

Children's Liturgy of the Word

Thirtieth Sunday in Ordinary Time — Year A

Readings: Exodus 22:21–27 • 1 Thessalonians 1:5c–10 • Matthew 22:34–40
For children aged approximately 3–8

Theme: Love God and Love Your Neighbour

Main Message

Jesus gives us two great commandments:

Love God with all your heart.

Love your neighbour as yourself.

If we truly love God, that love should begin to show in the way we treat other people — especially those who are lonely, poor, frightened, left out or in need.

1. Welcome and Gathering

Leader:

Good morning, everyone.

Today somebody asks Jesus a very important question:

“Which commandment is the greatest?”

There were lots of commandments.

Perhaps the person wondered:

“Which one matters most?”

Jesus gives a very clear answer.

First:

Love God with all your heart.

And then:

Love your neighbour as yourself.

Jesus teaches us that loving God and loving people belong together.

Let us begin with the Sign of the Cross.

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Opening Prayer

Lord Jesus,
thank You for loving us.

Help us to listen to Your Word.

Teach us to love God
with all our heart,

and to love the people
You place around us.

Help us to notice anyone
who is lonely, sad or in need,

and make our hearts
more like Yours.

Amen.

2. Opening Conversation

Ask:

-

What does the word **love** mean?

-
-

Who do you love?

-
-

How can you show someone that you love them?

-
-

Is love only something we say?

-
-

Can love also be something we do?

-

Allow simple answers.

Then say:

Suppose somebody says:

“I love you!”

but they never help you, never listen to you and are always unkind.

Would those words mean very much?

Probably not.

Love is something we say.

But love is also something we **do**.

Today Jesus teaches us how to love.

3. Gospel — Matthew 22:34 – 40

Say:

Some people came to Jesus.

One of them asked Him:

“Teacher, which is the greatest commandment?”

Jesus answered:

“You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul and with all your mind.”

Then Jesus said:

“You shall love your neighbour as yourself.”

Jesus taught that all God’s commandments are connected with these two great commandments.

Love God.

And love your neighbour.

The Gospel of the Lord.

Children:

Praise to You, Lord Jesus Christ.

4. Love God With All Your Heart

Ask:

What does it mean to love God?

Possible answers:

-

Pray.

-
-

Come to Mass.

-
-

Listen to Him.

-
-

Obey Him.

-
-

Thank Him.

-
-

Trust Him.

-

Explain:

Jesus does not say:

“Love God a little bit.”

He says:

“With all your heart.”

That means God should come first.

We love God because He loved us first.

He made us.

He gave us life.

He sent Jesus to save us.

Jesus died and rose again for us.

God wants us to live with Him for ever in Heaven.

So loving God is not simply obeying rules.

It begins with remembering:

God loves me.

And we answer:

I love You too, Lord.

5. Built-In Activity 1 — Whole Heart

Ask the children to place both hands over their heart.

Leader:

How much of our heart should belong to God?

A tiny bit?

Children:

No!

Half?

Children:

No!

All of it?

Children:

Yes!

Say together:

“Jesus, help me love God with all my heart.”

Repeat once.

Then say:

Loving God with all our heart means we do not let other things become more important than Him.

Games are good.

Friends are good.

Sports are good.

Television can be good.

But none of them is God.

God comes first.

6. Love Your Neighbour

Jesus then says:

“Love your neighbour as yourself.”

Who is our neighbour?

Is it only the person who lives next door?

No.

Our neighbour means the people God places around us.

Our family.

People at school.

People at church.

People who are lonely.

People we do not know very well.

Even people we sometimes find difficult.

Jesus wants us to love real people.

Not just people who are easy to love.

7. Built-In Activity 2 — What Does Love Do?

Tell the children:

I will say something.

If it shows love, make a heart shape with your hands.

If it does not show love, gently shake your head.

Helping someone who has fallen over.

Heart.

Laughing because somebody is lonely.

Shake head.

Praying for somebody who is sick.

Heart.

Refusing to share because we want everything for ourselves.

Shake head.

Speaking kindly to somebody who is sad.

Heart.

Forgiving someone who is sorry.

Heart.

Finish:

Love can be seen.

Love has hands.

Love has feet.

Love does something.

8. The First Reading — God Notices People in Need

In the First Reading, God tells His people:

Do not mistreat the stranger.

Do not hurt the widow or the orphan.

Do not take advantage of someone who is poor.

Why does God say that?

Because God notices people who are easily forgotten.

Imagine a child comes to school and does not know anyone.

Everyone else already has friends.

Would Jesus want us to ignore that child?

No.

Imagine someone is sitting alone.

Would Jesus notice?

Yes.

God sees the person other people may walk past.

And if we love God, we should learn to notice them too.

9. Built-In Activity 3 — Who Needs Love?

Ask:

Who might need some extra kindness?

Possible answers:

-

Someone new.

-
-

Someone lonely.

-
-

Someone who is ill.

-
-

Someone who is sad.

-
-

Someone who has no one to play with.

-
-

Someone who is poor.

-
-

Someone who is frightened.

-
-

Someone who has made a mistake.

•

After each answer say:

“Jesus loves them too.”

Then say together:

“Jesus, help me notice people who need love.”

10. Love Is More Than Being Nice

Explain:

Jesus does want us to be kind.

But Christian love is bigger than simply being nice.

Sometimes love means helping.

Sometimes love means sharing.

Sometimes love means forgiving.

Sometimes love means telling the truth kindly.

Suppose your friend is about to do something dangerous.

Would love say:

“I will not say anything because I want them to like me”?

No.

Love wants what is truly good for another person.

Jesus always loves us.

And because He loves us, He teaches us what is right.

11. A Simple Story

Imagine a boy called Daniel.

At playtime he sees another child sitting alone.

Daniel thinks:

“I could go over and speak to him.”

Then he thinks:

“But my friends are over there.”

He could walk away.

Nobody would probably say anything.

But then Daniel remembers Jesus:

“Love your neighbour.”

So he goes over.

“Would you like to play with us?”

The other child smiles.

It was only one small thing.

But small acts of love can make a very big difference.

That is how the love of Jesus begins to show in ordinary life.

12. Saint Paul — Turning to the Living God

In the Second Reading, Saint Paul speaks about people who turned away from idols:

“to serve a living and true God.”

An idol is something that takes the place which belongs to God.

Long ago, people sometimes worshipped statues.

But we can also let other things become too important.

Money.

Being popular.

Always getting our own way.

Winning.

Having more things.

Jesus teaches us:

God comes first.

And when God comes first, we learn to use other good things properly.

13. Built-In Activity 4 — Who Comes First?

Leader:

Who made us?

Children:

God!

Who loves us?

Children:

God!

Who sent Jesus to save us?

Children:

God!

Who should come first?

Children:

God!

Then ask:

If God comes first, should we love other people?

Children:

Yes!

Explain:

Loving God does not make us care less about people.

It teaches us to love them better.

14. Love God — Love People

Draw an imaginary cross in the air.

Say:

Think about the shape of a cross.

One line goes upwards.

One line goes across.

That can help us remember today's Gospel.

Upwards:

Love God.

Across:

Love your neighbour.

We cannot separate them.

We cannot say:

"I love God!"

and then deliberately be cruel to everyone else.

And we cannot truly love people as Jesus teaches without learning to love the God who made them.

The two belong together.

15. Built-In Activity 5 — The Two Great Commandments

Teach simple actions.

For:

"Love God"
point upwards.

For:

"with all your heart"
place hands over heart.

For:

"Love your neighbour"
open arms towards others.

For:

"as yourself"
place hand gently on chest.

Repeat slowly several times:

Love God — with all your heart.

Love your neighbour — as yourself.

16. What About Difficult People?

Ask:

Is it always easy to love people?

Children:

No!

Sometimes people annoy us.

Sometimes they hurt our feelings.

Sometimes they are unfair.

Jesus does not say that wrong things suddenly become good.

But He does tell us not to hate.

We can ask Him:

“Jesus, help me forgive.”

“Jesus, help me be patient.”

“Jesus, help me do what is right.”

Sometimes love begins with asking Jesus for help.

17. The Mass

Ask:

Where will we go when Children’s Liturgy finishes?

Back to Mass.

At Mass, we show our love for God.

We listen to His Word.

We pray.

We praise Him.

We give thanks.

And God gives us far more than we could ever give Him.

Jesus gives Himself to His Church in the Holy Eucharist.

The Eucharist is truly Jesus Christ:

Body, Blood, Soul and Divinity.

Those who are preparing for First Holy Communion can look forward to the day when they will receive Jesus sacramentally.

And all of us can remember:

Jesus gives Himself to us because He loves us.

Then He sends us out to love other people.

The love we receive from Jesus should not stop at the church door.

18. Built-In Activity 6 — From Mass Into the World

Ask the children to hold out their hands.

Say:

At Mass, God fills us with His love.

Close hands gently towards the heart.

Then:

Jesus sends us out to share that love.

Open hands outwards.

Repeat:

Jesus loves me.

Hands to heart.

Jesus sends me to love others.

Hands outwards.

19. Living the Gospel This Week

This week try to:

•

Pray every day.

•
•

Thank God for loving you.

•
•

Be kind to someone who feels left out.

•
•

Help at home without being asked.

•
•

Forgive someone who is sorry.

•
•

Pray for someone who is sick or sad.

•
•

Remember that every person is precious to God.

•

And each morning pray:

“Jesus, help me love God and love my neighbour today.”

20. Quiet Prayer

Ask the children to become still.

Leader:

Close your eyes.

Think about Jesus.

He loves you completely.

Say quietly in your heart:

Jesus, thank You for loving me.

Pause.

Help me love God with all my heart.

Pause.

Think of someone who may need kindness.

Pause.

Jesus, help me love my neighbour.

Pause.

Make my heart more like Yours.

Pause.

Lord Jesus,
teach us to love.

Help us put God first.

Help us notice people in need.

Give us kind hearts,
generous hands
and forgiving spirits.

Keep us close to You
and lead us safely to Heaven.

Amen.

21. Children's Intercessions

Leader:

Jesus teaches us to love God and our neighbour. Trusting in His love, let us pray.

For the Church throughout the world:
that she may help everyone know and love Jesus.

Lord, hear us.

For the Pope, our Bishop, priests and deacons:
that God may help them teach His people to love Him faithfully.

Lord, hear us.

For our families:
that our homes may be places of prayer, patience, kindness and forgiveness.
Lord, hear us.

For children who are lonely, frightened, poor or left out:
that they may find people who notice them and care for them.
Lord, hear us.

For people who find it difficult to forgive:
that Jesus may soften their hearts and give them peace.
Lord, hear us.

For those who are sick, worried or sad:
that they may know the love and comfort of Christ.
Lord, hear us.

For those who have died:
that God may forgive them and welcome them into the joy of Heaven.
Lord, hear us.

Let us ask Our Lady to help us love God with all our heart.

Hail Mary...

22. Closing Prayer

Lord Jesus,
You teach us the greatest commandments:

to love God
with all our heart,

and to love our neighbour
as ourselves.

Help us put God first.

Help us notice those who need us.

Teach us to be kind,
generous, patient and forgiving.

Fill us with Your grace
and help our lives show Your love.

Lead us one day
to the joy of Heaven.

Amen.

23. Returning to Mass

Before returning, say:

Today Jesus taught us:

Love God with all your heart.

And:

Love your neighbour as yourself.

As we return to Mass, remember:

We are going back to worship God.

Listen carefully to His Word.

Join in the prayers.

Look towards the altar.

And remember that Jesus loves us so much that He gives Himself to His Church in the Holy Eucharist.

Then when Mass finishes, we are sent out to carry His love into the world.

Let us return quietly.

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Optional Activity Swaps

Option 1 — Heart and Hands

Ask:

What does our heart remind us to do?

Love God.

What can our hands do?

Help our neighbour.

Say together:

“Heart for God. Hands for others.”

Option 2 — Who Is My Neighbour?

Give simple examples.

A new child at school?

My neighbour.

Someone sitting alone?

My neighbour.

Someone who annoys me?

Still my neighbour.

Someone from another country?

My neighbour.

Someone poor?

My neighbour.

Finish:

Jesus teaches us to love every person.

Option 3 — Notice Someone

Ask children to pretend to look around carefully.

Say:

Someone is lonely.

What do we do?

Notice them.

Someone is sad.

Notice them.

Someone needs help.

Notice them.

Someone has nobody to play with.

Notice them.

Finish:

Love notices.

Option 4 — God First

Read each one.

Prayer or pretending God does not matter?

Prayer.

Mass or deliberately choosing something unimportant instead?

Mass.

Truth or lying?

Truth.

Forgiveness or revenge?

Forgiveness.

Kindness or cruelty?

Kindness.

Explain:

Putting God first helps us choose what is good.

Option 5 — Love Is an Action

Leader says:

Love can—

Children:

Help!

Love can—

Share!

Love can—

Forgive!

Love can—

Listen!

Love can—

Pray!

Love can—

Tell the truth kindly!

Finish:

Love is something we do.

Option 6 — The Cross Reminder

Trace a cross slowly.

Vertical line:

Love God.

Horizontal line:

Love your neighbour.

Repeat three times.

Explain:

The Cross can remind us of both great commandments.

Memory Lines

Ages 3 – 5

“I love God.”

“Jesus, help me love others.”

Ages 6 – 8

“Love the Lord your God with all your heart.”

and:

“Love your neighbour as yourself.”

Final Memory Line

Repeat together three times:

Love God.

Love your neighbour.

Jesus, help me do both.