

# We Belong to the Lord Jesus

Year 2

**Please note:** this file is an archived version of what we had posted on the old website (with a few formatting changes).

## **Theme 1: It's good to be here!** (*Guide pages 46 - 53*)

### **Aims:**

- To enjoy being together
- To create a space together that expresses who we are

**For the Catechist:** As a catechist, you have the important ministry of passing on to these seven-year-old children the Good News of Jesus Christ. In Year One, these children have been welcomed further into community through sharing themes in We Belong to God. Now they will come to know God more deeply through developing a sense of belonging to and with Jesus in the Eucharist. As at our community's Eucharistic celebration, all Baptized people are welcome, so in this first theme, the children will be welcomed and re-affirmed as belonging to our Christian Community. A welcome is the human ritual that changes the feeling of being a stranger by warmth and hospitality. Jesus said, "Whoever welcomes this child in my name welcomes me, and whoever welcomes me, welcomes the one who sent me." As catechist, you welcome the children and make your gathering space a space where Jesus is welcomed into your midst.

**Preparation:** Have a large circular picture frame (big enough to hold circles with the names of all the children) on the door or wall in your gathering space. Prepare the paper circles. Have a small notebook for each which will be their special Friendship Book for the year. Make copies of Family Connection #1.

**Come and Gather:** Have the Song #1 "Welcome, My Friend" playing as the children arrive. Greet the children individually and gather in a circle. Begin with "Let us begin 'In the name of the Father and of the Son..." Share some thoughts of excitement about being together and review names using the song, "Welcome, My Friend."

**Come and Listen:** Pass the picture frame around so that each child looks through it and shares something about themselves such as favourite colours, foods, games, movies, etc. Give each a paper circle and have them write their names and decorate it and paste it on the picture frame to keep in your gathering space.

**Come and Do:** Talk with the children about how they would like to arrange their gathering space, maybe an area for gathering and an area for working on activities. Develop a short list of positive group rules of behaviour for your time together, include bringing books home and returning them every time you gather. Maybe you will like to have an attendance chart displayed. Emphasize how important it is that you do your part in getting ready for them every week and their attending every week. Now to emphasize the importance of each give them their

individual Friendship Book and invite them to draw a large tee shirt on the first page and decorate it to represent something about themselves. Give them time to share their art. (If you have space to make large paper tee shirts, they would make great decorations for your gathering space)

**Come and Go:** Gathered back in a circle show them their We Belong To the Lord Jesus books. As you (or another adult) present a book to each child, ritualize the presentation with naming the child and giving a little blessing. Eg. "(Child's name) may you be blessed as you use this book to understand more deeply that We Belong to the Lord Jesus." Allow some time to browse through the book and especially pages 6 - 9 and relate the pictures to your own activities today. Read together the Remember verse. Send them forth with "Go in peace and remember I'm so happy that you came!" and a closing Sign of the Cross. Encourage the children to share their books with family . Send home a copy of Family Connection #1 with each child.

## **Theme 2: What a Joy to Have Friends** (Guide pages 54 - 59)

### **Aims:**

- To share our stories of friendship
- To discover the joy of having friends

**For the Catechist:** This year's catechesis is built on the basic human experience of friendship and belonging. Friendships are to be respected and celebrated. Friendship is foundational for our faith. The Sunday Eucharist is the weekly gathering of the friends of Jesus, coming together in Jesus' presence as God's children. As children develop with being given freely the gift of love, they develop the confidence to live with confidence, joy, gratitude, and freedom from fear. Others naturally become friends. So it is with God's love. We freely receive God's love and feel the gift of God's friendship. Jesus said, "You are my friends..." Our human friendships reflect this divine friendship. We want the children to know and trust in the friendship of Jesus and of those who follow Jesus. Jesus is present in them and in you. You as catechist can more deeply develop an awareness that Jesus is present to us in so many ways: in his church, in the Mass in his minister and in the Eucharistic species, in the sacraments, in his word, wherever two or three are gathered in his name.

**Preparations:** Bring a memento which has memories of a special friend. Make copies of Family Connection #2.

**Come and Gather:** "Let us begin 'In the name of the Father..." Listen to Song 3 1 "Welcome, my Friends" and add friends' names to the song. Share a personal story about something you like to do with a special friend. Invite them to share experiences of being special friends.

**Come and Listen:** Now talk about how friends come in all ages. Invite the children to share the names of young and older friends. Share your memento of the friendship memory. Allow the children to share theirs. Place the mementos in the circle after they share. If someone did not bring one invite them to think of what they could have brought and tell its story. Reflect on how these mementos and our talk about them helps to make our friends more present to us and helps us celebrate those friendships. Next tell a story about friends who don't always get along. Discuss their experiences or feelings about this. It is also a natural part of friendships.

**Come and Do:** In their individual Friendship Books invite the children to draw a picture of them with their friends having fun together. Share their art. (If time is limited have them share in partners.)

**Come and Go:** Look at and discuss pictures on pages 10 - 11 in their books. Read the Remember verse.. Do a little ritual of taking turns saying to the person on their left and / or then on their right: "Thank you for your gift of friendship." Send home copies of Family Connection #2. Close with the blessing "Let us go in peace and remember Friendship is like a gift." and the Sign of the Cross. Remind them to take home their books to share with their families.

### **Theme 3: I Belong** (*Guide pages 62 - 67*)

#### **Aims:**

- To reflect on how I belong
- To deepen appreciation of how I belong to a family

**For the Catechist:** This theme continues to lay the groundwork for the gathering rite of the Sunday Eucharist, where we gather as the friends of God. Baptism and Confirmation welcomed us into the family of God; we come together to listen to the age-old stories of God and his people, and to break the bread and drink from the cup which is Jesus. In this theme we strengthen the sense of belonging through the experiences of belonging to families and groups. Belonging is a gift extended by others that we receive. Belonging means there is a bond among the members, of a family, of a group, of the human race, of all created by God. Without belonging we would shrivel up. It is the source of our life. It is the trace of God holding us all together.

**Come and Gather:** Let us begin "In the Name..." with the Sign of the Cross. Listen to Song # 2' "Open our Circle." Invite the children to recall a time last year when they used memory hats. Invite them to pretend they are putting on their memory hats as you want them to remember some things about last year. Invite them to close their eyes and silently answer the following questions to themselves: Who were your friends last year? What did you like to play together? Did you celebrate anything special? What is your favourite memory of last year with your friends? Allow them time to remove their hats and share some memories. Give thanks for all the good memories of last year.

**Come and Listen:** Invite the children to share the signs of the group they belong to which they were invited to bring in. Invite them to tell the one thing they like best about that group. Have them place the sign in the centre until everyone shares. (Take home at the end.) Make a list or at least review all the different groups to which the children belong in addition to their families.

**Come and Do:** Give each a sheet of paper (or light-coloured construction paper). Have them fold the two ends in to the middle to make two shutters. Invite them to write their names on the outside and decorate their names. Inside have them make four panes of glass and draw one or more pictures showing how they like belonging to their families. Share some of their thoughts and feelings. Emphasize the importance of their names and how name indicates belonging to family.

**Come and Go:** Look at and discuss pictures on pages 16 & 17 in their books and relate what other children did in these activities.. Read the Remember verse. Close with the blessing, "Let us go in peace and remember... you belong! And the Sign of the Cross. Remind them to take home their signs and their books to share at home.

## **Theme 11: Jesus is God's Gift to Us** (*Guide pages 126-133*)

### **Aims:**

- To enjoy being together again
- To recognize Jesus, the Word of God, as gift

**For the Catechist:** Before Christmas we were in expectation mode, preparing for and waiting for the fulfilment of God's great gift to us. Now we want to spend some time reflecting on how we celebrated this gift at Christmas. Epiphany was actually last Sunday, January 4, but since catechetics most likely had not begun, it is important to use this Sunday to reflect on our family and parish Christmas celebrations now having the large "Christ" candle lighted. Jesus is God's gift to us feeding us in so many ways. So many signs revealing that God is among us.

Have your gathering center prepared with wreath, child in creche, white cloth, Bible, large candle

**Come and Gather:** Welcome the children again with joy. What do they notice about your gathering center? Discuss these. Ask about their Christmas celebrations at home and at church. Share a special gift you received as to who gave it and how you feel about its specialness. Ask each child to share something about a special gift they received. Make comments about how gifts tell us that we are important to someone.

**Come and Listen:** Read the Christmas story from Luke 2:1-20. Ask why was child laid in a manger? Who were first visitors? What had the angels told them? How do we celebrate the birth of Jesus? Now share the story of the Magi from Matthew 2:1-12. Use props to accompany the story: a star, figures, incense, 'gold' treasure box, perfumed oil. Ask questions to review the main points of the story. Emphasize that God announced the birth of Jesus to shepherds, the poorest of people, and to the Kings, the rich and wise, because Jesus was God's gift to everyone! Enjoy the oils and incense.

**Come and Do:** Have each child decorate a star with his / her name and place these in the treasure chest from above.

**Come and Go:** Celebrate a little ritual: Begin with a procession probably just in a circle with the Bible around the Advent wreath. Play music "God has come to me" #6. Use Guide pages 136 with Opening prayer, reading Mathew2:1-12, dialogue homily, and ritual of placing stars in a circle around the Christ candle to replace the wreath. (See Looking ahead: If you wanted to provide a treat, you may want to make a bean cake!)

**Closing:** "Go in peace and remember Jesus is God's gift of light". Help the children to response each time with "Thanks be to God."

## **Theme 12: We Treasure the Gift of God's Story** (*Guide pages 134 - 141*)

### **Aims:**

- To enter into God's Story which is given to us in the Creed
- To celebrate what we believe

**For the catechist:** You are leading the children this year through the Mass. This theme is at the Creed. As catechists it is important to understand that the Creed is placed after the readings and the homily in which we listened and were immersed into part of the whole story of our faith as a people. As a people we accept and express our faith in point form in a Creed...either the Apostles' Creed or the Nicene Creed. We were first presented with this list of our beliefs at our Baptism when our parents / godparents professed this as the faith into which we will belong, in which we identify ourselves as Christians. In preparation for this theme, pray the Creed slowly and ponder the statements and conclude with repeating "This is our faith. This is the faith of the Church. We are proud to profess it in Christ Jesus, our Lord."

**Preparations:** Prepare a Creed Box containing a world map (or globe), a Christ candle, and a Bible. Prepare five pieces of plain paper the size of the four sides and the top.

**Come and Gather:** Recall again their recent celebrations of Advent / Christmas / Epiphany. Discuss some of their favorite memories. Make a list of words of God they recall from these celebrations.

**Come and Listen:** Gather around the Creed Box. Have someone open it and take out the map (globe). Discuss what it is, what it consists of, what we like about it, what it means to us, etc. Who created all the things that were discussed? Listen to part of song #10. Say a prayer of thanksgiving and praise for all of creation.

Next have someone take out the Christ candle. Of all the gifts God has given us Jesus is the greatest gift. We just celebrated this great gift at Christmas. Recall some stories they know about Jesus.

Next have someone remove the Bible. Say that before Jesus died he promised his friends another gift: Have them listen to you read John 14: 26-27. "the Holy Spirit whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you everything and remind you of all that I have said to you. Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you." Discuss what they know about the Holy Spirit. Points from year one include Jesus promised the Holy Spirit would be with us forever, the Holy Spirit helps us remember God's story, the Holy Spirit gathers us together as God's family and helps us remember all that God has done .

Connect all these ideas to the Creed as the gift. It is a prayer which helps us remember and celebrate all that God has done and shows that we are included in this story because we say "We believe."

**Come and Do:** Have the children review the three ideas from the map, candle, and Bible representing the three principle parts of "The Creed" which states and prays what "We believe." Have them decorate the papers with the words "I believe in God", "I believe in Jesus Christ," "I believe in the Holy Spirit", "We believe" and "Creed Box" for top. Glue these onto the box to decorate it. Have them add their names or images for additional decorations. In discussion stress the three parts Father who creates, the Son who lived as a human of earth, and the Spirit who remains with us and guides us to live good lives. Enjoy the Creed Box.

**Come and Go:** Look at the pictures in their texts pages 46 - 47 at Creed boxes other children made. Invite the children to bring their books home and share the pictures with family members and explain what you did together. Close with the blessing: "Go in peace and remember ' We believe in God the Father, the Son and the Holy spirit." Prompt the response of "Thanks be to God."

## **Theme 13: With Jesus We Pray Together** (*Guide pages 142 - 147*)

### **Aims:**

- To explore the community's prayer in the General Intercessions
- To pray together

**For the Catechist:** The General Intercessions is the final part of the Liturgy of the Word in the Mass. The structure of the General Intercessions is an introduction by the presider, then the people pray for the Church, the world, particular needs, the local community, and then a concluding prayer by the presider.

We want to be the Baptized people standing as one with Jesus interceding with God for all the needs of the world. The salvation and well-being of the world depend on these prayers.

**Come and Gather:** Gather all the children in a circle and ask them to close their eyes and silently reflect and think of one person who is sick, or sad, in trouble, in need of care and love. Now ask them to name that person. You may wish to list these names for the "We Care" poster..

**Come and Listen:** Prepare the children for listening to a story about caring. Read Mark 2: 1 - 5, 11 - 12. Discuss the story...how the friends cared, how Jesus showed his caring, how they all felt. Like the friends in this story we can bring our friends to Jesus through our prayers.

**Come and Do:** Examine the pictures on pages 18 - 19 and discuss how all the Baptized people are invited to gather together at Sunday Mass and how different ones use special things to lead us in our Eucharistic celebration. Then refer back to your Creed Box and the good things you talked about in creation. Then discuss that there are things and people in creation which are not as good and beautiful as we would like them to be. Talk about what some of those things might be, things in the Church, the world, the local community. Begin a "WE Care" poster and ask each to draw a picture of a situation in the Church, world or community where our love and care is needed. Add these to the poster.

**Come and Go:** Compare their poster to the pictures in their textbooks pages 48 - 50. Then gather together, as you do during Mass, for Prayers of Intercession. Use the format in your Guide page 147 and the closing prayer. Remind the children to take their books home and talk about Intercessory Prayers with their family members.

## **Theme 14: We celebrate the work of human hands** (*Guide pages 150 - 155*)

### **Aims:**

- To nurture an attitude of wonder and awe for the fruit's of God's creation
- To celebrate the work of human hands

**For the Catechist:** When we reflect on the magnitude of God's creation and our role of being the stewards of this creation, we ourselves should experience wonder and awe. We want to help children experience the richness and variety of creation, the fruits of the earth in all sizes, shapes, smells and tastes. We want to help children appreciate the gifts of creation for our use but not for exploitation. We have to exercise proper stewardship to receive the gifts of the earth, and change them to sustain our lives both physically and spiritually.

Four verbs are used in every meal story of Jesus...they are take, bless, break, and give. These are the actions which will be explored over the next four units. Themes 14 & 15 explore the action of taking. How important it is to take food and drink and bless God. Food and drink are made from the fruit of our human toil of growing plants and processing the products of the plants. We recognize these plants and the skills we have as God's gifts. We take the simple gifts of bread and wine at our Sunday Eucharist in memory of what Jesus did. This eating and drinking is our covenant feast between God and us. It is a feast of transformation. God transforms the gifts into the person of Jesus. In our eating and drinking, we are transformed more into the image and likeness of Jesus. What a wonderful living feast!

**Come and Gather:** Have some fun with the Riddles of food from your Guide pages 152 - 153. Then do Take a Guess! Have some bread and a bottle of wine (grape juice) in a brown paper bag. Have the children take turns guessing what is in the bag. "Both have been made from fruits of the earth." After identifying the bread and wine have a discussion on the process of making each.

**Come and Listen:** Have a variety of breads products and juices to discuss. Discuss the different traditions and processes for the making of each. These are the two basic foods in the different cultures of the world.

**Come and Do:** I expect most of you would not be able to make bread at your gathering. Some may be able to gather the children at your home to make bread. I used to make bread at school when I taught, but the facilities allowed that to happen. You will have to improvise here. Choose one recipe from page 154 and make some bread at home before you gather with the children. (this could be the loaf in the brown bag.) If you cannot do this, you can buy a bread similar to what the recipe suggests. Make one copy per child of the recipe. Talk about the ingredients and what each ingredient comes from and talk about the directions for the making of the bread. This is the processing of fruit of the earth to make something we can eat and enjoy. Then squeeze or crush some grapes to collect some juice. Explain that this is the beginning of the process of making wine which people also drink. Bring a bottle of juice (from the brown paper bag) and small paper cups. Gather round a table with the bread and squeezed and bottled juices. Tell the

children there is a prayer we pray over the bread and wine when we gather for the Sunday Eucharist.

"Blessed are you, Lord, God of all creation. Through your goodness, we have this bread and wine, which earth has given and human hands have made." Pray this before eating and drinking.

Enjoy a taste testing of the breads and wine (juice).

**Come and Go:** Introduce a special goblet and small plate which you will place at your prayer centre to remind all of the goodness of God's gifts. Look at the pictures on pages 54 - 55 in their textbooks. Have them draw pictures in their individual books to remind themselves of the gifts we have to take and use for eating and drinking which we all need to do to be healthy and strong. Close with the blessings: "Go in peace and remember that through God's goodness we have bread and wine." Encourage the children's response, "Thanks be to God."

## Theme 15: We Prepare the Table of the Eucharist

### Aims:

- To explore our activities around tables
- To explore how the Sunday assembly prepares the table of the Eucharist

**For the Catechist:** Since the table is the gathering place for many human activities, we want the children to understand the value of table and connect this basic experience with our sacred activity of gathering around the Eucharistic table. The altar is the focal point of any church. It is the gathering place to share the Eucharistic meal. It is the place where people of God ritually re-enacts the actions of Jesus at the Last Supper. It is the place where Christ is made present and active among us whenever we are gathered in his name. It is the place where Jesus gives himself again to God for the whole community in the power of the Holy Spirit. It is around this table that the people of our faith gather with Jesus and offer ourselves as a people united with Jesus through his life, death and resurrection in the power of the Holy Spirit. This special presence of Jesus with us (there are other special ways Jesus is present also with us) makes this table so special. That is why the priest greets the table (altar) with a kiss at the beginning of the Eucharist.

**Come and Gather:** Explain that today you're going to share about a special table. Ask them to help you make a list of all the different kinds of tables you know. Examples are kitchen, coffee, restaurant, sand, picnic, card, etc. Then talk about what things are done around the different tables. Lead into a discussion of what they do in their families around their dining table. The family gathers for regular meals and to celebrate special occasions when friends and relatives may gather. Discuss what preparations are made such as using a tablecloth, candles, flowers. What do they do before eating? (Gather to talk about what is new and often remember other common occasions in their relationships.)

**Come and Listen:** Explain that you want them to think about at your parish church. What tables are there? What are some of them used for? Then focus on two special "tables" in our churches. One may not look like a table but we do call it the "Table of the Word" (This will likely have been explained in an earlier theme.) It is also called the lectern where the readings are proclaimed. At that table we are fed with God's Word. The second table does look more like a table and we often call it the altar. Invite the children to share what they recall about this table. We use tablecloths of different colours at different times of the year. There are candles placed there during Mass. There may be a crucifix lying flat or on a stand nearby. A large cup and plate and more sometimes are used at this table. The priest kisses it at the beginning of Mass. He genuflects at the table. It is around this table we gather to be fed with special food.

**Come and Do:** Review again how a family at home gets a table ready for a celebration. Then explain that you want them to draw a picture in their individual friendship books of the table around which we gather at church. After they draw the basic table, ask them to add a green tablecloth (Green for the present time which is called Ordinary time). Then have them add candles on the table and a crucifix nearby. Then add the cup (chalice) which would contain the

wine and plate(ciborium)with bread on it. Now add a priest and themselves, their families, and friends gathered around.

**Come and Go:** Look at and discuss the pictures on pages 56 - 58 in their text books. Encourage the children to take their books and pictures home to share this theme with family members. Close with the blessing, "Go in peace and remember on Sunday we gather around the table of the Eucharist." Encourage response, "Thanks be to God."

If possible, you may want to bring your group around your parish altar for an up-close experience.

## **Theme 16: We Lift Up Our Hearts To The Lord**

### **Aims:**

- To explore how we honour people
- To explore how we honour God

**For the Catechist:** Continuing the actions of 'take, bless, break and give" in this theme we look at blessing. As the beginning of the Eucharistic Prayer begins with the invitation, "Lift up your hearts" we respond "We have lifted them up to the Lord" which means "We are ready" to bless and give praise to God! We are approaching Lent and Easter, the greatest feast in our Church, when we praise, thank and bless God for what God did in Jesus and for what God does in our lives. In every Eucharistic celebration God is at the centre of our community. We remember and keep alive the wonderful work of God in the lives of the people and most especially in the wonderful work God has done through the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus. May we live within the story, keep the story alive, proclaim the story to all in the world!! May God rule forever!

**We Gather:** To understand how and why people are honoured in our communities use the story from your guide pages 168 - 169 "Hooray for Mrs. O'Meara!" Discuss the story details and relate it to other examples in the life of the children and your community.

**We Listen:** Recall the Creed Box from an earlier theme. Begin a listing of the many gifts of creation and gifts of God's presence to us in Jesus and the Spirit. Then divide these gifts into categories such as gifts of the earth, things that happen, and people. Then invite words the children may know which are used to praise and thank God: Thank you, Praise God, Glory to God, Alleluia, Bless the Lord, Sing praises, etc. Discuss when and where we hear these words. Then introduce that special part in the Mass when the presider invites us to "Lift up your hearts" and invite what is our response "We have lifted them up to the Lord" and the presider's "Let us give thanks to the Lord our God" and our response "It is right to give God thanks and praise." Share an example of a preface from the Sunday Missal. The preface is appropriate to the season or to the feast day and names some of the wonderful things God has done and ends with the wonderful praise which we join "Holy, Holy, Holy Lord, God of power and might, Heaven and earth are full of your glory. Hosanna in the highest. Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord. Hosanna in the highest."

**We Respond:** Invite the children to reflect on some of the discussions and to think of something they would especially like to thank and praise God for and to do a drawing to illustrate it and add words of praise to God for it.

**We Go Forth:** Invite the children to practise the praise response "We praise you, O God, We thank you for your love, and we bless your name." Use Opening Prayer "Loving God, We remember your love for us. We lift our voices and our hearts in song and prayer as you gather us in Jesus' name." Then begin a litany of praises modelling a few with ideas from your listing of gifts and saying, "Because you love us, you ..... Eg. give us food to eat, OR give us Jesus Or

give us homes for shelter etc" Invite each child to lead a prayer of praise about their drawing. Close with "Lift up your hearts." and invite the response "We lifted them up to the Lord.."

Encourage the children to take home their books to share pages 60 & 61 and their drawings.

## **Theme 17: Do This in Memory of Me** (*Guide pages 172 - 179*)

### **Aims:**

- To remember what God has done through Jesus
- To explore the action of the Spirit upon the gifts of bread and wine and upon the assembly

**For the Catechist:** This theme continues reflection on the Eucharistic prayer. Think about remembering...remembering makes things real again in the present time. In the Eucharist we remember how Jesus prefigured his death and resurrection in his actions over the bread and wine at the Last Supper. The presider prays that the Holy Spirit may come upon our gifts of bread and wine to transform them into the Body and Blood of Jesus (epiclesis). By the power of the Spirit, we recall Jesus' actions and become part of the new life in our sharing communion; we become more like Jesus present with and in us. We remember and in our remembering and the Spirit of God it is made present again in our midst. Though Jesus was leaving, he promised the Spirit to be with his followers to continue and complete his work. This action in the Eucharist is central to who we are as Christians.

**Come and Gather:** Remind the children of how when we share a meal with family or with friends we talk about our memories of things that have happened. When Jesus gathered with his friends they talked about all the wonderful things God had done for them: how God had freed his people from slavery, protected them, fed them, and gave them a land of their own. They thanked God for all God had done for them. Then tell them about the special meal we call the Last Supper how Jesus took bread and thanked God for it; he blessed it, broke it and gave it to his disciples saying 'Take and eat. This is my body' and he took a cup of wine, blessed it and passed it around saying, 'Take and drink. This is a cup of my blood..' Then he said, 'Do this in memory of me.' At Mass we remember all that God has done by remembering all that Jesus did. Review with a plate and cup what Jesus did and said. When Jesus gave his friends the blessed bread and the wine, he gave himself to them just as he would do the next day when he gave up his life for them and for all. Every Sunday we remember that Jesus died for all people and that he rose again to new life. These are the wonderful things God did for us through Jesus. Jesus is with us now through his Spirit. At the Eucharist we give thanks and praise to God for Jesus. We remember what Jesus did and that Jesus is present with us always.

**Come and Listen:** Talk about changes that happen in their lives and around in nature, how this change is all part of being alive. Have some real food or pictures of food and discuss how food nourishes us and helps us grow and be healthy and strong.

Then share the idea that Jesus gives us food and drink every Sunday at Mass so we can be more like him. To help us to be more like him, Jesus also gives us the gift of the Holy Spirit. At Mass, the presider says a special prayer that the Holy Spirit comes upon the bread and wine so that it becomes the body and blood of Jesus. We join our prayer with the priest, "Send your Holy Spirit upon these gifts to make them the body and blood of Jesus, your Son." By the words of the priest and the power of the Holy Spirit, the gifts become the body and blood of Jesus. We then acclaim the wonderful works of Jesus when we say or sing "Christ has died. Christ has risen.

Christ will come again." And then the most important words of praise are "Through him, with him, in him, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, all glory and honour is yours, Almighty Father, for ever and ever." To which we all answer a Great "Amen!" This is our great act of thanksgiving and praise to God in union with Jesus and the Holy Spirit for all the wonderful love and care we have from God through the life, death and resurrection of Jesus. Our "Amen!" proclaims clearly our saying, "Yes, Lord Jesus, we belong to you!" Then remind them that just as the Holy Spirit changes the bread and wine, the Holy Spirit changes us to a people gathered together in love and friendship as the people of God called the Church. As we listen and join with the priest we pray for all in the Church and in the world.

**Come and Do:** Invite the children to draw, colour, and cut out a figure of themselves to put on a display around a picture of a Eucharistic table with the words, "Fill us with your Spirit." You will need to have the display with a picture of a table in the centre prepared in advance. Add the words after their figures are added.

**Come and Go:** Look at and discuss the pictures in their books on pages 62 - 66. Read the words together. Encourage them to take home their books and discuss the actions of the Holy Spirit in gathering us together and changing the bread and wine and changing us so that we live as the family of the Church. Close with the blessing, "Go in peace and remember Jesus said 'Do this in memory of me.'" Encourage the response "Thanks be to God."

## **Theme 18: Give Us This Day Our daily Bread** (*Guide pages 182 - 189*)

### **Aims:**

- To explore the Our Father as our request for daily bread and reconciliation
- To explore the seal of our prayer in the sign of peace.

**For The Catechist:** The Communion Rite begins with the Our Father, the Prayer for Peace and the sign of peace which prepare us to partake of our Lord's Body and Blood in Communion. We are now looking at the action of "breaking" as the bread (body) is broken and the wine (blood) is poured out for us. These are Jesus' actions of deepest love. In these prayers we ask for forgiveness and for all that we need... food, love, caring. In the Our Father, we humbly pray as Jesus taught us. Jesus wants us to recognize the holiness of God and God's desire to be our God and to do what only God can do for us. We pray for bread, for forgiveness, the heart to forgive others, to ability to withstand all power of evil. This is the perfect way to enter into receiving God's greatest gift of our Lord Jesus!

**We Gather:** Gather around the table with the plate and cup. Have Song #13 playing softly "Jesus is Our Peace." Recall that last year they learned the special prayer the "Our Father" with gestures (See Guide page 184 - 185). Practice it and then introduce it as the priest does in Mass "Let us pray as Jesus taught us to pray" and pray it together. Discuss the words "give us this day our daily bread." Discuss food in its many ways as all we have our need for it, how we get it, how some be hungry, how our food collections and collections at church are to help that all have enough daily bread. Talk also of the special food Jesus shares with us in the Eucharist so that we can become more like him and grow in unity with all people. Examine the pictures in their books pages 68, 69 & 71 to conclude that we also need "food for the heart" when we share love and kindness and happiness.

**We Listen:** Explain that in the Our Father we also pray for forgiveness. Read and discuss "The Best Cake ever" in your Guide 186 - 187. Recall the words from the Our Father about forgiveness. Then read from your Bible Matthew 5:9 "Blessed are the peacemakers for they shall be called children of God." We are children of God when we forgive and try to live in peace with others. At Mass the priest breaks the bread and puts it into the chalice when we sing "Lamb of God, who takes away the sins of the world, have mercy on us." On the night of the Last supper, Jesus ate lamb with his friends to celebrate God's love for his people. Since then, Jesus is our Lamb who brings peace.

**We Do:** Give some (or all) of the children examples of needs to read and act out. Ask the others to respond to the others' needs. Examples are "I am lonesome because I have no friends." "I am hurt because you made fun of me." "I am scared because I am lost." "I am hurt because no one will play with me." "I am mad at you and now I want to tell you I am sorry." Encourage words, and gestures such as smiles, handshakes, hugs. Connect with the Sign of Peace.

**We Go Forth:** Look at pictures on page 70 in their books. Then gather in a circle around the table with cup and plate for the Our Father, Lamb of God, and sign of peace. Close with

blessing, "Go in peace and remember to be peacemakers." Encourage them to take their books home to share this theme with family members.

## Theme 19: A Catechesis on Reconciliation

### Aims:

- To prepare to celebrate the Sacrament of First Reconciliation

**For the Catechist:** We want to develop in the children a gentle recognition of our need for the gift of forgiveness. Jesus spent much time with people who were being left out in society sometimes because of things they had done and sometimes just because of who they were. Jesus made a point of reaching out to these such as Matthew the tax collector and Zacchaeus. Jesus told them their "sins" were forgiven and he joined them at meals and gatherings. Jesus looked at what their hearts wanted and he included them thereby showing God's love and forgiveness. Jesus told parables such as about the Lost Sheep and the Prodigal Son to help his followers understand God's dream that all people live together in love, peace and harmony.

**We Gather:** Talk about times when people, even friends, sometimes have quarrels and do or say things that hurt others. Share some examples. Read "Sandra's Boots" (below)

Sandra was in a bad mood because she didn't like wearing the boots that had belonged to her older brother.

"Sandra," said her mother, "if you were to go to the store right now and buy a pair of boots, you tell me what difference there would be between new ones and those!"

"I don't care. I hate wearing boys' clothes!" screamed Sandra as she flung one of the boots ahead of her. She turned fast enough not to see it hit her mother on the leg.

"Sandra," said her mother sadly but firmly, "come here." Sandra turned, pouting. When she looked up, she saw from where the boot had landed, that it probably hit her mother.

"I love you, Sandra," said her mom. "That's why you must use these boots. Listen, you go and get the photo album on my dresser and then we'll sit down and talk about it."

Sandra was no longer angry. She was feeling sorry— not only for yelling at her mom, but also for having hit her with her boot. She climbed the stairs slowly and got the album.

When she came down, her mom was sitting on the sofa. "Come here, Sandra. Sit down," she said gently.

Her mother opened the album and found a photo of herself when she was Sandra's age. "Do you see the boots I'm wearing here, Sandra?" she asked. "These boots were the hardest things I've ever had to wear. They came from my cousin. I think I understand how you feel about wearing someone else's clothes." Then she reached for a catalogue lying open beside her. "Now let's look at some new boots. Can you see any difference between these and the ones from your brother?"

Sandra knew her mother was right. "Don't you think it would be wrong to buy new ones and throw these away?" asked her mother.

"I guess you're right, Mom," admitted Sandra. "I'm sorry for getting mad."

Discuss the story. Bring their attention to the different stages of forgiveness: feeling bad, changing our heart, and asking forgiveness. When the other person forgives we feel better and we have something to celebrate.

**We Listen:** Read the story of the woman at Simon's house Luke 7: 36 - 50. Discuss that we don't know what the woman had done before, but everyone called her a sinner. We know from her behaviour that she feels sorry. She must have heard stories about Jesus forgiving sins and this is why she comes to Jesus. How does she express her sorrow? What does Jesus say to her? How do you think she felt? Do you think she changed her life after this?

**We Respond:** Everyone needs forgiveness at some times in our lives. In our Church we have a special celebration when we can receive Jesus' forgiveness just like that woman did. This celebration is called the Sacrament of Reconciliation. Sometimes it is called "Confession" and for these young people it will be their "First Confession" or "First Reconciliation."

Look at some things we would think about to get ready to celebrate forgiveness by making a list of people we sometimes hurt. Then think of how we sometimes hurt those people and add this information beside the names on the list. Discuss how we feel when we hurt others or when we do something we know is wrong. When we feel bad, we can tell Jesus that we are sorry and ask for forgiveness.

Explain that in the celebration of the Sacrament of Forgiveness they can go to the priest who is there in place of Jesus. In our Church, the priest has been especially blessed to act in place of the person of Jesus. So just like the woman who had sinned went to Jesus, they are invited to go to Jesus for forgiveness in this special celebration. The priest will welcome them. He may read something from the Bible to help them to feel close to Jesus just like the woman was. Then they can tell the priest about their sins, about who they hurt and how or what they did wrong. They will tell the priest that they are sorry for what they did and that they will try not to do it again. The priest will tell them that their sins are forgiven just like Jesus told the woman. The priest will also tell them to do a certain "penance" which is a way of showing that they will change and not hurt anymore.

Take some examples from the list and do some role play exercises of forgiveness. Assign a few children to role play as if they were asking forgiveness for hurting someone from the list and you can role play the priest's part until they are comfortable. Make sure you remind them that everything they really say in the real celebration is very personal and no one else ever knows what they say.

**We Go Forth:** Explain to them the times and place when they will celebrate their "First Reconciliation" or "First Confession".

Gather for a closing prayer. Explain that you want them to hear one more story that Jesus told about how happy God is when we say we are sorry. Proclaim Luke 15: 1 - 10.

"God looks on us with love all the time"

Ask them to "echo" after you each line of the following Act of Contrition:

(You may like to have this on a prayer card for each child.)

***"God, I am sorry for my sins:***

***for what I have done and for what I have failed to do.***

***I will sincerely try to do better.***

***Help me to love you more.***

***Help me to love all people more."***

*Offer each other a Sign of Peace.*

Review with them the time and place when they will celebrate their "First Reconciliation" or "First Confession". Try very hard to help this to be a pleasant experience!!

## **Theme 19: Bread Broken for you and Cup Poured out for you** (*Guide pages 190 - 197*)

### **Aims:**

- To enter into the suffering and death of Jesus
- To appreciate the death of Jesus in the bread broken and the cup poured

**For the Catechist:** The children are invited to understand the ritual action of the breaking of the bread and the drinking of the cup in the Eucharist as a way of making present the death of Jesus. The early Christians gathered together for "the breaking of the bread" which is the Eucharistic action of remembering the death of Jesus and signifying the unity of all those who followed and believed in Jesus. The breaking of the bread by Jesus was a typical action of Jesus recognized by the travellers to Emmaus. The breaking of the bread at Mass, is the sign of the presence of Jesus, the lamb of God, who died on a cross because of his love for us and for his and our Father. At this time in the Mass, we sing "Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world, have mercy on us."

**Come and Gather:** Gather around a table with a plate and cup. Tell the children that you have a special story about Jesus to share with them. We call it the Passion story and it is always read on the Sunday before Easter which we call Passion Sunday and also Palm Sunday.

**Come and Listen:** Read the adapted version from your Guides pages 193 - 195 with a discussion after each section.

**Come and Do:** Have the children mime each part of the Passion story as suggested in your guide page 196. (Jesus in the Garden of Olives, Peter denies Jesus, the trial of Jesus, the death of Jesus, the burial of Jesus, the empty tomb, and also the ritual action of the Mass when the bread is broken and the cup poured (priest's drinking after broken bread parts are added), and communion being shared. You or one of the children could read the spoken words while different children do the actions. At various parts sing the refrain, "Jesus has given his life for us."

**Come and Go:** Look at their books pages 72 & 73 and review the Passion story. Encourage the children to share these pictures at home and to be preparing during these last weeks of Lent to be ready to share in the three-day celebration soon of Holy Thursday, Good Friday, and Easter and the time when they will come to share communion with the rest of the people. Pray the Prayer "Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world, have mercy on us as in Mass twice, and then Lamb of God...grant us peace." Close with the blessing, "Go in peace and remember, 'Jesus has given his life for us.'" and encourage their response "Thanks be to God".

## **Theme 20: You Are Invited to the Table of the Eucharist** (*Guide pages 198 - 203*)

### **Aims:**

- To recognize that we are called to serve others
- To listen to the invitation to feast at the table

**For the Catechist:** Jesus' disciples remembered Jesus as a man who served others all during his life. Jesus described his own life as a service to others. He compared himself to someone who served at tables, who washes others' feet, who died because he told the truth about God's love, and who could not betray that truth which he knew others needed to know. Jesus asked us to remember him by serving others. Before being ordained to the priesthood, men are ordained as "deacons" which comes from the Greek word "diakonia" meaning table service and the name the disciples gave the people who would take care of the poor. Jesus showed that it is in service to others that we live full lives.

Preparation: Have present a cup and a plate, and a bowl of water and a towel.

**Come and Gather:** Have a good discussion on times and ways the children help others, and about times they have been helped by others. What would it be like if no one helped? Why should we help others? How does it feel to help?

**Come and Listen:** Connect the discussion on helping with serving. We all have special ways we can help and special opportunities to be of service to others. Tell the children to listen while you tell them a story about how Jesus served on a special occasion. Proclaim John 13: 1 - 15. which is in your Guide page 201. Share feelings about the story. Why do they think Jesus washed their feet? Why did Peter not want Jesus to wash his feet? What do they think Jesus was teaching us by washing his friends' feet? How can we follow Jesus' example? Look at books pages 74 - 76.

**Come and Do:** Gather around the table with the cup and plate, the water and towel. Connect Jesus' washing of the feet with his invitation for them to do the same and how he also invited them to "take and eat" and "take and drink" the bread and wine which he had blessed. So we also are invited to serve others and to share at the table of the Eucharist. Invite the children to be silent. Do the Opening Prayer from the ritual on page 202 in your Guide. Then invite them to listen as they are "fed at the table of the Word". Proclaim John 13: 1 - 15 again. Do a reflection on how Jesus invites all to the table to feast with him. Do the ritual of washing the feet with some or all of the children. Say the Our Father together. Listen to Song # 14 "At the Table of our God." with the reminder that soon they will also feast at the table of the Eucharist in communion with the whole parish but for now they are present with the people.

**Come and Go:** Share some feelings about the ritual. Keep the discussion reverent. Invite them to think of one way they can be of service to someone today and volunteer their service in a special preparation for their coming to feast with Jesus. Close with a sign of peace and the

words "Go in peace and remember...Happy are those who are invited to the Lord's supper."  
Encourage the response "Thanks be to God."

Encourage the children to take their books home and share pages 74 - 76 with family members.

## **Theme 21: Alleluia! He is Risen!** (*Guide pages 206 - 213*)

### **Aims:**

- To explore our Easter experiences
- To enter into the joy of the Easter story

**For the Catechist:** These next themes explore the fourth action of eating and drinking. These reflect on the activity and meaning of the Sunday assembly eating and drinking the body and blood of Christ. All the Easter narratives tell us that the disciples know and recognize Jesus whom they see and eat with although Jesus is different. They recognize Jesus as he takes, blesses, breaks and eats. We today recognize Jesus in the same actions and celebrate the memory of Jesus. We see the Lord with our eyes of faith.

**Come and Gather:** Recall the three gatherings of the Triduum. What happened at Holy Thursday? Good Friday? Easter Vigil or Easter morning? What were the readings? The actions? The singing? The mood? Bring attention to the use of the word, "Alleluia". It has not been used throughout Lent but bursts forth at Easter. It is a happy version of "Praise God." Listen to Song #16 "We Have Alleluia"

**Come and Listen:** Prepare the children to hear the "Good News" story of Easter. Read the adaptation from Matthew 28: 1 - 10 from your Guide Book page 210. Discuss the details of the story and how the disciples and Jesus' friends felt during these events.

**Come and Do:** Invite the children to draw their own impressions of the Easter story in their individual books. Have them share their pictures in pairs and explain what is happening in their pictures. Then ask individuals to share with the large group what they heard and saw in their partner's picture that had special meaning for them.

**Come and Go:** Some of the children may have received their First Communion. Share their impressions. Continue with looking at the pictures in their books pages 78 - 79. Then examine the prayer on page 78 which is an open invitation to share for the first time and every time we celebrate the Sunday liturgy. Then reflect on the proclamation on page 79. This is what we recall and celebrate at every Mass. Explain that these words which are joined with our Eucharistic action at Mass recall and express our whole faith in Jesus. We want to continue to celebrate so that we may never get careless and forget about Jesus' death and resurrection to new life. Jesus remains with us now in many ways and one day we will be with Jesus in that special way that his disciples were with him for a while after his resurrection..

Encourage the children to take home their books and share the theme and their individual pictures with family members. Close with the blessing, "Go in peace and let us remember the mystery of our faith." Encourage them to join in the proclamation "Christ has died! Christ is risen! Christ will come again! Alleluia!"

Share a treat of happy coloured jelly beans!

## **Theme 22: Come, Take and Eat**    (*Guide pages 214 - 219*)

### **Aims:**

- To savour the presence of the risen Christ in the Easter community
- To reflect on how it is Jesus who gathers and feeds us

**For the Catechist:** This theme continues around the Eucharistic action of eating. We encounter Jesus in the Eucharist and are invited to know him better. The disciples begin to recognize Jesus in his full reality after his resurrection. To the disciples this is a moment of revelation. They recognize Jesus as the revelation of God. God has come and been revealed to them. They finally understand!! Their earlier attraction to Jesus was more than justified. They had met God at work in Jesus. Jesus was the bread from Heaven; the bread sent for the life of the world. Eating the bread means being nourished with the life that comes from God. We are invited to eat.

**Come and Gather:** Talk about the joy of gathering with family and friends to share a meal. What is a special meal they remember? What would it be like for them to sit down and have a meal with Jesus? What would they do? What would they talk about? Remind the children that Jesus had many meals with people. Can they remember any? There are several stories of Jesus joining disciples for meals after he died and rose from the dead. In fact often the disciples did not recognize Jesus until he joined them at a meal. Today you are going to share one of those stories about Jesus having breakfast with some of his friends on the shore.

**Come and Listen:** Gather in a circle. You might have some biscuits or bread and jam to share with the children. Explain that this story takes place on a shore early in the morning. Imagine the sounds of water, the smell of smoke from an open fire and the smell of fish frying, the vision of Jesus and his friends gathered, laughing and talking, enjoying each others' company. Do the Guided Imagery on Page 217 in your Guide. Share their experiences of the guided imagery. What might Jesus' friends have done after the breakfast was over? (Tell others?)

**Come and Do:** Invite the children to draw a picture of having breakfast on the shore with Jesus. Share these.

**Come and Go:** Look at the pictures on pages 80 - 81. The Sunday assembly is the special meal we share with Jesus. Christians gather together every Sunday to celebrate the Eucharist when we remember what Jesus did when he took bread and wine and blessed it and shared it. When we do that, the same risen Jesus is among us giving us his life in the bread and wine. That is why the Sunday Eucharist is so important. Jesus' disciples continued doing this whenever they came together to remember Jesus. We come together at least every Sunday to remember Jesus and to share his meal with us. Christians recognize Jesus in the blessed bread and wine. Listen to Song #14, "At the Table of our God" Encourage the children to take their books home to share this theme with family members. Closing blessing is "Go in peace and remember 'Happy are we who are called to the Lord's supper.'" Encourage response "Thanks be to God."