



FIRST HOLY COMMUNION PROGRAMME

UNIT 1



We Belong to God's Family

AIMS

1. To welcome children to the Programme and introduce its purpose.
2. To understand that we are part of the same family (the Church).

KEY WORDS

- FAMILY
- TREE, BRANCH, TRUNK
- BAPTISM
- JESUS, US

INTRODUCTION

Welcome everyone to the session and to this new First Communion and Reconciliation programme. Possibly ask each child to say their name and say something else about themselves. Explain that this is going to be a special year for them.

Start by telling the Story of the Multiplication of loaves (see Side B of Worksheet 1) or read it from a children's Bible.

RESOURCES

- A basket, if possible with five small loaves/rolls and pictures of 2 fishes.
- A large poster of a tree (ideally an enlarged copy of the tree shown in Worksheet 1).
- Leaf cut outs for each child.
- Flash cards showing the words "JESUS" and "US".
- Worksheet 1.

MAIN

- Highlight the key steps in the story and ask a few questions about it. (E.g. What was Jesus doing in the story? Who offered to give their food?) Elicit the fact that everybody ate from Jesus' loaves. Everyone benefited from the miracle Jesus worked. There was nobody who was left out.
- Jesus loves us all and loves every one of us individually. He loves us so much that he wanted to share his life us. We can be a part of Jesus family, just as the people in the story were gathered together to listen to Jesus' stories and eat from his bread. We are united with Jesus just as the trunk of a tree is with the branches and the leaves. Use the poster or model of the big tree and place the flashcard JESUS on the trunk and US on the branches/leaves. Hand out a cut out of a leaf to each child. Ask them to write their name on it. Then invite them to stick it on the poster of the big tree.
- Explain how if one branch is cut off the tree it will die. Similarly, if we do not remain united with Jesus we will not be happy. We are not only his friends but we are part of his own family and should always try our best to stay close to him.
- We became members of this great family when we were baptized. **In baptism we become God's children.** (You may want children to repeat this sentence and even learn it by heart.) We were united with Jesus and we must remain with him forever.
- Explain how we are members of one big family that is called the **Church**. We are part of and we live in this family. Jesus gives us meals too, as he did in the story of the multiplication of loaves. Without food we cannot live. Introduce the idea of spiritual food - the food that Jesus gives us to help us stay close to him. We cannot truly be Jesus' friends or be members of his big family the Church without this special food. That is why we receive **Holy Communion**. It is the spiritual food that Jesus gives us.
- Say that through this programme children are to learn about and prepare to be able to receive this special and spiritual food.

CONCLUDING PRAYER

Show and introduce the PRAYER BOOK to the group. Explain that this booklet includes prayers to learn and others to use as children go through this programme.

Introduce and pray together the Our Father. Explain that Jesus himself told us how to pray using this prayer to show we are one big FAMILY and that God is our FATHER.

NOTES

Worksheets can be reviewed at the following session and used to revise the main points and to celebrate children's work.

ACTIVITY

Give out worksheet 1 to all children. Go through it and explain that a similar worksheet will be handed out at each session. Encourage children to complete the front side and write a prayer or reflection in the space on the second side. Say that they can ask a parent or another adult at home for help.

(As this is the first session it may be helpful if some time is set apart to let the children start completing their worksheet and share some ideas about the different tasks it contains.)