

Liturgy of the Word with Children
29th Sunday in Ordinary Time, Year C
16 October, 2016
Luke 18:1-8

Catechist Background

People have, throughout history, grown disillusioned with their faith in Christ when things get difficult for them, and have been tempted to turn away from Jesus. Today's gospel passage reminds us that God's justice does not work to human timescales, and we should always be persistent in faith.

In the unquestionably patriarchal Hebrew world, the word 'widow' meant 'one who cannot speak.' Women had no public role, and without a male protector (father, husband or married adult son), the widow in this story would have had no standing. The community had a duty to take care of her, but justice was not being done. The unscrupulous judge does not see to justice out of a sense of duty, but out of fear of an embarrassing black eye from a woman!

Setting the Scene

For the activity described below, you will need leaves. If the weather has been fine and dry, it would be better to use real leaves from trees, but if the weather has been wet and they have all turned to mush, cut leaf shapes out of coloured paper.

We Say Sorry

Leader: You call the weak of the world, Lord have mercy.

All: Lord, have mercy.

Leader: You call the small of the world, Christ have mercy.

All: Christ, have mercy.

Leader: You help us to enter the Kingdom of God, Lord have mercy.

All: Lord, have mercy.

Gloria

We Pray (1)

Dear God, help us to be strong in following Jesus and to serve you with joy.
Amen.

Gospel Acclamation

Gospel: Luke 18: 1-8

Reflecting on the Reading with Children

- Was the judge in this story a very good judge? Was he nice? Was he fair?
- Why did he give in to the woman in the end?
- Do you think God is like that judge? (Hopefully, the children will answer 'No,' that God is much kinder and more loving.)

The following questions are of a slightly more sensitive nature. They are important questions to wrestle with, but they should be approached with

great care. Sensitivity to any personal events in the children's lives should be taken into account.

- Some people think we can learn about prayer from this story. Should we give up and stop loving God if God doesn't answer our prayers in the way we want them answered? What would happen if one person was praying for rain so their vegetables would grow, and one person was praying for sun so they could have a nice barbeque?
- Do you think God needs our help or advice from us as to what is the right thing to do? Why should we pray, then?

Response

Praying to God isn't like a magic spell, and it won't make our lives 100% smooth sailing. Our prayers might be answered in the way we want them to be, and as quickly as we want them to be, but sometimes they are not. Sometimes WE have to change as a result of praying. Sometimes our prayers might not be for the right things—what would happen if I prayed for chocolate cake for supper every night? Sometimes we don't know why things turn out as they do, but we need to be like the widow, and be faithful even when it is difficult, and trust that God will see to our needs. Wintertime can be hard on plants, just as the widow in the story was having a difficult time. Give each child a leaf, and invite them to put it around the centrepiece one at a time. Allow them the opportunity to say aloud one thing they would like to pray for if they wish.

We Believe

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 loves us very much?
- Do you believe in Jesus, God's Son who saves us from all evil?
- Do you believe in the Holy Spirit who is with us to comfort us?

We Pray (2)

Again, try to relate the bidding prayers to the reading by saying, 'When we pray out loud, someone in the room might have part of an answer to our prayers and so we also now pray...'

Leader: We pray for leaders in the Catholic Church. May they always do what is right and fair. Lord in your mercy,

All: Hear our prayer.

Leader: We pray for all judges. May they want to deliver justice, and come to wise decisions. Lord in your mercy,

All: Hear our prayer.

Leader: We pray for people like the widow we heard about today who aren't treated very well by people in positions of authority. May they find people to stand by them. Lord in your mercy,

All: Hear our prayer.

Leader: We pray for anybody we know who is having a difficult time lately. Lord in your mercy,

All: Hear our prayer.

Leader: Lord, help us to see the right way to act in our lives, and how to speak out when we see somebody in need. We make all our prayers through Christ our Lord.

All: Amen.

