

Shepherds to the Rescue

THE LITURGICAL YEAR



Hi, Caleb here!

Did you notice that *Shepherds to the Rescue* takes place during Easter? When my siblings and I travel back in time, we hear the Christmas story, but when we return to our time, it is Easter. In the last chapter of *Shepherds to the Rescue*, Hannah, Noah, and I are in church on the Fourth Sunday of Easter.

Maybe I better back up and explain the Church Year. It's also called the **Liturgical Year**.

You know how **the calendar year** starts in January and ends in December?



And **the school year** for most kids is August to May.



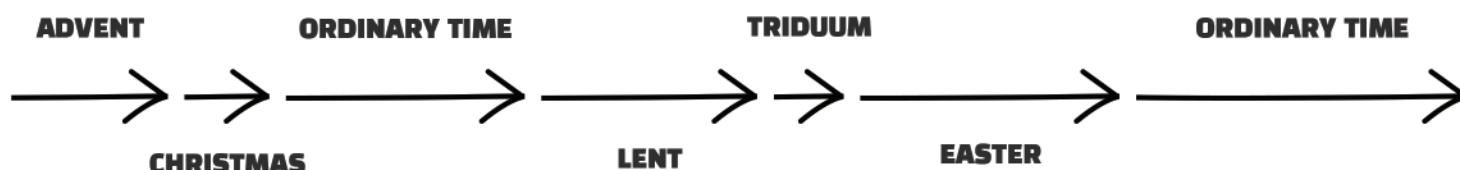
And we divide the year into **four seasons**, right?



Well, **the Church has a year, too**. And it has seasons! Here they are:

ADVENT • CHRISTMAS • LENT • TRIDUUM • EASTER • ORDINARY TIME

They aren't all the same length. It's something like this:

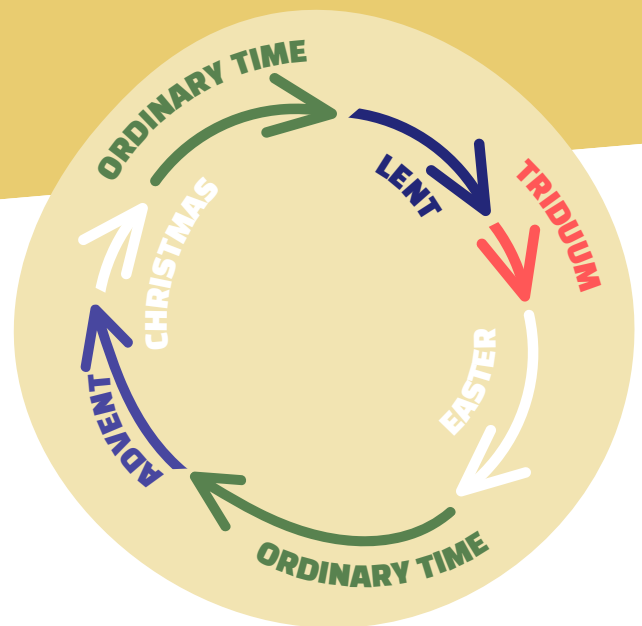


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But **it keeps repeating**, and each season has its own **color**, so maybe it's more like this:



Advent is the time when we get ready for Christmas.

Christmas is not just one day! It's a season that lasts a few weeks, celebrating the birth of Jesus.

Lent is a time to remember how Jesus suffered and died for love of us. The six weeks of Lent help us get ready for **Easter**, the most important day of the Church Year.

There's a tiny season called the **Triduum** (meaning "three days"), which is from the evening of Holy Thursday to the evening of Easter Sunday. Easter is the third day! Easter is when Jesus rose from the dead!

Then we celebrate the **Easter** season for 50 days!

Ordinary Time is the longest season of the Church's year. The weeks between Christmas and Lent, and the weeks between Easter and Advent, are all part of Ordinary Time. Fun fact: when you write numbers like this:

first, second, third, fourth, fifth...

they're called "ordinal numbers." So—Ordinary Time has weeks with ordinal numbers on them. During Ordinary Time, we remember Jesus' everyday life and teachings. We try to grow closer to Jesus in our everyday lives.

In *Shepherds to the Rescue*, my siblings and I travel back in time and hear the Christmas story from a shepherd. But when we return home, the Gospel story at Mass is the story of Jesus as the Good Shepherd. We hear this Gospel during the Easter season, on the Fourth Sunday of Easter.

ACTIVITY: Find out what next Sunday is. Is it a Sunday in Ordinary Time? If so, which week in Ordinary Time is it? Or is it another season of the Church Year?