

Liturgy of the Word with Children
Eleventh Sunday in Ordinary Time, Year C
12 June, 2016
Luke 7:36-50

Catechist Background

Although it is sometimes presumed the woman in today's gospel has committed sexual sins, we do not really know what 'kind' of sinner she was. Her acts of love toward Jesus are far more important than the details of her sinful reputation, or even her name, which is absent from the story.

Key portions of the story are somewhat contradictory in the translations available to us, because the original text does not have the same format as the English language. Some read 'Her many sins have been forgiven *because* she has loved much,' whereas other renditions read, 'Her many sins have been forgiven, *hence* she has loved much.' The second is probably more accurate, given the parable that accompanies the event. We know that it is not our own actions that make us deserving of forgiveness, but of God's loving generosity towards us.

Setting the Scene

For the activity described below, you will need teardrop-shaped pieces of paper for each child and writing/drawing materials. You will also need a picture to represent Jesus, or a crucifix or other suitable object.

We Say Sorry

Leader: You came to teach us how to live, Lord have mercy.

All: Lord, have mercy.

Leader: You show us how to be generous, Christ have mercy.

All: Christ, have mercy.

Leader: You are always ready to show forgiveness, Lord have mercy.

All: Lord, have mercy.

Gloria

We Pray (1)

God our Father, help us to follow Christ and to live according to your will. Amen.

Gospel Intro

Explain that in ancient times in Palestine, when someone came to another person's house for a meal, it would have been customary to greet them with a kiss, give them water to wash in, and perfumed oil to make everyone at the meal more pleasant smelling. In fact, it would have been impolite not to provide these items. Ask the children to pay special attention to them in the gospel.

Gospel Acclamation

Gospel: Luke 7:36-50

Reflecting on the Reading with Children

- Was the Pharisee very polite to Jesus, his guest? Did he give him water to wash, or a kiss, or oil?
- Who did? Did she do it to be polite? Or was it something more than that?
- The Pharisee thought the woman was a sinful woman. Was he right? Of course he was. But the Pharisee couldn't see that he also was a sinner who needed Jesus' forgiveness. Most of us are sometimes like the woman in the story and very aware and sorry when we do things wrong; and sometimes like the Pharisee, ready to judge other people and not realising that we need forgiveness too.

Response

Ask the children to think of one thing that they have done that they know they shouldn't have—a sin. Invite the children to draw or write what they are sorry for in a teardrop-shaped piece of paper. Invite the children to put their teardrop-drawings around the picture of Jesus.

Remind the children that we need to be like the woman in the story, ready to seek forgiveness, and like Jesus, ready to be forgiving.

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 Almighty?
- Do you believe in Jesus Christ, who gives us forgiveness?
- Do you believe in the Holy Spirit, who fills us with Christ's peace?

We Pray (2)

Again, try to relate the bidding prayers to the reading by saying, 'We know your love for all of us reaches through our sinful mistakes, and so we pray...'

Leader: We pray for all bishops and priests and deacons, that instead of being like the Pharisee, they are able to imitate Christ. Lord in your mercy,

All: Hear our prayer.

Leader: We pray for the leaders of our country, that they make laws that make it easier for people to turn away from their sins. Lord in your mercy,

All: Hear our prayer.

Leader: We pray for people who are left out by others because they have made bad decisions in the past. We especially pray for people in prison. Lord in your mercy,

All: Hear our prayer.

Leader: We pray for anyone we know who is feeling bad about mistakes they have made. Lord in your mercy,

All: Hear our prayer.

Leader: Lord, we know you hear all of our prayers and we trust in your love for us. We make all our prayers through Christ our Lord.

All: Amen.