

Liturgy of the Word with Children
23rd Sunday in Ordinary Time, Year B
6 September 2015
Mark 7:31-37

Catechist Background

The part of Palestine that Jesus walks through in today's gospel reading was in an overwhelmingly gentile area; the deaf-mute that Jesus healed was almost certainly a pagan. Physical ailments were widely seen as having spiritual causes, and the presumption may have been that the man's deafness was caused by an evil spirit or a sinful act. Using saliva in the way Jesus does seems odd to us today, but it was fairly common practice among ancient healers to ward off or deactivate evil.

We Say Sorry

Leader: You speak to us your saving Word, Lord have mercy.

All: Lord, have mercy.

Leader: We sometimes turn away, Christ have mercy.

All: Christ, have mercy.

Leader: You open our ears and our hearts, Lord have mercy.

All: Lord, have mercy.

Gloria

We Pray (1)

God, as your children, we ask to hear you more clearly and speak of you more bravely in our lives. Amen.

Gospel Acclamation

Gospel: Mark 7:31-37

Reflecting on the Reading with Children

- Does anyone here know anybody who is deaf? How easy is it to understand what that person wants to communicate? How easy is it to tell that person something?
- [Suggest the children cover their ears and try to tell them something about your morning.] What was that like? How easy would it be to make friends if you couldn't hear?
- How do you think you would feel if you could not hear and then Jesus came and healed you?
- What about the crowd—what do you think they thought?
- Even though most of us are not physically deaf, sometimes we do not use our ears properly to listen to what God is trying to say to us. Can anyone think of an example of when this might happen? [You might also enjoy a demonstration of covering your ears and singing 'Na-na-na-na-na!' in the time-honoured childish chant.]

- Even though most of us can actually speak properly, sometimes we don't use our words properly, to make others understand that they are loved by God. When might this happen?

Response

Compared to Jesus, all of us are 'deaf.' Compared to Jesus, we all have 'tied-tongues.' But we can always strive to listen to Jesus and to follow his example. Organise the children to be sitting in a circle or a line, if they are not already in one. In the fashion of 'Chinese Whispers,' say in the first child's ear, 'Be opened!' and s/he passes it along to the next one, and so on and so forth (although the phrase doesn't need to be a secret from the rest of the children at the beginning).

We Believe

Relating to the creed what you have shared with the children, ask this series of questions and invite the children to reply, 'I do.'

- Do you believe in God the Father who has created a beautiful world for us all?
- Do you believe in God the Son, Jesus, who redeems the world by his dying and rising?
- Do you believe in God the Holy Spirit, who helps us to show God's love to others?

We Pray (2)

Again, try to relate the bidding prayers to the reading by saying, 'You have given us the ability to listen and to speak with you, and so we now pray...'

Leader: We pray for all people whose job it is to tell other people about God. Help them to show true kindness to others. Lord in your mercy,

All: Hear our prayer.

Leader: We pray for presidents and prime ministers and rulers all over the world, that they act with compassion. Lord in your mercy,

All: Hear our prayer.

Leader: We pray for all people in the world today who are deaf or who have difficulty in communicating with those around them. Help them to know they belong and that they are loved. We pray for people with any kind of disability, especially as the Paralympics draws to an end. Lord in your mercy,

All: Hear our prayer.

Leader: We pray for anyone we know who is feeling lonely. Lord in your mercy,

All: Hear our prayer.

Leader: Lord, help us to always use well the gifts you have given us—our senses, our words, our love. We make all our prayers through Christ our Lord.

All: Amen.

