

Liturgy of the Word with Children
11th Sunday in Ordinary Time, Year B
16th June 2024
Mark 4:26-34

Catechist Background

Mark does not record many parables in his Gospel when compared with Matthew and Luke, although he tells readers that Jesus' teaching in parables was a defining feature of his ministry. Today we have two parables that Mark recorded.

The 'Kingdom of God' as spoken about in today's Gospel should not be understood as a geographical place, but as a way of existence: God's reign in the world and in eternity. We should not think of it only as heaven, where we will hope to be after we die. Instead, it exists now even though we are not there yet. Moreover as Christians, we are called to try to make this life and this world more 'heavenly' for everyone.

Setting the Scene

For the activity described below, you will need a selection of individual words/drawings which represent things that can either help or hinder us in seeing God's Kingdom (for instance, sharing, fighting, greediness, helping, friendship, etc).

We Say Sorry

Leader, You are our King, Lord have mercy.

All: Lord, have mercy.

Leader: Your kingdom is with us, Christ have mercy.

All: Christ, have mercy.

Leader: Your teach us to build your kingdom, Lord have mercy.

All: Lord, have mercy.

Gloria

We Pray (1)

Dear God, help us to do what is right by following Jesus and knowing you love us.
Amen.

Gospel Acclamation

Gospel: Mark 4:26-34

Reflecting on the Reading with Children

- When farmers and gardeners and other people plant seeds, who makes the seeds sprout? What do the farmers and gardeners do to make the ground ready for the plants to grow? What do they do once the plants have begun growing?
- When have you heard the phrase, 'thy kingdom come?' What does that mean?
- Remind the children that when we pray the Our Father, we pray for God's reign to be made more visible. What might it be like to live in God's kingdom?
- Older children may understand that the DNA for a plant is already fully present in its seed; just as God's reign is already present among us but is sometimes difficult to identify, just as a seed is more difficult to observe than a fully-grown plant.

- Show the pictures or read aloud the words one at a time. Let the children decide whether they are things that help us to see God's kingdom growing or if they make it more difficult for God's kingdom to grow. Display these items if possible.

Response

Although God is responsible for both the growing of plants and the growing of God's reign, we have seen that there are things we can do to make the ground ready for the seeds to grow, and there are things we can do to make the world around us more ready for God's reign to grow. The Gospel reading tells us that birds can rest in the shade of a mustard shrub; who shelters in God's reign? Draw out from the children some ideas of what we can do to help the seeds of God's kingdom to grow.

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, who created the world and watches over us with love?
- Do you believe in Jesus, God the Son, whose came into the world to show us that God is here among us?
- Do you believe in God the Holy Spirit, who makes God's Kingdom grow in the world?

We Pray (2)

Again, try to relate the bidding prayers to the Gospel reading by saying, 'Lord, we want your Kingdom to come, and so we now pray...'

Leader: We pray for all of us in your Church, that we may always do things to make it easier for others to understand your reign. Lord in your mercy,

All: Hear our prayer.

Leader: We pray that God's reign may be felt more and more by all people everywhere in the world. We especially pray for people living in places where there is fighting.

Lord in your mercy,

All: Hear our prayer.

Leader: We pray for members of our parish who are feeling unwell today. May they feel your love in their lives. Lord in your mercy,

All: Hear our prayer.

Leader: We take a moment to remember anyone we know who is especially in need of our prayers today. Lord in your mercy,

All: Hear our prayer.

Leader: Lord, help us to put into action the things that will make it easier for people to understand your reign, like a gardener looking after a garden. We make all our prayers through Christ our Lord.

All: Amen.

