



Sixth Sunday in Ordinary Time, Cycle A

Readings & Background

This Sunday's Readings: Theme of the Sunday:

It was said to our Ancestors. But I say this to you.

The first reading tells us that we are free and we are accountable for our actions.

The second reading speaks of the wisdom of God, so different from human wisdom;

The gospel gives some examples of this. The disciples do not ask Jesus to explain what he says. They believe in the **love of the Father** and they know that the way he shows them is the way to life.

First Reading Sirach 15:15–20

The eyes of God see all he has made.

Responsorial Psalm Psalm 119:1–2,4–5, 17–18,33–34

Happy are those who walk in the way of the Lord.

Second Reading 1 Corinthians 2:6–10

God has revealed this wisdom to us through the Spirit.

Gospel Reading Matthew 5:17–37

| Doctrinal Content: | Purpose of this session |
|---------------------------|---|
| Gospel | Matthew 5:17-37 I have not come to abolish the law and the prophets but to fulfill them. |
| Scripture | Jesus came to fulfil the law |
| Profession of Faith | Jesus is our teacher (#561) |
| Church | Eucharist: Our Father |
| Sacraments/liturgy | |
| Christian living/morality | Signs of Jesus' followers: keeping the commandments. Following Jesus by keeping the commandments. |
| Prayer/worship | Prayers of the faithful (with emphasis on praying for peace) |

Background on the Gospel Reading

Matthew continues the **Sermon on the Mount** with a three-part **instruction by Jesus on the Way of Life** in the kingdom of heaven.

Today's reading is part one and **deals with the Law**.

Part two deals with **worship and religious practice and contains the Lord's Prayer**.

Part three deals **with trusting God** and deeds of loving service to our neighbour.

When Matthew speaks of **"the Law and the prophets"** he means the **whole Scripture**. When the Messiah brings the fullness of the kingdom none of scripture will be done away with. Instead it will be fulfilled. Matthew's **Jesus does not overturn the Law of Moses**, nor does he set his followers free from the Law. He requires his followers to **go beyond the Law by doing more than the Law requires**.

The Law **condemned murder**. Jesus **condemns anger**.

The Law **condemned adultery**. Jesus condemns **even lustful looks**.

As Jewish Christians who had always been faithful to the Law Matthew's community need a way to understand the difference Jesus and the kingdom he brings have made.

They affirmed that God had always been at work in history through **"the Law and the prophets."**

But **God's work goes beyond that** to be embodied by the Messiah who reveals the definitive will of God. The written scriptures and their interpretation in tradition are **surpassed by Jesus whose life and teaching are the definitive revelation of the will of God**.

6th Sunday, Year A

Forgiving and Forgiven

Matthew 5:17-37



Theme: Forgiving and forgiven.

Object: A Sunday offering envelope

Scripture: Therefore, if you are offering your gift at the altar and there remember that your brother has something against you, leave your gift there in front of the altar. First go and be reconciled to your brother; then come and offer your gift. Matthew 5:23 (NIV)

I'm sure you all know what this is. (Hold up your offering envelope.) It is my offering envelope. Every week I bring an offering as a gift to God -- it is a very important part of our worship. Most of you have probably brought your offering today too.

There are many places in the Bible that teach us the **importance of presenting an offering to God**, but the truth is that God is more interested **in what's in our heart than he is in what's in our hand**.

In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus said, "**You have heard that it was said to people long ago, 'You must not murder. If you commit murder, you will be subject to judgment.'** But I say, **even if you are angry with someone, you are subject to judgment.**"

He went on to say that you will face God's judgment if you call someone a bad name or curse them.

What did Jesus say we should do if we are **guilty of any of these things**?

He said, "If you are presenting your offering to God and you remember that you have said something that hurt another person, leave your gift at the altar and **go and ask forgiveness from that person**. Then come back and offer your gift to God." Before we give our offering today, perhaps we should ask ourselves a few questions.

- Have I been angry with someone this week?
- Have I had any arguments lately?
- Have I called someone a bad name?
- Have I said something about someone that wasn't true?



If so, **we should ask God to forgive us and we should go to the person we have hurt and ask them to forgive us**. When we have done that, God will be pleased with our offering.

"Forgive" is a great old hymn written by Corinne Williams.

The first verse of this hymn would be a good prayer for us today.

***Forgive the things I've said in haste, O Lord, today,
As evening shadows fold again the light away;
O take away the sting and hurt from hearts, I pray;
And heal the wounded spirits, Lord, in Thine own way!***

Heavenly Father, we would not think of committing murder, but we sometimes say things in anger that hurt other people. Help us to guard against hateful and hurtful words and forgive us as we ask those we have hurt to forgive us as well. In Jesus' name we pray, Amen.

Sixth Sunday in Ordinary Time, Cycle A

Making the Connection (Grades 1, 2, and 3)



Gospel Reading Matthew 5:17–37

I have not come to abolish the law and the prophets but to fulfill them.

Children at this age consider the **right course of action** to be the one that **allows them to avoid punishment**. Jesus teaches us that obeying God's Law of love is to be done not just to avoid punishment but to show **love to others**.

Materials Needed

- None

Preparation for Sunday Scripture Readings



1. Draw an octagon on the board (the shape of a STOP sign, with eight sides)
2. Ask if any of the children recognize this shape. Explain that the shape is an octagon meaning that it has eight sides.
3. Tell the children that this shape is also used for a traffic sign and that it is colored red and has one word on it. (a STOP sign)
4. ***We have STOP signs and other traffic signs to protect us and to keep us safe. These signs remind us that we have laws to obey.***
5. Write the word *LAW* on the board. Ask for volunteers to explain what a law is. (a rule that we must obey)
6. Say: ***In this Sunday's Gospel, Jesus talks about the Law that God has given us and how he has come to fulfill this Law.***
7. Read aloud Matthew 5:17–37.
8. Ask: ***What does it mean to fulfill something?*** (to make it complete)
9. Say: ***Jesus tells us in this Sunday's Gospel that the best way to understand God's Law of love, is to listen to Jesus and to live like him.***
10. Conclude this time together by praying the psalm for this Sunday.

Responsorial Psalm Ps 119:1-2, 4-5, 17-18, 33-34

R. (1b) Blessed are they who follow the law of the Lord!

Blessed are they whose way is blameless,
who walk in the law of the LORD.
Blessed are they who observe his decrees,
who seek him with all their heart. ***R.***

You have commanded that your precepts
be diligently kept.
Oh, that I might be firm in the ways
of keeping your statutes! ***R***

Be good to your servant, that I may live
and keep your words.
Open my eyes, that I may consider
the wonders of your law. ***R.***

Instruct me, O LORD, in the way of your
statutes,
that I may exactly observe them.
Give me discernment, that I may observe your
law and keep it with all my heart.

Sixth Sunday in Ordinary Time, Cycle A

Making the Connection Grades 4, 5, and 6)

Gospel Reading Matthew 5:17–37

I have not come to abolish the law and the prophets but to fulfill them.

Children at this age are building their vocabulary with larger words. Jesus says that he has come, not to abolish the Law, but to fulfill it. We understand this Gospel better if we understand the meaning of the word *abolish*.

Materials Needed

- None

Preparation for Sunday Scripture Readings

1. Ask the children if they know what an abolitionist was. **(someone opposed to the institution of slavery; someone who wanted to do away with the institution of slavery)**
2. Ask the children if they know what the Emancipation Proclamation was. **(Abraham Lincoln's proclamation that effectively abolished the institution of slavery)**
(this references "American" History - we can however refer to and relate it to our own history in south Africa.)
3. Write the word - abolish on the board and ask if someone can define it. **(to completely eliminate something; to do away with)**
4. **When Jesus began teaching, some people thought that he had come to abolish the Law of Moses that the Jewish people had been following for centuries.**

In this Sunday's Gospel, Jesus explains what he has come to do.

5. Invite volunteers to read aloud Matthew 5:17–37.
6. What did Jesus say about abolishing the Law? **(He explains that he did not come to abolish the Law but to fulfill it.)**
7. Jesus teaches us that we fulfill the Law by going beyond the minimum requirements and by responding with love in all that we do.
8. How long does Jesus say the Law will remain with us? **(until heaven and earth pass away; forever)**
9. Conclude this time together by praying the psalm for this Sunday.

Responsorial Psalm Ps 119:1-2, 4-5, 17-18, 33-34

R. (1b) Blessed are they who follow the law of the Lord!

Blessed are they whose way is blameless,
who walk in the law of the LORD.
Blessed are they who observe his decrees,
who seek him with all their heart. **R.**

You have commanded that your precepts
be diligently kept.
Oh, that I might be firm in the ways
of keeping your statutes! **R**

Be good to your servant, that I may live
and keep your words.
Open my eyes, that I may consider
the wonders of your law. **R.**

Instruct me, O LORD, in the way of your
statutes,
that I may exactly observe them.
Give me discernment, that I may observe your
law and keep it with all my heart.

Sixth Sunday in Ordinary Time, Cycle A

Making the Connection (Grades 7, 8 and 9)

Gospel Reading Matthew 5:17–37

I have not come to abolish the law and the prophets but to fulfill them.

| Doctrinal Content: | Purpose of this session |
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| Gospel | Matthew 5:17-37 I have not come to abolish the law and the prophets but to fulfill them. |
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Young people at this age often strive to get by with making only minimum effort. In this Sunday's Gospel, **Jesus challenges us to go beyond the minimum requirements** of the Law and to respond to others in love.

Materials Needed

- None

Preparation for Sunday Scripture Readings

1. Ask the young people if they know what the minimum wage is.
2. Mention that although employers are required to pay the minimum wage, it is hoped that they will go beyond that and provide a living wage for their employees.
3. ***In his Sermon on the Mount, Jesus points out that the Law requires people to do the minimum. He has come to teach us how to go beyond the minimum requirements of the Law and to respond to others with love.***
4. Invite volunteers to read aloud Matthew 5:17–37.
5. ***What specific issues does Jesus address in this passage?*** (killing, anger, adultery, lust, marriage, divorce, oaths)
6. ***Jesus teaches us that “you shall not kill” is the minimum requirement of the Law, but in his kingdom, we must also refrain from anger that is directed toward others. In all things, Jesus challenges us to go beyond the minimum.***
7. Conclude this time together by praying the **Lord's Prayer**, asking that **God's kingdom may come**.

Our Father
IN HEAVEN
may your name
be kept holy
May your Kingdom
come soon
May your will be done
on Earth
as it is in
heaven
Give us today
the food we need
and forgive us
our sins, as we
have forgiven
those who sin against us.
And don't let us yield
TO TEMPTATION
but rescue us
from the evil one.



Sixth Sunday in Ordinary Time, Cycle A

Family

Gospel Reading

Matthew 5:17–37

I have not come to abolish the law and the prophets but to fulfill them.

Family Connection

Families have rules. Without rules, family life would be chaos.

As a family, brainstorm a list of rules that you are all called to follow in your home in order for you all to get along together.

Think about rules for play (fun) time, rules for eating, rules for how to speak to one another, rules for going out with friends, and so on.

Emphasize that families follow rules as a way of ***showing love and respect for one another***.

Explain that in this Sunday's Gospel, Jesus talks about following the Law.

God's Law of love can be thought of as rules that we are to follow in order to show our love and respect for one another.

Read aloud this Sunday's Gospel, Matthew 5:17–37.

Talk specifically with one another about how anger is to be dealt with in your family.

Conclude by praying for the ***grace to overcome anger and to show respect for one another*** as a family by following God's Law of love.

