and work of Jesus Christ to the prophetic writings of the Hebrew Scriptures. Notice the words, “All this took place to fulfill what had been spoken by the Lord through the prophet” (verse 22). He then cites *Isaiah 7:14b*: “Look, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and they shall name him Emmanuel.” Emmanuel is Hebrew for “God with us.” This formula, linking Jesus' story with the prophets, appears nine different times in Matthew.

Through the centuries, Christians have struggled with the concept of the Virgin Birth. Some scholars argue against the literal truth of it, but the Church has always understood it as a sign of the unique character and role of Jesus. From his conception he was destined to be God's saving Word to humankind. And so we confess in the Creeds that we believe he was born of the Virgin Mary.

O God, who from the family of your servant David raised up Joseph to be the guardian of your incarnate Son and the spouse of his virgin mother: Give us grace to imitate his uprightness of life and his obedience to your commands; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. *Amen.*

Saint Joseph

The Book of Common Prayer, p. 239

TEACHING TIP

Joseph is sometimes a shadowy, almost forgotten figure. Paintings of the Madonna and Child frequently omit him. This session provides an opportunity to flesh out his personality through the exercise of our

imaginings. In teaching intermediate-age students about the Nativity, carve out moments for the students to explore simple questions: What was it like to live in first-century Palestine? What would a carpenter's day include? What thoughts would Joseph have had as he planned a home for Mary? What would they talk about together?

GATHERING

As the students arrive, place fresh greens around the Advent wreath. When everyone is present, light three candles and invite the students to join in a choral reading, using Poster No. 7 in the Teacher's Packet with "O come, O come, Emmanuel" (*The Hymnal 1982*, 56; *We Sing of God*, 12), stanzas 5-6.

When everyone is present, the teacher says:

Let us pray. (Use the Collect "Saint Joseph," above, or a prayer of your own choosing.)

The chosen student lector reads from the class Bible (NRSV):

A Reading from the Gospel of Matthew, chapter 1, verses 18 through 25.

Now the birth of Jesus the Messiah took place in this way. When his mother Mary had been engaged to Joseph, but before they lived together, she was found to be with child from the Holy Spirit. Her husband Joseph, being a righteous man and unwilling to expose her to public disgrace, planned to dismiss her quietly. But just when he had resolved to do this, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream and said, "Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary as your wife, for the child conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. She will bear a son, and you are to name him Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins." All this took place to fulfill what had been spoken by the Lord through the prophet: "Look, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and they shall name him Emmanuel," which means, "God is with us." When Joseph awoke from his sleep, he did as the angel of the Lord commanded him; he took her as his wife, but had no marital relations with her until she had borne a son; and he named him Jesus.

Reader: The Word of the Lord.

Response: Thanks be to God.

INTRODUCING THE STORY (*Time: 10-20 minutes*)

Ask the students to find *Matthew 1:18-25* in their Bibles. Point out the reference to "the prophet," in verse 22, then invite the group to compare verse 23 with *Isaiah 7:14b*. Note that Matthew frequently quotes Hebrew prophets to support his story of Jesus' life and work.

Ask the students to pretend they are in a place where there is no Bible. Sharing the story of Jesus' birth depends on their memories and their own way of telling it. How would they begin? What would be the scenes they would include? Who would be in their stories?

As students make contributions, list them on a chalkboard or newsprint. Urge the group to agree quickly on the details and the order for describing the Nativity. Ask: To check our memories, where would we turn in the New

Testament?

Explain that only the *Gospel of Luke* provides the familiar story of the night in Bethlehem—the overcrowded inn, the birth in a stable, and the appearance of the angels and shepherds. The *Gospel of Mark* says nothing about Jesus' birth, and the *Gospel of John* speaks of it in a very different way, as we shall discover at the next session.

Relate more fully the story about Joseph's dream using information from the Getting Ready (above) and the student newspaper, *Church Times* (Unit II, Issue 3). Include a description of Hebrew marriage customs during biblical times from page 2 of *Church Times*. The *Gospel of Matthew* focuses on the story of Joseph and Mary, with no details about the birth itself.

EXPLORING (Time: 15-20 minutes)

Option 1. Dreams

Play “I Have a Dream,” based on the game of Charades. God uses dreams throughout the Bible to reveal important messages to people (see page 2 of *Church Times*).

On separate cards, describe different dreams found in the Bible. For example: Joseph interprets the Pharaoh's dream (*Genesis 41:25-28*); Daniel describes the king's dream (*Daniel 2:31-35*); Joseph is warned to flee Bethlehem (*Matthew 2:13-15*); Joseph learns his family can return to Nazareth (*Matthew 2:19-20*); Pilate's wife dreams of Jesus (*Matthew 27:17-19*).

Divide into pairs or groups and give each a dream and a Bible. Ask groups to read the passage and find one or more parts to act out, as in Charades, before the entire group. See if students can guess the dream and the dreamer.

Option 2. Angel Greetings

Provide supplies for the students to make greeting cards, using the simple angel pattern provided on Poster No. 9 in the Teacher's Packet. Gather white and pale blue construction paper for the card itself, bright yellow paper or gold foil for cutting out the angels, glue, and markers.

Fold a piece of paper in half for each card. Cut out an angel, and glue it to the cover. Inside, print an appropriate holiday message.

Option 3. Word Puzzle

Turn in the student newspaper, *Church Times*, Unit II, Issue 3, to the crossword puzzle titled “Joseph's Dream.” Students may work individually, in pairs, or as a total group.

MUSIC (Time: 10 minutes)

Using the *Children Sing!* tape, sing again the Advent hymn introduced in Session 1, “The King shall come when morning dawns” (*The Hymnal 1982*, 73). Suggest that the class members focus their thoughts on Christmas Day, soon to come. Let the hymn be a prayer of anticipation for the good news of Christ's birth.

CONNECTING/SPEAKING OUT *(Time: 15-20 minutes)*

Option 1. Group Discussion

Provide concordances of the New Testament, or make photocopies of the entry for Joseph, husband of Mary. Ask: Which Gospel does not mention Joseph at all?

Divide the group into three teams to investigate all references to Joseph in the Gospels of *Matthew*, *Luke*, and *John*. Encourage the teams to look up the citations in their Bibles and record briefly any bit of information they discover.

Ask an investigator from each group to report the findings. List everything the Bible tells us about Joseph on chalkboard or a piece of newsprint, noting the Gospel where the information appears.

Ask: Which Gospel gives the fullest picture of the husband of Mary? What is left to our imagination?

Option 2. Current Events

Talk with the students about the active presence of God in the events of our daily lives. Joseph knew God's presence when an angel spoke to him in a dream. Earlier, Mary had that same experience of an angel's visit.

Relate a time when you have felt God's presence in your life. Ask the students to think about times that they have sensed that God was with them. For example: at the death of a grandparent or a favorite pet; a time when they were afraid; or a joyful experience. Invite learners to share their experiences if they feel comfortable doing so.

REFLECTING *(Time: 10 minutes)*

Hand out the students' reflection envelopes, and set up the Reflection Center, as described in Session 1.

Offer directions for the students' responses. For this session, use the following:

Classical artists often depicted Joseph as an older man with gray hair. What does he look like in your mind? Imagine that you lived in Nazareth at the same time as Joseph. Walk down the dusty streets to his carpenter shop where you find him working. The time is the morning after his dream in which he is told to take Mary as his wife.

What is he doing? Is he making something out of wood? Does he tell you about his dream? How does he describe the angel from his dream? Is Joseph happy, sad, or puzzled?

When you have completed either drawing or writing your reflections, write a brief prayer.

Store the envelopes for safekeeping.

LEARNING SKILLS *(Time: 10-15 minutes)*

Option 1. Class Memory Challenge

Encourage the students to continue memorizing *Psalm 121* as introduced in Session 1. In unison, recite verses 1-4 one or more times.

Work together on verses 5-6. Point out “shade” in verse 5, which may be

linked with “sun” and “moon” in verse 6. Gather in alternating groups to practice saying both verses back and forth, then recite all of verses 1-6 in unison. Refer to the “Memory Challenge” block in the student newspaper, *Church Times*.

Option 2. Learning Scripture

Ask students who have learned verses since the previous session to write them on rays for the paper sun, as described in Session 1. Individuals may add red asterisks for any verses they have memorized.

For the next session, suggest that the students learn *Matthew 1:20b* or *Matthew 1:21*. See “Learning Scripture” in the student newspaper, *Church Times*.

ONGOING PROJECT (*Time: 5-10 minutes*)

Encourage the students to proceed with the third and fourth sections of the Jesse tree window project, as described in Session 1. Use the Teacher's Packet patterns for making the figure of Solomon, David's son. When finished, the Solomon section is to be attached just above David.

SYMBOL CARD and TREASUREBOOK

Card 12 shows the shield of Saint Joseph, along with a verse of scripture, and an explanation on the back.

Invite the students to read Part II, Section 3, of the *Cross Year Treasurebook*, for more information about the intent of the Gospels. Think about Joseph and how he felt during this exciting time.

GOING FORTH

Gather the group for the dismissal. The teacher or a student will say the following, pausing for the students' response of “Lord, have mercy”:

With all our heart and with all our mind, let us pray to the Lord, saying, “Lord, have mercy.”

For the peace from above, for the loving kindness of God, and for the salvation of our souls, let us pray to the Lord.

Lord, have mercy.

For the peace of the world, for the welfare of the holy Church of God, and for the unity of all people, let us pray to the Lord.

Lord, have mercy.

For _____ [learners may add their own petitions], let us pray to the Lord.

Lord, have mercy.

From The Prayers of the People
The Book of Common Prayer, pp. 383-384

Teacher: Let us go forth in the name of Christ.
Students: Thanks be to God.

TEACHER'S ASSESSMENT

What evidence did you glean that the students are able to enter into the Gospel narratives with fresh imagination? Have they formed fixed ways of telling the Nativity story? Or do they seem open to sharing new insights about it? Can they relate Joseph's dream and describe how it fits in the Nativity story?

LOOKING AHEAD

The next session is about the good news of the incarnation of God in Christ, as introduced in the *Gospel of John*. Read over the first chapter of that Gospel repeatedly. What is the source of spiritual light? When have you experienced it in your own life?

THE REIGN OF GOD

Session 4

The Word Became Flesh

FOCUS

The opening verses of the *Gospel of John* refer to the birth of Jesus of Nazareth as the appearance of the “Word of God” in human flesh. He came to be a “light” to the world. This lesson is read at Christmas along with the Nativity stories from *Matthew* and *Luke*. The students should be able to identify the passage as an account of Jesus' birth and explain that Jesus was God's Word to humankind.

GETTING READY

The Christmas Eve liturgy in some Episcopal congregations includes the reading of a second Gospel lesson—*John 1:1-14*. If not read at that time, it is likely to be used at another service on Christmas Day. In a very different way, this passage tells of the Nativity.

The opening verses contain words that parallel the first lines of the *Book of Genesis*: God makes a “beginning,” bringing forth “light” to dispel “darkness.”

The writer introduces the concept that Jesus Christ, as “the Word of God,” existed before all things. He was present in the Godhead at the time of the Creation. In the fullness of time, as a supreme gift from God, “the Word became flesh and lived among us, and we have seen his glory, the glory as of a father's only son, full of grace and truth” (verse 14). The birth of Jesus Christ is a creative act of God, culminating all that God had done in the original Creation.

In *Genesis*, chapter 1, God created by speaking. Note the repeated words, “And God said,” followed by each day's “making.” In *John*, chapter 1, the final word God spoke was revealed in flesh and blood—Jesus of Nazareth, the One of whom John the Baptist said, “He who comes after me ranks ahead of me because he was before me” (verse 15b).

Intermediate-age students are ready to hear this more abstract version of Jesus' birth. They can begin to appreciate John's glorious declaration concerning God's breaking through into the world's history, just as the light of Christmas morning overcomes the darkness of Christmas Eve (symbolized in the lighted candles of this happy season).

O God, you make us glad by the yearly festival of the birth of your only Son Jesus Christ: Grant that we, who joyfully receive him as our Redeemer, may with sure confidence behold him when he comes to be our Judge; who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. *Amen.*

The Nativity of Our Lord: Christmas Day

The Book of Common Prayer, p. 212

TEACHING TIP

When introducing more abstract terms to intermediates, it is important to choose teaching activities that include concrete images. In this session on the Word of God that became incarnate at Christmas, it is likely the students will not be wholly familiar with the concepts of Jesus as “the Word” and “incarnation.” To help them appreciate the unique announcement of the Nativity in John's Gospel, focus especially on the more tangible theme of

light overcoming darkness.

GATHERING

As the students arrive, replenish the greens on the Advent wreath and prepare to gather around it. When everyone is present, light four candles. Invite the students to join in a choral reading from Poster No. 7 in the Teacher's Packet, "O come, O come, Emmanuel" (*The Hymnal 1982*, 56; *We Sing of God*, 12). Include all the stanzas.

When everyone is present, the teacher says:

Let us pray. (Use the Collect "The Nativity of Our Lord: Christmas Day," above, or a prayer of your own choosing.)

The chosen student lector reads from the class Bible (NRSV):

A Reading from the Gospel of John, chapter 1, verses 1 through 14.

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things came into being through him, and without him not one thing came into being. What has come into being in him was life, and the life was the light of all people. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it. There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. He came as a witness to testify to the light, so that all might believe through him. He himself was not the light, but he came to testify to the light. The true light, which enlightens everyone, was coming into the world. He was in the world, and the world came into being through him; yet the world did not know him. He came to what was his own, and his own people did not accept him. But to all who received him, who believed in his name, he gave power to become children of God, who were born, not of blood or of the will of the flesh or of the will of man, but of God. And the Word became flesh and lived among us, and we have seen his glory, the glory as of a father's only son, full of grace and truth.

Reader: The Word of the Lord.

Response: Thanks be to God.

INTRODUCING THE STORY (*Time: 10-20 minutes*)

Display Poster No. 10 of the Nativity from the Teacher's Packet. Invite the students to make observations about the scene. Which details appeal to them? What would they like to know about the artist? What would they like to ask the artist?

Using the article from the student newspaper, *Church Times* (Unit II, Issue 4), tell the story of the nativity and the naming of Jesus. Contrast this familiar story with the passage from *John*. Nothing is said about his childhood. Instead, he is called "the Word of God" that came to bring light and life to humankind.

Ask the students to turn in their Bibles to *Genesis 1:1* and read it aloud in unison. Then direct them to locate *John 1:1* and do the same. Ask: What is different in the second reading? What is meant by "the Word"?

Encourage the group to think about the importance of words and speech.

As human begins, we have received from God the ability to express ourselves in language. Ask: How does God speak? What does God say at Christmas?

Emphasize the theme from Getting Ready (above). God creates by speaking. The life and ministry of God's Son, Jesus Christ, is the Word of God spoken to all people. That is why we ready *John 1:1-14* at Christmas.

EXPLORING (Time: 15-20 minutes)

Option 1. Sharing the Light

Obtain a large white candle in a holder, and gather enough small candles and paper protectors to provide one for each student and for the teacher(s).

Darken the room if possible. Invite everyone to gather in a circle, standing or seated. Light the large candle and place it in the center of the group.

Tell the group that in the season of Christmas, we give thanks for the good news that Jesus Christ is the light of the world. His birth was like light coming into darkness. Jesus expects us, as Christians, to continue to bring light into the world.

Invite the students, one by one to light their candles from the one in the center. As they light their candles, each should say one thing he or she could do to bring Christ's light into the world in the coming week. For example, calling or writing an older person who is housebound, taking care of a younger sibling without being told, forgiving a friend who has hurt your feelings.

When all are lighted, stand in silence. Conclude with the second Collect for the Nativity from *The Book of Common Prayer*, page 212.

Option 2. Bethlehem Silhouettes

Gather the following: A photocopy of the pattern for a silhouette of the town of Bethlehem on Poster No. 9 in the Teacher's Packet; sheets of deep blue and pieces of black and gold construction paper; scissors and glue.

Invite the class members to make individual silhouettes. Use the deep blue as the background, to represent the darkness of night. From the pattern, cut a black silhouette of the town and a gold star. Glue the town and star to the background to form a scene of light in the Palestinian sky.

Option 3. Word Puzzle

Turn in the student newspaper, *Church Times*, Unit II, Issue 4, to the puzzle titled "The Birth of Jesus." Students may work individually, in pairs, or as a total group.

MUSIC (Time: 10 minutes)

Listen on the *Children Sing!* tape or read "While shepherds watched their flocks by night" (*The Hymnal 1982*, 94, 95). Ask: In the third stanza, what is meant by "David's town"? Recall that he came from Bethlehem.

Also look at the less familiar hymn, "In the bleak midwinter" (*The Hymnal 1982*, 112). Call the students' attention to the last line of the second stanza, "the Lord God incarnate, Jesus Christ." How is this expression related to *John*, chapter 1?

Invite the group to join in singing either or both of the hymns.

CONNECTING/SPEAKING OUT *(Time: 15-20 minutes)*

Option 1. Group Discussion

Ask the students to look at the Nicene Creed in *The Book of Common Prayer*, page 358. Read together the first thirteen lines of the section describing Jesus Christ (from “We believe in one Lord, . . .” through “. . . was made man”). Ask: How does this description compare with *John 1:1-3* and *1:10-14*? Call attention to the words “Light from Light.”

Ask: What does the word “incarnate” mean? Invite the students to speculate about its meaning. Explain that it means “becoming flesh and blood” (a body). In John's Gospel, the good news of Christmas is described as God's Word becoming flesh.

Talk with the group about the pictures we can hold in our minds as we say the words of the Creed. When we confess our faith in Jesus Christ, we can see the scene of his birth and also remember the good news from John's Gospel.

Option 2. Current Events

Encourage the class members to reflect on your congregation's services at Christmas. When are they held? How will the church's appearance show that this is a Principal Feast? What will be different from other times?

In particular, talk about the presence of candles and other form of light as symbols of Jesus Christ. Does your church use more candles during Christmas services? Do you use candles in your decorations at home? Have you thought about candles being a symbol of the light of Christ? Is there a new way you could suggest candles be used in your home to illustrate this idea?

REFLECTING *(Time: 10 minutes)*

Give out the reflection envelopes, and arrange the Reflection Center as described in Session 1. Replenish the art supplies, if necessary.

Share the following, to encourage responses from the students:

Imagine you are entertaining a visitor who has never heard about Christmas and all that it means. It is up to you to answer this person's questions. The visitor asks, “Why do you have all these candles placed in your house these days? What do the lights on the tree mean?”

You think for a while, and then you remember that Jesus is called “the light of the world.” So what will you say to your visitor about the lights of Christmas and the birth of the Christ Child? How has he brought light to your own life?

When you have completed either drawing or writing your reflections, write a brief prayer.

Place the completed work in the envelopes for safekeeping.

LEARNING SKILLS *(Time: 10-15 minutes)*

Option 1. Class Memory Challenge

Assist the students in completing the task of learning *Psalm 121*. Refer to the “Memory Challenge” block in the student newspaper, *Church Times*.

Repeat verses 7 and 8 several times, in unison. Note that these verses are linked by the verb “keep,” which appears three times. Say together the entire psalm.

Option 2. Learning Scripture

Write new verses students learned on rays for the paper sun, as suggested in Session 1. Individuals may add red asterisks for verses they have learned.

For the next session, suggest the students commit to memory one or more of the following: *John 1:1*; *John 1:5*; *John 12:36*. See “Learning Scripture” in the student newspaper, *Church Times*.

ONGOING PROJECT (Time: 5-10 minutes)

Continue the Jesse tree window project as described in Session 1. At this session, use the patterns from Poster No. 9 in the Teacher's Packet to create the sections for both Joseph and Mary.

When the sections are completed, attach Joseph above Solomon, and Mary above Joseph.

SYMBOL CARD and TREASUREBOOK

Card 13 illustrates the symbol IHS, along with a verse of Scripture, and an explanation on the back.

Invite the students to explore in the *Cross Year Treasurebook*, Part II, Section 4, to look for information about the *Gospel of John*. What makes this Gospel different from the others?

GOING FORTH

Gather the group for the dismissal. The teacher or a student will say the following, pausing for the students' response of “Lord, have mercy”:

With all our heart and with all our mind, let us pray to the Lord, saying, “Lord, have mercy.”

For the peace from above, for the loving kindness of God, and for the salvation of our souls, let us pray to the Lord.

Lord, have mercy.

For the peace of the world, for the welfare of the holy Church of God, and for the unity of all people, let us pray to the Lord.

Lord, have mercy.

For _____ [learners may add their own petitions], let us pray to the Lord.

Lord, have mercy.

From The Prayers of the People

The Book of Common Prayer, pp. 383-384

Teacher: Let us go forth in the name of Christ.

Students: Thanks be to God.

TEACHER'S ASSESSMENT

This session includes abstract concepts of God incarnate and a Word coming from God. It also presents the concrete images of light and darkness, John and Jesus, and the people of the world. Which of the chosen activities and discussions seemed most appropriate for the students? How well were they able to relate John's words to the familiar story from *Luke*?

LOOKING AHEAD

The next session is about the recognition of the Christ Child by Simeon and Anna. Read *Luke 2:22-40* several times. Are you familiar with “the Song of Simeon (*Nunc dimittis*)” as it appears in *The Book of Common Prayer*, page 93? If so, when did you first hear it? How does it speak to you now?

FOCUS

Joseph and Mary took the baby Jesus to the temple in Jerusalem to present him to the Lord. While they were there, a good man named Simeon and an old widow named Anna recognized that Jesus had been born to bring salvation to the people. The students should be able to tell this story in their own words and to name Simeon's prayer as "The Song of Simeon (*Nunc dimittis*)," which is used in Christian worship.

GETTING READY

According to the ancient Hebrew law spelled out in *Leviticus*, chapter 12, the birth of a child was to be followed by a religious rite in which the mother brought an animal offering to a priest in order to receive assurance of atonement for sin. If she could not afford to offer a sheep, she was permitted to bring two turtledoves or two pigeons.

In *Luke 2:22-40*, we have the story of Jesus' presentation in the temple by both Mary and Joseph, in observance of their Jewish tradition. They brought an offering of birds rather than a sheep.

The event was marked by extraordinary encounters with two older worshipers who saw the child Jesus and praised God. Simeon took the baby in his arms and spoke the words in verses 29-32, known as the *Nunc dimittis* (Latin for "Now let us depart"). He declared Jesus to be the one through whom God would bring salvation to all people, both in Israel and in the Gentile world. He also told Mary that her son would face opposition in his mission. She, too, could expect to suffer heartbreak.

Anna, an 84-year-old widow, known as a prophet in her own right, also declared that the child would be the source of redemption.

By the fourth century in Jerusalem, the Presentation of Christ in the Temple had become a feast of the Church, observed on February 14—forty days after the Epiphany. Later, when the Christians of the East accepted December 25 as the date for Christmas, this observance was moved to February 2. In the West, in the seventh century, the bishop (pope) of Rome introduced a procession with candles and the singing of the *Nunc dimittis*. Many Episcopal congregations now observe the day with special services.

The *Nunc dimittis*, also called "The Song of Simeon," appears in *The Book of Common Prayer* as Cantic 17 (p. 93), for use in Morning Prayer. It is the second Cantic for Evening Prayer (pp. 66 and 120), and it is incorporated into the prayers of Compline (p. 135).

Lord, you now have set your servant free
to go in peace as you have promised;
For these eyes of mine have seen the Savior,
whom you have prepared for all the world to see:
A light to enlighten the nations,
and the glory of your people Israel.
Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit:
as it was in the beginning, is now, and will be for ever. *Amen.*
The Song of Simeon (*Nunc dimittis*)
The Book of Common Prayer, p. 93

THE REIGN OF GOD

Session 5

**Simeon and Anna Recognize
Jesus**

TEACHING TIP

The story of the temple visit with the baby Jesus might remind students of baptism in their own church. Draw on their experiences of baptism to help them picture this event. Be ready to contrast the similarities and differences of the Hebrew rites of presentation and Christian baptism.

GATHERING

As the students arrive, invite them to reflect on the Advent wreath. Its candles may be burned low by now. The seasons of Advent and Christmas have been observed. When everyone is present, gather around a Christ Candle and light it. (This may be the fifth candle of the wreath, or you may need to provide a large white candle for this session.)

Invite the class members to say or sing together the words of the familiar first stanza of “We three kings of Orient are” (*The Hymnal 1982*, 128; *We Sing of God*, 27).

When everyone is present, the teacher says:

Let us pray. (Use the “The Song of Simeon, (*Nunc dimittis*),” above, or a prayer of your own choosing.)

The chosen student lector reads from the class Bible (NRSV):

A Reading from the Gospel of Luke, chapter 2, verses 25 through 38.

Now there was a man in Jerusalem whose name was Simeon; this man was righteous and devout, looking forward to the consolation of Israel, and the Holy Spirit rested on him. It had been revealed to him by the Holy Spirit that he would not see death before he had seen the Lord's Messiah. Guided by the Spirit, Simeon came into the temple; and when the parents brought in the child Jesus, to do for him what was customary under the law, Simeon took him in his arms and praised God saying, “Master, now you are dismissing your servant in peace, according to your word; for mine eyes have seen your salvation, which you have prepared in the presence of all peoples, a light for the revelation to the Gentiles and for the glory of your people Israel.”

And the child's father and mother were amazed at what was being said about him. Then Simeon blessed them and said to his mother Mary, “This child is destined for the falling and rising of many in Israel, and to be a sign that will be opposed so that the inner thoughts of many will be revealed—and a sword will pierce your own soul too.”

There was also a prophet, Anna the daughter of Phanuel, of the tribe of Asher. She was of great age, having lived with her husband seven years after her marriage, then as a widow to the age of 84. She never left the temple but worshiped there with fasting and prayer night and day. At that moment she came, and began to praise God and to speak about the child to all who were looking for the redemption of Jerusalem.

Reader: The Word of the Lord.

Response: Thanks be to God.

INTRODUCING THE STORY (Time: 10-20 minutes)

Invite the students to reflect on the Christmas and Epiphany seasons. What will they remember best about this year's celebrations? What could the church or their families do differently next year?

Invite the students to locate *Luke 2:25-38* in their Bibles and glance through the story to find the account of Mary and Joseph's encounter with Simeon and Anna in the temple. Read aloud together Simeon's proclamation in verse 30. Then ask the students to find *Isaiah 52:10* to discover the source of Simeon's reference to "salvation" from God.

Together, look at Poster No. 11 of classical art from the Teacher's Packet that shows the presentation of the child Jesus in the temple by Joseph and Mary. Using the article in the student newspaper, *Church Times* (Unit II, Issue V), tell in your own words the story of that event, including the encounters with Simeon and Anna.

Note that the story identifies Jesus as the long-awaited Messiah and Savior. The aging Simeon and Anna recognized the baby as the one who would fulfill this role for the people of God. In the life and work of Jesus, the reign of God would be made known to the whole world.

You may also want to include information about the feast known as Candlemas from Getting Ready (above) and page 2 of *Church Times*.

EXPLORING (Time: 15-20 minutes)

Option 1. Role Play

Enlist the students in role-playing the temple scene as described in *Luke 2:22-40*. Ask for volunteers to play Mary, Joseph, a priest, Simeon, and Anna. Others can be temple worshipers and reporters. Provide a few simple head scarfs and robes. Obtain a doll to represent the baby Jesus and devise something to represent the two birds (stuffed crepe paper, puppets, or pictures).

Decide on the temple layout, and outline the speaking parts. Ask everyone to get into their roles, and let the action begin.

When the role play has ended, give the reporters a chance to interview the characters and the observers. They might ask: How did it feel to be in the temple for this special occasion? What was the most impressive thing you heard? How did Mary and Joseph feel? What will they tell Jesus when he gets older about this experience?

Option 2. Wheel of Seasons

For each student, make a photocopy of the Wheel of Seasons pattern provided on Poster No. 9 in the Teacher's Packet, using durable white paper. Provide sheets of construction paper in a neutral color, scissors, glue, and blue, purple, red, and green markers or crayons.

Class members may decorate the wheel and add the appropriate colors. When finished, the wheels may be cut out and glued to the background sheets.

Make an arrow out of construction paper and attach it to the center of the wheel with a brad. As the group works, discuss the rapid movement through Advent, Christmas, and Epiphany. Ask: Where are we in this year's calendar? Where does the Feast of the Presentation occur on the wheel?

Point the arrow to the season for this Sunday.

Option 3. Word Puzzle

Turn in the student newspaper, *Church Times*, Unit II, Issue 5, to the puzzle titled “The Presentation.” Students may work individually, in pairs, or as a total group.

MUSIC (*Time: 10 minutes*)

On the *Children Sing!* tape play “Lord God, you now have set your servant free” (*The Hymnal 1982*, 499). This is a recent paraphrase of “The Song of Simeon.” Compare the text of the hymn with the words from Simeon in *Luke 2:29-32*. Notice especially the hymn's final lines contrasting night and light.

CONNECTING/SPEAKING OUT (*Time: 15-20 minutes*)

Option 1. Group Discussion

The theme of God's “light” appears often in both Hebrew Scripture and the New Testament. Simeon's prayer in the temple speaks of Christ's coming as “a light for revelation to the Gentiles and for glory to your people Israel” (*Luke 2:32*). This passage is similar to many passages in the writings of the *Book of Isaiah*. Form teams to look up and report on these examples: *Isaiah 2:5*; *Isaiah 9:2*; *Isaiah 42:6*; *Isaiah 58:8*; *Isaiah 60:3*.

Explain that “Gentiles” refers to non-Hebrew nations and peoples. The Jewish people expected that the long-awaited Messiah would be recognized by the whole world. That expectation is reflected in the Gospels.

Ask: In what ways do Christians bring light into our world? Into our community? Into each of our lives? What are some forms of darkness in the world that can be overcome by the good news of Christ?

Option 2. Current Events

Talk with the students about the various forms of light used in the Church. What do they stand for? What part do they play in our worship? In your congregation, who is responsible for providing and caring for the candles and candlesticks?

You may be able to enlist the help of a member of the altar guild or a clergy person to lead a discussion about altar lights, lights used in processions, and the annual lighting of the Pascal Candle.

If your church plans a celebration of Candlemas on February 2, review what will happen in the service.

REFLECTING (*Time: 10 minutes*)

Distribute the reflection envelopes, and set up the Reflection Center as described in Session 1.

Direct the students to enter into the following imaginative scene:

You are living at the time of Jesus' birth and infancy. You are visiting the temple when a young mother and her husband enter holding a baby.

They bring the baby to a priest, and you listen to the ritual as they present their offering of birds. A little while later, you overhear the words of both

Simeon and Anna as they predict marvelous things about the child. You wonder about all that you have observed. What does it mean? Will you be able to see how the baby's life turns out?

Draw or write your reflections. When you have finished, write a brief prayer.

Place the students' work in the envelopes for safekeeping.

LEARNING SKILLS *(Time: 10-15 minutes)*

Option 1. Class Memory Challenge

In Sessions 1-4 each verse of *Psalms 121* has been introduced for the students to memorize. For this final review, invite the class members to stand together and recite *Psalms 121* in its entirety, without the text or any prompting. Another possibility is to organize two groups—one responsible for reciting the even-numbered verses and the other for the odd-numbered verses. The two groups can recite the psalm alternating verses.

See the “Memory Challenge” block in the student newspaper, *Church Times*.

Option 2. Learning Scripture

Label and add rays to the paper sun for each new verse the students learned, as described in Session 1. Individuals may place red asterisks on the rays representing the verses they have memorized.

For the next session, challenge the students to learn one or both of these verses: *Luke 2:29* (RSV); *Luke 2:40*. See “Learning Scripture” in the student newspaper, *Church Times*.

ONGOING PROJECT *(Time: 5-10 minutes)*

Complete the Jesse tree window, as described in Session 1. Use Poster No. 9 in the Teacher's Packet pattern to create the figure of Jesus Christ, which attaches at the top of the window.

As a group, decide on a way to share the completed project with the congregation. Where can it be exhibited? Who could write a brief description to accompany the window? What will need to be included?

You may want to mount the window on a sturdy backing so that it can be displayed on an easel.

SYMBOL CARD and TREASUREBOOK

Card 14 contains a purification symbol, a verse of scripture, and an explanation on the back.

Invite the students to explore in the *Cross Year Treasurebook*, Part II, Section 4, that includes references to the Presentation. What do we celebrate in a Candlemas service?

GOING FORTH

Gather the group for the dismissal. The teacher or a student will say the following, pausing for the students' response of “Lord, have mercy”:

With all our heart and with all our mind, let us pray to the Lord, saying, “Lord, have mercy.”

For the peace from above, for the loving kindness of God, and for the salvation of our souls, let us pray to the Lord.

Lord, have mercy.

For the peace of the world, for the welfare of the holy Church of God, and for the unity of all people, let us pray to the Lord.

Lord, have mercy.

For _____ [learners may add their own petitions], let us pray to the Lord.

Lord, have mercy.

From The Prayers of the People

The Book of Common Prayer, pp. 383-384

Teacher: Let us go forth in the name of Christ.

Students: Thanks be to God.

TEACHER'S ASSESSMENT

As you reflect on this session's activities, how did the class members react to each one? What clues indicated that the story of Simeon and Anna is meaningful to the students? Will there be ways to remind the group about Candlemas as the date approaches?

LOOKING AHEAD

The next session is the first of four that are focused more specifically on the reign (kingdom) of God. Read over the story of Nicodemus' encounter with Jesus (*John 3:11-16*). How do I bring my own faith questions to the Lord? What does it mean for me to speak of Christ as King?

FOCUS

A Jewish leader named Nicodemus visited Jesus by night. Jesus told him that persons must be “born again” in order to see the kingdom of God. Jesus spoke of a spiritual birth (by “water and the Spirit”) as essential to life with God. The story includes a much-quoted summary of the mission of Jesus, Son of God. The students should be able to retell the story of Nicodemus.

GETTING READY

This is the first of four sessions specifically focused on the kingdom (reign) of God proclaimed by Jesus Christ.

Each time we pray the Lord's Prayer, we ask for the establishing of God's kingdom on earth, “as it is in heaven.” For Hebrew and Christian alike, God is the only sovereign Ruler. God alone reigns over the affairs of humanity. Jesus as the Messiah ushers in the reign of God so that it becomes apparent to the eyes of all who believe.

Jesus proclaims the kingdom of God (or kingdom of heaven) through his miracles (deeds of power). He announces God's reign through his parables and teaching. And in the *Gospel of John*, God's kingdom is described as “life”—the eternal relationship between God and all people of faith. A particular example of this concept may be found in the story of Nicodemus (*John 3:1-16*).

We know very little about the Jewish leader Nicodemus. His story is richly symbolic: He came to Jesus in the night, suggesting movement from the darkness of sin and doubt into the saving light of Christ's presence.

Nicodemus was impressed by Jesus' deeds of power and his teaching, and he acknowledged that Jesus must be a man from God. But Jesus challenged him to perceive more deeply—to move beyond only what he had seen and heard. True membership in the kingdom of God requires one to be “born of the Spirit”—to experience a life-changing spiritual rebirth. When Nicodemus expressed only puzzlement, Jesus chided him for his lack of understanding.

Jesus then proclaimed himself to be the way to the kingdom. He summarized in the well-known declaration of verse 16. God loved the world so much that the Son was given. Everyone who believes in the Son will have life forever with God.

Give us grace, O Lord, to answer readily the call of our Savior Jesus Christ and proclaim to all people the Good News of his salvation, that we and the whole world may perceive the glory of his marvelous works; who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever.
Amen.

Third Sunday after the Epiphany
The Book of Common Prayer, p. 215

TEACHING TIP

Holy Scripture has a remarkable power to speak to us, often without our needing to consult commentaries or the opinions of scholars. In our teaching, we can make room for intermediate-age students to hear the New Testament on their own. Before imposing adult explanations of the passages, allow time

THE REIGN OF GOD

Session 6

**Jesus Speaks with
Nicodemus**

for students to read, think, and discuss the stories of Jesus' teaching. Lead discussions as an inquirer and value the class members' insightful contributions.

GATHERING

Display Poster No. 11 from the Teacher's Packet showing Nicodemus approaching Jesus by night. As the students arrive, invite them to react to the picture. Who do they think it is? Why is it so dark? Why is he so serious?

When everyone is present, the teacher says:

Let us pray. (Use the Collect "Third Sunday after the Epiphany," above, or a prayer of your own choosing.)

The chosen student lector reads from the class Bible (NRSV):

A Reading from the Gospel of John, chapter 3, verses 1 through 10, and verse 16.

Now there was a Pharisee named Nicodemus, a leader of the Jews. He came to Jesus by night and said to him, "Rabbi, we know that you are a teacher who has come from God; for no one can do these signs that you do apart from the presence of God." Jesus answered him, "Very truly, I tell you, no one can see the kingdom of God without being born from above." Nicodemus said to him, "How can anyone be born after having grown old? Can one enter a second time into the mother's womb and be born?" Jesus answered, "Very truly, I tell you, no one can enter the kingdom of God without being born of water and Spirit. What is born of the flesh is flesh, and what is born of the Spirit is spirit. Do not be astonished that I said to you, 'You must be born from above.' The wind blows where it chooses, and you hear the sound of it, but you do not know where it comes from or where it goes. So it is with everyone who is born of the Spirit." Nicodemus said to him, "How can these things be?" Jesus answered him, "Are you a teacher of Israel, and yet you do not understand these things? . . .

"For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not perish but may have eternal life."

Reader: The Word of the Lord.

Response: Thanks be to God.

INTRODUCING THE STORY (*Time: 10-20 minutes*)

Announce that this session begins a study of Jesus' teaching concerning the kingdom of God. Ask: How would you define "kingdom"? Since we live in a democracy and do not owe loyalty to a king, is this word out of date? Where in today's world do we still find kings and queens? How much power do they have?

Tell the story of Nicodemus using information from Getting Ready (above) and the reporter's account in the student newspaper, *Church Times* (Unit II, Issue 6). Emphasize the idea of spiritual "birth"—taking up a new and different kind of life as a person with faith in God. Jesus said this is necessary for entering the kingdom of God.

Define "kingdom" as the reign or rule of God. God alone rules over all of

humankind. Jesus said to Nicodemus that no one can “see” God’s rule without being “born of the Spirit and of water,” and experiencing a spiritual awakening.

Ask the students to look up *John 3:1-16* in their Bibles. How did Nicodemus address Jesus (verse 2)? What did Jesus say to Nicodemus about the kingdom of God? How did Nicodemus respond? In verse 10, what did Jesus call Nicodemus?

EXPLORING (Time: 15-20 minutes)

Option 1. Spirit Poster

Invite the class members to cooperate in making a large Spirit poster. Gather these supplies: A large sheet of posterboard; sheets of blue, red, white, and gold construction paper; pencils, markers, scissors, and glue.

Mark off areas on the poster for a patch of scalloped blue to suggest baptism in water; a dove on a gold background; and a cluster of seven red flames to symbolize the Holy Spirit. Parcel out the tasks of making the sections of the poster, then glue them to the posterboard. You may want to add the caption: Jesus said, “You must be born of water and the Spirit.”

As the students work, continue to talk together about Jesus’ encounter with Nicodemus.

Option 2. Pharisees and Sadducees

Read the articles on page 2 of the student newspaper *Church Times* about the Pharisees and the Sanhedrin. They describe the Pharisees’ belief in the close observation of the laws and how most people found it impossible to keep all the rules. The Sanhedrin settles disputes regarding religion and legal properties.

Play a relay game between the “Pharisees” and the “Sadducees.” Divide the group into two teams; ask one volunteer from each team to step away from his or her team to be on the Sanhedrin. Set a bowl of water and an empty bowl for each team at the end of the room. Give the first person a small cup. That person runs to the bowl of water, fills the cup, pours the water into the empty bowl, and returns to give the cup to the next person. The goal is to fill the empty bowl.

Before you begin, explain that the Pharisee team has a few more rules. Before they can fill the cup, they must put it on the floor and run around it three times. They also can only hop back and forth. The Sanhedrin are responsible for keeping the rules enforced.

Let each team have a chance to be the Pharisees, and appoint new people for the Sanhedrin. Talk about the experience afterward.

Option 3. Word Puzzle

Turn in the student newspaper, *Church Times*, Unit II, Issue 6, to the puzzle titled “Born of the Spirit.” Students may work individually, in pairs, or as a total group.

MUSIC (Time: 10 minutes)

Listen to “Praise, my soul, the King of heaven” (*The Hymnal 1982*, 410) on the *Children Sing!* tape. Ask the students to glance through stanzas 2-3.

Together, make a list of words that describe the King's gifts and actions toward us: grace, favor, slow to chide, swift to bless, glorious in his faithfulness, fatherlike, gently bears us, rescues us, mercy. In stanza 4, whom do we call upon to help us offer praise? (Angels, sun, and moon.)

CONNECTING/SPEAKING OUT *(Time: 15-20 minutes)*

Option 1. Group Discussion

Point out the well-known sentence Jesus spoke to Nicodemus in *John 3:16*. On a chalkboard, write the four elements in the verse, leaving space under each: 1. God's love for the world; 2. God's gift of Jesus Christ; 3. our call to believe in Christ; 4. the promise of eternal life.

Ask the students to work in teams to investigate the following New Testament verses: *Romans 5:8*; *Romans 8:32*; *Ephesians 2:4*; *I John 4:9-10*. Ask them to find one or more of the elements on the board in their passages. Ask a volunteer from each team to write the Scripture passage under each element that is mentioned in some way.

Which element is mentioned most often? Which passages (if any) include all four elements?

Option 2. Current Events

Nicodemus was greatly puzzled by Jesus' admonition that the kingdom is open to those who are "born of the Spirit" (*John 3:6, 8*). Invite the students to respond in their own way to the question: What is the difference between our natural birth and the kind of birth Jesus was speaking about?

In the discussion, you may want to suggest this line of thinking: As a gift from God, there are times that we feel certain of God's love and presence. We also feel a strong desire to serve God and our neighbor. Jesus hoped that Nicodemus would understand that such a spiritual birth is far more important than just keeping God's rules.

REFLECTING *(Time: 10 minutes)*

Distribute the reflection envelopes, and arrange the Reflection Center as described in Session 1, gathering more art supplies as needed. Offer the following to encourage creative responses to the story of Nicodemus:

Look again at the picture in Poster No. 11 of Nicodemus. Now that you have heard his story, do you know why the artist chose to make the painting so dark? Do you have a better idea about why he is so serious?

When you heard the story, how did you picture Nicodemus? How did you see Jesus? If you were telling a friend about their conversation, how would you describe it? Do you find the words of Jesus hard to understand?

Write or draw your reflections, then compose a brief prayer.

When their work is completed, place the students' work in the envelopes for safekeeping.

LEARNING SKILLS *(Time: 10-15 minutes)*

Option 1. Class Memory Challenge

For Sessions 6-9, the Class Memory Challenge is the Summary of the Law from *Matthew 22:37-40* and *The Book of Common Prayer*, p. 324. See the “Memory Challenge” block in the student newspaper, *Church Times*. Begin, in this session, with the text from *Matthew*.

Read over the entire Summary, in unison. In place of “He said to him,” in verse 37, substitute “Jesus said, . . .”

Concentrate on verses 37 and 38. Ask the students to form pairs to say these verses several times.

Option 2. Learning Scripture

Label and add rays to the paper sun for each new verse the students learned, as described in Session 1. Individuals may place red asterisks on rays that represent verses they have memorized.

For the next session, suggest that the students memorize one or both of these verses: *John 3:8a*; *John 3:16*. See “Learning Scripture” in the student newspaper, *Church Times*.

ONGOING PROJECT (Time: 5-10 minutes)

For Sessions 6-9, a possible ongoing project would be a large class diorama, “Jesus Teaches About the Kingdom of God.” Cut one side from a cardboard box that is at least 2 x 3 feet in size and a foot or more deep. Stand the box on a table, open side facing the students.

Gather a generous supply of construction paper in various colors, crepe paper, posterboard, tagboard, cardboard, bits of thin wood or tongue depressors, markers, glue, scraps of fabric, and any other materials that may be required for creating figures.

Begin by describing a general layout for the diorama. Prepare a long strip of construction paper with the title, and glue it at the top of the diorama. Inside, four scenes are to be constructed on “platforms” created by mounting well-anchored pieces of cardboard at right angles to the back.

For this session, decide on colors and materials for ground and sky. Then make figures for the scene on the first platform: Jesus and Nicodemus talking with each other. Attach white posterboard “balloons” to the figures. Perhaps Jesus can be saying, “You must be born of water and the Spirit,” and Nicodemus can be replying, “What does this teaching mean?”

SYMBOL CARD and TREASUREBOOK

Card 15 includes the symbol of a triquetra and a circle, along with a verse of Scripture, and an explanation on the back.

Invite the students to explore in the *Cross Year Treasurebook*, Part II, Section 7, a description of the Kingdom of God. When and how did Jesus speak about the kingdom of God?

GOING FORTH

Gather the group for the dismissal. The teacher or a student will say the following, pausing for the students' response of “Lord, have mercy”:

With all our heart and with all our mind, let us pray to the Lord, saying, “Lord, have mercy.”

For the peace from above, for the loving kindness of God, and for the salvation of our souls, let us pray to the Lord.

Lord, have mercy.

For the peace of the world, for the welfare of the holy Church of God, and for the unity of all people, let us pray to the Lord.

Lord, have mercy.

For _____ [learners may add their own petitions], let us pray to the Lord.

Lord, have mercy.

From The Prayers of the People

The Book of Common Prayer, pp. 383-384

Teacher: Let us go forth in the name of Christ.

Students: Thanks be to God.

TEACHER'S ASSESSMENT

What insights did the students share as they reflected on the story of Jesus' encounter with Nicodemus? What kinds of questions did they raise? How will the outcome of this session affect your preparation for the remainder of the Unit's sessions on God's reign in Christ?

LOOKING AHEAD

The next session is about Jesus' call for a childlike humility as a requirement in the kingdom of heaven. Reflect on your own childhood experiences in the Church. How are children treated in your congregation? What do you learn from them?

THE REIGN OF GOD

Session 7

Like a Child

FOCUS

Jesus taught that we must become like children in order to enter the kingdom of God. He linked the rule of God in people's hearts with childlike humility, and he urged a spirit of hospitality toward children. The students should be able to summarize this teaching of Jesus and share their own feelings about children in the Christian community.

GETTING READY

The disciples of Jesus had the same human traits we do. For one thing, they were conscious of status. In *Matthew 18:1-5*, we hear them asking Jesus, "Who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven?" Would some members of their group rank higher than the others? If so, how could one go about gaining this higher level?

Jesus answered the question in a surprising way. He called a child to stand in their midst. Then he told the disciples they could enter God's kingdom only by becoming humble like the child. Greatness under the reign of God requires humility.

The story implies that children understand truth that eludes their elders. They know, for example, that they do not have to work to earn a free gift. They simply accept the gift with delight and gratitude. In this same way, it should be clear to us that we cannot earn our way into the kingdom of God. That is a gift freely bestowed on us through our faith in Jesus Christ.

Jesus added a footnote (verse 5): Be hospitable to children. To do so in Jesus' name is to welcome Jesus himself. The early Christians learned from this teaching to value and care for children. Rabbis before Jesus' time had praised kindness to children, especially orphans. But the pagan world largely lacked such sensitivity.

Watch over thy children, O Lord, as *their* days increase; bless and guide *them* wherever *they* may be. Strengthen *them* when *they* stand; comfort *them* when discouraged or sorrowful; raise *them* up if *they* fall; and in *their* hearts may thy peace which passeth understanding abide all the days of *their* lives; through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

For a Birthday (adapted)

The Book of Common Prayer, p. 830

TEACHING TIP

Intermediate-age students, generally speaking, have one foot in childhood and the other in early adolescence. Any group representing grades 4-6 is likely to exhibit a wide range of maturity levels. Some no longer want to be called children. In teaching this session, encourage the class members to think of the qualities and special gifts they recognize in children younger than they are. Emphasize the importance of appreciating all age levels.

GATHERING

As the students arrive, invite them to examine Poster No. 12 in the Teacher's Packet showing Jesus with a child. Ask: How does the picture make you feel? What do you think the artist wanted to say through this painting?

Suggest that each class member write, on a nearby chalkboard or sheet of newsprint, a caption or headline for the scene.

When everyone is present, the teacher says:

Let us pray. (Use “For a Birthday (adapted),” above, or select another appropriate prayer.)

The chosen student lector reads from the class Bible (NRSV):

A Reading from the Gospel of Matthew, chapter 18, verses 1 through 5.

At that time the disciples came to Jesus and asked, “Who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven?” He called a child, whom he put among them, and said, “Truly I tell you, unless you change and become like children, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven. Whoever becomes humble like this child is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven. Whoever welcomes one such child in my name welcomes me.”

Reader: The Word of the Lord.

Response: Thanks be to God.

INTRODUCING THE STORY *(Time: 10-20 minutes)*

Ask the students to look in *Matthew 18:1-5* for the question the disciples asked about greatness in the kingdom of God and the answer Jesus gave them. Tell the story of this encounter using information from Getting Ready (above) and the student newspaper, *Church Times* (Unit II, Issue 7).

Make your story more interesting by adding facts from the article on page 2 about children's activities during biblical times. Archeologists, for example, have found dolls, whistles, rattles, and small clay animals that children may have had for toys.

In his answer to the question about greatness, Jesus chose to place a child in the disciples' midst. Ask: How old do you think the child was? Why did Jesus choose a child to give his answer? What did the disciples need to understand?

Ask class members to share their experience of being a part of the church. What does our church offer to children? What are some opportunities they receive in the church? How do children feel toward the church?

Brainstorm all the different ways children are now involved at your church. List ideas on a piece of newsprint or a chalkboard. For example: church school, acolytes, and choirs. Put an asterisk or star next to an idea for every member who is involved in that activity.

Next, talk with the students about their own special place in the life of the church. Jesus taught that children should be welcomed and treated with hospitality. Make a second list of everything class members would like to do. For example, serve as an usher or lay reader.

If appropriate, pass on names and telephone numbers of children interested in doing specific things to leaders and coordinators of church activities.

EXPLORING *(Time: 15-20 minutes)*

Option 1. Hospitality Poster

Provide a large sheet of posterboard, and invite the class members to create a hospitality poster to be displayed in your congregation. Supply paper, pencils, markers, glue, tear sheets from magazines, and any other materials that seem appropriate.

Decide on a main caption, such as *(Name of your church)* welcomes you!

Encourage the group to use pictures and symbols of welcoming, being sure to include children, youth, and adults of all ages.

Leave space at the bottom of the poster or add paper nearby for members of the congregation to sign their names. As the students work, continue to discuss the session themes.

Option 2. Friendship Cards

Obtain the names of all members of a young children's group in your congregation (possibly ages three to five). Gather supplies for making friendship cards to be presented to the children by the Intermediate class members. Use white construction paper approximately 7 x 10 inches, to make 5 x 7 cards when folded in half. On the outside, glue pictures clipped from magazine tear sheets. Scenes of children, flowers, animals, or birds would be ideal.

Ask the students to write messages inside, such as *(Name)*, we send you this greeting of friendship in Jesus' name. Sign the card, From the members of the Intermediate class, *(Name of your church)*.

Arrange a time when the class members can present the cards in person. Suggest they tell the recipients about Jesus' love for children.

Option 3. Word Puzzle

Turn in the student newspaper, *Church Times*, Unit II, Issue 7, to the crossword puzzle titled "Children of God." Students may work individually, in pairs, or as a total group.

MUSIC *(Time: 10 minutes)*

Listen again to "Praise, my soul, the King of heaven" (*The Hymnal 1982*, 410) on the *Children Sing!* tape. Ask: Which stanza speaks of God as a parent? What kind of parent is God?

Divide the students into two groups. Ask Group 1 to sing line 1 of each stanza, and Group 2, line 2. Everyone joins in singing the final "Alleluia" line.

CONNECTING/SPEAKING OUT *(Time: 15-20 minutes)*

Option 1. Group Discussion

Jesus' disciples were concerned about their position in the kingdom of God. Who would be greatest? What did you have to do to merit a special place?

Talk with the learners about our human tendency to emphasize rank and status. Ask: What are some of the honors people try to win in your school? In the community?

Ask students to describe honors they or members of their family have

earned in sports, the arts, at school, or at work. Why are these considered important? Are people who don't receive honors of less value?

Point out that it is good to gain recognition for one's skills—in our studies, sports, and hobbies. But that does not mean we are more valuable persons than others.

Jesus told his disciples that they must change and be childlike in order to be great in God's kingdom. Ask: What are some of the loveable qualities of young children? Focus on their trust in others and their humble dependence upon caregivers. Discuss: How does it make us feel to hear that we need to be like children all our lives?

Option 2. Current Events

Invite the students to consider how they could welcome and extend hospitality to other persons in the congregation. Ask: When could we offer friendly greetings to older persons? What might we say or do when we meet them? In what ways can we serve young children? What would help them to feel that they belong to a loving family of God?

Make a list on newsprint or a chalkboard of concrete suggestions. For example, Intermediate students could offer to host the first part of the coffee hour by making and serving cookies or other snacks. Or, class members could send friendship cards like those made for the Exploring activity above to older parishioners. Suggest that the group make a serious covenant (mutual promise) to ensure that their best ideas are accepted and acted upon.

REFLECTING (*Time: 10 minutes*)

Hand out the students' reflection envelopes, and prepare the Reflection Center, as described in Session 1. Use the following to stimulate responses:

Imagine you are living in the time of Jesus' earthly ministry. You are playing hide and seek with a group of friends near a group of people who have been arguing. You have hidden behind a large bush and can hear the group's conversation.

One of the adults in the group asks a question about who would be greatest in the kingdom of heaven. Suddenly Jesus beckons for you to come toward him. He touches you gently on the shoulder and places you right in the middle of the group. Then he tells the disciples they should become like you if they want to be a part of the reign of God!

How did it feel to be chosen by Jesus? Why did he choose you? How could adults be like children?

When you have completed either drawing or writing your reflections, write a brief prayer.

Place the students' work in their envelopes for safekeeping.

LEARNING SKILLS (*Time: 10-15 minutes*)

Option 1. Class Memory Challenge

Ask the students to work further in memorizing the Summary of the Law, as described in Session 6. Again, read *Matthew 22:37-40* in unison, substituting "Jesus said, . . ." for "He said to him, . . ." in verse 37.

For this session, concentrate on verses 39 and 40. Ask the students to form pairs to say the whole passage several times. See the "Memory

Challenge” block in the student newspaper, *Church Times*.

Option 2. Learning Scripture

Label and add rays to the paper sun for each new verse the students learned, as described in Session 1. Individuals may place red asterisks on rays that represent the verses they have memorized.

For the next session, suggest that the class members memorize one or more of the following: *Matthew 18:3*; *Matthew 18:5*; *Matthew 19:14*. See “Learning Scripture” in the student newspaper, *Church Times*.

ONGOING PROJECT (*Time: 5-10 minutes*)

Begin or continue the large class diorama, “Jesus Teaches About the Kingdom of God,” as described in Session 6. For this session, make a second platform and design a scene showing the disciples gathered around Jesus with a child in the midst of them.

Decide on what Jesus is saying to the disciples. You may want to ask a student to read the question from *Matthew 18*. Write the quotation on a white balloon and attach it to the figure.

SYMBOL CARD and TREASUREBOOK

Card 16 contains a picture of Jesus as the Good Shepherd, a verse of Scripture, and an explanation on the back.

Invite the students to explore in the *Cross Year Treasurebook*, Part II, Section 6, that includes Jesus' teaching about humility in the kingdom of God. What was Jesus' attitude toward children?

GOING FORTH

Gather the group for the dismissal. The teacher or a student will say the following, pausing for the students' response of “Lord, have mercy”:

With all our heart and with all our mind, let us pray to the Lord, saying, “Lord, have mercy.”

For the peace from above, for the loving kindness of God, and for the salvation of our souls, let us pray to the Lord.

Lord, have mercy.

For the peace of the world, for the welfare of the holy Church of God, and for the unity of all people, let us pray to the Lord.

Lord, have mercy.

For _____ [learners may add their own petitions], let us pray to the Lord.

Lord, have mercy.

From The Prayers of the People
The Book of Common Prayer, pp. 383-384

Teacher: Let us go forth in the name of Christ.
Students: Thanks be to God.

TEACHER'S ASSESSMENT

What were the students' reactions to Jesus' teaching about childlike humility? Had they thought that they might already possess greatness in the eyes of God? What did they have to say about your church's hospitality toward its younger members? About their own role in extending hospitality to others?

LOOKING AHEAD

The next session is on the Golden Rule. When did you first hear these words of Jesus? Did you always know that these words came from Jesus? Reflect on the times when have you been able to practice the rule. What was the result? When is it difficult to follow the rule?

THE REIGN OF GOD

Session 8

Jesus Gave a Golden Rule

FOCUS

Jesus taught his followers to love their enemies, to avoid retaliatory acts, and to expect no rewards from others. He summarized such a life in the words we call the Golden Rule. The students should be able to describe appropriate behavior toward others on the part of Christ's followers.

GETTING READY

Jesus outlined a radical new behavior for all who would enter the kingdom of God. Examples of this Christian ethic are found in *Luke 6:27-36*. No less than nine specific commands from Jesus represent a complete reversal from our natural tendencies:

- Loving our enemies.
- Doing good to persons who hate us.
- Blessing people who curse us.
- Praying for others who abuse us.
- Offering the other cheek when struck by someone.
- Giving a shirt also to someone who takes one's coat.
- Giving to beggars.
- Allowing someone who takes a possession from us to keep it.
- Lending to others expecting nothing in return.

A tenth command sums up all of the above: “Do to others as you would have them do to you” (verse 31). We know this famous line as the Golden Rule.

Can anyone measure up to these ideals? The story of Christianity includes many saintly figures who have. But certainly most of us cannot follow the Golden Rule much of the time. Still, our inability to achieve such a style of life ought not to discourage us from making a serious effort in that direction. At least, we can all struggle to put ourselves into the shoes of others, to feel their feelings, and to empathize with their needs. We would hope for no less from others in relation to ourselves.

O Lord, you have taught us that without love whatever we do is worth nothing: Send your Holy Spirit and pour into our hearts your greatest gift, which is love, the true bond of peace and of all virtue, without which whoever lives is accounted dead before you. Grant this for the sake of your only Son Jesus Christ, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. *Amen.*

Seventh Sunday after Epiphany
The Book of Common Prayer, p. 216

TEACHING TIP

A developmental characteristic of intermediate-age students is their increasing ability to empathize deeply with the feelings and experiences of other people. This session on Jesus' ethical teachings offers a rich opportunity for young people to think through their own actions. Share freely your own struggles to be sensitive and compassionate when you have felt justified in taking an opposite stance.

GATHERING

Ahead of time, copy the following statements on a chalkboard or newsprint:

- Someone takes your coat and keeps it.
- Someone slaps you on the cheek.
- A person on the street begs for a gift of money.

As the students arrive, ask them to read the statements and write their first reactions, with chalk or markers. What would they do if one of these things happened to them?

When everyone is present, the teacher says:

Let us pray. (Use the Collect “Seventh Sunday after Epiphany,” above, or a prayer of your own choosing.)

The chosen student lector reads from the class Bible (NRSV):

A Reading from the Gospel of Luke, chapter 6, verses 27 through 36.

(Jesus said,) “But I say to you that listen, Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, bless those who curse you, pray for those who abuse you. If anyone strikes you on the cheek, offer the other also; and from anyone who takes away your coat do not withhold even your shirt. Give to everyone who begs from you; and if anyone takes away your goods, do not ask for them again. Do to others as you would have them do to you.

“If you love those who love you, what credit is that to you? For even sinners love those who love them. If you do good to those who do good to you, what credit is that to you? For even sinners do the same. If you lend to those from whom you hope to receive, what credit is that to you? Even sinners lend to sinners, to receive as much again. But love your enemies, do good, and lend, expecting nothing in return. Your reward will be great, and you will be children of the Most High; for he is kind to the ungrateful and the wicked. Be merciful, just as your Father is merciful.”

Reader: The Word of the Lord.

Response: Thanks be to God.

INTRODUCING THE STORY (*Time: 10-20 minutes*)

Begin by reviewing the comments written by the students at the Gathering. Which statements are negative? positive? Would most people agree with any of the expressed reactions?

Read or tell in your own words the story on page 1 of the student newspaper, *Church Times* (Unit II, Issue 8) about the Roman soldier who gives his coat to a beggar. (A summary of the story appears in Reflecting.) Then share the teaching of Jesus outlined under Getting Ready (above). Point out that the levels of behavior Jesus described are the appropriate ways to treat others within the kingdom (reign) of God.

Ask the students to turn in their Bibles to *Luke 6:31*, to locate the Golden Rule. Suggest that they compare this verse with *Matthew 7:12*. Note that in Luke's Gospel, the rule is within Jesus' Sermon on the Plain; in *Matthew*, it is part of the Sermon on the Mount. In *Matthew's* version, what is meant by “the law and the prophets”? (The writer is referring to the law of Moses in the Pentateuch and to the writings of the Old Testament prophets.)

Repeat and discuss the Golden Rule. Look back at the comments that were written during the Gathering. Do any reflect Jesus' teachings? If not, add new comments that come from following the Golden Rule.

When have you had an opportunity to practice the Golden Rule? Was it hard? What happened? Ask students to share their experiences if they feel comfortable doing so.

EXPLORING (*Time: 15-20 minutes*)

Option 1. Writing an Advertisement

Challenge the students to compose a want ad for their church newsletter or bulletin. On a chalkboard or newsprint, write Positions Available. Underneath, begin the advertisement as follows:

Wanted: People who will love their enemies,

The class members' task is to complete the advertisement by suggesting other characteristics from Jesus' teachings in *Luke 6:27-36*. Urge them to compose phrases in their own words. Write down all contributions as they are offered, then work together to refine and edit the want ad. At the end, add: Apply at (*your church's name*) at any time. Your reward will be great.

Submit the ad to the person who compiles your church newsletter. Or, make several copies of the ad and post them on bulletin boards throughout your church.

Option 2. Response Cards

Give each class member two index cards, preferably blank on both sides. Provide drinking straws or craft sticks, pens, markers, and glue or a stapler.

Ask the students to write and illustrate on one card a negative situation or circumstance, such as "People hate you." On the other side, write and illustrate a response reflecting Jesus' teaching: "Do good to them." Look back at the Scripture passage for other ideas.

When the students have finished their cards, they may turn them back to back, then sandwich a straw or stick between them, to serve as a handle. Glue or staple the cards together around the edges. Invite class members to hold up and share their finished work.

Option 3. Word Puzzle

Turn in the student newspaper, *Church Times*, Unit II, Issue 8, to the puzzle titled "The Golden Rule."

Students may work individually, in pairs, or as a total group.

MUSIC (*Time: 10 minutes*)

Listen to the *Children Sing!* tape or read the hymn, "Where charity and love prevail" (*The Hymnal 1982*, 581). Ask after each stanza: Which phrases remind us of Jesus' teaching in *Luke 6:27-36*? Listen to the melody on the tape again, then sing along with the tape.

CONNECTING/SPEAKING OUT (*Time: 15-20 minutes*)

Option 1. Group Discussion

Remind the class members that the teachings of Jesus concerning the reign of God call upon his followers to react in ways that are different from our “natural” styles of behaving. For example, the natural way to resolve conflict is through use of force and protecting one's own interests.

Either verbally or through skits, share the following illustrations (or others that seem appropriate for the group to consider):

- Someone teases you at school. Natural response: You tease back.
- Someone grabs your pencil. Natural response: You grab it back.
- Someone borrows your coat without returning it. Natural response:

You accuse the borrower of stealing.

Discuss together how the text of *Luke 6:27-36* calls for a different kind of response in each case. Redo the skits, but this time use the Golden Rule in making your response. How can you respond to someone who teases you or takes your belongings? What does Jesus ask of us?

Option 2. Current Events

Bring to the session a current newspaper. Distribute portions of the news sections to teams of students. Invite them to find a story that illustrates conflict or human difficulty. Ask each team to answer these questions: If the people involved practiced Jesus' Golden Rule, how would it change the news stories? What makes it difficult for people to take the rule to heart?

Ask class members to share stories about conflicts they have observed at school, during sports, or in the community. Did people use the Golden Rule in their responses? How would the situations have been different if the participants had used the Golden Rule rather than force?

REFLECTING (*Time: 10 minutes*)

Set up the Reflection Center, as described in Session 1. Distribute the reflection envelopes, and offer these directions:

Martin of Tours grew up in a Roman household in the fourth century. Even though the family was loyal to the Roman gods, Martin learned about Jesus from his family's slaves.

Martin wanted to become a Christian, but his father ordered him to join the Roman legion. While stationed in what is now France, Martin met a beggar. He stopped and used his sword to cut his cloak in two. He then gave half of it to the beggar.

Later, Martin had a dream. He saw Jesus seated on a throne wearing the half-cloak he had given the beggar. Soon after, Martin left the army to become a monk.

How did the beggar feel when Martin gave him half his cloak? How could he return Martin's kindness? How do you respond when you see someone in need?

When you have completed either drawing or writing your reflections, write a brief prayer.

Place the students' work in their envelopes for safekeeping.

LEARNING SKILLS (*Time: 10-15 minutes*)

Option 1. Class Memory Challenge

Encourage the students to continue working on committing the Summary of the Law to memory, as described in Session 6, and as it appears in the “Memory Challenge” block of the student newspaper, *Church Times*.

Say together *Matthew 22:37-40*. Then turn to the Summary in *The Book of Common Prayer*, p. 324. Compare the text with the passage in *Matthew*, and repeat in unison the introduction and the first commandment.

Option 2. Learning Scripture

Label and add rays to the paper sun for each new verse the students learned, as described in Session 1. Individuals may add red asterisks to the rays representing verses they have committed to memory.

For the next session, suggest that the class members memorize one or more of the following: *Luke 6:27*; *Luke 6:29*; *Luke 6:31*. See “Learning Scripture” in the student newspaper, *Church Times*.

ONGOING PROJECT (Time: 5-10 minutes)

Continue working on the large class diorama, “Jesus Teaches About the Kingdom of God,” as described in Session 6. For this session make a third platform and prepare another scene showing Jesus with the twelve apostles.

Ask the students to choose a verse from Jesus' teaching in *Luke*, chapter 6 (possibly the Golden Rule). Write the quotation on a white balloon and attach it to the figure of Jesus.

SYMBOL CARD and TREASUREBOOK

Card 17 shows a symbol for the Golden Rule, along with a verse of Scripture, and an explanation on the back.

Invite the students to explore in the *Cross Year Treasurebook*, Part II, Section 7, the extraordinary ethical commands of Jesus. What does the Golden Rule require of us?

GOING FORTH

Gather the group for the dismissal. The teacher or a student will say the following, pausing for the students' response of “Lord, have mercy”:

With all our heart and with all our mind, let us pray to the Lord, saying, “Lord, have mercy.”

For the peace from above, for the loving kindness of God, and for the salvation of our souls, let us pray to the Lord.

Lord, have mercy.

For the peace of the world, for the welfare of the holy Church of God, and for the unity of all people, let us pray to the Lord.

Lord, have mercy.

For _____ [learners may add their own petitions], let us pray to the Lord.

Lord, have mercy.

From The Prayers of the People
The Book of Common Prayer, pp. 383-384

Teacher: Let us go forth in the name of Christ.

Students: Thanks be to God.

TEACHER'S ASSESSMENT

What were the students' reactions to this study about the ethics required within the kingdom of God? What questions did they raise about the radical ideas in Jesus' teachings? In future years, what will be their greatest challenges as they live within the Christian community?

LOOKING AHEAD

The final session of this Unit is on Jesus' Summary of the Law. Read the summary in *Mark 12:28-34*, also known as the two great commandments. Have you heard of these commandments? When did you first hear them? Have they affected the way you live? What could you do to follow these commandments more closely?

FOCUS

Jesus' Summary of the Law, commanding love of God and love of neighbor, defines what is expected of all who belong to the kingdom of God. The students should be able to recite the Summary and explain its meaning for Christ's people.

THE REIGN OF GOD

Session 9

The Great Commandment

GETTING READY

Religious leaders were angered by Jesus' teaching, and they sought to trap him with trick questions. Two examples of this tactic are found in *Mark*, chapter 12. The first had to do with paying taxes to the emperor. The second was about life after resurrection. In both cases, Jesus gave strong answers that no one could refute.

Then a teacher who had been listening to the dialogue posed this question: "Which commandment is the first of all?" (chapter 12:28). Possibly the questioner expected Jesus to choose one of the Ten Commandments for his answer. If so, he would be in difficulty. In Jewish tradition, all ten are essential in the Law that was given to Moses.

But Jesus answered in an unexpected way. He recited the Hebrew *Shema* (which means "hear") found in *Deuteronomy 6:4*: "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."

To this command he added: "You shall love your neighbor as yourself" (from *Leviticus 19:18*).

Combining the two commands was an original way of summarizing the entire Law. The teacher who asked the question could only admire and agree with Jesus' answer. Jesus said to him: "You are not far from the kingdom of God" (*Mark 12:34*).

In the Church, we say with confidence that love of God, love of neighbor, and love of self are the essential requirements for living under God's reign. The kingdom that is to come, and for which we pray daily, will be marked by such love toward the Creator and Redeemer, and toward one another in the human family.

In *The Book of Common Prayer*, The Holy Eucharist, Rite I (p. 324), Jesus' Summary of the Law is from *Matthew 22:37-40*.

O God, who before the passion of your only-begotten Son revealed his glory upon the holy mountain: Grant to us that we, beholding by faith the light of his countenance, may be strengthened to bear our cross, and be changed into his likeness from glory to glory; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. *Amen.*

Last Sunday after the Epiphany
The Book of Common Prayer, p. 217

TEACHING TIP

Some intermediate students are beginning to ask for the reasons behind some rules and regulations. Younger children are more likely to accept a rule without asking "Why?" Be patient with these questions that are a normal at

this developmental stage. Also, be prepared to answer students' questions about the reasons God gave us laws and the great commandments in Jesus' Summary of the Law.

GATHERING

Cut ten strips of construction paper or tagboard. With a marker, print on each strip a phrase from Jesus' Summary of the Law (BCP, p. 324), as follows: Hear what our Lord Jesus Christ saith:/Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart,/and with all thy soul,/and with all thy mind./This is the first and great commandment./And the second is like unto it:/Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself./On these two commandments/hang all the Law and the Prophets.

Scramble the strips and place them face down on a table. As the students arrive, invite them to put the strips into the correct order.

Note: If the students have already completed learning the Summary as the Class Memory Challenge for the Unit, make the exercise above more interesting by placing only the first three words of each phrase on the strips. The class members will need to fill in the remainder to assemble the Summary.

When everyone is present, the teacher says:

Let us pray. (Use the Collect "Last Sunday after the Epiphany," above, or a prayer of your own choosing.)

The chosen student lector reads from the class Bible (NRSV):

A Reading from the Gospel of Mark, chapter 12, verses 28 through 34.

One of the scribes came near and heard them disputing with one another, and seeing that he answered them well, he 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.' The second is this, 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.' There is no other commandment greater than these." Then the scribe said to him, "You are right, Teacher; you have truly said that 'he is one and besides him there is no other'; and 'to love him with all the heart, and with all the understanding, and with all the strength,' and 'to love one's neighbor as oneself,'—this is much more important than all whole burnt offerings and sacrifices." When Jesus saw that he had answered wisely, he said to him, "You are not far from the kingdom of God." After that no one dared to ask him any question.

Reader: The Word of the Lord.

Response: Thanks be to God.

INTRODUCING THE STORY (*Time: 10-20 minutes*)

Begin by checking the placement of the strips of paper with the Summary of the Law the group compiled during the Gathering (above). Tell the story of Jesus' encounter with religious leaders in your own words or using the article on page 1 of the student newspaper, *Church Times* (Unit II, Issue 9). Stress how Jesus was able to avoid being tricked by persons who wanted to

discredit his teaching.

Point out that Jesus' Summary of the Law originated with him. No one had ever put the two commandments together in this way. In these few words, Jesus was able to sum up all that is required of people who live in the kingdom of God.

Invite students to find *Mark 12:28-34* in their Bibles. Suggest they compare this scene with the one in *Luke 10:25-28*. In Luke's version, who gives the Summary? Then find *Matthew 22:34-40* for still another account. How are they different or alike?

Note that the two great commandments form the basis of Christian life. For example, when we pray, "Thy kingdom come," in the Lord's Prayer, we are asking God to hasten the time when all people will love God and their neighbors as Jesus taught.

EXPLORING (Time: 15-20 minutes)

Option 1. Summary Mobile

Invite the class members to work as a group to design and make a large mobile portraying Jesus' Summary of the Law. Assemble the following: sheets of heavy posterboard, heavy scissors, markers, tempera paint in various colors, sturdy string, a 28-inch length of wooden dowel, and a knife for notching it.

From the posterboard, cut the following pieces: one heart to stand for love; a large triangle as a symbol for God; a simple human figure to represent one's neighbor; a figure cut to suggest the tablets of the Law; and a figure shaped like an open Bible to represent the Hebrew prophets. Decide on any details the group wishes to add to the pieces, and add colors with markers or paint.

On a strip of posterboard approximately 6 x 20 inches, use a black marker to print the words of Jesus' Summary of the Law. Add a colorful border. Three inches from each end, punch holes one inch down from the top. Along the bottom of the strip, evenly spaced, punch five holes.

Make notches approximately four inches from each end of the dowel, for attaching two sets of string—one to provide a way to hang the finished mobile, and the other for suspending the printed Summary. Along the bottom of the Summary, attach strings of varying lengths for suspending the five pieces.

Option 2. Love Placards

The students will be familiar with promotional posters and bumper stickers that substitute a red heart for the word "love." Supply strips of tagboard and red and black markers or crayons.

Suggest that the class members create their own love placards based on Jesus' Summary of the Law. Here are some possibilities:

(*Red heart*) God with all your strength. Or, I (*red heart*) God with all my strength.

(*Red heart*) your neighbor as yourself. Or, I (*red heart*) my neighbor.

Encourage students to hang their placards in their rooms, school lockers, or other locations.

Option 3. Word Puzzle

Turn in the student newspaper, *Church Times*, Unit II, Issue 9, to the puzzle titled “The Law.” Students may work individually, in pairs, or as a total group.

MUSIC (Time: 10 minutes)

Listen to the hymn, “Where charity and love prevail” (*The Hymnal 1982*, 581) on the *Children Sing!* tape. Call the students' attention to the second line of stanza 2: “let us with heart and mind and strength now in love return.” What was the hymn writer's source for those words?

CONNECTING/SPEAKING OUT (Time: 15-20 minutes)

Option 1. Group Discussion

Point out that the two commandments Jesus used in his Summary of the Law are taken from the Hebrew Scriptures. Ask the students to work in pairs or teams to locate the following sources: *Deuteronomy 6:4* and *Leviticus 19:18*.

Suggest that the class members turn also to *The Book of Common Prayer*, pp. 847-848, to read the Catechism regarding the Ten Commandments. Notice the Roman numerals I through X in the third and fourth questions. The commandments are divided under the headings of “duty to God” (the first four) and “duty to our neighbors” (the remaining six). Ask: Why were they divided this way? Which are the hardest for you to keep?

If time permits, ask the group to compare the ten statements in the Catechism with the text of the Ten Commandments themselves, found in the Prayer Book on page 350.

Option 2. Current Events

Pose the following situations about caring for others or devise some examples of your own. Discuss each of these as an opportunity to “love your neighbor as yourself.”

—You are in the hall at school when you see a younger student fall. The books and papers she was carrying are scattered all around. What would you do? Why?

—A teammate at baseball fumbles a catch and allows the other side to score a run. Several voices in the background are booing the player. What would you do? Why?

—An older person down the street is out in her yard looking for her morning paper. It is caught in some bushes in a hard-to-reach place. What would you do? Why?

—Your parent arrives home from work, with several large bags of groceries to bring in from the car. What would you do? Why?

Remind the students that it may be easy to define what would be a loving thing to do in these situations. But is it actually easy to be a loving, caring neighbor at such times? Why, or why not? When have you experienced a temptation not to love another as you would love yourself?

REFLECTING (Time: 10 minutes)

Distribute the reflection envelopes, and prepare the Reflection Center as described in Session 1. Read the articles on page 2 of *Church Times* to help you prepare for this reflection. Provide these directions:

You have been invited to attend a bar mitzvah of a Jewish friend who is your classmate. You are nervous about attending a service at another church. First of all, they don't even call their place of worship a church—it's a synagogue.

You talk to your friend, who tells you not to worry. He even shares some of things he has learned at Hebrew school and some Hebrew words. One of the most important, you learn, is the “Shema.” That is the Hebrew word for “hear”, as in *Deuteronomy 6:1* that begins, “Hear, O Israel: The Lord is our God, the Lord alone.” Jews throughout the world recite this verse daily to emphasize the uniqueness and oneness of God.

What is an important phrase or statement about the Christian faith? Is it important to you? Why?

When you have completed either drawing or writing your reflections, write a brief prayer.

Place the completed work in the envelopes so that they may be taken home.

LEARNING SKILLS *(Time: 10-15 minutes)*

Option 1. Class Memory Challenge

Review the memorized text of the Summary of the Law, from *Matthew 22:37-40* and from the Prayer Book, p. 324. Focus on the second commandment and the added words, “On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets.” See the highlighted text in the student newspaper, *Church Times*.

As a way to bring closure to this task, ask the class members to become a choral reading ensemble. Name a student to introduce the readings, then direct the group to say the Summary in unison. The students may wish to repeat the reading for an audience in another area of the church school.

Option 2. Learning Scripture

For each new verse the students learned, label and attach another ray to the large paper sun, as described in Session 1. Red asterisks may be added to rays already in place for other verses.

For this final session of the unit, memorize either *Mark 12:30* or *John 15:12* and review all the other New Testament verses that have been learned. In Unit III, another group of verses will be introduced, along with a procedure for recording them as they are learned.

ONGOING PROJECT *(Time: 5-10 minutes)*

Complete the large class diorama, “Jesus Teaches About the Kingdom of God,” as described in Session 6. For this session make a fourth and final platform for a scene showing Jesus with the Pharisees. One is listening intently as Jesus answers his question about the commandments.

Make a white balloon for a quotation and attach it to the figure of Jesus. Perhaps he could be saying, “On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets” (*Matthew 22:40*).

SYMBOL CARD and TREASUREBOOK

Card 18 has a heart, cross, and anchor along with a verse of Scripture, and an explanation on the back.

Invite the students to review all of Part II in the *Cross Year Treasurebook*. Look especially at the closing portion of Section 8. What does the text say about Jesus' Summary of the Law?

GOING FORTH

Gather the group for the dismissal. The teacher or a student will say the following, pausing for the students' response of "Lord, have mercy":

With all our heart and with all our mind, let us pray to the Lord, saying, "Lord, have mercy."

For the peace from above, for the loving kindness of God, and for the salvation of our souls, let us pray to the Lord.

Lord, have mercy.

For the peace of the world, for the welfare of the holy Church of God, and for the unity of all people, let us pray to the Lord.

Lord, have mercy.

For _____ [learners may add their own petitions], let us pray to the Lord.

Lord, have mercy.

From The Prayers of the People
The Book of Common Prayer, pp. 383-384

Teacher: Let us go forth in the name of Christ.

Students: Thanks be to God.

TEACHER'S ASSESSMENT

Recall the contributions of students during this session. What impressed you most? How seriously are they able to discuss the Summary of the Law? What do you hope the class members will gain from taking part in the life of your congregation?

Note: The following letter is for teachers and parents of children in the Intermediate level of church school. These two pages can be reproduced or used as a model for a personalized letter.

Episcopal Children's Curriculum

Unit III: WORSHIP

Dear Parents and Guardians,

In this Unit of study, Intermediate students will encounter three major concepts: (1) worship in the sacramental tradition; (2) observance of Lent; and (3) the challenge to engage in mission, the work God asks us to do in the world.

In the Baptismal covenant (*The Book of Common Prayer*, page 304), we confess our faith, we commit ourselves to faithful participation in worship, and we promise to engage in the mission entrusted to Christ's people in the world. The Church has provided the "means of grace" that enables us to keep this solemn covenant. Sacramental rites invoke the presence and blessing of God at every moment of life.

In addition, the Church offers us the season of Lent. It is a time of reflection on our lives and a reenactment of the last events of our Lord's life. We are called to be active as Christ's ambassadors in the world—rejecting sin and evil, struggling for peace and justice, and guarding the dignity of our fellow human beings.

Schedule some time to talk to your child about what he or she is learning. You can do this by reading the Scripture passages cited below, discussing the **Symbol Cards** and *Church Times* sent home each week, and by reading together Part II of the *Cross Year Treasurebook*, which includes information about how we worship and how worship prepares us for mission.

The first five sessions in this unit are related to sacramental rites. The final four sessions are related to Lent, Holy Week, Easter, and Ascension Day. The following summaries portray the flow of the Unit's nine sessions:

Session 1: "The Two Great Sacraments" focuses on the meaning of the word "sacrament," and introduces the three dimensions of a sacramental celebration: outward signs, inward grace, and requirements. Although many students have studied Holy Baptism and the Holy Eucharist in previous years, it is essential to explore why these are called "great" above all other sacramental actions. Instituted by Jesus Christ himself, they remind us of our initiation into his Body and sustain us with spiritual food at his Holy Table. (*I Corinthians 12:12-13*)

Session 2: "Confirmation" defines this sacramental rite as an expression of mature commitment to Christ. The laying on of a bishop's hands is accompanied by prayer invoking the Holy Spirit. Recalling our confirmation, we continually "rekindle" our faith. We are reminded that we have a mission in the world given to us by our Lord. (*II Timothy 1:3-7*)

Session 3: “Ordination” offers an opportunity to reflect on the vital roles of ordained men and women. Their ministries enable the continuation of the church as a visible body in the world. Stemming from apostolic times, the rite of ordination confers special authority and duties upon bishops, priests, and deacons. (*Matthew 9:35-38*)

Session 4: “Marriage and Christian Families” combines a study of Holy Matrimony with discussions of healthy family life in Christian homes. The wedding service asks God’s grace and blessing upon the couple to help them keep the promises they have made. The marriage covenant implies those who enter into this sacred relationship will pray together and seek divine guidance in bringing up children. (*Mark 10:6-9; 13-16*)

Session 5: “Reconciliation and Healing” is devoted to two sacramental rites—Reconciliation of a Penitent (Penance) and Ministry to the Sick (Unction). They are interrelated because both ask for God’s healing. When persons confess their sins and receive absolution, the process of spiritual healing can begin. Broken relationships can be restored. Christians understand that healing can be both spiritual and physical. (*James 5:14-16* and *I John 2:1-2*)

Session 6: “Observing Lent” is an elementary look at the basis for the forty-day period of reflection we observe annually in preparation for the glad news of the Resurrection at Easter. Students will be challenged to think about what it means to be baptized followers of Jesus Christ. They will look at the temptations of Jesus in the wilderness and consider how his responses can also be our answers in times of testing. (*Mark 1:9-13*)

Session 7: “Jesus Was Condemned to Die” is centered primarily around the extraordinary trial of Jesus during the night of his betrayal by Judas and the early hours of Good Friday. By looking at the four Gospels closely, we can piece together a scenario of what happened to thwart justice and produce the final judgment upon Jesus. This session aims to help students appreciate the great suffering endured by Jesus. His sacrifice was a supreme act of compassion for humankind. (*Luke 23:1-5*)

Session 8: “Resurrection” is about the glorious good news of Easter. Based on the resurrection story according to *Luke*, the session examines the evidence for Jesus’ having been dead, buried, and raised to life again. The event is crucial to our faith. If it had not occurred, Jesus’ life and ministry would have faded away and there would be no Church. The Resurrection marks a whole new era for God’s creation. It was God’s ultimate yes to the world’s defiant no. (*Luke 24:1-12*)

Session 9: “Ascension” offers a fresh look at the Feast of the Ascension. Although it is a Principal Feast of the Church, it is less familiar to many people. Students will study Luke’s accounts of Jesus’ ascent into heaven forty days after the day of his resurrection. They will be asked to think about what Christ’s reign “above” can mean for everyday life. (*Luke 24:44-53*)

Yours in Christ,
Church School Teachers

FOCUS

The two “great sacraments” of the Church are Holy Baptism and Holy Eucharist. They are the means of grace that empower us to be Christ's body and to pursue our mission as God's people in the world. We are made one people through our baptism and in our life of worship. The students should be able to summarize in their own words descriptions of the two great sacraments.

GETTING READY

The first five sessions of this Unit focus on the Church's sacramental rites. These rites prepare and equip us for our mission as Christ's people in the world. In our Episcopal tradition, we are formed as a worshiping community through our use of *The Book of Common Prayer*. Its rites accompany and nurture us on our earthly journey, from birth to death.

The word “sacrament,” although not from the Bible, clearly sums up the New Testament understanding of the Christian life. It comes from the Latin “sacer,” which means sacred or holy. Also implied is the concept of mystery.

God is holy, and God graciously imparts holiness to life for all who worship in spirit and in truth. God's only Son, the risen Lord Jesus Christ, has opened the way for our participation in the holy. Of this we are reassured at every celebration of Holy Baptism and Holy Eucharist.

Baptism and the Eucharist were given to us by Jesus himself. They are required of all who bear the name of Christ. Baptism happens once, and the Eucharist is offered continually.

The Catechism reminds us that the sacraments are “outward and visible signs of inward and spiritual grace” (BCP, pp. 857-861). To put it another way, a sacramental celebration employs concrete gifts that we see, touch, feel, and taste (such as water, bread, wine, oil, and garments). The result of the celebration is an inner, mysterious, but very real gift whose source is the Holy Spirit.

As the intermediate-age students explore the sacraments and sacramental rites, it will be important to ask three questions concerning each one:

- What are the visible signs?
- What is the inward and spiritual grace?
- What is required of us?

Throughout the study, we will be reminded that faithful worship and mission must express our identity with Christ. We are “one body” in the world, brought into being by one Spirit (*I Corinthians 12:12-13*).

Gracious Father, whose blessed Son Jesus Christ came down from heaven to be the true bread which gives life to the world: Evermore give us this bread, that he may live in us, and we in him; who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. *Amen.*

Fourth Sunday in Lent

The Book of Common Prayer, p. 219

TEACHING TIP

WORSHIP

Session 1

The Two Great Sacraments

Intermediate-age class members may be quick to notice when a theme is being repeated. They may say, “We’ve had that before,” implying that it would be best to go on to something different. Help them understand that each time we study the great themes of the Christian faith, we gain new insights.

GATHERING

From the Teacher's Packet, display Poster No 13 showing water, bread, and wine. On a nearby chalkboard or sheets of newsprint, place the words, “water,” “bread,” and “wine”—leaving ample space under each one.

As the students arrive, invite them to use chalk or markers for adding phrases related to each of the words. If necessary, ask about sources, qualities, and benefits of all three of these physical gifts: Where do they come from? How do you describe them? What are they good for?

When everyone is present, say:

Let us pray. (Use the Collect “Fourth Sunday in Lent,” above, or a prayer of your own choosing.)

The chosen student lector reads from the class Bible (NRSV):

A Reading from the First Letter of Paul to the Corinthians, chapter 12, verses 12 through 13.

For just as the body is one and has many members, and all the members of the body, though many, are one body, so it is with Christ. For in the one Spirit we are all baptized into one body—Jews or Greeks, slaves or free—and we were all made to drink of one Spirit.

Reader: The Word of the Lord.

Response: Thanks be to God.

INTRODUCING THE STORY (*Time: 10-20 minutes*)

Invite students to turn in their Bibles to *I Corinthians 12:12-13, 26-27*. What is said about our baptism? What does “one body” mean? How are we related to one another?

Refer to the article on page 1 of the student newspaper, *Church Times* (Unit III, Issue 1), about a young person’s decision to be baptized at Easter Vigil. Tell the story in your own words or recount a personal story about a baptism.

Before the class meets, create a large chart on a sheet of posterboard similar to the small one on Poster No. 18 in the Teacher's Packet. Draw four columns and eight rows. Across the top row, label the four columns: Sacraments, Signs, Grace, Requirements. Label the rows in the Sacraments column: Holy Baptism, Holy Eucharist, Confirmation, Ordination, Marriage, Reconciliation of a Penitent, Unction of the Sick. Duplicated copies of the smaller chart that appears in the Teacher's Packet may be distributed to each student. (Note: Both the large class chart and the smaller student copies will be referred to and used for Introducing the Story in Sessions 1-5.)

Be sure the class knows the meanings of the words on the chart, even those that will be studied later. Based on the chart, see if class members can

come up with a definition of “sacrament.” Compare their definition to the one in the Catechism in *The Book of Common Prayer* on page 857. Focus on the phrases “outward and visible signs” and “inward and spiritual grace.”

Divide into two groups. Ask one group to look at the section about baptism on page 858 and fill in the appropriate spaces on the poster. The second group will look at the questions about the Eucharist on page 899 and do the same. Afterward, share information and give students time to complete their personal charts.

You may want to share additional information from the Getting Ready (above) and other materials. Speak briefly about the two great sacraments as a sign of our oneness in Christ. Save the class chart and the student copies for the next session.

EXPLORING *(Time: 15-20 minutes)*

Option 1. Tapestry: We Are One

Obtain a good-sized sheet of plain white fabric and a supply of markers in varied colors. (Use special fabric markers or permanent markers, which will not run on the fabric.)

Ahead of time, draw a circle in the center. Inside, in the lower half, make wavy blue lines to represent the water of Holy Baptism. In the upper half, draw a chalice and a paten with bread, to stand for Holy Communion. Add the caption, “We Are One.”

Spread the cloth on a flat surface. Invite the students to create a tapestry that includes symbols, drawings, or words to represent each of them—their special interests, hobbies, talents, and gifts. Suggest that the class members work together to produce a profile of their diversity and their unity. As they complete the project, discuss the significance of the symbols in the circle. Why is it placed in the center? (Stress that the class members are a vital part of the one body of Christ.)

Option 2. Prayer Book Scavenger Hunt

Divide into teams or pairs for a scavenger hunt to find a list of items from *The Book of Common Prayer*. Use the same list for everyone for fairness. Make a list of parts of the service for Holy Baptism and the Holy Eucharist. Include parts of services of the other sacraments if you wish.

Items you might include on the lists: Confession of Sin, Rite 1; Prayers for the Candidates; Presentation and Examination of the Candidates; The Great Thanksgiving for Eucharistic Prayer C; the Peace; the Lord’s Prayer; and the Lessons. Ask students to write a page number next to each item they locate.

Check the answers together. Were any of the items in more than one place? Why?

Option 3. Word Puzzle

Turn in the student newspaper, *Church Times*, Unit III, Issue 1, to the word puzzle titled “United in God’s Spirit.” Students may work individually, in pairs, or as a total group.

MUSIC (Time: 10 minutes)

Listen to “Now the silence” (*The Hymnal 1982*, 333) on the *Children Sing!* tape. Point out that this short, modern hymn is included in the hymnal section designated “Holy Eucharist.” Read the words together. Ask: Which phrases describe visible signs? Which phrases are about inner graces? Experiment with singing the phrases of lines 1-4 in an alternating pattern, with two groups. The shifts may come after these words, in order: peace, uplifted, plea, welcome, power, pouring. Sing together lines 5-8.

CONNECTING/SPEAKING OUT (Time: 15-20 minutes)

Option 1. Group Discussion

Explain that the bread and wine of Holy Eucharist are served to persons who have been baptized in the name of God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit (the Holy Trinity). People of all ages and from many different backgrounds are welcomed at the Lord's Table.

Read together or tell in your own words information from the articles on page 2 of the student newspaper, *Church Times*, about promises made at Holy Baptism and promises given by Jesus at the Last Supper.

Ask: In our church, how are people invited to receive Holy Communion? What does the Celebrant (priest) say? Note that many churches include a printed note in the weekly church bulletin inviting all baptized persons to the sacrament. Have you ever had an opportunity to invite a friend to attend Holy Eucharist? If so, how did you explain what would happen? How did you help the person to feel welcome?

Option 2. Current Events

The student newspaper (on page 3) notes that a popular Christian song of praise begins with the phrase, “We are one in the Spirit.” Each stanza ends with the refrain, “They will know we are Christians by our love.”

Talk about how we become one with Jesus Christ by showing our love to one another. On a piece of newsprint or chalkboard, ask student to list all the ways people help one another. Ask them to think about actions in the home, at school, at sports and other leisure times, at church, in the community, and in the world.

Go back through the list and put a star by every activity that a student could do. Highlight a group project that interests the students. Explore ways all or part of the group could become one with Christ by helping others with this project.

REFLECTING (Time: 10 minutes)

Throughout this Unit, suggestions are offered for “guided meditations.” The teacher leads and students may provide details.

For this session, ask: How does it make you feel to see all the different kinds of people who attend your church? How old and how young are they? Where do they all come from?

Allow time for the class members to think about the questions and share their thoughts. Then ask them to close their eyes and relax in silence as you

lead them in meditating. Speak slowly to allow everyone time to absorb the images. Incorporate students' contributions from the earlier sharing.

Ask class members to picture themselves walking into church on a normal Sunday. Who is there? Does anyone greet them? As they walk down the aisle to their seats, who do they see? How many young people are there? Do they go to their school? Are there many older people? Are some of the faces familiar?

What bring us all together at church? What draws people to our church? Do people go to other churches for the same reasons?

After a minute or so of silence, direct the class members to open their eyes and share their images.

LEARNING SKILLS *(Time: 10-15 minutes)*

Option 1. Class Memory Challenge

The memory challenge for this Unit includes the following: Seasons; Principal Feasts; Other Holy Days; and New Testament Saints. (See the "Memory Challenge" block in the student newspaper, *Church Times*.) For this session, focus on the seasons of the Church Calendar, in order. It is likely that most of the students will know these already, so it may be an easy review. Suggest a simple memory device the class members might use to teach the six seasons to others:

ACE-LEaP

The letters of ACE stand for Advent, Christmas, Epiphany. The LEaP means Lent, Easter, and Pentecost.

Invite the class members to practice introducing and explaining the device to one another.

Discuss the progression of seasons, noting especially that the date of Easter affects the beginning of Lent and the date of Pentecost.

Option 2. Learning Scripture

Encourage the students to memorize selected verses of Scripture during this Unit. When a verse has been learned by one or more class members, print the text on a small cross, cut from construction paper. Glue the cross to a sheet of posterboard. As additional students report having learned the verse, ask them to glue small triangles of colored paper to the cross to create a mosaic effect. (Avoid covering the text with the mosaic pieces.) Before the next class session, the students may memorize *Luke 24:30* or *I Corinthians 12:12*.

See "Learning Scripture" in the student newspaper, *Church Times*.

ONGOING PROJECT *(Time: 5-10 minutes)*

As an ongoing project for Sessions 1-5 of this Unit, invite the class members to make a series of five large, circular medallions. The medallions may be displayed on a bulletin board or wall surface, or may be hung from the ceiling. For each medallion, prepare a large circle of white cardboard or piece together two half-circles. Use felt-tip pins and markers to add a symbol at each session and add borders.

For this session, suggest a symbol composed of four hands reaching

inward toward the center of the medallion—to suggest the Church's mission of proclaiming peace and unity.

SYMBOL CARD and TREASUREBOOK

Card 19 shows a Bible, chalice, and water, along with a verse of Scripture, and an explanation on the back.

Invite the students to explore in the *Cross Year Treasurebook*, Part III, Section 1, that sets the stage for a more detailed walk through the sacramental rites. Why are sacraments celebrated in the Church?

GOING FORTH

Gather the group for the dismissal. The teacher or a student will say the following, pausing for the students' response of "Lord, have mercy":

For our Bishop, and for all the clergy and people, let us pray to the Lord.

Lord, have mercy.

For this city (town, village, _____), for every city and community, and for those who live in them, let us pray to the Lord.

Lord, have mercy.

That we may end our lives in faith and hope, without suffering and without reproach, let us pray to the Lord.

Lord, have mercy.

For _____ [learners may add their own petitions], let us pray to the Lord.

Lord, have mercy.

From The Prayers of the People
The Book of Common Prayer, pp. 384-385

Teacher: Let us go forth in the name of Christ.

Students: Thanks be to God.

TEACHER'S ASSESSMENT

How well did the students appear to grasp the concept of the sacraments as a source of our unity in Christ? What questions did they raise? Were they able to express the Catechism's content in their own words?

LOOKING AHEAD

The next session is on the sacramental rite of Confirmation. Recall your own confirmation. What do you remember best? What did you feel or hope?

FOCUS

Confirmation is a sacramental rite that expresses “mature commitment to Christ.” When persons are confirmed by a bishop, they “receive strength from the Holy Spirit through prayer and the laying on of hands.” Our faith is rekindled as we recall our confirmation. The students should be able to define this sacramental rite and explain how it challenges us to do Christ's work in the world.

GETTING READY

The Catechism of *The Book of Common Prayer* explains that “other sacramental rites evolved in the Church under the guidance of the Holy Spirit.” They differ from Holy Baptism and the Holy Eucharist because “they are not necessary for all persons in the same way” (p. 860).

The first mentioned of these other rites is Confirmation. When we are confirmed in the Church, we express our “mature commitment to Christ, and receive strength from the Holy Spirit through prayer and the laying on of hands by a bishop.”

The outward *signs* at Confirmation are the confirmand's spoken renewal of commitment to Jesus Christ, and the laying on of hands by a bishop.

The inner *grace* imparted by this rite includes a renewing of the Baptismal Covenant, a strengthening of faith, and an empowerment for serving Christ.

The *requirements* of those being confirmed are baptism, instruction in the Christian faith, penitence for sins, and readiness to confess that Jesus Christ is Savior and Lord.

The intent of Confirmation is reflected in Paul's greeting to his younger friend whom he had ordained for service in the Church. He urges Timothy to “rekindle the gift of God that is within you” (See *II Timothy 1:3-7*, especially verse 6). Recalling our own moment of confirmation at the hands of a bishop can lead to such a rekindling for each of us. We are reminded of our mission as Christ's people in the world. See especially the bishop's prayer at the Confirmation service (BCP, p. 418).

Grant, Almighty God, that we, who have been redeemed from the old life of sin by our baptism into the death and resurrection of your Son Jesus Christ, may be renewed in your Holy Spirit, and live in righteousness and true holiness; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. *Amen.*

For Confirmation

The Book of Common Prayer, p. 254

TEACHING TIP

Confirmation requirements vary within the Episcopal Church, particularly with respect to the ages of confirmands and to the forms of preparation. In some dioceses and congregations, persons are confirmed in late childhood or early adolescence. In others, the rite is reserved for older youth and adults. In some churches, instruction may last months; in others, a few weeks. As you

WORSHIP

Session 2

Confirmation

teach this session, be aware of the customs that prevail in your congregation and diocese. Take time to explain them to the class members.

GATHERING

Display Poster No. 13 from the Teacher's Packet showing hands being laid on the head of a person and Poster No. 18 of the Confirmation calligraphy.

As the students arrive, encourage them to write captions for the picture of the hand. Ask: What is happening? What is the occasion? If you have seen a similar scene, where did it take place? When?

When everyone is present, say:

Let us pray. (Use the Collect "For Confirmation," above, or a prayer of your own choosing.)

The chosen student lector reads from the class Bible (NRSV):

A Reading from the Second Letter of Paul to Timothy, chapter 1, verses 3 through 7.

(Paul wrote) I am grateful to God—whom I worship with a clear conscience, as my ancestors did—when I remember you constantly in my prayers night and day. Recalling your tears, I long to see you so that I may be filled with joy. I am reminded of your sincere faith, a faith that lived first in your grandmother Lois and your mother Eunice and now, I am sure, lives in you. For this reason I remind you to rekindle the gift of God that is within you through the laying on of my hands; for God did not give us a spirit of cowardice, but rather a spirit of power and of love and of self-discipline.

Reader: The Word of the Lord.

Response: Thanks be to God.

INTRODUCING THE STORY (*Time: 10-20 minutes*)

Call attention to the other sacramental rites on the class posterboard chart introduced at Session 1. They are: Confirmation, Ordination, Holy Matrimony, Reconciliation of a Penitent, and Unction of the Sick. If students are using duplicated copies of this chart from the Teacher's Packet (Poster No. 18), distribute these copies now.

As a group, turn to page 860 of *The Book of Common Prayer* to look at the questions in the Catechism about Confirmation. Use questions 3 and 4 to fill in the spaces on the chart for Confirmation.

Tell the story from the article on page 1 of the student newspaper, *Church Times* (Unit III, Issue 1) about the bishop's visit to a parish to celebrate the rite of confirmation. Or, in your own words describe your own confirmation or one that you have attended at your church.

Note that the sacraments like Confirmation are different from the two great sacraments of Baptism and Eucharist because they are not required for all persons in the same way. However, they are vital in the life of the Church because they help us serve Jesus Christ by strengthening us for our mission in the world.

Invite the students to look up *II Timothy 1:3-7* in their Bibles. Reread the scripture passage. Which verse seems to suggest the idea of confirmation? What does the phrase in verse 6, “rekindle the gift of God that is within you,” mean? When do we need to relight our faith?

EXPLORING (Time: 15-20 minutes)

Option 1. Confirmation Interviews

Plan a way to involve students in interviewing older members of the congregation to discover what they remember about their own services of confirmation. The group, for example, could offer to provide snacks for a coffee hour. During that time students could pair up and talk to people about their experiences.

Ask the class members to prepare questions that might be asked, such as: When were you confirmed? What do you recall about the bishop? What were your feelings at the time? How did your confirmation affect your life? What advice would you give to persons who expect to be confirmed in the future?

Option 2. Time-Lines

Give students two pieces of construction paper of different colors. Provide rulers, invisible tape, and colored markers. Ask them to draw a line horizontally across the middle of the both sheets of paper. On one of the sheets, have them create a time-line of their lives up to this point. Suggest they include their birth, baptism, preschool, elementary school, when they began to play a sport or musical instrument, and other events important to them.

On the second sheet, invite students to put in events they expect and want to happen. For example, entry into middle or junior high school, confirmation, high school, first job, college, marriage, and other events. Tape the two time-lines together. How many events related to sacraments on the chart were included? How do sacraments relate to our lives?

Option 3. Word Puzzle

Turn in the student newspaper, *Church Times*, Unit III, Issue 2, to the word puzzle titled “Confirmation Prayer.” Students may work individually, in pairs, or as a total group.

MUSIC (Time: 10 minutes)

Sing along with the *Children Sing!* tape “Jesus calls us; o’er the tumult” (*The Hymnal 1982*, 549, 550; *We Sing of God*, 86). The author, Mrs. Cecil Frances Alexander, was a devout member of the Church of England who also wrote the hymn, “All Things Bright and Beautiful.”

“Jesus calls us . . .” was written for St. Andrew’s Day. Stanza 2 is based on *Matthew 4:18-20*, the calling of Andrew and Peter while they were fishing, and Stanza 5 is a prayer that we will hear Christ’s call and resolve to be loyal followers. Why would this hymn be especially appropriate at a Confirmation service?

CONNECTING/SPEAKING OUT (Time: 15-20 minutes)

Option 1. Group Discussion

Divide the group into pairs or teams to look up the following passages in the Bible. Each describes a turning point in the life of a biblical character: Jacob, *Genesis 28:10-22*; Esther, *Esther 4:9-17*; Nicodemus, *John 3:1-10*; Mary Magdalene, *John 20:11-18*; and the prodigal son, *Luke 15:11-24*.

Ask each group or pair to answer the following questions: What happened to the person you read about? What was the turning point in his or her life?

Give each group time to report its findings. Discuss the similarities and differences in the stories. What commitments did the characters make? How was God present to each one?

Option 2. Current Events

Invite someone who is knowledgeable about Confirmation to visit the class for a discussion about Confirmation services at your church.

Suggest that the visitor describe his/her own confirmation. Where did it happen? Who was the bishop? What stands out in this person's memory of the event?

Ask: At what age do most persons become confirmands in your church? How are they helped to get ready for this rite? Who is in charge of their preparation? When was the last service of Confirmation? Who was confirmed? How does the congregation recognize the persons who are newly confirmed?

REFLECTING (Time: 10 minutes)

From Session 1, review the directions for leading a guided meditation.

Begin by talking about the word “commitment.” Ask them to define it in their own words. Intermediate-age students are beginning to hear this word at school, at church, and in their leisure activities. Many have heard their parents talk about family commitments or being over-committed.

Tell the group that several words are often associated with commitment, such as promise, responsibility, duty, resolution (as in New Year’s resolution), covenant, and undertaking.

Begin the meditation period by asking the class members to relax with their eyes closed and think about commitments in their own lives. Lead them in their thinking by saying the following:

Remember the first day of school when you met your teacher for the first time. What did he or she ask of you? Did the teacher make any commitments to you? What did you decide to do that day? Did you make any resolutions?

Think about the first time you met a new coach or music instructor. What kind of undertakings did they expect of you? What responsibilities were you willing to take on?

Picture your home. What kind of responsibilities do you have? Have you made promises to keep your room clean or do certain chores? What have other family members promised you?

After a brief silence, ask volunteers to share some of the things they thought about during the meditation. Talk about promises that we make in

the Church and the commitments made in Confirmation.

LEARNING SKILLS *(Time: 10-15 minutes)*

Option 1. Class Memory Challenge

Encourage the students to memorize the seven Principal Feasts observed in the Episcopal Church. These are listed in the Calendar of *The Book of Common Prayer*, p. 15: Easter Day; Ascension Day; Day of Pentecost; Trinity Sunday; All Saints' Day, November 1; Christmas Day, December 25; Epiphany, January 6. (Also, see the “Memory Challenge” block in the student newspaper, *Church Times*.)

Point out that the dates vary from year to year for the first four of these Feasts. The first Feast, which is Easter, determines when the next three are celebrated. (These four are sometimes called “Moveable Feasts.”) The final three Feasts have fixed dates that are easy to recall.

Discuss the themes of all seven, then suggest that the class members form pairs or teams to practice reciting the full list to one another, in order.

Option 2. Learning Scripture

Copy the texts onto paper crosses, glue to a background of posterboard, and add mosaics for verses the students have learned, as described in Session 1.

For the next session, the class members may learn *II Timothy 1:6* or *Hebrews 12:1c*. See “Learning Scripture” in the student newspaper, *Church Times*.

ONGOING PROJECT *(Time: 5-10 minutes)*

Invite the students to make a large medallion, as described in Session 1. For this session on Confirmation, the symbol could be a bishop's hands on the head of a confirmand. Another possibility might be a church surrounded by arrows pointing outward, to suggest that confirmed members reach into the world with the good news of Christ.

SYMBOL CARD and TREASUREBOOK

Card 20 shows a Canterbury Cross, along with a verse of Scripture, and an explanation on the back.

Invite the students to explore in the *Cross Year Treasurebook*, Part III, Section 3, on the rite of Confirmation. Why do people choose to be confirmed?

GOING FORTH

Gather the group for the dismissal. The teacher or a student will say the following, pausing for the students' response of “Lord, have mercy”:

For our Bishop, and for all the clergy and people, let us pray to the Lord.

Lord, have mercy.

For this city (town, village, ____), for every city and community, and

for those who live in them, let us pray to the Lord.
Lord, have mercy.

That we may end our lives in faith and hope, without suffering and without reproach, let us pray to the Lord.
Lord, have mercy.

For _____ [learners may add their own petitions], let us pray to the Lord.
Lord, have mercy.

From The Prayers of the People
The Book of Common Prayer, pp. 384-385

Teacher: Let us go forth in the name of Christ.
Students: Thanks be to God.

TEACHER'S ASSESSMENT

What were the students' questions about Confirmation? Were they able to link this rite with a Christian's challenge to serve Christ in the world? As you think about their future preparation, what will be important to include? In what ways does your work as their teacher contribute to their future "mature commitment" to Christ?

LOOKING AHEAD

The next session is on the rite of Ordination. Think about all the persons you know who are members of Holy Orders in the Church. How do they fulfill the promises they have made? Why is Ordination important to the life of Christ's people in the world?

FOCUS

Ordination is the rite by which persons are made bishops, priests, and deacons in the Church. Members of Holy Orders receive authority and the grace of the Holy Spirit, through prayer and the laying on of hands by bishops. The students should be able to list the orders of ordained ministry and describe the roles of ordained persons in carrying out the work of Christ as teacher, preacher, and healer.

GETTING READY

The Catechism of *The Book of Common Prayer* defines Ordination in one short sentence (pp. 860-861). It is “the rite in which God gives authority and the grace of the Holy Spirit to those being made bishops, priests, and deacons, through prayer and the laying on of hands by bishops.”

To assist the lay people of the Church in carrying out their mission as Christ's baptized people in the world, God has graciously given to the Church the threefold ministries of persons in Holy Orders:

Bishops are shepherds who exercise pastoral oversight of the clergy and people within a given geographical area. They have the primary responsibility of teaching the Christian faith and guarding it from error. They exercise authority over the Church as a whole, approving and ordaining candidates for ministry and conducting confirmations.

Priests are teachers, preachers, and pastors to congregations. They administer Baptism and Holy Communion. They hear confessions and pronounce absolution of sin. They visit the sick and administer unction. They comfort and counsel people in times of need and crisis. They celebrate weddings, preside at funerals, and offer the Church's blessing to individuals engaged in all forms of service to Christ.

Deacons assist in public worship and the ministration of God's Word and Sacraments. They also perform many acts of service to persons in need of assistance and counsel. Some persons remain deacons all their lives, while others serve a period of time as deacons and then are ordained to the priesthood.

These Orders are not to be undertaken lightly. Requirements include personal commitment to Christ, lives that demonstrate appropriate moral formation and behavior, and adequate preparation through diocesan processes of education and examination.

In *Matthew 9:35-38*, the Gospel writer describes the teaching, preaching, and healing ministries of Jesus himself. Jesus asked his disciples to pray for more “laborers” to work in “harvesting” the people of the world so that they would no longer be “harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd.” The Church understands this appeal to be valid in every generation. Ordination is a way of affirming the call of individuals to carry on the ministry embodied by the Lord Jesus Christ.

Heavenly Father, Shepherd of your people, we thank you for your servants, who were faithful in the care and nurture of your flock; and we pray that, following their examples and the teaching of their holy lives, we may by your grace grow into the stature of the fullness of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ; who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,

WORSHIP

Session 3

Ordination

one God, for ever and ever. *Amen.*
Of a Pastor (adapted)
The Book of Common Prayer, p. 248

TEACHING TIP

Most intermediate-age students have probably not attended a service of Ordination. However, many have participated in organizations which officers have been installed at special ceremonies. Talk to them about the similarities and differences of these events and ordination services. Just as God calls each of us to service, God also calls people to serve as priests, deacons, and bishops.

GATHERING

Display Poster No. 14 in the Teacher's Packet poster showing the following items: Bible; deacon's stole; priest's stole; clerical collar; pectoral cross; bishop's miter; shepherd's crook.

As the students arrive, invite them to speculate about each item. Have you seen something like it? What does it represent? Who would own it?

When everyone is present, say:

Let us pray. (Use the Collect "Of a Pastor," above, or a prayer of your own choosing.)

The chosen student lector reads from the class Bible (NRSV):

A Reading from the Gospel of Matthew, chapter 9, verses 35 through 38.

Then Jesus went about all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues, and proclaiming the good news of the kingdom, and curing every disease and sickness. When he saw the crowds, he had compassion for them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd. Then he said to his disciples, "The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few; therefore ask the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into his harvest."

Reader: The Word of the Lord.

Response: Thanks be to God.

INTRODUCING THE STORY (*Time: 10-20 minutes*)

Since most students have not been to an ordination service, tell the story in the student newspaper, *Church Times*, in your own words. If you have been to an ordination service yourself or talked to a clergy person, describe that experience. Use Poster No. 14 to point out how these objects are used in ordination.

Consider briefly the class posterboard chart introduced in Session 1. Students may also continue to use their duplicated copies of the smaller chart from Poster No. 18.

Together, look up the definition of Ordination provided in the Catechism of *The Book of Common Prayer*, p. 860. See if students can figure out some of the responses for the chart.

In the rites of Ordination, the outward *signs* are the laying on of hands by bishops, the spoken promises and prayers, and the gifts presented to the persons being ordained: a Bible, vestments, and for bishops, a shepherd's crook.

Grace comes through the Holy Spirit. *Requirements* include personal commitment to Christ, a moral life, and adequate preparation through education and examination.

Read or tell in your own words the article on orders of ministry on page 2 of *Church Times*. Be sure to define the word "order" as a particular group of people who have a specific mission. Bishops, priests, and deacons have their respective roles among Christ's people. From information in Getting Ready (above) describe the missions of the three orders.

Reread together in the Bible *Matthew 9:35-38*. Talk about how Jesus' work is described. What were the three key tasks to which he devoted his life? (Point out that "proclaiming" means preaching.) What did he ask his disciples to pray for? Which order is closely linked to this passage?

EXPLORING (Time: 15-20 minutes)

Option 1. Game: Who Is the Bishop?

Direct a game called "Who Is the Bishop?" Prepare a slip of paper for each class member. On each slip, write an order of ministry in the Church. Two slips will say "Priest," two will say "Deacon," just *one* will say "Bishop," and all the other slips will say "Lay person."

Distribute the slips. Make clear that everyone is to keep their assigned role a total secret, not to be given away.

Explain that the students will move around the room, asking one another only yes-or-no questions. In each case, everyone must ask at least three yes-or-no questions, about what another person *does* in his or her role. If someone asks *Are you the bishop?*, it must be Question 4.

When these directions are clear, allow a period of silence for everyone to consider three questions to ask at the beginning. Say "Go!" to start the game. Note that each class member who discovers the bishop should sit down at once. In the end, only the bishop will be left standing. Ask the group to share the clues that led them to know who was the bishop.

Option 2. Clergy Vestments

Using the article on page 2 of *Church Times*, describe the different vestments worn by clergy. Be sure to define terms that may be unfamiliar, such as cassock (usually a black, floor length robe), surplice (a white outer garment for clergy and the choir), and the stole (the scarf-like piece that is distinctive to clergy).

Provide paper, pencils, pens, and markers. Invite the student to draw pictures of different vestments. They can fill in the faces of the clergy and bishop for your church, or leave the face blank.

To help them visualize the vestments, display photographs of clergy in their differing vestments. You might also borrow a set of vestments from your clergy. Afterwards, talk about the reasons clergy wear vestments (to identify their roles and responsibilities in the Church).

Option 3. Word Puzzle

Turn in the student newspaper, *Church Times*, Unit III, Issue 3, to the crossword puzzle titled “Ordination.”

Students may work individually, in pairs, or as a total group.

MUSIC (*Time: 10 minutes*)

Listen again to “Jesus calls us; o’er the tumult” (*The Hymnal 1982*, 549, 550; *We Sing of God*, 86) on the *Children Sing!* tape. Ask: What makes this hymn appropriate for use at a service of Ordination? What did Andrew leave behind in order to follow Jesus? What does the hymn say Jesus asks us to do?

CONNECTING/SPEAKING OUT (*Time: 15-20 minutes*)

Option 1. Group Discussion

Ask the class members to look over the Ordination rites in *The Book of Common Prayer*, pp. 512-547. What are the major headings in all these services? List them on a chalkboard or newsprint, and discuss each one: The Presentation; The Ministry of the Word; The Examination; The Consecration.

Ask: What differences did you notice in the three services? Who presides at the Ordination of a Bishop? Who does the “laying on of hands” for each of the Holy Orders?

Option 2. Current Events

Ahead of time, obtain a list of the clergy persons in your diocese, together with their addresses, current positions, and dates of ordination to the diaconate, the priesthood, and the episcopacy. The priest(s) in your congregation should be able to supply this list. Share a photocopy with each class member. Ask: How many priests are on the list? deacons? Who is (are) the bishop(s)? Which ones do you know?

Suggest that each student consider “adopting” someone on the clergy list. They may pray for these adopted persons regularly, and send cards or notes on the anniversaries of their ordinations.

REFLECTING (*Time: 10 minutes*)

Follow the process for guided meditation, as described in Session 1.

Before you begin, talk about the differences between the clergy and the laity (people in the Church who are not ordained). Look back at the chart on the sacraments for ideas. What is the role of the laity? Do they have responsibilities and requirements?

Ask the group to close their eyes and be silent. Ask them to think about something they have prayed for in the past or are praying for now. For example, they may have prayed for a sick relative, for a friendship that is not working, or for people in another community or part of the world who have been struck by a natural disaster.

After a brief silence, read these words from Thomas More:

The things, good Lord, that we pray for,
Give us grace to work for,
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Allow time for the students to reflect in silence, and then talk about their thoughts.

Ask students who feel comfortable doing so to share some of the people or things they have been praying for. As a group, think about ways to work for each thing someone mentions. For example, forgiveness may be the best way to heal a broken friendship. A letter or card could be sent to someone a student is praying for. The group could explore ways they could help with disaster relief by collecting money or food. Include the people and places the students named in the closing prayer.

LEARNING SKILLS (Time: 10-15 minutes)

Option 1. Class Memory Challenge

Review, if necessary, the memory tasks accomplished at previous sessions. Then introduce “Seven Other Feasts of Our Lord, and Two Fasts”—listed in the Calendar of *The Book of Common Prayer*, pp. 16-17. (Also, see the “Memory Challenge” block in the student newspaper, *Church Times*.)

Discuss the reasons for the Feasts, then write their names on a chalkboard or newsprint. Ask the students to find the assigned dates for these “black letter” days in the Calendar of the Prayer Book, pp. 19-30.

Suggest a way to recall the list: The first and the last include the word “holy” (*Holy Name*; *Holy Cross Day*). Four of the Feasts end in “ation.” Call them out together several times, in unison, with one pause: *Presentation*; *Annunciation*; *Visitation*; (pause); *Transfiguration*. Note that the pause is where the Feast of St. John the Baptist belongs.

The two Fasts are Ash Wednesday, the beginning of Lent; and Good Friday, the day of Jesus' crucifixion.

Divide the group into pairs or teams to practice reciting all seven Feasts and two Fasts, in order.

Option 2. Learning Scripture

Print the verses the students have learned since the last session on paper crosses, as suggested in Session 1. Glue to the background poster, adding mosaic pieces as needed.

Before the next session, class members may memorize *Matthew 9:37* or *Ephesians 4:11*. See “Learning Scripture” in the student newspaper, *Church Times*.

ONGOING PROJECT (Time: 5-10 minutes)

Continue making large medallions, as described in Session 1. For this session, suggest that the students draw a face and neck, adding a clerical collar to symbolize the Church's clergy. As the group members work on the project, continue to discuss the roles of bishops, priests, and deacons.

SYMBOL CARD and TREASUREBOOK

Card 21 shows a bishop's miter, along with a verse of Scripture, and an explanation on the back.

Invite the students to explore in the *Cross Year Treasurebook*, Part III, Section 3, a description of what is involved in Ordination to ministry. What makes this sacramental rite “Episcopal”?

GOING FORTH

Gather the group for the dismissal. The teacher or a student will say the following, pausing for the students' response of “Lord, have mercy”:

For our Bishop, and for all the clergy and people, let us pray to the Lord.

Lord, have mercy.

For this city (town, village, _____), for every city and community, and for those who live in them, let us pray to the Lord.

Lord, have mercy.

That we may end our lives in faith and hope, without suffering and without reproach, let us pray to the Lord.

Lord, have mercy.

For _____ [learners may add their own petitions], let us pray to the Lord.

Lord, have mercy.

From The Prayers of the People
The Book of Common Prayer, pp. 384-385

Teacher: Let us go forth in the name of Christ.

Students: Thanks be to God.

TEACHER'S ASSESSMENT

How well were the students able to enter into the study of Ordination? Are students clear about how each of the Holy Orders functions in the Church? Can they relate Jesus' ministry to the role of the clergy?

LOOKING AHEAD

The next session is on the sacramental rite of Holy Matrimony. Read through the service in *The Book of Common Prayer*, pp. 423-432. What are the differences between secular and Christian concepts of marriage? How do most persons regard weddings in our culture?

FOCUS

Through the rite of Holy Matrimony, a man and a woman are joined for life before God and the Church. They receive the grace and blessing of God to help them in their life together and in establishing a Christian family. The mission of families is to serve God through their common life. The students should be able to explain what is meant by Christian marriage and to state that it was instituted by Jesus Christ.

GETTING READY

In *Mark 10:6-9*, Jesus instituted the sacramental act of marriage. In the family of God, a man and a woman are joined in holy union, committing themselves to each other for life.

The Church has honored and sanctified this commitment in the rite of Holy Matrimony. In the same chapter of Mark's Gospel (verses 13-16), Jesus spoke tenderly about little children, saying that the very kingdom of God "belongs" to them. Clearly, our Lord honored both marriage and family life.

In our culture, it is apparent that the institution of marriage requires continual interpretation by the Church. Christian marriage is infused with a particular mission—to show to the world an example of unity that St. Paul compared to the relationship between Christ and the Church (*Ephesians 5:21-33*).

The rite of Holy Matrimony provided in *The Book of Common Prayer* begins with a reminder that Jesus "adorned" marriage by attending a wedding in Cana of Galilee (p. 423). It was there that he performed his first miracle—changing water into wine.

The marriage rite employs the outward *signs* of spoken vows and prayers, accompanied by the exchange of rings as a sign of their binding promises.

The couple receive "the *grace* and blessing of God to help them fulfill their vows."

The *requirement* for marriage, in addition to laws imposed by states, is entry into a solemn covenant to love, comfort, honor, and keep each other, in sickness and in health, forsaking all others and being faithful to their union as husband and wife for as long as they live.

Almighty God, our heavenly Father, who settest the solitary in families: We commend to thy continual care the homes in which thy people dwell. Put far from them, we beseech thee, every root of bitterness, the desire of vainglory, and the pride of life. Fill them with faith, virtue, knowledge, temperance, patience, godliness. Knit together in constant affection those who, in holy wedlock, have been made one flesh. Turn the hearts of the parents to the children, and the hearts of the children to the parents; and so enkindle fervent charity among us all, that we may evermore be kindly affectioned one to another; through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

For Families

The Book of Common Prayer, p. 828

TEACHING TIP

WORSHIP

Session 4

Marriage and Christian Families

Intermediate-age students are able to articulate both positive and negative concepts of marriage and life in a family. Think through sensitive issues that affect your own class members. Some young persons (or their close friends) may struggle with pain caused by separation and divorce. Be clear that the purpose of this session is to lift up the Church's sacramental vision of marriage.

GATHERING

Display Poster No. 15 from the Teacher's Packet of the wedding at Cana. Nearby, provide copies of *The Book of Common Prayer*, opened to page 427, "The Marriage." As the students arrive, invite them to look at the picture and the Prayer Book. Ask the students to find a reference in this service to the wedding in Cana that is depicted in the poster. Suggest that they look at the first part of the service beginning on page 423. Why is this story of Jesus included in the service?

When everyone is present, say:

Let us pray. (Use the prayer, "For Families," above, or a prayer of your own choosing.)

The chosen student lector reads from the class Bible (NRSV):

A Reading from the Gospel of Mark, chapter 10, verses 6 through 9 and verses 13 through 16.

(Jesus said) "But from the beginning of creation, 'God made them male and female.' For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh.' So they are no longer two, but one flesh. Therefore what God has joined together, let no one separate. . . ."

People were bringing little children to him in order that he might touch them; and the disciples spoke sternly to them. But when Jesus saw this, he was indignant and said to them, "Let the little children come to me; do not stop them; for it is to such as these that the kingdom of God belongs. Truly, I tell you, whoever does not receive the kingdom of God as a little child will never enter it." And he took them up in his arms, laid his hands upon them, and blessed them.

Reader: The Word of the Lord.

Response: Thanks be to God.

INTRODUCING THE STORY (*Time: 10-20 minutes*)

Begin by telling in your own words the story from the student newspaper, *Church Times*, about the marriage of two Sunday School teachers that the class attended. Ask students who have attended weddings to describe them. If a student has participated in a wedding, ask him or her to tell the group what happened at the rehearsal and "behind the scenes."

Reread the scripture passage. What does Jesus say about a man and a woman who commit themselves to each other in marriage? What does he say about little children?

Ask students to look up the Catechism question on Holy Matrimony in

The Book of Common Prayer, p. 861. Lead the group in continuing the posterboard chart described in Session 1. Before discussing the information in Getting Ready (above) about signs, grace, and requirements of marriage, find out what students think about these three categories. Encourage those who have attended weddings to suggest signs and requirements they saw or heard during the ceremony. Fill in the appropriate categories on the poster and individual charts.

Talk to class members about the Church's special understanding of marriage as a permanent holy union between a man and a woman. In the rite the students looked at during the Gathering exercise, solemn vows are exchanged. Students may want to look at the vows that begin on page 424 of the Prayer Book.

Couples are supported in their covenant by the prayers of the Church that their life together will be blessed by God's grace.

God chose Mary and Joseph, who were joined in marriage, to provide Jesus with a human family. The gift of children is to be welcomed with joy. Christian parents are called to raise their children with love and knowledge of the Lord.

EXPLORING (Time: 15-20 minutes)

Option 1. Family Collage

Gather magazines, bits of fabric and colored paper, glue, scissors, markers, and other creative art materials. Supply a large sheet of white posterboard. As a group, look through the magazines and cut out pictures of families, couples, and other people of different ages.

Invite the students to make a collage titled "God Places Us in Families." Suggest that the scene include parents, grandparents, children, and young persons. Words and phrases may included, along with Jesus' words from *Mark 10:14*. Decide on where to display the finished work so that others in the congregation may see it.

Option 2. Symbols

Wedding rings are symbols of commitment in a marriage. The exchange of rings is part of the Celebration and Blessing of a Marriage. Other appropriate symbols may also be exchanged.

Ask the students to share stories or descriptions about their close friends. Often there is an event or some other shared moment that stands out in a relationship. Provide paper, pens, and other craft items. Suggest that the class members design a symbol that reminds them of a special friendship.

Afterwards, invite students who feel comfortable doing so to describe their symbols and friendships.

Option 3. Word Puzzle

Turn in the student newspaper, *Church Times*, Unit III, Issue 4, to the word puzzle titled "Families."

Students may work individually, in pairs, or as a total group.

MUSIC (Time: 10 minutes)

Listen once more to “Jesus calls us; o’er the tumult” (*The Hymnal 1982*, 549, 550; *We Sing of God*, 86) on the *Children Sing!* tape. Ask: Why might it be appropriate to sing this hymn at a wedding? In the hymn’s words, what would Jesus ask of the man and the woman entering into marriage?

CONNECTING/SPEAKING OUT (*Time: 15-20 minutes*)

Option 1. Group Discussion

Ask the students to look in *The Book of Common Prayer* for words or phrases that describe the ways people are to treat each other in marriage beginning on page 424. List their ideas on a piece of newsprint or chalkboard under the heading “Holy Matrimony.”

Next, ask the group to describe marriages depicted on television sitcoms or movies. List these descriptions under a heading “Marriage in the Media.” Compare the two lists. How many words or phrases are similar? What is different? Are marriages we see on television or at the movies realistic?

Look again at the list the group made for Holy Matrimony. Put a star by the words or phrases that would also describe the way friends should treat each other. Put a checkmark by those that describe a good relationship between siblings. Finally, circle those that describe the way children and parents should treat each other. Look at the list again. What do you find? What does this tell us about how we should treat each other?

Option 2. Current Events

Invite a married couple from the congregation to visit the class session. Ask them to bring photos of their wedding to share with the group.

Encourage the students to ask questions about the couple’s wedding and their life together as Christians in the covenant of Holy Matrimony. When were they married? Where was the wedding? What were their hopes for the future? How is their marriage affected by their belief in Jesus Christ?

REFLECTING (*Time: 10 minutes*)

Help the students think about relationships they have with friends and family members with a meditation on promises made by couples in the service of Holy Matrimony. Before you begin, ask students to brainstorm words or phrases that describe good relationships. Ask: Which of these apply only to people who are married? How many descriptions could apply to all relationships?

Ask class members to close their eyes while you slowly read the vows from the rite of the Celebrations and Blessing of Marriage in *The Book of Common Prayer*. While you read the words, ask the students to identify one or more vows that are important in their relationships with others.

First read either the man or woman’s Declaration of Consent on page 424. Pause, then read with the wife’s or husband’s vows at the top of page 427. End by reading one or more of the prayers on page 429.

After a brief silence, ask the students, if they feel comfortable doing so, to share with the group one or more of the vows they identified as important. Invite students to improve a current relationship by treating the other person with honor, love, and respect.

LEARNING SKILLS *(Time: 10-15 minutes)*

Option 1. Class Memory Challenge

At this session, challenge the class members to begin learning the dates for 22 other Major Feasts on the Church's Calendar. (All are noted in black letters in *The Book of Common Prayer*, pp. 19-30.) Since the Church Year opens with Advent rather than with the civil year date of January 1, start memorizing from the month of December, with these four Feasts:

December 21—St. Thomas, the Apostle

December 26—St. Stephen, Deacon and Martyr

December 27—St. John, Apostle and Evangelist

December 28—The Holy Innocents

Note that Thomas comes four days before Christmas Day. The other Feasts are on the three days just after Christmas. Work as a total group to fix these dates in mind. Ask the students to call out the correct dates as you name the Feasts several times, first in order and then at random.

See the “Memory Challenge” block in the student newspaper, *Church Times*.

Option 2. Learning Scripture

Print new verses the students have learned since the previous session on paper crosses to be glued to a background poster, as described in Session 1. Add mosaic pieces as additional class members report having learned verses assigned during the Unit.

For the next session, suggest the students learn *Mark 10:9* or *Hebrews 13:4a*. See “Learning Scripture” in the student newspaper, *Church Times*.

ONGOING PROJECT *(Time: 5-10 minutes)*

Continue with the medallion project as described in Session 1. For this session on marriage, the symbol on the medallion could be wedding rings superimposed over a cross.

SYMBOL CARD and TREASUREBOOK

Card 22 shows a Chi Rho with joined rings, along with a verse of Scripture, and an explanation on the back.

Invite the students to explore in the *Cross Year Treasurebook*, Part III, Section 4, about family life. What is meant by “Christian marriage”?

GOING FORTH

Gather the group for the dismissal. The teacher or a student will say the following, pausing for the students' response of “Lord, have mercy”:

For our Bishop, and for all the clergy and people, let us pray to the Lord.

Lord, have mercy.

For this city (town, village, ____), for every city and community, and for those who live in them, let us pray to the Lord.

Lord, have mercy.

That we may end our lives in faith and hope, without suffering and without reproach, let us pray to the Lord.

Lord, have mercy.

For _____ [learners may add their own petitions], let us pray to the Lord.

Lord, have mercy.

From The Prayers of the People
The Book of Common Prayer, pp. 384-385

Teacher: Let us go forth in the name of Christ.

Students: Thanks be to God.

TEACHER'S ASSESSMENT

What were the questions and concerns of the students as they explored the sacramental rite of Holy Matrimony? From your observations, have they acquired a healthy concept of marriage and family life within the Christian community?

LOOKING AHEAD

The next session focuses on Reconciliation of a Penitent and Unction of the Sick. When in your own life have you felt a need for the comfort and assistance available in these rites? What do you appreciate most about them?

FOCUS

The rites for Reconciliation of a Penitent and Unction of the Sick are ministries of healing—for the mending of our relationships with God and other people, and for the restoration of physical health. The students should be able to locate these rites in *The Book of Common Prayer* and to tell the purpose of each as defined in the Catechism.

GETTING READY

This session is about two sacramental rites: Reconciliation of a Penitent and Unction of the Sick. Both rites are related to our health. The spiritual sickness of sin requires a ministry of healing just as surely as bodily illness. The Church, in these two rites, assures us that God in Christ hears our prayers for wholeness in spirit, mind, and body.

- When we have committed sins against God and our neighbors, we may certainly make our confessions to God alone. But the Church has provided also that a penitent person may also seek the presence of a priest. The *signs* in the rite of Reconciliation of a Penitent, are the spoken confession and assurance of pardon. The *grace* is the absolution offered by the priest in Christ's name. The only *requirement* is a sincere desire to repent and be forgiven.

- When we are sick, we may call for the priest to administer the rite of Unction. The outward *signs* are anointing with oil and the laying on of hands. This rite affirms the Church's faith that the *grace* of God is given for healing. The only implied *requirement* is a desire to commend the person who is sick to the Lord's loving care.

The rites stem from New Testament practices, as described in a passage like *James 5:14-16*. By the time this epistle was written, probably around 90 CE, Christians had worked out a pattern of sending for the elders of the Church to administer unction. Notice also the linking of illness with the need to confess sins and seek forgiveness in the Christian community. The well-known “comfortable words” concerning forgiveness of sin can be found in *I Peter 2:1-2*.

Almighty and everlasting God, you hate nothing you have made and forgive the sins of all who are penitent: Create and make in us new and contrite hearts, that we, worthily lamenting our sins and acknowledging our wretchedness, may obtain of you, the God of all mercy, perfect remission and forgiveness; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. *Amen*.

Ash Wednesday

The Book of Common Prayer, p. 217

TEACHING TIP

Young persons at the intermediate age level frequently want to share their feelings with others—both their close friends and trusted adult confidants. This may be especially true when they are experiencing guilt and a need to set things right by being forgiven. Ideally, the church school class can become a community of reconciliation in which forgiveness is freely offered

WORSHIP

Session 5

Reconciliation and Healing

and received. Encourage the group to cultivate such an atmosphere in the class sessions.

GATHERING

Write the following on a chalkboard: “Reconciliation or Forgiveness” and “Unction or Healing.” Be ready to define words students are unfamiliar with. On a table under the words, set out pencils, slips of paper, a paper bag with the word “Reconciliation,” and another bag with the word “Healing.” Ask class members to write down on one slip something for which they need forgiveness, fold it several times, and put it in the bag marked “Reconciliation.” On another slip, ask them write the name of someone that they would like to pray for and put it in the second bag.

When everyone is present, say:

Let us pray. (Use the Collect “Ash Wednesday,” above, or a prayer of your own choosing.)

The chosen student lector reads from the class Bible (NRSV):

A Reading from the Letter of James, chapter 5, verses 14 through 16, followed by a reading from the First Letter of John, chapter 2, verses 1 and 2.

(James wrote) Are any among you sick? They should call for the elders of the church and have them pray over them, anointing them with oil in the name of the Lord. The prayer of faith will save the sick, and the Lord will raise them up; and anyone who has committed sins will be forgiven. Therefore confess your sins to one another, and pray for one another, so that you may be healed. The prayer of the righteous is powerful and effective.

(John wrote) My little children, I am writing these things to you so that you may not sin. But if anyone does sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous; and he is the atoning sacrifice for our sins, and not for ours only but also for the sins of the whole world.

Reader: The Word of the Lord.

Response: Thanks be to God.

INTRODUCING THE STORY *(Time: 10-20 minutes)*

Begin by telling a story about healing that you have experienced or observed or one that you have seen in the media. Another option is to tell in your words the story from the student newspaper, *Church Times* (Unit III, Issue 5). Ask class members to share stories about healing they have heard or observed. Invite them to talk about some of the names they wrote during the Gathering exercise.

Draw on the material in Getting Ready (above) as you lead the students in completing the class chart and smaller student copies introduced in Session 1. Look up the Catechism questions about the rites of Reconciliation and Unction on page 861 of *The Book of Common Prayer*.

Reconciliation of a Penitent (Penance) involves individual Christians who

confess their sins to God in the presence of a priest. They are assured that God pardons sins, and they receive the grace of absolution (BCP, pp. 447-452). Ask the students to look up *I John 1:1-2* in their Bibles. Find a reference to this passage in *The Book of Common Prayer* in the service of Holy Eucharist, Rite I, p. 332. Where is it used? What comes just before and after?

Ministration to the Sick (Unction of the Sick) is performed when those who are ill, or others acting on their behalf, seek prayers and anointing from a priest. Invite the students to reread the passage in *James 5:14-16*. The use of oil and the laying on of hands have their origin in this and other passages in the New Testament.

Compare the similarities of the two rites. Both provide the ministry of healing. We are healed in spirit when we confess our sins and receive forgiveness. When we are physically ill, God's grace is given.

Invite students to add names of people who are sick or something for which they need forgiveness to paper bags used in the Gathering. Make them available throughout the class period. At the dismissal, add a prayer for the sick and the sins that have been confessed. Provide a time for students to add their petitions verbally or in silence.

EXPLORING *(Time: 15-20 minutes)*

Option 1. Praying for the Sick

Before coming to class, get the current prayer list for your congregation. Photocopy enough for each person in the class. Pass the lists out and ask the group if they know anyone on the list. Ask each person to select one name.

Make available construction paper, markers, crayons, glue, envelopes, and a current church directory. Ask the students to design cards that can be sent to the people they have chosen. (Be sure the cards fit the envelopes you have provided.) Use Scripture passages read at the Gathering or in the Learning Scripture section below. Encourage the students to be as creative as possible.

When the cards are completed, put them in envelopes and address them. Put them near the paper sacks used in the Gathering.

Pass around the bag marked "Healing," and ask students to draw a name. If they draw one that they put in, ask them to return it and take another. Make a covenant with each other to pray during the week for the person on the slip of paper. Encourage students to take home the prayer lists and to pray for the person they made the card for.

Option 2. Pieces Back Together

For each student, supply a piece of posterboard approximately 6 x 9 inches, scissors, pens and markers, old magazines, an index card, and a ziplock bag. Direct the class members to prepare images of peace, health, and wholeness (such as hands being placed on a sick person's head, a peaceful scene from nature, or a Scripture verse). Explain at the outset that the images are to be cut into pieces and reassembled.

When the cutting is finished, ask the class members to place the pieces in the bags. Direct the students to exchange the bags with one another, and reassemble the pieces. As they do so, talk about the images students chose

and how God can bring us wholeness.

Option 3. Word Puzzle

Turn in the student newspaper, *Church Times*, Unit III, Issue 5, to the word puzzle titled “Reconciliation.”

Students may work individually, in pairs, or as a total group.

MUSIC (*Time: 10 minutes*)

Listen to “Wilt thou forgive that sin, where I begun” (*The Hymnal 1982*, 140, 141) on the *Children Sing!* tape. The words of this hymn are by the great English poet and priest, John Donne. Ask: How would you describe the poet's mood? What is he sorry for? What does he hope?

The music is by Johann Sebastian Bach. It will be easier to sing if the tape is played while the students simply follow the words on the hymnal page.

CONNECTING/SPEAKING OUT (*Time: 15-20 minutes*)

Option 1. Group Discussion

Ask the students to turn, in *The Book of Common Prayer*, to the rite for Ministration to the Sick, pp. 453-457. Call their attention to the italicized directions on page 453. Ask: Who is to be notified when someone is sick? What is always included in the service? Who leads the service? When and where can this service be used?

Now ask the student to look at the service for reconciliation beginning on page 447 of *The Book of Common Prayer*. Look at the top of page 451. The person seeking forgiveness is asked to forgive those who “have sinned against you.” Ask: Is there anyone you need to forgive? Are you holding any grudges? Does the person you need to forgive want your forgiveness? Why is this included in this service?

Option 2. Current Events

Pass out the news sections of recent newspapers. Ask students to find and cut out stories about people who are ill, who have been hurt in some way, or who are angry with others. Give students time to share the stories they found with the group.

Put the stories on a posterboard as a collage of people in need of healing. Ask the students to stand in a circle around the artwork. In silence or aloud, pray for the people on the poster. If possible, leave the poster up in the room as a reminder to pray for those in need of healing.

REFLECTING (*Time: 10 minutes*)

Lead the students in a guided meditation, using the process described in Session 1.

Ask the group to close their eyes while you speak slowly from the outline that follows.

“You and some of your friends were playing soccer after school. After a while, an argument broke out. Everyone started shouting at once about a rule someone had ignored.

“Soon you were caught up in a scuffle. You pushed a friend. The friend pushed back. Then you chased your friend out into the street. Just then you heard a car's brakes squealing against the pavement. But it was too late. You and your friend were both hit by the car. The police and an ambulance came, and within a few minutes you were taken to the hospital.

“You are lying in the hospital bed. Your left leg is in a cast. You hurt. And just now, the priest from your church has come into your room. The priest calls you by name and says gently, ‘I’m so glad the doctors said you and your friend are going to be all right.’ You do not answer, for you are feeling very sad about what happened. The priest speaks again, ‘Do you have something you’d like to say, or to ask?’ . . .”

Allow a few moments of silence, then ask the students: What do you think would help you feel less miserable? If the priest offered to pray with you, what kinds of prayers would you have wanted?

LEARNING SKILLS *(Time: 10-15 minutes)*

Option 1. Class Memory Challenge

Review the Holy Days observed by the Church in December, then invite the students to master a list of four more Feasts that occur in the winter months of January through March:

January 18—The Confession of St. Peter the Apostle

January 25—The Conversion of St. Paul the Apostle

February 24—St. Matthias the Apostle

March 19—St. Joseph

The two dates in January are for events that begin with “Con.” February has only one black letter day. We remember Joseph in March, just before spring arrives.

Again, call out the names of the four days in order and ask the students to shout back the correct dates. Continue this process in random patterns until the memory task is completed. (See the “Memory Challenge” block in the student newspaper, *Church Times*.)

Option 2. Learning Scripture

Prepare paper crosses with printed texts of any verses memorized since the previous session, as described in Session 1. Invite them to add paper mosaic pieces to the appropriate crosses on the poster.

For the next class session, encourage class members to learn *James 5:16a* or *I John 2:1b*. See “Learning Scripture” in the student newspaper, *Church Times*.

ONGOING PROJECT *(Time: 5-10 minutes)*

Complete the medallion project as described in Session 1. For this session, ask the students to use their imaginations to create a symbol suggesting the sacramental rites of Reconciliation of a Penitent or Unction of the Sick. Possibilities might be a kneeling figure, hands clasped in prayer, or an oil stock. As the students work, conduct a summarizing discussion about the Church's sacramental ministry as a way of strengthening Christians for their mission to the world.

SYMBOL CARD and TREASUREBOOK

Card 23 shows an olive branch, along with a verse of Scripture, and an explanation on the back.

Invite the students to explore in the *Cross Year Treasurebook*, Part III, Sections 5 and 6, the sacramental rites of Reconciliation of a Penitent and of Unction of the Sick. How are these two rites related?

GOING FORTH

Gather the group for the dismissal. The teacher or a student will say the following, pausing for the students' response of "Lord, have mercy":

For our Bishop, and for all the clergy and people, let us pray to the Lord.

Lord, have mercy.

For this city (town, village, _____), for every city and community, and for those who live in them, let us pray to the Lord.

Lord, have mercy.

That we may end our lives in faith and hope, without suffering and without reproach, let us pray to the Lord.

Lord, have mercy.

For _____ [learners may add their own petitions], let us pray to the Lord.

Lord, have mercy.

From The Prayers of the People
The Book of Common Prayer, pp. 384-385

Teacher: Let us go forth in the name of Christ.

Students: Thanks be to God.

TEACHER'S ASSESSMENT

Were the students able to connect the rites of Reconciliation of a Penitent and Unction of the Sick with experiences in their own lives? What were some of the feelings they shared in this session?

LOOKING AHEAD

The next session is the first of four that are related to themes of Lent, Holy Week, and Easter. What does the season of Lent contribute to your own life? What are some Lenten disciplines you find helpful?

FOCUS

The Church's observance of the season of Lent stems from the Gospel accounts of the forty days following Jesus' baptism. He did not yield to any of the temptations that awaited him. The students should be able to describe a meaningful observance of this season in the Church Year.

GETTING READY

The word "Lent" comes from an old English word for "lengthen." Hence, Lent marks the time of year when the days lengthen and spring arrives. More importantly, the Church's establishment of the season is based on the Gospel accounts of Jesus' lonely forty-day fast following his baptism at the hands of John the Baptist. There he encountered the devil and his faith was tested.

The wilderness story is condensed into two verses in *Mark 1:12-13*. The description of three temptations and Jesus' responses is found in *Luke 4:1-13* and *Matthew 4:1-11*.

Jesus was tempted (1) to turn stones into bread to satisfy his hunger; (2) to worship the devil in exchange for all the kingdoms of the world; and (3) to cast himself off the pinnacle of the temple in a stunt-like demonstration of special power.

None of us have faced these tests. They were unique to the life of Jesus as he waited to begin his ministry as Messiah. But if we look at the answers Jesus gave to the tempter, we can see that they are the very responses we can make to our own temptations:

- "One does not live by bread alone" (*Luke 4:4b*). Our existence is spiritual as well as physical. We separate ourselves from God when we become focused on material gain alone.

- "Worship only the Lord your God, and serve only him" (*Luke 4:8b*). Our culture invites us to neglect the life of prayer and participation in the sacraments.

- "Do not put the Lord your God to the test" (*Luke 4:12b*). We are in no way self-sufficient and able to command our own destinies. To do so is to try the patience of God who created us and desires our commitment and obedience.

In remembrance of Jesus' testing and victory, we consider soberly our own spiritual condition. We recall our initiation into the Body of Christ as we pray for all who are preparing to be baptized and confirmed at Easter. And we seek our Lord's help for facing temptations as we live under the reign of God. Intermediate-age students can be helped to appropriate Jesus' answers as they, too, encounter spiritual testing.

Almighty God, whose blessed Son was led by the Spirit to be tempted by Satan: Come quickly to help us who are assaulted by many temptations; and, as you know the weaknesses of each of us, let each one find you mighty to save; through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. *Amen*.

First Sunday in Lent

The Book of Common Prayer, p. 218

WORSHIP

Session 6

Observing Lent

TEACHING TIP

Although intermediate-age students are caught up in the pursuits of school, sports, popular music, and other aspects of contemporary culture, many are ready to think about the spiritual disciplines of prayer and reflection associated with the season of Lent. But because young persons guard the privacy of their lives, be careful not to intrude. Help them understand the season by sharing your own experiences with Lent and its challenges to greater Christian commitment.

GATHERING

From the Teacher's Packet, display Poster No. 16 of Jesus in the wilderness. As the students arrive, invite them to respond to the picture by writing words and phrases on a nearby chalkboard or a sheet of newsprint. Ask: What is happening in the painting? Who are the two figures?

When everyone is present, say:

Let us pray. (Use the Collect “First Sunday in Lent,” above, or a prayer of your own choosing.)

The chosen student lector reads from the class Bible (NRSV):

A Reading from the Gospel of Mark, chapter 1, verses 9-13.

In those days Jesus came from Nazareth of Galilee and was baptized by John in the Jordan. And just as he was coming up out of the water, he saw the heavens torn apart and the Spirit descending like a dove on him. And a voice came from heaven, “You are my Son, the Beloved; with you I am well pleased.”

And the Spirit immediately drove him out into the wilderness. He was in the wilderness forty days, tempted by Satan; and he was with the wild beasts; and the angels waited on him.

Reader: The Word of the Lord.

Response: Thanks be to God.

INTRODUCING THE STORY (Time: 10-20 minutes)

Tell in your own words the story of Jesus in the wilderness and the temptations he faced there. Or, base your story on the article on page 1 of the student newspaper, *Church Times* (Unit III, Issue 6).

Divide the class into three groups. Assign each group one of the following passages: *Mark 1:9-13*, *Matthew 4:1-11*, and *Luke 4:1-13*. Ask each group to find descriptions of the temptations Jesus faced and write them down on a piece of newsprint.

Hang the three pieces of newsprint in front of the group. Compare the way the story is told in the three gospels. Draw on the material in Getting Ready to describe how we can use the same responses Jesus made to our own temptations. Be ready to give concrete examples for each response, or ask the students to help you.

Material gains could be related to “needing” latest video games or designer sport shoe. In the second temptation, we are tempted by our culture sometimes to put sports before church attendance (both in playing and as a

spectator). In the third, we think we are in control and refuse to ask God or anyone else for help with homework, a bad day, or mending a broken friendship.

Look again at Poster No. 16 of Jesus in the wilderness. Ask: Do you see the picture differently now? Who are the two people in the foreground? What is happening?

Tell the students how the remembrance of this event helps us look at our own lives. The season of Lent was established by the Church to remember the forty days that Jesus fasted after his baptism and the devil's three tests. (Also see page 2 of the student newspaper.)

Invite the students to look at the current year's calendar, noting the dates for Ash Wednesday and Easter Day. Explain that Sundays are not included in counting the forty days. Sunday is always a feast day, a little "Easter," to celebrate Jesus' resurrection.

EXPLORING *(Time: 15-20 minutes)*

Option 1. Solemn Scenes

Divide the class members into three teams. Give each team a large sheet of posterboard or sturdy drawing paper and a supply of pens and markers.

Assign the three temptations of Jesus, one to each team. Before you begin, decide if you want to depict biblical scenes or draw three modern temptations based on the biblical story. If you make literal drawings, encourage the students to print their own paraphrases of the devil's words, at the top of each drawing. At the bottom, write Jesus' reply.

If you do a modern version, encourage students to use a situation that they might find themselves in. Take time to discuss ideas if needed.

When all three scenes are finished, display them in order and discuss the students' interpretations.

Option 2. Personal Calendars

From Poster No. 18 in the Teacher's Packet, make a photocopy of the blank Lenten calendar for each student. Distribute these, and ask the students to add the current dates. Discuss your own congregation's plans for observing Lent and Holy Week. Write in the events and services on the proper days. If the students wish to do so, they may add the Gospel readings for the six Sundays, using the Lectionary of *The Book of Common Prayer*, pp. 889-921.

Option 3. Word Puzzle

Turn in the student newspaper, *Church Times*, Unit III, Issue 6, to the word puzzle titled "The Temptation." Students may work individually, in pairs, or as a total group.

MUSIC *(Time: 10 minutes)*

Invite the students to read aloud the words of "Lord, who throughout these forty days" (*The Hymnal 1982*, 142), and then listen to it on the *Children Sing!* tape. This prayer for use in Lent is set to a Psalm tune that is over 400 years old and is easy to sing. Note that the hymn opens at the beginning of the forty days of Lent and ends with Easter hope.

CONNECTING/SPEAKING OUT *(Time: 15-20 minutes)*

Option 1. Group Discussion

Direct the students to read *Matthew 4:1-11* in their Bibles. Suggest that one student take the part of the devil (Satan, or the Evil One), and another take the part of Jesus. Ask them to read, in order, the direct quotes for each temptation. A third class member can serve as narrator, reading the passage and pausing for the two actors' lines. Follow the same procedure with *Luke 4:1-13*.

Together, compare the texts of the two Gospels. What is different? You may want to make a chalkboard list to show the order of the temptations in each account.

Ask: In the reading, how did Jesus respond to the temptations? When you are tempted, how do you “talk with yourself”? What are your inner conflicts? Where do you turn for help?

Option 2. Current Events

Encourage the students to share some of the temptations that come their way in daily life. If they feel comfortable doing so, encourage the group to share specific examples—such as the temptations to engage in violent behavior, to steal, to cheat in school, or to avoid homework and other responsibilities.

Ask: When these temptations come, what can make it hard to resist? Where can you turn for support when you need to say no to a temptation? If you yield to a temptation, how does it make you feel? What can you do about such feelings?

REFLECTING *(Time: 10 minutes)*

Prepare a guided meditation on the season of Lent. Encourage students to share their concepts of this period in the Church Year.

Ask the students to close their eyes and sit quietly as you share your own version of the following:

Think about what an encounter with the devil would look like today. The wilderness might be replaced with a busy mall, filled with people, but still lonely if you are by yourself. Or, it might be in an urban setting, on a street corner where drugs are being sold. Or, it might be far from civilization in a dark forest, or in the hot desert areas of the Southwest. Picture the place where you would feel the most alone.

Remember a time when you were very hungry and how you felt. After his long fast, Jesus must have wanted food and a cool drink more than anything.

If you were in the mall, the devil might offer you all the merchandise that surrounded you. If you were in a city, a drug lord might offer you incredible money and power if you were willing to leave your church and its teaching behind. In the forest or the desert, the devil might tempt you with the idea that you can do everything by yourself—that you don't need any outside help.

You listen to the temptations and you speak to God in a prayer that comes straight from your heart. You say, “Dear God, . . .”

After a period of silence, ask: What makes people take wrong turns in

their lives? What gives us strength to resist temptations that come our way? What can we do if we sin against God and our neighbor?

LEARNING SKILLS *(Time: 10-15 minutes)*

Option 1. Class Memory Challenge

Continue with the challenging task of learning names and dates for Other Major Feasts observed by the Church. At this session, focus on four feasts of springtime and early summer, April through June:

April 25—St. Mark the Evangelist

May 1—St. Philip and St. James, Apostles

June 11—St. Barnabas the Apostle

June 29—St. Peter and St. Paul, Apostles

Remind the students that Peter's confession and Paul's conversion were observed on separate dates earlier in the Church Year (January 18 and 25, respectively). They are the only apostles who appear twice in the Year's celebrations.

Suggest that the students work in pairs or teams to devise their own ways of learning these four Feasts and reviewing all twelve memorized thus far in the Unit. See the "Memory Challenge" block in the student newspaper, *Church Times*.

Option 2. Learning Scripture

Make paper crosses on which to print the verses students have learned since the previous session, as described in Session 1. Invite class members to add mosaic pieces as appropriate.

For the next session, encourage the students to learn *Luke 22:14* or *Luke 22:42*. See "Learning Scripture" in the student newspaper, *Church Times*.

ONGOING PROJECT *(Time: 5-10 minutes)*

For Sessions 6-9 of this Unit—on the themes of Lent, Holy Week, and Easter—suggest that the students make posters to represent four Stations of the Cross. When completed, they can be placed on display for all members of the congregation to see.

You will need posterboard, colored markers, glue, and creative art materials such as pieces of felt or other fabric, construction paper, yarn, pebbles, and bits of wood and dried grasses.

From the church library or a clergy person, obtain a copy of *The Book of Occasional Services* to review the scenes in the traditional fourteen Stations. If your congregation has paintings or carvings of the Stations, arrange for the group to view them in preparation for this task. The following four are suggested for this project: Jesus takes up his cross (Station 2); Jesus meets the women of Jerusalem (8); Jesus dies on the cross (12); and Jesus is laid in a tomb (14).

Challenge the class members to use their imaginations to design a poster showing Jesus taking up his cross. Ask: What will Jesus' posture be? How will the cross be portrayed? What could be added to the background?

When the group has roughed out the general scene, assist them in dividing the work among themselves. One member of the class may be chosen to print the Station's title on the poster.

SYMBOL CARD and TREASUREBOOK

Card 25 shows a crown of thorns, along with a verse of Scripture, and an explanation on the back.

Invite the students to explore in the *Cross Year Treasurebook*, Part III, Section 7. In what ways does the Church observe Lent?

GOING FORTH

Gather the group for the dismissal. The teacher or a student will say the following, pausing for the students' response of "Lord, have mercy":

For our Bishop, and for all the clergy and people, let us pray to the Lord.

Lord, have mercy.

For this city (town, village, _____), for every city and community, and for those who live in them, let us pray to the Lord.

Lord, have mercy.

That we may end our lives in faith and hope, without suffering and without reproach, let us pray to the Lord.

Lord, have mercy.

For _____ [learners may add their own petitions], let us pray to the Lord.

Lord, have mercy.

From The Prayers of the People
The Book of Common Prayer, pp. 384-385

Teacher: Let us go forth in the name of Christ.

Students: Thanks be to God.

TEACHER'S ASSESSMENT

How did the students respond to this study of the season of Lent? What were their reactions to Jesus' temptations? Could they relate the temptations to their own lives?

LOOKING AHEAD

The next session is on the trial and death of Jesus. Spend time with the Scriptural accounts of Jesus' last week, his final testing, and his crucifixion. What is your personal response to these sobering stories?

FOCUS

On the night before Jesus was betrayed, he was hastily brought before priests and accused of blasphemy. The following morning he was bound and taken to Pilate for judgment. Pilate, although he did not see that Jesus had done anything wrong, flogged Jesus and handed him over to be crucified. The students should be able to list the events between Jesus' betrayal and his death.

GETTING READY

The disciple Judas was apparently disappointed that Jesus had not declared himself to be an earthly king (Messiah). He was also resentful over Jesus' rebuke after he had criticized Jesus for extravagance in accepting Mary Magdalene's anointing with expensive perfume (*John 12:4-8*). Judas arranged to betray Jesus to Roman soldiers at a moment when the authorities were concerned about Jewish unrest supposedly instigated by Jesus himself.

After his betrayal and arrest, Jesus was taken away by soldiers. From the four Gospels, we can piece together the story of what happened during the next ten crucial hours. He was forced to appear before Jewish leaders and Roman officials six times:

(1) at the home of Annas, father-in-law of the high priest, Caiphas, for a brief examination (*John 18:13*);

(2) in the house of Caiphas, for an illegal pre-dawn questioning during which some Sanhedrin members spat on him and mocked him (*Matthew 26:69-75; Mark 14:53-65; Luke 22:54-65*);

(3) at the council or Sanhedrin, where he admitted he was the Son of God and was then condemned (*Luke 22:66-70*);

(4) at the Roman praetorium before Pilate, where he faced various charges of subversion (*Luke 23:1-7*);

(5) in the court of Herod Antipas, a Roman authority, who treated him mockingly and with contempt but found no real fault in him (*Luke 23:8-12, 15*);

(6) and once again at Pilate's seat of judgment, where he was finally condemned to be scourged and crucified (*Mark 15:1-15*).

Jesus' suffering and death on a cross are described in detail in all four Gospels: *Matthew 27:27-54; Mark 15:16-39; Luke 23:26-47; John 19:1-30*.

Lord God, whose blessed Son our Savior gave his body to be whipped and his face to be spit upon: Give us grace to accept joyfully the sufferings of the present time, confident of the glory that shall be revealed through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. *Amen.*

Wednesday in Holy Week

The Book of Common Prayer, p. 220

TEACHING TIP

Most intermediate-age students are able to arrange data chronologically and can sketch the order of events celebrated in Holy Week. Link the story of Jesus' Passion with the content of the liturgies for Palm Sunday, Maundy

WORSHIP

Session 7

Jesus Was Condemned to Die

Thursday, and Good Friday. Encourage the young persons to attend these services in your congregation.

GATHERING

Display Poster No. 16 in the Teacher's Packet of a painting of Judas' kiss of betrayal. As the students arrive, call their attention to the picture. Ask them to study it silently. Their impressions will be shared later in the session.

When everyone is present, say:

Let us pray. (Use the Collect "Wednesday in Holy Week," above, or a prayer of your own choosing.)

The chosen student lector reads from the class Bible (NRSV):

A Reading from the Gospel of Luke, chapter 23, verses 1 through 5.

Then the assembly rose as a body and brought Jesus before Pilate. They began to accuse him, saying, "We found this man perverting our nation, forbidding us to pay taxes to the emperor, and saying that he himself is the Messiah, a king." Then Pilate asked him, "Are you the king of the Jews?" He answered, "You say so." Then Pilate said to the chief priests and the crowds, "I find no basis for an accusation against this man." But they were insistent and said, "He stirs up the people by teaching throughout all Judea, from Galilee where he began even to this place."

Reader: The Word of the Lord.

Response: Thanks be to God.

INTRODUCING THE STORY *(Time: 10-20 minutes)*

Begin by asking students to share their impressions of the painting viewed at the Gathering. Ask: Why was Judas embracing Jesus? Why do you think he acted as he did?

Announce that this session is devoted to Jesus' final hours, his death, and the surprise of his resurrection.

Decide on a way to share what happened between the time of Jesus' arrest in the Garden of Gethsemane and his being led away to die on the cross. Retell the story in your own words using the article about the Jesus' trial before Pilate on page 1 of the student newspaper, *Church Times* (Unit III, Issue 7). Consider staging the dramatization suggested in Exploring (below).

Direct the students to find *Luke 23:1-25* in their Bibles. Ask them to focus on Pilate. What were his attitudes toward Jesus at the beginning? Why do you think he agreed to hand Jesus over to his enemies?

EXPLORING *(Time: 15-20 minutes)*

Option 1. Dramatization

Set up eight brief scenes in which the students act out the story of Jesus' trial and condemnation, as outlined under Getting Ready (above). Choose a student to take the role of Jesus in the seven scenes.

Scene 1: Betrayal of Jesus. Additional characters: Judas, soldiers, Peter

and other disciples.

Scene 2: Brief appearance before Annas. Character: Annas.

Scene 3: Illegal gathering at home of Caiphas. Characters: Caiphas, the high priest; several members of the Sanhedrin (Jewish council).

Scene 4: Appearance before the full Sanhedrin. Characters: Caiphas, elders, priests, and scribes.

Scene 5: First appearance before Pilate. Characters: Pilate, soldiers.

Scene 6: Before Herod. Characters: Herod, soldiers.

Scene 7: Before Pilate again. Characters: Pilate, crowd of people opposed to Jesus, soldiers.

Consider practicing and performing the drama at an appropriate event at your church.

Option 2. Making Crosses

Choose materials and a method of making small crosses that can be worn by the students themselves or presented to others as gifts. Possibilities are nails to be glued or wired together; twigs to be crossed and tied with wire or heavy black thread; narrow, flat strips of wood to be glued together; or braided raffia. For wearing, select string, yarn, leather strips, or bead necklaces.

When supplies are gathered, invite the class members to work together on the project. Encourage discussion of the significance of the cross as a Christian symbol. Note that an empty cross can signify Christ's victory over sin and death.

Option 3. Word Puzzle

Turn in the student newspaper, *Church Times*, Unit III, Issue 7, to the crossword puzzle titled "Trial of Jesus." Students may work individually, in pairs, or as a total group.

MUSIC (*Time: 10 minutes*)

Read stanzas 1 and 5 of the hymn, "There is a green hill far away" (*The Hymnal 1982*, 167; *We Sing of God*, 31), and then listen to the hymn on the *Children Sing!* tape. It was written by Mrs. Cecil Frances Alexander who also wrote "Jesus calls us; o'er the tumult" (used in Music, Sessions 2-4). In this Holy Week hymn, she wanted to help children interpret the words, "suffered under Pontius Pilate," in the Apostles' Creed.

Ask: Where is the green hill? What does the last stanza ask us to do? You may want to experiment with alternating groups singing the phrases. In stanza 1, break after "far away," and "crucified." In stanza 5, divide the text at "he loved!" and "blood."

CONNECTING/SPEAKING OUT (*Time: 15-20 minutes*)

Option 1. Group Discussion

As a group, review the events of Holy Week. Use the Lenten calendars if they were made during Session 6. An article about the events and their order also appears on page 2 of the student newspaper, *Church Times*. Note that the four Gospels do not agree precisely on the order of events the three days

after Palm Sunday.

Jesus spent time teaching in the temple and may have driven out people doing business there. The next event was the Last Supper, which may have been a Passover Seder. After the Last Supper, Jesus was arrested and tried. On Friday, he was crucified.

His body was placed in a tomb that belonged to Joseph of Arimathea. On the next day, the people waited and prayed. On Sunday, the empty tomb was discovered.

Talk about the events. Find out which ones are most familiar to the group. Encourage the students to speculate about the topics Jesus raised early in the week at the temple. What would you have said to the people?

Option 2. Current Events

Ask the students to look in newspapers and magazines for stories and pictures of court cases and people facing trials. Invite the students to recall any court trials they know about from recent news. How were they reported in the press? How do modern courts determine whether a person is guilty or innocent? Ask: If Jesus' appearance before Pilate were occurring in our own day, what do you think people would have said about it? Would it have turned out in the same way? Why, or why not?

REFLECTING (*Time: 10 minutes*)

Ask the students to reflect on what it would have been like to witness the final trials of Jesus. If you were his friend and follower, where would you go? What would you hope for? If you had been one of Jesus' enemies, what would be your reason for opposing him?

Invite the class members to close their eyes and remain quiet for a few moments. Then use the following outline for a guided meditation:

“You are a servant in the household of Pontius Pilate. You have been a trusted employee, and you respect Pilate as a just man who has made many fair decisions.

“Several months ago, a friend of yours invited you to visit a group of Jewish people who were followers of a teacher named Jesus. You listened to him speaking, and you were deeply touched by his kind, gentle manner. You wanted to hear more of what he said about God.

“Now you have received some very disturbing news. Jesus has been arrested. His enemies are determined to see him condemned to death. And the final judgment will be made by Pilate! Inwardly, you feel that Pilate will like Jesus. He would never want to allow such a good person to die.

“When Jesus was brought to Pilate's home, you arranged to be in the background where you could see and hear what was happening. You looked at the face of Jesus. Your heart went out to him as he stood there looking so helpless. You heard Pilate say that he could find nothing wrong with Jesus. Good, you thought. He will set Jesus free.

“But in the end it did not turn out the way you hoped. The crowds of Jesus' enemies shouted that they wanted him crucified. To your great sorrow, Pilate finally gave in. Jesus was led away to die on a cross.”

Allow a short period of silence. Ask: What are you feeling? Where can you go? Who can help you?

LEARNING SKILLS *(Time: 10-15 minutes)*

Option 1. Class Memory Challenge

Encourage the class members to proceed with the challenge of memorizing Other Major Feasts. See the “Memory Challenge” block in the student newspaper, *Church Times*. At this session, work on six Feasts observed in July through September (two for each month):

July 22—St. Mary Magdalene

July 25—St. James the Apostle

August 15—St. Mary, the Virgin, Mother of Our Lord Jesus Christ

August 24—St. Bartholomew the Apostle

September 21—St. Matthew, Apostle and Evangelist

September 29—St. Michael and All Angels

Note that each month includes one Apostle. Both July and August include Feasts for a Mary. The names of honored Saints in September both begin with *M* also.

Call out the three months, one at a time, so that the students can name the Feasts and their dates.

Option 2. Learning Scripture

Print verses students have learned since the previous session on paper crosses and glue them to the posterboard, as suggested in Session 1.

For the next session, the following are suggested for memorization: *Luke 23:34*, *Luke 23:42*, or *Luke 23:46*. See “Learning Scripture” in the student newspaper, *Church Times*.

ONGOING PROJECT *(Time: 5-10 minutes)*

Ahead of time, check all the supplies for this ongoing project described in Session 6. If the work is just beginning in this session, decide on the best way to apportion the time available. For this session, suggest that the students create the scene of Jesus meeting the women of Jerusalem on the way to the cross (Station 8 of the traditional group of 14). Ask: How many women can be included? What will they wear? What expressions will they have on their faces? How will Jesus appear as he sees them?

As the poster is completed, print the title beneath the scene.

SYMBOL CARD and TREASUREBOOK

Card 24 shows a chalice with a cross, along with a verse of Scripture, and an explanation on the back.

Invite the students to look again at the *Cross Year Treasurebook*, Part III, Section 8. How has the history of the world been affected by the gospel of Jesus Christ?

GOING FORTH

Gather the group for the dismissal. The teacher or a student will say the following, pausing for the students' response of “Lord, have mercy”:

For our Bishop, and for all the clergy and people, let us pray to the

Lord.

Lord, have mercy.

For this city (town, village, _____), for every city and community, and for those who live in them, let us pray to the Lord.

Lord, have mercy.

That we may end our lives in faith and hope, without suffering and without reproach, let us pray to the Lord.

Lord, have mercy.

For _____ [learners may add their own petitions], let us pray to the Lord.

Lord, have mercy.

From The Prayers of the People

The Book of Common Prayer, pp. 384-385

Teacher: Let us go forth in the name of Christ.

Students: Thanks be to God.

TEACHER'S ASSESSMENT

How well did the students know the story of Jesus' trial, condemnation, and death? Which details seemed new or unfamiliar? Do the class members give evidence of serious appreciation of Jesus' great sacrifice for our sake?

LOOKING AHEAD

The next session is on the resurrection of Jesus from the dead. How has the good news of Easter affected your own life? When did you first sense its profound significance? What do you hope for as Easter arrives?

FOCUS

Luke's story of the glorious resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead is one of the Gospel lessons for Easter Day celebrations in the Church. The students should be able to tell the story in their own words and explain why it is the center of the Christian faith.

GETTING READY

The resurrection of Jesus Christ is at the heart of the entire New Testament. The reality of Jesus Christ's rising from the dead shaped the faith and life of his followers. If this event had not happened, his death would have been simply another human tragedy.

This session focuses on the resurrection account in *Luke 24:1-12*, but the Easter story is remarkably similar in all four Gospels. None of the differences in details can detract us from the central truth: Women went to the tomb on the first day of the week, and they found it empty.

When the disciples heard the news, they took it to be an “idle tale” (*Luke 24:11*). They did not believe. And when Peter ran to the tomb to see for himself, “he went home, amazed at what had happened” (verse 12).

We know, from reading further in the letters of Paul and the *Book of Acts*, that the community of early Christians came only gradually to the firm conviction that the resurrection was a radical division in time itself. God had brought about a total victory over sin and death, and a “new creation” had begun. Indeed, the resurrection has been compared to the miracle of Israel's crossing of the Red Sea. That event had been totally unexpected, and it marked a new era for God's people. The resurrection of Jesus, the Messiah, was all the more decisive for human history.

The resurrection was God's yes to the world's no. On Good Friday, the finest systems of justice in the world had nailed Jesus to the cross. That event was humanity's defiant no to all that is right and good. But God had the last word. Our risen Lord validates final victory for love, forgiveness, reconciliation, trust, and hope.

Because of our faith in the risen Christ, we can live with confidence in a world still battling the forces of sin and evil. We have in our hearts the good news of Easter: Not even death itself can separate us from the love of God. Our own lives do matter, and our human striving for peace and justice truly counts in the eyes of our Lord.

O God, who made this most holy night to shine with the glory of the Lord's resurrection: Stir up in your Church that Spirit of adoption which is given to us in Baptism, that we, being renewed both in body and mind, may worship you in sincerity and truth; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. *Amen.*

Easter Day

The Book of Common Prayer, p. 222

WORSHIP

Session 8

Resurrection

TEACHING TIP

In literature, television shows, and the media, characters come back from the dead in different forms. In the eyes of some intermediate students, the story of Christ's resurrection may pale in comparison. Stress the importance of the resurrection in the Christian faith and how it began a new creation.

GATHERING

Display Poster No. 17 in the Teacher's Packet showing a portrayal of the empty tomb from an African perspective. As the students arrive, suggest that they study the scene in detail. Ask: What did the artist hope viewers would see first? If you were to attempt such a painting, how would your work differ from this artist's?

When everyone is present, say:

Let us pray. (Use the Collect "Easter Day," above, or a prayer of your own choosing.)

The chosen student lector reads from the class Bible (NRSV):

A Reading from the Gospel of Luke, chapter 24, verses 1 through 12.

But on the first day of the week, at early dawn, they came to the tomb, taking the spices that they had prepared. They found the stone rolled away from the tomb, but when they went in, they did not find the body. While they were perplexed about this, suddenly two men in dazzling clothes stood beside them. The women were terrified and bowed their faces to the ground, but the men said to them, "Why do you look for the living among the dead? He is not here, but has risen. Remember how he told you, while he was still in Galilee, that the Son of Man must be handed over to sinners, and be crucified, and on the third day rise again." Then they remembered his words, and returning from the tomb, they told all this to the eleven and to all the rest. Now it was Mary Magdalene, Joanna, Mary the mother of James, and the other women with them who told this to the apostles. But these words seemed to them an idle tale, and they did not believe them. But Peter got up and ran to the tomb; stooping and looking in, he saw the linen cloths by themselves; then he went home, amazed at what had happened.

Reader: The Word of the Lord.

Response: Thanks be to God.

INTRODUCING THE STORY (*Time: 10-20 minutes*)

Depending on the time available, you may prefer to begin by sharing your own outline of Luke's story of the resurrection, followed by a summary of key points drawn from Getting Ready (above). You could also use the article on page 1 of the student newspaper, *Church Times* (Unit III, Issue 8), in telling the story.

Another way to introduce this Easter session would be to involve the students in staging a series of tableaux. Gather simple costume materials (head cloths and loose-fitting robes).

Ask the students to look up the Scripture passage, *Luke 24:1-12*, in their Bibles. Together, make up a list of words and phrases describing the reactions of the characters in the passage, such as terrified, perplexed, and amazed. Use these characterizations as you plan the tableaux. Assign parts for the following:

Tableau 1: The group of women, carrying spices in baskets, is standing at the door of the empty tomb. Their faces show apprehension and fear.

Tableau 2: Two figures in white are standing. The women have their heads bowed toward the ground.

Tableau 3: The figures in white are addressing the women. Their faces show great surprise.

Tableau 4: The women are with Jesus' disciples, sharing their amazing discovery. The women's hands are posed in gestures that suggest excitement. The disciples are looking at one another with disbelief, perhaps with palms extended to express doubt.

Tableau 5: Peter is running toward the tomb. Others can be lingering in the background.

The first time through, encourage the actors to say what they think the characters might have said. The second time, ask the students to maintain complete silence, using only their faces and their bodies to indicate the action.

If an instant camera is available, consider making photographs of all the scenes, then arranging them on a display board in order under the caption, "He is not here. He is risen." Consider making a videotape of the scenes to show another group in the church.

EXPLORING (*Time: 15-20 minutes*)

Option 1. Alleluia!

During the season of Lent, the word "Alleluia" disappears from the liturgy, and we do not sing hymns that include the word. (For more information see Unit III, Issue 6 of the *Church Times*.) At the Feast of Easter, "Alleluia" reappears along with the joy Christians feel as they celebrate the resurrection of Christ.

Find a phrase or portion of *The Book of Common Prayer* that includes the word Alleluia. For example, it is used at the Breaking of the Bread in the Communion service on page 364. It is also added to the people's response at the dismissal (p. 366).

Design a message with the word "Alleluia" using these phrases or one of your own making and put it on a posterboard. Make the artwork as colorful as possible. Find a way for everyone to contribute by dividing up the work: some can work on borders that can be added while others try their hands at calligraphy.

Find a place to hang the poster in the church to help others feel the joy of this season.

Option 2. Making Easter Postcards

Invite the students to make Easter postcards to be mailed to shut-ins, residents of nursing homes, or patients in hospitals.

Obtain cardstock or lightweight tagboard. Cut a supply of pieces that are the exact size of a standard postal card. Gather pens and markers, complete addresses for card recipients, postage stamps, and printed examples of Easter symbols: an egg, a butterfly, or a bursting pomegranate.

Suggest that the class members choose one symbol for the centerpiece of each card, with a selected verse from *Luke 24:1-12* beneath it. Decide whether to sign the cards with individual students' names or to send them from the class as a whole.

Remind the students that the season of Easter lasts fifty days, and it is appropriate to mail the cards at any time during that period.

Option 3. Word Puzzle

Turn in the student newspaper, *Church Times*, Unit III, Issue 8, to the word puzzle titled "Emotions of Easter." Students may work individually, in pairs, or as a total group.

MUSIC (Time: 10 minutes)

Sing or listen on the *Children Sing!* tape to the well-known Easter hymn, "He is risen, he is risen!" (*The Hymnal 1982*, 180). Note that it is also by Mrs. Cecil Frances Alexander, writer of the hymns used in Music, Sessions 2-4 and 7. How do the words make us feel? How does the hymn describe the good news of Easter?

CONNECTING/SPEAKING OUT (Time: 15-20 minutes)

Option 1. Group Discussion

Write the following Gospel references on a chalkboard or newsprint: *Mark 16:1-8*, *Luke 24:1-12*, *Matthew 28:1-10*, *John 20:1-18*. Divide the students into four-member teams to explore the accounts of Jesus' resurrection. Within the teams, one person will be responsible for listing events in the Gospel passage. (Look at page 2 of the *Church Times* for a summary of differences in the Gospel accounts.)

Report the findings, briefly listing the events under each Gospel citation. Which details are the same in all four? What are some of the differences? Which events are you most familiar with?

Option 2. Current Events

Obtain your own church's Easter service folders for the students (or make photocopies of the service outlines). Walk through the details of the services. Which Gospel lesson(s) will be read? What will the music and singing include? Where are the Easter Collects in *The Book of Common Prayer*?

Discuss ways your church can share Easter gladness with persons who cannot be present at services. In what ways can the class members offer assistance?

REFLECTING (Time: 10 minutes)

Challenge the students to consider what it would be like to hear the news that Jesus' tomb was empty. If you had been one of Jesus' close friends, how would you have felt on Good Friday and on the Sabbath that followed? How would you have reacted to the news of the resurrection?

Invite the class members to imagine each of them is either among the women who went to the tomb, or one of Jesus' bereaved disciples.

Ask the group to close their eyes and sit quietly. Then lead a guided meditation:

“The disciples feel deep sorrow. Their teacher has died on a cross and their hopes are gone. They do not know which way to turn. For now, they can only pray and stay together. Will God show them what to do? Is the promise of a Messiah never to be realized?”

“Women who knew Jesus and cared deeply about him are also very sad. But they can at least take spices to his tomb and anoint the body according to Jewish custom. It is only right that they should show respect for their teacher and friend.

“When they arrive at the place where Jesus had been buried, the stone is gone from the tomb. They go inside only to find that the body is gone! Two men in dazzling clothing tell them that Jesus is not there. They remember that he had said he would rise from the dead after three days.

“The women are both afraid and disbelieving. They hurry to Jesus' disciples and tell them what they have seen and heard.

“The disciples hear feet hurrying toward the room where they are together. Who could it be? Someone opens the door a crack and realizes it is the women who went to anoint the body. The women enter hurriedly. They are out of breath, but they manage to tell what happened.

“One disciple says, ‘You have imagined this impossible thing. Forget about it.’ The others nod in agreement. The women must be having delusions.

“Then Peter leaves, running as fast as he can. He comes to the tomb and looks inside. There are the wrappings from the body. That is all. He is amazed. Slowly he walks home and sits down to think.”

Allow a period of silence. Find out which students chose the roles of the women, and ask them: How did it feel to make the discovery? How did you react to the disciples when they would not believe you? Ask the class members who thought of themselves as disciples: What were your feelings as the women came from the tomb with their story? Why did you not believe what they said?

LEARNING SKILLS *(Time: 10-15 minutes)*

Option 1. Class Memory Challenge

If the students have been at work on this Unit's memory challenge, they will have mastered by now the names and dates for eighteen Other Major Feasts. In this session, focus on the final four—three observed in October and just one in November:

October 18—St. Luke the Evangelist

October 23—St. James of Jerusalem, Brother of Our Lord Jesus Christ, and Martyr

October 28—St. Simon and St. Jude, Apostles

November 30—St. Andrew the Apostle

Ask the students to go over the dates and names silently. Then divide the group into two teams. Team 1 will call out the names of the four Feasts, and Team 2 will respond with the dates. Reverse the process. (Note: See the “Memory Challenge” block in the student newspaper, *Church Times*.)

Option 2. Learning Scripture

Prepare paper crosses and printed texts for verses memorized by the students since the previous session, as described in Session 1. Add appropriate mosaic pieces to the posterboard for verses that students have learned.

For the next session, assign the following: *Luke 24:2-3* and *John 20:25b*. See “Learning Scripture” in the student newspaper, *Church Times*.

ONGOING PROJECT (Time: 5-10 minutes)

Encourage the class members to continue working on the posters to represent Stations of the Cross, as described in Session 6. For this session, work on Station 12, Jesus dies on the cross. Make sure the supplies are adequate, and encourage the group to divide tasks for efficient completion of the poster. Ask: Who will be present around the cross? How will the figure of Jesus be portrayed?

Print the title at the bottom of the completed poster.

SYMBOL CARD and TREASUREBOOK

Card 26 shows a pomegranate, along with a verse of Scripture, and an explanation on the back.

Invite the students to review the *Cross Year Treasurebook*, Part III, Section 8, about the importance of the resurrection in the Christian faith. How has the history of the world been affected by the gospel of Jesus Christ?

GOING FORTH

Gather the group for the dismissal. The teacher or a student will say the following, pausing for the students' response of “Lord, have mercy”:

For our Bishop, and for all the clergy and people, let us pray to the Lord.

Lord, have mercy.

For this city (town, village, _____), for every city and community, and for those who live in them, let us pray to the Lord.

Lord, have mercy.

That we may end our lives in faith and hope, without suffering and without reproach, let us pray to the Lord.

Lord, have mercy.

For _____ [learners may add their own petitions], let us pray to

the Lord.

Lord, have mercy.

From The Prayers of the People

The Book of Common Prayer, pp. 384-385

Teacher: Let us go forth in the name of Christ.

Students: Thanks be to God.

TEACHER'S ASSESSMENT

Are the students able to articulate the importance of the resurrection in the New Testament and in the Christian faith? In what ways do the class members' concepts of Easter differ from those of adults?

LOOKING AHEAD

The final session of this unit is on Jesus' ascension. What does it mean to confess, in the Creed, that "he ascended into heaven"? Reflect on your own beliefs about the living Lord. How do you think of him as you pray?

FOCUS

Forty days after his resurrection, Jesus ascended into heaven. The Creeds of the Church include this event. The students should be able to tell Luke's version of the ascension and to explain that it proclaims the rule of Jesus Christ, Son of God and Savior.

GETTING READY

Ascension Day is one of the seven Principal Feasts of the Church. It comes just forty days after Easter Day. It is appropriate to study the story and its meaning well in advance of the feast itself.

Only Luke provides an account of Jesus' ascent into heaven. Indeed, he tells the story twice—in *Luke 24:44-53* and again in *Acts 1:1-11*.

The disciples, still incredulous at the appearances of the risen Christ, continued their common life and struggled to know what lay ahead for them. The Lord had promised that the Holy Spirit would come in power and give them comfort and direction.

According to the first account, Jesus took the disciples to Bethany, gave them a blessing, spoke of their mission to the world, and “withdrew from them and was carried up into heaven” (*Luke 24:50-53*).

In the second version of the story, Jesus assured the disciples that they would be his “witnesses in Jerusalem, in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.” Just then, Jesus “was lifted up, and a cloud took him out of their sight” (*Acts 1:8-9*).

In the Church's Creeds, we confess our belief that Jesus Christ “ascended into heaven.” But what does the concept of ascension mean for the Christian community today?

Consider how often we use the expression, “to rise above.” We advise one another to rise above our troubles, or to rise above our conflicts with others, or to rise above pettiness and meanness we encounter. The message of Ascension Day is that Jesus Christ has risen “above” with the Father in heaven. And because he has been lifted up, we have the assurance that our own life journeys will end in the everlasting presence of our Lord and Savior.

In a very real way, the ascension is a dramatic continuation of Easter. God has lifted Jesus Christ from sin and evil, from all that humankind can devise to thwart the love and justice of God, and from the grave itself. We are called to be witnesses to this good news. That is our mission in the world.

Almighty God, whose blessed Son our Savior Jesus Christ ascended far above all heavens that he might fill all things: Mercifully give us faith to perceive that, according to his promise, he abides with his Church on earth, even to the end of the ages; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, in glory everlasting. *Amen.*

Ascension Day

The Book of Common Prayer, p. 226

WORSHIP

Session 9

Ascension

TEACHING TIP

Intermediate-age students can begin to feel the rhythm of the Church year—times of penitence, times of rest, and times of great joy. Be ready to compare the same kind of dynamics in the calendar year. When do they feel rested during the year? When do they feel joyful? Encourage them to compare these feelings with those experienced during the Church seasons and feasts.

GATHERING

Display Poster No. 17 in the Teacher’s Packet of an artist’s portrayal of Jesus’ ascension into heaven. As the students arrive, point their attention to the picture. Why did the artist choose to use the color red for Jesus’ clothing? If you had painted the picture, how would you portray those who witnessed this event? Do you think some might have been fearful?

When everyone is present, say:

Let us pray. (Use the Collect “Ascension Day,” above, or a prayer of your own choosing.)

The chosen student lector reads from the class Bible (NRSV):

A Reading from the Gospel of Luke, chapter 24, verses 44 through 53.

Then (Jesus) said to (the disciples), “These are my words that I spoke to you while I was still with you—that everything written about me in the law of Moses, the prophets, and the psalms must be fulfilled.” Then he opened their minds to the scriptures, and he said to them, “Thus it is written, that the Messiah is to suffer and to rise from the dead on the third day, and that repentance and forgiveness of sins is to be proclaimed in his name to all nations, beginning from Jerusalem. You are witnesses of these things. And see, I am sending upon you what my Father promised; so stay here in the city until you have been clothed with power from on high.

Then he led them out as far as Bethany, and, lifting up his hands, he blessed them. While he was blessing them, he withdrew from them and was carried up into heaven. And they worshiped him, and returned to Jerusalem with great joy; and they were continually in the temple blessing God.

Reader: The Word of the Lord.

Response: Thanks be to God.

INTRODUCING THE STORY (*Time: 10-20 minutes*)

For a brief time, Jesus appeared to different people and groups after his resurrection and before his ascension. Ahead of time, photocopy the list of Jesus’ major post-resurrection appearances below, or copy the references on a sheet of newsprint for all to see. Divide into three groups and ask each group to look up the passages and then briefly describe to the entire group the appearances they read about:

Matthew 28:16-20; John 20:19-23; John 20:24-29 (to the eleven and other disciples);

Luke 24:13-31 (to two disciples on the road to Emmaus);

John 21:1-14 (to seven disciples)

Move on to share the story of Jesus' last visit with his disciples just before he was lifted up into heaven. Tell the story of the ascension in your own words as it is provided by Luke (in *Luke 24:36-53* and *Acts 1:6-11*). Refer to the story on page 1 of the student newspaper, *Church Times* (Unit III, Issue 9), for a first-person account of the event.

Invite students to read Luke's account of the ascension in *Luke 24:44-53* and *Acts 1:6-11*. What is the same in the two stories? What is different?

Talk about the Church's annual Ascension Day celebration, a Principal Feast that comes forty days after Easter. This festival dates back to the fourth century and is the time that the Church proclaims Jesus as the great high priest who "will come in glory to judge the living and the dead" (BCP, p. 359).

EXPLORING (Time: 15-20 minutes)

Option 1. Sharing the News

Because Ascension Day is always forty days after Easter, it falls on a weekday instead of a Sunday. Often it is overlooked, even though it is a major Feast Day in the Church. Find a way to remind people of this event and its place in the Church year.

Make cards that the class can hand out to the congregation at a service just before or after Ascension Day. Select one or more verses from *Luke 24:44-53* or *Acts 1:6-11* to put on the cards. If you want to make enough for everyone at the service, you may wish to photocopy enough verses beforehand for students. The verses can be glued to index cards or cut out and decorated.

Supply markers, stickers of balloons, glue, and other art supplies. Encourage students to make the cards as colorful as possible.

Make arrangements with the clergy for the group or representatives of the group to pass out the cards before or after a Sunday worship service.

Option 2. Balloon Messages

Give each student a piece of construction paper cut in the shape of a balloon. Supply pens, markers, and crayons.

Suggest that the students select verses from the accounts of the ascension (*Luke 24:50:53* and *Acts 1:6-9*) to be copied on the paper balloons. Encourage them to add other decorations. Make a colorful display of the balloons on a bulletin board in the room or another location in the church. If you wish, attach colored yarn or ribbon to the bottoms of the balloons and gather the ends in a bow.

Option 3. Word Puzzle

Turn in the student newspaper, *Church Times*, Unit III, Issue 9, to the word puzzle titled "Ascension Pyramid." Students may work individually, in pairs, or as a total group.

MUSIC (Time: 10 minutes)

Sing again the Easter hymn, "He is risen, he is risen!" (*The Hymnal 1982*,

180) using the *Children Sing!* tape. Point out that each of the four stanzas speaks of a sharp contrast such as death and life. In stanza 1, it is “prison” (of sin and death) and being “free” as a result of Christ's victory. Ask: What are the contrasting words and phrases in the other three stanzas?

CONNECTING/SPEAKING OUT (Time: 15-20 minutes)

Option 1. Group Discussion

Ask the students to work in three groups to explore the following references: *John 20:11-18* (Jesus' appearance to Mary Magdalene); *Mark 16:19-20* (Mark's reference to the ascension); *Ephesians 1:20-23* (a reference to Jesus' heavenly authority).

Invite the groups to report on what they discovered. Talk about how each passage related to Jesus' ascension into heaven.

Option 2. Current Events

Share your own church's plans for celebrating Ascension Day. What is the date? (Count forty days from Easter Day.) Note that Pentecost follows ten days after Ascension.

Invite the students to look at Hymns 213-222, *The Hymnal 1982*. Which of these would they select to sing on Ascension Day? Why? Share their ideas with the clergy and those responsible for hymn selection.

REFLECTING (Time: 10 minutes)

Invite the students to sit quietly and think about the story of Jesus' ascension into heaven. Encourage them to close their eyes and visualize the scene as you share a guided meditation:

“You are one of the eleven remaining disciples of Jesus. You have had so many unusual experiences in the last several weeks! After Jesus rose from the dead, you have seen him with your own eyes and heard him speaking.

“Today, you and the other disciples were visiting together. Suddenly Jesus came and said, ‘Peace be with you.’ He sounded just as he did before he was crucified! You and your friends were so startled. You shivered and wondered, Could this be a ghost?

“Then Jesus smiled and told you not to worry. You could touch him. You even watched him eat a piece of broiled fish. He was really alive and with you.

“Jesus told you again that everything was turning out just as he had told you. He said that the Holy Spirit would come and help you to be his witness to all the nations of the world.

“Then Jesus led your group out to the little town of Bethany, not far from Jerusalem. There he lifted up his hands and gave a blessing. You looked up to see his face. But he was not there anymore. He had disappeared into heaven.

Allow moments of silence. Ask: How did you feel when Jesus gave you his blessing? What was it like to discover he was gone from sight? How did you feel?

LEARNING SKILLS (Time: 10-15 minutes)

Option 1. Class Memory Challenge

Commend the students who have learned the Seasons, Feasts, Fasts, and Holy Days included in the Church's Calendar. Invite all class members to take part in a general review of the memory challenge. See the "Memory Challenge" block in the student newspaper, *Church Times*.

1. In order, what are the Seasons represented by the memory device, ACE-LEaP? (See Session 1.)
2. What are the seven Principal Feasts of the Church, beginning with Easter Day?
3. Name five additional Feasts of Our Lord and two Fasts. (Recall the two that begin with *Holy*, one at the beginning and the other at the end; and the four observances ending *ation*, with one Feast in between the third and fourth of these.)
4. Choose a month of the Church Year and name the Feasts and dates for it.

Option 2. Learning Scripture

Print the texts of new verses on paper crosses, as described in Session 1. By this time, the posterboard should be filled with crosses, each one with colorful mosaic pieces added.

Encourage the students to learn *Matthew 28:20b* or *Luke 24:51*. See "Learning Scripture" in the student newspaper, *Church Times*.

Discuss with the group what to do with the record of the students' memory work. Perhaps the posterboard could be displayed where others in the congregation would see it.

In Unit IV, another group of verses will be introduced, along with a different procedure for recording each one that has been learned.

ONGOING PROJECT (*Time: 5-10 minutes*)

Check to see that there are adequate supplies for completing this ongoing project, as described in Session 6. If the Stations begun in previous sessions are still in progress, you may want to use this session for finishing them. If time is available to do a fourth scene, design and create Station 14, Jesus is laid in the tomb. Ask: What will the tomb look like? Who will be in the scene?

Print the title at the bottom of the Station. Decide on an appropriate way to share all the completed posters with others in the congregation.

SYMBOL CARD and TREASUREBOOK

Card 27 shows the *Agnus Dei* (Lamb of God), along with a verse of Scripture, and an explanation on the back.

Invite the students to review all of Section III in *Cross Year Treasurebook*. As worshiping Christians, what is our mission to the world?

GOING FORTH

Gather the group for the dismissal. The teacher or a student will say the

following, pausing for the students' response of "Lord, have mercy":

For our Bishop, and for all the clergy and people, let us pray to the Lord.

Lord, have mercy.

For this city (town, village, _____), for every city and community, and for those who live in them, let us pray to the Lord.

Lord, have mercy.

That we may end our lives in faith and hope, without suffering and without reproach, let us pray to the Lord.

Lord, have mercy.

For _____ [learners may add their own petitions], let us pray to the Lord.

Lord, have mercy.

From The Prayers of the People
The Book of Common Prayer, pp. 384-385

Teacher: Let us go forth in the name of Christ.

Students: Thanks be to God.

TEACHER'S ASSESSMENT

As you think back over this Unit, have the students appeared to gain a deepened appreciation for the Church's patterns of worship? Was there evidence that they think of their own church as a source of spiritual help? In your opinion, what do they need most to equip them for their future journeys as Christ's disciples?

Note: The following letter is for teachers and parents of children in the Intermediate level of church school. These two pages can be reproduced or used as a model for a personalized letter.

Episcopal Children's Curriculum

Unit IV: CHURCH HISTORY

Dear Parents and Guardians,

In the final unit for this year we will look at the history of the Church. Obviously, is it not possible to provide an exhaustive survey of Christian history. Instead, we will explore periods involving major issues in the life of the Church. We will help students learn about these aspects of Church history at their own levels of ability and interest. Each session is a foundation for further exploration and study for years to come.

When you read materials students bring home, please note the following:

“Christian” refers to all who belong to the one holy catholic and apostolic church. “Church,” with a capital C, means the larger Christian community. When spelled with a lower-case c, “church” refers to a particular denomination or a local congregation.

“Anglican” and “Anglican Communion” designate the worldwide community stemming from the Church of England. Generally, “Episcopal Church” refers to Americans who are of the Anglican tradition.

“Protestant” is a term from the Reformation of the sixteenth century. “The Protestant Episcopal Church in the United States of America” is the official name for our churches.

During this unit we will also be exploring selected key concepts:

- The Church defines its beliefs in the form of historic Creeds.
- The Church’s worship holds to long-established liturgical forms.
- At crucial times, the Church undergoes reformation.
- The Bible is translated and shared with the whole world.
- The Anglican or Episcopal tradition play a significant role in early America.
- Christian missionaries have carried their faith to other lands.
- Christians have actively pursued justice, peace, and human dignity.
- The churches of Jesus Christ are called to seek unity.
- The Anglican heritage is apostolic, proceeding from the Day of Pentecost.

We encourage you to talk to your student about what he or she is learning. You can do this by reading the Scripture passages cited below, discussing the **Symbol Cards** and **Church Times** sent home each week, and exploring Part IV of the **Cross Year Treasurebook**, which includes information about the Church and its history.

Following are summaries of the Unit IV sessions:

Session 1: “Creeds: Defining Our Beliefs” focuses on the fourth-century Council of Nicaea that resulted in the Nicene Creed. It remains the defining statement of our beliefs in the Anglican tradition. The students will discuss the importance of Creeds in the thought and worship of Christians. Class members will have a chance to try their hand at producing their statements of beliefs. (*Philippians 2:5-11*)

Session 2: “The Church’s Worship Takes Form” exposes students to the fixed hours of prayer that were set by St. Benedict of Nursia, founder of the Benedictine monastic communities. The class members will gain insight into how the eight daily services evolved into the simple Daily Office of *The Book of Common Prayer*. (*Romans 12:1-2*)

Session 3: “The Church’s Reformation” shows that “re-forming” is a continuous process for Christians. After the Protestant Reformation in the sixteenth century, the Church produced new translations of the Bible, as well as new theological writings, hymns, and prayer books. Students will learn that less dramatic reforms have occurred more often. (*Romans 5:1-11*)

Session 4: “The Bible Is for All” helps students appreciate the evolution of English versions of the Bible. They will meet John Wycliffe and William Tyndale, who were condemned for translating and teaching the Bible. Class members also will hear about the King James Version and subsequent translations. (*II Timothy 3:14-17*)

Session 5: “The Church Came to America” focuses on the arrival of the first English settlers in Virginia in 1607. Anglicans lived chiefly in the Virginia colony from 1607 to about 1690. After that time, they moved rapidly into the other colonies. Students also will explore briefly the theology of the Puritans who settled in New England. The impact of the early settlers on institutions today will be emphasized. (*Matthew 28:16-20*)

Session 6: “Missionaries Are Sent Out” points out that the American Revolution slowed the growth of Anglican churches. Decades later, the Church had regained the strength to join in the missionary movement. Students will learn about the early Episcopal missions and consider the nature of present-day missions around the world. (*Luke 9:1-6*)

Session 7: “The Church Acts in Society” describes the role of the Episcopal Church in pursuing social justice in the twentieth century. In particular, students will look at the Civil Rights movement of the mid-twentieth century. Concern for equality has led both clergy and laity to speak and act with courage in combating racism. (*Galatians 3:27-29*)

Session 8: “Christians Struggle for Unity” invites students to think about the divisions that continue among Christian churches. They will look at the four essentials for unity that were set forth in the nineteenth century: the Bible as the revealed word of God; the Nicene Creed as a sufficient statement of the Christian faith; the two sacraments of Holy Baptism and Holy Eucharist; and the bishops in succession from the Apostles. (*Ephesians 4:1-7*)

Session 9: “We Celebrate Pentecost” is related to the other eight sessions, but may be used at any point. All that has happened in Church history stems from the visitation of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost. From that time to the present, Christians have worshiped and labored in an unbroken tradition. (*Acts 1:1-5*)

Yours in Christ,
Church School Teachers

FOCUS

Throughout the centuries, the Church adopted statements that sum up what we believe. A defining moment in early Church history was the Council of Nicaea, which dealt decisively with the nature of Jesus Christ. The students should be able to tell briefly the story of the Council and explain why Creeds are vital symbols in the Christian community.

CHURCH HISTORY

Session 1

Creeds: Defining Our Beliefs

GETTING READY

In the early centuries, as communities of Christians grew widespread, it was inevitable that their leaders would have differences concerning what they believed. By the fourth century, the Church was caught up in a crucial debate on the most important question of all: Who is Jesus Christ?

In Alexandria, Egypt, a priest named Arius taught that Christ is more than human but less than God. He said that God once lived alone and had no Son. Then he created Christ, who in turn created everything else.

Arius made Christ seem like a kind of divine hero, lower in rank than the eternal God. This concept seemed satisfactory to former pagans.

But Athanasius, a scholarly assistant to the bishop of Alexandria, saw the great danger in Arius' teachings. Many martyrs had died for the sake of the Lord Jesus Christ, who was truly God and truly human. In *Philippians 2:5-11*, the apostle Paul had made it clear "that Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father." How could the Church allow someone to teach differently? Athanasius determined to take a stand against the Arian heresy.

In 325 CE, the emperor Constantine convened the first great Ecumenical Council, at Nicaea. He called on the assembled Christian leaders to settle their differences in belief. He said a division in the Church was worse than war.

Athanasius persuaded the Council to adopt a creed defining the Church's belief in One God in three Persons. All but a few bishops signed it. The emperor was delighted, thinking the issue was now settled. That was not the case, for the debate continued. Athanasius became bishop upon the death of Alexander in 328. Five times he was sent into exile for defending the Nicene Creed. Decades after the Council of Nicaea, the doctrine of the Holy Trinity was finally firmly established. We affirm it in the Apostles' Creed as well.

In gratitude for our faith as the Creeds define it, we still sing great Trinitarian hymns composed by Bishop Ambrose of Milan who was born just fifteen years after the Council of Nicaea. See especially "O splendor of God's glory bright" and "Redeemer of the nations, come" (*The Hymnal 1982*, 5 and 55, respectively).

Almighty and everlasting God, you have given to us your servants grace, by the confession of a true faith, to acknowledge the glory of the eternal Trinity, and in the power of your divine Majesty to worship the Unity: Keep us steadfast in this faith and worship, and bring us at last to see you in your one and eternal glory, O Father; who with the Son and the Holy Spirit live and reign, one God, for ever and ever. *Amen.*

First Sunday after Pentecost: Trinity Sunday
The Book of Common Prayer, p. 228

TEACHING TIP

Most intermediate-age students are now able to place people and events on time-lines. This Unit covers events from the full sweep of the Church's history, and students are asked to move rapidly from one period to another. Use time-lines and other tools to help class members understand how each session fits into the total story.

GATHERING

Ahead of time, display Poster No. 19 from the Teacher's Packet, which is a photograph of a wall plaque from a colonial church containing the Apostles' Creed. As the students arrive, invite them to comment on the picture. Where else have they seen these words? Suggest that they compare the text to other versions of the Creed in *The Book of Common Prayer*, (pp. 53 and 120, among others).

When everyone is present, say:

Let us pray. (Use the Collect "First Sunday after Pentecost: Trinity Sunday," above, or a prayer of your own choosing.)

The chosen student lector reads from the class Bible (NRSV):

A Reading from the Letter of Paul to the Philippians, chapter 2, verses 5 through 11.

Let the same mind be in you that was in Christ Jesus, who, though he was in the form of God, did not regard equality with God as something to be exploited, but emptied himself, taking the form of a slave, being born in human likeness. And being found in human form, he humbled himself and became obedient to the point of death—even death on a cross. Therefore God also highly exalted him and gave him the name that is above every name, so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bend, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

Reader: The Word of the Lord.

Response: Thanks be to God.

INTRODUCING THE STORY (Time: 10-20 minutes)

Talk about the comparisons made in the Gathering activity between the Apostles' Creed on Poster No. 19 and the versions in *The Book of Common Prayer*. How were they different? Did those differences change the meaning of the Creed?

Using information in the Getting Ready and the *Cross Year Treasure-book*, introduce the concept of creeds and how they are used by the Church. Ask the students to turn in their Bibles to *Philippians 2:5-11*. Point out that these lines are like an early creed. On a sheet of newsprint, list the statements in the passage concerning Jesus Christ. Make similar lists for statements about Jesus that appear in the Apostles' Creed (BCP, p. 120) and the Nicene Creed (BCP, p. 358). Look for similarities among the three.

Tell the story of Athanasius at the Council of Nicaea, using information from Getting Ready (above) and the student newspaper, *Church Times*

(Unit IV, Issue 1). Point out the important role Athanasius in helping the Church to define its beliefs. Stress the crucial significance of the Council's decision about these questions: Who is Jesus Christ? What do Christians believe about God? What is the role of the Holy Spirit?

Complete the comparisons began earlier between the Apostles' and Nicene creeds. List the statements made in each under the headings of "God" and "Holy Spirit." Are there differences? Ask: Which of the statements is most important to you?

EXPLORING *(Time: 15-20 minutes)*

Option 1. Beliefs

Invite the students to pretend they are a council that is charged with preparing a definition of what they believe. The exercise may focus on a Church-related article of faith, or it can be some other concern (such as what they believe about music, sports, or other aspects of their lives).

Supply paper and pencils. Ask everyone to write "I believe . . ." at the top of a sheet. Agree upon a topic, then allow time for each person to write a personal statement of belief about it. The students may prefer to simply jot down lists of beliefs in short phrases.

When all are finished, allow time for everyone to share the written statements. Announce that now they must agree on a common statement that everyone can sign. Put "We believe . . ." at the top of a chalkboard or sheet of newsprint. Work out a consensus and write it for all to see. Continue working until all are willing to sign.

If the class is large, it may be necessary to divide into two or more groups for the exercise. If time becomes a problem, conclude the exercise with a discussion of the difficulty in reaching a consensus. The work of the Council at Nicaea illustrates this fact.

Option 2. Trinity Symbols

Share with the students the section on Poster No. 18 showing Trinity symbols from the Teacher's Packet. Supply creative art materials (posterboard, construction paper, colored markers, scissors, and glue). Briefly discuss the meaning of the Trinity and how the symbols on the poster are related to the Trinity.

Suggest that each class member choose a symbol to create in a colorful design. Arrange to display the completed items where others in the congregation can see them.

Option 3. Word Puzzle

Turn in the student newspaper, *Church Times*, Unit IV, Issue 1, to the word puzzle titled "The Church Is Formed." Students may work individually, in pairs, or as a total group.

MUSIC *(Time: 10 minutes)*

Introduce the hymn, "Redeemer of the nations, come" (*The Hymnal 1982*, 55) by playing it on the *Children Sing!* tape. Notice that it was composed by St. Ambrose (340-397 CE). How do the words remind us of the Nicene Creed? Which thoughts are similar? Why do we think of this as a

“Trinitarian” hymn (about the Trinity)? Listen to the music, then sing along with the tape.

CONNECTING/SPEAKING OUT *(Time: 15-20 minutes)*

Option 1. Group Discussion

Briefly discuss the meaning of the Trinity. Use Poster No. 18 to show how the Trinity is depicted in different symbols. Suggest that the students conduct a hunt to discover as many reminders of the Trinity as they can within their own church. If possible, make a quick tour of the building to look for triangles, trefoils, and other symbols. Look for these on furnishings, in hangings, and in architectural details (such as three steps leading to the altar area in some church buildings).

If this hunt is not feasible, consider exploring books of Christian symbols or leafing through *The Hymnal 1982* for service music and hymns that include the Trinity.

What kind of symbols or words did you find? Were you surprised to find so many references to the Trinity? Why do churches use so many reminders of the Trinity?

Option 2. Current Events

Point out that, in every generation, Christians find it necessary to make clear what they believe about God, the Creator; Jesus Christ, Son of God; and God the Holy Spirit. Always, somewhere in the world, Christians are suffering because of their beliefs.

If possible, bring in a map of the world or the globe. Ask students if they know of any places where Christians are suffering. Point out areas where there are inequities, such as Sudan, India, and Turkey.

Remind the students that Athanasius was opposed at times by both government and Church leaders. Five times he had to go into exile to escape injury or death—all because he was firm in his faith in the Trinity and would not deny his faith as defined in the Nicene Creed.

Ask: How would it feel to be in danger because of something you believed strongly? What would you do if someone threatened you because of your beliefs? What would you hope for?

REFLECTING *(Time: 10 minutes)*

Invite the students to prepare individual reflection folders. For each class member, supply a file folder containing enough sheets of lined paper to last throughout the Unit. To assure privacy in storing the folders, provide a large envelope for each student.

Ask the students to print the following title on their folders: “Questions to Think About.” They should also put their names on their envelopes and folders, using pens or markers for any decorations they may wish to add.

At this session, share the following question:

“What do I believe about Jesus Christ?”

Briefly discuss the importance of this question in Church history and also in each Christian's life. Encourage the class members to copy the question, write down their personal responses, and place their sheets in the folders and envelopes for safekeeping.

LEARNING SKILLS *(Time: 10-15 minutes)*

Option 1. Class Memory Challenge

Refer to the “Memory Challenge” block in the student newspaper, *Church Times*. Listed are the following key people and events appearing in the sessions of this Unit: Athanasius, Nicene Creed, Ambrose (fourth and fifth centuries); Benedict of Nursia, monastic movement (sixth century); Martin Luther, John Calvin, Protestant Reformation (fifteenth and sixteenth centuries); Thomas Cranmer, first edition of *The Book of Common Prayer* (sixteenth century); John Wycliffe, William Tyndale, King James Bible (fourteenth through seventeenth centuries); Puritans' arrival in America, Massachusetts Bay Colony (seventeenth century); John and Charles Wesley, George Whitfield (eighteenth century); first Episcopal Church missionaries to go overseas from America, 1830; Martin Luther King, Jr., and the civil rights movement (1950s-1960s); formation of the World Council of Churches (1948).

Challenge the students to memorize the list and the dates (along with any facts and related stories they wish to remember). For this session, they may learn Athanasius, Nicene Creed, and Ambrose.

Option 2. Learning Scripture

Encourage the students to memorize, before the next session, *John 16:28* or *Philippians 2:11*.

To preserve a record of class members' progress in learning verses during this Unit, obtain a tree branch that can be held upright in a pot or box of pebbles. The students can indicate that they have learned verses by hanging shapes cut from construction paper to branches of the tree. Ask them to write their names and the Bible citations (books, chapters, verses) on each item they place on the tree. Provide scissors, a paper punch, and a spool of dark thread.

See “Learning Scripture” in *Church Times*, the student newspaper.

ONGOING PROJECT *(Time: 5-10 minutes)*

Plan to develop a series of masks representing figures in the life and mission of the Church through the centuries. Each mask may be constructed from light cardboard or heavy paper, then curved slightly and glued to a background of posterboard (to give a three-dimensional effect). Captions and headlines may be lettered on the posters so that the completed group of masks can be displayed in chronological order for the congregation to enjoy at the end of the Unit.

For this session, create a mask of Athanasius for a poster headed “We believe . . .” Add hair, beard, and facial coloring. Cut out holes for the eyes, in the fashion of a theater mask. Position and attach the finished piece to the background. In block letters, add the name of Athanasius, and the dates 295-373 CE.

If time permits, the students may add phrases from the Nicene Creed, lettered in varied styles and scattered over the background. Save the poster for display.

SYMBOL CARD and TREASUREBOOK

Card 28 has the symbol of St. Athanasius, a verse of Scripture, and an explanation on the back.

Invite the students to explore in the *Cross Year Treasurebook*, Part IV, Section 1. It contains a fuller account of the Council of Nicaea and describes other Creeds of the Church.

GOING FORTH

Gather the group for the dismissal. The teacher or a student will say:
I ask your prayers for peace; for goodwill among nations; and for the well-being of all people.
Pray for justice and peace.
Silence

I ask your prayers for the poor, the sick, the hungry, the oppressed, and those in prison.
Pray for those in any need or trouble.
Silence

[Learners may add their own petitions.]

I ask your prayers for all who seek God, or a deeper knowledge of him.
Pray that they may find and be found by him.
From The Prayers of the People
The Book of Common Prayer, p. 386

Teacher: Let us go forth in the name of Christ.
Students: Thanks be to God.

TEACHER'S ASSESSMENT

Were the students able to sense the seriousness of the Nicene Council? What was their reaction upon hearing about Athanasius? In what ways can the class members be encouraged to appreciate the place of the Creed in the Church's worship?

LOOKING AHEAD

The next session is about the forming of patterns for prayer in the Church. Consider your own ways of praying throughout a day. Where do you turn for guidance? For you, what is the most helpful resource for your spiritual journey?

CHURCH HISTORY

Session 2

The Church's Worship Takes Form

FOCUS

In the earliest Church, the worship of Christians took form and followed an order. A later development was the establishment of monasteries in which prayers were offered at fixed hours in a Daily Office. This is reflected in rites of *The Book of Common Prayer*. The students should be able to trace briefly the development of the Church's life and worship in its first centuries.

GETTING READY

The apostles and the members of the early Church were Jewish, and they continued to worship in the patterns followed in temple and synagogue. Increasing hostility toward Christian communities led to their separation and their own distinct forms of worship. But these marks of Jewish practice were never left behind: Recitation of psalms, reading of Scripture, and observance of both daily and yearly cycles of prayer.

The primary day of worship came to be Sunday rather than the Jewish sabbath (Saturday), in remembrance of Jesus' resurrection. Weekly gatherings were centered around celebrations of the Eucharist. Daily prayer was a regular part of the Christians' life, but it was largely a private matter in the face of severe opposition to public assemblies. When the Emperor Constantine was converted to Christianity and persecution ceased, churches were built and times of public prayer were established.

In both the East and the West, in the fourth through the sixth centuries, communities of monks arose who were devoted to rules for daily work and worship. They gathered at appointed times.

In the West, the community of Benedict of Nursia regularized these eight daily occasions for prayer: Vigil or Matins (midnight); Lauds (before dawn); Prime (dawn); Terce (third hour); Sext (sixth hour, or noon); None (ninth hour); Vespers (evening); and Compline (end of the day).

Today, some Episcopal parishes and communities offer public services of Morning, Noonday, and Evening Prayer, sometimes including Compline. *The Book of Common Prayer* provides for these times of prayer.

In every generation, we are called to present our whole selves to God, "a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God." (See *Romans 12:1-2*.) We join in singing to our Lord, "Be thou my vision, . . . waking or sleeping, thy presence (our) light" (*The Hymnal 1982*, 488).

O Lord Jesus Christ, you became poor for our sake, that we might be made rich through your poverty: Guide and sanctify, we pray, those whom you call to follow you under the vows of poverty, chastity, and obedience, that by their prayer and service they make enrich your Church, and by their life and worship may glorify your Name; for you reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. *Amen*.

For Monastic Orders and Vocations
The Book of Common Prayer, p. 819

TEACHING TIP

The habit of setting aside time for prayer and Bible reading can be established in childhood. The intermediate-age years are not too early for encouraging this practice. Ask the students to try an experiment in the

coming week. At the same time each day—when they get up, get home from school, or go to bed, for example—they could spend a minute in prayer. Suggest that they ask God to help them find a solution to a problem they are facing or for God to be with someone they are concerned about.

GATHERING

As the students arrive, invite them to study the chart of the monastic hours of prayer, found on Poster No. 19 in the Teacher's Packet. (The hours are listed in Getting Ready, above.) Ask which of the named hours (in the left column), if any, is familiar. Have the class members prayed regularly at any of the times on the chart?

When everyone is present, say:

Let us pray. (Use the prayer “For Monastic Orders and Vocations,” above, or a prayer of your own choosing.)

The chosen student lector reads from the class Bible (NRSV):

A Reading from the Letter of Paul to the Romans, chapter 12, verses 1 and 2.

I appeal to you therefore, brothers and sisters, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship. Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your minds, so that you may discern what is the will of God—what is good and acceptable and perfect.

Reader: The Word of the Lord.

Response: Thanks be to God.

INTRODUCING THE STORY *(Time: 10-20 minutes)*

Describe St. Benedict and the monastery he established, using information from the lead article in the student newspapers, *Church Times* (Unit IV, Issue 2). It describes how the monastery was built on the ruins of a pagan altar, and how the brothers took vows of poverty, chastity, and obedience to follow the Rule written by Benedict.

This Rule, which was very reasonable at that time, gave them a way to praise God in every part of their lives. They gathered for prayer eight times a day, but also had ample rest and food. A nearby community was established for women and was led by Benedict's sister, Scholastica.

From information in the Getting Ready (above) and the *Cross Year Treasurebook*, tell the students about the early Church's gradual adoption of forms for Christian worship. Stress the fact that we owe much to St. Benedict and the monasteries for their contribution to our ways of praying. Use the chart from the Gathering section to review the monastic hours. Point out that *The Book of Common Prayer* provides for prayer in the morning, at noon, in the evening, and at night (Compline).

For an example of a prayer used since Benedict's time, ask the students to look up the sentences in the middle of page 80 in *The Book of Common Prayer*. The leader says: “Lord, open our lips.” The others respond: “And our mouth shall proclaim your praise.” This *versicle* comes from *Psalms 51:16*.

Point out other examples of how Scripture has been included in the prayers of the Church. Ask the students to look up *Psalms 95* and *100* and compare these to the Venite and the Jubilate on pages 82 and 83 in Morning Prayer in the Prayer Book.

EXPLORING (Time: 15-20 minutes)

Option 1. Monastery Game

In advance of the class meeting time, prepare a set of sixteen 3 x 5 cards to be used for a group game entitled “Monastery.”

The set of cards represent pairs to be matched. On one card in a pair, print the name of an hour of prayer; on the other card, a time of day. The pairs are listed in Getting Ready (above) and also on Poster No. 19 in the Teacher's Packet. (Remove the chart from view for this game.)

If there are more than sixteen students, prepare enough additional pairs to equal the number of class members present.

Ask the group to stand in a comfortable circle. Scatter the cards face down in the center and ask each person to draw one. Explain that each student is to move around until they find another member with a matching card. Example: The person holding the Vigil or Matins card must locate the one who has a card for midnight.

Pairs who have a correct match sit down until everyone has found a partner. Check answers using the chart.

Option 2. Prayer Clock

For each class member, prepare a piece of white posterboard approximately 10 inches square; a piece of colored tagboard about ½ by 3½ inches; and a metal fastener. On each posterboard, draw a black circle with a 7½-inch diameter, and punch a hole in the center.

Invite the students to create a prayer clock by printing in small letters (outside the circle) the eight times of prayer observed in St. Benedict's monastery. Mark the times on the clock face, using different colors for overlapping day and night positions (such as midnight and noon). Make a clock hand with a pointed end, and attach it with a fastener. Point the hand to the time of day the students will spend some time in prayer (see Teaching Tip).

Option 3. Word Puzzle

Turn in the student newspaper, *Church Times*, Unit IV, Issue 2, to the puzzle titled “The Monastic Life.” Students may work individually, in pairs, or as a total group.

MUSIC (Time: 10 minutes)

Introduce and sing with the *Children Sing!* tape “Be thou my vision, O Lord of my heart” (*The Hymnal 1982*, 488). Point out that the words were written around 700 CE in Ireland. Ask the students to find references to different times of the day. When are we to have God in our thoughts?

CONNECTING/SPEAKING OUT (Time: 15-20 minutes)

Option 1. Group Discussion

Ahead of time, find out where the nearest Anglican, Roman Catholic, or Eastern Orthodox monasteries, convents, or priories are located. If people in your congregation are not familiar with any, you may be able to get help from your diocese or from neighboring churches and clergy.

Share the information with the class members, and consider a possible project for finding out more about such religious communities. For example, you could contact Web sites on the Internet, write letters, or send e-mails to members of the community. Lead a discussion on questions the students would like to ask, such as: When did your community (or order) begin? How long have you been a member? What led you to choose this life? What is a typical day like in your community? At what times do the members gather for prayer? It might be appropriate to plan a field trip to visit a religious community.

Option 2. Current Events

Suggest that the students survey the churches in your neighborhood, town, or city to discover all the times during the week when Christians gather for prayer. A possible approach would be to examine the religion pages of local newspapers as well as the “yellow pages” of a telephone directory. How many services and times are listed?

Ask: In a typical week, how many times might you worship with other Christians in your own congregation? What patterns of prayer and worship are followed in other Christian churches you know about?

REFLECTING (Time: 10 minutes)

Use the reflection process outlined in Session 1. When the students' folders are ready, display this key question:

“When and how do I worship in my church?”

Point out that Christians have developed their own ways of praying and celebrating in the presence of God. Ask: What is most important about our worship? Why do we do it? What is your favorite part of worship? Suggest that the students copy the question, then write or draw their personal responses for their files.

Store the folders in the envelopes for safekeeping.

LEARNING SKILLS (Time: 10-15 minutes)

Option 1. Class Memory Challenge

Ask the students to continue memorizing the list of people and events from the “Memory Challenge” block in the student newspaper, *Church Times*, as described in Session 1.

Review the items learned at the previous session, then add Benedict of Nursia and the monastic movement. Encourage the class members to think of the list as a mental time-line.

Option 2. Learning Scripture

For any verse committed to memory, a student may prepare a paper triangle and hang it on the Scripture tree (as suggested in Session 1). The

triangle symbolizes the Holy Trinity.

Suggest that the class members memorize *Romans 12:2* or *Romans 14:8* before the next class session. See “Learning Scripture” in *Church Times*, the student newspaper.

ONGOING PROJECT *(Time: 5-10 minutes)*

Begin or continue work on the series of masks described in Session 1. Check the supply of posterboard, markers, and other materials. For this session, make a mask of St. Benedict (480-547? CE). Include enough detail to suggest that he was founder of a monastery.

Attach the mask to a background sheet with the heading, “We worship” Add Benedict’s name and dates. Compose a few phrases or sentences to make clear that the hours of prayer observed by the early monasteries are still reflected in our worship today. Put the finished work in a place of safekeeping.

SYMBOL CARD and TREASUREBOOK

Card 29 has the shield of St. Benedict, a verse of Scripture, and an explanation on the back.

Invite the students to explore in the *Cross Year Treasurebook*, Part IV, Section 2. Why does it matter how Christians worship?

GOING FORTH

Gather the group for the dismissal. The teacher or a student will say:
I ask your prayers for peace; for goodwill among nations; and for the well-being of all people.

Pray for justice and peace.

Silence

I ask your prayers for the poor, the sick, the hungry, the oppressed, and those in prison.

Pray for those in any need or trouble.

Silence

[Learners may add their own petitions.]

I ask your prayers for all who seek God, or a deeper knowledge of him.
Pray that they may find and be found by him.

From The Prayers of the People

The Book of Common Prayer, p. 386

Teacher: Let us go forth in the name of Christ.

Students: Thanks be to God.

TEACHER’S ASSESSMENT

How well do the class members grasp the concept that the Church has been shaped by its worship? Have they a sense of appreciation for the

ancient patterns of prayer that lie behind our Prayer Book? What would be most helpful to the students as they cultivate an appropriate reverence in the presence of God?

LOOKING AHEAD

The next session is on reform as an essential aspect of the Church's existence. Consider examples of reform and renewal you know about from your own experience. How do you react to conflict, debate, and change?

FOCUS

In crucial periods, the Church engages in “re-forming,” recalling always that its true mission is to proclaim the good news of Jesus Christ. From the great Reformation of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries emerged new Bible translations, new writings, new hymns, and *The Book of Common Prayer*. The students should be able to explain in their own words that the Church undergoes reformation.

CHURCH HISTOY

Session 3

The Church's Reformation

GETTING READY

The Church faces issues of authority and power, both in its internal life and in its relation to the State, or government. Where do Christians turn for final guidance in matters of belief and practice? Who has the greatest claim on Christians' loyalty?

Following the reign of Constantine, the Church gradually acquired enormous power and was itself like a great empire. It became infected with corruption and a decline of Christian knowledge and morality.

Then, in the sixteenth century, all of Europe was caught up in the Protestant Reformation, ignited principally by Martin Luther and John Calvin. The Bible was placed in the hands of the common people, in their own language. The power of the Roman popes was no longer secure. In time, England and Scotland welcomed the Protestant position. Archbishop Thomas Cranmer reformed English worship with the first text of *The Book of Common Prayer*.

The Reformation was a struggle involving monarchs, bishops and archbishops, and humble priests and scholars. The process was not immune to excesses on all sides. Some Protestant leaders were too hasty to destroy precious structures and traditions. In turn, their opponents were deadly cruel, perpetrating untold suffering and martyrdom for many. Cranmer himself was burned at the stake.

Human sin continually obscures the good news that we have “peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ” (*Romans 5:1-11*). We dare not forget that our God is a “mighty fortress.” In Christ, God's “. . . kingdom is forever” (*The Hymnal 1982, 687*). Intermediate-age learners are ready to hear the challenge of the Church's message and to participate in the essential, ongoing process of re-forming.

Let your continual mercy, O Lord, cleanse and defend your Church; and, because it cannot continue in safety without your help, protect and govern it always by your goodness; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. *Amen.*

Proper 13

The Book of Common Prayer, p. 232

TEACHING TIP

Intermediate students are now forming basic loyalties and adopting individual preferences. It is important to affirm and encourage this process. At the same time, change is inevitable as young people face new experiences. In discussions of issues, stress the importance of balancing fixed opinions and openness to others' views.

GATHERING

As the students arrive, call their attention to Poster No. 21 from the Teacher's Packet that shows the opening page of Morning Prayer from each of four versions of *The Book of Common Prayer*. Encourage them to note the dates of publication and compare the versions. What is the same in all four? What changes have occurred?

When everyone is present, say:

Let us pray. (Use Proper 13, above, or a prayer of your own choosing.)

The chosen student lector reads from the class Bible (NRSV):

A Reading from the Letter of Paul to the Romans, chapter 5, verses 1 through 11.

Therefore, since we are justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have obtained access to this grace in which we stand; and we boast in our hope of sharing the glory of God. And not only that, but we also boast in our sufferings, knowing that suffering produces endurance, and endurance produces character, and character produces hope, and hope does not disappoint us, because God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit that has been given to us. For while we were still weak, at the right time Christ died for the ungodly. Indeed, rarely will anyone die for a righteous person—though perhaps for a good person someone might actually dare to die. But God proves his love for us in that while we still were sinners Christ died for us. Much more surely then, now that we have been justified by his blood, will we be saved through him from the wrath of God. For if while we were enemies, we were reconciled to God through the death of his Son, much more surely, having been reconciled, will we be saved by his life. But more than that, we even boast in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received reconciliation.

Reader: The Word of the Lord.

Response: Thanks be to God.

INTRODUCING THE STORY (*Time: 10-20 minutes*)

Tell the story about Martin Luther using the student newspaper, *Church Times* (Unit IV, Issue 3). On October 31, 1517, he posted 95 statements on the doors of the Castle Church in Wittenburg, Germany. One of the statements condemned the use of indulgences, the practice of buying a place in heaven, especially for those who have already died.

His statements were very controversial and were questioned by priests who used indulgences to raise money. The case was taken to Rome where Pope Leo and Emperor Maximilian demanded that Luther be silenced.

Ask the students to locate in their Bibles *Romans 5:1-11*, the passage that inspired Martin Luther and set him on the path that led to the Reformation. Point out the phrase “justified by faith.” Explain that “justified” means “set right with God.” How would this passage affect the practice of buying

indulgences?

From material in Getting Ready (above) and the *Cross Year Treasure-book*, describe the essential process of reformation in the Church. Institutions sometimes decay and become corrupt. The Church is no exception. Christians need to be watchful and guide it toward reform and renewed faithfulness.

Refer briefly to the role of Thomas Cranmer, author of *The Book of Common Prayer*, and the reforming of Anglican worship. (Stories on page 2 of *Church Times* have information about England's break with Rome and the disputes between Queen Mary and Queen Elizabeth.)

EXPLORING (Time: 15-20 minutes)

Option 1. Indulgences or Faith

Play a game of freeze tag based on the conflicting views of the use of indulgences at the time of the Reformation. Assign one person to be John Tetzel who opposed Luther's ideas. Assign another to be Martin Luther.

Pass out slips of paper to the other students that are "indulgences" to buy a place in heaven. Give one person ten slips, another five slips, several others one slip, and some no slips. When "Tetzel" tags people, they must freeze unless they can give up an indulgence. "Luther" can unfreeze people by tagging them with "faith."

The goal of the game is for "Tetzel" to get as many indulgences as possible. Play several rounds with different people in the key roles. Talk about it afterwards. How did it feel to have no indulgences? What did poor people do before the Reformation? What was the good news that Luther brought?

Option 2. Roleplaying Interviews

Ask the students to pretend they are reporters assembled at a news conference called by a prominent figure from the Reformation period of Church history. As teacher, assume the part of the interviewee. Answer questions as thoroughly and accurately as you can.

You may wish to choose your own role, or perhaps you could be prepared to play any part the students suggest. Possible figures: Martin Luther, Thomas Cranmer, King Henry VIII, Queen Elizabeth I.

Option 3. Word Puzzle

Turn in the student newspaper, *Church Times*, Unit IV, Issue 3, to the matching exercise titled "A Queen's Psalm." Students may work individually, in pairs, or as a total group.

MUSIC (Time: 10 minutes)

Introduce and sing one or more stanzas of Martin Luther's Reformation hymn, "A mighty fortress is our God" (*The Hymnal 1982*, 687, 688). It was written more than 400 years ago in a time of great change in the Church. Compare the words of the hymn with *Psalm 46*. What did you find?

CONNECTING/SPEAKING OUT (Time: 15-20 minutes)

Option 1. Group Discussion

Invite the students to look at the historical documents at the beginning of *The Book of Common Prayer* (pp. 8-11). When were they written?

Call attention to the first paragraph of the Preface on page 9. It says that the Prayer Book may be “altered, abridged, enlarged, amended, or otherwise disposed of” when the Church's governing authority agrees that it is important to do so.

If possible, provide one or more copies of earlier Prayer Books. Suggest that the class members locate some of the major changes they can see. Ask: Why do you suppose these alterations were approved by the Church's General Convention?

Option 2. Current Events

As a way of involving the students in thinking about the concepts of reform, share a list of statements that illustrate a need for both personal and corporate change. Then ask the group to discuss how such change could come about. What needs changing? What is required? Who would be involved? What would be the likely result?

You may wish to devise a list that relates specifically to your particular class members. Following are possible examples:

Personal: 1. A sixth-grader has been warned by the school principal that it is against the rules to carry knives in pockets. The student ignores the warning repeatedly. 2. Over a period of several weeks, a fourth-grader was observed taking pencils from the desk of another student, a dollar from a teacher's desk, and a cassette record from the school library.

Corporate (group): 1. All the passengers on the school bus yelled and screamed repeatedly, ignoring the driver's requests for order and quiet. 2. A sports team refused to accept a referee's decision, protesting loudly so that the game could not continue.

Point out again that we all face times when we, or the groups we belong to, must change our behavior. It is necessary for our own good and the good of our community. It is the same way in the Church. Sometimes Christians fail to treat one another with courtesy. Sometimes they have strong differences and conflicts about beliefs and customs. But in all cases, some change or reform is called for, either by individuals or within groups. This requires both prayer and respect for differing opinions.

REFLECTING (*Time: 10 minutes*)

Distribute the students' file folders, described in Session 1, and invite them to reflect on these questions:

“What do I believe about the Church? How would I reform it if I could?”

Note aloud that the long history of the Christian community has included times of disagreement about the Church's life—how it is ruled, what it teaches, and what it declares to the world. Encourage the students to consider what they believe most strongly about the Church. How would they like to change it? Suggest they jot down their thoughts, and save their work in the folders.

Place the completed work in the large storage envelopes.

LEARNING SKILLS *(Time: 10-15 minutes)*

Option 1. Class Memory Challenge

Ask the students to review, in correct order, the names and events in Church history that they have memorized so far in this Unit. For this session, add Martin Luther, John Calvin, the Protestant Reformation, Thomas Cranmer, and the first Prayer Book. Refer to the “Memory Challenge” block in the student newspaper, *Church Times*.

As the class members progress through the centuries, they may want to create their own time-line for display in the classroom.

Option 2. Learning Scripture

For any verses committed to memory, students may write the citations on small paper circles marked off as clock faces, and hang them on the tree branch, as described in Session 1. These shapes represent the Church's daily hours of prayer.

Suggest that the students learn, before the next class session, *Psalm 118:23*, *John 8:32*, or *Romans 5:8*. See “Learning Scripture” in the student newspaper, *Church Times*.

ONGOING PROJECT *(Time: 5-10 minutes)*

Continue working on the mask project described in Session 1. If needed, add more posterboard, heavy paper, markers, and glue. Label the background poster, “Reformation.” Prepare a mask of Thomas Cranmer (1489-1556). When it has been glued to the background, enter his name and dates.

In the background space on the poster, add descriptive phrases and information about Archbishop Cranmer, who was martyred for his faith. Include also the names of Martin Luther, John Calvin, and any other Reformation figures you wish.

Save the finished work for display at a later time.

SYMBOL CARD and TREASUREBOOK

Card 30 has the coat of arms which Luther designed, a verse of Scripture, and an explanation on the back.

Invite the students to explore in the *Cross Year Treasurebook*, Part IV, Section 3. Why has the Church undergone reform at different times in its history?

GOING FORTH

Gather the group for the dismissal. The teacher or a student will say:
I ask your prayers for peace; for goodwill among nations; and for the well-being of all people.
Pray for justice and peace.
Silence

I ask your prayers for the poor, the sick, the hungry, the oppressed, and those in prison.
Pray for those in any need or trouble.

Silence

[Learners may add their own petitions.]

I ask your prayers for all who seek God, or a deeper knowledge of him.
Pray that they may find and be found by him.

From The Prayers of the People
The Book of Common Prayer, p. 386

Teacher: Let us go forth in the name of Christ.
Students: Thanks be to God.

TEACHER'S ASSESSMENT

Which historical figures or issues were of greatest interest to the students? Why? Can they list reasons change and reform are helpful? In future sessions, what will you emphasize as you introduce events in the Church's long story?

LOOKING AHEAD

The next session is on the translations of Holy Scripture that preceded and accompanied the Reformation. What is your favorite Bible version? Why does it have special appeal for you?

CHURCH HISTORY

Session 4

The Bible Is for All

FOCUS

A welcome development in Church history has been the translation and sharing of Holy Scriptures. Early efforts to produce an English Bible brought martyrdom for William Tyndale. The students should be able to name three or more significant English versions of the Bible and explain the role of Scripture in guiding the worship and life of Christians.

GETTING READY

In a time when the Bible is available in many languages to most people, we may easily forget the centuries of struggle that made this possible.

More than a century before the Reformation, an Oxford scholar named John Wycliffe (1320-1384) spoke out against corruption in the Church. Believing that people should be able to study God's Word for themselves, he translated portions of the Latin text of the Bible into English. He was condemned for his teachings and forced to leave his university post.

It was William Tyndale (born in 1492) who produced the first great English Bible. He had learned both Hebrew and Greek at Oxford and Cambridge, and he set about providing the Scriptures for everyone. To escape danger in England, he went to Germany to complete the task. Printed copies were smuggled to his homeland. But the Bishop of London ordered that these Bibles be seized and burned outside St. Paul's Cathedral.

Still, there was no stopping what Tyndale had begun. More and more Bibles were distributed. In the end, Tyndale was condemned. In 1536, he was strangled to death and burned.

In 1539, the English government authorized the printing of what came to be known as the Great Bible. James I authorized a new edition of the Bible, however, to end a controversy between those who used the Great Bible and those who used the Geneva Bible. The Geneva Bible had been prepared by English Protestants who sought refuge in Geneva during the reign of Mary.

In preparing the King James translation, a group of appointed scholars labored seven years. Their work has been called "the noblest" work in the English language.

English translations proliferated in the twentieth century. The latest authorized Bible is the New Revised Standard Version (1989).

Scripture equips us "for every good work" (*II Timothy 3:14-17*). In every generation, "the Lord has yet more light and truth to break forth from his word" ("We limit not the truth of God" *The Hymnal 1982*, 629).

Grant, we beseech you, Almighty God, that the words which we have heard this day with our outward ears, may, through your grace, be so grafted inwardly in our hearts, that they may bring forth in us the fruit of good living, to the honor and praise of your Name; through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

After Worship

The Book of Common Prayer, p. 834

TEACHING TIP

Intermediate-age students can be encouraged to read and reflect on Scripture as a regular and private spiritual discipline. Do the class members

have personal Bibles that are easy to read and handle? Provide a time to display and discuss several current Bible versions that are available at reasonable prices.

GATHERING

Ahead of time, assemble a collection of Bibles in various versions and translations. If possible, include Hebrew Scriptures, a Greek Testament, and Bibles in modern languages. (Clergy may have copies of Scripture in Hebrew or Greek as well as other versions.)

As the students arrive, encourage them to examine the different texts. Show them where information about the date of publication and publisher are located. When were they produced? Who was responsible?

When everyone is present, say:

Let us pray. (Use the prayer “After Worship,” above, or a prayer of your own choosing.)

The chosen student lector reads from the class Bible (NRSV):

A Reading from the Second Letter of Paul to Timothy, chapter 3, verses 14 through 17.

But as for you, continue in what you have learned and firmly believed, knowing from whom you learned it, and how from childhood you have known the sacred writings that are able to instruct you for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus. All scripture is inspired by God and is useful for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, so that everyone who belongs to God may be proficient, equipped for every good work.

Reader: The Word of the Lord.

Response: Thanks be to God.

INTRODUCING THE STORY (*Time: 10-20 minutes*)

Begin by challenging the students to imagine they were ordered to get rid of all Bibles in churches, schools, and homes. Ask: If this happened, what would you say or do? What difference would it make if all Bibles in the world were destroyed?

Ask the students to locate in their Bibles *II Timothy 3:14-17*. What is meant by “sacred writings”? Where does scripture come from? How is it useful?

Tell the story of William Tyndale using information in Getting Ready (above), the *Cross Year Treasurebook* and the student newspaper, **Church Times** (Unit IV, Issue 4). Among those who wanted to destroy his translation and put Tyndale to death was King Henry VIII of England. Someone Tyndale had trusted betrayed him.

Emphasize the sacrifices made by Tyndale and others in making it possible for us to own and read the Bible in English. Point to the translations you brought for the Gathering and describe the many translations now available throughout the world.

Note also the great importance of the invention of printing. An article on page 2 of the student newspaper tells about Johannes Gutenberg and the first

printing press. His invention meant that books no longer had to be copied by hand—a single book could take months to complete. Gutenberg produced the first printed Bible in Latin in 1452.

EXPLORING *(Time: 15-20 minutes)*

Option 1. Translation Exercise

For each student, photocopy one or more of the following group of Scripture verses taken from the King James Version, with plenty of white space under each one:

“Now the Lord had said unto Abram, Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house, unto a land that I will show thee” (*Genesis 12:1*).

“And (the children of Israel) baked unleavened cakes of the dough which they brought forth out of Egypt, for it was not leavened; because they were thrust out of Egypt, and could not tarry, neither had they prepared for themselves any victuals” (*Exodus 12:39*).

“And after six days Jesus taketh Peter, James, and John his brother, and bringeth them up into a high mountain apart” (*Matthew 17:1*).

“ . . . Jesus himself stood in the midst of them, and saith unto them, Peace be unto you. But they were terrified and affrighted, and supposed that they had seen a spirit” (*Luke 24:36b-37*).

Ask the students to work in small groups to prepare “translations” of the passages into language people would understand today. Discuss any words that are unfamiliar, and decide on appropriate substitutes. Allow each group of translators to read their work aloud, and compare the different “versions.”

Option 2. Gutenberg Scramble

Cut up index cards into small squares. On each square write a word that relates to this session or a single letter of the alphabet. Include words such as: Bible, English, Latin, Church, translation, translate, burn, version, King, Henry, James, was, and is, among others. In addition to single letters, include word endings such as “ed” and “ing.” The size of your group will determine the number of cards that are needed. (You could also use words and phrases on magnets, available at book and craft stores.)

Mix up the cards and put them face up on a table. Divide into pairs or small groups. Ask the students to make sentences, phrases, or even poetry using the words and letters on the cards. Encourage them to think about the story of William Tyndale and how he and others helped to make the Bible available to all.

When groups or pairs are finished, ask them to share their work.

Option 3. Word Puzzle

Turn in the student newspaper, *Church Times*, Unit IV, Issue 4, to the word search titled “Holy Scripture.” Students may work individually, in pairs, or as a total group.

MUSIC *(Time: 10 minutes)*

Read or listen to the hymn, “We limit not the truth of God” (*The Hymnal*

1982, 629) on the *Children Sing!* tape. Before hearing the second stanza, you may want to define “oracles” (truths given to us by God) and “climes” (climates). Ask: What makes the Bible different from all other books? Discuss the final, repeated line of the hymn: “the Lord has yet more light and truth to break forth from his word.” Talk about the way readers of the Bible continually discover new meanings and inspiration.

CONNECTING/SPEAKING OUT *(Time: 15-20 minutes)*

Option 1. Group Discussion

Obtain copies of a number of English translations of the Bible. Be sure to include the King James Bible. Distribute the different versions to pairs or small groups of students. Compare the dates of the available versions to establish their chronological order. Then call on individuals to read aloud—in that order—selected verses such as the following: *Exodus 20:8-11*; *Isaiah 40:1-2*; *Matthew 5:14-16*; *Luke 1:46-48*; *I Corinthians 13:1-3*.

As the class members compare the wording of the passages, ask: Which version do you like best? Why? Why has the language changed through the years? What is the advantage of having several versions?

Option 2. Current Events

Talk with the class members about the habit of daily Bible reading. You may want to review the Daily Office Lectionary, found in *The Book of Common Prayer*, pp. 936-995. If possible, bring in one or more books with daily Bible readings and commentaries for intermediate-age students. You could also provide several *Forward Day by Day* booklets (available at many churches) for learners to look through.

Ask: When are some appropriate times for you to read the Bible each day? Where would you do it? What might prevent you from reading the Scriptures daily? How do you feel about doing this? Do you know anyone who does this?

REFLECTING *(Time: 10 minutes)*

Hand out the students' reflection file folders, described in Session 1. Invite the class members to consider this question:

“What does the Bible mean to me?”

Discuss briefly the sacrifices made by many Christians of the past in order to preserve the text of Holy Scripture. We are fortunate in our own time and in this country to have ready access to the Bible, in various translations and many languages. Ask the students to ponder the importance of the Scriptures in their own lives, then write or draw their responses. Save the class members' work, placing the folders in the large storage envelopes.

LEARNING SKILLS *(Time: 10-15 minutes)*

Option 1. Class Memory Challenge

Ask the students to work in pairs or small groups to review, in order, the names and events in Church history that they have memorized so far in this Unit. For this session, add John Wycliffe, William Tyndale, and the King

James Bible. See the “Memory Challenge” block in the student newspaper, *Church Times*.

If the group is creating a classroom time-line display, the scripture translations can be added in the appropriate centuries.

Option 2. Learning Scripture

For all verses memorized, the students may add to the scripture tree small paper shapes representing the Prayer Book (with a cross on the cover). See the description in Session 1. Encourage the class members to memorize before the next session *Luke 24:32* or *II Timothy 3:15*. See “Learning Scripture” in the student newspaper, *Church Times*.

ONGOING PROJECT (*Time: 5-10 minutes*)

Continue working on the mask project as described in Session 1. For this session, encourage the students to prepare a mask of the Bible translator, William Tyndale (1495-1536), another Christian martyr.

The heading for the background poster is “We Treasure the Bible.” Add Tyndale's name and dates after the mask has been positioned and glued in place. With markers, scatter the background with phrases and sentences to honor the Holy Scriptures as the Word of God, now available to us in many languages because of the sacrificial labor of many persons. Include John Wycliffe, who preceded Tyndale. Mention the King James Version of the Bible and the names of modern versions as well.

Save the completed mask poster.

SYMBOL CARD and TREASUREBOOK

Card 31 shows an open Bible with a verse of Scripture, and an explanation on the back.

Invite the students to explore in the *Cross Year Treasurebook*, Part IV, Section 4. Why do we have various translations of the Bible?

GOING FORTH

Gather the group for the dismissal. The teacher or a student will say:

I ask your prayers for peace; for goodwill among nations; and for the well-being of all people.

Pray for justice and peace.

Silence

I ask your prayers for the poor, the sick, the hungry, the oppressed, and those in prison.

Pray for those in any need or trouble.

Silence

[Learners may add their petitions.]

I ask your prayers for all who seek God, or a deeper knowledge of him.

Pray that they may find and be found by him.

From The Prayers of the People

The Book of Common Prayer, p. 386

Teacher: Let us go forth in the name of Christ.

Students: Thanks be to God.

TEACHER'S ASSESSMENT

How would you describe your students' attitude toward the Bible? Are they sensitive to its unique role in the Church and in the lives of individual Christians? What questions or concerns do they have? As you think about their spiritual journeys, how do you think they will respond to the Bible's stories and teachings?

LOOKING AHEAD

The next session is about the establishment of the Anglican Church on the soil of the New World, especially in the colony of Virginia and in New England. When did your own ancestors settle in this country? What were their religious beliefs? How has this family history affected your own religious practices?

CHURCH HISTORY

Session 5

The Church Came to America

FOCUS

Settlers from England brought the Anglican Church to America, first to Virginia and then to Massachusetts. The students should be able to describe the Christian communities in these colonies.

GETTING READY

In 1607, ships from England brought 144 settlers to the New World. They came under the auspices of the Virginia Company, whose aims were to aid in building a strong navy, spread the Gospel among the native peoples, establish new areas of trade, find precious metals, and plant a Protestant English colony in a land threatened by Spain.

When they landed, the people knelt on American soil and gave thanks to God. Robert Hunt, a clergyman of the Church of England, celebrated Holy Communion at a roughly fashioned altar with a sail fastened above it. The place was Jamestown, Virginia. A chapel was one of the first buildings erected. The people, only men at first, said morning and evening prayer daily, and had a service and sermon twice on Sundays.

The clergy who came to America were well educated, often at Oxford and Cambridge. Robert Hunt died after less than two years in Jamestown. Conditions were severe, and other priests also died young.

In 1630, another group of Christians from England planted a colony at Massachusetts Bay. They represented the Puritan party of the Church of England. They were called “Puritan” because they wanted to purify the Church of extravagant vestments and ceremonies. Some went so far as to urge the abandonment of *The Book of Common Prayer*. They were known for simple worship and piety, strict observance of Sunday as a day of rest, and an emphasis on study of the Bible. This group was less radical in its views than the pilgrims who had come to Plymouth in 1620. (These earlier settlers had been headed for Virginia, but their ship went off-course and landed far to the north in harsh winter weather.) Even so, the Puritans of Massachusetts disagreed strongly with the Church of England. Most of them became Congregationalists.

But as the colonies grew, so did the influence of the Church of England. By 1650, approximately 30 Anglican parishes were established in the New World, all in Virginia. A century later, churches were widespread in the thirteen colonies. Many key figures in the early history of America belonged to the Church of England, later the Episcopal Church in America. They were George Washington, Thomas Jefferson, and Patrick Henry.

The Christian settlements in America were destined to help in extending the gospel to “all nations” (*Matthew 28:16-20*). In the face of challenges and hardships, the later colonists could sing, “Let us, with a gladsome mind, praise the Lord, for he is kind” (*The Hymnal 1982*, 389).

Lord God Almighty, in whose Name the founders of this country won liberty for themselves and for us, and lit the torch of freedom for nations then unborn: Grant that we and all the people of this land may have grace to maintain our liberties in righteousness and peace; through Jesus Christ

our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. *Amen.*

Independence Day
The Book of Common Prayer, p. 242

TEACHING TIP

In regular school history classes, most students have been exposed to the story of early American colonists. Ask them to share information they have learned. How do the students' stories dovetail with the lesson? Point out specific connections between the secular and religious histories of our country.

GATHERING

As the students arrive, invite them to study the map from Poster No. 20 the Teacher's Packet, showing the major religious groups represented among the original American colonies. Where was the Church of England strongest? How do they think a map showing churches today might differ from this one?

When everyone is present, say:

Let us pray. (Use the Collect "Independence Day," above, or a prayer of your own choosing.)

The chosen student lector reads from the class Bible (NRSV):

A Reading from the Gospel of Matthew, chapter 28, verses 16 through 20.

Now the eleven disciples went to Galilee, to the mountain to which Jesus had directed them. When they saw him, they worshiped him; but some doubted. And Jesus came and said to them, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything that I have commanded you. And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age."

Reader: The Word of the Lord.

Response: Thanks be to God.

INTRODUCING THE STORY (*Time: 20 minutes*)

Invite students to turn to *Matthew 28:16-20* in their Bibles and reread the Scripture passage for this session. Note that it is called the Great Commission. Make sure students know the meaning of commission: sending, deputizing, authorizing, or entrusting. What did Jesus ask the apostles to do?

One of the reasons the first settlers came to America was to spread the Gospel. Point out that the American settlement by Christians were a natural extension of the Church's mission in the whole world. Tell the story about the first settlement in Jamestown and how the settlers began by giving thanks to God. Use information from *Getting Ready* (above) and the article in the student newspaper, *Church Times* (Unit IV, Issue 5).

Briefly, share stories about the Massachusetts settlements of 1620 and 1630. If possible, connect these events with information the students have learned in school about early American history. (See Teaching Tip, above.)

EXPLORING *(Time: 15-20 minutes)*

Option 1. Trust Walk in the New World

Bring in enough blindfolds for at least half of the class members. Ask students to help you set up obstacles throughout the room using tables, chairs, and screens (if available). Instruct them to leave passageways between the obstacles that two people can pass.

Ask the students to line up in pairs, one pair behind another. Pass out one blindfold to each pair, and ask the people on the left to help their partners secure the blindfold carefully. Tell those who can see to listen carefully to your instructions so they will know how to lead their partners through the obstacles.

Make your instructions as colorful as possible. For example, begin by telling students that they are going on a perilous journey across the ocean to a new world. Winds and storms can make them go off-course. But assure those who are blindfolded that God is with them and will guide them with the help of their partners.

Let the first pairs enter the obstacle course. At different points give out new instructions as people go through the course. If possible, have them arrive at three different places in the room: the three sites of the first English settlements in America. Give everyone a chance to be blindfolded and to be a guide.

Afterwards, talk about how it felt to enter the course with a blindfold. How did the settlers feel when they left England for America? What would it be like to come to a completely new place far from home?

Option 2. Making Shields

Obtain a copy of your own diocesan shield. (Shields can be found in the *Episcopal Church Annual*; check with your church office for a copy.) Make enlarged photocopies. Distribute these to the class members, along with sheets of white construction paper and colored markers. Invite the students to add appropriate colors to their individual shields, which can be taken home as reminders of the diocese's history.

If possible, bring in information about the founding of your own Episcopal diocese. Who was the first bishop? Which congregations in the diocese are oldest? How does your diocese honor its history?

As an alternative, students could make enlarged copies of the shield of the Episcopal Church, using the traditional red, white, and blue.

Option 3. Word Puzzle

Turn in the student newspaper, *Church Times*, Unit IV, Issue 5, to the exercise titled "Church in the New World" Students may work individually, in pairs, or as a total group.

MUSIC *(Time: 10 minutes)*

Introduce "Let us, with a gladsome mind" (*The Hymnal 1982*, 389; *We*

Sing of God, 64). This hymn (on the *Children Sing!* tape) was written by the great English poet, John Milton, who was born just a year after the establishment of the Virginia Colony. Invite the students to imagine they are living in America around 1674. They have just learned that Milton has died, and they remember this hymn. Why do the stanzas have special meaning for them? How would they feel about God? Note especially the way Milton describes the sun (with golden hair), the moon (with horns), and the stars (as sparkling sisters to the moon).

CONNECTING/SPEAKING OUT *(Time: 15-20 minutes)*

Option 1. Group Discussion

Ask the students to form two teams to stage a brief imaginary debate between loyal members of the Church of England and representatives of the Puritan party in the early American colonies. Share the following:

Group 1 believes that *The Book of Common Prayer* is essential. The members believe that worship should be like the traditional services in England.

Group 2 takes the position that the Prayer Book is not needed. They believe the churches should be free to plan their own services, with longer sermons and more intense Bible study.

After both sides have had a chance to speak and respond to each other, point out again that these divided opinions left a permanent mark on the worship of American churches, both in the Episcopal tradition and in a variety of Protestant groups. These same arguments can be found in the Church today.

Option 2. Current Events

Ask the students about the importance of preserving our oldest churches, schools, and cemeteries. Ask the class members to describe historical sites they know about. What is being done to keep them in good condition?

If class members seem interested, arrange a field trip to the oldest church in your neighborhood, whether Episcopal or another denomination. When was it founded? What makes it distinctive?

REFLECTING *(Time: 10 minutes)*

As suggested in Session 1, distribute the students' reflection folders. Share this question on a chalkboard or newsprint:

“Why do we need churches in our community?”

Point out that America has many different Christian churches with distinct characteristics. Our nation's form of government grants freedom of religion, and no church is favored over others. Ask the students to reflect on their own choice of a church in which to worship, then write or draw their responses to the question above.

When work is completed, store the folders in the large envelopes.

LEARNING SKILLS *(Time: 10-15 minutes)*

Option 1. Class Memory Challenge

Ask the students to work in small groups to review the items memorized thus far from the “Memory Challenge” block in the student newspaper, *Church Times*.

For this session, add the Virginia and Massachusetts Bay colonies (seventeenth century).

Option 2. Learning Scripture

For any verses learned since the previous session, a student may prepare a paper shape of a ship and hang it on the Scripture tree (as suggested in Session 1). The ship symbolizes the period of American colonization.

Encourage the students to memorize, before the next session, *Matthew 5:16*, or *John 17:18*. See “Learning Scripture” in the student newspaper, *Church Times*.

ONGOING PROJECT (*Time: 5-10 minutes*)

Ask the students to continue developing the series of masks, as described in Session 1. For this session, make several smaller masks of men, women, and children who were early American colonists. Label the background poster, “Arrival in America.” Underneath, use markers to write: Virginia, 1607, and Massachusetts, 1620 and 1630. Challenge the class members to add phrases and sentences about these early settlers. Include mention of the Rev. Robert Hunt and the first Eucharist celebrated in Virginia.

Save the finished work for display at the end of the Unit.

SYMBOL CARD and TREASUREBOOK

Card 32 has an Episcopal shield, a verse of Scripture, and an explanation on the back.

Invite the students to explore Section 5 in Part IV of the *Cross Year Treasurebook* about the early history of the Anglican tradition in America. What brought the first English settlers to America? What were some of their beliefs?

GOING FORTH

Gather the group for the dismissal. The teacher or a student will say:

I ask your prayers for peace; for goodwill among nations; and for the well-being of all people.

Pray for justice and peace.

Silence

I ask your prayers for the poor, the sick, the hungry, the oppressed, and those in prison.

Pray for those in any need or trouble.

Silence

[Learners may add their petitions.]

I ask your prayers for all who seek God, or a deeper knowledge of him.

Pray that they may find and be found by him.
From The Prayers of the People
The Book of Common Prayer, p. 386

Teacher: Let us go forth in the name of Christ.
Students: Thanks be to God.

TEACHER'S ASSESSMENT

Did the students consider the history of the American colonies to be a part of their own church's story? What kinds of questions did the class members raise? What would help the group to continue exploring the history of the Church?

LOOKING AHEAD

The next session is on the rise of the missionary movement and the beginning of overseas Episcopal missions. Are you aware of Christian mission efforts in today's Church? Which ones are supported by your church? In what ways are you able to support these efforts.

CHURCH HISTORY

Session 6

Missionaries Are Sent Out

FOCUS

In time, the churches of America grew stronger and were inspired to send out missionaries to other regions. The students should be able to tell one or more stories of early Christian missions and describe the work of present-day missionaries.

GETTING READY

The period following the American Revolution was a very difficult time for the Anglican churches. Clergy who were loyal to the English crown had fled to England or Canada. Others remained in America and established the Protestant Episcopal Church. But many congregations lacked leadership and declined in vitality.

Before that time, John and Charles Wesley of the Church of England, and George Whitefield, a powerful preacher, began a religious revival that spread to America. The Great Awakening took off with George Whitefield's visit in 1740. At first they were not well received by many of the Episcopal Church leaders, who felt that these traveling evangelists had moved too far from the traditions of Prayer Book usage. However, there was a change in mood in about 1760. Supporters of Whitefield's message could be found at both Trinity Church in New York and Christ Church in Philadelphia.

In England, among Baptists and others, a sense of missionary zeal prompted the formation of the London Missionary Society in 1792. Soon, the same spirit led a group of students at Andover, Massachusetts, to offer themselves as missionaries wherever God might send them. Thus began the missionary movement in America.

It was not until 1829, however, that the Episcopal Church, through its reorganized Domestic and Foreign Missionary Society, was strong enough and ready to send out missionaries on behalf of the whole church. The first overseas missionaries went to Greece where they worked alongside Orthodox Christians, assisting in education and publishing. Later, teams went to China and Liberia. In the next hundred years, missions were expanded worldwide.

In America, the Episcopal Church joined with other Christians in missions to establish Sunday Schools on the western frontiers. Early Sunday Schools were established in Pennsylvania, for example, at the urging of Bishop William White.

The upheavals of the twentieth century have brought many changes in the mission effort. But the impulse to reach out to the whole world with the gospel of Jesus Christ continues as a strength of the organized Church. The mission of all Christians, as Christ's body, is that of "bringing the good news and curing diseases everywhere" (*Luke 9:1-6*). All Christians share in the call to "go forth for God" (*The Hymnal 1982, 347*).

O God of all the nations of the earth: Remember the multitudes who have been created in your image but have not known the redeeming work of our Savior Jesus Christ; and grant that, by the prayers and labors of your holy Church, they may be brought to know and worship you as you

have been revealed in your Son; who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. *Amen.*

For the Mission of the Church

The Book of Common Prayer, p. 257

TEACHING TIP

The final question in the Baptismal Covenant asks: “Will you strive for justice and peace among all people, and respect the dignity of every human being?” Intermediate-age students may have learned in history about missionaries who did not uphold the dignity of the people and cultures they entered. They may also have classmates and friends who come from different religions and cultures. Emphasize the importance of all Christians everywhere to keep this part of the Covenant.

GATHERING

Encourage the students to examine Poster No. 22 from the Teacher's Packet showing Christians reaching out to others overseas and in this country—in classrooms, in construction projects, in agricultural development, and in ministry to needy persons. What would be a suitable title for the composite of scenes? What do they have in common? If the students could add a scene, what might it show?

When everyone is present, say:

Let us pray. (Use the Collect “For the Mission of the Church,” above, or a prayer of your own choosing.)

The chosen student lector reads from the class Bible (NRSV):

A Reading from the Gospel of Luke, chapter 10, verses 1 through 6.

After this the Lord appointed seventy others and sent them on ahead of him in pairs to every town and place where he himself intended to go. He said to them, “The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few; therefore ask the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into his harvest. Go on your way. See, I am sending you out like lambs into the midst of wolves. Carry no purse, no bag, no sandals; and greet no one on the road. Whatever house you enter, first say, ‘Peace to this house!’ And if anyone is there who shares in peace, your peace will rest on that person; but if not, it will return to you.”

Reader: The Word of the Lord.

Response: Thanks be to God.

INTRODUCING THE STORY *(Time: 10-20 minutes)*

Ask the students to look at *Luke 10:1-6* in their Bibles more closely. Jesus gave specific directions to his disciples as he sent them out on a mission. What were they supposed to take with them? What were they to say to the people they met?

Look again at Poster No. 22 used in the Gathering exercise. Ask students if they or people they know are involved in mission work in their

community, city, or in the world. Invite students to share stories about the work these people do.

Afterwards, talk about the work of American churches in sending out missionaries. Note that the Episcopal Church was greatly weakened after the Revolutionary War. It was several decades after the war before it regained enough strength to join in mission efforts that were already underway in other Christian denominations.

Describe briefly the missions to America by the English churchmen, John and Charles Wesley and George Whitefield. As the Church became established in the United States, the obvious frontier for missions was the vast territory to the west. Included in this missionary effort was the establishment of Sunday Schools and local libraries.

As an example of this movement, tell the story of Paul Mazakute and Samuel D. Hinman using the student newspaper, *Church Times* (Unit IV, Issue 6). Father Hinman was a dedicated missionary whose love and concern for the Sioux people led to the strong presence of the Episcopal Church. Mazakute, a Sioux whose Indian name was Iron Shooter, was ordained a priest in 1869.

Missions to other countries were undertaken as well (see Getting Ready). Invite students to examine the map on Poster No. 20 in the Teacher's Packet that shows the Worldwide Anglican Communion.

Briefly mention the continuing need for missions at home and abroad. Describe programs in your own diocese and church, and those overseas.

EXPLORING (*Time: 15-20 minutes*)

Option 1. Church School Missionary Offering

Read about the Church School Missionary Offering (CSMO) on page 2 of *Church Times*. It is sponsored by the Office of Children's Ministries at the Episcopal Church Center in New York. The program gives children and adults the chance to learn about mission and ministry of the Church in another part of the world.

Each year CSMO publishes an issue of *TREASURE Magazine*, a leader's guide, and a study guide for adults, focusing on a different region or province of the world wide Anglican Communion. In recent years, the Offering has focused on such places as Korea, South America, the Caribbean, Africa, and the Philippines.

Challenge class members to suggest a way your church could be involved in this program or in supporting another mission project sponsored by your diocese or church. Ask them to suggest ways that children of different age groups could learn about a new place and its culture and traditions. Then brainstorm ways the entire congregation could be part of a fund-raising project.

Option 2. Mission Bookmarks

For each class member, prepare a strip of heavy white construction paper, approximately 2 by 7 inches. Gather pens, colored markers, and clear plastic contact paper.

Invite the students to copy *Matthew 28:19* onto their strips. (This command from Jesus to his disciples was their Great Commission as

missionaries to the whole world.) Colorful borders may be designed and added, and the completed strips laminated with the contact paper to preserve them for use as bookmarks.

Option 3. Puzzle

Turn in the student newspaper, *Church Times*, Unit IV, Issue 6, to the puzzle titled “Into the World.” Students may work individually, in pairs, or as a total group.

MUSIC (*Time: 10 minutes*)

Sing along with the *Children Sing!* tape, “Go forth for God; go to the world in peace” (*The Hymnal 1982*, 347). Note that it is most often sung at the end of a service of Holy Eucharist. Ask: What does the hymn ask us all to do? You may want to make a list of the qualities we are asked to carry into the world: peace, love, strength, joy, grace, courage, help, serving, and every gift. Assign each person one of the qualities in the hymn. Sing or play the tape again. Ask the students to stand when they hear the quality they were assigned and remain standing to the end of the hymn.

CONNECTING/SPEAKING OUT (*Time: 15-20 minutes*)

Option 1. Group Discussion

From a library, find several books or atlases that have brief descriptions of different countries and cultures. Display the map of the Worldwide Anglican Communion on Poster No. 20 in the Teacher’s Packet.

Invite students to select several countries or parts of the world they would like to know about. In small groups, look through the library books to find out more about the countries the group selected. If possible, ask students to identify possible needs their country or region might have. For example, dry climates and frequent droughts are devastating in areas of eastern Africa, such as Sudan. Look at Poster No. 20 to see if the country or region is a part of the Anglican Communion.

List the countries on newsprint along with information the students have gleaned. Ask each student to think of a sentence prayer for the region he or she researched. At the dismissal, stand in a circle and give students an opportunity to add their prayers at the appropriate time.

Option 2. Current Events

Talk about missions to establish new churches. Mission churches usually are started by more established churches or a diocese. Was your own congregation once a mission that received assistance in getting established? Or is it now such a mission? Where are missions currently underway in your diocese?

If possible, invite a person who is knowledgeable about such projects to visit the class and share information. What is required of those who direct and are leaders of mission churches? How can class members be involved or give support? (Mention the importance of contributing money designated for outreach.)

You may want to share details from your congregation's annual report,

including amounts budgeted for various missions.

REFLECTING *(Time: 10 minutes)*

Continue the reflection process outlined in Session 1. When the folders have been distributed, display this question:

“How can I help to share the good news of Jesus Christ with others?”

Suggest that all Christians are missionaries. Not everyone can go to a different nation or be a full-time worker in a mission. But we can all reach out to the people in our own schools and neighborhoods. What are some ways of doing this in your church? your community? Encourage the students to write or draw their responses.

Place completed work in the folders, and put each one in its storage envelope.

LEARNING SKILLS *(Time: 10-15 minutes)*

Option 1. Class Memory Challenge

Allow time for the students to review with one another the list of people and events memorized previously. For this session, add John and Charles Wesley, George Whitefield (eighteenth century), and the first Episcopal Church overseas missionaries from America, 1830. See the “Memory Challenge” block in the student newspaper, *Church Times*.

Option 2. Learning Scripture

Copy each verse memorized by class members onto paper shapes labeled “Holy Scripture.” Hang the shapes on the tree branch, as described in Session 1. For the next session, suggest that class members learn *Luke 9:6* or *Romans 15:21*.

See “Learning Scripture” in the student newspaper, *Church Times*.

ONGOING PROJECT *(Time: 5-10 minutes)*

The mask project, described in Session 1, may continue. For this session, challenge the class members to make several smaller masks to represent missionaries in different periods (possibly overseas in Africa and Asia, on the American frontier, and in modern inner-city settings). Label the poster, “Missions.” When the masks have been positioned and glued, scatter the background with phrases and sentences about Christian missions from the nineteenth century until the present.

Save the finished work for display.

SYMBOL CARD and TREASUREBOOK

Card 33 has a missionary symbol, a verse of Scripture, and an explanation on the back.

Invite the students to explore in the *Cross Year Treasurebook*, Part IV, Section 6, about the missionary movement. Where did the Episcopal Church in America send its first missionaries?

GOING FORTH

Gather the group for the dismissal. The teacher or a student will say:
I ask your prayers for peace; for goodwill among nations; and for the well-being of all people.
Pray for justice and peace.
Silence

I ask your prayers for the poor, the sick, the hungry, the oppressed, and those in prison.
Pray for those in any need or trouble.
Silence

[Learners may add their petitions.]

I ask your prayers for all who seek God, or a deeper knowledge of him.
Pray that they may find and be found by him.
From The Prayers of the People
The Book of Common Prayer, p. 386

Teacher: Let us go forth in the name of Christ.
Students: Thanks be to God.

TEACHER'S ASSESSMENT

What was the students' response to the challenge of reaching out to others in Christian missions, both at home and overseas? To what degree did they show interest in becoming personally involved? Can they understand that all Christians are missionaries?

LOOKING AHEAD

The next session is on the Church's role in the Civil Rights movement and other efforts for peace and justice in the world. Review the questions of the Baptismal Covenant (*The Book of Common Prayer*, pp. 304-305). Which of these promises is the greatest personal challenge?

CHURCH HISTORY

Session 7

The Church Acts in Society

FOCUS

Christians are charged to be a transforming influence in society, getting involved in struggles for human equality and dignity, and peace among races and nations. The students should be able to state that the Church has a responsibility to face the problems and evils of society, and to cite examples of such Christian action in today's world.

GETTING READY

Individual Christians and local congregations, in every generation and period of history, have reached out to others in need of care and support. Hospitals, ministries to prisoners, and relief work among the hungry and homeless, are among the efforts that have inspired and assisted untold numbers of people.

In the twentieth century, the Church as an institution has been challenged by difficult and implacable issues in society: Racism and segregation, war and the arms race, gender discrimination, and conflict over issues of human sexuality. Who speaks for the Church as a whole? When is it appropriate to spend the Church's money on programs to combat social injustice? To what degree do different Christian bodies cooperate in social programs? Questions like these have spurred much debate in the last fifty years.

The Episcopal Church, like other American churches, has taken an active role in the Civil Rights movement. Its clergy and lay members spoke out with courage, challenged discrimination policies, and appropriated money to combat racism. Support was given to South African Christians in their struggle against apartheid. The Church also has taken an active role in support of peace in the Middle East.

The Church's members at every age level can affirm that there is "no longer slave or free," for we all belong to Christ and have our unity in him (*Galatians 3:27-29*). We join in the hymn, "Lift every voice and sing" (*The Hymnal 1982, 599*), which describes the long struggle for human freedom.

Heavenly Father, in your Word you have given us a vision of that holy City to which the nations of the world bring their glory: Behold and visit, we pray, the cities of the earth. Renew the ties of mutual regard which form our civic life. Send us honest and able leaders. Enable us to eliminate poverty, prejudice, and oppression, that peace may prevail with righteousness, and justice with order, and that men and women from different cultures and with differing talents may find one another the fulfillment of their humanity; through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

For Cities

The Book of Common Prayer, p. 825

TEACHING TIP

In discussing the struggles of groups in society who seek justice and reconciliation, help students understand that these issues are not abstract or remote from their lives. Students may already be a part of or shunned by cliques that exclude classmates. Boy-girl tensions also are beginning to appear. Cultivate fairness, openness, and courtesy among the class members.

Make it a point to commend behaviors that demonstrate good will and fairness.

GATHERING

From the Teacher's Packet, display Poster No. 23 of six photographs related to race relations and other public issues of recent history. Alongside it, mount a sheet of newsprint or plain posterboard. Provide markers.

As the students arrive, invite them to study the poster, then write captions to accompany the pictures. Ask: What are some actions you think the Church might undertake in order to promote justice and peace?

When everyone is present, say:

Let us pray. (Use the prayer "For Cities," above, or a prayer of your own choosing.)

The chosen student lector reads from the class Bible (NRSV):

A Reading from the Letter of Paul to the Galatians, chapter 3, verses 27 through 29.

As many of you as were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ. There is no longer Jew or Greek, there is no longer slave or free, there is no longer male and female; for all of you are one in Christ Jesus. And if you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham's offspring, heirs according to the promise.

Reader: The Word of the Lord.

Response: Thanks be to God.

INTRODUCING THE STORY (Time: 10-20 minutes)

Begin by discussing the poster and the students' headlines from the Gathering. Ask: Why do Christians take action when they see injustice or suffering?

Focus especially on the role of the Church in battling racial prejudice. Describe the Civil Rights movement in this country and the anti-apartheid movement in South Africa. Speak about the significant roles of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., and Archbishop Desmond Tutu. Information about both men is in an article on page 2 of the student newspaper, *Church Times* (Unit IV, Issue 7). A quote from Dr. King's "I Have a Dream" speech is on page 3.

You may want to distinguish between individual and group response to inequality and injustice. Individual Christians have a duty to work for justice and peace with their neighbors. This means reaching out with kindness and concern.

At the same time, Christians act together (as the Church) to deal with national and world problems. Councils and other groups join to speak out and to contribute money for the causes of justice and peace, and for relief work in cases of disaster. Tell in your own words the story from page 1 of *Church Times*, which gives examples of both kinds of outreach by youth groups in churches. Or, describe a similar project where young people in a church reached out to another community.

Ask students to reread *Galatians 3:27-29* in their Bibles. The apostle Paul

was writing to a church community. What do you think he might write if he were addressing a letter to a church today? What groups would he include in his letter?

EXPLORING *(Time: 15-20 minutes)*

Option 1. Examining Injustice

Look at issues of fairness by setting up an informal task force or panel of class members. Select several issues from recent events in your community or school, or use one of the examples below:

- A student was left out of a game by a captain who did not like him/her.
- A student was punished for leaving school early, but had received written permission ahead of time.
- Two students were attacked on the school bus by other passengers.
- Trash was found on a neighbor's lawn, and a group of students were accused of leaving it there. They did not do it.

Choose someone to preside over the panel and two people to present each side of the case. Give the panel an opportunity to ask questions to find out why the injustice occurred. The panel must then find a way that justice could be achieved on behalf of the students who have been treated unfairly. At the same time, their decision should include a way for those who cause the injustice to ask for forgiveness or make amends.

When all aspects of the justice issues have been aired, remind the group of the promises we make at Holy Baptism—to work for peace and justice, and to respect the dignity of every human being.

Option 2. Poems for Peace

Anglican Bishop Trevor Huddleson wrote the following poem:

God bless Africa.
Guard her children,
guide her rulers,
and give her peace,
for Jesus Christ's sake.

Invite the students to write a poem of their own about a community, country, or issue where there is injustice, poverty, war, or other problem. Some may wish to write about one of the pictures on Poster No. 23 in the Teacher's Packet.

After the poems are written, share them if the students feel comfortable doing so. You may want to read some or all of them as part of the dismissal. The group could also share them with others in the church or give them to a committee that oversees missions activities.

Option 3. Word Puzzle

Turn in the student newspaper, *Church Times*, Unit IV, Issue 7, to the puzzle titled "The Church and Human Justice." Students may work individually, in pairs, or as a total group.

MUSIC *(Time: 10 minutes)*

Introduce "Lift every voice and sing" (*The Hymnal 1982*, 599) by

listening to the *Children Sing!* tape. The words are by a well-known black American poet. James Weldon Johnson died years before the Civil Rights movement secured long-denied freedoms for black people in our society. Read the stanzas in unison, pausing after each one to discuss these questions: What does the hymn writer hope for? What kind of life is he describing? What meaning does this hymn have for all American Christians?

Note that this hymn has been called the “black national anthem.” Why?

CONNECTING/SPEAKING OUT *(Time: 15-20 minutes)*

Option 1. Group Discussion

Talk with the students about the ministry of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., and the role he played in the Civil Rights movement in this country. Helpful information, together with a Collect, may be found in a current edition of *Lesser Feasts and Fasts*, published by the Church Hymnal Corporation. Speak also about the important part played by Archbishop Desmond Tutu of the Church in South Africa, as that nation was torn over the policy of apartheid. Ask: What still needs to be done to promote peace and justice among people of different races? different religions? different political views? How can young persons be involved? Include issues raised during the discussion at the intercessory prayers at the dismissal.

Option 2. Current Events

Beforehand, find religion pages or church newspapers that refer to church-related programs that serve human need and promote peace and justice. Also bring in several newspapers and magazines and invite students to find one or more examples of injustice or wrongdoing in today’s society.

Give the students time to share their findings with the group. Ask: How do these stories make you feel? What do you hope will happen? Then share the clippings about church-related programs with the class members. Could you participate in any of these projects? What can you do to help?

Stress the importance of prayers that ask God to bring peace into the lives of individuals and groups.

REFLECTING *(Time: 10 minutes)*

Encourage the students to work in their reflection file folders, as described in Session 1. For this session, display the following question:

“How can I help to change what is wrong or unfair?”

Comment that many Christians in the Church’s history have stood with courage against injustice. Cite examples of people who continue to battle racial discrimination and prejudice. Challenge the class members to think about what they can do to support what is right and just for all people, then add their responses to their file folders.

Store the folders in their envelopes for safekeeping.

LEARNING SKILLS *(Time: 10-15 minutes)*

Option 1. Class Memory Challenge

Devise a way for the students to repeat to one another the items they have memorized from the assigned list of people and events in Church history. See the “Memory Challenge” block in *Church Times*, the student newspaper. For this session, add Martin Luther King, Jr., and the Civil Rights movement (1950s-1960s).

Option 2. Learning Scripture

For each verse learned, class members may make paper shapes to suggest a globe and to symbolize the Church's world mission. Attach the shapes to the Scripture tree, as described in Session 1.

Challenge the group to memorize, before the next class session, one or more of the following: *Matthew 25:35* or *Galatians 3:28*. See “Learning Scripture” in *Church Times*, the student newspaper.

ONGOING PROJECT (*Time: 5-10 minutes*)

Prepare another poster with attached masks, as described in Session 1. For this session, suggest two masks representing Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., and Archbishop Desmond Tutu.

Label the poster, “We Seek Peace and Justice,” and add the names and dates for the masks. Scatter the background with phrases and sentences about the Church's involvement in the Civil Rights movement and in other causes on behalf of human peace and justice.

Save the completed work for sharing at the end of the Unit.

SYMBOL CARD and TREASUREBOOK

Card 34 contains a symbol for liberty, a verse of Scripture, and an explanation on the back.

Invite the students to explore in the *Cross Year Treasurebook*, Part IV, Section 7, about the Church's involvement in the Civil Rights movement. Why is it right for Christians to pursue freedom, peace, and justice for all people?

GOING FORTH

Gather the group for the dismissal. The teacher or a student will say:

I ask your prayers for peace; for goodwill among nations; and for the well-being of all people.

Pray for justice and peace.

Silence

I ask your prayers for the poor, the sick, the hungry, the oppressed, and those in prison.

Pray for those in any need or trouble.

Silence

[Learners may add their petitions.]

I ask your prayers for all who seek God, or a deeper knowledge of him.

Pray that they may find and be found by him.

From The Prayers of the People
The Book of Common Prayer, p. 386

Teacher: Let us go forth in the name of Christ.

Students: Thanks be to God.

TEACHER'S ASSESSMENT

How seriously were the students able to enter into the issues presented in this session? Were they able to identify events in their own life experiences that call for peace and justice? As they continue their spiritual journey, what will help the students to pursue “the things that make for peace”?

LOOKING AHEAD

The next session is the last in this Unit's rapid journey through the Church's story, past and present. The students will be challenged to think about unity among Christian churches. What has been your own experience in seeking oneness with other Christians?

CHURCH HISTORY

Session 8

Christians Struggle for Unity

FOCUS

Christian churches have been divided for many centuries over many issues. The ever-present challenge is to strive for Christian unity. The students should be able to explain the importance of the ecumenical movement and cite one or more examples of present-day efforts for reconciliation among Christian churches.

GETTING READY

Division among Christians has plagued the Church in each era of its history. The challenge is to strive for Christian unity, since there is but “one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all” (*Ephesians 4:1-7*).

The twentieth century produced serious efforts toward unity among Christian churches, and Episcopalians have participated in the discussions.

Because of its roots in both the traditional Catholic stream of Christendom and the Protestant movement stemming from the Reformation, the Episcopal Church has lived in tension between these two sides of its history. In 1886 and 1888, respectively, the House of Bishops of the Episcopal Church, and the Chicago-Lambeth Conference adopted a statement (Quadrilateral) setting forth four essentials for Christian unity from an Episcopal perspective:

- The Holy Scriptures as the revealed Word of God;
- The Apostles’ Creed as the Baptismal symbol, and the Nicene Creed as a sufficient statement of the Christian faith;
- The two sacraments of Holy Baptism and the Supper of the Lord (Eucharist);
- The historic episcopate (governance by bishops in succession from the Apostles).

(See *The Book of Common Prayer*, “Historical Documents,” pp. 877-878.)

On the one hand, some Episcopal leaders have urged that a firm commitment to the historic episcopacy requires separation from Protestant and Reformed groups that function without bishops. Other leaders have believed that agreement on the other essentials is sufficient to encourage participation in ecumenical dialogue with non-Episcopal bodies.

A statement on Baptism, Eucharist and ministry issued by the Faith and Order Commission offered some hope of reconciling differences between churches with bishops and those without. The commission, which later became part of the World Council of Churches, came about through the efforts of Episcopal Bishop Charles Henry Brent.

A statement, issued in 1982, encouraged those churches “which have not retained the episcopate to appreciate the episcopal succession as a sign, though not a guarantee, of continuity and unity of the Church.” (*Baptism, Eucharist, and Ministry*, Faith and Order Paper No. 111, World Council of Churches, 1982) In recent decades, discussions with Roman Catholic, Orthodox, Lutheran, and Reformed bodies have produced clearer statements of agreements and differences.

O God the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, our only Savior, the Prince of Peace: Give us grace seriously to lay to heart the great dangers we are in

by our unhappy divisions; take away all hatred and prejudice, and whatever else may hinder us from godly union and concord; that, as there is but one Body and one Spirit, one hope of our calling, one Lord, one Faith, one Baptism, one God and Father of us all, so we may be all of one heart and of one soul, united in one holy bond of truth and peace, of faith and charity, and may with one mind and one mouth glorify you; through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

For the Unity of the Church
The Book of Common Prayer, p. 818

TEACHING TIP

The Episcopal Children's Curriculum is designed to help students understand and appreciate mainstream Anglican beliefs and traditions. This knowledge will be useful as they learn about other Christian churches. Help them learn the essentials embraced by the Episcopal Church while maintaining openness to understanding and respecting the faith and practice of other Christians.

GATHERING

Bring in the local yellow-page telephone directory. Mark the sections that include churches and religious organizations.

As the students arrive, encourage them to go through the main headings. What are the churches' names? Why are there so many? What are they like?

When everyone is present, say:

Let us pray. (Use the prayer "For the Unity of the Church," above, or a prayer of your own choosing.)

The chosen student lector reads from the class Bible (NRSV):

A Reading from the Letter of Paul to the Ephesians, chapter 4, verses 1 through 7.

I therefore, the prisoner in the Lord, beg you to lead a life worthy of the calling to which you have been called, with all humility and gentleness, with patience, bearing with one another in love, making every effort to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called to the one hope of your calling, one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is above all and through all and in all. But each of us was given grace according to the measure of Christ's gift.

Reader: The Word of the Lord.

Response: Thanks be to God.

INTRODUCING THE STORY (*Time: 10-20 minutes*)

Tell the story in your own words about the ecumenical event planned by a group of young people on page 1 of the student newspaper, *Church Times* (Unit IV, Issue 8) or a similar event in your state or community. An Episcopalian youth group sponsored a gathering for young people in churches from other denominations.

Then invite class members to look again at the Scripture passage (*Ephesians 4:1-7*) and the opening lines of the prayer, “For the Unity of the Church,” used in the Gathering. (You may want to ask the students to look in the Bible and the Prayer Book for these.)

Ask: What is meant by “unhappy divisions” in the prayer? Why should we take seriously the fact that Christians are divided into so many different groups? Why do you think the Church is divided today?

Explain briefly the major streams of Christendom, as listed on the board, and point out that the Episcopal Church (which belongs to the worldwide Anglican Communion) has its roots in both Roman Catholic and Protestant traditions. Emphasize the four essentials for unity stated in the Quadrilateral document, as outlined in Getting Ready (above).

Describe the ongoing conversations and cooperative efforts among the different churches, and challenge the students to learn more about their own Church and other Christian bodies. Explain that the effort toward Christian unity among the different churches is called “the ecumenical movement.” Ecumenical means “extending over the whole world.”

EXPLORING (*Time: 15-20 minutes*)

Option 1. Mimes

Divide the class members into four teams or groups, and explain that each group will receive a secret card. The cards will direct them to portray an important Christian belief. They are to meet separately to devise their presentations as mimes or charades (silently). They may use objects but cannot use spoken or written words. After each group has performed, the others will be challenged to guess the portrayed belief.

Suggested texts for the cards:

1. Show that the Bible contains God's Word. It is a gift from God, and its message is for all people.
2. Show that the Nicene Creed is a Christian statement of faith.
3. Show that there are two great Sacraments. One is Holy Baptism, and the other in the Holy Eucharist.
4. Show that the Church has been ruled by bishops ever since the time of Jesus' twelve apostles.

Allow time for the groups to prepare, then call for action. When the exercise is completed, discuss the four portrayals as steps toward unity among Christians from an Anglican perspective.

Option 2. Strength in Unity

Beforehand, collect enough craft sticks for each student. (If the class is small, prepare enough for each student to have two or three sticks.) Write on the sticks the names of other denominations with churches in your community or town, such as Baptist, Methodist, Lutheran, Presbyterian, and Catholic. Make a second set with the same names.

Ask students to think of all the different kinds of churches their friends attend or that they have seen in their community. When a person says a Baptist church, for example, give them the appropriate stick.

When everyone has a stick, note that there was only one Church at the beginning. For a variety of reasons (for example, see the story on page 2 of

Church Times), the Church splintered into different factions and weakened efforts to spread the Good News. Ask the students to break the sticks they are holding with one hand. How hard is it to break a single stick?

Pass out the second set of sticks. Put several together. Can you still break the sticks with one hand? Put all the sticks together. Can you break the sticks even if you use two hands? What does this say about unity? Could Christians accomplish more if they all worked together?

Option 3. Word Puzzle

Turn in the student newspaper, *Church Times*, Unit IV, Issue 8, to the word puzzle titled “Christian Churches.” Students may work individually, in pairs, or as a total group.

MUSIC (*Time: 10 minutes*)

Sing in unison “In Christ there is no East or West” (*The Hymnal 1982*, 529; *We Sing of God*, 83) with the *Children Sing!* tape. The music for this well-known hymn (in the current hymnal) is adapted from an Afro-American spiritual. The words suggest the theme of racial harmony as well as unity among Christians in pursuing the Church's mission. Ask: What do the words say about Jesus Christ?

CONNECTING/SPEAKING OUT (*Time: 15-20 minutes*)

Option 1. Group Discussion

Assign to four teams or groups the following hymns from *The Hymnal 1982*:

“Christ is made the sure foundation,” 518.

“The Church's one foundation,” 525.

“Let saints on earth in concert sing,” 526.

“Singing songs of expectation,” 527.

Ask each group to locate the word “one” in their assigned hymn. How many times does the idea of oneness or unity appear? Where does the unity come from?

Option 2. Current Events

Bring in a street map of your community. If possible, enlarge it on a photocopier. Ask the students to locate on the map all the Christian churches they know about. You may also want to use the telephone book for students to look for other churches in the area. What are the names of the churches? Which ones are oldest? Who has friends that go to these churches? Are you surprised that there are so many? In what ways are all the churches “one”?

REFLECTING (*Time: 10 minutes*)

Continue the reflection process described in Session 1. When the file folders have been distributed, write the following question on a chalkboard or newsprint:

“What do I believe about Christian unity?”

Talk about the tension between the churches' desire to be united as Christ's body and the problem of reaching agreement about issues that

separate them. Ask the students to write or draw their reactions to the key question above. As they complete their work, place the files in the storage envelopes. If this is the last session of the church school year, make plans for students to take their reflections home.

LEARNING SKILLS *(Time: 10-15 minutes)*

Option 1. Class Memory Challenge

Review all the people and events on the abbreviated time-line of Church history provided for this Unit. For this session, add the World Council of Churches (1948). See the “Memory Challenge” block in *Church Times*, the student newspaper.

Option 2. Learning Scripture

For every verse memorized, ask the students to create paper crosses to symbolize Christian justice and peace. Attach these to the Scripture tree as described in Session 1.

For this session, suggest that the class members learn *Romans 12:9* or *Ephesians 4:2*. See “Learning Scripture” in the student newspaper, *Church Times*. The paper additions to be added to the Scripture tree, when these verses are memorized, could be doughnut-shaped to symbolize a circle of unity.

ONGOING PROJECT *(Time: 5-10 minutes)*

Work on the final masks for this project developed during the Unit. Suggest that the students make masks to represent the different branches of Christendom as listed under Introducing the Story (above). When these have been completed and glued to posterboard, supply the heading, “We Seek Unity.” Label the masks, then add phrases and sentences reflecting the Church's search for unity. Include the World Council of Churches and the National Council of Churches. You may want to abbreviate the four essentials for Christian unity, as outlined by the Chicago-Lambeth Quadrilateral document (summarized in Getting Ready).

Plan to discuss how the eight mask posters will be shared with the congregation. Could they be displayed in a prominent place?

SYMBOL CARD and TREASUREBOOK

Card 35 has the symbol for the World Council of Churches, a verse of Scripture, and an explanation on the back.

Invite the students to explore in the *Cross Year Treasurebook*. Part IV, Section 8. Why is it important for Christians to work for unity among churches?

GOING FORTH

Gather the group for the dismissal. The teacher or a student will say:

I ask your prayers for peace; for goodwill among nations; and for the well-being of all people.

Pray for justice and peace.

Silence

I ask your prayers for the poor, the sick, the hungry, the oppressed,
and those in prison.

Pray for those in any need or trouble.

Silence

[Learners may add their petitions.]

I ask your prayers for all who seek God, or a deeper knowledge of
him.

Pray that they may find and be found by him.

From The Prayers of the People

The Book of Common Prayer, p. 386

Teacher: Let us go forth in the name of Christ.

Students: Thanks be to God.

TEACHER'S ASSESSMENT

How fully were the class members able to enter into discussions about differences among the Christian churches? What kinds of questions or concerns did they raise? As they progress in their spiritual journeys, what sorts of activities will raise their consciousness about the importance of Christian unity?

LOOKING AHEAD

Session 9, on Pentecost, can be used on the date most appropriate for your church's calendar. It has been designed independently of Sessions 1-8 and may be used at any time without interrupting the flow of this Unit on the Church's history. Consider how to relate the suggested activities to your congregation's plans for celebrating the Feast of Pentecost.

CHURCH HISTORY

Session 9

We Celebrate Pentecost

FOCUS

Each year we pause to recall that the events of Pentecost gave rise to mission and ministry that were empowered by the Holy Spirit. The students should be able to retell the Pentecost story and explain how it is linked with the Church's growth and mission through the centuries.

GETTING READY

The time from Easter to Pentecost is known as the Great Fifty Days. Christians who take part in the rhythm of the Church Year welcome this annual springtime period for rejoicing in the good news of Christ's resurrection. The seven-week season in the Church's calendar corresponds to the fifty-day Jewish Feast of Weeks—a celebration connected to the barley harvest.

The Day of Pentecost recalls the descent of the Holy Spirit upon the waiting Apostles, as described in the *Book of Acts*, chapter 2. Luke, the writer, links this experience to a promise from Jesus Christ himself, just before his ascension into heaven. (*Acts 1:1-11*)

As one of the seven Principal Feasts of the Church, Pentecost offers us the opportunity to affirm the active presence of God's Spirit in the events of Christian history. As this Unit demonstrates, the Church's story is marked at every critical juncture by courage and faithfulness on the part of Christ's baptized people. The Church's Councils, the periods of reform, the renewal of worship and liturgy, the dispatching of missionaries to the ends of the earth, and the social witness of prophetic leaders—all of these have borne witness to the continuing presence of the Holy Spirit in the Church's life.

Red is appropriately the liturgical color for the Day of Pentecost. It stands for courage and the blood of martyrs.

Almighty and most merciful God, grant that by the indwelling of your Holy Spirit we may be enlightened and strengthened for your service; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. *Amen.*

Of the Holy Spirit

The Book of Common Prayer, p. 251

TEACHING TIP

The Feast of Pentecost offers an opportunity to celebrate a distinctively Christian festival without the trappings of commercialism and distracting customs. Encourage the students to take part in imaginative worship, prayer, and fellowship on this day for remembering the Church's story from biblical times to the present. Find out how class members could be a part of your own congregation's Pentecost observance.

GATHERING

Ahead of time, assemble a collection of red hangings and vestments used in the congregation. (If it is not possible to bring them to the classroom, arrange for an exhibit of instant photographs featuring these red items.)

As the students arrive, ask: What does the color red make you think of?

Why does the Church use it at this time of year?

When everyone is present, say:

Let us pray. (Use the prayer “Of the Holy Spirit,” above, or a prayer of your own choosing.)

The chosen student lector reads from the class Bible (NRSV):

A Reading from the Book of Acts, chapter 1, verses 1 through 5.

In the first book, Theophilus, I wrote about all that Jesus did and taught from the beginning until the day when he was taken up to heaven, after giving instructions through the Holy Spirit to the Apostles whom he had chosen. After his suffering he presented himself alive to them by many convincing proofs, appearing to them during forty days and speaking about the kingdom of God. While staying with them, he ordered them not to leave Jerusalem, but to wait there for the promise of the Father. “This,” he said, “is what you have heard from me; for John baptized with water, but you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now.”

Reader: The Word of the Lord.

Response: Thanks be to God.

INTRODUCING THE STORY *(Time: 10-20 minutes)*

Ahead of time, print the names of the seven Principal Feasts of the Church on white newsprint or posterboard. Before each name, draw a blank square. (The Feasts are: Easter Day, Ascension Day, The Day of Pentecost, Trinity Sunday, All Saints' Day, Christmas Day, and The Epiphany. See the calendar in *The Book of Common Prayer*, p. 15.)

Begin by reviewing the list with the students. As you do so, point out that the Church's liturgical color for all of the Feasts except one is *white*. Ask: Which Feast has a different color?

Use a *red* crayon or marker to fill in the square for “The Day of Pentecost.”

From the Teacher's Packet, display Poster No. 24 of a classic Pentecost painting. Retell the story from *Acts: 2* in your own words.

To set the stage, you may want to describe some of the people who were there. A story on page 2 of the student newspaper, *Church Times* (Unit IV, Issue 9) lists the Apostles and tells what they did after Pentecost, according to tradition.

Remind the students that the Church remembers at Pentecost all the followers of Christ who have been inspired by the Holy Spirit to take part in the Church's growth and mission through the centuries. Many have been people of great courage, even to the point of martyrdom. That is why we use the color red on this special occasion.

The descent of the Spirit upon the Apostles at Pentecost had been promised beforehand by the risen Christ. Ask the students to find this promise by looking up *Acts 1:1-5* in their Bibles. Where did Jesus ask the group to stay? What did he say would happen?

EXPLORING *(Time: 15-20 minutes)*

Option 1. Spell the Feast

Divide the class members into three teams or groups, and ask each one to choose a leader. Photocopy and distribute to the leaders, respectively, the sets of questions that follow.

Group A: What is the first letter in the name of the Apostle who denied Jesus three times on the night before the Crucifixion? (*Mark 14:72*) What is the first letter of a word that tells what “rabbi” means? (*John 1:38*) What is the first letter of the word that goes in the following blanks: “____ Lord, ____ faith, ____ baptism”? (*Ephesians 4:5*)

Group B: What is the first letter in the word that belongs in the following blank: Jesus said, “Take, _____, this is my body”? (*Matthew 26:26*) What is the first letter of a four-letter word that means the opposite of “good”? (*Matthew 7:11*) What is the first letter of the name of the first Christian to die for his faith? (*Acts 7:59-60*)

Group C: What is the first letter of the city in which Jesus lived with Joseph and Mary? (*Matthew 21:11*) What is the first letter of the name of the man who carried Jesus' cross on Good Friday? (*Matthew 27:32*) What is the first letter of the Apostle whose name belongs in the following blank: “_____ said, ‘Unless I see the mark of the nails in (Jesus) hands. . . , I will not believe’” (*John 20:24-25*)

Direct the teams to work together on their questions. They may consult their Bibles if necessary. When each team has discovered three letters, ask the whole group to assemble, share the letters, and arrange them to spell the name of a Principal Feast of the Church (Pentecost).

Option 2. Finding the Apostles

From information in *Church Times*, tell the stories of what happened to the Apostles after Pentecost. Peter visited Paul in Greece and was later crucified head down in Rome. Andrew went north, maybe to Russia, while Thomas went to India. Bartholomew also may have gone to India, returning through Armenia, where he was martyred. John went to Asia Minor and was exiled to Patmos.

James the Greater may have gone to Spain, and James the Less died in Jerusalem after being thrown from the temple roof. Philip went to Hierapolis, where he may have killed a dragon. Matthew preached the gospel in Ethiopia where he died; Simon and Jude went to Persia. Don't forget to include Paul (see page 1 of the student newspaper) who was converted soon after the Holy Spirit came upon Jesus' followers like wind and fire.

Beforehand, prepare enough index cards with one of the Apostles' name written on it for each person in the class. With masking tape or pins, secure one to each person's back. Direct the students to circulate around the room asking questions until they can identify the name on their backs. Play more than once if there is time and interest.

Option 3. Word Puzzle

Turn in the student newspaper, *Church Times*, Unit IV, Issue 9, to the puzzle titled “When the Church Began.” Students may work individually, in pairs, or as a total group.

MUSIC (Time: 10 minutes)

Sing the Pentecost hymn, “Spirit of mercy, truth, and love” (*The Hymnal 1982*, 229) or listen to it on the *Children Sing!* tape. Read the words in unison, stopping to define “convey” (express), “clime” (climate), and “tongue” (language). Ask: Why is Pentecost a “sacred day”? Note that the hymn is a prayer. In singing it, what are we asking of God?

Begin by singing with the tape, then add instruments, such as tambourines, drums, or sticks.

CONNECTING/SPEAKING OUT (Time: 15-20 minutes)

Option 1. Group Discussion

Invite the class members to imagine they were actually present with the Apostles on the Day of Pentecost. Ask: What would you have *seen*? What would you have *heard*? In columns on a chalkboard or newsprint, jot down the students' contributions.

Discuss the change that took place in the Apostles as a result of this Spirit-filled experience. Where were they? What were they doing in the seven weeks after the resurrection? What happened afterward? (Note the discouragement they felt, followed by Peter's bold sermon and all the activity that came after the Pentecost experience.)

Option 2. Current Events

If possible, distribute copies of the service leaflet for your congregation's celebration of Pentecost. Walk through it together, noting the choice of hymns and anthems. Who will take leading parts in the service? How many young people are involved? What could young people do in this service? (You may want to pass along their ideas to the clergy.)

Ask: How does our own church carry on the work that began at Pentecost? In what ways can we be like the Apostles? How does the Church of today differ from the Church in earlier centuries?

REFLECTING (Time: 10 minutes)

Continue work on the reflection file folders, as described in Session 1. Ask this question for the students to think about:

“What does the story of Pentecost mean to me?”

Summarize, in a sentence or two, the theme of this session—that the Holy Spirit has been present in the Church throughout its history, inspiring leaders and preserving the Christian faith through the centuries. Urge the students to respond to the question above by writing or drawing. Ask them to think about how they want the Holy Spirit to help them.

If this is the final session of the Unit, place the folders in the envelopes to be taken home by the students.

LEARNING SKILLS (Time: 10-15 minutes)

Option 1. Class Memory Challenge

Ask the students to review their work in learning the listed events and people from the “Memory Challenge” block in the student newspaper, *Church Times*.

Divide the class members into two groups. Direct one group to call out people and events. The other group will respond with matching centuries or dates. If time permits, reverse the roles of the two groups and repeat the process.

Option 2. Learning Scripture

The suggested verses to be learned following this session are *Acts 1:5* and *I Corinthians 12:4-6*. See “Learning Scripture” in the student newspaper, *Church Times*.

To track the students' accomplished memory tasks, continue adding paper shapes to the Scripture tree branch, as described in Session 1.

ONGOING PROJECT (*Time: 5-10 minutes*)

Review and complete any unfinished mask posters developed during the Unit. Suggest that the students practice arranging the eight posters in chronological sequence, adding a small identifying number in one corner of each one. If time permits, they may want to add to each one a small Pentecost symbol in red outline—either a dove or flames.

When a time has been determined for sharing the project with a wider audience, decide on roles for class members. Perhaps individuals or teams could stand with each poster and serve as interpreters.

SYMBOL CARD and TREASUREBOOK

Card 36 has a columbine, a verse of Scripture, and an explanation on the back.

Invite the students to review all of Part IV in the *Cross Year Treasurebook*. What do we believe about the future of the Church?

GOING FORTH

Gather the group for the dismissal. The teacher or a student will say:

I ask your prayers for peace; for goodwill among nations; and for the well-being of all people.

Pray for justice and peace.

Silence

I ask your prayers for the poor, the sick, the hungry, the oppressed, and those in prison.

Pray for those in any need or trouble.

Silence

[Learners may add their petitions.]

I ask your prayers for all who seek God, or a deeper knowledge of him.

Pray that they may find and be found by him.
From The Prayers of the People
The Book of Common Prayer, p. 386

Teacher: Let us go forth in the name of Christ.
Students: Thanks be to God.

TEACHER'S ASSESSMENT

Were the students aware that the Day of Pentecost is a major celebration for Christians? Why, or why not? How well do they grasp the significance of the Spirit's descent upon the Apostles and the formation of the Church? How can the class members be more fully involved in celebrating this Feast?