



**SEVENTH SUNDAY
IN ORDINARY TIME**

RESPONSE: Psalm 103

My God, my God,
have mercy on me,
for all my hope is in you,
my God,
all my hope is in you.

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION:

Sing praises to the
Lord, alleluia!
Sing praise to greet
the Word, alleluia!
Your Word brings us
healing, it brings us
new life, alleluia!
Alleluia!



EVALUATION

We are providing this brief evaluation form for use after you have celebrated this Sunday's liturgy with the children.

Notes for future reference:

What went well?

What needs improvement?

LITURGICAL SEASON BACKGROUND

Two weeks remain until we begin the Season of Lent. During these closing Sundays we continue to reflect upon the teachings of Jesus. These Sundays in Ordinary Time come between the two great feasts in the Liturgical Year, Christmas and Easter. As we listen to God's word, we are able to refine our understanding and participation in the life and work of Jesus. While these Sundays fall in a season called Ordinary, they offer an extra-ordinary opportunity for us to nurture our spiritual life and our relationship with God.

SCRIPTURE BACKGROUND

Both of the readings today focus on the mercy of God who is always ready to forgive. The reading from Isaiah is particularly pointed: "Our God says, '...I created you for myself...but you did not call on me...You went on sinning...I am the one who forgives your sins.'" Then, in the Gospel, his followers are so large in number that some of them have to lower a paralyzed man through the roof to get to Jesus. Such faith and trust in Jesus moved him to forgive the man's sins and cure him of his sickness.

This is another event in the life of Jesus that captures the imagination of children as well as adults. It illustrates with dramatic flair the power of Jesus over the effects of evil. It also prepares us for the coming penitential season of Lent, reassuring us that as we reflect upon our lives we can rest assured that God is ready to forgive and forget whatever wrongs we might have done.

LITURGICAL ENVIRONMENT

During the Sundays of Ordinary Time, our liturgical observance has been more simple. The color green has been used to symbolize both hope and nature. The Book of Readings is always the focus of attention, displayed open and facing the children.

You might display the *SUNDAY Scripture Poster*, an illustration of the Gospel, showing Jesus cure the man who was lowered through the roof of the house where Jesus had been surrounded by people. The poster could be sent home with a different family each week to color for the next celebration.

7th Sunday in Ordinary Time • Year B

CENTERING / PROCESSIONAL SONG

Suggestions:

- “If Today You Hear God’s Voice” (Vol. 1 *Sing God A Simple Song*, #37, Treehaus Communications). Suggested gestures:

If today you hear God’s voice, (*The children raise their hands to cup their ears.*)

harden, (*Clench fists and cross arms over the chest.*)

not your hearts, (*Open hands and gesture outward and downward with the arms.*)

- “O Taste and See” (Vol. 1 *Sing God A Simple Song*, #36, Treehaus Communications).
- “Psalm 19: Lord, You Have the Words” (Vol. 2 *Sing God A Simple Song*, #39, Treehaus Communications).

You may wish to follow the gestures suggested in *Sing God A Simple Song*.

FIRST READING *Isaiah 43:21, 24-25*

The reader may be either a child or an adult; in either case, this person should know ahead of time in order to prepare carefully. This reading might be read with warmth, to convey the care with which God treats people.

PSALM RESPONSE

The psalm is not only a response to the first reading; rather “responsorial” is descriptive of the way the psalm is prayed, with the children responding to the cantor or leader. You may wish to use the same psalm response for the Sundays in Ordinary Time to Lent. *Suggestions:*

- Psalm 103: “My God, My God” (Walker, *SUNDAY Book of Readings/Lectionary Adapted for Children*, Year B, Seventh Sunday in Ordinary Time, and *SUNDAY Weekly Leader Guide*, Year B, page 78, Treehaus Communications; *Music for Children’s Liturgy of the Word*, Cycle B, Treehaus Communications/O.C.P. Publications).
- “If Today You Hear God’s Voice” (Vol. 1 *Sing God A Simple Song*, #37, Treehaus Communications).
- “Psalm 103: Bless the Lord, My Soul” (Vol. 2 *Sing God A Simple Song*, #38, Treehaus Communications).

You might wish to follow the gestures suggested in *Sing God A Simple Song*.

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

Suggestions:

- “Sing Praises to the Lord” (Walker, *SUNDAY Book of Readings/Lectionary Adapted for Children*, Year B, Seventh Sunday in Ordinary Time, and *SUNDAY Weekly Leader Guide*, Year B, page 78, Treehaus Communications; *Music for Children’s Liturgy of the Word*, Cycle B, Treehaus Communications/O.C.P. Publications).
- “Halle, Halle, Halle” (Vol. 1 *Sing God A Simple Song*, #43, Treehaus Communications).
- “Psalm 113: Praise His Name” (Vol. 2 *Sing God A Simple Song*, #38, Treehaus Communications).

GOSPEL *Mark 2:1-12*

Usually the presider reads the Gospel. The passage should be read with a tone of compassion to convey the way Jesus felt about the paralyzed man. Also, let your reading reflect the unfolding emotions conveyed through the dialogue in the story.

HOMILY OUTLINE

See the *SUNDAY Weekly Leader Guide*, Year B, pages 78 and 79, for “Focus of the Readings” and “Reflecting on the Readings With Children.” When reflecting on the scriptures with children, we take our cues from the children’s responses. In so doing, you might use some of the questions below to enrich their appreciation of God’s word.

WE LISTEN TO GOD SPEAK

- What might the children in the assembly hear God saying to them in today's readings?
- How might you engage the children in the biblical experience with open-ended questions?

Examples for this week's readings:

Concerning the first reading:

- God told the people, "You got tired of me..." What do you think it was like for God to have people turn away from the One who gave them life?
- How do you think the people felt when they heard Isaiah tell them what God had said?
- Why do you think God is so forgiving when people continue to turn away and ignore what God asks of them?

Concerning the Gospel:

- What do you think it was like for the paralyzed man to be lowered through the roof to get to Jesus?
- Why do you think the people couldn't wait until the crowd left so that they would not have to go to such trouble to get to Jesus?
- The people in the crowd who were teachers of the law objected to what Jesus said to the man about his sins being forgiven. What do you think it was like for them to hear Jesus talk the way he did? What would you have said to them if you were Jesus?
- If you were the paralyzed man, what you you have said to Jesus after you were cured?

WE REFLECT ON THE REIGN OF GOD

- How can you invite the children to look out of the biblical experience at their lives today?
- How can you use the biblical imagery of today's readings to explore with children their experience of God's presence in our lives today?

Examples for this week's readings:

Concerning the first reading:

- What is it like for you to know that God created you that you might give God praise?
- In what ways have you given God praise?
- Who are some people you know who give praise to God? In what ways do they praise God?
- What is it like for you to know that our God is a forgiving God? What is it like for you to be forgiven by God?

Concerning the Gospel:

- Who are some people you know who have great faith in Jesus, like the people who climbed on the roof to lower the paralyzed man to Jesus?
- In what way have you felt the healing power of Jesus? What is that like for you?
- Who do you know who has been healed in some way by their faith in Jesus? What happened? How did they respond?
- The man who was cured had been paralyzed. Jesus said to him, "Your sins are forgiven." In what way does sin paralyze us?



WE RESPOND TO GOD'S WORD

- How might you attune yourself to encourage the children's own creative responses to God's word?
- How might the Spirit be moving the children to respond to God's word in praise and thanksgiving?

Examples for this week's readings:

- How can you show God praise when you have been forgiven?
- How can you share the healing power of Jesus with others?
- People who believed in Jesus brought the paralyzed man to Jesus to be healed. What can you do to bring someone closer to Jesus who is seeking to be healed?

CREED

Invite the children to profess their faith by creedal statements that echo the readings. Reflect on what the readings say about God as Creator, Jesus as Redeemer, and the Holy Spirit as the giver of life. Express these statements so that the children can give their assent to them. This week's readings, for example, offer these options:

- God, who is the one who always forgives.
- Jesus, who cures those who are sick.
- Holy Spirit, enables us to be healed and to be healers of others.

PRAYERS OF FAITHFUL

The proclamation of the word leads us to change our lives and express our gratitude in the celebration of the Eucharist. After the children have offered their prayers and concerns, you might also offer petitions based on the scripture texts. See notes for the First Sunday in Advent for guidelines regarding the development of these petitions.

In formulating the prayers, you might draw from the verbs or "action words and biblical images" in this week's readings. For example: *I created you, I forgive you, they trusted, "Your sins are forgiven", they praised God, "Stand up...and walk!"*

NOTE: Arrange to have the Sunday Scripture Leaflets given to the children as they are leaving Mass. Encourage the children and parents to use these leaflets through the week to continue reflecting prayerfully on God's Word. In addition, emphasize the use of the Word Made Flesh, Our Family Spiritual Life Journal, pages 32 and 33, (Treehaus Communications, Inc.) as a way of assisting the family's deeper reflection on God's word at home.



Liturgy of the Word • February 19, 2012

CENTERING / PROCESSIONAL SONG

• "Psalm 19: Lord, You Have the Words" (Vol. 2 *Sing God A Simple Song*, #39, Treehaus Communications)

Substitutions/Additional Notes:

OPENING PRAYER

Presider: God our Creator and Healer, we gather to praise you and to thank you for your healing love. Guide us in your way. We want to give you glory in all that we do, as Jesus gave you glory by sharing your healing love with those who trusted in him. We pray to you in the name of Jesus.

All: Amen.

Substitutions/Additional Notes:

FIRST READING *Isaiah 43:21, 24-25*

Today's Reader: _____

Presider: Today we hear what God does for us and expects of us.

Substitutions/Additional Notes:

PSALM RESPONSE

Presider or Song Leader: God is always ready to forgive us, and so we sing:

Substitutions/Additional Notes:

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

• "Sing Praises to the Lord" (Walker, *SUNDAY Book of Readings/ Lectionary Adapted for Children*, Year B, Seventh Sunday in Ordinary Time, and *SUNDAY Weekly Leader Guide*, Year B, page 78, Treehaus Communications; *Music for Children's Liturgy of the Word*, Cycle B, Treehaus Communications/ O.C.P. Publications).

Substitutions/Additional Notes:

GOSPEL *Mark 2:1-12*

Today's Reader: _____

Preliminary Comments: Mark tells us a wonderful story about what happens when people wanted Jesus to heal of paralyzed man.

Substitutions/Additional Notes:



HOMILY

Focal Points: The readings today continue to focus on the healing power of God and God's willingness to forgive. Our God wants to be close to us, to have an intimate relationship with us. God doesn't give up on us easily, even though we might turn from God again and again. Jesus shares God's healing love with the paralyzed man by telling the man that his sins are forgiven. Some of the religious leaders take offense at the language Jesus used. The power to forgive sin belonged to God. They thought Jesus was making fun of God's power, but when they saw that Jesus had cured the man, then they knew that Jesus could heal the soul, heal what lies hidden in our hearts.

Children can appreciate what lies hidden. They are naturally able to believe what they cannot see with their eyes. When we reflect with them on the power of Jesus to heal, their natural sense of mystery can be a source of faith for us.

Outline/Ideas:

CREED

Presider: Let us proclaim our faith in God who is ever ready to forgive and to heal us.

• Do you believe in God, who gave Jesus the power to forgive and to heal us?

All: Yes, we believe! *Or:* Yes, we believe in God who . . .

• Do you believe in Jesus, who heals our hearts and frees us from the burden of sin?

All: Yes, we believe! *Or:* Yes, we believe in Jesus who . . .

• Do you believe in the Holy Spirit, who dwells within us and enables us to praise God in all that we do?

All: Yes, we believe! *Or:* Yes, we believe in the Holy Spirit who . . .

Substitutions/Additional Notes:

PRAYERS OF THE FAITHFUL

Presider: God wants us to know that we can trust in God to care for us when we are in need. So we offer to God our prayers: (After the children have offered their prayers, you might also add prayers that reflect the spirit of today's readings.)

+ May the leaders of all nations be guided by God's way of ruling with mercy and forgiveness, we pray.

All: Merciful God, guide us and heal us.

+ May all churches renew their trust in Jesus to heal us from whatever may paralyze us from following God's way, we pray.

All: Merciful God, guide us and heal us.

+ May each of us in our families and neighborhoods trust in Jesus to show us the way to care for one another, we pray.

All: Merciful God, guide us and heal us.

Substitutions/Additional Notes:

CLOSING PRAYER

Presider: Merciful God, we know you are always ready to forgive us and to heal us. We trust in your healing love as we gather at your Holy Table. We want to be nourished by your Sacred Food and to share in the life and work of Jesus. Give us the strength to rise up from our paralyzing ways and walk in your way. We pray in the name of Jesus, your Son and our brother.

All: Amen.

Substitutions/Additional Notes:

NOTE: Arrange to have the *Sunday Scripture Leaflets* given to the children as they are leaving Mass. Encourage the children and parents to use these leaflets and the *Word Made Flesh, Our Family Spiritual Life Journal* throughout the week.

**SEVENTH SUNDAY
IN ORDINARY TIME**

YEAR B

PRAYER OF THE DAY:

Dearest God,
we often do things
which do not please you.
Forgive us
for not loving you enough.
Teach us to understand
what is right
and what is wrong.
May we always follow Jesus,
the healer of our hearts,
who lives with you
forever and ever.

FOCUS OF THE READINGS:

The focus of the readings for today is the forgiveness of sin. The first two lines of the reading from *Isaiah* may easily be misunderstood. For this reason, we have eliminated them from the children's version. The "things of the past" refer, not to sin, but to the events of the exodus—God's mighty act of salvation. God now says, in effect, "I am now going to do an even greater thing. I am going to bring you home from your exile (in Babylon)." The second paragraph of the reading explains that they were in exile because they had sinned. But God says, "I am God, and so I forgive." The Gospel reading focuses on the power of Jesus to forgive sin. Note the focus also on the faith of the community as instrumental in this forgiveness. It is the community (represented by the four men) who express faith by bringing the paralyzed man to Jesus.

"Look not on our sins, but on the faith of your church."

FIRST READING: *Isaiah* 43:21, 24-25

This is a reading from the prophet Isaiah.

Our God says,

"My people, I created you for myself
so that you would give me praise.
But you did not call upon me
because you got tired of me.
You went on sinning and doing evil things.

"But I am the one who forgives your sins.
I am your God,
and so I forgive all you do wrong,
and I forget about your sins."

The Word of the Lord.

RESPONSE: *Psalm* 103

RESPONSE:



My God, my God, have mer - cy on me, for



all my hope is in you, my God, all my hope is in you.

VERSES:



1. I give you thanks, O God, and bless your Ho - ly Name. —

2. You take a - way our sins and bring us to new life. —
3. As par - ents love their chil - dren, you love your faith - ful peo - ple.

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION:



Sing prais - es to the Lord, al - le - lu - ia! Sing praise to greet the



Word, al - le - lu - ia! Your Word brings us heal - ing, it



brings us new life, al - le - lu - ia! Al - le - lu - ia!

GOSPEL: *Mark 2:1-12*

This is a reading from the Gospel of Mark.

When Jesus came back to Capernaum, everyone heard that he was home. Many people came to the house where he was staying so they could hear him speak. The house was so crowded that there was no room left anywhere, even in front of the door.

While Jesus was teaching all these people, four men carrying a man on a stretcher came to the house.

The man was paralyzed and could not walk. They were bringing him to see Jesus, but, because of the huge crowd, they could not get in through the door. So they climbed up onto the roof and made a hole in it.

Then they lowered the stretcher with the man on it down through the roof to the floor in front of Jesus.

When Jesus saw how much they trusted and believed in him, he said to the paralyzed man,

“My friend, your sins are forgiven.”

Some of the people who were there were teachers of the law and they thought to themselves,

“How can this man say, ‘Your sins are forgiven’? Only God can forgive sins. He is making fun of God.”

Jesus knew what they were thinking, and so he said to them,

“Which do you think is easier to do: heal this man so he can walk again or forgive his sins? But I will show you that I do have the power to forgive sins.”

So Jesus said to the paralyzed man,

“Stand up! Pick up your stretcher and walk!”

The man got up at once, picked up his stretcher and walked out in front of the crowd.

Everyone who was there saw what happened, and they praised God, saying,

“We have never seen anything like this!”

The Gospel of the Lord.

REFLECTING ON THE READINGS WITH CHILDREN:

Hopefully, the Gospel has been proclaimed with all the joy of an exciting story. Let the children really hear the details which Mark has been so careful to include (compare *Matthew 9:1-8*). This marvelous episode teaches the loving forgiveness of God and the children will enjoy it all the more if they can picture the scene vividly.

Ask the children to recall the story. Take the details slowly:

- Jesus was at home;
- there was a large crowd;
- there was no room, even in front of the door;
- Jesus was teaching;
- four men carrying a stretcher, on which was a man who was paralyzed, looked for a way to get in;
- they climbed onto the roof and made a hole in it (by taking away tiles);
- they lowered the stretcher with the man on it to the floor in front of Jesus.
- How do you think the crowd reacted?
- What did Jesus say to the man?
- Why were the teachers of the law unhappy with this?
- How do you think the man felt during this discussion between Jesus and the teachers of the law?
- Then what did Jesus say to the man?
- How do you think the man felt then? What did he do?

Deeper Reflection:

- Why did Jesus say, “Your sins are forgiven”?
- Who had faith that Jesus could heal the man?

Help the children see that it was the faith of his friends that brought this man to Jesus to be healed. When others are weak, we can help them. We need each other in the church.