

Liturgy of the Word with Children
Fourth Sunday of Easter, Year A
7 May 2017
John 10:1-10

Catechist Background

The Fourth Sunday of Easter always has a gospel reading featuring Jesus as the Good Shepherd. At the time, the concept of a 'good' shepherd would have been novel, as shepherds did not typically enjoy a good reputation. They spent much time away from the communities in which they lived and therefore were unable to defend the honour of their women and children if necessary. However, David began life as a shepherd, and by making this link, Jesus asserts his own divine kingship. Two weeks ago on the Second Sunday of Easter, we were told that the stories of Jesus were written down so that we could believe in Jesus and that by believing in him we would have life in his name. These ideas can be revisited today as Jesus says in John 10:10 that he came that we might have life in its fullness.

Setting the Scene

You may wish to have prepared in advance the drawing mentioned below or you may wish to have materials so you can draw it as you speak.

We Say Sorry

Leader: You are the Good Shepherd, Lord have mercy.

All: Lord, have mercy.

Leader: You watch for us always, Christ have mercy.

All: Christ, have mercy.

Leader: You always come to bring us back to you, Lord have mercy.

All: Lord, have mercy.

Gloria

We Pray (1)

God, help us to hear you and to follow you in whatever we do. Amen.

Gospel Intro

Gospel Acclamation

Gospel John 10:1-10

Reflecting on the Reading with Children

You may wish to have the following drawing prepared in advance, or you may wish to draw the elements of it as you discuss them.

- Who do the sheep represent in the gospel? Who is the Good Shepherd?
- What are the important tasks of a shepherd? (To keep the sheep safe, to make sure they have enough to eat and drink, to make sure they go the right way.)
- What is a sheepfold? Why is it sometimes useful or even important to put sheep in a sheepfold? If you were a sheep, would you want to be in the sheepfold all the time?
- What is good about a pasture for sheep?
- If Jesus is the shepherd and we are the sheep, how do we get to the pasture?
- In real life, where might Jesus lead us? What might he lead us to do?

Response

Today's psalm is Psalm 22 /23 (discrepancies in psalm numbers occur due to different ways of numbering the psalms in various translations of the Bible). Ask the children to close their eyes and listen to you read verses 1-4, remembering that Jesus is the Good Shepherd. Below are the verses from the NAB translation.

The Lord is my shepherd, there is nothing I lack.
 In green pastures you let me graze; to safe waters you lead me;
 You restore my strength.
 You guide me along the right path for the sake of your name.
 Even when I walk through a dark valley, I fear no harm for you are at my side;
 Your rod and staff give me courage.

We Believe

Relating to the creed what you have shared with the children, ask this series of questions and invite the children to reply, 'I do, Alleluia, Alleluia!'

- Do you believe in God the Father, creator of all that is good?
- Do you believe Jesus the Good Shepherd who came that we might have 'life to the full?'
- Do you believe in the Holy Spirit who helps us follow the right path?

We Pray (2)

Again, try to relate the bidding prayers to the reading by saying, 'We know we should follow you, and so we bring our prayers to you.'

Leader: We pray for all catechists and parents, that they may teach children and others how to follow Jesus faithfully. Lord, in your mercy,

All: Hear our prayer.

Leader: We pray for bosses of companies, that they may do good works by treating their employees fairly. Lord, in your mercy,

All: Hear our prayer.

Leader: We pray for all people who grow and raise the things we eat. We pray also for people who package and transport our food. Lord, in your mercy,

All: Hear our prayer.

Leader: We pray for anyone we know who is having a difficult time doing the right thing lately. Lord in your mercy,

All: Hear our prayer.

Leader: Lord, like good shepherds constantly listen out for their sheep, we know you hear us when we cry out to you. We make all our prayers through Christ our Lord.

All: Amen.

