

Day 1 of Lent - Ash Wednesday:

Biblical lessons: Lent is a time for us to learn how to be vessels that God's light can shine out of so that people will praise the Father in Heaven

This is a script introducing the Sermon on the Mount's teachings. The Sermon on the Mount is the Church's theme for Year A during Lent.

Recommended: Read through this before you sit with your child.

Once there was a man who said such wonderful things and did such amazing things that people followed him everywhere.

One day he went up on a mountain to teach the disciples, but others saw them on their way and followed. They also wanted to learn.

So Jesus began to speak.

First Jesus blessed the people.

He gave nine blessings that day. They are often called the Beatitudes. They are ordinary but remarkable things people do that bless everyone. They told the secret to being truly happy. The name blessed comes from the Latin "beatus". It means happy. The Beatitudes are truly happiness-makers.

Matthew tells us that Jesus then went on to teach many more things about how to live as a citizen of the great Kingdom of God. This whole teaching is so important that it is known as the "Sermon on the Mount."

When he was done teaching, he left the mountain and the people were interested to see what he would do, so they followed him.

As Jesus was walking down the road, a man with a deadly skin disease called leprosy came up to him and knelt down on the road blocking Jesus.

Lepers were ugly, disfigured people who couldn't feel their fingers and toes. Sometimes they would get hurt and cut and wouldn't know it. They could even get infections from the cuts and their body would start to rot away. That is really awful.

But what is so much worse, is that they were not allowed to be near anyone. Their families wouldn't talk to them and the whole town would kick them out and they would go live in caves. That seems so mean, do you know why they couldn't be around anyone else? Others could become ill.

People didn't recover from leprosy unless God healed them.

Jesus stopped.

The leper began to speak, "Lord, if You wish to, please heal me."

Jesus reached out his hand toward him and said: "of course I wish to heal you. Be clean."

Immediately the man was healed.

Jesus then told him: Don't tell anyone what just happened. Rather go to the priest, show yourself to hi, and give a wave offering as Moses commanded. Your actions will tell the story of what happened here today.

These I wonder questions are not write or wrong. They are pondering times. Silence is OK. RESIST the urge to "teach" let God love your child and you. Ponder the child's answer. This will encourage your child to develop critical analysis skills and a more thoughtful way of learning about God. - You don't have to use all the questions.

I wonder what made people want to follow Jesus up and down a mountain?

Do you think it was hard for the leper to not be able to be near his family?

What do you think the leper said when he went to the temple?

How do you think he glorified the Father in Heaven?

Do you think we left anything out of the story?

Would you like me to tell you what wonderful things Jesus said in the Sermon on the Mount that made healing the leper a way he could show how the Kingdom of God looks?

This is the part I didn't tell you before:

Jesus sat down and began to teach

(that is what important teachers did at that time - they sat down to teach)

He began to tell them: And you, beloved, are the light of the world.

A city built on a hilltop cannot be hidden.

Similarly it would be silly to light a lamp and then hide it under a bowl.

When someone lights a lamp and then hides it under a bowl.

When some one lights a lamp, she puts it on a table or a desk or a chair,
and the light illumines the entire house.

You are like that illuminating light.

Let your light shine everywhere you go,

that you may illumine creation so men and women everywhere may see you good actions,

may see creation at its fullest,

may see your devotion to Me,

and may turn and praise your Father in heaven because of it.

Then Jesus began to tell the how people would be able to know they were illuminated by God and praise him.

Jesus told them three ways.

The first way is to do Acts of Righteousness to others.

He told his disciples and the crowds that unless they were more righteous than the Pharisees. -

The Pharisees were a group of people who made it their entire life's work to be doing every rule that they thought God would be pleased with -

then the disciples and the crowd would not be acting like citizens of the heavenly kingdom.

He then told them that the second way that others would know they were citizens of the kingdom and praise God the Father was that citizens of the kingdom prayed. He thought that it was so important to know exactly how simply to pray that he told them:

Your prayers, rather, should be *simple*, like this:

Our Father in heaven, let Your name remain holy.

Bring about Your kingdom.

Manifest Your will here on earth, as it is manifest in heaven.

Give us each day that day's bread—*no more, no less*—

And forgive us our debts as we forgive those who owe us something.

Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.

But let Your kingdom be, and let it be powerful and glorious forever. Amen.

The third way for others to know that we are citizen of the Great Kingdom and for God the Father to be praised is through fasting.

He explained that fasting is more than not eating a meal or stopping candy but is about knowing that there is a bigger picture to be considered - not just this single want. This single moment.

He told them:

Some people store up treasures *in their homes* here on earth.

This is a shortsighted practice—don't undertake it.

Moths and rust will eat up any treasure you may store here.

Thieves may break into *your homes* and steal *your precious trinkets*.

Instead, put up your treasures in heaven where moths do not attack, where rust does not corrode, and where thieves are barred at the door.

For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.

After telling them the three important things that they need to have to be the city on a hill that the light of God can shine through, he said:

The people who are listening to Me, those people who *hear what I say and* live according to My teachings—you are like a wise man who built his house on a rock, *on a firm foundation*.

When storms hit, rain pounded down and waters rose, *levies broke* and winds beat all the walls of that house. But the house did not fall because it was built upon rock.

Those of you who are listening and do not hear—you are like a fool who builds a house on sand. When a storm comes to his house, *what will happen?* The rain will fall, the waters will rise, the wind will blow, and his house will collapse with a great crash.

When Jesus was done talking the people were thoughtful about what he said. They wanted to know more and see what Jesus would do.

Then Jesus got up and went down the mountain towards the Sea of Galilee and the city of Capernaum.

And you know the rest. You know about how he showed great righteousness when he healed the leper.

I wonder what part you liked the best?

I wonder which of the three parts do you think is the hardest?

I wonder what part of the story is most like you?

I wonder what you thought was the most important part of Jesus' words?

I wonder who was listening the first time these words were spoken?

I wonder what heavenly treasures look like?

I wonder why he talked about houses built on sand and rocks?