

SUNDAY SCRIPTURES ALIVE

23RD SUNDAY OF YEAR A

Based on the Gospel

Matthew 18:15-20

REFLECTION:

The Gospel asks, how do you deal with others in a truly Christian (Christ-like) spirit? In the reading, Jesus gives us guidelines for restoring friendship with those who have hurt us. He is stressing that we should spare no effort to mend broken relationships; they must be mended. To do this as privately as possible helps people to keep their dignity and self-respect.

Let there be reconciliation, let hearts be touched, let there be gentleness, kindness, honesty and truth. There is always hope in the light of love. As Christians, we are all God's prophets, blessed to be a blessing for others. Therefore, we are responsible for the welfare of others, always, of course, in a positive way - no busy-bodies, no nagging, no "I'm better than you" attitude, no making judgements. Genuine Christian living and loving is our mission. Sometimes we have to put aside our own interests for the sake of the common good.

As the people of God, we, as Church together, are asked to accept responsibility to speak God's word in our world. We are challenged to be active in working against he many injustices in our world and promoting justice in our local communities. Have you considered how you can be a more active peacemaker?

SUGGESTED LESSON OUTLINE FOR GROUPS:

On a blackboard or chart, make two columns, one headed, "A community cares for its members", and the other, "The Church cares for me". Ask the children to make a list and/or discuss:

- * The things that parents, teachers, neighbours, friends do to care for them.
- * The jobs and responsibilities they (the children) have at home and school, and the other ways that they show care for others.
- * How does the Church care for people? Look at the place of the Commandments the Beatitudes and the Sacraments, especially Reconciliation.

Lead the group to see that the Church offers us a way of being reconciled with God, others and ourselves, e.g. we listen to God's word (e.g. today's readings). We acknowledge our uncaring for others (e.g. "in what I have done and in what I have failed to do"). We ask God to forgive us. (Note: "Penance", "Reconciliation", "Confession", are the names given to the Sacrament, the rite by which it is celebrated.) It is probably helpful to mention to the children that the three names refer to the same Sacrament. Reconciliation (bringing into harmony) reflects more clearly the Church's present intention to emphasize what God is doing in this Sacrament, rather than what we are doing, i.e. confessing.)

Talk about ways we can correct someone and still stay friends, e.g. read the Gospel and hear what Jesus suggested - talk with the person yourself or with another present or talk the problem over with someone in authority. Explore different ways the children could go about this. Explain what "non-judgemental" behaviour means.

Step 1: "Mind your little sisters while I put out the washing." "David is new to the school. Would you please show him where things are around the school and introduce him to the other children." "I'm sure a parent or teachers have said something like this to you and at some time or other have held you responsible for the actions of another. Part of being a family or a group is caring for other members, keeping them safe, showing them the way, helping them to do the right thing by your example - just as they must care for you, too.

Step 2: As followers of Jesus, we have his example to help us - Jesus did not love just his friends. His loving care and kindness were for all the people he met and with whom he lived, for even strangers or enemies. Remember the Canaanite woman (20th Sunday), the hungry people (18th Sunday), how Jesus corrected Peter's wrong ideas about the Messiah (last Sunday). Jesus knows that things can go wrong between people.

Step 3: Through his apostles, Jesus has given us another help, the Church. Through the members of the Church, parents, teachers, priests and friends, we come to know Jesus and we are helped to follow him. When we have failed in our love of others, the Church, through the priest, reminds us of God's love, helps us to be sorry and to ask for forgiveness and tells us we are forgiven in the Sacrament of Reconciliation. Reconciliation means being put right with the community again.

MESSAGE: A follower of Jesus is identified by the responsibility, care and love shown to all people whether they are family, stranger, friend or enemy. If we love, as Jesus asks us to, we will try to turn people to God and influence them to do good. Through the Sacraments, e.g. Reconciliation, and the guidance of his Church, Jesus helps us to follow him more faithfully and to grow in our love for him and for our neighbour.

SUGGESTED ACTIVITIES:

1. Make a special effort to attend the Sacrament of Reconciliation this week.
2. List local groups and organisations that have a caring role in the community.
3. Make peace with anyone with whom you have avoided being friendly lately.
4. Make a poster saying "Jesus is with us always".

PRAYER: Lord Jesus, you ask us to forget ourselves, so we can better care for others and make them happy. Help me grow in love so I will do that, just as you did for us. Help me to follow the command of Jesus, "You shall love your neighbour as yourself." Amen.

We pray that the light of Christ may shine in our hearts to show us our faults and help us to admit to them. May that light also shine through our lives by our example and the way we treat each other. Amen.

Always show **CARE and LOVE** *for others*



Jesus teaches us to love and care for others.

Put these words in the sentences:

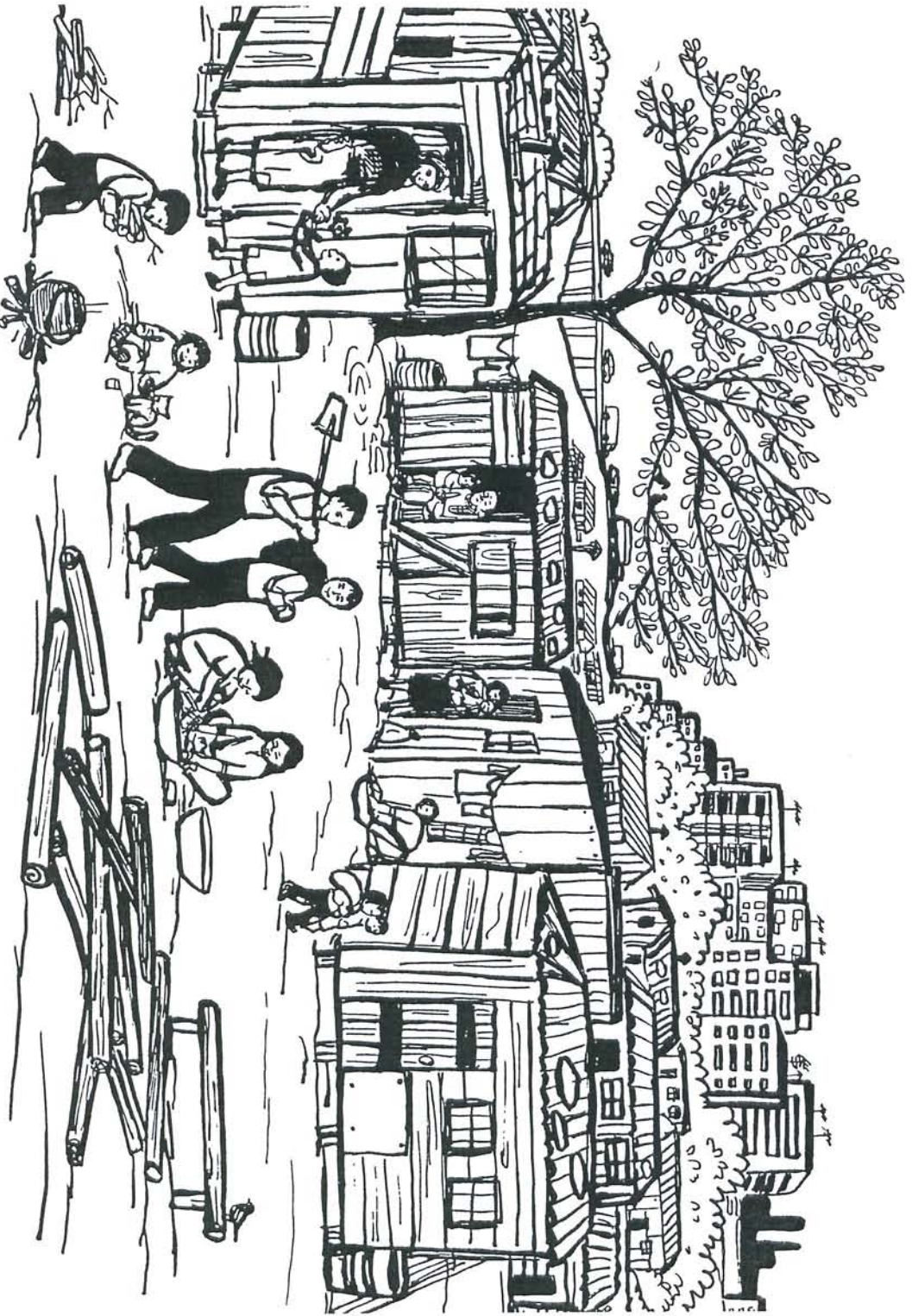
forgive loves help cheer

When I see someone has been hurt, I try to _____ them.

Jesus tells us to _____ each other.

When friends are sad, I try to _____ them up.

I know that Jesus _____ us all.



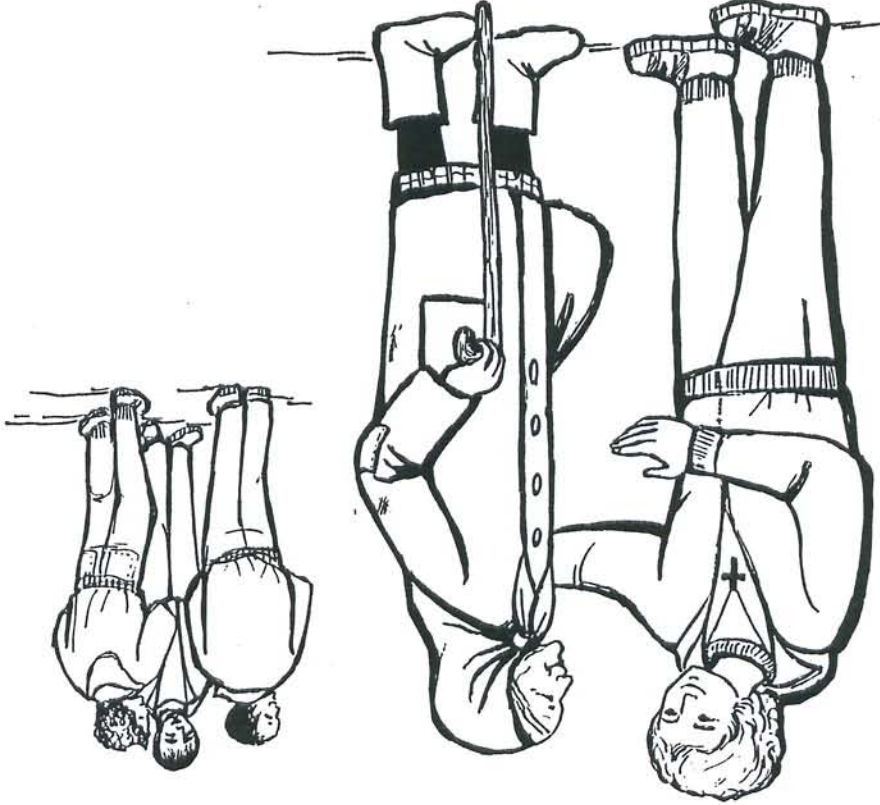
Read Matthew 18:15-20

Make a list of the things that these various groups do to care for others.

	Parents						
	Teachers						
	Neighbours						
	Friends						
	The Church						
	Families						

How would you feel if your friends wanted to shoplift?

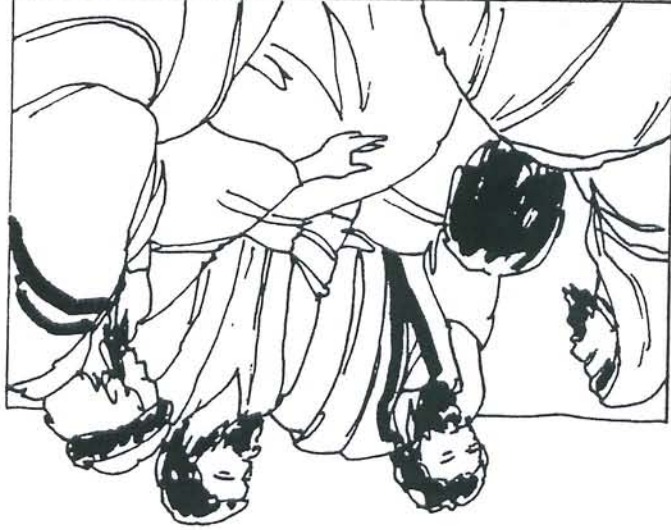
What would you do?



Care for One Another
I show that I care when I

1.

2.



Fill in the boxes below.

How can I care for myself?	How can I care for my family?	How can I care for my friends?	How can I care for other people?

Read Matthew 18:15-20

Today's Message: Show care and concern for others.

In my life I often need to forgive and be forgiven. Jesus offers us the opportunity of healing in the

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Say in your own words what this means to you.
