

Liturgy of the Word with Children
6th Sunday in Ordinary Time, Year A
15 February, 2026

Matthew 5:17-37 (short version Mt 5:20-22a, 27-28, 33-34a, 37)

Catechist Background

Today's Gospel reading forms part of the Sermon on the Mount. Jesus opened several sections with the words, 'You have heard it said... but I say to you...' which was a way of rabbinical teaching, a form of speaking used to highlight the fact that a rabbi had a particular way of interpreting the Scriptures. In doing so, Jesus brought a new teaching for a new era in understanding how to live a godly life. Although Jesus told us that he had not come to drop even one letter from the (Jewish) Law, he encouraged us to take a broader view of the Law and live by its underlying intention, not just the letter of what it allows or prescribes.

In its full form, today's Gospel reading is quite lengthy, and even the shorter version deals with some particularly adult themes. The notes and activity below focus on Matthew 5:17, 20, 21-22a, 23-24.

Setting the Scene

For the activity below, you will need faces either cut out of magazines (preferably of people unknown to the children) or drawn by you. Please then crumple them up and put them in a small rubbish bin.

You will also need some space near your focal point where the children will put these faces later.

We Say Sorry

As we prepare to listen to God's Word, let us remember that we don't always live as God wants us to.

Leader: You love us even when we fail, Lord have mercy.

All: **Lord, have mercy.**

Leader: You offer us forgiveness for our sins, Christ have mercy.

All: **Christ, have mercy.**

Leader: You call us to live peacefully, Lord have mercy.

All: **Lord, have mercy.**

Gloria

We Pray (1)

Lord, you promised to help those who try to do what is right. Help us to follow your example. Amen.

Gospel Intro

It may help to remind the children who the Scribes and Pharisees were (religious leaders who interpreted the Jewish Scriptures that we call the Old Testament). They mostly thought highly of themselves and many of them bragged about how holy and good they were in keeping the religious laws they had been given. It may also help to explain that in Jesus' day, as a normal part of worship, people would bring animals or doves or grain to the Temple to give to God to show their love of God.

Gospel Acclamation

Gospel: Matthew 5:17, 20, 21-22a, 23-24

Reflecting on the Reading with Children

- If you went to the dentist and they told that you shouldn't eat sweets or chocolate, would it be a good idea to eat lots of cake instead because the dentist didn't specifically say to avoid it too?
- If your parents told you not to kick a football in the room, would it be okay to kick a basketball?

- If you were told to tidy up your toys in your bedroom, should you pick up your books too, even if nobody told you to do so?
- In the Law that Jesus speaks of, what are people told not to do?
- If I said to someone, 'You are rubbish at everything, you are ugly and you smell like rotten fish,' would I be actually killing them? Would I be killing their spirit or their happiness?
- If I said all those things to somebody and then went to bring my offering to the Temple, would that be a very good way of worshipping God? What would have been better?
- Does Jesus mean that we need to make peace *only* with our brothers and sisters? Who else does he mean?
- How can I make peace with people I have hurt before coming to worship God?

Response

- It can be difficult to apologise and really mean it when we have hurt someone else.
- It can also be difficult to accept an apology, especially if we have been hurt.
- Jesus teaches us that we must try to make peace with others.
 - Invite the children to come up one at a time and take one picture out of the 'bin';
 - When they have done so, tell them to uncrumple the picture, and look at it;
 - Invite them then to place it near the Cross/focal point, to show we are trying to be peacemakers;
 - Invite them to pray for that person in our prayers later and when we are back in Mass.

We Believe

Relating the Creed to what you have shared with the children, ask these questions and invite them to reply: 'I do.'

- Do you believe in God the Father who made the whole world?
- Do you believe in Jesus, Son of God, who gives us the law of love?
- Do you believe in the Holy Spirit who helps us to act lovingly as God tells us to?

We Pray (2)

Again, relate the Prayer of the Faithful to the Gospel reading by saying: 'We know that God wants the whole world to be peaceful and happy and so we now pray...'

Leader: We pray for people who are leaders in Christian churches, that they may be examples of how to live lives that are pleasing to God. Lord in your mercy,

All: **Hear our prayer.**

Leader: We pray for people who make laws, that those laws echo God's laws. Lord in your mercy,

All: **Hear our prayer.**

Leader: We pray for our families and friends, especially those to whom we owe an apology. Lord in your mercy,

All: **Hear our prayer.**

Leader: We pray for anyone in the world who is feeling lonely or left out. Lord in your mercy,

All: **Hear our prayer.**

Leader: Lord, help us to live out your laws, not just in their exact words but in what they mean. We make our prayers through Christ our Lord.

All: **Amen.**