

EPISCOPAL CHILDREN'S CURRICULUM

PRIMARY

CHALICE



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Primary Chalice

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

Episcopal Children's Curriculum

Unit I. JUDGES/KINGS

Dear Parents and Guardians,

This unit takes up the story of the Hebrew people just after the death of their leader, Moses. Moses was the person God chose to lead the people out of slavery in Egypt. God gave Moses the Ten Commandments, which shaped the people's lives for all time. For forty years in the Sinai wilderness, Moses preserved the Hebrews as the chosen people of God.

Under Joshua, who had been an assistant to Moses, the wandering of the people ended at last, and they crossed the Jordan River into the Promised Land. Far from settling peacefully into their new home, the Hebrews faced a long struggle against hostile neighbors, the Canaanites.

Joshua was followed by the period of the Judges, involving twelve leaders who served over a period of about 180 years. Also included in this unit is the story of Ruth and Naomi. The unit ends with stories about the experience of God's people under kingly rule. Stories of three kings have been selected from a period extending about 600 years: David, Solomon, and Josiah.

After Solomon, the people of God were divided into two kingdoms. A long succession of rulers reigned in both the northern kingdom of Israel and the southern kingdom of Judah. Josiah reigned in Judah.

We encourage you to talk about the sessions with your child. You can do this by reading together the learners' book, *Servants of God*, which recaps the stories of Joshua, selected judges, Ruth, and three Israeli kings. We also encourage you to read the Scripture passages cited below with your child. The Take-Home Cards given to learners each week can be used in your discussions. These collectible cards, about the size of a postcard, can be displayed in a photo album, kept in a recipe box, or used in any way you find helpful.

Following are summaries of the unit's sessions.

Session 1: "Joshua" emphasizes his example as a servant of God. He challenged the Hebrew people to do what was right and good in God's sight and led them into the Promised Land. (*Joshua 1:1-2*)

Session 2: "Deborah" tells the story of a wise woman and prophet. She helped amass an army to defeat a well-armed enemy who threatened the Hebrew's peaceful existence. She joined Barak, a military leader, to provide moral support for the troops. (*Judges 4:4-5*)

Session 3: "Gideon" was chosen to battle against the Midianites who threatened the Hebrews about 100 years after Deborah's victories. Gideon protested that he was too young and weak for the task, but ultimately obeyed God. With God's help, he won a victory over the Midianites. (*Judges 6:14-16*)

Session 4: “Samuel” was a priest and prophet who was called to help Israel establish a monarchy. He served in the temple with Eli, and grew up to be a priest, judge and prophet. He anointed Saul as the first king and later anointed David as Saul's successor. (*I Samuel 1:20; 3:19*)

Session 5: “Ruth” recalls the story of the Moabite woman who remained faithful to her mother-in-law, Naomi, after the death of Ruth's husband. This session describes how she was permitted to glean for wheat in the field of Boaz. She later married her benefactor and they had a son, Obed, the grandfather of King David. (*Ruth 2:2-4*)

Session 6: “David” tells the story of the restoration of the Ark of the Covenant to a place of honor in Jerusalem. The Ark was a symbol of God's presence and Israel's most sacred object. (*II Samuel 6:12*)

Session 7: “Solomon” describes the building of the temple in Jerusalem. Having completed the temple of his father David's dreams, King Solomon presided at its dedication with prayers and offerings. (*I Kings 8:2-23a*)

Session 8: “Josiah” focuses on one of the good kings of Judah. Josiah came to the throne when he was only eight years old. He later called the people to be faithful once again to God. While restoring the temple, an old text reaffirming the covenant with God was discovered that is believed to be the *Book of Deuteronomy*. (*II Chronicles 34:1-2a*)

Session 9: “God's Saints Rejoice” helps learners celebrate all those people, past and present, who have been faithful to God. The saints include the people in the stories from the unit and both the famous and ordinary people who have been faithful to God. The communion of saints includes all of us who continue to seek God. (*II Chronicles 6:41*)

Yours in Christ,
Church School Teachers

JUDGES/KINGS

Session 1

Joshua

FOCUS

After Moses died, his assistant Joshua led the people of God into the promised land. Joshua challenged the people to be faithful to God. The learners should be able to tell who Joshua was and why we remember him.

GETTING READY

Joshua spent many years as Moses' assistant. He was in charge of the Tent of Meeting where God encountered the people during the wilderness years. He stood on Mt. Sinai with Moses when the golden calf was fashioned. Always concerned for the defense of the people, he mistook their revelry around the idol for the clamor of invading tribes. Before Moses died, he named Joshua as his successor.

Joshua was fiercely loyal to God. When he led God's people across the Jordan River into the land of Canaan, he built a monument to remember God's action. He helped Israel keep the Law of Moses and celebrated the Passover in a new land.

Joshua was also a warrior. Canaan was dangerous for the Hebrews. Joshua waged war to claim the land God had promised to Abraham and his descendants. Joshua's campaigns were mostly successful. They included the famous victory at Jericho, where seven days of trumpet blasts and shouts from the Hebrew people shattered the city's walls. Joshua saw a vision of God after the city fell and renewed his commitment as God's servant. Eventually, he defeated the kingdoms of Canaan and claimed Israel's inheritance.

Despite these successes, the faith of God's people wavered. Joshua urged them to stand strong in their faith in God. At the end of his life, he gathered all the tribes of Israel for a public ceremony at Shechem. He told the story of how God had rescued the people from slavery in Egypt and sustained them in the wilderness. He recalled how God had delivered them from dangerous enemies in the land of Canaan. Then he issued the famous challenge to Israel: "Choose this day whom you will serve . . . as for me and my household, we will serve the Lord." (*Joshua 24:15*) The biblical record is clear that God is the hero of Israel's deliverance and victories, not Joshua.

When the people agreed to serve the one true God who had called them out of slavery in Egypt, Joshua made a covenant with them. Shortly after, Joshua died and was buried. In Hebrew, Joshua's name means "God is salvation." Translated into Greek, the name is Jesus.

Almighty and merciful God, it is only by your gift that your faithful people offer you true and laudable service: Grant that we may run without stumbling to obtain your heavenly promises; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. *Amen.*

Proper 26

The Book of Common Prayer, p. 235

TEACHING TIP

To tell a story, begin with a clear outline of people, events, and facts in the order of their appearance. Keep the outline to a few essential sentences that can be quickly called to mind. This frees the storyteller to add descriptive details and dialogue without losing the point of the narrative. (See the suggestions on storytelling found in the Background section of this guide.)

GATHERING

Display the map on Poster No. 1 from the Teacher's Packet that shows the route of the people of Israel as they were led by Joshua into the Promised Land. As the learners arrive, ask them to look at the illustrations above Shechem, Jericho, and Mt. Sinai.

Invite the learners to say together *Psalm 100* called the *Jubilate* which can be found in the Bible or in *The Book of Common Prayer*, p. 729. (The Psalm's words are on Poster No. 2 in the Teacher's Packet.)

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.

STORYTELLING (*Time: 10 minutes*)

Open the Bible and read aloud *Joshua 1:1-2*:

“After the death of Moses the servant of the Lord, the Lord spoke to Joshua son of Nun, Moses' assistant, saying ‘My servant Moses is dead. Now proceed to cross the Jordan, you and all this people, into the land that I am giving to them, to the Israelites.’”

Finish with the words: The word of the Lord.
Learners respond: Thanks be to God.

Compose a story in your own words based on *Joshua 24:1-31*:

1. Recall that Moses led the people of Israel during forty years in the desert wilderness of Sinai. (What do the learners remember about Moses? the wilderness years?) The people were awaiting a time to enter the land God had promised.

2. Introduce Joshua. He had been Moses' faithful assistant. The death of

Moses brought great sadness to the people. What would they do without him? Joshua was chosen by God to lead the people across the Jordan River into the Promised Land. The priests carried the Ark of the Covenant, and all the people followed. The waters parted, and they had a safe crossing. Afterward, Joshua put twelve stones in the river to mark the place.

3. Describe what it was like in the new land. There were many good things—land, plentiful crops, and herds to tend. But the people faced enemies. Joshua was brave and clever. With God's help, he fought and won the famous battle of Jericho. (*Joshua 6:1-20*)

4. All through the years, the people were tempted to turn away from God and to worship the strange gods (idols) of the nations around them.

5. Joshua called the people together at Shechem and reminded them that their ancestors had served God. He said: “Choose today whom you will serve. As for me and my family, we will serve the Lord.”

6. The people answered that they, too, would serve the Lord. Joshua made sure they meant what they said. Then he made a covenant (a solemn agreement) with the people. He wrote down their decision, and he set up a great stone as a reminder of what they had promised. (*Joshua 24:25-27*)

In telling the story, use the map from the Gathering. (Remind class members that they can read at home the account of Joshua's leadership in the learners' book, *Servants of God*, chapter 1.)

CREATING (*Time: 15-20 minutes*)

Option 1. Story Maps

For each learner, provide a photocopy of the Biblical Map outline found on Poster No. 4 in the Teacher's Packet. Look at the map together. Invite the class members to make their own Joshua story maps, illustrating and labeling places, people, and events with colored pencils, crayons, or markers.

Option 2. Reminder Rocks

In Joshua's time, people used stones to mark the places where great events happened. Long afterward, when people looked at the stones, they would remember what they stood for. Today we have many monuments in our nation (cities, towns, countryside) to remind us of important people and historical events.

Collect enough clean, smooth rocks for every members of the class. Invite the learners to think of a special event, then select a rock and decorate it appropriately with markers or acrylic paints.

EXPLORING THE STORY (*Time: 10-15 minutes*)

Option 1. Game, “I Choose to Follow the Lord”

Line up a row of chairs, with every other chair facing in the opposite direction—enough chairs for all but one player. The player without a chair is Joshua.

All the other players sit down, as Joshua walks around the chairs. Joshua taps a player, saying “I choose to follow the Lord.” The tapped player gets up, says, “I choose to follow the Lord,” and follows Joshua. The game continues in the same way until all players have been tapped and are following Joshua.

Joshua then gives a signal, and everyone takes a chair. The one left standing becomes the new Joshua for another round of the game.

Option 2. Puzzle, “Joshua Maze”

Use Puzzle Sheet I.1 titled “Joshua Maze.” Make copies for everyone in the class. Directions are given on the sheet.

This can be a class or small group activity, or learners may work independently.

Option 3. Defining Covenant

Invite the learners to turn in their Bibles to *Joshua 24:25* and find the word “covenant.” Invite a volunteer to read the whole verse.

Ask: Where else have we heard the word? (Examples: In the stories of Noah, Abraham, and Moses; in the words of Jesus, at the Last Supper.)

Discuss the meaning of a biblical covenant, as an agreement in which God and people make promises to each other. Then ask the learners to write a definition in their own words (either individually or as a group).

TALKING IT OVER (*Time: 10-15 minutes*)

Under Joshua's leadership, the people entered into a covenant with God. The people promised to serve God and not to worship strange idols.

Talk with the learners about promises (covenants). Ask: What are some promises you have made? What have other people promised you? Have you been able to keep your promises?

Why is it important that promises be kept? How does it feel when someone fails to keep a promise?

INQUIRING (*Time: 10-20 minutes*)

Invite an adult or young person to dress as Joshua and visit the class. Ask “Joshua” to talk about gathering all the people at Shechem and challenging them to be faithful to God. Encourage the visitor to dramatize the words, “Choose you this day . . .”

Some class members may have questions to ask the visitor.

IMAGINING (*Time: 10-20 minutes*)

Set the stage by saying, “Close your eyes, and raise your hand when you feel a minute has passed.” When all the learners have raised a hand, ask: “How did it feel to wait?”

Share a story starter: “Joshua waited forty years to enter the land God had promised the Israelites. One day, the Lord called Joshua to lead the people into the Promised Land . . .” Invite the learners to use their imaginations and discuss how the story might end. How did the people feel after waiting so long? When they got to the Promised Land, how did they feel? What

would they want to do?

Individual response. The class members can write their own endings or draw pictures. Encourage them to express their own thoughts. Avoid giving the impression that there is a “right” way to end the story.

Group role play. The group can take part in a dramatization of Joshua's calling the people together and inviting them to make their choice of whether to serve the Lord or strange gods. (You may want to remind the players of the words Joshua used.) Simple costumes may be used if they are available.

MUSIC *(Time: 10-15 minutes)*

Introduce the hymn, “We gather together to ask the Lord's blessing” (*The Hymnal 1982*, 433) by listening to it on the *Children Sing!* tape. Read the stanzas aloud slowly, stopping to define unfamiliar phrases, like “chastens and hastens.” Sing the first stanza with the tape.

CONTINUING ACTIVITY *(Time: 10-20 minutes)*

Window Project. Invite the learners to begin working on a simulated stained glass window. Provide for each class member a piece of light-weight posterboard, 12 by 12 inches. On this board, mark off a grid of nine squares, 4 by 4 inches each. At each session of this unit, one of these squares will be filled in with a design from Poster No. 4 in the Teacher's Packet that is related to the key persons being studied. Save the center square for the All Saints panel; the others may be arranged in any way the learners choose. (If time is not available in a given session for this project, more than one panel can be completed at a later time.)

Photocopy for each learner the panel on Joshua from Poster No. 4. Ask the class members to glue these to their background boards. To create a window-like effect, the learners may use magic markers, colored chalk, crayons, or bits of colored tissue cut to fit sections of the design.

TAKE-HOME CARD

Card 1 has a picture of Joshua, a Scripture verse, facts about the story, and a question to think about. Present the card as a collectible that can help learners remember the story. Invite them to display it in a special place or to keep it in a photo album or recipe box at home.

CLOSING

Conclude the session with the following prayer:

Give us grace to do your will in all that we undertake;
That our works may find favor in your sight.
Let us pray for our own needs and those of others.
(The learners may add their own petitions.)
In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

From The Prayers of the People, Form III
The Book of Common Prayer, p. 387

Stand in a circle and say:

Teacher: Go in peace to love and serve the Lord.

Learners: Thanks be to God.

TEACHER'S REFLECTION

Consider this session's emphasis on Joshua's call for the people to make a public choice of loyalty and service to God. What evidence did you note that the children know what it means to make a promise and to talk about it with others? Were they able to enter into the idea of making a promise to God (a covenant)?

LOOKING AHEAD

The next session focuses on Deborah, one of the judges in Israel. Recall people to whom you turn for understanding and spiritual direction. What skills and gifts do they possess? How would you describe their contributions to your life?

JUDGES/KINGS

Session 2

Deborah

FOCUS

Deborah was a judge and a prophet. She gave wise counsel to the people of Israel. The learners should be able to describe Deborah's contribution.

GETTING READY

This is the first of three sessions on selected “judges” who played important roles in the evolving history of the Hebrew people after the time of Joshua. In all, twelve judges are mentioned in the Bible, from the period of about 1200-1020 BCE. These years preceded the anointing of Israel's first king (Saul).

The work of these biblical judges was not like that of a modern judge. Not only did they help to settle disputes, but they also exercised civil and military leadership. The judges functioned as prophets and representatives of God.

Deborah was a wise advisor whose counsel was sought by many as she sat under her palm tree. She was also a co-leader in a successful battle against a Canaanite army. Her willingness to accompany Barak on that dangerous mission is evidence of Deborah's deep faith in God's protection. She was a prophet who foresaw the dangers facing the Israelites.

Many of the accounts in the Old Testament include scenes that are far from gentle. Battles are won decisively, and enemies are destroyed in great numbers. The story of Deborah ends with a song in which she rejoices in the slaying of enemies. This poem (*Judges 5*) is one of the oldest parts of the Hebrew Scriptures.

It is important for teachers to sort out their own reactions to these biblical episodes. When telling the stories to children, it is both permissible and desirable to omit gory details. Let the central focus be on Deborah as a leader. She played a significant role on behalf of God's people in a time of violence.

Almighty God, you have built your Church upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief cornerstone: Grant us so to be joined together in unity of spirit by their teaching, that we may be made a holy temple acceptable to you; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. *Amen.*

Proper 8

The Book of Common Prayer, p. 230

TEACHING TIP

For the Imagining activities throughout the year, prepare a box of simple props to help the learners to dramatize biblical stories. (You may want to ask a parent to help with this.) Put costumes and other items in a storage box or trunk. Include bathrobes, scarfs, and various lengths of fabric for robes or headcoverings. Sandals, small purses, cords for waists, and sheets for

groundcloths can also be placed in the box. Learners may want to add items of their own.

GATHERING

Ahead of time, prepare a “palm tree” large enough for the class members to sit under. One way to do this: Tape a brown construction paper trunk to a wall. Cut out palm fronds, using scissors to add fringes. Attach the fronds to lightweight sticks or straightened coat hangers, and tape these to the top of the trunk in such a way that they extend out into the room.

As the learners arrive, point out the tree and invite their comments.

When all are present, say together *Psalm 100*, which can be found in the Bible or in *The Book of Common Prayer*, p. 729.

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

(Continue to the end. A poster containing the words is included on Poster No. 2 in the Teacher's Packet.)

STORYTELLING *(Time: 10 minutes)*

Open your Bible and read aloud *Judges 4:4-5*:

“At that time Deborah, a prophetess, wife of Lappidoth, was judging Israel. She used to sit under the palm of Deborah between Ramah and Bethel in the hill country of Ephraim; and the Israelites came up to her for judgment.”

Finish with the words: The word of the Lord.

Learners respond: Thanks be to God.

Compose a story based on the following outline:

1. Deborah was an Israelite. She lived in the promised land of Canaan where Joshua had led her people.

2. Explain that when people had problems, they went to Deborah for help because she was well-known for her faith in God. She was called a judge. The Israelites knew that they could find Deborah sitting under a palm tree.

3. Deborah was also called a prophet because she knew ahead of time that the army of Canaan was going to try to destroy her people (the Israelites in Canaan).

4. Deborah knew that a man named Barak would be a good leader in battle against this army. (Ask the learners: How would it feel to be asked to be such a leader?) Barak hesitated. He said he was not willing to go unless Deborah went with him. She agreed to do this.

5. The army of Canaan had iron chariots. Barak was afraid he and his people would be defeated. But a great rain caused Canaan's chariots to get stuck in the mud. Deborah and Barak won the battle. Describe the people's excitement and joy.

6. Deborah wrote a song to celebrate what had happened. She and Barak sang “Bless the Lord.” The Song of Deborah is in our Bible. (*Judges 5*)

(Remind the learners to read the story of Deborah at home in the learners' book, *Servants of God*, chapter 2.)

CREATING (*Time: 15-20 minutes*)

Option 1. Palm Tree Rubbing

Give each learner a small palm tree shape cut from poster board. (Use the pattern on Poster No. 4 in the Teacher's Packet.) Place a piece of plain white paper over the pattern on the table. Rub a crayon across the paper. Move the paper and repeat the process, creating multiple prints. Remind the children that Deborah sat under a palm tree as she gave advice to her people. Or, let learners use pencils, markers, and chalk to create different kinds of rubbing effects.

Option 2. Deborah Banner

Provide each learner with a rectangular piece of felt or burlap, a piece of dowel two inches longer than the width of the fabric, and yarn or string for hanging a completed banner. Invite the learners to choose a way to make a simple banner reflecting the story of Deborah—the judge, prophet, poet, leader of her people, and follower of God. Scenes or words can be sketched or lettered with markers on scraps of felt or other fabric and applied with glue.

EXPLORING THE STORY (*Time: 10-15*)

Option 1. Game, “Is This Deborah?”

Ask the learners to sit in a circle, on chairs or on the floor. Tell them to stand if a statement they hear about Deborah is true, and to sit if it is not. Use the following:

1. She was the mother of twin sons. (sit)
2. People came to her as she sat under a palm tree. (stand)
3. She sang a song about crossing the Red Sea. (sit)
4. She gathered grain in the fields of Boaz. (sit)
5. She and Barak led in a great battle against their enemies. (stand)
6. She wrote a song about winning a great battle in Canaan. (stand)
7. When her only son was born, she laughed. (sit)
8. She was called a judge. (stand)

Other statements may be added by the teacher, or at the suggestion of class members.

Option 2. Puzzle, “Deborah, Wise Judge”

Use Puzzle Sheet I.2 titled “Deborah, Wise Judge.” Make copies for everyone in the class. Directions are given on the sheet.

This can be a class or small group activity, or learners may work independently.

Option 3. Bible Search

Invite the learners to open their Bibles to *Judges 5*. Ask: What do you notice about this chapter? How is it different from the rest of the book? Why? What is it?

TALKING IT OVER (*Time: 10-15 minutes*)

Many people came to Deborah for advice. Today, just as in biblical times, people go to others for advice about their problems. Ask:

What kinds of problems do children your age have? If you had such a problem, what would you do? Who could help you? Why would you choose that person?

Who helps you decide about important things?

INQUIRING (*Time: 10-20 minutes*)

Invite a visitor from the congregation—a woman whose training qualifies her to counsel people about their problems and decisions, such as a lawyer, a judge, a social worker, or professional counselor. Ask her to talk with the learners about the process of sharing problems and making decisions. Ask: How do people find you? What kinds of problems do they bring to you? How do you go about being helpful (or giving advice)?

IMAGINING (*Time: 10-20 minutes*)

Share a story starter: “One day, Deborah was sitting under her palm tree. Two very angry people came up to her, and they were both talking at once. Deborah said, . . .” Invite the learners to use their imaginations and discuss how the story could continue. Why would the people come to Deborah? What would they want her to do?

Individual response. The class members can write their own endings or draw pictures. Encourage them to express their own thoughts. Avoid giving the impression that there is a “right” way to end the story.

Group role play. Ask a class member to take the part of Deborah and sit under a tree. (Use the tree made for the Gathering. Invite other learners to approach the prophet with a question. “Deborah” can give advice. Use simple props to set the scene.

MUSIC

(*Time: 10-15 minutes*)

Listen to “We gather together to ask the Lord's blessing” (*The Hymnal 1982*, 433) on the *Children Sing!* tape. Introduce the second stanza, and invite the learners to create movements to accompany the words while they listen to the tape.

CONTINUING ACTIVITY (*Time: 10-20 minutes*)

Window Project. Invite the learners to continue working on the simulated stained glass window. (See suggestions for this activity in Session 1.)

Photocopy for each learner the panel on Deborah from Poster No. 4 in the Teacher's Packet. Ask the class members to glue these to their background

boards. To create a window-like effect, the learners may use magic markers, colored chalk, crayons, or bits of colored tissue cut to fit sections of the design.

TAKE-HOME CARD

Card 2 has a picture of Deborah, a Scripture verse, facts about the story, and a question to think about. Remind learners to add this card to their collection at home.

CLOSING

Conclude the session with the following prayer:

Give us grace to do your will in all that we undertake;
That our works may find favor in your sight.

Let us pray for our own needs and those of others.

(The learners may add their own petitions.)

In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

From The Prayers of the People, Form III
The Book of Common Prayer, p. 387

Stand in a circle and say:

Teacher: Go in peace to love and serve the Lord.

Learners: Thanks be to God.

TEACHER'S REFLECTION

Think about the learners' reactions to hearing the story of Deborah. Were they appreciative of her diverse gifts? To what degree did they sense that she was an exceptional figure for her time in Hebrew history? Which activities contributed best to helping the learners enter into Deborah's story?

LOOKING AHEAD

The next session focuses on Gideon, a judge in Israel. As you consider his story, think about times when you have seen “Gideon Bibles” in hotels and other public places. Why would the Bibles' distributors choose this biblical name for their organization?

JUDGES/KINGS

Session 3

Gideon

FOCUS

Gideon was called by God to lead. He felt unworthy, but he obeyed. God was with him as he won a great victory over the invading Midianites. The learners should be able to tell the story of Gideon in their own words.

GETTING READY

Gideon was a judge who lived in the twelfth century BCE. God chose him although he was very young and was a member of Israel's weakest tribe. It was a dangerous time for God's unfaithful people. The Midianites were powerful enemies who repeatedly invaded Israel's territory and stole its crops. Gideon and his people hid in caves for protection. While threshing wheat one day, God's angel appeared to Gideon and called him to deliver Israel from its enemies. Just to be sure, Gideon asked the angel for a sign. He brought food from his house and watched as the angel consumed it with fire. Believing God's call, Gideon tore down an idol's altar and built an altar to God. The angry townspeople nearly killed him for this act.

Gideon's mission was to deliver the Hebrews from the Midianites. He raised a large army, then deliberately reduced it to only 300 men to ensure that the victory would be God's, not his own. At midnight Gideon's men attacked their sleeping enemies and drove them back to their homeland. The Midianites never invaded the Hebrews again. In later times, the expression "the day of Midian" became a proverb for deliverance by God without the help of people.

Gideon waged wars on other menacing enemies, winning such a string of victories that the Hebrews wanted to make him their king. He refused, telling the people that "the Lord will rule over you" (*Judges 8:23*). God's people lived in peace for forty years until Gideon died at an old age.

Nearly everyone has seen a "Gideon Bible" in a hotel room. The Gideons International who place the Scriptures in public accommodations consider themselves to be allies of this leader whose faith in God was unshakable.

Almighty and everlasting God, you are always more ready to hear than we to pray, and to give more than we either desire or deserve: Pour upon us the abundance of your mercy, forgiving us those things of which our conscience is afraid, and giving us those good things for which we are not worthy to ask, except through the merits and mediation of Jesus Christ our Savior; who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. *Amen.*

Proper 22

The Book of Common Prayer, p. 234

TEACHING TIP

Role playing a biblical story is an effective way to help learners enter into the scenes and recall the events. Some stories, like that of Gideon, include many details and actions. Select two or three of the episodes for role play. Attempting to act out the whole story is likely to take too much time and to confuse younger learners.

GATHERING

Introduce the sounds of horns blowing by placing several different kinds of horns on a table, inviting the learners to examine them. Or, make or borrow a tape recording of horns blowing; show pictures from books of a variety of horns, including some used in ancient times; distribute simple party horns that everyone can blow at the same time. Discuss why people blow horns. What purposes do they serve?

When all are present, say together *Psalm 100*, which can be found in the Bible or in *The Book of Common Prayer*, p. 729.

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

(Continue to the end. A poster containing the words is included on Poster No. 2 in the Teacher's Packet.)

STORYTELLING (*Time: 10 minutes*)

Open the Bible and read aloud *Judges 6:14-16*:

“Then the Lord turned to (Gideon) and said, ‘Go in this might of yours and deliver Israel from the hand of Midian; I hereby commission you.’ (Gideon) responded, ‘But sir, how can I deliver Israel? My clan is the weakest in Manasseh, and I am the least in my family.’”

Finish with the words: The word of the Lord.
Learners respond: Thanks be to God.

Share with the learners, in your own words, the following story:

1. The people of Israel enjoyed forty years of peace. But some of them began to worship idols (strange gods) and forgot the one God they had promised to serve forever.

2. New enemies, called Midianites, began to raid the land and steal the crops. The farmers were forced to hide in caves. The people grew desperate. They cried out to God for help.

3. Gideon, a young Israelite, was beating out wheat in a hidden place so that the Midianites would not find him and steal the grain. An angel of the Lord came to him and commanded that he lead in battle against the Midianites.

4. Gideon asked the angel for a sign to prove the angel was God's messenger. Gideon felt unsure, for he was the youngest child in a weak clan, and it seemed strange that God called him a “mighty warrior.”

5. Gideon was reassured by the signs he received from God. God helped him to choose 300 men. God would be with them in great power and they would defeat the larger army of the Midianites.

6. In the night, Gideon and his men surrounded the enemy. They carried trumpets and stone jars with torches hidden inside. At a signal from Gideon, they all blew their trumpets at the same time. They shouted, “For the Lord

and for Gideon.” Then they broke the jars and waved the flaming torches.

7. The Midianites awoke in terror and fled. God had been with Gideon in a powerful way.

8. The people wanted Gideon to be their ruler. But he told them that only God would rule. Gideon lived many more years, and there was peace in the land.

(Remind the learners to read the story of Gideon at home in the learners' book, *Servants of God*, chapter 3.)

CREATING *(Time: 15-20 minutes)*

Option 1. Gideon's Torch

Roll sheets of brown construction paper into the shape of cones, and tape or staple these in place. Crush pieces of red, yellow, and orange tissue paper, and stuff them inside the cones to create a flame effect.

Option 2. Crayon Resist: Gideon's Triumph

Encourage the learners to imagine the torches, broken stone jars (pitchers), and trumpets carried by Gideon's men. Ask them to think also about the confused people and camels in the night attack on the Midianite camp. Invite the class members to create any of these images with crayons on white construction paper. Use bold colors and solid heavy strokes. After the drawings are completed, brush them with a light coat of diluted black tempera paint. This will create an impression of darkness, like the night of the battle.

EXPLORING THE STORY *(Time: 10-15 minutes)*

Option 1. “Game, What/Who Am I?”

Everyone sits on the floor in a circle. One learner, selected to be “it,” decides (with the teacher's help) to be a person or item from the story. He/she asks: “Who (or what) am I?” Suggestions: the angel of the Lord; Gideon; torch; trumpet; pitcher; Midianite soldier; camels; Israelite soldier.

Group members take turns to ask three questions aimed at determining what or who “it” is. The first two questions must address characteristics of an item or person. A good example would be, “Are you made out of clay?” The third question is likely to be a direct one like, “Are you a stone jar (pitcher)?”

If three questions do not produce the answer, “it” must give clues until the whole group can guess correctly.

Option 2. Puzzle, “The Surprised Midianites”

Use Puzzle Sheet I.3 titled “The Surprised Midianites.” Make copies for everyone in the class. Directions are given on the sheet.

This can be a class or small group activity, or learners may work independently.

Option 3. The First Sign

Ask the learners to work in pairs or small groups to investigate *Judges 6:16-22*. Their assignment is to discuss the passage until they are sure they know exactly what happened. Conclude by reading aloud, in unison, Gideon's words in verse 22b.

TALKING IT OVER (*Time: 10-15 minutes*)

As the youngest son of Joash and a member of a weak tribe, Gideon felt inadequate to lead the Israelites as God commanded. He asked, "How can I do this?"

Engage the learners in sharing experiences from their own lives when they felt the same way Gideon did. Ask questions like: Were you ever asked to do something you thought you could not do? What was it? Who asked you? Why did you feel you could not do it? What did you say? Where did you turn for help?

INQUIRING (*Time: 10-20 minutes*)

Invite someone from the parish or community who plays a trumpet to bring it to the class. Talk to the person responsible for music at your church for ideas, or ask youth leaders for suggestions of young people who might be willing to come to the class. Ask the visitor to play the trumpet softly. Then ask the person to play it as loud as possible. Talk about the different sounds a horn can make and how frightening it would be to waken to the blast of a horn if you were in a sound sleep.

IMAGINING (*Time: 10-20 minutes*)

Share a story starter: "The powerful Midianite warriors were sleeping peacefully in their camp, when suddenly they were awakened . . ." Invite the learners to use their imaginations and discuss how the story could continue. What woke them? What would they do?

Individual response. The class members can write their own endings or draw pictures. Encourage them to express their own thoughts. Avoid giving the impression that there is a "right" way to end the story.

Group role play. Invite a learner to play the role of a news reporter and interview a Midianite, Gideon, and an Israelite soldier.

MUSIC (*Time: 10-15 minutes*)

Listen again to "We gather together to ask the Lord's blessing" (*The Hymnal 1982*, 433) on the *Children Sing!* tape. Read the third stanza, and continue to create movements to accompany the words.

CONTINUING ACTIVITY (*Time: 10-20 minutes*)

Window Project. Invite the learners to continue working on the simulated stained glass window. (See suggestions for this activity in Session 1.)

Photocopy for each learner the panel on Gideon from Poster No. 4 in the Teacher's Packet. Ask the class members to glue these to their background boards. To create a window-like effect, the learners may use magic markers,

colored chalk, crayons, or bits of colored tissue cut to fit sections of the design.

TAKE-HOME CARD

Card 3 has a picture of Gideon, a Scripture verse, facts about the story, and a question to think about. Remind learners to add this card to their collection at home.

CLOSING

Conclude the session with the following prayer:

Give us grace to do your will in all that we undertake;
That our works may find favor in your sight.
Let us pray for our own needs and those of others.
(*The learners may add their own petitions.*)
In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

From *The Prayers of the People, Form III*
The Book of Common Prayer, p. 387

Stand in a circle and say:

Teacher: Go in peace to love and serve the Lord.
Learners: Thanks be to God.

TEACHER'S REFLECTION

Like Gideon, children sometimes feel apprehensive about taking on responsibilities and tasks. This may become evident in a class where a few learners dominate activities and discussions. What is the pattern of participation in your classroom? In what ways can you affirm and include individual learners?

LOOKING AHEAD

The focus of the next session is on God's call to Samuel. At various times in our lives, we experience a strong sense of being directed and led spiritually. Recall such a time in your own life. How did you respond?

JUDGES/KINGS

Session 4

Samuel

FOCUS

Young Samuel, son of Hannah, served in the temple with Eli. He grew up to be a priest, judge, and prophet in Israel. The learners should be able to tell the story of God's call to Samuel.

GETTING READY

When Samuel was born in the eleventh century BCE, his mother, Hannah, dedicated him to a life in God's service. Jewish tradition says that when Samuel was seven or eight years old she took him to live in a local temple with Eli, an aging priest. Samuel wore priest's clothing. He spent nights in the temple, probably tending the lamp of God's presence and serving as a watchman. He opened the sanctuary doors every morning.

One night in the temple Samuel heard a voice calling him in a dream. Thinking it was Eli, he awakened the old priest and asked him what he wanted. When this happened three times, Eli was convinced that God was calling Samuel. He instructed the boy to listen to God. Samuel heard that God would punish Eli and his descendants for the evil acts of Eli's sons. Eli was stunned but accepted God's judgment. "It is the Lord," he said. "Let him do what seems good to him." (*I Samuel 3:18*)

Samuel grew up to become both a judge and a prophet. As a judge, he counseled troubled people. He anointed Saul as Israel's first king. Samuel asked God to forgive Saul when the king broke the laws of Moses. When God withdrew favor from Saul, God instructed Samuel to anoint David as king.

As Israel's first prophet, Samuel upheld the traditions of Moses and called for sincere worship of God. When he died in his old age, "all Israel assembled and mourned for him." (*I Samuel 25:1b*)

For primary-age children, the best part of Samuel's story is his childhood. His mother, Hannah, had prayed for a child, and when he was born, she dedicated him to the service of God.

Grant us, Lord, not to be anxious about earthly things, but to love things heavenly; and even now, while we are placed among things that are passing away, to hold fast to those that shall endure; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. *Amen.*

Proper 20

The Book of Common Prayer, p. 234

TEACHING TIP

Word puzzles help early readers begin to recognize patterns of letters and to develop their vocabularies. They can help learners to become familiar with particular words associated with the church's language. While some learners will be able to complete the puzzles independently, others will benefit from the activity as a class project or as an exercise with partners.

GATHERING

Beforehand, obtain an oil lamp, a container of oil, and a lighter (matches). As the learners arrive, invite them to assist in preparing to light the lamp. Fill it carefully, trim and adjust the wick, and light it. Discuss how lamps of this sort differ from other forms of indoor lighting.

When all are present, say together *Psalm 100*, which can be found in the Bible or in *The Book of Common Prayer*, p. 729.

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

(Continue to the end. The words are included on Poster No. 2 in the Teacher's Packet.)

STORYTELLING (*Time: 10 minutes*)

Open the Bible and read aloud *I Samuel 1:20*:

“In due time Hannah conceived and bore a son. She named him Samuel, for she said, ‘I have asked him of the Lord.’”

Also read *I Samuel 3:19*:

“As Samuel grew up, the Lord was with him and let none of his words fall to the ground.”

Finish with the words: The word of the Lord.
Learners respond: Thanks be to God.

Tell the story of Samuel in your own words, using the following outline:

1. Begin by telling about Samuel's birth. For many years, his mother Hannah asked God for a son, promising that if her prayer was answered she would “give him to the Lord all the days of his life.” In time, Samuel was born.

2. How could Hannah keep her promise to God? She prayed, and she told Samuel that his life would be dedicated to God. When he was about seven or eight years old, Hannah took Samuel to the temple to live with the aging priest, Eli.

3. Samuel served the Lord in the temple. He helped at the times of worship and did what Eli asked of him. (He helped to care for the temple light, which was always kept burning.)

4. One night, Samuel was lying down in the temple when he heard a voice calling, “Samuel! Samuel!” He ran to Eli to see what he wanted, only to discover Eli had not called him. Eli told him to return to sleep. After this happened a second and third time, Eli realized the Lord must be calling Samuel. Eli told Samuel to respond to the call by saying, “Speak, Lord, for your servant is listening.”

5. God gave Samuel a message about Eli's family. Eli said, “It is the Lord speaking.”

6. Samuel grew up to be a prophet for the people of Israel. They listened to him because they knew he spoke the word of the Lord.

(Remind learners that they can read the story of Samuel at home in the learners' book, *Servants of God*, chapter 4.)

CREATING (Time: 15-20 minutes)

Option 1. Finger Puppets

For each learner, photocopy a set of the three finger puppet patterns on Poster No. 4 in the Teacher's Packet (Hannah, the boy Samuel, and Eli). Invite the class members to color their figures with crayons or markers. When coloring is completed, cut out the figures. Tape or staple the tabs to form finger puppets.

Option 2. Samuel Sleeping

Provide paper, crayons, and markers. Invite the class members to make drawings of the young Samuel sleeping in the temple area. Before they begin, talk with the class members about the scene. Samuel probably had a simple bed on the floor, and the temple was a sacred tent. A lamp was hanging nearby. Learners could also choose to draw impressions of the darkness of the night and the light of the lamp.

EXPLORING THE STORY (Time: 10-15 minutes)

Option 1. Game, "Who Said It?"

Play a game called "Who Said It?" The teacher or an older class member reads the following passages aloud, pausing at the blank spaces. At each pause, the other learners respond with a motion indicating the speaker: Eli (hands at side of face to suggest sleeping); Samuel (hand cupped to ear to indicate listening); voice of God (hands at mouth in a calling gesture).

"Samuel, Samuel!" said _____ . (God)

"Here I am! for you called me," said _____ . (Samuel)

"I did not call," said _____ . (Eli)

"Go lie down," said _____ . (Eli)

"Samuel, Samuel!" said _____ . (God)

"Speak, for your servant is listening," said _____ . (Samuel)

"See, I am about to do something in Israel," said _____ . (God)

Option 2. Puzzle, "Samuel's Story"

Use Puzzle Sheet I.4 titled "Samuel's Story." Make copies for everyone in the class. Directions are given on the sheet.

This can be a class or small group activity, or learners may work independently.

Option 3. Bible Search

Invite the learners to open their Bibles to *I Samuel 3:2-3*. Find the words Samuel, Eli, temple, and God. When all the words are located, read the verses aloud in unison. Choose other verses from Samuel's story and identify words for class members to locate.

TALKING IT OVER *(Time: 10-15 minutes)*

In the temple at night, Samuel heard someone calling his name. But it was not Eli. Who could it be? Talk about Samuel's puzzlement. Why would he think it was Eli who called him? When Eli said that he had not called, imagine how Samuel felt. What might he say? How might he explain it? How would Eli feel about being wakened twice in the night for something he did not do?

What is it like to wake up suddenly in the night because of a noise? a movement? a bright light? When has this happened to you? How did you figure out what had happened?

Have you ever thought you heard your name being called when there was no one around? How did you feel? What did you do?

How does it feel to be all alone and very quiet? Have there been times when it felt as if you were close to God?

INQUIRING *(Time: 10-20 minutes)*

Work with class members to make an oil lamp of the kind typical of Samuel's day. Start with a piece of clay and roll it into a flat pancake. Next form a bowl. Pinch together one side to form a pitcher-like spout. Point out that once the clay was dry, oil would be put in the bowl and a wick inserted in the spout. If circumstances permit, allow each learner to make an oil lamp. (See the illustration and directions on Poster No. 4 in the Teacher's Packet.)

IMAGINING *(Time: 10-20 minutes)*

Suggest that the learners lie down quietly on the floor as though sleeping. Share a story starter: "Samuel was awakened by a voice calling, 'Samuel! Samuel!' He sprang from his pallet and . . ." Invite the learners to use their imaginations and discuss how the story could continue. What would Samuel think about? What would he do?

Individual response. The class members can write their own endings or draw pictures. Encourage them to express their own thoughts. Avoid giving the impression that there is a "right" way to end the story.

Group role play. Assign the parts of Samuel and Eli, and appoint a class member to be the voice of God (from the background). Act out the story of what happened in the temple. Repeat the scene with other learners taking the parts. Use simple props and costumes to enhance the role play.

MUSIC *(Time: 10-15 minutes)*

Listen to "We gather together to ask the Lord's blessing" (*The Hymnal 1982*, 433) on the *Children Sing!* tape. Sing all the stanzas with the tape or another accompaniment.

CONTINUING ACTIVITY *(Time: 10-20 minutes)*

Window Project. Invite the learners to continue working on the simulated stained glass window. (See suggestions for this activity in Session 1.)

Photocopy for each learner the panel on Samuel from Poster No. 4 in the Teacher's Packet. Ask the class members to glue these to their background boards. To create a window-like effect, the learners may use magic markers,

colored chalk, crayons, or bits of colored tissue cut to fit sections of the design.

TAKE-HOME CARD

Card 4 has a picture of Samuel, a Scripture verse, facts about the story, and a question to think about. Remind learners to add this card to their collection at home.

CLOSING

Conclude the session with the following prayer:

Give us grace to do your will in all that we undertake;
That our works may find favor in your sight.
Let us pray for our own needs and those of others.
(*The learners may add their own petitions.*)
In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

From *The Prayers of the People, Form III*
The Book of Common Prayer, p. 387

Stand in a circle and say:

Teacher: Go in peace to love and serve the Lord.
Learners: Thanks be to God.

TEACHER'S REFLECTION

The story of Samuel offers an opportunity for the learners to encounter someone from the Bible who is about their age. How readily did the class members identify with Samuel? Were they impressed with the fact that he was only seven or eight years old? Be attentive to details in the biblical stories that can be connected to the children's own lives.

LOOKING AHEAD

The story of Ruth in the next session reminds us vividly of the strong bonds among family members. Reflect on members of your family with whom you have a special bond. What has nurtured this relationship? How does God call us to respond to others?

JUDGES/KINGS

Session 5

Ruth

FOCUS

The story of Ruth's successful gleaning in the field of Boaz shows God's care for her and for Naomi. The learners should be able to retell the story of Ruth and the gleaners.

GETTING READY

Earlier sessions in this unit focused on Joshua (successor to Moses) and three well-known persons from the period of the judges (Deborah, Gideon, and Samuel). These leaders served God within the long period between Moses and King Saul—nearly three centuries (1300-1020 BCE).

Before turning to meet three of Israel's kings, we pause to recall the life of Ruth. She is neither judge nor prophet, but an ancestor of King David.

Her story begins with Elimelech and his wife, Naomi, and their two sons, Mahlon and Chilion. They lived in Israel during the period of the judges. Danger was always present because of hostile Canaanite neighbors. Famine was an added peril. So the whole family migrated to Moab.

The two sons married Moabite women, Orpah and Ruth. In time, the husbands of all three women died. At first, both daughters-in-law were going to stay with Naomi as she journeyed back to her own land. Orpah turned back, but Ruth refused to do so. She says to Naomi:

“Do not press me to leave you or to turn back from following you! Where you go, I will go; where you lodge, I will lodge; your people will be shall be my people, and your God my God. Where you die, will I die, and there will I be buried. May the Lord do thus and so to me, and more as well, if death part me from you!” (*Ruth 1:16-17*)

Ruth's life includes sorrow and trouble but ends in joy and security back in Bethlehem, the home of her mother-in-law. She married Boaz and gave birth to a son named Obed, who was the grandfather of David.

Lord of all power and might, the author and giver of all good things:
Graft in our hearts the love of your Name; increase in us true religion;
nourish us with all goodness; and bring forth in us the fruit of good
works; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and
the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. *Amen.*

Proper 17

The Book of Common Prayer, p. 233

TEACHING TIP

Many children in our country have a limited understanding of the steps in bread-making, from grain grown on farms to the loaves we eat. To ensure that the story of Ruth's gleaning will make sense to the learners, check out their knowledge of the food cycle. Fill in any gaps and clear up misconceptions.

GATHERING

Provide a display of pictures of harvest scenes from magazines or books. You may want to include samples of local farm products, such as fruits, vegetables, and nuts. As the learners arrive, encourage discussion of the display.

When all are present, say together *Psalm 100*, which can be found in the Bible or in *The Book of Common Prayer*, p. 729.

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

(Continue to the end. The words are included on Poster No. 2 in the Teacher's Packet.)

STORYTELLING (*Time: 10 minutes*)

Open the Bible and read aloud *Ruth 2:2-4*:

“And Ruth the Moabite said to Naomi, ‘Let me go to the field and glean among the ears of grain, behind someone in whose sight I might find favor.’ (Naomi) said to her, ‘Go, my daughter.’ So she went. She came and gleaned in the field behind the reapers. As it happened, she came to the part of the field belonging to Boaz, who was of the family of Elimelech. Just then Boaz came from Bethlehem. He said to the reapers, ‘The Lord be with you.’ They answered, ‘The Lord bless you.’”

Finish with the words: The word of the Lord.
Learners respond: Thanks be to God.

Tell the story of Ruth, using the following outline:

1. Begin by reviewing the story of Naomi and her family. They had left their home to live in the land of Moab. After a time, Naomi's husband and both of her sons had died. Ruth, the widow of one of her sons, refused to abandon her widowed mother-in-law, Naomi. Ruth said to Naomi, “Where you go, I will go.”

2. The two women returned to Bethlehem at the beginning of the barley harvest.

3. Ruth wanted to do her part in helping to provide food for Naomi and herself. She offered to glean after the harvesters. (Explain that poor people of that day were permitted to gather grain left in the fields after workers had harvested the best of the crop.)

4. Tell about Ruth's meeting with Boaz, the wealthy owner of the grain field. He was impressed with Ruth's dedication to her mother-in-law.

5. Boaz encouraged Ruth to remain in his fields, and he instructed his servants to leave some good grain wherever Ruth was working.

6. Describe Ruth's deep gratitude for the kindness of Boaz.

(Remind learners to read the story about Ruth and Naomi at home in the learners' book, *Servants of God*, chapter 5.)

CREATING *(Time: 15-20 minutes)*

Option 1. Grain Bookmarks

For each class member, prepare a bookmark of sturdy paper in whatever shape and size you choose. Write the following and photocopy for each learner:

“Where you go,
I will go;
Where you lodge,
I will lodge;
Your people shall be my people,
and your God my God.

Ruth 1:16b

Spread glue over the surface of the bookmark, and attach the Bible verse. Invite the learners to decorate the bookmarks.

Option 2. Grain Baskets

Baskets can be woven out of paper and string using long, inch-wide strips of brown paper cut from paper bags, brown wrapping paper, or craft paper. Spread glue on the paper strips and then twist the paper to form ropes. Coil the paper strips into a basket shape. The glue will hold the strips together. Attach a paper rope for a handle.

EXPLORING THE STORY *(Time: 10-15 minutes)*

Option 1. Game, “Freeze Pantomime”

Ask the class members to stand in an open space, prepared to act out (pantomime) actions suggested by the teacher. When the learners are fully involved in pantomiming each scene, the teacher interrupts by saying, “Freeze!” At this point, everyone stops immediately, maintaining his/her posture and expression at that moment. The group members enjoy observing one another in various positions. Unfreeze everyone, and proceed to another action.

Suggested scenes are given below. Some of the class members may want to devise others.

“Show Ruth, Naomi, and others traveling to Bethlehem.”

“Show Boaz greeting Ruth and other reapers in the field.”

“Show Ruth and others gleaning grain in the field.”

“Show Ruth and others making bread from the grain they gathered.”

Option 2. Puzzle, “Ruth in the Field”

Use Puzzle Sheet I.5 titled “Ruth in the Field.” Make copies for everyone in the class. Directions are given on the sheet.

This can be a class or small group activity, or learners may work independently.

Option 3. Bible Search

Help the learners to find the *Book of Ruth* in their Bibles. This book follows *Judges*, in which we found the stories of Deborah and Gideon (in

previous sessions). Encourage the learners to locate *Ruth 2:4*, which includes the greeting between Boaz and the reapers in his field. Notice the words of Boaz, “The Lord be with you.” Ask: When do we hear those same words at our church? (This is the greeting used before the Collect and the Great Thanksgiving in the Eucharist, and before the Lord's Prayer at Morning and Evening Prayer.)

TALKING IT OVER *(Time: 10-15 minutes)*

In Ruth's day, the law required that gleanings of the harvest must be left for the poor, the widows, and the strangers. (See *Leviticus 19:9-10*.) Jesus reminds us to reach out to all who are in need as an expression of loving our neighbors as ourselves. Ask: How does our congregation help poor and needy people? the homeless? How do individual families help? (Describe groups today that gather leftover crops from farmers and distribute them to the poor.)

Ruth followed Naomi because she believed in God. Who do you know who has a strong belief in God? What might they do in Ruth's place?

INQUIRING *(Time: 10-20 minutes)*

After Ruth gleaned the grain from the field, she took it home and ground it into flour to make bread for Naomi and herself. At a health store, get a small amount of unground wheat or other grain. Place the unground grain between two round, flat stones. (A mortar and pestle could be used instead.) Grind the grain with a firm, rotating motion. Encourage the learners to help with the grinding, and to touch the grain before and after this process. You may want to share some bread made from whole and coarsely ground grains.

IMAGINING *(Time: 10-20 minutes)*

Share a story starter: “Ruth wanted to do her share in providing food. One morning she decided to . . .” Invite the learners to use their imaginations and discuss how the story could continue. Ruth had chosen to go with Naomi to Bethlehem. In this new place, how would Ruth know where to turn for food? Who might help her?

Individual response. The class members can write their own endings or draw pictures. Encourage them to express their own thoughts. Avoid giving the impression that there is a “right” way to end the story.

Group role play. Role play the story of Ruth's gleaning in the fields of Boaz. You may want to perform the scene more than once, with class members shifting roles.

MUSIC *(Time: 10-15 minutes)*

Sing the first stanza of “Now thank we all our God” (*The Hymnal 1982*, 397; *We Sing of God*, 66) with the *Children Sing!* tape. Read the stanza aloud. Ask: If Ruth and Naomi heard us singing these words, would they have wanted to join in? Why? (It is a song of thanksgiving for all that God has given us.)

CONTINUING ACTIVITY *(Time: 10-20 minutes)*

Window Project. Invite the learners to continue working on the simulated stained glass window. (See suggestions for this activity in Session 1.)

Photocopy for each learner the panel on Ruth from Poster No. 4 in the Teacher's Packet. Ask the class members to glue these to their background boards. To create a window-like effect, the learners may use magic markers, colored chalk, crayons, or bits of colored tissue cut to fit sections of the design.

TAKE-HOME CARD

Card 5 has a picture of Ruth, a Scripture verse, facts about the story, and questions to think about. Remind learners to add this card to their collection at home.

CLOSING

Conclude the session with the following prayer:

Give us grace to do your will in all that we undertake;
That our works may find favor in your sight.
Let us pray for our own needs and those of others.
(The learners may add their own petitions.)
In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

From The Prayers of the People, Form III
The Book of Common Prayer, p. 387

Stand in a circle and say:

Teacher: Go in peace to love and serve the Lord.
Learners: Thanks be to God.

TEACHER'S REFLECTION

Did the children get a sense of why Ruth was gathering grain in Boaz's field? Did her determination to provide for herself and Naomi come through? Was a connection made between the situation faced by Ruth and Naomi and the plight of poor and hungry people today?

LOOKING AHEAD

The next session focuses on David, King of Israel, and his joyful return of the Ark of the Covenant to Jerusalem. Read this story about David in *II Samuel 6*. Do the details of the story as it appears in the Bible remind you of other stories you may have heard?

FOCUS

David, who was made king over all God's people, returned the Ark of the Covenant to Jerusalem. The learners should be able to describe the joyful procession.

GETTING READY

David was the second king of Israel. In his old age, Samuel faced the fact that Saul's days as king were numbered. God desired new leadership for the people and directed Samuel to go to the house of Jesse in Bethlehem to anoint a new king.

Samuel went to see Jesse, who had eight sons. All of them were presented to Samuel one at a time. God told Samuel to anoint David, a shepherd who was Jesse's youngest son. (See *I Samuel 16:1-13*.) Samuel anointed David with oil privately without the knowledge of King Saul or the people. Biblical writers present two additional stories of David's anointing. The second version holds that after Saul died, David was anointed in a public ceremony performed by the southern people of Judah. (*II Samuel 2:4*) A third version describes his anointing by yet another group (*II Samuel 5:3*).

In this session, learners will focus on how King David brought the Ark of the Covenant to his new capital in Jerusalem. The Ark was a gold-covered box symbolizing God's presence. The Ark was made at Mt. Sinai and carried through the wilderness in the time of Moses. It contained the tablets of the Ten Commandments and other sacred objects. Joshua and other leaders took it into battle.

Knowing it was Israel's most sacred object, David welcomed the Ark into Jerusalem with a celebration of music, shouting, dancing, and worship. The king himself danced in front of the Ark. Since a temple had not yet been built, David placed the Ark in a sacred tent and led the people in a feast of meat, bread, and cakes.

O Lord, make us have perpetual love and reverence for your holy Name, for you never fail to help and govern those whom you have set upon the sure foundation of your loving-kindness; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. *Amen.*

Proper 7

The Book of Common Prayer, p. 230

TEACHING TIP

This session offers teachers an opportunity to help primary-age learners enter into the varied moods and dimensions of a sacred event. The movement of the Ark of the Covenant into a new and special place in the people's midst was a powerful event. It was also a time of celebration and feasting. As you plan to tell the story and choose activities, help the class members to identify their own feelings related to special events in worship.

JUDGES/KINGS

Session 6

David

GATHERING

Ahead of time, cut out and assemble the replica of the Ark of the Covenant that is provided on Poster No. 3 in the Teacher's Packet. When finished, this colorful three-dimensional construction will stand on a table. As the learners arrive, invite them to inspect the Ark and comment on its features.

When all are present, say together *Psalm 100*, which can be found in the Bible or in *The Book of Common Prayer*, p. 729.

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

(Continue to the end. The words are included on Poster No. 2 in the Teacher's Packet.)

STORYTELLING *(Time: 10 minutes)*

Open the Bible and read aloud *II Samuel 6:12b*:

“So David went and brought up the ark of God from the house of Obed-edom to the city of David with rejoicing; . . .”

Finish with the words: The word of the Lord.

Learners respond: Thanks be to God.

1. Tell how David became King of Israel. One of the things he wanted to do was to bring the Ark of the Covenant to Jerusalem. The people of God had treasured the Ark from the time of Moses when God instructed them to build it in the wilderness.

2. Describe the Ark of the Covenant. It was a box-like container decorated with gold and had handles. (See *Exodus 25:10-22*.) The Ark held the Ten Commandments.

3. Explain that the Ark had been kept in a safe place, away from the city, to protect it from enemies. When King David brought peace to a united Israel, he wanted to return the Ark to its rightful place among the people.

4. Dramatize the day when the Ark was carried into Jerusalem. It was a very important occasion. King David thought it was a time for a celebration with the music of lyres, harps, tambourines, castanets, and cymbals and much singing and dancing. Even King David could be seen in the streets dancing. The people enjoyed a feast.

5. Conclude the story with the placing of the Ark inside a tent David had provided.

(Remind learners to look at this story of David and the Ark of the Covenant at home in the learners' book, *Servants of God*, chapter 6.)

CREATING *(Time: 15-20 minutes)*

Option 1. Ark Picture

For each learner, make a photocopy of the outline drawing of the Ark of

the Covenant found on Poster No. 4 in the Teacher's Packet. Invite the class members to color the Ark and to add drawings of people in King David's parade. They can include people playing instruments, dancing, and singing.

Option 2. King David Puppet Heads

Ask the learners to make King David puppet heads from lunch bags. Cut or tear various pieces of paper and fabric to create features for the heads. Use yarn for the hair. Make crowns from yellow construction paper and use markers to add jewels and designs. Tape the crowns to the puppet heads.

EXPLORING THE STORY (*Time: 10-15 minutes*)

Option 1. “Game, Follow the Ark”

Divide the class members into several teams or groups, who meet in separate areas of the room. Give to each group a different set of directions, such as:

- Dance in circles, and twirl your scarf. (Supply a stack of fabric scraps.)
- Blow your horns joyfully. (Use rolled-up cones of paper or party horns.)
- Play your instruments. (Use variety of rhythm instruments, bells, or simple substitutes.)
- March, clapping your hands and stamping your feet.

Choose one learner to carry the Ark. Play some tape-recorded music, and ask the Ark-bearer to move slowly to each of the groups, inviting them to join the parade while carrying out their instructions. The result will be a grand parade.

Option 2. Puzzle, “King David Moves the Ark”

Use Puzzle Sheet I.6 titled “King David Moves the Ark.” Make copies for everyone in the class. Directions are given on the sheet.

This can be a class or small group activity, or learners may work independently.

Option 3. Search for Musical Instruments

Help the learners to locate *II Samuel 6:5* in their Bibles. Challenge them to find the names of five musical instruments. These can be copied onto a chalkboard or a large sheet of newsprint (either by the teacher or an older class member). Share verbal descriptions of the instruments.

TALKING IT OVER (*Time: 10-15 minutes*)

Describe the procession in which the Ark of the Covenant was placed inside the special tent where it would be kept. The people would have been very prayerful at this moment as King David made an offering to God and blessed the people in the Lord's name.

Engage the learners in conversation about prayerful times people experience in worship today. Speak of moments like a church procession headed by the cross, the prayers at Holy Communion, the presentation of the consecrated bread and wine, and the like.

Ask: How do these events make us feel? Introduce the word “reverence” as a term for our solemn attention when worshiping God. What makes you feel grateful to God? Are there any items in church that make you feel that way?

INQUIRING (*Time: 10-20 minutes*)

Ask the learners to prepare a tent for the Ark of the Covenant. Use a sheet or blanket draped over clotheslines, or devise another way to create this special space. When the tent is finished, ask Ark-bearers to place the Ark of the Covenant inside, doing so with reverence. (Use the Ark from Poster No. 3 the Teacher's Packet, which was displayed at the Gathering.)

IMAGINING (*Time: 10-20 minutes*)

Ask the learners to pretend that they are standing on a street in Jerusalem in the warm sunshine.

Share a story starter: “Suddenly a joyful noise came from the outskirts of the city. Looking up, you saw” Invite the learners to use their imaginations and discuss how the story could continue. What was it like to see something very holy being brought into the city? to see the king dancing in the street? to hear loud music?

Individual response. The class members can write their own endings or draw pictures. Encourage them to express their own thoughts. Avoid giving the impression that there is a “right” way to end the story.

Group role play. Ask the learners to act out the story of David and the Ark of the Covenant. Use prop box materials to create costumes. A simple box can be used to represent the Ark. Rhythm instruments will help simulate the festive sounds of the celebration.

MUSIC (*Time: 10-15 minutes*)

Sing all stanzas of “Now thank we all our God” (*The Hymnal 1982*, 397; *We Sing of God*, 66) with the *Children Sing!* tape. Distribute simple rhythm instruments and invite the learners to play these while marching and singing.

CONTINUING ACTIVITY (*Time: 10-20 minutes*)

Window Project. Invite the learners to continue working on the simulated stained glass window. (See suggestions for this activity in Session 1.)

Photocopy for each learner the panel on David from Poster No. 4 in the Teacher's Packet. Ask the class members to glue these to their background boards. To create a window-like effect, the learners may use magic markers, colored chalk, crayons, or bits of colored tissue cut to fit sections of the design.

TAKE-HOME CARD

Card 6 has a picture of David, a Scripture verse, facts about the story, and a question to think about. Remind learners to add this card to their collection at home.

CLOSING

Conclude the session with the following prayer:

Give us grace to do your will in all that we undertake;
That our works may find favor in your sight.
Let us pray for our own needs and those of others.
(*The learners may add their own petitions.*)
In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

From *The Prayers of the People, Form III*
The Book of Common Prayer, p. 387

Stand in a circle and say:

Teacher: Go in peace to love and serve the Lord.
Learners: Thanks be to God.

TEACHER'S REFLECTION

Were the class members able to sense the importance of bringing the Ark of the Covenant back into the midst of God's people? Which aspects of this biblical event seemed to appeal most to the learners? Are the class members able to recognize that sacred objects can inspire both awe and joy?

LOOKING AHEAD

The next session focuses on King Solomon and the dedication of the temple. Recall times when you have witnessed the completion of a building or special project. What was done to commemorate the event? Who took part?

JUDGES/KINGS

Session 7

Solomon

FOCUS

Solomon, son of David, was granted wisdom from God. He dedicated the new temple with prayers and offerings. The learners should be able to describe Solomon's role at the temple's dedication.

GETTING READY

Solomon was the son of King David who reigned for forty years in the tenth century BCE. The people honored him for building the temple in Jerusalem and for his wisdom. Israel remained at peace throughout his reign.

Solomon used Canaanite architects and thousands of workers to build the temple. Stones were quarried and cut in Lebanon before being transported to Jerusalem. Cedar and cypress timbers were used to panel the temple interior. Woodworkers decorated the walls and ceilings with carvings of plants and figures, covering them with gold. The inner sanctuary housed the Ark of the Covenant that David had brought to Jerusalem. The room and its high altar were paneled entirely with gold. Solomon used 70,000 general laborers, 80,000 stonecutters, 30,000 slaves, and 3,000 supervisors to complete the temple. It took seven years to build.

Solomon was famous for his building projects, but God's prophets criticized him for living a life of luxury at the expense of the poor. He built magnificent houses for himself and had many horses and chariots.

God gave Solomon the gift of wisdom. He was a talented diplomat whose wise decisions kept Israel at peace with its neighbors. His wisdom is shown in his decision of the case involving two women who claimed to be the mother of the same baby (*I Kings 3:16-28*). He knew that the real mother would save her child's life when he threatened to divide the baby. The real mother was given custody of the child. People from many nations sought Solomon's wisdom.

This session focuses on the dedication of Solomon's temple. The ceremony was held during one of the holiest times of the year when people from many parts of Israel traveled to Jerusalem. Priests brought the Ark of the Covenant to the temple, which was filled with the glory of the Lord.

O God, the protector of all who trust in you, without whom nothing is strong, nothing is holy: Increase and multiply upon us your mercy; that, with you as our ruler and guide, we may so pass through things temporal, that we lose not the things eternal; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever.

Amen.

Proper 12

The Book of Common Prayer, p. 231

TEACHING TIP

Solomon was a person who had great wealth, but who did not share it well. His story presents an opportunity to talk to learners about how to keep from acting as Solomon did. It is a time to encourage sharing and giving. Primary-age learners may feel that they don't have anything to give. Help

them explore ways to be a part of your church's stewardship campaign and other outreach opportunities.

GATHERING

Display Poster No. 1 from the Teacher's Packet that shows Solomon's temple. As the learners arrive, encourage them to look carefully at the detail and grandeur of the building. Wonder aloud about how long it would have taken to build such a structure before the time of cranes, trucks, and power tools.

When all are present, say together *Psalm 100*, which can be found in the Bible or in *The Book of Common Prayer*, p. 729.

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

(Continue to the end. The words are included on Poster No. 2 in the Teacher's Packet.)

STORYTELLING *(Time: 10 minutes)*

Open the Bible and read aloud *I Kings 8:22-23a*:

“Then Solomon stood before the altar of the Lord in the presence of all the assembly of Israel, and spread out his hands to heaven. He said, ‘O Lord, God of Israel, there is no God like you in heaven above or on earth beneath.’”

Read also *I Kings 8:56*:

“(Solomon said,) ‘Blessed be the Lord, who has given rest to his people Israel according to all that he promised; not one word has failed of all his good promise, which he spoke through his servant Moses.’”

Finish with the words: The word of the Lord.

Learners respond: Thanks be to God.

Tell the story of Solomon, using the following outline:

1. Begin by sharing Solomon's background. He was a son of David, king of Israel. When David died, Solomon took his place as king.

2. Explain that Solomon knew about his father's dream to build a temple for God. This temple would be a permanent house for the Ark of the Covenant. God had told David that the temple would actually be built by his son.

3. It took seven years for Solomon to build a magnificent temple. The materials for it came from distant places, and thousands of workers were employed to complete the project. Remind the learners that only human and animal power was available to build this temple. Use descriptions from *I Kings 5-6* of how massive stones were dragged by ropes from the quarry and how picks and axes were used to cut stones.

4. When the temple was finally complete, Solomon planned a great festival. Describe the celebration: Many prayers were said and sacrifices offered. Leaders, heads of tribes, and all the elders of Israel came to Jerusalem for the temple dedication.

5. Solomon stood before the altar to offer a prayer of dedication. He thanked God for keeping the promises made to David and to all the people of Israel since the time of Moses.

6. Picture all the people assembled in the temple area as Solomon spoke. He declared the greatness of God, reminding everyone that God could not be contained within the walls of any building.

(Remind learners to read the story of the temple dedication at home in the learners' book, *Servants of God*, chapter 7.)

CREATING *(Time: 15-20 minutes)*

Option 1. Child's Prayer of Dedication

Invite the learners to create their own prayer of dedication for a place of worship. Ahead of time, prepare a scroll for each learner, using a sheet of plain paper. At the top of the scroll, photocopy or write these words from Solomon's prayer: "O Lord, there is no God like you in heaven above or on earth beneath . . ." On the next three lines, write these opening words:

Thank you, God, for . . .

We praise you, O God, for . . .

I promise . . .

The learners may complete the lines of the prayer in their own way. Ask them to use markers and crayons to decorate their prayer scrolls.

Option 2. Mosaic, Building Solomon's Temple

Provide each class member with a large sheet of white paper and some glue. (Learners will find it useful to have glue bottles with small tips or glue in cups, along with cotton swabs for applying small amounts.) Cut out many small, irregularly shaped bits of stone-colored paper (black, grey, brown). Place these "stones" on trays or in shallow boxes where all can reach them. Most learners will enjoy cutting "stones" to add to the piles in the boxes. Invite the learners to select stones and glue them in place on the paper to form Solomon's Temple.

EXPLORING THE STORY *(Time: 10-15 minutes)*

Option 1. Game, "Building Solomon's Temple"

On a newsprint sheet or chalkboard, use a thick marker to print the following in large letters with plenty of surrounding space:

T E M P L E
O F
S O L O M O N

Divide the class into two teams, and explain that a "stone" will be formed around each letter as learners supply accurate facts or descriptive sentences about Solomon and the building/dedication of the temple. Supply each team with a marker or piece of chalk to draw the stones.

Offer Team 1 a chance to state a fact (such as “Solomon was David’s son”). If successful, a team member puts a “stone” around the letter T. Continue, alternating between teams until each letter has become a stone.

Option 2. Puzzle, “A Builder’s Maze”

Use Puzzle Sheet I.7 titled “A Builder’s Maze.” Make copies for everyone in the class. Directions are given on the sheet.

This can be a class or small group activity, or learners may work independently.

Option 3. Using Bible Skills

Invite the learners to open their Bibles to the *Book of Psalms*. Ask them to search for *Psalms* 72. Explain that psalms are sacred songs or poems. This psalm is cast as a prayer of David for his son, Solomon. What does he ask God to do for his son? Look especially for the lines that begin with the word, “May”

TALKING IT OVER (*Time: 10-15 minutes*)

Solomon’s temple took seven years to build. It was done carefully with fine craftsmanship. Thousands of workers labored to finish it. The finished structure was very beautiful.

Talk with the learners about the many details involved in erecting a new building, such as a church or cathedral. Ask questions like:

What has to be done before building can begin?

Where do the materials for building come from? Who are the laborers?

In what order do the various steps in construction proceed?

When the building is finished, how do people celebrate? (Describe services such as “The Dedication and Consecration of a Church,” *The Book of Common Prayer*, p. 567-579.)

INQUIRING (*Time: 10-20 minutes*)

The dimensions of the temple of Solomon are given in *I Kings* 6:2: “The house which King Solomon built for the Lord was sixty cubits long, twenty cubits wide, and thirty cubits high.”

A cubit was about 18 inches (the approximate distance from an adult’s elbow to the tip of a middle finger).

Invite the learners to make one or more “cubit sticks” from strips of sturdy cardboard. They can then measure off the size of their classroom in cubits and compare it to the size of the temple. (If there is a place with adequate space, the class members could measure off the dimensions of the temple floor (60 by 20 cubits).

IMAGINING (*Time: 10-20 minutes*)

Share a story starter: “King Solomon had watched for seven years as workers built a temple for the Lord. When it was finished, he” Invite the learners to use their imaginations and discuss how the story could continue. How would Solomon look as he stood to inspect the new temple? Where would his eyes focus? What would he remember about his father,

David? What would he want to pray to God?

Individual response. The class members can write their own endings or draw pictures. Encourage them to express their own thoughts. Avoid giving the impression that there is a “right” way to end the story.

Group role play. Role play the building of Solomon's temple. Encourage the learners to imagine picking up, hauling, dragging, carrying, and cutting the huge stones and wooden logs used in the building. When items are imagined to be extremely heavy, remind individuals to find partners to help them.

MUSIC *(Time: 10-15 minutes)*

Invite the class members to look at the words of the hymn for the consecration of a church (*The Hymnal 1982*, 360-361), especially stanzas 4 and 5. Play the hymn on the *Children Sing!* tape at an appropriate point during the selected activities related to the dedication of Solomon's temple.

CONTINUING ACTIVITY *(Time: 10-20 minutes)*

Window Project. Invite the learners to continue working on the simulated stained glass window. (See suggestions for this activity in Session 1.)

Photocopy for each learner the panel on Solomon from Poster No. 4 in the Teacher's Packet. Ask the class members to glue these to their background boards. To create a window-like effect, the learners may use magic markers, colored chalk, crayons, or bits of colored tissue cut to fit sections of the design.

TAKE-HOME CARD

Card 7 has a picture of Solomon, a Scripture verse, facts about the story, and a question to think about. Remind learners to add this card to their collection at home.

CLOSING

Conclude the session with the following prayer:

Give us grace to do your will in all that we undertake;
That our works may find favor in your sight.
Let us pray for our own needs and those of others.
(The learners may add their own petitions.)
In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

From The Prayers of the People, Form III
The Book of Common Prayer, p. 387

Stand in a circle and say:

Teacher: Go in peace to love and serve the Lord.
Learners: Thanks be to God.

TEACHER'S REFLECTION

Through their comments and actions, did the children appear to understand how immense the temple work was for Solomon's people? Did they connect the temple with the concept of the greatness of God? Do the learners understand that even this great temple could not truly contain God?

LOOKING AHEAD

The next session is about the young boy king, Josiah. When restoring the temple, he discovered the long-neglected books of the law of God. History is filled with stories of people's need to reclaim and restore their heritage of faith. When in your life have you felt such a need to be in touch again with your spiritual roots?

JUDGES/KINGS

Session 8

Josiah

FOCUS

Josiah became king as a young boy. He repaired the house of God, and he discovered the books of the law. He called the people back to faithful worship of God. The learners should be able to tell the story of Josiah in their own words.

GETTING READY

King Solomon was succeeded by his son, Rehoboam. But Rehoboam refused to relax the great burdens on the people which had characterized his father's rule. The result was a split. Two tribes became the kingdom of Judah in the south, with Jerusalem as its capital. The other tribes became the northern kingdom of Israel.

Israel lasted 200 years, but Judah's life continued about 335 years.

In the year 640 BCE, Josiah became the fifteenth king of Judah. Only eight years old at the time, he was a serious boy who wanted to be faithful to God. During his reign, the high priest of the temple, Hilkiah, discovered a book of the law. When the book was read aloud to Josiah, he tore his robes in grief as he realized how far the nation had drifted from God.

Josiah set about reforming the religious life of his nation. He restored the observance of the Passover, burned idols, and ousted false priests. These reforms also affected the kingdom of Israel. When Josiah was killed in a battle, the people mourned. He had been their leader for over thirty years.

It is widely believed that the book discovered in the temple was *Deuteronomy*, which reaffirms the covenant made between God and the people in Moses' time.

Almighty God, you have given your only Son to be for us a sacrifice for sin, and also an example of godly life: Give us grace to receive thankfully the fruits of his redeeming work, and to follow daily in the blessed steps of his most holy life; through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever.
Amen.

Proper 15

The Book of Common Prayer, p. 232

TEACHING TIP

Faith is a gift from God, and it grows through God's grace. Faith is not like a skill that can be learned. We can seek to nurture children's faith by sharing our own faith with them. In classrooms, we can provide opportunities for the learners to express themselves, to ask questions, and to be immersed in the stories of their faith tradition.

GATHERING

Ahead of time, obtain a piece of “royal” material (purple fabric, possibly brocade or silk). Drape it over a standard-size chair. In the seat, place a crown, made from gold paper or foil. As the learners arrive, ask: Who would sit in this place? Allow a brief time for speculation and discussion.

When all are present, say together *Psalm 100*, which can be found in the Bible or in *The Book of Common Prayer*, p. 729.

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

(Continue to the end. The words are included on Poster No. 2 in the Teacher's Packet.)

STORYTELLING (*Time: 10 minutes*)

Open the Bible and read aloud *II Chronicles 34:1-2a*:

“Josiah was eight years old when he began to reign; he reigned thirty-one years in Jerusalem. He did what was right in the sight of the Lord, . . .”

Finish with the words: The word of the Lord.
Learners respond: Thanks be to God.

Tell the story of Josiah, using the following outline:

1. Begin by describing Josiah's early years. He was just eight when he became king of Judah. Wonder aloud about how it would have felt to have so much responsibility at such a young age.

2. When Josiah was sixteen, he wanted to learn more about believing in God. He asked questions about David's faith so that he would know what it meant to serve God.

3. Later, as a young man, Josiah destroyed the altars and idols erected to false gods throughout Judah and Jerusalem. Then he instructed his high priest, Hilkiah, to empty the collection boxes in the temple. The money would be used to pay for much-needed repairs.

4. To his great surprise, Hilkiah found a long-neglected book in the temple. He discovered that it contained God's law. He asked his secretary (scribe), Shaphan, to deliver the book to Josiah. This book was probably *Deuteronomy*.

5. Shaphan read the book aloud to Josiah. It was filled with laws of God. When Josiah heard the word of the Lord, he tore his clothes in grief and repentance because he and the people had not kept these laws.

6. Josiah ordered the law of God to be read to the people. He called everyone back to faithful worship. The people promised to serve the Lord.

7. Josiah restored the observance of Passover, the Hebrew celebration of their deliverance from slavery and their new life of freedom.

8. King Josiah was killed in a battle, and all the people wept with sorrow.

(Remind learners that the story of Josiah and the discovery of the *Book of Deuteronomy* can be read at home in the learners' book, *Servants of God*, chapter 8.)

CREATING *(Time: 15-20 minutes)*

Option 1. Josiah's Life

Give each learner a strip of white paper (approximately 4 by 18 inches), and provide pencils, crayons, and markers. Ask the class members to create a story strip entitled “Josiah's Life.” Suggest that they think through the scenes they would like to include, then to mark off an equal amount of space for each one. Possibilities: Josiah at eight, on his throne; Josiah at sixteen; Josiah ordering idols destroyed; Josiah directing that the temple be repaired; Josiah reading the book found in the temple; Josiah calling people together to hear the law of the Lord.

Option 2. Summary of the Law

Write on a chalkboard or newsprint easel the following words: “The Lord our God is one Lord; and you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your might.” (*Deuteronomy 6:4-5.*)

Explain that these words are from the book of the law that was found in King Josiah's time. Ask each class member to copy the words onto a sheet of paper. Supply larger sheets of construction paper to form a frame. The learners can then use bits of foil, yarn, glitter, and other colorful materials to decorate the frame. Provide a variety of writing materials, such as markers, colored pencils, and silver and gold pens. The finished product can be displayed like a plaque.

EXPLORING THE STORY *(Time: 10-15 minutes)*

Option 1. Game, “Treasure Hunt”

Write and number simple clues on slips of paper and hide them. The class members find the clues, arrange them in order, and follow the directions to locate a “treasure” (the book of the law in the temple). Use a Bible marked at *Deuteronomy* for the treasure book. Sample clues: 1. Stand at the door; 2. Walk three steps to the right; 3. Walk forward to (name a piece of furniture); 4. Turn left; 5. Walk to the wall; 6. Go to the table; 7. Look in the box under the table. (Adapt these clues to your classroom situation.)

Reverse the clues and put the treasure back.

Option 2. Puzzle, “Josiah and the Law”

Use Puzzle Sheet I.8 titled “Josiah and the Law.” Make copies for everyone in the class. Directions are given on the sheet.

This can be a class or small group activity, or learners may work independently.

Option 3. Josiah Bible Search

Write the name of Josiah on a chalkboard or newsprint easel. Ask the learners to turn in their Bibles to *II Chronicles 34*. Assist them in finding the following verses and answering the questions:

Verse 14. What did Hilkiah the priest find? (The book of the law of the Lord.)

Verse 19. What did the king do when he heard the law? (He “rent” his

clothes—tore them.)

Verse 30b. What did the king read to the people? (All the words of the book.)

TALKING IT OVER *(Time: 10-15 minutes)*

Josiah was only eight years old when he became king over Judah. Talk about what it would have been like for a young boy to assume such a great responsibility. Ask: When have you been asked to take charge of something? to make a big decision all by yourself? How did you feel? Did you turn to anyone for help? Why?

Josiah's faith increased as he grew older. He wanted to know more about God. Ask: As you grow older, what do you hope to learn about God?

INQUIRING *(Time: 10-20 minutes)*

If possible, borrow or purchase a mezzuzah from a Jewish temple or friend. It is a small case designed to be tacked to the doorpost of a Jewish home. Inside, on a tiny scroll, is printed the Hebrew text of *Deuteronomy 6:4-9*. These words are part of the book of the law that was found in the temple during the reign of Josiah. Show the mezzuzah and its contents to the learners. You may want to explain that the text on the scroll is called the "Shema" (pronounced sh-Mah). Shema is the Hebrew word for "Hear," the first word of *Deuteronomy 6:4*.

IMAGINING *(Time: 10-20 minutes)*

Share a story starter: "Early one morning, eight-year-old Josiah awoke to find himself King of Judah. The first thing he did was . . ." Invite the learners to use their imaginations and discuss how the story could continue. What would Josiah feel? What would he think of doing? saying? What difference would it make to the people that their king was eight years old?

Individual response. The class members can write their own endings or draw pictures. Encourage them to express their own thoughts. Avoid giving the impression that there is a "right" way to end the story.

Group role play. Role play the period in Josiah's reign when the temple was being repaired. Include workers, supervisors, priests, and others. Develop a sequence of scenes in which the book of the law is discovered, read, shared with the king, and read to all the people.

MUSIC *(Time: 10-15 minutes)*

Sing "Now thank we all our God" (*The Hymnal 1982*, 397; *We Sing of God*, 66) with the *Children Sing!* tape. The learners can help to create motions to accompany the words.

CONTINUING ACTIVITY *(Time: 10-20 minutes)*

Window Project. Invite the learners to continue working on the simulated stained glass window. (See suggestions for this activity in Session 1.)

Photocopy for each learner the panel on Josiah from Poster No. 4 in the Teacher's Packet. Ask the class members to glue these to their background boards. To create a window-like effect, the learners may use magic markers,

colored chalk, crayons, or bits of colored tissue cut to fit sections of the design.

TAKE-HOME CARD

Card 8 has a picture of Josiah, a Scripture verse, facts about the story, and a question to think about. Remind learners to add this card to their collection at home.

CLOSING

Conclude the session with the following prayer:

Give us grace to do your will in all that we undertake;
That our works may find favor in your sight.
Let us pray for our own needs and those of others.
(*The learners may add their own petitions.*)
In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

From *The Prayers of the People, Form III*
The Book of Common Prayer, p. 387

Stand in a circle and say:

Teacher: Go in peace to love and serve the Lord.
Learners: Thanks be to God.

TEACHER'S REFLECTION

This is the final session in this unit on the periods of judges and kings in Hebrew history. As the learners explored the stories of the eight figures, did they get a sense that the characters were real people called to do God's work? Which personal characteristics of the biblical leaders seemed most appealing to the class members?

LOOKING AHEAD

Session 9 of the unit is designed for use at the class meeting nearest the time of your congregation's celebration of All Saints' Day. (It may be inserted at any point within the sequence of sessions in Unit I.)

FOCUS

On All Saints' Day we remember all God's faithful people who have lived before us—"the great cloud of witnesses." We celebrate our own life in the "communion of saints," the Church of Jesus Christ. The learners should be able to identify All Saints' Day as a major feast day of the Church, and to describe how their congregation celebrates.

GETTING READY

The observance of All Saints' Day in the Church is an occasion for celebrating the community of God's worshipers—those who have lived in the past, together with all present-day believers. Time, space, and circumstances are erased; we are all *one* in the presence of our Creator and Lord.

In *Colossians 3:1-6*, Paul uses the term saint to refer to all of God's people within the Christian community. The Catechism in *The Book of Common Prayer*, p. 862, defines the communion of saints as "the whole family of God, the living and the dead, those whom we love and those whom we hurt, bound together in Christ by sacrament, prayer, and praise."

The Episcopal Church honors those who have served God in extraordinary ways by commemorating their memory on a special day. Those selected for this honor are assigned a lesser feast day, and we remember them in prayer on that day. The Saints of the Church are New Testament figures who were witnesses to Christ's ministry. These Saints are also remembered by prayer on a special day, and are listed in bold type in the Church calendar in *The Book of Common Prayer*. On All Saints' Day we remember the communion of saints, which includes the whole family of God, the living and the dead.

At whatever point this All Saints' session falls during the use of this unit, it will not be an interruption. Rather, it is a welcome affirmation of the communion of saints past and present. (Included alongside us are the faithful judges and kings of Israel and Judah.)

For primary-age learners, this is a good time to assist them in distinguishing between heroic people they admire simply for their courage and achievement, and saints whose actions were and are a reflection of their faith in God. Encourage class members to focus on people who live out their beliefs on a daily basis.

Because you are greatly glorified in the assembly of your saints. All your creatures praise you, and your faithful servants bless you, confessing before the rulers of this world the great Name of your only Son.

Preface for A Saint

The Book of Common Prayer, p. 381

TEACHING TIP

Primary-age learners know the concepts of past, present, and future. But for the most part, they are unable to place historical figures on a time-line with accuracy. Five years ago, five hundred years ago, or even five million

JUDGES/KINGS

Session 9

God's Saints Rejoice

years ago, are all “in the past” for typical first-, second-, and third-grade children. As teachers of primary-age classes, we need not focus on the historical details about people and events of the past. It is more important to look at personalities and appealing stories about them.

GATHERING

Gather a selection of books on saints. Include a wide sampling of biographies and storybooks, as well as photographic books with stained glass, carvings, and other architectural decorations from churches and cathedrals. Open a copy of *The Book of Common Prayer* to the calendar of the Church Year (pp. 15-33). Include a copy of *Lesser Feasts and Fasts*. Encourage the learners to browse through the books, noting the names of Saints and the various ways they are represented.

When all are present, say together *Psalm 100*, which can be found in the Bible or in *The Book of Common Prayer*, p. 729.

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

(Continue to the end. The words are included on Poster No. 2 in the Teacher's Packet.)

STORYTELLING (*Time: 10 minutes*)

Open the Bible and read aloud *II Chronicles 6:41d*:

“. . . and let thy saints rejoice in thy goodness.” (RSV)

Finish with the words: The word of the Lord.

Learners respond: Thanks be to God.

In this session, let the storytelling time be used to help the learners appreciate All Saints' Day as a major day of celebration for the Church.

1. Begin by reciting the first two lines of the Lord's Prayer, paying particular attention to the word “hallowed” in the second line—it means “to be honored as holy.” On the feast of All Hallows (All Saints), we honor all the faithful and holy people of the Church. (Note: The word “Halloween” is a shortened version of the phrase “All Hallows' Eve.”)

2. Describe what happens in your congregation on All Saints' Day (or the Sunday nearest November 1). Describe the services, paying particular attention to the colors of the vestments, and hymns. If appropriate, describe any customs, such as the reading of the names of all who have died in the parish, special prayers, banners, or other special items used on this day. Mention any foods served or other special events.

3. Explain that on All Saints' Day, churches all over the world gather to remember the faithful people of God who have lived before us—the “great cloud of witnesses” that we call saints (*Hebrews 12:1*). Some of these saints are famous, their stories known by many. Others are people who, through their daily lives, sought to serve God and their neighbors. We remember them all on All Saints' Day.

4. Using the books from the Gathering, tell one or more stories about saints. Or tell the following story about David Pendleton Oakerhater whose day is September 1 on the Church calendar. He was originally a soldier who fought against the United States army with warriors of other tribes in disputes over Native American land rights. He was known as a brave leader of the Cheyenne tribe in Oklahoma. After his capture, he was sent to prison in Florida where he learned English and encountered the Christian faith. With the help of an army captain and others, he answered the call to a ministry of peace. He returned to Oklahoma where he started several schools and missions. He continued his ministry of service, education, and pastoral care among his people until his death in 1931.

5. Introduce the idea that every baptized Christian is a member of the “communion of saints.” This means that we are all “saints” of God. On All Saints' Day, we remember and celebrate both the living saints and the saints who have died.

(Remind learners to read the story of the saints of God at home in the learners' book, *Servants of God*, chapter 9.)

CREATING *(Time: 15-20 minutes)*

Option 1. Illustrating S A I N T

Provide every learner with crayons, markers, and a large sheet of blank paper. Ask each of them to choose a single marker and to write the five letters S A I N T, spacing them out across the tops of their papers. For each of the five letters, the children can draw a person, item, or deed related to Saints and what they do. Some class members may choose to draw only one or two scenes. Others may decide to work in teams to think of ways to link their drawings with the specific letters. (Examples: S—shield; N—St. Nicholas.) Books used at the Gathering may suggest ideas.

Option 2. Saints' Mobile

From a collection of recent newspapers and magazines, invite each learner to clip out pictures of people's faces (“saints” of all ages). Provide each class member with four tagboard circles, each with a hole punched through the top. Glue clipped pictures to the fronts and backs of the circles. A wonderful addition would be to take instant photos of the class members and add their pictures to the mobile.

To make the hanger for a mobile, use thin wire and form a circle. Weave the ends around to make the circle secure. Attach the picture circles with varying lengths of yarn. Then measure and cut three 18-inch lengths of string. Tie each of the strings to the wire form, about equal distances apart on the circle. Gather the three strings, and tie them together about 6 inches from the end. Tie again, about 3 inches from the end, to create a loop for hanging the mobile. Adjust the strings to balance the mobile as it hangs.

EXPLORING THE STORY *(Time: 10-15 minutes)*

Option 1. Game, “Searching for Saints”

Prior to the session, prepare a list of clues and make copies to be given to

all participants. The clues should be symbols or names of saints. Depending on how many you can find in your church, you may need to “plant” some additional ones. For example, St. Cecilia’s symbol could be placed in a choir room. The class members are to form teams for following the clues. Remind the teams that the symbols or names may be found in windows, carvings, pictures, books, or in other forms—in and around your church. Describe clear boundaries within which the symbols may be found.

Option 2. Puzzle, “Saints of God”

Use Puzzle Sheet I.9 titled “Saints of God.” Make copies for everyone in the class. Directions are given on the sheet.

This can be a class or small group activity, or learners may work independently.

Option 3. Prayer Book Search

Invite the learners to open their Prayer Books to pages 237-245. Encourage them to make a chart showing names and dates for major Saints’ days observed during the Church Year. Turn to page 246, “The Common of Saints.” Explain that these are prayers in remembrance of Saints. Finally, find page 250. Read aloud one of these prayers.

TALKING IT OVER (*Time: 10-15 minutes*)

On a chalkboard or newsprint, write these two phrases (from the Story, above): “great cloud of witnesses” and “the communion of saints.” Talk with the learners about these expressions; the first refers to the many saints of God who have lived in the past, and the second includes all of us in the present-day Church.

Encourage the learners to think of specific names they would list under the two headings. Ask: What kinds of people are your favorite saints of the past? of the present? Why? (The class members may want to write the names on the board under the respective phrases.)

INQUIRING (*Time: 10-20 minutes*)

Invite a “saint” to your classroom. Recruit someone from the congregation to dress in costume and to impersonate a selected Saint from the New Testament. (If your church is named for a Saint, this would be a good opportunity to honor him/her). Ask the saint visitor to be prepared to talk about his/her life, speaking especially about faith in God, and one or more of the events that have tested or proven this faith.

IMAGINING (*Time: 10-20 minutes*)

Share a story starter: “One of the saints I know is” Invite the learners to use their imaginations and discuss how the story could continue. What does this saint do? look like? Where does the saint live?

Individual response. The class members can write their own endings or draw pictures. Encourage them to express their own thoughts. Avoid giving the impression that there is a “right” way to end the story.

Group role play. Provide simple props/costumes that apply to hymn 293, “I sing a song of the saints of God.” These may include a crown, a sword, a stole, a toy lamb, an item from a doctor’s kit, and the like. Invite the children to choose a role to play during the singing. As you sing or play a tape of the hymn, the class may march. Individual role players may bow when the hymn refers to them.

MUSIC (*Time: 10-15 minutes*)

Sing with the *Children Sing!* tape the hymn “I sing a song of the saints of God” (*The Hymnal 1982*, 293; *We Sing of God*, 49). Introduce the stanzas and invite the learners to create movements to accompany the words.

CONTINUING ACTIVITY (*Time: 10-20 minutes*)

Window Project. Invite the learners to continue working on the simulated stained glass window. (See suggestions for this activity in Session 1.)

From the Teacher’s Packet, photocopy for each learner the panel on modern saints from Poster No. 4. Ask the class members to glue this in the center panel of their background boards. To create a window-like effect, the learners may use magic markers, colored chalk, crayons, or bits of colored tissue cut to fit sections of the design.

TAKE-HOME CARD

Card 9 has a picture of modern saints, a Scripture verse, facts about All Saints’ Day, and a question to think about. Remind learners to add this card to their collection at home.

CLOSING

Conclude the session with the following prayer:

Give us grace to do your will in all that we undertake;
That our works may find favor in your sight.
Let us pray for our own needs and those of others.
(*The learners may add their own petitions.*)
In Jesus’ name we pray. Amen.

From *The Prayers of the People, Form III*
The Book of Common Prayer, p. 387

Stand in a circle and say:

Teacher: Go in peace to love and serve the Lord.
Learners: Thanks be to God.

TEACHER’S REFLECTION

Were the children able to make a distinction between common heroes and saints? Did they understand how they, too, can be known as saints of God? Were they able to name a major Saint, and tell what this person did or what he or she was famous for?

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

Episcopal Children's Curriculum

Unit II. PEOPLE IN PARABLES

Dear Parents and Guardians,

In this unit, we begin with five sessions related to Advent, Christmas, and Epiphany. During these seasons we hear the story of the Incarnation—the coming of the Lord into our human situation. The primary focus is on the Holy Family, their background, and their willingness to be the instruments of God's Holy Spirit at work in the world.

The remaining sessions are about four of Jesus' parables. According to *Mark 4:33-34*, Jesus spoke to his followers throughout his ministry in the form of parables, explaining everything in private to his disciples. The content of the parables was usually based on a very human situation that would be familiar to those who heard it. Jesus wanted his followers to think about the nature of God's kingdom, which he had come to initiate.

Throughout all nine sessions, the focus for primary-age children remain fixed on the real people who appear in the pages of the New Testament—in Jesus' life and ministry and in the stories he told.

We encourage you to talk about the sessions with your child. You can do this by reading together the learners' book, *Parables*, which describes how Jesus used parables. The book includes eight of Jesus' parables. We also encourage you to read the Scripture passages cited below with your child. The Take-Home Cards given to learners each week can be used in your discussions. These collectible cards, about the size of a postcard, can be displayed in a photo album, kept in a recipe box, or used in any way you find helpful.

Following are summaries of the Unit's sessions.

Session 1: “Jesus' Family Tree” links the people and stories of the Old Testament to the coming of the Messiah as the child of the Virgin Mary. Through Joseph's family, who descended from Jesse, the Christ Child gets his title, “son of David.” We begin the season of Advent knowing that all of us are members of God's family. (*Matthew 1:1-17*)

Session 2: “Emmanuel” tells how the Christ Child, to be born of Mary, would be called Emmanuel, or God with us. God's people had looked forward to the day when a special child would come to bring God closer to them in a new way. (*Isaiah 7:14*)

Session 3: “Joseph and the Angel” describes the comforting message Joseph receives from an angel visitor. The focus is on Joseph's willing obedience and God's faithfulness in sending the promised One. (*Matthew 1:18-25*)

Session 4: “From Christmas to Epiphany” focuses on the festival of Epiphany following the twelve days of Christmas. The children hear the Nativity story and learn about the visit of the Wise Men and their presentation of gifts. (*Matthew 2:1-12*)

Session 5: “Flight Into Egypt” tells about the Holy Family's escape from the anger of Herod. Again Joseph has a dream with an angel visitor. This time he is warned to take Jesus and Mary to Egypt. (*Matthew 2:13-23*)

Session 6: “Being a Resourceful Servant” describes the parable of three servants who took different approaches to caring for money entrusted to them by a master who went away for an extended period of time. Children will be challenged to think about their own gifts and talents and the responsibility of being good stewards. (*Matthew 25:14-28*)

Session 7: “Being Forgiven” tells the story of the prodigal son, the young man who asked for a share of his father's wealth and then wasted it in reckless living far from home. The children will focus on the loving forgiveness offered by the father. (*Luke 15:11-32*)

Session 8: “Being a Neighbor to Others” is about basic attitudes within a community. In the story of the Good Samaritan, Jesus contrasts the callous behavior of good, religious people with the generosity and kindness of a Samaritan traveler who would be least expected to help the injured man. (*Luke 10:25-37*)

Session 9: “Welcoming All People” tells the parable of the banquet and explores our view of hospitality—how it is extended to us and how we respond. True hospitality is rooted in genuine love for other people. (*Luke 14:16-24*)

Yours in Christ,
Church School Teachers

PEOPLE IN PARABLES

Session 1

Jesus' Family Tree

FOCUS

Jesus was born into a family that descended from David, son of Jesse and great-grandson of Ruth. The learners should be able to describe a “family tree” and to say that we celebrate in Advent as members of God's family.

GETTING READY

This session, like the *Gospel of Matthew* itself, provides a bridge between the story of God's acts in Israel and Judah and God's entry into human history in the person of Jesus Christ.

The writer of *Matthew* wanted to demonstrate that Old Testament prophecies are fulfilled in Jesus. Family lineage was very important to the Jewish people and a natural way to begin a description of a person's life. *Matthew* began with a genealogy showing that Jesus is a descendant of David, fulfilling the Hebrews' expectation of a Savior.

The season of Advent underscores the connection between Jesus and Old Testament prophecies as we wait again for the Nativity. Advent begins the Christian year and comes from the Latin *adventus*, meaning coming or arrival. These four weeks are a time of waiting, love, and hope when the Church prepares for the coming of the Messiah and makes ready for his second coming at the end of time.

Advent is a solemn season marked by a change in vestments and hangings of the color purple, which signifies penitence and royalty. The collects for the Sundays in Advent focus on preparation, expectation, and the power of the light of Christ.

As you begin this series of sessions on Advent themes, consider how to help the learners gain a sense of the significance of this season—a time of recalling what God has done in the past and looking ahead to the coming of Christ.

O God our heavenly Father, you have blessed us and given us dominion over all the earth: Increase our reverence before the mystery of life; and give us new insight into your purposes for the human race, and new wisdom and determination in making provision for its future in accordance with your will; through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

For the Future of the Human Race
The Book of Common Prayer, p. 828

TEACHING TIP

The Church Year provides opportunities for learners' participation in rituals that enhance our understanding of the seasons and enrich our worship. As you use the Advent wreath at the beginning of each session, allow the class members to take an active part. For example, ask those who come early to gather or replace the greens. Avoid artificial or dried materials for the wreath. Use fresh greens to symbolize the living Lord. A class member may be chosen each time to light the candle(s), and another may lead the reading.

GATHERING

As the learners arrive, ask them to help in putting together an Advent wreath. Purchase or make a circular form. Use a floral oasis or place four mounds of clay for candles on a sturdy plate. Put the candles in place. Add small pieces of seasonal greens around the base. (Putting greens in an oasis with water will help them live throughout the season and gives learners a sense of evergreen and life.) Invite the class members to help with all these preparations.

When everyone is present, gather around the wreath. As the first candle is lit, say together the Beatitudes. The words are included on Poster No. 5 in the Teacher's Packet.

Explain that the Beatitudes are found at the beginning of Jesus' Sermon on the Mount, in the *Gospel of Matthew* (chapter 5). By repeating these words, learners will become familiar with them and perhaps commit them to memory.

Blessed are the poor in spirit,
for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.
Blessed are those who mourn,
for they will be comforted.
Blessed are the meek,
for they will inherit the earth.
Blessed are those who hunger and thirst
for righteousness, for they will be filled.
Blessed are the merciful,
for they will receive mercy.
Blessed are the pure in heart,
for they will see God.
Blessed are the peacemakers,
for they will be called the children of God.
Blessed are those who are persecuted for
righteousness' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.
The Beatitudes
Matthew 5:3-10

The Advent wreath candles will be lit during the Gathering in each of the four weeks of Advent. The greens may need to be replenished at each session. (Extinguish the candle when the activity is concluded unless the wreath can be put in a protected place in the classroom. The candle should be relit just before the Closing activity.)

STORYTELLING *(Time: 10 minutes)*

Open the Bible to let the learners see where *Matthew 1:1-17* is located. Read aloud verse 1:

“An account of the genealogy of Jesus the Messiah, the son of David, the son of Abraham.”

Finish with these words: The word of the Lord.

Learners: Thanks be to God.

1. Begin by describing “ancestors.” They are the people from whom we are descended. You may want to sketch a family tree on a board or chart, showing how quickly the number of our ancestors multiplies as we move backward in time. The people of the Bible cared very much about keeping records of their ancestors.

2. Explain that the *Gospel of Matthew* begins with a recital of the ancestry of Jesus. We read about these people in the Hebrew Scriptures (Old Testament). They include Abraham and Sarah, Isaac and Rebekah, Jacob and Rachel, Boaz and Ruth, Jesse, and David. After many more generations, the list ends with Joseph and Mary.

3. When the Hebrews told stories about the history of their people, they remembered especially all the promises of God. God had promised that Abraham's descendants would be as numerous as the stars—so all the Hebrews could trace their family back to Abraham. God promised freedom to the people as Moses led them out of Egypt. God promised the people the new land where Joshua would lead them.

4. The greatest of all God's promises was the coming of a Messiah, a Savior for the people. The long list of generations is a reminder that God kept this promise in the birth of Jesus.

5. The four weeks of Advent, now beginning, are a time of waiting. In this time we remember again the promises of God. When we celebrate Jesus' birth, we give thanks that God did send the Savior for whom God's people waited so long.

NOTE: You may want to conclude the Storytelling by describing a Jesse Tree and sharing the Jesse Tree symbols from Poster No. 6 in the Teacher's Packet. These are designed for use in the Continuing Activity (below). If you wish, this activity could be combined with Storytelling during the weeks of Advent.

CREATING *(Time: 15-20 minutes)*

Option 1. Tree of Family Members

Provide each class member with a sheet of construction paper and a marker for sketching the trunk and branches of a tree. Distribute sheets of self-adhesive circle stickers, large enough for drawing a face and adding a name. (These are inexpensive, and available at office supply stores. A substitute could be simple cutouts of paper circles to be glued on the background sheet.)

Invite the learners to draw faces and print names of their family members on the circle stickers. Allow them to include anyone they wish on their trees. Details, including names, can be added with crayons and markers. The children may arrange the circles on their tree branches in any way that appeals to them.

Option 2. Advent Tree

For each learner, prepare a small multi-forked branch from a tree or bush,

approximately eight inches in height, and a generous lump of clay. Place the stem of the branch into the clay to form an upright “tree.”

Invite each class member to make four candles from ribbon or strips of paper to be hung on the tree branches with yarn or thread. You may want to hand out envelopes for keeping the candles at home. Suggest that one paper candle can be added weekly to the “tree” during Advent.

Learners could write a word, such as family, church, friends, peace, or love, on the back of each candle to remind them to pray for that each week.

EXPLORING THE STORY *(Time: 10-15 minutes)*

Option 1. Memory Game, “Advent”

Place at least six items associated with Advent on a tray (such as an evergreen wreath, separate candles, a small candlelighter, purple ribbons, an Advent calendar, a Bible, a Prayer Book, a Jesse Tree picture, and Advent books). Invite the learners to study the items for ten to fifteen seconds, then cover the tray with a cloth or towel. Ask them to name all the items they saw. This exercise may be varied by removing one or more of the items and asking the learners to identify what is missing.

Option 2. Puzzle, “Hidden Word”

Use Puzzle Sheet II.1 titled “Hidden Word.” Make copies for everyone in the class. Directions are given on the sheet.

This can be a class or small group activity, or learners may work independently.

Option 3. Bible Search

Assist the learners in locating *Matthew 1:1-17* in their Bibles. Encourage them to find familiar names, such as Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Ruth, Jesse, David, Solomon, Josiah, and Joseph (husband of Mary). Read aloud verse 17. How many generations are listed altogether?

Some of these kinds of games are available on computer software. If a computer is available, consider using one of these as an alternative.

TALKING IT OVER *(Time: 10-15 minutes)*

The Hebrews of Jesus' time enjoyed telling stories about what had happened in the long history of their people. They thought about the leaders who would never be forgotten—people like Abraham, Moses, Gideon, Ruth, and many others. In time, they wrote down their stories, and we have them in our Bible. Ask: Who are some of the people we remember from America's history? (Listen for names like Pocahontas, George Washington, Abraham Lincoln, Harriet Tubman, Clara Barton, and Martin Luther King.) Why do we remember them? Share briefly some stories about these people, and suggest they look for books about them at home or the library.

INQUIRING *(Time: 10-20 minutes)*

This session is about remembering generations. Suggest that the class members make simple Advent greeting cards to mail to the oldest and youngest persons they know (perhaps a great-grandparent, an aging neighbor, a young child, or infant). The cards can be made from folded construction paper in a variety of colors, decorated with markers and glitter. Help younger learners to print words like: “God bless you in Advent.”

Some congregations are fortunate to have four generations of one family living in the area. As an alternative, invite members of an extended family to visit and tell some of their stories.

IMAGINING *(Time: 10-20 minutes)*

Share a story starter: “One time, a Hebrew father and mother were having a meal with their children. The father began a story, saying, . . .” Invite the learners to use their imaginations, and discuss how the story could continue. What story of the Hebrew people might he tell?

Individual response. The class members can write their own endings or draw pictures. Encourage them to express their own thoughts. Avoid giving the impression that there is a “right” way to end the story.

Group role play. The learners can role play both biblical and modern families in settings where stories of the past can be shared. Possible scenes might be: a campfire circle; a dinner table gathering; a family traveling in a car.

MUSIC *(Time: 10-15 minutes)*

Listen to “O Come, O come, Emmanuel” (*The Hymnal 1982*, 56; *We Sing of God*, 12) on the *Children Sing!* tape. Read the words of this hymn as poetry. Stanza 3 retells the story of the Exodus; stanzas 4 and 5 are about David and his rule as king.

You may want to say or chant the stanzas, with the learners joining to sing the refrain.

CONTINUING ACTIVITY *(Time: 10-20 minutes)*

Jesse Tree. During Advent, involve the learners in a class project to make ornament-like symbols of Old Testament figures who prepared the way for the coming of Jesus. Hang the ornaments from a bare branch or small tree in the classroom. (The tree represents Jesse, father of King David. See *Isaiah 11:1*.) Decoration may be as simple or elaborate as you choose.

Patterns are provided on Poster No. 6 in the Teacher's Packet. For this session, use Noah (rainbow), Abraham and Sarah (field of stars), Isaac and Rebekah (twins, Jacob and Esau), Jacob (ladder), and Joseph (coat). Additional information may be obtained from the booklet, *The Jesse Tree*, by Raymond and Georgene Anderson (Augsburg Fortress, publisher).

TAKE-HOME CARD

Card 10 has a picture of a Jesse Tree, a Scripture verse, facts about the story, and a question to think about. Remind learners to add this card to their collection at home.

CLOSING

Conclude the session with the following prayer:

Give us grace to do your will in all that we undertake;
That our works may find favor in your sight.
Let us pray for our own needs and those of others.
(*The learners may add their own petitions.*)
In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

From The Prayers of the People, Form III
The Book of Common Prayer, p. 387

Stand in a circle and say:

Teacher: Go in peace to love and serve the Lord.
Learners: Thanks be to God.

TEACHER'S REFLECTION

Are the learners able to make the connection between the stories of God's people in the Old Testament and the birth of Jesus as a fulfillment of God's promise of a Messiah? As Advent continues, find ways to help the class members to think of this season as a time of waiting.

LOOKING AHEAD

The next session focuses on the name Emmanuel, meaning "God with us." As you prepare for teaching and reflect during Advent, think about the living presence of God in the person of Jesus.

PEOPLE IN PARABLES

Session 2

Emmanuel

FOCUS

God's people looked forward to the day when a special child would be born to bring God near to them in a new way. The child would be called Emmanuel (God with us). The learners should be able to state that Emmanuel is another name for Jesus.

GETTING READY

According to an old Chinese proverb, “a much-loved child has many names.” Such is the case with Jesus. He is called “Rose of Sharon” and “Bright Morning Star.” He is also “Alpha and Omega” (the beginning and the end). (*Revelation 1:8; 21:6; 22:13.*)

The name Immanuel appears in *Isaiah 7:14*. Isaiah was speaking to King Ahaz at a time of national crisis when a powerful foreign enemy threatened Jerusalem. The king was not confident that God would be present with his army and he hesitated to ask God for a sure sign. Out of fear, he put faith in his weapons and the strength of Jerusalem's fortifications.

Isaiah gave the wavering king a sign from God. A young woman would give birth to a son and would call his name Immanuel, meaning “God with us.” Many biblical names had literal meanings that carried messages to God's people. For Isaiah, the birth of a child called Immanuel meant that God was present with the people and would deliver them from their enemy.

A later biblical writer also used the birth of a child to bring a message of hope and new life to God's people (*Micah 5: 2-5*). God promised that a new king, a royal descendant of David, would be born in David's city of Bethlehem and would reign with justice.

The birth story in the *Gospel of Matthew* used Isaiah's image of Emmanuel to refer to Jesus, son of Mary. In the New Testament the I becomes an E and thus Emmanuel. (*Matthew 1:23.*) Matthew also borrowed Micah's image of a king born in Bethlehem to emphasize Jesus' identity as Israel's true ruler.

Jesus' interpretation of kingship was so radical that even his closest followers did not fully understand it until after his resurrection. They came to believe that Jesus fulfilled God's promises in a new way. Jesus reigns over a kingdom with no boundaries where all people live in right relationship with God and each other.

The focus of this Advent session is on the presence of God in the coming of Jesus. This is a season for reflecting on our faith in the One who is “God with us.”

Merciful God, who sent your messengers the prophets to preach repentance and prepare the way for our salvation: Give us grace to heed their warnings and forsake our sins, that we may greet with joy the coming of Jesus Christ our Redeemer; who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. *Amen.*

Second Sunday of Advent

The Book of Common Prayer, p. 211

TEACHING TIP

Consider a Christmas Eve pageant that includes some Old Testament prophets and stories. Part of the class time during Advent could be spent working on the pageant. Begin with Adam and Eve and select appropriate stories with the help of the class members.

GATHERING

As the learners arrive, invite everyone to help place fresh greens around the class Advent wreath. Talk with the group about the arrival of the second week of the season. Remind them that the candlelighting is a time of silent prayer. Encourage them to think of what they would like to pray for as the candles are lit. When everyone is present, light two candles, and say:

Blessed are the poor in spirit,
for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. . . .

(Continue to the end, using Poster No. 5 from the Teacher's Packet.)

The Beatitudes
Matthew 5:3-10

Extinguish the candle when the activity is concluded unless the wreath can be put in a protected place in the classroom. The candle should be re-lit just before the Closing.

STORYTELLING *(Time: 10 minutes)*

Open the Bible, and let the learners see where the *Book of Isaiah* is located. Read aloud *Isaiah 7:14*:

“Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign. Look, the young woman is with child and shall bear a son, and shall name him Immanuel.”

Finish with these words: The word of the Lord.
Learners: Thanks be to God.

1. Begin by talking briefly with the learners about what it is like to wait a long time for a promise to come true.

2. Move on to describe how the Hebrew people had waited for hundreds of years. Now they were living under the rule of the Roman government. They had to pay heavy taxes and follow orders of Roman soldiers. They were waiting for God to send the promised Messiah. Messiah means a Savior—one who would act to save the people. So they prayed that the Messiah would come soon.

3. They did not know exactly how or when the Messiah would come. But they did believe he would be born in Bethlehem and would be called “Son of David,” meaning a descendant of David. The great prophet Isaiah had said long ago that a child would be born and known as *Immanuel*, which means “God with us.” (*Isaiah 7:14*)

4. The people hoped that this Immanuel would be a king who would rule over the people in the way David and other kings had reigned. They did not understand that Immanuel would be a different kind of Savior and king. (*Micah 5:1-4*) We know that he was Jesus Christ.

5. *Matthew* takes these two independent images from two separate texts in *Isaiah* and *Micah* and combines them to describe the Church's understanding of Jesus' identity.

6. In Advent, we spend weeks thinking about what it was like for the people to wait for the Messiah. As we wait, we sing an Advent hymn called "O come, O come, Emmanuel."

CREATING (*Time: 15-20 minutes*)

Option 1. Advent Banner

Provide the learners with pieces of blue or purple felt, approximately 8 by 10 inches. From Poster no.4 in the Teacher's Packet, photocopy the letters of the name Emmanuel. Decorate the letters, then cut them out and glue them to the felt to form Advent banners proclaiming that God is with us. Attach dowels and yarn for hanging.

Option 2. Emmanuel Mosaic

On pieces of cardboard or other heavy material, invite the learners to make mosaics of the name Emmanuel. Poster No. 4 in the Teacher's Packet includes large block letters for making photocopies. Attach the copy to the background. To add a mosaic effect to the letters, arrange materials such as colored gravel (available in pet stores), sea shells, or bits of color cut from cards, magazines, or construction paper. Use small drops of glue (applied with cotton swabs) or glue sticks.

EXPLORING THE STORY (*Time: 10-15 minutes*)

Option 1. Game, "Name Cards"

Ahead of time, make pairs of matching name cards. Use all the names listed in Talking It Over (below). If the class is large, prepare additional sets so that you are assured of having one card for each person present. To play "Name Game," hand out one card to each learner. The group forms a circle, facing the center. Each learner places his/her card on the floor. At a signal from the teacher, the learners move around the circle single file. At another signal they stop, and each one picks up a card and looks for a person holding its "match." Repeat as long as interest holds.

Option 2. Puzzle, "Names for Jesus"

Use Puzzle Sheet II.2 titled "Names for Jesus." Make copies for everyone in the class. Directions are given on the sheet.

This can be a class or small group activity, or learners may work independently.

Option 3. Scripture Hunt

Invite the learners to turn to *Isaiah 7:14* and *Matthew 1:23* in their Bibles. Read them together. Which lesson is from the Old Testament? How do these passages differ? How are they the same?

TALKING IT OVER (Time: 10-15 minutes)

In the story for this session, seven names are used for the Son of God who was to come: I(E)mmanuel, Messiah, Savior, Son of David, King, Jesus, and Christ. List all these on a chalkboard or newsprint easel. Read the names aloud as a group. Ask: Which names do we use most often? When do we use the other names (in the list)?

Jesus has other names as well. Who knows some of these? (If the learners do not mention any names, remind them of the Advent hymn, “O come, O come, Emmanuel” in the music activity. It contains even more names for the Son of God.)

INQUIRING (Time: 10-20 minutes)

In Isaiah's time, the poor waited for God to deliver them and save them from their troubles. In our day, the poor (homeless, unemployed, orphans, refugees) wait in much the same way. They wait for food, shelter, and kindness. Invite a member of the congregation who volunteers in a program to help people in need. Ask the visitor to talk with the class members about ways to reach out to others.

IMAGINING (Time: 10-20 minutes)

Share a story starter: “The people of God were waiting for a Messiah. The prophet Isaiah said he would be called Emmanuel. The people thought” Invite the learners to use their imaginations and discuss how the story might continue. How do they think the Messiah would look? Where would they find him? How would they know he was the Messiah? What would he do? say?

Individual response. The class members can write their own endings or draw pictures. Encourage them to express their own thoughts. Avoid giving the impression that there is a “right” way to end the story.

Group role play. Role play announcements by prophets that God would send the Messiah. Choose learners to be prophets and others to be listeners. The prophets stand to tell the people of God's promise, and the people respond in various ways.

MUSIC (Time: 10-15 minutes)

Continue to sing “O come, O come, Emmanuel” (*The Hymnal 1982*, 56; *We Sing of God*, 12). Listen to a recording of the hymn on the *Children Sing!* tape, or a selection from Handel's *Messiah*. Invite the children to move rhythmically with the music.

CONTINUING ACTIVITY *(Time: 10-20 minutes)*

Jesse Tree. Decorate additional symbols of Old Testament characters who prepared the way for the coming of Jesus. Hang the ornaments.

Patterns are provided in the Teacher's Packet. For this session, use the symbols for Miriam (basket), Moses (tablets), Joshua (trumpet), Deborah (palm tree), and Gideon (clay jug with torch).

NOTE: Joshua, Deborah, and Gideon should be familiar to the class members from their study in Unit I.

TAKE-HOME CARD

Card 11 has an illuminated Scripture verse, facts about the story, and a question to think about. Remind learners to add this card to their collection at home.

CLOSING

Conclude the session with the following prayer:

Give us grace to do your will in all that we undertake;
That our works may find favor in your sight.
Let us pray for our own needs and those of others.
(The learners may add their own petitions.)
In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

From *The Prayers of the People, Form III*
The Book of Common Prayer, p. 387

Stand in a circle and say:

Teacher: Go in peace to love and serve the Lord.
Learners: Thanks be to God.

TEACHER'S REFLECTION

Do the learners have a sense that God promised to send the Messiah? Has the connection been made between Immanuel in Isaiah's prophecy and Jesus Christ? As you observe the class members, what evidence do you gather that they see the difference between the Church's season of Advent and the glitter of shopping malls?

LOOKING AHEAD

The next session is about Joseph's dream and the angel's word from God. Reflect on Joseph's willingness to act in faith on the promise of God. During Advent, pray the Collects for this season (BCP, p. 211-212).

PEOPLE IN PARABLES

Session 3

Joseph and the Angel

FOCUS

In a dream, Joseph learned from an angel that Mary would be the mother of Jesus, the Son of God. The learners should be able to tell the story in their own words.

GETTING READY

In the *Gospel of Matthew* we have the story of Joseph's reaction to the news that Mary, a virgin, would bear a child. Joseph is troubled by this news.

The normal Jewish marriage procedure at the time was likely to include three steps: 1) an engagement, often arranged for young persons by their parents; 2) a binding betrothal lasting for one year; and 3) the actual marriage, which took place following the betrothal period. (During the betrothal stage the couple would be referred to as husband and wife.)

It was during the betrothal that Joseph learned that Mary was expecting a child. His worry came from an awareness that under Jewish law Mary had committed a serious crime punishable by stoning (*Deuteronomy 22:23-24*). Joseph's deeply held religious beliefs and his concern for Mary guided his decision to divorce her quietly, rather than expose her to public scandal and punishment. It was a merciful course of action.

Just when Joseph had made up his mind, God sent an angel to him in a dream to say that "the child conceived in (Mary) is from the Holy Spirit." (*Matthew 1:20*). He was told not to divorce her. The angel also explained that the child would be called Jesus and that he would save God's people from their sins. Joseph obeyed and took Mary as his wife.

The focus of this story is on Joseph's trust in the angelic messenger and his faithfulness to Mary, his betrothed.

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

During the season of Advent, it is appropriate to talk about the key figures in the Nativity story. Primary-age learners understand that Jesus was born into a family. They can think about the adults in the story and how they reacted to the extraordinary event of Jesus' birth to the Virgin Mary. An interpretation of the Virgin Birth is not central to this session. Include the concern felt by Joseph, but concentrate on the angel's good news that God was miraculously at work to do what had been promised.

GATHERING

As the learners arrive, put fresh greens around the candles of the Advent wreath. Light three candles. As each one is lit, talk about waiting during the weeks of Advent. When all three candles are lit, say:

Blessed are the poor in spirit,
for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. . . .

(Continue to the end, using Poster No. 5 from the Teacher's Packet.)

The Beatitudes
Matthew 5:3-10

Extinguish the candles when the Gathering activity is concluded unless the wreath can be put in a protected place in the classroom. The candles should be relit just before the Closing activity.

STORYTELLING (*Time: 10 minutes*)

Open the Bible and allow the class members to see where *Matthew 1:18-25* is found. Read aloud verses 20-21:

“. . . 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.’”

Finish with these words: The word of the Lord.
Learners: Thanks be to God.

1. In the Bible, the stories of Jesus' birth are found only in the Gospels of *Matthew* and *Luke*. *Matthew* begins in a special way. He lists all the generations of God's people. Through most of the years in which these ancestors lived, they were expecting God to send a promised Messiah.

2. Then *Matthew* tells the story of Joseph and how God was about to do what the people had awaited for generations.

3. Joseph, a Jewish carpenter, was engaged to be married to Mary. He looked forward to the time when they would live together as husband and wife.

4. We know from *Luke*, that an angel had come to Mary with the startling news that she had been chosen to be the mother of Jesus, the long-expected Messiah. (*Luke 1:26-38*.) When Joseph heard this same news, he was troubled and afraid. What should he do?

5. Then Joseph received an answer to his questions. As he slept one night, an angel of God came to him in a dream. The angel said, “Joseph, do not be afraid. You and Mary will be married. The child she will have is a gift from God. This child will be called Jesus.”

6. When *Matthew* told this story of Joseph's dream, he wanted everyone to know that Jesus was the Son of God. Jesus would be the one whom God's people had expected for so long. He would be known as Emmanuel (God with us).

CREATING *(Time: 15-20 minutes)*

Option 1. Joseph and His Tools

For each learner, provide a scrap of plain wood and a piece of sandpaper. Ask the class members to sand the wood smooth. Older class members can then hammer small tacks into the wood in their own design. Younger members can use lead pencils to draw a carpentry tools on their wood pieces—such as a mallet, a plane, an axe, a rule, or a chisel. As they work, talk with the group about a carpenter's work in Joseph's day.

Option 2. Joseph's Dream

Supply materials for the learners to create a picture collage of Joseph's dream. Use sheets of white construction paper for drawing Joseph and the angel. To give another dimension to the garments, glue fabric and paper scraps to the scene. Add more color and small details with markers or crayons.

EXPLORING THE STORY *(Time: 10-15 minutes)*

Option 1. Game, “News Flash!”

Divide the class members into teams of two or three. Assign parts such as announcer, interviewer, and cameraperson. Ask each team to use their imagination and prepare a television news bulletin about the angel's appearance in Joseph's dream and the news the angel shared. Set a time limit for the teams to work (about ten minutes). You may need to move around to offer coaching to each team. At the appointed time, call for the teams to appear on different “channels” of classroom television. The teacher serves as station manager, introducing the teams. Before each presentation, say something like: “And now we will turn to Channel _____, for a special announcement.”

Option 2. Puzzle, “A Message”

Use Puzzle Sheet II.3 titled “A Message.” Make copies for everyone in the class. Directions are given on the sheet.

This can be a class or small group activity, or learners may work independently. (Invite the learners to complete the story by unscrambling the letters beneath each blank to form a word. When everyone has finished, ask for a volunteer to read the story.)

Option 3. Bible Search

Invite the learners to open their Bibles to *Matthew 1:18-25*. Supply each learner with a sheet listing the following words: Joseph, Mary, angel, the Lord, Holy Spirit, Jesus, prophet, Emmanuel. Ask the class members to work individually or in pairs to find the words in the passage and write down the verse number(s) for each one.

TALKING IT OVER *(Time: 10-15 minutes)*

Joseph was a gentle person. He cared for Mary and the baby Jesus. We honor Joseph as a Saint on March 19 each year. Because he nurtured, protected, and provided for his family, he is sometimes called St. Joseph the Provider. Talk with the learners about Joseph's role.

Ask: As a carpenter in Nazareth, what would Joseph do to care for Mary and Jesus? What might he make for their house?

Joseph was a faithful worshiper of God. What would he teach the boy Jesus? What would they do together?

Consider with the class members the roles of fathers today. How do they show care for their families? What can fathers and children do together? What do fathers teach their children?

INQUIRING (*Time: 10-20 minutes*)

Invite a carpenter or woodworker to lead the learners in assembling a life-size manger for the classroom. Suggest that the visitor prepare the necessary pieces of wood ahead of time so that the construction can be done quickly. With supervision, the children can help to saw, nail, sand, and glue. The completed manger can be filled with straw to await the Nativity.

IMAGINING (*Time: 10-20 minutes*)

Share a story starter: "Joseph was very troubled. He went to bed and quickly fell asleep. He began to dream, and . . ." Invite the learners to use their imaginations and discuss how the story could continue. What would he see in his dream? What would he hear? How would this dream make him feel?

Individual response. The class members can write their own endings or draw pictures. Encourage them to express their own thoughts. Avoid giving the impression that there is a "right" way to end the story.

Group role play. Role play Joseph's dream. Invite the learners to take turns being the angel and Joseph.

MUSIC (*Time: 10-15 minutes*)

Sing selected stanzas of "O come, O come, Emmanuel" (*The Hymnal 1982*, 56; *We Sing of God*, 12) with the *Children Sing!* tape. By now the refrain should be very familiar to the learners. You may want to try involving the class members in composing some new words to sing with the refrain's melody. For example, substitute "Good news!" for "Rejoice!" How could the good news the angel gave to Joseph be set to the music? (About 13 syllables are required.)

CONTINUING ACTIVITY (*Time: 10-20 minutes*)

Jesse Tree. Decorate symbols of Old Testament characters who prepared the way for the coming of Jesus. Hang the ornaments.

Patterns are provided in the Teacher's Packet. For this session, use the symbols for Samuel (lamp), Ruth (sheaves of wheat), David (lyre), Solomon (temple), and Josiah (scroll).

NOTE: All these five figures were introduced in Unit I. An additional set of five patterns is included in the Teacher's Packet for these prophets: Amos

(scale), Isaiah (eagle), Daniel (lion), Elijah (raven), and Jeremiah (yoke).

TAKE-HOME CARD

Card 12 has a picture of Joseph with the angel, a Scripture verse, facts about the story, and a question to think about. Remind learners to add this card to their collection at home.

CLOSING

Conclude the session with the following prayer:

Give us grace to do your will in all that we undertake;
That our works may find favor in your sight.
Let us pray for our own needs and those of others.
(*The learners may add their own petitions.*)
In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

From The Prayers of the People, Form III
The Book of Common Prayer, p. 387

Stand in a circle and say:

Teacher: Go in peace to love and serve the Lord.

Learners: Thanks be to God.

TEACHER'S REFLECTION

In traditional narratives of the birth of Jesus, Joseph is often in the background. The same is true in artists' representations. In this session, were the learners helped to appreciate Joseph as a caring, compassionate man? In the classroom activities, was Joseph's role made more distinct for the learners?

LOOKING AHEAD

The next session focuses on the birth of Jesus. Take time to sit quietly with a creche or a picture of the Nativity. What has the artist included that is especially meaningful to you? Do you notice something you had not seen before? What is new?

PEOPLE IN PARABLES

Session 4

From Christmas to Epiphany

FOCUS

In the days when Jesus was expected, and when Mary and Joseph prepared for his birth, Wise Men who lived far away were beginning their journey. The learners should be able to retell the Nativity story and explain why the Magi are placed in the creche at a later time than Christmas Day.

GETTING READY

A typical Christmas creche surrounds the Holy Family with shepherds, animals, and the Wise Men bearing gifts. This scene combines two separate stories of the Nativity:

The *Gospel of Luke* provides the accounts of Mary and the angel Gabriel, the birth in a stable, and the visit from the shepherds. At the end, Mary and Joseph take Jesus to the temple and return to Nazareth. In *Luke*, the story's movement is from Bethlehem outward to the larger world.

The *Gospel of Matthew* devotes more attention to Joseph, through whom Jesus is descended from David. This is important for Matthew's purpose, since he wishes to show that Jesus is the long-awaited Messiah promised by the prophets of old. The account also features the story of the Wise Men. By the time these sages arrive, the child Jesus is perhaps two years old. The significance of Jesus' birth was known to the outside world even before it was acknowledged in Judea. Matthew's story ends with the Holy Family's flight into Egypt, the subject of Session 5.

In the Church's calendar, the observance of Epiphany stems from the visit of the Magi. It comes twelve days after the Nativity, to signify the passage of time between the stories we have from *Luke* and *Matthew*. In early centuries, Epiphany was the festival of gift-giving while Christmas was focused on worship. This is still the case for some countries.

O God, by the leading of a star you manifested your only Son to the peoples of the earth: Lead us, who know you now by faith, to your presence, where we may see your glory face to face; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. *Amen.*

The Epiphany
The Book of Common Prayer, p. 214

TEACHING TIP

The Twelve Days of Christmas are a time for enjoying Christmas music and carols. Normally, these are not sung during Advent; they are saved for the Christmas Eve services. Encourage learners and their parents to sing the carols in their homes. Point out that many carols highlight particular scenes in the Nativity story. Recordings, including the *Children Sing!* tape, may also be played in classrooms during the season.

GATHERING

As the learners arrive, renew the greens around the Advent wreath and

light four candles. The four weeks of Advent, of waiting and preparation, are almost over. Conclude the candle lighting by saying together:

Blessed are the poor in spirit,
for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. . . .

(Continue to the end, using Poster No. 5 from the Teacher's Packet.)

The Beatitudes
Matthew 5:3-10

If your Advent wreath has a fifth, white Christ Candle, talk about how it is to be lit on Christmas Day. Look on page 80 of *The Book of Common Prayer* for the Antiphon for the Twelve Days of Christmas. Use these words if the Christ Candle is lit.

STORYTELLING (Time: 10 minutes)

Open the Bible to *Matthew 2:1-12*, and show the learners where the passage is found. Read aloud verses 1-2:

“In the time of King Herod, after Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea, wise men from the East came to Jerusalem, asking, ‘Where is the child who has been born king of the Jews? For we have observed his star at its rising, and have come to pay him homage.’”

Finish with these words: The word of the Lord.
Learners: Thanks be to God.

1. Most if not all of the learners have seen creches at church, in their homes, or both. Begin by asking the class members to name all the figures they have seen in the creches. If possible, bring a creche and let the learners arrange the figures as they describe each.

2. Typically, most creches include the Wise Men (Magi) from the beginning. Ask the learners whether they have noticed this. Then comment on the practice of reserving the figures of the Wise Men to be added to a creche on the Twelfth Day of Christmas as we prepare to celebrate Epiphany. Ask: Why would this be an appropriate thing to do? What might be the reason for waiting?

3. Move on to tell the story of Jesus' birth in Bethlehem of Judea. Describe the journey of Mary and Joseph, the birth in a manger (because there was no room in the inn), the adoration of the shepherds who had heard the angelic announcement that a Savior had been born. (This is a complete story in itself in *Luke 2*.)

4. Point out that we have another Nativity story in *Matthew 2*. (Refer to the reading, above.) This story had its beginning months before the birth of Jesus. Wise Men, who studied the heavens, had seen a special star in the east. They followed it, believing it pointed to the birth of a king. They brought gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh, for they planned to kneel down and worship the child. They went to see Herod the king, who told them to search for the baby. Herod said he, too, wanted to worship him.

5. The star continued to guide the Wise Men. It led them to the place where Mary and Joseph and the child, Jesus, were staying. The Magi presented their gifts. They were warned in a dream to avoid Herod and return home by another route.

6. Luke's story is for Christmas. Matthew's story is for Epiphany. Time and circumstances make them separate events on the Church's calendar. Explain that "Epiphany" means "a showing forth," or "a bringing to light." It is a time when we celebrate that Jesus Christ is to be the light of the whole world.

CREATING *(Time: 15-20 minutes)*

Option 1. Making the Holy Family

Provide the following supplies for the learners: sheets of construction paper, crayons and markers, glue, scraps of colorful fabric, foil, and trimmings (rickrack, ribbon, sequins, glitter, and buttons). Prepare several stencils of the Holy Family Pattern from Poster No. 9 in the Teacher's Packet, to be shared by class members as they trace the figures on their sheets. The learners can then add details and clothing. Glue the figures to toilet paper rolls so the figures actually stand and can be used in a creche scene. The finished pieces will have a three-dimensional quality.

Option 2. Star Prints

Use yellow or white tempera paint, and sponges cut into the shape of stars, to make prints on blue or black construction paper. Silver glitter may be sprinkled on the wet paint.

EXPLORING THE STORY *(Time: 10-15 minutes)*

Option 1. Game, "Christmas to Epiphany"

Ahead of time, prepare a list of at least thirteen questions based on the Nativity accounts from *Luke* and *Matthew*. Sample questions: Why did Joseph and Mary go to Bethlehem? What happened when Joseph asked for a room at the inn? Where did the Wise Men come from?

Mark off a playing chart on a chalkboard or newsprint easel, with thirteen equal spaces, from left to right. Pin a paper star to the chart at the left, near the first space (Christmas Day). Explain that the object of the game is to get the star to move through the twelve days of Christmas and then to the final space (Epiphany). Divide the class members into teams of at least three persons. Explain that each team will have a chance to answer questions read by the teacher. Correct answers will move the star.

Start with one team, asking them to roll a die or draw a numbered slip of paper from a basket. (Number the slips from 1 through 6.) If the team answers the question correctly, the star will be moved as many spaces to the right as the die or slip of paper indicated. Ask questions of all teams, in an established order, until the star reaches the Epiphany side of the chart. Continue playing as long as interest holds (or the questions have been used several times).

Option 2. Puzzle, “The Birth of Jesus”

Use Puzzle Sheet II.4 titled “The Birth of Jesus.” Make copies for everyone in the class. Directions are given on the sheet.

This can be a class or small group activity, or learners may work independently.

Option 3. Comparing Gospels

Invite the learners to use their Bibles for comparing the stories about the infant Jesus, from *Luke 2:1-19* and *Matthew 2:1-12*. Look for these words in *Luke*: Mary, Joseph, child (babe), manger, angel(s), shepherds. In *Matthew*, look for: Wise Men, star, child, Herod, Mary.

Explain that we need both Gospel accounts in order to have the full story of the Nativity and Epiphany.

TALKING IT OVER (*Time: 10-15 minutes*)

The Church's people have used their imaginations to picture the scenes surrounding Jesus' birth as told in the Gospels. People in different lands have given the figures characteristics familiar to them. The learners may be able to describe Asian, African, Hispanic, and other images of the Holy Family. Find out whether the class members have a variety of creches in their homes. Discuss similarities and differences. (If possible, share several Nativity scenes from art prints or greeting cards. Which ones do the class members prefer?)

Imagination has played an even stronger part in relation to the Wise Men. They have been given names and dressed as kings. The traditional names are Caspar, Melchior, and Balthasar. Ask: In pictures and creches, how are the Wise Men shown? What do they wear?

INQUIRING (*Time: 10-20 minutes*)

Bring in representational samples of gold, frankincense, and myrrh. (A suitable substitute for myrrh might be perfumed bath oil.) Lead the learners in investigating these gifts presented by the Magi. Notice the shiny beauty of the gold; it has no smell, and it will not burn. Incense can be burned, and it produces both a fragrance and a visible smoke. Myrrh is like a perfume; it is a type of resin usually mixed with oil.

Suggest that the class members listen on the *Children Sing!* tape to Stanzas 2-4 of the carol, “We three kings of Orient are,” which describe the three gifts. See *The Hymnal 1982*, 128.

Ask the learners what gifts they would have brought to baby Jesus. Remind them that the gifts had to be carried a long distance. Ask: What gifts could you give Jesus today? How could you use your gifts to help others? Is helping others giving Jesus a gift? Why?

IMAGINING (*Time: 10-20 minutes*)

Share a story starter: “When Jesus was born in Bethlehem, Wise Men far away were studying the night sky, and they saw a star that was different from all the rest. They wondered” Invite the learners to use their

imaginations and discuss how the story could continue. What did they say to one another? What would they do? Why was the star considered important? Who else might have seen the star?

Individual response. The class members can write their own endings or draw pictures. Encourage them to express their own thoughts. Avoid giving the impression that there is a “right” way to end the story.

Group role play. Provide props to help the class members to create a live Nativity scene, followed by a visit from the Magi. Include robes, scarfs, baby doll, staffs, crowns, a simple manger with straw, and the like. Involve the learners in retelling the Christmas and Epiphany stories.

MUSIC *(Time: 10-15 minutes)*

Sing “Once in royal David’s city” (*The Hymnal 1982*, 102; *We Sing of God*, 21), Stanzas 1, 4, and 5. You may want to listen to a recording of the hymn on the *Children Sing!* tape before inviting the learners to sing.

CONTINUING ACTIVITY *(Time: 10-20 minutes)*

Jesse Tree. Decorate the final symbols for the tree. Note that all the symbols made in previous sessions represent figures who prepared the way for the coming of Jesus Christ. Now it is time to add symbols for his birth. Hang the completed ornaments.

Patterns are provided on Poster No. 6 in the Teacher’s Packet. Use the symbols for an angel, Mary (rose), Joseph (carpenter’s tools), Nativity (manger), and Jesus (Chi Rho).

TAKE-HOME CARD

Card 13 has a picture of the Nativity, a Scripture verse, facts about the story, and a question to think about. Remind learners to add this card to their collection at home.

CLOSING

Conclude the session with the following prayer:

Give us grace to do your will in all that we undertake;
That our works may find favor in your sight.
Let us pray for our own needs and those of others.
(The learners may add their own petitions.)

In Jesus’ name we pray. Amen.

From The Prayers of the People, Form III
The Book of Common Prayer, p. 387

Stand in a circle and say:

Teacher: Go in peace to love and serve the Lord.
Learners: Thanks be to God.

TEACHER'S REFLECTION

Although the learners are familiar with the Christmas story, the timing of the Wise Men's arrival may be a new concept. Did the class members understand why the Magi were not present on the night of Jesus' birth? Did they make the connection between the story of the Wise Men and the Church's celebration of Epiphany?

LOOKING AHEAD

The next session focuses on the Holy Family's flight into Egypt following the visit of the Wise Men. Reflect on the Church's observance of December 28 as a day to remember the Holy Innocents, the children who were victims of King Herod at the time of Jesus' birth. Who are the innocent victims of violence and bloodshed in our world today?

PEOPLE IN PARABLES

Session 5

Flight Into Egypt

FOCUS

Again, Joseph had a dream. This time an angel warned that he should take Jesus and his mother, Mary, to Egypt to escape danger from Herod. The learners should be able to tell the story in their own way.

GETTING READY

After the fall of Jerusalem in 587 BCE, large numbers of Jewish people escaped to Egypt. Colonies were formed throughout the country, and the people remained for centuries.

At the time of Jesus' birth there may have been as many as a million Jews living in Egypt. In the city of Alexandria, they were granted privileges which included the right to hold public office. It was not unusual that Joseph would take Mary and Jesus to Egypt as a place of refuge from Herod's cruel edict calling for the destruction of all male babies under the age of two.

There is no record in secular history about the massacre under Herod, but he is known as a ruthless leader capable of such an atrocity. The Church has always honored the innocent children as martyrs. St. Augustine called them "buds, killed by the frost of persecution. . . ." Each year, we remember the Holy Innocents on the fourth day of Christmas (December 28).

The story of Herod's fear and anger, coupled with the destruction of infants, is a harsh jolt for children during the festive season of Christmas. When sharing the account, place the emphasis on God's care and protection of the Holy Family. The deaths surely brought sorrow to the heart of God as well.

O God, our heavenly Father, whose glory fills the whole creation, and whose presence we find wherever we go: Preserve those who travel; surround them with your loving care; protect them from every danger; and bring them in safety to their journey's end; through Jesus Christ our Lord.
Amen.

For Travelers
The Book of Common Prayer, p. 831

TEACHING TIP

In many congregations, the Advent/Christmas seasons involve special events such as pageants and musical programs, and church school classes may not meet during these weeks. This session, designed for use around Epiphany, may represent a new beginning for the primary-age learners as they return to regular classroom routines. You may want to take time to review class procedures and to allow the children to get reacquainted.

GATHERING

As the learners arrive, gather once more around the Advent wreath. Notice the four candles have all been lit, and each one is probably burning low by now. The waiting is over, and we have celebrated the birth of Jesus.

When everyone is present, prepare to light a Christ Candle. On some

Advent wreaths, this is the center, white candle. If your wreath does not have a center candle, put a white candle in a holder in the center. Learners may help to place fresh greens around the base. As the Christ Candle is lit, say:

Blessed are the poor in spirit,
for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. . . .

(Continue to the end, using Poster No. 5 from the Teacher's Packet.)

The Beatitudes
Matthew 5:3-10

Extinguish the candle when the Gathering activity is concluded unless it can be put in a protected place in the classroom.

STORYTELLING *(Time: 10 minutes)*

Open the Bible and show the learners where *Matthew 2:13-23* is located. Read aloud verse 13a:

“. . . an angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream and said, Get up, take the child and his mother, and flee to Egypt, . . .”

Finish with these words: The word of the Lord.
The learners respond: Thanks be to God.

1. Begin by describing Herod, the king. He had told the Wise Men to find the child Jesus. But he was not being truthful when he said he wanted to worship the newborn Savior. He was very jealous and afraid his power would be threatened.

2. Tell how the Wise Men had been warned in a dream not to go back to see Herod. They went home by a different route. When Herod realized that he had been tricked, he was furious. He gave an order that all the male children in Bethlehem under the age of two years should be killed.

3. Herod thought his order would assure that the baby Jesus would be among those who were killed. (You may want to share with the learners the fact that, each year, the Church remembers the children who died at that sad time. On December 28, we honor “The Holy Innocents.”)

4. But God was with the Holy Family. In a dream, Joseph was warned of the danger. He hurried to take Mary and Jesus away. They fled into the land of Egypt where they stayed until the death of Herod. (Display the map showing their route of travel, on Poster No. 10 in the Teacher's Packet.) Joseph had another dream telling him it was now safe for them to return to their home in Nazareth of Galilee.

CREATING *(Time: 15-20 minutes)*

Option 1. Escape to Egypt Maps

For each learner, make a copy of the map pattern found on Poster No. 9 in the Teacher's Packet. The maps are to be taped or glued to pieces of posterboard. Call attention to Bethlehem in Judea, and Egypt. Punch holes as

indicated. Give each learner a 12-inch piece of yarn to be threaded through the holes along the route taken by the Holy Family as they fled to Egypt. On the back of the map, tape down the ends of the yarn to hold it in place. The learners may want to draw and color the figures of Mary, Joseph, and the baby to add to the map.

NOTE: In preparation for this activity, use the larger map on Poster No. 10 from the Teacher's Packet to trace the travel route. See Inquiring (below).

Option 2. Angels' Messages

Provide for each learner an 8-inch circle of dark blue construction paper. For each child, make two photocopies of the angel figure from Poster No. 9 in the Teacher's Packet. Also make one copy for each learner of the two words, "Flee" and "Return," found on Poster No. 9 in the Teacher's Packet. Ask the class members to cut out their two angels and the words, and to glue an angel and a word to each side of their blue circles, to suggest the two dreams of Joseph—before the flight into Egypt (Flee) and at Herod's death (Return). The angel figures can be decorated with gold crayons or markers. As the children work, recall the story. If desired, a hole can be punched at the top of each circle and yarn attached for hanging.

EXPLORING THE STORY (*Time: 10-15 minutes*)

Option 1. Game, "Fleeing to Egypt"

Obtain a household timer and about ten items that might be taken on a hasty journey (such as scarfs, blankets, sandals, canvas bags, boxes, belts, and items of clothing). Place the items in a stack at one end of the classroom, and set the timer for ten minutes (or less if the group is small). Instruct the class members to form a line.

As soon as the timer begins to tick, the first child in the line goes to the stack and picks up an item, then returns in a hurry to the line and hands the item to the second person. That person carries the first item to the stack, picks up an additional item, and rushes back to hand both to the third person. The process continues until the last person returns to the line carrying everything that was in the stack. The group has arrived safe in Egypt if they have managed to retrieve all items before the timer sounds. Repeat, varying the time, the distance between the group and the stack, and the order in which the children stand in line.

Option 2. Puzzle, "Flight into Egypt"

Using Puzzle Sheet II.5 titled "Flight into Egypt." Make copies for everyone in the class. Directions are given on the sheet.

This can be a class or small group activity, or learners may work independently.

Option 3. Bible Search

Invite the learners to open their Bibles to *Matthew 2:13-23*. Ask them to locate the two dreams of Joseph (verse 13 and verse 19). What did the angel of the Lord say to Joseph in each of the dreams?

TALKING IT OVER *(Time: 10-15 minutes)*

Joseph, Mary, and Jesus became a refugee family when they fled to Egypt. To escape persecution under Herod, they had to leave their home and settle in a new place. They had no idea how long they would have to stay there.

People throughout history have had to leave their homes and flee for safety. Talk with the learners about the suffering and hardships faced by refugees. Ask: What would it be like to have to leave your home in an emergency? What would become of your family and friends? What would you want to take with you? Have you heard stories of people leaving their homes in a hurry during a storm? How would you feel? How can we help people in these situations?

INQUIRING *(Time: 10-20 minutes)*

Using the map provided on Poster No. 10 in the Teacher's Packet, challenge the learners to find Jerusalem, Bethlehem, Nazareth in Galilee (Joseph's home), and the land of Egypt. You may want to mark these sites with push-pins and use yarn to trace a possible route of travel for the Holy Family. (If time permits, speculate on where the Wise Men came from, how they arrived in Jerusalem and then Bethlehem, and what route they might have taken to return home.)

Or, if someone from the parish or community has worked with refugees, invite that person to visit the class. Ask them to share what it is like for these people, especially the children in refugee camps. What could we do for them?

IMAGINING *(Time: 10-20 minutes)*

Share a story starter: "Joseph dreamed that the baby Jesus was in great danger. When he woke up, he" Invite the learners to use their imaginations and discuss how the story would continue. What might Joseph say to Mary? What would they do first? Where would they go?

Individual response. The learners can write their own endings or draw pictures. Encourage the class members to express their own thoughts. Avoid giving the impression that there is a "right" way to end the story.

Group role play. Provide some simple props and costumes for a role play of the Holy Family's flight into Egypt. Simulate nighttime by darkening the room. Involve class members in the packing up to leave Bethlehem, and then again in the setting up of a new home in Egypt. The learners can take turns acting the various roles in the story.

MUSIC *(Time: 10-15 minutes)*

Introduce the hymn, "When Christ's appearing was made known," stanzas 1 and 5 (*The Hymnal 1982*, 132) by listening to it on the *Children Sing!* tape. Read the words aloud several times, then invite the learners to join in chanting the stanzas.

CONTINUING ACTIVITY *(Time: 10-20 minutes)*

Jesse Tree. Encourage the class members to take down the Jesse Tree

with care, sharing stories and facts about the persons whose symbols have been added through the previous sessions. The items can be wrapped in tissue and stored in an appropriate box so that the tree can be assembled again in future years.

TAKE-HOME CARD

Card 14 has an illustration of the flight into Egypt, a Scripture verse, facts about the story, and a question to think about. Remind learners to add this card to their collection at home.

CLOSING

Conclude the session with the following prayer:

Give us grace to do your will in all that we undertake;
That our works may find favor in your sight.

Let us pray for our own needs and those of others.

(The learners may add their own petitions.)

In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

From The Prayers of the People, Form III
The Book of Common Prayer, p. 387

Stand in a circle and say:

Teacher: Go in peace to love and serve the Lord.

Learners: Thanks be to God.

TEACHER'S REFLECTION

This session provided an opportunity for the learners to place Jesus' childhood on particular places on a map. Being able to do so gives them insight into the concrete reality of Christ's appearing. Was it clear to the class members that Bethlehem is a real village? Were they able to sense the urgency of the Holy Family's flight into Egypt?

LOOKING AHEAD

The next four sessions focus on parables of Jesus. Recall the parables that have meant the most to you through the years. As you consider Jesus' parable of the talents, think about your own gifts. How are you using these gifts in the service of God?

PEOPLE IN PARABLES

Session 6

Being a Resourceful Servant

FOCUS

Jesus told a story of three servants who handled money entrusted to them in different ways. Only the one who buried the money failed to receive praise. The learners should be able to tell why it is important for us all to make good use of what we are given by God.

GETTING READY

This is the first of four sessions on parables of Jesus—short stories used to teach a central truth or to answer a question. Most of Jesus' parables employ everyday situations that would be familiar to his hearers; from these he draws parallels with the reign of God. Often he begins, “The kingdom of heaven (God) is like”

The parable of the three servants and the talents is about the good use of God-given opportunities. The servants had their chance to be good stewards, caring for what had been entrusted to them.

Each of the servants was given talents according to their abilities. The talent in Jesus' parable was not a coin but a measurement of money equal to about 6,000 drachmas. A drachma was a Greek coin that had the same value as a Roman coin called the denarius. A worker would spend a whole day earning a drachma.

In the same way, we are called to be wise managers of resources committed to us by our Lord. Each of us has been given talents to use in our service to God.

On the one hand, stewardship has to do with the whole of our lives—the use of our time, our abilities, and all our resources. More specifically, we speak of stewardship as an obligation to support the work of Christ's Church through personal commitment and planned giving.

Discuss with the learners how they can exercise their own stewardship as members of the Church and the larger society. It is helpful for primary-age children to have specific experience in stewardship projects of the congregation. An example is the Heifer Project, which raises money to purchase breeding animals for communities in the United States and around the world.

Almighty God, whose loving hand has given us all that we possess: Grant us grace that we may honor you with our substance, and, remembering the account which we must one day give, may be faithful stewards of your bounty, through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

For the Right Use of God's Gifts
The Book of Common Prayer, p. 827

TEACHING TIP

The parables of Jesus do not lend themselves to easy interpretation. The more we think about them, the more we appreciate their depth. For teachers of children, it is tempting to add summaries of our own—like the “moral” given at the end of some stories and fables. Let the learners draw their own conclusions about the parables, keeping in mind that we can trust the power of these stories from Jesus to carry their own messages.

GATHERING

Display a piggy bank, several play coins, and a pile of dirt. Ask the learners how these items could be used in a story. What do money and a bank have to do with a pile of dirt?

Continue the Gathering by saying together the Beatitudes. The words are included on Poster No. 5 in the Teacher's Packet.

When all have arrived, gather the group and say:

Blessed are the poor in spirit,
for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. . . .

(Continue to the end)

The Beatitudes
Matthew 5:3-10 (NRSV)

STORYTELLING *(Time: 10 minutes)*

Open the Bible, and show the learners where *Matthew 25:14-28* is located. Read aloud verse 21:

“His master said to him, ‘Well done, good and trustworthy slave; you have been trustworthy in a few things, I will put you in charge of many things; enter into the joy of your master.’”

Finish with these words: The word of the Lord.
Learners respond: Thanks be to God.

1. Begin by introducing the word “parable.” A parable is a short story that helps people to think about an important truth. Jesus used many parables in his teaching.

2. Display Poster No. 7 of the picture of the parable of the talents from the Teacher's Packet. Invite the learners to observe closely the details of the picture. Who are the people? What do they appear to be doing?

3. Begin telling the story about Jesus' parable of the talents. A master was planning to go away on a journey. Before leaving, he called his servants together to instruct them about their duties in his absence.

3. The man divided his property among the servants for safekeeping in his absence. The first servant received five talents, the second servant received two talents, and the third servant received one talent. (A talent was a very valuable unit of money, equal to a worker's wages for nearly 20 years of work. As they tell the story, teachers can use play money to represent the talents.)

4. The first and second servants managed wisely the money entrusted to them. The third servant was afraid he would lose his master's talent, so he dug a hole and buried it.

5. After a long time, the master returned. He called for his servants to account for his money.

6. The first two servants reported on how they had doubled the money entrusted to them. To each of these, the master said, “Well done, good and trustworthy slave.”

7. The third servant was rebuked for hiding the money. The master took that servant's money away and gave it to the first servant.

(Remind the children the read at home about the parable of the talents in the learners' book, *Parables*, chapter 3. Encourage them to also read about how Jesus used parables in teaching in chapter 1 and about the houses built on stone and sand in chapter 2.)

CREATING *(Time: 15-20 minutes)*

Option 1. Drachmas (Denarii)

Silver was the most common metal used for making coins in Jesus' day. Ahead of time make fifteen cardboard circles for each class member, about an inch in diameter. Distribute the circles to the class. Invite the class members to cover the circles with aluminum foil or other metallic wrapping. Attach the circles with glue to a piece of construction paper in two sets of five each, two sets of two each and one alone. Talk about the story of the talents as the class works.

Option 2. Money Pouches

For each learner, provide a 12-inch circle of felt or other fabric and pieces of yarn or twine for threading. Punch holes around the circumference of the circles to prepare for lacing. Knot the yarn securely at one end, then thread it through the holes. Knot the other end. Pull the yarn gently while gathering the fabric together, to create a pouch. Drop coins into the completed pouches.

EXPLORING THE STORY *(Time: 10-15 minutes)*

Option 1. Game, “Hidden Treasure”

Hide pennies around the room. Tell the learners how many are hidden, and invite them to form pairs or teams for hunting. Continue searching until all the coins have been found. Compare the number of coins located to a total of 6,000 (which would be a New Testament “talent”).

Option 2. Puzzle, “The Faithful Servant”

Use Puzzle Sheet II.6 titled “The Faithful Servant.” Make copies for everyone in the class. Directions are given on the sheet.

This can be a class or small group activity, or learners may work independently.

Option 3. Prayer Book Search

Invite the learners to open *The Book of Common Prayer* to pages 258-259. Divide the class into three groups or teams, and ask each group to examine one of the three prayers, For Rogation Days. The learners may read the prayers aloud to one another, then answer these questions: What are the gifts of God mentioned in these prayers? What are we to do with these gifts?

TALKING IT OVER *(Time: 10-15 minutes)*

In the story Jesus told, the master gave his servants his property and trusted them to manage it well. Ask: What might the servants do with the money? The master expected them to be resourceful and to make the money grow. What chances would the servants be taking if they used the money to make more for their master?

Talk with the learners about taking risks. In Jesus' story, the risk-taking of the first two servants was much better than the choice made by the third servant who simply buried the money for safekeeping. Ask: Why do you think he buried the money? What did he hope would happen?

Point out that, like the master in the story, God has given us the earth's resources to manage well. Everything we have is entrusted to us by God, to be cared for in the best way we can. Ask: What have you been given to care for? How do you go about being a good manager?

(Encourage the learners to be specific. You might speak about garden seed. We prepare soil, plant the seed, and work to see that the plants grow and produce. If we just put the seed away without taking the risk of planting, that would be poor management.)

INQUIRING *(Time: 10-20 minutes)*

Visit the worship space at your church. Invite a member of the congregation who serves as an usher to talk about how offerings are collected during worship services. Ask the visitor to show the class where the collection plates are kept between services. Where are they kept at the beginning of a service? Who gives them to the ushers? Where do the ushers bring the plates after they have been passed among the congregation? Where are they placed after the offering of gifts? Ask the usher to also describe what happens to the offerings at the end of the service.

If there is time, let learners take turns carrying the collection plates and placing them on the altar. Talk about offerings the children could place in the collection plate.

IMAGINING *(Time: 10-20 minutes)*

Share a story starter: "After the master gave the money to the three servants, they . . ." Invite the learners to use their imaginations and discuss how the story could continue. We know that one of the servants buried his money, but what did the other two do? How did they double their money?

Individual response. The class members can write their own endings or draw pictures. Encourage them to express their own thoughts. Avoid giving the impression that there is a "right" way to end the story.

Group role play. The group can take part in a dramatization of this parable, using their imaginations to supply what the first two servants may have done with their share. Simple costumes and props may be used.

MUSIC *(Time: 10-15 minutes)*

Listen to “Fairest Lord Jesus” (*The Hymnal 1982*, 383; *We Sing of God*, 62) on the *Children Sing!* tape. Read the words of stanza 1 aloud together. Talk with the learners about ways we honor Jesus (caring for the environment, supporting the church, helping others).

CONTINUING ACTIVITY *(Time: 10-20 minutes)*

Sharing Our Gifts. Share the beauty of God's creation with the rest of the congregation by planting a garden, putting out window boxes, or preparing flowering plant tubs. Talk to the committee or person in charge of the church grounds to find out if a small space on the grounds could be used for a “garden gift” from the children to the congregation. If a garden area is not available, explore the possibility of tending window boxes or plant tubs.

Plan your gardening activities to be completed over the next four weeks. The first week, bring in flower seeds (look for those that grow quickly), soil, and small paper cups. Make a brief visit to the area designated for the class garden. Talk about giving the gifts of your time and efforts to make a place of beauty for others at the church.

When you return to the classroom, ask the learners to put the seeds and soil into the cups and set them on trays. Then add water. If the plants cannot be watered during the week, take them home.

TAKE-HOME CARD

Card 15 has a picture of the parable of the talents, a Scripture verse, facts about the story, and a question to think about. Remind learners to add this card to their collection at home.

CLOSING

Conclude the session with the following prayer:

Give us grace to do your will in all that we undertake;
That our works may find favor in your sight.
Let us pray for our own needs and those of others.
(The learners may add their own petitions.)
In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

From *The Prayers of the People, Form III*
The Book of Common Prayer, p. 387

Stand in a circle and say:

Teacher: Go in peace to love and serve the Lord.
Learners: Thanks be to God.

TEACHER'S REFLECTION

God expects us to be good stewards of all we have been given. Did this parable help class members to understand this concept? Did the learners gain a sense of responsibility for sharing with others the gifts we have been given by God? Consider ways that stewardship, caring for what has been entrusted to us, can be continually incorporated into the sessions.

LOOKING AHEAD

The next session focuses on the parable of the prodigal son, who was offered forgiveness by his father. Reflect on a time when you needed forgiveness from someone.

PEOPLE IN PARABLES

Session 7

Being Forgiven

FOCUS

In Jesus' story of the prodigal, the son who wasted his money realized his sin. The father offered forgiveness and rejoiced that the son had come home safe. The learners should be able to explain that repentance and forgiveness are possible for everyone.

GETTING READY

Many people have called the story of the prodigal son (*Luke 15:11-32*) the story of the loving father. It centers on the extravagant love of the father for both his sons, and the father's grace that overpowers his older son's sense of fairness. This is a parable that celebrates love, forgiveness, and joy.

The father is a wealthy landowner who owns slaves. Jewish custom held that a younger son was entitled to inherit one-third his father's wealth (*Deuteronomy 21:7*). Usually it was given when the father died. When the younger son asks for his inheritance and leaves home, he squanders his money on loose living and ends up feeding pigs. To feed swine was forbidden to Jews and placed them outside the covenant relationship with God and the community. The pods he was forced to eat were foot-long pods of the carob tree, used in Jesus' day as animal feed and sometimes as food by the very poor.

When the younger son comes to his senses, repents, and returns home, his compassionate father places a signet ring on his finger and dresses him in a robe and shoes. The ring symbolized the power of attorney for the father's estate. The robe was a sign of honor and the shoes were a sign that the father would treat him as a son, not as a slave as the son requested. Twice the father exclaims that his son was once dead but now lives. His joy, born out of love, inspires an act of forgiveness and restoration that leads to a joyous celebration.

The father goes beyond forgiving the sin of his son by throwing a party. By inviting both sons to the feast he shows that he does not love one more than the other. There are no winners or losers.

Jesus told this story because the scribes and Pharisees complained that he "welcomes sinners and eats with them" (*Luke 15:2*). The parable turns on the truth that God does not turn away from those who seek forgiveness, and challenges the Church to do the same.

Now there is rejoicing in heaven; for you were lost, and are found; you were dead, and are now alive in Christ Jesus our Lord. Go in peace. The Lord has put away all your sins.

Reconciliation

The Book of Common Prayer, p. 451

TEACHING TIP

The parable of the prodigal son has many levels of meaning that learners will come to appreciate as they encounter it in future years. For now, it is the father's unconditional love for the son that is most important to primary-age children. They need to know that they are loved even when they do wrong

and that forgiveness is always possible. When it is necessary for you to exercise firm discipline in the classroom, focus clearly on the undesired behavior while affirming your continuing love and concern for each learner.

GATHERING

Display Poster No. 7 from the Teacher's Packet that depicts the parable of the prodigal son. Encourage the learners to talk about what is happening in the picture.

When all have arrived, gather the group and say:

Blessed are the poor in spirit,
for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. . . .

(Continue to the end, using Poster No. 5 from the Teacher's Packet.)

The Beatitudes
Matthew 5:3-10 (NRSV)

STORYTELLING (*Time: 10 minutes*)

Open the Bible and show the learners where *Luke 15:11-32* is located. Read aloud verses 23-24:

“And get the fatted calf and kill it, and let us eat and celebrate; for this son of mine was dead, and is alive again; he was lost, and is found!’ And they began to celebrate.”

Finish with these words: The word of the Lord.
Learners respond: Thanks be to God.

1. Begin by describing the scene in which a wealthy man was approached by the younger of his two sons. This young man did not want to wait for his inheritance; he wanted it now. The father wished to be fair to both sons, so he divided his property between them. Props such as blocks or other items to represent property could be helpful here.

2. The younger son, eager to be out on his own, took all his possessions and traveled far away to another country. He did not manage well. He lived carelessly and squandered his money on personal pleasure. (We call him the “prodigal” son, meaning one who was recklessly wasteful.)

3. The prodigal son soon had nothing left. He was so poor and hungry that he had to find a job. He worked for a farmer feeding pigs. (This was a disgusting job for a Jewish person; religious laws considered pigs unclean, and therefore, forbidden to touch.)

4. The young man was very unhappy. He realized that the pigs had more to eat and received better care than he. He decided to return to his father's house. He would ask his father for a job as a hired hand.

5. From a distance, the father saw him returning and ran to him, embraced him with joy, and welcomed him home. The father provided him with special clothes and a ring. He planned a great party to celebrate his son's return.

6. The older son, working in the field, heard the sounds of celebrating.

When he found out what had happened, and that his father was honoring his brother, he was very angry. He had stayed with his father and had always obeyed him. Why should his brother be rewarded with a party? He refused to attend. But the father replied, “You are always with me. Everything I have is yours. We thought your brother might be dead, but here he is, alive! He was lost from us, but now he is found!”

(Remind the children to read at home about the prodigal son in the learners' book, *Parables*, chapter 6. Encourage them to also read about the parables of the sower in chapter 4 and of the lost coin and lost sheep in chapter 5.)

CREATING *(Time: 15-20 minutes)*

Option 1. Story Strips

For each learner, prepare a strip of light-colored paper about 4 ½ x 24 inches in size. (These can be made by taping or gluing together two halves of a 9 x 12-inch sheet of construction paper. Other possibilities would be strips of butcher paper cut to size, or pieces of wide adding machine tape.)

Fold the strips four to six times, in accordion fashion. Ask the learners to draw and color scenes from the parable of the prodigal son to form a story strip. (A sequence of possible scenes: father giving money to younger son; son wasting his inheritance; son feeding pigs; son going home to his father; celebration of the son's return; older brother's protest.)

Option 2. Celebration Scenes

Provide sheets of white drawing paper, small bits of brightly colored tissue, small paint brushes, and containers of diluted white glue. Invite the learners to paint glue onto the background paper, then affix selected pieces of the tissue. The pieces will overlap, and the colors will run to create a joyful effect.

As a group, write a prayer of forgiveness. Before you begin, share several prayers from books for families and children. After the “joyful” paper has dried, ask learners to copy the prayer or parts of it onto the paper.

EXPLORING THE STORY *(Time: 10-15 minutes)*

Option 1. Game, “Picture Pantomime Game”

Invite a volunteer to illustrate for the group a word from the story. The teacher whispers or writes the words for the illustrator so that the group does not hear. Then the illustrator begins to draw on a piece of newsprint or a chalkboard without saying a word. The drawing continues until the group guesses what is being illustrated. Some suggestions include: younger son, father, older son, pigs, house, party, field, robe, ring, shoes, hug, and money.

Option 2. Puzzle, “Prodigal Son”

Use Puzzle Sheet II.7 titled “Prodigal Son.” Make copies for everyone in the class. Directions are given on the sheet.

This can be a class or small group activity, or learners may work independently.

Option 3. Prayer of Forgiveness

Invite the learners to open *The Book of Common Prayer* to the Confession of Sin (Morning Prayer II, p. 79; Holy Eucharist I and II, p. 331 and 360.) Read the prayer aloud in unison. Find these words: *sinned*, *repent*, and *forgive*. Ask: How does this prayer remind us of Jesus' story of the prodigal son? What happens when we pray this prayer? (The priest asks God to forgive us.)

TALKING IT OVER (*Time: 10-15 minutes*)

In Jesus' story, the younger son was given great freedom of choice. Ask: What was he free to do? How did he choose to live? (He chose to leave his father's comfortable home. He chose to spend all of his money recklessly, without thinking about the consequences. He used his freedom in irresponsible ways.)

But the prodigal “came to himself.” He realized how he had sinned. His way of living was wrong in the sight of God, and it was wrong to treat his family so carelessly. Ask: What could he do about his situation? (He decided to “repent” to turn away from sin and ask for his father's mercy.)

Remind the learners that everyone sometimes does something wrong. Ask: When we realize we have not done the right thing, what can we do about it?

Explore the idea of “repenting.” It means more than just saying we are sorry for our mistakes. To repent is to change—to turn away from hurtful ways of acting and take up a new life. Who have you known who may have repented? What would it be like to change the way you act?

INQUIRING (*Time: 10-20 minutes*)

Arrange for a young person from the congregation to visit the class and portray the prodigal. Make certain the visitor is familiar with the parable and can act out the younger brother's part in a convincing way. Urge him/her to include dialogue and to share feelings of despair and repentance at the end.

The class members can be encouraged to ask the prodigal questions.

IMAGINING (*Time: 10-20 minutes*)

Share a story starter: “The older brother was out in the field when he heard the sound of music and dancing at his father's house. He rushed home, and . . .” Invite the learners to use their imaginations and discuss how the story could continue. Ask: How did the older son feel when he heard what had happened? What would he say to his father? to his brother?

Individual response. The class members can write their own endings or draw pictures. Encourage them to express their own thoughts. Avoid giving the impression that there is a “right” way to end the story.

Group role play. Invite a volunteer to narrate the story as three class members assume the roles of the father and the two brothers. The whole group can take part in scenes where appropriate (wasteful living; feeding the pigs; working in the fields; celebrating with music and dancing).

MUSIC (Time: 10-15 minutes)

Sing again “Fairest Lord Jesus” (*The Hymnal 1982*, 383; *We Sing of God*, 62) with the *Children Sing!* tape. Point out that this is a very old German hymn that has been translated into English. The word “fairest” means “most beautiful.”

CONTINUING ACTIVITY (Time: 10-20 minutes)

Sharing Out Gifts. If weather permits, prepare the garden area for planting. Before going outside or checking window boxes or tubs, look at the seedlings planted last week. Ask volunteers to water the plants. Bring gardening tools and ask learners to prepare the planting area by pulling weeds and turning over the soil.

TAKE-HOME CARD

Card 16 has a picture of the prodigal son, a scripture verse, facts about the story, and a question to think about. Remind learners to add this card to their collection at home.

CLOSING

Conclude the session with the following prayer:

Give us grace to do your will in all that we undertake;
That our works may find favor in your sight.
Let us pray for our own needs and those of others.
(*The learners may add their own petitions.*)
In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

From *The Prayers of the People*, Form III
The Book of Common Prayer, p. 387

Stand in a circle and say:

Teacher: Go in peace to love and serve the Lord.
Learners: Thanks be to God.

TEACHER'S REFLECTION

Which aspects of the parable seemed most meaningful to the class members? Were there indications in their discussion of the parable that they saw a connection between the father's forgiveness of the prodigal son and God's forgiveness offered to us?

LOOKING AHEAD

The next session focuses on the parable of the Good Samaritan. How do you understand the expression “good Samaritan”? In our present-day society, what does it mean for us to be good neighbors to others? Recall times when “a Samaritan” has helped you.

PEOPLE IN PARABLES

Session 8

Being a Neighbor to Others

FOCUS

The Samaritan who cared for an injured man understood how to be a real neighbor to others. The learners should be able to compare the Samaritan's reaction to that of the priest and the Levite, and to say that Jesus teaches us the meaning of being a "neighbor."

GETTING READY

The scribe whose question prompts Jesus to tell the parable of the good Samaritan wants to know, "Who is my neighbor? Who am I to love?" Jesus' story is not about having the right answers, but about doing the right thing. It is a story of impartial love.

The road from Jerusalem to Jericho was a twenty-mile stretch notorious for violent crimes. Robbers often sprang on unsuspecting travelers from rock outcroppings along the narrow, steep road. In Jesus' day it was known as "The Bloody Way."

When the priest saw what he thought was a corpse he avoided it by walking on the other side of the road. Touching a dead body meant he would be ritually unclean for a week and unable to take his turn serving in the Jerusalem temple. A Levite was a priest who had charge over the temple sanctuary. He also was forbidden to touch a corpse. Both men might have thought the body was a decoy placed by robbers, a common trick along the Jericho road. Their reasons for walking on the other side were understandable.

A Samaritan was the opposite of a priest. Samaritans were an ancient mixed population of Jews and Gentiles. They opposed worshiping in the Jerusalem temple and built their own place of worship instead. Jews in Jesus' day considered them to be unclean social outcasts. Jews and Samaritans had little to do with each other. It was this person who helped the injured man by giving him immediate care and then providing for him until he was healed from his wounds.

In Jesus' mind, the Samaritan demonstrated love in action. Helping another person was more important than asking, "Who is my neighbor?" For him, the question was, "What does a good neighbor do?"

This session focuses on seeing all people as neighbors and on ways children can be good neighbors to others.

Sanctify, O Lord, those whom you have called to the study and practice of the arts of healing, and to the prevention of disease and pain. Strengthen them by your life-giving Spirit, that by their ministries the health of the community may be promoted and your creation glorified; through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

For Doctors and Nurses
The Book of Common Prayer, p. 460

TEACHING TIP

At the primary-age, growth and development revolves around social relationships among friends—the gang, the team, and the class. When planning class sessions, choose activities that encourage learners to interact with one another and to play cooperatively. Allow ample time for class members to talk and to share ideas as they work together on projects.

GATHERING

Set out a first-aid kit and an emergency road kit. As learners arrive, ask them where they have seen these items. Have you ever been in a situation where you have needed either? If so, describe what happened.

When all have arrived, gather the group and say:

Blessed are the poor in spirit,
for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. . . .

(Continue to the end, using Poster No. 5 from the Teacher's Packet).

The Beatitudes
Matthew 5:3-10

STORYTELLING (*Time: 10 minutes*)

Open the Bible, show the learners where *Luke 10:25-37* is located, and read aloud verses 36-37:

“Which of these three, do you think, was a neighbor to the man who fell into the hands of robbers?” He said, “The one who showed him mercy.” And Jesus said to him, “Go and do likewise.”

Finish with these words: The word of the Lord.

Learners respond: Thanks be to God.

1. Begin by setting the scene in the way the Gospel writer does. A man was asking Jesus questions about how to live. Jesus reminded him of the two great commandments: Love God, and love your neighbor. The man asked Jesus, “But who is my neighbor?” Jesus responded by telling a story that we call the parable of the Good Samaritan.

2. Display Poster No. 8 from the Teacher's Packet that shows the parable of the Good Samaritan. Invite the learners to talk about what is happening in the picture.

3. Tell the story. A man was walking on the road from Jerusalem to Jericho. (Describe the danger involved. Robbers sometimes hid by the roadside and attacked people traveling alone.)

4. The man was attacked, robbed, beaten, and left on the roadside to die.

5. Two men came along, saw the man lying on the ground, and did nothing to help him. The first was a priest (one who served God in the temple). The second was a Levite (a member of a religious community). These men walked by on the other side of the road.

6. The next passerby—a Samaritan—was someone who would not be expected to help. But he saw the suffering man, felt very sorry for him, and stopped to assist. He dressed the man's wounds and took him on his donkey to an inn. He paid the innkeeper to care for the injured traveler, and he promised to come back. He promised to pay any additional cost as well.

7. When Jesus finished his story, he asked the man who had been questioning him, “Now which of these three (the priest, the Levite, or the Samaritan) was a neighbor to the traveler who was hurt?” The man said, “The one who stopped to help.” Jesus said, “Go, and do the same.”

(Remind the children to read at home about the Good Samaritan in the learners' book, *Parables*, chapter 7.)

CREATING *(Time: 15-20 minutes)*

Option 1. Parable Figures

Make a good supply of paper figures, using the pattern provided on Poster No. 9 in the Teacher's Packet (a blank form of head and body, with flaps to be folded back for support). Ask the learners to create one or more of the people in the parable of the Good Samaritan. They may use crayons and markers, small bits of paper and fabric, and yarn. The group may enjoy using their completed figures to help retell the story.

Option 2. Collage, Our Neighbors

Give the class members pieces of construction paper and a generous selection of tear sheets from magazines. Ask the learners to select and cut out pictures that show people who are our neighbors. Glue the pictures to the construction paper sheets. Learners may add their own drawings to the collage, and they may wish to use markers for adding the words, “Love your neighbor.”

EXPLORING THE STORY *(Time: 10-15 minutes)*

Option 1. Game, “Who Am I?”

On a chalkboard or a large piece of newsprint, draw a long line to represent the road from Jerusalem to Jericho. At the ends of the line, sketch in a few buildings to suggest the two places. Write the names if you wish. Along the road, draw footprints headed toward Jericho.

As the group gathers, give each class member a paper footprint. Read aloud a series of clues. For each correct response to a clue, a paper footprint is added to the road. Anyone in the class may answer, and footprints are added by volunteers. (These are attached with tape loops over the ones that have been drawn on the board.)

Use the following clues, adding to each one the question, Who am I?:

I was beaten by robbers. (Traveler) I told the story. (Jesus) I received money to help care for the man. (Innkeeper) I was the first one to come by and see the man lying by the road. (Priest) I was the one who stopped to help. (Samaritan) I was on my way to Jericho. (Traveler) I was the second person to pass the traveler by. (Levite) I said, “Go and do likewise.” (Jesus)

Devise additional clues if needed. A clue may be used more than once.

Option 2. Puzzle, “Parable Word Search”

Use Puzzle Sheet II.8 titled “Parable Word Search.” Make copies for everyone in the class. Directions are given on the sheet.

This can be a class or small group activity, or learners may work independently.

Option 3. Looking at the Text

Invite the learners to open their Bibles to *Luke 10:25-37*, the story of the Good Samaritan. Convert selected sentences of the parable into questions to be answered by the class members. Examples: verse 25: Who stood up and put Jesus to the test? (a lawyer); verse 30: What were the three things the robbers did to the man? (stripped him, beat him, left him behind).

TALKING IT OVER (*Time: 10-15 minutes*)

In Jesus' time, the Samaritans' worship and ways of life were different, and they had little to do with their Jewish neighbors. The separation between Jews and Samaritans had lasted hundreds of years. Ask: Why do people let their differences matter so much? Why do they find it hard to get along together?

Jesus had a special concern for helping people to understand and care for one another despite their differences. The story of the Good Samaritan is filled with surprises.

Ask: Who fails to stop and offer help to the man by the roadside? Why does this surprise us? (The priest and the Levite believed in God and the commandments. They could be expected to help someone in trouble. Ask: Why do you think they just passed by without stopping?)

In the end, who helped? Why was this the biggest surprise of all? (The Samaritan was the last person who would be expected to assist the Jewish traveler. Yet, he bound up the man's wounds and took him to an inn to be cared for. He even paid the bill.)

Ask: How can we be good neighbors to other people? Share some examples of people offering help to others in trouble.

INQUIRING (*Time: 10-20 minutes*)

Invite a class visitor who can describe for the learners some modern situations in which injured persons have been helped. Or, share a story you have read in the newspaper or seen on television. The cases could include victims of fire, storms, or other disasters, as well as possible instances of people injured in accidents or by assault. Consult ahead of time with the visitor to encourage him/her to describe any instances of a modern “Good Samaritan” who happened by and was especially helpful.

The guest might be a hospital emergency worker, a fire department employee, an ambulance driver, or a school nurse.

Encourage the learners to interview the visitor, asking questions about what it is like to offer help in emergencies.

IMAGINING *(Time: 10-20 minutes)*

Share a story starter: “A traveler had been beaten by robbers and helped by a Samaritan who came along. When he got well, he decided to” Invite the learners to use their imaginations and discuss how the story could continue. Ask questions like: What would the man do next? How would he treat other people in trouble? What would he think of Samaritans?

Individual response. The class members can write their own endings or draw pictures. Encourage them to express their own thoughts. Avoid giving the impression that there is a “right” way to end the story.

Group role play. The class members can dramatize the story of the Good Samaritan as Jesus told it. Simple costumes may be used if they are available. Set up additional role playing scenes in which the learners act out a modern story of someone being helped.

MUSIC *(Time: 10-15 minutes)*

Sing “Jesu, Jesu, fill us with your love” (*The Hymnal 1982*, 602; *We Sing of God*, 93) with the *Children Sing!* tape. Encourage the learners to look for ways in which the words remind them of Jesus' parable of the Good Samaritan.

CONTINUING ACTIVITY *(Time: 10-20 minutes)*

Sharing Our Gifts. If weather permits, plant the garden this week. If the seedlings are not ready, bring in other plants from a nursery. (The seedlings can be added to the garden later.) When you reach the garden area, talk about how gently the new plants must be treated. Before putting the plants into the ground or in boxes and tubs, talk about how the group wants the planting area to look. After putting the plants into the soil, ask for volunteers to water them.

TAKE-HOME CARD

Card 17 has a picture of the Good Samaritan, a Scripture verse, facts about the story, and a question to think about. Remind learners to add this card to their collection at home.

CLOSING

Conclude the session with the following prayer:

Give us grace to do your will in all that we undertake;

That our works may find favor in your sight.

Let us pray for our own needs and those of others.

(The learners may add their own petitions.)

In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

From The Prayers of the People, Form III

The Book of Common Prayer, p. 387

Stand in a circle and say:

Teacher: Go in peace to love and serve the Lord.

Learners: Thanks be to God.

TEACHER'S REFLECTION

Were the learners able to make a clear association between the expression, “being a Good Samaritan,” and the parable? How well do they grasp the concept that all people are our neighbors? In what ways are they good neighbors to one another?

LOOKING AHEAD

The next session focuses on the parable of the banquet. Reflect on the difference between meeting social obligations out of a sense of duty, and responding to the warm generosity of friends. Think about situations in your own life that are examples of this difference.

PEOPLE IN PARABLES

Session 9

Welcoming All People

FOCUS

In the parable of the banquet, people took the invitation lightly and offered excuses for not attending. In the end, the host opened his home to all kinds of people. The learners should be able to explain that all people should be offered genuine hospitality.

GETTING READY

Like the parables of the prodigal and the Good Samaritan, Jesus' story of a banquet (from *Luke*) is about the attitudes and expectations of the religious people.

In this parable the master prepares a great banquet. The banquet represents the great feast that God will prepare for us. Jesus spoke of the kingdom as a feast one of the happiest times a human could know. The Jews would expect to be invited to God's banquet. The master does invite the chosen people of God, the Jews, but they refuse. The excuses offered are very much like those we hear and use ourselves, "I'm too busy. I have to be somewhere else."

Jesus turns the expectations upside down. When the invitations were refused, the servants were sent to the outcasts, the Gentiles, the tax collectors, and sinners. These are the people who would never dream of receiving such an invitation. They would be welcome at the great feast. The good news is that at God's banquet there will be room for everyone who accepts the invitation.

Habits of exclusion and the forming of cliques begin early in our lives. The teaching of primary-age learners offers many opportunities for us to work toward encouraging hospitality to all people. We are called to follow the great commandment, "Love your neighbor as yourself."

Almighty and everliving God, ruler of all things in heaven and earth, hear our prayers for this parish family. Strengthen the faithful, arouse the careless, and restore the penitent. Grant us all things necessary for our common life, and bring us all to be of one heart and mind within your holy Church; through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

For the Parish

The Book of Common Prayer, p. 817

TEACHING TIP

In relating the parable of the great banquet, expect primary-age learners to be somewhat aware of the social obligations inherent in attending parties—the need for an RSVP to an invitation, arriving on time and departing promptly, or, as happens in the parable, not canceling out at the last minute except in cases of extreme emergency. Expect also that the learners will be very sensitive to how it feels to be excluded and not invited to a party. Emphasize Jesus' message of hospitality to all. Speak directly about what this means for the learners' "party" behavior.

GATHERING

Display Poster No. 8 from the Teacher's Packet, depicting the parable of the great banquet. Below the poster, set a table for a party with invitations and placecards. Encourage the learners to talk about what is happening in the picture and display. Speculate about the people in the picture. Who are they? What are they doing? Why is the table set for a party?

When all have arrived, gather the group and say:

Blessed are the poor in spirit,
for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. . . .

(Continue to the end, using the poster from the Teacher's Packet.)

The Beatitudes
Matthew 5:3-10 (NRSV)

STORYTELLING (*Time: 10 minutes*)

Open the Bible, show the learners where *Luke 14:16-24* is located, and read aloud verse 23:

“And the master said to the servant, ‘Go out to the highways and hedges, and compel people to come in, that my house may be filled.’”

Finish with these words: The word of the Lord.

Learners respond: Thanks be to God.

1. Begin by setting the scene: Jesus had gone to the home of a religious leader for dinner on the sabbath day (the day of prayers and rest). Jesus noticed how the other guests at the dinner all wanted to be sure of a place of honor at the table. They felt that they were very important and deserved the best seats. Jesus decided to talk about hospitality and sharing.

2. In Jesus' parable, someone planned a great dinner. Many people were invited. As the day came, the host sent a servant to remind all the invited people to come.

3. The guests gave excuses for not coming to the dinner. Some of these excuses were:

“I have bought some land, and I must go to see it.”

“I have bought oxen, and I am going to try them out.”

“I have just been married and cannot come.”

4. When the servant told his master what the people had said, the owner of the house was very angry.

5. The master sent his servant into the street to bring in the poor, the crippled, the blind, and the lame.

6. Still there was room for more guests. The servant was dispatched again, this time going into the roads to compel people to come in so that the whole house would be filled for the banquet.

7. The master said that none of the people who were first invited would be allowed to enjoy the dinner.

(Remind the children to read at home this story about the banquet in the learners' book, *Parables*, chapter 9.)

CREATING *(Time: 15-20 minutes)*

Option 1. The Great Banquet

Provide the learners with large sheets of drawing paper, pencils, crayons, and markers. Invite them to create their interpretations of the room where the feast was held, including an elaborately decorated banquet hall and a table filled with delicious food. Pass out magazines and invite learners to cut out pictures of people who would be invited to God's table. Add these pictures to the drawing. As the learners work, talk with them about the inclusion of all people in our hospitality.

Option 2. Banquet Placemats

Give a piece of 12 x 18-inch construction paper to each learner. Print the words, "All Are Welcome," across the top of the paper. Encourage the learners to create decorative borders around the edges of their placemats with crayons, markers, glitter, colored paper, fabric trims, ribbons, and sequins. You may want to laminate the placemats with clear plastic vinyl.

EXPLORING THE STORY *(Time: 10-15 minutes)*

Option 1. Game, "Highways and Hedges"

A learner begins by saying, "I went out to the highways and hedges, and I brought _____ (*use a name that begins with A, such as Anna*) to the party." The next person continues, "I went out to the highways and hedges, and I brought A _____ (*repeat the name used*) and B _____ (*use a B name*) to the party." The game continues with each player repeating all the previous names and adding a new name beginning with the next letter of the alphabet. Between players, the group may chant the names in unison, which will help younger learners to keep them in mind.

Option 2. Puzzle, "The Great Banquet"

Use Puzzle Sheet II.9 titled "The Great Banquet." Make copies for everyone in the class. Directions are given on the sheet.

This can be a class or small group activity, or learners may work independently.

Option 3. Reading the Parable

Invite the learners to locate *Luke 14:15-24* in their Bibles and read the passage silently. After a few minutes, ask the class members to find places where someone is quoted. (Look for the words "said" and "to say," which appear just before someone speaks.)

Explain that you will lead a group reading of the parable. Read the text, citing verse numbers as needed. When you come to the word "said," pause for a volunteer (or the whole class) to speak the words.

Practice one verse together as an example. Teacher says, "Verse 18: But they all alike began to make excuses. The first said to him, . . ." Learner volunteers, "I have bought a field, and I must go out and see it; I pray you, have me excused."

Repeat the responsive reading if interest warrants. Perhaps one of the learners would like to take the role of leader in the reading.

TALKING IT OVER *(Time: 10-15 minutes)*

Talk with the class members about two aspects of this story: excuses made by the invited guests, and hospitality extended to everyone.

Ask: What excuses did the guests give for not coming to the dinner? How would their excuses make the host feel?

Encourage the learners to think about times when they have been invited to parties. Ask: How did you respond to the invitations? What happens when a person invited to a party decides at the last minute not to go?

When we invite other people to go to church with us, for example, how do we decide whom to invite? (Stress the fact that it is not appropriate to sort our friends into “best friends” and “others.” It is good to welcome as many guests as we can. Be alert to ways to engage the learners in thinking about genuine hospitality that is freely offered.)

INQUIRING *(Time: 10-20 minutes)*

Work with class members to organize a banquet (snack). Decorate the classroom, set out drinks, and provide a selection of snacks. Plan special music. If possible, go out of the classroom in search of additional guests for this “great dinner.” (You may wish to alert parents and other classes that this compelling invitation will be extended.)

This activity can be an end-of-the-unit celebration. Talk with guests about Jesus' parable of the great banquet, which inspired the party.

IMAGINING *(Time: 10-20 minutes)*

Share a story starter: “The angry master told his servant to find guests for the banquet. Quickly, the servant ran outside to the street, and . . .” Invite the learners to use their imaginations and discuss how the story could continue. Who would the servant find on the street? What might the street people say when the servant asked them to come to the house for a party? What did they do?

Individual response. The class members can write their own endings or draw pictures. Encourage them to express their own thoughts. Avoid giving the impression that there is a “right” way to end the story.

Group role play. Dramatize the parable of the great banquet. Use simple props to set the scene around the banquet table. Learners can role play the parts of the master, the servant, the three who gave excuses, and the many who came from the streets to the banquet. Consider using a narrator whose commentary can set the pace and subtly guide the action.

MUSIC *(Time: 10-15 minutes)*

Sing again “Jesus, Jesus, fill us with your love” (*The Hymnal 1982*, 602; *We Sing of God*, 93) with the *Children Sing!* tape. This time, consider how the words of the hymn may remind us of Jesus' parable of the great banquet. Pay particular attention to the refrain.

CONTINUING ACTIVITY *(Time: 10-20 minutes)*

Sharing Our Gifts. Visit the garden area or place where the class has put their plantings. Check on the plants, adding water if necessary. Talk about who will continue to take care of the garden in the coming weeks. Did the group enjoy sharing their gifts with others? What are other ways we could share our gifts by helping others?

TAKE-HOME CARD

Card 18 has a picture of the banquet, a Scripture verse, facts about the story, and a question to think about. Remind learners to add this card to their collection at home.

CLOSING

Conclude the session with the following prayer:

Give us grace to do your will in all that we undertake;
That our works may find favor in your sight.
Let us pray for our own needs and those of others.
(The learners may add their own petitions.)
In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

From *The Prayers of the People, Form III*
The Book of Common Prayer, p. 387

Stand in a circle and say:

Teacher: Go in peace to love and serve the Lord.
Learners: Thanks be to God.

TEACHER'S REFLECTION

The parable of the banquet offers primary-age learners an opportunity to focus on aspects of being a guest—receiving and responding to the invitations of others. The parable also urges us to offer hospitality freely to other people. How did the learners respond to these issues? Did they concur that sometimes people make excuses for not doing things they should? What did they say about the inclusion of everyone? As you plan future classroom activities, what more can you do to encourage inclusive behavior?

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

Episcopal Children's Curriculum

Unit III. EUCHARIST: PEOPLE IN COMMUNION

Dear Parents and Guardians,

Each time we repeat The Baptismal Covenant (BCP, p. 304), we promise to “continue in the apostles' teaching and fellowship, in the breaking of the bread, and in the prayers.” It is important that we share with our children the story of this sacrament and help them to take their places at our Lord's Holy Table.

Sessions 1-5 of this unit have been designed to help primary-age learners understand the nature and meaning of the Church's celebration of the Eucharist. **Sessions 6-9** are for use in the Lent/Easter season. These four sessions focus on the Last Supper, Jesus' betrayal and arrest, the crucifixion and resurrection, and Jesus' post-resurrection appearance on the road to Emmaus.

We encourage you to talk about the sessions with your child. You can do this by reading together the learners' book, *Christians Celebrate Eucharist*, which describes Jesus' Last Supper and the celebration of Eucharist from the early Church through today. We also encourage you to read the Scripture passages cited below with your child. The Take-Home Cards given to learners each week can be used in your discussions. These collectible cards, about the size of a postcard, can be displayed in a photo album, kept in a recipe box, or used in any way you find helpful.

Following are summaries of the unit's sessions.

Session 1: “Jesus' Last Supper With the Disciples” focuses on what happened at the Last Supper when Jesus shared bread and wine with his disciples. The children will learn that the celebration of the Eucharist reaches all the way back to Jesus' final meal with his friends. (*Luke 22:19-20*)

Session 2: “Christians Remember the Last Supper” introduces children to the idea that when Christians gather at the Eucharist, they are remembering the whole story of Jesus' life and ministry, including his death, resurrection, and ascension. Primary-age learners can appreciate Jesus' words at the Last Supper, “Do this in remembrance of me.” (*I Corinthians 11:23-26*)

Session 3: “People Celebrate the Eucharist” concentrates on the Eucharist as a “sacrament” and centers on the Great Thanksgiving at the heart of our celebrations. (*The Book of Common Prayer*, p. 342)

Session 4: “We Use *The Book of Common Prayer* at Holy Eucharist” helps children discover how we use the Prayer Book during Holy Eucharist. They will also learn how to find the Holy Eucharist services in the Prayer Book. (*Acts 20:7a*)

Session 5: “Each Congregation Celebrates Holy Communion” provides a chance for the children in the class to think about their own congregation's practices at Holy Communion and how their church celebrates the Great Thanksgiving. (*I Corinthians 10:17*)

Session 6: “Jesus' Disciples Prepare for the Passover” is about Maundy Thursday and Jesus' final meal with his disciples in the context of Passover week in Jerusalem. The children are introduced to Passover as an ancient sacred meal celebrating the Hebrews' deliverance from slavery in Egypt in the time of Moses. (*Luke 22:8*)

Session 7: “Jesus Was Arrested” takes us to the Garden of Gethsemane where Jesus and the disciples had gone after the Last Supper. Jesus asked them to pray, but they could not stay awake. At midnight, Judas betrayed Jesus, and Jesus was led away. (*Luke 22:39-62*)

Session 8: “Jesus Died and Rose Again” is designed to share the story of what happened from Good Friday through Easter Day. (*Luke 23:44-49; 24:1-12*)

Session 9: “Road to Emmaus” focuses on the story of two followers' journey on the road to Emmaus and their meeting the risen Lord. They did not recognize him until he broke bread as he had done at the first Eucharist. (*Luke 24:13-35*)

Yours in Christ,
Church School Teachers

EUCHARIST: PEOPLE IN COMMUNION

Session 1

Jesus' Last Supper with the Disciples

FOCUS

Following a meal with his disciples, Jesus shared bread and wine in a new way. The learners should be able to identify this event as the Last Supper and tell what Jesus said and did.

GETTING READY

The Holy Eucharist is the central act of worship for Christian people. Its origin and meaning are clearly stated in *The Book of Common Prayer*, p. 316:

“Beloved in the Lord: Our Savior Christ, on the night before he suffered, instituted the Sacrament of his Body and Blood as a sign and pledge of his love, for the continual remembrance of the sacrifice of his death, and for a spiritual sharing in his risen life. For in these holy Mysteries we are made one with Christ, and Christ with us; we are made one body in him, and members one of another.”

Introducing the Sacrament, Jesus gave this five-fold pattern of action:

- He took the bread . . . ;
- He blessed (gave thanks for) it;
- He broke it;
- He gave it to his disciples;
- He said, “Take, eat, this is my Body”

He did the same with the cup, saying, “This is my Blood”

Christians in their many traditions and liturgies have retained these actions and words with faithfulness and accuracy through the centuries. If Jesus' disciples were to visit us, they might be surprised in many ways by the development of Christianity in our culture. But they would know Christ's community by the presence of the cross and in receiving the bread and wine of Eucharist.

Four days after Jesus entered Jerusalem with his disciples (Palm Sunday), he gathered them in an upper room. There they celebrated the Jewish Passover feast, a special meal that commemorates God rescuing his people from slavery in Egypt. At the end of the meal Jesus took ceremonial bread and wine. He blessed them and gave them to his disciples to eat and drink as his body and blood. Jesus commanded them to celebrate this meal to remember him and to “proclaim the Lord's death until he comes.” (*I Corinthians 11:26*)

All baptized persons are welcome to partake of Holy Communion. Primary-age learners are observers and participants in the Eucharist.

Be present, be present, O Jesus, our great High Priest, as you were present with your disciples, and be known to us in the breaking of bread; who live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit, now and for ever.

Amen.

Before Receiving Communion

TEACHING TIP

The class members' experiences with Eucharist are likely to vary. As you begin this unit, be aware of the customs in your congregation. Be sensitive to class members who may not have received bread and wine at Holy Communion. If the learners do not attend Eucharist on a regular basis, you may wish to arrange for the class to attend a Eucharist at some time during the unit.

GATHERING

Beforehand, arrange a table set up for a meal. Include a cup or wine glass, olives, and a variety of breads, cheese, and grapes. As the learners arrive, invite them to inspect the table and share their observations.

At the Gathering for each session of this unit, use a Post Communion Prayer, *The Book of Common Prayer*, p. 365. Repeating the words of the prayer each week should enable the learners to become familiar with it and perhaps commit it to memory. (Poster No. 11 in the Teacher's Packet includes the words of the prayer.)

When all are gathered, say:

Eternal God, heavenly Father,
you have graciously accepted us as living members
of your Son our Savior Jesus Christ,
and you have fed us with spiritual food
in the Sacrament of his Body and Blood.
Send us now into the world in peace,
and grant us strength and courage
to love and serve you
with gladness and singleness of heart;
through Christ our Lord. Amen.

Post Communion Prayer, Holy Eucharist Rite II
The Book of Common Prayer, p. 365

STORYTELLING *(Time: 10 minutes)*

Open the Bible, show the learners where the passage is, and read aloud *Luke 22:19-20*:

“Then (Jesus) took a loaf of bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it and gave it to them, saying, ‘This is my body, which is given for you. Do this in remembrance of me.’ And he did the same with the cup after supper, saying, ‘This cup that is poured out for you is the new covenant in my blood.’”

Finish with these words: The word of the Lord.
Learners respond: Thanks be to God.

Draw on the following outline in telling the story. This session focuses on the meal and Jesus' words instituting the Eucharist.

1. Begin by speaking about the number of meals mentioned in the Bible. The people of God placed great value on celebrating with feasts and sacred meals.

2. If we look through the Gospels, we may be surprised by how many times we can find Jesus and his followers at meals together—sometimes alone but often at the invitation of others. Some examples: Zacchaeus' invitation to Jesus to eat at his home (*Luke 19:2*), the meal at Peter's house (*Mark 1:29-30*), the visit with Mary and Martha (*Luke 10:38-42*), and the occasion at the Pharisee's house where Jesus told his parable of the Great Banquet (*Luke 14:16-24*).

3. Four days after Jesus entered Jerusalem on Palm Sunday, he and his disciples ate supper together.

4. When it was time for them to eat, they reclined at a long table. We can imagine how it looked, with meat and cheese, olives and grapes, bread and wine, similar to the food displayed at the Gathering. They ate with their fingers.

5. It was good for the disciples to be together with their teacher. The city was filled with people, and the disciples were glad for a chance to get away in a quiet place, to be with Jesus.

6. Jesus took bread, blessed it, broke it, and shared it with the disciples. He said, "Do this in remembrance of me." Then he shared a cup of wine in the same way, saying, "This is a new covenant."

(Remind children to read at home about Jesus' Last Supper in the learners' book, *Christians Celebrate Eucharist*, chapter 1.)

CREATING (*Time: 15-20 minutes*)

Option 1. Mobiles

Photocopy the items provided on Poster No. 9 in the Teacher's Packet (one set for each learner). The children may color and trim the chalice (cup), the bread, and the four rectangles containing these words: *This is my body*; *This is my blood*; *Give thanks*; *The Lord's Supper*. Glue the pieces to lightweight cardboard cut to size. Punch holes where indicated. To the largest rectangle, *The Lord's Supper*, attach the other words and pictures, using string or yarn, to form a mobile.

Option 2. Last Supper Pictures

Show the learners several artists' interpretations of the Last Supper (such as Salvador Dali, Rembrandt, da Vinci, Watanabe, or others). Reproductions can be found in books or art prints. Provide drawing paper, crayons, chalk, watercolors, markers, pencils, charcoal, and other media. Invite the learners to create their own versions of the Last Supper.

EXPLORING THE STORY (*Time: 10-15 minutes*)

Option 1. Word Associations

Using the food items set up for the Gathering, invite the learners to play a word association game. Holding up one of the items, ask class members to name as many things as they can that the item can be used for. For example,

grapes could be used in jelly, juice, and raisins.

If real food is used in the game, share it with class members as a celebration at the end of the game.

Option 2. Puzzle, “Last Supper”

Use Puzzle Sheet III.1 titled “Last Supper.” Make copies for everyone in the class. Directions are given on the sheet.

This can be a class or small group activity, or learners may work independently.

Option 3. Bible and Prayer Book Search

Invite the learners to turn in their Bibles to find the words of Jesus at the Last Supper (*Luke 22:19-20*). Read the words aloud in unison. Then ask the class members to find the words of institution in *The Book of Common Prayer* (Rite I, p. 335; Rite II, p. 362). Which of Jesus' words are the same as in *Luke*? How do they differ?

TALKING IT OVER (*Time: 10-15 minutes*)

Talk with the learners about the custom of marking special occasions in our lives by having a meal with friends. Ask: What holidays do we celebrate by eating together? What are some of the special foods served at holiday times? What happens when the meal is ended?

Encourage the class members to recall times (other than holidays) when a meal celebrated a special occasion—such as a birthday, an anniversary, or a farewell party. Ask: Who was invited? What did people say?

Jesus shared a meal with his twelve disciples on Thursday night of Holy Week. Ask: Why do we call this meal “the Last Supper”? What happened there? Why do we remember it?

INQUIRING (*Time: 10-20 minutes*)

Invite the learners to join in a project to make a kind of bread that might have been shared in Jesus' time, especially among poor families. Use the following recipe (from *Living Bread*, by Christine Whitehorn Stugard; Forward Movement, 1983; p. 15):

- 3/4 cup whole-wheat flour
- 1/2 cup white flour
- 3/8 teaspoon baking soda
- 1 heaping tablespoon of shortening
- 3/8 teaspoon salt
- 3/8 cup cold water
- 1 1/2 tablespoons honey

Mix well the flours, soda, and salt (sifted well before measuring). Add shortening. Blend very well. Add water and honey. Knead for a good texture. Spread the dough into a pan, or roll it flat with a rolling pin and place it in a pan. The dough may be cut into wafers. Bake 10 to 12 minutes at 350 degrees. A toaster oven may be used in the classroom. (Makes enough for 15 people.)

IMAGINING *(Time: 10-20 minutes)*

Share a story starter: “As the disciples of Jesus gathered around the table in Jerusalem, they . . .” Invite the learners to use their imaginations and discuss how the story could continue. Ask questions like: What kinds of food were served? How would it feel to have a meal with Jesus? What would the disciples and Jesus talk about?

Individual response. The class members can write their own endings or draw pictures. Encourage them to express their own thoughts. Avoid giving the impression that there is a “right” way to end the story.

Group role play. The group can take part in a dramatization of the Last Supper. Simple costumes may be used.

MUSIC *(Time: 10-15 minutes)*

Introduce stanza 3 of “I come with joy to meet my Lord” (*The Hymnal 1982*, 304; *We Sing of God*, 51) by listening to it on the *Children Sing!* tape. If you wish, use these motions to accompany the words:

As Christ breaks bread (*make breaking motion with hands*)

and bids us share, (*open arms wide*)

each proud division ends. (*bring hands together in prayer*)

That love that made us makes us one, (*cross arms over chest*)

and strangers now are friends. (*reach out to shake hands with someone*)

CONTINUING ACTIVITY *(Time: 10-20 minutes)*

Chalice and Paten. Provide class members with clay and invite them to create a chalice (cup) and paten (plate) to be eucharistic vessels for the class. These can be made with simple clay coil construction or more elaborately with a potters' wheel. Arrange for the clay to dry, be painted, and fired over the next five weeks.

TAKE-HOME CARD

Card 19 has a picture of Jesus at the Last Supper, a Scripture verse, facts about the story, and a question to think about. Remind learners to add this card to their collection at home.

CLOSING

Conclude the session with the following prayer:

Give us grace to do your will in all that we undertake;

That our works may find favor in your sight.

Let us pray for our own needs and those of others.

(The learners may add their own petitions.)

In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

From The Prayers of the People, Form III

The Book of Common Prayer, p. 387

Stand in a circle and say:

Teacher: Go in peace to love and serve the Lord.

Learners: Thanks be to God.

TEACHER'S REFLECTION

What evidence did you gather that the learners have made a connection between Jesus' Last Supper and the Church's continuing celebration of the Eucharist? This theme will be repeated in coming sessions. Consider how you can strengthen their understanding.

LOOKING AHEAD

The focus of the next session is on the early Church's remembrance of the Last Supper. Think about how memories are kept alive through the generations. What special memory could you share with children?

EUCHARIST: PEOPLE IN COMMUNION

Session 2

**Christians Remember
the Last Supper**

FOCUS

In the early Church, Christians recalled Jesus' words at the Last Supper, "Do this in remembrance of me." Jesus shares bread and wine with us today just as he did with his disciples. The learners should be able to explain that Christians remember Jesus Christ at every Holy Eucharist just as he asked the disciples to do.

GETTING READY

Early Christians arranged their lives around the weekly celebration of the Eucharist on Sunday. (On weekdays, those who could do so gathered for simpler services of prayer and singing.)

These long-ago Eucharists began when the celebrant said, "The Lord be with you." Then came readings from the Old Testament, *Psalms*, and the New Testament. A reader stood at a wooden stand; the celebrant preached from a chair where all could see.

After the sermon, the people who were not yet baptized and confirmed as Christians left. Then the deacon led the rest of the community in prayers. The kiss of peace came next. A white cloth was placed on a small table, and gifts of bread and wine were presented. Some of these gifts were set aside to be given to the poor.

The prayer over the gifts apparently followed a fixed pattern in the early Church. Today's liturgies reflect the long history of various forms of the Great Thanksgiving. But one thing has remained the same: The Church understands that the celebration of Eucharist unites us with our Lord Jesus Christ; at every service we remember (call to mind) the whole life and ministry of Jesus, who died on the cross and gave himself for us, an offering and sacrifice to God.

When Jesus said, "Do this in remembrance of me" (*I Corinthians 11:26*) he meant more than thinking about what he said and did in the Last Supper. He meant a remembrance that brings an event or person out of the past into the present. By sharing the bread and wine in the Eucharist, the congregation is reliving the Last Supper in the present moment. We are not only thinking about Jesus' sharing the bread and wine; we are also taking part in it directly.

O Lord Jesus Christ, who in a wonderful Sacrament hast left unto us a memorial of thy passion: Grant us, we beseech thee, so to venerate the sacred mysteries of thy Body and Blood, that we may ever perceive within ourselves the fruit of thy redemption; who livest and reignest with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. *Amen.*

After Receiving Communion

The Book of Common Prayer, p. 834

TEACHING TIP

Art projects for primary-age learners are meant to invite creativity and individuality of expression. Because they generally have convictions about how things “ought” to look, they may need strong encouragement to experiment and strive for their own ways of drawing, painting, and molding scenes and objects. For example, it is important not to convey the idea that there is a “right” or “wrong” way to portray Jesus. Some drawings may resemble a person close and familiar to them rather than any of the images of Jesus that are more familiar to adults.

GATHERING

Display Poster No. 10 from the Teacher's Packet showing the words “Do this in remembrance of me” as they appear on a variety of objects and church furnishings. As the learners arrive, ask them to study the poster and discern what is similar among the pictured examples.

When everyone has arrived, gather and say:

Eternal God, heavenly Father,
you have graciously accepted us as living members
of your Son our Savior Jesus Christ, . . .

(Continue to the end, using Poster No. 11 from the Teacher's Packet.)

Post Communion Prayer, Holy Eucharist, Rite II
The Book of Common Prayer, p. 365

STORYTELLING *(Time: 10 minutes)*

Open the Bible, show the learners where the passage is, and read aloud *I Corinthians 11:23-26*:

“. . . the Lord Jesus on the night when he was betrayed took a loaf of bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it, and said, ‘This is my body that is for you. Do this in remembrance of me.’ In the same way he took the cup also, after supper, saying, ‘This cup is the new covenant in my blood. Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me.’ For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes.”

Finish with these words: The word of the Lord.

Learners respond: Thanks be to God.

1. This story is about early Christians gathering to remember what it was like when Jesus was with them.

2. After Jesus died and was raised from the dead, his friends recalled what he said at the Last Supper. He had said they should share the bread and the wine “in *remembrance* of him.”

3. The first Christians gathered often to remember Jesus in this way. They ate together, then shared the bread and wine. Always, they repeated Jesus' words to his disciples and celebrated his life, death, and resurrection.

4. They told the story of the Last Supper over and over again so that their children and their new friends would know about Jesus.

6. In the reading from the Bible (above), the apostle Paul is reminding his friends in the church at Corinth about what Jesus said at the Last Supper. He is also saying that as they participate in the breaking of the bread and drinking of the wine, they are keeping their hope in Jesus alive.

6. When we celebrate the Eucharist in our church, we are remembering all these things.

(Remind children to read at home about the way Christians remember Jesus during Eucharist in the learners' book, *Christians Celebrate Eucharist*, chapter 2.)

CREATING *(Time: 15-20 minutes)*

Option 1. Portraits of Jesus

Remind the class members that, in every generation, artists have pictured Jesus in many ways. (You may want to share examples from various cultures and periods.) Invite the learners to create their own portraits of Jesus as they think of him. Use pastels or crayons. Each “portrait” may be framed, using colored posterboard strips or strips of construction paper stapled at each corner.

Option 2. Memory Plaque

For each learner, make a photocopy of the 8-inch circle from Poster No. 9 in the Teacher's Packet, with the words “Do this in remembrance of me” around the border. The class members can glue the circles to heavier board or paper plates to form plaques for hanging. Invite them to produce pictures in the center of the circle (such as a chalice and paten, a Last Supper scene, or people receiving Holy Communion at a church). Supply pencils, crayons, and markers as needed.

EXPLORING THE STORY *(Time: 10-15 minutes)*

Option 1. Action Song

Ask the learners to stand and sing “Let us break bread together on our knees” (*The Hymnal 1982*, 325; *We Sing of God*, 53). This is an African-American spiritual that can be learned easily by all age groups. Add appropriate actions to accompany the words: breaking, drinking, kneeling, lifting hands in praise.

When the class members are familiar with the stanzas, divide into two groups. One group can sing “Let us break bread” (stanza 1), and the other group can echo, “Let us drink wine” (stanza 2). Everyone can join in stanza 3.

Option 2. Puzzle, “Remembering”

Use Puzzle Sheet III.2 titled “Remembering.” Make copies for everyone in the class. Directions are supplied on the sheet.

This can be a class or small group activity, or learners may work independently.

Option 3. Finding Jesus' Words

Ask the learners to turn in their Bibles to the apostle Paul's account of the

Last Supper, in *I Corinthians 11:23-26*. Challenge them to find both instances of the words “in remembrance of me” (verses 24 and 25). Suggest that class members may want to copy the parts of the two verses that are quotations from Jesus. (They may work in pairs or as individuals.)

TALKING IT OVER *(Time: 10-15 minutes)*

Focus on the word “remembering.” Some things we remember only a little while. Ask: What are some of these kinds of remembering? (Examples: what we wore last Monday morning; what we ate three days ago.)

But we have other important memories—things we will never forget. Invite the learners to name some of these from their own lives. (Examples: our birthdates; our first teachers; special songs and who taught them to us.)

When Jesus shared the bread and the wine with his disciples at the Last Supper, he asked them to remember him always. Ever since the death and resurrection of Jesus, Christians have remembered him at the Holy Eucharist. We never forget who he was and what he did. Ask: What do we do at the Eucharist that helps us to remember? What are some of the things we say? In what ways are we like the first disciples?

INQUIRING *(Time: 10-20 minutes)*

Invite someone to the class who has been a member of your church since childhood. A learner's grandparents would be wonderful. Ask them to tell a story about what it was like in church when they were a child. Also ask them to describe their memories of hearing the story of Jesus and the Last Supper and of receiving Holy Communion for the first time.

IMAGINING *(Time: 10-20 minutes)*

Share a story starter: “At church, when we gather to celebrate the Eucharist, we remember . . .” Invite the learners to use their imaginations and discuss how the story could continue. Ask: If someone came to your church who had never been to Holy Communion before, how would you explain what we do? Why do we have this meal together?

Individual response. The class members can write their own endings or draw pictures. Encourage them to express their own thoughts. Avoid giving the impression that there is a “right” way to end the story.

Group role play. As teacher, take on the part of a person who knows very little about the Last Supper and Holy Eucharist. Ask the class members to help you learn the story and its meaning by playing various roles (Jesus and his disciples, present-day priests and deacons, and others). You may need to ask leading questions, such as: What happened at the Last Supper? What did Jesus say to his disciples? What do you say and do at Holy Communion in your church?

MUSIC *(Time: 10-15 minutes)*

Sing “I come with joy to meet my Lord” (*The Hymnal 1982*, 304; *We Sing of God*, 51) with the *Children Sing!* tape. Point out that stanzas 1, 2, and 3 describe our act of remembering Jesus at Eucharist; we are brought together by our common memory.

CONTINUING ACTIVITY *(Time: 10-20 minutes)*

Chalice and Paten. If the learners worked on making a chalice and paten out of clay at the previous session, continue the project. Some may still be working on the clay form while others are ready to sand and clean their artwork. See Session 1 for a description of this ongoing project.

TAKE-HOME CARD

Card 20 has a paten and chalice, a Scripture verse, facts about the story, and a question to think about. Remind learners to add this card to their collection at home.

CLOSING

Conclude the session with the following prayer:

Give us grace to do your will in all that we undertake;
That our works may find favor in your sight.
Let us pray for our own needs and those of others.
(The learners may add their own petitions.)
In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

From *The Prayers of the People, Form III*
The Book of Common Prayer, p. 387

Stand in a circle and say:

Teacher: Go in peace to love and serve the Lord.
Learners: Thanks be to God.

TEACHER'S REFLECTION

How well do the learners grasp the concept of the Eucharist as an act of remembering the presence of Jesus Christ? In this session, were they able to link the Last Supper with our celebrations of Eucharist in the Church today?

LOOKING AHEAD

The next session will focus on the Holy Eucharist as one of the two great sacraments of the Church and examine the parts of the celebration. Read over the Liturgy of Holy Communion in *The Book of Common Prayer* as preparation.

EUCHARIST: PEOPLE IN COMMUNION

Session 3

People Celebrate the Eucharist

FOCUS

We call the church's sacred meal “Holy Eucharist,” and we pray the “Great Thanksgiving” each time we gather for Communion. The Eucharist is one of the two principal Christian sacraments. The learners should be able to say that Holy Eucharist is a sacrament and describe how it is celebrated.

GETTING READY

“Holy” is a very important word for Christians. It means “set apart and called sacred.” We speak of God as holy. And we say together our belief in “one holy catholic and apostolic Church.” The Church understands its worship and liturgy to be holy (sacred) acts by the people of God. Chief among these acts are the sacraments we celebrate.

Holy Baptism and Holy Eucharist are the two great sacraments Jesus himself instituted for all persons he calls into the community of faith. Baptism happens only once for each of us, but we take part in the Eucharist again and again.

The catechism in *The Book of Common Prayer* says that Holy Eucharist is “the sacrament commanded by Christ for the continual remembrance of his life, death, and resurrection, until his coming again.

The Celebrant (a priest) presides at the Holy Table (altar)—leading the prayer we call the Great Thanksgiving and laying hands on the paten and the chalice. Here, the gifts of bread and wine are sanctified by the Holy Spirit “to be . . . the Body and Blood” of Jesus Christ, “the holy food and drink of new and unending life in him.”

We call what happens at the Eucharist “holy mysteries.” The sacrament itself is a very precious gift from God. No one can explain all that it means; we can only take part with gratitude and faith. Our participation assures us that we are “living members” of the Body of Christ.

God our Father, whose Son our Lord Jesus Christ in a wonderful Sacrament has left us a memorial of his passion: Grant us so to venerate the sacred mysteries of his Body and Blood, that we may ever perceive within ourselves the fruit of his redemption; who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. *Amen.*

Of the Holy Eucharist

The Book of Common Prayer, p. 252

TEACHING TIP

Primary-age children enjoy making things. This session includes opportunities for projects. The children also enjoy entering into conversations. They like to talk with one another as well as with their teacher. Group projects are a natural place for such interaction to occur. Look for ways to continue discussing the session themes while the children work.

GATHERING

Ahead of time, arrange a table in the room as if it were an altar. Use a white cloth, candles, a chalice, and a loaf of bread on a plate. As the learners arrive, invite them to look at the table and share comments or questions.

When everyone has arrived, gather and say:

Eternal God, heavenly Father,
you have graciously accepted us as living members
of your Son our Savior Jesus Christ, . . .

(Continue to the end, using Poster No. 11 from the Teacher's Packet.)

Post Communion Prayer, Holy Eucharist, Rite II
The Book of Common Prayer, p. 365

STORYTELLING (Time: 10 minutes)

Open *The Book of Common Prayer* to page 368-369 and read aloud:

“Therefore, according to his command, O Father,
We remember his death,
We proclaim his resurrection,
We await his coming in glory;
And we offer our sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving to you, O Lord of all; presenting to you, from your creation, this bread and this wine.”

1. Begin by introducing the word “sacred.” We use this word to describe something that has been made holy. When the Church arranges a special setting for worship, we call it “sacred time and space.” (Speak about the sanctuary of your own church, which has been set apart with prayers to be a holy space for the people as they praise God.)

2. Next, share the word “sacrament.” Two sacraments have been celebrated by the Church from the very beginning: Holy Baptism and Holy Eucharist. (In baptism, ordinary water is made sacred and holy. In Eucharist, ordinary bread and wine are made sacred and holy.)

3. When we come together to celebrate the Eucharist, we are doing what Jesus asked us to do. As we break bread and drink wine in remembrance of him, we are joining in a holy and sacred relationship with God.

4. Tell the story of how your own church celebrates the Eucharist. You may want to use props, such as a chalice and paten, as you describe the celebration.

(Remind the children to read at home about the celebration of Holy Eucharist in the learners' book, *Christians Celebrate Eucharist*, chapter 3.)

CREATING (Time: 15-20 minutes)

Option 1. Memorial Acclamation

Demonstrate how to divide into thirds a 9 x 12-inch piece of manila paper or white drawing paper. In the first section, ask the learners to draw a symbol/picture representing “Christ has died”; in the second, “Christ is

risen”; and in the third, “Christ will come again.” The teacher or learners may print the sentences in the appropriate sections.

Option 2. Chalice and Paten Mosaics

Cut old greeting cards (particularly ones with gold, silver, or foil pictures) into very small squares. Provide each learner with a sheet of construction paper and a pile of the colored bits. Invite the class members to create a chalice and paten in a mosaic pattern, by gluing the small squares to construction paper.

EXPLORING THE STORY (*Time: 10-15 minutes*)

Option 1. Game, “Sacrament Pictures”

Use the twelve picture cards (chalice, bread, stole, cross, Prayer Book, veil, chasuble, candles, flagon, paten, kneeler, altar) on Poster No. 13 in the Teacher's Packet to make four sets of playing cards. Mount the cards on posterboard for easy use. Invite the learners to use the cards for a memory game. Place all cards face down on a flat surface. The first player turns over two cards in search of a match. If these cards do not match, turn them face down again. Other players take turns turning up pairs of cards. When two cards are matched, they are removed from the game area. The game continues in this manner until all matched pairs are uncovered.

Option 2. Puzzle, “Sacrament”

Use Puzzle Sheet III.3 titled “Sacrament.” Make copies for everyone in the class. Directions are given on the sheet.

This can be a class or small group activity, or learners may work independently.

Option 3. Prayer Book Skill

Assist the learners in locating two or more forms of The Great Thanksgiving in *The Book of Common Prayer*. (Rite I, Prayer I, and Rite II, Prayer C, make a good contrast.) Ask the group to compare the two forms, looking for the phrases that refer to God the Creator, the coming of Jesus, the crucifixion, death, resurrection, and ascension. Locate the words used by Jesus at the Last Supper.

TALKING IT OVER (*Time: 10-15 minutes*)

Talk about different ways the Eucharist is celebrated at your church. Include your experiences in other churches. Invite the learners to contribute any experiences they may have had in other churches. What is the same in all of the celebrations?

INQUIRING (*Time: 10-20 minutes*)

Invite a member of the altar guild, a chalice bearer, or clergy to explain to the class members how the bread and wine are prepared and cared for in your church—both before and after the service. Ask questions like: How do people receive the bread and wine? What are some of the different ways?

Why is it important to eat the bread at the time it is received? What happens to the bread and wine that are left after everyone has received? Why?

IMAGINING *(Time: 10-20 minutes)*

Share a story starter: “One day a friend asked me what Holy Communion is. I said” Invite the learners to use their imaginations and discuss how the story could continue. How would you describe the word sacrament? How would you explain about Holy Baptism and Holy Eucharist? What would you tell them about receiving Eucharist? What would you tell your friend about why we celebrate Eucharist?

Individual response. The class members can write their own endings or draw pictures. Encourage them to express their own thoughts. Avoid giving the impression that there is a “right” way to end the story.

Group role play. The group can take part in a role play of an interaction with a friend who asks questions about our worship. Simple costumes and props may be used if they are available.

MUSIC *(Time: 10-15 minutes)*

Listen to “I come with joy to meet my Lord” (*The Hymnal 1982*, 304; *We Sing of God*, 51) on the *Children Sing!* tape. Sing stanzas 1-3 again. Add rhythm instruments. Perhaps some learners may wish to use hand motions (see Session 1) while others play the instruments.

CONTINUING ACTIVITY *(Time: 10-20 minutes)*

Chalice and Paten. If the learners have been working on making a chalice and paten out of clay, continue the project. Some learners may be ready to paint their artwork. See Session 1 for a description of the ongoing project.

TAKE-HOME CARD

Card 21 has a picture of people celebrating the Eucharist, a Scripture verse, facts about the story, and a question to think about. Remind learners to add this card to their collection at home.

CLOSING

Conclude the session with the following prayer:

Give us grace to do your will in all that we undertake;
That our works may find favor in your sight.
Let us pray for our own needs and those of others.
(The learners may add their own petitions.)
In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

From The Prayers of the People, Form III
The Book of Common Prayer, p. 387

Stand in a circle and say:

Teacher: Go in peace to love and serve the Lord.
Learners: Thanks be to God.

TEACHER'S REFLECTION

Did the learners appear to understand the definition of sacrament? In what ways were they able to express their own feelings about the sacrament of Eucharist? Listen to the class members as they struggle to put into words what they know intuitively.

LOOKING AHEAD

In the next session, the learners will focus on the Word of the Lord in the celebration of the Eucharist. Spend some time looking at the various forms of Eucharistic prayers used in the Prayer Book.

EUCHARIST: PEOPLE IN COMMUNION

Session 4

*We Use The Book of
Common Prayer at
Holy Eucharist*

FOCUS

To help us celebrate Holy Eucharist as a community, the Episcopal Church has *The Book of Common Prayer*, which contains the service. We can follow the service because the words are printed for us. The learners should be able to locate the Holy Eucharist in the Prayer Book.

GETTING READY

Holy Eucharist is the name for the Church's act of worship that includes the liturgy of the Word and celebration of Holy Communion.

The liturgy of the Word of God begins with an opening acclamation, hymns and collects (prayers that reflect the theme for the day).

Lessons in the liturgy of the Word are read from the Old Testament, *The Psalms*, and the New Testament. A reading from the Gospels is always included. Passages are assigned by the lectionary, a schedule of Bible texts appointed for use throughout the year. A sermon follows the reading of Scripture. It tells the story of God's acts of salvation and calls for people to respond in faith and action.

The congregation responds to the proclamation of God's Word by reciting a creed, saying prayers, and confessing sins. The Nicene Creed is always used in the Eucharist because it is a community statement of what "we believe." The Prayers of the People include prayers for the Church, nation, local community, people who are suffering, and those who have died. The Confession of Sin guides the congregation in recalling personal sins and social ills.

The second half of the eucharistic liturgy is Holy Communion. It is preceded by an offertory, in which the congregation brings bread, wine, money, or other gifts to the altar. Our gifts at the altar represent the gift of ourselves to God.

The Great Thanksgiving is the heart of Holy Communion and summarizes God's work in Jesus Christ. It recalls the night Jesus celebrated the Last Supper and was betrayed, and remembers his death and resurrection. It invites the congregation to participate in those events, and asks God to fill each participant with the Holy Spirit. The Eucharist comes to a climax with the breaking of the bread before the bread and wine are shared with the people.

The Holy Eucharist concludes with a prayer asking God to "send us into the world" to love and serve God in peace and joy.

Lord, we pray that your grace may always precede and follow us, that we may continually be given to good works; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. *Amen.*

Proper 23

The Book of Common Prayer, p. 234

TEACHING TIP

Talking about the Liturgy of the Word and the Great Thanksgiving is an opportunity for teachers to encourage Bible reading and prayer at home. The letter to parents at the beginning of this unit suggests several ways they can interact with their learner at home. Remind class members to talk about the Take-Home Cards and information in the learner books at home.

GATHERING

Ahead of time, prepare a display of Prayer Books (varying in size, print, covers, and dates of publication). Add some church bulletins and possibly some children's service booklets. As the learners arrive, encourage discussion about the items on display.

When everyone is present, gather and say:

Eternal God, heavenly Father,
you have graciously accepted us as living members
of your Son our Savior Jesus Christ, . . .

(Continue to the end, using Poster No. 11 from the Teacher's Packet.)

Post Communion Prayer, Holy Eucharist, Rite II
The Book of Common Prayer, p. 365

STORYTELLING *(Time: 10 minutes)*

Open the Bible and read aloud *Acts 20:7a*:

“On the first day of the week, when we met to break bread, Paul was holding a discussion with them . . .”

1. Christians gather on Sunday, the first day of the week, because Jesus rose from the dead on a Sunday.
2. When we gather, we hear God's Word through Scripture reading and prayer. Then we give God thanks through the “Great Thanksgiving.”
3. Choose the rite from *The Book of Common Prayer* used in your congregation. Open the Prayer Book to that page and show the learners the sections called Word of God, Holy Communion, and the Great Thanksgiving.
4. Explain that there are two parts of the service. In the first part, we hear the stories of Jesus and others in the Bible. Share your favorite Gospel story with the learners. Then tell them that in the second part we give thanks to God for all that God has done for us through Jesus. We do this by celebrating the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus and by sharing in the Last Supper.

(Remind the children to read at home about how books of prayer have been important in the celebration of Eucharist in the learners' book, *Christians Celebrate Eucharist*, chapter 4.)

CREATING *(Time: 15-20 minutes)*

Option 1. Hearing the Word

Ask the learners to remember what it is like to listen to the Bible being read aloud in church. Who does the reading? Where does this person stand? Provide class members with paper and crayons and ask them to draw their version of the scene.

Option 2. Listening to the Story

Provide learners with crayons, markers, or watercolors and white drawing paper. Read aloud a Bible story of your choice and ask class members to draw or paint what they hear.

EXPLORING THE STORY *(Time: 10-15 minutes)*

Option 1. Pantomime

Using the Gospel story you shared in the Storytelling, invite the learners to retell the story using actions only, with no sounds or words. Divide the class into small groups and allow them a few minutes to develop their plan. As each team takes a turn, the rest “listen” with their eyes.

Option 2. Puzzle, “Search for Words from the Eucharist”

Use Puzzle Sheet III.4 titled “Search for Words from the Eucharist.” Make copies for everyone in the class. Directions are given on the sheet.

This can be a class or small group activity, or learners may work independently.

Option 3. Prayer Book Search

Invite the learners to find the service for The Holy Eucharist in *The Book of Common Prayer*. Turn to the Rite(s) commonly used in your congregation. As a group, read through the service—pointing out the various parts and reviewing appropriate postures (sitting, standing, kneeling). Find the Collect of the Day, select a form of the Prayers of the People, and point out the Prefaces.

On a chalkboard or newsprint, write the following words: The Holy Eucharist, The Word of God, The Holy Communion, The Great Thanksgiving. Divide the class into teams, and ask them to find the printed words on the chalkboard as many times as they can in the Prayer Book.

TALKING IT OVER *(Time: 10-15 minutes)*

Discuss how people listen to the Word of God in different ways. What if you couldn't hear? How could you “listen” to the Word of God and the prayers? How might a musician present the Word of God? How do you like to listen to the stories from the Bible? How do you listen to prayers from *The Book of Common Prayer*?

INQUIRING (Time: 10-20 minutes)

Visit your church's worship space to see where the Scripture is read. Take turns standing at this place to read Scripture or say the introductory words. Where do people kneel for prayer? Where do they receive the Eucharist?

IMAGINING (Time: 10-20 minutes)

Share a story starter: "A long time ago the people of God did not have books. When they went to church, they . . ." Invite the learners to use their imaginations and discuss how the story could continue. Ask: What would it be like if we had no Prayer Book? What would the people do? think about? Who would they pray for?

Individual response. The class members can write their own endings or draw pictures. Encourage them to express their own thoughts. Avoid giving the impression that there is a "right" way to end the story.

Group role play. The group can take part in a dramatization of what worship might have been like before Bibles and Prayer Books were available. Simple costumes may be used if they are available.

MUSIC (Time: 10-15 minutes)

Sing again "I come with joy to meet my Lord" (*The Hymnal 1982*, 304; *We Sing of God*, 51) with the *Children Sing!* tape. Introduce stanzas 4 and 5, indicating that as we come together to celebrate the Eucharist we share our joy with other Christians everywhere.

CONTINUING ACTIVITY (Time: 10-20 minutes)

Chalice and Paten. If the learners have been making their clay chalices and patens, continue the project. Some learners may be ready to paint or decorate their work. See Session 1 for a description of the ongoing project.

TAKE-HOME CARD

Card 22 has a picture of *The Book of Common Prayer* in a pew rack, a Scripture verse, facts about the story, and a question to think about. Remind learners to add this card to their collection at home.

CLOSING

Conclude the session with the following prayer:

Give us grace to do your will in all that we undertake;
That our works may find favor in your sight.

Let us pray for our own needs and those of others.

(*The learners may add their own petitions.*)

In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

From The Prayers of the People, Form III
The Book of Common Prayer, p. 387

Stand in a circle and say:

Teacher: Go in peace to love and serve the Lord.

Learners: Thanks be to God.

TEACHER'S REFLECTION

Are the learners able to find where the reading of Scripture and prayer occur in the celebration of the Eucharist in *The Book of Common Prayer*? What more can be done to encourage the class members to use the Prayer Book as they take part in worship?

LOOKING AHEAD

In the next session, the focus will be on the Great Thanksgiving portion of the celebration of the Eucharist and aspects of the service that are unique to your congregation. Recall other churches you may have attended and how their forms of worship were similar to or different from yours.

EUCHARIST: PEOPLE IN COMMUNION

Session 5

**Each Congregation
Celebrates Communion**

FOCUS

In every congregation, the Holy Communion or Great Thanksgiving are part of the celebration of Holy Eucharist. The learners should be able to share how their own church celebrates the Great Thanksgiving. Some learners may be able to offer comparisons with customs in other congregations where their families have been members or visitors.

GETTING READY

The Great Thanksgiving is a long prayer that forms the central part of The Holy Communion. It follows the liturgy of the Word when the congregation celebrates the Eucharist. There are eight forms of the Great Thanksgiving in *The Book of Common Prayer*. Some of the words come from the third century while others were written in recent times. The thanksgiving gives thanks to God, remembers the Last Supper, asks for the presence of the Holy Spirit, and intercedes in behalf of the Church.

The Great Thanksgiving begins with a dialogue between the celebrant (a priest or bishop) who says: “Lift up your hearts.” The congregation responds: “We lift them up to the Lord.”

The Great Thanksgiving continues by praising God for the many blessings we have received. It recalls God’s work through Jesus Christ in his life, death, resurrection, and ascension. Each Great Thanksgiving in the Prayer Book uses different words to summarize God’s acts throughout history.

All of the Great Thanksgivings use the words of Paul to celebrate the Eucharist. They recall the events of the Last Supper when, on the night of his betrayal, Jesus took bread and broke it saying, “This is my body broken for you. Do this in remembrance of me.” (*I Corinthians 11:24*).

The celebrant continues by inviting the congregation to enter the mystery of the Eucharist and the events of Jesus’ Passion: his Last Supper, betrayal, crucifixion and resurrection.

Before the Lord’s Prayer, the celebrant prays for God to send the Holy Spirit upon the gifts of bread and wine. Sharing the elements unifies the participants and fills them with the Holy Spirit. The Great Thanksgiving concludes when the congregation affirms the words of the celebrant by saying “Amen.”

Almighty God, you sent your Son Jesus Christ to reconcile the world to yourself: We praise and bless you for those whom you have sent in the power of the Spirit to preach the Gospel to all nations. We thank you that in all parts of the earth a community of love has been gathered together by their prayers and labors, and that in every place your servants call upon your Name; for the kingdom and the power and the glory are yours for ever. *Amen.*

For the Mission of the Church
The Book of Common Prayer, p. 838

TEACHING TIP

As children learn to participate in corporate worship, they benefit from opportunities to practice behaviors and responses expected of everyone during the liturgy. Provide opportunities for this to happen in your church. See Inquiring (below) for a detailed suggestion of how to do this. If this activity cannot be arranged during the church school time, consider arranging it for another day.

GATHERING

Before class, place a large blank sheet of paper on a table or wall. As learners arrive, invite them to draw pictures of anything that they are thankful for.

When everyone is present, gather and say:

Eternal God, heavenly Father,
you have graciously accepted us as living members
of your Son our Savior Jesus Christ, . . .

(Continue to the end, using Poster No. 11 from the Teacher's Packet.)

Post Communion Prayer, Holy Eucharist, Rite II
The Book of Common Prayer, p. 365

STORYTELLING *(Time: 10 minutes)*

Open the Bible, show the learners where the passage is, and read aloud *I Corinthians 10:17*:

“Because there is one bread, we who are many are one body, for we all partake of the one bread.”

Finish with these words: The word of the Lord.
Learners respond: Thanks be to God.

1. Begin by telling a story based on your own experience of the Great Thanksgiving or make up a story about a fictional person attending your church.

2. Describe the person's arrival at church, listening to the music, the processional, the opening prayers, and listening to the Bible read aloud.

3. Continue the story by describing the passing of the peace and how the offerings are collected.

4. Then tell about the Great Thanksgiving and how it tells of the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

5. Describe the blessing of the bread and the wine and the lifting up of the gifts of God. Add details about your congregation's traditions during this part of the service.

(Remind children to read at home about how churches are different in the learners' book, *Christians Celebrate Eucharist*, chapter 5.)

CREATING *(Time: 15-20 minutes)*

Option 1. Eucharist Picture

Invite the learners to use crayons and construction paper to produce their own pictures of your congregation during Holy Communion. Discuss some of the furnishings that might be in the picture, what the priest and others would wear, and where people would be. Remind learners to include themselves in the picture.

Option 2. Eucharist Collage

Gather a supply of materials for collage-making, such as scraps of fabric that suggest Eucharistic vestments, altar hangings, and banners; gold-painted pieces of wood for crosses and candlesticks (toothpicks, flat sticks); pieces of paper and foil (white, gold, and silver); and purple yarn, markers, or watercolors to suggest wine. Give each learner a sheet of sturdy paper, and provide glue. Invite the class members to create collages depicting aspects of a celebration of Holy Communion.

EXPLORING THE STORY *(Time: 10-15 minutes)*

Option 1. Card Game

Add to the cards made for the sacramental picture game in Session 3 of this unit. (For instructions for making the cards, see Exploring the Story, p. 125.) New cards could include words or pictures of the Communion service, such as “Word of the Lord,” a Bible, a collection plate, or “Great Thanksgiving.” Use all of the cards in a memory game. Place all cards face down on a flat surface. The first player turns over two cards in search of a match. If these cards do not match, turn them face down again. Other players take turns turning up pairs of cards. When two cards are matched, they are removed from the game. The game continues until all pairs are uncovered.

Option 2. Puzzle, “Celebrating Eucharist”

Use Puzzle Sheet III.5 titled “Celebrating Eucharist.” Make copies for everyone in the class. Directions are given on the sheet.

This can be a class or small group activity, or learners may work independently.

Option 3. Prayer Book Study

Ask the learners to turn, in *The Book of Common Prayer*, to the different Rites for the celebration of Holy Eucharist: **Rite I**, Eucharistic Prayer I (p. 333) and Prayer II (p. 340); **Rite II**, Eucharistic Prayer A (p. 361), Prayer B (p. 367), Prayer C (p. 369), and Prayer D (p. 372).

Encourage the class members to find in the prayers one or more lines that are the same and one or more lines that are different. They may work alone or in teams.

TALKING IT OVER *(Time: 10-15 minutes)*

Talk with the learners about the specific way your own congregation celebrates Holy Eucharist. Lead the learners in a description of the elements of the service. Use questions like: How does the service begin? (Prelude, procession or other form of entrance.) What are the first spoken words? By whom?

Talk about the lessons from Scripture. Who reads them? Where do the readers stand? Is a psalm included? When?

How is the Creed shared? How does the congregation pass the Peace? How is the Offering received? Who presents the Oblations (the bread and the wine)? How do the people receive Holy Communion? (Individually? together in groups? in other ways?)

How does the service end?

INQUIRING (*Time: 10-20 minutes*)

Arrange to take the class members to the nave of your church, or to a chapel. Lead a simple “walk-through” of the Service of Holy Eucharist, with the learners taking part in a procession; standing where lectors would stand; sitting, kneeling, and standing at appropriate times; going to receive Holy Communion; concluding the service. Make clear that you are following the specific customs of your own congregation.

IMAGINING (*Time: 10-20 minutes*)

Share a story starter: “My friend and I went to Holy Eucharist at my church. My friend had never been there before. I explained . . .” Invite the learners to use their imaginations and discuss how the story could continue. What would you want your friend to know? How could you help your friend to be comfortable in the service?

Individual response. The class members can write their own endings or draw pictures. Encourage them to express their own thoughts. Avoid giving the impression that there is a “right” way to end the story.

Group role play. The group can role play inviting a friend to visit their church for Holy Eucharist.

MUSIC (*Time: 10-15 minutes*)

Sing again “I come with joy to meet my Lord” (*The Hymnal 1982*, 304; *We Sing of God*, 51) with the *Children Sing!* tape.

CONTINUING ACTIVITY (*Time: 10-20 minutes*)

Chalice and Paten. Finish the chalice and paten the learners made from clay. Use the chalices and patens at an appropriate celebration of Holy Communion in your church or for the class. See Session 1 for a description of the ongoing project.

Plan ways to display and share the clay figures with parents and others in the congregation.

TAKE-HOME CARD

Card 23 has a picture of people celebrating Eucharist, a Scripture verse, facts about the story, and a question to think about. Remind learners to add this card to their collection at home.

CLOSING

Conclude the session with the following prayer:

Give us grace to do your will in all that we undertake;
That our works may find favor in your sight.

Let us pray for our own needs and those of others.

(The learners may add their own petitions.)

In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

From The Prayers of the People, Form III
The Book of Common Prayer, p. 387

Stand in a circle and say:

Teacher: Go in peace to love and serve the Lord.

Learners: Thanks be to God.

TEACHER'S REFLECTION

Are the learners able to describe accurately the way your congregation celebrates Holy Communion? Were some class members able to share worship customs in other churches? From your observations, are the class members prepared to participate in your church's celebrations? Consider what you can do to encourage their future involvement in the service.

LOOKING AHEAD

The next session shifts the unit's emphasis from the Service of Holy Eucharist to the events of Holy Week, beginning with Maundy Thursday. If possible, read or talk with friends about the celebration of the Passover in Jewish tradition. Make note of the preparations involved. Books are available in most public libraries.

EUCHARIST: PEOPLE IN COMMUNION

Session 6

Jesus' Disciples Prepare for the Passover

FOCUS

During Jesus' last week, he sent Peter and John to prepare for the Passover meal. They did so and were directed to the upper room of a house where the observance would occur. The learners should be able to explain what the "Passover meal" is and tell the story about the disciples' preparation for it.

GETTING READY

This is the first of four sessions about Holy Week. All are designed to be used during the Lent/Easter seasons.

At the service of Holy Communion the Celebrant breaks the consecrated bread and says, "Christ our Passover is sacrificed for us." These words suggest a connection between the Christian Eucharist and the Passover feast of Judaism. Both celebrations are rooted in specific events in history.

The Passover Feast marks the beginning of a seven-day festival that celebrates the Exodus of the Israelite slaves from Egypt. (*Exodus 6-15*) The name comes from the Exodus story. During the final plague God sent against Pharaoh, God destroyed the first-born of Egyptian families and "passed over" the Israelites. Pharaoh finally agreed to set God's people free.

Since that night, Jews have celebrated Passover annually with a special meal called a "seder." Symbolic foods, wine and prayers recall God's acts of deliverance and place the participants in the Exodus events. An important food in the Passover meal is "matzah", unleavened bread. Jews clean their homes of "hametz" (foods made with leaven) before the eve of Passover. In ancient times a slain lamb was roasted and eaten.

The Eucharist recalls the Last Supper, the sacrificial death of Jesus Christ, and his victory over sin and death on our behalf. The Last Supper was probably a Passover Seder where Jesus and his disciples ate unleavened bread and drank wine to remember the Exodus story.

Jesus is called "the Lamb of God." Just as in ancient times an unblemished lamb was slain for the Passover feast, Jesus as the Lamb of God died during Passover week on a cross outside Jerusalem.

Primary-age learners are unlikely to be ready to consider these parallels. But it is appropriate for the class members to focus on the story of preparations for Jesus' Last Supper in the season of Passover.

Dear friends in Christ: On this most holy night, in which our Lord Jesus passed over from death to life, the Church invites her members, dispersed throughout the world, to gather in vigil and prayer. For this is the Passover of the Lord, in which, by hearing his Word and celebrating his Sacraments, we share in his victory over death.

Easter Vigil

The Book of Common Prayer, p. 285

TEACHING TIP

This session, which touches on both the Christian observance of Maundy Thursday and the Jewish celebration of Passover, offers an opportunity to introduce learners to diverse faith groups. Primary-age children are developing their own sense of identity as Christians and Episcopalians. Be alert to ways in which you can encourage the class members to honor and respect the traditions of others.

GATHERING

Prepare a calendar line to represent eight days, Palm Sunday through Easter Day (Holy Week). Ahead of time, obtain eight sheets of construction paper to be placed on a display board, side by side in a row. Label the first through seventh sheets as follows: Palm Sunday, Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Maundy Thursday, Good Friday, and Holy Saturday. Label the eighth sheet Easter Day.

The sheet for Easter Day should be white. Check your congregation's liturgical customs in making your choice of colors for the other days. If you wish, add simple drawings or pictures to the sheets. Suggestions: palm branch, jar of perfume, table turned over surrounded by scattered coins, a money pouch, table, crown of thorns, tomb, sunrise. Poster No. 12 includes pictures for Maundy Thursday, Good Friday, and Easter that could also be used on the sheets for these days.

This calendar line will be used in Sessions 6-9 of this unit.

As the learners arrive for this session, focus their attention on the calendar days of Palm Sunday up to Maundy Thursday.

When everyone is present, gather and say:

Eternal God, heavenly Father,
you have graciously accepted us as living members
of your Son our Savior Jesus Christ, . . .

(Continue to the end, using Poster No. 11 from the Teacher's Packet.)

Post Communion Prayer, Holy Eucharist, Rite II
The Book of Common Prayer, p. 365

STORYTELLING *(Time: 10 minutes)*

Open the Bible, show the learners where the passage is, and read aloud *Luke 22:8*:

“So Jesus sent Peter and John, saying, ‘Go and prepare the passover for us, that we may eat it.’”

Finish with these words: The word of the Lord.
Learners respond: Thanks be to God.

1. Begin by pointing out to the learners that this session will be the first in a series on the events of Holy Week. Holy Week begins with Palm Sunday and continues through Maundy Thursday, Good Friday, and the celebration

of Easter.

2. On Palm Sunday, Jesus entered Jerusalem in triumph among cheering crowds waving palm branches. On Monday, Mary anointed Jesus' feet; on Tuesday, Jesus entered the temple and chased away the money changers; and on Wednesday, Judas made a deal with the temple priests to betray Jesus.

3. On Maundy Thursday Jesus celebrated a Passover meal with his friends. Poster No. 12 in the Teacher's Packet includes a picture of this event.

4. Explain that the Passover meal is a tradition kept by the Jewish people. It is a celebration of the Exodus of the people of God from slavery in Egypt. Moses led the people out of that land, and they crossed the Red Sea. (The meal included roast lamb, unleavened bread, bitter herbs, and wine.)

5. Jesus sent his disciples, Peter and John, to prepare the Passover for the Twelve. They asked Jesus where they should go. Jesus said they would find a man carrying a jar of water. They were to follow him to a house, and to tell the owner that the Teacher wished to use a room for a Passover meal.

6. Peter and John did as they were told and found everything just as Jesus had said it would be. The owner of the house escorted them to a large furnished upper room.

(Remind the children that they can read at home about how Jesus taught us to love one another in the learners' book, *Christians Celebrate Eucharist*, chapter 6.)

CREATING *(Time: 15-20 minutes)*

Option 1. Upper Room Scene

From Poster No. 13 in the Teacher's Packet, make a photocopy for each student of a house, staircase, table, and figures of Jesus and disciples. Ask the learners to color these pieces and glue them in place to form an Upper Room scene. The class members may draw additional details.

Option 2. Passover Table

Supply enough salt dough for all class members. (See the recipe on Poster No. 13 in the Teacher's Packet.) Invite the learners to create their own versions of a table set for a Passover meal. Suggest that unleavened bread (matzoh) and cups of wine should be included.

If you prefer, small boxes and pieces of cloth could be used for the tables.

EXPLORING THE STORY *(Time: 10-15 minutes)*

Option 1. Guessing Game, "Who/What Am I?"

Prepare game cards, using index-size cards or small pieces of paper on which are written names of people, actions, and elements from the Passover story, such as Jesus, man with a jar, John, Peter, owner of the house, Passover feast, cup of wine, unleavened bread. Place the cards in a bag.

To begin a guessing game, ask a volunteer to reach into the bag and take out a game card. Without saying what is on the card, the learner gives clues to the group so they can guess what is written on the card. (Limit the number

of clues; three is ideal.) Example: A volunteer gets a card that says “John.” The following clues might be given, one at a time: “I looked for a man with a jar of water. I went with Peter. I helped prepare the Passover meal.” The player pauses after each clue, asking: “Who am I?”

Continue until everyone has had a turn to play. Learners may work in pairs to select cards and give clues.

Option 2. Puzzle, “Passover”

Use Puzzle Sheet III.6 titled “Passover.” Make copies for everyone in the class. Directions are given on the sheet.

This can be a class or small group activity, or learners may work independently.

Option 3. Bible Search

Invite the learners to find and read *Exodus 13:3-10* in their Bibles. Ask: What did Moses say about observing the Passover meal? What were the Hebrew people remembering? Read the passage aloud together.

TALKING IT OVER (*Time: 10-15 minutes*)

Begin a conversation about the reasons for special celebrations. Ask, for instance, about our celebrations of days like Thanksgiving, Fourth of July, Memorial Day, and possibly other special times observed in your community. Ask, concerning each of these: What special event(s) are we celebrating? Why? What are we remembering on these occasions?

Today, Jewish people celebrate the Feast of the Passover every year. What are they remembering? (Describe the Hebrews' flight from slavery in Egypt.) This celebration has happened ever since the time of Moses.

Talk with the learners about Jesus' last week. He and his friends had gone to Jerusalem to celebrate the Passover. We call Jesus' last meal with his disciples The Last Supper. At each Eucharist we celebrate, we hear again the words Jesus spoke at this meal. Ask: What are we remembering at our celebration?

INQUIRING (*Time: 10-20 minutes*)

Provide unleavened bread (matzos), which is used in today's Passover observances. (It is available in many grocery stores.) Allow the class members to share in eating small portions. Explain the symbolism of this kind of bread; the Hebrews fled Egypt in great haste, and there was no time to wait for their bread to rise.

Consider introducing other symbols and elements of a Jewish passover celebration (Seder). Explain that the meal follows a specific order, with prescribed questions, responses, actions, and foods. Consult your local library, or talk with members of a Jewish community for accurate information. A good source is *The shalom seders: Three haggadahs*, compiled by New Jewish Agenda, Adama Books, New York, 1984.

IMAGINING *(Time: 10-20 minutes)*

Share a story starter: “Jesus asked Peter and John to prepare the Passover meal. So they . . .” Invite the learners to use their imaginations and discuss how the story could continue. Ask: What would they talk about as they walked along? What would they do? How would it feel to be sent ahead of the others?

Individual response. The class members can write their own endings or draw pictures. Encourage them to express their own thoughts. Avoid giving the impression that there is a “right” way to end the story.

Group role play. Act out the preparation for the Passover meal. Provide a jug for water, and cloth head pieces. Select volunteers to be John, Peter, Jesus, the man with the water jar, and the owner of the house. The role play can be repeated to give other class members an opportunity to take different parts.

MUSIC *(Time: 10-15 minutes)*

Introduce the African-American spiritual, “Were you there when they crucified my Lord?” (*The Hymnal 1982*, 172; *We Sing of God*, 32) by listening to it on the *Children Sing!* tape. Call attention to the hymn’s structure. Each stanza is a question, which is repeated after the common refrain.

CONTINUING ACTIVITY *(Time: 10-20 minutes)*

Accordion Display. Begin a project to describe and illustrate the events of Holy Week. Use half-size posterboard for the sections, and develop a portion at each of Sessions 6-9. The sections are to be taped together on the back so that they will stand on a table in accordion-style. Create original text and illustrations. The group may dictate written material to the teacher, or they may wish to write it themselves. A possible overall title for this project could be *Jesus’ Death and Resurrection*.

TAKE-HOME CARD

Card 24 has a Maundy Thursday scene, a Scripture verse, facts about the story, and a question to think about. Remind learners to add this card to their collection at home.

CLOSING

Conclude the session with the following prayer:

Give us grace to do your will in all that we undertake;
That our works may find favor in your sight.
Let us pray for our own needs and those of others.
(The learners may add their own petitions.)
In Jesus’ name we pray. Amen.

From The Prayers of the People, Form III
The Book of Common Prayer, p. 387

Stand in a circle and say:

Teacher: Go in peace to love and serve the Lord.

Learners: Thanks be to God.

TEACHER'S REFLECTION

Was it clear to the learners that Jesus and his disciples took part in a Passover meal, which had been a tradition since the Exodus many hundreds of years before? In coming sessions, as you continue to examine the events of Holy Week, refer to Maundy Thursday as a time of remembering Jesus' Last Supper.

LOOKING AHEAD

The next session focuses on Jesus' arrest in the Garden of Gethsemane. Read over one or more of the Gospel accounts of Jesus' betrayal. Reflect on this story's meaning for you.

EUCHARIST: PEOPLE IN COMMUNION

Session 7

Jesus Was Arrested

FOCUS

As Jesus left the meal with his disciples, he went to the Garden of Gethsemane, at the Mount of Olives. There he prayed earnestly, but the disciples fell asleep. Soon Jesus was arrested and led away. The learners should be able to tell the story of Jesus' time of prayer and his arrest.

GETTING READY

The arrest of Jesus in *Luke 23:39-53* is the focus of this session. The event occurs after Jesus and his disciples celebrated the Passover meal in Jerusalem. After the Last Supper he took his disciples to the Mount of Olives to pray, leaving Judas behind to carry out his betrayal.

Jesus urged his followers to pray with him through the night, but Luke says they were too saddened to stay awake. As Jesus prayed, a crowd appeared consisting of the chief priests, elders and temple police who had harassed him since his arrival in Jerusalem. They were led there by Judas who knew where Jesus was.

Jesus had not come to Jerusalem to die. He asked God to “remove this cup from me” (*Luke 23:42*) but offered no resistance to the arresting crowd. Judas betrayed Jesus with a kiss, a sign of affection. One disciple (John’s Gospel says it was Peter) sliced off the right ear of the chief priest’s slave. Jesus healed the slave and called for no more violence.

The arrest of Jesus launched a series of events that lead to his trial, crucifixion and resurrection. Primary learners are sensitive to the details of Jesus’ Passion. It is appropriate for the story to be shared in a straightforward way.

Gracious God, the comfort of all who sorrow, the strength of all who suffer: Let the cry of those in misery and need come to you, that they may find your mercy present with them in all their afflictions; and give us, we pray, the strength to serve them for the sake of him who suffered for us, your Son Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

Good Friday

The Book of Common Prayer, p. 279

TEACHING TIP

It is important that primary-age children be given ample opportunity to put themselves into the biblical story. They are not just passive listeners or receivers of information; they can be actively engaged with feelings and actions. That is especially the case in this session. While the focus is on Jesus, he is surrounded by very real people and circumstances. Help the class members to remember the names and roles of the important figures in the Good Friday events.

GATHERING

Use again the calendar line prepared for the previous session representing the eight days, Palm Sunday through Easter Day (Holy Week).

As the learners arrive for this session, focus their attention on the calendar days up through Good Friday. Note again the picture from Poster No. 12 in the Teacher's Packet for Maundy Thursday of the Last Supper.

When everyone is present, gather and say:

Eternal God, heavenly Father,
you have graciously accepted us as living members
of your Son our Savior Jesus Christ, . . .

(Continue to the end, using Poster No. 11 from the Teacher's Packet.)

Post Communion Prayer, Holy Eucharist, Rite II
The Book of Common Prayer, p. 365

STORYTELLING (*Time: 10 minutes*)

Open the Bible, show the learners where *Luke 22:39-62* is located, and read aloud verse 54a:

“Then they seized him and led him away, bringing him into the high priest's house.”

Finish with these words: The word of the Lord.
Learners respond: Thanks be to God.

1. Following the Last Supper, Jesus went with the disciples to the Mount of Olives. He told the disciples to pray. Then he went on a little farther alone, and knelt to pray.

2. Jesus struggled as he thought about the events that were to come. He prayed that God's will would be done.

3. When Jesus finished his prayer, he found his disciples sleeping. He awakened them and asked them why they slept. He asked them to continue to pray.

4. Suddenly, a crowd led by Judas approached him. (At some point, Judas had separated from Jesus and the disciples.) Judas came near to kiss Jesus, but Jesus said, “Judas, would you betray me with a kiss?” One of Jesus' followers struck a soldier with a sword, cutting off his right ear. Jesus commanded, “No more of this.” He touched the injured ear, and it was healed. Share the picture of Good Friday showing the betrayal of Judas on Poster No. 12 in the Teacher's Packet.

5. Jesus was arrested and led away to the high priest's house.

6. Peter followed and waited in a courtyard. He was asked three different times whether he knew Jesus. But all three times, Peter denied that he did.

7. Suddenly, Peter heard the cock crow. He realized he had done just what Jesus had predicted he would. He was filled with shame and wept bitterly.

(Remind the children to read at home about how Jesus suffered and died in the learners' book, *Christians Celebrate Eucharist*, chapter 7.)

CREATING *(Time: 15-20 minutes)*

Option 1. Garden Silhouette

Use the pattern provided on Poster No. 13 in the Teacher's Packet to prepare for each class member a silhouette of Jesus praying in the Garden. Use black paper for these. Give the learners sheets of blue construction paper, and invite them to use crayons or markers to create the garden scene, adding the outlines of plants, rocks, and the like. Stars and moon could be included. The silhouettes are to be glued to the completed background.

Option 2. Framed Prayer

From Poster No. 13 in the Teacher's Packet, make copies of the Collect for Good Friday (BCP, p. 221). Give one to each class member, and invite the group to mount the prayers on pieces of construction paper (preferably red). Appropriate designs, possibly crosses, may be used to create a border for the prayer. As the learners work, read the prayer aloud.

EXPLORING THE STORY *(Time: 10-15 minutes)*

Option 1. Good Friday Report

Invite a learner to act as a newspaper or television reporter. Offer props such as a pad and pencil or a microphone. Select other class members to play the parts of Jesus; Malchus, the soldier who lost his ear; Judas, Peter, and the other sleepy disciples; the guards. Encourage the “reporter” to interview the others about the evening's events.

Option 2. Puzzle, “Jesus Was Arrested”

Use Puzzle Sheet III.7 titled “Jesus Was Arrested.” Make copies for everyone in the class. Directions are given on the sheet.

This can be a class or small group activity, or learners may work independently.

Option 3. Prayer Book Search

Invite the learners to turn, in *The Book of Common Prayer*, to find references to Jesus' betrayal and arrest. (See especially Holy Eucharist, Rite I, Prayers I and II, pp. 334 and 342; Rite II, Prayer A, p. 362, and Prayer C, p. 371.) As the different forms are located, write them on a board for all to see and read aloud together.

TALKING IT OVER *(Time: 10-15 minutes)*

Talk with the learners about Jesus' prayer in the Garden of Gethsemane. He prayed that God's will would be done in the days ahead. Jesus meant he would accept whatever God wanted, even if that was not what he (Jesus) wanted.

Jesus taught us to pray the same way in the Lord's Prayer. Say the first few lines of the Lord's Prayer together, noting especially the words, “Thy (your) will be done on earth as it is in heaven.” Ask: What do we mean when we pray these words? What do we hope for? What times do you pray the

Lord's Prayer? When do you pray in your own words? When do you pray with others? When do you pray alone?

INQUIRING *(Time: 10-20 minutes)*

Invite a visitor to come to the class session in costume, to play the role of one of Jesus' disciples. Ask this "eye witness" to share the events of Jesus' last week—describing what happened on the night after the Last Supper (Jesus' prayer in the Garden, Judas' kiss of betrayal, the arrest by soldiers, and Peter's denial). Encourage the class members to ask questions.

Plan this time with care, to help the learners sense more completely the fast-moving action in those early hours of Good Friday.

IMAGINING *(Time: 10-20 minutes)*

Share a story starter: "Peter was alone and frightened in the courtyard. Jesus was under arrest. Peter . . ." Invite the learners to use their imaginations and discuss how the story could continue. Ask: Why was Peter frightened? What would he do? What did he think about?

Individual response. The class members can write their own endings or draw pictures. Encourage them to express their own thoughts. Avoid giving the impression that there is a "right" way to end the story.

Group role play. The group can take part in a dramatization of Peter's denial of Jesus. Simple costumes may be used if they are available.

MUSIC *(Time: 10-15 minutes)*

Sing again "Were you there when they crucified my Lord?" (*The Hymnal 1982*, 172; *We Sing of God*, 32) with the *Children Sing!* tape.

CONTINUING ACTIVITY *(Time: 10-20 minutes)*

Accordion Display. Prepare the second section of the display begun in Session 6. On a piece of posterboard, add text about Jesus' arrest in the Garden of Gethsemane, together with illustrations prepared by the learners. Tape the section to the previous one.

TAKE-HOME CARD

Card 25 has a Good Friday picture, a Scripture verse, facts about the story, and a question to think about. Remind learners to add this card to their collection at home.

CLOSING

Conclude the session with the following prayer:

Give us grace to do your will in all that we undertake;
That our works may find favor in your sight.
Let us pray for our own needs and those of others.
(The learners may add their own petitions.)
In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

From The Prayers of the People, Form III
The Book of Common Prayer, p. 387

Stand in a circle and say:

Teacher: Go in peace to love and serve the Lord.

Learners: Thanks be to God.

TEACHER'S REFLECTION

From your observations, were the learners able to enter into the story of Jesus' betrayal and arrest? What were their questions? How did they express their emotions? Take the class members' reactions into account as you prepare the coming sessions.

LOOKING AHEAD

The next session, designed to be used on Easter or the session following, is on the story of Jesus' death and resurrection. Reflect on the relationship between the Holy Week events and the prayers of Christ's people at Holy Eucharist. How does our Communion proclaim the good news of Easter?

EUCHARIST: PEOPLE IN COMMUNION

Session 8

Jesus Died and Rose Again

FOCUS

In Holy Week, we remember again all the details of Jesus' death on the cross, but always with thanksgiving for the good news that he was victorious over death and rose from the tomb. The learners should be able to retell in their own words the stories of Good Friday and Easter morning.

GETTING READY

The women who came to Jesus' tomb at dawn on Sunday morning were planning to anoint his body with spices. Tombs at that time were hewn out of rock caves and sealed with a large circular stone set in a groove. Bodies were wrapped in linen strips like bandages and laid on a shelf. The women were expecting to find the tomb closed and were puzzled to find it open and empty.

The women were terrified by a vision of two men in “dazzling apparel.” In *John* they are called angels. These messengers from God gently reprimanded Mary Magdalene, Mary the Mother of James, and Joanna for forgetting Jesus' promise that he would be crucified and raised again on the third day.

Without being told to do so, they ran from the empty tomb to tell the apostles the news that Jesus was raised from the dead. The word *Luke* uses to describe the women's communication to the disciples is a medical term for the senseless babbling of a person suffering from insanity. The disciples did not believe them. Only Peter went to the tomb to see for himself what had happened. He found it empty, filled only with Jesus' linen grave cloths.

Luke and other Gospel writers relate a number of resurrection appearances by Jesus to his disciples and other followers. The details of the Easter story differ among the four Gospels. But the most important detail is the same in all of them: the tomb is empty and Jesus is risen from the dead.

In this session, the primary-age learners learn about the contrast in moods from Good Friday to Easter morning. The focus is on the surprise and joy of this season.

But chiefly are we bound to praise you for the glorious resurrection of your Son Jesus Christ our Lord; for he is the true Paschal Lamb, who was sacrificed for us, and has taken away the sin of the world. By his death he has destroyed death, and by his rising to life again he has won for us everlasting life.

Preface for Easter, Holy Eucharist II
The Book of Common Prayer, p. 379

TEACHING TIP

Primary-age learners are able to cope with the reality of death in their own ways, which they may not be willing to share openly. They need to be protected from images that focus only on pain and dying. When approaching the death of Jesus, the children need to know the facts about his crucifixion.

But it is vitally important to connect Good Friday with the Resurrection. Put greater emphasis on the Easter event.

GATHERING

Create a “tomb” by covering a table with a large cloth. Allow the children to crawl into the darkness and experience emerging into the light.

When all are present, gather and say:

Eternal God, heavenly Father,
you have graciously accepted us as living members
of your Son our Savior Jesus Christ, . . .

(Continue to the end, using Poster No. 11 from the Teacher's Packet).

Post Communion Prayer, Holy Eucharist, Rite II
The Book of Common Prayer, p. 365

STORYTELLING (*Time: 10 minutes*)

Open the Bible and show the learners where to find *Luke 23:44-49; 24:1-12*. Read aloud *Luke 24:6-7*:

“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.”

Finish with these words: The word of the Lord.
Learners respond: Thanks be to God.

1. Jesus was sentenced to death at his trial. Early on Friday morning, he was led away to be nailed to a cross.

2. Between the sixth and ninth hours (from noon until three o'clock), darkness covered the land. The curtain of the temple was torn in half.

3. As Jesus died, he cried out to God, “Father, into your hands I commend my spirit!” He died. A centurion who witnessed the events praised God and said, “Certainly this man was innocent!”

4. Jesus' body was removed from the cross and was placed in a tomb provided by a man named Joseph of Arimathea.

5. Jesus' followers waited in great sorrow. The next day was the sabbath, and they had to rest according to custom.

6. At dawn the next morning (Sunday), women who had come with Jesus from Galilee (Mary Magdalene, Joanna, Mary the mother of James, and others), took spices and ointments to the tomb in the hope that they could prepare Jesus' body for burial.

7. When they arrived at the tomb, the stone at the entrance had been rolled away. Jesus was not there. (Add the Easter picture from Poster No. 12 in the Teacher's Packet to the eight-day calendar used at the Gathering.)

8. Two men in dazzling clothes appeared to the women, saying, “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.” (Luke 24:5-7)

9. The women ran to tell the disciples what they had seen.

(Remind the children to read at home the story of Jesus' resurrection in the learners' book, *Christians Celebrate Eucharist*, chapter 8.)

CREATING (Time: 15-20 minutes)

Option 1. Easter Crosses

Create Easter crosses from lightweight posterboard (about the thickness of a file folder). Cut two strips approximately 1.5 inches in width—one strip 8 inches long and the other 6 inches. Join the strips to form a cross, using either staples or fast-drying glue. Ask the learners to decorate the crosses with flowers and bright colors. Punch a hole in the top of each cross, and insert a 4-inch piece of yarn. Tie the yarn in a knot to create a loop for hanging.

Option 2. Symbols of the Resurrection

Before class, cut sponges into shapes of Easter symbols: egg, butterfly, and flowers. Place several layers of paper towel in the bottom of a pie tin. Pour a small amount of liquid tempera paint on the towel layers to create a stamp-pad. Repeat the procedure with several colors. Learners dip the sponges in the paint and stamp them onto white construction paper. Encourage each one to use all the shapes and colors.

EXPLORING THE STORY (Time: 10-15 minutes)

Option 1. Easter Tableaus

Divide the class members into four groups to prepare tableaus (characters posed to depict a scene without movement or sound). Assign the following scenes: a. a group grieving as the stone is rolled over the door of Jesus' tomb; b. women surprised by the empty tomb and the angel; c. women sharing the Easter news with the disciples; d. disciples turning away in disbelief. If there are more learners than characters, create other roles so that everyone can take part.

Each group will decide how to portray an assigned scene. The scenes are then presented in order.

Option 2. Puzzle, “Holy Week”

Use Puzzle Sheet III.8 titled “Holy Week.” Make copies for everyone in the class. Directions are given on the sheet.

This can be a class or small group activity, or learners may work independently.

Option 3. Bible Search

Invite the learners to find *Luke 23:44* through *24:11*, in their Bibles. On a chalkboard or newsprint, write the five excerpts printed below. (These are taken, in order, from *23:46*; *24:2*; *24:5*; *24:9*; and *24:11*. If your class members use another version of the Bible, revise these accordingly.)

- “Father, into your hands I commend my spirit!”
- They found the stone rolled away from the tomb,
- “Why do you look for the living among the dead?”
- and returning from the tomb, they told all this to the eleven
- and they did not believe them.

Direct the learners to search for the excerpts in their own Bibles. When one is found, ask the learner who located it to call out the verse number. Ask everyone to put a finger on the verse; the group may read aloud in unison.

TALKING IT OVER *(Time: 10-15 minutes)*

Invite the learners to share their impressions and feelings about the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. Begin with factual questions like: What happened on Good Friday? Holy Saturday? Easter morning? Who were the people in the story?

Ask: How did the centurion feel? Jesus' mother? the disciples? Joseph of Arimathea? the women at the tomb?

Finally, encourage the class members to share what they would have done or said if they had been there. Ask: How does it make you feel to hear the story of Jesus' death and resurrection?

INQUIRING *(Time: 10-20 minutes)*

Obtain a variety of seeds and bulbs. Ask the students to examine and identify them. Comment on their appearance. Ask: What would happen if they were left on a shelf permanently? What would happen if they were planted?

If possible, arrange to plant some grass seed and bulbs that will grow quickly and can be observed in coming days.

Encourage the learners to express, in their own words, the way in which seeds produce new life. The seed loses its present form in order to reappear in a new form that we call a living plant. The planting of a seed that grows can remind us of the good news of Easter; Jesus' death led to new life given by God at the resurrection.

IMAGINING *(Time: 10-20 minutes)*

Share a story starter: “In the early dawn, Mary Magdalene and the other women came to the tomb of Jesus. They . . .” Invite the learners to use their imaginations and discuss how the story could continue. Ask: Why were they coming to the tomb? What did they expect? What happened? How did they react?

Individual response. The class members can write their own endings or draw pictures. Encourage them to express their own thoughts. Avoid giving the impression that there is a “right” way to end the story.

Group role play. The group can take part in a dramatization of the women's discovery of the empty tomb. Simple costumes may be used if they are available.

MUSIC *(Time: 10-15 minutes)*

Sing “Now the green blade riseth from the buried grain” (*The Hymnal 1982*, 204; *We Sing of God*, 37) with the *Children Sing!* tape. The words of this Easter hymn compare the resurrection to the appearing of new life from planted seeds. (See *John 12:24* and *I Cor. 15:37*.) Read the words of all stanzas aloud.

If you wish, combine the use of the hymn with Inquiring (above).

CONTINUING ACTIVITY *(Time: 10-20 minutes)*

Accordion Display. Prepare the third section of this ongoing project. On a piece of posterboard, add text about Jesus' resurrection from the dead, together with illustrations prepared by the learners. Tape the section to the two that were done at previous sessions.

TAKE-HOME CARD

Card 26 has an Easter picture, a Scripture verse, facts about the story, and a question to think about. Remind learners to add this card to their collection at home.

CLOSING

Conclude the session with the following prayer:

Give us grace to do your will in all that we undertake;
That our works may find favor in your sight.
Let us pray for our own needs and those of others.
(The learners may add their own petitions.)
In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

From The Prayers of the People, Form III
The Book of Common Prayer, p. 387

Stand in a circle and say:

Teacher: Go in peace to love and serve the Lord.

Learners: Thanks be to God.

TEACHER'S REFLECTION

In response to the story and activities of this session, were the learners able to enter into the Easter story as it unfolds in the Gospel? What evidence do you notice that they sense the difference between the Church's celebration of Christ's resurrection and the worldview of Easter as a springtime festival (with bunnies, candy, and new clothes)?

LOOKING AHEAD

The final session of the unit is on the resurrection appearance on the road to Emmaus. This story presents the sharp contrast between discouragement and the surprise and delight of Jesus' living presence. Think of times in your own life when God's presence has lifted you from gloom or despair.

FOCUS

Jesus' followers were disconsolate after the crucifixion, and slow to take in the news of his resurrection. Cleopas and his companion, while traveling to Emmaus, had the incredible experience of meeting their risen Lord. They did not recognize him, but when he broke bread (as he had done at the first Eucharist), they knew who he was. The learners should be able to tell the story in their own way.

GETTING READY

Luke alone tells of Jesus' resurrection appearance to the men who were on the way to Emmaus. Theirs was an experience of spiritual vision and deep, inner conviction.

We can identify fully with the discouragement of the two followers as they made their way out of Jerusalem and walked westward along a well-traveled road. They were totally occupied by their own thoughts as they discussed the events of recent days. When joined by the risen Lord, they did not know him. He “interpreted to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning himself.” Still, they were unaware of his identity.

The eye-opening moment came at the end of the day when they stopped for supper. Jesus took the bread, broke it, and gave it to them. Their “eyes were opened,” and they knew Christ's presence. Just as he had been present with the Twelve at the Last Supper, he was with these followers.

Jesus vanished from the scene. But the men would never be the same. They said, “Did not our hearts burn within us while he opened to us the Scriptures?” Now they could look back and understand everything! They raced back to Jerusalem to share what had happened.

At every Holy Eucharist, the risen Christ is made known to us “in the breaking of bread.” We give thanks for so great a gift from God, a gift that changes our whole outlook on life. As primary-age children come to Holy Communion, they sense inwardly what they (and we) can never fully put into words.

O God, whose blessed Son made himself known to his disciples in the breaking of bread: Open the eyes of our faith, that we may behold him in all his redeeming work; who lives and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. *Amen.*

Wednesday in Easter Week
The Book of Common Prayer, p. 223

TEACHING TIP

Exposure to ghosts and ghost stories through television and movies is common for most learners. Jesus' resurrection appearances were not “ghost-like.” The risen Christ was not an apparition; he ate with his disciples and spoke with them in a normal way. As the post-resurrection appearances are shared with children, keep the focus on Jesus as a unique person, the Son of God.

EUCHARIST: PEOPLE IN COMMUNION

Session 9

Road to Emmaus

GATHERING

Display several items relating to the story. For traveling items include a pair of sandals, a backpack, or small suitcase. Also set out a chalice and a plate of bread. Ask learners to comment on the display. Ask: How are the items related?

When everyone is present, gather and say:

Eternal God, heavenly Father,
you have graciously accepted us as living members
of your Son our Savior Jesus Christ, . . .

(Continue to the end, using Poster No. 11 from the Teacher's Packet).

Post Communion Prayer, Holy Eucharist, Rite II
The Book of Common Prayer, p. 365

STORYTELLING (*Time: 10 minutes*)

Open the Bible, show the learners where *Luke 24:13-35* is located. Read aloud verse 30:

“When he was at the table with them, he took the bread and blessed, and broke it, and gave it to them.”

Finish with these words: The word of the Lord.

Learners respond: Thanks be to God.

1. On the day of Jesus' resurrection, two of Jesus' followers were traveling to a village named Emmaus, about seven miles from Jerusalem. They were talking with each other about all that had happened in the last few days.

2. As they were talking, the risen Jesus joined them. But they did not recognize him.

3. Jesus asked the men what they were talking about. One of the men, Cleopas, said, “Are you the only one who does not know what has happened?” They told about Jesus' arrest, trial, and death. They also said that they had hoped Jesus would be the Messiah for whom the people of God had waited so long.

4. The men also explained that some women had gone to the tomb of Jesus and could not find the body. They said that they, too, had found the tomb empty.

5. Then Jesus began to speak with the men about the Scriptures concerning the Christ (Messiah). As he explained, they drew near to Emmaus. The men invited Jesus to stay and have supper with them.

6. When they sat to eat together, Jesus took the bread and broke it—just as he had done at the Last Supper. At that moment, the men recognized their Lord! He then vanished from their sight. In realizing it had been Jesus who walked with them along the road, they knew he had risen from the dead. They returned immediately to tell the other disciples. Show the picture of Jesus breaking bread with the travelers in Emmaus on Poster No. 12 in the Teacher's Packet.

(Remind the children that they can read about the eucharist at Emmaus in

the learners' book, *Christians Celebrate Eucharist*, chapter 9.)

CREATING *(Time: 15-20 minutes)*

Option 1. Stained Glass Pictures

Provide each learner with a sheet of white paper and crayons. Invite the learners to create a stained glass window of a scene from the story of the Road to Emmaus. Follow a three-step process: Draw the outline of the window with a black crayon; create and color the picture using crayons; outline colored sections with black crayon, to suggest pieces of glass. Use a cotton ball dipped lightly in baby oil to rub the finished picture. The effect is translucent when the sheet is hung in a window.

Option 2. Emmaus Slides

Obtain write-on slides at a photography supply store. Ask the learners to use sharpened lead pencils to draw the events of Jesus' arrest, trial, death, resurrection, and his appearance on the road to Emmaus. Color may be added with water-based, fine-tip markers. When the slides are completed, present a slide show for the class or other groups. If slides are not available, use clear, acetate sheets and markers to create pictures for an overhead projector display.

EXPLORING THE STORY *(Time: 10-15 minutes)*

Option 1. Echo Pantomime

Ask the class members to stand in an area where they can move easily. As the teacher reads and demonstrates accompanying motions, the learners “echo” the movements (imitating the actions). Use the words of the Eucharist hymn, “I come with joy to meet my Lord” (*The Hymnal 1982*, 304), changing the order of the stanzas (3, 1, 2):

As Christ breaks bread (*make motion of breaking a loaf*)
and bids us share, (*open arms wide in sharing motion*)
each proud division ends. (*bring hands together in prayer*)
That love that made us makes us one, (*cross arms in front of chest*)
and strangers now are friends. (*reach out to take someone's hand*)

I come with joy to meet my Lord, (*extend right arm, then left arm*)
forgiven, loved, and free, (*hands clasped; arms crossed over chest;*
arms open wide)
in awe and wonder to recall (*raise arms above head*)
his life laid down for me. (*stretch out arms as if on a cross*)

I come with Christians far and near (*beckoning gesture; hand over*
brow to peer into distance)
to find, as all are fed, (*reverent eating of bread*)
the new community of love (*reaching out to touch another person*)
in Christ's communion bread. (*hold hands in circle*)

Option 2. Puzzle, “Road to Emmaus”

Use Puzzle Sheet III.9 titled “Road to Emmaus.” Make copies for everyone in the class. Directions are given on the sheet.

This can be a class or small group activity, or learners may work independently.

Option 3. Prayer Book Study

Ask the learners to work in teams on the following assignment: In *The Book of Common Prayer*, find the Collects for Easter Week and the six Sundays following (pp. 222-225). Which prayer appears twice? Which words in that prayer remind us of the story of the men on the road to Emmaus?

TALKING IT OVER (*Time: 10-15 minutes*)

Cleopas and his friend were so engrossed in their grief that they were not aware of the risen Christ's presence when he joined them on the road to Emmaus. Even after he began to speak to them, they did not recognize him.

Ask: Why did the men not recognize Jesus? How did Jesus try to help them know who he was? When did they finally see him?

When does Jesus break bread with us? In what other ways do we know that Jesus is with us? How do we recognize him?

INQUIRING (*Time: 10-20 minutes*)

Ask class members to look more closely at the picture on Poster No. 12 in the Teacher's Packet, “Supper at Emmaus,” by Da Caravaggio, that was displayed during the story.

Who are the people in the picture? What do they seem to be focused on? What could they be thinking? feeling? saying?

How is the table set? What is on it?

Explain that this is an artist's interpretation of the story of the men on the road to Emmaus. Ask: Is the picture before or after the men recognized Jesus? Why?

IMAGINING (*Time: 10-20 minutes*)

Share a story starter: “As I walked along the road with my friend Cleopas . . .” Invite the learners to use their imaginations and discuss how the story could continue. What would you be talking about? What do you think of the stranger who joins you? Why would you ask him to eat with you?

Individual response. The class members can write their own endings or draw pictures. Encourage them to express their own thoughts. Avoid giving the impression that there is a “right” way to end the story.

Group role play. The group can take part in acting out the story of the disciples on the road to Emmaus. Simple costumes may be used if they are available.

MUSIC (*Time: 10-15 minutes*)

Sing again, “Now the green blade riseth from the buried grain” (*The Hymnal 1982*, 204; *We Sing of God*, 37) with the *Children Sing!* tape. Focus the learners' attention on stanza 4, reminding them of the grief the disciples

on the road to Emmaus felt at the death of Jesus, and the joy they felt as they recognized him.

CONTINUING ACTIVITY *(Time: 10-20 minutes)*

Accordion Display. Prepare the fourth and final section of this project. On a piece of posterboard, add text about Christ's appearance on the road to Emmaus, together with illustrations prepared by the learners. Tape the section to the three completed in previous sessions.

Celebrate the end of the unit with a special party. Set up two locations to help the class members review the unit. Walk from Palm Sunday to a table set for a Passover meal (set out unleavened bread, such as matzo, and cups of grape juice). Walk along the road to Emmaus to the second table set to remember Jesus through the celebration of Holy Communion (cover the table with white cloth or paper; set out the clay patens and chalices class members made filled with cookies and juice). Give thanks and celebrate.

TAKE-HOME CARD

Card 27 has a picture of the Supper at Emmaus, a Scripture verse, facts about the story, and a question to think about. Remind learners to add this card to their collection at home.

CLOSING

Conclude the session with the following prayer:

Give us grace to do your will in all that we undertake;
That our works may find favor in your sight.

Let us pray for our own needs and those of others.

(The learners may add their own petitions.)

In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

From The Prayers of the People, Form III
The Book of Common Prayer, p. 387

Stand in a circle and say:

Teacher: Go in peace to love and serve the Lord.

Learners: Thanks be to God.

TEACHER'S REFLECTION

As the learners explored the story of the Emmaus Road experience, did they seem able to sense the contrast between the travelers' grief and disappointment at the beginning and their joy and excitement at the end? Did you notice evidence that the class members see a connection between the resurrection and the presence of Christ in the Eucharist?

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

Episcopal Children's Curriculum

Unit IV. THE CHURCH IN THE PRAYER BOOK

Dear Parents and Guardians,

In our Episcopal tradition, *The Book of Common Prayer* is an important liturgical and spiritual resource. With the Bible and the Hymnal, it helps us in our common worship. It includes a treasury of prayers that evolved through many centuries of Christian history.

We are a praying people who lift up our hearts to the Lord both as individuals and as the worshipping Body of Christ in the world. The promises we make in the Baptismal Covenant imply a prayerful lifestyle.

In this unit, first-, second-, and third-grade learners will be introduced to *The Book of Common Prayer* and helped to find their way through its pages.

We encourage you to talk about the sessions with your child. You can do this by reading together the learners' book, *The Church Prays*, which describes different ways and places we pray throughout the year. It includes selected prayers from *The Book of Common Prayer*, chosen from the sections explored in the sessions. We also encourage you to read the Scripture passages cited below with your child. The Take-Home Cards given to learners each week can be used in your discussions. These collectible cards, about the size of a postcard, can be displayed in a photo album, kept in a recipe box, or used in any way you find helpful.

The following descriptions offer an overview of the nine sessions in the unit:

Session 1: “Episcopalians Use *The Book of Common Prayer*” introduces the children to the Prayer Book. They will become more familiar with the sections of the Prayer Book and be invited to “take a journey” through the entire book. Learners will find out the role Thomas Cranmer played in writing the Prayer Book. It will be important for each learner to have a copy of the Prayer Book. (*Romans 15:30*)

Session 2: “The Church's People Pray All Through the Day” focuses on the Daily Office, or services of Morning Prayer, Noonday Prayer, Evening Prayer, and Compline. Learners will discover how the Daily Office was influenced by St. Benedict. (*Psalms 113:3*)

Session 3: “Praying for Others” is designed to introduce the children to the way the Prayer Book ministers to people at crucial moments in their lives, from birth to death. The children will discover the reasons we pray for people at special times in their lives. (*Psalms 23:6*)

Session 4: “Episcopal Services” is about people who are called by the Church for Holy Orders (bishops, priests, and deacons). Learners will hear the story of Bishop William White who shaped the Episcopal Church in the New World. (*Psalm 132:9*)

Session 5: “The Psalter” offers the children a chance to explore the Prayer Book's inclusion of the psalms from the Bible. Learners will learn about David, who, according to tradition, wrote many of the psalms. (*Psalm 117*)

Session 6: “Prayers and Thanksgivings” introduces a section of the Prayer Book that speaks directly to the children's everyday lives, such as mealtime graces, prayers for birthdays and travelers, and thanksgivings for every kind of blessing. (*Psalm 6:9*)

Session 7: “Seasons of the Church Year” introduces the children to the Church's Calendar, from Advent through Pentecost. The seasons help us remember the whole story of Jesus Christ. (*Ecclesiastes 3:1*)

Session 8: “The Calendar of Saints” gives children the opportunity to learn about the stories of the Saints, which will enrich the Christian journey. They will find out more about the Holy Days that commemorate special people in the Church. (*Revelation 22:21*)

Session 9: “The Church Celebrates Pentecost” is scheduled for use on or near Pentecost Sunday. It includes a review of the story of the Holy Spirit's descent upon the apostles from the second chapter of the *Acts of the Apostles*. (*Acts 2:32-33*)

Yours in Christ,
Church School Teachers

THE CHURCH IN THE PRAYER BOOK

Session 1

Episcopalians Use *The Book of Common Prayer*

FOCUS

The Book of Common Prayer provides us with forms and resources for praying together at appointed times, for celebrating sacraments and for personal meditation. It is part of the long history of the Church of England and the Episcopal Church. The learners should be able to say that the first Prayer Book was written long ago and is still part of our worship.

GETTING READY

Thomas Cranmer, scholar and Archbishop of Canterbury, was a leading figure in the English Reformation in the church in the 16th century. He is best known as the principal writer of the first English *Book of Common Prayer* (1549). Born in 1489, he studied Bible and theology at Cambridge University where he became a lecturer. Interested in new ideas spawned by Martin Luther and other church reformers in Germany, he traveled there and worked closely with Reformation leaders.

In 1533, King Henry VIII appointed Cranmer Archbishop of Canterbury. Cranmer supported Henry's authority over the Church as it broke away from Rome and the pope. He helped guide the reforming of its worship, doctrine and practice under the inspiration of the Reformation in Europe, moving it away from Roman Catholic influences.

When Henry's Catholic daughter Mary I (known as "Bloody Mary") ascended the throne, she arrested Cranmer for opposing her. While in prison he reversed his position in regard to reforming the Church of England. Later, he courageously returned to his original beliefs and was burned at the stake. At his execution, he inserted his hand into the fire first, saying, "forasmuch as my hand offended in writing contrary to my heart, therefore my hand shall first be punished."

Cranmer's first *Book of Common Prayer* was revised four times before the current English Prayer Book was adapted in 1662. An American *Book of Common Prayer* first appeared in 1786 to answer the needs of the new nation that had separated from England. Another version followed in 1789 and remained in use for a century.

Concerns over more flexible worship styles and a renewed interest in enriching the liturgy based on ancient Christian practices led to a new Prayer Book in 1892. Only thirty years later, another Prayer Book was introduced in 1928. The current *Book of Common Prayer* was published in 1979. It contained substantial revisions for celebrating the Eucharist, added new prayers and other rites for worship, and established the significance of baptism.

Almighty Father, whose blessed Son before his passion prayed for his disciples that they might be one, as you and he are one: Grant that your Church, being bound together in love and obedience to you, may be united in one body by the one Spirit, that the world may believe in him

whom you have sent, your Son Jesus Christ our Lord; who lives and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. *Amen.*

For the Unity of the Church
The Book of Common Prayer, p. 255

TEACHING TIP

In the Episcopal Church, worshipers need to be able to find their way comfortably through the Bible, the Prayer Book, and the Hymnal. Primary-age learners, who are developing their reading skills, are at the ideal stage for becoming acquainted with *The Book of Common Prayer*. In this unit, it will be especially helpful if copies are available for all class members.

GATHERING

The beginning of this unit would be an appropriate time to present learners with their own copies of *The Book of Common Prayer*. Make a display of the books for the children to look at as they come into the classroom.

Each session of this unit will use the Prayers of the People, Form III, *The Book of Common Prayer*, p. 387, at the conclusion of the Gathering time. (Poster No. 14 with the words of the prayer is included in the Teacher's Packet.)

When all are present, say:

Leader: Father, we pray for your holy Catholic Church;

Learners: *That we all may be one.*

Leader: Grant that every member of the Church may truly and humbly serve you;

Learners: *That your Name may be glorified by all people.*

Leader: We pray for all bishops, priests, and deacons;

Learners: *That they may be faithful ministers of your Word and Sacraments.*

Leader: We pray for all who govern and hold authority in the nations of the world;

Learners: *That there may be justice and peace on the earth.*

Leader: Give us grace to do your will in all that we undertake;

Learners: *That our works may find favor in your sight.*

Leader: Have compassion on those who suffer from any grief or trouble;

Learners: *That they may be delivered from their distress.*

Leader: Give to the departed eternal rest;

Learners: *Let light perpetual shine upon them.*

Leader: We praise you for your saints who have entered into joy;
Learners: *May we also come to share in your heavenly kingdom.*

The Prayers of the People, Form III
The Book of Common Prayer, p. 387

STORYTELLING (Time: 10 minutes)

Open the Bible, and read aloud *Romans 15:30*:

“I appeal to you, brothers and sisters, by our Lord Jesus Christ and by the love of the Spirit, to join me in earnest prayer to God”

Finish with the words: The word of the Lord.
Learners respond: Thanks be to God.

1. Begin by describing Christians as a prayerful people. We pray to God when we are together in the Church, and we also pray alone or with our families.

2. Episcopalians have a resource called *The Book of Common Prayer* that contains the prayers we use in our Church's worship.

3. Using information from Getting Ready (above), explain the development of the Prayer Book and the role Thomas Cranmer played.

a. When King Henry VIII broke away from the Church in Rome in 1533, he appointed Cranmer Archbishop of Canterbury.

b. Cranmer wrote the first Prayer Book in 1549, and we still use many of the prayers he composed.

c. When Henry's Catholic daughter Mary I became queen after Henry's death, she arrested Cranmer for opposing her. At first, he reversed his position. Later, he courageously returned to his original beliefs. He was burned at the stake for these beliefs.

4. Our Anglican brothers and sisters, in countries all over the world, also have a form of *The Book of Common Prayer*. (“Anglican” refers to all churches in the world that share the history and liturgy of the Church of England. In America, the Anglican tradition is preserved by the Episcopal Church.)

5. The American Prayer Book has been changed through the years, but in many ways it still resembles the first one. The first American version appeared in 1786 after the Revolutionary War. Four other revisions were made, with the latest revision in 1979, the book we use today.

(Encourage the children to read at home about a house of prayer called the Washington National Cathedral in the learners' book, *The Church Prays*, p. 5.)

CREATING (Time: 15-20 minutes)

Option 1. Prayer Book Markers

For each learner, prepare 1 x 6-inch cardboard strips, with two holes punched at one end. With each strip, provide four lengths of narrow ribbon

in red, white, green, purple, and blue. Ask the learners to insert two ribbons in each hole, and knot them in place. The strip can then be inserted in the spine of a Prayer Book, with the ribbons serving as place markers.

Option 2. Prayer Journey

Provide learners with sheets of construction paper, crayons, markers, glue, and old magazines. Invite them to create a prayer journey, using pictures from magazines or drawing their own. Thomas Cranmer wanted everyone to hear God's word through prayer. By putting their artwork in one booklet, we have a prayer book for people who cannot read yet. Talk with the learners about what might be in their pictures (such as people who need our prayers, scenes of God's creation, or a special celebration).

EXPLORING THE STORY (*Time: 10-15 minutes*)

Option 1. Prayer Walk

Ahead of time, cut out paper footprints. Write or draw on each one a picture of something the class members can pray for—such as healing for a sick friend, thanksgiving for the warm sunshine, and praise to God for our lives. Place the footprints around the room. Ask the learners to work in pairs and to follow the footprints, praying as they walk.

Option 2. Puzzle, “*The Book of Common Prayer*”

Use Puzzle Sheet IV.1 titled “*The Book of Common Prayer*.” Make copies for everyone in the class. Directions are given on the sheet.

This can be a class or small group activity, or learners may work independently.

Option 3. Prayer Book Search

If possible, obtain copies of your church's service bulletin so that each learner may have one. Call attention to the outline of the service, noting page numbers. Ask the class members to find listed parts of the service in their Prayer Books. Examples: Holy Eucharist, Rite II, The Great Thanksgiving, Prayer A, p. 361; Prayers and Thanksgivings, For Peace, p. 815.

TALKING IT OVER (*Time: 10-15 minutes*)

Talk about what it was like for people in Thomas Cranmer's time who couldn't read the Bible. Some of them had never learned to read, while others did not understand the language it was written in. How could they learn about God? What kinds of pictures would have helped them? How would they know what prayers to pray? What might they say in their prayers?

INQUIRING (*Time: 10-20 minutes*)

Spend some time getting acquainted with the organization of *The Book of Common Prayer*. If possible, provide a copy for each class member. Ask: How many pages does the book have?

Encourage everyone to turn to the table of contents. Notice the spaces

between sections of the book and count the sections (headed with bold type). Ask class members to call out words they recognize.

Write Holy Baptism on a chalkboard and ask for the page number. Do the same for Holy Eucharist, Psalms, Prayers and Thanksgivings, Pastoral Offices, and Episcopal Services.

IMAGINING (*Time: 10-20 minutes*)

Share a story starter: “One day I decided to write down some prayers. I . . .” Invite the learners to use their imaginations and discuss how the story could continue. What kinds of prayers would you write? Would you look at the Prayer Book for ideas?

Individual response. The class members can write their own endings or draw pictures. Encourage them to express their own thoughts. Avoid giving the impression that there is a “right” way to end the story.

Group role play. The group can form pairs to act out prayers that they might have written.

MUSIC (*Time: 10-15 minutes*)

Introduce “Take my life, and let it be” (*The Hymnal 1982*, 707; *We Sing of God*, 104) by listening to it on the *Children Sing!* tape. Point out that this hymn is a prayer in which we ask for help in loving and praising God.

CONTINUING ACTIVITY (*Time: 10-20 minutes*)

Class Prayer Book. Use oversize sheets of construction paper (two red for the cover and plenty of white for the inside pages). Begin a project in which the learners will create a Class Prayer Book, with selected prayers and illustrations. At this session, make the cover and begin work on the contents. Groups of learners may gather to choose and copy prayers. Other groups can work on the illustrations.

TAKE-HOME CARD

Card 28 has a picture of the exterior of the National Cathedral in Washington, DC. This cathedral is called a house of prayer for all people. A Scripture verse, facts about the story, and a question to think about are also included on the card. Remind learners to add this card to their collection at home.

CLOSING

Conclude the session with the following prayer:

Give us grace to do your will in all that we undertake;
That our works may find favor in your sight.
Let us pray for our own needs and those of others.
(*The learners may add their own petitions.*)
In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

From the Prayers of the People, Form III
The Book of Common Prayer, p. 387

Stand in a circle and say:

Teacher: Go in peace to love and serve the Lord.

Learners: Thanks be to God.

TEACHER'S REFLECTION

From your observations, do the learners understand that *The Book of Common Prayer* is used in our worship? In what ways can they be helped to become more familiar with it? Are they comfortable in using it?

LOOKING AHEAD

The next session focuses on the use of the Daily Office throughout the day. Take some time to read through one of the services of Morning Prayer, Noonday, Evening Prayer, or Compline.

THE CHURCH IN THE PRAYER BOOK

Session 2

The Church's People Pray All Through the Day

FOCUS

The people of God, in every generation, raise their voices in prayer and praise. In the Prayer Book, we have services that help us to pray at various times of the day. We call these services The Daily Office, and they may be used by the whole Church assembled, small groups, or families and individuals. The learners should be able to say in their own words why we should pray every day.

GETTING READY

In Jewish faith, the day was marked in the temple at Jerusalem with morning and evening sacrifices and with services of psalms and prayers in the morning and afternoon. Devout Jews also designate times of the day with private prayers in the evening, morning, and noonday. (See *Psalms 55:18*.)

In the fifth century, Benedict of Nursia moved into the hills of his native Italy to withdraw from the excesses of Roman life. In time other Christians gathered around him and formed a religious community with Benedict as leader. Over the next few years Benedict developed a monastic "rule of life" that called for periods of communal worship and prayer at set hours from dawn until dark. Between prayers, the monks' usual day was marked by a rhythm of five hours of spiritual reading, six hours of work, one hour of eating and eight hours for sleeping in individual cells. New monks took vows of "stability, amendment of life, and obedience." Many religious orders were influenced by Benedict's rule and adopted a daily schedule of prayers balanced with other activities.

For primary-age learners, it is important to recognize that the natural rhythm of a person's daily life can be accented by times when we turn to God in prayer not only to ask for help but also to give thanks for all that we have received from God.

Lord God, almighty and everlasting Father, you have brought us in safety to this new day: Preserve us with your mighty power, that we may not fall into sin, nor be overcome by adversity; and in all we do, direct us to the fulfilling of your purpose; through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

A Collect for Grace

The Book of Common Prayer, p. 100

TEACHING TIP

Remind children that they don't have to be in church to talk to God. They can pray with their families at meals or at bedtime. Suggest that they begin each day by talking to God. This is a good time to encourage the children to use prayer through their day.

GATHERING

Display four pictures (perhaps from magazines) that show different times of day—morning, noon, evening, and night. Under the pictures place four sheets of blank paper. As the learners arrive, ask them to choose their

favorite times of day and write sentences or draw pictures of what they like to do at those times.

When all are gathered, say:

Leader: Father, we pray for your holy Catholic Church;

Learners: *That we all may be one.*

Leader: Grant that every member of the Church may truly and humbly serve you;

Learners: *That your Name may be glorified by all people.*

(Continue to the end, using Poster No. 14 from the Teacher's Packet).

The Prayers of the People, Form III
The Book of Common Prayer, p. 387

STORYTELLING *(Time: 10 minutes)*

Open the Bible and read aloud *Psalms 113:3*:

“From the rising of the sun to its setting let the name of the Lord be praised!”

Finish with these words: The word of the Lord.

Learners respond: Thanks be to God.

1. Speak briefly about the rhythms of daily life: getting up to enjoy a new day; pausing at noontime for food and rest; bringing the day to a close; and preparing to sleep. At all these times we pray to God. (You may wish to refer to the sentences or pictures the learners added at the Gathering.)

2. The Hebrew people long ago prayed to God in this same way. They gathered together to hear Scripture, sing the psalms, and join in other prayers. Jesus grew up practicing these customs.

3. The Christian church, from the very beginning, called people to pray.

4. In your own words, tell the story of a young boy in a choir of a Benedictine monastery. The story would include the following points. John lived in a small village near a monastery where a group of monks, very holy men, lived, worked, and prayed together. John had an excellent singing voice and would often sing as he went about doing the odd jobs he could get to earn a few pennys to help feed the rest of his family. The monks had a boys choir and a school for boys so they could learn Scripture, and to read and write.

One of the monks heard John singing in the street and invited him to join the choir and come to the school. The monks would help support John's family. John would go to live in the monastery and follow the monks way of life. He would spend six hours a day practicing with the choir, five hours studying, one hour eating, and eight hours sleeping. He would also join the monks for the hours of prayer throughout the day, often singing Psalms and chants as part of the choir's work and worship.

(Encourage the children to read at home the daily prayers in the learners' book, *The Church Prays*, pp.7-9.)

CREATING (Time: 15-20 minutes)

Option 1. Prayer Plaques

Beforehand, copy the words of the hymn “Take my life, and let it be” (*The Hymnal 1982*, 707) or “Day by day” (*The Hymnal 1982*, 654). Make enough photocopies of the words for each class member. Attach them to a posterboard background and invite learners to decorate the area around the words. Ask them to display the posters in their homes to remind them to pray every day.

Option 2. Watercolors

Provide the learners with drawing paper and watercolors. Fold the paper in half. On the top half, ask each class member to choose a favorite time of day and paint a picture to represent that time. As the learners work, talk about the prayers we use at these times of day. When the pictures are dry, they may copy prayers from the Prayer Book or write their own.

EXPLORING THE STORY (Time: 10-15 minutes)

Option 1. Game, “Times to Pray”

Ahead of time, make photocopies from Poster No. 13 in the Teacher's Packet of the cards with symbols and names of Morning Prayer, Noonday Prayer, Evening Prayer, and Compline—enough for every class member to have a set of the four. (If you wish, use sturdy paper to be cut into cards, or glue the copies to index cards.)

Distribute the cards in such a way that no one gets a complete set.

Play a game called “Times to Pray.” The object is for each learner to trade with the others until he/she has all four cards. If, for example, a player who only has cards for Morning Prayer approaches another, he/she says: “I can pray in the morning. Can you help me pray another time?” Arrange a trade, or move on to someone else. A player who has cards for morning, noon, evening, and night sits down. Repeat the game as long as time permits or interest holds.

Option 2. Puzzle, “All Through the Day”

Use Puzzle Sheet IV.2 titled “All Through the Day.” Make copies for everyone in the class. Directions are given on the sheet.

This can be a class or small group activity, or learners may work independently.

Option 3. Prayer Book Skills

Supply these words and page numbers: Venite (*Psalm 95:1-7*), p. 82; Jubilate, p. 82; O Gracious Light (Phos Hilaron), p. 118; and Lord, you now have set your servant free . . . (Nunc Dimittis), p. 135. Ask the learners to find each one in the Prayer Book. Which order of prayer is it from? Why are the words appropriate for that time of day?

The learners may be interested in the meanings of these words:

Venite is the Latin word for “come.”

Jubilate is Latin for “be joyful.”

Phos Hilaron is Greek for “gracious light.”
Nunc Dimittis is Latin for “now let depart.”

TALKING IT OVER *(Time: 10-15 minutes)*

Emphasize that Christians pray daily. *The Book of Common Prayer* provides prayers for us to use throughout the day. We call the first big section of our Prayer Book “The Daily Office.” It includes prayers for us to use all through the day. Look up this section in the Prayer Book. Ask: When during the day can we use the prayers in the Daily Office? What are the names for the different kinds of prayer? Who can use these prayers? When? Where?

INQUIRING *(Time: 10-20 minutes)*

Invite to the class a person who works at night (such as a hospital staff member, a baker, a police person, a firefighter, a security person, or a custodian). Ask the visitor to describe what it is like to “work while others sleep.” What does the person worry about? What makes this person's work different from daytime activity? You may want to encourage the visitor to speak about how his/her life includes prayer and the Prayer Book.

Close the visit with this prayer from Compline:

O God, your unfailing providence sustains the world we live in and the life we live: Watch over those, both night and day, who work while others sleep, and grant that we may never forget that our common life depends upon each other's toil; through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

The Book of Common Prayer, p. 134

IMAGINING *(Time: 10-20 minutes)*

Share a story starter: “Late one night, when everyone else was asleep, I began to pray . . .” Invite the learners to use their imaginations and discuss how the story could continue. What kinds of prayers would you say?

Individual response. The class members can write their own endings or draw pictures. Encourage them to express their own thoughts. Avoid giving the impression that there is a “right” way to end the story.

Group practice. The group can take part in a guided walk-through of An Order for Compline from *The Book of Common Prayer*.

MUSIC *(Time: 10-15 minutes)*

Sing again “Take my life, and let it be” (*The Hymnal 1982*, 707; *We Sing of God*, 104) with the *Children Sing!* tape. Ask the learners to devise movements to accompany the words of both stanzas.

CONTINUING ACTIVITY *(Time: 10-20 minutes)*

Class Prayer Book. At this session, label a page, “Praying Through the Day.” Groups of learners may gather to choose and copy prayers. Other groups can be at work on the illustrations. See Session 1 for details.

TAKE-HOME CARD

Card 29 has a picture of a stained glass window, a scripture verse, facts about the story, and a question to think about. Remind learners to add this card to their collection at home.

CLOSING

Conclude the session with the following prayer:

Give us grace to do your will in all that we undertake;
That our works may find favor in your sight.

Let us pray for our own needs and those of others.

(The learners may add their own petitions.)

In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

From The Prayers of the People, Form III
The Book of Common Prayer, p. 387

Stand in a circle and say:

Teacher: Go in peace to love and serve the Lord.

Learners: Thanks be to God.

TEACHER'S REFLECTION

Are the learners gaining a sense that they can pray at any time? How can they be encouraged to think of the Prayer Book as their own, and as a means of helping them to offer their prayers to God?

LOOKING AHEAD

The next session will examine the Pastoral Offices in *The Book of Common Prayer*. This part of the Prayer Book provides ways for us to pray for people in different circumstances throughout their lives. Set aside some quiet time to read through one or more of these Pastoral Offices that begin on page 411.

THE CHURCH IN THE PRAYER BOOK

Session 3

Praying for Others

FOCUS

The Book of Common Prayer provides orders of prayer for confirmation, marriage, thanksgiving for birth or adoption of a child, reconciliation, ministry to the sick, ministry at the time of death, and burial. The learners should be able to say why we pray for people at special times in their lives.

GETTING READY

All the directions, prayers, and orders for ministry at special times in people's lives are available to everyone in the Church within the covers of *The Book of Common Prayer*.

The section of *The Book of Common Prayer* called Pastoral Offices contains rites of passage, rites of personal vocation, and rites for life crises.

Confirmation is a rite for youth and adults who make a mature profession of faith and commitment to Christ through prayers, renewing baptismal vows, and laying on of hands by a bishop. It generally follows a period of instruction.

Marriage is a public sharing of vows between a man and a woman in the presence of God and the church. A priest or bishop presides at a service that includes prayers, a celebration of the Eucharist, and a blessing. Participants seek God's grace to strengthen the couple in keeping the promises they make as they enter a lifelong commitment.

Thanksgiving for the Birth or Adoption of a Child is a service of praise and thanksgiving to God for the gift of a new life. It is celebrated as part of a Sunday service and can take place in the church, at home or a hospital.

The Reconciliation of a Penitent is designed to reconcile and heal those who have been separated from the faith community because of sin. The rite includes confession of sin, and may also include prayers and reading of Scripture. A priest pronounces absolution and forgiveness. It is an especially appropriate rite during penitential seasons such as Lent.

Ministration to the Sick includes readings from Scripture, prayers, the laying on of hands and Eucharist. It can be celebrated as part of a public worship service or in other settings.

Ministration at the Time of Death provides a rite of prayers and a litany for those who are near death, a vigil before a funeral, and prayers for receiving a body at the church.

The Burial of the Dead normally takes place in a church and includes a celebration of the Eucharist. Its themes come from the Easter liturgy and the Christian hope in the resurrection. The rite also contains a graveside service for committal of the body.

It is on important occasions throughout our lives when these Pastoral Offices are used.

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

It is important to make connections between events in people's lives and the way the Church is a part of these milestones. Primary-age learners will not have had personal experience with most of the Pastoral Offices introduced in this session. We can help them at this stage in their lives to see how God and the Church are connected to people's lives from the beginning to the end.

GATHERING

Ahead of time, arrange a display of items that will encourage the learners to think about significant life events for which we have Pastoral Offices in *The Book of Common Prayer*. The items may include: baby toys or clothing (Thanksgiving for the Birth or Adoption of a Child); Prayer Book (Confirmation); wedding rings or wedding cake decoration (Marriage); card that says "I'm sorry" (Reconciliation of a Penitent); first-aid kit (Ministry to the Sick); plain cross or flowers (Burial).

As the learners arrive, challenge them to connect each item to a time in someone's life that they know.

When all are present, say:

Leader: Father, we pray for your holy Catholic Church;

Learners: *That we all may be one.*

Leader: Grant that every member of the Church may truly and humbly serve you;

Learners: *That your Name may be glorified by all people.*

(Continue to the end, using Poster No. 14 from the Teacher's Packet).

The Prayers of the People, Form III,

The Book of Common Prayer, p. 387

STORYTELLING (Time: 10 minutes)

Open the Bible and read aloud *Psalms 23:6*:

"Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life; and I shall dwell in the house of the Lord for ever."

Finish with these words: The word of the Lord.

Learners respond: Thanks be to God.

1. Tell a story about a woman, from her birth to her death. Use the Prayer

Book as a prop as you tell the story. If learners have their own Prayer Books, encourage them to follow along.

2. Begin by describing the woman's birth. Use your own experiences in describing the event, a birth or adoption. The blessing for the birth or adoption of a child is on page 439 of the Prayer Book.

3. Continue the story through her confirmation (p. 413) and her wedding (p. 423).

4. Soon after her wedding, her grandmother became ill. They had been very close, and she found the prayers for the sick (p. 453) to be very comforting for both of them.

5. Her grandmother's health improved and they all rejoiced when the woman had a child. The family used the same thanksgivings (p. 439) that they had said when the woman was born.

6. The woman lived a full life, with its ups and downs. She often turned to the prayers for the sick when friends and family were ill, and even used the prayers for forgiveness (p. 447) when she and a friend were angry with one another. When she died, her family and friends gathered to say the prayers at the time of death (p. 462) and at her burial (p. 491).

(Encourage the children to look up at home two prayers taken from Pastoral Offices in the learners' book, *The Church Prays*, pp. 11-12.)

CREATING *(Time: 15-20 minutes)*

Option 1. Pictures for Pastoral Offices

Provide the learners with drawing paper, crayons, and markers. Fold the drawing paper into three sections. Label the sections as follows: Thanksgiving for the Birth or Adoption of a Child, Confirmation, Marriage. Talk about the sections, and invite the learners to create pictures for each one.

Option 2. Celebration Cards

Gather ribbons, glitter, sequins, foil, construction paper, and glue. Invite the learners to choose an occasion in a person's life, such as confirmation, marriage, or the birth or adoption of a child. Use the art materials to create a card to send to someone on that occasion.

EXPLORING THE STORY *(Time: 10-15 minutes)*

Option 1. Game, "Naming the Events of Our Lives"

Ahead of time, prepare a game board with the following five pictures on it: a newborn baby, a hospital (a building with a red cross on the door), a cross, a wedding cake, a simple gravestone. Ask the players to toss a button onto the board. When the button lands on a picture, the learners say a short prayer that matches it.

Continue until all have had a turn.

Option 2. Puzzle, "Pastoral Offices"

Use Puzzle Sheet IV.3 titled "Pastoral Offices." Make copies for everyone in the class. Directions are given on the sheet.

This can be a class or small group activity, or learners may work

independently.

Option 3. Prayer Book Skill (Choose one)

Invite the class members to examine the Reconciliation of a Penitent, p. 447, Forms One and Two. How does each Form begin? What is the same? What is different?

Or, ask the learners to open their Prayer Books to The Burial of the Dead, p. 469 and p. 491. The services are Rite I and Rite II. Where else have we seen two different rites in the Prayer Book? Examine the two rites for use at burial, and compare the similarities and differences. Look particularly at the versions of *Psalm 23*, Rite I, pp. 476-477.

TALKING IT OVER (*Time: 10-15 minutes*)

Talk with the learners about significant milestones in people's lives: People are born, they are baptized, they are confirmed, they marry, and they die. (You may want to give examples from your own family history.) Invite the learners to share examples of these milestones that they know about.

How does the Prayer Book help us to celebrate these special times in our lives? Encourage the class members to tell about any of the services they may have attended. What do clergy do on these occasions? How do the other people take part?

INQUIRING (*Time: 10-20 minutes*)

Invite a nurse or a hospital staff person or volunteer to visit the class and talk about hospital experiences that call for special prayers. The person could discuss births, baptisms, prayers for the sick and for the doctors and nurses who care for them, and prayers at the time of a death. Point out to the learners that *The Book of Common Prayer* provides prayers for all these times.

IMAGINING (*Time: 10-20 minutes*)

Share a story starter: "One day on my way home, I was surprised to see people going into the church. I opened the door, looked in, and . . ." Invite the learners to use their imaginations and discuss how the story could continue. Who was there? Why? How did the church look inside? What was happening?

Individual response. The class members can write their own endings or draw pictures. Encourage them to express their own thoughts. Avoid giving the impression that there is a "right" way to end the story.

Group role play. The group can select one of the Pastoral Offices and take part in a dramatization of a scene where one of the Offices would be used.

MUSIC (*Time: 10-15 minutes*)

Sing again "Take my life, and let it be" (*The Hymnal 1982*, 707; *We Sing of God*, 104) with the *Children Sing!* tape. Notice how the words of the hymn are related to the whole journey of a person's life. Invite the class members to continue using the motions developed in the previous session.

CONTINUING ACTIVITY *(Time: 10-20 minutes)*

Class Prayer Book. At this session, label a page, “Prayers from Pastoral Offices.” Groups of learners may gather to choose and copy prayers. Other groups can be at work on the illustrations. See Session 1 for details.

TAKE-HOME CARD

Card 30 has a picture of a stained glass window, a Scripture verse, facts about the story, and a question to think about. Remind learners to add this card to their collection at home.

CLOSING

Conclude the session with the following prayer:

Give us grace to do your will in all that we undertake;
That our works may find favor in your sight.
Let us pray for our own needs and those of others.
(The learners may add their own petitions.)
In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

From *The Prayers of the People, Form III*
The Book of Common Prayer, p. 387

Stand in a circle and say:

Teacher: Go in peace to love and serve the Lord.
Learners: Thanks be to God.

TEACHER'S REFLECTION

Are the learners making connections between *The Book of Common Prayer* and the life journey of a Christian? Do they understand that the Church is a part of the milestones of a person's life?

LOOKING AHEAD

The next session focuses on the section of *The Book of Common Prayer* that is devoted to Episcopal Services. Episcopal, in these services, means “led by a bishop.” Read the Preface to the Ordination Rites, p. 510.

THE CHURCH IN THE PRAYER BOOK

Session 4

Bishops, Priests, and Deacons

FOCUS

The Book of Common Prayer includes a section called Episcopal Services. Included are services used by bishops as they conduct ordinations of bishops, priests, and deacons. The learners should be able to name the three types of clergy in the Episcopal Church.

GETTING READY

From the time of the apostles, God has reached out to persons from the Christian community and offered to them a vocation (a calling) as bishops, priests, and deacons. By the leading of the Holy Spirit, men and women answer God's call.

Like the Twelve who responded to Jesus' call to discipleship, modern-day candidates for Holy Orders in the Church are asked to give up their former occupations and devote themselves to the work of full-time ministry. This means serious study and preparation, usually in a theological seminary, accompanied by examinations and processes of discerning their gifts for service.

Some persons are called to serve as deacons for their whole lives. Other deacons make a transition to priesthood. From among the Church's priests, bishops are elected and consecrated by other bishops.

In *The Book of Common Prayer*, there are Episcopal Services that are performed by a bishop. "Episcopal" comes from a Greek word meaning "overseer." A church that has an episcopal form of government is ruled by bishops (overseers, shepherds).

One of the first bishops of the newly formed Protestant Episcopal Church of the United States of America was Bishop William White. He was born in Philadelphia in 1747 and became a priest in 1772. After the Revolutionary War, he traveled to London where he was consecrated as the first Bishop of Pennsylvania. He was the Presiding Bishop of the first General Convention of the Episcopal Church in 1789.

While Bishop White was in England, he heard about a new movement in England called the Sunday School. These schools taught reading and writing to poor children on Sundays using Bible stories. After their lessons the children would attend worship. Bishop White brought this idea back to Philadelphia with him. He then established the first Sunday schools in the new United States of America.

The Episcopal Services in the Prayer Book also include a service for the Celebration of a New Ministry (when a new priest is called to serve a congregation), pp. 558-565, and a service for Consecration of a Church or Chapel, pp. 566-579.

Almighty God, the giver of all good gifts, in your divine providence you have appointed various orders in your Church: Give your grace, we humbly pray, to all who are called to any office and ministry for your people; and so fill them with the truth of your doctrine and clothe them

with holiness of life, that they may faithfully serve before you, to the glory of your great Name and for the benefit of your holy Church; 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.*

For those to be ordained
The Book of Common Prayer, p. 256

TEACHING TIP

Services of ordination do not happen frequently. In some congregations, there may never have been one. This session is an opportunity to introduce ordinations and how they are conducted by the Church's bishops. The children may look forward to attending a service of ordination.

GATHERING

Display a bishop's miter made out of posterboard. (Simple instructions and an illustration appear on Poster No. 13 in the Teacher's Packet.) As the learners arrive, ask if they have ever seen a hat like this. Who wears it? When?

When all are gathered, say:

Leader: Father, we pray for your holy Catholic Church;
Learners: *That we all may be one.*

Leader: Grant that every member of the Church may truly and humbly serve you;
Learners: *That your Name may be glorified by all people.*

(Continue to the end, using Poster No. 14 from the Teacher's Packet).

The Prayers of the People, Form III
The Book of Common Prayer, p. 387

STORYTELLING *(Time: 10 minutes)*

Open the Bible and read aloud *Psalms 132:9*:

“Let thy priests be clothed with righteousness, let thy saints shout for joy.”

Finish with these words: The word of the Lord.
Learners respond: Thanks be to God.

1. Explain that the word “Episcopal” means led by bishops. The Episcopal Church elects bishops who have charge over the dioceses and congregations of people. They visit and care for all the churches. (The learners may know the bishop of their diocese. If so, invite them to describe a bishop's visit.)

2. Explain the meaning of “ordination.” When persons feel called to be deacons and priests in the Church, they go through a time of careful

preparation.

3. In your own words, tell the story of Bishop William White who was one of the first bishops in the Episcopal Church as it was formed after the American Revolution. It was Bishop White who established the first Sunday school in America after seeing it on a trip to England. The very first bishop of the Episcopal Church was Samuel Seabury, who was from Connecticut.

(Encourage students to read at home prayers from Episcopal services in the learners' book, *The Church Prays*, pp. 13-15.)

CREATING *(Time: 15-20 minutes)*

Option 1. Clergy Appreciation

Supply construction paper and markers or crayons, and ask the class members to make cards that express thanks for the work of the clergy in your congregation. (Write the names and titles of recipients on a board so that all can copy them.) They may want to arrange a time to present their cards to the clergy.

Option 2. Episcopal Shields

Obtain a copy of your diocesan shield from the office of the diocese or your church office. (*The Episcopal Church Annual*, compiled by Morehouse Publishing, includes the shields of all the dioceses.)

Make enlarged copies of the shield of your diocese for all the class members. Invite them to add color and to print the name of your bishop(s). As the learners work, talk about the details of the shield. Many of the shields include a bishop's miter. Does yours?

EXPLORING THE STORY *(Time: 10-15 minutes)*

Option 1. Game, “Follow the Bishop”

Play a version of “Follow the Leader.” Choose one person in the room to be the bishop. You may want to give this person a shepherd's crook to serve as the bishop's staff. Since it is the job of a bishop to lead the flock and keep it safe, the “bishop” must lead the rest of the group around the room, keeping them away from danger. The teacher may need to get the game started by serving as a narrator and describing the dangers faced and necessary acts to avoid them. Designate a spot in the room as the journey's end. When the group reaches this spot, a “new” bishop takes over, and the “old” bishop joins the flock.

Option 2. Puzzle, “Episcopal”

Use Puzzle Sheet IV.4 titled “Episcopal.” Make copies for everyone in the class. Directions are given on the sheet.

This can be a class or small group activity, or learners may work independently.

Option 3. Prayer Book Skill

Divide the class into three teams, and assign each team one of the services

of ordination from the Prayer Book—Bishop (p. 511), Priest (p. 525), and Deacon (p. 537). Ask each team to read through their service and prepare a description, in order, of the events in the service. (This could be a verbal or written report.) Teams can read aloud selected prayers or passages from their services.

TALKING IT OVER *(Time: 10-15 minutes)*

Begin a conversation with the learners by recalling that the Church's people pray constantly for their bishops, priests, and deacons. You may want to turn to the Prayers of the People from the Gathering (Poster No. 14). Read together these lines: "We pray for all bishops, priests, and deacons; *That they may be faithful ministers of your Word and Sacraments.*"

Ask: Why are these persons important in our lives? Why do they become ordained? How does our Prayer Book help us to understand what they do? How do they serve God? How do they serve other people? (Allow class members to share freely their own stories about bishops, priests, and deacons they have seen or talked with.)

INQUIRING *(Time: 10-20 minutes)*

Invite someone who has attended the ordination of a bishop, priest, or deacon to visit the class session and describe the event. You may be able to borrow a framed Certificate of Ordination to show to the class members. Read the certificate aloud, notice the place, the diocese, the date, the name and signature of the officiating bishop, and the bishop's seal. Also, if possible, arrange a display of pictures, printed programs, or other memorabilia of an ordination.

IMAGINING *(Time: 10-20 minutes)*

Share a story starter: "One time, my family was invited to meet the bishop, and . . ." Invite the learners to use their imaginations and discuss how the story could continue. Ask: What might this person be like? What would you talk about? What questions would you like to ask?

Individual response. The class members can write their own endings or draw pictures. Encourage them to express their own thoughts. Avoid giving the impression that there is a "right" way to end the story.

Group role play. The group can take part in a dramatization of meeting a bishop at a cathedral, in your church, or informally. Provide a few props and fabric to serve as simple vestments.

MUSIC *(Time: 10-15 minutes)*

Just before the bishop lays hands on a person being ordained (and consecrated), an ancient hymn is sung (either *Veni Creator Spiritus* or *Veni Sancte Spiritus*). One version is "Come, Holy Ghost, our souls inspire" (*The Hymnal 1982*, 504). Listen to this version on the *Children Sing!* tape. The ordinand (candidate for ordination) kneels before the bishop during the singing. This part of the service is the same in the Episcopal Services for bishops, priests, and deacons. (Notice the directions on pages 520, 533, and 544 of *The Book of Common Prayer*.)

Encourage the learners to sing or chant stanzas 7-9 of the hymn:
Teach us to know the Father, Son, and thee, of both, to be but One,
that through the ages all along, this may be our endless song:
praise to thy eternal merit, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

CONTINUING ACTIVITY *(Time: 10-20 minutes)*

Class Prayer Book. At this session, label a page, “Episcopal Services.” Groups of learners may gather to choose and copy prayers. Other groups can be at work on the illustrations. See Session 1 for details.

TAKE-HOME CARD

Card 31 has a picture of the interior of the National Cathedral in Washington, DC, a Scripture verse, facts about the story, and a question to think about. Remind learners to add this card to their collection at home.

CLOSING

Conclude the session with the following prayer:

Give us grace to do your will in all that we undertake;
That our works may find favor in your sight.
Let us pray for our own needs and those of others.
(The learners may add their own petitions.)
In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

From The Prayers of the People, Form III
The Book of Common Prayer, p. 387

Stand in a circle and say:

Teacher: Go in peace to love and serve the Lord.
Learners: Thanks be to God.

TEACHER'S REFLECTION

Do the learners have a better sense of how bishops, priests, and deacons are ordained in the Episcopal Church? What more can be done to help them appreciate what it means to be Episcopalian?

LOOKING AHEAD

The next session focuses on *The Psalter*—the pages of *The Book of Common Prayer* that contain all 150 of the Psalms from the Bible. Think about the Psalms that have special meaning for you. At what times in your life have they offered spiritual comfort or encouragement?

THE CHURCH IN THE PRAYER BOOK

Session 5

The Psalms

FOCUS

The Book of Common Prayer contains all 150 Psalms from the Bible. They are both prayers and songs, to be used by individuals, groups, and the whole Church. The learners should be able to find the Psalms in the Prayer Book.

GETTING READY

Psalms from the Hebrew Scriptures (Old Testament) are meant to be used in the worship of a congregation. Psalms are always included in the Daily Office (Morning, Noonday, Evening Prayer, and Compline). For example, in addition to psalms appointed for each day, the *Venite (Psalm 95)* or the *Jubilate (Psalm 100)* are always used at Morning Prayer.

At Holy Eucharist, the Psalm for the day comes after the Old Testament reading or the Epistle—but always before the Gospel is read.

Tradition tells us that David, the shepherd, who became King of Israel, wrote the Psalms. His reputation as a musician was so strong that generations of Christians and Jews have called them the “Psalms of David.” Scholars now believe that there were many different authors.

Psalm 23, with its many references to the life of a shepherd, has been most often connected to David.

Psalms invite primary-age learners to experiment with movement and dance, improvised melodies, and choral readings. They can also inspire art projects. The Psalms are timeless prayers that direct our thoughts to God. Daily repetition of Psalms is an often used form of spiritual devotion.

I lift up my eyes to the hills;
from where is my help to come?
My help comes from the Lord,
the maker of heaven and earth.
He will not let your foot be moved
and he who watches over you will not fall asleep.
Behold, he who keeps watch over Israel
shall neither slumber nor sleep;
The Lord himself watches over you;
the Lord is your shade at your right hand,
So that the sun shall not strike you by day,
nor the moon by night.
The Lord shall preserve you from all evil;
it is he who shall keep you safe.
The Lord shall watch over your going out and your coming in,
from this time forth for evermore.

Psalm 121

The Book of Common Prayer, p. 779

TEACHING TIP

The church school class offers an excellent opportunity for encouraging learners to be helpful to one another. In the sessions on the psalms, several activities offer class members a chance to work cooperatively as they locate page numbers, make comparisons in the text, and read aloud. To assure that no one fails at assigned tasks, ask the children to work in pairs or teams.

GATHERING

Display a shepherd's crook or a picture of one. Ask the learners how they think it is used by the shepherd. Ask: Why is it curved at the top? Do you know someone in the Bible who might have used a crook?

When all are present, say:

Leader: Father, we pray for your holy Catholic Church;
Learners: *That we all may be one.*

Leader: Grant that every member of the Church may truly and humbly serve you;
Learners: *That your Name may be glorified by all people.*

(Continue to the end, using Poster No. 14 from the Teacher's Packet).

The Prayers of the People, Form III
The Book of Common Prayer, p. 387

STORYTELLING (Time: 10 minutes)

Open the Bible and read aloud *Psalms 117*:

“Praise the Lord, all you nations!
Extol him, all you peoples!
For great is his steadfast love toward us;
and the faithfulness of the Lord endures forever.
Praise the Lord!”

Finish with these words: The word of the Lord.
Learners respond: Thanks be to God.

1. Begin by showing the learners the Psalms in *The Book of Common Prayer* (pp. 582-808). Note that it is about one-fourth of the book, and it contains all the psalms found in the Bible. You may want to open a Bible to show the *Book of Psalms*.

2. Share some lines from psalms that are your favorites—such as “The Lord is my shepherd” (*Psalms 23:1a*), probably written by King David.

3. Many different people wrote the many kinds of psalms. Some are hymns of praise and thanksgiving, to be sung by a congregation. Some are joyful and filled with hope. Others are mournful and sad. Some comfort us in times of great trouble. Some are retellings of the history of God's people.

4. In your own words, tell a story of David, as a young shepherd herding his sheep through the hills and the valleys of Israel. He protected his sheep from the many dangers such as bears, wolves, and other predators. While

alone, perhaps while playing his lyre (a kind of simple harp) he may have composed the words of *Psalm 23*.

(Encourage the children to read at home selected prayers from The Psalter in the learners' book, *The Church Prays*, pp. 16-17.)

CREATING (Time: 15-20 minutes)

Option 1. Framed Psalm

Beforehand, make for each learner a photocopy of the framed text of *Psalm 117*, from Poster No. 13 in the Teacher's Packet. Ask the class members to use crayons and markers to decorate the frame around the psalm. The decorated psalms can be attached to a construction paper background.

Option 2. Psalm Paintings

Psalms are filled with strong feelings. One of these is a desire to praise God with all one's heart. Invite the learners to express the feeling of praise through fingerpainting or watercoloring. Supply sheets of paper and bright-colored paints. Read aloud several passages, such as *Psalm 117*, *Psalm 148*, and *Psalm 150*. If possible, play a tape of a choir singing from a Psalm text or other hymns of praise. The *Children Sing!* tape includes music from *Psalm 23*, "The King of love my shepherd is;" *Psalm 100*, "All people that on earth do dwell;" and *Psalm 84*, "How lovely is thy dwelling place." Encourage the painters to let their fingers move freely and give full reign to their creativity.

EXPLORING THE STORY (Time: 10-15 minutes)

Option 1. Game, "Pantomime the Psalms"

Look through The Psalter and choose verses or short passages that lend themselves to pantomime (movements suggested by the words). Example: *Psalm 88:1*: "O Lord, my God, my Savior, by day and night I cry to you." Keep in mind the members of the class in order to choose lines that will have special appeal. Write the citations on slips of paper and place them in a basket.

Divide the class members into pairs. Each team chooses a slip from the basket and gives it to the teacher, who reads it aloud. The team decides how to act it out silently. The teacher reads the passage again, and they present their pantomime. Continue as long as interest holds.

Option 2. Puzzle, "Psalms"

Use Puzzle Sheet IV.5 titled "Psalms." Make copies for everyone in the class. Directions are given on the sheet.

This can be a class or small group activity, or learners may work independently.

Option 3. Prayer Book and Bible Skill

Divide the learners into two teams. Provide one team with the Bible and the other with *The Book of Common Prayer*. Ask each team to locate

selected psalms and compare the language used. Invite the teams to talk about the differences they find. Explain that the differences are due to the words chosen by different translators; some translations are very old, and others use modern language.

TALKING IT OVER *(Time: 10-15 minutes)*

Talk with the learners about the Psalms as a treasure. People learn them by heart and remember them in times of trouble or need. They also bring joy, as people shout their praise to God. Reading and saying psalms can be a way of praying when we are alone or with our families.

Ask: When have you ever listened to someone read the Psalms? Are you able to say verses from Psalms? Which ones? What would you like to know about the people who wrote them?

INQUIRING *(Time: 10-20 minutes)*

Use again Poster No. 2 of *Psalms 100* in the Teacher's Packet. (This was used at the Gathering through all of Unit I, so the learners are likely to be familiar with it.) Challenge the group to become "a congregation" and practice different ways psalms may be used in services. For example:

- a. All the words are read by everyone in unison.
- b. All the words are sung by everyone. (For *Psalms 100*, see *The Hymnal 1982 Service Music* for a variety of settings. These are numbered S-11 through S-15.)
- c. The verses are said antiphonally, which means that one group of people says the first verse, and a second group says the second. This alternation continues to the end. Sometimes this is done by half-verse, using an asterisk (*) to divide the verses.
- d. A leader reads a verse, and the people respond with the next. (This, too, may be by half-verse.)
- e. Choirs and soloists may follow other patterns.

For this exercise you may want to ask for assistance from a lay reader or choir member.

IMAGINING *(Time: 10-20 minutes)*

Share a story starter: "Once when I was playing outside, I thought of David as a shepherd boy, and" Invite the learners to use their imaginations and discuss how the story could continue. What would you talk about if you met David as a boy? What would you ask him? Would you have ideas for prayers he could write? What would they be about?

Individual response. The class members can write their own endings or draw pictures. Encourage them to express their own thoughts. Avoid giving the impression that there is a "right" way to end the story.

Group role play. Ask the class members to pretend that they are psalm writers like David. On a board or newsprint, write these words: praise, Lord, people, kindness, truth, forever. Help the learners to form a short psalm of praise. Example: "Praise the Lord for people, God's truth lasts forever, Praise God for kindness, Praise the Lord." If interest warrants, provide other sets of words for the class to compose additional psalms.

MUSIC *(Time: 10-15 minutes)*

The texts of many psalms have been set to music. Select one or more from *The Hymnal 1982* to share with the class. (On page 940, under Authors, Translators, and Sources, is a listing of those hymn numbers.) You may want to use the familiar *Psalm 23* or *Psalm 100*. Listen to a recording of these psalms on the *Children Sing!* tape.

CONTINUING ACTIVITY *(Time: 10-20 minutes)*

Class Prayer Book. At this session, label a page “Psalms.” Groups of learners may gather to choose and copy verses from Psalms. Other groups can be at work on the illustrations. See Session 1 for details.

TAKE-HOME CARD

Card 32 has a picture of a stained glass window, a Scripture verse, facts about the story, and a question to think about. Remind learners to add this card to their collection at home.

CLOSING

Conclude the session with the following prayer:

Give us grace to do your will in all that we undertake;
That our works may find favor in your sight.
Let us pray for our own needs and those of others.
(The learners may add their own petitions.)
In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

From *The Prayers of the People, Form III*
The Book of Common Prayer, p. 387

Stand in a circle and say:

Teacher: Go in peace to love and serve the Lord.
Learners: Thanks be to God.

TEACHER'S REFLECTION

Were the learners able to find the Psalms in *The Book of Common Prayer* and understand how they are used in worship? How can they be encouraged to read and think about Psalms in the future?

LOOKING AHEAD

The next session is about a section of the Prayer Book titled “Prayers and Thanksgivings.” Spend some time looking through these prayers. Which ones speak most directly to you?

THE CHURCH IN THE PRAYER BOOK

Session 6

Prayers and Thanksgivings

FOCUS

The Book of Common Prayer includes a section of Prayers and Thanksgivings that help us pray to God—both in public services of worship and during private devotion. The learners should be able to locate these prayers and note any with special meaning for them.

GETTING READY

The Book of Common Prayer has a section called Prayers and Thanksgivings (pp. 809-841). Included here are prayers that may be used by individuals, families, small groups, and an entire congregation.

Some of these prayers are from very old texts, others are revisions from previous editions of *The Book of Common Prayer*, and still others were written for the present book. Following are some examples:

For Clergy and People (p. 817) has undergone many revisions, including a version in the 1928 Prayer Book.

For the Unity of the Church (p. 818) was in the English Prayer Book of 1714. It was included in a book of prayers for the armed forces during the Civil War and then made its way into the 1892 American Prayer Book.

For our Country (p. 820) was written in 1882 by the Rev. George Lyman Locke, and it appeared in the 1928 Prayer Book.

For Young Persons (p. 829) is a new collect written by Sister Ann Brooke Bushong of the Church Army.

For a Birthday, No. 51 (p. 830) is a new prayer written for the 1979 Prayer Book by the Rev. Dr. Charles P. Price.

Primary-age learners are at an ideal stage of development for investigating a variety of prayers and discovering where to find them.

O God, you made us in your own image and redeemed us through Jesus your Son: Look with compassion on the whole human family; take away the arrogance and hatred which infect our hearts; break down the walls that separate us; unite us in bonds of love; and work through our struggle and confusion to accomplish your purposes on earth; that, in your good time, all nations and races may serve you in harmony around your heavenly throne; through Jesus Christ our Lord.
Amen.

For the Human Family
The Book of Common Prayer, p. 815

TEACHING TIP

Learners may wonder why we use prayers other people have written (and which have been collected in *The Book of Common Prayer*) rather than making up our own. The Prayer Book includes prayers for use at times when our own words fail us, when we find the words of others to be expressions of our own thoughts, and when we want to unite our praying with others. In class discussion, help the children to appreciate both extemporaneous and

formal prayers.

GATHERING

Make a display of items that might be connected to a birthday party, such as invitations, balloons, banners, candles, and games.

As the learners arrive, ask them to use markers or crayons to draw pictures of how the items might be used.

When all are gathered, say:

Leader: Father, we pray for your holy Catholic Church;

Learners: *That we all may be one.*

Leader: Grant that every member of the Church may truly and humbly serve you;

Learners: *That your Name may be glorified by all people.*

(Continue to the end, using Poster No. 14 from the Teacher's Packet).

The Prayers of the People, Form III
The Book of Common Prayer, p. 387

STORYTELLING (Time: 10 minutes)

Open the Bible, show the learners where the passage is, and read aloud *Psalm 6:9*:

“The Lord has heard my supplication; the Lord accepts my prayer.”

Finish with these words: The word of the Lord.

Learners respond: Thanks be to God.

1. Tell the story of a birthday party that includes different prayers from the section in *The Book of Common Prayer* called “Prayers and Thanksgivings” (pp. 809-841). Base the story on your own experiences or use the outline below. Use the items brought for the Gathering as props for your story.

2. Mary and Jeff are twins who will be celebrating their eighth birthday at a party. They have been helping their parents plan for it. Invitations were sent, the house has been decorated, and the guests will arrive soon.

3. They planned a game to begin that they thought everyone would enjoy. Then it was time to eat. They selected the following grace from page 835 in the Prayer Book:

“Bless, O Lord, your gifts to our use and use to your service; for Christ's sake. *Amen.*”

4. Toward the end of the party, before favors were distributed, everyone stood in a circle around Mary and Jeff while their godmother read the following prayer for a birthday (BCP, p. 830):

“O God, our times are in your hand: Look with favor, we pray, on your servants Mary and Jeff as they begin another year. Grant that they may grow in wisdom and grace, and strengthen their trust in your goodness all the days of their lives; through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*”

(Encourage the children to read at home prayers and thanksgivings from *The Book of Common Prayer* in the learners' book, *The Church Prays*, pp.19-21.)

CREATING *(Time: 15-20 minutes)*

Option 1. Prayer Illustration

Ahead of time, copy the prayer for a birthday from *The Book of Common Prayer*, p. 830, leaving the spaces for the name blank. Make a photocopy for each class member, and write in each child's name where appropriate. Give learners a piece of construction paper, crayons, markers, and their copy of the prayer. Attach the prayer to the paper and invite the learners to create illustrations around the prayer.

Option 2. Prayer Painting

Prayers are not always expressed in words. Artists use paint, clay, stone, and glass to offer their prayers to God.

Invite class members to create a prayer painting. Provide paper, paint, and brushes or other medium of your choosing.

EXPLORING THE STORY *(Time: 10-15 minutes)*

Option 1. Game, “I Will Pray For . . .”

Play a version of “Grandma's Attic.” Gather the learners in a circle and ask them to name something to pray for. (For ideas, refer to the categories at the Gathering and in Talking It Over.) Example: The first player says, “Today I will pray for peace in the world . . .” The whole group repeats this sentence in unison, then pauses for the second player to say, “Today I will pray for . . .” The pattern (of repetition and new prayer suggestions) continues until everyone has had a turn.

Option 2. Puzzle, “Prayer”

Use Puzzle Sheet IV.6 titled “Prayer.” Make copies for everyone in the class. Directions are given on the sheet.

This can be a class or small group activity, or learners may work independently.

Option 3. Prayer Book Skill

Provide Prayer Books for all the class members. Divide the class into two teams, making sure that older learners who are good readers have been included in each group. Ask one team to choose one or more prayers under each of the major headings in “Prayers and Thanksgivings” (BCP, pp. 809-841) to be read aloud as the other team listens. The second team calls out a general heading for each prayer as it is read. Before going on to the next prayer, the reader(s) will confirm the heading and title of the prayer.

Alternate the reading and listening between the teams.

TALKING IT OVER *(Time: 10-15 minutes)*

Talk with the learners about the many times people pray to God. Ask: When do we feel we need to pray? at what times? for what? How does the Prayer Book help us to pray?

Direct the class members' attention to the display used at the Gathering (above). Reread the prayer for a birthday (on the previous page). Ask questions related to each item in the display, such as:

- Birthday banner—Why do we celebrate birthdays?
- Candles—How do we grow in wisdom? Who can help us?
- Games—How do laughter and fun help us grow?
- Party hats—How does God take care of our needs?

INQUIRING *(Time: 10-20 minutes)*

As a group activity, compose a prayer with the class.

Begin by asking the class members to look through the Prayers and Thanksgivings (BCP, pp. 814-841) to discover the ways they begin and conclude. On a board or easel, write down the opening words of several prayers. Do the same with the ending phrases of prayers (before the Amen).

Invite the group to compose a prayer of their own for the class. Use a beginning and a conclusion chosen from the list.

IMAGINING *(Time: 10-20 minutes)*

Share a story starter: “One day I wanted to pray about” Invite the learners to use their imaginations and discuss how the story could continue. Encourage the learners to think of many times when they wanted to pray—such as while one of their parents was away, when a friend was sick, on a birthday, when they felt sad or lonely. Invite them to express those thoughts and feelings.

Individual response. The class members can write their own endings or draw pictures. Encourage them to express their own thoughts. Avoid giving the impression that there is a “right” way to end the story.

Group role play. The group can dramatize the story they have created. Simple props or brief narrations may accompany the role play.

MUSIC *(Time: 10-15 minutes)*

Introduce the hymn “How lovely is thy dwelling-place” (*The Hymnal 1982*, 517; *We Sing of God*, 82) by listening to it on the *Children Sing!* tape. Read the words aloud. Ask: Which lines do you like best? Why? How does this hymn help us to think about the passing of time?

CONTINUING ACTIVITY *(Time: 10-20 minutes)*

Class Prayer Book. At this session, label a page, “Prayers and Thanksgivings.” Groups of learners may gather to choose and copy prayers. Other groups can be at work on the illustrations. See Session 1 for details.

TAKE-HOME CARD

Card 33 has a picture of a stained glass window, a Scripture verse, facts

about the story, and a question to think about. Remind learners to add this card to their collection at home.

CLOSING

Conclude the session with the following prayer:

Give us grace to do your will in all that we undertake;
That our works may find favor in your sight.
Let us pray for our own needs and those of others.
(*The learners may add their own petitions.*)
In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

From *The Prayers of the People, Form III*
The Book of Common Prayer, p. 387

Stand in a circle and say:

Teacher: Go in peace to love and serve the Lord.

Learners: Thanks be to God.

TEACHER'S REFLECTION

Did you sense that the learners think of Prayers and Thanksgivings as helpful for their own use? Which of the prayers seemed particularly meaningful? Consider ways to continue using these prayers in future sessions.

LOOKING AHEAD

The next session focuses on the Seasons of the Church Year. Read one or more of the Collects for the seasons, from *The Book of Common Prayer*, pp. 157-261. Do any of these evoke particular memories or associations for you?

THE CHURCH IN THE PRAYER BOOK

Session 7

Seasons of the Church Year

FOCUS

The Church's people gather to pray continually and to celebrate what God has done in Jesus Christ. To help us remember the whole story, we observe a rhythm of appointed seasons: Advent through the time after Pentecost. The learners should be able to outline the principal seasons of the Church Year.

GETTING READY

A distinguishing mark of “liturgical Churches” (chiefly Orthodox, Catholic, Anglican or Episcopal, and Lutheran) is their observance of a Church Calendar, ordered in annual Seasons. In recent times, other Christian bodies have adopted a similiar calendar.

The cycle of the Seasons (Advent through Pentecost) is intended to highlight the life, death, resurrection, and ascension of Jesus Christ, Our Lord. It also calls to mind the continuing work of the Church as a people empowered by the Holy Spirit to do the work of ministry in the world. The word “liturgy” itself means “the work of the people.”

Primary-age learners can see the changing colors and other aspects of the Seasons.

The Church Year begins with Advent. The word comes from the Latin meaning coming or arrival. It is a four-week period of waiting and preparing for the birth of Jesus the Messiah, and for his coming again at the end of time. The season of Christmas celebrates the birth of Christ, God among us in the flesh. It lasts for twelve days.

The Feast of the Epiphany comes twelve days after Christmas Day. It is a Greek word meaning “appearance” and takes place on January 6. It celebrates the appearance of Jesus to the Gentiles, especially the Wise Men, and proclaims him to the world. The Season of Epiphany continues until Ash Wednesday.

Ash Wednesday is a day of fasting and penitence that is forty days before Easter, not including Sundays, and marks the beginning of Lent. The name comes from the tradition of placing ashes on the foreheads of worshipers in the sign of the cross. The word Lent comes from the Anglo-Saxon term “lencten,” referring to the lengthening of days in springtime. It is a period of fasting and preparation for the passion, death and resurrection of Jesus. Lent ends with Holy Week. The days preceding the death of Jesus.

Easter Day is the most important festival of the Church, when the Church celebrates the resurrection of Jesus Christ. Churches light the Paschal candle and once more acclaim “Alleluia.” Forty days later the Church observes Ascension Day when Jesus was taken up into heaven and returned to his heavenly throne.

The Day of Pentecost recalls the day when God sent the Holy Spirit in tongues of flame that descended above the heads of Jesus’ followers. Trinity Sunday falls a week later and is the only day in the church calendar that commemorates a basic belief (a doctrine) and not a person.

Following Trinity Sunday, the Church enters the Season After Pentecost

which leads again to Advent and the beginning of a new Church Year.

O Lord God Almighty, as you have taught us to call the evening, the morning, and the noonday one day; and have made the sun to know its going down: Dispel the darkness of our hearts, that by your brightness we may know you to be the true God and eternal light, living and reigning for ever and ever. *Amen.*

Order for Evening
The Book of Common Prayer, p. 110

TEACHING TIP

First-grade learners are just becoming familiar with the calendar and the passage of time through days, months, and years. Third-grade children have a better understanding of dates, and some may use personal calendars for planning their own activities and school assignments. Be sensitive to these wide variations in perception and ability among class members as you discuss the Church's seasons.

GATHERING

Display the strip poster of the Church seasons from Poster No. 15 in the Teacher's Packet. As the learners arrive, invite each one to locate an approximate position for this day's date on the poster. (If your church has a weekly bulletin that indicates the seasonal designation of the day, you may want to show it to the class.)

When all are present, say:

Leader: Father, we pray for your holy Catholic Church;
Learners: *That we all may be one.*

Leader: Grant that every member of the Church may truly and humbly serve you;
Learners: *That your Name may be glorified by all people.*

(Continue to the end, using Poster No. 14 from the Teacher's Packet).

The Prayers of the People, Form III
The Book of Common Prayer, p. 387

STORYTELLING *(Time: 10 minutes)*

Open the Bible and read aloud *Ecclesiastes 3:1* (KJV):

“To everything there is a season, and a time to every purpose under heaven.”

Finish with these words: The word of the Lord.
Learners respond: Thanks be to God.

1. Begin by describing the way Christians celebrate the life of Jesus. We remember his birth, his death, and his resurrection. Christians organize their

worship according to seasons that represent major pieces of Jesus' story.

2. The Church Year calendar is different from the regular calendar year we all live by. The Church Year begins with the First Sunday of Advent—always the Sunday nearest November 30.

3. Conduct a brief “walk” through the seasons of a Church Year, using Poster No. 15 from the Teacher's Packet:

- a. In *Advent*, we begin our preparations for celebrating Jesus' birth.
- b. At *Christmas*, we have a twelve-day observance of the Christ Child's birth.
- c. On January 6, we begin the season of *Epiphany*, when we remember Jesus' baptism and his life with his disciples.
- d. *Lent* is a six-week season that ends with Holy Week. We pray and think about what it means to be one of Christ's people. Maundy Thursday and Good Friday come at the end of Lent.
- e. *Easter* begins with a great celebration of Jesus' resurrection from the dead and lasts fifty days.
- f. On *Pentecost* Sunday, the Church begins the long season which lasts until Advent comes again. During these months, we hear again the many stories of Jesus' ministry. We pray for help in being Christ's people in the world.

4. Explain that *The Book of Common Prayer* leads us through the Church Year. In several places we can find information we need in the lectionary, collects, and tables.

(Encourage the children to look at home the selected prayers related to the Church Year in the learners' book, *The Church Prays*, pp. 23-24.)

CREATING *(Time: 15-20 minutes)*

Option 1. Church Seasons Ring

Provide materials for each learner to make a hanging ring with the colors and names of the Church seasons. (See Poster No. 15 in the Teacher's Packet.) Use strips of colored paper, ribbons, or thin lengths of fabric. Attach the strips to a ring. (Use a 4- or 6-inch ring of metal, plastic, or sturdy cardboard.) Add string to suspend the ring in a steady position when it is hung for display. As the class members work, talk with them about the colors for each season.

Option 2. Church Year Mosaic

Cut pieces of construction or other colored paper into tiny squares to be used in creating a mosaic of the Church Year. (You will need plenty of violet or blue for Advent, white for Christmas and Easter, violet for Lent, and green for Epiphany and the Sundays after Pentecost. Provide a few red bits to use for Pentecost Sunday.) Provide each learner with a strip of white paper to be marked off in blocks for the succession of seasons. The class members can label the blocks, then fill in the spaces with arrangements of the appropriate mosaic pieces.

EXPLORING THE STORY *(Time: 10-15 minutes)*

Option 1. Game, “Name the Season”

Play a guessing game called “Name the Season.” Review briefly the names of the seasons. Then give clues, one at a time. If no one guesses correctly on the first clue, give a second. If no one guesses after a third clue, move on to another season and come back later. Sample clues:

(Advent) 1. We prepare a wreath. 2. The wreath has four candles. 3. We get ready for the birth of Jesus.

(Christmas) 1. We get out the creche. 2. We decorate with lots of red and green. 3. We sing carols.

(Epiphany) 1. It is the season of light. 2. January 6 is the day the season begins. 3. We add the Wise Men to the creche.

(Lent) 1. We don't say Alleluia. 2. We don't have flowers on the altar. 3. The season lasts forty days.

(Easter) 1. The season starts in darkness and ends in light. 2. We say “Alleluia! Christ is risen.” 3. The church has many lilies.

(Pentecost) 1. Everything is red on the Feast Day when it begins. 2. It is many weeks before Advent comes again. 3. We celebrate the Church's birthday.

You may want to devise additional clues and repeat the game, and learners may want to take turns giving clues.

Option 2. Puzzle, “Seasons of the Church Year”

Use Puzzle Sheet IV.7 titled “Seasons of the Church Year.” Make copies for everyone in the class. Directions are given on the sheet.

This can be a class or small group activity, or learners may work independently.

Option 3. Locating the Seasonal Collects

Open the Prayer Book to the Collects (p. 158 or p. 211), and read aloud at least one Collect (appointed prayer) from each Church season.

TALKING IT OVER *(Time: 10-15 minutes)*

Use again Poster No. 15 from the Teacher's Packet to review the colors used for seasons of the Church Year. Ask: During the year, where do we see these colors? Who wears them? Who takes charge of changing the colors from one season to the next? How do the colors help us to remember the whole story of Jesus' life, death, and resurrection?

INQUIRING *(Time: 10-20 minutes)*

Cut out the seven labeled triangles provided on Poster No. 15 in the Teacher's Packet. (Prepare loops using removable tape so that the triangles can be attached to the poster during the activity.)

Ask the group to gather around the poster from the Teacher's Packet (No. 15) that shows the colors and names of the seasons. Explain that the triangles

represent seven days of the Church Year that we call “principal feasts.” These can be placed on the color blocks of the appropriate seasons.

Ask the learners to look in the Prayer Book, p. 15, to find and read aloud the names of the Principal Feasts. What are they?

First, ask the class members to help in placing the four Feast Day triangles that have seasons named for them: Christmas, Epiphany, Easter, and Pentecost.

Display the triangle for All Saints' Day. Ask: When is this feast celebrated? How do we remember the date? (Refer to Halloween, which comes the night before November 1.) Add the triangle near the end of the green block of the season after Pentecost.

Two triangles will be left: Ascension Day and Trinity Sunday. Ask the learners to think about locating these days on the calendar. (Recall that, after Jesus' resurrection, he made a number of appearances and then ascended into heaven. Ascension Day, then, comes near the end of the Easter season. At Pentecost, the Holy Spirit descended upon the apostles; that means there is a Trinity: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Trinity Sunday is the week after Pentecost Day.)

IMAGINING *(Time: 10-20 minutes)*

Share a story starter: “One Sunday I went to church and saw new colors. It was . . .” Invite the learners to use their imaginations and discuss how the story could continue. What was the new color? What did it mean? How would the color make you feel? How would it help you pray?

Individual response. The class members can write their own endings or draw pictures. Encourage them to express their own thoughts. Avoid giving the impression that there is a “right” way to end the story.

Group role play. Designate an area for setting up a church scene with altar, pulpit, and lectern (a small table and two chairs could be used). Gather fabric or sheets of paper in each of the liturgical colors used at your church. Let the learners form teams to role play the changing of the colors—explaining to one another what they are doing and why.

MUSIC *(Time: 10-15 minutes)*

Sing again “How lovely is thy dwelling-place” (*The Hymnal 1982*, 517; *We Sing of God*, 82) with the *Children Sing!* tape. Read the words aloud. Ask: Which lines do you like best? Why? How does this hymn help us to think about the passing of time?

CONTINUING ACTIVITY *(Time: 10-20 minutes)*

Class Prayer Book. At this session, label a page “Seasons of the Church Year.” Groups of learners may gather to choose and copy prayers. Other groups can be at work on the illustrations. See Session 1 for details.

TAKE-HOME CARD

Card 34 has a picture of a stained glass window, a Scripture verse, facts about the story, and a question to think about. Remind learners to add this

card to their collection at home.

CLOSING

Conclude the session with the following prayer:

Give us grace to do your will in all that we undertake;
That our works may find favor in your sight.

Let us pray for our own needs and those of others.

(The learners may add their own petitions.)

In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

From *The Prayers of the People, Form III*
The Book of Common Prayer, p. 387

Stand in a circle and say:

Teacher: Go in peace to love and serve the Lord.

Learners: Thanks be to God.

TEACHER'S REFLECTION

Like summer, fall, winter, and spring, the seasons of the Church Year are enduring—establishing the order for a lifetime of prayer and worship. Are the learners familiar with the names and sequence of the seasons? Do they understand the repetitive aspect of each Church Year? How can you continue to help learners mark the seasons and follow the Church Year calendar?

LOOKING AHEAD

The next session introduces Saints' days in the Church's calendar. Think about a saint you are familiar with and consider the ways this saint's life and deeds have enriched your faith.

THE CHURCH IN THE PRAYER BOOK

Session 8

The Calendar of Saints

FOCUS

The Book of Common Prayer includes the names of Saints of the Church and tells us the dates on which to remember them. The learners should be able to name three or more Saints.

GETTING READY

The Book of Common Prayer includes a Calendar of Saints, beginning on page 19. In addition to dates for celebrating the lives of all the New Testament Saints traditionally honored by the Church, days are established for remembering many others who lived in all periods of the Church's history. A considerable number of the names represent important figures in the story of the Episcopal Church.

Saints on the Calendar that are not from the Bible can be found in a separate book of the Church called *Lesser Feasts and Fasts*.

Some of the saints on the calendar are:

Nicholas of Myra was a bishop in the fourth century. Since the sixth century he has been known as the patron saint of sailors and children. Tradition portrays him as the bearer of gifts to children. He provides a dowery for some poor young girls, by dropping gold into their stockings hung by the fireplace to dry. The Dutch introduced St. Nicholas to New York in colonial times and Americans adapted the legend as Santa Claus.

Teresa of Avila was born in Spain in 1515. She was sensitive to God's presence as a very young child. As a Carmelite nun she was a scholar and mystic whose simple lifestyle and brilliant visions brought her respect. She spent twenty-five years traveling through Spain and established seventeen convents despite imprisonment and repeated illnesses. Teresa of Avila was a prolific writer whose letters reveal her skill as an administrator, friend, mystic, and energetic leader who dedicated her life fully to loving and serving God.

Phillips Brooks was one of the greatest preachers of the nineteenth century and the author of the carol "O little town of Bethlehem." For many years he served as rector of Trinity Church in Boston where his reputation as a forceful preacher and spiritual leader led to his election as Bishop of Massachusetts in 1891.

Absalom Jones was born a slave on a Delaware plantation in 1746. He taught himself to read, attended a Quaker school, and purchased his freedom in 1784. While living in Philadelphia he attended an Episcopal church that made blacks sit in the balcony. Jones and others formed a new congregation of black Episcopalians. He was ordained a priest by Bishop William White in 1802 and served St. Thomas Church in Philadelphia. He spoke out against slavery and preached about God's opposition to injustice and oppression.

Almighty God, you have surrounded us with a great cloud of witnesses: Grant that we, encouraged by the good example of your

servants, may persevere in running the race that is set before us, until at last we may with them attain to your eternal joy; through Jesus Christ, the pioneer and perfecter of our faith, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. *Amen.*

Of a Saint

The Book of Common Prayer, p. 250

TEACHING TIP

Primary-age learners are interested in people past and present. At this age level, they honor national heroes such as George Washington, astronauts, and sports figures. It is important that they be helped to know and appreciate the Christian saints. Help class members to understand that the saints were real people.

GATHERING

Place the calendar poster (No. 16) from the Teacher's Packet on a display board or wall area. On two strips of paper, write "June 24—St. John the Baptist" and "August 15—St. Mary the Virgin." Add these strips to the spaces for June and August.

As the learners arrive, call their attention to the poster and the names that have been added. Encourage them to ask why the strips were added, and to wonder about other possible additions to the calendar.

When all are present, say:

Leader: Father, we pray for your holy Catholic Church;

Learners: *That we all may be one.*

Leader: Grant that every member of the Church may truly and humbly serve you;

Learners: *That your Name may be glorified by all people.*

(Continue to the end, using Poster No. 14 from the Teacher's Packet).

The Prayers of the People, Form III

The Book of Common Prayer, p. 387

STORYTELLING *(Time: 10 minutes)*

Open the Bible and read aloud *Revelations 22:21*:

"The grace of the Lord Jesus be with all the saints. Amen."

Finish with these words: The word of the Lord.

Learners respond: Thanks be to God.

1. Christians all over the world, in many traditions, remember Saints of the Church on established days. The Episcopal Church has a Calendar of the Church Year (*The Book of Common Prayer, pp. 15-30*) that lists the days for honoring Saints.

2. As you show the calendar to the learners, call their attention to the days printed in bold black print. These are Holy Days on which the Church celebrates feasts. Some of these bold-letter days honor Saints from the New Testament and others remind us of important events.

3. Other saints on the Calendar (not in bold print) are from all parts of the world and every period of Christian history. Their dates are not considered major feast days. You may want to name some of these persons whose names are familiar to the children, such as St. Patrick (March 17), St. Nicholas (December 6), or St. Francis (October 4).

4. Christians honor men and women who have been wonderful examples of faithfulness to Jesus Christ. We call such people “saints” because their love, humility, bravery, and accomplishments inspire us all. Many saints were martyrs (died for their faith). Reading stories about the saints helps us to see more clearly how people’s lives are changed by their faith in God.

5. Choose a Saint (possibly the one for whom your church is named or one whose Feast Day is on or near the date of this session). Help the learners to find the date on the Calendar.

6. Tell the story of one or more of the saints described in the Getting Ready (above).

(Encourage the children to read at home prayers from the Collects for Saints in the learners' book, *The Church Prays*, pp 26-27.)

CREATING *(Time: 15-20 minutes)*

Option 1. Saints Banner

Provide each learner with a 9 x 12-inch piece of felt, glue, and a variety of other materials such as ribbon, rickrack, sequins, and glitter. Invite the learners to make a banner for the Saints. The class members may choose a particular saint or they may wish to symbolize all the saints.

Option 2. Saint's Day Reminder

Invite the class members to make “reminders” for a particular Saint's day. Distribute sheets of construction paper, crayons, and markers. Write the name of a Saint and the date of celebration on the paper. The learners may then decorate and display their reminders to offer thanks for that Saint on that day. If they wish, individuals may write the Collect for the Saint's day on the reminder.

EXPLORING THE STORY *(Time: 10-15 minutes)*

Option 1. Game, “Guess the Saints”

Play a game of charades based on the lives and acts of Saints the class members have studied during this unit. Divide the class members into two groups. Give each group a name or deed performed by a biblical Saint. For example:

- Mary is visited by the angel Gabriel (Unit II, Session 4)
- Joseph flees with his family to Egypt (Unit II, Session 5)
- Jesus and the disciples share the last supper (Unit III, Session 1)
- Jesus prays at the Garden of Gethsemane with Peter, James, and John

(Unit III, Session 7)

- Mary Magdalene visits the tomb (Unit III, Session 8)

Option 2. Puzzle, “The Calendar of Saints”

Use Puzzle Sheet IV.8 titled “The Calendar of Saints.” Make copies for everyone in the class. Directions are given on the sheet.

This can be a class or small group activity, or learners may work independently.

Option 3. Finding the Calendar of the Saints

The Prayer Book includes Collects (short prayers) to be used on the days of all the New Testament Saints. They begin on page 237, under the heading “Holy Days.” The first Saint honored in the Church Year is Andrew on November 30.

Divide the group into pairs. With one member of the pair looking at the Calendar of Saints, beginning on page 19 of *The Book of Common Prayer*, and the other learner using the Collects, beginning on page 237, match and read as many Collects for Saints as time allows.

TALKING IT OVER (*Time: 10-15 minutes*)

Saints on the Church's Calendar represent every century in Christian history. The list of saints is revised from time to time so that the calendar can include more recent outstanding Christians.

Several saints have been added to the Calendar since the present Prayer Book (1979) was published. Talk with the class members about Jonathan Daniels, whose day is August 14. He was born in 1939. In 1962 he enrolled in the Episcopal Divinity School in Boston, Massachusetts. In the summer of 1965 he joined those in Alabama who were seeking freedom from racism in this country. More details of his life are included in *Lesser Feasts and Fasts*.

Ask: Why is Jonathan Daniels remembered? What did he do to help his nation? How did he live out his faith?

INQUIRING (*Time: 10-20 minutes*)

Turn again to the “Calendar Poster” (No. 16) from the Teacher's Packet that was used for the Gathering (above). Lead the group in preparing additional strips with dates and names of Saints to be added to the calendar—at least one for each month. Some possible choices are listed below. Depending upon time available and the learners' level of interest, you may want to choose additional saints. As the names are added, talk about each one:

January 21—St. Agnes: She was a young Christian in Rome who refused to worship false gods. She was killed at the age of twelve during a time of terrible persecution of Christians.

February 24—St. Matthias the Apostle: He was chosen by the apostles to replace Judas, who had betrayed Jesus.

March 19—St. Joseph: He was a carpenter and the husband of Mary, mother of Jesus.

April 25—St. Mark the Evangelist: The second Gospel bears his name. He may have traveled with Paul and Barnabas.

May 1—St. Philip and St. James, Apostles: These are two of Jesus' twelve Apostles. This James is known as "James the Less" (to distinguish him from the other apostle James).

June 24—St. John the Baptist: This is the date for celebrating his birthday. He was the child of Elizabeth and a cousin of Jesus. He baptized Jesus.

July 22—St. Mary Magdalene: She was a follower of Jesus. She is one of the women who found the tomb empty on Easter morning.

August 15—St. Mary the Virgin: She was the mother of Jesus.

September 21—St. Matthew, Apostle and Evangelist: He was a tax collector who followed Jesus. The first Gospel is named for him.

October 18—St. Luke the Evangelist: He wrote the *Gospel of Luke* and the *Acts of the Apostles*. He traveled with the apostle Paul.

November 30—St. Andrew the Apostle: He was a brother of Peter, and one of the first to be called by Jesus as a disciple.

December 27—St. John, Apostle and Evangelist: He was a fisherman called by Jesus to be a disciple. The *Gospel of John* is named for him.

IMAGINING *(Time: 10-20 minutes)*

Share a story starter: "_____ is my favorite Saint because" Invite the learners to use their imaginations and discuss how the story could continue. Ask: Who is your choice? Why? (Class members might like to choose someone they know whom they would nominate to be a saint. If so, their stories would include the reasons for their selection.)

Individual response. The class members can write their own endings or draw pictures. Encourage them to express their own thoughts. Avoid giving the impression that there is a "right" way to end the story.

Group role play. The group can act out a scene from the life of a Saint of their own choosing. Simple costumes may be used if they are available. Examples: Peter fishing and being called to follow Jesus; Paul on the road to Damascus, overcome by a great light and hearing the voice of Christ; Mary Magdalene washing the feet of Jesus.

MUSIC *(Time: 10-15 minutes)*

Sing the familiar hymn, "I sing a song of the saints of God" (*The Hymnal 1982*, 293; *We Sing of God*, 49) with the *Children Sing!* tape. Point out to the learners that the doctor in the first stanza is St. Luke (October 18 on the Church Calendar); the queen is St. Margaret, Queen of Scotland (November 16); the shepherdess is Joan of Arc, a brave heroine of France (not included in the Episcopal calendar, but her day is May 30); the soldier is Martin of Tours, a preacher of the Gospel (November 11); the one slain by a beast was Ignatius of Antioch, a bishop of the second century (October 17).

CONTINUING ACTIVITY *(Time: 10-20 minutes)*

Class Prayer Book. At this session, label a page "Saints." Groups of learners may gather to choose and copy prayers. Other groups can be at work on the illustrations. See Session 1 for details.

TAKE-HOME CARD

Card 35 has a picture of a stained glass window, a Scripture verse, facts about the story, and a question to think about. Remind learners to add this card to their collection at home.

CLOSING

Conclude the session with the following prayer:

Give us grace to do your will in all that we undertake;
That our works may find favor in your sight.
Let us pray for our own needs and those of others.
(*The learners may add their own petitions.*)
In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

From The Prayers of the People, Form III
The Book of Common Prayer, p. 387

Stand in a circle and say:

Teacher: Go in peace to love and serve the Lord.

Learners: Thanks be to God.

TEACHER'S REFLECTION

Have the learners become more familiar with the Saints on the calendar of the Church Year? Can they name at least three saints that are on the calendar in *The Book of Common Prayer*? In what ways can the learners be reminded of the Saints' stories in coming years?

LOOKING AHEAD

Session 9 has been prepared for use on Pentecost Day. It will not matter if this date occurs before Sessions 1-8 have been completed. The learners' book, *The Church Prays*, includes the Collect for Pentecost. Consider how to incorporate your congregation's plans for celebrating this Principal Feast of the Church.

THE CHURCH IN THE PRAYER BOOK

Session 9

The Church Celebrates Pentecost

FOCUS

The celebration of the Day of Pentecost follows the season of Easter. The weeks thereafter begin the longest portion of the Church Year. On this day we rejoice in the presence of God's Spirit with Christ's people. The learners should be able to locate Trinity Sunday and the Sundays after Pentecost in the Church Calendar. They should also be able to say why the Day of Pentecost is a "Principal Feast" of the Church.

GETTING READY

Pentecost is one of the Principal Feasts of the Church—with Easter, Ascension Day, Trinity Sunday, All Saints' Day, Christmas Day, and The Epiphany. (See the BCP, p. 15.)

The Day of Pentecost is celebrated by Christian worshipers as a time to recall the coming of the Holy Spirit upon the twelve apostles in Jerusalem.

The momentous event described in *Acts 2* occurred at the time of the major Jewish feast of Pentecost when people from many nations gathered in Jerusalem each year. This celebration was also called Feast of Weeks, Feast of Harvest, or Feast of First Fruits. It came fifty days after the beginning of the Passover season and was timed to occur as wheat was being harvested, a few weeks after the April barley harvest.

At the Feast of Pentecost, the disciples of Jesus were gathered in the Upper Room behind locked doors. They were afraid they would be arrested and put to death, just as Jesus had been. Suddenly, a wind blew through the room and tongues of fire appeared over the heads of the people in the room. The Holy Spirit had come to them just as Jesus had told them it would.

From that moment they went forth into the world to tell the story of Jesus of Nazareth, who is the Son of God, and to preach the Good News of Jesus to all the people. On that day, Peter preached to more than 3,000 people who asked to be baptized and follow Jesus.

Our Christian Pentecost is a festival of the Holy Spirit. The day offers many possibilities for congregational celebrations involving persons in all age groups.

Almighty God, on this day you opened the way of eternal life to every race and nation by the promised gift of your Holy Spirit: Shed abroad this gift throughout the world by the preaching of the Gospel, that it may reach to the ends of the earth; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. *Amen.*

The Day of Pentecost: Whitsunday
The Book of Common Prayer, p. 227

TEACHING TIP

In preparation for this session on Pentecost, consider ways to involve the learners in the celebration of the congregation. Note especially the church's worship bulletin for citations in the Prayer Book, hymns that will be sung,

and decorations or processions that may be part of the service. The Pentecost “May Pole” game (below), and the greeting cards (Creating, Option 1) could be incorporated into the congregation’s activities.

GATHERING

Ahead of time, use red construction paper to make nine large block letters (approximately 5 x 7 inches), to spell the word “Pentecost.” Place the letters, out of order, on a table. As the learners arrive, ask them to form a word using all the letters.

When all are present, say the following:

Leader: Father, we pray for your holy Catholic Church;

Learners: *That we all may be one.*

Leader: Grant that every member of the Church may truly and humbly serve you;

Learners: *That your Name may be glorified by all people.*

(Continue to the end, using Poster No. 14 from the Teacher's Packet).

The Prayers of the People, Form III
The Book of Common Prayer, p. 387

STORYTELLING *(Time: 10 minutes)*

Open the Bible and read aloud *Acts 2:32-33*:

“This Jesus God raised up, and of that all of us are witnesses. Being therefore exalted at the right hand of God, and having received from the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit, he has poured out this which you both see and hear.”

Finish with these words: The word of the Lord.

Learners respond: Thanks be to God.

In your own words, retell the story of Pentecost from *Acts 2:1-12*. Include the following:

1. Seven weeks had passed since Jesus rose from the dead (at Easter). In that time, Jesus had ascended into heaven. He had told his apostles that they should tell everyone in the world what they had seen, and he promised that God's Spirit would be with them.
2. The apostles were all together, at the time of the Jewish feast of Pentecost, when many visitors were in Jerusalem. The Holy Spirit descended upon them with mighty wind and tongues of fire.
3. The apostles began to speak, all at once, in other languages. People heard this happening and came to investigate the sound. They were amazed and asked, “And how is it that we hear, each of us, in our own native language?”
4. Peter realized that this was the event that God had promised. He began to preach about who Jesus was and what God was doing.

5. The Church celebrates Pentecost each year, fifty days after Easter Day. Trinity Sunday always comes the week after the Day of Pentecost, and all the Sundays of the Church Year following that are called “Sundays after Pentecost.”

6. You may want to use the “Church Seasons,” Poster No. 15 from the Teacher's Packet, to show how Pentecost relates to the other Principal Feasts. (These items were also suggested in Session 7, Inquiring.)

(Encourage the children to read at home selected prayers related to Pentecost in the learners' book, *The Church Prays*, pp. 30-31.)

CREATING *(Time: 15-20 minutes)*

Option 1. Pentecost Greetings

Using red and white construction paper, crayons, and markers, create Pentecost greeting cards that can be shared with persons who are unable to attend the congregation's Pentecost celebration (hospital patients, nursing home residents, or shut-ins). Possible themes for decorating the cards would be symbols of Pentecost, a globe of the world, and faces of many kinds of persons. (Possible symbols: Flames of fire; dove; lamps.) Add the words, “Happy Pentecost Day!”

Option 2. Tissue Pentecost Flames

Ask the learners to think for a moment about tongue-like flames of fire. What are the shapes and varied colors? Then provide each one with torn pieces of red and yellow tissue paper. Encourage the group to attach the pieces to sheets of white construction paper (using diluted white glue applied with paint brushes). Avoid giving the impression that particular shapes are expected; encourage experimentation.

EXPLORING THE STORY *(Time: 10-15 minutes)*

Option 1. Game, “Pentecost May Pole”

Attach red and white streamers of ribbon or crepe paper to a central pole. A stick anchored in a pot of sand or pebbles would be suitable, but you may want to use an outdoor pole or lamppost. (Be sure to have enough streamers for all class members. They should be at least six feet in length.)

Invite the learners to weave the streamers around the pole, with red ones going in one direction and white in another. The group may want to chant or sing as they move. (See suggestion under Music, below.)

Option 2. Puzzle, “Pentecost”

Use Puzzle Sheet IV.9 titled “Pentecost.” Make copies for everyone in the class. Directions are given on the sheet.

This can be a class or small group activity, or learners may work independently.

Option 3. Pentecost in the Prayer Book

Invite the learners to work individually or in small groups to examine references to Pentecost in *The Book of Common Prayer*. Note the list of Principal Feasts on page 15 and the prayers on pages 227-228.

TALKING IT OVER (*Time: 10-15 minutes*)

Talk with the learners about Pentecost as a Principal Feast of the Church. Ask: Why do Christians consider the Day of Pentecost to be a very important celebration? What happened that we want to remember?

In the discussion, focus on our gratitude for the coming of the Holy Spirit upon the apostles—and the beginning of the Christian church. *The Book of Common Prayer* and *The Hymnal 1982* provide prayers and hymns for the joyful celebration of this Feast. Spend some time reviewing the customs of your own congregation at Pentecost. What happens on that day? Who takes part?

What color do we associate with Pentecost? Why?

We use red to remind us of all the courageous Christians who have lived and died for their faith. We also remember the flames of the Holy Spirit.

An older name for Pentecost was Whitsunday (White Sunday). Explain that Pentecost was a day of baptisms, and the people being baptized would wear white garments.

INQUIRING (*Time: 10-20 minutes*)

Use a globe or a map of the world. Ask the learners to point to countries they have heard about (lived in or visited). Discuss the languages spoken by the different peoples. Talk about the presence of the Church in all parts of the world (citing examples of the Anglican Worldwide Communion). We find Christians everywhere because the apostles who were present at Pentecost told people about their risen Lord. People are still sharing this good news, and we can do the same.

Close by reading aloud the collect for The Day of Pentecost: Whitsunday (BCP, p. 227). See Getting Ready, above.

IMAGINING (*Time: 10-20 minutes*)

Share a story starter: “Seven weeks after Jesus’ resurrection, I was a visitor in Jerusalem surrounded by people from many countries. Suddenly we heard . . .” Invite the learners to use their imaginations and discuss how the story could continue. Ask: Where did the sound come from? What was so unusual about what happened? How did it feel to be there?

Individual response. The class members can write their own endings or draw pictures. Encourage them to express their own thoughts. Avoid giving the impression that there is a “right” way to end the story.

Group role play. The group can take part in a dramatization of the Pentecost scene. Read aloud the following words and phrases from the Pentecost account in the *Acts of the Apostles*: mighty wind, tongues of fire, bewildered, filled with the spirit, amazed, astonished, perplexed, sneered, drunk with new wine.

Ask the learners to imagine that they were actually there, seeing the flames and hearing the wind. How would it feel to the apostles? How would they look when the crowd that came to investigate?

Invite everyone to assume the role of either an apostle or a member of the crowd, and to “freeze” in a position that reflects the strong feelings and excitement in the story. No one speaks; the group forms a tableau. (Consider taking a picture with a camera, to be enjoyed later.) If the group is large, more than one tableau can be formed.

MUSIC *(Time: 10-15 minutes)*

Sing “Like the murmur of the dove's song” (*The Hymnal 1982*, 513; *We Sing of God*, 81) with the *Children Sing!* tape.

Learners may wish to make hand motions like doves flying as they sing.

After the group has become familiar with the hymn, divide into two groups for singing:

Group 1: Like the murmur of the dove's song,
like the challenge of her flight,

Group 2: like the vigor of the wind's rush, like
the new flame's eager might:

All: come, Holy Spirit, come.

Repeat several times.

This hymn could be used for the “May Pole” game (above), with the red streamers as Group 1 and white streamers as Group 2.

CONTINUING ACTIVITY *(Time: 10-20 minutes)*

Class Prayer Book. At this session, continue work on the contents. Label a page, “Pentecost.” Groups of learners may gather to choose and copy prayers. Other groups can be at work on the illustrations. See Session 1 for details.

TAKE-HOME CARD

Card 36 has a picture of stained glass window, a Scripture verse, facts about the story, and a question to think about. Remind learners to add this card to their collection at home.

CLOSING

Conclude the session with the following prayer:

Give us grace to do your will in all that we undertake;

That our works may find favor in your sight.

Let us pray for our own needs and those of others.

(The learners may add their own petitions.)

In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

From The Prayers of the People, Form III

The Book of Common Prayer, p. 387

Stand in a circle and say:

Teacher: Go in peace to love and serve the Lord.

Learners: Thanks be to God.

TEACHER'S REFLECTION

What evidence did you observe that the learners grasp the significance of the Feast of Pentecost? Are they able to see that this Principal Feast celebrates more than just the birthday of the Church?