**Children’s liturgy – Thirty-first Sunday in Ordinary Time (Year A)**

**Preparation of the worship space**

Colour: green

**Song suggestions:** O Lord, all the world belongs to you (847, Laudate)

**Welcome:** Today Jesus warns us to be careful when we are deciding what sort of people we want to be. We are asked not to be too proud but to help one another.

**Opening prayer:** God of truth, help us not to be too distracted by what is not important. Help us always to listen to Jesus and to follow him. Amen.

**First reading (optional):** Malachi 1:14-2:2, 8-10

**Psalm:** Psalm 130

**Gospel acclamation:** *everyone stands and sings the acclamation together.*

**Gospel:** Matthew 23:1-12

Then Jesus spoke to the crowds and to his disciples.“The teachers of the Law and the Pharisees are the authorized interpreters of Moses' Law. So you must obey and follow everything they tell you to do; do not, however, imitate their actions, because they don't practice what they preach. They tie onto people's backs loads that are heavy and hard to carry, yet they aren't willing even to lift a finger to help them carry those loads. They do everything so that people will see them. Look at the straps with scripture verses on them which they wear on their foreheads and arms, and notice how large they are! Notice also how long are the tassels on their cloaks! They love the best places at feasts and the reserved seats in the synagogues; they love to be greeted with respect in the market places and to be called ‘Teacher.’ You must not be called ‘Teacher,’ because you are all members of one family and have only one Teacher. And you must not call anyone here on earth ‘Father,’ because you have only the one Father in heaven.Nor should you be called ‘Leader,’ because your one and only leader is the Messiah. The greatest one among you must be your servant.Whoever makes himself great will be humbled, and whoever humbles himself will be made great.

*(Gospel passage taken from Good News Translation® and used with permission, see details below\*)*

**Gospel reflection:** What do you remember from today’s reading?

Jesus is talking about people who seem to know a lot and think they are very important. Jesus warns his friends that there are some people who always tell others what to do but never listen to their own advice. Their words and their actions are not the same. So, Jesus tells his friends, that they can listen, but that they are not to copy what these people do. These people say one thing, but do another, while also telling everyone else how they must behave. And, more importantly, they never do anything to help others.

Do you think that there are people like that around now?

Jesus describes people who want others to notice them and do whatever they tell them. But he reminds his friends that we must always listen to God first.

Why might it be wrong to listen to other people telling us what to do?

Sometimes people might encourage us to make the wrong choices. They might want us to do something we know is not right.

Jesus reminds us of the way that he teaches us. Jesus does not show off or act like a king. He acts like a servant, because we should all be like servants – loving and caring for each other.

We can follow Jesus’ words, but we can also follow his actions. What Jesus does is always filled with love for other people.

How can we serve others and help each other this week? How can we behave in a way that would show our love for others this week?

**Intercessions** *You may want to ask the children to offer their own prayers or use the suggestions below.*

We believe we are meant to be people who care for each other and so we pray together:

We pray for world leaders: that they may serve their people honestly, making decisions for the good of all. Lord, in your mercy…

We pray for our brothers and sisters throughout the world: that together with them, we may build a better world, free from poverty and filled with love. Lord, in your mercy…

We pray for our parish, family and friends: that we may love God with all our hearts and be inspired to reach out in love to others. Lord, in your mercy…

**Closing prayer:** Christ Jesus, you came into the world to show us how to live as servants to others. Let our love for you be shown in how we care for all people, especially those among us who are poor. Amen.

**Activity suggestions**

Share the accompanying illustration with the children and encourage them to write or draw how they can help others in the “helping hand” shape.

Invite the children to write a prayer thanking God for all those people who follow Jesus by helping others.

Encourage the children to act out how they could serve and help one another in pairs.

Remind the children to share all that they have heard and thought about in the liturgy today with the people at home. Encourage them to do at least one thing that shows their love for others during the coming week.

\*Gospel passage taken from:

Good News Translation® (Today’s English Version, Second Edition)

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