

SIXTH SUNDAY OF EASTER

YEAR A

PRAYER OF THE DAY:

Lord God,
we can do nothing good
without the help of your Spirit.
Send that Spirit to us now
so that we may be quick
to forgive those who hurt us,
ready to spread the Good News
about Jesus,
and to love our neighbor
as ourself.
We ask you this
through Jesus, your Son,
who lives with you,
forever and ever.

FOCUS OF THE READINGS:

Our readings focus on God's universal love. In the first reading Philip goes to preach the Good News to the people of Samaria, a foreign country, outside of Judaism. For the Jews of Palestine, this represents an enormous sign of God's universal love. The reading also focuses our attention on the coming of the Holy Spirit, the fruit of the death and Resurrection of Jesus.

The Gospel gives us the heart of the Christian message: love. This is not an option for Christians, but a commandment. It is the proof of our discipleship. This love is made possible by the power of the Holy Spirit living in us.

FIRST READING: *Acts 8:5-8, 14-17*

This is a reading from the Acts of the Apostles.

Philip went to a city in Samaria to proclaim the Good News of Christ. The people there believed what Philip told them because of the way he preached and the wonderful signs he gave them. He freed people who had evil spirits in them, and he healed many people. All the people were filled with joy because of what Philip said and did.

When the apostles in Jerusalem heard that the people in Samaria believed in Jesus, they sent Peter and John there to pray that they would also receive the Holy Spirit. The people already had been baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus, but when Peter and John laid hands on them and prayed, they received the Holy Spirit.

The Word of the Lord.

RESPONSE: *Psalm 96*

RESPONSE:



VERSES:



1. Give God glo - ry. Give hon - or and praise.
2. Pro - claim sal - va - tion day af - ter day.
3. Tell the na - tions God's won - der - ful deeds.

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION:



GOSPEL: *John 14:15-21*

This is a reading from the Gospel of John.

Jesus said to his disciples,

"If you truly love me,
you will keep my commandments.
And I will pray to the Father
to send the spirit of truth
to be with you forever.
I will not leave you alone.
I will come back to you.
Yes, I am going back to the Father now,
but you will see me because I am alive.
And because I live, you will live, too.
Anyone who loves me
keeps my commandments.
My Father loves everyone who loves me.
And if you love me,
I will show myself to you."

The Gospel of the Lord.

REFLECTING ON THE READINGS WITH CHILDREN:

Jesus said we should love one another so that we will be happy. Ask the children if that is their experience. Are people happier when they love one another? Perhaps they could share some examples.

- Jesus tells us how he wants us to love others. What did he say?
- What do you think Jesus meant when he said, "Love one another as I have loved you"?

Note: this is a crucial point in our Christian faith. Christian life is based on love of God and neighbor. But children can easily misunderstand this. The love Jesus shares is God's very own divine love. God is love. We are not able to love with the fullness of God's divine love as Jesus did. We are, however, commanded to love in the way Jesus loved. This commandment is first given in an earlier part of this last discourse of Jesus, just after he has washed the feet of his disciples in an attitude of service. And so we are commanded to love one another in the way Jesus loved, that is, by serving one another. The greatest love is shown by giving our lives for others—in service. By doing this in the name of Jesus, we share God's own love with one another. What a wonderful gift to receive and to share. Remind the children that Jesus said, "there is no greater love than to give your life for your friends."

Jesus gave his life for us when he died. But he also gave his life for others by healing them, helping them, and caring for them. How can we give our lives for others now? Help children see and express ways they can give their lives for others. Here are some examples:

- Including all children in games.
- Talking to a child who feels alone.
- Helping someone with a task.
- Taking time, perhaps from play, to help someone.
- Accepting people just as they are.
(We want to catechize, not moralize.)

Jesus asks us to love this way because he loves us so much. Jesus loves everyone and wants us to love everyone, too. That's what a Christian is—someone who believes Jesus is living and who lives like him.