

Third Sunday of Lent Year C –24th March 2019

Introduction

Today is the third Sunday of Lent. (Ask the children if they can tell you what we mean by Lent?) A time of forty days of preparation for Easter, beginning on Ash Wednesday. In Lent we do three things to bring us closer to God, so that we may truly celebrate the joy of Easter. During Lent we **PRAY** more, we **FAST** (give up something we like), and we show love or **CHARITY** to those around us by being generous and sharing and not being selfish. The most important of these three actions is prayer. As we are almost halfway through Lent ask the children about the things they have been doing to prepare for Jesus' resurrection at Easter.

Make the Sign of the Cross – a sign of the love God has for us. (This is optional, as we have already done this at the start of Holy Mass, but for young children it helps to demonstrate and practice how to do this correctly.)

Light the candles on the table next to the Lectionary. An adult lights the candles).

Penitential Act

Ask the children to think about how they have behaved in the past week. Ask them if they have always been kind and helpful to others, obedient to their parents, listened to their teachers etc.

Lead the children in singing the "Sorry Song".

We are sorry,
Truly sorry,
Heal us Lord,
In Your love,
Help us to do better,
Help us to be kinder, (sung to tune of Frere Jacques)
Forgive us,
Forgive us.

NO Gloria DURING LENT

All stand to welcome the Gospel singing the **Gospel Acclamation:**

Praise to You Lord,
King of Glory,
Help us to,
Change our lives,
Strengthen our faith, (same tune as above)
In God's Good News,
Praise to You, Lord,
King of Glory!

Gospel

Select the correct Gospel from the Children's Lectionary. This week it's on page 27, Third Sunday of Lent, in the Book of Readings. The Lectionary Adapted for Children." (Year C)

Luke 13:3, 5-9.

"A reading from the Holy Gospel according to St. Luke".

Explain and demonstrate – make three crosses: one on your forehead, one on your lips and one on your heart (in this way we think God's word, speak God's word and keep God's word in our hearts) **as we say together "Glory to You, O Lord."**

Read the Gospel aloud to the children. At the end say: **"The Gospel of the Lord"**.

All reply: **"Praise to You, Lord Jesus Christ"**. Ask everyone to be seated.

Lead a Discussion on the Gospel

What is a parable? (A special story that Jesus tells to teach us something)

When the man in the parable went to check on his fruit tree what did he find? (There was nothing growing on it). Ask the children if they have ever tried to grow something and it didn't quite work - like Cress seeds, or Sunflower seeds, for example?

When the man realised the tree had not grown fruit what did he ask the gardener to do? (He asked him to cut it down as it was no use.)

The gardener asked the man to give it one more year, one last chance before cutting it down.

What do you think the man was willing to do to help the tree bear fruit? (Water it, dig the soil, feed it and give it lots of attention).

Just as the gardener didn't give up on the tree, who will never give up on any of us? (God will always love us and take care of us no matter what)

Discuss with the children what Jesus will help them with? (For example -to be kind to others and to forgive others). By doing these things we will bear the fruits of God's love.

How can we "bear the fruit" of Jesus' love during Lent? (By choosing to do good things: especially remembering to **pray**, and to **fast by giving up something we like**, and to show **charity** to others by not being selfish and being kind and generous).

Remember - if you're tempted to give up - ask Jesus and Mary His mother and our heavenly mother, to help you to try your best.

Prayers of the Faithful (optional/ time dependent)

You may wish to prepare some of these yourselves or ask the children for their prayers. Here are some suggestions for today:

Lord Jesus, help us to try our best during Lent to come closer to You by **praying** to You - remembering to tell You that we love You, that we are sorry for our faults and also to thank You for all the love that You show us.

Lord, in Your mercy.

All reply: "**Hear our prayer.**"

Lord Jesus, help us to try our best during Lent to **fast** by giving up something that we like and to show **charity** by not being selfish and being kind and generous to others especially those who have less than we have.

Lord, in Your mercy.

All reply: "**Hear our prayer.**"

Closing Prayer

Hail Mary, full of grace.....

Amen.

Now ask for volunteers for the Offertory Procession. After the procession, children return quietly to sit with their families in church.