

# SIXTH SUNDAY OF EASTER

YEAR B

## PRAYER OF THE DAY:

Lord God,  
we can do nothing good  
without the help  
of your Spirit.  
Send that Spirit to us now  
so that we may be quick  
to forgive those who hurt us,  
ready to spread  
the good news about Jesus,  
and to love our neighbor  
as ourself.  
We ask this  
through Jesus, your Son,  
who lives with you,  
forever and ever.

## FOCUS OF THE READINGS:

The mission of the church is to love—all people, everywhere.

The ultimate sign of the Christian believer is love. Love is not an option. It is the commandment of the one who witnessed to his love for us by giving his life. The Gospel tells us, with the clearest of focus, "You are my friends if . . . you love one another."

In our first reading Peter tells us that this love must be all inclusive. God does not have favorite people. God's Spirit is poured out on the Gentiles as well as the Jews. The Christian community is founded, not in external circumstances, but in Christ's love.

## REFLECTING ON THE READINGS WITH CHILDREN:

If you choose to reflect on the first reading, ask the children to recall the story:

- Who was there?
- Where were they?
- Why were they there?
- What happened while Peter was speaking?
- What did Peter say to the people?

Peter taught us something very special and very important in today's reading. He said, "God does not have favorite people." God loves all of us. God does not love some people more than others. We want to always remember that there isn't anyone—not anyone at all—that God loves more than you.

FIRST READING: *Acts 10:24, 34-35, 44-48*

*This is a reading from the Acts of the Apostles.*

Peter and some of the other disciples went to the house of Cornelius.

Cornelius had invited his relatives and friends to hear Peter speak. Peter said to them,

"I am beginning to see now that it is true; God does not have favorite people. Anyone from any country who loves God and lives in God's ways is saved."

As Peter was speaking, the Holy Spirit came to all those who were listening. They began speaking in strange languages and praising God.

The Jewish believers who had come with Peter were surprised that the gift of the Holy Spirit was given to the Gentiles too. But Peter said,

"If these people have received the Holy Spirit, just as we have, why shouldn't they be baptized with water?"

So they were all baptized in the name of Jesus Christ.

*The Word of the Lord.*

RESPONSE: *Psalm 104*

RESPONSE:

I will praise you as long as I live, — as  
long as I live, — I will praise you God. praise you God.

VERSES:

1. I praise you God for all you do, for all my life for all you do.  
2. You give us bread to make us strong. You give us drink to make us glad.

\* Round during final response only

## GOSPEL ACCLAMATION:



1. Love one an - oth - er, love one an - oth - er, }  
 2. Al - le - lu - ia, Al - le - lu - ia, }

1.-2. love one an - oth - er, as I have loved you.

## GOSPEL: *John 15:9-14, 17*

*This is a reading from the Gospel of John.*

Jesus said to his disciples,

“I love you  
 just as God loves me.  
 Live always in my love.  
 If you keep my commandments,  
 you are living in my love.  
 I am telling you this  
 so that you may be completely filled  
 with my joy.  
 This is my commandment—  
 love one another  
 just as I have loved you.  
 There is no greater love  
 than to give your life for your friends.  
 And you are my friends  
 if you do what I tell you.  
 The commandment I am giving you is this—  
 love one another.”

*The Gospel of the Lord.*

During this Easter season we celebrate that Jesus loves everyone and showed his great love by dying and rising. Jesus did that for all of us: people who sin, people who try to be good, people who love him and people who don't love him, people who know him and people who don't know him, people who are in trouble, people of all races, people of all countries, people of all sizes and shapes, people who are old and people who are young and even people who aren't born yet. Let's listen to the Gospel to hear how important this love is to Jesus.

After the Gospel, remind the children that Jesus said he was telling us this—to love one another—so that we would have joy. Ask the children if that is their experience. Are people happier when they love one another? Perhaps they could share some examples.

Jesus tells us how he wants us to love others.

- What did he say?
- What do you think Jesus meant when he said,  
 “Love one another as I  
 have loved you”?

*Note: this is a crucial point in our Christian faith. Christian love is a commandment. But children can easily misunderstand this. Jesus loves with divine love. God is love. We are not commanded to love “as much as,” that is, with divine love. We are commanded to love “in the way” Jesus loved. This commandment is first given in an earlier part of this last discourse of Jesus, just after he has washed the feet of his disciples in an attitude of service. And so we are commanded to love (serve) one another. The greatest love is shown by giving our lives for others—in service. Children should never feel guilty about not loving everyone equally. That is a universal love attained by few. Jesus teaches us to show loving service to anyone and everyone.*

Remind the children that Jesus said,  
 “There is no greater love  
 than to give your life  
 for your friends.”

Jesus gave his life for us when he died. But he also gave his life for others by healing them, helping them, and caring for them. How can we give our lives for others now?

Help them to see ways of doing this (things possible for children):

- including all children in games;
- talking to a child who feels alone;
- helping someone with a task;
- taking time, perhaps from play, to help someone;
- accepting people just as they are.

Jesus asks us to love this way because he loves us so much. Jesus loves everyone and wants us to love everyone too. That's what a Christian is—someone who believes Jesus is living and who lives like him.

# Sixth Sunday of Easter

## Focus

A candle next to a Bible open at today's Gospel, with a simple ring placed beside them.

## Introduction

Jesus commanded us to 'Love one another as I have loved you'. So great was Christ's love that he poured out his life on the cross for the forgiveness of our sins. God's love for us never changes; it is like a circle without beginning or end which goes on for ever.

## Gloria

## Gospel Acclamation

Light the Gospel candle and sing Acclamation 4.

## Gospel

A reading from the Gospel of St John (15:9-17)  
(See page 381.)

## Reflection

*What did Jesus command us to do?*

Jesus demands that whoever wants to be called his follower must love others as much as he loves us.

*Is this commandment easy to obey?*

At times we find some people more lovable than others! But Jesus doesn't simply want us to love people we know and care about. He demands that we love the unloved and those who are rejected and ignored by the world. This is the challenge of being a Christian and struggling to become more like Christ.

*Why is love so important?*

Love is at the heart of everything good which leads us to God. Listen to what St Paul had to say about love:

Love is patient and kind; it is not jealous or full of self-importance; love is not selfish or greedy; it does not anger easily or remember past mistakes; love finds no joy in what is wrong, but delights in what is right. Love is always trusting; hoping in the future and accepting whatever it might bring. Many things may come and go, but love will never end. There are three important things: faith, hope and love, and the greatest of these is love. *(Adapted from 1 Corinthians 13:4-7, 13)*

Jesus came to *show* us what it means to love as God loves. God loves us unconditionally in spite of what we say and do. Jesus put his love into action and gave us many examples of what loving one another really means.

*Can you think of any examples?*

(Encourage the children to share any stories they know that demonstrate Christ's living love in action.)

*How can we love one another as God loves us?*

Jesus gave us the perfect example when he shared his final meal with his disciples:

It was just before the Passover celebration, and knowing that the time for him to die was fast approaching, Jesus showed his disciples the depth of his love for them.

While they were at supper together Jesus stood up, and, laying his outer garments to one side, he wrapped a towel around his waist. The disciples watched as he fetched a basin of water and knelt down to wash their feet one by one, before drying them with the towel. When it was Peter's turn, he protested loudly, 'Lord, it isn't right that you should wash my feet!' But gently Jesus insisted, and reluctantly Peter allowed his Master to wash his feet. When he had finished, Jesus dressed and returned to the table. 'Just as your Lord and Master has washed your feet, so you must be ready to do for others what I have done for you.' Then he told them, 'This is my new commandment: love one another as I have loved you. The world will know that you are my disciples by the love you have for one another.' *(Adapted from John 13:1-15, 34-35)*

Serving one another is one way in which Jesus expects us to show our love for others. In every act of love and service offered in every home, workplace, kitchen and canteen, school or playground we wash the feet of one another and bear the fruit of God's love. It is something that we are all called to do; it is the 'hallmark' of every Christian.

## Activity

Give each child a copy of the words of St Paul to decorate and hang at home.

OR

Give each child a rectangular piece of plain paper. Ask them to write their name on one side and decorate it. Then make a paper chain using each child's name to add a link to the circle. The small links making up the large ring are a reminder of God's love for us, that love which we share with one another.

## Intercessions

As brothers and sisters in one loving family, together let us pray to our heavenly Father:

We pray for countries facing famine, flood, drought and any kind of disaster.

Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

We pray for people who are poor and hungry.

Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

We pray for peace between nations and religions.

Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

We pray for the needs and concerns of one another.

Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Knowing that our heavenly Father is listening, in the silence of our hearts let us share our own unspoken prayers with him.

*Silence*

Loving Father,  
may we faithfully follow Christ  
so that our love for you and each other  
may make us worthy to be called your children.  
Grant this through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**



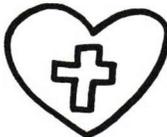
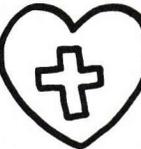
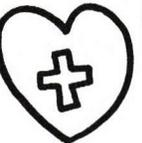
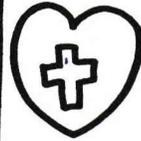
Love is...

Patient and kind;  
 It is not jealous or full  
 of self-importance;  
 Love is not selfish or  
 greedy;  
 It does not anger easily  
 or remember past  
 mistakes;

Love finds no joy in  
 what is wrong  
 But delights in what  
 is right.

Love is always trusting;  
 Hoping in the future  
 and accepting whatever  
 it might bring.

Many things may  
 come and go,  
 but love will never end.



## Sixth Sunday of Easter

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### Love each other

#### INTRODUCTION

Jesus loves each one of us so much that he died on the cross so we could share eternal life with him. He asks us to be generous and to share this love with all of humankind.

#### SIGN OF THE CROSS

#### LIGHT THE CANDLES

Light the candles and read this prayer:

The candle flame is warm and bright;  
it changes darkness into light.

We feel its warmth and see its glow,  
and when we look at it we know,  
the light of Christ is burning bright,  
for we are children of the light.

#### SORRY

After a few moments of quiet reflection, ask the children to sing Sorry Song 1.

#### GLORIA

#### GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

To welcome today's Gospel sing Acclamation 4.

#### GOSPEL (JOHN 15:9-17)

One day Jesus said to his disciples: "I love you just as my father loves me. If you do as I ask then you will always be close to me, and my father will love you, too. I want you to love each other in the same way as I have loved you. I have chosen you to be my friends and am sending you out to share this love with the rest of the world."

#### DISCUSSION

Jesus asked his disciples to love one another as he had loved them. Jesus reminded his disciples many times that the greatest commandments were to love God and to love each other.

What does it mean to love another person? To love someone else means that you care about another person, about their happiness, and the things which happen to them. You want only the

best for them, and for them to grow in love and goodness.

Sometimes when there is a disaster, people behave heroically by saving the lives of others instead of their own. Their love for another person is so great that they put that person's needs before their own.

Jesus' love for us was so great that he did an extraordinary thing for us. "Greater love has no man, than to give up his life for others." Jesus loved us so much that he was ready to die so that we could live and share new life with him in heaven.

Jesus asked us to share his love with each other. We can put our love into action:

—by spending some time with someone who is lonely;

—by offering help to someone who needs it;

—by sharing our happiness with others.

We can put our love into words:

—by telling the members of our family how much we love them;

—by praying for the needs of other people;

—by praising and thanking God for all that we have.

(Encourage the children to make their own suggestions.)

Jesus lives inside each one of us, so whatever we say or do to each other, we say or do it to him. We can make everything we do a little act of love for God.

#### ACTIVITY

Make a "love is..." booklet for each child with several blank pages for their own drawings and ideas. Either use the illustration here for the cover, or the children can design their own.

#### CREED

#### CLOSING PRAYER

Heavenly father,  
our hearts are brimming over with your love.  
Help us to be generous  
and always ready to share this love  
with everyone we meet.

