

Children's liturgy – Fourth Sunday of Easter (Year A)

Preparation of the worship space

Colour: white

Song suggestions: Take my hands (676, Celebration Hymnal for Everyone)

Welcome: Today Jesus tells us that he has come so that we may have life and have it to the full. But what does it mean to live life to the full? Let's think some more about this today...

Opening prayer: God of all, you sent your son Jesus, so that we may have life to the full. Inspire us to do all that we can so all your children around the world may live free from poverty and hunger. Amen.

First reading (optional): Acts 2:14, 36-41

Psalm: Psalm 22:1-6. R. v.1

Gospel acclamation: everyone stands and sings the acclamation together. Suggestions include: 'Halle, halle, halle' (Caribbean) from 'Sing With the World', Alison Adam & John Bell; 'Alleluia' (Zimbabwe), Abraham Maraire Publications, WCC & GIA; 'Celtic Alleluia' (traditional); 'Alleluia! Raise the Gospel' from 'Go Before Us', Bernadette Farrell, OCP Publications.

Gospel: John 10: 1-10

Gospel reflection: In today's reading Jesus tells us a parable in which he is the gate which takes us to God. But can you remember what Jesus says, right at the end of today's gospel?

Jesus says, "I have come so that they may have life and have it to the full."

What do you think it means to have life to the full?

Living life to the full doesn't mean having all the latest toys or the most fashionable clothes or the biggest house.

And it doesn't even mean just having all the things we need in life, like enough food and somewhere safe to live, although this is a really important part of living life to the full.

It also means being the best person that we can be, living our lives well and having the chance to use all our gifts and talents for the good of all.

What gifts and talents do you have? What are you good at?

Do you always make the most of the gifts that you have? Do you always try to be the best person you can be?

How can we help other people to live life to the full?

Emily lives with her family in Eastern Kenya. A few years ago, there was a very bad drought – when there just wasn't enough rain. During this time life was very difficult for Emily and her family because their crops couldn't grow.

During the drought Emily worked hard to build two dams in the surrounding areas. The local community needed the dams because watering crops was such a big problem. Even though she found it very hard to work on an empty stomach Emily talked about how the work helped her: "The vouchers we got as pay for our work helped to buy food... And working in a group encouraged me. Working together we could help each other."

Emily and her family have worked hard to build a better life for themselves since the drought but there's still more to do. CAFOD has given them seeds and training to help grow crops. Emily says: "When the vegetables grow my family will eat well and they won't have to skip meals. It will also mean that the children don't have to miss school because we can't pay school fees."

Emily and her neighbours share what they have with each other. She says: "Sharing is part of my faith. Sharing takes us through the hard times."

How is Emily trying to be the best person she can be? How is she using her gifts and talents to help others (her family, children, friends and neighbours)?

(There is a photo of Emily in the accompanying photo PowerPoint which you can share with the children)

Let's do all that we can this week to live our own lives to the full – doing all that we can to be the best people we can be and using our gifts and talents for the good of others.

And let's also do all that we can to help others to live their lives to the full too – people here who we see every day and our brothers and sisters around the world.

What will you do this week to help others to live life to the full?

Intercessions *You may want to ask the children to offer their own prayers or*

you can use the suggestions below.

We pray together to God, who comes to give us life to the full:

We pray for world leaders: that they may do all that they can to make sure all their people have the chance to live life to the full. Lord, in your mercy...

We pray for all our brothers and sisters around the world: that they may have the chance to live free from poverty and hunger and be able to make the most of their own talents and gifts to build a better future. Lord, in your mercy...

We pray for our parish, family and friends: that we may use our gifts and talents to be the best people we can be and for the good of all. Lord, in your mercy...

Closing prayer: God of life in all its fullness, be with us as we try to be the best people we can be and inspire us to help others have the chance to use their gifts and talents too, so that the world may be a better place, reflecting the glory of your Kingdom. Amen.

Activity suggestions

Ask the children to colour in the accompanying illustration and to write or draw on the back how they can try to be the best people they can be, and how they will help others to live life to the full.

Explore the principles of Catholic social teaching with the children. Choose one to focus on (perhaps dignity or rights and responsibilities) and ask them how they think this principle can help them and others to live life to the full. There is a summary of the principles, in child-friendly language available here: <http://comeandsee.cafod.org.uk/> (may require you to register/log in).

Ask the children to go home and share all that they have heard and thought about today. Ask them to try during the week to be the best people they can be and use their gifts and talents for the good of others. Ask them to do all that they can to help others live their lives to the full too.