# LSW

children

Year B

##### Nineteenth Ordinary Sunday

## Images

Welcoming Jesus to our mass

## Points to note

This week’s reading is the third of a series of readings centred around the account of the feeding of the five thousand in Jn in Sunday 17. For the five weeks, the readings will be laden with theological themes of: the feeding (Sunday 17); true bread (Sunday 18); the person of Jesus (Sunday 19); Jesus as bread (Sunday 20); and accepting Jesus (Sunday 21).

While it makes sense to present them in such a cycle to adults, it is very difficult for children. I have therefore interpreted it as: preparing the meal (Sunday 17); what we eat (Sunday 18); who we eat with (Sunday 19); the wider church who shares the bread (Sunday 20); and what to do after the meal (Sunday 21).

In all instances, it is important to emphasise the personal and the everyday occurrences that children encounter at meals and parallel them with the meal for their spiritual world.

## Liturgy

### Acclamation

Alleluia! Alleluia!

I am the living bread which has come down from heaven,

says the Lord.

Anyone who eats this bread will live for ever.

Alleluia!

Gospel

*Remind the children that Jesus has just fed the five thousand men, with the women and children.*

A Reading from the Holy Gospel according to St John

(Jn 6: 41-51)

The Jews were complaining to each other about Jesus, because he had said, “I am the bread that comes down from heaven.” “Surely this is Jesus son of Joseph,” they said. “We know his father and mother, how can he now say, ‘I have come down from heaven’?” Jesus said in reply, “Stop complaining to each other.

No one can come to me

unless he is drawn by the Father who sent me,

and I will raise him up at the last day.

It is written in the prophets:

They will all be taught by God,

and to hear the teaching of the Father,

and learn from it, is to come to me.

Not that anybody has seen the Father,

except the one who comes from God: he has seen the Father.

I tell you most solemnly,

everybody who believes has eternal life.

I am the bread of life.

Your fathers ate the manna in the desert and they are dead; but this bread that comes down from heaven,

so that a man may eat it and not die.

I am the living bread which has come down from heaven. Anyone who eats this bread will live for ever;

and the bread that I shall give

is my flesh, for the life of the world.

This is the Gospel of the Lord

# Discussion

Just as the family at home have meals together, the family of God also have a meal together. The mass. *Draw parallels between the family at home and the family of God. There is a dining table (the altar table) with a table-cloth over it (the altar cloth). There is food on the table (the bread and wine) and lots of diners (the congregation).*

Discuss when Mom or Dad has an important guest for dinner. Dad’s boss at work, the parish priest, or even more important, your schoolteacher. Would the table be set even more special? Discuss how. The guest will have the most important seat that the table and will have the first serving of the food. Everything will be done to get the guest as comfortable as possible. And if this is the first visit, the guest may even get a tour of the house. We will all also have to be on our best behaviour and will not be allowed to say any nasty remarks about our guest.

Parallel this with the mass. Who are the people at our mass? There are Catholics as well those who are interested in our church. There are the priests. Discuss when we have a special guest at our church: say, the bishop or a visiting priest. Won’t we make an extra effort to make sure that he is welcomed and he knows where everything is for him to say mass? Also, in some churches, we ask people who are attending our church for the first time to stand up so that we can welcome them.

What about Jesus? Is he a guest at our mass too? This is an interesting question: is a member of the family also a guest? Discuss how Jesus is present at our mass: (i) in the Eucharist in the form of bread and wine; (ii) in the reading, since Jesus is also the Word of God; and (iii) in the gathering of the people, because Jesus said, where two or three are gathered in my name, there I will be.

Discuss how we make Jesus welcome in the mass: (i) we kneel when the bread is broken and prepared for us as our way of treating the Eucharist with respect; (ii) we stand when the Gospel is read, because we recognise that these are the words of Jesus; and (iii) we greet the people around us in the sign of peace, and in doing so, we also greet Jesus.