

All Age Penguins Eucharist

For several years we have been including children in our celebration of the Eucharist and we have written several child friendly liturgies to attempt to enable the younger ones (Imogen was 4 and Beth 5) among us to participate in telling the story of the last supper. In this service we watched some extracts from the film March of the Penguins and reflected on how the community of penguins worked together to survive and incubate their eggs against the odds. We made penguins out of card and wrote our prayers for others onto them as a sign that we too live in community and depend on each other.

We then involved the children in leading the Eucharist with the younger ones asking the questions, much as they do in the Jewish festival of Passover, and the teenagers helping me explain the story. I have left the various children's names as an indication of how to involve several voices but it does not have to be divided up in this way. Do what suits you but do share out roles before the service to prevent any arguing over the elements!

**Here's a table
here's a table
let us share
let us share
bread and wine
bread and wine
with Jesus here
with Jesus here.**

(Sing to the Tune of Friar Jacques)

Clare: In the Jewish tradition it is the smallest child who asks the questions as to why the Passover is celebrated. It is the smallest child who asks the questions and allows the story to be told.

Imogen: Why are we here?

Clare: We gather together
around this table
to tell the stories
that inspire our faith
that help us
become a community

Beth: Tell me a story.

Sam: The emperor penguins
walk 70 miles
across the frozen landscape
hungry
cold
battered by storms
huddled together
in order to survive
no, not to survive
but to protect
what is weakest
an egg

the hope of new life
cocooned against the harsh winter
passed precariously
from one penguin to another
until one day
the egg hatches
a tiny, helpless
baby penguin.

Imogen: Why do you tell this story?

Clare: Because it is here
gathered together
around this table
that we bring the things
we find difficult
the things we cannot do alone.

Joel: On the penguins we wrote things we find difficult
to remind us all to help each other.

[Readout prayers on penguins and place on table]

Beth: Tell me the story about Jesus.

Rachel: Jesus shared lots of meals
with his friends
and with the ordinary people
he met
he told them stories
of inviting people from the streets
to great banquets
of a run away son
saying sorry and having a party
of tiny seeds
growing into huge trees
he showed that by sharing a picnic lunch
a crowd could be fed
he sat a child on his knee
to show that the smallest
is the most important
of all

Imogen: But why do we share bread?

Clare: The night before Jesus
was killed
he shared a last meal
with his friends
he took bread
and broke it
and said:

Imogen: this is my body
 broken for you

[Joel to break bread]

Clare: to show how he was broken
 on the cross
 to show that our world is broken
 by the things we do wrong

 when we share the bread

Imogen: we say sorry
 and ask God to forgive us

[Share bread - Imogen]

Beth: Why do we share wine?

Clare: The night before Jesus
 was killed
 he shared a last meal
 with his friends
 he took wine
 and gave thanks
 and said

Beth: this is my blood
 poured out for you

[Joel to hold up cup]

Clare: to show that we are forgiven
 to show that we are loved by God
 to remind us to love one another
 to remind us that the small things
 are the most important

Beth: to celebrate the hope
 of new life

[Share wine - Beth]

Joel: Let us pray:
 God who loves us very much,
 we have told new stories
 and listened to old stories
 we have said sorry
 and been forgiven
 we have become friends
 and learned that together

we can do the things
we find difficult
but most of all
we have celebrated
that with your love
like the baby penguins
there is hope of new life

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