

Children's liturgy – Fourth Sunday of Lent (Year A)

Preparing the worship space

Colour: purple (or rose)

Props: blindfold; covered box containing objects for the children to identify by touch, smell and sound.

Song suggestions: Look around you (936, Laudate)

Welcome: Today we hear how Jesus helped a blind man to see again. God has given us the gift of sight to see all the wonderful things that he has made in our world. But we also need to open our eyes to things that are wrong and try to do what we can to change them. Let's think some more about this today.

Opening prayer: God of power and glory, we give thanks to you for the wonderful gift of sight. Open our eyes to the good things in this world. Help us also to see when things are wrong and what we can do to change them. Amen.

First reading (optional): 1 Samuel 16:1, 6-7, 10-13

Psalm (optional): Psalm 22 r. 1

Gospel acclamation: *everyone stands and sings the acclamation together. For Lent we use an acclamation that doesn't use the word 'Alleluia'.*

Gospel: John 9:1-41 or John 9:1, 6-9, 13-17, 34-38. *Below is the shortened version.*

As Jesus was walking along, he saw a man who had been born blind.

Jesus spat on the ground and made some mud with the spittle; he rubbed the mud on the man's eyes and said, "Go and wash your face in the Pool of Siloam." (This name means "Sent.") So the man went, washed his face, and came back seeing.

His neighbours, then, and the people who had seen him begging before this, asked, "Isn't this the man who used to sit and beg?"

Some said, "He is the one," but others said, "No he isn't; he just looks like him."

So the man himself said, "I am the man."

Then they took to the Pharisees the man who had been blind. The day that Jesus made the mud and cured him of his blindness was a Sabbath. The Pharisees, then, asked the man again how he had received his sight. He told them, "He put some mud on my eyes; I washed my face, and now I can see."

Some of the Pharisees said, "The man who did this cannot be from God, for he does not obey the Sabbath law."

Others, however, said, "How could a man who is a sinner perform such miracles as these?" And there was a division among them.

So the Pharisees asked the man once more, “You say he cured you of your blindness — well, what do you say about him?”

“He is a prophet,” the man answered.

They answered, “You were born and brought up in sin — and you are trying to teach us?” And they expelled him from the synagogue.

When Jesus heard what had happened, he found the man and asked him, “Do you believe in the Son of Man?”

The man answered, “Tell me who he is, sir, so that I can believe in him!”

Jesus said to him, “You have already seen him, and he is the one who is talking with you now.”

“I believe, Lord!” the man said, and knelt down before Jesus.

(Gospel passage taken from Good News Translation® and used with permission, see details below)*

Gospel reflection: What do you remember about today’s reading?

Jesus makes a paste, puts it on the blind man’s eyes and tells him to wash in a pool. When the blind man does this he can see.

How do you think the blind man felt at being able to see for the first time?

The Pharisees (some of the religious leaders of the time) question the man and his parents to find out how Jesus gave him his sight. The man tells them but they do not believe it and grow angry.

Jesus tells the Pharisees that they are blind because they cannot see that he is the Son of God.

While there is nothing wrong with their eyes, the Pharisees do not open their hearts to see the truth of who Jesus is. While the blind man is able to see and to believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God.

God has given us five senses to learn about the world that is around us. Do you know what those five senses are?

We can see all the beautiful and wonderful things that God has created like birds, trees, flowers, fish, family and friends.

We can hear lovely music and the birds singing.

We can smell flowers, and the sea, and grass when it has just been cut.

We can taste yummy food and drink.

We can feel the sun warm on our skin, the soft fur of a pet when we stroke it, and the hands of our friends when we do a high five.

Can you tell me some of the wonderful things in our world that you have seen, heard, smelt, tasted or felt today?

But we also need Jesus to help us to see the truth about the world around us and how we should treat one another. As well as our five senses we need to open our hearts to others so that we can reach out and help them when they need us.

Sometimes there are problems or things that are not right in this world. We can take notice of these problems and try to make them better.

We can see that it is not fair for some people in the world to have lots of money, power and things while others of us are poor or hungry or do not have a safe place to live.

We can see that we are damaging our planet and that the climate is changing. Floods, droughts and natural disasters are happening more often and affecting more people around the world.

But we can also see what is possible when people work together to solve problems. For example, thanks to support from you and your grown ups, CAFOD helps people around the world to rebuild their homes after war or natural disaster, to grow their own food, to get clean water, to find new ways to earn money, and to care for the earth at the same time.

God calls us to use our gifts and not to ignore the problems that we see. We can try instead to make a difference, to care for our earth and to help people who are poor to change their lives for the better.

Look out for all the good things that you can see in the world this week. If you see anything that is wrong or unfair, think about what you could do to help to change it.

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

We ask God to help us open our senses to the world as we pray together...

We pray for world leaders: that the Holy Spirit may open their eyes to see the problems that face them and find ways to help all people, especially those who are poor. Lord, in your mercy...

We pray for people who are hungry: that they may not be ignored and that with God's help we can work together to make sure all people have enough to eat. Lord, in your mercy...

We pray for our parish, family and friends: that the Lord may guide us to notice the problems of others and together we may do all that we can to make a difference. Lord, in your mercy...

Closing prayer: God of hope, inspire us to look out into the world, praising and thanking you for all that is good, and seeking your help as we try to change what is not fair or right. Amen.

Activity suggestions

Share the accompanying activity sheet with the children. Invite them to colour in the picture and to see how many good things they can see in the picture. Ask them to do the other activities either now or at home later.

Play a blindfold game with the children so that they can think about what life might have been like for the blind man in the reading. Get the children to take turns to wear a blindfold. While blindfolded invite them to identify one or two objects from a covered box by feel or smell where appropriate. The box could include objects such as a banana, apple, wooden spoon, hairbrush, keys, etc. You could also play/make a sound and see if the children can guess what object is making the noise.

Encourage the children to write a prayer thanking God for all the good things that they see/hear/feel/taste/smell in the world.

Remind the children to tell their parents all that they have heard and thought about in the session and to play the blindfold game at home. Encourage them to look out for one thing to be thankful to God for and one thing that they would like to change during the week and to try to make that change even if it is small.

To find out more about how you and the children can get involved with CAFOD's work this Lent, go to **cafod.org.uk/primarylent**

*Gospel passage taken from:

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