



## Catechist Background

*Some materials produced for Children's Liturgy of the Word (such as those produced by Treehaus Communications) use a different Gospel reading for this Sunday than the one referred to here.*

In Bible times, our modern sense of 'fair play' did not exist. Enemies would try to humiliate each other through devious means. Darnel, the poisonous weed mentioned in today's Gospel reading, looks very similar to wheat as a young plant. So, it would be very easy to mistake the two. The field owner would have suffered social embarrassment for allowing a contaminated crop to grow, but it was better to let it grow than try to uproot it: the canny owner not only lets the weeds grow so that no wheat plants would be accidentally pulled up, but then gathered the weeds and the wheat at harvest time, but used the darnel as fuel. Moreover, he does not even call for retaliation!

## Setting the Scene

For the activity below, you will need some cards, half of which have 'wheat' written on them and 'darnel' on the other half. If the children are too young to read, you could use the letters 'W' and 'D'.

## We Say Sorry

*Leader:* You are the merciful judge of all, Lord have mercy.

*All:* **Lord, have mercy.**

*Leader:* You teach us what is right, Christ have mercy.

*All:* **Christ, have mercy.**

*Leader:* You never stop loving us, Lord have mercy.

*All:* **Lord, have mercy.**

## Gloria

## We Pray (1)

Lord, help us always to be ready to serve you joyfully. Amen.

## Gospel Acclamation

**Gospel:** Matthew 13:24-30

## Reflecting on the Gospel Reading with Children

In this parable [*a story used to teach an important message*] we hear about a man who has a field where he planted some wheat seeds.

- What happened to the wheat? Did it grow well? (Yes)
- Did anyone else plant seeds in his field (yes, his enemies plant weeds there too);
- Did the weeds grow too? (Yes, all among the wheat plants)
- Did the farmer tell his servants to pull up the weeds while they were growing? (No, he told them to wait till harvest time before pulling them up)
- Why did he say that? (Because if you try pulling up the weeds when they and the wheat are young, there is a chance you might pull up the wheat too, and kill it)

Do you think Jesus was just talking about a farmer and some seeds in this story? (No)

- Who does the owner of the field represent in this story? (God)

- Who do the servants of the owner represent? (those who follow God and tell others about God)
- Who is the enemy of the owner? (those who ignore or say bad things about God. You could refer to the Devil (“the evil one”) if you want but the children might not understand)
- Can somebody act like they are a bad person but really be a good person?
  - Have you ever seen anybody do something that you thought was wrong but they thought was a right thing?
  - Have you ever seen someone behave really badly and then find out that they were actually sick, and it was making them not make good decisions or act like themselves?
- Are we really able to judge if people are good or not? (Not completely, no)
- Whose job is that? (God’s job, because only God knows what is in a person’s heart).

## Response

- Select one person to try to be a ‘judge’ for the following activity:
- Give the other children a card each with either the word ‘wheat’ or ‘darnel’ written on it (or just a ‘W’ and a ‘D’);
- Then ask the ‘judge’ to guess who has a wheat and who has a darnel card;
- Remind the children that God is the judge of all, and we should not decide who is good or bad:
  - We should treat everyone kindly as we are all God’s children.
  - Make sure that everyone knows that this activity was just a game to show a point, and that no child goes away thinking that they are a ‘weed’ in God’s eyes.

## 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 the Father who created and loves every one of us?
- Do you believe in Jesus, God the Son, who came to remind us of God’s love?
- Do you believe in God the Holy Spirit, who helps us to share God’s love?

## We Pray (2)

Again, relate the Prayer of the Faithful to the Gospel reading by saying: ‘God, we know you care for all people and so we now pray...’

*Leader:* We pray for all Christians, that they may follow Jesus’ teaching on judging others. Lord in your mercy,

*All:* **Hear our prayer.**

*Leader:* We pray for the countries of the world, that they may live in peace. Lord in your mercy,

*All:* **Hear our prayer.**

*Leader:* We pray for people who are bullied, teased or made fun of in any way. Lord in your mercy,

*All:* **Hear our prayer.**

*Leader:* We pray for anybody we know who is sad or lonely. Lord in your mercy,

*All:* **Hear our prayer.**

*Leader:* Lord, help us show your love to all we meet. We make our prayers through Christ our Lord.

*All:* **Amen.**

