

Easter:

Fifth Sunday of Easter

Lesson Contents

Preparation

Background for Scripture Readings

Breaking Open the Word

Leader Instruction

Preparation

Background for Scripture Readings

First Reading

- In the reading for the Acts of the Apostles, the disciples were unwilling to believe in Paul's radical conversion.
- Through the influence of Barnabas, the disciples come to believe in the conversion of a former enemy.
- The early Church begins to learn the strength of God's grace and forgiveness.

Second Reading

- The passage from the First Letter of John declares that if we truly live in God, we will love in deed as well as word.
- Our task is to live in the life of Christ.
- We are able to do this through the Spirit given to us.

Gospel

- The image of Jesus as the vine presented in today's Gospel comes from the figure of the vine common in the Old Testament.
- Jesus, the vine, is the source of life for his disciples.
- Life in Christ results in good works in the lives of his followers.

Breaking Open the Word

Leader Instruction

Catechist Reflection Guide for the Fifth Sunday of Easter

First Reading: Acts 9:26-31—The community grows through the Holy Spirit.

Responsorial Psalm: Psalm 22:26-27, 28, 30, 31-32—Praise the Lord in the assembly.

Second Reading: 1 John 3:18-24—Love one another in word and deed.

Gospel: John 15:1-8—The vine and the branches.

Invitation to prayer (30 seconds)

Ask the children to quiet themselves and sit comfortably. Have them take three deep breaths while you prompt them to relax as they breathe in God, our Father who loves us, Jesus Christ, his Son, our brother, and God's Holy Spirit who lovingly guides us. As an invitation to prayer, make the Sign of the Cross.

Listening for a word or phrase to speak to your heart (3-4 minutes)

Read the Gospel passage or the special phrase slowly and deliberately while the children are silently listening. Ask them to listen for a word or phrase that seems to be God's word for them today. Spend about 30 seconds as they select their "word" from God. Ask them to silently repeat that word or phrase and to write it on their heart.

Ages 5-8: Read Acts 9:26-31 from a children's Bible, or paraphrase it in your own words. Help the children sound out the word, peace.

Ages 9-14: Read the Scripture passage.

Loving God through his Word (3-5 minutes)

Ages 5-6: Demonstrate how to make a peace sign as shown in the picture on the handout. After they practice this gesture, help them print the word, peace, under the picture. Then ask: **When are you at peace? Do you like to be alone or with others during peaceful times? Do you enjoy peaceful times?** Use these questions to explore the meaning of peace. Close with a prayer for peace.

Ages 7-8: As children explain what the picture a handshake demonstrates, discuss ways to make peace with friends and family. Practice the Sign of Peace with them. Ask these questions to initiate a discussion: **Have you ever had an argument with a friend? How do you feel when you are not at peace? When you settled your differences, did you shake hands as a sign of peace between you? How do you feel when there is a time of peace between you and your friends?** Close by exchanging the Sign of Peace.

Ages 9-11: Guide the children in a reflection on the early community and the role of the Holy Spirit in helping bring new members in. Next ask them to reflect on their own parish and explore how their community grows. Pray the closing prayer.

Ages 12-14: Guide young people to do a quiet reflection on the reading by using the text on the handout. Then follow up with a discussion of their thoughts and responses. Point out the

meaning of the phrase, fear of the Lord. Some synonyms are provided for them to consider in examining their behavior and attitude at Mass. Pray the closing prayer.

Living the Gospel words through the week (3-5 minutes)

The handouts describe one or two ways children and young people can live this reflection on the Gospel through the week at home, school, or play. If appropriate, have them add one or two more personal choices to act on this week.