

Session 1 Introduction

Parents

Welcome to you all. Thanks to the Catechists for their commitment. Letter sent out with a variety of replies. Why it was so 'straight'. Responses: from moving and humble to cynical. Previous years' experience – people disappearing afterwards. This is not just 'another thing' to put in the diary but a lifelong commitment to Our Lord. Pope Francis: "Christianity is not a part-time occupation".

Baptism promises broken – eg. 'first teachers in the ways of faith' – don't want to be. Some objected last year and quietly withdrew or just got out their phones during the catechetical session – what message did that give to the catechists and children? So no phones allowed here! Our catechists will help you teach your children and you will see the enthusiasm of the children when this happens. Different 'culture' now – sense of entitlement and anger if not given – no one is 'entitled' to 'grace'; it is a free gift. Cf. Christmas carol – 'where meek souls will receive him, still the dear Christ enters in'.

Holy Communion is about our life with the Lord pure and simple – not about joining a football team or taking part in a dance show – you wouldn't turn up without 'training'. Some comments we have heard: "I don't see why I should have to do this..." – too much 'me' and not enough 'him'. The reason we are here is all too obvious: "do this in memory of me"

Many people have withdrawn from practising their faith because it is no longer 'relevant' to their lives – yet many still want the 'fringe benefits'. They feel they can come along when they want and not when other things are 'more important'. What does this say to parents who do manage to be part of the Christian community despite the trials and difficulties?

This can't carry on. Soon there will be no 'church' left – what do you think it means anyway? That being said: many families have to 'juggle' with all sorts of challenges: work schedules, separated from partners and sharing care, to say nothing of what is for many a deep 'crisis' of faith – can I still believe in anything? So a huge decision awaits you this evening: do I want to stay with the Lord or not? Give yourself time and read the contents of these folders.

The folders are now given out and parents asked to fill in the information forms

Explanation of the programme and folders: The file contains:

Information sheet – please fill in and leave today. It will be kept in as confidential file

Extracts from the Rite of Baptism – what you have promised

Articles for reflection:

'Keeping the Faith' – Joanna Moorhead (January 2000)

‘Communion should never be the lazy fall-back for families looking for their fill of special occasions’ – Michael Kelly (September 2018)

‘Archbishop is right to put parents on sacramental spot’ – Sandra Carey (December 2019)

‘The Church can open its doors to a fresh era of family faith’ – Wendy Grace (December 2019)

‘Rites of Initiation into the Catholic faith must be more than an elaborate version of ‘Say Yes to the Dress’ - Michael Kelly (December 2019)

Schedule of dates for the programme:

Dates of sessions and events – please come along. Do not drop off your children and go away. Read them carefully and put the dates in your diary. Group sessions – children placed in groups with parents – no chatting or distraction. The work is specially written so it ‘evolves’ each year and can change if necessary. Passports – why? Sometimes we will have sessions separately, some together. Read the promises you made at your children’s baptism and ask yourselves the questions on the document enclosed. Read all the other documents at your leisure – mainly from the Irish papers, but honest and truthful – question: does this apply to me?

The Partnership of Prayer – explain its significance

Prayer partners – significance of ‘representatives’ of the community – please visit them and become their friends. This is great for both parties. Any suggestions are welcome but not family members. Don’t need to decide until February. Teas and celebrations – not optional!

Engage and involve children in liturgies and Masses – critical to show them how to belong. This is especially the case over Christmas. Singing and acting is good for them. This is part of a new spiritual journey for you – may be the first one. It will ask much of you but much will be given. We recognise people’s difficulties and problems and we want to help – that is what we are there for. Please feel free to speak to either of us or any of the catechists, who also have to juggle their lives – doing this for love – we should all respect this

Ask your children to write an Advent prayer – don’t google it! – and bring it back next week for us to pray together. Any questions? Next week we will continue our work on Advent which has begun this evening as well as asking how we will be celebrating Christmas. The children will be given: lanyards for each week, folders to take home and bring each time, passports to be brought to Mass

Children

3)

Meet in the hall to be placed in their groups and for activities. Colour in your cover picture and stick it on the front of your folder, then carefully colour in the picture of the Advent wreath. What does the wreath signify? A circle which has no beginning or end, represents God as so great that he has who has no beginning or end. Evergreens: they stay green all year and tell us that God never changes. Berries: these are red and represent suffering – Jesus came into the world as a poor child, homeless and vulnerable and to die for us all on the cross. Candles: there are five candles, each representing one week of Advent and then one for Christmas when Advent is completed. There are three violet candles and one pink - for the third Sunday of Advent, which I sometimes called ‘Gaudete Sunday’, which means ‘rejoicing Sunday’. In some churches the priests wear rose coloured vestments instead of purple ones on this Sunday as well. The first candle represents hope -the hope of the people of Israel that someone would come and save them. The second represent peace – ‘a peace the world cannot give’, as Our Lord himself promises us. The fourth candle represents love – sent to us from God through his Son, Jesus Christ. The white candle, which is lit on Christmas Day represents the light of Jesus come into our darkness to give us the life of God which we share with others.

Session 2 Children and parents: Advent and Christmas

The parents and children meet together in their groups and do two activities: the Advent Word search and then the Advent quiz. Then we discuss our family customs for Christmas: the ‘vigilia’ of Poland, sharing Brazilian food, taking family photos, seeing families, playing games, putting ‘baby Jesus’ in the manger, coming to church and of course eating together and opening presents. We share these customs with all the other groups when we come together. What will we be doing this Christmas? What is our hope and prayer at this time? We know full well that our planet is being damaged by greed and exploitation. Do you think we could do anything to make a difference? Also, we know that there is ‘war’ everywhere –how can we be ‘peacemakers’ ourselves? In 2010 a musical called ‘Mother Mary’ was written here and began with two people doing their Christmas shopping and lamenting what had happened: “Supermarket trolleys filled with food we’ll surely waste. People living far and near who’d dearly love a taste of what we daily throw away, neglected in our need. How much could we help them if we only curbed our greed? Selfishness consumes us so we cannot hear them plead.” Ask our children to write down what they think their ‘gift’ is that they could give Jesus and all these notes could be placed in a special box. Perhaps we could ask others to do this as well and bring the box up to our tree during our Christmas Eve Masses. So what can we do to make this holy time special for Jesus and our families? What can we do to share what we have with others? Think about what has just happened this weekend – A Christmas Fair, half of the proceeds of which will be given to Lawrence House, and the AlterNativity project which can change for ever the way we do our shopping.

Session 3

Preparing for Christmas

4)

Gather everyone in groups and ask the following questions:

What does 'Happy Christmas' mean to you?

How do you celebrate it? – eg. family customs

What are you looking forwards to this year?

What is the best thing about Christmas for you?

Make notes of the responses

Drama: "It would make me very happy this Christmas if.....

Both I want you to be happy, always happy in the Lord

Reader 1 It would make me very happy this Christmas if I got lots of toys, games and everything I asked for

Reader 2 It would make me very happy this Christmas if everyone who had no home, could find somewhere to live, and all those people who were flooded out could get back to their homes again

Reader 1 It would make me very happy this Christmas if I got loads of sweets, biscuits, cakes and treats

Reader 2 It would make me very happy this Christmas if all the people in the world who are hungry could be fed

Reader 1 It would make me very happy this Christmas if I could have so many presents that I could not get into my room

Reader 2 It would make me very happy this Christmas if I had a room and a roof over my head in the first place

Reader 1 It would make me very happy this Christmas if I didn't get fed up so easily, if I wasn't bored

Reader 2 It would make me very happy this Christmas if people who had fallen out with each other could say 'sorry' and make it up

Reader 1 It would make me very happy this Christmas if my family did what I wanted all the time

Reader 2 It would make me very happy this Christmas if everyone who has no family could have one

Reader 1 It would make me very happy this Christmas if we didn't have to have boring people round for dinner

Reader 2 It would make me very happy this Christmas if all who are feeling lonely could be wanted by someone

Reader 1 It would make me very happy this Christmas if I had lots of treats

Reader 2 It would make me very happy this Christmas if I knew that all those who are sad could be comforted

Reader 1 It would make me very happy this Christmas if.... It would make me very happy this Christmas if... It would make me very happy if...I don't think I know what would make me really happy any more

Reader 2 It would make me very happy this Christmas if everyone stopped worrying about what made them happy and tried to make others happy instead

Both I want you to be happy, always happy in the Lord

The box – last year's answers to the following:

Dear Jesus, this Christmas I would like to give you

.....

.....

.....

Happy Christmas to you, with love from your friend

Write down your message and put it in the box – your own words! The boxes will be brought up during our Christmas Masses and placed next to the altar

Taking part in the Christmas liturgies in our parishes – who? Practice times

Prayer and song from “Mother Mary” – ‘Souper Trouper’

The Christmas Masses in Hinckley and Earl Shilton were led by our children's liturgy groups which incorporated many of the First Communion group and were lovely celebrations. We hope this will encourage members of this year's group to join the monthly children's liturgy group on a more regular basis.

Session 4 After Christmas

The replies were very revealing. You said that you wanted to give Jesus your love and your heart – what a beautiful thing – and that the best thing about Christmas was not in fact presents but being with your parents how delighted they must have been. So how did this work out for you? What sort of Christmas did you have together – the highlights and the lowlights! Have some discussion in groups and then separate for parents to sort out prayer partners and begin to think about the Mass of Anointing.

Children

In this session parents and children are split up and brought together at the end of the evening.

Just think for a minute, what do you love about God's world in which we live? Write down your replies and then share them with others. Some of your answers might be:

Flowers, the sea, growing plants and vegetables, trees and plants, talking to people, young babies, beautiful sunsets, dogs and animals, The smell of the rain, the sight of rainbows, lakes, sunsets, sunrise, the trees changing colour sun and snow, landscapes, mountains, waterfalls, seasons, clouds (but not i.cloud!), the night sky, the planets, harvest, music, children, food, friendship, grass, laughter, family, hugging and lots of love.

"And God saw what he had made and it was good..."

God made this beautiful world for us live in and to enjoy. We will look at a story to illustrate this. David Kossoff's story of creation read over Dvorak's "Largo" from the "New World Symphony:

This is the story of the beginning of everything, before anything and anyone ever was., when there was only God on his own, a quiet, thoughtful God, full of love to give and with no one to give it to. God had been by himself for a long time. Perhaps he felt a bit empty, even bored, looking out into nothing. Sitting, silent, still. Then suddenly he thought, I need something to do, something to live for; I know, I'll make a world. Mind you, before God started to make the world, he gave it a lot of thought. Big job, not much to go on, no previous experience of such a thing; and no good materials either. 'Right', said God, 'first things first. Some light to work by. Let there be light,' and there was. 'Pleasant effect,' God thought and turned it on and off a few times. Sometimes more dark, sometimes more light, 'and I'll call them night and day,' he said. God then looked at the endless water. 'Too much,' he thought, and decided to halve it. But where to put the other half, nowhere to empty it. So he pointed upwards and the water lifted into a gorgeous roof with every colour and every kind of cloud. God looked up. "I'll call that 'heaven'," he said, "it looks like a nice place to live." So he moved in.

God drew on the waters below with his finger and the land came up – "the earth and the seas" – he said. It looked a bit bare so he covered it with plants and all kinds of vegetation, each with its own seed. Then God thought of a way to improve on his day and night invention, which was a bit harsh on the eyes with its sudden change. He hung outside his home two globes of light – a large one to look after the day (the Sun) and a smaller one for the night (the Moon). Nice effect. Then he made a million smaller moons, which he called stars. God was enjoying himself. "Next," he said, things that fly and move and crawl and swim and walk." He used every colour and shape that came into his mind to make huge sea monsters and birds, tiny insects, delicate dancing creatures and slow heavy ones. Nothing was forgotten. "Multiply", he said, "fill the seas and the land and the sky; there's plenty of room." And so they did. God was pleased with his work, but he still had an odd feeling of

loneliness, of something still to do. He sat looking down into a calm lake, down at his own reflection. Then he smiled. "That's it," he said, "I'll make someone to talk to. A man. He can look like me." So God took some dust and wet it. He moulded it into a shape, like a statue, lying on the ground. Then he bent over it and gently blew into its nostrils. Very slowly, it began to move and got unsteadily to its feet. And they looked at each other. God said, "at last I have a friend...I'll call him Adam."

Here is a slightly different 'take' on the same story: *God is sitting at the edge of the sanctuary and various items are displayed as he speaks:*

Narrator: We have been thinking about God's beautiful world that he made for us and how pleased he was at doing it

God I'm very pleased

Narrator He made the sky and the seas – he loved them

God I love them

Narrator The sun and the moon and the stars. He thought they were brilliant

God They're brilliant

Narrator The plants and the trees

God How good is that?

Narrator God then made the fish in the sea

God Aren't I clever?

Narrator The birds and the animals

God Marvellous

Narrator And last of all, of course, he made you and me, human being to be his friends. He was absolutely delighted

God Friends at last. I'm absolutely delighted!

Narrator And so are we!

God has made this beautiful world for us. He loves it and everything in it. So how do you think we care for God's world? Think of the things we do that might damage God's lovely creation and make a note of them. Think about how people wreck this beautiful world that God has made by being too greedy and selfish and forgetting about the effect their behaviour will have on others. How many people are there who have no food because they cannot grow it – too much water or too little. We will remember too all those many people we have been thinking about who have no homes, no jobs, no food and no water because of what we have done to them. This is caused by changes in the climate and this is caused by us – you and me – using too much fuel and energy and releasing harmful gases into the air which cause the earth to warm up and create horrible weather in some countries. We waste millions of tons of plastic and dump them in the ocean. Only we don't think about them because they're not here in front of us. How can we help them as well as changing our lives?

Some people waste food and energy so there's none left to share. Many beautiful trees are being chopped down to be used for paper and furniture or to provide more grazing land for

cattle. What sort of things do you throw away that you need not? What can we save? Listen to the words of this song:

The party is over, the house is a mess, serviettes, bottles, cans and waste food.
So what will we do with the debris that's left, to leave it here's not very good.
There's so much to get rid of; it's very unfair, the guests could have taken away
to recycle themselves, but they're not really bothered, so they've left me to throw it away.

Chorus:

Throw it away, throw it away. What happens I really don't care.
Throw it away, throw it away, I've not enough room here to spare.
The bottles and tins you can chuck in the bins, and everything else, they just say:
"Just find somewhere secret right out of the way, and fly-tip it or throw it away."

God help the bin men who come to collect the rubbish that's strewn all around.
Shifting that lot's a magnificent feat if it's spread all over the ground.
Why can't we be careful, responsible too, and think of the mess we create,
and what will soon happen because of our waste, the implication for other folks' fate.

Out on the town with my friends for a laugh, wandering along down the street.
I put my hand in my pocket and take out the chocolate, and carefully unwrap the sweet.
What to do with paper that's left no one knows, if I chuck it I might get a fine,
but it's only sweet paper that's really not much, to keep it would be such a bind.

Disposable nappies, what happens to them, when mummy has thrown them all out?
With tons of all rubbish they find themselves piled in a hole that no one knows about.
Biodegradable that cannot be, in a landfill tucked out of the way,
and left there to rot for years, years and more years, and not our problem anyway.

The gas that emits from that underground store is dangerous, polluting the air,
affecting our weather with huge climate change, and permanent harm everywhere,
ruining the planet we need to protect, destroying the world that we know,
with fires in the forest, earthquakes, floods and droughts, and rivers now ceasing to flow.

Chorus

Prayer together and we sing the SPANNED climate change song
Family Homework: Colour in the picture of the Good Shepherd

Do the Moses word search together and see if you can find where all the words are. Put the
sheets in your folder and bring them back next week

Parents

Some of this may stretch into the next session

Discuss the importance of prayer partners as representatives of the parishes and ask parents if there is any particular person they might like to have (it should be a retired person whom they can visit from time to time). Make a list of choices and we will try to find partners for the other children in the meantime. Point out the importance of being at Mass each week and not coming for part of it as some people have been doing. Next time we shall choose which of the First Communion Masses we want to come to, a part of one of which may be said in different languages. Discuss the forthcoming Mass of Anointing and Tea. Next time we can begin to think about catering for it.

Read the story of the rich young man: Mk.10:17-22

“He was setting out on a journey when a man ran up, knelt before him and put this question to him: ‘Good master, what must I do to inherit eternal life?’ Jesus said to him, ‘why do you call me good? No one is good except God alone. You know the commandments: you must not kill, you must not commit adultery; you must not steal, you must not bear false witness, you must not defraud, honour your father and your mother.’ And he said to him ‘Master, I have kept all these from my earliest days.’ Jesus looked steadily at him and loved him, and he said, ‘there is one thing you lack. Go and sell everything you own and give the money to the poor; and you will have treasure in heaven; then come, follow me.’ But his face fell at these words and he went away sad, for he was a man of great wealth.”

Divide people into smaller groups, with different people, not their normal ‘friends’ and put the following questions to them and ask them to note their replies:

Introduce yourselves to each other and say a little about yourselves – please don’t be shy!

Why do you think that people disappear from the practice of their faith at weekly Mass after their children have made their First Holy Communion?

Has this happened to you personally? If so, why? What difficulties do you have in practising your faith – eg. loss of faith, work or family commitments, personal sorrow or tragedy etc.?

What would it take for you to resume the practice of your faith and a life with Our Lord?

What sort of Church do you want to belong to?

Gather people back together and read out some of their responses.

Read the story of the rich young man again.

Meet up in church to see what our children have been doing!

The SPANNED climate change hymn

10)

If you want to change the world, then change your life *(repeat)*
Change your habits, change your thinking,
Change your eating, and your drinking,
If you want to change the world, then change your life

If you want to save the planet, start yourself *(repeat)*
Love the world and fairly use it,
Never damage or abuse it,
If you want to save the planet, start yourself

Realise what we are doing to our earth *(repeat)*
Our water's never clear,
The rain forests disappear
Realise what we are doing to our earth

Do not stash your household rubbish in the bin *(repeat)*
Recycle it, don't throw it,
There's receptacles to stow it
Do not stash your household rubbish in the bin

Don't blame anybody else but only you *(repeat)*
You're the one to make the start
In your head and in your heart
Don't blame anybody else but only you

Eco-friendly is the only way to be
Make the air pure, clean and fresh for you and me
To avoid noise and pollution,
Simply try a new solution
Eco-friendly is the only way to be

If you want to show you care, then do it now *(repeat)*
All our habits we must break,
Our whole future is at stake,
If you want to show you care, then do it now

If you want to change the world, then change your life *(repeat)*
Come on make a start today,
And live simply every day
If you want to change the world, then change your life

God shows us his care; God shows us how to care; Children meet with catechists

Introduction – we will show God's care for his people through three stories – Noah, Abraham and Moses then think about how he cares for us and shows us how to care for each other. A little later in church we will sing a lovely hymn about Noah building his ark.

God's care for us: We think of this in the hymns we sing like All things bright and beautiful; Morning has broken; My God loves me. Can anyone think of other hymns that tell us of God's care for us?

Here are some stories about how God cared for his people in the time before Jesus was born:

Noah: It wasn't long after God made the man and his wife and put them into a beautiful garden that things started to go wrong. Adam and Eve ate the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil that God had forbade them to, and then found out what good and evil were – living in God's way or in ours. They had two children and one, Cain, murdered the other, Abel, because he was jealous of him. So God began to think that maybe making a world was not such a good idea after all. And for the next hundred years or so, he had no reason to change his mind. He was deeply hurt and sorry that he had ever made the human race. "I will end the whole dreadful business, men Animals, reptiles, wild birds, everything," he said, "I'm sorry I ever began it". One man, however, was different from the others – Noah. God thought well of him as he was trying to live in God's way. God told him to build a ship on dry land, which he managed to do and then God told him to take his family on to it, and pairs of animals as well, one male and one female. "You're the only good man I can find", God said, "and next week I am going to send down rain on the earth. It will rain and rain for a very long time and destroy all living things everywhere." Noah again obeyed. At the end of the week, down came the rain and God shut Noah and his family safe and sound up in the ship. It rained for a very long time before it stopped and there was nothing left on the earth. Eventually, the rain stopped and Noah opened the hatch to see the waters everywhere. Then, after another long time, the waters subsided and the land dried out. Noah got off the ship and made a special prayer of thanks to God, who told him, "I will never again drown the world because of what people have done, even if they disobey me again". God's promise to Noah was called a covenant.

Abraham: Of course we know that human nature being what it is, things did not get better but worse. God's people continually turned away from him and did things he didn't like, so he was getting rather short of friends. He watched and he waited for someone really special to turn up and it took about 400 years, because God wanted to start a new kind of people. You would think that he would choose someone young to start a new people, but no, he chose a middle aged man who had lived in large cities all his life and had a good looking wife but no children. He had a good business a fine home and many servants, and his name was

Abraham. God spoke to him – he was his friend after all – and told him to leave all his home and beautiful things and that he would be the father of a great nation. Abraham's wife, Sarah, who was now getting older and past the time when she might have children, just laughed at her husband when he told her, but Abraham believed God and trusted in him, so he set off. It was a long and difficult journey that took them through the desert, into Egypt and out of it, and there were many problems on the way with his family, because Abraham did not know yet where God meant him to be. Eventually, when they got to the Jordan valley, God told him that this land would be his and that he would have thousands of descendants. Sarah didn't believe him of course but sure enough, even though by now both Abraham and Sarah were old, they had a son called Isaac. God told Abraham that he was going to destroy the cities of people who had turned against him, but his friend persuaded him to relent. As years went on, God was to test the faith and friendship of his friend in a big way. He told him to take his son off into the mountains, to build an altar with some wood and to offer his son as a sacrifice to God as they used to do with animals. So Abraham took his son with him and built the altar. He lay his son, his only son on the altar and was about to kill him with a knife when God stopped his hand and said to him: "Now I know for sure that you believe in me and trust me; you did not refuse your only son to me". Abraham looked up and saw a ram caught in a bush, and he sacrificed the animal to God's place of his son. God rewarded Abraham for his faith and made him the father of a great nation – the people of Israel – through the covenant he had made with him.

Moses: Moses was the person who led God's people out of slavery in Egypt. The pharaoh, who was the Egyptian ruler had ordered that all the male newborn Hebrews had to be killed. So Moses' mother put him in a basket and sent him down the river to save him. Pharaoh's daughter found him and took him into her home to look after him, so he grew up in the royal court and no one knew where he came from. But one day he had to escape as he killed an Egyptian who was beating a Hebrew slave. At the bottom of Mount Sinai, Moses first met God, who spoke to him out of a burning bush, who told him to ask Pharaoh to free the Hebrew people from their slavery. But Pharaoh refused. God then punished the Egyptians with ten plagues which killed many people, including Pharaoh's son. Moses and the Hebrews escaped and got to the Red Sea being followed by the Egyptian army. Then a miracle happened. The waters of the Red Sea parted and the Hebrews were able to pass through it. When the Egyptians followed them, the waters returned and the Egyptians were drowned. Moses took his people to Mount Sinai, where God revealed himself to him again and gave him ten tablets of stone – the ten commandments – for the people to follow so that they could love God. In this way, God made another 'covenant', this time with Moses. Moses spent the rest of his life leading his people through the desert to Canaan, the land God promised to give them. It was a hard journey with much complaining but they got there. Just before they reached the promised land, Moses died at the age of 120.

Children and parents return to their groups

Exercise: How did you get on with the Moses word search? Show us your picture of the Good Shepherd

So what is God's care for us like?

A father – think of what the love of a father is like and examples of how God loves us like that?

A shepherd – think of the things a shepherd does to show his care. Can you think of any times when God's care for us is likened to that of a shepherd?

Look at the two extracts below. What do they tell us about God's care? Compare the two extracts and see if you can find some similarities between them.

Psalm 23:

The Lord is my shepherd, there is nothing I shall want.

Fresh and green are the pastures where he gives me repose.

Near restful waters he leads me to revive my drooping spirit.

He guides me along the right path; he is true to his name.

If I should walk in the valley of darkness, no evil would I fear.

You are there with your crook and your staff.

With these you give me comfort.

You have prepared a banquet for me, in the sight of my foes.

My head you have anointed with oil; my cup is overflowing.

Surely goodness and kindness shall follow me all the days of my life.

In the Lord's own house shall I dwell, for ever and ever.

St. Mark's gospel

Jesus wanted to take his disciples away to a lonely place where they could rest for a while, so they got into a boat to find somewhere they could be by themselves. But the people followed him. So as he stepped ashore he saw a large crowd and he took pity on them because they were like sheep without a shepherd and he set himself to teach them at some length. By now it was getting very later and his disciples came up to him and said: "This is a lonely place and it is getting very late, so send them away and they can go to the farms and villagers round about to buy themselves something to eat." Jesus replied, "Give them something to eat yourselves". But they had nothing only five loaves and two fishes. Then Jesus ordered them to get the people to sit down on the green grass and they sat down. Then he took the five loaves and two fish, raised his eyes to heaven and said the blessing; then he broke the loaves and handed them to his disciples to distribute among the people. He also shared out the two fish between them all. They all ate as much as they wanted, nearly five thousand people, and when the disciples collected up the scraps they filled twelve baskets with them

Exercise (*for clever people*) – can you think of where else you have heard the words of St. Mark telling us how Jesus multiplied the bread?

Prayer in church: We will begin by singing together 'Rise and Shine' – the story of Noah.

Summarise the stories we have heard this evening

Song: Moses, I know you're the man

Parents

Here is a summary of some of the replies to last week's questions by last year's parents:

What difficulties do you have in practising your faith?

We feel as though when we were children we were forced to go to church.

It was not cool in secondary school so we had to hide our faith

We dip in and out of faith

We need a balance in life between hobbies, work and faith.

There are changes in our life situation at different ages, commitments, university etc.

Our priorities change; maybe we will come back in later life.

If people do disappear it is none of my business; I don't know what other people are dealing with

Family commitments – not all parents have the same faith so how do you please both?

As much as you try to guide your children with all the best will in the world; when they get older, they choose not to go.

The disempowerment of females in the Church

The struggle to 'be proud' of being a Catholic and sometimes how others see and form an opinion of you being a Catholic

Talking about death a lot

What would it take for you to resume the practice of your faith and a life with Our Lord?

More clubs to distract the children

Timing – maybe a little later start time

Other Masses to be inclusive for children, eg. Saturday evening

Getting into a routine

Help in encouraging my children in their faith

Feeling comfortable with the priest

Tragedy has brought some back to church but I also think it questions the faith

More support and strength

What sort of Church do you want to belong to?

A welcoming one

The comfort of a 'Father' in times of need

Community spirit

A more uplifting Church

Thinking about other people before ourselves

Socialising with older people

Finding comfort and peace

Spending time with family members who are at church

*Question: how much of this depends on what **you** want? Look at Fr.Brian D'Arcy's article on page 15 and see if that makes you change your mind*

Is it me, or are we becoming a painfully self-centred, unfeeling and greedy society? Don’t get me wrong, many generous individuals continually think of others; they welcome the stranger and show compassion to the needy. Sadly, though, such people are becoming a minority in today’s race to the bottom. Instead, too often, there is the angry word, the bitter condemnation, directed at anyone who points the finger at or questions their self-centred individualism. What’s even more deplorable is that mainstream religions continue to promote and equally false, individualistic spirituality. The ‘perfect’ person in their views is the one who achieves wealth and power, irrespective of the damage they do to themselves or the community. Self-sufficiency is all that matters: ‘I am all-important.’ It is the spirituality of narcissism. It’s never actually stated but the implication is that to show dependency is a weakness – and weakness is to be deplored. To admit vulnerability is to admit failure. The consequence of this overly self-centred attitude is that their constant goal is to be super secure, and never to be dependent on anyone, not even God. Possessions are more important than who we are. Life becomes a struggle to gather up enough for now and to accumulate more than enough for the future. The more we have, the more independent we are perceived to be. The trouble is that enough is never enough. It should be obvious that we will die and that we cannot take our wealth with us. Just stop and think: we know wealth and good fortune are to be shared, not hoarded. Self-centred greed leads to a judgemental, unforgiving attitude. The wealthy have an ideal lifestyle and to be honest there is absolutely nothing wrong with that. It’s OK to enjoy our comforts, but why regard the poor and unemployed as failures? The poor will go on living in poor conditions with little opportunity to get out of their mess. A comfortable lifestyle is beyond their reach while the rich get richer and the poor become even more poor. Prisons are full of people from poor areas who have no hope left. It’s not a fair or a just world.

This attitude also seeps into churches. Obey certain laws and get yourself into heaven by your own efforts. It is presumed that if we become self-sufficient individuals, we can demand entry into heaven. God becomes like a rich uncle who can be manipulated. There is no need for God when you think you are God. ‘Religions’ like this are made up of self-sufficient individuals walking side by side in a club of independent hypocrites. Christianity is about community and concern for others. The early Christians came together, sold what they had and shared their goods with the needy in the community. The gospels ask us to live a life filled with gratitude and self-giving and not self-seeking. Our focus has to be on an afterlife and a higher power – not just on money and earthly possessions.

When we crave the security of possessions, we end up being a slave to possessions. At best, God becomes a security blanket who is nice to have around if things go wrong. Real faith is unseen but felt, faith is strength when we feel we have none and faith is hope when all seems lost. No matter what has happened to you in the past or what is going on in your life now, it cannot prevent you from having a bright future: God loves you; trust God.

Reflection together on our Mass of Anointing and Tea – what did you like best about it?

We have heard stories about how God showed his care for his people in the past
So what happened when God's people didn't care for each other or Him? He sent them prophets to warn them what would happen, like Isaiah, Jeremiah and of course Amos, whose story we acted out last time. So in the end he had to send Jesus to show us how to love and live – how do you think he might have done that? *Discussion followed by demonstration in church of how we put together the scriptures, music and gesture. We are going to reflect on six people – Matthew and Zacchaeus, the tax collectors, the woman who sinned, the woman with a long-term illness, the man born blind and the Roman centurion*

How did Jesus show his care - Healing and forgiving

Music *“Benedictus” (Karl Jenkins)*

Several tableaux are made of each scene on different parts of the stage. Matthew sits at a table with people coming up to him and paying money. He reacts when Jesus calls him

Narration

0.12 He saw Matthew sitting at the customs house, collecting taxes. “Follow me,” he said and he got up and followed him

He does so. Zacchaeus enters with a crowd, jostling him. He stands on a box and Jesus sees him, calls him and he gets down and hugs Jesus

0.58 Zacchaeus, come down; I'm going to have dinner with you today

The crowd remains and gathers around a woman, who is dragged in front of them. They make as if to stone her

1.20 Let any of you who is without sin be the first to cast a stone at her

They slowly move away, leaving only the woman, to whom Jesus speaks

1.47 Go away now and do not sin any more

A blind man enters

2.15 Son of David, have pity on me

2.35 If I can just touch his cloak, if I can just touch his cloak, I shall be made well

She touches him and is cured. She reacts. A man comes forward

3.05 Sir, I am not worthy to have you under my roof; say only the word and my servant will be healed. And his servant was healed at that moment.

All exit. Jesus remains

Think about each of the people involved in this extract. What impact did meeting Jesus have on them? Matthew and Zacchaeus were tax collectors who robbed their own people by collecting taxes for the Romans and ‘creamed off’ some for themselves. We are told that Jesus often ate meals with tax collectors and the Jewish priests and leaders didn’t like it. The woman with the bleed was desperate; she had tried everything and yet she felt that Jesus could do something for her. The woman who was a public sinner was reviled and vilified until she met Jesus, as was the man born blind. The centurion was a Roman with no faith and yet he believed that Jesus could do something for his servant who was seriously ill.

The story of the lepers

Explain a bit about leprosy and how people saw it as an inner sin breaking out on the bodies of people with the disease. So they had to live apart from everyone and no one went near them. But they came to Jesus and he touched them and healed them.

Music *“Macedonian morning” from “The Dance of the Light”*

0.15 *Lepers enter and dance out their predicament.*

0.40 Lepers came, outcast, living apart, living in misery, shame and degradation. Isolated, castigated, neglected, rejected, relegated to the edge

1.05 *Jesus enters and cures them by touching them; they react*

1.10 Lepers came, and he cured them

They take off their rags, and exit as the music draws to a close

2.50 *Music ends*

Can you think of any other stories where Jesus healed people or things he did to show he cared for them, eg. Feeding 5,000 people. Make a note in your books

Session 7 The beginning of our faith journey

Parents and children meet in groups for this discussion – please take notes

Shortly after we were born our parents brought us to the church to be baptized. What do you think that means? You cannot of course remember your baptism but what have your parents told you about it? Where and when was it? Who was the priest who baptized you? Who are your godparents? Were you given a baptismal candle and do you still have it? Do you still have any gifts you were given on the day of your baptism? What are they?

Write down the answers to these questions if you can here:

Baptism is the first of what we call the seven sacraments. What is a 'sacrament'? What does it do? A sacrament is a special sign of God's love for us. We know he loves us – he sent us Jesus his Son to show us, to live, die and rise to new life for us – but these 'signs' are very special ways in which he does so today. We believe that in the sacraments Jesus is really present with us, beginning with our baptism and continuing each time we go to confession or come to Mass. Jesus is with us always and he wants us to always be with him – "remain in my love", he tells us. How many of the sacraments can you think of and what do they mean? How many of these sacraments have you and your parents received?

Baptism	Reconciliation	Holy Communion (The Eucharist)
Confirmation	Ordination to the priesthood	
Marriage	Anointing of the Sick	

Baptism is the beginning of our life as followers of Jesus within his family which is called the Church. It is not magic nor just an excuse for a party! Nor should it ever be seen as a passport to get into our senior school.! Your parents and godparents promise to bring you up to live in God's way as Jesus teaches us. They teach you to pray, to listen to God speaking in your heart, they show you how to live like Jesus every day. They bring you to Mass in your church each week to celebrate the Holy Eucharist as Jesus asked his friends to do for him. He promised us that whenever we do this he will be really with us. As we go through this course, we will celebrate the Sacrament of Reconciliation – how God helps us to put right what we have done wrong – and our first Holy Communion. Later on when we are older, we will renew for ourselves the promises our parents made for us on the day of our baptism in the sacrament of Confirmation. Some of us will get married and maybe one or two become priests, and when we become infirm, we will receive the sacrament of anointing to feel God's help for us when we are weak. This is what we did with many of our older and infirm parishioners at the special and very beautiful Mass we celebrated recently.

A brief interlude to discuss what we did over half term

What does Jesus tell us about caring?

Love each other as I have loved you; Love your enemies and do good to those who hurt you; treat others as you would like them to treat you; be compassionate; do not judge; forgive and you will be forgiven; give away your life and you will find it. Think about what 'as I have loved you' might mean for us. What did it mean for Jesus? *Write this down*

Reprise of examples of Jesus' care for people: Zacchaeus, Matthew, the woman with the sickness, Centurion's Son, man born blind – catechists to summarize the stories – what do they say to us about how Jesus cares? *Write this down*

How are we showing Jesus' care to others at the moment? *Discussion*

Look at what is happening in the Ukraine, Gaza, Sudan and Nigeria at the moment and other parts of the world. Why are people being treated like this? How are we trying to help them? What else are we doing? This is showing some of the care of Jesus to them. The same applies through using our CAFOD boxes, Family Fast Day this week and the various CAFOD activities – all of which are happening in the next few weeks. What are we doing to show God's care for our planet? If nothing, then what might we do? *Write this down*

So what happens when we don't live like this?

Family discussion in groups – this might be difficult! What might parents and children do or don't do that hurt each other? What sort of thing causes sadness or tension in the house? Who gets hurt and why? What can we do about it? If you find it difficult to talk about this together because it is too personal, maybe you could do it quietly this evening before you go to bed. What happens in school when we fall out? Do we ever think that we hurt God by hurting each other? Do you think that Jesus is sad or hurt when we don't live in the way he showed us how to? What might we do about it? Are we ever willing to admit we were wrong?

How to put things right

In order to put things right between ourselves certain things need to happen. The word for all this is "Reconciliation". Spend a little time together on the 'reconciliation word search'. You can take it home and finish it there if you wish.

The process of 'reconciliation' – explain how it works

- a) We recognise that we have done wrong – that we have hurt Our Lord or another person
- b) We say that we are sorry because we have hurt them
- c) They accept our sorrow and forgive us
- d) Our friendship / love is deepened because we have been forgiven

So how do we put things right when we have hurt God our Father or Our Lord? How are we forgiven and what effect does it have on us? This is what we will look at next time.

Children meet in church and parents have a discussion on reconciliation and confession together. How often do we feel the need to apologise to each other and how do we do it? Think about what happens at work – if you apologise you might lose your job, so you don't admit to making a mistake. Is this good? Do we ever go to confession? Have we had any difficult experiences? Do we ever think we could hurt God and how? What would make us feel we could seek reconciliation with him on a regular basis? Parents will be given sheets on confession and reconciliation to consider and keep. The children will practice the Mike Stanley piece and then arrange who is reading what at next Saturday's service.

The story of the Prodigal son – act this out. Interactive drama and Mike Stanley's song. Ask yourself – was he really sorry? Was he not just thinking it was in his best interests to come home? Was he thinking about his father and his brother? How would he react when he saw his father coming out to embrace him? How did the other brother feel? Neither of them understood just what the love of their father is like – this is God's love for us when we have strayed from him and it is wonderful. It makes us want to love him back.

The transforming power of meeting Our Lord

We listening to the words or haunting music of John Tavener's accompaniment to the 17th century poem of George Herbert: 'Love bade me welcome' and possibly mime it

Love bade me welcome yet my soul drew back, guilty of dust and sin,
but quick eyed Love, observing me grow slack from my first entrance in,
drew nearer to me, sweetly questioning if I lacked anything.

"A guest," I answered, "worthy to be here". Love said, "you shall be he".

"I, the unkind, the ungrateful, ah, my dear, I cannot look on thee."

Love took my hand and, smiling, did reply, "who made the eyes but I?"

"Truth Lord, but I have marred them; let my shame go where it doth deserve."

"And know you not," said Love, "who bore the blame?" "My dear, then I will serve".

"You must sit down," said Love, "and taste my meat". So I did sit and eat.

Last week we identified what needs to happen when we have fallen out with or hurt each other. Putting wrong things right between ourselves and God is what is called the sacrament of reconciliation or confession. Very shortly we will be making our first confession and our parents may do so as well. Please look at the sheet you have been given on how to examine your conscience and think about how we have hurt God and each other. *Give out the Family confession leaflets*

We looked at the stories of Jesus, how he showed his care and love to people like the Zacchaeus, the woman with the bleed, lepers and the Centurion, and soon we will see how he forgave those who arrested, condemned and tortured him – this is what we will be celebrating in Holy Week and Easter – and ask ourselves, do I love like that, do I live like that? Think of the people who were part of the story of Holy Week and what did they do to Jesus: Judas, Peter, the Pharisees, Caiaphas, Pilate, the Roman soldiers, the two thieves.

Take time during the week to consider these questions and write down the answers to keep in your file. You do not need to share them with anyone but may wish to

What do you think 'love' is?

.....

Who shows it to you?

How?

Who do you love?

How do you show them?

Listen to this reading from the First Letter of St. Paul to the Corinthians:

Love is patient and kind. Love is not jealous or boastful or proud or rude. It does not demand its own way. It is not irritable and it keeps no record of being wronged. It does not rejoice about injustice but rejoices whenever the truth wins out. Love never gives up, never loses faith, is always hopeful and endures through every circumstance. Prophecy and speaking in unknown languages and special knowledge will become useless. But love will last for ever.

From this reading we can see that 'love' is not:

Jealous – of other people's possessions, status, talents or gifts

Boastful – about what we know, our wisdom, what we have and are. It is not possible to be boastful and to love at the same time

Proud – thinking too much about our own importance. A Christian who shows love is truly humble

Rude – behaving badly and not thinking about other people's feelings

Demanding your own way – looking out for your interests only and expecting them to be met

Irritable – being ratty, and arguing too easily

Keeping a 'record' of how people have hurt us – God does not keep a record of our sins ("he does not repay us according to our faults"). So a person who loves does not keep remembering an action or insult against them

Taking pleasure in other people's failures – finding fault with others and delighting when things go wrong for them

Parents come into church to rejoin their children who mime the Mike Stanley story of the Prodigal Son

Love never gives up and a true friend never fails to love

Sometimes we make the wrong choices. We turn away from God. We do this when we do not listen to his words, when we do things we know are wrong – when we sin. We are therefore needing to change often – to ‘convert’ (turn back to him) and to ask his forgiveness.

Today we are thinking about our relationship with God – not simply about whether we are nice to each other or not. When we see how much God loves us even though we do not deserve it, then we see how much we fail to love him back. This is what makes us sorry; this is what makes us want to be forgiven, to put things right between us again. We do this in many ways but in particular through the sacrament of reconciliation.

There are some questions to ask yourselves which you can take home and think about. You might like to write down on a piece of paper what you would like to tell Our Lord that you are sorry for and bring it with you on Saturday. The main thing here is my relationship with God and how it affects my life each day. Think about these things:

Do I pray every day? Do I come to Mass each week? Do I fool around in church and forget where I am? Do I do what my parents and teachers ask me to do? Do I say mean things to anyone? Do I always remember to say ‘thank you’ when people have been good to me? Am I difficult to get on with? Am I lazy round the house or at school? Do I tell lies? Do I bully others and start fights? Do I blame others for what is my fault? Do I get people into trouble? Do I cheat or play unfair in games in order to win? Do I refuse to talk to some people? Do I steal anything that does not belong to me? Do I spend too much time on computer games? *Look at the sheet for the Service of Repentance next Saturday and check which of the two groups you are in.*

“I don’t like going to confession because I get embarrassed; I’d sooner do it by phone or on the internet” – really?

Well, here is an option - not! – from an article recently written in one of our papers, telling you how to do this if you really must:

“Welcome to the phone confessional. This call may be recorded for judgemental purposes. Please enter your seven figure purgatory number followed by three Hail Marys. Thank you; one moment please”

“How long is it since your last confession?”

If less than one week, press one.

If between one week and one month, press two.

If more than one month but less than a year, press three.

If more than a year, press 4.

If this is your first confession, press 5”

There now follows some heavenly music

“Thank you for waiting. If you wish to confess a venial sin, press 1.

If you wish to confess a mortal sin, press 2.

If you have blasphemed against the Holy Spirit, you may hang up now.

One moment please.”

More heavenly music

“You have chosen venial sins. For further assistance, please:

Press 1 for sloth, 2 for gluttony, 3 for anger, 4 for envy, 5 for pride, 6 for lust, 7 for greed.

Thank you. You have pressed 3 for anger. All our priests are busy dealing with other penitents. One will be with you shortly.”

More music

“We are experiencing an unusually high volume of sinfulness at present. You are 13th in the queue.”

More music

“Why not find out more about the telephone confessional service at our website:

www.catholicabsolution.org?”

More music

“Your salvation is very important to us; a priest will be with you shortly.”

More music

“Do not hang up. Doomsday could be at any moment.”

Ring, ring, ring

“We are sorry to have kept you waiting – you are through to anger confession. If you are angry with yourself, press 1. If you are angry with another person, press 2. If you are angry with an inanimate object, press 3.

If you are angry with our new automated confession line, you are forgiven. Thank you for calling. Have a nice eternity”

We don't recommend you try this at home!

If you need to say sorry to anyone in your family you may have hurt, then do so before you go to bed tonight

All of us will say an Act of sorrow together.

“O my God, because you are so good, I am very sorry that I have sinned against you and with your help, I will not sin again”

We are also looking for your help in Holy Week – next week we will ask you to sign up if you can come and take part in any of the services

Next Saturday will be the day that we come to make our first confession. Those who are coming to the first session, please arrive by 9.20am and for the second session by 11.20am. We will confirm who is reading what and give you your notes on which to write what you are sorry for, and then afterwards, to write a thank you prayer.

Session 10 Jesus died for me

Reflection on Family Confession day – thinking on how we hurt Our Lord who has loved us so much. How can we show him we love him? Think again about your First Confession leaflet: How does Jesus love? He loves in a most beautiful way; he shows us what the love of God our Father is like – he gave away his life on the cross. Every time I look at the cross, Jesus is saying to me “look, I am giving away my life for you; look how much I love you” So how much do I love him? Do I know what ‘love’ is anyway? Do I ever talk to him, not the talk of “please can I have this or please can you do this for me”, because that is talk all about me, but what about the talk of “dear Jesus, I love you; dear Jesus thank you for being my friend, my Lord, my God; dear Jesus you are wonderful; thank you for showing me your way, for showing me how to be really happy”. Do I ever talk to him like that? Do I ever really pray? Prayer to say every night: Dear Jesus please help me to love you every day of my life

Stations of the Cross – What are the Stations of the Cross? Can you put them in the right order? We gather in church for the service (*Appendix 3 for full text*)

At the beginning of each station, we reply to: “We adore you O Christ and we praise you” by saying together: “Because by your holy cross you have redeemed the world.” At the end of each Station, we say: “Dear Jesus, please help me to love you every day of my life.”, and sing “Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom”

1. Jesus is condemned to death
2. Jesus receives his cross
3. Jesus falls the first time
4. Jesus meets his mother
5. Simon of Cyrene helps Jesus
6. Veronica wipes his face
7. Jesus falls the second time
8. Jesus meets the women of Jerusalem
9. Jesus falls the third time
10. Jesus is stripped of his garments
11. Jesus is nailed to the cross
12. Jesus dies on the cross
13. Jesus is taken down from the cross
14. Jesus is laid in the tomb

Song: To make you feel my love *Turn and face the cross in church*

Ask yourself how did everyone feel when this happened – Pilate, the soldiers, Mary, Simon, Veronica, the women of Jerusalem, St. John. What was it really like for them? Take home your pictures to colour in and put them where you can see them over the Easter period.

The Festival of 'Pesach', which literally means 'pass over', refers to the experience of the Israelites in Egypt on the night before they left their slavery behind. The final act of God's judgement against the gods of Egypt and the people who worshipped them was to kill every firstborn son in Egypt. To save their child God said each Israelite father should get a lamb. The lamb must have nothing wrong with it. Moses told the Israelites to kill the lambs. They obeyed him. They put the lambs' blood on their doors that death would pass over the houses with blood on their doors. If there was no blood on the door the first born child would die. The Israelites cooked the lamb and ate it. They stayed in their houses. The king of Egypt still wanted the Israelites for slaves. He took his army and chased them. The sickness passed over the houses with blood on the door. The Israelite children did not die. They called this the Passover. Through Moses, God told the Israelites to remember the Passover. He said they should have a Passover dinner every year. They should remember that God saved their children. Then the Israelites came to the Red Sea. God told Moses to raise his hand over the sea. A strong wind divided the sea. It was a miracle. The Israelites walked across on dry ground. When they were safe on the other side, God told Moses to raise his hand over the sea again. The sea covered the Egyptians and they were killed. Now the Israelites were free. They sang songs and danced and thanked God. They would always remember the Passover. They would always remember that God led them out of Egypt. This is why they celebrated the Passover every year. The Passover celebration usually lasts 7 or 8 days and takes place in April each year, and as such coincides with our celebration of Holy Week and Easter. Indeed ,it was during the Passover meal celebration with his friends that Jesus took the bread and wine and changed them into his own body and blood. This of course was the first ever Mass or Eucharist, which we now celebrate every day. More of this later.

The elements of the Passover meal or 'seder' are:

Wine or grapejuice

Matzoh – unleavened bread

Parsley, celery or other 'greens'

Bitter herbs such as horseradish- to symbolise the bitter suffering of the Israelites in Egypt

A shank of lamb (or sometimes chicken) – to symbolise the slaughtered lamb, the blood of which was sprinkled over the doorposts of the Israelites to prevent the 'angel of death' from visiting them before their escape.

Apples, nuts, raisins

Now we will try to re-create the 'Passover' meal of the Jewish people in a simplified form, in order to see how it leads into the Mass. Preparing the table: There should be a long table at which everyone can sit down, covered in a banqueting cloth, with plates, serviettes, cutlery, glasses and candles. A special cup or chalice is used - maybe the same we use for Mass. A bowl of water with towel(s) is needed for washing hands before the meal. The meal can be led by two people to represent the mother and father of the household. Food required: A joint of lamb sliced into small pieces; sprigs of parsley for everyone; wine or grape juice; matzoh unleavened bread; horse-radish sauce; honey and a bowl of salted water.

The Passover meal is celebrated solemnly with the room and food prepared and the original Passover followed as closely as possible. Questions are asked by the children and answered by their parents and the story of the original Passover is read from the Book of Exodus. The 'wine' is drunk, unleavened bread, bitter herbs, and of course the cooked lamb or chicken are all eaten, with the appropriate sauces. At the end of the meal, the 'father' says the following:

Father This service is now over. We have lifted up our cups in memory of the promises of God to save us, and we have called upon his name. We now lift up our hearts to him in faith and hope and ask his blessing upon us. May he, who broke the power of Pharaoh break the power of sin and bring an end to injustice for ever. May his kingdom come on earth as it is in heaven and may he be present with us always. May the Lord bless us and keep us. May the Lord make his face to shine upon us and be gracious to us. May he lift up the light of his face and give us peace. Amen

This Passover meal is still celebrated by Jewish people at this time of year to commemorate the deliverance of their forefathers from slavery in Egypt. It was the Passover that Jesus celebrated with his friends but in an entirely different way as we shall see:

The Last Supper

On the first day of the Feast of Unleavened Bread, the disciples asked Jesus, 'Where would you like us to plan for you to eat the Passover feast? Jesus replied to them, "Go into the city and you will find a man. Tell him that we would like to come to his house for Passover." The disciples did just as Jesus asked, and they found a place and got ready for the Passover. The evening came, and Jesus and the twelve disciples sat to eat the meal. Jesus thanked God for the bread and shared it with the disciples and said, 'Take this and eat it. This is my body which is given for you Do this in memory of me.' Then He took a full cup, thanked God for it and said, This is my blood, which will be poured out for many people so their sins may be forgiven. Do this in memory of me." They all took a sip from the cup. After some time, Jesus got up from the table and went to a different part of the room. He took off his everyday clothes and put a large towel around himself to look like a servant. After that, he poured water into a large bowl and began to wash the disciples' feet. Then he dried them with the towel that was wrapped around Him. By washing the disciples' feet, He was doing something that only a servant would do. When Jesus had finished washing all of the disciples' feet, he put his everyday clothes back on and returned to the table.

This celebration of the Passover by Jesus was in fact the first ever Mass, and we will commemorate it on Maundy Thursday evening.

Group work: Let us look back at the events of Holy Week and Easter for a moment. Did you take part in any of them? What did you think? Which of these events made the most impression on you and why? What happens in Poland over Easter? Colour in the picture of Jesus risen and put it in your books. Discussion: We have been thinking about Jesus dying for us and acted this out beautifully in our Stations of the Cross and Good Friday liturgy in Holy Week recently. Now we think about Jesus rising. What was it like for his friends who had deserted him because they were afraid, and thought he was gone for ever? What were they supposed to do next? Talk about how they must have felt when they realised they had abandoned him, especially Peter. ? And what happened when they actually saw Jesus alive? How many stories can you think of when Jesus ‘appeared’ to his friends and they did not recognise him?

Mt.28:1-10 / Mk.16:1-8 / Lk.24:1-10 / Jn.20:1-18– women at the tomb and Jesus appears to them Emmaus – Lk.24:13-35. Jesus and disciples – Lk.24:36-43 / Mt.28:16-20 / Jn.20:19-29 / Jn.21:1-14. Read the story of St.John’s account which we will then re-enact in church.:

Music: Elgar (‘Nimrod’)

0.20 It was very early on the first day of the week and still dark, when Mary of Magdala came to the tomb.

0.50 She saw that the stone had been rolled away from the tomb and came running to Simon Peter and the other disciple, the one Jesus loved. "They have taken the Lord out of the tomb," she said, "and we don't know where they have put him."

1.15 So Peter set out with the other disciple to go to the tomb. The other disciple got there first. He bent down and saw the linen cloths lying on the ground, but did not go in.

1.45 Simon Peter came up and went right into the tomb, and saw the linen cloths, as well as the cloth that had been round his head.

2.03 Then the other disciple who had reached the tomb first also went in; he saw and he believed. Till this moment, they had failed to understand the teaching of scripture that he must rise from the dead.

2.25 Filled with awe and great joy, they came away from the tomb, and there, coming to meet them, was Jesus.

2.41 "Greetings," he said, and they came up to him, fell down before him and clasped his feet. Then Jesus said to them: "Do not be afraid; go and tell my brothers that they must leave for Galilee. They will see me there."

3.40 *The disciples leave and return as Jesus raises his hands; they all raise their hands*

4.12 This is the gospel of the Lord.

“The Best Jobs” – a short play about angels – this is an amusing ‘take’ on the same story. It is about an angel called Trevor who keeps getting missed out when ‘the best jobs’ come along and is fed up being a ‘guardian angel’ to children who don’t want to be ‘guarded’ or guided at all. He doesn’t realise that he is in for a very big surprise.....

Gather in your groups and, using the special booklet, explain what ‘church’ means in the first place – ‘a group of people called together to love and honour Our Lord and to love each other’. This is what the word ‘ecclesiastical’ means. ‘Church’ is foremost a ‘community’ – people – who often meet in a building. Talk about the early days of the church from the Acts of the Apostles – how they met secretly, but also went to the temple for the Jewish prayers, gave away all they had and shared it out with others, especially those in need. Why did they do this? Because they thought that Jesus was coming back soon and so they did not need houses or property as they were on their way to heaven. But it didn’t happen so soon and they had to think again. There were arguments among them – did you have to become Jewish before you could be a follower of Jesus and be baptised, or could you have no faith and still be baptised if you believed in him? Some arguments continued for centuries, for the first three of which the ‘Church’ was a secret religion and many Christians were persecuted and even murdered. Think of the story of St. Paul – who can remember it? What was his original name, what was he doing and what happened to him? There were no ‘priests’ as we know them but there were ‘elders’ (usually the father of a family), ‘deacons’ and ‘bishops’. What do you know about the secret meetings Christians had? How did they show each other where they were going to meet? What secret symbol did they use to show they were Christians? What did it mean? Can you think of any early ‘martyrs’ of the Church? Can you think of any modern-day martyrs and what do you know about them? Why were they martyred and by whom?

Everything changed in the fourth century when the Roman Emperor, Constantine, became a Christian and Christianity became the official religion of the empire. This means that there were no more secret meetings and everyone could pray freely in public. But where to put all these people? At first they gathered in public buildings which had a platform and space for everyone below it. This was known as a ‘basilica’, ‘the home of the king’. Eventually churches as we know them began to be built, the first of which was St. John Lateran Basilica in Rome, and people gathered there to pray and above all, to celebrate the Holy Mass, which is where we are now.

Take your book, which was put together some time ago about the church here in Earl Shilton, and try to fill in the answers to the questions, along with those on your sheets.

What does ‘church’ mean?	When was this one built?
How many people can it hold?	What do we use it for?
What is the altar for?	What is it made of?
What is inside it?	What is the lectern for?
What does tabernacle mean?	What is it for?
What does chalice mean?	What is it for?
What does ciborium mean?	What is it for?
What does alb mean?	What it is for?
What does chasuble mean?	What is it for?
What does stole mean?	What it is for?
How many colours are there for the vestments and what do they mean?	

What are statues for?

How many can you name in the church?

What or who do they represent?

What are stained glass windows for?

What do they signify?

What are the Stations of the cross for?

How many are they?

What other churches do we have in our parishes? When were they built? What do you know about them? Do you have any favourite churches you have been to? Where are they and why are they so special to you? Where is the church in which you were baptised? Do you know the name of the priest or deacon who baptised you?

Why do we try to keep quiet when we go into church? What makes it so special?

We will then gather in church to explain to you the meaning of the different areas of the church, statues and symbols, vestments and vessels and what they are for.

Prayer For our prayer this evening we are going to do something unusual – say a part of the ‘rosary’. This is beautiful prayer during which we use beads and pray the same prayer – the Hail Mary – ten times as we reflect on a particular aspect of Our Lord’s life or that of his mother. It originated from the Eastern Church where people used to use beads to help them to concentrate as they said countless times what was called ‘The Jesus prayer’: “Lord Jesus Christ, Son of the living God, have mercy on me, a sinner”. The Prayer is divided into four sets of what we call ‘mysteries’ – Joyful, Sorrowful, Glorious and the Mysteries of Light, and each one has five ‘decades’ which begin with an Our Father and end with a Glory be, with 10 Hail Mary’s in between, each of which focuses on a particular theme. The whole prayer ends with what is called the ‘Salve Regina’ or Hail Holy Queen. Tonight we are going to say one ‘decade’, the first glorious mystery, which is the Resurrection of Jesus. As we do so, look up at the figure above the altar in church and think about how Jesus is reaching out to you and welcoming you into his life and love.

Session 15 – the Celebration of Holy Mass

This evening we are going to think about the Holy Mass, which we celebrate together every day and in particular on Sundays. See if you can remember what we spoke of last time in answering these questions:

What is the ‘Mass’?

Can you think of another word for it?

What does that mean?

When was the first ever Mass?

Who said it?

Who else was there?

What were they remembering?

How and where did the early Christians celebrate Mass?

Who led it when they did?

Why was it like this?

When did things change?

Where were Masses celebrated then?

What does that name mean?

What language was the Mass said in?

Why?

What language is Mass said in now?

How many different languages have you heard it said in?

Why do we go to Mass?

What is the most special thing that happens during Mass?

How does Jesus show himself to us at Mass?

What does this mean that we should do?

What the Mass means and where does it come from?

The Covenant We have heard already on our course that God made what is called a 'covenant' with Noah, Abraham and Moses. What was that? It was a solemn agreement and promise between people that was sealed in a very special way and not through a handshake or a written contract as we might do today. It took two forms – a meal, as with Noah, or a sacrifice which was far more gruesome. An animal was slaughtered – often a lamb – its body cut in half and the two parties walked between the halves and then poured some of the dead animals blood over themselves – Ugh! This was meant to signify that if either of them broke the promise the fate of the animal would be theirs, that is, they would die. So the death of the animal represented the punishment for the broken promise (or 'sin') of the people involved in the covenant. The animal 'bore the sin' of the people and by the shedding of its blood saved them from the same fate. The parties would then cook the lamb and eat it as a sign of the life they shared together through their covenant.

Let us take a moment to see if we can recognise any of these words from the Mass. Where do they occur?

"Sacrifice"

"Covenant"

"Sin"

"Lamb"

"Bread"

'Body'

'Blood'

However, the covenant had to be renewed many times because God's people broke it and sinned – hence Noah, Abraham and Moses. Read their stories again from and see if you can make any connection. What can you remember about the Passover meal and why it was so important? The celebration of the Passover by Jesus was in fact the first ever Mass.

The Mass, Jesus and us: There are two elements in the Mass – both the sacrifice and the meal – and both are the way in which the 'covenant' between God and his people is renewed. In the Mass the following happens:

Jesus becomes the 'Lamb of God who takes away the 'sin' of the world'.

Jesus is the bread that is broken – so that it can be shared – and the blood that is poured out so that it can be drunk by everyone. The bread is not in slices (!) but is broken and shared between everyone.

Jesus is 'the new and eternal covenant' that will never need to be renewed

Jesus' 'sacrifice' on the cross is now something that happens always. Jesus is always giving away his life for us – it is no longer a 'once for all' event – but something that happens every day. Cf. Philippians 2:6-11

We celebrate the Mass because Jesus asked us to 'do this in memory of me'

We celebrate the Mass because we remember Jesus' great love for us and want to show him our love too

At Mass we:

'gather' – come together as a family or community

‘pray’ – open our minds and hearts to God to ‘thank’ him (‘Eucharist’ means ‘thank you’) for his great love for us, and remember also our special intentions for that day

‘listen’ – to His word, as He speaks to us through the Bible – in this he shows us his love and how to love him by living in Jesus’ way

‘eat’ – his Body in Holy Communion – food for our journey to heaven

‘sacrifice’ – ourselves and what we want, so that we can give away our lives for Jesus as he does for us

The blessed or ‘consecrated’ bread is really Jesus himself, and he promises us “anyone who eats this bread will live for ever”

Extract from the homily of Rev. Robin Pollard RIP for the Feast of the Body and Blood of Our Lord, June 2018:

“The gospels very firmly put the concept of the Body and Blood of Christ into the setting of a meal, and we need to consider what it means for us to share this meal. We are all here as a family and we cannot exclude anyone who has been invited by the Lord, who is the host at the meal. This is why we refer to the piece of consecrated bread as the ‘host’ Jesus is the Lord who has invited us to his feast and he is present in the bread and wine. It is not our meal. It is his and therefore anyone invited by the Lord is welcome. When we truly share the Body of Christ, we truly become the Body of Christ. The Last Supper, as we know it, was a Passover meal and the format was to bring to mind the Passover, when God rescued his people from slavery to the Egyptians. This meal was a reminder of God’s constant care for his people. But Jesus deepened this meaning by inserting himself into the story. Breaking the bread he said, ‘this is my body which will be given for you.’ Sharing the cup he said, ‘this is my blood which will be shed for you.’ The grain, ground, is baked into a loaf; the grapes, trodden into a pulp, become the wine. In each case the original form has to be abandoned, if the new glorious life is to be achieved. Jesus is telling us that by giving up his own life for our sakes, he will be restored to a glorious life to which he will bring us along with himself. He is showing us that we must be prepared to relinquish everything of our present life if we are to be resurrected to the eternal life that he has promised, if we are to truly become the Body of Christ ourselves.”

What do you think might be the key words here for us to think about?

This is why we celebrate the Mass or ‘Eucharist’ as it is sometimes called. This word actually means ‘thank you’, so this is what we are doing each time we come to Mass. We do not just ‘come’ to Mass, however. We celebrate it from our hearts, we take part in it and we, in our groups, often lead the prayer of the Mass for others so that they can ‘hear’ and understand God’s Word. Think of all the times we have celebrated Mass together – what can you remember about them? Just as bread cannot be made without grinding the wheat to create flour and wine cannot be made without crushing grapes, so Jesus allowed himself to be crushed and destroyed so that he could become the Bread of Life. He cannot be shared with us unless he has been broken like the bread.: “Body broken to be shared as bread; crucified and risen from the dead; just to be within your heart and head and make you feel my love”

Think about ‘memories’ and ‘memorials’ – remembering things or events in the past. This is what God’s people did in the Passover – remembered his goodness in the past and gave thanks for it. The Mass is quite different – not only do we ‘remember’ what Jesus did, but we believe he is actually here still doing what he did then for us today. We believe that Jesus is really and truly in the bread we share at Mass – this is why it means so much to us.

Session 16 The Holy Mass – the most special ‘thank you’ prayer

Preliminary discussion – a summary of what we have been learning these past few weeks:

Jesus died for all of us – love = giving yourself away, even to the end

Jesus rose from the dead for all of us

Jesus sent his Holy Spirit so that he could live in us

1. How would Jesus like us to thank him?

Follow him; Praying; Live in his way; Give away our lives for him – what does that mean?

Share his love with others (especially those in need)

Put others before ourselves – even if it costs us (‘sacrifice’); Tell others about him

Most important – “Do this in memory of me”

2. So why do we go to church? What happens there?

We spend time with each other – community

We share a special meal and celebrate Jesus giving his life for us - Eucharist

We listen to our friend, Jesus speaking to us – the Word of God – and talk back to him - prayer

We celebrate our life and friendship together

The food we share and the way we eat it - not like a ‘fast food’ restaurant but the bread of life. Think about what we do at home and what we do in church

At home we.....

Live together with family

Share warmth, friendship and love

Have lots of smiles

Talk to each other

Listen to each other

Eat together properly

Feel safe and protected

Celebrate big and small events

Welcome new friends

In church we.....

Live together as God’s family

Share warmth, friendship and love

Have lots of smiles

Talk to God

Listen to God in the Bible

Share the meal which is the Holy Mass

Feel God’s presence around us

Celebrate big and small events

Welcome new friends

Are thankful for a lovely home

Are thankful for God's love

The Church is our home and our family. We belong there because we belong to God and to each other. Coming to church is like coming home.

Explain the parts of the Mass:

Gathering – all sorts of people from all round the world coming together ('ekklesia'). (How many nationalities are represented in our church family?)

Singing – hymns of prayer and praise – what is your favourite and why?

The sign of the cross – representing everything we do is in his name – we belong to him

Greeting and introduction – explaining what we are thinking about in our Mass today

Rite of Penance- saying we are sorry for hurting God and making him sad

Glory to God – on big feasts – a hymn of praise and thanks to God

Collect prayer- gathering the prayers of the day together

Word of God – readings from the Bible, which is God speaking to us. Old Testament, New Testament and Gospel with a psalm or hymn of praise in between

Homily – an explanation of what the Word means

Creed – our declaration of our faith in God, Jesus, the Holy Spirit and the Church

Bidding Prayers- placing our particular intentions in the hands of our God

Offertory – we bring gifts of bread and wine but also ourselves to God. The gifts come from God but we thank him and allow him to transform them into the body and blood of his Son.

Prayer and Preface – prayers before the main prayer of the Mass

Eucharistic Prayer – great prayer of thanksgiving. The priest asks God's Holy Spirit to come down on the bread and wine and change them into Jesus himself. The priest then says Jesus' own words at what we call the 'consecration' and Jesus comes among us. Afterwards, we ask the help of the saints and remember our loved ones who have died, before concluding the prayer with the 'doxology' – 'through him...etc.

Our Father –we pray the prayer that unites all Jesus' followers

Sign of peace – the Eucharist unites us to each other through Our Lord

Lamb of God – direct reference to the Passover and how Jesus has transformed it. The death of the Passover lamb represented the saving of God's people from the death caused by sin.

The death of Jesus, made him the Lamb of God who took away our death in his dying and offered us life in his rising.

Holy Communion – we receive Jesus reverently and ask him to come into our hearts. We are in 'communion' with God, with each other all over the world (so we are all brothers and sisters) and with all who have gone before us.

Prayer after Communion – concluding the celebration

Blessing – of God invoked on us all

Dismissal – telling us to take Christ to others

The Disastrous Dinner party (*Appendix 3 for full text*)

Question: how do you eat your meals at home? Who cooks the meals? What is your favourite? What do you do if you get food that you don't like? Do you ever sit down together as a family to eat? How often and when? What should be important when we do? What

should happen during the meal? Do you say 'grace' before meals? Can you think of any 'grace' prayers you use or might like to use? Could we make up some more? When we come to Mass, we say lots of 'grace' prayers which are thanking him for what he has given us in Jesus. Can you think of any times when the word 'grace' is used in the Mass, eg. the beginning?

If there is time, we will act out a short play called the disastrous dinner party, which is basically all about how not to eat a meal! If we know how to eat a meal properly then we will know how to eat the holy meal which is the Eucharist. (See Appendix 4)

Discussion

Everyone gets into small groups and discusses the following questions

1. How many things can you think were wrong with that family scene? List them
2. Is it anything like the meals you have in your house? If so, how?
3. How do you think we could put this right when we eat together?

We would hope that items like bad table manners, watching TV while eating, arguing over measures, wasting lots of food, never saying 'thank you' or helping to set or clear the table, would come up in the discussion, as well as the need to share what we have, listen to each other at table, eat sparingly and make the meal a real celebration.

Prayer

Thank you for our home and those who are part of our life together Loving God, you made us a family so that we could learn about your love for us. Thank you for the times we have been able to laugh and cry together, for giving us time to talk and listen to each other and for all the ways we know we are loved. Forgive us when we hurt each other. Help us to show others what your love is like by the way we love each other even in the little things we can do. Please look after all those who have no family and no one to care for them, and help us never to forget that we are part of your family, which is the Church. We ask this through Christ our Lord. Amen

Session 17 - "What we have seen and heard we are telling you..." – preparation for our Retreat Day and First Communion

- a) Session with parents in church – 30 minutes, then rejoin children

Explanation of parents' role today and in the future. Discussion with Fr. Michael

Information about places in church, Grotto photos and refreshments. Does anyone wish to have their family celebration in the centre? If so, get together and organise it. Discussion of notes on Retreat Day circulated last week. Next week we will sort out jobs for the Strawberry Tea

- b) Session with children in hall

Very shortly we will be making our first Communion and receiving Jesus ourselves. To prepare for this, we will be having a special Retreat Day, when we will be thinking about the theme for this year's First Communion Celebration: "What we have seen and heard we are telling you..." This is the theme chosen for the celebration of the 50th anniversary of

SPANNED this year, culminating in the Jubilee Mass with Bishop Patrick on September 26 at 2.00pm. We will have some discussion about this tonight and bring some of our responses into the celebration of our First Communion Mass. Catechists to make notes on children's replies with names attached so that they can be prepared for First Communion Mass

What is 'SPANNED' and what do you know about it?

When and how did it start?

Are there any SPANNED groups near to us?

What does it do and why is it so special?

How far back can you remember and what do you remember?

What have you seen or heard that has made an impact on you so that you will always remember it?

What would you like to tell others?

Do you want to tell them just 'gossip' or useless information or something more important, like something special that may have happened to you or your family, or maybe something very sad?

What would you want to tell others about your First Holy Communion?

Do you think it will be so special that you cannot wait to tell others about it?

Are you excited about it? If so, why?

Do you think you would like to tell anyone about Jesus and your faith in him?

If so, what would you want to tell them?

Would you be embarrassed or afraid to talk to others about Our Lord?

Think of the words from this well-known hymn and what do they tell us to do?

"Go, the Mass is ended, children of the Lord. Take his word to others, as you've heard it spoken to you. Go the Mass is ended, go and tell the world: the Lord is good, the Lord is kind and he loves everyone"

The question for all of us is: would we want to tell the world that the Lord is good and kind and that he loves everyone?

Retreat Day

There will be 14 children for the first session and 11 children for the second session. We will divide the activities into three:

Making bread rolls and freezing them for next week

Art work - Letters to be made, painted and put on the wall in church:

WHAT WE HAVE SEEN AND HEARD WE ARE TELLING YOU...

Above, a host and a chalice with each child's name and a message on them

Cards of thanks for parents and families. We might make little crosses and cut them out – put our names on them and place them in a basket next to the bread we have baked. These will be distributed to everyone by the children at the end of the First Communion Mass

Discussion –

What is your favourite bread and why?

What sorts of bread do we eat in the different countries we come from?

What is the symbolism of bread and wine – the stuff of life and the source of our joy and celebration. Just as bread cannot be made without grounding the wheat to create flour and wine cannot be made without crushing grapes, so Jesus allowed himself to be crushed and destroyed so that he could become the Bread of Life. He cannot be shared with us unless he has been broken like the bread.: “Body broken to be shared as bread; crucified and risen from the dead; just to be within your heart and head and make you feel my love”. This is what Jesus’ ‘amazing’ love is really like.

We will also talk about what we discussed last Monday and put it into the First Communion Masses

After this we will move into church to see where we will be sitting and practice our readings. We will choose hymns and practice them. We will also practice receiving Holy Communion. We will repeat these activities next Monday evening when we meet in Hinckley.

The responses to our questions on page 35 were as follows:

Saturday

What is ‘SPANNED’ and what do you know about it? It is the agency in our diocese led by Fr.Frank to support people with additional needs

Robert got it spot on

When and how did it start? March 1976 – a letter from the Bishop

Are there any SPANNED groups near to us? Yes, the Hinckley Sunshine Club

What does it do and why is it so special? It brings people together and enables them to contribute to the lives of others.

Edward – it makes a community including people

Jagoda – it forms friendships

How far back can you remember and what do you remember?

Matthew – I went to a dinosaur theme park when I was about 3 or 4

Odelia – someone bought me a kitchen toy to play with when I was about 3

Olivier – when I started school I was excited but nervous because I didn’t know anybody

Thomas – being 2 or 3 and crying for my Mum at the gate at the top of the stairs

Ruby – 3- 4 years old playing tennis with grandma in the garden

Jagoda – when I was 4 years old I told a lie at nursery. Flying on a plane from Poland to Uk.
Having surgery on my broken arm

Edward – my 7th birthday – it was amazing!

Selena – When I was 2 years old I got my first dog called ‘toffee’

Jagoda – Princess Anne visited our primary school when I was in foundation class

What have you seen or heard that has made an impact on you so that you will always remember it?

Matthew – I remember when me pet hamster died. I still think about him on his birthday

Olivier – I will always remember my first Communion

Odelia – I spend a lot of time with my friends and we do tricks together

Robert – Mum showed me a video when I was a baby and I fell off the bed

Edward – our football team got selected to walk out with Leicester City at their home ground.
I was very excited and proud

Selena – I said to my Dad that I would like anther dog so we saw one at an adoption centre
and have now brought him home. Biscott is so lovely

Fr.Frank remembers England winning the World Cup 60 years ago and the day that President
John Kennedy was shot

What would you like to tell others?

Olivier – I am looking forward to our retreat Day and making bread

Matthew – I have a lovely prayer partner called Margaret and visited her a couple of weeks
ago

Emily – I enjoy looking into things a bit deeper and understanding more

Oskar – I most enjoy meeting new people and making new friends

Reece – I enjoyed cakes and drinks at the baptism last week

Alex – I enjoyed the baptism service

Jagoda – don’t be friends with people who are a bad influence; believe in your dreams

Selena – follow in Jesus’ footsteps

Edward – believe in yourself

Do you want to tell them just ‘gossip’ or useless information or something more important, like something special that may have happened to you or your family, or maybe something very sad?

Jagoda – Tell people things that are special or sad, something real. Help others with their
problems

What would you want to tell others about your First Holy Communion?

Olivier – I am excited about it

Matthew – I feel holy

Odelia – I am excited about receiving Jesus

Ruby – we’re having a retreat Day

Robert – receiving the body of Christ and having my family from Poland with me

Jagoda – how special it was picking my dress

Edward – that I enjoyed receiving Jesus and had a really good time

Selena – I will never regret it as Jesus will always be in my heart and with me

All – sharing the day with family and friends

Do you think it will be so special that you cannot wait to tell others about it?

Are you excited about it? If so, why?

Jagoda – Scared but excited. A bit nervous

Edward – take pictures straight after Holy Communion because we want to share the news right away

Emily / Oskar / Alex / Rosalia / Zuzanna – Yes

Reece – so I can eat cake

Do you think you would like to tell anyone about Jesus and your faith in him?

Matthew – I believe in Jesus but might not go around telling others

Odelia – I tell my friends and then they might tell others

If so, what would you want to tell them?

Odelia – people should believe in Jesus and pray to him if something bad happens

Olivier – people can be close to Jesus by praying to him

Matthew – I would tell people that I go to Mass every Saturday and follow the Mass on the children's sheet

Jagoda – Jesus helps me with decisions and will always be there for me

Would you be embarrassed or afraid to talk to others about Our Lord?

Matthew – I wouldn't be embarrassed and would explain that I believe in God if people asked me

Emily / Oskar / Zuzanna – I would share my experiences of Jesus and my faith

Selena – I want to spread the message of the Lord

Ade – go and spread the Word of God

All – never; we want everyone to know about him

Sunday

What is 'SPANNED' and what do you know about it? It is the agency in our diocese led by Fr. Frank to support people with additional needs

When and how did it start? March 1976 – a letter from the Bishop

Are there any SPANNED groups near to us? - Yes, the Hinckley Sunshine Club

What does it do and why is it so special? – it brings people together and enables them to contribute to the lives of others.

Kinga: People with additional needs are sometimes marginalised

Ade – it helps people with difficulties to interact with the wider community and helps the community to grow

How far back can you remember and what do you remember?

Neve – my first day in primary school. When I went home with my friend Elliott, we used to climb in the trees

Kinga – sitting with Thomas at pre-school and when my Mum came to pick me up I didn't want to leave

Kaya – my 3rd birthday when friends came around

Iggy – when I was 2 or 3, I was scared of coming down the stairs

Franek – when I was 5 or 6, I banged my head against the radiator and had to go to hospital

Nadia – when I was 2 or 3 my Dad bought pizza but I only ate the olives from it

Keona – When I was 4 years old I remember the dog we used to have. He was lovely and was called Max

Charlotte – When I first started school, I missed my Mum and Dad but soon made new friends

Shindara – when I was 8 years old I accidentally slammed the door on Keona's finger and she had to have stitches. I felt awful. When I was 9 I started a new school in the UK. It was a bit scary but I made lots of friends.

Ade – when I was 7 years old I stubbed my toe on the door. It really hurt and my toenail fell off

What have you seen or heard that has made an impact on you so that you will always remember it?

Neve – watching YouTube and saw someone doing Rubiks cubes, so now I love it

Keona – I used to play football at my old school but a boy said I shouldn't be playing, so I stopped. It made me very sad.

What would you like to tell others?

Kinga – I had a tortoise which kissed me on the nose!

Keona – don't always listen to what others say when they say you can't do something

Shindara – never let anyone bring you down.

Do you want to tell them just 'gossip' or useless information or something more important, like something special that may have happened to you or your family, or maybe something very sad?

Keona – tell about sadness, so they can help you

Ade – tell people important things

What would you want to tell others about your First Holy Communion?

Iggy – now I can receive Jesus

Kinga – I am looking forward to having my first body of Christ. I have always wanted to do it and feel it is something I must do. I feel overjoyed and really excited because I will feel more a part of God's family

Keona – how fun it will be seeing each other in our smart outfits

Do you think it will be so special that you cannot wait to tell others about it?

All – yes! It's going to be one of the most special days of our lives. We want to tell everybody

Are you excited about it? If so, why?

Neve – I would like to tell others that doing First Holy Communion is sometimes fun. I am feeling a bit excited

Kaya – about my outfit!

Nadia – I am excited about getting closer to Jesus. 25 people are coming to be with me

Franek – I am excited about my family from Poland sharing the day with me; both grandmothers are coming

Do you think you would like to tell anyone about Jesus and your faith in him?

Neve - sometimes people at school ask if I believe in Jesus and I say 'yes'

Kaya – St.Peter was crucified upside down because he felt unworthy to share the same fate as Jesus

Kinga – I believe in Jesus but I am shy and quiet. I am happy talking to everyone here but don't want anyone who can't take their First Communion to feel bad

If so, what would you want to tell them?

Neve – I would tell them about church and the altar and that we should follow Jesus

Kinga – I would tell people how Jesus died and rose again; he is the Messiah

These responses were placed within the liturgy of the First Communion Masses

First Communion Mass A – Saturday June 20th at 2.00pm

First Communion Mass B – Sunday June 21st at 2.30pm

Presentation of certificates:

Sunday June 28th – 9.45am in Hinckley; 11.30am in Earl Shilton

Strawberry Tea for retired parishioners: Sunday July 5th at 3.30pm

SPANNED Golden Jubilee Mass with Bishop Patrick – Saturday September 26th at 2.00pm

The full First Communion programme is available for families on our parish website – stdominics.uk

Appendix 1 Liturgy for the Feast of the Presentation of the Lord with Mass of Anointing 41)

Music before Mass The Lord is my light (*Rizza*)

Entry Hymn No.25 All you who seek a comfort sure

Greeting and Welcome

Introduction

Reader 1 Dear friends, we have come together today to celebrate Jesus as our light.

The children's candles are lit

Reader 2 We think of the time when Jesus as a baby was brought to the temple by his parents and offered to Almighty God his Father.

Reader 1 We pray for peace in the world and that the light of Jesus will shine in the hearts of everyone.

Reader 2 We pray especially today that Jesus' light will reach all those who live in the darkness of starvation and cold.

Reader 1 First of all, we bless these candles and the ones which will be used throughout the year on the altar every time we celebrate Mass

Priest God our Father, source of all light, today you revealed to Simeon your light to the nations of the world. Bless these candles + and make them holy. May we who carry them to praise your glory walk in the path of goodness and come to the light that shines for ever.

Reader 2 Let us now go forward with our lighted candles, singing the praises of God, who sent Jesus to be our light and our friend.

The children and ministers walk in procession around the church

Hymn No.285 Longing for light

Penitential Rite

Priest To prepare ourselves to celebrate this Holy Mass, let us remember that we are sinners and ask our loving Lord to forgive us.

Lord Jesus you healed the sick, Lord have mercy

All Lord have mercy

Priest Lord Jesus, you forgave sinners, Christ have mercy

All Christ have mercy

Priest Lord Jesus, you give us yourself to heal us and bring us strength, Lord have mercy

All Lord have mercy

Priest May Almighty God have mercy on us, forgive us our sins and bring us to everlasting life.

Prayer Father, we have seen your glory in the life of your Son, Jesus Christ. Help us to see our own lives in the light of his, so that we may be drawn to him and be healed. We ask this through Our Lord Jesus Christ, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.

First reading *The children remain on the sanctuary with lighted candles*

Reader 3 A reading from the first letter of St.John
Reader 4 This is what we have heard from him, and the message
 that we are announcing to you:
Both God is light
Reader 3 There is no darkness in him at all.
Reader 4 The people that walked in darkness has seen a great light; on those who
 live in a land of deep shadow, a light has shone
Reader 3 If we say we are in union with God, while we are living in darkness,
Both We are lying,
Reader 4 Because we are not living the truth.
Both But if we live our lives in the light,
Reader 3 as he is in the light,
Reader 4 then we are in union with each other,
Both and Jesus the light, frees us from all darkness. This is the Word of the
 Lord.

Psalm No. 317 Make me a channel of your peace

Gospel The presentation in the temple (*mimed*)

Narrator 1 A reading from St.Luke's gospel. Forty days after Jesus was born, his
 parents, Mary & Joseph, brought him to the temple to present him to God,
 as the custom was.

Mary and Joseph enter

Narrator 2 Now in the temple there was an old man called Simeon.

Enter Simeon

He was a holy man who had loved God all his life, and was waiting for
God to send the messiah to his people, as he had promised.

Narrator 1	God had spoken to him through the Holy Spirit, that he would not die until he had seen for himself the Christ, the promised messiah.	43)
Narrator 2	When Joseph and Mary brought Jesus into the temple, Simeon saw them and he took the child in his arms. His eyes lit up, for he knew that at last he had seen the Christ child.	
Simeon	Please let me hold him.	

He takes the baby

All my life I wanted to see him, and now here he is. Here is the light of all mankind; here is the glory of Israel. Thanks be to God. Now I am ready to die in peace. This child will change many people and things. Because of him some will be raised up, others will be humbled. And you, Mary, will have to suffer great trials.

Narrator 1 There was also in the temple a woman called Anna.

Enter Anna

She too was old and served God in the temple night and day, praying and fasting. She came by just then and saw the child. She praised God, and spoke of the child to everyone who was waiting for Israel to be set free.

Anna lifts up her hands in praise

Narrator 1 & 2 This is the gospel of the Lord.

Instruction

Priest My dear friends, we are gathered here in the name of Our Lord Jesus Christ who is present among us as we recall the words of the apostle James: “are there any who are sick among you? Let them call for the elders of the church, who will pray over them, anointing them in the name of the Lord. This prayer, made in faith, will save those who are sick; the Lord will raise them up and if they have committed any sins, their sins will be forgiven

Litany

Priest Dear friends, let us commend all who are sick or troubled in mind or body for whatever reason, to the healing love of our Saviour Jesus Christ.

Come and strengthen them through this holy anointing. Lord hear us

All Lord graciously hear us

Priest Free them from all harm. Lord hear us.

All Lord graciously hear us

Priest Assist those dedicated to their care. Lord hear us 44)

All Lord graciously hear us

Priest Relieve the suffering of all here present. Lord hear us

All Lord graciously hear us

Priest Give life and health to our brothers and sisters, on whom we now lay our hands in your name.

Laying on of hands

The priests stretch out their hand over the heads of all who are to be anointed

Prayer over the oil

Priest Praise to you, God the Almighty Father; you sent your Son to live among us and bring us salvation. Our response is: Blessed be God who heals us in Christ

All Blessed be God who heals us in Christ

Priest Praise to you God the only Son; you humbled yourself to share in our humanity and heal our infirmities

All Blessed be God who heals us in Christ

Priest Praise to you, God the Holy Spirit, the consoler; your unfailing power gives us strength in our weakness

All Blessed be God who heals us in Christ

Priest Lord God, with faith in you our brothers and sisters will be anointed with this holy oil. Ease their sufferings and bring them life and salvation. We ask this through Christ our Lord.

All Amen

Anointing

Music O Lord, my heart is not proud (*Rizza*)

Reading extract from the homily of Pope John Paul II at Southwark Cathedral on May 28 1982.

I myself have had a share in suffering, and I have known the physical weakness that comes with injury and sickness. It is precisely because I have experienced suffering that I am able to affirm with ever greater conviction what St. Paul says: “neither death nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor things present nor things to come will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord” Dear friends, there is no force or power that can block God’s love for you. Sickness and suffering seem to contradict all that is worthy, all that is desired by us. And yet no disease, no injury, no infirmity can ever deprive you of your dignity as children of God and brothers and sisters of Jesus Christ. By his dying on the cross, Christ

shows us how to make sense of our suffering. In his passion, we find inspiration and strength to turn away from any temptation to resentment and grow through pain into new life....This sacrament of the anointing of the sick should be approached in a spirit of great confidence, like the leper in the gospel that has just been proclaimed. Even the desperateness of the man's condition did not stop him from approaching Jesus with trust. We too must believe in Christ's healing love and reaffirm that nothing will separate us from that love.

Prayers

- Reader 5 Jesus says: "I am the light of the world". Help us dear Lord, to bring your light to everyone.
- Reader 6 Please take away the dark from everyone who feels they are living in it.
- Reader 7 Help us to bring your light to all who are afraid.
- Reader 8 Help us to bring your light to all who are sad.
- Reader 9 Help us to bring your light to all who are not friends.
- Reader 10 Help us to bring your light to all who cannot see each other's suffering.
- Reader 11 Help us to bring your light to everyone.
- Reader 12 Now we ask the mother of Jesus and our mother, Mary, to pray with us and for us: Hail Mary

Music My peace I give you (*Taize*)

Prayers after anointing

Priest Father in heaven, through this holy anointing, grant your servants comfort in their sufferings; when they are afraid, give them courage; when they are afflicted, give them patience; when they are dejected, give them hope, and when they feel alone assure them of your abiding presence and of the loving support of all your people. This we ask through Christ our Lord.

All **Amen**

Offertory Hymn No.20 All that I am

Prayer over the gifts Father, we bring our gifts of bread and wine, and with them we bring our thoughts, our words and our actions, to your holy light in Jesus Christ. May he drive out all darkness, fear and sin from our hearts and minds. He is Lord for ever and ever.

Preface God our Father, you are powerful and live for ever. Every day we want to thank you for the great things you have done for us through Jesus your Son. You gave him to us to be our light and our hope: a light to take away the darkness of fear, of anxiety, of

wickedness and sin; a light to bring warmth, comfort and confidence; a light to show us the way to live.

You have given us this light that we may share it with others, so that everyone can see your goodness and give you glory and praise.

Today we praise and thank you in the company of all the angels and saints as we say: Holy, holy, holy etc.

Eucharistic Prayer No.2

Music during Communion In the Lord (*CD – Rizza*)

Communion hymn No.345 O bread of heaven

Prayer after Communion God our Father, we have received your Son, whose life gives light to the world. Help us to live always as children of the light. We ask this through Christ our Lord.

Blessing

Final Hymn No.502 Walk in the light

Appendix 2 The Passover meal (*full text*)

All gather round the table with the 'mother' and father' at the top. A hymn is sung: "Shalom, my friend". The mother lights the candle and prays:

Mother Blessed are you, O Lord our God, King of the Universe, who have commanded us to light these lights. May we be blessed by the light of your presence, shining upon us and giving us peace.

All Blessed be God for ever

The father lifts the cup of wine

Father As we lift this cup, let us welcome the festival of the Passover and rejoice in the joy of our salvation. With songs of praise and symbols of our feast, let us renew the memory of the past. In love, God has given us this memorial of our departure from slavery in Egypt, so let us thank him and praise him.

All Blessed be God for ever

The father sips his wine and each person takes a sip from their own cup. He then washes his hands and dries them. The bowl is passed round and each person washes their hands,

Background music may be played After this, people representing the 'children' of the house ask the questions:

Child I / Person 1 Father Why do we celebrate this feast?

Father This night is different from all other nights. We celebrate this night because our ancestors were the slaves of Pharaoh in Egypt and the Lord God delivered us with a mighty hand. Had not the Lord delivered our fathers from Egypt, we and all our children would have remained slaves. This is why we celebrate and tell the story of our deliverance from Egypt: listen to the story

Reader A reading from the book of Exodus

A long time before Jesus was born, God's people, the people of Israel, lived in Egypt away from their own country. The ruler of Egypt, called the Pharaoh grew jealous of them and wanted to break their spirit. He forced them into slave labour and treated them badly, but this did not stop their numbers growing. Even when he sent his men to kill all the baby boys that did not break them. God's servant, Moses, when an infant was rescued by a woman of the royal court and he was brought up there. When he grew up and saw how the people of Israel were being treated, he killed one of the soldiers and then had to escape. God chose Moses to lead his people out of their slavery, and this is how it happened. God sent him ten times to tell Pharaoh that if he did not let the people of Israel go, God would punish him with great plagues. Even after nine plagues, Pharaoh did not agree. So God sent a tenth plague to destroy them all but he told Moses first: You must carry out these orders family by family. Kill a lamb and take a plant, dip the plant in the blood and spread it over the doorposts and lintel on the outer door of your house. And stay indoors. God will be passing through the Egyptians bringing death in his path but when he sees the blood on your lintel he will pass over you. But Pharaoh sent for Moses and told him to get out of the country as fast as he could and to take all his people with him. The Israelites didn't even have time to finish baking their bread; they carried the unleavened dough in bags under their arms. When they reached the sea, God drove the sea back so that they could pass through it into their own country. When the Egyptian army followed them, God drove the waters back and swept them all away. This is how God saved his people who passed over from slavery to life.

The mother breaks the matzoh and passes it round for each person to take a piece.

Mother This is the bread of suffering which our ancestors ate in the land of Egypt'
Child 2 / Person 2 Why do we eat only unleavened bread on this night?

Father When Pharaoh let our ancestors go, they had to flee in haste. They had no time to let the yeast rise in their bread. This bread is called matzoh. It reminds us of their haste in escaping bondage in Egypt and God's mighty hand in saving them

Child 3 / Person 3 Why do we eat bitter herbs on this night?

Mother We eat bitter herbs because our ancestors were slaves in Egypt where their lives were bitter. In eating these herbs we recall their hardship

The mother passes the plate of herbs and everyone dips their matzoh into the sauce

Father As we eat, we rejoice in the mighty acts of God who has delivered us out of hardship and bitterness

All Blessed be God for ever

Everyone eats the matzoh

Child 4 / Person 4 Why do we dip green herbs in salt water on this night?

The mother passes round the plate of parsley and the bowl of salt water. Everyone dips their parsley into the salt water

Father We dip this parsley into salt water to remind us of the tears shed by our people when they were slaves

Everyone eats the parsley

Child 5 / Person 5 Why do we dip bitter herbs in honey on this night?

The mother passes round more matzohs and a plate with a mixture of horseradish sauce and honey into which everyone dips their matzoh.

Mother We eat bitter herbs mixed with honey as a sign of hope. Our ancestors were able to put up with the bitterness of slavery because it was sweetened by the hope that one day God would deliver his people

All eat the matzohs and mixture

Child 6 / Person 6 What is the meaning of the Passover lamb?

Father The lamb was sacrificed at the Passover and its blood was placed on the doorposts of the homes of the children of Israel. When God saw the blood he passed over their homes when he visited death on the Egyptians

The mother passes round the lamb which everyone eats.

Father Let us rejoice that the lamb bore the sins of the world by its dying
All Blessed be God for ever

Everyone drinks from their cups

All Blessed be God for ever

Father This service is now over. We have lifted up our cups in memory of the promises of God to save us, and we have called upon his name. We now lift up our hearts to him in faith and hope and ask his blessing upon us. May he, who broke the power of Pharaoh break the power of sin and bring an end to injustice for ever. May his kingdom come on earth as it is in heaven and may he be present with us always. May the Lord bless us and keep us. May the Lord make his face to shine upon us and be gracious to us. May he lift up the light of his face and give us peace. Amen

Appendix 3 The Stations of the Cross

Leader: My dear Jesus, you carried your cross and allowed yourself to be hurt because you love me and wanted to save me from my sins. Too often I have forgotten how much you love me. Help me to be sorry for my sins and to love you with my whole heart as I remember how you suffered and died for me upon the cross. Amen

At the beginning of each station, we reply to: "We adore you O Christ and we praise you" by saying together: "Because by your holy cross you have redeemed the world." At the end of each Station, we say: "Dear Jesus, please help me to love you every day of my life.", and sing "Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom"

First Station: Jesus is condemned to death

Reader: Jesus was accused of many crimes he didn't commit. He didn't defend himself. He knew he needed to die for our sins. I often get defensive when I know I have done something wrong. Help me to be honest and also not to be a tell tale or wrongly accuse others of doing wrong. *Silence*

Second Station: Jesus accepts the cross.

Reader: The cross was big and heavy. It was hard for Jesus to carry it. Jesus carried the heavy cross without complaining once. Sometimes schoolwork or jobs at home are hard for me and I complain. Jesus, please help me not to complain. I want to keep trying, even when I find something hard. *Silence*

Third station: Jesus falls the first time.

Reader: Jesus was already badly wounded when he fell the first time. It must have hurt very much. Jesus got up and kept on going. When we don't succeed in school or when we lose a sports game, it can make us feel defeated. Jesus was hurt but never defeated. Jesus, I want your attitude of hope and victory even if I am not succeeding. *Silence*

Fourth Station: Jesus meets his mother.

Reader: Jesus knew that his mother was sad to see him suffering. But he was happy she came to him. Mary loves Jesus very much. Our parents love us very much, and sometimes we don't let them hug us and care for us because we are mad or sad or don't want them to see us in trouble. Jesus, I thank you for my parents and their love for me. *Silence*

Fifth station: Simon of Cyrene helps Jesus.

Reader: Simon didn't come to help Jesus but only to see what was going on. But Jesus was struggling, and the soldiers ordered Simon to help Jesus carry the cross. Later, he was glad he did. Sometimes I don't want to help my friends or brothers and sisters or parents when I am told to. Jesus, help me know that when I do help others, it is like helping you. I want to be kind and helpful. *Silence*

Sixth Station: Veronica wipes Jesus' face.

Reader: Veronica loved Jesus very much. When she stepped out to wipe his face, she risked getting in big trouble from the soldiers. Her love and kindness overcame her fear. Jesus, I want to love you like Veronica. Help me to be brave and love others who are unpopular. *Silence*

Seventh Station: Jesus falls a second time.

Reader: Jesus fell again because he was so weak and tired from all his wounds. He still didn't give up. He got back up and continued on. Think of something that makes you feel weak, something that is hard for you to do. Ask Jesus to help you with this. *Silence*

Eighth Station: Jesus meets the women of Jerusalem.

Reader: A lot of people were against Jesus, but a lot of people followed him. They were his faithful friends like these women he met on the way. Help me to be a faithful friend. When my friends are going through a hard time or are being made fun of, I want to help them and be a true friend. *Silence*

Ninth Station: Jesus falls a third time.

Reader: It's unbelievable that Jesus fell again and the soldiers didn't help him. They only yelled louder for him to get up and continue on. Jesus didn't get mad at them; he forgave them. Sometimes people say or do hurtful things to us or don't help us when we need them. Jesus, help me to forgive everyone like you did. Help me not to get angry or hold a grudge against someone who has hurt me. *Silence*

Tenth Station: Jesus is stripped of his clothes.

Reader: To be without clothes in front of everyone is a humiliating thing. Jesus wasn't ashamed because he knew his Father in heaven loved him. Jesus, when I am tempted to feel embarrassed or ashamed, help me to remember and trust in your love for me. *Silence*

Eleventh Station: Jesus is crucified.

Reader: The soldiers drove nails through Jesus' hands and feet. They lifted up the cross and put it in place. Jesus was in a lot of pain. Many people suffer pain every day from being sick, hungry, poor, and because of war or natural disasters. Jesus, please comfort everyone who is in pain today. *Silence*

Twelfth station: Jesus dies on the cross.

Reader: When Jesus died, the sky got dark and the ground started to shake. This made some people very scared. They saw that Jesus was innocent and that they had made a big mistake. Jesus help me to admit when I make mistakes. Help me to say I'm sorry. Thank you for always forgiving me. I love you, and I want to do the right thing. *Silence*

Thirteenth Station: Jesus' body is taken down from the cross.

Reader: When Jesus had died, the soldiers came and pierced his side to make sure he was dead. They took him down from the cross and laid him in the arms of his mother. "Greater love has no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends" Let us pray here for all mothers who lose their children through illness, tragedy or violence. We think of their unbearable sorrow and ask Jesus to help and support them. *Silence*

Fourteenth Station: Jesus is laid in the tomb

Reader: Joseph of Arimathea gave Jesus his own burial cave because Jesus didn't have a place to be buried. Joseph was another one of Jesus' friends who took a risk to help him. Sometimes it is risky to step out and help people who are in need. Jesus, I want to be a risk-taker and help others. Give me love and courage. Even when things look very difficult and sad, there is always hope that God can bring new life. Jesus, I believe that you died and rose from the dead so that I could have new life. Thank you!! *Silence*

Song: To make you feel my love *Turn and face the cross in church*

Appendix 4 "The Disastrous Dinner Party"

The purpose of this session is to concentrate on 'eating' and how to do it properly or not do it properly. The reason for this is that if we do not know how to eat properly and celebrate a meal, we will not know how to celebrate the Eucharist. This session will highlight what can go wrong when a family sit down to eat together, if indeed they do that at all, and it can be carried out in various ways. You will need a large table in the middle of the room, chairs and various items to be placed upon it at the appropriate time. You will also require some food items, plates, cups – paper and china – cutlery, take-away papers and polystyrene boxes. You can use one group to mime the whole activity or give a particular part of it each to several groups depending on how many people you have for the session. The Narrator will be the key person, who tries to draw out information from the participants as well as 'commentating' on what is happening. Some chairs in front of an imaginary TV need to be situated close to the main table. The piece can be narrated entirely and mimed or acted out as follows:

A group of young people/ children slouch on the chairs obviously watching television or playing with their mobile phones.

Narrator Good evening everyone, and welcome to the disastrous dinner party. This evening we are going to show you many ways of how *not* to eat your dinner, so please do not under any circumstances try this at home, and if you do already, then change what you are doing straight away! The evening has come and the family have gathered for the meal, beautifully cooked for them by their mother, slaving for hours over a hot stove.....

The mother enters

Mother You must be joking, mate!

NarratorAt Mr.Deng Wong's 'take-away'. First of all it is necessary to prepare the table and gather the family

Mother It's ready...somebody set the table

Nobody moves

Mother I said, somebody set the table....come on, you do it

Person 1 Mum, why me? I always have to do it

Person 2 No you don't...I did it last week...anyway you're the youngest...that's your job

Person 1 It's not fair....Mum..it's not fair

Mother Will you get on with it and set the table...this'll get cold

He throws a cloth on the table very untidily and bashes dishes and cutlery down, then returns to the TV

Narrator The family are at first a little reluctant to begin the meal as instructed because there are other things on their mind

Person 3 Why can't we have it on our laps? We're watching the football!

Mother Look, that's not the way to have your dinner...you can go back to the telly afterwards...record it if you have to

Person 4 But we don't want to record it...it's exciting

Mother Record it and come to the table

They all move to the table and fight over the chair which allows them to keep watching the TV

Person 1 That's my chair....

Person 2 No..it's mine...I want to watch the TV

Person 1 So do I....it's mine

The father enters and takes the chair from them

Father We'll soon sort this out...I'll sit there

He sits in the chair and watches TV over their shoulders. The mother brings in the take-away and slaps it down on the table

Person 3 Oh no....not a take-away again. If I have any more noodles, I'll turn into one!

Person 4 You are a noodle already so there!

He tries to hit her but the father intervenes

Father We'll have none of that at the table, thank you

Person 1 Dad, I don't like noodles...how many times have I told you I don't like noodles?

Person 2 Why can't we have chips? We love chips

Person 3 Yeah...and chicken nuggets...or burgers...or sausages

Mother Junk food is not good for you... I've told you that before

Person 4 But this is junk food...it doesn't get any junkier!

Father Now shut up and get it down you...It'll do you good...and stop moaning....there's plenty of children with nothing to eat...your mother's had a hard day and so have I, so if you don't mind, we'd like a bit of peace

The young people grab at the food with their hands and the mother slaps them

Mother Do you mind? We're not in a zoo

She then pours out the lemonade and gives it to them. They examine it to see who has got the most

Person 1 Mum, he's got more than me..it's not fair

Person 2 No...I haven't ... anyway...she's got the most

Person 3 That's 'cos I'm the eldest and I need more

They make a grab for the bottle and the mother quickly removes it

Mother That is quite enough of that...eat your food

Person 4 is texting at the table and the father is still watching TV, so much so that he spills his food down his shirt

Mother Would you two care to join us or is that asking too much?

Father It's the match...I always watch the match

Mother But not when we're eating thank you....

She takes the remote control and turns it off. The father grunts. She then takes the phone from Person 4 who whines. They eventually finish their food, wasting large amounts of it

Mother I don't know why I bother...going to the expense of getting you this lovely food when all you do it waste it....there's people starving you know...they'd be glad of it

Person 1 Well give to them then...we don't like it...we told you

She exits and comes back with a cake which she puts on the table. The children make a grab for it

Person 2 Your slice is bigger than mine...Mu-um

Mother Will you stop it?

The father meantime has found the remote control and is watching the match again

Mother Look, can't you do anything? These children are out of control

Father What?oh do what your mother says

Mother You're not one bit interested in me or them of anything except your beloved football...this is no way to have any family life you know...

The children have sneaked away from the table and gone back to the chairs with the cake in their hands. The mother is now in complete despair

Mother So who's going to clear the table?

The children answer together pointing at each other

Children He is....she is

Mother Oh...I give up

Narrator I'm sure you'll all agree that this is a beautiful family meal...perhaps it is like a meal in your home...I hope not...but it is how some people eat. And it's terrible, isn't it? So let's break up into groups and talk about what went wrong

Discussion

Everyone gets into small groups and discusses the following questions

1. How many things can you think were wrong with that family scene? List them
2. Is it anything like the meals you have in your house? If so, how?
3. How do you think we could put this right when we eat together?
4. Do you ever sit down as a family or community to eat?
5. What should be important when you do? What should happen during the meal?

We would hope that items like bad table manners, watching TV while eating, arguing over measures, wasting lots of food, never saying 'thank you' or helping to set or clear the table, would come up in the discussion, as well as the need to share what we have, listen to each other at table, eat sparingly and make the meal a real celebration.

“What we have seen and heard we are telling you” – The Celebration of First Holy Communion 2026 in St.Dominic's community S.W.Leics.

THANKS BE TO GOD