

**Liturgy of the Word with Children**  
**Fourth Sunday of Lent, Year A**  
**19 March 2023**  
**John 9:1, 6-9, 13-17, 34-38**

### **Catechist Background**

In today's Gospel, the healing of the man born blind invites us to focus on the physical and spiritual aspects of sight and light. In the first part of today's Gospel, we hear Jesus' response to a prevalent belief of his time: that misfortune and disability were the result of sin. That belief is why Jesus is asked the question of whose sin caused the man's blindness—his own or his parents'. Jesus does not answer directly, but instead gives the question an entirely different dimension—through this man's disability, God's power will be made manifest. Jesus then heals the man.

### **Setting the Scene**

Ask the children if they have ever been blind to doing a crossword puzzle or a maths question or even how to spell a word; they just couldn't work it out. Ask if someone helped them to see, to make it clear, to help them to understand. Ask them what it was like for them to be helped, what it was like to suddenly understand what it was they were so baffled by. Ask them if they have ever been blindfolded and had to rely on someone else to help them to find their way.

### **We Say Sorry**

Lord, by water and the Spirit you give us new life,

**All: Lord, have mercy.**

Christ, by the cross you brought pardon and hope,

**All: Christ, have mercy.**

Lord, by your death you brought peace and forgiveness,

**All: Lord, have mercy.**

### **We Pray (1)**

God, help us to listen to your word so that we may see your glory. Amen.

### **Gospel Intro**

Last week we heard how Jesus changed the life of the Samaritan Woman and thought about our baptism. In today's Gospel, we hear about how Jesus cures a blind man, changing his life too. The man was blind from the time he was born. He doesn't ask to be cured; Jesus sees the man and decides to help the him.

### **Gospel Acclamation**

**Gospel :** John 9:1, 6-9, 13-17, 34-38

*(The resource book 'Sunday – Weekly Leader Guide – Year A offers a dialogue reading of the Gospel which you might consider.)*

### **Reflecting on the Reading with Children**

Invite the children to say what they heard in the story.

Lead them to think about their own sight, something easily taken for granted, perhaps talking about favourite colours, places, pictures.

Help them to imagine the effect of blindness on the man in the Gospel, who had never seen colours or pictures or the world around him.

He was so grateful that he gave praise to Jesus even when the Pharisees tried to make him say that Jesus was a sinner for healing on the Sabbath. The people around were blind to the power of Jesus and what he could do, but the man who had been blind knew he had received a wonderful gift, the gift of seeing with his eyes. He also received the gift of faith, of seeing with the eyes of faith and said, 'Yes, Lord, I do believe.'

Sometimes we are blind too. Sometimes we are blind to the help we need to ask for and the help we should be offering to others. We need to hear the call of those in need; we need to try and see who those people are in need around us.

## Response

Consider blindfolding one of the children to help them realise what it like to be not to be able to see. The blindfolded one will rely on the help of the one who can see to be led around the hall. You might make a little bit of an obstacle course (being careful, of course, of safety issues).

Talk to the children about the homeless and the poor, people who come here from other countries in search of freedom, people who want to work, who want their children to go to school, who need doctors and hospitals to cure their illnesses. Many of these people cannot speak English. They come to a new country and need help to see how things work here.

Ask the children if they can imagine how difficult it must be to come to a new country and not be able to speak the language! The children may be aware of some of these people; they may see homeless living in their area, they may know children who do not have as much as they have and they may know people new to the country who struggle with English. Ask them if they can see what it must be like for them. Ask them, too, if they can think of anything they can do to help.

The blind man in today's gospel accepted the gift Jesus gave to him of his sight and he said he believed in him. Each of us is given gifts by God which we can share with others. It is important to see the gifts others have and it is equally important to be willing to share our gifts with others.

## We Believe

In our creed, we say what we believe. Invite the children to think about what they are saying when they say the creed.

Ask this series of questions and invite the children to reply, "I do":

- Do you believe that God wants us to share what we have?
- Do you believe that Jesus is the light of the world who helps us to see the needs of others?
- Do you believe in the Holy Spirit who helps us to understand what God is like?
- Do you believe in our holy, catholic church, where we come to learn about God?

## We Pray (2)

Again, try to relate the bidding prayers to the reading by saying, 'You gave new sight to the blind man and the gift of faith, and so we pray...'

We pray for Christian leaders, that their behaviour is modelled on Jesus' self-giving love. Lord in your mercy,

**All: Hear our prayer.**

We pray for the world, especially for places where there is much suffering, that the people may not be blind to the suffering of others. Lord in your mercy,

**All: Hear our prayer.**

We pray for all those who, like the blind man, risk being rejected because of their beliefs. Lord in your mercy,

**All: Hear our prayer.**

We pray for our friends and families, that they may grow closer to Jesus in this season of Lent. Lord in your mercy,

**All: Hear our prayer.**

God, we know you hear our prayers. Help us to hear your voice in our lives and to trust in your salvation. We make all our prayers through Christ our Lord.

**All: Amen.**

