

Seventh Sunday of the Year

Love your enemies

INTRODUCTION

Does anyone know what an enemy is? (Someone who hates another person and wants to hurt or harm them). Today we hear Jesus telling us that we must learn to forgive and love our enemies, and never to hate them.

SIGN OF THE CROSS

LIGHT THE CANDLES

Say together: Fill our hearts with the love of Jesus.

SORRY

Jesus told us to be like his heavenly Father, who always forgives; Help us to forgive anyone who has hurt or harmed us. If we have spoiled our friendship with God we ask for his forgiveness as we sing our sorry song.

Sing Sorry Song 4: *When we say that we are sorry.*

GLORIA

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

To welcome today's Gospel sing Acclamation 3: *Alleluia, alleluia.*

GOSPEL (cf Matthew 5:38-48)

One day Jesus said: 'If someone hits you, do not hit them back, instead you must forgive them and try to be their friend. Learn to love your enemies and to pray for anyone who wishes you harm. It is easy to love someone who loves you back, but it is hard to love someone who hurts you. Try to be like God our Father, who always forgives. If you do this, others will see God's goodness in you, and my Father in Heaven will be very pleased.'

DISCUSSION

Jesus tells us to love as God loves – all people, even those we do not like! It is easy to be kind to those who are kind to us, but God wants us to be good to people who hurt us too.

Has anyone ever been hurt by someone else, for example a bully at school?

What happened and how did they react to the incident?

What has Jesus told us to do?

We should not let our anger win. We must try to be generous and kind, and to become friends. This is never easy, but we should try to do what we know is right. If the bully laughs at us and will not listen, do not give up! Tell an adult – a teacher or a parent, and perhaps they can help them to

realise that hurting others is wrong and instead they must learn to love.

Do the children know of any countries at war?

All over the world many different nations are enemies and their people are at war. Many people are trying hard to bring peace to these places, to encourage friendship, just as Jesus wanted. In our own small way we too can be peacemakers like them; by offering our friendship to everyone we meet; by trying to end a quarrel between others, and by learning to say sorry and to forgive others who have hurt us.

ACTIVITY

Photocopy the illustrations onto thin card. Cut them out for the children to colour and make into badges which encourage peace throughout the whole world.

CREED

CLOSING PRAYER

Lord Jesus, you once said,
'I leave you my peace, my peace I give you.'
May our hands reach out
to share your peace with others,
and may our hearts always be filled
with forgiveness and love.