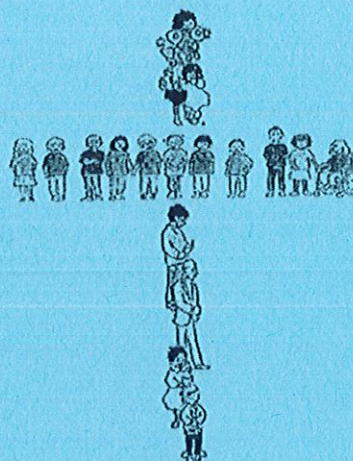

What is the Church?

Parent Leader's Guide: Unit 5

We are People who Follow Jesus



Main themes

- ◆ As members of the Church community we follow Jesus' way of love.
- ◆ Our gifts of bread and wine, symbols of human life and work, are accompanied by offerings to support the Church community and those in need.
- ◆ In this season of Lent, we consider what it means to give as Jesus gave.

Link to the Mass - The Presentation of Gifts

"Between the liturgy of the word and the liturgy of the eucharist we have some rather quiet, practical moments. The collection is taken and the gifts and table are prepared. Bread and wine are brought by the faithful, but so are gifts of money. In this way we place what we have earned by our work within the holy time of Mass. Unwilling to separate our lives from our prayer, we bring something for the poor and the church from our wealth or our poverty."

(Cardinal Bernardin, *Guide to the Assembly*, page 15)

During the meeting, parents will:

- ◆ discover what the parish catechists or faith friends will do with the children
- ◆ be given an outline of the celebration for this unit and be clear about their own role
- ◆ consider suggestions for supporting their child at home
- ◆ appreciate the importance of giving for Christian living
- ◆ understand the relationship between the presentation of the gifts and the collection
- ◆ reflect on opportunities for self denial and involvement in issues of justice and peace, especially during the season of Lent
- ◆ be invited to pray together

Unit 5 – Approach A

Before the meeting begins: have the following clearly displayed -

a cross

bread

wine

offertory baskets and/or planned giving envelopes

a CAFOD envelope

You will also need: copies of the parent leaflets for those attending

1. Warmly welcome everyone and introduce the focus for this next step on the children's journey.

- ♦ as Christians we are called to follow Jesus, we are called to love; to give, to share, to put other people first. Jesus' way of love led him to give his life for us on the cross and we too are called to respond to God's love for us by giving to others
- ♦ this can be done in many different ways: our time, money, skills, prayer, a smile
- ♦ giving of ourselves can be challenging, but the Holy Spirit helps us, enabling us to follow Jesus in this way and to represent Jesus Christ alive in the church today.

Give out the parent leaflets and invite the parents to look first at the quotation on the back page.

2. Invite everyone to reflect for a moment on this stage in the Mass:

- ♦ these "practical moments" can often be quite busy: sometimes a hymn will be sung or perhaps some music played: there will be shuffling and movement as people gather money and envelopes together; if children have been celebrating the Liturgy of the Word in a separate place, they will often be returning at this point
- ♦ all this serves to mark the change of focus from God's presence with us in the Word to God's presence through the gifts of bread and wine. Just as at the beginning of Mass we recognised that we come as we are, with all the distractions, worries, concerns of the past week, as well as the blessings and joys, so too now we bring the bread and wine as signs of our lives and work
- ♦ we offer the past week - the good, the bad, the easy, the difficult; we give in the collection "for the poor and the church"
- ♦ in our offertory procession, on behalf of the whole community, we bring "fruits of the earth and work of human hands"
- ♦ the bread is unleavened, "a simple bread, a bread of the poor"; we acknowledge the ways in which we are poor, needy, hungry
- ♦ we bring our gifts recognising that we too need gifts, we need to be fed, we need "the bread of life"

3. Invite the parents to spend a few moments discussing with one another the following:

We can give in many different ways: our time, money, skills, prayer

Which do you find easiest to give and in what circumstances?

Which do you find most difficult?

After sharing one or two points from the discussions continue with some or all of the following:

- ♦ the season of Lent is a time for special reflection on God's love for us through the symbol of the cross. In preparation for renewing our baptismal promises at Easter we explore our response to God's love for us
- ♦ an important way of doing this is by looking at the ways in which we give of ourselves; our time, our money, the skills and talents we have; we look to deny ourselves some of the things or attitudes which prevent us giving as God gives
- ♦ we also reflect anew on our responsibility as members of the Church to help others, both at parish level and world wide [here mention can be made of charities such as SVP and CAFOD]

Invite everyone to turn again to the parent leaflet and point out the work the children will be doing with their catechist as a summary of the points already made.

Ask them to discuss for a few moments the suggestions on the third page of the leaflet. Allow any issues or questions to follow this.

4. Details of the celebration for "We are People who Follow Jesus" should now be given.
5. Introduce a short period of prayer by making the sign of the cross.

Lord Jesus Christ,

you called your disciples to go forward with you on the way to the cross.

Since you first walked that road, countless millions have followed you.

Help us to follow you and to give of ourselves especially during this Lenten season.

Help us to accompany our children as they prepare to celebrate the gift of your Holy Spirit and to receive you in the Eucharist for the first time. Amen.

Unit 5 – Approach B

Before the meeting begins: have the following clearly displayed -
bread and wine
offertory baskets and/or envelopes
picture(s) of ordinary people who could represent ourselves

You will also need:
the room arranged for group work: 5/6 chairs round a table
copies of the worksheets headed "To give or give up?"
copies of the parent leaflet for those present

1. As parents arrive for the meeting, warmly welcome them, inviting them to sit grouped around the tables. Introduce yourself and any other team members present then focus for this next step on the children's journey.

In this unit we are being invited to think about the way in which we offer ourselves during the offertory procession.

As Christians we are called to follow Jesus, we are called to love; to give, to share, to put other people first. Jesus' way of love led him to give his life for us on the cross and we too are called to respond to God's love for us by giving to others.

In our first meeting together we considered how the Church is made up of people, and that we are the Church. What we give, not only in terms of money, is part of the whole Church's giving.

2. Hand out copies of the worksheets headed **"To give or give up?"**.

Depending on your situation, perhaps read through the sheet first, then invite parents to reflect on their own for about five minutes.

Invite them to share as much or as little with the others grouped around their table, recognising that this may be very personal.

Once you feel they are ready, invite them to turn over to the other side of the sheet and as a group discuss the way in which the Church gives during the year.

After about ten minutes invite any feedback and offer some of the following points:

- ♦ the Offertory, as we commonly call it marks a change of focus from God's presence with us in the Word to God's presence through the gifts of bread and wine
- ♦ just as at the beginning of Mass we recognised that we come as we are, with all the distractions, worries, concerns of the past week, as well as the blessings and joys, so too now we bring the bread and wine as signs of our lives and work

- ♦ during the offertory, in addition to the gifts of bread and wine, we offer money to reach out in support of others, to maintain the Church and parish schools
 - ♦ it is a time for us to reflect on our offerings during the past week in terms of our giving to others in the everyday circumstances of our lives
 - ♦ we can also during this time, look forward to ways in which we will try to give more of ourselves in the coming week
3. Give out the parent leaflet and point out the work the children will be doing with their catechist as a summary of the points already made.

Ask them to discuss for a few moments the suggestions on the third page of the leaflet. Allow any issues or questions to follow this.

4. Details of the celebration for "We are People who Follow Jesus" should now be given.
5. Invite all present to join in a short period of prayer by making the sign of the cross.

Read the following story from the Gospel according to Luke:

"Jesus looked up and saw rich people putting their gifts into the treasury; he also saw a poor widow put in two small copper coins. He said, "Truly I tell you, this poor widow has put in more than all of them; for all of them have contributed out of their abundance, but she out of her poverty has put in all she had to live on." [21:1-4]

Allow a period of silent reflection then pray:

Compassionate God,
you bless us with the abundance of your love
and grace us with the gift of your eternal presence.
In this Lenten time give us the wisdom to recognise our poverty and the
compassion to share it's treasure with our brothers and sisters.
We ask this through your Son Jesus Christ, who gave his life for us.

(From *Prayer for Parish Groups*, The Columba Press)

TO GIVE OR GIVE UP?

Take time to reflect on ways in which you have given this week.

The following may be helpful:

- ◆ Time for my children
- ◆ Time for a neighbour or a colleague at work
- ◆ Time to be with wife/husband/partner
- ◆ Helping someone out
- ◆ Smiling at a stranger
- ◆ Listening to someone
- ◆ Meeting a request to do something
- ◆ Giving a donation to charity
- ◆ Supporting a cause
- ◆ Others?

TO GIVE OR GIVE UP?

What do you think your Church/Parish gives during the week and through the year?

The following may be helpful:

- ◆ Visiting the housebound
- ◆ Visiting the sick in hospital
- ◆ Helping those in need
- ◆ Supporting CAFOD and other charities
- ◆ Financial support for the school
- ◆ Links with the school
- ◆ Rescue Society support
- ◆ Taking Holy Communion to the sick & housebound
- ◆ Offering food & drink to the homeless

Lenten Promise

During this season of Lent reflect on whether to give, or to give up.

Make a Lenten promise for yourself.

Ask your child(ren) to make a Lenten promise.

Unit 5 – Approach C

Before the meeting begins: have the following clearly displayed -

*a cross
bread
wine
offertory baskets and/or planned giving envelopes
a CAFOD envelope*

*You will also need: copies of the parents' leaflets for those attending
copies of the Diocesan Covenant extract on stewardship
a flip chart / or large pieces of paper
markers or poster pens*

1. Warmly welcome everyone and introduce the focus for this next step on the children's journey. Remind them that the last time we met we were reflecting on the importance of the Word of God for the Church. To help us focus for this new unit we are going to use a passage from the Acts of the Apostles which tells us stories of the early Church. Invite everyone to listen to the passage and to listen for just one thing which strikes them (perhaps a word or phrase).

"Now the whole group of those who believed were of one heart and soul, and no one claimed private ownership of any possessions, but everything they owned was held in common. With great power the apostles gave their testimony to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, and great grace was upon them all. There was not a needy person among them, for as many as owned lands and houses sold them and brought the proceeds of what was sold. They laid it at the apostles' feet and it was distributed to each as any had need."

[Acts 4: 32 - 36, NRSV]

Invite people to share with one other person what struck them as they listened to this reading, then after a few moments write up the responses on the flip chart (or large sheet of paper).

Using the images/ words/ phrases collected from the group, draw the points together with some of the following:

- ♦ the early followers of Jesus recognised that everything they had was a gift and to be shared with the whole community for 'the common good'
- ♦ this 'giving' was an essential part of their response to God's love for them and of their following in Jesus' way
- ♦ they knew that Jesus was concerned to give of himself so that the needs of the poor, the sick, the outcast could be met
- ♦ after the fourth century, there are references to aid or charity centres throughout Rome. These were run by deacons from the contributions made at the Sunday Eucharist, to meet the needs of those who previously would have been helped by the state: the unemployed, the sick, widows and orphans
- ♦ when we gather together on Sunday as God's People we too follow the ancient traditions of the Church, we give of ourselves

2. Give out the parent leaflets and invite the parents to look first at the quotation on the back page. Invite everyone to reflect for a moment on this stage in the Mass:

- ◆ these "practical moments" can often be quite busy: sometimes a hymn will be sung or perhaps some music played; there will be shuffling and movement as people gather money and envelopes together; if children have been celebrating the Liturgy of the Word in a separate place, they will often be returning at this point
- ◆ all this serves to mark the change of focus from God's presence with us in the Word to God's presence through the gifts of bread and wine. Just as at the beginning of Mass we recognised that we come as we are, with all the distractions, worries, concerns of the past week, as well as the blessings and joys, so too now we bring the bread and wine as signs of our lives and work
- ◆ we offer the past week - the good, the bad, the easy, the difficult; we give in the collection "for the poor and the church"
- ◆ in our offertory procession, on behalf of the whole community, we bring "fruits of the earth and work of human hands"
- ◆ the bread is unleavened, "a simple bread, a bread of the poor"; we acknowledge the ways in which we are poor, needy, hungry
- ◆ we bring our gifts recognising that we too need gifts, we need to be fed, we need "the bread of life"

3. Lent is the Church's season of prayer, fasting and self-denial. It can be a good time to focus on one aspect of our Diocesan Covenant with the Poor. (Here it may be necessary to give more information on this, depending on your parish's response).

Invite parents to form groups of 4/5 and give out copies of the extract from the Diocesan Covenant. (This is included for photocopying at the end of this approach).

Allow about ten minutes for the tasks printed on the bottom of the sheets, then ask for feedback from the groups.

Invite everyone to turn again to the parent leaflet and point out the work the children will be doing with their catechist as a summary of the points already made.

4. Details of the celebration for "We are People who Follow Jesus" should now be given.
5. Introduce a short period of prayer by making the sign of the cross.

Invite someone from the group to read aloud the Covenant commitment to responsible stewardship.

After a time for silent reflection invite all to join in praying "Our Father .."

"Called To Be Responsible Stewards of the earth and its resources, we commit ourselves

- ◆ to live simply, sharing what we have and avoiding unnecessary consumption and waste
- ◆ to take seriously the universal need to care for the environment, since our failure to do so diminishes the quality of life for all and especially those on the margins of society
- ◆ to use our money to enrich rather than further impoverish the poor of the world, to invest ethically, to support fair trade and encourage credit unions."

(i) Share what most strikes you about this commitment.

(ii) What practical steps could we take, during this Lenten season, to help our children value this commitment?

"Called To Be Responsible Stewards of the earth and its resources, we commit ourselves

- ◆ to live simply, sharing what we have and avoiding unnecessary consumption and waste
- ◆ to take seriously the universal need to care for the environment, since our failure to do so diminishes the quality of life for all and especially those on the margins of society
- ◆ to use our money to enrich rather than further impoverish the poor of the world, to invest ethically, to support fair trade and encourage credit unions."

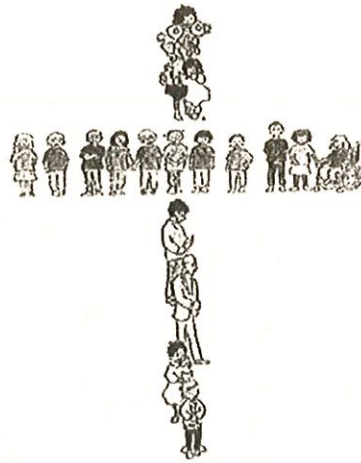
(i) Share what most strikes you about this commitment.

(ii) What practical steps could we take, during this Lenten season, to help our children value this commitment?

What is the Church?

Parent Leaflet: Unit 5

We are People who Follow Jesus



Main Themes

The children, with their catechists, are looking at what it means to live as a follower of Jesus.

They are being asked to think about:

- ♦ How Jesus shows his love for us all, to the point of being crucified
- ♦ How we are called to imitate Jesus in loving and serving other people, using the gifts that God has given us
- ♦ The way we offer our gifts to God at Mass
- ♦ The special time of the Church's year that we call Lent
- ♦ The fact that the gifts of the Holy Spirit help us to live as followers of Jesus

The children are being encouraged to think about what they will do during Lent in terms of:

- ♦ Prayer - talking to God and listening to God
- ♦ Fasting - doing without some of the things we enjoy
- ♦ Almsgiving - sharing what we have with those in need

From Your Child's Worksheet

The Presentation of Gifts

God gives us a lot of gifts that we can use in loving other people.

Complete these words to show some of those gifts:

T _ m _ S k _ l _ s T _ l _ n _ s

Sometimes we are not able to help people ourselves but we can give money or other things which someone else can use to help them.

At Church we have collections which are used to pay the costs of running the Church and to help people who are in need. We give from what we have for the sake of others.



At Mass we offer our gifts to God.



After the Readings and Bidding Prayers, the gifts of bread and wine are brought to the altar.

The bread and wine are "fruits of the earth" and "work of human hands". They are wheat and grapes which people have made into bread and wine.

They represent all the gifts that we are offering to use, as followers of Jesus, in loving and serving other people.

For all the gifts that God gives us, we say:

Blessed be
God forever

What You Can Do To Help Your Child

Talk with your child about the ways in which people give time to helping in the parish community. Is there anything in the parish that you are involved in or could get involved in?

Encourage your child to give time to helping others, even if it is only in small ways - at home or at school. Help them to reflect on this at the end of each day: did they show love to others as Jesus did?

Talk as a family about what you can do in the season of Lent. You might decide to:

- ◆ Spend some time in prayer each day
- ◆ Give up some luxury on a particular day each week
- ◆ Donate money to a charity (such as St Joseph's Penny or CAFOD)

Come to Mass each Sunday so that your child can experience the Offertory when we offer gifts of bread and wine, symbols of human life and work, together with money to support the Church community and those in need.

Help your child to complete their worksheet - especially the last page.

Please keep your child's worksheet safe, so that they can bring it back to the next meeting with their catechist.

The Presentation of Gifts

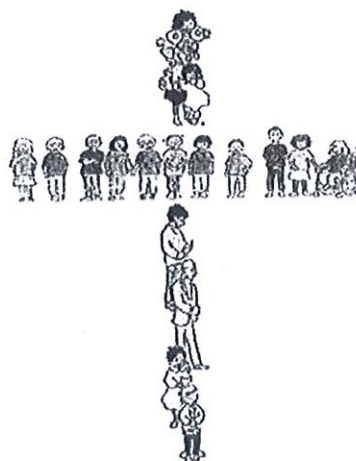
"Between the liturgy of the word and the liturgy of the eucharist we have some rather quiet, practical moments. The collection is taken and the gifts and table are prepared. Bread and wine are brought by the faithful, but so are gifts of money. In this way we place what we have earned by our work within the holy time of Mass. Unwilling to separate our lives from our prayer, we bring something for the poor and the church from our wealth or our poverty."

(Cardinal Bernardin, *Guide to the Assembly*, page 15)

What is the Church?

Children's Worksheet: Unit 5

We are People who Follow Jesus



Jesus shows us how to love



The way of life that Jesus lived, which we read about in the Gospels, is one that led to him being crucified.

During his life on earth, Jesus showed us how to love and care for other people.

Jesus carrying his cross shows how far he was prepared to go out of love for us.

We are called to be followers of Christ.

This does not simply mean walking behind him, like the crowds did on his way to Calvary. It means we must imitate him in the way we love and care for other people.



Complete the words which describe some of the ways we can show love to other people:



H _ l _ i _ g

S _ a _ i _ g

C _ r _ n _

The Presentation of Gifts

God gives us a lot of gifts that we can use in loving other people.

Complete these words to show some of those gifts:

T _ m _ S k _ l _ s T _ l _ n _ s

Sometimes we are not able to help people ourselves but we can give money or other things which someone else can use to help them.

At Church we have collections which are used to pay the costs of running the Church and to help people who are in need. We give from what we have for the sake of others.



At Mass we offer our gifts to God.



After the Readings and Bidding Prayers, the gifts of bread and wine are brought to the altar.

The bread and wine are "fruits of the earth" and "work of human hands". They are wheat and grapes which people have made into bread and wine.

They represent all the gifts that we are offering to use, as followers of Jesus, in loving and serving other people.

For all the gifts that God gives us, we say:

Blessed be
God forever

Lent



This is a special time in the Church's year when we think about God's love for us and try very hard to live as followers of Jesus.



The season of Lent begins on **Ash Wednesday** when we are marked with ashes in the sign of the cross. This is a reminder of the sign of the cross made on our foreheads at Baptism.

It is in Baptism that we are called to live as followers of Jesus. During Lent we try to do this better. We are invited to spend time:

- ♦ Praying - talking to God and listening to God
- ♦ Fasting - doing without some of the things we enjoy
- ♦ Almsgiving - sharing what we have with those in need

Lent is not just about giving things up. It is also about doing extra things to show that we are followers of Jesus. Write down what you will do this Lent:

The Holy Spirit helps us to follow Jesus

During Lent we should pray for the gifts of the Holy Spirit to be given to us to help us to live as followers of Jesus. These gifts are:

- ♦ Wisdom
- ♦ Understanding
- ♦ Counsel
- ♦ Fortitude
- ♦ Knowledge
- ♦ Piety
- ♦ The Fear of the Lord



At Home...

Try to do something special on the days of Lent to show that you are a person who follows Jesus. Draw in the boxes, using the special code, to make a note of the things you do.



A star if you spend some time in prayer



A cross if you give something up for the day



A heart if you do something kind

			Ash Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
First Sunday of Lent	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
Second Sunday of Lent	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
Third Sunday of Lent	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
Fourth Sunday of Lent	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
Fifth Sunday of Lent	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
Palm Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Maundy Thursday	Good Friday	Holy Saturday

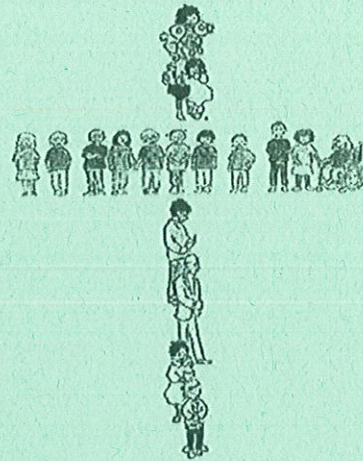
These are not part of Lent but days when we celebrate the love Jesus has for us and prepare to celebrate his resurrection.

This worksheet belongs to: _____

What is the Church?

Catechist's Guide: Unit 5

We are People who Follow Jesus



You will need to gather in the children's worksheets from the previous unit (unless this has already been done or unless they are keeping them at home).

Spend a few moments seeing what the children remember from their last session with you - or from any celebration that took place.

Remind them that they are preparing to become full members of the Church family through Confirmation and Holy Communion.

The aim of this unit is to explore the ways in which we, as the People of God, are called to follow Jesus. This will be done by reflecting with the children on a number of themes:

- ◆ The love that Jesus has for us - to the point of being crucified
- ◆ The gifts God gives us to use for the love and service of other people
- ◆ The way we offer our gifts to God during Mass
- ◆ Lent as the special season of the Church's year for concentrating on following Jesus
- ◆ The gifts of the Holy Spirit that help us to be followers of Jesus

In preparation for this session, you might like to think of some of the ways in which we can do something special during Lent.

You might also like to look back over the four previous sessions because there are a number of connections that can be drawn here.

INITIATION

What is the Church?

Children's Worksheet: Unit 5

We are People who Follow Jesus



Jesus shows us how to love



The way of life that Jesus lived, which we read about in the Gospels, is one that led to him being crucified.

During his life on earth, Jesus showed us how to love and care for other people.

Jesus carrying his cross shows how far he was prepared to go out of love for us.

We are called to be followers of Christ.

This does not simply mean walking behind him, like the crowds did on his way to Calvary. It means we must imitate him in the way we love and care for other people.



Complete the words which describe some of the ways we can show love to other people:



H_l_i_g



S_a_i_g



C_r_n_

Page 1

Talk with the children about the way in which Jesus loves us. He was prepared to die on the cross to show that love (cf. *Additional Suggestions and Resources*, No. 1).

Remind them that in the previous unit (*We are People who Celebrate God's Word*) they thought about the stories of Jesus that are told to us in the Gospels each week.

Remind them too that in preparing for Reconciliation they were told about Jesus' law of love - for God and neighbour.

Using the picture of people looking at Jesus carrying the cross, talk about the way in which we could simply be bystanders (allowing Jesus to be crucified but not really paying much attention to it) or we could be followers (people who are so impressed by him that we want to imitate what he does).

Talk about the ways in which we can imitate Jesus in terms of loving others and complete the words - Helping, Sharing and Caring.

The Presentation of Gifts

God gives us a lot of gifts that we can use in loving other people.

Complete these words to show some of those gifts:

T_m_ Sk_l_s T_l_n_s

Sometimes we are not able to help people ourselves but we can give money or other things which someone else can use to help them.

At Church we have collections which are used to pay the costs of running the Church and to help people who are in need. We give from what we have for the sake of others.



At Mass we offer our gifts to God.



After the Readings and Bidding Prayers, the gifts of bread and wine are brought to the altar.

The bread and wine are "fruits of the earth" and "work of human hands". They are wheat and grapes which people have made into bread and wine.

They represent all the gifts that we are offering to use, as followers of Jesus, in loving and serving other people.

For all the gifts that God gives us, we say:

Blessed be
God forever

Page 2

Ask the children to think about the different gifts that God has given them and how they can use these in helping others. Complete the words - Time, Skills and Talents.

Emphasise the fact that we cannot do it all ourselves. Sometimes we will need to rely on other people and our best way to help will be by providing money or other things.

The Offertory collection at Church is one way we can help. (cf. *Additional Suggestions and Resources*, No. 2).

Ask the children where they have heard the phrases "fruits of the earth" and "work of human hands" (i.e. in the Offertory prayers). Say a little about what this means in terms of what God provides and what humanity creates from this.

Explain the word "represents" in terms of the bread and wine being signs/symbols of all that we offer to God.

If you wish, let the children colour in the words "Blessed be God forever" which is our response to the Offertory prayers.

A cartoon illustration of a young boy with curly hair, wearing a collared shirt. He has a small 'x' or star drawn on his forehead. A hand from the right side of the frame is pointing towards the star on his forehead. The boy has a slight smile and his hands are clasped in front of him.

It is in Baptism that we are called to live as followers of Jesus. During Lent we try to do this better. We are invited to spend time:







- ♦ Praying - talking to God and listening to God
- ♦ Fasting - doing without some of the things we enjoy
- ♦ Almsgiving - sharing what we have with those in need

During Lent we should pray for the gifts of the Holy Spirit to be given to us to help us to live as followers of Jesus. These gifts are:

-

Try to do something special on the days of Lent to show that you are a person who follows Jesus. Draw in the boxes, using the special code, to make a note of the things you do.

- ★ A star if you spend some time in prayer
- ✝ A cross if you give something up for the day
- ♥ A heart if you do something kind

 If you do something to someone in prayer				 If you do something to someone in prayer			
 A cross if you give something up for the day				 A cross if you give something up for the day			
 A heart if you do something kind				 A heart if you do something kind			
First Sunday of Lent	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	
Second Sunday of Lent	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	
Third Sunday of Lent	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	
Fourth Sunday of Lent	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	
Fifth Sunday of Lent	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	
Palm Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Maundy Thursday	Good Friday	Holy Saturday	

These are not part of Lent but days when we celebrate the love Jesus has for us and prepare to celebrate his resurrection.

This worksheet belongs to: _____

Talk to the children about the gifts of the Holy Spirit that they will receive in Confirmation (cf. *Additional Suggestions and Resources* No. 4)

Get the children to write their name on the worksheet and remind them to bring their worksheet back to the next session. Thank them for taking part, or tell them how much you have enjoyed working with them.

Additional Suggestions and Resources

1. The Stations of the Cross

Point out to the children that the story of Jesus being crucified is told in pictures which are displayed in churches. These show the journey to Calvary, the suffering on the way, and the people that Jesus met on that final journey.

2. The Offertory

In the earliest days of the Church, people actually brought to the altar a whole range of goods that could be used in Church or given to those in need. By about the fourth century this became restricted to the bread and wine, though other goods were often collected elsewhere. Nowadays, the bread and wine (together with the collection) represent all that we are able to give of ourselves to God and to others.

3. Lent

The Gospel of Ash Wednesday sets the scene for Lent and urges us to pray, fast and give alms. Help the children to understand this by reminding them that:

- ◆ Prayer can be in their own words and at any time of the day
- ◆ Fasting is not just from food but from anything that they enjoy (e.g. not watching TV or playing computer games for an evening/day)
- ◆ They don't have to give big amounts to charity; every little helps

4. The Gifts of the Holy Spirit

The Holy Spirit is given to us to help us in our day to day living of the Christian life. Each of the seven gifts makes a special contribution to this. Perhaps here we need to stress fortitude (bravery/strength to be followers of Christ in the world today).

What is the Church?

Celebration Guide: Unit 5

We are People who Follow Jesus

This Celebration draws four ideas together:

- ♦ The cross
- ♦ Lent
- ♦ The Presentation of the Gifts at Mass
- ♦ Love and Generosity

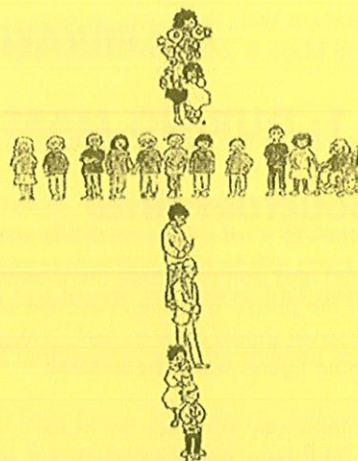
In a sense, these are all aspects of the same mystery - the self-giving love of Jesus - which we imitate as his disciples. As our children journey towards full membership of the Church, we take a moment of Lent to look at the generous love that should be a mark of Christians. We invite the children, and all our communities, to be renewed in this discipleship.

1. Our children are learning what it is to be part of the Church: they are learning what it is to be followers of Jesus. So the aim of this celebration is to help them "take up their cross" - to see the ways in which they can be like Jesus in loving and giving - thinking of others before themselves.

2. This celebration offers the children, their parents and the whole parish an opportunity to celebrate the mystery of the cross as the sign of love: "Anyone who wishes to be a follower of mine must renounce self; they must take up their cross and follow me." (Matthew 16:24) or: "There is no greater love than this, that one should lay down their life for their friends." (John 15:13) Celebrating this mystery is most suitable in Lent, a season when we seek to 'renounce ourselves' and renew the sense of being followers of Jesus, something that began in Baptism.

3. During Lent, the whole Church prepares for Easter. We seek to recover our baptismal innocence by means of prayer, fasting, almsgiving and reconciliation. All who are baptised were marked with the cross at baptism. It is therefore suitable for the children to be reminded of this moment as part of their Lenten journey.

4. This celebration ideally takes place during a normal Sunday Mass, some time in Lent. If a celebration during Sunday Mass is not possible, a form of celebration outside Mass is presented. In the celebration outside Mass, the readings chosen may be of the Sunday, or from those suggested on the back page.



5. In places where the children normally celebrate the Liturgy of the Word in a separate place, it would be suitable for all to remain on this occasion.

6. It is suggested that a large cross be used in the entrance procession of this celebration. This could be the cross which is venerated on Good Friday, or it could be a specially designed cross for the occasion. It may be carried in by the priest, a parent, a catechist, or another parishioner.

7. It is recommended that all the details of this Rite be thoroughly prepared with parents and children beforehand.

Readers, commentators and other ministers should be selected on the basis of liturgical competence. Some younger children are able to read the Scriptures well, but the witness of adults ministering with care and reverence is often more effective in giving good example, and enabling the word of God to be heard. This is especially important in this celebration!

8. When this Rite is celebrated during Mass, the norms regarding musical priorities remain the same. The Gospel Acclamation, the "Holy, holy", Mystery of Faith and Great Amen should be sung. Other music should be chosen for its appropriateness to the occasion. Where possible the Responsorial Psalm should be sung, but never replaced by a non-Scriptural hymn.

9. If the Celebration takes place outside Mass, musical priority should be given to the Gospel Acclamation, and other music should be chosen for its appropriateness to the occasion and the part of the Rite.

Checklist:

- ☐ Commentator
- ☐ Readers
- ☐ Processional Cross
- ☐ [Crosses for children] *optional*
- ☐ Procession of Gifts (at Mass)
- ☐ Collection takers (outside Mass)

CELEBRATING THE WAY OF LOVE

1: DURING MASS

INTRODUCTORY RITES

The Children may gather outside the Church (or at the back or in the porch) with the Priest and servers. The priest or a server should carry a cross - a large, wooden cross (without figure) would be suitable.

A commentator may introduce the Mass:

My dear children and friends here at (name of Church). **In this time of Lent we are getting ready for Easter; at Easter we will remember how much Jesus loved us, when he died and rose again for us. We are the followers of Jesus, and so we should do our best to live in love. Like Jesus, we should give generously: we give our time, our energy and the things we own to show our love. The cross is the sign of Jesus's love for us. So now we follow the cross into the Church, singing as we do**

The Opening Hymn is sung. The priest and ministers enter with the cross. On arriving at the altar, the cross should be placed somewhere prominent. When the hymn is over, the priest says:

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

All reply: Amen.

The priest greets the congregation in these or similar words:

My dear children, parents, and all members of God's Family here at (name of Church). **I welcome you with great joy. May the Lord, who gave his life out of love, be ever with you.**

All reply: And also with you.

The Penitential Rite follows as usual.

The Opening Prayer is of the occurring Sunday.

LITURGY OF THE WORD

The Readings are of occurring Sunday. [Outside Mass a single reading may be used.]

HOMILY

SIGNING THE CHILDREN WITH THE CROSS

The priest stands and says:

Children, Jesus has asked you to be his friends. Try always to follow him. He gave himself, because he loved us: always try to give, to show your love. If you come forward now, I will make the sign of the cross on your foreheads.

The children come forward and are each signed with the cross. During this a suitable hymn should be sung.

A Parish may wish to give each child a small cross in memory of this celebration; if so, it could be given at this point. When all the children have returned to their places, the priest says:

Dear parents and friends, each day you remind your children of the love of Jesus. I now invite you to make the sign of the cross on your children's foreheads as I have just done.

The parents and families sign the children in silence. Then all stand and Mass continues as normal with the Profession of Faith and the Intercessions.

LITURGY OF THE EUCHARIST

PRESENTATION OF THE GIFTS

*It would be suitable for all the children to share in the procession of the gifts of bread and wine - parishes may wish to think of ways of making the children's participation in this part of the Mass more meaningful: it should be remembered, however, that the most important gifts that are brought up are the bread and wine: they symbolise **all** the offerings we make.*

HOLY COMMUNION

*The children may be invited to come forward in the Communion Procession to receive a form of blessing. It would be suitable to use the gesture of laying on of hand(s), with a phrase such as "**May God, who loves you, care for you now and always. Amen.**" Eucharistic ministers can also use this prayer. (The Trinitarian form of blessing and the sign of the cross, which occur at the end of Mass, and which Eucharistic Ministers cannot use, is not recommended here.)*

CONCLUDING RITES

The concluding prayer is from the Sunday.

BLESSING AND DISMISSAL

*Priest: **The Lord be with you.***

All: And also with you.

*Priest: **May Almighty God bless you, the Father, + and the Son, and the Holy Spirit.***

All: Amen.

*Priest: **Children, today you have taken another step on your journey: the next time we gather together will be for the celebration of Confirmation; then you will be ready to receive Holy Communion for the first time. Use these last weeks well, to prepare for that time when you will become full members of the Church. Our love and prayers go with you. Let us go in peace, to love and serve the Lord.***

All: Thanks be to God.

The Final Hymn is sung.

2: OUTSIDE MASS

INTRODUCTORY RITES

The Children may gather outside the Church (or at the back or in the porch) with the Priest and servers. The priest or a server should carry a cross - a large, wooden cross (without figure) would be suitable.

A commentator may introduce the Celebration:

My dear children and friends here at (name of Church). **In this time of Lent we are getting ready for Easter; at Easter we will remember how much Jesus loved us, when he died and rose again for us. We are the followers of Jesus, and so we should do our best to live in love. Like Jesus, we should give generously: we give our time, our energy and the things we own to show our love. The cross is the sign of Jesus's love for us. So now we follow the cross into the Church, singing as we do**

The Opening Hymn is sung. The priest and ministers enter with the cross. On arriving at the altar, the cross should be placed somewhere prominent. When the hymn is over, the priest says:

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

All reply: Amen.

The priest greets the congregation in these or similar words:

My dear children, parents, and all members of God's Family here at (name of Church). **I welcome you with great joy. May the Lord, who gave his life out of love, be ever with you.**

All reply: And also with you.

The Opening Prayer is of the occurring Sunday.

LITURGY OF THE WORD

The Readings are of the occurring Sunday or taken from those suggested on the back page of this guide. A single reading may be used.

HOMILY

SIGNING THE CHILDREN WITH THE CROSS

The priest stands and says:

Children, Jesus has asked you to be his friends. Try always to follow him. He gave himself, because he loved us: always try to give, to show your love. If you come forward now, I will make the sign of the cross on your foreheads.

The children come forward and are each signed with the cross. During this a suitable hymn should be sung.

A Parish may wish to give each child a small cross in memory of this celebration; if so, it could be given at this point.

When all the children have returned to their places, the priest says:

Dear parents and friends, each day you remind your children of the love of Jesus. I now invite you to make the sign of the cross on your children's foreheads as I have just done.

The parents and families sign the children in silence.

The Intercessions follow immediately, followed by the Our Father. It would be suitable for there to be a collection with a procession after the Our Father, perhaps for a particular charity. During the collection a hymn should be sung. When the collection is presented to the priest, the following prayer could be used:

Blessed are you, Lord, God of all creation, thanks to your goodness we can offer these gifts as signs of our love for all your people; they will become for us and for all signs of love and generosity.

All: Blessed be God for ever.

CONCLUDING RITES

Concluding Prayer

Lord, creator and redeemer of your holy people, your great love has drawn these children to seek and find you.

Look upon them today and bring to fulfilment in them the gift of your Spirit, so that, faithfully following Christ, they may come to eat and drink at your table. We ask this through Christ our Lord.

All: Amen.

BLESSING AND DISMISSAL

Priest: The Lord be with you.

All: And also with you.

Priest: May Almighty God bless you, the Father, + and the Son, and the Holy Spirit.

All: Amen.

Priest: Children, today you have taken another step on your journey: the next time we gather together will be for the celebration of Confirmation; then you will be ready to receive Holy Communion for the first time. Use these last weeks well, to prepare for that time when you will become full members of the Church. Our love and prayers go with you. Let us go in peace, to love and serve the Lord.

All: Thanks be to God.

The Final Hymn is sung.

IDEAS FOR THE CELEBRATION

SUGGESTIONS FOR PRAYERS OF THE FAITHFUL

Priest:

Our children are travelling closer to Confirmation and Holy Communion; we rejoice that they are learning how to live Jesus's way of love. Let us pray for them and for all God's people.

Reader:

1. Let us pray for the world, which thirsts for love, peace and justice. (Pause) That all may know the love Jesus showed us. Lord, in your mercy...

2. Let us pray for our children, signed with the cross of Jesus. (Pause) That each day they may learn to love more generously. Lord, in your mercy...

3. Let us pray for all who need our love - the lonely, the sick and the poor. (Pause) That they may always find the love they seek. Lord, in your mercy...

4. A Prayer for local intentions.

In silence let us make our own prayers to the God who listens to us.

Priest:

**Loving Father,
you have called us to be your children;
listen to the prayers we offer you,
and strengthen us as we follow Jesus
through the cross
to the joys of Easter.
We ask this through Christ our Lord.**

SUGGESTIONS FOR MUSIC

Hymns

All that I am
Blest are you Lord, God of all Creation
Follow Christ
Gifts of Bread and Wine
He is Lord
I will never forget you
Let all that is within me
Lord accept the gifts we offer
Love is his word
Make me a channel of your peace
My song is love unknown
My God accept my heart today
Only a shadow
O Lord my God, when I in awesome wonder
O the love of my Lord
Take this bread, we ask you
This day God gives me
Whatsoever you do

Gospel Acclamation

Note that during Lent we DO NOT sing "Alleluia"

*Glory and praise to you, Lord (Chris O'Hara)
Praise to you, O Christ our Saviour (Farrell)
Praise to you, King of eternal glory (Walsh)*

Instrumental Music

The organ or solo melody instrument or a music group can be very effectively used as an alternative to a song at moments like the signing with the cross.

SUGGESTIONS FOR READINGS (OUTSIDE MASS)

Note: the Sunday readings may always be used.

1st Reading: 1 John 4:7-10

Gospel: John 15:12-15

A SUGGESTED BULLETIN INSERT

"Our children in Year 3 continue their preparation journey. The next celebration is "A People who follow Jesus" on _____. This celebration seeks to bring many things together: Lent, the Cross, the Preparation of the Gifts at Mass, and the mystery of loving and giving.

At Easter, we remember the cross of Jesus: it is a sign of his love for us all - love that meant he gave his life for us. This "self-giving" is something that we should all copy, because we follow Jesus in his way of living. We should be generous people. So the cross is a sign of what we should be like - always willing to give ourselves for others, as Jesus did.

One moment when we concentrate on this giving is when our gifts are brought forward at Mass: the bread and wine are symbols of our work, our gifts, our generosity. We should see them as expressions of all that we give as followers of Jesus.

We become followers of Jesus at Baptism: when we are baptised, each of us is signed with the cross of Jesus - it is traced on our foreheads. When we repeat this gesture for our children at this celebration, it tells them (and all of us) that we must be like Jesus in his self-giving - and be generous not just at Mass, but in all things."