Discuss the four types of prayers: praising prayers (adoration), sorry prayers (penitential), asking prayers (petitional) and thank you prayers (thanksgiving). Discuss examples of such prayers. The first three can be found in the Our Father. Emphasise that if they don’t know prayers, they could make them up.

Explain that you would like to invite the children to a prayer session now. Start with thanksgiving prayers, then petitional and lastly adoration. It is not advisable to attempt penitential prayers unless this is an intimate group and the children have all been specifically prepared for it.

See if anyone is willing to say a prayer. For those reluctant, ask them what they would like to pray for. Let those who were willing, to say their prayers. After they have finished, ask again if any of the others would like to say a prayer. For those still reluctant, incorporate their requests and ideas into a prayer that you could say yourself. Repeat for petitional prayers and, if time permits, adoration prayers.

Year A

LSW

children

Seventh Sunday of Easter

Images

Praying for others

Points to note

The reading this Sunday forms part of the priestly prayer of Jesus. It is therefore an opportunity for us as imitators of Christ, to learn to pray as he did.

It is not easy to teach praying. A certain spontaneity is required and that is one ingredient that is not easy to teach.

Children also often feel shy to pray in public. Ensure that no child is pressured to say a prayer. Encourage by all means but remember there is a thin line between encouraging and pressuring. It is however essential to make each child feel a part of the prayers. If the child is not ready to pray aloud, ensure his or her petitions are incorporated into the prayers said.

One reason for the reluctance could be that the child is unfamiliar with praying. An atmosphere of a community at prayer helps overcome this. It is encouraging for a child to see his or her peers pray. It may therefore be advisable to leave those reluctant to pray to the last, if they are still willing to pray. Where there are two or more children who are good friends but are reluctant to pray, encourage the other to pray immediately after one has made or agreed to make a prayer.

Another reason for the reluctance is a fear of not knowing how to pray. Keep the framework of the prayer simple and reduce protocol to a minimum. Emphasise that, as God is our father, we should speak to him like we speak to our fathers at home. Strip out all unnecessary ritualism and identify prayer firmly as an everyday occurrence.

Liturgy

Explain to the children that Ascension Thursday was celebrated last Thursday. Ascension Thursday is forty days after Easter. After Ascension, there are ten more days to Pentecost, when the Holy Spirit sent by God descended on the Apostles. There were ten days therefore when the disciples were without Jesus and without the Holy Spirit. This, therefore, is the period of preparation for Pentecost.

Acclamation before the Gospel

Alleluia! Alleluia!

I will not leave you orphans, says the Lord;

I will come back to you, and your hearts will be full of joy.

Alleluia!

Reading

Explain to the children that at the end of the Last Supper, Jesus prayed for his disciples.

The Lord be with you.

All: And also with you.

A Reading from the Holy Gospel according to St John

All: Glory to you O Lord

(Jn 17: 1-11)

Jesus raised his eyes to heaven and said:

 “Father, the time has come:

 glorify your Son so that your Son may glorify you;

 and, through the power over all mankind that you have given me,

 let me give eternal life to all those you have put in my care.

 And eternal life is to know you, the only true God,

 and Jesus Christ whom you have sent.

 I have glorified you on earth

 and finished the work that you have given me to do.

 Now, it is time for you to glorify me

 with the glory that I had with you before the world was made.

 I have made you known

 to the men who left their homes to follow me.

 They were yours and you gave them to me,

 and they have kept your word.

 Now at last they know that all you have given me

 comes indeed from you;

 for I have taught them all you gave to me,

 and they have truly learnt this, that I come from you,

 and have believed that it was you who sent me.

 I pray for them; I am not praying for the world,

 but for those you have given me, because they belong to you:

 all I have is yours and all you have is mine, in them I am glorified.

 I am not in the world any longer,

 but they are in the world, and I am coming to you.”

 This is the Gospel of the Lord

Discussion

Does anyone know any prayers? When do we say those prayers? Discuss the various settings of prayer: at mass; at home; at the dinner table; anywhere where the need arises. Jesus said where two or three are gathered in his name, he will be there. Therefore, Jesus is there when Christians get together to pray. Discuss about family prayers. Does any of the children participate in them? If willing, encourage them to discuss what happens at their family prayers.