

Liturgy of the Word with Children
Trinity Sunday, Year A
4 June 2023
John 3:16-18

Catechist Background

Although we mark all of our liturgical celebrations by calling to mind the Trinity by making the sign of the cross, we celebrate the Trinity in a special way on the first Sunday after Pentecost. Today's gospel passage can be seen as a mini-gospel, a concise summary of all Jesus came to do and teach. In the original Greek, the word we translate as 'condemn' means condemn *and* judge. Also, in John's gospel, the phrase 'eternal life' is not just about length of time but about quality and intensity of experience of the gift of our life with God. The Trinity is a relationship of love, and it is our goal to be intimately united and caught up with that Love that our lives are totally infused with it in every aspect.

Setting the Scene

Although the usual liturgical colour for Ordinary Time is green, the importance of this feast is highlighted by the use of the colour white. You may wish to have traditional symbols of the Trinity—shamrocks, Celtic knotwork, etc—decorating your worship space.

Remind the children that it is Trinity Sunday. Ask if anyone knows what 'Trinity' means. If nobody can explain it very well, remind them that we believe in one God, but we know God as 'Father,' 'Son,' and 'Holy Spirit.' If the children are having a difficult time grasping this, demonstrate that it is not so strange - they may be able to think of someone who is sometimes called 'Mum,' sometimes called 'Mrs. _____,' and sometimes by her first name, depending on who is speaking to them and what they want. While the theology of the Trinity is more complicated than this, the brief explanation will allow you to move on to the rest of Children's Liturgy. Invite the children to make the sign of the cross, paying particular attention to the Trinitarian names as they do so.

We Say Sorry

Lord Jesus, you have revealed yourself as the way to the Father, Lord, have mercy.

All: Lord, have mercy.

You have poured out on your people the Spirit of truth, Christ, have mercy.

All: Christ, have mercy.

You lead us to eternal life, Lord, have mercy.

All: Lord, have mercy.

Gloria

We Pray (1)

God our Father, you sent your Son to show us the truth and your Spirit to guide us in living out that truth. Help us to worship you with our lives. Amen.

Gospel Acclamation

Gospel: John 3:16-18

Reflecting on the Reading with Children

- Warn the children that you are going to ask them a slightly peculiar question. What is the point of God? Or to put it another way, why does God bother to do anything? (If they do not grasp the point, read again, 'God LOVED the world so much...')
- If the point of God is Love, then what does God want for us? (Again, if they need a hint read, 'So that everyone who believes in him may not be lost but have ETERNAL LIFE.')
- We have heard recently in the gospel about Jesus, the Good Shepherd, coming so that we have life in its fullness, and this is also what today's gospel tells us. It is such an important message that we hear it slightly differently today as well. Invite the children to look at each other in the room. Do their faces look as if they remember that God loves us totally, and wants us to have a fantastic life? (If everyone is looking sleepy/nervous/shy, allow them to jump up and down 5 times to remind themselves that God wants our happiness by showing us Love.)

Response

Remembering that today is Trinity Sunday, it is a good week to be thinking about Love, because it can be said that the Trinity is a communion of Love, to use a very fancy term. We are invited to show God's love to each other. How can we do that? St. Paul, in one of the readings for today, gives his friends a very powerful greeting. He says, 'The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you always.' Invite the children to repeat the greeting, one phrase at a time. It is a much stronger way of speaking to someone than saying, 'I hope you have a nice day.' Invite the children to say this greeting to each other—cheerfully!

We Believe

For Trinity Sunday, read out the whole of the Apostles' Creed (have copies for the children if they are able to read – see below).

We Pray (2)

Again, try to relate the bidding prayers to the reading by saying, 'We know God loves us totally and so we give God our concerns...'

Leader: We pray that Christians everywhere will be able to live out their lives joyfully.
Lord in your mercy,

All: Hear our prayer.

Leader: We pray that all people in the world will feel your love. Lord in your mercy,

All: Hear our prayer.

Leader: We pray for those who are feeling heavy with sadness. Lord in your mercy,

All: Hear our prayer.

Leader: We pray for people in our parish who are nearing the end of their lives on earth and will soon meet you face to face. Lord in your mercy,

All: Hear our prayer.

Leader: Lord, thank you for hearing our prayers and knowing what is best for us. We make all our prayers through Christ our Lord.

All: Amen.



THE APOSTLES' CREED

I believe in God, the Father Almighty,
Creator of Heaven and Earth
And in Jesus Christ
His only Son, Our Lord
Who was conceived of the Holy Spirit
Born of the Virgin Mary
Suffered under Pontius Pilate
Was crucified, died and was buried.
On the third day, he rose again
He ascended into Heaven
and is seated at the right hand
of God, the Father Almighty.
He will come again to judge the living and the dead.
I believe in the Holy Spirit,
the holy catholic Church,
the communion of saints,
the forgiveness of sins,
the resurrection of the body,
and life everlasting.
Amen.