***LSW***

children

Year C

### Holy Family

**Images**

Being Lost

**Points to note**

Today’s reading is an intimately childhood nightmare. Being lost when out with their parents. Also a little topical – many of the children would have just recently been in a heavily crowded mall during Christmas shopping season (or Boxing Day sale). Just take care that it doesn’t relive a real harrowing experience of being lost, especially a very recent one. Most children can look back at it after passage of time and be detached from the anxiety of that time, but not all.

One more point. Before any accuse Mary and Joseph of being negligent parents, it should be noted that it I quite normal for caravans of those days to have families travelling separately. Often, small children travel with their mothers while older boys travel with their fathers. Jesus was 12 at that time and at the cusp of puberty. So, it will be understandable that Joseph would have expected Jesus to be travelling with his mother while Mary would have thought that Jesus was big enough to be travelling with his father. Now, hasn’t something like that happened to your family before?

**Liturgy**

Acclamation before the Gospel

Alleluia! Alleluia!

Open our heart, O Lord,

to accept the words of your Son.

Alleluia!

## Gospel

The Lord be with you.

*All:*  And also with you.

A Reading from the Holy Gospel according to St Luke

*All:*  Glory to you O Lord

(Lk 2:41-52)

Every year the parents of Jesus used to go to Jerusalem for the feast of the Passover. When he was twelve years old, they went up for the feast as usual. When they were on their way home after the feast, the boy Jesus stayed behind in Jerusalem without his parents knowing it. They assumed he was with the caravan, and it was only after a day’s journey that they went to look for him among their relations and acquaintances. When they failed to find him they went back to Jerusalem looking for him everywhere.

Three days later, they found him in the Temple, sitting among the doctors, listening to them, and asking them questions; and all those who heard him were astounded at his intelligence and his replies. They were overcome when they saw him, and his mother said to him, ‘My child, why have, you done this to us? See how worried your father and I have been, looking for you.’ ‘Why were you looking for me?’ he replied ‘Did you not know that I must be busy with my Father’s affairs?’ But they did not understand what he meant.

He then went down with them and came to Nazareth and lived under their authority. His mother stored up all these things in her heart. And Jesus increased in wisdom, in stature, and in favour with God and men.

This is the Gospel of the Lord

**Discussion**

Have you ever been out with your family and gotten separated from them? *It could have happened during the recent Christmas shopping. Take care if the experience was a stressful one and is still fresh in the child’s memory. If it was not, get the children to talk about it, focusing on how they felt when they saw their parents again. Was it relief or disappointment? Some children had a good time when they get lost, being fussed over by other people. Discuss also what they did while waiting for their parents to come and claim them.*

*If none of the children ever had such an experience, discuss what they would do they found themselves lost. No harm taking them through the experience before it happens so that they are prepared.*

*Discuss how they felt when they realised that they were lost. Discuss how they felt when they saw someone familiar again and when they were reunited with their family.*

*Explain that it is the same when we have done wrong and are far from God. We too feel lost and are very fearful about what could happen, feeling very exposed. And much like our parents finding us and bring us back to our families, it is God who finds us again and places us within the family of the church where we belong.*

*Discuss how God has been good to give us the family at home and the family at church, to (in different contexts) look for us when we are lost and make us feel part of a family again. As this is the last Sunday of the calendar year (and with our bellies and Christmas stockings full) it may be an appropriate moment to offer a thanksgiving prayer for our families that God gave us and for those who do not have one or are far away from their own families.*