Take the children through simple examples: siblings who have taken toys or would not let you share theirs. People who call you names in school. People who taunt you into a fight. How would the children respond?

How about bullies? Have you met a bully? Let the children talk about the bullies that they have met in school, etc. Discuss how the children could deal with a bully without retaliating, following what Jesus has said. Report to authorities. Tell friends and families. Stick together in a bigger group. Ultimately, Jesus says make friends with the bully and understand him/her & help him/her mend his/her ways.

Year A

### LSW

children

Seventh Sunday in Ordinary Time

Concepts

The opposite Christian

Points to note

The message from the Sermon on the Mount this week builds on the one last week. Remember there were two messages last week and we only focussed on one. The other one is dealt with in more detail here. You may want to repeat the first part of last week reading, but remember only the first half.

This is not an easy reading to follow – even for adults, maybe especially for adults. We are constantly reminded that the ways of the world are not ours but, really, the ways of the world are designed for those who live in the world. They are sometimes necessary ways to protect ourselves against the dangers of the world we live in.

How practical is it for us to adopt the Christian way that the world will not hesitate to exploit in a defenceless Christian? Maybe we say that we as adults will know how to differentiate between the sensible and the idealistic parts of this message. Is this passage all the more relevant today in a world where the Pope calls us to welcome the immigrant and the refugee even at great safety cost to ourselves and our communities?



On this practical point, we have to ensure that the children understand the balance: the last thing you want is parents coming after you for teaching the children to be insensible. Perhaps we can focus on pacifism as a way to deal with people who have been difficult. Pacifism has been a Christian principle from the earliest days. Christians refused to serve in the army in those days.

On the more idealistic point, I will have to leave it to each of us to individually determine whether the reason we did not adopt ways of the Gospel is because the Gospel way is no longer relevant in the modern world or because we have compromised with the world in our weakness.

Liturgy

Acclamation before the Gospel

Alleluia! Alleluia!

If anyone loves me he will keep my word,

and my Father will love him, and we shall come to him.

Alleluia!

Gospel

Explain that we are still with the Sermon on the Mount.

The Lord be with you.

All: And also with your spirit.

A Reading from the Holy Gospel according to St Matthew

All: Glory to you O Lord

(Mt 5: 38-48)

Jesus said to his disciples, “You have learnt how it was said: Eye for an eye and tooth for a tooth. But I say this to you: offer the wicked man no resistance. On the contrary, if anyone hits you on the right cheek, offer him the other as well; if a man takes you to law and would have your tunic, let him have your cloak as well. And if anyone orders you to go one mile, go two miles with him. Give to anyone who asks, and if anyone wants to borrow, do not turn away.

You have learnt how it was said: You must love your neighbour and hate your enemies. But I say this to you: love your neighbour and pray for those who persecute you; in this way you will be sons of your Father in heaven, for he causes his sun to rise on bad men as well as good, and his rain to fall on honest men and dishonest men alike. For if you love those who love you, what right do you have to claim any credit? Even the tax collectors do that much, do they not? You must therefore be perfect just as your heavenly Father is perfect.”

This is the Word of the Lord

Dialogue

Have you heard of Mahatma Gandhi? Explain who Gandhi was. He led the Indians to independence from the British using non-violent means. Explain that the British imprisoned him but he refused to ask the people to fight. He used strikes and peaceful marches as weapons. But his greatest weapon was the British conscience. He got the British to realise that violence was wrong and in the end the British backed down.



One of Gandhi’s famous sayings as “An eye for an eye makes the world go blind” when some of his followers urged him to retaliate against killings by the British Army. Refer back to the reading Eye for an eye and tooth for a tooth. Jesus explained that this was not the right way to behave.

Do you think it is easy not to retaliate? What does it require? Self control, patience, faith and love. You must love yourself, love peace and love the person provoking you for you to be able to not retaliate. Easy?