# Children’s liturgy: Thirtieth Sunday in Ordinary Time (Year C)

## Preparation of the worship space

Colour: green
Props: coloured pens and pencils, balloons, jars and water

## Song suggestions

All that I am (600, Laudate)

## Welcome

Today Jesus tells us a story about a Pharisee and a Tax Collector which teaches us how to pray and have a good heart. Let’s hear more.

## Opening prayer

Merciful God, you know us through and through, and you forgive us when we have done wrong. Help us to know when we have made a mistake and to come to you in prayer each day. Amen.

## First reading: Ecclesiasticus 35: 12-14, 16-19

## Psalm: Psalm 32:2-3, 17-19, 23 R. v. 7

## Gospel acclamation: *everyone stands and sings the acclamation together.*

## Gospel: Luke 18: 9-14

Jesus also told this parable to people who were sure of their own goodness and despised everybody else. “Once there were two men who went up to the Temple to pray: one was a Pharisee, the other a tax collector.

The Pharisee stood apart by himself and prayed, ‘I thank you, God, that I am not greedy, dishonest, or an adulterer, like everybody else. I thank you that I am not like that tax collector over there. I fast two days a week, and I give you a tenth of all my income.’

But the tax collector stood at a distance and would not even raise his face to heaven, but beat on his breast and said, ‘God, have pity on me, a sinner!’ I tell you,” said Jesus, “the tax collector and not the Pharisee, was in the right with God when he went home. For those who make themselves great will be humbled, and those who humble themselves will be made great.”

*(Gospel passage taken from Good News Translation® and used with permission, see details below\*)*

## Gospel reflection

What do you remember from today’s reading?

The Pharisee goes to the Temple to pray, but what does he say and how does he feel?

The Pharisee is full of pride. He thinks he’s brilliant, that he’s done everything right and that God must love him very much.

Then a tax collector comes to pray. But what does he say and how does he feel?

The tax collector is humble and sorry. He know that he has done wrong and he asks God for forgiveness.

Jesus wanted the Pharisees (religious leaders) and us, to understand that the things that we say when we pray are not as important as what is in our hearts, what we’re thinking and feeling deep down.

The Pharisees thought that the way to enter God’s Kingdom was by keeping a lot of rules and by making new rules. The Pharisees thought that all the people who didn’t keep their rules were bad and unacceptable to God.

There is nothing wrong with rules. Every family, school, church and organisation has them. We need rules. I’m sure that you have rules at home. Does anyone want to share one of their home rules? What about school rules? Who wants to share a rule that you have in your class?

Why do you think we need some rules in life? Rules are here to guide us and help us not to hurt ourselves or others. Rules should help us to keep ourselves safe and to think about what other people need. We should always care about other people.

Yet, there is something wrong with thinking we are better than other people, just because we keep the rules. We all do things wrong sometimes. We need to own up, say sorry and accept that although others are different to us, they are still loved by God.

The two men behaved very differently in the temple that day, didn’t they? The Pharisee was proud and thought he knew better than other people. The tax collector knew that he was no better than anyone else and that only God could give him the forgiveness and mercy he needed.

The Pharisee judged the tax collector. He thought the tax collector wasn’t as good as he was. But we are all equal and special in the eyes of God, who loves us all.

No matter who we are, where we come from, the colour of our skin, whether we are rich or poor, tall or short, we are special to God. God loves us all very much.

This week try not to judge others because they are different to you. Try to treat all people you meet with kindness and respect. Also think about the things that you could do better, say sorry to God for the times you get things wrong and ask God to help you to get them right next time. God is always ready to listen and to forgive us when we say sorry.

## Intercessions: *You may want to ask the children to offer their own prayers or you can use the suggestions below.*

Let us pray together to God for mercy and forgiveness:

We pray for the Church: that it may share God’s love and forgiveness with all. Lord in your mercy…

We pray for our sisters and brothers throughout the world: that they may all be treated with respect and love no matter who they are and where they come from. Lord in your mercy…

We pray for our parish, family and friends: that we may recognise our own mistakes and do our best to show love and kindness to all. Lord in your mercy…

In this Jubilee Year, we pray that we may be signs of hope in our world through all that we do and how we treat one another. Lord in your mercy…

## Closing prayer

All-powerful God, help us to know when we are being proud or when we have forgotten to be forgiving towards others. Help us to do what is pleasing to you. Amen.

## Activity suggestions

Invite the children to colour in the accompanying illustration and to write on the back their own prayer to God.

Encourage the children to draw their own Pharisee and Tax collector and then to draw what they think pride looks like and what they think mercy looks like.

Invite the children to blow up some balloons and draw faces on them with a pen. Then show the children that the balloons represent the Pharisee – all inflated and puffed up with pride. Hold the balloons up so that the Pharisee is higher than them and looking down on them from above. He thinks he’s better than everyone. Then show the children that the empty jars represent the tax collector. He needs Jesus to fill his heart and make him whole again. Encourage the children to pour water into each of the jars. The water represents forgiveness (just like in baptism) and makes the empty jars full up. It is Jesus who fills us up, not our own puffed up air.

Remind the children to share all that they have heard and thought about in the liturgy today with the people at home. If they have written a prayer, encourage them to say it at home with others during the week. Ask them to try not to judge others who are different in the coming week and to show love and kindness to everyone they meet. Remind them to say sorry to God when they make the wrong choices and to remember that everyone makes mistakes sometimes.

\*Gospel passage taken from:

Good News Translation® (Today’s English Version, Second Edition)

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