

What Goes Around Comes Around

Overview of the
Liturgical Cycle



Preschool
Catechist Lesson One

Prepare

PREPARE YOUR HEART PREPARE YOUR CLASSROOM

Catechist's Prayer - *Thank You, Lord, for calling me to this ministry of teaching. I cannot do it alone, so I ask You to be present with me in every moment of training, planning, preparation, calling the students, and in teaching them. Help me to prepare well. Use me as an instrument to bring the students closer to You. Bless each child in my class. Be with them now, before classes begin, during class, and at home as they take part in their Home Lessons. In Jesus' Name, I pray. Amen.*

Contact the parents of your students at least one week before class starts to introduce yourself and to remind them of the classroom dates and location. Ask them to arrive early so that they can find the classroom.

Read through your lesson carefully to become familiar with the lesson content.

Classroom preparation - Arrive 20-30 minutes early. Prepare a prayer space with a small, low table, a cloth of the current liturgical color, a candle, a Bible, a small statue or image of Jesus, and a standing crucifix. (See the *Introduce Your Prayer Table* part of this month's lesson for details.) If there is not a low table available in your classroom, a covered box or plastic storage bin can work well. There will be opportunities throughout the year to add other seasonally-appropriate pieces. Be ready to greet the students who arrive early.

MATERIALS NEEDED

PROVIDED

- ◆ supply box
- ◆ prayer center items
- ◆ *Priest Paper Doll* (optional)
- ◆ *Seasonal Colors Pictures*
- ◆ felt board
- ◆ *Lesson 1 Felt Board Images*
- ◆ *The Colors Fathers Wears*
- ◆ *Chasuble Template* (optional)
- ◆ gold cross stickers (optional)
- ◆ glue sticks (optional)
- ◆ green, purple, red, white crayons (optional)
- ◆ colored construction paper for the "Living Calendar" activity

FROM HOME

- ◆ classroom decorations
- ◆ additional prayer center items (candle, statue or image of Jesus, and a Bible)
- ◆ audio player and kid-friendly music that can be suddenly turned off and on. (See the "Living Calendar Activity." See the "Praise and Prayer" QR code for a music suggestion.)

Prepare

PREPARE FOR CRAFTS PREPARE YOUR ACTIVITIES



Lesson 1 Felt Board - Use a felt board and the images provided to assemble a simplified version of a liturgical calendar.

Preparation:

- ◆ Color, cut, and laminate (optional) the *Lesson 1 Felt Board Images*.
- ◆ Attach felt pieces or Velcro to the back of the images, so they stick to the board.



Living Calendar Activity - This active game plays a little like a cake walk. The goal is to review the colors of the Church year and reinforce the main characteristic of each season.

Preparation:

- ◆ Place the sheets of red, purple, white, and green construction paper in a circle on the floor in any order. You will need the same number of sheets of paper as you have students in your class.
- ◆ You will need a source of kid-friendly music that can be suddenly turned off and on to indicate when students should stop and go. See the “Praise and Prayer” QR code for a music suggestion.



What is Father Wearing? Craft - Reinforce the lesson while making connections to what students will see when they come to Mass.

Materials Needed:

- ◆ *The Colors Father Wears* page (one per catechist and student)
- ◆ For an added decorative option, add small gold cross stickers to the chasubles.
- ◆ Chasuble decorations (choose the option that best fits the skills of your students):
 - 1) For Option 1: Provide white, green, purple, and red crayons and direct students to use the proper color on each chasuble on *The Colors Father Wears* page.
NOTE: We recommend you put all the other colors of crayons away so they are not available for this activity.
 - 2) For Option 2: Use the *Chasuble Template* page and print it on purple, green, white, and red paper. Cut them out in advance, and then students can glue them on *The Colors Father Wears* page.

Preparation:

- ◆ Decide which of the chasuble decoration options will work best with your students and make the necessary preparations.
- ◆ Make a sample to become familiar with the process and to show students a finished product.



Saintly Visitor - Recommendation for this month: invite a priest or deacon (or a sacristan or volunteer) for a brief show and tell about the colors he wears to Mass, to take place either in your classroom or in the sacristy (Lesson Connection). If you use this option, be sure to show him the color references in the “Discussing the Seasons” section of the Lesson to see the specific and very simple wording the lesson uses to describe the seasons. Scan the QR code for scripts and costume suggestions.



Lesson Basics

What Goes Around Comes Around

The Liturgical Year

The liturgical year, sometimes called the “Church Year,” celebrates the cycle of events in the life of Christ. The First Sunday in Advent marks the beginning of the “New Year” for the Church. The Church has a beautiful, yet mysterious, rhythm to its seasons that renews us as we participate fully in them. Just as the calendar year follows the sun, so too the Church year follows the life of the Son.

As each family learns and discovers the wisdom of the Church in its sacred celebrations, they will be transformed in their participation of the liturgy. In this lesson, you will discover the various liturgical colors which are associated with the seasons of the Church year.

The first season of each liturgical year is Advent, which is centered on the preparation for the birth of Jesus. The Christmas season follows during which time we celebrate Jesus’ birth, the feast of the Holy Family, Mary Mother of God, and Epiphany. This season ends with the Baptism of Jesus. The next part of the cycle finds us in Ordinary Time for a short while, until we begin the seasons of Lent, Holy Week, and Easter. Easter Sunday is the greatest Christian feast of the liturgical year. After a wonderful, long celebration of the Easter season, which includes the Ascension and Pentecost, we find ourselves returning to Ordinary Time. This season continues well into the fall of the calendar year where we will finish the liturgical year with the great celebration of Christ the King.

So it is, during the liturgical year, that Catholics receive from the Church a way to reflect upon *and* live out the mysteries of our salvation in Jesus. Praise be to God!

FOCUS:

The liturgical year is the Church’s way of marking the seasons that remember the life of Jesus and His Church.

GOAL:

To teach students about the liturgical seasons and to understand that there is a rhythm to the seasons of the Church.

What Goes Around Comes Around

OVERVIEW OF THE LITURGICAL CYCLE
Preschool Catechist Lesson Plan—Lesson 1, Cycle C/A

To Note for This Month:



BIBLE VERSE

At this beginning of the year, instead of a Bible verse, we are focusing on the way Catholics often begin their time of prayer with the Sign of the Cross. Making this ancient gesture reminds us of the Trinity, of the saving work of Jesus, and that we are covered with His love. Pay special attention to the directions in the Praise and Prayer section below.



SAINTLY VISITOR

Who is visiting the classroom today? Follow the QR code in the “Prepare” section of this lesson for scripts and costume suggestions. Highly recommended for this month is a priest or deacon from your parish showing the four main chasuble colors worn at Mass (Lesson Connection).



WELCOME

- ◆ Welcome students as they arrive and invite each one, by name, into your classroom space.
- ◆ Give each a name tag.
- ◆ Take attendance.



PRAISE AND PRAYER

- ◆ Gather the students into a circle near your prayer center. Begin with an active song or two in praise of the Lord. (To help with preparation, follow the QR code to hear suggested songs.)
- ◆ Introduce your prayer table:
 - ◇ Each time we meet we will come here to pray.
 - ◇ Let's start by lighting our candle. The light reminds us that Jesus is with us. (You can reinforce this each month as you light the candle by saying aloud, “Jesus is the Light of the world.”)
 - ◇ We have a Bible - God's Holy Word. Let's put it here in an important place.
 - ◇ This is our statue (or image) of Jesus to remind us that He is here with us.
 - ◇ What color is our prayer table cloth? Green, just like we see in church right now.
 - ◇ We will gather here every time we meet so we can pray together.
- ◆ Open with the Sign of the Cross. Some students may not know how to make the Sign of the Cross, so go slowly so they can follow your example.



A small sticker on the back of a child's right hand is a good reminder when they are learning to make the Sign of the Cross.



Dear Father in heaven, thank You for bringing us here today and for the wonderful gift of the Church. When we go to church we know You are there in a special way and what we see and hear points to how much You love us. Please bless our class today. We love You, Jesus! Amen.

Close with the Sign of the Cross.



LESSON

Materials Needed:

- ◆ Seasonal Colors Pictures
- ◆ Lesson 1 Felt Board Images
- ◆ Felt board



Discussing the Seasons

Look outside. What season is it now?
How can you tell?

What are the other seasons? (The four seasons are spring, summer, autumn/fall, and winter.)



Have a child hold up the picture of autumn/fall.

What season do you think this is? (Autumn/fall)

Why? (Leaves are turning colors)

What are the colors in this picture that remind us of fall? (Orange)



Have a child hold up the picture of the snowman.

What season do you think this is? (Winter)

Why? (Snowman, hats/mittens)

What are some of the colors in this picture that remind us of winter? (White)



Have a student hold up the picture of the children planting.

What season do you think this is? (Spring)

Why? (Planting seeds)

What are some of the colors in this picture that remind us of spring? (Green)



Have a child hold up the picture of the pool and sun.

What season do you think this is? (Summer)

Why? (Swimming)

What are some of the colors in this picture that remind us of summer?
(Yellow)



These are the outdoor seasons that are based on the weather. The Catholic Church has seasons too, but they are different than outdoor seasons. The seasons in the Church revolve around the life of Jesus Christ. Each Church season has a special color and that is what we will learn about today.

When we look inside a Catholic Church we can see that it has seasons and special colors, too. The Church is decorated in these colors, and the priest wears the different colors during various seasons of the Church year. These colors help to remind us of important times in Jesus' life.



Use the felt board pieces to demonstrate the colors and complete a very simplified version of a liturgical calendar.

Hold up the purple wedge that says, "Jesus is Coming," and place it on your felt board.

- ◆ For the Church, purple is a color of preparation.
- ◆ When Father [name] is wearing purple it means it is a season when we are waiting and getting ready for a big celebration.
- ◆ The very beginning of the Church year is called Advent and Father is wearing purple to remind us to get ready for the great celebration of Jesus being born at Christmas.



Hold up the white Christmas wedge.

- ◆ What does white make you think of? (Snow, things that are very clean)
- ◆ For the Church, white is the color of celebration. It is also a reminder of joy, peace, and purity.
- ◆ Father [name] will wear white for great celebrations like Christmas and Easter.
- ◆ Our first season of celebration is Christmas.



Hold up the first green "Jesus Teaches" wedge.

- ◆ Green is the color that the priest wears most of the time. We call this time Ordinary Time.
- ◆ Green reminds us of growing things, and Ordinary Time is a time for us to grow in our love of God.



Hold up the purple wedge that says, "Jesus Fasts and Prays."

- ◆ Next we are back to purple. Who remembers what purple means? (It means we are getting ready for a big celebration.)
- ◆ We call this season Lent and Father [name] wears purple to remind us to do things to get ready for the great celebration of Easter.



Hold up the red wedge.

- ◆ For the Church, red is a color worn to show celebrations of great love.
- ◆ Father [name] wears red on the day we celebrate when the Holy Spirit came, and on the days of some saint celebrations.
- ◆ He also wears red on Good Friday, a day Jesus showed His great love for us.



Hold up the white "Jesus Rises" wedge.

- ◆ Next we have another big celebration. In fact, Easter is the biggest celebration of the whole Church year.
- ◆ Easter is the joyful season when we celebrate that Jesus is alive!



Hold up the last green wedge, "Jesus Teaches."

- ◆ After Easter, we have another season of Ordinary Time when Father wears green.
- ◆ What does green remind us of? (Growing)



GET UP AND MOVE

Living Calendar Activity

Materials Needed:

- ◆ Purple, green, white, and red sheets of construction paper. (You will need the same number of sheets as you have students in your class.) Mix the colors up and place them on the floor in a circle large enough for your activity.
- ◆ Audio player and music that can be easily paused, so the students know when to stop.

To Play:

- ◆ This game plays a little like a cake walk and is played with the same number of colored sheets of construction paper as you have players. As you play some music, the students will walk around the circle stepping on the colored sheets as they move. When the music stops, each student will stop on the nearest sheet of construction paper and the game leader leads a brief discussion.

Let's play a game that will remind us of all these celebrations in the Church year.



- ◆ Ask all the students who are on purple cardstock to raise their hand. Ask, "Who remembers what it means when Father [name] wears purple?"
 - ◆ Purple: season of waiting and getting ready. Worn during Advent and Lent.
 - ◆ White: season of great celebration. Reminds us of joy and peace. Worn during Christmas and Easter. (White is also worn for other important feasts celebrating events in the lives of Jesus, Mary, and some other saints, but this may be too much detail for preschoolers.)

- ♦ Green: Reminds us of growing things and how we are steadily growing closer to Jesus. Green is worn during the two segments of Ordinary Time.
- ♦ Red: Reminds us of the Holy Spirit and of times when Jesus and some saints showed love that was especially great.
- ♦ Repeat this sequence for each of the colors. Play for as long as you would like.
- ♦ The key component to this game comes as the game leader verbally reinforces the connections for each color with a simple phrase that students repeat (e.g., purple is a season of waiting and getting ready, white is a season of great celebration, etc.).



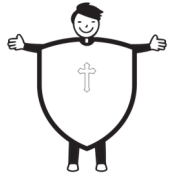
SAINTLY VISITOR AND CRAFT

What is Father Wearing?

NOTE: If your Sainly Visitor is a deacon or priest from your parish, this might be a good time for his show and tell activity. Afterwards, complete the craft in class.

Materials Needed:

- ♦ *The Colors Father Wears* page (provided)
- ♦ For an added decorative option, add small gold cross stickers to the chasubles.
- ♦ Chasuble decorations (choose the option that best fits the skills of your students):
 - 1) For Option 1: Provide white, green, purple, and red crayons and direct students to use the proper color on each chasuble on *The Colors Father Wears* page.
RECOMMENDED: Put all the other colors of crayons away so they are not available for this activity.
 - 2) For Option 2: Use the *Chasuble Template* pages provided on purple, green, white, and red paper. Cut them out in advance, and have students glue them on *The Colors Father Wears* page.



Instructions:

- ♦ Make a sample in advance so you are familiar with the process and have an example to show the students.
- ♦ Prepare supplies for each student before he/she does the craft.
- ♦ As you give directions for decorating each of Father's chasubles, use the opportunity to again remind the students of the significance of each of the liturgical colors with the simple phrases suggested in this lesson.



LITURGICAL CYCLE REVIEW

Gather your class together for a time of review.

OPTIONAL: If provided by your parish, dress your *Priest Paper Doll* and the vestments you have prepared in advance. Ask the students to select the proper vestment for the current season (Ordinary Time). Put it on Father and place him on your prayer table. Each month, as you gather, give a very brief review as you dress Father for the season and place him on your prayer table.



When you go to Mass this Sunday, pay special attention to what color vestment Father is wearing. The Church season is now Ordinary Time, so what color will Father [name] be wearing? (Green)



CLOSING PRAYER

God is So Good!

Gather your class together to sing your closing prayer:

God is so good, God is so good,
God is so good. He's so good to me.

God is so good, God is so good,
God is so good. He's so good to me.

I love Him so, I love Him so,
I love Him so. He's so good to me.



NOTE: Preschoolers love repetition and ritual, and each month's closing prayer suggestion will take advantage of this principle.

Music brings joy to prayer, and simple reminders of God's goodness and love are foundational. *God is So Good!* is a song that is easily memorized, making it possible for the children you teach to "bring this prayer home with them," to sing and ponder in settings outside of your classroom.

In these lessons, the first and third verses will always be the same, and the middle verse will somehow reflect each month's lesson in a more specific way.

Follow the QR code in the "Praise and Prayer" section of this lesson to hear the melody.



MATERIALS TO SEND HOME

- ◆ *The Colors Father Wears* craft