

FIRST READING

A reading from the book of the prophet Isaiah

Isaiah 55:6-9

*My thoughts are not
your thoughts.*

Turn to the LORD!
 He can still be found.
 Call out to him.
 He is near.
 Give up your wicked ways and your evil thoughts.
 Return to the LORD our God.
 He will be merciful and forgive all your sins.

The LORD says: "My thoughts and my ways
 are not like yours.
 Just as the heavens are higher than the earth,
 my thoughts and my ways are higher than yours."

The word of the Lord.

Responsorial

Psalms 145:2-3

Alleluia

R. Alleluia, alleluia.

See Acts 16:14b

*Open our hearts, O Lord,
to listen to the words of your Son.*

R. Alleluia, alleluia.

GOSPEL

Matthew 20:1-16a

✚ A reading from the holy gospel according to Matthew

As Jesus was telling what the kingdom of heaven would be like, he said:

"Early one morning a man went out to hire some workers for his vineyard. After he had agreed to pay them the usual amount for a day's work, he sent them off to his vineyard.

"About nine that morning, the man saw some other people standing in the market with nothing to do. He said he would pay them what was fair, if they would work in his vineyard. So they went.

"At noon and again about three in the afternoon he returned to the market. And each time he made the same agreement with others who were loafing around with nothing to do.

"Finally, about five in the afternoon the man went back and found some others standing there. He asked them, 'Why have you been standing here all day long doing nothing?'

*Are you jealous
because I am generous?*

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"'Because no one has hired us,' they answered.
Then he told them to go work in his vineyard.

"That evening the owner of the vineyard
told the man in charge of the workers
to call them in and give them their money.
He also told the man to begin
with the ones who were hired last.
When the workers arrived,
the ones who had been hired at five in the afternoon
were given a full day's pay.

"The workers who had been hired first
thought they would be given more than the others.
But when they were given the same,
they began complaining to the owner of the vineyard.
They said, 'The ones who were hired last
worked for only one hour.
But you paid them the same that you did us.
And we worked in the hot sun all day long!'

"The owner answered one of them,
'Friend, I didn't cheat you.
I paid you exactly what we agreed on.
Take your money now and go!
What business is it of yours if I want to pay them
the same that I paid you?
Don't I have the right to do what I want
with my own money?
Why should you be jealous, if I want to be generous?'"

Jesus then said, "So it is!
Everyone who is now first will be last."

The gospel of the Lord.

September 20, 2020

Twenty-fifth Sunday in Ordinary Time

Children Celebrate!

Liturgy of the Word with Children

Today's Readings

Isaiah 55:6–9

Psalms 145:2–3, 8–9, 17–18

Matthew 20:1–16a

God's Ways Are Not Our Ways

Preparation

Children's Leaflet

Have on hand copies of the Children's Leaflet for this Sunday. Distribute copies either at the start of the session or before the children return to the assembly.



Prepare the Meeting Space

In the worship area, on a table draped with a green cloth, place:

- ▶ a Lectionary
- ▶ a battery-operated candle
- ▶ a potted plant or vase of fresh flowers

Have ready for use during the Gathering activity:

- ▶ a wallet filled with play \$1 bills or a bag of foil-wrapped chocolate coins.

Suggested Music

See page 62 for additional information.

Gathering: "God Loves Me" (*Seeds* CD-2, Track #15) or "The Great Commandment" (*Promise & Good News* CD-2, Track #18)

Gospel Acclamation: "Gospel Acclamation; Alleluia" (*Promise & Good News* CD-2, Track #24)

Prepare with Prayer

I will praise you, my God and King, and always honor your name. Each generation will announce to the next your wonderful and powerful deeds. (Psalm 145:1, 4)

Scripture Background

"Turn to the LORD!" are the words that begin today's First Reading from the Book of Isaiah. Although this Old Testament expression ordinarily was a summons to the Temple, here it is a call to consider your immediate circumstances. If you are honest, you must admit to some moral weakness or another—some habitual sin.

A forgiving God, however, is always within speaking distance, ready to forgive your sins if you ask with a sincere heart. God is not like human beings who persist in holding a grudge against those who wrong them. Rather, God always remains near to those who call upon him. Yet God does this while remaining mysteriously transcendent. "Just as the Heavens are higher than the earth, my thoughts and my ways are higher than yours," today's reading concludes. This paradox is a perfect lead-in for today's Gospel.

Jesus tells a parable that begins in a true-to-life setting, yet ends with more than one unexpected twist. It was common for first-century Palestinian employers, like the man in today's story, to go to the marketplace to hire workers. It was where job-seekers always gathered.

Nevertheless, the employer in Jesus' story breaks the mold in a few key ways. Throughout the day, he repeatedly visits the marketplace to hire workers, instead of just once. He goes there at 6 a.m., 9 a.m., noon, 3 p.m., and again at 5 p.m. What real-life employer would do that? Only someone more interested in relieving the ranks of the unemployed than in running his agribusiness!

While not believable as a human being, the man is spot-on as a symbol of God. God does not judge by externals alone but sees into the heart. Perhaps the employer paid all workers generously because all demonstrated a desire to work—in other words, he gave them credit for their good intentions and not simply the number of hours they had worked.

Children's Connections

The parable in today's Gospel shocked its original audience. To communicate some of its power to children, begin your Homily with a short demonstration. Ask four kids who can count to stand up and count off one to four. Tell them that their number signifies the number of hours they have spent picking grapes for you.

Then take the play money from the display, go to the number four child, ask how many hours he or she has worked, and give that child four \$1 coins or bills. Make a big show of this. Have the child hold out a hand as you count out each coin or bill slowly and loudly. Continue giving the same amount to each of the other children, even though the others have worked fewer than four hours. Then ask what the group thinks of what they just saw. If anyone calls you unfair, say that's exactly what the people of Jesus' day thought when they heard him tell today's parable. Then take back the play money, return it to the display, let the four children be seated, and proceed as usual with the suggested Homily.

Here is another demonstration to consider using as part of your Homily. Pick two children similar in age and size to do a *walking* race from one side of the room to another. One child, however, must walk while balancing, hands-free, a magazine or pillow on his or her head. The one who is not weighed down of course will win the race. Explain that sin weighs you down and makes

More About ...

Alternate Gathering Activity

In a hallway or open space separate from the worship area, invite the children to spread apart while facing you. Then hold an inflated, tied balloon in one hand and a book in the other. With the balloon held significantly higher than the book, ask which item is higher. After the children answer, tell them you are going to play a game called "What's Higher?"

Appoint an older child to be "IT." That child will stand in front of the group and say, "Teacher has a question" before tapping the balloon toward the group volleyball-style. Any child near the flying balloon may tap it back while saying, "What's the question?" "IT" catches and holds onto the returned balloon while you ask one of the "What's Higher?" questions listed in today's Gathering activity. If the child who asked, "What's the question?" answers correctly, he or she becomes "IT" for the next round.

you clumsy in your efforts to serve God. If you get rid of sin to better answer God's call, though, God will respect you and reward you for your efforts.

The Children's Leaflet

The children's leaflet for this week helps them learn Jesus' teaching about God's ways, through a summary of the Gospel, prayer, and a creative activity.

Distribute copies of the leaflet. If time permits, read with the children the summary of this week's Gospel. Point out the artwork about the man who hired the workers and ask the children what is happening in the picture.

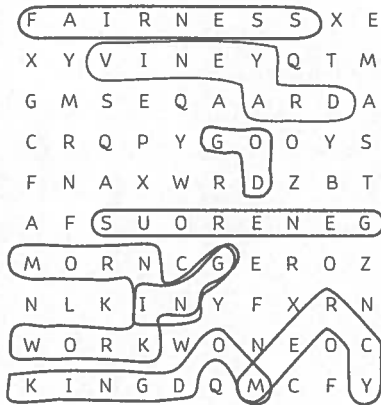
Activity

Within families “fairness” is often challenged. Who got the biggest piece of cake? Why is her chore easier than mine? This week, mealtime is a time to discuss one another’s feelings about any unfairness they feel within the family. There’s a slight “twist” to this week’s puzzle for the children.



Squiggle Search

GRAPES
MASTER
GOD
VINEYARD
MORNING
FAIRNESS
GENEROUS
WORKING
MERCY
KINGDOM



The Liturgy of the Word

Gathering

Invite the children to be seated. Tell them you are going to play a speed game. You will quickly call out lots of questions and you want them to answer as quickly as they can. The questions will be about one subject—what’s higher?

What’s higher:

- ▶ my shoulders or my waist?
- ▶ a basement or an attic?
- ▶ a hill or a mountain?
- ▶ a birdhouse or a doghouse?
- ▶ a cloud or a star?
- ▶ a flying flag or a cruising jet?
- ▶ a basketball goal or a golf hole?
- ▶ a floor fan or a ceiling fan?

When the game is over, explain why you played it. In today’s liturgy, Isaiah says that God’s ways are *higher* than our ways—as high as the Heavens are above the earth. Whenever we sin, we need to remember that and lift up our hearts to God to ask for forgiveness.

Opening Prayer

Leader: Let us now take a moment to bow our heads, remember our sins, and ask for God’s forgiveness. (*Pause.*) Our response to each short prayer will be, “How great is your love, O Lord.” Your ways are not our ways. How great is your love, O Lord.

Children: How great is your love, O Lord.

Leader: Your thoughts are not our thoughts. How great is your love, O Lord.

Children: How great is your love, O Lord.

Leader: You are merciful and forgiving. How great is your love, O Lord.

Children: How great is your love, O Lord.

Invite the children to be seated. Light the candle and begin the First Reading.

First Reading

Leader: In today’s First Reading, Isaiah reminds us that, unlike people who sometimes hold grudges, God is *always* ready to forgive our sins. *Read Isaiah 55:6–9.* Then say, “The word of the Lord.”

Children: Thanks be to God.

Responsorial Psalm

The Psalm may be either sung or spoken. Before beginning, sing or announce the response.

Leader: The Lord is near to all who call on him.

Children: The Lord is near to all who call on him.

Leader: *Read Psalm 145:2–3, 8–9, 17–18.*

Gospel Acclamation

Invite the children to stand. Sing the suggested Acclamation or another familiar one. If you choose not to sing the Acclamation, proceed to the Proclamation of the Gospel.

Proclaim the Gospel

Leader: In today’s Gospel, Jesus tells a story about a man who needs workers to go pick grapes for him.

Leader: The Lord be with you.

Children: And with your Spirit.

Leader: A reading from the Gospel of Matthew.

Children: † Glory to you, O Lord.

Leader: Read Matthew 20:1-16a. Then say, "The Gospel of the Lord."

Children: Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.

Homily

Conduct the payday demonstration explained in Children's Connections, then continue with these thoughts:

- ▶ Remember what Isaiah said in the First Reading: God's ways are higher than our ways. What that really means is that God's ways are better than our ways. That's because God knows more, sees more, and loves more than we do.
- ▶ Now think of the vineyard owner in today's Gospel. He gives a full day's pay to all his workers, whether they worked only one hour or all day long. He didn't care how many hours each person had worked. What mattered was that each person was willing to work, and each person said "yes" when asked.
- ▶ The owner in the story represents God, and the workers represent all of us. God wants us to work for him, but sometimes our sins hold us up and we show up late for work. The people with the fewest sins always get to work the fastest, while those with more sins show up later.
- ▶ This story is just Jesus' way of saying that God doesn't judge us the way other human beings judge us. God sees inside our hearts and knows the sins we have conquered in order to come to him. Instead of condemning us for being slow to answer his call, God gives us credit for answering it. God sees inside our hearts and sees the goodness of our sorrow for our sins—not just the goodness of our deeds.
- ▶ And that is something to celebrate!

Profession of Faith

Leader: Please stand for the Profession of Faith. Respond to each question with the words, "I do." Do you believe in God, the Father almighty, who forgives us our sins?

Children: I do.

Leader: Do you believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord, who saved us from sin's power over us?

Children: I do.

Leader: Do you believe in the Holy Spirit, Lord and giver of life, who strengthens us in goodness and faith?

Children: I do.

Prayer of the Faithful

Leader: As children of a Heavenly Father who forgives us our sins time and time again, let us turn to him in prayer. Our response to each petition will be, "Hear us, O Lord." Because you are generous, O God, strengthen in faith our Holy Father, the pope, and all the leaders of the Church throughout the world, we pray:

Children: Hear us, O Lord.

Leader: Because you are generous, O God, strengthen in faith everyone who lives in a country harmed by hunger, disease, or war, we pray:

Children: Hear us, O Lord.

Leader: Because you are generous, O God, strengthen in faith all of us here whenever we are tempted to sin, we pray:

Children: Hear us, O Lord.

Leader: Invite the children to pray their own petitions. Then pray:

Heavenly Father, we stand here today to praise you and thank you for your great goodness. May your generosity to all your children inspire us to be generous with one another. This we ask through Christ our Lord.

Children: Amen.

Return to Assembly

The Liturgy of the Word ends with the Prayer of the Faithful. Prepare the children to return to the assembly in a respectful manner. If you haven't already done so, distribute the leaflets. Remind the children to take the leaflets home and share them with their families. Encourage them to watch this week's Gospel Reflection video and complete the Family Corner activities as a family.

September 20, 2020

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Liturgy of the Word with Children

Today's Readings

Isaiah 55:6–9

Psalms 145:2–3, 8–9, 17–18

Matthew 20:1–16a



We Pray

Lord, remind us to be generous to all people. Let us never forget your generosity to us. Amen.

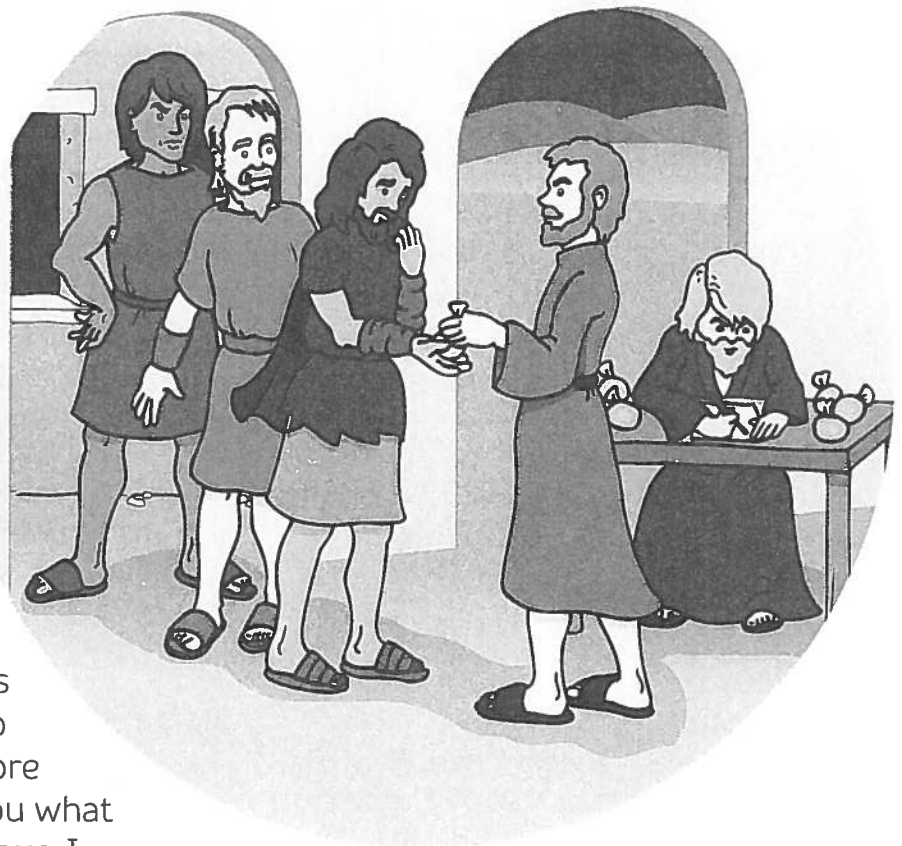


The Word of God This Week

God's Ways Are Not Our Ways

Jesus told the story of a man who hired some workers very early one morning. They agreed on their pay for the day's work. Throughout the day, the man hired more workers at different times. When he paid the workers at the end of the day, those who worked the longest expected more pay. But the man said, "I paid you what we agreed. If I want to be generous, I can."

Jesus added, "The last shall be first."



Visit pflaum.com/fall2020 for this week's Gospel Reflection, Saint Spotlight, and more.



Activity

Try to find the following words in the Squiggle Search below. You may need to go up and down, diagonally, backward, frontward, or around and about. One of them has been done for you.



Squiggle Search

F	A	I	R	N	E	S	S	X	E
X	Y	V	I	N	E	Y	Q	T	M
G	M	S	E	Q	A	A	R	D	A
C	R	Q	P	Y	G	O	O	Y	S
F	N	A	X	W	R	D	Z	B	T
A	F	S	U	O	R	E	N	E	G
M	O	R	N	C	G	E	R	O	Z
N	L	K	I	N	Y	F	X	R	N
W	O	R	K	W	O	N	E	O	C
K	I	N	G	D	Q	M	C	F	Y

GRAPES
MASTER
GOD
VINEYARD
MORNING
FAIRNESS
GENEROUS
WORKING
MERCY
KINGDOM

Family Corner

Faith Focus

What does it mean to be fair? Both Isaiah the prophet and Jesus tell us that God is much more fair to us than we can imagine. In family life, there are times when children may think parents are unfair. Parents have many hard decisions to make, and children learn when they are included as much as possible in the decision-making. This way, fairness on all levels will be easier.

Family Activity

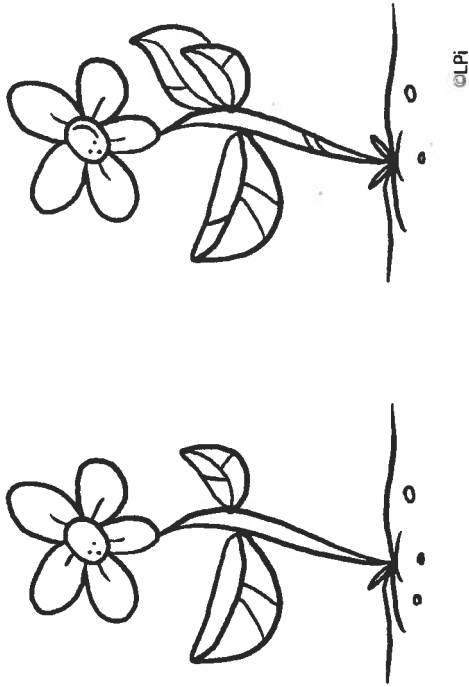
At mealtimes this week, try to discuss some of these questions: What was the best part of your day? What was the hardest part of your day? How did you handle the hard times? Did you thank God for the good times? Make sure that each person has an opportunity to share his or her ups and downs of the day. End the meal with a prayer of thanks for one another.

GROWING WITH THE Gospel

CYCLE A

PUZZLE

Find 8 differences.



©LPI

MISSION

Say a special prayer for each person in your family.

COLOR

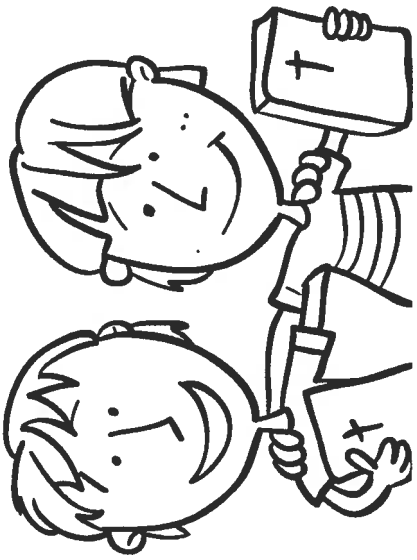
Read the Gospel of the week and color the image.





DRAW

Draw a picture of yourself telling a friend at school about Jesus.



GOSPEL

Whether you work for God your whole life, or whether you just got started, God will reward you in heaven. God doesn't want you to compare yourself with other people. God just wants you to love him with your whole heart.



PRAYER

God, help me to be ready when you ask me to work for you.



BECAUSE VIBRANT
CHURCHES MATTER

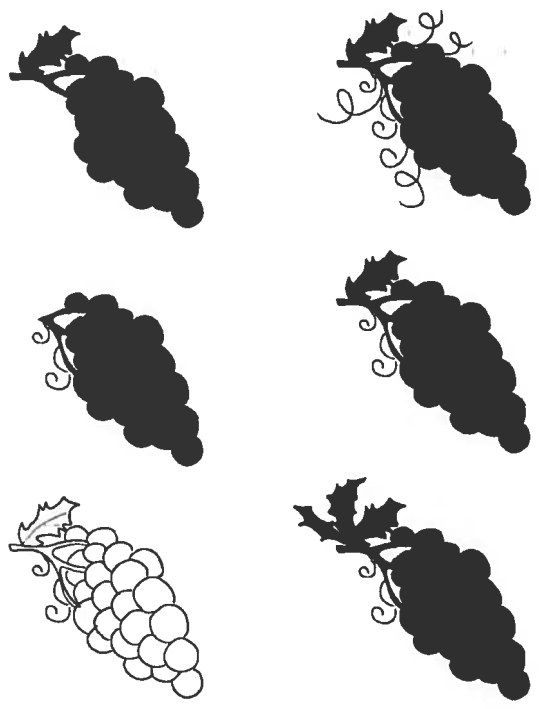
GROWING

WITH THE **Gospel**

CYCLE A

PUZZLE

Find the right shadow.



MISSION

I will do chores and give the money that I earn to the poor.

COLOR

Read the Gospel of the week and color the image.





DRAW

Draw God giving you a blessing for helping others in this world.



GOSPEL

Your Father says, "Will you work eight hours in my garden for one hundred dollars?" You answer, "Yes." You work hard for seven hours. Then your Father says to two other people, "Will you work one hour in my garden for one hundred dollars?" You shout angrily, "Father, you are not fair." He says, "You agreed to work eight hours for one hundred dollars. That is fair."



PRAYER

When I am first or when I am last, thanks for giving me what I need, Father.