

Children's liturgy –Thirty-second Sunday in Ordinary Time (Year A)

Preparation of the worship space

Colour: green

Song suggestions: Wait for the Lord (88, Laudate)

Welcome: Today Jesus tells us a story about how it is important to be ready and prepared for whatever will happen. Let's think a bit about being prepared today.

Opening prayer: Christ Jesus, you call us to be ready for the coming of your kingdom. Help us to listen to your word and answer your call. Amen.

First reading (optional): Wisdom 6:12-16

Psalm: Psalm 62:2-8. R. v.2

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 25:1-13

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

Jesus tells a story about ten people who are waiting at a wedding for the bridegroom to arrive. It is dark and so they all have lamps with them to light the way. But what did five of them have that the other five didn't?

Five of them were sensible and took extra oil with them, so that if the bridegroom was late they would still be able to light his way. They were prepared. What happened next?

The bridegroom was very late. It was after midnight before the ten people were asked to go out and meet him and five of them no longer had enough oil for their lamps. They were not prepared and ended up being left outside the wedding.

How do you think they felt about being left outside?

Sometimes things happen that we don't expect. And we realise that we are not ready for them. Can you think of a time when this has happened to you? What happened? How did you feel?

Can you think of a time when you were ready for something? When you were well prepared? What happened? How did you feel?

Sabita lives in Bangladesh. She lives by the sea and often faces problems because of flooding.

But CAFOD has helped Sabita to prepare as best as she can for the flooding. She says, "We had more heavy rain: after just one hour my courtyard was flooded in a foot of water. But my vegetable plot wasn't ruined, because CAFOD had encouraged me to raise it off the ground. My husband and I raised it about two and a half feet higher than it was before."

Sabita's vegetable plot is very important because she uses it to grow food to feed herself and her family. But it is also a way of making a living – she sells the vegetables to make money.

Sabita says, "I give my neighbours advice on how to protect themselves and their land. It's important as if our vegetables are destroyed, we can't make a living. I also show them how to prepare for future floods. We can't stop natural disasters, but we can keep the damage low."

Sabita knows that her land is likely to flood again and even though she doesn't know exactly when, she is more prepared than she ever has been before. How do you think this makes her feel?

(There is a picture of Sabita in the accompanying photo PowerPoint which you can share with the children.)

We know that God's kingdom will come. But we don't know exactly when. In today's reading Jesus is telling us we should be prepared, so we are ready and waiting when he comes again.

How do you think we can make sure we are prepared for the coming of God's kingdom?

Intercessions *You may want to ask the children to offer their own prayers or you can use the suggestions below.*

Let's pray together:

We pray for Sabita and for all people around the world who face floods and natural disasters: that they may be able to prepare as best they can to protect themselves and their land. Lord, in your mercy...

We pray for the work of CAFOD: that it may continue to help people be prepared and to change their lives for the better. Lord, in your mercy...

We pray for our parish, family and friends: that we may do all that we can to prepare for the coming of God's kingdom, by following Jesus' teaching and treating others as we would wish to be treated. Lord, in your mercy...

Closing prayer: God of all, help us to share what we have, to treat others as we would wish to be treated and to try to make the world a fairer place, so that we may be found ready when your kingdom comes. Amen.

Activity suggestions

Ask the children to colour in the accompanying optional illustration and to write or draw on the back how they will make sure they are prepared for the coming of God's kingdom.

Ask the children to write a prayer for Sabita and all the other people who face natural disasters – that they are able to prepare as best they can, and protect themselves, their homes and their land.

Ask the children to go home and share all that they have heard and thought about today. Ask them to "be prepared" in the coming week – to do all that they can to follow what Jesus asks of us. If they have written a prayer, ask them to say it together at home or at school during the coming week.