



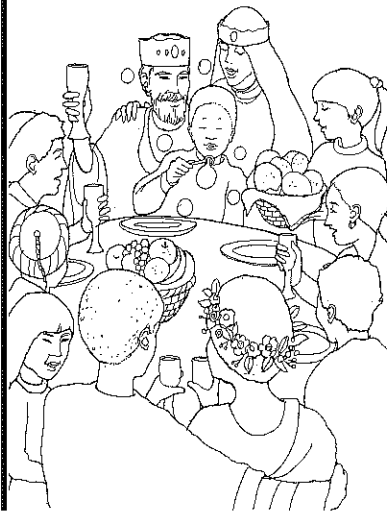
**28TH SUNDAY
IN ORDINARY TIME**

RESPONSE: Psalm 23

You are my shepherd;
you are my friend.
I want to follow
you always,
just to follow my friend.

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION:

"Everything is ready;
come to the feast."
Alleluia.
"Come to the feast."



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

We continue, during these closing weeks in Ordinary Time, to reflect on how God reigns with justice and compassion. Last week, on the 27th Sunday, we heard the parable about a vineyard owner who sent his servants and then his own son to collect his share of the harvest from the workers whom he had hired. But the workers kept the harvest for themselves and killed servants and the owner's son.

This Sunday we hear another parable, about the king who held a wedding feast for his son and when the invited guests failed to come, he sent his servants to invite whomever they met, both good and bad people.

Next Sunday we will hear how some of the Jewish leaders tried to trick Jesus about paying taxes to Caesar, considered by some people of that time to have been a god. But Jesus saw through their question and made it clear that there is only one God.

These readings continue to fill out a picture of how God relates to us and how we are to relate to God. In God's reign, we are to treat one another with justice and mercy — as God always treats us. So do we participate in establishing the reign of God here on earth, wherever we may be.

SCRIPTURE BACKGROUND

The readings today both use the graphic image of celebrating at a banquet, one of the powerful images of the reign of God, in which God's generosity is overflowing. In both readings we enjoy the sense of God's desire for intimacy with us. We are invited us to sit at God's own table, to share the food of God's own goodness. This is no ordinary meal. God invites us to a feast! Such imagery readily engages the imagination of children. They know the closeness that comes with eating together.

In the reading from Isaiah, God prepares a feast on a mountain. This God wants everyone to enjoy life. This God destroys evil and the power of death. This is one of the prophecies reflected in the Resurrection. In the parable of the wedding feast from the Gospel of Matthew, Jesus tells us the banquet God has prepared is ready for us now. Everyone is welcome.

LITURGICAL ENVIRONMENT

The environment for Ordinary Time is simple, featuring a candle, a plant or group of plants, and perhaps some incense. The liturgical color of the season is green. Since the readings this week focus on the image of a divine banquet, you might want to add some elements of a banquet celebration: perhaps some fruit, bread, and other harvest samplings. You might display the **SUNDAY**

28th Sunday in Ordinary Time • Year A

Scripture Poster which, this week, is an illustration of the Gospel, showing people of different cultures gathered at the wedding feast. The poster could be sent home with a different family each week to color for the next celebration. The book of God's word, displayed facing the assembly, is the focal point of the gathering space.

CENTERING / PROCESSIONAL SONG

You might use the same centering/gathering song for several Sundays during this season. *Suggestions:*

- "Psalm 103: The Lord Is Kind and Merciful" (*Vol. 1 Sing God A Simple Song*, #39, Treehaus Communications). Children can sing the refrain with the following gestures:

The Lord is kind . . . (Cross hands over heart.)
. . . and merciful. (Extend hands outward in a gesture of giving. Repeat gestures when line is repeated.)
Slow to anger, (Cross right hand over heart.)
rich in kindness, (Cross left hand over heart.)
the Lord is kind and merciful. (Extend hands outward again in a gesture of giving.)

- "Psalm 100: We Are God's People" (*Vol. 1 Sing God A Simple Song*, #38, Treehaus Communications). When used as a centering song, rather than as a processional, you might use the movement and gestures suggested in *Sing God a Simple Song*.

- "Sing to the Mountain" (*Vol. 2 Sing God A Simple Song*, #29, Treehaus Communications). You may wish to follow the gestures suggested in *Sing God A Simple Song*.

FIRST READING *Isaiah 25:6-10a*

The reader may be either a child or an adult; in either case, the person should know ahead of time in order to prepare carefully. This text might be read to convey joy and enthusiasm over what God promises to do.

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 might use the same psalm through several Sundays. *Suggestions:*

- "Psalm 23: You Are My Shepherd" (Walker, *SUNDAY Book of Readings/Lectionary Adapted for Children and SUNDAY Weekly Leader's Guide*, Year A, page 120, Treehaus Communications; *Music for Children's Liturgy of the Word*, Cycle A, Treehaus Communications/O.C.P. Publications).

- "Psalm 34: 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).
- "Psalm 122: I Rejoiced" (*Vol. 2 Sing God A Simple Song*, #6, Treehaus Communications).

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

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

Suggestions:

- "Everything Is Ready" (Walker, *SUNDAY Book of Readings/Lectionary Adapted for Children and SUNDAY Weekly Leader's Guide*, Year A, page 121, Treehaus Communications; *Music for Children's Liturgy of the Word*, Cycle A, Treehaus Communications/O.C.P. Publications).
- "Halle, Halle, Halle" (Caribbean, *Vol. 1 Sing God A Simple Song*, #43, Treehaus Communications).
- "Salesbury Alleluia" (*Vol. 2 Sing God A Simple Song*, #41, Treehaus Communications).

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

GOSPEL *Matthew 22:1-10*

Usually the presider reads the Gospel. This text can be read as one would tell a story, letting the dialog convey the drama of the event. Dramatic emphasis, however, should call attention to the story and not to the storyteller.

HOMILY OUTLINE

See the SUNDAY Weekly Leader Guide, Year A, pages 120 and 121, 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:

- Why do you suppose Isaiah chose the image of a banquet to say what God would do for the people? What does the idea of God preparing a banquet for people tell you about God?
- How would you describe what "God's holy mountain" might be like?
- Why do you suppose there will be all kinds of food at God's banquet table?
- How do you think Isaiah might have felt telling the people about these promises that God had made? How do you think the people felt?

Concerning the Gospel:

- What do you think it was like for the king to prepare a wedding feast for his son and find that the guests he had invited were not interested in coming? How would you feel?
- Why do you think the people who had been invited felt as they did about the king's feast?
- Why do you think the king responded as he did? What do you think justified his anger and his punishment of the people who turned down his invitation? Shouldn't they have been free not to come?
- Why do you think the king invited both good and bad people to the wedding feast? What do you think that was like, to eat with good and bad people?
- Why do you think Jesus told this story? What do you think Jesus wants us to know about God from this story?
- Why do you think it was so important for the king that the people stop their work-a-day lives and to celebrate his son's wedding?

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:

- In what way has God prepared a banquet for you in your life? How have you felt the hand of God with you, protecting you?
- What might have been some "mountain" experiences in your life, when you felt on top of the world?
- In what ways have you seen God protecting people from hurt, guiding them to a safe and bountiful mountain?

Concerning the Gospel:

- In what ways do people today refuse to accept the goodness God has to offer them? Who might be some of these people?
- What do you think keeps people from accepting God's invitation to be part of God's life?
- When might we have refused God's invitation to share in the abundance of life God offers?
- What is it like for you to have people refuse the good you have to offer them or something special you have prepared for them? What do you do in response?
- Who do you think are some of the good and bad people God invites to enjoy the feast?
- How do you feel about the way God welcomes both the good and bad people you know to share the goodness of God's life?
- What is it God wants us to celebrate when we take time from our work-a-day world?



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:

Concerning the first reading:

- What can you do to help others find "the mountain" of God's presence in their lives?
- What are some ways you can "be glad and rejoice" in what God has done for you?

Concerning the Gospel:

- What can we do to accept God's invitation?
- How can we be better guests at God's banquet?
- How can we help fill "the wedding hall" where God has prepared the feast?
- What do we need to do in order to set aside our work-a-day lives and celebrate the goodness of God?

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 prepares a banquet for us; who loves life and destroys death.
- Jesus, who comes to lead all people to God's feast table; who is the center of God's banquet celebration.
- Holy Spirit, who fills us with the abundance of God's festive life.

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 prayers based on the scripture texts. See notes for the 23rd Sunday in Ordinary Time for guidelines on preparing petitions.

In formulating the prayers, you might draw from the verbs or "action words" and biblical images in this week's readings. For example: "give a banquet," "destroy all evil," "wipe away tears," "God with us," invite, go and tell, rejoice, "come to the feast."

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 Light of the World, Our Family Spiritual Life Journal, pages 122 and 123, (Treehaus Communications, Inc.) as a way of assisting the family's deeper reflection on God's word at home.



Liturgy Celebration for October 9, 2011 • 28th Sunday in Ordinary Time • Year A

CENTERING / PROCESSIONAL SONG

• "Sing to the Mountain" (Vol. 2 *Sing God A Simple Song*, #29, Treehaus Communications).

Substitutions/Additional Notes:

OPENING PRAYER

Presider: O God, your generosity is without bounds. You prepare a banquet for us beyond our fondest dreams. You love life and want us to enjoy it with you. Guide us in the way you want us to celebrate with you. We pray in the name of Jesus.

All: Amen.

Substitutions/Additional Notes:

FIRST READING *Isaiah 25:6-10a*

Today's Reader: _____

Presider: Isaiah tells us about a wonderful surprise God has in store for us.

PSALM RESPONSE

Presider or Leader of Song: We sing with joy to the God of surprises, the God who invites us all to a grand feast.

Substitutions/Additional Notes:

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

• "Everything Is Ready" (Walker, *SUNDAY Book of Readings/Lectionary Adapted for Children and SUNDAY Weekly Leader Guide*, Year A, page 121, Treehaus Communications; *Music for Children's Liturgy of the Word*, Cycle A, Treehaus Communications/O.C.P. Publications).

Substitutions/Additional Notes:

GOSPEL *Matthew 22:1-10*

Today's Reader: _____

Preliminary Comments: Jesus tells another surprising story about what a king does when the invited guests do not come to his son's wedding feast.

28th Sunday in Ordinary Time • Year A



HOMILY

Focal Points: Our God loves life. God wants life to be as a feast. God does not want life to end in death; so God promises to destroy death that we might live in joy on God's own mountain. God sends Jesus to let everyone know that all people are welcome at God's table. We will miss out on the festive life God offers if we wrap ourselves up in our own lives, our own concerns, our own self interests. We cannot afford to refuse the life God offers. There is no other life. Our God is generous beyond our fondest dreams.

Outline:

CREED

Presider: Let us proclaim our faith in the one true God who surprises us with boundless care.

• Do you believe in God, who loves life and destroys death?

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

• Do you believe in Jesus, who came to invite all people, good and bad, to God's banquet table?

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

• Do you believe in the Holy Spirit, who fills us with the abundance of God's life.

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

PRAYERS OF THE FAITHFUL

Presider: **Our God loves all people, whether good or bad. So do we offer our prayers to God with grateful hearts.** (After the children have offered their prayers, you might also add prayers based on today's scripture texts. For example:)

+ **May all nations share with each other the abundance of God's banquet table; we pray.**

All: Generous God, hear our prayer.

+ **May our churches, as servants at God's wedding feast, invite all people, good and bad, to the banquet God has prepared; we pray.**

All: Generous God, hear our prayer.

+ **May we generously share with one another, in our homes and neighborhoods, the abundance of God's love and care; we pray.**

All: Generous God, hear our prayer.

Substitutions/Additional Notes:

CLOSING PRAYER

Presider: **O God, we are glad and we rejoice that you have invited us to your banquet. Be with us now as we gather at your Table. We come to you at your invitation, to share in holy communion the Sacred Food of your own Son, our Lord Jesus, who lives with us now and forever.**

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 *Light of the World, Our Family Spiritual Life Journal* throughout the week.

**TWENTY-EIGHTH
SUNDAY
IN ORDINARY TIME
YEAR A**

PRAYER OF THE DAY:

God our King,
you call us to share your life
and be happy with you forever.
Do not let us be deaf
to your voice
by our selfishness;
guide us along the path of love,
so that one day we will
be worthy to be with you
at heaven's great family meal,
and with Jesus, your Son,
who lives with you,
forever and ever.

FOCUS OF THE READINGS:

Both of our readings focus on the great banquet as the symbolic image of the reign of God.

Isaiah speaks of a time when we will sit at the table and enjoy the richness of God's gifts. There will be no more suffering, no violence, no evil, no tears. All will be joy, and it will last forever.

Matthew takes up this symbol in the parables of today's Gospel but applies it to the reign of God now. The focus of this parable is not the future but the invitation to share in the wedding feast now. The reign is here but not seen or accepted by all who have been invited. We are called by this parable to be ready, not only for the heavenly banquet, but for the banquet now—the reign of God among us with the eucharistic banquet as our celebration of that reality present and to come. Daily we choose to accept the invitation or to be too busy about other affairs.

FIRST READING: Isaiah 25:6-10a

This is a reading from the prophet Isaiah.

Isaiah said to the people,

“God is going to give a big banquet,
a feast with all kinds of good food.
This feast will be celebrated here
on God's holy mountain.
And God will destroy all evil
that has hurt people of every nation.
God will destroy the power of death
and wipe away the tears from everyone's eyes.
God will forgive everyone who has sinned.
This will happen
because our God said it would.

“And when it happens, people will say,

“This is the God we have been waiting for,
the God who will save us.
So let us be glad and rejoice in salvation.”

“Yes, the hand of God is here
and will stay on this holy mountain.
God will be with us forever!”

The Word of the Lord.

RESPONSE: Psalm 23

RESPONSE:

You are my shep-herd, you are my friend. I want to fol-low you
al-ways, just to fol-low my friend. (Finis)

VERSES:

1. I have all I need. You are my shep-herd, your hand is with me.
2. When path-ways are dark, you are there guid-ing me, keep-ing me safe.
3. You give me to eat. You make me wel-come, you fill me with joy.
4. Your good-ness I know. Your love will be with me all of my life.

