

An rfour.org Children's Time Message

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Written for July 9, 2023

Sixth Sunday after Pentecost

Lectionary Year A

Scripture: [Matthew 11:16-19, 25-30](#) [**Summary:** *Receiving God's Love And Peace*]

Supplies Needed: No supplies needed, but speak with one student ahead of time to be ready to say something like, "You'll just have to try it!" if/when you give them an agreed upon signal.

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

- Good morning!
- Can you tell me some kinds of food that you really like? [*Let them list some foods; for the next line, pick one of the foods that is pretty well known. I will use "pizza" in the following lines*]
- Ok, those are a lot of good sounding foods. I think you all have good taste.
- But, let's pretend I haven't tried one of those foods. Let's say I haven't tried [*insert your own food here* – I'll use "pizza"] pizza before.
- So, let's have a conversation where you, as a group, try to convince me to try some pizza. I'll start that conversation with a question and then you try to convince me and then we'll go back-and-forth a few times about why I should or shouldn't try the food, ok?
- [*Note: You're job is to make excuses as to why you don't want to try the food*]
 - [*You start it off*] So, this pizza you speak of – I've never tried it – why should I try it? [*They say: Because it's good; because its the best*]
 - [*Give excuses to not try it*] I don't know...it sounds kind of gross. The ingredients aren't covered up, they just sit on the top – that's *weird*. And the cheese is sometimes brown and the crust sometimes has these "bubbles" in it. I think it's too ugly to taste good.
 - [*Hopefully they have a response for you. If they don't, then nod at the student you spoke with earlier so that they'll say, "You'll just have to try it to find out how good it is!"*]
 - [*Wrap-up with*] You all make some good points. I still think it's too ugly to eat, but maybe I'll just close my eyes and give it a try!

TELL (a.k.a. *The Freeway*)

- Even though I made excuses to not try one of your favorite foods, thank you for inviting me to try it.
- I wanted us to have a conversation like that because that's the type of conversation Jesus is talking about at the start of today's scripture story.
- In today's scripture story, Jesus is saying that there are certain people, where, no matter what you offer them, they will make excuses to refuse and reject what is being offered.
- Except, Jesus was not inviting them to try a food. Instead, he was inviting them to receive God's love and peace.
- But the people in the story responded just like I did a moment ago about the pizza – they made a bunch of excuses to not try it.
- Now, it's very possible that the people who made excuses *thought* their reasons made sense, even if the excuses didn't make much sense – like my excuses that pizza can't possibly taste good because of how it looks.
- But whatever their reasons were, the end result was that they said no to what Jesus was offering them.

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

- Despite people saying to Jesus, “No, I won't listen to you or try what you are saying because I have *excuses*” Jesus kept sharing God's love and peace - just like you kept inviting me to try pizza.
- Because Jesus kept sharing and inviting, he also found people - like his disciples - who said, “Yes, I will try that!”
- And then those people kept inviting and sharing with others, just like Jesus did, so that even more people were invited to try – some of whom also said “Yes.”
- Two thousand years later and people are still choosing to receive for themselves and then share God's love and peace with others.
- This includes us, you know! You, me – all of us – are invited to receive God's love and peace.
- And, when we choose to receive God's love and peace, then we also have that love and peace to share with others.
- And 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 kept sharing...

...who kept sharing...

...your love and peace...

...your love and peace...

...no matter what happened...

...no matter what happened...

...so that we could receive it and then share it.

...so that we could receive it and then share it.

Thank you and Amen