**Children’s liturgy –Fifteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time (Year A)**

**Preparation of the worship space**

Colour: green

Props: coloured paper, coloured pens and pencils

**Song suggestions:** O the word of my Lord (979, Laudate)

**Welcome:** Today Jesus tells us a parable about planting seeds. It shows us how important it is that the seeds land on the right kind of ground to grow, but it also tells us something about ourselves and how we should be. Let’s listen and find out more.

**Opening prayer:** God of life, help us to hear your word, to understand it and to grow to live our lives the way you call us to. We ask this through Christ our Lord, Amen.

**First reading (optional):** Isaiah 55: 10-11

**Psalm:** Psalm 64:10-14. R. Lk 8:8

**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:** Matthew 13:1-23

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

Jesus tells a parable about someone who is planting seeds in a field. He does not carefully place the seeds in the ground but scatters them around. The seeds all land in different places, some in good soil and some not. Can you remember all the places the seed lands and what happens to it?

Makuu and Willygister live in Kenya. They are learning how to grow vegetables at school. Then when they are older they will know how to grow vegetables at home to feed themselves and their families.

Willygister says, “We were told how to prepare the ground, set it out and plant the seeds. I’ll be watering on a daily basis. The most important things apart from watering are to control the weeds and put down manure. We weed and water the plants. We aim to feed the whole school one day. We already have beans and maize for lunch – so it would be good for us to have greens too.”

Makuu says, “I’m learning things from the garden: how to plant vegetables, how to sow seeds and look after them. The garden will help me and my family because when I finish school, if I’m jobless, I can raise money and help myself by selling vegetables.”

Makuu has a question for you too, he says: “I’d like to ask children in the UK whether they plant vegetables like we do here?”

What’s your answer to Makuu’s question? Do you have a vegetable patch at home or school? Do you help out? What jobs do you do? What do you grow?

*(There are pictures of Makuu and Willygister in the accompanying photo PowerPoint which you can share with the children.)*

In today’s gospel reading Jesus goes on to explain his parable and exactly what it means. Can you remember any of what he said?

The seed that falls on the path is like those people who hear what Jesus is saying but don’t really understand it or listen to it properly.

The seed that falls on the rocks is like the person who hears what Jesus asks of us and starts off really excited about it, but who gives up following him as soon as it is difficult.

The seed that falls in the thorns is like someone who hears what Jesus asks but concentrates too much on having the best things, the most money, the most power, rather than on being the person Jesus wants us to be.

The seed that falls on the rich soil is like someone who hears what Jesus is asking, understands it, and lives their life as he asks them to.

So which one do you think we should try to be? How do you think you can be like the seed that falls on the rich soil? How can we live our lives like God asks us to – what do we have to do?

This week, see if you can be like the seed that falls on the rich soil – listen to what Jesus asks of you, try to understand it and live your life as God calls you to.

**Intercessions** *You may want to ask the children to offer their own prayers or*

*you can use the suggestions below.*

We try to listen to Jesus as we pray together:

We pray for world leaders: that they may do what is best for all their people, especially those who are poor. Lord, in your mercy…

We pray for all people that grow crops to feed themselves and to feed others: that they may have a good harvest. Lord, in your mercy…

We pray for our parish, family and friends: that we may be like the seed in the rich soil, living our lives as God calls us to and caring for one another. Lord, in your mercy…

**Closing prayer:** God of all, guide us as we try to follow you, so that we may grow in faith and love, and share that love with all people throughout the world. Amen.

**Activity suggestions**

Ask the children to colour in the accompanying illustration and on the back to write or draw what they will do this week to make sure they are like the seed that falls in the rich soil – listening to God’s word and living their lives as God wants them to.

Ask the children to think about the question that Makuu has asked them “I’d like to ask children in the UK whether they plant vegetables like we do here?” and to write a letter to him to answer it.

Make a display with the children – draw a seed under the earth and get the children to add all the things that a plant needs to grow – sunshine, rich soil, water, weeding. Then also get them to add in what they can do to live like God wants us to – so that they too grow like the seed in the rich soil.

Ask the children to go home and share all that they have heard and thought about today. Ask them to try in the coming week to see if they can be like the seed in the rich soil – listening to the word of God and living the way God wants us.