



Catechist Background

In today's Gospel reading Jesus talks to his disciples about the responsibility they have as individuals and as a community to help each other to live as God wants. He assures the disciples of his presence when even two or three gather to pray in his name. It is in prayer that we gain strength to face the challenges of showing our love for others in the ways that Jesus describes.

Setting the Scene

For the activity below, you will need to invent situations of bad behaviour that children might experience: [*Problems*]. Write each 'problem' on a slip of paper and place them in a bag or box. You could also write some possible solutions for the children to read and discuss.

We Say Sorry

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

All: **Lord, have mercy.**

Leader: You forgive us when we stray, Christ have mercy.

All: **Christ, have mercy.**

Leader: You promise to be with us always, Lord have mercy.

All: **Lord, have mercy.**

Gloria

We Pray (1)

God, you teach us to reach out to others. Help us to live as you want us to live. Amen.

Gospel Acclamation

Gospel: Matthew 18:15-20

Reflecting on the Gospel reading with the children:

In today's Gospel Jesus told the disciples what to do if a friend was doing something wrong. Ask:

- Have you ever done something wrong and been told about it by your friend?
- Did you like them telling you that? How did it make you feel?
- Why do you think your friend talked to you about it?
- Have you ever felt you should say something to a friend when they have done wrong?
- Was it easy or difficult to do? Why?
- What might happen if we don't tell our friends when they have done wrong?
- What does Jesus say we should do first if our friend is doing something wrong? [*Talk to that person about it on your own*];
- What does he tell us to do if that doesn't work? [*Talk to the friend again but with one or two other friends there too*];
- What should we then do? [*Tell the church, and if the friend refuses to listen to the church, then treat them as someone who has left the church*];
- How will Jesus help us in this task? [*by listening to our prayers and always being with us.*]

Say:

- We don't know exactly what led to Jesus giving this advice to his friends;
- Maybe he knew that some of them had friends who were not behaving as God would want;
- Maybe they had asked Jesus to do something and he wanted them to know what to do.

- If we love people and want the best for them then we need to be strong enough to help them to do the right thing, even if that means we have to have a difficult conversation;
- Real friendship and Christian love include helping each other, even when it is difficult;
- Sometimes we can't handle this alone so Jesus suggests asking another friend to be there,
- Maybe it might take two of you to convince your friend that he/she has done wrong;
- Sometimes even that may fail and we can go further for help, maybe we could ask for help from our teachers or parents.
- In today's Gospel reading Jesus says that when we pray in his name, even just two or three of us, he will be there to guide and support us.
- So, however we deal with the situation, it is important that first we pray to Jesus to help us to show our love for our friend in whatever we do.

Response

- Put your 'Problems' in a bag or box.
- Ask a child to draw out one slip from the bag/box and read it aloud;
- Ask for suggestions as to how you might help a friend to do better: ['Solutions'];
- With younger children you could provide some written solutions for the children to discuss;
- *Depending on time*, do this a few more times with different children selecting a 'problem';
- Ask: how does our behaviour affects the whole community? [*ask for examples*]
- Do you think the whole community should help people to correct their behaviour?
- Ask: Have any of you been asked in school to agree some behaviour rules in the classroom?
- If so, how can we help our classmates behave well whilst supporting and respecting them?

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 that God created us to be like him?
- Do you believe that Jesus teaches us to live as God wants us to?
- Do you believe in the Holy Spirit who gives us the strength to live as God wishes?
- Do you believe in our holy, Catholic Church, in which we meet and learn about God?

We pray (2):

Again, relate the Prayer of the Faithful to the Gospel reading by saying 'Jesus said he is with us as we pray, and so we pray to the Father with him...'

Leader: For the Church: that we may continue the work of your son Jesus, Lord, in your mercy

All: **Hear our prayer.**

Leader: For love in our hearts, that we will be more loving to all, Lord, in your mercy

All: **Hear our prayer.**

Leader: For a deeper understanding of the ways in which God is with us, Lord, in your mercy

All: **Hear our prayer.**

Leader: For all those who are ill, sad or injured, that they may be healed, Lord, in your mercy

All: **Hear our prayer.**

Leader: For all those who have died; and their loved ones, who miss them, Lord, in your mercy

All: **Hear our prayer.**

