

St. Joseph's Children's Liturgy of the Word

Year A weeks 2-7

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St. Joseph is the patron saint of the family, and the family is the “domestic Church.” These sheets were originally developed to support my parish of St. Joseph in Great Malvern, Worcestershire, but they are now used by parishes and schools not just in the UK, but some are sent to contacts abroad as well.

There are Four Dimensions of our Faith, and the activities all reflect one or more of each of these dimensions.

**Professing the faith
(speaking about it and
learning the faith)**

**Celebrating our faith in
the liturgy and the
sacraments**



**Living the faith in Christ
(making choices by the grace
of Jesus Christ)**

**A prayer-filled life where
the Our Father takes
centre stage**

Welcome to Year A, the Year of Matthew.

The Gospel of St Matthew is our guide into the mystery of Christ this liturgical year.

In ordinary time, Matthew's Gospel begins with Jesus setting up home in Capernaum and a wonderful prophesy from the Old Testament that Matthew quotes. Matthew is writing for Jewish converts and so shows that Jesus is the promised Messiah, the new Moses. After calling His first disciples, we then begin the “Sermon on the Mount” fulfilling Moses descending from Mount Sinai with the Ten Commandments. Yet the wonderful message is not that Jesus is the new Moses, but He is the chosen One of God. As the Ten Commandments come from God, only God can change them and here, we see doing just that, when He says “I say to you...”

It is always tricky trying to find the Sunday Gospels in this new “final” format and for the foreseeable future I cannot find Sundays of Week 7,8 or 9 for year A, with the ESV translation of the Lectionary. They are all taken up with Lent and then Easter. Having said that, I do appreciate that it's not easy reading for little children so some of our team still use the Jerusalem Bible for Children's Liturgy of the Word. Anyway, these activities are just suggestions and as every you are free to use them and pass them on to others for free, but they are not to be resold in any way.

God Bless your ministry
Carol Ann Harnett

Children's liturgy of the word for this week

Gospel for Sunday 2nd Sunday in Ordinary Time Year A

John 1:29-34

At that time: John saw Jesus coming towards him, and said, 'Behold, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!'

This is he of whom I said, "After me comes a man who ranks before me, because he was before me."

I myself did not know him, but for this purpose I came baptising with water, that he might be revealed to Israel.'

And John bore witness: 'I saw the Spirit descend from heaven like a dove, and it remained on him. I myself did not know him, but he who sent me to baptise with water said to me,

"He on whom you see the Spirit descend and remain, this is he who baptises with the Holy Spirit."

And I have seen and have borne witness that this is the Son of God.'

The Gospel of the Lord

R/: *Praise to you Lord Jesus Christ*

Discussion on the Gospel



† Light a candle

† Introduce the Gospel liturgically

*The activity for today focusses on the work of the Holy Spirit who helped Jesus and who helps us. Finish with the prayer to the Holy Spirit (below). As children will probably not know it, say it a line at a time for them to repeat, or *base the discussion around either the images on the second handout or the activity suggested in the first handout below.*

Q: How did John describe Jesus? (A: As the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world.)

Q: Every year the Jews sacrificed a lamb in the Temple to celebrate that God has freed them from slavery in Egypt. Jesus was going to die on a cross to free us from something – what was that? (A: Sin.)

Q: Jesus' death was a sacrifice like the sacrifice of the lambs in the Temple. It was a very brave thing to do, and He needed the Holy Spirit to give Him courage to do this. When does the Holy Spirit give us courage? (A: Open – e.g. when we are finding things difficult, we need to resist temptation....)

Q: John said that Jesus was going to baptise with the Holy Spirit. When did we receive the Holy Spirit? (A: In our Baptism.)

Q: In the Gospel, the Holy Spirit was symbolised as a dove, but the Holy Spirit also has other symbols, does anyone know them? (A: Fire, water, cloud, oil, laying on of hands, wind.)

Q: There are seven special gifts that the Holy Spirit gives to us, who knows what they are? (A: Wisdom, understanding, counsel, courage, knowledge, piety, respect for God.)

Q: Let's think about these, what do they mean? (List them and ask/explain what they mean.*

- Wisdom – the Holy Spirit helps us love Jesus.
- Understanding – the Holy Spirit helps us to understand Jesus' teaching.
- Counsel – the Holy Spirit helps us to *want to do* what Jesus would like us to do.
- Courage – the Holy Spirit helps us to *actually do* what is best for us to do.
- Knowledge – the Holy Spirit shows us the right way to live so that we get to heaven.
- Piety – the Holy Spirit helps us to pray.
- Respect for God – the Holy Spirit makes us love God so that we don't want to offend Him.

In Confirmation these gifts are strengthened in us, but we can use them before we are confirmed.

As you colour in these Symbols of the Holy Spirit, draw a line to the gift that you think best matches the symbol.



Dove



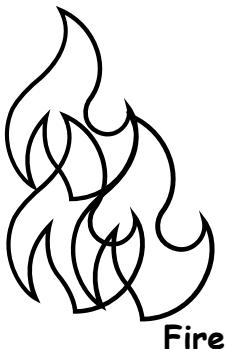
Wisdom



Courage



Oil



Fire



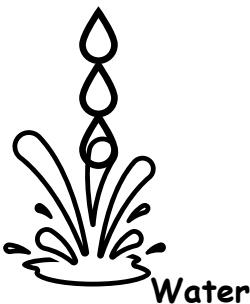
Understanding



Counsel



Laying on of hands



Water



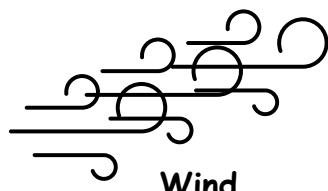
Respect for God



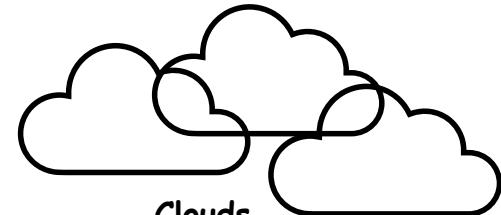
Knowledge



Piety



Wind



Clouds

Alternative suggestion for this session:

Get 7 shoe (or similar size) boxes wrapped like presents (but with the lids easily removable)

Inside each place a card with one of the with one of the seven gifts written on it.

Invite a child to open a box at random and then as each "gift" is taken out, discuss how that particular gift helps us to love Jesus who leads us to His Father in heaven and which symbol might best go with the gift. (There is no right or wrong in this - it's just a vehicle to think about the different gifts and the different symbols.) Maybe also have picture cards with the symbols on them ready and match them up. (You could enlarge the pictures on the sheet below).

**Come, Holy Spirit, fill the hearts of Thy
faithful and kindle in them the fire of
Thy love. Send forth Thy Spirit and
they shall be created. And Thou shalt
renew the face of the earth.**

Gospel for 3rd Sunday Year A

Matthew 4:12-23

When Jesus heard that John had been arrested, he withdrew into Galilee. And leaving Nazareth he went and lived in Capernaum by the sea, in the territory of Zebulun and Naphtali, so that what was spoken by the prophet Isaiah might be fulfilled:

'The land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali, the way of the sea, beyond the Jordan, Galilee of the Gentiles — the people dwelling in darkness have seen a great light, and for those dwelling in the region and shadow of death, on them a light has dawned.'

*From that time Jesus began to preach, saying, 'Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.'

While walking by the Sea of Galilee, he saw two brothers, Simon (who is called Peter) and Andrew his brother, casting a net into the sea, for they were fishermen. And he said to them, 'Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men.'

Immediately they left their nets and followed him. And going on from there he saw two other brothers, James the son of Zebedee and John his brother, in the boat with Zebedee their father, mending their nets, and he called them.

Immediately they left the boat and their father and followed him.

And he went throughout all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues and proclaiming the gospel of the kingdom and healing every disease and every affliction among the people.

The Gospel of the Lord. R:/Praise to you Lord Jesus Christ

Children's liturgy of the word for this week

Discussion on the Gospel



- † Light a candle
- † Introduce the Gospel liturgically

With younger children it may be simpler to begin at the asterisk. This is the classic story of the calling of the first disciples and leads us to reflect that Jesus is calling us too.

Q: Where was Jesus? (A: By the sea of Galilee.)

Q: What were Simon (Peter) and Andrew doing? (A: Mending their fishing nets.)

Q: What did Jesus say to them? (A: Come, follow me and I will make you fishers of men.)

Q: Who else did Jesus speak to? (A: James and John.)

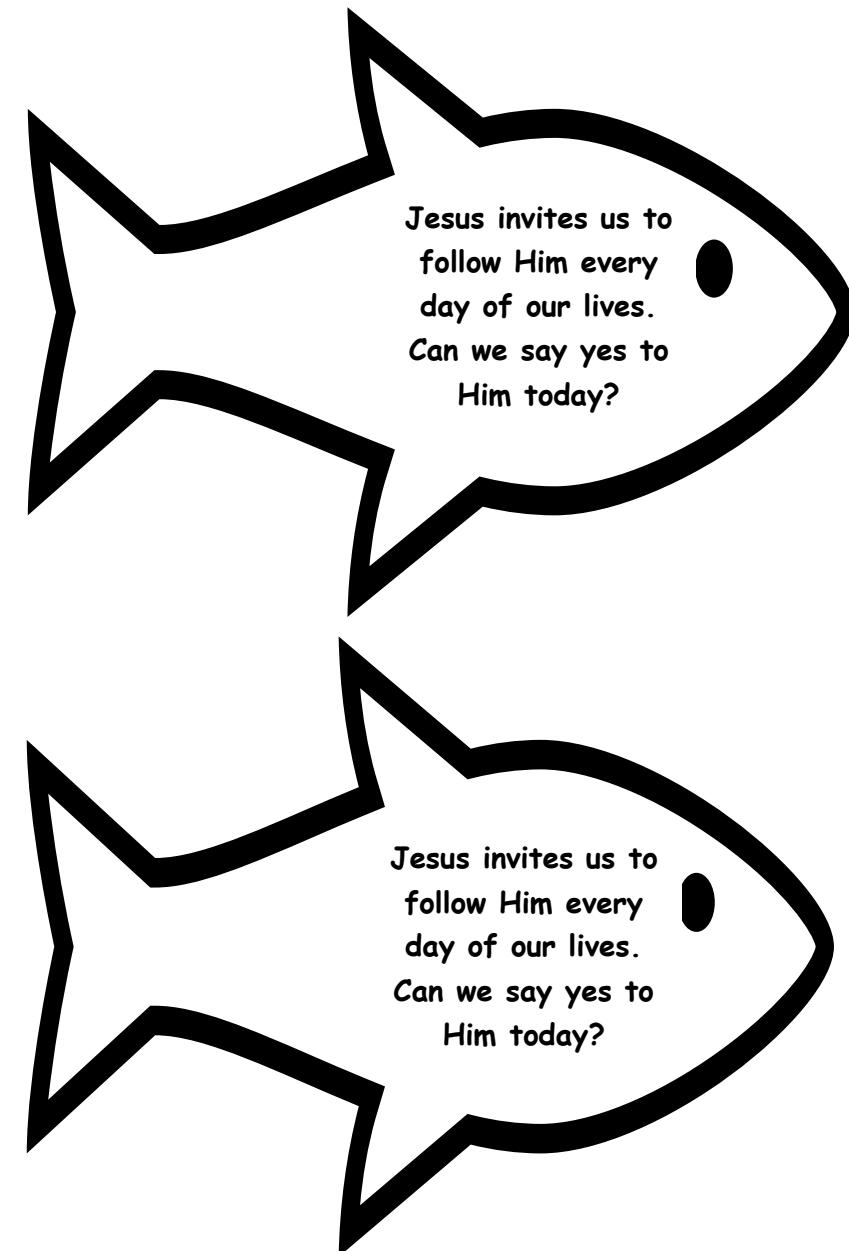
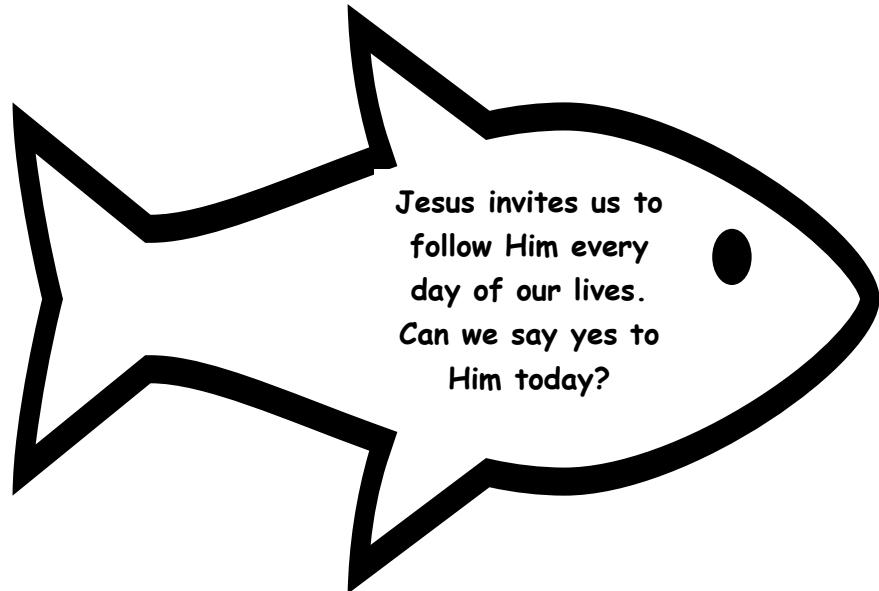
Q: What did Simon Peter, Andrew, James, and John do when Jesus invited them to follow Him? (A: They left everything to follow Jesus.)

Q: Jesus invites us to follow Him too. Let's just think about that for a moment. (Read this slowly, pausing at the end of each phrase.) **Shut your eyes and look at Jesus in your imagination. See Him looking at you. See Him smile and hear Him call you by your name. He holds out His hand to you. See Him tell you that He loves you and wants you to be His friend. What do you say to Jesus. In the silence of your heart, tell Jesus that you want to be His friend. When you are ready, come back into the room..... How can we show Jesus that we are His friend?** (A: Open – e.g. love Him, pray, come to Mass, read the Bible....)

Q: One way we can be a real friend of Jesus is to tell people about Him.

What could we say to people about Jesus? (A: Open – may be encourage responses such as He died for us, He gives Himself to us in Holy Communion....)

On the next page are some fish with invitations to follow Jesus. They can be cut out for the children to colour in and then give them to other people – may be other parishioners in the church when they go back into Mass.



Gospel for the 4th Sunday Year A

Matthew 5:1-12a

At that time:
Seeing the crowds, Jesus went up on the mountain,
and when he sat down, his disciples came to him.
And he opened his mouth and taught them, saying:
'Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.
Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted.
Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth.
Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness,
for they shall be satisfied.
Blessed are the merciful, for they shall receive mercy.
Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God.
Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God.
Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake,
for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.
Blessed are you when others revile you and persecute you
and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely on my account.
Rejoice and be glad, for your reward is great in heaven.'

The Gospel of the Lord. R:/Praise to you Lord Jesus Christ

Children's liturgy of the word for this week



Discussion on the Gospel

- † Light a candle
- † Introduce the Gospel liturgically

There are different ways to explore this beautiful Gospel. In the 12 Days of Christmas edition the Beatitudes were covered on the 8th day and looked at the Beatitudes as 8 attributes of Jesus. You may like to use that for the activity instead of the suggested activity below. Before the session prepare 8 flashcards with the key words on and as you read the Gospel, invite the children to find each word.

You could also prepare a large poster with a picture of Jesus on and invite the children to place the words around the large picture to take into church.

Q: Where is Jesus? (A: On a hill [or mountain].)

Q: Who is Jesus speaking to? (A: The crowds and His disciples. [This is not just the 12 Apostles, but all those who followed Jesus to learn from Him].)

Q: What is the word Jesus keeps using? (A: Blessed.)

Q: In other translations of the Bible, the word "Happy" is sometimes used, e.g. "Happy are the poor in Spirit." What does "blessed" mean? (A: Happy.)

Q: Jesus is saying that all these people are perfectly happy or blessed. In fact, Jesus is describing the most perfect Christian. Let's look at what He says. Can someone choose a word? (As the words are chosen, read it out and explain what it means. Then invite the children to think of someone who is like that.)

When all the words have been discussed ...

Q: All these words describe Jesus. Let's colour these words in and a picture of Jesus to remind us that when we are being merciful, gentle etc we are being like Jesus.

Note on Poor in Spirit.

When we recognise that we are poor in Spirit we know that we need Jesus and His Holy Spirit. If we think that we are good Christians and are on the right path to heaven, we are certainly not poor in Spirit!

Poor in Spirit

Persecuted

Peacemaker

Meek

Merciful

Mourns/is sad

Works for justice

Pure in heart



Meek

Mourns/is sad

Pure in heart

Poor in Spirit

Children's liturgy of the word for this week



Gospel for 5th Sunday Year A

Matthew 5:13-16

At that time: Jesus said to his disciples, 'You are the salt of the earth, but if salt has lost its taste, how shall its saltiness be restored?

It is no longer good for anything except to be thrown out and trampled under people's feet.

'You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hidden.

Nor do people light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a stand, and it gives light to all in the house.

In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven.'

The Gospel of the Lord
R/: *Praise to you Lord
Jesus Christ*

Discussion on the Gospel

- † Light a candle
- † Introduce the Gospel liturgically

Q: What foodstuff did Jesus say that we are like? (A: Salt.)

Q: What is salt used for? (A: Making food taste better. When Jesus walked on earth, there were no fridges or freezers, so salt was also used to preserve food, especially meat. So, salt not only made food taste better but it also stopped it from going bad.)

Q: Jesus also said that we are like something else, what is that? (A: Light.)

Q: What happens if there is no light? (A: We can't see where to go.)

Q: Jesus told His disciples that they are the light of the world. He means that they have to show people were to go, that means, being a good example to other people. How can we be a good example to other people at school? (A: Open.)

Q: Light is a very important sign in our faith in Jesus Christ because Jesus told us that He was the Light of the World. What do we do to remind us that Jesus said this? (A: We light candles when we pray, at Mass etc.)

Q: When we are baptised, we are given a special candle called a "baptismal candle". Who uses their candle at home? (A: Open.)

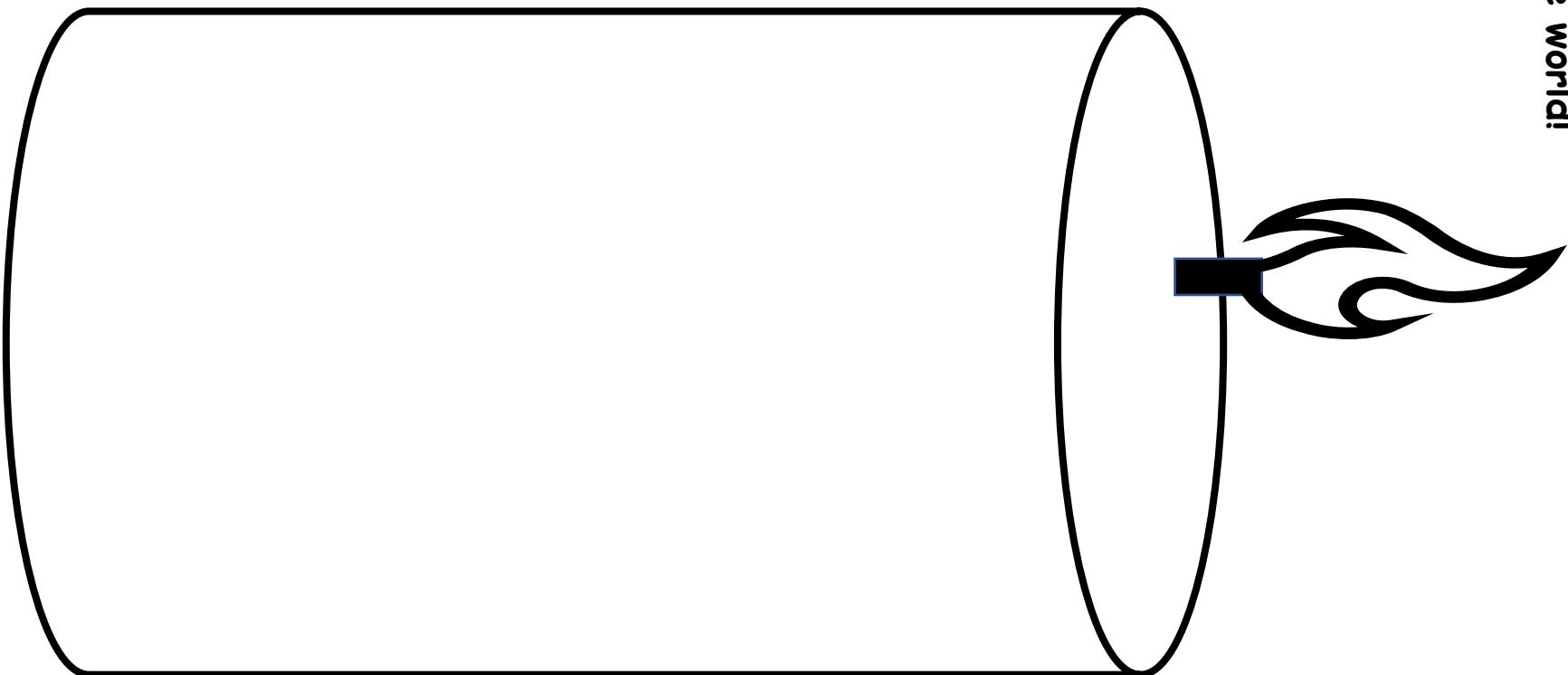
(If possible show a baptismal candle to the children)

Q: Why do you think we are given a candle when we are baptised? (A: Because when we are baptised, we are joined to Jesus and so His light shines through us.)

Let's just finish with this little moment of reflection. Shut your eyes and imagine that you are looking at Jesus. See Him smiling at you and see Him say your name. He tells you that He loves you. Feel that special love of His in your heart. Tell Jesus that you love Him too. Imagine that He is giving you a candle to hold. This is a special invisible candle that does not have a flame that burns. Instead, it is your smiling face that lights up those around you. Jesus's special grace helps you to smile! When you are ready, come back into the room.

**Jesus said that we are
the light of the world!**

*Either colour in
this candle or
write a prayer
inside it and cut
it out as a
bookmark to
remind me that
His light shines
through me.*



Gospel for 6th Sunday Year A

Matthew 5:17-37

At that time: Jesus said to his disciples,
'Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law
or the Prophets;

I have not come to abolish them but to fulfil
them.

For truly, I say to you, until heaven and earth pass
away,
not an iota, not a dot, will pass from the Law
until all is accomplished.

'You have heard that it was said to those of old,
"You shall not murder; and whoever murders
will be liable to judgement."

But I say to you that everyone who is angry with
his brother
will be liable to judgement;
whoever insults his brother will be liable to the
council;
and whoever says, "You fool!" will be liable to
the hell of fire.

So if you are offering your gift at the altar
and there remember that your brother has
something against you,
leave your gift there before the altar and go.

First be reconciled to your brother,
and then come and offer your gift.

Come to terms quickly with your accuser
while you are going with him to court,
lest your accuser hand you over to the judge,
and the judge to the guard, and you be put in
prison.

Truly, I say to you,
you will never get out until you have paid the
last penny.

The Gospel of the Lord. R:/Praise to you Lord

Children's liturgy of the word for this week

Discussion on the Gospel



† Light a candle

† Introduce the Gospel liturgically

I have cut this Gospel reading down to focus on relationships with other people rather than the official short version which refers to adultery and divorce.

Q: Jesus said that He was not going to abolish the Law. What Law is He talking about? (A: The Ten Commandments mainly.)

Q. The 5th commandment is "You shall murder". Jesus is saying something stronger than not killing, what is He saying? (A. That we must not get angry with other people.)

Q. When Jesus says "brother" He is not just talking about our immediate family. "Brother" in His society meant brothers and sisters, cousins, aunts, uncles and all relatives as well as people who are a part of our community. Thinking about that, who is your "brother"? (A: Open, e.g. named members of the family, aunts, uncles close friends, people at school, people in the parish.)

Q: Jesus tells us not to get angry or call those close to us nasty names. He then says that we mustn't bring an offering if we are angry with someone. When do we bring an offering at Mass? (A: The offertory.)

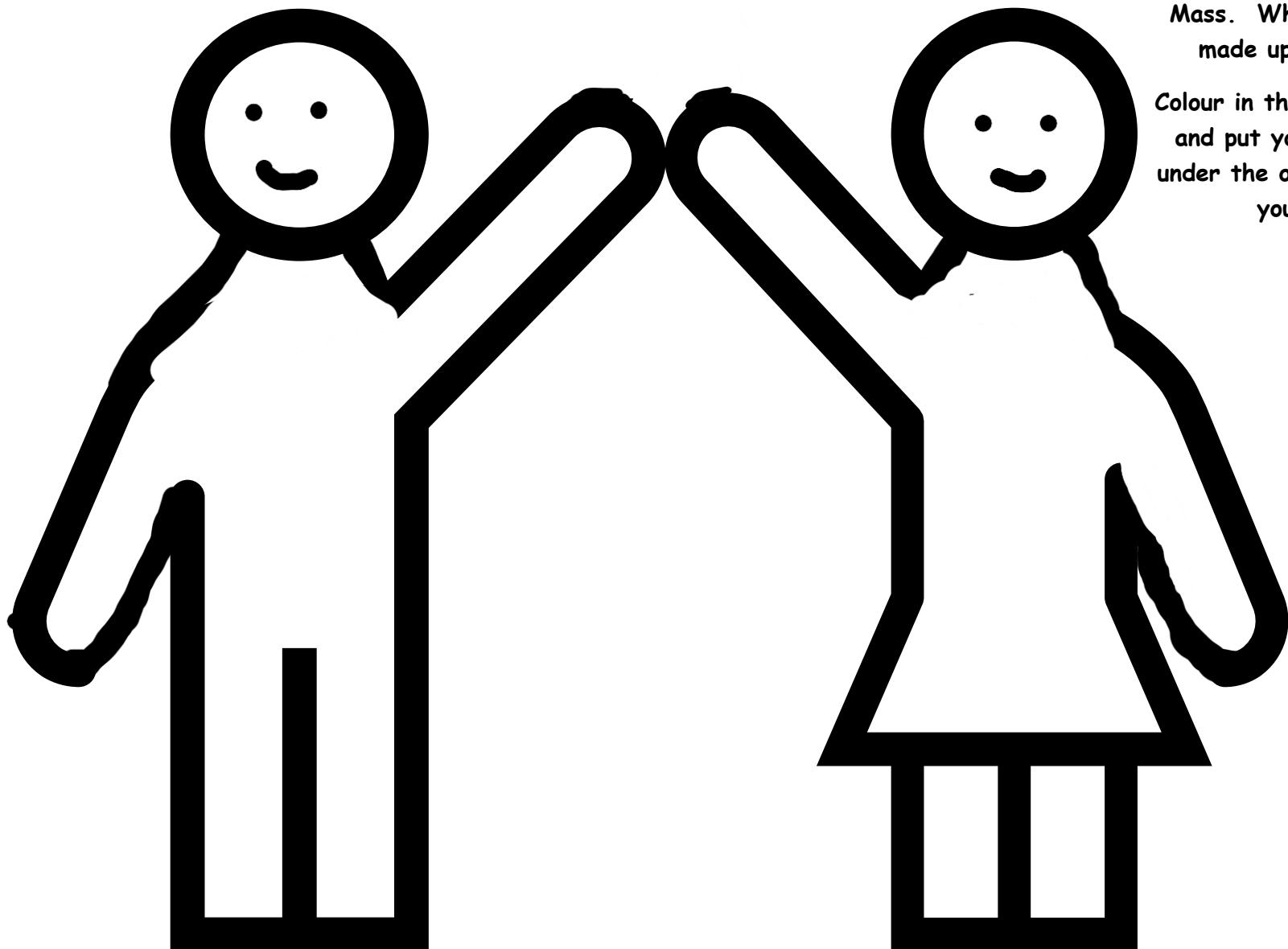
Q: What do we offer at the offertory? (A: Bread and wine, the collection, ourselves.)

Q: The offertory is a really important part of Mass, but Jesus says that we have to do something before we come to Church to be ready for the offertory. What is that? (A: We have to be reconciled, say sorry and forgive, those we are cross with.)

Q: In a moment we are going to walk up the aisle with the bread and wine and the collection. Let's just think – is there anyone we are cross with. Shut your eyes and see Jesus giving them a big hug. Then feel Jesus give you a big hug too.

Jesus tells us to make up with everyone before coming to Mass. Who have I made up with?

Colour in these people and put your name under the one that is you.



Gospel for the 7th Sunday Year A

Matthew 5:38-48

This is the Jerusalem translation

Jesus said to his disciples: ‘You have learnt how it was said: *Eye for eye and tooth for tooth*. But I say this to you: offer the wicked man no resistance. On the contrary, if anyone hits you on the right cheek, offer him the other as well; if a man takes you to law and would have your tunic, let him have your cloak as well. And if anyone orders you to go one mile, go two miles with him. Give to anyone who asks, and if anyone wants to borrow, do not turn away.

‘You have learnt how it was said: You must love your neighbour and hate your enemy. But I say this to you: love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you; in this way you will be sons of your Father in heaven, for he causes his sun to rise on bad men as well as good, and his rain to fall on honest and dishonest men alike. For if you love those who love you, what right have you to claim any credit? Even the tax collectors do as much, do they not? And if you save your greetings for your brothers, are you doing anything exceptional? Even the pagans do as much, do they not? You must therefore be perfect just as your heavenly Father is perfect.’

The Gospel of the Lord. R:/Praise to you Lord Jesus Christ

Children’s liturgy of the word for this week



Discussion on the Gospel

- † Light a candle
- † Introduce the Gospel liturgically

There is a lot of misunderstanding with this Gospel. Jesus is not telling us to be wet rags but in fact to recognise our human dignity. The background is cultural. In first century Palestine, if a person hits you on the right cheek, he has to be backhanding you and only slaves were backhanded, so if you turn the other cheek, you are actually saying, “I am not a slave, treat me as your equal!” It was illegal to take someone’s cloak as that is what they slept in so by offering your cloak, the person would be breaking the law if he accepted. Finally, a soldier could force you to carry his pack one mile, but any longer and he would be in trouble. So, these instructions are about standing up for your own rights and dignity. On loving our enemies – Jesus explains this Himself – there is no credit in being nice to those who are nice to us. We need to be nice to those who are not nice to us. Not easy by ourselves, but by the grace we receive from the Holy Spirit, it is!

Q: Jesus is telling us a lot of things here, what has He said? (A: Open for responses from the text.)

Q: Some of these instructions sound a bit strange to us. What are the strange things Jesus says? (A. Let the children come up with the things that they find strange and explain them as they come up with them. You could demonstrate (without hitting) the hitting on the other cheek.)

Q: Jesus tells us to love and pray for our enemies. Who would we consider our enemies? (A: Open – answers may range from people we don’t get on with to national “enemies” such as Putin.)

Q: When we find it hard to get on with someone – may be someone at school or in the family like a brother or sister, we can shut our eyes and imagine we can do this. Let’s all shut our eyes and imagine that we can see Jesus. See also the person that we are finding it difficult to love at the moment. See Jesus looking at them. He loves them. He may not love what they are doing, but He loves them. See Jesus next to that person and see Him put His arm around them. Now let Jesus see you. See Him smile at you and see Him walk towards you. See Him tell you that He loves you too. You tell Him that you love Him too.

Jesus I love you. I know
that you want me to love
those whom I find hard to
even like. By the grace of
your Holy Spirit I know that
I can love other people,
even those I don't like.

