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An rfour.org Children's Time Message

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Written for Sunday, October 1, 2017

17th Sunday after Pentecost

Lectionary Year A

**Scripture:** [Matthew 21:23-32](#) [ **Summary:** *Jesus Does What He Says* ]

### Supplies Needed:

- You will need a soft-type of ball (foam is best) to throw
- You will need 2 adult volunteers from the congregation (they'll have to say a line or two, as well, so you'll probably want to pick people who are comfortable with a little over-acting).

### ASK (a.k.a *The On-Ramp*)

- Good morning!
- I've asked two volunteers from the congregation to "try out" for us as catchers.
- They are going to tell us why we should pick them to be the official catcher for our church – and then I will throw a ball to them and they are to catch it.
- After watching and listening to them, our job is to pick the person who we think will do their best to catch the ball every time it is thrown to them.
- So, first person -- go ahead and tell us why you should be our official catcher.
- [*Phrase that first person says: "I'm the greatest catcher that has ever lived. You can only wish that you could be as good as me."*]
- Ok, First Volunteer. Are you ready to catch the ball?
- [*First volunteer (as instructed beforehand) should cross their arms at this point -- They might even continue in character with a "Born ready" type of comment*]
- [*Throw ball to first volunteer.*]
- [*First volunteer makes absolutely no attempt to actually catch the ball. Keeps arms folded. Lets the ball hit them. Just stands there. Maybe says, "I'm the best" while the ball hits him/her.*]
- Ok, 2nd Volunteer -- go ahead and tell us why we should hire you as a catcher.

- [*Phrase that second volunteer says -- "I have no idea! I'm no good at catching – someone else should do this!"*]
- OK, Second Volunteer, are you ready to catch the ball?
- [*"No! -- Not at all!"*]
- [*Throw ball to second volunteer – Second person MUST catch the ball. They can continue to make excuses about why they shouldn't be catching the ball while they catch it.*]
- [*Ask the children:*] So, who do you think we should choose to be our catcher? (most likely answer: the second volunteer)
- Why? (because he/she actually tried to CATCH the ball instead of just talking about it!)
- [*Thank the volunteers for their help.*]

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

- In today's scripture story, the Pharisees, who are the religious leaders in Jesus time and place, are asking Jesus why they should trust what he says.
- But Jesus doesn't answer their question. Instead he tells a story about a farmer who had two children.
- In the story, the farmer says both kids, "Go work in the field." One says, "Of course. I will do so right away" and then does not do any work. The other says, "I will not go work in the field" but then actually goes and works in the field.
- Those two kids sound a lot like our volunteer catchers, don't they?
- Jesus tells this story for at least two reasons.
- The first reason is to let the Pharisees know that they can trust Jesus because of what he does.
- Jesus ALSO tells this story to let the Pharisees know that they need to do more than just talk, that their actions are just, if not more, important than their words.

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

- There's a third type of person, of course, who isn't in Jesus' story.
- That third person says what they are going to do and then actually does what they said.
- That's the type of person who Jesus is.
- Not only does Jesus use words to teach about God, but his actions do, too, because his actions match his words.
- Jesus is the child who says, "I will go out and do work in the field" and then goes and does it.
- He's the one who says, "I'll catch the ball" and then he actually catches it.
- In fact, sometimes, his actions help make his words make more sense.

- Which is why, when Jesus invites us to listen to him and follow him so that we can learn to share God's love just like he does, we know that we can trust that he means what he is saying.
- 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 teaches us about you...**

...who teaches us about you...

**...and then actually does...**

...and then actually does...

**...what he teaches.**

...what he teaches.

**Amen**