

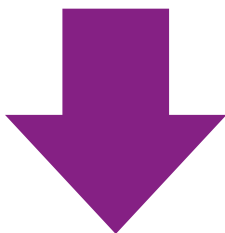
Children Celebrate! for Liturgy of the Word with Children

Leader's Guide. Each quarter (every 13 weeks) a new 64-page Leader's Guide provides an introductory planning section plus four pages for every Sunday in the quarter. Each Sunday's guide includes a summary of the theme, scripture background, how the theme relates to children, ideas for the worship environment and for music and prayers, plus a full order for worship.

Children's Leaflets. Every week these full-color leaflets retell the Scripture message in a way that's meaningful for children, then provide involving puzzles and pencil activities to add to the learning. The take-home Family Focus column offers great ideas to build on the Gospel message all week. Each student set includes a pull-out leaflet for every Sunday in the quarter.



Scroll down to view the pages.



● In this Product Preview ● you'll find these sample ● pages:

- Children's Leaflet for Sunday, Sept. 18, 2011
- Leader's Guide for Sunday, Sept. 18, 2011

Children Celebrate!



The Word This Week

Jesus told the story of a man who hired some workers very early one day. They agreed on their pay for the day. Throughout the day, the man hired more workers at different times. When he paid the workers at the end of the day, those who worked the longest expected more pay. But the man said, "I paid you what we agreed. If I want to be generous, I can."

Jesus added, "The last shall be first."

September 18, 2011

Twenty-fifth Sunday in Ordinary Time

Today's Readings

for Liturgy of the Word with Children

Isaiah 55:6-9

Psalms 145:2-3, 8-9, 17-18

Matthew 20:1-16a

Squiggle Search

Try to find the following words in the Squiggle Search below. You may need to go up and down, diagonally, backward, forward, or AROUND AND ABOUT. One of them has been done for you.



F	A	I	R	N	E	S	S	X	E
X	Y	V	I	N	E	Y	Q	T	M
G	M	S	E	Q	A	A	R	D	A
C	R	Q	P	Y	G	O	O	Y	S
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N	L	K	I	N	D	F	X	R	N
W	O	R	K	W	O	N	E	O	C
K	I	N	G	D	Q	M	C	F	Y

- GRAPES
- MASTER
- GOD
- VINEYARD
- MORNING
- FAIRNESS
- GENEROUS
- WORKING
- MERCY
- KINGDOM

Family Focus

What does it mean to be fair? Both Isaiah the prophet and Jesus tell us that God is much more fair to us than we can imagine. In family life, there are times when children may think parents are unfair. Parents have many hard decisions to make, and children learn when they are included as much as possible in the decision making. This way, fairness on all levels will be easier.

Word Into Action

At mealtimes this week, try to discuss some of these questions. What was the best part of your day? What was the hardest part of your day? How did you handle the hard times? Did you thank God for the good times? Make sure that each person has an opportunity to share his or her ups and downs of the day. End the meal with a prayer of thanks for one another.

Prepare with Prayer

*I will praise you,
my God and King,
and always honor your name.
Each generation will announce
to the next your wonderful
and powerful deeds.*

Psalm 145:1, 4

Today's Readings

Isaiah 55:6-9

Psalm 145:2-3, 8-9, 17-18

Matthew 20:1-16a

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God's ways are not our ways.

Scripture Background

“Turn to the Lord!” are the words that begin today’s First Reading from the Book of Isaiah. Although this Old Testament expression ordinarily was a summons to the temple, here it is a call to consider your immediate circumstances. If you are honest, you must admit to some moral weakness or another—some habitual sin.

A forgiving God, however, is always within speaking distance, ready to forgive your sins if you ask with a sincere heart. God is not like human beings who persist in holding a grudge against those who wrong them. Rather, God always remains near to those who call upon him. Yet God does this while remaining mysteriously transcendent. “Just as the heavens are higher than the earth, my thoughts and my ways are higher than yours,” today’s reading concludes. This paradox is a perfect lead-in for today’s Gospel.

Jesus tells a parable that begins in a true-to-life setting, yet ends with more than one unexpected twist. It was common for first-century Palestinian employers, like the man in today’s story, to go to the marketplace to hire workers. It was where job-seekers always gathered.

Nevertheless, the employer in Jesus’ story breaks the mold in a few key ways. All on the same day he repeatedly visits the marketplace to hire workers, instead of just once, early in the morning. He goes there at 6 a.m., 9 a.m., 12 noon, 3 p.m., and again at 5 p.m. What real-life employer would do that? Only someone more interested in relieving the ranks of the unemployed than in running his agribusiness!

While not believable as a human being, the man is spot-on as a symbol of God. God does not judge by externals alone but sees into the heart. Perhaps the employer paid all workers generously because all demonstrated a desire to work—in other words, he gave them credit for their good intentions and not simply the number of hours they had worked.

Relationship to Children

The parable in today’s Gospel shocked its original audience. To communicate some of its power to children, begin your Homily with a short demonstration. Ask four kids who can count to stand up and count off one to four. Tell them that their number signifies the number of hours they have spent picking grapes for you.

Then take the play money from the display, go to the number four child, ask how many hours he or she has worked, and give that child four \$1 coins or bills. Make a big show of this. Have the child hold out a hand as you count out each coin or bill slowly and loudly. Continue giving the same amount to each of the other children, even though the others have worked fewer than four hours.

Then ask what the group thinks of what they just saw. If anyone calls you unfair, say that’s exactly what the people of Jesus’ day thought when they heard him tell today’s parable. Then take back the play money, return it to the display, let the four children be seated, and proceed as usual with the suggested Homily.

Here is another demonstration to consider using as part of your Homily. Pick two children similar in age and size to do a *walking* race from one side of the room to another. *One* child, however, must walk while balancing, hands-free, a magazine or pillow on his or her head. The one who is not weighed down of course will

This Week's Preparation

In the worship area, on a table draped with a green cloth, place:

- a lectionary
- a candle
- a green plant or fresh flower arrangement
- a wallet filled with play \$1 bills or a bag of foil-wrapped chocolate coins.

win the race. Explain that sin weighs you down and makes you clumsy in your efforts to serve God. If you get rid of sin to better answer God's call, though, God will respect you and reward you for your efforts.

(To review some of the benefits of using such demonstrations with children, go to articlecompilation.com and enter the phrase "advantages of object lessons in teaching" in the website's search engine.)

Music

See page 62 for hymnal and recording information.

Gathering: "I Rejoiced" by Trevor Thompson

Psalm: "Psalm 91: Be with Me, Lord" by Marty Haugen (*Singing Our Faith*, GIA)

Gospel Acclamation: "Alleluia" by Steve Angrisano


Alternate Gathering Activity

In a hallway or open space separate from the worship area, invite the children to spread apart while facing you. Then hold an inflated, tied balloon in one hand and a book in the other. With the balloon held significantly higher than the book, ask which item is higher. After the children answer, tell them you are going to play a game called "What's Higher?"

Appoint an older child to be it. That child will stand in front of the group and say, "Teacher has a question" before tapping the balloon toward the group volleyball-style. Any child near the flying balloon may tap it back while saying, "What's the question?" It catches and holds onto the returned balloon while you ask one of the "What's Higher?" questions listed in today's gathering activity. If the child who asked, "What's the question?" answers correctly, he or she becomes it for the next round.

Children's Leaflet

Families explore the importance of being honest about fairness. Families are often places where "fairness" is challenged. Who got the biggest piece of cake? Why is her chore easier than mine? This week, mealtime is a time to discuss one another's feelings about any unfairness they feel within the family. There's a slight "twist" to this week's puzzle for the children.



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N	L	K	I	N	D	F	X	R	N
W	O	R	K	W	O	N	E	O	C
K	I	N	G	D	Q	M	C	F	Y

GRAPES
MASTER
GOD
VINEYARD
MORNING
FAIRNESS
GENEROUS
WORKING
MERCY
KINGDOM

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Order of worship

Gathering

Invite the children to be seated. Tell them you are going to play a speed game. You will quickly call out lots of questions and you want them to answer as quickly as they can. The questions will be about one subject—what’s higher?

What’s higher:

- my shoulders or my waist?
- a basement or an attic?
- a hill or a mountain?
- a birdhouse or a doghouse?
- a cloud or a star?
- a flying flag or a cruising jet?
- a basketball goal or a golf hole?
- a floor fan or a ceiling fan?

When the game is over, explain why you played it. In today’s liturgy, Isaiah says that God’s ways are *higher* than our ways—as high as the heavens are above the earth. Whenever we sin, we need to remember that and lift up our hearts to God to ask for forgiveness.

Opening Prayer

Leader: Let us now take a moment to bow our heads, remember our sins, and ask for God’s forgiveness. (*Pause.*) Our response to each short prayer will be, “How great is your love, O Lord.”

Children: How great is your love, O Lord.

Leader: Your ways are not our ways. How great is your love, O Lord.

Children: How great is your love, O Lord.

Leader: Your thoughts are not our thoughts. How great is your love, O Lord.

Children: How great is your love, O Lord.

Leader: You are merciful and forgiving. How great is your love, O Lord.

Children: How great is your love, O Lord.

Light the candle and begin the First Reading.

First Reading: Isaiah 55:6-9

Leader: In today’s First Reading, Isaiah reminds us that, unlike people who sometimes hold grudges, God is *always* ready to forgive our sins.

At the end of the reading:

Leader: The word of the Lord

Children: Thanks be to God.

Responsorial Psalm: Psalm 145:2-3, 8-9, 17-18

The Psalm may be either sung or spoken. Before beginning the Psalm, sing or announce the response.

Leader: The Lord is near to all who call on him.

Children: The Lord is near to all who call on him.

Gospel Acclamation

Invite the children to stand. Sing the suggested Acclamation or another familiar one. If you choose not to sing the Acclamation, proceed to the Proclamation of the Gospel.

Proclaim the Gospel: Matthew 20:1-16a

Leader: In today’s Gospel, Jesus tells a story about a man who needs workers to go pick grapes for him.

Leader: The Lord be with you.

Children: And also with you.

Leader: A reading from the Gospel of Matthew.

Children: † Glory to you, Lord.

At the end of the reading:

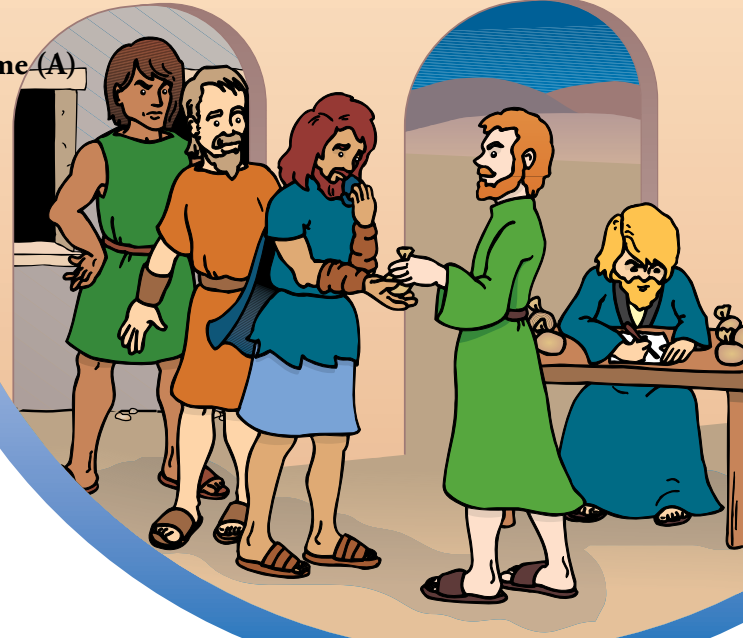
Leader: The Gospel of the Lord.

Children: Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.

Homily

Conduct the payday demonstration explained in Relationship to Children, then continue with these thoughts:

- Remember what Isaiah said in today’s First Reading—God’s ways are higher than our ways. What that really means is that God’s ways are *better* than our



ways. That's because God knows more, sees more, and loves more than we do.

- Now think of the vineyard owner in today's Gospel. He gives a full day's pay to all his workers, whether they worked only one hour or all day long. He didn't care how many hours each person had worked. What mattered was that each person was willing to work, and each person said "yes" when asked.

- The owner in the story represents God, and the workers represent all of us. God wants us to work for him, but sometimes our sins hold us up and we show up late for work. The people with the fewest sins always get to work the fastest, while those with more sins show up later.

- This story is just Jesus' way of saying that God doesn't judge us the way other human beings judge us. God sees inside our hearts and knows the sins we have conquered in order to come to him. Instead of condemning us for being slow to answer his call, God gives us credit for answering it at all. God sees inside our hearts and sees the goodness of our sorrow for our sins—not just the goodness of our deeds.

- And that is something to celebrate!

Profession of Faith

Leader: Please stand for the Profession of Faith. Respond to each question with the words, "I do."

Children: I do.

Leader: Do you believe in God, the Father almighty, who forgives us our sins?

Children: I do.

Leader: Do you believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord, who saved us from sin's power over us?

Children: I do.

Leader: Do you believe in the Holy Spirit, Lord and giver of life, who strengthens us in goodness and faith?

Children: I do.

Prayer of the Faithful

Leader: As children of a Heavenly Father who forgives us our sins time and time again, let us turn to him in prayer. Our response to each petition will be, "Hear us, O Lord."

Children: Hear us, O Lord.

Leader: Because you are generous, O God, strengthen in faith our Holy Father, the pope, and all the leaders of the Church throughout the world, we pray.

Children: Hear us, O Lord.

Leader: Because you are generous, O God, strengthen in faith everyone who lives in a country harmed by hunger, disease, or war, we pray.

Children: Hear us, O Lord.

Leader: Because you are generous, O God, strengthen in faith all of us here whenever we are tempted to sin, we pray.

Children: Hear us, O Lord.

Invite the children to add their own petitions.

Leader: Heavenly Father, we stand here today to praise you and thank you for your great goodness. May your generosity to all your children inspire us to be generous with one another. This we ask through Christ our Lord.

Children: Amen.

Return to Assembly

The Liturgy of the Word ends with the Prayer of the Faithful. Prepare the children to return to the assembly in a respectful manner. Remind them to take a leaflet home.

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