

**SIXTH SUNDAY
IN ORDINARY TIME**

YEAR A

PRAYER OF THE DAY:

Lord, it is so hard
to love everyone
as you love us through Jesus.
We are sorry
for our bad tempers,
for upsetting those
who care for us,
and not helping those
who need our care.
Forgive us,
and show your love
to us again
so that we may truly love
our family and all our friends.
We ask you to do this
through Jesus Christ,
who lives with you
forever and ever.

FOCUS OF THE READINGS:

Both readings focus on fidelity to God's laws. The first reading tells us that God is not responsible for the evil in this world. We are free to accept God's ways or not. The Gospel also insists on God's law, but takes it even further. Jesus insists on fidelity, not only to the external law, but the spirit of the law. Both call for a well-developed conscience.

Note on the adaptation of the Gospel: Because of the extreme length of this Gospel and its complexity, we have chosen to use a shorter form. We have included what we feel to be both the heart of the message and that which is most easily understood by small children.

FIRST READING: Sirach 15:15-20

This is a reading from the book of Sirach.

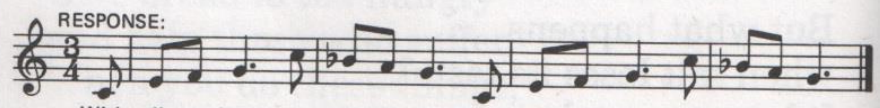
The prophet said to the people,

"It is up to you whether or not
you will be faithful to God.
You are the ones who must choose.
If you want to,
you are able to keep the commandments.
You can have either life or death.
Whichever you choose will be given to you.
God doesn't tell anyone to do bad things,
and God doesn't give anyone
permission to sin."

The Word of the Lord.

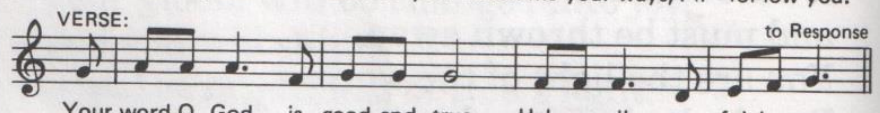
RESPONSE: Psalm 119

RESPONSE:



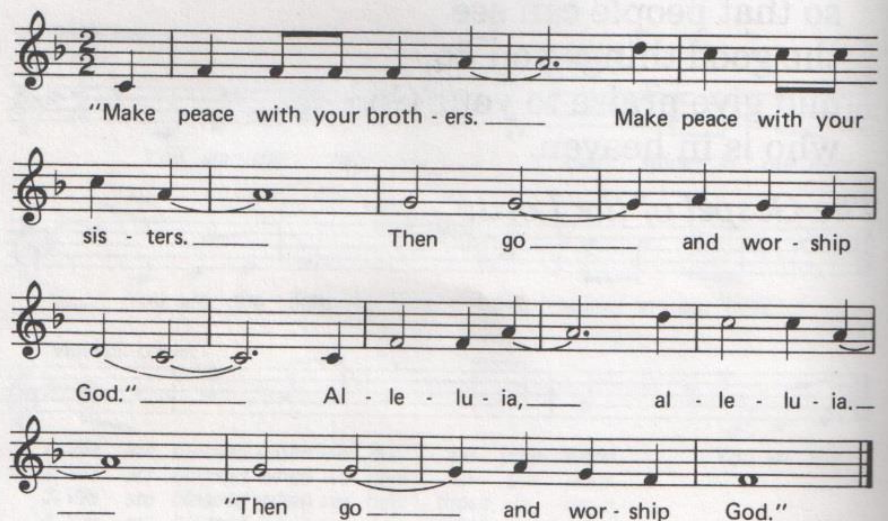
With all my heart I turn to you. Teach me your ways, I'll fol-low you.

VERSE:



Your word, O God, is good and true. Help us all to fol-low you.

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION:



"Make peace with your broth - ers. _____ Make peace with your
sis - ters. _____ Then go _____ and wor - ship
God." _____ Al - le - lu - ia, _____ al - le - lu - ia. _____
_____ "Then go _____ and wor - ship God."

GOSPEL: *Matthew 5:17, 21-22a, 20, 23-4*

This is a reading from the Gospel of Matthew.

Jesus said to his disciples,

“Don’t think that I came to destroy
what the law and the prophets taught.
No, I came to show you what they meant.
I tell you the truth,
if you want to go to heaven,
you must behave better than
the scribes and Pharisees.
For example, the law said,

‘You shall not kill anyone.’

“But I say to you,

‘Don’t even stay angry with anyone.’

“Whoever insults another person
or says bad things to them will be judged.
So, if you are making an offering
or praying at the altar,
and you remember that your brother or sister
is upset or angry with you about anything,
leave your gifts there at the altar.
First, go and make peace
with your brother or sister,
and then come back and worship God.”

The Gospel of the Lord.

REFLECTING ON THE READINGS WITH CHILDREN:

Two points should be emphasized.

1. Jesus wants us to do what is right—not only on the outside, but also in our hearts. The Ten Commandments say, “You shall not kill anyone.” But Jesus says, “Don’t stay angry; don’t make fun of people; don’t say bad things about people.” Jesus wants us to do more than avoid murder; he wants us to live in peace with our brothers and sisters.

- Who are our brothers and sisters?
- What does Jesus say about offering our gifts at the altar?

Help the children relate these ideas to mass.

- Do we sometimes come to mass when we are angry with someone, or when someone is angry with us? Jesus asks us to forgive one another.

Explain to the children that our greeting of peace at mass is an expression of peace—but we also must *live* in peace.

While we certainly do not want to lead the children into being overly scrupulous, we do want to help them develop a conscience in accord with Jesus’ teachings. The teaching is not that we do not deserve to be at mass; rather, it is there that we are nourished by Word and sacrament to live the commandments of Jesus. The teaching is that what we are nourished to do, we must do!

2. While we are nourished by the grace of God to follow Jesus, we must, in fact, choose to do that or not. God neither forces nor prevents us.

