

Children's liturgy – Twenty-ninth Sunday in Ordinary Time (Year C)

Preparation of the worship space

Colour: Green

Props: Coloured pens and pencils, weighing scales, small plain cards, pebbles.

Song suggestions: O Lord, hear my prayer (542, Celebration Hymnal for Everyone)

Welcome: Today we hear about a bad judge and a widow who would not give up. And Jesus teaches us the importance of justice, of praying and of never giving up hope. Let's find out more.

Opening prayer: God of justice and wisdom, help us to keep on praying and never to doubt that your truth will protect us in all that we face. Amen.

First reading (optional): Exodus 17:8-13

Psalm: Psalm 12-. R. Cf. v.2

Gospel acclamation: everyone stands and sings the acclamation together. Suggestions include: 'Halle, halle, halle' (Caribbean) from 'Sing With the World', Alison Adam & John Bell; 'Alleluia' (Zimbabwe), Abraham Maraire Publications, WCC & GIA; 'Celtic Alleluia' (traditional); 'Alleluia! Raise the Gospel' from 'Go Before Us', Bernadette Farrell, OCP Publications.

Gospel: Luke 18:1-8

Gospel reflection: What do you remember from today's reading?

Jesus tells us a story about a bad judge and a widow who wants justice – who wants what is right. Judges are supposed to be fair and honest, but this isn't always the case. The prophets in the Bible were always getting angry with bad judges who thought more about themselves when making decisions than about the people who had been hurt by someone else's actions. And if the judges didn't sort out the problems fairly then people would suffer again and again.

Can you think of things that seem unfair to you? How do you feel when someone has treated you unfairly?

The widow was ignored by the law but she didn't give up. She just kept nagging the judge to make things right. Eventually, just to get rid of her, he gave her what she wanted, justice. Her prayers were finally answered.

Why do you think Jesus told us this story? What does Jesus want us to understand?

The widow is like us - we call to God in our prayers to give us what we need and want.

But if this bad judge eventually did the right thing, how much more will God, who is all-powerful and good, do what is right? So if we don't get what we pray for the first time, should we just give up?

Jesus says that God hears the cries of all who call out to him day and night. And God will certainly answer our prayers, even if it's not in the way that we expect.

How does it make you feel, to know that God always hears you when you pray?

There are many things that are unfair in our world. And there are many people, like the widow in the story, who struggle to make their voices heard.

We can pray for these people but we also have to do what we can to make sure all people are treated fairly. Who knows, we might even be the answer to someone's prayers!

For example, many people have been forced to leave their homes because of war, poverty or climate change or because they are persecuted (bullied) for having a different religion to others in their country. They leave their homes to find a place where they can live in safety. They face a long and difficult journey, they cannot bring much with them and they often get separated from family and friends. Can you imagine what this must feel like? Do you think it is fair?

These people are refugees. They are looking for somewhere that is welcoming and safe to live. What do you think we can do to show that we care and want to help? (*See the activity suggestions below and encourage the children to write their messages of hope and welcome to refugees.*)

This week think about how you can treat other people fairly and justly. What will you do to help others know that you care and to make sure all people around the world are treated fairly?

Intercessions *You may want to ask the children to offer their own prayers or you can use the suggestions below.*

Let us pray together to God for a fairer world:

We pray for the Church: that it may stand up for what is right and never stay silent when people are treated unfairly. Lord in your mercy...

We pray for leaders in our communities: that they may be models of justice in how they guide and govern their people. Lord in your mercy...

We pray for all refugees: that they may be welcomed and find somewhere safe to live. Lord, in your mercy...

We pray for our parish, family and friends: that we may show kindness, fairness and justice in our hearts and in our homes. Lord in your mercy...

Closing prayer: God of justice and wisdom, help us to make a change when we see people are hurt or treated unfairly. May we find strength to keep going, even if at first we are not heard. Amen.

Activity suggestions

Ask the children to colour in the accompanying illustration and on the back to write or draw how they will stand up for what is right in the coming week.

Using the weighing scales, ask all the children to make some simple cards with the words: *justice, fairness, mercy, prayer, faith* and *hope* on. Then get them to put them in the weighing scales and to keep adding more cards with the same words on until the scales are equally balanced. Then they can see fairness. (You might need to add some little pebbles if it takes too long!)

Ask the children to write a prayer to God for a fairer world for all people to live in.

Ask the children to write a message of hope to refugees using the 'refugee action for children' sheet from the [CAFOD schools page](#). Suggest they think about their own hopes and dreams for the future, would refugees have the same hopes too? They may also reflect on why the refugees are fleeing, what might they need that they left behind? What do they need to make their lives better? Explain that CAFOD will dedicate all these messages at a special Mass at the end of the Year of Mercy, and will make sure they are shared with refugees around the world. Please send the children's messages back to us using the '[Refugee action return form](#)' so that we can do this. Download more [information about CAFOD's work with refugees](#) or a [prayerful pilgrimage](#) to help the children reflect on this issue.

Ask the children to go home and share all that they have heard and thought about today. If they have written a prayer ask them to say it together in the

coming week. Ask them to do all that they can to stand up for what is right and fair in the coming week.