

Children's Liturgy of the Word



16TH SUNDAY OF ORDINARY TIME MATTHEW 24-43

BACKGROUND FOR PARENTS AND LEADERS



For the past few weeks, there has been a growing theme of tending gardens and small acts of kindness which help each other share the load of daily life.

In today's Gospel, Jesus offers three parables to describe the Kingdom of Heaven. The beginnings of the Kingdom of Heaven can be found in this world. The fruition of the Kingdom of Heaven, however, will not be realized until the final judgment. In the meantime, as Jesus warns the

disciples, we are not to judge the progress. Only God, in the final judgment, will discern the fruit and offer its reward.

The second and third parables call to our attention the abundance that will result from small beginnings. Just as a mustard seed—the smallest of all seeds—will become a large tree, so too God will bring his Kingdom to full bloom. As a small amount of yeast will leaven the entire batch of bread, so too God will bring about the expansion of his Kingdom.

There are warnings as well as consolation in these parables. In the parable of the sower we are warned against judging others. To judge and uproot the “weeds” prematurely will harm the wheat; final judgement rests with God. In the parables of the mustard seed and the yeast, we are consoled by the message that God can work wonders from even the smallest beginnings of the Kingdom of Heaven.

PREPARATION

Prepare a prayer focus with a green cloth (Ordinary Time), and space to receive the Candle and the Children's Lectionary. Have some mustard seeds, and a picture of a mustard tree, with birds nesting in it and people sitting in its shade. Maybe also some yeast and a fresh loaf of bread.

Activity materials:

- Liturgical Year Calendar on the wall.
- Floorcloth
- Worksheets
- Picture of a wheat field, a mustard tree, and a fresh loaf of bread.

Set up a 'table' with a green cloth on the floor for the children with the worksheet for each placed around the edges so they feel welcome and at home in the room.

SETTING THE SCENE

To help the children remember that they are still part of the Mass, discuss the colours Father is wearing (green for Ordinary Time) and if they remember what he said to them before they came to the Children's Liturgy room. Show on the Liturgical Calendar that we are now in 16th Sunday of Ordinary Time.

Remind the children of what was discussed last week: In our baptism, God sows the gifts of the Holy Spirit in our hearts, like seeds in a garden, which bear fruit. Ask if they remember what they were (courage, kindness, right judgement, awe, wonder, kindness, self-control, strength, humility) and if they recognised any of these during the week.

Discuss with the children why they like Mum and Dad reading stories to them. These are like the parables that we have been hearing – good stories that Jesus told that help us understand how much God loves us and wants us to be with him always.

In today's Gospel, Jesus tells three different parables about the Kingdom of God. Christians believe that this kingdom began with the coming of Christ, and exists in the hearts of all sorts of people who accept Jesus as our God and king. We try to live as he taught us to.

We meet another farmer sowing wheat seeds in a big field. The soil is good, but when he's not looking, his enemy sows poisonous weeds amongst it. Listen also for the encouragement that God's tiny seeds can grow into big trees.

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

You may like to ask one of the older children (a good reader) to read the Gospel. As everyone stands for the Gospel Acclamation, the reader goes to the Lectionary Stand.

Chord progression for the Gospel Acclamation:

General: Al - le - lu - ia. Al - le - lu - ia. Fill us O Lord with your word.

Al - le - lu - ia. Al - le - lu - ia. Your word is life for our souls.

Gospel: MATTHEW 13:24-43 (*Read from the Children's Lectionary.*)

Reader: A reading from the Holy Gospel according to Matthew.

All: Glory to you, O Lord.

Sign of the Cross on the forehead (God be in my mind)

sign of the Cross on the lips (God be in my words),

Sign of the Cross on the heart (God be in my heart)

At the end of the Gospel: The Gospel of the Lord

Children: Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.



Ask the children what words they heard and build up a list on the board.
Summarise the Gospel using the words/reflection they have given.

REFLECTION ON THE READING

- **What was the first parable we heard today about the kingdom of heaven?**
(Jesus told a story about a farmer sowing his field with wheat, and someone had scattered weed seeds amongst his crop.)
- **When we are in the garden, are there some plants that Mum and Dad say not to eat? Why?** (Weeds may look good to eat, but are poisonous and will make us sick.)
- **What did the farmer do?**
(He did not want to risk losing a single precious ear of wheat by accidentally pulling it up as he removed the weeds. So he allowed the poisonous weeds and the wheat to grow beside each other until the harvest time. Only then he will be able to tell which is wheat and which are weeds.)
- **What does this parable tell us about God's Kingdom?**
(The kingdom includes all kinds of people – good together with the bad - and its hard sometimes to know which is which. Day by day, we all play a part in the kingdom of God. In the end, it is only God who can judge each person's heart.)
- **What was the second parable Jesus told?**
He compared the Kingdom of heaven to a little mustard seed which grew into a huge tree. Jesus began with only a few disciples, but from small beginnings, Christians are now spread throughout the world! In this kingdom are people of every race, colour and nationality, who are united by the faith they share. Jesus is preparing us for the kingdom of heaven.
- **What did the third parable compare the kingdom with?**
Jesus described how a small amount of yeast makes bread rise and increase in size.
- **Has anyone made bread? What are the ingredients?**
Flour, water and sugar and yeast. Yeast is the amazing ingredient which, with warmth and some water, is activated into life and makes the dough rise and increase in size. Without yeast, the bread remains flat like pitta bread.
- **What does this parable tell about the kingdom?**
Just like yeast, the kingdom of God grows and develops unseen inside each person's heart by the power of God. The yeast is warmed and watered with our prayers, coming to Mass, listening to God's word, opening our hearts with love, joy and hope.

RESPONSE

This week, remember it is for God, not us, to judge others.

Small things we do each day matter.

How can we help each other to do the good things that Christ has taught us, so that the kingdom of God can grow in our hearts? (Prayer, sharing, being kind, being courageous)

What shall we do this week?

WE BELIEVE

Say the little Creed together from the chart. Relating to the creed what you have shared with the children, ask this series of questions and invite the children to reply, 'I do.'

- Do you believe in God the Father who has created each one of us and cares for us?
- Do you believe in Jesus, God the Son, who came to remind us of God's care?
- Do you believe in God the Holy Spirit, who helps us to live out God's love?

"I do, Alleluia! Alleluia!"

WE PRAY

Again, try to relate the prayers to the Reading. To help children to include others in their prayers, ask who/what they would like to pray for. After each offering, repeat it, and add, *"...and for all who...."*

Here are some suggestions:

- We pray for all followers of Jesus, that they may follow Jesus' teaching on not judging others.
- We pray for the countries of the world, that they may live in peace.
- We pray for people who are bullied or teased or made fun of for any reason.
- We pray for anybody we know who is sad or lonely.
- Lord, help us to bring your love to everyone we meet.

We make all our prayers through Christ our Lord.

All: Amen

The children return to the pews during the Offertory Procession.







