



Gospel: Mt 22:15-21

A reading from the holy Gospel according to Matthew

Give to Caesar the things that belong to Caesar and to God the things that are God's.

The Pharisees went away to work out between them how to trap Jesus in what he said. And they sent their disciples to him, together with the Herodians, to say, 'Master, we know that you are an honest man and teach the way of God in an honest way, and that you are not afraid of anyone, because a man's rank means nothing to you. Tell us your opinion, then. Is it permissible to pay taxes to Caesar or not?' But Jesus was aware of their malice and replied, 'You hypocrites! Why do you set this trap for me? Let me see the money you pay the tax with.' They handed him a denarius, and he said, 'Whose head is this? Whose name?' 'Caesar's' they replied. He then said to them, 'Very well, give back to Caesar what belongs to Caesar – and to God what belongs to God.'

Reflection:

A major theme of the Scripture readings is 'God comes first'.

Do you ever experience a conflict between what your faith says and what your country says? If something is legal, is it always moral? And if something is moral, is it always legal? Jesus reminds us that God must be first in our hearts, and that our whole life must be directed toward him.

In Jesus' time, the Roman taxation was an issue that could easily cause people to take sides. It was with this very issue that the Pharisees hoped to trap Jesus, but Jesus outwits them. The coin (denarius) was minted and issued by Caesar. It belonged to him. He could require that it be given back any time he wanted, and men were obliged to give it back. But Caesar did not own everything. Ultimately, God does. And so we are to give back to God that which rightly belongs to Him. We should give ourselves back to God. Jesus' response suggests that one can indeed be loyal to both a religious tradition and a secular power.

Does God truly get what rightfully belongs to God, or just the leftovers in my busy schedule? If only giving God what belongs to God was as simple as paying taxes. God asks more of me than that.

Prayer:

Loving God,

I am glad to be your follower, Lord. You are the fount of wisdom and life, the source of every good thing. You have called me by name. You hold me in existence. You give me work to do in your Kingdom, the work of love, self-giving, and self-sacrifice. Teach me your wisdom, Lord; teach me your love... This world offers me so many opportunities for doing good. Please remind me of my mission in life, Lord. I am not the Saviour of the world, but I am your disciple; show me what more I can do to build your Kingdom Amen.

Rosary:

The month of October is dedicated to Mary. The children have been praying a decade of the Rosary daily. A Rosary card was sent home last week. Please take some time to look at it and pray as a family for peace in our world.

Thank you

Franca Bonserio

Religious Education Coordinator

INSIGHTS

by Michael Grose - Australia's leading parenting educator



Nurture your child's thinking skills

Take advantage of your role modelling position and take an active interest in your child's learning and in the activities, such as reading and questioning, that foster learning.

How can you nurture your child's thinking life in the pre-primary and primary years? The purpose is not so much for your child to excel at school, but to instil a desire to learn and the ability to think for themselves and be resilient enough to resist following the crowd in thoughts as well as actions.

Children spend more time at home than at school yet parents often feel most children's learning occurs behind the classroom door. Learning is natural and has no boundaries and can happen anywhere.

Parents teach their children both implicitly and explicitly. Take advantage of your role modelling position and take an active interest in your child's learning and in the activities, such as reading and questioning, that foster learning. If your child sees you reading and taking an interest in a myriad of subjects he or she will be more interested in reading and more than likely develop a sense of curiosity as well.

Curiosity may be the most important learning behaviour that your child develops. Bake a cake with your child and see it rise. Make a model plane and see it fly. Help your child dismantle a broken clock. Ask questions of yourself and of your child. Curiosity needs to be fed by experiences and they don't have to be expensive or externally provided. They can be provided at home by parents.

It is worth considering how your home environment fosters a sense of curiosity and enquiry in children. Consider the following:

- **Spaces for doing and thinking:**

Look at your home through the eyes of a child and his or her learning needs. Do you have spaces that invite your child to explore, create and think? Do you have a quiet place for reading and drawing? Do you have a space for kids to be creative and messy? Do you have a place for noise and music? Do you have a space for kids to be tactile with plenty of textures (this can be outside or inside)?

- **Materials:**

Look at the materials available that can stimulate the senses of a child. These include art materials, books, costumes and masks, sketch pads, construction materials, puzzles and games. Take a minimalist approach. That is, the more bells and whistles that a toy has the less opportunity a child has to be creative with it. Kids don't need much to be creative.

- **The role of television:**

Some specifically designed children's programs such as Playschool are great but much of television promotes a spectator mode of consciousness and suppresses active thinking. Don't let the TV dominate your child's free time.

- **Teachable moments:**

Be on the lookout for teachable moments. These are the opportunities to explain, question and prompt exploration with your child. Looking at insect wings, ants walking in a line or moths flying around the lights can provide teachable moments as long as you are lead by your child and don't get too heavy handed with the 'lessons' learned. Sometimes the experience is enough.

Nurturing in children the ability to think openly about their world starts with their own environment. It involves a mixture of free, open exploration on their own and interactions with adults that stimulate discussions and prompt them to explore new ideas and think. It is these types of experiences that can foster in kids a love of learning and thinking that can help them succeed at school and beyond.

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PO Box 167 Balnarring VIC 3926 P. 03 5983 1798 F. 03 5983 1722 E. office@parentingideas.com.au