

Liturgy of the Word with Children
Thirty-third Sunday in Ordinary Time, Year A
19 November 2023
Matthew 25:14-30

Catechist Background

The Greek word 'Talent' was the largest unit of currency at the time, and would have taken a labourer fifteen years to earn one talent. Some estimates put one talent as worth over £200,000 in modern currency. It is remarkable, then, that the returning master would have called the first two servants faithful in 'small matters!' It should be remembered that, as it is a parable, this story isn't really about commercial investment (in the same way that in the parable of the builders in Matthew 7:24-27 Jesus is not concerned with giving us construction advice). It is here to urge us to use what God has given us by imitating Jesus, for the glory of God.

Setting the Scene

To capture the original meaning of the story for the children, it is probably better to use a translation that doesn't use the word 'Talent,' lest they get distracted into thinking the master left them actual abilities to play football, sing beautifully, or draw well. For the activity described below, you will need a large piece of paper with which to make a banner plus brightly coloured paper, writing materials, glue, and scissors.

We Say Sorry

Leader: Lord Jesus, you act with fairness and justice, Lord have mercy.

All: Lord, have mercy.

Leader: You reach out the strong and the weak, Christ have mercy.

All: Christ, have mercy.

Leader: You lead us to God's Kingdom, Lord have mercy.

All: Lord, have mercy.

Gloria

We Pray (1)

God our Father, help us to live out the truth and joy of your love. Amen.

Gospel Acclamation

Gospel: Matthew 25:14-30

Reflecting on the Reading with Children

- Who does the master represent in this parable? Who do the servants represent?
- Why was the master happy with the first servants? Why was he cross with the last servant?
- What did the master say to the first two servants? How do you think they would have felt at being invited to join in their master's happiness?

Response

God has given all of us many abilities. Get the children to look at their hands. What are all the things that they can do with their hands that can give praise to God? (Suggestions might be as varied as painting a picture, setting the table, giving a friend a high-five, holding the hand of someone who is feeling afraid.) For older groups of children, it would be useful to point out that sometimes we don't always use our hands for good purposes (hands can also be used for pinching, breaking things, graffiti). Help each child to draw around their hand on brightly-coloured paper and then cut out the handprints. Glue the handprints to a piece of banner paper to recognise that we can use our hands to praise God in many ways. You may want the banner to form part of the Offertory procession.

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, our creator and master?
- Do you believe in Jesus, God the Son, who came to set us free?
- Do you believe in God the Holy Spirit, who helps us to use our gifts and talents wisely?

We Pray (2)

Again, try to relate the bidding prayers to the reading by saying, 'Whatever our talents and abilities, we can always give our concerns to you and so we now pray...'

Leader: We pray for Christians around the world, that we use our gifts to glorify God in every situation. Lord in your mercy,

All: Hear our prayer.

Leader: We pray for MPs and other politicians here and in other countries as well as leaders in powerful companies that they use their power for making the world a better place. Lord in your mercy,

All: Hear our prayer.

Leader: We pray for anybody who does not have enough money to have the things that are necessary for a healthy life. Lord in your mercy,

All: Hear our prayer.

Leader: We pray for all members of our parish who have died recently. Lord in your mercy,

All: Hear our prayer.

Leader: Lord, we know that you want us to join in your happiness. Give us the courage to use our gifts to do the right things. We make all our prayers through Christ our Lord.

All: Amen.

