

Liturgy of the Word with Children
33rd Sunday in Ordinary Time, Year C
16 November 2025
Luke 21:5-19

Catechist Background

As we pass through autumn and towards the end of the Church's year, the readings continue to remind us of the end of the world. In the popular first century Jewish mind, the destruction of Herod's Temple in 70AD was thought of as a cataclysmic event, as was the destruction of Solomon's temple centuries earlier. By the time Luke wrote his Gospel (after 70 AD), the Temple had been destroyed and the centre of Jewish worship had been removed once again and thus destabilising Jewish religious life hugely (as the Temple was the centre of that). Indeed, all of the things that Jesus prophesies in Luke's Gospel had happened by the time this Gospel was written: wars, earthquakes, famines and persecution. These events had probably triggered some to believe the end of the world was imminent and to abandon their worldly pursuits. This might explain why St Paul, in today's Second Reading, felt compelled to tell people that if they abandoned working they should not feel entitled to eat.

Bible readings which speak about great destructive events can be unsettling, especially for children, and so it is worth always emphasising when discussing them that God does not send bad things to happen to us, sometimes they just happen. We know and believe as Christians that God is with us always, to support and comfort us whenever we are in need, and we should do the same for others.

Setting the Scene

For the activity below, you will need string (or yarn) and small pieces of card with holes punched in one end so you can tie the string through them during the 'Response.' The cards may be prepared in advanced with a happy face on one side and a sad face on the other and the words 'Jesus is with me,' or you can ask the children to decorate them like this during the Liturgy as time permits.

We Say Sorry

Leader: You have created us as your children, Lord have mercy.

All: Lord, have mercy.

Leader: You are present among us in each other, Christ have mercy.

All: Christ, have mercy.

Leader: You are the giver of all good gifts, Lord have mercy.

All: Lord, have mercy.

Gloria

We Pray (1)

God of all that is good, help us to serve you, because that is what will make us happy. Amen.

Gospel Acclamation

Gospel: Luke 21:5-19

Reflecting on the Reading with Children

- Why does Jesus talk about such frightening things in this story?
- It may be helpful for the children to understand that this story was written down when things were really very difficult for Christians, and the Gospel was not meant to scare them but to remind them that Jesus was with them even in difficult times.
- How do you think you would feel if you were in an earthquake or a war or a famine?

- In scary times, is it easy to remember that Jesus is with us?
- Is it important to remember that Jesus is with us? Why?
- How can we feel in the scary times if we remember Jesus is with us? Would that change even if those scary times were because of an earthquake or someone in our family being ill... ?

Response

There is a saying that fish don't notice the water. That is because they are surrounded by it!

- We often don't notice that we are surrounded by air.
- Similarly, it is sometimes easy to forget that we are surrounded by God's love when we are busy concentrating on other things.
- But even when we have lots of things going on in our lives, God can work through us to shine love on the world, even if those things are difficult.

Some people tie a piece of string or ribbon around their finger or around a tree to help them remember something:

- Give the children each a piece of string and a card to tie around their finger or their wrist to remind them that Jesus is always with them, in good times and in bad.
- If time permits, you could ask them to decorate their cards (or this could be done beforehand)

We Believe

Relate the Creed to what you have shared with the children by asking these questions and inviting the children to reply, 'I do.'

- Do you believe in God the Father who created the world to be a good place?
- Do you believe in Jesus, God the Son, who is with us in all situations?
- Do you believe in God the Holy Spirit, who helps us know God in our lives?

We Pray (2)

Again, relate the Prayer of the Faithful to the Gospel reading by saying, 'You have promised to be with us always and so we now pray...'

Leader: We pray for leaders of the Church, especially in places where it is dangerous to follow Jesus.
Lord in your mercy,

All: Hear our prayer.

Leader: We pray for world leaders, that they may allow Christians in their countries to worship freely.
Lord in your mercy,

All: Hear our prayer.

Leader: We pray for people in the world today who are suffering because of wars and earthquakes, food shortages and diseases. Lord in your mercy,

All: Hear our prayer.

Leader: In this month of November, we remember especially those who have died. We pray for people in our parish family who have died in the last year. Lord in your mercy,

All: Hear our prayer.

Leader: Lord, you told your followers that you would be with them and would help them follow your example. Help us to follow you and love one another. We make our prayers through Christ our Lord.

All: Amen.