



Children's liturgy – Twenty Fourth Sunday in Ordinary Time

Welcome: Today Jesus talks about forgiveness – about how God is always ready to forgive us if we say sorry. And about how we should try to forgive others if they say sorry to us. Let's think a bit more about this today.

Opening prayer: Merciful God, we are truly sorry for the things that we have done wrong. Forgive us and help us to try to forgive others as your son Jesus teaches us. Amen.

Gospel: Matthew 18:21-35

Then Peter came to Jesus and asked, "Lord, if my brother keeps on sinning against me, how many times do I have to forgive him? Seven times?"

"No, not seven times," answered Jesus, "but seventy times seven, because the Kingdom of heaven is like this. Once there was a king who decided to check on his servants' accounts. He had just begun to do so when one of them was brought in who owed him millions of pounds. The servant did not have enough to pay his debt, so the king ordered him to be sold as a slave, with his wife and his children and all that he had, in order to pay the debt. The servant fell on his knees before the king. 'Be patient with me,' he begged, 'and I will pay you everything!' The king felt sorry for him, so he forgave him the debt and let him go.

"Then the man went out and met one of his fellow servants who owed him a few pounds. He grabbed him and started choking him. 'Pay back what you owe me!' he said. His fellow-servant fell down and begged him, 'Be patient with me, and I will pay you back!' But he refused; instead, he had him thrown into jail until he should pay the debt. When the other servants saw what had happened, they were very upset and went to the king and told him everything. So he called the servant in. 'You worthless slave!' he said. 'I forgave you the whole amount you owed me, just because you asked me to. You should have had mercy on your fellow-servant, just as I had mercy on you.' The king was very angry, and he sent the servant to jail to be punished until he should pay back the whole amount."

And Jesus concluded, "That is how my Father in heaven will treat every one of you unless you forgive your brother from your heart."

Gospel reflection: What do you remember from today's reading?

Peter asks Jesus how many times he should forgive someone. What does Jesus answer?

Jesus says that Peter should forgive someone not just seven times, but seventy times seven. That's 490 times!

That's a lot isn't it! Do you think Jesus wants us to count how many times we forgive someone? What happens if we forgive them more than 490 times?

Jesus chose seventy times seven because it was a really big number – he is saying to Peter that there should be no end to our forgiveness, just like there is no end to God's forgiveness. If someone is truly sorry and tries to change then we should try to forgive them.

Then Jesus tells Peter a story to show what he means. Can you remember what happens in the story?

A servant owes the king lots of money and cannot pay it back. So the king decides to punish him. But the servant asks the king to be patient and he will pay back all the money he owes. What does the king say?

The king agrees to be patient. How do you think the servant felt when he heard this?

But when the servant meets someone else who owes him money, what does he do?

Even though the second servant says he will pay, he is shown no mercy. The first servant has him thrown into prison.

What does the king say when he hears about this? The king is very cross and punishes the first servant. He wanted the servant to act with mercy, just as the king had done for him.

Who do you think the king in this story is meant to be? And who is the first servant?

The king is God – who is always ready to be patient, merciful and forgiving with us if we ask, and if we try to change our ways.

The servant is like us – we sometimes find it hard to change our ways, to stop doing what we know is wrong.

Can you think of a time when you have been forgiven? How did you feel?

Can you think of a time when someone has said sorry and said that they would not do it again, and you found it hard to forgive? Why was it hard? How did you feel?

Can you think of a time when someone has said sorry and tried to change and you did forgive them? How did you feel then?

How can we help other people to see that what they are doing is wrong and that they need to make a change?

This week let's try our best to make a change in the way we treat other people, to say sorry when we have done something wrong, and to forgive and help others make a change in the way they behave.

Activity

Colour in the accompanying illustration and write or draw on the back what you will do the next time someone asks you for forgiveness.

Think about something that you have done wrong. How can you make a change so that in the future you can try to be better? Say sorry to God quietly in your heart and say sorry to the other person out loud in the coming week.

Discuss all that you have heard and thought about today with your grown ups at home. Look out for things that you know are wrong in the coming week. Can you find a way to change the situation, so that the world is better for everyone?

Twenty-fourth Sunday in Ordinary Time
Gospel: Matthew 18:21-35

