

Children's liturgy:

First Sunday of Lent (Year B) – Sunday 26 February 2012

Preparing the worship space:

Colour: Purple

Props: Two containers or bottles of the same size, one filled with water, one empty.

Welcome: Today we are going to hear about how Jesus spent 40 days in the desert. Deserts are very hot, very dry places. What do you think it would be like to live somewhere without clean, running water? Let's think a bit more about that today.

Song suggestions: Water of life, cleanse and refresh us (401, Celebration Hymnal for Everyone)

Opening prayer: God of life, your Son Jesus went out into the desert to spend time in prayer and get closer to you. Help us also to draw closer to you this Lent, in our prayers and in our actions. Through Christ our Lord, Amen.

First reading (optional): Genesis 9:8-15

Psalm: Ps 24:4-9 r 10

Gospel acclamation: Everyone stands and sings the acclamation together. For Lent we use an acclamation that doesn't use the word 'Alleluia'. We suggest 'Change your lives and believe in him' by Christopher Walker (OCP Publications).

Gospel: Mark 1:12-15

Gospel reflection: What do you remember about that reading?

Jesus goes out into the desert for 40 days. What is a desert? What do you think it would be like to live out in the desert?

Deserts are very hot and very dry. While Jesus was there he had very little food to eat or water to drink. How do you think he must have felt?

There are many people around the world who struggle to get enough clean water to drink. They don't have taps and running water in their houses. They have to fetch water from rivers, lakes or wells (boreholes) and sometimes these are a long way away.

Rosena is 11 years old and she lives in Zambia, in Africa. She used to have to walk to the river three times a day to fetch water. It was a 45-minute journey and then she would often have to wait in a queue. Sometimes it would take so long that she had to run to school. "I was often late," she says.

What couldn't you do if you had no running water and no taps in your house? How would you feel if you were late to school because you had to fetch water?

Give the children an empty container and a container filled with water to lift and ask them to feel the difference. Ask them how they would feel if they had to carry lots of very heavy water a long way each day.

If you have time, you can share more of Rosena's story with the children at this point. See "Activity suggestions" below for more details.

Today is the first Sunday of Lent. Do you know what Lent is? How long does it last for?

Lent is a time when we prepare for Easter. We try to pray more and share more, thinking less about ourselves and more about other people. Just like Jesus in the desert, we spend 40 days trying to come closer to God. How do you think we can do this?

We can draw closer to God by praying, asking for forgiveness for all the things that we have done wrong, and trying to live the kind of life that God wants for us.

One thing that many people do during Lent is to give something up so that they can give more away to people who have less than they do. Are you giving something up this Lent? What are you giving up?

With the money that you save on sweets or fizzy drinks, or whatever you give up this Lent, you can make a splash for people like Rosena around the world by supporting CAFOD, so that everyone all around the world can have clean, safe water to drink.

Intercessions: As we try to draw closer to God this Lent, we pray together:

We pray for world leaders: that they may take action so that all their people have clean water to drink close to home. Lord, in your mercy...

We pray for all people who find it hard to get clean water to drink: that, with our help, their lives may change for the better. Lord, in your mercy...

We pray for our parish, family and friends: that we may find the strength to make a difference to our own lives this Lent and so to the lives of others around the world. Lord, in your mercy...

Closing prayer: God of life, refresh all those who thirst and guide us as we try to make sure that all our brothers and sisters around the world have enough clean water to drink. Amen.

Activity suggestions

Ask the children to colour in the accompanying optional illustration (available at cafod.org.uk/childrensliturgy) and to write in the droplet what they are giving up for Lent this year.

Share more of Rosena's story with the children and show them pictures. Details of her story and a photo slideshow you can download and print are available in the primary schools section at cafod.org.uk/lent. Or use the downloadable water photopack to tell the story of children in Zambia, which are also available here.



Order the "Make a splash" Lent promises poster from CAFOD by calling 020 7095 5682 and ask the children to draw on the poster or write on cut-out droplets and stick them on, what they are giving up for Lent, or the things they are going to do during Lent to feel closer to God. Use this as a display during the rest of Lent, or take it up in the offertory procession, so all the congregation can see what the children have pledged to do.



Ask the children to think about all the different ways they use water during one day and to write them down or draw them. Ask them to think about what it would be like if they had to walk a long way carrying all the water that they use.

Ask the children to write a prayer about water, why it is precious and for all those people who do not have access to clean water. They could use the response "God, refresh all those who thirst."

Ask the children to tell their family all that they have heard and thought about during the liturgy today. In the coming week, each time they turn on the tap or use some water, ask them to think about Rosena and other children around the world who do not have clean water to drink. If they have written a prayer, ask them to say it together as a family during the coming week.



Download the Lenten calendar for children from the primary schools section at cafod.org.uk/lent and photocopy one for each child. Give them out, read through the actions with the children and ask them to choose their own actions to do during Lent.

More children's liturgy resources are available from cafod.org.uk/childrensliturgy