

Twenty-third Sunday of the Year

I am with you

INTRODUCTION

Today Jesus reminds us that he will be with us in a very special way, every time we meet together to pray.

SIGN OF THE CROSS

LIGHT THE CANDLES

Light the candles and say Candle Prayer 1: *Flicker, flicker little candle.*

SORRY

St Paul tells us how we should treat other people and reminds us that we should be ready to forgive, just as God forgives us. (*cf St Paul's Letter to the Colossians 3:12-13*)

Always be ready to care for others, and to be kind and gentle. Be patient and calm and never boast, or be proud of your goodness. Just as God always forgives you, so you must always be forgiving towards others.

Close your eyes and speak to God quietly for a few moments.

GLORIA

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

To welcome today's Gospel sing Acclamation 2: *Light up our hearts.*

GOSPEL (*cf Matthew 18:18-20*)

Jesus said to his disciples, 'Listen to me: whatever you accept on earth, will be accepted in heaven, and whatever you forbid on earth will be forbidden in heaven. When two of you agree to ask for something, then my Father will answer your prayers. Again I tell you that when two or three of you meet together in my name, then I will be there with you.'

DISCUSSION

How many of us have gathered here today?

(Perhaps you could ask one child to stand up and point to each member of the group, as the children count aloud.)

Do you think that the Holy Spirit is here with us now? – Jesus told us that when only a few people meet together in his name, then he promises to be with them. We are here to listen to God's word together and to pray, and we know that the Spirit shares this time with us.

Can you think of other times when two or more people gather together to pray?

Some examples include:

- Church celebrations such as Mass, weddings, baptisms and so on.
- saying prayers as a family, perhaps at bedtime or at mealtimes.
- school assemblies.

(Encourage the children to discuss their experiences of prayer.)

Why is it good for us to come together to pray?

– When we meet to pray we come together as one family, and Jesus joins with us in our prayer. Such prayer is very powerful, because we know that God the Father will answer any prayer offered by several people when they pray for the same thing.

What different forms can our prayer together take? – We do not always have to use words. Sometimes we can just sit quietly with a group of people, with each of us sharing our thoughts and feelings with Jesus. We might sing together, or play some beautiful music. All of these are examples of prayer – the important thing is that we *share* them together.

ACTIVITY

Cut out several praying figures as given here and have the children colour them. Cut out a larger figure of Jesus and pin him on a board before arranging the praying figures in a circle around him. Add the caption 'Jesus is with us always.'

CREED

CLOSING PRAYER

Lord Jesus, we know that at this moment you are here with us.

As brothers and sisters in God's family, we ask you to listen to and answer the prayers we bring before you today.

(Either pause for a few moments of silence, or encourage the children to share anything that they might want everyone to pray for.)

