

Liturgy of the Word with Children
Fifteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time, Year B
14th July 2024
Mark 6:7-13

Catechist Background

The word 'apostle' in Greek means 'one who is sent out,' and in today's Gospel we hear about the first time the Twelve were sent out. Rather like trainee teachers, they first learned from Jesus' teaching and from his example. They saw him interact with those who trusted him and those who didn't. They were with him as he calmed the sea, healed people, and answered their questions. In Jesus' time it was normal for people to explain that a person was ill or acting very strangely because he or she had 'an unclean spirit' or a 'devil' in them. Therefore, the unwell or "strange" person was often not allowed to live in his/her own community but would be 'cast out'. This was usually because others in the community were afraid they would be 'tainted or 'harmed' by that spirit or devil if the unwell/unusual person stayed there. However, if the person was 'cured' they could return to the community. In contrast, this reading shows that the apostles (following Jesus' example) did not respond typically to those who were ill. No, the apostles anointed them with oil and cured them, showing them love and making it possible for them to go home. Also, anointing with oil in a Jewish sense meant recognising that a person is blessed by God and has a particular task or role to do.

Setting the Scene

For the activity described below you will need circles of paper with a Fruit of the Holy Spirit written on each one (see Galatians 5:22-3). The fruits are *love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness* and *self-control*. You may even be able to illustrate the Fruits of the Holy Spirit! There should be at least one for every child, with some left over. Having some spare blank 'fruits' would also be helpful.

We Say Sorry

Leader: You entrust us with your work, Lord have mercy.

All: Lord, have mercy.

Leader: You lift us when we struggle, Christ have mercy.

All: Christ, have mercy.

Leader: You give us all we need, Lord have mercy.

All: Lord, have mercy.

Gloria

We Pray (1)

God, your light guides us in Jesus' ways. Help us to do what is good and stay away from what is not. Amen.

Gospel Acclamation

Gospel: Mark 6:7-13

Reflecting on the Reading with Children

- If you were going on a really important trip, what would you pack?
- You might include clothes, spare shoes, a towel, soap/shampoo, snacks, toys, a book... [Use a large suitcase and these items if you can, for visual purposes.]

- If you had all those things in your bag, how fast could you travel? If you lived in a time before airplanes and cars, would this make a big difference to your journey?
- The words used in today's Gospel seem odd to us today. We now have a different way of understanding illnesses and minds, than they did in Jesus' time.
- What were the apostles sent to do, and what did they do?
- What might that mean for us today? Are we sent to do the same things?

Response

We, like the earliest apostles, are 'sent out' by Jesus, to encourage people to live more generous lives, to heal people's sadnesses, to bring joy to others, and to remind people that Jesus brings freedom from fear. We don't need to have fancy gadgets or expensive equipment to do that. We need things (which the Bible calls 'fruits') that the Holy Spirit gives us, like love, peace, joy, courage, understanding, good judgement. We can travel quickly with these fruits, and they are available to all of us.

Show the children a selection of 'travel items' on the floor (circles of paper with words/pictures on to symbolise fruits of the Holy Spirit). Allow each child to select one that they might like to carry with them today. Encourage them to see that the 'fruit' is a reminder of what they may need for the tasks ahead of them, not the thing itself.

We Believe

To relate what you have shared with the children to the Creed, ask these questions and invite the children to reply, 'I do.'

- Do you believe in God the Father, creator of the universe and all that is in it?
- Do you believe in Jesus Christ, sent by the Father to redeem the world?
- Do you believe in the Holy Spirit, who is with us as we go out to the world like the apostles did?

We Pray (2)

Again, relate the bidding prayers to the Gospel reading by saying, 'You provided for the first apostles and you provide for us, so we bring our concerns to you...'

Leader: We pray for all people sent out to preach God's love. May they remain true to the task they have been given. Lord in your mercy,

All: Hear our prayer.

Leader: We pray for generosity among all wealthy people of the world to those less fortunate. Lord in your mercy,

All: Hear our prayer.

Leader: We pray for those who are ill, that they may know your healing. Lord in your mercy,

All: Hear our prayer.

Leader: We pray for anyone we know who is feeling down today, and we take a moment to think about them in the silence of our hearts... Lord in your mercy,

All: Hear our prayer.

Leader: Lord, help us to be true to the mission you give us, your apostles today. Help us to spread your love everywhere. We make all our prayers through Christ our Lord.

All: Amen.

