Family Catechetical Gathering #3
We Share Sacred Stories - The Liturgy of the Word

Supplies:

- cross & stand
- lectionary
- paschal candle
- musical instruments
- pom poms
- tape
- Scripture Banner
- music
- LCD projector
- laptop
- portable microphone
- extension cord
- handouts
- pens & pencils
- attendance list
- treat sign-up list
- posting of mass
- sign up sheet for liturgy
- seeds
- peat pellets
- planting instructions?

Hospitality Items

- coffee
- tea
- juice
- sugar
- cream
- coffee cups
- dixie cups (extra)
- serviettes

Items from last session:

- list of names
- family books
- song books and cds
- wooden crosses

1. Before you Begin:

- prepare gather space with lectern, processional cross, paschal candle and bible.
- put out garbage and recycling bins in refreshment area.
- set up overhead projector and screen.
- place letters GATHER and LISTEN on seats or wait to hand out to children.

Ask for children to volunteer for the following:

2 - cheerleaders (2 children)
12 - letter carriers or ask children to look under their seats to see if there is a letter
1 - cross bearer
1 - candle bearer
1 - lectionary bearer
1 - child for each instrument (e.g. bongos, maracas, shakers) (A reminder that musical instruments should be played in the entrance procession only and afterwards should be stowed in the basket provided or under the seats.)

Ask for adults or teen assistants to volunteer for the following:

- put the letters up on the wall.
- read Scripture
- play CD or lead music of you have the resources
2. **ANNOUNCEMENTS:**

- make any announcements that need to be made.

3. **REVIEW - GATHERING**

Remind the children that last time we talked about gathering together for our celebration.

Have the candidates bring up the words G-A-T-H-E-R and put them on the wall. I usually have cheerleaders with pom poms call out:

   - Give me a “G” after which the crowd shouts out “G” and the child with that letter comes up and puts the letter on the wall.
   - Give me an “A”, etc.

After the last letter is placed, the cheerleaders say,

   “What have you got?” and everyone calls out “GATHER”

4. **LISTENING**

Today/tonight we are going to begin learning about what it is we gather together to do.

   ... to **LISTEN** & to **GIVE PRAISE AND THANKS**.

This meeting is all about gathering to Listen to God’s Word.

Have the children repeat the cheerleading with the letters L-I-S-T-E-N.

Ask them not to place the letters on the wall, however, but, rather, to hold them up above their heads spelling out the word.

Ask the children are standing with the letters held above their heads ask “L” to change places with “S”. Ask “T” to move to the end. (Listen is transformed into Silent.)
Ask the children what the letters spell now.

Ask the children if they think there might be a connection between listening and being silent.

5. **Parts of the Liturgy of the Word.**

- Explain that the part of the mass in which we listen to God called the "liturgy of the Word.
- At this part of the mass, we share our most important stories with one another, and listen closely and in silence to hear what God is trying to tell us in these stories.

- These are the parts of the Liturgy of the Word:

  **First Reading:**
  - these are usually from the oldest part of the bible called the First or Old Testament.
  - sometimes called the Hebrew scriptures because they were written in Hebrew.
  - Jewish people share this part of the bible with us today.
  - this is the bible that Jesus would have known.
  - these would be like the stories of our great-great-great-great grandparents of faith.
  - they are told to teach us how to behave (or sometimes how not to behave).

  - it is great to have children turn to their parents and think of a family story that is told again and again either because they can learn a lesson from it or it is funny or it is inspirational.

  **Psalm:**
  - these are the song prayers of the Jewish people.
  - there are psalms for when you are sad, happy, angry, worried, joyful.
  - King David wrote many of the psalms.

  **Second Reading:**
- these are letters and stories taken from the New Testament.
- sometimes called the Greek Scriptures because they were written in Greek.
- most of them were written by St. Paul to the churches that he started all over Rome and Greece.

**Gospel Acclamation**
We are so joyful that we are going to be listening to the stories about Jesus that we shout an acclamation.
It’s the bible version of “hooray”.
In lent, we don’t sing “Alleluia” but “Glory and Praise ...”

**Gospel**
- we hear the stories of Jesus.
- it’s always nice to ask the children if there is any one named after these evangelists.

**Homily**
- ask the children if it is easy to understand the stories and writings in the bible.
- ask them if they think their parents understand everything in the bible.
- because it was written so long ago we need some help to understand what these words mean to us today.
- that is what the priest does in the homily.

**Creed**
- after we have listened to the Word in Silence, we declare what we believe.
- not just what we believe but what we love.
- the word credo means “give your heart to”

**Prayers of the Faithful**
- we have heard the stories of the people who have been great faithful followers of God and many who haven’t
- now we add the story of our lives and ask God to take care of us and all our needs and the needs of the world.
6. **Liturical Celebration of the Word**

**Opening Song & Procession** - Come All You People

(Members go to back of the room where someone hands them the cross, candle, bible and musical instruments. As the song begins they process to the front and place the items in the appropriate places.)

**Opening Prayer**

Presider: In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

All: Amen

Presider: Let us pray during this holy season of Lent.

Lord Jesus,
we are gathered here with open ears and open hearts
to listen to your Word
and to celebrate the wonderful gift of your Word in our lives.

Help us to cherish your Word and to live it daily.
This we ask through Christ our Lord.

All: Amen.

**Word of God**

**Gospel**: The Sower

Luke 8:4-18

It is important to proclaim the Word from a worthy book (just as if it were an ordinary liturgy) so that the children see that it is something cherished and honoured.

A Reading from the Holy Gospel according to Luke,

Jesus went on through cities and villages, proclaiming and bringing the good news of the kingdom of God.
The twelve were with him, as well as some women who had been cured by him.
When a great crowd gathered and people from town after town came to him, he said in a
parable:
"A sower went out to sow his seed; and as he sowed,
some fell on the path and was trampled on,
and the birds of the air ate it up.
Some fell on the rock;
and as it grew up, it withered for lack of moisture.
Some fell among thorns, and the thorns grew with it and choked it.
Some fell into good soil, and when it grew, it produced a hundredfold." As he said this, he
called out, "Let anyone with ears to hear listen!"

The Gospel of the Lord.
Praise to You, Lord Jesus Christ.

Stop and ask the children if they understand what Jesus is talking about.
Most of them think that he is simply telling people how to plant seeds.

Tell the children that it’s fine if they do not understand what the parable
means because when Jesus told it, the disciples did not understand.

Then proceed to read the second part of the parable.

Another Reading from the Holy Gospel according to Luke,

Then his disciples asked him what this parable meant.
He said, "Now the parable is this:
The seed is the word of God.
The ones on the path are those who have heard;
them the devil comes and takes away the word from their hearts,
so that they may not believe and be saved.
The ones on the rock are those who, when they hear the word,
receive it with joy.
But these have no root; they believe only for a while
and in a time of difficulty fall away.
As for what fell among the thorns, these are the ones who hear;
but as they go on their way,
they are choked by the cares and riches and pleasures of life,
and their fruit does not mature.
But as for that in the good soil,
these are the ones who, when they hear the word,
hold it fast in an honest and good heart,
and bear fruit with patient endurance.

The Gospel of the Lord.
Praise to You, Lord Jesus Christ.
- explain to the children that our hearts are the soil where the Word of God is planted.
- God's Seeds planted in our Hearts during the Liturgy of the Word.

- we need to make sure our hearts are healthy like good soil.

Think of things that are like the sun & water
  (E.g. food, good friends, etc)
Think of things that are like thorns, too much
  (E.g. bullies, friends who make you do bad things, sadness, too much tv/noise, etc.)

One thing we can do to make the “heart soil” more nutritious so that God’s word can grow is to have more silent time.

Is it easy to hear God?

- In the story of Samuel... there was no mistaking someone was speaking with Samuel.

Sometimes God's voice "thunders".... like MLK "Let my people go!"
- in the voices of prophets and signs and wonders.

- but...most of the time...
- God speaks in a "still, small voice"
- like the sound of butterfly wings....
- barely, barely makes a sound.

- the only way to really hear this still, small voice is to be very quiet
- to listen in the silent places of our hearts.

Show slide: Word: listen... silent (same letters)

Tell the children that you are going to teach them a way to pray in silence that will help them listen more closely to God’s word.
- have them get comfortable and close their eyes.
- tell them to ask God to speak to their hearts.
- remind them that they will know it is God speaking because it will make them feel loved.
- it is important to say this because some children hear or are inclined to hear scolding or bad messages. Children learn to be good by being told they are good.
- giving them ideas about what God might say, can help (e.g. I love you. ... You are my child. ... I'm so happy I made you the way I did. ... I forgive you. ... You have a kind heart. ... I am proud of how hard you are trying ... The angels danced the day you were born. )

Give the children and their parents one full minute of silence. This is very, very powerful.
- afterward, ask them if they would like to share any messages that they heard from God.
- assure the children that if they did not “hear” any message, that does not mean God was not speaking to them, but simply that they may need a bit more practice.

Ask the children to spend the next week trying out this meditative prayer as their bedtime prayer. On pages 45 and 46, there is a place to record the fruit of their meditations.

Give each child a sunflower seed, cup and peat pellet. Ask them to grow it at home as a symbol of God’s Word growing in their hearts.

**Closing Song:** The Sower