

Children's liturgy – Twenty-sixth Sunday in Ordinary Time (Year B)

Colour: green

Song suggestions: Do not be afraid (972, Laudate)
Will you come and follow me (877, Laudate)

Welcome: Today we will reflect on how believing in Jesus can sometimes mean we have to make hard choices. As it is CAFOD's Family Fast Day on Friday, we will also think about the choices we need to make to Go Green and protect and care for the beautiful planet earth, which is our home.

Opening prayer: God of love, strengthen our faith and help us to make the right choices even when it is difficult. Amen.

First reading (optional): Numbers 11:25-29

Psalm: Psalm 18:8, 10, 12-14 r. 9

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

Gospel: Mark 9:38-41

One day John came to Jesus and said, "Lord, we saw a man curing the sick in your name, and because we did not know him, we told him to stop!"

"Do not try to stop him," Jesus told them, "because no one who performs a miracle in my name will be able soon afterwards to say evil things about me. For whoever is not against us is for us. I assure you that anyone who gives you a drink of water because you belong to me will certainly receive his reward.

Gospel reflection: What do you remember about the gospel reading that we heard today?

Jesus tells the disciples that anyone who is not against him, who is not Jesus' enemy, is his friend. And Jesus says that anyone who treats people well because they follow him will be loved by him and be rewarded in heaven.

Do you believe that Jesus is our friend, who loves and cares for all of us always? I do!

But how do we show that we are friends or followers of Jesus? What would Jesus like us to do?

Just like Jesus cares for us all, he asks us to care for one another. Not just the people we know, our friends and our family, but for all people around the world. And to show our love and care for others in everything that we do.

This means being kind and generous and friendly and helpful. It can mean making sure everyone has enough food to eat, and clean water to drink. But it can also mean a bit more than that, like sticking up for what is right and what we believe in.

We might have to choose to do the right thing when others are doing something wrong. We might need to speak out when we see something happening that we know is not right or fair.

It can be really hard to be different and to stick to what we believe in. Sometimes it can even be a little bit painful, if others get angry and upset with us or laugh at us. But Jesus is with us, and he tells us that it will be all right in the end. Knowing he is there beside us can help us to be brave.

One thing that we all need to do to show our love for others is to care for our planet, which we all share.

Luana lives in the Amazon rainforest. She lives in a country called Brazil, but the rainforest is so big it covers nine countries! She lives with her grandmother Dona Sonia.

The Amazon rainforest is very important for the earth's climate. Luana looks after the place where she lives. She says, "The Amazon is important for everyone, for the whole world, and not just for me."

To find out more about Luana, how she cares for the rainforest, and how CAFOD is helping her and her community, share the primary schools Family Fast Day film with the children. Available from cafod.org.uk/primary/harvest

The people in Luana's community hope they can continue to look after the natural world where they are, and that everywhere in the world people will take more care of nature.

Luana says, "Why should we protect the environment? Because without nature, people wouldn't have anything. From nature comes our food, our fruits and it also protects our waters. Without nature there wouldn't be any water, it would end."

She has this message for children in the UK: "You should never give up on your dreams and you should help nature in your own countries."

We are all called to play our own part in looking after the earth and supporting others throughout the world, like Luana, who are doing their best to care for God's creation. Jesus, our friend, gives us strength and courage to do this.

Working together, if we show our love for others and play our part in protecting our planet, we can try to bring about true hope for the future of the earth and of all people.

Friday is CAFOD's Family Fast Day, and so perhaps in the coming week we can do our best to make the right choices and to share what we have. Perhaps we can Go Green and Brighten Up the world by fundraising for CAFOD, to support families like Luana's.

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

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God's wonderful gift of creation has been given to all people to share, both now and in the future. What can we do to help look after this gift for ourselves and for people in the future?

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

Jesus calls us to help those who are in need. Let us remember this as we pray together:

We pray for all people throughout the world: that they may have their fair share of the gifts of creation, which have been given by God to us all. Lord, in your mercy...

We pray for all people who are working to protect the earth: that God may give them strength in their work and inspire us all to do what we can to care for the world. Lord, in your mercy....

We pray for our parish, family and friends: that we may be inspired to do the right thing even when it's hard and to share what we have so that all people may have enough. Lord, in your mercy...

Closing prayer: Generous God, we thank you for creating such a beautiful world. May we do all that we can to protect it for all people today and in the future. Amen.

Activity suggestions

Invite the children to colour in the accompanying illustration of people caring for the environment. How many different ways can they spot that people are caring for the earth in the picture? Encourage the children to write or draw on the back how they will care for the earth, Go Green and Brighten Up the world this week.

Encourage the children to Go Green to Brighten Up the world and fundraise for CAFOD this Harvest. Whether it's a vibrant green clothes day, a pea green soup lunch or a bright green bake sale. However they raise money, can they make it bright green? For activities and resources to support Family Fast Day with the children visit **cafod.org.uk/primary/harvest**

Remind the children to share all that they heard and thought about with the people at home during the week. Ask them to do what they can to care for the environment and to see if they can raise money to support communities like Luana's around the world.