

# Home is a Holy Place....

In conjunction with the Catholic Family Trust, SPANNED is adapting some of the resources / material and introducing original ideas so that the project on “Home is a Holy Place” may be undertaken by groups of our friends with special needs and disabilities and their families during the course of the coming year, and a meaningful and valued contribution to the whole project can be made. What lies at the heart of a ‘home’ is relationship – the relationship of every family member to each other and to the whole ‘family’ unit, and so our understanding of ‘relationship’ will be crucial, and certainly if we are to see where God can and does play a part in our home, thus making it a ‘holy place’. A ‘home’ may not necessarily be a physical ‘place’ as such but can exist in the mind and heart of a person. This is why prayer – being at ‘home’ with God and having the easy sort of relationship with Him that we think of when we say that word, ‘home’ – is such a critical element of our lives. Prayer can take place anywhere at all – as the words of the great American folk singer much beloved of SPANNED groups, Tom Paxton, tell us: “home to me is anywhere you are”. This is not to deny the importance of a physical ‘place’ or ‘space’, which is always important, particularly in the spiritual formation of our friends, and we hope that we can all come to see that the church – as community and buildings – is our ‘home’ too, especially because of the powerful and discernible presence of God there.

## Preliminary considerations

### Historical perspective:

- One of the unavoidable difficulties in this matter is the fact that the people who are members of our groups today are now no longer ‘children’; in fact many of them are in their 40’s, 50’s or even older, and these are the people on whom we are largely basing our observations. The philosophy of care that existed in the past is entirely different from that which is being promoted today, and this needs to be noted from the outset. In the past it was the parents who ‘cared’ for their children right into adulthood, often without the support that they would automatically receive these days. It was for them a lonely and anxious existence, with no offer or even hope of an independent existence for their children in the future. The Church took the lead in supporting these families and bringing their children into the mainstream life of community and society. Today, it is no longer envisaged that a person with an impairment of some form or another will be living with their parents permanently, and there are many opportunities to promote and prepare them and their parents for eventual independent living. In addition, society is more enlightened about the place of a person with a disabling condition within it and facilities, benefits and services are now provided that were never present even a relatively short time ago, when parents had to struggle on their own. For this we should be rightly thankful.

### Adult children living with parents

- However, many of our friends do still actually live in their parental homes even though they are fully grown adults. It is more than likely that their parents are getting elderly and are struggling to contemplate the future. Similarly, in our experience, the person themselves is often the centre of that family’s life and therefore might find it difficult to adapt easily to a community life where some form of compromise is always necessary. Their view of ‘home’ therefore might be quite different from that of a person living in supervised sheltered accommodation or in a residential community. Thus the answers we receive to our questions about home are likely to differ greatly, but then again, this is part of the challenge. To enable our friends to live more happily in their own home or in a

residential community by becoming more aware of their own responsibilities to all others who live there will be very beneficial.

### **Interdependency**

- We have also found that in some cases an adult person still at home with their parents who has been the centre of attention for years, cannot easily open out to others, especially if parents have consistently fed this rather ‘ego-centric’ behaviour. In our experience, one could often say that many parents ‘depend’ on the adult person who has a disability or learning difficulties more than the other way round. In some cases, the family cannot ‘afford’ for that person to go into a residential situation because of the loss of income involved.

### **Routine**

- ‘Routine’ is a much-prized part of their lives and change does not come easily either to parents, who are tired and find it too much to think about or to the person themselves for whom the desire for a regular, settled and thoroughly predictable life is a key element in the nature of their condition. For this reason, opportunities for ‘maturing’ may not be created and this is certainly an element of ‘home’ life that needs to be better facilitated.

### **Opportunities to mature**

- Many of our friends continue to be treated in a rather child-like manner by their parents long into their adulthood, especially in the language they use to each other, and again, this does not prepare the person for the choices they may have to make themselves later on. Often professionals get very frustrated by the unwillingness of some parents to allow their ‘children’ to grow up. It is important that the person with special needs within the family is always treated in an age-appropriate manner and respected as an individual and that all agencies both statutory and voluntary who are involved with the family should work closely together to foster growth and development.

### **Parental aspirations**

- Sometimes, parental aspirations for a person with a disabling or limiting condition are very low and the idea of the person being ‘independent’ from them does not come easily. Social contact may therefore be limited and still today, there are very many people in this situation, who never leave their own homes unless it is absolutely necessary. As a consequence, when anything does happen to their parents – who usually believe and hope that the young person will die before they do – they are ill-equipped to cope with the new ‘home’ they find themselves in, particularly if it is in a community where they are no longer the centre of attention themselves.

### **Not always ‘holy’**

- We are conscious also of the fact that for many people ‘home’ may not be a ‘holy place’, even to the extent that the mere word could conjure up all sorts of negative ideas or feelings. If there has been some form of verbal or physical abuse or neglect, jealousy on the part of siblings of the attention given to the family member who has special needs, any lack of love or feeling of being ‘in the way’, this will colour the person’s perception of what we mean by home. If their home is a community in which there is strife, tension or fear, this may likewise inhibit our efforts. We need to be aware of these potential problems when preparing and delivering our catechesis.

### **The ageing population with learning difficulties**

- In recent years we are discovering a particular problem among people with learning

difficulties that was not so prevalent previously – ageing and dementia. Modern advances in medicine mean that there has been a prolonging of the lives of people whose intellectual condition also involved the possibility of heart failure and early death. This is especially the case among people with Down's Syndrome, who are now living significantly longer than before. Mental health issues and illness will certainly influence 'home' life, either for parents who are ageing themselves or for a community in which one or more members have particular problems which may cause disruption as well as anxiety for everyone in the community. Putting up with 'moods' is one thing within a group of people who live together; dealing with a situation which will not change or improve is quite another.

### **Crisis**

- When a crisis or 'mess' occurs this is always a cause of difficulty in any home, but may be more so when a lot of people are living together in community and they are adults who may not take too kindly to 'discipline' and certainly cannot be treated as children. The experience of the staff and management will be invaluable here. Within our own diocese, there are two communities which sprang from our group in Nottingham and who form a major part of it still. The manner in which problems are faced and resolved has become a sort of 'benchmark' for many families trying to deal with similar difficulties within their own homes, and is commendable in both its patience and professionalism.

### **Spirituality**

- From a spiritual point of view, we are living in a very 'secular age' in which the notion of 'holiness' has been seriously diminished. To talk of God and the things of God to many people, therefore, is often now like talking in a different language that few people understand. And yet the spiritual dimension of life is as important for our friends as for any of us and developing some sense of God and his love is vital if we are to hear 'another voice' to that of the voice of materialism, self-interest and ego-centricity that is proclaimed incessantly to us in the media. In SPANNED, we call this work 'spiritual formation', and not 'religious education', because it involves the whole person – intellect, emotions and the ability to 'appreciate' love and beauty in a meaningful way. It is particularly important when people come to live in communities of one sort or another, even if those communities are non-religious. People have to put up with each other, learn to accept responsibility and self-discipline and need a reason for so doing – the love and service of Our Lord. It may be appropriate for us to re-visit the work we have done some years ago on the sacrament of reconciliation for people with learning difficulties. To deprive them of this opportunity because we feel they will not 'understand' it may be to miss a wonderful chance for their spiritual lives to develop and mature.

The main thrust of the work of SPANNED in the Diocese of Nottingham for the past 33 years has been to bring those among us with disabilities and learning difficulties much more into the mainstream of social and church life, and more than that to enable them to be seen as 'contributors' instead of always being seen as people who need to be 'helped'. For more details see "A Man Came..." (Frank Daly) in "Intellectual Disability The Response of the Church" ed. Brian Kelly and Patrick McGinley, Lisieux Hall Publications, Chorley 2000. We should mention also the pioneering work of the L'Arche communities all over the world, in which people live and work together in small units basing their 'home' life on Christian principles and actively seeking to live together in the service of Our Lord. The residents have 'jobs' appropriate to their abilities and so 'earn' their living in a dignified manner which gains great satisfaction and self-respect. The input and experience of the L'Arche organisation would be a major contribution in helping us to understand 'Home as a Holy Place', and it is more than likely that its communities could provide insights that

are invaluable in the attempt to build up a coherent picture of what the concept means for people with learning difficulties and disabilities. Bearing in mind that the “L’Arche” communities are

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established on specifically Christian principles, we would almost certainly obtain from them a more accurate idea of what the living out of this idea is than one that might be provided from the experience of those people living in communities of a more secular nature. In presenting our efforts and findings, therefore, we counsel you to compare and contrast them with the experience of “L’Arche”, in order to discover a realistic notion of what it means to live in the Lord’s way in the present social climate.

## **The Project**

Our work will be carried out in group sessions on several evenings during the year and will be ‘gathered’ together at a number of liturgies where all the six groups of SPANNED meet on four occasions: May, July, September and November. There is flexibility for the catechists and group leaders to adapt or alter the material as they see fit, so that it can be incorporated happily into the needs and abilities of their particular group. We will use art, music, interactive drama and mime in these sessions and record the outcome of each. We hope these sessions will be fun too, as humour is a very good way of pointing out our deficiencies to others and also learning to live with them. It may even be possible for each person in the group to have a scrapbook of their own. The content of the four liturgies will depend on what emerges from the group meetings. What you will then have here is firstly, the catechesis for each session and secondly, the replies and responses that were received during its delivery

The themes for group sessions are:

- Session 1 What is home?
- Session 2 Favourite things
- Session 3 Likes and dislikes
- Liturgy 1 Annual General Meeting Mass at Keyworth
- Session 4 Falling out and making up
- Session 5 Homeless people
- Liturgy 2 Scunthorpe Retreat Day
- Session 6 Fun and laughter at home
- Session 7 God’s love in our home
- Liturgy 3 Annual Diocesan Mass, Clifton, Nottingham
- Session 8 Eating together – the disastrous dinner party
- Session 9 Jesus’ meal with his friends
- Session 10 The celebration of Mass together followed by formal meal
- Session 11 The Church as our home
- Liturgy 4 Advent Mass in Leicester and close

*\* Please note that many of these themes and sessions were not envisaged initially when we planned the project, but have emerged during the course of following it.*

A typical evening session might be as follows:

- 10 mins – gathering and introduction
- 40 mins - discussion in groups / art work
- 15 mins – coming together and putting work / responses on a flow chart / focus table
- 20 mins – social time / games
- 5 mins - concluding song and prayer; notices about what to bring next time

It may also be that the groups do not follow this scheme on successive evenings if they have other activities of a social or fund-raising nature planned, but we hope that by the end of the year, most of

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the 'syllabus' will have been covered and to be able to put together in this book the conclusions and contributions of each group.

While the original "Home is a Holy Place" scheme does mention a family with a young person with special needs, it does not deal with adults, who would otherwise have left home and made their way in life, nor consider the effect that their continued presence may have on their parents and siblings. Neither does it cover the situation where 'home' is a community of adults who find themselves living together and have to learn to put up with each other. We also feel the need to consider the matter of homeless people, both at home and abroad, and possibly do some fund-raising for those charities and projects that can help them to find a 'home' of one sort or another. In these ways we hope our findings will be a valuable contribution to the project as a whole by casting some light on areas not originally envisaged by it.

*Father Frank Daly, Director, with the trustees and Group leaders of SPANNED  
February - December 2009*

**SPANNED** is the acronym for Supporting People with Additional Needs in the Nottingham Diocese, an agency which came into being in March 1976. It has been through a few name changes since then, to reflect the increasing awareness and dignity of the people involved, and its work has changed in a similar manner. At present, it operates as a registered charity with six constituent groups all sharing in its charitable status: The Loreto Thursday Club, Nottingham (1979), the SPANNED Scunthorpe Group (1979), the Loughborough Group for People with Disabilities (1979), the SPANNED Leicester Group (1982), the Hinckley Sunshine Club (1982) and the Derby Tuesday Club (1986). The agency publishes a quarterly magazine and has also been responsible for much pioneering work in the area of liturgy and catechesis for people with learning difficulties, such as:

- *The publication of pastoral guidelines for those working with people with physical and intellectual disabilities (1977)*
- *The invention of the "Faith and Light" "Celebration" in 1978*
- *The introduction of the use of mime and music as a background to proclaiming and understanding the Word of God (1978)*
- *"The Pauline Project" – leading the Sunday liturgy in local parishes in Nottingham and Derby (1983)*
- *The notion of "contribution" as opposed to "being helped"*
- *The 'inclusion' of people with learning difficulties in mainstream drama (1986)*
- *"The Dance of the Light" – the story of Our Lord's life in music and movement (the music of "Riverdance" and "The Seville Suite") with a cast of 160 people (2000)*

The registered office is at 7, Colwick Rd., West Bridgford, Nottingham NG2 5FR, Tel.0115 955 8811.

## Session 1: What is Home?

### Group Discussion

*“The disciples said to Jesus: ‘Rabbi, where do you live?’ He replied, ‘come and see’”.*

1. Ask everyone the address of their home? (*Keep a confidential record of this*)
2. Who else lives there? Names..... people or pets
3. What are the neighbours like? Any stories? Good or bad? You could put together your ideas here in a drama called “Neighbours from Hell”!
4. What do you do at home? Special times, meals, gatherings etc.
5. Do you have your own room? What is it like? What is in it? Posters, pictures, DVD’s, your ‘things’ etc. What is the most unusual thing you have?
6. Would you like to draw a picture of your home? Put an arrow pointing to your room
7. What does ‘home’ mean to you – what can you think of when you say the word? (eg. safety, warmth, food, comfort, love or maybe even some things that are not so nice, like rows, fights, bullying)
8. Do you feel ‘at home’ with this group? Do you think of us as your ‘family’?

#### For next time...

- Bring one of your favourite ‘things’ from home (not too big) and tell us what it means to you.
- You could also bring photos of yourself and your family. May we keep some of them for our special book?
- How many times can you think of references to Jesus’ home and family are made in the gospels? What sort of home life did he have?
- Is there any member of your family or friends that you would like us to pray for in our group

#### Prayer... Let us pray

Thank you, Lord, for each person in our family (*name them if you like*)  
 Thank you for our home and those who are part of our life together  
 Loving God, you made us a family so that we could learn about your love for us.  
 Thank you for the times we have been able to laugh and cry together, for giving us time to talk and listen to each other and for all the ways we know we are loved.  
 Forgive us when we hurt each other. Help us to show others what your love is like by the way we love each other even in the little things we can do.  
 Please look after all those who have no family and no one to care for them, and help us never to forget that we are part of your family, which is the Church. We ask this through Christ our Lord. Amen

## So what is home?

### Here are some answers from the Loreto Thursday Club

Home is warm, cosy, peaceful, dressing-gown and slippers, a place to lay your head, all friends together, where 'Big Dave' is, my garden, TV and videos, where my parents live, pets, music, where friends come – friends are the family we choose:

Ken	Somewhere to keep all my special things I can be peaceful in my room Nice people who look after me and friends who live there Having a second home with family	going on outings Orla House
Neil	Celebrating special events Having two homes and being lucky enough to use both My bedroom, especially my bed! Going on holiday	Family Sticking together Somewhere to keep my special things Privacy
Declan	Brenda's dog Music	Banana milkshake Apple pie Watching Tv Being loved
William	Helping with jobs Supporting Forest Having my own flat	Having two homes Watching videos playing electric keyboard & guitar Parents friends
Robert	A happy house	For family life A place of rest with loved ones
Edward	TV / DVD 2 cats	Snooker Daddy & Mummy
Michael	Plenty of space Cosy House	TV Warm Happy House Garden
Martin S.	My home is where my parents live	Help with house work
David McCready	Bedroom Felicity & Phil in Derbyshire Loreto Cottage – 16 people	CAFOD poster Loreto Cottage Jaws (favourite film)
Martin Blake	Fags & my Irish lighter My family visiting me at my house Church services & prayers	My friends who live with me My personal stereo Walking frame Dancing
John Leonard	Orla House Bubble fights Watch Friends / staff	Friends Christmas Matching towels Ties Drawing / writing
Sinead	No.26, Orla House, Loreto Cottage & family in Ireland	

My mobile & mac book  
A coffee at the neighbours

white pudding & vegetable roué  
My own family and friends

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Paolo has three homes – Loreto Cottage, Woodthorpe & Rome!

Jonathan	Mum & Martin Drink tea	Your bed Loreto Cottage	Relax
Michael	Mum & Dad Going to the pub Somewhere to follow your 'footie' team – 'the Magpies'	CD's Bedroom	Headphones Somewhere to hang your coat
Dayle	Loreto Cottage Photographs of Mum Listening to Forest on the radio	Nice & homely Being relaxed when having a massage	All friends together

## Session 2: Favourite Things

*Everyone should have brought a 'favourite thing' from their home. Ask them to put it on the focus table and select some of the group members to talk to the whole group about their favourite thing at the end of the evening. In the gathering time let everyone view what is on the table. Gather everyone together and play the song from the "Sound of Music" – "these are a few of my favourite things".*

### Group Discussion

1. Ask everyone to tell us what they brought and why it is special to them – be respectful if they give you a rather unusual answer!
2. Where do they keep this 'favourite thing' in their home?
3. If you had to live on a desert island, what 'things' (books, music etc.) would you take with you?
4. What sort of home did Jesus have? Where was it? Who lived there? What do we know about them?
5. What sort of person do you think Jesus was when he was a boy and young man? How do we know?

#### For next time...

- Think of some of the things you like about being at home (eg. slippers, home comforts, good food, being together with the family)
  - Think of some of the things you don't like about being at home (eg. having to share things, not watching your favourite TV when someone wants to watch something else, not enough toilets, people pending too long in the bathroom, etc.)
    - Think about what you are like to live with – ask someone else to tell the group!
    - If anyone was a guest in your home, what would they feel?
    - Bring something from home which reminds you that you are loved

#### Prayer... Let us pray

Thank you, Lord, for each person in our family  
 Thank you for our home and those who are part of our life together  
 Loving God, you made us a family so that we could learn about your love for us. Thank you for the times we have been able to laugh and cry together, for giving us time to talk and listen to each other and for all the ways we know we are loved.  
 Forgive us when we hurt each other.  
 Help us to show others what your love is like by the way we love each other even in the little things we can do.  
 Please look after all those who have no family and no one to care for them, and help us never to forget that we are part of your family, which is the Church. We ask this through Christ our Lord. Amen

## Favourite Things?

### Here are some answers from the Hinckley Sunshine Club

- John M. - Hinckley United poster
- Eileen - my big Minnie Mouse (a birthday present for my 60<sup>th</sup>)
- Anthony - Dillon the dog
- Jane - 'snowy' my white seal because I care for the future of the polar ice-cap
- Amanda - darts and dominoes trophies
- Ian - CD's and DVD pack of 'Coronation Street', my favourite programme
- Danny - pictures of me with Max the dog
- Sergio - 'sponge Bob' who lives in the sea
- Stephen - my talking 'Dalek' from 'Doctor Who'
- Angela - yellow tulips that cheer you up in the morning
- Pat - a battered Sacred Heart Statue we've had since we were children and we had a little altar in our bedroom. 'He has lost a few fingers over the years but he goes everywhere with me.' A card from St.Peter's School from when I retired as a mid-day supervisor
- Catherine - a teddy bear called 'George' named after a boy she used to look after; his Mum made it for her.
- Jonathan - "Syston" – a koala bear bought there
- Chloe - "Daddy dog" – 'I got him while I was a baby to look after me'
- Naomi - a rosary from Mary and a friendship bracelet
- Claire - Lyndon's model yellow 'porsche' – as close as he'll ever get to having a real one!
- Theresa - a locket with photos of her Dad and her son in it – 'the two men closest to my heart'
- Jo - a 'heart' bought for me by my niece, Amy – 'she picked it out herself'

*After this we put up a poster of a 'desert island' surrounded by sand. We made pictures of what we would take and stuck them up on it.*

**Here are some answers from Loreto Thursday Club**

- Michael - my cup for pool in Llandudno
- David - photo of me with Barbara
- Paolo - a cook book
- Declan - a poster of Blondie
- Ken - a photo of my nephew
- Robert - a 'praying hands' made by my mother-in-law, who led the prayers at her church for 45 years
- John - a photo of me with my sister, Angela
- Sue - my teddy bear that I've had for 84 years
- Martin B - a picture of my Mum
- Bridget - 'heart and soul' piece of pottery denoting friendship
- Jim - a dinosaur with 'I love my grandpa' written on it – 'I always have to take it away with me', and rosary beads used during 'the troubles'. We said the rosary every night in the street hiding behind the gable end.'
- Caroline - books and cakes
- Ian - 'peace and quiet'! duster, roller and screwdriver
- Pat - a photo of my husband, Derek, peeling an apple for the first time ever with a plastic knife, in Barcelona
- Stephen - my camera
- Seamus - a photo of my boys
- Philip - teddy bear

Loreto Group's desert island. We would like to take the following:

Caroline – Aloe Vera face cream;

Neil – After Sun and toilet roll

Edward – my light writer

## Things that make us feel loved

**Here are some things that the Sunshine Club brought that make them feel loved at home:**

Yvonne brought her toy cat which she keeps in her bedroom and which she likes to cuddle at night

Sergio brought his 'Spiderpig' - his favourite toy from 'The Simpsons Movie' which always makes him laugh!

Danny brought a picture of all his friends in Llandudno – he is looking forward to going there again with them this year.

Lauren brought her favourite teddy bear

Betty brought a tiny teddy bear given to her by her grandchildren and her favourite picture of all her grandchildren together

Pat brought 'Victoria', a beautiful doll she has had for 43 years. Victoria was given to her by her late husband, Tom, and she is a treasured memory of their early years together

Fr.Frank brought a double frame with a picture of his Mum and a treasured letter from her in it.

## Session 3: Likes and Dislikes

*Put photos and objects from home on the focus table. Give everyone time to look at them. How do they remind us that we are loved?*

### Group Discussion

1. What do you like about being at home? (eg. your own room / space, family meals, celebrations and parties, just being together, wearing each other's clothes)
2. What do you not like about being at home? (eg. sharing bathroom, not getting your own way, having to put yourself out if a guest comes, doing chores when nobody else does like washing up and tidying your room.)
3. Do you watch TV on your own? Why?
4. Who is the best guest you could have? Who is the worst guest you could have?
5. Do you get on with everybody else all the time? Be truthful!
6. If not, why not?
7. Do you think any of this could be your fault? Why is it always me?
8. What could be done to make things better?

#### For next time.....

- Think about the times you fall out at home and whom you fall out with most often
- Can you think why this is?
- What causes rows?
- Do you ever think it could be you?
- What can be done to put things right when this happens?

#### Prayer... Let us pray

Thank you, Lord, for each person in our family  
 Thank you for our home and those who are part of our life together  
 Loving God, you made us a family so that we could learn about your love for us.  
 Thank you for the times we have been able to laugh and cry together, for giving us time to talk and listen to each other and for all the ways we know we are loved.  
 Forgive us when we hurt each other. Help us to show others what your love is like by the way we love each other even in the little things we can do.  
 Please look after all those who have no family and no one to care for them, and help us never to forget that we are part of your family, which is the Church. We ask this through Christ our Lord Amen

## Likes and Dislikes

Here are some comments from the Loreto Thursday Club:

	Likes	Dislikes
Declan	lying on the sofa in the lounge Drawing pictures in my bedroom Going out into the garden	Noisy people Loud music
Sinead	family & friends Having my own things Security / memories	people leaving a mess being on my own
Michelle	Bedroom with own wardrobe Aromatherapy Music nights / the pub Having Wednesdays at home	Noise change
Dayle	being in charge of packed lunches Going on holiday Bingo nights, aromatherapy	people banging things being changed at the last minute
Michael	Watching TV Hot dinner on the sofa Drying the pots My bedroom	Noise emptying the bins washing dishes untidy home
Martin	hoovering & housework Mowing the grass Ironing, mopping the floor Walking Mum & Dad Playing with nephews & nieces Holidays in Llandudno	putting clothes away fruit practising my guitar when Mum shouts at me
Michael M.	Watching TV, food Helping Mum Holidays / the pub Dusting / gardening	Time for bed being in the dark washing pots being told what to do Untidy rooms
Robert	Music / watching football Visits from family DIY Meal times around the table	Noise of the washing machine when people don't put their clothes away going food shopping
William	My flat Watching videos / food Going for a walk People in Orla House	washing cars

Pat	Cooking / looking after visiting family Gardening / arranging flowers Playing the piano	noisy people & cars phone calls trying to sell you something junk mail
Tony	Cooking My music room Sitting down with a book When the family come When the family go!	cleaning the bathroom gardening
Stephen	Brass cleaning Cleaning the cooker Walking Drinking cider / Forest matches Music / holidays in Llandudno	people shouting or showing off
Fr.Frank	Cooking for others Nicely decorated home – by me! Being comfortable and warm	forgetting what I came upstairs for Living on my own falling asleep on the sofa Phone rings too often Light bulbs keep blowing Changing all the clocks
Ken	Food / setting the table Going shopping with Sinead Listening to the radio Going to football	noise Peter slapping me on the head!
John L.	Food Going out My own toilet	Getting up Lammers chucking slippers at me!
Paul	Pasta, biscuits Going out with friends	Salads
Edward	Food / pub / snooker Holidays / gala bingo Times at Orla House Laughing / jokes	people arguing getting up early
Dave	Friends coming Going on holiday	when people tell me to put my teeth in!
Jonathan	Tea / coffee / pub Pool / bingo Going home to Mum	noisy people getting up
Seamus	Family When Niall says, ‘Daddy’ Watching ‘X files’	losing sleep

Bridget Trees, walking, music

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Wendy Her rosary

Neil chocolate cakes

getting up in the morning

## **Best guest / worst guest**

**Best** Someone who can clean well; my brother; Brian O'Driscoll; Eleanor the aromatherapist; my family; my brother; friends; Daddy every Saturday; Notts County Football team!; my handy grandson – I have a list of jobs ready! ; SPANNED groups; grandchildren – when you've had enough of them you can give them back!

**Worst** My mother-in-law – she never shuts up!; double glazing salesmen; burglars; the man who comes to read the meter and three days later you get the bill!

## Liturgy 1 - Keyworth – May 17 2009 *(This liturgy was the AGM of the agency)*

### Home is a Holy Place

**Entrance Hymn**      Come and go with me

**Introduction**      This year we are doing a project all together like we did last year and the year before – it is ‘Home is a holy Place’. We’ll be hearing a lot about this in the coming months and we hope to be able to make a book to be given to the diocese. Already two bishops have written to thank us for our work and to say how much they are looking forward to hearing more about it. How good is that? Today at Mass, we are going to think about three things: What is Home to me? What are my favourite things that I have there? What do I like and dislike about it?

**What is home?**      - Derby group  
**Favourite things**      - Hinckley group  
**Likes & Dislikes**      - Nottingham group

**Hinckley**      -      What do you have in your home? Your favourite things all round you which make you feel comfortable. They could be teddy bears, photos, clothes or whatever. So if were going off to live on a desert island, which of these things would you bring with you? Here is a picture of our desert island and some of the things that we would take.....  
 And here is our special ‘favourite things’ song, which we know you will recognise... *(they sing and mime “Favourite Things” from “The Sound of Music”)*

**Nottingham**      -      What do you like and what do you dislike about your home? Here are a few of ours – see separate sheet.

*We will use two gospel readings to illustrate Jesus’ home life:*

**First Reading** – Leicester group

**Introduction**      Where was Jesus’ home? Well, at first it was in Nazareth with Mary and Joseph where he grew up. We know very little about what happened to Jesus from the time he was 12 to the time he was 30. Was he a difficult child? Did he argue with his parents? Did he help his Dad in the carpentry shop? What sort of friends did he have? Did he bring them home for tea? Did he have a room of his own with his own things in it? What sort of things might they have been? Did he go to church with his parents? Was he good in church? Did he ever get sick? Who looked after him? There are thousands of questions we could ask about Jesus growing up and of course, the world was a very different place then from what it is now? Just think of all the things we have that Jesus couldn’t possibly have had. We do not know very much about his childhood but what we do know is that he loved his parents and did what they asked of him. Here are two readings from the Bible which tell us a bit about Jesus and his family:

The first one tells us about what happened when he was 12 years old:  
 Read the story from Luke 2:41-52

**Psalm** Let us build a house where love can dwell

**Second reading** – Loughborough group

**Introduction** When Jesus began his work he was often quite a way from his own home and so didn't see much of his parents. We don't know what happened to Joseph, how long he lived, where and when he died, because no mention is made about him. But Mary his mother played a very important part in his life. She was there at the beginning when Jesus started his work at the marriage at Cana. This is a lovely story which we are going to hear in a moment. I love the bit where she says to him, 'they have no wine' – what she meant was not, 'will you make some as a miracle' but, 'you and your mates have drunk it all, so what are you going to do about it'? There is mention here also about his 'brothers' but we do not know whether they were actually his brothers or it was referring to his disciples. Then Mary disappears from Our Lord's life until the very end when she is standing near to the cross and Jesus gives his mother to the care of his friend, John. It was at that moment, we believe, that Mary became the mother of the Church. Some people say that she was in the room with the apostles when the Spirit came, but we cannot be sure. What is certain is that Our Lord thought so much of his mother that he wanted her to be looked after and honoured, which she has been ever since. A little later, we will hear how Jesus made a home with his friends Martha, Mary and Lazarus, who lived in a place called Bethany, and this was the place where he went to put his feet up when he was very tired. But for today, let us think about this wedding.  
Read John 2:1-12

**Homily** "Woman, what is that to you or me?" Jesus separates himself from his family so that he can carry out his mission and then, at the end, when on the cross, he unites himself to his mother again and gives her to the Church in the person of St. John

**Bidding Prayers** Scunthorpe group

Dear Father, we come together today to think about our home and your place in it. Please listen to the prayers we offer you.

Father bless our homes and families. May they be places of love and welcome for everyone

Look after everyone here and help us all to be happy in our homes wherever they may be

We pray for all those families where there is sadness or trouble at the moment – please help them and comfort them

We pray for those people who have no home and those who have been forced to leave their homes because of earthquakes, famine or the violence of others. May they be able to return home soon.

Help us to make a home for you and your Son in our hearts and we hope that you will feel warm and welcome there

Thank you for the love and friendship we receive from each other in SPANNED and especially for all our friends here in Keyworth. Keep us all happy together in your family

We remember with love all our friends who have died since we met here last year...  
Take them into your eternal home and happiness

We now ask Mary, who is our mother too, to pray with us and for us

Let us say together our special SPANNED prayer:

**Thank you, Lord, for each person in our family.**

**Thank you for our home and those who are part of our life together**

**Loving God, you made us a family so that we could learn about your love for us. Thank you for the times we have been able to laugh and cry together, for giving us time to talk and listen to each other and for all the ways we know we are loved.**

**Forgive us when we hurt each other. Help us to show others what your love is like by the way we love each other even in the little things we can do.**

**Please look after all those who have no family and no one to care for them, and help us never to forget that we are part of your family, which is the Church. We ask this through Christ our Lord. Amen**

**Offertory Hymn** Because the Lord is my shepherd

**Preface**

**Eucharistic Prayer No.2**

**Communion Hymn** On this house your blessing, Lord

**Recessional** I will be with you

## Session 4 Falling out and Making up

Group discussion:

1. How often is there a row or falling out in your home? Be honest!
2. What is it usually about?
3. Who starts it?
4. How is it resolved?
5. Do you ever admit that it might be your fault?
6. How do you feel when you know you have been responsible for starting a row?
7. How would you like it to be put right?

*Get everyone back together and read the answers each group gave to the questions. There may be something someone says that is quite revealing – evidence of being hurt by someone else, or possibly an admission of causing hurt to others. Great sensitivity will be required at this point to ensure that the person is not embarrassed and, if it is possible, that the matter they have spoken of may be discussed by everyone.*

*Talk about the possibility of a family reconciliation “service” – once every couple of months after the weekend meal – or during a ‘house meeting’ or a residential community. The accent here must be very firmly placed on what I feel I may have done or not done, rather than ‘blaming’ someone else for what they have done to me. It may even be possible for the group to compose some such ‘service’.*

For next time...

1. What is it like to have no home?  
Can you imagine that?
2. Invite a speaker from a local homeless charity to come and speak about what it is like to be homeless.
3. Suggest ways in which the group could help the charity through some form of fund-raising
4. Bring large cardboard boxes and bits of plastic (eg. bin liners) for a competition to make a shelter for a homeless person on the street.

Prayer... Let us pray

Thank you, Lord, for each person in our family  
Thank you for our home and those who are part of our life together  
Loving God, you made us a family so that we could learn about your love for us. Thank you for the times we have been able to laugh and cry together, for giving us time to talk and listen to each other and for all the ways we know we are loved.  
Forgive us when we hurt each other. Help us to show others what your love is like by the way we love each other even in the little things we can do.  
Please look after all those who have no family and no one to care for them, and help us never to forget that we are part of your family, which is the Church. We ask this through Christ our Lord. Amen

## Falling out and Making up

### Here are some answers from the Hinckley group:

1. Very often, occasionally, a lot, one person often argues and lashes out. Overall we are happy but sometimes we fall out; we do have disagreements and misunderstandings
2. Arguments are usually about staying out; banging doors, loud music, cleaning our rooms, people with different opinions; belongings moved; people not keeping promises; “selective hearing” – ie. hearing only what you want to hear; men do not like to ask for instructions when new remote controls are brought; women always like the last word; saying sorry is the hardest thing to do as you feel that you are giving in; little things that tend to build up when you don’t get your own way.
3. It takes two to argue; usually one particular person in our home starts it; sometimes you start it if certain things are said; sometimes it starts if you have had a hard day at work
4. Sometimes I walk away, ignore it, say sorry; the first person to apologize; meeting half way and agree to keep the peace.
5. I realise it’s sometimes me; rarely; sometimes you agree if it’s your fault
6. It makes me feel awful; I feel upset in a way, sad and sorry; regret; insecure
7. Have a hug, make us and give a big kiss, say sorry; we apologize but with difficulty and you must be able to convince the other party that it is meant; care and consideration, gentle and not too much aggro.

*“I have often been called horrible things in the past, such as ‘spastic’.”*

*SPANNED made a concerted effort some years ago to raise the possibility of the Sacrament of Reconciliation for people with learning difficulties, but it did not finally materialise. Some opinion was expressed about our friends being “God’s little angels”, while all of us know only too well that sometimes this is clearly not the case! Others said that a ‘box’ would possibly frighten people, which is certainly true, so that matter sort of faded away from our consciousness. However, with the “Home is a Holy Place” project and the featuring of ‘falling out and making up’ within it, we might want to look again at the possibility of sacramental reconciliation for people with learning difficulties. Of course the context would have to be appropriate, but if we were to have something similar to the Celebration of Family Confession which appears in the appendix to this publication, this may be something that everyone values and wishes. It is true that most Catholic people have now abandoned the practice of regular confession for their own reasons, but the opportunities for it are still there, and it surely must be right not to deny these opportunities to those among us with learning difficulties if it is perceived that confession would be an important part of their spiritual lives.*

## Session 5 Having No Home

*This evening we invite a representative from a local homeless charity and talk about homelessness in the area for 15 minutes maximum and then to answer questions.*

### Group Discussion

1. Can you imagine what it is like to have no home?
2. Why are people homeless today? Could we help them? How?

**Song** "Streets of London" (*Ralph McTell*)

### Our Visiting Speaker

3. Having listened to our speaker, have they changed our views on homeless people?
4. Have they shown us ways in which we can help?
5. How will we do so in our group?

### Competition

6. Divide the group into two and supply each with cardboard, plastic sheets, a sleeping bag and ask them to construct a shelter for a homeless person. This would be better done outside so that they can feel the cold.
7. Ask everyone what it feels like to be in the shelter

#### For next time...

- Would you describe your home as a 'fun' place?
- Who makes you laugh the most?
- What sort of things or events have made you laugh a lot?
- Can you laugh at yourself?
- Do you think that this is important?

#### Prayer... Let us pray

Thank you, Lord, for each person in our family  
Thank you for our home and those who are part of our life together

Loving God, you made us a family so that we could learn about your love for us. Thank you for the times we have been able to laugh and cry together, for giving us time to talk and listen to each other and for all the ways we know we are loved.

Forgive us when we hurt each other. Help us to show others what your love is like by the way we love each other even in the little things we can do.

Please look after all those who have no family and no one to care for them, and help us never to forget that we are part of your family, which is the Church. We ask this through Christ our Lord. Amen

## Becoming Homeless – a story from the Nottingham group

- Ian arrived for the club night very smartly dressed in suit, tie and very clean shoes. He got up and asked us what would we do without our TV, Nintendo, Wii, X-box, showers, toilets, comfortable bed and sofa? What would we do without our family and friends?
- At this point he took off his smart jacket and tie and asked did we know how some people become homeless? One reason he gave was by becoming addicted to alcohol – he then took two empty bottles from his pockets, which he said he had enjoyed very much. Then he started talking about becoming lonely and going to the pub to be in other people's company, but in fact it's really just you and yourself – no friends and no family.
- A sign of the slippery slope – Ian then removed his clean white shirt only to show underneath a really scruffy and dirty T shirt. He carried on talking about losing your confidence with other people and how you can start to turn inwards to just being happy on your own. If you have a job and turned up for work one day dressed smartly and within a short time you let your appearance go, then your bosses would not be happy and possibly you would be sacked.
- Then you might turn to gambling and think you were always on a sure thing, but we know who the real winner is and that is the Casino. But again you may think you are among friends until one evening when your luck is out and you have just lost all your money. You approach a 'friend' to help you out as you believe that your luck will change, but your friend turns their back on you and decides not to be your friend any more. If you have a house, where is the mortgage money going to come from? If you have a car, do you have enough money for the petrol, tax and insurance, and if you lose your job, do you lose the car as well?
- All at once we lose our self-esteem and lose our confidence. Ian removes his shoes, his smart trousers to reveal a scruffy pair of jeans with holes in and very faded. On his feet he has no socks to keep his feet warm, only an old tatty pair of sandals. If it rains or snows, what will he do to stay dry?
- Here we see that we are now stripping away ourselves and becoming homeless, losing the most important things in our lives – our family and friends. We have no money, no food, no home (to call home) – we have lost everything.
- Perhaps we might end up on drugs, which they think might help them get through the day, whereas they are really taking them further and further away from the real world. Once addicted they will do anything for a fix and quickly become criminals and ill. We are stripping ourselves away and we don't realise it
- Through becoming addicted to drugs or drink or gambling, we leave our homes and families behind as they can't cope with us anymore, to end up in a world we really don't want to end up in. We do it to ourselves and who is to blame?
- At the end, we compare how Ian is now – dirty, scruffy, homeless, addicted – to the Ian that arrived at the beginning of the evening and there is no resemblance at all
- This is one way how respectable people can end up homeless. Not all homeless people are vagrants or tramps, as we used to call them, who cannot live inside, but often respectable people who are victims of misfortune and bad luck

We then tried to make Ian a cardboard home which he gets into . It is dry but not very comfortable. What would we do? Bridget told the group about her experience working in a Day Centre for Homeless people on Christmas Day, which really opened her eyes. She didn't want the day to end as she knew that all the people inside enjoying a hot meal would have to return to the streets once

the evening was over. There are night shelters in the city but still some people prefer to sleep in shop doorways or under railway bridges than to be inside. We then spoke about what we could do practically to help people at the Day Centre – eg. collect toothpaste, toiletries, clothes, etc.

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**Liturgy 2 – Scunthorpe, July 5 2009** *(this liturgy was also the 30th anniversary celebration of the Scunthorpe Group)*

**Entrance Hymn** Walk with me, O my Lord

**Procession** *The banner bearers come forward in procession*

**Welcome** *Fr. Frank*

**Introduction** 30 years of the Scunthorpe group

**Rite of Penance** Falling out and making up *Hinckley group*

Reader 1 We have spent a lot of time thinking about how we fall out and make up in our home, whether it is our family home or our community home. Often we fall out because we are selfish and think too much about ourselves – we don't like people moving our things; we don't like people making noise; we don't like people getting things that we think we should have; we don't like people who are always right; we don't like not getting our own way.

Reader 2 Sometimes we fall out because of misunderstandings and we find ourselves being nasty to those who live with us. Sometimes we blame others too easily rather than see that it might be our fault. We don't like it, but we feel we can't help ourselves and saying sorry is the hardest thing to do. But we can't keep on living like this – we have to make up, we have to try to put things right, and we have to see that yes, maybe it is me who is causing this problem, maybe it is me who is hurting others by what I say and do; maybe it is me who is making life awful for everyone else. I don't like myself for doing it; I don't like not being friends or having friends; I don't like feeling like this. I do want to make up so who will show me?

Reader 3 Jesus shows us how to forgive and how to ask for forgiveness; Jesus shows us that we can feel good about ourselves again when we have said 'sorry' to someone we have hurt. Jesus shows us how to heal and be healed. And so, just now, for a moment, let every one of us here think about how we might have fallen out with others and how much of it is our fault.

And now let us say that we are sorry:

Priest Lord Jesus Christ, you forgive us everything because you love us. Lord have mercy  
Lord Jesus Christ, you show us how to admit our fault and say we are sorry. Christ have mercy  
Lord Jesus Christ, you alone can make things right when we fail. Lord have mercy

Reader 3 If there is anyone in this church today, whom you know you have hurt,

and to whom you want to say you are sorry, go them right now and do it.

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**Psalm** Let us build a house where love can dwell

**Gospel** Luke 9:2-6, 57-58

Jesus called his disciples to him and sent them out to proclaim the kingdom of God and to heal. He said to the: "Take nothing for the journey, neither staff, nor haversack, nor bread, nor money, and let none of you take a spare tunic. Whatever house you enter, stay there, and when you leave, let it be from there." As they travelled along they met a man who said to Jesus: "I will follow you wherever you go." Jesus answered: "Foxes have holes and the birds of the air have their nests, but the Son of Man has nowhere to lay his head." This is the gospel of the Lord

**Homily** To have no home *Nottingham group*

*Steve enters in a suit, shirt tie and smart shoes. Gradually he removes his clothes to reveal the scruffy, dirty appearance of a homeless man. He looks for shelter and ends up in one of the cardboard boxes.*

Narrator 1 Can you imagine what it is like to have no home, nowhere to go to at night when you are tired and cold? We know that Jesus was homeless at the beginning of his life when he and his parents had to flee to Egypt for fear of King Herod. And then, when he was preaching and healing, there was nowhere for him to lay his head. Probably he had to sleep outside on many nights and sometimes his friends like Martha and Mary offered him a bed and a welcome.

Narrator 2 There are thousands of homeless people on our streets today. Often we think that it's their fault but that is because we don't really understand what has happened to them and why. Here is our smartly dressed friend, Steve. No one would ever think that he could become homeless because he looks so rich and smart. But say, for example he lost his job all of a sudden. Some people lose their jobs and never tell their families because they are ashamed. For months and months they dress up like this and their family think they are going to work, but they go to some café and sit all day drinking coffee, or go to the pub or go to bet on horses. Very soon, they can get addicted to drink or gambling and lose what money they have left. They lose their car and eventually lose their friends as well. Then they can lose their confidence and when the bank finds that they have stopped paying their mortgage, they take their house back and they really have to live on the streets. The smart suit disappears and all of a sudden they can become a ragged and dirty person. Their family might leave them because they are drunk and they can end up with no one, living a miserable life, friendless and penniless.

Narrator 3 So what has happened to our friend, Steve, just because he has lost his job? Very soon, he might have lost everything. Who will care about him now? Who will be his friend? Look at him – dirty T shirt, scruffy jeans, old shoes that let the water in – what has happened to the smart man we once knew? And when he can't afford to live in a hostel, he will have to live on the street, in a cardboard box and beg for food and drink. Here are the boxes we have

made – this is not a joke. Many homeless people would be glad of one of these boxes to keep them warm at night when they are sleeping on the street. So just remember when you see someone looking scruffy and dirty lying in a

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doorway or behind a bush – you don't know what life used to be like for them; you don't know how they became homeless; and you don't know that it might just be you one of these day

### **The poetry of Jamie Marshall aged 15**

*When I first started thinking about home and its relevance to being a Holy Place, I have to admit that I thought, well actually I thought nothing, because nothing came to me, but after a few days wandering round my home, I started jotting down some ideas and thoughts about my home – the house, the rooms within it and the people there; my family and friends that I invite into my home to be part of my family, and bringing those things together, for me, makes my home a very Holy Place. I just hadn't thought about it in that way or realised it before. I put myself in the position of someone who didn't have a home and this made it much easier.*

### **My Dream**

As the darkness closes in and the moon begins to rise,  
I allow my mind to wander and I slowly close my eyes,  
and in my dreams I picture a house to call my home,  
it's nothing very fancy, but it's a place to call my own.  
It's a place of warmth and safety, somewhere that I belong,  
something that I used to have, where did it all go wrong?  
Tonight, as every other night, the floor becomes my bed,  
no mattress and no covers, just cardboard beneath my head.  
How I wish I had my own room, with a bed in which to lie,  
A room that has a ceiling, not just the open sky.  
and I'll wake up, when I want to, in a room with my own things,  
take each day as it comes, and with every thing it brings.  
I hear the sound of laughter from my children down the stairs,  
and smell sweet smells of cooking as breakfast is prepared.  
I go into the bathroom but recoil at what I see  
for there in the cracked mirror is reality for me.  
As the hot water ran out of the tap the mist clouded my dream,  
it's not my happy home any more and inwardly, I scream.

### **Jack's poem**

My home is Holy because God is all around me  
my family who love me and who I love are always there for me  
I have lots of things and am grateful for all of them  
I pray every night in my bedroom that is my most Holy Place.

**Song**                      "The Streets of London" (Ralph McTell)

**Chorus:**                So how can you tell me you're lonely,  
and say for you that the sun don't shine?  
Let me take you by the hand and lead you through  
the streets of London;

I'll show you something to make you change your mind.

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Narrator 4            Three of our groups – Hinckley, Nottingham and Derby – have made a commitment to help a local charity which works for homeless people in their town, to raise funds for them, collect food for them and help them to help those who, through no fault of their own, find themselves homeless and friendless. Jesus said: “Whatever you do to the least of these brothers of mine, you do to me.”

**Bidding Prayers**     *Loughborough & Derby groups*

Priest            Dear friends, gathering here today, we give thanks for the thirty years of our beloved Scunthorpe group and ask God’s blessing upon them all for the future.

Reader            Father, please look after our Scunthorpe friends and thank you for their wonderful kindness and example given to the rest of us. Lord hear us

Bless all of us in SPANNED; keep us close to you and each other in your service. Lord hear us

We pray that whenever we have arguments that we will always be quick to ask forgiveness from you and each other. Lord hear us

We pray that we may learn to reach out to all people in need, especially those who have no home. Show us how to help and support them. Lord hear us

We pray for all our friends who are sick or unwell at the moment. Be with them to heal and comfort them. Lord hear us

We ask Mary our mother to pray with us and for us as we say: Hail Mary

Priest            Let us say together our special SPANNED prayer:

**Thank you, Lord, for each person in our family.  
Thank you for our home and those who are part of our life together  
Loving God, you made us a family so that we could learn about your love for us.  
Thank you for the times we have been able to laugh and cry together,  
for giving us time to talk and listen to each other and for all the ways  
we know we are loved.  
Forgive us when we hurt each other. Help us to show others what  
your love is like by the way we love each other even in the little things we can do.  
Please look after all those who have no family and no one to care for  
them, and help us never to forget that we are part of your family,  
which is the Church. We ask this through Christ our Lord. Amen**

**Offertory Music and Memorial**     *Scunthorpe reader*

Reader We bring our gifts of bread and wine to you, dear Lord, and the thirty years of our service as the Scunthorpe group. We bring you too the memory of our dear friends, whom you have called home:  
*The names of the dead are read out and their photos brought to the altar*

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**Preface** God our Father, you are powerful and live for ever. Always and everywhere we want to thank you for the wonderful goodness you have shown us in Jesus Christ your Son. You gave us Jesus to show us how to live splendidly and generously in your way. He had nowhere to lay his head and spent much of his life without a home to call his own. He asks all of us to make a home for him in our hearts and invites us into your home and life as our God. We praise you, Father, in the company of the angels and saints as we say: Holy Holy.

**Eucharistic Prayer No.2**

**Communion Hymn** Whatsoever you do

**Final prayer** Dear Father, we thank you for all that you have been to us, all that you are to us and all that you will be, in Jesus Christ our Lord.

**Recessional Hymn** Follow Me

## Session 6 - Fun and Laughter at Home

*Divide people up into groups and ask them to answer the following questions:*

### Group discussion

1. Who is the funniest person in your house, who makes you laugh the most?
2. Why?
3. What do they do that is funny?
4. Would you say that everyone in your home laughs a lot or not at all?
5. Can you laugh at yourself?
6. Each person should now tell the group something silly that they have done at home
7. Do you think we take ourselves too seriously?
8. Why? What could we do about it?
9. Do you think it matters to God how silly we are?

*Get back together and read out the answers from each group. Ask for volunteers to tell a funny joke, sing a funny song, or do something that will make us all laugh.*

### For next time...

- What / who is it that makes you feel loved when you are at home?
- Do you think that God's love is in your home? If so, how?
- What could you do to show the others in your home that you love them?
- Do you know many people who do not have a happy life at home? Why do you think that happens?

### Prayer... Let us pray

Thank you, Lord, for each person in our family  
 Thank you for our home and those who are part of our life together  
 Loving God, you made us a family so that we could learn about your love for us. Thank you for the times we have been able to laugh and cry together, for giving us time to talk and listen to each other and for all the ways we know we are loved.  
 Forgive us when we hurt each other.  
 Help us to show others what your love is like by the way we love each other even in the little things we can do.  
 Please look after all those who have no family and no one to care for them, and help us never to forget that we are part of your family, which is the Church. We ask this through Christ our Lord. Amen

## Fun and Laughter at home

Here are some answers from the Hinckley Sunshine Club:

1. “Me – when I look in the mirror”! Our children. My Dad; my wife; my Mum; our cat. TV makes many of us laugh – “Dad’s Army” (Bet) “Eastenders” (John & Danny), “Coronation St.” (Hilary), “Last of the Summer Wine” (Margaret), Terry Wogan and “Auntie’s Bloomers” (Pat) .
2. If you are feeling a bit fed up, it cheers you up. Children’s antics are always funny. We get into lots of silly and funny situations.
3. It’s just funny to watch silly things, one after another. Losing car keys and asking for intercession from the saints to find them! The actions of my cat.
4. Yes – most of the time. It depends on your mood.
5. Yes, because I am happy (Hilary); when I trip over the cat (Bet); I used to pull facers at myself. It needs someone else to point it out. Sometimes, I’m too grumpy to laugh at myself.
6. Pouring paint over myself when leaning over to paint a fence (Keith); putting my foot through the ceiling up in the loft (Fr.Frank); walking round to get into the wrong side of the car in France (Stuart); Tripping over when carrying my dinner (Danny); falling out of bed (Yvonne); falling off the chair (Jo)
7. More often than not, we do. Yes.
8. Sometimes you have to take a long hard look at yourself. Go out for a walk by myself (Margaret); go and talk to someone (John & Danny) Sometimes I cry. Let it go and try to have better moods.
9. No – he loves us as we are; God is good – he likes me to laugh at things (John). He wants us to laugh with others not at them. He would be happy if we were meeting people and doing different jobs, like helping others, instead of thinking of ourselves.

*Fr.Frank sang two silly songs; Ian sang “Mamma Mia”; Paul and Yvonne sang too.*

## Session 7      God's love in our home

*In this session we want to focus on an appreciation of God's love in our home, and the fact that it is God's love we share that makes it a home in the first place. All loving things teach us about God, so that is why we talk about 'feeling loved' first. One of the most revealing parts of the DVD is when a young father of five children says that God is asking him for help through his children; it is his face that is looking at you through them. You are God for them. It is like an extra person in the room, who helps us to give without thinking. If one of our family needs us, it does not matter if we feel tired or that it's not convenient – we have to help them because we love them. This is what love means and this is the sort of love that Jesus showed us – he did not have to die on the cross, and yet he did have to die. Because of him we give what we have to each other until sharing becomes second nature to us. The words 'mine', 'my' or 'I' eventually disappear from our vocabulary. One good way of demonstrating this is to show a large cross to the group and say that it is nothing more than the 'I' crossed out. We want to demonstrate that our love can be shown in many other ways as well – by building each other up, thanking one another, complimenting one another, comforting one another, taking delight in each other. We are all called to be 'ministers of love' in our home.*

### Group Discussion

1. Who is it that makes you feel loved at home?
2. What could you do to show others in your home that you love them?
3. When did you last pay a compliment or say something nice to someone you live with? What was it? How did they react?
4. Do you think God's love is in your home? If so, how?
5. Do you know many people who do not have a happy life at home? Why do you think that happens?
6. Do you think it is important to say 'sorry' if you have hurt someone and to forgive them if they ask you to?

#### For next time...

- What is your favourite food?
- What is the best and worst meal you have ever had? Where and why?
- How do you eat your meals – in front of TV, at table, in your room?
- Who does the cooking? Do you help?
- If you were asking friends round for a meal, what would you do?
- What would a 'disastrous' dinner party be like?

#### Prayer... Let us pray

Thank you, Lord, for each person in our family  
 Thank you for our home and those who are part of our life together Loving God, you made us a family so that we could learn about your love for us. Thank you for the times we have been able to laugh and cry together, for giving us time to talk and listen to each other and for all the ways we know we are loved. Forgive us when we hurt each other. Help us to show others what your love is like by the way we love each other even in the little things we can do.  
 Please look after all those who have no family and no one to care for them, and help us never to forget that we are part of your family, which is the Church. We ask this

## God's love in our home

### Here are some answers from the Hinckley Sunshine Club:

1. Who makes you feel loved at home? – My carer; my son; Ann; rabbits and chickens; My Mum; my husband; everyone at the Trees; my family; the cat; my Mum and Dad; my wife, with God; children;
2. How do you show others in your home that you love them? – give them a kiss or cuddle; by caring for the home and showing that you love them; helping Ann and looking after the animals; by doing little jobs for Mum and getting a cup of tea; looking after the home and making it welcoming for all the family; helping the staff at the Trees; always be there when needed; I treat them like an adult; I do what I can to help them; tell them that you love them; do as you are told; treat them with respect; saying and doing nice and loving things for them; give them a smile so big and genuine that the world stands still; I make them laugh or give them a hug and a smile; cook a nice meal; ask them what they want to do; shake hands;
3. When did you last say something nice to somebody at home? – tonight; I said ‘thank you’; by talking to my other son on the phone; I told Mum I loved her; I signed to Naomi that I love her at the Sunshine Club; I thanked my Dad for doing the cooking at my old house; not for a while; when I spoke to each of my family on the phone; I told my Mum I loved her and thanked her for paying for my haircut; today; hopefully it was earlier today!; I try to say please and thank you every day and not take things for granted; today I told Jo how beautiful she looked in her lovely dress – she was going to the Prom; I told my friends they were nice;
4. How is God’s love shown in your home? – by showing your love and trust to all the family; my Mum rings me from Spain and tells me she loves me; my Mum looks after me with all her love and care; showing love and compassion to all the family; when I smile at people who visit me; the family will always say ‘thank you’ for food, also prayers at night; by welcoming anyone who visits; I welcomed my Dad when I got up; we show it to each other in everything we do; when he lets my family forgive me and give me another chance; welcoming everyone who comes round to visit; I talk to the angels in bed before sleep and during the night, always have and always will; look down on me and look after my Dad; he controls the path I walk; I know he has got something planned for me but I don’t think I will know till the moment comes – strange!; having a home and enough to live on; having good family and friends; having people to care; when I am feeling sad and something nice happens unexpectedly; when people are friendly;
5. Do you know many people who do not have a happy life at home? Why do you think that happens? – because there isn’t any of God’s love in the home; ; because they don’t have the love, care and attention for the staff at times; because no one loves them; problems of life; illness, unemployment; problems with the family; death; abuse; arguments; fighting; loneliness; you shouldn’t be arguing about who is doing your washing because that makes others upset; there are a lot of unhappy people; misunderstandings; unkindness; not satisfied with life; lonely; every time you switch on the TV or open the paper it’s full of unhappy children or adults, who have miserable lives, most of the time through no fault of their own; a few, because they are selfish; where I live, someone is unhappy – I speak to her and cheer

her up; my friend is unhappy because she does not have any friends; I know someone who is unhappy – she is unwell and does not see much of her family; she is very lonely and sad

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6. Do you think it is important to say 'sorry' if you have hurt someone and to forgive them if they ask you to? – yes it is important for you and for everyone in your family; sometimes it's hard to say 'sorry' but it's important so that life can continue – forgive and forget; saying sorry with a smile makes life a lot easier; it's very important to mean it; if a person says they are sorry to you, do your best to understand and let them know you forgive them; always say you are sorry – this shows that you have respect and care for the feelings of others and that you don't mean to hurt them; yes, because you shouldn't fight with each other; you should say 'sorry' for being rude; yes, forgive them but you need to understand what it is about; it depends what you're forgiving; yes, but it's important to pick the right moment; good to make friends again; it makes me sad if I upset someone – I would say sorry and they would forgive me;

**Liturgy 3 - Clifton, Saturday September 12 2009** *(this liturgy is the Annual Mass of SPANNED with our bishop)*

*The banner bearers assemble in the porch along with one flag bearer for each group*

**Entry Hymn**            On this house, your blessing, Lord

**Greeting**              The Bishop

**Introduction** *Loughborough Group build their 'house'*

Welcome to our Annual Mass, with a special welcome to Bishop Malcolm and a sincere 'thank you' to Fr.Chris for once again letting us use his church. Throughout the year in our individual groups and when we have come together for our diocesan events, we have been talking and thinking about our homes, the places where we live, and in what ways home can be a holy place. We've looked at and talked about what makes us happy or sad in our homes, about why some people become homeless and about what we like and what we don't like; we've talked about prayer at home and sharing meals and celebrations and most of all about how God's love is present in our homes. In our Mass today, we will bring together all of these elements.

We've seen through the year that there are a great many types of places where people live. We know that our homes all look different – for instance we may live in a house, big or small, detached or semi, a flat or apartment, a bungalow, or even for some, a great mansion or palace. But all of these have the same starting point – they have to be built in the first place. Whatever the type of home, it had to be constructed, one piece at a time, probably by a whole range of workers with many skills.

The house we have on the altar today is just a small example (we didn't have room for a palace!) to show us how a house is built. The people are bringing the bricks and other materials of the house, and one by one they are added together. When the work is done, the house is built, but it is still a shell, however grand it may look. It is not a home yet. When people start to live in it, maybe just one person, maybe a family or group of friends, then it begins to be a home. Firstly because there are people in it, but more importantly because those people will bring to the house their own things, personal possession, photographs, all their favourite things that make the house familiar and comfortable to be in, and make it different from all the other houses that looked the same when they were first built.

And so, on each of the bricks that are being built into the house today, we have put something that shows what 'home' means to us, words such as 'family', 'friendships', 'prayer', 'meals', and pictures or images of our favourite things. An even more important thing we bring into the house to make it a home, is our love, meaning the thought and consideration we give to others in the home. And just as in this model, we are putting into the house our words and picture that we worked on as a community in our group, so in our lives we take into our homes what we have experienced in our communities. This is seen too when we welcome others into our homes, since the welcome they receive will be a reflection of the way we live our lives in our home.

Building a house, putting the bricks together, is not easy: it takes time and hard work. So too with making a home, we have to keep working at our friendships and take time and trouble to look after

each other. There is a psalm that begins with the line, “if the Lord does not build the house, in vain do its builders labour”, which is not saying that the Lord is the one who puts the bricks in the walls, nor does he tell us every minute of the day how to behave and how to treat people. Rather it means

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that if we want to build or achieve something that is truly worthwhile, we should do it with God’s love in our minds and hearts, and that is the best way to make a house into a home.

Song: Let us build a house where love can dwell

**Rite of Penance**      Derby Group

- Reader 1      Sometimes we take our family and friends in our homes for granted, expecting them to do everything for us. *Remove brick*
- Reader 2      Sometimes we are selfish, we only want things for ourselves; we don’t want to share our chocolates, our television or our games *Remove brick*
- Reader 3      Sometimes we are grumpy and can’t be bothered to talk to others in our home *Remove brick*
- Reader 4      Sometimes we think we are better than those around us *Remove brick*
- Reader 5      Sometimes we don’t try hard enough at home to help others  
*Remove brick*
- Reader 1      Dear Lord, we are sorry that we only think about ourselves. Help us to think about those who live with us and to help them. We are sorry, Lord
- All**      **We are sorry, Lord**      *Replace brick*
- Reader 2      Dear Lord we are sorry we are selfish and don’t want to share our possessions. Help us to share what we have gladly. We are sorry, Lord
- All**      **We are sorry, Lord**      *Replace brick*
- Reader 3      Dear Lord, we are sorry we are sometime bad tempered and behave badly to others. Help us to be kind and to understand how other people might be feeling. We are sorry, Lord
- All**      **We are sorry, Lord**      *Replace brick*
- Reader 4      Dear Lord, we are sorry when we don’t laugh more in our home, when we take ourselves too seriously and don’t make it a fun place to live. We are sorry, Lord
- All**      **We are sorry, Lord**      *Replace brick*
- Reader 5      Dear Lord, we are so sorry when we forget about you, when we don’t pray to you in our home or think about you, when we don’t try to love each other as you asked us to. We are sorry, Lord

**All**            **We are sorry, Lord**     *Replace brick*

**Bishop**        May Almighty God have mercy on us, forgive us our sins and bring us to life everlasting.

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**All**            **Amen**

**Prayer**        Dear Father in heaven, you have come to live with us in Jesus your Son. He is with us always, especially in our hearts and in our homes. Help us to feel him in our hearts, to see him in the love we are given, to know him as our Saviour and friend, and to honour him wherever we may be in all that we think, say or do, for his is Lord for ever and ever.

**First Reading**        Hinckley group

Narrator        If God is in our home, then it should always be a place of joy and happiness. We've been thinking about our homes as fun places where people can sometimes laugh a lot and what a good thing that is, especially if you can laugh at yourself, and the daft things you sometimes do. Yvonne said that Gwen made her laugh when she tripped over the cats. Ian said that Patty makes him laugh when she pulls funny faces. Danny said that Anne keeps burning the toast. Father Frank owned up to putting his foot through the ceiling when he had to go up to the loft to fetch the Christmas crib down in his first parish. Marina bought some new glasses and then promptly sat on them. Stuart put strawberry jam on the salad instead of tomato chutney and Pam was not pleased. She says that he's so stupid that he puts his shoes in the airing cupboard to dry and then forgets where they are. Danny burned the carpet when ironing his clothes on the floor. Our lives together at home bring us comfort and happiness if we live in God's way, and here is a reading from St.Paul, where he was telling the Romans how they should live in their homes:

Your love must be sincere and straightforward. Have nothing to do with evil of any kind. Give your heart to everything that is good. Be a real family, warm-hearted in your care for one another, thinking better of others than yourselves. Look forward to God's new world with gladness. In hard times, stand your ground and never forget to pray. Take your part in helping other friends of Jesus when they are in want; make it your aim to keep the doors of your home open to those who need it. Share other people's happiness and other people's sadness. Learn to respect everybody. This is the Word of the Lord

**Responsorial Psalm**    The response is: How lovely is your dwelling place, Lord God of hosts

My soul is longing and yearning,  
is yearning for house of the Lord.  
My heart and my soul ring out their joy,  
to God, the living God

They are happy who dwell in your house,  
for ever singing your praise.  
They are happy whose strength is in you,

in whose hearts are the roads to heaven

One day within your house  
is better than a thousand elsewhere.

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The threshold of the house of God  
I prefer to the dwellings of the wicked

**Gospel**      *Mimed by the Hinckley group to "The Blessing of the Three" (Sacred Weave Music)*

A reading from the holy gospel according to St. John

Jesus said: "Do not let your hearts be troubled or afraid; trust in God still, and trust in me. There are many rooms in my Father's house; if there were not, I should have told you. I am going now to prepare a place for you and after I have gone and prepared you a place, I shall return to take you with me, so that where I am, you may be too. If anyone loves me, he will keep my word, and my Father will love him and we shall come to him and make our home with him. Make your home in me, as I make mine in you." This is the gospel of the Lord

**Homily**                      The Bishop

**Prayer of the Faithful**      Leicester Group

Bishop    Dear friends in Christ, gathered together in this holy place, we ask God our loving Father to listen to these prayers we put before him today.

Reader    Lord, we pray for the Church. Help us always to love our brothers and sisters, so that we may have happy lives, and be happy in our family of the Church and in our homes

Bishop    Lord hear us

Reader    We pray for peace in the world. We ask you, Lord to help all those who have lost their friends and their homes because of war, broken homes and relationships. Give them your peace

Bishop    Lord hear us

Reader    We pray for those people who are very unhappy because they have no jobs and are homeless. Help us to reach out to them in friendship and give them some hope for the future.

Bishop    Lord hear us

Reader    Lord, in our families, we are able to eat and rest. We pray for those who live in places where there are floods, famine and disease. Help us to make them happy by living more simply in our homes.

Bishop    Lord hear us

Reader    Dear Lord, we pray today for all people who have been forced to leave their homes and countries, and live as refugees and asylum seekers. Help us to be generous in sharing what we can with them.

Bishop Lord hear us

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Reader We remember especially today all our friends who have died since we last celebrated this Mass together: May they rejoice in their new home in heaven and rest in love and peace in friendship with you and all the saints.

*Candles are brought out in memory of each person.*

Bishop Lord hear us

Reader We ask Mary, the Mother of Our Lord and our mother too to pray with us and for us as we say: Hail Mary

Bishop Let us now say together our special SPANNED prayer:

**Thank you, Lord, for each person in our family.**

**Thank you for our home and those who are part of our life together**

**Loving God, you made us a family so that we could learn about your love for us. Thank you for the times we have been able to laugh and cry together, for giving us time to talk and listen to each other and for all the ways we know we are loved.**

**Forgive us when we hurt each other. Help us to show others what your love is like by the way we love each other even in the little things we can do.**

**Please look after all those who have no family and no one to care for them, and help us never to forget that we are part of your family, which is the Church. We ask this through Christ our Lord. Amen**

**Offertory** Nottingham group

Narrator In the Loreto group we have been thinking about what sort of things we would like to put in this house, this home that God has built for us: Of course there would have to be some comforts – TV, wine, a kettle for making the tea, flowers to cheer it up, nice carpet, a good bed, ornaments and photos of our family and friends, a fireplace for the lounge and a big dining table for many people to eat around. What makes a house home, though, is not things, but people – the people who live there, the friends and family who come to stay, and above all else the person who made it all: God, who is with us in our home every day, even when we don't know it.

*Various items are put into the house with a crucifix last of all*

**Hymn** Come, Lord Jesus Come

**Prayer over the gifts** Loving God, we bring you this bread and wine, as symbols of what we have made. As you change them into the life of Jesus your Son, change us too into the people you would like us to be. We ask this through Christ our Lord

**Preface** God our Father, you are powerful and live for ever. Always and everywhere we want to thank you for the wonderful goodness you have shown us in Jesus Christ your Son. You gave us Jesus to show us how to live splendidly and generously in your way. He had nowhere to lay his head and spent much of his life

without a home to call his own. He asks all of us to make a home for him in our hearts and invites us into your home and life as our God. We praise you, Father, in the company of the angels and saints as we say: Holy Holy.

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## **Eucharistic Prayer No.2**

### **Our Father**

Bishop        God is our Father and we are his children; because of his love for us we are all one family. As a sign of this, let us now join hands with each other as we say the prayer that Jesus taught us

**Communion Hymn**    Be still for the presence of the Lord

**Thanksgiving Meditation**    Scunthorpe group

God be in my home and in my heart; God be in each day right from the start;  
God be in my mind and in my living; God be in my hands and in my giving;  
God be in my joy and in my playing; God be in my faith and in my praying;  
God be in the truth of what I'm saying; God be in the act of you obeying;  
God be my salvation and my friend; God be in my life right to the end. Amen

**Final Prayer**    Loving Father, you have made your home in us through Jesus your Son; may we now make our home in Him through prayer and action, so that one day we may live for ever with you in the home you have made for us in heaven. We ask this through Christ our Lord

### **Blessing**

Bishop        May God the eternal Father keep you in love for him and for each other so that the peace of Christ may stay with you and be always in your homes

**All**            **Amen**

Bishop        May your children bless you, your friends console you and all people live in peace with you

**All**            **Amen**

Bishop        May you always bear witness to the love of God in the world so that the afflicted and the needy will find in you generous friends and welcome you into the joys of heaven.

**All**            **Amen**

Bishop        And may Almighty God bless you, the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit.

**All**            **Amen**

Bishop        Go in peace to love and serve the Lord

**All**            **Thanks be to God**

## Session 8: “The Disastrous Dinner Party”

*The purpose of this session is to concentrate on ‘eating’ and how to do it properly or not do it properly. The reason for this is that if we do not know how to eat properly and celebrate a meal, we will not know how to celebrate the Eucharist. In two sessions’ time, we will attempt to celebrate a Mass in the home or meeting place followed by a formal meal in the very same place, using the same tables, to enhance the connection between the two. The underlying theme will then lead into the last session where a connection between the ‘church’ as ‘building’ and as ‘people’ will finally be made to enable everyone to see the church as their ‘home’ as well. This session will highlight what can go wrong when a family sit down to eat together, if indeed they do that at all, and it can be carried out in various ways. You will need a large table in the middle of the room, chairs and various items to be placed upon it at the appropriate time. You will also require some food items, plates, cups – paper and china – cutlery, take-away papers and polystyrene boxes. You can use one group to mime the whole activity or give a particular part of it each to several groups depending on how many people you have for the session. The Narrator will be the key person, who tries to draw out information from the participants as well as ‘commentating’ on what is happening. Some chairs in front of an imaginary TV need to be situated close to the main table. The piece can be narrated entirely and mimed or acted out as follows:*

*A group of young people/ children slouch on the chairs obviously watching television or playing with their mobile phones.*

Narrator        Good evening everyone, and welcome to the disastrous dinner party. This evening we are going to show you many ways of how *not* to eat your dinner, so please do not under any circumstances try this at home, and if you do already, then change what you are doing straight away! The evening has come and the family have gathered for the meal, beautifully cooked for them by their mother, slaving for hours over a hot stove.....

*The mother enters*

Mother        You must be joking, mate!

Narrator        ....At Mr.Deng Wong’s ‘take-away’. First of all it is necessary to prepare the table and gather the family

Mother        It’s ready...somebody set the table

*Nobody moves*

Mother        I said, somebody set the table....come on, you do it

Person 1       Mum, why me? I always have to do it

Person 2       No you don’t...I did it last week...anyway you’re the youngest...that’s your job

Person 1       It’s not fair....Mum..it’s not fair

Mother Will you get on with it and set the table...this'll get cold

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*He throws a cloth on the table very untidily and bashes dishes and cutlery down, then returns to the TV*

Narrator The family are a first a little reluctant to begin the meal as instructed because there are other things on their mind

Person 3 Why can't we have it on our laps? We're watching the football!

Mother Look, that's not the way to have your dinner...you can go back to the telly afterwards...record it if you have to

Person 4 But we don't want to record it...it's exciting

Mother Record it and come to the table

*They all move to the table and fight over the chair which allows them to keep watching the TV*

Person 1 That's my chair....

Person 2 No..it's mine...I want to watch the TV

Person 1 So do I....it's mine

*The father enters and takes the chair from them*

Father We'll soon sort this out...I'll sit there

*He sits in the chair and watches TV over their shoulders. The mother brings in the take-away and slaps it down on the table*

Person 3 Oh no....not a take-away again. If I have any more noodles, I'll turn into one!

Person 4 You are a noodle already so there!

*He tries to hit her but the father intervenes*

Father We'll have none of that at the table, thank you

Person 1 Dad, I don't like noodles...how many times have I told you I don't like noodles?

Person 2 Why can't we have chips? We love chips

Person 3 Yeah...and chicken nuggets...or burgers...or sausages

Mother Junk food is not good for you... I've told you that before

Person 4 But this is junk food...it doesn't get any junkier!

Father            Now shut up and get it down you...It'll do you good...and stop moaning...there's plenty of children with nothing to eat...your mother's had a hard day and so have I, so if you don't mind, we'd like a bit of peace

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*The young people grab at the food with their hands and the mother slaps them*

Mother            Do you mind? We're not in a zoo

*She then pours out the lemonade and gives it to them. They examine it to see who has got the most*

Person 1          Mum, he's got more than me..it's not fair

Person 2          No...I haven't ... anyway...she's got the most

Person 3          That's 'cos I'm the eldest and I need more

*They make a grab for the bottle and the mother quickly removes it*

Mother            That is quite enough of that...eat your food

*Person 4 is texting at the table and the father is still watching TV, so much so that he spills his food down his shirt*

Mother            Would you two care to join us or is that asking too much?

Father            It's the match...I always watch the match

Mother            But not when we're eating thank you....

*She takes the remote control and turns it off. The father grunts. She then takes the phone from Person 4 who whines. They eventually finish their food, wasting large amounts of it*

Mother            I don't know why I bother...going to the expense of getting you this lovely food when all you do it waste it....there's people starving you know...they'd be glad of it

Person 1          Well give to them then...we don't like it...we told you

*She exits and comes back with a cake which she puts on the table. The children make a grab for it*

Person 2          Your slice is bigger than mine...Mu-um

Mother            Will you stop it?

*The father meantime has found the remote control and is watching the match again*

Mother            Look, can't you do anything? These children are out of control

Father            What? ....oh do what your mother says

Mother            You're not one bit interested in me or them of anything except your beloved football...this is no way to have any family life you know...

*The children have sneaked away from the table and gone back to the chairs with the cake in their hands. The mother is now in complete despair*

Mother            So who's going to clear the table?

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*The children answer together pointing at each other*

Children          He is....she is

Mother            Oh...I give up

Narrator          I'm sure you'll all agree that this is a beautiful family meal...perhaps it is like a meal in your home...I hope not...but it is how some people eat. And it's terrible, isn't it? So let's break up into groups and talk about what went wrong

### **Discussion**

*Everyone gets into small groups and discusses the following questions*

1. How many things can you think were wrong with that family scene? List them
2. Is it anything like the meals you have in your house? If so, how?
3. How do you think we could put this right when we eat together?
4. Do you ever sit down as a family or community to eat?
5. What should be important when you do? What should happen during the meal?

*We would hope that items like bad table manners, watching TV while eating, arguing over measures, wasting lots of food, never saying 'thank you' or helping to set or clear the table, would come up in the discussion, as well as the need to share what we have, listen to each other at table, eat sparingly and make the meal a real celebration.*

For next time...

We will look at the special meal that Jesus had with his friends, the Jewish Passover, and think about what it meant, as well as what happened at the Last Supper, when the Passover became the Mass

Prayer... Let us pray

Thank you, Lord, for each person in our family  
Thank you for our home and those who are part of our life together Loving God, you made us a family so that we could learn about your love for us. Thank you for the times we have been able to laugh and cry together, for giving us time to talk and listen to each other and for all the ways we know we are loved. Forgive us when we hurt each other. Help us to show others what your love is like by the way we love each other even in the little things we can do. Please look after all those who have no family and no one to care for them, and help us never to forget that we are part of your family, which is the Church. We ask this through Christ our Lord. Amen

## Session 9 Jesus' meal with his friends

*In this session, we will try to re-create the 'Passover' meal of the Jewish people in a simplified form, in order to see how it leads into the Mass.*

Preliminary discussion:

1. Can you think of any times when you might sit down for a celebration meal?
2. What do you need to have when you do?
3. Can you think of any time when Jesus ate a special meal with his friends? What was it called?
4. When do we eat a special meal with Jesus? What is that called?

**Preparing the table:**

*There should be a long table at which everyone can sit down, covered in a banqueting cloth, with plates, serviettes, cutlery, glasses and candles. A special cup or chalice is used – maybe the same we use for Mass. A bowl of water with towel(s) is needed for washing hands before the meal. The meal can be led by two people to represent the mother and father of the household.*

*Food required: A joint of lamb sliced into small pieces; sprigs of parsley for everyone; wine or grape juice; matzah unleavened bread; horse-radish sauce; honey and a bowl of salted water*

*All gather round the table with the 'mother' and 'father' at the top.*

*A hymn is sung: "Shalom, my friend"*

*The mother lights the candle and prays:*

Mother      Blessed are you, O Lord our God, King of the Universe, who have commanded us to light these lights. May we be blessed by the light of your presence, shining upon us and giving us peace.

All            Blessed be God for ever

*The father lifts the cup of wine*

Father        As we lift this cup, let us welcome the festival of the Passover and rejoice in the joy of our salvation. With songs of praise and symbols of our feast, let us renew the memory of the past. In love, God has given us this memorial of our departure from slavery in Egypt, so let us thank him and praise him.

*The father sips his wine and each person takes a sip from their own cup. He then washes his hands and dries them. The bowl is passed round and each person washes their hands. Background music may be played. After this, people representing the 'children' of the house ask the questions:*

Child 1      Why do we celebrate this feast?

Father        This night is different from all other nights. We celebrate this night because our ancestors were the slaves of Pharaoh in Egypt and the Lord God delivered us with a mighty hand. Had not the Lord delivered our fathers from Egypt, we and all our children would have remained slaves. This is why we celebrate and tell the story of our deliverance from Egypt: listen to the story

Reader        A reading from the book of Exodus

A long time before Jesus was born, God's people, the people of Israel, lived in Egypt away from their own country. The ruler of Egypt, called the Pharaoh, grew jealous of them and wanted to break their spirit. He forced them into slave labour and treated them badly, but this did not stop their numbers growing. Even when he sent his men to kill all the baby boys that did not break them. God's servant, Moses, was rescued by a woman of the royal court and he was brought up there. When he grew up and saw how the people of Israel were being treated, he killed one of the soldiers and then had to escape. God chose Moses to lead his people out of their slavery, and this is how it happened. God sent Moses ten times to tell Pharaoh that if he did not let the people of Israel go, God would punish him with great plagues. Even after nine plagues, Pharaoh did not agree. So God sent a tenth plague to destroy them all but he told Moses first: You must carry out these orders family by family. Kill a lamb and take a plant, dip the plant in the blood and spread it over the doorposts and lintel on the outer door of your house. And stay indoors all night. God will be passing through the Egyptians bringing death in his path but when he sees the blood on your lintel he will pass over you. Pharaoh sent for Moses and told him to get out of the country as fast as he could and to take all his people with him. The Israelites didn't even have time to finish baking their bread; they carried the unleavened dough in bags under their arms. When they reached the sea, God drove the sea back so that they could pass through it into their own country. When the Egyptian army followed them, God drove the waters back and swept them all away. This is how God saved his people who passed over from slavery to life.

*The mother breaks the matzah and passes it round for each person to take a piece.*

Mother        This is the bread of suffering which our ancestors ate in the land of Egypt.

Child 2        Why do we eat only unleavened bread on this night?

Father        When Pharaoh let our ancestors go, they had to flee in haste. They had no time to let the yeast rise in their bread. This bread is called matzah. It reminds us of their haste in escaping bondage in Egypt and God's mighty hand in saving them.

Child 3        Why do we eat bitter herbs on this night?

Mother            We eat bitter herbs because our ancestors were slaves in Egypt where their lives were bitter. In eating these herbs we recall their hardship

*The mother passes the plate of herbs and everyone dips their matzah into the sauce*

46)

Father            As we eat, we rejoice in the mighty acts of God who has delivered us out of hardship and bitterness

All                Blessed be God for ever

*Everyone eats the matzah*

Child 4           Why do we dip green herbs in salt water on this night?

*The mother passes round the plate of parsley and the bowl of salt water. Everyone dips their parsley into the salt water*

Father            We dip this parsley into salt water to remind us of the tears shed by our people when they were slaves

*Everyone eats the parsley*

Child 5           Why do we dip bitter herbs in honey on this night?

*The mother passes round more matzahs and a plate with a mixture of horseradish sauce and honey into which everyone dips their matzah.*

Mother           We eat bitter herbs mixed with honey as a sign of hope. Our ancestors were able to put up with the bitterness of slavery because it was sweetened by the hope that one day God would deliver his people.

*All eat the matzahs and mixture*

Child 6           What is the meaning of the Passover lamb?

Father            The lamb was sacrificed at the Passover and its blood was placed on the doorposts of the homes of the children of Israel. When God saw the blood he passed over their homes when he visited death on the Egyptians

*The mother passes around the lamb which everyone eats.*

Father            Let us rejoice that the lamb bore the sins of the world by its dying

All                Blessed be God for ever

*Everyone drinks from their cups*

Father            As followers of Jesus Christ we know that he is the lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world. The last supper was the first Mass, when Jesus gave us himself to eat and drink. Through Jesus' dying on the cross and the spilling of his blood, we can pass-over from death to life and be new people in him. That is why the Mass is

so important to us, in that it recalls what Jesus did and in a most special way what Jesus is still doing for us today. Jesus is always giving his whole life to set us free.

Reader A reading from the book of Revelation. The apostle John saw a vision in the sky of a lamb that had been killed but had come to life. Thousands of people gathered around him and praised him for his goodness and love. They said: “worthy is the lamb that  
47)

was slain to receive power and wealth and wisdom and strength and honour and glory and praise.”

All Blessed be God for ever

Father This service is now over. We have lifted up our cups in memory of the promises of God to save us, and we have called upon his name. We now lift up our hearts to him in faith and hope and ask his blessing upon us. May he, who broke the power of Pharaoh, break the power of sin in our lives and bring an end to injustice for ever. May his kingdom come on earth as it is in heaven and may he be present with us always.

Blessing - we all say the blessing together

All May the Lord bless us and keep us. May the Lord make his face to shine on us and be gracious to us. May he lift up the light of his face to us and give us peace. Amen

Hymn

For next time....

We will be having a very special occasion when we celebrate Mass together in the room where our group meets and afterwards at the same table we will serve up a really nice meal. We hope that it is nothing like the disastrous dinner party we shared in earlier!

Prayer... Let us pray

Thank you, Lord, for each person in our family

Thank you for our home and those who are part of our life together Loving God, you made us a family so that we could learn about your love for us. Thank you for the times we have been able to laugh and cry together, for giving us time to talk and listen to each other and for all the ways we know we are loved. Forgive us when we hurt each other. Help us to show others what your love is like by the way we love each other even in the little things we can do. Please look after all those who have no family and no one to care for them, and help us never to forget that we are part of your family, which is the Church. We ask this through Christ our Lord. Amen

## Session 10 The Celebration of Mass and a Special Meal

*This evening we take great care to prepare the room in which we meet regularly, rather in the same way that we prepared it for the Passover meal. We cover the table in a nice cloth and have seats for everyone. We have lighted candles and a special place for the priest to sit. The liturgy from the Mass can be one of celebration – three of our groups used this occasion to celebrate their 30<sup>th</sup> anniversaries –and thanksgiving with appropriate readings and hymns.*

*After the Mass, clear the table reverently and re-set it for a slap-up meal which has been prepared beforehand. People should sit in the same places if possible, a 'grace' before the meal should be said and a speech might be made to thank the cooks at the end. If possible some discussion around the table should take place.*

*We want to make the link between the Passover and the Mass and then the Mass and the formal meal. The ingredients are similar but what is involved is also important – good food and wine, good conversation and listening, signs of friendship and peace, prayers of thanksgiving, etc.*

1. Can you think of anything similar about this evening's Mass and last time's Passover?
2. What items of food were the same?
3. What do they symbolise?
4. Can you think of anything similar to the meal we have just enjoyed?

For next time...

- Why do we go to church?
- What happens there?
- We spend time with each other – community
- We share a special meal Eucharist
- We listen to our friend speaking to us – the Word of God – and talk back to him - prayer
- We celebrate our life and friendship together

Prayer... Let us pray

Thank you, Lord, for each person in our family  
Thank you for our home and those who are part of our life together Loving God, you made us a family so that we could learn about your love for us. Thank you for the times we have been able to laugh and cry together, for giving us time to talk and listen to each other and for all the ways we know we are loved. Forgive us when we hurt each other. Help us to show others what your love is like by the way we love each other even in the little things we can do. Please look after all those who have no family and no one to care for them, and help us never to forget that we are part of your family, which is the Church. We ask this through Christ our Lord. Amen

## Session 11      The Church as our Home

*The purpose of this final session is to draw together all the strands that have gone before and make the link between the Church and our home. What makes a 'home' is not the building of the house, but the people in it; likewise what makes a 'church' is not the building, but the people. This is not to say that the buildings are not important in either case, because they are the places where the people feel warm, comfortable, at peace, loved and safe, where they eat together, pray together, sometimes fall out and make up together and live every facet of their lives together. The love that is in these places then should reach out beyond them to places where there is no love and people who have no 'place, no home. We hope that we can move away from the notion of 'going to church' as if it were something detached like going to a football match or to the cinema and move towards seeing church-going as 'coming home' to meet God, and looking forward to that day when we can truly 'come home' to him and see his face for ever. There will therefore be a section in this session as there has been in all our liturgies this year, to remember with gladness all those who have 'come home' to the Father in heaven.*

### Activity

*Take a large cardboard box and stand it on its end. On one side we will make a house, on the other a church. Alternatively, you may use two boxes the same size side by side. The opening leaves at the top should be kept loose so that they can be made into a roof for both buildings. Paint the inside or decorate it. Cut out templates of 'people' to be coloured in by group members as themselves and then placed in the house, attaching them to the walls with removable blue-tac. Make a table and place it in the centre of the room. The table then doubles up as the altar.*

### Discussion

1. How much can you remember from our project work this year?
  - what is 'home'? who lives there? what makes it a home?

- what do you like about your home or not?
- who makes you happy in your home?
- what do you do when you fall out with each other?
- how do you know that God's love is in your home?
- what do you know about people who have no home? how can we help them?
- what is it like when you eat together at home?
- what special meal did Jesus eat with his friends? what happened because of it? what happened after it?

2. In what ways do you think of the church as your home?

*Write down the key words on small flashcards and put them around the 'home' and the 'church'. Move the 'people' out of the model of the home into the model of the church*

#### **At home we.....**

Live together with family  
Share warmth, friendship and love  
Have lots of smiles  
Talk to each other  
Listen to each other  
Eat together properly  
Feel safe and protected  
Celebrate big and small events  
Welcome new friends  
Are thankful for a lovely home

#### **In church we.....**

Live together as God's family  
Share warmth, friendship and love  
Have lots of smiles  
Talk to God  
Listen to God in the Bible  
Share the meal which is the Holy Mass  
Feel God's presence around us  
Celebrate big and small events  
Welcome new friends  
Are thankful for God's love

**The Church is our home and our family. We belong there because we belong to God and to each other. Coming to church is like coming home.**

*If possible take the group into the church for a few moments. Point out some of the features mentioned in the discussion – the lectern (where we hear God speak); the altar (where we share the holy meal with Jesus; the font (where we begin our lives as his followers)- and any other things that might be especially relevant to your particular community. Try to remember some of the happy occasions you have had in this place together*

3. Let us light our candle and remember all our friends who have 'come home' to God to live with Him in heaven for ever.....

God be in my home and in my heart; God be in each day right from the start;  
God be in my mind and in my living; God be in my hands and in my giving;  
God be in my joy and in my playing; God be in my faith and in my praying;  
God be in the truth of what I'm saying; God be in the act of you obeying;  
God be my salvation and my friend; God be in my life right to the end. Amen

Prayer... Let us pray

Thank you, Lord, for each person in our family

Thank you for our home and those who are part of our life together Loving God, you made us a family so that we could learn about your love for us. Thank you for the times we have been able

## **Liturgy 4 – Leicester, November 29 2009**

**Entry Hymn**            Here in this place

### **Introduction**

Leicester            This year we have been thinking and praying about home as a holy place. We have worked hard in our groups and had some very interesting evenings and then we have brought our work to the Masses we have shared together at Keyworth, Scunthorpe and Clifton. Today we come to the end of the project and we will present our work to our friend, Fr. John Sherrington, who is now the parish priest of the Loreto Thursday Club and also the priest responsible for co-ordinating the 'Home is a Holy Place' project in our diocese.

Hinckley            At Keyworth, we sang a song about our favourite things and told you what they were (*hold up some placards*)

Scunthorpe        When you came to Scunthorpe, we had a competition to build a shelter for a homeless person and then Steve got into it

Loughborough    At Clifton, we built our house and what a house it was

Hinckley            Several of us had 'disastrous dinner parties' where we learned how not to eat your food together (*little mime*) and Fr. Frank ate a tin of dog food....well at least he got us thinking that he did!

Loughborough    We had a beautiful Mass to celebrate our 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary then a great meal in the Polish Club and thank you all for coming

- Nottingham The next day we had a lovely Mass and meal in a posh hotel to celebrate our 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary and Jim made a great speech
- Derby We had a Passover meal together – that was the special meal Jesus was having with his friends when he gave us the Mass – the Last Supper
- Nottingham Next week we are holding a Christmas Fair evening at the Good Shepherd Parish to raise funds for the Framework project for homeless people
- Hinckley Some of us are taking part in our parish Christmas Fair to help raise funds for the local Salvation Army’s projects for homeless people at Christmas
- Leicester This year we have learned some very important things about home, about ourselves, and about God our loving Father. Today we will think about our home with God and the Church as our home. We have built this house to show us like this....
- Hinckley And we have built a house and a church to show you like this...
- Song** Let us build a house where love can dwell

**Word of God** 1) Leicester group

*Actors can dress up in the parts of Mary, Joseph, Shepherds and kings*

Very shortly we are going to celebrate once again the beautiful story of Christmas, with Mary, Joseph, the baby Jesus, angels, shepherds and kings. It is such a lovely story that inspires and cheers us up every year. We think of how and where Jesus was born and what happened that night to so many people, how the innkeeper took pity on his parents and gave them the only room left – a stable – and how the baby was born and laid in the manger with the animals to keep him warm. And how he had all those visitors – shepherds and kings. But what does this all mean? It means that God, who has lived for ever, since before the beginning of time, has come to live with us, has made his home with us by sending Jesus his Son to be one of us and one with us for ever. So Christmas is about home – about Jesus having no home, only the hearts of all of us to welcome him and make him comfortable. Dear Jesus, our Christmas wish this year is that you make your home with us and in us today.

**Carol** Away in a Manger

**Word of God** 2) Derby group

*This could be mimed by a group of people*

This lovely story is not the end but the beginning for us, because Jesus asks us something more – “make your home in me as I make mine in you”, he says. He told his friends that he was going away to prepare a place for them, a home for them to live in with him for ever and he promised that he would come back to take them home with him. Jesus wants not only to make his home into our hearts but for us to make our home with him and in him, so that we will all be home together in God’s kingdom with all our friends who have got there before us and who are waiting to welcome us.

## Homily – Hinckley group

- Reader 1      Look at our two buildings and you will see that they are quite similar: one is a house and the other a church. But a house is not a house without people in it.
- Reader 2      And a church is not the church without people
- Reader 1      At home we live together with our family
- Reader 2      In church we live together as God's family
- Reader 1      At home we share warmth, friendship and love
- Reader 2      In church we share warmth, friendship and love
- Reader 1      At home we have lots of smiles
- Reader 2      In church we have lots of smiles
- Reader 1      At home we talk and listen to each other
- Reader 2      In church we talk and listen to God
- Reader 1      At home we try to eat together properly
- Reader 2      In church we share the beautiful meal which is the holy Mass
- Reader 1      At home we feel safe and protected
- Reader 2      In church we feel safe in God's presence around us
- Reader 1      At home we celebrate big and small events
- Reader 2      In church we celebrate big and small events
- Reader 1      At home we welcome new friends
- Reader 2      In church we welcome new friends
- Reader 1      At home we are thankful for a lovely time
- Reader 2      In church we are thankful for God's love
- Reader 1      So you see that just as our house is the home where all our real life takes place so too the church is our home where we can bring ourselves as we really are to God.
- Reader 2      And so, the church is our home too.
- Reader 1      The Church is our home and our family. We belong there because we belong to God and to each other.
- Reader 2      Coming to church is like coming home.

Prayers           Leicester group  
                      The SPANNED prayer

**Thank you, Lord, for each person in our family**

**Thank you for our home and those who are part of our life together Loving God, you made us a family so that we could learn about your love for us. Thank you for the times we have been able to laugh and cry together, for giving us time to talk and listen to each other and for all the ways we know we are loved. Forgive us when we hurt each other. Help us to show others what your love is like by the way we love each other even in the little things we can do. Please look after all those who have no family and no one to care for them, and help us never to forget that we are part of your family, which is the Church. We ask this through Christ our Lord. Amen**

Let us light our candle and remember all our friends who have ‘come home’ to God to live with Him in heaven for ever.....

**Offertory Hymn**     I give my hands

**Eucharistic Prayer**

**Communion Hymn** Be still for the presence of the Lord

**Presentation** of our project to Fr.Sherrington and group leaders

**Final prayer**           Scunthorpe Group

God be in my home and in my heart; God be in each day right from the start;  
God be in my mind and in my living; God be in my hands and in my giving;  
God be in my joy and in my playing; God be in my faith and in my praying;  
God be in the truth of what I’m saying; God be in the act of you obeying;  
God be my salvation and my friend; God be in my life right to the end. Amen

**Blessing**

**Final Hymn**     Let there be love shared among us

## **Appendix 1**     Interactive Session on Reconciliation

1. **Welcome** – *ask someone to make drinks*

2. **How many words?** - *get families together for the following exercise / competition*

**Reconciliation**     - how many words can you make out of this word?

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.....	.....	.....	.....
.....	.....	.....	.....
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**What does it mean?** .....

**3. Scenes from Family Life**

- Fighting in the living room – hitting each other without reason / bullying
- Stealing sweets
- arguing over TV
- just being difficult
- shouting at each other
- “it’s not fair”

Parents try to get you to say ‘sorry’ – do you want to? How do you do it? Do you mean it?  
Effect: sulking; not meaning it; moody all day; afraid of punishment;

Is this really being sorry?

If, not what is? – recognising that you hurt someone you love. Would you treat your best friend like that?

Can you think of any stories in the bible where people did things wrong?

**4. Refreshments**

**5. Scenes from the Bible**

- interactive on the Prodigal Son
- interactive on Zacchaeus – what was Jesus really like?

**6. Family Session** – if not time, take this home

**Have you ever gone wrong in your friendships? ..... How?**  
.....

**How did you put it right?** .....

**Can you say you are sorry easily?** .....

**What would you want to ask someone else to forgive you for?** .....

.....

How do you feel when you are friends again? .....

Can you think of how you might hurt God? .....

Why would he be hurt? .....

How do things get put right between us and God? .....

How do we feel when that has happened? .....

If God will always love and forgive us, what should we do for him? .....

## **Appendix 2**    The Celebration of Family Confession

*This service could be used for families or for people with learning difficulties with the Sacrament of Reconciliation or parts could be used in a small community setting without formal Reconciliation but with an opportunity to say sorry to each other at the end of the prayer. Its most significant contribution is that it relates our behaviour to the person of Jesus rather than what we might call the 'horizontal' approach of seeing our sinfulness solely in relation to each other eg. "I was nasty to someone", "I cheated", "I was moody and angry", "I didn't share what I have".*

*The sanctuary is set out with two places for priests to hear confessions and a large cross in a stand at the front. To the rear of the church there are two sets of tables with chairs around for the children to write their prayers. Quiet music may be played as a background to the readings*

**Hymn**            Make me a channel of your peace

### **Introduction and welcome**

#### **Why Confession?**

Reader 1        Why should anyone go to confession?

Reader 2        Because sometimes we need to say we are sorry

Reader 1        What should we be sorry for?

Reader 2        When we have hurt someone, been greedy or selfish

Reader 1        It's not easy is it, you know, to say sorry?

Reader 2        No it isn't, that's why lots of people don't do it, because they're scared

Reader 1        Scared?

Reader 2        Yeah, scared of having to admit they're wrong, scared of having to see that they are not perfect, scared of owning up to making a mistake

Reader 1        I see what you mean, like it's easier to say nothing and hope it will go away?

Reader 2        Exactly. Then you get out of the habit of saying sorry

Reader 1 And never say sorry at all?

Reader 2 Yeah...and then never even see that you could be wrong

Reader 1 And never own up to anything?

Reader 1 Absolutely

Reader 1 It's much easier that way, though isn't it, you know never to think you could make a mistake?

Reader 2 Well....no. You see there's a little voice nagging away inside your head that tells you things you don't want to hear

Reader 1 Whose voice?

Reader 2 God's voice

Reader 1 God's voice?

Reader 2 Oh yes, God our Father is telling us that we are hurting him and each other by not living in the way he showed us

Reader 1 He showed us?

Reader 2 Yes, he showed us what his way is like by sending us Jesus his Son to be our best ever friend

Reader 1 So?

Reader 2 So, you don't treat your best friend badly, do you?

Reader 1 Oh no

Reader 2 And you don't stop talking to your best friend do you?

Reader 1 Of course not...otherwise they wouldn't be your best friend

Reader 2 Precisely

Reader 1 So because they're your best friend you want to make them happy

Reader 2 Of course you do

Reader 1 And you're sorry if you don't aren't you

Reader 2 Well, I suppose so.....ah I see what you mean

Reader 1 And that's why we go to confession – to tell God our Father we are sorry for not living in his way and to tell Jesus we are sorry for not being the friend he would like us to be

Reader 2 Oh well...if you put it that way...when do I start?

Reader 1 Right here and now, today in this church

**Prayer** God our Father, we have come together today to tell you that we love you and that we are sorry for not loving you more. You have given us everything and sometimes we give you so little of our time, our efforts and ourselves. We are very sorry and we ask you to show us how to love you always. We make our prayer through Christ our Lord. Amen

**Gospel** A reading from St. John's gospel

Jesus said to his followers: "love one another as I have loved you. No one can love others more than by laying down his life for them. Love one another as I have loved you. You are not my servants because servants do not know their masters well; you are my friends because you do what I ask you to do in my name, and when you do, my Father in heaven will be with you and we will all live happily together for ever. What I ask you is to love one another as I have loved you.

### **Where does Jesus live?**

Reader 3 Where does Jesus live?

Reader 4 Jesus lives in my heart.

Reader 3 He has always been there since my parents brought me to church to become his follower through my baptism.

Reader 4 Sometimes I don't think he is there. Sometimes I don't think he is anywhere at all.

Reader 3 Sometimes I don't listen to his voice speaking quietly in my head – "love everyone else just like I have loved you".

Reader 4 When I really stop and think about it, I know Jesus is right, that his way to live is the best way to live if we want to be really happy. But how often do I stop to think?

Reader 3 How often am I too busy to listen to what Jesus wants to say to me?

Reader 4 How often do I not want to hear him because what he asks might be difficult?

Reader 3 I might have to do something that costs me in effort or money or time.

Reader 4 I might have to think of others before myself;

Reader 3 I might even have to forget about myself altogether.

Reader 4 That is not easy for me, not easy for anyone.

### **How does Jesus love?**

Reader 5 How does Jesus love?

Reader 6 Jesus loves in a most beautiful way; he shows us what the love of God our Father is like – he gave away his life on the cross.

Reader 5 Every time I look at the cross, Jesus is saying to me: 'look I am giving away my life for you; look how much I love you'.

Reader 6 So how much do I love him?

Reader 5 Do I ever talk to him, you know, not the talk of ‘please can I have this or please do that for me’ because that is talk all about me, but what about the talk of “dear Jesus I love you; dear Jesus thank you for being my friend; dear Jesus you are wonderful; thank you for showing me your way, for showing me how to be really happy”

Reader 6 Do I ever talk to him like that?

Reader 5 Do I ever really pray?

### **So where is Jesus now?**

Reader 1 So where is Jesus now?

Reader 2 Jesus is here with us in this church today; when we are very quiet, we can hear him speak in our hearts.

Reader 1 Jesus is with us at Mass, when we hear his Word in the gospel and most of all when we receive him in Holy Communion.

Reader 2 That is why we are all looking forward so much to our first Holy Communion – we can reach out to Jesus and take him right into our selves, so that he can be with us and we can be with him for ever.

### **Is it easy to be Jesus’ friend?**

Reader 3 Is it easy to be Jesus’ friend?

Reader 4 Not always

Reader 3 Some people will think we are silly if we live in God’s way by trying to put others first and be good to them as Jesus taught us to do

Reader 4 Some people might make fun of us and call us names because we love Jesus, and talk to him.

Reader 3 Others might tell us to do what **we** want, get what **we** want, be what **we** want and forget about everyone else, but we know that this is not Jesus’ way and we know in our hearts that we do not really want to live like that

Reader 4 We know too that sometimes we do live like that and we are sorry for we know that we hurt our Father and each other

Reader 3 That is why we have come here today – to tell God we are sorry for not loving him and living in Jesus’ way

Reader 4 And to ask him to help us to be close to him always, today and for ever

Reader 3 In a moment we are going to write down something we are really sorry for on a piece of paper, and bring it to the priest as we make our confession

Reader 4 After confession, we will go to say a prayer by the cross, tear up our paper and put it in the bowl

Reader 3      A little later all the paper in the bowl will be burned

Reader 4      This is a sign that in confession God takes all our sins away

### **Act of Sorrow**

**Priest**      Before we come to speak to our priests one by one, let us all tell God that we are sorry for hurting him:

**All**          **O my God, because you are so good, I am very sorry that I have sinned against you and with your help, I will not sin again**

*A little music is played as the children go to the tables, to write out their prayers before confession. This continues during the time of confession. After a little while a reader says:*

Reader      When we have been to confession, we return quietly to our table and write a thank you prayer to God and also a promise prayer about what we will be and do in the future

*When the last person has gone to confession, the priests return to the sanctuary. One of them sets fire to the pieces of paper in the bowl*

**Priest**      God our Father, your love is so great that it makes our sins as nothing. We thank you for your mercy and love which you have shown to us in Jesus Christ our Lord.  
Amen

Now we listen to some of our children's prayers which they have just written

*Those children who wish to come forward and read out their prayers*

We now pray together in the words our Saviour gave us: Our Father

Let us offer each other a sign of peace

May Almighty God bless us as he has forgiven us, the Father, Son and Holy Spirit,  
Amen.

**Final Hymn**      God forgave my sin