



# DIOCESE OF HAMILTON

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## Children's Liturgy of the Word

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# Twenty-Seventh Sunday of Ordinary Time, Year A

## Theme: God's Vineyard and Our Responsibilities

### Objectives

- † To use the image of the vineyard as illuminating the identity of God and us
- † To identify sources of spiritual nourishment that help us grow.

### Leader's Preparation:

- † Pray the Lectionary readings.
- † Sin is part of our lives and affects our relationship with God.
- † Throughout history, God calls us to continually grow closer by overcoming sin.
- † Jesus made it possible to overcome sin.
- † People are oriented to goodness.
- † God desires us to direct our decisions toward good and just decisions.

### 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 5:1-7**

- † The first speaker in the reading is Isaiah, who identifies himself as a friend of God.
- † Isaiah depicts God as a vinedresser doing everything possible to ensure his vineyard bears good fruit.
- † When people did not bear fruit, God asked, "Why not?" and "What could I have done more?"
- † Isaiah explains that people should vindicate the poor (judgment)
- † Rather than being just, they brought suffering.

## Matthew 21:28-32

- † This is the third parable in three weeks in a vineyard.
- † Vineyards symbolize God's care.
- † The owner (God) prepared it carefully and visited it annually.
- † It would take four to five years for the grapes to flourish.
- † The workers abandoned the vineyard and did not tend it as they should have.
- † The twist is that the workers eventually kill the owner's son (Jesus).
- † With the first reading, we are called to remember in whose vineyard we are working and to ask what kind of fruit we produce.

### Prayer Leader Reflection Questions

- † What are the good grapes in your life?
- † How do you allow yourself to be pruned?

## 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 5:1-7**

**A reading from the book of the Prophet Isaiah.**

**Isaiah said to the people of God:**

**"My friend had a grape vineyard. And my friend planted the best vines and took very good care of them so that they would grow good grapes. But instead, the vines gave bitter grapes that no one could eat."**

**Then God said,**

**"Now tell me, is there anything else I could have done for my vineyard? When I looked for good grapes, why did it give me only bitter grapes?"**

**My people, you are like that vineyard. You are the ones I love. I do everything for you. But I find only evil and killing when I look for justice and fairness. When I look for goodness, I see people crying because they suffer."**

**The Word of the Lord.**

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

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

**GOSPEL Matthew 21:33-43**

The children stand for the Gospel. The leader proclaims the Gospel.

✠ **A reading from the holy Gospel according to Matthew.**

All respond: Glory to you, Lord. All sign themselves on the forehead, lips and breast.

**One day, Jesus told this story to the leaders:**

**"There was a man who owned a grape vineyard. He built a wall to protect it. He hired people to work in it and went to another country. When it was time to pick grapes, the owner asked the servants to collect his share.**

**But the workers beat the servants and killed some of them. Later, the owner sent more servants, and they were beaten and killed. Finally, he said,**

**'I will send my son, for surely those workers will respect my own son.'**

**They took the son, threw him out of the vineyard, and killed him."**

**Then Jesus asked the leaders,**

**"Now, what do you think the owner will do when he comes and finds out what the workers have done?"**

**They answered,**

**"He will punish the wicked people and give his vineyard to good people."**

**Jesus said to them,**

**"Heaven will be taken away from those who do evil and given to people who do good."**

**The Gospel of the Lord.**

The leader concludes the Gospel with The Gospel of the Lord. All respond: Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.

The children sit to listen to the reflection.

## Reflection

The leader may offer this reflection in these or similar words. Please consider the amount of time available to return to the main assembly. The leader may wish to reduce the number of questions.

We have been talking about vineyards for a few weeks. We might think of a vineyard as a grape farm. The vineyard owner, or farmer, works hard to produce many good, ripe grapes.

**Have you ever eaten grapes? What are they like?** (Invite a few short responses and try to return to the reflection in a straightforward and reasonable time.)

When grapes are ripe and fresh, they taste sweet, juicy and a bit tart. They are good to eat but can also be made into grape jelly, juice, raisins or wine. With all the beautiful ways we can use grapes, can you see why someone would want to spend time caring for grapevines?

In the Gospel, when the time comes for the wine to be ready, the man sends his servants to collect it. But the workers do not want to share, and they hurt those who have been sent. Eventually the man sends his son because he thinks the tenants will respect and listen to him. But the tenants treat the son no better than they treat the others.

**How do you think the man felt when he heard what the workers had done?** (Invite a few short responses and try to return to the reflection in a straightforward and reasonable time.)

They didn't want to share it with anyone, not even the man who owned the vineyard.

**Do you think this is what Jesus wants us to be like? No? What does Jesus want us to do?** (Invite a few short responses and try to return to the reflection in a straightforward and reasonable time.)

Jesus told this story so that people could understand more about God and what Jesus had come to do on earth. The people in the story represent God, the prophets – God's messengers to the people – and Jesus.

The bad workers in the gospel story thought only about themselves. Jesus asks us to think about other people, too, to use the earth's resources wisely so that everyone can have their fair share, protect the earth, and enjoy the wonders of God's creation now and in the future.

Following the reflection, the prayer leader invites everyone to stand to profess our faith.

Together, recite the Creed.

## 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. 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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