

THE HANDS-ON GOSPEL

Thought-Provoking
Demonstrations
of the Sunday Gospels

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*Let the children come to me, and do not prevent them;
for the kingdom of heaven belongs to such as these.*

—Matthew 19:14

Jesus invites both catechists and parents to find a way to instill in our children the love of God. What better way than to prepare them for the message of the Gospel every Sunday? Mass is about sharing the message of Jesus with the whole community. *Hands-On Gospel* is about getting that message into the hands of our children.

In seeking how best to lead our children to God's kingdom, we consider the environment in which our children develop and learn. What we find is an atmosphere of almost constant stimulation, particularly that provided by the all-pervasive media. As a result, learning tends to be increasingly experiential. Children embrace learning when they are discovering information and trying it out.

Hands-On Gospel responds to the need for an experiential approach to religious education. It provides fun and stimulating activities and experiences that are designed to correspond to the Gospel reading for each Sunday.

For the convenience of the catechist or parent, boldface type within the "Demonstration" sections is used to suggest questions or comments that may be paraphrased as desired. The Gospel readings from the *Lectionary for Masses with Children* are referenced at the top of each page. To further reinforce the Gospel message, a graphic symbol accompanies each Gospel passage. Reproducible pages of these symbols are also provided. These may be copied onto labels and given to the children to remind them of what they have learned.

We hope you will enjoy using *Hands-On Gospel*. May its activities bring the children to a greater appreciation of the Gospel message and offer them a glimpse of the kingdom of heaven that Jesus promises to all of us.

Illustrations by Jason O'Malley and Paul Canavese.

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READING

Mark 13:33–37

SYNOPSIS

Jesus told his disciples to be ready for God to come at any time just as a watchman keeps constant guard so that his master will not find him asleep when he returns.



MATERIALS NEEDED

- Index card
- Pens or markers

DEMONSTRATION

1. On an index card, draw a circle near the right edge and tell the children that the circle represents the earth. Then draw a cross approximately 3" to the left of the circle and ask if they know what the cross represents. (Jesus and his love for us.)
2. Ask for a volunteer to hold the card about 9" from his or her nose, close his or her right eye, look only at the "earth" and tell the class what happens to the cross. The child may need to move the card closer or farther away. In the correct position, the cross will seem to disappear. Instruct the child to move the card closer and the cross will reappear.
3. Say: *In the Gospel this week, Jesus warned his disciples to keep their eyes open and focused on him because God may come into their lives at any moment. If they aren't alert or awake they may miss him.*



