**Prayer** - **Those who love God must love other people**

*This service could be used independently or as a preparation for a Penitential Service. The*

*Service focuses on everyday conflicts children experience in their relationships with others, such as name calling, rivalry, taking sides, physical force etc. It is important to remind children of the invitation of Jesus to treat others fairly and with respect.*

**Needed**

*A cloth, bible, pencils and slips of paper, a small box or container.*

**Sacred Space**

*Set up the Sacred Space using the cloth, candle, bible, and a small box or container.*

**Hymn**

**Prayer**

God, our Loving Father, you know each of us by name. You love each of us in a special way.

Help us to live and love like you. Help us to show your love to our brothers and sisters, our classmates, and our friends. When it is hard to love them, help us to offer love. We ask this in the name of Jesus, your son and our brother.

**All:** Amen

**Leader**

Sometimes you don’t have to do anything but walk out the door and others tease you. They call

you names, or make fun of you, or say your stupid, or laugh at your mistakes. Your first reaction

is to get even, and who could blame you for feeling this way? And yet, what God asks of you is to return kindness for unkind words and to return good for evil. When we show love for others, we are also showing our love for God. Here is what God’s Word says:

**Scripture Reading** (1 John 4:20-21)

When people say they love God, yet hate others, they are liars. Those who have no love for those they can see, cannot possibly love God whom they cannot see. The commandment we have from God is this: those who love God must also love other people.

The Word of the Lord

**All:** Thanks be to God.

**Psalm:** My Shepherd is the Lord.

**Person 1**

Ciara was my best friend, but when the new girl, Lily, came along who had better clothes, and more spending money, my so-called friend, Ciara, started to ignore me. She acted like we had never been friends. Once when I went to her, she turned her back on me and made a joke about me to Lily. I hate her now. I don’t know why I ever thought she was my friend.

**All**

The commandment we have from God is this: those who really love God also love other people.

**Person 2**

I was walking through the park one day when Brian, a boy in another class, threw an empty Coke tin at me. When I requested him to stop, he shouted at me, and laughed at me. I was really angry because I didn’t do a thing to him. I was minding my own business. I just wanted to walk through the park. I hate Brian.

**All**

The commandment we have from God is this: those who really love God also love other people.

**Person 3**

Does God really expect us to love other people who are mean to us? My brother tries to get me in trouble every chance he gets. He just gets a laugh out of seeing me being corrected at home. He acts real innocent when I explain to my parents what is going on. My parents believe him because he is older. I hate when he does this to me. I hate him for all the trouble he causes me.

**All**

The commandment we have from God is this: those who really love God also love other people.

**Person 4**

What should we do when someone deliberately hurts us? How can we love that person?

It’s not fair for God to expect us to love people no matter what they do.

**Leader**

In the gospel of St. John, he says: “God hears us whenever we ask him for something. If someone hurts us, we should ask God to help us deal with that person lovingly and justly. God will answer our prayer. We belong to God, just as Jesus does; and Jesus will help us to deal with the difficult people in our lives. It is hard to understand, but God will help us to overcome evil with good and to offer love when someone hurts us. When we pray for the person who has hurt us, little by little our anger and hurt feelings will fade away. Even if the person doesn’t respond to our love, we are nevertheless showing our love for God.

**All**

The commandment we have from God is this: those who really love God also love other people.

**Leader**

Think of someone in your life right now who is making you unhappy.

Picture this person in your mind now and in your own words tell Jesus about how this person has hurt you. Share exactly how you feel.

(*Pause for a minute to allow the children time to think about their issue.)*

* Now ask Jesus to bless this person and to put love in his/her heart. (*Pause)*
* Ask Jesus to bless and heal you, so that your hurt feelings will fade away. *(Pause)*

**All:** Say the Act of Sorrow

**Sacrament of Reconciliation**

*Individual Confession*

**Activity** *If the group is not receiving the Sacrament of Penance at this time.*

**Activity**

*Give each person a slip of paper.*

*Invite each one to put on the slip the name of the person who is hurting them.*

*Or*

*Draw an image of the person.*

*Fold the slip so it can’t be seen by anyone else.*

*Collect the slips and place them in a container.*

*Place them in the Prayer Space.*

*(Reassure the children that the names / images will not be looked at or read but will be put through the shredder)*

**Prayer**

Loving Father, help us to believe that you can heal our hurting hearts.

Help us to trust that you will help the people whose names/images are on these slips to be more loving.

Help us, too, to learn to offer love to others even when they hurt us.

Help us to live and love like you.

We ask this in the name of Jesus, your son. Amen

**Closing Hymn**