

Easter:

Seventh Sunday of Easter

Lesson Contents

Preparation

Background for Scripture Readings

Breaking Open the Word

Leader Instruction

Preparation

Background for Scripture Readings

First Reading

- The paragraphs immediately before these tell the story of the disciples witnessing Jesus' Ascension into heaven.
- Twelve is the number of the tribes of ancient Israel; the followers of Jesus are still thinking in fairly strictly Jewish terms when they want to fill the vacant position.
- They're still thinking in terms of fulfillment of ancient promises, not in terms of entirely new promises and prospects.

Second Reading

- The recipients of the first Letter of John were Christians.
- The inspired writer wants to ease the pains caused by rifts, and assure his readers that the saving truth is open to them and clear.
- The author of this passage is a poetic mystic. His sentences are spare but packed with meaning.

Gospel

- Jesus concludes his farewell discourse to his disciples (ch 14-17) with a prayer for them (17:9-19) and for all believers (17:20-26).
- He confidently places his concern for his followers in the Father's hands.
- Now that he is leaving, this unity is endangered, and must take on a new and more complete dimension to survive and be fruitful.

Breaking Open the Word

Leader Instruction

Catechist Reflection Guide for the Seventh Sunday of Easter

First Reading: Acts 1:15-17, 20a, 20c-26—Matthias is picked to replace Judas.

Responsorial Psalm: Psalm 103:1-2, 11-12, 19-20—The Lord placed his throne in heaven.

Second Reading: 1 John 4:11-16—Jesus has given us his Spirit.

Gospel: John 17:11b-19—Jesus prays for his friends before the Ascension.

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 5-6: As you read the phrase on their sheet ask them to think about their friends. From a children's Bible or in your own words read John 17:11-19.

Ages 7-14: Read the passage from the Gospel.

Loving God through his Word (3-5 minutes)

Ages 5-6: Focus the children's attention on the picture of Jesus praying. Tell them **he is praying to his Father to keep his friends safe from harm**. Have them color the picture. While they are coloring, lead them in conversation using these questions: **Have you ever been in a danger? Who helped you out? Have you had a friend that was sick or in danger?** Have them think of a friend they might pray for. Pray the closing prayer.

Ages 7-8: Read aloud the explanation of the Gospel verse. Tell children **This is the prayer Jesus said to his Father just before he returned to heaven. He cared about his friends. He wanted them to be safe and holy. He also wanted them to stay in the world to spread the Good News about God's Kingdom**. Lead children in a discussion about safe places and unsafe places.

- **Do your parents ask you to stay safe?**
- **What kinds of things do they warn you about?**
- **Do you have any concerns about your friends who may be in situations that are not safe for them? Do you know anyone who is going through a hard time right now.**

Close with the prayer for safety.

Ages 9-11: Lead the young people through the guided meditation using the questions on the handout. At the conclusion of the meditation, have volunteers share their thoughts, questions and reflections. Close with the Lord's Prayer.

Ages 12-14: Lead young people slowly through a meditation on the Our Father (two initial petitions to give glory to God, three petitions for us and others in the Christian community). At the conclusion of the meditation, have volunteers share their thoughts, questions and reflections. Close with the Lord's 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.