Catechist Background
‘Lent’ comes from an Old English word meaning ‘spring,’ and it is from this word that we also get ‘lengthen,’ as the days grow longer. Beginning on Ash Wednesday and ending on Holy Thursday, Lent is a journey of forty days towards Easter. Lent itself is slightly longer than forty days, as the Sundays of Lent are not included in the countdown of days of penance. In Lent we are encouraged to focus on re-conversion and re-commitment to our baptismal promises in following Christ. Three main activities of Lent have traditionally been prayer, fasting and almsgiving to help us grow closer to God in preparation for the Easter mysteries.

Setting the Scene
Purple is the colour for Lent, and if your Children’s Liturgy space allows, you may choose to incorporate that colour into a centrepiece. In keeping with the penitential flavour of the season, we do not proclaim either the ‘Gloria’ or the ‘Alleluia’ during Lent.

We Say Sorry
In some parishes, Children’s Liturgy of the Word begins before the Introductory Rite has finished. If you have been in the main body of the church for the Penitential Rite, there is no need to repeat it in Children’s Liturgy.

We Pray (1)
The Opening Prayer expresses the theme of the readings for the day. As above, if you have been in the main body of the church for the Opening Prayer, there is no need to repeat it in Children’s Liturgy. Where the language is accessible to children, some of the prayers used on the Sundays have been taken from *The Sunday Missal*.

Gospel Acclamation
‘Alleluia,’ the normal gospel acclamation, is not sung during Lent. For the Gospel Acclamation you might like to have a look at:
- *Music for Children’s Liturgy of the Word* by Christopher Walker (Oregon Catholic Press)
- Some of the Gospel Acclamations used at your parish mass if suitable
- Try writing your own words using tunes familiar to children (see suggestions in *The Complete Children’s Liturgy* by Katie Thompson (Kevin Mayhew publishers), and words suitable to the season, such as the following:
  - Glory and praise to you / Lord Jesus Christ!
  - Glory to you O Christ / You are the Word of God!
  - Praise to you Lord Jesus Christ / King of endless glory!

Gospel
This year is year ‘C,’ and most of the Gospel readings for Sunday Mass this year will come from the Gospel of Luke. Luke’s Gospel probably circulated...
first with Gentile Christians, and he takes care to point out that Jesus came for all humanity, Jews and Gentiles alike. He has a special concern for the needy, and takes care to point out that God is an upside-down God who is particularly care-full for the humble, poor, and oppressed, rather than on those whose high social standing thinks it buys them merit. Some favourite parables like the Prodigal Son and the Good Samaritan are found only in Luke’s Gospel. Luke himself admits that he was not an original follower of Jesus, but claims to have ‘investigated everything accurately.’ Some have speculated that he may have spent some time with Mary, Jesus’ mother, to gain so much information about his infancy.

Reflecting on the Reading with Children

Response

We Believe

We Pray (2)

‘All liturgy is prayer and it is right that a liturgy of the word with children should end with a time of intercession. The prayer may arise from the children’s reflection but it is always concerned with the needs of the whole Church and the world. It is important to remember that the petitions are invitations to pray not the prayers themselves, so a short phrase that invites the children to pray is better than a long or detailed list of concerns. This model of intercession is easily learned by children.’ (Liturgy of the Word with Children – Guidelines –Commentary ¶7)