

Sunday, September 28, 2008

20th Sunday after Pentecost

Preparation:

Read the Gospel for the day over [Matthew 21:23-32](#) 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/propera21.htm>

<http://www.sermons4kids.com/riddle-me-this.html>

<http://children.calvarychapel.com/site/pdf/New/Curr222.pdf>

<http://www.sundayschoollessons.com/pent19mtles.htm>

<http://www.ebibleteacher.com/children/lessons/twosons.htm>

Gathering:

Materials needed:

Small table or end of one table

White candle

Bible & Bookmark

Green cloth (optional)

Newsprint and markers

Pictures of authority figures from magazine, newspaper or printed from the internet, such as: police officers, clergy, bishops, the prime minister, fire fighters, nurses, doctors, umpires and any others you can think of

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. Lay out the pictures of the authority figures that you have collected where the children can see them. Ask them to name the different figures. Ask the children what they do for us. As they are talking about the various figures ask them if they would pay attention to what they told you to (*usually they will give a positive response to this*). Ask them if they would pay attention to what Jesus had to say. Explain that in today's story some people who were leaders had questions for Jesus about his authority or right to do the things God had given him to do.

Story Time:

Materials needed:

Jesus and his friends had gone to Jerusalem. The big place that everyone went to worship was at the Temple. People went there every day, all day. It was a noisy but interesting place to be. Ordinary people went there. Rich people went there. Poor people went there. Leaders went there. It was the place to go and worship God and to learn from each other.

It wasn't really surprising that Jesus and his friends decided to go to the Temple. They spent time there worshipping God and talking with the people who were there. Jesus spent time teaching about the kingdom of God. Some of the leaders of the Temple decided to come and ask Jesus a question about his teaching.

They asked Jesus, "Who gave you the authority to teach the way you do about God? Who gave you the right to teach the people?"

Jesus looked at them. He decided that he would answer with a question of his own. Jesus asked them, "Here is a question for you. You remember the baptism that John did. Was that baptism from God or was that baptism from people?"

This had the leaders completely confused. They gathered just out of Jesus' hearing. Some of them said, "If we say 'from God' then Jesus will ask us why we don't believe what he teaches. If we say 'from people' then all those who followed John and think of him as one of God's prophets will be angry with us. What are we going to do?"

The leaders stood around and argued amongst themselves for quite awhile. They finally came to a decision. One of the leaders said to Jesus, "We just do not know."

Then Jesus said, "Then I do not have to answer your question."

Jesus looked at the people standing around listening to all of this in the Temple. He said to them, "Let me tell you a story."

Once there was a man who had two sons. He had a garden that needed some work done it. The man went up to the first son and said, "Son, please go out to the garden and work there for the day."

His son said, "No, I don't want to do that today."

Later on the son thought about it and realized that he should do what his father asked him to do. The father went to his second son and said, "Son, please go out to the garden and work there for the day."

His son said, "Sure, I will be happy to go and do that."

However he never went to do the work.

Jesus asked those who were listening, "So, who did what his father asked him to do?"

The people listening to him said, "The first son."

Jesus said, "I tell you this. Those who the leaders think are the lowest will make it into God's kingdom before they do. For they heard God speaking through John when they did not. They have God speaking through me when they did not. It is time for everyone to change their lives like they did."

Response:

Idea #1: Ministry Mural

This idea will help connect the story the children heard with the everyday ways that we can do the ministry that God calls us to do.

Materials needed: newsprint or butcher paper, markers, magazines, scissors, glue, and glitter

Instructions: Lay out the newsprint or butcher paper on the floor. Print across the top **GOD'S WAY IS OUR WAY**. Invite the children to think of ways that we as Christians can follow God's way that Jesus tells us to do. Let them use the magazines to find pictures or if they want let them draw their own pictures showing ways to follow God. Have the children glue on their pictures and decorate them using the glitter. With the children choose a place that the mural can be put up to show the rest of the community.

Idea #2: Ministry Notebooks

The children will be able to take home these notebooks and share with their families ideas on ways to follow God in the everyday world.

Materials needed: construction paper, stapler, scissors, white paper, magazines, seasonal stickers, and fine markers

Instructions: Cut the construction paper into 6 inch/15 cm circles – make two per child. Cut 4 circles the same size out of the white paper for each child. For younger children make the books by putting a construction paper circle in front and behind the 4 white pages. Staple them together. Let the older children do this for themselves. Print on the outside of the booklets **GOD'S WAY IS OUR WAY** – again let the older children do this for themselves. Invite the children to look through the magazines and see if they can find pictures that show ways that they can follow God at home. If they can't find what they are looking for suggest that they might want to draw a picture or write some words to describe the idea they want to share. Encourage the children to share their notebooks with their families.

Idea #3: Helping Hands Tree

With this idea the children, especially younger ones, will be able to show to others things they can do share God's ministry in the world.

Materials needed: newsprint, markers, construction paper, scissors, and glue

Instructions: Lay out the newsprint and draw a simple outline of tree on the paper. Make it as big as you can. Help the children to trace each of their hands on the construction paper and cut them out. Invite the children to think of as many helping words as they can. Encourage them to choose and print the ones they want on their hands. Help them to glue their hands on to the tree as leaves for the tree. With the children choose a place to put up the tree so that other members of the community can see it.

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.