

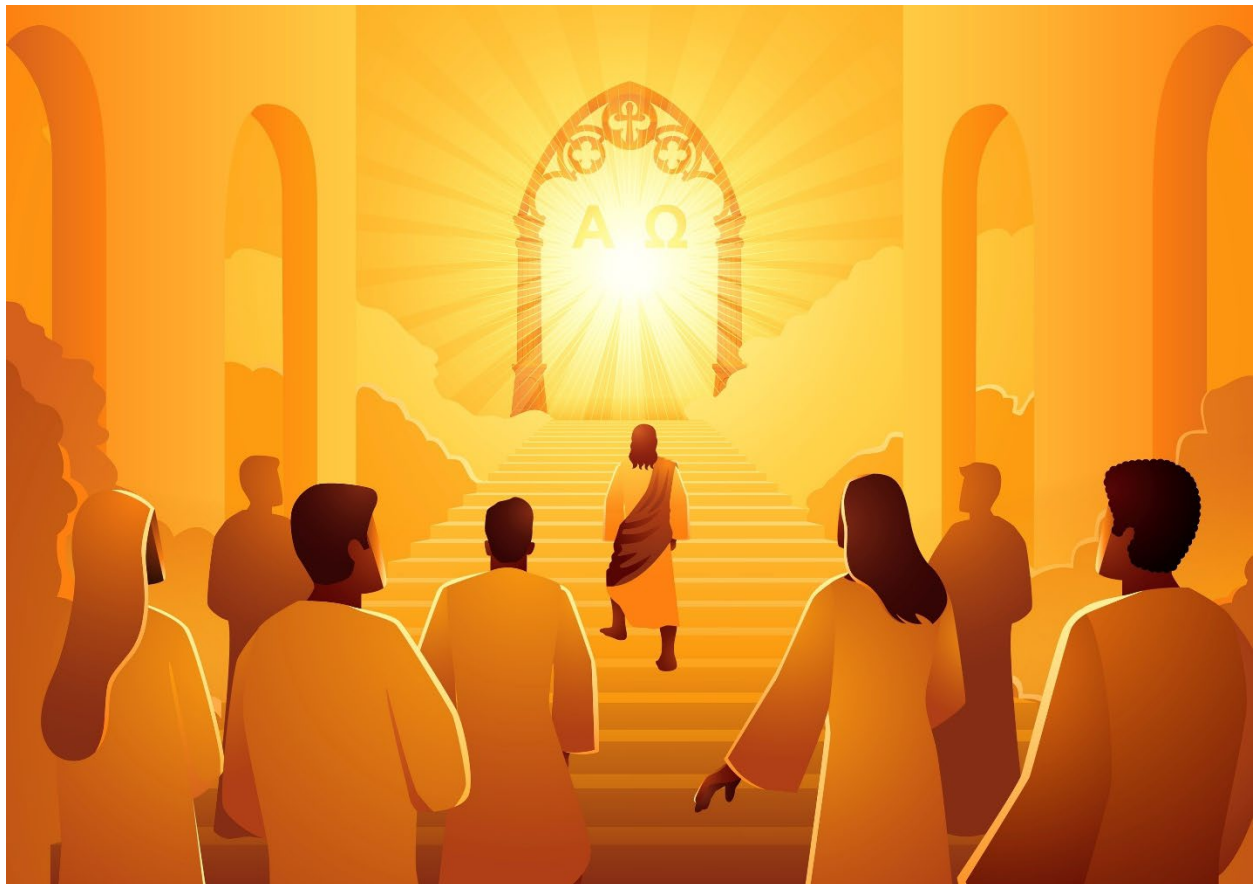


DIOCESE OF HAMILTON

700 King Street West, Hamilton, Ontario, Canada L8P 1C7

CHILDREN'S LITURGY OF THE WORD

Sixteenth Sunday of Ordinary Time



Overview

Children love stories—especially big stories about kingdoms. Cinderella, Snow White and Sleeping Beauty are great examples. The Sixteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time is an opportunity to introduce them to the greatest Kingdom of all—the Kingdom of God.

This CLoW reflects on the shorter Gospel passage ending at verse 33; however, you could expand it to verse 43. The readings teach that God's power is shown through love, patience, and mercy. God gives everyone time to grow, forgives those who are sorry, and sends the Holy Spirit to help us pray. Jesus reminds us that instead of worrying about others' mistakes, we should focus on becoming more loving, patient, and faithful ourselves.

There are three parables in verses 24-33. God's Kingdom is real and growing; God will ensure that everything ends as God wants it to, and that we choose good over evil as the Kingdom of God grows.

The Church teaches that good and evil exist together, and despite injustices, God's Kingdom invites us to make good decisions. It's helpful for children to learn that patience is required in God's Kingdom. While we may be quick to judge, Jesus assures us that God sees all and will act in His time, asking us to be patient with others. This lesson can be challenging for both adults and children, so guidance is essential for their understanding.

The Mustard Seed parable tells us that growth starts small but becomes large. Yeast works unseen, but when mixed with dough, it helps the dough rise and increase in size. Children can be the initiators of good in their worlds.

We live in an impatient world. Today's parables help children to see that patience is an important virtue. Neither they nor we have to fix everything. We just need to make good choices and have faith in God. Help children focus on their own goodness rather than dwell on the bad things they see around them and cannot control.

This week's Gospel provides three blessings in one message: God's Kingdom is growing in a challenging world; God will ensure that good happens even amid evil; and God transforms us through small beginnings.

READINGS

First Reading

Wisdom 12.13, 16-19

A reading from the book of Wisdom.

There is no god besides you, Lord, whose care is for all people, to whom you should prove that you have not judged unjustly.

For your strength is the source of righteousness, and your sovereignty over all causes you to spare all. For you show your strength when people doubt the completeness of your power, and you rebuke any insolence among those who know it. Although you are sovereign in strength, you judge with mildness, and with great forbearance, you govern us; for you have power to act whenever you choose.

Through such works, you have taught your people that the righteous must be kind, and you have filled your children with good hope, because you give repentance for sins.

The word of the Lord

Observe a period of silence after the reading.

R. Lord, you are good and forgiving.

You, O Lord, are good and forgiving,
abounding in steadfast love to all who call on you.
Give ear, O Lord, to my prayer;
listen to my cry of supplication. **R.**

All the nations you have made shall come
and bow down before you, O Lord,
and shall glorify your name.
For you are great and do wondrous things;
you alone are God. **R.**

But you, O Lord, are a God merciful and gracious,
slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love and faithfulness.
Turn to me and be gracious to me;
give your strength to your servant. **R.**

Second Reading

Romans 8.26-27

A reading from the Letter of Saint Paul to the Romans.

Brothers and sisters:

The Spirit helps us in our weakness; for we do not know how to pray as we ought, but that very Spirit intercedes with sighs too deep for words.

And God, who searches the heart, knows what is the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for the saints according to the will of God.

The word of the Lord.

Observe a period of silence after the reading.

A reading from the holy Gospel according to Matthew.

Jesus put before them another parable: "The kingdom of heaven may be compared to someone who sowed good seed in his field; but while everybody was asleep, an enemy came and sowed weeds among the wheat, and then went away. So when the plants came up and bore grain, then the weeds appeared as well. And the slaves of the householder came and said to him, 'Master, did you not sow good seed in your field? Where, then, did these weeds come from?' He answered, 'An enemy has done this.' The slaves said to him, 'Then do you want us to go and gather them?' But he replied, 'No; for in gathering the weeds you would uproot the wheat along with them. Let both of them grow together until the harvest; and at harvest time I will tell the reapers, collect the weeds first and bind them in bundles to be burned, but gather the wheat into my barn.' "

Jesus put before them another parable: "The kingdom of heaven is like a mustard seed that someone took and sowed in his field; it is the smallest of all the seeds, but when it has grown it is the greatest of shrubs and becomes a tree, so that the birds of the air come and make nests in its branches."

He told them another parable: "The kingdom of heaven is like yeast that a woman took and mixed in with three measures of flour until all of it was leavened."

The Gospel of the Lord.

Key Messages for Children

- † God takes care of everyone and knows what is right.
- † Be patient with people and don't try to be a "judge."
- † Small, good choices matter because God's kingdom grows.
- † Live like "good wheat": do what is right and keep choosing goodness.

Key Messages for Leaders

- God takes care of everyone and wants us not to judge unjustly.
- God understands what's inside you.
- Be careful not to "pull weeds" in a way that hurts what is good.
- God will deal with evil at the "harvest time."

Leader's Personal Reflection Questions

1. How will prayer shape what you say?
2. How can you explain to children that God's final judgment belongs to the Lord?
3. What "small good" actions can children recognize this week?

Takeaway

Don't spend your time judging others. Let God help you grow into the person God created you to be.

Background

Wisdom 12:13, 16–19 The Book of Wisdom was written to help us remain faithful to God while living in a world with many different beliefs and ideas. The book teaches that true wisdom comes from God, and that living God's way leads to joy, peace, and everlasting life. The reading tells us that God is powerful, but he chooses to be gentle, patient, and merciful. God gives people time to change, learn from their mistakes, and do what is right. Real strength is shown through kindness, patience, and forgiveness. Just as God is patient with us, we should be patient and forgiving with others.

Psalms 86 The psalm reminds us that God is loving, kind, and always ready to forgive those who turn to him in prayer. Whenever we pray, God listens with love. We can always ask God for help and forgiveness.

Romans 8:26–27 teaches that sometimes we don't know what to say when we pray. The Holy Spirit helps us by praying with us and guiding our hearts. Even when we can't find the right words, God understands us. The Holy Spirit helps us pray.

Matthew 13:24–33 Jesus tells a story about a farmer whose field has both good wheat and weeds growing together. Instead of pulling out the weeds too soon, the farmer waits until harvest, so the wheat won't be damaged. Jesus teaches that God is patient and gives everyone time to choose what is good. No one is perfect. God is patient with us and helps us grow into loving, kind, and faithful people. We should not judge others but trust God and keep choosing to do what is right.

Children sometimes notice classmates or friends who make poor choices or wonder why bad things happen. Jesus reminds us that our job is not to judge others. Instead, we should focus on growing into kind, loving disciples ourselves.

Like wheat growing little by little, we become more like Jesus every day through prayer, listening to God's Word, celebrating Mass, and making loving choices. God patiently helps each of us grow.

The Liturgy

Procession from the main Church

At the proper moment, the priest invites the children to come forward. The leaders may come forward and stand facing the altar with the children. The priest then addresses the children.

Dear children, Jesus is going to tell us another story this week about a farmer planting seeds. As you go now to listen to God's Word, ask Jesus to help you understand His message.

Go in peace to hear God's Word, and we'll welcome you back soon.

Once most of the children have formed a procession, the leader with the book proceeds to the celebration site. The second leader usually walks behind the children. Upon arrival at the CLoW room, the leader places the book on the prepared table.

Welcome

The leaders help the children sit and prepare. **Begin with the Sign of the Cross.** Help the children think and connect their actions as they touch their foreheads, shoulders, and stomachs. The leader may offer the following prayer, in these or similar words.

Let us quiet our hearts and make the Sign of the Cross.

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

Lord, show us your mercy and love.

Help us receive your gifts.

Teach us to serve you with faith, hope, and love—every day.

**We ask this through Jesus Christ, your Son,
who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,
God, forever and ever.**

Amen.

Invite the children to listen to the readings. Proclaiming all the readings is unnecessary; however, at a minimum, proclaim the Gospel.

REIMAGINED READINGS FOR CHILDREN

The readings below are intended for use after the children have heard the original reading. The intent is to allow the children to listen to the original reading and help them better understand it (not replace it).

Read at least the Gospel, then ask the children to sit down. You can then read the reimagined reading. Leaders may not have time to read all the reading.

Reimagined readers must always remain faithful to the original Scripture's intent, making it age-appropriate for children.

Wisdom 12.13, 16-19

God is strong and good. Even when people doubt God, we know that God is gentle with us.

God wants us to be kind like Him. When we are sorry for our sins, give us hope and help us change our hearts.

God is patient.

The reading below is intended to be used after the children have heard the original reading. The intent is to allow the children to listen to the original reading and help them better understand it (not replace it).

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

R. Lord, you are good and forgiving.

Lord, you are always good.

You love everyone who talks to you.

Please hear our prayer.

Listen when we call you. **R.**

People everywhere can come to you.

They can thank you and praise your name.

You do wonderful things,

because you are the one true God. **R.**

Lord, you are kind and gentle.

You are patient and full of love.

Please stay close to me,

help me, and make me strong. **R.**

The reading below is intended to be used after the children have heard the original reading. The intent is to allow the children to listen to the original reading and help them better understand it (not replace it).

Romans 8.26-27

Sometimes we don't know what to say when we pray. But God gives us the Holy Spirit to help us. The Holy Spirit prays with us and for us, even when we cannot find the right words.

God knows what is in our hearts. He knows what the Holy Spirit is asking for us, because the Holy Spirit always helps us to follow God's loving plan.

The reading below is intended to be used after the children have heard the original reading. The intent is to allow the children to listen to the original reading and help them better understand it (not replace it).

Matthew 13.24-33

Jesus told the people this story:

"A farmer planted good seeds in his field. While everyone was sleeping, someone came and planted weeds among the good plants. Later, when the plants began to grow, the weeds grew too.

The farmer's helpers asked, 'Should we pull out the weeds?'

The farmer said, 'No. If you pull out the weeds now, you might pull out the good plants too. Let them grow together. At harvest time, we will separate them.'"

Then Jesus told another story.

"The Kingdom of Heaven is like a tiny mustard seed. It is one of the smallest seeds, but it grows into a big tree where birds can rest and make their homes."

Jesus told one more story.

"The Kingdom of Heaven is like a little bit of yeast that a woman mixed into flour. Even though the yeast was small, it helped all the dough rise."

Jesus wanted everyone to know that God's Kingdom begins in small ways. When we choose kindness, love, forgiveness, and trust in God, those small acts can grow into something wonderful.

Reflection

The leader may offer this reflection in these or similar words. Remember the amount of time available to return to the main assembly. The leader may wish to reduce the number of questions.

What did you hear?

Have you ever held a tiny seed in your hand? (Pause)

It is so small! **Do you think a tiny seed can grow into a big plant or even a tree?**

(Allow the children to answer.)

Jesus tells us that God's Kingdom is like that tiny seed. It starts small, but it grows into something wonderful. Every time you do something kind, you are planting a little seed of God's love.

Let's think of some kind things we can do.

1. **If your mom or dad asks you to help, what could you do?** (Take answers)
2. **If someone at school is sitting alone, what could you do?** (Invite them to play)
3. **If your brother or sister is sad, what could you do?** (Give them a hug, say kind words)

Those little things may seem small, but they help God's Kingdom grow!

Jesus also told a story about good plants and weeds growing together. The farmer didn't pull out the weeds right away because he didn't want to hurt the good plants. This teaches us something important about God.

Do we always make the right choices? (No)

Have you ever forgotten to listen to your parents? (Raise your hand if you have.) I have made mistakes too!

Have you ever said something unkind and then wished you hadn't? (Pause for responses.)

God knows that everyone makes mistakes sometimes. Instead of giving up on us, God is patient. He helps us learn, say we're sorry, forgive others, and keep trying to make good choices.

Let's play a quick game. I'll say something, and you tell me if it plants a good seed or a bad weed.

Sharing your toys. (Good seed!)

Hitting someone. (Bad weed.)

Saying “Thank you.” (Good seed!)

Telling a lie. (Bad weed.)

Helping someone who is hurt. (Good seed!)

Forgiving a friend. (Good seed!)

Wonderful! Every day, you get to choose what you will plant in your heart.

So here's one last question:

What good seed will you plant today? (Allow several children to answer: helping at home, praying, sharing, telling the truth, being kind.)

Those small acts of love may seem tiny, just like the mustard seed, but Jesus promises they can grow into something beautiful and help make the world a happier place.

Alternative Reflection

This reflection is for older children, teenagers, or even young adults. It may provide CLoW leaders with a broader perspective, using the Church readings.

I have a question for you.

If you could change just one thing about the world, what would it be?

Maybe you would end bullying, stop wars, help people who are hungry, or make sure everyone has a safe home.

Sometimes when we look at the world, we see both good things and bad things happening at the same time. We might even wonder, "Why doesn't God just get rid of all the bad things right away?"

That's exactly what Jesus talks about in today's Gospel.

In the first story, the farmer's helpers want to pull out the weeds immediately. But the farmer says, "Not yet." Why? Because if they pull out the weeds too quickly, they might also pull out the good wheat.

Jesus is teaching us that God is patient. He knows people can change. He gives us time to grow, to learn from our mistakes, to ask for forgiveness, and to become the people he created us to be.

Think about this:

- **Have you ever made a mistake but were grateful someone gave you another chance?**
- **Has a teacher, parent, coach, or friend ever believed in you even after you messed up?**
- **How did that make you feel?**

God is like that. God never stops believing that we can grow.

Then Jesus tells us about a tiny mustard seed. It starts off so small that you could almost lose it in your hand. Yet it grows into a large tree that birds can find shelter in.

What are some "small" things that can make a big difference?

Those small choices may not seem important at first, but they can change someone's whole day—and, over time, a parish.

Finally, Jesus talks about yeast mixed into dough. You can't really see the yeast anymore, but it changes all the dough from the inside.

That reminds us that God's love works quietly in our hearts. Every time we pray, forgive someone, read the Bible, receive the Eucharist, or choose to do what is right instead of what is easy, God is changing us from the inside.

Let's Think This Through Together:

- **What kind of "seed" are you planting with your words this week?**
- **Who in your class or neighbourhood might need someone to be kind to them?**
- **When is it hardest for you to choose kindness instead of anger or selfishness?**
- **What is one small thing you can do this week that will help God's Kingdom grow?**

Remember, Jesus doesn't ask us to do huge things every day. He asks us to be faithful in the little things. One kind word, one honest choice, one act of forgiveness, one prayer—these are the seeds that help God's Kingdom grow.

Following the reflection, the prayer leader invites everyone to stand to profess their faith. Recite the Creed or use the sample below to ask the children to respond.

The Creed

Depending on the time, a simple profession of faith may be made (see below).

Leader: Do you believe in God, the Father Almighty, maker of heaven and earth?

All: I believe.

Leader: Do you believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, who gave his life for us?

All: I believe.

Leader: Do you believe in the Holy Spirit who lives in our hearts and gives us everlasting life?

All: I believe.

Leader: This is our faith. This is the faith of the Church. We are proud to profess it.

Prayer of the Faithful

Leaders may begin the intercessions by announcing the needs they know. The leader may need to repeat and paraphrase the petition, concluding it with the cue for the response: 'We pray to the Lord.' All respond to each petition by saying, "Lord, hear our prayer." Sample intercessions are below.

The leader says:

Leader:

Jesus teaches us that God's love grows in our hearts like a tiny seed. Let us bring our prayers to our loving Father, saying, "Lord, hear our prayer."

R. Children: Lord, hear our prayer.

1. For the Church: that we may help everyone learn about Jesus and share his love with the world, we pray to the Lord.

R. Lord, hear our prayer.

2. For our families: that we may be kind, helpful, and forgiving with one another every day, we pray to the Lord.

R. Lord, hear our prayer.

3. For children everywhere: that they may be safe, loved, and have food, a home, and people who care for them, we pray to the Lord.

R. Lord, hear our prayer.

4. For people who are sick, sad, or lonely, that God will comfort them and send them caring friends, we pray to the Lord.

R. Lord, hear our prayer.

5. For ourselves: that the Holy Spirit will help us make good choices and grow closer to Jesus every day, we pray to the Lord.

R. Lord, hear our prayer.

Leader:

Loving God, thank you for hearing our prayers. Help us grow like the tiny mustard seed by loving you and being kind to others each day. We ask this through Christ our Lord. Amen.

Return to the church

Ask the children to return to the main assembly. Ask them to return quietly and reflect on what they have heard and what they are now doing. Be mindful of children who may have difficulty finding their families.

Please note that the Handouts are available at:

Bulletin: TheKidsBulletin.com – Goodwill donation suggested

Quiz Handout provided by: thewordthisweek.net



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