

Children's liturgy
First Sunday of Lent (Year A) 5 March 2017

Preparing the worship space:

Colour: purple

Props: net, fish/cut out fish (see below), Lent Fast Day poster for children

Song suggestions:

Be not afraid (Laudate 964), Bread for the world (Laudate 625)

Welcome: Today we are going to hear about how Jesus spent 40 days in the desert. He had nothing with him, and had to survive with very little. What do you think it would be like to have to live without clean water, or cupboards full of food, or changes of clothes? Let's think a bit more about that today.

Opening prayer: God of life, you gave your Son Jesus strength in the desert. Give us the strength to do what we know is right and to stand up for what we believe in, even when it is difficult. Amen.

First reading (optional): Genesis 2:7-9; 3:1-7

Psalm (optional): Ps 50:3-6, 12-14 17 r. 3

Gospel acclamation: Everyone stands and sings the acclamation together. For Lent we use an acclamation that doesn't use the word 'Alleluia'. We suggest 'Change your lives and believe in him' by Christopher Walker (OCP Publications).

Gospel: Matthew 4:1-11

Gospel reflection:

What do you remember from that reading?

Jesus goes out into the desert to pray. He is there for 40 days and 40 nights and during this time he fasts.

How do you think Jesus feels at the end of this time?

Jesus is hungry, after all he's been fasting for 40 days. What does it feel like to be hungry?

God created the world, all the fish in the sea and all the animals on the ground. But many families around the world struggle to earn a living so do not have enough money for the basic things they need like food, a home and clothing.

Florence is a mum. She lives in Zambia, a country in southern Africa, with her children. Although she would work very hard growing food for her family to eat, they often didn't have enough and would go to bed hungry.

Florence was always very tired from the long hours she had to work, and ached from bending over the ground to grow their vegetables.

Florence joined a group of fish farmers in her village. Florence learnt how to farm with a few small fish – smaller than goldfish you may have at home, about the size of my thumb.

Those little fish have grown into lots of BIG fish! Florence sells some of the fish at market and uses the money to buy things her family need- like food, books and uniforms. This has made a BIG difference to her family!

How do you think Florence feels now she is able to provide for her family?

In our Gospel today, Jesus is tempted to turn stones into bread to eat. Even though he is hungry and this would be an easy way to get food, he says no. He was being tempted to do something wrong, to show off. Jesus listened to what God wanted him to do, and he was brave and did the right thing.

Lent is a time when we look at our lives and what we've done. We try to make our relationship with God better.

We say sorry to God for what we have done wrong and we try to make a change to our lives to make the world a better and fairer place for everyone.

This isn't easy. Sometimes we'll be tempted to do the wrong thing, just like Jesus was in the desert, but we have try to find the strength to do the right thing.

What little changes will you make to your life this Lent? And how will you try to make the world a fairer place for people like Florence and her family? Will you help **Turn little fish into Big fish** turn little fish into big fish this Lent, and make a BIG difference to communities around the world?

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

As we try to make a change to our own lives and to our world, we pray:

We pray for world leaders: that they may not be tempted by power and money, but instead may God guide them to make wise decisions for the good of all people, especially those who are poor. Lord, in your mercy...

We pray for all our sisters and brothers throughout the world: that by sharing in God's creation, all people will have the chance to earn money to support themselves and their families. Lord, in your mercy...

We pray for the work of CAFOD: that God will help us to continue to support people to change their lives for the better. Lord, in your mercy...

We pray for our parish, families and friends: that by following Jesus' way of doing the right thing, we may make a difference to our own lives and so help to make the world a fairer place for everyone. Lord, in your mercy...

Closing prayer: Christ Jesus, help us to follow your example, to try to do what we know is right and to do all that we can so that all people can live their lives to the full. Amen.

Activity suggestions

- Ask the children to colour in the optional accompanying illustration of Florence and her fish farm and to write or draw on the back what they will do this Lent to **Turn little fish into Big fish** and help change people's lives for the better. Download this from cafod.org.uk/childrensliturgy
- Ask the children to write a prayer or message for Florence and her family and for all our global sisters and brothers who find it difficult to find work and so to support their families. You may want to write the prayer on the back of a cut-out fish (download this from cafod.org.uk/childrensliturgy) and add them to a net or display board. You could add more fish to the net each week of Lent.
- Ask the children to go home and share all that they have heard and thought about today. Ask them to go to cafod.org.uk/primary and find out more about Florence by watching an animated film about a fish called Bob. Ask the children to remember Florence and all our sisters and brothers around the world in their prayers throughout the week.