

Children's liturgy – Most Holy Body and Blood of Christ (Year A)

Preparation of the worship space

Colour: White

Props: Different types of bread from around the world for the children to try or pictures of different types of bread for the children to look at, a world map

Song suggestions:

Eat this bread, drink this cup (Taizé) (151, Celebration Hymnal for Everyone)

Bread of life, hope of the world (95, Celebration Hymnal for Everyone)

Bread for the world, a world of hunger (92, Celebration Hymnal for Everyone)

Welcome: Today Jesus tells us that anyone who eats the bread that he offers will live forever. How amazing! But how can this be? Let's think about this and the importance of bread around the world today.

Opening prayer: Christ Jesus, Bread of Life, feed us with your love and wisdom and move us to help one another, so that all people may have enough to eat. Amen.

First reading (optional): Deuteronomy 8:2-3, 14-16

Psalm: Psalm 147:12-15, 19-20. R. v. 12

Gospel acclamation: *everyone stands and sings the acclamation together.*

Gospel: John 6:51-58

Jesus said: "I am the living bread that came down from heaven. If anyone eats this bread, he will live for ever. The bread that I will give him is my flesh, which I give so that the world may live."

This started an angry argument among them. "How can this man give us his flesh to eat?" they asked.

Jesus said to them, "I am telling you the truth: if you do not eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, you will not have life in yourselves. Those who eat my flesh and drink my blood have eternal life, and I will raise them to life on the last day. For my flesh is the real food; my blood is the real drink. Those who eat my flesh and drink my blood live in me, and I live in them. The living Father sent me, and because of him I live also. In the same way, whoever eats me will live because of me. This, then, is the bread that came down from heaven; it is not like the bread that your ancestors ate. They later died, but those who eat this bread will live for ever."

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

Gospel reflection:

What do you remember from today's reading?

Today Jesus tells us that he is the living bread which has come down from heaven. That anyone who eats this bread will live forever.

He goes on to say that the bread he gives is his flesh, and that whoever eats his flesh and drinks his blood lives in him and he lives in them.

What do you think this means? We can't eat Jesus can we?!

Every time we come to Mass, the bread and wine are changed into the body and blood of Jesus. And we come to share in it, even if we only have a blessing, welcoming Jesus into our lives.

With older children who have made or are preparing for their First Holy Communion, you could talk more about the significance of the Eucharist at this point. For younger ones, we have chosen to focus more on the importance of bread around the world.

Why do you think Jesus chose to talk about bread?

Bread is a very important food. It is a basic food eaten by people all over the world. It is an everyday food that all Jesus' listeners would have recognised and understood.

When was the last time you had some bread? How often do you eat bread? Every day, once a week or just on special occasions?

How many different types of bread can you name? (eg. *brown, white, baguette, pitta, naan, chapati, tortilla, rolls etc*). How many different types of bread have you tried?

Bread is very important in the lives of many people around the world today. In fact, it can be life-changing.

In a village called Puentecitos in El Salvador a group of women run a bakery where they make rolls and other nice things. (*You could show the illustration at this point*).

One of the women, Sibia, says that making and selling bread has changed her life. "It has made a big change because for the first time we have some savings," she says. Sibia and her friends are using this extra money to buy more ingredients for making their bread. They have also set up a savings group which Sibia leads so that they have more money for things they will need in the future.

The ingredients are getting more expensive but the women have not put the prices of their rolls up. Sibia says this is because people who are poor cannot afford it.

The women know that everyone needs food, so if their customers have no money, they will let them 'pay' with a small possession that they are happy to give away instead of paying with money.

As we get ready to go back into Mass and share in Communion, we remember now how very special the bread at Mass is, because it becomes Jesus' body. We look forward to taking part in this special meal with the whole parish community, by receiving a special blessing or, if we have made our First Holy Communion, the Body of Christ.

And we pray for all the people who make sure that we have bread to eat every day. The people who grow the ingredients, who make the flour. We pray for Sibia and for all people who make bread around the world. The people who sell the bread and who buy it for us to eat.

Let's also pray especially for people who are struggling to get enough food to eat at this time, in our own community and throughout the world.

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

We live in Jesus and he lives in us and so we pray together:

We pray for all people in our world: that they may have their fair share of the good things that God has given for everyone. Lord, in your mercy...

We pray for all members of our global family who are hungry: that through our prayers and actions, we may all have enough food. Lord, in your mercy...

We pray for our parish, family and friends: that we may be inspired to work together with others so that all people have enough to eat. Lord, in your mercy...

Closing prayer: Lord, Giver of Life, we thank you for the gifts that you have given us. Watch over all your people and work through us so that all your children around the world may have enough to eat. Amen.

Activity suggestions

Invite the children to colour in the accompanying illustration of the bakery in Puentecitos and on the back to write or draw what they will do to help make sure that all people around the world have enough food to eat.

Get different types of bread from around the world to show the children, and let them feel and taste them. (*Do bear in mind any allergies*). Or you could look at images of different types of bread if that's easier/safer. What are they like? Did they enjoy them? Encourage the children to name any of these different breads that they recognise. Explain to the children which country the breads originally come from and show them or challenge the older ones to find on a map where that country is. Talk about the fact that even though these breads are all different, they are still bread. Much the same as all people are different but they are still people – who are special and loved by God.

Encourage the children to think about and pray for all the people involved in producing their bread, from those who grow and produce the ingredients, to those who bake and sell the bread.

Remind the children to share all that they have heard and thought about in the liturgy today with the people at home. Encourage them to remember Sibia in El Salvador, each time they eat bread in the coming week, and also pray for all people around the world who are struggling to get enough to eat. Perhaps they could do one thing in the coming week to help those who are hungry either in their local community or around the world.

See cafod.org.uk/families for more child-friendly activities.

*Gospel passage taken from:

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