

JESUS AND THE NEW COVENANT

UNIT ONE: THE WAY IS PREPARED

Lessons 4 & 5: Jesus Grows Up: Miscommunication and Good Communication

CONTENT:

1. Jesus lived in a family and community, like any of us. The period of his life when he lived quietly in Nazareth is known as his 'hidden life'. We look at some of the aspects of his life as a Jewish boy.
2. As Jesus grew up he realised more clearly who he was and what his mission was. But his parents, though they were good and holy, did not understand so well. In spite of these differences, the family lived together in harmony. Jesus was obedient to them.
3. As long as we are living with our parents, we should obey them in all they ask (when it is for our good or for the good of our families) Of course, we do not have to obey anyone who asks us to do something wrong. [Cf. CCC2217]
4. The Holy Family experienced a problem due to miscommunication. Joseph thought that Jesus was travelling with the woman and children, Mary thought he was with the men (now that he was grown up) and Jesus thought that they knew he was in the Temple.
5. All families face problems due to miscommunication. We can learn how to deal with the problem with good communication. Some guidelines are discussed.

REFERENCES: Luke 2:14-52. CCC 2217

MATERIALS NEEDED: Handouts, letter paper/blank paper for letters.

ASSIGNMENT: Complete letter and give it to your parent. [Lesson18]

NB. WE RECOMMEND THAT YOU CONDUCT ONE OR BOTH OF THE FOLLOWING SESSIONS:

1. PRAYER: Form 5 groups and ask each group to lead one decade of the Joyful mysteries of the Rosary. Before each decade they give a short reflection based on what they have learnt.
2. CHART MAKING: Students gather information and materials of Mary /Joseph. In groups they create a collage bringing out the life and qualities of these 2 great saints.[Each group takes up one not both.] Materials such as woodshavings, nails, rosary, household items, pictures of related Bible stories; photographs which represent qualities life humility, wisdom etc are stuck.

LESSON 4

I. STARTER:

Today we are going to talk about a different part of Jesus' life, a period that we do not know very much about. After the stories of his birth, the Bible is almost completely silent about the 30 years or so when he lived as most human beings do, in his home in Nazareth. This period is called the 'hidden life' of Jesus. (Not because he was hiding from anyone, but because he lived quietly among the ordinary people, like anyone else.)

The Bible has only one story from this period. It was when Jesus was about your age. Let's read the story. It has a lot to tell us, especially about living in a family, and how to face misunderstandings and miscommunication.

II. DEVELOPMENT:

[Give out handouts and read the passage. The following questions are not done individually, but as a class, as the students will probably not know the answers. Allow them to make suggestions, and then explain as follows:]

1. Why do you think the problem of 'losing' Jesus took place? Why did it take his parents so long to realize that he was missing?

Biblical scholars explain the problem that took place in this way:

Jesus and his parents were not travelling alone, but along with many other people from their local community. It was the custom for the women and children to set off earlier, because they took longer. The older boys and men set off later and caught up with the women and children by nightfall. Then they would all camp together for the night. (The journey from Jerusalem to Nazareth was a long one!)

What may have happened was that Joseph assumed that Jesus was travelling with the women and children. Maybe he still considered him a child. Jesus had probably just completed his Bar Mitzvah and was now officially, a 'grown up' in the eyes of the Law. So Mary must have supposed that he was with the other men. It was only when they got together at night that they realised that he was missing.

And Jesus thought that his parents knew that he was in the Temple all along. (We see this from the answer he gave his mother.) This is an example of miscommunication.

2. Did Jesus' parents understand him fully? How did Jesus react to this?

Jesus said to Mary, "“Why did you have to look for me? Didn't you know that I had to be in my Father's house?” Perhaps he had experienced an inner call while he was in the Temple.

The Bible tells us that his parents did not understand Jesus' answer. But Jesus still returned home with them and obeyed them.

We can learn something from this: If Jesus, who is God, obeyed his parents, even when they didn't understand him fully, we too must try our best to follow his example. The Church tells us that as long as we are living with our parents we should obey them in all they ask, when they ask us to do something for our good, or the good of the family. Of course, God doesn't want us to obey anyone who asks us to do something wrong, like cheating or stealing.

[Students fill in the answers [2] in their own words]

III. INTERIORIZATION & PRAYER:

During our next class we will talk a little more about communication and how we can communicate well, especially with our parents. Let us now think a little more about what Jesus' life must have been like as a boy.

[Read the section under [3].]

Let us do a small exercise in imagination, in order to understand Jesus better, and realise that he really was one of us, shared so many of the experiences that we ourselves might have. You might describe sharing a meal with him at his house; an outdoor 'adventure' with shepherds on the hills around; a morning helping at Joseph's workshop; celebrating the Sabbath; or perhaps journeying to Jerusalem for the Passover festival.

[Students now write a short imaginary experience they had as a friend/neighbour of Jesus. End with a short prayer on these lines:]

Lord Jesus, thank you for choosing to live like any one of us,
in a family... with neighbours,... working, studying, praying, playing...
We believe that even now, you are with us in our daily lives.
Help us to remember this at all times. Amen.

LESSON 5

I. STARTER:

At our last class we read the story of how Jesus' parents lost him because of miscommunication. Many people find it difficult to believe that the Holy Family had any kind of relationship problems. But such problems are part of every family. It doesn't mean that someone is doing something wrong. If you think a bit I'm sure you will remember many times when you had a situation just like the one we read.

II. DEVELOPMENT:

Today we are going to see if there is something that we can do when we face a problem of miscommunication. If you look again at the Bible passage you will get a hint. Did anyone do anything which helped? *[Allow students to suggest]*

The answer is: GOOD COMMUNICATION! Mary talked to her son and told him how worried and upset they had been. Jesus in turn, explained his side of the story. And so, even though the parents did not quite understand him, they kept it in their hearts, and there was a happy ending to the incident.

Most counsellors agree that the key to solving relationship problems is good communication! Let's look at some rules for good communication. You can use these rules when you communicate with your parents and with anyone else! *[Read [3] and explain a little]*

ROLE PLAY: *[Actors should have prepared to act beforehand.]*

CAST: Director, mother, son (or daughter if your students are girls!)

('Director' is seated on one side, with his back to the audience. Do not introduce the actors! The 'director' should come as a surprise. Son is trying to slip out of the house unnoticed.)

Mom: *[Calling out from inside]* Joe is that you? Where do you think you're going? Have you finished your work?

Joe: Ma..aa! I'm just going out. Do you have to check on every movement I make?

Mom: *[Coming into the room]* I'm your mother, so I have to know what you are doing. Have you finished your homework or not?

Joe: *(Trying to slip out of the door)* I'll do it later.

Mom: Don't walk out when I'm talking to you! I know your 'later'... It never comes! Do it *before* you go out.

Joe: Why do you keep acting like I'm a baby? I'm a teenager now... Just stay out of my life!

Mom: Joe, if you don't concentrate on your studies now, how will you ever get into medicine?

Joe: *(muttering)* 'Concentrate on my studies' or live in a concentration camp... seems to be the same thing in this house!

[Aloud] Who said I wanted to do medicine? Just because Dad is a doctor you keep on about medicine. I haven't even decided what I want to do!

Mom: But you should keep your options open ...

Joe: *(yelling)* That's the point! It's MY life and MY options! You just stay out of it and let me handle it! You never want me to have any fun in life! Its nag, nag, nag all day long! I *have* to escape!

(He goes out muttering) Clean up your room... get off the computer... don't go out... This is a prison, not a home!

Director: Cut! Cut! This play is all wrong! This is supposed to be a story of a happy family. *[Turns to audience]* Would any of you like to take the place of Joe and show us how to get a better end?

[A volunteer could come up and take the place of the son, trying to communicate in a better way. If you think the students will not volunteer, you could prepare another student (secretly) to re-enact the play, speaking to the mother in a reasonable way and respectful way, at the same time expressing his need for a little more space to organise his life.]

iii. INTERIORIZATION:

Lets put what we have learnt into action. Write a letter to your father/ mother (or any other elder who acts as a parent for you.) First think of all the good you see in him/ her and write and tell him/ her what you appreciate about him and why. Then share any difficulty you are facing. Say what you feel, but in a reasonable and gentle way. At the same time be truthful and open. [Remember the 'BEES']

[Students write the letter after a moment of prayer, asking the Spirit to guide them.]

Home assignment: Finish your letter and give it to your parent.