

**Liturgy of the Word with Children**  
**6<sup>th</sup> Sunday in Ordinary Time, Year A**  
**12 February, 2023**

**Matthew 5:17-37 (short version Mt 5:20-22a, 27-28, 33-34a, 37)**

### **Catechist Background**

Today's gospel forms part of the Sermon on the Mount. Jesus opens several sections with the words, 'You have heard it said...but I say to you...' which was a way of rabbinical teaching, a form of speaking used to highlight the fact that a rabbi had a particular way of interpreting the scriptures. Jesus brings a new teaching for a new era in understanding how to live a godly life. Although Jesus tells us that he has not come to drop even one letter from the law, he encourages us to take a broader view of the law and live by its underlying intention, not just the letter of what it prescribes.

In its full form, today's gospel is quite lengthy, and even the shorter version deals with some particularly adult themes. The notes below focus on Matthew 5:17, 20, 21-22a, 23-24.

### **Setting the Scene**

For the activity below, you will need faces cut out of magazines (preferably of people unknown to the children) or drawn by you, crumpled up and put in a small rubbish bin.

### **We Say Sorry**

As we get ready to listen to the scriptures, let us recognise that we don't always live the life God asks us to live.

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

**All: Lord, have mercy.**

You offer us forgiveness for our sins, Christ have mercy.

**All: Christ, have mercy.**

You call us to peaceful living, Lord have mercy.

**All: Lord, have mercy.**

### **Gloria**

### **We Pray (1)**

Dear God, you promised to help people who try to do what is right. Help us to live as you want us to do. Amen.

### **Gospel Intro**

It may be useful to remind the children who the scribes and Pharisees were—religious leaders of the day who interpreted the scriptures that we call the Old Testament. They mostly thought pretty highly of themselves and many of them bragged about how holy they were and how good they were in keeping the religious laws they had been given. It may also be helpful to explain that in Jesus' day, as a normal part of worship, people would bring livestock animals or doves or grain to the temple as an offering to God to show their devotion.

## Gospel Acclamation

**Gospel:** Matthew 5:17, 20, 21-22a, 23-24

## Reflecting on the Reading with Children

- If you went to the dentist and were told that you shouldn't eat sweets or chocolate, do you think it would be a good idea to then eat lots of doughnuts and cake because the dentist didn't specifically say not to?
- If your parents told you not to kick a football in the house, do you think it would be okay to kick a basketball?
- If you were told to pick up your toys from your bedroom, do you think you should pick up your books too, even if nobody told you to do so?
- In the law Jesus speaks of, what are people told not to do? But if I said to someone, 'You are rubbish at everything and you are ugly and you smell like a pile of rotten fish,' would I be actually killing them? Would I be killing their spirit?
- If I had said all of those things to somebody and then went to bring my offering to the temple, do you think it would be a very good way of bringing an offering to God? What would have been better?
- Does Jesus *only* mean that we need to make peace with our brothers and sisters? Who else does he mean?
- How can I make peace with people I have hurt before coming to worship God?

## Response

It can be difficult to apologise and really mean it when we have hurt someone else. It can also be difficult to accept an apology. Invite the children to come up one at a time and take a picture out of the 'bin,' uncrumple them, and place them around the cross/focal point, as a symbol of working to be peacemakers.

## 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 whole world?
- Do you believe in Jesus, Son of God, who gives us the law of love?
- Do you believe in the Holy Spirit who guides us to act according to God's wishes?

## We Pray (2)

Again, try to relate the bidding prayers to the reading by saying, 'We know that God wants the good of the whole world and so we now pray...'

We pray for people who are leaders in Christian churches, that they may be examples of how to live lives that are pleasing to God. Lord in your mercy,

**All: Hear our prayer.**

We pray for people who make laws, that they make rules that are in line with God's laws. Lord in your mercy,

**All: Hear our prayer.**

We pray for our families and friends, especially those to whom we owe an apology.  
Lord in your mercy,

**All: Hear our prayer.**

We pray for anyone in the world who is feeling lonely or left out. Lord in your mercy,

**All: Hear our prayer.**

Lord, help us to live out your laws, not just in the exact words that they say but in what they mean. We make all our prayers through Christ our Lord.

**All: Amen.**

