FIFTEENTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

YEAR A

PRAYER OF THE DAY:

God of all that exists,
plant your Word
in our hearts,
and may it take root
and grow there.
We want to be
your good soil,
producing a harvest
of kindness and love,
so leading others
to find you
and give themselves to you.
We make this prayer to you
through Christ, our Lord.

FOCUS OF THE READINGS:

The focus of the readings is the eventual success of God's will. The first reading tells us that God's Word will succeed just as surely as rain waters the earth. The Gospel says that even though many seeds seem to be lost, the harvest, in the end, is great. God's Word will triumph. The eventual success of God's Word is not dependent on us, but each of us can personally provide the "soil" for its growth in us.

FIRST READING: Isaiah 55:10-11
This is a reading from the prophet Isaiah.
Our God says,

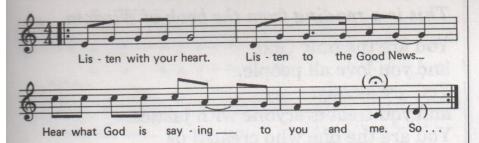
"When the rain and snow come down from heaven, they water the earth so that things will grow and people will have bread. My word is like that. When I speak, my word goes out from me, and it does what I send it to do."

The Word of the Lord.

RESPONSE: Psalm 119



GOSPEL ACCLAMATION:



GOSPEL: Matthew 13:1-9

This is a reading from the Gospel of Matthew.

One day Jesus was sitting by the sea, and a large crowd of people gathered around him. He used parables to teach them many things.

This is one of the parables he told them: "There once was a person who went out to plant some seeds. Some of the seeds fell beside the path,

and the birds came and ate them.

Some seeds fell on ground where there were lots of rocks.

The seeds grew up fast, but since there wasn't much dirt around them,

the roots didn't grow very deep.

And when the sun got too hot, the seeds dried up and died.

And some seeds fell into a patch of thorns.

The thorns grew around them, and the seeds didn't have

enough room to grow so they also died. But some of the seeds fell on good soil.

And when the grain grew up,

it was 30 or 60 or 100 times

as much as the farmer had planted.

Anyone who has ears,

listen to what I am really saying!"

The Gospel of the Lord.

REFLECTING ON THE READINGS WITH CHILDREN:

After the Gospel, give the children an opportunity to share what they heard in the story.

What happened to some of the seeds?

Explore those images with the children.

You will notice that we have chosen the short form of the reading. The long form includes an allegorical interpretation (verses 18-23). Since these verses are not included, allow the children to suggest their own allegories. Ask them what they think Jesus meant by "beside the path," "lots of rocks," "patch of thorns."

Some of the seed fell on good soil and when the grain grew up there was 30 or 60 or 100 times as much as the farmer planted. How can we be sure we are that "good soil" where the Word of God can grow?

Take time with this. We cannot always assume the children understand this kind of imagery. What is important is that they realize they can be open to God's Word, they can help themselves be ready to hear it and think about it.