

Activity for the Triduum (Holy Thursday, Good Friday, Easter Sunday)

We Celebrate the Three Days

Scripture Focus: Holy Thursday (the Last Supper): Mark 14:22–24 (Featured Story “The Last Supper”); Good Friday: Matthew 27:50–54 (Featured Story “Jesus Gives His Life for Us”); Easter Sunday: Matthew 28:5–9 (Featured Story “Jesus Wants Us to Help Others Know Him”). The children make a mobile with representative symbols—a Host and chalice, a cross, and a “rising sun”—of each of the Three Days of the Triduum, with a prayer to Jesus on each symbol.

Gather the following items: wire coat hangers, one for each child; brown, gold, and white construction paper from which to cut the symbols; scissors; several bottles of glue; thread or string; and a needle or hole punch for making holes in paper (To make the symbols, you might want to start by making a template for each out of cardboard and then trace around it as many times as needed for the number of children in your class. Draw a simple chalice with a “rounded” shape for the top and a broad “leg” for the bottom, all in one piece. Trace this onto gold construction paper. To make the Host, cut out a circle of an appropriate size that will fit on the paper chalice. Trace this onto white construction paper. Cut out a cross, being careful not to make it too thin. Trace this onto brown construction paper. Cut out a circle for the sun, also including “rays” coming out of it. Trace this onto gold construction paper.)

Let’s Look It Up! Have the children open *The Catholic Children’s Bible* to the New Testament. Direct them to find the illustrations for each of the Featured Stories listed in the “Scripture Focus” section, so that they are made aware of the entire three days of the Triduum. (*Note:* Consider making these Featured Stories the basis for your lesson.)

Activity

1. Explain to the children that the Church celebrates three special days during Holy Week. These days are called the Triduum, which means “three days.” (The Triduum days begin at sunset, so the Triduum lasts from Holy Thursday evening through Easter Sunday evening.) These are the days that Jesus gave us the gift of the Eucharist at the Last Supper, and then suffered, died, and rose again for us. These are the most solemn and serious days of the entire year.

2. Share the following with the children:
 - To celebrate these days, and to remind us of what they mean, we will make a mobile. On it we will hang three special symbols of Jesus' gifts to us. One symbol is the Host and chalice, for the Holy Eucharist, the gift Jesus gave us on Holy Thursday. Another symbol is the cross, for Jesus' death on Good Friday. The third symbol is the shining sun, for Jesus' Resurrection on Easter Sunday.
3. Distribute the paper chalices and Hosts, along with scissors and glue, and ask the children to cut out the symbols. Then instruct them to glue the bottom of the paper Host to the top of the chalice.
4. Distribute the paper crosses and ask the children to cut them out.
5. Distribute the paper suns and ask the children to cut them out.
6. Ask the children to turn the chalice over and write a message to Jesus on the back of it. (Suggestions: *Thank you, Jesus, for Holy Communion; Jesus, thank you for being with us always; Jesus, I love you.*)
7. Ask the children to turn the cross over and write a message to Jesus on the back: (Suggestions: *Thank you, Jesus, for all you did for us; Jesus, I love you.*)
8. Ask the children to turn the sun over and write a message to Jesus on the back: (Suggestions: *Alleluia! Jesus is risen!; Risen Jesus, I love you; Thank you, Jesus, for new life!*)
9. Using the needle or hole punch, poke holes in the symbols as follows: at the top of the Host, at the top of the cross, and at the end of one of the rays of the sun.
10. Distribute three pieces of thread or string, of varying lengths, to each child. (Holes made by needles will need thread; holes made with a hole punch will need string.) Help the children attach the string to the symbols.
11. Distribute the wire hangers. Help the children hang the symbols from the wire hangers.
12. Review the meaning of the symbols by asking volunteers to tell the "story" of the symbol. Remind the children to tell the story at home when showing their mobiles to their families.