



Fourteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time

July 6, 2014

Jesus Reveals the Mysteries of God's Kingdom

Lectionary #100

Zechariah 9:9-10

Psalms 145:1-2, 8-9, 10-11, 13-14

Romans 8:9, 11-13

Matthew 11:25-30

Focus: To learn about God the Father from Jesus.

Catechist's Context

What does it mean to be childlike? In our world today, it is difficult to define since most of our children grow up so quickly. Some defining traits of being childlike are curiosity, openness, and trust. Jesus invites those who are burdened to come to him, as a child would, for he will refresh our hearts and open them to God's love.

Sign of the Cross

All make the Sign of the Cross.

**In the name of the Father, and of the Son,
and of the Holy Spirit.**

Alleluia

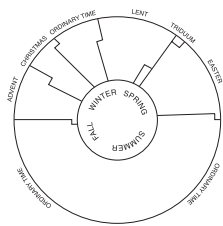
See Matthew 11:25

Alleluia, alleluia.

Blessed are you, Father, Lord of heaven
and earth;

you have revealed to little ones the mysteries
of the kingdom.

Alleluia, alleluia.



Liturgical Calendar Connection

Help the children to find the feast of St. Thomas on the liturgical calendar (July 3). Point out that the liturgical color for this feast day is red. Ask the children what they already know about this apostle.

Gospel

Matthew 11:25–30

At that time Jesus exclaimed: “I give praise to you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, for although you have hidden these things from the wise and the learned you have revealed them to little ones. Yes, Father, such has been your gracious will. All things have been handed over to me by my Father. No one knows the Son except the Father, and no one knows the Father except the Son and anyone to whom the Son wishes to reveal him.

“Come to me, all you who labor and are burdened, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am meek and humble of heart; and you will find rest for yourselves. For my yoke is easy, and my burden light.”

Gospel Reflection

Jesus Knows!

Distribute paper and writing materials and talk about the following questions with the children.

- ☉ What do you know about God?
- ☉ What are the ways we learn about who God is?

Give the children a few minutes to write down as many things as they can about who God is. Invite them to share what they wrote.

- ☉ What is the best way we can learn about God the Father?

Jesus is the best way to learn about God the Father because he is one with the Father in the Holy Trinity. We also hear in the Gospel that no one knows the Father except for the Son and those who the Son reveals the Father to.

Another part of this Sunday’s Gospel teaches us about how the Father reveals the Kingdom to the childlike, not to the clever or those who try to use their intellect to figure

God out. Notice Jesus uses the word *childlike*, not *childish*.

- ☉ What does this mean?

Childlike means having the good qualities of a child. You don’t act fake, you wonder about life, and you are always learning new things. Children like you also see the goodness of what life offers. To be childlike is to be open to God’s presence and trust that God will indeed provide, in God’s time. Acting childish is different. It usually means that you are being selfish or whiny.

We can learn so much from Jesus when he speaks to his Father and says that things have been revealed to the childlike.

- ☉ What does Jesus want us to discover about his Father in this Gospel?

It may be that Jesus wants us to know we don’t have to do everything by ourselves, and we don’t have to worry about figuring everything out. All we really need to do is accept Jesus’s invitation to come to him when we’re tired or weary and weighed down with life’s burdens. He will help us and we will find rest. Sometimes it is difficult to be childlike and trust in God’s goodness, such as when someone we love is sick or dies. But just as you would go to your mom and dad whenever anything worries you, or whenever you need help, you can also go to Jesus. He knows the Father and will show us the Father’s love so we can know him like he does.

Focus on Church Teaching

Jesus gives witness to his Father in heaven in the way he reveals the mysteries of the Kingdom to those who are childlike. The learned and sophisticated, the rich and the privileged do not have the proverbial keys to the Kingdom. It is the poor and innocent, with no choice but to rely on others, who know the blessings of God. Jesus is our model. Jesus relies entirely on God and submits his heart to God's will. His entire life is a prayer of surrender to the Father, who is revealed most fully to those who are childlike.

A Childlike Prayer

To lead this activity, you will need paper and writing materials.

Ask the children to spend a few minutes reflecting on the Gospel. Reread it for them, if necessary. Instruct the children to take their paper and pen or pencil and go to a space where they can be alone and think about the following question:

☉ **Has there ever been a time when you acted childish, not childlike?**

Invite volunteers to share what they had written, keeping the mood thoughtful and serene. End the session with a prayer. Ask Jesus to help them always remain childlike in God's presence and to find the grace not to be childish.

Prayers and Blessings at Home

Fourteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time

July 6, 2014

Our Father

Our Father, who art in heaven,
hallowed be thy name;
thy kingdom come,
thy will be done
on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread,
and forgive us our trespasses,
as we forgive those who trespass
against us;
and lead us not into temptation,
but deliver us from evil.

Prayer for the Fourteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time

Lord God,
may we never cease to praise you.
Send us your Holy Spirit,
so that we may grow in faith, hope,
and charity.
We ask this through Jesus Christ,
our Lord,
who lives and reigns with you
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
one God forever and ever.
Amen.



Lectionary Readings

Zechariah 9:9–10

Psalm 145:1–2, 8–9, 10–11,
13–14

Romans 8:9, 11–13

Matthew 11:25–30

Family Blessing

During the summer months, the usual family routines may change as your child goes off to camp, and vacations and other events can quickly take over family time. Make a special effort every day to say “I love you,” to each family member and bless one another, saying: “God loves you and so do I.”

Living the Liturgy at Home

Set aside an evening devoted to fun and games. Allow yourselves to enjoy the experience and the time together. Re-discover some of the qualities of being childlike.



Fifteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time

July 13, 2014

Fertile Ground for God's Word

Lectionary #103

Isaiah 55:10–11

Psalms 65:10, 11, 12–13, 14

Romans 8:18–23

Matthew 13:1–23 or 13:1–9

Focus: To receive and follow through on God's Word.

Catechist's Context

The human heart and soul are very much like a field. God continually sows the seeds of faith and love in each of us, notably in the young. At times, we are lost in struggle or sadness, or we give into temptation and our hearts are hard. God rejoices with us in the times when those seeds fall deep into our hearts and we grow in faith.

Sign of the Cross

All make the Sign of the Cross.

**In the name of the Father, and of the Son,
and of the Holy Spirit.**

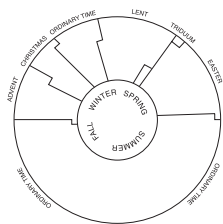
Alleluia

Alleluia, alleluia.

The seed is the word of God, Christ is the sower.

All who come to him will have life forever.

Alleluia, alleluia.



Liturgical Calendar Connection

Ordinary Time is the only season that is split over two parts of the year. It also doesn't always have the same number of weeks, due to the moveable seasons of Lent and of Easter. Help the children to count to see the number of Sundays of Ordinary Time that occur this liturgical year. How many have already passed and how many are still left?

Gospel

Matthew 13:1–23 or 13:1–9

On that day, Jesus went out of the house and sat down by the sea. Such large crowds gathered around him that he got into a boat and sat down, and the whole crowd stood along the shore. And he spoke to them at length in parables, saying: “A sower went out to sow. And as he sowed, some seed fell on the path, and birds came and ate it up. Some fell on rocky ground, where it had little soil. It sprang up at once because the soil was not deep, and when the sun rose it was scorched, and it withered for lack of roots. Some seed fell among thorns, and the thorns grew up and choked it. But some seed fell on rich soil, and produced fruit, a hundred or sixty or thirtyfold. Whoever has ears ought to hear.”

Gospel Reflection

The Seed

☉ From what you heard in the reading today, what is the job of a sower?

As the sower spread the seeds, they fell in four places. Some fell on the pathway, some fell on rocky ground, some fell among the thorns, and some fell on good soil. What happened to the seeds at each place?

Jesus was telling this story to make a point and teach a lesson to the people who listened to him. This kind of story is called a parable, which always has a message tucked into the story. We can also learn something from this parable. What do you think that lesson is?

The seed in the story is the Word of God, and the different types of soil refer to how we listen to God’s Word and what we do after we hear the Word. Like the seed that fell on the path, some people hear the Word and quickly forget about it. It never even sinks in at all. Some people hear the Word and may want to

pay attention to it, but there is too much going on in their lives and they let it die, like the seeds that fell on the rocky soil.

Many, many people listen to the Word but never follow through with what it asks of us. They are not able to live it because it can be tough to live the way Jesus taught us, so they make choices not to listen even when they know what is right. This group chooses friends and hangs out with people who do not believe in the goodness and love that Jesus offers us. This is like the seeds that fell among thorns.

Finally, there are believers who hear the Word, listen carefully to it, take the Word into their hearts, and have the courage to let it make a difference in the way they live every day. This is the seed that fell into rich soil and produced fruit.

Every day we have so much to do, and we meet all kinds of people who do not always help or encourage us to live God’s Word. That is why it is important to pray every day and go to Mass. We can all help each other be like the last group of people, and let our lives be like rich soil for God’s word to take root. When we keep our hearts focused on the Word, we’ll make a difference in the world.

Focus on Church Teaching

We are challenged by the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* to live our lives according to the lessons Jesus taught in his parables. He uses parables to draw us to the Kingdom with some awareness of what the Kingdom is like. In addition to inviting us to the heavenly feast, Jesus forces us to choose. We have to give up everything to gain the Kingdom, and be like good earth for the word to take root in our lives.

As the Seed Grows

To lead this activity, you will need paper and coloring materials.

Have children fold paper to create four sections. Then, have them label the top of each section: Pathway, Rocky Soil, Thorns, Rich Soil. Instruct the group to illustrate the growth of the seed in each section, as they heard in the Gospel. Then, on the reverse side of their drawings, ask them to compose a prayer asking God to make our hearts like the rich soil and to give us the grace to live the Word of God every day. Ask children how we could do this. Some ways are through showing kindness, generosity, patience, honesty, obedience, and courage. Children may also respond with specific examples of serving others, extending forgiveness, and being a peacemaker. It is important for the children to know it is not going to be the big things that will make the most difference, but the little things they do every day. Tell the children that their illustrations and prayers will remind them to keep their hearts and minds rooted in God's love.

Prayers and Blessings at Home

Fifteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time



July 13, 2014

Lectionary Readings

Isaiah 55:10–11

Psalm 65:10, 11, 12–13, 14

Romans 8:18–23

Matthew 13:1–23 or 13:1–9

Our Father

Our Father, who art in heaven,
hallowed be thy name;
thy kingdom come,
thy will be done
on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread,
and forgive us our trespasses,
as we forgive those who trespass
against us;
and lead us not into temptation,
but deliver us from evil.

Prayer for the Fifteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time

Creator God,
let your Spirit move in power over us
to transform our hearts into the good soil
you seek.
Then may your Word bear fruit
a hundredfold through our deeds,
and thus reveal a world
that eagerly awaits the blessed hope and
glorious freedom of your reign.
We ask this through our Lord Jesus
Christ, your Son,
who lives and reigns with you
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
one God forever and ever.
Amen.

Family Blessing

During the summer months, the usual family routines may change as your child goes off to camp, and vacations and other events can quickly take over family time. Make a special effort every day to say “I love you,” to each family member and bless one another, saying: “God loves you and so do I.”

Living the Liturgy at Home

The summer is a great time for being outdoors and appreciating the beauty of nature. Ask your child to help you with gardening tasks, especially planting seeds for a vegetable garden or flowers. Remind your child of the message of today's Gospel as you care for the plants and watch them grow over time.



Sixteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time

July 20, 2014

Justice Tempered with Compassion

Lectionary #106

Focus: To experience the Kingdom of Heaven.

Wisdom 12:13, 16–19

Psalms 86:5–6, 9–10, 15–16

Romans 8:26–27

Matthew 13:24–43 or 13:24–30

Catechist's Context

This Sunday's Gospel calls us to be vigilant, strong in faith and always ready to deal with the weeds. The "weeds" in our daily lives take away our focus, or are choices that might look good at first, but are in reality choices that choke the life out of our faith.

Sign of the Cross

All make the Sign of the Cross.

**In the name of the Father, and of the Son,
and of the Holy Spirit.**

Alleluia

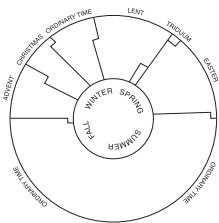
See Matthew 11:25

Alleluia, alleluia.

Blessed are you, Father, Lord of heaven
and earth;

you have revealed to little ones the mysteries
of the kingdom.

Alleluia, alleluia.



Liturgical Calendar Connection

Help the children to find the Sixteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time on the liturgical calendar. Ask them to look for when the Memorial of St. Mary Magdalene is celebrated (July 22). Explain why the liturgical color on that day is white.

Gospel

Matthew 13:24–43 or 13:24–30

Jesus proposed another parable to the crowds, saying: “The kingdom of heaven may be likened to a man who sowed good seed in his field. While everyone was asleep his enemy came and sowed weeds all through the wheat, and then went off. When the crop grew and bore fruit, the weeds appeared as well. The slaves of the householder came to him and said, ‘Master, did you not sow good seed in your field? Where have the weeds come from?’ He answered, ‘An enemy has done this.’ His slaves said to him, ‘Do you want us to go and pull them up?’ He replied, ‘No, if you pull up the weeds you might uproot the wheat along with them. Let them grow together until harvest; then at harvest time I will say to the harvesters, “First collect the weeds and tie them in bundles for burning; but gather the wheat into my barn.””

Gospel Reflection

The Weeds in Life

☉ What can you remember about the seeds in last week’s reading?

In last week’s Gospel, Jesus talked about the different places where seeds fall and whether or not the seeds would grow into strong healthy plants. Today, Jesus talks about plants again, but this time he focuses on weeds. In this parable, a farmer who sowed good seed in good soil was hoping for a plentiful harvest of wheat. But an enemy came along and planted weed seeds right where the farmer planted the good seeds. When the wheat grew, the weeds the enemy planted grew right next to it.

☉ Who does the farmer represent in this parable?

☉ Why did the farmer tell the workers not to pull up the weeds?

When the plants are grown, it would be very easy to tell the difference between the wheat and the weeds.

☉ What is Jesus trying to teach us in the parable?

Even when we are growing in God’s Word, weeds can sneak into our hearts and cause us to be distracted in our spiritual growth. When we know and can see the weeds we find along the way we can make better choices about living God’s Word. The Word has to be planted deep in our hearts, in the good, rich soil of who God wants us to be.

☉ What “weeds” might be growing in your heart?

We will grow up bearing good fruit but we will also have weeds of sin that prevent us from being perfectly good. When we choose to live in the Word as Jesus taught us, we will know the difference between what is good and what is a “weed” to be uprooted and thrown away.

Focus on Church Teaching

We do not have to be perfect to be members of the Church. In all of us, the weeds of sin will be intermingled with the goodness that has taken root in our hearts. As we make our way toward holiness, we need to acknowledge that our failings are real, that we are sinners. All of us must acknowledge our sinfulness so that we can all move together towards the salvation Christ gained for us.

Uprooting the Weeds

To lead this activity, you will need paper and writing materials.

Weeds of sin can grow in our hearts even when we are trying to do something good. Let's talk about how we can get rid of them. Praying is one way we can focus on the good. Another way is by taking time to do something kind for someone, or sticking up for someone who others think may be weird.

Invite the children to think for a moment about their own "weeds" — what they say and do that lessen the growth of their goodness. Have them write these things down, and then write what they can do to "pull them up." Ask volunteers to share their thoughts if they feel comfortable. If children prefer to keep their thoughts private, you might share what "weed" you'll uproot. End the session with the prayers on the Take Home page.

Prayers and Blessings at Home

Sixteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time



July 20, 2014

Lectionary Readings

Wisdom 12:13, 16–19

Psalm 86:5–6, 9–10, 15–16

Romans 8:26–27

Matthew 13:24–43 or 13:24–30

Our Father

**Our Father, who art in heaven,
hallowed be thy name;
thy kingdom come,
thy will be done
on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread,
and forgive us our trespasses,
as we forgive those who trespass
against us;
and lead us not into temptation,
but deliver us from evil.**

Prayer for the Sixteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time

**Merciful Father,
your patience reflects your desire
for us to repent and live in your grace.
Give us the strength and the will
to change those things that are contrary
to you.
Grant this through Jesus Christ, our Lord,
who lives and reigns with you
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
one God forever and ever.
Amen.**

Family Blessing

During the summer months, the usual family routines may change as your child goes off to camp, and vacations and other events can quickly take over family time. Make a special effort every day to say “I love you,” to each family member and bless one another, saying: “God loves you and so do I.”

Living the Liturgy at Home

This is a good week to focus on the small, subtle things we do that hurt others. It is a little easier to get away with things within the family because we grow so used to each other that we overlook our own or others' actions. In the language of the Gospel, we are allowing weeds to grow if we do or say hurtful things to our family members. Ask family members to be mindful of his or her words and actions for this week. At the end of the week, talk about what that effort accomplished. Did it make you more appreciative of one another? Did it make you pause before saying or doing something regrettable?



Seventeenth Sunday in Ordinary Time

July 27, 2014

Yearning for Wisdom

Lectionary #109

1 Kings 3:5, 7–12

Psalm 119:57, 72, 76–77, 127–128, 129–130

Romans 8:28–30

Matthew 13:44–52 or 13:44–46

Focus: To understand the path to the kingdom of heaven.

Catechist's Context

The kingdom of heaven is as close as our heart and surrounds us every moment of every day. Unfortunately, we are often too busy to notice. Once we awaken to the truth, we will know the treasure of life with Christ, be willing to give all we have for his sake, and know the path to the kingdom as well as we know anything.

Sign of the Cross

All make the Sign of the Cross.

**In the name of the Father, and of the Son,
and of the Holy Spirit.**

Alleluia

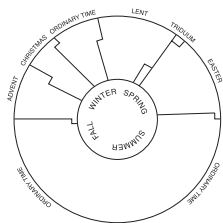
See Matthew 11:25

Alleluia, alleluia.

Blessed are you Father, Lord of heaven
and earth;

for you have revealed to little ones the
mysteries of the kingdom.

Alleluia, alleluia.



Liturgical Calendar Connection

Help the children find the Seventeenth Sunday
of Ordinary Time on the liturgical calendar.

What saints will be remembered this week?

(St. Martha, July 29; St. Ignatius of Loyola,
July 31; St. Alphonsus Liguori, August 1)

Gospel

Matthew 13:44–52 or 13:44–46

Jesus said to his disciples: “The kingdom of heaven is like a treasure buried in a field, which a person finds and hides again, and out of joy goes and sells all that he has and buys that field. Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a merchant searching for fine pearls. When he finds a pearl of great price, he goes and sells all that he has and buys it.”

Gospel Reflection

The Kingdom of Heaven

Jesus tries to explain the Kingdom of Heaven in ways that the people could understand. Jesus gave us three different examples to describe the Kingdom of Heaven.

☉ What does Jesus say the Kingdom of Heaven is like?

Jesus tells us that the people who discovered the treasure and the pearl did something once they found them. The person who found the treasure in the field had to sell everything he owned to buy the field and the merchant sold all he had to buy the pearl of great price.

Jesus wants us to understand two things if we want to know the Kingdom of Heaven in our life today. We have to value the Kingdom of Heaven, and we have to be willing to give up everything that we have in order to get it.

The Kingdom of Heaven is not somewhere far away. Every time we choose to change the things we do wrong, we make the Kingdom present. When we forget about our own wants so that we can help someone else, we make the Kingdom present. Every time we take the time to pray and bring God into our lives, we make the Kingdom present.

☉ What would you be willing to give up in your life today to gain the Kingdom of Heaven?

The treasures of God’s love surround us every day, but sometimes we are just too busy or distracted to take the time to notice them. God shows us the way to the Kingdom of Heaven every day. Let’s remember to pray for the grace of wisdom to be able to see the Kingdom at work in our world today!

Focus on Church Teaching

Jesus came into the world to reveal the love of God to all creation. God is truth and love. The path to the kingdom, as shown by Jesus, can only be a path that leads to love—there is no other possibility. When God sent his Son, it was to bear witness to the truth, and bring forth the reign of peace and justice that is the kingdom of heaven through instruction that is good and true.

Bible Treasure

To lead this activity, you will need Bibles opened to Psalms and Proverbs.

The Bible is full of hidden treasure that comes in the form of words of encouragement and comfort. The Word of God helps us to hear God's loving voice and to put love for him and good habits above other things. The Bible is like a whole library of treasures because it contains many books in one Bible! Have pairs read through Psalms or Proverbs and select passages that speak to them. Allow each pair to read their selection aloud and explain why they think it is a valuable "treasure" telling of God's great love.

Road Map to the Kingdom

To lead this activity, you will need paper and coloring materials.

☉ How many of you have ever gone on a road trip?

☉ Did you use a map or a GPS?

Maps are a huge help when we are trying to go somewhere. They show us the roads, the towns that we are approaching, and any interesting sites along the way. They help us not to get lost, and help us to find the places where we need to go.

☉ As you live your life, what helps you to stay on the right path?

☉ Are there any things that lead you astray?

Ask the children to draw a map that charts a day in their lives. They might draw a path from one end to the other with milestones along the way, like getting up, being on the school bus, going to practice, and having dinner with their families. They might draw paths away from their main path that represent wrong turns they might take, or they might write warning signs along the route. Allow them to be creative with the presentation of their maps. Invite them to share their maps with the rest of the group.

Prayers and Blessings at Home

Seventeenth Sunday in Ordinary Time

July 27, 2014

Our Father

Our Father, who art in heaven,
hallowed be thy name;
thy kingdom come,
thy will be done
on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread,
and forgive us our trespasses,
as we forgive those who trespass
against us;
and lead us not into temptation,
but deliver us from evil.

Prayer for the Seventeenth Sunday in Ordinary Time

**Good and generous God, in Christ you
have revealed your kingdom to us,
a treasure hidden in a field,
a pearl of great price.
Grant us your Spirit's gift of discernment,
that we may learn to distinguish aright
between the passing wealth of this
present world
and the enduring value of your kingdom.
We ask this through our Lord Jesus
Christ, your Son,
who lives and reigns with you
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
one God forever and ever.
Amen.**



Lectionary Readings

1 Kings 3:5, 7–12
Psalm 119:57, 72, 76–77,
127–128, 129–130
Romans 8:28–30
Matthew 13:44–52 or
13:44–46

Family Blessing

During the summer months, the usual family routines may change as your child goes off to camp, and vacations and other events can quickly take over family time. Make a special effort every day to say “I love you,” to each family member and bless one another, saying: “God loves you and so do I.”

Living the Liturgy at Home

This week, choose a time, such as dinner or bedtime, to ask your child what was good in the day. Share a good moment from your day, too. Talk about how these moments give us glimpses of the kingdom of God, right here and now.