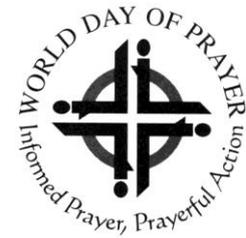


Friday 3rd March 2017
WORLD DAY OF PRAYER
‘Am I being unfair to?’
LEADER’S NOTES¹ for CHILDREN’S SERVICE



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 hands ² CH4 351; JP 134

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(Pause for answers)

⁴Ask for volunteers to help act out the story. Choose one to be the ‘landowner.’ Some simple props will help those who are acting:

- a drawstring bag with ‘silver coins’ (could be chocolate coins)
- a cloak for the landowner
- a large sheet of paper for each ‘worker’
- some paper ‘grapes’ in a basket that can be stuck on each worker’s sheet
- a large paper clock with moveable hands to show the time
- ask the “workers” to go to one side of the room and introduce the landowner

Reader 1: This is the story that Jesus told in Matthew 20: 1-16.

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 morning ⁵(show time on clock) and there he found people who were looking for work. 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.

⁶(Choose one child to be the first worker in the field. They should then start ‘working’ by collecting grapes (only one at a time!) and putting them on their individual sheet. They would probably find it more fun if the basket was further away and they had to run back and forth to collect the grapes.)

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-day ⁷(show time on clock) 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(Ask the landowner to choose another child to come and start work.)

Reader 2: Even now that there was more help there was still a lot to do. At 3 o’clock ⁹(show time on clock) 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(Ask the landowner to choose another child to come and start work.)

Reader 1: At last it was 5 o'clock ¹¹(*show time on clock*) 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 landlord made one last visit to the marketplace.¹¹ 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(*Invite the last worker to come and start collecting grapes but stop all the work when they have collected just one grape.*)

Reader 2: ¹³(*Ask the workers to line up holding their finished 'work'.*) The workers all stood in a line with their baskets of grapes in front of them. 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(*Ask the children what the owner had agreed with the first worker. Had they been paid what they had agreed? Why do they think the owner gave just as much money to the last workers? Why did he show such kindness? Whose money was it? Could he do what he liked with his money?*)

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(*Ask the 'actors' to sit back down.*)

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 good ¹⁶ *Fischy Music* (<http://www.fischy.com> OR own choice)

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 *Fischy music* (see ¹⁶ above) 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 *JP 275; CH4 544*

Optional Activity

Leader: I'm sure you all know when things are fair and not fair. Let's think of some:

Directions: Read each statement aloud. The children will decide if the scenario is fair or not fair. Have a scale marked on a long strip of paper 1-10 and seek two volunteers to hold this up. (1 being really fair 10 being totally unfair). When you read out the statement the children stand along the scale. Encourage them to make up their own minds and not just follow their friends.

1. You take the last biscuit from the biscuit tin.
2. Everyone passes the ball missing out the weakest player on your team.
3. You allow someone to skip in line in front of you.
4. You only share with children who have a birthday in the same month as you.
5. You wash the dishes and your brother or sister dries them.
6. Your brother shares his toys with you and then you make him pick them up all by himself.
7. Only kids with blue eyes can earn prizes in your class.
8. You save a seat for your best friend every day in the lunch hall.
9. You change the rules in the middle of the game because your team is losing.
10. You find some money and don't know whose it is, so you keep it.
11. You play by the rules even though you don't like one of them.
12. When your friend goes to the movies, he always sneaks in to see another movie when the one he paid for is over.
13. You can't find your pencil and I have an extra that looks just like yours, so you take it.
15. Your team for 8 year olds is one player short and your 10-year-old brother is little for his age. You give him a top and let him play.

NOTE: Some of these scenarios may not have a clear-cut answer, so play along and have fun processing them with the children.

The children could also learn this Memory Verse:

Micah 6:8

‘No, the Lord has told us what is good.
What He requires of us is this:
to do what is just,
to show constant love,
and to live in humble fellowship with our God.’

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