

Liturgy of the Word with Children
Sixth Sunday in Ordinary Time, Year C
16 February, 2025
Luke 6:17, 20-26

Catechist Background

Just as in our day, in Jesus' time it was convenient for people who had a prosperous life to think of themselves as blessed by God, and look down on others who had less. Humanity seems to have a tendency to consider outcasts as being less loved by God or less worthy of God's love. Today's Gospel reading reminds us that God loves everybody, particularly those on the edges of society. In some Bible translations, the different groups of people are described as "Happy" whereas in the Bible translation we use in Mass, they are termed "Blessed". This is an important distinction as people who are blessed by God do not always feel 'happy' in the usual sense. If the Gospel text that you are reading today uses 'happy' then make sure you explore what that means with the children!

Later on in Luke's Gospel, this idea that God loves everyone, especially the marginalised is developed: the rich are portrayed as greedy and as people who do not recognise God as the source of their gifts, while the poor are considered to be the ones who understand the importance of Jesus' mission.

Setting the Scene

You will need some medium-sized boxes for the activity described below, and a broad felt-tip marker to write on them.

We Say Sorry

Leader: You call us to your side, Lord have mercy.

All: **Lord, have mercy.**

Leader: You reach out to all who struggle, Christ have mercy.

All: **Christ, have mercy.**

Leader: You lead us to true happiness, Lord have mercy.

All: **Lord, have mercy.**

Gloria

We Pray (1)

God, be with us today and every day, as you have promised to be with those who follow you. Amen.

Gospel Intro

Ask the children to pay attention to anything in this Gospel reading that sounds a little peculiar.

Gospel Acclamation

Gospel: Luke 6:17, 20-26

Reflecting on the Reading with Children

Jesus says some things in today's Gospel reading that seem very topsy-turvy.

- If you were listing groups of people who were happy, what groups would you have included?
- We don't usually think of people who are poor, hungry, weeping, or hated as happy!
- Why might Jesus have said those things?
- What do you think Jesus means by the word 'happy' here?

Response

Choose a child to help demonstrate the following illustration.

- Ask the children to suggest things that we think might make us happy.

- Write these words on the boxes, and ask the volunteer child to hold them.
- When his/her hands are really very full, ask them to hold a box of 'God's Love.'
 - When the child drops one or all of the boxes, reassure them that is okay;
 - Explain to the children that when we are tightly holding on to other things, holding the God's Love box will be impossible.
 - *[If you do not have boxes, write on pieces of A4 paper but ask the child to hold them so everybody can see what is written on each of them.]*
- It may be important to explain that the things that make us happy aren't always bad in themselves, but some might be if they keep us from God.
- After that demonstration, allow all of the children to hold, with empty hands, the box of 'God's Love.'
- You might sing together the chorus of: "Love, love, Jesus is Love. God's greatest gift is the gift of love" by Bernadette Farrell: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZN4JE0GL2Ls>

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 created us to be happy?
- Do you believe in Jesus Christ, who showed us how to live so that we can be happy?
- Do you believe in the Holy Spirit, who helps us to be happy?

We Pray (2)

Again, relate the Prayer of the Faithful to the Gospel reading by saying: 'We trust that God is concerned about us today just as in long-ago times, and so we pray...'

Leader: We pray for the leaders in our Church, that they may remember to care about people who are in need. Lord in your mercy,

All: **Hear our prayer.**

Leader: We pray for the leaders in our world, that they may look after those who are most in need. Lord in your mercy,

All: **Hear our prayer.**

Leader: We pray for all people who are poor, hungry, sad, or hated. Lord in your mercy,

All: **Hear our prayer.**

Leader: We pray for everyone we know who is having a sad time. Lord in your mercy,

All: **Hear our prayer.**

Leader: God, we know that you are with us when times are easy and when times are difficult. Help us remember that your love surrounds us. We make all our prayers through Christ our Lord.

All: **Amen.**

