

Liturgy of the Word with Children
3rd Sunday in Ordinary Time, Year A
25 January, 2026 (Sunday of the Word of God)
Matthew 4:12-23 (short version, Mt. 4:12-17)

Catechist Background

The full version of today's Gospel is rather long, and although there is an option for a short version, we have taken the option of adapting the Gospel reading in a manner that we think will be most relevant for children. Therefore, the reflection that follows focuses on Matthew 4:18-23.

Fishermen by the Sea of Galilee were in a thriving industry. Particularly when working as part of a family unit, as the disciples were, they could have been said to have a fairly good lot in life. From contextual clues in Matthew's Gospel, it was the dry season when Jesus passed by and there was not much fishing to be done, making it easier for the fishermen to drop everything and follow him.

We Say Sorry

As we get ready to listen to the Word of God, let us remember the times we haven't lived up to God's love for us.

Leader: Lord, you came to bring light to a world that couldn't see you, Lord have mercy.

All: Lord, have mercy.

Leader: You came to call imperfect people, Christ have mercy.

All: Christ, have mercy.

Leader: You came to cure us of all that makes us unwell, Lord have mercy.

All: Lord, have mercy.

Gloria

We Pray (1)

God in heaven, guide us so that we can help bring about peace in the world. Amen.

Gospel Acclamation

Gospel: Matthew 4:12-23 (see note above)

Reflecting on the Reading with Children

- Who here has ever been fishing? Was it exciting, fun, hard work, dull...?
- Did you use fishing poles or nets?
- What do you think Jesus meant when he said that he would make Peter, Andrew, James and John fishers of men?
- Do you think he meant that they would go out and get people in their nets?
- What might Jesus *really* have meant?
- How can we 'fish' for people with Jesus today?

Response

Play the following game to illustrate what happens when someone follows Jesus.

- The leader approaches a child and (while jumping) says, 'I'm foll-foll-following Jesus, I'm jump-jump-jumping for joy!' and the child should respond the same way.
- The child who has just been selected then joins as the leader of the queue of two, and leads to another child, who is approached and responds in the same way ('I'm foll-foll-following Jesus, I'm jump-jump-jumping for joy!'), and that next child becomes the leader.
- Continue in the same fashion until all the children are part of the queue.

Remind the children that we hope that all people will eventually become part of the group following Jesus but for that to happen, we need to invite them to 'jump for joy' with him.

We Believe

Relating to the Creed what you have shared with the children, ask this series of questions and invite the children to reply, 'I do.'

- Do you believe in God the Father?
- Do you believe in God the Son, Jesus, who came to call people to God?
- Do you believe in God the Holy Spirit, who inspires people today to follow Jesus?

We Pray (2)

Again, relate the Prayer of the Faithful to the Gospel reading by saying: 'Lord, you went with your friends to teach and to heal and so we also now pray...'

Leader: We pray for bishops, priests, and deacons, that they may be faithful in their following of God. Lord in your mercy,

All: Hear our prayer.

Leader: We pray for politicians and lawmakers. May they make decisions that lead to less suffering in the world. Lord in your mercy,

All: Hear our prayer.

Leader: We pray for anybody who is ill, especially those people who will never get better. Lord in your mercy,

All: Hear our prayer.

Leader: We pray for anyone who is in need of a friendly gesture. Lord in your mercy,

All: Hear our prayer.

Leader: Lord, we know that you call us to follow you just as you called the first disciples. Help us to live lives that please you. We make all our prayers through Christ our Lord.

All: Amen.

