

February 3, 2019

Fourth Sunday in Ordinary Time

Children Celebrate!

Liturgy of the Word with Children

Today's Readings

Jeremiah 1:4–5, 17ab, 18–19
Psalm 71:1–2, 3abcd, 3ef, & 5a
1 Corinthians 13:4–8a, 11–13
Luke 4:20b–24, 28–30

Some People Reject Jesus

Preparation

Children's Leaflet

Have on hand copies of the Children's Leaflet for this Sunday. Distribute copies either at the start of the session or before the children return to the assembly.



Prepare with Prayer

I will always hope in you and add to all your praise. My mouth shall proclaim your just deeds, day after day your acts of deliverance, though I cannot number them all. I will speak of the mighty works of the LORD; O GOD, I will tell of your singular justice. God, you have taught me from my youth; to this day I proclaim your wondrous deeds. (Psalm 71:14–17)

Scripture Background

Perhaps Jeremiah knew better than any other Old Testament prophet the high price of going against a crowd. Around 605 BC, the prophet delivered God's message to King Jehoiakim that he should bribe Babylonia's fearsome King Nebuchadnezzar to stay out of Judah. For this, Jeremiah became the most hated person in Judah. King and people alike turned on him for lacking "patriotism" as they marched into a war they ultimately lost.

Today's First Reading concerns the beginning of Jeremiah's prophetic career. God hints at the rejection that lies ahead for the young man—but also promises final vindication.

The Second Reading contains Saint Paul's famous words about the place of love in a saintly life. Verse 6 applies especially well to the kind of love visible in the heart of a prophet: it "rejoices in the truth, but not in evil."

In the Gospel, Jesus says to an oppressed people that he has an important announcement about something they long have been awaiting. He has come to tell them that, here and now in

Prepare the Meeting Space

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

- ▶ a Lectionary
- ▶ a battery-operated candle

Suggested Music

See page 62 for more information.

Gathering: "Hello, Jesus" (Seeds CD-2, Track #18) or "Come and Follow Me" (Promise & Good News CD-2, Track #14)

Gospel Acclamation: "Gospel Acclamation; Alleluia" (Promise & Good News CD-2, Track #24)

his presence, this precious thing is theirs: freedom! Can you imagine the shouts of joy that would have greeted his announcement had it come from a trusted authority in Jerusalem? Instead, it comes from someone people know as “the boy next door,” and they think he is crazy—or worse.

As believers, we need to pray for the wisdom to recognize God’s word in whatever way it comes to us, even when no one around us listens or believes.

Children’s Connections

On one level, today’s Gospel provides an interesting study of assertive behavior used effectively. The ideas in today’s homily are based on an article in the Sept.–Oct. 1995 issue of *Psychology Today*: “Big Bad Bully,” by Hara Estroff Marano. The author asserts that bullying among children begins at an early age. It is important to teach children not to be bullies, but also teach them how to handle bullies.

Aggressive children tend to pick on certain personalities: children who are sensitive, cautious, quiet, anxious, overprotected, or lacking in self-confidence. All children must learn to stand up for themselves. Adults can help by teaching them clever verbal comebacks to use in certain situations.

The gathering activity uses a simple word game to stress the idea that life is full of choices. Be prepared to laugh at some of the children’s reasons for choosing one thing and not its opposite!

QUESTIONS FOR THE “OPPOSITES GAME”

Which would you rather have? Why?

1. An old coat or a new one?
2. A hard pillow or a soft one?
3. A fast pony or a slow one?
4. A big TV or a little one?
5. A heavy grocery bag or a light one?
6. A pretty picture or an ugly one?
7. A nice babysitter or a mean one?
8. A smelly tennis shoe or a flower-scented one?
9. A fresh banana or a rotten one?
10. One good friend or many bad friends?

More About ...

The Catechism on the Prophets

- “For the People of God, the Temple was to be the place of their education in prayer,” for it was where they gathered to offer sacrifices, burn incense, and experience many “signs of the holiness and glory of God Most High and Most Near.” (#2581)
- “But ritualism often encouraged an excessively external worship. The people needed education in faith and conversion of heart; this was the mission of the prophets.” (#2581)
- In their “one to one” encounters with God,” they gained strength and enlightenment for their mission. Even when they argued or complained in their prayers, they stood firm in their hope for eventual “intervention of the Savior God, the Lord of history.” (#2584)
- “The prophets summoned the people to conversion of heart and, while zealously seeking the face of God, like Elijah, they interceded for the people.” (#2595)

The Children’s Leaflet

The leaflet for this week helps children learn what Jesus said about how some people don’t accept him, through a summary of the Gospel, prayer, and a creative activity.

You may distribute the leaflet now, for use during the session, or before the children return to the assembly. If you distribute the leaflet now and time permits, you may wish to read with the children the summary of the Gospel in “The Word of God This Week” after you have read the Gospel. Point out the artwork and ask the children what is happening in the picture.

Leaflet Activity

Children will learn that Jesus was bullied for his beliefs, but he dealt with his bullies in a calm, practical manner. Children will know that they, too, can stand up to bullies and be good followers of Jesus.

- If $1 \times 6 = 6$, put an E on lines 2, 10, and 12. If it does not, put an I on those lines.
- If $15 \div 3 = 5$, put an R on lines 3, 5, 7, 13, and 14. If it does not, put an S on those lines.
- If $4 + 8 = 12$, put an M on line 11. If it does not, put an N on that line.
- If $8 - 7 = 1$, put an L on line 4. If it does not, put a U on that line.
- If $10 + 10 = 20$, put an I on lines 6 and 15. If it does not, put an O on those lines.
- If $1 + 2 = 123$, put a K on line 1. If it does not, put a J on that line.
- If $21 \div 7 = 3$, put an H on lines 9 and 17. If it does not, put a T.
- If $4 \times 4 = 12$, put an R on line 8. If it does not, put a P.
- If $5 \times 2 = 10$, put an A on line 16. If it does not, put a Q.



J	E	S	U	S	I	S	T	H	E
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
M	E	S	S	I	A	H			
11	12	13	14	15	16	17			

The Liturgy of the Word

Gathering

Tell the children that today you will begin with the “Opposites Game.” Have them sit in front of you. Then explain that you will throw the ball into the group for anyone to catch. The person who catches it must answer a question about opposites and give a reason for his or her answer, then throw the ball back to you. Some suggestions for questions are given in the Children’s Connections section. Ask as many questions as you like, but be sure to end with the last one given on the list.

When the game is over, explain that in today’s liturgy you will look at this important idea: Sometimes we have to choose between being like Jesus and being like “the crowd.”

Collect

Leader: *Invite the children to bow their heads. Then pray:*

Loving God in Heaven, you sent us Jesus to show us the right way to live. Every day we have choices to be like him or not to be like him. Through the power of the Holy Spirit, help us always to make good choices. This we ask through Christ our Lord.

Children: Amen.

Invite the children to be seated. Light the candle and begin the First Reading.

First Reading

Leader: In today’s First Reading, we hear about the time God called Jeremiah to be a prophet. God knew that Jeremiah would make many enemies as a prophet, but promised to help him stand up to them.

Read Jeremiah 1:4–5, 17ab, 18–19. Then say, “The word of the Lord.”

Children: Thanks be to God.

Responsorial Psalm

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

Leader: I will sing of your salvation.

Children: I will sing of your salvation.

Leader: *Read Psalm 71:1–2, 3abcd, 3ef, 5a.*

Second Reading

Leader: In today’s Second Reading, Saint Paul tells us how important it is to be loving and kind, even when other people aren’t loving and kind in return. Paul says that it takes a very grown-up person to understand this.

Read 1 Corinthians 13:4–8a, 11–13. Then say, “The word of the Lord.”

Children: Thanks be to God.

Gospel Acclamation

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

Proclaim the Gospel

Leader: In today’s Gospel you will hear that many people in Jesus’ own hometown didn’t like him and didn’t believe that he was a prophet. As you listen, try to put yourself in the crowd gathered before him and ask yourself: whom you would have stuck with, Jesus or the crowd?

The Lord be with you.

Children: And with your Spirit.

Leader: A reading from the Gospel of Luke.

Children: † Glory to you, O Lord.

Leader: Read Luke 4:20b–24, 28–30. Then say, “The Gospel of the Lord.”

Children: Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.

Homily

Build a homily on these points:

1. So whom would you have stuck with, Jesus or the crowd? In this case, of course, Jesus was right and the crowd was wrong.
2. Let’s take a closer look at how Jesus acted around bullies.
 - ▶ The crowd wanted to push him off a cliff, but Jesus didn’t start a big fist fight or order his disciples to start punching people.
 - ▶ Jesus did stick up for himself, though. Then he walked away.
3. Jesus is a good model for us.
 - ▶ We should never just give in to bullies, but we shouldn’t be as mean as they are, either.
 - ▶ Instead of hitting back with fists, we should hit back with a few strong words, such as, “Leave me alone!”
 - ▶ Then we should walk away.
 - ▶ When Jesus walked away from the crowd in Nazareth, he rejoined his friends.
 - ▶ Try to be a friendly person and have other good kids for friends. When you are with friends, most bullies will leave you alone.

Profession of Faith

Leader: Please stand now for the profession of faith. Your response to each question will be, “Yes, I do believe.” Do you believe in God the Father, who is almighty and all-loving?

Children: Yes, I do believe.

Leader: Do you believe in God the Son, who is both God and man?

Children: Yes, I do believe.

Leader: Do you believe in God the Holy Spirit, who lives in Heaven and on Earth?

Children: Yes, I do believe.

Prayer of the Faithful

Leader: Let us ask the Holy Trinity, a perfect community of love, to fill our world with love.



To each petition, please respond, “Hear us, O Lord.” That Pope _____ and all church leaders will help the world know Jesus better, let us pray to the Lord.

Children: Hear us, O Lord.

Leader: That leaders of cities and countries around the world will stand up for what is right, let us pray to the Lord.

Children: Hear us, O Lord.

Leader: That the people of our parish will always choose Jesus over everything else, let us pray to the Lord.

Children: Hear us, O Lord.

Leader: Invite the children to add their own petitions.

Let us pray. Loving God, you made Jeremiah strong as a bronze wall against his enemies, and through Jesus you taught us how to stand up for ourselves. We thank you for all your gifts, given to us 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. If you haven’t already done so, distribute the leaflets. Remind the children to take the leaflets home and share them with their families. Encourage them to complete the Family Corner activities as a family.