

Children's liturgy –Twenty-seventh Sunday in Ordinary Time (Year A)

Preparation of the worship space

Colour: green

Props: a parachute and inflatable globe or a balloon, some old newspapers, toilet roll tubes and scissors.

Song suggestions: He's got the whole world in his hands (973, Laudate)
O Lord, all the world belongs to you (847, Laudate)

Welcome: In today's gospel Jesus talks to us about a man who has real trouble with the people who are looking after his vineyard. These people are called tenants. Let's find out some more about this.

Opening prayer: Loving God, you sent your son Jesus to show us how to live. Help us to listen to your word and care for the world that you have given us. Amen.

First reading (optional): Isaiah 5:1-7

Psalm: Psalm 79:9, 12-16, 19-20. R. Is 5:7

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

Gospel: Matthew 21:33-43

"Listen to another parable," Jesus said. "There was once a landowner who planted a vineyard, put a fence around it, dug a hole for the winepress, and built a watchtower. Then he let out the vineyard to tenants and went on a journey. When the time came to gather the grapes, he sent his slaves to the tenants to receive his share of the harvest. The tenants seized his slaves, beat one, killed another, and stoned another. Again the man sent other slaves, more than the first time, and the tenants treated them the same way. Last of all he sent his son to them. 'Surely they will respect my son,' he said. But when the tenants saw the son, they said to themselves, 'This is the owner's son. Come on, let's kill him, and we will get his property!' So they seized him, threw him out of the vineyard, and killed him.

"Now, when the owner of the vineyard comes, what will he do to those tenants?" Jesus asked.

"He will certainly kill those evil men," they answered, "and let the vineyard out to other tenants, who will give him his share of the harvest at the right time."

Jesus said to them, "Haven't you ever read what the Scriptures say?"

'The stone which the builders rejected as worthless turned out to be the most important of all.

This was done by the Lord;
what a wonderful sight it is!

“And so I tell you,” added Jesus, “the Kingdom of God will be taken away from you and given to a people who will produce the proper fruits.”

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

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

A man takes good care of his vineyard. He plants grapes in it, builds a fence and a tower and a press for making wine from the grapes. Then when he goes away he asks some other people to look after it for him. These people are his tenants.

When the time comes for the wine to be ready, the man sends his people to collect it. But the tenants do not want to share and they hurt those who have been sent.

Eventually the man sends his son because he thinks the tenants will respect and listen to him. But the tenants treat the son no better than they treated the others. How do you think the man felt when he heard what the tenants had done?

The tenants were greedy and wanted to keep all the wine for themselves. They didn’t want to share it with anyone, not even the man who owned the vineyard. Do you think this is what Jesus wants us to be like? No? What does Jesus want us to do?

Jesus told this story so that people could understand more about God and what Jesus had come to do on earth. The different characters in the story represent God, the prophets – who were God’s messengers to the people – and Jesus.

Who do you think the man who owned the vineyard is? (*God*)

Who do you think the people are who the man sends to deliver a message to the tenants? (*the prophets*)

Who do you think the son in the story is? (*Jesus*)

Like the man who gave the vineyard to his tenants to look after, God has given us the earth and all that is in it. God also sent his son Jesus to show us how to live.

We are responsible for looking after the earth and all the animals, people and plants that are in it. Can you think of ways that we sometimes don’t take as good care of the earth as we should?

What happens when we don’t look after the earth?

When we don’t look after the earth, it becomes damaged. We have seen how there are more floods, droughts, storms and heatwaves in our world. This extreme weather often affects people who are poorest the most.

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People like Meera and her baby Marwi who live in Pakistan. Last year, just as Marwi was born, there was terrible flooding and Meera's house was destroyed.

We all have times when we need help. This was one of those times.

Meera was able to get some medicine for her children when they became ill from a mobile clinic, run by Dr Nasha. And Marwi is now a healthy one year old. Together, Meera and her husband have rebuilt their home and are working to recover all that they lost in the floods.

The bad tenants in the gospel story thought only about themselves. Jesus asks us to think about other people too, to use the resources of the earth wisely so that everyone can have their fair share, to care for and protect the earth, and enjoy the wonders of God's creation now and in the future.

What will you do to take care of the earth now and in the future?

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

Let's give thanks to God for the earth and all the wonders in it as we pray together:

We pray for world leaders: that they may do all that they can to protect the earth so that all people now and in the future can enjoy the wonders of God's creation. Lord, in your mercy...

We pray for our brothers and sisters around the world: that they may have the chance to enjoy God's creation and to grow and produce the food that they need to live. Lord, in your mercy...

We pray for our parish, family and friends: that we may treat the earth and all that is in it with respect, never taking more than we need. Lord, in your mercy...

Closing prayer: Creator God, may we listen to your word. Teach us to care for each other and for all creation so that all people may have what they need. Amen.

Activity suggestions

Invite the children to colour in the accompanying illustration and on the back to write or draw how they will take care of the earth so that all people now and in the future can have their fair share and enjoy the wonders of God's creation.

Share a video prayer for our Earth with the children. Available from cafod.org.uk/kidzzone

If you have a parachute, you could play this game with the children to encourage them to work together to look after our world. Arrange the children around the parachute so that they are all holding a section. Place a large inflatable globe in the

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middle of the chute. As the children pull the parachute taut, the globe is lifted into the air. As the globe gains momentum, it is lifted higher and higher. The children have to work together to prevent the world from falling off the parachute. Or if you do not have a parachute you could play with one or several balloons – throw the balloon(s) into the air and encourage the children to keep the balloon(s) off the floor by tapping them. Please check any allergies before introducing balloons to the group.

Make plant pots with recycled newspaper with the children so that they can plant some seeds and start growing their own vegetables or plants:

1. Open a newspaper to the middle pages. Cut along the centre fold. Each half sheet will make one plant pot.
2. Take one sheet of newspaper and fold it neatly in half lengthways to create a long strip. The folded edge will be the top of your plant pot.
3. Take a toilet roll tube and roll the paper around it. Leave about two centimetres of toilet roll showing at the folded end of the paper. This will help you to remove the toilet roll when you have finished making the pot.
4. Now crunch the paper at the other end into the toilet roll tube to make the bottom of your plant pot. Give it a little twist as you go to make sure no compost will fall out later on.
5. Finally, remove the toilet roll tube and admire your pot! It's now ready for soil or compost and a seed!

Remind the children to share all they have heard and thought about in the liturgy today with their grown ups. Encourage the children to think carefully about how they use the earth's resources in the coming week and to try to do at least one thing to show that they respect and care for the earth and all the people who live in it.

*Gospel passage taken from:

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