

Thirtieth Sunday of the Year

The Pharisee and the tax collector

INTRODUCTION

One day Jesus told a story with a special message for those who were proud of their own goodness, and looked down on anyone who could not live up to their strict rules.

SIGN OF THE CROSS

LIGHT THE CANDLES

Light the candles and read these words:

Jesus said, "Let your goodness shine like a light in the darkness, so that through you, the love of our heavenly father will touch the lives of others."

(Matthew 5:16)

SORRY

After a few moments of quiet contemplation, sing Sorry Song 2.

GLORIA

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

To welcome today's Gospel sing Acclamation 2: Light up our hearts.

GOSPEL (LUKE 18:10-14)

One day Jesus told this parable: "Two men went to the temple to pray. One was a Pharisee, who was an upright and religious man who always obeyed the law. The other was a tax collector, who cheated people to make himself rich.

"The Pharisee stood up and prayed, 'Thank you, God, for making me such a good person, unlike the tax collector over there! I keep all your rules and am most generous with my money.'

"The tax collector stood at the back of the temple. He bowed his head in shame as he prayed quietly, 'O God, I have done so many things wrong, please forgive me.'" Then Jesus said, "It was the second man, and not the first, who pleased God with his prayer."

DISCUSSION

This parable was meant for the Pharisees, who were very sure of their own goodness. They prided

themselves on obeying the laws and treated anyone who did not do so with complete disgust. They wanted everyone to appreciate their goodness.

As the name suggests, the tax collectors collected money, or taxes, for the Romans. Often they collected more than was necessary and kept the extra for themselves. They were dishonest men who grew rich by cheating the poor.

The tax collector in the story was only too aware of his faults, and came to ask God's mercy and forgiveness. Can you remember the name of any other tax collector who was befriended by Jesus, and because of his love, changed his dishonest ways? (Matthew, who was a tax collector, and later an apostle.)

Why was the tax collector's prayer more pleasing to God? Because outward gestures of goodness do not impress God! What matters to him is what we feel in our hearts.

If we are ready to admit our weakness and our need for God's mercy, then we will welcome God into our hearts and our lives. The Pharisee thought that he was perfect and had very little need for God's help.

No one is perfect. We have all made some mistakes in our lives, and we should not judge the actions of others. God is loving and merciful and wants us to be honest and sincere rather than full of self importance and pride.

ACTIVITY

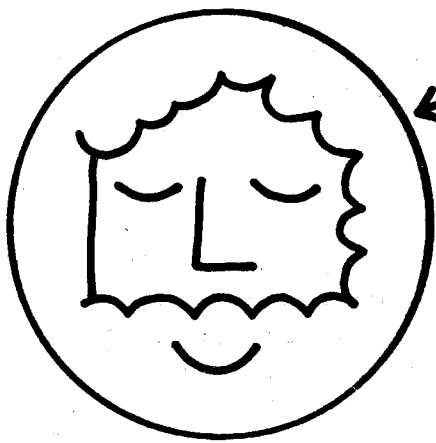
Copy the faces, cut them out, and tape each one on to the top of a drinking straw. Cover toilet paper tubes with a piece of white paper; or, if these are unavailable, roll the white paper to make tubes. Each child should have a pharisee and a tax collector pop-up puppet. They can draw arms and clothes onto the bodies and re-enact the story.

CREED

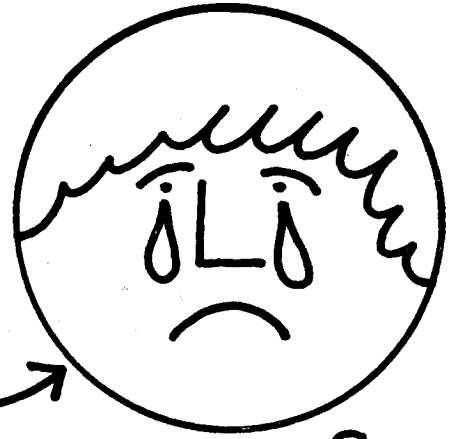
CLOSING PRAYER

Help us, father,
to admit our mistakes
and to turn to your love
and forgiveness.

We ask this through Jesus Christ, our Lord.

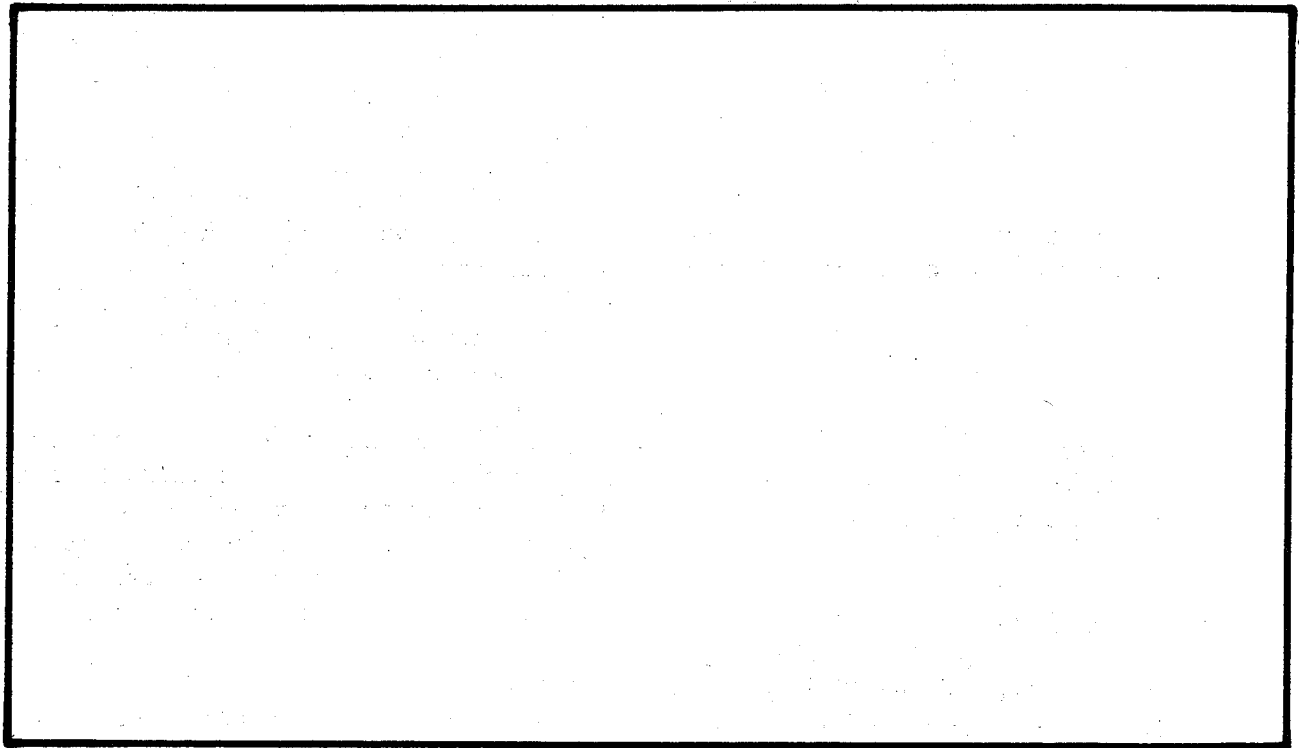


← Pharisee



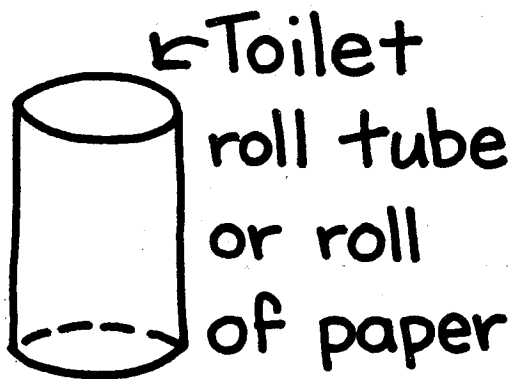
Tax collector →

9cm ↓



Piece of white paper.

← 15cm



← Toilet roll tube or roll of paper

