

Sunday, September 21, 2008

19th Sunday after Pentecost

Preparation:

Read the Gospel for the day over, [Matthew 20:1-16](#) Pay attention to the words or phrases that jump out at you.

Read over the lesson so that you are familiar with what is intended to happen. Gather the materials that you will need for each section of the lesson. For deeper thinking or for ways to extend the lesson take a look at the following websites:

<http://www.textweek.com/yeara/propera20.htm>

<http://www.childrensermons.com/sermons/lastfirst.htm>

http://children.calvarychapel.com/site/curriculum_n.htm - look for number 215 down the page

<http://www.efree.mb.ca/lectionarypuzzles/awv/awvs25ra.htm> - word puzzle

http://ecusa.anglican.org/50534_61669_ENG_HTML.htm - scroll down the page to find the date for this Sunday

<http://www.maxipraise.com/mpkids/MAZES/GRAPES.html> - a printable maze

Gathering:

Materials needed:

Small table or end of one table

White candle

Bible & Bookmark

Green cloth (optional)

Newsprint and markers

Small coloured pebbles

Gather around the small table or at the end of one table. If you have the green cloth put it down and place the candle on it and put the Bible near the candle (you may want to let the children help with this). Write the prayer up on the newsprint so that everyone can see it.

Light the candle.

Pray the following prayer together:

Loving God be with us today,

Loving Jesus be with us today,

Loving Spirit be with us today,

Amen.

Blow out the candle. Gather the children in a circle. Put the pebbles in the centre of the circle. Ask the children what they think the fairest way would be to give everyone the pebbles. Suggest that everyone with green eyes should get more pebbles – see what the response is. Suggest that everyone with blue socks should get more pebbles – see what the response is. Tell the children that in today's story from Jesus they are going to hear about an employer who acted in a way that everyone didn't think was fair.

Story Time:

Materials needed: coloured pebbles from the Gathering, print up on separate pieces of card stock the following times: **6 am, 9 am, noon, 3 pm** and **5 pm**

Jesus looked at all the people with him. He said, "Listen up everyone. I have a story to tell you about God's kingdom."

This is the story that he shared.

There once was an employer. He had lots of work for people to do. He didn't have enough workers to get everything done. He went out into the market place early in the morning. *Hold up the first time sign.*

He saw lots of people waiting to get work. The employer said, "If you are looking for work go into my fields. There you will find plenty to do. I will pay you the regular amount at the end of the day." The work was going well. The employer knew he could still use more workers. He went back to the market place. *Hold up the second time sign.*

The employer still lots of people needing work. He said, "If you are looking for work go into my fields. There you will find plenty to do. I will pay you the regular amount at the end of the day."

The employer went back to the market place looking for more workers several times. *Hold up the third and then the fourth time signs.* He saw lots of people still looking for work. He told them, "If you are looking for work go into my fields. There you will find plenty to do. I will pay you the regular amount at the end of the day."

Finally it was nearly the end of the day. The employer decided to go back to the market place one more time for the day. He looked around and saw some people sitting around. He asked them, "Are you looking for work? If so, then go out into my fields and you will find work there."

It came to the end of the day. The employer gathered all the workers together. He thanked them all for the work that they had done. Then he handed out their pay. He started with those who had started first. He gave them each the pay for the day. *Give each child a pebble.* Then those who had started later in the morning came to see him. He gave them each the pay for the day. *Give each child a pebble.* Then the people who had started to work at noon came forward. He gave them each the pay for the day. *Give each child a pebble.* Then came those who came to work in the middle of the afternoon. He gave them each the pay for the day. *Give each child another pebble.* Last came those who had started work at the end of the day came forward. The employer gave them each their pay for the day. *Give each child a pebble.*

Now the workers who had started earliest in the day were quite upset. They came to the employer and were very angry. They said, "How come those people who came after us got paid the same amount as we did? We were here all day and worked hard the whole time. It is NOT FAIR!"

The employer looked at them and shook his head. He said sadly, "What does it matter to you how I pay the workers? Didn't you agree to work for the regular pay? Didn't I pay you what we agreed to? It should not matter what I pay to the pay who started work later."

After Jesus finished telling the story, he told the people this, "In God's kingdom, the first shall be last and the last shall be first."

Response:

Idea #1: God's Kingdom Picture

With this response the children will be able to share what they heard about God's kingdom with different art and craft materials. There is no expected response to this, just what the children come up with.

Materials needed: construction paper, glitter, glue, scissors, pipe cleaners, stickers, tissue paper, wrapping paper, card stock, markers, crayons, stamps, stamp pads, and any thing else that might be interesting

Instructions: Lay out the craft materials in an attractive manner. Invite the children to remember the story that they just heard. Ask them to think about what it means for the 'last to be first and the first to be last'. As the children look at the craft materials and when they seem ready encourage them to make a picture with the materials that shows God's kingdom to others. When the children are finished and as they are comfortable have them share with each other their pictures.

Idea #2: Clay Sculptures

For this response there will be a direct tie in with the pebbles used during the story and will enable the children to make a concrete reminder of the story.

Materials needed: play dough recipe (at end of lesson) and the ingredients needed in the lesson, pebbles from story, and heavy large paper plates

Instructions: Make enough of the play dough that each child has a good size ball to work with. Give each child a ball of dough, the plate and the pebbles they had for the story. Invite them to hold the clay in their hands and remember the story they have just heard. Suggest to the children that they come up with a shape that will help them remember what Jesus had to say about the last being first. When they are done their shapes have them put them on the plates and let the children decorate their sculptures with the pebbles used during the story.

Idea #3: Last shall be First Collage

Older children will probably appreciate this response than younger ones. It will give them a way to make a connection between Jesus' words and the world they live in today.

Materials needed: several days of newspapers, magazines, poster board, markers, glitter, glue and scissors

Instructions: Cut the poster board in half and have a half piece for each child. Lay out the magazines, newspapers and scissors. Invite the children to look through the magazines and newspapers for stories, headlines, words, or pictures that describe when people who might be seen as the last in the world coming first. Let them cut them out. When they have enough encourage them to make a collage with them on the poster board. Suggest that they use the glue and glitter to make a title across the poster that uses Jesus' words from the story: **THE LAST SHALL BE FIRST**. If possible find places in the church that they can share these posters with the congregation.

Closing:

Gather with the children around the worship table again. Relight the candle. Say the prayer line by line and encourage the children to repeat it after you:

Thank you God for our time together,

Thank you Jesus for being our friend,

Thank you Spirit for showing us the way,

Amen.

PLAY DOUGH RECIPE

Mix together:

- 1 C. flour
- 1/2 C. salt
- 2 tsp tartar
- 1 package unsweetened drink mix

Add:

- 1 C. boiling water
- 1 tablespoon vegetable oil

Stir until soft dough forms, knead until smooth. Store in air tight container in refrigerator.