

Chapter 1

Chapter 1

Featured Story

The Risen Jesus Appears to Mary Magdalene (John 20:11–18)



Lesson Goals

- to identify that Christ died, rose from the dead, and is with us now
- to recognize that we meet Jesus in the sacraments
- to express that we confess our sins and are forgiven by God in the Sacrament of Reconciliation

Lesson at a Glance

- Go** (10 minutes)
Opening Prayer
Engage Activity
- Seek** (30 minutes)
Featured Story
Core Learning Activity
- Find** (20 minutes)
God's Treasure of Forgiveness
Lesson Wrap-Up
Closing Prayer

Materials Needed

- *The Catholic Children's Bible* and chapter 1 activity booklet
- materials for any of the optional activities you choose

Music Suggestions

- "I Believe in Jesus," by Invitation Music (Invitation Publishing)
- "With Us" (Acoustic) [Live], by Hillsong Live (Hillsong Music)

Jesus Is Always with Us

Background Focus

Every sacrament is a treasure because every sacrament is a gift of the presence of God. Given to the Church by Jesus Christ, the sacraments bring his presence to us through human words and actions and through material elements like water, bread, wine, and oil.

The sacraments use the gifts of the material world to bring us into the realm of the spiritual. The sacraments are "doorways to the sacred." There is a particular place in the Mass in which the water and wine are mingled in the chalice, and the priest prays, "By the mystery of this water and wine may we come to share in the divinity of Christ who humbled himself to share in our humanity" (*Roman Missal, page 529*). Our humanity is the water. The divinity of Christ is the wine.

In every sacrament, our lives are mingled with Christ's living and risen presence. The Sacrament of Reconciliation is one of the sacraments that does not have an external material or earthly element (like water, bread, or oil) as part of its celebration. In the Sacrament of Reconciliation, the earthly element is the confession of sins, and the presence of Christ, in his love and forgiveness, is mediated by a hand extended in blessing and the comforting sound of a human voice, "I absolve you from your sins in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit" (*Rite of Penance*).

Go (10 minutes)

Opening Prayer

- Invite the children to turn to page 1 in their chapter 1 activity booklets and locate the prayer on that page.
- Begin prayer by leading the children in the Sign of the Cross, then saying, "Let us remember we are in the holy presence of God." Allow about 10 seconds of silence.
- Read the prayer in the activity booklet to the group. Invite all of the children to say "Amen," and then close with another Sign of the Cross. Ask the children to close their activity booklets for now.

Engage Activity

- Invite the children to recall everything they know about Jesus and record their answers on the board. Give them some examples if they need help. (Answers might include: *born in Bethlehem, is the Son of God, healed people and taught people about God, was crucified on the cross, etc.*)
- Emphasize the point that Jesus died, was buried, and rose from the dead. Remind the children that this is what Christians celebrate each year on a very special and holy day. Ask them if they can name that holy day, the greatest day of the year. (Easter)
- Tell the children that they will read about Jesus rising from the dead and will explore why that is important for us today.

Seek (30 minutes)

Featured Story

- Invite the children to find John 20:11–18 in *The Catholic Children's Bible* (page 1701).
- Direct them to turn to page 1702 and place an "I found it!" sticker next to the Featured Story.
- Tell them that the words between the leaves on page 1702 are a shortened version of the Scripture story on the previous page.
- Ask the children to look at the artwork on pages 1702–1703. Invite them to describe what they see in the artwork and to predict what the Bible story might be about.
- Invite a volunteer to read the title on the page, and ask the children to share what the words "Risen Jesus" mean. (*Jesus was crucified on the cross, but he rose again and is now risen from the dead.*)
- Ask the children to share what they know about Mary Magdalene. (*She was a friend to Jesus. She loved Jesus very much. That is why she was visiting his grave.*)
- Read the Bible story to the children. Then ask the children several questions to check for comprehension, such as these:
 - Why was Mary Magdalene crying? (*She did not know where Jesus was.*)
 - What did the angels ask her? (*"Woman, why are you crying?"*)
 - What did Mary Magdalene answer? (*"They have taken my Lord away, and I do not know where they have put him!"*)
 - What happened when Mary Magdalene turned around? (*She saw Jesus.*)

Understand It!

- Read Understand It! on page 1703 to the children, or invite a volunteer or volunteers to read.
- Invite the children to summarize what they just heard, asking them key questions about the reading to check for comprehension.
- Review these key points with them:
 - Mary Magdalene was very sad when Jesus died. She did not expect to see him again.
 - When she went to the tomb, she did not find his body. She thought someone had taken it. She was very upset.
 - Then she turned around and saw Jesus! At first she didn't know it was Jesus. But then he said her name, and she knew who it was.
 - Jesus was alive after all! Mary was so happy! She ran to tell the other disciples. (See John 20:18.)

Live It!

- Invite a volunteer to read Live It! on page 1703 or read it aloud to the group.
- Ask the children to share what they would write in their diary for that first Easter Sunday if they were Mary Magdalene, using these questions:
 - What would they say they were thinking or feeling as they went to the tomb?
 - How did they feel after they saw Jesus and he spoke their names?
- Explain to the children that we are happy that Jesus rose from the dead because it means that he is always with us. Explain that he is still with us today in a very special way.
- Pray this short prayer with the children: "Thank you, Jesus, for rising on that first Easter Sunday."

Tell It!

- Ask the children to look at the images in Tell It! on page 1703.
- Invite the children to find a partner and use the images to retell the Bible reading as best they can.
- Encourage several volunteers to stand and summarize the Bible reading for the group, using the images in Tell It!
- Have the children use some of the smaller stickers to mark parts of the Featured Story pages that capture their interest. Remind them to save enough stickers to use on the remaining chapters.

Core Learning Activity**The Bible Says**

- Invite the children to gather in a circle, if there is space, or to stand at their places with their hands at their sides.
- Explain that we will play a game similar to Simon Says.
- Give directions in these or similar words:
 - We will begin by standing with our hands at our sides.
 - When I say, "The Bible says, 'Christ has died,'" everyone will crunch down, put their hands over their heads, and repeat, "Christ has died." Then everyone will stand up again with hands at sides.
 - When I say, "The Bible says, 'Christ is risen,'" everyone will lift their arms into the air and say, "Christ is risen. Alleluia!" *Alleluia* means, "Praise God!" Then everyone will put their hands at their sides again and wait for the next direction.
 - If I don't say, "The Bible says," then you are to stand still and do nothing.
 - If you move when I do not say, "The Bible says," you will be out of the game. The last person standing is the winner.

Note: As in the game Simon Says, vary your directions, sometimes saying, "The Bible says," and sometimes omitting it. Remind the children to stand with their hands at their sides while awaiting the next direction. It will be helpful to end the game with, "The Bible says, 'Christ has risen,'" to end on a positive note. You may want to arrange the chil-

dren into teams. The team with the most members still standing at the end of the game (when you call "time!") is the winner.

Process the Activity

- Remind the children of the Bible story for the day and how happy Mary Magdalene was when she realized that Jesus had risen from the dead.
- Tell the children that Jesus, rising from the dead is Good News that we celebrate each year at Easter. Explain that we rejoice in this and celebrate the fact that Jesus continues to be present to us in a special way today.

Additional Activity Options

If the core activity would not work for your group for any reason, you may choose to use any of the Additional Activities on page 22 in its place.

✕ Find (20 minutes)**God's Treasure of Forgiveness**

- Tell the children that Jesus gave us seven great and holy signs of God's love, and that these signs are called **sacraments**. Explain that Jesus is present to us in a special way in the sacraments so that we can follow him more closely. Tell them that the sacraments give us **grace**, the gift of God's life in us, which makes us God's children and helps us to stay away from **sin** and to do good things. Explain that a sin is something we say, do, or think that does not follow God's Law.
- List the Seven Sacraments on the board for the children, and give a brief description of each. Explain how the Sacraments of Baptism, Confirmation, and the Eucharist begin our life in the Church. Ask the children how many of them know if they have been baptized.
- Continue by explaining that in Baptism, we become children of God and all of our sins are washed away. Tell the children that the sins we commit after Baptism are forgiven through the Sacrament of Reconciliation. Circle this sacrament on the board.
- Remind the children that this time together is to help them prepare for the Sacrament of Reconciliation. Tell them that this sacrament has many names:

- Its official Church name is: the **Sacrament of Penance and Reconciliation**. Often this is shortened to “the Sacrament of Penance” or “the Sacrament of Reconciliation.”
- Often we call this sacrament “**confession**,” because in it we confess what we have done wrong. We say, “We are going to confession tomorrow afternoon.”
- Sometimes it is called “the sacrament of **conversion**,” because this sacrament helps us to *convert*, or change, for the better.
- Help the children understand that the Sacrament of Reconciliation is a sacrament in which we meet Jesus in a special way. In this sacrament, we ask God to forgive us. Explain to them that after we confess our sins and are forgiven in the Sacrament of Reconciliation, we will be filled with new life again.
- Invite the children to turn to page 3 in the activity booklet and complete the activity.
Answers: 1. Forgive, 2. conversion, 3. Baptism, 4. confession, 5. better. Word at bottom: grace

Teacher Note: This content is presented in a child-friendly way in the *God’s Treasure of Forgiveness Student Booklet*. You may wish to have the children read all or parts of chapter 1 to supplement your presentation. Or use the concluding points under “Things to Remember” to wrap up the lesson before prayer.

Lesson Wrap-Up

- Invite the children to think back over all of the different things they did in this lesson, and invite volunteers to share some of the key things they learned.
- Take some time to get input from the group, and write their answers on the board.

- Ensure that the following points are made, write them on the board, and circle them:
 - Christ died, rose from the dead, and is with us now.
 - We meet Jesus in the sacraments.
 - We confess our sins and are forgiven by God in the Sacrament of Reconciliation.
- Ask the children to place the chapter 1 sticker in the correct circle on their treasure map.



Closing Prayer

- Begin prayer by leading the children in the Sign of the Cross, then saying, “Let us remember we are in the holy presence of God,” followed by a few seconds of silence.
- Invite the children to come to you, one by one. Make the Sign of the Cross on each child’s forehead as you say: “____, God calls you by name. You are God’s child. You belong to God.” Encourage the child to respond, “Amen.”
- Play a piece of music, if you have time, that speaks about belonging to God, being children of God, being called by name, or following Jesus.
- End with the Glory Be prayer (see page 1992 in *The Catholic Children’s Bible*). Then close with a final Sign of the Cross.

Materials Needed

- none

Materials Needed

- plastic spoons
- plastic Easter eggs

Materials Needed

- a computer with Internet access
- a computer projector



Additional Activities

God Calls Me by Name (15 minutes)

- Invite the children to gather in a circle. Introduce yourself first, saying, "My name is ____ and I like ____." (Name something that starts with the first letter of your first name. For example, "I am Sara and I like sassafras.")
- Instruct the child next to you to say your name and add his or hers. (For example: "She is Sara and she likes sassafras. My name is Lucy and I like licorice.")
- The next child will say all three names and likes, including his or her own. (The group may help as needed, because the game will get more difficult. Keep the atmosphere light and fun, so no one feels inadequate for not being able to remember all the preceding names and likes.)
- At the end of the game, ask the children: "Did we have trouble remembering everyone's name and what they liked? (Yes) Does God have trouble remembering our names and what we like and don't like? (No) Why not? (God is all-knowing and all-loving. He loves us and knows us best of all.)
- Remind the children that they became children of God at Baptism.

Easter Egg Relay (15 minutes)

- Arrange the children into groups of four. Give each child in the group a plastic spoon.
- Invite the children in each group to stand together in a line, and give the first child in each line a plastic egg to balance on his or her spoon.
- Explain that this is a relay race and that the first person in the line will carry the egg on their spoon to the other end of the room and back. Tell them that if they drop the egg, they must come back to the front of the line and start over (this rule can be skipped if this proves too difficult for the children).
- Continue by telling them that when they return, they should move the egg, without using their hands, to the next person's spoon. Explain that this person will go to the other end of the room and back and will continue until the last person in each group returns.
- Tell the children that the first group to have all members return wins.
- Explain that the Easter egg reminds us that Jesus rose from the dead. Just like a baby chick breaks out of an egg, so Jesus left the tomb and is with us today.

Jesus Loves Me (15 minutes)

- Show the video "Hey, Jesus Loves Me," by StJohnKIDChurch, available on YouTube (3:53). This video, with lyrics, can be used to emphasize how much Jesus loves each one of us and how he is always ready to show us mercy.
- Invite volunteers to recall some of the ideas in the song.
- Remind the children that Jesus died and rose again to show us how much he loves us.