

Children's Liturgy of the Word

Twenty-Seventh Sunday in Ordinary Time — Year A

Theme: God Wants Good Fruit to Grow in Us

Gospel: Matthew 21:33–43

Main Message

God loves us and gives us many gifts.

Jesus tells us about a vineyard which was carefully planted and cared for. God wants our lives to be like a good vineyard, growing the good fruit of faith, love and holiness.

Jesus is the cornerstone of our lives. When we stay close to Him, His grace helps good things grow in us.

1. Welcome and Gathering

(Gather the children calmly.)

Leader:

Good morning, everyone.

Have you ever planted something?

Perhaps a flower.

A seed.

A tomato plant.

Or perhaps you have seen someone working in a garden.

If you plant something, do you expect it to grow?

Children:

Yes!

Today the Bible talks a lot about a **vineyard**.

A vineyard is a place where grapes grow.

God tells us that He had done everything to help His vineyard grow well.

Jesus then tells another story about a vineyard.

We are going to discover that God has given us many good things too.

And He wants something beautiful to grow in our lives.

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 loving us.

Thank You for all the good things
You have given us.

Plant Your Word in our hearts.

Help us to grow in faith,
in goodness
and in love.

Keep us close to You
and help our lives bear good fruit.

Amen.

2. Opening Conversation

Ask:

What does a plant need to grow?

Possible answers:

Water.

Sunlight.

Good soil.

Care.

Then ask:

What happens if we plant an apple tree?

Do we hope for apples?

Yes!

A grapevine?

Grapes!

Explain:

God wants something good to grow in us too.

Not apples or grapes!

He wants our hearts and lives to become holy.

3. Gospel — Simplified

Jesus told the people a story.

There was once a man who planted a beautiful vineyard.

He put up a fence to keep it safe.

He built a tower to watch over it.

He made everything ready so that good grapes could grow.

Then he asked some workers to look after the vineyard for him.

After some time, the owner sent one of his servants to collect some of the fruit.

But the workers were cruel to him and sent him away.

So the owner sent another servant.

But the workers were cruel to him too.

Then the owner thought:

“I will send my own son. Surely they will listen to him.”

But when the workers saw the son coming, they did something very wrong.

They rejected him and killed him.

Jesus was telling the people something important.

God had sent many prophets to help His people listen to Him.

Then, at last, God sent His own Son.

That Son is Jesus.

Some people rejected Jesus.

They put Him to death on the Cross.

But that was not the end.

God raised Jesus from the dead.

Jesus then spoke about a stone which builders had thrown away.

That stone became the most important stone in the whole building.

Jesus was teaching us:

He is the cornerstone.

He is the strong foundation.

We build our lives on Him.

The Gospel of the Lord.

Children:

Praise to You, Lord Jesus Christ.

4. God Cares for His Vineyard

In the First Reading, God says that He planted a vineyard.

He chose good ground.

He cleared away stones.

He planted good vines.

He built a tower.

He prepared everything carefully.

Then He waited for good grapes.

This tells us something about God.

God does not forget about His people.

He cares for them.

And God has cared for us too.

He has given us life.

He has given us people who love us.

He has given us His Word.

He has given us the Church.

Most wonderfully, He has given us Jesus.

God has planted many good things in our lives.

5. Built-In Activity 1 — Grow!

Ask the children to crouch down like tiny seeds.

Say:

God gives us His love.

Begin to rise.

God gives us His Word.

Rise a little more.

God gives us grace.

Stand taller.

God gives us Jesus.

Stand up completely and stretch arms out like branches.

Say together:

“Jesus, help me grow!”

6. What Fruit Does God Want?

God does not expect grapes to grow from us!

He wants something much better.

He wants the fruit of a holy life.

When we tell the truth, good fruit is growing.

When we pray, good fruit is growing.

When we forgive, good fruit is growing.

When we help someone, good fruit is growing.

When we obey God, good fruit is growing.

And all of this begins with God's grace.

We do not make ourselves holy without Him.

Jesus helps holiness grow in us.

7. Built-In Activity 2 — Good Fruit or Bad Fruit?

Tell the children:

If I say something which is **good fruit**, pretend to pick a grape.

If it is **bad fruit**, shake your head.

Praying.

Good fruit.

Lying.

Bad fruit.

Sharing.

Good fruit.

Being deliberately cruel.

Bad fruit.

Forgiving.

Good fruit.

Helping someone who is lonely.

Good fruit.

Explain:

Jesus wants good fruit to grow in our hearts.

8. The Tenants Forget Whose Vineyard It Is

The tenants make a terrible mistake.

They begin behaving as though the vineyard belongs to them.

But it does not.

It belongs to the owner.

That teaches us something important.

Everything we have comes from God.

Our life is a gift.

Our talents are gifts.

The world is God's gift.

Even the people we love are gifts.

We should be grateful.

We should not behave as though God has nothing to do with our lives.

We belong to Him.

9. A Simple Illustration — Borrowing Something

Imagine someone lends you a beautiful toy.

They say:

“Please look after this for me.”

Would it be right to say:

“No! It is mine now!”

No.

It was entrusted to you.

Our lives are like that.

God has entrusted them to us.

He wants us to use them well.

That does not make life less beautiful.

It makes life more precious.

10. God Sends His Son

In Jesus' story, the owner finally says:

“I will send my son.”

Jesus is speaking about Himself.

God did not simply send messages from Heaven.

He sent His Son.

Jesus came among us.

He taught us.

He healed.

He forgave sins.

He showed us the Father.

And then people rejected Him.

Jesus died upon the Cross.

But that was not the end.

God raised Jesus from the dead.

The Son who was rejected became the foundation of everything.

11. Jesus the Cornerstone

Jesus says:

“The stone that the builders rejected has become the cornerstone.”

What is a cornerstone?

Long ago, an important stone helped a building stand properly.

If the foundation is wrong, the whole building can become crooked.

Our lives need a strong foundation too.

And our foundation is:

Jesus.

Not money.

Not popularity.

Not always getting what we want.

Jesus Christ.

12. Built-In Activity 3 — Build on Jesus

Ask the children to stand firmly.

Say:

Imagine your feet are standing on a strong rock.

Leader:

Who is our strong foundation?

Children:

Jesus!

Who teaches us the truth?

Jesus!

Who died and rose again for us?

Jesus!

Who helps us reach Heaven?

Jesus!

Finish:

“Jesus, build my life on You.”

13. Saint Paul — What Do We Put Into Our Minds?

Saint Paul says something very beautiful today.

He tells us to think about what is:

true,

good,

pure,

lovely.

Our minds are a little like gardens.

What we keep putting into them can grow.

If we spend all our time thinking angry thoughts, anger can grow.

If we fill our minds with good things, that helps goodness grow.

So we should choose carefully what we watch, listen to and think about.

We can fill our minds with God's Word.

Good stories.

Beautiful music.

Kind thoughts.

Prayer.

Things which help us love what is good.

14. Built-In Activity 4 — What Should Grow?

Leader:

Should truth grow in us?

Children:

Yes!

Kindness?

Yes!

Prayer?

Yes!

Jealousy?

No!

Cruelty?

No!

Love for Jesus?

Yes!

Say together:

“Jesus, grow what is good in me.”

15. What About Worry?

Saint Paul also says:

“Do not be anxious about anything.”

Sometimes we do worry.

Children can worry too.

We might worry about school.

Friends.

Someone being ill.

Something happening at home.

Saint Paul does not tell us to pretend nothing is wrong.

He tells us what to do:

Pray.

Tell God what is worrying you.

You can say:

“Jesus, I am worried about this. Please help me.”

God may not make every problem disappear immediately.

But He stays with us.

And He can give us His peace.

16. Built-In Activity 5 — Give the Worry to Jesus

Ask the children to close one hand tightly.

Say:

Imagine you are holding a worry.

Now tell Jesus quietly what it is.

Pause.

Open the hand slowly.

Say together:

“Jesus, I give this to You.”

Then:

“Jesus, give me Your peace.”

17. The Sacraments Help Us Grow

A garden needs water.

Our souls need grace.

Jesus gives us grace through His Church.

At Baptism we receive new life in Christ.

When we are old enough, in Confession Jesus forgives our sins and helps us begin again.

And in the Holy Eucharist, Jesus gives Himself to us.

The Sacraments are not simply things Catholics do.

They are ways Jesus acts in our lives.

He is helping His vineyard grow.

18. A Simple Story

Imagine Sophie plants a strawberry plant.

Every morning she looks at it.

On Monday:

Nothing.

Tuesday:

Nothing.

Wednesday:

Still no strawberry.

She might think:

“This is useless!”

But plants often grow slowly.

Then one day she notices a tiny flower.

Later a small green strawberry appears.

Then eventually it becomes red.

Our life with Jesus can be like that.

We may not become saints in one day.

We pray.

We go to Mass.

We learn to forgive.

We try again after mistakes.

And slowly, with God’s grace, good fruit grows.

Holiness often grows quietly.

19. Living the Gospel This Week

This week try to remember:

Thank God for something every day.

Choose something good to put into your mind.

Do one kind thing without being asked.

When you worry, tell Jesus.

And every morning pray:

“Jesus, help good fruit grow in me today.”

20. Quiet Prayer

Ask the children to become still.

Leader:

Close your eyes.

Imagine Jesus looking at your heart like a little garden.

Ask Him:

“Jesus, what good thing do You want to grow in me?”

Pause.

Perhaps kindness.

Perhaps patience.

Perhaps courage.

Perhaps prayer.

Now say quietly:

“Jesus, help me grow.”

Pause.

“Jesus, take away what is bad.”

Pause.

“Jesus, make my heart fruitful.”

Pause.

“Jesus, keep me close to You.”

Amen.

21. Children’s Intercessions

Leader:

God has given us so many gifts. Trusting in His goodness, let us pray.

For the Church throughout the world, that she may bear good fruit and lead many people to Jesus.

Lord, hear us.

For Pope Leo, Bishop Patrick, our priests and deacons, that God may help them care faithfully for His vineyard.

Lord, hear us.

For our families, that our homes may be places where faith, prayer and kindness grow.

Lord, hear us.

For children who are worried or frightened, that Jesus may give them His peace.

Lord, hear us.

For people who have forgotten God or turned away from Him, that they may come back to Jesus.

Lord, hear us.

For those who are sick, lonely or sad, that they may know how much God cares for them.

Lord, hear us.

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

Lord, hear us.

Let us ask Our Lady to help us remain close to Jesus and bear good fruit for Him.

Hail Mary...

22. Closing Prayer

Lord Jesus,
thank You for all You have given us.

Thank You for Your Word,
Your Church
and Your grace.

Help us to build our lives on You.

Grow in us
what is true,
good and holy.

When we are worried,
teach us to pray.

And help our lives
bear beautiful fruit for God.

Amen.

23. Sending Back to Mass

Today we heard about a vineyard.

God had cared for it and wanted good fruit.

God cares for us too.

He wants good fruit to grow in our lives.

And Jesus told us:

“The stone that the builders rejected has become the cornerstone.”

Jesus is our cornerstone.

As we return to Mass, look towards the altar.

Remember:

Jesus died and rose again for us.

He is the foundation of our faith.

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

Let us return quietly and ask:

“Jesus, help me grow close to You.”

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

Additional Activity Options

Option A — Fruit Basket

Pretend to place fruit in an imaginary basket.

For each good action add a piece of fruit:

Prayer.

Kindness.

Forgiveness.

Truthfulness.

Helping.

Obedience.

Finish:

“Jesus, help my life bear good fruit.”

Option B — Vineyard Actions

Leader:

Dig the soil!

Children pretend to dig.

Plant the vine!

Pretend to plant.

Water it!

Pretend to water.

See the grapes!

Point excitedly.

Thank God!

Everyone:

“Thank You, God!”

Option C — Build on the Rock

Place a Bible or crucifix where everyone can see it.

Ask:

What should our life be built upon?

Jesus!

Our family?

Jesus!

Our parish?

Jesus!

Our faith?

Jesus!

Finish:

Jesus Christ is our cornerstone.

Option D — Good Thought or Bad Thought?

Say:

“I want to help.”

Good.

“I hope they fail.”

Bad.

“Jesus loves me.”

Good.

“I will never forgive.”

Bad.

“I can pray when I am worried.”

Good.

Explain:

Saint Paul teaches us to fill our minds with what is true and good.

Option E — Thankfulness Round

Each child names one good thing God has given them.

For younger children give examples:

Family.

Food.

Home.

Church.

Friends.

Jesus.

After each answer say:

“Thank You, God.”

Option F — Give Jesus the Worry

Children pretend to hold something tightly.

Say:

Tell Jesus your worry quietly.

Then open the hands.

Say:

“Jesus, I trust You.”

Option G — What Fruit Is Growing?

Leader asks:

If I forgive, what fruit is growing?

Love!

If I tell the truth?

Goodness!

If I pray?

Faith!

If I help?

Kindness!

Finish:

God’s grace helps good fruit grow.

Option H — True or False?

God forgot about His vineyard.

False.

God cares for His people.

True.

Jesus is the Son sent by the Father.

True.

Jesus stayed dead after the Cross.

False.

Jesus is our cornerstone.

True.

Prayer can help us when we worry.

True.

The Sacraments give us grace.

True.

Option I — Draw the Vineyard

Draw a large vine.

On the grapes write or draw:

PRAYER

LOVE

TRUTH

KINDNESS

FORGIVENESS

Write underneath:

Jesus helps good fruit grow in me.

Option J — Cornerstone Echo Prayer

Leader:

Jesus, You are—

Children:

Our cornerstone!

Help us build—

On You!

Help us grow—

In holiness!

Help us bear—

Good fruit!

Keep us close—

To You!

Amen.

Memory Lines

Ages 3 – 5

“Jesus helps me grow.”

“Jesus is my strong foundation.”

Ages 6 – 8

“The stone that the builders rejected has become the cornerstone.”

and:

“Whatever is true, whatever is honourable, whatever is just, whatever is pure... think about these things.”

Final Memory Line

Repeat three times:

God cares for His vineyard.

Jesus is our cornerstone.

Jesus helps good fruit grow in us.