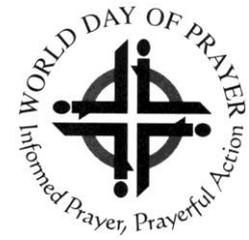


Friday 3rd March 2017
WORLD DAY OF PRAYER
‘Am I being unfair to you?’
CHILDREN’S SERVICE

(It is essential that the Leader’s Notes are used)¹



Pupil 1: Welcome to our children’s service. We are here to find out how God wants us to be fair and kind to everyone. The World Day of Prayer committee in the Philippines have written the materials for this year.

Pupil 2: Let’s start our service today by reminding ourselves about the kindness Jesus showed to others. Let’s all stand and sing together:

Song: Jesus’ hands were kind hands²

Reader 1: Please sit down. Let’s close our eyes and pray

Pupil 1: God thank you for our brothers and sisters in the Philippines. We ask you to be with us in this service and help us to learn about your kindness to us. We pray that you would help us to show that same kindness to others around us. Amen

Reader 2: We are now going to hear the story from the Bible. Do you know what a parable is? Jesus often told stories to people to help them to think carefully about his message. Can you remember any stories that Jesus told?³

Reader 1: This is the story that Jesus told in Matthew 20: 1-16.⁴

Reader 2: A landowner had a vineyard and when the grapes were all ripe he needed lots of help to gather them in. He went to the marketplace early in the morning⁵ and there he found people who were looking for work.⁶ He offered to pay them one silver coin in return for their work and they were happy with this wage. He took them to his field and they began to work.

Reader 1: The sun soon came up and the day was hot. It was hard work picking the grapes and the landowner could see that there was a lot of work to do. At mid-day⁷ when the sun was at its hottest he went back to the marketplace and he found more workers who were standing around hoping to be hired. He offered them a fair price for the work and they agreed to come.⁸

Reader 2: Even now that there was more help there was still a lot to do. At 3 o’clock⁹ the landowner looked at all the hot and sweaty workers and decided that he really should hire more help. He went back to the market place again and he found some more people looking for work. Again he told them that he would pay a fair price for their work and they agreed to come.¹⁰

Reader 1: At last it was 5 o’clock¹¹ and there was just one hour to go before the workers could stop working and receive their pay. They felt tired but were happy that they had found work that day and could buy a good meal for their families. However, the landowner made one last visit to the marketplace. He found people still standing around. When he asked them why they were not working they told him that nobody had hired them that day. This meant that they would not be paid and would have no money to buy food. The landowner was kind so he told them to come and work for him and they joined the other workers in the field.¹²

Reader 2: The workers all stood in a line with their baskets of grapes in front of them.¹³ Some had been picking since early that morning. Their backs were aching and they were very tired but they knew that at last they were going to be paid. The landowner started to pay the workers. He began with the workers who had just started to work and he gave them one silver coin. He then went to those who had worked from 3 o’clock and he paid them one silver coin. Next he went to the workers who had joined at midday and gave them one silver coin. Last of all he went to the workers who had been working all day and gave them what he had agreed to pay

them – one silver coin! When they realised that they were being paid exactly the same as the people who had just started to work they started to grumble – they complained to the landowner saying that it wasn't fair.¹⁴

Reader 1: The landowner reminded the workers that he hadn't cheated them. They had agreed to work for a fair price and he had paid them exactly what had been agreed. He also told them that the money was his to do with as he liked. If he chose to be generous then that was not their business. He had wanted to show kindness to people and they should not be jealous because he had chosen to do this.¹⁵

Reader 2: Jesus was telling this story to help his followers to understand more about the Kingdom of Heaven. He was helping them to see that God wants to include everyone and that He is generous with His love. He even wants to include those who don't immediately respond to His call – because He loves them too.

Pupil 1: God is not unfair – He is kind, but our world often is unfair. God asks us to help Him by showing the same kindness He has towards others. He wants us to notice when others are being treated unfairly and to do what we can to help them.

Pupil 2: This song helps us to think about that. Let's stand together and sing.

Song: We can do good¹⁶

Offering (*an offering for WDP can be uplifted at this point, if applicable*) It might be nice to have the song **Part of your plan**¹⁷ playing in the background while the collection is being uplifted.

Reader 1: Please sit down. Now let us pray together for all the people who need our kindness but especially remembering those in the Philippines who are treated unjustly.

Pupil 1: Dear God, thank You for the story we have heard today which shows us just how generous you are. We know You want us to show kindness to others too.

Pupil 2: Help us to leave this service today remembering Your love for all of us. May we notice when things are unfair and help us to be strong enough to speak out for justice. In Jesus' name – Amen

Reader 2: Let's stand and sing:

Song: When I needed a neighbour¹⁸

*Grateful thanks go to Anne Smart, Biggar,
who adapted the service for use in Scotland.*