

An rfour.org Children's Time Message

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Written for January 28, 2024

Fourth Sunday After Epiphany

Lectionary Year B

Scripture: [Mark 1:21-28](#) [**Summary:** *Jesus Isn't Afraid Of Our Messes*]

Supplies Needed: You will need to assemble a mess. Pack a bag that might include some of the following: mismatched socks, a rumpled shirt or two, scraps of papers, writing utensils, an old cell phone, books/magazines, an empty snack of some kind (like a Wheat Thins box or empty candy wrappers), a couple of movie/jewel cases, remote control, maybe an old slipper, etc.

ASK (a.k.a. [The On-Ramp](#))

- Good morning!
- Has your room at home ever been messy?
- And then, did you have to clean up that messiness?
- Yeah? What kinds of things do you usually have to clean up? (books, toys, clothes, headphones, stuffed animals, other things)
- I have messes at home, too. They usually look like this...*[open up your prepared bag and pour out your assembled mess]*
- So what do you think – these messes we have at home, do you ever see those type of messes here in the sanctuary?
- No, not so much -- it looks pretty clean just about all the time, doesn't it? Which makes this mess look especially messy and out-of-place, right?
- So – I should probably clean this up, don't you think? Can you help me clean up my mess? *[pick up things and put them back in the bag]*.

TELL (a.k.a. [The Freeway](#))

- Just like we have messes in our rooms, we can also have messes inside of us.
- And a lot of times, we think we're supposed to clean those inside messes up on our own.

- We might even think that we need to clean up our messes before we can come here to worship.
- Or – maybe we think we need to *hide* our messes when we come here – because it looks so clean and it feels like it wouldn't be good to mess it up, right?
- But in today's scripture story, we see someone in Jesus' faith community who decides to spill their inside mess right in the middle of the worship service.
- The story calls that mess "an unclean spirit."
- Did you notice how Jesus responded to this person's mess?
- That's right - Jesus didn't get mad or upset with the person.
- Instead, Jesus helped the person clean up his mess, right then and there.

SHARE the Good News (a.k.a. *The Destination*)

- Although this sanctuary is almost always clean, that doesn't mean that we have to have everything cleaned up in our own lives to be here.
- In fact, our faith community can actually help us, with God's guidance and love, clean up our messes just like Jesus did in today's scripture story.
- For example, when we started this time together, I made a mess.
- But then – you helped me clean it up, right?
- And that's how it's supposed to work!
- Not only do we **not** need to be all cleaned up to be part of the church, we can invite others in the faith community to know about our messes.
- Then, together and with God's help, we can work together to clean up our messes.
- That's the good news for today.
- Let's pray. This is a repeat-after-me prayer.

CLOSING Prayer

Dear God,

Dear God,

Thank you for Jesus...

Thank you for Jesus...

...who shows us...

...who shows us...

...how to receive and share...

...how to receive and share...

...your healing love...

...your healing love...

...even when things are messy.

...even when things are messy.

Thank you and Amen.