

Children's liturgy – Fourth Sunday of Easter (Year C)

Preparation of the worship space

Colour: white

Props: paper or card, colouring pens or pencils

Song suggestions: Love is his word, love is his way (399, Celebration Hymnal for Everyone)

Welcome: Today Jesus talks about how important it is to listen to him. And how he knows and cares about each and every one of us, no matter who we are. Let's think some more about this today.

Opening prayer: God of all, help us to listen to your voice and to care for each other as you care for all people. We ask this through Christ our Lord, Amen.

First reading (optional): Acts 13:14, 43-52

Psalm: Psalm 99:1-3, 5 r 3

Gospel acclamation: everyone stands and sings the acclamation together. Suggestions include: 'Halle, halle, halle' (Caribbean) from 'Sing With the World', Alison Adam & John Bell; 'Alleluia' (Zimbabwe), Abraham Maraire Publications, WCC & GIA; 'Celtic Alleluia' (traditional); 'Alleluia! Raise the Gospel' from 'Go Before Us', Bernadette Farrell, OCP Publications.

Gospel: John 10:27-30

Gospel reflection: Today Jesus talks about sheep. Jesus didn't spend his time looking after sheep out in the fields, so who do you think Jesus' sheep are? Who is he talking about?

Jesus is a shepherd of people. He shows us the way to live our lives. He looks after us and cares for us, just as a shepherd looks after his sheep.

What does Jesus say about his sheep in the gospel reading today?

Jesus says that his sheep listen to his voice.

How do we listen to Jesus in our lives? (*Through hearing his word in the readings, through prayer etc*)

Jesus also says that he knows his sheep, and that they will never be lost. What do you think this means?

Jesus cares for each and every one of us. No matter who we are or from where we come.

Samm lives in Cambodia with his parents. He has four brothers and sisters. Samm likes studying, playing football, drawing and riding on motorbikes. His favourite subjects at school are Khmer language and maths.

Fils lives in Rwanda, with his mum and two little brothers. They play football together. Their favourite team is Manchester United. Fils learns English and maths at school. He likes English a lot. When he grows up, Fils wants to be a driver.

Yoshi lives in England with his mum and dad. His favourite subjects at school are PE and art. He loves playing football and the guitar. He likes reading books too. When he grows up he wants to be a car designer, a footballer or an artist for a book.

(See photos of the three boys in the accompanying photo PowerPoint which you can share with the children)

These three boys live in very different places around the world. Can you tell us some things that are different about each of the boys? And can you tell us some things that are the same? Are they the same or different to you? How?

We are all different from each other, but we are also very alike. We all need enough food and water to live. We all like to have fun and a laugh with our friends. We are all part of the same global family and so we are all very special and important. Jesus loves and cares for us all.

How does it make you feel to know that Jesus loves and cares for all of us, no matter who or where we are? What do you think this means for how we should treat each other?

This week, let's try to listen to what Jesus is saying to us, and share the love that he has for us all with others.

Intercessions *You may want to ask the children to offer their own prayers or you can use the suggestions below.*

We know that we are loved by God, and we try to listen to Jesus in our lives, as we pray together:

We pray for the Church throughout the world: that it may welcome and care for everyone as Jesus did – like a shepherd cares for his sheep. Lord, in your mercy...

We pray for all people throughout the world: that they may see that we are all part of one global family, and treat each other with love and respect. Lord, in your mercy...

We pray for our parish, family and friends: that we may be open to listen to Jesus in our lives and be able to see that all people are our brothers and sisters, no matter who they are or where they live. Lord, in your mercy...

Closing prayer: Lord Jesus, help us to listen and follow you and to care for each other, so that all members of our global family may live together in peace. Amen.

Activity suggestions

Ask the children to colour in the accompanying illustration and to write their name and the names of some of their friends and the children they've heard about today on the sheep. On the back ask them to write or draw either how they will show that they are listening to Jesus this week, or how they will care for their brothers and sisters around the world.

Give the children a cut-out of a sheep. Ask them to write their name on it and to decorate it. You could also get them to decorate a sheep for some of the children that they have heard about from around the world. When they have finished display all the sheep on a large board, saying "I know my sheep".

Ask the children to go home and share all that they have heard and thought about today. Ask them during the week to remember that all people are loved by God, and to try to care for others as Jesus cares for us, his sheep. Ask them to visit Picture my World, CAFOD's website for children (cafod.org.uk/picturemyworld), to find out more about children around the world and to explore the similarities and differences between them.