



What is the Church?

Catechist's Guide: Unit 4

We are People who Celebrate God's Word



You will need to gather in the children's worksheets from the previous unit (unless this has already been done or unless they are keeping them at home).

Spend a few moments seeing what the children remember from their last session with you - or from the celebration of Reconciliation that took place.

Remind them that they are preparing to become full members of the Church family through Confirmation and Holy Communion.

The aim of this unit is to explore the ways in which we, as the People of God, celebrate God's Word. This will be done by reflecting with the children on a number of themes:

- ♦ We need to listen carefully to God's Word
- ♦ We celebrate God's Word when we gather together for Mass
- ♦ The Gospel - the Good News of Jesus Christ - is very important for us
- ♦ The Holy Spirit helps us to understand God's Word

In preparation for this session, you might like to read and reflect on a few of your own favourite Bible stories so that you can use these in talking to the children.

INITIATION

What is the Church?

Children's Worksheet: Unit 4

We are People who
Celebrate God's Word



Listening is very important

Someone once said that God gave us two ears but only one mouth
because listening is more important than speaking

Can you think of some people that you listen to?

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

We hear all sorts of different things - that just happens to us
but listening is an activity - something we do

When you want to listen very carefully, what do you do?

_____	_____
_____	_____

We can listen

- | | |
|-----------------|--|
| with our ears | - to hear the words people speak to us |
| with our minds | - to understand what they are saying |
| with our hearts | - to accept the message and let it affect us |

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Talk with the children about how important listening is if we want to know about things that matter.

Prompt them, if necessary, to suggest some of the people they might listen to: parent, teacher, priest, friend.

Try to explain to them the difference between simply hearing things (i.e. our ears receiving sounds) and really listening (i.e. taking in what is being heard).

Again, prompt them to think about the ways they might listen more attentively: sitting quietly, paying attention to the person speaking, turning off other noises (e.g. radio or television), concentrating, not speaking at the same time as the other person.

Talk a little about the idea that when we really listen we try to understand what is being said (listen with our minds) and allow what we hear to have an affect upon us (listen with our hearts).

When we gather together at Mass

...we listen to God's Word

The Bible tells us about God and God's people.

In the Old Testament we hear about the people of Israel and their special relationship with God.

In the New Testament we hear about Jesus and those who were his first followers.



Our readings at Mass are taken from the Bible - both the Old and New Testaments.

They are printed in a special book called the Lectionary.

The reader stands at a special place to read to us.

Our task is to listen attentively - even if we have the words in front of us.

On a Sunday we have three readings and a responsorial psalm.



In the Gospel reading we hear what Jesus said and did when he was on the earth.

Sometimes the Gospel book is carried in a procession, or incense is burnt, or candles are held either side of the lectern as the priest reads the Gospel. All of these show that the Gospel is very important.

After the Gospel reading the priest gives a homily which helps us to reflect on the readings we have heard and think about what they might mean for us in our own lives.



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Show them a Bible (or point out the picture on their worksheet) and explain that this is a very special book for us as Christians.

Read what the worksheet says about the Old and New Testaments and perhaps expand on this a little bit with the information provided under *Additional Suggestions and Resources* (No. 1).

Go through what the worksheet says about the readings at Mass (a special book, a special place, perhaps a procession, etc.) and talk about how this is arranged in your own Church.

Talk to the children about listening attentively to the readings and the homily.

The Gospel is Good News

The Good News is the fact that Jesus, through his death and resurrection, has made it possible for us to share God's eternal life.

Jesus is the Word made flesh. He came on earth to tell us the Good News himself and to show us how to live as his followers.



When Jesus had returned to heaven, his first disciples decided to write down the things he had said and done so that future generations could also hear this Good News.

What stories from the Gospels can you remember?

The Holy Spirit helps us to listen well



The Holy Spirit helped the first disciples of Jesus to put the Gospel stories together.

We receive the Holy Spirit in our Baptism and at Confirmation.

Amongst the gifts given to us by the Holy Spirit are the gifts of wisdom and understanding. These gifts help us to listen well to the scriptures and think about what they mean for us.

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Explain that the word Gospel means "Good News". When there is good news, we want to hear it, we want to find out more about it. So the Gospels tell us lots of stories about Jesus' life and teachings.

Jesus came to earth to invite us to share God's life. God has spoken to us in a very special way by sending Jesus to us. We should listen to him.

Jesus wanted this Good News to be spread to all people in all places and at all times. So his first disciples, inspired by the Holy Spirit, wrote down the stories about Jesus in the Gospels that we have today.

Prompt the children to see what Gospel stories they can remember and write the name of the story on the lines provided (for example, The Prodigal Son, The Lost Sheep, The Good Samaritan).

Begin to introduce the idea of the gifts of the Holy Spirit that they will receive in Confirmation. Concentrate on wisdom and understanding which help us to listen more attentively and make more sense of the Word of God for ourselves.

At home...



Find out if you have a family Bible or a book of Bible stories. If not, see if your parents will buy one. Read some of these stories (perhaps with your parents or brothers and sisters) and talk about the message they give us.



Choose one of your favourite Bible stories and write it in your own words (or draw a picture of it).

This worksheet belongs to: _____

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Ask the children to complete this page of the worksheet at home but, if time allows, take them through the ideas that it contains:

It is good to have a Bible or book of Bible Stories in every house. Some families have a special Bible in which they record the names of family members and the Bible gets passed on from one generation to another.

More important than simply having the Bible at home is actually making use of it. They can read it on their own or with other members of the family. They can also discuss the stories they have read so that they come to understand them better.

Writing out a Bible story in their own words (or drawing a picture) will give them the chance to think about what the story is really about.

Get the children to write their name on the worksheet and remind them to bring their worksheet back to the next session. Thank them for taking part, or tell them how much you have enjoyed working with them.

Additional Suggestions and Resources

1. The Bible

The Bible contains lots of stories about God and God's people. It also contains prayers and poetry (like the psalms). All of these writings are from a long time ago and some are very old indeed.

The Old Testament tells us about the People of Israel (the Jews) and how they were specially chosen by God. It tells us about God's love for them, even when they didn't always do what God wanted.

You might like to see if the children can remember any of the characters from the Old Testament: Noah, Abraham, Joseph, Moses, David, Solomon, etc.

The children might like to know (or be reminded) that the Old Testament writings were the ones that Jesus would have read or heard when he was on the earth. They are still the Jewish Scriptures today.

The New Testament tells us about Jesus and the things that he said and did when he was on the earth. It also tells us about the first Christian communities - the people who made sure the Good News was passed on so that we could hear it today.

2. Listening Attentively

- ◆ If the session with the children follows directly after Mass, you might want to ask what they remember about the readings (or homily) they have just heard.
- ◆ If the session takes place at some other time, you might ask them to listen whilst you read a passage of scripture to them and then ask what they remember.

3. The Liturgy of the Word

- ◆ First Reading (normally Old Testament, sometimes Acts of Apostles)
- ◆ Responsorial Psalm
- ◆ Second Reading (New Testament Letter)
- ◆ Alleluia Verse
- ◆ Gospel Reading
- ◆ Homily
- ◆ Creed
- ◆ Prayers of the Faithful

4. The Lectionary

This special book contains the readings from the Bible that have been chosen for use in our churches. For Sundays, the readings are arranged over a three year cycle so that we hear all four of the Gospel accounts: Matthew's Gospel in Year A, Mark's Gospel in Year B, and Luke's Gospel in Year C. John's Gospel is used during the special seasons of the liturgical year.