

# Children

For Primary School Children

**Reading**: This story celebrates the extraordinary generosity of our heavenly Father, represented by the landowner in the parable. He is concerned that all his children are cared for and that no one is left without what they need to live with dignity.

**Recognising**: Can you remember when someone showed you a kindness that you weren't expecting or you felt you didn't deserve?

Draw or write about this Jesus person who has shown you great forgiveness?

**Responding**: We thank God for the people who love and care for us.

We are sorry for the times we complain instead of being thankful. We pray for people who do not have a job and find it hard to look after their families.

**Resting**: 'my friend'.

**Reflecting**: When we love each other like brothers and sisters, we are happy when good things happen to others, so there is no room for jealousy.

**Reaction**: **This week I will try to show love by..**

LECTIO DIVINA

# Living the Word

A WEEK'S JOURNEY WITH THE SUNDAY GOSPEL

**Year A - 25th Sunday in Ordinary Time**

A companion for encountering Jesus' love in everyday life.




## Gospel: Matthew 20:1-16

You are invited to **read** the Gospel passage slowly, attentively, respectfully and reverently as a gift of God.

Jesus told this parable to his disciples: 'The kingdom of heaven is like a landowner going out at daybreak to hire workers for his vineyard. He made an agreement with the workers for one denarius a day, and sent them to his vineyard.

Going out at about the third hour he saw others standing idle in the market place and said to them, "You go to my vineyard too and I will give you a fair wage." So they went. At about the sixth hour and again at about the ninth hour, he went out and did the same.

Then at about the eleventh hour he went out and found more men standing round, and he said to them, "Why have you been standing here idle all day?"

"Because no-one has hired us," they answered. He said to them, "You go into my vineyard too."

In the evening, the owner of the vineyard said to his bailiff, "Call the workers and pay them their wages, starting with the last arrivals and ending with the first." So those who were hired at about the eleventh hour came forward and received one denarius each. When the first came, they expected to get more, but they too received one denarius each.

They took it, but grumbled to the landowner. "The men who came last," they said, "have done only one hour, and you have treated them the same as us, though we have done a heavy day's work in the heat."

He answered one of them and said, "My friend, I am not being unjust to you; did we not agree on one denarius? Take your earnings and go. I choose to pay the last-comer as much as I pay you. Have I no right to do what I like with my own? Why be envious because I am generous?"

Thus the last will be first, and the first, last.'

## Background to Gospel passage

**Where does it happen?** Jesus has left Galilee and is now in Judea, on the far side of the River Jordan, making his way steadily towards Jerusalem.

**When does it happen?** Jerusalem is now on

the horizon. Jesus is conscious that his time with his disciples is limited, and he is determined to make the most of the time that remains to prepare and form them for the continuation of his mission.

**Who is there?** It seems that Jesus is alone with his closest disciples. In this more intimate setting, he has the opportunity to speak with them, challenge them, and deepen their understanding of what it means to follow him.

**What happens?** The parable teaches that God's generosity is not based on human ideas of fairness or deservingness. Like the landowner who gives the same wage to all the workers, God wants everyone to have enough to live with dignity. We are encouraged to celebrate the blessings others receive rather than becoming jealous or resentful, because God's love and generosity are abundant and available to everyone.

## **Recognising Stage** (Meditate)

- ***Trust the Holy Spirit** at work within you.*
- ***Enter the Gospel:** When have I experienced something similar? What does it remind me of?*
- ***Let the Gospel and your memories speak to each other.***
- ***Notice where you encounter Jesus' loving presence today.***
- *If needed, **use the following prompts to awaken memories.***

**"These last have done only one hour's work, and you have treated them the same as us"?**
Can you recognise within yourself those moments when you have felt envious of others because they seemed to have received so much, even though, in your eyes, they did not deserve it? Can you hear yourself joining the complaint of the workers?
Or
**"Those who were hired at the eleventh hour came forward and received one denarius each."**
Can you remember the deep sense of joy and gratitude that filled your heart when you received such an unexpected and undeserved gift of kindness and love?
Or
**"The landowner saw others standing idle in the marketplace and said to them, 'you go and work in my vineyard too'."**
Can you recall an occasion when you reached out to someone who was still waiting, perhaps forgotten or overlooked by others, and offered them an opportunity to participate, to contribute, and to experience their own dignity and worth?

**What memories come back to you? Listen deeply to your own life experience.**

**Where was it? When was it? Who was there? What happened?**

(Some might find it helpful to journal their memory.)

**I remember the time when…**

*Gen.25:16, 'Truly God was in this place and I didn't see it,' until now!*

## Prayer Response

***You are invited to respond in your own words, and where possible, together with some words from the passage.** Let the prayer flow from your recognition of the passage, or any part of it, in life experience. You might find it helpful to journal your prayer.*

*Tell your Father how this passage and the memories it has evoked have awakened gratitude for the presence of Jesus in your life and in the world. Heavenly Father, I thank you…*

*The Gospel is always a call to repentance as well. Share with the Father your sorrow for the times when you, or a community you belong to, have fallen short in living this Gospel. Heavenly Father, I am sorry for...*

*Ask your Father for the help you need to live the Gospel more fully—in yourself, your family, community, Church and world. Heavenly Father, please give us the help we need to…*



**You are invited to deepen this prayer experience by resting your heart silently in God's presence and love. The quiet repetition of a word or phrase from the passage may help you on this journey to greater stillness and greater silence, e.g. "my friend".**

## An Invitation to Reflect

*From your journey with the passage in meditation and prayer, what new insight or understanding have you received about the true meaning of love or some expression of it, into what it means to be fully human, and how God's kingdom is being made present among us today?*

*Rest in this truth, hold it in prayer and trust that it will bear fruit in your life.*

## Thought for the week

*The root of all envy is the failure to see and to love the other as a brother or sister.*

### Reaction

*With God's help I will try to live this Gospel by....*