

Liturgy of the Word with Children
Fifth Sunday of Easter, Year A
14 May 2017
John 14:1-12

Catechist Background

Like last week's gospel, this scene takes place before Jesus' death and resurrection. This particular gospel is set at the Last Supper, after Jesus washed his disciples' feet, as part of the speeches that form a sort of last will and testament, following in the scriptural traditions of Moses, Jacob and Paul. In biblical times, the son in a family would need permission from his father, the ruler of the household, to bring his bride to the family home. He would build a room attached to the house for him and his wife. When the father agreed that the room was satisfactory, the couple could be wed and the bride brought home.

Prior to Jesus' life and ministry, his followers would have had very specific rules about what to do to keep themselves on right terms with God—laws regarding diet, Sabbath, correct types of sacrifice and many other topics take up a great deal of the first part of the Bible. However, Jesus appears particularly concerned throughout the gospels with the number of people like the Saducees, Pharisees and the scribes who kept the letter of the law perfectly, but missed the broader picture of loving others as part of their worship of God.

Setting the Scene

For the activity described below, you will need a path of footprints; this can either be drawn on a roll of paper, or on individual A4 sheets of paper. Each footprint should have what one of Jesus' actions should show in our lives (for instance, 'Putting others first,' 'Being kind,' 'Forgiving others,' 'Praying to God') written on it.

We Say Sorry

Leader: Lord, you are the Way for us to follow, Lord have mercy.

All: Lord, have mercy.

Leader: You are the Truth of life, Christ have mercy.

All: Christ, have mercy.

Leader: You offer life in its fullness to us, Lord have mercy.

All: Lord, have mercy.

Gloria

We Pray (1)

Father, help us to live freely and full of joy by following your Son and our Saviour, Jesus. Amen.

Gospel Intro

Remind the children of last week's gospel, and about following the shepherd, as in this gospel, Jesus proclaims himself as the Way to the Father.

Gospel Acclamation

Gospel John 14:1-12

Reflecting on the Reading with Children

- What do you think Jesus meant when he said that he was the Way and the Truth and the Life?
- How could his first friends have seen God the Father through Jesus' actions?
- How can we see God through the actions of people around us? How can others see God through our actions?

Response

Lay the 'footprints' out on the floor. Ask if anyone has ever walked in the snow and seen footprints there. If snow is deep, it is much easier to walk if someone has gone before you and packed down the snow! Similarly, in long grass, it is easier if someone has trampled the grass first. Jesus' life is like that—Jesus shows us the way to God by living the way he lived and loving others the way he does. Discuss what is written on the footsteps. Allow the children to walk across the 'Way' you have laid out, thinking about how to follow Jesus.

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, who created all of us out of love?
- Do you believe in Jesus, God the Son, who is the Way to the Father?
- Do you believe in God the Holy Spirit, who lives in us to help us see God?

We Pray (2)

Again, try to relate the bidding prayers to the reading by saying, 'God's love is present in our concern for each other, and so we pray...'

Leader: We pray for all leaders in the Church, that they may faithfully do Jesus' work. Lord, in your mercy,

All: Hear our prayer.

Leader: We pray for prime ministers and presidents and all world leaders, that they may lead their people wisely. Lord, in your mercy,

All: Hear our prayer.

Leader: We pray for all people who are living in places where there have been natural disasters recently: earthquakes, violent storms, droughts or fires.

Lord, in your mercy,

All: Hear our prayer.

Leader: We pray for anyone in our parish community who is struggling to follow you. Lord, in your mercy,

All: Hear our prayer.

Leader: Lord, help us to remember that sometimes the answers to a prayer come from us acting in your place. Show us how to bring others to you. We make all our prayers through Christ our Lord.

All: Amen.

