

We Belong to God

Twenty-Ninth Sunday in Ordinary Time, Year A

Isaiah 45:1, 4–6 • 1 Thessalonians 1:1–5b • Matthew 22:15–21

For children aged approximately 3–8

Main message: A coin may carry the image of a king, but **we carry the image of God**. We belong to Him, and He should come first in our lives.

1. Welcome

Gather the children and say:

Today Jesus is shown a coin.

He asks a very simple question:

“Whose picture is on it?”

And from that little coin, Jesus teaches something enormous about who we are.

Begin together:

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

Opening Prayer

Lord Jesus,
thank You for making us and loving us.
Help us listen to Your Word today.
Teach us to put God first
and to remember that we belong to Him.
Amen.

2. Look at a Coin

If possible, hold up an ordinary coin.

Ask:

What is this?

A coin.

What can we see on it?

A picture.

Writing.

Numbers.

Ask:

If we saw somebody's picture on a coin, what might that tell us?

It might tell us whose kingdom or country the coin comes from.

Now say:

Jesus is going to use a coin to teach us something much more important.

The coin has someone's image on it.

But you have an image on you too.

Not a picture that we can see with our eyes.

The Bible tells us that every human person is made **in the image of God**.

That means every person is precious.

And it means:

We belong to God.

3. The Gospel — Matthew 22:15 – 21

Say:

Some people wanted to catch Jesus out.

They asked Him a difficult question about paying money to the ruler.

They hoped that whatever Jesus answered would cause trouble.

But Jesus knew what they were doing.

He said:

“Show me the coin.”

They brought Him one.

Jesus asked:

“Whose image is this?”

They answered:

“Caesar’s.”

Caesar was the ruler.

Then Jesus said:

“Give to Caesar what belongs to Caesar, and give to God what belongs to God.”

The Gospel of the Lord.

Praise to You, Lord Jesus Christ.

4. What Does Jesus Mean?

Say:

Jesus teaches us that there are things we should do because we live together in a country and a community.

We should obey good rules.

We should respect other people.

We should help make the place where we live better.

But there is something much bigger.

Jesus says:

“Give to God what belongs to God.”

So what belongs to God?

Ask the children.

Then say:

We do.

The coin carried Caesar’s image.

We carry **God’s image**.

God made us.

God loves us.

God gave us our life.

So we should never let anything become more important than Him.

5. “Who Comes First?” Activity

Tell the children:

I am going to say some things.

If you think they show **God coming first**, point upwards.

If not, gently shake your head.

Praying before bed.

Point upwards.

Being cruel because everybody else is doing it.

Shake head.

Coming to Mass on Sunday.

Point upwards.

Telling the truth even when it is difficult.

Point upwards.

Pretending we do not know Jesus because we are embarrassed.

Shake head.

Helping somebody because they are made in God’s image too.

Point upwards.

Finish:

Putting God first changes the way we treat other people.

6. Made in God’s Image

Say:

Imagine someone gives you a photograph of somebody they love very much.

Would you scribble all over it?

Would you stamp on it?

Hopefully not.

Why?

Because the picture represents someone important.

Every person is much more precious than a photograph.

Every person is made in the image of God.

The child who is your best friend.

The child who annoys you.

The person who looks different from you.

The elderly person.

The poor person.

The person nobody seems to notice.

All made in God's image.

That is one reason Catholics believe every human life is precious.

We cannot say we love God while treating His image badly in other people.

7. Isaiah — God Is Lord of Everything

Say:

In the first reading, God speaks to a powerful ruler called Cyrus.

Cyrus was a king.

But even kings are not greater than God.

God says:

“I am the Lord, and there is no other.”

That means no king, government, famous person, footballer, celebrity or anybody else should take God's place.

People may have authority.

But only God is God.

8. Saint Paul — Faith That Can Be Seen

Saint Paul thanks God for the Christians in Thessalonica.

He remembers their:

“work of faith, labour of love and steadfastness of hope.”

Explain:

Their faith was not something they only talked about.

You could see it in the way they lived.

That is important for us too.

If we belong to God, something should begin to show.

Faith helps us do good.

Love helps us serve.

Hope helps us keep going.

9. A Little Story

Say:

Imagine you have written your name very carefully on your lunchbox.

Then someone picks it up and says:

“This belongs to me.”

You might say:

“Hang on. My name is on it!”

Now imagine God saying something much greater about us:

“My image is on you. You belong to Me.”

Not because God wants to take something away from us.

Because He loves us.

Belonging to God means being loved by the One who made us.

It means knowing where we come from.

It means knowing where our life is going.

And through Baptism, we belong to Christ in a special way.

We are marked as His.

10. Baptism

Say:

At Baptism, something wonderful happens.

We become children of God.

We are joined to Jesus.

Original sin is washed away.

We receive God's grace.

That means that when Jesus says:

"Give to God what belongs to God,"

we can remember:

I belong to God.

My life belongs to Him.

My Sunday belongs to Him.

My choices belong to Him.

My love belongs to Him.

And God does not leave us alone.

He gives us grace to live as His children.

11. The Mass

Ask:

Where will we go when Children's Liturgy finishes?

Back to Mass.

At Mass, we give something to God.

We give Him our prayer.

Our praise.

Our attention.

Our hearts.

But God gives us far more.

Jesus gives Himself to us in the Holy Eucharist.

The bread and wine become **His Body and Blood, Soul and Divinity.**

So Mass reminds us who comes first.

God.

And it reminds us who we belong to.

Christ.

12. Quiet Prayer

Ask the children to put their hands together.

Say slowly:

Lord Jesus,
I belong to You.

Thank You for making me.

Thank You for loving me.

Help me to put God first.

Help me to see Your image in other people.

Help me to live as Your child.

Amen.

Pause for a few moments of silence.

13. Children's Intercessions

Leader:

Because we belong to God and He loves us, we bring Him our prayers.

For the Church: **that she may help people everywhere know that they are loved by God.
Lord, hear us.**

For those who lead our country: **that they may make good and just decisions and protect those who are weak.
Lord, hear us.**

For our families: **that our homes may be places where God is loved and prayer is part of everyday life.
Lord, hear us.**

For people who are lonely, sick, poor or forgotten: **that they may be treated with the dignity of people made in God's image.**

Lord, hear us.

For those who have died: **that God may welcome them into the joy of Heaven.**

Lord, hear us.

14. Our Lady

Say:

Our Lady knew completely that she belonged to God.

She gave Him her whole life.

Let us ask her to help us put God first.

Together:

**Hail Mary, full of grace,
the Lord is with thee...**

15. Closing Prayer

God our Father,
You made us in Your image
and called us to belong to You.

Help us to love You,
to put You first,
and to recognise Your image in every person we meet.

Keep us close to Jesus
and lead us safely to Heaven.

Through Christ our Lord.
Amen.

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

Returning to Mass

Before returning to church, say:

Jesus said:

“Give to God what belongs to God.”

As we go back to Mass, remember:

We belong to God.

Listen carefully.

Pray with everyone.

Look towards the altar.

And remember that the God who made us in His image will give us His greatest gift:

Jesus Himself.

Optional Activity Swaps

Option 1 — The Coin

Pass around or show a coin.

Ask:

Whose image is on the coin?

Then point gently towards the children:

Whose image is on you?

Answer together:

“God’s!”

Then:

“Who do we belong to?”

“God!”

Option 2 — Mirror Activity

If a safe mirror is available, let children briefly look into it.

Say:

When you look into a mirror, you see yourself.

But God sees something more.

He sees someone made in His image.

Each child can say:

“God made me and loves me.”

Option 3 — What Belongs to God?

Ask children to finish the sentence:

“My _____ belongs to God.”

Possible answers:

My life.

My heart.

My Sunday.

My choices.

My gifts.

My prayer.

Then say:

Everything good we have comes from God, so we use His gifts well and give Him first place.

Option 4 — God First

Ask:

“What might make us forget God?”

Let children suggest things.

Games.

Television.

Being busy.

Sports.

Phones or tablets.

Then say:

Those things are not necessarily bad.

But none of them is God.

Good things should never push out the greatest good.

Memory Lines

Choose one:

“We belong to God.”

or

“I am made in the image of God.”

or

“God comes first.”

For older children:

“Give to God what belongs to God — and I belong to Him.”