



Catechist Background

This is the last of the series of parables that Jesus told for a few weeks in our liturgical cycle, with the meaning of today's parable very similar to what we heard last week. The image of a banquet representing God's reign was used in the Old Testament times, and would have been a familiar image for Jesus' hearers. Scholars today think that Matthew wrote his Gospel for primarily Jewish Christians who were engaging with to Gentile believers. It was important for them to understand that one's genealogical (family) heritage was less important than one's actions in welcoming them to the banquet of God's Kingdom.

Setting the Scene

For the activity, prepare invitations to a banquet in God's kingdom, to given out, one to each child.

We Say Sorry

Leader: You call those in the world who are weak, Lord have mercy.

All: **Lord, have mercy.**

Leader: You call those in the world who are small, Christ have mercy.

All: **Christ, have mercy.**

Leader: You help us to enter the Kingdom of God, Lord have mercy.

All: **Lord, have mercy.**

Gloria

We Pray (1)

God, may we show that we love you by the way that we treat others. Amen.

Gospel Intro

Remind the children that in this reading, Jesus was speaking in the Temple to people who thought they followed God's rules faithfully and taught others to do the same.

Gospel Acclamation

Gospel: Matthew 22:1-10

Reflecting on the Gospel reading with Children

- Have any of you, or your families, received a wedding invitation?
- Did you go to the wedding? Did you have a good time?
- Who do people invite to their weddings? *[their friends and family]*
- What would the bride and groom think if the people invited to the wedding all said, 'No, we have better things to do that day...'
- What would others think if the bride and groom then said, 'OK, let's go out and get anyone who is in the street to come to our wedding and our party!'
- Who does the king represent in today's parable? *[God]*
- Who do the servants represent? *[God's messengers – angels, prophets...]*
- Who do the people who were invited first represent? *[the Jews, God's chosen people]*
- Who do the people who were invited later represent? *[the non-Jews "Gentiles"]*

- Why did Jesus tell the people who were in charge at the temple that they were like the first people who were invited to the wedding? *[so that they would realise they had heard God's message but were not responding to it in ways which pleased God. Perhaps Jesus wanted them to change their ways so that they did follow God better]*

Response

Say:

- Although it is exciting to go to a wedding, we are invited to a better party: the Kingdom of God.
- What do you think God's kingdom will be like? *[It would be the best place ever! Today's first reading from Isaiah gives us hints: tasty food, tears wiped away, rejoicing everywhere...]*
- What type of things make us feel like rejoicing? *[It is important not to discourage ideas that are not traditionally associated with the kingdom of heaven; for all we know, musical statues, chocolate milkshake and monkey bars may indeed be there!]*
- Give each child an invitation to the banquet of God's Kingdom for them to take home *[You may need to read it to the younger children];*
- Encourage them to draw/write on the other side in the next week their own ideas of what that banquet could be like.

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 that God created all of us to be happy?
- Do you believe that Jesus Christ has invited us all to share in his banquet?
- Do you believe that the Holy Spirit helps us to be generous and to listen to God?

We Pray (2)

Again, relate the Prayer of the Faithful to the Gospel reading by saying 'God has a delightful plan for all of creation, and so we now pray...'

Leader: We pray for the Church, that we may always help others to know God. Lord in your mercy,

All: **Hear our prayer.**

Leader: We pray for God's peace and generosity to be spread all over the world. Lord in your mercy,

All: **Hear our prayer.**

Leader: We pray for anyone who is ill or in pain, that we may help them. Lord in your mercy,

All: **Hear our prayer.**

Leader: We pray for us, that we can see and share with others the wonderful things God has given.

Lord in your mercy,

All: **Hear our prayer.**

Leader: Lord, help us to make the world around us more like your heavenly banquet. We make our prayers through Christ our Lord.

All: **Amen.**