

Year A

Twentieth Sunday of the Year

The Canaanite woman

INTRODUCTION

Jesus was well known around Jerusalem and in Galilee, so sometimes he made trips to places outside Palestine, where the people did not know him. On one of these trips, Jesus met a Canaanite woman and was struck by the strength of her belief.

SIGN OF THE CROSS

LIGHT THE CANDLES

As we light the candles today, we pray that the light of Jesus will keep shining in our lives and showing us the way. Sing the Candle Song.

SORRY

As we sing our sorry song together, let us ask God to help us make a fresh start. Sing Sorry Song 3.

GLORIA

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

To welcome today's Gospel sing Acclamation 3.

GOSPEL (MATTHEW 15:21–28)

Jesus went to stay near the cities of Tyre and Sidon, where few people knew him. One day a Canaanite woman came to him and cried, "Help me, Jesus! My daughter's mind is disturbed and she is very ill!" Jesus did not answer the woman, and she cried on crying aloud and begging him to help.

The disciples were embarrassed by the shouting and asked Jesus to help her, but Jesus said, "I have been sent to the Jewish people and not the pagans." Then turning to the woman he said, "Surely you would not give the food meant for children to the dog?" The woman threw herself at his feet and answered, "No sir, but even the dogs get the crumbs that their masters drop from the table!" Then Jesus smiled and said, "Your belief is strong, and your daughter is well!" From that moment the woman's daughter was cured.

DISCUSSION

Jesus spent much of his time traveling from place to place, teaching the people and performing mir-

acles as he went. Sometimes he needed a rest, to get away from the crowds, and spend some time quietly praying and enjoying some peace.

Do you know what a Canaanite is? A Canaanite was a person from Canaan, who still practiced the old religion which existed in the country before the Jewish religion. What did the Canaanite woman want from Jesus? What did Jesus do?

At first it seemed that Jesus would not help her because he had been sent to bring his message to the Jewish people and not pagans. But Jesus was struck by the strength of her belief in him. She kept asking for his help and would not be put off. She trusted in the generosity and mercy of God, and knew that Jesus could help her.

What can we learn from this story? We learn that the message Jesus brought was for everyone, not just the Jewish people. We also learn that Jesus is ready to help anyone who asks because he loves all of us, and that when our belief and faith in God are strong enough, our prayers will be answered.

ACTIVITY

Cut out a banner and draw on a cross. Ask one or two of the children to color or decorate the banner. Divide the individual letters or words of the phrase "Jesus died to save us all" amongst the other children according to numbers. After coloring, these can be stuck onto the banner around the cross.

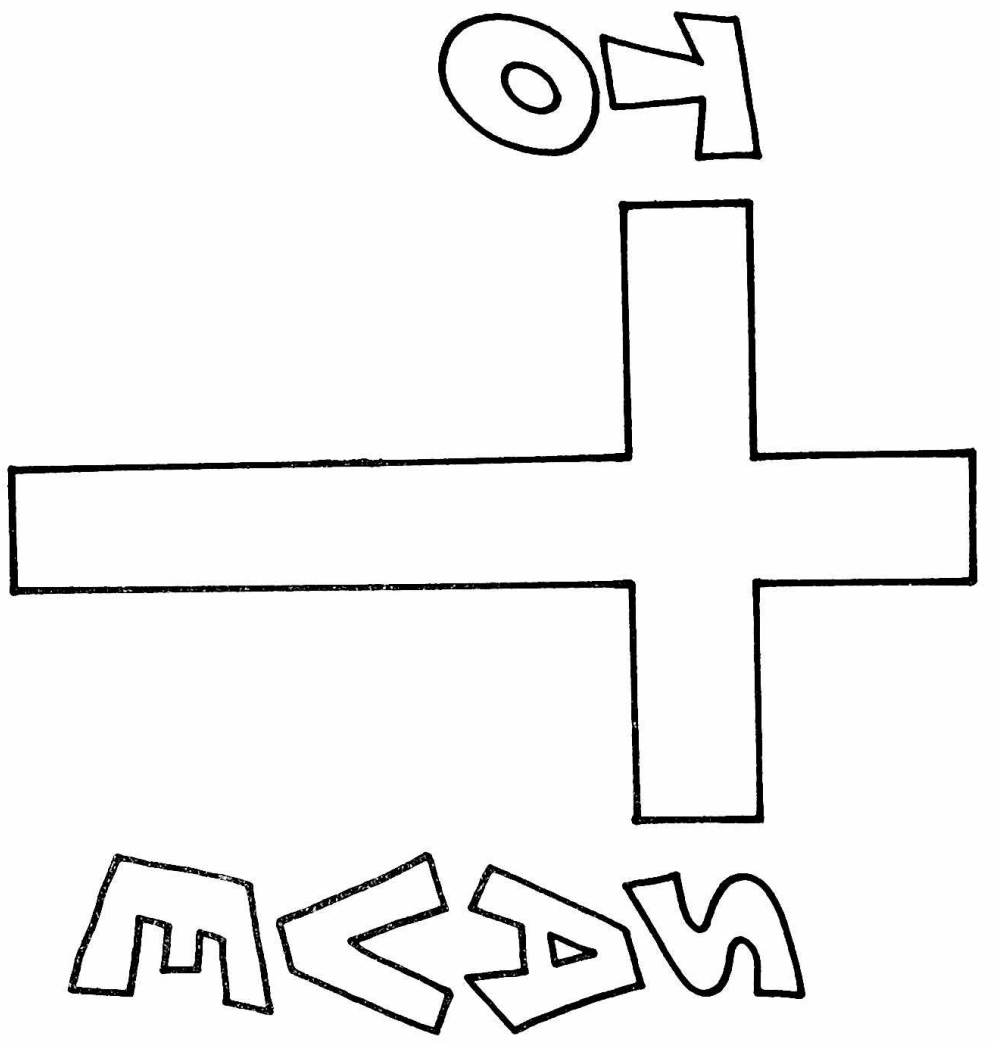
As another option, have the children cut out and color the banner on the opposite page.

CREED

CLOSING PRAYER

O God, make our faith in you
as strong as that of the Canaanite woman,
because we believe in you
and know that your word is true.

JESUS DIED



US ALL

