

Eighth Sunday of the Year

The fruits of goodness

INTRODUCTION

Just as we can recognize an apple tree by the fruit which grows on it, so, too, can people recognize us as Christians by the way we act and the things we say.

SIGN OF THE CROSS

LIGHT THE CANDLES

Sing the Candle Song.

SORRY

Have you ever had a bright shiny apple and bitten into it, only to find that it is rotten in the middle? What is on the outside is not important, but Jesus wants our hearts to be filled with goodness. In his Gospel, Matthew tells us:

The words that we speak flow from our hearts. If our hearts are filled with goodness, our words and actions will be kind and loving, too. But if our hearts are filled with darkness and hate, then our words and actions will be selfish and unkind. (Matthew 12:34-35)

Let us turn to God and speak to him in our hearts, asking for his help to chase away any darkness, and fill our hearts with his goodness and love. (Allow the children a few quiet moments to contemplate.)

GLORIA

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

To welcome today's Gospel sing Acclamation 2.

GOSPEL (LUKE 6:43-45)

One day Jesus told this parable: "Fruit that is rotten and bad can never grow on a strong and healthy tree, just as good fruit cannot grow on a tree that is sick and diseased.

"Different fruits grow on different trees, and everyone knows which fruit belongs to which type of tree. Like the tree and its fruit, a good person will speak and act kindly, because of the goodness in their hearts."

DISCUSSION

At certain times of the year, trees can be identified by the fruit growing on their branches. Apples only grow on apple trees, and pears only grow on pear trees! (Show the children some pictures of different fruit trees and their fruit; a good gardening book should provide these.)

What do you need to get a good crop of tasty healthy apples? An apple tree that is healthy and well cared for will usually produce lots of good fruit. A tree which is attacked by disease or pests, or whose branches and trunk become rotten, will produce only a few poor apples.

Just as you can tell whether a tree is good or bad by the fruit it grows, so the words and actions of people reveal the state of their hearts. If we are healthy and strong and full of God's goodness, then that goodness will show in our lives. If our hearts are selfish and unkind, then we will be selfish and unkind people.

How can we make sure our lives are filled with God's love and goodness? Jesus comes to each one of us in a very special way when we receive the holy eucharist. Just as a tree needs to be nourished to produce good fruit, so we need the bread of life to nourish us.

Jesus shares his love and goodness by giving himself to us. We invite Jesus into our lives, and the goodness he shares with us overflows into our daily words and actions.

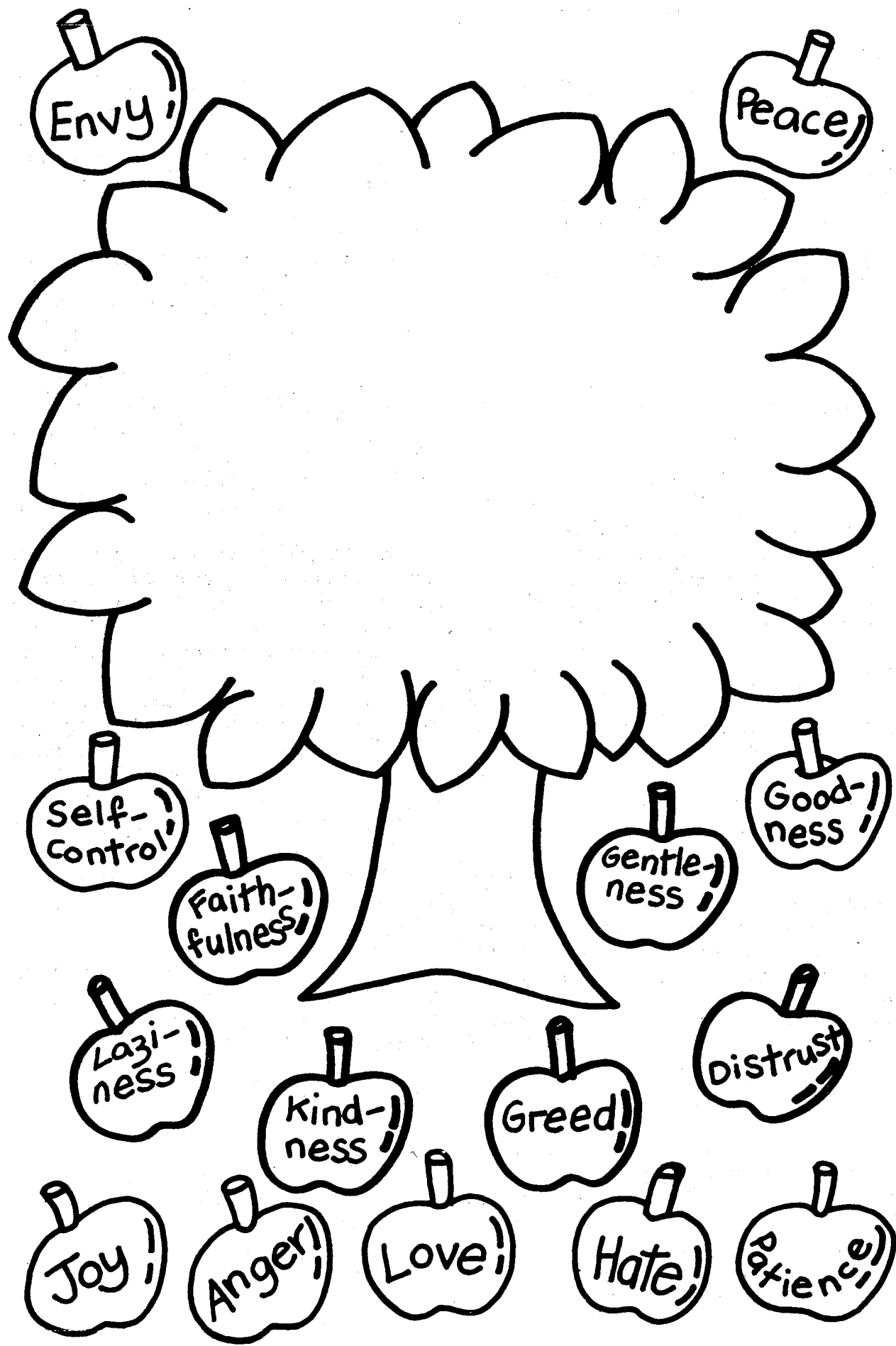
ACTIVITY

The children can cut out the good apples and stick them in the tree. Help them to assemble the pictures on a background after they have been colored, and add the caption "The Fruits of Goodness."

CREED

CLOSING PRAYER

Lord Jesus, may people see
the fruits of your love
and goodness of our hearts
in the way we treat other people.



Envy

Peace

Self-Control

Faithfulness

Gentleness

Goodness

Laziness

Kindness

Greed

Distrust

Joy

Anger

Love

Hate

Patience