



Left: Awut's grandchildren Nyajima (2) and Nyibak (5), and their farm animals.
Right: Ajak with her son Ngor (8 months) and Awut with her granddaughter Nyajima (2). Photo credit: Achuoth Deng

LENT 2021 | Exploring the Sunday Gospels with Children

Curriculum Links

Catholic Preschool and Primary Religious Education Curriculum for Ireland

Christian Morality

- Human Dignity
- Social Teaching of the Church – Liturgy and prayer
- Liturgical Year

Grow in Love

- Lent
- Love for one's neighbour
- Easter Liturgical Season

Religious Education Curriculum for Northern Ireland

The Revelation of God. The Life of Jesus.

- The Ministry of Jesus
- Passion, Death and Resurrection.

The Christian Church

- Worship and Prayer

Morality

- Respect for each other
- Respect for the Environment

HOW TO USE THIS RESOURCE

For use in your home, school or parish

Information for leaders, parents or teachers

This resource is recommended for use in the following ways:

- At a family Mass setting
- With a childrens' liturgy group
- At home around the kitchen table
- In a classroom setting

For each week during Lent, there is an activity for the group leader, family or teacher.

The activity relates directly to the gospel reading for each Sunday of Lent and to the stories of Awut and Ajak from South Sudan and their families, who feature on this year's Trócaire box.

This Lent, Trócaire is highlighting the impact of conflict on families living in South Sudan. We see how neighbours support each other and work together through hard times to survive and thrive.

Some families in South Sudan face the fear of violence, hunger and being forced

to leave their homes. As families are displaced within the country because of conflict and hunger, they move to communities where they meet other families, who welcome them and they all support and care for each other. You can show your care by supporting them and praying for them.

It is important to note that this is only one perspective from South Sudan. Avoid reinforcing negative stereotypes as you move through this resource. Conflict and poverty are a reality for these families, but not everyone in, or from, South Sudan has had this experience. Remind children that this is only one part of the story of South Sudan. Where possible, focus on positive aspects of the country as a balance. South Sudan is only one country amongst many in the entire continent of Africa. Therefore, avoid describing the families as living in Africa. If you have access to the internet in your home, parish or school, allow the children to research five facts about South Sudan before starting this activity. Emphasise the diversity in the country and focus on positive aspects of its culture. Research corresponding facts about Ireland and compare.

Please adhere to current Covid-19 recommendations for your area in the delivery of Exploring the Gospels with Children. Trócaire staff are also available to guide your group through this resource in whatever way is safest for all taking part and in line with government guidelines. Additional Lenten Resources, including homily notes, the Stations of the Cross, parish resource and reflections are available [here](#)

FIRST SUNDAY OF LENT

Gospel of Mark 1:12–15

Theme: Jesus fasts for forty days and is tempted. The angels looked after him.

Extracts from the Gospel Reading

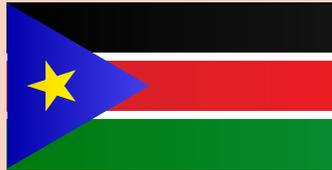
The Spirit drove Jesus out into the desert and Jesus was there for forty days, tempted by Satan; and he was with the wild animals; and the angels waited on him.

Now after John was arrested, Jesus came to Galilee, proclaiming the good

news of God. Jesus said, 'The time has come, and the kingdom of God is near; change your ways, and believe in the good news.'

*This is the Gospel of the Lord.
Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.*

Ajak and her family (in the photo below) all support and care for each other. Ajak and her friend Awut also support each other through difficult times.



Ask the children

- 1) What do we as Christians do during Lent?
- 2) Today, do we fast in the same way Jesus did in this gospel reading?
- 3) How do we show care for our families and friends? How can we show care for families around the world?

Group Activity

On heart shaped pieces of paper, write down one thing that you love and are giving up for Lent, or one thing you are taking on for Lent. Write down something that will bring fairness into someone's life. Put a ribbon on it and hang it in a place that will remind you every day of your promise.

Ajak and her sons, (L–R) Pawany (7), Majak (4), Chiech (6). Photo credit: Achuoth Deng



SECOND SUNDAY OF LENT

Gospel of Mark 9:2–10

Theme: **This is my Son, the Beloved; listen to Him.**

Extracts from the Gospel Reading

With the disciples, Peter, James and John, Jesus climbed a mountain to pray. Jesus' appearance was changed before them: his face shone like the sun and his clothes became bright as light.

Just then, Moses and Elijah appeared to them, talking with Jesus.

Peter spoke and said to Jesus, 'Master, it is good that we are here, if you so

wish, I will build three tents: one for you, one for Moses and one for Elijah.'

Then a cloud formed, covering them in a shadow and from the cloud came these words, 'This is my Son the Beloved with whom I am well pleased. Listen to Him.'

*This is the Gospel of the Lord.
Praise to you Lord Jesus Christ.*

Ajak and Awut are special people in the children's lives. The two women work very hard each day to look after them. The children show kindness to Awut and Ajak by fetching water.

Ask the children

- 1) When we are unsure about things at home or in school, who do we listen to?
- 2) Who are the special people in our lives?
- 3) Do you think it is fair that the children have to fetch water?

Group Activity

On a piece of paper, draw the outline of your hand. For each finger, try to write or draw a special moment you remember in your life. In the palm of your hand, write thank you to God because God holds us in the palm of his hand on good and bad days. You can hang these drawings up in your church, classroom or in your home. This is something adults and children can do together.

Children fetching water.
Photo credit: Achuoth Deng



THIRD SUNDAY OF LENT

Gospel of John 2:13–25

Theme: Knock down this temple and I will build it up in three days.

Extracts from the Gospel Reading

Jesus found people in his temple selling cattle and sheep and pigeons and he shouted at the people – take all of this out of here and stop turning God’s house into a market.

Jesus told the people, ‘Knock down this temple and I will build it up in three days.’

Jesus stayed in Jerusalem for another while and many people believed in him, when they saw the great works he did.

Many people believed in the power of Jesus.

*This is the Gospel of the Lord.
Praise to you Lord Jesus Christ.*

Maize and beans are popular foods that people grow in their garden in South Sudan. Sometimes, families eat food that grows in the wild, such as Kwor. This is a green leafy plant.



Ask the children

- 1) Have you ever eaten foods that grow in the wild in Ireland? (e.g. blackberries)
- 2) Have we helped in the kitchen at home?
- 3) What do families in South Sudan eat?

Group Activity

Baking and decorating fairy cakes is fun! In your school, home or parish, can you bake fairy cakes? Here is a recipe you can try with the help of one of the adults in your life. This is something that you can plan to do for Easter, especially if you have given up sweet things for Lent.

Kwor, a green leaf food in South Sudan.
Photo credit: Sean Farrell, Trócaire



FAIRY CAKES RECIPE

Ingredients

- 100 g caster sugar
- 100 g very soft butter
- 100 g self-raising flour
- 2 eggs
- 1 tsp vanilla extract for the icing
- 200 g icing sugar
- Food colouring
- Sprinkles/marshmallows, etc.

Step One

- **Ask a grown-up helper** to turn the oven on to 180C/160C fan/gas 4. Put a paper case in each hole of a twelve-hole bun tin.

Step Two

- Put the sugar and butter (it must be soft or you won't be able to mix it properly) in a bowl and mix it together. Sift in the flour.

Step Three

- Break the eggs into a separate bowl (spoon out any bits of shell that fall in) and add them to the bowl with the vanilla. Mix everything together.



Step Four

- Divide between the cases using a spoon, scraping it off with a knife. **Ask a grown-up helper** to put the tray in the oven for twenty minutes.

Step Five

- Mix the butter and icing sugar to make a creamy icing. Add colouring, if you like. Push an icing nozzle into an icing bag, then scoop the icing into the bag.

Step Six

- Let the cakes cool completely in the tray. Pipe icing onto each cake and decorate with marshmallows or sprinkles, or whatever you like.

Question: Did you ever wonder how they make bread for Holy Communion? Why not ask someone in your parish this week.

This link will help you: <https://www.allrecipes.com/recipe/241680/unleavened-bread-for-communion>

FOURTH SUNDAY OF LENT

Gospel of John 3:14–21

Theme: God sent his Son, so that through him, the world will be saved.

Extracts from the Gospel Reading

God loved the world so much, that he gave us his only Son. Whoever believes in Jesus will have life forever.

The light has come into the world and whoever lives according to the truth

comes into the light so that it can be clearly seen that their works have been done in God.

This is the Gospel of the Lord.

Praise to you Lord Jesus Christ.

We speak about light in our gospel today. Playing games, having fun and getting our photo taken can brighten up our day and bring light into our lives.

Ask the children

- 1) What games do we play to have fun?
- 2) What games do we play that the children in South Sudan also play? For example, football, skipping, volleyball, basketball.
- 3) Other than games, what do we love doing each day?

Activity 1

Go for a walk and maybe have a little treasure hunt around the church grounds. Look for the stained-glass windows. Find the place where the priest reads the gospel.

Activity 2

Make stained-glass windows with lollipop sticks. Put the lollipop sticks in a triangular shape, then add tissue

paper. Add some twine at the top so it can dangle. For some help, check out this link: <https://www.wikihow.com/Make-Tissue-Paper-Suncatchers>



Nyajima (2) and Nyibak (5) having fun whilst their photo is taken. Photo credit: Achouth Deng



FIFTH SUNDAY OF LENT

Gospel of John 12:20–33

Theme: A rich harvest brings great love. Who are the people that give light to our world?

Extracts from the Gospel Reading

Whoever serves me must follow me and wherever I am, there shall my servant be also. If anyone loves me, the Father will honour them.

Jesus said, 'While you have light, believe in the light, that you may become children of light.'

After Jesus said this, he left and kept himself hidden.

*This is the Gospel of the Lord.
Praise to you Lord Jesus Christ.*

Jesus asks us to believe in that light from our gospel today. Coloured flags bring light to our lives and we can see them from far away.

Ask the children

- (1) What colours are in the Irish flag?
- (2) What colours are in the South Sudanese flag?

Group Activity

Draw and colour the flags of South Sudan and Ireland. The colours of a country's flag often tell us about that country's history. Each colour in the South Sudanese flag has its own meaning:

Black signifies the people of South Sudan.

Red is the colour of blood.

Green signifies agriculture and land.

White signifies peace.

Blue means the River Nile, which is a source of life for the entire nation.

Yellow signifies the unity of the states and hope for all.

The national flag is embraced and used by the people of South Sudan as a symbol of national unity. At home or in school or in your parish, find out the meaning of the colours of the Irish flag.



PALM SUNDAY

Gospel of Mark 11:1–10

Theme: Blessings on Him who comes in the name of the Lord. How do we celebrate in our lives?

Extracts from the Gospel Reading

Lots of people were going to Jerusalem for the Passover festival. Jesus and his friends went too. But Jesus did not walk this time. He asked his friends to go to a special house where a young donkey would be waiting. They were to borrow it for the day. When people saw Jesus approaching, they began to cheer and clap and wave palm branches. Look – it is Jesus, they said to each other, riding on a donkey. Jesus is our King. Hooray for Jesus, they shouted. I saw him heal a man who could not walk. And he

has healed blind and deaf people too and he tells wonderful stories about God said someone else. The donkey plodded on, unworried by the shouting and cheering. But there were some in the crowd who didn't like what they saw and heard. Some of the religious leaders did not like what Jesus taught about God. They were already plotting to find a way to make sure he stopped being a problem to them.

*This is the Gospel of the Lord.
Praise to you Lord Jesus Christ.*

In our gospel story today, Jesus makes a journey into Jerusalem.

Ask the children

- 1) Tell us about the longest journey you have ever made?
- 2) Do you like walking or running?

Activity

Have you noticed there are different types of roads in Ireland? In and around the big towns and cities the roads are wide and busy with traffic. In the countryside some roads are very narrow, some have potholes and some even have grass running down the middle! Similarly, in South Sudan, the

roads near the big towns and cities are made from tarmac and are busy with cars, trucks, buses and bikes. However, in the countryside, there is no tarmac on most of the roads. Draw a picture of the road nearest to you and what it looks like to you. Ask a grown up to describe a road that is different to the one you live on (motorway/city road/country laneway) and then draw a picture of it.



The village of Lakakudu in South Sudan. Photo credit: Sean Farrell, Trócaire

EASTER SUNDAY

Gospel of John 20:1–9

Theme: Jesus is risen. We celebrate today. How do we celebrate in our lives?

Extracts from the Gospel Reading

Early in the morning, on the first day after the Sabbath, while it was still dark, Mary of Magdala came to the tomb and saw that the stone over the tomb had been moved away. So, she ran to Peter and the other disciple whom Jesus loved. And she said to them, 'They have taken the Lord out of the tomb and we do not know where they have laid him.'

Simon Peter joined Peter and the other

disciple and entered the tomb; they saw the linen cloths lying there. The napkin, which had been around his head was not lying like the other linen cloths but rolled up in a place by itself. They all saw this and believed. They had not yet understood Scripture that foretold Jesus rising from the dead. After that, the disciples went home again.

This is the Gospel of the Lord.

Ask the children

- 1) Can we think of a time when we got a wonderful surprise?
- 2) How did we celebrate?
- 3) Do we know that going to Mass is a celebration?
- 4) What do you think we are celebrating at Mass?

Activity

Make an Easter card for your family to show that you want to celebrate because Jesus is risen.



Pray for Awut, Ajak and their families



Dear God,

As we pray for families in South Sudan you hold us as one big family.

We pray for Awut and Ajak and their families who are on our Trócaire box this year.

Old or young, short or tall, wherever we live, you made us all.

Help us to share, whatever we have, however small it seems, to make our world fair and just.

Help us to work hard alongside our global brothers and sisters promoting global justice. And live out our hopes and dreams. Amen.

Prayer from Colm Hogan, Trócaire

More Parish Resources, including homily notes, Parish resource, Stations of the Cross, reflections, photos and videos are available [here](#)

Development Education Resources, including Early Childhood and Primary are available [here](#)

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Trócaire gratefully acknowledges support received from Irish Aid to conduct Development Education and Public Engagement activities in Ireland. The content, approaches and activities outlined in this resource are entirely the responsibility of the author(s) and do not necessarily represent or reflect the policy of Irish Aid.

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REF: E5