



Nottingham Roman Catholic
Diocesan Education Service



Desert to
Garden

Branch 4

Y4 Teachers' Guide

Version 1: September 2026

This booklet is offered as a theological guide for teachers. Although the information provides some context for the whole branch, it will be most useful for teachers as they deliver the first few sessions and lessons within the branch.

Teachers' Guide: Branch Four: Galilee to Jerusalem – Y4

Notes for teachers

- In this branch, pupils will explore Lent's themes of forgiveness and reconciliation and the idea that devotion to God leads a person to do good works. They will also look at Holy Week in St Matthew's gospel and see that St Matthew shows Jesus as the servant-Messiah. For Lent, they will explore two parables.
- The Parable of the Lost (or prodigal) Son is one of the most familiar parables in the gospels. It is a beautifully crafted story through which Jesus reveals that God does not break his relationship with his children. The lost son is always the Father's son and is only lost to himself.
- Pope Francis said, 'This teaching of Jesus is important: our condition of children of God is the fruit of the love of the Father's heart; it does not depend on our merits or our actions and, therefore, no one can take it away, not even the devil! No one can take away this dignity'. (General Address 11.05.16).
- However, pupils should also think about the character of the elder brother. He has always done as his Father has asked but cannot forgive his brother, so have his reasons for following his Father's wishes come from a place of love? St Luke does not answer this but leaves it as a puzzle which pupils can discuss.
- The Parable of the Judgement of the Nations is often called the parable of the sheep and the goats. It is about the last judgement at the end of time. As a parable, pupils will need to think about what it means because it is not as it first appears. It is not a parable about people being ranked because of the number of good deeds they carried out. Instead, it says that the people who love God cannot help but do good deeds.
- God is love and those who seek to love him see the face of God in each other and will always move to help those in need. The 'goats' have chosen not to do good deeds because they act out of self-interest. Their hearts are not with God, so their actions do not flow from faith and hope in God.
- The parable is the source of the Church's corporal works of mercy. Both parables can prompt reflection on why pupils might fast or raise money for charity in Lent.
- Regarding teaching the events of Holy Week, pupils should have an overview to form a sequence of the last week of Jesus' earthly life. They are not expected to study each scriptural passage in detail and teachers will decide how pupils hear the narrative of Holy Week; they may wish to reference the Palm Sunday Liturgy.
- The outcomes focus on how Jesus continues to reveal that he is the servant-Messiah. At the beginning of the week, Jesus is welcomed into Jerusalem, and the people shout 'Hosanna!'. However, he refuses to be like an earthly king. Instead, as with his healing miracles, he reaches out to humanity and takes on the burden of sin for the whole world.
- Even his closest friends do not understand his course of action. Pupils can get some sense of this through the actions of Peter. Only after the Resurrection do the disciples understand that Jesus came, 'not to be served but to serve... For the Christian, to reign is to serve him, particularly when serving the poor and suffering, in whom the Church recognises the image of her poor and suffering founder'. (CCC 786)

General guidance: Wherever possible, resources for teaching should always look to diverse representations from the Universal Catholic Church. Teachers must teach the content through the lenses of Hear, Believe, Celebrate, and Live but do not have to follow the lenses in sequence.

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CCC Links	Knowledge lens content
Prodigal son CCC 1439 Judgement of the Nations CCC 1038 Peter CCC 1851 Holy Week CCC 1169	Hear By the end of this unit of study, pupils will hear the following key texts: • The lost son (the prodigal) and the dutiful son (Lk 15:11-32) • The Judgement of the Nations (sheep and goats) (Matt 25:31-46) • The events of Holy Week from the gospel of Matthew Entry into Jerusalem (Matt 21:1-11), Judas' betrayal (Matt 26:14), the Passover and Peter's denial foretold (Matt 26:17-35) Jesus prays (Matt 26:36-46) the betrayal and arrest of Jesus (Matt 26:47-56), Peter's denials (Matt 26:69-75), Pilate questions Jesus (Matt 27:11-14), the Crucifixion (Matt 27:32-44), the death of Jesus (Matt 27:45-56) and the Burial of Jesus (Matt 27:57-61)* *Pupils should have an overview of the events of Holy Week. Please see teachers notes for additional information.
Forgiveness YCfK p94 YC 524 CCC 277, 1439, 2838 Virtues YC 306-309 CCC 1840-1841, 1844 Lent & repentance YC 230 CCC 1438 Acts of mercy YC 450-451 CCC 2447 Holy Week CCC 1169	Believe By the end of this unit of study, pupils will know that the Church teaches that: • God loves everyone. He can and wants to forgive people's sins. • When people love God, they want to help others as the virtues of faith, hope, and love have their foundations in God who is love. • Lent is a time for Christians to make a new start by loving God with their whole heart and expressing this love through good works. Celebrate By the end of this unit of study, pupils will know: • The works of mercy show Christians how to treat other people. • That Lent is a time to live out the works of mercy (for example, by praying for someone who is sad, practising patience, fasting, or giving time or money to those in need). • Holy Week begins on Palm Sunday and marks the annual celebration of Jesus' passion, death, and resurrection. Live By the end of this unit of study, pupils will know: • The corporal and spiritual acts of mercy. • How the life and work of a person or organisation (historical or contemporary) lives out the works of mercy and/or the love for those oppressed by poverty (e.g., St Damien of Molokai, Ruth Pfau, National Justice and Peace Network, CAFOD).
Key vocabulary	
Lent Holy Week parable sin forgiveness mercy	

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