

FIFTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

YEAR B

PRAYER OF THE DAY:

Caring God,
to make this world happy
and peaceful as you want it
we must work hard
at loving and helping
all people.

See how weak we are;
make us strong
to do your work,
because without you
we can do nothing.

We ask you to do this
through Jesus, your Son.

FOCUS OF THE READINGS:

The readings for this Sunday continue the theme of the past Sundays of "call and response" and preaching the message. But they also lead us into the miracle stories of Jesus. The reading from Job (which we have omitted because of its difficult language for children) speaks of the sufferings of the human condition. The healings in our Gospel passage respond to that. We have chosen the second reading in which Paul speaks of his call to preach the Gospel. The focus of this reading is that he *must* respond to that call and that he must respond in a way that will truly bring the Good News (of healing and salvation) to all. Paul does not mean, here, that he has no free will, but rather, that the call is so compelling that it takes hold of his whole being.

In the Gospel reading, Mark combines the themes of healing and preaching. Jesus, after healing many, tells his disciples he must "go to other towns to proclaim the Good News there also." In short, the focus of our call is to preach the Good News of healing and salvation which is found in Christ.

FIRST READING: *I Corinthians 9:16-19, 22-23*

*This is a reading
from Paul's first letter to the Corinthians.*

Brothers and sisters,

When I preach the Gospel,
I don't do it so that I can brag.
I do it because God told me to preach.

I am a free person.

But I have made myself
like a servant to everyone
so that they will accept me
and what I am preaching.

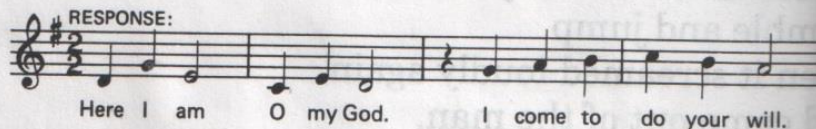
When someone is weak,
I become weak with them,
so that they will accept the Gospel.
I am always ready
to accept the people I preach to,
so that at least some of them
might accept the Gospel.

Everything I do, I do because of the Gospel.
And I hope that because I do this,
I will always be blessed.

This is the Word of the Lord.

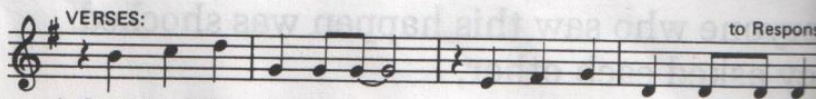
RESPONSE: *Psalm 40*

RESPONSE:



Here I am O my God. I come to do your will.

VERSES:



1. Speak Lord, I'm lis - ten - ing, — I wait to hear your Word. —
2. I love your law, O God, — it makes my heart re - joice. —
3. I will tell ev' - ry - one — how you will save us all. —

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION:

Al - le - lu - ia! Praise for the Good News — that
God is love, God cares for us so al - le - lu - ia,
praise for the Good News — that God is love.

GOSPEL: *Mark 1:29-39*

This is a reading from the Gospel of Mark.

One day Jesus went with James and John to Simon and Andrew's house.

Simon's mother-in-law was sick in bed with a high fever.

As soon as Jesus went into the house, Simon and Andrew told him about her.

So Jesus went to her, took her by the hand and helped her up.

Her fever left her immediately and she began

to serve all those who were there.

That evening, the people of the town brought to Jesus those who were sick and those who had evil spirits in them.

And Jesus healed them.

Early the next morning, Jesus went off to a place where he could be alone for awhile and pray.

Simon and some of the others went to find him, and said,

"Everyone is looking for you."

But Jesus said to them,

"We must go to other towns now so that I can proclaim the Good News there also.

Because that is what I came to do."

So Jesus went into the synagogues all around Galilee

and preached the Good News.

This is the Good News of the Lord.

REFLECTING ON THE READINGS WITH CHILDREN:

We suggest that the readings be reflected on separately this Sunday.

After the first reading, ask the children to share what they know about St. Paul. If they are unfamiliar with his life, tell them a little about his conversion.

St. Paul (Saul) was a Jew — a Pharisee. He was proud of his Jewish background and was a leader among his people. He was well educated and had studied the Jewish law very carefully. Because he believed so much in his Hebrew faith, he began to persecute anyone he could find who was a follower of Jesus. He thought Christians were sinning against God and so he wanted to keep people from believing in Jesus. He even agreed with those who stoned St. Stephen to death. One day when he was on his way to the city of Damascus, to put Christians in prison, Jesus appeared to him and spoke to him. From that moment, Paul's life was completely changed. He became a believer and was baptized. He spent the rest of his life preaching about Jesus, especially how Jesus saves people even when they have sinned.

Help the children understand why St. Paul was so eager to share with others the good news about Jesus. Explain to them what Paul means by "I am always ready to accept the people I preach to. . ." Help them understand that when we receive a gift freely, we want others to have that gift freely too.

After the Gospel, reflect with the children on the meaning of "Good News." Tell them that "Gospel" means "Good News." What is the Good News that Jesus went to proclaim? Help them see that Jesus prayed before he preached. And we too must pray if we want to share the Good News.

Note: We will have many miracle stories in the Year B with Mark. It may be best to concentrate on the second half of this reading. How can we share the "Good News" today? (Be sure that this discussion remains on a level which is truly practical for their age.)