

Children's liturgy – Seventh Sunday of Easter (Year C)

Preparation of the worship space

Colour: white

Props: paper, card, coloured pens and pencils

Song suggestions: Bind us together (922, Laudate)

Welcome: Today we hear how Jesus prayed to God for all those people, like us, who would come to believe in him. Let's listen and think more about this now...

Opening prayer: Loving God, we pray to you as Jesus did. We thank you for sending your Son Jesus to show us how to live. May your love be in us and help us to live together in peace and unity with all people. Amen.

First reading (optional): Acts 7:55-60

Psalm: Psalm 96:1-2, 6-7, 9 r.1.9

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 17:20-26

Gospel reflection: What do you remember from today's reading?

Jesus is praying to God for his disciples. But not only for his friends who were with him during his life. Jesus also prays for all those people who will come to believe in him. No matter when or where they will live.

This means Jesus was praying to God for us. How does it make you feel to know Jesus prayed for you?

Can you remember what Jesus asked for in his prayer?

Jesus asked that all his people could be as one. This means that they all stand united, they love one another, live peacefully and work together.

We are all different. Turn to the person next to you. Can you find two things that are different about you? (*Eg hair colour, eye colour, one likes apples, one prefers oranges, one supports Arsenal, one supports Manchester City etc*)

We all have differences. These are the things that make us special. They make me, me. And you, you.

But even though we are different we have lots of things in common with each other. Can you find three things that are the same about you and your neighbour?

(You might want to give children ideas like: We both have brown eyes. We both like dancing, we both like playing with bricks, our favourite book/programme/song is the same)

There is one very special thing which we all share. God loves us. We are all sisters and brothers, no matter who we are or where in the world we live. We are all part of one global family, loved by God.

And God wants that love to shine through us in the way that we treat each other. We are called to love one another and to live together in harmony.

This doesn't mean all being the same. It doesn't mean we all have to agree about everything. But it does mean that we should always be kind and loving to one another, treating each other as we would wish to be treated. Even those people who live in different countries to us who we might never meet.

We are united by God's love for us.

Jesus prayed to God to help us to be loving to one another. This week, let us also pray to God to help us live in this way.

And let us do our very best to be united with other people even if they are different from us. And to love our brothers and sisters throughout the world.

Intercessions *You may want to ask the children to offer their own prayers or you can use the suggestions below:*

We pray like Jesus to the Father who loves us:

We pray for world leaders: that they may work together for the good of all people. Lord, in your mercy...

We pray for all those who are poor, sick or in need: that they may find the help and support that they need and know that they are loved. Lord, in your mercy...

We pray for our parish, family and friends: that we may love one another and build peace and unity in our world rather than looking at what is different between us. Lord, in your mercy...

Closing prayer: God of all, we thank you for your love for us. May we share that love with others so that all your children throughout the world may be one family. Amen.

Activity suggestions

For more children's liturgy resources and illustrations see cafod.org.uk/childrensliturgy

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Ask the children to colour in the accompanying illustration of a group of people who are different but united.

Spend more time with the children thinking about what unites them. What makes them the same? You could also share the examples of some children around the world (available from cafod.org.uk/kidzzone) to see what unites these children with your group.

Give all the children a cut out of a person. Ask them to decorate it to look like themselves and to write their name on them. Then stick them all to a large poster with the words “We are one” at the top.

Talk to the children about how important it is to pray – even Jesus prayed and he was the Son of God. Give all the children a bookmark shaped piece of card. Ask them to write the names of all the people they would like to pray for on the prayer card. You could also encourage them to include “all people in our global family” or the names of specific people that they have heard about through CAFOD. Ask them to take this prayer card home with them and remember all these people in their prayers during the week.

Ask the children to go home and share with their grown ups all that they have heard and thought about this week. Ask them to pray to God as Jesus did. And to do what they can be loving to one another and to remember that we are all members of one global family.