


UNIT TWO: I BELIEVE IN JESUS CHRIST

LESSON 4: The Public Life of Jesus

CONTENTS OF LESSON:

1. We continue to study and reflect on Jesus' life, looking at his public ministry. The Luminous Mysteries contain key events from this period:
THE BAPTISM OF JESUS: Jesus' public life began with his baptism by John in the Jordan. Though he was without sin he accepted baptism, taking the place of sinful man. His immersion signified his death. The Father expressed his delight in his Son. [CCC535-536]
THE MIRACLE AT CANA: The first of Jesus' miracles, performed at the request of his mother, 'revealed his glory and his disciples believed in him'. The miracles of Jesus: healing, exorcism, raising from the dead, calming the sea etc show that Jesus is indeed the Son of God and has power over nature and over evil spirits. [CCC548-550]
THE PROCLAMATION OF THE KINGDOM: Jesus came to invite all people to his Kingdom. In order to enter it, we must repent and believe in the Gospel. The Gospel or Good News is that God sent Jesus to save us. His parables invite us to his Kingdom. [CCC543, 545, 546]
THE TRANSFIGURATION: This event gave the 3 disciples a foretaste of his glory in heaven. Moses and Elijah spoke about Jesus' upcoming death. Jesus' disciples must expect both suffering and glory. [CCC554-556]
THE INSTITUTION OF THE EUCHARIST: The Last Supper of Jesus reminds us of the paschal lamb, whose blood saved the Israelites from the angel of death. We realize that Jesus gave his life freely. [CCC554-556]
2.  In the parable of the Wedding Banquet Jesus reminds us that we are all invited to the great feast of God's Kingdom. However it is up to us to accept or reject his invitation.

REFERENCES: Matt 3:13-17; 22:1-10; Mark 1:15; Luke 9:28-36; 22:14-20; John 2:1-11; 3:16; Rom 5:8.

MATERIALS NEEDED: Handouts, Bibles.

I. STARTER:

- As we continue to look at Jesus' life we will be trying to understand the meaning of certain actions. E.g. When Pontius Pilate washed his hands in front of everyone he was saying, 'I don't take responsibility for Jesus' death. It is your choice!'
- Suppose you wanted to show that you are going to be someone's friend forever, can you think of a symbolic action to express this? [Students come up and demonstrate their ideas.]

II. DEVELOPMENT:

- At the very start of Jesus' public life we see him do an action which had a deep meaning. It showed what his mission was. Can anyone guess what event I am talking about?
[Jesus' Baptism in the Jordan.]
- Let's read about this event. We will be looking at the Luminous Mysteries of the Rosary. They contain some of the highlights of Jesus' public ministry which lasted for about 3 years only.
[Give out the handouts and go through each mystery together. The Bible passage is read aloud and students try to answer the questions. Bring out:]

THE BAPTISM OF JESUS:

1. Why did John want to prevent Jesus from being baptized? *[John used to baptize people as a sign of their repentance. He realized that Jesus was holy and without sin, and so had no need of being washed of sin.]*
2. What did Jesus' Baptism mean? *[It meant that Jesus had come to take the place of sinful man.]*
 Immersing in the water was a sign of his death. Coming out again, was a sign of his rising again. The Father showed his delight in his obedient Son by his words.

THE MIRACLE AT CANA:

3. What was the effect of this first miracle of Jesus?
[The disciples realized the glory of Jesus and they believed in him.]
4. E.g. of miracles and what they tell us about Jesus:
 - Walking on Water: Jesus was truly the Son of God, and had power over nature.*
 - Casting out Demons: His power over evil spirits.*
 - Healing of the sick: His compassion and power.*

THE PROCLAMATION OF THE KINGDOM:

5. Whom did Jesus invite to his kingdom? *[All people.]*
6. What must we do to enter it? *[Repent and believe in the Gospel.]*
7. What is the Gospel? *[The Gospel or 'Good News' is that God loves us so much that he sent Jesus to save us.]*
8. *[List those parables in which Jesus says, "The kingdom of heaven is like..."]*

THE TRANSFIGURATION:

9. What other event does this remind you of? *[The Baptism of Jesus.]*
Before Jesus began his public work, the Father spoke from heaven. And before he could begin his passion and death, he spoke again using the same words.
10. Who appeared with Jesus? What did they talk about? *[Moses and Elijah. They spoke about his upcoming death.]*
11. What do you think the experience showed the 3 disciples? *[They realized his heavenly glory and also were reminded that suffering was part of God's plan for Jesus.. and for his followers also.]*

THE INSTITUTION OF THE EUCHARIST:

12. On which feast did Jesus have his Last Supper? Why do you think he chose this day?
[On the feast of the Passover. Just as the blood of the lamb saved the Israelites in Egypt from death, so Jesus' blood would save us from spiritual death.]
 13. How do we know that Jesus gave his life freely? *[Because before being arrested, he was already talking about what would happen. He said, "will be given for you" and "will be poured out for you".]*
- Again we see Jesus using an action to express something very deep. Can you see anything more in Jesus' action at the table? *[Students could suggest what they see, E.g. Breaking the bread: His flesh would be wounded; Bread gives energy and strength: Jesus gives us inner strength.]*

III. INTERIORISATION/PRAAYER:

[Read Matthew 22:1-10.]

Jesus came to announce his Kingdom and to make the way for us to enter it. But it is up to you and me to accept the invitation or not. Maybe some of us don't realize what a wonderful chance we are being given. Maybe for some their business or family is more important.

Be quiet and think about this. Write a short prayer in answer to God. Be honest about your feelings. *[Students pray in silence for AT LEAST 5 minutes.]*

IV. ACTIVITY:

- The parables of Jesus invite us to His kingdom and also ask us to make a choice. Let us pick a parable and try and present it to the class.
[Form groups and let each group pick a parable of Jesus. (Names and references of parables could be written on slips of paper and folded.) They plan for just 2 minutes and then mime the parable. The others try to guess which parable they are presenting.]

HOME ASSIGNMENT: ⇨ Pray the Luminous Mysteries of the Rosary with your family and explain the deeper meaning of each decade using your handout.