

THE CHURCH C·E·L·E·B·R·A·T·E·S

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# Lent and Easter

Catholic  
**UPDATE**  
VIDEO

LEADER'S GUIDE

**PLEASE NOTE:** This leader's guide was originally written for those using this video program in its VHS format. Those now using this program on DVD may find some references that do not apply to their use (i.e., directions for locating segments, time notations, etc.). We trust that both VHS- and DVD-users will find this guide a valuable resource.

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## **Catholic Update Video**

### **The Use of Video in Faith Formation**

Jesus used the “media” of his day to teach. He was a master storyteller. His preaching is full of imagery. His parables are calculated to engage his audience. Through the ages, Christian teachers and preachers have followed Jesus in the creative proclamation of his message.

From the culture of Jesus’ time, heavily dependent on *oral communication*—to the advent of *print communication*—to our own time and its dependence on *electronic media*—Christian teachers have adapted their proclamation to each new medium and its particular demands.

Media scholars like Marshall McLuhan remind us of the impact of the medium on the message it carries. *How* we communicate affects *what* we communicate. Electronic media offer us new ways to tell the story of our faith. Father Pierre Babin points out (see *The New Era in Religious Communications*, Pierre Babin with Mercedes Iannone, Fortress Press, Minneapolis, 1991) that the message, as well as the sender and receiver, will be re-shaped in the telling.

Catechesis, as a part of the total evangelization process, must touch the learners’ hearts and shine the light of faith on their lives. It must connect to the learners’ experience or risk being discarded as irrelevant. To be effective, catechists must learn how to make the best use of the electronic media available in our culture, aware of the particular medium’s strengths and weaknesses.

Video is a very popular, familiar and accessible part of our electronic culture. It draws us in, captures our imaginations and touches us on a deep, emotional level.

As it speaks to our experience and utilizes several of our senses, its message is more likely to be heard and remembered. By integrating quality video programs into the catechetical process, catechists can share the message more effectively.

At the same time, as television becomes a more pervasive part of our lives, we can be lulled into thinking that it can do everything for us—inform, entertain, shop, even worship. The reality is that it can't and shouldn't do everything. As Pierre Babin emphasizes, electronic media function differently than print media. They appeal first to the *emotional* content of our faith rather than the *intellectual* content. Video cannot begin to convey the amount of information print can. It cannot replace the live presence and personal witness of the catechist. But in a catechetical setting, it can be a powerful part of the “mix of media” used in proclaiming the message.

How effectively video—or any electronic media—is used in the catechetical setting depends primarily on how prepared the catechist is to use it:

- A preview of the video is essential to determine the best use of the program with a particular group.
- The catechist should select a video program (or section of a video) based on the audience, the purpose, and the availability of competent teachers and other resources and activities to support the theme.
- Sufficient time should be available to introduce the video and to process the viewing experience.

Catechists must realize that they control the use of video in their sessions. They might approach a video program in one of two ways: as a skeleton on which to build a presentation or as a way to “enflesh” an existing skeleton.

A video program well-tailored to the needs of a

group might be used in its entirety. At other times, catechists may creatively manipulate the video to fit their needs:

- An excerpt may be taken from a longer piece to illustrate a point.
- A video may be shown with the *sound off* to highlight an aspect of the program.
- The “pause” button can be used freely to interject explanations and examples or to elicit reactions.
- The program or excerpt may be repeated to emphasize a point.

The producers of this video program have attempted to craft both medium and message with an awareness of the power of the medium as well as its limitations. They encourage those who use it to study this guide and become familiar with ways to allow this program to supplement their own sharing of the Gospel message of Jesus Christ.

### **Introduction to the Series**

*Catholic Update Videos* are dynamic new media designed for use with today’s adult learners. Use them in RCIA, faith formation, liturgical and pastoral ministry, faith-sharing groups, and sacramental preparation. *Catholic Update Video* offers catechists and pastoral ministers multimedia resources to enhance teaching, presentation and training efforts.

*Catholic Update Video*’s four segments—story, witness, teaching and musical reflection—are short and can stand alone or be used with others in the program. The format is flexible, making it useful in a variety of group settings as well as for individual viewing. The emphasis is on what video can do best, namely touch us through story (story segment), testimony (witness segment) and song (musical reflection segment) with

images and the emotions they carry. But a more “didactic” approach (teaching segment) respects the need to convey a concise core of information.

The general model for catechetical process (life experience, message or doctrine, response) is respected by the order of the four segments, although at times a catechist may choose to use them alone or out of sequence:

- Each program begins with a **story segment** designed to draw viewers in and help them connect their life-experience to the faith-topic.
- The testimony of real-life Catholics in the **witness segment** helps viewers reflect on their own life experience and prepare for group sharing.
- Our teacher briefly highlights some aspects of the topic in the **teaching segment**. Relevant images help to illustrate the points being made. *(This segment is not intended to treat a topic exhaustively nor substitute for a more thorough presentation on the message or doctrine.)*
- Viewers are invited to respond in prayer using the **musical reflection segment**.

The program’s host provides a context for each segment. This is designed to help viewers who will see the program from beginning to end. Catechists who use segments individually or out of sequence may wish to prepare their own lead-in. On-screen graphics provide viewers with a question for reflection or sharing between segments.

This leader’s guide is an important tool for making the best use of this video program.

It includes the following features:

- **Small Group Process** incorporating all four segments into a single session.
- **Summary and Suggestions for Use** for each segment.

- **Questions for Sharing** for the story, witness and teaching segments; facilitators can choose from them or use them as models for developing their own questions.
- **Suggestions for Use** for the musical reflection segment provide a model for using this segment in a prayer setting.
- **Resources for Further Study** are listed at the end of this guide.
- Approximate times are noted for where each segment begins. *(If the VCR is equipped with an “elapsed time” counter, reset the counter to 0:00:00 at the beginning of the tape and fast-forward to the time listed for the beginning of the desired segment. If the VCR does not have an “elapsed time” counter, the facilitator can fast-forward in the “review” mode [i.e., while the VCR is in “play”] to find the gray screen and Catholic Update Video logo that indicate the start of a segment.)*

## THE CHURCH C·E·L·E·B·R·A·T·E·S

### Lent and Easter

#### Overview of the Program

Ask a child which Church season is most important, and he or she will tell you, “Christmas!” Even many adults will argue that without Jesus’ birth at Christmas, we wouldn’t be able to celebrate Jesus’ Resurrection at Easter. We do have to admit to a certain logic in that answer.

Without downplaying the importance of the Incarnation, that God became human—one of *us*—in the infant Jesus born in Bethlehem, many of us come to realize through the dyings and risings in our own lives just how important Christ’s Resurrection is. We learn along the way that we only know of the miracle of Jesus’ birth and the teachings and miracles of his life *because* he rose to new life after suffering a horrible death. He rose to new life so that we may know new life after bodily death. His Resurrection frees us from sin and death. This makes Easter our Church’s greatest liturgical season.

Lent, the period of preparation for Easter, is a time when we are invited to look at the meaning of Baptism—upcoming for those elect participating in the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults (RCIA) and ongoing for those already baptized. We each need to continually ask ourselves the question: “What must die in me so that Christ may come to new life in me this Easter?”

This *Catholic Update Video* provides an overview of the meaning and order of the pivotal seasons of Lent and Easter in our Church’s liturgical year.

- The liturgies of the Church are meant to bring the

reality of Christ's dying and rising into the midst of our everyday lives. In the *story segment*, we meet a man whose personal story of spiritual death and rebirth illustrates the Paschal Mystery and the dying to self we all must undertake as true followers of Christ.

- In the *witness segment*, Catholics share their own reflections on the Lenten and Easter celebrations of the Church's liturgical year. Some of them have recently celebrated the sacraments of initiation.
- In the *teaching segment*, Franciscan Father Tom Richstatter presents an overview of the Easter Season—from Lent to Pentecost. He reminds us that the celebrations of the Church year are the way we read the salvation stories of the Bible in the midst of our community. He emphasizes a seasonal spirituality that reflects the centrality of Baptism in the lives and identities of all Christian disciples.
- Our concluding *music video reflection* invites all of us—those preparing for Baptism and those already baptized—to break down the walls separating us from God so that God can take our brokenness and rebuild each one of us into a place where God lives. “Shelter Your Name” by Danielle Rose Skorich is a song of reconciliation and renewal.

### **Audience**

This program is intended for an adult audience. Its primary audience is those participating in the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults (RCIA) who are being introduced to the seasons of the Church's liturgical year. Other uses include groups of adults with an interest in learning more about the Church's liturgical year (e.g., worship commissions, liturgy planners, small groups).

## **Small Group Process**

While many groups may choose to use the segments in separate sessions or out of sequence, we provide here a sample outline for a small group process incorporating all four of the video segments into a single session.

This outline is designed to help volunteer catechists/facilitators who may need assistance in planning group sessions and for those professionals who like to adapt a sample plan to meet their own needs.

## **Suggested Process**

### **1. *Setting the Environment***

A central table may be set with a variety of symbols of the seasons of Lent and Easter (e.g., ashes, a palm leaf, the *Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults*, a vigil light as used at the Easter Vigil, a crucifix, bread and wine, a Bible or Lectionary, an Easter lily, etc.).

Arrange these items around a lit candle representing the presence of Christ.

### **2. *Gathering***

Invite participants to gather around the table for an opening prayer or song. If using a song, we suggest playing a recording of a song related to the theme and providing those gathered with the lyrics. The leader may choose to use the following or similar opening prayer: *Loving God, we gather today as women and men who desire to know you better. Help us to look upon the days of Lent and Easter as opportunities to grow closer to you and to the Church community. Guide us as we move forward on this path. Amen.*

### **3. *Sharing My Story***

- Invite personal reflection and group sharing on the question: “When has an experience of challenge, suffering or death led you to new opportunities,

new perspectives or new life?”

- View the *story segment*. Invite reflection and sharing on the question: “How does Jimmy’s story speak to you with a message of hope or challenge as you face your own struggles?”
- View the *witness segment* and invite participants to share their thoughts about what it means to die to oneself. Ask participants to reflect on this question: “What must die in you in order that Christ may live more fully within you?”

#### **4. *Relating My Story to the Church’s Story***

Show the *teaching segment* and discuss the connection between Lent/Easter and Baptism. Help participants see the connection between the dying and rising of Christ and their own stories. Use discussion questions on page 20.

#### **5. *Responding in Life and Faith***

Use the *musical reflection segment* as a closing prayer. (If time permits, consider using or modifying the sample prayer experience outlined on page 21 of this guide.)

### **Story Segment**

#### **“Jimmy Heath: Journey of Rebirth”**

*(Begins approximately 4:03 into program.)*

### **Summary**

The liturgies of the Church bring the reality of Christ’s dying and rising into the midst of our everyday lives. In this documentary, we meet Jimmy Heath, a man whose personal story of spiritual death and rebirth illustrates the Paschal Mystery and the dying to self we all must undertake as true followers of Christ.

Jimmy shares his story of the wretchedness of

alcoholism. His drinking made him so ill that at one point he was hospitalized and his doctors prepared his family for his death. Jimmy shares that he “wanted to be dead” and hoped that death would be a way out of his misery.

Jimmy’s drinking eventually led to homelessness and isolation. He shares, “At the time, all I was trying to do was survive. I didn’t realize how much my spirit was dead, how empty I was, how hollow I was inside.”

Physically exhausted, Jimmy walked into the Drop Inn Center, a homeless shelter in Cincinnati, and the people there reached out to him and offered to help him. Their words and actions said to him, “Your life is of value, and we don’t want you to die.”

Jimmy struggled to accept this message. Eventually a moment of spiritual awakening came when he knew he’d never go back to what he was. He knew that that part of his life was over and he decided to “live” again.

Jimmy had to break out of his isolation and work in a group with other recovering people. He had to learn that he couldn’t do it by himself. This was an awakening to his need for community and dependence on God.

Jimmy’s gift for photography has blossomed since he sought help at the Drop Inn Center. His subject matter is what he has come to know and appreciate: the streets and people of the inner city. One of his friends from the Drop Inn Center shares, “Our people struggle with having a lot of folks devalue them all the time, but to have someone capture ordinary daily things and be able to frame it in a way that honors them and their experience, I think is a gift.” Jimmy admits, “I really wanted to be a photographer, but it never worked until I found the connection between photography and my own spirit.”

He shares his photographs and his story with young

people at the Peaslee Neighborhood Center. Jimmy considers his interaction with the children the best part of the work he does.

Jimmy believes that he had to suffer through the hard times in order to be where he is today. He now recognizes that God was with him in his suffering and that the suffering itself has meaning. He has put his life in God's hands and considers each day a gift with which to do something good.

Jimmy chooses to live in the busy inner city but, when time permits, enjoys the solitude and quiet of the Trappist Abbey of Gethsemani in western Kentucky. He finds it a good place for prayer and meditation.

Jimmy considers himself an activist. He says, "Everything I do is around that because you take an active part in your own life first. Hopefully you can start spreading that around when you understand it a little bit." And when he looks at his life, he sees the blessings of his journey—the highs and lows—and feels a responsibility to give back to life, a life he now sees as a precious gift from God.

### **Suggestions for Use**

Use this segment in either of the following ways:

- as a way to help those participating in the RCIA process or any group of adult learners to relate the events of their own lives to the Paschal Mystery. Use the following or similar questions to encourage discussion.
- as a resource when discussing the topics of homelessness, addiction or outreach.

### **Questions for Sharing**

1. What is a theme in Jimmy's story that you also find

in your own story?

2. How does Jimmy's story speak to you with a message of hope or challenge as you face your own struggles?
3. What effect does Jimmy's faith have on how he understands the path his life has taken and his sense of responsibility to himself and others? What difference does faith make in your life?
4. The question of the meaning of suffering challenges each of us at some time in our lives. What meaning have you found in your own times of struggle or suffering?

### **Witness Segment**

*(Begins approximately 13:07 into program.)*

### **Summary**

In the witness segment, Catholics share their own reflections on the Lenten and Easter celebrations of the Church's liturgical year. Some of them have experienced the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults and celebrated the sacraments of initiation in recent years. The following summarizes their sharing:

- Lent is a time to do spiritual spring housecleaning.
- It's a time to give thought to where I'm going in my spiritual life. I can do this through prayer and involvement in service activities.
- Lent is a time of going into the desert and looking inward to see if we are dying to ourselves.

- We die in Christ and then we come alive again. Whatever we reflect on during Lent, we try to improve with the Resurrection.
- It's marvelous to watch the candidates and catechumens as they grow and use Lent to get ready for the Easter sacraments. It's equally important for each of us to look at this season as a time to renew our own Baptism.
- I was baptized, confirmed and received the Eucharist at the Easter Vigil Mass. It was a very moving time of celebration for me. I felt so much a part of the new life that comes at that time of year.
- The Easter Vigil was the culmination of a long process of reflection, study, discussion, talking to other people and trying to understand whether I was ready to accept Christ.
- I didn't expect some big miracle to happen when I was baptized but I felt that something was going to die and something was going to be born.
- Having all my sins washed away and starting fresh was a great feeling. I've never felt closer to God in my life.
- Easter is more than Easter Sunday; it's the whole season up to Pentecost. I think the Church gives us time to do the "Alleluia Season" because we are a people of Resurrection. We need to focus on the fact that there's a good ending to the story.

### **Suggestions for Use**

Use this segment to encourage personal reflection and sharing among participants. The following questions may facilitate this.

## **Questions for Sharing**

1. What kind of spiritual housecleaning do you need to do this Lent?
2. What does it mean to you to die to yourself? What must die in you in order that Christ may live more fully within you?
3. What does it mean to you to be baptized? What difference does/will it make in your life?
4. What does it mean to be “a people of Resurrection”? How does this affect your view of life?

## **Teaching Segment**

*(Begins approximately 16:57 into program.)*

## **Summary**

Father Tom Richstatter is an author and teacher of liturgy and sacraments, training future clergy and lay ministers for service in the Church. In this presentation he presents an overview of the Easter Season—from Lent to Pentecost. He emphasizes a seasonal spirituality that reflects the centrality of Baptism in the lives and identities of all Christian disciples.

### **I. God radically changed the universe in the suffering, death and Resurrection of Jesus.**

- A. This belief is at the heart of Christian identity.
- B. This is what we celebrate during the liturgical season of Easter.

### **II. The Church celebrates two great seasons: Easter and Christmas.**

- A. Both seasons have three components.

- B. The three components of the Easter season are Lent, the Easter Triduum and the “Great 50 Days.”

**III. Baptism is the key to understanding Lent.**

- A. Lent was originally a 40-day retreat for those preparing for Baptism at Easter.
- B. The Scripture readings for Lent are chosen in light of this theme:
  1. The woman at the well: Baptism is the sacrament of discipleship.
  2. The man born blind: Baptism is the sacrament of illumination.
  3. The raising of Lazarus: Baptism is the sacrament of new life.

**IV. “The Lenten liturgy disposes both catechumens and the faithful to celebrate the Paschal Mystery: catechumens, through the several stages of Christian initiation; the faithful through reminders of their own Baptism and through penitential practices” (General Norms for the Liturgical Year and Calendar, 27).**

**V. St. Paul writes: “If we have died with Christ, we shall also rise with him.”**

- A. In Baptism, we celebrate dying and rising.
- B. We die to selfishness and sin and rise with Christ to new life—enlivened by the Spirit.
- C. The penitential aspect of Lent—the “giving something up” part—is related to the “dying” aspect of Baptism.
  1. The “dying” is not an end in itself; our hope is directed toward the “rising.”
  2. “Unless a grain of wheat falls to the ground and dies, it remains just a grain of wheat; but

if it dies, it produces much fruit” (John 12:24).

3. The farmer doesn’t intend to kill the wheat nor regret “giving up” wheat for seed. He looks to the harvest: new grain, new life, resurrection.

**VI. Lent begins on Ash Wednesday and lasts for 40 days.**

- A. The symbolic 40 days of Lent recall Christ’s 40 days in the desert.
- B. On the final Sunday of Lent we read the account of the Passion—the story of Jesus’ suffering and death—as presented in the Gospel of Matthew, Mark or Luke.
- C. As we recall Jesus’ entry into Jerusalem, we enter the holiest week of the Church year. “Holy Week has as its purpose the remembrance of Christ’s Passion, beginning with his Messianic entrance into Jerusalem” (GNLYC, 31).
- D. Lent ends on Thursday of Holy Week.

**VII. The second component of the Easter Season is the Triduum.**

- A. Triduum is Latin for “a three day period.”
- B. “The Easter Triduum begins with the Evening Mass of the Lord’s Supper, reaches its high point in the Easter Vigil, and closes with Evening Prayer on Easter Sunday” (GNLYC, 19).
- C. At the Evening Mass of the Lord’s Supper, we wash feet.
  1. The Gospel of John tells of Jesus washing the feet of his disciples.

2. Those preparing for Baptism (and those already baptized) must be ready to serve one another. Eucharist is the sacrament of humble service.
- D. On the Friday we call “Good” we proclaim the death of Jesus and the triumph of the cross.
1. In John’s Gospel the cross is a cross of glory.
  2. We join in solemn intercessions, praying that the glory of the cross be realized in our day.
  3. A cross is brought forward and presented with the words “Behold, Behold, the wood of the cross...”
  4. We approach the cross and reverence it with a touch or a kiss.

**VIII. The high point of the Triduum—and of the whole liturgical year—is the Easter Vigil.**

- A. This is celebrated on the night when Christ rose from the dead.
- B. The Church awaits Christ’s Resurrection and celebrates it in the sacraments of Baptism, Confirmation and Eucharist.

**IX. The third component of the Easter Season is the Great 50 Days. Each of these days is Easter. We speak of the Sundays *of*, not *after*, Easter.**

- A. The Resurrection is so central to our faith that it takes 50 days to celebrate it. (“Pentecost” is Greek for 50 days.)
- B. During the 50 Days, we read the Acts of the Apostles and look at our Christian roots.
- C. The newly baptized don’t only “put on Christ,” they put on his Body, the Church.

1. During the days of Easter we take time to remember who that Church is.
2. The Great 50 Days end with Pentecost. The Spirit commissions us to continue the heritage of the Acts of the Apostles: to keep the story of Jesus alive in our day.

### **Suggestions for Use**

Use this segment to give viewers a basic overview of the meaning and order of the Church's seasons of Lent and Easter. This presentation provides the essential foundation on which a catechist can build and fill in details relating to Lenten customs and practices and the rites that will occur during Lent and Easter for those participating in the RCIA.

It is hoped that viewers will come to see the liturgical year and its seasons not as an artificially imposed structure but as a structure that derives meaning from and adds meaning to the life of the Christian community. Use of the story and witness segments prior to viewing the teaching segment will enhance this appreciation. Use the following or similar questions to elicit a response to the presentation.

### **Questions for Sharing**

1. "The Lenten liturgy disposes both catechumens and the faithful to celebrate the Paschal Mystery: catechumens, through the several stages of Christian initiation; the faithful through reminders of their own Baptism and through penitential practices" (GNLYC, 27). What does it mean to you to "celebrate the Paschal Mystery"?
2. What does Jesus washing the feet of his apostles at the Last Supper say to you about your life as a

Christian? Are you living a life of humble service?  
What needs to change/die in you to make this possible?

3. The practice of reverencing the cross on Good Friday is key to that communal observance. What does it mean to you that Jesus died for you?
4. The Easter Season is a time to claim and reflect on our Christian identity. What are some everyday ways that your Christian identity can shine through?

### **Musical Reflection Segment**

*(Begins approximately 27:21 into program.)*

#### **Summary**

This segment invites all of us—those preparing for Baptism and those already baptized—to break down the walls separating us from God so that God can take our brokenness and rebuild each one of us into a place where God lives. “Shelter Your Name” by Danielle Rose Skorich is a song of both reconciliation and renewal.

“Shelter Your Name”

Text and music by Danielle Rose Skorich

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#### **Suggestion for Use**

This segment may be used on its own as a prayer or as part of a longer prayer experience. An outline of a sample prayer service follows.

1. Open the prayer with the following or similar words:  
*Loving God, you show us in the life, death and Resurrection of Jesus that new life can come from*

*suffering and death, that light follows darkness and that good prevails over evil. Help us to see your promise in our own lives so that we can persevere in times of struggle and bring hope and light to others. We ask this and all things in the name of your son, Jesus. Amen.*

2. Scripture: John 11:25-26
3. Invite participants to reflect on what attitudes or actions prevent them from responding fully to God's love. Ask them to choose the one brick in that wall that is particularly troublesome or challenging. Ask the question, "What will it take to turn this obstacle into a building block?" Challenge them to commit to doing one thing to bring this about. Invite them to reflect on this question during and following the viewing of the *music video segment*.
4. View the *music video segment*.
5. Share responses to Step 3 in pairs as participants feel comfortable doing so.
6. Close by praying the "Lord's Prayer" (have copies available for those who are still learning this prayer) and then offering each other a sign of peace.

## RESOURCES FOR FURTHER STUDY

### 1) Scripture references:

Matthew 26-28; Mark 14-16; Luke 9:23-25; Luke 22-24; John 11:25-26; John 12:24; John 13-21; Romans 6:1-11; I Corinthians 15:35-58; Philippians 1:27-30; Philippians 4:13; I Peter 3:13-18

### 2) *Catechism of the Catholic Church* references:

Passion Sunday (558-559)

“Jesus Christ suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died and was buried.” (571-630)

“He descended into Hell. On the third day He rose again.” (631-658)

“I believe in the Holy Spirit.” (683-747)

“I believe in the holy Catholic Church.” (748-870)

Liturgical Year and Seasons (1163-73, 1193-95, 1095)

Sunday: The Lord’s Day (2174-2195)

### 3) Available from St. Anthony Messenger Press

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