

Eighth Sunday of the Year

The fruits of goodness

INTRODUCTION

Just as we can recognise an apple tree by the fruit which grows on it, so too can people recognise us as Christians by the way we act and the things we say.

SIGN OF THE CROSS

LIGHT THE CANDLES

Sing the Candle song.

SORRY

Have you ever had a bright shiny apple and bitten into it only to find that it is rotten in the middle?

What is on the outside is not important, but Jesus wants our hearts to be filled with goodness. St Matthew tells us (*cf Matthew 12:34-35*):

The words that we speak flow from our hearts. If our hearts are filled with goodness, our words and actions will be kind and loving too. But if our hearts are filled with darkness and hate, then our words and actions will be selfish and unkind.

Let us turn to God and speak to him in our hearts, asking for his help to chase away any darkness, and to fill our hearts with his goodness and love.

(Allow the children a few quiet moments to contemplate)

GLORIA

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

To welcome today's Gospel sing Acclamation 2:
Light up our hearts.

GOSPEL (*cf Luke 6:43-45*)

One day Jesus told this parable: 'Fruit that is rotten and bad can never grow on a strong and healthy tree, just as good fruit cannot grow on a tree that is sick and diseased.'

Different fruits grow on different trees, and everyone knows which fruit belongs to which type of tree. Like the tree and its fruit, a good person will speak and act kindly, because of the goodness in their hearts.'

DISCUSSION

Does anyone have a fruit tree growing in their garden?

What type of tree is it?

What is the easiest way to tell the difference between an apple and a pear tree?

At certain times of the year, trees can be

identified by the fruit growing on their branches. Apples only grow on apple trees, and pears only grow on pear trees!

(Show the children some pictures of different fruit trees and their fruit; a good gardening book should provide these.)

What do you need to get a good crop of tasty healthy apples? – An apple tree that is healthy and well cared for, will usually produce lots of good fruit. A tree which is attacked by disease or pests, or whose branches and trunk become rotten, will produce only a few poor apples.

What is the message of today's parable? – Just as you can tell whether a tree is good or bad by the fruit it grows, so the words and actions of people reveal the state of their hearts. If we are healthy and strong, and full of God's goodness, then that goodness will show in our lives. If our hearts are selfish and unkind, then we will be selfish and unkind people.

How can we make sure our lives are filled with God's love and goodness? – Jesus comes to each one of us in a very special way when we receive the Holy Eucharist. Just as a tree needs to be nourished to produce good fruit, so we need the 'Bread of Life' to nourish us. Jesus shares his love and goodness by giving himself to us. We invite Jesus into our lives and the goodness he shares with us overflows into our daily words and actions.

ACTIVITY

The children can cut out the good apples and stick them in the tree. Help them to assemble the pictures on a background after they have been coloured, and add the caption:
The Fruits of Goodness.

CREED

CLOSING PRAYER

Lord Jesus,
may people see the fruits of your love
and goodness in our words
and the way we treat other people.