

EXPLORING THE GOSPELS WITH CHILDREN

For use in your home, school or parish

Information for Leaders, Parents or Teachers

This resource can be used in parishes by family Mass or children's liturgy groups, at home around the kitchen table, or in a classroom setting. For each week during Lent there is an activity for the group leader, family or teacher.

The activity relates directly to the Gospel reading for that Sunday and to the stories of two of the children who feature on this year's Trócaire box, Alex from Kenya and Jocsan from Honduras.

This Lent, Trócaire is highlighting how mothers are protecting their families from the effects of climate change in Kenya, and from the actions of a logging company in Honduras.

Curriculum Links

Catholic Preschool and Primary Religious Education Curriculum for Ireland

Christian Morality

- Human Dignity
- Social Teaching of the Church

Liturgy and Prayer

- Liturgical Year

Grow in Love

Lent

Love for One's Neighbour

Easter Liturgical Season

Religious Education Curriculum for Northern Ireland

The Revelation of God: The Life of Jesus

- The Ministry of Jesus
- Passion, Death and Resurrection

The Christian Church

- Worship and Prayer

Morality

- Respect for Each Other
- Respect for the Environment

FIRST SUNDAY OF LENT

Gospel of Matthew (4:1–11)

Theme: Jesus fasts for forty days and is tempted. *What distracts me during my day?*

Extracts from the Gospel Reading

After spending forty days and nights without food, Jesus was hungry.

Jesus says, 'Scripture tells us that people do not live on bread alone but on every word that God speaks.'

Then the devil tempted Jesus again by showing him a glimpse of all the kingdoms of the world. 'All this belongs

to me', he said, 'but I will give this power and glory to you if you worship me.'

Jesus answered him, 'Scripture tells us to worship the Lord our God and serve him alone.'

This is the Gospel of the Lord.
Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.

Alex from Kenya eats ugali for breakfast with his family. At school, he eats a mix of rice and beans called githeri. He eats it with his friends under the acacia tree to shade from the sun. For supper he usually eats githeri again at home with

his family. Alex's mother says that it is very important for their family to eat together, because while they eat, they also talk about how they can help each other with any challenges they are facing.

This is Alex's favourite part of the day.

Activity

With an adult, in your school, home or parish, can you bake bread? Here is a recipe you can try.

Ingredients

- 1 tub natural yogurt 500g
- 360g porridge oats
- One egg
- 3–4 tbsp milk
- 2 tsp baking soda
- 1/2 tsp salt

Did you ever wonder how they make bread for Holy Communion? Why not ask someone in your parish this week.

Method

Preheat your oven to 180°C/350°F/Gas Mark 4. Grease a standard loaf tin (2lbs/900g – 18.5cm x 11.5cm x 9cm) using butter or simply use parchment paper.

In a mixing bowl, combine the yogurt, egg, milk and baking soda.

Ensure all ingredients are well blended into a doughy texture; then transfer mixture to loaf tin.

Cut a line down the centre of your loaf and sprinkle with a few nuts and seeds.

Place in the oven and cook for 45–55 minutes (depending on your oven).

Remove loaf from tin. Return to oven upside down and allow loaf to cook for 5 minutes more to make loaf crispy.

Leave to cool on a wire tray.

Enjoy!

SECOND SUNDAY OF LENT

Gospel of Matthew (17:1–9)

Theme: The face of Jesus shone like the sun. What are the special moments in my life?

Extracts from the Gospel Reading

With the disciples, Peter, James and John, Jesus climbed a mountain to pray. Jesus' appearance was changed before them: his face shone like the sun and his clothes became bright as light.

Just then, Moses and Elijah appeared to them, talking with Jesus.

Peter spoke and said to Jesus, 'Master, it is good that we are here, if you so wish, I will build three tents: one for

you, one for Moses and one for Elijah.'

At that moment, a cloud descended and covered them up on the mountaintop, and the disciples were afraid. Then a voice from the cloud spoke, 'This is my son the Beloved with whom I am well pleased. Listen to him.'

This is the Gospel of the Lord.
Praise to you Lord Jesus Christ.

Alex's mother Madris says that her special moment each day is the evening: 'I love the evening, because I have time to talk to my children. After cooking, I get some rest, I sit with my children to talk and discuss before they go to sleep. They often play games together and we sing songs as a family.'

Activity

On a piece of paper, draw the outline of your hand. For each of your five fingers, write or draw a special moment you remember in your life. In the palm of your hand, say thank you to God because God holds us in the palm of his hand on good and bad days. You can hang these hands up in your church, your classroom or in your home. This is something adults and children can do together.

Alex at his home in Kenya. Photo credit: Gary Moore



THIRD SUNDAY OF LENT

Gospel of John (4:5–42)

Theme: A spring of water welling up to eternal life. *What are the important things in my life?*

Extracts from the Gospel Reading

Jesus said to the Samaritan woman, 'If you only knew the gift of God and if you knew who it is that is asking you for a drink, you yourself would have asked, and he would have given you living water.'

The woman answered, 'Sir, you have no bucket and this well is deep, where can you get this living water?'

Jesus said to her, 'Whoever drinks of this water will be thirsty again; but

whoever drinks of the water that I shall give will never be thirsty; for the water that I shall give will become in them a spring of water welling up to eternal life.'

The woman said to Jesus, 'Sir, give me this water, that I may never be thirsty again.'

This is the Gospel of the Lord.
Praise to you Lord Jesus Christ.

Alex's mother Madris collects water from a local river. It is a three-hour round trip to walk there and back. She collects it in a barrel that holds 20 litres of water. She carries the barrel on her back, using a strap around her forehead.

Activity

Fill your own container of water and walk a distance that is manageable for you. How does it feel to carry the water?

Madris collecting water for her family in Kenya. Photo credit: Gary Moore



FOURTH SUNDAY OF LENT

Gospel of John (9:1–41)

Theme: He went off and washed himself, and came away with his sight restored.
What do I love seeing every day?

Extracts from the Gospel Reading

As Jesus walked along, he saw a man who had been blind from birth.

Jesus says, 'As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world.' As he said this, he spat on the ground, made clay with the spittle, and rubbed it on the eyes of the blind man. Then

he said, 'Go and wash in the Pool of Siloam.' So, he went and washed and came back able to see.

This is the Gospel of the Lord.
Praise to you Lord Jesus Christ.

Jocsan from Honduras loves to play a hide-and-seek game. He takes a branch with leaves, shows it to his friends, then hides it. His friends look for the branch. When the branch is found, the players describe what they saw as they searched for the branch.

Activity

Play Jocsan's game. Go for a walk and point out what you can see. Visit the church; see the stained-glass windows; find the place where the Gospel is read from.

Jocsan at his home in Honduras. Photo credit: Simon Burch



FIFTH SUNDAY OF LENT

Gospel of John (11:1–45)

Theme: I am the resurrection and the life. What brings happiness to me every day?

Extracts from the Gospel Reading

Now, there was a man named Lazarus who was from Bethany, the village of Mary and her sister Martha.

Lazarus had died and had been in the tomb for four days, when Jesus came to visit.

Mary said to Jesus, 'Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died. But I know that even now, whatever you ask from God, he will give you.' Jesus said, 'Your brother will rise again.'

Jesus was deeply moved again and came to the tomb and he lifted his eyes and said, 'Father, I thank you for you have heard me, I know that you always hear me.'

When Jesus had said this, he cried out in a loud voice, 'Lazarus, come out.' Lazarus came out, his hands and feet tied up with linen strips and his face wrapped in a cloth. So Jesus said to them, 'Untie him and let him go.'

This is the Gospel of the Lord.
Praise to you Lord Jesus Christ.

Angela, Jocsan and baby Helen at their home in Honduras. Photo credit: Simon Burch

Jocsan's mother Angela

says that nature takes care of us with plants. The trees provide oxygen for breathing. The noni tree in their forest provides food and medicine. The rivers and water are a big part of their life. However, logging companies are destroying the nature around them by cutting down trees. Angela is working with others in the community to protect the forest.

Activity

Draw and colour in a large tree trunk and branches. Cut leaves out of paper. On each leaf, write the things you are thankful for and stick them onto the tree's branches. If some of your leaves are dedicated to people, take the time this week to tell them how much they mean to you. If some of your leaves are dedicated to prayers that were answered, take the time to thank God.



PALM SUNDAY

Gospel of Matthew (21:1–11)

Theme: Blessings on Him who comes in the name of the Lord. How do we celebrate in our lives?

Extracts from the Gospel Reading

When they drew near Jerusalem and arrived at Bethphage, on the Mount of Olives, Jesus sent two of his disciples, saying, 'Go to the village in front of you, and as soon as you enter, you will find there a donkey tied up with its colt by her. Untie them and bring them to me. If anyone says something to you, say, "The Lord needs them, and he will send them back immediately."' "

The disciples went and did as Jesus had instructed them, and they brought the donkey with its colt. Then they threw their cloaks on it back and Jesus mounted.

Many people also spread their cloaks on the road, while others cut leafy branches from the trees and spread them on the road. The people who walked ahead of Jesus and those who followed him began to shout: 'Hosanna to the Son of David. Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord. Hosanna, praise to him in the highest heaven.'

When Jesus entered Jerusalem, all the city was disturbed. The people asked, 'Who is this man?'

And the crowd answered, 'This is the prophet Jesus from Nazareth in Galilee.'

This is the Gospel of the Lord.

Praise to you Lord Jesus Christ.

Activity

Think of a time somebody new joined your parish/neighbourhood/school. How did you welcome them?

Do you know any hymns of welcome? This is one example you can learn.

All Are Welcome

By Marty Haugen

Let us build a house where love can dwell
and all can safely live,
a place where saints and children tell
how hearts learn to forgive.
Built of hopes and dreams and visions,
rock of faith and vault of grace;

here the love of Christ shall end divisions.
All are welcome, all are welcome,
all are welcome in this place.

Let us build a house where all are named,
their songs and visions heard
and loved and treasured, taught and
claimed

as words within the Word.

Built of tears and cries and laughter,
prayers of faith and songs of grace,
let this house proclaim from floor to
rafter.

All are welcome, all are welcome,
all are welcome in this place.

EASTER SUNDAY

Gospel of John (20:1–9)

Theme: Jesus is risen – we celebrate today. *How do we celebrate in our lives?*

Extracts from the Gospel Reading

Early in the morning, on the first day after the Sabbath, while it was still dark, Mary of Magdala came to the tomb and saw that the stone over the tomb had been moved away. So she ran to Peter and the other disciple whom Jesus loved. And she said to them, 'They have taken the Lord out of the tomb and we do not know where they have laid him.'

Simon Peter joined Peter and the other disciple and entered the tomb; they

saw the linen cloths lying there. The napkin, which had been around his head was not lying like the other linen cloths but rolled up in a place by itself. They all saw this and believed. They had not yet understood Scripture that foretold Jesus rising from the dead. After that, the disciples went home again.

This is the Gospel of the Lord.
Praise to you Lord Jesus Christ.

Activity

Think of a time when you were surprised. How did you celebrate?

Did you know that going to Mass is a celebration? What are the ways we celebrate Jesus in Mass on Easter Sunday?

Alex, Madris and Joy-Faith at the home in Kenya. Photo credit: Gary Moore



Pray for the Families in Kenya and Honduras

Dear God,

Speak to our hearts and help us to see that we are one big family.

Old or young, short or tall, wherever we live, you made us all.

Help us to share, however hard it seems, to make our world fair,

And live out our dreams.

Amen.

Prayer on p. 8 from CAFOD

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