

Children's liturgy – Fifth Sunday of Easter (Year B)

Colour: White

Props: A bunch of grapes.

Song suggestions: I am the vine, you are the branches (273, Celebration Hymnal for Everyone)

You are the vine (824, Celebration Hymnal for Everyone)

Welcome: Today we hear how Jesus is the vine, and how he gives life to us, his branches. Let's think a bit about what that means today.

Opening prayer: Dear Lord, you are the vine, we are the branches. Help us to bear your fruit and follow your word. Amen.

First reading (optional): Acts 9:26-31

Psalm: Ps 21:26-28, 30-32 r. 26

Gospel acclamation: Sing the acclamation together. Suggestions: 'Halle, halle, halle' (Caribbean) from 'Sing with the world', Alison Adam & John Bell; 'Alleluia' (Zimbabwe), Abraham Maraire Publications, WCC & GIA.

Gospel: John 15:1-8

"I am the real vine, and my Father is the gardener. He breaks off every branch in me that does not bear fruit, and he prunes every branch that does bear fruit, so that it will be clean and bear more fruit. You have been made clean already by the teaching I have given you. Remain united to me, and I will remain united to you. A branch cannot bear fruit by itself; it can do so only if it remains in the vine. In the same way you cannot bear fruit unless you remain in me.

"I am the vine, and you are the branches. Those who remain in me, and I in them, will bear much fruit; for you can do nothing without me. Those who do not remain in me are thrown out like a branch and dry up; such branches are gathered up and thrown into the fire, where they are burned. If you remain in me and my words remain in you, then you will ask for anything you wish, and you shall have it. My Father's glory is shown by your bearing much fruit; and in this way you become my disciples.

Gospel reflection: What do you remember from the reading you heard today?

Jesus is teaching his disciples. He calls himself the "true vine". Do you know what a vine is? What grows on a vine?

Grapes grow on vines. (*Hold up a bunch of grapes to the children*). Do you like grapes?

Jesus called us his branches because he supports us, like a tree trunk supports its branches. And he wants us to bear fruit for him.

What do you think this means? Do you think he wants us to grow grapes?!

What Jesus means is that he wants us to stay close to him and follow his teachings. This means being the best we can be, loving each other, and loving the beautiful world he has given us.

But this world is changing. Because we humans have treated the planet badly, our climate is heating up. And the hotter it gets, the more we see big weather disasters like storms or droughts – when there is no rain and everything dries up like the vine we heard about in today's gospel.

Everyone will be affected, but right now it is the poorest people who suffer the most.

Florence is from a country in Africa called Zimbabwe. Here many people rely for food on what they can grow. The rain is not coming when it should anymore, so it is very hard for Florence's parents to grow crops. People are going hungry and thirsty.

How would you feel if you had hardly anything to eat or drink?

We all have a part to play to protect our world, so that it stays a beautiful place for us all to live in safely.

There are many ways that we can show love for our neighbour and care for our world. Can you think of some, so that you will be like the strong, healthy branches on the vine that Jesus talks about?

Intercessions: *Ask the children to offer their own prayers or use the suggestions below.*

We know that Jesus is the true vine always supporting us, his branches. Let us keep this in mind as we pray together:

We pray for the Church throughout the world: that it may follow Christ's example and show love and welcome to all people. Lord, in your mercy...

We pray for all those who have been badly affected by the changing climate; may we always show care for our planet and not damage it any more. Lord, in your mercy

We pray for our parish, family and friends: that we may be moved to show love for our neighbours, both here and around the world. Lord, in your mercy...

Closing prayer: Generous God, support us in all we do as a vine supports its branches, and help us to support and share with others around the world, especially those who are affected by the changing climate. Amen.

Activity suggestions:

Ask the children to colour in the accompanying illustration. Ask them to draw fruit on the tree. In each fruit ask them to write or draw one way that they will care for their neighbour or the planet in the coming week.

Find out more about the Eyes of the World campaign on our primary school pages, which is about the climate crisis. Show the animation if the age range of your group suits.

Ask the children to tell their family all they have heard and thought about today. Each time they eat a piece of fruit in the next week, ask them to remember their task of caring for the earth.

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