

# Children's Sermons

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Note: In the September, October, November 2009 trimester, all texts are appropriate for any denomination following the Revised Common Lectionary, including Lutheran.

In this issue, the activity will follow the gospel sermon for each date. This is due to the new binding, which does not allow a pull-out section.

This issue of CSS Plus! was written entirely by Leah Thompson, a professional writing student at Ohio Northern University in Ada, Ohio. She is originally from Van Wert, Ohio, where she graduated from Van Wert High School in 2007. Leah plans to graduate from ONU with her bachelor's degree and start a career in the field of publishing. In her free time, Leah is a trumpet teacher and a pianist. Leah is a member of Trinity Evangelical Lutheran Church in Convoy, Ohio.

Rebecca K. Allen, Managing Editor

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Proper 18

Mercy, mercy, mercy

September 6, 2009 James 2:1-10 (11-13) 14-17

Mercy

“For judgment will be without mercy to anyone who has shown no mercy; mercy triumphs over judgment.” (v. 13)

Object: gavel

(Bang gavel) Order in the court! Good morning, boys and girls! How many of you know what this is? (show gavel, allow answers) This is called a gavel. It is what judges use at court so that they can get the people in the court to be quiet or to settle down. In the courts, judges and juries pass judgment on the people who come to court. Who can tell me what judgment is? (allow answers) When you pass judgment on people, you decide who is good and who is bad. Have you ever had someone pass judgment on you? (allow answers) Maybe one of your parents had to pass judgment on what to do if you break their rules. When your parents pass judgment on what to do if you break rules, they want to be fair.

If you break a rule, you should have consequences. Do you know what consequences are? (allow answers) Consequences are things that happen because we choose to do something or to not do something. Consequences of not doing our chores might be not getting any dessert. Our parents know that there are consequences for not doing what we are supposed to do. But at the same time, our parents use mercy when they pass judgment on us. Do you know what mercy is? (allow answers)

Here’s an example of mercy: Let’s say you owe your parents ten dollars, but you don’t have ten dollars. Your parents could say, “You have to pay us right now!” or they could take away something else instead of ten dollars. That would be fair, right? You owe them ten dollars, so they either take ten dollars or they take something that is worth ten dollars. Your parents might not do that. Instead, they could show you mercy. Instead of taking something else, they might say, “That’s okay, you can pay us later.” That is showing mercy. It’s not really fair to your parents — after all, you promised to pay them! — but it is the forgiving thing to do.

God wants us to be merciful to other people. Our Bible verse today tells us that “mercy triumphs over judgment.” That means we should be fair when we pass judgment, but we should also be merciful whenever we can. What are some ways we can be merciful to other people? (allow answers) There are lots of ways to show

mercy to other people. Maybe one of our friends says something mean. What should you do? (allow answers) To be merciful, you should forgive them and move on. Don't say mean things back to them. It's better to be kind than to get even. God was merciful to us when he sent his Son, Jesus, to die for our sins. Just as God was merciful, we should be merciful in small ways to the people around us. Amen.

Proper 18

Strong medicine

September 6, 2009 Mark 7:24-37

Healing

"And immediately his ears were opened, his tongue was released, and he spoke plainly." (v. 35)

Object: medicine

Good morning, boys and girls! How many of you have been sick before? (allow answers) Have you ever had to take medicine like this? (allow answers, show medicine) Most of us have had to take medicine when we were sick. Medicine helps us get better when we are sick.

There are some problems that medicine can't heal. What are some things that medicine can't heal? (allow answers) Medicine cannot heal people who are blind or deaf. There are some medical problems that we just don't know how to heal.

Today's gospel talks about a man who is deaf and mute. Who knows what happens when you are "mute"? (allow answers) A person who is mute is a person who can't speak. The man in the gospel cannot hear and he cannot speak! What are some things that you couldn't do if you were deaf and mute? (allow answers) You could not talk to your friends and family. You could not listen to music or to the radio. How would you communicate with others if you were deaf and mute? (allow answers) You might write notes to people so that they could read what you want to say. You might use sign language to tell them things.

In Jesus' time, most people couldn't write. How would the deaf and mute man communicate? (allow answers) He could try to use sign language, but people who didn't know sign language would not be able to understand him. This was a big problem for the man! He couldn't communicate with anyone, and there was no medicine strong enough to cure him.

This story has a happy ending. Doctors did not know a cure for deafness or muteness, but someone did! That someone was Jesus! In the gospel story, it says that Jesus put his fingers in the deaf man's ears, touched the deaf man's tongue, and asked God to let the man hear and speak. Do you know what happened? (allow answers) The man could hear! The man could speak! Jesus performed a miracle for the deaf and blind man by asking God for help.

This story shows us that Jesus is stronger medicine than anything the doctors can prescribe. This does not mean that we should ignore the medicine that doctors prescribe us. In many cases, doctors' medicine does work! But

while we are taking our medicine, we should also remember to pray for Jesus to be with us and to help us through our illness. Just because we pray doesn't mean that we will automatically get better, but prayer is still important. It reminds us that Jesus is with us, no matter what happens. Amen.

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Proper 18 September 6, 2009

Strong medicine

Mark 7:24-37

Healing

SHARING THIS WEEK'S GOSPEL THEME AT SUNDAY SCHOOL AND AT HOME

Materials:

Knee socks or tube socks\* (one sock per child) Long white grain rice (no minute rice or brown rice) Rubber bands  
For older children only: needle and thread

Directions:

1. Give each of the children a sock. 2. Have the children fill the sock about  $\frac{3}{4}$  full of rice. 3. Have the children secure the open end of sock with a rubber band. 4. If you are working with older children, have them fold the end over several times and whipstitch the end closed. 5. Use the rice bag when your head or neck hurts: put the rice bag in the microwave on high for a minute or two until it is warm, then put it around your neck. It may be used as a foot warmer. \*Make sure the socks are 100% cotton. An alternative to using socks is making a long tube of 100% cotton fabric, stitched closed at one end, for each child.

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## Proper 19

## Speak no evil

September 13, 2009 James 3:1-12

## Bad words

“From the same mouth come blessing and cursing. My brothers and sisters, this ought not to be so.” (v. 10)

## Object: duct tape

Good morning, boys and girls! How many of you have ever said a bad word? (show of hands) Don't tell me what it is! How many of you have heard someone else say a bad word? (show of hands) Sometimes people forget to watch their tongues, and curse words slip out. Sometimes my mom used to threaten to cover my mouth with this stuff (show duct tape) if I said bad words. What is this? (allow answers) That's right — it's duct tape! My mom said that if I couldn't say anything nice, I just shouldn't say anything at all. Have you ever heard that? “If you can't say anything nice, don't say anything at all”? (allow answers)

That is a popular saying, and that saying is what our Bible verse today talks about. Our Bible verse says, “From the same mouth come blessing and cursing. My brothers and sisters, this ought not to be so.” The Bible tells us that we should not say bad words, because we use that same mouth to say good words in praise of God.

Have you ever helped your mom in the kitchen? When you are cooking, do you use the same bowl to make salad as you use to make cookies? (allow answers) Not without washing it first! If you don't wash that bowl, your salad might taste like chocolate chip cookies, or your cookies might taste like lettuce and salad dressing. Yuck! Using curse words is kind of the same thing. When we say words of praise, we don't want them to come from the same mouth that uses curse words! Yuck!

Instead, we always need to watch our tongues. We must remember to use kind words when we speak. What are kind words that we can use? (allow answers) We should be careful not to let our anger get away from us. When we feel like shouting curse words or angry words, what can we do? (allow answers) Some people count to ten when they feel angry. Instead of letting bad words come out of their mouths, they keep quiet and count “one ... two ... three ... four ...” all the way to ten. That way, they can take some time to calm down. After they calm down, they realize that they don't have to say those bad words.

We can't help it when we get so angry that we want to say bad words. However, we can always choose not to say those bad words. God wants us to use good words whether we are praising him or talking to other people. He wants us to set an example for people by doing what's right and using good words.

Next time you get angry, slow down and count to ten. Remember this duct tape. If you can't say anything nice, don't say anything at all. Amen.



## Proper 19

## Soul for a soul

September 13, 2009 Mark 8:27-38

## Souls

“Indeed, what can they give in return for their life?” (v. 37)

Object: American and foreign dollars

Good morning, boys and girls! How many of you have been to another country? (allow answers) How many of you know someone who has been to another country? (allow answers) It’s fun to travel to different places, but there are a lot of things that you have to do before you go. What are some things that people might have to do before they go to another country? (allow answers) Before you go to another country, you have to get a passport and pack your luggage. There is another very important thing you have to do before you go to another country. You have to change your money.

Do any of you know what it means to change money? (allow answers) When you change your money, you trade American money for the money of the country you are going to. (show money) If you are going to Europe, you trade American dollars for euros. If you are going to England, you trade American dollars for British pounds. When you change money, you will always get the same amount, but that is not always the same number of dollars. For example, if you are changing an American dollar for a Canadian dollar, you might get one Canadian dollar for every two American dollars. Does that sound fair? (allow answers)

You get one dollar back for paying two because of something called the exchange rate. One American dollar may be worth the same as half of one Canadian dollar. If you buy something in Canada that costs one Canadian dollar, you would have to pay two American dollars. The American dollar and the Canadian dollar are not worth the same amount.

Exchanging money is complicated. The exchange rate changes often, and

there are people whose job it is to figure out exchange rates. Our Bible verse today

talks about exchanges. It asks, “What can they give in return for their life?”

What is the most expensive thing you can think of? (allow answers) How many of those very expensive things do you think it would take to equal the cost of one life? (allow answers) There is no number big enough! Nothing is equal to the value of someone’s life.

When we travel to other countries, there is an exchange rate that lets us know how much our money is worth in another place. But there is no exchange rate when it comes to our lives or our souls. God has made each of us so precious there is nothing we can trade for ourselves. Every single one of us is more precious than a huge

mansion or expensive jewelry. We are all precious to God, and he would not trade us for anything in the world.  
Amen.

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Proper 19 September 13, 2009

Soul for a soul

Mark 8:27-38

Souls

SHARING THIS WEEK'S GOSPEL THEME AT SUNDAY SCHOOL AND AT HOME

Materials:

Monopoly money "Prizes" — candy, snacks, small stuffed animals, etc.

Directions:

1. Price the prizes. The children will use Monopoly money to bargain for the prizes. 2. Make some children "shopkeepers." They will "sell" the prizes. 3. Give all the other children equal amounts of Monopoly money, but do not give each child the same denominations. 4. Shopkeepers may not make change. The children must trade with each other to make change. 5. The children may resell prizes to others. 6. Shopkeepers may buy prizes with their money. 7. Have the children play this "exchange" game. Make the point that we can trade many things for money, but we cannot trade our souls for money or prizes. \*At the end, the children may take their prizes home.

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Proper 20

Planting peace

September 20, 2009 James 3:13 — 4:3, 7-8a

Peace

“And a harvest of righteousness is sown in peace for those who make peace.”

(v. 18) Object: John Deere baseball cap

Good morning, boys and girls! How many of you recognize this cap? (put on John Deere cap) This is a John Deere cap. John Deere is a tractor company. Farmers use John Deere tractors to plant and harvest their crops. Do any of you know someone who is a farmer? (allow answers) We need farmers to grow the food that we eat.

Do any of you know when farmers plant their crops? (allow answers) Farmers plant their crops in the springtime. Farmers who sow, or plant, their crops in the spring will harvest a healthy crop at the end of the summer. Their plants will get rain in the spring to help them sprout and heat in the summer to help them grow.

Plants can't grow well if they aren't planted at the right time or in the right place. You can't plant crops in cement or in the snow. Where else can't you plant crops? (allow answers) The only good place to plant crops is in dirt. Farmers call dirt "soil." Soil is dirt that is full of the vitamins and minerals that help crops grow. How many of you take vitamins? (allow answers) We take vitamins to help us stay strong and healthy. Plants need soil with vitamins and minerals so that they can stay healthy, too.

If crops aren't planted in just the right conditions, they will not grow. And that's a big problem for us! We need to grow crops so that we can eat! Farmers are the people who make it their job to choose the best time to plant their crops. Farmers deserve a lot of thanks!

The Bible talks about farming a lot. Even back in Bible times, farmers were very important. There were lots of farmers in Bible times, so people knew what Jesus was talking about when he told them about farming. Our Bible verse today uses farming to talk about peace. It says, "And a harvest of righteousness is sown in peace for those who make peace." This verse isn't really talking about plants, though. This verse is talking about being a good person. God wants us to be "peacemakers" in our lives. Peacemakers are people who try to solve arguments between their friends. The verse tells us how to be a good peacemaker. To be a peacemaker, we must be calm and kind. When we try to help our friends solve a disagreement, we must not take sides or be cruel to them. We cannot make peace if we are not peaceful ourselves. We have to make peace in the best conditions possible. Just like crops, if we try to make peace in the wrong conditions, the peace will not last. Amen.

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September 20, 2009 Mark 9:30-37

Prayer, Fear

“But they did not understand what he was saying and were afraid to ask him.” (v. 32)

Object: textbook

Good morning, boys and girls! How many of you go to school? (allow answers) School is an important part of our lives. It is the place where we learn. Sometimes at school you have to use textbooks. (show textbook) Textbooks have information that can be really difficult! Our teachers at school help us learn the information in our textbooks, but sometimes we still have questions about it. What do you do if you have a question about something, whether it is at home or at school? (allow answers) You ask someone for the answer! Sometimes, though, we are scared to ask someone a question. Why might someone be scared to ask a question? (allow answers) You might be scared of the person you are asking. You might be scared that other people will think that your question is silly. Do you think those are good reasons not to ask questions? (allow answers) No, they're not!

In today's gospel, the people listening to Jesus were afraid to ask him questions about what he is teaching. Why do you think those people were afraid? (allow answers) They probably didn't want to look silly in front of Jesus for not understanding what he taught them.

We still listen to Jesus today. We listen to his words when we read the Bible, and we listen for his help when we pray to him. What are some things we pray about? (allow answers) When we pray, it's like we are talking to Jesus. We tell him things and ask him questions. We might tell him about the good things that happen to us, or ask him to help us do something difficult. Have you ever been afraid to ask Jesus something? (allow answers) Sometimes we worry that we aren't telling or asking Jesus the right thing. What if Jesus thinks we look silly? But we shouldn't worry about that. The people in the Bible story are afraid to ask Jesus questions, and they miss out on learning something wonderful. When we are scared to talk to Jesus, we are missing out on a best friend. If we tell Jesus everything, without being afraid, he can be the best friend we will ever know.

We can be scared of lots of things. What are some things you are afraid of? (allow answers) All those are much scarier than asking a question! Asking a question about things we don't understand is not something that we should be afraid of, whether we are asking Jesus or one of our parents or teachers.

Sometimes, asking questions is the only way for us to learn. If we are scared to ask questions, we could miss out on an important message — just like the people in the reading today. Don't be afraid! Amen.

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Proper 20 September 20, 2009

Ask!

Mark 9:30-37

Prayer, Fear

SHARING THIS WEEK'S GOSPEL THEME AT SUNDAY SCHOOL AND AT HOME

Materials:

Block notepads about 2"-3" inches thick (one per child) Stamps, ink Pencils, markers, colored pencils, crayons

Directions:

1. Give each of the children a block notepad. 2. Have the children stamp, draw, and color on the sides of the paper block. Have the older children decorate their notepad with the saying "Ask and you shall receive." 3. Tell the children to take their notepad home. They can use it to write a prayer list or to write down new things that they learn. Note: Check your local printer for scrap notepads. To create your own, cut pieces of heavier paper so they are all the same size, then use packing tape at one end to bind them together. (This version is more fragile, but it will hold pieces of paper together.)

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## Proper 21

Was blind, but now I see

September 27, 2009 James 5:13-20

## Compassion

“You should know that whoever brings back a sinner from wandering will save the sinner’s soul from death and will cover a multitude of sins.” (v. 20)

Object: blindfold

(put on blindfold) Good morning, boys and girls! Is everyone here? (allow answers) I can’t tell because I can’t see. Can you help me? (allow answers, encourage them to help remove the blindfold) Wow! That’s much better! I was stuck behind that blindfold, but since you helped me take it off, I can see everything clearly. Thank you for that act of kindness!

Do any of you know another word that means “kindness”? (allow answers) Another word that means kindness is “compassion.” Can you say it with me? Compassion. We have compassion for others when we take a moment to help them. We might have compassion on someone if we help them carry their groceries from the store to their car. We could have compassion on someone if we see them going in the wrong direction, and we tell them the right way. Have you ever had compassion on someone? (allow answers) How have you received compassion? (allow answers)

Our Bible lesson today talks about having compassion. It tells us that if we see someone doing something wrong, we are supposed to help them do the right thing instead. But how can we do this? There are lots of places and ways that we can help people do the right thing. If you know that someone is lying, what can you do? (allow answers) You can talk to that person about it. You can tell them that lying is not the right thing to do. You can ask them why they lied and help them come up with a way to stop lying and tell the truth. If someone is saying mean things about another person, you can tell the person saying mean things that their words are hurtful and that nobody wants to hear hurtful words. If you see someone cheating at a game, what should you do? (allow answers) You should let that person know that cheating hurts all the other people who are playing the game and that winning is not the most important thing; playing a game with friends is the important part. It doesn’t matter who wins or loses.

People who do the wrong thing are like I was at the beginning of this sermon. It’s like they are blindfolded about what is right and wrong. When you help them understand the right thing to do, it’s like you take off their blindfold and let them see everything clearly. God wants us to help each other see the world clearly. So if you see anyone with a blindfold on this week — whether it’s a real blindfold or a blindfold to right and wrong — help them take it off so that they can see the world as God wants them to see it. Amen.

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September 27, 2009 Mark 9:38-50

Evangelism

“No one who does a deed of power in my name will be able soon afterward to speak evil of me.” (v. 39b)

Object: high school diploma

Good morning, boys and girls! Today I brought my high school diploma. Look at how fancy it is. It has my name on it and the name of my high school. There are some fancy signatures at the bottom. This diploma lets other people know that I am a high school graduate. I am special!

We get diplomas or certificates for lots of things. These diplomas and certificates let other people know that we have done something important. Can you think of anything that you get a diploma or certificate for? (allow answers) You might get a diploma at preschool graduation. Older people get diplomas when they graduate college. Sometimes we get certificates if we win a contest. When we get a diploma or a certificate, we feel pretty special!

But we have to be careful about feeling this special. Sometimes a diploma or certificate makes us feel so special that we think people who don't have that diploma or certificate are worthless. With my high school diploma, I could look at people who haven't graduated high school yet and say, "I'm much better than you, because I have this fancy diploma. I graduated high school." We might not think that people who don't have that diploma or certificate can do the things that we do. If I wanted to get a job, I might think that I should automatically get it instead of someone who is still in high school. But that's not always true! Maybe the person in high school is a better person for the job. Maybe they live closer to the job, or maybe they are willing to work more hours than I am. Maybe they are even smarter than me! Just because I have a diploma doesn't make me the best.

Our gospel lesson talks about this today. Jesus' disciples are angry because there are people, people who are not disciples, doing miracles in Jesus' name. They think that because they are Jesus' disciples, they are the only people who can preach in Jesus' name. They are kind of like the people who have high school degrees and think that people who don't have their degrees are worthless. That's not true at all! Jesus says as much to his disciples. He tells the disciples that it is okay for others to preach and do miracles in Jesus' name. Jesus wants other people to help spread the good news!

This is still true today. You don't have to be a pastor in order to tell people

the good news. You don't have to have any special certificate or diploma to invite

your friends to Sunday school or to church. It doesn't matter who you are; it only matters that you love God and do your best to follow him. Amen.



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Proper 21 September 27, 2009

Certified

Mark 9:38-50

Evangelism

SHARING THIS WEEK'S GOSPEL THEME AT SUNDAY SCHOOL AND AT HOME

Materials:

Paper (copy paper will work, or heavier "fancy" paper) Crayons, markers, colored pencils, and so on Stickers, stencils, and other items for decoration

Directions:

1. Give each of the students a piece of paper. 2. Have them create their own "Christian Diploma" to show that they are certified representatives of God. CSSPlus\_Sep-Nov09\_txt.indd 14

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Proper 22

Not angels

October 4, 2009 Hebrews 1:1-4; 2:5-12

Mercy

“Now God did not subject the coming world, about which we are speaking, to angels.” (v. 5)

Object: dry cereal (preferably Cheerios)

Good morning, boys and girls! Look what I brought for you today — cereal! You can all have a few pieces. I thought you might want a morning snack. (allow children to share the cereal) Isn't it a good snack? Sometimes I get hungry during church. In fact, I bet even your parents get hungry during church. What do you think? (allow answers) If your parents are hungry, do you think it's fair that I only gave a snack to you? (allow answers) After all, your parents are older and smarter than you, right? How smart are your parents? (allow answers) They seem to know everything! Why should you guys get special treatment instead of your parents?

That's kind of the same question that our Bible verse asks today. This verse isn't talking about kids and their parents; it's talking about human beings

— everyone in here — and angels! Now, if you think your parents are really smart, how smart do you think angels are? (allow answers) Let's ask your parents — Congregation, do you think angels are more intelligent than people? (allow answers) See? Your parents agree that angels are smarter than people. If angels are smarter than people, what would we think God would do? To be fair, shouldn't he treat angels better than people? (allow answers) If you are in a race and you win it, doesn't that mean you're the best? (allow answers) Well, sometimes God doesn't work that way. Maybe angels are better than humans, but God loves us. Our Bible verse today says that God did not create heaven for angels, but he created heaven for humans. Even though we think that angels are better than us and more deserving than us to be treated extra-specially, God does the unexpected: He creates heaven just for us! Just like how I gave you cereal but not your parents, God gives us, not angels, heaven. God is very generous, don't you think? (allow answers) We call this generosity God's mercy. Have you heard of mercy before? (allow answers) Sometimes God doesn't give us what we deserve, but he gives us what we need. We can have mercy, too. Can you think of any time when someone has given you something good that you didn't deserve? (allow answers) Can you show mercy to others? (allow answers) We can show mercy by being kind. If somebody pushes you on the playground, you can show mercy by not pushing back. Maybe there's a kid who doesn't like you very much. You can show mercy by still treating that person with kindness and respect. God is great because he has shown us mercy. If we want to be like God, we should try to show mercy in the little things. Amen.

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October 4, 2009 Mark 10:2-16

Jesus' love

“And he took them up in his arms, laid his hands on them, and blessed them.”

(v. 16) Object: photo of your grandparents

Good morning, boys and girls! Today I brought a picture of my grandparents. How many of you have grandparents? (allow answers) Grandparents are wonderful people. I love my grandparents! My grandparents aren't here today, but if they were, do you know what I would do? (allow answers) I would give them each a great big hug and tell them that I love them. What would you do if your grandparents were here? (allow answers) Good answers!

We can't always be with the people we love. Sometimes we move away from our family members. Sometimes people we love die, and we can't be with them anymore. What are some other reasons that we can't be around people we love? (allow answers) There are many, many reasons. Can you name some people who you can't be with all the time? (allow answers) Maybe it's your grandparents, or maybe it's your mom or dad or brother or sister. But there is someone else who can't be with us in human form. Who do you think that is? (allow answers) It's Jesus! Jesus is always with us in spirit, but he can't be with us as a person.

What do you think Jesus would do if he could be here in person? (allow answers) Our Bible verse today tells us the answer. The verse is found in the book of Mark, chapter 10, verse 16. “Jesus took them up in his arms, laid his hands on them, and blessed them.” Remember when we said the things we would do if the people we love were here? The Bible tells us clearly what Jesus would do. Jesus would bless us! Just like I would hug my grandparents and tell them that I love them, Jesus would hug each and every one of us and tell us that God loves us and that we are blessed. Isn't that good news? Whenever we are feeling sad or afraid, we can remember that Jesus wants to bless us. If he could be beside us, he would tell us not to be afraid. He would tell us that we are blessed. We are important enough and loved enough to be blessed by God! Every one of us is blessed!

Sometimes people we love are in the hospital or sick. We pray for people from our congregation who are sick or hospitalized. Although we can't always be with them, because hospitals have some hours where visitors are not allowed, those people in the hospital know that our thoughts and prayers are with them — even if we can't be there “right now.” We can't always be with the people we love every moment, but we can always know that those people love us in return. Jesus is one of those people who loves us back. If he were here in human form, he would bless us all — “right now.” Amen.

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Proper 22 October 4, 2009

Right now

Mark 10:2-16

Jesus' love

SHARING THIS WEEK'S GOSPEL THEME AT SUNDAY SCHOOL AND AT HOME

Materials:

Embroidery floss or yarn (variety of colors) Scissors Cross charms Safety pins Masking tape

Directions:

1. Each of the children will make a bracelet/anklet to keep a reminder of Jesus' love with them at all times. 2. Have each child choose five colors of floss or yarn. Cut the floss or yarn into lengths of about a yard. 3. Help the children tie the cross charm in the middle of their length of floss. 4. Help the children stick a safety pin through the knot holding the charm. Pin floss to jeans/pants. Use masking tape to secure floss to table. 5. Take all threads except one and pull tight. With remaining floss, make an L-shape. Loop floss behind bundle and back up through the crook of the L. Pull tightly. 6. Repeat with all strands of floss. After each knot, push up loop so that it is snug against the previous loop. The bundle of thread should not be visible beneath the outer loop. 7. When one side is finished, tie thread in large knot. Repeat steps 4-6 with the other half of the bracelet. \*Young children may find it easier to tie the entire bundle in many large knots. Encourage the children to make patterns of their knots or be otherwise creative with their bracelet.

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## Proper 23

## Sharper than swords

October 11, 2009 Hebrews 4:12-16

## God's word

"Indeed, the word of God is living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing until it divides soul from spirit, joints from marrow; it is able to judge the thoughts and intentions of the heart." (v. 12)

Object: toy sword (preferably foam sword) and a Bible

Good morning, boys and girls! How many of you have a toy sword at home? (allow answers) Toy swords aren't very sharp. Here, feel the edge of this one. (pass around sword) However, a real sword is very sharp. What are some other things that are sharp like real swords? (allow answers) Very good! Things like scissors and knives are also very sharp. But I have something with me today that is sharper than any sword. It's sharper than scissors or knives. Do you know what it is? (show them a Bible) It's this! Look — isn't this sharp? (allow answers) No? You don't think the Bible is sharp like a sword?

I have proof that the Bible is sharp like a sword. It is a verse from one of today's readings. This verse is from the book of Hebrews, which is in the New Testament. The New Testament is the part of the Bible that was written after Jesus was born. The New Testament tells the stories of Jesus and tells us how to live the way God wants us to live. In the book of Hebrews, our verse is in the fourth chapter. It is the twelfth verse. It says: "The word of God is living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword." See? I told you that this Bible was sharp! Do any of you know how a Bible can be sharp? (allow answers)

What do sharp things do? (allow answers) They cut! When you cut something, you divide it. If your mom or dad uses a knife to cut an apple, they divide the apple into smaller, bite-sized parts. If you use scissors to cut paper, you divide the paper into smaller parts. Well, the Bible divides each one of us. When you read the Bible, you learn how to divide good things from bad things. Can anyone give me an example of a good thing? (allow answers) There are lots of good things! It is a good thing to love your mother and father. It is a good thing to be kind to others. Now can you tell me some bad things? (allow answers) It is bad to be mean to others or to hurt others. It is bad to steal or kill or be jealous of others. The Bible helps us divide good things from bad things. Have you ever had an apple or a pear that had bad parts in it? (allow answers) Sometimes our food has bad, mushy, gray spots that we have to cut out. We have to divide the good parts from the bad parts. As you get older, it might be harder to tell which parts are good and which are bad. That's why we have the Bible. It's sharper than a sword and does a lot more good! Amen.

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October 11, 2009 Mark 10:17-31

God's power

"Jesus looked at them and said, 'For mortals it is impossible, but not for God; for God all things are possible.'" (v. 27)

Object: hammer

Good morning, boys and girls! How many of you have used a hammer before? (allow answers) How did you use your hammer? (allow answers) Hammers are important tools. They've been around for a long time, too! There's even a song about hammers. The words say: "If I had a hammer, I'd hammer in the morning, I'd hammer in the evening, all over this land!" People really like their hammers!

Someone from the Old Testament used a hammer, too. Can you think of someone from the Old Testament who built something special? (allow answers) Who knows the story about Noah's ark? (allow show of hands) God told Noah to build a giant boat called an ark. Then Noah had to take two of every kind of animal in the world on his ark so that they wouldn't drown in a great flood. If someone told you to build a giant boat, what would you say? (allow answers) I would probably say, "That's impossible! I can't build a giant boat all by myself! My neighbors will make fun of me!" That's about what Noah said, too. But nevertheless, the ark was built. And the rest is history!

Many people in the Bible have done things that seemed impossible. Not all of them used hammers to do it. David beat Goliath using a slingshot. Jesus fed 5,000 people with a few loaves of bread and a couple fish. The blind and crippled were cured; dead people were raised to life. All these things should have been impossible, except for one important thing: God! Our Bible verse today says, "for God all things are possible." If we allow God to work through us, we can do all things that are impossible for us alone. There is a story in the Old Testament about the prophet Elijah. Elijah was a prophet of God. In the land where Elijah lived, there were also priests who worshiped a false god called Baal. One day, the king set up a contest between Elijah and the priests of Baal. They had to pray to either God or Baal to set an altar on fire. The priests of Baal prayed but nothing happened. Elijah waited. Before he began to pray, he drenched the altar in water. Uh-oh — fire doesn't burn wet things! That should have been impossible! Then Elijah began to pray. The altar burst into flame. What was impossible for the priests of Baal was possible for Elijah because he had God on his side.

Next time you get ready to do something that you think is impossible — maybe you're getting ready to take a hard test at school, or maybe you're getting ready to play the best T-ball team in the league — remember to ask God for help. You might be surprised at what you can do with the help of God! Amen.

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Proper 23 October 11, 2009

All things

Mark 10:17-31

God's power

SHARING THIS WEEK'S GOSPEL THEME AT SUNDAY SCHOOL AND AT HOME

Materials:

Cornstarch Water Bowl Food coloring (optional) Newspaper (or table liners)

Directions:

1. Line the tables with newspaper or other liners. 2. In the bowl, mix water and cornstarch in ratio of two parts cornstarch to one part water. If desired, add food coloring. 3. This creates an "impossible" mixture that seems to be both a liquid and a solid called oobleck - a non-Newtonian fluid. Play with it! Talk to children about things that seem impossible. Remember that nothing is impossible with God!

\*You could pour mixture into individual foam bowls so each child has one.

October 18, 2009 Hebrews 5:1-10

Obedience

“Although he was a Son, he learned obedience through what he suffered ...”

(v. 8) Object: wooden spoon

Good morning, boys and girls! Have you ever heard someone say, “Don’t make me get the wooden spoon”? Your parents or grandparents probably know that phrase pretty well. When they were kids, they got a swat from the wooden spoon if they didn’t behave. Their parents used that swat to help their children learn to be obedient. Who knows what “obedient” means? (allow answers) Being obedient means listening to your parents or other people in authority. If you set the table because your mom asks you to, you are being obedient.

We aren’t always obedient. Sometimes our parents have to discipline us. Maybe your parents made you stand in the corner or take a time out. Maybe you don’t get dessert or maybe you have to go to bed early. Sometimes it’s hard to be obedient! Can you tell me about a time when you were not obedient? (allow answers) There are many times when we just don’t want to do what others tell us to do. For parents, that’s when this wooden spoon used to come in handy.

Obedience is something that we have to learn. We aren’t born knowing that we should listen to our parents. The older we get, the more we learn that our parents love us and want what is best for us. When they ask us to do something, it is something that will be good for us. What things do parents want you to do that are good for you? (allow answers) Our parents want us to eat certain things, or to go to bed at a certain time, so that we stay healthy and well rested.

We are not the only ones who learn by being obedient. Even Jesus had to learn to be obedient. Today’s reading says: “Jesus learned obedience.” He was God’s Son, but he still had to learn to listen to the Father. Jesus did not always want to do what God asked him to do, but Jesus had learned that God always has a reason for the things he asks. Just like we don’t want to go to bed early or eat leafy green vegetables, Jesus didn’t always want to preach to people who wouldn’t listen to him. Jesus certainly did not want to suffer at the hands of the Romans. Jesus knew that God’s plan was greater than he could understand. He learned to be obedient to God, no matter what. We can learn from Jesus’ example. No matter how much we might not want to do the right thing, we know that God wants us to. God tells us to do what’s right, no matter how hard it is. Jesus shows us that doing the right thing is not always fun, but in the end it is part of God’s greater plan. And that plan is always in the world’s best interest. Amen.

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October 18, 2009 Mark 10:35-45

Serving others

“But whoever wishes to become great among you must be your servant.” (v. 43b)

Object: broom

Good morning, boys and girls! How many of you know the fairy tale of Cinderella? (allow answers, show broom) In the fairy tale, Cinderella has to become a servant to her stepmother and stepsisters, sweeping the floors and cooking the food. At the end of the story, however, she marries the prince! Cinderella, who was a servant in her own house, became royalty.

There are lots of tales about kings or queens or princes or princesses who are disguised as servants or who lose their wealth and have to become servants. In these stories, the person who became a servant ends up returning to the throne and being one of the best rulers their country has ever known.

Our Bible verse today talks about something like that. It says, “Whoever wishes to become great among you must be your servant.” Doesn’t that sound strange? (allow answers) Shouldn’t it say something like, “Whoever wishes to become great among you must get to know rich and famous people and get a lot of money”? But the Bible tells us to become a servant in order to be great.

What does that mean for us? It doesn’t mean that we should work as a servant for someone. It means that we should put others first. Do you know of ways that we can put others first in our lives? (allow answers) Putting others first means that we aren’t always focused on ourselves. Maybe I want the last ice cream cone, but so does my sister. If I am putting others first, will I snatch it away, or will I offer to share it with her — or maybe let her have the whole thing? What do you think? (allow answers) If I am putting others first, I will share it with her or let her have it. If I am putting myself first, I will snatch it away and eat it all.

In fairy tales, when the kings and queens and princes and princesses become servants, they learn how to put others first. Cinderella learned what it was like

to wake up very, very early and do a lot of hard work for people who bossed her around. When she married the prince, how do you think she treated her servants? (allow answers) Since she knew what it was like to work hard, she probably was very kind to them!

Even though we aren’t living in a fairy tale, we, too, can learn to put others first. The Bible is a good place to start. In the Bible we can read lots of stories about putting others first. Jesus is the best example. His life definitely was not a fairy tale, but he gives us the best example of putting other people first in our lives. Amen.

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Proper 24 October 18, 2009

Fairy tales

Mark 10:35-45

Serving others

SHARING THIS WEEK'S GOSPEL THEME AT SUNDAY SCHOOL AND AT HOME

Materials:

Copy paper Pencils

\*In this activity, children will create group "fairy tales." This activity works best for children who are old enough to write legibly.

For younger children, you can play this game out loud: have children take turns telling one sentence of a story. The teacher may write it down and then read it back to the class.

Directions:

1. Give each of the children a piece of paper and a pencil. 2. Have the children turn up a strip at the bottom of the page, approximately 1-1½ inches. 3. Have each of the children write the first sentence of a fairy tale on the paper. 4. Fold the strip at the bottom up so that the words are hidden. (In the end, the paper will "unroll" to show the full story.) 5. Pass the paper to the left. 6. Repeat steps 3-5 five more times, or until there is no paper left. 7. Take turns reading these funny fairy tales out loud. \*If you have a large number of children, this may work better if they are split up into groups of 5-8. Have them read their completed fairy tales to their group. If there's time left over, have them do it again.

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October 25, 2009 Hebrews 7:23-28

### Strength

“For the law appoints as high priests those who are subject to weakness, but the word of the oath, which came later than the law, appoints a Son who has been made perfect forever.” (v. 28)

Object: weights

Good morning, boys and girls! How many of you know this song: “Jesus loves me, this I know, for the Bible tells me so. Little ones to him belong, they are weak but he is strong”? (allow show of hands) Lots of boys and girls sing this song in worship and praise all over the world.

Our Bible verse today is a lot like this song. It says that even priests — even our pastors — have moments of weakness. But God sent Jesus, who is perfect and strong, to be the one who will ultimately talk to God on our behalf.

What do you think the Bible means when it says that our pastors are weak? Does it mean that they can't lift weights like these? (show weights, allow answers) No — that's not what it means. The Bible is talking about a different kind of weakness. You could be the strongest person in the world but still be weak in faith. Do you know what it means to be weak in faith? (allow answers) Maybe it means that you can't lift very many Bibles at one time. Do you think that's it? (allow answers) No! Being weak in the faith means that we aren't trusting in God the way that we should. Maybe we don't follow all of God's commandments. Or maybe we rely too much on human things — maybe we rely too much on financial investments or fancy clothes — instead of relying on God's word. What does it mean to rely too much on money or clothes? It means that instead of being kind to others and sharing God's word, we spend all our time making money or dressing in the latest fashion in order to impress others. Instead, we should impress others by letting our love for God shine through our actions.

How can we let the love of God shine through our actions? (allow answers) We can be kind to others. We can volunteer to help at church or to do things to help others — maybe volunteer to help shovel your neighbor's sidewalk or rake their leaves. Or maybe you can volunteer to color a picture or draw a card for someone in the nursing home. That would cheer up their day!

These are things that will make us strong in the faith. Being strong in the faith means that we are not putting too much importance on impressing others with how much money we have, how we dress, how smart we are, or other things. Being strong in the faith means we trust that when we do the right thing, God will lead other people to respect us. It doesn't take money or cars to earn other people's love or respect. Instead, it takes strong faith and a love of God. Amen.



October 25, 2009 Mark 10:46-52

Faith

“Many sternly ordered him to be quiet, but he cried out even more loudly, ‘Son of David, have mercy on me!’ ”  
(v. 48)

Object: megaphone

Good morning, boys and girls! (use megaphone) How are you today? (allow answers, stop using megaphone)  
How many of you have used a megaphone like this before? (show of hands) People use megaphones when they want to make sure that others hear what they are saying. What are some other ways that people can make themselves heard? (allow answers) People can speak over a loudspeaker system or shout!

Usually at church we aren’t supposed to be noisy. We are supposed to listen to the pastor and other people who speak. But today, we’re going to do something a little different — we are going to shout! But hold on — we’re not going to shout just yet. How many of you know the song “Go Tell It On The Mountain”? (allow answers) It’s a Christmas carol, but “Go Tell It On The Mountain” is all about shouting the good news that Jesus loves us. Ready? We’re going to shout out loud: Jesus loves you! Say it with me — (have them shout) “Jesus loves you!”

Good job, everyone! I’m glad to hear you shouting about Jesus! But you know what — it’s easy to tell people about Jesus at church. Our Bible verse today tells about someone who talked about Jesus somewhere else. In our gospel reading today, a man keeps calling for Jesus even when other people try to make him stop. The verse says, “Many ordered him to be quiet, but the man cried out even more loudly, ‘Son of David, have mercy on me!’ ” The man was trying to get Jesus’ attention. Even though other people wanted him to be quiet, he refused to stop. Thanks to this man’s persistence, Jesus did stop to help him!

We should remember that when we need Jesus, all we have to do is ask. Sometimes this is harder than it sounds. Other people might try to stop us. They might say that we are silly to be talking to Jesus or wonder why we keep talking to Jesus. We just have to remember the man in the Bible verse — even though others asked him to be quiet, he knew what he needed was Jesus. He was ready to “Go Tell It On The Mountain” — or anywhere! Wherever he was in need, he knew that Jesus would help him through it. He only needed the courage to ask.

So what are some ways that we can ask Jesus for help? (allow answers) The best way to ask Jesus for help is to pray! When we pray, we trust our life in Jesus’ hands; whatever happens, we know that he will watch out for us and keep us safe. So go tell it — spread the good news: (use megaphone) JESUS LOVES YOU! Amen.

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Proper 25 October 25, 2009

Go tell it

Mark 10:46-52

Faith

SHARING THIS WEEK'S GOSPEL THEME AT SUNDAY SCHOOL AND AT HOME

Materials:

Styrofoam cups or plastic disposable cups Yarn, cut in two-yard lengths Markers Pencils Scotch tape Pony bead

Directions:

1. Give each of the children two Styrofoam or plastic cups and two yards of yarn. 2. Have the children poke a hole in the bottom of each cup with a pencil. 3. String the yarn through each hole, and tie a knot at the end in the cup. Pull the rest of yarn out the bottom of the cup. If knot won't stay, tie a pony bead to the end of the string to keep it from pulling out. 4. If they have difficulty getting string through hole, wrap Scotch tape tightly around the end of the yarn and it will feel almost like a big plastic needle. If the yarn still won't go through, make the hole bigger. 5. Have the children decorate their cups. 6. Have the children partner together and take turns using each other's new "telephone" to tell their partner that Jesus loves them. \*If you're feeling ambitious, try tin cans instead of Styrofoam.

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All Saints

Passed away

November 1, 2009 Revelation 21:1-6a

Heaven, death

“He will wipe every tear from their eyes. Death will be no more; mourning and crying and pain will be no more, for the first things have passed away.”

(v. 4) Object: newspaper (obituary section)

Good morning, boys and girls! Today we’re going to take a look in the newspaper. There is a special section in the newspaper called the obituary page. How many of you know what obituaries are? (allow answers) An obituary is a short story in the newspaper that tells about people who have recently died. An obituary tells about the person who passed away and sometimes shows a picture of them. An obituary tells about the person’s family, tells what the person did for a living, and tells when the funeral services will be.

It can be sad to read the obituaries. We are sad when the people we love die! We will never get to see them or talk to them again. It is painful for people left behind to live without that person in their lives anymore. Sometimes it is even painful when one of our pets dies — maybe a cat or a dog or fish. It’s not fun to lose a friend, whether it is our neighbor or a loyal puppy.

Where do people go when they die? Do you know? (allow answers) No one on earth knows for sure. But God knows! According to the Bible, we will go to heaven to be with God when we die. No human knows what heaven will be like, but — once again — God gives us clues throughout the Bible to what we will experience when we get there. Our Bible verse today, from the book of Revelation, talks about heaven. It says, “Jesus will wipe every tear from their eyes. Death will be no more; mourning and crying and pain will be no more, for the first things have passed away.” We don’t know what we will wear, or how we will talk, or what we will look like in heaven, but we do know that Jesus will take care of us. And we will not be sad!

Even though those left behind are sad when someone dies, it helps us to know that the person we miss is not in pain, or sick, or crying. Even though we might be all of those things, we know that they have finally found peace in Jesus’ arms.

Not only do we know that they have found peace, but we also know something else. What do we know? (allow answers) We know that someday, when we are done living, there will be a place for us, too. We will be able to live where there is no crying, or pain, or death. We, too, will live with Jesus in this wonderful place. So even though it’s sad to look at the obituary pages, we can live with the hope that someday, when we are on these pages, we will have an everlasting peace with Jesus that is better than we can even imagine. Amen.



All Saints

Jesus wept

November 1, 2009 John 11:32-44

Jesus

“Jesus began to weep.” (v. 35)

Object: bowl of water

Good morning, boys and girls! Today, we’re going to talk about something that is very special in the church: water. (show bowl) Can you tell me some reasons that water is important to the church? (allow answers) We are baptized in water. God used water to flood the world when Noah built the ark. Jesus’ first miracle was turning water into wine. There is a lot of water in the Bible!

Today we are going to talk about a kind of water that we don’t usually think of when we talk about water in the church: tears. How many of you have cried before? (allow answers) All of you! We cry a lot when we are babies; the older we get, the less we cry. But we all know what it feels like to have water leaking out of our eyes! Can you describe what it feels like to cry? (allow answers)

Did you know that even Jesus cried? (allow answers) In some versions of the Bible, the shortest verse is only two words long. It says this: “Jesus wept.” That’s the whole verse! The very shortest verse in the Bible tells us only that Jesus was crying.

This is a pretty important verse. How many of you have ever thought about Jesus crying? (allow answers) We usually think of Jesus as very serious but not as very sad! Does anyone know why Jesus was crying? (allow answers)

Jesus cried because he heard that his friend Lazarus had died. Jesus loved his friend Lazarus! Jesus ends up raising Lazarus from the dead, making everyone very happy. However, when he found out the sad news, he just cried.

His tears are important for Christians. Even though Jesus was God’s Son, he was also human. As God’s Son, Jesus was all-knowing and all-powerful. But as a human, he also felt the same sadness at Lazarus’ death that we might feel at the death of a friend or relative whom we love. Even though through God Jesus had the power to raise Lazarus, he still felt pain at the idea of his friend’s death.

This is important for us because it helps us to remember that Jesus was the Son of God and the son of man. He represents God to humans and he represents humans to God. No one understands our feelings better than Jesus can; he’s been through life just like we have! That is why God sent Jesus to earth to live among humans as a human: so that he could understand our hope, joy, fear, sadness, pain, and all our other emotions. Thanks to Jesus’ suffering and sacrifice — even his tears — we know that someday we will have everlasting life with God. Amen.



All Saints November 1, 2009

Jesus wept

John 11:32-44

Jesus

SHARING THIS WEEK'S GOSPEL THEME AT SUNDAY SCHOOL AND AT HOME

Materials:

Bowl of water Eyedroppers Coffee filters Black markers Scissors

Directions:

1. Have the children cut a coffee filter into a cross shape. Easy technique: Fold in half twice, then cut a "triangle" from the rounded side to create square cross. Unfold. 2. Have the children draw simple designs on their coffee filter with black marker. 3. Use eyedroppers to drip a little bit of water onto marker designs. As marker bleeds, new colors should appear. 4. Remind the children that Jesus' tears were sorrowful, but they were also good news — showing us that Jesus is human and can understand our every emotion. CSSPlus\_Sep-Nov09\_txt.indd 29

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November 8, 2009 Hebrews 9:24-28

Heaven

“For Christ did not enter a sanctuary made by human hands, a mere copy of the true one, but he entered into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God on our behalf.” (v. 24)

Object: stained-glass window

Good morning, boys and girls! Today we’re going to talk about something very beautiful — stained-glass windows. How many of you like looking at stained-glass windows? (allow answers) Stained-glass windows come in all different styles. Some of them are just pretty pieces of colored glass. Some of them have patterns or designs. Some of them have pictures and words in them. Sometimes they show pictures from Bible stories.

Some churches have many stained-glass windows. There are big cathedrals that are famous for their beautiful windows. Some churches only have one stained-

glass window or maybe they don’t have any at all. We decorate the sanctuary with stained-glass windows because their beauty gives glory to God.

What are some other ways we decorate the church sanctuary to give glory to God? (allow answers) We hang banners. We light candles. We dress in our best clothes when we come to worship. We want our sanctuary and our worship to be beautiful for God.

In the old days, a sanctuary was more than just beautiful. A sanctuary was a place of safety. If a person was running away from the law or from someone who wanted to hurt them, the runaway could go to a church sanctuary. The people chasing him or her did not go in. According to the law, a church sanctuary was a sacred place, and people could not be arrested while they were in a sanctuary.

Beautiful and safe. What does that sound like to you? (allow answers) To me, that sounds like heaven! We try to make our church sanctuaries as peaceful and lovely as we imagine heaven to be. When we die and go to heaven, it should feel like walking into a church — only better!

Our Bible verse today talks about churches. It says, “Christ did not enter a sanctuary made by human hands, a mere copy of the true one, but he entered into heaven itself.” The Bible tells us that we are supposed to feel the same kind of peace and joy in church that we will feel in heaven! The Bible also says that churches are only human copies of heaven — so they’re not perfect. Sometimes we forget that our church is supposed to be a place full of love. Sometimes we fight with each other at church. That’s not very heavenly! Even though our sanctuary is only a human copy of heaven, we should still do our best to make the sanctuary a place of peace, love, and joy for all who enter. Amen.



"For all of them have contributed out of their abundance; but she out of her poverty has put in everything she had, all she had to live on." (v. 44)

Object: penny

Good morning, boys and girls! Today I brought something very special with me. You will all be super excited to see it. It's the best. It's the top. I can hardly believe I brought it with me today! Are you ready to see a miraculous thing? (take out penny, show them) Can you all see? What do I have? (allow answers) That's right — it's a penny! You don't seem very excited. But look at this; it's a whole penny! You don't think that's very cool? (allow answers) It's true — most of us don't think that a penny is a very big deal. In fact, sometimes I see a penny on the sidewalk and don't even pick it up. Pennies aren't worth that much.

Do you know what? Jesus doesn't think a penny is worthless. In fact, in our gospel reading today, Jesus says that a few pennies can be worth more than hundreds of dollars. Do you think that sounds kind of weird? (allow answers)

Jesus was sitting at the temple with his friends. Jesus and his friends were watching people give offerings. Rich people walked in and gave lots of money. They made a big deal about how much money they put in the offering box and made sure that everyone standing around knew just how generous they were.

Then a poor widow came to the offering box. Her clothes were dirty and full of holes. She walked to the offering box and put two copper coins in it. These two copper coins were worth almost nothing — less than a penny! Do you know what Jesus said? He told his friends that the widow had given more than the rich men. How is that possible? (allow answers)

If you have a box of cookies and you give one to your friend, is it hard to give away that cookie? (allow answers) No, it's probably not. After all, you still have a whole box! But if you only have one cookie left, do you want to give it away? (allow answers) No! If you give that one away, you won't have anything left for yourself!

That's how the people in the temple were. The rich men had lots of money. They could give and give and still have enough left to wear fancy clothes and have a nice house. But the widow didn't have anything except those two copper coins. She didn't have any money to buy food or clothing. All she had were those two copper coins — and she gave them to God.

Next time you have a chance to share with someone — either a friend or God — remember the widow's two coins. You might not want to share ... but you know that it's what God wants you to do. Amen.

Proper 27 November 8, 2009

“Cents”able giving

Mark 12:38-44

Giving

SHARING THIS WEEK’S GOSPEL THEME AT SUNDAY SCHOOL AND AT HOME

Materials:

Variety of coins (may include foreign coins) Crayons or pieces of crayons with paper removed Paper Markers

Directions:

1. Give each of the children a piece of paper. 2. Create coin rubbings — put coins beneath paper and rub gently with side of crayon. Encourage children to be creative, using many different coins and many different colors. 3. Write: “All I have is for the Lord” around the edge or in the center of the page. \*Ask the children to bring in one small item that is “timely” for next week’s activity.

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Proper 28

Gotcha!

November 15, 2009 Hebrews 10:11-14 (15-18) 19-25

Love

“And let us consider how to provoke one another to love and good deeds.”

(v. 24) Object: Halloween mask

Good morning, boys and girls! Halloween was just a few weeks ago. How many of you went trick-or-treating? (allow answers) Did anyone wear a mask like this one? (allow answers) What do you say when you ask someone for candy on Halloween? (allow answers) You say, “Trick-or-treat!”

Some people like to play tricks on Halloween. Have you ever played a trick on anybody? (allow answers) Halloween isn't the only time we play tricks on people. How many of you know about April Fool's Day? (show of hands) What do you do on April Fool's Day? (allow answers) You trick people! I knew someone who used to make Jell-O in a pitcher so that it looked like Kool-Aid. When other people tried to pour it in their cups, it didn't move! That was a good trick.

There are some tricks that aren't very good. Bad tricks can hurt people. Some tricks are dangerous. We have to be careful when we play pranks on people so that no one gets hurt. Instead, if we're going to trick someone, it should only be in a good way, like the Jell-O in the Kool-Aid pitcher.

Our Bible verse today talks about “provoking one another to love and good deeds.” Does anyone know what provoking is? (allow answers) Repeat after me: Provoking. (repeat) Provoking someone means we get a response from them. Sometimes when we pull a prank, we might provoke someone to be afraid. If you are provoking your little brother by teasing him, he could be provoked to anger. Can you think of other ways that you could provoke someone? (allow answers)

Provoking someone doesn't have to be in a bad way. Instead of teasing your brother, you could be nice to him instead. If you share with your brother and are nice to him, he might be provoked to be kind to you in return. What other ways can we provoke people to be kind? (allow answers) We can provoke others to be kind by setting a good example. What does it mean to set an example? (allow answers) Setting an example means that we do the right thing. Other people see our example and copy our actions.

Who do we know who sets an example for us? (allow answers) Maybe your mom and dad or your grandparents set a good example. Maybe your pastor or your teachers set a good example. But there's one very important person who set the best example. That person is Jesus! Jesus did the right thing so that we could see his example and be provoked to love and good deeds. It's not a trick — it's a real example of God's love in action. Amen.



Proper 28

Tick tock

November 15, 2009 Mark 13:1-8

Patience

“Tell us, when will this be, and what will be the sign that all these things are about to be accomplished?” (v. 4)

Object: analog clock

Good morning, boys and girls! Today I brought a clock with me to the children’s message. How many of you have clocks like this in your house? (show of hands) How many of you have learned how to read a clock? (show of hands) The big round part of the clock is called its face. It has two hands that go around. The long hand tells you how many minutes it is. The short hand tells you what hour it is. And if you listen very carefully, the clock goes “tick, tick, tick.” Each “tick” is one second passing. Can you hear it? (have them listen)

The “tick, tick, tick” of a clock can sometimes drive you nuts! Have you ever been sitting next to a clock and all you can hear is “tick, tick, tick”? If you have to sit there a long time, it can get pretty annoying! While we are listening to the clock, we are thinking about all the other things we could be doing — like playing outside or coloring. But clocks are important. They let us know what time it is and let us know how much time has passed.

In our gospel lesson today, the disciples talk about time. They ask Jesus when all God’s promises will come true. They ask him how they will know that God’s kingdom is coming. It seems like they want Jesus to set up a giant clock so that they know exactly when to be ready for God! But that’s not how it works. We don’t know when Jesus will come back. We don’t know when all the predictions in the Bible will come true. We simply have to be patient.

It’s hard to be patient, isn’t it? (allow answers) Can you think of a time when you have had to be patient? (allow answers) Sometimes we have to be patient for an hour or for some specific amount of time. Maybe we are driving to another city and we have to be patient for 45 minutes in the car. Sometimes we have to be patient but we don’t know for how long. When it’s raining, we have to be patient until it’s nice and we can go outside. We don’t know how long we’ll have to wait for the rain to stop. It might just be a few minutes or several hours. It might even be a few days!

No matter how long we have to wait, though, we know that when the sun comes out, the wait will be worth it. That’s how it is with God’s kingdom, too. We don’t have a clock that is counting down the hours until all of the Bible’s predictions will happen. It has been a long wait. We will probably continue to wait for a long time. But we do know that no matter what happens, the wait will be worth it. Amen.

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Proper 28 November 15, 2009

Tick tock

Mark 13:1-8

Patience

SHARING THIS WEEK'S GOSPEL THEME AT SUNDAY SCHOOL AND AT HOME

Materials:

Sealable container Photographs "Profile" sheets Markers, colored pencils, crayons Shovel Items for a time capsule

Directions:

1. Have the children bring in items for a time capsule or find things around the church (such as a bulletin). 2. Print out "profile" sheets for each of the children to complete. Include spaces for name, favorite activities, favorite thing about church, and space to draw a picture. 3. Decorate the time capsule as a group and fill it with the time capsule items. Seal it well and label the capsule with the date of burial and the date it is to be reopened. \*Either bury the time capsule outside or put it high on a shelf in the cupboard.

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## Proper 29

## “Junior” priests of God

November 22, 2009 Revelation 1:4b-8

## Evangelism

“... and made us to be a kingdom, priests serving his God and Father, to him be glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen.” (v. 6)

Object: photograph of the Pope

Good morning, boys and girls! Do any of you know who this is? (show photograph, allow answers) This man is the Pope. How many of you have heard of the Pope before? (show of hands) The Pope is the leader of the Catholic church. We could call him a “high priest” of God. How many of you know what a priest is? (allow answers) A priest is the same as a pastor or a minister. A priest’s job is to study God’s word and help others to understand it. In order to be a priest, you usually have to go to college and study religion. Priests must be “ordained” before they can start their work. “Ordained” is a word for the ceremony that priests go through. It’s kind of like other ceremonies that we go through at church

— baptism, first communion, and confirmation. Although priests are the ones who are the most qualified to share God’s word, that doesn’t mean that we can’t share God’s word, too! How can we share God’s word with others? (allow answers) One way is to tell others about it. We can invite our friends to church, Sunday school, or Bible school. We can also share God’s word by showing God’s love to others. When we show God’s love, we are kind to others, no matter who they are or how they treat us. We are patient, kind, gentle, slow to get angry, peaceful, joyful, loving, and thankful — all things that we know as “fruits of the Spirit.” When we show all of these things we are showing what it is like to live in God’s love. It might not seem like it, but people notice the example we set. If we are kind and loving, they want to know how they can be that way, too; but if we are cruel and mean, then people don’t want anything to do with us!

Can you think of people who set good examples? (allow answers) There are many people in our congregation who show God’s love through their actions. Maybe they visit people who are sick. Maybe they help cook food for funeral dinners or potlucks. Maybe they volunteer to be Sunday school teachers or take care of babies in the nursery during worship.

There are ways that you can show God’s love, too! Even when you are little, you can show God’s love by sharing with your brothers and sisters. You can be patient with your family. You can go with your parents to visit people who are lonely or sick. But most of all, you can show joy. We show joy by smiling, by sharing, by being kind, and by spreading God’s love everywhere we can. We may not be ordained, but we are still called to be “junior” priests of God. Amen.

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37 Proper 29 November 22, 2009 Who are you? John 18:33-37 Identity

“Pilate asked him, ‘So you are a king?’ Jesus answered, ‘You say that I am a king. For this I was born, and for this I came into the world, to testify to the truth. Everyone who belongs to the truth listens to my voice.’ ” (v. 37)

Object: none

Good morning, boys and girls! Today our gospel lesson talks about a king. But not just any king! Does anyone know who the king is in our gospel today? (allow answers) The king is Jesus!

Our gospel lesson takes place after the Romans arrested Jesus. The Romans

take Jesus to talk to Pilate, who is the governor. Pilate is trying to figure out who

Jesus is and why he has been arrested. He asks Jesus, “So you are a king?” Jesus says: “You say that I am.”

That’s kind of funny, don’t you think? Jesus doesn’t say if he is a king or isn’t a king. But he’s not done talking. Jesus says: “I came into the world to testify to the truth. Everyone who belongs to the truth listens to my voice.”

Jesus isn’t worried about being a king. What people call him isn’t important. Jesus wants people to listen to the truth. Jesus doesn’t define himself by a title. He defines himself by his work for God.

How do you define yourself? If I asked you, “Who are you?” What would you say? (allow answers) You might tell me your name. You might tell me what school you go to, where you live, or who your parents are. If you asked me who I am, I would tell you about what I do for a living; I define myself by my job. We all have different ways of telling other people who we are.

Jesus is showing us that sometimes it’s not about who our parents are or what our job is. In the gospel today, Jesus is showing us that what really matters is what work we do for God. If someone asked you what work you do for God, what would you tell them? (allow answers) That can be a pretty tough question for some people! It’s easy to tell someone your name, or what school you go to, but it’s not always easy to think about how you are living your life for God. I’d rather just tell someone what I do at my job!

Following Jesus’ example isn’t supposed to be easy. It’s supposed to be hard work. But in the end, that hard work pays off when we can share the love of God with others. This week, I want all of you to think about the way that you do work for God. See if you can start to define yourself by that. Amen.

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Proper 29 November 22, 2009

Who are you?

John 18:33-37

Identity

SHARING THIS WEEK'S GOSPEL THEME AT SUNDAY SCHOOL AND AT HOME

Materials:

Construction paper cut in half (fat rectangles, not skinny rectangles) Markers, crayons, colored pencils Hole punch Yarn

Directions:

1. Have each of the children write their name on one side of their construction paper. 2. On the other side, have them write or draw things that they do for God. This is going to be a new way to identify themselves to others. Are they good helpers? Do they like to pray? Do they make music for God? Help children identify their strengths and how they can use those to work for God. 3. Punch two holes at the top of the paper. 4. String yarn through holes to create a necklace. 5. Have the children wear their nametags to church, showing the side with their "new" identity. CSSPlus\_Sep-Nov09\_txt.indd 38

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## Thanksgiving Day

## War and peace

November 26, 2009 1 Timothy 2:1-7

## Peace

“First of all, then, I urge that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and thanksgivings be made for everyone, for kings and all who are in high positions, so that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and dignity.” (v. 1-2)

Object: flags or flag pictures from different countries

Good morning, boys and girls! Today we are going to talk about other countries. How many of you have ever been to another country? (show of hands) How many of you know someone who has been to another country? (allow answers) Where have they been? (allow answers, show flags) There are lots and lots of different countries in the world, and each one is unique and exciting.

Sometimes the people there forget how unique and exciting other countries

are, and they end up fighting each other in wars. Wars can be long, expensive, and

scary for everyone involved: for soldiers, for their families, for the people of the countries. War is not a fun time. It can seem hard to be a follower of God when there is a war going on. It is hard to love other people when those other people

might be fighting our family and neighbors. It is hard to love a country that we call

the “enemy.” It is sometimes hard to pray about the war, because we know that

God loves the people who are fighting on both sides.

In our reading today, the apostle Paul writes about prayers for the government. He writes that we should pray for people who are “in high positions” — like kings, presidents, or prime ministers — so that they will be able to resolve conflicts and so that “we may lead a quiet and peaceable life” with others. When we have trouble talking to God about battles, we can try praying for the people who are in charge of armies or of countries. We can pray that they will be able to make peace with the other countries. We can pray that they will find the strength to be good, honest leaders. We can pray that they will be able to lead their country in peace as well as they have done in war.

In England, the national anthem follows this advice. The title of the song is “God Save The Queen,” and the song asks God to protect the queen and to help her be a good and strong ruler over her country. In America, the song “God Bless America” also asks God to “stand beside” and “guide” the rulers of America to make good choices and to work to help the American people.

When you say your prayers, remember to ask God to be with the rulers of our country and the rulers of all countries. Rulers are very important, powerful people. They can still use God's help to create a world where we can live in peace. Amen.

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Thanksgiving Day

Worry-warts

November 26, 2009 Matthew 6:25-33

Worry

“And can any of you by worrying add a single hour to your span of life?” (v. 27)

Object: hourglass egg timer

Good morning, boys and girls! Today I have with me an egg timer like you might use in a board game. How many of you have seen one of these at your house? (allow answers) What did you use it for? (allow answers)

I’m going to set this egg timer. The sand pours from the top part into the bottom part. When all the sand is gone from the top part, the time is up! (set timer) And there it goes. Oh, dear. I hope it doesn’t get stuck in there. I hope the sand keeps running! What if it runs out of time and I have to flip it over? Then I’ll have to interrupt my children’s sermon and reset it — and then you will all think I’m silly. Uh-oh ... it’s running. I think the sand is running faster. What if it goes too fast? What if the timer is broken? Now I won’t be able to play the game that the timer came with! What will I do?

You can see that I’m pretty worried about this egg timer. What do you think I should do about it? Should I just let it go and trust that it will be okay? Or should I keep watching it and worrying about it? (allow answers)

I guess it’s kind of silly to worry about an egg timer. We have a lot more of them at my house, anyway. But sometimes I get carried away with worrying. Worrying just gets everyone upset — we start and then it can be very hard to stop! We start worrying over silly little things, then we start worrying over bigger things, and then sometimes we just worry so much that we can hardly even smile anymore, we’re so worn out with worrying! Is that the way you want to live — so worried-out that you can’t even find enough strength to smile? (allow answers) I sure don’t want to live that way!

Sometimes worrying distracts us. But you know what? We don’t have to be distracted! My worrying did not make the sand go any faster or any slower. In fact, my worrying didn’t have any effect on the timer at all! Instead of worrying, I needed to trust that things were going to be okay. But who should I be trusting? Do you know? (allow answers) The answer is God! When there are things that make us worried, we need to know that God is there to take our worries away. He will take care of things. They may not always work out exactly the way we planned, but God will provide for us. In the end, they will work out the way God wants them to. Instead of worrying, we just need to trust in God — and just like this timer, things will run the way they are supposed to run. Amen.

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Thanksgiving Day November 26, 2009

Worry-warts

Matthew 6:25-33

Worry

SHARING THIS WEEK'S GOSPEL THEME AT SUNDAY SCHOOL AND AT HOME

Materials:

Wax paper Sculpey clay Oven Baking sheet

Directions:

1. Children will be making "worry-stones." These are small stones to keep in one's pocket and stroke to relieve worry. 2. Spread out wax paper on tables. 3. Give each of the children a walnut-sized hunk of clay in color of their choice. 4. Have the children press their thumb into the piece of clay. Worry-stones are traditionally small rocks with an indent to rub with one's thumb. 5. Let them decorate their stone with other Sculpey clay. Sculpey directions have other decorating ideas. 6. Follow Sculpey directions to bake worry-stones. 7. Remind the children to give their worries to the Lord. CSSPlus\_Sep-Nov09\_txt.indd 41

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## Advent 1 (Cycle C)

Only you

November 29, 2009 1 Thessalonians 3:9-13

Thankfulness

“How can we thank God enough for you in return for all the joy that we feel before our God because of you?” (v. 9)

Object: mirror

Good morning, boys and girls! Today I want to show you some people I am really grateful for. (hold up mirror) Who do you see in this mirror? (allow answers) It’s you guys! This morning I wanted to tell each and every one of you how thankful I am to see you here today. I’m so glad that you’re here at church to worship God with us! I’m thankful to God that each and every one of you is alive and a part of this world. You each bring me — and God — great joy!

How does it make you feel to know that you are special to God? (allow answers) There are billions of people on this earth — that’s a gigantic number! God cares about each one of us. He loves and looks after me, just like he loves and looks after you, just like he loves and looks after people in Africa, people in Mexico, people in Australia and China and Russia and anywhere you can imagine. God is even looking out for the astronauts in outer space! There is nowhere we can go to escape God’s love. Isn’t that great? Not only does God love every single one of us, he also keeps tabs on where we are and what we do.

That can be a little bit scary. Do your parents know every single thing you have ever done? (allow answers) Probably not. No human can know every single thing that another human has ever done. God can. God can know every single thing you’ve ever done and every single thing that anyone has ever done. God is awesome! Furthermore, God has made each one of us different and unique from everyone else. No two people are exactly alike.

Every morning when you look in the mirror, I want you to remember that you are special. You are special to God, but you are also special to your family. You are special to your church family. You are special to your friends, neighbors, teachers, and bus drivers. When you are feeling sad or lonely, remember that you are a special child of God. God is always there to listen to your problems and to help you through them. And there are lots of other people who want to help you, too — because you are special. No matter how old you are, it is never too late to remember that you are God’s special child. This week, I want you to tell someone who is important to you just how special they are. That person might be your mom or dad; it might be a brother or sister; it might be your teacher or babysitter. I want you to go up to that person and tell them, “Thank you for what you do for me!” Because you are a special child of God — and they are, too. Amen.

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“Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will not pass away.” (v. 33)

Object: Bible

Good morning, boys and girls! Today I brought my Bible with me. How many of you have your own Bible? (allow answers) How many of your parents have their own Bibles? (allow answers) Bibles are important. Years ago, they used to keep old, old family Bibles and record important events in them. Family Bibles had lists of when people were born, when people died, when they got married, and when they had children. Family Bibles were passed down from generation to generation; even after one generation was dead and gone, the family Bible was still around, keeping a record of the family history and giving the family a place to find and read about God’s word. Even though the Bible was just paper and binding, it was important enough to be treated carefully, and its words were passed down through many, many years.

Our Bible verse today talks about the word of God being handed down. The verse says, “Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will not pass away.” This means that even when we are all finished living, even when the earth is empty and there are no more people, God’s word will still exist. No matter what happens, God’s word will be there. It’s kind of like the family Bibles. Perhaps the father and mother of a family die. Their world has passed away, but the word of God has not passed away. Instead, it is still there for their children to read and learn from. The word of God didn’t just last for a few years and die out; instead, it has lasted thousands and thousands of years. We are still studying it today!

This is great news for us. This means that when we read God’s word in the Bible, we know that it is the truth forever. It is not just the truth for when Jesus was alive; it is not just the truth for when we are alive; it will be the truth forever and ever, long after we are gone and long after our children are gone; long after people are gone from the earth. Isn’t that good news? Sometimes people call Jesus their rock. Like a rock, Jesus will not die or wither away; he will not grow old or decay. Like a rock, Jesus will stand firm no matter what — even if the weather is very hot, or if it is very cold, or if there is ice, or if there is rain. Like a rock, which is solid and strong, Jesus will always be there for us — forever. While family Bibles might hold birth and marriage records, the Bible itself holds the record of Jesus’ love — but long after the names in the family Bibles have faded out and been forgotten, Jesus’ name will still be remembered. Amen.

Advent 1 (Cycle C) November 29, 2009

Eternal words

Luke 21:25-36

Eternal life

SHARING THIS WEEK'S GOSPEL THEME AT SUNDAY SCHOOL AND AT HOME

Materials:

Large landscaping rock Permission from pastor Permanent markers Winter coats (depending on weather)

Directions:

1. Give each of the children a permanent marker. 2. Have each of the children sign the landscaping rock and either write a Bible verse or draw something that reminds them of God (a cross, a Jesus fish, and so on). 3. Take a field trip outside and choose someplace to put the finished rock to remind everyone that, like a rock, God's words last forever. CSSPlus\_Sep-Nov09\_txt.indd 44

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