

Liturgy of the Word with Children
Corpus Christi, Year A
(Most Holy Body & Blood of Christ)
11 June, 2023
John 6:51-58

Catechist Background

Today's gospel would have been quite alarming to its first hearers. Any kind of blood—human or otherwise—was forbidden to Jews. Eating human flesh would have been a complete abomination. Even the word that we translate as 'to eat' in the original Greek ('trego') was not the word usually used to describe human behaviour at a meal; it is much more animalistic, akin to 'feed on' or even 'gnaw.' John's gospel continues after this teaching to say that many of Jesus' followers left, and it is no surprise. Jesus explicitly links himself to the provision of manna in the desert with Moses, and claims that partaking in his body as food will supersede that desert miracle. Further, in the Old Testament books of Proverbs and Sirach, bread is used as a metaphor for heavenly wisdom.

Setting the Scene

For the activity described below, you will need small pieces of paper for the children to draw their faces on, and a chalice-like cup or ciborium-like dish, and materials for drawing.

We Say Sorry

Leader: You have given us your life, Lord have mercy.

All: Lord, have mercy.

Leader: You are always with us, Christ have mercy.

All: Christ, have mercy.

Leader: You share yourself with us in the Eucharist, Lord have mercy.

All: Lord, have mercy.

Gloria

We Pray (1)

God, help us to join in your love so that we can live out the peace of your Kingdom.
Amen.

Gospel Acclamation

Gospel: John 6:51-58

Reflecting on the Reading with Children

- Who here has heard the phrase, 'You are what you eat?' What does that mean? If you wanted to be a runner in the Olympics, what should you eat? If you wanted to walk to the top of Mount Everest, what should you eat? If you want to be a follower of Jesus, what should you eat?
- Let's think about food in a different way—what special meals can you think of that people have? What do most people have for Christmas dinner? How would people in your family react if someone decided to make lasagne for Christmas instead? Or if at a birthday, there was no cake?

- Special meals help us to remember and to make more real our memories of celebrations gone by. When people join in the Eucharist, they are remembering, not just in their memories, Jesus' life and mission. At Mass, the bread and wine becomes Jesus' body and blood, giving those who eat it the nutrition they need to live their lives like they should.
- (For children old enough to 'understand' communion but not old enough to receive:) Even if you are not old enough to receive communion, how can you join in the second part of Mass? (joining in with the responses, paying attention to the prayers, going forward for a blessing etc.)

Response

Jesus tells us that those who eat his flesh and drink his blood will live in him, and he will live in them. The first people who heard this certainly thought it was a strange thing to say! Give the children small pieces of paper and drawing materials to draw their faces on. In turn, allow each child to put their 'face' into the dish representing the chalice/ciborium to acknowledge that they want to join in Jesus' love, whether or not they are old enough to receive the Eucharist yet.

We Believe

Relating to the creed what you have shared with the children, ask this series of questions and invite the children to reply, 'I do.'

- Do you believe in God the Father and Creator of all that is?
- Do you believe in God the Son, Jesus, who offers us his Body and Blood?
- Do you believe in God the Holy Spirit, present in our world today?

We Pray (2)

Again, try to relate the bidding prayers to the reading by saying, 'Lord, you came to give life and so we now pray...'

Leader: We pray for people all around the world who believe in you, that they may be united in Love. Lord in your mercy,

All: Hear our prayer.

Leader: We pray for kings and queens and prime ministers and presidents and rulers everywhere, that they may make laws that encourage people to lead holy lives. Lord in your mercy,

All: Hear our prayer.

Leader: We pray for people who do not have clean water to drink or enough food to eat. Help us to be generous to those in need. Lord in your mercy,

All: Hear our prayer.

Leader: We pray for the people in our parish who have recently received Communion for the first time (*or who are preparing to*). Help them to grow in faith. Lord in your mercy,

All: Hear our prayer.

Leader: Lord, help us to become united in your love through our joining in the Eucharist. We make all our prayers through Christ our Lord.

All: Amen.

