



Celebrate the Seasons

A Game for Children (Grades 3 to 6)

Playing as individuals, in pairs, or in teams, children will 'race' one another to the end of the church year, pausing to learn about the church seasons or to answer relevant questions as they move along the board.

Prepare the Game Board

Photocopy or pull out the centre pages. Colour in the squares, using a crayon or marker.

- ☆ **Blue for:**
the four Sundays of Advent
- ☆ **White or gold for:**
Christmas to Epiphany
Baptism of Jesus
Transfiguration Sunday
Easter and Season of Easter
Trinity Sunday
All Saints' Day
Christ the King/Reign of Christ Sunday
- ☆ **Red for:**
Palm Sunday
Holy Week
Pentecost Sunday
- ☆ **Green for:**
Season after Epiphany
Season after Pentecost (Ordinary Time)
- ☆ **Purple for:**
Ash Wednesday
Lent

Mount the game board on bristol board and laminate.

Alternative: The children might help prepare the game board in an earlier church school session.

Prepare the Game Cards

Photocopy the sample game card on page viii. You will need 70 cards—one card for each question/statement. On one side of the dotted fold line, write out the question/statement. On the other side of the fold, write the name of the relevant church season, add the symbol for the season, then colour this side of the fold in the colour for the season. Fold along the dotted line. You might keep a separate list of answers for those cards that have questions, or you might write the appropriate answer on the reverse side of the card (the latter method being more useful for children who choose to continue playing and learning from the game on their own). Glue and/or laminate the cards.

Alternative: If your congregation has traditional customs for these holidays, include them on your game cards to remind the young players of those traditions.

Make a Spinner

Divide a paper plate or a round piece of bristol board into six pie-shaped segments. Write in numbers 1 to 6. Colour the segments if desired. Create an arrow out of bristol board and, using a straight pin or thumbtack, attach the straight end of it to the centre of the plate.

Prepare Playing Pieces

Each player, pair, or team will need a playing piece, e.g. differently coloured beads, small stones or shells, or playing pieces borrowed from another board game.

Alternative: In an earlier church school session, invite the children to make their own playing pieces or if they



have hunted for tiny stones or shells, they could mark them with their initial or a symbol of their choosing.

To Play

Sort the game cards into piles according to seasons.

The first player, pair, or team spins the spinner and, beginning with the first Advent (blue) square, moves the playing piece the appropriate number of spaces. Whichever space the player lands on, a game card for that season is chosen from the pile. The card might share a statement (some information about the season) or ask a question. Beginners might read (or have read to them) a card from the appropriate pile to get them acquainted with the seasons. (For the less familiar seasons, consider reading several of the cards to gain a better understanding.) The game could also be played with a Bible nearby so that scripture references might be looked up and answers found as indicated. If the player(s) give an incorrect answer, they must move their piece back one space; correct answers and cards that offer statements advance the player(s) two spaces. Play can continue as long as players remain interested. If players want a 'winner,' the first player to reach Christ the King Sunday could be named the winner.

Alternative: Children are good at devising their own rules, so encourage them to offer their own suggestions.

Game Card Questions/Statements

Advent

1. The word 'advent' means 'coming' or 'arriving.' During Advent, what 'coming' are we looking forward to?

[Answer: Christmas or Jesus, or God Incarnate]

2. A symbol for Advent is a candle. How do we see candles used during Advent?

[Answer: Advent wreath]

Advanced question: Why do we light candles in Advent?

[Christ comes as a light in the darkness.]

3. There are four traditional themes for Advent. They are hope, peace, joy, and love.

4. The colour blue is used during Advent because it is associated with hope. Sometimes a pink or rose candle will be used on the third Sunday of Advent. This colour is associated with joy.
5. Advent can also be a time to emphasize the prophets. Prophets are people who understand God's ways and point others to the activity of God. Can you name a biblical prophet?

[Answers: Micah, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Hosea, Zephaniah, etc.]

Christmas

1. Christmas is the celebration of the birthday of Jesus.
2. We often use a nativity or crèche to symbolize Christmas. What do you think the word 'nativity' means?

[Answer: birth]

3. Sometimes we give gifts at Christmas time. Why are gifts associated with Christmas?

[Answer: Christians believe that Jesus was a gift from God. We give gifts as a reminder that God gave us this wonderful gift.]

4. Who were the first visitors to greet Jesus and how did they learn of his birth?

[Answer: shepherds and angels]

5. We often see candy canes at Christmas time, why is that?

[Answer: Some say that candy canes are similar to shepherd staffs and are reminders of the shepherds, who were the first to visit Jesus. Others say that they are shaped like the letter J, the first letter of Jesus' name.]

6. In which city was Jesus born?

[Answer: Bethlehem]

Why was he born there?

[Answer: Mary and Joseph had to go there to be counted for a census.]

7. Why was Jesus born in a stable or barn?

[Answer: The city of Bethlehem was very busy on the night of Jesus' birth, and Mary and Joseph could not find a room anywhere.]

8. Can you name or sing a Christmas carol?

Epiphany and the Season after Epiphany

1. Epiphany is the celebration of the Wise Ones coming to see Jesus. What are other names for those visitors?

[Answer: kings, magi, wise men]

2. How many Wise Ones do we think came and why?

[Answer: Tradition has it that there were three magi, because we hear of three gifts.]

3. What gifts were brought by the Wise Ones?

[Answer: gold, frankincense, myrrh]

4. Why is the star a symbol of Epiphany?

[Answer: The Wise Ones followed a star from their countries in the Far East.]

5. Can you name or sing a song for Epiphany?

[Two favourites are "We Three Kings" and "I Am the Light of the World."]

6. The Wise Ones visited a King before they found Jesus. Who was this king?

[Answer: Herod]

7. Herod was frightened when the Wise Ones asked him about a new king. Why was he afraid?

[Answer: The Wise Ones asked him where they could find the "child born king of the Jews" (Matthew 2:2-3), and since he understood himself to be their king he was afraid of any challenge to his position.]

8. Where did the Wise Ones find Jesus?

[Answer: In Matthew 2:11 we read that they found him in a house. Because Herod killed all the children in and around Bethlehem who were two-years-old and under (Matthew 2:16), many believe that the Wise Ones followed the star for many months before they reached Jesus.]

Baptism of Jesus

1. Who baptized Jesus?

[Answer: Jesus' cousin, John the Baptist (Matthew 3:13-17, Luke 3:21-22)]

2. Where was Jesus baptized?

[Answer: in the River Jordan (Matthew 3:13)]

3. The Bible records that some people heard and saw things at Jesus' baptism. What did they see and hear?

[Answer: A dove descended, and a voice said, "This is my Son, the Beloved." (Matthew 3:16-17, Luke 3:21-22)]

Transfiguration Sunday

1. The word 'transfiguration' means to change or transform. On this day we celebrate a strange event that the Bible recounts. (Matthew 17:1-8) Jesus and three of his disciples had gone up a mountain together, and when they reached the top, Jesus began to shine or glow. The disciples were both afraid and excited by what they saw. Suddenly, they began to see Jesus in a different way; they had a new viewpoint of Jesus.

2. Who were the disciples that went with Jesus to the mountaintop?

[Answer: Peter, James, and John (Matthew 17:1)]

3. Who did the disciples see on the mountaintop?

[Answer: Moses and Elijah (Matthew 3)]

4. Have you ever discovered something new about someone that made you view them in a different way?

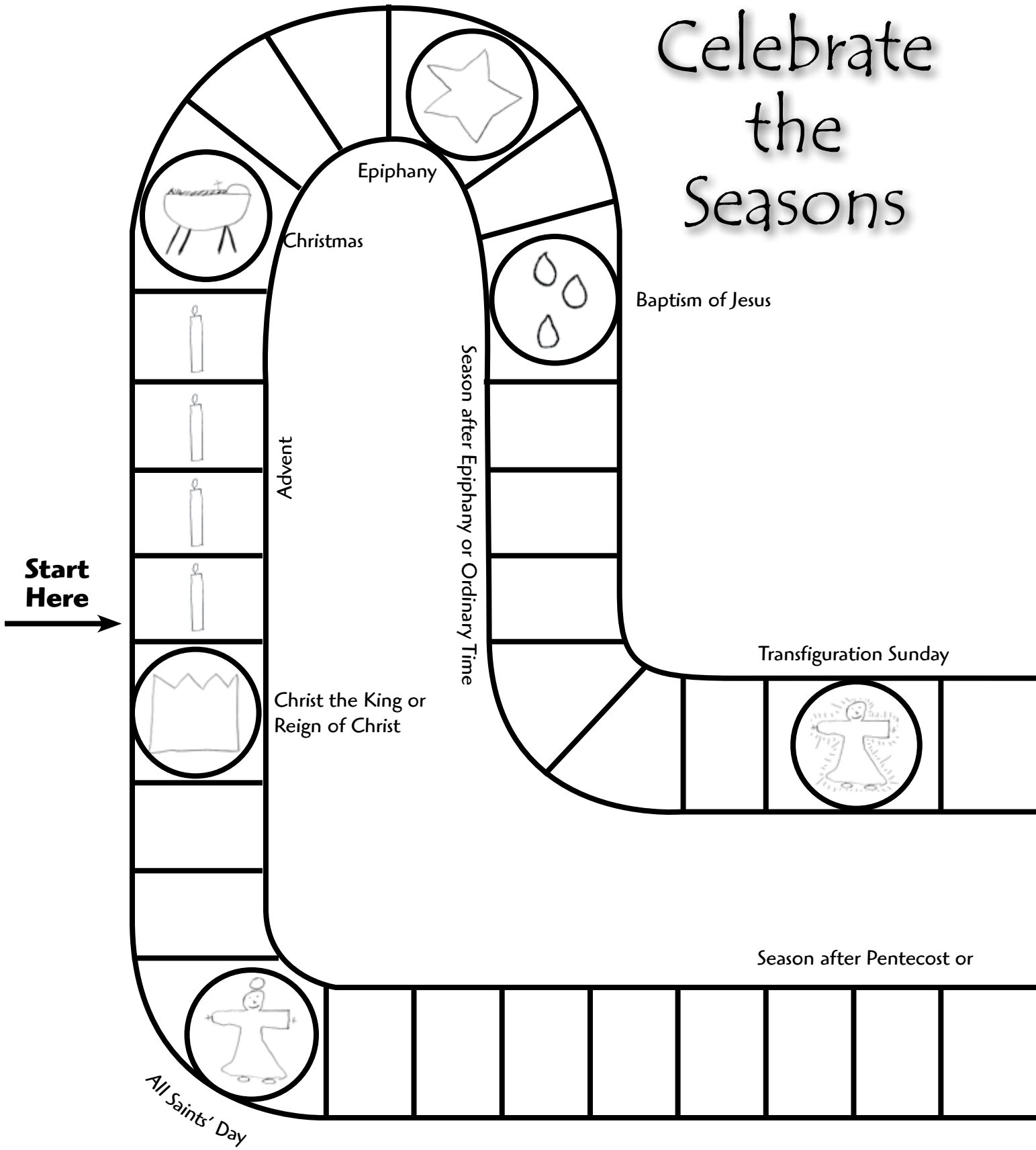
[Hint: Perhaps you've learned that a friend had a hidden talent or a parent or grandparent had a surprising experience as a young person.]

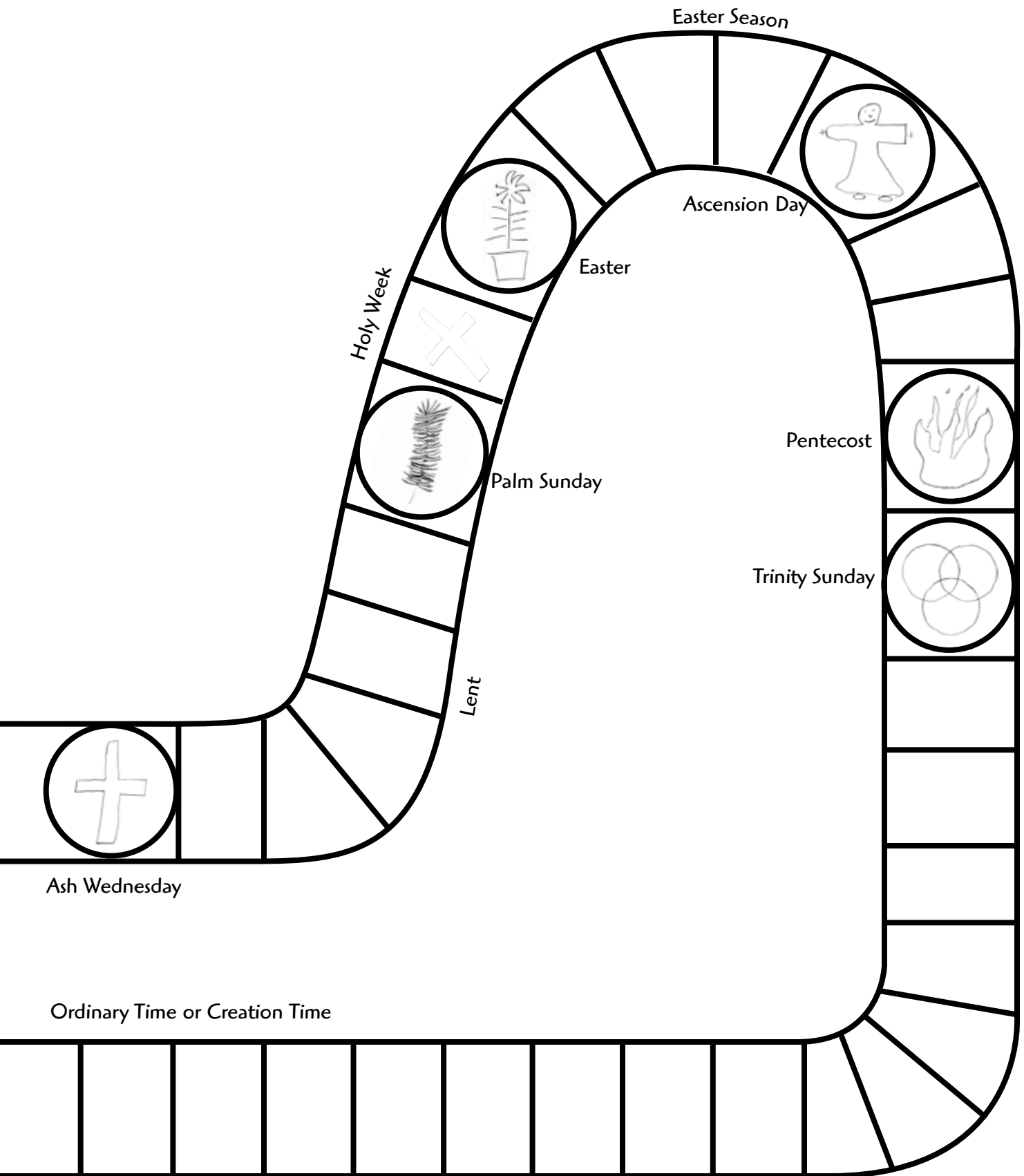
Ash Wednesday

1. Ash Wednesday is a serious day, a day of repentance. What is repentance?

[Answer: saying we're sorry for a wrong thing we have done and promising to change our ways]

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2. What is the symbol for Ash Wednesday?

[Answer: a cross of ashes marking one's forehead or hand]

3. Why do we use ashes?

[Answer: Palms from the previous Palm Sunday are burned to create the ashes for Ash Wednesday. We remember with sorrow how the promise of Palm Sunday was broken by the death of Jesus on Good Friday. It is also a time to remember that we are humans and that whether we live or die, we are not alone.]

Lent

1. Lent is a time of getting ready. What are we getting ready for?

[Answer: During Lent we get ready for the new life promised to us in Easter.]

2. How many days are there in Lent?

[Answer: Lent lasts for 40 days. It begins with Ash Wednesday and ends on Easter Sunday. The 40 days do not include Sundays, as Sundays are 'little Easters,' days of celebration.]

3. Can you think of any other time when the number 40 was significant?

[Answers: The Israelites wandered in the desert for 40 years with Moses. Noah and the animals experienced 40 days and nights of rain on the Ark. Jesus fasted for 40 days in the desert before beginning his ministry.]

4. Why do we fast or give up something for Lent?

[Answer: We remember Jesus fasting in the desert. Giving up something also helps us to focus on growing in faith.]

5. Why is purple the colour for Lent?

[Purple is a serious colour, and Lent is a serious season. Purple is also a colour for royalty; we sometimes think of Jesus as 'royal,' though a different kind of king from the king of a country.]

6. During Lent we also remember that Jesus was tempted when he went into the desert. What does it mean to be tempted?

[Answer: wanting to do something we know isn't right]

Palm Sunday

1. What are we celebrating on Palm Sunday?

[Answer: We celebrate Jesus' exciting entry into Jerusalem.]

2. Why do we wave palm branches on Palm Sunday?

[Answer: The crowds who greeted Jesus waved palm branches and laid them at his feet. (Matthew 21:8) The branches were a sign of honour.]

3. What word do we often shout on Palm Sunday?

[Answer: "Hosanna!" which means, "O Save!" The people were hoping Jesus would save them from Roman rule.]

4. What animal did Jesus ride into Jerusalem?

[Answer: a donkey (Matthew 21:2)]

5. What is the colour for Palm Sunday?

[Answer: red, a colour for celebration]

Holy Week

1. Maundy Thursday is the day we remember Jesus' last supper with his disciples.

2. During Jesus' last supper with his disciples, he gave them bread to eat and wine to drink. How do we remember this special meal?

[Answer: We share communion.]

3. The Gospel of John (13:4-5) records that Jesus washed the disciples' feet. Why did Jesus do that?

[Answer: Indeed the disciples' feet were probably very dirty; the dusty streets of Jesus' time made this an everyday condition. However, Jesus' action meant more than cleaning the disciples' feet. The action symbolized that Jesus came to serve and that we too need to serve others.]

4. Good Friday is the day we remember Jesus' arrest and death on the cross. In Old English, 'good' meant 'holy,' so the title Good Friday means 'Holy Friday.' A Good Friday service might include darkness and the removing of all decorations except the cross from the worship space.

5. Can you think of a special food that is baked for Good Friday?

[Answer: hot cross buns]

Easter

1. Easter is the celebration of the risen Christ.
2. What is the word that we often use to describe what happened to Jesus on the first Easter morning?

[Answer: resurrection]

3. What are some of the ways we might greet one another on Easter?

[Answers: Alleluia! Christ is risen! Happy Easter!]

4. What are some of the symbols for Easter?

[Answers: lilies, bunnies, eggs, butterflies, and other signs of new life]

5. What is the colour for Easter?

[Answer: white, for joy and new life]

6. What did the women bring to the tomb on the first Easter morning, and why did they bring this?

[Answer: They brought spices to anoint Jesus' body. This was the burial custom of the time.]

7. What did the women find when they came to the tomb on the first Easter morning?

[Answer: They found an empty tomb. The stone was rolled away. Some texts relate that an angel met them; others relate that they were met by Jesus.]

Ascension

1. This day is the celebration of the ascension of Christ to heaven, a completion of the resurrection.
2. Describe what you think of when you hear the word 'heaven.'

Pentecost

1. Pentecost is the day we celebrate the coming of the Holy Spirit and the birthday of the church. Pente means five or 50 (a pentagon has five sides), and Pentecost is 50 days after Easter.

2. We call this the birthday of the church because after Jesus' ascension his friends were feeling frightened and sad, hiding together in a room. After they received the Holy Spirit in wind and flame, they went out into the streets to tell everyone about Jesus. Three thousand people were baptized, and the church was born.

3. What is the colour of Pentecost?

[Answer: red]

4. What are some symbols of Pentecost?

[Answers: flames, dove, balloons]

Trinity

1. Trinity Sunday is when we celebrate God as Creator/Father, God as Son/Christ/Redeemer, and God as Holy Spirit/Sustainer.

2. Trinity means three.

3. Can you think of something else that takes three different forms?

[Answers: water/ice/steam, or white/yolk/shell, or root/stem/leaf]

All Saints' Day

1. All Saints' is a day of remembering. We especially remember faithful people who have died, but we can also remember all those who help us know God in today's world.

2. Can you name a saint?

Christ the King (Reign of Christ)

1. This is the day we celebrate Christ as a king or power in our lives. Can you think of other times when we think of Jesus as a king?

[Answer: During Advent we prepare for the birth of a king. On Palm Sunday, Jesus was greeted as a king. At this and other times, we remember that Jesus was a very different kind of king.]

Season after Pentecost (Ordinary Time)

1. What do you think of when you hear the word 'ordinary'?

[Answer: In the church context, ordinary does not mean 'everyday' or 'regular.' It means 'ordered.' We count the Sundays after Epiphany and after Pentecost in an orderly, numbered fashion, so we call these times Ordinary.]

2. Special Sundays such as Environment Sunday, First Nations Sunday, World Communion Day, Peace Sunday, Children's Sunday, World Food Day, Remembrance Day, and Thanksgiving are all celebrated during this season. Can you describe how one (or more) of these Sundays is celebrated in your church?

3. This is the time when school comes to an end, summer begins, holidays are taken, we go to camp, school begins again, and the seasons change from spring to summer to fall to winter. What are your favourite things to do during Ordinary Time?

4. We also hear this part of the church year referred to as Creation Time. Can you think of any creation stories? How is your church involved in taking care of creation? How are you involved in caring for creation?

Sample Game Card

