

Children's Liturgy of the Word

Twenty-Fifth Sunday in Ordinary Time — Year A

Home Mission Sunday

Theme: Jesus Keeps Calling Us

Gospel: Matthew 20:1–16

Main Message

God is wonderfully generous.

Jesus calls people to belong to Him, whether they have known Him for a long time or are only just beginning.

We should never be jealous when somebody comes closer to Jesus. We should be glad.

On Home Mission Sunday we remember that there are people around us who do not yet know how good Jesus is. We can help them by loving Him, living our faith and inviting others to know Him too.

1. Welcome and Gathering

(Gather the children calmly.)

Leader:

Good morning, everyone.

Have you ever been called?

Perhaps Mum calls:

“Dinner!”

Perhaps your teacher calls your name.

Perhaps someone calls:

“Come and play!”

Today Jesus tells us a story about a man who keeps going out and calling people:

“Come and work in my vineyard.”

Jesus is teaching us something about God.

God keeps calling people to come close to Him.

And He is very generous.

Let us begin with the Sign of the Cross.

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

Opening Prayer

Lord Jesus,
thank You for calling us to know You.

Help us to listen to Your Word.

Teach us to be glad when other people come close to You.

Help us to love You, follow You
and help others discover how good You are.

Amen.

2. Opening Conversation

Ask:

What would you say if Jesus said, “Come and follow Me”?

Allow simple answers.

Then ask:

Does Jesus only want a few people to know Him?

Children:

No!

Explain:

Jesus wants everyone to come to Him.

Children.

Grown-ups.

People who already know Him.

People who hardly know Him at all.

People who have been away from church.

Jesus keeps calling.

3. Gospel — Simplified

Jesus told His disciples a story.

A landowner had a vineyard.

Early in the morning he went out and found some workers.

He said:

“Come and work in my vineyard.”

They went.

Later he went out again and found more people.

He said:

“You come too.”

Later still, he found more people.

And near the end of the day he found some people who had been waiting all day because nobody had hired them.

He said:

“You go into my vineyard too.”

At the end of the day, the landowner was very generous to the workers.

Some of the people who had worked all day became cross because the landowner was generous to those who had arrived later.

The landowner said:

“Have I not been fair to you?

Are you jealous because I am generous?”

Jesus was teaching that God is wonderfully generous.

The Gospel of the Lord.

Children:

Praise to You, Lord Jesus Christ.

4. God Keeps Going Out

Did you notice something about the landowner?

He keeps going out.

Morning.

Later.

Later again.

Almost at the end of the day.

He keeps looking for people.

That tells us something beautiful about God.

God does not easily give up on people.

Perhaps somebody has hardly ever prayed.

God still calls.

Perhaps somebody used to come to Mass but stopped.

God still calls.

Perhaps somebody has done something wrong.

God still calls them to come back.

Jesus wants people in His Kingdom.

5. Built-In Activity 1 — “You Come Too!”

Ask all the children to sit.

Call a few children:

“You come too!”

They stand.

Call some more:

“You come too!”

They stand.

Finally call everyone:

“You come too!”

When everyone is standing, say:

Jesus calls all of us.

Say together:

“Thank You, Jesus, for calling me.”

Sit down.

6. Nobody Is Forgotten

The last workers say:

“No one has hired us.”

Perhaps they thought nobody wanted them.

But the landowner sees them.

He says:

“You go into my vineyard too.”

Nobody was forgotten.

That is like Jesus.

Sometimes a person might feel unimportant.

Perhaps they are lonely.

Perhaps nobody chooses them first.

Perhaps they think nobody notices them.

But God does.

Every person is precious to Him.

Jesus died and rose again for every human soul.

7. God Is Generous

Some workers become cross because the landowner is generous.

They start looking at what everyone else has received.

We can do that too.

“Why did she get that?”

“Why did he get chosen?”

“That is not fair!”

Sometimes we are so busy looking at somebody else’s gift that we forget our own.

But imagine if someone who had never known Jesus began coming to Mass.

Should we say:

“Well, I have been coming for years!”

No.

We should say:

“Thank You, God!”

Another person has discovered Jesus.

That is something to celebrate.

8. Built-In Activity 2 — Glad or Jealous?

Tell the children:

I will give you a situation.

If we should be **glad**, smile and clap once.

If it sounds **jealous**, fold your arms.

“Someone new comes to church.”

Glad!

“My friend gets a lovely present and I am angry because I did not get one.”

Jealous.

“Someone learns how to pray for the first time.”

Glad!

“I want to be the best at everything.”

Jealous.

“Someone comes back to Jesus.”

Very glad!

Explain:

God’s goodness to somebody else does not take His goodness away from us.

9. The First Reading — God Thinks Bigger

In the First Reading, God tells us:

“My thoughts are not your thoughts.”

God sees more than we do.

We might look at somebody and think:

“They will never change.”

God can see what His grace can do.

We might think:

“They have been away from Jesus too long.”

God says:

Come back.

God’s mercy is bigger than ours.

That is why we should never give up praying for people.

10. Saint Paul — Christ Is the Treasure

Saint Paul says something wonderful today:

“For me to live is Christ.”

That means Jesus had become the centre of his whole life.

Saint Paul had discovered that knowing Christ was worth more than anything else.

That helps us understand the workers in the vineyard.

The greatest gift is not simply getting something from the landowner.

The great gift is being invited into his vineyard.

And for us, the greatest gift is Jesus Himself.

We can know Him.

We can pray to Him.

We can hear His Word.

We can belong to His Church.

We can receive His grace.

And when we are ready, we can receive Him in the Holy Eucharist.

What a gift it is to belong to Jesus.

11. Built-In Activity 3 — The Greatest Gift

Leader:

Who is our Saviour?

Children:

Jesus!

Leader:

Who loves us?

Children:

Jesus!

Leader:

Who calls us?

Children:

Jesus!

Leader:

Who is our greatest treasure?

Children:

Jesus!

Repeat:

“Jesus, You are my greatest treasure.”

12. Home Mission Sunday

Today is also **Home Mission Sunday**.

That means we remember especially the mission of sharing Jesus here at home, with people around us.

Mission does not only happen far away.

There may be people in our own street who do not know Jesus.

People at school.

People in our families.

People who have stopped coming to Mass.

We cannot force anybody to believe.

But we can show them that knowing Jesus is something beautiful.

How?

By loving Him ourselves.

By praying.

By being kind.

By speaking naturally about church and our faith.

And sometimes by saying:

“Would you like to come with us?”

The landowner keeps going out and inviting people.

The Church must keep inviting people too.

13. A Simple Story

Imagine a little girl called Grace.

A new girl arrives in her class.

She does not know anyone.

At playtime everyone runs off with their friends.

Grace could simply stay with the people she already knows.

Instead she goes over and says:

“Would you like to play with us?”

That little invitation changes everything.

Sometimes inviting someone towards Jesus can begin just as simply.

“Would you like to come to church?”

“Would you like to come to our parish celebration?”

“I will pray for you.”

We do not have to give a big speech.

We can simply help someone take one small step towards Jesus.

14. Jesus Is Still Calling

Perhaps some of you have known Jesus since you were babies.

What a wonderful gift.

Perhaps somebody else is only just beginning to learn about Him.

That is wonderful too.

We do not say:

“I knew Jesus first.”

We say:

“Come with us.”

There is room in God’s family.

There is room in the Church.

There is room in the vineyard.

Jesus is still calling.

15. Living the Gospel This Week

This week try to:

Thank Jesus for calling you.

Pray for somebody who does not know Jesus very well.

Be welcoming to someone who feels left out.

Be glad when something good happens to another person.

And remember:

Knowing Jesus is a gift worth sharing.

16. Quiet Prayer

Ask the children to become still.

Leader:

Close your eyes.

Imagine Jesus looking at you and saying:

“Come and follow Me.”

Say quietly in your heart:

Jesus, thank You for calling me.

Pause.

Jesus, help me follow You.

Pause.

Think of someone you would like to know Jesus better.

Pause.

Say:

Jesus, please bring them closer to You.

Pause.

Jesus, help me share Your love with others.

Amen.

17. Children's Intercessions

Leader:

Jesus calls everyone to His Kingdom. Trusting in His goodness, let us pray.

For the Church throughout the world, that she may joyfully invite everyone to know and follow Jesus.

Lord, hear us.

For Pope Leo, Bishop Patrick, our priests and deacons, that God may help them bring many people closer to Christ.

Lord, hear us.

On this Home Mission Sunday, for people in our own country who do not know Jesus, that they may meet Catholics who help them discover His love.

Lord, hear us.

For people who used to come to Mass but have stopped, that Jesus may gently call them home.

Lord, hear us.

For our families and parish, that we may be welcoming and glad when new people come among us.

Lord, hear us.

For anyone who feels forgotten or left out, that they may know how precious they are to God.

Lord, hear us.

For people who are sick, worried or sad, that Jesus may comfort them.

Lord, hear us.

For those who have died, that God may forgive them and welcome them into the joy of Heaven.

Lord, hear us.

Let us ask Our Lady, **Queen of Apostles**, to help us bring others to her Son.

Hail Mary...

18. Closing Prayer

Lord Jesus,
thank You for calling us.

Thank You for the gift of our faith.

Help us never to be jealous of Your goodness to others.

Give us generous hearts.

Help us welcome people,
pray for them
and share the joy of knowing You.

Bring many people into Your Church
and one day gather us all
into Your Kingdom in Heaven.

Amen.

19. Sending Back to Mass

Today Jesus told us about the landowner who kept going out and calling:

“You come too.”

Jesus is still calling people today.

He has called us.

And He wants others to know Him too.

As we go back to Mass, remember Saint Paul’s words:

“For me to live is Christ.”

And when you look towards the altar, remember that Jesus is not only someone we talk about.

Jesus is alive.

At Mass He gathers His Church around Him.

And in the Holy Eucharist He is truly present, **Body, Blood, Soul and Divinity.**

Let us go back quietly and joyfully.

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

Additional Activities

Option A — Come Into the Vineyard

Best for younger children.

Children sit around the room.

Call them in small groups:

“Come into the vineyard!”

Each group comes towards the leader.

Finally everyone gathers together.

Say:

Jesus calls everyone to come close to Him.

Option B — The Open Door

Pretend there is a large door.

Ask:

Should we shut the door when someone new wants to know Jesus?

No!

Pretend to open it wide.

Say together:

“Come and meet Jesus!”

Explain:

The Church should help people come through the door towards Christ.

Option C — Invitation Circle

Go around the group.

Each child completes:

“Jesus calls...”

Possible answers:

Me.

My family.

My friends.

Everyone.

Finish together:

“Jesus calls everyone!”

Option D — Happy for Someone Else

Give simple examples.

“Your friend wins a prize.”

“Someone new makes a friend.”

“Someone comes back to Mass.”

“Another child answers the question correctly.”

Ask:

Can I be glad for them?

Yes!

Explain:

A generous heart can enjoy another person's happiness.

Option E — Vineyard Actions

Leader calls:

Morning!

Children pretend to wake up.

Work in the vineyard!

Pretend to pick grapes.

Someone new arrives!

Wave and say:

“Welcome!”

Jesus calls!

Point towards Jesus or a crucifix.

Everyone:

“I will follow!”

Option F — Who Has God Forgotten?

Ask:

Has God forgotten children?

No!

Has God forgotten old people?

No!

Has God forgotten people who have made mistakes?

No!

Has God forgotten people who have stopped coming to church?

No!

Finish:

God keeps calling people back to Himself.

Option G — A Simple Mission Invitation

Practise together:

“Would you like to come with me?”

Explain:

Sometimes sharing our faith can be as simple as inviting somebody.

There is no need to argue.

We invite with kindness.

Option H — Draw the Vineyard

Draw a large vineyard.

Add people arriving at different times.

Write above it:

JESUS CALLS EVERYONE

For older children add:

“You go into my vineyard too.”

Option I — True or False?

God only loves people who have known Him for years.

False.

Jesus wants people to come back to Him.

True.

We should be jealous when someone receives God's mercy.

False.

Knowing Jesus is a wonderful gift.

True.

We can pray for people who do not know Jesus.

True.

The Church has a mission to bring people to Christ.

True.

Option J — Home Mission Prayer

Leader:

Jesus, bless our homes.

Children:

Bring people closer to You.

Jesus, bless our schools.

Bring people closer to You.

Jesus, bless our parish.

Bring people closer to You.

Jesus, bless our country.

Bring people closer to You.

Jesus, use us to share Your love.

Amen.

Memory Lines

For Ages 3 – 5

“Jesus calls me.”

“Jesus loves everyone.”

For Ages 6 – 8

“You go into my vineyard too.”

and:

“For me to live is Christ.”

Final Memory Line

Repeat three times:

Jesus calls us.

Jesus is generous.

We can help others come to Jesus.