

RESPONDING

Song of response: SJ 42 *Listen, God is calling*

Prayers of the congregation

SENDING

Song: GR CD *Som' landela (We will follow)* (*Together*, p. 2, for text)

Benediction: SJ 158

Session Ten

The Pharisee and the Tax Collector



Text: Luke 18:9-14

Focus statement: Be humble.

GATHERING

Welcome

Call to worship: SJ 122

Song: HWB 6 *Here in this place*

Opening prayer: "God of Caring" (*Together*, p. 4)

PRAISING

Song suggestions:

GR CD *Awake, arise, o sing a new song* (*Together*, p. 3, for text)

HWB 55 *Cantemos al Senor (Let's sing unto the Lord)*

HWB 64 *Asithi: Amen (Sing amen)*

HWB 76 *Je louerai l'Eternal (Praise, I will praise you, Lord)*

SJ 19 *I will call upon the Lord*

Prayer of thanksgiving: SJ 125

Offering/offertory

CONFESSING AND RECONCILING

Silence

Prayer of confession: SJ 128

Song: SJ 20 Agios o Theos

Words of assurance: Isaiah 58:9-11

Song: SJ 39 Ubi caritas (*Where true love*)

HEARING

Children's time:

Advance preparation: Gather supplies.

Supplies: Green blanket, container with grass, session 10 symbol (child's hand folded in prayer).

Gather children. Jesus' parables teach us about the kingdom of God as we live God's ways.

- We are generous with others (*touch symbol 8*).
- We show compassion (*touch symbol 9*).

Ask: Have you ever heard anyone say, "My picture is better than yours" or "I can run faster than you"? Sometimes we think we are better than others. Jesus told this story to people who thought they were better than others. They didn't want to be friends with everyone.

Two people went to church to pray (*fold hands as if you are praying*). One was a religious person who kept many rules (*count on fingers*). The other was a tax collector who was looked down upon by others (*drop head*). The religious person thanked God that he was better than others (*make bold praying motions and say, "Thank you God that I am such a good person"*). He bragged to God about all the good things he did (*look proud and ask others, "Did you see all the good things I did?"*). But the tax collector bowed his head and quietly prayed to God (*make prayer motions, quietly pray*). He asked God for mercy and love (*quietly say, "God, forgive me. Give me your mercy. Fill me with your love"*).

Which person was living God's way? When we are humble we are living God's way (*place symbol 10 into grass container*). Humility means cooperating with others and caring for them. When we honor God in others we are being humble.

Invite the children to honor God in each other as they bless each other. Invite each child to stand as the rest of the children say together: "(*child's name*), God is in you!"

Scripture reading: Luke 18:9-14

Sermon seeds:

Jesus addressed the self-righteous who looked down on others by telling a parable about a Pharisee and a tax collector who prayed in the synagogue. The Pharisee loudly thanked God he was unlike other sinners and listed his religious observances while the tax collector quietly begged God for mercy. Jesus praised the tax collector because of his humility.

It is difficult for modern readers to recapture the shock Jesus' original audience would have felt upon hearing the descriptions of the Pharisee and tax collector. Pharisees were considered the pinnacle of piety in Jewish society and held in high regard by most people. Tax collectors were on the bottom rung of Jewish society, considered political traitors to their own people, working in an unclean and dishonest trade for the occupying foreign government.

The prayer of both men speaks of each one's overall disposition toward God. The Pharisee stands by himself in the common posture of prayer with his hands and eyes lifted toward heaven, exultant in

unworthiness. As he approaches God in prayer, not daring to lift his eyes to heaven, he beats his chest, a sign of grief and mourning for sin.

The tax collector speaks of hidden sins while the Pharisee proclaims his own virtues. One man measures himself against God and asks for mercy; the other man measures himself against others and asks for nothing. Only the tax collector returns home forgiven.

RESPONDING

Affirmation of faith: SJ 134

Prayers of the congregation

SENDING

Song: SJ 78 Sizohamba naye (*We will walk with God*)

Benediction:

Go now from this time of worship knowing that you are loved and cherished by God, no matter what. Go in peace. Amen.

Session Eleven

The Bread of Life



Text: John 6:35-51

Focus statement: Jesus gives us life.

GATHERING

Welcome

Call to worship: WFW2 32 *Speak Your Wisdom*

Song: SJ 4 *You've got a place*

Opening prayer: SS 199

PRAISING

Song suggestions:

GR CD *Shout for God!* (*Together*, p. 2, for text)

HWB 51 *Let the whole creation cry*

LHWR 52 *God of the earth, the sky, the sea*