### LSW

children

*Also, in praying, we don’t just ask God for things. We also make sure that we live good lives. It is of no use if we pray to God everyday but do not behave as good Christians do. Therefore, we must be persistent in living good lives because our lives are also a part of our prayers.*

Year A

###### Twentieth Sunday in Ordinary Time

**Images**

Persistence

**Points to note**

There is more than one way of looking at this passage. We can talk about how Jesus came to save all people and not just the Israelites. From here we can relate it to God reaching to all religions and not just Christianity. This, though, could confuse the children if not handled right and you don’t have the answers ready. This is particularly the case with the younger ones.

I have chosen to discuss the way the Canaanite woman debated her way. It is easy sometimes to accept Jesus’ first answer. Sometimes, we are even told that it is a matter of humility to accept it and shut up. But Jesus loves a good debater and he gave in to her more because she came up with a smart answer rather than her persistence, which she seems to have in plenty, too. I suspect that this is one debate that he did not mind losing. So, it would seem that, to get on to Jesus’ right side, one need to be persistent and have a smart answer.

I love children who can give me a smart answer, provided of course, I don’t have them at my dining table every night. Somehow, smart answers make for more lively discussions. But, if we are not ready for the cut and thrust of that kind discussion, stay clear. Children have a cruel way of telling you they enjoy seeing you humiliated when you lose a debate.

Anyway, for this discussion, we focus on the Canaanite woman’s other virtue: her persistence.

**Liturgy**

Acclamation before the Gospel

Alleluia! Alleluia!

Jesus proclaimed the Good News of the kingdom,

and cured all kinds of sickness among the people

Alleluia!

Gospel

The Lord be with you.

*All:*  And also with you.

A Reading from the Holy Gospel according to St Matthew

*All:*  Glory to you O Lord

(Mt 15:21-28)

Jesus left Gennesaret and withdrew to the region of Tyre and Sidon. Then out came a Canaanite woman from the district and started shouting, “Sir, Son of David, taken pity on me. My daughter is tormented by a devil.” But he answered her not a word. And his disciples went and pleaded with him. “Give her what she wants,” they said, “because she is shouting after us.” He said in reply, “I was sent only to the lost sheep of the House of Israel.” But the woman had come up and was kneeling at his feet. “Lord,” she said, “help me.” He replied, “It is not fair to take the children’s food and throw it to the house-dogs.” She retorted, “Ah yes, sir; but even the house-dogs can eat the scraps that fall from their master’s table.” Then Jesus answered her, “Woman, you have great faith. Let your wish be granted.” And from that moment her daughter was well again.

This is the Word of the Lord

**Dialogue**

How many of you have younger brothers or sisters? Have you noticed the way they ask things from Mom and Dad? They keep asking and asking until Mom and Dad agrees to give it to them.  *It should be interesting that children will be quicker to claim that younger siblings unfairly get things because they are persistent. Be careful that this does not become a grouse session and that we do not convey the impression that this is acceptable.*

*Explain the meaning of the words,* persistence *and* perseverance*. Explain how we use them, in language and the context that it is used. Older children may be able to differentiate between* persistence *and* pestering.Persistence *is when we do it while* pestering *is when someone else gets something unfairly simply because they are persistent.*

Go back to the reading. Note how Jesus recognised the way woman was willing to persist in her request. Ask if the children have encountered any examples of such persistence - when someone persists in asking for something someone else unreasonably will not give. There should be examples at home and in school. There are also examples of people who persist in fighting for freedom: Gandhi, Martin Luther King, Mandela, Aung San Su Kyi.

*Translate these into our spiritual lives. How do we persist in our spiritual lives? When we ask for things from God, we constantly pray to him. Care should be taken that we do not convey the impression that God is someone unreasonable that we have to keep bugging to get what we want.*

Some people say that if we pray hard enough, God will give us what we want and we do not get what we want when we ask God because we did not pray hard enough. Do we agree with that? *Explain that it is not how hard we pray but also that what we pray for must be something good. Therefore, we must be persistent in wanting the right thing and for the right reasons.*