

## Week 3: 'Respect for all Peoples' (2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday in Lent, Year A - Sunday 20<sup>th</sup> February 2005)

### FOCUS FOR THE LEADER:

Christians claim and share a common spiritual heritage. We are called to work for understanding, harmony and peace among all peoples, including those of different faiths. Ecumenism happens among those who are baptised. We also need to seek a deeper understanding of those who do not share our commitment to Jesus Christ. Interfaith activity has borne much fruit in recent decades.

### FOR OLDER CHILDREN

#### GOSPEL ACCLAMATION:

Gospel Acclamation 2 for Lent Martin Foster



Praise to you, Lord Je-sus Christ, Son of the Fa-ther, Word of God.

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#### GOSPEL: Matthew 17:1-9

*In this week's Gospel, we hear a story about how Jesus's face shone like the sun.*

#### Breaking open the Gospel:

Remind the children that, last week, they were asked to think of ways they can be more like Jesus. This is very important during Lent.

- Ask the children if they have ever heard their friends talking about a new film or television programme and, because of what their friends are saying, they decide they really want to see it. Ask what it was like to hear about the film, how it made them look forward to seeing the film. Consider asking them to talk in two's or three's about their experience of this.
- Tell the children that, in this week's Gospel, we hear the story of how Jesus goes up on a high mountain with three of his disciples: Peter, James and John. Explain to the children that we are going to enter the scene of what was happening in a meditation. Make sure that the space is comfortable for the children and, perhaps, have some quiet music in the background. Stress to them that you know how difficult it is to go from being really active to being really quiet; but tell them that this is a special quiet time for them to be with Jesus – listening to him and thinking about what he has

to say in the story. Get the children to find a space to sit with their legs crossed on the floor with some space around them. If your meeting place has carpet on the floor, you might invite them to lay down and make themselves comfortable – laying on their backs or on their sides or whatever is easiest for them. Help them to become aware of the sounds around them, the music, the sounds outside the room where you are. Get them to become aware of their breathing – not to change it in any way, but to become aware of it. Then invite them to start from the top of their heads and go right to the tip of their toes to feel their bodies relaxing on the floor. Get them to be aware of their clothes resting on their skin. Ask them how they are feeling. Are they happy or sad, angry or tired, excited – just to notice how they are feeling. Then invite them to breathe in all the good thing they know will make them happy and breath out anything that has either hurt or upset them.

Then, invite them to imagine themselves in the story in the Gospel that they heard. Read the following text slowly, pausing to allow the children to enter into the story. "It is a warm and sunny day and are one of the disciples in the story. Which one are you and why? You are with the other two disciples relaxing in the warm sunshine after a hard morning's work, when you notice a familiar figure walking towards you. You recognise him as Jesus. Greet Jesus in the way you want to. Jesus sits down with the three of you and you all speak about the day so far. After a short while, Jesus invites you all to go on a journey with him to a quiet place to a mountain; he wants to spend more time with you. How do you feel about going on a journey with Jesus and spending more time with him?"

As you walk long the road you talk and laugh with Jesus and the other two disciples to the mountain. You have the chance to speak with Jesus. What do you want to say to him as you walk along the road? It can be about anything. It can be about what you have learnt today or about what is happening in school or at home. Talk to Jesus now as you would to our best friend. And listen to what He has to say to you as you approach the mountain.

As you reach the mountain the three of you sit down; you are tired after the journey. Jesus walks on a little ahead and suddenly before your eyes you see Jesus transformed into someone you do not recognise. Wow! His face shone like a sun and his clothes became so dazzling as light that it was difficult to see Jesus as it was hurting your eyes. Just as you

went to speak with the other two disciples, you see Moses and Elijah coming to talk with Jesus. What are you thinking as you see the three talking together. Peter gets up to speak to Jesus about making three shelters for them.

As he does this, a bright cloud covers Jesus, Moses and Elijah and a voice suddenly from the cloud saying, "This is my Son, the Beloved, listen to him". As you hear the voice, you become scared and frightened and you crouch down on the floor in fear. Jesus comes over to you and touches your shoulders telling you not to be afraid. When you slowly raise your eyes and look around you see that there is no one else apart from Jesus and your friends beside you. Jesus comes and sits beside you. What would you like to say to Jesus now about what you have seen? Is there anything you do not understand? Spend a moment speaking with Jesus and listen to his response to you.

Jesus now turns to you says "You are so special to me just like I am to my Father. I want you to listen to me, like I do to my Father. Then, you can be like me, you can follow me. How does it feel to hear these words, to hear that you are special to Jesus? Spend a moment thinking about this.

You become aware that it is time to leave Jesus and your friends so you say goodbye to them in the way that you want to and walk down the mountain thinking about all that you have seen. As you walk down the mountain. You become aware that you are not walking down the mountain with the warm sun are your back but back inside this room listening to the sound of the music in the background and noises that are around you.

Once again become aware of our breathing, your body resting on the floor. When you are ready, open your eyes. Jesus gave his disciples a preview of what it would be like after the resurrection. – a preview. What was it like for you?"

- Ask the children how Christians listen to Jesus today. Christians from all the different churches believe that Jesus speaks to us when we listen to the stories from the bible. Ask if they believe that. Ask if they believe that Jesus speaks to us when we listen to our priests, our ministers, our catechists, our teachers and our parents when they teach us about God.

**A Creed** – a series of questions to which the children are invited to reply, "We do."

- Do you believe that God speaks to us and wants us to listen?
- Do you believe that Jesus came to give us a preview of what is to come.
- Do you believe in the Holy Spirit, who helps us to understand what God is like?
- Do you believe in the Holy, Catholic Church, where we come to learn about God?
- Do you believe that God is asking us to share our faith with those around us?



### Intercessions

Jesus has told us to ask God for what we need, so as God's children, we pray

- for all God's family, for our Church leaders, for our teachers, our catechists and our parents and for ourselves – that we all learn to reach out to one another, that we all try to be loving and caring people, we say. *Response: Lord, hear our prayer.*
- for God's beautiful world, that we look after it with loving care, we say. *Response: Lord, hear our prayer.*
- for all those who are hungry or sad, lonely or sick, we say. *Response: Lord, hear our prayer.*
- For all who live in our parish who need our prayers, we say. *Response: Lord, hear our prayer.*

Loving Father, we ask you to listen to these prayers in the name of Jesus, our Lord. *Amen.*

## FOR YOUNGER CHILDREN:

### GOSPEL ACCLAMATION:



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### GOSPEL: Matthew 17:1-9

*In this week's Gospel, we hear a story about how Jesus's face shone like the sun.*

### Breaking open the Gospel:

Remind the children that, last week, they were asked to think of ways they can be more like Jesus. This is very important during Lent.

- Have some party things on a table for the children to see – things like invitations, balloons, cake, sweets, a party bag, etc. Ask the children what they see, what they think it is for. Ask them if they like going to parties, what makes them look forward to going to parties. Parties are happy occasions. Ask them if they hope they will be invited to their friends' birthday parties.



- In this week's Gospel, we hear the story of how Jesus goes up on a high mountain with three of his disciples, Peter, James and John. Tell the children that, in this week's Gospel, we hear the story of how Jesus goes up on a high mountain with three of his disciples: Peter, James and John. Explain to the children that we are going to enter the scene of what was happening in a meditation. Make sure that the space is comfortable for the children and, perhaps, have some quiet music in the background.

Stress to them that you know how difficult it is to go from being really active to being really quiet; but tell them that this is a special quiet time for them to be with Jesus – listening to him and thinking about what he has to say in the story. Get the children to find a space to sit with their legs crossed on the floor with some space around them. If your meeting place has carpet on the floor, you might invite them to lay down and make themselves comfortable – laying on their backs or on their sides or whatever is easiest for them. Help them to become aware of the sounds around them, the music, the sounds outside the room where you are. Get them to become aware of their breathing – not to change it in any way, but to become aware of it. Then invite them to start from the top of their heads and go right to the tip of their toes to feel their bodies relaxing on the floor. Get them to be aware of their clothes resting on their skin. Ask them how they are feeling. Are they happy or sad, angry or tired, excited – just to notice how they are feeling. Then invite them to breathe in all the good thing they know will make them happy and breath out anything that has either hurt or upset them.

Then, invite them to imagine themselves in the story in the Gospel that they heard. Read the following text slowly, pausing to allow the children to enter into the story. "I want to invite you to imagine yourself in the story that you have heard earlier. You are walking with Jesus and your friends to a mountain where Jesus has wanted to take you for a long time. As the four of you walk along you talk and laugh together. You feel so happy to be with your friends especially Jesus because he is your best friend.

As you reach the mountain, Jesus walks on a little ahead and you run on to be with Jesus, but Jesus tells you to rest after your long walk. Just as you turn to speak with your other two friends about the day so far, suddenly you become aware of a very bright light and you realise that it is Jesus who is shining like the sun; he is so bright that it hurts your eyes – like it does when you look right into the sun. Then you see two other people coming to speak with Jesus also – Moses and Elijah. What are you thinking as you see the three talking together. Peter gets up to speak to Jesus about making three tents for them.

Just then, a bright cloud covers Jesus, and a voice suddenly from the cloud saying, "This is my Son, the Beloved, listen to him". What do you think? Are you a little frightened? Jesus comes over to you and touches your shoulder and tells you not to be afraid. When you slowly raise your eyes and look around, you see that there is no one else apart from Jesus and your friends beside you who are also

scared and frightened. Jesus comes and sits beside you. What would you like to say to Jesus now about what you have seen? Spend a moment speaking with Jesus and listen to his response to you.

Jesus now turns to you says “You are so special to me just like I am to my Father. I want you to listen to me, like I do to my Father. Then, you can be my follower.” How does it feel to hear these words, that you are special to Jesus? Spend a moment thinking about this.

You become aware that it is time to leave Jesus and your friends so you say goodbye to them in the way that you want to and walk down the mountain thinking about all that you have seen. As you walk down the mountain, you become aware that you are not walking down the mountain with the warm sun on your back but back inside this room listening to the sound of the music in the background and noises that are around you.

Once again become aware of our breathing, your body resting on the floor. When you are ready, open your eyes.” Jesus was telling the disciples what they had to look forward to after he died and rose again. Ask the children how they are feeling about this story now?

- Ask the children how Christians listen to Jesus today. Christians from all the different churches believe that Jesus speaks to us when we listen to the stories from the bible. Ask if they believe that. Ask if they believe that Jesus speaks to us when we

listen to our priests, our ministers, our catechists, our teachers and our parents when they teach us about God.

**A Creed** – a series of questions to which the children are invited to reply, “We do.”

- Do you believe that God loves you very much?
- Do you believe that Jesus came to tell us what God is like?
- Do you believe that we come to church to learn about God?

### Intercessions

Jesus has told us to ask God for what we need, so as God’s children, we pray

- for all God’s family so that we may share the Good News with everyone. *Lord, in your mercy; hear our prayer.*
- for God’s beautiful world that we look after it with loving care. *Lord, in your mercy; hear our prayer.*
- for all who are hungry or sad, lonely or sick, today we pray for . . . . *Lord, in your mercy; hear our prayer.*

Loving Father, we ask you to listen to these prayers in the name of Jesus, our Lord. *Amen*