

Doctrinal Themes: Liturgical Year

Introduction

This segment is designed to help you reflect on the theme of Liturgy. It will also provide some awareness of how *Alive in Christ* integrates Liturgy and the Liturgical Year into the curriculum. Just follow the outline. Begin by reflecting on or journaling the first question. Watch the video *Theological Foundations: Liturgy* and note how the explanation sheds light on the topic for your own understanding. Then read the article “Liturgy” and answer the reflection questions.

First Question

Why is liturgy important for you?

Video

Watch the *Theological Foundations: Liturgy* video, then respond to these questions:

- What signs or symbols of the Church give you hope?
- What events in your life do you identify as experiences of dying and rising?
- In what ways do you keep Sunday holy?
- Which of the seasons of the Church Year are your favorites? Why?

Article: Liturgy

Read the following article and respond to the questions:

Saint Paul called on the Philippians to be ever joyful and with grateful hearts call upon God in prayer. We do this as individuals, often. Liturgy, however, is the community at public prayer. In and through the sacramental celebrations, particularly the Eucharist, and the Liturgy of the Hours, we take part in the Incarnation, life, Death, Resurrection, and Ascension of Jesus. In addition, the Church celebrates the Paschal Mystery in and through the seasons of the liturgical year, as it slowly unfolds to reveal the message, mission, and meaning of Jesus Christ. Besides learning about Liturgy in the regular sessions, *Alive in Christ* places an emphasis on the Church Year with its seasonal lessons for every grade.

Reflect for a moment on the last time you truly rejoiced at a family celebration. Think about those who took part in it. Whether it was a birthday party or a wedding reception, the celebration most likely included festive decorations, music, and enthusiastic participation. The liturgical year celebrations are similar to family celebrations.

Celebration is the foundation of the Church year. Its six seasons—Advent, Christmas, Ordinary Time, Lent, Triduum, and Easter—celebrate the mystery of Jesus Christ. Their rhythm also matches the cycle of life. During the Church Year, the faithful experience the anticipation of Advent; rejoice at the Savior's birth on Christmas; live faithfully in Ordinary Time; grow reflective in Lent; and know suffering, death, and rising to new life in Christ through the Triduum and Easter. We do not simply watch this drama unfold; we are drawn into the reality of God's continuing presence in our lives.

Just as the church environment reflects the seasons, using liturgical

colors of violet, white, red, or green in vestments and banners proclaiming the season, make every effort to create a liturgical season environment in your classroom. Even if all you do is change the color of the cloth on the prayer table according to the season, you are helping young people to be drawn into the season. Go over the seasonal lessons in your Teacher Guide and plan ahead to use them at the appropriate time. Make those class sessions more celebratory than the others.

Reflection Questions

- In what ways do you, or could you, use the liturgical seasons as markers for your own spiritual journey?
- Name one way you will raise awareness of the liturgical seasons in your classroom?