

St. Joseph's *Children's Liturgy of the Word*

January 2024 (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 originally 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.



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The liturgical year concludes with the celebration of Christ the Universal King. What is more evidence of His glorious kingship than this mosaic of Him crowning His mother with His own crown.

Sunday Mass is the cornerstone of our week; These resources are designed to be used in a family setting or in Children's Liturgy of the Word at Mass, or in the classroom. Please make them your own and feel free to pass them on for free.

Meeting Jesus

As always, the beginning of the Church's year focuses on our response to Jesus' call to us. He calls and we have the choice to respond. On the 2nd Sunday of the year, the first reading is the call of Samuel so you may wish to use that reading instead. There are two sets of questions but they both lead to listening to and responding to Jesus. On the 4th Sunday, Jesus is in the synagogue teaching and healing. I've focused on the encounter with Jesus which made an impact on the people, and that we encounter Him at Mass. The activity is to colour in (and take home to learn) the invitation to communion “Lord I am not worthy...”. I realise that most children who come to Children's Liturgy of the Word have not made their First Holy Communion, but we want to instill in them a desire to come to know Jesus and an eagerness to receive Him in Holy Communion. Let us pray, *Lord Jesus Christ, instill in each of us a desire to draw closer to you this year.*

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

Jesus above St. Peter's Rome, pointing to heaven. © C A Harnett 2022.



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



Gospel for 2nd Sunday Year B

14th January 2024

John 1:35-42

As John the Baptist stood with two of his disciples, Jesus passed, and John stared hard at him and said, 'Look, there is the lamb of God.' Hearing this, the two disciples followed Jesus. Jesus turned round, saw them following and said, 'What do you want?' They answered, 'Rabbi,' – which means Teacher – 'where do you live?' 'Come and see' he replied; so they went and saw where he lived, and stayed with him the rest of that day. It was about the tenth hour.

One of these two who became followers of Jesus after hearing what John had said was Andrew, the brother of Simon Peter. Early next morning, Andrew met his brother and said to him, 'We have found the Messiah' – which means the Christ – and he took Simon to Jesus. Jesus looked hard at him and said, 'You are Simon son of John; you are to be called Cephas' – meaning Rock.

The Gospel of the Lord

R/: *Praise to you Lord Jesus Christ*

The first reading today is the lovely call of Samuel in the temple and so I have included it here. Normally, we focus on the Gospel in Children's Liturgy of the Word but from time-to-time readings from the Old Testament are valuable and good for the children to hear. The reading and questions are after this page on the Gospel and the activity is the same.

Discussion on the Gospel

Q: Who pointed out Jesus? (A: John the Baptist...)

Q: What did two disciples ask Jesus? (A: Where do you live?)

Q: What did Jesus say to them? (A: Come and see.)

Q: What did the two disciples do then? (A: They spent the rest of the day with Jesus.)

Q: Why do you think that they did that? (A: Possible answer, to learn about Jesus.)

Q: What did Andrew do after spending the day with Jesus? (A: They went to find his brother Simon Peter).

Q: Why do you think that he wanted to tell his brother about Jesus? (A: Possible answers could be that they found Jesus fascinating, that He was the Messiah, that they realised that there was something special about Jesus).

Q: Where can we find Jesus? (A: Lots of answers, e.g. when we read the Bible, at Mass, in quiet/prayer times at home, in our friends, in the poor as Jesus said that whatever we do to other people, we do to Him....)

Q: Andrew spent time with Jesus and then told his brother about Him. Later on in life He and Simon Peter would tell a lot more people about Jesus and that is why we know Jesus. Who can you tell about Jesus today? (A: Open....)

Q: What would you say to them? (A: Open....)

Q: Look the icon on the page after next, called "Jesus and friend." Draw a picture of yourself standing next to Jesus with His arm around you.

Discussion on the First reading

First reading for 2nd Sunday Year B

14th January 2024

First reading, 1 Samuel 3:3-10,19

Samuel was lying in the sanctuary of the Lord, where the ark of God was, when the Lord called, 'Samuel! Samuel!' He answered, 'Here I am.' Then he ran to Eli and said, 'Here I am, since you called me.' Eli said, 'I did not call. Go back and lie down.' So he went and lay down. Once again the Lord called, 'Samuel! Samuel!' Samuel got up and went to Eli and said, 'Here I am, since you called me.' He replied, 'I did not call you, my son; go back and lie down.' Samuel had as yet no knowledge of the Lord and the word of the Lord had not yet been revealed to him. Once again the Lord called, the third time. He got up and went to Eli and said, 'Here I am, since you called me.' Eli then understood that it was the Lord who was calling the boy, and he said to Samuel, 'Go and lie down, and if someone calls say, "Speak, Lord, your servant is listening."' So Samuel went and lay down in his place.

The Lord then came and stood by, calling as he had done before, 'Samuel! Samuel!' Samuel answered, 'Speak, Lord, your servant is listening.'

Samuel grew up and the Lord was with him.

The word of the Lord

R/: *Thanks be to God*

Q: Who was calling Samuel? (A: The Lord [Or, you could say God. *Often in the Bible the word "the Lord" is used because it was disrespectful to say "God"...*])

Q: Who did Samuel think was calling him? (A: Eli, the priest)

Q: The statement that Samuel had "no knowledge of the Lord" sounds strange to us because Samuel was living in the Temple. What do you think that this might mean? (A: Varied answers but one could be that Samuel as a child had not really been involved in the Temple liturgy (prayers and sacrifices), a bit like a young child comes to Church but pays no attention to what is going on at Mass.)

Q: What did Eli realise after Samuel kept coming back to him (A: That the Lord (God) was calling him.)

Q: How did Samuel respond to the last time he was called? (A: "Speak Lord, your servant is listening").

Q: When does Jesus speak to us? (A: Lots of possible answers, e.g. at Mass, in the readings (Bible, Gospels) in our prayers, in the sacraments e.g. Reconciliation and Holy Communion, through our parents, teachers, friends, when we are out in the countryside....)

Q: How do we know that Samuel was always faithful to God? (A: As he grew up, the Lord was with him).

Q: The image below is an icon called "Jesus and friend." We can place ourselves in the position of the "friend" and realise that Jesus is beside us with his hand on our shoulder. How can we stay close to Jesus and respond when He calls us like He called Samuel? (A: Various possible answers).



Draw yourself in the white space with
Jesus' hand on your shoulder.



Children's liturgy of the word for this week



Gospel for 3rd Sunday Year B

21st January 2024

Mark 1:14-20

Jesus went into Galilee. There he proclaimed the Good News from God. 'The time has come' He said 'and the kingdom of God is close at hand. Repent, and believe the Good News.'

As He was walking along by the Sea of Galilee, He saw Simon and his brother Andrew casting a net in the lake – for they were fishermen. And Jesus said to them, 'Follow me and I will make you into fishers of men.' And at once they left their nets and followed him.

Going on a little further, He saw James son of Zebedee and his brother John; they too were in their boat, mending their nets. He called them at once and, leaving their father Zebedee in the boat with the men he employed, they went after Him.

The Gospel of the Lord

Praise to you Lord Jesus Christ

Discussion on the Gospel

Last week we heard the account in the Gospel of John of the call of the first disciples – here is the one that we are probably more familiar with.

Q: Where was Jesus? (A: In Galilee/near the Sea of Galilee)

Q: What three things do we hear Jesus saying at the beginning of this Gospel passage?

(A: 1. The time has come ...2. Repent...3. Believe the Good News")

Let's think a bit about these three statements.

Q: What does Jesus mean when He says "The time has come?" (A: Various answers possible, but the main point is that God has planned the History of Salvation since the Fall, since Adam and Eve sinned in the garden of Eden and now is the time of salvation – Jesus has come to save us from slavery to sin.)

Q: What do you think that Jesus means when He says that the "Kingdom of God" is close at hand? (A: Various possible answers, including Jesus' time has come, His kingdom is here, wherever Jesus is, His kingdom is there so when we meet Jesus in prayer and in the sacraments, we are living in His kingdom.)

Q: What does "repent" mean (A: It means to be sorry. Literally it means to think again (Re + "pent" which is from the Latin for "to think".)

Q: Why is Jesus asking us to think again, to repent? (A: Various possible answers: to learn think again about the way we live, e.g. our behaviour. Is it the kind of behaviour that is "pleasing" to Jesus? Do we ask Jesus to help us to become better people?)

Q: Jesus then called two sets of brothers, who? (A: Simon Peter and Andrew, and James and John.)

Q: What was their response? (A: They followed Him....)

Q: How does Jesus call us? (A: Open; e.g. at Mass, when we are praying/thinking about Him...)

Finish by reading the meditation on the next page and the children can colour in the picture.

Read this slowly and gently aloud and try to join in yourself mentally. Where there are a series of dots, pause a bit to allow the picture to develop in everyone's mind.

Shut your eyes and imagine you can see Jesus walking by the Sea of Galilee.... There are a lot of people around and you are there. Jesus watches Simon Peter and Andrew in their boat and when they look up they see Jesus looking at them.... He smiles at them and they wave at Him.... He waves to them and they come ashore. "Follow Me" He says, And I will make you into fishers of men"..... Simon Peter and Andrew leave the boat and follow Jesus..... Then Jesus turns and smiles at you..... See Him smiling at you..... Feel His love pouring into your heart.... He gently says your name (add the names if you wish, gently)..... Jesus then says "I love you"..... Hear Him saying this. Hear his gentle voice.... He says it again..... "I love you".... then He says, "Will you follow me too?"..... Answer Him in the silence of your heart.... Your answer is private, just between you and Jesus.

When you are ready, you can come back into the room.

The Call of Peter, Vatican, Rome ©
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Children's liturgy of the word for this week



Gospel for 4th Sunday of Ordinary Time Year B

28th January 2024

Mark 1:21-28

Jesus and his disciples went as far as Capernaum, and as soon as the sabbath came he went to the synagogue and began to teach. And his teaching made a deep impression on them because, unlike the scribes, he taught them with authority.

In their synagogue just then there was a man possessed by an unclean spirit and it shouted, 'What do you want with us, Jesus of Nazareth? Have you come to destroy us? I know who you are: the Holy One of God.' But Jesus said sharply, 'Be quiet! Come out of him!' And the unclean spirit threw the man into convulsions and with a loud cry went out of him. The people were so astonished that they started asking each other what it all meant. 'Here is a teaching that is new' they said 'and with authority behind it: he gives orders even to unclean spirits and they obey him.' And his reputation rapidly spread everywhere, through all the surrounding Galilean countryside.

The Gospel of the Lord:

R/: *Praise to you Lord Jesus Christ*

Discussion on the Gospel

The discussion focusses on the encounter with Jesus in the synagogue and the fact that at Mass we encounter Jesus. Although there are 4 ways that He is present at Mass, we are focussing on 2: the readings and in the Eucharist. Most children will not have made their First Holy Communion but it's important to refer to His presence long before they begin preparation, so that they become eager and excited to meet Him in the Eucharist.

Q: What did Jesus do on the Sabbath? (A: Went into the synagogue and taught).

Q: What is the Sabbath? (A: Day of rest/Saturday. As Christians we tend to regard Sunday as the Sabbath, but Jews still regard Saturday as the most holy day of the week.)

Q: What is a synagogue? (A: a Jewish place of worship)

Q: Where do we go on a Sunday to listen to Jesus? (A: Mass/Church.)

Q: What do you think Jesus said to them when He was teaching in the synagogue? (A: Open.)

Q: When we come to Mass, we listen to Jesus teaching us. When does Jesus teach us at Mass? (A: In the readings, the prayers and in the homily [or at Children's Liturgy of the Word]. For those who have made their First Holy Communion, Jesus also speaks to us in our hearts when we receive Him in Holy Communion.)

Q: When we go back into Mass today, what will happen? (A: Offertory, Eucharistic Prayer the bread and wine become Jesus' Body and Blood, people receive Him, hymns, prayers, notices [adapt according to your parish Mass].)

Q: When the priest is at the altar and raises the bread and the chalice, and says these special words, "this is my body/this is my blood" the bread and wine become Jesus and He is really and truly here. Try to listen out for that moment, what will happen? (A: Sometimes a bell is rung [listen for that]. We are kneeling and can bow our heads, because Jesus is really and truly here as He was in the synagogue.)

Q: What can we say when the host and chalice are raised? (A: Open – "I Love you Jesus" or "My Lord and my God".)

We meet Jesus every time we come to Mass and listen to Him in the readings. Those who have made their First Holy Communion also meet Him in going to Holy Communion. Before Holy Communion, everyone in the Church says this to Jesus because in return for us coming out to meet Him.... He comes to meet us! How wonderful is that! See, if you can learn this prayer by heart this week so that you can join in next week.

*Lord, I am not worthy
that you should enter
under my roof, but only
say the word, and my
soul shall be healed.*