



Nottingham Roman Catholic
Diocesan Education Service



Desert to
Garden

Branch 4

Y5 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 – Y5

Notes for teachers

- At the Ash Wednesday service, the priest places an ash cross on each person's forehead and says, 'Turn away from sin and believe in the Gospel' or 'Remember that you are dust, and to dust you shall return'. In this branch, pupils will explore the meaning of these words by exploring what it means to sin and the last things, death, judgement, heaven, and hell as part of God's plan for salvation. God's plan is for everyone to go to heaven.
- However, the Church teaches that, as people, we often turn away from this plan and become tempted to make choices that turn us away from God's plan. Jesus is God, but he is also fully human. In the wilderness, he is tempted to make choices that appeal to his human nature. He is hungry and is tempted to eat; he is tempted to show his power over the invisible (the angels will catch him) and the visible (ruling all the kingdoms of the world).
- Jesus rejects these temptations. (In Year Six, pupils will look at the second story of Creation and how Adam and Eve did not resist the temptation!) When people are tempted, they often make a choice that turns them away from God and focuses instead on human needs. Pupils can explore this in an age-appropriate way. Being selfish or mean or saying unkind things are all focused on what 'I' want, not loving our neighbour.
- To understand this, pupils must reflect on the concept of conscience as an 'inner voice' that guides the choices people make. They will also link with the idea of the commandments as 'moral codes' that help to guide the conscience.
- St Paul's writing about love provides a powerful guide on leading a life turned towards God and links with the theological virtues already studied.
- The season of Lent is a time in the Church's year when Catholics reflect on the importance of realigning their lives to God. Fasting reminds people that everything comes from God and shows solidarity with those who have less.
- Giving is also sharing the gifts of God with others and building a more just world. Praying strengthens a person's relationship with God, and in Lent, they should examine their conscience to understand where they have fallen short of God's love. They can also pray that other people will help them to be a better witness to the Gospel.
- For Christians, Lent is a time to reflect on the spiritual or interior life through becoming more mindful of God's love in their lives and examining what in their life is drawing them away from God's purpose. Lent is a time for spiritual exercises, contemplation on scripture, and penitential pilgrimages alongside the self-denial of fasting and charitable works (see CCC 1438).
- The conclusion of Lent is Holy Week culminating in the Resurrection of Jesus. This year, pupils will think about prayer reflections on the passion, death, and Resurrection of Christ through continuing to learn about the Rosary through looking at the Sorrowful mysteries.
- Understanding God's plan for heaven includes thinking about how people get there. The Church teaches that at some point in the future, Christ will come again, and there will be a final judgement.
- However, until then, the only way to get to heaven is to die. The Church teaches that when a person dies, their soul goes to God. People can no longer change when they die, and God sees them as they are. The Church teaches that when we meet God after death, he brings about what is just. No one knows how this happens.
- The Church teaches that God is loving and forgiving, heaven is when people's souls join him in endless love, and purgatory is a time after their death of getting ready to join God in his infinite love. Because God loves all people, he gives them a choice not to love him and to choose to turn away from the love of God forever is called hell.

General guidance: Conversations about death always come with a 'trigger warning'. Teachers know their class and the circumstances of the pupils in a class. If conversations about the last things will cause distress because of personal circumstances, teachers should use their professional judgement about what to cover or leave out. 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.

CCC Links	Knowledge lens content
Jesus' temptations CCC 538-540 Sin YCFK 55, 81 YC 315, CCC 18491851, 1871-1872 Conscience YCFK 21,113, YC 295 CCC 1776-1779 The Last Things YCFK 58-62, YC 154, 157-162, CCC 1021, 1023, 1026,1030,1031, 1033 Ash Wednesday YC 272, CCC 1667, 1677 Penitential practice CCC 1438 Rosary YCFK 155, YC 481, CCC 2678 Prayer YCFK 139, 145 YC 469, 487 CCC 2558-2565	Hear By the end of this unit of study, pupils will hear the following key texts: - A selection of Ash Wednesday readings e.g., Joel 2:12-18, Psalm 50:3-6, 12-14, 17, 2 Cor 5:20-6, Matt 6:1-6, 16-18 - Temptation in the Wilderness (Matt 4:1-11) - The Resurrection of the Dead Paul (1 Corinthians 15:1-8, 20-25, 54-57) Believe By the end of this unit of study, pupils will know that the Church teaches that: - Ash Wednesday marks the beginning of the season of Lent and is the first of the forty days of Lent leading up to Easter. The forty days refer to the time Jesus spent in the desert during which he was tempted. - A sin is a word, deed, or intention by which a person deliberately chooses to turn away from God. - Sin separates people from love and from good. All sins are damaging but some are so deadly they break our friendship with God. - Conscience is an 'inner voice' that guides the choices people make. God speaks to people through their conscience. - The Last Things are death, judgement, heaven, purgatory, and hell. - Prayer is turning the heart towards God. Celebrate By the end of this unit of study, pupils will know: - What the ashes on Ash Wednesday symbolise. - A simple examen and/or act of contrition. - The Sorrowful Mysteries of the Rosary. Live By the end of this unit of study, pupils will know: - Prayer is a way of sharing with God everything that is in a person's heart, what makes them happy and what is troubling them. - What Christians express by prayer postures e.g., kneeling, standing, sitting, joined hands.
Key vocabulary	
Ash Wednesday Lent sin deadly sin fasting prayer conscience death judgement heaven hell	

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