

3RD SUNDAY OF LENT

THE CLEANSING OF THE TEMPLE

Before the Passover feast, we find Jesus using the temple in Jerusalem and the words of the prophets from the Old Testament to teach the people a lesson about who He is – the Son of God. He tries to teach them that the temple is God’s house and they should respect it, but they did not listen to Him. This upsets Jesus and He tells them that He will tear down the temple and rebuild it in three days. When Jesus says this to them He is speaking about Himself in a symbolic way, because He is the temple of the Lord. He will die (be “destroyed”) and then resurrect (be “raised up”) on the third day. Because God created us, our bodies are also temples of the Lord, and we should treat them with love and respect, too.

PRIMARY LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Jesus cleanses the temple of things that distracted people from prayer before the celebration of Passover.

Scripture Resources: [John 2:13-25](#)

Catechism Resources: [CCC 583-586](#); [CCC 793-795](#)

Jesus refers to His own body as a new temple and predicts His coming death and resurrection.

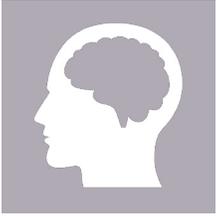
Scripture Resources: [Matthew 26:59-64](#)

Catechism Resources: [CCC 988-999](#)

We cleanse our own temples, our bodies and souls, before the celebration of Easter.

Scripture Resources: [Exodus 40:30-32](#); [1 Corinthians 3:16-18](#)

Catechism Resources: [CCC 1004](#)



PONDER: EXPLORE KEY THEMES FOR THE WEEK

Look for opportunities throughout the week to ponder with and communicate these truths to your child(ren). Use the questions below each objective to explore the topic throughout the week. Remember that our faith is a mystery and you don't always need all the answers. Refer to the Parent Guide for more recommendations on pondering with your child(ren).

FOR YOUNGER CHILDREN:

Learning Objectives

01 Jesus cleanses the temple of things that distracted people from prayer before the celebration of Passover.

To help your child ponder this idea, ask:

- Do you have any things, places, or events in your life that are important or special to you? Can you describe them?
- How would you feel if someone ruined one of your special things, places, or events?
- How do you treat the things that are special to other people? Why?

02 Jesus refers to His own body as a new temple and predicts His coming death and resurrection.

To help your child ponder this idea, ask:

- Jesus says His body is a "temple." What is a temple?
- For the Jewish people, the temple was the house of God. For Catholics, the church is the house of God. Why should people be respectful in a temple or a church?



Destroy this temple and in three days I will raise it up.

John 2:19

03 We cleanse our own temples, our bodies and souls, before the celebration of Easter.

To help your child ponder this idea, ask:

- What are some things that you do to take care of the important or special things that you have?
- What are some of the ways you prepare to celebrate important or special events, like a birthday, Christmas, or Easter?
- Jesus is the Son of God, and a “temple of the Lord”, so He takes very good care of His body and His soul. What are some ways that you can take good care of your body?



FOR OLDER CHILDREN

Learning Objectives

01 Jesus cleanses the temple of things that distracted people from prayer before the celebration of Passover.

Jesus believes that the temple is a sacred place because He knows it is the house of God, His Father in Heaven. When Jesus sees people in the temple doing the wrong thing, He becomes filled with righteous (virtuous) anger and wants to teach the people that what they are doing is disrespectful to the Father. He also wants to be sure that the temple is made clean and free of distractions before Passover, a sacred Jewish celebration when all Jews made pilgrimage to the temple to worship God together.

To help your child ponder this idea, ask:

- Do you have a special place you like to go to be alone with God? If so, where and why is it special to you?
- How would you feel if someone went into your special place and started doing things that were disrespectful to you? What would you do?

02 Jesus refers to His own body as a new temple and predicts His coming death and resurrection.

Remember that the Trinity is God in three persons – Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Jesus, the Son, is both human and divine (God), so He has a body and soul like us. Jesus' body is the house of God in an even more profound way than the Jewish temple was the house of God. Jesus uses the metaphor of the temple to explain His own death (on Good Friday) and resurrection (Easter!).

To help your child ponder this idea, ask:

- What does it mean to “destroy” something? What does it mean to “raise up” something?
- Let's think about Jesus' analogy with these words. What does it mean to “destroy” Jesus' temple?
- What does it mean to “raise it up”?
- God loves you so much that He created you – body and soul. What are some things that you can do to take care of your body to show God you love Him too? What are some ways you can take care of your soul?

03 We cleanse our own temples – our bodies and souls – before the celebration of Easter.

During the Season of Lent, we prepare our bodies and souls for Easter by cleaning them out and making sacrifices out of love for God because of His sacrifice for us. We show Jesus we love Him by saying we are sorry for the things we have done wrong and we promise to try not to sin again in the Sacrament of Confession (Reconciliation).

To help your child ponder this idea, ask:

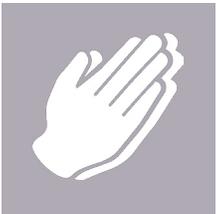
- Can you think of anything that the people in your parish do together to help one another make themselves clean before Easter? (The washing of the feet.)
- How does the Sacrament of Reconciliation help you to clean out your soul and make it a sacred space for the Holy Spirit to live?
- What are some other ways that you can show God that you are sorry for offending Him?
- What is one sacrifice you can make to show God you are thankful for His sacrifice for you?



LISTEN: FAMILY LECTIO DIVINA

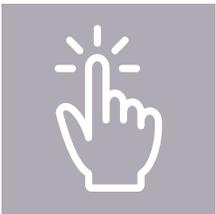
Read the passage listed below for this week's family Lectio Divina time. Ask what your child's favorite part is or what stood out to them. Ask what God may be trying to show your child through the chosen scripture. Please refer to the Parent Guide for further recommendations on doing Lectio Divina with children.

[John 2:13-25](#) - The Cleansing of the Temple



PRAY: SPECIAL PRAYER FOR THE WEEK

FOR THE FAMILY: [The Scriptural Stations of the Cross](#)



ACT: CONCRETE WAYS TO LIVE OUT THIS WEEK'S THEME

FOR YOUNGER AND OLDER CHILDREN: Building a House for Jesus

Pair any small children with an older child or adult. Children ages 6 and up can work alone or with an adult, if they prefer. Give the child(ren) a grocery bag filled with a variety of materials (straws, popsicle sticks, play dough, masking tape, stickers, ribbon). Tell them you want them to build a beautiful house for Jesus using only the materials in the bag. To do this, they must remain seated in a circle and not move around. Tell them you will be judging the most beautiful house so when they are finished, they will present their house to the group and tell us why it is a good house for Jesus to live in.

Give the children about 30 minutes to work on their houses (adults guide and provide support in their groups). When they are finished, have them present their houses to your family. At the completion of the activity, we recommend that you tell the children something like this:

"All these houses are beautiful but not quite beautiful enough for Jesus. But I see one that is perfect for him." Pick one of the children out of the group to start and state, "I think Thomas is perfect for Jesus to live in ... oh and there is another one ... Luke ... Maria... Jimmy..." (name all the children).