

Children's liturgy – Third Sunday of Advent (Year A) – 11 December 2016

Preparing the worship space

Colour: purple

Song suggestions: Come to set us free (135, Celebration Hymnal for Everyone)

Welcome: Today we listen to Jesus say that he came to heal the sick and to bring good news to the poor. We are going to think about how we can be that good news and help to change the lives of others around the world.

Opening prayer: God of hope, you sent your Son Jesus to bring good news to people who are poor. Help us to be that good news, so that all people around the world can make a better life for themselves and their families. Amen.

First reading (optional): Isaiah 35:1-6a, 10

Psalm: Ps 145:6-7, 8-9a, 9b-10

Gospel acclamation everyone stands and sings the gospel acclamation together. Options include: 'Change your lives and believe in him', Christopher Walker; 'Halle, halle, halle' (Caribbean) from 'Sing With the World', Alison Adam & John Bell; 'Celtic Alleluia' (traditional).

Gospel: Matthew 11:2-11

Gospel reflection: What do you remember from the reading?

John the Baptist, who we heard about last week, wants to make sure that Jesus is really the special person that he has been waiting for, so he sends some friends to check.

Jesus answers them by telling them that he is the one who has come to heal the sick and to bring good news to the poor. This answer tells John that Jesus really is the person for whom he has been waiting.

We are not able to heal the sick as Jesus did, but we can help other people. We are all part of one family, God's family, and God asks us to love each other and care for each other.

But what does it mean to bring good news to people who are poor? Do you have any ideas?

What can we do to help other people, either our friends, family, or people in other countries whom we have never met? People who are sick or who have hurt themselves? People who are hungry or thirsty? People who are poor?

CAFOD works with people who are poor all around the world. In times of emergencies, like an earthquake or flooding, that can mean giving people food or shelter, but more often it means helping them to help themselves. For example giving people seeds and tools means that they can grow enough food for their families and enough to share with others. This is very good news!

With Christmas approaching, our minds turn to gifts under the Christmas tree. CAFOD has some special "World Gifts" that are a little bit unusual. One of the gifts is a Motivating Music pack. Perhaps you play an instrument and know how good it makes you feel?

Marcos lives in an area of Brazil where poverty makes life very difficult, but when he plays his cello he feels so much better. If you bought a gift like this you could imagine playing in an orchestra that stretched right around the world. You can make a real difference to someone, like Marcos, whom you have never met.

What do you think about World Gifts? How do you think they help to bring good news to people who are poor?

How will you try to be like Jesus, helping others and bringing good news to people who are poor in the next week?

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

Jesus shows us an example of how to live. Together we pray for help from God, so that we can follow that example:

We pray for our brothers and sisters around the world who are poor: that with our support and help they may make life better for themselves and their families. Lord, in your mercy...

We pray for all children around the world: that they may have the chance to go to school, learn many things and have a bright and happy future. Lord, in your mercy...

We pray for our parish, our families and our friends: that we may always try to help other people, even those we have never met and who live far away. Lord, in your mercy...

Closing prayer: Generous God, we thank you for all the good things that you have given us. Help us to follow the example of Jesus, to care for others and to bring good news to people who are poor. Amen.

Activity suggestions

Ask the children to colour in the optional accompanying illustration of the children helping someone in the playground. Ask them to think of other ways that we can

help others, both here and overseas. On the back get them to draw their own picture of one way we can help other people.

As a group you could fundraise to buy a World Gift, or you could spend more time with the children exploring some of the other types of World Gifts and the case studies that accompany them.

Look at the World Gifts site for more information on the different types of World gifts available. <http://worldgifts.cafod.org.uk>

Find more information, prayers and activities for children around World Gifts to share with the children. <http://cafod.org.uk/Education/Primary-schools/World-Gifts-for-children>. Although the resources are designed for use in school, they could be used in an adapted form during a children's liturgy session.

Ask the children to go home and share all that they have heard and thought about during the liturgy. Ask them to do one thing in the next week to help other people either here or in another country so that they can bring good news to others.