



VenTuRe

Jesus Treats Sinners with Mercy

Lent: A Review from A to Z

Catholics celebrate the fifth and final full week of Lent this week.

At the beginning of Lent, you read about Jesus' temptation in the desert, and you made promises to work on over these forty days. You may have received ashes, which are a sign of your promise to turn from sin and to follow the message of the Gospel. **Read this Lenten alphabet together as a class. Pause to do the activities and then answer the Think questions at the end.**

A is for absolution. We receive absolution, or forgiveness, for sin as part of the Sacrament of Penance and Reconciliation. When we confess our sins to a priest, he will offer us absolution. But it's up to us to avoid that sin in the future.

C is for change. In the Gospel Reading for the Second Sunday of Lent, three disciples see Jesus shine with God's glory on the mountain (Luke 9:28b-36). This change is called the Transfiguration. God the Father reveals



Jesus as his "chosen Son" and tells the disciples to "listen to him." This prepared the disciples for the suffering Jesus would soon experience. It helped them believe that God is stronger than death.

Lent is a season of change. We grow from being the people we were on Ash Wednesday to the people we want to be at Easter. **How are you doing with your Lenten promises? Remember that God is like the gardener in the Gospel story about the fig tree (look up and review Luke 13:1-9, which we read on the Third Sunday of Lent). God gives us the chance to grow and change.**

E is for Eucharist. On Holy Thursday (April 17), we remember Jesus' first celebration of the Eucharist. We know it as the Last Supper. We remember the life-giving gift of Jesus' Body and Blood every time we celebrate the Sacrament of the Eucharist. The word *Eucharist* comes from a Greek word that means "thanksgiving." **What does the Eucharist have to do with being thankful? Turn to page 21 in *What the Church Believes and Teaches* to find the answer.**

F is for forgiveness. Last Sunday's Gospel (Luke 15:1-3, 11-32) was about the forgiving father and his two sons. The younger son spent his father's money and returned home begging for help. The older son was angry and resented his father's joy at his brother's return.

This story is all about forgiveness. We may identify with the older son and have sympathy for him. But we are the younger son in this story. We all need God's love and forgiveness.

In last week's lesson, you also read about a boy who had behaved poorly at school. It may be easy to talk about forgiveness in the Bible, but what about when something like this happens to us? **Think of a time when you needed forgiveness, and it was freely given to you. Now think of a time when someone wronged you. What helps you forgive?**

G is for grace. We are forgiven because of God's grace. It is the free and undeserved help God gives to us at Baptism to share in his life as his children. We do nothing to earn grace—it's a gift. **Reflect on what you do when you get a special gift. You thank the person who gave it to you, right? This week, think about who has forgiven you or offered you a special kindness. Thank them!**

H is for Holy Week. We will walk through the last days of Jesus' earthly life next week. Holy Week begins on Palm Sunday, when we celebrate Jesus' entry into Jerusalem. **Take a look ahead: What do we remember on the other days of Holy Week?**

J is for Jesus. Jesus is our teacher, leader, brother, and friend. He is like us, but he is also the Son of God. Consider what roles Jesus has in your life. **How do you most often think of him?**

L is for the Lord's Prayer. This is the prayer that Jesus taught his disciples in the Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 6:9–15). You will finish your study of the Lord's Prayer in this lesson (see page 6). **What are the seven petitions, things for which we pray, in the Lord's Prayer? Try to list them from memory. If you need a**

reminder, turn to page 45 in *What the Church Believes and Teaches*.

M is for mercy. Mercy describes God's love for us. Mercy is like a mother's love for a child. The word *mercy* comes from the Hebrew word *rehem*, which means "womb," the place where babies grow inside their mothers.

When we say that God is merciful, we mean that God loves us as a mother loves her child. To be merciful is to forgive and give many chances. In the Lord's Prayer, Jesus teaches us to be merciful like God. We ask God to forgive us in the same way that we forgive others. **Look at The Lord's Prayer (see page 52 in *What the Church Believes and Teaches*). What line reminds you to offer God's mercy to others?**



Imprimatur: + Most Reverend Solomon I. McMane, S.T.D., Bishop of Phoenix, May 1, 2024. Theological Reviewer: Reverend Michael T. Martin, S.T.D., J.C.L.; Publisher: David Schatz, Editor: Jean-Marie Conway and Nicholas Clark; Designer: Jennifer Pridel. Printed in the USA.

[illegible]

N is for new. You may have people in your parish who are preparing to become new Christians. We call these people *catechumens*, which comes from a Greek word that means “one being instructed.” In the Catholic Church, catechumens prepare to celebrate Baptism, Confirmation, and the Eucharist. They celebrate these sacraments at the Easter Vigil Mass on Holy Saturday. **As a class, pray for the people in your parish who will become new Catholics on April 19. Attend this special Mass with your family.**

P is for prayer. People in the Bible spoke with God. We read about them in the First Readings from the Old Testament during Lent. We speak to God in prayer. **Pray together the Week 5 prayer: Help me to forgive and seek peace.**

Q is for quiet. This is closely related to prayer. We need to quiet ourselves to hear God’s voice. **Think about the noises or things that distract you when you try to pray. Share your ideas for getting ready for prayer.**

R is for Rosary. This special prayer reminds us of the events of Jesus’ life, Death, and Resurrection. **Turn to page 54 in *What the Church Believes and Teaches*. Pray the Sorrowful Mysteries of the Rosary together.**



S is for service. At the Last Supper, Jesus washed his friends’ feet like a servant. He told them to follow his example and serve others.

At the evening Mass on Holy Thursday, your pastor will wash the feet of twelve members of your parish. This shows that he is a servant to the parish. **In what ways have you served others during Lent?**

T is for temptation. Temptation is the urge to do something wrong. The Devil tried to tempt Jesus with earthly power and goods.

We face temptations every day. For example, we may be tempted to spend time gaming rather than on homework or to exclude others rather than invite them to be friends. **Read the Sunday Gospel from the First Sunday of Lent (Luke 4:1–13) together in class. What did Jesus say to the Devil? Then think about what tempts you.**

W is for the Works of Mercy. These are actions that show others that God loves them. Jesus tells us that what we do for the least among us, we do for him. We help people meet Jesus when we do these works. **Turn to page 50 in *What the Church Believes and Teaches*. Review the Corporal Works of Mercy and check off each one that you have done during Lent.**



1 Identify the letters that are not included in this Lenten alphabet. What Catholic Faith Words or other Lenten words could you assign to those letters?

2 Some people view Lent in a negative way. They see it as a time when they have to give up things they enjoy. How would you explain Lent as a time to be positive?

3 Take some time to think about this Lent. Are you more like the person you were on Ash Wednesday or more like the person you want to be on Easter Sunday?



Jesus said, “Whoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood remains in me and I in him.”

~John 6:56



SUNDAY GOSPEL

5th Sunday of Lent

John 8:1-11

Jesus Acts with Mercy

Narrator: Jesus went to the Mount of Olives. Early the next morning, he went back to the Temple, where people gathered around him. He sat down and began to teach them. Then teachers of the Law and Pharisees brought a woman who had been caught committing adultery.

Pharisee 1: Teacher, this woman was caught committing adultery. In our Law, Moses commanded that such a woman must be stoned to death.

Pharisee 2: What do you say?

Narrator: The Pharisees asked this question to trap Jesus, so

that they could accuse him. Jesus bent over and wrote on the ground with his finger. They kept questioning him, so he straightened up and said:

Jesus: Let the one who is without **sin** throw the first stone.

Narrator: Then Jesus bent over again and wrote on the ground. When the teachers heard Jesus' words, they left one by one. Jesus straightened up again and looked around.

Jesus: Where are they? Is there no one left to condemn you?

Woman: No one, sir.

Jesus: Well, then I do not



condemn you either. Go, but do not sin any more.



- 1 Why do the Pharisees bring the woman to Jesus? Why do they leave?
- 2 What do you think Jesus was writing on the ground?
- 3 How does Jesus treat the woman? How does Jesus want us to treat one another when we have done wrong?



Connecting GOSPEL and DOCTRINE

We all sin and do wrong. We act selfishly sometimes. We put others down to build ourselves up. We make fun of someone less smart, less well-dressed, or less athletic than we are.

In Sunday's Gospel, Jesus challenges people who act as if they never did anything wrong. They bring him a woman who broke the Law of Moses. Jesus does not condemn the woman. He encourages her to turn

away from doing wrong. Jesus encourages us to stop sinning and to show mercy to others.

Mercy and forgiveness help make things right. They fix the brokenness that sin has caused. They bring people back to their families, friendships, and communities (see CCC, 1443).

We Can Act with Mercy



- 1 Ask yourself: Have I said something that is not true? Have I acted unkindly? Have I been jealous of someone else's success?
- 2 On Ash Wednesday, you may have received ashes and heard the words "Repent, and believe in the Gospel." Name two ways you have repented, turned away from sin, during Lent.



A sin is a word, action, or desire that breaks God's law. Turn to pages 31-32 in *What the Church Believes and Teaches*. What is the difference between mortal and venial sin? What happens when people do not seek forgiveness for their sins? If someone spreads a rumor about another person, what kind of sin do they commit?

We Ask God to Forgive Us at Mass

We don't need to be afraid to admit that we are sinners. We read in Sunday's Gospel that Jesus is always understanding of those who admit they have sinned. Jesus does not like when people are proud and sure they are right. Jesus is merciful toward those who seek forgiveness.

Every time we worship at Mass, we admit our sinfulness to God and to one another.

Look at the blue box. The left column lists parts of the Mass during which we ask for forgiveness. The right column lists prayers from the Mass. Match the part of the Mass with the prayer that the priest or people pray at that time.

Answers are in the Teaching Guide.



Catholic **FAITH WORD**

sin A free, deliberate choice to turn away from God's love, to break God's law, and to hurt others and ourselves.

1. Penitential Act

2. Profession of Faith (Creed)

3. Eucharistic Prayer

4. The Lord's Prayer

5. Breaking of Bread

6. Invitation to Communion

a. Lord, I am not worthy that you should enter under my roof, but only say the word and my soul shall be healed.

b. Forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us . . .

c. Lamb of God, you take away the sins of the world, have mercy on us.

d. I confess to almighty God and to you, my brothers and sisters, that I have greatly sinned . . .

e. This is the chalice of my Blood . . . poured out for you and for many for the forgiveness of sins.

f. I confess one Baptism for the forgiveness of sins.

The Roman Mass

We Study the Lord's Prayer During Lent

In the Lord's Prayer, Jesus teaches us to ask God for our needs, including daily bread, forgiveness, and protection from evil. We ask for God's help to stand strong against the temptations from the Devil. We ask that God will help us choose good over evil.

Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.

Temptation

We read the Gospel about the Devil tempting Jesus at the beginning of Lent. A temptation is a strong urge to do something that we know is wrong. To tempt someone is to invite and attract, to promise a reward. Advertising tempts us to buy things. A dare may tempt us to try something dangerous.

We ask God to keep us on the right path, to keep us from breaking his commandments. God doesn't force us to keep the commandments. Following God is our choice. Our conscience is our "God-given" inner voice that helps us know whether an action is morally right or wrong.

Deliver

To deliver has several meanings. It can mean to rescue or set free. Moses delivered the Israelites from slavery. To deliver can also mean to make something happen or to reach a goal.

In the Lord's Prayer, we look to the future and ask to reach our goal of life with God. We unite ourselves with Jesus in the struggle against evil in our world.

We ask to be saved from doing wrong and from the wrongs of others. We stand strong with Jesus who has already won the battle against evil.

With My Family and Friends

Scan here for parent resources
or go to gospelweeklies.com/family



Pray

Help me to see my faults, Lord, before looking at the faults of others. Amen.



Think

Have you felt alone with no friends? How can remembering that Jesus loves you help you during those times?



Act

In this Sunday's Gospel, the woman is caught in a serious sin, and people want to punish her. She was alone with her accusers. We all know someone who may be left out, lonely, or hurt. Call, write, text, or invite them to spend time with you.

The Blame Game

Play with three or four other people. Cut out the cards on this page. Place one set facedown on your desk or table. Take turns drawing a card and reading it aloud. Read it again and

(over)

I don't have my backpack for school today **because** my dad drove away with it in his car.

Having a Switch™ at school is against the rules. My friend takes mine out of my backpack to play with it. He got caught, but I got sent to the office **because** of him.

I had five dollars and my cell phone in my pocket. My mom called me. When I took out the phone, I guess the money fell out. Now I am broke **because** of my mom's call.

I missed catching a pass **because** my friend is a lousy thrower.

My friend used my cell phone to text something mean to a classmate. My classmate is upset with me **because** of what my friend did.

I don't have lunch money, **because** my mom didn't remind me to take it.

Our whole class can't go out to recess **because** some kids were fighting on the playground.

I don't have my project finished **because** the teacher didn't tell us when it was due.

Rory kept talking to me after our teacher asked for quiet. I got sent out of the room. Rory didn't **because** he's a teacher's pet.

FREE

It's no one's fault.
Things happen.

FREE

It's no one's fault.
Things happen.

BLAME

Game

BLAME

Game

BLAME

Game

BLAME

Game

BLAME

Game

BLAME

Game

BLAME

Game

BLAME

Game

BLAME

Game

BLAME

Game

BLAME

Game

stop at the word **BECAUSE**. Give two other ways to end the sentence. If you draw a free card, keep it and draw again. You may end a sentence with the words on that card.