



Catechist Background

This resource recommends using the shorter form of today's Gospel reading, as the full version is rather lengthy to hold young attention spans. Over the next few Sundays, we hear portions of the same scene when Jesus spoke to the crowds, whilst sitting in a boat (presumably so he could be better seen and heard). He told parables (a technique frequently used in Jesus' day): stories which used a familiar image to illustrate a point, repetition to emphasise it, and which often had a surprising twist at the end. Sowing seed would have been a common activity in ancient times, one Jesus' audience would have known well. The surprising twist Jesus inserted is the abundance of the harvest: people would have considered a five-fold return on their crop a blessing; a thirty- or hundred-fold return was a clear sign of God's amazing abundance.

Setting the Scene

To aid the discussion you may wish to have an illustration of this Bible passage prepared in advance. 'Google' has many helpful images.

We Say Sorry

Leader: You bring us to the truth, Lord have mercy.

All: **Lord, have mercy.**

Leader: You are our guide, Christ have mercy.

All: **Christ, have mercy.**

Leader: You free us so that we can love you, Lord have mercy.

All: **Lord, have mercy.**

Gloria

We Pray (1)

God, your light shows us the way to Jesus. Help us to follow him always. Amen.

Gospel Acclamation

Gospel: Matthew 13:1-9

Reflecting on the Gospel Reading with Children

In today's Gospel reading Jesus tells a story about a man who is sowing seeds.

- Can anyone remember the different places where the seed lands? (on the path; on rocky ground; among thorns; in good soil)
- What happened to it in each of these places? (eaten by birds; grew without roots and died in the sun; choked by thorns; grew very well)

[You may wish to draw or refer to a picture of these places here]

- In this parable, Jesus is not actually talking about a farmer but someone else. Who do you think is the person spreading the seed around in this story? (God)
- What do you think the 'seeds' are in this parable? (God's words to us)
- What do you think this parable is about? (How different people respond to God's teachings)

[The full explanation is given in the second half of the full form of today's Gospel reading.]

So this parable is all about what happens to God's words and what they need to grow well.

- What sort of 'soil' does God's word need to grow? (kind, loving, patient hearts and minds)
- Is it possible for 'good soil' to turn into 'bad soil'? How? (Yes, if we choose to ignore God).
- When seeds grow, what do they produce? (plants)

- Where do seeds come from? (Seeds produce plants that produce fruit, and usually the seeds are in that fruit or somewhere else on the plant. So seeds in time make more seeds...)
- What do the seeds of God's word produce? (more seeds)
- Are people 'seeds of God'?

Response

- Encourage the children to crouch down on the ground as small as possible, like seeds.
- "Sprinkle" them with God's words – you could use an empty watering can here.
- Encourage them to 'grow' like a plant, reaching as tall or as wide as possible.
- Remind the children that God wants us to be good soil in which to plant his word so it grows.

If the children are old enough, you could give them each a small pot with a couple of sunflower seeds in it.

Tell them to plant their seeds in some good soil in their pot or in the ground in a sunny spot and to water it once a day.

Explain to the children that by the time they go back to school after the summer holiday a plant will have begun to grow because it was planted in rich, well-watered soil.

We Believe

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

- Do you believe in God who plants the seed of faith in us?
- Do you believe in Jesus who feeds our faith so that it can grow?
- Do you believe in the Holy Spirit who helps us understand what God is like?
- Do you believe in our holy Catholic Church where we meet God regularly?

We Pray (2)

Again, relate the Prayer of the Faithful to the Gospel reading by saying: 'We open our hearts to God's word as we pray...'

Leader: We pray for the Church all around the world, and especially for Christians in places where it is very hard to believe in Jesus. Lord in your mercy,

All: **Hear our prayer.**

Leader: We pray for people in the world who do not have enough to eat. Lord in your mercy,

All: **Hear our prayer.**

Leader: We pray for farmers, that their crops may be enough to make a living and to feed the world. Lord in your mercy,

All: **Hear our prayer.**

Leader: We pray for people in our area who are unhappy for any reason. Lord in your mercy,

All: **Hear our prayer.**

Leader: Lord, we ask your word to grow in our hearts and that your kingdom will come. We make all our prayers through Christ our Lord.

All: **Amen.**

