



DIOCESE OF HAMILTON

700 King Street West, Hamilton, Ontario, Canada L8P 1C7

Children's Liturgy of the Word

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Twenty-Fifth Sunday of Ordinary Time, Year A

Theme: Our ways are not God's ways

Objectives

- † To distinguish God's attributes from human attributes.
- † To help children see the immense generosity and love of God for everyone.

Leader's Preparation:

- † Read the Lectionary readings.
- † The parable method used by Jesus reveals a truth about God.
- † The first reading acknowledges that humans cannot know God's ways, but God has become human to reveal God's own self to us through Jesus.
- † The Gospel shows us that God is generous and beyond our understanding.
- † As we grow closer to God, we conform our thinking more closely to the mind of God.

Environment and Materials

- † Two screened adult leaders.
- † Liturgical space for Children's Liturgy of the Word.
- † Candle, table, liturgical colours, and any other visual aids.
- † Read the lectionary readings and backgrounds.
- † Bookmark the readings in the Bible. Place the Bible in a prominent location for the children to see when they enter the space for the Children's Liturgy of the Word.
- † Prepare any hymns that the children will sing as they gather in the space for the Children's Liturgy of the Word.
- † Select volunteers (older children or adults) to proclaim the readings.
- † Display the responsorial psalm refrain lyrics, if possible and desired.
- † Display the Creed, if possible and desired.

Background

Isaiah 55:6-9

- † Isaiah 55 is a hymn depicting an end-time banquet in which everyone is invited.
- † The banquet symbolizes union with God and humanity.
- † The verbs *seek* and *call* stress the importance of prayer and Mass.
- † The nouns *wicked* and *unrighteous* are meant to warn us to change our ways to become generous.
- † Isaiah wants us to know that God does not act or judge by human standards.
- † Humans may act with envy, jealousy, strict justice, or vengeance.
- † God acts with love, mercy, and compassion.
- † Isaiah challenges us to make God's ways our ways.

Matthew 20:1-16

- † The context of the parable is the end times and final judgment.
- † The generosity of the vineyard owner (God) gives the last workers hired the same as the first.
- † The hired workers think the vineyard owner has not treated them fairly.
- † Linked to the first reading, God's ways are not our ways.
- † Humans may operate out of strict justice and perceived fairness. God works out of mercy and compassion.

- † The Gospel shifts our thinking from doing God's work out of reward to doing God's work out of the love of God and others.

Prayer Leader Reflection Questions

- † How do you show gratitude to God for what you have been given?
- † How do you advocate for just wages for all people?

The Liturgy

Procession from the main Church

After the opening prayer, when all are seated, the leaders come forward and stand facing the altar.

Priest: Children, do not worry about comparing yourself to others because God gives us his Son, Jesus, who is the most important reward possible. He comes to you now to speak to you in the Scriptures. Go now and listen to him.

One of the leaders carries the Book of God's Word, held high for all to see. The second leader assists by directing the children to form a procession behind the leader with the book. When it appears that most of the children have formed a procession, the leader with the book proceeds to the place of the celebration. The second leader usually walks behind the children to ensure they remain in the procession. Upon arrival at the place of the celebration, the leader places the book on the prepared table. The parish music minister may have selected a song of dismissal for the assembly to sing while the children leave.

Welcome.

The leaders assist the children to sit, welcome them and invite them to participate in the prayer. When the children are seated and settled, one of the leaders or a child may light the candle beside the book.

The leader may say the prayer.

O God, allow our hearts to be open to your Word so we may serve you completely. We ask this through Christ our Lord.

Invite the children to sit and listen to the readings.

Lectionary Readings

One of the leaders (or an older child who has prepared the text) stands, takes the book from the table, stands behind the table, and proclaims the first reading. The reading is concluded with: The Word of the Lord. All respond: Thanks be to God.

FIRST READING

Isaiah 55:6-9

The Lord says: My thoughts are not your thoughts.

A reading from the book of the Prophet Isaiah.

Seek the Lord while he may be found,
call upon him while he is near; let the
wicked person forsake their way, and
the unrighteous person their thoughts;
let that person return to the Lord that
he may have mercy on them, and to
our God, for he will abundantly pardon.

For my thoughts are not your thoughts,
nor are your ways my ways, says the
Lord.

For as the heavens are higher than the
earth, so my ways higher than your
ways and my thoughts than your
thoughts.

The Word of the Lord.

The leader may teach the children to respond: Thanks be to God.

A period of silence is observed following the proclamation. It may be helpful for the leader to invite the children to think about some particular aspect of the reading during this time. Perhaps the gesture of bowing heads and closing eyes will foster the effective use of this silent period.

RESPONSORIAL PSALM

The responsorial psalm is sung. It is recommended that the same setting used in the parish on the day be used. Suppose music ministers are not available to lead the singing. In that case, a recording may assist the children in responding. A Seasonal psalm may also be used.



The Lord is my light and my sal - va - tion.

1. The Lord is my light and my salvation;
whom shall I fear?
The Lord is the stronghold of my life;
of whom shall I be afraid?
2. One thing I asked of the Lord, that will I seek after;
to live in the house of the Lord all the days of my life,
to behold the beauty of the Lord,
and to inquire in his temple.
3. I believe that I shall see the goodness of the Lord
in the land of the living.
Wait for the Lord; be strong,
and let your heart take courage; wait for the Lord!

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GOSPEL

The children stand for the Gospel. The leader proclaims the Gospel. At the beginning, the Gospel is announced as in the book. All respond: Glory to you, Lord. All sign themselves on the forehead, lips and breast. The leader concludes the Gospel with The Gospel of the Lord. All respond: Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.

Matthew 20:8-16

Are you envious because I am generous?

✠A reading from the holy Gospel according to Matthew.

When evening came, the owner of the vineyard said to his manager, 'Call the workers and give them their pay, beginning with the last and then going to the first.'

When those hired about five o'clock came, each of them received the usual daily wage.

Now, when the first came, they thought they would receive more, but each of them also received the usual daily wage.

And when they received it, they grumbled against the landowner, saying, 'These last worked only one hour, and you have made them equal to us who have borne the burden of the day and the scorching heat.'

But he replied to one of them, 'Friend, I am doing you no wrong; did you not agree with me for the usual daily wage?

Take what belongs to you and go; I choose to give to this last the same as I give to you.

Am I not allowed to do what I choose with what belongs to me? Or are you envious because I am generous?'

So the last will be first, and the first will be last."

The Gospel of the Lord.

The children sit to listen to the reflection.

Reflection

The leader may offer this reflection in these or similar words.

The first reading tells us about God. God thinks differently than we do. God's thoughts are bigger, greater and higher than ours. The true mind of God is compassion, justice, and love.

Jesus tells us about workers in a vineyard, which is a place where people grow grapes. God's vineyard is known as the Kingdom of God. We are not grapes but grow because God wants us to grow in faith, love, justice, and compassion.

There was probably a lot to do in the vineyard, so the owner hired more workers later in the day. Some started close to the end of the day. The owner paid everyone the same, regardless of how much they worked.

If you had worked through the entire day, what would you expect?

The people who started early were paid the same as the people who started later. The owner thought like God thinks. Everyone received the pay that they were promised! And everyone received enough! The owner was generous!

What does the parable tell us about God?

God is generous. As we work together in God's Kingdom, let's try to think more like God. Let's try to help others to have what they need. Let's try to be generous. We can trust God.

The Creed

Depending on the time, a simple profession of faith may be made (see below).

Leader: Do you believe in God, the Father Almighty, maker of heaven and earth?

All: We do believe.

Leader: Do you believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, who became our brother and gave his life for us?

All: We do believe.

Leader: Do you believe in the Holy Spirit who lives in our hearts and gives us everlasting life?

All: We do believe.

Leader: This is our faith. This is the faith of the Church. We are proud to profess it.

Prayer of the Faithful

Invite the children to think of the needs of others and to announce their petitions. The leaders may begin the intercessions by announcing the needs they know. When the children's name is needed, it may be necessary for the leader to repeat and/or paraphrase the petition and conclude it with the cue for the response: For this, we pray. All respond to each petition by saying: Lord, hear our prayer. Sample intercessions are below.

Leader: Grateful for our faith, we now pray to God.

Please respond, "Lord, hear our prayer." **R.**

For Pope Francis and Douglas, our bishop, we pray to the Lord. **R.**

For government leaders, we pray, we pray to the Lord. **R.**

For our families, we pray, we pray to the Lord. **R.**

For the sick, we pray, we pray to the Lord. **R.**

The leader may invite other intercessions from the children or add intercessions based on the Church's current needs, the world, or the local community.

For all who have died, we pray to the Lord. **R.**

Merciful God, you are compassion and love. Grant that we, your children, may always seek your forgiveness and forgive our brothers and sisters. Through Christ our Lord.

Children: Amen.

Ask the children to return to the main assembly. Ask them to return quietly and perhaps think about what they have heard and are now doing.

Be mindful of children having difficulty finding their families.

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