

Children's liturgy – Twenty-third Sunday in Ordinary Time (Year A)

Preparation of the worship space

Colour: green

Song suggestions: Be still, for the presence of the Lord (720, Laudate)

Welcome: In today's gospel Jesus encourages us to meet together in his name and says he will be with us. When do we meet together in his name? How about here and now today? Let's think a bit more about this together.

Opening prayer: Christ Jesus, be with us now as we gather together in your name. Guide us in all that we say and all that we do, as we try to follow you. Amen.

First reading (optional): Ezekiel 33:7-9

Psalm: Psalm 94:1-2, 6-9. R. v.8

Gospel acclamation: *everyone stands and sings the acclamation together.*

Gospel: Matthew 18:15-20

"If your brother sins against you, go to him and show him his fault. But do it privately, just between yourselves. If he listens to you, you have won your brother back. But if he will not listen to you, take one or two other persons with you, so that 'every accusation may be upheld by the testimony of two or more witnesses,' as the scripture says. And if he will not listen to them, then tell the whole thing to the church. Finally, if he will not listen to the church, treat him as though he were a pagan or a tax collector.

"And so I tell all of you: what you prohibit on earth will be prohibited in heaven, and what you permit on earth will be permitted in heaven.

"And I tell you more: whenever two of you on earth agree about anything you pray for, it will be done for you by my Father in heaven. For where two or three come together in my name, I am there with them."

(Gospel passage taken from Good News Translation® and used with permission, see details below)*

Gospel reflection: Can you remember what Jesus says in today's reading about prayer?

Jesus says that God listens to and answers our prayers.

What does Jesus say about when two or three people meet together in his name?

Jesus says that he is there with them. What do you think it means to meet together in Jesus' name?

However we meet people, whether it's to pray, to learn, to sing, or to talk, or to do something else together, if we invite Jesus in, then he will be with us, listening to us and guiding us.

Can you think of a time when you meet together with others in Jesus' name? Can you tell me a bit about it?

We can meet together in Jesus' name at church, at home and at school. Can you think of any other places where this happens?

Spending time with others is really important.

Farisai lives with her grandmother in Zimbabwe. During the pandemic both Farisai and her grandmother became very ill. Farisai missed a lot of school and her grandmother was too ill to look after her properly.

Farisai goes to special workshops at St Albert's Mission Hospital, supported by CAFOD, with other children who have also faced lots of challenges. Coming together at the workshops gives the children the chance to meet each other and make friends and realise that they are not the only one who feels sad, angry or confused. They also learn how to cope with their worries and to share their problems.

Farisai says, "My hope for the future is to successfully finish school and take care of my grandmother. Maybe if I work hard enough, I could be a teacher. I hope for a lot of things."

If Jesus is with us, when we gather together, how can we make sure we listen to him and do what he asks of us?

In the coming week, when you join together in Jesus' name with other people to pray or to sing, remember that all around the world other children are also joining together in Jesus' name. Say a prayer for them: that all children around the world may live happy and healthy lives, in peace and free from poverty.

Intercessions *You may want to ask the children to offer their own prayers or use the suggestions below.*

We are gathered here in Jesus' name today and so we pray together:

We pray for the Church throughout the world: that everyone may know that she works in Jesus' name, who came to bring good news to the poor. Lord, in your mercy...

We pray for our brothers and sisters around the world: that they may all have the chance to live happy and healthy lives, in peace and safety and free from poverty. Lord, in your mercy...

For more children's liturgy resources and illustrations see cafod.org.uk/childrensliturgy

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We pray for our parish, family and friends: that we may invite Jesus to be with us in all we do, and that we may treat all people as they would wish to be treated. Lord, in your mercy...

Closing prayer: Christ Jesus, we thank you for being with us. Watch over us and all our sisters and brothers around the world. Help us to work together in peace and unity, so all people may live free from poverty. Amen.

Activity suggestions

Invite the children to colour in the accompanying illustration and on the back to write their prayer for their sisters and brothers around the world, especially those who are poor.

Encourage the children to hold hands with two or three other people. Ask them to spend a minute together in silence with Jesus and to listen to what he is saying to them.

Invite the children to discuss all that they have heard and thought about today with their grown ups at home. Encourage them to count the times they think that they meet with others in Jesus' name during the week, and each time to remember all our brothers and sisters around the world, especially those who are poor.

See cafod.org.uk/families for more child-friendly activities.

*Gospel passage taken from:

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