

Liturgy of the Word with Children
33rd Sunday in Ordinary Time, Year B
17 November 2024
Mark 13:24-32

Catechist Background

As the end of the liturgical year draws near, the readings take on the theme of the end of the world. In this Gospel reading, Jesus and his disciples are sitting on the Mount of Olives outside Jerusalem overlooking the city. Jesus had predicted the destruction of the Temple shortly beforehand. To his listeners, this was a shocking prediction as their entire religious and social orientation was around the Temple. It was the same as saying that the way of life as they knew it would be over. Unsurprisingly, Jesus' friends asked him when that destruction would happen, or by what signs they would know it was imminent. Apocalyptic language like the language Jesus uses is meant to be symbolic, not literal: it was a literary device used by people in constrained societies to speak out against powerful people without putting oneself in immediate danger. The vivid imagery used can be seen as frightening, but it does not need to be frightening for believers, as God is always with us, even in the worst of tribulations.

Setting the Scene

For the activity described below, you will need 'medallions' that say 'God is always with me' (circles of paper with a hole punched out and laced onto a string) and colouring materials. Remind the children of last week's Gospel reading. Ask them if they remembered to act on their offering of generosity?

(Climate change might be raised in this discussion and it is a suitable time to address it, but try not to alarm the children: remind them that with God's help we can help our world recover.)

We Say Sorry

Leader: Lord Jesus, you came to bring peace.

All: Lord, have mercy.

Leader: You come to us in your Word to make us strong, Christ have mercy.

All: Christ, have mercy.

Leader: You will come in glory with salvation for your people, Lord have mercy.

All: Lord, have mercy.

Gloria

We Pray (1)

God, help us to be faithful to you in all things, and to experience the joy you give us. Amen.

Gospel Acclamation

Gospel: Mark 13:24-32

Reflecting on the Gospel Reading with Children

- What would you think if all the stars fell from the sky and the sun and moon went dark?
 - How frightened do you think people would be?
- Sometimes when scary things happen to people, they ask if God is still with them.
- [It may help to include a personal story here, e.g. how when I went to a new school it was totally new and scary, but then it turned out that I made really good friends in the end.]
 - What things make people worried like that?
- Even if the scariest thing in the world happened, God would still be with us. It might even turn out better than we expected!

Response

- Warn the children that you are going to ask them to do something unusual.
 - Tell them that when you clap your hands twice (and not before) you will ask them to stand up (and without running) to move to a different place than where they are now and sit down there.
- Clap your hands twice.
- [Once everyone has sat down], point out how things have changed in the room, but everyone is still alright!
- Sometimes we have bigger changes in our lives.
 - [You might refer to your earlier personal story]
- Remind them of the widow from last week's Gospel reading.
- If the Temple was destroyed and life was totally changed for her, would there be an opportunity for life to be better?
 - She wouldn't need to give money to the Temple any more, and she could use it to buy food!
 - Even the greedy scribes may have become closer to God, as they were not able to be so selfish with other people's offerings.
- Give each child a medallion (with the words 'God is always with me!' on it) to decorate.
 - On one half, they can draw things that they think would be scary, and on the other, things that they find comforting.

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 made and looks after all creation?
- Do you believe in Jesus Christ the Son, who will come again to reunite all goodness with God?
- Do you believe in the Holy Spirit who is always with us?

We Pray (2)

Again, try to relate the Prayer of the Faithful to the Gospel reading by saying:
'God, you are all good and so we pray for justice in our world:'

Leader: We pray for Christians throughout the world, especially for those who live in places where it is dangerous to say you believe in Jesus. Lord in your mercy,

All: Hear our prayer.

Leader: We pray for leaders in businesses, that they will pay their workers what is fair and what they need to live on. Lord in your mercy,

All: Hear our prayer.

Leader: We pray for all people affected by violent weather. Lord in your mercy,

All: Hear our prayer.

Leader: We pray for our families and our friends, that they always know our support and care. Lord in your mercy,

All: Hear our prayer.

Leader: Lord, thank you for hearing our prayers. Help us to remember that you are always close to us. We make all our prayers through Christ our Lord.

All: Amen.

