

# CHILDREN'S LITURGY

## FOURTH SUNDAY OF LENT (Year C)

Today's Gospel is the story known as the Prodigal Son. It's about a son who did lots of things wrong, but he said sorry and so his father forgave him. Let's listen and think some more about this today.

**Opening prayer:** Loving God, help us to be sorry when we have gone wrong and to know that you always love us and are ready to forgive us. Move us to forgive those who have hurt us and to do all that we can to make the world a fairer place. Amen.



**First reading (optional):** Joshua 5: 9-12

**Psalm:** Psalm 33: 2-7 r. 9

Gospel acclamation: Everyone stands and sings the acclamation together. For Lent we use an acclamation that doesn't use the word 'Alleluia'. We suggest 'Change your lives and believe in him' by Christopher Walker (OCP Publications).

**Gospel:** Luke 15: 1-3, 11-32

**Gospel reflection:** What do you remember from today's reading?

Jesus was spending time with people who were not very popular in his time. He spent time with tax collectors, and those who everyone else thought were doing wrong. Jesus sat down and ate with these people.

The Pharisees complained and so Jesus told them a story. Why do you think he told them this story?

A man had two sons. What did the younger son do? He took half of his father's money and went off and spent it all.

What happened when the son had run out of money?

There was a famine – which means that there wasn't enough food. What job did the son do?

The son started to look after someone else's pigs. He was so hungry that he would have liked to eat the pigs' food, but no one would let him have it. How do you think he must have felt to know that no one was willing to share with him?

So what did the son decide to do then? He set off home to see his father – to say sorry and to say that he would work as a servant in his house. How do you think the son was feeling?

How do you feel when you know you have done something wrong? Is it always easy to say sorry?

When he was a long way off, the father saw his son and rushed out to greet him. How do you think the father felt to see his son again after all this time?

How does the son expect his father to feel? But what does the father do after the son has said sorry?

The father throws a big party. He is so happy that his son has returned to him, safe and sound. He forgives him for all that he has done and invites everyone to a big meal to celebrate.

The elder brother is not so pleased. Have you ever been cross with your brother or sister? Why do you think the elder brother is angry that his father is throwing a party? But what does the father say?

God loves us all and forgives us for all the things that we have done wrong, just like the father in this story forgives his son.

Jesus shared food with many different sorts of people. And the father in Jesus' story welcomed his son back to share in the feast, even though he had not always done the right thing.

What do you think God wants us to understand from this story?

God welcomes everyone to the feast. It doesn't matter who we are, where we come from or what we've done, we all have the right to share in the food that God has given for all people.

And so we have to do our best to make sure that all people can get their fair share.

So perhaps this week, we can do our best to say sorry for the times when we haven't done the right thing, especially when we haven't shared very well with others?

But let's also make a change, let's try to share more with others and work together so that all people are able to join in the feast of good food that God provides for us.

## INTERCESSIONS

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

The response to these prayers is 'Hear our Prayer'.

We offer our prayers to God, who loves us all:

*We pray for the Church: that it may follow Jesus' example of forgiveness, love and welcome to all people, especially those who are poor or who are finding life difficult. Lord, in your mercy...*

*We pray for all people who are far away from home: that they may find a place of safety and welcome. Lord, in your mercy...*

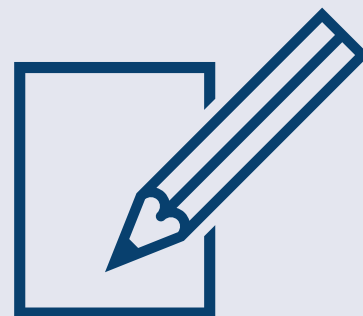
*We pray for our parish, family and friends: that we may be welcoming and forgiving of each other. Lord, in your mercy...*

**Closing prayer:** God of life, you want all people to have enough to eat and to share with each other. Work through us so that this hope may become a reality. Amen.



## ACTIVITY SUGGESTIONS

Ask the children to write or draw on a sheet of paper what they will share with others, and how they will help ensure all people get their fair share of food.



Ask the children to act out the gospel reading. How do the different characters feel at different points? What would the children do if they were the younger son, the older son or the father?

Ask the children to think about their experiences of sharing food. When do they share food as a family or with others at school or elsewhere? When do they sit and eat with others? Are there special times when they celebrate with food? Ask them to draw a picture or make a collage of a time when they have celebrated with a special meal.

Ask the children to write a grace to use at a special occasion like the feast in the gospel story – asking forgiveness for the things we have done wrong and giving thanks that all people are welcome and invited by God to the feast.

Ask the children to tell their family all that they have heard and thought about today. Ask them to do their best to forgive those who hurt them in the coming week, to welcome others into their games and to share what they have with each other.

**Please send pictures of your activities to us by emailing [parishes@sciaf.org.uk](mailto:parishes@sciaf.org.uk)**

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