

**Liturgy of the Word with Children**  
**Fifth Sunday of Easter, Year B**  
**28 April 2024**  
**John 15: 1-18**

### **Catechist Background**

Today's Gospel comes from the long farewell speech at the Last Supper in John's Gospel. At first glance, it may seem peculiar to read from Jesus' last night during the Easter season, but Jesus' words at this time look to the future, not the past, and they seek to inspire and encourage his disciples.

Vines, grapes and vinedressers pruning their plants in an effort to maximise their yield would have been a very familiar sight to Jesus' first hearers. Wild grapes (and most wild plants) that are not appropriately pruned, trained and looked after do not produce as much fruit as those that are tended to. People who grow tomatoes may be familiar with the practice of 'pinching out' the secondary foliage that saps the plant's energy from producing fruits by forcing the energy into excess leaves.

Also, in the Old Testament, Israel was frequently referred to as God's vine. By calling himself the 'True Vine', Jesus identifies himself as the 'True Israel', and by extension, this title includes those who are his branches (for a vine does not exist without branches). 'Remaining' in Jesus is the key theme in today's Gospel selection. By remaining in Jesus, we produce fruit, not firewood.

### **Setting the Scene**

For the activity described below, you will need an old branch from a tree 'planted' in a pot or otherwise secured from falling over. You will also need paper leaves and paper grapes with holes punched in them and a loop of string tied through (to later attach the leaves to the 'plant.')

Alternatively, you could use a paper vine.

### **We Say Sorry**

Leader: We are your children, Lord have mercy.

**All: Lord, have mercy.**

Leader: We sometimes do unkind things, Christ have mercy.

**All: Christ, have mercy.**

Leader: You welcome us back to yourself, Lord have mercy.

**All: Lord, have mercy.**

### **Gloria**

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

God, help us to feel your love in our lives so we can share that love with each other.  
Amen.

### **Gospel Intro**

**Gospel Acclamation** To highlight the significance of the Easter season, you may choose to sing 'Alleluia' after the completion of the Gospel reading as well as at the beginning.

**Gospel** John 15: 1-18

## Reflecting on the Reading with Children

- What did you hear Jesus say that he was in this reading? What does he say that we are?
- Can you have a branch that is not connected to the rest of the vine? What happens to it if it is cut off from the rest of the plant?
- What does this tell us about how close we are to Jesus?
- A grapevine produces grapes and an apple tree produces apples, but what is the 'fruit' that Christians produce? This is not the kind of fruit that you can buy in a supermarket. So, what do our lives bring to the world?
- Also grapes are used to make wine that we use in Mass: wine that has interesting flavours and tastes. Our lives, like wine, will also be interesting and tasty!

## Response

Give each child a leaf and encourage them to write their names or draw a picture of themselves on it. Allow each child to come up and put a leaf and a bunch of grapes on the tree. As they do so, encourage them to think about the 'harvest' they would like to be a part of for God—for instance, by making the world a more friendly place, or by making their brothers and sisters happy by sharing with them.

## 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, Alleluia, Alleluia!'

- Do you believe in God the Father, who carefully looks after the vine branches?
- Do you believe in Jesus Christ, the true vine, connecting us to God the Father and to each other?
- Do you believe in the Holy Spirit, helping us to grow in faith?

## We Pray (2)

Again, try to relate the bidding prayer to the Gospel reading by saying, 'God, the world today needs your help to bear fruit, and so we also pray...'

Leader: We pray for all catechists and people who teach others about Jesus, that they may do a good job of explaining faith to others. Lord, in your mercy,

**All: Hear our prayer.**

Leader: We pray for peace all over the world, particularly in the parts of the world where Jesus lived in his earthly life. Lord, in your mercy,

**All: Hear our prayer.**

Leader: We pray for all people in the world who do not have enough to eat today. Lord, in your mercy,

**All: Hear our prayer.**

Leader: We pray for anyone we know who is feeling particularly cross or sad or lonely at the moment. Lord, in your mercy,

**All: Hear our prayer.**

Leader: Lord, help us to reach out to others in need. We make all our prayers through Christ our Lord.

**All: Amen.**