

Liturgy of the Word with Children
31st Sunday in Ordinary Time, Year B
4 November 2018
Mark 12:28-34

Catechist Background

The conversation in today's gospel reading takes place after Jesus' triumphal entry into Jerusalem the week before his crucifixion. Jesus has recently silenced objections raised to him by the Temple priests, Pharisees and Sadducees. These earlier inquisitors were all hostile to Jesus and clearly trying to catch him out. However, the scribe in today's reading seems genuinely interested after Jesus' advice on what was a hot topic of debate for scribes at the time, as it was sometimes very difficult to enact each of the hundreds of commands listed in the Torah within the specified time frames. Jesus gives the scribe two pieces of the Hebrew scriptures to ponder, the first from Deuteronomy 6:4-5 is called the 'Shema' and was recited three times a day by Jewish men (and frequently women as well), was put into small boxes, and tied on to doors and gates and arms and foreheads as phylacteries (Greek) or tefillin (Hebrew). These practices continue to the present day except in Reform Jewish groups. The second, from Leviticus 19:18, originally applied the term 'neighbour' to mean only one's fellow countrymen. It was later understood to also apply to aliens living in the locality and later still to mean all of humanity. By hinging all of the other commands on these two, Jesus reminds us that the laws were not given just for the sake of jumping through hoops, but as an expression of love for God and for the people God puts in our lives.

Setting the Scene

We Say Sorry

Leader: You love all of humanity, Lord have mercy.

All: Lord, have mercy.

Leader: You challenge us to do the same, Christ have mercy.

All: Christ, have mercy.

Leader: You love us even when we fail, Lord have mercy.

All: Lord, have mercy.

Gloria

We Pray (1)

God, help us to joyfully praise you with our lives in all we do. Amen.

Gospel Acclamation

Gospel: Mark 12:28-34

Reflecting on the Reading with Children

- Why do you think the scribe asked Jesus what was the most important commandment?
- Do you remember what Jesus told him? What about the second most important commandment?
- Why do you think these are the most important two?

Response

Show the children pictures of Jewish phylacteries (these are readily found on the internet, especially by looking up images of 'tefillin' in a search engine). Explain that they contain pieces of scripture that are so important that Jews wore—and wear—them to remind them of their importance by their physical presence. Look around your children's liturgy space and see if there are any reminders of the most important elements of what we believe—crucifixes, statues, pictures, even jewellery worn by the leaders may remind us of Jesus' love for us. Give children a long, narrow strip of paper, and for those who can write, encourage them to copy down the words to Deuteronomy 6:4-5 (have some pre-prepared for children who are too young to write). Suggest that the children decorate the strips of paper with important symbols of God's love. Encourage them to display them at home as a reminder of the most important commandment.

Older children may be interested in seeing and even copying the first words of the Shema (remember that Hebrew reads right-to-left).

שמע ישראל יהוה יהוה אלהינו יהוה אחד

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 created the world and gave us rules to be happy?
- Do you believe in Jesus Christ, God the Son, who came to call us back to God's love?
- Do you believe in God the Holy Spirit who helps us to love God and each other?

We Pray (2)

Again, try to relate the bidding prayers to the reading by saying, 'We know the world needs your help to grow in love and so we now pray...'

Leader: We pray for Christians all over the world, that we may extend Jesus' love to all people, including those who are not like us. Lord in your mercy,

All: Hear our prayer.

Leader: We pray for all countries which are choosing new leaders, inspire people to choose wisely, lovingly and well. Lord in your mercy,

All: Hear our prayer.

Leader: As the weather gets colder, we pray for all those who do not have warm homes to live in. Lord in your mercy,

All: Hear our prayer.

Leader: We pray for our nearby neighbours, our faraway loved ones, and anyone who needs our prayers. Lord in your mercy,

All: Hear our prayer.

Leader: Lord, help us to see the needs around us and to act in a way to share your love with others. We make all our prayers through Christ our Lord.

All: Amen.

