

Thirty-first Sunday of the Year

The two great commandments

INTRODUCTION

The scribes were very religious and carefully obeyed every commandment of the Jewish Law, and spent much of their time studying the scriptures. One day, a scribe came to Jesus and asked him an important question.

SIGN OF THE CROSS

LIGHT THE CANDLES

Light the candles and read this prayer:

The candle flame is warm and bright,
it changes darkness into light.

We feel its warmth and see its glow,
and when we look at it we know,
the light of Christ is burning bright,
for we are children of the light.

SORRY

Lord, as we sing this song together, help us to be truly sorry and to change our hearts if we have not always been good. Sing Sorry Song 1

GLORIA

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

To welcome today's Gospel sing Acclamation 1:
Share your word with us.

GOSPEL (cf Mark 12:28-34)

One of the scribes came to Jesus and asked, 'Which of God's commandments is the most important?' Jesus answered, 'To love God with all your heart, and all your mind and all your strength, and to love others as much as you love yourself. These commandments come before all others!' Then the scribe said to Jesus, 'What you have said is true, because nothing is more important than loving God and loving our neighbours.'

Seeing that the scribe was wise and good, Jesus said to him, 'My friend, what you have said will please God and keep you close to him.'

DISCUSSION

Which of God's commandments are the most important? – To love God and to love our neighbours as ourselves.

Who is our neighbour? – Jesus did not only mean the person living next door, or people that you know! Every person we meet is our 'neighbour', and Jesus expects us to treat them in the same way as we would like to be treated ourselves.

Why might the scribe have asked such a question? – Many of the scribes paid more attention to the rules and regulations of the law, rather than the things which were truly important – loving God and our neighbour. The scribe had listened to Jesus preaching, and was probably curious to know what was most important to Jesus.

Jesus wants us to put our love for God and for other people before anything else in our lives. What will happen if we do this? – Like the scribe in the story, our lives will be pleasing to God and we will stay close to his love as he leads us through life. At the end of time, the reward for our goodness will be to share everlasting life with him in heaven.

How can we show our love to God and to each other? (Encourage the children to share their ideas.)

Jesus once said, 'Love one another as I have loved you.' He showed his love by caring for everyone he met – spending time listening and talking to them; helping the sick; making the lonely feel welcome and loved; by being forgiving and not judging others. Jesus has shown us many ways to put the two greatest commandments into action in our lives.

ACTIVITY

Use large sheets of paper to make two banners. Cut out the individual letters which make up the words of the two greatest commandments. Ask the children to colour these brightly, and help them to assemble them in the correct order before sticking them onto the banners.

CREED

CLOSING PRAYER

Heavenly Father,
you know each one of us
and generously pour your love
into our lives.

Teach us
not to be selfish or greedy,
by returning your love
and sharing it willingly
with everyone we meet.