

Prepare with Prayer

*I offer you my heart, LORD God,
and I trust you.
Don't disappoint any
of your worshipers.
You will show the right path
to all who worship you,
They will have plenty,
and then their children
will receive the land.*

Psalm 25:1, 3,
12-13

Today's Readings

Jonah 3:1-5, 10

Psalm 25:1-5abc, 6, 7cd, 8-9

Mark 1:14-20

*God wants our help in bringing people
into the kingdom.*

Scripture Background

In today's First Reading, we meet Jonah. Called to preach to the hated Ninevites, Jonah lands in all kinds of trouble while trying to escape his call. Today's excerpt from his story narrates what happens when Jonah finally fulfills his mission. Much to his dismay, he becomes an instrument of his enemies' salvation!

The Book of Jonah was a fictional tale written to challenge strong nationalistic sentiments among fifth-century Jews. Its central, divinely inspired message is that God's ultimate plan is to save everyone, and those Jews who believe that God cares for only one nation on earth, *theirs*, are grossly mistaken. The ancient tale of Jonah thus laid a foundation for the message of universal salvation that Jesus later would preach.

In today's Gospel, Jesus announces the coming of the kingdom of God and invites the first disciples to help him spread the word. The kingdom is not so much a place as a state of mind. The reach of God's kingdom is extended each time anyone learns about the one true God and consciously decides to live under God's rule.

Major spurts of growth occurred when Jesus began his public career and again when his death and resurrection released the power of the Spirit upon the earth. According to the Gospels, the reign of God will become final and complete at the end of time, when Jesus comes again.

Fishing in the Sea of Galilee

The Sea of Galilee, where Peter, Andrew, James, and John plied their trade, was actually a freshwater lake. While some fishermen simply stood along its shores singly casting small nets, others fished with larger nets from boats that could go wherever the fish swam. The four men destined to become apostles belonged to the latter group.

Compared to large ocean-going vessels of the day, their boats were quite simple and small. One boat, operated by the wind power of a single sail, was long enough for only four or five men to stand side-by-side while hoisting a net into the sea. Men in another boat sailing parallel to it handled the other side of the net. Much coordinated effort was required to land a big catch.

How interesting that four men destined to roam well beyond their native land were experienced boatmen! Interesting, too, that they were experienced at teamwork, which surely helped the growth of the early Church.

Relationship to Children

The purpose of today's Homily is to simplify for children a beautiful truth found in the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*: "The witness of a Christian life and good works done in a supernatural spirit have great power to draw men to the faith and to God" (2044).

If you wish and if time permits, end the Homily with a little game. Show the children an empty tin can, and say you want their help preparing a "can of bait" for a child who wants to be a "fisher of people."

On slips of paper, write an assortment of kind remarks (*May I help you with that? Would you like to play with us? Do you want some of my candy?*) and unkind ones (*Go away; I don't want to play with you! Go get your*

This Week's Preparation

In the worship area, on a table draped with a green cloth, place:

- a lectionary
- a candle
- if available, a few objects to represent the seashore and/or the fishing trade (seashells, fishnet, hooks, lures, and so forth)

For the Homily, have ready one of these options:

- empty tin can; slips of paper with remarks written on them (see Relationship to Children)
- personal story or a speaker

own; this is mine!). Read the papers one by one and have the children tell you which ones belong in the bait can and which ones in the garbage can.

Another option is to end the Homily with a story about yourself, in which you tell of a time when others' kindness to you strengthened your faith in God. Or have a guest speaker briefly address the group. Former missionaries usually can tell stories of people who came into the Church because of kindnesses shown to them in Jesus' name; likewise, converts to the faith sometimes can explain their conversions in those terms.

Children's Leaflet

Making a family poster reminds everyone in the family of the Christian mission. Identifying the qualities that make a good helper is the basis for the children's activity. this week.

Music

See page 62 for more information.

Gathering: "Follow Me," by Anna Vagle

Psalm: "Psalm 25: Teach Me Your Ways" by David Haas (*Singing Our Faith*, GIA)

Gospel Acclamation: "Alleluia" by Steve Angrisano

Dear Jesus,
I am responding to your request for help. I would like to be part of your mission.

I am: (color the hearts that apply)

<input type="checkbox"/> patient	<input type="checkbox"/> kind	<input type="checkbox"/> loyal	<input type="checkbox"/> humble	<input type="checkbox"/> generous
<input type="checkbox"/> respectful	<input type="checkbox"/> gentle	<input type="checkbox"/> caring	<input type="checkbox"/> friendly	<input type="checkbox"/> musical
<input type="checkbox"/> athletic	<input type="checkbox"/> creative	<input type="checkbox"/> mechanical	<input type="checkbox"/> prayerful	

other (describe) _____

I can: (color the hands that apply)

<input type="checkbox"/> work with a team	<input type="checkbox"/> cooperate with adults
<input type="checkbox"/> make things with my hands	<input type="checkbox"/> clean my room
<input type="checkbox"/> speak or sing in front of a group	<input type="checkbox"/> work with technology
<input type="checkbox"/> share my toys	<input type="checkbox"/> cook a meal

other (describe) _____

I will share my faith when I:

(describe) _____

(describe) _____

Sincerely yours,

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Jesus wants help with his mission. You have already been accepted for the job! Use this cover letter to identify your abilities. Then "apply" yourself. Use your skills to share your faith!

Order of worship

Gathering

As the children enter the worship space, sing or play the suggested song or any hymn that uses fishing and/or seashore imagery.

Opening Prayer

Leader: Let us bow our heads for our Opening Prayer. Please repeat each line after me.

Leader: Lord, you have called me by name.

Children: Lord, you have called me by name.

Leader: You have asked me to follow you.

Children: You have asked me to follow you.

Leader: Lead me on, O Lord. Amen, amen!

Children: Lead me on, O Lord. Amen, amen!

Light the candle and begin the First Reading.

First Reading: Jonah 3:1-5,10

Leader: Where is the last place on earth that you would want to be right now? (Give children time to consider and, possibly, to answer this question.) For the prophet Jonah, that place was Nineveh, because people lived there who were great enemies of his people. Yet guess where God wanted Jonah to go and preach?

At the end of the reading:

Leader: The word of the Lord

Children: Thanks be to God.

Psalm: Psalm 25:4-5abc, 6, 7cd, 8-9

The Psalm may be either sung or spoken. Before beginning the Psalm, sing or announce the response. (If using a sung response, see Music.)

Leader: Teach me your ways, O Lord.

Children: Teach me your ways, O Lord.

Gospel Acclamation

Invite the children to stand. Sing the suggested Acclamation or another familiar one. If you choose not to sing the Acclamation, proceed to the Proclamation of the Gospel.

Proclaim the Gospel: Mark 1:14-20

Leader: In the First Reading, we saw that God sent Jonah all by himself to preach to Nineveh. But many years later, when it was time for Jesus to go out and preach, God wanted Jesus to have some help. Let's listen to how Jesus found his helpers.

Leader: The Lord be with you.

Children: And with your spirit.

Leader: A reading from the Gospel of Mark.

Children: † Glory to you, O Lord.

At the end of the reading:

Leader: The Gospel of the Lord.

Children: Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.

Homily

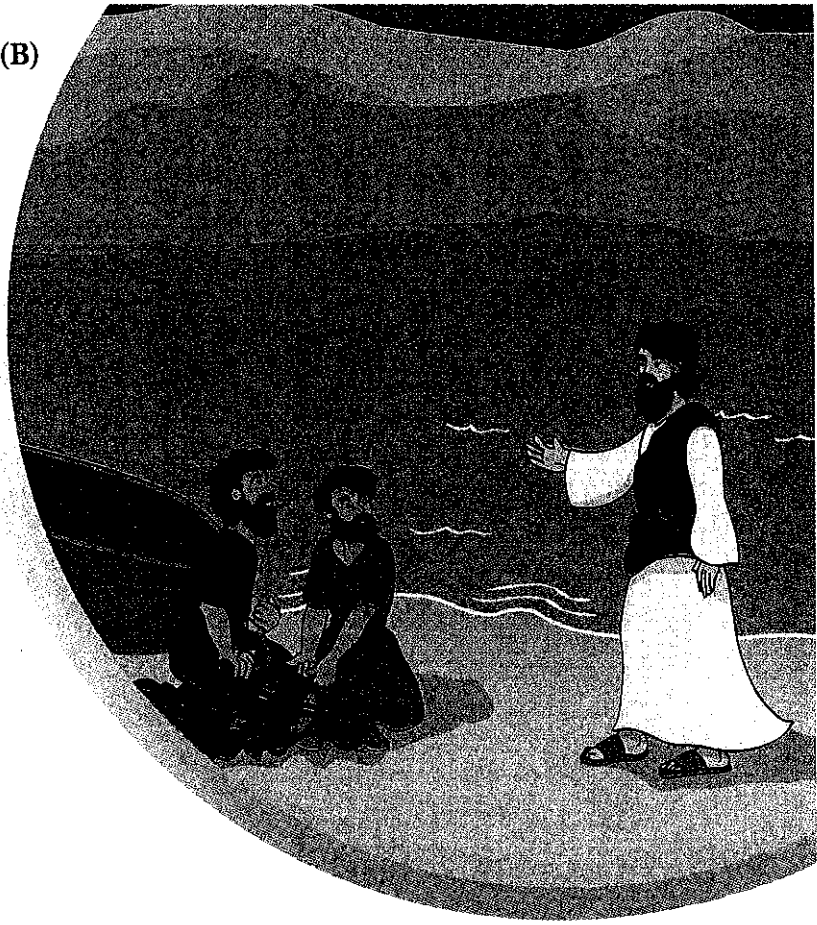
Use the following questions and ideas to prepare your Homily.

- The First Reading shows us that God calls *everyone* to the kingdom of heaven, even people we might not like.
- The Gospel shows us that Jesus wants our help in bringing people into the kingdom.
- We bring people into the kingdom in much the same way that people catch fish.
 - What tools are used to catch fish? (nets, poles, bait)
 - When people fish with poles, what do they use for bait? (worms, flies, etc.)
 - These things are used because fish like them. Flies and worms *attract* fish.
 - Do flies and worms attract people? No, but kindness always does!
- Every time you show people kindness for Jesus' sake, you attract them to Jesus.

(Time permitting, end the Homily with the game described in Relationship to Children.)

Profession of Faith

Leader: Please stand now as we profess our faith. Please repeat each line after me.



Leader: I believe in God almighty.

Children: I believe in God almighty.

Leader: Loving Creator of heaven and earth.

Children: Loving Creator of heaven and earth.

Leader: I believe in Jesus the Lord.

Children: I believe in Jesus the Lord.

Leader: Son of God and son of Mary.

Children: Son of God and son of Mary.

Leader: I believe in God the Holy Spirit.

Children: I believe in God the Holy Spirit.

Leader: Who gathers together the people of God.

Children: Who gathers together the people of God.

Leader: I believe in the holy, Catholic church.

Children: I believe in the holy, Catholic church.

Leader: The people of God, called to life eternal.

Children: The people of God, called to life eternal.

Prayer of the Faithful

Leader: In today's Gospel, Jesus asked the first apostles for help in bringing people into God's kingdom. Jesus wants our help, too, so let us begin by praying for all those who most need our prayers. To each petition, please respond, "Your kingdom come, O Lord."

Children: Your kingdom come, O Lord.

Leader: For the leaders of the Church, that they will be strong in preaching God's message, let us pray to the Lord.

Children: Your kingdom come, O Lord.

Leader: For all of us, that we will attract people to God with the goodness of our lives, let us pray to the Lord.

Children: Your kingdom come, O Lord.

Leader: For all people everywhere, that they will believe the good news and enter the kingdom of God, let us pray to the Lord.

Children: Your kingdom come, O Lord.

Invite the children to add their own petitions.

Leader: Let us pray. Our Father in heaven, holy is your name. May your kingdom come, may your will be done on earth as it is in heaven! This is our hope; this is our prayer, through Christ our Lord.

Children: Amen.

Return to Assembly

The Liturgy of the Word ends with the Prayer of the Faithful. Prepare the children to return to the assembly in a respectful manner. Remind them to take a leaflet home and share it with their families.

**63B THIRD SUNDAY
IN ORDINARY TIME**

FIRST READING

Jonah 3:1-5, 10 The Ninevites renounced their evil ways.

A reading from the book of the prophet Jonah

The LORD spoke to Jonah and said,
"Jonah, go to that great city of Nineveh and speak to them for me."

Jonah obeyed the LORD and went to Nineveh.
The city was so large that it took three days just to walk through it.
After walking for a day, Jonah told the people,
"Forty days from now Nineveh will be destroyed."

They believed God's message
and they set a time when they would all go without eating.
Then everyone in the city, no matter who they were,
also dressed in sackcloth.

When God saw that the people had stopped doing evil things,
he had pity on them and did not destroy them, as he had said.

The word of the Lord.

RESPONSORIAL PSALM

Psalm 25:4-5abc, 6 and 7cd, 8-9

R₁. (4a) Teach me your ways, O Lord.

**Show me your paths
and teach me to follow;
guide me by your truth
and instruct me.
You keep me safe.**

R₂. Teach me your ways, O Lord.

**Please, LORD, remember,
you have always
been patient and kind.
Show how truly kind you are
and remember me.**

R₃. Teach me your ways, O Lord.

**You are honest and merciful,
and you teach sinners
how to follow your path.
You lead humble people
to do what is right
and to stay on your path.**

R₄. Teach me your ways, O Lord.

SECOND READING

1 Thessalonians 5:16-24 May you all be kept blameless, spirit, soul, and body, for the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.

A reading from the first letter of Paul to the Thessalonians

Brothers and sisters:

Always be joyful and never stop praying.

Whatever happens, keep thanking God because of Jesus Christ.

This is what God wants you to do.

Don't turn away God's Spirit or ignore prophecies.

Put everything to the test.

Accept what is good and don't have anything to do with evil.

**I pray that God, who gives peace,
will make you completely holy.**

**And may your spirit, soul, and body be kept healthy and faultless
until our Lord Jesus Christ returns.**

**The one who chose you can be trusted,
and he will do this.**

The word of the Lord.

ALLELUIA

Isaiah 61:1

R/. Alleluia, alleluia.

**The Spirit of the Lord now upon me
has sent me to bring good news to the poor.**

R/. Alleluia, alleluia.

ALLELUIA

Mark 1:15

R/. Alleluia, alleluia.

**The kingdom of God is near:
repent and believe the good news!**

R/. Alleluia, alleluia.

GOSPEL

Mark 1:14-20 Repent and believe the good news.

✠ **A reading from the holy gospel according to Mark**

After John was arrested,

Jesus went to Galilee and told the good news that comes from God.

He said, "The time has come!

God's kingdom will soon be here.

Turn back to God and believe the good news!"

As Jesus was walking along the shore of Lake Galilee,

he saw Simon and his brother Andrew.

They were fishermen and were casting their nets into the lake.

Jesus said to them, "Come with me!

I will teach you how to bring in people instead of fish."

Right then the two brothers dropped their nets and went with him.

Jesus walked on and soon saw James and John, the sons of Zebedee.

They were in a boat, mending their nets.

At once Jesus asked them to come with him.

**They left their father in the boat with the hired workers
and went with him.**

The gospel of the Lord.