

"Lord, when did we see you hungry?"

Matthew 25:37

CATECHIST BACKGROUND

In this prayer service, children will reflect on what they have learned and from whom they have learned about Jesus.

Before gathering the children in the prayer center, prepare the prayer table with a green cloth, a Bible open to Matthew 25, a candle, and copies of the Intermediate Catechetical Sunday activity called The Church's Greatest Missionary.

Gather the children in the prayer center. Invite them to recall what they have learned about Jesus in religion class, at Mass, and in their families. Then invite each to name a person who has taught him or her about Jesus and what that person has taught. Be prepared to give an example of your own. Explain that today's prayer is a prayer of thanks for all who help us learn about Jesus.

INTRODUCTION

- Light the candle, and sing a familiar song sung at your parish, or a song about the Word of God.
- Lead the children in praying the Sign of the Cross, and then offer the following prayer:

Lord Jesus, you ask us to share your love with others by helping people meet their basic needs—sheltering the homeless, giving food to the hungry, and taking care of the sick. Thank you for the catechists, teachers, friends, and family members who have shown us how to follow you by serving those in need. Guide us so that we can help others find comfort and peace in your unending love. For you are Lord for ever and ever. Amen.

WORD OF GOD

- Invite the students to listen for what Jesus teaches in Matthew 25:34-40. Sing an "Alleluia" sung at your parish, and proclaim the Gospel as follows:

Then the king will say to those on his right, 'Come, you who are blessed by my Father. Inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world. For I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me drink, a stranger and you welcomed me, naked and you clothed me, ill and you cared for me, in prison and you visited me.' Then the righteous will answer him and say, 'Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you drink? When did we see you a stranger and welcome you, or naked and clothe you? When did we see you ill or in prison, and visit you? And the king will say to them in reply, 'Amen, I say to you, whatever you did for one of these least brothers of mine, you did for me.'"

- Invite volunteers to share what they think is the meaning of the story. Then ask, "Why are we called to help the poor and sick with their physical and spiritual needs?"
- Tell the young people that this Gospel reading is from a speech that Jesus gives to his disciples about the final judgment. Tell them that the king in the passage is Jesus himself.

- Explain that, as followers of Jesus, it is our responsibility to help build his kingdom by lovingly spreading the Gospel. Tell them that we do this by teaching people about Jesus and serving the needs of “the least of these” of this world.
- Invite the young people to name people that help build the Kingdom of God by teaching others about Jesus. If possible, write these names on chart paper or a white board.
- Then invite them to name people that help build the Kingdom of God by feeding the hungry, welcoming those who are lonely and forgotten, and caring for the poor and sick. List the young people’s responses on the chart paper.
- Under each of the lists, write the name “Saint Paul.” Tell them that Saint Paul was the Church’s greatest missionary, and explain that a missionary is a catechist who travels to teach others about Jesus and care for those in need.

PRAYER ACTIVITY

Distribute copies of The Corporal Works of Mercy activity, and invite a young person to read aloud the the description. Read the instructions for the first activity and give the young people a couple minutes to complete the activity. Then invite them to brainstorm ideas of how they might fulfill the Corporal Works of Mercy. Give the young people ideas of ways that they can serve others, such as volunteering at a soup kitchen or food pantry, donating to a food or clothing drive, or visiting a homeless shelter. Ask them to write their ideas on their papers.

CONCLUSION

- Lead the class in offering prayers of thanks for those who have helped them learn about Jesus. Invite them to respond, **“Thank you, Lord.”** (You may also wish to invite the students to raise their hands in a gesture of thanks and praise when they pray the response.)

*For the many saints who gave their talents and time to teach others about Jesus through their words and actions, we pray:
Thank you, Lord.*

*For those in our parish who teach us about God’s unending love and who help us serve others as Jesus taught, we pray:
Thank you, Lord.*

*For our families, for the seeds of faith they plant in our lives, and for all they do to teach us how to follow Jesus, we pray:
Thank you, Lord.*

*For catechists and missionaries everywhere, who teach us that following Jesus means feeding the hungry, sheltering the homeless, and caring for the poor and sick, we pray:
Thank you, Lord.*

*For each of us, that we may look for chances to teach others about God’s love and serve those in need, we pray:
Thank you, Lord.*

*Help us follow the example of our catechists so that others will come to know, love, and serve you.
Help us follow your example, Lord, by serving “the least of these” of this world.
For you are Lord, for ever and ever.
Amen.*

- Conclude by leading the young people in praying the Sign of the Cross.