



Catechist Background

The parable we hear today has a fairly clear message: God, the owner of the vineyard, treats his workers equally and pays them a just daily wage, regardless of when they arrived in the vineyard. The 'envy' by those who worked the whole day is at the vineyard owner, not at the other workers; this is implicit in the original Greek but is less clear when translated into English. The message of the last being first and the first being last has been applied to different groups over time. Jesus' original disciples were made up of some of the 'last' in society: sinners, tax collectors etc. As Matthew's readers were probably Jewish Christians, he may have included this to show that Gentile Christians, despite their pagan roots, were entitled to participate fully in the Church just like Jewish ones. Today we should consider who the 'last' in society are, as they too are equal inheritors of God's Kingdom.

Setting the Scene

For the activity below, you will need a 'vine,' either drawn on a large (cA1) piece of paper, or cut out of pieces of paper and stuck to the wall; the vine could have grapes on it. You will also need a 'leaf' for each child, writing/drawing materials, and tape/blu-tak to attach the children's leaves to the vine.

We Say Sorry

Leader: Lord Jesus, you act with fairness and justice, Lord have mercy.

All: **Lord, have mercy.**

Leader: You reach out to the strong and the weak, Christ have mercy.

All: **Christ, have mercy.**

Leader: You will lead us to God's Kingdom, Lord have mercy.

All: **Lord, have mercy.**

Gloria

We Pray (1)

God in heaven, help us to follow your law of love through showing your love to other people. Amen.

Gospel Acclamation

Gospel: Matthew 20:1-16

Reflecting on the Gospel reading with Children

In today's Gospel reading Jesus told the disciples a story that some of them may have found unfair.

- Have you ever thought, 'That's not fair!' about something?
- How does it make you feel when you think things are not fair? [*Angry, confused, sad*]
- Why were the people in the parable who were hired first cross when they were paid? [*because they had worked all day but were paid the same as those who had only worked for one hour*];
- Did the people hired last need the same amount of money to live as those hired first? [*Possibly*]
- How do you think the people who were hired last felt when they were paid? [*surprised, happy, embarrassed?*]
- What do you think will happen to people who only come to know God when they are old?
- Should they be allowed to belong to God's family as much as those of us who have known about God since we were small? [*Of course!*]

Response

- Give a 'leaf' to each child;
- Ask him/her to draw or write something on it for which they are thankful to God;
- Invite the children to come forward, one at a time, and attach their 'leaves' to the 'vine.'

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 is generous and full of mercy?
- Do you believe in Jesus who teaches us to treat others with love and kindness?
- Do you believe in the Holy Spirit who gives us the strength to be kind and generous to others?

We Pray (2)

Again, relate the Prayer of the Faithful to the Gospel reading by saying 'God, the vineyard owner, is always watching over us and so we now pray...'

Leader: We pray for the Church, that we may continue the work of Jesus. Lord in your mercy,

All: **Hear our prayer.**

Leader: We pray for the world, that countries may work together to make sure all people have what they need to live full lives. Lord in your mercy,

All: **Hear our prayer.**

Leader: We pray for a spirit of love in the hearts of all people. Lord in your mercy,

All: **Hear our prayer.**

Leader: We pray for those in our world who are 'last' and left out in any way. Lord in your mercy,

All: **Hear our prayer.**

Leader: Lord, help us not to envy others, but to be thankful and generous. We make all our prayers through Christ our Lord.

All: **Amen.**

