# LSW

children

Treatment for possible answers

* *Because Jesus can bring us to heaven – does that mean that if Jesus cannot bring us to heaven, we would not have loved him? Doesn’t that mean that we only love being in heaven and not really love Jesus?*
* *Because Jesus can help us and answer our prayer – are we trying to bargain with God: that we do good deeds in exchange for him answering our prayers? Does bargaining with God work? Does God have need of anything that we may have to bargain with? Also, does that mean that if Jesus cannot answer our prayers, we would not have loved him? Doesn’t that mean that we only love having our prayers answered and not really love Jesus?*
* *Because if we don’t, we will be punished and sent to hell – does that mean we would not do all the things Jesus asked us to if there is no punishment for failing? Doesn’t that mean we are aiming to avoid hell and punishment and don’t really love Jesus.*
* *Well, you get the gist!*

Conclusion (compulsory for younger children)

We could just tell them that we should be doing all the things that Jesus asked of us because they are the right things to do. That means that even if Jesus had not told us, we should still have done them. This should suffice for some time and we hope they will think about it when they are older. Do you have another answer?

Year B

#### Sixth Sunday in Ordinary Time

## Images

Why follow Jesus

## Points to note

This reading has variations among the other Synoptic Gospels. We can highlight various lessons from this reading: Jesus wanting to heal; Jesus healing; giving thanks after the healing, etc. I am choosing to focus on the part where Jesus asked the cured leper not to tell anyone about it. Potentially, there could be questions arising from the children’s confusion over this instruction.

This has been an intriguing point for me since my youth: why would Jesus not want to tell anyone about himself? Doesn’t his instruction not to tell anyone conflicts with his other instructions to spread the news? In some way, I believe it could be a test of whether we are coming to Jesus for the right reasons or are we just attracted to the miracles he performed.

In this, care needs to be taken that the children do not understand their relationship with Jesus to be that of an examiner testing an examinee. Sincerity is a prerequisite in any relationship. Similarly with God: if we were to hide our motives and say or do the right things in order to impress God with the ‘right’ answers in the Great Examination of Life, we will surely fail.

There was a study performed by some scientist among students in a college. They asked one group of students who were feeling a little depressed to do good deeds without stopping to think why they are doing it while the other group of similarly depressed students were to carry on their life as normal. After the trial period, the first group was found to be significantly happier than the second. There surely must be something in that for us to think about: does doing good deeds only work if there is no ‘why’ to our doing?

## Liturgy

### Acclamation before the Gospel

Alleluia! Alleluia!

A great prophet has appeared among us;

God has visited his people.

Alleluia!

Gospel

Explain that Jesus was still preaching and curing people in the Galilee, his home region. Last week, he cured Peter’s mother-in-law.

The Lord be with you.

*All:*  And also with you.

A Reading from the Holy Gospel according to St Mark

*All:*  Glory to you O Lord

(Mk 1: 40-45)

A leper came to Jesus and pleaded on his knees, “If you want to,” he said, “you can cure me.” Feeling sorry for him, Jesus stretched out his hand and touched him. “Of course I want to!” he said, “Be cured!” And the leprosy left him at once and he was cured. Jesus immediately sent him away and sternly ordered him, “Mind you say nothing to anyone, but go and show yourself to the priest, and make the offering for your healing prescribed by Moses as evidence of your recovery.” The man went away, but then started talking about it freely and telling the story everywhere, so that Jesus could no longer go openly into any town, but had to stay outside in places where nobody lived. Even so, people from all around would come to him.

This is the Gospel of the Lord

# Discussion

What miracle did Jesus do? *Discuss what leprosy is and how they were required to live outside the town in the olden days and had to ring a bell calling out ‘Leper! Leper!’ to warn people of their coming. Go through the story about how Jesus cured the leper.*

What did Jesus tell the leper to do after curing him? *Discuss each of the two instructions separately:*

* *The cured man was to present himself to the priest and make an offering. This was in accordance with the way that the Old Testament treat cured lepers. The presentation to the priest allowed the priest to examine him and confirm that he is cured so that he could live in the community again. The offering was a thanksgiving upon confirming that he is cured.*
* *The cured man was to tell no one about his healing. Discuss why Jesus would want the man to keep it secret. In a way, Jesus wanted to know whether the people would follow him or do they only want to see the miracles.*

Do you love Jesus? Would you want to do all that is asked of us in the Bible? Why? *This is a tricky and can be rather riotous part: it is not easy for adults to come to a conclusion. It is an answer that we would all come back to again and again in our lives. The older children can start off their lifetime of questioning and can leave the session without a conclusion so that they can answer it at another time and place of God’s choosing. Let’s not impose our conclusion on a very private matter like this. There must, however, be a conclusion for the younger ones so that they do not leave confused.*