

Sixteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time, Cycle A

Sunday, July 19, 2020
Reading and Background

This Sunday's Readings

First Reading

Wisdom 12:13,16-19

God has shown himself to be a God of justice and mercy.

Responsorial Psalm

Psalm 86:5-6,9-10,15-16

A prayer to God for mercy.

Second Reading

Romans 8:26-27

The Spirit intercedes for us with God.

Gospel Reading

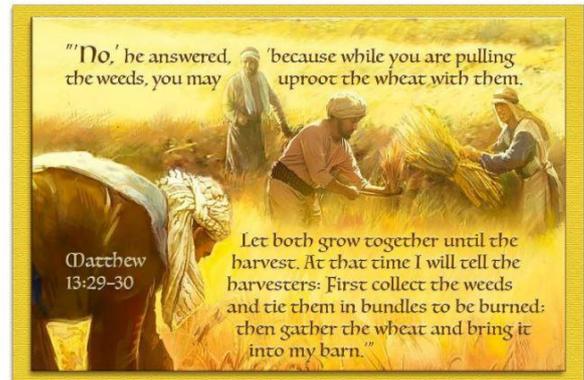
Matthew 13:24-43 (shorter form: Matthew 13:24-30)

Jesus offers parables about the Kingdom of Heaven and explains them to his disciples.

Background on the Gospel Reading

In today's Gospel, Jesus offers three parables to describe the Kingdom of Heaven. He also **explains why he speaks to the crowds in parables** and interprets the parable of the sower for the disciples. This reading is a continuation of Jesus' discourse that we began reading last Sunday.

All three parables use commonplace experiences to describe aspects of the Kingdom of Heaven. The first parable is longer and more detailed than the next two, and it alerts us to the two-fold reality of the Kingdom of Heaven. The beginnings of the Kingdom of Heaven can be found in this world. The fruition of the Kingdom of Heaven, however, will not be realized until the final judgment. In the meantime, as Jesus' explanation to the disciple's cautions, any effort to judge the progress of the Kingdom of Heaven is premature. Only God, in the final judgment, will distinguish the fruit of the Kingdom of Heaven and offer its reward.



If you have faith the size of a mustard seed, nothing will be impossible for you.



The second and third parables call to our attention the abundance that will result from the small beginnings of the Kingdom of Heaven. Just as a mustard seed—the smallest of all seeds—will become a large bush, so too God will bring his Kingdom to full bloom.

As a small amount of yeast will leaven the entire batch of bread, so too God will bring about the expansion of his Kingdom. In each case the image

is of the superabundance that God brings out of even the smallest of signs of the Kingdom.

Contained within these parables are words of caution as well as words of consolation. In the parable of the sower we are warned against judging others. To judge and uproot the “weeds” prematurely will harm the wheat; final judgment rests with God. In the parables of the mustard seed and the yeast, we are consoled by the message that God can work wonders and produce abundance from even the smallest beginnings of the Kingdom of Heaven.

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Making the Connection (Grades 1, 2, and 3)

Gospel Reading

Matthew 13:24-43 (shorter form: Matthew 13:24-30)

Jesus offers parables about the Kingdom of Heaven and explains them to his disciples.

Young children are striving to make a difference in their world. Jesus' parables of the mustard seed and the yeast provide important lessons that even small contributions can yield dramatic results.

Materials Needed

- One clear bowl of water
- Food colouring

Preparation for Sunday Scripture Readings

1. Show the group the bowl of water. Tell the group that you would like to make this water more colourful by adding food colouring.
Ask: ***How much food colouring do you think is needed to change the colour of this water?*** Allow time for the children to offer their suggestions.
2. ***It really doesn't take much food colouring to change the colour of this water. Let me show you.*** Place one drop of food colouring into the bowl. Let the children observe how much impact just a drop of food colouring has on the water.
Say: ***Sometimes little things can make a big difference.***
3. ***Jesus told many parables about the Kingdom of Heaven. The lesson from two of these parables reminds me of the food colouring in the water. As we listen carefully to these parables Jesus told, see if you can figure out which two make me think about the demonstration we just did.***
4. Read aloud Matthew 13:24-33.
5. ***In this Gospel, Jesus tells three parables.***
 - ***The first is called the parable of the sower, and in it the farmer allows the wheat and the weeds to grow together.***
 - ***In the second parable, Jesus taught that the Kingdom of Heaven is like a mustard seed.***
 - ***In the third parable, he said that the Kingdom of Heaven is like yeast.***
 - ***Which of these parables are like the demonstration we did with the water and food colouring?*** (The parable of the mustard seed and the parable of the yeast)
6. ***In these parables, Jesus is teaching us that little things can make a big difference. In fact, the Kingdom of Heaven, the great news that Jesus came to announce, begins with the smallest of actions. That means that every good thing that we do, however small, can have tremendous effect when we do it because we love Jesus.***
7. Conclude in prayer together, thanking God for helping us to make small contributions that can make big differences in the world. Pray together the Lord's Prayer or the Morning Offering.

Morning Offering

My God, I offer you my prayers, works, joys and sufferings of this day in union with the holy sacrifice of the Mass throughout the world.

I offer them for all the intentions of your Son's Sacred Heart, for the salvation of souls, reparation for sin, and the reunion of Christians.

Amen.

Sixteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time, Cycle A
Sunday, July 19, 2020
Making the Connection (Grades 4, 5, and 6)

Gospel Reading

Matthew 13:24-43 (shorter form: Matthew 13:24-30)

Jesus offers parables about the Kingdom of Heaven and explains them to his disciples.

Children and adults alike are tempted to judge others by their appearance. In the first parable found in today's Gospel, we are warned against judging people, and we are reminded that final judgment rests with God.

Materials Needed

- Two wrapped boxes, one wrapped in plain paper and one wrapped in decorated paper

Preparation for Sunday Scripture Readings

1. Show the group the two wrapped boxes.
If you could choose one of these gifts, which would you choose and why?
(Accept all reasonable answers.)
2. Say: ***I have just asked you to make a judgment based on appearances. We often do this in our lives. We judge things, and sometimes we even judge people based on first impressions and appearances. This is not the way that God judges. Jesus told a parable about this to teach us about God's judgment. Let's listen carefully to this parable.***
3. Invite one or more volunteers to read aloud today's Gospel in its shorter form, Matthew 13:24-30.
4. ***In this parable the sower makes a surprising decision. He allows the wheat and the weeds to grow together. Why does he do this?*** (He says that pulling the weeds before the harvest will damage the wheat as well.) ***What alternative does he offer to pulling up the weeds?*** (The sower says to wait until harvest time, when the wheat and the weeds can be pulled up together and separated without harming the wheat.) ***What does this parable tell us about God's judgment?*** (Accept all reasonable answers.)
5. ***If this is the way that God judges, what might be the lesson for us about judging things by their appearances?*** (Accept all reasonable answers.)
6. Pray together, thanking God for the wisdom to withhold judgment. Pray together the Prayer of Saint Francis or the Act of Love.

Peace Prayer of Saint Francis

Lord, make me an instrument of your peace:
where there is hatred, let me sow love;
where there is injury, pardon;
where there is doubt, faith;
where there is despair, hope;
where there is darkness, light;
where there is sadness, joy.

O divine Master, grant that I may not so much seek to be consoled as to console,
to be understood as to understand, to be loved as to love.
For it is in giving that we receive, it is in pardoning that we are pardoned,
and it is in dying that we are born to eternal life. Amen.

Sixteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time, Cycle A
Sunday, July 19, 2020
Making the Connection (Grades 7, 8, and 9)

Gospel Reading

Matthew 13:24-43 (shorter form: Matthew 13:24-30)

Jesus offers parables about the Kingdom of Heaven and explains them to his disciples.

Young people are familiar with Jesus' reliance in his parables on images from everyday life, especially from the world of nature.

Materials Needed

- A dandelion seed head or picture from a magazine or the Internet of a dandelion with its seeds blowing away

Preparation for Sunday Scripture Readings

1. Show the young people the dandelion or ask them to describe the picture of the dandelion.
2. Ask a volunteer to blow the dandelion seeds off the stem or to describe what happens when someone blows on a dandelion seed head.
3. Ask: ***If you did this in your yards, what would they look like at the end of summer or next year?*** (Weeds would overrun the yard.)
4. Say: ***People often work diligently to keep weeds out of their yards. In Sunday's Gospel, we hear Jesus using the image of weeds to help us understand the Kingdom of God.***
5. Have a volunteer read aloud the short version of the Gospel, Matthew 13:24-30.
6. Ask: ***What do you think Jesus is trying to teach us about the Kingdom of God?*** (Accept all reasonable answers.)
7. Have another volunteer finish reading the longer version, Matthew 13:24-43.
8. Ask: ***What do these parables teach us about the Kingdom of God?*** (Accept all reasonable answers.)
9. Say: ***In the coming week, let's continue to pray that our faith will grow and that the Kingdom of God will be spread throughout the world.***
10. Conclude by praying the psalm for this Sunday, Psalm 86:5-6,9-10,15-16.

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Family Connection

Gospel Reading

Matthew 13:24-43 (shorter form: Matthew 13:24-30)

Jesus offers parables about the Kingdom of Heaven and explains them to his disciples.

Taken together, the parables found in today's Gospel offer both a sobering reminder about the Kingdom of God and words of encouragement.

As the wheat and the weeds must grow together until the harvest, ***so we may not know whether our actions contribute to God's Kingdom until God's final judgment.*** With this word of caution in mind, *we act always in prayer that our actions will be consistent with God's plans.*

In the parables of the ***mustard seed and the yeast***, we hear ***words of encouragement.*** God can bring the Kingdom of Heaven from even the smallest of beginnings. Thus, we ask God to work through us for the sake of the Kingdom of Heaven.

Set aside some time this week to make bread with your family.
Show the amount of yeast that is required to raise an entire batch of bread.
Observe that little things can go a long way.

After the bread has been baked, gather together as a family.
Read together today's Gospel, Matthew 13:24-43.

Reflect together on what Jesus means when he teaches that the Kingdom of Heaven is like a mustard seed and like yeast.

In these parables, Jesus is teaching us that God can work wonders from even the smallest beginnings of the Kingdom of God.
This means that even the little things that we do can make a big difference in the lives of others.

What are some of the little things that we can do in our family that help to make things better for others?

Decide on one action to take together.

Pray that God will use your action to make a difference in the world.

Pray together the Lord's Prayer.