

Liturgy of the Word with Children
Second Sunday of Easter, Year C - Divine Mercy Sunday
27 April 2025
John 20:19-31

Catechist Background

This week's Gospel reading is full of important themes: the contrast between the disciples' fear and Jesus' wish of peace for them; Jesus' instruction to the disciples to take up his work in going out to others and forgiving sins; Thomas' doubt; Jesus' calling those who have not seen and yet believed 'blessed.'

This may be your first session back together since Palm Sunday and so do remind the children that a lot has happened in the Gospels since then, and now we are celebrating that Jesus died and has come back to life.

Setting the Scene

For the activity below, you will need a crucifix, (preferably one featuring the risen Christ) and ideally one that is quite large. *[Do wipe it reverently before and after the activity to clean it.]*

We Say Sorry

Leader: Risen Lord, you came to give us life, Lord have mercy.

All: **Lord, have mercy.**

Leader: You take away our fears, Christ have mercy.

All: **Christ, have mercy.**

Leader: You bring us your peace, Lord have mercy.

All: **Lord, have mercy.**

Gloria

We Pray (1)

God our Father, when Jesus rose from the dead he gave his friends an important job, to spread the love of God to the world. Help us to be like them in spreading your love. Amen.

Gospel Intro

Remind the children that we heard last week that Jesus had risen. For us a week has now passed, but for the people in the Gospel reading today, it is still Easter Sunday. As a result, some of them are still confused as to what has happened with Jesus and they do not know he has risen again.

Gospel Acclamation *[Do explain that we can say or sing 'Alleluia' – the happiest word we have - again as it is now Eastertime]*

Gospel: John 20:19-31

Reflecting on the Reading with Children

- How were Jesus' friends feeling at the start of this reading?
 - Where were they?
 - Why were they afraid?
- What did Jesus wish upon his friends when he appeared in the room?
 - What is it like to feel 'peace'?
- What did Jesus ask them to do?
 - Do you think that would have made them more afraid or more at peace?

- Why did Jesus tell them to receive the Holy Spirit?
- Who here has ever seen Jesus?
 - Who here believes in Jesus?
 - Help the children realise that Jesus' last words in today's Gospel reading could apply to them too.

Response

- Invite the children individually to touch the 'body' of Jesus on the crucifix, and to pray like Thomas, by calling Jesus something like: 'My Lord and my God.' (This may be too much for the younger children, so they could just say something simpler like "Jesus is God".)
 - Allow them to take their time in looking at and touching the crucifix.
 - Children are naturally tactile and can learn a great deal from exploring with their fingertips. It can also help them realise the reality of otherwise abstract things.
- In the meantime, it may be necessary to do some activity with those waiting their turn or those who have finished:
 - You could ask them how they celebrated Easter;
 - They could colour in a group poster featuring the word, 'Peace!'
- Although they will be back in the church for the Communion Rite, you could encourage the children to share with each other 'Peace!' at this point, near to when it is being discussed.

We Believe

Relate the Creed to what you have shared with the children by asking these questions and inviting them to reply, 'I do, Alleluia, Alleluia!'

- Do you believe in God the Father, who sent Jesus to us?
- Do you believe in Jesus, who sends us out to the world?
- Do you believe in the Holy Spirit, given by Jesus to help us live as we should?

We Pray (2)

Again, relate the Prayer of the Faithful to the Gospel reading by saying: 'We know God loves the whole world and wants the very best for us, and so we pray...'

Leader: We pray for all Church leaders, that they especially remember your instructions to go out and be forgiving people. Lord in your mercy,

All: **Hear our prayer.**

Leader: We pray for prime ministers and presidents and world leaders. May they remember and follow your instructions to be forgiving. Lord in your mercy,

All: **Hear our prayer.**

Leader: We pray for everyone in the world who is struggling to believe in you, like Thomas. Lord in your mercy,

All: **Hear our prayer.**

Leader: We pray for the people in this parish who, like your friends gathered in the room together all those years ago, are trying to do what you have asked of us. Lord in your mercy,

All: **Hear our prayer.**

Leader: Lord, we know that sometimes we are the answers to somebody else's prayers. Help us look for opportunities to show your love to the world around us. We make all our prayers through Christ our Lord.

All: **Amen.**