# LSW

children

*Assisi was one of those who tended to lepers when others avoided them. There was also Fr Damian who tended to a leper colony in Hawaii and eventually died as a consequence. They did not avoid the sick but brought God’s love to them.*

##### Healing (for more advanced children)

Can you name the seven sacraments? *There is an easy way to remember – they come in three groups: (i) the sacraments of initiation of baptism, communion & confirmation; (ii) the social sacraments of ordination & matrimony; and (iii) the healing sacraments of reconciliation & the anointing of the sick.*

Explain what happens at the anointing of the sick: the priest rubs oil, which – just like our ointments today – was an agent of healing in olden days, on the sick person and says a prayer and blesses him or her. In the past, people tend to associate the anointing of the sick with the last rites that a Catholic receives when he or she is about to die. In truth, however, anointing of the sick could and should happen at any time when a Catholic is sick and not be limited to the deathbed.

*The anointing of the sick expresses the faith of the community that the sick person can get well again & that when he or she recovers, it is due to the good graces of God that it happens.*

##### Why Jesus came (for older children)

###### Go through the last paragraph of the reading note the oddness that Jesus wanted to go away when everyone was looking for him. Why? Discuss what is it that the people wanted from Jesus after hearing of his healing and his casting out of the demons. Was that what he wanted? What did he want to do? He wanted to preach. So he went elsewhere so that he could preach. Note that he continued to cast out devils when he was preaching. This is to emphasise that he did not go away because he did not want to cure people (in the olden days, people thought that diseases were caused by devils and, so, it seems sometimes that curing people was the same as casting out devils), but that curing people was only a secondary part of his ministry, secondary to preaching.

Year B

#### Fifth Sunday in Ordinary Time

## Images

Helping the sick

Why Jesus came

## Points to note

This reading from Mk comprises three parts: (i) the healing of Peter’s mother-in-law; (ii) curing those possessed by devils; and (iii) leaving the town to preach. The discussion here allows for separate themes for each of the three parts. I have chosen to combine the first two parts into a discussion on healing while the discussion on the third part is recommended for older children only. I have included this short discussion on the third part, as there is a potential question why Jesus left which some of the older children may ask.

Talking to children about healing can also be done on two levels. All children should be able to relate to dealing with family members who are sick. I would, however, suggest, that discussing the sacrament of anointing should be limited to only those who have undergone instructions on sacraments as a whole: that there are seven sacraments, etc.

In our modern, clean and sterile society, we tend to stay clear of germs, dirt and all the yucky stuff. One unfortunate consequence is that we avoid people who are sick. I find it sad to see people walking around with facemasks, as the message I get is that interacting with me is a risk they have to put up with. As a result, we do not provide comfort to the sick. Don’t you long for a hug sometimes when you are sick and miserable in bed with a fever? Well, in today’s society, that is very unlikely. Perhaps, we should be reminded that Jesus healed the sick by holding them by the hand – very much like how Mother Teresa cradled the dying in her arms and Princess Di embraced AIDS patients.

## Liturgy

### Acclamation before the Gospel

Alleluia! Alleluia!

He took our sickness away,

and carried our diseases for us.

Alleluia!

Gospel

Explain that Jesus is still travelling around Galilee at the beginning of his ministry and most people still do not know his message.

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: 29-39)

On leaving the synagogue, Jesus went with James and John straight to the house of Simon and Andrew. Now, Simon’s mother-in-law had gone to bed with fever, and they took her by the hand and helped her up. And the fever left her and she began to tend to them.

That evening, after sunset, they brought to him all who were sick and those who were possessed by devils. The whole town came crowding round the door, and he cured many who were suffering from diseases of one kind or another; he also case out many devils, but he would not allow them to speak, because they knew who he was.

In the morning, long before dawn, he got up and left the house, and went off to a lonely place and prayed there. Simon and his companions set out in search of him, and when they found him they said, “Everybody is looking for you.” He answered, “Let us go elsewhere, to the neighbouring country towns, so that I can preach there too, because that is why I came.” And he went all through Galilee, preaching in their synagogues and casting out devils.

This is the Gospel of the Lord

# Discussion

### Healing (for all children)

Have any of you ever fell sick before? *Allow them to talk about what happened to them - feeling miserable, in pain, not being able to eat proper food, not being able to go out or play. Slowly guide the discussion to how other people tended to them: the doctors, their parents, their family and friends, the teachers, etc.*

Are you glad that you got all that treatment? What would have happened if you did not? *Do not limit this to only the medical treatment but also lead on to the tender loving care that all of us need to get well.*

*Discuss how miserable we feel when we are sick.* Wouldn’t you like a good warm hug at that point? *Of course we do!* Do you give your family members a warm hug when they are sick *(Leave out friends – you do not want to be accused of encouraging the children to contract a cold at school.)*? *If the children answer in the affirmative, compliment them and ask if it makes them feel better as well as the making the sick one feel better. If they answer in the negative, contrast it with what they would wish to have when they are sick but are not willing to give to others.*

*Explain that it is not just doctors who heal but that we, too, can help to heal in our little way. And just as Jesus did with Peter’s mother-in-law, it is by taking them by their hand. St Francis of*