



**Mennonite
Church
Canada**

Resource Centre

Just Do It!

Children's Story

Cycle A, Proper 21

Title: Just Do It!
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Text: Matthew 21: 28-32
Theme: God wants us to do what is
good and right.
Needed: A few small house or garden
plants, a small pot of weeds
or dirt, seeds

Wondering Questions:

- I wonder when what we do is more important than what we say.
- I wonder why it's so easy to make a good promise and so hard to keep it.
- I wonder what good and right things God wants us to do.

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Gathering Activity:

Begin by welcoming the children and thanking them for responding to your invitation to come forward. Explain how much harder it would be for you to tell them a story and worship with them if they were hiding behind the benches or chairs in the sanctuary. They did the right thing by doing what you invited them to do, because gathering the children for a children's story is a good and right part of a worship service. Ask them if they also do the right things their parents ask them to do. Provide the eager ones with the opportunity to share how they do things like clean their rooms, feed pets, take out the garbage, pick up toys, etc. Ask them if they ever say "no" to their parents' requests, but then reluctantly go and do what they were asked to do. Or do they sometimes agree to do something and then decide not to do it? Ask the children to give you a "thumbs up", "thumbs down" or "thumbs in the middle" to show how good or bad it is to respond in each of these ways. That's what Jesus was talking about in today's Gospel text. Help the children settle into a mood of holy listening by imagining themselves cuddled into the lap of Jesus while you read them the story from Matthew 21:28-32. Then show the children the plants you brought.

Story:

Jesus' story about the two brothers reminds me of gardening. Planting gardens is a good and right thing because we get good food to eat from gardens. Did some of you help your parents garden this year? If you did, you will know that a garden takes a lot of careful planning and hard work. The gardener has to decide what to plant, when to plant it, the best ways to care for the plants and when to harvest the plants. If a gardener makes all sorts of plans, buys the seeds, tells other people that she's planting a garden, but doesn't actually plant the seeds or care for the young plants nothing will grow just like nothing is growing in this pot (show pot full of dirt and packaged seeds).

But, if a gardener says, "It is too much work! This year I'm not going to plant anything. I'm just going to sit back and look at the dirt" but then changes her mind and plants the some seeds anyway, the garden will grow, just like this plant is growing (show small houseplant). To which gardener would you give a "thumbs up" or a "thumbs down"?

That's a lot like the answers Jesus got when he told the story about the two brothers.

Prayer:

Thank you, God, for keeping the promises that you have made to us. Please help us keep our promises and do the good and right things we say we will do. And when we say no to good requests, help us change our minds so that we go and do what is right. Amen.