

Reader Seven

Down through the ages, Christians have tried to understand how Jesus can be with us when we don't see him. We see signs of his presence and we feel it in our hearts, but we don't see him; we only see one another. People who have great faith understand that Jesus lives among us through others. How we treat others is how we treat Jesus.

All

Where are you, Jesus? We can't see you.

Leader

Let us now talk to Jesus in the quiet of our hearts. Close your eyes and picture Jesus knocking Paul off his horse. Ask him about this. Picture him meeting you in the hall at school. Ask Jesus about this, too. Is he really at school with you? Does he ever do anything special to get your attention? Ask him to give you a strong faith so you will know that he is with you.

(Allow two or three minutes for silent prayer.)

OPTIONAL ACTIVITY

Invite children to discuss the words they repeated during this service: "Where are you, Jesus? We can't see you." Remind them of the conclusions reached by John and Paul. If Jesus is living in the children and in those around them, how should they treat others? If they were to draw a picture of themselves reaching out to Jesus, how would they picture Jesus? Have each now do such a drawing. When all are completed, tape them together to form a mural. Invite the children to stand around this mural for the closing prayer.

CLOSING PRAYER

Leader

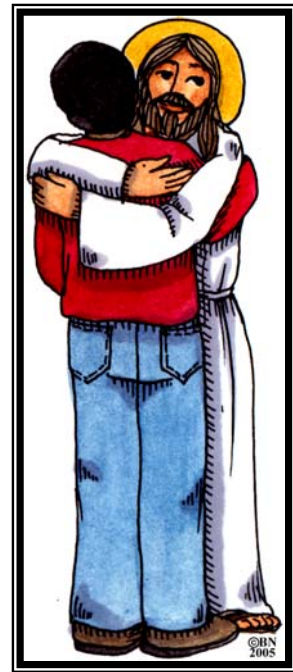
Look at the person next to you. Shake that person's hand. Bow your head slightly in the direction of that person. He or she is follower of Jesus, and Jesus, through the power of the Holy Spirit, dwells in that person.

Let us pray. Jesus, give us the gift of faith that we might believe in your presence among us and thus love and serve one another in your name. We ask these things in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

All

Amen.

Where Are You, Jesus?



A Lenten Reconciliation Prayer Service for Grades 4-6

Where Are You, Jesus?

BACKGROUND NOTES

This service helps children reflect on the presence of Jesus here and now. It leads them to the conclusion that how they relate to those around them is how they relate to Jesus. It is ideal for helping them examine their behavior toward others. Explain before the service that sin upsets the balance of our relationship with God and Jesus. To make that relationship "right" (in other words, to be reconciled with God and Jesus), we must balance our relationships with the people around us.

Practice the verse recited by "All" beforehand and also practice with the readers. Have available paper, crayons or markers, and tape for the optional activity.

GATHERING PRAYER

Leader

Jesus, you are here with us. You promised your followers that you would never leave them, and that promise extends to us, too. You are here with us through your Holy Spirit. We don't see your Spirit, but our faith tells us that your Spirit is real. Fill our hearts with love as we now pray and think together about our relationship with you, with God the Father, and with your Holy Spirit.

Reader One

After he died on the cross and was raised to new life, Jesus ascended to heaven. Before he left, he promised his followers that he would remain with them always. He would send them a helper and friend to keep his presence alive. But the followers wondered: How can we know that Jesus is with us if we can't see him? They gathered together in the Upper Room to pray about this.

All

Where are you, Jesus? We can't see you.

Reader Two

One day as they prayed, there was a noise from the sky that sounded like a strong wind blowing, and it filled the whole house. Then they saw what looked like tongues of fire spreading out, and each person there was touched by a tongue. They were all filled with the Holy Spirit.

All

Where are you, Jesus? We can't see you.

Reader Three

Some of the early followers tried to understand this great mystery. How does the Holy Spirit make Jesus present? Saint John explains it this way: No one has ever seen God, but if we love one another God lives in us. Whoever declares that Jesus is the Son of God, God lives in that person. It is the Spirit who puts this faith in our hearts.

All

Where are you, Jesus? We can't see you.

Reader Four

John goes on to say: This is the command that Jesus gives us, to love one another. When we do this, we are loving God. We can't say that Jesus is among us if we hate the people around us. When we love one another, our lives are in God and in Jesus. It is the Spirit who gives us the power to love.

All

Where are you, Jesus? We can't see you.

Reader Five

Paul, like John, puzzled over this mystery. He was a great follower of Jesus, but not at first. Paul, first known as Saul, was converted in a very strange way. One day he was on his way to the city of Damascus where he would be ordering the arrest of Christians. He was thrown off his horse and a voice called out to him: "Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting me?"

All

Where are you, Jesus? We can't see you.

Reader Six

Paul was astonished. "Who are you?" he cried out. The voice answered, "I am Jesus, the one you are persecuting." Paul thought about this for a long time. He eventually understood that Jesus was alive. He really was present in his followers. Paul never forgot this lesson, and he preached about Jesus from that time on.

All

Where are you, Jesus? We can't see you.