

Liturgy of the Word with Children
Third Sunday of Advent, Year A
11 December, 2016
Matthew 11:2-11

Catechist Background

Now in prison, John the Baptist appears disappointed that Jesus' messiahship has not brought about the changes he expected. It stands to reason that if your cousin was the messiah, some preferential treatment might be in order—or at least a release from prison. Like many others, John misunderstands what type of saviour Jesus was to be. He is not about to overthrow their Roman occupiers and oppressors and reinstitute a Jewish state, ushering in an age of prosperity for their people; at the time, this was the popular expectation of what the messiah would do. Jesus takes his understanding of what type of messiah he will be from today's First Reading, broadening the Kingdom of Heaven for all people. In his final statement that the least in the Kingdom of Heaven is greater than John the Baptist, Jesus definitively states that membership is not limited to race, class, culture, nationality or any other of life's circumstances.

We Say Sorry

Leader: Lord Jesus, you came to bring peace.

All: Lord, have mercy.

Leader: You come to us in your Word to make us strong, Christ have mercy.

All: Christ, have mercy.

Leader: You will come in glory with salvation for your people, Lord have mercy.

All: Lord, have mercy.

We Pray (1)

Dear God, remove all sadness from us and help us to celebrate with joy Christ's entrance into the world. Amen.

Gospel Acclamation

Gospel Matthew 11:2-11

Reflecting on the Reading with Children

- Why do you think John the Baptist wasn't sure that Jesus was the one he had been waiting for?
- What type of things did Jesus give as examples to show that he was the Messiah?
- In today's world, how do 'the blind see?' 'The lame walk?' 'Lepers are cleansed?' 'The deaf are able to hear?' 'The dead are raised?' 'The poor have the good news proclaimed to them?' (You can speak about these as literally or as metaphorically as you see fit.)
- Who is able to do those things? (Us! Jesus acting through us! We are the Body of Christ on earth.)
- How do we recognise when Jesus is doing those things for us? Do we notice Jesus acting through others when we are being comforted or helped?

Response

Get the children into pairs. Have one person in the pair ('Partner A') represent somebody who is blind by covering their eyes. The other person ('Partner B') will then symbolically restore their sight by removing their hands from their eyes. Next, Partner A will represent someone who cannot walk by sitting down, arms outstretched. Partner B will help them up. Continue through the list that Jesus gave as a summary of what he was doing. Allow both partners to be the healed and healer, either by taking turns or going through the list twice.

We Believe

Relating the creed to 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 Messiah who came to draw people back to the Kingdom of Heaven?
- Do you believe in the Holy Spirit who inspires us to live out Jesus' love on earth today?

We Pray (2)

Again, try to relate the bidding prayers to the reading by saying, 'Just like 2000 years ago, there are people in need in our world today and so we pray...'

Leader: We pray for Christians who, like John the Baptist, are imprisoned for speaking out against injustice. Lord in your mercy,

All: Hear our prayer.

Leader: We pray for world leaders, that they may seek to implement Jesus' type of Kingdom on earth. Lord in your mercy,

All: Hear our prayer.

Leader: We pray for peace in our world, especially in areas where there is lots of tension. Lord in your mercy,

All: Hear our prayer.

Leader: We pray for anyone we know who is losing their sight or their hearing or their ability to move because of old age or illness. Lord in your mercy,

All: Hear our prayer.

Leader: Lord, there are many ways in our lives that we can make your Good News known to those who are poor or lonely or sad. Help us to take all the opportunities that are in front of us. We make all our prayers through Christ our Lord.

All: Amen.

