



DIOCESE OF HAMILTON

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

Children's Liturgy of the Word

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Thirtieth Sunday of Ordinary Time, Year A

Theme: Imitators of Christ.

Summary

When asked which commandment was the greatest, Jesus identified loving God completely and our neighbours as ourselves. The commands are united on the foundation of love.

Objectives

- † To explore the significance of the greatest commandments.
- † To highlight the particular place of care for the vulnerable.

Leader's Preparation:

- † Pray the Lectionary readings.
- † The writers of the Old Testament wanted us to know that society suffers when people in need are neglected.
- † Christians seek to love God with our whole hearts, minds and souls.
- † We show our love for God by loving our neighbour and all the people God created.
- † The Ten Commandments are summarized in Jesus' great commandment of love.
- † Christians live by this commandment.

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

Exodus 22:20-26

- † God made a covenant with the Israelites after their liberation from Egypt.
- † They would never forget their history as alien labourers in a foreign country.
- † God's covenant included social regulations regarding the treatment of widows, orphans, immigrants, and everyone defenceless and voiceless.
- † Money lenders had a grave responsibility not to be extortionists.
- † They were not to exact payment by leaving the impoverished person without a place to sleep.

Matthew 22:34-40

- † The Pharisees had many regulations while not respecting ordinary people they sought to control.
- † The Sadducees guarded the Temple (i.e. church) and demanded payments from worshippers.
- † The scholar scribes wrote the Scriptures but often failed to live by God's word.
- † Jesus criticized all these leaders and taught that God's law of love has two parts.

Prayer Leader Reflection Questions

- † In what ways do you love the Lord with your heart? With your soul? With your mind?
- † To which of your neighbours do you more easily show love? Which of your neighbours do you have to work harder to love?
- † How do you show love to yourself in a way that makes your love of your neighbour meaningful?

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: Dear children, we are called to imitate Jesus and to welcome all people into our midst. Go now and take to heart this teaching of the Lord who loves you very much.

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. When 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. Upon arrival at the place of the celebration, the leader places the book on the prepared table.

Welcome.

The leaders assist the children to sit, welcome them and participate in the prayer.

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 45:1, 4-6

A reading from the book of Exodus

God says,

"When foreigners and strangers live among you, you must never do anything to hurt them.

Remember that you used to be strangers in the country of Egypt.

And don't do anything to hurt widows and orphans.

If you do hurt them, and they cry out to me,

I will listen to them, and I will help them.

But I will punish you.

"When you lend money to people in need,

don't make them pay back more than they owe you.

And if you take their coat,

don't keep it

because they will need it to stay warm.

If they cry out to me, I will help them,

for I love the poor

and will take care of them."

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 22:34-39

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, a lawyer who belonged to a group called Pharisees asked Jesus this question:

"Teacher, what is the greatest commandment in the law?"

Jesus said,

**"You must love God with all your heart
and with all your soul
and with all your mind.**

**This is the first
and most important commandment.**

**And the second one is like it—
you must love your neighbour
just as you love yourself."**

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.

In today's Gospel, Jesus talked about the greatest commandments. The whole law and the prophets depend on loving God and loving your neighbour.

Why do we love God?

In our first reading from the book of Exodus, we heard some of the other commandments. The book of Exodus is about how God rescued us because God deeply loves us. God has loved us first from the moment we exist, even before our baptism. We love God because God loves us first.

How do we love God?

Jesus said to love "*with all your heart, soul, and mind.*" We sometimes say that we love that person "with all our heart" since our heart is deep inside us. We also love God with our souls and minds. We love God with everything we have, including our minds. We learn about God through the Bible, the Church, school and prayer. Knowing God with our brain is loving God with our minds.

Jesus wants us to care for people who may not have someone to look out for them, like immigrants, widows, orphans, and all people in need. He invites us to use our minds to take care of others.

How do we care for others?

Following the homily or reflection, the prayer leader invites everyone to stand to profess our faith. Together, sing or recite the Apostles' or Nicene Creed. Refer the children to the words of the prayer that you have displayed.

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 to the Lord. R.

For us to use the gifts God gives us, we pray to the Lord. R.

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

For the sick, 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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