

Thirty-first Sunday of the Year

Practise what you preach

INTRODUCTION

The Pharisees were the leaders of the Jewish people. They studied the scriptures and were very proud that they obeyed the Jewish law. The ordinary people looked to the Pharisees for good example, but Jesus told his followers that they did not 'practise what they preached.'

SIGN OF THE CROSS

LIGHT THE CANDLES

Light the candles and sing the Candle Song together.

SORRY

Close your eyes and listen to this reading (*cf Psalm 14:2-3*):

Lord those who turn away from you do wrong,
those who are wise worship you,
Lord you see all that we do,
help us to do what is right.

(Allow the children a few moments to think about these words before reading the following slowly:)

If we have chosen the wrong way,
and made a mistake,
(*All*) Lord have mercy.

If we have forgotten to share your love with others,
(*All*) Christ have mercy.

If we have spoiled our friendship with you
and made you sad,
(*All*) Lord have mercy.

GLORIA

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

To welcome today's Gospel sing Acclamation 5:
We have come to hear you.

GOSPEL (*cf Matthew 23:1-12*)

Jesus said to the crowds, 'Listen to what the Pharisees tell you and do what they say, but do not copy what they do. They do not put their words into actions or practise what they preach. They are full of self-importance and pride and you must not follow their example. Only God is important and you must be ready to serve him and one another.'

DISCUSSION

Jesus said that the Pharisees did not 'practise what they preached'. What does this mean? – The Pharisees did not match what they said with what they did. They told everyone what the law said

they must do, but then they did not do it themselves. They did not put the words that they preached into action.

We still use this saying today, because we are all very good at telling everyone else what *they should* do, but we aren't very good at actually *doing it* ourselves.

Can you think of examples in everyday life when people don't 'practise what they preach'?

– when you visit a friend's house to play, you might remind *them* that they should share a precious toy, but *you* don't share your favourite toys at home.

– if someone else does something wrong you expect *them* to say sorry straight away, but are *you* always ready to say sorry when you get it wrong yourself?

If we tell someone else what they should do then we should be ready to do that thing ourselves. Can you think of any examples of putting your words into action and actually 'practising what you preach'?

– before telling your younger sister or brother to keep their toys tidy, make sure your own toys are tidy.

– if we tell our friends to be honest, then when we find some money in the playground, we should hand it to the teacher, and not put it in our own pocket.

Jesus wanted us to understand that if we want to share the message of his love with others, then it is important for us to *do* what we say, and show our goodness by our actions. By showing others how much we care for each other, our words are not just empty sounds, they are put into loving action.

ACTIVITY

Hand out the photocopied sheet. Talk about the pictures with the children – who is being helpful and kind and who isn't. Can they add a couple of drawings of their own in the space provided?

CREED

CLOSING PRAYER

Jesus,
help us to make our actions
speak louder than our words.
So that others will see
that we belong to Christ
and may believe in you.