

Liturgy of the Word with Children
Fifteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time, Year C
10 July, 2016
Luke 10:25-37

Catechist Background

The familiarity of the story of the Good Samaritan may blind us to the fact that it would have been quite shocking to its first hearers. We cannot overestimate the importance of ritual purity to the first century Jewish community in which Jesus lived. If the priest and Levite had come into contact with a dead body or a non-Jew (and who could tell, if the beaten man was unclothed and unconscious), they would be unable to perform their duties in the temple that were essential to the worship of God, the most important aspect of their life. In order to be able to resume their duties, they would have to undergo purification, which would be a potentially embarrassing admission of 'uncleanness.'

It is also difficult for a 21st century Westerner to fully understand the mutual hatred between the Samaritans and Jews. Jews travelling to Jerusalem would travel great distances out of their way to avoid Samaritan areas. It is entirely possible that upon regaining health, rather than be grateful to be alive the beaten man would have been angry at the Samaritan for making him 'unclean.' He was certainly not the person who would have been expected to help!

Finally, a note about the 'lawyer' (or 'expert in the Torah'): as an expert, he already knows the answer to the question he poses to Jesus. In fact, the gospel tells us that he is testing Jesus with it. His problem is that he has too legalistic definition of what 'loving God' and 'loving neighbour' is. To him, loving God means meticulously following the rules laid out in the Torah. One of these rules describes 'loving your neighbour' as looking after your kinsfolk—and Samaritans were not kinsfolk. Jesus brilliantly deconstructs the 'lawyer's' suggestion that love can be measured by legal minimum standards.

We Say Sorry

Leader: Lord Jesus, you are our teacher and friend, Lord have mercy.

All: Lord, have mercy.

Leader: Lord Jesus, you are our guide, Christ have mercy.

All: Christ, have mercy.

Leader: Lord Jesus, you are the way the truth and the life, Lord have mercy.

All: Lord, have mercy.

Gloria

We Pray (1)

God, our Father, may the Light of your Love help us to live our lives in the way you want us to. Amen.

Gospel Introduction

Without a bit of explanation, it would be easy for children to conclude that the first two passers-by were just not very nice people, and miss a main point of the story. Briefly explain the first century characters of 'priest,' 'Levite,' 'Samaritan' and 'lawyer.'

Gospel Acclamation

Gospel: Luke 10:25-37

Reflecting on the Reading with Children

- Why did the 'lawyer' ask Jesus what he should do to have eternal life?
- Why didn't the priest and Levite help the injured man?
- Why is it surprising that the Samaritan helped him?
- How can we sometimes be like the priest and Levite in our lives today? How can we be like the Good Samaritan?

Response

Assign parts and re-enact the gospel. Break into smaller groups if necessary.

Characters could include the following:

Jesus	priest
lawyer	Levite
onlookers	Samaritan
man who gets robbed	donkey
robbers	innkeeper

(NB: Ensure that the robbers do not *really* beat anyone up! A good way to prevent this is to tell them that they must act out their part of the scene in S-L-O-W-M-O-T-I-O-N, and may not at any time, actually connect with the victim.)

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 made us out of Love?
- Do you believe in Jesus, the Son, who came to show us how to Love?
- Do you believe in the Holy Spirit, who helps us to Love others?

We Pray (2)

Again, try to relate the bidding prayers to the reading by saying, 'We know we should look after the needs of others and so we now pray...'

Leader: We pray for priests and bishops and deacons and all those with official jobs in the Church. May they always remember that loving others is as important as their other duties. Lord in your mercy,

All: Hear our prayer.

Leader: We pray for people who have powerful jobs. May they use their power to look after those who are in need. Lord in your mercy,

All: Hear our prayer.

Leader: We pray for people who are like the ancient Samaritans, and are left out because of something they cannot change about themselves. Lord in your mercy,

All: Hear our prayer.

Leader: We pray for anybody we know who is sick or hurt in any way. Lord in your mercy,

All: Hear our prayer.

Leader: Lord, help us to be like the Samaritan and look after those we meet. We make all our prayers through Christ our Lord.

All: Amen.

