**Children’s liturgy – The Holy Family of Jesus, Mary and Joseph (Year C)**

**Preparing for worship**

**Colour:** white

**Props:** pictures of families from around the world, leaf shapes cut out of coloured paper

**Song suggestions:** Away in a manger (137, Laudate)

**Welcome:** Today we celebrate the feast of the Holy Family – Jesus, Mary and Joseph. We hear about Jesus’ family life and something surprising that happened when Jesus was a boy. Let’s think a bit about different types of family and how we should treat people today.

**Opening prayer:** God of love, as we remember the family that Jesus grew up in, we pray that our own families may be full of peace, kindness and love. We ask this through Christ our Lord, Amen.

**First reading (optional):** 1 Samuel 1:20-22, 24-28

**Psalm:** Psalm 128:1-2, 3, 4-5

**Gospel acclamation:** *Everyone stands and sings the acclamation together.*

**Gospel:** Luke 2:41-52

Every year the parents of Jesus went to Jerusalem for the Passover Festival. When Jesus was twelve years old, they went to the festival as usual. When the festival was over, they started back home, but the boy Jesus stayed in Jerusalem. His parents did not know this; they thought that he was with the group, so they travelled a whole day and then started looking for him among their relatives and friends. They did not find him, so they went back to Jerusalem looking for him. On the third day they found him in the Temple, sitting with the Jewish teachers, listening to them and asking questions. All who heard him were amazed at his intelligent answers. His parents were astonished when they saw him, and his mother said to him, “My son, why have you done this to us? Your father and I have been terribly worried trying to find you.”

He answered them, “Why did you have to look for me? Didn't you know that I had to be in my Father's house?” But they did not understand his answer.

So Jesus went back with them to Nazareth, where he was obedient to them. His mother treasured all these things in her heart.Jesus grew both in body and in wisdom, gaining favour with God and people.

(*Gospel passage taken from Good News Translation® and used with permission\*)*

**Gospel reflection:** What do you remember about the reading today?

When Jesus was 12 years old, he went with his family to Jerusalem as they did every year to celebrate the feast of the Passover. After the feast was over Mary and Joseph set off for home but Jesus stayed behind.

After travelling for a whole day, Mary and Joseph realised that he was not with their other family members or friends. How do you think they must have felt when they realised Jesus was missing?

They travelled back to Jerusalem and after looking for him for three days they found him in the Temple. How do you think they felt when they finally found him?

Have you ever been in a situation where you got separated from the adult you were with? How did it feel? How did they react when they found you again? Why do you think this was?

I imagine that Jesus’ parents felt angry that he’d stayed behind without telling them, frightened because they didn’t know if he was safe, and very very happy and relieved when they finally found him.

How does Jesus react when his parents question him? What does he say to them?

Jesus was not worried because he was in God’s house and so he felt at home.

What does this story tell us about Jesus and his family?

In some ways Jesus’ family is just like many others. They did ordinary things like celebrating the Passover. And they had times when they did not understand each other – just like ordinary families.

In other ways Jesus’ family is very special. Because Jesus is the Son of God.

Families come in all shapes and sizes. Some families have lots of people living together in the same house. Some families are spread all over the world. Some families are small and some families are very big.

Who is in your family?

There are different types of family. There are the family members we live with. And there are the family members we might only see sometimes. Can you think of any other types of family?

For example, we are all part of the same parish family. If you go to school, you belong to a school family. And we also belong to one big global family. What do you think this means?

All people around the world are our brothers and sisters. We are all loved by God and are all God’s children.

How does this make you feel? How do you think God wants us to treat the people in our family at home, church, school and our global family? (*loving, sharing, being kind, generous, etc*)

How will you treat those you live with and your global family in the coming week?

**Intercessions** *You may want to ask the children to offer their own prayers or you can use the suggestions below.*

We are all members of God’s global family and so we pray together:

We pray for world leaders: that they may work together to bring peace to all members of God’s family. Lord, in your mercy…

We pray for all families around the world, no matter how big or small they are, no matter where they live: that they may love, care and respect each other and have hope for the future. Lord, in your mercy…

We pray for our parish, our friends and our family, both locally and globally: that we may be honest and gentle with each other, forgive each other, love one another and treat each other as we would wish to be treated. Lord, in your mercy…

**Closing prayer:** Loving God, help us to make our families places where we may grow in love and wisdom. Encourage us to love our brothers and sisters around the world and to recognise that even though we are all different, we are all members of one family. Amen.

**Activity suggestions**

Invite the children to complete the accompanying activity sheet.

Give the children a large leaf cut out of card or coloured paper. Invite them to draw all the people they consider to be part of their family on the leaf. Gather together the leaves and stick them to a large cut-out tree to make a group family tree. You could also add pictures of families from around the world to the tree to show that we are all part of the same global family.

Encourage the children to discuss all that they have heard and thought about in today’s liturgy with the people at home. Remind them that although each person is different we are all part of one global family and so we should try to treat each other with love, kindness and respect.