

St. Joseph's Children's Liturgy of the Word February 2023 (Year A)



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St. Joseph is the patron saint of the family, and the family is the “domestic Church.” These sheets were developed to support my parish of St. Joseph in Great Malvern, Worcestershire, but they are now used by parishes and schools not just in the UK, but some are sent to contacts abroad as well. As always, feedback and suggestions are most welcome.

Sunday Mass is the cornerstone of our week; it's the source of grace for living a life IN Christ. We can help the whole family to grow in faith by spending precious moments together to pray as a family, even if it is just a few minutes after a meal. It can be a fruitful time. Light a candle and have a few moments' silence and remind everyone that they are in the presence of God who is Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Start with just a few moments and build up the scope and variety of prayers slowly. Give everyone the opportunity to voice their own prayers as well as reciting (and learning) traditional



Jesus and friend Icon ©
Carol Ann Harnett 2018.

How can we love Jesus more?

Each of the Gospel readings before Lent, which starts at the end of the month, lead us to think about our relationship with Jesus and other people. First, He tells us that we are salt and light, and then we are challenged to live by that. We are invited to make sure that we don't have quarrels that spill over into our time of worship and then are invited to recognise our human dignity and love our enemies. Each of these Children's Liturgy of the Word sessions ends with a short meditation imagining that the children are looking at Jesus. This is an excellent way to help them really pray. Learning rote prayers is important but it is also important that they build a relationship with Jesus and contemplating Him in different situations is an excellent way to do this. This also helps when dealing with fractured relationships, inviting children to realise that Jesus loves the other person as much as He loves us. He may not love what they, or we do of course, and we need to stress that. As the adage goes – love the sinner, not the sin.

There are Four Dimensions of our Faith, and the activities all reflect one or more of each of these dimensions.

Professing the faith (speaking about it and learning the faith)

Celebrating our faith in the liturgy and the sacraments



Living the faith in Christ (making choices by the grace of Jesus Christ)

A prayer-filled life where the Our Father takes centre stage

Children's liturgy of the word for this week



Discussion on the Gospel

Gospel for 5th Sunday Year A

5th February 2023

Matthew 5:13-16

Jesus said to his disciples: 'You are the salt of the earth. But if salt becomes tasteless, what can make it salty again? It is good for nothing, and can only be thrown out to be trampled underfoot by men.

'You are the light of the world. A city built on a hill-top cannot be hidden. No one lights a lamp to put it under a tub; they put it on the lamp-stand where it shines for everyone in the house. In the same way your light must shine in the sight of men, so that, seeing your good works, they may give the praise to your Father in heaven.'

The Gospel of the Lord
R/: *Praise to you Lord
Jesus Christ*

- ✠ Light a candle
- ✠ Make the Sign of the Cross
- ✠ Someone read the Gospel slowly

Q: What foodstuff did Jesus say that we are like? (A: Salt.)

Q: What is salt used for? (A: Making food taste better. When Jesus walked on earth, there were no fridges or freezers, so salt was also used to preserve food, especially meat. So salt not only made food taste better but it also stopped it from going bad.)

Q: Jesus also said that we are like something else, what is that? (A: Light.)

Q: What happens if there is no light? (A: We can't see where to go.)

Q: Jesus told His disciples that they are the light of the world. He means that they have to show people where to go, that means, being a good example to other people. How can we be a good example to other people at school? (A: Open.)

Q: Light is a very important sign in our faith in Jesus Christ because Jesus told us that He was the light of the world. What do we do to remind us that Jesus said this? (A: We light candles when we pray, at Mass etc.)

Q: When we are baptised, we are given a special candle called a "baptismal candle. Who uses their candle at home? (A: Open.)

(If possible show a baptismal candle to the children)

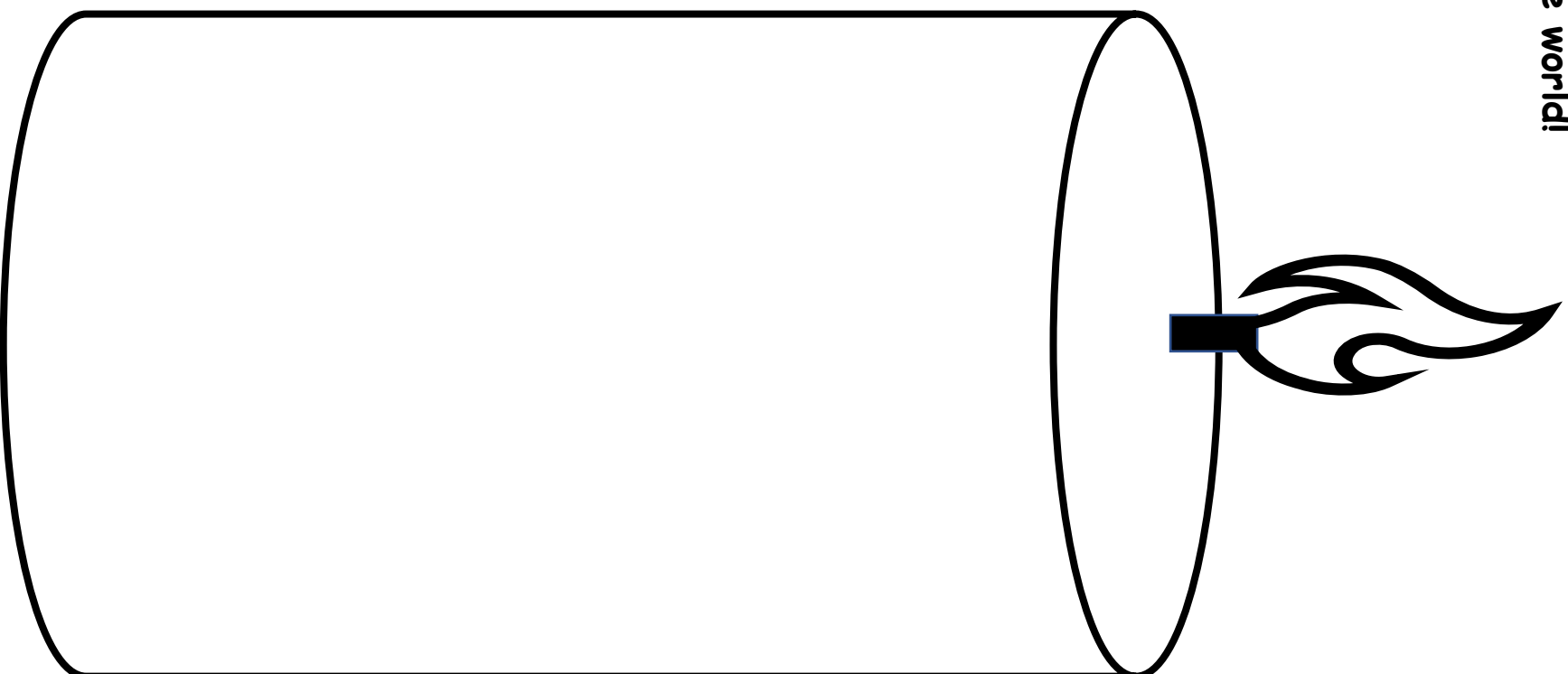
Q: Why do you think we are given a candle when we are baptised? (A: Because when we are baptised we are joined to Jesus and so His light shines through us.)

Let's just finish with this little moment of reflection. Shut your eyes and imagine that you are looking at Jesus. See Him smiling at you and see Him say your name. He tells you that He loves you. Feel that special love of His in your heart. Tell Jesus that you love Him too. Imagine that He is giving you a candle to hold. This is a special invisible candle that does not have a flame that burns. Instead it is your smiling face that lights up those around you. Jesus's special grace helps you to smile! When you are ready, come back into the room.

If you have time, children can decorate a candle to keep, (acrylic paint works on wax candles) otherwise there is a colouring page below.

**Jesus said that we are
the light of the world!**

*Either colour in
this candle or
write a prayer
inside it and cut
it out as a
bookmark to
remind me that
His light shines
through me.*



Gospel for 6th Sunday Year A

12th February 2023

Matthew 5:17-37

Jesus said to his disciples: 'Do not imagine that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets. I have come not to abolish but to complete them. I tell you solemnly, till heaven and earth disappear, not one dot, not one little stroke, shall disappear from the Law until its purpose is achieved. ...

'You have learnt how it was said to our ancestors: *You must not kill*; and if anyone does kill he must answer for it before the court. But I say this to you: anyone who is angry with his brother will answer for it before the court; if a man calls his brother "Fool" he will answer for it before the Sanhedrin; and if a man calls him "Renegade" he will answer for it in hell fire.

So then, if you are bringing your offering to the altar and there remember that your brother has something against you, leave your offering there before the altar, go and be reconciled with your brother first, and then come back and present your offering. Come to terms with your opponent in good time while you are still on the way to the court with him, or he may hand you over to the judge and the judge to the officer, and you will be thrown into prison. I tell you solemnly, you will not get out till you have paid the last penny.

The Gospel of the Lord. **R:/Praise to you Lord Jesus Christ**

Children's liturgy of the word for this week



Discussion on the Gospel

- ✠ Light a candle
- ✠ Make the Sign of the Cross
- ✠ Someone read the Gospel slowly

I have cut this Gospel reading down to focus on relationships with other people rather than the official short version which refers to adultery and divorce.

Q: Jesus said that He was not going to abolish the Law. What Law is He talking about? (A: The Ten Commandments mainly.)

Q. The 5th commandment is "You shall not kill". Jesus is saying something stronger than not killing, what is He saying? (A. that we must not get angry with other people.)

Q. When Jesus says "brother" He is not just talking about our immediate family. "Brother" in His society meant brothers and sisters, cousins, aunts, uncles and all relatives as well as people who are a part of our community. Thinking about that, who is your "brother"? (A: Open, e.g. named members of the family, aunts, uncles close friends, people at school, people in the parish.)

Q: Jesus tells us not to get angry or call those close to us nasty names. He then says that we mustn't bring an offering if we are angry with someone. When do we bring an offering at Mass? (A: The offertory.)

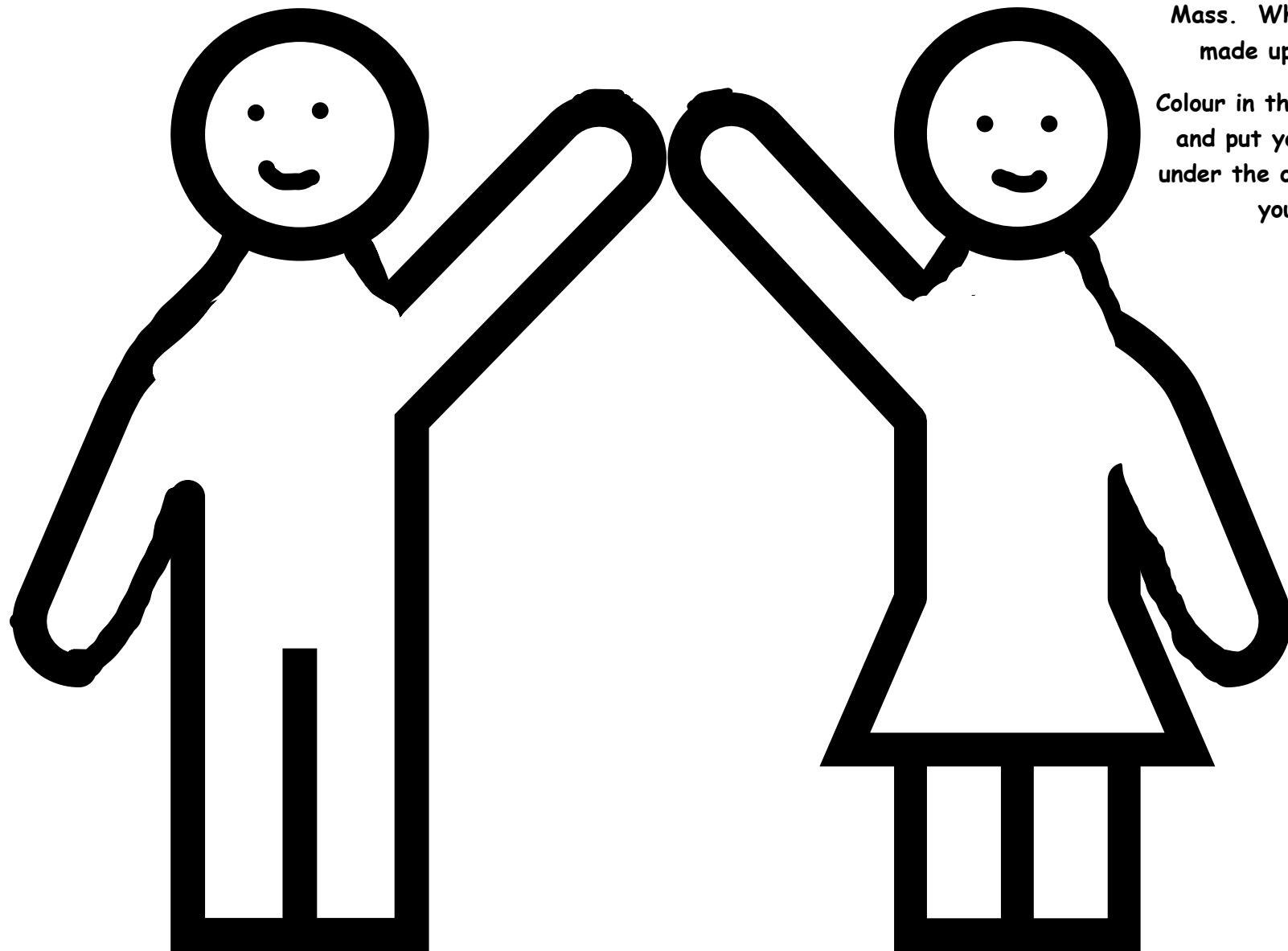
Q: What do we offer at the offertory? (A: Bread and wine, the collection, ourselves.)

Q: The offertory is a really important part of Mass, but Jesus says that we have to do something before we come to Church to be ready for the offertory. What is that? (A: We have to be reconciled, say sorry and forgive, those we are cross with.)

Q: In a moment we are going to walk up the aisle with the bread and wine and the collection. Let's just think – is there anyone we are cross with. Shut your eyes and see Jesus giving them a big hug. Then feel Jesus give you a big hug too.

Jesus tells us to make up with everyone before coming to Mass. Who have I made up with?

Colour in these people and put your name under the one that is you.



Gospel for the 7th Sunday Year A

19th February 2023

Matthew 5:38-48

Love your enemies

Jesus said to his disciples: ‘You have learnt how it was said: *Eye for eye and tooth for tooth*. But I say this to you: offer the wicked man no resistance. On the contrary, if anyone hits you on the right cheek, offer him the other as well; if a man takes you to law and would have your tunic, let him have your cloak as well. And if anyone orders you to go one mile, go two miles with him. Give to anyone who asks, and if anyone wants to borrow, do not turn away.

‘You have learnt how it was said: You must love your neighbour and hate your enemy. But I say this to you: love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you; in this way you will be sons of your Father in heaven, for he causes his sun to rise on bad men as well as good, and his rain to fall on honest and dishonest men alike. For if you love those who love you, what right have you to claim any credit? Even the tax collectors do as much, do they not? And if you save your greetings for your brothers, are you doing anything exceptional? Even the pagans do as much, do they not? You must therefore be perfect just as your heavenly Father is perfect.’

The Gospel of the Lord. **R:/Praise to you
Lord Jesus Christ**

Children’s liturgy of the word for this week



Discussion on the Gospel

- ✠ Light a candle
- ✠ Make the Sign of the Cross
- ✠ Someone read the Gospel slowly

There is a lot of misunderstanding with this Gospel. Jesus is not telling us to be wet rags but in fact to recognise our human dignity. The background is cultural. In first century Palestine, if a person hits you on the right cheek, he has to be backhanding you and only slaves were backhanded, so if you turn the other cheek, you are actually saying, “I am not a slave, treat me as your equal!” It was illegal to take someone’s cloak as that is what they slept in so by offering your cloak, the person would be breaking the law if he accepted. Finally, a soldier could force you to carry his pack one mile, but any longer and he would be in trouble. So, these instructions are about standing up for your own rights and dignity. On loving our enemies – Jesus explains this Himself – there is no credit in being nice to those who are nice to us. We need to be nice to those who are not nice to us. Not easy by ourselves, but by the grace we receive from the Holy Spirit, it is!

Q: Jesus is telling us a lot of things here, what has He said? (A: Open for responses from the text.)

Q: Some of these instructions sound a bit strange to us. What are the strange things Jesus says? (A. Let the children come up with the things that they find strange and explain them as they come up with them. You could demonstrate (without hitting) the hitting on the other cheek.)

Q: Jesus tells us to love and pray for our enemies. Who would we consider our enemies? (A: Open – answers may range from people we don’t get on with to national “enemies” such as Putin.)

Q: When we find it hard to get on with someone – may be someone at school or in the family like a brother or sister, we can shut our eyes and imagine we can do this. Let’s all shut our eyes and imagine that we can see Jesus. See also the person that we are finding it difficult to love at the moment. See Jesus looking at them. He loves them. He may not love what they are doing, but He loves them. See Jesus next to that person and see Him put His arm around them. Now let Jesus see you. See Him smile at you and see Him walk towards you. See Him tell you that He loves you too. You tell Him that you love Him too.

Jesus I love you. I know
that you want me to love
those whom I find hard to
even like. By the grace of
your Holy Spirit I know that
I can love other people,
even those I don't like.

