

First Sunday of Lent

Adam and Eve disobey God

INTRODUCTION

Today is the first Sunday of Lent. The word "Lent" comes from *lencten*, a very old word which means springtime. It is the time of year when the days are getting longer as summer gets closer. Lent begins on Ash Wednesday and lasts for forty days. Over the next few weeks the readings we will hear encourage us to say "yes" to God and "no" to our own selfishness.

SIGN OF THE CROSS

LIGHT THE CANDLES

Say Candle Prayer 1.

SORRY

Lent means springtime, a time of year when new life begins and everything starts to grow. We can make a fresh start too, and try extra hard to be good. Together let us sing Sorry Song 1.

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

To welcome today's Gospel sing Acclamation 5.

GOSPEL (GENESIS 2:8–10, 3:1–14, 22–24)

Adam and Eve lived very happily together in the Garden of Eden. They could eat the fruit from any tree in the garden except the fruit from the tree of good and evil which grew in the middle of the garden.

Now, the devil hated God, and loved to spoil the good things that he had made. One day he disguised himself as a snake and slithered up to Eve. "Why don't you taste the fruit on the tree in the middle of the garden?" he hissed. "We must not because God asked us not to," answered Eve. "Do not listen to God," said the snake, "Eat it and you will become as wise and powerful as he is."

So Eve picked a fruit, ate some, and shared it with Adam. Later, when God called to Adam and Eve, they hid from him because they were ashamed and embarrassed. "Did you disobey me and eat the fruit from the forbidden tree?" God asked them. "The snake made us do it!" said Eve. "No. You chose to disobey me," said God sadly,

"Now you must leave this beautiful garden, for your disobedience has allowed death to come into the world." So Adam and Eve left the Garden of Eden.

DISCUSSION

Today's story is all about temptation, when you think about doing something that you know is wrong. In the story, who was tempted and what did they do wrong? Like Adam and Eve, we are all tempted sometimes to do something wrong.

God wants us to choose to do what is right, but this is not always easy. During Lent we make promises; we may give up something nice or promise to do something good. Whatever we do, we try to keep in touch with God, to be less selfish and more generous.

What are some of the lenten promises you will try to follow? The emphasis should be on doing things for Jesus, rather than simply on giving things up. If we give up cookies or candy, there should be a positive motive. (For children, it is often easier to achieve short term goals rather than to try to make one promise for the whole six weeks. They could have a different promise or act for each day or for each week.)

ACTIVITY

Have the children color in the picture; or, compile a large picture with the individual characters from the story, with cutout leaves and fruit which can be colored and glued onto the completed scene.

CREED

CLOSING PRAYER

Dear Jesus, there will be times during Lent when we might find it difficult to keep our lenten promises. But if you are there to help us, then we will keep on trying.



Second Sunday of Lent

God's glory on the mountain

INTRODUCTION

When Jesus wanted to pray, he would often find a quiet, peaceful place away from the crowds, where he could be alone with his heavenly father. One day he took three of his disciples with him. He planned to give them a great surprise by giving them a glimpse of God's glory!

SIGN OF THE CROSS

LIGHT THE CANDLES

As we light our candles today, we think about the brightness of their light which reminds us of God's glory.

SORRY

Ask a child to choose a sorry color from the large "SORRY" picture (see Introduction). The child can then read the corresponding Sorry Prayer, or the group can say the prayer together.

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

To welcome today's Gospel sing Acclamation 2.

GOSPEL (MATTHEW 17:1-9)

One day Jesus asked Peter, James, and John to come and pray with him. He led them to the top of a steep mountain, where it was peaceful and quiet, and they could be alone.

Jesus began to pray to his heavenly father when suddenly he appeared to change! His face and clothes shone with a brilliant light, as dazzling as the rays of the sun. Then the disciples saw Moses and Elijah on either side of Jesus, talking to him.

Peter jumped up with excitement and said, "Lord, this is wonderful! I could make three shelters, one for each of you!" At that moment a cloud streaming with light appeared above them, and a voice said, "This is my son, whom I love very much. Listen to what he says." The disciples were so terrified that they threw themselves to the ground and hid their faces.

Then Jesus said gently, "Get up my friends, do not be afraid." When they looked up, Jesus was standing alone. As they came down the mountain

together, Jesus told them firmly, "You must not tell anyone about what you have seen today, until the son of God has risen from the dead."

DISCUSSION

Jesus led his friends to the top of a mountain. In the Old Testament, mountains were often the place where God appeared to people. When Jesus began to pray, what happened? How did he change?

Two people appeared beside Jesus. Can you remember their names? Moses was the man chosen by God to lead his people out of slavery in Egypt to the Promised Land. He had taken them through the Red Sea and across the desert for forty long years. He collected the Ten Commandments on Mount Sinai.

Elijah was a prophet, a man who spoke for God. He had warned people not to disobey God and to follow God's rules. Like Moses, he always trusted God and did whatever he asked.

The disciples were amazed at this sight, but what happened next to make them fall to the ground in fear? God wanted the three friends to know that Jesus was his son.

In days to come, when Jesus would suffer and die, they would remember the glory of God that they had seen on the mountaintop. Jesus was showing himself as they would know him in heaven.

ACTIVITY

Cut out and color these figures to create a transfiguration scene.

CREED

CLOSING PRAYER

Dear God,
Peter, James, and John
saw the light of your glory
shining from Jesus
on the mountain that day.
Jesus shares that light
and his love with all of us.
May the light in our hearts
help us to change
so that we will be more like Jesus,
filled with his joy, happiness, and goodness.



Third Sunday of Lent

The woman at the well

INTRODUCTION

Today we will hear about a meeting between Jesus and a Samaritan woman. The Samaritans came from a place called Samaria. The Jews from Galilee and Judea hated them because the Samaritans had built a temple for God on Mount Gerizim, in their own country, and refused to worship at the temple in Jerusalem.

SIGN OF THE CROSS

LIGHT THE CANDLES

Together sing the Candle Song.

SORRY

Encourage the children to close their eyes and make the words of this prayer their own:

Lord, sometimes we make mistakes
and forget the things you tell us.

If we have not always been kind toward others,
we are sorry.

If we have not always been honest or fair,
we are sorry.

Send your spirit to fill us with your love
and help us to be good.

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

To welcome today's Gospel sing Acclamation 1.

GOSPEL (JOHN 4:6-11, 13-19, 28-29, 39-42)

Jesus had been walking all morning and was tired and thirsty. He stopped to rest beside a well when a Samaritan woman came to fill her water jug at the well.

Jesus asked her, "Will you give me a drink?" The woman was very surprised because the Jews and Samaritans hated one another and rarely spoke. "Surely, sir, you are a Jew. Why should I share my water with you?" Jesus said, "If you knew me, it would be you asking me for a drink, for I would give you the water of life."

The woman was puzzled, "The well is deep and you have no bucket, so how could you reach this 'living water'?" Jesus said, "When you drink the water from this well, your thirst always returns.

Anyone who drinks the water that I can give will never be thirsty again. This water will become a spring inside them and fill them with eternal life."

The woman said to him, "Sir, share this water with me." Then Jesus told the woman many things about herself that no other person knew, and she believed that he was truly the son of God. When she told the people of the town what had happened by the well, they, too, came to believe that this man was the son of God.

DISCUSSION

Help the children to imagine what a difference it would make to our lives today, if we had to collect water from a well. For example, when:

- washing our clothes
- having a bath
- filling a swimming pool
- watering the garden.

Water is a symbol or sign of life. Without it everything would die.

Jesus called the water that he could give, the "water of life." What do you think he meant? The water he was describing was the life which God gives. This life, or grace, is poured into our hearts by the Holy Spirit. He fills us with his love and goodness so that we never have to thirst for God. He is the well of God's life in us, from which the living water flows.

ACTIVITY

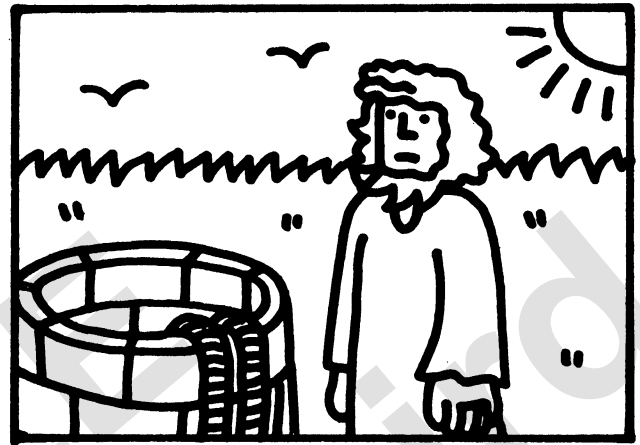
Color the story of "The Woman at the Well," then cut out the pages and staple them together to make an individual storybook for each child.

CREED

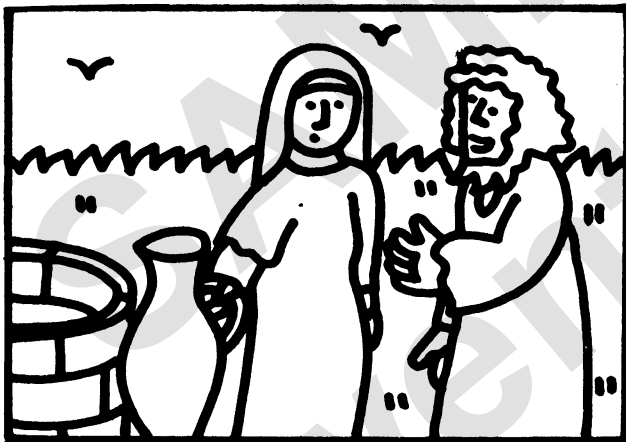
CLOSING PRAYER

We thank you, Jesus,
for the blessing of water;
For being able to turn on a tap
and know that it will flow;
For the rain, and the rivers,
and the mighty oceans.
We thank you for the "water of life,"
poured out and shared with us
at our baptism,
so that we can have everlasting life.

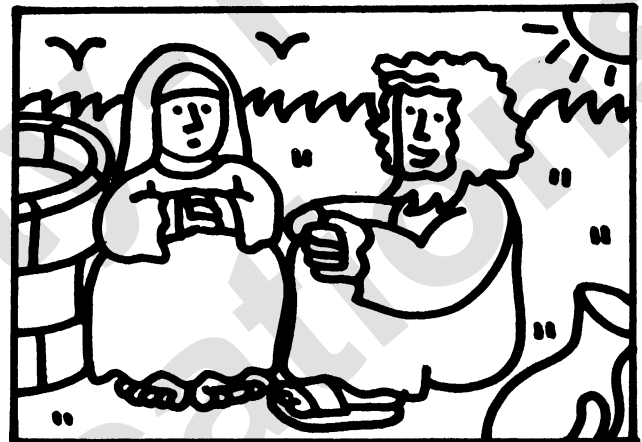
The Woman at The Well



Jesus was tired and thirsty so he stopped at the well.



He asked a Samaritan woman for a drink.



Jesus said "I can give you living water."



"Will you share this living water with me?" she asked.



The woman and her friends believed that Jesus was the Son of God.

Fourth Sunday of Lent

Help us to see!

INTRODUCTION

Can you imagine what it would be like to be blind? Close your eyes tightly or cover them with your hands. Think about the things you have already done this morning; getting out of bed, having breakfast, brushing your teeth, putting on your clothes and shoes. Would you have found them harder to do if you were blind and could not see? In today's Gospel, we hear how Jesus helps a blind man to see with his eyes and his heart!

SIGN OF THE CROSS

LIGHT THE CANDLES

We say together:

Fill our hearts with the light of Jesus.

SORRY

If we do something wrong, our hearts are filled with darkness. As we sing "sorry" together, God's spirit will fill our hearts with his light and chase the darkness away. Together sing Sorry Song 2.

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

To welcome today's Gospel we sing Acclamation 2.

GOSPEL (JOHN 9:1, 5, 6–11, 32–33, 35–38)

One day Jesus saw a blind man begging by the roadside. The man had never been able to see. Jesus turned to his disciples and said, "I am the light of the world."

Then he bent down and made a paste with some spittle and a little mud. He put this on the man's eyes and said to him, "Go to the pool of Siloam and wash your eyes." The man did this, and to his amazement, found that he could see!

The people of the town could not believe it. "Is this really the blind beggar?" they asked. "It is me!" he answered, and he explained what Jesus had done. "But who is this man?" the crowd asked. "I do not know where he came from, or who he is, but I know that he made me see. Unless this man was sent by God he could not have done such a marvelous thing."

The crowd grew angry with the man and

chased him away. Later, Jesus found him sitting alone. "Do you believe in the Son of God?" he asked. "Yes sir, I believe in him, but I do not know him," he answered. Jesus said, "You can see him, for he is speaking to you." At once, the man fell to his knees and said, "Lord, I believe in you."

DISCUSSION

What did Jesus do to make the blind man see? How do you imagine he felt when he opened his eyes after washing them?

Who did he think the man was? The blind man knew that a man called Jesus had cured him. He realized that no ordinary man had done this wonderful thing. Jesus told his disciples that he was the "light of the world." He touched this man's eyes and his heart with the light of his love, so that he could "see" that Jesus was the son of God.

How can we make sure that we are filled with God's light so that we do not become blind to God's goodness? One way is to pray every day. When we pray to God we are talking to him, and so we get to know God better. Then it is easier for God to help us to see the way we should live our lives.

ACTIVITY

Have the children imagine all the "new" things that the blind man saw for the very first time when he opened his eyes after washing them. Then, either draw the things they have imagined, or color the examples given here, and mount them around a smiling picture of the man who had been blind.

CREED

CLOSING PRAYER

Dear Jesus, I give you my eyes
to see others the way you do,
I give you my heart
to fill with the light of your love,
Let your goodness shine out from me
so others may see
that you are the light of the world.

