

May 10, 2020

Fifth Sunday of Easter Family Activity

Introduction



This Sunday we will again read from the Acts of the Apostles for the first reading, the second reading is from 1st Peter, and the Gospel is taken from the Gospel of John . In the Gospel Jesus is asked by His disciples to show them the Father, He responds by telling them that if they have seen Him they have seen the Father. Jesus tells His disciples that He goes to prepare a place for us

and that when He goes to The Father his disciples will do the works He has done because He is with the Father. The works of Jesus are to feed the hungry, clothe the naked and shelter the widow and orphan. In the Acts of the Apostles we see the response of the early Church to the mission of Jesus, when the widows of the Greek Christians were neglected the apostles chose out seven upstanding men to serve the church as deacons to those who are most out-cast and in need. These seven men called by the apostles were the first deacons. In this lesson you will learn about the order of deacon and how deacons in the church assist in continuing the mission of Jesus.

Materials needed

1. Lesson
2. Gospel reading from the USCCB found [HERE](#)
⇒ Homily from any Mass livestreamed @ 9:30am, 11:15am and 1pm (in Spanish) [LINK](#)
3. Bible
4. Large cardboard box
5. Markers, paint, decorating paper, stickers and other things to decorate the box

Resources

- † [Video story of St. Stephan the first Christian martyr](#)
- † [Kid's version of the story of St. Stephan](#)
- † Music: [We are the Easter People, Alleluia is our song.](#)

Mother's Day Special Crafts

1. Handprint Bouquet Craft [HERE](#)
2. Tulip Card Craft [HERE](#)
3. A song for mothers [HERE](#)

Method

1. **Pray:** (Thank God for your family, for his love and for this time together and specially for mother's in their special day. **Praise** Him for his goodness and His grace. **Ask** Him for anything that you need. *End with sign of the Cross.*)
2. **Read** the First Reading, Psalm, Second Reading and Gospel.
3. **Talk** about the readings and share any words or phrases that stood out you.
4. **Read** the lesson provided in the next pages or watch **THIS** video about the difference between priests and deacons and **THIS** excellent explanation by Pope Francis. Discuss how we can be like the deacons in our service to the church and to the poor. What things can you do that bring comfort to God's people?
5. Do the **Stephan's Box activity** together and make a plan to share the blessings God has given you.
6. Close by **praying together** the Our Father.

Activity

Stephan's Box

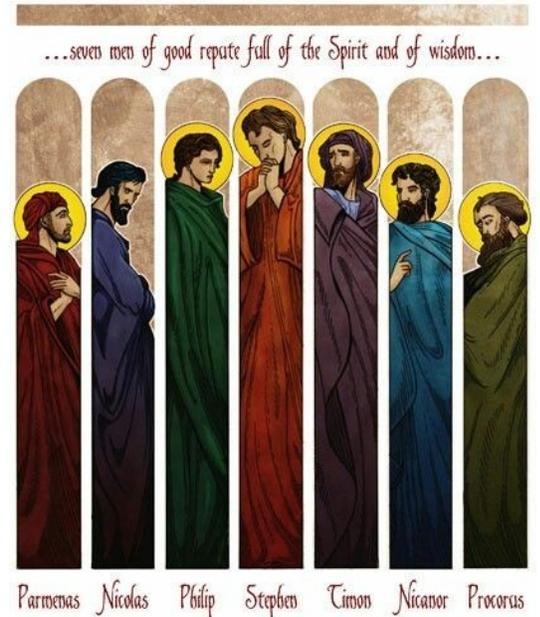
1. Explain to your child that you will be making and decorating a box to use at home for collecting things to donate for the poor. Make the connection that this is what the deacons did for the early church. Since many places are not currently accepting this type of donation, you may choose to collect non-perishable food items to donate.
2. Using the cardboard box, the paper and the markers or paint decorate the box.
3. Place the box in a convenient place that you and your child will remember to think of it. Put any food items for the food pantry in it that you plan to donate as well as any things that you hope to donate to Matt 25, St. Vincent de Paul or Salvation Army. Watch the bulletin for food items that the food pantry is especially in need of and consider the season when you are donating clothing items to Matt 25.
4. As you fill the box remember the story of St. Stephan and how the deacons minister to the Church and how you can help do the same.



Lesson

The account we hear in the first reading from the Acts of the Apostles is the beginning of the office of deacon. The Apostles in their ministry of the messengers of Jesus were unable to keep up with all the needs of the growing Christian community so the apostles gathered the community together and with their approval appointed seven men who were filled with faith and the Holy Spirit. The word deacon (*diakonos*) means both minister or servant. During the time of the early Church the word began to take on the further meaning of someone ordained to the service of the church especially the less fortunate.

Early on there already was a process of choosing and appointing deacons. Paul in writing to Timothy says *“Similarly, deacons must be dignified, not deceitful, not addicted to drink, not greedy for sordid gain, holding fast to the mystery of the faith with a clear conscience. Moreover, they should be tested first; then, if there is nothing against them, let them serve as deacons”* ¹Timothy 3:8-10.



The order of the deacon is one of the three degrees of Holy Orders along with Bishops and Priests. When a man is ordained to the order of Deacon he is either ordained to what is called a transitional diaconate which means that he is in the process of becoming a priest or he is ordained as a permanent deacon which means that he does not intend to move on to the other degrees of orders but intends to serve the church in this vocation of service. The duties of the deacon include serving at the altar, administering to the temporal needs of parishes and working with the priests and bishops to minister to the spiritual needs of the church.



Deacons serve in many ways in the church. Some assist primarily in the liturgy by virtue of their ordination and with the blessing of the priest they proclaim the Gospel during Mass or preach the homily. The first examples we see of deacons teaching and preaching are the deacons Stephan and Philip in the Acts of the Apostles. From the times of the early church the deacons also participated in the training and instruction of those who wished to convert and enter into the church. Deacons assist in the administration of the sacrament of baptism and the preparation of catechumens for that sacrament.

Of the seven sacraments the deacon has the sacrament of Holy Orders but receives this at the hands of the bishop and does not pass it on to others. The deacon is able with the permission of the bishop or pastor to preside over the sacraments of Baptism and Marriage. He does not celebrate the sacraments of Reconciliation, Anointing or Eucharist. Within the Mass the role of the Deacon is as an assistant to the priest. He cannot himself celebrate the Mass but rather assists in appropriate parts such as the ministry of the word.

The deacon when performing his liturgical duties can be distinguished from the priest in several ways. First the deacon wears the vestment called a *dalmatic* which unlike the priest's chasuble has sleeves. The sleeves on the Deacon's dalmatic represent the ministry of service that he holds and indicates his place as the hands of the church extended to the poor and those in need. The second thing that deacons wear distinguishing them is their *stole* they wear across their body rather than draped over their shoulders like the priest. This designates their order as deacon but shows that they do not hold the office of priest. It is common in western countries for permanent deacons to wear a grey shirt with a white roman collar when performing their secular duties. This differentiation of dress helps to identify the deacon and to remind him of his ministry as the hands and feet of Christ and of his service to the body of Christ.



In what ways can you serve the church in your life? God calls all of us to service in some way. Can you minister to the widows and orphans as the first deacons did?

Sources

- † [USCCB Questions about Deacons](#)
- † [Aleta article about the role of Deacons](#)
- † [Catholic dictionary entry: Deacons](#)



