

Family Page

Background Reflection

Easter approaches—but first the Church encourages us to journey through the season of preparation we call Lent. Lent is the time when we, together as an entire Church, root ourselves more deeply in the salvation we have in Christ. Traditionally a time of fasting, prayer, and almsgiving, the forty days of Lent are also a personal time of spiritual growth, rooted in our Baptism.

Just as Moses led God's people to freedom through water, our Baptism leads us to the freedom of being God's sons and daughters. This gift of Baptism is renewed in Lent, as we especially remember and pray for the catechumens who are preparing for the Sacraments of Christian Initiation (Baptism, Confirmation, and the Eucharist) at the Easter Vigil. The renewing of our own baptismal promises is our best response to the new life begun in Christ in the Sacrament of Baptism. Encourage your child to see his or her Baptism as a wonderful beginning to a new life of grace—a new life of joy, peace, and love.

People of Faith

Saint Augustine of Hippo (354-430)

Saint Augustine took a long time to become a Christian because he found it hard to give up his sinful habits. He was baptized as an adult by Saint Ambrose, bishop of Milan. Augustine later became a priest and the bishop of Hippo, in North Africa. Augustine was a writer and teacher. He wrote about grace, forgiveness, the Trinity, and Original Sin. Shortly after his death, invaders came to destroy Hippo, but they left Augustine's cathedral and library untouched. Saint Augustine's feast day is August 28.

Prayer

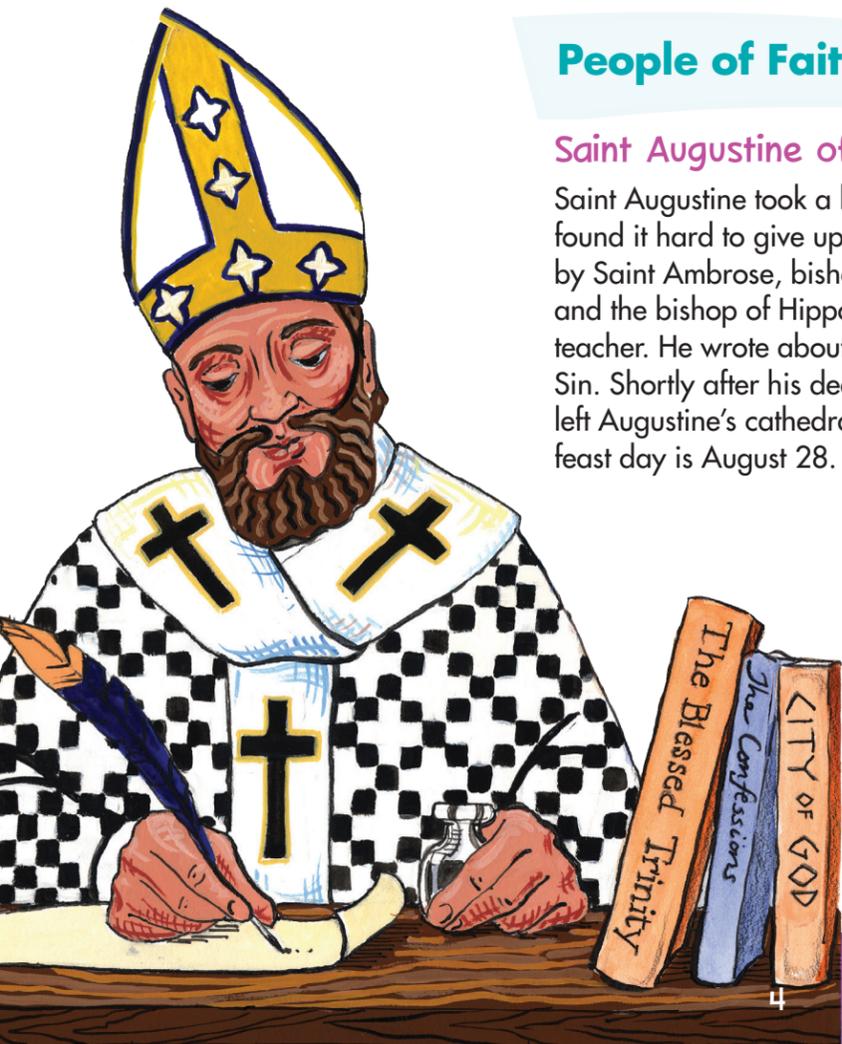
Pray this prayer together as a family, beginning and ending with the Sign of the Cross.

Jesus, walk with our family as we prepare to celebrate your Resurrection at Easter. Help us through our fasting, prayer, and good works to come closer to you and to grow in compassion for those in need. Amen.

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Family Activities

- Count your blessings as a family. Each day this week, gather as a family and write down the blessings your family sees. Each Sunday morning this Lent, take time to read this list of your family's blessings, and thank God.
- Obtain a list of the RCIA candidates who will join the Church at your parish this Easter. Each evening this week, invite your child to pray for the candidates by name.
- Watch the video "2016 Lent Calendar—Kids talk about Lent" (YouTube, 2:57). Discuss some of the ideas suggested by the children in the video. Then brainstorm how your child can make Lent a holy time as you journey with the Church to Easter.



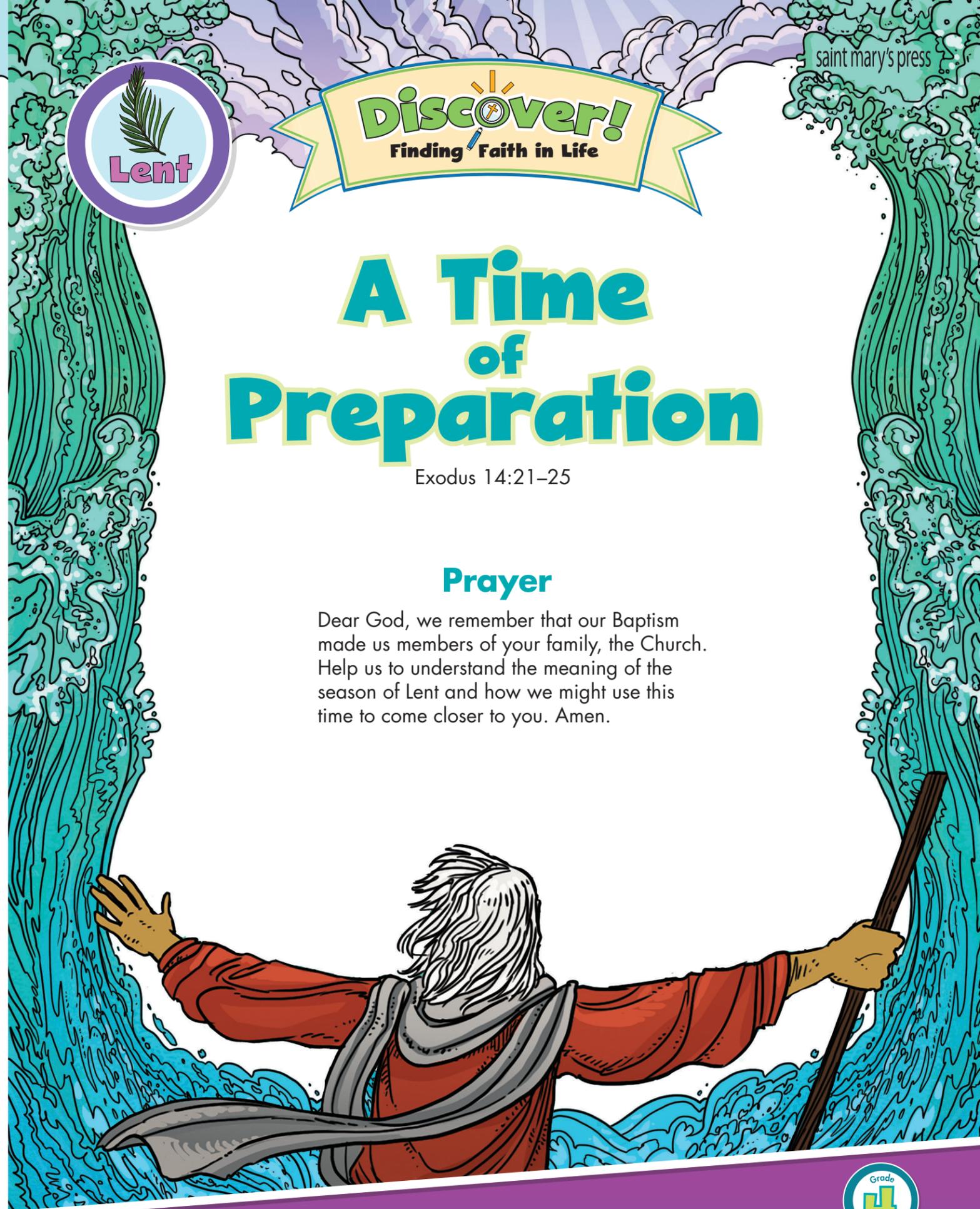
Discover!
Finding Faith in Life

A Time of Preparation

Exodus 14:21-25

Prayer

Dear God, we remember that our Baptism made us members of your family, the Church. Help us to understand the meaning of the season of Lent and how we might use this time to come closer to you. Amen.



Use the Featured Story on page 122 in *The Catholic Children's Bible* (Exodus 14:21–25) to help you unscramble the words in the following sentences.

- 1 **OSSEM** held out his hand over the sea.

- 2 God drove the sea **KACB** with a strong east wind.

- 3 The wind blew all night and turned the **AES** into dry land.

- 4 The **WTEAR** was divided, and the Israelites went through.

- 5 The Egyptians **DEURSUP** the Israelites into the sea.

- 6 The Egyptian army was thrown into a **CNAPI**.

- 7 God made the wheels of the Egyptians' **THSACIOR** get stuck.

Our Baptismal Promises

Leader: Let us begin our prayer with the Sign of the Cross. . . . Let us remember that we are in the holy presence of God.

Leader: Lent is a time to remember our Baptism, when we became free as children of God.

All: Thanks be to God.

Leader: Lent is a time to prepare to renew our baptismal promises, made for us by our parents and godparents.

All: Thanks be to God.

Leader: Lord, as you led your people through the sea, we thank you for leading us through the waters of Baptism.

All: Thanks be to God.

Leader: Lord, we thank you for making us your children through Baptism.

All: Thanks be to God.

Leader: Let us renew our baptismal promises now by saying "I do" after each question.

- Do you reject sin so as to live in the freedom of God's children? **(I do.)**
- Do you reject evil? **(I do.)**
- Do you reject Satan? **(I do.)**
- Do you believe in God? **(I do.)**
- Do you believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son? **(I do.)**
- Do you believe in the Holy Spirit? **(I do.)**
- Do you believe in the holy Catholic Church? **(I do.)**

Leader: We thank you God, for the gift of faith, given to us in Baptism.

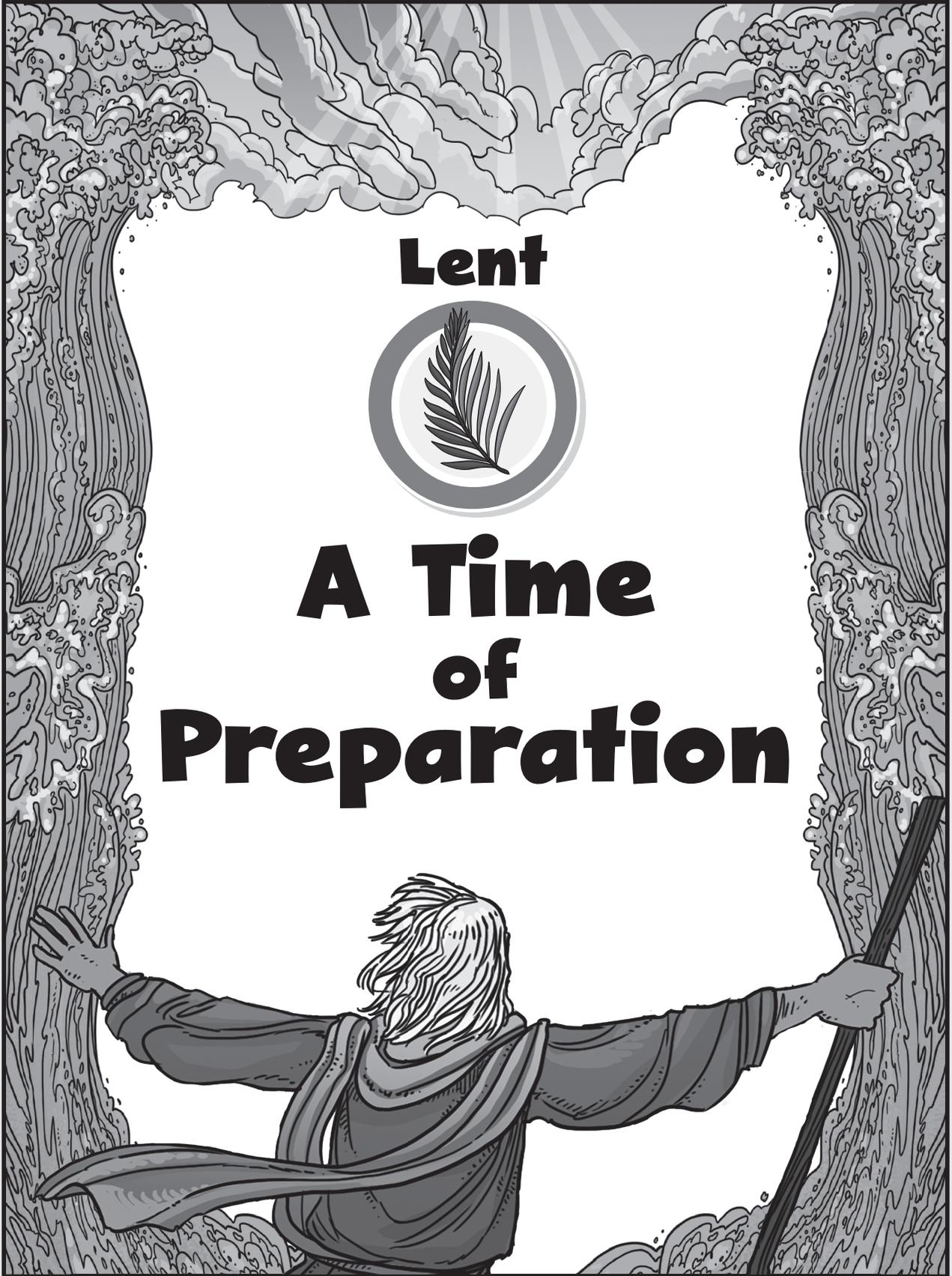
All: Thanks be to God.

Leader: Lord, may we live our Baptism as your free sons and daughters. We ask this through Jesus, our Lord.

All: Amen.

(Blessing with holy water.)

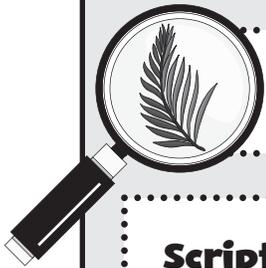
**Part of this prayer service is based on the Renewal of Baptismal Promises found in the Roman Missal.*



Lent



**A Time
of
Preparation**



Lesson at a Glance

Scripture Focus

Exodus 14:21–25

Lesson Goals

- to explain that the waters of Baptism lead us to freedom from the slavery of sin
- to identify Lent as a season in which we prepare for the renewal of our baptismal promises at Easter
- to define the Easter Vigil as the night when new Christians receive the Sacraments of Initiation

Catechism References

1217–1222, 1229–1233

Church Year Calendar

A Church year calendar is available in black-and-white at the end of this book and in full-color at www.smp.org/discover_grade4.

Key Words

pursued, chariot, panic

Music Suggestions

- “You’re All I Need (Live),” by Hillsong Kids (Hillsong Church)
- “Come to the Water,” by Jaime Thietten (Alturas Productions)

Materials Needed

- *The Catholic Children’s Bible* and the Lent activity booklet
- a board or poster to write on
- blank paper
- crayons
- blank stapled booklets, one for each child
- a copy of the parish calendar
- a bowl of holy water
- materials for any of the additional activities you choose

Background Reflection

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Just as Moses led God’s people to freedom through water, our Baptism leads us to the freedom of being God’s sons and daughters. This gift of Baptism is renewed in Lent, as we especially remember and pray for those catechumens who are preparing for the Sacraments of Christian Initiation (Baptism, Confirmation, and the Eucharist) at the Easter Vigil. The renewing of our own baptismal promises is our best response to the new life begun in Christ in the Sacrament of Baptism. Encourage your children to see their Baptism as a wonderful beginning to a new life of grace—a new life of joy, peace, and love.

**Get Ready! (10 minutes)****Opening Prayer**

- Invite the children to turn to page 1 of the Lent activity booklet.
- Begin prayer by leading the children in the Sign of the Cross. Then say, "Let us remember that we are in the holy presence of God." Allow about 10 seconds of silence.
- Read aloud the prayer on page 1 of the activity booklet. Invite the children to say "Amen," and then close with another Sign of the Cross.

Engage Activity

- Ask the children to recall a time in their life or in their family life when their biggest question was, "How will I, or we, get through it?" Give examples and ask for others. (*Examples may include a flood or other natural disaster, an accident, an illness, even a music recital, a race or game, or other personal challenge.*)
- Ask the children to share anything they remember about this challenge. Accept all reasonable responses, and write key information on the board.
- Tell the children that they will read about a challenge Moses and the Israelites faced in Egypt and will see how God's miraculous action through Moses is connected to our Baptism and a season in the Church called Lent.

**Dive In! (15 minutes)****Scripture Focus**

- Invite the children to find Exodus 14:5–29 in *The Catholic Children's Bible* (pages 120–121). Point out the green leaf at the beginning and end of the passage.
- Have the children turn to the Featured Story on page 122. Explain that the green leaves on this page mark that this is a shortened version of the same Scripture passage found on the previous pages.
- Ask the children to look at the artwork on pages 122–123. Invite volunteers to describe what they see happening in the pictures.
- Read the Scripture passage to the children. Then ask several questions to check for comprehension, such as the following:
 - Who was able to cross the sea on dry ground? (*the Israelites*)
 - Who was following the Israelites? (*the Egyptians*)
 - What happened to the Egyptians? (*The Egyptians got stuck, and they realized that God was with the Israelites.*)
 - Who was fighting for the Israelites and helping them? (*God*)
 - Who fights for us and helps us get through what we need to get through in life? (*God*)

- Explain that our faith in God does not prevent us from facing difficulties. Assure the children that our faith in God does help us get through the difficulties we face, just as the Israelites got through the sea with God's help.
- Have the children turn to the activity on page 2 of the activity booklet and complete it. *Answers: 1. Moses, 2. back, 3. sea, 4. water, 5. pursued, 6. panic, 7. chariots*

Understand It!

- Read aloud the Understand It! on page 123, or have a volunteer read it.
- Invite the children to summarize what they just heard, asking them key questions about the reading to check for comprehension.
- Review some of the key points with them:
 - Water kept the Israelites safe when the Egyptians were chasing them.
 - God did something wonderful at the Red Sea: Moses raised his stick, and God split the Red Sea in two so the Israelites could safely cross the water on dry ground.
 - In the waters of our Baptism, God gives us grace, his special gift that makes us his children.
- Tell the children that some children are baptized as infants, and others receive Baptism when they are older—but God wants all of us to be close to him through Baptism.
- Remind the children that the grace of Baptism leads us to freedom from the slavery of sin.

Live It!

- Read aloud the Live It! on page 123, or have a volunteer read it.
- Distribute the blank paper and crayons to each child. Ask the children to use crayons to draw the picture suggested in the Live It! Remind them to add a title. Allow a few minutes for the children to work.
- Invite volunteers to share their drawings and titles, time permitting.

Tell It!

- Ask the children to look at the images in the Tell It! on page 123.
- Invite volunteers to retell the story using the images. (*Image 1 shows Moses raising his hand over the Red Sea, with the Israelites behind him. Image 2 shows the Israelites walking between the walls of divided water. Image 3 shows the Egyptian army about to get stuck in the water. Image 4 shows the Egyptians knowing it's time to leave.*)



Discover! (25 minutes)

Core Learning Activity (Craft)

Lenten Reminder Booklets

- Prepare blank booklets, one for each child, before class by stapling five half-sheets of paper together.
- Invite the children to brainstorm things they can do for Lent to draw closer to Jesus. Write their answers on the board, and suggest possibilities if they get stuck. (*Possible answers include: cleaning up after meals without being asked, reading to a younger sibling, reading Scripture, praying for others, helping a friend with homework, or making cards to send to nursing homes.*)
- Explain that giving up treats like candy and ice cream are also good ideas, because these things can help us remember what Jesus gave up for us. Tell the young people that we can make this a prayer for all of those who have less than we do. Remind the young people to ask their families to help them keep this kind of resolution.
- Distribute the blank booklets and crayons to the children. Have the children write one Lenten act of prayer or service on each sheet of paper in the booklet. Then invite them to title the booklet and decorate the covers and pages.
- Tell the children to take the booklet home and to choose one of the activities to do each week as a Lenten practice.

Process the Activity

- Invite volunteers to share some of the ideas they wrote in their booklets.
- Tell the children that they are now going to learn about the season of Lent and why Lent is a good time to spend extra time focused on our relationship with Jesus and doing good works for others.

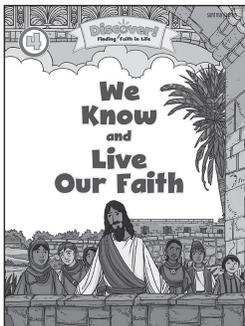
Additional Activity Options

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 263 in its place.

Core Teaching

- Explain to the children that Lent is forty days long. Show them a parish calendar, and count the days of Lent, from Ash Wednesday through Holy Saturday. (Remember that Sundays are not counted as “days of Lent,” although we usually keep up our chosen Lenten practices on Sundays as well.) Continue with the following additional points about Lent:
 - The forty days of Lent remind us of the forty years the Israelites wandered in the wilderness after passing through the Red Sea.
 - The forty days also remind us of the forty days Jesus spent fasting and praying in the desert. This reference is found in the Gospels of Matthew, Mark, and Luke.
 - Lent is a time to renew our lives in Christ.
 - Three traditional practices during Lent are praying, fasting, and doing good works (also called almsgiving). These practices help prepare for the renewal of our baptismal promises at Easter.
 - Fasting means more than just giving up food. We can also make small sacrifices, such as “fasting from,” or giving up, mean words, too much time with electronics, or other things that take us away from time with our family or time in prayer.
 - Spending more time in prayer is a wonderful practice for the season of Lent. We should make an effort to pray more often during this season.
 - Good works can be any action that helps or shows care for someone else.
- Tell the children that on the night before Easter, many adults and older children officially enter the Church at the Easter Vigil. Explain that those who were not already baptized receive Baptism at the Easter Vigil and receive the Sacraments of Confirmation and First Holy Communion. Remind the children that together these three sacraments are the Sacraments of Christian Initiation.
- Point out to the children that today’s Scripture reading is read as part of the Easter Vigil liturgy to remind us of God’s saving action. Explain that just as crossing through the waters of the sea brought the Israelites freedom, we are freed from sin by the waters of Baptism.
- Remind the children that Lent is a preparation for Easter, and at Easter we renew our baptismal promises. Explain that in these promises we say that we believe in God and renounce the ways of sin. Assure the children that faith in God leads to joy and love, and that the ways of sin lead to unhappiness for ourselves and others.

- Ask the children some questions to check for comprehension, such as the following:
 - What is the season of Lent? (*Lent is a season of forty days in which we renew our lives in Christ; we prepare for the renewal of our baptismal promises at Easter.*)
 - What three practices are helpful during Lent? (*fasting, praying, and doing good works*)
 - What are the three Sacraments of Christian Initiation that new Catholics receive the night before Easter? (*Baptism, Confirmation, and the Eucharist*)
 - What do we promise in our baptismal promises? (*We promise to follow God's way in faith and love, and we renounce the ways of sin.*)
- Have the children turn to page 4 of the activity booklet. Read aloud the "People of Faith" section. Add any other information you know about Saint Augustine of Hippo, and encourage the children to say, "Saint Augustine, pray for us," during the next week.



We Know and Live Our Faith

The following articles in the *We Know and Live Our Faith* resource correspond to concepts introduced in this lesson:

- "Life in Christ," page 47
- "Prayer Is God's Idea," page 76

Read the selections aloud, or invite a volunteer to read, as time allows. Check for understanding by asking several questions. You may want to summarize the key concepts for the children.

**Go! (10 minutes)****Lesson Wrap-Up**

- Invite the children to think back over all 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:
 - The waters of Baptism lead us to freedom from the slavery of sin.
 - Lent is a season in which we prepare for the renewal of our baptismal promises at Easter.
 - The Easter Vigil is the night when new Christians receive the Sacraments of Initiation.

Short Closing Prayer (optional)

Note: Use this prayer if you do not intend to use the longer prayer service on the next page to close this lesson.

- Begin prayer by leading the children in the Sign of the Cross and saying, "Let us remember that we are in the holy presence of God," followed by a few seconds of silence.
- Create a spontaneous prayer for all of those who are preparing to enter the Church through Baptism and the other Sacraments of Christian Initiation at the Easter Vigil.
- Invite the children to respond with "Amen," and then close with a final Sign of the Cross.

Prayer Service

Our Baptismal Promises

Prepare a small bowl with some holy water, and place it on your prayer table or in your prayer space. Gather the young people around the prayer table, and explain that at the end of this prayer you will be inviting them to come forward, one at a time, to bless themselves with holy water to remind them of the waters of Baptism.

Leader: Let us begin our prayer with the Sign of the Cross. *(All make the Sign of the Cross.)* Let us remember that we are in the holy presence of God. *(Allow about 10 seconds of silence.)*

Leader: Lent is a time to remember our Baptism, when we became free as children of God.

All: Thanks be to God.

Leader: Lent is a time to prepare to renew our baptismal promises, made for us by our parents and godparents.

All: Thanks be to God.

Leader: Lord, as you led your people through the sea, we thank you for leading us through the waters of Baptism.

All: Thanks be to God.

Leader: Lord, we thank you for making us your children through Baptism.

All: Thanks be to God.

Leader: Let us renew our baptismal promises now by saying "I do" after each question.

- Do you reject sin so as to live in the freedom of God's children? (I do.)
- Do you reject evil? (I do.)
- Do you reject Satan? (I do.)

- Do you believe in God? (I do.)
- Do you believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son? (I do.)
- Do you believe in the Holy Spirit? (I do.)
- Do you believe in the holy Catholic Church? (I do.)

Leader: We thank you, God, for the gift of faith, given to us in Baptism.

All: Thanks be to God.

Leader: Lord, may we live our Baptism as your free sons and daughters. We ask this through Jesus, our Lord.

All: Amen.

Invite the children to come forward, one by one, to bless themselves with holy water and then return to their places. You might consider playing some quiet music as the children come forward and bless themselves, especially if you have a large group. Consider ending with an appropriate song.

*(Part of this prayer service is based on the "Renewal of Baptismal Promises" in the English translation of *The Roman Missal*.)*

Additional Activities

Materials Needed

- slips with the names of this year's RCIA catechumens and candidates from your parish, one slip for each child
- construction paper in spring colors
- markers or crayons

Cards for RCIA Candidates (15 minutes)

- Prepare in advance by creating slips of paper with the names of your parish's RCIA catechumens and candidates. Put one name on each slip of paper, creating enough slips for each child to get one. (Some names may be listed multiple times if necessary.)
- Explain to the children that many people will join the Church during the Easter Vigil service. Explain that these people have been studying all during Lent and will now celebrate the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults, or RCIA.
- Give each child one of the slips with the name of an RCIA catechumen or candidate. Tell the children that they will make a card to welcome their assigned person into the Church.
- Distribute the construction paper and drawing materials. Have the children fold the construction paper in half to make a card. Allow them 5–10 minutes to write and decorate their cards.
- Collect the cards and provide them to the RCIA coordinator or other volunteer or staff person to distribute to the RCIA catechumens and candidates.

Materials Needed

- brown and blue construction paper, one sheet of each for each child
- several pairs of scissors
- several glue sticks

I Am a Follower of Jesus (15 minutes)

- Tell the children that through our Baptism, we all are children of God, called to follow Jesus. Ask the children to brainstorm ways fourth graders can be followers of Jesus. Affirm all reasonable answers.
- Distribute the brown and blue construction paper, one sheet of each color per child. Have each child trace both feet onto the brown paper.
- Distribute the scissors and glue sticks. Have the children cut out their footprints and then glue the footprints onto the blue paper.
- Have the children write "Because of my Baptism, I follow Jesus" at the top of their papers.
- Tell them that their crafts represent their journey through the waters of Baptism, like the Israelites' journey through the waters of the Red Sea.

Materials Needed

- a computer with internet access
- a computer projector

Kids Talk about Lent (15 minutes)

- Show the video "2016 Lent Calendar—Kids Talk about Lent" (YouTube, 2:57) to the group.
- Ask the children to recall what the children in the video shared about their understanding of Lent.
- Invite the children to brainstorm what they also can do to make Lent a holy time during the journey to Easter. Affirm all reasonable answers, and write the ideas on the board.
- Remind the children that we should use this season to grow closer to Jesus.

God Leads the Israelites Out of Egypt



Exodus 14:21–25 (For the full story, read Exodus 14:5–29.)

21 Moses held out his hand over the sea, and the LORD drove the sea back with a strong east wind. It blew all night and turned the sea into dry land. The water was divided, 22 and the Israelites went through the sea on dry ground, with walls of water on both sides. 23 The Egyptians pursued them . . . into the sea with all their horses, **chariots**, and drivers. 24 Just before dawn the LORD looked down . . . at the Egyptian army and threw them into a **panic**. 25 He made the wheels of their chariots get stuck. . . . The Egyptians said, “The LORD is fighting for the Israelites [IZ-ry-el-yts] against us. Let’s get out of here!”

pursued chased people in order to catch them

chariot two-wheeled horse-drawn cart

panic a sudden feeling of being very afraid



Understand It!

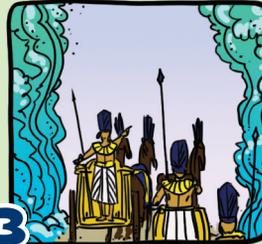
In this Bible story, water played a role in keeping God's people alive. When the Israelites arrived at the shore of the Red Sea, the Egyptians were chasing them. The Egyptians wanted to capture the Israelites and make them slaves again. So God did something wonderful. When Moses raised his stick over the Red Sea, God sent a wind to split the water in two. The Israelites walked safely through the walls of water on dry ground! God loves his people so much that he brought them through the water to be real close to him.

When water was poured on you at Baptism, God saved you through water too. You received God's special gift, which is called grace. The grace God gives you at Baptism makes you his child and keeps filling you with new life. It is good for children to be close to their parents. Baptism makes you so close to God the Father that he actually works in you. He wants you close to him, too.

Live It!

Use paper and crayons to create a picture of the Israelites going through the Red Sea. Paint how you see the two huge walls of water and the people walking through them. When you are done with the picture, add a title that reminds you of how God helps people. Display your picture at home for others to see.

Tell It!



Using the pictures above, retell this story in your own words.

