

**Liturgy of the Word with Children**  
**Seventh Sunday of Easter, Year C**  
**1 June 2025**  
**John 17:20-26**

### **Catechist Background**

This week we continue Jesus' discourse from the night before his death, at the very end of its last chapter in John's Gospel. The following chapter moves straight into Jesus' arrest in the garden. The whole of Chapter 17 is a prayer of Jesus. Having assured the disciples of the promise of the Holy Spirit (last week's Gospel reading), Jesus then prayed to his Father for the disciples, and all who believe in him. He prayed that all will be united, that they may love as Jesus is loved by the Father, and know that the Father loves them. We are thus reminded that through Jesus we are united with one another and with God, our Father.

We celebrated the Feast of the Ascension on Thursday and our children may have celebrated the feast in school or in the parish (but we should not assume that all have done). So, we hear today's Gospel reading in the light of the Ascension, when Jesus told the disciples that they would be his witnesses, proclaiming the Good News to all the world.

### **Setting the Scene**

- Tell the children that we are nearly at the end of the Easter season which lasts 50 days.
- Easter will end next Sunday with the Feast of Pentecost, the coming of the Holy Spirit.
- Remind them of Jesus' Ascension into heaven, celebrated on Thursday, emphasising that he is no longer with the disciples physically.
- Today we are going to hear about Jesus' care and concern, and his prayer for them.
- You could display a large picture of the Last Supper to remind the children of the context in which Jesus prays.
- For the activity below you will need paper chain strips (one per child), pens or crayons, and some glue (to join the strip together).

### **We Say Sorry**

*Leader:* Lord Jesus, you lead us to the Father, Lord have mercy.

*All:* **Lord, have mercy.**

*Leader:* You teach us to be one with you, Christ have mercy.

*All:* **Christ, have mercy.**

*Leader:* You fill us with joy, Lord have mercy.

*All:* **Lord, have mercy.**

### **Gloria**

### **We Pray (1)**

God, help us to show the joy in our lives that comes from this Easter season, Alleluia. Amen.

### **Gospel Intro**

- Last week we listened to what Jesus wanted to say to his friends when he knew he did not have much time left with them.
- This week we hear Jesus' prayer to his Father.
- Ask the children to put themselves in the place of the disciples at the Last Supper;
- Invite them to imagine (using the picture) what it was like to listen to Jesus as he prayed.

### **Gospel Acclamation**

**Gospel** John 17:20-26

## Reflecting on the Reading with Children

- Do you remember who Jesus prayed for in his prayer?
- What did Jesus pray for? What did he want for us?
  - What do you think it means to be "one"? to be "united"?
  - If we are united with each other, what might we be able to do better?
- Jesus also prayed that we would be united with him and with the Father.
  - What can we do better when we are united with Jesus?
  - How can we show that we are united with each other and with Jesus?
  - How can we show that we love each other just as the Father loves us?
- *Do remind them that we've talked about this lots of times before!*

## Response

- Give each child a paper strip;
- Ask them to decorate it, and, if they can, write their name on it.
- When all are finished, make a paper chain with the different strips;
- Point out how beautiful the chain is, with its colours and names;
- Show them how the chain holds the strips together even when they don't touch each other;
- Remind them that Jesus is like a chain, holding us all together so we are united;
- Bring the chain into the church and display it if possible.

Prepare the children for the Feast of Pentecost next week. You could invite them to wear something red to symbolise the Holy Spirit, just as our paper chain symbolises our unity.

## 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 loves us?
- Do you believe in Jesus Christ, who wants us to be one?
- Do you believe in the Holy Spirit, who guides us and inspires us?

## We Pray (2)

Again, relate the Prayer of the Faithful to the Gospel reading by saying: 'Jesus calls us to be united with God and with each other, and so we pray...'

*Leader:* We pray for all Christians that they may work to be united in love for each other. Lord, in your mercy,

*All:* **Hear our prayer.**

*Leader:* We pray for leaders of countries, that they may work together for peace in the world. Lord, in your mercy,

*All:* **Hear our prayer.**

*Leader:* We pray for people who suffer in any way, that they may know the care of others. Lord, in your mercy,

*All:* **Hear our prayer.**

*Leader:* We pray for our friends, that they may know that we love them and that they may know that God loves them. Lord, in your mercy,

*All:* **Hear our prayer.**

*Leader:* Lord, help us to show our care for each other just as you care for us. We make all our prayers through Christ our Lord.

*All:* **Amen.**