

A NOTE TO PARENTS

Jesus' friends wanted a monopoly on the use of his name and his power—they wanted an exclusive franchise on the Kingdom. This state of mind has remained in the Church ever since. Parties in the church see themselves as the mainstream, the true heirs of Jesus' authority, and ignore, belittle, or fight the efforts of others to do God's work, as they understand it, in Jesus' name.

Reading this story, you and your children may identify with the disciples. You may feel you belong to an "in" group—active parishioners, longtime affiliates with a major denomination. You may feel threatened by a new or different movement in the parish or the neighborhood—whether its agenda is charismatic renewal, traditionalism, or social action. Your children may have very limited experience of Christianity outside the particular tradition in which you are raising them. When we took our children to an Eastern Orthodox liturgy (in English) as part of our parish's Lenten program on this rich and varied branch of Christianity, it seemed so foreign to them that they had trouble thinking of it as Christian worship. Today's lesson can start you on a casual or not-so-casual tour of other Christian bodies in your community. Point out churches as you pass them; point out social service agencies that are also doing God's work. Remind your children that their friends who worship in other Christian traditions are also Jesus' disciples.

On the other hand, you may identify with the "outs" in this story—those who, outside the self-proclaimed mainstream, are also trying to carry out their vocations in Jesus' name. You may feel marginalized in your parish, or unable, at this point, to make a full commitment to the institutional Church. Jesus prayed that we might all be one; and his rebuke to his disciples, as they tried to exclude others whom they did not recognize, can encourage those who find themselves, for whatever reason, out of full community with "the Church." Such fellow-travelers, he insists, can still do wonders in his name. All of us, in or out, can and must offer that cup of cold water to his little ones. What can you and your child do this week, in Jesus' name, to move his Kingdom that much closer?

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THE SUNDAY PAPER, 19 Colony Road, New Haven, CT 06511, USA

203 - 624-2520 • www.the-sunday-paper.com



THE SUNDAY PAPER JUNIOR

Year B
PROPER 21
TRACKS 1 and 2

*Jesus's disciples
saw a person they didn't know,
using Jesus's name to heal someone.*

MARK 9:38



Jesus had given his disciples the power to heal by using his name.

Everyone saw how when Jesus's friends used his name, sick people got better.



Sometimes other people tried it too. When Jesus's disciples saw this, they got jealous and angry.

But Jesus said, "Don't stop them. Anyone who uses my name to do God's work is my friend."



We call Jesus's friends his DISCIPLES. A disciple is a pupil and a follower. Jesus's disciples were excited that he had chosen them to be his pupils and followers. They knew they were very special.

But sometimes they wanted to be too special. They didn't want anyone else to do what they got to do. But Jesus said that God's work gets done in many ways, by many kinds of people.

Jesus said,
WHOEVER SHARES
EVEN A CUP
OF GOLD WATER
OUT OF LOVE
FOR ME
IS MY FRIEND
MARK 9:41



Finish the picture by drawing a cup of water. Then think of a way you can do God's work today.