



Catechist Background

Last week we heard how Jesus sent the disciples to proclaim the Kingdom of Heaven. He predicted that they would face difficulties in their mission. Many people, even family members, would not receive them well, instead turning away from them because of their commitment to Jesus. In today's Gospel reading, which is much simplified in the Lectionary for Children, we might understand Jesus as putting suffering in perspective. The disciples were called upon to keep their focus on God, who alone has ultimate power, and not to worry about those who could harm their bodies. Persecution and suffering cannot be avoided or prevented, but Jesus reassured his disciples that God knows and cares about what happens to his children.

We might not face the same type of persecution as the disciples, but we do experience difficulties as we try to live a Christian life. Sometimes we let the opinions of others prevent us from doing what we know to be right. We need to be reminded that what God thinks is more important, and that God does nurture and protect us.

Setting the Scene

For the activity below, you will need a board, a few paper sparrows and a few paper human figures, (or have pictures of them which you can put on the board). Also, make sure you include a crucifix or a statue or picture of Jesus (or the Trinity) in your focal point today.

Explain that today's Gospel reading comes from when Jesus was preparing the disciples for the task, the mission, he sent them to do. He said it would not be easy but he encouraged them also.

We Say Sorry

Leader: You cover us with your protection, Lord have mercy.

All: Lord, have mercy.

Leader: You trust us to do your work, Christ have mercy.

All: Christ, have mercy.

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

All: Lord, have mercy.

Gloria

We Pray (1)

God, you sent your son, Jesus, to be our example. Help us to follow him always. Amen.

Gospel Acclamation

Gospel: Matthew 10:26-33

Reflecting on the Gospel Reading with Children

Jesus gave a lot of instructions in the Gospel reading today.

- Ask: What was the first thing that Jesus said in the reading? ("Do not be afraid")
- Ask: People can find different things scary? Who is afraid of heights? Of Spiders? Of the dark?
- Ask: What might the disciples have been afraid of? (People being horrible, like hitting them);

- Ask: Have you ever seen a situation where somebody was treated unfairly? Did anybody stand up for that person or do you think people were too afraid to get involved?
- Place (or draw) a few paper sparrows and a few human figures on a board.
- Ask: Can you tell me the names of some of the disciples? (Simon (Peter), Andrew, James, John, Matthew (Levi), Jude, Philip, Bartholomew, Thomas)
- Write: with the children's help, the names of some of the disciples on the paper figures (ideally using names of some of the children if you can).
- Ask: Who did Jesus say was more important to God: sparrows or the disciples?

Response

- Explain: Jesus called the disciples to do what he wanted them to do. God now calls us today to do what God wants us to do.
- Ask: Sometimes it's difficult to do as God wants. Can you think of a reason why is it hard sometimes to do what God wants (e.g. being teased or embarrassed for doing the right thing.)
- Explain: We know that we are worth so much to God that God always is with us, calming our fears, and giving us the courage to do what we know is right.
- Invite the children to carry the paper figures closer to the Crucifix, picture or statue of Jesus or the Trinity which you have for your focal point today, to show that God cares about them.
- Invite the children whenever they see a bird this week, to remember that God loves me.

We Believe

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

- Do you believe in God the Father who always cares for us?
- Do you believe in God the Son, Jesus, who came to call people to God?
- Do you believe in God the Holy Spirit, who helps people today to follow Jesus?

We Pray (2)

Again, relate the Prayer of the Faithful to the Gospel reading by saying: 'Lord, you always care for us, and so we bring our concerns to you...'

Leader: We pray for those who preach God's love, may they will stay true to this. Lord in your mercy,
All: **Hear our prayer.**

Leader: We pray for generosity among wealthy people to those less fortunate. Lord in your mercy,
All: **Hear our prayer.**

Leader: We pray for anyone who is 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 sad for any reason, 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 have given us: to share your love wherever we go. We make our prayers through Christ our Lord.

All: **Amen.**