

**Liturgy of the Word with Children**  
**Third Sunday of Lent, Year C**  
**23 March 2025**  
**Luke 13:1-9**

### **Catechist Background**

In Jesus' day, as is often throughout human history, it was tempting to attribute natural and political disasters to God's punishment, especially if there was no other way to explain them. The first part of today's Gospel reading disagrees with that assumption, and forces us to admit that sometimes bad things happen for reasons we cannot understand. We don't always understand why bad things happen and we shouldn't always blame God for them either. We are also prompted to note that we are not 'better' than people who have experienced earthquakes, wars, famines or economic deprivation. They have not been punished by God through those disasters, and similarly, we should not consider ourselves safe from such things due to God's reward.

The parable in today's Gospel reminds us that God gives people second chances, but also that ultimately one day we will be called to account for our lives and the fruit that our lives produce.

### **Setting the Scene**

For the activity below, you will need a barren 'tree.' You could reuse the one from last week. You will also need paper (some cut in the shape of fruits), writing materials and something to attach the paper fruit to the tree (Sellotape, blutack, string).

### **We Say Sorry**

Leader: You came to teach us how to live, Lord have mercy.

**All: Lord, have mercy.**

Leader: You show us how to be generous, Christ have mercy.

**All: Christ, have mercy.**

Leader: You are always ready to show forgiveness, Lord have mercy.

**All: Lord, have mercy.**

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

God, our Father, thank you for Jesus, who shows us the way to you. Amen.

### **Gospel Introduction**

- Explain to the children that the Gospel reading today is a parable about a fig tree.
- As most of them will not know about figs, ask if anyone knows what a fig is? [*a kind of fruit*]
- Explain that figs grow on trees, and that there are lots of fig trees where Jesus lived, and that figs were/are a very popular fruit there.
- Ask if the children know what a parable is. [*it is a type of story that Jesus told to teach us something about God's love and about ourselves.*]
- Ask the children to think about what this story might be teaching us today as they listen.

### **Gospel Acclamation**

**Gospel:** Luke 13:1-9

### **Reflecting on the Reading with Children**

- What does a tree need to grow well and produce leaves and fruit? [*soil, water, sunshine*]
- Explain that trees get their food and drink from the soil which they are in;
- What happens to a fruit tree if it doesn't have good healthy soil to grow in?
- This story is a parable, and so Jesus was not telling it to help us grow trees. Instead, he was trying to teach us something through this story.
- Explain that the tree and the owner might represent some people:

- Who might the tree represent? [*us*]
- Who might be the owner of the tree? [*God the Father*]
- Who might be the vine dresser? [*Jesus, or even other (kind) people*]
- What type of 'fruit' could people be said to produce? [*i.e., being kind, generous, sharing etc.*]
- What do we need so we can be those things? [*i.e., be loved, have things to share etc.*]
- Point out if there is any overlap in answers to those two questions: we usually can only give/share what we receive/experience.

## Response

- Write on the bits of paper the things the children say we need to produce 'fruit' in our lives;
- Place these things on the tree's soil to fertilise it;
- Tell them that trees get their food from the soil and turn that food into fruit;
- Give 'fruit' shapes to the children and ask them to write/draw something on the fruit that they do that makes the world happier;
- Attach the fruits to the tree's branches;
- Point out that all these good things that we do are our response to God's love, and the love that others show us.

## 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 in God, the Father, who gives us the good things we need to grow?
- Do you believe in Jesus, the Son, who set us free so we can produce goodness in our lives?
- Do you believe in the Holy Spirit, who helps us to live the way we were meant to live?

## We Pray (2)

Again, relate the Prayer of the Faithful to the Gospel reading by saying:  
'We know that God wants us to have fruitful lives and so we pray...'

*Leader:* We pray for leaders in the Church. May they give the People of God good teaching to help us grow in faith. Lord in your mercy,

**All: Hear our prayer.**

*Leader:* We pray for prime ministers, presidents, leaders and other rulers. May they lead the world well and with kindness. Lord in your mercy,

**All: Hear our prayer.**

*Leader:* We pray for people affected by recent natural disasters. May they know God is very close to them. Lord in your mercy,

**All: Hear our prayer.**

*Leader:* We pray for our parish. May we be a fruitful example of God's love. Lord in your mercy,

**All: Hear our prayer.**

*Leader:* God in heaven, help us to do what we can to share your love in the world. We make all our prayers through Christ our Lord.

**All: Amen.**