

Twenty-third Sunday of the Year

Jesus cures a deaf man

INTRODUCTION

Unless we know someone who is deaf, we take the gift of hearing for granted. We never stop to imagine how different our lives would be if we could not hear. Jesus often changed the lives of the people he met. Today we hear how one deaf man's world would never be the same again.

SIGN OF THE CROSS

LIGHT THE CANDLES

Light the candles and say Candle Prayer 1: *Flicker, flicker little candle.*

SORRY

As we sing our sorry song together, let us ask God to change our hearts and help us to be good. Sing Sorry Song 3.

GLORIA

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

To welcome today's Gospel sing Acclamation 5: *We have come to hear you, Lord.*

GOSPEL (cf Mark 7:31-37)

Jesus was returning to the Sea of Galilee when some people brought to him a man who was deaf and could not speak properly. They asked Jesus to help their friend.

Jesus was filled with pity and led the man away to a quiet place where he touched his ears and tongue with his hands, and looking up to heaven said, 'Be opened!' At once the man could hear and speak clearly!

The man and his friends were amazed, and they told everyone they met about the miracle Jesus had performed.

DISCUSSION

Ask the children to close their eyes, sit very quietly and listen to all the things around them. After a few moments ask them to describe some of the sounds they could hear.

Can you remember the very first sound you heard this morning?

If you had to choose a favourite sound what would it be and why?

Often we associate certain sounds with particular happy events:

- A car in the drive which means that Daddy is home from work.

- The sound of Happy Birthday being sung before you open your presents.
- A cheering crowd when your team has just scored a goal!

Now ask the children to close their eyes and put their hands tightly over their ears.

What difference would it make to their lives if they could not hear?

They would not be able to:

- listen to music
- hear what others are saying.
- understand a television programme easily.
- hear the sound of traffic.
- hear the words 'I love you.'

(Encourage the children to make their own suggestions.)

How do deaf people today communicate with the world? - They use sign language and lip reading to hold a conversation. Some television programmes have subtitles, or write the words being spoken on the screen, so that deaf people can understand.

How do you think the deaf man must have felt when Jesus cured him? - Suddenly his silence was broken by the sounds of the world around him, sounds which he had never heard before! He found that he could speak clearly and make himself understood. Jesus had totally changed his life by his act of kindness, and it would never be the same again.

What do you imagine he might have heard and said first? - Perhaps the first thing that he heard was the sound of Jesus' own voice, and it would be nice to imagine that the first words he spoke were to thank Jesus for changing his life and enabling him to hear and speak.

ACTIVITY

Photocopy the series of pictures telling the story of today's Gospel. Help the children to arrange these in order to make a booklet.

CREED

CLOSING PRAYER

Dear God,
we thank you today
for the gift of hearing.
Help us to listen to and appreciate
all the wonderful sounds around us,
and to pray for all those
who only know the sound of silence.