

Liturgy of the Word with Children
Fifteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time, Year A
16 July 2023
Matthew 13:1-23 (shorter form Matthew 13:1-7)

Catechist Background

This resource recommends using the shorter form of today's gospel, as the full version is rather lengthy to hold young attention spans.

For the next three weeks, we hear portions of the same scene of Jesus speaking to the crowds. He tells several parables from the boat which he sits on for a better hearing. Parables were frequently used in Jesus' day; they are stories which use a familiar image to illustrate a point, and they normally make use of repetition and have a surprising twist at the end. Sowing seed would have been a common activity in ancient times, one his audience would have been very familiar with. The surprising twist Jesus inserts is the abundance of the harvest. People would have considered a five-fold return on their crop a fortunate blessing; a thirty- sixty- or hundred-fold return is a sign of God's amazing abundance.

Setting the Scene

To aid the discussion in 'Reflecting on the Reading with Children,' you may wish to have an illustration prepared in advance. 'Google' has many helpful images.

We Say Sorry

Leader: You bring us to your truth, Lord have mercy.

All: Lord, have mercy.

Leader: You are our guide, Christ have mercy.

All: Christ, have mercy.

Leader: You always free us to love you, Lord have mercy.

All: Lord, have mercy.

Gloria

We Pray (1)

God, your light shows us the way to Jesus. Help us to follow him always.
Amen.

Gospel Acclamation

Gospel: Matthew 13:1-7

Reflecting on the Reading with Children

- Can anyone remember the different places the sower sowed seed? What happened to it in each of these places? (You may wish to draw a picture of the appropriate places, or refer to a drawing you or another leader has produced earlier).
- What do you think this parable is about? (The full explanation is given in the second half of the full form of today's gospel.)
- What sort of 'soil' does God's word need to grow? Is it possible for 'good soil' to turn into 'bad soil'? How?
- When seeds grow, what do they produce? (Try to get at then answer that they produce more seeds...which go on to produce more

seeds...which go on to produce more seeds...) What do the seeds of God's word produce?

Response

Encourage the children to crouch down on the ground as small as possible, like seeds. When you are ready, encourage them to 'grow' like a plant, reaching as tall as possible. Remind the children that God wants us to be good soil in which to plant his word so it grows.

You might want to take a bean or some seeds and place them in a pot of well watered soil. For many this may be close to your last Children's Liturgy Celebration for the term. (You might ask one of the children to take the pot home and to water it during the summer.) Explain to the children when they return from summer holiday a plant will begin to grow because it was planted in rich well watered soil. You might even plant one in rocky sandy soil to show the difference at the end of the holidays.

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 who plants the seed of faith in us and wants it to grow?
- Do you believe in Jesus who nourishes our faith and helps it to grow?
- Do you believe in the Holy Spirit who helps us to understand what God is like?
- Do you believe in our holy, Catholic Church, where we come to learn about God?

We Pray (2)

Again, try to relate the bidding prayers to the reading by saying, 'We open our hearts to God's word as we pray...'

Leader: We pray for the Church all over the world. We especially pray for Christians in places where other people think it is bad to believe in Jesus.
Lord in your mercy,

All: Hear our prayer.

Leader: We pray for people in the world who do not have enough to eat.
Lord in your mercy,

All: Hear our prayer.

Leader: We pray for all farmers, that their crops may be enough to make a living and to feed the world. Lord in your mercy,

All: Hear our prayer.

Leader: We pray for people in our neighbourhoods who are unhappy for any reason. Lord in your mercy,

All: Hear our prayer.

Leader: Lord, we ask your word to grow in our hearts and that your kingdom will come. We make all our prayers through Christ our Lord.

All: Amen.

