

Dear Padre,

I'm tired of being distracted by children sliding around in the pews, fidgeting, and giggling with each other. How would the priest like parents to handle these situations during Mass?

I presume you mean children between the ages of two and six—kids too old to be crying in their parents' arms and too young to be in religious-education programs. Many parishes have children's Liturgy of the Word programs, but the kids still spend time at regular Mass.

It's important for kids to be at Mass and to learn to be quiet for an hour. When children come to Mass, they slowly get used to the idea that they're expected to behave for a limited amount of time.

Parents should bring books or soft toys—anything that won't make more noise—to keep the kids entertained. They shouldn't let their kids bring musical toys, electronic games with sound effects, or toy trucks that can be run up and down the pews. If children continue to be disruptive, parents should take them outside for a short time and then bring them back.

Bottom line: Priests want children to come to Mass. It's better to have fidgeting kids at Mass than no kids at all. We want them to learn to behave now so when they get older, they're ready to deepen their participation in the Mass.

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A WORD FROM Pope Francis

With his birth, Jesus made himself a bridge between God and mankind, reconciled earth and sky, and recomposed the whole human race in unity...And today he also asks you to be little bridges, where you live....Sometimes it is not easy, but if we are united with Jesus we can do it.

ADDRESS TO CHILDREN, DECEMBER 16, 2019



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Our Parish Community

October 23, 2022

Thirtieth Sunday in Ordinary Time (C)
Sir 35:12–14, 16–18
2 Tm 4:6–8, 16–18
Lk 18:9–14

Thank You that I am Better than Others

The words of the Pharisee in today's Gospel might look like a prayer of thanksgiving. However, it is not a prayer, nor does it express gratitude. It is an arrogant statement of self-congratulation. One might think that he had a right to boast. After all, he did observe certain religious obligations and refrain from forms of public immorality. Why did Jesus say that he was not justified?

First, he haughtily presented himself in the temple as a prayerful man. As we saw last week, the fundamental character of prayer is acknowledgement of human neediness and a trust in God's loving care. This man did not see himself as needy or requiring God's care. Second, he did not realize that as important as religious observance and good works might be, they are not requirements fulfilled to earn God's love. Rather, they should flow from one's inner relationship with God. Third, he judged the inner disposition of others by observing the outer circumstances of their lives.

On the other hand, Jesus praised the tax collector. Why? First, he acknowledged he was a sinner in need of God's mercy. After all, as tax collector, he worked for the hated Romans who occupied the land. Most likely he made his own living by adding a commission to the taxes he collected from others. Second, he made no claim of being righteous and deserving God's mercy. Third, overwhelmed by his own unworthiness, he compared himself to no one. His was genuine prayer.

Sr. Dianne Bergant, CSA



- * What might lead you to think you are better than others?

- * Acknowledge your own neediness and turn to God with confidence.