

‘They will know Him by the good works that you do’

HOME MISSION SUNDAY – 20th September 2009

Ideas for celebrating a Liturgy of the Word with Children

These suggestions are offered as supplementary resources for those who plan and lead a separate Liturgy of the Word with children. They were prepared with children aged five to eight years of age in mind. I offer a full outline, which may be particularly helpful to those who are not so familiar with leading a separate Liturgy of the Word with children.

25th Sunday of Ordinary Time – Year B Gospel: Mark 9:30-37

Message to be celebrated:

Jesus tells us that we are the most important when we serve others.

Suggestions for resources

- ◆ Some photos/pictures on cards of people who would be well-known to the children; e.g. Pope Benedict, parish priest, teachers, Patron Saint of the church, sports and entertainment personalities and also some cards with words of family members such as: parents, grandparents, sisters and brothers, as well as a few blank cards and marker pen.
- ◆ Posters of Jesus with little children, and also of Jesus washing the feet of his disciples at the Last Supper may be helpful.
- ◆ A5 cards with outlines of a pair of hands - open and side by side, together with some pencils.
- ◆ Take-home sheets - A4 sheets covered with the outline of various sizes of hands, with a title such as: ‘We use our hands to serve others’ and perhaps a few lines at the bottom where the children could write their own prayer.

GATHERING

- ◆ Either during the Introductory Rite or after the Opening Prayer the children’s liturgy team – leaders, helpers, reader and musician – are invited by the celebrant to come forward, together with the children of the appropriate age group to receive their Children’s Lectionary and process to their separate liturgy room.
- ◆ On arrival the children sit down, the Children’s Lectionary is placed reverently on the cloth on the table and one of the helpers lights the candle.
- ◆ The Leader welcomes the children, reminding them that they have come to their special liturgy space to hear God’s word and discover what Jesus wants to tell us so that we can follow him better and share in his work of love.

LISTENING

- ◆ The leader could set the scene by asking the children to identify the people pictured on the cards and to name people who are important in their lives. As these 'important' people are identified and named, the helpers could put the cards on the display board, and write any additional names on the blank cards.
- ◆ The leader could then ask the children who they think is the most important, but leave the answer open, and then invite everyone to stand to welcome the gospel and listen carefully to find out who Jesus says his most important followers are.
- ◆ **Gospel Acclamation Sing** your usual Gospel Acclamation or consider singing 'Listen to Jesus' in 'Share the Light' by Bernadette Farrell, which would be quite appropriate.

Proclaiming the Word - the reader then proclaims the gospel from the Children's Lectionary.

The following points may be helpful to explore the message of the gospel:

- ◆ When Jesus asked his disciples what they were talking about on the way home they didn't answer him. What were they talking about?
- ◆ Why do you think they didn't want to tell Jesus?
- ◆ Can you think of any times when we discuss who is the most important? Maybe when we think of who won a race or gained good marks or perhaps we argue about which football team is the best?
- ◆ When Jesus sat down and called his disciples to come and sit with him, what did he tell them? Jesus told them something that was very different to what they had been thinking – he told them that the only way to be important in God's kingdom is to serve other people. Can you think of what Jesus did at the Last Supper to show his disciples how to serve each other humbly? (*The poster of Jesus washing the feet of his disciples may be needed as a prompt.*)
- ◆ In case his disciples thought that only grown ups could be important in sharing in Jesus' work of serving others, who did Jesus bring in front of them all? Jesus was showing all his followers that everyone, who serves others with love as he did, is important, even little children. So, what can we do to serve others?
- ◆ When we serve other people in love, even in very little ways, they can see God's love in what we do and in this way we are sharing in Jesus' work of showing God's love to everyone.

RESPONDING

- ◆ One response could be to give each child (and adult present) an A5 card with the outline of some hands on it and a pencil and, following the discussion about ways in which we can serve others, invite them to write down one way on each hand. Then they could be brought forward to the poster of Jesus (or laid out in a large heart-shape) in a gesture of offering this loving service to the Lord, so that people will know of his love through us.

- ◆ This action could be concluded by saying a prayer (phrase by phrase after the leader); e.g. Dear Jesus / we thank you / for telling us / that we can be important in God's kingdom. / We offer you our hands / and our voices / and our hearts / to serve you / and other people, with love. Alternatively, the act of offering could be concluded in song (e.g. from Bernadette Farrell's 'Share the Light of Jesus' the verses: 'Share the smile of Jesus' and 'Share the love of Jesus').
- ◆ Having responded together in the liturgy room, the leader might suggest that when we return to rejoin our families in the church we could listen for the invitation to offer each other a sign of peace and smile at each person as we wish them 'Peace be with you' as a little way of serving them, especially if we share the peace with someone who may be at Mass on their own, without their family.
- ◆ As a way to encourage the children to bring the message home to their families, the leader could show them the A4 take-home sheet and suggest that they might get family members and friends to write how they can serve others in the hand outlines and maybe compose a prayer to say together. (*In my experience it is preferable to hand out these sheets at the end of Mass as everyone leaves the church.*)

GOING WITH A MISSION

- ◆ When the leader receives the signal that the homily has ended in the church, they could very briefly remind the children about the Sign of Peace and the take-home sheets and then invite everyone to stand for the **Prayer of the Faithful**:

Leader: Jesus has told us to ask God for what we need,
and so, as God's children, we pray:

Reader: We pray for our families and all those who teach us about Jesus.
May they help us to live like him. Lord in your mercy . . . hear our prayer

We pray that God's Spirit will help us to share God's love
by serving others. Lord in your mercy . . . hear our prayer

We pray for people who don't know Jesus.
May they come to know him by seeing the good things that we do.
Lord in your mercy . . . hear our prayer

Leader: Loving God, we ask you to listen to these prayers
which we bring to you today in the name of Jesus the Lord. **Amen**

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See also <http://www.liturgyoffice.org.uk/Resources/LOWC/index.shtml> for the 'Liturgy of the Word with Children Guidelines' of the Bishops' Conference.