

Liturgy of the Word with Children
Twenty-eighth Sunday in Ordinary Time, Year A
15 October 2017
Matthew 22:1-10 (shorter form)

Catechist Background

This is the last of the series of parables that Jesus will tell for a few weeks in our liturgical cycle, with the meaning of today's parable very similar to what we heard last week. The image of a banquet representing God's reign was used in the Old Testament times, and would be a familiar image for Jesus' hearers. Matthew first wrote his gospel for a community of primarily Jewish Christians who were necessarily opening up to Gentile believers. It was important for them to understand that one's genealogical heritage was less important than one's actions in allowing a person to join in the banquet of the Kingdom of God.

Setting the Scene

For the activity, you will need to produce some wedding invitations and drawing materials.

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)

God, may we show you we love you by the good way we treat others. Amen.

Gospel Intro

Remind the children that, like last week, Jesus is speaking in the temple precinct to people who consider themselves faithful followers of God's rules.

Gospel Acclamation

Gospel: Matthew 22:1-10

Reflecting on the Reading with Children

- Have any of you, or your families, received a wedding invitation? Did you go to the wedding?
- Who do people invite to their weddings? What would the bride and groom think if the people invited to the wedding all said, 'No, we have better things to do that day...' How do you think people would have felt if they then said, 'OK, let's go out and get anyone who is in the street to come to our wedding and our party!'
- Who does the king represent in today's parable? Who do the servants represent? The people who were invited first? The people who were invited later?

- Why did Jesus tell the people who were in charge at the temple that they were like the first people who were invited to the wedding?

Response

Although it may have been exciting to go to a wedding, we are invited to a much better party—the Kingdom of God. Encourage the children to come up with ideas of what the Kingdom of God is like. Unfortunately, our society does not often connect the idea of ‘enjoyment’ with anything to do with God. It is often not helped by well-meaning people describing heaven as like being in church for forever, given many people’s actual experience of being in church. Today’s first reading from Isaiah can give some hints, if the children are struggling: rich and juicy food, tears wiped away, rejoicing everywhere. What type of things make us feel like rejoicing? It is important not to discourage ideas that are not traditionally associated with the kingdom of heaven; for all we know, musical statues, chocolate milkshake and monkey bars may indeed be there! Give the children invitations to the banquet of God’s Kingdom. Encourage them to draw/write their own ideas of what that banquet could be like.

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 that God created all of us to be happy?
- Do you believe that Jesus Christ has invited us all to share in his banquet?
- Do you believe that the Holy Spirit helps us to be wise and to listen to God?

We Pray (2)

Again, try to relate the bidding prayers to the reading by saying, ‘God has a delightful plan for all of creation, and so we now pray...’

Leader: We pray for the Church, that we may always welcome people to the banquet.
Lord in your mercy,

All: Hear our prayer.

Leader: We pray for God’s peace to be spread all over the world, to people of every country and religion. Lord in your mercy,

All: Hear our prayer.

Leader: We pray for anyone suffering from illness, that we may be active in helping them. Lord in your mercy,

All: Hear our prayer.

Leader: We pray for those of us here, that we can see the wonderful things God has surrounded us with. Lord in your mercy,

All: Hear our prayer.

Leader: Lord, help us to make the world around us more like your heavenly banquet. We make all our prayers through Christ our Lord.

All: Amen.

