

Mission Together

Lent Liturgy: Jesus heals a man born blind



Introduction for teachers / leaders

What is Lent? During the forty days of Lent Christians prepare for Easter – when Jesus suffered, died and rose from the dead. We prepare for this wonderful event by doing three things: praying, giving something up (fasting) and by being generous (almsgiving). When we do these we learn to put other people first and to grow closer to God our Father – just as Jesus did.

Liturgy plan

This liturgy encourages children to think about the virtues of courage, love, faith and gratitude. It has been adapted from the Gospel reading for the fourth Sunday in Lent – John 9:1-41 (Year A).

It may be used alongside our story about Bright, a little boy who lives in the Little Eden Centre for children with special needs in Johannesburg, South Africa, and which is supported by Mission Together.

Setting the scene

Please refer to our guide 'How to Pray with Children' <https://missiontogether.org.uk/prayer-resources/>

Entrance hymn or recorded music

Our suggestion: 'Father, in my life I see.'

Sign of the cross

Bible reading and children's reflection

As an alternative to the scripture overleaf and for a more in-depth study of scripture you may wish to use the interactive retelling of the reading in Appendix 1.

You will need seven copies of the Appendix 1 retelling – one for each reader.

Please note, Mission Together has created pupil-led, abridged narratives of the Sunday Gospels during Lent (Year A). Please visit the Lent page of our website to download.

Closing prayer: prayers of intercession and the Mission Together prayer

Copy and paste the prayers of intercession and ask two pupils to read.

Sign of the cross

Closing hymn or recorded music

Our suggestion: 'God forgave my sin in Jesus' name.'

Follow up scripture exploration: See Appendix 2

Mission Together Prayer

May all children
In the world
Share love
Share friendship and live
In the peace
Of God's love.
Now and forever. Amen



Lent Liturgy: Jesus heals a man born blind



The readings we hear in Lent show us how Jesus always looked at people with eyes of love. Sadly, we sometimes struggle to see how special **everyone** is, or the things they are good at, or how kind they are, or the help they might need. Today we will hear a story about how Jesus opened the eyes of a blind man, and by doing so helped us all to see more clearly. **Listen** carefully and **imagine** you were there and saw what happened.

‘As they went along, Jesus and his disciples saw a blind man, begging. Jesus spat on the ground, made some mud with the saliva, and put it on the man’s eyes. Jesus said to him, “Go and wash in the pool.”

The man went and washed, and came home, seeing.

His neighbours, who only knew him as a beggar, weren’t sure if he was the same man.

The man who had been blind said, “It is me! Jesus made some mud and put it on my eyes. He told me to go and wash. So I did and now I can see.”

The crowd brought the man to the Pharisees. The Pharisees were very important. The day on which Jesus had opened the man’s eyes was a holy day when no one was allowed to work. So the Pharisees questioned the man. They said, “Jesus cannot be from God, because he works on the holy days.”

But the man replied, “Jesus has been sent by God. If Jesus were not from God, he could not have opened my eyes.” The Pharisees were angry and they threw the man out.

When Jesus heard what had happened he went and found the man and said to him,

“Do you believe I am the Son of God?” The man replied, “Yes, Lord, I believe.”

The Gospel of the Lord. **R/ Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ**

Question: The start of the story may seem strange, but **how** Jesus opened the man’s eyes shouldn’t distract us from **why** he wanted to help. What virtues (good qualities) can we find in the way Jesus behaves?

Answer: Loving and kind/compassionate.

Question: What parts of the story help us to recognise Jesus’s kindness and love?

Answer: Whilst others saw only a beggar and looked down on the man, Jesus saw him as deserving of love and kindness. Jesus wanted to help so he stopped and gave the man the gift of sight. Later, Jesus seeks the man out after he has heard that he had been treated badly. By the end of the story, not only has Jesus given the man the gift of sight, he also has given him the gift of friendship and faith.

Question: If we look closely, we can see that the blind man in the story displayed great courage. Find examples of when he was courageous.

Answer: He told his neighbours what Jesus had done for him even though they doubted he was telling the truth. He stood up to the Pharisees and argued that Jesus had been sent by God, even though they disagreed.

Question: How can we tell that the man was grateful to Jesus for transforming his life?

Answer: The man was able to speak up for Jesus – to his neighbours and the Pharisees. His faith in Jesus meant he was courageous and grateful.

Reflective questions

- Can you think of a time when you have shown courage?
- Do you think your faith in Jesus can help you when you are scared, sad or lonely?
- In the story, Jesus shows us that we should be loving to everyone. Do you think that is hard to do?
- Do you think prayer might help us to be loving towards everyone?
- What’s happened today that you are grateful for?
- How will you show gratitude? As well as saying thank you, what other ways are there to thank people?



Appendix 1: An interactive retelling, John 9:-41



This Lent we continue to follow *The Year of the Word: The God Who Speaks*, an initiative of the Catholic Bishops' Conference of England and Wales. As scripture is foundational to the life of the Catholic Church, *The Year of the Word's* vision is to celebrate, share and live out our faith through deeper scriptural engagement. This resource is designed to support schools as they journey through Lent and *The Year of the Word*.

The retelling below of John 9:1-41 helps pupils engage with the reading through imagination and interaction.

Narrator: As they went along, Jesus and his disciples saw a blind man, begging. Jesus spat on the ground, made some mud with the saliva, and put it on the man's eyes. Jesus said to him,

Jesus: Go, wash in the pool.

Narrator: The man went and washed, and came home seeing. His neighbours who knew him as a beggar asked,

Neighbour 1: Isn't this the same man who used to sit and beg?

Neighbour 2: (*uncertainly*) Hmm, maybe he only looks like him.

Narrator: But the man answered,

Man: I am the man.

Neighbour 1: How is it that you can see?

Man: The man they call Jesus made some mud and put it on my eyes. He told me to go and wash. So I did and now I can see.

Neighbours: Where is this man?

Man: I don't know.

Narrator: They brought the man who had been blind to the Pharisees. They were the religious leaders. The day on which Jesus had opened the man's eyes was a Sabbath when no one was allowed to work. So the Pharisees were cross. They questioned him and he said,

Man: Jesus put mud on my eyes, I washed, and now I see.

Pharisee 1: (*angrily*) This Jesus cannot be from God, for he works on the Sabbath.

Pharisee 2: (*doubtful*) But if he is not from God, how could he do something like this?

Narrator: So they asked the man,

Pharisees together: What do you say about Jesus?

Narrator: The man replied,

Man: Jesus is a prophet, sent by God.

Narrator: The Pharisees were angry. They hurled insults at him and said,

Pharisees together: We don't even know where Jesus comes from!

Man: (*calmly*) Now that is remarkable! You don't know where he comes from, yet he opened my eyes. If Jesus were not from God, he could do nothing."

Narrator: The Pharisees shouted and they threw the man out. Jesus heard what had happened. He went and found the man and said to him,

Jesus: Do you believe that I am the Son of God?

Narrator: The man said,

Man: Yes, Lord, I believe.

Narrator: And the man worshipped Jesus.



The Gospel of the Lord R/ Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ

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Appendix 2: Scripture exploration ideas



This Lent we continue to follow *The Year of the Word: The God Who Speaks*, an initiative of the Catholic Bishops' Conference of England and Wales. As scripture is foundational to the life of the Catholic Church, *The Year of the Word's* vision is to celebrate, share and live out our faith through deeper scriptural engagement. This resource is designed to support schools as they journey through Lent and *The Year of the Word*.

- Print the abridged scripture on Appendix 3 and ask pupils to annotate the text (a wide margin has been added for this), looking out for words that help: picture the scene, capture emotion and feelings, relay important messages about love, courage, faith and gratitude.
- Create a poster to illustrate what you think is the most important message in the reading. Think carefully about how you will visualise this. Which characters are in it? What are they doing?
- Invite the pupils to retell the scripture as a story, using their own words and as vividly as they can.
- For younger pupils, read the shorter scripture below, then invite the children to retell the story in their own words. Provide paper puppets as props.

'One day Jesus and his disciples saw a blind man, begging. Jesus wanted to help, so he made some mud, put it on the man's eyes, and told him to "Go and wash in the pool."

The man did what Jesus said – then his eyes opened and he was able to see!

When the man got home his neighbours didn't recognise him, until he said, "It is me! Jesus opened my eyes and now I can see."

The day on which Jesus had opened the man's eyes was a holy day when no one was allowed to work. Because of this some very important people, called the Pharisees, questioned the man.

They said, "We do not believe Jesus comes from God, because he works on the holy days."

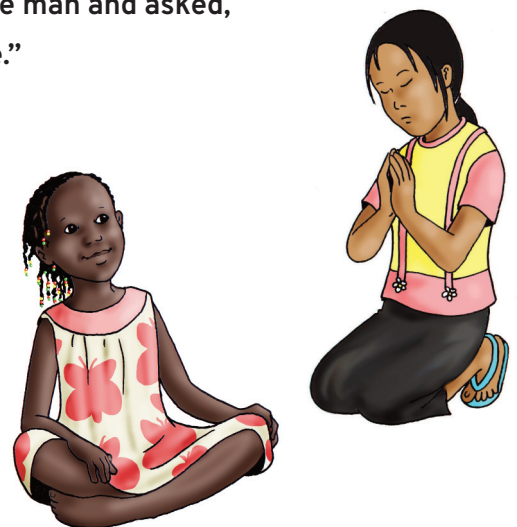
But the man replied, "Jesus has been sent by God. If Jesus were not from God, he could not have opened my eyes." This made the Pharisees angry and they threw him out.

When Jesus heard what had happened, he went and found the man and asked, "Do you believe in me?" The man replied, "Yes Lord, I believe."

The Gospel of the Lord: Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.

- During class prayer time, invite pupils to listen carefully as you reread the scripture. After the reading remind the children that God speaks to us through the words of scripture. Then ask if any words stood out from the scripture today.

What might God be saying to us through these words?



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Appendix 3: Abridged version, John 9:-41



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So the Pharisees questioned the man. They said, “Jesus cannot be from God, because he works on the holy days.”

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The Pharisees were angry and they threw the man out.

When Jesus heard what had happened he went and found the man and said to him, “Do you believe I am the Son of God?”

The man replied, “Yes, Lord, I believe.”

The Gospel of the Lord.

R/ Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ



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Mission Together

Lent Liturgy: Bright and Little Eden



A PowerPoint slide with these images is available to download from our website.

Here is someone who displays courage, faith, love and gratitude every day. His name is Bright and he lives at the Little Eden Care Centre in South Africa.

Bright is a toddler and he can't live with his family because he needs special care. Bright must take medicine every day, eat regular meals and have special equipment to help him stay well and move around.

Even though Bright is unable to speak he brings great joy to everyone. He likes getting messy with paint and his handprints cheer visitors up when they see them on the wall. Here he is playing with a Mission Together collection box.

With the help of Mission Together he is able to live at Little Eden where he is cared for by nurses and a special group of Religious Sisters. Here are the Sisters playing with some other children at Little Eden.

Question: What is a Religious Sister?



Answer: A Religious Sister is a woman who leaves her family and friends to live with other Religious Sisters. They dedicate their lives to loving God and helping others.

The Sisters at Little Eden are courageous – they travelled all the way from India to South Africa to live with and care for Bright and children like him.

As well as making sure the children are happy and well cared for, the Sisters also help the children know Jesus.

They help the children see how Jesus taught us to live as God's family, forgiving each other, sharing what we have, praying for one another, and spending time with God our Father.

In the photo you can see the Sisters gathering the residents at Little Eden to pray the rosary. The older children take it in turn to lead the rosary. Prayer strengthens the children's faith.

Question: How can we pray more in Lent to strengthen our faith too?

Bright is very grateful for everything he has at Little Eden. He's unable to say this with words, so:



Question: How else might Bright show his gratitude? The photo of Bright gives us some clues.

Answer: Bright shows his gratitude with his twinkling eyes and huge smile.

Bright and the sisters show us the virtues of gratitude, courage, faith and love. This Lent, let's promise to do the same. We can do that now by praying the Mission Together rosary for Bright and all the children at Little Eden, and by thinking of ways we can share what we have to help the Sisters care for the children too.

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