

Liturgy of the Word with Children
Twenty-sixth Sunday in Ordinary Time, Year A
1 October 2023
Matthew 21:28-32

Catechist Background

It may help to understand the ingenuity in today's parable by looking at its context. Jesus has arrived in Jerusalem for the culmination of his ministry which will ultimately lead to his crucifixion. He is teaching in the Temple, the centre of Jewish worship. Imagine someone in our modern times was preaching in the piazza at St. Peter's Basilica in Rome. Those in charge of the Temple have just come out and asked who gave Jesus permission/authority to teach there (Matthew 21:23-27) and Jesus responds with today's parable. Some scholars think that today's parable, found only in Matthew's Gospel, may be the basis for the parable of the Prodigal Son, found only in Luke's Gospel.

Setting the Scene

For the activity described below, you will need sticky address labels and writing materials.

We Say Sorry

Leader: Lord Jesus, you lead us to the Father, Lord have mercy.

All: Lord, have mercy.

Leader: You call us to do your will, Christ have mercy.

All: Christ, have mercy.

Leader: You keep calling us back to you, Lord have mercy.

All: Lord, have mercy.

Gloria

We Pray (1)

God our Father, you are constantly bringing us joy by your forgiveness. Help us to share your compassion with all we meet. Amen.

Gospel Intro

It may be helpful to the children to explain that Jesus is in Jerusalem, at the Temple, and speaking to the religious leaders in charge of the Temple who don't particularly like him.

Gospel Acclamation

Gospel: Matthew 21:28-32

Reflecting on the Reading with Children

- Who do you think the father represents in the parable? Who might the sons represent?

- How do you think the religious leaders that Jesus was speaking to would have reacted to hearing the parable?
- Have you ever acted like the first brother? The second? We all have, unfortunately. What would be a better way to act?

Response

Give each children sticky label (or two depending on the size of the labels) and encourage them to write 'Yes to Jesus!' on them, and then stick them on themselves. As they work, discuss how we can say yes to Jesus, not just with our words but with our actions in our lives. If the age of the children in your group is very young, it would be better to have prepared the words on these beforehand, and then allow the children to decorate them before sticking them on themselves.

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, full of love and generosity?
- Do you believe in God the Son, Jesus, showing us how to be active followers?
- Do you believe in God the Holy Spirit, who gives us the strength to do the work God wants us to do?

We Pray (2)

Again, try to relate the bidding prayers to the reading by saying, 'We are God's children and so we bring our prayers to God...'

Leader: We pray for the Church, that we may continue the work of Jesus.
Lord in your mercy,

All: Hear our prayer.

Leader: We pray for leaders of the world, that they follow through promises with good actions. Lord in your mercy,

All: Hear our prayer.

Leader: We pray for our parish. We especially pray for anybody who is feeling let down by someone else. Lord in your mercy,

All: Hear our prayer.

Leader: We pray for anyone in the world who is suffering from any type of illness. Lord in your mercy,

All: Hear our prayer.

Leader: Lord, we know you hear our prayers. Help us to live our lives in a way that we may be the answer to someone else's prayer. We make all our prayers through Christ our Lord.

All: Amen.

