

Liturgy of the Word with Children
Sixteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time, Year B
21st July 2024
Mark 6:30-34

Catechist Background

Today's Gospel takes place chronologically just after last week's, when the apostles were sent out in pairs, and just before the feeding of the 5,000. In Jesus' day, the population of Nazareth was probably between 50 and 150 people. Given the communal nature of life in the ancient Mediterranean world, it was not likely to be a place where Jesus could spend time with his disciples in private! Many in the ancient world would have seen the desire for private dealings as suspicious (i.e. 'Why don't you want people knowing what you are doing? Are you up to something shady?').

The 'compassion' that Jesus had on the crowds is significant because in Hebrew, it is a trait usually attributed to women (the word has the same root as the word for 'womb.') St. Louise de Marillac, a friend of St. Vincent de Paul, once said that a person cannot leave Christ to meet Christ; if the sisters were at prayer and a beggar came to the door, serving God by seeing to the beggar's needs became the most important priority.

Setting the Scene

For the activity below, you will need to have adverts to show the children. Large or full-page magazine adverts may work best or you could print some from the internet.

We Say Sorry

Leader: You love us and guide us, Lord have mercy.

All: Lord, have mercy.

Leader: You are our Teacher, Christ have mercy.

All: Christ, have mercy.

Leader: You are the Good Shepherd, Lord have mercy.

All: Lord, have mercy.

Gloria

We Pray (1)

God, make us ready to serve you, in the quietness of our minds and in the cheerfulness of our hearts. Amen.

Gospel Intro

Before the Gospel, ask the children what they remember from last week's Gospel as today's follows it. The apostles were 'sent' by Jesus to do what he did: teach, heal, call to conversion. Today's Gospel tells us what happened when they came back.

Gospel Acclamation

Gospel: Mark 6:30-34

Reflecting on the Reading with Children

- How do you think you would feel after returning to Jesus and your other friends? Excited? Exhausted? Something else?
- Why do you think Jesus wanted them first to have time alone with his friends?

- How would you have felt when your day with Jesus was interrupted by a crowd of people who also wanted to be near Jesus?
- How were those people described? What animal were they said to be like?
- What are sheep like without shepherds? Can they defend themselves? Do they go where they are supposed to go?

Response

- The people in Jesus' day were like sheep without a shepherd, and people today are sometimes like sheep without a shepherd, too.
- Show the children a selection of adverts. What do you think of these ads?
- The people that made these ads: what do they want you to do?
- Do they care about making you happy? Do they just want your (parents') money?
- Some people today believe these adverts. Are they like sheep without a shepherd?
- Encourage the children to create their own slogans or adverts that show God's care and compassion for the world and everyone in it.
- They might draw a poster about how much God/Jesus loves us.
- They could amend an advertising slogan [e.g. Nike's "Just do it" → "Jesus did it"; or McDonald's "I'm lovin' it" → "God's lovin' us." Other slogans might be Tesco's "Every Little Helps"; Sainsbury's "Live well for less"; or even "Beanz meanz Heinz"]
- If time, encourage them to write down their slogans or make posters using them.

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 who created a wonderful world for us to live in?
- Do you believe in Jesus, God the Son, who came to shepherd us and set us free?
- Do you believe in God the Holy Spirit, who lives in our hearts today?

We Pray (2)

Again, to relate the bidding prayers to the Gospel reading, say 'Lord, you always have love for the world, and so we now pray for those who need it...'

Leader: We pray for people who have been recently ordained as deacons, priests, or bishops in our Church. May they always have compassion on others. Lord in your mercy,

All: Hear our prayer.

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

All: Hear our prayer.

Leader: We pray for children beginning their summer holidays this week. We ask that they have a safe and happy and holy holiday. Lord in your mercy,

All: Hear our prayer.

Leader: We pray for anyone we know who is sick or sad today. Lord in your mercy,

All: Hear our prayer.

Leader: Lord, help us to imitate your life by showing compassion to all we meet. We make all our prayers through Christ our Lord.

All: Amen