

## Session 1

# Preparing the Way for Christ



## Let's Pray

Heavenly Father,

Thank you for showing your power and your love when you saved your people from slavery in Egypt and led them through the desert to the Promised Land. Please help me to always trust in you to guide me, protect me, and provide for my needs.

I ask this in Jesus's name.

Amen.

## Introduction

When is your birthday? How do you celebrate it? When something really important happens, like a wedding or the birth of a new baby, we celebrate that event every year. Sometimes we have special traditions, meaning every year we celebrate it the same way. When God saved the Israelites from slavery and death in Egypt, he told them to celebrate that special day every year with the Feast of Passover. He told them exactly how to celebrate the feast so they would always remember how he saved them.





## Key Words

### Moses

An Israelite who was adopted by an Egyptian princess. God chose him to deliver the Israelites from slavery. God gave Moses the Ten Commandments to guide his people.

### Plagues

A series of disasters that God brought upon Egypt to convince Pharaoh to free the Israelites from slavery.

### Sacrifice

Offering of something to God for the forgiveness of sin or in thanksgiving for God's great gifts. Jesus offered himself as a sacrifice so that our sins could be forgiven.

### Unleavened bread

Bread that is made without yeast so that it doesn't rise.

### Passover

The event that recalls how God saved his people from slavery and death in Egypt.



## Let's Read God's Word

### The Feast of Passover

From Exodus 12:14–28

When God sent **Moses** to bring the Israelites out of slavery in Egypt, Pharaoh did not listen. God sent nine terrible **plagues**—such as a terrible hail storm and swarms of locusts—to show that he was the only God. But still Pharaoh would not let the Israelites leave. Finally, God told Moses there would be a tenth plague. In this final plague, all the first-born sons in Egypt would die, and then Pharaoh would finally let God's people go.

God gave Moses instructions for what the Israelites were to do on the night of the tenth plague. Every family needed to choose a spotless lamb and **sacrifice** it.

Then, God said: "They shall take some of the blood, and put it on the two doorposts and the lintel of the houses in which they eat them. They shall eat the flesh that night, roasted; with **unleavened bread** and bitter herbs they shall eat it" (Exodus 12:7–8).

When they eat it, they were to be dressed for a long journey because in the morning they would leave Egypt. God told



them: "It is the Lord's **Passover**. For I will pass through the land of Egypt that night, and I will strike all the first-born in the land of Egypt, both man and beast; and on all the gods of Egypt I will execute judgments: I am the Lord. The blood shall be a sign for you, upon the houses where you are; and when I see the blood, I will pass over you, when I strike the land of Egypt.

This day shall be for you a memorial day, and you shall keep it as a feast to the Lord; throughout your generations you shall observe it as an ordinance for ever"  
(Exodus 12:11-14).

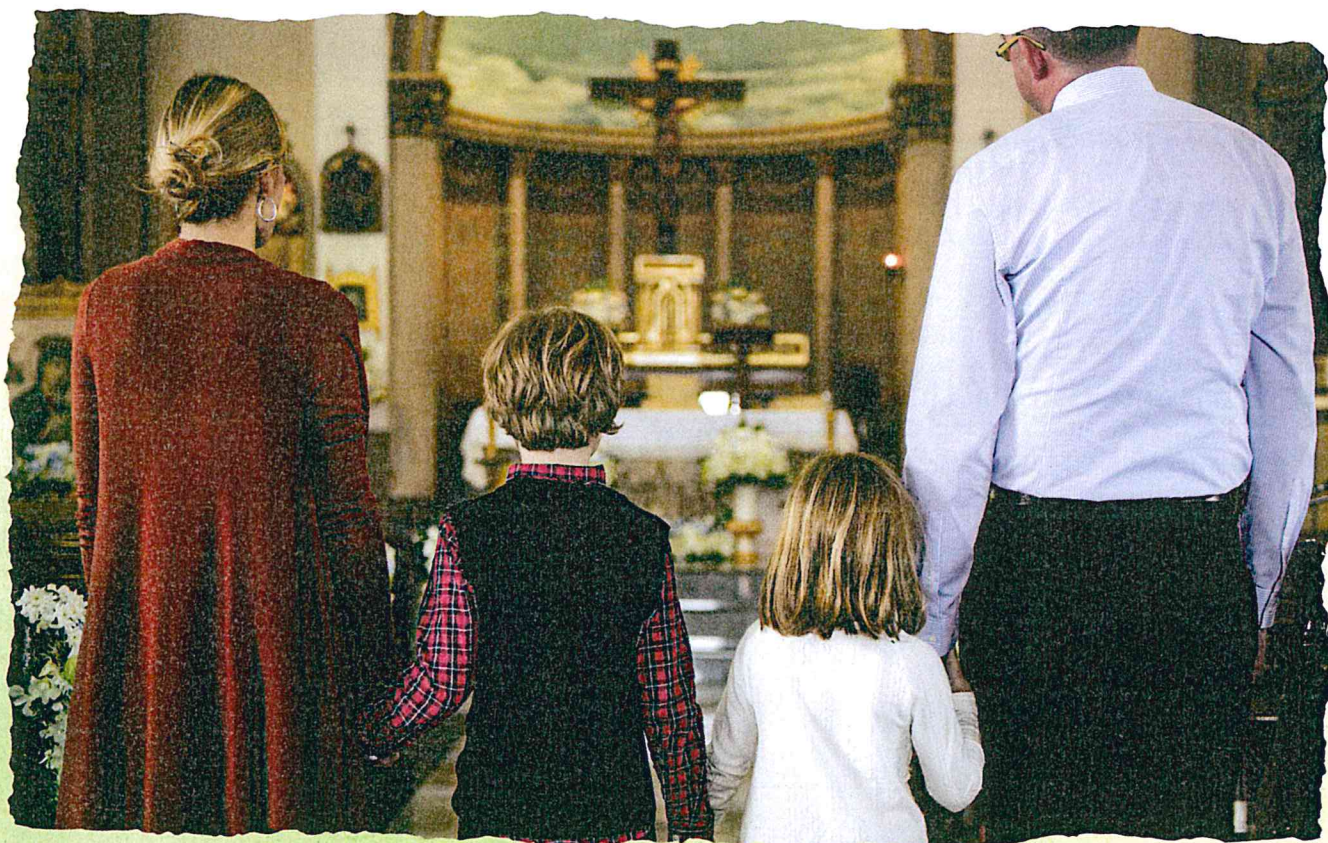


## Let's Talk About It

In the Mass, we remember how Jesus saves us from sin. Jesus brought us the gift of salvation. Have you ever been given a gift that made you thankful?



Jesus replaced the sacrifices of the Old Testament with his sacrifice on the Cross. But we still offer our own sacrifices to God by praying and doing good deeds. The most important way we offer sacrifice to God is by going to Mass because this is where we celebrate Jesus's sacrifice for us in a very special way.



## Let's Talk About It

Discuss some of the sacrifices you can offer God in your daily life.





## Did You Know?

### The Passover Seder Meal

The Passover meal is called the **Seder Meal**, which means “order.” There is a special order to the prayers and the food eaten during the meal. This order teaches us about how God saved his people at the first Passover.

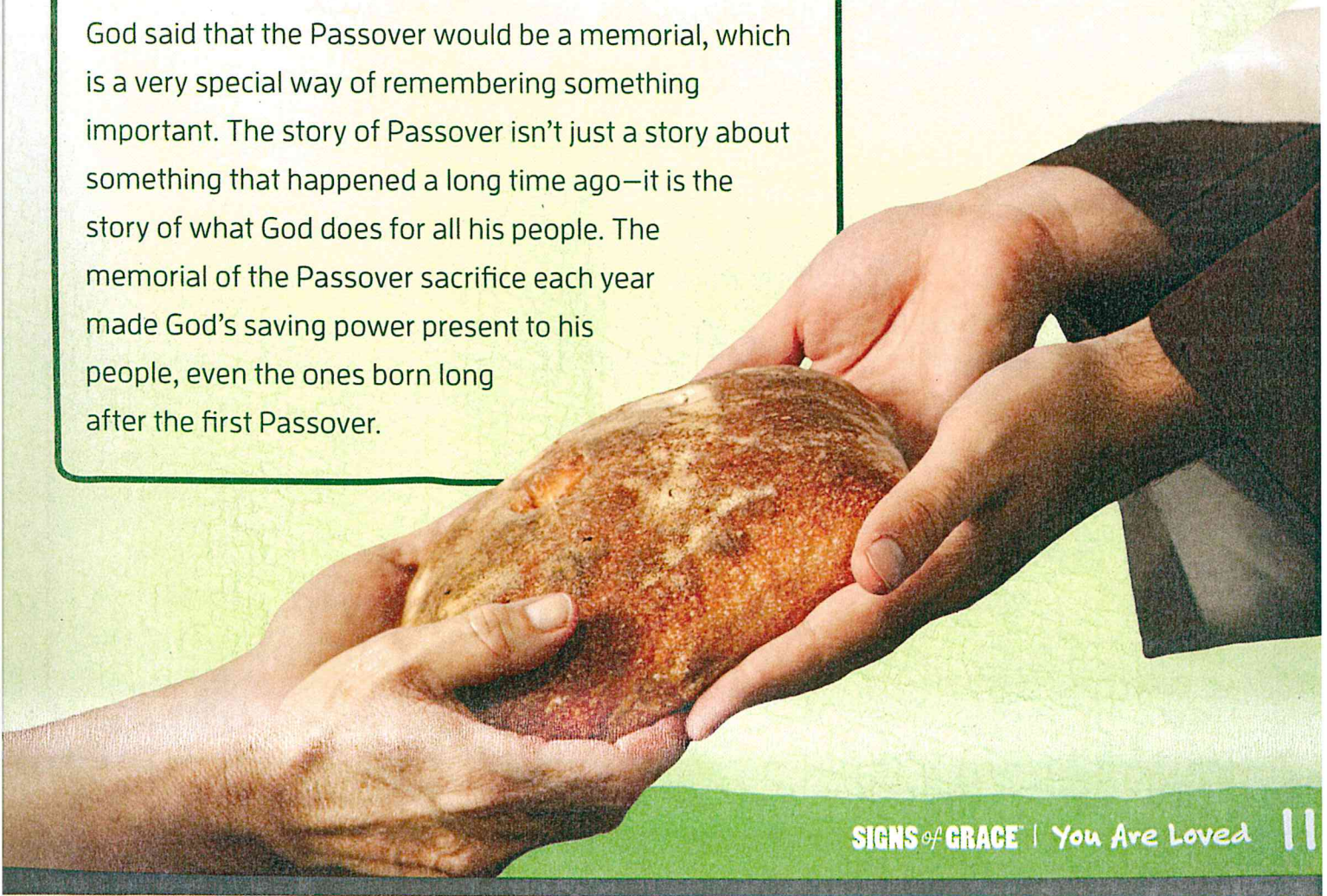
One of the most important parts of the Seder is when a child asks, “Why is this night different from all other nights?” The father answers this question by retelling the story of how God saved the Israelites from Egypt.

God said that the Passover would be a memorial, which is a very special way of remembering something important. The story of Passover isn’t just a story about something that happened a long time ago—it is the story of what God does for all his people. The memorial of the Passover sacrifice each year made God’s saving power present to his people, even the ones born long after the first Passover.

## Key Word

### Seder Meal

A memorial meal celebrated by Jews during Passover, which recalls the exodus of the Israelites from slavery in Egypt.







## Let's Do Activities

### Jesus Is the New Passover Lamb!

Read the story of the first Passover and fill in the blanks that match the pictures.

A very long time ago, God heard his



\_\_\_\_\_ crying out because

they were slaves. He wanted to save them. So he sent



\_\_\_\_\_ to

tell Pharaoh, "LET MY PEOPLE GO!" But Pharaoh was mean and said, "NO!" Then God

sent nine bad plagues on



\_\_\_\_\_ to convince Pharaoh to let God's

people be free. But Pharaoh still said, "NO!" So, Moses told him that if he did not listen

to God, then all the first-born sons would die. But



\_\_\_\_\_ still

said, "NO!" Then Moses told the Israelites to sacrifice a lamb and put its blood on the



\_\_\_\_\_ of their homes to save them from death. That night the

Angel of Death passed over the houses where the blood of the lamb was on the

doorposts, but all the Egyptian first-born sons died. Pharaoh finally let Moses and all of

God's people go to worship their God. This was called the



### Word Bank

Passover

Egypt

Moses

Doorposts

Pharaoh

People



## Who Am I?

Read the clues that are given and choose the correct answer from the Word Bank.

I floated down a river when I was a baby. God gave me a mission, and I couldn't say, "Maybe." He sent me to talk to a bad king named Pharaoh and tell him that God said, "Let my people go!" Who am I? \_\_\_\_\_

I was a king of Egypt, and I felt like a god. When Moses came to me, I thought he was odd. I was grouchy and mean to all of my slaves, and I didn't believe that their God really saves! Who am I? \_\_\_\_\_



We were God's people, but life was bad, because we were slaves, we were so sad. We cried out for help to God above, and he saved us all because God is love! Who are we? \_\_\_\_\_

I am all white, and I eat lots of grass. My blood on Israel's doorposts made death pass. My sacrifice will help you, if you are a slave. Remember me and the gift I gave. What am I? \_\_\_\_\_

## Word Bank

Israelites

Moses

Pharaoh

Lamb



## Let's Recall and Reflect

What was special about the Tabernacle in the wilderness? How do you think this special place made the Israelites feel?

---

God gave the Israelites manna when they were hungry. How does God care for you and provide for your needs?

---

**What is the Passover?** The Passover is the memorial that recalls how God saved his people from slavery and death in Egypt.

**What is manna?** Manna is the bread from heaven that God gave to the Israelites in the desert.

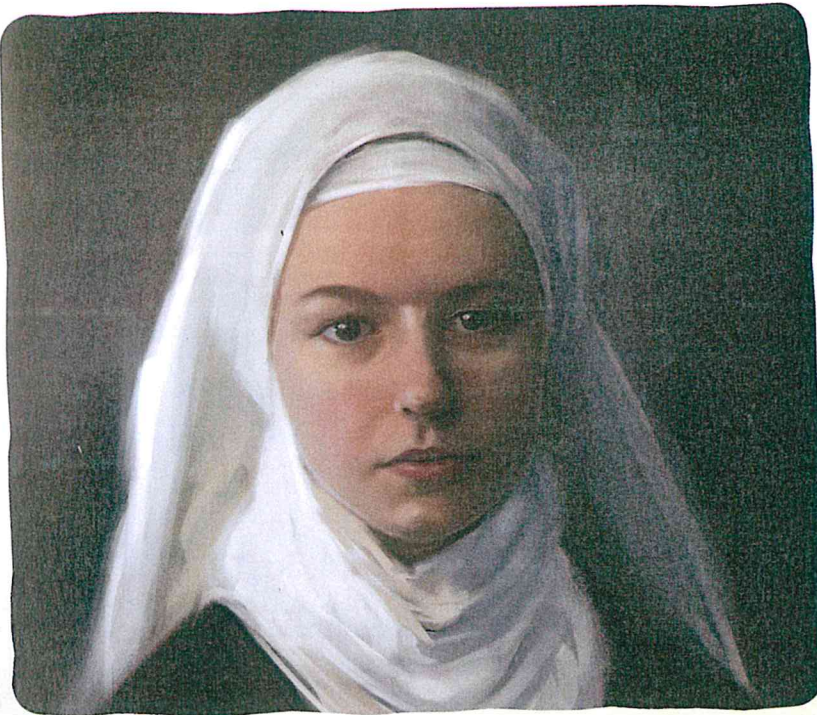
**What was the Tabernacle?** The Tabernacle was a large tent where God dwelt with his people when they were in the desert.

**What is a sacrifice?** A sacrifice is an offering of something to God for the forgiveness of sin or in thanksgiving for God's great gifts. Jesus offered himself as a sacrifice so that our sins could be forgiven.

**What is the most important way to offer sacrifice to God?** The most important way we offer sacrifice to God is by going to Mass because this is where we celebrate Jesus's sacrifice for us in a very special way.



## Story of a Saint



### Saint Catherine of Siena (1347–1380)

As a young girl, Saint Catherine of Siena dedicated her life to serving Christ. She lived at a time when people were confused about what the Church taught, and they were hungry for the truths of the Faith. God used Catherine to feed people's minds and hearts with the truth they needed so that they could grow closer to Jesus. For many years she ate no food but the Eucharist. This reminds us of when God gave manna to his people in the desert. They were lost and hungry and needed him to fill their hunger. Saint Catherine shows us that God will always provide what we need.



## Let's Pray

O my Jesus,  
I offer you my prayers,  
my work, and my play,  
everything that makes me  
happy, and everything  
that makes me sad,  
in union with the Holy  
Sacrifice of the Mass all  
over the world, for all the  
needs of my family and  
friends, and especially for  
the intentions of the Holy  
Father, the Pope.  
Amen.

### Memory Verse

*"I am the bread of life. Your fathers ate manna in the wilderness.... I am the living bread which came down from heaven."*

—John 6:48–49, 51





## Let's Read a Story

# Buried Treasure

Nick and Samantha Perry came out of the Saint Clare school building with the rest of their class. It was a sunny Friday afternoon. Some of the students ran onto the playground to the swings and jungle gym and slide.

Nick and Sam walked with their friends Brad Wilkes and Kim Lee.

Brad grumbled about the homework they were just given in their class about First Communion. Their teacher Sister Lucy told them to prepare a presentation about the important events in their families. She said they should talk about special days they celebrate and bring in meaningful items to show about their family history.

"Why do teachers talk about the past all the time?" Brad said with a frown. "What does this have to do with Communion? It's a waste of time," he added with a grumble.

Sam thought the project would be fun.

"I don't like to talk about my past," Kim said. "It's nobody's business." She tightened her lips and walked away.

They were standing near the wooden tool shed. Mr. Norm, the school handyman, stepped out of the shed with a large shovel. He tucked a toothpick into the corner of his mouth. He always had a toothpick on one side of his mouth or the other. All of the kids liked Mr. Norm. He often joked with them.

"Time to get to work," he said to the kids.

"What are you going to do?" Nick asked.

"Dig for buried treasure," he said. He put the shovel over his shoulder and walked off.

The three kids watched him. He went to a corner of the playground by the fence and started to dig. Nick, Sam, and Brad looked at each other and then ran to him.

"Buried treasure!" Brad said.



“Maybe,” Mr. Norm said. “A long time ago there was a gold prospector named Old Stockyard Willis. He had a shack on this very spot.” Mr. Norm broke through the grass to the dark dirt underneath.

The kids watched and waited.



“Well, Mrs. Gramm is the town historian, and she said she found some old letters belonging to Willis. One of the letters said he buried a box right here. Father Cliff told me to dig it up.”



"There's really buried treasure?" Brad asked. His eyes were big.

Mr. Norm stopped digging. He moved the toothpick from one side of his mouth to the other. He looked at Brad. "Why should you care? It's from the past; it's a waste of time."

Brad's cheeks turned red. He looked down at his shoes.

Mr. Norm winked at Sam. "Why should any of us care what happened in the past? Except that everything you see wouldn't be here. No playground. No school. The bikes you ride on. Your homes. They are only here because someone in the past made them."

Mr. Norm pointed to Saint Clare Church across the playground. "What happens in there is because of what God did in the past."

Brad fumed. He kicked at the dirt. "There's no buried treasure. You only said that to tease us." He stormed off.

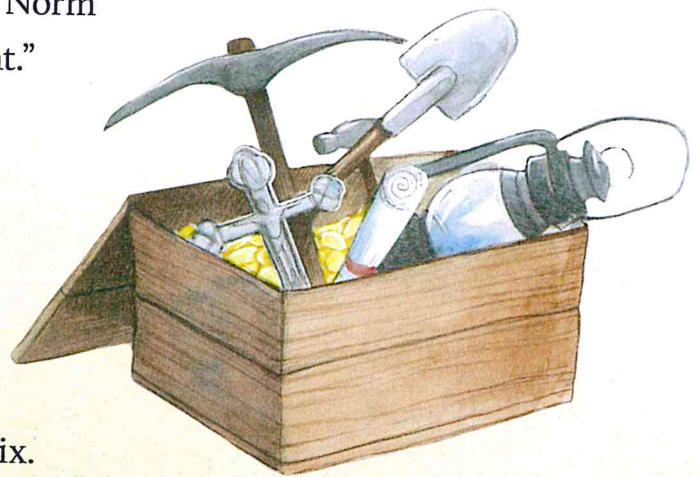
Nick and Sam looked at Mr. Norm. Mr. Norm smiled and said, "The past is always present." He went back to digging.

At dinner that evening, Nick and Sam heard from their mom that Mr. Norm had dug up a box that once belonged to Old Stockyard Willis. Inside he found a few nuggets of gold, some tools, an oil lamp, a set of false teeth, and a silver crucifix.

"Not much of a treasure," Nick said.

"They were treasures to Old Stockyard Willis," Mrs. Perry said.

Sam thought about Kim and wondered why she didn't want to talk about her past.



## Let's Talk About It

Why did Mr. Norm, the handyman, say we should care about the past? What do you think he meant when he said, "The past is always present"?

Why are the events of the Bible important to us today?

What are some things that Jesus said or did that impact us today?