

Eleventh Sunday of the Year

The twelve apostles

INTRODUCTION

Jesus chose twelve disciples to become his apostles. They became the foundation stones of the early church, and went out to share all that Jesus had taught them with the nations of the earth.

SIGN OF THE CROSS

LIGHT THE CANDLES

Light the candles and read:

Jesus said, 'I am the light of the world, whoever follows me will have the light of life and will never walk in darkness.' (cf John 8:12)

SORRY

It is hard to be good all the time, and God our Father knows and understands this. He is always ready to forgive us when we say that we are sorry. Listen carefully to the words of this reading from the book of Joel, a prophet in the Old Testament: (cf Joel 2:13) Turn back to God for he is kind and always ready to forgive. He is full of patience and understanding, and will not punish you for doing wrong if you are sorry.

GLORIA

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

To welcome today's Gospel sing Acclamation 1:
Share your words with us.

GOSPEL (cf Matthew 9:35-10:4)

Jesus had been travelling around the towns and villages, preaching to the people and sharing the Good News about the Kingdom of God. Along the way he had performed many miracles and cured the sick and crippled people that he met. When Jesus saw how many people needed his help, he felt sorry for them, and called together twelve disciples who were his closest friends. Jesus named these twelve as his apostles, and gave them the power to work in his name, before sending them out all over the land to heal the sick and preach to the people. The names of the twelve were: Simon, whom Jesus called Peter, and his brother Andrew; James and his brother John; Philip and Bartholomew; Matthew and Thomas, (another) James and Thaddeus; Simon the zealot; and Judas Iscariot who would later betray Jesus.

DISCUSSION

Jesus called his special team of helpers 'apostles'. Do you know what an apostle is? – The Greek word '*Apostello*' means 'to send'. An apostle is someone who is sent out on a special mission, with a special job to do.

What was the mission God sent them on? – To share the Good News with the people and to perform miracles in the name of Jesus. These twelve became the first bishops of the Church, and their power and leadership has been passed down until the present day.

Which apostle did Jesus choose to be leader of the Church on earth? – Peter. What is the name of our Pope today and where does he live? – St Peter's power and authority has been handed down from pope to pope through the ages. He is the head of the Catholic Church on earth.

Here are some of the things we know about the twelve apostles:

Simon Peter and Andrew – they were brothers and had been fishermen. Peter was the 'rock' on which Jesus chose to build his Church.

James and John – were also fishermen before they became followers of Christ. John was quiet and thoughtful, and Jesus chose him to take care of Mary his mother after his death on the cross.

Matthew – had been a dishonest tax collector who collected money for the Romans. Until he became a follower of Jesus he did not have many friends.

Thomas – was often full of doubt and did not believe what he was told. He became known as 'doubting Thomas'.

Simon (the zealot) – he had belonged to a group who wanted to lead the people in rebellion against the Romans. At the beginning he probably expected Jesus to be the one who would lead the Jews to fight against the Romans.

Judas – was better educated than many of the other apostles. He would be the one to betray Jesus to the high priests.

ACTIVITY

Make paper chains of the twelve apostles and ask the children to pin the names to each one.

CREED

CLOSING PRAYER

Lord Jesus, give wisdom and courage to our Pope and bishops who are the leaders of your church on earth.
Help them to carry on with the mission given to the twelve apostles,
and lead your people to our Father in heaven.