

Thirty-third Sunday of the Year

Gifts from God

INTRODUCTION

When we love someone, sometimes we give them a gift, something special for them to use and enjoy. God has given talents to each one of us as a sign of his love; these are gifts from God.

SIGN OF THE CROSS

LIGHT THE CANDLES

Light the candles, and then read (*cf Revelation 22:5*):

One day there will be no more darkness, no more night. No one will need lamps or the light from the sun. God will light up the darkness with glory and they will see clearly forever.

• SORRY

Ask a child to choose a sorry colour. The corresponding Sorry Prayer can be read by them or the group can say the prayer together.

• GLORIA

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

(The talents described in St Matthews Gospel were large units of money used at that time. To avoid confusing the children, the Gospel adaptation refers to the talents given to us by God, using the other sense of the word 'talent' as a skill or gift for doing something. This has been done to help make the Gospel clearer and avoid ambiguity.) To welcome today's Gospel sing Acclamation 3: *Alleluia, alleluia.*

GOSPEL (*cf Matthew 25:14-30*)

One day Jesus said: 'Once there were three men who had each been given different numbers of talents. The first man had five, the second man, three and the third, one. They were free to use these talents however they wished. The first man used his talents well and doubled them; the second man also worked hard and used what he had been given wisely, but the third man felt that he had little to offer, so he hid his talent away from everyone and did not use it. The time came to meet the one who had given each of them their talents, and they told him in turn how they had used them. He was very pleased with the first and second men, but not with the third man who had wasted what he had been given.'

DISCUSSION

If we say that someone has a talent, what do we

mean? – We mean that they have a special gift or skill for doing something.

In the story Jesus told, each man was given a number of talents. Who gives us our talents? – Any gifts or talents we have, have been given to us by God our Father.

Tell me about some of the talents which God has given to each of you. Encourage the children to talk about one thing which they do well, for example:

– swimming; making people laugh; singing; dancing; being thoughtful; playing a musical instrument; reading.

In the story can you remember what the men did with their talents? – Two of them used their talents well and made them grow and multiply. The other man kept his talent hidden from everyone and did not share it.

What does God want us to do with the talents he has given us? – When someone gives us a present, they love to see us using it and getting pleasure from it. Our talents are gifts from God, given to us because he loves us. They are very precious and must not be wasted, but instead be put to good use.

What will we be asked at the end of time? – Like the men in the parable, God will ask us what we have done with the talents he gave us. Did we use them wisely, sharing them with others for the good of all; or did we hide them away selfishly, without allowing them to grow?

ACTIVITY

Either: cut out a variety of parcel shapes – enough for more than one each, and ask the children to colour them so that they look like wrapped gift boxes. Or: gift wrap some mini packets of sweets (these can be bought loose). Then give each child a label on which to write one of their own talents before attaching it to a box. These can be pinned to a board or carried up in a basket with the caption 'Our gifts from God'.

CREED

CLOSING PRAYER

Heavenly Father, we thank you for the talents which you have given to each of us. Whatever our gifts may be, teach us to use them wisely, and for the good of others.