

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

Preparation of the worship space

Colour: green

Props: Coloured paper to make invitations and RSVPs, colouring pens and pencils.

Song suggestions: Gather us in (475, Laudate)

Welcome: Today is a very special liturgy for us. This weekend we are celebrating our Family Fast Day. A special day when we do what we can to help our brothers and sisters around the world. Especially those who do not have enough to eat.

In today's liturgy we will hear a story about a king who invites lots of different people to the wedding of his son. They have a big feast with lots of yummy food. Let's also think a bit about food, the harvest and what God invites us to do in our lives today.

Opening prayer: God of welcome, you invite us to follow in your ways and enter into your kingdom. May we answer your call. Amen.

First reading (optional): Isaiah 25:6-10

Psalm: Psalm 22. R. v.6

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

Gospel: Matthew 22:1-14

Jesus again used parables in talking to the people. "The Kingdom of heaven is like this. Once there was a king who prepared a wedding feast for his son. He sent his servants to tell the invited guests to come to the feast, but they did not want to come. So he sent other servants with this message for the guests: 'My feast is ready now; my bullocks and prize calves have been butchered, and everything is ready. Come to the wedding feast!' But the invited guests paid no attention and went about their business: one went to his farm, another to his shop, while others grabbed the servants, beat them, and killed them. The king was very angry; so he sent his soldiers, who killed those murderers and burned down their city. Then he called his servants and said to them, 'My wedding feast is ready, but the people I invited did not deserve it. Now go to the main streets and invite to the feast as many people as you find.' So the servants went out into the streets and gathered all the people they could find, good and bad alike; and the wedding hall was filled with people.

"The king went in to look at the guests and saw a man who was not wearing wedding clothes. 'Friend, how did you get in here without wedding clothes?' the king asked him. But the man said nothing. Then the king told the servants, 'Tie him up hand and foot, and throw him outside in the dark. There he will cry and grind his teeth.'"

And Jesus concluded, "Many are invited, but few are chosen."

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

Gospel reflection: What do you remember from today's reading?

Today Jesus tells us another parable to try and explain what the kingdom of heaven is like.

The king's son is getting married. He invites lots of people to the party but when the day comes and the king sends out his servants to fetch the people they do not come. He tries again, but the people just aren't interested in coming.

How do you think the king feels about this? What does he do next?

The king sends out his servants to stand in the middle of the street and invite everyone they can find to the wedding. So they do, and the wedding hall is filled with guests. They all take part in the big feast, with lots of yummy things to eat.

What is your favourite food?

Mine is To make this it would need a farmer to grow X, a X to make X and then someone to take it to the supermarket or shop where I could buy it. So I'm very grateful for the X, X and X. *(Fill in the blanks with your favourite food and the ingredients that go towards it)*

Who do you think helped to make your favourite food?

Particularly this year, we think of people who because of the coronavirus do not have enough food, wherever they live in the world, nearby or far away.

This year over 350 million children around the world missed at least one meal a day because of school closures. That's nearly one in every five children.

Some of these children live in Zimbabwe, a country in Africa. Is anyone here from Zimbabwe or does anyone have any family or friends there?

Last year and earlier this year before coronavirus arrived, Zimbabwe and the country next door, Zambia had very poor rains. It just did not rain enough. What do you think that might mean for the harvest?

As well as the lack of rain, schools were closed because of coronavirus, just as they were in this country. Often school dinner is the children's only meal of the day and missing this means they don't eat at all.

One way that CAFOD is helping is by supporting a school to provide one nutritious meal a day for children who would otherwise struggle to have enough to eat.

CAFOD has provided face masks for every child at the school so they can continue to come and collect their food parcel, and also buckets for handwashing so they can protect themselves from the spread of the virus.

From Brazil to Bangladesh, Cambodia to Kenya our global neighbours need our support to make sure they have enough food to eat.

Thinking back to today's gospel story, the king in Jesus' story represents God and the wedding is the kingdom of heaven. What do you think that Jesus was trying to tell us with this story?

For more children's liturgy resources and illustrations see cafod.org.uk/childrensliturgy

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We are all invited by God to enter into the kingdom of Heaven. It is a place where everyone is welcome. But we have to be ready to go.

When we go to a wedding, or any party, we tell the person who invited us that we are coming. We get out our best clothes and make sure we are clean and tidy. We buy a present and write the card. Can you think of anything else that we do to get ready for a party?

But how do you think we can answer God's invitation and get ready for the kingdom of heaven?

We can listen to God's word and try to follow what God asks us to do in our lives. What do you think God asks us to do?

God asks us to be kind, to be welcoming and invite others to share in what we have so that everyone has enough food to eat and clean water to drink, to bring peace, to stand up for what is right, to care for and respect one another and to love our neighbour, wherever they are in the world.

Can you think of anything else that God asks us to do?

By answering God's invitation and being kind and generous, welcoming and fair, by loving our neighbour, we can help to reflect God's kingdom here on earth. We will help other people to see that we care for everyone, no matter who they are or where they come from, and the world will become a better, fairer place for all people to live.

Let's all try really hard this week to listen to what God wants from us and to say yes to that invitation in the way we behave in the coming week.

You could give the children an example from your own life eg: I think God is inviting me to be more generous and share what I have. I will say yes to that invitation by sharing the vegetables from my allotment with my elderly neighbour/sharing some of my time volunteering to help others/taking my old clothes to the charity shop, raising money for Family Fast Day etc.

How does God want you to live your life? And how will you answer that invitation this week?

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

We pray together to God who welcomes everyone:

We pray for the Church throughout the world: that it may live out God's invitation of welcome and love for all. Lord, in your mercy...

We pray for world leaders: that they may be guided to make decisions for the good of all people, especially those who are poor. Lord, in your mercy...

We pray for our parish, family and friends: that we may live our lives as God asks us to, with respect and care for all people and love for our neighbours throughout the world. Lord, in your mercy...

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Closing prayer: Loving God, strengthen and help us as we try to say yes to your invitation to be with you, by living lives of sharing, kindness, respect and love. Amen.

Activity suggestions

Encourage the children to colour in the accompanying optional illustration and to fill in both the invitation (God invites me to...) and the RSVP (I am willing to...)

Give the children pieces of coloured paper to make invitations. Encourage them to decorate them and write what they think God is inviting them to do. Then, on the back or on a separate piece of paper get them to make an RSVP and to write or draw how they will answer God's invitation in their lives.

Invite the children to spend some time quietly in prayer in the coming week, trying to listen to what God is inviting them to do. Encourage them to try to say yes to that invitation in the way they behave in the coming week.

Get involved with Family Fast Day. Find out more at cafod.org.uk/fastday

*Gospel passage taken from:

Good News Translation® (Today's English Version, Second Edition)
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