

**Liturgy of the Word with Children**  
**Twenty-seventh Sunday in Ordinary Time, Year A**  
**8 October 2017**  
**Matthew 21:33-43**

### **Catechist Background**

Jesus is in Jerusalem, where he will suffer and die. Having been feted by the people on his entry to Jerusalem, Jesus cast out extortionate traders from the temple; the religious leaders are anxious and challenge him with hostile questions which Jesus answers with parables. Last week we heard the first parable. Today we hear the second and next week the third. In each of the parables the leaders will recognise themselves, and not in a positive way.

Absentee landlords were an everyday part of life in the ancient Mediterranean, large tracts of which were owned by people living elsewhere. The owner might only be seen once a year to collect the annual rent, or he might send trusted servants to collect it for him. One can sympathise to a certain degree with the frustration of tenant farmers who toil and get to keep very little of their earnings. If the landowner died without an heir, the ownership of the land transferred to the tenants.

Each element of this parable has an allegorical counterpart. God, the landowner, throughout history sent prophets to proclaim his message to his chosen people. One after the other the prophets were rejected. Finally God sends his Son, whom, we know, will again be rejected and killed. We are called to be the people who produce the fruit of the Kingdom of God.

### **Setting the Scene**

If you have the 'vine' from the Twenty-fifth Sunday in Ordinary Time (two weeks ago), you can re-use it this week! You will also need paper 'grape bunches' for each of the children, and tape/blu-tak to attach it to the vine.

### **We Say Sorry**

Leader: Lord Jesus, you act with fairness and justice, Lord have mercy.

**All: Lord, have mercy.**

Leader: You reach out the strong and the weak, Christ have mercy.

**All: Christ, have mercy.**

Leader: You will lead us to God's Kingdom, Lord have mercy.

**All: Lord, have mercy.**

### **Gloria**

#### **We Pray (1)**

God, your love for us is more than we can imagine. Give us the strength to always live in your truth. Amen.

### **Gospel Intro**

The children might need some help in understanding what a 'tenant' is before being able to appreciate the implications of the story.

### **Acclamation**

**Gospel:** Matthew 21:33-43

## Reflecting on the Reading with Children

- Who does the landowner represent in this story? Who are the tenants? Help the children to see that the tenants represent the people in Jesus' day who thought they were better than God at being in charge.
- Who are the servants of the landowner? Who is the landowner's son?
- What did the tenants do? What should they have done?

## Response

Emphasise the fact that the landowner was asking for what was rightfully his—it was the tenants who were being greedy and selfish. In the same way, the first people Jesus told the story to were not very willing to give all their goodness to God's glory. They wanted to make themselves look good, not God. Help the children to recognise some of the things that God has given us in our day and age that really belong to God. These things might include our natural resources, our opportunities, or our talents. If God has given someone a singing talent, should that person use it to sing, '[Your name] is so ugly, she is the smelliest person on the planet...?' Of course not! Or if a person has a talent for maths, should that person finish their maths work and then say 'I am a genius! The rest of you are all so stupid, I am not sure how you can even be alive!' No way! Or if the person is really strong, should they use their strength to beat people up? That would be ridiculous! Allow the children to voice alternative ways of using the above God-given gifts.

Hand out the paper 'grapes' and encourage each child to write/draw something on the back that they will make an extra effort to use in a Godly way this week. Allow each child to come forward and place it on the 'vine' as a sign of their commitment.

## 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 has made the world full of good things for us to enjoy?
- Do you believe in Jesus Christ, God the Son, who came to call us back to God's love?
- Do you believe in God the Holy Spirit, who remains with us to give us the strength to keep working in God's vineyard?

## We Pray (2)

Again, try to relate the bidding prayers to the reading by saying, 'We know you are with us in love and so we also now pray...'

Leader: We pray for the Church all over the world. We especially pray for those who share God's Word in dangerous circumstances. Lord in your mercy,

**All: Hear our prayer.**

Leader: We pray for leaders of all countries, that they may use their power responsibly. Lord in your mercy,

**All: Hear our prayer.**

Leader: We pray for our parish family. Lord in your mercy,

**All: Hear our prayer.**

Leader: We pray for anybody who is feeling lonely, including people who have recently moved house, people who are ill, and people whose loved ones are far away. Lord in your mercy,

**All: Hear our prayer.**

Leader: Lord, we know you hear our prayers. Help us to be your servants in sharing your love with the world. We make all our prayers through Christ our Lord.

**All: Amen.**

