

Liturgy of the Word with Children
32nd Sunday in Ordinary Time, Year B
10 November 2024
Mark 12:38-44 (Shorter form Mark 12:41-44)

Catechist Background

In the heavily male-oriented society of the ancient world, widows with no male provider were very vulnerable. Jewish religion/society recognised this and arranged for widows to be provided for through the Temple. Today's Gospel reading is often cited as an example of the widow's generosity of spirit, especially in its short form. However, in its long form we can see that Jesus is criticising the scribes who exploited vulnerable people like this widow. The widow's behaviour is compared by Jesus with that of the scribes. She gave to the Temple all that she had to live on. In contrast, the scribes, (whose living also came from the Temple), squandered on expensive living the provision (money and care) that should have been given to her and to other widows. As the Gospels were written for us, as well as other Christians, we too are challenged to ask if our own selfishness gets in the way of our generosity towards others. It is interesting to note that even in modern times when calls are made to provide aid for those affected by natural disasters, people who are less well-off usually give more in donations than those who are wealthy, both as a percentage of income and in real terms.

Setting the Scene

Some children may need an explanation of what a 'widow' is, and most children will understand the Gospel reading better if you explain why these widows were in a difficult position. It may help also to explain that women at the time of Jesus didn't have as many options available to them as they do now: they couldn't just walk out and get a job if they had no living husband.

We Say Sorry

Leader: You came to teach us how to live, Lord have mercy.

All: Lord, have mercy.

Leader: You show us how to be generous, Christ have mercy.

All: Christ, have mercy.

Leader: You are always ready to forgive us, Lord have mercy.

All: Lord, have mercy.

Gloria

We Pray (1)

God, protect our bodies and our minds and our spirits so that we can do the work you have given us to do in spreading your love in this world. Amen.

Gospel Acclamation

Gospel: Mark 12:38-44 (shorter form, Mark 12:41-44)

Reflecting on the Gospel Reading with Children

- What do you think life was like for the widow, who only had two pennies to live on?
 - Why do you think she gave them to the Temple?
 - How might she have felt, next to people who were putting in big bags of gold coins?
- The scribes thought they were very important religious, holy people.
 - Were they acting in a way that was following God's commandments?
 - How should they have been acting?
 - How should they have acted towards the widow we heard about?

Response

We have all been given many blessings in our lives, and it is up to us to share them with others to spread God's joy and love around the world. Even if we don't have much money, there are other things we can share with others: our time, our friendship, our talents.

Give everyone a few moments to think about what they are going to be generous with this week. Invite each child to say what is their plan for generosity this week.

We Believe

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

- Do you believe in God the Father who has created a world with enough for everyone to live comfortably?
- Do you believe in God the Son, Jesus, who came to pull us up from our sins and challenge us to live as he did?
- Do you believe in God the Holy Spirit, who is with us now and helps us show God's love to the world today?

We Pray (2)

Again, try to relate the Prayer of the Faithful to the Gospel reading by saying:

'Jesus saw people in need around him and so we also now bring the world's needs to God...'

Leader: We pray for leaders of the Church, that they use the Church's money to do the most good for the most needy. Lord in your mercy,

All: Hear our prayer.

Leader: We pray for all governments of the world, that they work together to look after their citizens, especially the most needy. Lord in your mercy,

All: Hear our prayer.

Leader: We pray for all people who have been affected by war throughout the world. Lord in your mercy,

All: Hear our prayer.

Leader: We pray for anybody we know who is having a particularly difficult time at the moment. We especially pray for those who have lost someone they love. Lord in your mercy,

All: Hear our prayer.

Leader: Lord, we know you have a special concern for the vulnerable in the world. Help us to open our eyes to see their needs and to know what we can do about them. We make all our prayers through Christ our Lord.

All: Amen.

