During the blessing of the candle, the priest traces all these symbols on the candle, and if you listen carefully, he will be reading them as he prays the blessings. The blessed candle is then used to bless the water for baptism. (We discussed that last week.) The light from the paschal candle is then used to light the little candles we will be holding during the mass. Throughout the season of Easter, the paschal candle will be lit every time the Gospel reading is read. It is our way of saying that we are enlightened every time Jesus, i.e., the Gospel, comes to us.



BAPTISMAL PROMISES

Do you reject sin, so as to live in the freedom of God’s children?

I do.

Do you reject the glamour of evil, and refuse to be mastered by sin?

I do.

Do you reject Satan, father of sin and prince of darkness?

I do.

Do you believe in God, the father almighty, creator of heaven and earth?

I do.

Do you believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord, who was born of the Virgin Mary, was crucified, died, and was buried, rose from the dead and is now seated at the right hand of the Father?

I do.

Do you believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy catholic church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and life everlasting?

I do.

Year A

LSW

children

Fourth Sunday in Lent

Images

Light of the world

Points to note

The imagery used for this series of Sundays starting last week centres around the baptism. For this Sunday, the imagery is that of light. (Last week's was water and next week is life) You may wish to have a candle as the centrepiece during your session, but it must not be used as symbolic of anything. Do not light it as the light of Christ. Do not light it for the reading. Do not light the Paschal candle. Anticipating the symbolism of Easter will only dilute the impact of the Easter midnight mass. Use the candle only to illustrate the ideas that you are trying to get across. You may use last year’s Paschal candle.



The second reading in the Missal is not that easy to follow. I have greatly simplified the language so that even adults can follow it. The reading, like many of Paul’s letters, deal with concepts. Fortunately, the concepts are quite basic and can be quite easily reduced to common everyday occurrence.

Liturgy

Acclamation before the Gospel

There is no acclamation as the Gospel is not read.

Reading

Explain to the children that Paul often writes letters to his friends to teach them about Jesus and to encourage them when they have problems. In this reading, he is writing to his friends in the Greek town of Ephesus, who were so proud of the letter that they circulated it among the other Christian communities nearby. This is one of the letters Paul wrote from prison.

As the Gospel is not read, the sign of the cross is omitted but the introductory dialogue (i.e., the Lord be with you...) may be used.

A Reading from the letter of St Paul to his friends in Ephesus

(Ep 5: 8-14)

You were darkness once, but now you are light in the Lord;

be like children of light, for the effects of light are seen in perfect goodness.

Try to discover what God wants you to do,

and have nothing to do with the works of darkness.

Things that are done in darkness are things people are ashamed of;

but anything exposed by the light will be lit up,

and anything lit will turn into light.

That is why it is said:[[1]](#footnote-1)

 Wake up from your sleep,

 rise from the dead,

 and Christ will shine on you.

This is the Word of the Lord

Dialogue

Have you noticed what happens if there is no light? Discuss the effect on the world if there is no light. Nobody can see anything. Anybody can get away with anything. No one can trust anyone else. Nobody can know anything. Nobody can learn anything.

Imagine now that there is a little light. Have you noticed that there only need to be a little bit of light in the room, for there to be not one spot in the room that will be in total darkness. Discuss the fact that light drives out darkness. Discuss the effect on the room if there are many mirrors to reflect the light. Does everybody like the light? Do criminals like the light or would they prefer to work in the darkness? Discuss what Paul meant when he said “Things that are done in darkness are things people are ashamed of”.

Paul calls us ‘children of light’. Who therefore do you think is the ‘father of light’? Discuss that all light comes from God. We call Jesus the ‘light of the world’. Discuss that we are not the light, but we only reflect whatever light we get from Jesus.

What are the uses of light? Discuss how light brings knowledge as we can see things and learn about the world.

Explain the symbolic significance of light at the Easter midnight mass. In fact, the first part of the mass is known as the Liturgy of the Light, when the paschal candle is lit. ‘Paschal’ is another word for ‘Easter’. You may show them last year’s paschal candle. All paschal candles will have the same symbols: the alpha α and the omega Ω (the first and the last letters in the Greek alphabet); the cross; and the year.

1. This is an extract of a very early Christian hymn, probably sung during baptism when the newly baptised neophyte emerges from the baptismal waters. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)