

Liturgy of the Word with Children
27th Sunday in Ordinary Time, Year B
7 October, 2018
Mark 10:2-6

Catechist Background

In the ancient world, children and women did not enjoy the same rights and legal protection as men. Ancient Greeks saw women as 'failed men.' In such a milieu, the provision in the Torah for divorce could be seen as positively enlightened, as it allowed for the remarriage of women who had been publicly abandoned by their husbands. Without a male provider, such women otherwise faced destitution. However, the rule only allowed men to divorce their wives; women could not divorce their husbands (this anomalous situation still exists in traditional Jewish groups). By emphasising the sanctity and permanence of marriage, Jesus speaks to its dignity and importance.

The 'age of the law' in Jesus' world was twelve, when (boy) children had access to legal privileges. At this time their status was significantly raised. When the disciples turned the children away it was with the understanding that they were too small or too unimportant for Jesus to be bothering with them. Evidently they had not been paying attention to what Jesus had been saying over the last few gospel selections (a theme that will continue in the next few weeks to come as well)! Jesus' irritation with the disciples, their self-importance, and their presumption over who was able to access the Kingdom of God becomes a lesson for us on God's love for the whole of humanity.

Setting the Scene

The materials which follow suggest only using Mark 13-16; verses 2-12 have very little practical application to children. Furthermore, children who come from families who have experienced divorce have already experienced at close-hand the difficulty which comes from families splitting up, and often feel a sense of personal responsibility for the loss. Altering the reading selection in this way is in keeping with the Directory for Masses with Children, paragraph 43.

"If, because of the limited capacity of the children, it seems necessary to omit one or other verse of a biblical reading, this should be done cautiously and in such a way "that the meaning of the text or the intent and, as it were, style of the Scriptures are not distorted."

For the activity described below, you will need a large, bulky box wrapped to look like an attractive gift. This box can be re-used again in next week's Children's Liturgy of the Word.

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 show us the Kingdom of God, Lord have mercy.

All: Lord, have mercy.

Gloria

We Pray (1)

God, you love us with a love bigger than we can imagine. Forgive us when we mess up, and keep us on the path that leads to you. Amen.

Gospel Acclamation

Gospel: Mark 10:13-16

Reflecting on the Reading with Children

- If an important official or a king or a really rich person asked to see Jesus, do you think the disciples would have turned them away? Why do you think the disciples were turning the children away?
- What do you think Jesus meant when he said that people need to enter the Kingdom of God like a little child?

Response

Show the children a large box, wrapped in gift wrap. Explain that this represents the most wonderful gift, the Kingdom of God. Show the following two reactions to receiving the gift; if you have two leaders prepared to act, the options could be demonstrated by different people.

Option 1 (politely, but in a fairly dull voice): Thank you very much. This is just what I wanted. [shakes hand of the person giving the gift].

Option 2 (excitedly): OhmygoodnessohmyGOODNESS! [jumps in the air and claps hands] Yes! Wow! Excellent! Hooray!

Ask which person seemed more like a child receiving the best gift they had ever been given, and which seemed more like an adult.

Ask for volunteers among the children to show how they would receive the Kingdom of God. Allow everyone to demonstrate if they wish.

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 made the world to be perfect?
- Do you believe in God the Son, Jesus Christ, who came to welcome us back to the Kingdom of God?
- Do you believe in God the Holy Spirit, who lives on through the Church today?

We Pray (2)

Again, try to relate the bidding prayers to the reading by saying, 'Jesus showed concern for all people, right down to the least significant, and so we also now pray...'

Leader: We pray for the Church, that we may be welcoming to those who are seen as not very important. Lord in your mercy,

All: Hear our prayer.

Leader: We pray for world leaders, that they may use their power to protect those who have nobody else to protect them. Lord in your mercy,

All: Hear our prayer.

Leader: We pray for children all over the world, especially those who do not have loving families to belong to. Lord in your mercy,

All: Hear our prayer.

Leader: We pray for anyone we know who has asked for our prayers. We take a moment to think of anyone who that may be... Lord in your mercy,

All: Hear our prayer.

Leader: Lord, help us to reach out to everyone around us who needs us. We make all our prayers through Christ our Lord.

All: Amen.

