

Liturgy of the Word with Children
Dedication of the Lateran Basilica (Year C)
9 November 2025
John 2:13-22

Catechist Background

Today's feast marks the dedication of the Cathedral of Rome in 324AD. In this church is the *cathedra* (chair) of the Bishop of Rome, the Pope. An inscription there reads: "*omnium ecclesiarum Urbis et Orbis mater et caput*", which means "The mother and head of all churches of the city and of the world". In this church a powerful pope, Innocent III, dreamt of a magnificent church breaking apart and then shored up by a man in a beggar's robe. Soon after that, beggars from Assisi arrived led by a man named Francis and asked for Innocent's approval for their lifestyle and work. Prepared by his dream, Innocent encouraged them the Franciscans, who are still committed to renewing the Church.

Today's Gospel reading speaks of the place where God is worshipped, so today you could discuss the space in which you worship. For the Jews of Jesus' time, the Temple was the centre of their religious life as they believed that God lived in the Ark of the Covenant within the Temple. Most Jews then visited the Temple several times a year for holy days and to fulfil set duties and sacrifices (e.g. thanking God for a child). The destruction of the Temple (and the loss of the Ark) in 70AD was devastating for them, as it was not rebuilt. Judaism had to develop in different ways, with no Temple, no presence of God in the Ark, and no sacrifices, and so synagogues became much more central to Judaism. (One wall of the Temple still remains today. It is called the Western ('Wailing') Wall, and it is still a holy but now fought-over site).

In today's Second Reading St Paul (1 Corinthians 3:9c-11, 16-17) tells us 'You are God's building' and that everyone building God's Church must work carefully to make it as God wants it. Our focus today can be the Church as the People of God or the church as the place where we gather to praise God.

Setting the Scene

For the activity below you will need:

- a large shape or outline of a simple church,
- pictures of the altar, lectern, cross or crucifix, font, candles, statues etc, (see <http://catholicblogger1.blogspot.co.uk/p/free-printables.html> and scroll down to the Mass section);
- some blank face shapes for the children to decorate with pens, pencils or crayons

We Say Sorry

Leader: You have created us in your image, Lord have mercy.

All: Lord, have mercy.

Leader: You are present in the people around us, Christ have mercy.

All: Christ, have mercy.

Leader: You remain within us even when we cannot see you, Lord have mercy.

All: Lord, have mercy.

Gloria

We Pray (1)

Lord God, strengthen us in faith, hope, and love so we can serve you in our lives. Amen.

Gospel Acclamation

Gospel: John 2:13-22

Reflecting on the Gospel reading with the children:

In our Gospel today where did Jesus go? (to the Temple);

- The Temple was very special to the Jews because they believed God lived there;
- Was Jesus happy when he arrived at the Temple? (No, he got very angry.)

What made Jesus so angry? (If you need to, explain the following:)

- The merchants had turned it into a market place, which made it hard for people to pray there;
- Have you ever been angry because you saw someone break something special?
- How would you feel if a person broke something in your home or in our church on purpose?

Let's think about our own church building.

- *If visible*, point out the bricks (or stones, wood beams etc) that make up your church's building;
- What would happen to the wall if we took away lots of the bricks? Would our church fall down?
- Think about the people who come to Mass here on Sunday. What kind of people are they?
 - young / old,
 - rich / poor,
 - from different countries,
 - male / female,
 - healthy / sick;
 - speaking different languages.
- It is people who make up the Church as St Paul says 'You are God's building';
- Just like these stones/beams/bricks, we need to support each other or our church will fall down;
- When we sing and pray to God together, it pleases God and makes us feel part of God's family.

Response:

- Ask the children to look at the church pictures and to name the things they see.
- Stick the shapes onto the church as they name them, and explain what each thing is (used for);
- Give each child a blank face on which they can draw in their features.
- Then stick these onto/into the church outline to remind us that we are God's building ourselves.

We Believe:

Relate the Creed to what you have shared with the children by asking these questions and inviting the children to reply, 'I do'.

- Do you believe that God loves us and wants us to come together to worship him?
- Do you believe that Jesus came to help us to be God's Church?
- Do you believe in the Holy Spirit who helps us to love and serve God?
- Do you believe in our holy, Catholic Church, where we come to learn about God?

We Pray:

Again, relate the Prayer of the Faithful to the Gospel reading by saying, 'Jesus taught us to ask God for what we need, so as God's children:

Leader: We pray for the leaders of the Church and our country, that they will be honest and fair.
Lord in your mercy,

All: Hear our prayer.

Leader: We pray for peace and forgiveness in our world and in our families. Lord in your mercy,
All: Hear our prayer.

Leader: We pray for all those who ill or in pain, that they may be healed, Lord in your mercy,
All: Hear our prayer.

Leader: We pray for those who have died and those who miss them, Lord in your mercy,
All: Hear our prayer.

Leader: Loving Father, we ask you to listen to these prayers in the name of Jesus, our Lord.

All: Amen